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ON REPEAT

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



FACTORY FLOOR

Two Different Ways
It's Factory Floor's first release for New York label DFA – and oh my, did they choose a corker to get things started. 'Two Different Ways' is a less feral beast than some of the London trio's previous cuts but, with Nik Colk's icy vocals, neuron-frying synths and nods to Chicago house played out over nearly 10 minutes of noisy bliss, it's a behemoth of a track nonetheless.

Ben Hewitt, writer

SEYE ADELEKAN

White Noise
Recognise that surname? Seye is Gbenga from Metronomy's bro and, going by his debut songs, wicked rhythmic ways run in the family. Here, Seye picks up where Katy B's 'On A Mission' left off, crooning saucily about putting "my cigarette inside your paper cup" on a night out over frenzied tribal beats, like Fela Kuti for the Rinse generation.

Laura Snapes, Assistant Reviews Editor

DRAKE FT RIHANNA

Take Care
Producer Jamie xx completes the dream team on this epic anthem of emo-hop taken from Drake's delayed 'Take Care' album. Like the negative to 'What's My Name's' full-colour Polaroid, Drake twists hip-hop's macho bravado 360 degrees on this chilling, housey ode to love and togetherness.

Priya Elan, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

GROSS MAGIC

Yesterdays
Brighton boy Sam McGarrigle nails a perfect sweet spot between grungy grind and woozy, Ariel Pink-style psych-pop. This extract from a split seven-inch with Novella, The History Of Apple Pie and Echo Lake on Marshall Teller Records is his gnarliest work yet, reminiscent of early, scary Mercury Rev.

Emily Mackay, Reviews Editor

ROSTAM

Don't Let It Get To You
Rostam's latest solo foray – away from Vampire Weekend – mines a little Latin

American flavour and nicks the chugging drumbeat from Paul Simon's 'The Obvious Child'. Without Ezra yelping over the top, the whole thing's prettier, calmer and more blurred-around-the-edges. Less an ice-cold horchata, more a warming winter tumbler of mulled wine.

Luke Lewis, Editor, NME.COM

THE BIG PINK

Hit The Ground (Superman)
Early signs for the new album from the now-clean-living Big Pink are promising. Following 'Stay Gold', this second excerpt hits with almost as many soaring, big beat melodies – who needs a drug intake so high that sniffer dogs keel over when they walk within 50 yards of the band members, eh?

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

HOWLER

Back Of Your Neck
These Minneapolis teens better have broad shoulders, given they've already been charged with kick-starting that long-mooted rock'n'roll revival next year. Thankfully, this turbo-charged rocket from their forthcoming debut LP sounds so bloody massive it's already pretty inevitable that they'll pull it off.

Rick Martin, News Editor

LAURA MARLING

I Was An Eagle
Of all the new material currently getting road tested at Laura's live dates, this missive raises our hopes highest for the fourth album – a beautiful yet barbed dispatch to a former flame that insists "I will not be a victim of romance/ I will not be a victim of circumstance".

Tim Chester, Deputy Editor, NME.COM



PULLED APART BY HORSES VENOM

As an opening salvo from the Leeds noise mongers' new LP 'Tough Love', 'VENOM' certainly feels like a statement of intent. Surprisingly raw and outstandingly heavy, it builds to a crushing metal outro that nods to vintage Motörhead. PABH are back with a mighty wallop.

Tom Goodwyn, writer

TRACK
OF
THE
WEEK

THE MACCABEES

Pelican

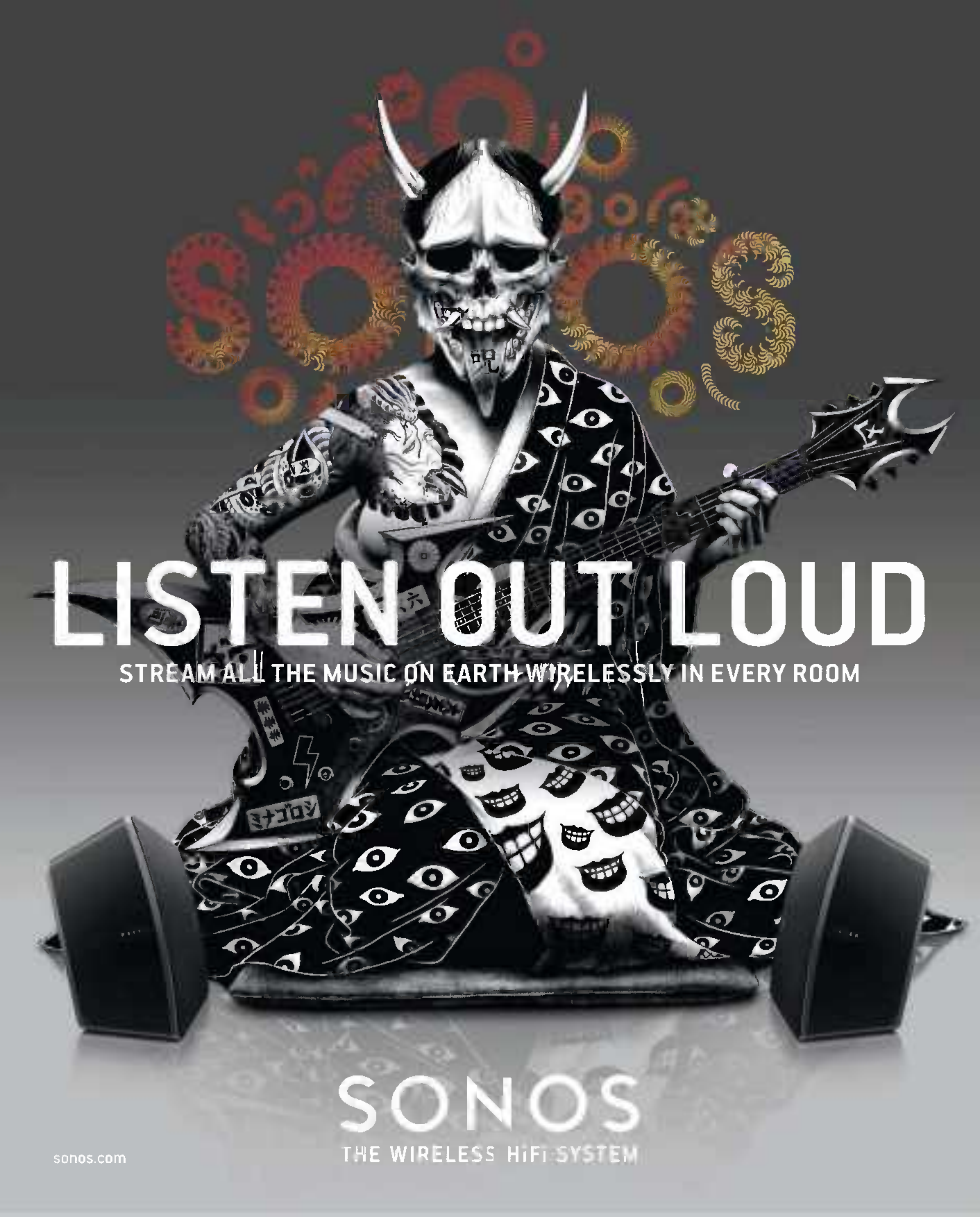
In their most recent *NME* interview, The Maccabees enthused that playing the sort of massive gigs that Arctic Monkeys and Kasabian do would be something that they'd be "totally up for". This is a good thing because – and make no mistake about this whatsoever – 2012 is going to be their year, and the point at which they step assuredly into The Big League.

In the same way that, prior to second album 'Wall Of Arms', 'No Kind Words' indicated that here was a cult concern making a giant leap into the realm of Bands To Be Taken Seriously, as a first taste of forthcoming third album 'Given To The Wild',

Yes, it sounds suited to larger venues, but it's also a natural step forward

'Pelican' marks a step into the Take Very, Very Seriously stage. It is the sound, unmistakably, of The Maccabees we all know and love, but it's more strident, adventurous and instinctive. Nimble guitar lines, svelte, lissom rhythms, a tear-beckoning, beautiful vocal... so many bands in recent times have attempted to retool themselves for arenas by turning up the reverb and borrowing a Bono chorus. One of the most exciting things about 'Pelican' is that, yes, it sounds suited to larger rooms, but it's also like a completely natural step forward. It sounds like the best young guitar band in Britain at the absolute peak of their powers. 2012 is going to be emotional.

Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor



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UPFRONT

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

Edited by Rick Martin



The likely lads:
John, left, and Carl



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"A LOT OF BRIDGES HAVE BEEN BUILT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS"

MAIN
EVENT

Reunited on the European film festival circuit, The Libs' Carl Barât and John Hassall reveal that reconvening with Pete is on the cards – though not for a few years

To know your future, you must first

understand your past, as the old saying goes. And lord, are Carl Barât and John Hassall being given plenty of opportunities to understand theirs this week. *NME* has joined the pair in Denmark, in the midst of a jaunt around the continent's film festivals to promote *There Are No Innocent Bystanders*, Roger Sargent's documentary on The Libs' fractious 2010 reunion shows. The film is given a big screening at the Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival tonight (November 9). Carl insists they're here simply to "hold Roger's hand", but when we sit down afterwards with the trio, it's clear that watching it on the big screen has reopened a few old wounds. We pick Carl up on one of the threads in the film, that he'd feel "incomplete" if he didn't make another Libs album.

"One day, I'd love to do that," he muses – despite telling us just six months ago he'd "never again" talk to the press about The Libs. "In the film I say I'd feel incomplete not to go down that road further. But also I want to do something important to me now. Right now we're not ready. We can't just book another tour without having written an album, and there's no conceivable space to write an album for the next couple of years. I speak to [Pete] quite a bit. It's grand. We don't have to mention The Libertines. It was definitely the end of the chapter."

"One has to choose the right time to do stuff," says John. "Last year was the right time to do that and you can't force these things. It has to be natural." But it's a 'when', not an 'if'? Carl: "Well maybe, if that's the way you think about

it, but bear in mind it won't be for the next couple of years. There are no plans and we're all very busy. The official line is 'no'. Not next year and probably not the year after."

Roger, an *NME* photography legend and a firm Libertines 'insider', is rather more candid about the possibility. "A lot of bridges have been built in the last six months or so. Peter and Carl are talking, they've not made plans but compared to how it was when the film was finished – it was very difficult, they had quite a big falling out and it really did look like the absolute end – it's my opinion that they're not just gonna come back and play gigs, they'll make a record in 18 months to two years. They can't just do it tomorrow, though, because every member of the band is doing something else."

"There's been no pressure," says Carl. "It echoes throughout the band. We've spent that much time together that whenever we are together it's like nothing's ever really changed."

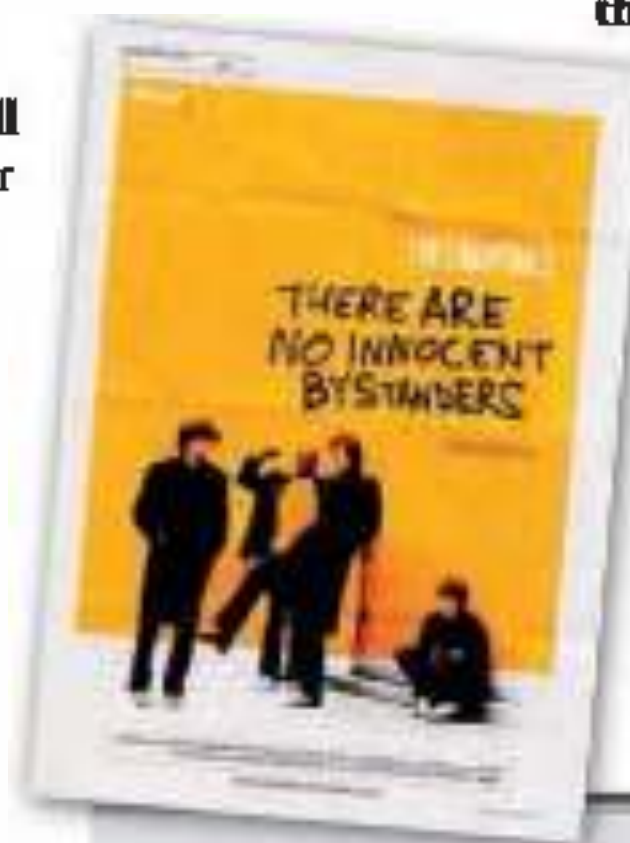
Carl and John reunited yesterday in Copenhagen – a short drive from John's home in Aarhus, which Carl claims is situated "in the middle of Aarstreet" – and, almost instantly, they found the old Libs chaos on their heels. At last night's screening the soundtrack was out of sync and Carl had to stop Roger finding and punching the projectionist. "My inner Ghandi came out. It all blacked out and there was a big round of applause. I think people thought it'd finished in typical Libertines-esque confusion. It was about five or 10 minutes in."

NME joins them for John's guided tour of Copenhagen, taking in the surprisingly little Little Mermaid statue (Carl: "I was expecting

titls like The Darkness would ride in on") and a boat trip around the city's waterways. At tonight's Q&A session at the festival, Carl admits that, of the three weeks The Libertines had booked to rehearse for Reading and Leeds, they only managed four hours.

"The reason it's meant a lot to a lot of people is because those problems and fuck-ups are so naked and exposed," says Carl. "It was the people's hand, it was everyone's hand as much as ours. I'd like people to take that romance with them."

And their plans for the 10th anniversary of 'Up The Bracket' next year? A reissue perhaps? Carl: "Is that a good thing to do? That'd just piss everyone off, wouldn't it? A different box. I don't see any point to that." John has a better idea. "We could go to the pub together and celebrate it?"



"FILMING WITH PETE WAS HARROWING"

Roger and Carl remember the making of There Are No Innocent Bystanders

Roger: "As much as possible, I felt I blended in to the room. I think it would've hampered the rehearsals if there'd been a crew in there."

"Filming the interview with Peter was one of the most harrowing experiences of my life because he got very, very upset. We caught him on the middle of a tour in

January this year and he'd obviously been going over things a lot since [Reading and Leeds]. He was on a knife-edge, emotionally. There was a hell of a lot I couldn't use from the interview."

Carl: "It's a bit cringey for me... I get stressed watching it. But it's great to document the coming together of all the years of supposition

about how big The Libertines were to people. No-one really knew because we never got to do that gig. So to get the opportunity to actually prove it right, it wasn't some kind of mythology – or if it was it doesn't matter. Everybody was there and everyone was together and everyone wanted to tear it up..."

BE A ROCKSTAR

Two Door Cinema Club formed by accident when Kevin was trying to snog Alex and Sam's mates. Four years later, they're one of the UK's most successful new bands. Want to know more about their crazy lifestyle?

Paco Rabanne Black XS has the answer

Black
paco rabanne

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NME AWARDS SHOWS ANNOUNCED



Justice live. Just like football, apparently

JUSTICE: "WE HAVE TO DELIVER"

The Gallic duo announce five NME Awards Shows and get cracking on their third album

We're working around the clock, 24-7 at the moment," beams a wide-eyed Xavier de Rosnay, speaking about Justice's preparations for their NME Awards Shows next year. "We want to make sure it looks amazing." The Parisian pair are spending the next month beaver away in their garage working on the lighting for the shows, which will see them play five gigs across the UK [see column right for full details]. And they've got good reason for putting the extra effort in, too – Xavier explains they feel more pressure playing in our capital than almost

anywhere else in the world. "When we play London or Paris, it's like a football team playing a home game," he explains. "You can almost feel the expectation from the crowd. We have to deliver."

One thing we weren't expecting was news of a third album, given that their second – last month's 'Audio, Video, Disco' – was almost half a decade in the making. But it seems that they're not planning on such a laboured process next time around. "We were thinking just yesterday how cool it'd be to start making some new music already," Xavier reveals. "It's funny, we spent a fair amount of time making 'Audio...' – but we're not sick of being in studios. Yet."

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Those NME Awards Shows in full

JUSTICE

O2 Academy Bristol (Feb 9)

O2 Academy Brixton London (10)

O2 Academy Birmingham (11)

O2 Academy Glasgow (12)

Manchester Academy (13)

CHARLI XCX

Lexington (8)

SLOW CLUB

Heaven (9)

PURE LOVE

Bush Hall (14)

BAND OF SKULLS

XOVO (15)

TUNE-YARDS

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (15)

TOTALLY ENORMOUS

EXTINCT

DINOSAURS

Heaven (16)

CLOUD CONTROL

Electric Ballroom (17)

THE BIG PINK,

The Garage (20)

KURT VILE,

Koko (21)

ALABAMA SHAKES

Boston Arms (22)

OH LAND

Heaven (23)

LITTLE DRAGON

Forum (24)

MARINA & THE

DIAMONDS

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (26)

THE DRUMS

Roundhouse (27)

All dates London unless otherwise stated

Tickets go on sale this Wednesday (Nov 16) at 9am



THE BIG PINK'S WILD NIGHTS WITH HOT CHOCOLATE

Bed by midnight, mugs of cocoa... What's up with Milo and Robbie?

Nightcaps of hot chocolate? We were aware The Big Pink were knocking partying on the head – they said as much on these very pages earlier this month – but little did we know they were taking things this far. "Robbie's been spending hours and days in singing lessons nurturing his voice," explains Milo. "He doesn't smoke, he doesn't do drugs." Even a night out in London for their NME Awards Show next February can't tempt the boys back to their debauched ways, either. Says Milo: "We like to be in bed with a cup of cocoa by midnight these days." According to Milo, they also got "in a bit of a rut" singing the heartbroken missives of 'A Brief History Of Love', so they're looking forward to a change in that department too.

"Everything was written around splitting up with girls, and we didn't think about playing the songs for two years afterwards," he says. "This time we kept that in mind, so we tried to keep everything as optimistic as possible." And, hints Milo, "there may even be a viola" involved onstage – oooh, hark at them...



MARINA: "THE SHOW'S GOING TO BE GRAND!"

New personae, theatrics and even costume changes coming this way...

"I've only done one rehearsal so far, and it only lasted two hours," laughs Marina guiltily, as she confesses she hasn't quite got round to knocking her new batch of songs into stage-ready shape just yet. "But by February, I'll definitely be ready." That's heartening news: not only is the singer's second album 'Electra Heart' scheduled to drop around then, but she'll also be showcasing the bulk of her new material to the masses for the first time at her NME Awards Show.

So far, Marina's revelations about 'Electra Heart' have hinted at a muddle of different scenarios and personae without fully divulging how such lofty, character-based ambitions will be

knitted together. For now, she simply says it will all "become a lot clearer" very soon – but she does promise that the theatrics will be incorporated into her gigs. "It's all going to run through the live shows hugely, because a lot of the project is so visual and film-based. It's going to be much grander than before," she says. "I'm sure I can manage a costume change or two." Frankly, we'd expect nothing less.



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ART ATTACK!

Thought MGMT couldn't get any weirder? As a bizarre evening at New York's Guggenheim proves, it seems the madness is only just beginning

FRONT ROW

What links MGMT with a 51-year-old Italian artist whose first ever solo show in 1989 was just a closed gallery door bearing a sign saying 'be right back'? Maurizio Cattelan, the artist in question, has made a career out of defying expectations. For one show, he stole another artist's exhibition with the intention of passing it off as his own, for another he persuaded a gallery owner to dress in a bunny-eared penis suit. For a month.

Someone obviously saw the connection between the artist with an eye for satire and indie's most wilfully difficult duo, because tonight (November 11)

MGMT play the second of two shows at New York's Guggenheim Museum to celebrate Cattelan's last exhibition before retirement. There may be mannequins of horses, dinosaur skeletons and a boy hanging from a noose dotted around the room, but MGMT's 45 minute prog jam is comfortably the most out-there thing NME witness tonight.

Heralded by a bass wobble, Andrew VanWyngarden, Ben Goldwasser and co slink down a staircase, which explodes into light from a series of coloured strobes. As the assorted high-heeled city types and specky art school musos cheer, the band pick up a creepy carousel theme

on keyboards and guitars... and the madness begins.

A giant screen behind them shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog, only punctuating the jam with some mildly diverting spaceman sound effects. There's no breaks, no chat; Andrew and Ben barely even look up. When the crowd realise there's more chance of hitching a ride on a horse mannequin than hearing 'Kids' or 'Time To Pretend' – or even a track from 'Congratulations' – someone sparks up a spliff and the room descends into chatter.

The set climaxes with the kind of doomy drumming that characterised 'Lady Dada's Nightmare', before morphing into 12-bar blues. Forget defying expectations – this was a batshit endurance test pitched somewhere between demented genius and total bollocks. Bet Maurizio Cattelan loved it.

A screen shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog



VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Nick Lomanto, 23
"That was the worst concert I've ever been to! I'm a big fan, but they bombed. They didn't play any of their good songs, didn't even look at the crowd. They should have played some hits! That's what people paid for! And I've never been to a show where there wasn't an encore."



Carina Williams, 26
"I thought it was great! The sound really matched the installation. It seems a lot of fans who came here tonight were expecting to hear MGMT from three years ago, but I feel like this was more of a familiar sound from their last album. It was like a [film] score."

“WE’RE BRINGING BACK DIRTY ROCK’N’ROLL”

Taking aim at chillwave, shoegaze and Casio drums, Minneapolis’ – hey, maybe the planet’s – best new band **Howler** talk us through one of 2012’s most anticipated debuts

IN THE WORKS

“It’s not just about music, it’s about my life in general. I need to be doing something at all times or I will fucking blow my brains out.” We should point out that Howler’s 19-year-old singer Jordan Gatesmith is speaking with a sense of manic glee rather than Cobain-esque ennui. The loping frontman is still recovering from his first ever tour, supporting Tapes’n’Tapes across America (a series of “major ups and major downs”, apparently), but is also now in possession of his first ever album, completed a mere three months after his band were picked up by Rough Trade. Called ‘America Give Up’ and to be released on January 16, it springs from a single, simple aim. Gatesmith explains: “Me and Max [Petrek,

keyboardist] were just sitting there one day and we thought there’s not really been a really great rock – ROCK! – record, or even a punk record, in ages. I keep hearing a lot of witch house stuff, chillwave, shoegazey keyboards with Casio drums. But not rock. So we wanted to make it dirty rock’n’roll.”

While three of the 11 tracks – ‘Told You Once’, ‘This One’s Different’ and ‘You Like White Women. I Like Cigarettes’, now-renamed ‘Wailing (Making Out)’ – have been re-recorded after they appeared on the band’s debut EP, everything else on the album is brand new, with centrepiece ‘America’ among Gatesmith’s favourites. “We wanted to write a song like Bruce Springsteen and that’s where that one comes from. It’s actually ended up very Jonathan Richman-sounding, but at the same time it’s got this whole big Springsteen vibe about it.”

The singer also admits he could be in for a kicking back home due to the album’s title, but says it’s actually meant to be tongue-in-cheek rather than bitchy. “Yeah... we’ll see what happens over here with that one. I think it’s pretty funny. All the British people will probably understand it fine, I just hope people over here see the humour too.”

Recording at Minneapolis’ SO-TM studio (also the place where serial killer Andrew Cunanan committed his first murder, as the band informed us during their *Radar* interview a few months back), Gatesmith says the only real difficulty they encountered was when it came to picking

a cover. “God, we’ve had so many problems with that. It was supposed to be like a Lucky Strike cigarette pack,

but we ripped it off and got in loads of trouble. We were talking to their people and they were going on about marketing plans and legal shit, because apparently RJ Reynolds [the 19th-century tobacco tycoon] still owns the image. It looked fucking sweet, the original one. In the end we had to adapt.” Not that Gatesmith is too concerned with that. As he admits later, he’s busier than ever at present, so he’s happy. “You know, I would actually drive myself fucking insane if I wasn’t doing this...”

THE DETAILS

Title:
‘America Give Up’

Released:
January 16, 2012

Recorded:

SO-TM, Minneapolis

Rehearsed/written:

The back of Java

Jack’s Coffee House

in Minneapolis

On tour:

The Garage, London

(Nov 16), The Bowery,

Sheffield (Nov 18), Old

Blue Last, London

(Dec 8)

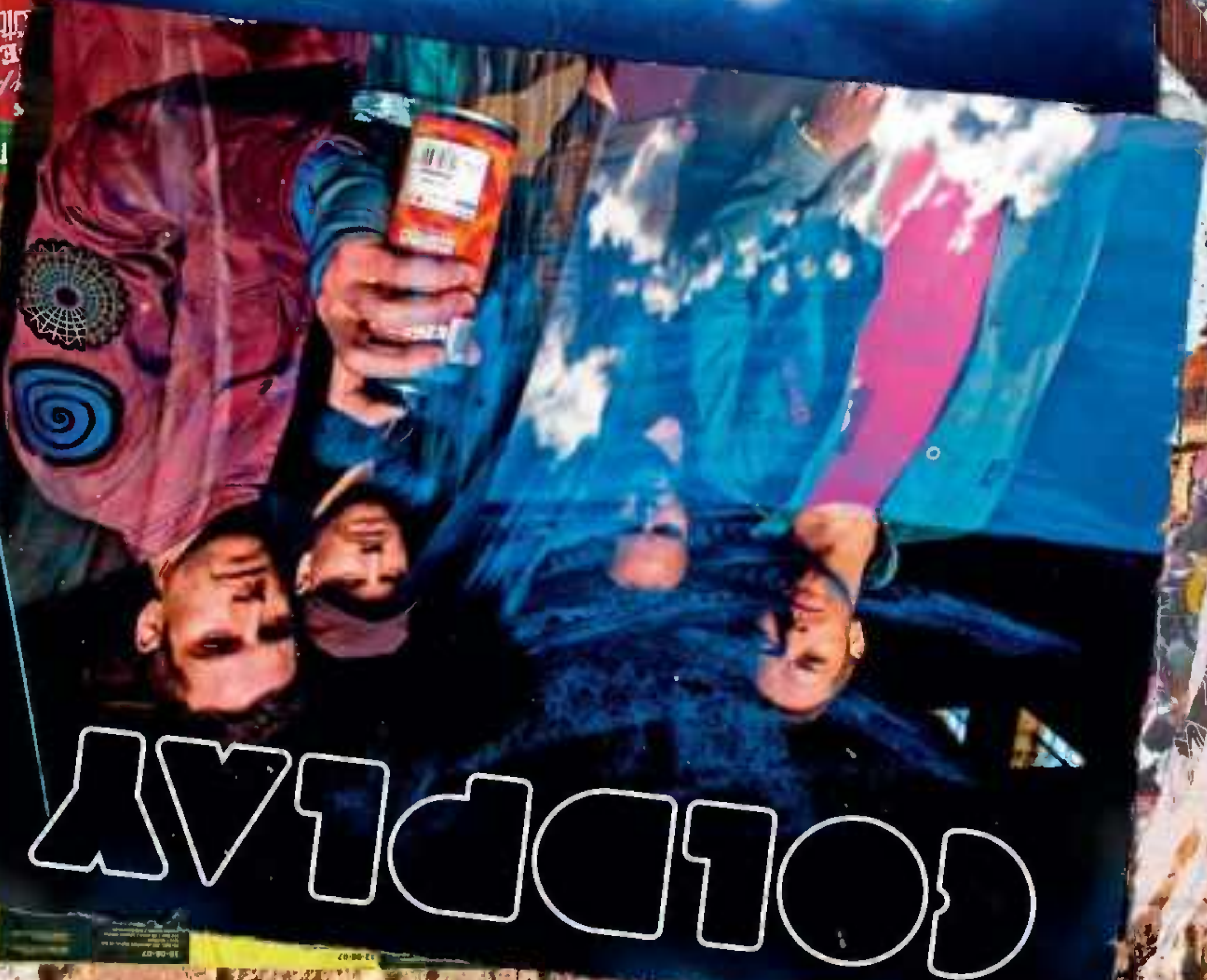


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PIECES OF ME ORLANDO WEEKS

The Maccabees frontman on drinking gin at his first gig, the 'James Dean of otters' and why The National's lyrics are so brilliant

My first album

FUGEES - 'THE SCORE'

"I think I bought it from Woolworths in Woodbridge in Suffolk. That was the first thing I'd listen to in the car. To me, the Fugees was something else that sounded like I could sing along to, just as well as to The Beatles."

My first gig

LAURYN HILL, WEMBLEY ARENA, LONDON

"My friend Josh from school and I went right to the front, where we made friends with these much, much, *much* older women who gave us shots of gin. It was a dreamy night, I don't even think I remember the tunes, I just remember thinking how big everything was. Lauryn Hill, six costume changes. And maybe two glasses of gin - it was amazing."

The first record I loved

THE SOUNDTRACK TO BUGSY MALONE

"The only other film that has music in it that's as good is Disney's *Robin Hood*, with the foxes and the bear. The whole of *Bugsy Malone* is great, every song is kind of funny and poignant and definitive of an era. I remember that our family took us to go and see the *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* musical and it wasn't as good. I think that was the Jason Donovan era."

My favourite lyric

THE NATIONAL - 'SLOW SHOW'

"The National have a beautiful lyric, '*You know I dreamed about you for 29 years before I saw you/ You know I dreamed about you/ I missed you for 29 years*'. That's one of the most romantic things you could ever say to anyone, but it's not cheesy. It's perfect and it's concise. I first saw the band on *Jools Holland* - he's brilliant for that kind of stuff. I remember trying to phone Felix [White, Maccabees guitarist] while he was trying to phone me at the same time when he saw Arcade Fire play, watching him [Win Butler] play his guitar back to front and thinking, 'How can you be part of a band that is that brilliant and also do something that looks like Talking Heads?'"

My favourite place

ALETSCH GLACIER, SWITZERLAND

"It's a huge glacier but they've drilled holes in the side of it so you can walk right into the centre of it, through 200 metres of ice. We went because we were driving back from a festival, we must've gone the wrong way because there was no reason to drive over a whole mountain range, we could have just skirted it. We sat there for three hours. Even with lots of tourists around it, it felt alien."



It's not comparable to anything else I've ever seen; I've never felt as weirded out as being in the middle of a giant ice block. It's like the dwelling of a Bond villain."

My favourite film

TARKA THE OTTER

"It's a film about the life story of an otter. It's beautiful. If it's just one otter playing the part, it is the James Dean of otters. There's a heron and there's a love interest, White-Tip. It's multicultural because there's an owl family. It's an animal melting pot, by the side of a river."

My favourite artist

STANLEY SPENCER

"I was taken to Sandham Memorial Chapel [where Spencer's work is exhibited] when I was about 13 or 14 and I remember thinking that it was the most incredible atmosphere and just being stunned into silence, not wanting to make a rude sound or anything like that. That must mean that there's something really special going on there. And I remember that very clearly, in the same way as being on a school trip to the Somme and even the funny kids at school just shut up."



Clockwise from main: looks like Orlando needs a refill; The National frontman and lyricist Matt Berninger; artist Stanley Spencer; Fugees' huge-selling 1996 album *The Score* with frontwoman Lauryn Hill in the centre; the soundtrack to 1976 kiddo gangster romp *Bugsy Malone*; *Tarka The Otter*

VERSUS

PETER ROBINSON *vs* JONATHAN PIERCE

The Drums' man on stealing biscuits and how he doesn't care about chart positions – yeah, yeah



• The Drums are obsessed with interviews by Ke\$ha and Marina & The Diamonds

• “We have a thing for watching them crumble – oh my god!” exclaims the indie funster

• True to Jonathan's spooky prediction, that single did not exactly set the charts alight

Hello, Jonathan. I went to see Britney recently...

“YOU DID? I went to see her about three months ago! My manager took me as a surprise. And it certainly was a surprise! A good one – I laughed my ass off. It was like watching somebody mash potatoes for two hours, which was sad but she has some good songs.”

Anyway, there is a bit in her show where she gets on a massive swing the size of the stage and sings a song. Would you have a massive swing on stage?

“Oh god, no way, I don't think *(laughs)* we'll ever do anything more than a few lights. We're even nervous about having a strobe. It sounds pretentious but we really like our songs and we feel they speak for themselves.”

I like that you recorded your last album in a kitchen. Did your record label keep coming in to see how the album was coming along and/or steal biscuits?

“It's ideal if you're hungry. Amy, my manager, she stops over all the time, but right at the start our label said, ‘We know you're different from other bands so we'll let you call the shots.’ The whole team around us is pretty cool. Maybe just not telling us things that are awful... They know we're sensitive lads.”

You have sensitive lad cheekbones and haircuts.

“*(Cackles)* That we do, that we do. You just watch, this next record we're coming back with big mountain beards. And tiny instruments. Like little accordions and bells and whistles.”

How good are you at growing beards? The Drums don't really strike me as the hairiest of recording artists.

“No, man, I think I had my first hair under my arm when I was about 19. It took a long time, I got picked on the whole time. But who's laughing now? Who's laughing now? *(Laughs)*”

No waxing for Jonathan from The Drums!

“Exactly! Who's in line at the waxing station now? Not me. I'm touring the world motherfuckers! I'm joking.”

If you take up swimming you'll be quite aerodynamic.

“Oh man, I really wanna do that. I'm a big fan of Björk and I read that she – this could be completely made up



– goes swimming every morning because it helps with her voice. All I wanna do is go swimming but I don't think my feet have been in water in over two years.”

You have washed your feet in the last two years, let's just clarify? “That is true. What do you think?”

I think you've washed your feet. “*(Howls)* YOU ARE RIGHT! You are right about that. Ding ding”

Finally you have a record out now in the UK. What's your chart prediction?

“Er, I'm gonna say... Which chart?”

The proper one. Your singles haven't exactly bothered the higher reaches of the Top 100 so far. Is it all going to change?

“Oh I don't think so! *(Laughs)* I don't even know where our last single registered on the chart.”

I'm looking at your chart positions now on Wikipedia and it doesn't make for pleasant reading, Jonathan, I'll be honest. But hey, it's not about the chart positions, so don't you worry.

“We're very happy with where we are and what's happening with the band. I feel like a lot of that crazy hype has subsided and now we can just get on with it. To be honest it feels exotic and thrilling to be focusing on these things. Without doing too many interviews about, you know, who cuts your hair or whatever.”

But who DOES cut your hair? “Jacob cuts all our hair.”

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1 2 HOWLER
'I TOLD YOU ONCE'
Fresh Tunes

2 3 SCUM
'AMBER HANDS'
New

3 6 DRY THE RIVER
'WEIGHTS & MEASURES'
New

4 4 THE BIG PINK
'STAY GOLD'
It

5 7 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB
'LIGHTS OUT, WORDS GONE'
New

6 9 LANA DEL REY
'VIDEO GAMES'
New

7 10 HIKI & THE DOVE
'THE DRUMMER'
Various

8 12 THE VACCINES
'TIGER BLOOD'
Various

9 8 ARCTIC MONKEYS
'SHUCK IT AND SEE'
Various

10 16 KASABIAN
'RE-WIRED'
Various

11 13 FLORENCE + THE MACHINE
'SHAKE IT OUT'
New

12 11 NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS
'AKA... WHAT A LIFE!'
Various

13 33 FRIENDLY FIRES
'BLUE CASSETTE'
It

14 1 THE VACCINES
'WETSUIT'
Various

15 14 TRIBES
'WHEN MY DAY COMES'
New

16 17 JUSTICE
'AUDIO, VIDEO, DISCO'
Various

17 36 YOU ME AT SIX
'LOVERBOY'
It

18 27 COLDPLAY
'PARADISE'
Various

19 5 MANIC STREET PREACHERS
'THIS IS THE DAY'
Various

20 15 THE DRUMS
'HOW IT ENDED'
New

NME RADIO

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

NME TV

Watch the Top 10 video chart countdown every weekday on NME TV
SKY CHANNEL 387
FRIDAY SAT 510

NME.COM

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



NEW TO NME RADIO PLAYLIST

• FRANK TURNER
‘Wessex Boy’
• FOSTER THE PEOPLE
‘Call It What You Want’
• GOTYE
‘Easy Way Out’

The NME Chart is compiled each week by NME Radio and is based on how many times each track has been played on the station over the previous seven days.

RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Matt Wilkinson



ABOUT
TO
BREAK

A\$AP ROCKY

The NYC rap upstart with a swagload of tunes and a \$3 million record deal

It's exactly a week since self-dubbed "pretty motherfucker" A\$AP Rocky released his 16-track mixtape 'LiveLoveA\$AP', and he strides into the Polo Grounds Music offices a couple of blocks from Madison Square Garden. "How's it going, B?" 23-year old Rocky greets label boss and hip-hop kingpin Bryan Leach, fixes himself a Hennessy and Pepsi from Leach's personal bar, and drapes himself over a leather armchair, laptop open and Facebook on before he hits the seat. The last week has been a good one for Rocky, the Harlem-born rapper whose real name is Rakim Meyers (yep, he's named after THAT Rakim). "Finally, people have to come out with if they like me or not now," he says. "There's no wondering if I'm good or not. And I've been getting a lot of good feedback."

Good feedback is an understatement. It's not even a year since A\$AP Rocky and A\$AP Ferg dropped a handmade video for a track they made called 'Get High' on YouTube. At the time Rocky had moved his mother and baby sister from Harlem to

New Jersey and was paying for their apartment by selling drugs on the street.

"It was a way of surviving: I didn't have a job, my mum didn't have a job," he says – but pushing dope finally came to an end in July, around the same time he put a new video, 'Purple Swag', online.

It took a third video – for woozy Houston rap number 'Peso', in August – and suddenly everyone wanted a piece of A\$AP Rocky. Including Polo Grounds Music, part of Sony/RCA, who put a \$3 million deal on the table to sign him and fund a group label called A\$AP Worldwide, with Rocky in charge.

"I'm a tastemaker. I know how to look out for what's good, what's big, what's next," he says, pulling out a bag of weed and calling up YouTube videos of Tennessee 'gangster walk' and Lana Del Rey.

If there's pressure on him to deliver, Rocky's not feeling it yet. "This is easy!" he says lighting up with a grin. "Selling drugs is hard. But this? All you gotta do is show up and do what you love." *Hazel Sheffield*

NEED TO KNOW

FROM: Harlem, New York

FOR FANS OF: Odd Future, Drake

BUY IT NOW: 'LiveLoveA\$AP' is available online for free now

SEE HIM LIVE: He's hoping to be in the UK in January

ON NME.COM: Watch Rocky's best vids

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Rocky turned vegetarian recently. "It doesn't make sense to take a life for your satisfaction," he says.



GAUNTLET HAIR HEAD TO UK

US duo heading this way with tales of slashed tyres, pummelled housemates and wizard dicks

RADAR
NEWS

"We had a party at our old house in Denver and after we left we caught wind that some guy had slashed our van tyres," informs one half of Gauntlet Hair, Andy Rauworth, when asked how things have been going since the release of their self-titled debut album last month.

"Then, there was another time in Missouri when we stayed with some strangers and woke up to the sound of them pummelling each other. One of them threw the other one down the stairs. I don't know why it's so violent lately but we do seem to attract the stranger crowd."

If you're also a fan of casual violence then you're in luck – Gauntlet Hair have just confirmed their first ever UK dates, and are heading over here to spread the, er... *love* next February.

"Neither of us have been overseas," Andy enthuses, adding that the dates will see him and co-mainman Craig Nice playing stripped-down versions of their songs to compensate for the fact that their backing band are too

skint to head over for the tour. "There will have to be a lot of changes to make it work, though, because the album was recorded for a full band. The [tracks] might even change entirely," he explains.

One thing that is staying put, however, is their eyebrow-raising name, which Craig brilliantly defended recently by telling detractors to "go suck our medieval, hairy, wizard dicks."

"That [comment] was something he pulled off that we're all very proud of,"

"I don't know why, but we attract the stranger crowd"

ANDY RAUWORTH

Andy chuckles. "It's exhausting for reviewers to continually give us shit over it but there's some excellent points to having a name like that. If you type in Gauntlet Hair into your Google search box all you get is this fucking band. I figured [the critics] would tire of writing the same shit over and over again but they're still going at it."

We're sure that people will have some far more interesting things to say about Gauntlet Hair once February rolls around... *Lisa Wright*

The Buzz

The rundown of the music, videos and scenes breaking forth from the underground this week



1 FEAR OF MEN TEAM UP WITH BOS ANGELES

Two of our favourite new bands are heading out on the road together this week. Fear Of Men and Bos Angeles (above) play a number of co-headline dates on the jaunt, which kicks off at Manchester's Trof this Thursday (Nov 17). What's more, both acts are also readying new releases. Bos unleash their Cure-esque double A-side 'Beach Slalom'/'Days Of Youth' via Roundtable Records on November 21, while FoM release the excellently titled 'Alice Munro Demos' cassette tape on December 12 – head to NME.COM/newmusic now to hear two exclusive songs from it and check out the bands' tour dates in full.



2 BRETON'S NEW VID

The south London band – who live in a disused bank – release debut single 'Edward The Confessor' on November 21, but it's the video which is really kicking up a fuss. Filmed in-house under the collective's own bretonLABS moniker, you can see it for yourself on NME.COM/newmusic now.



3 MEXICAN SUMMER'S 100TH RELEASE

With a history taking in Dungen, Kurt Vile, Best Coast and Wooden Shjips, it's not been a bad existence for NYC's Mexican Summer label. Formed three years ago, it celebrates its 100th release next Friday (Nov 25), with a special cut from Ford & Lopatin – hear it on NME's Daily Download blog now.



4 LIVERPOOL'S MERCURY

What Wales does, Liverpool follows. Sort of. The folks behind Scouse new music blog Getintothisco.uk have outlined their plans to hold a Mercury Prize-style award in the city next year, focusing solely on acts from around the region. Nominees for the inaugural award are set to be announced early in 2012.

5 IROK

AKA The Intergalactic Republic Of Kongo. AKA Mike Title from London non-starters Dead Kids. Mike dressed as Colonel Gaddafi – post-golden gun shooting – during IROK's set at London's newest, most depraved venue The Sebright Arms recently. It was the perfect setting for his self-described "violent and contagious psychotropic afro-punk".



BAND CRUSH



Patrick Wolf on his favourite new act

"Every time I feel stressed or under pressure I listen to Kreayshawn. And if I had to come back as any human being it would be Kreayshawn because in every video she looks so carefree and she doesn't give a fuck. She's really inspiring to me right now."

SCENE
REPORTWHAT'S HOT
FOR THE
HORRORS

*Rhys Webb from The Horrors
ponders the crystal ball of new music*



Welcome to the second instalment of Spider's top sounds and new bands to check out and catch live. This time I'm focusing on some of the hip young guitar slingers flying the flag for psychedelia and garage. First up – freakbeat ravers **Speak & The Spells**. They play

frantic punk rock, owing as much to '60s R&B legends The Downliners Sect and The Pretty Things as they do to Billy Childish. Check their debut EP 'She's Dead'.

The Hypnotic Eye are recording their debut long player and have recently been treading the boards at some of London's underground hot spots. They play sultry organ-led garage and feature the seductive lead vocals of Grace Lightman. Coffin Joe and I dropped in to the session for their forthcoming debut single 'Marianne' to lend some backing vocals recently, and there's a date at my clubnight the Cave Club on the horizon too.

RHYS'
TOP 5

SPEAK & THE SPELLS
'She's Dead'

THE HYPNOTIC EYE
'Fly On The Wall'

THEE VICARS
'Don't Wanna Be Free'

BLOOD MUSIC
'Unending Blues'

UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA
'How Can U Luv Me'

Thee Vicars fuse the early punk sounds of The Damned and 'Spiral Scratch'-era Buzzcocks with a very authentic trashy garage blueprint. Kind of like a British Black Lips, who they often play with. I also love the London-based **Blood Music**, who play heavy, mind-bending noise that crashes and throbs like the klang of heavy machinery. They're currently putting the finishing touches to their debut single.

They're a little bit bigger now, but Portland's **Unknown Mortal Orchestra** are absolutely superb. They return to the UK this month. Get down there and check them out!

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Friendly Fires' Jack Savidge

5
TO SEE
This week's
unmissable new
music shows

HOWLER (pictured)
Garage, London
16 November

**THE HISTORY OF
APPLE PIE**
Shacklewell Arms,
London
16 November

WISE BLOOD
Undertone, Cardiff
18 November

THEME PARK
Green Door Store,
Brighton
19 November

FOLKS
Deaf Institute,
Manchester
22 November



Money: Ryan
Jarmann's hair
lives on...

MONEY/ BEATY HEART

SACRED TRINITY CHURCH, SALFORD
FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER

CAUGHT
LIVE

Following WU LYF's well-documented ascension, it's been unsurprising to witness a glut of Manchester-based bands reverting to

similar smoke and mirror tactics. Yet for every act hastily cobbling together faux-cryptic imagery while simultaneously deleting their Facebook, there are those whose devotion to the art of presentation as a whole is clear.

Money are one such group.

Confidence isn't something they've always had during their fledgling existence. Starting

as Books last year, they quickly changed name to Youth roundabout when they were looking timid as openers for Deerhunter; 18 months on and the contrast is substantial. The four-piece tonight possess the sort of unashamed sincerity in their stargazing-from-the-gutter pop that can't not revitalise, particularly at a time when blogs are awash with guitar music diluted of emotion in lieu of slacker escapism. It helps that the Sacred Trinity Church's reverential surroundings match their clearly bombastic

ambitions. It helps, too, that they seem to have gained such local devotion despite having hardly any online music to their name. This is no more apparent than in support act Beaty Heart, whose post-'... Merriweather...' reels of sound are largely ignored. It's a shame, for the Peckham trio have gained plaudits in their own right, but this evening the blurred edges of their disorientated pop just doesn't conquer minds and bodies in the manner it's rightfully done elsewhere.

Money possess the sort of unashamed sincerity that can't not revitalise

Money are still raw, mind; a sound already heavy on reverb often spirals out of control, obscuring Jamie Lee's sharpened croon. Yet it's hard not to be pulled in by 'Who's Going To Love You Now?'s wide-eyed affectation, or the soul-searching balladry of 'The Sea'. Indeed, at times their sense of conviction is such that it could make a person latch onto them and never want to let go, leaving others to baulk at a perceived hubris. You feel, though, that they wouldn't want it any other way. *Simon Jay Catling*



Looks like one of
The Hypnotic Eye
came straight
from work



SOA PLANO
2024

One year ago **The Vaccines** were a hyped indie band with some exciting demos. Then they delivered an amazing debut album, slayed the world's festivals and bulked into one of our most thrilling live acts. **Barry Nicolson** joins their victory lap

PHOTOS: ROGER SARGENT

Fuck, I've just had a Bono moment!"

Wandering the corridors of Manchester's MEN Arena in search of his dressing room, Justin Young has become hopelessly lost and found himself surrounded by a mob of fans who have been camped outside the venue's front door all afternoon. After a few double-takes and gasps of recognition, one by one, they begin to encircle and approach. Some of them breathlessly tell him that The Vaccines are the reason why they've started a band of their own (he's been getting that one a lot recently), while some say nothing at all, but giggle nervously

and present him with T-shirts, shoes, limbs or whatever else they can find that he can scrawl his name on. One girl approaches him on three separate occasions before finally working up the nerve to open her mouth. When he notices that his bandmates have all quietly slunk off, he elects to stick around anyway, ensuring that everyone who wants a photo gets one, making as much small talk as he can get away with, and maybe – just maybe – enjoying his Bono moment more than he'd like to let on.

Scenes like these are becoming *de rigueur* for The Vaccines. At a gig in Belgium this summer, guitarist Freddie Cowan encountered a particularly obsessive group of fans who had travelled all the way from Israel to present him with a Star of David pendant, in the mistaken belief that he was Jewish. "I kinda just had to go along with it," he shrugs. Wherever they go during

the 48 frantic hours *NME* spends in their company, an autograph request is never far away.

That's just how it is for The Vaccines these days: no big deal. What's unusual about this particular scene, however, is that the band aren't even headlining tonight's gig; they're playing second fiddle to Arctic Monkeys. Theoretically, at least. It's patently obvious, however, that The Vaccines have long since outgrown their lowly status on this tour; they're playing to near-capacity arenas full of fans who have clearly made a point of coming down early to catch them. Even their support slots are becoming proper events, and the songs sound more anthemic than ever in such surroundings. You imagine they'd have no trouble filling some of these venues on their own.

It's easy to forget, but the question of what we should expect from The Vaccines seemed a pretty loaded one back at the start of 2011. The hype – self-perpetuating, double-edged and the undoing of many a lesser band – made it all sound so cut and dried: of course they were going to be the saviours of guitar music, the anointed ones who would wrestle back the charts for rock'n'roll. But how many of them have we watched crash and burn over the years? The truth is, The Vaccines might have easily disappeared into the obscure recess of the indie

landscape marked 'Here Be Viva Brother'. Instead, as the year draws to a close, they haven't just survived it, they've positively smashed it.

The day before Justin's 'Bono moment' in Manchester, we meet up with the band at Cardiff's Motorpoint Arena, where the hot topic of conversation in the dressing room is, randomly enough, Lou Reed and Metallica's collaboration album, 'Lulu'. "Have you heard it yet?" Justin asks eagerly. We made it through 30 seconds of one song and seriously considered never

listening to music again, we tell him. "Oh, you have to listen to it! It's one of those albums that's so bad, it's terrible," he says, somewhat logically, before ramping up the volume and gleefully pointing out the vocal similarities between Laughin' Lou and Eric Cartman. He also reveals that he forced himself "to listen to all 90 minutes of it this afternoon, as a test of my own endurance". While he's gurning noisily along to the freeform sludge-metal of 'Brandenburg Gate' (*"Small town*

guuuuurrrrbbbbblll!) Freddie starts blasting out The Everly Brothers' 'Claudette', not-so-subtly nudging Justin to please make the horror stop.

To an outsider, The Vaccines' closeness is immediately evident; the shared weirdness of everything that's happened in the past 12 months has fostered a sense of unity and an unwavering self-belief in what they're ►

**“IT JUST FEELS
SO GOOD
TO BE LOVED”**
Justin



doing. Then again, given that they began 2011 as the band that other bands loved to hate, that's not much of a surprise. At Leeds this year, we spoke to a musician whose band broke around the same time as The Vaccines, and he confessed that – until he heard their debut album – he had jealously dismissed them as another London hype band who'd never had to work for their recognition. It wasn't an uncommon perception.

"Oh, I was definitely aware of all that," says Justin. "One of the first interviews I ever did was with a guy whose opening question was, 'Did you know that every local band in my city can't stand you?' As soon as he said it, I thought, 'Well, if they spent half as much time worrying about their own bands as they seem to do about mine, maybe they'd be riding this wave with us.' People think that if you're hyped, you've got it easy. But in a lot of ways, I actually think it made things harder, because with the hype came all the detractors who actively wanted us to fail. People will put every obstacle in your way, you know? I've been in bands since I was 11, getting it wrong over and over again. I've seen my friends do well and I've been jealous of them, but the only reason they were doing better than me is that, at the time, they were better than me. And all those bands who were sat at home moaning about us were just jealous because we were better than them."

We can't help but notice a difference in Justin's rhetoric since those early days. After all, this is the same man who was once at pains to play down every grandiose

claim being made on his band's behalf, telling *NME* back in January that, "It'd be amazing if we were ever in the charts – but I wouldn't bet money on it." What's changed? "We made a point of being quite self-deprecating in the beginning because we wanted people to get past all the hyperbole that was attaching itself to us, but we've always known we're a great band. Truly, I don't think there's another band out there who do what we do as well as we do it. That's not arrogance, that's just fact. I mean, can you name me any?"

As *NME* discovers, 'Doing what The Vaccines do' is not for the fainthearted. By the end of the year, the band will have played almost 150 gigs, 45 of those being festival engagements that sometimes saw them doing two shows in two different countries on the same day.

Everyone wants a piece of them right now, and you get the feeling that they can be a little too accommodating for their own good: after the gig in Cardiff (and after draining every last drop of their rider), bassist Arni Hjörvar and drummer Pete Robertson are accosted by a group of fans hanging around their tourbus who plead with them to come and watch their gig at the venue

across the road. Naturally, they agree, and everyone is soon sinking double *I* aphroaigs.

That eye-of-the-storm, seat-of-the-pants sort of lifestyle takes its toll, but it was the band's workload – not their partying habits – that brought them to the brink of catastrophe earlier this summer. Shortly after their triumphant Reading and Leeds performances

in August, Justin discovered that the vocal polyp problem which had plagued him all year would require yet another throat operation – his third time under the knife in just nine months – resulting in the cancellation of the band's entire American tour, as well as shows in Japan and Europe.

When we sit down with him in Manchester, it's clear that there's still a lingering uncertainty about what his vocal problems might ultimately mean for the

future of The Vaccines.

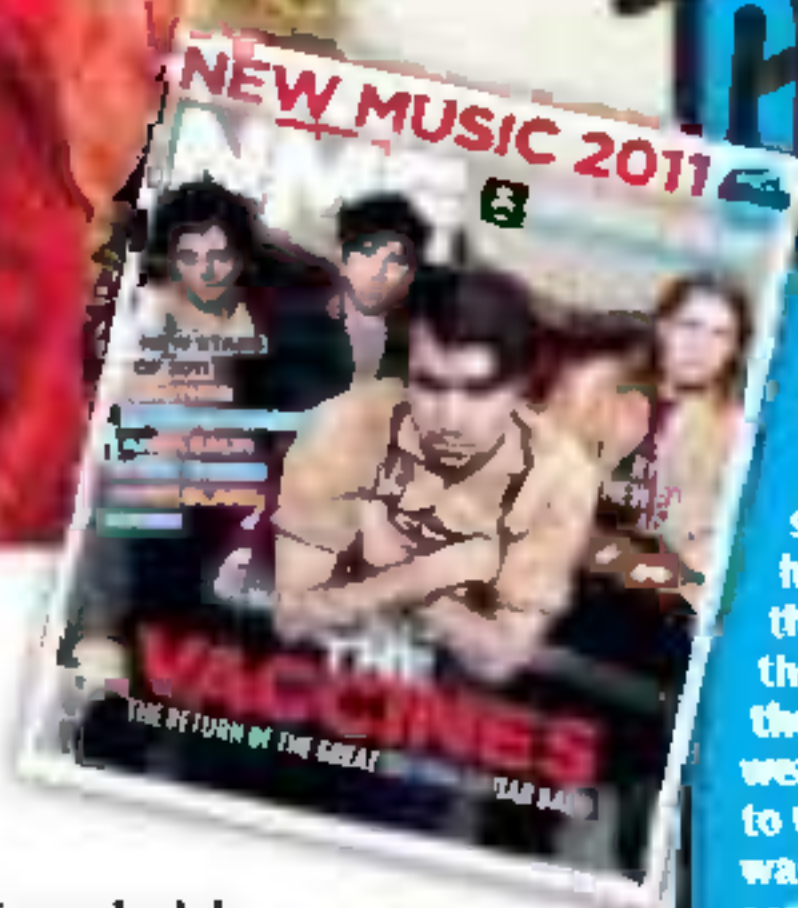
NME: We've heard about your throat – what were you actually diagnosed with?

Justin: "I'd had a haemorrhage, basically. Whenever I would shout during gigs, the vocal polyp would bleed, then it would scar and it wouldn't close properly. So my voice would just start squeaking."

**"WE ALWAYS
KNEW WE WERE
A GREAT BAND"**
Justin



Clockwise from far left: onstage at MEN; Freddie takes off; the lads lament a poor turnout; Arni's facepalm moment; Pete shows us what he's got



THE FIVE MOMENTS THAT MADE THE VACCINES

How did you react when you found out you'd have to have a third operation?

"I was told in LA, when we were out doing *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* I went to the doctor because I was having a problem with my ear, but he mentioned I was sounding husky and that he wanted to take a look at my throat. I just thought to myself, 'Oh shit, here we go again.' I won't lie to you, I properly broke down when he told me he'd found the haemorrhage again. I was completely devastated, because it meant cancelling the American tour. I don't know how to say this without sounding cheesy, but it was like I was on top of the world one minute and in total freefall the next."

Was there a point where you thought that it might mean the end of the band?

"Oh yeah, definitely. I mean, it's pretty fucking serious stuff. I guess people were a bit pissed off at us for pulling shows and maybe they thought I was just lazy, but if I hadn't had that operation, honestly, the band would've been over by now. The second time it happened, they told me it was turning carcinogenic! I've been through three operations in the last nine months, but I think the sheer number of shows we've played in between is testament to how much we want to overcome it. I took eight weeks off after the last operation, and I've worked hard to get my voice back up to strength, but I've been told just to cross my fingers and hope it doesn't come back again. I feel pretty good at the moment, and I've been doing everything I can to look after my voice, so

hopefully it's gone for good..."

As Freddie tells us later: "Justin's vocal problems were no great mystery: we had the busiest schedule of any band in the world this summer. At one stage, we did 16 flights in 10 days, across four continents. We work with people who have been with The Killers and The Strokes, people who have seen and done it all, and even they said they'd never known anything like our schedule. We were tempting fate, yeah, but when you're a new band, you don't say no to things. You say yes to everything, try your luck and see what happens."

Up to that point, 'seeing what happened' had proved a decidedly fruitful strategy for The Vaccines. It was at this year's T In The Park that Freddie first noticed "something special happening for us. You can talk about the hype and all that, but it fades into insignificance next to walking out onstage in front of 30,000 kids. The hype was never real, but that gig was." By the time Reading and Leeds came around, Vaccines fever had escalated into a full-blown pandemic.

"We'd been around the world in two weeks or something crazy like that, and we were all pretty burnt out," recalls Justin. "But to look out at those crowds and know that all those people had accepted us... I guess it just felt good to be so loved, you know?"

Luckily, the new single – the Albert Hammond ►

THE FIRST NME COVER

"We want indie back in the charts," they said, but who'd have guessed by the end of the year they'd have put it there? The band were weary of playing up to the hype, but it was clear there was something special afoot.

THE DEBUT

The moment which Justin describes as "the crucial point where people could either get on with celebrating us, or start ignoring us". Met with near-unanimous praise and a Number Four chart placing, it turned out to be the former.

T IN THE PARK

"T In The Park was just like, 'Fuck!'" says Justin. "There were so many people there." The band's set at the King Tut's Wah Wah Tent was one of the weekend's highlights,

and an early indication that things were going stratospheric.

READING AND LEEDS

Justin's throat problems would bring them crashing down to earth a few days later, but The Vaccines were on top of the world after their R&L performances this summer.

THE HEADLINE TOUR

Their biggest UK tour to date climaxes with two massive shows at Brixton next month. Should be a memorable victory lap after their mad year.



Jr-produced 'Tiger Blood' – was already in the can long before Justin's vocal collapse. Recorded at Albert's behest at his home studio in upstate New York, it's pretty much exactly what you'd expect a collaboration between The Vaccines and the coolest of all Strokes to be: a thrillingly propulsive rock'n'roll song that barely cracks two minutes, but you wish would last forever.

"I really just had the bare bones of the song, with no idea for where to take it," says Justin. "We wanted to work with someone creative, someone we really admired, and Albert basically became like a fifth member of the band when we were in his studio. It's hard to be objective about something you've created with people you spend all day, every day with, so it was good to have reassurance from someone you admire. And, obviously, with us being massive fans of The Strokes, it was pretty exciting."

Was it overwhelming to work so closely with someone you spent your teenage years idolising?

"Not at all. I'm not 15 anymore, you know? It was inspiring, though. Growing up and listening to The Strokes, Albert always seemed like a total rock star to me. But we were there to do a job. We didn't sit around swapping stories or asking him for advice. In the end, that song is just another step towards trying to push the band forward – whether it does that or not is open to debate, but we just wanted to try something different."

The band are playing it frustratingly coy about exactly where they want to push forward to; Justin reveals that they'll be playing new songs on the UK headline tour they embark on this week, and that he expects to record a new album "during the first half of next year", but they're vague when it comes to specifics. What Justin will say, however, is that in spite of how proud he is of the band's first album, "we know that it's not a masterpiece and that we have to get better. The songs are essentially nursery rhymes: three chords, one note being played over them, a straight drumbeat, no harmonies. It's pure

back-to-basics rock'n'roll, and the songs were good enough on their own that they didn't have to hide behind any silly production. So in that respect, they were the best 11 songs we had, and 'What Did You Expect From The Vaccines?' was as good as The Vaccines could possibly have been at that point. We've made a great first record, but it still sounds like a first record – we want to keep improving."

Following the set in Manchester – watched intently from side of stage by Alex Turner and Matt Helder – where they come within a ball-hair of thieving the Monkeys' thunder, the band head to Big Hands on Oxford Road for some post-show drinks. On a previous visit to the city, Pete ended up at a goth club, spinning '80s electro-pop underneath the pulsating red eyes of a giant fibreglass Satan. Tonight isn't quite so weird, despite Mumford & Sons' Winston Marshall randomly appearing from out of nowhere. There's just one thing left to ask Justin

WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM THEIR SECOND ALBUM?

Justin and Freddie on what's up their sleeves

NME: So, where are you at with the next album?

Justin: "Well, we want to write it first. We've got a couple of songs that we really like, and we're going to be playing them on the headline tour. We don't want to rush into it, I think we want to make a record that we're proud of, that's better than the first record. I'd say that definitely, in the first half of next year, we'll record the second record. The songs still sound youthful and direct and upbeat, but maybe with a little more swagger. The first record was knowingly dumb, and I think the second one will be less like that. Obviously the whole thing with the first record

was to strip back all the parts, so now we're looking at maybe building on the sound a little bit."

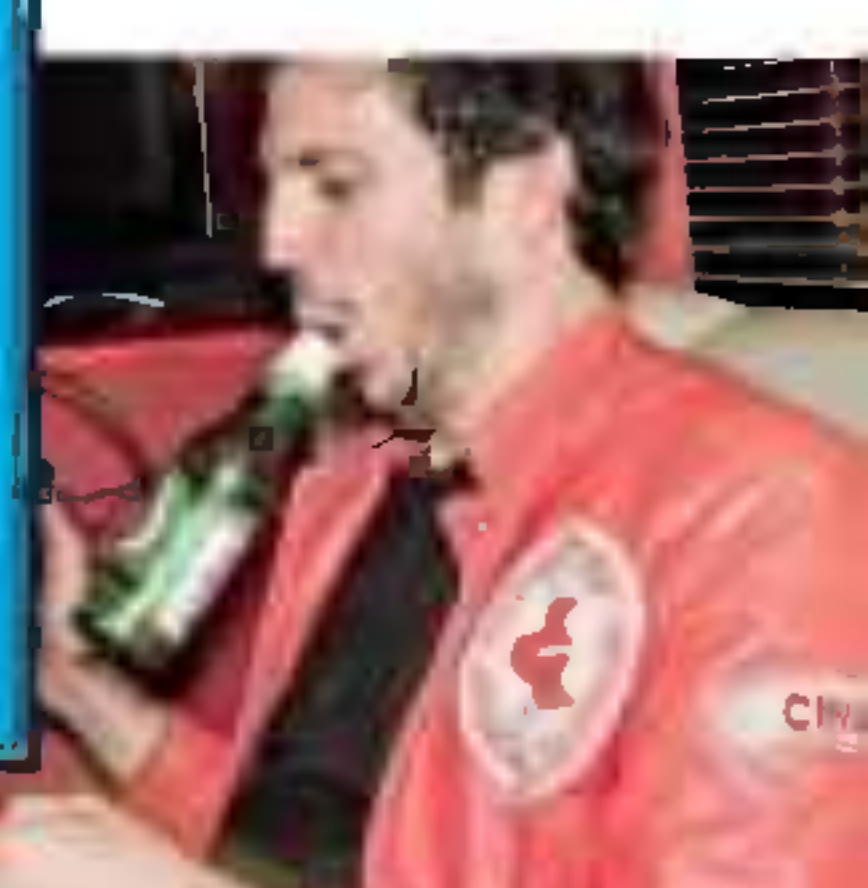
Freddie: "We've got a few new songs, I don't know how many we'll end up keeping, but there are a couple of them that I feel are paving the way for what's coming next. I don't think we want to go bigger for the sake of it, just because we're playing bigger venues. We definitely don't want to make the same record twice, but we don't want to consciously change our sound. The first record happened really organically, and I think the second one will, too. It just feels really exciting at the moment."

before we stagger back to our hotel, though: after living through all the lunacy and hyperbole of the last 12 months, does he feel as though The Vaccines have made a difference? Are they changing things in the way that the Monkeys and The Strokes before them managed to?

"We've had kids coming up to us telling us that we're the blueprint for their own bands, and that's a great thing," he says. "I feel that rock'n'roll is an artform in a way that electronic music just... isn't. I find that kind of music quite scientific, almost devoid of personality, in a way. Whereas there's nothing sexier than just getting up onstage and beating the shit out of your guitar, is there? Saying what you fucking think, doing what you fucking feel..."

And taking life one Bono moment at a time

NME EXTRA For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a pair of tickets to The Vaccines' winter tour and a limited edition Vaccines skateboard, plus video footage from backstage at The Oz, head to NME.COM/extra. See p8 for details



Clockwise from above: Arni gets his fix of NME; Pete sucks it and sees; Justin's healthy eating, messy living; Freddie shows off his rock profile; arriving in Manchester





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“HOW WOULD WE LIKE TO SNUFF IT? COMING OFF A ROLLER COASTER!”

Are they bigger than Arctic Monkeys? What's their favourite cartoon? Can pigs swim? **Kasabian's** Tom and Serge answer the burning questions sent in by readers and some famous faces

Talking nonsense: it is, truly, a dying rock'n'roll artform. Who cares about tempo changes, effects pedals and widdly solos when you can put the *real* issues of the day to bands? Praise be for Tom Meighan and Serge Pizzorno, then. You could lock this pair in a room with just a Dictaphone for company and return with reams of compelling dinosaur chat and breakdowns of their favourite cartoon characters.

Not that they don't come up with the hard info too – last week in *NME* the pair let it slip that, as well as playing a New Year's Eve show at London's O2 Arena this year, next summer they're likely to be heading up the capital's Hyde Park Calling.

“Wigston Swimming Pool!” Tom replies when asked what further venues the band would like to play next year. “We all used to go there as kids in Leicester. It's got loads of great childhood memories for me that place. Apart from the pool itself. It was dead fucking cold.”

Indeed. So with the Kasabian wagon clearly set to roll straight through to next year, with the help of questions from readers and musicians, there's lots to catch up on – from how they see themselves compared to Arctic Monkeys, to who has inspired them most, to the swimming abilities of farm animals.

I like both Kasabian and Arctic Monkeys, but, honestly, who would you say was the bigger band?

Sassan Tabbazian

Serge: “Well, I'm a lot taller than any of them.”

Tom: “Ha! Yeah, we're definitely taller than them.”

Serge: “They're not very tall, are they? Alex is not very tall.”

Tom: “Well, he's not you, is he?”



Gerard Way, My Chemical Romance

Tom: “Wow, what a good question. Velociraptor? It just came out of nowhere. Well, it just sounded good, that's all that bloody happened really, mate. It's just quite a comic book, kind of cartoon-ish name for an album, that's really all it is really, to be honest. He's a nice guy, though, Gerard's a nice guy... we've made up, we're friends now (*Kasabian had previously said MCR make ‘ventriloquists’ music* – Beef Ed).”

NME: Did you have any other working titles for the album?

Tom: “‘Sex After Eating’. Serge?”

Serge: “Nah, there weren't any. There actually genuinely weren't any, we just thought ‘That'll do’, it came quite quick.”

Tell us something odd and quite nasty about each other.

Christina Grönlund

Tom: “Serge has really big feet, basketball feet. Size 11's big, isn't it?”

Serge: “It's not like they're size 14s. But for someone in a band they're pretty big.”

Tom: “It's like the size of a ruler! You've got to say something bad about me now, go on!”

Serge: “Tom never stops whistling. It's like a disease. He whistles anything – tunes, bird noises. You just want to take a hand grenade to the head sometimes.”

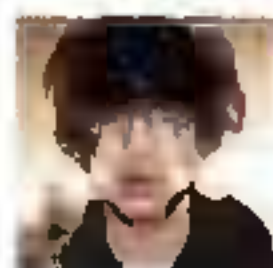
Would you rather lick a pavement or have boobs for feet?

Ciara Lynch

Tom: “Do you know what? I'd rather lick a pavement, to be honest. I've done that before when I was a kid. I think everyone has licked a pavement some time, haven't they?”

“SERGE HAS BIG FEET, LIKE RULERS”

Tom



Can pigs swim?

Faris Badwan, The Horrors

Serge: "I've got no idea. I know they're quite intelligent."

Tom: "No, they can't. What a weird question. Nah, yes they can. Have I ever seen a pig swim? I can draw one"

Which have been the most inspiring gigs you've ever been to?

Alice Simkins

Tom: "My mum in the kitchen making dinner."

Serge: "I saw Chris Cunningham last year and he was fucking unbelievable. It was just him, and musically and visually it blew my mind. Amy [Serge's girlfriend] was pregnant at the time and I was shitting it because the bass was on another level. It was mind-bending."



Where did you get your US flag shirt that you wore on

stage in Italy this summer? And will you wear it alongside Nick O'Malley for an NME photoshoot of the worst shirts ever?

Matt Helders, Arctic Monkeys

Tom: "US flag shirt? That I wore onstage? Oh! Moschino mate, I think it's Moschino. Nah, actually, it's the Union Jack shirt I wore, I think that's what Helders is on about... The one I wore for that fuckin' Live 8 gig... sorry, Live Earth gig. It's a Paul Smith, it's in my wardrobe and one day I'm gonna put it up in a Hard Rock Café."

All the best rock stars die young. Kasabian don't miss a trick, so in what circumstances are you gonna snuff it?

Mark Blake

Tom: "I can imagine me going on a fairground ride and coming off a roller coaster. It would be a pretty good way to go, your adrenaline is going and the next thing you know it's over. That'd be the way to go."

Serge: "I want to do something daft, like a toaster in the bath, or a knife in the toaster sort of thing."

Tom: "Or have a heart attack in the cinema. No-one would notice because they'd be laughing and eating popcorn. Unbelievable."



I used to DJ with all your old EPs and singles, will you sign my vinyl?

Nick Hodgson, Kaiser Chiefs

Serge: "Yeah, yeah. Sure."

Tom: "Of course mate! Love it, love it man! All that vinyl stuff we put out years ago is fun to collect. We did them in different colours and put one out in black and I think that's great man, fair play to Nick."

Tom, what are your five favourite cartoons?

Jill McMullen

Tom: "Denver, The Last Dinosaur, Captain Planet, Masters Of The Universe, The Real Ghostbusters, with Slimmer in it, and number five, ThunderCats. Easy!"



What do you do with your time off? I always end up a bit

like Alan Partridge, buying Ginsters from a corner shop...

Tom Clarke, The Enemy

Serge: "You know what, I don't think I've ever had any time off. I don't even know what that is, I'd rather just fuckin' crack on to be honest. I don't really stop working, I don't really stop, so I don't know what time off is."

Tom: "I socialise, really, catch up with people I've not seen for a while, see my family. Ginsters, man - I mean, Jesus! We used to buy them before we started touring years ago. It's the only thing you can really eat when you're on the road."

NME: So do you recognise Tom Clarke's description of himself being a bit like Alan Partridge?

Serge: "Well, yeah, well, no, not really. Well, him just sorta wandering around. He goes on fuckin' Global Rally and shit, though, doesn't he. I can imagine him in an E-Type Jag, riding around, fuckin' avin' it, that's how I see Tom."

Would you rather watch The Only Way Is Essex or Made In Chelsea?

James Ogram

Serge: "If I was forced, at gunpoint, I would go for the Essex one."

Tom: "No. None of them. They're all cunts. Seriously, none of them."



My sister and I both think Tom would look great with Alex

Turner's new quiff, and he'd look great with your hair. Would you ever consider swapping?

James & Allan, Glasvegas

Tom: "What, his teddy boy look? I've been doing the James Dean look lately, this old American kind of Hollywood look, the '40s/'50s Hollywood look. But I'm not too sure about the rockabilly look. It suits Alex, it looks great on Alex. But it's a bully's hair, you know what I mean?"

Serge: "Tom kinda had it a couple of years back. He looked amazing, he could get away with anything really. You could put him in a fuckin' bin liner and he would still look good."



For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win one of 10 pairs of tickets to Kasabian's New Year's Eve show at The O2 Arena in London, go to NME.COM/extra. See page 8 for more information

KASABIAN ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS



Tom wears a shirt for Britain...



Nick represents the whole fucking world

"TOM'D LOOK GOOD IN A BIN LINER"

Serge

Bad Vibrations

In 1966, Brian Wilson started on *The Beach Boys*' "teenage symphony to God", but the drug-fuelled sessions almost destroyed him and 'Smile' was scrapped. With the material finally released, **Mark Beaumont** relives the paranoia-drenched experience with him

The sandbox, Brian Wilson will talk about. "The sandbox inspired us to feel like we were on the beach. It was a clever idea but kinda strange and cumbersome sitting there with our feet in the sand writing songs." The fireman's hats, he'll cheerfully admit to. "I wanted the guys to get the feeling of being firemen in a fire. It's an odd thing to do, and a little embarrassing." The acid and speed, he'll hold up his still-quivering hand. "We were taking too much drugs and we paid the full price for taking too much drugs too."

The lighter side of The Beach Boys' experiences in 1966, he'll revisit with pleasure. But the dark side? The business meetings he held in his swimming pool? The belief that Phil Spector was out to get him? The song scrapped because he believed it might have caused house fires? The breakdowns, paranoia and manias that surrounded the recording of The Beach Boys' great lost masterpiece, he's less willing to discuss.

Forty-five years on from its shelving, and seven years after he exorcised its demons by re-recording it and performing it in full, Brian is still putting a brave face on 'Smile'. "I thought it was a step forward," he says in his childlike snap. "[But] I thought it was too far ahead of its time so we junked it for 40 years!"

This month, after the longest wait for a release in rock history, we get to 'officially' hear the follow-up to 1966's 'Pet Sounds'. And if that album is now regarded as a masterwork of '60s pop psychedelia – voted the best album ever made by *NME* in 1993 – 'The Smile Sessions', pieced together from the original session tapes which fans have been bootlegging for decades, will blow minds clear out the back of skulls. 'Smile' would have made The Beach Boys pioneers of the psychedelic generation, The Velvet Funderground. If it only hadn't almost destroyed its creators...

By 1966, Brian Wilson's problems were too clear to ignore. Having withdrawn from touring after a breakdown on a flight to Houston in 1964, he would stay in California writing songs while the band played gigs. He indulged in drug bouts that were valuable creatively (he wrote 'California Girls' on his first LSD trip) but detrimental to his mental state. Guitarist Al Jardine recalls an afternoon in which Brian drove him in circles around the William Morris Agency in L.A., refusing to let him out of the car unless Al promised to try acid.

"I asked him for a ride home," says Al, "and instead of taking me home he drove me around the block about 25 times! I was very concerned. I admonished him to

"WE PAID THE FULL PRICE FOR TAKING TOO MANY DRUGS"

BRIAN WILSON

stop [taking drugs], but he'd already gone beyond that point. He had developed a lifestyle that was more detached from the rest of us and started experimenting musically under the influence of those things. But the output was amazing."

Nay, game-changing. 'Pet Sounds' had advanced The Beach Boys' sun-bleached surfin' sound into grand new realms of orchestral wonder and psychedelia. But, for all its critical plaudits, it was considered a flop by their label Capitol, and many were pushing Brian to write more 'traditional' Beach Boys songs. He followed 'Pet Sounds' by spending several months and a then-record \$50,000 recording the "pocket symphony" 'Good

Vibrations' using session musicians The Wrecking Crew and a new modular technique of taping 90 hours of segments for the song at four different studios. Each studio had a different 'vibe' in Wilson's head – and he reduced it all to a three-minute pop song. The Beach Boys were glad of the success – Number One on both sides of the Atlantic – but wary of this eccentric new direction in which they were being taken.

"We were recording music that was spilling out of Brian's head at an incredible rate of speed," says Al. "We were basically hanging on by our coat-tails. [There were] two dynamic groups, one in the studio and one on tour. We were focusing a great deal of our energy on touring and Brian was feeling isolated from the band. He was getting really antsy and he had all of this music inside of him to express and of course he wanted to get it out. So he would surprise us... ambush us with stuff."

Ambush? On returning from a tour of the Far East and Europe, where 'Pet Sounds' was a huge hit, The Beach Boys must have felt like a musical Light Brigade. In their absence, Brian had hooked up with surrealist lyricist Van Dyke Parks and, using the cut-up recording style of 'Good Vibrations', completed much of an hour-long concept album – a "teenage symphony to God" as Brian dubbed it – in response to the recent British Invasion, about a historical and spiritual journey across America from Plymouth Rock to Hawaii.

"We tried to do justice to the mood of early Americana," says Brian. "New Americana and the Hawaiian islands. [The band] thought it was crazy music. I wanted to get a concept album across to people and The Beach Boys didn't like it."

In Al Jardine's mind, however, Brian is vastly overstating the anti-'Smile' feeling within the band. "We gathered around the control room at Columbia Studios or Western," he recalls. "He plays this wonderful stuff, ▶



it's different, it's completely transformative, it had a different breadth and depth from what we'd been doing. This is a whole different direction and the crux of it was new evolutionary songwriting and lyric writing as well. Van and Brian together created a new form of music. [The acid] was expressing itself through the music."

If the chop'n'change anti-structure of 'Smile', the barnyard and workshop interludes wherein the band were required to make animal noises and 'play' saws and hammers respectively, the funeral re-workings of 'You Are My Sunshine', the delicate, wintery sprawl of 'Surf's Up' or the Wild West imagery of the magnificent, multi-sectioned pop opera 'Heroes And Villains' surprised the band, they didn't know the half of it. Brian had taken to insisting on meetings being held in his swimming pool for fear of his house being bugged. He'd had a 'dope tent' erected in his house and a sandbox installed around his piano so as to feel the sand between his toes while he wrote. The sessions had taken a turn for the bizarre: Brian cancelled one full-orchestra session for the track 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)' when he refused to get out of his Rolls-Royce in the car park because of "bad vibes". He turned up at the next one with fireman hats for the entire orchestra and set a large bucket alight to create the mood for the song, then scrapped it when he heard of a spate of fires near the studio shortly after the session, leading him to believe the music was "too dangerous" to release.

"IT WAS ANOTHER LEVEL - IT'S A MASTERPIECE"

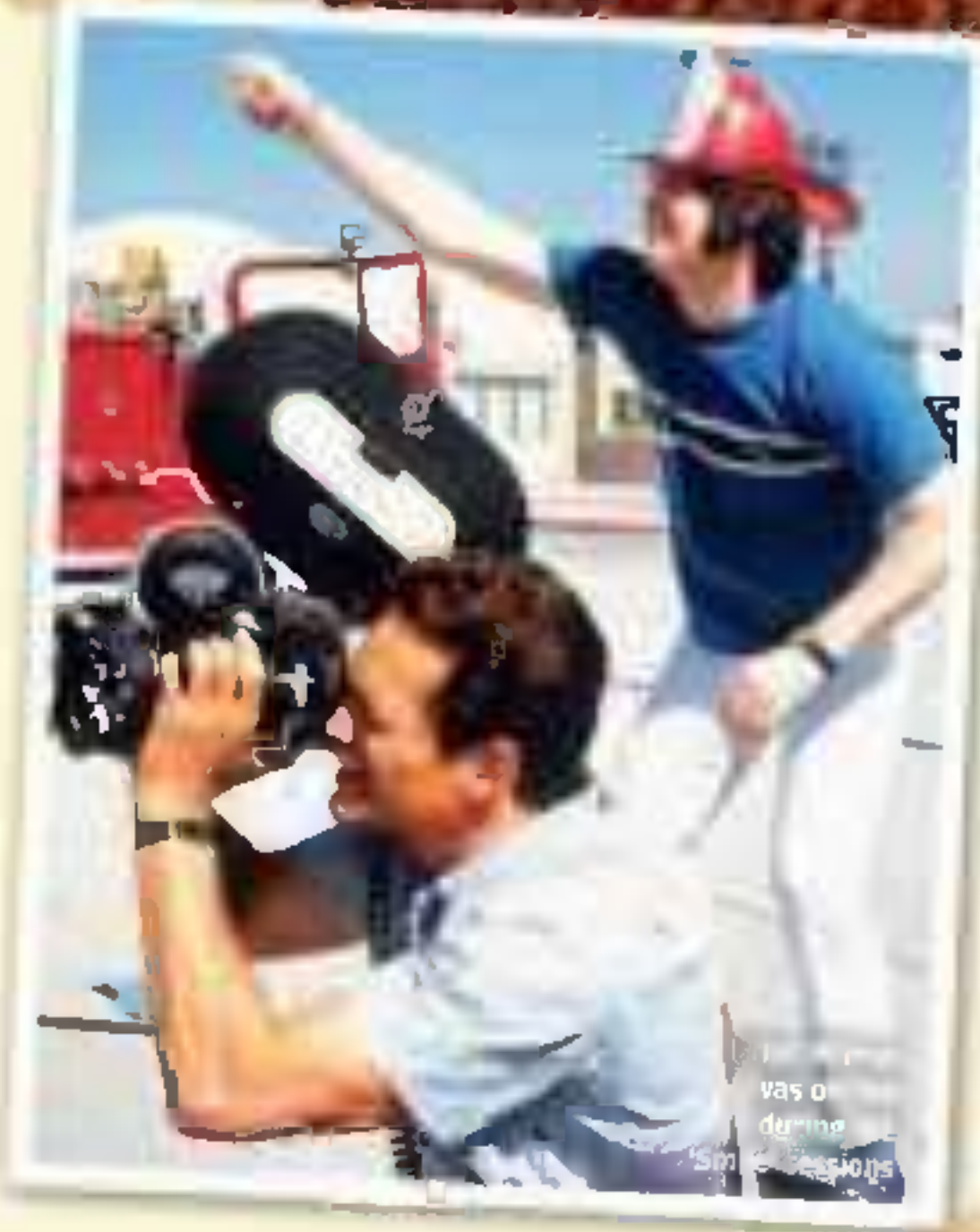
AL JARDINE

At another session he refused to let journalist Jules Siegel sit in as he thought Siegel's wife was a witch who was controlling his mind. On seeing the film *Seconds* starring Rock Hudson, he became convinced it told the story of his own life and had been made by the "mind gangster" Phil Spector specifically to fuck with his head. "It had a lot of rock'n'roll in it," Brian explains, "for which he was responsible."

Sessions to record The Beach Boys' vocals onto Brian's 'Smile' tracks quickly deteriorated. The band's usual lyricist Mike Love was reportedly unhappy with Van Dyke Parks' impenetrable poetry, calling it "acid alliteration". "Mike was a little bit envious of Van Dyke," claims Brian, though Al plays down the alleged row between Mike and Van Dyke over the unfathomable lyrics to 'Cabin Essence' that finally put the kibosh on the 'Smile' sessions: "I wouldn't call it a row. I'd call it an intellectual impasse."

Brian sensed the dissatisfaction with his new direction. Scrapping the sessions in 1967, some tracks - including 'Vege-Tables', 'Wonderful' and 'Wind Chimes' - were then re-recorded in a new studio at Brian's house, forming the quirky but relatively unambitious 'Smiley Smile' album ('Surf's Up' was also pieced together by Carl Wilson for the 1971 album of the same name), after which Brian shrank away from his own production genius, and The Beach Boys' stance atop the '60s cultural and artistic tsunami was over.

"He definitely withdrew from the structural recording we were doing up," says Al, although Brian himself admits no regret. "We weren't upset [at scrapping 'Smile'], he says. "We knew it was the right move."



was happening. It would've been another level of compositional and structural achievement for The Beach Boys. It's a masterpiece."

Music itself may be poorer for having been denied it in '67 but, my oh my, can we 'Smile' about it now...

NME
EXTRA

For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a new 'The Smile Sessions' boxset worth over £100, go to NME.COM/extra or see page 8 for more details

Check out Brian Wilson's ill-advised rap career on the NME Office Blog at NME.COM/blogs

The Beach Boys: (clockwise from bottom left) Carl Wilson, Mike Love, Dennis Wilson, Al Jardine, Bruce Johnston, Dennis Wilson



THE NME REVIEW

THE BEACH BOYS SMILE BROTHER



It was, in 1966, an entirely new genre: montage

pop. Constructed from hundreds of disparate takes - the special-edition box-set of 'The Smile Sessions' includes 36 separate segments recorded for 'Heroes And Villains' alone - 'Smile' is an ever-shifting acid vision of a record. Of its 20 tracks, only seven or eight could be considered 'songs' in the traditional sense. The rest are sonic mood pieces, avant garde constructs or 30-second throwaway links; the band make duck, sheep and chicken noises throughout 'Barnyard', march around the studio on the touching spiritual 'You're Welcome' and recreate a fire-in-progress on 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)', named after the animal said to have started the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The fans who've been constructing their own versions of 'Smile' from bootlegs of the sessions

over the past 45 years can't have envisioned the masterpiece Wilson originally intended: 'Smile' plays out like a billowing balloon of ideas, kept rooted by the book-ending guy ropes of 'Heroes And Villains' and 'Good Vibrations'.

If the album presaged eclectic masterpieces such as 'The White Album', stylistically it was a premonition of modern-day US alt.folk. Built around horn, viola, xylophone, banjo and harpsichord, telling the story of a journey through US geography and history, it set a blueprint of evocative atmospherics adhered to today by everyone from Sufjan Stevens to Fleet Foxes. And even if the passing listener finds the whole thing baffling, who wouldn't be entranced by the juxtaposition of haunting death-of-summer ode 'Surf's Up' with jaunty, health-obsessed pop wonder 'Vege-Tables'? Like the man Jardine says, a masterpiece. **Mark Beaumont**

9



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SID VICIOUS
SAN ANTONIO, 1978

I'M A
MESS

NME
Photo by Bob Gruen, from
his new book, Rock Seen



RAMONES
NEW YORK, 1975





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THE CLASH
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PIP NEWBY RECORD LABEL BOSS

Music has been Pip Newby's life for as long as he can remember. And his early love of Weezer, Blur, Daft Punk and the Beastie Boys inspired him to set up his own record label, Friends Vs Records, before he had even graduated from university.

But being self-employed means that he has to keep a closer eye on what he earns and spends each month than most people. "I've certainly spent a lot of money on music," says Pip. "That being said, I've got to eat and pay my rent, so I'm careful with everything I spend as much as possible."

And being a music fan can be an expensive hobby.

"My whole life is music, basically. Seeing bands is pretty much my main activity. I spend a lot of my money going out seeing shows."

Being such a committed music fan means that Pip needs to keep on top of his money more than most people would.

"Travel is a really big expense. I go to as many gigs as I can, which can mean travelling around a lot all over the country. So often it's about knowing whether I can go to that secret gig that I really, really want to go to. And, as any music

nut knows, your record collection can never quite be big enough!

"I'm always careful with my money, but it can still be really tough. I wouldn't

change my lifestyle for the world, but I could do with help managing my finances."

If Pip was a Lloyds TSB customer, Money Manager's easy-to-read charts and graphs could give him a clear view of his spending, giving him more free time to concentrate on the stuff that's really important to him.

"I WOULDN'T CHANGE MY LIFESTYLE FOR THE WORLD, BUT I COULD DO WITH HELP MANAGING MY FINANCES"

YOUR MONEY THE DREAM

**“KNOWING
WHAT IS
HAPPENING
WITH MY CASH
WOULD BE A
MASSIVE HELP”**

SAM WOLFSON WRITER

As a freelance writer for *NME*, 21-year-old Sam Wolfson has got the coolest part-time job out there. When he's not reviewing the latest new album releases he's interviewing Rihanna, and when he's not doing either of those things Sam is buzzing around Europe having a wild time with the likes of Bombay Bicycle Club.

Life's not one big party, though. Sam is also a student at Cambridge University, juggling his studies with his writing.

“I love live music, but Cambridge is not exactly known for it's vibrant music scene,” says Sam. “I'm always travelling around the country going to gigs and following my favourite bands. I'm just thankful when I can get into gigs for free!”

It's not just getting sweaty in the moshpit that costs Sam his cash, as he explains.

“I also spend a lot of money on all the brilliant new albums and DVDs out there, as well as going

to the pub with mates. Obviously my biggest expenses are my uni bill and my rent, but I've got textbooks to buy too. After all that I just hope I've left enough money back to eat.”

Sam's story is common. As every student knows, it's not easy to manage your money and make ends meet.

“I'm forever spending and I also have lots of little bits of income from my summer jobs, so it can be hard to keep a handle on what's coming and going out of my account and if I have enough to cover my bills. Knowing what is happening with my cash would be a massive help and give me one less thing to sort out.”

“I'm really lucky to be able to travel and be so closely involved with such an amazing music scene. If only I could manage my cash a bit better things would be great!”

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REVIEWS

CHILDISH GAMBINO, AEROPLANE

Edited by Emily Mackay



RIHANNA

TALK THAT TALK MERCURY/DEF JAM

The superstar singer plays it annoyingly safe – and the tantalising glimpses of what might have been only make it harder to handle



What's in a font? In terms of music, they can conjure up several different meanings, from something stalwart (The Rolling Stones, Ramones) to the ephemeral and futuristic (Daft Punk), and finally to the fussy and over focus-grouped (Cher Lloyd). On Rihanna's sixth album, she's returning to the spiky 'R' that crowned the cover of 2009's 'Rated R'. That album was a Year Zero for her as she emerged from the pupa of robo-pop star to free-flapping 'artiste'. It was the place in which personal crisis (her abuse at the hands of, and public break-up with, Chris Brown) drove her sound and image

in the best, most creative ways possible. The futuristic, dubstep-shaded sounds on that album were mirrored by lyrics that layered meaning and allusions to create a cohesive piece of musical pop-art that pricked at your consciousness from several directions.

And then there was 'Rude Boy'. The biggest hit from an under-selling album, its fun bump'n'grind jerk-pop seemed to dictate where she would go next. So it was – last year's 'Loud' marked a turning point and the lasciviousness was upped up a notch, but at the same time you felt the shutters coming down artistically. It also coincided with her ubiquity. Suddenly she was everywhere, like the cast of *The Only Way Is*

Essex-and-Kim Kardashian 'everywhere'. There she was, popping up on David Guetta's album, getting Ofcom and Matt Cardle into a tizzy on *The X Factor*, trilling the chorus of 'All Of The Lights' on Kanye West's 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy', organising Katy Perry's Cirque du Soleil hen do, appearing on 'Pink Friday', having a 'get off my laaaahnd' moment with an Irish farmer. She was even, in London, spotted on the bloody tube on the way to one of her own concerts at The O2.

So perhaps it's no big revelation that 'Talk That Talk's' stylish 'R' doesn't indicate a return to 'Rated R's' boundary-pushing, but instead leaves us with the impression Rihanna has spread herself so thinly that she doesn't have time to record a cohesive album. Her usually perfect hit-rate of sonic surprises is disappointingly low due, one suspects, to half the album having been monopolised by chart-botherers Dr Luke and Stargate. 'TTT' is filled with tinny-sounding '90s Europop, the kind of stuff that hangs around the playlists of commercial radio for months. And when it's not playing it safe, the album re-treads old ground. 'Roc Me Out' is a 'Rude Boy' re-tool from the vocal delivery to her "Come on boy..." line, closer 'Farewell' echoes 'Fire Bomb', while re-teaming with Jay-Z on the title track is a gamble that doesn't pay off. The pace may echo 'Umbrella', but there's precious little of that song's spark. The Jigga's rap feels like it was dashed off in a few minutes between Def Jam conference calls ("Oh, she really gotta pee", he raps at one point. I mean, do we really want to hear about Beyoncé's bladder control during pregnancy? Noooo).

Sure, there are pleasant moments – 'Drunk On Love' is basically The xx's 'Intro' with Rihanna's voice over the top, and 'Where Have You Been' is a dance-pop gem complete with 'Bonkers'-style wibbles. But there are only two truly brilliant songs. Despite some cringey lyrics ("Suck my cockiness/Lick my persuasion"), 'Cockiness (Love It)' is genuine elastic thrill, twisting into all sorts of jaw-dropping musical shapes. Produced by Bangladesh, it sounds like a sped-up nervous breakdown, while the elliptical 'Red Lipstick', a collaboration with Chas & Status, sounds like something which could have graced the Katy B album. That the latter is relegated to the deluxe edition smacks of someone's loss of nerve. You can only imagine what happened to the rumoured Rusko collaboration.

It would have been unpredictable and intense if Rihanna had followed these musical leads, but as it stands we get a so-so album which suggests it may be time for Ms Fenty to take a holiday. **Priya Elan**

5

DOWNLOAD: 'Where Have You Been', 'Red Lipstick', 'Cockiness (I Love It)'

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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PEAKING LIGHTS

936 DOMINO



Much as music writers throw drug references around like icing sugar, let us be clear that most of us are far, far too chickenshit to ever try anything like peyote, ayahuasca or any other 'tribal ritual' drug. Anyway, no need when you can listen to this Wisconsin duo instead. From here it all looks so insignificant spaced-out synthy ambience leads into a psychojourney through shuffling, organic beats, cosmically detached vocals, dubbish grooves, faint touches of psychobilly-twangin' guitar and boney rattles. It's like Dead Can Dance with less goth and more groove – and definitely worth an initiation. **Emily Mackay**

DOWNLOAD: 'Birds Of Paradise (Dub Version)'

6

APPARAT ORGAN QUARTET

POLYFONIA CRUNCHY FROG



Jóhann Jóhannsson enjoys a time traveller's life. He released an album earlier this year on which he paid moving tribute to Durham's now-diminished mining community with the help of a local brass band and some old Victorian hymns. Then he beamed himself through time and space to record these nine brutalist cosmic rock tracks on a bunch of phasing analogue synths and other steely sounding machinery with three fellow keyboard fanatics (and a drummer). The result is a clean, efficient, piston-pumping, Teutonic sound of robots doing serious damage to bands with beards and banjos – icy and brilliantly foreboding future-rock. **Chris Parkin**

DOWNLOAD: 'Söngur Geimunglingsins'

7

MINT JULEP

SAVE YOUR SEASON VILLAGE GREEN



A "husband/wife dream-pop duo from Portland, Oregon". An instrumental opener called 'Chasing The Wind Catching The Shadows'. A first line that goes "I lie awake, dreaming of landscapes and the rain" ('Aviary'). Yeah, I know, there is a hell of a lot of that kind of thing about at the moment, but the simple fact is Mint Julep are just great at doing it. Songs like 'Cherry Radio' and 'Stay' are melodically sophisticated, synthetically textured and actually dreamy. It's unquestionably a beautiful (debut) album, and one that may be well-timed, what with so many folk falling for that College feat Electric Youth tune from *Drive*, which could easily sit on here. **Hamish MacBain**

DOWNLOAD: 'Stay'

8

ATLAS SOUND

PARALLAX 4AD



Bradford Cox decelerates sonically here, but lyrically he remains sublime. 'Parallax' appears to deal with the continuing conflict of a Christian upbringing with more sacrilegious life experiences. Opener 'The Shakes' battles with the artist's increasing fame while 'Praying Man' cautiously states faith in something higher. Contrastingly, however, 'My Angel Is Broken' sees Cox revert, a tumbling paradox that seems to question his own convictions. Each LP since Deerhunter's debut – both individual and collective – has retreated further from that record's naked aggression, and this is another step towards Bradford finding self-contentment. **Simon Jay Catling**

DOWNLOAD: 'My Angel Is Broken'

8

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



JOHN McDONNELL

"This week I've been listening to nothing but Sade-sampling rap songs in my damp, freezing flat while hysterically weeping. The highlight of the week was getting a haircut."



EMILY MACKAY

"The combination of a seemingly never-ending cold and the excitement of the new Maccabees album in my inbox nearly caused complete respiratory failure. Worth it, though."



CHRIS PARKIN

"Watching *In The Night Garden* while listening to David Lynch's 'Crazy Clown Time' took me to a place I've not been since watching *Stars In Their Eyes* on mushrooms."

DRAKE

TAKE CARE YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/ISLAND

R&B star's much-anticipated second album is a belter – but the feeling lingers that he's capable of much more



In indie circles, R&B has long been stigmatised – sickly sweet vocals and dry humping inanimate objects not being in keeping with the ethos of the asymmetrically

fringed masses. Drake has completely transcended any such snobbery with a delicate, mellifluous sound and unashamedly candid, emotive lyrics.

The half-Jewish Canadian – who played a wheelchair-bound student in TV teen drama *Degrassi: The Next Generation* until 2009 – is clearly not your typical rap/R&B star. On his US chart-topping debut, last year's 'Thank Me Later', he unleashed a lifetime's worth of angst, bemoaning his lovelorn mental state.

'Take Care', his highly anticipated follow-up, begins in a more assertive mood, with the rapper declaring that he "killed everybody in the game last year" on opener 'Over My Dead Body'. Success can breed arrogance but the platinum-selling artist's braggadocio is suffused with melancholia. "I might be too strung out on compliments/Overdosed on confidence" he laments on lolling lead single 'Headlines'.

His lingua franca of heartbreak soon bleeds through on 'Marvin's Room' as he tries to win over a girl he knows is out of reach. "Talk to me please, don't have much to believe in/Need you right now, are you down to listen to me?" he sings down the phone, sounding totally crestfallen.

The yearning, sun-kissed title track, produced by Jamie xx, sees guest Rihanna in the role of an almost motherly figure: "If you let me in, here's what I'll do: I'll take care of you".

The despondency is obviously contagious, infecting his Young Money label boss Lil Wayne on 'The Real Her' as he bemoans: "Cos to her I'm just a rapper and soon she'll have met another" (a line earnestly cribbed from 'Miss Me' on his protégé's debut). The song's second guest, Andre 3000, also gets in on the emo action, declaring: "Sittin' here, sad as hell, listening to Adele, I feel you, baby".

Just as on 'Thank Me Later', 'Take Care' is heavy with the beats of long-term collaborator Noah '40' Shebib. But although the sparse arrangements are a perfect match for Drake's often lethargic mood, when the hip-hop bent of Just Blaze's production on 'Lord Knows' kicks in it hits like an elbow to the solar plexus, every euphoric gospel choir burst inducing a tremor of emotion through the body. In light of this, it somehow feels a shame Drake didn't experiment more with unfamiliar sounds. Such is the esteem that he's now held in, the refrain of "I'm just sayin' you could do better" on 'Marvin's Room' is one that lingers. Yet considering 'Take Care' is an affecting masterpiece easily on par with his debut, there could be no greater accolade for the genius of this man. **John McDonnell**

DOWNLOAD: 'Lord Knows', 'Take Care', 'Headlines'

8





CHILDISH GAMBINO

CAMP GLASSNOTE

US comedian Donald Glover has seriously good rhymes



Donald Glover – aka Childish Gambino – is well aware that he conforms to no-one's idea of hip-hop 'realness'. But then, as he points out, "All the real niggas I know are

either crazy or dead", so it's hardly his loss. Raised a Jehovah's Witness in a small Georgia suburb, Glover graduated from NYU and wound up working in television, landing a writing gig on *30 Rock* and an acting one on *Community*. Last year, The Internet got *this* close to having him cast as the new Spider-Man, and next year he'll be seen in the new Muppets movie. Hardly the stuff great hip-hop is made of, right?

Um, wrong. For starters, Glover is no dilettante: 'Camp' is his fourth full-length under his *nom de rap* (taken from a Wu-Tang Clan name generator), and the best to date. For another thing, while he's a gifted comedian, his focus is never really on being funny – just witty, heartfelt, honest and occasionally uproarious.

He's been variously tagged as backpack and nerdcore, and you can kind of understand why: on 'LES', Glover skewers his own hipsterhood by describing a bathroom clench with a girl who's "Got ironic tattoos on her back/That ain't ironic bitch, I love Rugrats", before decreeing on 'Hold You Down' that "you're not not-racist 'cos The Wire's in your Netflix queue". Pop-cultural references like that abound – his indie namechecks range from Mumford & Sons to Radiohead to Sufjan Stevens – but there's also an emotional heart to songs like 'Outside' and the epic, seven-minute (and largely spoken-word) 'That Power' that can't be expressed in air-quotes.

"Why does every black actor gotta rap some?" Glover wonders on 'Bonfire', before concluding, "I don't know, all I know is I'm the best one". And that's true, even if it's not much of a claim. I'm about to make a bigger one on his behalf, though: fuck Tyler's empty posturing, this is the hip-hop album of the year.

Barry Nicolson

8

DOWNLOAD: 'That Power', 'Outside', 'Bonfire'

AEROPLANE

IN FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT ESKIMO



Having made his name with SoundCloud mixes – and remixes for artists including Friendly Fires – Aeroplane faced a dilemma when it came to his first mix

album: how do you entice 40,000 people who have been downloading your stuff for free to shell out for a CD? His solution was to assemble exclusive tracks from artists he's tipped, add a new production of his and put them together in a mix that reeks of Balearic beaches and suntan lotion. The result is a brilliant album of off-kilter house, funk and exotic pop that should entice even disco skinflints. **Ben Cardew**

DOWNLOAD: 'Herr Styler - Zero Ghosts Out The Door'

7

THE DØ

BOTH WAYS OPEN JAWS

VILLAGE GREEN



It's a commonly held truth that when it comes to decent European pop, Scandinavia is where it's at and France is where it definitely is not. However, on

their second album, French/Finnish duo The Dø are helping l'Hexagone conquer the Vikings. 'Both Ways Open Jaws' is tribal, prickly and wickedly playful, courtesy of singer Olivia Merilahti's loopy vocal. The apocalyptic jump-rope skits of 'Gonna Be Sick' and 'Slippery Slope' are highlights of a chaotic record that makes such a racket, you'll be able to hear Sweden quaking in its boots. **Laura Snapes**

DOWNLOAD: 'Slippery Slope'

8

THE RIDER

What we're reading and watching this week



Art

NME/Sonic

Editions prints

Stuck for Christmas presents? NME and Sonic Editions have just printed a fresh selection of our iconic shots – including a cracking picture of Julian Casablancas and Jarvis Cocker. It's the only way you'll fit all of Arcade Fire under your tree.



Book

Gig Posters: Rock Show Art Of The 21st Century Vol 2

For over a decade, *gigposters.com* has been showcasing exquisite gig artwork designed by independent artists. In this compendium, you can read interviews with some of the designers, and pull out 101 perforated and ready-to-frame posters.



Film

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1

While not as incendiary as the last OST, you can't argue with The Joy Formidable, Theophilus London and Iron & Wine soundtracking the penultimate vampire sexual frustration-fest.

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's
FRASER McALPINE



WOOWOOS

FIZZY LETTUCE MOSHI MOSHI

It's inconceivable that a band with the sense to call themselves WooWoos don't know that 'Fizzy Lettuce' is a silly title for a brooding pop song. Especially when they refuse to explain how this salad became carbonated in the first place. Then again, they do also sing about dessert, and I could swear someone mentions rollmops in the chorus, so there's a lesson for us all here: never write while peckish.

JESSIE WARE

STRANGEST FEELING PMR RECORDS

Meanwhile, Jessie, who can't tell if she's hungry or sad, has embarked on a ramshackle adventure a woozy world away from her previous SBTRKT productions. 'Strangest Feeling' is what happens when you take a sparkling Katy B pop song and throw it in a haunted moat. The twinkly bits are washed off by a murk of clicks and moans, while the bass becomes progressively more waterlogged.

BRETON

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR FAT CAT

There's a bit halfway through this relentless face-prod of a song where a spiralling harp attempts to curl around the unforgiving rhythm, to make everything less austere. It's a gesture as beautifully doomed as putting a tulip on a pneumatic drill. Forget Hard-Fi trying to capture the sounds of the street, this is the sound breezeblocks would make if they decided to form a band, instead of a wall.

CHARLI XCX

NUCLEAR SEASONS THIS IS MUSIC

"Huh! Breezeblocks... You think THAT'S clever," sing the Geiger counters on the shelf, "wait until you hear OUR band. We've got that Charli XCX in, and she's singing in a pouty voice about surviving decay, yeah? And we swoosh around doomily in the background. Throw in some melodious hiccups in the chorus and we're off to *Top Of The Pops!*" They were ever so sad when I told them the show had been cancelled.

EMA

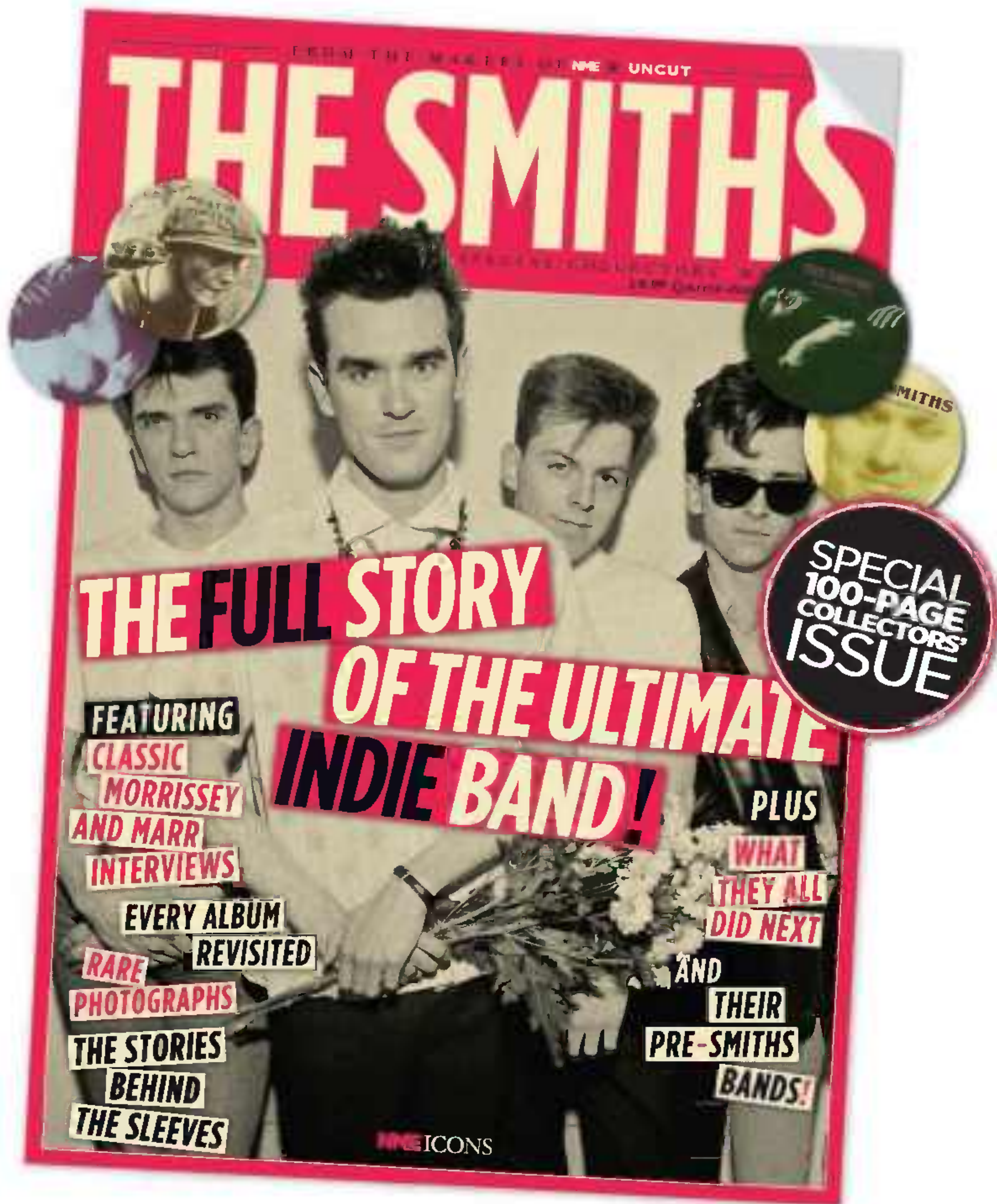
MARKED SOUTERRAIN TRANSMISSIONS

Remember the twinkly bits from Jessie Ware's song? That's the stuff EMA makes her music out of: the scrape of raw knuckle across guitar string, an ominous rumble, a worried child's internal monologue, the wheezing of an asthmatic angel, leaning on the organ in a church, these are her fragments. How she manages to sew them all into a recognisable quilt by the end of proceedings is anyone's guess.

BOS ANGELES

DAYS OF YOUTH ROUNDTABLE

There's no time for sonic stitch-work for the Bos boys. Their mission is simpler: 1) Make a buckety surf noise. 2) Repeat it. 3) Sing, dance, whoop, shimmy. 4) Stop, a mere two minutes and 16 seconds later. 5) Go about their business. Which just leaves you and me to complete item 6) Repeat until snoozy.



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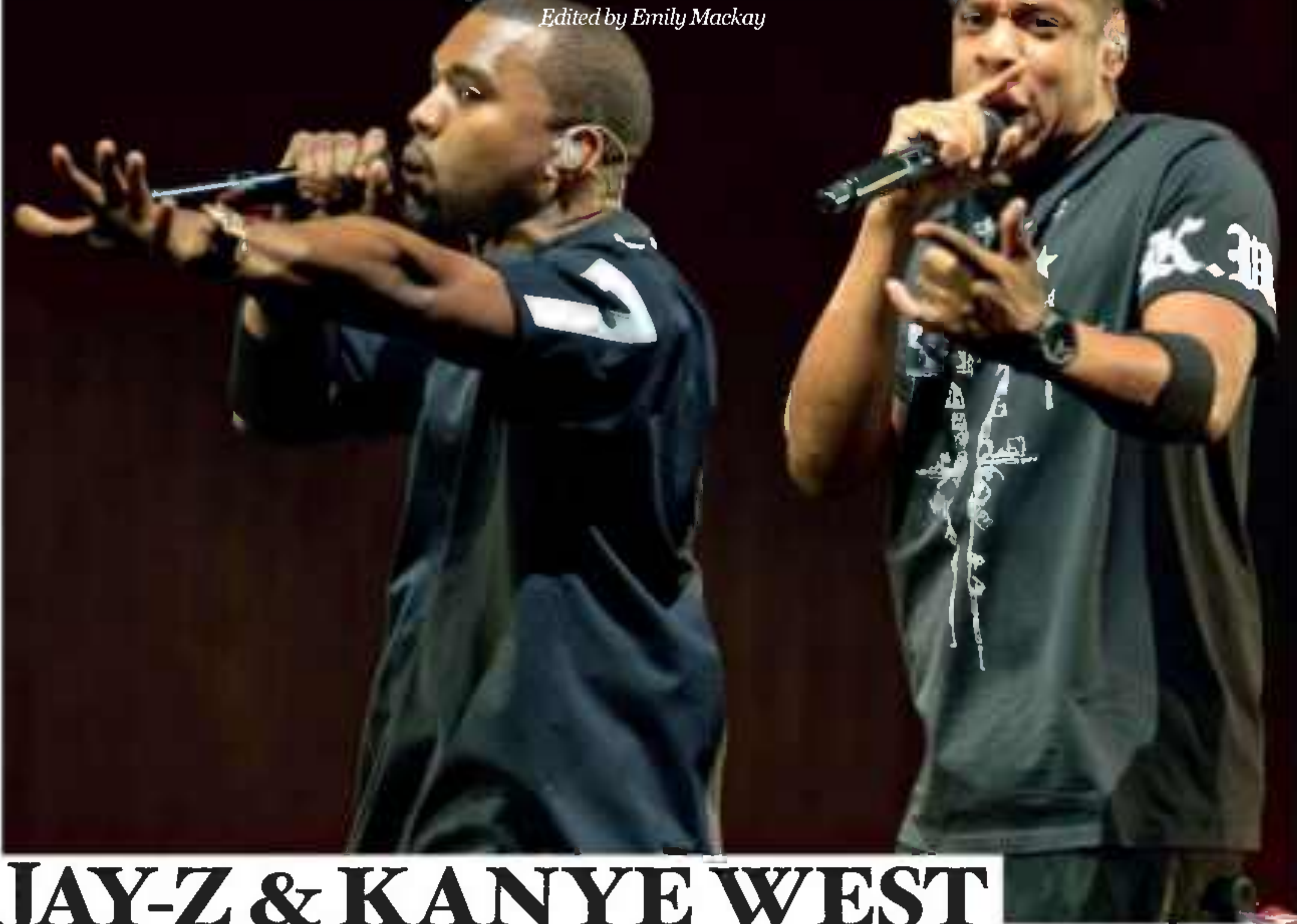


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LIVE

HURTS, AZEALIA BANKS, ST VINCENT

Edited by Emily Mackay

JAY-Z & KANYE WEST

IZOD CENTER, NEW JERSEY SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5

If this was meant to be megastars just lazily cashing in, it seems no-one told the megastars

The problem with supergroups is that they are, almost by definition, a breeding ground for complacency. When you've realised virtually all of your musical goals and become used to fame and adulation, summoning the will to earn it all again is something that few are willing or able to do. Given that both Kanye West and Jay-Z are pretty much the biggest music stars in the world right now, 'Watch The Throne' is a project that should be mired in malaise – but watching them perform together, it becomes apparent that the only thing capable of pushing each of them to greater heights is the other.

Right from the off, the scene is set for gladiatorial rap battle. As opener

'HAM' resounds around the arena, the Jigga is at one end of the venue, Yeezy at the other, and they both ascend high above the crowd on gigantic cube-shaped podiums as they spit the track's boastful verses at each other. Once they unite on the same stage, this titanic face-off is given a suitably dramatic backdrop, a giant American flag is unfurled, giant pyrotechnic effects are triggered and, somewhat bizarrely, images of cheetahs killing their prey in the Serengeti are projected on screens. It's staggeringly pompous stuff, but when coupled with the commanding bombast of tracks like 'Otis' and 'Welcome To The Jungle' it creates an exhilarating marriage of immodesty.

As well as performing a further smattering of 'Watch The Throne'

cuts, the duo take turns at dazzling the crowd with their solo material. It's a tag-team combo that just seems to get better and better as the show goes on; Jay dishes out classics like 'Where I'm From' and throws down the gauntlet by

Kanye can't compete with Jay's rhymes, but his physical energy is just as powerful

demonstrating his untouchable vocal dexterity and dominance. Then Kanye returns, and though he can't quite compete with the ferocity of Jay's rhymes, his physical energy during 'Jesus Walks' is just as powerful. Every

time one of them brings something new to the gig, the other responds in kind, and the one-upmanship continues until the excitement level inside the building is barely legal.

By the time they get to the business end of their two-hour plus set, it's impossible to know who has the upper hand anymore, but judging by the way they dust each other off during 'Niggas In Paris,' it looks like they're happy to call their Herculean head-to-head a draw. For the 10,000 flabbergasted fans looking on, however, 'Watch The Throne' is an emphatic win. **Hardeep Phull**



HURTS

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON, LONDON
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Adam and Theo are huge stars, the show's a big success – but didn't this used to be more FUN?

Twenty-one months ago, Hurts played their debut UK gig, in tiny St Philip's Church in Salford, attended by a smattering of curious journoes and industry folk. Now look at them, playing the final show of the 'Happiness' world tour at a sold-out O2 Brixton Academy. In the intervening time the duo have grown from opinion-dividing curios into one of our biggest and best-loved bands. They've sold a million singles and a shade off a million albums, filled arenas everywhere from Iceland to Estonia, and been impersonated badly on endless dodgy foreign versions of *The X Factor*.

Tonight is the classic triumphant homecoming. The crowd's ear-bleeding adulation never lets up, but is there a sense – and I'm just playing devil's advocate here – in which Hurts were actually *better* as no-hopers, a major label folly destined for glorious failure? Originally the Hurts live experience consisted of two blokes, a seven-foot-tall opera singer named Richard, and a backing tape. Now there are 11 people onstage, including two dancers. It's all a bit slick. Yes, even for Hurts. And... hang on, where's the opera singer? Poor massive Richard is gone!

Theo sings all the parts himself (including Richard's former showpiece, 'Verona'). I picture Richard at home alone, weeping into his cummerbund to

the strains of 'Nessun Dorma'. In the end, having a stony-faced and mostly extraneous opera singer onstage was one of the ludicrous touches that made Hurts unique and lovable. By ditching Richard they are approximately 12 per cent less ridiculous, and that's a shame.

Highlights? Well, obviously 'Stay' and closer 'Better Than Love'. Almost two years of touring have whittled them into surging pop Exocets, obliterating all possible opposition or reservation. Low point? Kylie showing up to duet on 'Devotion' and her own 'Confide In Me'. Of course, she gets a hurricane-strength welcome, but her appeal remains mysterious. She's a blank, a hamster squeak, a whiff of Febreze.

When it's all over there's no farewell speech, no recognition that this gig is in any way special. Perhaps they're saving themselves for the aftershow (the next day Theo tweets about "the greatest night of our lives... a collapsing Dutch supermodel and about 1,000 bottles of tequila... the perfect crescendo"). This makes an enjoyable and efficient full stop at the end of 'Happiness', but no more than that. **Luke Lewis**

Customers can get Priority Tickets to the O2 Academy Brixton up to 48 hours before general release. Just register at o2.co.uk/priority where Priority Tickets are going. Then to go to the venue.



TWIN SISTER

DEAF INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

So, how was your weekend?" Andrea Estella smiles to the subdued crowd. "Thanks for coming out and being so sweet. And so sleepy." Whether it's due to the approach of midnight or to the hypnotic qualities present in Twin Sister's loose, hazy pop, tonight often feels like a waking dream, with a mute-tongued Manchester pinned down by what unfolds before us. After support Holiday Shores endure something of a 'mare, Estella and her band could justifiably wonder whether this will be a night to forget, as the light-footed funk of 'Stop' and 'Bad Street' somehow fail to register. While this tour is ostensibly to promote new album 'In Heaven', there's plenty of more familiar material in the set – but even this seems to slip by almost unnoticed, with 'Lady Daydream' and 'Ginger' being greeted with only reverent applause.

All the while, though, a potent magic has been bubbling quietly away, and it's only when the band step down from the stage, leaving Estella and guitarist Eric Cardona alone and exposed, that it truly takes hold. Shorn of its motorised beats and muggy synths, 'Kimmi In A Rice Field' reveals a spectral beauty, and Estella and Cardona's voices – sometimes overly similar on record – work together to weave a subtle spell upon the transfixed room.

After that, the group reconvene for 'Daniel' and 'All Around And Away We Go', but we're too woozy to dance. It may be late, but this is a dream that will last long into the waking hours. **Neil Condon**

DOG IS DEAD

COCKPIT, LEEDS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Looking dapper in cable-knit and buttoned-up shirts, the five members of Dog Is Dead display their earnest and learned harmonies, bobbing in perfect synchronisation like a human wave of politely restrained testosterone.

Robert Milton, taking the lead on vocal duties, possesses a textbook boy-band smile: he's a sly wink and a bare chest away from a pop career but, luckily, the rest of the band reign in the schmaltz, diverting enough of the crowd's attention with the lilting guitar lines of their Vampire Weekend-meet-Mumford & Sons student anthems.

As bass player Trev cleans the dust from the low-arched ceiling with his curly mane, the rest of the band alternate between thrusting wildly (loud bits), bobbing excitedly (poppy bits), and swaying in shut-eyed reverence (harmonies). Always synchronised. Always in time. Dog Is Dead are note-perfect and never miss a beat, but just a few songs in they have already become predictable, crowd-rousing-by-numbers, hands in the air for the 'old ones'. They are at their best in 'River Jordan', when they hint at post-rock leanings; only then do they seem more concerned with playing than performing, as guitar lines noodle amid the cacophony and around the vocals, bolstering them, rather than providing a soulless backdrop. 'Glockenspiel Song', though, is clearly the track that fills the room and flogs the tickets – but here's hoping they don't have to get every new track played on *Skins* in order to keep up the momentum. **Hayley Avron**

WHAT'S ON YOUR RIDER?



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- Fruit juices
- Soft drinks (including root beer)
- Sandwich materials (vegan and meats)
- Six scratch cards
- Surprise us!

MARCUS FOSTER

MOJO, LIVERPOOL TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Acoustic singer-songwriters tend to be of similar stock these days. Frank Turner, Newton Faulkner, Ed Sheeran, Sam Duckworth – in fact, put together any two names and you'll find some chump with a guitar, an earnest song or two, and the ambition to be voice of their generation. So it's almost a relief when we hear Marcus Foster's weathered, rasping voice work its way around the room tonight. The young Communion signing looks no older than 25, but we suspect he wishes he was in his 50s – his world-weary lyrics belie his young face to the point that you'd think this was a convincing pastiche of his influences. That's not to discredit his songwriting, however. It is succinct, flamboyant and heartbreaking in the right places, something his peers often lack, and he's more captivating live than on record. 'Old Birch Tree' is quite a dull piece of MOR on debut LP 'Nameless Path', but here it's delivered with soul. A version of the album's standout song, 'I Was Broken', is both devastating and uplifting in equal measure, and a beautiful cover of John Martyn's 'Couldn't Love You More' shows he can hold a candle to his predecessors, a homage not lost on this audience. If he's a voice of any generation, it's probably that of the Radio 2 listening mum, but that's no bad thing. **Mike Doherty**

AZEALIA BANKS

HOXTON SQUARE BAR & KITCHEN, LONDON
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Hip-hop's sparsely-dressed new star has a potty mouth – and definitely more than one great song

"I was about to give more of a show than I came over here for, knowwhatI'msayin'?" smirks Azealia Banks, clutching her red-and-white striped bustier to her chest. It's teatime on Sunday, and Azealia's clothes appear to be falling off, shaken loose by the aggressive bounce with which she's stomping any sense of Sabbath restfulness out of the first of two short, sharp showcases.

Industry and hipsters are out in force at both to check out the latest gutter-mouthed goddess. 'Tazed' is not, however, a word in Azealia's inventively disgusting vocabulary. Strolling on in mohair coat and tiny denim shorts, she couldn't be more at ease. She starts with a fierce cappella, her DJ, Cosmo, scratching a belligerent beat out behind her as she tosses out warnings about the dire possible consequences of fucking with her. "Try something slick and get your dick backed up/You can either bit the door in peace or watch your meat bit the floor in pieces/Believe this" she assures on the beguilingly nonchalant, Peter Bjorn And John-sampling 'The Chills'. And, yes, the vicarious thrill of a pretty young woman talking abject, violent filth is nothing new, but Azealia's wit, her energy, her rawness

make it fresh. Though after the bitchy, crunky 'Barbie Shit', she throws in a truncated cover of 'Valerie' as a nod to London's own late dirty diva, it's clear that rapping is where Azealia's talents and heart lie, and you can't imagine her, like Nicki Minaj, getting sidetracked into balladry. The spirit of Lil' Kim sleazes through the moody, menacing 'Runnin', her collaboration with Lunice, blended with an omnivorous musical

taste and an eye to the dancefloor. "This is the jam that probably brought y'all here tonight," she says as she brings the evening showcase to a jumping end. "So take your shirt off, pull your dick out, do whatever you need to do..." Everyone else manages to keep their clothes on but completely loses their shit as the maddeningly aggressive synth of '212' begins to wind up, and as Azealia starts howling "THIS SHIT BEEN MINE, MINE" the whole room bounces with her.

She chucks in the chorus of The Prodigy's 'Firestarter', taking things up to breaking point, and then, that's it. She's gone, leaving them wanting more. Let's just hope the fickle affections of the internet stick with her long enough to realise that she's more than just that one song. *Emily Mackay*

VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Demisha Anderson, London

"Excuse my French, but it was fucking amazing. I wanna be her best friend."

NME: Does she have any other songs that stand up to '212'?

"Well, I knew a few others. 'Barbie Shit' is amazing, people will be cutting shapes to that!"



ST VINCENT

WEBSTER HALL, NEW YORK
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Annie Clark's twisted tales of identity and inadequacy surf a wave of adulation

"My face is drawn on with this Number 2 pencil", sings Annie Clark in the final song of her set, 'Your Lips Are Red', as she steps in front of the microphone and teeters on the edge of the stage. A soundman rushes to roll out cable. Clark sways for a moment in the strobe, then flips over onto the ready arms of the audience who carry her, one leg raised, out into the crowd.

It's a moment of release from Clark's usual poise and comes hard earned. St Vincent's twisted pop songs expose the madness that goes on behind a mask drawn on in pencil – from failing at motherhood in 'Cruel' to lying to keep the peace in

'Cheerleader' and 'Surgeon'. Her characters stress about their inadequacy. As she tells Webster Hall,

the video for 'Cruel' shows Clark being kidnapped by a motherless family who bury her alive after they realise she can't cook, clean or care for them properly.

If household cleanliness might be a problem, Clark makes up for it in control: both creative control and the kind of self-control she exudes onstage, though her chilly demeanour tonight could also be nerves. There is a moment before 'Save Me From What I Want' where the spotlight dances across Clark's face as she takes in the packed 1,400-capacity venue and her mouth makes a small 'o'. David Byrne, with

whom she is collaborating on an as-yet-undisclosed new project, watches from the wings. Cameras follow Clark everywhere, streaming the performance live for MTV in a mark of mainstream acceptance if ever there was one.

Creative control has served Clark well on three solo albums since she stopped touring with The Polyphonic Spree and Sufjan Stevens last decade. But it wasn't until this year's 'Strange Mercy', an album that stretches ideas about identity and anxiety over woodwind arrangements and nifty angular riffs, that she started attracting the attention she deserves.

She exudes self-control, although her chilliness could also be nerves

At Webster Hall, Clark plays puppets with her audience. She warms with a story about drinking tequila and running through a cemetery on Halloween before launching into 'Neutered Fruit', then squashes a heckler who says she can't shred with the words: "What is this, a live Twitter feed?" A growling cover of The Pop Group's 'She Is Beyond Good And Evil' speaks for itself. Tonight it's all in the eyes, wide and unblinking, until the sudden stagedive. But don't be fooled: Clark's studied femininity is a ruse for something much, much bolder. *Hazel Sheffield*



PIETER NVAN HATTEN, RICHARD JOHNSON

On The Road With **KATY B**

Plane destruction, naked shower videos and 'arse midgets' – they might sound smooth, but 'sexy witch' Katy B and her crew are rock 'n' roll on tour



to , Mord , 4pm
Katy reads the lowreen volume, unaware of the it was the clown wot dun it



lights off: Mord's resident clown wot dun it
Katy's tour bus

DOMED, BRIGHTON MONDAY, OCTOBER 31

Katy B is at the controls of a helicopter on the final leg of her UK tour, but things are rapidly getting out of hand.

'KRAKK!' The chopper smashes into the tourbus window, and Rinse mastermind Geeneus leans in to inspect the damage.

"That's a hundred quid you owe me," the 'On A Mission' co-writer and producer tells Katy, flinging a protective arm round her shoulder while *NME* secretly gives thanks it wasn't our face getting mashed up beneath the blades.

The helicopters aren't life-sized just yet, but Katy's second headline tour is undeniably grand in scale – the south London star and crew have been living for the past few weeks in a double-decker tourbus with its own games room and library.

Tonight it rolls into Brighton. It's Halloween, and we're following Katy to the dressing room where we're told she and her bandmates will be kitted out for the occasion. Our leading lady, it transpires, is plumping for the 'sexy witch' look: no green facepaint or crooked noses, just a cutesy, conical hat and little black number which Geeneus says he can "see her bum crease" in.

The atmosphere backstage at the penultimate show of

Katy's tour is fun-bordering-raucous, and Gee can usually be found somewhere near the silliness' epicentre. In between aiming his (miraculously recovered) helicopter at various people's heads, the

boss man cracks wise about everything from ITV's weekend programming schedule to Brixton, whose resident hipsters he says are oblivious to what really goes on ("It's true! In Brixton McDonald's there's two queues; the ghetto queue and the trendy queue").

Even Gee's court-holding, however, is upstaged by Caelan, the superfly, three-year-old son of Katy's hype man, Tippa. Flipping through his daddy's iPod with terrifying ease, the little fella finds the artists he wants by looking at the record sleeves (he's too young to read the names) and gives word-perfect renditions of Tinie Tempah and J Cole, among others – though his old man snatches the gadget away before he can hit 'play' on Bob The Builder.

Katy gets finished with her make-up and nips in the room next door to get changed.

"Are you havin' a number two in there?" shouts Tippa, tittering. "Cos it's getting a bit whiffy in the dressing room." "Yeah – it's coming out your top lip," Katy shoots back, and Tippa is forced to accept defeat as the room falls about laughing.

Half an hour later the potty-mouthed hype man is clad in ludicrous werewolf mask, as the band step out to the strains of Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' and

Brighton goes properly nuts. It's an awesome show which sees Katy backed by brass, girl singers and the almighty clatter of Junior on drums. Our main gal, meanwhile, doesn't put a foot wrong all

night, bopping her way through the likes of 'Broken Record', 'Katy On A Mission' and 'Perfect Stranger' with ease.

PAVILIONS, PLYMOUTH WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2

On Wednesday *NME* rejoins Katy in rain-lashed Plymouth, which brings big wheels and even bigger helicopters as Gee looks to replace his by-now-written-off old model. We're driven to a grim-looking timber yard where Katy poses between the bags of gravel, and a model aeroplane shop lurks improbably in the wet. As if that wasn't glamorous enough, Gee is having a ding-dong on the phone with someone from the venue about merchandising rights. He hangs up, and buys himself a brand new helicopter. To call it bigger than the last one would be something of an understatement: you could ask a shih tzu to pilot the ruddy thing and still have leg room in back.

With that we're off to sample the cultural delights of Plymouth: principally a fuck-off Ferris wheel overlooking the seafront. It has a pretty gangsta-looking VIP carriage with blacked-out windows and complimentary bottles of bubbly, but we make do with a regular booth and drink in the views with Katy and her make-up artist, Vicky. Gee is still fuming after his phone call and declines to join us ("I've spent all my life living on the top of council blocks, what do I wanna go on that fucking thing for?").

On the way back to the venue, Tippa winds up Katy about the fact she's been offered a personal trainer. Taking the piss is pretty much the glue that holds this lot together, it would seem, whether it's backing singer and token northerner Rihanna (real name, honest) being greeted with a sarcastic "Fy oop!" when

she walks in the room, or Tippa being taunted with cameraphone videos that capture him taking a soapy flannel to his, er, intimate areas on the tourbus shower.

Back at the venue, Katy regales us with tales of her merch stall guys, who are all from Essex and are literally mental. One of them, she says, got a tattoo of a third nipple done while out on the road. Another's uncle claims to have copyright on the word 'reem' (er, ©?). A third used to work in a sex shop and donated an 'arse midget' to the touring company.

"What's an arse midget?" we ask gingerly, sort-of-but-not-really-wanting to know the answer. Katy leads us to front of stage, where a black gnome leers at us from underneath an obscenely protruding hat. "He's sort of become our mascot," Katy beams proudly.

Tonight's show is a bit slow to warm up, but by the time Katy drops an '80s/'90s throwback double-whammy in 'Good Life' and Robin S' 'Show Me Love', the joint is officially jumping. From Katy's exhortations to treat the performance as a 'rave' instead of a concert to the hokey attempts at flogging T-shirts onstage, there's the understanding that this is pop music by, for and of the people – no need for S&M dancers or posing as Christ in a wheelchair here, thanks, just a straight-up display of great music, locally sourced.

"Katy's come a very long way in a very short time," says Tippa at the show's finale, urging on the crowd. "And there's not many ordinary girls coming out here and mashin' up the place like this!" He takes some stick for that speech after the show ("bruv, it's not the fucking *X Factor*"), but secretly they must know he's hit the nail on the head. As the crew washes down the taste of success with Nando's and bubbly, *NME* gets ready to take our leave: now where's that chopper when you need it? *Alex Denney*

VIEW FROM THE CREW



Tim, merch
seller

**Why do you have
a tattoo of
a third nipple?**

"We did a gig in
Newcastle and
I know a few good
tattoo artists there.
I thought, 'Why not
show my respect to
the people with a
third nipple?' I've
never looked back."

**Would you consider
investing in
a fourth?**

"I'd need to do my
research, see where
a fourth nipple's
usually located."

RICHARD JOHNSON



Brighton, Monday, 5.30pm

Peekaboo! And you all thought it was Mick Hucknall hiding under there, didn't you? Below, Tippa bogs up his skeleton crew



Brighton, Monday, 10pm

Katy rocks the 'sexy witch' look with a tiny hat that resembles a goth's upturned ice cream cone



Plymouth, Wednesday, 9.30pm

The hat's been nabbed, but Katy thinks she knows the culprit...it's that arse midget! Below, Katy gets wheely high



Plymouth, Wednesday, 11pm
Katy's fans wait outside in the rain for an autograph. Shoes optional, apparently

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ON REPEAT

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



FACTORY FLOOR

Two Different Ways

It's Factory Floor's first release for New York label DFA – and oh my, did they choose a corker to get things started. 'Two Different Ways' is a less feral beast than some of the London trio's previous cuts but, with Nik Colk's icy vocals, neuron-frying synths and nods to Chicago house played out over nearly 10 minutes of noisy bliss, it's a behemoth of a track nonetheless.

Ben Hewitt, writer

SEYE ADELEKAN

White Noise

Recognise that surname? Seye is Gbenga from Metronomy's bro and, going by his debut songs, wicked rhythmic ways run in the family. Here, Seye picks up where Katy B's 'On A Mission' left off, crooning saucily about putting "my cigarette inside your paper cup" on a night out over frenzied tribal beats, like Fela Kuti for the Rinse generation.

Laura Snapes, Assistant Reviews Editor

DRAKE FT RIHANNA

Take Care

Producer Jamie xx completes the dream team on this epic anthem of emo-hop taken from Drake's delayed 'Take Care' album. Like the negative to 'What's My Name's' full-colour Polaroid, Drake twists hip-hop's macho bravado 360 degrees on this chilling, housey ode to love and togetherness.

Priya Elan, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

GROSS MAGIC

Yesterdays

Brighton boy Sam McGarrigle nails a perfect sweet spot between grungy grind and woozy, Ariel Pink-style psych-pop. This extract from a split seven-inch with Novella, The History Of Apple Pie and Echo Lake on Marshall Teller Records is his gnarliest work yet, reminiscent of early, scary Mercury Rev.

Emily Mackay, Reviews Editor

ROSTAM

Don't Let It Get To You

Rostam's latest solo foray – away from Vampire Weekend – mines a little Latin

American flavour and nicks the chugging drumbeat from Paul Simon's 'The Obvious Child'. Without Ezra yelping over the top, the whole thing's prettier, calmer and more blurred-around-the-edges. Less an ice-cold horchata, more a warming winter tumbler of mulled wine.

Luke Lewis, Editor, NME.COM

THE BIG PINK

Hit The Ground (Superman)

Early signs for the new album from the now-clean-living Big Pink are promising. Following 'Stay Gold', this second excerpt hits with almost as many soaring, big beat melodies – who needs a drug intake so high that sniffer dogs keel over when they walk within 50 yards of the band members, eh?

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

HOWLER

Back Of Your Neck

These Minneapolis teens better have broad shoulders, given they've already been charged with kick-starting that long-mooted rock'n'roll revival next year. Thankfully, this turbo-charged rocket from their forthcoming debut LP sounds so bloody massive it's already pretty inevitable that they'll pull it off.

Rick Martin, News Editor

LAURA MARLING

I Was An Eagle

Of all the new material currently getting road tested at Laura's live dates, this missive raises our hopes highest for the fourth album – a beautiful yet barbed dispatch to a former flame that insists "I will not be a victim of romance/ I will not be a victim of circumstance".

Tim Chester, Deputy Editor, NME.COM



PULLED APART BY HORSES VENOM

As an opening salvo from the Leeds noise mongers' new LP 'Tough Love', 'VENOM' certainly feels like a statement of intent. Surprisingly raw and outstandingly heavy, it builds to a crushing metal outro that nods to vintage Motörhead. PABH are back with a mighty wallop.

Tom Goodwyn, writer

TRACK
OF
THE
WEEK

THE MACCABEES

Pelican

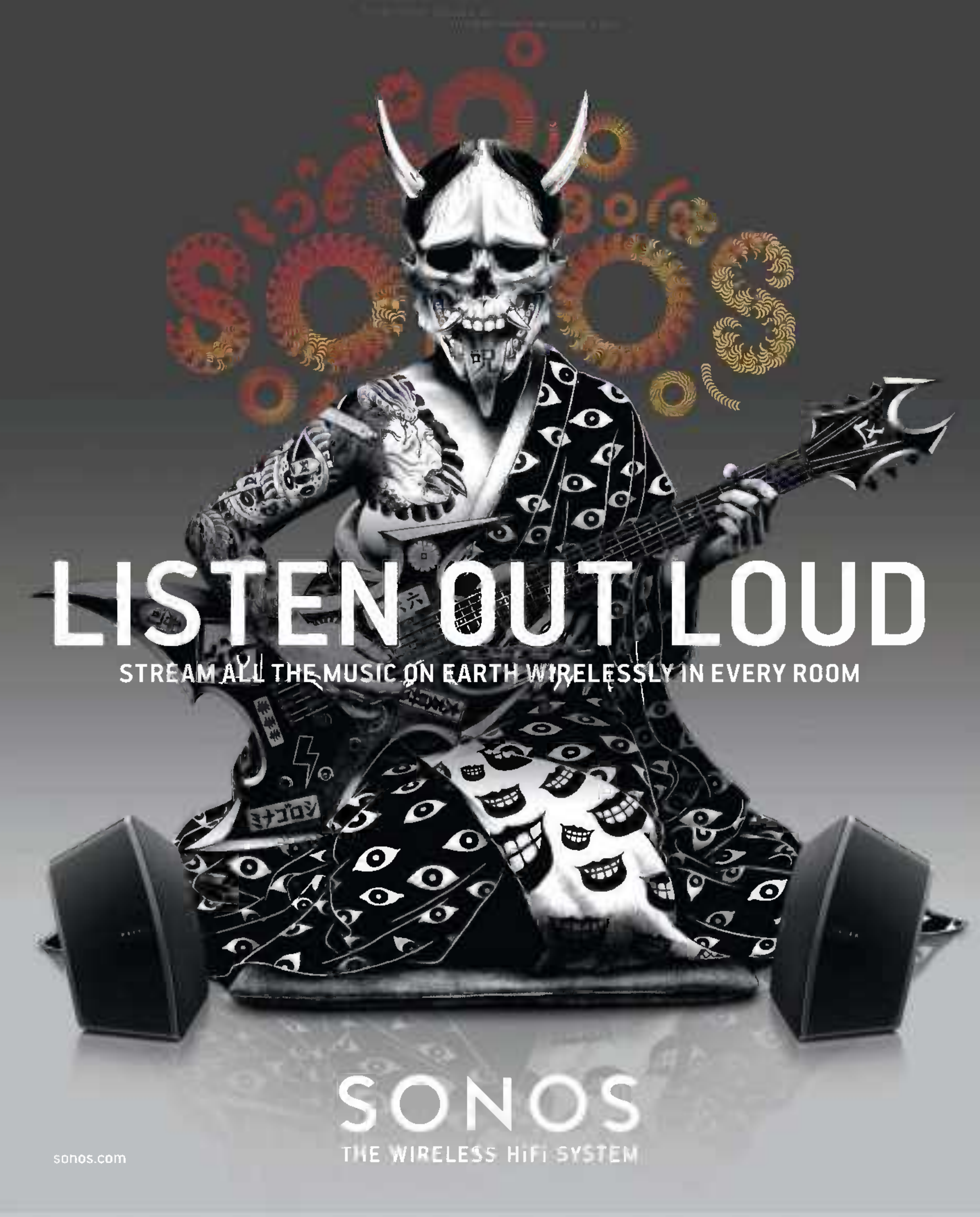
In their most recent *NME* interview, The Maccabees enthused that playing the sort of massive gigs that Arctic Monkeys and Kasabian do would be something that they'd be "totally up for". This is a good thing because – and make no mistake about this whatsoever – 2012 is going to be their year, and the point at which they step assuredly into The Big League.

In the same way that, prior to second album 'Wall Of Arms', 'No Kind Words' indicated that here was a cult concern making a giant leap into the realm of Bands To Be Taken Seriously, as a first taste of forthcoming third album 'Given To The Wild',

Yes, it sounds suited to larger venues, but it's also a natural step forward

'Pelican' marks a step into the Take Very, Very Seriously stage. It is the sound, unmistakably, of The Maccabees we all know and love, but it's more strident, adventurous and instinctive. Nimble guitar lines, svelte, lissom rhythms, a tear-beckoning, beautiful vocal... so many bands in recent times have attempted to retool themselves for arenas by turning up the reverb and borrowing a Bono chorus. One of the most exciting things about 'Pelican' is that, yes, it sounds suited to larger rooms, but it's also like a completely natural step forward. It sounds like the best young guitar band in Britain at the absolute peak of their powers. 2012 is going to be emotional.

Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor



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UPFRONT

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

Edited by Rick Martin



The likely lads:
John, left, and Carl



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"A LOT OF BRIDGES HAVE BEEN BUILT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS"

MAIN EVENT

Reunited on the European film festival circuit, The Libs' Carl Barât and John Hassall reveal that reconvening with Pete is on the cards – though not for a few years

To know your future, you must first

understand your past, as the old saying goes. And lord, are Carl Barât and John Hassall being given plenty of opportunities to understand theirs this week. *NME* has joined the pair in Denmark, in the midst of a jaunt around the continent's film festivals to promote *There Are No Innocent Bystanders*, Roger Sargent's documentary on The Libs' fractious 2010 reunion shows. The film is given a big screening at the Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival tonight (November 9). Carl insists they're here simply to "hold Roger's hand", but when we sit down afterwards with the trio, it's clear that watching it on the big screen has reopened a few old wounds. We pick Carl up on one of the threads in the film, that he'd feel "incomplete" if he didn't make another Libs album.

"One day, I'd love to do that," he muses – despite telling us just six months ago he'd "never again" talk to the press about The Libs. "In the film I say I'd feel incomplete not to go down that road further. But also I want to do something important to me now. Right now we're not ready. We can't just book another tour without having written an album, and there's no conceivable space to write an album for the next couple of years. I speak to [Pete] quite a bit. It's grand. We don't have to mention The Libertines. It was definitely the end of the chapter."

"One has to choose the right time to do stuff," says John. "Last year was the right time to do that and you can't force these things. It has to be natural." But it's a 'when', not an 'if'? Carl: "Well maybe, if that's the way you think about

it, but bear in mind it won't be for the next couple of years. There are no plans and we're all very busy. The official line is 'no'. Not next year and probably not the year after."

Roger, an *NME* photography legend and a firm Libertines 'insider', is rather more candid about the possibility. "A lot of bridges have been built in the last six months or so. Peter and Carl are talking, they've not made plans but compared to how it was when the film was finished – it was very difficult, they had quite a big falling out and it really did look like the absolute end – it's my opinion that they're not just gonna come back and play gigs, they'll make a record in 18 months to two years. They can't just do it tomorrow, though, because every member of the band is doing something else."

"There's been no pressure," says Carl. "It echoes throughout the band. We've spent that much time together that whenever we are together it's like nothing's ever really changed."

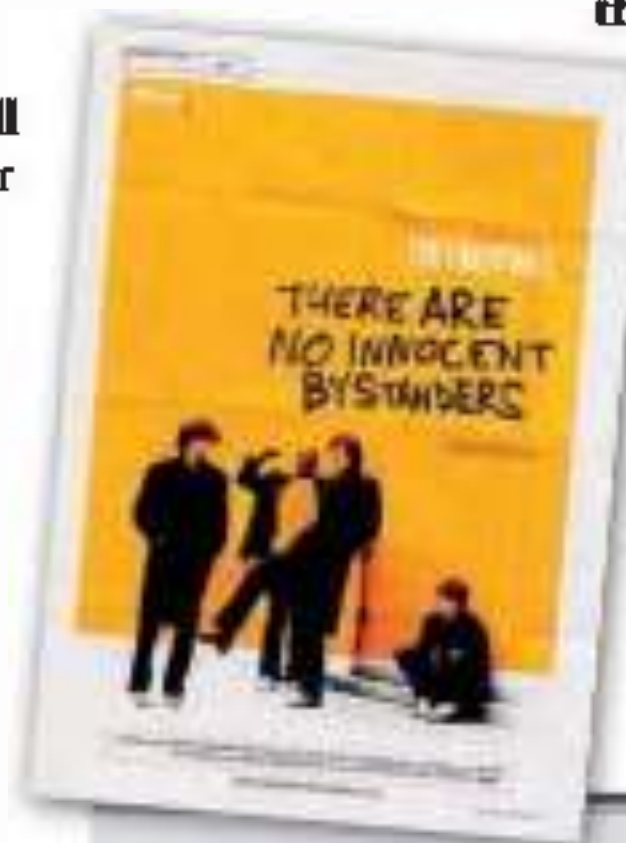
Carl and John reunited yesterday in Copenhagen – a short drive from John's home in Aarhus, which Carl claims is situated "in the middle of Aarstreet" – and, almost instantly, they found the old Libs chaos on their heels. At last night's screening the soundtrack was out of sync and Carl had to stop Roger finding and punching the projectionist. "My inner Ghandi came out. It all blacked out and there was a big round of applause. I think people thought it'd finished in typical Libertines-esque confusion. It was about five or 10 minutes in."

NME joins them for John's guided tour of Copenhagen, taking in the surprisingly little Little Mermaid statue (Carl: "I was expecting

tits like *The Darkness* would ride in on") and a boat trip around the city's waterways. At tonight's Q&A session at the festival, Carl admits that, of the three weeks *The Libertines* had booked to rehearse for Reading and Leeds, they only managed four hours.

"The reason it's meant a lot to a lot of people is because those problems and fuck-ups are so naked and exposed," says Carl. "It was the people's band, it was everyone's band as much as ours. I'd like people to take that romance with them."

And their plans for the 10th anniversary of 'Up The Bracket' next year? A reissue perhaps? Carl: "Is that a good thing to do? That'd just piss everyone off, wouldn't it? A different box. I don't see any point to that." John has a better idea. "We could go to the pub together and celebrate it?"



"FILMING WITH PETE WAS HARROWING"

*Roger and Carl remember the making of *There Are No Innocent Bystanders**

Roger: "As much as possible, I felt I blended in to the room. I think it would've hampered the rehearsals if there'd been a crew in there."

"Filming the interview with Peter was one of the most harrowing experiences of my life because he got very, very upset. We caught him on the middle of a tour in

January this year and he'd obviously been going over things a lot since [Reading and Leeds]. He was on a knife-edge, emotionally. There was a hell of a lot I couldn't use from the interview."

Carl: "It's a bit cringe for me... I get stressed watching it. But it's great to document the coming together of all the years of supposition

about how big The Libertines were to people. No-one really knew because we never got to do that gig. So to get the opportunity to actually prove it right, it wasn't some kind of mythology – or if it was it doesn't matter. Everybody was there and everyone was together and everyone wanted to tear it up..."

BE A ROCKSTAR

Two Door Cinema Club formed by accident when Kevin was trying to snog Alex and Sam's mates. Four years later, they're one of the UK's most successful new bands. Want to know more about their crazy lifestyle?

Paco Rabanne Black XS has the answer

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paco rabanne

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NME AWARDS SHOWS ANNOUNCED



JUSTICE: "WE HAVE TO DELIVER"

The Gallic duo announce five NME Awards Shows and get cracking on their third album

We're working around the clock, 24-7 at the moment," beams a wide-eyed Xavier de Rosnay, speaking about Justice's preparations for their NME Awards Shows next year. "We want to make sure it looks amazing." The Parisian pair are spending the next month beaver away in their garage working on the lighting for the shows, which will see them play five gigs across the UK [see column right for full details]. And they've got good reason for putting the extra effort in, too – Xavier explains they feel more pressure playing in our capital than almost

anywhere else in the world. "When we play London or Paris, it's like a football team playing a home game," he explains. "You can almost feel the expectation from the crowd. We have to deliver."

One thing we weren't expecting was news of a third album, given that their second – last month's 'Audio, Video, Disco' – was almost half a decade in the making. But it seems that they're not planning on such a laboured process next time around. "We were thinking just yesterday how cool it'd be to start making some new music already," Xavier reveals. "It's funny, we spent a fair amount of time making 'Audio...' – but we're not sick of being in studios. Yet."

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Those NME Awards Shows in full

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O2 Academy Glasgow (12)
Manchester Academy (13)

CHARLI XCX

Lexington (8)

SLOW CLUB

Heaven (9)

PURE LOVE

Bush Hall (14)

BAND OF SKULLS

XOVO (15)

TUNE-YARDS

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (15)

TOTALLY ENORMOUS

EXTINCT

DINOSAURS

Heaven (16)

CLOUD CONTROL

Electric Ballroom (17)

THE BIG PINK,

The Garage (20)

KURT VILE,

Koko (21)

ALABAMA SHAKES

Boston Arms (22)

OH LAND

Heaven (23)

LITTLE DRAGON

Forum (24)

MARINA & THE DIAMONDS

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (26)

THE DRUMS

Roundhouse (27)

All dates London unless otherwise stated

Tickets go on sale this Wednesday (Nov 16) at 9am

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THE BIG PINK'S WILD NIGHTS WITH HOT CHOCOLATE

Bed by midnight, mugs of cocoa... What's up with Milo and Robbie?

Nightcaps of hot chocolate? We were aware The Big Pink were knocking partying on the head – they said as much on these very pages earlier this month – but little did we know they were taking things this far. "Robbie's been spending hours and days in singing lessons nurturing his voice," explains Milo. "He doesn't smoke, he doesn't do drugs." Even a night out in London for their NME Awards Show next February can't tempt the boys back to their debauched ways, either. Says Milo: "We like to be in bed with a cup of cocoa by midnight these days." According to Milo, they also got "in a bit of a rut" singing the heartbroken missives of 'A Brief History Of Love', so they're looking forward to a change in that department too.

"Everything was written around splitting up with girls, and we didn't think about playing the songs for two years afterwards," he says. "This time we kept that in mind, so we tried to keep everything as optimistic as possible." And, hints Milo, "there may even be a viola" involved onstage – oooh, hark at them...



MARINA: "THE SHOW'S GOING TO BE GRAND!"

New personae, theatrics and even costume changes coming this way...

"I've only done one rehearsal so far, and it only lasted two hours," laughs Marina guiltily, as she confesses she hasn't quite got round to knocking her new batch of songs into stage-ready shape just yet. "But by February, I'll definitely be ready." That's heartening news: not only is the singer's second album 'Electra Heart' scheduled to drop around then, but she'll also be showcasing the bulk of her new material to the masses for the first time at her NME Awards Show.

So far, Marina's revelations about 'Electra Heart' have hinted at a muddle of different scenarios and personae without fully divulging how such lofty, character-based ambitions will be

knitted together. For now, she simply says it will all "become a lot clearer" very soon – but she does promise that the theatrics will be incorporated into her gigs. "It's all going to run through the live shows hugely, because a lot of the project is so visual and film-based. It's going to be much grander than before," she says. "I'm sure I can manage a costume change or two." Frankly, we'd expect nothing less.



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ART ATTACK!

Thought MGMT couldn't get any weirder? As a bizarre evening at New York's Guggenheim proves, it seems the madness is only just beginning

FRONT ROW

What links MGMT with a 51-year-old Italian artist whose first ever solo show in 1989 was just a closed gallery door bearing a sign saying 'be right back'? Maurizio Cattelan, the artist in question, has made a career out of defying expectations. For one show, he stole another artist's exhibition with the intention of passing it off as his own, for another he persuaded a gallery owner to dress in a bunny-eared penis suit. For a month.

Someone obviously saw the connection between the artist with an eye for satire and indie's most wilfully difficult duo, because tonight (November 11)

MGMT play the second of two shows at New York's Guggenheim Museum to celebrate Cattelan's last exhibition before retirement. There may be mannequins of horses, dinosaur skeletons and a boy hanging from a noose dotted around the room, but MGMT's 45 minute prog jam is comfortably the most out-there thing NME witness tonight.

Heralded by a bass wobble, Andrew VanWyngarden, Ben Goldwasser and co slink down a staircase, which explodes into light from a series of coloured strobes. As the assorted high-heeled city types and specky art school musos cheer, the band pick up a creepy carousel theme

on keyboards and guitars... and the madness begins.

A giant screen behind them shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog, only punctuating the jam with some mildly diverting spaceman sound effects. There's no breaks, no chat; Andrew and Ben barely even look up. When the crowd realise there's more chance of hitching a ride on a horse mannequin than hearing 'Kids' or 'Time To Pretend' – or even a track from 'Congratulations' – someone sparks up a spliff and the room descends into chatter.

The set climaxes with the kind of doomy drumming that characterised 'Lady Dada's Nightmare', before morphing into 12-bar blues. Forget defying expectations – this was a batshit endurance test pitched somewhere between demented genius and total bollocks. Bet Maurizio Cattelan loved it.

A screen shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog



VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Nick Lomanto, 23
"That was the worst concert I've ever been to! I'm a big fan, but they bombed. They didn't play any of their good songs, didn't even look at the crowd. They should have played some hits! That's what people paid for! And I've never been to a show where there wasn't an encore."



Carina Williams, 26
"I thought it was great! The sound really matched the installation. It seems a lot of fans who came here tonight were expecting to hear MGMT from three years ago, but I feel like this was more of a familiar sound from their last album. It was like a [film] score."

“WE’RE BRINGING BACK DIRTY ROCK’N’ROLL”

Taking aim at chillwave, shoegaze and Casio drums, Minneapolis’ – hey, maybe the planet’s – best new band **Howler** talk us through one of 2012’s most anticipated debuts

IN THE WORKS

“It’s not just about music, it’s about my life in general. I need to be doing something at all times or I will fucking blow my brains out.” We should point out that Howler’s 19-year-old singer Jordan Gatesmith is speaking with a sense of manic glee rather than Cobain-esque ennui. The loping frontman is still recovering from his first ever tour, supporting Tapes’n’Tapes across America (a series of “major ups and major downs”, apparently), but is also now in possession of his first ever album, completed a mere three months after his band were picked up by Rough Trade. Called ‘America Give Up’ and to be released on January 16, it springs from a single, simple aim. Gatesmith explains: “Me and Max [Petrek,

keyboardist] were just sitting there one day and we thought there’s not really been a really great rock – ROCK! – record, or even a punk record, in ages. I keep hearing a lot of witch house stuff, chillwave, shoegazey keyboards with Casio drums. But not rock. So we wanted to make it dirty rock’n’roll.”

While three of the 11 tracks – ‘Told You Once’, ‘This One’s Different’ and ‘You Like White Women. I Like Cigarettes’, now-renamed ‘Wailing (Making Out)’ – have been re-recorded after they appeared on the band’s debut EP, everything else on the album is brand new, with centrepiece ‘America’ among Gatesmith’s favourites. “We wanted to write a song like Bruce Springsteen and that’s where that one comes from. It’s actually ended up very Jonathan Richman-sounding, but at the same time it’s got this whole big Springsteen vibe about it.”

The singer also admits he could be in for a kicking back home due to the album’s title, but says it’s actually meant to be tongue-in-cheek rather than bitchy. “Yeah... we’ll see what happens over here with that one. I think it’s pretty funny. All the British people will probably understand it fine, I just hope people over here see the humour too.”

Recording at Minneapolis’ SO-TM studio (also the place where serial killer Andrew Cunanan committed his first murder, as the band informed us during their *Radar* interview a few months back), Gatesmith says the only real difficulty they encountered was when it came to picking

a cover. “God, we’ve had so many problems with that. It was supposed to be like a Lucky Strike cigarette pack,

but we ripped it off and got in loads of trouble. We were talking to their people and they were going on about marketing plans and legal shit, because apparently RJ Reynolds [the 19th-century tobacco tycoon] still owns the image. It looked fucking sweet, the original one. In the end we had to adapt.” Not that Gatesmith is too concerned with that. As he admits later, he’s busier than ever at present, so he’s happy. “You know, I would actually drive myself fucking insane if I wasn’t doing this...”

THE DETAILS

Title:
‘America Give Up’
Released:
January 16, 2012
Recorded:
SO-TM, Minneapolis
Rehearsed/written:
The back of Java
Jack’s Coffee House
in Minneapolis
On tour:
The Garage, London
(Nov 16), The Bowery,
Sheffield (Nov 18), Old
Blue Last, London
(Dec 8)



Howler's
bedroom
sure is cool

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PIECES OF ME ORLANDO WEEKS

The Maccabees frontman on drinking gin at his first gig, the 'James Dean of otters' and why The National's lyrics are so brilliant

My first album

FUGEES - 'THE SCORE'

"I think I bought it from Woolworths in Woodbridge in Suffolk. That was the first thing I'd listen to in the car. To me, the Fugees was something else that sounded like I could sing along to, just as well as to The Beatles."

My first gig

LAURYN HILL, WEMBLEY ARENA, LONDON

"My friend Josh from school and I went right to the front, where we made friends with these much, much, *much* older women who gave us shots of gin. It was a dreamy night, I don't even think I remember the tunes, I just remember thinking how big everything was. Lauryn Hill, six costume changes. And maybe two glasses of gin - it was amazing."

The first record I loved

THE SOUNDTRACK TO BUGSY MALONE

"The only other film that has music in it that's as good is Disney's *Robin Hood*, with the foxes and the bear. The whole of *Bugsy Malone* is great, every song is kind of funny and poignant and definitive of an era. I remember that our family took us to go and see the *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* musical and it wasn't as good. I think that was the Jason Donovan era."

My favourite lyric

THE NATIONAL - 'SLOW SHOW'

"The National have a beautiful lyric, '*You know I dreamed about you for 29 years before I saw you/ You know I dreamed about you/ I missed you for 29 years*'. That's one of the most romantic things you could ever say to anyone, but it's not cheesy. It's perfect and it's concise. I first saw the band on *Jools Holland* - he's brilliant for that kind of stuff. I remember trying to phone Felix [White, Maccabees guitarist] while he was trying to phone me at the same time when he saw Arcade Fire play, watching him [Win Butler] play his guitar back to front and thinking, 'How can you be part of a band that is that brilliant and also do something that looks like Talking Heads?'"

My favourite place

ALETSCH GLACIER, SWITZERLAND

"It's a huge glacier but they've drilled holes in the side of it so you can walk right into the centre of it, through 200 metres of ice. We went because we were driving back from a festival, we must've gone the wrong way because there was no reason to drive over a whole mountain range, we could have just skirted it. We sat there for three hours. Even with lots of tourists around it, it felt alien."



It's not comparable to anything else I've ever seen; I've never felt as weirded out as being in the middle of a giant ice block. It's like the dwelling of a Bond villain."

My favourite film

TARKA THE OTTER

"It's a film about the life story of an otter. It's beautiful. If it's just one otter playing the part, it is the James Dean of otters. There's a heron and there's a love interest, White-Tip. It's multicultural because there's an owl family. It's an animal melting pot, by the side of a river."

My favourite artist

STANLEY SPENCER

"I was taken to Sandham Memorial Chapel [where Spencer's work is exhibited] when I was about 13 or 14 and I remember thinking that it was the most incredible atmosphere and just being stunned into silence, not wanting to make a rude sound or anything like that. That must mean that there's something really special going on there. And I remember that very clearly, in the same way as being on a school trip to the Somme and even the funny kids at school just shut up."



Clockwise from main: looks like Orlando needs a refill; The National frontman and lyricist Matt Berninger; artist Stanley Spencer; Fugees' huge-selling 1996 album *The Score* with frontwoman Lauryn Hill in the centre; the soundtrack to 1976 kiddie gangster romp *Bugsy Malone*; *Tarka The Otter*

VERSUS

PETER ROBINSON *vs* JONATHAN PIERCE

The Drums' man on stealing biscuits and how he doesn't care about chart positions – yeah, yeah



• The Drums are obsessed with interviews by Ke\$ha and Marina & The Diamonds

• “We have a thing for watching them crumble – oh my god!” exclaims the indie funster

• True to Jonathan's spooky prediction, that single did not exactly set the charts alight

Hello, Jonathan. I went to see Britney recently...

“YOU DID? I went to see her about three months ago! My manager took me as a surprise. And it certainly was a surprise! A good one – I laughed my ass off. It was like watching somebody mash potatoes for two hours, which was sad but she has some good songs.”

Anyway, there is a bit in her show where she gets on a massive swing the size of the stage and sings a song. Would you have a massive swing on stage?

“Oh god, no way, I don't think *(laughs)* we'll ever do anything more than a few lights. We're even nervous about having a strobe. It sounds pretentious but we really like our songs and we feel they speak for themselves.”

I like that you recorded your last album in a kitchen. Did your record label keep coming in to see how the album was coming along and/or steal biscuits?

“It's ideal if you're hungry. Amy, my manager, she stops over all the time, but right at the start our label said, ‘We know you're different from other bands so we'll let you call the shots.’ The whole team around us is pretty cool. Maybe just not telling us things that are awful... They know we're sensitive lads.”

You have sensitive lad cheekbones and haircuts.

“*(Cackles)* That we do, that we do. You just watch, this next record we're coming back with big mountain beards. And tiny instruments. Like little accordions and bells and whistles.”

How good are you at growing beards? The Drums don't really strike me as the hairiest of recording artists.

“No, man, I think I had my first hair under my arm when I was about 19. It took a long time, I got picked on the whole time. But who's laughing now? Who's laughing now? *(Laughs)*”

No waxing for Jonathan from The Drums!

“Exactly! Who's in line at the waxing station now? Not me. I'm touring the world motherfuckers! I'm joking.”

If you take up swimming you'll be quite aerodynamic.

“Oh man, I really wanna do that. I'm a big fan of Björk and I read that she – this could be completely made up



– goes swimming every morning because it helps with her voice. All I wanna do is go swimming but I don't think my feet have been in water in over two years.”

You have washed your feet in the last two years, let's just clarify? “That is true. What do you think?”

I think you've washed your feet. “*(Howls)* YOU ARE RIGHT! You are right about that. Ding ding”

Finally you have a record out now in the UK. What's your chart prediction?

“Er, I'm gonna say... Which chart?”

The proper one. Your singles haven't exactly bothered the higher reaches of the Top 100 so far. Is it all going to change?

“Oh I don't think so! *(Laughs)* I don't even know where our last single registered on the chart.”

I'm looking at your chart positions now on Wikipedia and it doesn't make for pleasant reading, Jonathan, I'll be honest. But hey, it's not about the chart positions, so don't you worry.

“We're very happy with where we are and what's happening with the band. I feel like a lot of that crazy hype has subsided and now we can just get on with it. To be honest it feels exotic and thrilling to be focusing on these things. Without doing too many interviews about, you know, who cuts your hair or whatever.”

But who DOES cut your hair? “Jacob cuts all our hair.”

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1 2 HOWLER
'I TOLD YOU ONCE'
Rough Trade

2 3 SCUM
'AMBER HANDS'
Wax

3 6 DRY THE RIVER
'WEIGHTS & MEASURES'
MCA

4 4 THE BIG PINK
'STAY GOLD'
St

5 7 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB
'LIGHTS OUT, WORDS GONE'
Wax

6 9 LANA DEL REY
'VIDEO GAMES'
Polygram

7 10 MIKI & THE DOVE
'THE DRUMMER'
Virgin

8 12 THE VACCINES
'TIGER BLOOD'
Capitol

9 8 ARCTIC MONKEYS
'SHUCK IT AND SEE'
Domino

10 16 KASABIAN
'RE-WIRED'
Liberty

11 13 FLORENCE + THE MACHINE
'SHAKE IT OUT'
KID

12 11 NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS
'AKA... WHAT A LIFE!'
Sire

13 33 FRIENDLY FIRES
'BLUE CASSETTE'
St

14 1 THE VACCINES
'WETSUIT'
Capitol

15 14 TRIBES
'WHEN MY DAY COMES'
Wax

16 17 JUSTICE
'AUDIO, VIDEO, DISCO'
MCA

17 36 YOU ME AT SIX
'LOVERBOY'
EMI

18 27 COLDPLAY
'PARADISE'
Polygram

19 5 MANIC STREET PREACHERS
'THIS IS THE DAY'
Capitol

20 15 THE DRUMS
'HOW IT ENDED'
Wax

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NEW TO NME RADIO PLAYLIST

• FRANK TURNER
‘Wessex Boy’
• FOSTER THE PEOPLE
‘Call It What You Want’
• GOTYE
‘Easy Way Out’

The NME Chart is compiled each week by NME Radio and is based on how many times each track has been played on the station over the previous seven days.

RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Matt Wilkinson



ABOUT
TO
BREAK

A\$AP ROCKY

The NYC rap upstart with a swagload of tunes and a \$3 million record deal

It's exactly a week since self-dubbed "pretty motherfucker" A\$AP Rocky released his 16-track mixtape 'LiveLoveA\$AP', and he strides into the Polo Grounds Music offices a couple of blocks from Madison Square Garden. "How's it going, B?" 23-year old Rocky greets label boss and hip-hop kingpin Bryan Leach, fixes himself a Hennessy and Pepsi from Leach's personal bar, and drapes himself over a leather armchair, laptop open and Facebook on before he hits the seat. The last week has been a good one for Rocky, the Harlem-born rapper whose real name is Rakim Meyers (yep, he's named after THAT Rakim). "Finally, people have to come out with if they like me or not now," he says. "There's no wondering if I'm good or not. And I've been getting a lot of good feedback."

Good feedback is an understatement. It's not even a year since A\$AP Rocky and A\$AP Ferg dropped a handmade video for a track they made called 'Get High' on YouTube. At the time Rocky had moved his mother and baby sister from Harlem to

New Jersey and was paying for their apartment by selling drugs on the street.

"It was a way of surviving: I didn't have a job, my mum didn't have a job," he says – but pushing dope finally came to an end in July, around the same time he put a new video, 'Purple Swag', online.

It took a third video – for woozy Houston rap number 'Peso', in August – and suddenly everyone wanted a piece of A\$AP Rocky. Including Polo Grounds Music, part of Sony/RCA, who put a \$3 million deal on the table to sign him and fund a group label called A\$AP Worldwide, with Rocky in charge.

"I'm a tastemaker. I know how to look out for what's good, what's big, what's next," he says, pulling out a bag of weed and calling up YouTube videos of Tennessee 'gangster walk' and Lana Del Rey.

If there's pressure on him to deliver, Rocky's not feeling it yet. "This is easy!" he says lighting up with a grin. "Selling drugs is hard. But this? All you gotta do is show up and do what you love." *Hazel Sheffield*

NEED TO KNOW

FROM: Harlem, New York

FOR FANS OF: Odd Future, Drake

BUY IT NOW: 'LiveLoveA\$AP' is available online for free now

SEE HIM LIVE: He's hoping to be in the UK in January

ON NME.COM: Watch Rocky's best vids

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Rocky turned vegetarian recently. "It doesn't make sense to take a life for your satisfaction," he says.



GAUNTLET HAIR HEAD TO UK

US duo heading this way with tales of slashed tyres, pummelled housemates and wizard dicks

RADAR
NEWS

"We had a party at our old house in Denver and after we left we caught wind that some guy had slashed our van tyres," informs one half of Gauntlet Hair, Andy Rauworth, when asked how things have been going since the release of their self-titled debut album last month.

"Then, there was another time in Missouri when we stayed with some strangers and woke up to the sound of them pummelling each other. One of them threw the other one down the stairs. I don't know why it's so violent lately but we do seem to attract the stranger crowd."

If you're also a fan of casual violence then you're in luck – Gauntlet Hair have just confirmed their first ever UK dates, and are heading over here to spread the, er... *love* next February.

"Neither of us have been overseas," Andy enthuses, adding that the dates will see him and co-mainman Craig Nice playing stripped-down versions of their songs to compensate for the fact that their backing band are too

skint to head over for the tour. "There will have to be a lot of changes to make it work, though, because the album was recorded for a full band. The [tracks] might even change entirely," he explains.

One thing that is staying put, however, is their eyebrow-raising name, which Craig brilliantly defended recently by telling detractors to "go suck our medieval, hairy, wizard dicks."

"That [comment] was something he pulled off that we're all very proud of,"

"I don't know why, but we attract the stranger crowd"

ANDY RAUWORTH

Andy chuckles. "It's exhausting for reviewers to continually give us shit over it but there's some excellent points to having a name like that. If you type in Gauntlet Hair into your Google search box all you get is this fucking band. I figured [the critics] would tire of writing the same shit over and over again but they're still going at it."

We're sure that people will have some far more interesting things to say about Gauntlet Hair once February rolls around... *Lisa Wright*

The Buzz

The rundown of the music, videos and scenes breaking forth from the underground this week



1 FEAR OF MEN TEAM UP WITH BOS ANGELES

Two of our favourite new bands are heading out on the road together this week. Fear Of Men and Bos Angeles (above) play a number of co-headline dates on the jaunt, which kicks off at Manchester's Trof this Thursday (Nov 17). What's more, both acts are also readying new releases. Bos unleash their Cure-esque double A-side 'Beach Slalom'/'Days Of Youth' via Roundtable Records on November 21, while FoM release the excellently titled 'Alice Munro Demos' cassette tape on December 12 – head to NME.COM/newmusic now to hear two exclusive songs from it and check out the bands' tour dates in full.



2 BRETON'S NEW VID

The south London band – who live in a disused bank – release debut single 'Edward The Confessor' on November 21, but it's the video which is really kicking up a fuss. Filmed in-house under the collective's own bretonLABS moniker, you can see it for yourself on NME.COM/newmusic now.



3 MEXICAN SUMMER'S 100TH RELEASE

With a history taking in Dungen, Kurt Vile, Best Coast and Wooden Shjips, it's not been a bad existence for NYC's Mexican Summer label. Formed three years ago, it celebrates its 100th release next Friday (Nov 25), with a special cut from Ford & Lopatin – hear it on NME's Daily Download blog now.



4 LIVERPOOL'S MERCURY

What Wales does, Liverpool follows. Sort of. The folks behind Scouse new music blog Getintothisco.uk have outlined their plans to hold a Mercury Prize-style award in the city next year, focusing solely on acts from around the region. Nominees for the inaugural award are set to be announced early in 2012.

5 IROK

AKA The Intergalactic Republic Of Kongo. AKA Mike Title from London non-starters Dead Kids. Mike dressed as Colonel Gaddafi – post-golden gun shooting – during IROK's set at London's newest, most depraved venue The Sebright Arms recently. It was the perfect setting for his self-described "violent and contagious psychotropic afro-punk".



BAND CRUSH



Patrick Wolf on
his favourite
new act

"Every time I feel stressed or under pressure I listen to Kreayshawn. And if I had to come back as any human being it would be Kreayshawn because in every video she looks so carefree and she doesn't give a fuck. She's really inspiring to me right now."

SCENE
REPORT

WHAT'S HOT FOR THE HORRORS

*Rhys Webb from The Horrors
ponders the crystal ball of new music*



Welcome to the second instalment of Spider's top sounds and new bands to check out and catch live. This time I'm focusing on some of the hip young guitar slingers flying the flag for psychedelia and garage. First up – freakbeat ravers **Speak & The Spells**. They play

frantic punk rock, owing as much to '60s R&B legends The Downliners Sect and The Pretty Things as they do to Billy Childish. Check their debut EP 'She's Dead'.

The Hypnotic Eye are recording their debut long player and have recently been treading the boards at some of London's underground hot spots. They play sultry organ-led garage and feature the seductive lead vocals of Grace Lightman. Coffin Joe and I dropped in to the session for their forthcoming debut single 'Marianne' to lend some backing vocals recently, and there's a date at my clubnight the Cave Club on the horizon too.

RHYS' TOP 5

SPEAK & THE SPELLS
'She's Dead'

THE HYPNOTIC EYE
'Fly On The Wall'

THEE VICARS
'Don't Wanna Be Free'

BLOOD MUSIC
'Unending Blues'

UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA
'How Can U Luv Me'

Thee Vicars fuse the early punk sounds of The Damned and 'Spiral Scratch'-era Buzzcocks with a very authentic trashy garage blueprint. Kind of like a British Black Lips, who they often play with. I also love the London-based **Blood Music**, who play heavy, mind-bending noise that crashes and throbs like the klang of heavy machinery. They're currently putting the finishing touches to their debut single.

They're a little bit bigger now, but Portland's **Unknown Mortal Orchestra** are absolutely superb. They return to the UK this month. Get down there and check them out!

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Friendly Fires' Jack Savidge

5 TO SEE This week's unmissable new music shows

HOWLER (pictured)
Garage, London
16 November

**THE HISTORY OF
APPLE PIE**
Shacklewell Arms,
London
16 November

WISE BLOOD
Undertone, Cardiff
18 November

THEME PARK
Green Door Store,
Brighton
19 November

FOLKS
Deaf Institute,
Manchester
22 November



Money: Ryan
Jarmann's hair
lives on...

MONEY/ BEATY HEART

SACRED TRINITY CHURCH, SALFORD
FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER

CAUGHT LIVE

Following WU LYF's well-documented ascension, it's been unsurprising to witness a glut of Manchester-based bands reverting to

similar smoke and mirror tactics. Yet for every act hastily cobbling together faux-cryptic imagery while simultaneously deleting their Facebook, there are those whose devotion to the art of presentation as a whole is clear.

Money are one such group.

Confidence isn't something they've always had during their fledgling existence. Starting

as **Books** last year, they quickly changed name to **Youth Roundabout** when they were looking timid as openers for **Deerhunter**; 18 months on and the contrast is substantial. The four-piece tonight possess the sort of unashamed sincerity in their stargazing-from-the-gutter pop that can't not revitalise, particularly at a time when blogs are awash with guitar music diluted of emotion in lieu of slacker escapism. It helps that the Sacred Trinity Church's reverential surroundings match their clearly bombastic

ambitions. It helps, too, that they seem to have gained such local devotion despite having hardly any online music to their name. This is no more apparent than in support act **Beaty Heart**, whose post-'... Merriweather...' reels of sound are largely ignored. It's a shame, for the Peckham trio have gained plaudits in their own right, but this evening the blurred edges of their disorientated pop just doesn't conquer minds and bodies in the manner it's rightfully done elsewhere.

*Money possess the sort of
unashamed sincerity that
can't not revitalise*

Money are still raw, mind; a sound already heavy on reverb often spirals out of control, obscuring Jamie Lee's sharpened croon. Yet it's hard not to be pulled in by 'Who's Going To Love You Now?'s wide-eyed affectation, or the soul-searching balladry of 'The Sea'. Indeed, at times their sense of conviction is such that it could make a person latch onto them and never want to let go, leaving others to balk at a perceived hubris. You feel, though, that they wouldn't want it any other way. **Simon Jay Catling**



Looks like one of
The Hypnotic Eye
came straight
from work



One year ago **The Vaccines** were a hyped indie band with some exciting demos. Then they delivered an amazing debut album, slayed the world's festivals and bulked into one of our most thrilling live acts. **Barry Nicolson** joins their victory lap

Fuck, I've just had a Bono moment!" Wandering the corridors of Manchester's MEN Arena in search of his dressing room, Justin Young has become hopelessly lost and found himself surrounded by a mob of fans who have been camped outside the venue's front door all afternoon. After a few double-takes and gasps of recognition, one by one, they begin to encircle and approach. Some of them breathlessly tell him that The Vaccines are the reason why they've started a band of their own (he's been getting that one a lot recently), while some say nothing at all, but giggle nervously and present him with T-shirts, shoes, limbs or whatever else they can find that he can scrawl his name on. One girl approaches him on three separate occasions before finally working up the nerve to open her mouth. When he notices that his bandmates have all quietly slunk off, he elects to stick around anyway, ensuring that everyone who wants a photo gets one, making as much small talk as he can get away with, and maybe – just maybe – enjoying his Bono moment more than he'd like to let on.

That's just how it is for The Vaccines these days: no big deal. What's unusual about this particular scene, however, is that the band aren't even headlining tonight's gig; they're playing second fiddle to Arctic Monkeys. Theoretically, at least. It's patently obvious, however, that The Vaccines have long since outgrown their lowly status on this tour; they're playing to near-capacity arenas full of fans who have clearly made a point of coming down early to catch them. Even their support slots are becoming proper events, and the songs sound more anthemic than ever in such surroundings. You imagine they'd have no trouble filling some of these venues on their own.

**“IT JUST FEELS
SO GOOD
TO BE LOVED”**
Justin

To an outsider, The Vaccines' closeness is immediately evident; the shared weirdness of everything that's happened in the past 12 months has fostered a sense of unity and an unwavering self-belief in what they're ►



doing. Then again, given that they began 2011 as the band that other bands loved to hate, that's not much of a surprise. At Leeds this year, we spoke to a musician whose band broke around the same time as The Vaccines, and he confessed that – until he heard their debut album – he had jealously dismissed them as another London hype band who'd never had to work for their recognition. It wasn't an uncommon perception.

"Oh, I was definitely aware of all that," says Justin. "One of the first interviews I ever did was with a guy whose opening question was, 'Did you know that every local band in my city can't stand you?' As soon as he said it, I thought, 'Well, if they spent half as much time worrying about their own bands as they seem to do about mine, maybe they'd be riding this wave with us.' People think that if you're hyped, you've got it easy. But in a lot of ways, I actually think it made things harder, because with the hype came all the detractors who actively wanted us to fail. People will put every obstacle in your way, you know? I've been in bands since I was 11, getting it wrong over and over again. I've seen my friends do well and I've been jealous of them, but the only reason they were doing better than me is that, at the time, they were better than me. And all those bands who were sat at home moaning about us were just jealous because we were better than them."

We can't help but notice a difference in Justin's rhetoric since those early days. After all, this is the same man who was once at pains to play down every grandiose

claim being made on his band's behalf, telling *NME* back in January that, "It'd be amazing if we were ever in the charts – but I wouldn't bet money on it." What's changed? "We made a point of being quite self-deprecating in the beginning because we wanted people to get past all the hyperbole that was attaching itself to us, but we've always known we're a great band. Truly, I don't think there's another band out there who do what we do as well as we do it. That's not arrogance, that's just fact. I mean, can you name me any?"

As *NME* discovers, 'Doing what The Vaccines do' is not for the fainthearted. By the end of the year, the band will have played almost 150 gigs, 45 of those being festival engagements that sometimes saw them doing two shows in two different countries on the same day.

Everyone wants a piece of them right now, and you get the feeling that they can be a little too accommodating for their own good: after the gig in Cardiff (and after draining every last drop of their rider), bassist Arni Hjörvar and drummer Pete Robertson are accosted by a group of fans hanging around their tourbus who plead with them to come and watch their gig at the venue

across the road. Naturally, they agree, and everyone is soon sinking double Laphroaigs.

That eye-of-the-storm, seat-of-the-pants sort of lifestyle takes its toll, but it was the band's workload – not their partying habits – that brought them to the brink of catastrophe earlier this summer. Shortly after their triumphant Reading and Leeds performances

in August, Justin discovered that the vocal polyp problem which had plagued him all year would require yet another throat operation – his third time under the knife in just nine months – resulting in the cancellation of the band's entire American tour, as well as shows in Japan and Europe.

When we sit down with him in Manchester, it's clear that there's still a lingering uncertainty about what his vocal problems might ultimately mean for the

future of The Vaccines.

NME: We've heard about your throat – what were you actually diagnosed with?

Justin: "I'd had a haemorrhage, basically. Whenever I would shout during gigs, the vocal polyp would bleed, then it would scar and it wouldn't close properly. So my voice would just start squeaking."

**"WE ALWAYS
KNEW WE WERE
A GREAT BAND"**
Justin



Clockwise from far left: onstage at MEN; Freddie takes off; the lads lament a poor turnout; Arni's facepalm moment; Pete shows us what he's got



THE FIVE MOMENTS THAT MADE THE VACCINES



How did you react when you found out you'd have to have a third operation?

"I was told in LA, when we were out doing *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* I went to the doctor because I was having a problem with my ear, but he mentioned I was sounding husky and that he wanted to take a look at my throat. I just thought to myself, 'Oh shit, here we go again.' I won't lie to you, I properly broke down when he told me he'd found the haemorrhage again. I was completely devastated, because it meant cancelling the American tour. I don't know how to say this without sounding cheesy, but it was like I was on top of the world one minute and in total freefall the next."

Was there a point where you thought that it might mean the end of the band?

"Oh yeah, definitely. I mean, it's pretty fucking serious stuff. I guess people were a bit pissed off at us for pulling shows and maybe they thought I was just lazy, but if I hadn't had that operation, honestly, the band would've been over by now. The second time it happened, they told me it was turning carcinogenic! I've been through three operations in the last nine months, but I think the sheer number of shows we've played in between is testament to how much we want to overcome it. I took eight weeks off after the last operation, and I've worked hard to get my voice back up to strength, but I've been told just to cross my fingers and hope it doesn't come back again. I feel pretty good at the moment, and I've been doing everything I can to look after my voice, so

hopefully it's gone for good..."

As Freddie tells us later: "Justin's vocal problems were no great mystery: we had the busiest schedule of any band in the world this summer. At one stage, we did 16 flights in 10 days, across four continents. We work with people who have been with The Killers and The Strokes, people who have seen and done it all, and even they said they'd never known anything like our schedule. We were tempting fate, yeah, but when you're a new band, you don't say no to things. You say yes to everything, try your luck and see what happens."

Up to that point, 'seeing what happened' had proved a decidedly fruitful strategy for The Vaccines. It was at this year's T In The Park that Freddie first noticed "something special happening for us. You can talk about the hype and all that, but it fades into insignificance next to walking out onstage in front of 30,000 kids. The hype was never real, but that gig was." By the time Reading and Leeds came around, Vaccines fever had escalated into a full-blown pandemic.

"We'd been around the world in two weeks or something crazy like that, and we were all pretty burnt out," recalls Justin. "But to look out at those crowds and know that all those people had accepted us... I guess it just felt good to be so loved, you know?"

Luckily, the new single – the Albert Hammond ►

THE FIRST NME COVER

"We want indie back in the charts," they said, but who'd have guessed by the end of the year they'd have put it there? The band were weary of playing up to the hype, but it was clear there was something special afoot.

THE DEBUT

The moment which Justin describes as "the crucial point where people could either get on with celebrating us, or start ignoring us". Met with near-unanimous praise and a Number Four chart placing, it turned out to be the former.

T IN THE PARK

"T In The Park was just like, 'Fuck!'" says Justin. "There were so many people there." The band's set at the King Tut's Wah Wah Tent was one of the weekend's highlights,

and an early indication that things were going stratospheric.

READING AND LEEDS

Justin's throat problems would bring them crashing down to earth a few days later, but The Vaccines were on top of the world after their R&L performances this summer.

THE HEADLINE TOUR

Their biggest UK tour to date climaxes with two massive shows at Brixton next month. Should be a memorable victory lap after their mad year.



Jr-produced 'Tiger Blood' – was already in the can long before Justin's vocal collapse. Recorded at Albert's behest at his home studio in upstate New York, it's pretty much exactly what you'd expect a collaboration between The Vaccines and the coolest of all Strokes to be: a thrillingly propulsive rock'n'roll song that barely cracks two minutes, but you wish would last forever.

"I really just had the bare bones of the song, with no idea for where to take it," says Justin. "We wanted to work with someone creative, someone we really admired, and Albert basically became like a fifth member of the band when we were in his studio. It's hard to be objective about something you've created with people you spend all day, every day with, so it was good to have reassurance from someone you admire. And, obviously, with us being massive fans of The Strokes, it was pretty exciting."

Was it overwhelming to work so closely with someone you spent your teenage years idolising?

"Not at all. I'm not 15 anymore, you know? It was inspiring, though. Growing up and listening to The Strokes, Albert always seemed like a total rock star to me. But we were there to do a job. We didn't sit around swapping stories or asking him for advice. In the end, that song is just another step towards trying to push the band forward – whether it does that or not is open to debate, but we just wanted to try something different."

The band are playing it frustratingly coy about exactly where they want to push forward to; Justin reveals that they'll be playing new songs on the UK headline tour they embark on this week, and that he expects to record a new album "during the first half of next year", but they're vague when it comes to specifics. What Justin will say, however, is that in spite of how proud he is of the band's first album, "we know that it's not a masterpiece and that we have to get better. The songs are essentially nursery rhymes: three chords, one note being played over them, a straight drumbeat, no harmonies. It's pure

back-to-basics rock'n'roll, and the songs were good enough on their own that they didn't have to hide behind any silly production. So in that respect, they were the best 11 songs we had, and 'What Did You Expect From The Vaccines' was as good as The Vaccines could possibly have been at that point. We've made a great first record, but it still sounds like a first record – we want to keep improving."

Following the set in Manchester – watched intently from side of stage by Alex Turner and Matt Helders – where they come within a ball-hair of thieving the Monkeys' thunder, the band head to Big Hands on Oxford Road for some post show drinks. On a previous visit to the city, Pete ended up at a goth club, spinning '80s electro-pop underneath the pulsating red eyes of a giant fibreglass Satan. Tonight isn't quite so weird, despite Mumford & Sons' Winston Marshall randomly appearing from out of nowhere. There's just one thing left to ask Justin

WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM THEIR SECOND ALBUM?

Justin and Freddie on what's up their sleeves

NME: So, where are you at with the next album?

Justin: "Well, we want to write it first. We've got a couple of songs that we really like, and we're going to be playing them on the headline tour. We don't want to rush into it, I think we want to make a record that we're proud of, that's better than the first record. I'd say that definitely, in the first half of next year, we'll record the second record. The songs still sound youthful and direct and upbeat, but maybe with a little more swagger. The first record was knowingly dumb, and I think the second one will be less like that. Obviously the whole thing with the first record

was to strip back all the parts, so now we're looking at maybe building on the sound a little bit."

Freddie: "We've got a few new songs, I don't know how many we'll end up keeping, but there are a couple of them that I feel are paving the way for what's coming next. I don't think we want to go bigger for the sake of it, just because we're playing bigger venues. We definitely don't want to make the same record twice, but we don't want to consciously change our sound. The first record happened really organically, and I think the second one will, too. It just feels really exciting at the moment."

before we stagger back to our hotel, though: after living through all the lunacy and hyperbole of the last 12 months, does he feel as though The Vaccines have made a difference? Are they changing things in the way that the Monkeys and The Strokes before them managed to?

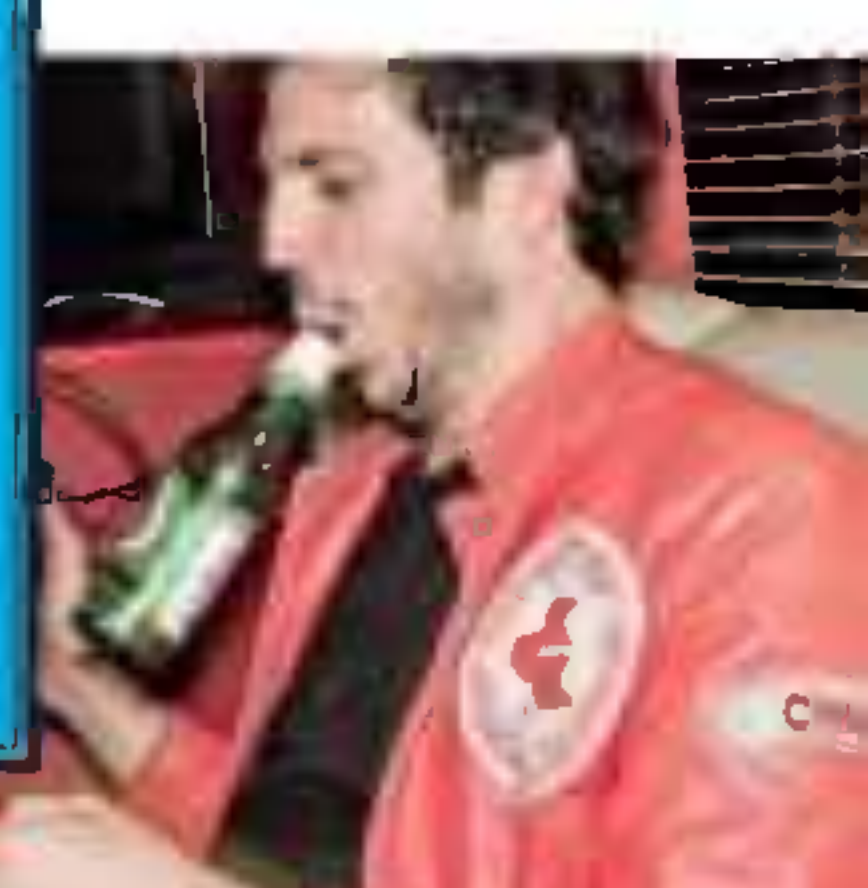
"We've had kids coming up to us telling us that we're the blueprint for their own bands, and that's a great thing," he says. "I feel that rock'n'roll is an artform in a way that electronic music just isn't. I find that kind of music quite scientific, almost devoid of personality, in a way. Whereas there's nothing sexier than just getting up onstage and beating the shit out of your guitar, is there? Saying what you fucking think, doing what you fucking feel..."

And taking life one Bono moment at a time.

NME EXTRA For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a pair of tickets to The Vaccines' winter tour and a limited edition Vaccines skateboard, plus video footage stage at The Oz, head to NME.COM/extra. See p8 for details



Clockwise from above: Arni gets his fix of NME; Pete sucks it and sees; Justin's healthy eating, messy living; Freddie shows off his rock profile; arriving in Manchester





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“HOW WOULD WE LIKE TO SNUFF IT? COMING OFF A ROLLER COASTER!”

Are they bigger than Arctic Monkeys? What's their favourite cartoon? Can pigs swim? **Kasabian's** Tom and Serge answer the burning questions sent in by readers and some famous faces

Talking nonsense: it is, truly, a dying rock'n'roll artform. Who cares about tempo changes, effects pedals and widdly solos when you can put the *real* issues of the day to bands? Praise be for Tom Meighan and Serge Pizzorno, then. You could lock this pair in a room with just a Dictaphone for company and return with reams of compelling dinosaur chat and breakdowns of their favourite cartoon characters.

Not that they don't come up with the hard info too – last week in *NME* the pair let it slip that, as well as playing a New Year's Eve show at London's O2 Arena this year, next summer they're likely to be heading up the capital's Hyde Park Calling.

“Wigston Swimming Pool!” Tom replies when asked what further venues the band would like to play next year. “We all used to go there as kids in Leicester. It's got loads of great childhood memories for me that place. Apart from the pool itself. It was dead fucking cold.”

Indeed. So with the Kasabian wagon clearly set to roll straight through to next year, with the help of questions from readers and musicians, there's lots to catch up on – from how they see themselves compared to Arctic Monkeys, to who has inspired them most, to the swimming abilities of farm animals.

I like both Kasabian and Arctic Monkeys, but, honestly, who would you say was the bigger band?

Sassan Tabbazian

Serge: “Well, I'm a lot taller than any of them.”

Tom: “Ha! Yeah, we're definitely taller than them.”

Serge: “They're not very tall, are they? Alex is not very tall.”

Tom: “Well, he's not you, is he?”



Gerard Way, *My Chemical Romance*

Tom: “Wow, what a good question. Velociraptor? It just came out of nowhere. Well, it just sounded good, that's all that bloody happened really, mate. It's just quite a comic book, kind of cartoonish name for an album, that's really all it is really, to be honest. He's a nice guy, though, Gerard's a nice guy... we've made up, we're friends now (*Kasabian had previously said MCR make “ventriloquists' music” – Beef Ed*).”

NME: Did you have any other working titles for the album?

Tom: “‘Sex After I Atting’. Serge?”

Serge: “Nah, there weren't any. There actually genuinely weren't any, we just thought ‘That'll do’, it came quite quick.”

Tell us something odd and quite nasty about each other.

Christina Grönlund

Tom: “Serge has really big feet, basketball feet. Size 11's big, isn't it?”

Serge: “It's not like they're size 14s. But for someone in a band they're pretty big.”

Tom: “It's like the size of a ruler! You've got to say something bad about me now, go on!”

Serge: “Tom never stops whistling. It's like a disease. He whistles anything – tunes, bird noises. You just want to take a hand grenade to the head sometimes.”

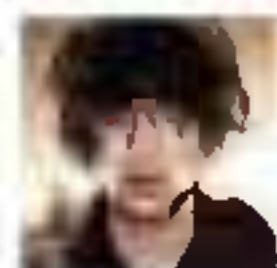
Would you rather lick a pavement or have boobs for feet?

Ciara Lynch

Tom: “Do you know what? I'd rather lick a pavement, to be honest. I've done that before when I was a kid. I think everyone has licked a pavement some time, haven't they?”

“SERGE HAS BIG FEET, LIKE RULERS”

Tom



Can pigs swim?

Faris Badwan, *The Horrors*

Serge: "I've got no idea. I know they're quite intelligent."

Tom: "No, they can't. What a weird question. Nah, yes they can. Have I ever seen a pig swim? I can draw one"

Which have been the most inspiring gigs you've ever been to?

Alice Simkins

Tom: "My mum in the kitchen making dinner."

Serge: "I saw Chris Cunningham last year and he was fucking unbelievable. It was just him, and musically and visually it blew my mind. Amy [Serge's girlfriend] was pregnant at the time and I was shitting it because the bass was on another level. It was mind-bending."



Where did you get your US flag shirt that you wore on

stage in Italy this summer? And will you wear it alongside Nick O'Malley for an NME photoshoot of the worst shirts ever?

Matt Helders, *Arctic Monkeys*

Tom: "US flag shirt? That I wore onstage? Oh! Moschino mate, I think it's Moschino. Nah, actually, it's the Union Jack shirt I wore, I think that's what Helders is on about... The one I wore for that fuckin' Live 8 gig... sorry, Live Earth gig. It's a Paul Smith, it's in my wardrobe and one day I'm gonna put it up in a Hard Rock Café."

All the best rock stars die young. Kasabian don't miss a trick, so in what circumstances are you gonna snuff it?

Mark Blake

Tom: "I can imagine me going on a fairground ride and coming off a roller coaster. It would be a pretty good way to go, your adrenaline is going and the next thing you know it's over. That'd be the way to go."

Serge: "I want to do something daft, like a toaster in the bath, or a knife in the toaster sort of thing."

Tom: "Or have a heart attack in the cinema. No-one would notice because they'd be laughing and eating popcorn. Unbelievable."



I used to DJ with all your old EPs and singles, will you sign my vinyl?

Nick Hodgson, *Kaiser Chiefs*

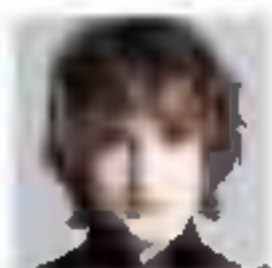
Serge: "Yeah, yeah. Sure."

Tom: "Of course, mate! Love it, love it man! All that vinyl stuff we put out years ago is fun to collect. We did them in different colours and put one out in black and I think that's great man, fair play to Nick."

Tom, what are your five favourite cartoons?

Jill McCullen

Tom: "Denver, *The Last Dinosaur*, *Captain Planet*, *Masters Of The Universe*, *The Real Ghostbusters*, with Slimer in it, and number five, *ThunderCats*. Easy!"



What do you do with your time off? I always end up a bit

like Alan Partridge, buying Ginsters from a corner shop...

Tom Clarke, *The Enemy*

Serge: "You know what, I don't think I've ever had any time off. I don't even know what that is, I'd rather just fuckin' crack on to be honest. I don't really stop working, I don't really stop, so I don't know what time off is."

Tom: "I socialise, really, catch up with people I've not seen for a while, see my family. Ginsters, man – I mean, Jesus! We used to buy them before we started touring years ago. It's the only thing you can really eat when you're on the road."

NME: So do you recognise Tom Clarke's description of himself being a bit like Alan Partridge?

Serge: "Well, yeah... well, no, not really. Well, him just sorta wandering around. He goes on fuckin' Global Rally and shit, though, doesn't he. I can imagine him in an E-Type Jag riding around, fuckin' 'avin' it, that's how I see Tom."

Would you rather watch *The Only Way Is Essex* or *Made In Chelsea*?

James Ogram

Serge: "If I was forced, at gunpoint, I would go for the Essex one."

Tom: "No. None of them. They're all cunts. Seriously, none of them."



My sister and I both think Tom would look great with Alex

Turner's new quiff, and he'd look great with your hair. Would you ever consider swapping?

James Allan, *Glasvegas*

Tom: "What, his teddy boy look? I've been doing the James Dean look lately, this old American kind of Hollywood look, the '40s/'50s Hollywood look. But I'm not too sure about the rockabilly look. It suits Alex, it looks great on Alex. But it's a bully's hair, you know what I mean?"

Serge: "Tom kinda had it a couple of years back. He looked amazing, he could get away with anything really. You could put him in a fuckin' bin liner and he would still look good."



For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win one of 10 pairs of tickets to Kasabian's New Year's Eve show at The O2 Arena in London, go to NME.COM/extra. See page 8 for more information

**KASABIAN
ANSWER
YOUR
QUESTIONS**



Tom wears a shirt for Britain...



... Nick represents the whole fucking world

**"TOM'D
LOOK
GOOD IN A
BIN LINER"**

Serge

Bad Vibrations

In 1966, Brian Wilson started on *The Beach Boys'* "teenage symphony to God", but the drug-fuelled sessions almost destroyed him and 'Smile' was scrapped. With the material finally released, **Mark Beaumont** relives the paranoia-drenched experience with him

The sandbox, Brian Wilson will talk about. "The sandbox inspired us to feel like we were on the beach. It was a clever idea but kinda strange and cumbersome sitting there with our feet in the sand writing songs." The fireman's hats, he'll cheerfully admit to. "I wanted the guys to get the feeling of being firemen in a fire. It's an odd thing to do, and a little embarrassing." The acid and speed, he'll hold up his still-quivering hand. "We were taking too much drugs and we paid the full price for taking too much drugs too."

The lighter side of The Beach Boys' experiences in 1966, he'll revisit with pleasure. But the dark side? The business meetings he held in his swimming pool? The belief that Phil Spector was out to get him? The song scrapped because he believed it might have caused house fires? The breakdowns, paranoia and manias that surrounded the recording of The Beach Boys' great lost masterpiece, he's less willing to discuss.

Forty-five years on from its shelving, and seven years after he exorcised its demons by re-recording it and performing it in full, Brian is still putting a brave face on 'Smile'. "I thought it was a step forward," he says in his childlike snap. "[But] I thought it was too far ahead of its time so we junked it for 40 years!"

This month, after the longest wait for a release in rock history, we get to 'officially' hear the follow-up to 1966's 'Pet Sounds'. And if that album is now regarded as a masterwork of '60s pop psychedelia – voted the best album ever made by *NME* in 1993 – 'The Smile Sessions', pieced together from the original session tapes which fans have been bootlegging for decades, will blow minds clear out the back of skulls. 'Smile' would have made The Beach Boys pioneers of the psychedelic generation, The Velvet Funderground. If it only hadn't almost destroyed its creators...

By 1966, Brian Wilson's problems were too clear to ignore. Having withdrawn from touring after a breakdown on a flight to Houston in 1964, he would stay in California writing songs while the band played gigs. He indulged in drug bouts that were valuable creatively (he wrote 'California Girls' on his first LSD trip) but detrimental to his mental state. Guitarist Al Jardine recalls an afternoon in which Brian drove him in circles around the William Morris Agency in L.A., refusing to let him out of the car unless Al promised to try acid.

"I asked him for a ride home," says Al, "and instead of taking me home he drove me around the block about 25 times! I was very concerned. I admonished him to

"WE PAID THE FULL PRICE FOR TAKING TOO MANY DRUGS"

BRIAN WILSON

stop [taking drugs], but he'd already gone beyond that point. He had developed a lifestyle that was more detached from the rest of us and started experimenting musically under the influence of those things. But the output was amazing."

Nay, game-changing. 'Pet Sounds' had advanced The Beach Boys' sun-bleached surfin' sound into grand new realms of orchestral wonder and psychedelia. But, for all its critical plaudits, it was considered a flop by their label Capitol, and many were pushing Brian to write more 'traditional' Beach Boys songs. He followed 'Pet Sounds' by spending several months and a then-record \$50,000 recording the "pocket symphony" 'Good

Vibrations' using session musicians The Wrecking Crew and a new modular technique of taping 90 hours of segments for the song at four different studios. Each studio had a different 'vibe' in Wilson's head – and he reduced it all to a three-minute pop song. The Beach Boys were glad of the success – Number One on both sides of the Atlantic – but wary of this eccentric new direction in which they were being taken.

"We were recording music that was spilling out of Brian's head at an incredible rate of speed," says Al. "We were basically hanging on by our coat-tails. [There were] two dynamic groups, one in the studio and one on tour. We were focusing a great deal of our energy on touring and Brian was feeling isolated from the band. He was getting really antsy and he had all of this music inside of him to express and of course he wanted to get it out. So he would surprise us... ambush us with stuff."

Ambush? On returning from a tour of the Far East and Europe, where 'Pet Sounds' was a huge hit, The Beach Boys must have felt like a musical Light Brigade. In their absence, Brian had hooked up with surrealist lyricist Van Dyke Parks and, using the cut-up recording style of 'Good Vibrations', completed much of an hour-long concept album – a "teenage symphony to God" as Brian dubbed it – in response to the recent British Invasion, about a historical and spiritual journey across America from Plymouth Rock to Hawaii.

"We tried to do justice to the mood of early Americana," says Brian. "New Americana and the Hawaiian islands. [The band] thought it was crazy music. I wanted to get a concept album across to people and The Beach Boys didn't like it."

In Al Jardine's mind, however, Brian is vastly overstating the anti-'Smile' feeling within the band. "We gathered around the control room at Columbia Studios or Western," he recalls. "He plays this wonderful stuff, ▶



it's different, it's completely transformative, it had a different breadth and depth from what we'd been doing. This is a whole different direction and the crux of it was new evolutionary songwriting and lyric writing as well. Van and Brian together created a new form of music. [The acid] was expressing itself through the music."

If the chop'n'change anti-structure of 'Smile', the barnyard and workshop interludes wherein the band were required to make animal noises and 'play' saws and hammers respectively, the funeral re-workings of 'You Are My Sunshine', the delicate, wintery sprawl of 'Surf's Up' or the Wild West imagery of the magnificent, multi-sectioned pop opera 'Heroes And Villains' surprised the band, they didn't know the half of it. Brian had taken to insisting on meetings being held in his swimming pool for fear of his house being bugged. He'd had a 'dope tent' erected in his house and a sandbox installed around his piano so as to feel the sand between his toes while he wrote. The sessions had taken a turn for the bizarre: Brian cancelled one full-orchestra session for the track 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)' when he refused to get out of his Rolls-Royce in the car park because of "bad vibes". He turned up at the next one with fireman hats for the entire orchestra and set a large bucket alight to create the mood for the song, then scrapped it when he heard of a spate of fires near the studio shortly after the session, leading him to believe the music was "too dangerous" to release.

"IT WAS ANOTHER LEVEL - IT'S A MASTERPIECE"

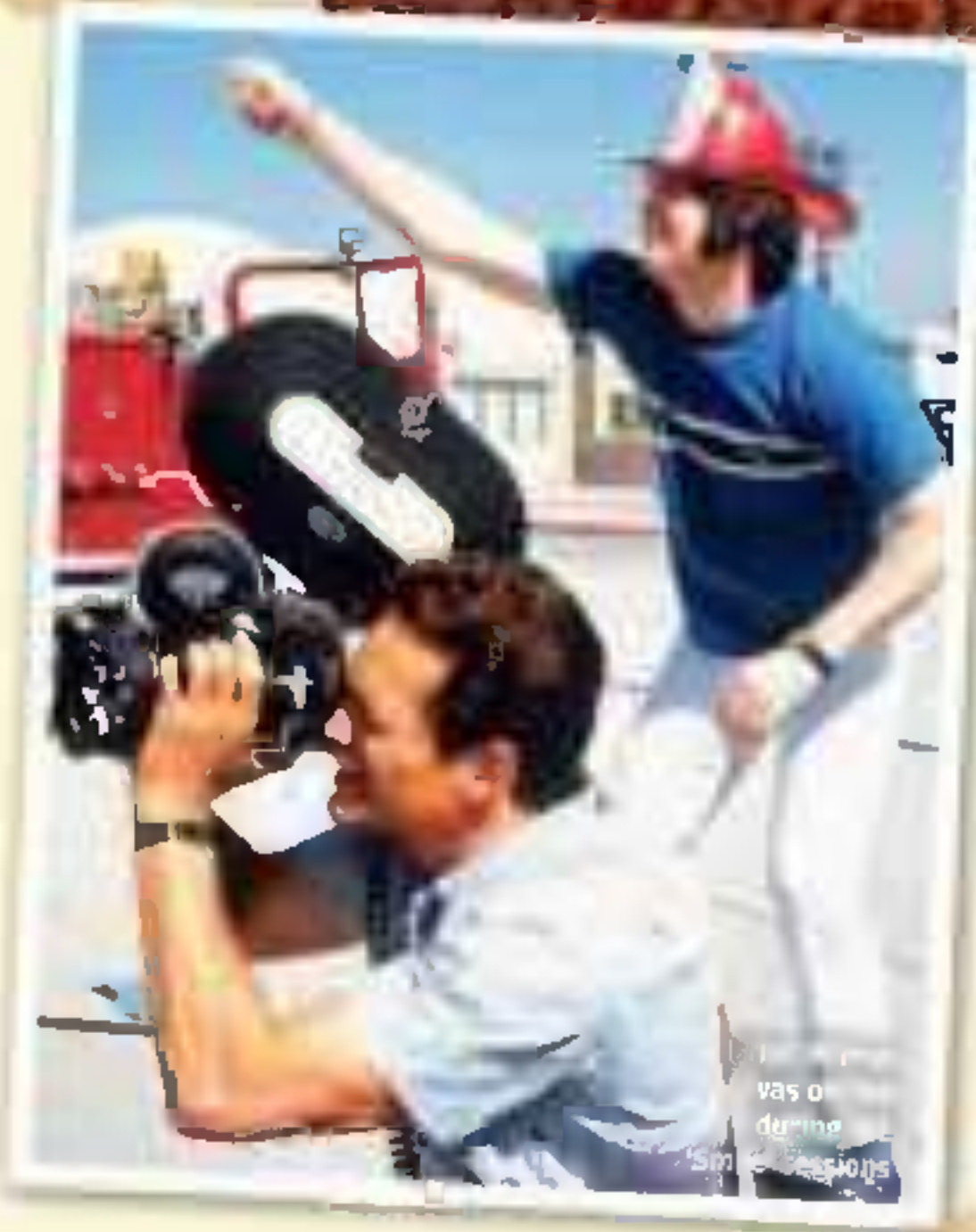
AL JARDINE

At another session he refused to let journalist Jules Siegel sit in as he thought Siegel's wife was a witch who was controlling his mind. On seeing the film *Seconds* starring Rock Hudson, he became convinced it told the story of his own life and had been made by the "mind gangster" Phil Spector specifically to fuck with his head. "It had a lot of rock'n'roll in it," Brian explains, "for which he was responsible."

Sessions to record The Beach Boys' vocals onto Brian's 'Smile' tracks quickly deteriorated. The band's usual lyricist Mike Love was reportedly unhappy with Van Dyke Parks' impenetrable poetry, calling it "acid alliteration". "Mike was a little bit envious of Van Dyke," claims Brian, though Al plays down the alleged row between Mike and Van Dyke over the unfathomable lyrics to 'Cabin Essence' that finally put the kibosh on the 'Smile' sessions: "I wouldn't call it a row. I'd call it an intellectual impasse."

Brian sensed the dissatisfaction with his new direction. Scrapping the sessions in 1967, some tracks - including 'Vege-Tables', 'Wonderful' and 'Wind Chimes' - were then re-recorded in a new studio at Brian's house, forming the quirky but relatively unambitious 'Smiley Smile' album ('Surf's Up' was also pieced together by Carl Wilson for the 1971 album of the same name), after which Brian shrank away from his own production genius, and The Beach Boys' stance atop the '60s cultural and artistic tsunami was over.

"He definitely withdrew from the structural recording we were doing up," says Al, although Brian himself admits no regret. "We weren't upset [at scrapping 'Smile'], he says. "We knew it was the right move."



was happening. It would've been another level of compositional and structural achievement for The Beach Boys. It's a masterpiece."

Music itself may be poorer for having been denied it in '67 but, my oh my, can we 'Smile' about it now...

NME
EXTRA

For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a new 'The Smile Sessions' boxset worth over £100, go to NME.COM/extra or see page 8 for more details

Check out Brian Wilson's ill-advised rap career on the NME Office Blog at NME.COM/blogs

The Beach Boys: (clockwise from bottom left) Carl Wilson, Mike Love, Dennis Wilson, Al Jardine, Bruce Johnston, Dennis Wilson



THE NME REVIEW

THE BEACH BOYS SMILE BROTHER



It was, in 1966, an entirely new genre: montage

pop. Constructed from hundreds of disparate takes - the special-edition box-set of 'The Smile Sessions' includes 36 separate segments recorded for 'Heroes And Villains' alone - 'Smile' is an ever-shifting acid vision of a record. Of its 20 tracks, only seven or eight could be considered 'songs' in the traditional sense. The rest are sonic mood pieces, avant garde constructs or 30-second throwaway links; the band make duck, sheep and chicken noises throughout 'Barnyard', march around the studio on the touching spiritual 'You're Welcome' and recreate a fire-in-progress on 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)', named after the animal said to have started the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The fans who've been constructing their own versions of 'Smile' from bootlegs of the sessions

over the past 45 years can't have envisioned the masterpiece Wilson originally intended: 'Smile' plays out like a billowing balloon of ideas, kept rooted by the book-ending guy ropes of 'Heroes And Villains' and 'Good Vibrations'.

If the album presaged eclectic masterpieces such as 'The White Album', stylistically it was a premonition of modern-day US alt.folk. Built around horn, viola, xylophone, banjo and harpsichord, telling the story of a journey through US geography and history, it set a blueprint of evocative atmospherics adhered to today by everyone from Sufjan Stevens to Fleet Foxes. And even if the passing listener finds the whole thing baffling, who wouldn't be entranced by the juxtaposition of haunting death-of-summer ode 'Surf's Up' with jaunty, health-obsessed pop wonder 'Vege-Tables'? Like the man Jardine says, a masterpiece. **Mark Beaumont**

9



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THREE YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS...

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE TING TINGS?

[illegible]

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SID VICIOUS
SAN ANTONIO, 1978



NME
Photo by Bob Gruen, from
his new book, Rock Seen

RAMONES
NEW YORK, 1975



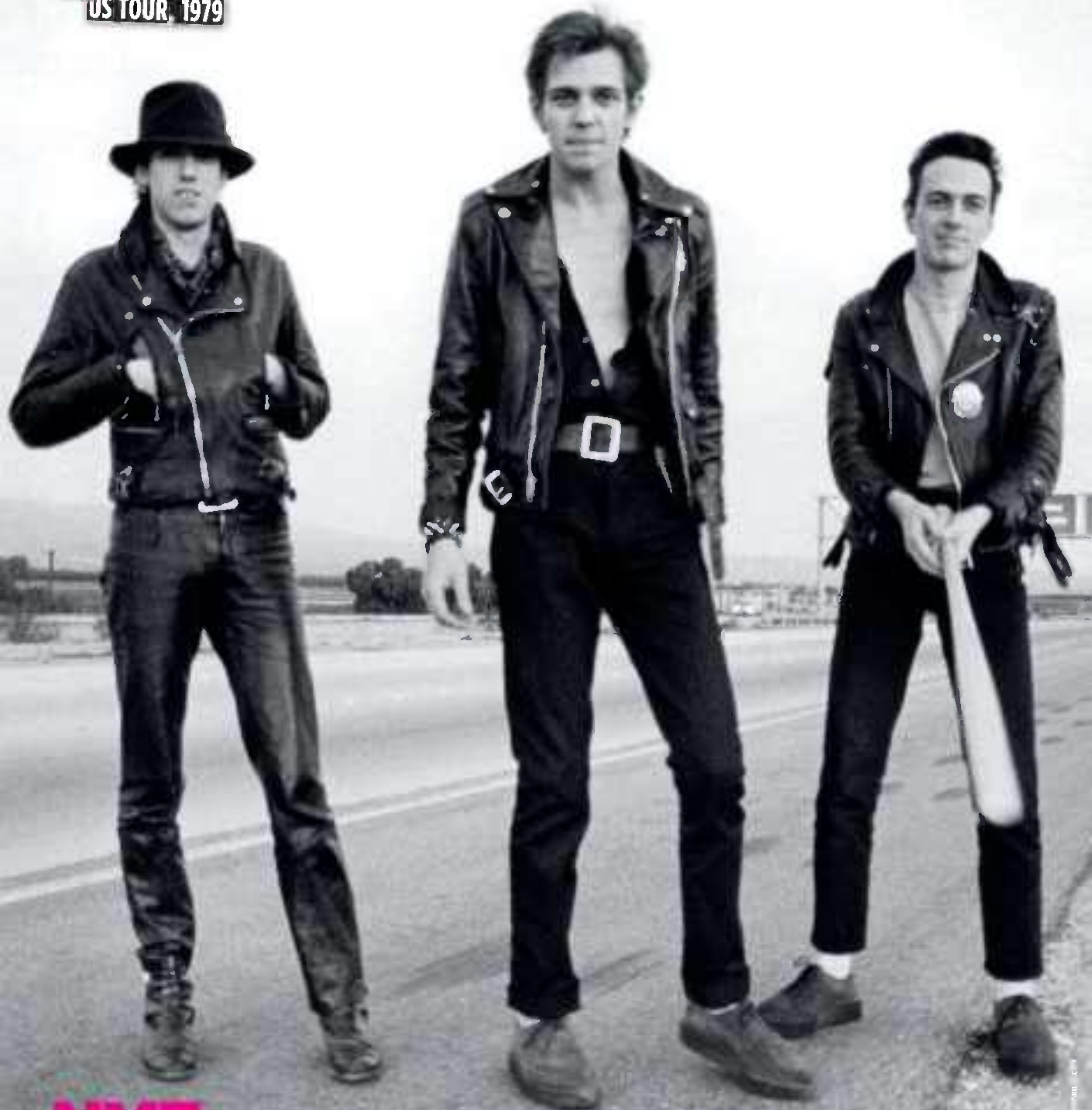


NIME

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THE CLASH

US TOUR, 1979



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Photo by Bob Gruen, from
his new book, Rock Seen



Out Wednesday
November 23

AND MOST
IMPORTANTLY...

Coming Next Week

WHO'S OUT?



MANAGE AND LIVE

Lloyds TSB's Money Manager is a free and easy-to-use tool that helps you to manage your personal finances more effectively, however busy your life might be. Two friends of NME tell us about their spending habits...

PIP NEWBY RECORD LABEL BOSS

Music has been Pip Newby's life for as long as he can remember. And his early love of Weezer, Blur, Daft Punk and the Beastie Boys inspired him to set up his own record label, Friends Vs Records, before he had even graduated from university.

But being self-employed means that he has to keep a closer eye on what he earns and spends each month than most people. "I've certainly spent a lot of money on music," says Pip. "That being said, I've got to eat and pay my rent, so I'm careful with everything I spend as much as possible."

And being a music fan can be an expensive hobby.

"My whole life is music, basically. Seeing bands is pretty much my main activity. I spend a lot of my money going out seeing shows."

Being such a committed music fan means that Pip needs to keep on top of his money more than most people would.

"Travel is a really big expense. I go to as many gigs as I can, which can mean travelling around a lot all over the country. So often it's about knowing whether I can go to that secret gig that I really, really want to go to. And, as any music

nut knows, your record collection can never quite be big enough!

"I'm always careful with my money, but it can still be really tough. I wouldn't

change my lifestyle for the world, but I could do with help managing my finances."

If Pip was a Lloyds TSB customer, Money Manager's easy-to-read charts and graphs could give him a clear view of his spending, giving him more free time to concentrate on the stuff that's really important to him.

**"I WOULDN'T CHANGE
MY LIFESTYLE FOR THE
WORLD, BUT I COULD DO
WITH HELP MANAGING
MY FINANCES"**

YOUR MONEY THE DREAM

**“KNOWING
WHAT IS
HAPPENING
WITH MY CASH
WOULD BE A
MASSIVE HELP”**

SAM WOLFSON WRITER

As a freelance writer for *NME*, 21-year-old Sam Wolfson has got the coolest part-time job out there. When he's not reviewing the latest new album releases he's interviewing Rihanna, and when he's not doing either of those things Sam is buzzing around Europe having a wild time with the likes of Bombay Bicycle Club.

Life's not one big party, though. Sam is also a student at Cambridge University, juggling his studies with his writing.

“I love live music, but Cambridge is not exactly known for it's vibrant music scene,” says Sam. “I'm always travelling around the country going to gigs and following my favourite bands. I'm just thankful when I can get into gigs for free!”

It's not just getting sweaty in the moshpit that costs Sam his cash, as he explains.

“I also spend a lot of money on all the brilliant new albums and DVDs out there, as well as going

to the pub with mates. Obviously my biggest expenses are my uni bill and my rent, but I've got textbooks to buy too. After all that I just hope I've left enough money back to eat.”

Sam's story is common. As every student knows, it's not easy to manage your money and make ends meet.

“I'm forever spending and I also have lots of little bits of income from my summer jobs, so it can be hard to keep a handle on what's coming and going out of my account and if I have enough to cover my bills. Knowing what is happening with my cash would be a massive help and give me one less thing to sort out.”

“I'm really lucky to be able to travel and be so closely involved with such an amazing music scene. If only I could manage my cash a bit better things would be great!”

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REVIEWS

CHILDISH GAMBINO, AEROPLANE

Edited by Emily Mackay



RIHANNA

TALK THAT TALK MERCURY/DEF JAM

The superstar singer plays it annoyingly safe – and the tantalising glimpses of what might have been only make it harder to handle



What's in a font? In terms of music, they can conjure up several different meanings, from something stalwart (The Rolling Stones, Ramones) to the ephemeral and futuristic (Daft Punk), and finally to the fussy and over focus-grouped (Cher Lloyd). On Rihanna's sixth album, she's returning to the spiky 'R' that crowned the cover of 2009's 'Rated R'. That album was a Year Zero for her as she emerged from the pupa of robo-pop star to free-flapping 'artiste'. It was the place in which personal crisis (her abuse at the hands of, and public break-up with, Chris Brown) drove her sound and image

in the best, most creative ways possible. The futuristic, dubstep-shaded sounds on that album were mirrored by lyrics that layered meaning and allusions to create a cohesive piece of musical pop-art that pricked at your consciousness from several directions.

And then there was 'Rude Boy'. The biggest hit from an under-selling album, its fun bump'n'grind jerk-pop seemed to dictate where she would go next. So it was – last year's 'Loud' marked a turning point and the lasciviousness was upped up a notch, but at the same time you felt the shutters coming down artistically. It also coincided with her ubiquity. Suddenly she was everywhere, like the cast of *The Only Way Is*

Essex-and-Kim Kardashian 'everywhere'. There she was, popping up on David Guetta's album, getting Ofcom and Matt Cardle into a tizzy on *The X Factor*, trilling the chorus of 'All Of The Lights' on Kanye West's 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy', organising Katy Perry's Cirque du Soleil hen do, appearing on 'Pink Friday', having a 'get off my laaaahnd' moment with an Irish farmer. She was even, in London, spotted on the bloody tube on the way to one of her own concerts at The O2.

So perhaps it's no big revelation that 'Talk That Talk's' stylish 'R' doesn't indicate a return to 'Rated R's' boundary-pushing, but instead leaves us with the impression Rihanna has spread herself so thinly that she doesn't have time to record a cohesive album. Her usually perfect hit-rate of sonic surprises is disappointingly low due, one suspects, to half the album having been monopolised by chart-botherers Dr Luke and Stargate. 'TTT' is filled with tinny-sounding '90s Europop, the kind of stuff that hangs around the playlists of commercial radio for months. And when it's not playing it safe, the album re-treads old ground. 'Roc Me Out' is a 'Rude Boy' re-tool from the vocal delivery to her "Come on boy..." line, closer 'Farewell' echoes 'Fire Bomb', while re-teaming with Jay-Z on the title track is a gamble that doesn't pay off. The pace may echo 'Umbrella', but there's precious little of that song's spark. The Jigga's rap feels like it was dashed off in a few minutes between Def Jam conference calls ("Oh, she really gotta pee", he raps at one point. I mean, do we really want to hear about Beyoncé's bladder control during pregnancy? Noooo).

Sure, there are pleasant moments – 'Drunk On Love' is basically The xx's 'Intro' with Rihanna's voice over the top, and 'Where Have You Been' is a dance-pop gem complete with 'Bonkers'-style wibbles. But there are only two truly brilliant songs. Despite some cringey lyrics ("Suck my cockiness/Lick my persuasion"), 'Cockiness (Love It)' is genuine elastic thrill, twisting into all sorts of jaw-dropping musical shapes. Produced by Bangladesh, it sounds like a sped-up nervous breakdown, while the elliptical 'Red Lipstick', a collaboration with Chas & Status, sounds like something which could have graced the Katy B album. That the latter is relegated to the deluxe edition smacks of someone's loss of nerve. You can only imagine what happened to the rumoured Rusko collaboration.

It would have been unpredictable and intense if Rihanna had followed these musical leads, but as it stands we get a so-so album which suggests it may be time for Ms Fenty to take a holiday. **Priya Elan**

5

DOWNLOAD: 'Where Have You Been', 'Red Lipstick', 'Cockiness (I Love It)'

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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PEAKING LIGHTS

936 DOMINO



Much as music writers throw drug references around like icing sugar, let us be clear that most of us are far, far too chickenshit to ever try anything like peyote, ayahuasca or any other 'tribal ritual' drug. Anyway, no need when you can listen to this Wisconsin duo instead. From here it all looks so insignificant spaced-out synthy ambience leads into a psychojourney through shuffling, organic beats, cosmically detached vocals, dubbish grooves, faint touches of psychobilly-twangin' guitar and boney rattles. It's like Dead Can Dance with less goth and more groove – and definitely worth an initiation. **Emily Mackay**

DOWNLOAD: 'Birds Of Paradise (Dub Version)'

6

APPARAT ORGAN QUARTET

POLYFONIA CRUNCHY FROG



Jóhann Jóhannsson enjoys a time traveller's life. He released an album earlier this year on which he paid moving tribute to Durham's now-diminished mining community with the help of a local brass band and some old Victorian hymns. Then he beamed himself through time and space to record these nine brutalist cosmic rock tracks on a bunch of phasing analogue synths and other steely sounding machinery with three fellow keyboard fanatics (and a drummer). The result is a clean, efficient, piston-pumping, Teutonic sound of robots doing serious damage to bands with beards and banjos – icy and brilliantly foreboding future-rock. **Chris Parkin**

DOWNLOAD: 'Söngur Geimunglingsins'

7

MINT JULEP

SAVE YOUR SEASON VILLAGE GREEN



A "husband/wife dream-pop duo from Portland, Oregon". An instrumental opener called 'Chasing The Wind Catching The Shadows'. A first line that goes "I lie awake, dreaming of landscapes and the rain" ('Aviary'). Yeah, I know, there is a hell of a lot of that kind of thing about at the moment, but the simple fact is Mint Julep are just great at doing it. Songs like 'Cherry Radio' and 'Stay' are melodically sophisticated, synthetically textured and actually dreamy. It's unquestionably a beautiful (debut) album, and one that may be well-timed, what with so many folk falling for that College feat Electric Youth tune from *Drive*, which could easily sit on here. **Hamish MacBain**

DOWNLOAD: 'Stay'

8

ATLAS SOUND

PARALLAX 4AD



Bradford Cox decelerates sonically here, but lyrically he remains sublime. 'Parallax' appears to deal with the continuing conflict of a Christian upbringing with more sacrilegious life experiences. Opener 'The Shakes' battles with the artist's increasing fame while 'Praying Man' cautiously states faith in something higher. Contrastingly, however, 'My Angel Is Broken' sees Cox revert, a tumbling paradox that seems to question his own convictions. Each LP since Deerhunter's debut – both individual and collective – has retreated further from that record's naked aggression, and this is another step towards Bradford finding self-contentment. **Simon Jay Catling**

DOWNLOAD: 'My Angel Is Broken'

8

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



JOHN McDONNELL

"This week I've been listening to nothing but Sade-sampling rap songs in my damp, freezing flat while hysterically weeping. The highlight of the week was getting a haircut."



EMILY MACKAY

"The combination of a seemingly never-ending cold and the excitement of the new Maccabees album in my inbox nearly caused complete respiratory failure. Worth it, though."



CHRIS PARKIN

"Watching *In The Night Garden* while listening to David Lynch's 'Crazy Clown Time' took me to a place I've not been since watching *Stars In Their Eyes* on mushrooms."

DRAKE

TAKE CARE YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/ISLAND

R&B star's much-anticipated second album is a belter – but the feeling lingers that he's capable of much more



In indie circles, R&B has long been stigmatised – sickly sweet vocals and dry humping inanimate objects not being in keeping with the ethos of the asymmetrically

fringed masses. Drake has completely transcended any such snobbery with a delicate, mellifluous sound and unashamedly candid, emotive lyrics.

The half-Jewish Canadian – who played a wheelchair-bound student in TV teen drama *Degrassi: The Next Generation* until 2009 – is clearly not your typical rap/R&B star. On his US chart-topping debut, last year's 'Thank Me Later', he unleashed a lifetime's worth of angst, bemoaning his lovelorn mental state.

'Take Care', his highly anticipated follow-up, begins in a more assertive mood, with the rapper declaring that he "killed everybody in the game last year" on opener 'Over My Dead Body'. Success can breed arrogance but the platinum-selling artist's braggadocio is suffused with melancholia. "I might be too strung out on compliments/Overdosed on confidence" he laments on lolling lead single 'Headlines'.

His lingua franca of heartbreak soon bleeds through on 'Marvin's Room' as he tries to win over a girl he knows is out of reach. "Talk to me please, don't have much to believe in/Need you right now, are you down to listen to me?" he sings down the phone, sounding totally crestfallen.

The yearning, sun-kissed title track, produced by Jamie xx, sees guest Rihanna in the role of an almost motherly figure: "If you let me in, here's what I'll do: I'll take care of you".

The despondency is obviously contagious, infecting his Young Money label boss Lil Wayne on 'The Real Her' as he bemoans: "Cos to her I'm just a rapper and soon she'll have met another" (a line earnestly cribbed from 'Miss Me' on his protégé's debut). The song's second guest, Andre 3000, also gets in on the emo action, declaring: "Sittin' here, sad as hell, listening to Adele, I feel you, baby".

Just as on 'Thank Me Later', 'Take Care' is heavy with the beats of long-term collaborator Noah '40' Shebib. But although the sparse arrangements are a perfect match for Drake's often lethargic mood, when the hip-hop bent of Just Blaze's production on 'Lord Knows' kicks in it hits like an elbow to the solar plexus, every euphoric gospel choir burst inducing a tremor of emotion through the body. In light of this, it somehow feels a shame Drake didn't experiment more with unfamiliar sounds. Such is the esteem that he's now held in, the refrain of "I'm just sayin' you could do better" on 'Marvin's Room' is one that lingers. Yet considering 'Take Care' is an affecting masterpiece easily on par with his debut, there could be no greater accolade for the genius of this man. **John McDonnell**

DOWNLOAD: 'Lord Knows', 'Take Care', 'Headlines'

8





CHILDISH GAMBINO

CAMP GLASSNOTE

US comedian Donald Glover has seriously good rhymes



Donald Glover – aka Childish Gambino – is well aware that he conforms to no-one's idea of hip-hop 'realness'. But then, as he points out, "All the real niggas I know are

either crazy or dead", so it's hardly his loss. Raised a Jehovah's Witness in a small Georgia suburb, Glover graduated from NYU and wound up working in television, landing a writing gig on *30 Rock* and an acting one on *Community*. Last year, The Internet got *this* close to having him cast as the new Spider-Man, and next year he'll be seen in the new Muppets movie. Hardly the stuff great hip-hop is made of, right?

Um, wrong. For starters, Glover is no dilettante: 'Camp' is his fourth full-length under his *nom de rap* (taken from a Wu-Tang Clan name generator), and the best to date. For another thing, while he's a gifted comedian, his focus is never really on being funny – just witty, heartfelt, honest and occasionally uproarious.

He's been variously tagged as backpack and nerdcore, and you can kind of understand why: on 'LES', Glover skewers his own hipsterhood by describing a bathroom clench with a girl who's "Got ironic tattoos on her back/That ain't ironic bitch, I love Rugrats", before decreeing on 'Hold You Down' that "you're not not-racist 'cos The Wire's in your Netflix queue". Pop-cultural references like that abound – his indie namechecks range from Mumford & Sons to Radiohead to Sufjan Stevens – but there's also an emotional heart to songs like 'Outside' and the epic, seven-minute (and largely spoken-word) 'That Power' that can't be expressed in air-quotes.

"Why does every black actor gotta rap some?" Glover wonders on 'Bonfire', before concluding, "I don't know, all I know is I'm the best one". And that's true, even if it's not much of a claim. I'm about to make a bigger one on his behalf, though: fuck Tyler's empty posturing, this is the hip-hop album of the year.

Barry Nicolson

8

DOWNLOAD: 'That Power', 'Outside', 'Bonfire'

AEROPLANE

IN FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT ESKIMO



Having made his name with SoundCloud mixes – and remixes for artists including Friendly Fires – Aeroplane faced a dilemma when it came to his first mix

album: how do you entice 40,000 people who have been downloading your stuff for free to shell out for a CD? His solution was to assemble exclusive tracks from artists he's tipped, add a new production of his and put them together in a mix that reeks of Balearic beaches and suntan lotion. The result is a brilliant album of off-kilter house, funk and exotic pop that should entice even disco skinflints. **Ben Cardew**

DOWNLOAD: 'Herr Styler - Zero Ghosts Out The Door'

7

THE DØ

BOTH WAYS OPEN JAWS

VILLAGE GREEN



It's a commonly held truth that when it comes to decent European pop, Scandinavia is where it's at and France is where it definitely is not. However, on

their second album, French/Finnish duo The Dø are helping l'Hexagone conquer the Vikings. 'Both Ways Open Jaws' is tribal, prickly and wickedly playful, courtesy of singer Olivia Merilahti's loopy vocal. The apocalyptic jump-rope skits of 'Gonna Be Sick!' and 'Slippery Slope' are highlights of a chaotic record that makes such a racket, you'll be able to hear Sweden quaking in its boots. **Laura Snapes**

DOWNLOAD: 'Slippery Slope'

8

THE RIDER
What we're reading and watching this week



Art
NME/Sonic Editions prints
Stuck for Christmas presents? NME and Sonic Editions have just printed a fresh selection of our iconic shots – including a cracking picture of Julian Casablancas and Jarvis Cocker. It's the only way you'll fit all of Arcade Fire under your tree.



Book
Gig Posters: Rock Show Art Of The 21st Century Vol 2
For over a decade, *gigposters.com* has been showcasing exquisite gig artwork designed by independent artists. In this compendium, you can read interviews with some of the designers, and pull out 101 perforated and ready-to-frame posters.



Film
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1
While not as incendiary as the last OST, you can't argue with The Joy Formidable, Theophilus London and Iron & Wine soundtracking the penultimate vampire sexual frustration-fest.

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's
FRASER McALPINE



WOOWOOS

FIZZY LETTUCE MOSHI MOSHI

It's inconceivable that a band with the sense to call themselves WooWoos don't know that 'Fizzy Lettuce' is a silly title for a brooding pop song. Especially when they refuse to explain how this salad became carbonated in the first place. Then again, they do also sing about dessert, and I could swear someone mentions rollmops in the chorus, so there's a lesson for us all here: never write while peckish.

JESSIE WARE

STRANGEST FEELING PMR RECORDS

Meanwhile, Jessie, who can't tell if she's hungry or sad, has embarked on a ramshackle adventure a woozy world away from her previous SBTRKT productions. 'Strangest Feeling' is what happens when you take a sparkling Katy B pop song and throw it in a haunted moat. The twinkly bits are washed off by a murk of clicks and moans, while the bass becomes progressively more waterlogged.

BRETON

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR FAT CAT

There's a bit halfway through this relentless face-prod of a song where a spiralling harp attempts to curl around the unforgiving rhythm, to make everything less austere. It's a gesture as beautifully doomed as putting a tulip on a pneumatic drill. Forget Hard-Fi trying to capture the sounds of the street, this is the sound breezeblocks would make if they decided to form a band, instead of a wall.

CHARLI XCX

NUCLEAR SEASONS THIS IS MUSIC

"Huh! Breezeblocks... You think THAT'S clever," sing the Geiger counters on the shelf, "wait until you hear OUR band. We've got that Charli XCX in, and she's singing in a pouty voice about surviving decay, yeah? And we swoosh around doomily in the background. Throw in some melodious hiccups in the chorus and we're off to *Top Of The Pops!*" They were ever so sad when I told them the show had been cancelled.

EMA

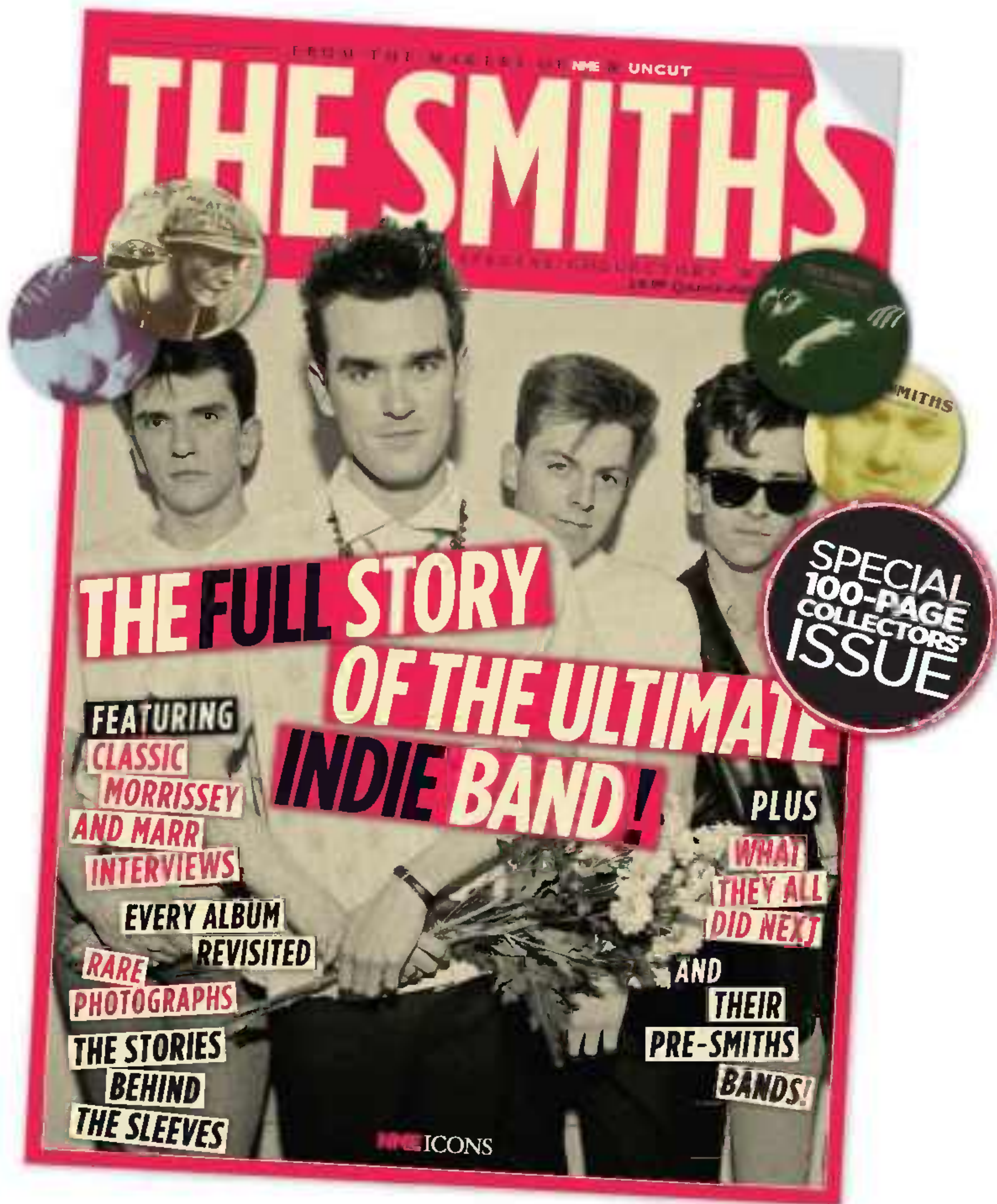
MARKED SOUTERRAIN TRANSMISSIONS

Remember the twinkly bits from Jessie Ware's song? That's the stuff EMA makes her music out of: the scrape of raw knuckle across guitar string, an ominous rumble, a worried child's internal monologue, the wheezing of an asthmatic angel, leaning on the organ in a church, these are her fragments. How she manages to sew them all into a recognisable quilt by the end of proceedings is anyone's guess.

BOS ANGELES

DAYS OF YOUTH ROUNDTABLE

There's no time for sonic stitch-work for the Bos boys. Their mission is simpler: 1) Make a buckety surf noise. 2) Repeat it. 3) Sing, dance, whoop, shimmy. 4) Stop, a mere two minutes and 16 seconds later. 5) Go about their business. Which just leaves you and me to complete item 6) Repeat until snoozy.



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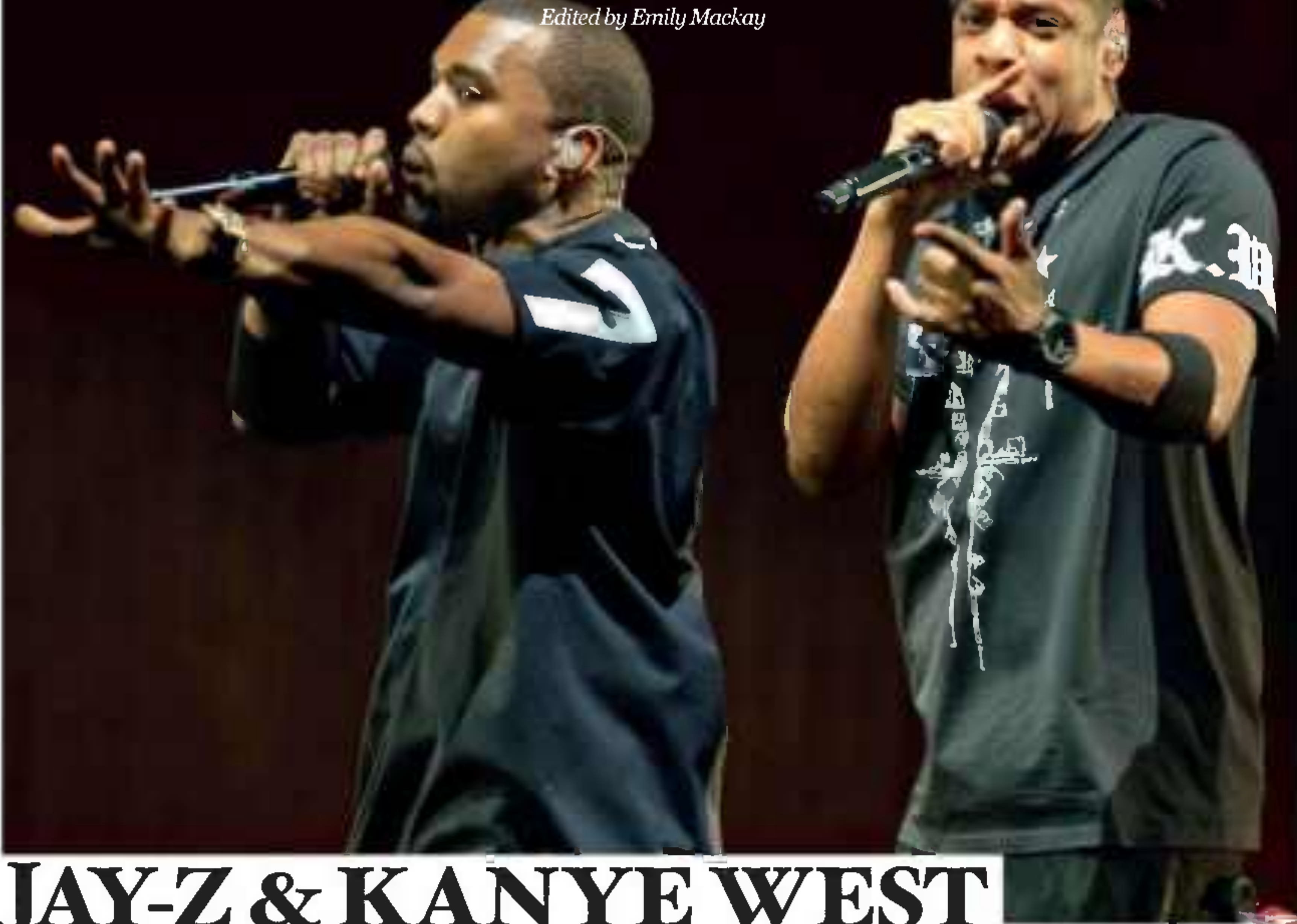
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LIVE

HURTS, AZEALIA BANKS, ST VINCENT

Edited by Emily Mackay

JAY-Z & KANYE WEST

IZOD CENTER, NEW JERSEY SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5

If this was meant to be megastars just lazily cashing in, it seems no-one told the megastars

The problem with supergroups is that they are, almost by definition, a breeding ground for complacency. When you've realised virtually all of your musical goals and become used to fame and adulation, summoning the will to earn it all again is something that few are willing or able to do. Given that both Kanye West and Jay Z are pretty much the biggest music stars in the world right now, 'Watch The Throne' is a project that should be mired in malaise – but watching them perform together, it becomes apparent that the only thing capable of pushing each of them to greater heights is the other.

Right from the off, the scene is set for gladiatorial rap battle. As opener

'HAM' resounds around the arena, the Jigga is at one end of the venue, Yeezy at the other, and they both ascend high above the crowd on gigantic cube-shaped podiums as they spit the track's boastful verses at each other. Once they unite on the same stage, this titanic face-off is given a suitably dramatic backdrop, a giant American flag is unfurled, giant pyrotechnic effects are triggered and, somewhat bizarrely, images of cheetahs killing their prey in the Serengeti are projected on screens. It's staggeringly pompous stuff, but when coupled with the commanding bombast of tracks like 'Otis' and 'Welcome To The Jungle' it creates an exhilarating marriage of immodesty.

As well as performing a further smattering of 'Watch The Throne'

cuts, the duo take turns at dazzling the crowd with their solo material. It's a tag-team combo that just seems to get better and better as the show goes on; Jay dishes out classics like 'Where I'm From' and throws down the gauntlet by

Kanye can't compete with Jay's rhymes, but his physical energy is just as powerful

demonstrating his untouchable vocal dexterity and dominance. Then Kanye returns, and though he can't quite compete with the ferocity of Jay's rhymes, his physical energy during 'Jesus Walks' is just as powerful. Every

time one of them brings something new to the gig, the other responds in kind, and the one-upmanship continues until the excitement level inside the building is barely legal.

By the time they get to the business end of their two-hour plus set, it's impossible to know who has the upper hand anymore, but judging by the way they dust each other off during 'Niggas In Paris,' it looks like they're happy to call their Herculean head-to-head a draw. For the 10,000 flabbergasted fans looking on, however, 'Watch The Throne' is an emphatic win. **Hardeep Phull**



HURTS

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON, LONDON
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Adam and Theo are huge stars, the show's a big success – but didn't this used to be more FUN?

Twenty-one months ago, Hurts played their debut UK gig, in tiny St Philip's Church in Salford, attended by a smattering of curious journo's and industry folk. Now look at them, playing the final show of the 'Happiness' world tour at a sold-out O2 Brixton Academy. In the intervening time the duo have grown from opinion-dividing curios into one of our biggest and best-loved bands. They've sold a million singles and a shade off a million albums, filled arenas everywhere from Iceland to Estonia, and been impersonated badly on endless dodgy foreign versions of *The X Factor*.

Tonight is the classic triumphant homecoming. The crowd's ear-bleeding adulation never lets up, but is there a sense – and I'm just playing devil's advocate here – in which Hurts were actually *better* as no-hopers, a major label folly destined for glorious failure? Originally the Hurts live experience consisted of two blokes, a seven-foot-tall opera singer named Richard, and a backing tape. Now there are 11 people onstage, including two dancers. It's all a bit slick. Yes, even for Hurts. And... hang on, where's the opera singer? Poor massive Richard is gone!

Theo sings all the parts himself (including Richard's former showpiece, 'Verona'). I picture Richard at home alone, weeping into his cummerbund to

the strains of 'Nessun Dorma'. In the end, having a stony-faced and mostly extraneous opera singer onstage was one of the ludicrous touches that made Hurts unique and lovable. By ditching Richard they are approximately 12 per cent less ridiculous, and that's a shame.

Highlights? Well, obviously 'Stay' and closer 'Better Than Love'. Almost two years of touring have whittled them into surging pop Exocets, obliterating all possible opposition or reservation. Low point? Kylie showing up to duet on 'Devotion' and her own 'Confide In Me'. Of course, she gets a hurricane-strength welcome, but her appeal remains mysterious. She's a blank, a hamster squeak, a whiff of Febreze.

When it's all over there's no farewell speech, no recognition that this gig is in any way special. Perhaps they're saving themselves for the aftershow (the next day Theo tweets about "the greatest night of our lives... a collapsing Dutch supermodel and about 1,000 bottles of tequila... the perfect crescendo"). This makes an enjoyable and efficient full stop at the end of 'Happiness', but no more than that. **Luke Lewis**

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TWIN SISTER

DEAF INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

So, how was your weekend?" Andrea Estella smiles to the subdued crowd. "Thanks for coming out and being so sweet. And so sleepy." Whether it's due to the approach of midnight or to the hypnotic qualities present in Twin Sister's loose, hazy pop, tonight often feels like a waking dream, with a mute-tongued Manchester pinned down by what unfolds before us. After support Holiday Shores endure something of a 'mare, Estella and her band could justifiably wonder whether this will be a night to forget, as the light-footed funk of 'Stop' and 'Bad Street' somehow fail to register. While this tour is ostensibly to promote new album 'In Heaven', there's plenty of more familiar material in the set – but even this seems to slip by almost unnoticed, with 'Lady Daydream' and 'Ginger' being greeted with only reverent applause.

All the while, though, a potent magic has been bubbling quietly away, and it's only when the band step down from the stage, leaving Estella and guitarist Eric Cardona alone and exposed, that it truly takes hold. Shorn of its motorised beats and muggy synths, 'Kimmi In A Rice Field' reveals a spectral beauty, and Estella and Cardona's voices – sometimes overly similar on record – work together to weave a subtle spell upon the transfixed room.

After that, the group reconvene for 'Daniel' and 'All Around And Away We Go', but we're too woozy to dance. It may be late, but this is a dream that will last long into the waking hours. **Neil Condon**

DOG IS DEAD

COCKPIT, LEEDS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Looking dapper in cable-knit and buttoned-up shirts, the five members of Dog Is Dead display their earnest and learned harmonies, bobbing in perfect synchronisation like a human wave of politely restrained testosterone.

Robert Milton, taking the lead on vocal duties, possesses a textbook boy-band smile: he's a sly wink and a bare chest away from a pop career but, luckily, the rest of the band reign in the schmaltz, diverting enough of the crowd's attention with the lilting guitar lines of their Vampire Weekend-meet-Mumford & Sons student anthems.

As bass player Trev cleans the dust from the low-arched ceiling with his curly mane, the rest of the band alternate between thrusting wildly (loud bits), bobbing excitedly (poppy bits), and swaying in shut-eyed reverence (harmonies). Always synchronised. Always in time. Dog Is Dead are note-perfect and never miss a beat, but just a few songs in they have already become predictable, crowd-rousing-by-numbers, hands in the air for the 'old ones'. They are at their best in 'River Jordan', when they hint at post-rock leanings; only then do they seem more concerned with playing than performing, as guitar lines noodle amid the cacophony and around the vocals, bolstering them, rather than providing a soulless backdrop. 'Glockenspiel Song', though, is clearly the track that fills the room and flogs the tickets – but here's hoping they don't have to get every new track played on *Skins* in order to keep up the momentum. **Hayley Avron**

WHAT'S ON YOUR RIDER?



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- 24 bottles of water (chilled and non-chilled)
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- Bottle of sauvignon blanc
- Fruit juices
- Soft drinks (including root beer)
- Sandwich materials (vegan and meats)
- Six scratch cards
- Surprise us!

MARCUS FOSTER

MOJO, LIVERPOOL TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Acoustic singer-songwriters tend to be of similar stock these days. Frank Turner, Newton Faulkner, Ed Sheeran, Sam Duckworth – in fact, put together any two names and you'll find some chump with a guitar, an earnest song or two, and the ambition to be voice of their generation. So it's almost a relief when we hear Marcus Foster's weathered, rasping voice work its way around the room tonight. The young Communion signing looks no older than 25, but we suspect he wishes he was in his 50s – his world-weary lyrics belie his young face to the point that you'd think this was a convincing pastiche of his influences. That's not to discredit his songwriting, however. It is succinct, flamboyant and heartbreaking in the right places, something his peers often lack, and he's more captivating live than on record. 'Old Birch Tree' is quite a dull piece of MOR on debut LP 'Nameless Path', but here it's delivered with soul. A version of the album's standout song, 'I Was Broken', is both devastating and uplifting in equal measure, and a beautiful cover of John Martyn's 'Couldn't Love You More' shows he can hold a candle to his predecessors, a homage not lost on this audience. If he's a voice of any generation, it's probably that of the Radio 2 listening mum, but that's no bad thing. **Mike Doherty**

AZEALIA BANKS

HOXTON SQUARE BAR & KITCHEN, LONDON
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Hip-hop's sparsely-dressed new star has a potty mouth – and definitely more than one great song

"I was about to give more of a show than I came over here for, knowwhatI'msayin'?" smirks Azealia Banks, clutching her red-and-white striped bustier to her chest. It's teatime on Sunday, and Azealia's clothes appear to be falling off, shaken loose by the aggressive bounce with which she's stomping any sense of Sabbath restfulness out of the first of two short, sharp showcases.

Industry and hipsters are out in force at both to check out the latest gutter-mouthed goddess. 'Fazed' is not, however, a word in Azealia's inventively disgusting vocabulary. Strolling on in mohair coat and tiny denim shorts, she couldn't be more at ease. She starts with a fierce cappella, her DJ, Cosmo, scratching a belligerent beat out behind her as she tosses out warnings about the dire possible consequences of fucking with her. "Try something slick and get your dick backed up/You can either bit the door in peace or watch your meat bit the floor in pieces/Believe this" she assures on the beguilingly nonchalant, Peter Bjorn And John-sampling 'The Chills'. And, yes, the vicarious thrill of a pretty young woman talking abject, violent filth is nothing new, but Azealia's wit, her energy, her rawness

make it fresh. Though after the bitchy, crunky 'Barbie Shit', she throws in a truncated cover of 'Valerie' as a nod to London's own late dirty diva, it's clear that rapping is where Azealia's talents and heart lie, and you can't imagine her, like Nicki Minaj, getting sidetracked into balladry. The spirit of Lil' Kim sleazes through the moody, menacing 'Runnin', her collaboration with Lunice, blended with an omnivorous musical

taste and an eye to the dancefloor. "This is the jam that probably brought y'all here tonight," she says as she brings the evening showcase to a jumping end. "So take your shirt off, pull your dick out, do whatever you need to do..." Everyone else manages to keep their clothes on but completely loses their shit as the maddeningly aggressive synth of '212' begins to wind up, and as Azealia starts howling "THIS SHIT BEEN MINE, MINE" the whole room bounces with her.

She chucks in the chorus of The Prodigy's 'Firestarter', taking things up to breaking point, and then, that's it. She's gone, leaving them wanting more. Let's just hope the fickle affections of the internet stick with her long enough to realise that she's more than just that one song. *Emily Mackay*

VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Demisha Anderson, London

"Excuse my French, but it was fucking amazing. I wanna be her best friend."

NME: Does she have any other songs that stand up to '212'?

"Well, I knew a few others. 'Barbie Shit' is amazing, people will be cutting shapes to that!"



ST VINCENT

WEBSTER HALL, NEW YORK
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Annie Clark's twisted tales of identity and inadequacy surf a wave of adulation

"My face is drawn on with this Number 2 pencil", sings Annie Clark in the final song of her set, 'Your Lips Are Red', as she steps in front of the microphone and teeters on the edge of the stage. A soundman rushes to roll out cable. Clark sways for a moment in the strobe, then flips over onto the ready arms of the audience who carry her, one leg raised, out into the crowd.

It's a moment of release from Clark's usual poise and comes hard earned. St Vincent's twisted pop songs expose the madness that goes on behind a mask drawn on in pencil – from failing at motherhood in 'Cruel' to lying to keep the peace in 'Cheerleader' and 'Surgeon'. Her characters stress about their inadequacy. As she tells Webster Hall, the video for 'Cruel' shows Clark being kidnapped by a motherless family who bury her alive after they realise she can't cook, clean or care for them properly. If household cleanliness might be a problem, Clark makes up for it in control: both creative control and the kind of self-control she exudes onstage, though her chilly demeanour tonight could also be nerves. There is a moment before 'Save Me From What I Want' where the spotlight dances across Clark's face as she takes in the packed 1,400-capacity venue and her mouth makes a small 'o'. David Byrne, with

whom she is collaborating on an as-yet-undisclosed new project, watches from the wings. Cameras follow Clark everywhere, streaming the performance live for MTV in a mark of mainstream acceptance if ever there was one.

Creative control has served Clark well on three solo albums since she stopped touring with The Polyphonic Spree and Sufjan Stevens last decade. But it wasn't until this year's 'Strange Mercy', an album that stretches ideas about identity and anxiety over woodwind arrangements and nifty angular riffs, that she started attracting the attention she deserves.

She exudes self-control, although her chilliness could also be nerves

At Webster Hall, Clark plays puppets with her audience. She warms with a story about drinking tequila and running through a cemetery on Halloween before launching into 'Neutered Fruit', then squashes a heckler who says she can't shred with the words: "What is this, a live Twitter feed?" A growling cover of The Pop Group's 'She Is Beyond Good And Evil' speaks for itself. Tonight it's all in the eyes, wide and unblinking, until the sudden stagedive. But don't be fooled: Clark's studied femininity is a ruse for something much, much bolder. *Hazel Sheffield*



PIETER NIVAN HATTEN, RICHARD JOHNSON

On The Road With **KATY B**

Plane destruction, naked shower videos and arse midgets⁵ — they might sound smooth, but 'sexy witch' Katy B and her crew are rock'n'roll on tour



Reading time on, Monday, 4pm
Katy reads her favourite book, 'The Hobbit', at low volume, unaware of the it was the clown wot dun it



Lights off Katy's resting, her crew's asleep
Lights off, Katy's resting, her crew's asleep
Lights off, Katy's resting, her crew's asleep

DOMED, BRIGHTON MONDAY, OCTOBER 31

Katy B is at the controls of a helicopter on the final leg of her UK tour, but things are rapidly getting out of hand.

'KRAKK!' The chopper smashes into the tourbus window, and Rinse mastermind Geeneus leans in to inspect the damage.

"That's a hundred quid you owe me," the 'On A Mission' co-writer and producer tells Katy, flinging a protective arm round her shoulder while *NME* secretly gives thanks it wasn't our face getting mashed up beneath the blades.

The helicopters aren't life-sized just yet, but Katy's second headline tour is undeniably grand in scale – the south London star and crew have been living for the past few weeks in a double-decker tourbus with its own games room and library.

Tonight it rolls into Brighton. It's Halloween, and we're following Katy to the dressing room where we're told she and her bandmates will be kitted out for the occasion. Our leading lady, it transpires, is plumping for the 'sexy witch' look: no green facepaint or crooked noses, just a cutesy, conical hat and little black number which Geeneus says he can "see her bum crease" in.

The atmosphere backstage at the penultimate show of

Katy's tour is fun-bordering-raucous, and Gee can usually be found somewhere near the silliness' epicentre. In between aiming his (miraculously recovered) helicopter at various people's heads, the

boss man cracks wise about everything from ITV's weekend programming schedule to Brixton, whose resident hipsters he says are oblivious to what really goes on ("It's true! In Brixton McDonald's there's two queues; the ghetto queue and the trendy queue").

Even Gee's court-holding, however, is upstaged by Caelan, the superfly, three-year-old son of Katy's hype man, Tippa. Flipping through his daddy's iPod with terrifying ease, the little fella finds the artists he wants by looking at the record sleeves (he's too young to read the names) and gives word-perfect renditions of Tinie Tempah and J Cole, among others – though his old man snatches the gadget away before he can hit 'play' on Bob The Builder.

Katy gets finished with her make-up and nips in the room next door to get changed.

"Are you havin' a number two in there?" shouts Tippa, tittering. "Cos it's getting a bit whiffy in the dressing room." "Yeah – it's coming out your top lip," Katy shoots back, and Tippa is forced to accept defeat as the room falls about laughing.

Half an hour later the potty-mouthed hype man is clad in ludicrous werewolf mask, as the band step out to the strains of Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' and

Brighton goes properly nuts. It's an awesome show which sees Katy backed by brass, girl singers and the almighty clatter of Junior on drums. Our main gal, meanwhile, doesn't put a foot wrong all

night, bopping her way through the likes of 'Broken Record', 'Katy On A Mission' and 'Perfect Stranger' with ease.

PAVILIONS, PLYMOUTH WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2

On Wednesday *NME* rejoins Katy in rain-lashed Plymouth, which brings big wheels and even bigger helicopters as Gee looks to replace his by-now written-off old model. We're driven to a grim-looking timber yard where Katy poses between the bags of gravel, and a model aeroplane shop lurks improbably in the wet. As if that wasn't glamorous enough, Gee is having a ding-dong on the phone with someone from the venue about merchandising rights. He hangs up, and buys himself a brand new helicopter. To call it bigger than the last one would be something of an understatement: you could ask a shih tzu to pilot the ruddy thing and still have leg room in back.

With that we're off to sample the cultural delights of Plymouth: principally a fuck-off Ferris wheel overlooking the seafront. It has a pretty gangsta-looking VIP carriage with blacked-out windows and complimentary bottles of bubbly, but we make do with a regular booth and drink in the views with Katy and her make-up artist, Vicky. Gee is still fuming after his phone call and declines to join us ("I've spent all my life living on the top of council blocks, what do I wanna go on that fucking thing for?").

On the way back to the venue, Tippa winds up Katy about the fact she's been offered a personal trainer. Taking the piss is pretty much the glue that holds this lot together, it would seem, whether it's backing singer and token northerner Rihanna (real name, honest) being greeted with a sarcastic "Ey oop!" when

she walks in the room, or Tippa being taunted with cameraphone videos that capture him taking a soapy flannel to his, er, intimate areas on the tourbus shower.

Back at the venue, Katy regales us with tales of her merch stall guys, who are all from Essex and are literally mental. One of them, she says, got a tattoo of a third nipple done while out on the road. Another's uncle claims to have copyright on the word 'reem' (er, ©?). A third used to work in a sex shop and donated an 'arse midget' to the touring company.

"What's an arse midget?" we ask gingerly, sort-of-but-not-really-wanting to know the answer. Katy leads us to front of stage, where a black gnome leers at us from underneath an obscenely protruding hat. "He's sort of become our mascot," Katy beams proudly.

Tonight's show is a bit slow to warm up, but by the time Katy drops an '80s/'90s throwback double-whammy in 'Good Life' and Robin S' 'Show Me Love', the joint is officially jumping. From Katy's exhortations to treat the performance as a 'rave' instead of a concert to the hokey attempts at flogging T-shirts onstage, there's the understanding that this is pop music by, for and of the people – no need for S&M dancers or posing as Christ in a wheelchair here, thanks, just a straight-up display of great music, locally sourced.

"Katy's come a very long way in a very short time," says Tippa at the show's finale, urging on the crowd. "And there's not many ordinary girls coming out here and mashun' up the place like this!" He takes some stick for that speech after the show ("bruv, it's not the fucking *X Factor*"), but secretly they must know he's hit the nail on the head. As the crew washes down the taste of success with Nando's and bubbly, *NME* gets ready to take our leave: now where's that chopper when you need it? *Alex Denney*

VIEW FROM THE CREW



Tim, merch
seller

**Why do you have
a tattoo of
a third nipple?**

"We did a gig in
Newcastle and
I know a few good
tattoo artists there.
I thought, 'Why not
show my respect to
the people with a
third nipple?' I've
never looked back."

**Would you consider
investing in
a fourth?**

"I'd need to do my
research, see where
a fourth nipple's
usually located."

RICHARD JOHNSON



Brighton, Monday, 5.30pm

Peekaboo! And you all thought it was Mick Hucknall hiding under there, didn't you? Below, Tippa bops up his skeleton crew



Brighton, Monday, 10pm

Katy rocks the 'sexy witch' look with a tiny hat that resembles a goth's upturned ice cream cone



Plymouth, Wednesday, 9.30pm

The hat's been nabbed, but Katy thinks she knows the culprit...it's that arse midget! Below, Katy gets wheely high



Plymouth, Wednesday, 11pm
Katy's fans wait outside in the rain for an autograph. Shoes optional, apparently

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NOW!

ON REPEAT

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



FACTORY FLOOR

Two Different Ways
It's Factory Floor's first release for New York label DFA – and oh my, did they choose a corker to get things started. 'Two Different Ways' is a less feral beast than some of the London trio's previous cuts but, with Nik Colk's icy vocals, neuron-frying synths and nods to Chicago house played out over nearly 10 minutes of noisy bliss, it's a behemoth of a track nonetheless.

Ben Hewitt, writer

SEYE ADELEKAN

White Noise
Recognise that surname? Seye is Gbenga from Metronomy's bro and, going by his debut songs, wicked rhythmic ways run in the family. Here, Seye picks up where Katy B's 'On A Mission' left off, crooning saucily about putting "my cigarette inside your paper cup" on a night out over frenzied tribal beats, like Fela Kuti for the Rinse generation.

Laura Snapes, Assistant Reviews Editor

DRAKE FT RIHANNA

Take Care
Producer Jamie xx completes the dream team on this epic anthem of emo-hop taken from Drake's delayed 'Take Care' album. Like the negative to 'What's My Name's' full-colour Polaroid, Drake twists hip-hop's macho bravado 360 degrees on this chilling, housey ode to love and togetherness.

Priya Elan, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

GROSS MAGIC

Yesterdays
Brighton boy Sam McGarrigle nails a perfect sweet spot between grungy grind and woozy, Ariel Pink-style psych-pop. This extract from a split seven-inch with Novella, The History Of Apple Pie and Echo Lake on Marshall Teller Records is his gnarliest work yet, reminiscent of early, scary Mercury Rev.

Emily Mackay, Reviews Editor

ROSTAM

Don't Let It Get To You
Rostam's latest solo foray – away from Vampire Weekend – mines a little Latin

American flavour and nicks the chugging drumbeat from Paul Simon's 'The Obvious Child'. Without Ezra yelping over the top, the whole thing's prettier, calmer and more blurred-around-the-edges. Less an ice-cold horchata, more a warming winter tumbler of mulled wine.

Luke Lewis, Editor, NME.COM

THE BIG PINK

Hit The Ground (Superman)
Early signs for the new album from the now-clean-living Big Pink are promising. Following 'Stay Gold', this second excerpt hits with almost as many soaring, big beat melodies – who needs a drug intake so high that sniffer dogs keel over when they walk within 50 yards of the band members, eh?

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

HOWLER

Back Of Your Neck
These Minneapolis teens better have broad shoulders, given they've already been charged with kick-starting that long-mooted rock'n'roll revival next year. Thankfully, this turbo-charged rocket from their forthcoming debut LP sounds so bloody massive it's already pretty inevitable that they'll pull it off.

Rick Martin, News Editor

LAURA MARLING

I Was An Eagle
Of all the new material currently getting road tested at Laura's live dates, this missive raises our hopes highest for the fourth album – a beautiful yet barbed dispatch to a former flame that insists "I will not be a victim of romance/ I will not be a victim of circumstance".

Tim Chester, Deputy Editor, NME.COM



PULLED APART BY HORSES VENOM

As an opening salvo from the Leeds noise mongers' new LP 'Tough Love', 'VENOM' certainly feels like a statement of intent. Surprisingly raw and outstandingly heavy, it builds to a crushing metal outro that nods to vintage Motörhead. PABH are back with a mighty wallop.

Tom Goodwyn, writer

TRACK
OF
THE
WEEK

THE MACCABEES

Pelican

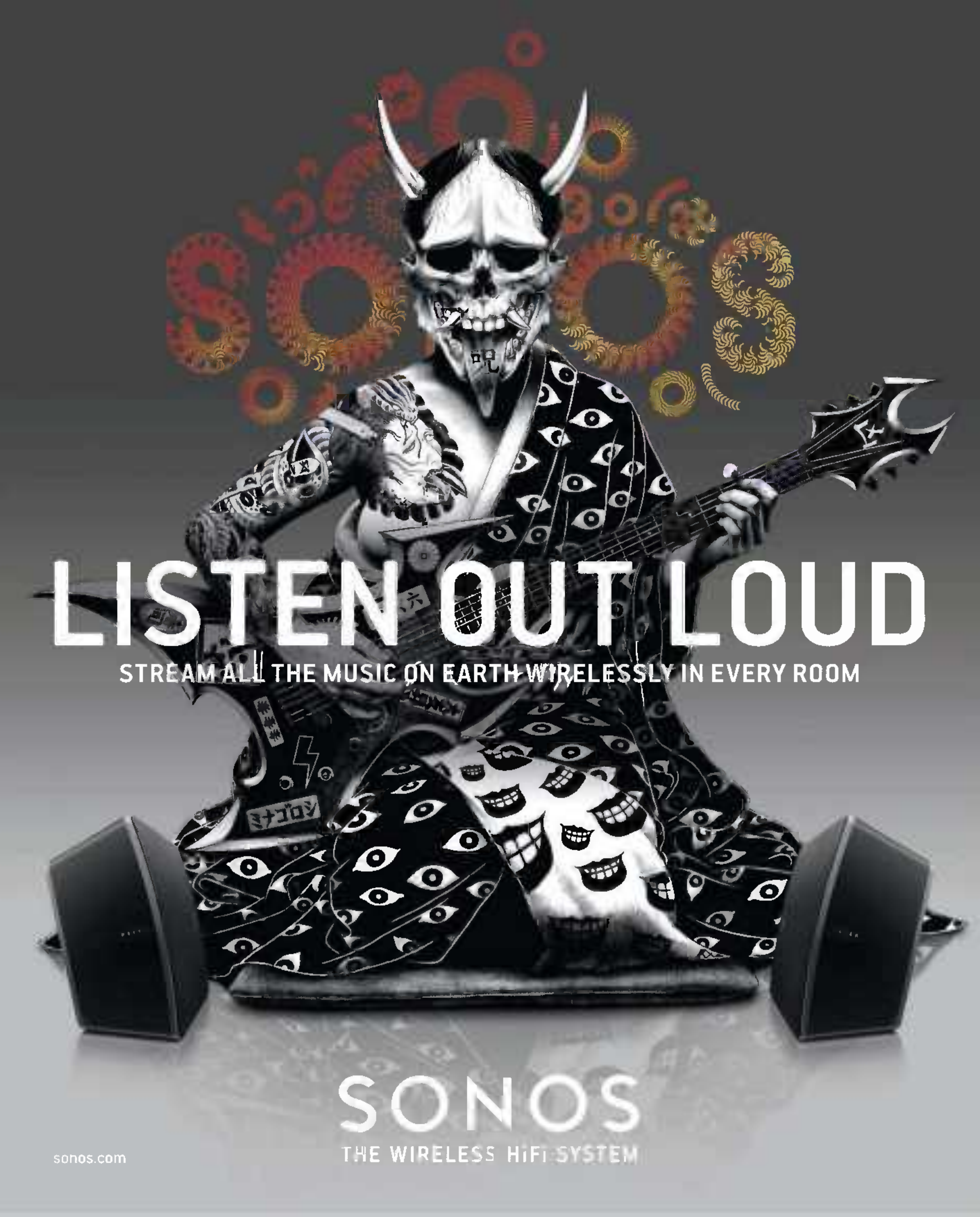
In their most recent *NME* interview, The Maccabees enthused that playing the sort of massive gigs that Arctic Monkeys and Kasabian do would be something that they'd be "totally up for". This is a good thing because – and make no mistake about this whatsoever – 2012 is going to be their year, and the point at which they step assuredly into The Big League.

In the same way that, prior to second album 'Wall Of Arms', 'No Kind Words' indicated that here was a cult concern making a giant leap into the realm of Bands To Be Taken Seriously, as a first taste of forthcoming third album 'Given To The Wild',

'Pelican' marks a step into the Take Very, Very Seriously stage. It is the sound, unmistakably, of The Maccabees we all know and love, but it's more strident, adventurous and instinctive. Nimble guitar lines, svelte, lissom rhythms, a tear-beckoning, beautiful vocal... so many bands in recent times have attempted to retool themselves for arenas by turning up the reverb and borrowing a Bono chorus. One of the most exciting things about 'Pelican' is that, yes, it sounds suited to larger rooms, but it's also like a completely natural step forward. It sounds like the best young guitar band in Britain at the absolute peak of their powers. 2012 is going to be emotional.

Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor

Yes, it sounds suited to larger venues, but it's also a natural step forward



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UPFRONT

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

Edited by Rick Martin



The likely lads:
John, left, and Carl



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SPECAL

"A LOT OF BRIDGES HAVE BEEN BUILT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS"

MAIN
EVENT

Reunited on the European film festival circuit, The Libs' Carl Barât and John Hassall reveal that reconvening with Pete is on the cards – though not for a few years

To know your future, you must first

understand your past, as the old saying goes. And lord, are Carl Barât and John Hassall being given plenty of opportunities to understand theirs this week. *NME* has joined the pair in Denmark, in the midst of a jaunt around the continent's film festivals to promote *There Are No Innocent Bystanders*, Roger Sargent's documentary on The Libs' fractious 2010 reunion shows. The film is given a big screening at the Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival tonight (November 9). Carl insists they're here simply to "hold Roger's hand", but when we sit down afterwards with the trio, it's clear that watching it on the big screen has reopened a few old wounds. We pick Carl up on one of the threads in the film, that he'd feel "incomplete" if he didn't make another Libs album.

"One day, I'd love to do that," he muses – despite telling us just six months ago he'd "never again" talk to the press about The Libs. "In the film I say I'd feel incomplete not to go down that road further. But also I want to do something important to me now. Right now we're not ready. We can't just book another tour without having written an album, and there's no conceivable space to write an album for the next couple of years. I speak to [Pete] quite a bit. It's grand. We don't have to mention The Libertines. It was definitely the end of the chapter."

"One has to choose the right time to do stuff," says John. "Last year was the right time to do that and you can't force these things. It has to be natural." But it's a 'when', not an 'if'? Carl: "Well maybe, if that's the way you think about

it, but bear in mind it won't be for the next couple of years. There are no plans and we're all very busy. The official line is 'no'. Not next year and probably not the year after."

Roger, an *NME* photography legend and a firm Libertines 'insider', is rather more candid about the possibility. "A lot of bridges have been built in the last six months or so. Peter and Carl are talking, they've not made plans but compared to how it was when the film was finished – it was very difficult, they had quite a big falling out and it really did look like the absolute end – it's my opinion that they're not just gonna come back and play gigs, they'll make a record in 18 months to two years. They can't just do it tomorrow, though, because every member of the band is doing something else."

"There's been no pressure," says Carl. "It echoes throughout the band. We've spent that much time together that whenever we are together it's like nothing's ever really changed."

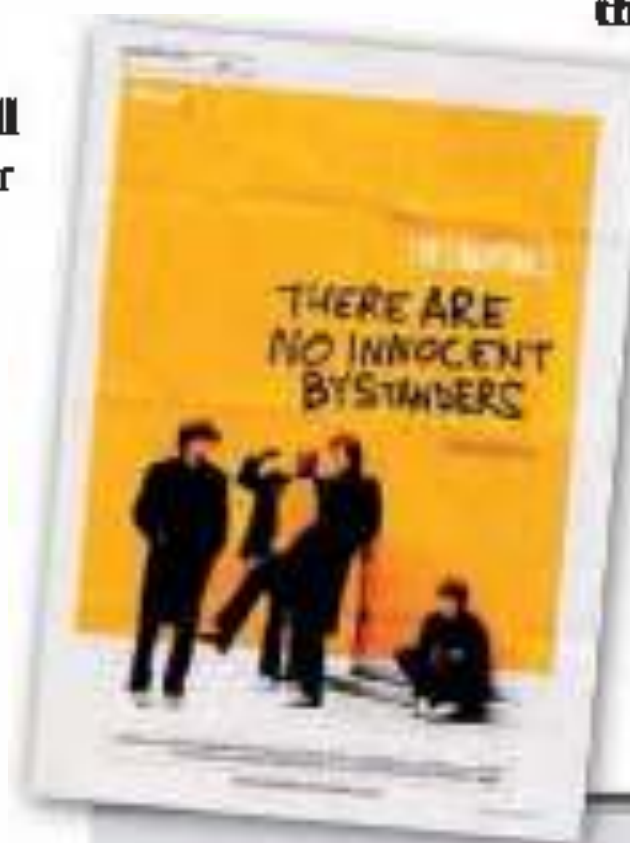
Carl and John reunited yesterday in Copenhagen – a short drive from John's home in Aarhus, which Carl claims is situated "in the middle of Aarstreet" – and, almost instantly, they found the old Libs chaos on their heels. At last night's screening the soundtrack was out of sync and Carl had to stop Roger finding and punching the projectionist. "My inner Ghandi came out. It all blacked out and there was a big round of applause. I think people thought it'd finished in typical Libertines-esque confusion. It was about five or 10 minutes in."

NME joins them for John's guided tour of Copenhagen, taking in the surprisingly little Little Mermaid statue (Carl: "I was expecting

titls like The Darkness would ride in on") and a boat trip around the city's waterways. At tonight's Q&A session at the festival, Carl admits that, of the three weeks The Libertines had booked to rehearse for Reading and Leeds, they only managed four hours.

"The reason it's meant a lot to a lot of people is because those problems and fuck-ups are so naked and exposed," says Carl. "It was the people's hand, it was everyone's hand as much as ours. I'd like people to take that romance with them."

And their plans for the 10th anniversary of 'Up The Bracket' next year? A reissue perhaps? Carl: "Is that a good thing to do? That'd just piss everyone off, wouldn't it? A different box. I don't see any point to that." John has a better idea. "We could go to the pub together and celebrate it?"



"FILMING WITH PETE WAS HARROWING"

Roger and Carl remember the making of There Are No Innocent Bystanders

Roger: "As much as possible, I felt I blended in to the room. I think it would've hampered the rehearsals if there'd been a crew in there."

"Filming the interview with Peter was one of the most harrowing experiences of my life because he got very, very upset. We caught him on the middle of a tour in

January this year and he'd obviously been going over things a lot since [Reading and Leeds]. He was on a knife-edge, emotionally. There was a hell of a lot I couldn't use from the interview."

Carl: "It's a bit cringey for me... I get stressed watching it. But it's great to document the coming together of all the years of supposition

about how big The Libertines were to people. No-one really knew because we never got to do that gig. So to get the opportunity to actually prove it right, it wasn't some kind of mythology – or if it was it doesn't matter. Everybody was there and everyone was together and everyone wanted to tear it up..."

BE A ROCKSTAR

Two Door Cinema Club formed by accident when Kevin was trying to snog Alex and Sam's mates. Four years later, they're one of the UK's most successful new bands. Want to know more about their crazy lifestyle?

Paco Rabanne Black XS has the answer

Black XS
paco rabanne

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NME AWARDS SHOWS ANNOUNCED



Justice live. Just like football, apparently.

JUSTICE: "WE HAVE TO DELIVER"

The Gallic duo announce five NME Awards Shows and get cracking on their third album

We're working around the clock, 24-7 at the moment," beams a wide-eyed Xavier de Rosnay, speaking about Justice's preparations for their NME Awards Shows next year. "We want to make sure it looks amazing." The Parisian pair are spending the next month beaver away in their garage working on the lighting for the shows, which will see them play five gigs across the UK [see column right for full details]. And they've got good reason for putting the extra effort in, too – Xavier explains they feel more pressure playing in our capital than almost

anywhere else in the world. "When we play London or Paris, it's like a football team playing a home game," he explains. "You can almost feel the expectation from the crowd. We have to deliver."

One thing we weren't expecting was news of a third album, given that their second – last month's 'Audio, Video, Disco' – was almost half a decade in the making. But it seems that they're not planning on such a laboured process next time around. "We were thinking just yesterday how cool it'd be to start making some new music already," Xavier reveals. "It's funny, we spent a fair amount of time making 'Audio...' – but we're not sick of being in studios. Yet."

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Those
NME
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Shows in full

JUSTICE

O2 Academy Bristol (Feb 9)
O2 Academy Brixton London (10)
O2 Academy Birmingham (11)
O2 Academy Glasgow (12)
Manchester Academy (13)

CHARLI XCX

Lexington (8)

SLOW CLUB

Heaven (9)

PURE LOVE

Bush Hall (14)

BAND OF SKULLS

XOVO (15)

TUNE-YARDS

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (15)

TOTALLY

ENORMOUS

EXTINCT

DINOSAURS

Heaven (16)

CLOUD CONTROL

Electric Ballroom (17)

THE BIG PINK,

The Garage (20)

KURT VILE,

Koko (21)

ALABAMA SHAKES

Boston Arms (22)

OH LAND

Heaven (23)

LITTLE DRAGON

Forum (24)

MARINA & THE

DIAMONDS

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (26)

THE DRUMS

Roundhouse (27)

All dates London unless otherwise stated

Tickets go on sale this Wednesday (Nov 16) at 9am



THE BIG PINK'S WILD NIGHTS WITH HOT CHOCOLATE

Bed by midnight, mugs of cocoa... What's up with Milo and Robbie?

Nightcaps of hot chocolate? We were aware The Big Pink were knocking partying on the head – they said as much on these very pages earlier this month – but little did we know they were taking things this far. "Robbie's been spending hours and days in singing lessons nurturing his voice," explains Milo. "He doesn't smoke, he doesn't do drugs." Even a night out in London for their NME Awards Show next February can't tempt the boys back to their debauched ways, either. Says Milo: "We like to be in bed with a cup of cocoa by midnight these days." According to Milo, they also got "in a bit of a rut" singing the heartbroken missives of 'A Brief History Of Love', so they're looking forward to a change in that department too.

"Everything was written around splitting up with girls, and we didn't think about playing the songs for two years afterwards," he says. "This time we kept that in mind, so we tried to keep everything as optimistic as possible." And, hints Milo, "there may even be a viola" involved onstage – oooh, hark at them...



MARINA: "THE SHOW'S GOING TO BE GRAND!"

New personae, theatrics and even costume changes coming this way...

"I've only done one rehearsal so far, and it only lasted two hours," laughs Marina guiltily, as she confesses she hasn't quite got round to knocking her new batch of songs into stage-ready shape just yet. "But by February, I'll definitely be ready." That's heartening news: not only is the singer's second album 'Electra Heart' scheduled to drop around then, but she'll also be showcasing the bulk of her new material to the masses for the first time at her NME Awards Show.

So far, Marina's revelations about 'Electra Heart' have hinted at a muddle of different scenarios and personae without fully divulging how such lofty, character-based ambitions will be

knitted together. For now, she simply says it will all "become a lot clearer" very soon – but she does promise that the theatrics will be incorporated into her gigs. "It's all going to run through the live shows hugely, because a lot of the project is so visual and film-based. It's going to be much grander than before," she says. "I'm sure I can manage a costume change or two." Frankly, we'd expect nothing less.



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"Don't all look at me, this was your idea too"

ART ATTACK!

Thought MGMT couldn't get any weirder? As a bizarre evening at New York's Guggenheim proves, it seems the madness is only just beginning

FRONT ROW

What links MGMT with a 51-year-old Italian artist whose first ever solo show in 1989 was just a closed gallery door bearing a sign saying 'be right back'? Maurizio Cattelan, the artist in question, has made a career out of defying expectations. For one show, he stole another artist's exhibition with the intention of passing it off as his own, for another he persuaded a gallery owner to dress in a bunny-cared penis suit. For a month.

Someone obviously saw the connection between the artist with an eye for satire and indie's most wilfully difficult duo, because tonight (November 11)

MGMT play the second of two shows at New York's Guggenheim Museum to celebrate Cattelan's last exhibition before retirement. There may be mannequins of horses, dinosaur skeletons and a boy hanging from a noose dotted around the room, but MGMT's 45-minute prog jam is comfortably the most out-there thing NME witnesses tonight.

Heralded by a bass wobble, Andrew VanWyngarden, Ben Goldwasser and co slink down a staircase, which explodes into light from a series of coloured strobes. As the assorted high-heeled city types and specky art school musos cheer, the band pick up a creepy carousel theme

on keyboards and guitars... and the madness begins.

A giant screen behind them shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog, only punctuating the jam with some mildly diverting spaceman sound effects. There's no breaks, no chat; Andrew and Ben barely even look up. When the crowd realise there's more chance of hitching a ride on a horse mannequin than hearing 'Kids' or 'Time To Pretend' – or even a track from 'Congratulations' – someone sparks up a spliff and the room descends into chatter.

The set climaxes with the kind of doomy drumming that characterised 'Lady Dada's Nightmare', before morphing into 12-bar blues. Forget defying expectations – this was a batshit endurance test pitched somewhere between demented genius and total bollocks. Bet Maurizio Cattelan loved it.

A screen shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog



VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Nick Lomanto, 23
"That was the worst concert I've ever been to! I'm a big fan, but they bombed. They didn't play any of their good songs, didn't even look at the crowd. They should have played some hits! That's what people paid for! And I've never been to a show where there wasn't an encore."



Carina Williams, 26
"I thought it was great! The sound really matched the installation. It seems a lot of fans who came here tonight were expecting to hear MGMT from three years ago, but I feel like this was more of a familiar sound from their last album. It was like a [film] score."

“WE’RE BRINGING BACK DIRTY ROCK’N’ROLL”

Taking aim at chillwave, shoegaze and Casio drums, Minneapolis’ – hey, maybe the planet’s – best new band **Howler** talk us through one of 2012’s most anticipated debuts

IN THE WORKS

“It’s not just about music, it’s about my life in general. I need to be doing something at all times or I will fucking blow my brains out.” We should point out that Howler’s 19-year-old singer Jordan Gatesmith is speaking with a sense of manic glee rather than Cobain-esque ennui. The loping frontman is still recovering from his first ever tour, supporting Tapes’n’Tapes across America (a series of “major ups and major downs”, apparently), but is also now in possession of his first ever album, completed a mere three months after his band were picked up by Rough Trade. Called ‘America Give Up’ and to be released on January 16, it springs from a single, simple aim. Gatesmith explains: “Me and Max [Petrek,

keyboardist] were just sitting there one day and we thought there’s not really been a really great rock – ROCK! – record, or even a punk record, in ages. I keep hearing a lot of witch house stuff, chillwave, shoegazey keyboards with Casio drums. But not rock. So we wanted to make it dirty rock’n’roll.”

While three of the 11 tracks – ‘Told You Once’, ‘This One’s Different’ and ‘You Like White Women. I Like Cigarettes’, now-renamed ‘Wailing (Making Out)’ – have been re-recorded after they appeared on the band’s debut EP, everything else on the album is brand new, with centrepiece ‘America’ among Gatesmith’s favourites. “We wanted to write a song like Bruce Springsteen and that’s where that one comes from. It’s actually ended up very Jonathan Richman-sounding, but at the same time it’s got this whole big Springsteen vibe about it.”

The singer also admits he could be in for a kicking back home due to the album’s title, but says it’s actually meant to be tongue-in-cheek rather than bitchy. “Yeah... we’ll see what happens over here with that one. I think it’s pretty funny. All the British people will probably understand it fine, I just hope people over here see the humour too.”

Recording at Minneapolis’ SO-TM studio (also the place where serial killer Andrew Cunanan committed his first murder, as the band informed us during their *Radar* interview a few months back), Gatesmith says the only real difficulty they encountered was when it came to picking

a cover. “God, we’ve had so many problems with that. It was supposed to be like a Lucky Strike cigarette pack,

but we ripped it off and got in loads of trouble. We were talking to their people and they were going on about marketing plans and legal shit, because apparently RJ Reynolds [the 19th-century tobacco tycoon] still owns the image. It looked fucking sweet, the original one. In the end we had to adapt.” Not that Gatesmith is too concerned with that. As he admits later, he’s busier than ever at present, so he’s happy. “You know, I would actually drive myself fucking insane if I wasn’t doing this...”

THE DETAILS

Title:
‘America Give Up’

Released:
January 16, 2012

Recorded:

SO-TM, Minneapolis

Rehearsed/written:

The back of Java

Jack’s Coffee House

in Minneapolis

On tour:

The Garage, London

(Nov 16), The Bowery,

Sheffield (Nov 18), Old

Blue Last, London

(Dec 8)



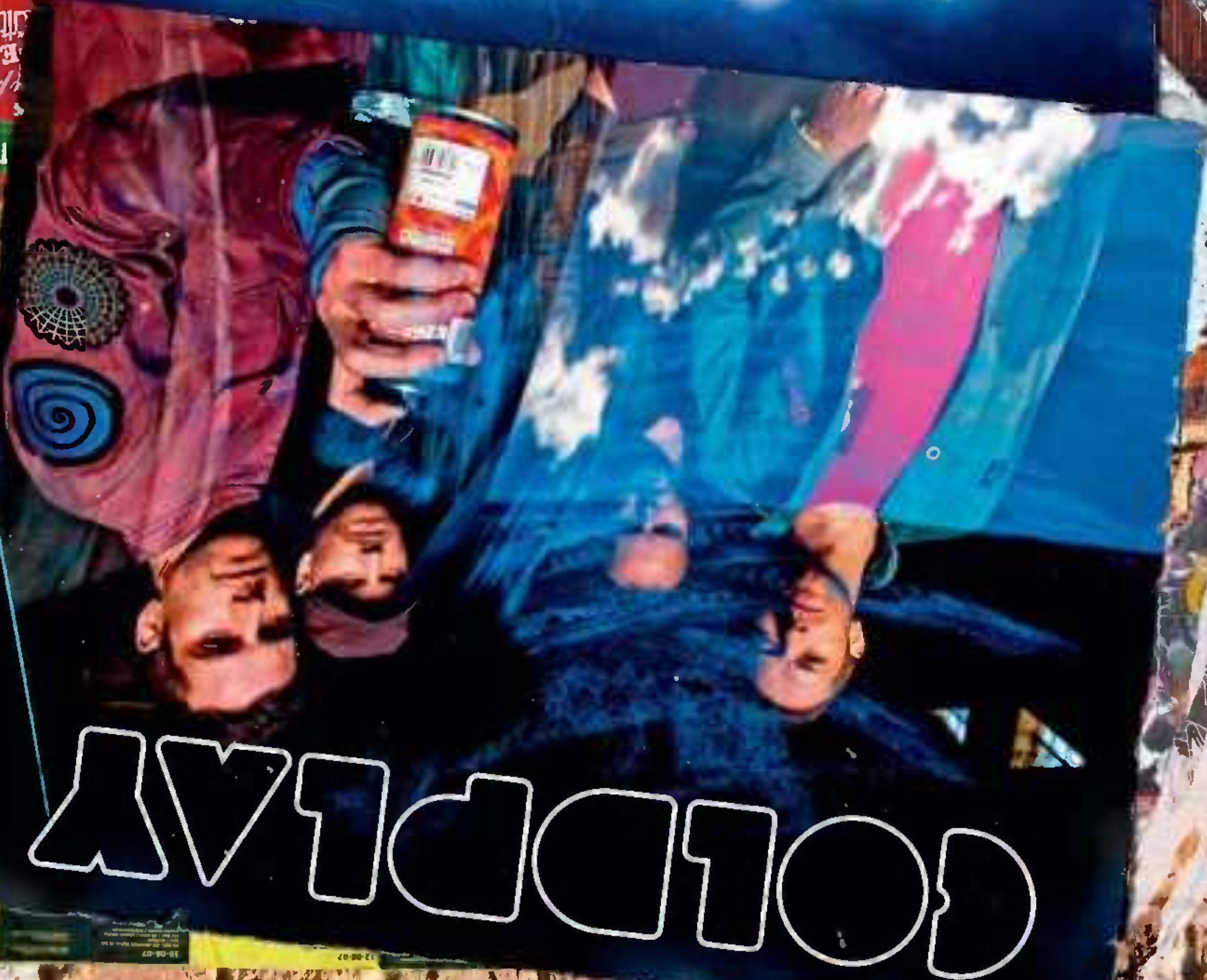
Howler's bedroom sure is cool

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PIECES OF ME ORLANDO WEEKS

The Maccabees frontman on drinking gin at his first gig, the 'James Dean of otters' and why The National's lyrics are so brilliant

My first album

FUGEES - 'THE SCORE'

"I think I bought it from Woolworths in Woodbridge in Suffolk. That was the first thing I'd listen to in the car. To me, the Fugees was something else that sounded like I could sing along to, just as well as to The Beatles."

My first gig

LAURYN HILL, WEMBLEY ARENA, LONDON

"My friend Josh from school and I went right to the front, where we made friends with these much, much, *much* older women who gave us shots of gin. It was a dreamy night, I don't even think I remember the tunes, I just remember thinking how big everything was. Lauryn Hill, six costume changes. And maybe two glasses of gin - it was amazing."

The first record I loved

THE SOUNDTRACK TO BUGSY MALONE

"The only other film that has music in it that's as good is Disney's *Robin Hood*, with the foxes and the bear. The whole of *Bugsy Malone* is great, every song is kind of funny and poignant and definitive of an era. I remember that our family took us to go and see the *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* musical and it wasn't as good. I think that was the Jason Donovan era."

My favourite lyric

THE NATIONAL - 'SLOW SHOW'

"The National have a beautiful lyric, '*You know I dreamed about you for 29 years before I saw you/ You know I dreamed about you/ I missed you for 29 years*'. That's one of the most romantic things you could ever say to anyone, but it's not cheesy. It's perfect and it's concise. I first saw the band on *Jools Holland* - he's brilliant for that kind of stuff. I remember trying to phone Felix [White, Maccabees guitarist] while he was trying to phone me at the same time when he saw Arcade Fire play, watching him [Win Butler] play his guitar back to front and thinking, 'How can you be part of a band that is that brilliant and also do something that looks like Talking Heads?'"

My favourite place

ALETSCHEGLACIER, SWITZERLAND

"It's a huge glacier but they've drilled holes in the side of it so you can walk right into the centre of it, through 200 metres of ice. We went because we were driving back from a festival, we must've gone the wrong way because there was no reason to drive over a whole mountain range, we could have just skirted it. We sat there for three hours. Even with lots of tourists around it, it felt alien."



It's not comparable to anything else I've ever seen; I've never felt as weirded out as being in the middle of a giant ice block. It's like the dwelling of a Bond villain."

My favourite film

TARKA THE OTTER

"It's a film about the life story of an otter. It's beautiful. If it's just one otter playing the part, it is the James Dean of otters. There's a heron and there's a love interest, White-Tip. It's multicultural because there's an owl family. It's an animal melting pot, by the side of a river."

My favourite artist

STANLEY SPENCER

"I was taken to Sandham Memorial Chapel [where Spencer's work is exhibited] when I was about 13 or 14 and I remember thinking that it was the most incredible atmosphere and just being stunned into silence, not wanting to make a rude sound or anything like that. That must mean that there's something really special going on there. And I remember that very clearly, in the same way as being on a school trip to the Somme and even the funny kids at school just shut up."



Clockwise from main: looks like Orlando needs a refill; The National frontman and lyricist Matt Berninger; artist Stanley Spencer; Fugees' huge-selling 1996 album *The Score* with frontwoman Lauryn Hill in the centre; the soundtrack to 1976 kiddie gangster romp *Bugsy Malone*; *Tarka The Otter*

VERSUS

PETER ROBINSON *vs* JONATHAN PIERCE

The Drums' man on stealing biscuits and how he doesn't care about chart positions – yeah, yeah



• The Drums are obsessed with interviews by Ke\$ha and Marina & The Diamonds

• “We have a thing for watching them crumble – oh my god!” exclaims the indie funster

• True to Jonathan's spooky prediction, that single did not exactly set the charts alight

Hello, Jonathan. I went to see Britney recently...

“YOU DID? I went to see her about three months ago! My manager took me as a surprise. And it certainly was a surprise! A good one – I laughed my ass off. It was like watching somebody mash potatoes for two hours, which was sad but she has some good songs.”

Anyway, there is a bit in her show where she gets on a massive swing the size of the stage and sings a song. Would you have a massive swing on stage?

“Oh god, no way, I don't think *(laughs)* we'll ever do anything more than a few lights. We're even nervous about having a strobe. It sounds pretentious but we really like our songs and we feel they speak for themselves.”

I like that you recorded your last album in a kitchen. Did your record label keep coming in to see how the album was coming along and/or steal biscuits?

“It's ideal if you're hungry. Amy, my manager, she stops over all the time, but right at the start our label said, ‘We know you're different from other bands so we'll let you call the shots.’ The whole team around us is pretty cool. Maybe just not telling us things that are awful... They know we're sensitive lads.”

You have sensitive lad cheekbones and haircuts.

“*(Cackles)* That we do, that we do. You just watch, this next record we're coming back with big mountain beards. And tiny instruments. Like little accordions and bells and whistles.”

How good are you at growing beards? The Drums don't really strike me as the hairiest of recording artists.

“No, man, I think I had my first hair under my arm when I was about 19. It took a long time, I got picked on the whole time. But who's laughing now? Who's laughing now? *(Laughs)*”

No waxing for Jonathan from The Drums!

“Exactly! Who's in line at the waxing station now? Not me. I'm touring the world motherfuckers! I'm joking.”

If you take up swimming you'll be quite aerodynamic.

“Oh man, I really wanna do that. I'm a big fan of Björk and I read that she – this could be completely made up



– goes swimming every morning because it helps with her voice. All I wanna do is go swimming but I don't think my feet have been in water in over two years.”

You have washed your feet in the last two years, let's just clarify? “That is true. What do you think?”

I think you've washed your feet. “*(Howls)* YOU ARE RIGHT! You are right about that. Ding ding”

Finally you have a record out now in the UK. What's your chart prediction?

“Er, I'm gonna say... Which chart?”

The proper one. Your singles haven't exactly bothered the higher reaches of the Top 100 so far. Is it all going to change?

“Oh I don't think so! *(Laughs)* I don't even know where our last single registered on the chart.”

I'm looking at your chart positions now on Wikipedia and it doesn't make for pleasant reading, Jonathan, I'll be honest. But hey, it's not about the chart positions, so don't you worry.

“We're very happy with where we are and what's happening with the band. I feel like a lot of that crazy hype has subsided and now we can just get on with it. To be honest it feels exotic and thrilling to be focusing on these things. Without doing too many interviews about, you know, who cuts your hair or whatever.”

But who DOES cut your hair? “Jacob cuts all our hair.”

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1 2 HOWLER
'I TOLD YOU ONCE'
Brunch Truck

2 3 SCUM
'AMBER HANDS'
Wax

3 6 DRY THE RIVER
'WEIGHTS & MEASURES'
MCA

4 4 THE BIG PINK
'STAY GOLD'
St

5 7 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB
'LIGHTS OUT, WORDS GONE'
Wax

6 9 LANA DEL REY
'VIDEO GAMES'
Polygram

7 10 MIKI & THE DOVE
'THE DRUMMER'
Virgin

8 12 THE VACCINES
'TIGER BLOOD'
Polygram

9 8 ARCTIC MONKEYS
'SHUCK IT AND SEE'
Domino

10 16 KASABIAN
'RE-WIRED'
Liberty

11 13 FLORENCE + THE MACHINE
'SHAKE IT OUT'
KID

12 11 NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS
'AKA... WHAT A LIFE!'
Sire

13 33 FRIENDLY FIRES
'BLUE CASSETTE'
St

14 1 THE VACCINES
'WETSUIT'
Liberty

15 14 TRIBES
'WHEN MY DAY COMES'
Wax

16 17 JUSTICE
'AUDIO, VIDEO, DISCO'
MCA

17 36 YOU ME AT SIX
'LOVERBOY'
EMI

18 27 COLDPLAY
'PARADISE'
Polygram

19 5 MANIC STREET PREACHERS
'THIS IS THE DAY'
Polygram

20 15 THE DRUMS
'HOW IT ENDED'
Wax

NME RADIO

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

NME TV

Watch the Top 10 video chart countdown every weekday on NME TV
SKY CHANNEL 387
FREE SAT 510

NME .COM

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



NEW TO NME RADIO PLAYLIST

• FRANK TURNER
'Wessex Boy'
• FOSTER THE PEOPLE
'Call It What You Want'
• GOTYE
'Easy Way Out'

The NME Chart is compiled each week by NME Radio and is based on how many times each track has been played on the station over the previous seven days.

RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Matt Wilkinson



ABOUT
TO
BREAK

A\$AP ROCKY

The NYC rap upstart with a swagload of tunes and a \$3 million record deal

It's exactly a week since self-dubbed "pretty motherfucker" A\$AP Rocky released his 16-track mixtape 'LiveLoveA\$AP', and he strides into the Polo Grounds Music offices a couple of blocks from Madison Square Garden. "How's it going, B?" 23-year old Rocky greets label boss and hip-hop kingpin Bryan Leach, fixes himself a Hennessy and Pepsi from Leach's personal bar, and drapes himself over a leather armchair, laptop open and Facebook on before he hits the seat. The last week has been a good one for Rocky, the Harlem-born rapper whose real name is Rakim Meyers (yep, he's named after THAT Rakim). "Finally, people have to come out with if they like me or not now," he says. "There's no wondering if I'm good or not. And I've been getting a lot of good feedback."

Good feedback is an understatement. It's not even a year since A\$AP Rocky and A\$AP Ferg dropped a handmade video for a track they made called 'Get High' on YouTube. At the time Rocky had moved his mother and baby sister from Harlem to

New Jersey and was paying for their apartment by selling drugs on the street.

"It was a way of surviving: I didn't have a job, my mum didn't have a job," he says – but pushing dope finally came to an end in July, around the same time he put a new video, 'Purple Swag', online.

It took a third video – for woozy Houston rap number 'Peso', in August – and suddenly everyone wanted a piece of A\$AP Rocky. Including Polo Grounds Music, part of Sony/RCA, who put a \$3 million deal on the table to sign him and fund a group label called A\$AP Worldwide, with Rocky in charge.

"I'm a tastemaker. I know how to look out for what's good, what's big, what's next," he says, pulling out a bag of weed and calling up YouTube videos of Tennessee 'gangster walk' and Lana Del Rey.

If there's pressure on him to deliver, Rocky's not feeling it yet. "This is easy!" he says lighting up with a grin. "Selling drugs is hard. But this? All you gotta do is show up and do what you love." *Hazel Sheffield*

NEED TO KNOW

FROM: Harlem, New York

FOR FANS OF: Odd Future, Drake

BUY IT NOW: 'LiveLoveA\$AP' is available online for free now

SEE HIM LIVE: He's hoping to be in the UK in January

ON NME.COM: Watch Rocky's best vids

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Rocky turned vegetarian recently. "It doesn't make sense to take a life for your satisfaction," he says.



GAUNTLET HAIR HEAD TO UK

US duo heading this way with tales of slashed tyres, pummelled housemates and wizard dicks

RADAR NEWS

"We had a party at our old house in Denver and after we left we caught wind that some guy had slashed our van tyres," informs one half of Gauntlet Hair, Andy Rauworth, when asked how things have been going since the release of their self-titled debut album last month.

"Then, there was another time in Missouri when we stayed with some strangers and woke up to the sound of them pummelling each other. One of them threw the other one down the stairs. I don't know why it's so violent lately but we do seem to attract the stranger crowd."

If you're also a fan of casual violence then you're in luck – Gauntlet Hair have just confirmed their first ever UK dates, and are heading over here to spread the, er... *love* next February.

"Neither of us have been overseas," Andy enthuses, adding that the dates will see him and co-mainman Craig Nice playing stripped-down versions of their songs to compensate for the fact that their backing band are too

skint to head over for the tour. "There will have to be a lot of changes to make it work, though, because the album was recorded for a full band. The [tracks] might even change entirely," he explains.

One thing that is staying put, however, is their eyebrow-raising name, which Craig brilliantly defended recently by telling detractors to "go suck our medieval, hairy, wizard dicks."

"That [comment] was something he pulled off that we're all very proud of,"

"I don't know why, but we attract the stranger crowd"

ANDY RAUWORTH

Andy chuckles. "It's exhausting for reviewers to continually give us shit over it but there's some excellent points to having a name like that. If you type in Gauntlet Hair into your Google search box all you get is this fucking band. I figured [the critics] would tire of writing the same shit over and over again but they're still going at it."

We're sure that people will have some far more interesting things to say about Gauntlet Hair once February rolls around... *Lisa Wright*

The Buzz

The rundown of the music, videos and scenes breaking forth from the underground this week



1 FEAR OF MEN TEAM UP WITH BOS ANGELES

Two of our favourite new bands are heading out on the road together this week. Fear Of Men and Bos Angeles (above) play a number of co-headline dates on the jaunt, which kicks off at Manchester's Trof this Thursday (Nov 17). What's more, both acts are also readying new releases. Bos unleash their Cure-esque double A-side 'Beach Slalom'/'Days Of Youth' via Roundtable Records on November 21, while FoM release the excellently titled 'Alice Munro Demos' cassette tape on December 12 – head to NME.COM/newmusic now to hear two exclusive songs from it and check out the bands' tour dates in full.



2 BRETON'S NEW VID

The south London band – who live in a disused bank – release debut single 'Edward The Confessor' on November 21, but it's the video which is really kicking up a fuss. Filmed in-house under the collective's own bretonLABS moniker, you can see it for yourself on NME.COM/newmusic now.



3 MEXICAN SUMMER'S 100TH RELEASE

With a history taking in Dungen, Kurt Vile, Best Coast and Wooden Shjips, it's not been a bad existence for NYC's Mexican Summer label. Formed three years ago, it celebrates its 100th release next Friday (Nov 25), with a special cut from Ford & Lopatin – hear it on NME's Daily Download blog now.



4 LIVERPOOL'S MERCURY

What Wales does, Liverpool follows. Sort of. The folks behind Scouse new music blog Getintothisco.uk have outlined their plans to hold a Mercury Prize-style award in the city next year, focusing solely on acts from around the region. Nominees for the inaugural award are set to be announced early in 2012.



5 IROK

AKA The Intergalactic Republic Of Kongo. AKA Mike Title from London non-starters Dead Kids. Mike dressed as Colonel Gaddafi – post-golden gun shooting – during IROK's set at London's newest, most depraved venue The Sebright Arms recently. It was the perfect setting for his self-described "violent and contagious psychotropic afro-punk".

BAND CRUSH



Patrick Wolf on his favourite new act

"Every time I feel stressed or under pressure I listen to Kreayshaw. And if I had to come back as any human being it would be Kreayshaw because in every video she looks so carefree and she doesn't give a fuck. She's really inspiring to me right now."

SCENE
REPORTWHAT'S HOT
FOR THE
HORRORS

*Rhys Webb from The Horrors
ponders the crystal ball of new music*



Welcome to the second instalment of Spider's top sounds and new bands to check out and catch live. This time I'm focusing on some of the hip young guitar slingers flying the flag for psychedelia and garage. First up – freakbeat ravers **Speak & The Spells**. They play

frantic punk rock, owing as much to '60s R&B legends The Downliners Sect and The Pretty Things as they do to Billy Childish. Check their debut EP 'She's Dead'.

The Hypnotic Eye are recording their debut long player and have recently been treading the boards at some of London's underground hot spots. They play sultry organ-led garage and feature the seductive lead vocals of Grace Lightman. Coffin Joe and I dropped in to the session for their forthcoming debut single 'Marianne' to lend some backing vocals recently, and there's a date at my clubnight the Cave Club on the horizon too.

Thee Vicars fuse the early punk sounds of The Damned and 'Spiral Scratch'-era Buzzcocks with a very authentic trashy garage blueprint. Kind of like a British Black Lips, who they often play with. I also love the London-based **Blood Music**, who play heavy, mind-bending noise that crashes and throbs like the klang of heavy machinery. They're currently putting the finishing touches to their debut single.

They're a little bit bigger now, but Portland's **Unknown Mortal Orchestra** are absolutely superb. They return to the UK this month. Get down there and check them out!

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Friendly Fires' Jack Savidge

RHYS'
TOP 5

SPEAK & THE SPELLS
'She's Dead'

THE HYPNOTIC EYE
'Fly On The Wall'

THEE VICARS
'Don't Wanna Be Free'

BLOOD MUSIC
'Unending Blues'

UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA
'How Can U Luv Me'

5
TO SEE
This week's
unmissable new
music shows

HOWLER (pictured)
Garage, London
16 November

**THE HISTORY OF
APPLE PIE**
Shacklewell Arms,
London
16 November

WISE BLOOD
Undertone, Cardiff
18 November

THEME PARK
Green Door Store,
Brighton
19 November

FOLKS
Deaf Institute,
Manchester
22 November



Money: Ryan
Jarmann's hair
lives on...

MONEY/
BEATY HEART

SACRED TRINITY CHURCH, SALFORD
FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER

CAUGHT
LIVE

Following WU LYF's well-documented ascension, it's been unsurprising to witness a glut of Manchester-based bands reverting to

similar smoke and mirror tactics. Yet for every act hastily cobbling together faux-cryptic imagery while simultaneously deleting their Facebook, there are those whose devotion to the art of presentation as a whole is clear.

Money are one such group.

Confidence isn't something they've always had during their fledgling existence. Starting

as Books last year, they quickly changed name to Youth roundabout when they were looking timid as openers for Deerhunter; 18 months on and the contrast is substantial. The four-piece tonight possess the sort of unashamed sincerity in their stargazing-from-the-gutter pop that can't not revitalise, particularly at a time when blogs are awash with guitar music diluted of emotion in lieu of slacker escapism. It helps that the Sacred Trinity Church's reverential surroundings match their clearly bombastic

ambitions. It helps, too, that they seem to have gained such local devotion despite having hardly any online music to their name. This is no more apparent than in support act Beaty Heart, whose post-'... Merriweather...' reels of sound are largely ignored. It's a shame, for the Peckham trio have gained plaudits in their own right, but this evening the blurred edges of their disorientated pop just doesn't conquer minds and bodies in the manner it's rightfully done elsewhere.

Money possess the sort of unashamed sincerity that can't not revitalise

Money are still raw, mind; a sound already heavy on reverb often spirals out of control, obscuring Jamie Lee's sharpened croon. Yet it's hard not to be pulled in by 'Who's Going To Love You Now?'s wide-eyed affectation, or the soul-searching balladry of 'The Sea'. Indeed, at times their sense of conviction is such that it could make a person latch onto them and never want to let go, leaving others to balk at a perceived hubris. You feel, though, that they wouldn't want it any other way. *Simon Jay Catling*



Looks like one of
The Hypnotic Eye
came straight
from work



One year ago **The Vaccines** were a hyped indie band with some exciting demos. Then they delivered an amazing debut album, slayed the world's festivals and bulked into one of our most thrilling live acts. **Barry Nicolson** joins their victory lap

Fuck, I've just had a Bono moment!" Wandering the corridors of Manchester's MEN Arena in search of his dressing room, Justin Young has become hopelessly lost and found himself surrounded by a mob of fans who have been camped outside the venue's front door all afternoon. After a few double-takes and gasps of recognition, one by one, they begin to encircle and approach. Some of them breathlessly tell him that The Vaccines are the reason why they've started a band of their own (he's been getting that one a lot recently), while some say nothing at all, but giggle nervously and present him with T-shirts, shoes, limbs or whatever else they can find that he can scrawl his name on. One girl approaches him on three separate occasions before finally working up the nerve to open her mouth. When he notices that his bandmates have all quietly slunk off, he elects to stick around anyway, ensuring that everyone who wants a photo gets one, making as much small talk as he can get away with, and maybe – just maybe – enjoying his Bono moment more than he'd like to let on.

To an outsider, The Vaccines' closeness is immediately evident; the shared weirdness of everything that's happened in the past 12 months has fostered a sense of unity and an unwavering self-belief in what they're ►



doing. Then again, given that they began 2011 as the band that other bands loved to hate, that's not much of a surprise. At Leeds this year, we spoke to a musician whose band broke around the same time as The Vaccines, and he confessed that – until he heard their debut album – he had jealously dismissed them as another London hype band who'd never had to work for their recognition. It wasn't an uncommon perception.

"Oh, I was definitely aware of all that," says Justin. "One of the first interviews I ever did was with a guy whose opening question was, 'Did you know that every local band in my city can't stand you?' As soon as he said it, I thought, 'Well, if they spent half as much time worrying about their own bands as they seem to do about mine, maybe they'd be riding this wave with us.' People think that if you're hyped, you've got it easy. But in a lot of ways, I actually think it made things harder, because with the hype came all the detractors who actively wanted us to fail. People will put every obstacle in your way, you know? I've been in bands since I was 11, getting it wrong over and over again. I've seen my friends do well and I've been jealous of them, but the only reason they were doing better than me is that, at the time, they were better than me. And all those bands who were sat at home moaning about us were just jealous because we were better than them."

We can't help but notice a difference in Justin's rhetoric since those early days. After all, this is the same man who was once at pains to play down every grandiose

claim being made on his band's behalf, telling *NME* back in January that, "It'd be amazing if we were ever in the charts – but I wouldn't bet money on it." What's changed? "We made a point of being quite self-deprecating in the beginning because we wanted people to get past all the hyperbole that was attaching itself to us, but we've always known we're a great band. Truly, I don't think there's another band out there who do what we do as well as we do it. That's not arrogance, that's just fact. I mean, can you name me any?"

As *NME* discovers, 'Doing what The Vaccines do' is not for the fainthearted. By the end of the year, the band will have played almost 150 gigs, 45 of those being festival engagements that sometimes saw them doing two shows in two different countries on the same day.

Everyone wants a piece of them right now, and you get the feeling that they can be a little too accommodating for their own good: after the gig in Cardiff (and after draining every last drop of their rider), bassist Arni Hjörvar and drummer Pete Robertson are accosted by a group of fans hanging around their tourbus who plead with them to come and watch their gig at the venue

across the road. Naturally, they agree, and everyone is soon sinking double Laphroaigs.

That eye-of-the-storm, seat-of-the-pants sort of lifestyle takes its toll, but it was the band's workload – not their partying habits – that brought them to the brink of catastrophe earlier this summer. Shortly after their triumphant Reading and Leeds performances

in August, Justin discovered that the vocal polyp problem which had plagued him all year would require yet another throat operation – his third time under the knife in just nine months – resulting in the cancellation of the band's entire American tour, as well as shows in Japan and Europe.

When we sit down with him in Manchester, it's clear that there's still a lingering uncertainty about what his vocal problems might ultimately mean for the

future of The Vaccines.

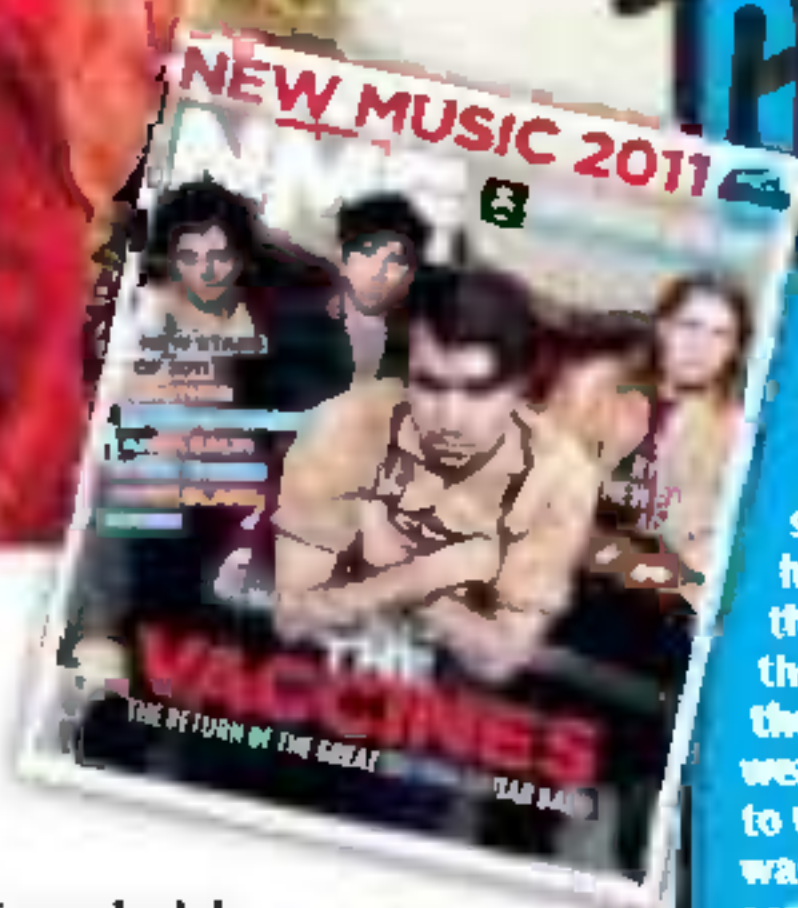
***NME:* We've heard about your throat – what were you actually diagnosed with?**

Justin: "I'd had a haemorrhage, basically. Whenever I would shout during gigs, the vocal polyp would bleed, then it would scar and it wouldn't close properly. So my voice would just start squeaking."

**"WE ALWAYS
KNEW WE WERE
A GREAT BAND"**
Justin



Clockwise from far left: onstage at MEN; Freddie takes off; the lads lament a poor turnout; Arni's facepalm moment; Pete shows us what he's got



THE FIVE MOMENTS THAT MADE THE VACCINES

How did you react when you found out you'd have to have a third operation?

"I was told in LA, when we were out doing *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* I went to the doctor because I was having a problem with my ear, but he mentioned I was sounding husky and that he wanted to take a look at my throat. I just thought to myself, 'Oh shit, here we go again.' I won't lie to you, I properly broke down when he told me he'd found the haemorrhage again. I was completely devastated, because it meant cancelling the American tour. I don't know how to say this without sounding cheesy, but it was like I was on top of the world one minute and in total freefall the next."

Was there a point where you thought that it might mean the end of the band?

"Oh yeah, definitely. I mean, it's pretty fucking serious stuff. I guess people were a bit pissed off at us for pulling shows and maybe they thought I was just lazy, but if I hadn't had that operation, honestly, the band would've been over by now. The second time it happened, they told me it was turning carcinogenic! I've been through three operations in the last nine months, but I think the sheer number of shows we've played in between is testament to how much we want to overcome it. I took eight weeks off after the last operation, and I've worked hard to get my voice back up to strength, but I've been told just to cross my fingers and hope it doesn't come back again. I feel pretty good at the moment, and I've been doing everything I can to look after my voice, so

hopefully it's gone for good..."

As Freddie tells us later: "Justin's vocal problems were no great mystery: we had the busiest schedule of any band in the world this summer. At one stage, we did 16 flights in 10 days, across four continents. We work with people who have been with The Killers and The Strokes, people who have seen and done it all, and even they said they'd never known anything like our schedule. We were tempting fate, yeah, but when you're a new band, you don't say no to things. You say yes to everything, try your luck and see what happens."

Up to that point, 'seeing what happened' had proved a decidedly fruitful strategy for The Vaccines. It was at this year's T In The Park that Freddie first noticed "something special happening for us. You can talk about the hype and all that, but it fades into insignificance next to walking out onstage in front of 30,000 kids. The hype was never real, but that gig was." By the time Reading and Leeds came around, Vaccines fever had escalated into a full-blown pandemic.

"We'd been around the world in two weeks or something crazy like that, and we were all pretty burnt out," recalls Justin. "But to look out at those crowds and know that all those people had accepted us... I guess it just felt good to be so loved, you know?"

Luckily, the new single – the Albert Hammond ►

THE FIRST NME COVER

"We want indie back in the charts," they said, but who'd have guessed by the end of the year they'd have put it there? The band were weary of playing up to the hype, but it was clear there was something special afoot.

THE DEBUT

The moment which Justin describes as "the crucial point where people could either get on with celebrating us, or start ignoring us". Met with near-unanimous praise and a Number Four chart placing, it turned out to be the former.

T IN THE PARK

"T In The Park was just like, 'Fuck!'" says Justin. "There were so many people there." The band's set at the King Tut's Wah Wah Tent was one of the weekend's highlights,

and an early indication that things were going stratospheric.

READING AND LEEDS

Justin's throat problems would bring them crashing down to earth a few days later, but The Vaccines were on top of the world after their R&L performances this summer.

THE HEADLINE TOUR

Their biggest UK tour to date climaxes with two massive shows at Brixton next month. Should be a memorable victory lap after their mad year.



Jr-produced 'Tiger Blood' – was already in the can long before Justin's vocal collapse. Recorded at Albert's behest at his home studio in upstate New York, it's pretty much exactly what you'd expect a collaboration between The Vaccines and the coolest of all Strokes to be: a thrillingly propulsive rock'n'roll song that barely cracks two minutes, but you wish would last forever.

"I really just had the bare bones of the song, with no idea for where to take it," says Justin. "We wanted to work with someone creative, someone we really admired, and Albert basically became like a fifth member of the band when we were in his studio. It's hard to be objective about something you've created with people you spend all day, every day with, so it was good to have reassurance from someone you admire. And, obviously, with us being massive fans of The Strokes, it was pretty exciting."

Was it overwhelming to work so closely with someone you spent your teenage years idolising?

"Not at all. I'm not 15 anymore, you know? It was inspiring, though. Growing up and listening to The Strokes, Albert always seemed like a total rock star to me. But we were there to do a job. We didn't sit around swapping stories or asking him for advice. In the end, that song is just another step towards trying to push the band forward – whether it does that or not is open to debate, but we just wanted to try something different."

The band are playing it frustratingly coy about exactly where they want to push forward to; Justin reveals that they'll be playing new songs on the UK headline tour they embark on this week, and that he expects to record a new album "during the first half of next year", but they're vague when it comes to specifics. What Justin will say, however, is that in spite of how proud he is of the band's first album, "we know that it's not a masterpiece and that we have to get better. The songs are essentially nursery rhymes: three chords, one note being played over them, a straight drumbeat, no harmonies. It's pure

back-to-basics rock'n'roll, and the songs were good enough on their own that they didn't have to hide behind any silly production. So in that respect, they were the best 11 songs we had, and 'What Did You Expect From The Vaccines?' was as good as The Vaccines could possibly have been at that point. We've made a great first record, but it still sounds like a first record – we want to keep improving."

Following the set in Manchester – watched intently from side of stage by Alex Turner and Matt Helder – where they come within a ball-hair of thieving the Monkeys' thunder, the band head to Big Hands on Oxford Road for some post-show drinks. On a previous visit to the city, Pete ended up at a goth club, spinning '80s electro-pop underneath the pulsating red eyes of a giant fibreglass Satan. Tonight isn't quite so weird, despite Mumford & Sons' Winston Marshall randomly appearing from out of nowhere. There's just one thing left to ask Justin

WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM THEIR SECOND ALBUM?

Justin and Freddie on what's up their sleeves

NME: So, where are you at with the next album?

Justin: "Well, we want to write it first. We've got a couple of songs that we really like, and we're going to be playing them on the headline tour. We don't want to rush into it, I think we want to make a record that we're proud of, that's better than the first record. I'd say that definitely, in the first half of next year, we'll record the second record. The songs still sound youthful and direct and upbeat, but maybe with a little more swagger. The first record was knowingly dumb, and I think the second one will be less like that. Obviously the whole thing with the first record

was to strip back all the parts, so now we're looking at maybe building on the sound a little bit."

Freddie: "We've got a few new songs, I don't know how many we'll end up keeping, but there are a couple of them that I feel are paving the way for what's coming next. I don't think we want to go bigger for the sake of it, just because we're playing bigger venues. We definitely don't want to make the same record twice, but we don't want to consciously change our sound. The first record happened really organically, and I think the second one will, too. It just feels really exciting at the moment."

before we stagger back to our hotel, though: after living through all the lunacy and hyperbole of the last 12 months, does he feel as though The Vaccines have made a difference? Are they changing things in the way that the Monkeys and The Strokes before them managed to?

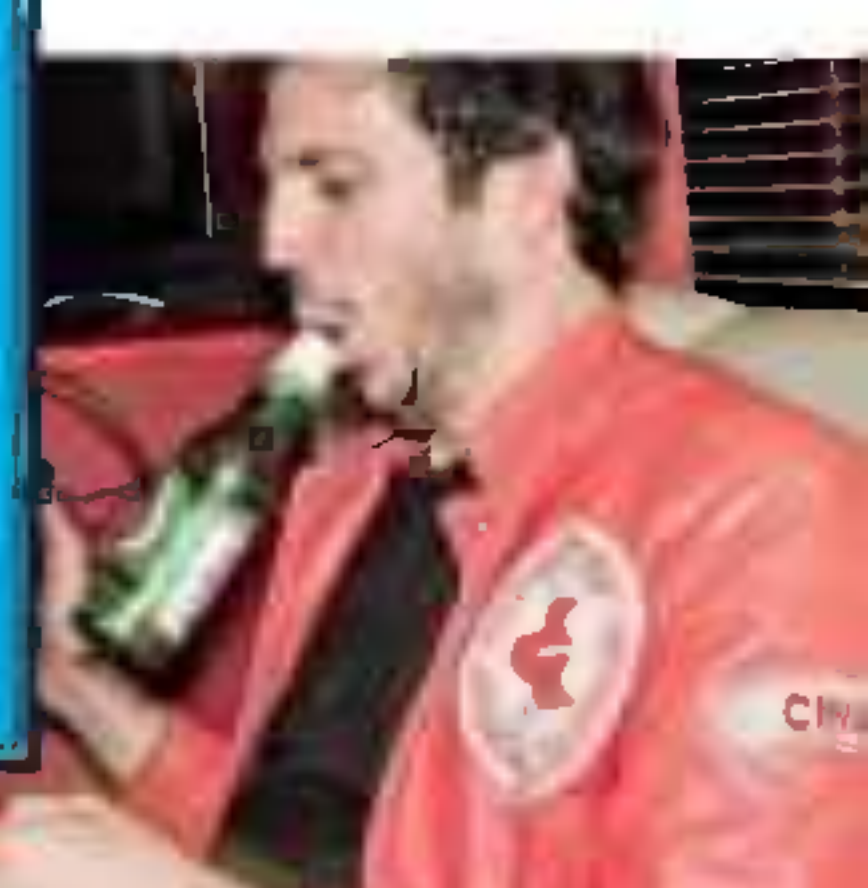
"We've had kids coming up to us telling us that we're the blueprint for their own bands, and that's a great thing," he says. "I feel that rock'n'roll is an artform in a way that electronic music just... isn't. I find that kind of music quite scientific, almost devoid of personality, in a way. Whereas there's nothing sexier than just getting up onstage and beating the shit out of your guitar, is there? Saying what you fucking think, doing what you fucking feel..."

And taking life one Bono moment at a time

NME EXTRA For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a pair of tickets to The Vaccines' winter tour and a limited edition Vaccines skateboard, plus video footage from backstage at The Oz, head to NME.COM/extra. See p8 for details



Clockwise from above: Arni gets his fix of NME; Pete sucks it and sees; Justin's healthy eating, messy living; Freddie shows off his rock profile; arriving in Manchester





ONLY JACK DANIEL KNOWS WHAT OLD NO. 7 MEANS.

AND WE WON'T BE HEARING FROM HIM ANYTIME SOON.

Was it the number seven train that carried his barrels across the land? Or was seven simply his lucky number? Truth is, no one knows the origin or significance of "Old No. 7" on our label. Except Mr. Jack. And he's not talking.

JACK DANIEL'S  TENNESSEE WHISKEY

It's no mystery. Always drink responsibly.

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for the facts drinkaware.co.uk





“HOW WOULD WE LIKE TO SNUFF IT? COMING OFF A ROLLER COASTER!”

Are they bigger than Arctic Monkeys? What's their favourite cartoon? Can pigs swim? **Kasabian's** Tom and Serge answer the burning questions sent in by readers and some famous faces

Talking nonsense: it is, truly, a dying rock'n'roll artform. Who cares about tempo changes, effects pedals and widdly solos when you can put the *real* issues of the day to bands? Praise be for Tom Meighan and Serge Pizzorno, then. You could lock this pair in a room with just a Dictaphone for company and return with reams of compelling dinosaur chat and breakdowns of their favourite cartoon characters.

Not that they don't come up with the hard info too – last week in *NME* the pair let it slip that, as well as playing a New Year's Eve show at London's O2 Arena this year, next summer they're likely to be heading up the capital's Hyde Park Calling.

“Wigston Swimming Pool!” Tom replies when asked what further venues the band would like to play next year. “We all used to go there as kids in Leicester. It's got loads of great childhood memories for me that place. Apart from the pool itself. It was dead fucking cold.”

Indeed. So with the Kasabian wagon clearly set to roll straight through to next year, with the help of questions from readers and musicians, there's lots to catch up on – from how they see themselves compared to Arctic Monkeys, to who has inspired them most, to the swimming abilities of farm animals.

I like both Kasabian and Arctic Monkeys, but, honestly, who would you say was the bigger band?

Sassan Tabrizian

Serge: “Well, I'm a lot taller than any of them.”

Tom: “Ha! Yeah, we're definitely taller than them.”

Serge: “They're not very tall, are they? Alex is not very tall.”

Tom: “Well, he's not you, is he?”



Gerard Way, My Chemical Romance

Tom: “Wow, what a good question. Velociraptor? It just came out of nowhere. Well, it just sounded good, that's all that bloody happened really, mate. It's just quite a comic book, kind of cartoon-ish name for an album, that's really all it is really, to be honest. He's a nice guy, though, Gerard's a nice guy... we've made up, we're friends now (*Kasabian had previously said MCR make ‘ventriloquists music’ – Beef Ed*).”

NME: Did you have any other working titles for the album?

Tom: “‘Sex After Eating’. Serge?”

Serge: “Nah, there weren't any. There actually genuinely weren't any, we just thought ‘That'll do’, it came quite quick.”

Tell us something odd and quite nasty about each other.

Christina Grönlund

Tom: “Serge has really big feet, basketball feet. Size 11's big, isn't it?”

Serge: “It's not like they're size 14s. But for someone in a band they're pretty big.”

Tom: “It's like the size of a ruler! You've got to say something bad about me now, go on!”

Serge: “Tom never stops whistling. It's like a disease. He whistles anything – tunes, bird noises. You just want to take a hand grenade to the head sometimes.”

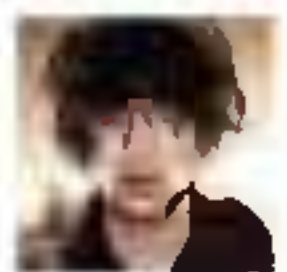
Would you rather lick a pavement or have boobs for feet?

Ciara Lynch

Tom: “Do you know what? I'd rather lick a pavement, to be honest. I've done that before when I was a kid. I think everyone has licked a pavement some time, haven't they?”

“SERGE HAS BIG FEET, LIKE RULERS”

Tom



Can pigs swim?

Faris Badwan, The Horrors

Serge: "I've got no idea. I know they're quite intelligent."

Tom: "No, they can't. What a weird question. Nah, yes they can. Have I ever seen a pig swim? I can draw one"

Which have been the most inspiring gigs you've ever been to?

Alice Simkins

Tom: "My mum in the kitchen making dinner."

Serge: "I saw Chris Cunningham last year and he was fucking unbelievable. It was just him, and musically and visually it blew my mind. Amy [Serge's girlfriend] was pregnant at the time and I was shitting it because the bass was on another level. It was mind-bending."



Where did you get your US flag shirt that you wore on

stage in Italy this summer? And will you wear it alongside Nick O'Malley for an NME photoshoot of the worst shirts ever?

Matt Helders, Arctic Monkeys

Tom: "US flag shirt? That I wore onstage? Oh! Moschino mate, I think it's Moschino. Nah, actually, it's the Union Jack shirt I wore, I think that's what Helders is on about... The one I wore for that fuckin' Live 8 gig... sorry, Live Earth gig. It's a Paul Smith, it's in my wardrobe and one day I'm gonna put it up in a Hard Rock Café."

All the best rock stars die young. Kasabian don't miss a trick, so in what circumstances are you gonna snuff it?

Mark Blake

Tom: "I can imagine me going on a fairground ride and coming off a roller coaster. It would be a pretty good way to go, your adrenaline is going and the next thing you know it's over. That'd be the way to go."

Serge: "I want to do something daft, like a toaster in the bath, or a knife in the toaster sort of thing."

Tom: "Or have a heart attack in the cinema. No-one would notice because they'd be laughing and eating popcorn. Unbelievable."



I used to DJ with all your old EPs and singles, will you sign my vinyl?

Nick Hodgson, Kaiser Chiefs

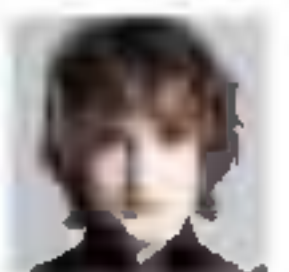
Serge: "Yeah, yeah. Sure."

Tom: "Of course, mate! Love it, love it man! All that vinyl stuff we put out years ago is fun to collect. We did them in different colours and put one out in black and I think that's great man, fair play to Nick."

Tom, what are your five favourite cartoons?

Jill McCullen

Tom: "Denver, The Last Dinosaur, Captain Planet, Masters Of The Universe, The Real Ghostbusters, with Slimer in it, and number five, ThunderCats. Easy!"



What do you do with your time off? I always end up a bit

like Alan Partridge, buying Ginsters from a corner shop...

Tom Clarke, The Enemy

Serge: "You know what, I don't think I've ever had any time off. I don't even know what that is, I'd rather just fuckin' crack on to be honest. I don't really stop working, I don't really stop, so I don't know what time off is."

Tom: "I socialise, really, catch up with people I've not seen for a while, see my family. Ginsters, man – I mean, Jesus! We used to buy them before we started touring years ago. It's the only thing you can really eat when you're on the road."

NME: So do you recognise Tom Clarke's description of himself being a bit like Alan Partridge?

Serge: "Well, yeah... well, no, not really. Well, him just sorta wandering around. He goes on fuckin' Global Rally and shit, though, doesn't he. I can imagine him in an E-Type Jag riding around, fuckin' 'avin' it, that's how I see Tom."

Would you rather watch The Only Way Is Essex or Made In Chelsea?

James Ogram

Serge: "If I was forced, at gunpoint, I would go for the Essex one."

Tom: "No. None of them. They're all cunts. Seriously, none of them."



My sister and I both think Tom would look great with Alex

Turner's new quiff, and he'd look great with your hair. Would you ever consider swapping?

James Allan, Glasvegas

Tom: "What, his teddy boy look? I've been doing the James Dean look lately, this old American kind of Hollywood look, the '40s/'50s Hollywood look. But I'm not too sure about the rockabilly look. It suits Alex, it looks great on Alex. But it's a bully's hair, you know what I mean?"

Serge: "Tom kinda had it a couple of years back. He looked amazing, he could get away with anything really. You could put him in a fuckin' bin liner and he would still look good."



For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win one of 10 pairs of tickets to Kasabian's New Year's Eve show at The O2 Arena in London, go to NME.COM/extra. See page 8 for more information

**KASABIAN
ANSWER
YOUR
QUESTIONS**



Tom wears a shirt for Britain...



... Nick represents the whole fucking world

**"TOM'D
LOOK
GOOD IN A
BIN LINER"**

Serge

Bad Vibrations

In 1966, Brian Wilson started on *The Beach Boys*' "teenage symphony to God", but the drug-fuelled sessions almost destroyed him and 'Smile' was scrapped. With the material finally released, **Mark Beaumont** relives the paranoia-drenched experience with him

The sandbox, Brian Wilson will talk about. "The sandbox inspired us to feel like we were on the beach. It was a clever idea but kinda strange and cumbersome sitting there with our feet in the sand writing songs." The fireman's hats, he'll cheerfully admit to. "I wanted the guys to get the feeling of being firemen in a fire. It's an odd thing to do, and a little embarrassing." The acid and speed, he'll hold up his still-quivering hand. "We were taking too much drugs and we paid the full price for taking too much drugs too."

The lighter side of The Beach Boys' experiences in 1966, he'll revisit with pleasure. But the dark side? The business meetings he held in his swimming pool? The belief that Phil Spector was out to get him? The song scrapped because he believed it might have caused house fires? The breakdowns, paranoia and manias that surrounded the recording of The Beach Boys' great lost masterpiece, he's less willing to discuss.

Forty-five years on from its shelving, and seven years after he exorcised its demons by re-recording it and performing it in full, Brian is still putting a brave face on 'Smile'. "I thought it was a step forward," he says in his childlike snap. "[But] I thought it was too far ahead of its time so we junked it for 40 years!"

This month, after the longest wait for a release in rock history, we get to 'officially' hear the follow-up to 1966's 'Pet Sounds'. And if that album is now regarded as a masterwork of '60s pop psychedelia – voted the best album ever made by *NME* in 1993 – 'The Smile Sessions', pieced together from the original session tapes which fans have been bootlegging for decades, will blow minds clear out the back of skulls. 'Smile' would have made The Beach Boys pioneers of the psychedelic generation, The Velvet Funderground. If it only hadn't almost destroyed its creators...

By 1966, Brian Wilson's problems were too clear to ignore. Having withdrawn from touring after a breakdown on a flight to Houston in 1964, he would stay in California writing songs while the band played gigs. He indulged in drug bouts that were valuable creatively (he wrote 'California Girls' on his first LSD trip) but detrimental to his mental state. Guitarist Al Jardine recalls an afternoon in which Brian drove him in circles around the William Morris Agency in L.A., refusing to let him out of the car unless Al promised to try acid.

"I asked him for a ride home," says Al, "and instead of taking me home he drove me around the block about 25 times! I was very concerned. I admonished him to

"WE PAID THE FULL PRICE FOR TAKING TOO MANY DRUGS"

BRIAN WILSON

stop [taking drugs], but he'd already gone beyond that point. He had developed a lifestyle that was more detached from the rest of us and started experimenting musically under the influence of those things. But the output was amazing."

Nay, game-changing. 'Pet Sounds' had advanced The Beach Boys' sun-bleached surfin' sound into grand new realms of orchestral wonder and psychedelia. But, for all its critical plaudits, it was considered a flop by their label Capitol, and many were pushing Brian to write more 'traditional' Beach Boys songs. He followed 'Pet Sounds' by spending several months and a then-record \$50,000 recording the "pocket symphony" 'Good

Vibrations' using session musicians The Wrecking Crew and a new modular technique of taping 90 hours of segments for the song at four different studios. Each studio had a different 'vibe' in Wilson's head – and he reduced it all to a three-minute pop song. The Beach Boys were glad of the success – Number One on both sides of the Atlantic – but wary of this eccentric new direction in which they were being taken.

"We were recording music that was spilling out of Brian's head at an incredible rate of speed," says Al. "We were basically hanging on by our coat-tails. [There were] two dynamic groups, one in the studio and one on tour. We were focusing a great deal of our energy on touring and Brian was feeling isolated from the band. He was getting really antsy and he had all of this music inside of him to express and of course he wanted to get it out. So he would surprise us... ambush us with stuff."

Ambush? On returning from a tour of the Far East and Europe, where 'Pet Sounds' was a huge hit, The Beach Boys must have felt like a musical Light Brigade. In their absence, Brian had hooked up with surrealist lyricist Van Dyke Parks and, using the cut-up recording style of 'Good Vibrations', completed much of an hour-long concept album – a "teenage symphony to God" as Brian dubbed it – in response to the recent British Invasion, about a historical and spiritual journey across America from Plymouth Rock to Hawaii.

"We tried to do justice to the mood of early Americana," says Brian. "New Americana and the Hawaiian islands. [The band] thought it was crazy music. I wanted to get a concept album across to people and The Beach Boys didn't like it."

In Al Jardine's mind, however, Brian is vastly overstating the anti-'Smile' feeling within the band. "We gathered around the control room at Columbia Studios or Western," he recalls. "He plays this wonderful stuff, ▶



it's different, it's completely transformative, it had a different breadth and depth from what we'd been doing. This is a whole different direction and the crux of it was new evolutionary songwriting and lyric writing as well. Van and Brian together created a new form of music. [The acid] was expressing itself through the music."

If the chop'n'change anti-structure of 'Smile', the barnyard and workshop interludes wherein the band were required to make animal noises and 'play' saws and hammers respectively, the funereal re-workings of 'You Are My Sunshine', the delicate, wintery sprawl of 'Surf's Up' or the Wild West imagery of the magnificent, multi-sectioned pop opera 'Heroes And Villains' surprised the band, they didn't know the half of it. Brian had taken to insisting on meetings being held in his swimming pool for fear of his house being bugged. He'd had a 'dope tent' erected in his house and a sandbox installed around his piano so as to feel the sand between his toes while he wrote. The sessions had taken a turn for the bizarre: Brian cancelled one full-orchestra session for the track 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)' when he refused to get out of his Rolls-Royce in the car park because of "bad vibes". He turned up at the next one with fireman hats for the entire orchestra and set a large bucket alight to create the mood for the song, then scrapped it when he heard of a spate of fires near the studio shortly after the session, leading him to believe the music was "too dangerous" to release.

"IT WAS ANOTHER LEVEL - IT'S A MASTERPIECE"

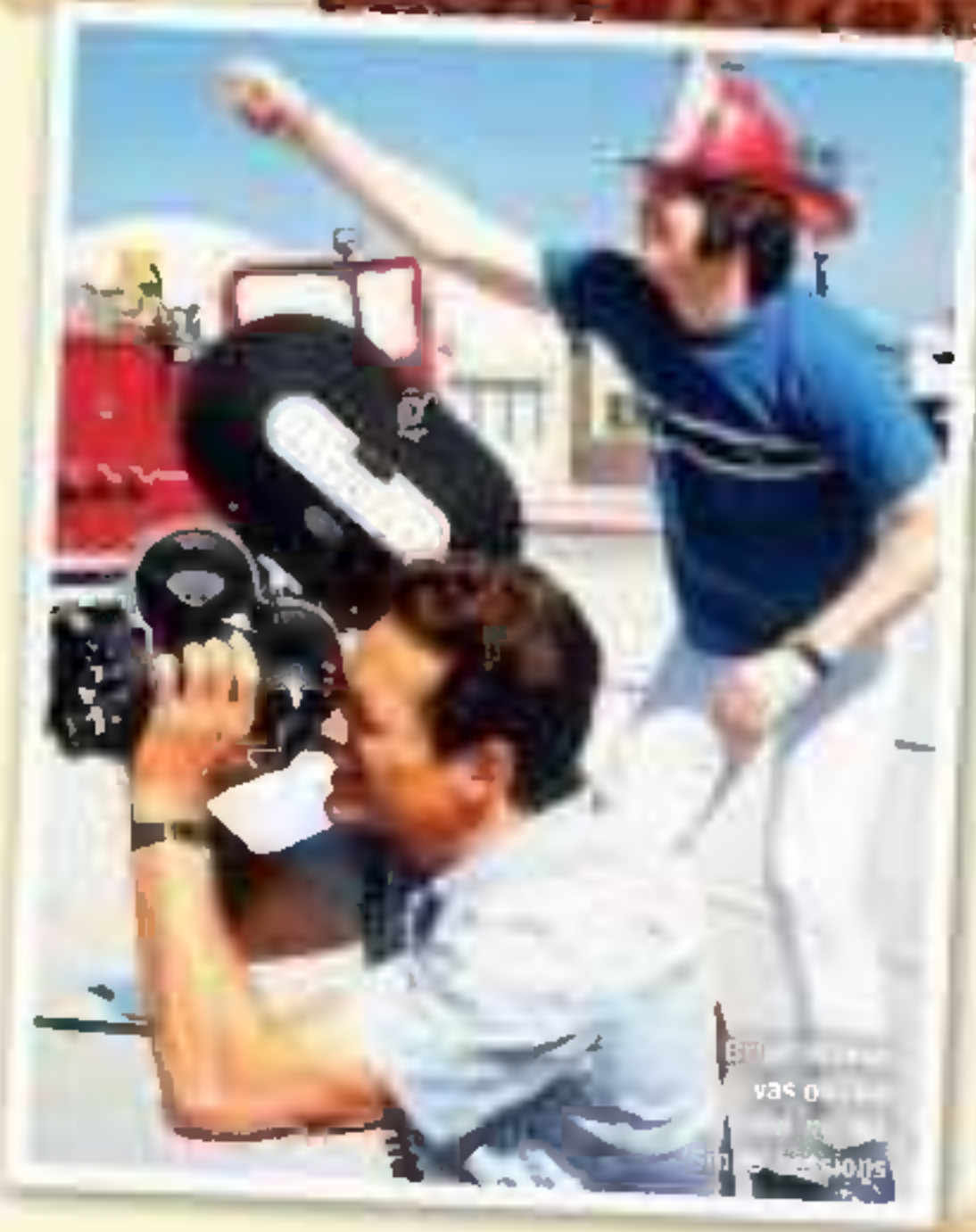
AL JARDINE

At another session he refused to let journalist Jules Siegel sit in as he thought Siegel's wife was a witch who was controlling his mind. On seeing the film *Seconds* starring Rock Hudson, he became convinced it told the story of his own life and had been made by the "mind gangster" Phil Spector specifically to fuck with his head. "It had a lot of rock'n'roll in it," Brian explains, "for which he was responsible."

Sessions to record The Beach Boys' vocals onto Brian's 'Smile' tracks quickly deteriorated. The band's usual lyricist Mike Love was reportedly unhappy with Van Dyke Parks' impenetrable poetry, calling it "acid alliteration". "Mike was a little bit envious of Van Dyke," claims Brian, though Al plays down the alleged row between Mike and Van Dyke over the unfathomable lyrics to 'Cabin Essence' that finally put the kibosh on the 'Smile' sessions: "I wouldn't call it a row. I'd call it an intellectual impasse."

Brian sensed the dissatisfaction with his new direction. Scrapping the sessions in 1967, some tracks - including 'Vege-Tables', 'Wonderful' and 'Wind Chimes' - were then re-recorded in a new studio at Brian's house, forming the quirky but relatively unambitious 'Smiley Smile' album ('Surf's Up' was also pieced together by Carl Wilson for the 1971 album of the same name), after which Brian shrank away from his own production genius, and The Beach Boys' stance atop the '60s cultural and artistic tsunami was over.

"He definitely withdrew from the structural recording we were doing up," says Al, although Brian himself admits no regret. "We weren't upset [at scrapping 'Smile'], he says. "We knew it was the right move."



was happening. It would've been another level of compositional and structural achievement for The Beach Boys. It's a masterpiece."

Music itself may be poorer for having been denied it in '67 but, my oh my, can we 'Smile' about it now...

NME EXTRA

For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a new 'The Smile Sessions' boxset worth over £100, go to NME.COM/extra or see page 8 for more details

Check out Brian Wilson's ill-advised rap career on the NME Office Blog at NME.COM/blogs

The Beach Boys: (clockwise from bottom left) Carl Wilson, Mike Love, Dennis Wilson, Al Jardine, Bruce Johnston, Dennis Wilson



THE NME REVIEW

THE BEACH BOYS SMILE BROTHER



It was, in 1966, an entirely new genre: montage

pop. Constructed from hundreds of disparate takes - the special-edition box-set of 'The Smile Sessions' includes 36 separate segments recorded for 'Heroes And Villains' alone - 'Smile' is an ever-shifting acid vision of a record. Of its 20 tracks, only seven or eight could be considered 'songs' in the traditional sense. The rest are sonic mood pieces, avant garde constructs or 30-second throwaway links; the band make duck, sheep and chicken noises throughout 'Barnyard', march around the studio on the touching spiritual 'You're Welcome' and recreate a fire-in-progress on 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)', named after the animal said to have started the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The fans who've been constructing their own versions of 'Smile' from bootlegs of the sessions

over the past 45 years can't have envisioned the masterpiece Wilson originally intended: 'Smile' plays out like a billowing balloon of ideas, kept rooted by the book-ending guy ropes of 'Heroes And Villains' and 'Good Vibrations'.

If the album presaged eclectic masterpieces such as 'The White Album', stylistically it was a premonition of modern-day US alt.folk. Built around horn, viola, xylophone, banjo and harpsichord, telling the story of a journey through US geography and history, it set a blueprint of evocative atmospherics adhered to today by everyone from Sufjan Stevens to Fleet Foxes. And even if the passing listener finds the whole thing baffling, who wouldn't be entranced by the juxtaposition of haunting death-of-summer ode 'Surf's Up' with jaunty, health-obsessed pop wonder 'Vege-Tables'? Like the man Jardine says, a masterpiece. **Mark Beaumont**

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SCRAPPED ALBUMS,

ABORTED SESSIONS,

THREE YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS...

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE TING TINGS?

Dan Martin tracks the globe-trotting duo down to Nice to find out...

There is a good reason for *NME* to be in Nice. We're in a coffee shop on one of the city's backstreets, a stone's throw from the billionaires' yachts at the other end of society, to catch up with The Ting Tings and to fathom the whereabouts of Manchester's most-delayed album since 'Second Coming'. The band, however, have no good reason to be here at all. We're meeting in a city that they are not playing in, and to which they have no links.

When Katie White and Jules de Martino arrive, a colour-blocked vision of baseball caps and pumped up kicks, things become only marginally clearer. After an aborted relocation to Berlin, the band have left their de facto home in southern Spain, and are about to head over for 10 days of partying – masquerading as rehearsal for their imminent UK comeback tour – in Ibiza. So, in between, they've driven 10 hours to Nice to programme their equipment. There is no more reason for being in Nice other than that they can.

"I don't think we've fully got over not touring, so we just kind of keep moving," says Karie. "It's really bad—we can't settle anywhere so we stay somewhere for a few months and then it's like, 'Right, let's go here!' We don't have anywhere where we *actually live*. All my stuff's in boxes. It has been for two years. I'm just gonna bin it."

This is the life that Katie and Jules now live, that of Technicolor, body-popping gypsies. And this sounds like the simplest answer to the epic delays to their phantom second album. "There was a period of friction," admits Jules.

"The label were chasing us around the world for it." He isn't even joking.

The Ting Tings' accidental assault on the pop mainstream began, as legend now has it, at a succession of warehouse parties in Salford's Islington Mill. They would have their mates round, get everyone drunk, jam, and those sessions would turn into songs. 'That's Not My Name', 'Great DJ' and 'Shut Up And Let Me Go' turned them into pop stars. When it came to album two, the label wanted them to go back to the Mill and do those parties again. It was a terrible idea.

"We lived at the Mill," remembers Katie. "It was a natural moment. It would be weird to go back two years later and be like, 'Let's recreate this vibe that we had.' It would have killed every memory we had of it. So we went elsewhere."

They fled, as so many couples in search of inspiration have before them, to Berlin, following the logic that trying to get started *somewhere else might be better*. They set up opposite a massage parlour named Kunst, which they found such a hoot that they sparked another label panic by semi-joking in an interview that this would be the name of the album. But, for all of Berlin's famed eerie glamour, the reality turned out to be more Lou Reed grim than Bowie hedonistic and Peaches-androgynous.

"All the parties and the art are brilliant there, but when you're sat in writing you don't experience that," says Katie. "You just come out of the studio at 3am, it's freezing, you're hungry and the street is full of dogshit and kebab shops. I'm sure if you went 10 minutes down the road to some weird club that's got coffins in it, it'd be amazing. But the art of writing there is quite different."

The second we're lying on a beach sunning ourselves going, 'Didn't we do well?' then we're going to end up writing shit music because we're too content."

At the same time, they were *still* downing tools every few weeks to continue touring, so their eyes were off the ball.

They were shopped round various super-producers, and the German techno they were surrounded by was corrupting their sound. "We did good stuff in Berlin, but it was very dark, dance-based," says Katie. "We just didn't want an electronic dance album because that's so done and so boring to us now, because everything's just the same fucking dance track with some singer over it."

Despite their reservations, they played along with the release last summer of a single 'Hands', with a slew of Calvin Harris remixes. They played some half hearted festival shows. The single stalled at Number 29. They felt themselves losing their grip. They clumped the album and fled Berlin as quickly as they could.

Eighteen months later, The Ting Tings are finally gearing up to release album two, titled 'Sounds From Nowheresville'. Heralded by the 'Walk This Way'-hop of single 'Hang It Up', it sounds... well, rather like their debut. After Berlin they settled in Spain, setting up a studio in a deserted dustbowl, and followed the same muse that led to 'We Started Nothing' all that time ago. It's the oldest story in the world; somebody travelling thousands of miles to find what was there all along.

"It ~~was~~ a huge departure," says Katie, almost defiant. "It's us, and you either love it or you hate it. That was the problem with the Berlin stuff, it was too well received! We wanted that spikiness that can bug people."

But do Katie and Jules not worry that, four years on, there will be no audience left for them? "We were more concerned with it being *good*," says Katie. "We'd rather sell to fewer people but do something we're proud of. I feel like we've nailed our sound now." Jules: "The first record had no audience and we didn't expect anything. The minute that expectation is in the camp it's horrible. If that's the case, that's the end for us."

An early get-out in case the album flops? Perhaps, but it comes across sincerely—a symptom of the self-sabotaging gene that has defined Manchester bands since time immemorial. “We enjoy radio support and we love pop music,” says Jules, “but most pop bands

are not normally as DIY as us, and every time we get something that's really polished we wreck it. Every time we cross that line into pure pop we get frightened."

But can The Ting Tings succeed once again at remoulding the pop charts in their own image? They don't seem sure – but they make a good show of appearing like they don't care. "We've been down all those red carpets and stood next to these girls who are like... pop stars," says Katie. "They work it so well, but I'm just totally useless."

And at the juncture between this and yet another country, it's going to become clear just how useless. Whether they like it or not, The Ting Tings are returning as pop stars, and they're going to be expected to act like them. It sounds like there's going to be blood spilt on those red carpets before spring.

Watch the video for 'Hang It Up' at NME.COM/video

“THE LABEL WERE CHASING US AROUND THE WORLD”

JULES DE MARTINO

FINALLY!

*Exclusive second
album details*

[illegible]

KITTIE HAYTE: "We lived in Nashville for two years, and we've put the album that we made in that time, *Heart on the Line*, so a little story down in the middle of somewhere and it's so cool and intimate there. We knew that country was resting their bodies, and it was full of love and care."

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SID VICIOUS

SAN ANTONIO, 1978



NME

Photo by Bob Gruen, from
his new book, Rock Seen

RAMONES
NEW YORK, 1975





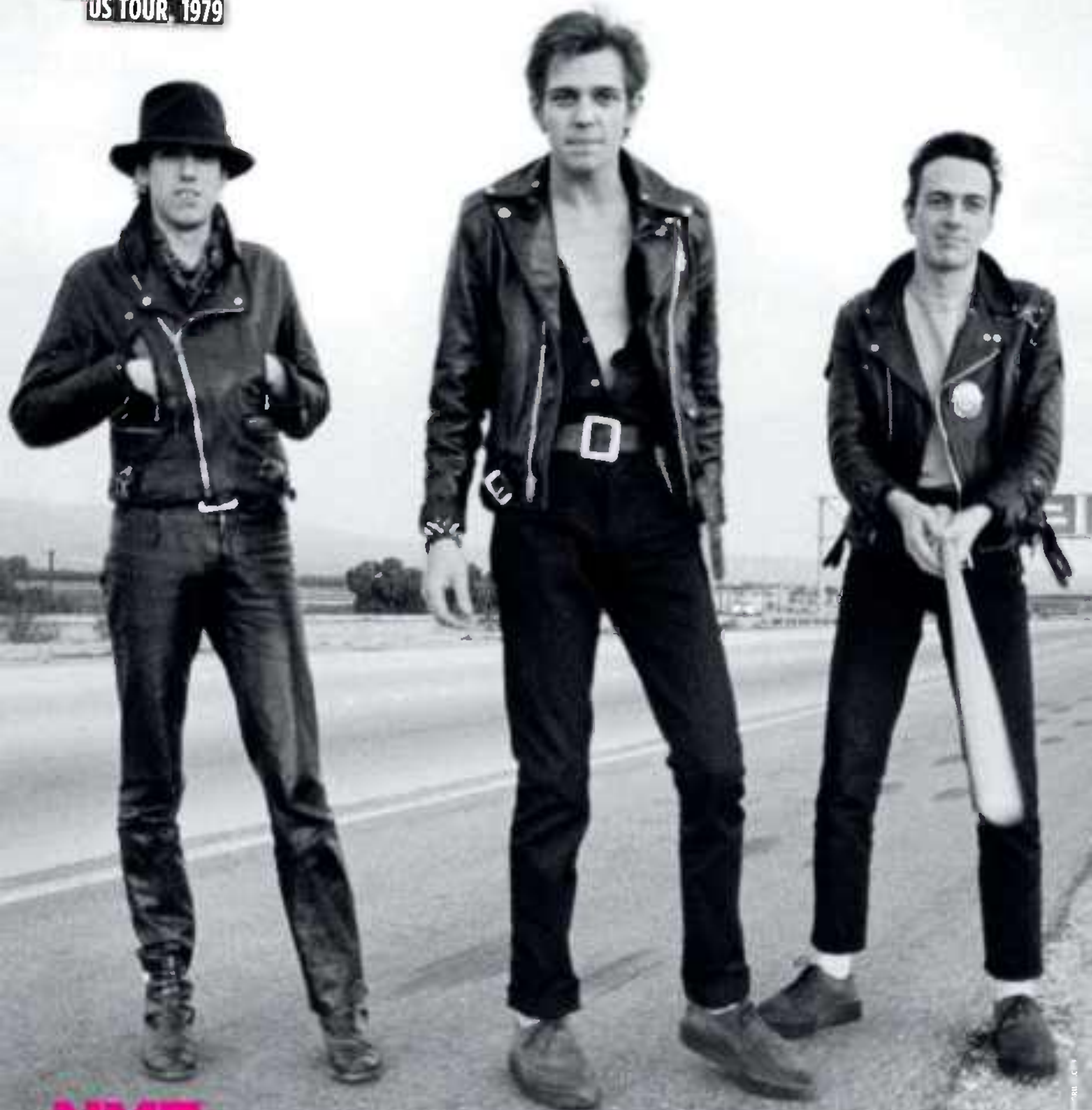
Photo by Rob Gruen, from
his new book, Rock Seen

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THE CLASH

US TOUR, 1979



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Photo by Bob Gruen, from
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WHO'S OUT?

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MANAGE AND LIVE

***Lloyds TSB's Money Manager** is a free and easy-to-use tool that helps you to manage your personal finances more effectively, however busy your life might be. Two friends of NME tell us about their spending habits...*

PIP NEWBY RECORD LABEL BOSS

Music has been Pip Newby's life for as long as he can remember. And his early love of Weezer, Blur, Daft Punk and the Beastie Boys inspired him to set up his own record label, Friends Vs Records, before he had even graduated from university.

But being self-employed means that he has to keep a closer eye on what he earns and spends each month than most people. "I've certainly spent a lot of money on music," says Pip. "That being said, I've got to eat and pay my rent, so I'm careful with everything I spend as much as possible."

And being a music fan can be an expensive hobby.

"My whole life is music, basically. Seeing bands is pretty much my main activity. I spend a lot of my money going out seeing shows."

Being such a committed music fan means that Pip needs to keep on top of his money more than most people would.

"Travel is a really big expense. I go to as many gigs as I can, which can mean travelling around a lot all over the country. So often it's about knowing whether I can go to that secret gig that I really, really want to go to. And, as any music

nut knows, your record collection can never quite be big enough!

"I'm always careful with my money, but it can still be really tough. I wouldn't

change my lifestyle for the world, but I could do with help managing my finances."

If Pip was a Lloyds TSB customer, Money Manager's easy-to-read charts and graphs could give him a clear view of his spending, giving him more free time to concentrate on the stuff that's really important to him.

**"I WOULDN'T CHANGE
MY LIFESTYLE FOR THE
WORLD, BUT I COULD DO
WITH HELP MANAGING
MY FINANCES"**

YOUR MONEY THE DREAM

**“KNOWING
WHAT IS
HAPPENING
WITH MY CASH
WOULD BE A
MASSIVE HELP”**

SAM WOLFSON WRITER

As a freelance writer for *NME*, 21-year-old Sam Wolfson has got the coolest part-time job out there. When he's not reviewing the latest new album releases he's interviewing Rihanna, and when he's not doing either of those things Sam is buzzing around Europe having a wild time with the likes of Bombay Bicycle Club.

Life's not one big party, though. Sam is also a student at Cambridge University, juggling his studies with his writing.

“I love live music, but Cambridge is not exactly known for it's vibrant music scene,” says Sam. “I'm always travelling around the country going to gigs and following my favourite bands. I'm just thankful when I can get into gigs for free!”

It's not just getting sweaty in the moshpit that costs Sam his cash, as he explains.

“I also spend a lot of money on all the brilliant new albums and DVDs out there, as well as going

to the pub with mates. Obviously my biggest expenses are my uni bill and my rent, but I've got textbooks to buy too. After all that I just hope I've left enough money back to eat.”

Sam's story is common. As every student knows, it's not easy to manage your money and make ends meet.

“I'm forever spending and I also have lots of little bits of income from my summer jobs, so it can be hard to keep a handle on what's coming and going out of my account and if I have enough to cover my bills. Knowing what is happening with my cash would be a massive help and give me one less thing to sort out.”

“I'm really lucky to be able to travel and be so closely involved with such an amazing music scene. If only I could manage my cash a bit better things would be great!”

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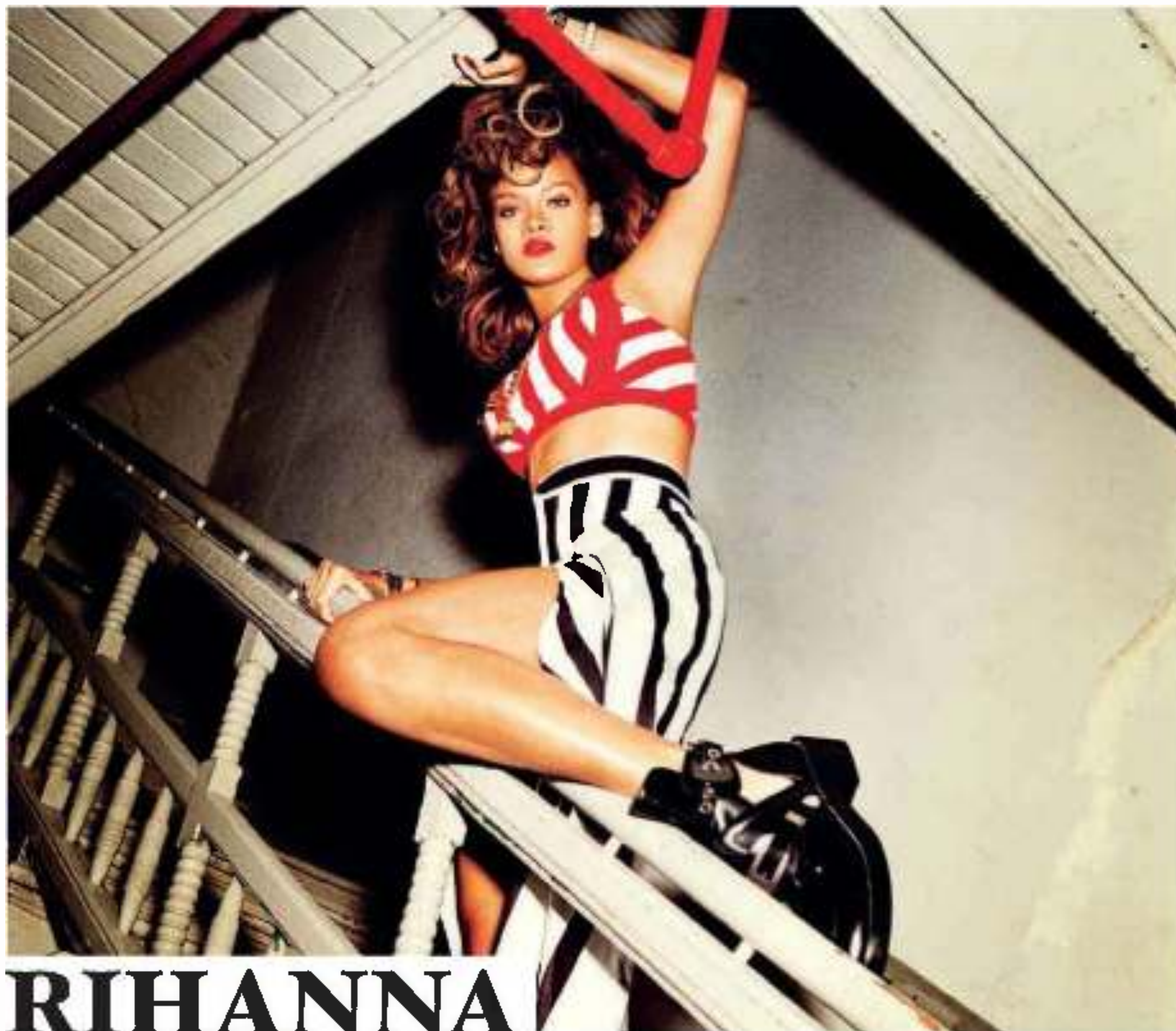


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REVIEWS

CHILDISH GAMBINO, AEROPLANE

Edited by Emily Mackay



RIHANNA

TALK THAT TALK MERCURY/DEF JAM

The superstar singer plays it annoyingly safe – and the tantalising glimpses of what might have been only make it harder to handle



What's in a font? In terms of music, they can conjure up several different meanings, from something stalwart (The Rolling Stones, Ramones) to the ephemeral and futuristic (Daft Punk), and finally to the fussy and over focus-grouped (Cher Lloyd). On Rihanna's sixth album, she's returning to the spiky 'R' that crowned the cover of 2009's 'Rated R'. That album was a Year Zero for her as she emerged from the pupa of robo-pop star to free-flapping 'artiste'. It was the place in which personal crisis (her abuse at the hands of, and public break-up with, Chris Brown) drove her sound and image

in the best, most creative ways possible. The futuristic, dubstep-shaded sounds on that album were mirrored by lyrics that layered meaning and allusions to create a cohesive piece of musical pop-art that pricked at your consciousness from several directions.

And then there was 'Rude Boy'. The biggest hit from an under-selling album, its fun bump'n'grind jerk-pop seemed to dictate where she would go next. So it was – last year's 'Loud' marked a turning point and the lasciviousness was upped up a notch, but at the same time you felt the shutters coming down artistically. It also coincided with her ubiquity. Suddenly she was everywhere, like the cast of *The Only Way Is*

Essex-and-Kim Kardashian 'everywhere'. There she was, popping up on David Guetta's album, getting Ofcom and Matt Cardle into a tizzy on *The X Factor*, trilling the chorus of 'All Of The Lights' on Kanye West's 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy', organising Katy Perry's Cirque du Soleil hen do, appearing on 'Pink Friday', having a 'get off my laaaahnd' moment with an Irish farmer. She was even, in London, spotted on the bloody tube on the way to one of her own concerts at The O2.

So perhaps it's no big revelation that 'Talk That Talk's' stylish 'R' doesn't indicate a return to 'Rated R's' boundary-pushing, but instead leaves us with the impression Rihanna has spread herself so thinly that she doesn't have time to record a cohesive album. Her usually perfect hit-rate of sonic surprises is disappointingly low due, one suspects, to half the album having been monopolised by chart-botherers Dr Luke and Stargate. 'TTT' is filled with tinny-sounding '90s Europop, the kind of stuff that hangs around the playlists of commercial radio for months. And when it's not playing it safe, the album re-treads old ground. 'Roc Me Out' is a 'Rude Boy' re-tool from the vocal delivery to her "Come on boy..." line, closer 'Farewell' echoes 'Fire Bomb', while re-teaming with Jay-Z on the title track is a gamble that doesn't pay off. The pace may echo 'Umbrella', but there's precious little of that song's spark. The Jigga's rap feels like it was dashed off in a few minutes between Def Jam conference calls ("Oh, she really gotta pee", he raps at one point. I mean, do we really want to hear about Beyoncé's bladder control during pregnancy? Noooo).

Sure, there are pleasant moments – 'Drunk On Love' is basically The xx's 'Intro' with Rihanna's voice over the top, and 'Where Have You Been' is a dance-pop gem complete with 'Bonkers'-style wibbles. But there are only two truly brilliant songs. Despite some cringey lyrics ("Suck my cockiness/Lick my persuasion"), 'Cockiness (Love It)' is genuine elastic thrill, twisting into all sorts of jaw-dropping musical shapes. Produced by Bangladesh, it sounds like a sped-up nervous breakdown, while the elliptical 'Red Lipstick', a collaboration with Chas & Status, sounds like something which could have graced the Katy B album. That the latter is relegated to the deluxe edition smacks of someone's loss of nerve. You can only imagine what happened to the rumoured Rusko collaboration.

It would have been unpredictable and intense if Rihanna had followed these musical leads, but as it stands we get a so-so album which suggests it may be time for Ms Fenty to take a holiday. **Priya Elan**

5

DOWNLOAD: 'Where Have You Been', 'Red Lipstick', 'Cockiness (I Love It)'

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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PEAKING LIGHTS

936 DOMINO



Much as music writers throw drug references around like icing sugar, let us be clear that most of us are far, far too chickenshit to ever try anything like peyote, ayahuasca or any other 'tribal ritual' drug. Anyway, no need when you can listen to this Wisconsin duo instead. From here it all looks so insignificant spaced-out synthy ambience leads into a psychojourney through shuffling, organic beats, cosmically detached vocals, dubbish grooves, faint touches of psychobilly-twangin' guitar and boney rattles. It's like Dead Can Dance with less goth and more groove – and definitely worth an initiation. **Emily Mackay**

DOWNLOAD: 'Birds Of Paradise (Dub Version)'

6

APPARAT ORGAN QUARTET

POLYFONIA CRUNCHY FROG



Jóhann Jóhannsson enjoys a time traveller's life. He released an album earlier this year on which he paid moving tribute to Durham's now-diminished mining community with the help of a local brass band and some old Victorian hymns. Then he beamed himself through time and space to record these nine brutalist cosmic rock tracks on a bunch of phasing analogue synths and other steely sounding machinery with three fellow keyboard fanatics (and a drummer). The result is a clean, efficient, piston-pumping, Teutonic sound of robots doing serious damage to bands with beards and banjos – icy and brilliantly foreboding future-rock. **Chris Parkin**

DOWNLOAD: 'Söngur Geimunglingsins'

7

MINT JULEP

SAVE YOUR SEASON VILLAGE GREEN



A "husband/wife dream-pop duo from Portland, Oregon". An instrumental opener called 'Chasing The Wind Catching The Shadows'. A first line that goes "I lie awake, dreaming of landscapes and the rain" ('Aviary'). Yeah, I know, there is a hell of a lot of that kind of thing about at the moment, but the simple fact is Mint Julep are just great at doing it. Songs like 'Cherry Radio' and 'Stay' are melodically sophisticated, synthetically textured and actually dreamy. It's unquestionably a beautiful (debut) album, and one that may be well-timed, what with so many folk falling for that College feat Electric Youth tune from *Drive*, which could easily sit on here. **Hamish MacBain**

DOWNLOAD: 'Stay'

8

ATLAS SOUND

PARALLAX 4AD



Bradford Cox decelerates sonically here, but lyrically he remains sublime. 'Parallax' appears to deal with the continuing conflict of a Christian upbringing with more sacrilegious life experiences. Opener 'The Shakes' battles with the artist's increasing fame while 'Praying Man' cautiously states faith in something higher. Contrastingly, however, 'My Angel Is Broken' sees Cox revert, a tumbling paradox that seems to question his own convictions. Each LP since Deerhunter's debut – both individual and collective – has retreated further from that record's naked aggression, and this is another step towards Bradford finding self-contentment. **Simon Jay Catling**

DOWNLOAD: 'My Angel Is Broken'

8

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



JOHN McDONNELL

"This week I've been listening to nothing but Sade-sampling rap songs in my damp, freezing flat while hysterically weeping. The highlight of the week was getting a haircut."



EMILY MACKAY

"The combination of a seemingly never-ending cold and the excitement of the new Maccabees album in my inbox nearly caused complete respiratory failure. Worth it, though."



CHRIS PARKIN

"Watching *In The Night Garden* while listening to David Lynch's 'Crazy Clown Time' took me to a place I've not been since watching *Stars In Their Eyes* on mushrooms."

DRAKE

TAKE CARE YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/ISLAND

R&B star's much-anticipated second album is a belter – but the feeling lingers that he's capable of much more



In indie circles, R&B has long been stigmatised – sickly sweet vocals and dry humping inanimate objects not being in keeping with the ethos of the asymmetrically

fringed masses. Drake has completely transcended any such snobbery with a delicate, mellifluous sound and unashamedly candid, emotive lyrics.

The half-Jewish Canadian – who played a wheelchair-bound student in TV teen drama *Degrassi: The Next Generation* until 2009 – is clearly not your typical rap/R&B star. On his US chart-topping debut, last year's 'Thank Me Later', he unleashed a lifetime's worth of angst, bemoaning his lovelorn mental state.

'Take Care', his highly anticipated follow-up, begins in a more assertive mood, with the rapper declaring that he "killed everybody in the game last year" on opener 'Over My Dead Body'. Success can breed arrogance but the platinum-selling artist's braggadocio is suffused with melancholia. "I might be too strung out on compliments/Overdosed on confidence" he laments on lolling lead single 'Headlines'.

His lingua franca of heartbreak soon bleeds through on 'Marvin's Room' as he tries to win over a girl he knows is out of reach. "Talk to me please, don't have much to believe in/Need you right now, are you down to listen to me?" he sings down the phone, sounding totally crestfallen.

The yearning, sun-kissed title track, produced by Jamie xx, sees guest Rihanna in the role of an almost motherly figure: "If you let me in, here's what I'll do: I'll take care of you".

The despondency is obviously contagious, infecting his Young Money label boss Lil Wayne on 'The Real Her' as he bemoans: "Cos to her I'm just a rapper and soon she'll have met another" (a line earnestly cribbed from 'Miss Me' on his protégé's debut). The song's second guest, Andre 3000, also gets in on the emo action, declaring: "Sittin' here, sad as hell, listening to Adele, I feel you, baby".

Just as on 'Thank Me Later', 'Take Care' is heavy with the beats of long-term collaborator Noah '40' Shebib. But although the sparse arrangements are a perfect match for Drake's often lethargic mood, when the hip-hop bent of Just Blaze's production on 'Lord Knows' kicks in it hits like an elbow to the solar plexus, every euphoric gospel choir burst inducing a tremor of emotion through the body. In light of this, it somehow feels a shame Drake didn't experiment more with unfamiliar sounds. Such is the esteem that he's now held in, the refrain of "I'm just sayin' you could do better" on 'Marvin's Room' is one that lingers. Yet considering 'Take Care' is an affecting masterpiece easily on par with his debut, there could be no greater accolade for the genius of this man. **John McDonnell**

DOWNLOAD: 'Lord Knows', 'Take Care', 'Headlines'

8





CHILDISH GAMBINO

CAMP GLASSNOTE

US comedian Donald Glover has seriously good rhymes



Donald Glover – aka Childish Gambino – is well aware that he conforms to no-one's idea of hip-hop 'realness'. But then, as he points out, "All the real niggas I know are

either crazy or dead", so it's hardly his loss. Raised a Jehovah's Witness in a small Georgia suburb, Glover graduated from NYU and wound up working in television, landing a writing gig on *30 Rock* and an acting one on *Community*. Last year, The Internet got *this* close to having him cast as the new Spider-Man, and next year he'll be seen in the new Muppets movie. Hardly the stuff great hip-hop is made of, right?

Um, wrong. For starters, Glover is no dilettante: 'Camp' is his fourth full-length under his *nom de rap* (taken from a Wu-Tang Clan name generator), and the best to date. For another thing, while he's a gifted comedian, his focus is never really on being funny – just witty, heartfelt, honest and occasionally uproarious.

He's been variously tagged as backpack and nerdcore, and you can kind of understand why: on 'LES', Glover skewers his own hipsterhood by describing a bathroom clench with a girl who's "Got ironic tattoos on her back/That ain't ironic bitch, I love Rugrats", before decreeing on 'Hold You Down' that "you're not not-racist 'cos The Wire's in your Netflix queue". Pop-cultural references like that abound – his indie namechecks range from Mumford & Sons to Radiohead to Sufjan Stevens – but there's also an emotional heart to songs like 'Outside' and the epic, seven-minute (and largely spoken-word) 'That Power' that can't be expressed in air-quotes.

"Why does every black actor gotta rap some?" Glover wonders on 'Bonfire', before concluding, "I don't know, all I know is I'm the best one". And that's true, even if it's not much of a claim. I'm about to make a bigger one on his behalf, though: fuck Tyler's empty posturing, this is the hip-hop album of the year.

Barry Nicolson

8

DOWNLOAD: 'That Power', 'Outside', 'Bonfire'

AEROPLANE

IN FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT ESKIMO



Having made his name with SoundCloud mixes – and remixes for artists including Friendly Fires – Aeroplane faced a dilemma when it came to his first mix

album: how do you entice 40,000 people who have been downloading your stuff for free to shell out for a CD? His solution was to assemble exclusive tracks from artists he's tipped, add a new production of his and put them together in a mix that reeks of Balearic beaches and suntan lotion. The result is a brilliant album of off-kilter house, funk and exotic pop that should entice even disco skinflints. **Ben Cardew**

DOWNLOAD: 'Herr Styler - Zero Ghosts Out The Door'

7

THE DØ

BOTH WAYS OPEN JAWS

VILLAGE GREEN



It's a commonly held truth that when it comes to decent European pop, Scandinavia is where it's at and France is where it definitely is not. However, on

their second album, French/Finnish duo The Dø are helping l'Hexagone conquer the Vikings. 'Both Ways Open Jaws' is tribal, prickly and wickedly playful, courtesy of singer Olivia Merilahti's loopy vocal. The apocalyptic jump-rope skits of 'Gonna Be Sick' and 'Slippery Slope' are highlights of a chaotic record that makes such a racket, you'll be able to hear Sweden quaking in its boots. **Laura Snapes**

DOWNLOAD: 'Slippery Slope'

8

THE RIDER

What we're reading and watching this week



Art

NME/Sonic Editions prints

Stuck for Christmas presents? NME and Sonic Editions have just printed a fresh selection of our iconic shots – including a cracking picture of Julian Casablancas and Jarvis Cocker. It's the only way you'll fit all of Arcade Fire under your tree.



Book

Gig Posters: Rock Show Art Of The 21st Century Vol 2

For over a decade, *gigposters.com* has been showcasing exquisite gig artwork designed by independent artists. In this compendium, you can read interviews with some of the designers, and pull out 101 perforated and ready-to-frame posters.



Film

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1

While not as incendiary as the last OST, you can't argue with The Joy Formidable, Theophilus London and Iron & Wine soundtracking the penultimate vampire sexual frustration-fest.

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's
FRASER McALPINE



WOOWOOS

FIZZY LETTUCE MOSHI MOSHI

It's inconceivable that a band with the sense to call themselves WooWoos don't know that 'Fizzy Lettuce' is a silly title for a brooding pop song. Especially when they refuse to explain how this salad became carbonated in the first place. Then again, they do also sing about dessert, and I could swear someone mentions rollmops in the chorus, so there's a lesson for us all here: never write while peckish.

JESSIE WARE

STRANGEST FEELING PMR RECORDS

Meanwhile, Jessie, who can't tell if she's hungry or sad, has embarked on a ramshackle adventure a woozy world away from her previous SBTRKT productions. 'Strangest Feeling' is what happens when you take a sparkling Katy B pop song and throw it in a haunted moat. The twinkly bits are washed off by a murk of clicks and moans, while the bass becomes progressively more waterlogged.

BRETON

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR FAT CAT

There's a bit halfway through this relentless face-prod of a song where a spiralling harp attempts to curl around the unforgiving rhythm, to make everything less austere. It's a gesture as beautifully doomed as putting a tulip on a pneumatic drill. Forget Hard-Fi trying to capture the sounds of the street, this is the sound breezeblocks would make if they decided to form a band, instead of a wall.

CHARLI XCX

NUCLEAR SEASONS THIS IS MUSIC

"Huh! Breezeblocks... You think THAT'S clever," sing the Geiger counters on the shelf, "wait until you hear OUR band. We've got that Charli XCX in, and she's singing in a pouty voice about surviving decay, yeah? And we swoosh around doomily in the background. Throw in some melodious hiccups in the chorus and we're off to *Top Of The Pops!*" They were ever so sad when I told them the show had been cancelled.

EMA

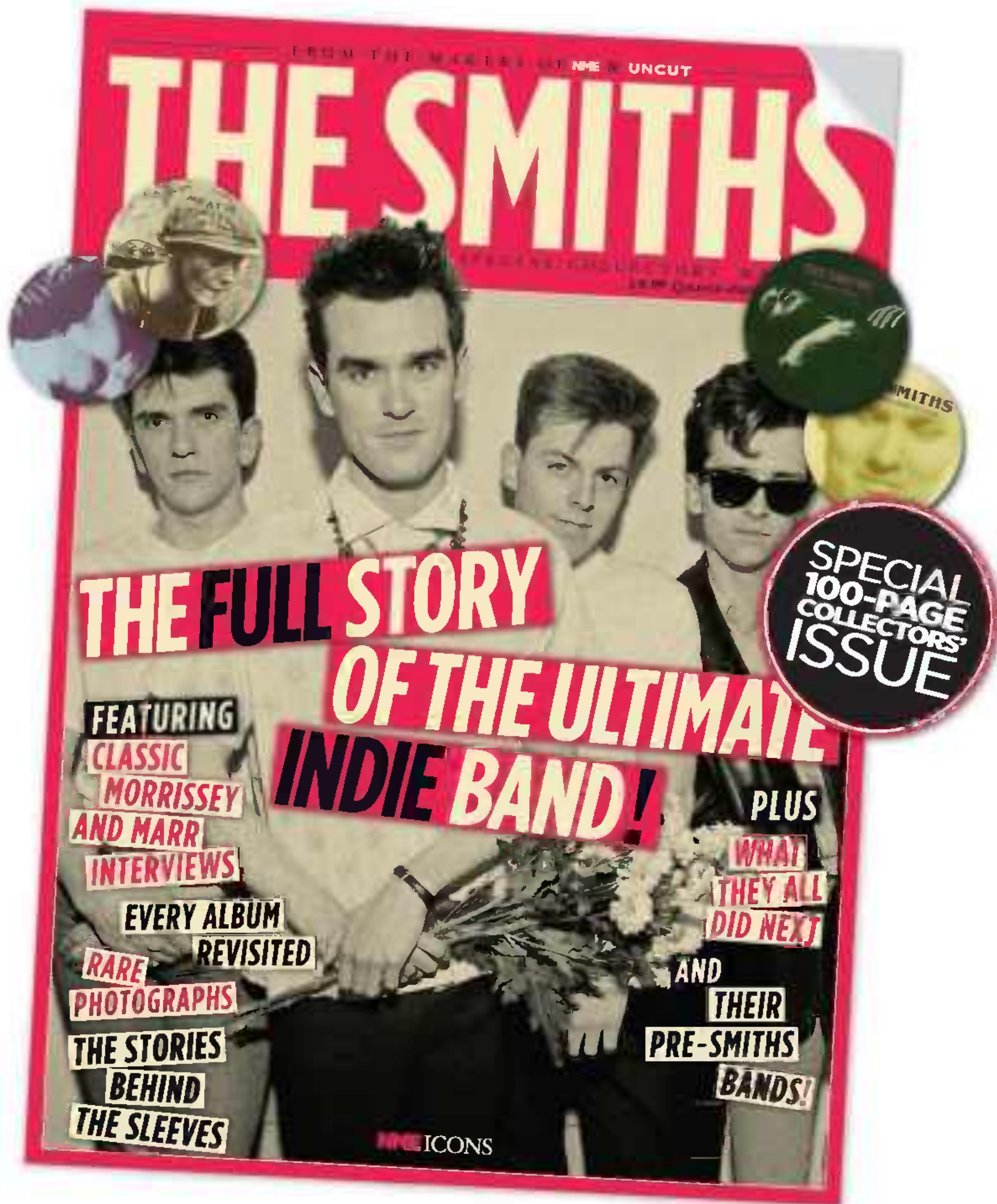
MARKED SOUTERRAIN TRANSMISSIONS

Remember the twinkly bits from Jessie Ware's song? That's the stuff EMA makes her music out of: the scrape of raw knuckle across guitar string, an ominous rumble, a worried child's internal monologue, the wheezing of an asthmatic angel, leaning on the organ in a church, these are her fragments. How she manages to sew them all into a recognisable quilt by the end of proceedings is anyone's guess.

BOS ANGELES

DAYS OF YOUTH ROUNDTABLE

There's no time for sonic stitch-work for the Bos boys. Their mission is simpler: 1) Make a buckety surf noise. 2) Repeat it. 3) Sing, dance, whoop, shimmy. 4) Stop, a mere two minutes and 16 seconds later. 5) Go about their business. Which just leaves you and me to complete item 6) Repeat until snoozy.



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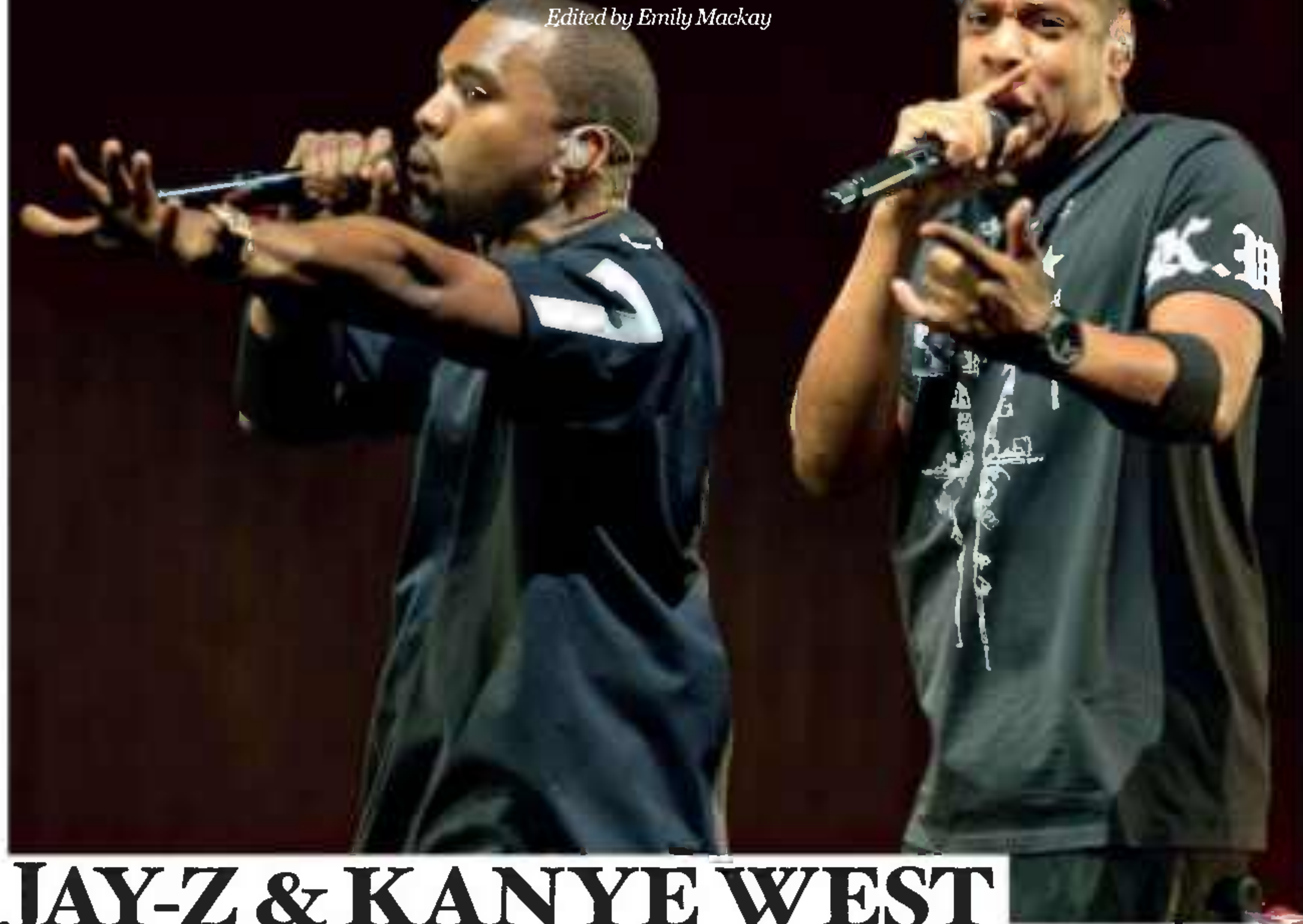
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LIVE

HURTS, AZEALIA BANKS, ST VINCENT

Edited by Emily Mackay

JAY-Z & KANYE WEST

IZOD CENTER, NEW JERSEY SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5

If this was meant to be megastars just lazily cashing in, it seems no-one told the megastars

The problem with supergroups is that they are, almost by definition, a breeding ground for complacency. When you've realised virtually all of your musical goals and become used to fame and adulation, summoning the will to earn it all again is something that few are willing or able to do. Given that both Kanye West and Jay-Z are pretty much the biggest music stars in the world right now, 'Watch The Throne' is a project that should be mired in malaise – but watching them perform together, it becomes apparent that the only thing capable of pushing each of them to greater heights is the other.

Right from the off, the scene is set for gladiatorial rap battle. As opener

'HAM' resounds around the arena, the Jigga is at one end of the venue, Yeezy at the other, and they both ascend high above the crowd on gigantic cube-shaped podiums as they spit the track's boastful verses at each other. Once they unite on the same stage, this titanic face-off is given a suitably dramatic backdrop, a giant American flag is unfurled, giant pyrotechnic effects are triggered and, somewhat bizarrely, images of cheetahs killing their prey in the Serengeti are projected on screens. It's staggeringly pompous stuff, but when coupled with the commanding bombast of tracks like 'Otis' and 'Welcome To The Jungle' it creates an exhilarating marriage of immodesty.

As well as performing a further smattering of 'Watch The Throne'

cuts, the duo take turns at dazzling the crowd with their solo material. It's a tag-team combo that just seems to get better and better as the show goes on; Jay dishes out classics like 'Where I'm From' and throws down the gauntlet by

Kanye can't compete with Jay's rhymes, but his physical energy is just as powerful

demonstrating his untouchable vocal dexterity and dominance. Then Kanye returns, and though he can't quite compete with the ferocity of Jay's rhymes, his physical energy during 'Jesus Walks' is just as powerful. Every

time one of them brings something new to the gig, the other responds in kind, and the one-upmanship continues until the excitement level inside the building is barely legal.

By the time they get to the business end of their two-hour plus set, it's impossible to know who has the upper hand anymore, but judging by the way they dust each other off during 'Niggas In Paris,' it looks like they're happy to call their Herculean head-to-head a draw. For the 10,000 flabbergasted fans looking on, however, 'Watch The Throne' is an emphatic win. **Hardeep Phull**



HURTS

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON, LONDON
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Adam and Theo are huge stars, the show's a big success – but didn't this used to be more FUN?

Twenty-one months ago, Hurts played their debut UK gig, in tiny St Philip's Church in Salford, attended by a smattering of curious journoes and industry folk. Now look at them, playing the final show of the 'Happiness' world tour at a sold-out O2 Brixton Academy. In the intervening time the duo have grown from opinion-dividing curios into one of our biggest and best-loved bands. They've sold a million singles and a shade off a million albums, filled arenas everywhere from Iceland to Estonia, and been impersonated badly on endless dodgy foreign versions of *The X Factor*.

Tonight is the classic triumphant homecoming. The crowd's ear-bleeding adulation never lets up, but is there a sense – and I'm just playing devil's advocate here – in which Hurts were actually *better* as no-hopers, a major label folly destined for glorious failure? Originally the Hurts live experience consisted of two blokes, a seven-foot-tall opera singer named Richard, and a backing tape. Now there are 11 people onstage, including two dancers. It's all a bit slick. Yes, even for Hurts. And... hang on, where's the opera singer? Poor massive Richard is gone!

Theo sings all the parts himself (including Richard's former showpiece, 'Verona'). I picture Richard at home alone, weeping into his cummerbund to

the strains of 'Nessun Dorma'. In the end, having a stony-faced and mostly extraneous opera singer onstage was one of the ludicrous touches that made Hurts unique and lovable. By ditching Richard they are approximately 12 per cent less ridiculous, and that's a shame.

Highlights? Well, obviously 'Stay' and closer 'Better Than Love'. Almost two years of touring have whittled them into surging pop Exocets, obliterating all possible opposition or reservation. Low point? Kylie showing up to duet on 'Devotion' and her own 'Confide In Me'. Of course, she gets a hurricane-strength welcome, but her appeal remains mysterious. She's a blank, a hamster squeak, a whiff of Febreze.

When it's all over there's no farewell speech, no recognition that this gig is in any way special. Perhaps they're saving themselves for the aftershow (the next day Theo tweets about "the greatest night of our lives... a collapsing Dutch supermodel and about 1,000 bottles of tequila... the perfect crescendo"). This makes an enjoyable and efficient full stop at the end of 'Happiness', but no more than that. **Luke Lewis**

Customers can get Priority Tickets to the O2 Academy Brixton up to 48 hours before general release. Just register at o2.co.uk/priority where Priority Tickets are going. Then to go to the venue.



TWIN SISTER

DEAF INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

So, how was your weekend?" Andrea Estella smiles to the subdued crowd. "Thanks for coming out and being so sweet. And so sleepy." Whether it's due to the approach of midnight or to the hypnotic qualities present in Twin Sister's loose, hazy pop, tonight often feels like a waking dream, with a mute-tongued Manchester pinned down by what unfolds before us. After support Holiday Shores endure something of a 'mare, Estella and her band could justifiably wonder whether this will be a night to forget, as the light-footed funk of 'Stop' and 'Bad Street' somehow fail to register. While this tour is ostensibly to promote new album 'In Heaven', there's plenty of more familiar material in the set – but even this seems to slip by almost unnoticed, with 'Lady Daydream' and 'Ginger' being greeted with only reverent applause.

All the while, though, a potent magic has been bubbling quietly away, and it's only when the band step down from the stage, leaving Estella and guitarist Eric Cardona alone and exposed, that it truly takes hold. Shorn of its motorised beats and muggy synths, 'Kimmi In A Rice Field' reveals a spectral beauty, and Estella and Cardona's voices – sometimes overly similar on record – work together to weave a subtle spell upon the transfixed room.

After that, the group reconvene for 'Daniel' and 'All Around And Away We Go', but we're too woozy to dance. It may be late, but this is a dream that will last long into the waking hours. **Neil Condon**

DOG IS DEAD

COCKPIT, LEEDS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Looking dapper in cable-knit and buttoned-up shirts, the five members of Dog Is Dead display their earnest and learned harmonies, bobbing in perfect synchronisation like a human wave of politely restrained testosterone.

Robert Milton, taking the lead on vocal duties, possesses a textbook boy-band smile: he's a sly wink and a bare chest away from a pop career but, luckily, the rest of the band reign in the schmaltz, diverting enough of the crowd's attention with the lilting guitar lines of their Vampire Weekend-meet-Mumford & Sons student anthems.

As bass player Trev cleans the dust from the low-arched ceiling with his curly mane, the rest of the band alternate between thrusting wildly (loud bits), bobbing excitedly (poppy bits), and swaying in shut-eyed reverence (harmonies). Always synchronised. Always in time. Dog Is Dead are note-perfect and never miss a beat, but just a few songs in they have already become predictable, crowd-rousing-by-numbers, hands in the air for the 'old ones'. They are at their best in 'River Jordan', when they hint at post-rock leanings; only then do they seem more concerned with playing than performing, as guitar lines noodle amid the cacophony and around the vocals, bolstering them, rather than providing a soulless backdrop. 'Glockenspiel Song', though, is clearly the track that fills the room and flogs the tickets – but here's hoping they don't have to get every new track played on *Skins* in order to keep up the momentum. **Hayley Avron**

WHAT'S ON YOUR RIDER?



Danananan-aykroyd

- A local independent newspaper
- Local postcards and stamps
- Vodka (Stolichnaya)
- 24 bottles of water (chilled and non-chilled)
- A case of beer (no Kronenberg)
- Bottle of sauvignon blanc
- Fruit juices
- Soft drinks (including root beer)
- Sandwich materials (vegan and meats)
- Six scratch cards
- Surprise us!

MARCUS FOSTER

MOJO, LIVERPOOL TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Acoustic singer-songwriters tend to be of similar stock these days. Frank Turner, Newton Faulkner, Ed Sheeran, Sam Duckworth – in fact, put together any two names and you'll find some chump with a guitar, an earnest song or two, and the ambition to be voice of their generation. So it's almost a relief when we hear Marcus Foster's weathered, rasping voice work its way around the room tonight. The young Communion signing looks no older than 25, but we suspect he wishes he was in his 50s – his world-weary lyrics belie his young face to the point that you'd think this was a convincing pastiche of his influences. That's not to discredit his songwriting, however. It is succinct, flamboyant and heartbreaking in the right places, something his peers often lack, and he's more captivating live than on record. 'Old Birch Tree' is quite a dull piece of MOR on debut LP 'Nameless Path', but here it's delivered with soul. A version of the album's standout song, 'I Was Broken', is both devastating and uplifting in equal measure, and a beautiful cover of John Martyn's 'Couldn't Love You More' shows he can hold a candle to his predecessors, a homage not lost on this audience. If he's a voice of any generation, it's probably that of the Radio 2 listening mum, but that's no bad thing. **Mike Doherty**

AZEALIA BANKS

HOXTON SQUARE BAR & KITCHEN, LONDON
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Hip-hop's sparsely-dressed new star has a potty mouth – and definitely more than one great song

"I was about to give more of a show than I came over here for, knowwhatI'msayin'?" smirks Azealia Banks, clutching her red-and-white striped bustier to her chest. It's teatime on Sunday, and Azealia's clothes appear to be falling off, shaken loose by the aggressive bounce with which she's stomping any sense of Sabbath restfulness out of the first of two short, sharp showcases.

Industry and hipsters are out in force at both to check out the latest gutter-mouthed goddess. 'Tazed' is not, however, a word in Azealia's inventively disgusting vocabulary. Strolling on in mohair coat and tiny denim shorts, she couldn't be more at ease. She starts with a fierce cappella, her DJ, Cosmo, scratching a belligerent beat out behind her as she tosses out warnings about the dire possible consequences of fucking with her. "Try something slick and get your dick backed up/You can either bit the door in peace or watch your meat bit the floor in pieces/Believe this" she assures on the beguilingly nonchalant, Peter Bjorn And John-sampling 'The Chills'. And, yes, the vicarious thrill of a pretty young woman talking abject, violent filth is nothing new, but Azealia's wit, her energy, her rawness

make it fresh. Though after the bitchy, crunky 'Barbie Shit', she throws in a truncated cover of 'Valerie' as a nod to London's own late dirty diva, it's clear that rapping is where Azealia's talents and heart lie, and you can't imagine her, like Nicki Minaj, getting sidetracked into balladry. The spirit of Lil' Kim sleazes through the moody, menacing 'Runnin', her collaboration with Lunice, blended with an omnivorous musical

taste and an eye to the dancefloor. "This is the jam that probably brought y'all here tonight," she says as she brings the evening showcase to a jumping end. "So take your shirt off, pull your dick out, do whatever you need to do..." Everyone else manages to keep their clothes on but completely loses their shit as the maddeningly aggressive synth of '212' begins to wind up, and as Azealia starts howling "THIS SHIT BEEN MINE, MINE" the whole room bounces with her.

She chucks in the chorus of The Prodigy's 'Firestarter', taking things up to breaking point, and then, that's it. She's gone, leaving them wanting more. Let's just hope the fickle affections of the internet stick with her long enough to realise that she's more than just that one song. *Emily Mackay*

VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Demisha Anderson, London

"Excuse my French, but it was fucking amazing. I wanna be her best friend."

NME: Does she have any other songs that stand up to '212'?

"Well, I knew a few others. 'Barbie Shit' is amazing, people will be cutting shapes to that!"



ST VINCENT

WEBSTER HALL, NEW YORK
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Annie Clark's twisted tales of identity and inadequacy surf a wave of adulation

"My face is drawn on with this Number 2 pencil", sings Annie Clark in the final song of her set, 'Your Lips Are Red', as she steps in front of the microphone and teeters on the edge of the stage. A soundman rushes to roll out cable. Clark sways for a moment in the strobe, then flips over onto the ready arms of the audience who carry her, one leg raised, out into the crowd.

It's a moment of release from Clark's usual poise and comes hard earned. St Vincent's twisted pop songs expose the madness that goes on behind a mask drawn on in pencil – from failing at motherhood in 'Cruel' to lying to keep the peace in

'Cheerleader' and 'Surgeon'. Her characters stress about their inadequacy. As she tells Webster Hall,

the video for 'Cruel' shows Clark being kidnapped by a motherless family who bury her alive after they realise she can't cook, clean or care for them properly.

If household cleanliness might be a problem, Clark makes up for it in control: both creative control and the kind of self-control she exudes onstage, though her chilly demeanour tonight could also be nerves. There is a moment before 'Save Me From What I Want' where the spotlight dances across Clark's face as she takes in the packed 1,400-capacity venue and her mouth makes a small 'o'. David Byrne, with

whom she is collaborating on an as-yet-undisclosed new project, watches from the wings. Cameras follow Clark everywhere, streaming the performance live for MTV in a mark of mainstream acceptance if ever there was one.

Creative control has served Clark well on three solo albums since she stopped touring with The Polyphonic Spree and Sufjan Stevens last decade. But it wasn't until this year's 'Strange Mercy', an album that stretches ideas about identity and anxiety over woodwind arrangements and nifty angular riffs, that she started attracting the attention she deserves.

She exudes self-control, although her chilliness could also be nerves

At Webster Hall, Clark plays puppets with her audience. She warms with a story about drinking tequila and running through a cemetery on Halloween before launching into 'Neutered Fruit', then squashes a heckler who says she can't shred with the words: "What is this, a live Twitter feed?" A growling cover of The Pop Group's 'She Is Beyond Good And Evil' speaks for itself. Tonight it's all in the eyes, wide and unblinking, until the sudden stagedive. But don't be fooled: Clark's studied femininity is a ruse for something much, much bolder. *Hazel Sheffield*



PIETER NIVAN HATTEN, RICHARD JOHNSON

On The Road With **KATY B**

Plane destruction, naked shower videos and arse midgets⁵ — they might sound smooth, but 'sexy witch' Katy B and her crew are rock 'n' roll on tour



WILSON, MORDEN, 4pm
Katy reads her book at low volume, unaware of the it was the clown wot dun it



LIGHTS OFF: NINE'S RESIDENT **PERFORMER** **SHAGGY**
strikes again on Katy's tour bus

DOMED, BRIGHTON MONDAY, OCTOBER 31

Katy B is at the controls of a helicopter on the final leg of her UK tour, but things are rapidly getting out of hand.

'KRAKK!' The chopper smashes into the tourbus window, and Rinse mastermind Geeneus leans in to inspect the damage.

"That's a hundred quid you owe me," the 'On A Mission' co-writer and producer tells Katy, flinging a protective arm round her shoulder while *NME* secretly gives thanks it wasn't our face getting mashed up beneath the blades.

The helicopters aren't life-sized just yet, but Katy's second headline tour is undeniably grand in scale – the south London star and crew have been living for the past few weeks in a double-decker tourbus with its own games room and library.

Tonight it rolls into Brighton. It's Halloween, and we're following Katy to the dressing room where we're told she and her bandmates will be kitted out for the occasion. Our leading lady, it transpires, is plumping for the 'sexy witch' look: no green facepaint or crooked noses, just a cutesy, conical hat and little black number which Geeneus says he can "see her bum crease" in.

The atmosphere backstage at the penultimate show of

Katy's tour is fun-bordering-raucous, and Gee can usually be found somewhere near the silliness' epicentre. In between aiming his (miraculously recovered) helicopter at various people's heads, the

boss man cracks wise about everything from ITV's weekend programming schedule to Brixton, whose resident hipsters he says are oblivious to what really goes on ("It's true! In Brixton McDonald's there's two queues; the ghetto queue and the trendy queue").

Even Gee's court-holding, however, is upstaged by Caelan, the superfly, three-year-old son of Katy's hype man, Tippa. Flipping through his daddy's iPod with terrifying ease, the little fella finds the artists he wants by looking at the record sleeves (he's too young to read the names) and gives word-perfect renditions of Tinie Tempah and J Cole, among others – though his old man snatches the gadget away before he can hit 'play' on Bob The Builder.

Katy gets finished with her make-up and nips in the room next door to get changed.

"Are you havin' a number two in there?" shouts Tippa, tittering. "Cos it's getting a bit whiffy in the dressing room." "Yeah – it's coming out your top lip," Katy shoots back, and Tippa is forced to accept defeat as the room falls about laughing.

Half an hour later the potty-mouthed hype man is clad in ludicrous werewolf mask, as the band step out to the strains of Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' and

Brighton goes properly nuts. It's an awesome show which sees Katy backed by brass, girl singers and the almighty clatter of Junior on drums. Our main gal, meanwhile, doesn't put a foot wrong all

night, bopping her way through the likes of 'Broken Record', 'Katy On A Mission' and 'Perfect Stranger' with ease.

PAVILIONS, PLYMOUTH WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2

On Wednesday *NME* rejoins Katy in rain-lashed Plymouth, which brings big wheels and even bigger helicopters as Gee looks to replace his by-now written-off old model. We're driven to a grim-looking timber yard where Katy poses between the bags of gravel, and a model aeroplane shop lurks improbably in the wet. As if that wasn't glamorous enough, Gee is having a ding-dong on the phone with someone from the venue about merchandising rights. He hangs up, and buys himself a brand new helicopter. To call it bigger than the last one would be something of an understatement: you could ask a shih tzu to pilot the ruddy thing and still have leg room in back.

With that we're off to sample the cultural delights of Plymouth: principally a fuck-off Ferris wheel overlooking the seafront. It has a pretty gangsta-looking VIP carriage with blacked-out windows and complimentary bottles of bubbly, but we make do with a regular booth and drink in the views with Katy and her make-up artist, Vicky. Gee is still fuming after his phone call and declines to join us ("I've spent all my life living on the top of council blocks, what do I wanna go on that fucking thing for?").

On the way back to the venue, Tippa winds up Katy about the fact she's been offered a personal trainer. Taking the piss is pretty much the glue that holds this lot together, it would seem, whether it's backing singer and token northerner Rihanna (real name, honest) being greeted with a sarcastic "Ey oop!" when

she walks in the room, or Tippa being taunted with cameraphone videos that capture him taking a soapy flannel to his, er, intimate areas on the tourbus shower.

Back at the venue, Katy regales us with tales of her merch stall guys, who are all from Essex and are literally mental. One of them, she says, got a tattoo of a third nipple done while out on the road. Another's uncle claims to have copyright on the word 'reem' (er, ©?). A third used to work in a sex shop and donated an 'arse midget' to the touring company.

"What's an arse midget?" we ask gingerly, sort-of-but-not-really-wanting to know the answer. Katy leads us to front of stage, where a black gnome leers at us from underneath an obscenely protruding hat. "He's sort of become our mascot," Katy beams proudly.

Tonight's show is a bit slow to warm up, but by the time Katy drops an '80s/'90s throwback double-whammy in 'Good Life' and Robin S' 'Show Me Love', the joint is officially jumping. From Katy's exhortations to treat the performance as a 'rave' instead of a concert to the hokey attempts at flogging T-shirts onstage, there's the understanding that this is pop music by, for and of the people – no need for S&M dancers or posing as Christ in a wheelchair here, thanks, just a straight-up display of great music, locally sourced.

"Katy's come a very long way in a very short time," says Tippa at the show's finale, urging on the crowd. "And there's not many ordinary girls coming out here and mashun' up the place like this!" He takes some stick for that speech after the show ("bruv, it's not the fucking *X Factor*"), but secretly they must know he's hit the nail on the head. As the crew washes down the taste of success with Nando's and bubbly, *NME* gets ready to take our leave: now where's that chopper when you need it? *Alex Denney*

VIEW FROM THE CREW



Tim, merch
seller

**Why do you have
a tattoo of
a third nipple?**

"We did a gig in
Newcastle and
I know a few good
tattoo artists there.
I thought, 'Why not
show my respect to
the people with a
third nipple?' I've
never looked back."

**Would you consider
investing in
a fourth?**

"I'd need to do my
research, see where
a fourth nipple's
usually located."

RICHARD JOHNSON



Brighton, Monday, 5.30pm

Peekaboo! And you all thought it was Mick Hucknall hiding under there, didn't you? Below, Tippa bops up his skeleton crew

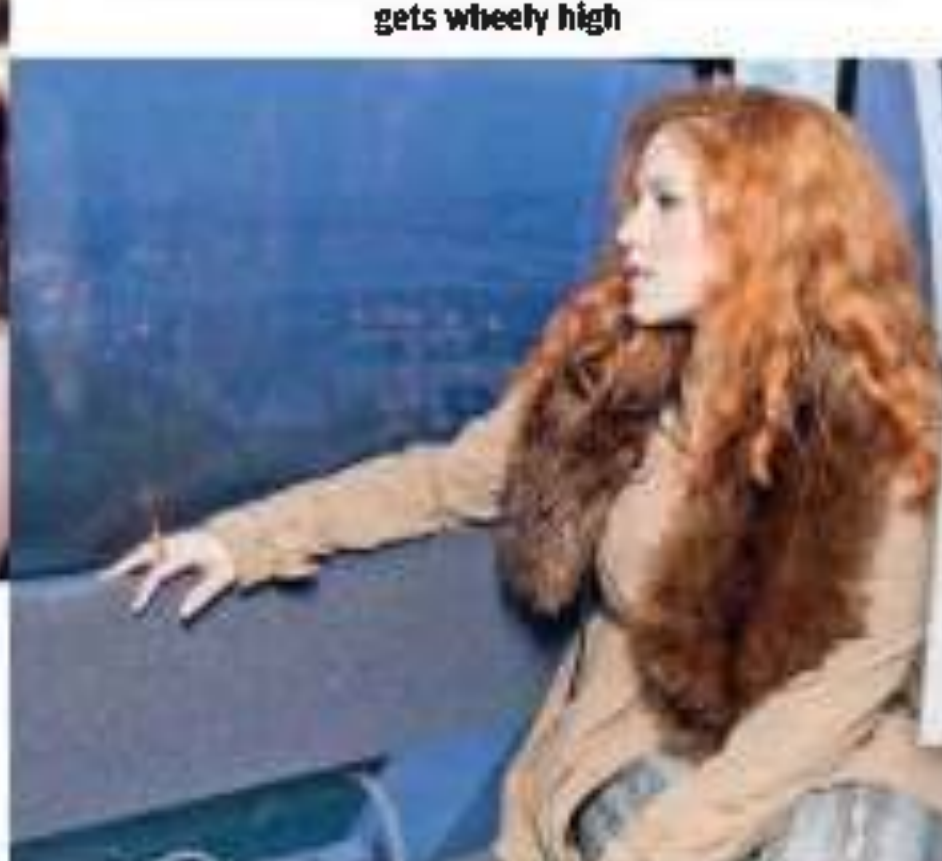


Brighton, Monday, 10pm
Katy rocks the 'sexy witch' look with a tiny hat that resembles a goth's upturned ice cream cone



Plymouth, Wednesday, 9.30pm

The hat's been nabbed, but Katy thinks she knows the culprit...it's that arse midget! Below, Katy gets wheely high



Plymouth, Wednesday, 11pm
Katy's fans wait outside in the rain for an autograph. Shoes optional, apparently

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"BRIAN REFUSED TO UNLOCK THE CAR UNLESS AL PROMISED TO TRY ACID"

JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE FOR THE BEACH BOYS

PLUS

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ON REPEAT

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



FACTORY FLOOR

Two Different Ways
It's Factory Floor's first release for New York label DFA – and oh my, did they choose a corker to get things started. 'Two Different Ways' is a less feral beast than some of the London trio's previous cuts but, with Nik Colk's icy vocals, neuron-frying synths and nods to Chicago house played out over nearly 10 minutes of noisy bliss, it's a behemoth of a track nonetheless.

Ben Hewitt, writer

SEYE ADELEKAN

White Noise
Recognise that surname? Seye is Gbenga from Metronomy's bro and, going by his debut songs, wicked rhythmic ways run in the family. Here, Seye picks up where Katy B's 'On A Mission' left off, crooning saucily about putting "my cigarette inside your paper cup" on a night out over frenzied tribal beats, like Fela Kuti for the Rinse generation.

Laura Snapes, Assistant Reviews Editor

DRAKE FT RIHANNA

Take Care
Producer Jamie xx completes the dream team on this epic anthem of emo-hop taken from Drake's delayed 'Take Care' album. Like the negative to 'What's My Name's' full-colour Polaroid, Drake twists hip-hop's macho bravado 360 degrees on this chilling, housey ode to love and togetherness.

Priya Elan, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

GROSS MAGIC

Yesterdays
Brighton boy Sam McGarrigle nails a perfect sweet spot between grungy grind and woozy, Ariel Pink-style psych-pop. This extract from a split seven-inch with Novella, The History Of Apple Pie and Echo Lake on Marshall Teller Records is his gnarliest work yet, reminiscent of early, scary Mercury Rev.

Emily Mackay, Reviews Editor

ROSTAM

Don't Let It Get To You
Rostam's latest solo foray – away from Vampire Weekend – mines a little Latin

American flavour and nicks the chugging drumbeat from Paul Simon's 'The Obvious Child'. Without Ezra yelping over the top, the whole thing's prettier, calmer and more blurred-around-the-edges. Less an ice-cold horchata, more a warming winter tumbler of mulled wine.

Luke Lewis, Editor, NME.COM

THE BIG PINK

Hit The Ground (Superman)
Early signs for the new album from the now-clean-living Big Pink are promising. Following 'Stay Gold', this second excerpt hits with almost as many soaring, big beat melodies – who needs a drug intake so high that sniffer dogs keel over when they walk within 50 yards of the band members, eh?

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

HOWLER

Back Of Your Neck
These Minneapolis teens better have broad shoulders, given they've already been charged with kick-starting that long-mooted rock'n'roll revival next year. Thankfully, this turbo-charged rocket from their forthcoming debut LP sounds so bloody massive it's already pretty inevitable that they'll pull it off.

Rick Martin, News Editor

LAURA MARLING

I Was An Eagle
Of all the new material currently getting road tested at Laura's live dates, this missive raises our hopes highest for the fourth album – a beautiful yet barbed dispatch to a former flame that insists "I will not be a victim of romance/ I will not be a victim of circumstance".

Tim Chester, Deputy Editor, NME.COM



PULLED APART BY HORSES VENOM

As an opening salvo from the Leeds noise mongers' new LP 'Tough Love', 'VENOM' certainly feels like a statement of intent. Surprisingly raw and outstandingly heavy, it builds to a crushing metal outro that nods to vintage Motörhead. PABH are back with a mighty wallop.

Tom Goodwyn, writer

TRACK
OF
THE
WEEK

THE MACCABEES

Pelican

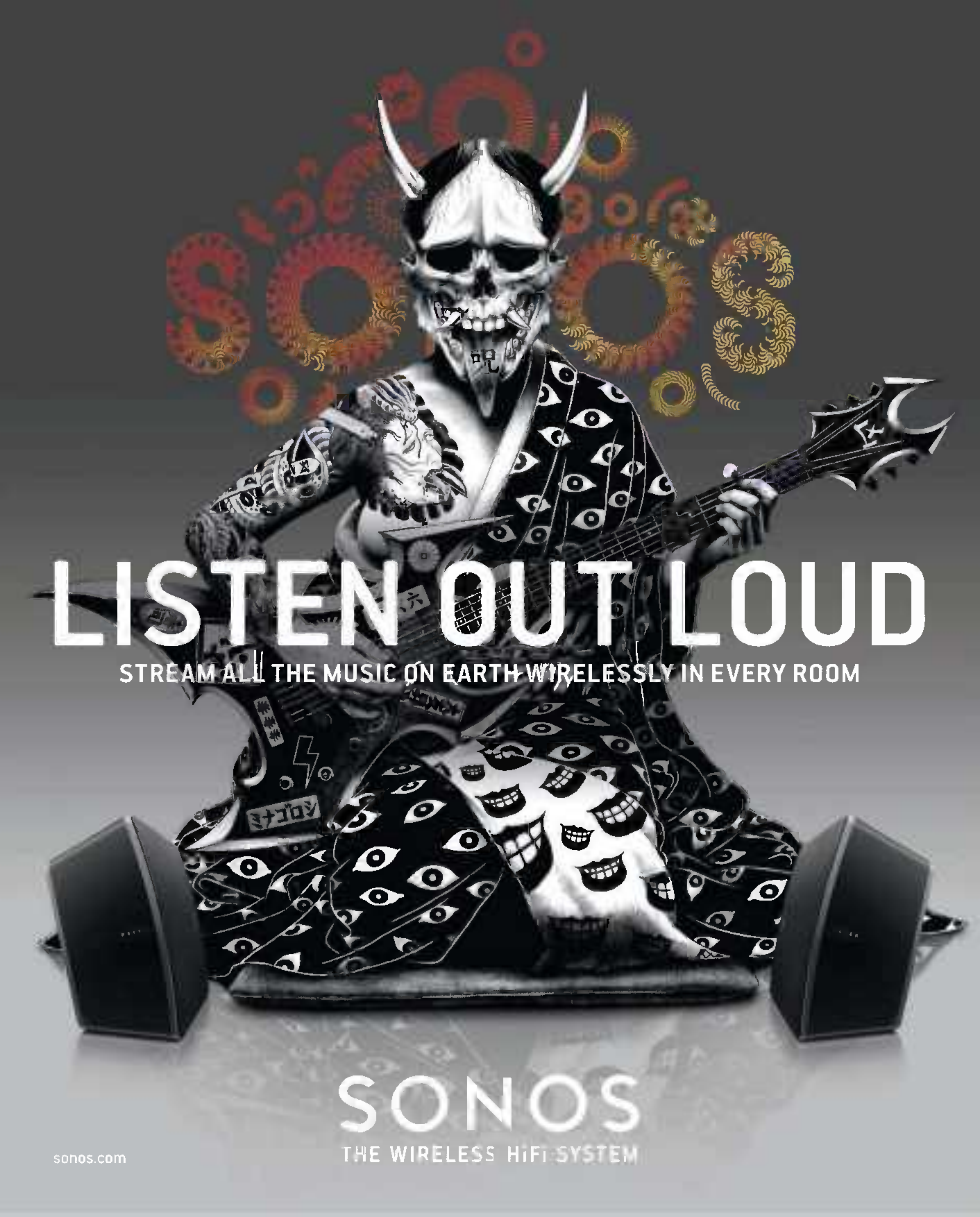
In their most recent *NME* interview, The Maccabees enthused that playing the sort of massive gigs that Arctic Monkeys and Kasabian do would be something that they'd be "totally up for". This is a good thing because – and make no mistake about this whatsoever – 2012 is going to be their year, and the point at which they step assuredly into The Big League.

In the same way that, prior to second album 'Wall Of Arms', 'No Kind Words' indicated that here was a cult concern making a giant leap into the realm of Bands To Be Taken Seriously, as a first taste of forthcoming third album 'Given To The Wild',

Yes, it sounds suited to larger venues, but it's also a natural step forward

'Pelican' marks a step into the Take Very, Very Seriously stage. It is the sound, unmistakably, of The Maccabees we all know and love, but it's more strident, adventurous and instinctive. Nimble guitar lines, svelte, lissom rhythms, a tear-beckoning, beautiful vocal... so many bands in recent times have attempted to retool themselves for arenas by turning up the reverb and borrowing a Bono chorus. One of the most exciting things about 'Pelican' is that, yes, it sounds suited to larger rooms, but it's also like a completely natural step forward. It sounds like the best young guitar band in Britain at the absolute peak of their powers. 2012 is going to be emotional.

Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor



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UPFRONT

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

Edited by Rick Martin



The likely lads:
John, left, and Carl



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The Hooves Of Destiny
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"A LOT OF BRIDGES HAVE BEEN BUILT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS"

MAIN
EVENT

Reunited on the European film festival circuit, The Libs' Carl Barât and John Hassall reveal that reconvening with Pete is on the cards – though not for a few years

To know your future, you must first

understand your past, as the old saying goes. And lord, are Carl Barât and John Hassall being given plenty of opportunities to understand theirs this week. *NME* has joined the pair in Denmark, in the midst of a jaunt around the continent's film festivals to promote *There Are No Innocent Bystanders*, Roger Sargent's documentary on The Libs' fractious 2010 reunion shows. The film is given a big screening at the Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival tonight (November 9). Carl insists they're here simply to "hold Roger's hand", but when we sit down afterwards with the trio, it's clear that watching it on the big screen has reopened a few old wounds. We pick Carl up on one of the threads in the film, that he'd feel "incomplete" if he didn't make another Libs album.

"One day, I'd love to do that," he muses – despite telling us just six months ago he'd "never again" talk to the press about The Libs. "In the film I say I'd feel incomplete not to go down that road further. But also I want to do something important to me now. Right now we're not ready. We can't just book another tour without having written an album, and there's no conceivable space to write an album for the next couple of years. I speak to [Pete] quite a bit. It's grand. We don't have to mention The Libertines. It was definitely the end of the chapter."

"One has to choose the right time to do stuff," says John. "Last year was the right time to do that and you can't force these things. It has to be natural." But it's a 'when', not an 'if'? Carl: "Well maybe, if that's the way you think about

it, but bear in mind it won't be for the next couple of years. There are no plans and we're all very busy. The official line is 'no'. Not next year and probably not the year after."

Roger, an *NME* photography legend and a firm Libertines 'insider', is rather more candid about the possibility. "A lot of bridges have been built in the last six months or so. Peter and Carl are talking, they've not made plans but compared to how it was when the film was finished – it was very difficult, they had quite a big falling out and it really did look like the absolute end – it's my opinion that they're not just gonna come back and play gigs, they'll make a record in 18 months to two years. They can't just do it tomorrow, though, because every member of the band is doing something else."

"There's been no pressure," says Carl. "It echoes throughout the band. We've spent that much time together that whenever we are together it's like nothing's ever really changed."

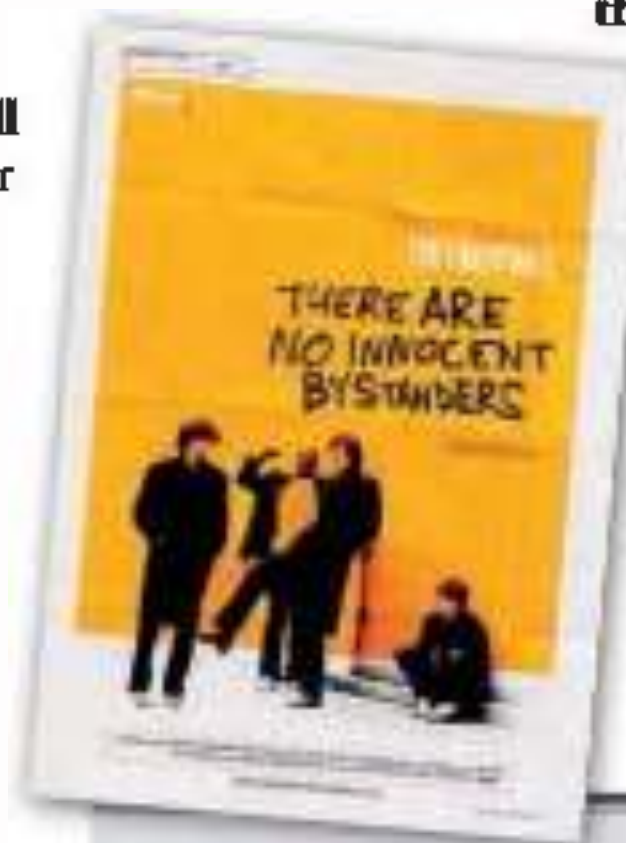
Carl and John reunited yesterday in Copenhagen – a short drive from John's home in Aarhus, which Carl claims is situated "in the middle of Aarstreet" – and, almost instantly, they found the old Libs chaos on their heels. At last night's screening the soundtrack was out of sync and Carl had to stop Roger finding and punching the projectionist. "My inner Ghandi came out. It all blacked out and there was a big round of applause. I think people thought it'd finished in typical Libertines-esque confusion. It was about five or 10 minutes in."

NME joins them for John's guided tour of Copenhagen, taking in the surprisingly little Little Mermaid statue (Carl: "I was expecting

tits like The Darkness would ride in on") and a boat trip around the city's waterways. At tonight's Q&A session at the festival, Carl admits that, of the three weeks The Libertines had booked to rehearse for Reading and Leeds, they only managed four hours.

"The reason it's meant a lot to a lot of people is because those problems and fuck-ups are so naked and exposed," says Carl. "It was the people's band, it was everyone's band as much as ours. I'd like people to take that romance with them."

And their plans for the 10th anniversary of 'Up The Bracket' next year? A reissue perhaps? Carl: "Is that a good thing to do? That'd just piss everyone off, wouldn't it? A different box. I don't see any point to that." John has a better idea. "We could go to the pub together and celebrate it?"



"FILMING WITH PETE WAS HARROWING"

Roger and Carl remember the making of There Are No Innocent Bystanders

Roger: "As much as possible, I felt I blended in to the room. I think it would've hampered the rehearsals if there'd been a crew in there."

"Filming the interview with Peter was one of the most harrowing experiences of my life because he got very, very upset. We caught him on the middle of a tour in

January this year and he'd obviously been going over things a lot since [Reading and Leeds]. He was on a knife-edge, emotionally. There was a hell of a lot I couldn't use from the interview."

Carl: "It's a bit cringey for me... I get stressed watching it. But it's great to document the coming together of all the years of supposition

about how big The Libertines were to people. No-one really knew because we never got to do that gig. So to get the opportunity to actually prove it right, it wasn't some kind of mythology – or if it was it doesn't matter. Everybody was there and everyone was together and everyone wanted to tear it up..."

BE A ROCKSTAR

Two Door Cinema Club formed by accident when Kevin was trying to snog Alex and Sam's mates. Four years later, they're one of the UK's most successful new bands. Want to know more about their crazy lifestyle?

Paco Rabanne Black XS has the answer

Black
paco rabanne

HEAD TO WWW.BEAROCKSTAR.COM TO WATCH EXCLUSIVE BLACK XS OFF SHOWS FROM TWO DOOR, KAISER CHIEFS, COLD WAR KIDS AND MORE.

NME AWARDS SHOWS ANNOUNCED



Justice live. Just like football, apparently

JUSTICE: "WE HAVE TO DELIVER"

The Gallic duo announce five NME Awards Shows and get cracking on their third album

We're working around the clock, 24-7 at the moment," beams a wide-eyed Xavier de Rosnay, speaking about Justice's preparations for their NME Awards Shows next year. "We want to make sure it looks amazing." The Parisian pair are spending the next month beaver away in their garage working on the lighting for the shows, which will see them play five gigs across the UK [see column right for full details]. And they've got good reason for putting the extra effort in, too – Xavier explains they feel more pressure playing in our capital than almost

anywhere else in the world. "When we play London or Paris, it's like a football team playing a home game," he explains. "You can almost feel the expectation from the crowd. We have to deliver."

One thing we weren't expecting was news of a third album, given that their second – last month's 'Audio, Video, Disco' – was almost half a decade in the making. But it seems that they're not planning on such a laboured process next time around. "We were thinking just yesterday how cool it'd be to start making some new music already," Xavier reveals. "It's funny, we spent a fair amount of time making 'Audio...' – but we're not sick of being in studios. Yet."

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To the issue playlist, including Howler and Drake

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Those NME Awards Shows in full

JUSTICE

O2 Academy Bristol (Feb 9)
O2 Academy Brixton London (10)
O2 Academy Birmingham (11)
O2 Academy Glasgow (12)
Manchester Academy (13)

CHARLI XCX

Lexington (8)

SLOW CLUB

Heaven (9)

PURE LOVE

Bush Hall (14)

BAND OF SKULLS

XOVO (15)

TUNE-YARDS

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (15)

TOTALLY ENORMOUS

EXTINCT

DINOSAURS

Heaven (16)

CLOUD CONTROL

Electric Ballroom (17)

THE BIG PINK,

The Garage (20)

KURT VILE,

Koko (21)

ALABAMA SHAKES

Boston Arms (22)

OH LAND

Heaven (23)

LITTLE DRAGON

Forum (24)

MARINA & THE DIAMONDS

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (26)

THE DRUMS

Roundhouse (27)

All dates London unless otherwise stated

Tickets go on sale this Wednesday (Nov 16) at 9am

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THE BIG PINK'S WILD NIGHTS WITH HOT CHOCOLATE

Bed by midnight, mugs of cocoa... What's up with Milo and Robbie?

Nightcaps of hot chocolate? We were aware The Big Pink were knocking partying on the head – they said as much on these very pages earlier this month – but little did we know they were taking things this far. "Robbie's been spending hours and days in singing lessons nurturing his voice," explains Milo. "He doesn't smoke, he doesn't do drugs." Even a night out in London for their NME Awards Show next February can't tempt the boys back to their debauched ways, either. Says Milo: "We like to be in bed with a cup of cocoa by midnight these days." According to Milo, they also got "in a bit of a rut" singing the heartbroken missives of 'A Brief History Of Love', so they're looking forward to a change in that department too.

"Everything was written around splitting up with girls, and we didn't think about playing the songs for two years afterwards," he says. "This time we kept that in mind, so we tried to keep everything as optimistic as possible." And, hints Milo, "there may even be a viola" involved onstage – oooh, hark at them...



MARINA: "THE SHOW'S GOING TO BE GRAND!"

New personae, theatrics and even costume changes coming this way...

"I've only done one rehearsal so far, and it only lasted two hours," laughs Marina guiltily, as she confesses she hasn't quite got round to knocking her new batch of songs into stage-ready shape just yet. "But by February, I'll definitely be ready." That's heartening news: not only is the singer's second album 'Electra Heart' scheduled to drop around then, but she'll also be showcasing the bulk of her new material to the masses for the first time at her NME Awards Show.

So far, Marina's revelations about 'Electra Heart' have hinted at a muddle of different scenarios and personae without fully divulging how such lofty, character-based ambitions will be

knitted together. For now, she simply says it will all "become a lot clearer" very soon – but she does promise that the theatrics will be incorporated into her gigs. "It's all going to run through the live shows hugely, because a lot of the project is so visual and film-based. It's going to be much grander than before," she says. "I'm sure I can manage a costume change or two." Frankly, we'd expect nothing less.



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ART ATTACK!

Thought MGMT couldn't get any weirder? As a bizarre evening at New York's Guggenheim proves, it seems the madness is only just beginning

FRONT ROW

What links MGMT with a 51-year-old Italian artist whose first ever solo show in 1989 was just a closed gallery door bearing a sign saying 'be right back'? Maurizio Cattelan, the artist in question, has made a career out of defying expectations. For one show, he stole another artist's exhibition with the intention of passing it off as his own, for another he persuaded a gallery owner to dress in a bunny-eared penis suit. For a month.

Someone obviously saw the connection between the artist with an eye for satire and indie's most wilfully difficult duo, because tonight (November 11)

MGMT play the second of two shows at New York's Guggenheim Museum to celebrate Cattelan's last exhibition before retirement. There may be mannequins of horses, dinosaur skeletons and a boy hanging from a noose dotted around the room, but MGMT's 45 minute prog jam is comfortably the most out-there thing NME witness tonight.

Heralded by a bass wobble, Andrew VanWyngarden, Ben Goldwasser and co slink down a staircase, which explodes into light from a series of coloured strobes. As the assorted high-heeled city types and specky art school musos cheer, the band pick up a creepy carousel theme

on keyboards and guitars... and the madness begins.

A giant screen behind them shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog, only punctuating the jam with some mildly diverting spaceman sound effects. There's no breaks, no chat; Andrew and Ben barely even look up. When the crowd realise there's more chance of hitching a ride on a horse mannequin than hearing 'Kids' or 'Time To Pretend' – or even a track from 'Congratulations' – someone sparks up a spliff and the room descends into chatter.

The set climaxes with the kind of doomy drumming that characterised 'Lady Dada's Nightmare', before morphing into 12-bar blues. Forget defying expectations – this was a batshit endurance test pitched somewhere between demented genius and total bollocks. Bet Maurizio Cattelan loved it.

A screen shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog



VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Nick Lomanto, 23
"That was the worst concert I've ever been to! I'm a big fan, but they bombed. They didn't play any of their good songs, didn't even look at the crowd. They should have played some hits! That's what people paid for! And I've never been to a show where there wasn't an encore."



Carina Williams, 26
"I thought it was great! The sound really matched the installation. It seems a lot of fans who came here tonight were expecting to hear MGMT from three years ago, but I feel like this was more of a familiar sound from their last album. It was like a [film] score."

“WE’RE BRINGING BACK DIRTY ROCK’N’ROLL”

Taking aim at chillwave, shoegaze and Casio drums, Minneapolis’ – hey, maybe the planet’s – best new band **Howler** talk us through one of 2012’s most anticipated debuts

IN THE WORKS

“It’s not just about music, it’s about my life in general. I need to be doing something at all times or I will fucking blow my brains out.” We should point out that Howler’s 19-year-old singer Jordan Gatesmith is speaking with a sense of manic glee rather than Cobain-esque ennui. The loping frontman is still recovering from his first ever tour, supporting Tapes’n’Tapes across America (a series of “major ups and major downs”, apparently), but is also now in possession of his first ever album, completed a mere three months after his band were picked up by Rough Trade. Called ‘America Give Up’ and to be released on January 16, it springs from a single, simple aim. Gatesmith explains: “Me and Max [Petrek,

keyboardist] were just sitting there one day and we thought there’s not really been a really great rock – ROCK! – record, or even a punk record, in ages. I keep hearing a lot of witch house stuff, chillwave, shoegazey keyboards with Casio drums. But not rock. So we wanted to make it dirty rock’n’roll.”

While three of the 11 tracks – ‘Told You Once’, ‘This One’s Different’ and ‘You Like White Women. I Like Cigarettes’, now-renamed ‘Wailing (Making Out)’ – have been re-recorded after they appeared on the band’s debut EP, everything else on the album is brand new, with centrepiece ‘America’ among Gatesmith’s favourites. “We wanted to write a song like Bruce Springsteen and that’s where that one comes from. It’s actually ended up very Jonathan Richman-sounding, but at the same time it’s got this whole big Springsteen vibe about it.”

The singer also admits he could be in for a kicking back home due to the album’s title, but says it’s actually meant to be tongue-in-cheek rather than bitchy. “Yeah... we’ll see what happens over here with that one. I think it’s pretty funny. All the British people will probably understand it fine, I just hope people over here see the humour too.”

Recording at Minneapolis’ SO-TM studio (also the place where serial killer Andrew Cunanan committed his first murder, as the band informed us during their *Radar* interview a few months back), Gatesmith says the only real difficulty they encountered was when it came to picking

a cover. “God, we’ve had so many problems with that. It was supposed to be like a Lucky Strike cigarette pack,

but we ripped it off and got in loads of trouble. We were talking to their people and they were going on about marketing plans and legal shit, because apparently RJ Reynolds [the 19th-century tobacco tycoon] still owns the image. It looked fucking sweet, the original one. In the end we had to adapt.” Not that Gatesmith is too concerned with that. As he admits later, he’s busier than ever at present, so he’s happy. “You know, I would actually drive myself fucking insane if I wasn’t doing this...”

THE DETAILS

Title:
‘America Give Up’

Released:
January 16, 2012

Recorded:

SO-TM, Minneapolis

Rehearsed/written:

The back of Java

Jack’s Coffee House

in Minneapolis

On tour:

The Garage, London

(Nov 16), The Bowery,

Sheffield (Nov 18), Old

Blue Last, London

(Dec 8)



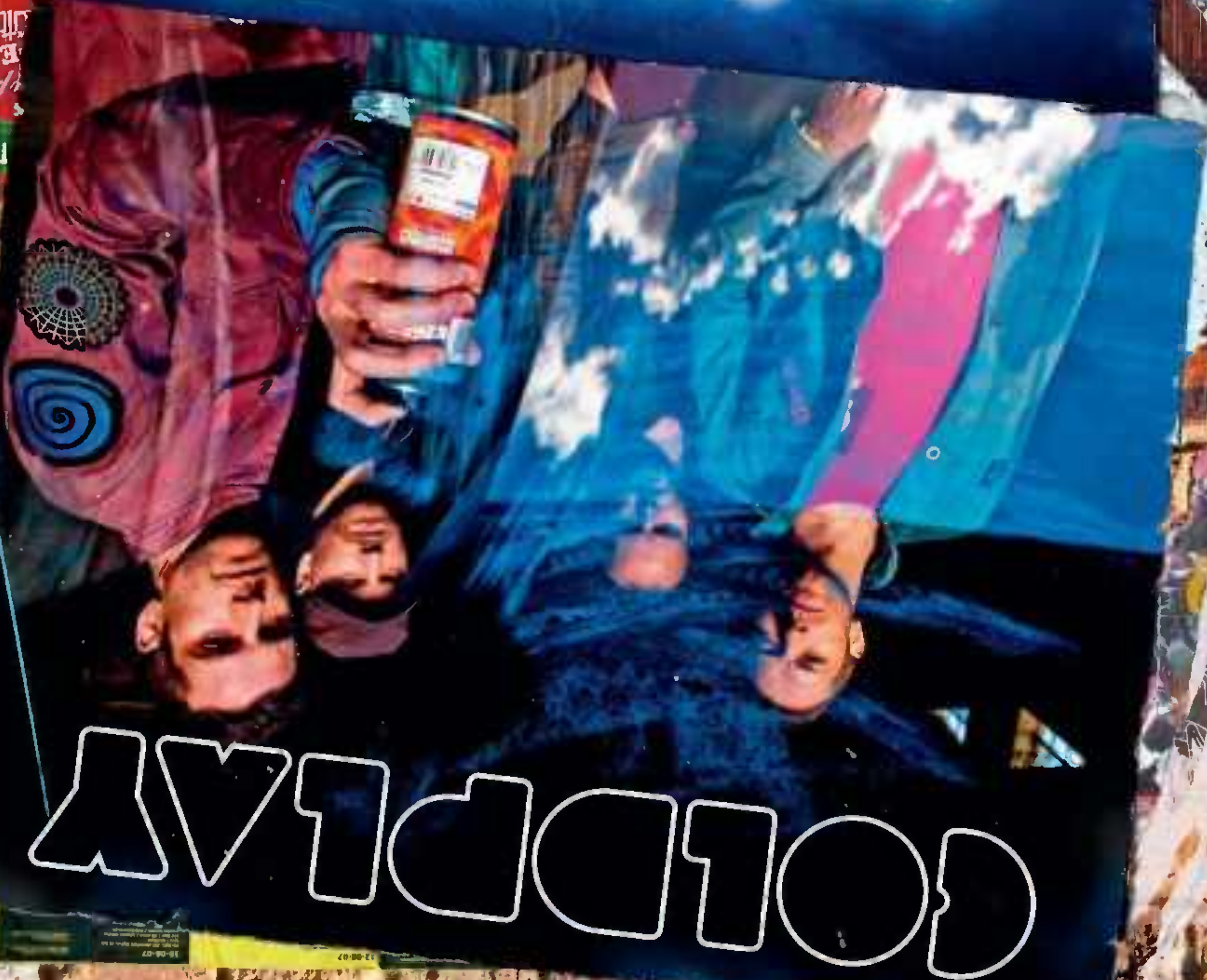
Howler's bedroom sure is cool

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PIECES OF ME ORLANDO WEEKS

The Maccabees frontman on drinking gin at his first gig, the 'James Dean of otters' and why The National's lyrics are so brilliant

My first album

FUGEES - 'THE SCORE'

"I think I bought it from Woolworths in Woodbridge in Suffolk. That was the first thing I'd listen to in the car. To me, the Fugees was something else that sounded like I could sing along to, just as well as to The Beatles."

My first gig

LAURYN HILL, WEMBLEY ARENA, LONDON

"My friend Josh from school and I went right to the front, where we made friends with these much, much, *much* older women who gave us shots of gin. It was a dreamy night, I don't even think I remember the tunes, I just remember thinking how big everything was. Lauryn Hill, six costume changes. And maybe two glasses of gin - it was amazing."

The first record I loved

THE SOUNDTRACK TO BUGSY MALONE

"The only other film that has music in it that's as good is Disney's *Robin Hood*, with the foxes and the bear. The whole of *Bugsy Malone* is great, every song is kind of funny and poignant and definitive of an era. I remember that our family took us to go and see the *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* musical and it wasn't as good. I think that was the Jason Donovan era."

My favourite lyric

THE NATIONAL - 'SLOW SHOW'

"The National have a beautiful lyric, '*You know I dreamed about you for 29 years before I saw you/ You know I dreamed about you/ I missed you for 29 years*'. That's one of the most romantic things you could ever say to anyone, but it's not cheesy. It's perfect and it's concise. I first saw the band on *Jools Holland* - he's brilliant for that kind of stuff. I remember trying to phone Felix [White, Maccabees guitarist] while he was trying to phone me at the same time when he saw Arcade Fire play, watching him [Win Butler] play his guitar back to front and thinking, 'How can you be part of a band that is that brilliant and also do something that looks like Talking Heads?'"

My favourite place

ALETSCH GLACIER, SWITZERLAND

"It's a huge glacier but they've drilled holes in the side of it so you can walk right into the centre of it, through 200 metres of ice. We went because we were driving back from a festival, we must've gone the wrong way because there was no reason to drive over a whole mountain range, we could have just skirted it. We sat there for three hours. Even with lots of tourists around it, it felt alien."



It's not comparable to anything else I've ever seen; I've never felt as weirded out as being in the middle of a giant ice block. It's like the dwelling of a Bond villain."

My favourite film

TARKA THE OTTER

"It's a film about the life story of an otter. It's beautiful. If it's just one otter playing the part, it is the James Dean of otters. There's a heron and there's a love interest, White-Tip. It's multicultural because there's an owl family. It's an animal melting pot, by the side of a river."

My favourite artist

STANLEY SPENCER

"I was taken to Sandham Memorial Chapel [where Spencer's work is exhibited] when I was about 13 or 14 and I remember thinking that it was the most incredible atmosphere and just being stunned into silence, not wanting to make a rude sound or anything like that. That must mean that there's something really special going on there. And I remember that very clearly, in the same way as being on a school trip to the Somme and even the funny kids at school just shut up."



Clockwise from main: looks like Orlando needs a refill; The National frontman and lyricist Matt Berninger; artist Stanley Spencer; Fugees' huge-selling 1996 album *The Score* with frontwoman Lauryn Hill in the centre; the soundtrack to 1976 kiddie gangster romp *Bugsy Malone*; *Tarka The Otter*

VERSUS

PETER ROBINSON *vs* JONATHAN PIERCE

The Drums' man on stealing biscuits and how he doesn't care about chart positions – yeah, yeah



• The Drums are obsessed with interviews by Ke\$ha and Marina & The Diamonds

• “We have a thing for watching them crumble – oh my god!” exclaims the indie funster

• True to Jonathan's spooky prediction, that single did not exactly set the charts alight

Hello, Jonathan. I went to see Britney recently...

“YOU DID? I went to see her about three months ago! My manager took me as a surprise. And it certainly was a surprise! A good one – I laughed my ass off. It was like watching somebody mash potatoes for two hours, which was sad but she has some good songs.”

Anyway, there is a bit in her show where she gets on a massive swing the size of the stage and sings a song. Would you have a massive swing on stage?

“Oh god, no way, I don't think *(laughs)* we'll ever do anything more than a few lights. We're even nervous about having a strobe. It sounds pretentious but we really like our songs and we feel they speak for themselves.”

I like that you recorded your last album in a kitchen. Did your record label keep coming in to see how the album was coming along and/or steal biscuits?

“It's ideal if you're hungry. Amy, my manager, she stops over all the time, but right at the start our label said, ‘We know you're different from other bands so we'll let you call the shots.’ The whole team around us is pretty cool. Maybe just not telling us things that are awful... They know we're sensitive lads.”

You have sensitive lad cheekbones and haircuts.

“*(Cackles)* That we do, that we do. You just watch, this next record we're coming back with big mountain beards. And tiny instruments. Like little accordions and bells and whistles.”

How good are you at growing beards? The Drums don't really strike me as the hairiest of recording artists.

“No, man, I think I had my first hair under my arm when I was about 19. It took a long time, I got picked on the whole time. But who's laughing now? Who's laughing now? *(Laughs)*”

No waxing for Jonathan from The Drums!

“Exactly! Who's in line at the waxing station now? Not me. I'm touring the world motherfuckers! I'm joking.”

If you take up swimming you'll be quite aerodynamic.

“Oh man, I really wanna do that. I'm a big fan of Björk and I read that she – this could be completely made up



– goes swimming every morning because it helps with her voice. All I wanna do is go swimming but I don't think my feet have been in water in over two years.”

You have washed your feet in the last two years, let's just clarify? “That is true. What do you think?”

I think you've washed your feet. “*(Howls)* YOU ARE RIGHT! You are right about that. Ding ding”

Finally you have a record out now in the UK. What's your chart prediction?

“Er, I'm gonna say... Which chart?”

The proper one. Your singles haven't exactly bothered the higher reaches of the Top 100 so far. Is it all going to change?

“Oh I don't think so! *(Laughs)* I don't even know where our last single registered on the chart.”

I'm looking at your chart positions now on Wikipedia and it doesn't make for pleasant reading, Jonathan, I'll be honest. But hey, it's not about the chart positions, so don't you worry.

“We're very happy with where we are and what's happening with the band. I feel like a lot of that crazy hype has subsided and now we can just get on with it. To be honest it feels exotic and thrilling to be focusing on these things. Without doing too many interviews about, you know, who cuts your hair or whatever.”

But who DOES cut your hair? “Jacob cuts all our hair.”

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1 2 HOWLER
'I TOLD YOU ONCE'
Rough Trade

2 3 SCUM
'AMBER HANDS'
Wax

3 6 DRY THE RIVER
'WEIGHTS & MEASURES'
MCA

4 4 THE BIG PINK
'STAY GOLD'
St

5 7 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB
'LIGHTS OUT, WORDS GONE'
Wax

6 9 LANA DEL REY
'VIDEO GAMES'
Polygram

7 10 MIKI & THE DOVE
'THE DRUMMER'
Virgin

8 12 THE VACCINES
'TIGER BLOOD'
Polygram

9 8 ARCTIC MONKEYS
'SHUCK IT AND SEE'
Domino

10 16 KASABIAN
'RE-WIRED'
Liberty

11 13 FLORENCE + THE MACHINE
'SHAKE IT OUT'
Epic

12 11 NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS
'AKA... WHAT A LIFE!'
Sire

13 33 FRIENDLY FIRES
'BLUE CASSETTE'
St

14 1 THE VACCINES
'WETSUIT'
Liberty

15 14 TRIBES
'WHEN MY DAY COMES'
Wax

16 17 JUSTICE
'AUDIO, VIDEO, DISCO'
MCA

17 36 YOU ME AT SIX
'LOVERBOY'
Epic

18 27 COLDPLAY
'PARADISE'
Polygram

19 5 MANIC STREET PREACHERS
'THIS IS THE DAY'
Polygram

20 15 THE DRUMS
'HOW IT ENDED'
Wax

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• FRANK TURNER
‘Wessex Boy’
• FOSTER THE PEOPLE
‘Call It What You Want’
• GOTYE
‘Easy Way Out’

The NME Chart is compiled each week by NME Radio and is based on how many times each track has been played on the station over the previous seven days.

RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Matt Wilkinson



ABOUT
TO
BREAK

A\$AP ROCKY

The NYC rap upstart with a swagload of tunes and a \$3 million record deal

It's exactly a week since self-dubbed "pretty motherfucker" A\$AP Rocky released his 16-track mixtape 'LiveLoveA\$AP', and he strides into the Polo Grounds Music offices a couple of blocks from Madison Square Garden. "How's it going, B?" 23-year old Rocky greets label boss and hip-hop kingpin Bryan Leach, fixes himself a Hennessy and Pepsi from Leach's personal bar, and drapes himself over a leather armchair, laptop open and Facebook on before he hits the seat. The last week has been a good one for Rocky, the Harlem-born rapper whose real name is Rakim Meyers (yep, he's named after THAT Rakim). "Finally, people have to come out with if they like me or not now," he says. "There's no wondering if I'm good or not. And I've been getting a lot of good feedback."

Good feedback is an understatement. It's not even a year since A\$AP Rocky and A\$AP Ferg dropped a handmade video for a track they made called 'Get High' on YouTube. At the time Rocky had moved his mother and baby sister from Harlem to

New Jersey and was paying for their apartment by selling drugs on the street.

"It was a way of surviving: I didn't have a job, my mum didn't have a job," he says – but pushing dope finally came to an end in July, around the same time he put a new video, 'Purple Swag', online.

It took a third video – for woozy Houston rap number 'Peso', in August – and suddenly everyone wanted a piece of A\$AP Rocky. Including Polo Grounds Music, part of Sony/RCA, who put a \$3 million deal on the table to sign him and fund a group label called A\$AP Worldwide, with Rocky in charge.

"I'm a tastemaker. I know how to look out for what's good, what's big, what's next," he says, pulling out a bag of weed and calling up YouTube videos of Tennessee 'gangster walk' and Lana Del Rey.

If there's pressure on him to deliver, Rocky's not feeling it yet. "This is easy!" he says lighting up with a grin. "Selling drugs is hard. But this? All you gotta do is show up and do what you love." *Hazel Sheffield*

NEED TO KNOW

FROM: Harlem, New York

FOR FANS OF: Odd Future, Drake

BUY IT NOW: 'LiveLoveA\$AP' is available online for free now

SEE HIM LIVE: He's hoping to be in the UK in January

ON NME.COM: Watch Rocky's best vids

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Rocky turned vegetarian recently. "It doesn't make sense to take a life for your satisfaction," he says.



GAUNTLET HAIR HEAD TO UK

US duo heading this way with tales of slashed tyres, pummelled housemates and wizard dicks

RADAR
NEWS

"We had a party at our old house in Denver and after we left we caught wind that some guy had slashed our van tyres," informs one half of Gauntlet Hair, Andy Rauworth, when asked how things have been going since the release of their self-titled debut album last month.

"Then, there was another time in Missouri when we stayed with some strangers and woke up to the sound of them pummelling each other. One of them threw the other one down the stairs. I don't know why it's so violent lately but we do seem to attract the stranger crowd."

If you're also a fan of casual violence then you're in luck – Gauntlet Hair have just confirmed their first ever UK dates, and are heading over here to spread the, er... *love* next February.

"Neither of us have been overseas," Andy enthuses, adding that the dates will see him and co-mainman Craig Nice playing stripped-down versions of their songs to compensate for the fact that their backing band are too

skint to head over for the tour. "There will have to be a lot of changes to make it work, though, because the album was recorded for a full band. The [tracks] might even change entirely," he explains.

One thing that is staying put, however, is their eyebrow-raising name, which Craig brilliantly defended recently by telling detractors to "go suck our medieval, hairy, wizard dicks."

"That [comment] was something he pulled off that we're all very proud of,"

"I don't know why, but we attract the stranger crowd"

ANDY RAUWORTH

Andy chuckles. "It's exhausting for reviewers to continually give us shit over it but there's some excellent points to having a name like that. If you type in Gauntlet Hair into your Google search box all you get is this fucking band. I figured [the critics] would tire of writing the same shit over and over again but they're still going at it."

We're sure that people will have some far more interesting things to say about Gauntlet Hair once February rolls around... *Lisa Wright*

The Buzz

The rundown of the music, videos and scenes breaking forth from the underground this week



1 FEAR OF MEN TEAM UP WITH BOS ANGELES

Two of our favourite new bands are heading out on the road together this week. Fear Of Men and Bos Angeles (above) play a number of co-headline dates on the jaunt, which kicks off at Manchester's Trof this Thursday (Nov 17). What's more, both acts are also readying new releases. Bos unleash their Cure-esque double A-side 'Beach Slalom'/'Days Of Youth' via Roundtable Records on November 21, while FoM release the excellently titled 'Alice Munro Demos' cassette tape on December 12 – head to NME.COM/newmusic now to hear two exclusive songs from it and check out the bands' tour dates in full.



2 BRETON'S NEW VID

The south London band – who live in a disused bank – release debut single 'Edward The Confessor' on November 21, but it's the video which is really kicking up a fuss. Filmed in-house under the collective's own bretonLABS moniker, you can see it for yourself on NME.COM/newmusic now.



3 MEXICAN SUMMER'S 100TH RELEASE

With a history taking in Dungen, Kurt Vile, Best Coast and Wooden Shjips, it's not been a bad existence for NYC's Mexican Summer label. Formed three years ago, it celebrates its 100th release next Friday (Nov 25), with a special cut from Ford & Lopatin – hear it on NME's Daily Download blog now.



4 LIVERPOOL'S MERCURY

What Wales does, Liverpool follows. Sort of. The folks behind Scouse new music blog Getintothisco.uk have outlined their plans to hold a Mercury Prize-style award in the city next year, focusing solely on acts from around the region. Nominees for the inaugural award are set to be announced early in 2012.

5 IROK

AKA The Intergalactic Republic Of Kongo. AKA Mike Title from London non-starters Dead Kids. Mike dressed as Colonel Gaddafi – post-golden gun shooting – during IROK's set at London's newest, most depraved venue The Sebright Arms recently. It was the perfect setting for his self-described "violent and contagious psychotropic afro-punk".



BAND CRUSH



Patrick Wolf on his favourite new act

"Every time I feel stressed or under pressure I listen to Kreayshawn. And if I had to come back as any human being it would be Kreayshawn because in every video she looks so carefree and she doesn't give a fuck. She's really inspiring to me right now."

SCENE
REPORT

WHAT'S HOT FOR THE HORRORS

*Rhys Webb from The Horrors
ponders the crystal ball of new music*



Welcome to the second instalment of Spider's top sounds and new bands to check out and catch live. This time I'm focusing on some of the hip young guitar slingers flying the flag for psychedelia and garage. First up – freakbeat ravers **Speak & The Spells**. They play

frantic punk rock, owing as much to '60s R&B legends The Downliners Sect and The Pretty Things as they do to Billy Childish. Check their debut EP 'She's Dead'.

The Hypnotic Eye are recording their debut long player and have recently been treading the boards at some of London's underground hot spots. They play sultry organ-led garage and feature the seductive lead vocals of Grace Lightman. Coffin Joe and I dropped in to the session for their forthcoming debut single 'Marianne' to lend some backing vocals recently, and there's a date at my clubnight the Cave Club on the horizon too.

RHYS' TOP 5

SPEAK & THE SPELLS
'She's Dead'

THE HYPNOTIC EYE
'Fly On The Wall'

THEE VICARS
'Don't Wanna Be Free'

BLOOD MUSIC
'Unending Blues'

UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA
'How Can U Luv Me'

Thee Vicars fuse the early punk sounds of The Damned and 'Spiral Scratch'-era Buzzcocks with a very authentic trashy garage blueprint. Kind of like a British Black Lips, who they often play with. I also love the London-based **Blood Music**, who play heavy, mind-bending noise that crashes and throbs like the klang of heavy machinery. They're currently putting the finishing touches to their debut single.

They're a little bit bigger now, but Portland's **Unknown Mortal Orchestra** are absolutely superb. They return to the UK this month. Get down there and check them out!

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Friendly Fires' Jack Savidge

5 TO SEE This week's unmissable new music shows

HOWLER (pictured)
Garage, London
16 November

**THE HISTORY OF
APPLE PIE**
Shacklewell Arms,
London
16 November

WISE BLOOD
Undertone, Cardiff
18 November

THEME PARK
Green Door Store,
Brighton
19 November

FOLKS
Deaf Institute,
Manchester
22 November



Money: Ryan
Jarmann's hair
lives on...

MONEY/ BEATY HEART

SACRED TRINITY CHURCH, SALFORD
FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER

CAUGHT LIVE

Following WU LYF's well-documented ascension, it's been unsurprising to witness a glut of Manchester-based bands reverting to

similar smoke and mirror tactics. Yet for every act hastily cobbling together faux-cryptic imagery while simultaneously deleting their Facebook, there are those whose devotion to the art of presentation as a whole is clear.

Money are one such group.

Confidence isn't something they've always had during their fledgling existence. Starting

as Books last year, they quickly changed name to Youth roundabout when they were looking timid as openers for Deerhunter; 18 months on and the contrast is substantial. The four-piece tonight possess the sort of unashamed sincerity in their stargazing-from-the-gutter pop that can't not revitalise, particularly at a time when blogs are awash with guitar music diluted of emotion in lieu of slacker escapism. It helps that the Sacred Trinity Church's reverential surroundings match their clearly bombastic

ambitions. It helps, too, that they seem to have gained such local devotion despite having hardly any online music to their name. This is no more apparent than in support act Beaty Heart, whose post-'... Merriweather...' reels of sound are largely ignored. It's a shame, for the Peckham trio have gained plaudits in their own right, but this evening the blurred edges of their disorientated pop just doesn't conquer minds and bodies in the manner it's rightfully done elsewhere.

*Money possess the sort of
unashamed sincerity that
can't not revitalise*

Money are still raw, mind; a sound already heavy on reverb often spirals out of control, obscuring Jamie Lee's sharpened croon. Yet it's hard not to be pulled in by 'Who's Going To Love You Now?'s wide-eyed affectation, or the soul-searching balladry of 'The Sea'. Indeed, at times their sense of conviction is such that it could make a person latch onto them and never want to let go, leaving others to baulk at a perceived hubris. You feel, though, that they wouldn't want it any other way. **Simon Jay Catling**



Looks like one of
The Hypnotic Eye
came straight
from work



One year ago **The Vaccines** were a hyped indie band with some exciting demos. Then they delivered an amazing debut album, slayed the world's festivals and bulked into one of our most thrilling live acts. **Barry Nicolson** joins their victory lap

Fuck, I've just had a Bono moment!" Wandering the corridors of Manchester's MEN Arena in search of his dressing room, Justin Young has become hopelessly lost and found himself surrounded by a mob of fans who have been camped outside the venue's front door all afternoon. After a few double-takes and gasps of recognition, one by one, they begin to encircle and approach. Some of them breathlessly tell him that The Vaccines are the reason why they've started a band of their own (he's been getting that one a lot recently), while some say nothing at all, but giggle nervously and present him with T-shirts, shoes, limbs or whatever else they can find that he can scrawl his name on. One girl approaches him on three separate occasions before finally working up the nerve to open her mouth. When he notices that his bandmates have all quietly slunk off, he elects to stick around anyway, ensuring that everyone who wants a photo gets one, making as much small talk as he can get away with, and maybe – just maybe – enjoying his Bono moment more than he'd like to let on.

To an outsider, The Vaccines' closeness is immediately evident; the shared weirdness of everything that's happened in the past 12 months has fostered a sense of unity and an unwavering self-belief in what they're ►



doing. Then again, given that they began 2011 as the band that other bands loved to hate, that's not much of a surprise. At Leeds this year, we spoke to a musician whose band broke around the same time as The Vaccines, and he confessed that – until he heard their debut album – he had jealously dismissed them as another London hype band who'd never had to work for their recognition. It wasn't an uncommon perception.

"Oh, I was definitely aware of all that," says Justin. "One of the first interviews I ever did was with a guy whose opening question was, 'Did you know that every local band in my city can't stand you?' As soon as he said it, I thought, 'Well, if they spent half as much time worrying about their own bands as they seem to do about mine, maybe they'd be riding this wave with us.' People think that if you're hyped, you've got it easy. But in a lot of ways, I actually think it made things harder, because with the hype came all the detractors who actively wanted us to fail. People will put every obstacle in your way, you know? I've been in bands since I was 11, getting it wrong over and over again. I've seen my friends do well and I've been jealous of them, but the only reason they were doing better than me is that, at the time, they were better than me. And all those bands who were sat at home moaning about us were just jealous because we were better than them."

We can't help but notice a difference in Justin's rhetoric since those early days. After all, this is the same man who was once at pains to play down every grandiose

claim being made on his band's behalf, telling *NME* back in January that, "It'd be amazing if we were ever in the charts – but I wouldn't bet money on it." What's changed? "We made a point of being quite self-deprecating in the beginning because we wanted people to get past all the hyperbole that was attaching itself to us, but we've always known we're a great band. Truly, I don't think there's another band out there who do what we do as well as we do it. That's not arrogance, that's just fact. I mean, can you name me any?"

As *NME* discovers, 'Doing what The Vaccines do' is not for the fainthearted. By the end of the year, the band will have played almost 150 gigs, 45 of those being festival engagements that sometimes saw them doing two shows in two different countries on the same day.

Everyone wants a piece of them right now, and you get the feeling that they can be a little too accommodating for their own good: after the gig in Cardiff (and after draining every last drop of their rider), bassist Arni Hjörvar and drummer Pete Robertson are accosted by a group of fans hanging around their tourbus who plead with them to come and watch their gig at the venue

across the road. Naturally, they agree, and everyone is soon sinking double Laphroaigs.

That eye-of-the-storm, seat-of-the-pants sort of lifestyle takes its toll, but it was the band's workload – not their partying habits – that brought them to the brink of catastrophe earlier this summer. Shortly after their triumphant Reading and Leeds performances

in August, Justin discovered that the vocal polyp problem which had plagued him all year would require yet another throat operation – his third time under the knife in just nine months – resulting in the cancellation of the band's entire American tour, as well as shows in Japan and Europe.

When we sit down with him in Manchester, it's clear that there's still a lingering uncertainty about what his vocal problems might ultimately mean for the

future of The Vaccines.

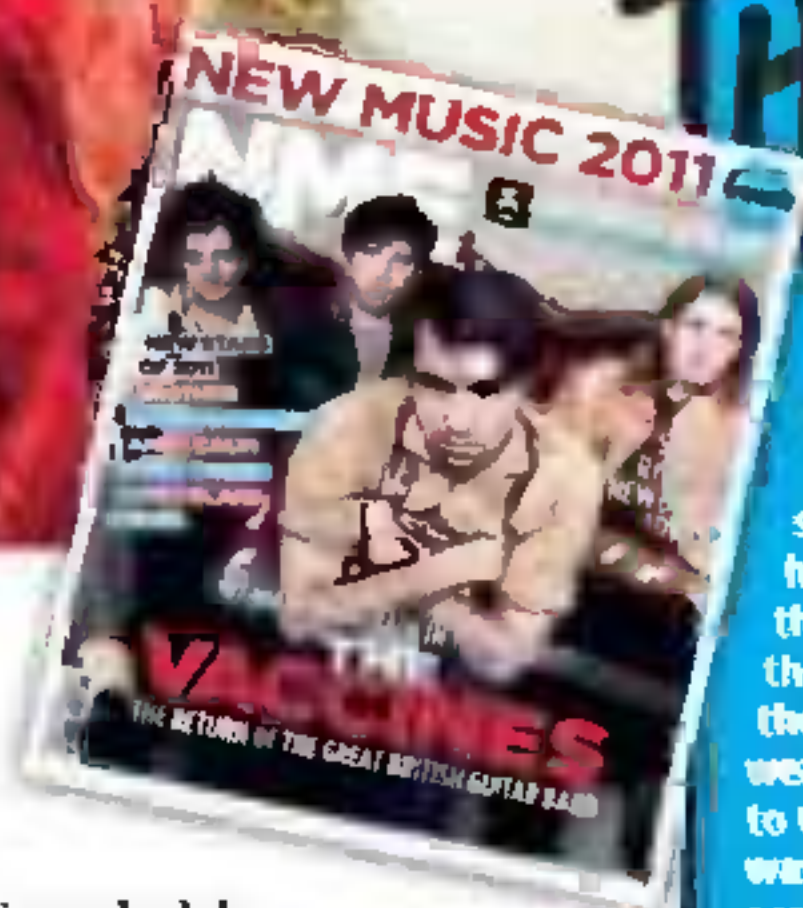
***NME:* We've heard about your throat – what were you actually diagnosed with?**

Justin: "I'd had a haemorrhage, basically. Whenever I would shout during gigs, the vocal polyp would bleed, then it would scar and it wouldn't close properly. So my voice would just start squeaking."

**"WE ALWAYS
KNEW WE WERE
A GREAT BAND"**
Justin



Clockwise from far left: onstage at MEN; Freddie takes off; the lads lament a poor turnout; Arni's facepalm moment; Pete shows us what he's got



THE FIVE MOMENTS THAT MADE THE VACCINES

How did you react when you found out you'd have to have a third operation?

"I was told in LA, when we were out doing *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* I went to the doctor because I was having a problem with my ear, but he mentioned I was sounding husky and that he wanted to take a look at my throat. I just thought to myself, 'Oh shit, here we go again.' I won't lie to you, I properly broke down when he told me he'd found the haemorrhage again. I was completely devastated, because it meant cancelling the American tour. I don't know how to say this without sounding cheesy, but it was like I was on top of the world one minute and in total freefall the next."

Was there a point where you thought that it might mean the end of the band?

"Oh yeah, definitely. I mean, it's pretty fucking serious stuff. I guess people were a bit pissed off at us for pulling shows and maybe they thought I was just lazy, but if I hadn't had that operation, honestly, the band would've been over by now. The second time it happened, they told me it was turning carcinogenic! I've been through three operations in the last nine months, but I think the sheer number of shows we've played in between is testament to how much we want to overcome it. I took eight weeks off after the last operation, and I've worked hard to get my voice back up to strength, but I've been told just to cross my fingers and hope it doesn't come back again. I feel pretty good at the moment, and I've been doing everything I can to look after my voice, so

hopefully it's gone for good..."

As Freddie tells us later: "Justin's vocal problems were no great mystery: we had the busiest schedule of any band in the world this summer. At one stage, we did 16 flights in 10 days, across four continents. We work with people who have been with The Killers and The Strokes, people who have seen and done it all, and even they said they'd never known anything like our schedule. We were tempting fate, yeah, but when you're a new band, you don't say no to things. You say yes to everything, try your luck and see what happens."

Up to that point, 'seeing what happened' had proved a decidedly fruitful strategy for The Vaccines. It was at this year's T In The Park that Freddie first noticed "something special happening for us. You can talk about the hype and all that, but it fades into insignificance next to walking out onstage in front of 30,000 kids. The hype was never real, but that gig was." By the time Reading and Leeds came around, Vaccines fever had escalated into a full-blown pandemic.

"We'd been around the world in two weeks or something crazy like that, and we were all pretty burnt out," recalls Justin. "But to look out at those crowds and know that all those people had accepted us... I guess it just felt good to be so loved, you know?"

Luckily, the new single – the Albert Hammond ►

THE FIRST NME COVER

January 8
"We want indie back in the charts," they said, but who'd have guessed by the end of the year they'd have put it there? The band were weary of playing up to the hype, but it was clear there was something special afoot.

THE DEBUT

September 11
The moment which Justin describes as "the crucial point where people could either get on with celebrating us, or start ignoring us". Met with near-unanimous praise and a Number Four chart placing, it turned out to be the former.

T IN THE PARK

July 10
T In The Park was just like, 'Fuck!' says Justin. "There were so many people there." The band's set at the King Tut's Wah Wah Tent was one of the weekend's highlights,

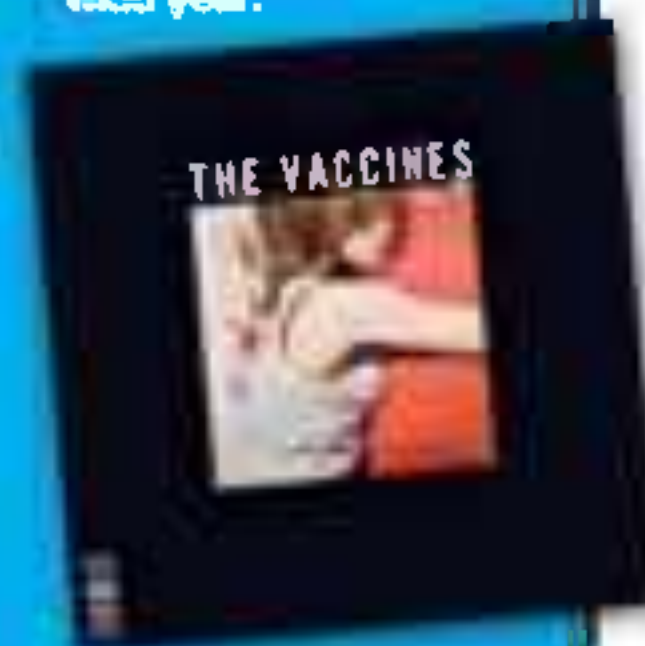
and an early indication that things were going stratospheric.

READING AND LEEDS

August 6-27
Justin's throat problems would bring them crashing down to earth a few days later, but The Vaccines were on top of the world after their R&L performances this summer.

THE HEADLINE TOUR

September 11-12
Their biggest UK tour to date climaxes with two massive shows at Brixton next month. Should be a memorable victory lap after their mad year.



Jr-produced 'Tiger Blood' – was already in the can long before Justin's vocal collapse. Recorded at Albert's behest at his home studio in upstate New York, it's pretty much exactly what you'd expect a collaboration between The Vaccines and the coolest of all Strokes to be: a thrillingly propulsive rock'n'roll song that barely cracks two minutes, but you wish would last forever.

"I really just had the bare bones of the song, with no idea for where to take it," says Justin. "We wanted to work with someone creative, someone we really admired, and Albert basically became like a fifth member of the band when we were in his studio. It's hard to be objective about something you've created with people you spend all day, every day with, so it was good to have reassurance from someone you admire. And, obviously, with us being massive fans of The Strokes, it was pretty exciting."

Was it overwhelming to work so closely with someone you spent your teenage years idolising?

"Not at all. I'm not 15 anymore, you know? It was inspiring, though. Growing up and listening to The Strokes, Albert always seemed like a total rock star to me. But we were there to do a job. We didn't sit around swapping stories or asking him for advice. In the end, that song is just another step towards trying to push the band forward – whether it does that or not is open to debate, but we just wanted to try something different."

The band are playing it frustratingly coy about exactly where they want to push forward to; Justin reveals that they'll be playing new songs on the UK headline tour they embark on this week, and that he expects to record a new album "during the first half of next year", but they're vague when it comes to specifics. What Justin will say, however, is that in spite of how proud he is of the band's first album, "we know that it's not a masterpiece and that we have to get better. The songs are essentially nursery rhymes: three chords, one note being played over them, a straight drumbeat, no harmonies. It's pure

back-to-basics rock'n'roll, and the songs were good enough on their own that they didn't have to hide behind any silly production. So in that respect, they were the best 11 songs we had, and 'What Did You Expect From The Vaccines' was as good as The Vaccines could possibly have been at that point. We've made a great first record, but it still sounds like a first record – we want to keep improving."

Following the set in Manchester – watched intently from side of stage by Alex Turner and Matt Helders – where they come within a ball-hair of thieving the Monkeys' thunder, the band head to Big Hands on Oxford Road for some post show drinks. On a previous visit to the city, Pete ended up at a goth club, spinning '80s electro-pop underneath the pulsating red eyes of a giant fibreglass Satan. Tonight isn't quite so weird, despite Mumford & Sons' Winston Marshall randomly appearing from out of nowhere. There's just one thing left to ask Justin

WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM THEIR SECOND ALBUM?

Justin and Freddie on what's up their sleeves

NME: So, where are you at with the next album?

Justin: "Well, we want to write it first. We've got a couple of songs that we really like, and we're going to be playing them on the headline tour. We don't want to rush into it, I think we want to make a record that we're proud of, that's better than the first record. I'd say that definitely, in the first half of next year, we'll record the second record. The songs still sound youthful and direct and upbeat, but maybe with a little more swagger. The first record was knowingly dumb, and I think the second one will be less like that. Obviously the whole thing with the first record

was to strip back all the parts, so now we're looking at maybe building on the sound a little bit."

Freddie: "We've got a few new songs, I don't know how many we'll end up keeping, but there are a couple of them that I feel are paving the way for what's coming next. I don't think we want to go bigger for the sake of it, just because we're playing bigger venues. We definitely don't want to make the same record twice, but we don't want to consciously change our sound. The first record happened really organically, and I think the second one will, too. It just feels really exciting at the moment."

before we stagger back to our hotel, though: after living through all the lunacy and hyperbole of the last 12 months, does he feel as though The Vaccines have made a difference? Are they changing things in the way that the Monkeys and The Strokes before them managed to?

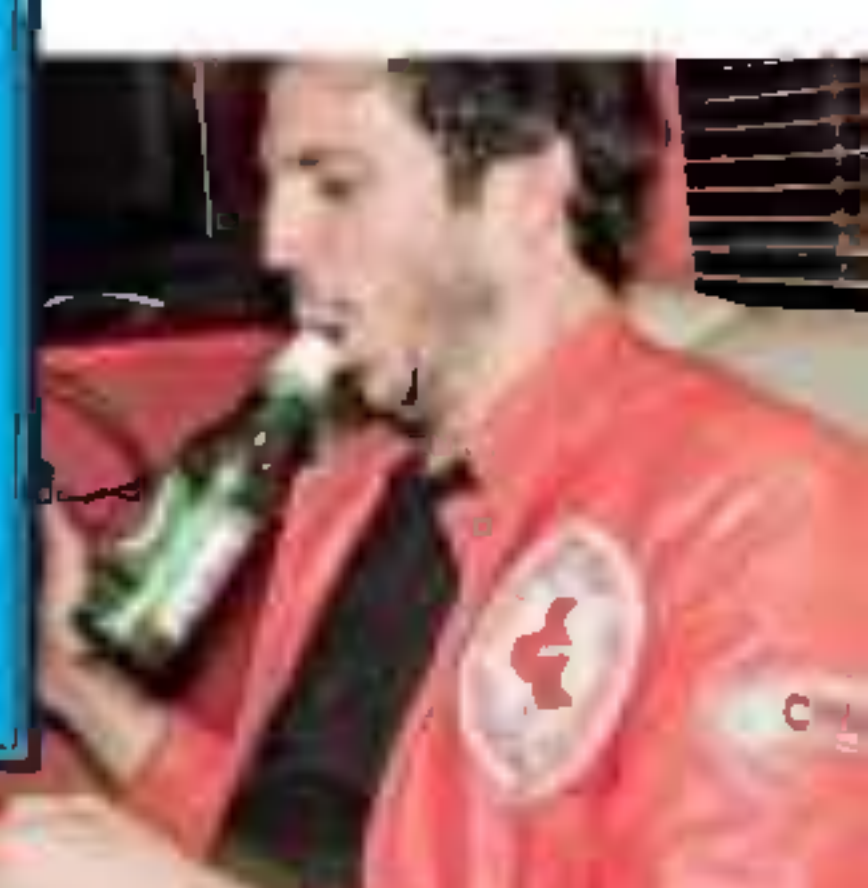
"We've had kids coming up to us telling us that we're the blueprint for their own bands, and that's a great thing," he says. "I feel that rock'n'roll is an artform in a way that electronic music just isn't. I find that kind of music quite scientific, almost devoid of personality, in a way. Whereas there's nothing sexier than just getting up onstage and beating the shit out of your guitar, is there? Saying what you fucking think, doing what you fucking feel..."

And taking life one Bono moment at a time.

NME EXTRA For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a pair of tickets to The Vaccines' winter tour and a limited edition Vaccines skateboard, plus video footage stage at The Oz, head to NME.COM/extra. See p8 for details



Clockwise from above: Arni gets his fix of NME; Pete sucks it and sees; Justin's healthy eating, messy living; Freddie shows off his rock profile; arriving in Manchester





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“HOW WOULD WE LIKE TO SNUFF IT? COMING OFF A ROLLER COASTER!”

Are they bigger than Arctic Monkeys? What's their favourite cartoon? Can pigs swim? **Kasabian's** Tom and Serge answer the burning questions sent in by readers and some famous faces

Talking nonsense: it is, truly, a dying rock'n'roll artform. Who cares about tempo changes, effects pedals and widdly solos when you can put the *real* issues of the day to bands? Praise be for Tom Meighan and Serge Pizzorno, then. You could lock this pair in a room with just a Dictaphone for company and return with reams of compelling dinosaur chat and breakdowns of their favourite cartoon characters.

Not that they don't come up with the hard info too – last week in *NME* the pair let it slip that, as well as playing a New Year's Eve show at London's O2 Arena this year, next summer they're likely to be heading up the capital's Hyde Park Calling.

“Wigston Swimming Pool!” Tom replies when asked what further venues the band would like to play next year. “We all used to go there as kids in Leicester. It's got loads of great childhood memories for me that place. Apart from the pool itself. It was dead fucking cold.”

Indeed. So with the Kasabian wagon clearly set to roll straight through to next year, with the help of questions from readers and musicians, there's lots to catch up on – from how they see themselves compared to Arctic Monkeys, to who has inspired them most, to the swimming abilities of farm animals.

I like both Kasabian and Arctic Monkeys, but, honestly, who would you say was the bigger band?

Sassan Tabrizian

Serge: “Well, I'm a lot taller than any of them.”

Tom: “Ha! Yeah, we're definitely taller than them.”

Serge: “They're not very tall, are they? Alex is not very tall.”

Tom: “Well, he's not you, is he?”



Gerard Way, My Chemical Romance

Tom: “Wow, what a good question. Velociraptor? It just came out of nowhere. Well, it just sounded good, that's all that bloody happened really, mate. It's just quite a comic book, kind of cartoon-ish name for an album, that's really all it is really, to be honest. He's a nice guy, though, Gerard's a nice guy... we've made up, we're friends now (*Kasabian had previously said MCR make ‘ventriloquists’ music* – Beef Ed).”

NME: Did you have any other working titles for the album?

Tom: “‘Sex After Eating’. Serge?”

Serge: “Nah, there weren't any. There actually genuinely weren't any, we just thought ‘That'll do’, it came quite quick.”

Tell us something odd and quite nasty about each other.

Christina Grönlund

Tom: “Serge has really big feet, basketball feet. Size 11's big, isn't it?”

Serge: “It's not like they're size 14s. But for someone in a band they're pretty big.”

Tom: “It's like the size of a ruler! You've got

to say something bad about me now, go on!”

Serge: “Tom never stops whistling. It's like a disease. He whistles anything – tunes, bird noises. You just want to take a hand grenade to the head sometimes.”

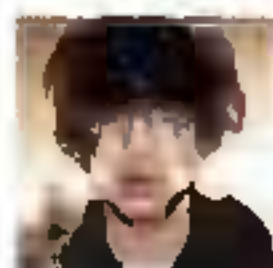
Would you rather lick a pavement or have boobs for feet?

Ciara Lynch

Tom: “Do you know what? I'd rather lick a pavement, to be honest. I've done that before when I was a kid. I think everyone has licked a pavement some time, haven't they?”

“SERGE HAS BIG FEET, LIKE RULERS”

Tom



Can pigs swim?

Faris Badwan, The Horrors

Serge: "I've got no idea. I know they're quite intelligent."

Tom: "No, they can't. What a weird question. Nah, yes they can. Have I ever seen a pig swim? I can draw one"

Which have been the most inspiring gigs you've ever been to?

Alice Simkins

Tom: "My mum in the kitchen making dinner."

Serge: "I saw Chris Cunningham last year and he was fucking unbelievable. It was just him, and musically and visually it blew my mind. Amy [Serge's girlfriend] was pregnant at the time and I was shitting it because the bass was on another level. It was mind-bending."



Where did you get your US flag shirt that you wore on

stage in Italy this summer? And will you wear it alongside Nick O'Malley for an NME photoshoot of the worst shirts ever?

Matt Helders, Arctic Monkeys

Tom: "US flag shirt? That I wore onstage? Oh! Moschino mate, I think it's Moschino. Nah, actually, it's the Union Jack shirt I wore, I think that's what Helders is on about... The one I wore for that fuckin' Live 8 gig... sorry, Live Earth gig. It's a Paul Smith, it's in my wardrobe and one day I'm gonna put it up in a Hard Rock Café."

All the best rock stars die young. Kasabian don't miss a trick, so in what circumstances are you gonna snuff it?

Mark Blake

Tom: "I can imagine me going on a fairground ride and coming off a roller coaster. It would be a pretty good way to go, your adrenaline is going and the next thing you know it's over. That'd be the way to go."

Serge: "I want to do something daft, like a toaster in the bath, or a knife in the toaster sort of thing."

Tom: "Or have a heart attack in the cinema. No-one would notice because they'd be laughing and eating popcorn. Unbelievable."



I used to DJ with all your old EPs and singles, will you sign my vinyl?

Nick Hodgson, Kaiser Chiefs

Serge: "Yeah, yeah. Sure."

Tom: "Of course mate! Love it, love it man! All that vinyl stuff we put out years ago is fun to collect. We did them in different colours and put one out in black and I think that's great man, fair play to Nick."

Tom, what are your five favourite cartoons?

Jill McMullen

Tom: "Denver, The Last Dinosaur, Captain Planet, Masters Of The Universe, The Real Ghostbusters, with Slimmer in it, and number five, ThunderCats. Easy!"



What do you do with your time off? I always end up a bit

like Alan Partridge, buying Ginsters from a corner shop...

Tom Clarke, The Enemy

Serge: "You know what, I don't think I've ever had any time off. I don't even know what that is, I'd rather just fuckin' crack on to be honest. I don't really stop working, I don't really stop, so I don't know what time off is."

Tom: "I socialise, really, catch up with people I've not seen for a while, see my family. Ginsters, man - I mean, Jesus! We used to buy them before we started touring years ago. It's the only thing you can really eat when you're on the road."

NME: So do you recognise Tom Clarke's description of himself being a bit like Alan Partridge?

Serge: "Well, yeah, well, no, not really. Well, him just sorta wandering around. He goes on fuckin' Global Rally and shit, though, doesn't he. I can imagine him in an E-Type Jag, riding around, fuckin' avin' it, that's how I see Tom."

Would you rather watch The Only Way Is Essex or Made In Chelsea?

James Ogram

Serge: "If I was forced, at gunpoint, I would go for the Essex one."

Tom: "No. None of them. They're all cunts. Seriously, none of them."



My sister and I both think Tom would look great with Alex

Turner's new quiff, and he'd look great with your hair. Would you ever consider swapping?

James & Allan, Glasvegas

Tom: "What, his teddy boy look? I've been doing the James Dean look lately, this old American kind of Hollywood look, the '40s/'50s Hollywood look. But I'm not too sure about the rockabilly look. It suits Alex, it looks great on Alex. But it's a bully's hair, you know what I mean?"

Serge: "Tom kinda had it a couple of years back. He looked amazing, he could get away with anything really. You could put him in a fuckin' bin liner and he would still look good."



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KASABIAN ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS



Tom wears a shirt for Britain...



Nick represents the whole fucking world

"TOM'D LOOK GOOD IN A BIN LINER"

Serge

Bad Vibrations

In 1966, Brian Wilson started on *The Beach Boys*' "teenage symphony to God", but the drug-fuelled sessions almost destroyed him and 'Smile' was scrapped. With the material finally released, **Mark Beaumont** relives the paranoia-drenched experience with him

The sandbox, Brian Wilson will talk about. "The sandbox inspired us to feel like we were on the beach. It was a clever idea but kinda strange and cumbersome sitting there with our feet in the sand writing songs." The fireman's hats, he'll cheerfully admit to. "I wanted the guys to get the feeling of being firemen in a fire. It's an odd thing to do, and a little embarrassing." The acid and speed, he'll hold up his still-quivering hand. "We were taking too much drugs and we paid the full price for taking too much drugs too."

The lighter side of The Beach Boys' experiences in 1966, he'll revisit with pleasure. But the dark side? The business meetings he held in his swimming pool? The belief that Phil Spector was out to get him? The song scrapped because he believed it might have caused house fires? The breakdowns, paranoia and manias that surrounded the recording of The Beach Boys' great lost masterpiece, he's less willing to discuss.

Forty-five years on from its shelving, and seven years after he exorcised its demons by re-recording it and performing it in full, Brian is still putting a brave face on 'Smile'. "I thought it was a step forward," he says in his childlike snap. "[But] I thought it was too far ahead of its time so we junked it for 40 years!"

This month, after the longest wait for a release in rock history, we get to 'officially' hear the follow-up to 1966's 'Pet Sounds'. And if that album is now regarded as a masterwork of '60s pop psychedelia – voted the best album ever made by *NME* in 1993 – 'The Smile Sessions', pieced together from the original session tapes which fans have been bootlegging for decades, will blow minds clear out the back of skulls. 'Smile' would have made The Beach Boys pioneers of the psychedelic generation, The Velvet Funderground. If it only hadn't almost destroyed its creators...

By 1966, Brian Wilson's problems were too clear to ignore. Having withdrawn from touring after a breakdown on a flight to Houston in 1964, he would stay in California writing songs while the band played gigs. He indulged in drug bouts that were valuable creatively (he wrote 'California Girls' on his first LSD trip) but detrimental to his mental state. Guitarist Al Jardine recalls an afternoon in which Brian drove him in circles around the William Morris Agency in L.A., refusing to let him out of the car unless Al promised to try acid.

"I asked him for a ride home," says Al, "and instead of taking me home he drove me around the block about 25 times! I was very concerned. I admonished him to

"WE PAID THE FULL PRICE FOR TAKING TOO MANY DRUGS"

BRIAN WILSON

stop [taking drugs], but he'd already gone beyond that point. He had developed a lifestyle that was more detached from the rest of us and started experimenting musically under the influence of those things. But the output was amazing."

Nay, game-changing. 'Pet Sounds' had advanced The Beach Boys' sun-bleached surfin' sound into grand new realms of orchestral wonder and psychedelia. But, for all its critical plaudits, it was considered a flop by their label Capitol, and many were pushing Brian to write more 'traditional' Beach Boys songs. He followed 'Pet Sounds' by spending several months and a then-record \$50,000 recording the "pocket symphony" 'Good

Vibrations' using session musicians The Wrecking Crew and a new modular technique of taping 90 hours of segments for the song at four different studios. Each studio had a different 'vibe' in Wilson's head – and he reduced it all to a three-minute pop song. The Beach Boys were glad of the success – Number One on both sides of the Atlantic – but wary of this eccentric new direction in which they were being taken.

"We were recording music that was spilling out of Brian's head at an incredible rate of speed," says Al. "We were basically hanging on by our coat-tails. [There were] two dynamic groups, one in the studio and one on tour. We were focusing a great deal of our energy on touring and Brian was feeling isolated from the band. He was getting really antsy and he had all of this music inside of him to express and of course he wanted to get it out. So he would surprise us... ambush us with stuff."

Ambush? On returning from a tour of the Far East and Europe, where 'Pet Sounds' was a huge hit, The Beach Boys must have felt like a musical Light Brigade. In their absence, Brian had hooked up with surrealist lyricist Van Dyke Parks and, using the cut-up recording style of 'Good Vibrations', completed much of an hour-long concept album – a "teenage symphony to God" as Brian dubbed it – in response to the recent British Invasion, about a historical and spiritual journey across America from Plymouth Rock to Hawaii.

"We tried to do justice to the mood of early Americana," says Brian. "New Americana and the Hawaiian islands. [The band] thought it was crazy music. I wanted to get a concept album across to people and The Beach Boys didn't like it."

In Al Jardine's mind, however, Brian is vastly overstating the anti-'Smile' feeling within the band. "We gathered around the control room at Columbia Studios or Western," he recalls. "He plays this wonderful stuff, ▶



it's different, it's completely transformative, it had a different breadth and depth from what we'd been doing. This is a whole different direction and the crux of it was new evolutionary songwriting and lyric writing as well. Van and Brian together created a new form of music. [The acid] was expressing itself through the music."

If the chop'n'change anti-structure of 'Smile', the barnyard and workshop interludes wherein the band were required to make animal noises and 'play' saws and hammers respectively, the funereal re-workings of 'You Are My Sunshine', the delicate, wintery sprawl of 'Surf's Up' or the Wild West imagery of the magnificent, multi-sectioned pop opera 'Heroes And Villains' surprised the band, they didn't know the half of it. Brian had taken to insisting on meetings being held in his swimming pool for fear of his house being bugged. He'd had a 'dope tent' erected in his house and a sandbox installed around his piano so as to feel the sand between his toes while he wrote. The sessions had taken a turn for the bizarre: Brian cancelled one full-orchestra session for the track 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)' when he refused to get out of his Rolls-Royce in the car park because of "bad vibes". He turned up at the next one with fireman hats for the entire orchestra and set a large bucket alight to create the mood for the song, then scrapped it when he heard of a spate of fires near the studio shortly after the session, leading him to believe the music was "too dangerous" to release.

"IT WAS ANOTHER LEVEL - IT'S A MASTERPIECE"

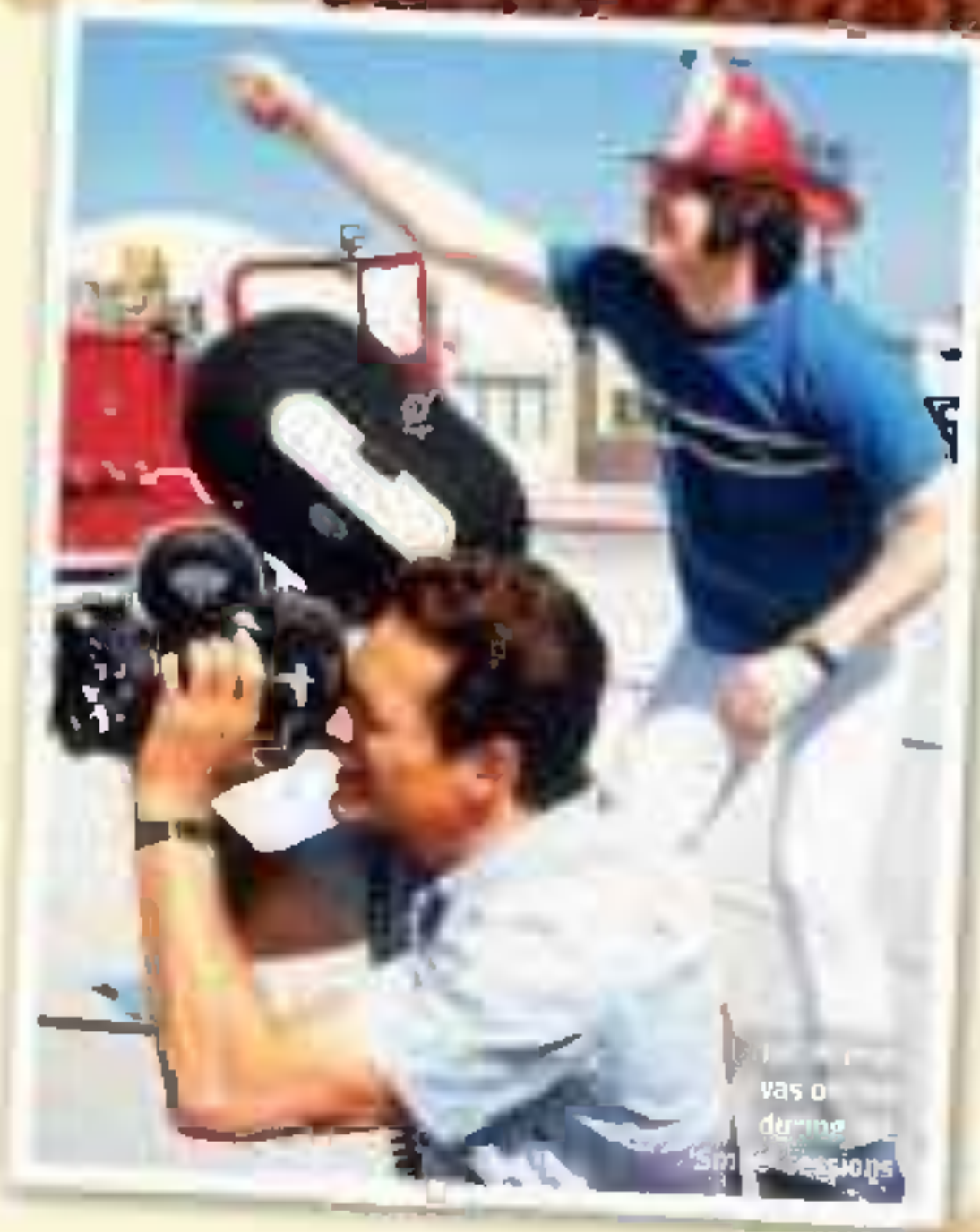
AL JARDINE

At another session he refused to let journalist Jules Siegel sit in as he thought Siegel's wife was a witch who was controlling his mind. On seeing the film *Seconds* starring Rock Hudson, he became convinced it told the story of his own life and had been made by the "mind gangster" Phil Spector specifically to fuck with his head. "It had a lot of rock'n'roll in it," Brian explains, "for which he was responsible."

Sessions to record The Beach Boys' vocals onto Brian's 'Smile' tracks quickly deteriorated. The band's usual lyricist Mike Love was reportedly unhappy with Van Dyke Parks' impenetrable poetry, calling it "acid alliteration". "Mike was a little bit envious of Van Dyke," claims Brian, though Al plays down the alleged row between Mike and Van Dyke over the unfathomable lyrics to 'Cabin Essence' that finally put the kibosh on the 'Smile' sessions: "I wouldn't call it a row. I'd call it an intellectual impasse."

Brian sensed the dissatisfaction with his new direction. Scrapping the sessions in 1967, some tracks - including 'Vege-Tables', 'Wonderful' and 'Wind Chimes' - were then re-recorded in a new studio at Brian's house, forming the quirky but relatively unambitious 'Smiley Smile' album ('Surf's Up' was also pieced together by Carl Wilson for the 1971 album of the same name), after which Brian shrank away from his own production genius, and The Beach Boys' stance atop the '60s cultural and artistic tsunami was over.

"He definitely withdrew from the structural recording we were doing up," says Al, although Brian himself admits no regret. "We weren't upset [at scrapping 'Smile'], he says. "We knew it was the right move."



was happening. It would've been another level of compositional and structural achievement for The Beach Boys. It's a masterpiece."

Music itself may be poorer for having been denied it in '67 but, my oh my, can we 'Smile' about it now...

NME EXTRA

For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a new 'The Smile Sessions' boxset worth over £100, go to NME.COM/extra or see page 8 for more details

Check out Brian Wilson's ill-advised rap career on the NME Office Blog at NME.COM/blogs

The Beach Boys: (clockwise from bottom left) Carl Wilson, Mike Love, Dennis Wilson, Al Jardine, Bruce Johnston, Dennis Wilson



THE NME REVIEW

THE BEACH BOYS SMILE BROTHER



It was, in 1966, an entirely new genre: montage

pop. Constructed from hundreds of disparate takes - the special-edition box-set of 'The Smile Sessions' includes 36 separate segments recorded for 'Heroes And Villains' alone - 'Smile' is an ever-shifting acid vision of a record. Of its 20 tracks, only seven or eight could be considered 'songs' in the traditional sense. The rest are sonic mood pieces, avant garde constructs or 30-second throwaway links; the band make duck, sheep and chicken noises throughout 'Barnyard', march around the studio on the touching spiritual 'You're Welcome' and recreate a fire-in-progress on 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)', named after the animal said to have started the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The fans who've been constructing their own versions of 'Smile' from bootlegs of the sessions

over the past 45 years can't have envisioned the masterpiece Wilson originally intended: 'Smile' plays out like a billowing balloon of ideas, kept rooted by the book-ending guy ropes of 'Heroes And Villains' and 'Good Vibrations'.

If the album presaged eclectic masterpieces such as 'The White Album', stylistically it was a premonition of modern-day US alt.folk. Built around horn, viola, xylophone, banjo and harpsichord, telling the story of a journey through US geography and history, it set a blueprint of evocative atmospherics adhered to today by everyone from Sufjan Stevens to Fleet Foxes. And even if the passing listener finds the whole thing baffling, who wouldn't be entranced by the juxtaposition of haunting death-of-summer ode 'Surf's Up' with jaunty, health-obsessed pop wonder 'Vege-Tables'? Like the man Jardine says, a masterpiece. **Mark Beaumont**

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THREE YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS...

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE TING TINGS?

[illegible]

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SID VICIOUS

SAN ANTONIO, 1978



Photo by Rob Gruen, from
his new book, Rock Seen

NME

RAMONES
NEW YORK, 1975



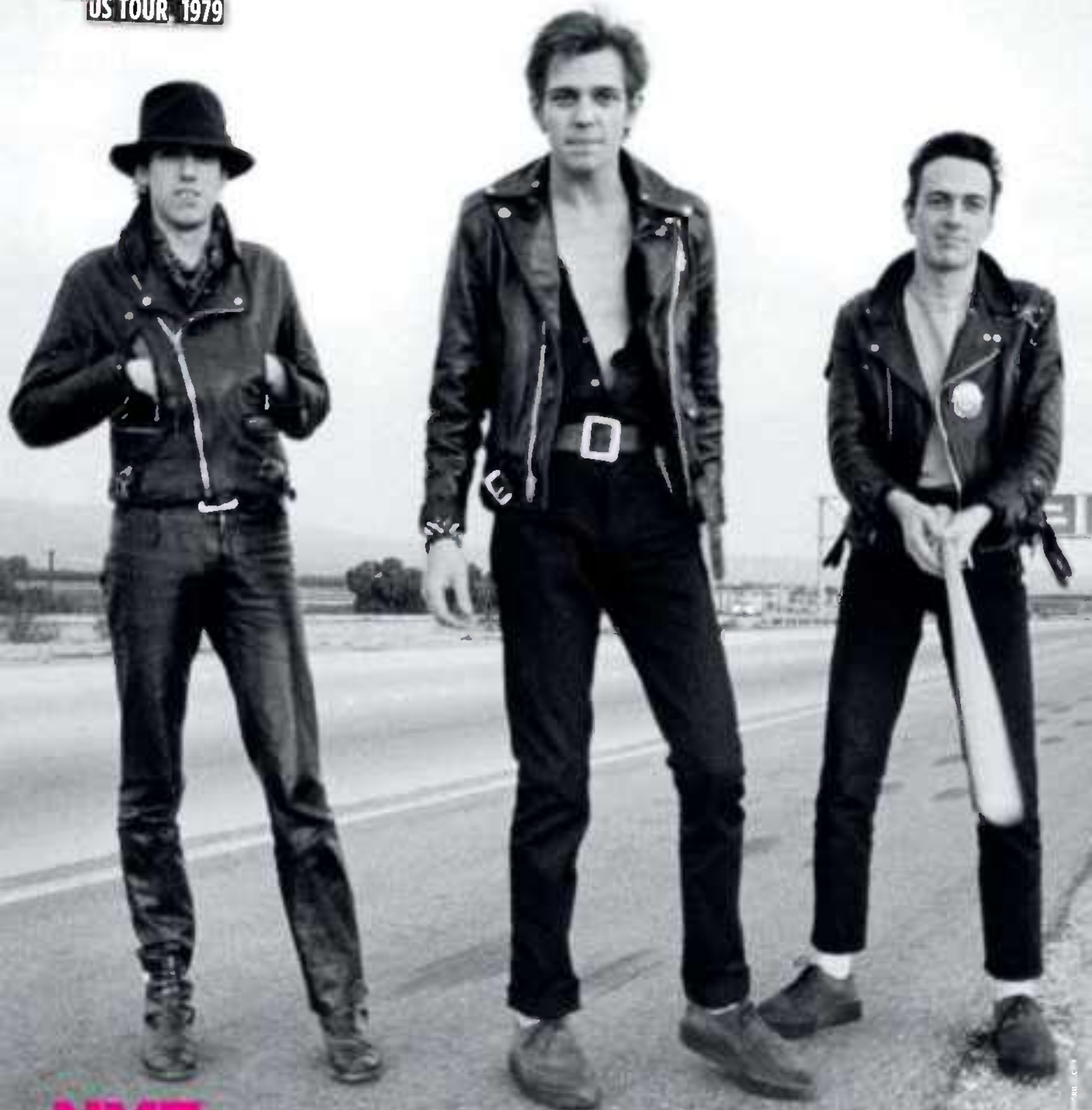


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MANAGE AND LIVE

***Lloyds TSB's Money Manager** is a free and easy-to-use tool that helps you to manage your personal finances more effectively, however busy your life might be. Two friends of NME tell us about their spending habits...*

PIP NEWBY RECORD LABEL BOSS

Music has been Pip Newby's life for as long as he can remember. And his early love of Weezer, Blur, Daft Punk and the Beastie Boys inspired him to set up his own record label, Friends Vs Records, before he had even graduated from university.

But being self-employed means that he has to keep a closer eye on what he earns and spends each month than most people. "I've certainly spent a lot of money on music," says Pip. "That being said, I've got to eat and pay my rent, so I'm careful with everything I spend as much as possible."

And being a music fan can be an expensive hobby.

"My whole life is music, basically. Seeing bands is pretty much my main activity. I spend a lot of my money going out seeing shows."

Being such a committed music fan means that Pip needs to keep on top of his money more than most people would.

"Travel is a really big expense. I go to as many gigs as I can, which can mean travelling around a lot all over the country. So often it's about knowing whether I can go to that secret gig that I really, really want to go to. And, as any music

nut knows, your record collection can never quite be big enough!

"I'm always careful with my money, but it can still be really tough. I wouldn't

change my lifestyle for the world, but I could do with help managing my finances."

If Pip was a Lloyds TSB customer, Money Manager's easy-to-read charts and graphs could give him a clear view of his spending, giving him more free time to concentrate on the stuff that's really important to him.

**"I WOULDN'T CHANGE
MY LIFESTYLE FOR THE
WORLD, BUT I COULD DO
WITH HELP MANAGING
MY FINANCES"**

YOUR MONEY THE DREAM

**“KNOWING
WHAT IS
HAPPENING
WITH MY CASH
WOULD BE A
MASSIVE HELP”**

SAM WOLFSON WRITER

As a freelance writer for *NME*, 21-year-old Sam Wolfson has got the coolest part-time job out there. When he's not reviewing the latest new album releases he's interviewing Rihanna, and when he's not doing either of those things Sam is buzzing around Europe having a wild time with the likes of Bombay Bicycle Club.

Life's not one big party, though. Sam is also a student at Cambridge University, juggling his studies with his writing.

“I love live music, but Cambridge is not exactly known for it's vibrant music scene,” says Sam. “I'm always travelling around the country going to gigs and following my favourite bands. I'm just thankful when I can get into gigs for free!”

It's not just getting sweaty in the moshpit that costs Sam his cash, as he explains.

“I also spend a lot of money on all the brilliant new albums and DVDs out there, as well as going

to the pub with mates. Obviously my biggest expenses are my uni bill and my rent, but I've got textbooks to buy too. After all that I just hope I've left enough money back to eat.”

Sam's story is common. As every student knows, it's not easy to manage your money and make ends meet.

“I'm forever spending and I also have lots of little bits of income from my summer jobs, so it can be hard to keep a handle on what's coming and going out of my account and if I have enough to cover my bills. Knowing what is happening with my cash would be a massive help and give me one less thing to sort out.”

“I'm really lucky to be able to travel and be so closely involved with such an amazing music scene. If only I could manage my cash a bit better things would be great!”

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REVIEWS

CHILDISH GAMBINO, AEROPLANE

Edited by Emily Mackay



RIHANNA

TALK THAT TALK MERCURY/DEF JAM

The superstar singer plays it annoyingly safe – and the tantalising glimpses of what might have been only make it harder to handle



What's in a font? In terms of music, they can conjure up several different meanings, from something stalwart (The Rolling Stones, Ramones) to the ephemeral and futuristic (Daft Punk), and finally to the fussy and over focus-grouped (Cher Lloyd). On Rihanna's sixth album, she's returning to the spiky 'R' that crowned the cover of 2009's 'Rated R'. That album was a Year Zero for her as she emerged from the pupa of robo-pop star to free-flapping 'artiste'. It was the place in which personal crisis (her abuse at the hands of, and public break-up with, Chris Brown) drove her sound and image

in the best, most creative ways possible. The futuristic, dubstep-shaded sounds on that album were mirrored by lyrics that layered meaning and allusions to create a cohesive piece of musical pop-art that pricked at your consciousness from several directions.

And then there was 'Rude Boy'. The biggest hit from an under-selling album, its fun bump'n'grind jerk-pop seemed to dictate where she would go next. So it was – last year's 'Loud' marked a turning point and the lasciviousness was upped up a notch, but at the same time you felt the shutters coming down artistically. It also coincided with her ubiquity. Suddenly she was everywhere, like the cast of *The Only Way Is*

Essex-and-Kim Kardashian 'everywhere'. There she was, popping up on David Guetta's album, getting Ofcom and Matt Cardle into a tizzy on *The X Factor*, trilling the chorus of 'All Of The Lights' on Kanye West's 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy', organising Katy Perry's Cirque du Soleil hen do, appearing on 'Pink Friday', having a 'get off my laaaahnd' moment with an Irish farmer. She was even, in London, spotted on the bloody tube on the way to one of her own concerts at The O2.

So perhaps it's no big revelation that 'Talk That Talk's' stylish 'R' doesn't indicate a return to 'Rated R's' boundary-pushing, but instead leaves us with the impression Rihanna has spread herself so thinly that she doesn't have time to record a cohesive album. Her usually perfect hit-rate of sonic surprises is disappointingly low due, one suspects, to half the album having been monopolised by chart-botherers Dr Luke and Stargate. 'TTT' is filled with tinny-sounding '90s Europop, the kind of stuff that hangs around the playlists of commercial radio for months. And when it's not playing it safe, the album re-treads old ground. 'Roc Me Out' is a 'Rude Boy' re-tool from the vocal delivery to her "Come on boy..." line, closer 'Farewell' echoes 'Fire Bomb', while re-teaming with Jay-Z on the title track is a gamble that doesn't pay off. The pace may echo 'Umbrella', but there's precious little of that song's spark. The Jigga's rap feels like it was dashed off in a few minutes between Def Jam conference calls ("Oh, she really gotta pee", he raps at one point. I mean, do we really want to hear about Beyoncé's bladder control during pregnancy? Noooo).

Sure, there are pleasant moments – 'Drunk On Love' is basically The xx's 'Intro' with Rihanna's voice over the top, and 'Where Have You Been' is a dance-pop gem complete with 'Bonkers'-style wibbles. But there are only two truly brilliant songs. Despite some cringey lyrics ("Suck my cockiness/Lick my persuasion"), 'Cockiness (Love It)' is genuine elastic thrill, twisting into all sorts of jaw-dropping musical shapes. Produced by Bangladesh, it sounds like a sped-up nervous breakdown, while the elliptical 'Red Lipstick', a collaboration with Chas & Status, sounds like something which could have graced the Katy B album. That the latter is relegated to the deluxe edition smacks of someone's loss of nerve. You can only imagine what happened to the rumoured Rusko collaboration.

It would have been unpredictable and intense if Rihanna had followed these musical leads, but as it stands we get a so-so album which suggests it may be time for Ms Fenty to take a holiday. **Priya Elan**

5

DOWNLOAD: 'Where Have You Been', 'Red Lipstick', 'Cockiness (I Love It)'

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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PEAKING LIGHTS

936 DOMINO



Much as music writers throw drug references around like icing sugar, let us be clear that most of us are far, far too chickenshit to ever try anything like peyote, ayahuasca or any other 'tribal ritual' drug. Anyway, no need when you can listen to this Wisconsin duo instead. From here it all looks so insignificant spaced-out synthy ambience leads into a psychojourney through shuffling, organic beats, cosmically detached vocals, dubbish grooves, faint touches of psychobilly-twangin' guitar and boney rattles. It's like Dead Can Dance with less goth and more groove – and definitely worth an initiation. **Emily Mackay**

DOWNLOAD: 'Birds Of Paradise (Dub Version)'

6

APPARAT ORGAN QUARTET

POLYFONIA CRUNCHY FROG



Jóhann Jóhannsson enjoys a time traveller's life. He released an album earlier this year on which he paid moving tribute to Durham's now-diminished mining community with the help of a local brass band and some old Victorian hymns. Then he beamed himself through time and space to record these nine brutalist cosmic rock tracks on a bunch of phasing analogue synths and other steely sounding machinery with three fellow keyboard fanatics (and a drummer). The result is a clean, efficient, piston-pumping, Teutonic sound of robots doing serious damage to bands with beards and banjos – icy and brilliantly foreboding future-rock. **Chris Parkin**

DOWNLOAD: 'Söngur Geimunglingsins'

7

MINT JULEP

SAVE YOUR SEASON VILLAGE GREEN



A "husband/wife dream-pop duo from Portland, Oregon". An instrumental opener called 'Chasing The Wind Catching The Shadows'. A first line that goes "I lie awake, dreaming of landscapes and the rain" ('Aviary'). Yeah, I know, there is a hell of a lot of that kind of thing about at the moment, but the simple fact is Mint Julep are just great at doing it. Songs like 'Cherry Radio' and 'Stay' are melodically sophisticated, synthetically textured and actually dreamy. It's unquestionably a beautiful (debut) album, and one that may be well-timed, what with so many folk falling for that College feat Electric Youth tune from *Drive*, which could easily sit on here. **Hamish MacBain**

DOWNLOAD: 'Stay'

8

ATLAS SOUND

PARALLAX 4AD



Bradford Cox decelerates sonically here, but lyrically he remains sublime. 'Parallax' appears to deal with the continuing conflict of a Christian upbringing with more sacrilegious life experiences. Opener 'The Shakes' battles with the artist's increasing fame while 'Praying Man' cautiously states faith in something higher. Contrastingly, however, 'My Angel Is Broken' sees Cox revert, a tumbling paradox that seems to question his own convictions. Each LP since Deerhunter's debut – both individual and collective – has retreated further from that record's naked aggression, and this is another step towards Bradford finding self-contentment. **Simon Jay Catling**

DOWNLOAD: 'My Angel Is Broken'

8

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



JOHN McDONNELL

"This week I've been listening to nothing but Sade-sampling rap songs in my damp, freezing flat while hysterically weeping. The highlight of the week was getting a haircut."



EMILY MACKAY

"The combination of a seemingly never-ending cold and the excitement of the new Maccabees album in my inbox nearly caused complete respiratory failure. Worth it, though."



CHRIS PARKIN

"Watching *In The Night Garden* while listening to David Lynch's 'Crazy Clown Time' took me to a place I've not been since watching *Stars In Their Eyes* on mushrooms."

DRAKE

TAKE CARE YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/ISLAND

R&B star's much-anticipated second album is a belter – but the feeling lingers that he's capable of much more



In indie circles, R&B has long been stigmatised – sickly sweet vocals and dry humping inanimate objects not being in keeping with the ethos of the asymmetrically

fringed masses. Drake has completely transcended any such snobbery with a delicate, mellifluous sound and unashamedly candid, emotive lyrics.

The half-Jewish Canadian – who played a wheelchair-bound student in TV teen drama *Degrassi: The Next Generation* until 2009 – is clearly not your typical rap/R&B star. On his US chart-topping debut, last year's 'Thank Me Later', he unleashed a lifetime's worth of angst, bemoaning his lovelorn mental state.

'Take Care', his highly anticipated follow-up, begins in a more assertive mood, with the rapper declaring that he "killed everybody in the game last year" on opener 'Over My Dead Body'. Success can breed arrogance but the platinum-selling artist's braggadocio is suffused with melancholia. "I might be too strung out on compliments/Overdosed on confidence" he laments on lolling lead single 'Headlines'.

His lingua franca of heartbreak soon bleeds through on 'Marvin's Room' as he tries to win over a girl he knows is out of reach. "Talk to me please, don't have much to believe in/Need you right now, are you down to listen to me?" he sings down the phone, sounding totally crestfallen.

The yearning, sun-kissed title track, produced by Jamie xx, sees guest Rihanna in the role of an almost motherly figure: "If you let me in, here's what I'll do: I'll take care of you".

The despondency is obviously contagious, infecting his Young Money label boss Lil Wayne on 'The Real Her' as he bemoans: "Cos to her I'm just a rapper and soon she'll have met another" (a line earnestly cribbed from 'Miss Me' on his protégé's debut). The song's second guest, Andre 3000, also gets in on the emo action, declaring: "Sittin' here, sad as hell, listening to Adele, I feel you, baby".

Just as on 'Thank Me Later', 'Take Care' is heavy with the beats of long-term collaborator Noah '40' Shebib. But although the sparse arrangements are a perfect match for Drake's often lethargic mood, when the hip-hop bent of Just Blaze's production on 'Lord Knows' kicks in it hits like an elbow to the solar plexus, every euphoric gospel choir burst inducing a tremor of emotion through the body. In light of this, it somehow feels a shame Drake didn't experiment more with unfamiliar sounds. Such is the esteem that he's now held in, the refrain of "I'm just sayin' you could do better" on 'Marvin's Room' is one that lingers. Yet considering 'Take Care' is an affecting masterpiece easily on par with his debut, there could be no greater accolade for the genius of this man. **John McDonnell**

DOWNLOAD: 'Lord Knows', 'Take Care', 'Headlines'

8





CHILDISH GAMBINO

CAMP GLASSNOTE

US comedian Donald Glover has seriously good rhymes



Donald Glover – aka Childish Gambino – is well aware that he conforms to no-one's idea of hip-hop 'realness'. But then, as he points out, "All the real niggas I know are

either crazy or dead", so it's hardly his loss. Raised a Jehovah's Witness in a small Georgia suburb, Glover graduated from NYU and wound up working in television, landing a writing gig on *30 Rock* and an acting one on *Community*. Last year, The Internet got *this* close to having him cast as the new Spider-Man, and next year he'll be seen in the new Muppets movie. Hardly the stuff great hip-hop is made of, right?

Um, wrong. For starters, Glover is no dilettante: 'Camp' is his fourth full-length under his *nom de rap* (taken from a Wu-Tang Clan name generator), and the best to date. For another thing, while he's a gifted comedian, his focus is never really on being funny – just witty, heartfelt, honest and occasionally uproarious.

He's been variously tagged as backpack and nerdcore, and you can kind of understand why: on 'LES', Glover skewers his own hipsterhood by describing a bathroom clench with a girl who's "Got ironic tattoos on her back/That ain't ironic bitch, I love Rugrats", before decreeing on 'Hold You Down' that "you're not not-racist 'cos The Wire's in your Netflix queue". Pop-cultural references like that abound – his indie namechecks range from Mumford & Sons to Radiohead to Sufjan Stevens – but there's also an emotional heart to songs like 'Outside' and the epic, seven-minute (and largely spoken-word) 'That Power' that can't be expressed in air-quotes.

"Why does every black actor gotta rap some?" Glover wonders on 'Bonfire', before concluding, "I don't know, all I know is I'm the best one". And that's true, even if it's not much of a claim. I'm about to make a bigger one on his behalf, though: fuck Tyler's empty posturing, this is the hip-hop album of the year.

Barry Nicolson

8

DOWNLOAD: 'That Power', 'Outside', 'Bonfire'

AEROPLANE

IN FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT ESKIMO



Having made his name with SoundCloud mixes – and remixes for artists including Friendly Fires – Aeroplane faced a dilemma when it came to his first mix

album: how do you entice 40,000 people who have been downloading your stuff for free to shell out for a CD? His solution was to assemble exclusive tracks from artists he's tipped, add a new production of his and put them together in a mix that reeks of Balearic beaches and suntan lotion. The result is a brilliant album of off-kilter house, funk and exotic pop that should entice even disco skinflints. **Ben Cardew**

DOWNLOAD: 'Herr Styler - Zero Ghosts Out The Door'

7

THE DØ

BOTH WAYS OPEN JAWS

VILLAGE GREEN



It's a commonly held truth that when it comes to decent European pop, Scandinavia is where it's at and France is where it definitely is not. However, on

their second album, French/Finnish duo The Dø are helping l'Hexagone conquer the Vikings. 'Both Ways Open Jaws' is tribal, prickly and wickedly playful, courtesy of singer Olivia Merilahti's loopy vocal. The apocalyptic jump-rope skits of 'Gonna Be Sick!' and 'Slippery Slope' are highlights of a chaotic record that makes such a racket, you'll be able to hear Sweden quaking in its boots. **Laura Snapes**

DOWNLOAD: 'Slippery Slope'

8

THE RIDER
What we're reading and watching this week



Art
NME/Sonic Editions prints
Stuck for Christmas presents? NME and Sonic Editions have just printed a fresh selection of our iconic shots – including a cracking picture of Julian Casablancas and Jarvis Cocker. It's the only way you'll fit all of Arcade Fire under your tree.



Book
Gig Posters: Rock Show Art Of The 21st Century Vol 2
For over a decade, *gigposters.com* has been showcasing exquisite gig artwork designed by independent artists. In this compendium, you can read interviews with some of the designers, and pull out 101 perforated and ready-to-frame posters.



Film
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1
While not as incendiary as the last OST, you can't argue with The Joy Formidable, Theophilus London and Iron & Wine soundtracking the penultimate vampire sexual frustration-fest.

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's
FRASER McALPINE



WOOWOOS

FIZZY LETTUCE MOSHI MOSHI

It's inconceivable that a band with the sense to call themselves WooWoos don't know that 'Fizzy Lettuce' is a silly title for a brooding pop song. Especially when they refuse to explain how this salad became carbonated in the first place. Then again, they do also sing about dessert, and I could swear someone mentions rollmops in the chorus, so there's a lesson for us all here: never write while peckish.

JESSIE WARE

STRANGEST FEELING PMR RECORDS

Meanwhile, Jessie, who can't tell if she's hungry or sad, has embarked on a ramshackle adventure a woozy world away from her previous SBTRKT productions. 'Strangest Feeling' is what happens when you take a sparkling Katy B pop song and throw it in a haunted moat. The twinkly bits are washed off by a murk of clicks and moans, while the bass becomes progressively more waterlogged.

BRETON

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR FAT CAT

There's a bit halfway through this relentless face-prod of a song where a spiralling harp attempts to curl around the unforgiving rhythm, to make everything less austere. It's a gesture as beautifully doomed as putting a tulip on a pneumatic drill. Forget Hard-Fi trying to capture the sounds of the street, this is the sound breezeblocks would make if they decided to form a band, instead of a wall.

CHARLI XCX

NUCLEAR SEASONS THIS IS MUSIC

"Huh! Breezeblocks... You think THAT'S clever," sing the Geiger counters on the shelf, "wait until you hear OUR band. We've got that Charli XCX in, and she's singing in a pouty voice about surviving decay, yeah? And we swoosh around doomily in the background. Throw in some melodious hiccups in the chorus and we're off to *Top Of The Pops!*" They were ever so sad when I told them the show had been cancelled.

EMA

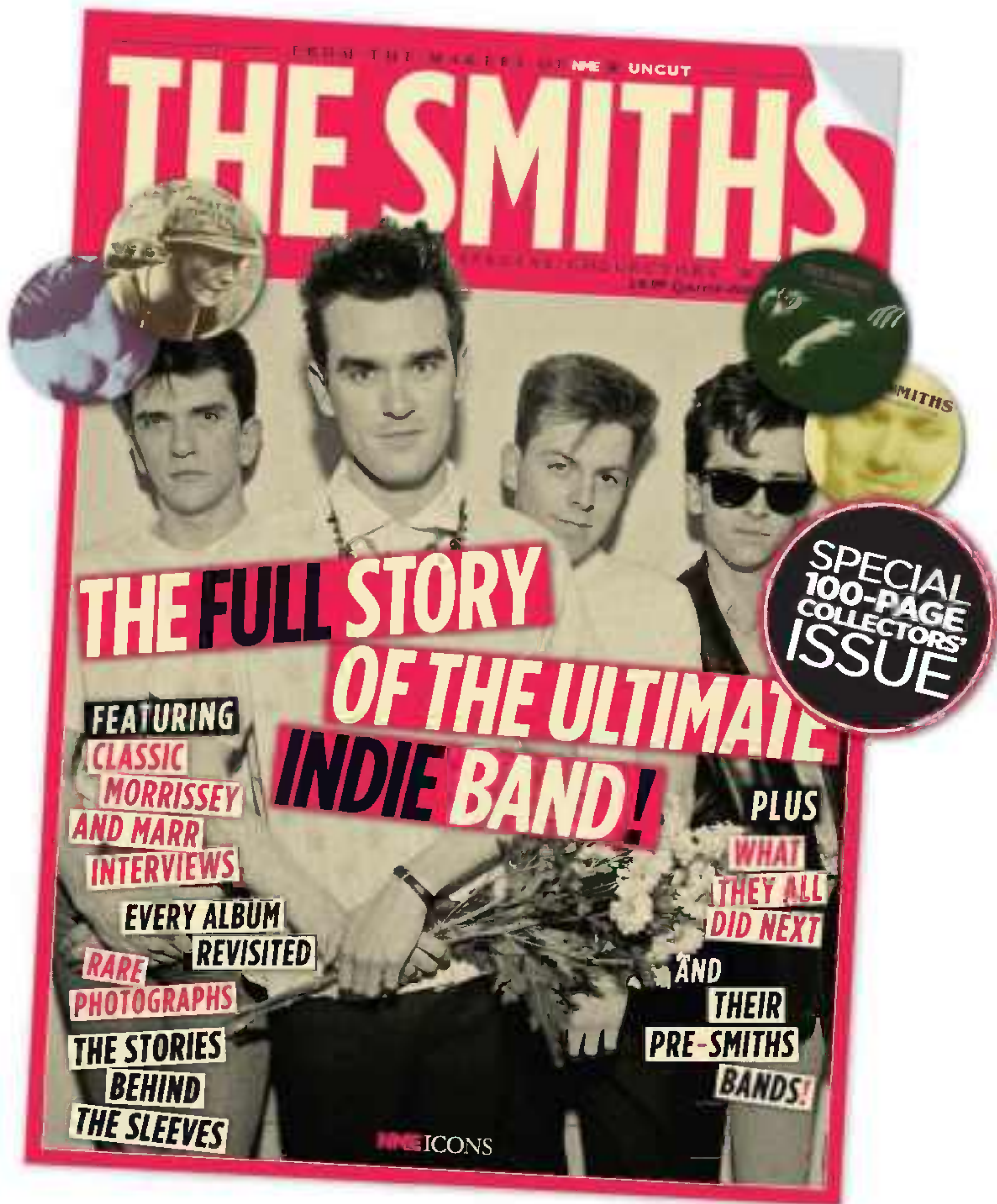
MARKED SOUTERRAIN TRANSMISSIONS

Remember the twinkly bits from Jessie Ware's song? That's the stuff EMA makes her music out of: the scrape of raw knuckle across guitar string, an ominous rumble, a worried child's internal monologue, the wheezing of an asthmatic angel, leaning on the organ in a church, these are her fragments. How she manages to sew them all into a recognisable quilt by the end of proceedings is anyone's guess.

BOS ANGELES

DAYS OF YOUTH ROUNDTABLE

There's no time for sonic stitch-work for the Bos boys. Their mission is simpler: 1) Make a buckety surf noise. 2) Repeat it. 3) Sing, dance, whoop, shimmy. 4) Stop, a mere two minutes and 16 seconds later. 5) Go about their business. Which just leaves you and me to complete item 6) Repeat until snoozy.

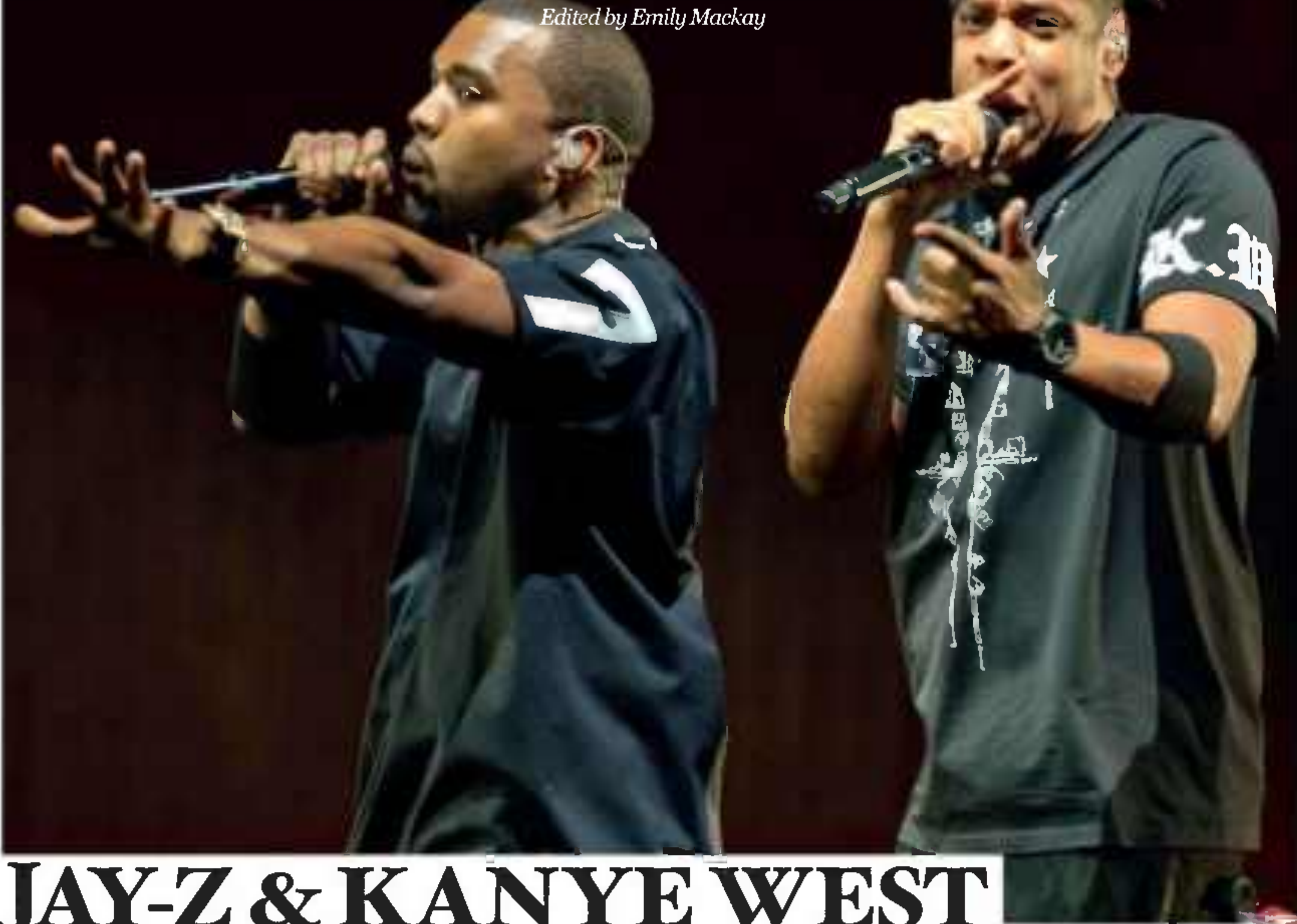


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LIVE

HURTS, AZEALIA BANKS, ST VINCENT

Edited by Emily Mackay

JAY-Z & KANYE WEST

IZOD CENTER, NEW JERSEY SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5

If this was meant to be megastars just lazily cashing in, it seems no-one told the megastars

The problem with supergroups is that they are, almost by definition, a breeding ground for complacency. When you've realised virtually all of your musical goals and become used to fame and adulation, summoning the will to earn it all again is something that few are willing or able to do. Given that both Kanye West and Jay Z are pretty much the biggest music stars in the world right now, 'Watch The Throne' is a project that should be mired in malaise – but watching them perform together, it becomes apparent that the only thing capable of pushing each of them to greater heights is the other.

Right from the off, the scene is set for gladiatorial rap battle. As opener

'HAM' resounds around the arena, the Jigga is at one end of the venue, Yeezy at the other, and they both ascend high above the crowd on gigantic cube-shaped podiums as they spit the track's boastful verses at each other. Once they unite on the same stage, this titanic face-off is given a suitably dramatic backdrop, a giant American flag is unfurled, giant pyrotechnic effects are triggered and, somewhat bizarrely, images of cheetahs killing their prey in the Serengeti are projected on screens. It's staggeringly pompous stuff, but when coupled with the commanding bombast of tracks like 'Otis' and 'Welcome To The Jungle' it creates an exhilarating marriage of immodesty.

As well as performing a further smattering of 'Watch The Throne'

cuts, the duo take turns at dazzling the crowd with their solo material. It's a tag-team combo that just seems to get better and better as the show goes on; Jay dishes out classics like 'Where I'm From' and throws down the gauntlet by

Kanye can't compete with Jay's rhymes, but his physical energy is just as powerful

demonstrating his untouchable vocal dexterity and dominance. Then Kanye returns, and though he can't quite compete with the ferocity of Jay's rhymes, his physical energy during 'Jesus Walks' is just as powerful. Every

time one of them brings something new to the gig, the other responds in kind, and the one-upmanship continues until the excitement level inside the building is barely legal.

By the time they get to the business end of their two-hour plus set, it's impossible to know who has the upper hand anymore, but judging by the way they dust each other off during 'Niggas In Paris,' it looks like they're happy to call their Herculean head-to-head a draw. For the 10,000 flabbergasted fans looking on, however, 'Watch The Throne' is an emphatic win. **Hardeep Phull**



HURTS

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON, LONDON
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Adam and Theo are huge stars, the show's a big success – but didn't this used to be more FUN?

Twenty-one months ago, Hurts played their debut UK gig, in tiny St Philip's Church in Salford, attended by a smattering of curious journoes and industry folk. Now look at them, playing the final show of the 'Happiness' world tour at a sold-out O2 Brixton Academy. In the intervening time the duo have grown from opinion-dividing curios into one of our biggest and best-loved bands. They've sold a million singles and a shade off a million albums, filled arenas everywhere from Iceland to Estonia, and been impersonated badly on endless dodgy foreign versions of *The X Factor*.

Tonight is the classic triumphant homecoming. The crowd's ear-bleeding adulation never lets up, but is there a sense – and I'm just playing devil's advocate here – in which Hurts were actually *better* as no-hopers, a major label folly destined for glorious failure? Originally the Hurts live experience consisted of two blokes, a seven-foot-tall opera singer named Richard, and a backing tape. Now there are 11 people onstage, including two dancers. It's all a bit slick. Yes, even for Hurts. And... hang on, where's the opera singer? Poor massive Richard is gone!

Theo sings all the parts himself (including Richard's former showpiece, 'Verona'). I picture Richard at home alone, weeping into his cummerbund to

the strains of 'Nessun Dorma'. In the end, having a stony-faced and mostly extraneous opera singer onstage was one of the ludicrous touches that made Hurts unique and lovable. By ditching Richard they are approximately 12 per cent less ridiculous, and that's a shame.

Highlights? Well, obviously 'Stay' and closer 'Better Than Love'. Almost two years of touring have whittled them into surging pop Exocets, obliterating all possible opposition or reservation. Low point? Kylie showing up to duet on 'Devotion' and her own 'Confide In Me'. Of course, she gets a hurricane-strength welcome, but her appeal remains mysterious. She's a blank, a hamster squeak, a whiff of Febreze.

When it's all over there's no farewell speech, no recognition that this gig is in any way special. Perhaps they're saving themselves for the aftershow (the next day Theo tweets about "the greatest night of our lives... a collapsing Dutch supermodel and about 1,000 bottles of tequila... the perfect crescendo"). This makes an enjoyable and efficient full stop at the end of 'Happiness', but no more than that. **Luke Lewis**

Customers can get Priority Tickets to the O2 Academy Brixton up to 48 hours before general release. Just register at o2.co.uk/priority where Priority Tickets are given. Then you can buy them.



TWIN SISTER

DEAF INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

So, how was your weekend?" Andrea Estella smiles to the subdued crowd. "Thanks for coming out and being so sweet. And so sleepy." Whether it's due to the approach of midnight or to the hypnotic qualities present in Twin Sister's loose, hazy pop, tonight often feels like a waking dream, with a mute-tongued Manchester pinned down by what unfolds before us. After support Holiday Shores endure something of a 'mare, Estella and her band could justifiably wonder whether this will be a night to forget, as the light-footed funk of 'Stop' and 'Bad Street' somehow fail to register. While this tour is ostensibly to promote new album 'In Heaven', there's plenty of more familiar material in the set – but even this seems to slip by almost unnoticed, with 'Lady Daydream' and 'Ginger' being greeted with only reverent applause.

All the while, though, a potent magic has been bubbling quietly away, and it's only when the band step down from the stage, leaving Estella and guitarist Eric Cardona alone and exposed, that it truly takes hold. Shorn of its motorised beats and muggy synths, 'Kimmi In A Rice Field' reveals a spectral beauty, and Estella and Cardona's voices – sometimes overly similar on record – work together to weave a subtle spell upon the transfixed room.

After that, the group reconvene for 'Daniel' and 'All Around And Away We Go', but we're too woozy to dance. It may be late, but this is a dream that will last long into the waking hours. **Neil Condon**

DOG IS DEAD

COCKPIT, LEEDS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Looking dapper in cable-knit and buttoned-up shirts, the five members of Dog Is Dead display their earnest and learned harmonies, bobbing in perfect synchronisation like a human wave of politely restrained testosterone.

Robert Milton, taking the lead on vocal duties, possesses a textbook boy-band smile: he's a sly wink and a bare chest away from a pop career but, luckily, the rest of the band reign in the schmaltz, diverting enough of the crowd's attention with the lilting guitar lines of their Vampire Weekend-meet-Mumford & Sons student anthems.

As bass player Trev cleans the dust from the low-arched ceiling with his curly mane, the rest of the band alternate between thrusting wildly (loud bits), bobbing excitedly (poppy bits), and swaying in shut-eyed reverence (harmonies). Always synchronised. Always in time. Dog Is Dead are note-perfect and never miss a beat, but just a few songs in they have already become predictable, crowd-rousing-by-numbers, hands in the air for the 'old ones'. They are at their best in 'River Jordan', when they hint at post-rock leanings; only then do they seem more concerned with playing than performing, as guitar lines noodle amid the cacophony and around the vocals, bolstering them, rather than providing a soulless backdrop. 'Glockenspiel Song', though, is clearly the track that fills the room and flogs the tickets – but here's hoping they don't have to get every new track played on *Skins* in order to keep up the momentum. **Hayley Avron**

WHAT'S ON YOUR RIDER?



Danananan-aykroyd

- A local independent newspaper
- Local postcards and stamps
- Vodka (Stolichnaya)
- 24 bottles of water (chilled and non-chilled)
- A case of beer (no Kronenberg)
- Bottle of sauvignon blanc
- Fruit juices
- Soft drinks (including root beer)
- Sandwich materials (vegan and meats)
- Six scratch cards
- Surprise us!

MARCUS FOSTER

MOJO, LIVERPOOL TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Acoustic singer-songwriters tend to be of similar stock these days. Frank Turner, Newton Faulkner, Ed Sheeran, Sam Duckworth – in fact, put together any two names and you'll find some chump with a guitar, an earnest song or two, and the ambition to be voice of their generation. So it's almost a relief when we hear Marcus Foster's weathered, rasping voice work its way around the room tonight. The young Communion signing looks no older than 25, but we suspect he wishes he was in his 50s – his world-weary lyrics belie his young face to the point that you'd think this was a convincing pastiche of his influences. That's not to discredit his songwriting, however. It is succinct, flamboyant and heartbreaking in the right places, something his peers often lack, and he's more captivating live than on record. 'Old Birch Tree' is quite a dull piece of MOR on debut LP 'Nameless Path', but here it's delivered with soul. A version of the album's standout song, 'I Was Broken', is both devastating and uplifting in equal measure, and a beautiful cover of John Martyn's 'Couldn't Love You More' shows he can hold a candle to his predecessors, a homage not lost on this audience. If he's a voice of any generation, it's probably that of the Radio 2 listening mum, but that's no bad thing. **Mike Doherty**

AZEALIA BANKS

HOXTON SQUARE BAR & KITCHEN, LONDON
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Hip-hop's sparsely-dressed new star has a potty mouth – and definitely more than one great song

"I was about to give more of a show than I came over here for, knowwhatI'msayin'?" smirks Azealia Banks, clutching her red-and-white striped bustier to her chest. It's teatime on Sunday, and Azealia's clothes appear to be falling off, shaken loose by the aggressive bounce with which she's stomping any sense of Sabbath restfulness out of the first of two short, sharp showcases.

Industry and hipsters are out in force at both to check out the latest gutter-mouthed goddess. 'Fazed' is not, however, a word in Azealia's inventively disgusting vocabulary. Strolling on in mohair coat and tiny denim shorts, she couldn't be more at ease. She starts with a fierce cappella, her DJ, Cosmo, scratching a belligerent beat out behind her as she tosses out warnings about the dire possible consequences of fucking with her. "Try something slick and get your dick backed up/You can either bit the door in peace or watch your meat bit the floor in pieces/Believe this" she assures on the beguilingly nonchalant, Peter Bjorn And John-sampling 'The Chills'. And, yes, the vicarious thrill of a pretty young woman talking abject, violent filth is nothing new, but Azealia's wit, her energy, her rawness

make it fresh. Though after the bitchy, crunky 'Barbie Shit', she throws in a truncated cover of 'Valerie' as a nod to London's own late dirty diva, it's clear that rapping is where Azealia's talents and heart lie, and you can't imagine her, like Nicki Minaj, getting sidetracked into balladry. The spirit of Lil' Kim sleazes through the moody, menacing 'Runnin', her collaboration with Lunice, blended with an omnivorous musical

taste and an eye to the dancefloor. "This is the jam that probably brought y'all here tonight," she says as she brings the evening showcase to a jumping end. "So take your shirt off, pull your dick out, do whatever you need to do..." Everyone else manages to keep their clothes on but completely loses their shit as the maddeningly aggressive synthery of '212' begins to wind up, and as Azealia starts howling "THIS SHIT BEEN MINE, MINE" the whole room bounces with her.

She chucks in the chorus of The Prodigy's 'Firestarter', taking things up to breaking point, and then, that's it. She's gone, leaving them wanting more. Let's just hope the fickle affections of the internet stick with her long enough to realise that she's more than just that one song. *Emily Mackay*

VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Demisha Anderson, London

"Excuse my French, but it was fucking amazing. I wanna be her best friend."

NME: Does she have any other songs that stand up to '212'?

"Well, I knew a few others. 'Barbie Shit' is amazing, people will be cutting shapes to that!"



ST VINCENT

WEBSTER HALL, NEW YORK
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Annie Clark's twisted tales of identity and inadequacy surf a wave of adulation

"My face is drawn on with this Number 2 pencil", sings Annie Clark in the final song of her set, 'Your Lips Are Red', as she steps in front of the microphone and teeters on the edge of the stage. A soundman rushes to roll out cable. Clark sways for a moment in the strobe, then flips over onto the ready arms of the audience who carry her, one leg raised, out into the crowd.

It's a moment of release from Clark's usual poise and comes hard earned. St Vincent's twisted pop songs expose the madness that goes on behind a mask drawn on in pencil – from failing at motherhood in 'Cruel' to lying to keep the peace in

'Cheerleader' and 'Surgeon'. Her characters stress about their inadequacy. As she tells Webster Hall, the video for 'Cruel' shows Clark being kidnapped by a motherless family who bury her alive after they realise she can't cook, clean or care for them properly.

If household cleanliness might be a problem, Clark makes up for it in control: both creative control and the kind of self-control she exudes onstage, though her chilly demeanour tonight could also be nerves. There is a moment before 'Save Me From What I Want' where the spotlight dances across Clark's face as she takes in the packed 1,400-capacity venue and her mouth makes a small 'o'. David Byrne, with

whom she is collaborating on an as-yet-undisclosed new project, watches from the wings. Cameras follow Clark everywhere, streaming the performance live for MTV in a mark of mainstream acceptance if ever there was one.

Creative control has served Clark well on three solo albums since she stopped touring with The Polyphonic Spree and Sufjan Stevens last decade. But it wasn't until this year's 'Strange Mercy', an album that stretches ideas about identity and anxiety over woodwind arrangements and nifty angular riffs, that she started attracting the attention she deserves.

She exudes self-control, although her chilliness could also be nerves

At Webster Hall, Clark plays puppets with her audience. She warms with a story about drinking tequila and running through a cemetery on Halloween before launching into 'Neutered Fruit', then squashes a heckler who says she can't shred with the words: "What is this, a live Twitter feed?" A growling cover of The Pop Group's 'She Is Beyond Good And Evil' speaks for itself. Tonight it's all in the eyes, wide and unblinking, until the sudden stagedive. But don't be fooled: Clark's studied femininity is a ruse for something much, much bolder. *Hazel Sheffield*



PIETER NIVAN HATTEN, RICHARD JOHNSON

On The Road With **KATY B**

Plane destruction, naked shower videos and 'arse midgets' – they might sound smooth, but 'sexy witch' Katy B and her crew are rock 'n' roll on tour



to , Mord , 4pm
Katy reads the lowreen volume, unaware of the it was the clown wot dun it



lights off: Mord's resident clown wot dun it
Katy's tour bus

DOMED, BRIGHTON MONDAY, OCTOBER 31

Katy B is at the controls of a helicopter on the final leg of her UK tour, but things are rapidly getting out of hand.

'KRAKK!' The chopper smashes into the tourbus window, and Rinse mastermind Geeneus leans in to inspect the damage.

"That's a hundred quid you owe me," the 'On A Mission' co-writer and producer tells Katy, flinging a protective arm round her shoulder while *NME* secretly gives thanks it wasn't our face getting mashed up beneath the blades.

The helicopters aren't life-sized just yet, but Katy's second headline tour is undeniably grand in scale – the south London star and crew have been living for the past few weeks in a double-decker tourbus with its own games room and library.

Tonight it rolls into Brighton. It's Halloween, and we're following Katy to the dressing room where we're told she and her bandmates will be kitted out for the occasion. Our leading lady, it transpires, is plumping for the 'sexy witch' look: no green facepaint or crooked noses, just a cutesy, conical hat and little black number which Geeneus says he can "see her bum crease" in.

The atmosphere backstage at the penultimate show of

Katy's tour is fun-bordering-raucous, and Gee can usually be found somewhere near the silliness' epicentre. In between aiming his (miraculously recovered) helicopter at various people's heads, the

boss man cracks wise about everything from ITV's weekend programming schedule to Brixton, whose resident hipsters he says are oblivious to what really goes on ("It's true! In Brixton McDonald's there's two queues; the ghetto queue and the trendy queue").

Even Gee's court-holding, however, is upstaged by Caelan, the superfly, three-year-old son of Katy's hype man, Tippa. Flipping through his daddy's iPod with terrifying ease, the little fella finds the artists he wants by looking at the record sleeves (he's too young to read the names) and gives word-perfect renditions of Tinie Tempah and J Cole, among others – though his old man snatches the gadget away before he can hit 'play' on Bob The Builder.

Katy gets finished with her make-up and nips in the room next door to get changed.

"Are you havin' a number two in there?" shouts Tippa, tittering. "Cos it's getting a bit whiffy in the dressing room." "Yeah – it's coming out your top lip," Katy shoots back, and Tippa is forced to accept defeat as the room falls about laughing.

Half an hour later the potty-mouthed hype man is clad in ludicrous werewolf mask, as the band step out to the strains of Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' and

Brighton goes properly nuts. It's an awesome show which sees Katy backed by brass, girl singers and the almighty clatter of Junior on drums. Our main gal, meanwhile, doesn't put a foot wrong all

night, bopping her way through the likes of 'Broken Record', 'Katy On A Mission' and 'Perfect Stranger' with ease.

PAVILIONS, PLYMOUTH WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2

On Wednesday *NME* rejoins Katy in rain-lashed Plymouth, which brings big wheels and even bigger helicopters as Gee looks to replace his by-now-written-off old model. We're driven to a grim-looking timber yard where Katy poses between the bags of gravel, and a model aeroplane shop lurks improbably in the wet. As if that wasn't glamorous enough, Gee is having a ding-dong on the phone with someone from the venue about merchandising rights. He hangs up, and buys himself a brand new helicopter. To call it bigger than the last one would be something of an understatement: you could ask a shih tzu to pilot the ruddy thing and still have leg room in back.

With that we're off to sample the cultural delights of Plymouth: principally a fuck-off Ferris wheel overlooking the seafront. It has a pretty gangsta-looking VIP carriage with blacked-out windows and complimentary bottles of bubbly, but we make do with a regular booth and drink in the views with Katy and her make-up artist, Vicky. Gee is still fuming after his phone call and declines to join us ("I've spent all my life living on the top of council blocks, what do I wanna go on that fucking thing for?").

On the way back to the venue, Tippa winds up Katy about the fact she's been offered a personal trainer. Taking the piss is pretty much the glue that holds this lot together, it would seem, whether it's backing singer and token northerner Rihanna (real name, honest) being greeted with a sarcastic "Fy oop!" when

she walks in the room, or Tippa being taunted with cameraphone videos that capture him taking a soapy flannel to his, er, intimate areas on the tourbus shower.

Back at the venue, Katy regales us with tales of her merch stall guys, who are all from Essex and are literally mental. One of them, she says, got a tattoo of a third nipple done while out on the road. Another's uncle claims to have copyright on the word 'reem' (er, ©?). A third used to work in a sex shop and donated an 'arse midget' to the touring company.

"What's an arse midget?" we ask gingerly, sort-of-but-not-really-wanting to know the answer. Katy leads us to front of stage, where a black gnome leers at us from underneath an obscenely protruding hat. "He's sort of become our mascot," Katy beams proudly.

Tonight's show is a bit slow to warm up, but by the time Katy drops an '80s/'90s throwback double-whammy in 'Good Life' and Robin S' 'Show Me Love', the joint is officially jumping. From Katy's exhortations to treat the performance as a 'rave' instead of a concert to the hokey attempts at flogging T-shirts onstage, there's the understanding that this is pop music by, for and of the people – no need for S&M dancers or posing as Christ in a wheelchair here, thanks, just a straight-up display of great music, locally sourced.

"Katy's come a very long way in a very short time," says Tippa at the show's finale, urging on the crowd. "And there's not many ordinary girls coming out here and mashin' up the place like this!" He takes some stick for that speech after the show ("bruv, it's not the fucking *X Factor*"), but secretly they must know he's hit the nail on the head. As the crew washes down the taste of success with Nando's and bubbly, *NME* gets ready to take our leave: now where's that chopper when you need it? *Alex Denney*

VIEW FROM THE CREW



Tim, merch
seller

**Why do you have
a tattoo of
a third nipple?**

"We did a gig in
Newcastle and
I know a few good
tattoo artists there.
I thought, 'Why not
show my respect to
the people with a
third nipple?' I've
never looked back."

**Would you consider
investing in
a fourth?**

"I'd need to do my
research, see where
a fourth nipple's
usually located."

RICHARD JOHNSON



Brighton, Monday, 5.30pm

Peekaboo! And you all thought it was Mick Hucknall hiding under there, didn't you? Below, Tippa bops up his skeleton crew



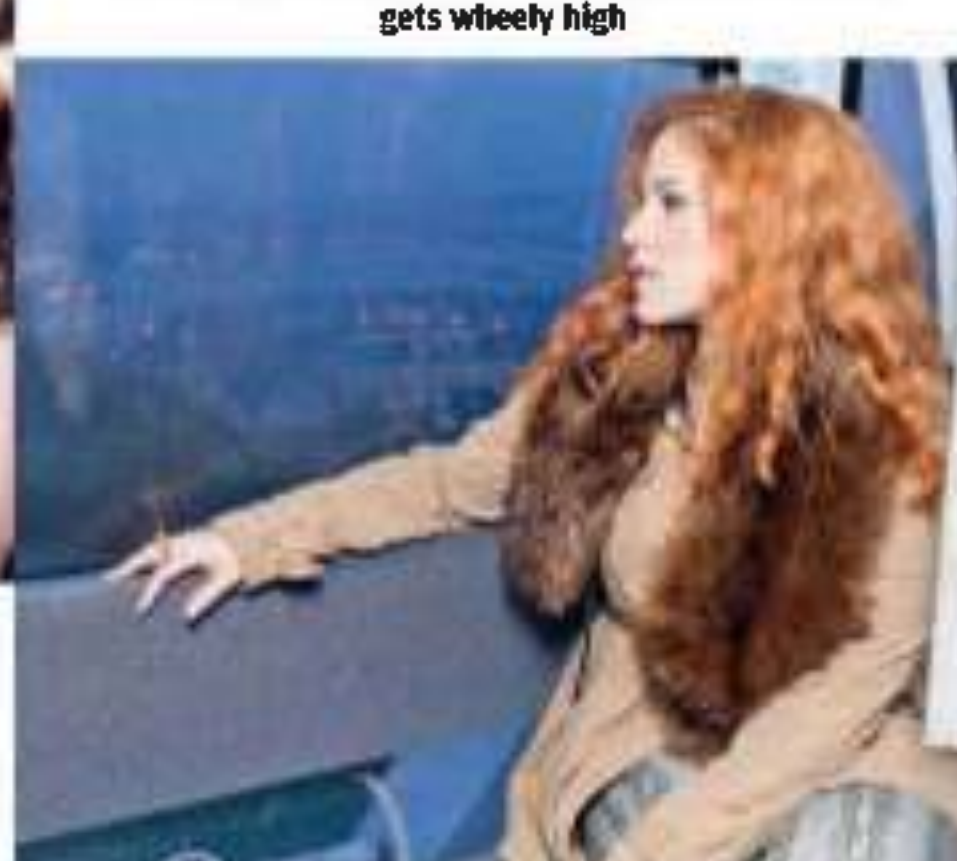
Brighton, Monday, 10pm

Katy rocks the 'sexy witch' look with a tiny hat that resembles a goth's upturned ice cream cone



Plymouth, Wednesday, 9.30pm

The hat's been nabbed, but Katy thinks she knows the culprit...it's that arse midget! Below, Katy gets wheely high



Plymouth, Wednesday, 11pm

Katy's fans wait outside in the rain for an autograph. Shoes optional, apparently



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ON REPEAT

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



FACTORY FLOOR

Two Different Ways
It's Factory Floor's first release for New York label DFA – and oh my, did they choose a corker to get things started. 'Two Different Ways' is a less feral beast than some of the London trio's previous cuts but, with Nik Colk's icy vocals, neuron-frying synths and nods to Chicago house played out over nearly 10 minutes of noisy bliss, it's a behemoth of a track nonetheless.

Ben Hewitt, writer

SEYE ADELEKAN

White Noise
Recognise that surname? Seye is Gbenga from Metronomy's bro and, going by his debut songs, wicked rhythmic ways run in the family. Here, Seye picks up where Katy B's 'On A Mission' left off, crooning saucily about putting "my cigarette inside your paper cup" on a night out over frenzied tribal beats, like Fela Kuti for the Rinse generation.

Laura Snapes, Assistant Reviews Editor

DRAKE FT RIHANNA

Take Care
Producer Jamie xx completes the dream team on this epic anthem of emo-hop taken from Drake's delayed 'Take Care' album. Like the negative to 'What's My Name's' full-colour Polaroid, Drake twists hip-hop's macho bravado 360 degrees on this chilling, housey ode to love and togetherness.

Priya Elan, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

GROSS MAGIC

Yesterdays
Brighton boy Sam McGarrigle nails a perfect sweet spot between grungy grind and woozy, Ariel Pink-style psych-pop. This extract from a split seven-inch with Novella, The History Of Apple Pie and Echo Lake on Marshall Teller Records is his gnarliest work yet, reminiscent of early, scary Mercury Rev.

Emily Mackay, Reviews Editor

ROSTAM

Don't Let It Get To You
Rostam's latest solo foray – away from Vampire Weekend – mines a little Latin

American flavour and nicks the chugging drumbeat from Paul Simon's 'The Obvious Child'. Without Ezra yelping over the top, the whole thing's prettier, calmer and more blurred-around-the-edges. Less an ice-cold horchata, more a warming winter tumbler of mulled wine.

Luke Lewis, Editor, NME.COM

THE BIG PINK

Hit The Ground (Superman)
Early signs for the new album from the now-clean-living Big Pink are promising. Following 'Stay Gold', this second excerpt hits with almost as many soaring, big beat melodies – who needs a drug intake so high that sniffer dogs keel over when they walk within 50 yards of the band members, eh?

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

HOWLER

Back Of Your Neck
These Minneapolis teens better have broad shoulders, given they've already been charged with kick-starting that long-mooted rock'n'roll revival next year. Thankfully, this turbo-charged rocket from their forthcoming debut LP sounds so bloody massive it's already pretty inevitable that they'll pull it off.

Rick Martin, News Editor

LAURA MARLING

I Was An Eagle
Of all the new material currently getting road tested at Laura's live dates, this missive raises our hopes highest for the fourth album – a beautiful yet barbed dispatch to a former flame that insists "I will not be a victim of romance/ I will not be a victim of circumstance".

Tim Chester, Deputy Editor, NME.COM



PULLED APART BY HORSES VENOM

As an opening salvo from the Leeds noise mongers' new LP 'Tough Love', 'VENOM' certainly feels like a statement of intent. Surprisingly raw and outstandingly heavy, it builds to a crushing metal outro that nods to vintage Motörhead. PABH are back with a mighty wallop.

Tom Goodwyn, writer

TRACK
OF
THE
WEEK

THE MACCABEES

Pelican

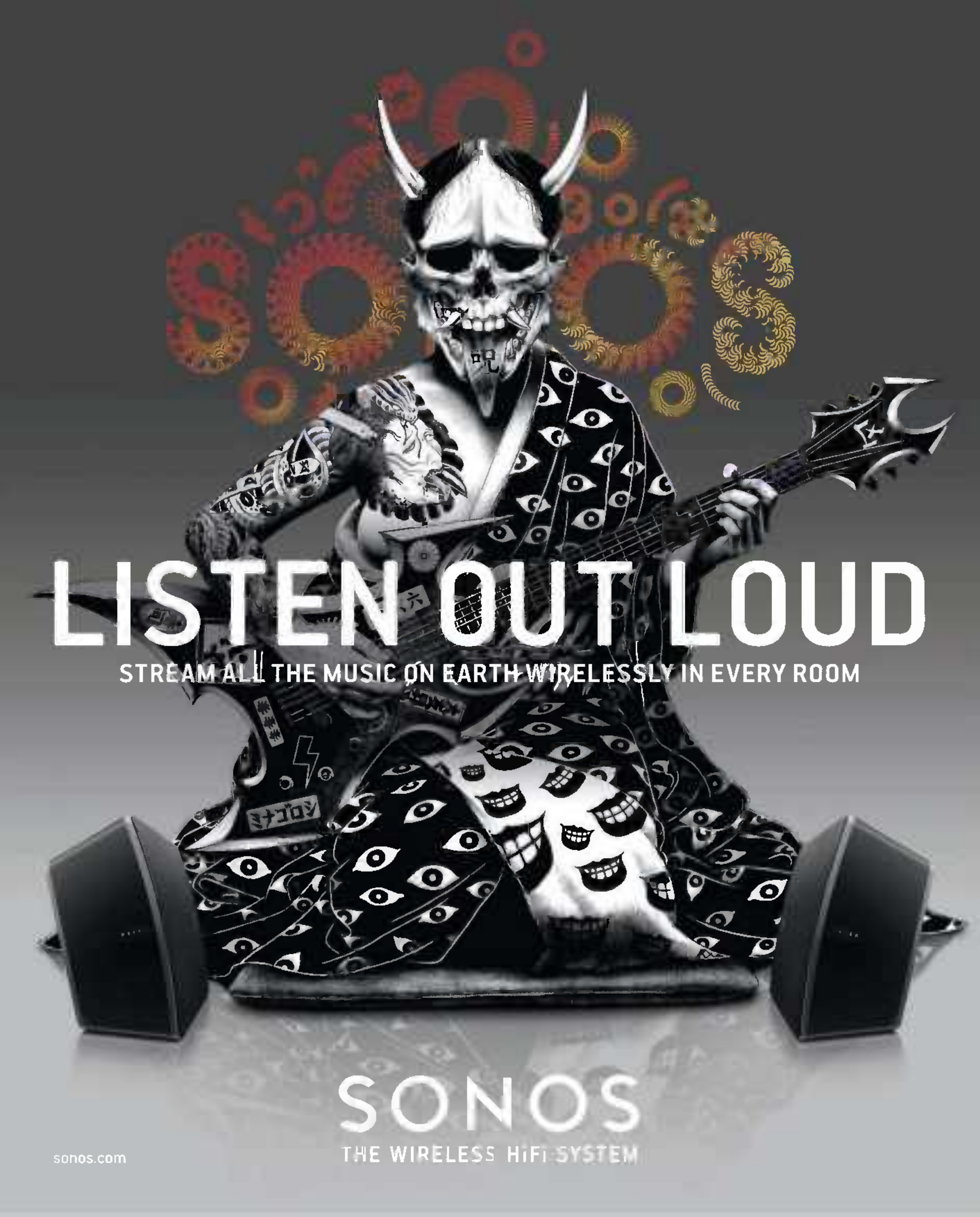
In their most recent *NME* interview, The Maccabees enthused that playing the sort of massive gigs that Arctic Monkeys and Kasabian do would be something that they'd be "totally up for". This is a good thing because – and make no mistake about this whatsoever – 2012 is going to be their year, and the point at which they step assuredly into The Big League.

In the same way that, prior to second album 'Wall Of Arms', 'No Kind Words' indicated that here was a cult concern making a giant leap into the realm of Bands To Be Taken Seriously, as a first taste of forthcoming third album 'Given To The Wild',

'Pelican' marks a step into the Take Very, Very Seriously stage. It is the sound, unmistakably, of The Maccabees we all know and love, but it's more strident, adventurous and instinctive. Nimble guitar lines, svelte, lissom rhythms, a tear-beckoning, beautiful vocal... so many bands in recent times have attempted to retool themselves for arenas by turning up the reverb and borrowing a Bono chorus. One of the most exciting things about 'Pelican' is that, yes, it sounds suited to larger rooms, but it's also like a completely natural step forward. It sounds like the best young guitar band in Britain at the absolute peak of their powers. 2012 is going to be emotional.

Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor

Yes, it sounds suited to larger venues, but it's also a natural step forward



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UPFRONT

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

Edited by Rick Martin



The likely lads:
John, left, and Carl



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SPECAL

"A LOT OF BRIDGES HAVE BEEN BUILT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS"

MAIN EVENT

Reunited on the European film festival circuit, The Libs' Carl Barât and John Hassall reveal that reconvening with Pete is on the cards – though not for a few years

To know your future, you must first

understand your past, as the old saying goes. And lord, are Carl Barât and John Hassall being given plenty of opportunities to understand theirs this week. *NME* has joined the pair in Denmark, in the midst of a jaunt around the continent's film festivals to promote *There Are No Innocent Bystanders*, Roger Sargent's documentary on The Libs' fractious 2010 reunion shows. The film is given a big screening at the Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival tonight (November 9). Carl insists they're here simply to "hold Roger's hand", but when we sit down afterwards with the trio, it's clear that watching it on the big screen has reopened a few old wounds. We pick Carl up on one of the threads in the film, that he'd feel "incomplete" if he didn't make another Libs album.

"One day, I'd love to do that," he muses – despite telling us just six months ago he'd "never again" talk to the press about The Libs. "In the film I say I'd feel incomplete not to go down that road further. But also I want to do something important to me now. Right now we're not ready. We can't just book another tour without having written an album, and there's no conceivable space to write an album for the next couple of years. I speak to [Pete] quite a bit. It's grand. We don't have to mention The Libertines. It was definitely the end of the chapter."

"One has to choose the right time to do stuff," says John. "Last year was the right time to do that and you can't force these things. It has to be natural." But it's a 'when', not an 'if'? Carl: "Well maybe, if that's the way you think about

it, but bear in mind it won't be for the next couple of years. There are no plans and we're all very busy. The official line is 'no'. Not next year and probably not the year after."

Roger, an *NME* photography legend and a firm Libertines 'insider', is rather more candid about the possibility. "A lot of bridges have been built in the last six months or so. Peter and Carl are talking, they've not made plans but compared to how it was when the film was finished – it was very difficult, they had quite a big falling out and it really did look like the absolute end – it's my opinion that they're not just gonna come back and play gigs, they'll make a record in 18 months to two years. They can't just do it tomorrow, though, because every member of the band is doing something else."

"There's been no pressure," says Carl. "It echoes throughout the band. We've spent that much time together that whenever we are together it's like nothing's ever really changed."

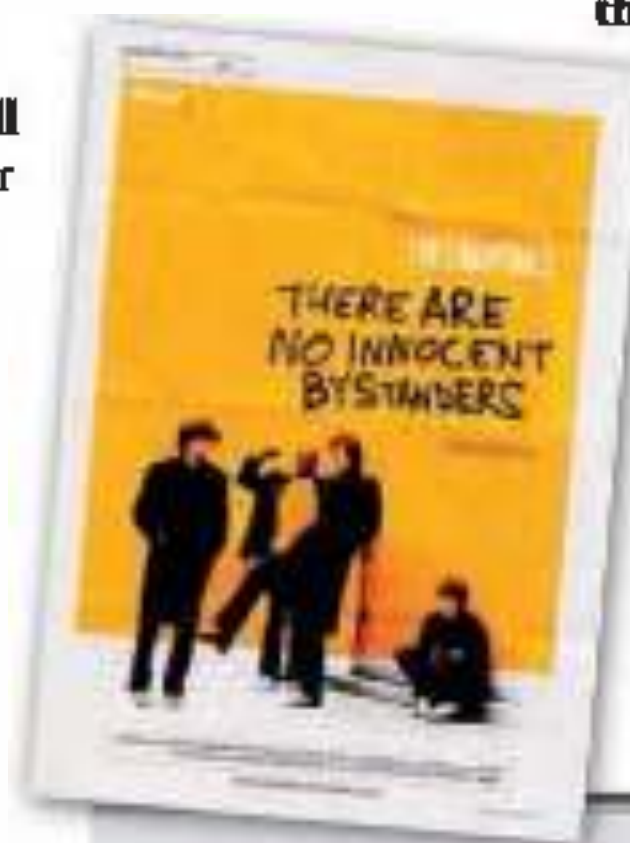
Carl and John reunited yesterday in Copenhagen – a short drive from John's home in Aarhus, which Carl claims is situated "in the middle of Aarstreet" – and, almost instantly, they found the old Libs chaos on their heels. At last night's screening the soundtrack was out of sync and Carl had to stop Roger finding and punching the projectionist. "My inner Ghandi came out. It all blacked out and there was a big round of applause. I think people thought it'd finished in typical Libertines-esque confusion. It was about five or 10 minutes in."

NME joins them for John's guided tour of Copenhagen, taking in the surprisingly little Little Mermaid statue (Carl: "I was expecting

titls like The Darkness would ride in on") and a boat trip around the city's waterways. At tonight's Q&A session at the festival, Carl admits that, of the three weeks The Libertines had booked to rehearse for Reading and Leeds, they only managed four hours.

"The reason it's meant a lot to a lot of people is because those problems and fuck-ups are so naked and exposed," says Carl. "It was the people's hand, it was everyone's hand as much as ours. I'd like people to take that romance with them."

And their plans for the 10th anniversary of 'Up The Bracket' next year? A reissue perhaps? Carl: "Is that a good thing to do? That'd just piss everyone off, wouldn't it? A different box. I don't see any point to that." John has a better idea. "We could go to the pub together and celebrate it?"



"FILMING WITH PETE WAS HARROWING"

Roger and Carl remember the making of There Are No Innocent Bystanders

Roger: "As much as possible, I felt I blended in to the room. I think it would've hampered the rehearsals if there'd been a crew in there."

"Filming the interview with Peter was one of the most harrowing experiences of my life because he got very, very upset. We caught him on the middle of a tour in

January this year and he'd obviously been going over things a lot since [Reading and Leeds]. He was on a knife-edge, emotionally. There was a hell of a lot I couldn't use from the interview."

Carl: "It's a bit cringey for me... I get stressed watching it. But it's great to document the coming together of all the years of supposition

about how big The Libertines were to people. No-one really knew because we never got to do that gig. So to get the opportunity to actually prove it right, it wasn't some kind of mythology – or if it was it doesn't matter. Everybody was there and everyone was together and everyone wanted to tear it up..."

BE A ROCKSTAR

Two Door Cinema Club formed by accident when Kevin was trying to snog Alex and Sam's mates. Four years later, they're one of the UK's most successful new bands. Want to know more about their crazy lifestyle?

Paco Rabanne Black XS has the answer

Black XS
paco rabanne

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NME AWARDS SHOWS ANNOUNCED



JUSTICE: "WE HAVE TO DELIVER"

The Gallic duo announce five NME Awards Shows and get cracking on their third album

We're working around the clock, 24-7 at the moment," beams a wide-eyed Xavier de Rosnay, speaking about Justice's preparations for their NME Awards Shows next year. "We want to make sure it looks amazing." The Parisian pair are spending the next month beaver away in their garage working on the lighting for the shows, which will see them play five gigs across the UK [see column right for full details]. And they've got good reason for putting the extra effort in, too – Xavier explains they feel more pressure playing in our capital than almost

anywhere else in the world. "When we play London or Paris, it's like a football team playing a home game," he explains. "You can almost feel the expectation from the crowd. We have to deliver."

One thing we weren't expecting was news of a third album, given that their second – last month's 'Audio, Video, Disco' – was almost half a decade in the making. But it seems that they're not planning on such a laboured process next time around. "We were thinking just yesterday how cool it'd be to start making some new music already," Xavier reveals. "It's funny, we spent a fair amount of time making 'Audio...' – but we're not sick of being in studios. Yet."

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Those NME Awards Shows in full

JUSTICE

O2 Academy Bristol (Feb 9)

O2 Academy Brixton London (10)

O2 Academy Birmingham (11)

O2 Academy Glasgow (12)

Manchester Academy (13)

CHARLI XCX

Lexington (8)

SLOW CLUB

Heaven (9)

PURE LOVE

Bush Hall (14)

BAND OF SKULLS

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TUNE-YARDS

O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (15)

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EXTINCT

DINOSAURS

Heaven (16)

CLOUD CONTROL

Electric Ballroom (17)

THE BIG PINK,

The Garage (20)

KURT VILE,

Koko (21)

ALABAMA SHAKES

Boston Arms (22)

OH LAND

Heaven (23)

LITTLE DRAGON

Forum (24)

MARINA & THE

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O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (26)

THE DRUMS

Roundhouse (27)

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THE BIG PINK'S WILD NIGHTS WITH HOT CHOCOLATE

Bed by midnight, mugs of cocoa... What's up with Milo and Robbie?

Nightcaps of hot chocolate? We were aware The Big Pink were knocking partying on the head – they said as much on these very pages earlier this month – but little did we know they were taking things this far. "Robbie's been spending hours and days in singing lessons nurturing his voice," explains Milo. "He doesn't smoke, he doesn't do drugs." Even a night out in London for their NME Awards Show next February can't tempt the boys back to their debauched ways, either. Says Milo: "We like to be in bed with a cup of cocoa by midnight these days." According to Milo, they also got "in a bit of a rut" singing the heartbroken missives of 'A Brief History Of Love', so they're looking forward to a change in that department too.

"Everything was written around splitting up with girls, and we didn't think about playing the songs for two years afterwards," he says. "This time we kept that in mind, so we tried to keep everything as optimistic as possible." And, hints Milo, "there may even be a viola" involved onstage – oooh, hark at them...



MARINA: "THE SHOW'S GOING TO BE GRAND!"

New personae, theatrics and even costume changes coming this way...

"I've only done one rehearsal so far, and it only lasted two hours," laughs Marina guiltily, as she confesses she hasn't quite got round to knocking her new batch of songs into stage-ready shape just yet. "But by February, I'll definitely be ready." That's heartening news: not only is the singer's second album 'Electra Heart' scheduled to drop around then, but she'll also be showcasing the bulk of her new material to the masses for the first time at her NME Awards Show.

So far, Marina's revelations about 'Electra Heart' have hinted at a muddle of different scenarios and personae without fully divulging how such lofty, character-based ambitions will be

knitted together. For now, she simply says it will all "become a lot clearer" very soon – but she does promise that the theatrics will be incorporated into her gigs. "It's all going to run through the live shows hugely, because a lot of the project is so visual and film-based. It's going to be much grander than before," she says. "I'm sure I can manage a costume change or two." Frankly, we'd expect nothing less.



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ART ATTACK!

Thought MGMT couldn't get any weirder? As a bizarre evening at New York's Guggenheim proves, it seems the madness is only just beginning

FRONT ROW

What links MGMT with a 51-year-old Italian artist whose first ever solo show in 1989 was just a closed gallery door bearing a sign saying 'be right back'? Maurizio Cattelan, the artist in question, has made a career out of defying expectations. For one show, he stole another artist's exhibition with the intention of passing it off as his own, for another he persuaded a gallery owner to dress in a bunny-eared penis suit. For a month.

Someone obviously saw the connection between the artist with an eye for satire and indie's most wilfully difficult duo, because tonight (November 11)

MGMT play the second of two shows at New York's Guggenheim Museum to celebrate Cattelan's last exhibition before retirement. There may be mannequins of horses, dinosaur skeletons and a boy hanging from a noose dotted around the room, but MGMT's 45 minute prog jam is comfortably the most out-there thing NME witness tonight.

Heralded by a bass wobble, Andrew VanWyngarden, Ben Goldwasser and co slink down a staircase, which explodes into light from a series of coloured strobes. As the assorted high-heeled city types and specky art school musos cheer, the band pick up a creepy carousel theme

on keyboards and guitars... and the madness begins.

A giant screen behind them shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog, only punctuating the jam with some mildly diverting spaceman sound effects. There's no breaks, no chat; Andrew and Ben barely even look up. When the crowd realise there's more chance of hitching a ride on a horse mannequin than hearing 'Kids' or 'Time To Pretend' – or even a track from 'Congratulations' – someone sparks up a spliff and the room descends into chatter.

The set climaxes with the kind of doomy drumming that characterised 'Lady Dada's Nightmare', before morphing into 12-bar blues. Forget defying expectations – this was a batshit endurance test pitched somewhere between demented genius and total bollocks. Bet Maurizio Cattelan loved it.

A screen shows psychedelic patterns while the boys set up camp on planet prog



VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Nick Lomanto, 23
"That was the worst concert I've ever been to! I'm a big fan, but they bombed. They didn't play any of their good songs, didn't even look at the crowd. They should have played some hits! That's what people paid for! And I've never been to a show where there wasn't an encore."



Carina Williams, 26
"I thought it was great! The sound really matched the installation. It seems a lot of fans who came here tonight were expecting to hear MGMT from three years ago, but I feel like this was more of a familiar sound from their last album. It was like a [film] score."

“WE’RE BRINGING BACK DIRTY ROCK’N’ROLL”

Taking aim at chillwave, shoegaze and Casio drums, Minneapolis’ – hey, maybe the planet’s – best new band **Howler** talk us through one of 2012’s most anticipated debuts

IN THE WORKS

“It’s not just about music, it’s about my life in general. I need to be doing something at all times or I will fucking blow my brains out.” We should point out that Howler’s 19-year-old singer Jordan Gatesmith is speaking with a sense of manic glee rather than Cobain-esque ennui. The loping frontman is still recovering from his first ever tour, supporting Tapes’n’Tapes across America (a series of “major ups and major downs”, apparently), but is also now in possession of his first ever album, completed a mere three months after his band were picked up by Rough Trade. Called ‘America Give Up’ and to be released on January 16, it springs from a single, simple aim. Gatesmith explains: “Me and Max [Petrek,

keyboardist] were just sitting there one day and we thought there’s not really been a really great rock – ROCK! – record, or even a punk record, in ages. I keep hearing a lot of witch house stuff, chillwave, shoegazey keyboards with Casio drums. But not rock. So we wanted to make it dirty rock’n’roll.”

While three of the 11 tracks – ‘Told You Once’, ‘This One’s Different’ and ‘You Like White Women. I Like Cigarettes’, now-renamed ‘Wailing (Making Out)’ – have been re-recorded after they appeared on the band’s debut EP, everything else on the album is brand new, with centrepiece ‘America’ among Gatesmith’s favourites. “We wanted to write a song like Bruce Springsteen and that’s where that one comes from. It’s actually ended up very Jonathan Richman-sounding, but at the same time it’s got this whole big Springsteen vibe about it.”

The singer also admits he could be in for a kicking back home due to the album’s title, but says it’s actually meant to be tongue-in-cheek rather than bitchy. “Yeah... we’ll see what happens over here with that one. I think it’s pretty funny. All the British people will probably understand it fine, I just hope people over here see the humour too.”

Recording at Minneapolis’ SO-TM studio (also the place where serial killer Andrew Cunanan committed his first murder, as the band informed us during their *Radar* interview a few months back), Gatesmith says the only real difficulty they encountered was when it came to picking

a cover. “God, we’ve had so many problems with that. It was supposed to be like a Lucky Strike cigarette pack,

but we ripped it off and got in loads of trouble. We were talking to their people and they were going on about marketing plans and legal shit, because apparently RJ Reynolds [the 19th-century tobacco tycoon] still owns the image. It looked fucking sweet, the original one. In the end we had to adapt.” Not that Gatesmith is too concerned with that. As he admits later, he’s busier than ever at present, so he’s happy. “You know, I would actually drive myself fucking insane if I wasn’t doing this...”

THE DETAILS

Title:

‘America Give Up’

Released:

January 16, 2012

Recorded:

SO-TM, Minneapolis

Rehearsed/written:

The back of Java Jack’s Coffee House in Minneapolis

On tour:

The Garage, London (Nov 16), The Bowery, Sheffield (Nov 18), Old Blue Last, London (Dec 8)



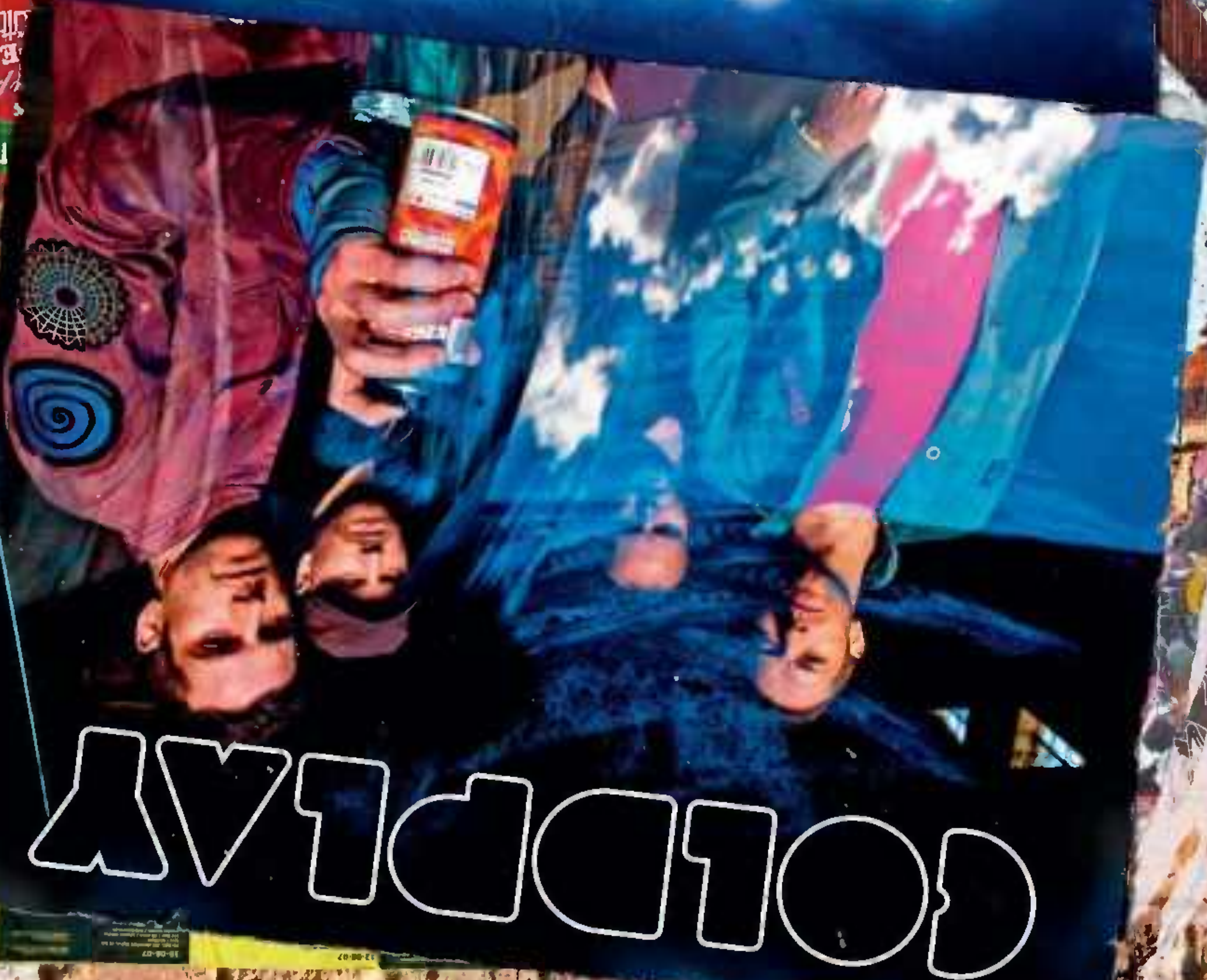
Howler's bedroom sure is cool

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PIECES OF ME ORLANDO WEEKS

The Maccabees frontman on drinking gin at his first gig, the 'James Dean of otters' and why The National's lyrics are so brilliant

My first album

FUGEES - 'THE SCORE'

"I think I bought it from Woolworths in Woodbridge in Suffolk. That was the first thing I'd listen to in the car. To me, the Fugees was something else that sounded like I could sing along to, just as well as to The Beatles."

My first gig

LAURYN HILL, WEMBLEY ARENA, LONDON

"My friend Josh from school and I went right to the front, where we made friends with these much, much, *much* older women who gave us shots of gin. It was a dreamy night, I don't even think I remember the tunes, I just remember thinking how big everything was. Lauryn Hill, six costume changes. And maybe two glasses of gin - it was amazing."

The first record I loved

THE SOUNDTRACK TO BUGSY MALONE

"The only other film that has music in it that's as good is Disney's *Robin Hood*, with the foxes and the bear. The whole of *Bugsy Malone* is great, every song is kind of funny and poignant and definitive of an era. I remember that our family took us to go and see the *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* musical and it wasn't as good. I think that was the Jason Donovan era."

My favourite lyric

THE NATIONAL - 'SLOW SHOW'

"The National have a beautiful lyric, '*You know I dreamed about you for 29 years before I saw you/ You know I dreamed about you/ I missed you for 29 years*'. That's one of the most romantic things you could ever say to anyone, but it's not cheesy. It's perfect and it's concise. I first saw the band on *Jools Holland* - he's brilliant for that kind of stuff. I remember trying to phone Felix [White, Maccabees guitarist] while he was trying to phone me at the same time when he saw Arcade Fire play, watching him [Win Butler] play his guitar back to front and thinking, 'How can you be part of a band that is that brilliant and also do something that looks like Talking Heads?'"

My favourite place

ALETSCH GLACIER, SWITZERLAND

"It's a huge glacier but they've drilled holes in the side of it so you can walk right into the centre of it, through 200 metres of ice. We went because we were driving back from a festival, we must've gone the wrong way because there was no reason to drive over a whole mountain range, we could have just skirted it. We sat there for three hours. Even with lots of tourists around it, it felt alien."



It's not comparable to anything else I've ever seen; I've never felt as weirded out as being in the middle of a giant ice block. It's like the dwelling of a Bond villain."

My favourite film

TARKA THE OTTER

"It's a film about the life story of an otter. It's beautiful. If it's just one otter playing the part, it is the James Dean of otters. There's a heron and there's a love interest, White-Tip. It's multicultural because there's an owl family. It's an animal melting pot, by the side of a river."

My favourite artist

STANLEY SPENCER

"I was taken to Sandham Memorial Chapel [where Spencer's work is exhibited] when I was about 13 or 14 and I remember thinking that it was the most incredible atmosphere and just being stunned into silence, not wanting to make a rude sound or anything like that. That must mean that there's something really special going on there. And I remember that very clearly, in the same way as being on a school trip to the Somme and even the funny kids at school just shut up."



Clockwise from main: looks like Orlando needs a refill; The National frontman and lyricist Matt Berninger; artist Stanley Spencer; Fugees' huge-selling 1996 album *The Score* with frontwoman Lauryn Hill in the centre; the soundtrack to 1976 kiddie gangster romp *Bugsy Malone*; *Tarka The Otter*

VERSUS

PETER ROBINSON *vs* JONATHAN PIERCE

The Drums' man on stealing biscuits and how he doesn't care about chart positions – yeah, yeah



• The Drums are obsessed with interviews by Ke\$ha and Marina & The Diamonds

• "We have a thing for watching them crumble – oh my god!" exclaims the indie funster

• True to Jonathan's spooky prediction, that single did not exactly set the charts alight

Hello, Jonathan. I went to see Britney recently...

"YOU DID? I went to see her about three months ago! My manager took me as a surprise. And it certainly was a surprise! A good one – I laughed my ass off. It was like watching somebody mash potatoes for two hours, which was sad but she has some good songs."

Anyway, there is a bit in her show where she gets on a massive swing the size of the stage and sings a song. Would you have a massive swing on stage?

"Oh god, no way, I don't think *(laughs)* we'll ever do anything more than a few lights. We're even nervous about having a strobe. It sounds pretentious but we really like our songs and we feel they speak for themselves."

I like that you recorded your last album in a kitchen. Did your record label keep coming in to see how the album was coming along and/or steal biscuits?

"It's ideal if you're hungry. Amy, my manager, she stops over all the time, but right at the start our label said, 'We know you're different from other bands so we'll let you call the shots.' The whole team around us is pretty cool. Maybe just not telling us things that are awful... They know we're sensitive lads."

You have sensitive lad cheekbones and haircuts.

"*(Cackles)* That we do, that we do. You just watch, this next record we're coming back with big mountain beards. And tiny instruments. Like little accordions and bells and whistles."

How good are you at growing beards? The Drums don't really strike me as the hairiest of recording artists.

"No, man, I think I had my first hair under my arm when I was about 19. It took a long time, I got picked on the whole time. But who's laughing now? Who's laughing now? *(Laughs)*"

No waxing for Jonathan from The Drums!

"Exactly! Who's in line at the waxing station now? Not me. I'm touring the world motherfuckers! I'm joking."

If you take up swimming you'll be quite aerodynamic.

"Oh man, I really wanna do that. I'm a big fan of Björk and I read that she – thus could be completely made up



– goes swimming every morning because it helps with her voice. All I wanna do is go swimming but I don't think my feet have been in water in over two years."

You have washed your feet in the last two years, let's just clarify? "That is true. What do you think?"

I think you've washed your feet. "Howls) YOU ARE RIGHT! You are right about that. Ding ding"

Finally you have a record out now in the UK. What's your chart prediction?

"Er, I'm gonna say... Which chart?"

The proper one. Your singles haven't exactly bothered the higher reaches of the Top 100 so far. Is it all going to change?

"Oh I don't think so! *(Laughs)* I don't even know where our last single registered on the chart."

I'm looking at your chart positions now on Wikipedia and it doesn't make for pleasant reading, Jonathan, I'll be honest. But hey, it's not about the chart positions, so don't you worry.

"We're very happy with where we are and what's happening with the band. I feel like a lot of that crazy hype has subsided and now we can just get on with it. To be honest it feels exotic and thrilling to be focusing on these things. Without doing too many interviews about, you know, who cuts your hair or whatever."

But who DOES cut your hair? "Jacob cuts all our hair."

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1 2 HOWLER
'I TOLD YOU ONCE'
Fresh Tunes

2 3 SCUM
'AMBER HANDS'
N/A

3 6 DRY THE RIVER
'WEIGHTS & MEASURES'
N/A

4 4 THE BIG PINK
'STAY GOLD'
N/A

5 7 BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB
'LIGHTS OUT, WORDS GONE'
N/A

6 9 LANA DEL REY
'VIDEO GAMES'
N/A

7 10 HIKI & THE DOVE
'THE DRUMMER'
Vegard

8 12 THE VACCINES
'TIGER BLOOD'
Capitol

9 8 ARCTIC MONKEYS
'SHUCK IT AND SEE'
Domino

10 16 KASABIAN
'RE-WIRED'
Liberty

11 13 FLORENCE + THE MACHINE
'SHAKE IT OUT'
N/A

12 11 NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS
'AKA... WHAT A LIFE!'
Sire

13 33 FRIENDLY FIRES
'BLUE CASSETTE'
N/A

14 1 THE VACCINES
'WETSUIT'
Liberty

15 14 TRIBES
'WHEN MY DAY COMES'
N/A

16 17 JUSTICE
'AUDIO, VIDEO, DISCO'
MCA

17 36 YOU ME AT SIX
'LOVERBOY'
N/A

18 27 COLDPLAY
'PARADISE'
Parlophone

19 5 MANIC STREET PREACHERS
'THIS IS THE DAY'
Capitol

20 15 THE DRUMS
'HOW IT ENDED'
N/A

NME RADIO

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

NME TV

Watch the Top 10 video chart countdown every weekday on NME TV
SKY CHANNEL 387
FRIDAY SAT 510

NME.COM

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



NEW TO NME RADIO PLAYLIST

• FRANK TURNER
'Wessex Boy'
• FOSTER THE PEOPLE
'Call It What You Want'
• GOTYE
'Easy Way Out'

The NME Chart is compiled each week by NME Radio and is based on how many times each track has been played on the station over the previous seven days.

RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Matt Wilkinson



ABOUT
TO
BREAK

A\$AP ROCKY

The NYC rap upstart with a swagload of tunes and a \$3 million record deal

It's exactly a week since self-dubbed "pretty motherfucker" A\$AP Rocky released his 16-track mixtape 'LiveLoveA\$AP', and he strides into the Polo Grounds Music offices a couple of blocks from Madison Square Garden. "How's it going, B?" 23-year old Rocky greets label boss and hip-hop kingpin Bryan Leach, fixes himself a Hennessy and Pepsi from Leach's personal bar, and drapes himself over a leather armchair, laptop open and Facebook on before he hits the seat. The last week has been a good one for Rocky, the Harlem-born rapper whose real name is Rakim Meyers (yep, he's named after THAT Rakim). "Finally, people have to come out with if they like me or not now," he says. "There's no wondering if I'm good or not. And I've been getting a lot of good feedback."

Good feedback is an understatement. It's not even a year since A\$AP Rocky and A\$AP Ferg dropped a handmade video for a track they made called 'Get High' on YouTube. At the time Rocky had moved his mother and baby sister from Harlem to

New Jersey and was paying for their apartment by selling drugs on the street.

"It was a way of surviving: I didn't have a job, my mum didn't have a job," he says – but pushing dope finally came to an end in July, around the same time he put a new video, 'Purple Swag', online.

It took a third video – for woozy Houston rap number 'Peso', in August – and suddenly everyone wanted a piece of A\$AP Rocky. Including Polo Grounds Music, part of Sony/RCA, who put a \$3 million deal on the table to sign him and fund a group label called A\$AP Worldwide, with Rocky in charge.

"I'm a tastemaker. I know how to look out for what's good, what's big, what's next," he says, pulling out a bag of weed and calling up YouTube videos of Tennessee 'gangster walk' and Lana Del Rey.

If there's pressure on him to deliver, Rocky's not feeling it yet. "This is easy!" he says lighting up with a grin. "Selling drugs is hard. But this? All you gotta do is show up and do what you love." *Hazel Sheffield*

NEED TO KNOW

FROM: Harlem, New York

FOR FANS OF: Odd Future, Drake

BUY IT NOW: 'LiveLoveA\$AP' is available online for free now

SEE HIM LIVE: He's hoping to be in the UK in January

ON NME.COM: Watch Rocky's best vids

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Rocky turned vegetarian recently. "It doesn't make sense to take a life for your satisfaction," he says.



GAUNTLET HAIR HEAD TO UK

US duo heading this way with tales of slashed tyres, pummelled housemates and wizard dicks

RADAR NEWS

"We had a party at our old house in Denver and after we left we caught wind that some guy had slashed our van tyres," informs one half of Gauntlet Hair, Andy Rauworth, when asked how things have been going since the release of their self-titled debut album last month.

"Then, there was another time in Missouri when we stayed with some strangers and woke up to the sound of them pummelling each other. One of them threw the other one down the stairs. I don't know why it's so violent lately but we do seem to attract the stranger crowd."

If you're also a fan of casual violence then you're in luck – Gauntlet Hair have just confirmed their first ever UK dates, and are heading over here to spread the, er... *love* next February.

"Neither of us have been overseas," Andy enthuses, adding that the dates will see him and co-mainman Craig Nice playing stripped-down versions of their songs to compensate for the fact that their backing band are too

skint to head over for the tour. "There will have to be a lot of changes to make it work, though, because the album was recorded for a full band. The [tracks] might even change entirely," he explains.

One thing that is staying put, however, is their eyebrow-raising name, which Craig brilliantly defended recently by telling detractors to "go suck our medieval, hairy, wizard dicks."

"That [comment] was something he pulled off that we're all very proud of,"

"I don't know why, but we attract the stranger crowd"

ANDY RAUWORTH

Andy chuckles. "It's exhausting for reviewers to continually give us shit over it but there's some excellent points to having a name like that. If you type in Gauntlet Hair into your Google search box all you get is this fucking band. I figured [the critics] would tire of writing the same shit over and over again but they're still going at it."

We're sure that people will have some far more interesting things to say about Gauntlet Hair once February rolls around... *Lisa Wright*

The Buzz

The rundown of the music, videos and scenes breaking forth from the underground this week



1 FEAR OF MEN TEAM UP WITH BOS ANGELES

Two of our favourite new bands are heading out on the road together this week. Fear Of Men and Bos Angeles (above) play a number of co-headline dates on the jaunt, which kicks off at Manchester's Trof this Thursday (Nov 17). What's more, both acts are also readying new releases. Bos unleash their Cure-esque double A-side 'Beach Slalom'/'Days Of Youth' via Roundtable Records on November 21, while FoM release the excellently titled 'Alice Munro Demos' cassette tape on December 12 – head to NME.COM/newmusic now to hear two exclusive songs from it and check out the bands' tour dates in full.



2 BRETON'S NEW VID

The south London band – who live in a disused bank – release debut single 'Edward The Confessor' on November 21, but it's the video which is really kicking up a fuss. Filmed in-house under the collective's own bretonLABS moniker, you can see it for yourself on NME.COM/newmusic now.



3 MEXICAN SUMMER'S 100TH RELEASE

With a history taking in Dungen, Kurt Vile, Best Coast and Wooden Shjips, it's not been a bad existence for NYC's Mexican Summer label. Formed three years ago, it celebrates its 100th release next Friday (Nov 25), with a special cut from Ford & Lopatin – hear it on NME's Daily Download blog now.



4 LIVERPOOL'S MERCURY

What Wales does, Liverpool follows. Sort of. The folks behind Scouse new music blog Getintothisco.uk have outlined their plans to hold a Mercury Prize-style award in the city next year, focusing solely on acts from around the region. Nominees for the inaugural award are set to be announced early in 2012.

5 IROK

AKA The Intergalactic Republic Of Kongo. AKA Mike Title from London non-starters Dead Kids. Mike dressed as Colonel Gaddafi – post-golden gun shooting – during IROK's set at London's newest, most depraved venue The Sebright Arms recently. It was the perfect setting for his self-described "violent and contagious psychotropic afro-punk".



BAND CRUSH



Patrick Wolf on his favourite new act

"Every time I feel stressed or under pressure I listen to Kreayshawn. And if I had to come back as any human being it would be Kreayshawn because in every video she looks so carefree and she doesn't give a fuck. She's really inspiring to me right now."

SCENE
REPORTWHAT'S HOT
FOR THE
HORRORS

*Rhys Webb from The Horrors
ponders the crystal ball of new music*



Welcome to the second instalment of Spider's top sounds and new bands to check out and catch live. This time I'm focusing on some of the hip young guitar slingers flying the flag for psychedelia and garage. First up – freakbeat ravers **Speak & The Spells**. They play

frantic punk rock, owing as much to '60s R&B legends The Downliners Sect and The Pretty Things as they do to Billy Childish. Check their debut EP 'She's Dead'.

The Hypnotic Eye are recording their debut long player and have recently been treading the boards at some of London's underground hot spots. They play sultry organ-led garage and feature the seductive lead vocals of Grace Lightman. Coffin Joe and I dropped in to the session for their forthcoming debut single 'Marianne' to lend some backing vocals recently, and there's a date at my clubnight the Cave Club on the horizon too.

RHYS'
TOP 5

SPEAK & THE SPELLS
'She's Dead'

THE HYPNOTIC EYE
'Fly On The Wall'

THEE VICARS
'Don't Wanna Be Free'

BLOOD MUSIC
'Unending Blues'

UNKNOWN MORTAL ORCHESTRA
'How Can U Luv Me'

Thee Vicars fuse the early punk sounds of The Damned and 'Spiral Scratch'-era Buzzcocks with a very authentic trashy garage blueprint. Kind of like a British Black Lips, who they often play with. I also love the London-based **Blood Music**, who play heavy, mind-bending noise that crashes and throbs like the klang of heavy machinery. They're currently putting the finishing touches to their debut single.

They're a little bit bigger now, but Portland's **Unknown Mortal Orchestra** are absolutely superb. They return to the UK this month. Get down there and check them out!

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Friendly Fires' Jack Savidge

5
TO SEE
This week's
unmissable new
music shows

HOWLER (pictured)
Garage, London
16 November

**THE HISTORY OF
APPLE PIE**
Shacklewell Arms,
London
16 November

WISE BLOOD
Undertone, Cardiff
18 November

THEME PARK
Green Door Store,
Brighton
19 November

FOLKS
Deaf Institute,
Manchester
22 November



Money: Ryan
Jarmann's hair
lives on...

MONEY/ BEATY HEART

SACRED TRINITY CHURCH, SALFORD
FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER

CAUGHT
LIVE

Following WU LYF's well-documented ascension, it's been unsurprising to witness a glut of Manchester-based bands reverting to

similar smoke and mirror tactics. Yet for every act hastily cobbling together faux-cryptic imagery while simultaneously deleting their Facebook, there are those whose devotion to the art of presentation as a whole is clear.

Money are one such group.

Confidence isn't something they've always had during their fledgling existence. Starting

as **Books** last year, they quickly changed name to **Youth Roundabout** when they were looking timid as openers for **Deerhunter**; 18 months on and the contrast is substantial. The four-piece tonight possess the sort of unashamed sincerity in their stargazing-from-the-gutter pop that can't not revitalise, particularly at a time when blogs are awash with guitar music diluted of emotion in lieu of slacker escapism. It helps that the Sacred Trinity Church's reverential surroundings match their clearly bombastic

ambitions. It helps, too, that they seem to have gained such local devotion despite having hardly any online music to their name. This is no more apparent than in support act **Beaty Heart**, whose post-'... Merriweather...' reels of sound are largely ignored. It's a shame, for the Peckham trio have gained plaudits in their own right, but this evening the blurred edges of their disorientated pop just doesn't conquer minds and bodies in the manner it's rightfully done elsewhere.

Money possess the sort of unashamed sincerity that can't not revitalise

Money are still raw, mind; a sound already heavy on reverb often spirals out of control, obscuring Jamie Lee's sharpened croon. Yet it's hard not to be pulled in by 'Who's Going To Love You Now?'s wide-eyed affectation, or the soul-searching balladry of 'The Sea'. Indeed, at times their sense of conviction is such that it could make a person latch onto them and never want to let go, leaving others to baulk at a perceived hubris. You feel, though, that they wouldn't want it any other way. *Simon Jay Catling*



Looks like one of
The Hypnotic Eye
came straight
from work



One year ago **The Vaccines** were a hyped indie band with some exciting demos. Then they delivered an amazing debut album, slayed the world's festivals and bulked into one of our most thrilling live acts. **Barry Nicolson** joins their victory lap

Fuck, I've just had a Bono moment!" Wandering the corridors of Manchester's MEN Arena in search of his dressing room, Justin Young has become hopelessly lost and found himself surrounded by a mob of fans who have been camped outside the venue's front door all afternoon. After a few double-takes and gasps of recognition, one by one, they begin to encircle and approach. Some of them breathlessly tell him that The Vaccines are the reason why they've started a band of their own (he's been getting that one a lot recently), while some say nothing at all, but giggle nervously and present him with T-shirts, shoes, limbs or whatever else they can find that he can scrawl his name on. One girl approaches him on three separate occasions before finally working up the nerve to open her mouth. When he notices that his bandmates have all quietly slunk off, he elects to stick around anyway, ensuring that everyone who wants a photo gets one, making as much small talk as he can get away with, and maybe – just maybe – enjoying his Bono moment more than he'd like to let on.



doing. Then again, given that they began 2011 as the band that other bands loved to hate, that's not much of a surprise. At Leeds this year, we spoke to a musician whose band broke around the same time as The Vaccines, and he confessed that – until he heard their debut album – he had jealously dismissed them as another London hype band who'd never had to work for their recognition. It wasn't an uncommon perception.

"Oh, I was definitely aware of all that," says Justin. "One of the first interviews I ever did was with a guy whose opening question was, 'Did you know that every local band in my city can't stand you?' As soon as he said it, I thought, 'Well, if they spent half as much time worrying about their own bands as they seem to do about mine, maybe they'd be riding this wave with us.' People think that if you're hyped, you've got it easy. But in a lot of ways, I actually think it made things harder, because with the hype came all the detractors who actively wanted us to fail. People will put every obstacle in your way, you know? I've been in bands since I was 11, getting it wrong over and over again. I've seen my friends do well and I've been jealous of them, but the only reason they were doing better than me is that, at the time, they were better than me. And all those bands who were sat at home moaning about us were just jealous because we were better than them."

We can't help but notice a difference in Justin's rhetoric since those early days. After all, this is the same man who was once at pains to play down every grandiose

claim being made on his band's behalf, telling *NME* back in January that, "It'd be amazing if we were ever in the charts – but I wouldn't bet money on it." What's changed? "We made a point of being quite self-deprecating in the beginning because we wanted people to get past all the hyperbole that was attaching itself to us, but we've always known we're a great band. Truly, I don't think there's another band out there who do what we do as well as we do it. That's not arrogance, that's just fact. I mean, can you name me any?"

As *NME* discovers, 'Doing what The Vaccines do' is not for the fainthearted. By the end of the year, the band will have played almost 150 gigs, 45 of those being festival engagements that sometimes saw them doing two shows in two different countries on the same day.

Everyone wants a piece of them right now, and you get the feeling that they can be a little too accommodating for their own good: after the gig in Cardiff (and after draining every last drop of their rider), bassist Arni Hjörvar and drummer Pete Robertson are accosted by a group of fans hanging around their tourbus who plead with them to come and watch their gig at the venue

across the road. Naturally, they agree, and everyone is soon sinking double *I* aphroaigs.

That eye-of-the-storm, seat-of-the-pants sort of lifestyle takes its toll, but it was the band's workload – not their partying habits – that brought them to the brink of catastrophe earlier this summer. Shortly after their triumphant Reading and Leeds performances

in August, Justin discovered that the vocal polyp problem which had plagued him all year would require yet another throat operation – his third time under the knife in just nine months – resulting in the cancellation of the band's entire American tour, as well as shows in Japan and Europe.

When we sit down with him in Manchester, it's clear that there's still a lingering uncertainty about what his vocal problems might ultimately mean for the

future of The Vaccines.

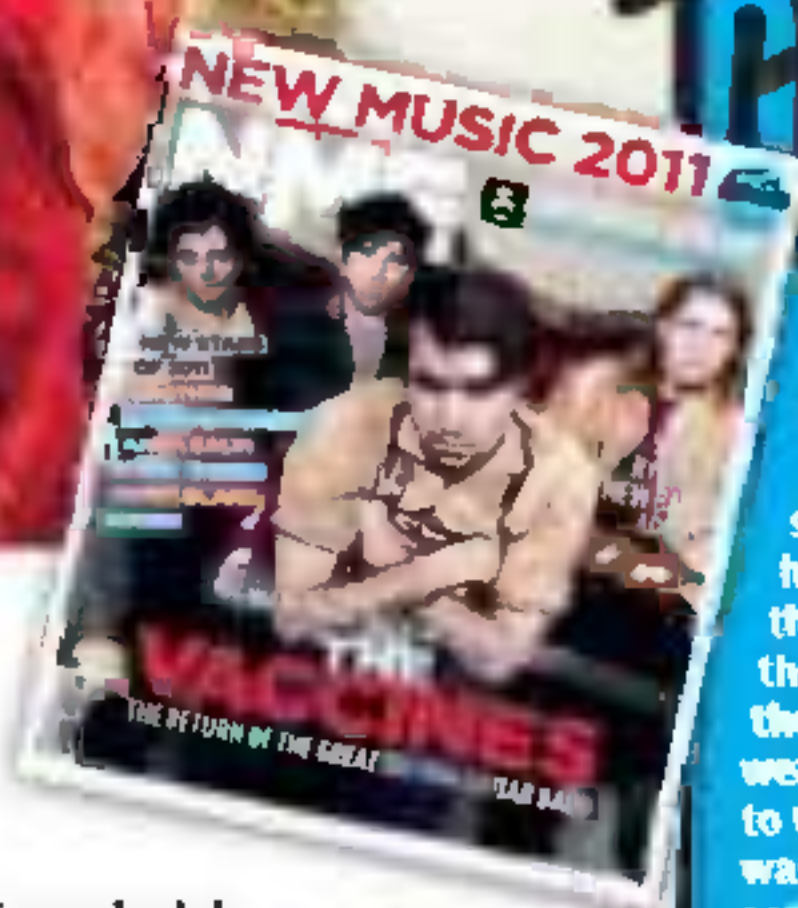
NME: We've heard about your throat – what were you actually diagnosed with?

Justin: "I'd had a haemorrhage, basically. Whenever I would shout during gigs, the vocal polyp would bleed, then it would scar and it wouldn't close properly. So my voice would just start squeaking."

**"WE ALWAYS
KNEW WE WERE
A GREAT BAND"**
Justin



Clockwise from far left: onstage at MEN; Freddie takes off; the lads lament a poor turnout; Arni's facepalm moment; Pete shows us what he's got



THE FIVE MOMENTS THAT MADE THE VACCINES

How did you react when you found out you'd have to have a third operation?

"I was told in LA, when we were out doing *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* I went to the doctor because I was having a problem with my ear, but he mentioned I was sounding husky and that he wanted to take a look at my throat. I just thought to myself, 'Oh shit, here we go again.' I won't lie to you, I properly broke down when he told me he'd found the haemorrhage again. I was completely devastated, because it meant cancelling the American tour. I don't know how to say this without sounding cheesy, but it was like I was on top of the world one minute and in total freefall the next."

Was there a point where you thought that it might mean the end of the band?

"Oh yeah, definitely. I mean, it's pretty fucking serious stuff. I guess people were a bit pissed off at us for pulling shows and maybe they thought I was just lazy, but if I hadn't had that operation, honestly, the band would've been over by now. The second time it happened, they told me it was turning carcinogenic! I've been through three operations in the last nine months, but I think the sheer number of shows we've played in between is testament to how much we want to overcome it. I took eight weeks off after the last operation, and I've worked hard to get my voice back up to strength, but I've been told just to cross my fingers and hope it doesn't come back again. I feel pretty good at the moment, and I've been doing everything I can to look after my voice, so

hopefully it's gone for good..."

As Freddie tells us later: "Justin's vocal problems were no great mystery: we had the busiest schedule of any band in the world this summer. At one stage, we did 16 flights in 10 days, across four continents. We work with people who have been with The Killers and The Strokes, people who have seen and done it all, and even they said they'd never known anything like our schedule. We were tempting fate, yeah, but when you're a new band, you don't say no to things. You say yes to everything, try your luck and see what happens."

Up to that point, 'seeing what happened' had proved a decidedly fruitful strategy for The Vaccines. It was at this year's T In The Park that Freddie first noticed "something special happening for us. You can talk about the hype and all that, but it fades into insignificance next to walking out onstage in front of 30,000 kids. The hype was never real, but that gig was." By the time Reading and Leeds came around, Vaccines fever had escalated into a full-blown pandemic.

"We'd been around the world in two weeks or something crazy like that, and we were all pretty burnt out," recalls Justin. "But to look out at those crowds and know that all those people had accepted us... I guess it just felt good to be so loved, you know?"

Luckily, the new single – the Albert Hammond ►

THE FIRST NME COVER

"We want indie back in the charts," they said, but who'd have guessed by the end of the year they'd have put it there? The band were weary of playing up to the hype, but it was clear there was something special afoot.

THE DEBUT

The moment which Justin describes as "the crucial point where people could either get on with celebrating us, or start ignoring us". Met with near-unanimous praise and a Number Four chart placing, it turned out to be the former.

T IN THE PARK

"T In The Park was just like, 'Fuck!'" says Justin. "There were so many people there." The band's set at the King Tut's Wah Wah Tent was one of the weekend's highlights,

and an early indication that things were going stratospheric.

READING AND LEEDS

Justin's throat problems would bring them crashing down to earth a few days later, but The Vaccines were on top of the world after their R&L performances this summer.

THE HEADLINE TOUR

Their biggest UK tour to date climaxes with two massive shows at Brixton next month. Should be a memorable victory lap after their mad year.



Jr-produced 'Tiger Blood' – was already in the can long before Justin's vocal collapse. Recorded at Albert's behest at his home studio in upstate New York, it's pretty much exactly what you'd expect a collaboration between The Vaccines and the coolest of all Strokes to be: a thrillingly propulsive rock'n'roll song that barely cracks two minutes, but you wish would last forever.

"I really just had the bare bones of the song, with no idea for where to take it," says Justin. "We wanted to work with someone creative, someone we really admired, and Albert basically became like a fifth member of the band when we were in his studio. It's hard to be objective about something you've created with people you spend all day, every day with, so it was good to have reassurance from someone you admire. And, obviously, with us being massive fans of The Strokes, it was pretty exciting."

Was it overwhelming to work so closely with someone you spent your teenage years idolising?

"Not at all. I'm not 15 anymore, you know? It was inspiring, though. Growing up and listening to The Strokes, Albert always seemed like a total rock star to me. But we were there to do a job. We didn't sit around swapping stories or asking him for advice. In the end, that song is just another step towards trying to push the band forward – whether it does that or not is open to debate, but we just wanted to try something different."

The band are playing it frustratingly coy about exactly where they want to push forward to; Justin reveals that they'll be playing new songs on the UK headline tour they embark on this week, and that he expects to record a new album "during the first half of next year", but they're vague when it comes to specifics. What Justin will say, however, is that in spite of how proud he is of the band's first album, "we know that it's not a masterpiece and that we have to get better. The songs are essentially nursery rhymes: three chords, one note being played over them, a straight drumbeat, no harmonies. It's pure

back-to-basics rock'n'roll, and the songs were good enough on their own that they didn't have to hide behind any silly production. So in that respect, they were the best 11 songs we had, and 'What Did You Expect From The Vaccines' was as good as The Vaccines could possibly have been at that point. We've made a great first record, but it still sounds like a first record – we want to keep improving."

Following the set in Manchester – watched intently from side of stage by Alex Turner and Matt Helders – where they come within a ball-hair of thieving the Monkeys' thunder, the band head to Big Hands on Oxford Road for some post show drinks. On a previous visit to the city, Pete ended up at a goth club, spinning '80s electro-pop underneath the pulsating red eyes of a giant fibreglass Satan. Tonight isn't quite so weird, despite Mumford & Sons' Winston Marshall randomly appearing from out of nowhere. There's just one thing left to ask Justin

WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM THEIR SECOND ALBUM?

Justin and Freddie on what's up their sleeves

NME: So, where are you at with the next album?

Justin: "Well, we want to write it first. We've got a couple of songs that we really like, and we're going to be playing them on the headline tour. We don't want to rush into it, I think we want to make a record that we're proud of, that's better than the first record. I'd say that definitely, in the first half of next year, we'll record the second record. The songs still sound youthful and direct and upbeat, but maybe with a little more swagger. The first record was knowingly dumb, and I think the second one will be less like that. Obviously the whole thing with the first record

was to strip back all the parts, so now we're looking at maybe building on the sound a little bit."

Freddie: "We've got a few new songs, I don't know how many we'll end up keeping, but there are a couple of them that I feel are paving the way for what's coming next. I don't think we want to go bigger for the sake of it, just because we're playing bigger venues. We definitely don't want to make the same record twice, but we don't want to consciously change our sound. The first record happened really organically, and I think the second one will, too. It just feels really exciting at the moment."

before we stagger back to our hotel, though: after living through all the lunacy and hyperbole of the last 12 months, does he feel as though The Vaccines have made a difference? Are they changing things in the way that the Monkeys and The Strokes before them managed to?

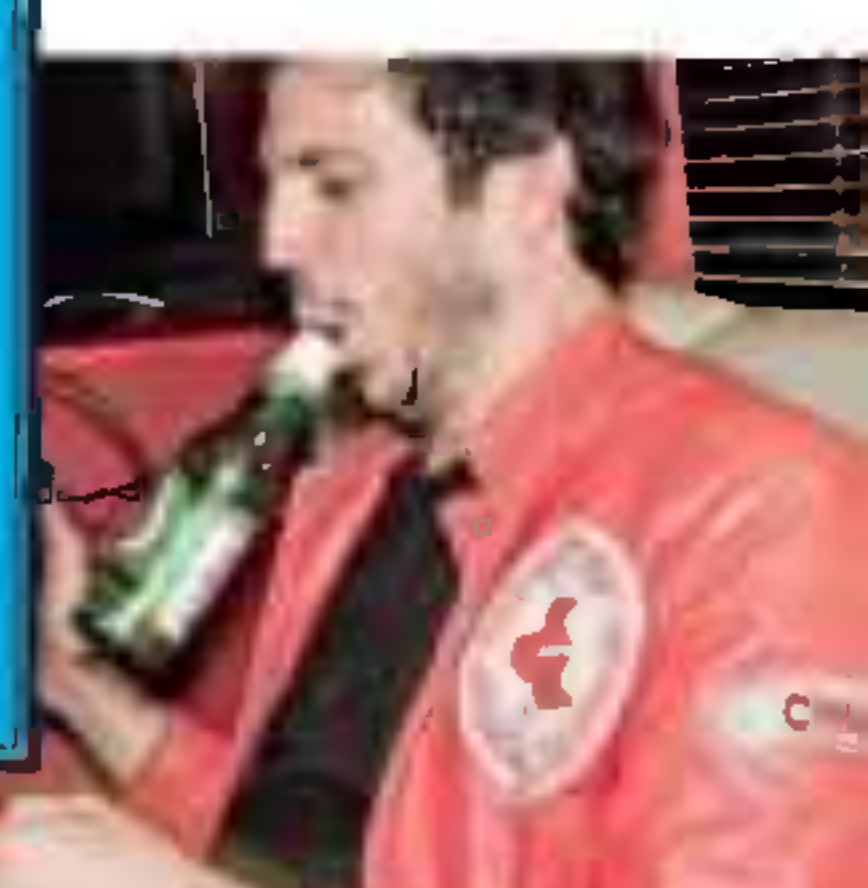
"We've had kids coming up to us telling us that we're the blueprint for their own bands, and that's a great thing," he says. "I feel that rock'n'roll is an artform in a way that electronic music just isn't. I find that kind of music quite scientific, almost devoid of personality, in a way. Whereas there's nothing sexier than just getting up onstage and beating the shit out of your guitar, is there? Saying what you fucking think, doing what you fucking feel..."

And taking life one Bono moment at a time.

NME EXTRA For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a pair of tickets to The Vaccines' winter tour and a limited edition Vaccines skateboard, plus video footage stage at The Oz, head to NME.COM/extra. See p8 for details



Clockwise from above: Arni gets his fix of NME; Pete sucks it and sees; Justin's healthy eating, messy living; Freddie shows off his rock profile; arriving in Manchester





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“HOW WOULD WE LIKE TO SNUFF IT? COMING OFF A ROLLER COASTER!”

Are they bigger than Arctic Monkeys? What's their favourite cartoon? Can pigs swim? **Kasabian's** Tom and Serge answer the burning questions sent in by readers and some famous faces

Talking nonsense: it is, truly, a dying rock'n'roll artform. Who cares about tempo changes, effects pedals and widdly solos when you can put the *real* issues of the day to bands? Praise be for Tom Meighan and Serge Pizzorno, then. You could lock this pair in a room with just a Dictaphone for company and return with reams of compelling dinosaur chat and breakdowns of their favourite cartoon characters.

Not that they don't come up with the hard info too – last week in *NME* the pair let it slip that, as well as playing a New Year's Eve show at London's O2 Arena this year, next summer they're likely to be heading up the capital's Hyde Park Calling.

“Wigston Swimming Pool!” Tom replies when asked what further venues the band would like to play next year. “We all used to go there as kids in Leicester. It's got loads of great childhood memories for me that place. Apart from the pool itself. It was dead fucking cold.”

Indeed. So with the Kasabian wagon clearly set to roll straight through to next year, with the help of questions from readers and musicians, there's lots to catch up on – from how they see themselves compared to Arctic Monkeys, to who has inspired them most, to the swimming abilities of farm animals.

I like both Kasabian and Arctic Monkeys, but, honestly, who would you say was the bigger band?

Sassan Tabrizian

Serge: “Well, I'm a lot taller than any of them.”

Tom: “Ha! Yeah, we're definitely taller than them.”

Serge: “They're not very tall, are they? Alex is not very tall.”

Tom: “Well, he's not you, is he?”



Gerard Way, *My Chemical Romance*

Tom: “Wow, what a good question. Velociraptor? It just came out of nowhere. Well, it just sounded good, that's all that bloody happened really, mate. It's just quite a comic book, kind of cartoonish name for an album, that's really all it is really, to be honest. He's a nice guy, though, Gerard's a nice guy... we've made up, we're friends now (*Kasabian had previously said MCR make “ventriloquists' music” – Beef Ed*).”

NME: Did you have any other working titles for the album?

Tom: “‘Sex After I Atting’. Serge?”

Serge: “Nah, there weren't any. There actually genuinely weren't any, we just thought ‘That'll do’, it came quite quick.”

Tell us something odd and quite nasty about each other.

Christina Grönlund

Tom: “Serge has really big feet, basketball feet. Size 11's big, isn't it?”

Serge: “It's not like they're size 14s. But for someone in a band they're pretty big.”

Tom: “It's like the size of a ruler! You've got to say something bad about me now, go on!”

Serge: “Tom never stops whistling. It's like a disease. He whistles anything – tunes, bird noises. You just want to take a hand grenade to the head sometimes.”

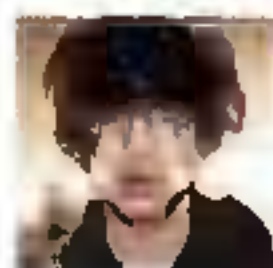
Would you rather lick a pavement or have boobs for feet?

Ciara Lynch

Tom: “Do you know what? I'd rather lick a pavement, to be honest. I've done that before when I was a kid. I think everyone has licked a pavement some time, haven't they?”

“SERGE HAS BIG FEET, LIKE RULERS”

Tom



Can pigs swim?

Faris Badwan, The Horrors

Serge: "I've got no idea. I know they're quite intelligent."

Tom: "No, they can't. What a weird question. Nah, yes they can. Have I ever seen a pig swim? I can draw one"

Which have been the most inspiring gigs you've ever been to?

Alice Simkins

Tom: "My mum in the kitchen making dinner."

Serge: "I saw Chris Cunningham last year and he was fucking unbelievable. It was just him, and musically and visually it blew my mind. Amy [Serge's girlfriend] was pregnant at the time and I was shitting it because the bass was on another level. It was mind-bending."



Where did you get your US flag shirt that you wore on

stage in Italy this summer? And will you wear it alongside Nick O'Malley for an NME photoshoot of the worst shirts ever?

Matt Helders, Arctic Monkeys

Tom: "US flag shirt? That I wore onstage? Oh! Moschino mate, I think it's Moschino. Nah, actually, it's the Union Jack shirt I wore, I think that's what Helders is on about... The one I wore for that fuckin' Live 8 gig... sorry, Live Earth gig. It's a Paul Smith, it's in my wardrobe and one day I'm gonna put it up in a Hard Rock Café."

All the best rock stars die young. Kasabian don't miss a trick, so in what circumstances are you gonna snuff it?

Mark Blake

Tom: "I can imagine me going on a fairground ride and coming off a roller coaster. It would be a pretty good way to go, your adrenaline is going and the next thing you know it's over. That'd be the way to go."

Serge: "I want to do something daft, like a toaster in the bath, or a knife in the toaster sort of thing."

Tom: "Or have a heart attack in the cinema. No-one would notice because they'd be laughing and eating popcorn. Unbelievable."



I used to DJ with all your old EPs and singles, will you sign my vinyl?

Nick Hodgson, Kaiser Chiefs

Serge: "Yeah, yeah. Sure."

Tom: "Of course mate! Love it, love it man! All that vinyl stuff we put out years ago is fun to collect. We did them in different colours and put one out in black and I think that's great man, fair play to Nick."

Tom, what are your five favourite cartoons?

Jill McMullen

Tom: "Denver, The Last Dinosaur, Captain Planet, Masters Of The Universe, The Real Ghostbusters, with Slimmer in it, and number five, ThunderCats. Easy!"



What do you do with your time off? I always end up a bit

like Alan Partridge, buying Ginsters from a corner shop...

Tom Clarke, The Enemy

Serge: "You know what, I don't think I've ever had any time off. I don't even know what that is, I'd rather just fuckin' crack on to be honest. I don't really stop working, I don't really stop, so I don't know what time off is."

Tom: "I socialise, really, catch up with people I've not seen for a while, see my family. Ginsters, man - I mean, Jesus! We used to buy them before we started touring years ago. It's the only thing you can really eat when you're on the road."

NME: So do you recognise Tom Clarke's description of himself being a bit like Alan Partridge?

Serge: "Well, yeah, well, no, not really. Well, him just sorta wandering around. He goes on fuckin' Global Rally and shit, though, doesn't he. I can imagine him in an E-Type Jag, riding around, fuckin' avin' it, that's how I see Tom."

Would you rather watch The Only Way Is Essex or Made In Chelsea?

James Ogram

Serge: "If I was forced, at gunpoint, I would go for the Essex one."

Tom: "No. None of them. They're all cunts. Seriously, none of them."



My sister and I both think Tom would look great with Alex

Turner's new quiff, and he'd look great with your hair. Would you ever consider swapping?

James & Allan, Glasvegas

Tom: "What, his teddy boy look? I've been doing the James Dean look lately, this old American kind of Hollywood look, the '40s/'50s Hollywood look. But I'm not too sure about the rockabilly look. It suits Alex, it looks great on Alex. But it's a bully's hair, you know what I mean?"

Serge: "Tom kinda had it a couple of years back. He looked amazing, he could get away with anything really. You could put him in a fuckin' bin liner and he would still look good."



For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win one of 10 pairs of tickets to Kasabian's New Year's Eve show at The O2 Arena in London, go to NME.COM/extra. See page 8 for more information

KASABIAN ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS



Tom wears a shirt for Britain...



Nick represents the whole fucking world

"TOM'D LOOK GOOD IN A BIN LINER"

Serge

Bad Vibrations

In 1966, Brian Wilson started on *The Beach Boys'* "teenage symphony to God", but the drug-fuelled sessions almost destroyed him and 'Smile' was scrapped. With the material finally released, **Mark Beaumont** relives the paranoia-drenched experience with him

The sandbox, Brian Wilson will talk about. "The sandbox inspired us to feel like we were on the beach. It was a clever idea but kinda strange and cumbersome sitting there with our feet in the sand writing songs." The fireman's hats, he'll cheerfully admit to. "I wanted the guys to get the feeling of being firemen in a fire. It's an odd thing to do, and a little embarrassing." The acid and speed, he'll hold up his still-quivering hand. "We were taking too much drugs and we paid the full price for taking too much drugs too."

The lighter side of The Beach Boys' experiences in 1966, he'll revisit with pleasure. But the dark side? The business meetings he held in his swimming pool? The belief that Phil Spector was out to get him? The song scrapped because he believed it might have caused house fires? The breakdowns, paranoia and manias that surrounded the recording of The Beach Boys' great lost masterpiece, he's less willing to discuss.

Forty-five years on from its shelving, and seven years after he exorcised its demons by re-recording it and performing it in full, Brian is still putting a brave face on 'Smile'. "I thought it was a step forward," he says in his childlike snap. "[But] I thought it was too far ahead of its time so we junked it for 40 years!"

This month, after the longest wait for a release in rock history, we get to 'officially' hear the follow-up to 1966's 'Pet Sounds'. And if that album is now regarded as a masterwork of '60s pop psychedelia – voted the best album ever made by *NME* in 1993 – 'The Smile Sessions', pieced together from the original session tapes which fans have been bootlegging for decades, will blow minds clear out the back of skulls. 'Smile' would have made The Beach Boys pioneers of the psychedelic generation, The Velvet Underground. If it only hadn't almost destroyed its creators...

By 1966, Brian Wilson's problems were too clear to ignore. Having withdrawn from touring after a breakdown on a flight to Houston in 1964, he would stay in California writing songs while the band played gigs. He indulged in drug bouts that were valuable creatively (he wrote 'California Girls' on his first LSD trip) but detrimental to his mental state. Guitarist Al Jardine recalls an afternoon in which Brian drove him in circles around the William Morris Agency in LA, refusing to let him out of the car unless Al promised to try acid.

"I asked him for a ride home," says Al, "and instead of taking me home he drove me around the block about 25 times! I was very concerned. I admonished him to

"WE PAID THE FULL PRICE FOR TAKING TOO MANY DRUGS"

BRIAN WILSON

stop [taking drugs], but he'd already gone beyond that point. He had developed a lifestyle that was more detached from the rest of us and started experimenting musically under the influence of those things. But the output was amazing."

Nay, game-changing. 'Pet Sounds' had advanced The Beach Boys' sun-bleached surfin' sound into grand new realms of orchestral wonder and psychedelia. But, for all its critical plaudits, it was considered a flop by their label Capitol, and many were pushing Brian to write more 'traditional' Beach Boys songs. He followed 'Pet Sounds' by spending several months and a then-record \$50,000 recording the "pocket symphony" 'Good

Vibrations' using session musicians The Wrecking Crew and a new modular technique of taping 90 hours of segments for the song at four different studios. Each studio had a different 'vibe' in Wilson's head – and he reduced it all to a three minute pop song. The Beach Boys were glad of the success – Number One on both sides of the Atlantic – but wary of this eccentric new direction in which they were being taken.

"We were recording music that was spilling out of Brian's head at an incredible rate of speed," says Al. "We were basically hanging on by our coat-tails. [There were] two dynamic groups, one in the studio and one on tour. We were focusing a great deal of our energy on touring and Brian was feeling isolated from the band. He was getting really antsy and he had all of this music inside of him to express and of course he wanted to get it out. So he would surprise us... ambush us with stuff."

Ambush? On returning from a tour of the Far East and Europe, where 'Pet Sounds' was a huge hit, The Beach Boys must have felt like a musical Light Brigade. In their absence, Brian had hooked up with surrealist lyricist Van Dyke Parks and, using the cut-up recording style of 'Good Vibrations', completed much of an hour-long concept album – a "teenage symphony to God" as Brian dubbed it – in response to the recent British Invasion, about a historical and spiritual journey across America from Plymouth Rock to Hawaii.

"We tried to do justice to the mood of early Americana," says Brian. "New Americana and the Hawaiian islands. [The band] thought it was crazy music. I wanted to get a concept album across to people and The Beach Boys didn't like it."

In Al Jardine's mind, however, Brian is vastly overstating the anti-'Smile' feeling within the band. "We gathered around the control room at Columbia Studios or Western," he recalls. "He plays this wonderful stuff, ►



it's different, it's completely transformative, it had a different breadth and depth from what we'd been doing. This is a whole different direction and the crux of it was new evolutionary songwriting and lyric writing as well. Van and Brian together created a new form of music. [The acid] was expressing itself through the music."

If the chop'n'change anti-structure of 'Smile', the barnyard and workshop interludes wherein the band were required to make animal noises and 'play' saws and hammers respectively, the funereal re-workings of 'You Are My Sunshine', the delicate, wintery sprawl of 'Surf's Up' or the Wild West imagery of the magnificent, multi-sectioned pop opera 'Heroes And Villains' surprised the band, they didn't know the half of it. Brian had taken to insisting on meetings being held in his swimming pool for fear of his house being bugged. He'd had a 'dope tent' erected in his house and a sandbox installed around his piano so as to feel the sand between his toes while he wrote. The sessions had taken a turn for the bizarre: Brian cancelled one full-orchestra session for the track 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)' when he refused to get out of his Rolls-Royce in the car park because of "bad vibes". He turned up at the next one with fireman hats for the entire orchestra and set a large bucket alight to create the mood for the song, then scrapped it when he heard of a spate of fires near the studio shortly after the session, leading him to believe the music was "too dangerous" to release.

"IT WAS ANOTHER LEVEL - IT'S A MASTERPIECE"

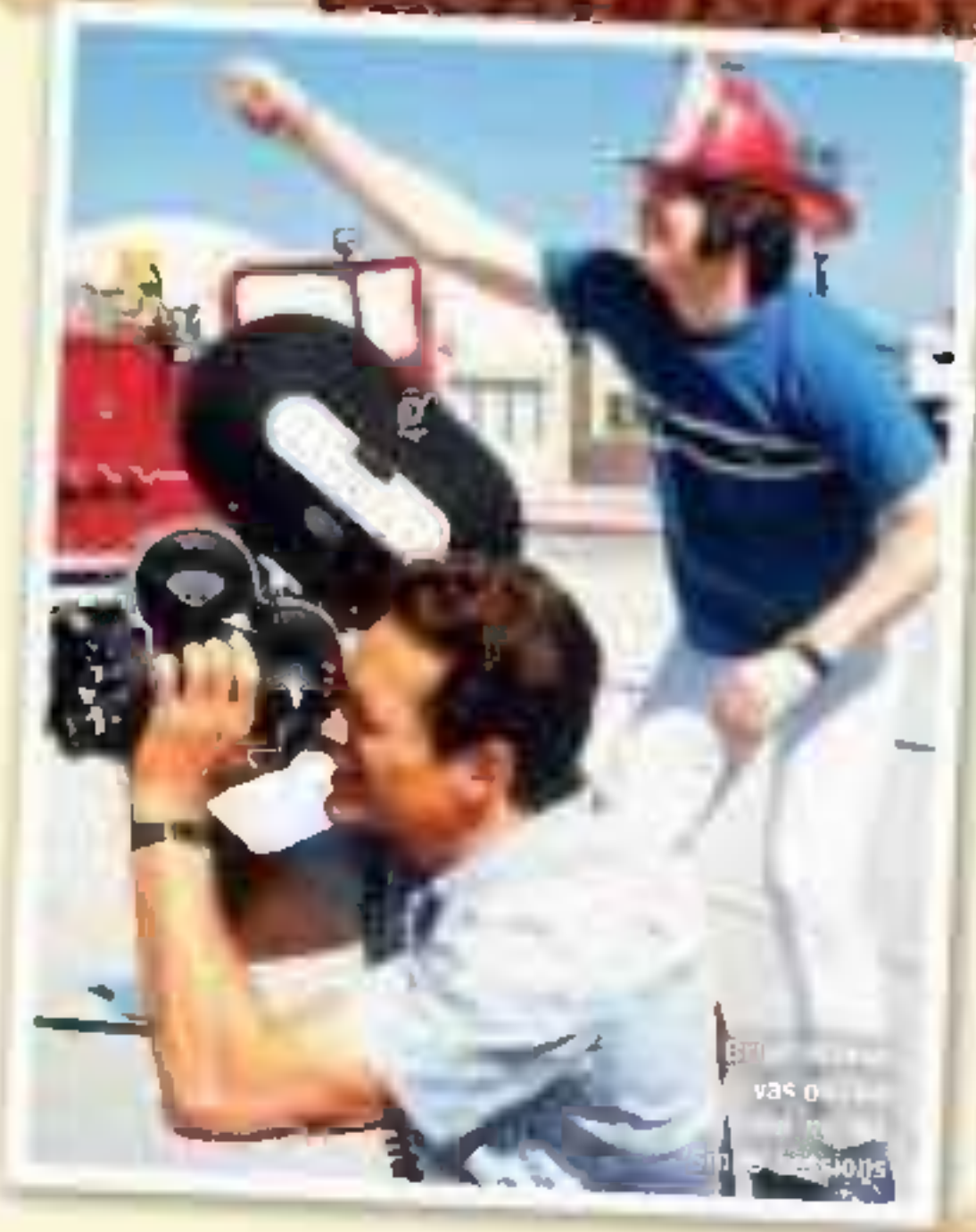
AL JARDINE

At another session he refused to let journalist Jules Siegel sit in as he thought Siegel's wife was a witch who was controlling his mind. On seeing the film *Seconds* starring Rock Hudson, he became convinced it told the story of his own life and had been made by the "mind gangster" Phil Spector specifically to fuck with his head. "It had a lot of rock'n'roll in it," Brian explains, "for which he was responsible."

Sessions to record The Beach Boys' vocals onto Brian's 'Smile' tracks quickly deteriorated. The band's usual lyricist Mike Love was reportedly unhappy with Van Dyke Parks' impenetrable poetry, calling it "acid alliteration". "Mike was a little bit envious of Van Dyke," claims Brian, though Al plays down the alleged row between Mike and Van Dyke over the unfathomable lyrics to 'Cabin Essence' that finally put the kibosh on the 'Smile' sessions: "I wouldn't call it a row. I'd call it an intellectual impasse."

Brian sensed the dissatisfaction with his new direction. Scrapping the sessions in 1967, some tracks - including 'Vege-Tables', 'Wonderful' and 'Wind Chimes' - were then re-recorded in a new studio at Brian's house, forming the quirky but relatively unambitious 'Smiley Smile' album ('Surf's Up' was also pieced together by Carl Wilson for the 1971 album of the same name), after which Brian shrank away from his own production genius, and The Beach Boys' stance atop the '60s cultural and artistic tsunami was over.

"He definitely withdrew from the structural recording we were doing up," says Al, although Brian himself admits no regret. "We weren't upset [at scrapping 'Smile']," he says. "We knew it was the right move."



How might it have changed The Beach Boys' career? "I think nobody would've liked it. People are much better at listening to music these days than they were in the mid-'60s."

Al, meanwhile, envisions an entirely alternate Beach Boys universe. "It would've kept us in the eye of the flower power movement that

was happening. It would've been another level of compositional and structural achievement for The Beach Boys. It's a masterpiece."

Music itself may be poorer for having been denied it in '67 but, my oh my, can we 'Smile' about it now...

NME EXTRA

For exclusive hidden content, including the chance to win a new 'The Smile Sessions' boxset worth over £100, go to

NME.COM/extra or see page 8 for more details

Check out Brian Wilson's ill-advised rap career on the NME Office Blog at NME.COM/blogs

The Beach Boys: (clockwise from bottom left) Carl Wilson, Mike Love, Dennis Wilson, Al Jardine, Bruce Johnston, Dennis Wilson



THE NME REVIEW

THE BEACH BOYS SMILE BROTHER



It was, in 1966, an entirely new genre: montage

pop. Constructed from hundreds of disparate takes - the special-edition box-set of 'The Smile Sessions' includes 36 separate segments recorded for 'Heroes And Villains' alone - 'Smile' is an ever-shifting acid vision of a record. Of its 20 tracks, only seven or eight could be considered 'songs' in the traditional sense. The rest are sonic mood pieces, avant garde constructs or 30-second throwaway links; the band make duck, sheep and chicken noises throughout 'Barnyard', march around the studio on the touching spiritual 'You're Welcome' and recreate a fire-in-progress on 'The Elements: Fire (Mrs O'Leary's Cow)', named after the animal said to have started the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The fans who've been constructing their own versions of 'Smile' from bootlegs of the sessions

over the past 45 years can't have envisioned the masterpiece Wilson originally intended: 'Smile' plays out like a billowing balloon of ideas, kept rooted by the book-ending guy ropes of 'Heroes And Villains' and 'Good Vibrations'.

If the album presaged eclectic masterpieces such as 'The White Album', stylistically it was a premonition of modern-day US alt.folk. Built around horn, viola, xylophone, banjo and harpsichord, telling the story of a journey through US geography and history, it set a blueprint of evocative atmospherics adhered to today by everyone from Sufjan Stevens to Fleet Foxes. And even if the passing listener finds the whole thing baffling, who wouldn't be entranced by the juxtaposition of haunting death-of-summer ode 'Surf's Up' with jaunty, health-obsessed pop wonder 'Vege-Tables'? Like the man Jardine says, a masterpiece. **Mark Beaumont**

9



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THREE YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS...

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE TING TINGS?

TITLE: Sounds From
'New Orleans'

RELEASED: February 2012

DESCRIPTION: "It's Up, 'One
Block' 'N' More', 'Hit Me
Down Morn', 'Rollin' King',
'Gotta Get a Grip',
'Sittin' on the Edge of the
World', 'I'm Back',
'Gimme Back'.

ARTIST: "We've lived
in New Orleans for
the past 10 years. We've put
the city back in that
place. And it's so little
everybody in the middle
of America can't see it's so cool
and beautiful there. We
love the music. It's resting
on the ground. It's full of
the soul."

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SID VICIOUS

SAN ANTONIO, 1978



NME

Photo by Bob Gruen, from
his new book, Rock Seen

RAMONES
NEW YORK, 1975





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THE CLASH
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MANAGE AND LIVE

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PIP NEWBY RECORD LABEL BOSS

Music has been Pip Newby's life for as long as he can remember. And his early love of Weezer, Blur, Daft Punk and the Beastie Boys inspired him to set up his own record label, Friends Vs Records, before he had even graduated from university.

But being self-employed means that he has to keep a closer eye on what he earns and spends each month than most people. "I've certainly spent a lot of money on music," says Pip. "That being said, I've got to eat and pay my rent, so I'm careful with everything I spend as much as possible."

And being a music fan can be an expensive hobby.

"My whole life is music, basically. Seeing bands is pretty much my main activity. I spend a lot of my money going out seeing shows."

Being such a committed music fan means that Pip needs to keep on top of his money more than most people would.

"Travel is a really big expense. I go to as many gigs as I can, which can mean travelling around a lot all over the country. So often it's about knowing whether I can go to that secret gig that I really, really want to go to. And, as any music

nut knows, your record collection can never quite be big enough!

"I'm always careful with my money, but it can still be really tough. I wouldn't

change my lifestyle for the world, but I could do with help managing my finances."

If Pip was a Lloyds TSB customer, Money Manager's easy-to-read charts and graphs could give him a clear view of his spending, giving him more free time to concentrate on the stuff that's really important to him.

**"I WOULDN'T CHANGE
MY LIFESTYLE FOR THE
WORLD, BUT I COULD DO
WITH HELP MANAGING
MY FINANCES"**

YOUR MONEY THE DREAM

**"KNOWING
WHAT IS
HAPPENING
WITH MY CASH
WOULD BE A
MASSIVE HELP"**

SAM WOLFSON WRITER

As a freelance writer for *NME*, 21-year-old Sam Wolfson has got the coolest part-time job out there. When he's not reviewing the latest new album releases he's interviewing Rihanna, and when he's not doing either of those things Sam is buzzing around Europe having a wild time with the likes of Bombay Bicycle Club.

Life's not one big party, though. Sam is also a student at Cambridge University, juggling his studies with his writing.

"I love live music, but Cambridge is not exactly known for it's vibrant music scene," says Sam. "I'm always travelling around the country going to gigs and following my favourite bands. I'm just thankful when I can get into gigs for free!"

It's not just getting sweaty in the moshpit that costs Sam his cash, as he explains.

"I also spend a lot of money on all the brilliant new albums and DVDs out there, as well as going

to the pub with mates. Obviously my biggest expenses are my uni bill and my rent, but I've got textbooks to buy too. After all that I just hope I've left enough money back to eat."

Sam's story is common. As every student knows, it's not easy to manage your money and make ends meet.

"I'm forever spending and I also have lots of little bits of income from my summer jobs, so it can be hard to keep a handle on what's coming and going out of my account and if I have enough to cover my bills. Knowing what is happening with my cash would be a massive help and give me one less thing to sort out."

"I'm really lucky to be able to travel and be so closely involved with such an amazing music scene. If only I could manage my cash a bit better things would be great!"

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REVIEWS

CHILDISH GAMBINO, AEROPLANE

Edited by Emily Mackay



RIHANNA

TALK THAT TALK MERCURY/DEF JAM

The superstar singer plays it annoyingly safe – and the tantalising glimpses of what might have been only make it harder to handle



What's in a font? In terms of music, they can conjure up several different meanings, from something stalwart (The Rolling Stones, Ramones) to the ephemeral and futuristic (Daft Punk), and finally to the fussy and over focus-grouped (Cher Lloyd). On Rihanna's sixth album, she's returning to the spiky 'R' that crowned the cover of 2009's 'Rated R'. That album was a Year Zero for her as she emerged from the pupa of robo-pop star to free-flapping 'artiste'. It was the place in which personal crisis (her abuse at the hands of, and public break-up with, Chris Brown) drove her sound and image

in the best, most creative ways possible. The futuristic, dubstep-shaded sounds on that album were mirrored by lyrics that layered meaning and allusions to create a cohesive piece of musical pop-art that pricked at your consciousness from several directions.

And then there was 'Rude Boy'. The biggest hit from an under-selling album, its fun bump'n'grind jerk-pop seemed to dictate where she would go next. So it was – last year's 'Loud' marked a turning point and the lasciviousness was upped up a notch, but at the same time you felt the shutters coming down artistically. It also coincided with her ubiquity. Suddenly she was everywhere, like the cast of *The Only Way Is*

Essex-and-Kim Kardashian 'everywhere'. There she was, popping up on David Guetta's album, getting Ofcom and Matt Cardle into a tizzy on *The X Factor*, trilling the chorus of 'All Of The Lights' on Kanye West's 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy', organising Katy Perry's Cirque du Soleil hen do, appearing on 'Pink Friday', having a 'get off my laaaahnd' moment with an Irish farmer. She was even, in London, spotted on the bloody tube on the way to one of her own concerts at The O2.

So perhaps it's no big revelation that 'Talk That Talk's' stylish 'R' doesn't indicate a return to 'Rated R's' boundary-pushing, but instead leaves us with the impression Rihanna has spread herself so thinly that she doesn't have time to record a cohesive album. Her usually perfect hit-rate of sonic surprises is disappointingly low due, one suspects, to half the album having been monopolised by chart-botherers Dr Luke and Stargate. 'TTT' is filled with tinny-sounding '90s Europop, the kind of stuff that hangs around the playlists of commercial radio for months. And when it's not playing it safe, the album re-treads old ground. 'Roc Me Out' is a 'Rude Boy' re-tool from the vocal delivery to her "Come on boy..." line, closer 'Farewell' echoes 'Fire Bomb', while re-teaming with Jay-Z on the title track is a gamble that doesn't pay off. The pace may echo 'Umbrella', but there's precious little of that song's spark. The Jigga's rap feels like it was dashed off in a few minutes between Def Jam conference calls ("Oh, she really gotta pee", he raps at one point. I mean, do we really want to hear about Beyoncé's bladder control during pregnancy? Noooo).

Sure, there are pleasant moments – 'Drunk On Love' is basically The xx's 'Intro' with Rihanna's voice over the top, and 'Where Have You Been' is a dance-pop gem complete with 'Bonkers'-style wibbles. But there are only two truly brilliant songs. Despite some cringey lyrics ("Suck my cockiness/Lick my persuasion"), 'Cockiness (Love It)' is genuine elastic thrill, twisting into all sorts of jaw-dropping musical shapes. Produced by Bangladesh, it sounds like a sped-up nervous breakdown, while the elliptical 'Red Lipstick', a collaboration with Chas & Status, sounds like something which could have graced the Katy B album. That the latter is relegated to the deluxe edition smacks of someone's loss of nerve. You can only imagine what happened to the rumoured Rusko collaboration.

It would have been unpredictable and intense if Rihanna had followed these musical leads, but as it stands we get a so-so album which suggests it may be time for Ms Fenty to take a holiday. **Priya Elan**

5

DOWNLOAD: 'Where Have You Been', 'Red Lipstick', 'Cockiness (I Love It)'

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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PEAKING LIGHTS

936 DOMINO



Much as music writers throw drug references around like icing sugar, let us be clear that most of us are far, far too chickenshit to ever try anything like peyote, ayahuasca or any other 'tribal ritual' drug. Anyway, no need when you can listen to this Wisconsin duo instead. From here it all looks so insignificant spaced-out synthy ambience leads into a psychojourney through shuffling, organic beats, cosmically detached vocals, dubbish grooves, faint touches of psychobilly-twangin' guitar and boney rattles. It's like Dead Can Dance with less goth and more groove – and definitely worth an initiation. **Emily Mackay**

DOWNLOAD: 'Birds Of Paradise (Dub Version)'

6

APPARAT ORGAN QUARTET

POLYFONIA CRUNCHY FROG



Jóhann Jóhannsson enjoys a time traveller's life. He released an album earlier this year on which he paid moving tribute to Durham's now-diminished mining community with the help of a local brass band and some old Victorian hymns. Then he beamed himself through time and space to record these nine brutalist cosmic rock tracks on a bunch of phasing analogue synths and other steely sounding machinery with three fellow keyboard fanatics (and a drummer). The result is a clean, efficient, piston-pumping, Teutonic sound of robots doing serious damage to bands with beards and banjos – icy and brilliantly foreboding future-rock. **Chris Parkin**

DOWNLOAD: 'Söngur Geimunglingsins'

7

MINT JULEP

SAVE YOUR SEASON VILLAGE GREEN



A "husband/wife dream-pop duo from Portland, Oregon". An instrumental opener called 'Chasing The Wind Catching The Shadows'. A first line that goes "I lie awake, dreaming of landscapes and the rain" ('Aviary'). Yeah, I know, there is a hell of a lot of that kind of thing about at the moment, but the simple fact is Mint Julep are just great at doing it. Songs like 'Cherry Radio' and 'Stay' are melodically sophisticated, synthetically textured and actually dreamy. It's unquestionably a beautiful (debut) album, and one that may be well-timed, what with so many folk falling for that College feat Electric Youth tune from *Drive*, which could easily sit on here. **Hamish MacBain**

DOWNLOAD: 'Stay'

8

ATLAS SOUND

PARALLAX 4AD



Bradford Cox decelerates sonically here, but lyrically he remains sublime. 'Parallax' appears to deal with the continuing conflict of a Christian upbringing with more sacrilegious life experiences. Opener 'The Shakes' battles with the artist's increasing fame while 'Praying Man' cautiously states faith in something higher. Contrastingly, however, 'My Angel Is Broken' sees Cox revert, a tumbling paradox that seems to question his own convictions. Each LP since Deerhunter's debut – both individual and collective – has retreated further from that record's naked aggression, and this is another step towards Bradford finding self-contentment. **Simon Jay Catling**

DOWNLOAD: 'My Angel Is Broken'

8

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



JOHN McDONNELL

"This week I've been listening to nothing but Sade-sampling rap songs in my damp, freezing flat while hysterically weeping. The highlight of the week was getting a haircut."



EMILY MACKAY

"The combination of a seemingly never-ending cold and the excitement of the new Maccabees album in my inbox nearly caused complete respiratory failure. Worth it, though."



CHRIS PARKIN

"Watching *In The Night Garden* while listening to David Lynch's 'Crazy Clown Time' took me to a place I've not been since watching *Stars In Their Eyes* on mushrooms."

DRAKE

TAKE CARE YOUNG MONEY/CASH MONEY/ISLAND

R&B star's much-anticipated second album is a belter – but the feeling lingers that he's capable of much more



In indie circles, R&B has long been stigmatised – sickly sweet vocals and dry humping inanimate objects not being in keeping with the ethos of the asymmetrically

fringed masses. Drake has completely transcended any such snobbery with a delicate, mellifluous sound and unashamedly candid, emotive lyrics.

The half-Jewish Canadian – who played a wheelchair-bound student in TV teen drama *Degrassi: The Next Generation* until 2009 – is clearly not your typical rap/R&B star. On his US chart-topping debut, last year's 'Thank Me Later', he unleashed a lifetime's worth of angst, bemoaning his lovelorn mental state.

'Take Care', his highly anticipated follow-up, begins in a more assertive mood, with the rapper declaring that he "killed everybody in the game last year" on opener 'Over My Dead Body'. Success can breed arrogance but the platinum-selling artist's braggadocio is suffused with melancholia. "I might be too strung out on compliments/Overdosed on confidence" he laments on lolling lead single 'Headlines'.

His lingua franca of heartbreak soon bleeds through on 'Marvin's Room' as he tries to win over a girl he knows is out of reach. "Talk to me please, don't have much to believe in/Need you right now, are you down to listen to me?" he sings down the phone, sounding totally crestfallen.

The yearning, sun-kissed title track, produced by Jamie xx, sees guest Rihanna in the role of an almost motherly figure: "If you let me in, here's what I'll do: I'll take care of you".

The despondency is obviously contagious, infecting his Young Money label boss Lil Wayne on 'The Real Her' as he bemoans: "Cos to her I'm just a rapper and soon she'll have met another" (a line earnestly cribbed from 'Miss Me' on his protégé's debut). The song's second guest, Andre 3000, also gets in on the emo action, declaring: "Sittin' here, sad as hell, listening to Adele, I feel you, baby".

Just as on 'Thank Me Later', 'Take Care' is heavy with the beats of long-term collaborator Noah '40' Shebib. But although the sparse arrangements are a perfect match for Drake's often lethargic mood, when the hip-hop bent of Just Blaze's production on 'Lord Knows' kicks in it hits like an elbow to the solar plexus, every euphoric gospel choir burst inducing a tremor of emotion through the body. In light of this, it somehow feels a shame Drake didn't experiment more with unfamiliar sounds. Such is the esteem that he's now held in, the refrain of "I'm just sayin' you could do better" on 'Marvin's Room' is one that lingers. Yet considering 'Take Care' is an affecting masterpiece easily on par with his debut, there could be no greater accolade for the genius of this man. **John McDonnell**

DOWNLOAD: 'Lord Knows', 'Take Care', 'Headlines'

8





CHILDISH GAMBINO

CAMP GLASSNOTE

US comedian Donald Glover has seriously good rhymes



Donald Glover – aka Childish Gambino – is well aware that he conforms to no-one's idea of hip-hop 'realness'. But then, as he points out, "All the real niggas I know are

either crazy or dead", so it's hardly his loss. Raised a Jehovah's Witness in a small Georgia suburb, Glover graduated from NYU and wound up working in television, landing a writing gig on *30 Rock* and an acting one on *Community*. Last year, The Internet got *this* close to having him cast as the new Spider-Man, and next year he'll be seen in the new Muppets movie. Hardly the stuff great hip-hop is made of, right?

Um, wrong. For starters, Glover is no dilettante: 'Camp' is his fourth full-length under his *nom de rap* (taken from a Wu-Tang Clan name generator), and the best to date. For another thing, while he's a gifted comedian, his focus is never really on being funny – just witty, heartfelt, honest and occasionally uproarious.

He's been variously tagged as backpack and nerdcore, and you can kind of understand why: on 'LES', Glover skewers his own hipsterhood by describing a bathroom clench with a girl who's "Got ironic tattoos on her back/That ain't ironic bitch, I love Rugrats", before decreeing on 'Hold You Down' that "you're not not-racist 'cos The Wire's in your Netflix queue". Pop-cultural references like that abound – his indie namechecks range from Mumford & Sons to Radiohead to Sufjan Stevens – but there's also an emotional heart to songs like 'Outside' and the epic, seven-minute (and largely spoken-word) 'That Power' that can't be expressed in air-quotes.

"Why does every black actor gotta rap some?" Glover wonders on 'Bonfire', before concluding, "I don't know, all I know is I'm the best one". And that's true, even if it's not much of a claim. I'm about to make a bigger one on his behalf, though: fuck Tyler's empty posturing, this is the hip-hop album of the year.

Barry Nicolson

8

DOWNLOAD: 'That Power', 'Outside', 'Bonfire'

AEROPLANE

IN FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT ESKIMO



Having made his name with SoundCloud mixes – and remixes for artists including Friendly Fires – Aeroplane faced a dilemma when it came to his first mix

album: how do you entice 40,000 people who have been downloading your stuff for free to shell out for a CD? His solution was to assemble exclusive tracks from artists he's tipped, add a new production of his and put them together in a mix that reeks of Balearic beaches and suntan lotion. The result is a brilliant album of off-kilter house, funk and exotic pop that should entice even disco skinflints. **Ben Cardew**

DOWNLOAD: 'Herr Styler - Zero Ghosts Out The Door'

7

THE DØ

BOTH WAYS OPEN JAWS

VILLAGE GREEN



It's a commonly held truth that when it comes to decent European pop, Scandinavia is where it's at and France is where it definitely is not. However, on

their second album, French/Finnish duo The Dø are helping l'Hexagone conquer the Vikings. 'Both Ways Open Jaws' is tribal, prickly and wickedly playful, courtesy of singer Olivia Merilahti's loopy vocal. The apocalyptic jump-rope skits of 'Gonna Be Sick' and 'Slippery Slope' are highlights of a chaotic record that makes such a racket, you'll be able to hear Sweden quaking in its boots. **Laura Snapes**

DOWNLOAD: 'Slippery Slope'

8

THE RIDER

What we're reading and watching this week



Art

NME/Sonic Editions prints

Stuck for Christmas presents? NME and Sonic Editions have just printed a fresh selection of our iconic shots – including a cracking picture of Julian Casablancas and Jarvis Cocker. It's the only way you'll fit all of Arcade Fire under your tree.



Book

Gig Posters: Rock Show Art Of The 21st Century Vol 2

For over a decade, *gigposters.com* has been showcasing exquisite gig artwork designed by independent artists. In this compendium, you can read interviews with some of the designers, and pull out 101 perforated and ready-to-frame posters.



Film

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1

While not as incendiary as the last OST, you can't argue with The Joy Formidable, Theophilus London and Iron & Wine soundtracking the penultimate vampire sexual frustration-fest.

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's
FRASER McALPINE



WOOWOOS

FIZZY LETTUCE MOSHI MOSHI

It's inconceivable that a band with the sense to call themselves WooWoos don't know that 'Fizzy Lettuce' is a silly title for a brooding pop song. Especially when they refuse to explain how this salad became carbonated in the first place. Then again, they do also sing about dessert, and I could swear someone mentions rollmops in the chorus, so there's a lesson for us all here: never write while peckish.

JESSIE WARE

STRANGEST FEELING PMR RECORDS

Meanwhile, Jessie, who can't tell if she's hungry or sad, has embarked on a ramshackle adventure a woozy world away from her previous SBTRKT productions. 'Strangest Feeling' is what happens when you take a sparkling Katy B pop song and throw it in a haunted moat. The twinkly bits are washed off by a murk of clicks and moans, while the bass becomes progressively more waterlogged.

BRETON

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR FAT CAT

There's a bit halfway through this relentless face-prod of a song where a spiralling harp attempts to curl around the unforgiving rhythm, to make everything less austere. It's a gesture as beautifully doomed as putting a tulip on a pneumatic drill. Forget Hard-Fi trying to capture the sounds of the street, this is the sound breezeblocks would make if they decided to form a band, instead of a wall.

CHARLI XCX

NUCLEAR SEASONS THIS IS MUSIC

"Huh! Breezeblocks... You think THAT'S clever," sing the Geiger counters on the shelf, "wait until you hear OUR band. We've got that Charli XCX in, and she's singing in a pouty voice about surviving decay, yeah? And we swoosh around doomily in the background. Throw in some melodious hiccups in the chorus and we're off to *Top Of The Pops!*" They were ever so sad when I told them the show had been cancelled.

EMA

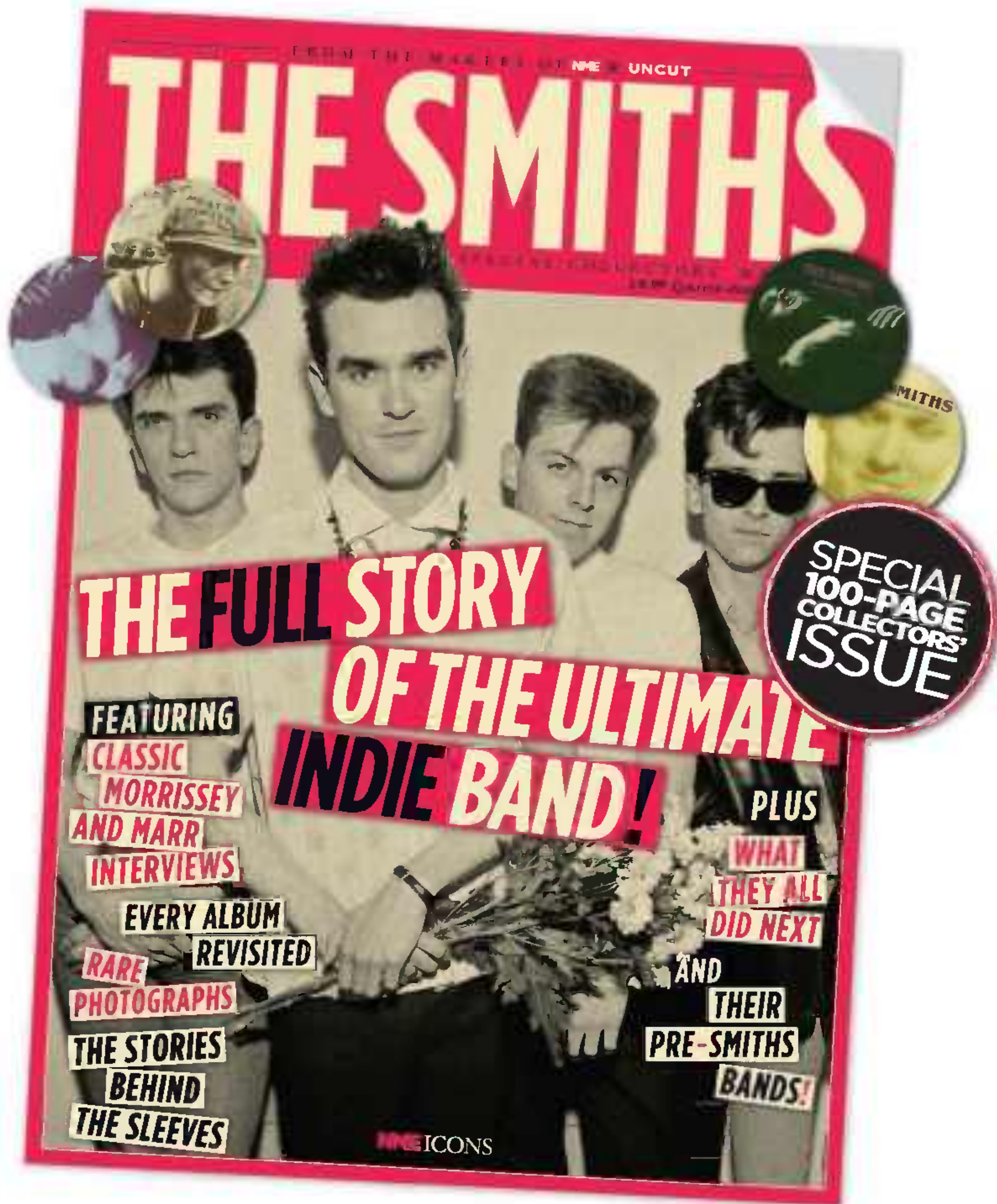
MARKED SOUTERRAIN TRANSMISSIONS

Remember the twinkly bits from Jessie Ware's song? That's the stuff EMA makes her music out of: the scrape of raw knuckle across guitar string, an ominous rumble, a worried child's internal monologue, the wheezing of an asthmatic angel, leaning on the organ in a church, these are her fragments. How she manages to sew them all into a recognisable quilt by the end of proceedings is anyone's guess.

BOS ANGELES

DAYS OF YOUTH ROUNDTABLE

There's no time for sonic stitch-work for the Bos boys. Their mission is simpler: 1) Make a buckety surf noise. 2) Repeat it. 3) Sing, dance, whoop, shimmy. 4) Stop, a mere two minutes and 16 seconds later. 5) Go about their business. Which just leaves you and me to complete item 6) Repeat until snoozy.



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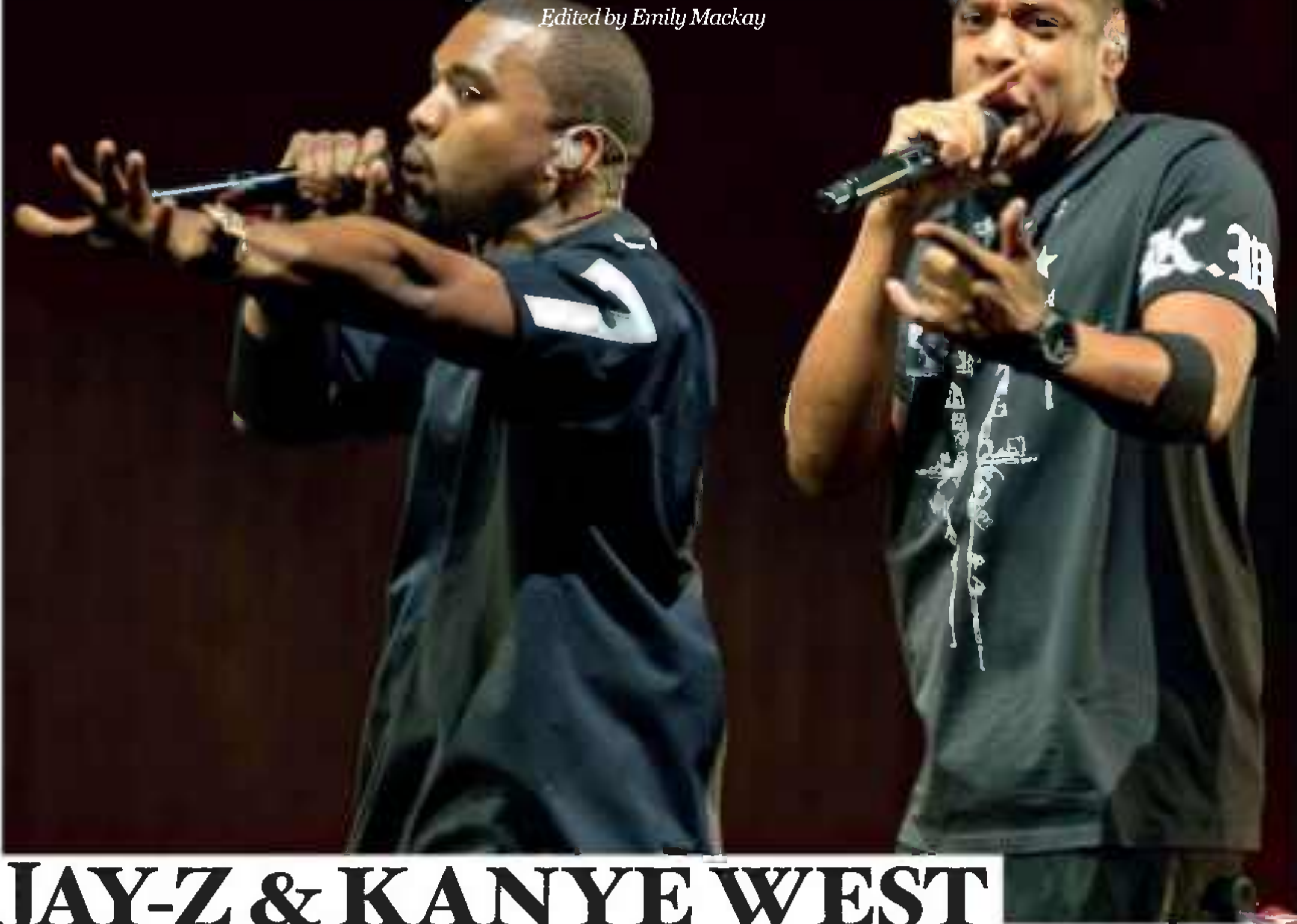
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LIVE

HURTS, AZEALIA BANKS, ST VINCENT

Edited by Emily Mackay

JAY-Z & KANYE WEST

IZOD CENTER, NEW JERSEY SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5

If this was meant to be megastars just lazily cashing in, it seems no-one told the megastars

The problem with supergroups is that they are, almost by definition, a breeding ground for complacency. When you've realised virtually all of your musical goals and become used to fame and adulation, summoning the will to earn it all again is something that few are willing or able to do. Given that both Kanye West and Jay-Z are pretty much the biggest music stars in the world right now, 'Watch The Throne' is a project that should be mired in malaise – but watching them perform together, it becomes apparent that the only thing capable of pushing each of them to greater heights is the other.

Right from the off, the scene is set for gladiatorial rap battle. As opener

'HAM' resounds around the arena, the Jigga is at one end of the venue, Yeezy at the other, and they both ascend high above the crowd on gigantic cube-shaped podiums as they spit the track's boastful verses at each other. Once they unite on the same stage, this titanic face-off is given a suitably dramatic backdrop, a giant American flag is unfurled, giant pyrotechnic effects are triggered and, somewhat bizarrely, images of cheetahs killing their prey in the Serengeti are projected on screens. It's staggeringly pompous stuff, but when coupled with the commanding bombast of tracks like 'Otis' and 'Welcome To The Jungle' it creates an exhilarating marriage of immodesty.

As well as performing a further smattering of 'Watch The Throne'

cuts, the duo take turns at dazzling the crowd with their solo material. It's a tag-team combo that just seems to get better and better as the show goes on; Jay dishes out classics like 'Where I'm From' and throws down the gauntlet by

Kanye can't compete with Jay's rhymes, but his physical energy is just as powerful

demonstrating his untouchable vocal dexterity and dominance. Then Kanye returns, and though he can't quite compete with the ferocity of Jay's rhymes, his physical energy during 'Jesus Walks' is just as powerful. Every

time one of them brings something new to the gig, the other responds in kind, and the one-upmanship continues until the excitement level inside the building is barely legal.

By the time they get to the business end of their two-hour plus set, it's impossible to know who has the upper hand anymore, but judging by the way they dust each other off during 'Niggas In Paris,' it looks like they're happy to call their Herculean head-to-head a draw. For the 10,000 flabbergasted fans looking on, however, 'Watch The Throne' is an emphatic win. **Hardeep Phull**



HURTS

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON, LONDON
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Adam and Theo are huge stars, the show's a big success – but didn't this used to be more FUN?

Twenty-one months ago, Hurts played their debut UK gig, in tiny St Philip's Church in Salford, attended by a smattering of curious journoes and industry folk. Now look at them, playing the final show of the 'Happiness' world tour at a sold-out O2 Brixton Academy. In the intervening time the duo have grown from opinion-dividing curios into one of our biggest and best-loved bands. They've sold a million singles and a shade off a million albums, filled arenas everywhere from Iceland to Estonia, and been impersonated badly on endless dodgy foreign versions of *The X Factor*.

Tonight is the classic triumphant homecoming. The crowd's ear-bleeding adulation never lets up, but is there a sense – and I'm just playing devil's advocate here – in which Hurts were actually *better* as no-hopers, a major label folly destined for glorious failure? Originally the Hurts live experience consisted of two blokes, a seven-foot-tall opera singer named Richard, and a backing tape. Now there are 11 people onstage, including two dancers. It's all a bit slick. Yes, even for Hurts. And... hang on, where's the opera singer? Poor massive Richard is gone!

Theo sings all the parts himself (including Richard's former showpiece, 'Verona'). I picture Richard at home alone, weeping into his cummerbund to

the strains of 'Nessun Dorma'. In the end, having a stony-faced and mostly extraneous opera singer onstage was one of the ludicrous touches that made Hurts unique and lovable. By ditching Richard they are approximately 12 per cent less ridiculous, and that's a shame.

Highlights? Well, obviously 'Stay' and closer 'Better Than Love'. Almost two years of touring have whittled them into surging pop Exocets, obliterating all possible opposition or reservation. Low point? Kylie showing up to duet on 'Devotion' and her own 'Confide In Me'. Of course, she gets a hurricane-strength welcome, but her appeal remains mysterious. She's a blank, a hamster squeak, a whiff of Febreze.

When it's all over there's no farewell speech, no recognition that this gig is in any way special. Perhaps they're saving themselves for the aftershow (the next day Theo tweets about "the greatest night of our lives... a collapsing Dutch supermodel and about 1,000 bottles of tequila... the perfect crescendo"). This makes an enjoyable and efficient full stop at the end of 'Happiness', but no more than that. **Luke Lewis**

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TWIN SISTER

DEAF INSTITUTE, MANCHESTER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

So, how was your weekend?" Andrea Estella smiles to the subdued crowd. "Thanks for coming out and being so sweet. And so sleepy." Whether it's due to the approach of midnight or to the hypnotic qualities present in Twin Sister's loose, hazy pop, tonight often feels like a waking dream, with a mute-tongued Manchester pinned down by what unfolds before us. After support Holiday Shores endure something of a 'mare, Estella and her band could justifiably wonder whether this will be a night to forget, as the light-footed funk of 'Stop' and 'Bad Street' somehow fail to register. While this tour is ostensibly to promote new album 'In Heaven', there's plenty of more familiar material in the set – but even this seems to slip by almost unnoticed, with 'Lady Daydream' and 'Ginger' being greeted with only reverent applause.

All the while, though, a potent magic has been bubbling quietly away, and it's only when the band step down from the stage, leaving Estella and guitarist Eric Cardona alone and exposed, that it truly takes hold. Shorn of its motorised beats and muggy synths, 'Kimmi In A Rice Field' reveals a spectral beauty, and Estella and Cardona's voices – sometimes overly similar on record – work together to weave a subtle spell upon the transfixed room.

After that, the group reconvene for 'Daniel' and 'All Around And Away We Go', but we're too woozy to dance. It may be late, but this is a dream that will last long into the waking hours. **Neil Condron**

DOG IS DEAD

COCKPIT, LEEDS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Looking dapper in cable-knit and buttoned-up shirts, the five members of Dog Is Dead display their earnest and learned harmonies, bobbing in perfect synchronisation like a human wave of politely restrained testosterone.

Robert Milton, taking the lead on vocal duties, possesses a textbook boy-band smile: he's a sly wink and a bare chest away from a pop career but, luckily, the rest of the band reign in the schmaltz, diverting enough of the crowd's attention with the lilting guitar lines of their Vampire Weekend-meet-Mumford & Sons student anthems.

As bass player Trev cleans the dust from the low-arched ceiling with his curly mane, the rest of the band alternate between thrusting wildly (loud bits), bobbing excitedly (poppy bits), and swaying in shut-eyed reverence (harmonies). Always synchronised. Always in time. Dog Is Dead are note-perfect and never miss a beat, but just a few songs in they have already become predictable, crowd-rousing-by-numbers, hands in the air for the 'old ones'. They are at their best in 'River Jordan', when they hint at post-rock leanings; only then do they seem more concerned with playing than performing, as guitar lines noodle amid the cacophony and around the vocals, bolstering them, rather than providing a soulless backdrop. 'Glockenspiel Song', though, is clearly the track that fills the room and flogs the tickets – but here's hoping they don't have to get every new track played on *Skins* in order to keep up the momentum. **Hayley Avron**

WHAT'S ON YOUR RIDER?



Danananan-aykroyd

- A local independent newspaper
- Local postcards and stamps
- Vodka (Stolichnaya)
- 24 bottles of water (chilled and non-chilled)
- A case of beer (no Kronenberg)
- Bottle of sauvignon blanc
- Fruit juices
- Soft drinks (including root beer)
- Sandwich materials (vegan and meats)
- Six scratch cards
- Surprise us!

MARCUS FOSTER

MOJO, LIVERPOOL TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Acoustic singer-songwriters tend to be of similar stock these days. Frank Turner, Newton Faulkner, Ed Sheeran, Sam Duckworth – in fact, put together any two names and you'll find some chump with a guitar, an earnest song or two, and the ambition to be voice of their generation. So it's almost a relief when we hear Marcus Foster's weathered, rasping voice work its way around the room tonight. The young Communion signing looks no older than 25, but we suspect he wishes he was in his 50s – his world-weary lyrics belie his young face to the point that you'd think this was a convincing pastiche of his influences. That's not to discredit his songwriting, however. It is succinct, flamboyant and heartbreaking in the right places, something his peers often lack, and he's more captivating live than on record. 'Old Birch Tree' is quite a dull piece of MOR on debut LP 'Nameless Path', but here it's delivered with soul. A version of the album's standout song, 'I Was Broken', is both devastating and uplifting in equal measure, and a beautiful cover of John Martyn's 'Couldn't Love You More' shows he can hold a candle to his predecessors, a homage not lost on this audience. If he's a voice of any generation, it's probably that of the Radio 2 listening mum, but that's no bad thing. **Mike Doherty**

AZEALIA BANKS

HOXTON SQUARE BAR & KITCHEN, LONDON
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Hip-hop's sparsely-dressed new star has a potty mouth – and definitely more than one great song

"I was about to give more of a show than I came over here for, knowwhatI'msayin'?" smirks Azealia Banks, clutching her red-and-white striped bustier to her chest. It's teatime on Sunday, and Azealia's clothes appear to be falling off, shaken loose by the aggressive bounce with which she's stomping any sense of Sabbath restfulness out of the first of two short, sharp showcases.

Industry and hipsters are out in force at both to check out the latest gutter-mouthed goddess. 'Fazed' is not, however, a word in Azealia's inventively disgusting vocabulary. Strolling on in mohair coat and tiny denim shorts, she couldn't be more at ease. She starts with a fierce cappella, her DJ, Cosmo, scratching a belligerent beat out behind her as she tosses out warnings about the dire possible consequences of fucking with her. "Try something slick and get your dick backed up/You can either bit the door in peace or watch your meat bit the floor in pieces/Believe this" she assures on the beguilingly nonchalant, Peter Bjorn And John-sampling 'The Chills'. And, yes, the vicarious thrill of a pretty young woman talking abject, violent filth is nothing new, but Azealia's wit, her energy, her rawness

make it fresh. Though after the bitchy, crunky 'Barbie Shit', she throws in a truncated cover of 'Valerie' as a nod to London's own late dirty diva, it's clear that rapping is where Azealia's talents and heart lie, and you can't imagine her, like Nicki Minaj, getting sidetracked into balladry. The spirit of Lil' Kim sleazes through the moody, menacing 'Runnin', her collaboration with Lunice, blended with an omnivorous musical

taste and an eye to the dancefloor. "This is the jam that probably brought y'all here tonight," she says as she brings the evening showcase to a jumping end. "So take your shirt off, pull your dick out, do whatever you need to do..." Everyone else manages to keep their clothes on but completely loses their shit as the maddeningly aggressive synth of '212' begins to wind up, and as Azealia starts howling "THIS SHIT BEEN MINE, MINE" the whole room bounces with her.

She chucks in the chorus of The Prodigy's 'Firestarter', taking things up to breaking point, and then, that's it. She's gone, leaving them wanting more. Let's just hope the fickle affections of the internet stick with her long enough to realise that she's more than just that one song. *Emily Mackay*

VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Demisha Anderson, London

"Excuse my French, but it was fucking amazing. I wanna be her best friend."

NME: Does she have any other songs that stand up to '212'?

"Well, I knew a few others. 'Barbie Shit' is amazing, people will be cutting shapes to that!"



ST VINCENT

WEBSTER HALL, NEW YORK
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Annie Clark's twisted tales of identity and inadequacy surf a wave of adulation

"My face is drawn on with this Number 2 pencil", sings Annie Clark in the final song of her set, 'Your Lips Are Red', as she steps in front of the microphone and teeters on the edge of the stage. A soundman rushes to roll out cable. Clark sways for a moment in the strobe, then flips over onto the ready arms of the audience who carry her, one leg raised, out into the crowd.

It's a moment of release from Clark's usual poise and comes hard earned. St Vincent's twisted pop songs expose the madness that goes on behind a mask drawn on in pencil – from failing at motherhood in 'Cruel' to lying to keep the peace in

'Cheerleader' and 'Surgeon'. Her characters stress about their inadequacy. As she tells Webster Hall, the video for 'Cruel' shows Clark being kidnapped by a motherless family who bury her alive after they realise she can't cook, clean or care for them properly.

If household cleanliness might be a problem, Clark makes up for it in control: both creative control and the kind of self-control she exudes onstage, though her chilly demeanour tonight could also be nerves. There is a moment before 'Save Me From What I Want' where the spotlight dances across Clark's face as she takes in the packed 1,400-capacity venue and her mouth makes a small 'o'. David Byrne, with

whom she is collaborating on an as-yet-undisclosed new project, watches from the wings. Cameras follow Clark everywhere, streaming the performance live for MTV in a mark of mainstream acceptance if ever there was one.

Creative control has served Clark well on three solo albums since she stopped touring with The Polyphonic Spree and Sufjan Stevens last decade. But it wasn't until this year's 'Strange Mercy', an album that stretches ideas about identity and anxiety over woodwind arrangements and nifty angular riffs, that she started attracting the attention she deserves.

She exudes self-control, although her chilliness could also be nerves

At Webster Hall, Clark plays puppets with her audience. She warms with a story about drinking tequila and running through a cemetery on Halloween before launching into 'Neutered Fruit', then squashes a heckler who says she can't shred with the words: "What is this, a live Twitter feed?" A growling cover of The Pop Group's 'She Is Beyond Good And Evil' speaks for itself. Tonight it's all in the eyes, wide and unblinking, until the sudden stagedive. But don't be fooled: Clark's studied femininity is a ruse for something much, much bolder. *Hazel Sheffield*



PIETER NIVAN HATTEN, RICHARD JOHNSON

On The Road With **KATY B**

Plane destruction, naked shower videos and arse midgets⁵ – they might sound smooth, but ‘sexy witch’ Katy B and her crew are rock ‘n’ roll on tour



Wales on, Mordred, 4pm
Katy reads her book at low volume, unaware of the it was the clown wot dun it



Lights off, Mordred's resident, Mordred's resident
Lights off, Mordred's resident, Mordred's resident strikes again on Mordred's resident

DOME, BRIGHTON MONDAY, OCTOBER 31

Katy B is at the controls of a helicopter on the final leg of her UK tour, but things are rapidly getting out of hand.

'KRAKK!' The chopper smashes into the tourbus window, and Rinse mastermind Geeneus leans in to inspect the damage.

"That's a hundred quid you owe me," the 'On A Mission' co-writer and producer tells Katy, flinging a protective arm round her shoulder while *NME* secretly gives thanks it wasn't our face getting mashed up beneath the blades.

The helicopters aren't life-sized just yet, but Katy's second headline tour is undeniably grand in scale – the south London star and crew have been living for the past few weeks in a double-decker tourbus with its own games room and library.

Tonight it rolls into Brighton. It's Halloween, and we're following Katy to the dressing room where we're told she and her bandmates will be kitted out for the occasion. Our leading lady, it transpires, is plumping for the 'sexy witch' look: no green facepaint or crooked noses, just a cutesy, conical hat and little black number which Geeneus says he can "see her bum crease" in.

The atmosphere backstage at the penultimate show of

Katy's tour is fun-bordering-raucous, and Gee can usually be found somewhere near the silliness' epicentre. In between aiming his (miraculously recovered) helicopter at various people's heads, the

boss man cracks wise about everything from ITV's weekend programming schedule to Brixton, whose resident hipsters he says are oblivious to what really goes on ("It's true! In Brixton McDonald's there's two queues; the ghetto queue and the trendy queue").

Even Gee's court-holding, however, is upstaged by Caelan, the superfly, three-year-old son of Katy's hype man, Tippa. Flipping through his daddy's iPod with terrifying ease, the little fella finds the artists he wants by looking at the record sleeves (he's too young to read the names) and gives word-perfect renditions of Tinie Tempah and J Cole, among others – though his old man snatches the gadget away before he can hit 'play' on Bob The Builder.

Katy gets finished with her make-up and nips in the room next door to get changed.

"Are you havin' a number two in there?" shouts Tippa, tittering. "Cos it's getting a bit whiffy in the dressing room." "Yeah – it's coming out your top lip," Katy shoots back, and Tippa is forced to accept defeat as the room falls about laughing.

Half an hour later the potty-mouthed hype man is clad in ludicrous werewolf mask, as the band step out to the strains of Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' and

Brighton goes properly nuts. It's an awesome show which sees Katy backed by brass, girl singers and the almighty clatter of Junior on drums. Our main gal, meanwhile, doesn't put a foot wrong all

night, bopping her way through the likes of 'Broken Record', 'Katy On A Mission' and 'Perfect Stranger' with ease.

PAVILIONS, PLYMOUTH WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2

On Wednesday *NME* rejoins Katy in rain-lashed Plymouth, which brings big wheels and even bigger helicopters as Gee looks to replace his by-now-written-off old model. We're driven to a grim-looking timber yard where Katy poses between the bags of gravel, and a model aeroplane shop lurks improbably in the wet. As if that wasn't glamorous enough, Gee is having a ding-dong on the phone with someone from the venue about merchandising rights. He hangs up, and buys himself a brand new helicopter. To call it bigger than the last one would be something of an understatement: you could ask a shih tzu to pilot the ruddy thing and still have leg room in back.

With that we're off to sample the cultural delights of Plymouth: principally a fuck-off Ferris wheel overlooking the seafront. It has a pretty gangsta-looking VIP carriage with blacked-out windows and complimentary bottles of bubbly, but we make do with a regular booth and drink in the views with Katy and her make-up artist, Vicky. Gee is still fuming after his phone call and declines to join us ("I've spent all my life living on the top of council blocks, what do I wanna go on that fucking thing for?").

On the way back to the venue, Tippa winds up Katy about the fact she's been offered a personal trainer. Taking the piss is pretty much the glue that holds this lot together, it would seem, whether it's backing singer and token northerner Rihanna (real name, honest) being greeted with a sarcastic "Fy oop!" when

she walks in the room, or Tippa being taunted with cameraphone videos that capture him taking a soapy flannel to his, er, intimate areas on the tourbus shower.

Back at the venue, Katy regales us with tales of her merch stall guys, who are all from Essex and are literally mental. One of them, she says, got a tattoo of a third nipple done while out on the road. Another's uncle claims to have copyright on the word 'reem' (er, ©?). A third used to work in a sex shop and donated an 'arse midget' to the touring company.

"What's an arse midget?" we ask gingerly, sort-of-but-not-really-wanting to know the answer. Katy leads us to front of stage, where a black gnome leers at us from underneath an obscenely protruding hat. "He's sort of become our mascot," Katy beams proudly.

Tonight's show is a bit slow to warm up, but by the time Katy drops an '80s/'90s throwback double-whammy in 'Good Life' and Robin S' 'Show Me Love', the joint is officially jumping. From Katy's exhortations to treat the performance as a 'rave' instead of a concert to the hokey attempts at flogging T-shirts onstage, there's the understanding that this is pop music by, for and of the people – no need for S&M dancers or posing as Christ in a wheelchair here, thanks, just a straight-up display of great music, locally sourced.

"Katy's come a very long way in a very short time," says Tippa at the show's finale, urging on the crowd. "And there's not many ordinary girls coming out here and mashun' up the place like this!" He takes some stick for that speech after the show ("bruv, it's not the fucking *X Factor*"), but secretly they must know he's hit the nail on the head. As the crew washes down the taste of success with Nando's and bubbly, *NME* gets ready to take our leave: now where's that chopper when you need it? *Alex Denney*

VIEW FROM THE CREW



**Tim, merch
seller**

**Why do you have
a tattoo of
a third nipple?**

**"We did a gig in
Newcastle and
I know a few good
tattoo artists there.
I thought, 'Why not
show my respect to
the people with a
third nipple?' I've
never looked back."**

**Would you consider
investing in
a fourth?**

**"I'd need to do my
research, see where
a fourth nipple's
usually located."**

RICHARD JOHNSON



Brighton, Monday, 5.30pm

Peekaboo! And you all thought it was Mick Hucknall hiding under there, didn't you? Below, Tippa digs up his skeleton crew



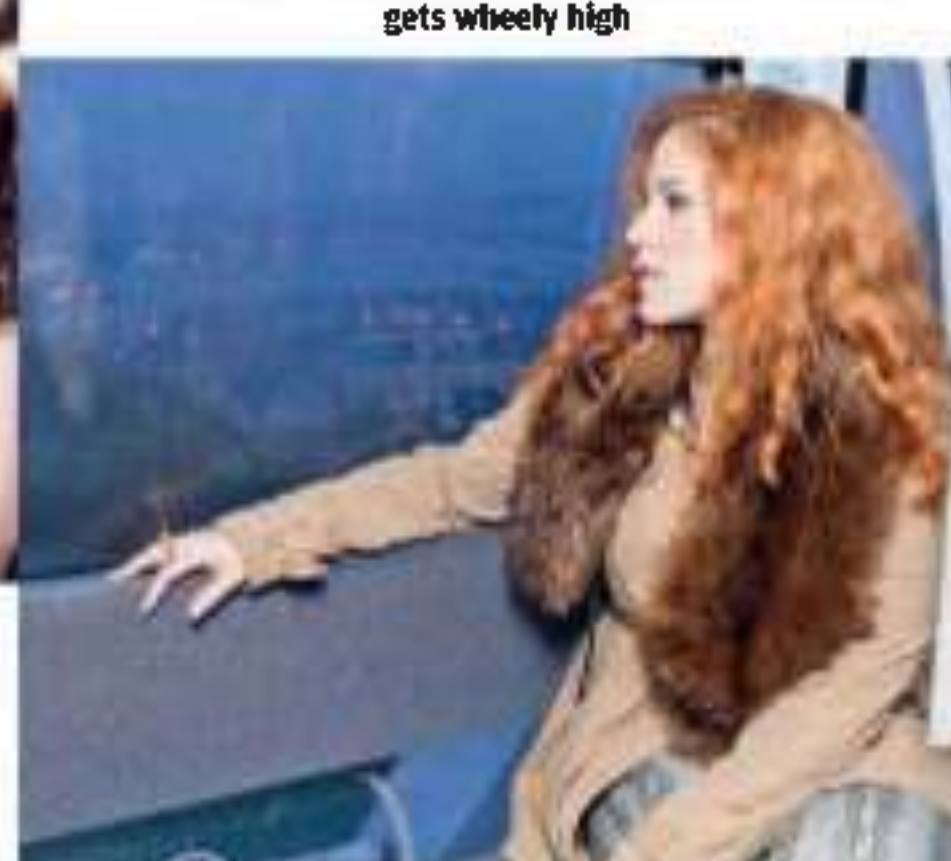
Brighton, Monday, 10pm

Katy rocks the 'sexy witch' look with a tiny hat that resembles a goth's upturned ice cream cone

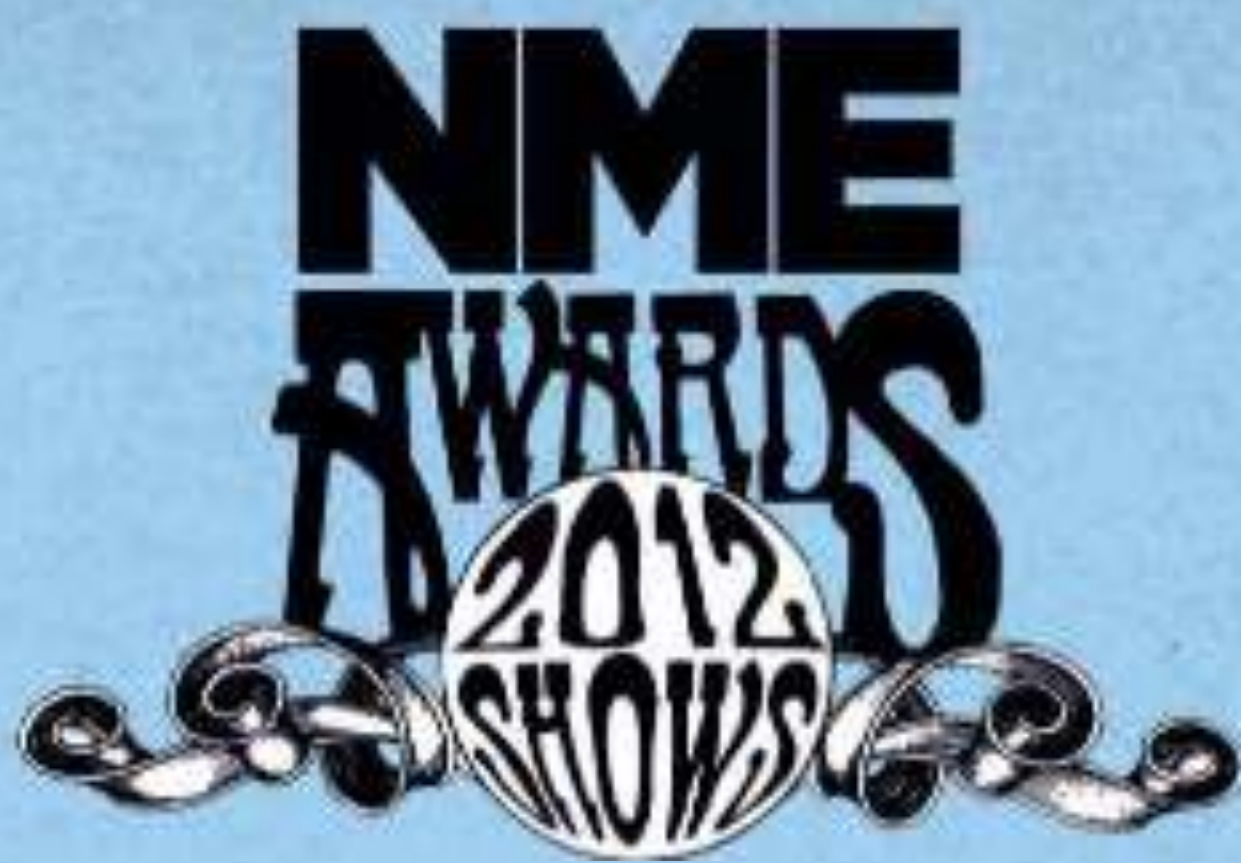


Plymouth, Wednesday, 9.30pm

The hat's been nabbed, but Katy thinks she knows the culprit...it's that arse midget! Below, Katy gets wheely high



Plymouth, Wednesday, 11pm
Katy's fans wait outside in the rain for an autograph. Shoes optional, apparently



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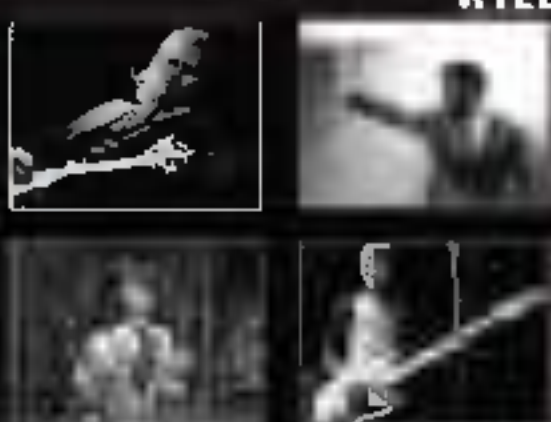
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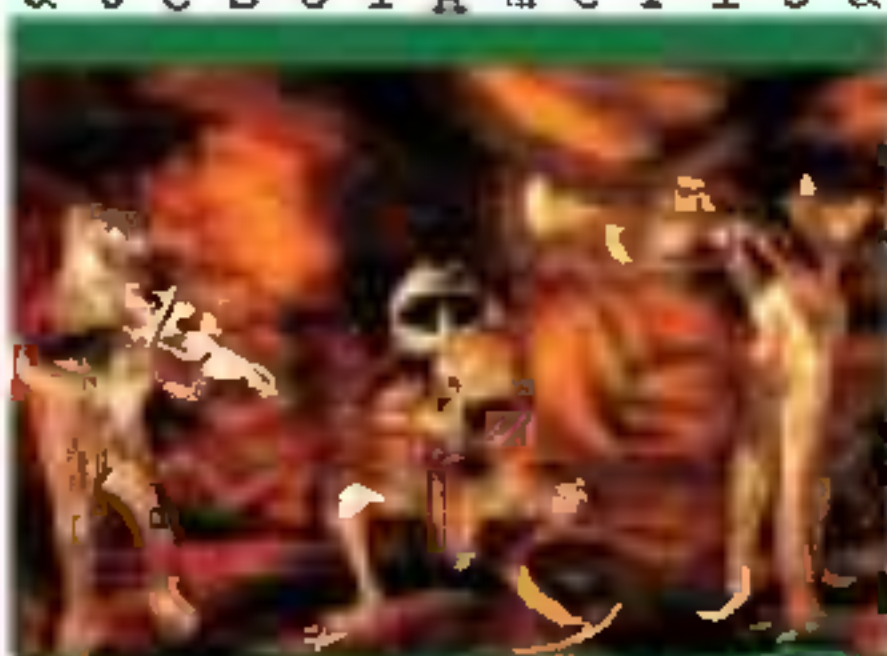
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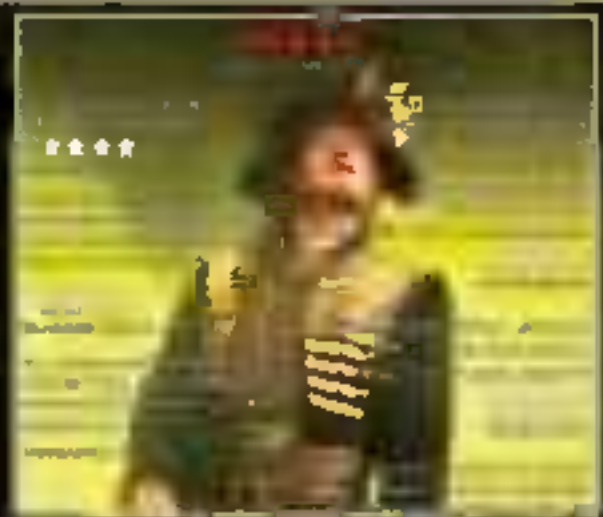
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 05 ABERDEEN - THE LEMON TREE
 10 BIRMINGHAM - HMV INSTITUTE
 11 BOURNEMOUTH - GOLD FISH STATION
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 17 LONDON - THE GARAGE
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Edited by Laura Snapes

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TRIBES/ SLOW CLUB

STARTS: London HMV Forum, Dec 31

DON'T
MISS

Let's be honest – New Year's Eve is nearly *always* a massive disappointment: freezing your tits off in crap fancy dress, seasonally priced £8 cans, Jools' bloody *Hootenanny*... Which is exactly why you should get down to London's Forum on NYE to see 2012 in with a bunch of brilliant bands. Headlining this year are Tribes, returning to their native north London to celebrate a corking 2011. Next on the bill are the mighty Slow Club, supported by rising newcomers Bones and Caan, and the whole affair is put on by the brains behind venue The Wheelbarrow, which staged early gigs by the likes of Florence, Bombay, Marling and The Vaccines. Never mind New Year's Resolutions – *this* is how you start 2012 on the right foot.



MOZART PARTIES

STARTS: Leeds Musiquarium, Nov 23
James Bennett has just released his debut single, 'Black Cloud', and plays a handful of rare shows in support of Trailer Trash Tracys and Beaty Heart.



BEN HOWARD

STARTS: London St John-at-Hackney Church, Nov 24
Ben Howard and Michael Kiwanuka join Coldplay's Chris Martin and Jonny Buckland for a Mencap Little Noise Session.



WIDOWSPEAK

STARTS: London Windmill, Nov 25
The swoony Radar faves leave the confines of Brooklyn play their debut UK and European live shows this month, on the back of their self-titled debut.



BLOOD ORANGE

STARTS: Brighton Green Door Store, Dec 2
He might lig with the stars (did he mention he knows Beyoncé?), but Dev's heart is in the right place, putting on this free festive show.



HARD-FI

STARTS: Stoke Sugarmill, Dec 3
Rich Archer and co announce three pre-Christmas dates before retiring home to circle *Radio Times* listings and stuff their faces with mince pies.



THE BIG PINK

STARTS: O2 Apollo Manchester, Dec 5
The Big Pink line up a string of pre-Christmas shows, including one at London's Shackwell Arms on December 9, and reschedule their November tour for February.



TIM WHEELER & EMMY THE GREAT

STARTS: London Bush Hall, Dec 14
Tim and Emmy announce a special festive show to accompany their Christmas album of original songs and a Phil Spector cover, nicely titled 'This Is Christmas'.



MILES KANE

STARTS: O2 Academy Brixton, Dec 14
Wee Monkey-bothering Miles plays the fairy on top of the tree at XFM's annual Winter Wonderland gig, topping off a pretty fine year for the Liverpoolian singer and guitarist.



PORCELAIN RAFT

STARTS: Bristol Trinity, Jan 17
The silk-voiced Italian releases his debut album, 'Strange Weekend', and hits the road with wistful, shoegazey French electronic whiz, M83.



FRIENDS

STARTS: Manchester Deaf Institute, Feb 6
The sassy, ESG-loving New York gang announce their first UK shows, after wowing crowds at gigs during their native CMJ last month.



GENERAL FIASCO

STARTS: Glasgow Arches, Feb 20
Watch your backs, Two Door Cinema Club – General Fiasco have been conquering Ireland since you've been away, and look set to reign over here too.



SUFJAN STEVENS

STARTS: London Barbican Hall, Apr 9
So it's not *strictly* a Sufjan show, but the elusive genius returns to London to premiere a piece written with Nico Muhly and The National's Bryce Dessner.

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PICK of the WEEK

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BATTLES

STARTS: Sheffield Plug, Nov 16

NME
PICK

Last time Battles played second album 'Gloss Drop' over here – mere weeks after its release – it felt like they hadn't quite hit their stride. Their show at London's Heaven felt a little shaky, as though John, Ian and Dave were still struggling to fill the gap left by former vocalist Tyondai Braxton. Somewhere over the summer, however, something clicked: the awkwardness was gone, shooed away by the colossal core of fun at the album's heart. Because while Battles' fiddly syncopations and mind-boggling riffs are a wonder to behold, really there's no better way of celebrating their awesomeness than by dancing like an absolute fruitloop at their gigs. What had previously been a bit of a beard-scratching exercise became a communal experience, filling any sense of a gap onstage and bolstering Battles' transformation into something of a full-blown party band. You'd be a fool to miss them this week.



Everyone's Talking About THE BESNARD LAKES/SUUNS

STARTS: Manchester Deaf Institute, Nov 18
The Besnard Lakes have never had the acclaim they deserve for their brooding, literate albums – and their legacy led to us giving Suuns' sublime 'Zeroes QC' a spin at the start of the year, as the Lakes' Jace Lasek produced it. Boy, we're glad we did – its harsh, Liars-like crunch made it one of our favourite records of 2012.



Don't Miss ISLET

STARTS: London Lexington, Nov 16
Finally, Cardiff's weirdest are getting their arses in gear and putting out their debut album early next year. Impatient as we are, the wait seems to have served them well – the few clips we've heard are harsher and more focused than their previous EPs, and they've managed to translate the brilliantly confrontational element of their shows onto record. Get a sneaky peek here.



Radar Stars HOWLER

STARTS: London Garage, Nov 16
There's still two months to wait until Howler's debut drops – all the more reason, then, to get yourself down to these November dates to check out Minneapolis' finest band since The Replacements. They've got The Strokes' legacy between the ears, The Drums' way with a hook, and the same smell of fresh meat that The Vaccines had this time last year. Breathe it deep.

WEDNESDAY

November 16

I Dream In Colour Moles
01225 404445

BELFAST

The Antlers Stiff Kitten
028 9023 8700

BIRMINGHAM

The Bronze Medal/The Winter Tradition O2 Academy 3
0870 477 2000

Doom O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
Ezio Glee Club 0870 241 5093

New Villager HMV Institute (Temple)
0844 248 5037

BOURNEMOUTH

Mike Peters & The Alarm Old Fire Station 01202 503888

BRIGHTON

The Darkness/Crown Jewel Defense/Foxy Shazam Dome
01273 709709

Kutosis/Samoans The Hope
01273 723 568

Lacuna Coil/Straight Line Stitch Concorde 2 01273 673 311

BRISTOL

Bad Tequila/Stars And Flights/Camera Culture Croft (Main Room)
0117 987 4144

Big D & The Kids Table Fleece
0117 945 0996

CCTV Tapped Canteen 0117 923 2017

Release The Kraken/Xisforeyes/Bound By Exile Croft (Front Bar)
0117 987 4144

Yes Colston Hall 0117 922 3683

CAMBRIDGE

Bellowhead Corn Exchange
01223 357851

Portico Quartet Junction
01223 511511

CARDIFF

Alabama 3 Coal Exchange
029 2049 4917

Citizens/Hemine Fatale 10 Feet Tall
02920 228883

Glenn Hughes Glee Club
0870 241 5093

James Apollo Gwdihw Cafe Bar
029 2039 7933

EDINBURGH

Cake HMV Picture House
0844 847 1740

The Twilight Sad Bongo Club
0131 558 7604

EXETER

Gecko Havana Bar 01392 459 888

GLASGOW

Peter Dinklage Royal Concert Hall
0141 353 8000

Thomas Dolby O2 ABC
0870 903 3444

Turbowolf/Hawk Eyes/James Cleaver Quintet King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

The Webb Sisters Oran Mor
0141 552 9224

LEEDS

Anna Calvi Cockpit 0113 244 3446

St Vincent Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866

LEICESTER

Turisas/Chthonic Sub 91

LIVERPOOL

Kate Walsh Unity Theatre
0151 709 4988

The Moons/The Sundowners/Call Off The Search Mojo
0844 549 9090

Young Statues Shipping Forecast
0151 709 6901

LONDON

Aurelio Martinez Union Chapel
020 7226 1686

Beverly Knight Royal Albert Hall
020 7589 8212

Billy Vincent/Kieran McMullan Bedford 020 8682 8940

Brain Shake Nambucca
020 7272 7366

Brigade/Verses/Hill Valley High Barfly 0870 907 0999

Calvinball/Apologies I Have None/One Night Stand In North Dakota Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

Channel Cairo Bull & Gate
020 7485 5358

The Dactyls MacBeth 020 7739 5095

Dead End New Cross Inn
020 8692 1866

Death Cab For Cutie HMV
Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400

Esben & The Witch Corsica Studios
0207 703 4760

The History Of Apple Pie Shacklwell Arms 020 7249 0810

Howler Garage 020 7607 1818

Hyde & Beast Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Islet The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Jet Bronx & The New Forbidden Arch Angel 020 7938 4137

Johanna Mystery/Drongomala Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Kate McGill Borderline 020 7734 5547

Kim Richey Slaughtered Lamb
020 8682 4080

Lana Del Rey Scala 020 7833 2022

Ledfoot Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

The Low Anthem/William Elliott Whitmore Roundhouse 020 7482 7318

Marcus Bonfanti O2 Academy
Islington 0870 477 2000

Neon Indian Heaven 020 7930 2020

Niki & The Dove/Sound Of Arrows Cargo 0207 749 7840

Paper Crows/14th Floor/Findlay Hoxton Square Bar & Grill
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Skeletons On Holiday 93 Feet East
020 7247 6095

Skrllex KOKO 020 7388 3222

The Smashing Pumpkins/Ringo Deathstarr O2 Academy Brixton
0870 477 2000

Tom Vek O2 Shepherds Bush Empire
0870 771 2000

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Basement 0871 230 1094

Yellowjackets Ronnie Scott's
020 7439 0747

Yuksek Garage (Upstairs)
0871 230 1094

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Exit Ten/Fel Comodo Moho Live
0161 834 8180

Horny HMV Ritz 0161 236 4355

KMFDM Academy 3 0161 832 1111

Madina Lake Academy 0161 832 1111

Portugal The Man Deaf Institute
0161 330 4019

Wild Beasts/Braids Cathedral
0161 832 1111

Wire Academy 2 0161 832 1111

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01603 632 717

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0115 958 8484

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Acid Mothers Temple Jericho Tavern
01865 311 775

Heather Peace Glee Club
0871 472 0400

Imelda May The Regal 01865 241 261

SHEFFIELD

Battles/Walls Plug 0114 276 7093

Yuck/Fanzine Leadmill 0114 221 2828

SOUTHAMPTON

Arcane Roots/22 Joiners
023 8022 5612

Virgil & The Accelerators Brook
023 8055 5366

Voodoo Glow Skulls Talking Heads
023 8055 5899

WOLVERHAMPTON

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Dum Dum Girls Central Station
01978 358780

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Karine Polwart The Duchess
01904 641 413

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THURSDAY

November 17

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Joanne Shaw Taylor The Tunnels
01224 211121

Red Sky July Cafe Drummond
01224 624642

BELFAST

Scroobius Pip Stiff Kitten
028 9023 8700

BIRMINGHAM

Aurelio Martinez MAC 0121 440 3838

Chase & Status O2 Academy

0870 477 2000

From The Get Go HMV Institute
(Temple) 0844 248 5037

Lana Del Rey HMV Institute (Library)
0844 248 5037

Neon Indian/Trophy Wife Hare &
Hounds 0870 264 3333

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Big D & The Kids Table The Hydrant
01273 608 313

Danny & The Champions Of The
World Green Door Store 07894 267 053

The Fall Concorde 2 01273 673 311

Soapy Jefferson/Soapy Yau The
Hope 01273 723 568

Thieves By The Code Latest Music Bar
01273 687 171

Tokimonsta Sticky Mike's Frog Bar
01273 749 465

Will Young Centre 0870 900 9100

Yuksek Coalition 01273726858

BRISTOL

The Blood Choir Mother's Ruin
0117 925 6969

Cults Thekla 08713 100000

In Your Honour/Goldtrip Croft (Main
Room) 0117 987 4144

Jaya The Cat/Subversive Fire Croft
(Front Bar) 0117 987 4144

Jools Holland/Karine Polwart
Colston Hall 0117 922 3683

Mark Morriss Thunderbolt
07791 319 614

New Villager Start The Bus
0117 930 4370

People Like Us/Aki Onda Cube
Cinema 0117 907 4190

Wreckless Eric/Amy Rigby Fleece
0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE

Float Riverer/Halo Halo Corner
House 01223 352 047

Islet Portland Arms 01223 357268

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Daniel Land & The Modern Painters
Undertone 029 2022 8883

Gecko 10 Feet Tall 02920 228883

EDINBURGH

Alkaine Trio/Dave Hause HMV

Picture House 0844 847 1740

Echofela Whistlebinkies 0131 557 5114

Halloween: Alaska Sneaky Pete's
0131 225 1757

Lianne La Havas Pleasance
0131 556 6550

Mr Scruff University 0131 650 2656

Remember Remember/Dam Mantle
Electric Circus 0131 226 4224

Wire Liquid Room 0131 225 2564

EXETER

Mind Set A Threat Cavern Club
01392 495 370

GATESHEAD

Battles Old Town Hall 0191 433 6916

J Cole O2 ABC 0870 903 3444

Red Snapper/Dhass King Tut's Wah
Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

Umbilical Chord Garage 0141 332 1120

HOVE

The People String Foundation/Bat
Country Brunswick 01273 735254

LEEDS

Billy Bragg/The King Blues/Sound
Of Rum University 0113 244 4600

The Correspondents HiFi Club
0113 242 7353



Death Cab For Cutie O2 Academy
0870 477 2000

Lowkey Cockpit 0113 244 3446

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0207 703 4760

Arcane Roots Barfly 0870 907 0999

Beady Eye O2 Academy Brixton
0870 477 2000

Bellowhead O2 Shepherds Bush
Empire 0870 771 2000

Civil Civic Sebright Arms
020 7729 0937

Colourmusic Hoxton Square Bar &
Grill 020 7613 0709

Curtis Eller Green Note 0871 230 1094

Dum Dum Girls ULU 020 7664 2000

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Underworld 020 7482 1932

Fireworks Night The Wheelbarrow
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Guillemots KOKO 020 7388 3222

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John Maus Boston Arms 020 7272 8153

Jon Windle Nambucca 020 7272 7366

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020 7482 3867

King Mob 229 Club 020 7631 8310

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020 7428 5875

Little Roy Scala 020 7833 2022

Mike Peters & The Alarm O2
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My Brightest Diamond St Giles In The
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020 7739 5095

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020 7267 1577

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Shoreditch 020 7033 0085

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Yellowjackets Ronnie Scott's
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Yes HMV Hammersmith Apollo
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Phred's 0161 273 5200

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Winston Academy 0161 832 1111

SBTRKT/Friendly Fires/Chad Valley
O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000

Turbowolf Alter Ego 0161 236 9266

Turisas/Cthonic/Kluas Academy 2
0161 832 1111

The Vaccines/Frankie & The
Heartstrings Academy 0161 832 1111

Voodoo Glow Skulls Moho Live
0161 834 8180

White Noise Box Academy 3
0161 832 1111

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The Damned O2 Academy
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Gazelle Twin Green Door Store
07894 267 053

Left At The Robot Latest Music Bar
01273 687 171

Surfin' Lungs Prince Albert
01273 730 499

BRISTOL

Gecko/The Leano Croft (Main Room)
0117 987 4144

Marmalade Sky Fleece 0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE

Will Young Corn Exchange
01223 357851

CARDIFF

Guillemots Coal Exchange
029 2049 4917

Wise Blood Undertone 029 2022 8883

EDINBURGH

Homework Sneaky Pete's
0131 225 1757

Vantage Point Cabaret Voltaire
0131 220 6176

The Zombies The Caves 0131 557 8989

EXETER

Blawan Cavern Club 01392 495 370

Madina Lake/Chlodos/My Passion
University 01392 263519

Red Kite Timepiece 01392 425 309

FALMOUTH

Dreadzone Princess Pavilion
01326 211222

GLASGOW

Alabama 3 O2 ABC 0870 903 3444

Bos Angeles/Fear Of Men School Of
Art 0141 353 4530

Dimmi Borglr Maggie May's
0141 548 1350

Friendly Fires/SBTRKT/Chad Valley
Barrowlands 0141 552 4601

The Twilight Sad Nice'n'Sleazy
0141 333 9637

The Vibrators Ivory Blacks
0141 221 7871

Wire The Arches 0141 565 1000

HOVE

Loose Arrangement Brunswick
01273 735254

LEEDS

Against Me! Cockpit 0113 244 3446

The Damned O2 Academy
0870 477 2000

Fool's Gold Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866

Senser/Idiom The Well 0113 2440474

LIVERPOOL

Battles Kazimier 0871 230 1094

J Cole University 0151 256 5555

LONDON

Age Of Consent MacBeth
020 7739 5095

Anison Barfly 0870 907 0999

A Day To Remember/August Burns
Red HMV Forum 020 7344 0044

Bear Driver Barfly (Upstairs)
0870 907 0999

FRIDAY

November 18

Black Danny Cargo 0207 749 7840

Calling All Astronauts Nambucca
020 7272 7366

Channel One Sound System Scala
020 7833 2022

Colours Of One/Bufalo Riders 229
Club 020 7631 8310

The Coolness Sebright Arms
020 7729 0937

Factory Floor Garage 020 7607 1818

Freedom Call/Arthemis/Neonfly
Underworld 020 7482 1932

Gogol Bordello Electric Ballroom
020 7485 9006



The Great Gatsby/These Ghosts The
Miller 020 7407 2690

Louder Clouds Roadtrip
020 7253 6787

Melic Hoxton Square Bar & Grill
020 7613 0709

The Melody Nelson/Lewis Floyd
Henry Borderline 020 7734 5547

The Mob/Zounds Jamm
020 7274 5537

Monarchy/Britt Love Club NME @
Koko 0870 4325527

Mondkopf XOYO 020 7729 5959

MJ Cole/Cooly G Corsica
020 7288 1495

The Priscillas/Motley Kunst St
Moritz 020 7437 0525

Shush 100 Club 020 7636 0933

Standard Fare Wilmington Arms
020 7837 1384

White Sunday/The Naked Polaroids
Fiddler's Elbow 020 7485 3269

Will & The People New Cross Inn
020 8692 1866

Yellowjackets Ronnie Scott's
020 7439 0747</

SATURDAY

November 19

ABERDEEN

The Little Kicks/Velvet Audio/The Easy Tigers The Tunnels 01224 211121

BELFAST

Chase & Status/Delliah Queens

University 028 9097 3106

Chase & Status Stiff Kitten

028 9023 8700

Dutch Uncles Auntie Annie's

028 9050 1660

Jody Has A Hitlist Queens University

028 9097 3106

Marlachi El Bronx Stiff Kitten

028 9023 8700

BIRMINGHAM

Brendan Power MAC 0121 440 3838

Milkk Wagon & Horses 0121 772 1403

The Naked And Famous HMV

Institute 0844 248 5037

The Rubberbandits O2 Academy 2

0870 477 2000

The Smashing Pumpkins O2

Academy 0870 477 2000

Son Of A Lumberjack O2 Academy 3

0870 477 2000

BRIGHTON

Milky Wimpshake/Humosexual/

Woolf West Hill Hall 01273 327976

The Pigeon Detectives Concorde 2

01273 673 311

She Keeps Bees The Haunt

01273 770 847

Summer Camp/Theme Park Green

Door Store 07894 267 053

Bristol

Bravo Brave Bats/Big Joan Croft

(Main Room) 0117 987 4144

Discharge/Sickpig/Peter And

The Murder Of Crows Fleece

0117 945 0996

Fixers Start The Bus 0117 930 4370

Ice, Sea, Dead People/Von Bartha/

The Baronesques Croft (Front Bar)

0117 987 4144

Lianne La Havas Thekia

08713 100000

The Moons The Lanes 0117 325 1979

Neon Indian The Cooler

0117 945 0999

Portugal The Man/Standard

Fare/The Figureheads Louisiana

0117 926 5978

Wild Beasts Anson Rooms

0117 954 5810

CAMBRIDGE

Billy Bragg/The King Blues/Sound

Of Rum Junction 01223 511511

Cardiff

The Cautionary Child/The Me! Me!

Me?z's Undertone 029 2022 8883

Dodgy Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199

Wake The President/The Red Age

Buffalo Bar 02920 310312

Edinburgh

Richard Youngs Canon's Gait

0131 556 4481

The Vibrators Citrus 0131 622 7086

Yuck/Fanzine Cabaret Voltaire

0131 220 6176

Exeter

Scholars Cavern Club 01392 496 370

Falmouth

The Little Unsaid/Lampfilter Miss

Peapod's 0871 230 1094

Glasgow

The Babies Captain's Rest

0141 331 2722

The Besnard Lakes/Suuns King

Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

The Black Arrows/Somatic Maggie

May's 0141 548 1350

Death Cab For Cutie O2 Academy

0870 477 2000

Heather Findlay Classic Grand

0141 847 0820

The John Knox Sex Club Nice'n'Sleazy

0141 333 9637

Mac Floyd O2 ABC 0870 903 3444

Marseille Ivory Blacks 0141 221 7871

Okkervil River Oran Mor

0141 552 9224

The Vaccines/Frankie & The

Heartstrings Barrowlands

0141 552 4601

The Zombes Ferry 01698 360085

LEEDS

Curtis Eller Adelphi 01943 468615

Dimmu Borgir Cockpit 0113 244 3446

Friendly Fires/SBTRKT/Chad Valley

O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

LIVERPOOL

Grandmaster Flash Mojo

0844 549 9090

LONDON

Amsterdam Half Moon 020 7274 2733

A Day To Remember/August Burns

Red/The Ghost Inside HMV Forum

020 7344 0044

Bad Wolf/Something Simple

Roadtrip 020 7253 6787

Barn Owl Hoxton Square Bar & Grill

020 7613 0709

The Bevis Frond 229 Club

020 7631 8310

Black Knight Barfly 0870 907 0999

Black Mekon/The Castilians Old

Blue Last 020 7613 2478

Bob Dylan/Mark Knopfler HMV

Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400

Canvas Wall/Britpop Chipshop

Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094

Carter The Unstoppable Sex

Machine O2 Academy Brixton

0870 477 2000

Doyle & The Fourfathers Dublin

Castle 020 7485 1773

Jaya The Cat O2 Academy Islington

0870 477 2000

J Balvin Coronet 020 7701 1500

Karl Phillips & The Midnight

Ramblers Barfly (Upstairs)

0870 907 0999

King Raam/Ali Azimi Cargo

0207 749 7840

Los Plantronics/Patti P!nko & Her

Boy The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Mungo's HiFi Plan B 08701 165421

Nightlord/Hysterica Underworld

020 7482 1932

Oxide & Neutrino CAMP Basement

0871 230 1094

Project Plenty/Navacross Cavendish

Arms 0207 627 0698

Pure Negative/The Day Of Locusts/

When Gods Burn The Unicorn

020 7485 3073

Quantik KOKO 020 7388 3222

The Shabby Tinker2 Nambucca

020 7272 7366

Space Ritual/The Eden House

Garage 020 7607 1818

Steve Ignorant O2 Shepherds Bush

Empire 0870 771 2000

SSS Shacklewell Arms 020 7249 0810

The Webb Sisters Union Chapel

020 7226 1686

MANCHESTER

Baked A La Ska Band On The Wall

0161 832 6625

Cults Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392

CW Stoneking Academy 2

0161 832 1111



The Damned Academy 0161 832 1111

The Dark Lights Night And Day Cafe

0161 236 1822

The Experimental Pop Band

Gullivers 0161 832 5899

Freedom Call/Arthemis Roadhouse

0161 228 1789

Lotte Mullan The Castle 0161 237 9485

Mama's Gun/Kristyna Myles Alter

Ego 0161 236 9266

Red Snapper Sound Control

0161 236 0340

Run From Robots Dry Bar

0161 236 5920

Senser Moho Live 0161 834 8180

Shabazz Palaces Deaf Institute

0161 330 4019

NEWCASTLE

Alabama 3 O2 Academy 2

0870 477 2000

Hairy Beavers O'Neills 0191 269 3001

Saint & The Cynics Cluny

0191 230 4474

Voodoo Six Legends 0191 232 0430

Wire O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

NORWICH

Mojokings Brickmakers 01603 441 118

NOTTINGHAM

Against Me!/Crazy Arm Rescue

Rooms 0115 958 8484

Alnrace/Houston Rock City

08713 100000

OXFORD

Cashier No 9 Jericho Tavern

01865 311 775

Dirty Deeds Folly Bridge Inn

01865 790 106

PORTSMOUTH

Dreadzone Wedgewood Rooms

023 9286 3911

Red Kite Plug'n'Play 0118 958 1447

SHEFFIE

Bellowhead Leadmill

0114 221 2828

The Dwarves Corporation

0114 276 0262

J Cole O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

Liz Green Harley 0114 275 2288

Rihanna/Calvin Harris Motorpoint

Arena 01142 565656

SOUTHAMPTON

Apologies I Have None Dorchester

023 8033 3217

WREXHAM

Purescence Central Station

01978 358780

YORK

Mostly Autumn Grand Opera House

01904 671818

BELFAST

Anna Calvi Empire 028 9024 9276

Vintage Trouble Auntie Annie's

028 9050 1660

BIRMINGHAM

Axix Of Awesome HMV Institute

0844 248 5037

The Besnard Lakes/Suuns Hare &

Hounds 0870 264 3333

Kate Walsh Glee Club 0870 241 5093

Voodoo Glow Skulls HMV Institute

(Temple) 0844 248 5037

Will Young/Lawson O2 Academy

0870 477 2000

BOURNEMOUTH

Frank Turner O2 Academy

0870 477 2000

BRIGHTON

CW Stoneking Concorde 2

01273 673 311

Death Cabaret The Hope</

MONDAY

November 21

BIRMINGHAM

Chris T-T/Franz Nicolay Actress & Bishop 0121 236 7426

Foster The People/Unknown Mortal Orchestra HMV Institute 0844 248 5037

BRIGHTON

Her Name Is Calla/Twenty One Crows Sticky Mike's Frog Bar 01273 749 465

BRISTOL

A Tale Of Two Cities/Attention Thieves/The Afterparty Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144

The Besnard Lakes/Suuns Thekla 08713 100000

Cashier No 9/Kowalski/Most Planes Land The Cooler 0117 945 0999

Okkervil River Trinity 01179 351 200

The Pigeon Detectives Fleece 0117 945 0996

PP Dog Mr Wolf's 0117 927 3221

CAMBRIDGE

Friendly Fires/SBTRKT/Chad Valley Corn Exchange 01223 357851

CARDIFF

Bellowhead Coal Exchange 029 2049 4917

Liz Green/Horizon 10 Feet Tall 02920 228883

Three Platons/Maggie Insect/Tender Prey Buffalo Bar 02920 310312

Voodoo Glow Skulls/Anti Vigilante Bogiez 029 2034 1463

EDINBURGH

Rozl Plain/Jamie Harrison/This Is The Kit Electric Circus 0131 226 4224

Turlin Brakes Queen's Hall 0131 668 2019

EXETER

Voodoo Six Cavern Club 01392 495 370

GATESHEAD

The Webb Sisters Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

GLASGOW

James Apollo Brel 0141 342 4966

The Morning Parade/Finding Albert King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS

Lau/The Deadly Gentlemen Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866

Loz Contreras Wire Club 0870 444 4018

The Ting Tings Cockpit 0113 244 3446

LONDON

Battles HMV Forum 020 7344 0044

Big Deal/Famy & Toy The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Bob Dylan/Mark Knopfler HMV Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400

Bos Angeles/Fear Of Men Shacklwell Arms 020 7249 0810

Bush Scala 020 7833 2022

Fanfario Cargo 0207 749 7840

The Funeral Suits Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358

Jonathan Wilson Hoxton Square Bar & Grill 020 7613 0709

The Last Chords/Chasing Tigers Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Loch Lomond Social 020 7636 4992

Loney Dear St Pancras Old Church 020 7247 9386

Other Lives St Giles In The Fields 020 7240 2532

The Pipettes Nambucca 020 7272 7366

The Roads Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080

Scroobius Pip/Breton/Wise Blood Barfly 0870 907 0999

She Keeps Bees Windmill 020 8671 0700

Shigeto/Lapalux/Greenwood Sharps Rhythm Factory 020 7247 9386

Strange Attractor Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094

Suffokate/Blind Witness Underworld 020 7482 1932

The Twilight Sad Borderline 020 7734 5547

Will Young/Jodie Marle 02 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000

The Xcerts/Straight Lines/Crushing Blows Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

MANCHESTER

The Field/Walls Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

Gillian Welch O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000

Heartsounds Star & Garter 0161 273 6726

Josh T Pearson Royal Northern College Of Music 0161 273 6283

Rihanna/Calvin Harris Evening News Arena 0161 950 5000

Swimming Sound Control 0161 236 0340

NEWCASTLE

Fish Riverside 0191 261 4386

Freedom Call Trillians 0191 232 1619

Marlachi El Bronx/Tim Kashier Cluny 0191 230 4474

The Vaccines/Frankie & The Heartstrings O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

NORWICH

Against Me!/Crazy Arm Arts Centre 01603 660 352

Exit Ten/Fel Comodo/Never Means Maybe Waterfront 01603 632 717

The Naked And Famous/Alex Winston Waterfront 01603 632 717

NOTTINGHAM

Alabama 3 Rock City 08713 100000

Liam O'Kane And The Stabilizers Maze 0115 947 5650

Lianne La Havas Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484

Rumer Royal Centre 0115 948 2525

OXFORD

Billy Bragg/The King Blues/Sound Of Rumi O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

Kvelertak O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000

The Stone Electric Bullingdon Arms 01865 244516

SHEFFIELD The Darkness O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000

Morbid Angel Corporation 0114 276 0262

SOUTHAMPTON

Caslokids Joiners 023 8022 5612

Wild Beasts University 023 8059 5000

YORK

Lisa Hannigan The Duchess 01904 641 413

TUESDAY

November 22



Foster The People, Queen Margaret Union, Glasgow

Pearl & The Puppets/Tommy Kelly The Tunnels 01224 211121

BIRMINGHAM

Dan Haywood's New Hawks Hare & Hounds 0870 264 3333

Kvelertak O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000

Vintage Trouble/Kill It Kid O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000

BRIGHTON

Cashier No 9/Kowalski/Anagrams Green Door Store 07894 267 053

Other Lives Audio 01273 624343

Swimming Sticky Mike's Frog Bar 01273 749 465

Wire Concorde 2 01273 673 311

BRISTOL

Coloursmusic Louisiana 0117 926 5978

CW Stoneking Trinity 01179 351 200

Hyde/Petrol Fleece 0117 945 0996

Oneohtrix Point Never/Kelly Twins Cube Cinema 0117 907 4190

Shabazz Palaces Start The Bus 0117 930 4370

CAMBRIDGE

The Treatment/Marcus Foster Portland Arms 01223 357268

CARDIFF

Brotherhood Of The Lake Buffalo Bar 02920 310312

Quill/Coldspell Barfly 029 2066 7658

Sam Lewis/Fred Jones 10 Feet Tall 02920 228883

EXETER

Vanadium Cavern Club 01392 495 370

FALMOUTH

Bellowhead Princess Pavilion 01326 211222

GLASGOW

Foster The People Queen Margaret Union 0141 339 9784

The Game O2 ABC 0870 903 3444

Josh T Pearson Oran Mor 0141 552 9224

Lotte Mullan King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

Make This Relate Nice'n'Sleazy 0141 333 9637

LEEDS

Exit Ten Cockpit 0113 244 3446

Suffokate The Well 0113 2440474

Trailer Trash Tracys Nation Of Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831

LEICESTER

Emily Portman Musician 0116 251 0080

LIVERPOOL

Caslokids Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901

Loch Lomond Static Gallery 01517078090

LONDON

The Bables Madame Jojo's 020 7734 2473

The Besnard Lakes/Suuns Scala 020 7833 2022

Billy Bragg/Akala/Sound Of Rumi HMV Forum 020 7344 0044

Buraka Son Sistema Heaven 020 7930 2020

Bush Garage 020 7607 1818

The Deadly Gentlemen Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080

Diagrams/Black Light CAMP Basement 0871 230 1094

Elbow/Maverick Sabre St John At Hackney Church 020 8985 5374

Fool's Gold Shacklwell Arms 020 7249 0810

The Indicators Monarch 0871 230 1094

Jess Mills/Disclosure/Breakage Hoxton Square Bar & Grill 020 7613 0709

Kill The Young/Spring Heeled Jacks Monto Water Rats 020 7837 4412

KT Tunstall Tabernacle 020 7243 4343

Lacuna Coll/Straight Line Stitch ULU 020 7664 2000

Lanterns On The Lake The Lexington 020 7837 5387

Monument Valley/Peter & Kerry Social 020 7636 4992

Morbid Angel O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000

Mount Eerie/Nicholas Krgovich Cecil Sharp House 020 7485 2206

Nizlopi/The Feeling/Judy Tzuks Union Chapel 020 7226 1686

Nomad Soul Arts Club 020 7460 4459

Okkervil River KOKO 020 7388 3222

Pete Murray Bush Hall 020 8222 6955

Pete & The Pirates Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191

Professor Penguin Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773

Rumer Royal Albert Hall 020 7589 8212

Tangled Hair/Love Among The Mannequins Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

The Ting Tings Kings College 020 7834 4740

Turbowolf Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094

Will Young/Jodie Marle O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000

Wye Oak XOYO 020 7729 5959

MANCHESTER

The Dwarves Moho Live 0161 834 8180

Folks Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

Jesse Mallin & The St Mark's Social Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392

NEWCASTLE

Aesthetic Perfection Legends 0191 232 0430

The Morning Parade O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000

NOTTINGHAM

The Darkness/Crown Jewel Defense Rock City 08713 100000

Dutch Uncles Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484

James Apollo Malt Cross Music Hall 0115 941 1048

Kate Walsh Glee Club 0871 472 0400

Marlachi El Bronx Bodega Social Club 08713 100000

Rihanna/Calvin Harris Capital FM Arena 0115 948 4526

OXFORD

The Twilight Sad Jericho Tavern 01865 311 775

PLYMOUTH

J Cole The Junction 01752 665 895

PORTSMOUTH

Yuck/Fanzine Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911

SHEFFIELD

Imelda May/Big Boy Bloater & The Southside Stompers O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

SBTRKT The Junction 0114 222 8777

SOUTHAMPTON

Saves The Day Talking Heads 023 8055 5899

TRURO

Shakin' Stevens Hall For Cornwall 01872 262466

WOLVERHAMPTON Beverley Knight Civic Hall 01902 552121

WRECKHAM

Futures Central Station 01978 358780

YORK

Alabama 3 The Duchess 01904 641 413

I Dream In Colour Stereo 01904 612237



Friendly Fires, Corn Exchange, Cambridge

PRIORITY

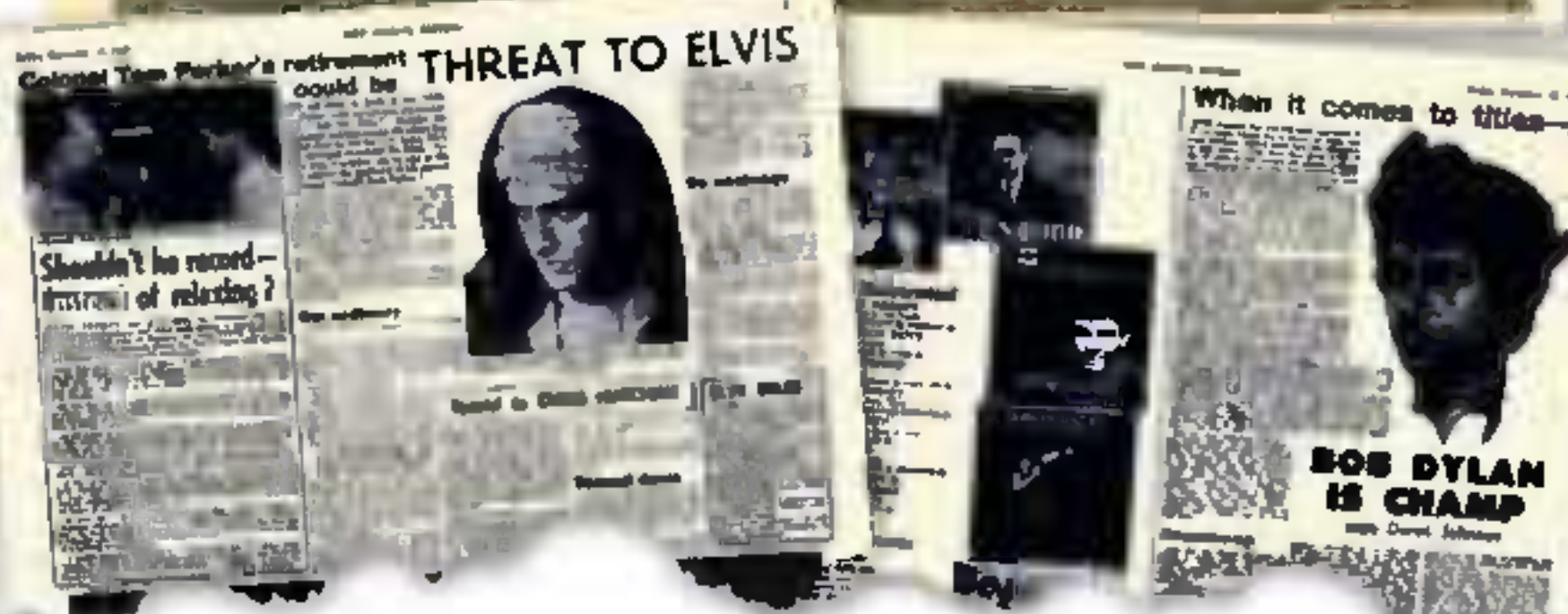
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THIS WEEK IN 1965

SANDIE SLIPS, COLONEL TOM'S GONE AND DYLAN BAFFLES



KING LOSES LIMB?

The end of the famous partnership between Elvis Presley and his manager Colonel Tom Parker is in sight. He advises, "If you want to do business with Mr Presley, you go find him and do it with my blessing." He also reveals that he and his client "have no contract. The one we had expired five years ago or more." The Colonel adds: "A contract wouldn't be worth the paper it was written on, anyway. If somebody came to him, made him a better offer and he wanted to take it, I figure I wouldn't want to manage him anyhow."

FIGHTING TALK

Derek Johnson asks: "Which of the songs in the current hit parade would you choose to hear purely on the strength of the titles?" He then goes on to describe Dylan as "the past master of intriguing titles", noting that several readers have already written in to ask the meaning of 'Positively 4th Street'. He praises Dylan's album 'Highway 61 Revisited' to the skies, and notes: "It seems certain that he will be here again in March for a concert tour. And if it's a nationwide tour, he will then presumably record an LP called 'The M1 Revisited!'"

SANDIE & 'ME'

Sandie Shaw is one of the hippest female singers around. In 1964, she shot to the top of the UK charts with the Bacharach-penned 'There's Always Something There To Remind Me', and her first album 'Sandie', released last February – also did good business. A second Number One came in the shape of 'Long Live Love' in May of 1965, at which point her rise seemed unstoppable.

But then comes the second album featured on this week's cover: 'Me'. It's a brave record that sees her tackling more challenging material, including her first original composition in the shape of 'Til The Night Begins To Die'. It shows a darker side to the girl whose trademark barefoot performances have captivated the country, but it goes on to sell poorly – much less than 'Sandie'.

It is a bad way to end the year. By the start of 1966, Sandie is back in favour with 'Tomorrow', but from this point on, things will get increasingly difficult for her. The singles that follow are not huge, and most of them barely make it into the Top 40.

In January 1967, she releases 'I Don't Need Anything', which stalls at Number 50. This leads to her recording 'Puppet On A String' for the Eurovision Song Contest. Of this cabaret song, she later says: "I hated it from the very first oompah to the final bang on the big bass drum. I was instinctively repelled by its sexist drivel and cuckoo-clock tune."

It goes straight to Number One, becoming her biggest ever hit.

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THAT WEEK

- Number One in the NME Top 30 is The Rolling Stones' 'Get Off Of My Cloud'.
- An advert for a pack of 'John Lennon Christmas cards' reads: "Buy the most 'gear' card ever to send to your friends, and help the world's hungry. Drawing specially donated to Oxfam and signed by John Lennon of the fabulous Beatles."
- The Kinks' 'Til The End Of The Day' is Record Of The Week.
- 'Having A Rave Up With The Yardbirds' is described as a combination of "basic rock'n'roll, old-fashioned blues and straightforward country music, mixed with 'oriental' chords and played with an improvisational electronic bib band drive!"
- The voting for the 14th 'NME Annual International Popularity Poll' is now open!

NME

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THE LEGENDARY NME CROSSWORD

TAXING THE FINEST MINDS IN ROCK'N'ROLL FOR SIX DECADES

Compiled by Trevor Hungerford

Win!

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1+10A Are you sitting uncomfortably? It's a bit of a strain but we'll begin with Professor Green (2-4-13)
 4 Feist album could go platinum or gold or even 30 across (6)
 9+8D Givers only want it one way (2-2-2)
 10 (See 1 across)
 11 A bit of ukelele from Bloc Party (4)
 13 Punk band whose albums include 'Cut' from 1979 and 'Trapped Animal' from 2009 (5)
 14 A bit of a funny comment needed to complete The Charlatans' single '___ (There's No Need To Stop)' (1-1-1)
 15 New Lou Reed and Metallica album or pop singer since the '60s (4)
 18+26D Can't take any more of The Enemy's music (3-6)
 19 Foster The People album is perhaps to her cost (7)
 21 Main change in The Stone Roses' reformation (4)
 22 Part of The View seen through manky lens (4)
 23 "All of my life, I been a-waitn', tonight there'll be no hesitatin'", 1957 (2-3)
 24 (See 5 down)
 26 South Bronx funk band appearing in pirate's gear (1-1-1)
 27 John _____ had '60s Number One with Joe Meek-produced 'Johnny Remember Me', also appeared in movies including *The Great Escape* (6)
 28 Cult album unsuitable for the Unplugged series (8)
 29 Ron arranges for 1997 'Snow' act to appear (3)
 30 Some heavy metal from The Mega City Four in 1993? (4)
 32+17D Song written in 1932 by Noel Coward, became a hit in '90s when Dinah Washington's version was used in Levi's ad (3-5-3-3)
 33 It's alright to make a move for Grammy Award-winning band from Chicago (2-2)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Pink Floyd album or '60s band (7)
 2 Daniel Blumberg's band of rather poor taste (4)
 3 "But when you talk about destruction, don't you know you can count me out", The Beatles (10)
 4 "Convexed you bend, twist and shout, twist and shout", 2006 (7)
 5+24A So Solid Crew... just ignorant (4-4-4)

- 6+31D At this moment in time it's fortunate we have Ryan Adams (5-3)
 7 Rapper who was all the talk of hip hop group Arrested Development (6)
 8 (See 9 across)
 12 Send guide wrong way for a Kooks performance (6-3)
 16 Their albums include 'It's A Shame About Ray' from 1992 and 'Varshons' from 2009 (10)
 17 (See 32 across)
 20 "On my last night on Earth I won't look to the ___", from Noah & The Whale's 'Life Goes On' (3)
 23 What a hoot it is here with Adam Young adopting this name for a Number One hit (3-4)
 24 "When she wakes up in the morning, she writes down all her ___", The Libertines' 'What A Waster' (6)
 25 She may sound like a 'Broken Record' but her music will 'Easy Please Me' (4-1)
 26 (See 18 across)
 31 (See 6 down)

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Simply cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, November 22, 2011, to the following address: Crossword, NME, 9th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.

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

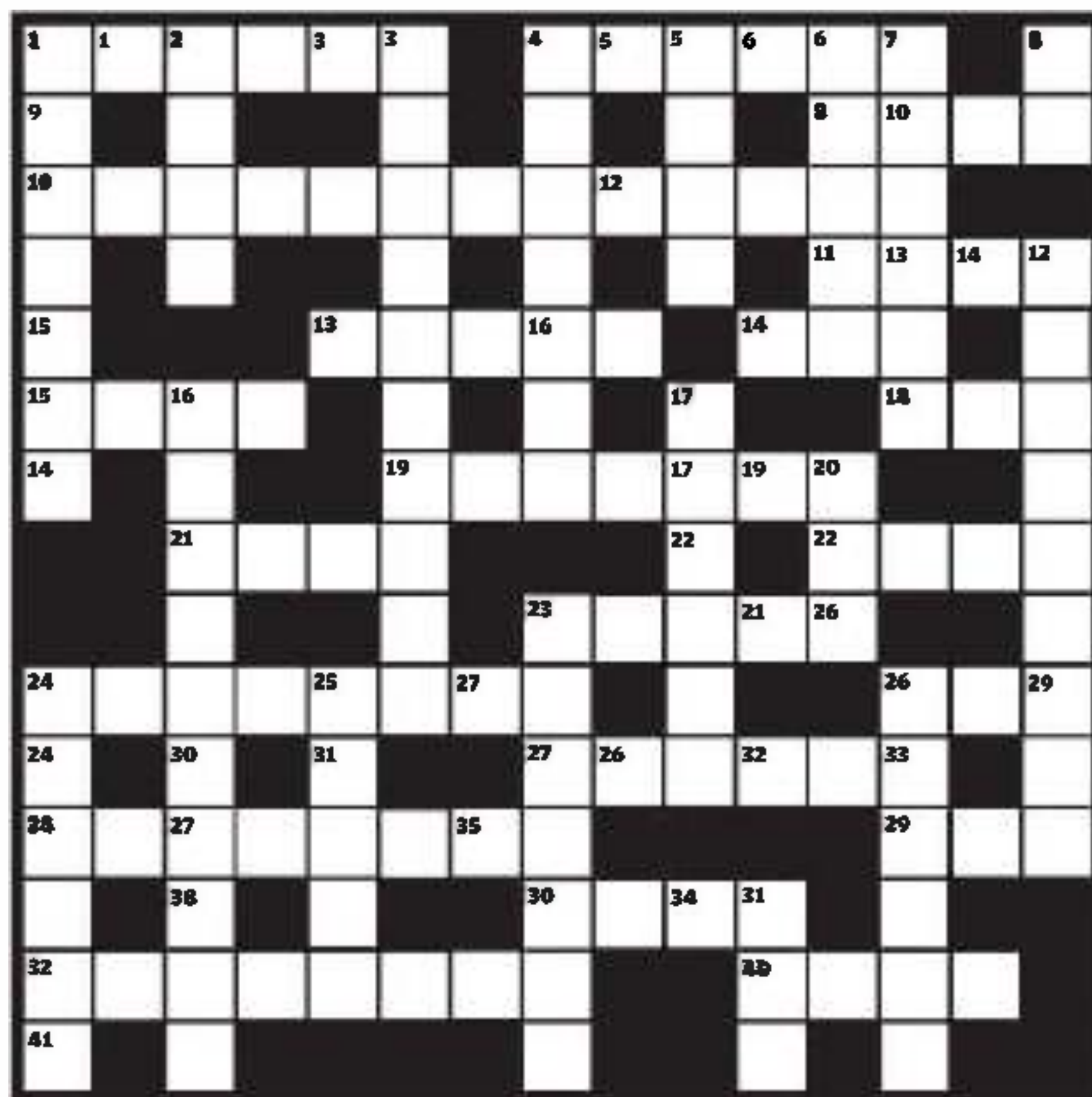
OCTOBER 29 ANSWERS

ANSWERS ACROSS

1+27D Lights Out, Words Gone, 8 Not Fair, 9+24A Witches Brew, 11 Death, 12+21D April Skies, 14 UNKLE, 15 Lie, 19 Enjoy The Silence, 22+16A Elton John, 26 Rage, 28 Oscar, 32 C'mon, 33 DNA

ANSWERS DOWN

1 Lana Del Rey, 2 Gotta See Jane, 3 Trash, 5+31A Towers Of London, 6+4D Out Of Reach, 7 Dr Hook, 10+18D Same Jeans, 13 Lucille, 16 Jay-Z, 17 Unit, 20 Hula, 23 Lorca, 24 Boon, 25 Wood, 26 Ride, 29 Cud, 30 Boy



COLLECTORS' CORNER THE STROKES

Call yourself a super fan? Here are the gems that no The Strokes obsessive should be without



THE MODERN AGE EP (2001)



The band's debut EP, and the one which brought them to the world's

attention. Features three tracks, which were eventually re-recorded for their debut album 'Is This It', including future single and fan favourite 'Last Nite'.

Need To Know: The group's first London show shortly after the EP was released was an NME Awards gig supporting Texan art-rockers ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead at the now-demolished Astoria.

THE VIDEOS AND MORE (2002)



Only available for a limited time as a bonus DVD with the

special edition of 'Is This It', this compilation features the promotional videos for all the singles from their first record, including 'Last Nite' and 'Someday' as well as a bunch of previously unaired live performances from an MTV \$2 Bill special, which originally aired in February 2002.

Need To Know: Many of the band's early videos were directed by Francis Ford Coppola's son Roman.

MY DRIVE THRU (2008)



This surprise collaboration between The Strokes' frontman

Julian Casablancas, Santigold and N'E'R'D main man Pharrell Williams was recorded for Converse's centennial 'Three Artists, One Song' celebrations, and was originally made available as a free download on the US shoe company's website.

Need To Know: Casablancas and Santigold recorded their parts in separate locations (including Miami, LA and NYC) supervised by Williams' production duo The Neptunes.

NICKEL EYE - THE TIME OF THE ASSASSINS (2009)



By his own admission, bassist Nikolai Fraiture got

bored during the long wait for a Strokes album between 2006 and 2011. So he delved into a series of old lyrics and poems he had written years earlier, got some mates together and recorded an album, with some of the sessions taking place in east London's Hackney, before being completed in NYC.

Need To Know: Nick Zinner and Regina Spektor guest on the album.

FANMAIL

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

Edited by Hamish MacBain



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X MARKS THE ROT?

From: David Yule
To: NME

I have been scouting Florence + The Machine's website for the last week and waiting anxiously for tour news. However, as I open the news page on the website, I am hit with the most horrifying headline imaginable: "Florence to play on X Factor on Sunday, November 6". My disappointment is unreal. Now even she has been sucked in. I am a huge fan of Flo, but to hear that she played on the very stage that has produced some of the worst pop artists to walk the earth angers me. To think one of the best indie pop artists of these times played on the same show which coughed up the likes of Jedward and the MacDonald Brothers is simply heartbreaking. I expect better of you, Florence.

NME's response...

For sure, the drunkenly rolling around on the Barfly floor screaming 'Kiss With A Fist' seems a long time ago now. Was it all a careful play for an initial dose of indie credibility, before Flo (and Flo's team) set their sights firmly on the mainstream?

I would have thought the notion of Florence being in any way "alternative" disappeared a long time ago, but judging by the barrage of letters we received in the wake of her X Factor turn last Sunday, all of which expressed complete and utter

disgust, maybe I'm wrong. To quite a lot of you, this is her "selling out", and the point at which you get off the bus. But her album's at Number One (partly thanks to you), and playing in front of 12 million people who all think her histrionic singing style - God means

there will be plenty of people to snap up any tickets snubbed by disgruntled indie types. Harsh, but true - HM

Get in touch at the above addresses. Winners should email letters@nme.com to claim their voucher

FACTOR ME OUT

From: Sophie
To: NME

I was relishing the new Florence album until on Saturday I saw her tweet: "At rehearsals for x factor. Managed to fit in a rummage at a church jumble sale #obviously X". I was shocked and appalled at first. Florence on *The X Factor*?! How can this be? I despise *The X Factor* with a passion. The number one reason is that I've always regarded it as an easy way into the music industry, but another top reason is that the contestants always mime on the group performance on the results show (*Er, no they don't - HM*). Miming on a SINGING competition? Anyway, I just didn't understand why a brilliant, reputable band like F+TM would feel the need to go on Poo Factor! Was it for money? Surely not if the album was Number One. My theory is that *The X Factor* was struggling for viewers, and so by getting a decent act like Flo on people like me would watch it, thus raising the viewings.

From: NME
To: Sophie

No offence Soph, but however "in crisis" the tabloids may have you believe *X Factor* is in, one imagines they are still some way off pandering to the indie nation for viewers. Florence had an album out that week. That's why she did it. Whether this impacts upon your view of her is up to you - HM

From: Mel

To: NME
I thought we'd lost her when 'You've Got The Love' started being played

everywhere, but Florence... *X Factor*? Really? Why would you want to go on that shitstorm of a show?

From: Darren
To: NME
WHAT THE FUCK WAS FLORENCE DOING ON FUCKING X FACTOR!?

From: NME
To: Darren
Wait 'til you see *The Cries* on there next week - HM

JOHNNY NO STARS

From: Julia Christmas
To: NME

I hope you're actually kidding me? 'Johnny Foreigner Vs Everything' getting a 3 (November 5)? Oh, and what a shock - Rick Martin, aka the one who Alexei (of Johnny Foreigner) had a small disagreement with over Record Store Day earlier this year, was the one to review it. What an absolute surprise! I've lost every last tiny bit of respect for NME for this childish behaviour. 'Johnny Foreigner Vs Everything' is probably one of the best albums of this year. Maybe you should let another of your team review it - one who doesn't have something against the band. Fucking pathetic.

From: Simon Wright
To: NME

Is it really fair to get Rick Martin to review Johnny Foreigner's new album after they had a spat over Record Store Day and they called Rick's blog "horrendously written, poorly researched"? Surely a conflict of interest.

From: Rory O'B
To: NME

The review of the new Johnny Foreigner record in

the last issue was, quite frankly, utterly shit. Giving a review to someone who has a personal issue with the lead singer/guitarist (over the RSD article) is an incredibly poorly thought-out move, especially when you consider that the band have made no secret of the fact that this is a record which will make or break them, and giving it a higher score (which it deserves) could have been a huge boost in the right direction. If I worked for one of the leading music magazines in the UK and I was given a record by a band that I disliked due to something unrelated to their music, I think that maybe I'd give that album to someone else to review. Just a thought.

From: NME
To: Julia Christmas, Simon Wright, Rory O'B
 Rick was busy shopping on Amazon for records he could buy in an independent store, but did find the time to offer this explanation: "Pre-RecordStoreDaygate I knew the name Johnny Foreigner, but hadn't listened to their music. So what better opportunity to get up to speed than a review of their album? Surely the fact the band had blogged about me (not the other way around) shouldn't have automatically barred me



STALKER

From: Oliver

To: NME

"I met Frankie Heartstring at Underage Festival, he's so beautiful"

from reviewing their piss-poor Britrock? Besides, a quick straw poll in the office suggests the LP probably wouldn't have fared much better in other hands. Oh, and nice Photoshop work on my Twitter profile pic - good move, that" - HM

RAVING REVIEW? BAH!

From: Sam

To: NME

Having seen your review of Lou Reed/Metallica's 'Lulu' (October 29), which you gave 7/10, I was shocked when I listened to it. The songs are so bad it's not even worthy of a score. There is so much hate for this thing on the internet, and NME seem like the only people that liked it. Why did you give it a 7? I'm struggling to come up with anything good about it.

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Web Slings

The highlight of this week's NME.COM blogs

THE WORST ROCK STAR EXCUSES EVER

Excuses, excuses. We've all been there. I ran out of time. I forgot, I wasn't feeling well. My hamster ate it. I was wearing the wrong shoes. What? The wrong shoes? Oh, well when it comes to excuses, it seems musicians - and especially Bono - are offered allowances excluded from the rest of us. So U2's supposedly sub-par Glastonbury performance was down to an ice rink stage and the wrong footwear. Insert your own 'Get On Your

Boots' gag here. Bono's not the only one concocting questionable cover stories, though. He joins a long line of musicians blaming everything but themselves. Ian Brown initially blamed Reading 1996 on wind in the monitors and Pete Doherty insisted it was Peaches Geldof grabbing his bum at Live 8 that ensured a shitty show from him. What's the worst excuse you've heard from a singer or a band?

Read Tim Chester's blog in full at NME.COM/blogs...



Best of the responses...

Metronomy singer at Calvi On The Rocks blaming a nosebleed on the flight to Corsica.
Pauline Briand

Deftones in Bangkok and 'the wrong cables'.
Thomas Murcutt

Saw Hell Is For Heroes (remember those guys? Thought not) in Middlesbrough about nine years ago. They walked off after 15 minutes complaining of jetlag. A quick glance at their tour dates revealed that

the previous evening they had been playing in the far-flung reaches of... Leeds University.
Matthew Lamb

"Missed her private jet." The Cranberries' singer Dolores O'Riordan on her

no-show at a Belgian festival some time in the '90s. The rest of the band were there...
James Attanasio

Bono just needs to jump into a fire.
Michael Carter

From: Joel

To: NME

The David Lynch review (November 5): his films are shite enough, but giving him 8 out of 10 for his shitty music? You've got to be joking.

From: NME

To: Sam, Joel

And therein lies the problem (or beauty, depending on how you look at it) with reviews. They are by nature the opinion of one individual. I'd agree with Joel and Sam, that the Lynch/'Lulu' reviews were the work of barmy people. But that is what's fun about this game - HM

BLURRED VISION

From: Summer

To: NME

Yes, I love Blur and yes, I'd love them to get back together, but haven't we heard this before? I have an NME dated April 2010 in which Damon said Blur were hoping to record something new. A year and

a half later, we're still in the same position!

From: NME

To: Summer

Yes, you'd think that if Blur were gonna do something new, they should have done it by now. The longer this goes on, the less encouraging the prospect seems - HM

RADIO POO

From: Sammie Hawxwell

To: NME

So The Chief has made a mighty return, everyone in the country is celebrating his musical genius again and all is well. He showed Radio 2 listeners that he was back with a vengeance, but it was only the listeners he seemed to show that to - the audience he played to were about as 'mad fer it' as a sea of confused llamas. Competition winners? Didn't seem like they had any idea what he was singing apart from 'Wonderwall' and 'Don't Look Back In Anger'. They could have at least given

the new album a listen on the way there. Noel seemed annoyed too - he tried making banter, but it looked like hard work. I'd have loved to have been at the gig myself, I would have sang every word to every song. Maybe next time they should chose their competition winners more carefully.

From: NME

To: Sammie Hawxwell

Um, and how would you go about choosing competition winners more carefully? - HM

QUIFF I HAD A GUN

From: Chris

To: NME

Though a prospect of Miles Kane joining Arctic Monkeys may seem exciting, I believe this would be a mistake. Not a 'big mistake', just a mistake. Miles Kane has his '60s-influenced music, which works very well, and Arctic Monkeys, well... they're just Arctic

Monkeys. It's Alex's thing and Miles would have too much influence on the style. I'd rather see both brilliant artists produce their own individual works and every now and again have a stint at The Last Shadow Puppets. Oh, and one last thing... someone tell Turner to get rid of that fucking haircut.

From: NME

To: Chris

On that note, I'm off... - HM



STALKER

From: Melissa Roden

To: NME

"Me and Nicky Wire from the Manics, who I met at their CD signing. I somehow managed to out-grin him!"

DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week

JUSTIN HAWKINS THE DARKNESS

QUESTION 1

What colour Spandex are you wearing in your original Madame Tussauds waxwork (below)?

"I believe they have changed it recently, but classic era would have to be pink Spandex and white leather. It's a costume I'm thinking of reviving on account of it being the best ever."

Correct



QUESTION 2

What was the new craze that featured in the Ikea ad you did the music for?

"One was 'noshing'. Not fellatio. The other one was 'shlompig'. 'Noshing' was a Nashvillian fellatio country song. 'Shlompig' was a Marc Bolan ode to relaxation. This was from before I was rock'n'roll."

Correct

QUESTION 3

How much did you raise for charity during moustache-based fundraiser 'Movember' in 2009?

"Probably around about £1,200."

Correct.

"I see myself as an ambassador for the cause. If there was another part of my body I could shave to raise money..."

QUESTION 4

In which direction does the bed spin in the video to 'I Believe In A Thing Called Love'?

"I can picture my bandmates passing from right to left, so I would be going clockwise."

Correct



QUESTION 5

Why did you tell Jonathan Ross that you'd given up wearing catsuits in 2006?

"I imagine because they'd started to fit like a sausage skin or something."

Correct. "Because they don't make them in 'slight doughy size'"

in 'slight doughy size'"

QUESTION 6

What was your time for 'Star In A Reasonably Priced Car' when you appeared on Top Gear in 2005 and again in 2006 (above)?



"I did it twice. Once drunk, once sober, both times in one minute 48, making me the fastest man in rock."

Correct

QUESTION 7

What actually happened when you met then-NME editor Conor McNicholas backstage at Glastonbury in 2003, leading to The Darkness never speaking to NME again [apart from now]?

"I was behaving like a big child. He wanted to put us on the cover. I might have sworn at him. I felt like we'd been overlooked. I felt upset and slighted and I said things I regret. I'd like to apologise for my behaviour."

Correct. Rumour is you told NME to 'get down on your knees and kiss my feet'

"Absolute nonsense! I think he was gesturing

as if he was on his knees begging. Even at my worst I don't think I'd have ever said anything like that."

QUESTION 8

You entered Making Your Mind Up, the UK's search for a Eurovision song, in 2007, but who did you end up losing out to?

"Um. I think music was the winner on the day."

Wrong. Scooch, 'Flying The Flag (For You)'. You came in second to last



QUESTION 9

You've admitted to spending £150,000 in three years on cocaine between 2003-2006

"I think there's been some crude mathematics applied there."

Anyhoo. If you hadn't stopped, and assuming the price of cocaine remained constant, and you didn't get any sort of bulk discount, how many years would it have been before you'd have snorted a million pounds?

"Three years at 50 grand a year would be 20 years."

Correct. It'd be 2023

"Ha! Well, I could still catch up, I suppose."

QUESTION 10

Who sings directly before and after your first line in Band Aid 20?

"I can't even remember what line I did."

So... was it Daniel Bedingfield and Natasha Bedingfield?"

Wrong. Tom Chaplin from Keane and Dizzee Rascal. You sing, "Raise a glass for everyone"

Total Score
8/10

"The questions on when I was most fucked up I did well in. I was just pretending not to know the Scooch one"

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