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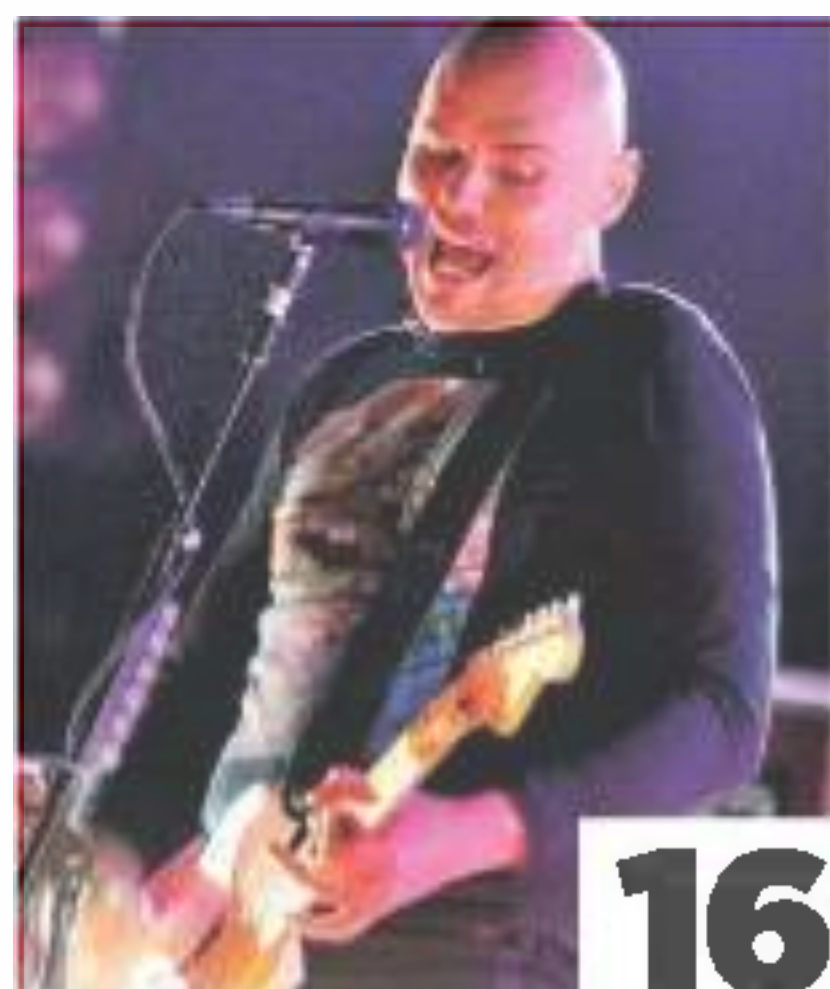
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"MCA WANTED US TO RECORD NEW MATERIAL"
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ON REPEAT

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



ARIEL PINK

Baby

Ariel Pink loves '70s crooner duo Donnie and Joe Emerson's 'Baby' so much he's put it on every mixtape he's assembled in the past few years AND covered it for the band's "retro-licious" (his words) new album 'Mature Themes'. Probably best served while hooking up with a long-haired deadbeat muso in the long grass on a sunny day.

Emelie Joy, writer

GRIZZLY BEAR

Sleeping Ute

The first taster from the Brooklyn experimentalists' hotly anticipated new album finds them playing to their strongest suit – cramming in myriad mind-boggling ideas while creating one focused whole by the end. Not as complex as 'I Live With You', more mental than 'Knife' – a welcome return from every Animal Collective fan's second favourite band.

Rick Martin, News Editor

THE-DREAM

Dope Bitch

Following his gloomy, Weeknd-esque '1997' album, Terius Nash returns to his The-Dream moniker and the sunnier end of his repertoire with this summer-flecked (cowbell alert!) tune, which sounds like Donny Hathaway singing on a '90s Mariah track.

Priya Elan, writer

LANA DEL REY

Body Electric

"Elvis is my daddy, Marilyn is my mother – Jesus is my bestest friend", purrs Lana Del Rey, bravely tottering around the edges of self-parody on this latest offering of simmering Stepford symphonics. A huge departure from 'Born To Die' it isn't, but, like swigging from a bottle of Chanel No 5, it's intoxicating.

Leonie Cooper, writer

ECHO LAKE

Wild Peace

Seeped in more buzzy gloop than a bumblebee drowning in its own (just like) honey, the title track of the

forthcoming debut album from the London newcomers is admittedly a photo of a dream Kevin Shields had once. Derivativeness be damned, though, because this feels good.

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

GRIMES AND BLOOD DIAMONDS

Phone Sex

Phone sex is an awkward, cringey thing, but LA pop artist Blood Diamonds and new BFF Grimes throw themselves 100 per cent into this ode to talking dirty. If you like the idea of K-pop mixed with Madonna's 'Material Girl' – with a drop! – listen up. If you don't, cheer up.

Siân Rowe, Assistant Reviews Editor

MICACHU AND THE SHAPES

OK

Come the glorious revolution of 2062, when purveyors of sonic war crimes are incarcerated in the Tower Of London, there'll be a bronze bust of Mica Levi in the Museum Of Pop Treasures. 'OK' will be her proudest moment: a wonky, warped nursery-rhyme that's giddier than last year's 'Chopped And Screwed'.

Ben Hewitt, writer

TODDLA T FEAT TIMBERLEE

Body Dub

Sheffield producer Toddla T is joined by Jamaican songstress Timberlee on this mix of dancehall and electro. She boldly declares "We got the best pum pum around here" in the first five seconds, while he works on the bleep-heavy backdrop and bass wobble. I could compare that wobble to her behind, but I'm not that crass.

Kieran Yates, writer



USHER FEAT A\$AP ROCKY

Hot Thing

Never liked Usher, 'cos he's mushy. Dig Rocky, 'cos he's weird. Admire The Neptunes (on production here), 'cos who doesn't? ALL THREE ON ONE SONG: Big. Pharrell's rapid squelch and Rocky's rap cameo about "G2" and "Nicki Minaj" inject some pleasing naaaaaastiness into the ickyness of Usher's vox.

Tom Howard, Reviews Editor

TRACK
OF
THE
WEEK

PASSION PIT

I'll Be Alright

When 'Take A Walk', Passion Pit's first new track for three years, landed a couple of months ago, its recession-based lyrics and familiar-sounding synths weren't the explosive comeback we'd been expecting. Thankfully, on 'I'll Be Alright' bandleader Michael Angelakos has plugged into the unfamiliar sounds of glitchy, maximalist Warp producers like Rustie and Hudson Mohawke, and now there's dynamite (and darkness) to spare. Endlessly twisting and distorting his voice through something called a "kaleidoloop", he turns

his attention to more personal affairs as he sings about gin-swigging, pill-necking and bad times before announcing: "Go if you want to, I'll be alright". You would be forgiven for missing

Michael endlessly twists and distorts his voice through a "kaleidoloop"

some of that lyrical gloom though, because his tale of woe is buried deep beneath a whole heap of hyperactive Friendly Fires-style optimism.

As they proved on song after song on 2009's 'Manners', Passion Pit have always been at their best when smuggling this kind of heart-on-sleeve honesty into their ecstatic sound. And if there's more of this sort of thing to come, it could save summer.

Kevin EG Perry, writer

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UPFRONT

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

Edited by Rick Martin

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT... FROM THE NEW VACCINES ALBUM?

Barely a year after their debut, Justin and co are back with a quickfire second album – inspired by the work ethic of Elton John and the tunes of Bob Dylan and the Roses...

MAIN
EVENT

Say what you like about The Vaccines, but you can't fault their work ethic. *NME* has travelled to deepest

Somerset where they're finishing up sessions for their second record, *The Vaccines Come Of Age*, with producer Ethan Johns, which will come out just 18 months after their lauded debut. Clearly the only grass growing under their feet is on the rolling hills around the Distillery Studios on Farleigh Plain.

Suggest to frontdude Justin Young that this is any kind of rush job and he is defiant. "I've always written songs, I always will and they were ready to go and I just thought, 'What's the point waiting?'" he tells *NME*. "The problem these days is you have to play the game a bit with labels where they all wanna find the right week to release a record. But I love that back in the day, Elton John released three records a year. I love the idea of being able to release a record a year. You don't wanna be hashing stuff out live."

The speed at which The Vaccines can write and record is to their advantage.

In the current climate, letting the grass grow under your feet with drawn-out, crisis-fuelled sessions for a second set can leave bands with no fanbase to return to. But with the songs already down and everyone confident they were good enough, the band decamped to Belgium in March to begin recording, moved into the Distillery and, peppered by a few festival shows, have returned for these final sessions. By the time you read this, it'll all be finished. It says a lot for The Vaccines' conviction that the label agreed with them that there would be no point waiting to release in January what was ready in the spring. So 'The



Vaccines Come Of Age will meet the world sometime around the beginning of September.

It finds them in a sturdier, more confident space. "I don't think there's any danger of us making the same record twice," says Justin, "but I think anything people found attractive about us the first time round has been retained. I'm really confident we've got the balance right."

Where the first album found them as "students of rock" on a mission to nail

down the formulas for the most basic and most perfect pop songs, now they want to do the same, just to prove

that a) they can play and b) there's a few more strings to their bows.

The first evidence of that came with the gruff bridging track 'No Hope', to which one fan hysterically reacted with a comment on the Soundcloud page, "Bob Dylan?!" Justin reckons his newly confident ad-libbed vocal style might explain why the track brings Dylan to mind. But he also admits, "In all our record collections there's a big roots Americana section, and there was no place for that on the first record at all." And with their magpie tendencies spreading outwards in all musical directions (see box, below), Justin says

that lyrically, he's bringing things closer to home. "I wanted to look inwards with this record. Honesty goes a long way in music and it's therapeutic. There's a lot about the way I'm feeling. One minute you're a shit-kicking 21-year-old and the next you're playing a song you've written in front of 20,000 people chanting your name. But that's tongue-in-cheek too, it's not me taking myself completely seriously."

So while there will be no talk of wetsuits this time round, rest assured there's no talk of hotel rooms either. "The road is where you find yourself after your first record, but the one thing I think's so awful is where musicians make on-the-road records where they're singing about missing their friends and family, 'another one from the road!' It's so soulless. So everything I've written on the road, I've written with a good view."

The bromance is strong with KoI, producer Ethan Johns too. He told them from the start that his problem with most current bands is they can't actually play what they put down in the studio. Now with everything recorded live, "He always tells us when we make him feel good," says Justin; but as Ethan confides to *NME*, "They're better than I thought they were going to be."

We'll find out if they were right to come back so quick in September – but for now, The Vaccines are making the *Difficult Second Album* look easy.

"The songs were ready. Why wait?"

JUSTIN YOUNG

Five key songs from the album

We've heard them – this is how they're sounding

'TEENAGE ICON'

A likely first single 'proper' in which The Vaccines decorate their best new-wave buzz with a lovely '50s bubblegum shimmy. And Justin sets fire to his newfound status as a pin-up, declaring "I'm no teenage icon, I'm not Frankle Avalon".

'WEIRDO'

A more downbeat adventure, but still warm and fuzzy and instantly melodic. Justin is found in a confessional mode, arguing about his sense of self over something that perhaps resembles one of the more tender turns from Dexys.

'NO HOPE'

The one you've heard and, the way they tell it, the best bridging track between The Vaccines you knew and the upgraded ones on their way back. The feedback may have suggested Bob Dylan, but the screwed-youth narrative is pure James Dean.

'ALL IN VAIN'

Further proof of The Vaccines' newfound confidence in spreading their toys into other parts of the playground; in essence an old-school rock'n'roll pop song, it nevertheless builds to something celestial and somewhere approaching The Stone Roses.

'LONELY WORLD'

This album's 'Wetsuit' in that it's a stirring and emotionally bare sort of thing, except this time building on waves of floating '60s psychedelia that stir up a storm and then, when the chorus hits, drop down to pin-drop quiet. And beautiful.

WIN! SIGNED ROSES PRINT!

As brother of Roses guitarist John Squire, photographer Matt Squire has had unrivalled access to the band at all their key moments. And now he's opening up his archive – including putting out limited-edition, signed prints of the official negative from 1987 single 'Sally Cinnamon'. And you could be the proud owner of one of the prints, featuring the signatures of Ian Brown, Mani, John and Reni. "It wasn't even specially commissioned," Matt tells *NME*. "John saw the negatives, liked what he saw and the rest is history." Want to get your hands on this amazing prize? Follow the instructions below. See mattsquire.zenfolio.com for more info on Matt's Stone Roses prints.



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THE STORY BEHIND YOUR FREE POSTERS

As the excitement builds towards Heston Park, this week *NME* is giving away two new Stone Roses posters – turn to page 33 to get yours. The photos are among those in new exhibition *What The World Is Waiting For*, at the Rock City Art Gallery, Bedford until June 22. The event showcases images by photographer Ian Tilton, capturing the band during the late '80s. "We bonded on our first shoot together," Tilton explains.



Hope Simon
remembered to
pack some Persil

Ben is actually
completely naked
here. Honestly

The Swindon crowd
implore Simon to
bare his chest

BIFFY'S WET 'N' WILD RETURN

After their longest ever gap between gigs, the Scottish crazies treat their hardcore fans to a sweat-drenched show with new material in Swindon

A gig in a swimming pool with the singer wearing a boiler suit? You can't really go wrong with that. And so it is that Biffy Clyro signal the start of Season Six. The Post-Cardle Years in the same brilliant and bizarre fashion they've maintained since day one. Against a backdrop of triangular mirrors and trees, Friday night in Swindon is a fun, fan-only warm-up ahead of festival shows at Download and RockNess. It's only been seven months since they last played, but that's still the longest they've ever gone between shows.

The boys have almost finished work on album six, which will still very likely be a double but, following a rethink, those discs definitely *won't* be called 'The Land At The End Of Our Toes' and 'The Sand In The Core Of Our Bones', as they claimed to *NME* earlier this year. Those lines, however, still provide the chorus of totemic tentpole track 'Sounds Like Balloons', one of the four new songs

they're roadtesting. It's epic and multi-faceted and melodic and totally hot. There's the thrashy and acrobatic 'Modern Magic Formula'. There's 'The Joke's On Us', which they've been playing for a year now, and there is the epic 'Victory Over The Sun', as monumentally daft as the title would suggest, starting chanty, going wiggly, and thrusting toward a climax as gigantic as any *X Factor* Christmas Number One they've ever written. All of this augurs well. The beery converts they recruited with 2009's 'Only Revolutions' will be happy with the big soaring choruses, but all four are dense and complicated enough to win back the spoddy early fans who deserted them around the same time.

Otherwise, it's hits all the way, which is disarming when you realise quite how

many they now have. Yet between opening cataclysm 'Mountains' and final euphoric smash 'The Captain', the oldies also get the care they deserve. Heartstring-tugger '21' gets an outing early doors and the brazen 'Toys Toys Toys Choke Toys Toys Toys' is dedicated to support act Pure Love.

*The beery converts
and the early fans
will both be happy*

Out on the merch stand, this summer's best T-shirt is there to reassure fans; inspired by Frankie Goes To Hollywood's

seminal design, it reads simply 'BIFFY SAYS RELAX'. Up there, Simon can do no such thing; the boiler suit is killing him. It's a dry run for his tribute to Pete Townshend's get-up at the Isle Of Wight 1970, which he plans to unveil at the festival later this month. For most other bands those would be silly and lofty heights to reach for. But here, nah.

*"We've
gone nuts"*

*Simon comes clean
about the new record*

NME: Why Swindon?

Simon Neil: "We scoured the map trying to find a town we hadn't played before. And it had to begin with an 'S', that was the stipulation. We were feeling sexy and saucy so it was all about the S. We know what it's like when you live in the smaller places that bands don't really come through, because whenever a band came to Ayrshire we'd fucking go mental." What can you tell us about the new album?

"We're fully baggiped up on this record. We went as nuts as we could possibly go. We really don't want to ever make a plodding rock record. We're fans of big tunes, but it wouldn't really be Biffy if it didn't have the quirkiness and the weirdness, and it kind of comes naturally sometimes."

Talk us through the boiler suit?

"It was a huge mistake. There was a reason that we started playing with our tops off because you sweat profusely and you end up like a raisin at the end of the night. I was giving myself a dry run for the Isle Of Wight to make sure I wasn't pinching my crotch."



Photo: (l-r): James, Ben and Simon

ANDY WILLISHER

"MCA ASKED TO RECORD TRACKS BEFORE HE DIED"

Producer Mario Caldato lifts the lid on Adam Yauch's final recordings – and comments on the future for Ad-Rock and Mike D

Since the death of Adam 'MCA' Yauch last month, there has been plenty of speculation that there's an album of unreleased Beastie Boys material on the way. Mike D confirmed that the trio had recorded with Yauch shortly before he died – and that there's the stack of work that never made it onto 2009's 'Hot Sauce Committee Part Two' – which was stalled after Yauch's diagnosis with cancer. But now *NME* has learned that there are other tracks in the Beasties' vault which could see the light of day.

Mario C – who worked with the band on 'Paul's Boutique', 'Check Your Head', 'Ill Communication' and 'Hello Nasty' – says that he has a stash of extra tracks from his studio days with the trio. "There was a lot of material that was recorded so there is a possibility of something coming out," he confirms. "There's a handful of extra stuff from each record apart from 'Paul's Boutique'. I actually went through it all recently and checked out a few things that weren't used for 'Hello Nasty' and there's definitely two or three extra tracks that didn't get utilised that could be utilised."

"He'd want it heard – if it was good"

MARIO CALDATO

But, he says, it's unlikely that any material will be released in the near future. "We'll take it slowly. No-one's thinking of doing anything right away. It's too soon."

Of Yauch's last recording session with his bandmates Mike D and Ad-Rock a few months before he died, he says: "The guys told me that he wanted to record. So they hung out and did what they used to do – just lay it down and have fun. He would want people to hear it if it was good. I'm not sure what his voice was sounding like at that point. I'm sure the guys would be very

tasteful in using anything. If it was supposed to be heard and if it's appropriate then it will happen."

But does he see a possibility of the Beastie Boys without Yauch? "I doubt it," he says. "They worked as a threesome. They were a very team-orientated group. And Yauch was the captain, leader and mentor." It's a view that tallies with Mike D's comments after Yauch's death – namely that he can see the remaining duo making music, but not as the Beasties. "Adam was the depth of the trio," Caldato concludes. "That's irreplaceable. It wouldn't fly without him."



The Beasties in 2009: Ad-Rock, Mike D and MCA

Who is Mario C?

The lowdown on the Beasties' legendary producer



Mario Caldato Jr was the Beastie Boys' right-hand man for 'Paul's Boutique', 'Check Your Head', 'Ill

Communication' and 'Hello Nasty'. Outside the studio, he performed with the band on tour doing front house mixing, making sure the sound was pitch perfect live and on record. He's

immortalised in a lyric from 'Intergalactic': "Mario C likes to keep it clean"; testament to his raw and no-frills style. He's since worked with Beck, Björk and Super Furry Animals.

MUSE GO DUBSTEP: THE FANS REACT

The band announced their big return last week with a lavish teaser trailer – but what does it all mean?

Updates from Muse have been few and far between over the past few months, with the band locking themselves away in a London studio to work on the follow-up to 'The Resistance'. But last Wednesday (June 6) they returned in typically epic style with a lavishly put together trailer for their new album 'The 2nd Law', closely followed by the announcement of October UK and European live dates (see boxout, right).

The montage, which featured footage of a newsreader, rabid stockbrokers and the oil industry over a swirling string section, soon gives way to a very angry-looking robot and a Skrillex-esque dubstep wob. As with every other syllable the band utter, their rabid online fanbase soon analysed the trailer and



quickly discovered that the words were largely lifted from physics' second law of thermodynamics, hence the whole 'The 2nd Law' title. Greenbean91, a particularly sharp-eyed *NME.COM* user, noted the trailer's obsession with energy creation, entropy



(look it up, it's quite complex) and the irreversibility of some actions (hence all the oil references).

Theories were also questioned about the mention of Helium 3. Could it be a far-off planet where the album is set? Could it be a

new chemical particle designed to save the world? Actually, it's just the name of the band's record label; they've been putting stuff out on it since 2006. A far bigger talking point than any of this was the band's decision to delve into Skrillex and Nero territory, with forum poster NakedInTheRain even hoping that "the dubstep part is just to fuck with us". Many others were into the change of direction, and, unusually for Muse fans, some were really unsure about it. Either way, when the band said they were doing something totally different this time around, clearly they weren't joking...

THE LIVE RETURN

Matt Bellamy and co will play the following UK dates this year

Glasgow SECC (October 24)
London O2 Arena (26, 27)
Birmingham LG Arena (30)
Manchester MEN Arena (November 1)
See NME.COM/artists/muse for further information

BECK, JACK AND THE NASHVILLE SESSIONS

As Mr Hansen reveals he's got two new albums in the works, he also lifts the lid on what went down when he paid Jack White a visit

When you're as busy as Beck, it's hard to get shit done. Four years since the release of 'Modern Guilt', he tells NME he's struggling to stay in one place long enough to finish another album. So it's something of a surprise when he reveals he's working on not one new album, but two. "I have something that I'm working on in Nashville that is more traditional songwriting," he explains. "Then I have this other record that's sort of weird and kind of all over the place..."

While we wait for those (and he's not committing to release dates), he's got plenty of collaborative projects to keep him busy – producing everyone from Charlotte Gainsbourg to Steven Malkmus, supplying wonky rapping on Childish Gambino's 'Silk Pillow', and laying down two tracks for Jack White's Third Man Records on the 'I Just Started Hating Some People Today' 7-inch. So will he follow it with a full collaborative album with Jack? Why's Nashville such a big influence at the moment? And who'll produce his new material? We got him on the phone to tell us...

How did the Third Man single with Jack White come about?

"We've been friendly for over 10 years and we've recorded a number of times together. Most of the stuff we haven't put out. But we've been talking for years about me coming to Nashville. Then I decided to do a cross-country trip with my family last fall, and we stopped off."

What were the sessions for 'I Just Started Hating Some People Today' like?
"It was reminiscent of how I've recorded a lot of my records – at people's houses. I like that informality; the kids are running around in the yard,

Beck regrets lending his eyes to Jack for a limited-edition Third Man vinyl release

BECK'S COLLABS:
The roll call
He's been pretty busy of late...



MGMT

They appeared on Beck's Record Club project covering Leonard Cohen songs, along with the likes of Devendra Banhart.

CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG

Beck produced and co-wrote Charlotte's 2010 album 'IRM', duetting with the French songstress on lead single 'Heaven Can Wait'.

THURSTON MOORE

Beck produced the Sonic Youth man's 2011 album 'Demolished Thoughts' and played bass too.

BAT FOR LASHES

Narasha Khan (below) duetted with Beck on 'Let's Get Lost', part of *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* soundtrack.

CHILDISH GAMBINO

Beck turned his hand to rapping on Donald Glover's new track 'Silk Pillow' earlier this month.



people coming and going. It feels relaxed. It's a bit of a blur. We both gravitate towards the traditional style of recording. It was gratifying to me for something to finally see light of day."

What's going on with the screaming at the end of the track?

"That was Jack. He's got a better scream than I do. Mine's been dormant for a lot of years."

There's obviously a Nashville vibe to the tracks...

"It's funny, there is something going on in Nashville. I've been going there for years, but there's a whole community there now, I think I know more people there than I do in New York or LA."

Is Jack going to be doing production for the whole of your next record?

"No, that was a separate



project, although I slightly wish I'd recorded more at Jack's; I really liked working there. This record I've been pretty much on my own; the first time since 'Midnite Vultures' I've produced myself. For a lot of years I felt like that record got away from me a bit; production-wise it was a little bit ambitious. I don't think I really wanted to take the reins for a lot of years. That record got a little crazy."

So you're ready to do it on your own?
"You know, in time, 14 years later, there's a lot more perspective and experience. I've spent a lot of time and money and years – and wasted a lot of time and money and years – in the studio trying to figure out how it all works."

[Bassist and producer] Justin Meldal-Johnsen did tweet that your new material was "mindblowing" – so it does seem a new album is on the way...
"It's been a long gestation, you know? I'll go off and do a record with someone else for five months, and then come back to it for a few weeks, and then I'll get caught up in some other project or remix. I've been busy the whole time."

GOOD WEEK

Taylor Hawkins

The Foo Fighters drummer was confirmed to play Iggy Pop in a new film about legendary New York venue CBGB.



Taylor praises the Dave Grohl grin every morning

Radiohead fans

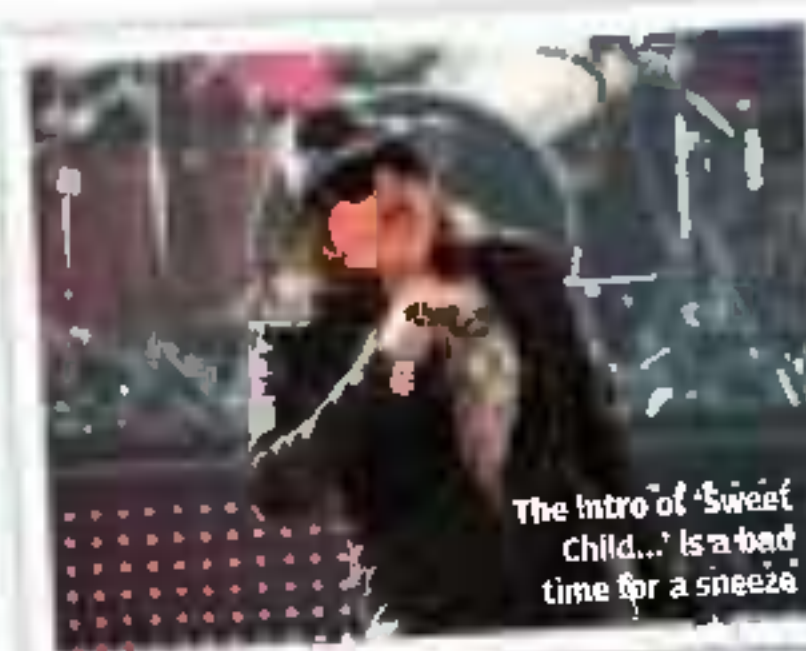
US fans were treated with another new song – 'Full Stop' – in addition to two others premiered earlier on the tour.

Marilyn Manson

Not only was his Paris show graced by Tilda Swinton, his backstage requests included no-one making eye contact with him.

Axl Rose

A jewellery thief hit the Guns N' Roses' Paris date – although the £130,000 haul was eventually returned by police.



The intro of 'Sweet Child...' is a bad time for a sneeze

Strictly Come Dancing

The TV favourite was dealt a blow when Noel Gallagher refused to join the judging panel.

Dave Mustaine

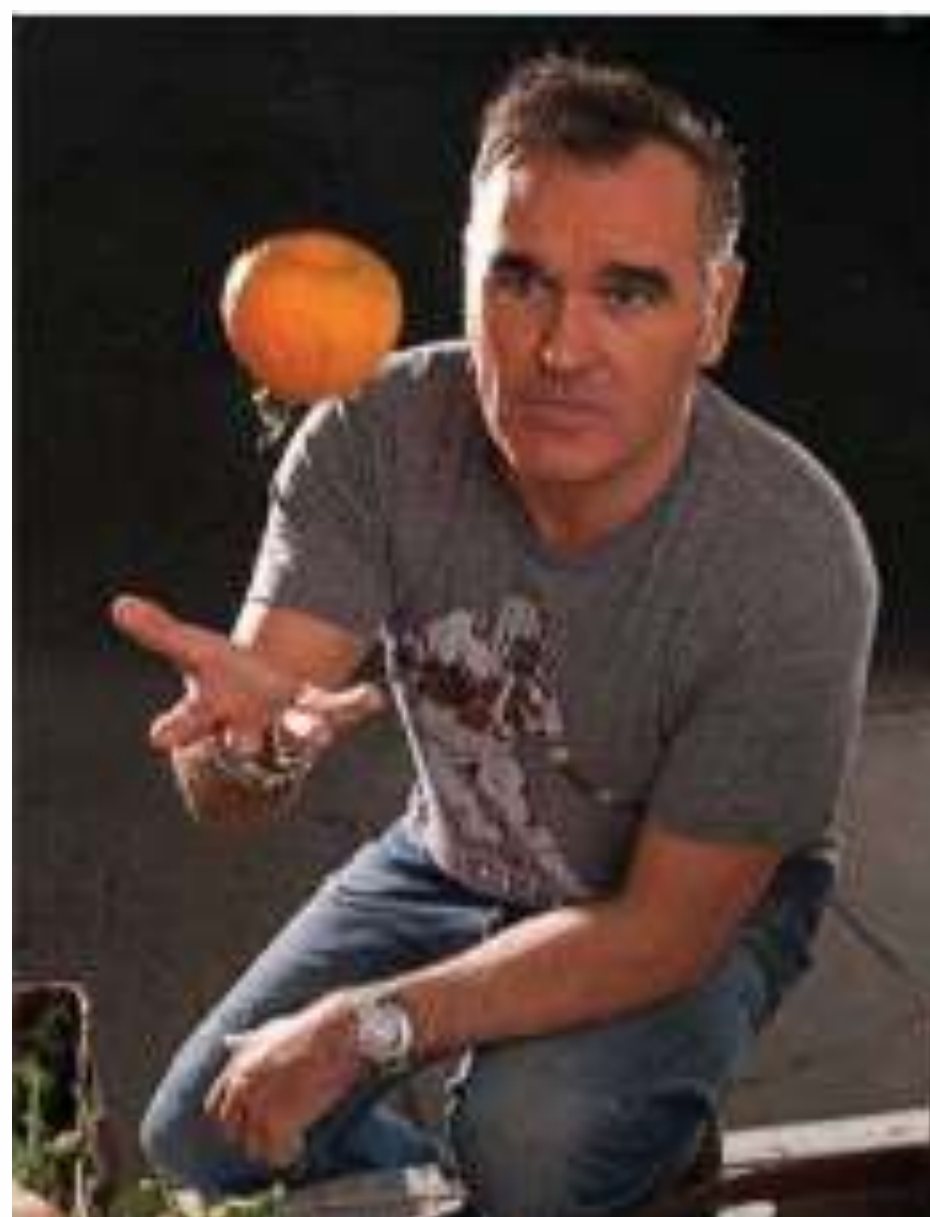
Megadeth's set at Croatia's Metalfest ended early when the crowd pelted them with rocks. One hit singer Dave on the bonce.

BAD WEEK

NME SAYS SORRY TO MORRISSEY FOR THE MISUNDERSTANDING OVER 2007 ARTICLE

In December 2007, we published an article entitled "Morrissey: Big mouth strikes again". Following this, Morrissey began proceedings for libel against us. His complaint is that we accused him of being a racist off the back of an interview which he gave to the magazine. He believes the article was edited in such a way

that made him seem reactionary. We wish to make clear that we do not believe that he is a racist; we didn't think we were saying he was and we apologise to Morrissey if he or anyone else misunderstood our piece in that way. We never set out to upset Morrissey and we hope we can both get back to doing what we do best.



READING AND LEEDS: LATEST LINE-UP ADDITIONS

Here's the full Festival Republic run-down and the buzziest new acts

It's the stage that's provided career kickstarts for everyone from Kasabian to Arctic Monkeys over the past 12 years – and this week *NME* can reveal the names set to grace the Festival Republic Stage at Reading and Leeds festivals this year. While there's plenty of old festival hands heading up the stage – The Subways, Feeder and The View to name just three – there's also myriad buzzy new bands to check out. Here's five you absolutely cannot miss...

PALMA VIOLETS

Reading Friday/Leeds Saturday
They've no tracks available online but that hasn't stopped south London's Palma Violets on their lightning fast ascent to the top of the buzz tree. With a deal with Rough Trade already inked, this gang are ready to bring their boneshakingly brilliant psych-rock out of the shadows. Check out: 'Happy Endings'

SAVAGES

Reading Friday/Leeds Saturday
Four femme fatales fronted by the androgynous Jehnny Beth, Savages are purveyors of whip-smart post-punk, performed with stares so cold they could freeze the sun. Worth watching for their seething live intensity alone. Check out: 'Flying To Berlin'

JAKE BUGG

Reading Saturday/Leeds Sunday
Fresh-faced Nottingham troubadour Jake Bugg may only be 18 but he's already tapping into a classic style of songwriting,

Sounding more like a child of the '60s than the 21st century, Bugg already feels like a household name in waiting. Check out: 'Trouble Town'

ALT-J

Reading Friday/Leeds Saturday
Alt-J are putting the brains back into guitar music. Not content with littering their debut album 'An Awesome Wave' with references to highbrow arts, their off-kilter folk-step is a mass of razor-sharp beats snapped into mental time signatures. Check out: 'Tessellate'

CITIZENS!

Reading Saturday/Leeds Sunday
After releasing their Alex Kapranos-produced debut 'Here We Are' last month, Citizens' task is simple: step out of the Franz man's art-pop shadow. However, they already feel one buzzy festival slot away from proper stardom. Check out: 'Reptile'



Festival Republic Stage: The full line-up		
FRIDAY READING SATURDAY LEEDS	SATURDAY READING SUNDAY LEEDS	SUNDAY READING FRIDAY LEEDS
Sleigh Bells	Feeder	The View
The Subways	Young Guns	The Futureheads
Veronica Falls	Lower Than Atlantis	Benjamin Francis
Bastille	Bassnectar (DJ set)	Leftwich
Niki And The Dove	We Are The In Crowd	King Charles
Zulu Winter	Dog Is Dead	2:54
Lucy Rose	Jake Bugg	SCUM
Alt-J	Don Broco	Alberta Cross
We Are Augustines	Oberhofer	Iceage
Jeff The Brotherhood	The Knux	OZ Deathrays
Savages	Citizens!	Toy
Fidlar	Theme Park	Deap Vally
Palma Violets	The Minutes	The Cast Of Cheers
O Brother	Blood Or Whiskey	La

THE BEST OF NME VIDEO.COM THIS WEEK



BLACK SABBATH TALK DOWNLOAD

tinyurl.com/d9qk7v8

Speaking ahead of their headline slot at the festival last weekend, Ozzy and co discuss the progress of their new album.



REGINA SPEKTOR: 'WHY I LOVE THE STROKES!'

tinyurl.com/hon2xjv

Regina tells us of her fellow New Yorkers' influence on her LP 'What We Saw From The Cheap Seats'.



BACKSTAGE AT CARL BARAT'S OPERA

tinyurl.com/eslwaaz

Carl talks us through his bonkers role in Paris opera *Pop'pea* - the fan footage of the show at the end of the clip shouldn't be missed...



THE CRIBS: OUR NEW ALBUM'S TAKEN OVER OUR LIVES

tinyurl.com/cfrw72f

The Jordan brothers talk about their new record, before playing an acoustic session in the NME office.



MYSTIC GAV

NME oracle **Gavin Haynes** looks deep into his pint glass to predict the events rocking the music world in the week ahead



Wednesday ILL MANORS CONTAGION STRIKES

As Plan B announces his Forest Gate-based *Ill Manors*, The Vaccines announce that they too are to make a film based on their childhood hood. *To The Ill Manor Born* will take in one bad day in Kensington, with eight interleaving storylines of modern yooof, including one about a girl who sells her body to a Russian oligarch, peer pressure leading to Jack Wills addiction, single-shareholder families and crap service in Boujis.

Thursday WAR OF THE ROSES

When Axl Rose demands that security remove anyone wearing a Slash T-shirt from Guns N' Roses gigs, Slash will retaliate tit-for-tat by ordering security to remove from his gigs all massive egomaniac wankers and useless shoddy timekeeping arseholes.

Friday START-UPS AND KICK-DOWNS

Following Amanda Palmer's million-bucks haul from her fan-funded record on Kickstarter, The Enemy will announce they have started their own Kickstarter, and hope to raise a million quid from good old-fashioned people

Faris Badwan is planning to invent the 'Bar Blaster: Ice Crusher And Nut Cracker'

power in exchange for a promise that they won't make another record. Meanwhile, it will emerge that Faris Badwan is still stuck on \$390 of a planned \$10,000 for his own invention, the 'Bar Blaster: Ice Crusher And Nut Cracker With Automated Cocktail Shaking Functionality'.



Birthday Runes

TUPAC SHAKUR (Born June 16, 1971)

Another good year for Tupac, as the holograms toll while he hides out in an undisclosed South American lair, although he will have to put up one of those 'No Junk Mail' stickers on his letterbox, as the amount of catalogues and pizza takeout leaflets he has to put

Saturday BLOC MOCKING BLEATS

After announcing that he's going to be putting Bloc Party back together, Kele Okereke will confess in an interview that the album 'Four' is not so-named after it being their fourth record, but after the number of people who bought their third.

Sunday TUG OF PURE LOVE

As Gallows begin playing live with new singer Wade MacNeil, there will be an awkward moment in an awards show lift when Frank Carter pleads with his former bandmates to take him back, confessing that Pure Love are "just not very good", before tearfully threatening to sue for copyright possession of the band name. When Wade retaliates by bringing in his own lawyers, the band's legal team will work out an innovative custody-sharing arrangement based on precedents from family courts. Frank will do Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Easter, while Wade will do Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Christmas. Gallows fans will become the neglected kids in the middle of this divorced-dad arrangement, and their grades will suffer.

Monday IN THE DOLL DUMBS

It is announced that Little Mix are to get their own series of dolls. However, the orders have to be postponed when the Chinese manufacturing plant complain that they are still working hard on the technology to make a human face look that anonymous, plastic and blank.

Tuesday BEATLE CRUSHERS

The National Trust confirms it will not bother saving Ringo Starr's childhood home from demolition; they will also confirm that they will be installing a blue plaque at the exact spot where Paul McCartney's songwriting talent died in 1974.

THE

NME

CHART

1	NEW	JACK WHITE 'FREEDOM AT 21' Tomm Moya
2	22	MAXIMO PARK 'HIPS AND LIPS' V2/Parlophone
3	11	HOT CHIP 'NIGHT & DAY' Globe
4	4	THE BLACK KEYS 'DEAD AND GONE' Warner
5	40	ALABAMA SHAKES 'HANG LOOSE' Rough Trade
6	17	ALT-J 'BREEZEBLOCKS' Poly
7	10	PASSION PIT 'TAKE A WALK' Capitol
8	7	THE VACCINES 'NO HOPE' Capitol
9	2	ALABAMA SHAKES 'HOLD ON' Rough Trade
10	8	THE CRIBS 'COME ON, BE A NO-ONE' Island
11	16	DRY THE RIVER 'NO REST' Poly
12	25	OF MONSTERS AND MEN 'DIRTY PAWS' Island
13	1	MILES KANE 'FIRST OF MY KIND' Capitol
14	14	HOWLER 'THIS ONE'S DIFFERENT' Rough Trade
15	3	KASABIAN 'MAN OF SIMPLE PLEASURES' Capitol
16	5	BAND OF SKILLS 'SWEET SOUP' Dunham Bros
17	12	SPECTOR 'CELESTINE' Poly
18	6	PAUL WELLEN 'WHEN YOUR GARDEN'S OVERGROWN' Island
19	28	ZULU WINTER 'SILVER TONGUE' Poly
20	NEW	THE MILK 'EVERYTIME WE FIGHT' Island

NME

RADIO

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

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

PURITY RING

Warped, compelling future-pop, with a bit of mutilation thrown into the mix

Purity Ring's vocalist Megan James seems so... nice. It's roam and the band have been travelling for days, but instead of rattling on sleeping pills and screaming at children (like *Radar* would) she is enthusiastic, she's bright and she says everything is "incredible!"

The first time you listen to her band and that sweet voice, you'll probably think, "Ooh, she's sooooo nice" too. That is, until you listen to what she's singing about. This is a woman who writes about bodily fluids seeping into fractured skulls, crying bones, dead voices and drilling holes in eyelids. She's a Canadian Slayer in a lovely curly wig.

But it wasn't always this way. Purity Ring only formed in late 2010, when 24-year-old Megan was approached by 21-year-old Corin Roddick. They'd known each other from playing in electro-pop upstarts Born Gold (formerly Gobble Gobble) and came together again when Corin realised he needed someone to sing over the beats he'd been writing while on tour. At the start of 2011 they uploaded 'Ungirthed', starting

a buzz clusterfuck the size of Saturn, with love coming in from fans, blogs and major record labels. "It was like, 'OK, we're going to have to write another song!'" she says, explaining that later tracks 'Lofticries' and 'Belispeak' only came into being three months afterwards.

Now, finally, debut album 'Shrines' is about to come out on 4AD. It's a weird yet compelling listen; sometimes straight-up indie, sometimes what's been hailed as future-pop (or, just electronic pop music with bits of wavy hip-hop wedged in). On their current European tour they'll fit just as well with the brilliant tumultuous bass of LA duo Nguzunguzu (at Berlin's Berghain) as they do with Brighton guitar group Fear Of Men (at London indie institution White Heat). There are tracks like 'Fineshrine' where Megan coos the grim "get a little closer, cut out my sternum and poke" over a warped echoey rhythm, and makes it sound like a fey (but murderous) take on R Kelly asking a lover to "Sex me, baby baby sex me". So come on, Megan, what's it all about? "I just daydream lyrics like that," she says (yup) enthusiastically... *Siân Rowe*

NEED TO KNOW

BASED: Halifax/Montreal, Canada

FOR FANS OF: Grimes, Jai Paul

BUY IT NOW: Single 'Obedear' is out now on 4AD. Buy LP 'Shrines' on July 24

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Corin had never made music with a computer until he started Purity Ring



EAGULLS SOAR ABOVE IT ALL

Singer George Mitchell's life is a living hell... the perfect inspiration for slabs of dirty punk

RADAR
NEWS

Since last time we spoke with thrilling Leeds grotters Eagulls, things have been looking up. Fresh from sharing stages with the likes

of Fucked Up, Hot Snakes and San Fran hardcore legends Flipper, the punk five-piece have a new EP released on Sexbeat later this month.

Not that singer George Mitchell has anything much to crow about: "They're more personal, the songs on this one. The old stuff was more my anger against other people, but this time, I dunno, I got a bit pissed off. I went off the rails with drinking and that, I was living in a bad place and it was just the perfect opportunity to write about my shit life."

Seagulls being more the types to crap directly into your chips than soar on great thermals of windy metaphor, George doesn't stint on the gory details: 'Coffin' recalls his pisshead flair for passing out drunk on mates' carpets with arms folded Dracula-style, 'Moulting' talks about going to pieces – literally – in

the face of the mounting squalor of your existence, and 'Stillborn' is a nasty retort to the neighbours from hell.

George explains: "Our neighbour came round with knives and wanted to kill us; he fucking hated us. He was a drug dealer, he managed to get his scally crew to come and rob the house. He had about a thousand fucking kids and his girlfriend was pregnant again, even though they used to take pills constantly. So the song's just me saying I wouldn't mind if your baby is stillborn. I wouldn't wish it on anyone else, but I'd wish it on them."

Elsewhere on the (self-titled) EP, 'Cripple (Hypokalemic Periodic Paralysis)' deals with a potassium muscle deficiency that left George temporarily unable to move when he was younger. "I remember there was a woman on the hospital ward and she was pretty much brown bread. I was looking at her thinking, 'Fucking hell, I might not move again...' It's like a therapy session, this!" Let it all out, George. *Alex Denney*

Catch Eagulls live at London CAMP, June 19 and Leeds Brudenell, June 20

The Buzz

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



1 GLASS ANIMALS

Yeah, so calling a song 'Cocoa Hooves' does make it sound like an M&S Christmas present, but fuck it – Oxford newcomers Glass Animals more than make up for their titling shortcomings in the melody department. They sound different enough from the more A-list acts their city's produced in recent years to warrant serious attention, something that was reinforced when we caught them at the Bullingdon a few months ago (they were a sea of soaring vocals – think Buckley on downers – and FX trickery). The band have just been snapped up by the new Kaya Kaya label, the latest of XL's ever-growing roster of imprints, and they play its launch party at London's Birthdays next Tuesday (June 19).



2 CHEATAHS

OK, so London isn't exactly short on good bands who deal in the kind of scrappy, '90s-influenced rock that Cheatahs do, but by pushing the hooks and melodies to the fore and not just relying on the "sound", this new quartet are elevating themselves to being one of the best. Their 'Coared' EP is out on June 25 on Marshall Teller.



3 THE NIGHT'S 'TURN YOUR LIGHT ON ME'

If you thought Haim recalled the dark-desired yearning of Fleetwood Mac, check out the first track from this clandestine London collective, who've been holed up in a studio for the past several months perfecting their baroque, brooding pop. Catch a rare live glimpse when they hit the UK in mid-July.



4 GHXST

They describe themselves as "deth grunge" but to us GHXST sound like a sleazy, female-fronted, New York City version of DZ Deathrays. If the singer from DZ Deathrays was on Quaaludes, that is. The NYC trio arrive in the UK this week, playing a host of veritable toilet venues up and down the country.



5 RUDIMENTAL

Somewhere in the East End of London lie Rudimental, a new four-piece production outfit currently making waves with their infectious drum'n'bass, deep house, dubstep and garage beats. The Wretch 32 and Benny Banks remixers are about to prove that comparing them to Chase & Status may not be such an exaggeration after all.

BAND CRUSH



Justin Hawkins of The Darkness on his new favourite band

"I love this band called Cock 107. They're just starting to break through, and they sound like Foreigner. New Foreigner. They have the potential to be mega household names..."

SCENE
REPORTTHE DRUMS:
BREAKING
NEW WAVES

*Jacob Graham digs deep into the
thrift store of future music*



Kidcity are from Toronto and have a slight Kate Bush vibe about them—something in the instrumentation, a similar spirit perhaps. It's a very organic, electronic, melodic sort of music in the vein of Io Echo. I do hope they don't polish themselves up, something would be lost.

Also from Canada are Montreal's Chevalier Avant Garde. Luckily there is nothing too avant-garde about them. It's just great, understated, electronic pop. The two band members Dimitri and Filip keep a thick veil of mystery around the project, which I always appreciate.

Shelflife Records once again proves that it's still the coolest indie label in the world with The Hobbes Fanclub. They've got a wonderfully familiar, noisy, '90s pop vibe going on. And what a great name! It reminds me of all the great indie/noise-pop Tooth & Nail records from the '90s. You should check all that stuff out too. Morella's Forest is a good place to start, but I digress...

JACOB'S
TOP 5

KIDCITY
'Bloody Face'

CHEVALIER AVANT
GARDE
'Nie Rozumiem'

THE HOBBS
FANCLUB
'Your Doubting
Heart'

GOODLY
THOUSANDS
'Honest'

NOVEMBER
NOVELET
'Street Of Lost
Hearts'

Goodly Thousands are just classic English pop music in the vein of The Hit Parade or Harvey Williams. Jangly guitars with jangly percussion. You're probably thinking all this jangliness is starting to get old, well it is, but if it's a great song you might as well give in.

And now I must tell you about a German band called November Növelet. They're not new *per se*, in fact they've been around since the early '90s. But I've only just discovered their 2007 album 'Magic', and I'm obsessed with it. The most minimal synthesizers and drum machines you've ever heard, but somehow with a striking intensity. It's extremely dark and I'm not sure if it is the man or the woman in the band that is singing; the voice sounds mostly like a whispering demon. The accompanying videos are incredible and must be seen to be believed. Go, see, now!

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Toddla T

5
TO SEE
This week's
unmissable new
music shows

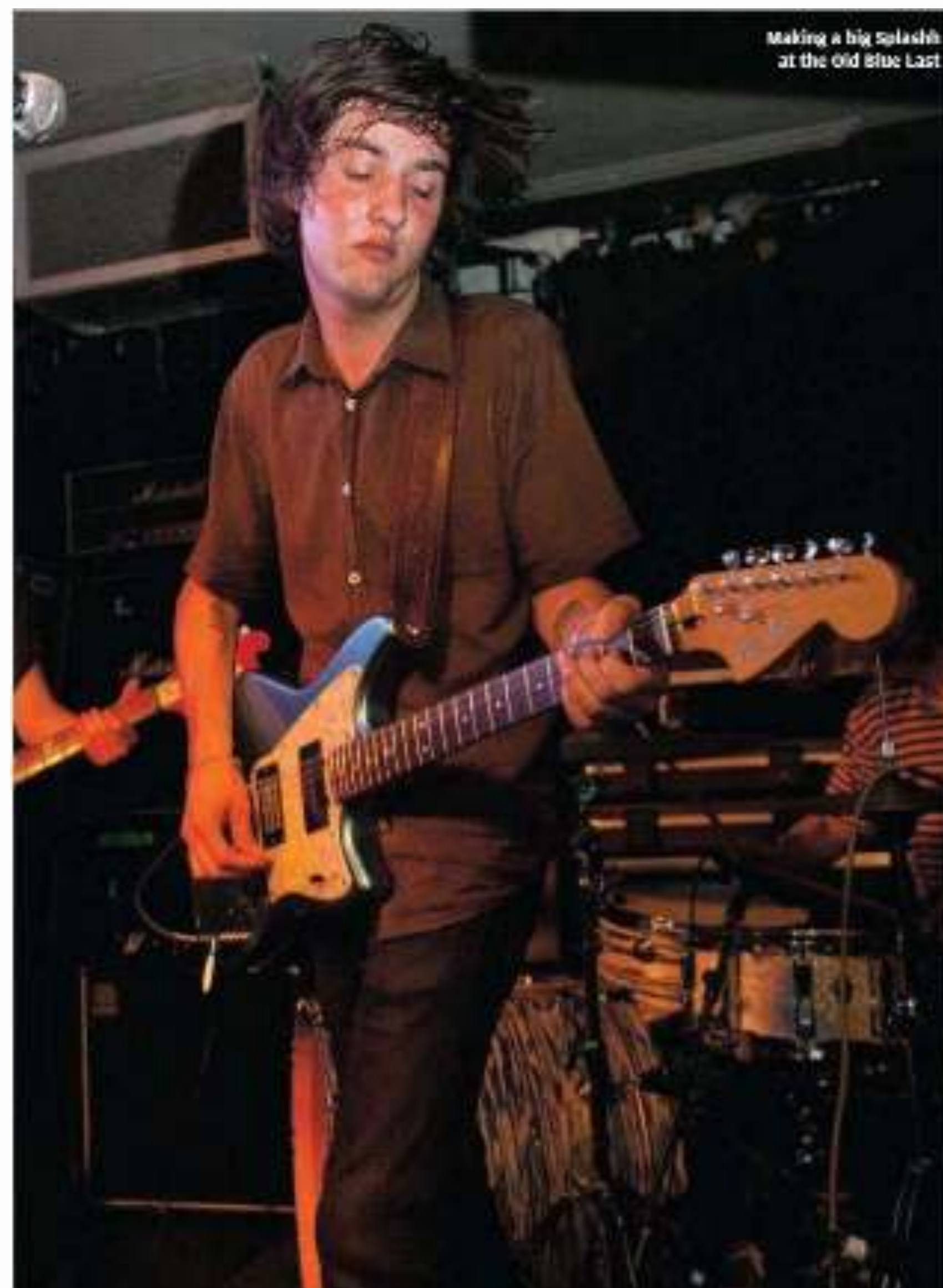
NZCA/LINES
(pictured)
Birthdays, London,
June 14

SUNLESS '97
Shacklewell Arms,
London, June 14

FAMY
Thekla, Bristol,
June 14

MIDNIGHT LION
The Voodoo Rooms,
Edinburgh, June 14

FEAR OF MEN
Musiquarium, Leeds,
June 15



SPLASHH

THE OLD BLUE LAST, LONDON MONDAY, MAY 28

CAUGHT
LIVE

Hype. It's a dangerous game. One that catapults bands into the spotlight before they've even really begun, and then swiftly knocks them

back down again when a new Next Big Thing emerges. London's Splashh will be familiar with the fabled lightning-quick ascent of the buzz band. Formed only three months ago, they're a group who're already igniting frenzied excitement

both on and offline. It's an electrifying anticipation that's blindingly obvious tonight, at what is only their fifth gig - although if

you weren't already aware of their fledgling status, you would never guess it, such is their unfaltering confidence onstage. Easily the most exciting band to emerge from the capital this year, Splashh are re-imagining grungy, lo-fi pop and breathing new life into it. It's there in the way singer Sasha Carlson snarls his way through 'Washed Up', there in the bubbling submarine outro to 'Headspins' and, most of all, there in

the sun-kissed escapism of 'All I Wanna Do', which transforms the sticky room into an azure-misted tropical paradise. They're the kind of band that make you want to be right down the front at every gig, the kind that puts every other slacker band holed up in the back room of an east London pub to shame. Even through the patchy sound that haunts The Old Blue Last, each song sounds breathtakingly brilliant, from the fuzzed up, rock'n'roll lullaby of opener 'Lemonade' to the dizzying whirligig of 'Need It'. It's a half-

*They put every slacker band
holed up in the back room of
an east London pub to shame*

hour set that feels ever more formidable as it rumbles on to the next track, packing in breezy summer hooks and half apathetically sighed, half sarcastically spat lyrics, all the while presenting the kind of accomplished performance you'd expect from a band on the verge of releasing their first album, not their first single. Sometimes staying on top is the hardest thing to do, but for Splashh, it looks like it should be effortless. *Rhian Daly*

Not the windy city,
but KidCity



Even Billy Corran
couldn't stomach the
Alphabet spaghetti



"I'M GONNA WIN IN THE END. I'M THAT KIND OF MOTHERF**KER"

Billy Corgan has a new Smashing Pumpkins and is gearing up to take on the world again (while writing wrestling scripts on the side). **Emily Mackay** unravels the infinite madness

PHOTOS: ANDY WILLISHER

I'm not supposed to be making great records, that's the general consensus," says Billy Corgan. "I've lost my mind and I've lost my band and somehow I've made a great record under the name Smashing Pumpkins. So how is this possible, if I'm not on drugs and I haven't done some pact with Satan?"

Well, that's what we're here in a hotel in Lisbon, near the Rock In Rio festival where the Pumpkins are playing, to find out. Mr Corgan, one-time villain of grunge to Kurt Cobain's blue-eyed, blond hero, decried as a sell-out, a control freak, a bastard, has just, in 'Oceania', made the strongest Smashing Pumpkins album in years (see p40 for *NME*'s review). In the eyes of many original fans, he's done so without the actual Smashing Pumpkins. His current band consists of three younger musicians he's now been working with for a couple of years: guitarist Jeff Schroeder, drummer Mike Byrne and bassist/vocalist Nicole Fiorentino.

For many, if it ain't original bassist D'Arcy Wretzky, drummer Jimmy Chamberlin and guitarist James Iha, all of whom departed the band in various degrees of acrimony (in Chamberlin's case twice, after he joined a reformed Pumpkins only to leave again in 2009), it's a Guns N' Roses-style travesty.

But, as ever, Mr Corgan, relaxing in the shade of a hotel terrace in a casual sweater, sipping water, is not really that worried about what people think, or indeed, what they might think they want. He's happily holding forth on his ex-bandmates, his new career as wrestling impresario, his relationship with Courtney Love, and why the Pumpkins are looking to the here and now, like it or not.

NME: When the new album comes out you're playing it in full, and you've already played some very new material-heavy shows. Are fans receptive?

Billy Corgan: "Your fans want you to be more yourself, and the mainstream public wants you to be who they think you are. All the bands running around – everybody from Sonic Youth on down – playing this album and that album have given the mainstream public an impression that bands are there to serve their fantasies. It's dangerous for the health of rock'n'roll because it's actually counter-rebellious (*laughs*). You're basically becoming a service industry."

**"BANDS AREN'T
HERE TO SERVE
FANTASIES"**

BILLY CORGAN

Do the Pumpkins get enough recognition?

"Oh, I think we get our dues. With a voice like mine and the kind of music we did, I never thought we were gonna be everybody's Number One. Not that I'm a big fan of her at the moment, but Courtney [Love, Corgan's one-time girlfriend and on/off friend] explained to me somewhere in the early '90s, she was like, 'Look,

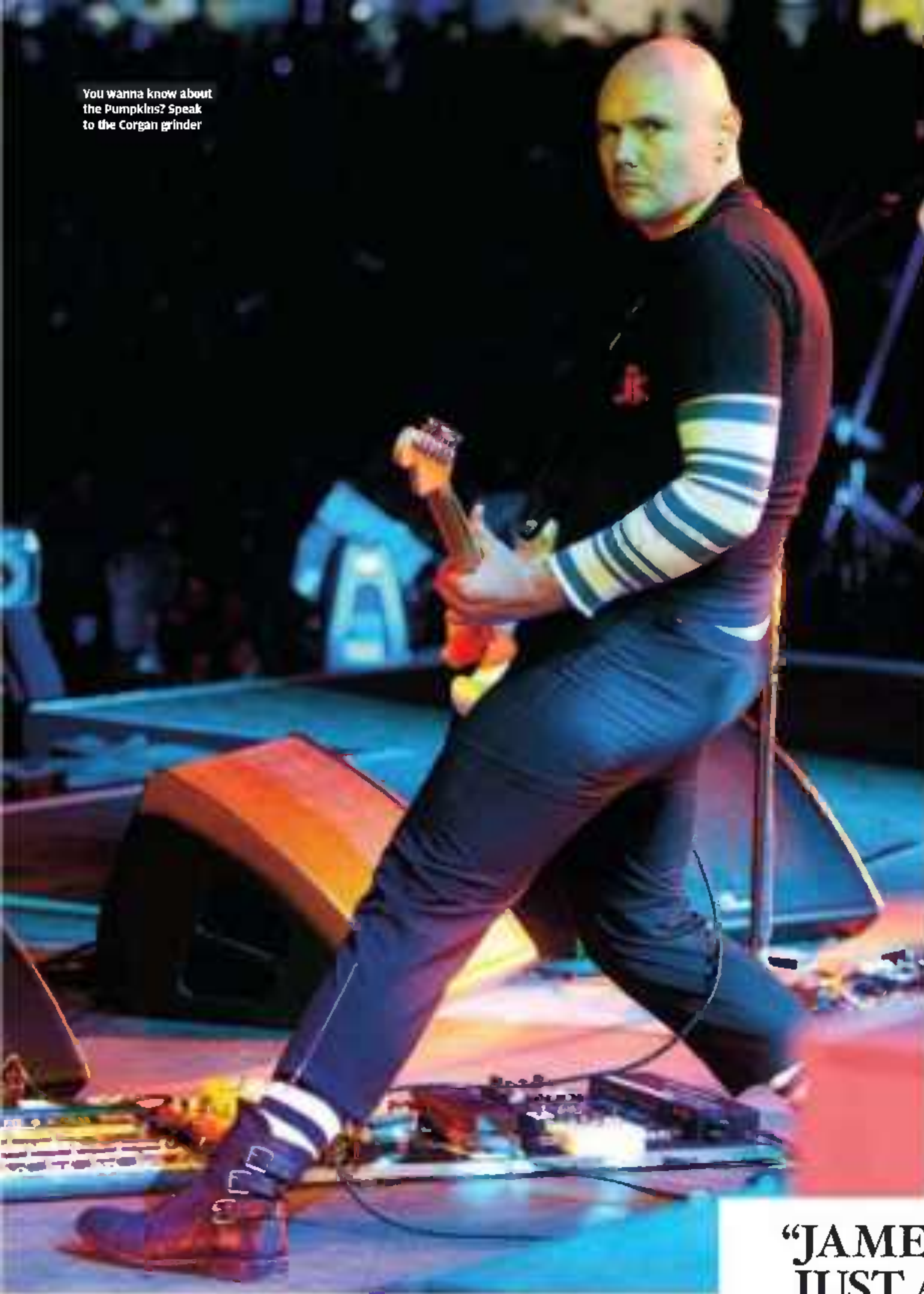
everybody's got a role to play. There's only so many archetypal spaces to fill. And you're in the anti hero position. You're not the Johnny Good Guy, you're the bad guy. So just know your role and play your role.' She's quite astute, sometimes.

"Well, back then I think she was very lucid when it came to her assessments of pop culture. She obviously studied it far more than she studied how to play chords."

Where do you and Courtney stand at the moment, after your public fall-out over your contributions to the last Hole album?

"Oh god, nothing. Nothing. I have nothing to do ►

You wanna know about the Pumpkins? Speak to the Corgan grinder



with her, don't want anything to do with her. Done. D-O-N-E in capital letters. Nothing. I've just... there's nothing left there. I stood by her one too many times and, like anybody else who's stood by her, you get kicked in the teeth, that's it."

Does it frustrate you when she talks about you or your relationship in the press?

"Yeah, but I think she's so destroyed in credibility I don't think anybody believes a goddamn word she says anymore. If you don't like me, great, but I'm still a musician. That's not a musician, y'know? That's something else."

You've started your own wrestling company, Resistance Pro. Where did that idea come from?

"I was into it when I was a kid, and then when I got into my goth years, I thought, 'Oh, you're not supposed to like baseball and wrestling.' So I stopped watching and didn't give a shit until the

late '90s, when I fell back into it. And I started meeting all these wrestlers behind the scenes, and they're pretty fascinating people. It's like a circus. What makes somebody want to be the superbud guy or superbud girl?"

Who's your favourite wrestler?

"I think Ric Flair. He's sort of a legendary bad guy. He would say, 'Oh, I just got in off my private jet, I was fucking a couple of girls last night. But even though I'm tired from last night, I'm still good enough to beat you in the ring.' I remember thinking, 'Woah, he's so arrogant.' Of course, later I would play the same character onstage. Wrestling kind of changed my perception of how to be in concert."

The common view is that the tension between the original Pumpkins was part of what made the music great. True?

"No. Really, it's like a stew. Two parts veal, one part carrot kind of thing. What made the group work 90 per cent of the time was their faith in where I wanted to take us. You wanna do a 30-minute song at the end of the show? I let's do it. You wanna stand up onstage and tell the audience to fuck off? Fucking let's do it. It was a magical support for my insanity. I tell people this and they don't believe me: we never argued about music. We argued about the fucking plane itinerary, the fucking deli trays, who made a face during a photoshoot. But music was sort of this holy, sacred space and when we were in there we did well by it."

Should you have argued more about music?

"No. Success held that band together longer than it should have been held together. It was dysfunctional. There were a lot of years there where I regretted the way it all went down, and now I think it was meant to die when it died how it died. We stole from the Promethean fire to fuel whatever our weird psychic death trip was and then we paid for it. Or got too close to the sun and crashed. It was just meant to be that way. And you can draw parallels from that with Jimmy's situation [when he left the band in 2009] because that was maybe just a continuance of something that hadn't been resolved back then."

He said in his statement on leaving that he "couldn't just cash the cheque"...

"See now, here is a perfect opportunity for me to bury Jimmy as a fucking liar. But I won't. That's a lie. That statement's just a flat out lie."

Was it that you wanted to take the band in a commercial direction, and he didn't?

"Ha ha! No, it's the exact opposite. I wish I could explain it, but I don't trust the world to understand the complexity of it. I think it's telling that the first thing Jimmy did when he left the band was make a statement about money because that had a lot to do with it. But if you look at what I've done since he's left, where have I made money?"

'Voice of the US underground' Steve Albini once described the Pumpkins as "three pandering sluts and their record company stooge"...

"He's that rare guy who can say shit like that because he lives it. He's entitled to say that because he wasn't a hypocrite. And we were sluts. He just didn't understand the depth of our sluttiness."

And Pavement's Stephen Malkmus had a dig at you in the lyrics to 'Range Life'...

"I found it incredibly ironic that they got back together and did a money tour. There was no end to my laughter about it. We actually played a festival

where they were on before us. It was interesting that they did not play 'Range Life' that night..."

Do you still feel any rancour towards the other band members about the way it ended?

"Uhhh... I'm OK with Jimmy. We don't have a relationship at the

moment, but I mean, I have no ill will. I want to see him do well. James Iha I think is just a piece of shit. I think he's one of the worst human beings I've ever met in my life. And D'Arcy, she's sort of, in her own way, sort of an innocent."

Those photos that were released when she was arrested for missing a court date last year suggested she wasn't really in a good place.

"Yeah, it's terrible. But she's not a bad person. And I don't hold any ill will towards her, even though I've had to deal with fucking lawsuits and stuff like that. If there's any culprit in this it's Iha. But, y'know, he was there at the right time of my life, we did do good

"JAMES IHA IS JUST A PIECE OF SHIT"

BILLY CORGAN

things together, I think he is a good musician when he gives a fuck, which most of the time he doesn't. And that's about it."

It'd be easy to sit back amid a mix of nostalgia and bitterness, but that's not Corgan's style. Come to him expecting to relive your youth, and you're gonna get choke-slammed.

There's a term in wrestling, it's called hotshotting, Corgan explains. "In wrestling, you wanna build up a couple of people to where the audience really wants to see those people go together. If you do it too fast, you kind of kill the energy in it - where do you go from there? Well, everybody out playing their old albums is hotshotting. Bad economy, record sales are down, gotta make money from touring, what's the way to make the most money from touring, oh, go out and play 'Siamese Dream'. Get as many of the original members as you can get back in there. The managers will tell you, 'You'll be playing in front of big crowds and you'll have an opportunity to move from there into the next cycle.'"

"I'm sorry, but if you play in front of an audience and give them exactly what they want, the way they want it, they're not coming back. They're like a girl who fucks on the first date. They're not coming back and, if they are, they're coming back for the same thing, they're not coming back for the right thing. If you go too fast, too soon, the audience just assumes that you're a bitch just like everybody else and they move on to someone else that they believe in."

"For me this is just like a long slog, you know? And I'm gonna win in the fucking end. I'm that kind of motherfucker, that's it. I'll fight to the end and I'll still be standing there at the end."

With the new version of the Smashing Pumpkins, though, when you have a band that's joined later and are younger, are there the same kind of checks and balances that you had with a band that grew up together?

"It's a different system. One plus is that, where in the old band situation I would have to obscure myself at different times and it would piss other people off because their egos couldn't handle it... I would get yelled at by other band members if we would sit in an interview situation and an interviewer such as yourself would mostly ask me questions. My band would yell at me, as if I was supposed to feel bad for being out front. It's now understood that it's sort of my world that way. But, by the same token, to ask them to step into a situation that is very difficult... I mean, we did some US touring last year, and half the reviews would say 'rent-a band', 'hired hands'... it takes a certain kind of personality to be willing to take that on."

'Oceania' is structured around the tarot, right?

"Yes, it's around what's called the hero's journey or

One way or another, that pretzel's coming out



The original line-up (l-r): D'Arcy Wretzky, James Iha, Billy Corgan, Jimmy Chamberlin



"Quick check. Do I still have a band...?"



Peace and Love? What, with Courtney in the frame...?



the fool's journey. You start from a place of innocence and you're happy. The first card of the tarot is the Fool, and the Fool is standing on a cliff, and he's like, 'La la, life is wonderful.' And the last card of the tarot deck is the World card, which is you know everything or you've learned all you need to know. But in the progression of that you have to go through all this disappointment and betrayal to learn in order to become a child again in your mind... in my life I've had to go through break-ups, disappointments,

betrayals, lawsuits, bullshit, bad record sales or whatever to actually come back to a point where I really like music again, from a very genuine place, similar to the place I had where I was 16. Music has been the greatest thing that's ever happened to me but it's brought me such fucking pain. I never could have ever imagined as a 16-year-old the amount of criticism and withering judgement of my personality... if I'd known that, I never would have bothered picking up the guitar in the first place."

KEEPING BILLY BUSY

Beyond day-to-day band duties, Billy Corgan's also got...

FOR THE WINNER: MOTHER

Billy's opening a tea shop in his native Chicago. "It's meant to be an art space, but the design is chinoiserie, '30s," he says. "My love Jess [Jessica Origliasso of The Veronicas, Billy's girlfriend] is big on scones. She likes her high tea, like a good subject of the Queen."

WRESTLING IMPRESSIONS

Billy's planning a memoir of his life in rock, which should offer some more revelations about the Pumpkins years. "I'm about 75 per cent through," he tells us. "It explains some of the dynamic more accurately, but even then it's just my take on it."

REALITY TV: RESISTANCE PRO

Resistance Pro will be televised. "We've just signed with a producer," Billy says. "It'll be a really intimate look at what goes on at an independent wrestling company, which has a lot of parallels to what goes on with say an indie band."

ADVISOR: MELLON COLLIE

Having already re-released the Pumpkins' first two albums in deluxe packages with offcuts through his own SPRC label, next up is their lush third effort 'Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness' - among the extra material Billy has promised "an alternate studio take on 'XYU'".

HOW TO MAKE THE SUMMER'S HOTTEST DEEBUT ALBUM

BY ALI-J



After the release of the most essential – and possibly weirdest – debut of the season, **Barry Nicolson** presses **Alt-J's** buttons

PHOTO: RICHARD JOHNSON

We're not entirely sure what we were expecting when we met Alt-J. As Joe Newman, Gwil Sainsbury, Thom Green and Gus Unger-Hamilton exit their van outside Glasgow's

School Of Art – the latest stop on their first headline tour of the UK – we find ourselves wondering if these amiable young twentysomethings can really be the same people who wrote 'An Awesome Wave', the weird and very wonderful album we recently anointed the summer's hottest debut. Any lingering mystique cultivated by the band's strange, face-obscuring early press shots is well and truly dissipated by the sight of Newman's retina-popping Bermuda shorts.

Nevertheless, with 'An Awesome Wave', this Leeds-formed, Cambridge based quartet of old university friends have made one of the year's finest albums, an unclassifiable mish-mash of genres and ideas that they've somehow coalesced into a satisfying, sophisticated whole. Here's how they did it.

SOUND A BIT LIKE A SPONGE CAKE WHEN YOU SING

Joe's voice is probably the most unique weapon in the Alt-J arsenal. To our ears, it sounds like Ray Davies, Prince and André 3000 triple-tracked on top of one another, but that's just us; your own take on it will likely be very different. In any case, he's already heard the weirdest possible description of it.

"Someone said I sounded like Daniel Bedingfield trapped inside a sponge cake," he grins. "He's got a good voice and I like sponge cakes, so I took it as a compliment."

Before you ask, yes, there is a certain degree of construct and artifice involved. But think of Newman's voice as a fifth instrument, what he does with it is no different from a guitarist utilising an effects pedal.

"I didn't know the destination of working on my voice would be this," he says. "I just found a voice I was comfortable with. My dad actually sings a bit like me, so maybe I picked up some vibes from him. I listened to a lot of soul music when I was younger – Percy Sledge, Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding – and I think that's seeped into how I sound."

Gwil puts it more succinctly: "He's an indie wigga!"

DITCH THE MYSTIQUE

In their early days, Alt-J took the WU LYF approach to band photography by having their faces hidden in a series of cryptic – and wonderfully inventive – press shots. They don't do that any more ("We have to play the game to a certain extent," admits Joe), but they remain determined not to look like one of those bands who stand against brick walls and pout like pillowed-up Derek Zoolanders.

"It was never about not showing our faces, it was just about not doing something boring," says Gwil. "There are a lot of opportunities to do

interesting band photos if you've got the time and energy to do it. We've never wanted to look like a standard band, all posey and stupid."

"I just don't want to recreate something that makes me cringe," Joe explains. "We don't want to pout, or lean against a wall with our arms crossed. I suppose we do look quite moody in a few shots... but that's just 'cos we're tired."

AVOID SCENES AT ALL COSTS

The band formed at university in Leeds, but moved down to Cambridge last summer. But despite Leeds' reputation – and Cambridge's lack of one – as a musical hotbed, Gus doesn't see much difference.

"We weren't looking to start a band, get on the circuit and become part of the 'scene'," he says. "There's no scene in Cambridge, but we never experienced one in Leeds either. There was a network of people putting on band nights, but I wouldn't call it a scene, to be brutally honest. We couldn't identify a scene in Leeds. We weren't accepted or invited into any, and we certainly didn't search out for any, either."

TAKE YOUR TIME

'An Awesome Wave' is many things, but rushed isn't one of them. Alt-J's first show was in late 2008, after which, Gus claims, "We probably would've sacked the whole thing off if we hadn't got such an amazing response." The version of 'Matilda' that's on the album was recorded three years ago, while 'Breezeblocks' is 18 months old. The band work slowly and deliberately, sometimes, as Joe says, "spending weeks or months or years figuring out what we want to do with a song".

In fact, impatience only crept in after the album was finally finished. "I was tempted to stick it up on a

torrent site after we'd finished it," confesses

Gwil. "It actually leaked online a few weeks ago, which I was quite happy about. It was what I wanted to happen, but didn't have the balls to do it myself."

MAKE IT UN-PIGEONHOLEABLE

Half the fun of listening to 'An Awesome Wave' is trying to put your finger on exactly what the fucker sounds like: is it Radiohead cooing predatorily at Mountain Man in a remote log cabin? Is it Everything Everything having a quirk-off with Wild Beasts? Is it alt-, trip- or nu- (choose your own prefix) folk with – as one blogger wrote, much to bassist Gwil's merriment – "the anthemic choruses of Kaiser Chiefs"? Chue: it's not that last one.

"We always wanted to make music that was interesting and that we wouldn't get sick of," says Gwil. "I think most of the comparisons we get are pretty valid and funny, and sometimes accurate. That's why it's interesting for us to do interviews, because interviewers will sometimes make observations you've never thought about, but are absolutely true. Every time we do an interview, we seem to learn a bit more about ourselves as a band."

ALT-J: NEED TO KNOW

BAND MEMBERS:

Joe Newman (vocals),
Gwil Sainsbury (bass),
Thom Green (drums), Gus
Unger-Hamilton (keyboards)

FROM:

All over the place, but they
formed at Leeds University.
They moved to Cambridge
last summer, where the four
of them recorded in the
basement of Gwil's
girlfriend's house.

WHAT THEY SOUND LIKE:

Where to start? Their close
harmonies and acoustic
tendencies are the hallmarks
of a love of folk music, but
they're also big Radiohead
fans. Other bands they've
been likened to are Foals and
Wild Beasts.

CHECK OUT:

'An Awesome Wave', their
recently released debut
album that's getting us all
hot under the collar.

Standing in the way
of Ctrl, Alt-J (l-r):
Thom Green, Gwil
Sainsbury, Joe Newman,
Gus Unger-Hamilton

WELCOME TO

AZARI & III'S PARTY.

YOU MIGHT JUST GET LAID

Hardcore hedonists **Azari & III's** sex-pumped, drug-drenched live show is returning to the UK. **Dan Martin** says it could change you forever – if they get their hands on your pineal gland

PHOTO: JESS BAUMUNG

Suggest to Alphonse Alixander Lanza III that his band Azari & III are riding a wave of gleeful retro house revivalism, and he'll look at you like you've just called his mother a slag. "You've gotta have a sense of danger," he says. "If you live dangerously, your art's gonna reflect that. This is street level man, real deal, dangerous living shit and that's what the songs are about. If it sounds pretty, well, that's because of our dream to transcend the street level shit that we do."

Not everything Alphonse says makes sense. On their album? "It was a social commentary. It's like four people coming and reporting back to headquarters, and at the headquarters, putting that through the algorithm and out comes our vision of what's happening. It's serious, it's not a joke, we're not covering every base. 'Beep beep beep,' a sonar comes back and that's what comes back into the record. We've got some lala and we've got some rara, you know. It's a little oily. But that's punk rock, it's not all peace love ecstasy house music."

Riiight Ahead of the collective's return to the UK for London's Lovebox festival this weekend, *NME* has travelled to their hipster hub of Toronto to find out how to party the Azari & III way. But of course, with a band whose video for 'Hungry For The Power' featured sex cannibals, this sounds more like the party at the end of the world. And it's taken on a life of its own.

After a year that has seen them circle the globe with their sex disco cabaret, Azari & III are becoming a big deal. They were nominated for a Canadian Juno award, and whispers of a support slot on the Madonna tour persist and are not quite denied. But here, at The Hoxton in Toronto, is the first proper show they've played in their homeland. It's a courageous and hedonistic homecoming – and not just because it feels that every person in Toronto is on some sort of drugs. "Heroin's making a comeback," Alphonse claims mysteriously. Theirs is a high-stakes brand of partying.

As much as anything else, it might be difficult to imagine a more ill-fitting group of people to be in a band than this one. Christian 'Dinamo Azari' Farley is a jock, and in any other scenario he'd be the guy who bullied Alphonse, the super-intense yet intensely charming out-there producer geek, wardrobe by *Miami Vice*. The pair of them are the conflicting sides of James Murphy separated into two people. The fact that they're both

flamboyantly gay black men is the only thing you'd call a similarity between frontmen Fritz Helder and Cédric 'Starving Yet Full' Gasaida, the former a street-smart, charismatic young Cee Lo Green type, the latter an ethereal and theatrical performance art Grace Jones.

Four such large and clashing personalities can add up to no end of drama. "I quit every day!" says Fritz.

"Something gets me to the point where I can't handle these people, but then obviously... everyone is just so intensely intense and kind of forgets about other people. And as much as it bugs the shit out of me, at least they're

passionate. We're a lot to deal with, there's fireworks going off all the time. We're very elemental. There's always earth, wind, fire and water."

Their live show has evolved on-the-road organically, and they're fully aware of the effect it can have on people. "Late at night, everybody comes together," says

Christian. "It's kind of creepy, but in a good way."

"But those sounds are intangible," adds Alphonse. "This techno, it doesn't have to be dancey, it's got to be a noise that is infectious and takes you outside of thoughts so that your mind isn't operating logically anymore and you're experiencing waveforms."

Christian: "We try to access the pineal gland, which is the third eye. So late at night you're watching yourself. Don't worry, we'll give you a mask that you can put on

and we'll stop infiltrating your pineal gland."

Alphonse: "It's also like, you know, putting out the signals, so we'll put a bit out there and if it comes back, that's when things amplify and reverb very quickly and things can get out of control. Not everyone's like, 'Aaah so happy!' and not everyone's wanting to destroy things, but there's this mix of strange chaos that exudes transgendered, transsexual people just freaking out and transforming."

Christian: "You might just get laid!"

Indeed. As well as a lot of making out, Fritz points to a weird sexual alchemy that often unfolds at their shows. "I notice we work people up and they don't really know what to do with themselves!" he says. "There's this transformative energy, girls will try to make out with me and Caddy, and there'll be guys who we know are straight and they're like, coming on *way* too strong. Everybody starts to get all like, 'I don't know who I am anymore, what's going on?' Which is really funny, that's what a good night out should be all about, right? You should wake up in the morning and go, 'Oh my God, did I just do that?'"

So you're a revolutionary sex band?

"That could be a good agenda, because I think that whole concept of gay or straight is just so tired," reckons Christian. "Not saying I'm gonna get married to a girl and have babies, but I know what an attractive woman is, and my parts work so... if there's a way to communicate that without preaching some cheesy cliché hippy thing, 'cos I also believe that it should happen naturally

"I don't think there should be this revolution to ban sexual identity, but you can already sense it in the younger generation; there isn't this need for this patch you need to wear for the rest of your life. You can wear it now but throw it away in a couple of months or a couple of years. But I feel like I'm part of the old school and I go, 'No way! My word, what are you doing?!' But if that's how it is, then that's awesome."

Oh yes, there ain't no party like an Azari & III party. And afterwards, you might never be quite the same again...

"WE MAKE YOU THINK, 'GOD, DID I JUST DO THAT?'"

Fritz Helder

THE SCIENCE OF AZARI

It's all about the pineal gland...

Co-bandleader Christian says he wants to "access the pineal gland" of his audiences. But what the fuck does that mean?

The pineal gland is a small endocrine gland in the vertebrate brain that produces melatonin, a hormone that affects the wake/sleep patterns and seasonal functions.

In other words, to influence it using the waveforms found in music could feel like taking drugs without actually taking drugs. Philosopher Descartes said it was the "principal seat of the soul" - the point of connection between intellect and the body. Trippy, dude.



Azari space age riot (l-r):
Fritz Helder, Christian
Farley, Cédric Gasalda,
Alphonse Lanza III



WHISKEY FIT FOR A QUEEN.

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Roll Up! MUMFORDS TAKEOVER Roll Up!

Ready for *Mumford & Sons*' big unveil? Over the next eight pages they tell us about their favourite bands, label secrets and meeting Obama – but first, *Berry Nicolson* heads to Huddersfield for their album reveal

PHOTOS ANDREW WHITTON

Every ascendent young band has their own crucible of the weird. In the case of Mumford & Sons, you might expect that crucible to be, say, sharing a stage with Bob Dylan at the Grammys. Or playing a gig at the White House for Barack Obama. Or perhaps Marcus Mumford getting married to Hollywood starlet Carey Mulligan and being anointed by the *Daily Mail* as one half of Britain's newest 'Power Couple'. But no, the apex of three years of escalating surreality came at a festival in Tennessee last June, when the man they call 'The Hedgehog' offered up his carnal claw for a friendly shake.

"It was too hot a day to meet Ron Jeremy," says bassist Ted Dwane, ruefully, of arguably the most famous man in the porn industry (Google him – actually, maybe don't). "He was at Bonnaroo festival, where he was just sort of hanging out,

making himself, um, apparent to people, in the way that Ron Jeremy does, I suppose. I think he was just enjoying the experience of being backstage and being Ron Jeremy. Anyway, he came up to us and starting telling us how he was a big fan of the band. He was quite intense. He stuck his hand out for me to shake and I was like, 'Hmmm, should I? Do I really want to go there? Where has that hand been?'"

Even Ron Jeremy, it seems, is a Mumford & Sons fan. If you find that surprising, we're not sure why. The quartet of unerringly bashful west London folkies with the name that evokes a dusty Dickensian ironmongery are now an honest-to-God phenomenon – a tweedy, continent-straddling juggernaut, who have charmed and disarmed all who stand before them. As if to underline our point, when *NME* steps off the train in Huddersfield – the latest staging-post of their quiet revolution, where the band are ▶

MUMFORDS TAKEOVER

hosting their inaugural Gentlemen Of The Road Stopover mini-festival – we bump into banjoist Winston Marshall, who's waiting for his girlfriend to arrive. As we're chatting outside the station, a fan cautiously approaches and, addressing him as 'Country' (Marshall's nom de Mumford), reverently informs him that, "You're the reason I first picked up the banjo." Not the guitar, not even the drums. The bloody banjo.

Greenhead Park lies a short walk to the west of Huddersfield town centre. A few months ago, Mumford & Sons sat down with a pencil and a sheet of paper, and sketched a rough approximation of what they wanted to turn this site into for their first Gentlemen Of The Road Stopover. After a lot of work (and, we imagine, no small amount of money) that sketch has today become a reality.

The vibe is best described as 'Village fête meets travelling gastro-folk circus'. Giant flags bearing the Gentlemen Of The Road insignia – a top-hatted, twirly-moustached dandy above a pair of crossed muskets – are flown all around the site, while the length of the food queues would suggest that, given the choice between paying a fiver for a tray of chips covered in curried slurry or gourmet salmon fishcakes on a bed of red cabbage coleslaw, festival-goers prefer the latter. There's even a specially brewed Stopover Ale on sale, a rooty, fruity concoction that kicks like a mule on its way to the castration block. "It's supposed to be 3.8 per cent," smiles keyboardist Ben Lovett, "but it tastes more like 8.3."

It all makes for an impressive spectacle, but we still can't help wondering why Mumford & Sons decided to run the risk of staging these events (one apiece in the UK and Ireland, plus four more American dates in August) instead of simply taking their pick of this summer's major festivals. The suggestion that they might've outgrown them is refuted by Ted

"There's no shunning going on," he insists. "Our desire was just to throw our own party. We've always enjoyed festivals. They're just such rigid institutions now, and the format of this is different. We've been trying to involve Huddersfield and Galway as integrally as we can, because they're towns a lot of bands – including ourselves – don't go to as much as they should."

Logistically, the experience has been an eye-opener: they've had to immerse themselves in the kind of minutiae that doesn't trouble you at, say, Reading and Leeds. Some of it – like the Huddersfield pub crawl they embarked on in the name of "research" – was fun. Some of it, not so much.

"We've learned how ridiculously hard it is to put on a festival," says Winston, wearily. "We'll never take that for granted again. But we'd never turn our back on festivals. We came together through festivals. A lot of our most important gigs have been at festivals. This was something we wanted to do because we wanted to celebrate the towns, and to include all these bands that we love. I really feel like this is something special."

If, as Ben claims, it's not about competing with anyone then surely their name must be near the top of the 'prospective Glastonbury 2013 headliners' list. Have they had the conversation with Michael Eavis yet?

"About headlining?" scoffs Ben. "We've released one album. That's the simple answer. I'd love to headline Glastonbury, but in 10 years' time. I feel like we should put a few more albums out before doing something as prestigious as that. We're headlining RockNess, and that's a bit of a victory for us. But Glastonbury is the biggest festival in the world. So, no."

The gaping flaw in his logic, of course, is that the band no longer have just the one album to fall back on. Their follow-up to 2009's 'Sigh No More' will finally be released on September 24, and its unveiling is what



"Hello Huddersfield!" Marcus heads onstage



Marcus will be playing for Huddersfield Town next season



The festival is the first time the band has ever performed in Huddersfield



The festival's wallpaper is based on the Eton crest



Mumford & Sons is a bit like Cubs. But with banjos

today is really all in service of. Mumford & Sons aren't the sort of band to wax hyperbolic about, well, anything, but their excitement for the (still untitled) record is palpable. Ben describes it as "the culmination of this whole thing we've been through," while a bronchial Marcus – roused from his tourbus sickbunk, where he's been trying to salvage his voice in time for tonight's show – reckons it's the clearest manifestation yet of "our hunger to become a great band. I don't think we could've made this record before now."

Recorded with 'Sigh No More' producer Markus Dravs in fits and starts and in a variety of locations – including Ben's parents' barn in Devon – the album has been something of a victim of their debut's success,

and has taken far longer to cross the finish line than any of them anticipated.

"We didn't end up starting until late summer last year," explains Marcus. "We'd do a session then go on tour, do another session and go on another tour... it went on and on. It definitely slowed the whole process down. And songs kept cropping up while we were recording. Five or six songs were written during the recording process that we felt needed the attention the other songs had received. So we recorded them all. Some made it, some didn't. It took time, but we weren't at battle with ourselves or anything."

Is he worried that's how people will see it? The 'Difficult Second Album'? "I don't know how people



The new songs

Our lowdown on the newbies played in Huddersfield

LOVER'S EYES

The self opener, and a reassuring sign that the band haven't ventured into 'doom-folk' territory, or something similarly daft, as they'd previously said. This is reassuringly familiar stuff: a hushed, fragile melody in the style of 'Timshel', given extra heft and oomph by those trademark four-part harmonies and a skronk or two of trombone. For a newly-wed, however, Marcus sure doesn't half sound glum: "Love was kind, for a time/Now it just aches and makes me blind".

BELOW MY FEET

Notably rockier and more up-tempo than their usual fare – there's even an electric guitar on there – this song steadily builds from a tremulous, rinky-dink piano intro to a memorable crescendo, via a classically Mumford chorus. Lyrically, all the talk of "eyes to serve" and "hands to learn", as well as a fleeting reference to Jesus, hints at 'weighty' themes within.

LOVER OF THE LIGHT

Of the five new songs they preview in Huddersfield (a further two, 'Broken Crown' and 'Where Are You Now?', are dropped from the setlist at the last minute), this is easily

the most immediate and, you'd think, the obvious candidate for lead single. Featuring Marcus on drums, it's an uplifting, almost Coldplay-esque anthem in-waiting – indeed, it's become such a fixture of their setlist, many in the crowd know it word-for-word already.

GHOSTS THAT WE KNEW

The most muted and deliberately low-key of the new tunes: aside from a few vocal harmonies and some sparse, unintrusive instrumentation, it's focused almost entirely on Marcus' voice and guitar. As such, it feels like a wisp of a song, even though it clocks in at over five minutes. Probably better suited to small, intimate spaces, rather than large, open-air ones.

WHISPERS IN THE DARK

The band's new: It's not a riff on the eldritch horror of the near-namesake HP Lovecraft story. The good: while it's easily the oldest of the new songs (they were playing it live before 'Sigh No More' was released), it's also one of the best, with a hymnal country-ish intro swelling to an ending that's the noisiest, most raucous thing the band have ever done.



will see it," Marcus replies. "At this point, I don't really care. I'm just glad it's done."

The irony is that, for all the secrecy that surrounds the album (even the band's own press officer has yet to hear a single song), anyone with an internet connection can already find roughly half of it – in varying stages of evolution – on YouTube. *NME* first heard 'Lover Of The Light' and 'Whispers In The Dark' more than two years ago, while the likes of 'Lover's Eyes' or 'Ghosts That We Knew' will be familiar to anyone who's seen them live in the past 18 months. Consequently, before they've even decided what the lead single will be ("six or seven" tracks are currently in contention), people already have preconceived ideas of how the album will sound and which of the new songs will be on it.

"With, say, 'Lover Of The Light,'" says Ben, "people would go, 'I can't wait to hear that chorus on record.' But what they mean by that is they can't wait to hear what they've already heard. And the songs gradually change. One of them, when it was first played live,

started as a rock'n'roll song. Now it's the quietest moment on the album."

"People have certain expectations," agrees Marcus. "It's great that they have an emotional attachment to a song, but we had to try and do what we felt was justice to the album. That's why working with Markus Dravs is great for us because he's only seen us live once, so he has no attachment to the songs. He just comes at it from the angle of trying to make the record as good as possible. We've ended up with something that we're really, really proud of."

"GETTING STALKED BY PAPS IS WEIRD..."

Marcus Mumford



It's been almost two years since we last sat down properly with Marcus. In that time, Mumford & Sons have lived about five years' worth of success. The obvious question is how that success has changed them, and the obvious answer – at least for Ben, Ted and Winston – is not an awful lot. With Marcus, however, it's less cut and dried. We don't see a lot of him today – he's either holed up in the bus, or wandering offsite with his new wife, Carey Mulligan – but when he is present, he's more guarded and evasive than before. We're told that he won't talk about his marriage to Mulligan, but even getting him to address the question of his own celebrity is an awkward process. "We're still the same band, the same people," he protests. "Obviously, things are on a larger scale now. But we're the same four guys. We've just smoked a few more cigarettes, drank a few more beers..."

Been stalked by the paparazzi a few more times? "There is a bit of that, yeah," he sighs. "I can't deny it's weird. But there's not as much of it as you'd think. I find it hard to believe that I sell newspapers" ▶

Another topic they are sensitive about is their performance at the White House back in March. They played that show at the behest of David Cameron (then in the midst of a diplomatic charm assault) but Marcus bristles at the notion that accepting the invitation was somehow a tacit show of support for the coalition government.

"No, that's just something people talk about afterwards," he defends, shaking his head. "We didn't even think about how it would be perceived. You can spend your whole time worrying about stuff like that. We try not to second-guess ourselves too much, because that's as dangerous as letting fame go to your head. You become so precious and cowardly. We just followed our gut, and didn't worry about whether or not it was 'cool'. We've never done anything based on that. We were never very cool in the first place."

Still, the success you guys have had has always been predicated on being the underdog. Isn't accepting a gig from David Cameron a little, well... 'establishment', rather than just 'uncool'?

"See, that goes back to us not being self-aware enough to care how it was perceived," argues Ben. "We literally just thought, 'That sounds ridiculous. Let's do it!'"

It's a little odd that the band, who have happily played gigs at Glastonbury for the super-left-leaning Strummerville organisation set up in the spirit of Joe Strummer's punk politics, don't see it as a big deal. But whichever way you want to look at it, playing private shows for world leaders is way beyond where most bands on the cusp of their second record find themselves. The artists Mumford & Sons grew up playing with at Winston's old Bosun's Locker folk nights – namely Laura Marling and Charlie Fink – have enjoyed

successes of their own, but it's telling that neither of them are on the bill for these Stopover events. If there ever was a west London folk 'scene', the implication is that Mumford & Sons have long since cut off from it.

Marcus charitably concedes that "[That scene] infused the character of our band, and led us to where we are now. It taught us about community and music. Where we're at now is very much because of that education."

And it's weird that people around the world are now familiar with these little bands that we played our first gigs with. Those are our roots."

For Ben, however, "It just feels so out of context for us in 2012. There are bands playing today from London and other parts of the world who are as big a part of our community now as Laura or Noah were. That's not to say we don't love those guys, but it's not an ongoing scene any more. I'm sure they feel the same way. Like us, they'll have met a whole bunch of other bands that they're off on their own journey with."

Tonight marks the first step on the latest leg of that journey. After months spent fretting over details great and small (ticket sales, line-up logistics, the inconstancies of the English summer), the first Gentlemen Of The Road Stopover proves a resounding success; not a typical rock'n'roll show, perhaps, but a euphoric, thousands-strong campfire singalong, and a worthy curtain-raiser for that long-awaited new album.

We last spy Ben Lovett, hopped up on Stopover Ale, dancing on his own in the middle of the artists' enclosure, pondering which of the three aftershow parties to attend. Huddersfield holds a panoply of wonders tonight. But nothing so weird, hopefully, as Ron Jeremy's hand.

"WE'RE STILL THE SAME FOUR GUYS"

Marcus Mumford



Ted Dwane with the world's finest violin

"We're thickening our sound!"

Marcus on the biggest influences on the new Mumfords album

EMMYLOU HARRIS

"I was basically trying to find anything she sang on, but some of my favourite songs were stuff like 'Boulder To Birmingham' and that amazing stuff she did recently with The Low Anthem. Her voice just makes anything sound cool. Her ability to pick out melodies and harmonies is incredible."

FIRST AID KIT

"We listened to a lot of the First Aid Kit record while we were making the album. I first came across them from

listening to BBC 6Music, actually. They're two really cool Swedish girls, who just write brilliant songs that have this great, kind of country-ish vibe. And again, they've also got amazing harmonies."

NEW INSTRUMENTS

"I've got a little six-string ukulele which I used on the record, but I've also been playing lots more mandolin, and that features quite heavily. We used it a lot behind the acoustic guitar, to kind of thicken out our sound a little bit. I've also been playing a high-strung Nashville acoustic, which is a great guitar to play."



DAWES

"We were all listening to different stuff while we were making the record, but Dawes were one band that we were all into. When we took our break to go and play in Nashville last year, they came along and opened up for us, and they were amazing. They're coming with us on the American Gentlemen Of The Road Stopovers."



have this great, kind of country-ish vibe. And again, they've also got amazing harmonies."



Drum roll... It's Thumbford & Sons

Dearly beloved: Fans of the Communion label



COMMUNION SPIRIT

Mumfords' Ben Lovett has taken his **Communion** gigs and record label global. **Leonie Cooper** hears one of the greatest indie success stories of recent times – and how it's only just getting started...

Business and pleasure aren't generally supposed to mix. But try telling that to the good folk of Communion, the artist-centric love-in label founded by Mumford & Sons keyboardist Ben Lovett back in 2006 with his then-bandmate Kev Jones, and their producer Ian Grimble.

A homegrown gigging enterprise which has now matured into a global proposition with a thriving independent record label, publishing company, recording studio, annual festival and all round good vibes machine, Communion would be plenty to deal with for your average Joe, never mind a member of one of the biggest bands in the world. "I've probably done about 30 Communion emails today," says a surprisingly laidback Ben backstage at Huddersfield, before casually mentioning that he's in the collective's Highbury attic office pretty much every day that he's not on tour. "It takes the pressure off being in the band," he nods. "I get to enjoy being in Mumford & Sons as a really ridiculous, fun thing to do."

Communion was first conceived to kick against old-school promoter pricks. "Kev and I were in an awful indie band called Hot Rocket," remembers Ben. "We started noticing that the promoters were fleeing us at

all the gigs." They'd invite friends to shows only to be met with promoters saying they first needed 20 people through the doors, and after that they'd get a measly couple of quid per person. "That's still going on," sighs Ben. "It's quite standard practice for unsigned bands."

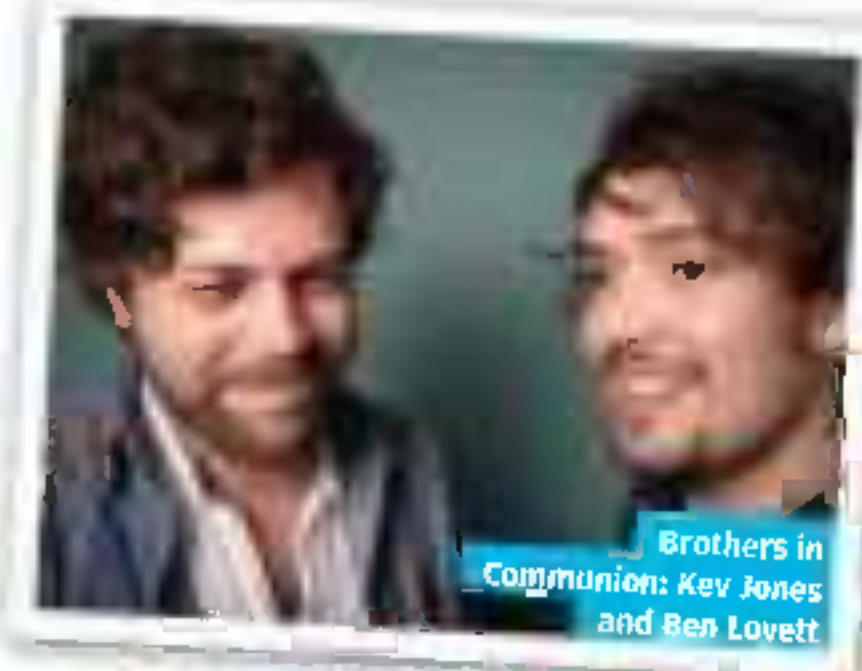
Starting out as a Hot Rocket Sunday residency at the Notting Hill Arts Club, Communion soon became one of London's top nights of choice for up-and-coming artists, with the likes of Laura Marling, Noah & The Whale and a solo Marcus Mumford playing them. Then in 2008, Camden's KOKO asked if they'd like to host the night there. "The question was, do we go up or do we go across?" remembers Ben. They decided to spread out rather than take up KOKO's offer, starting a second night in Brighton.

As its reputation grew things snowballed, with Ben and Kev approaching promoters in the UK and across the world to carry the Communion torch. Nights are now hosted in 16 cities from Sydney to San Francisco, with the newest in Nashville and plans for more US cities to be rolled out. They also host the occasional madcap tour, like the Austin to Boston trip earlier this year, where Ben led 25 musicians across America in a convoy of VW camper vans.

Michael Kiwanuka is one musician who has benefited from devoted Communion fans worldwide who'll go to shows even if they don't know

the line-up. "It's great because you get an audience who haven't heard your music, but are willing to listen as opposed to an audience who just want to listen to another act later on," he says.

It's because of these fans that Communion took the next big step and set up a record label in 2010, despite the fact that "we had no idea what we were doing",



Brothers in Communion: Kev Jones and Ben Lovett

admits Ben. They've put out over 30 EPs and singles, including Kiwanuka's and the swoony 1970s choral Americana of Treetop Flyers. There have also been three absorbing compilations – the first featuring the early, acoustic work of Jay Jay Pistolet, now known as The Vaccines' Justin Young – and their biggest coup: co-releasing Gotye's megasmash 'Somebody That I Used To Know' with Island. At the moment, the Nirvana-influenced Joe Banfi and the dark, delicious Daughter are Communion's hottest names to drop.

So what's next? "My work is Communion and my hobby is Mumford & Sons," Ben says. "If the band were to fold in, like, five, 10 or 50 years or whatever, I'd still feel like I'd be doing something good for music, which is all I really want to do."

Watch Mumford & Sons' Ben Lovett talking about his Communion label at NME.COM/video now

Communion playlist

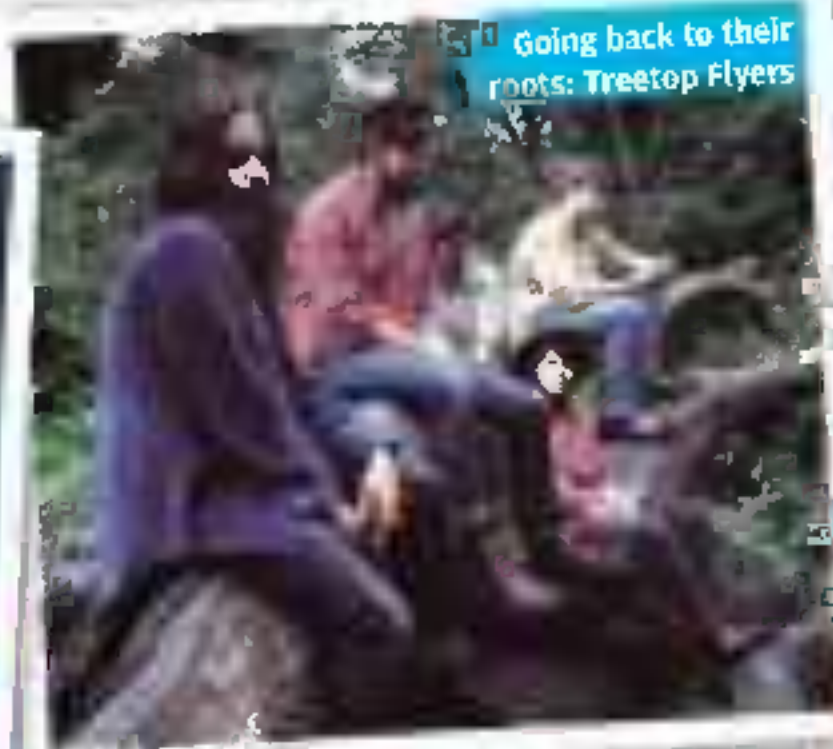
The 10 best songs on the label – listen at NME.COM/blogs

- MUMFORD & SONS 'Sister'
- JAY JAY PISTOLET 'Vintage Red'
- TREETOP FLYERS 'Things Will Change'
- DAUGHTER 'Home'
- KEATON HENSON 'To Your Health'
- MICHAEL KIWANUKA 'Tell Me A Tale'
- JOE BANFI 'Olive Green'
- GOTYE 'Somebody That I Used To Know'
- BEN HOWARD 'Old Pine'
- NATHANIEL RATELIFF 'Just For Me But I Thought Of You'

Cheer up Ben Howard, at least



Going back to their roots: Treetop Flyers



Lock up your daughters, it's ex, Daughter



MUMFORDS AND CHUMS

Marcus and co introduce you to their favourite new acts – all on their *Gentlemen Of The Road Stopover* bills – starting with Denver singer and facial hair enthusiast **Nathaniel Rateliff**

Brothers-in-acoustic-guitar-toting-arms and fans of the Forestry Commission-approved Alpha male yell, Marcus Mumford and Nathaniel Rateliff are kindred spirits, best mates and fellow growers of fine facial fur.

The two met thanks to Laura Marling, who took US singer/songwriter Nathaniel on the road with her in 2010 after falling for his live show. Marcus had been a longstanding fan of Nathaniel's openhearted Americana after a year spent in Nathaniel's hometown of Denver, when the Mumfords frontman was number one fanboy for his old band, *Born In The Flood*.

"My friends were all introducing me to cool music," explains Marcus of what inspired him to start playing local open mic nights. "I did a road trip from Denver to Nashville and one of the only CDs I had was by *Born In The Flood*, and we listened to it all the way from Denver to Nashville where I went to buy my first guitar." Now, the pair have been reunited on Mumford & Sons' *Gentlemen Of The Road Stopovers*. So, instead of us telling you how great Nathaniel is, we thought Marcus could do the hard work for us and interview him instead.

Marcus: "Nathaniel, how did we meet? That's my first question!"

Nathaniel: "It was at the Williamsburg Music Hall."

M: "That's right, we were in New York for CMJ a few years ago and Laura Marling was playing before you guys. She watched your soundcheck and said it was great."

I went in at the beginning of your show and stood there mesmerised and watched the entire thing. We met downstairs, in the basement."

N: "I was probably pretty drunk."

M: "You were *drrrruunk* and it was awesome. I was pretty drunk as well. We only met very briefly, and I was very sycophantic and was like, 'I'm a huge fan!' I knew Nathaniel's old band, but I didn't know that night [it was you], I only recognised your voice and was like, 'Fuck, were you in *Born In The Flood*?' His first impression of me must have been, 'What a knob,' because I was like, 'I fucking love you man!' But we have a lot in common. We don't believe in frontmen being slender..."

N: "I haven't been drinking."

M: "It makes such a difference, doesn't it?"

N: "Yeah, I lost, like, 20 pounds."

M: "I haven't quit drinking (*laughs and rubs his belly*)."



Nat's entertainment!

N: "But anyway... what do we admire about each other's songwriting? I still like Marcus' space and tension: the build, the silence and getting bigger. It's what's really important about songwriting. I think it's what makes a group of people listen or not listen."

M: "I think that's what I like about your songwriting as well. I don't know anyone else who has dynamics like Nathaniel in the way he sings his songs. We jam together backstage."

N: "My inspirations are Leonard Cohen, The Band... a lot stuff from the '60s. I grew up listening to that, that's why it was so easy to take an extreme version of that and ruin it by becoming a jam band. Lyrically,

Leonard Cohen's early stuff is really stunning; the production on those early records is so amazing – little bits of things floating in at the perfect time and only taking up a small amount of space. I love The Band's melodies. I really love R&B and soul and they have this mix of honky tonk and R&B."

M: "We've played together onstage pretty much every time we've been out on the road together. We toured Germany together and I'd just got a six-string ukulele and was playing it all the time and then Nathaniel suggested maybe playing a song together, and I was like, 'Can I play my new uke?'"

N: "We've gotten tattoos backstage. I had a tattooist friend come out to the Fillmore in Denver."

M: "He's given me two tattoos now. I got my wagon wheel..."

N: "...and you got that line."

M: "Yeah, I drew a line. It was before a show. It's good, it gives you the rush!"

NATHANIEL RATELIFF NEED TO KNOW

WHO IS HE?

There's a heart of gold buried below that hairy exterior. A Missouri man now based in the wilds of Denver, he's all about hard-edged country harmonies and tormented bloke blues, the sound of a man baring his soul, chasing out the demons and brooding in a ragged Wrangler shirt.

FOR FANS OF:

Bon Iver, Fleet Foxes, building fires in the woods while quoting *Brokeback Mountain*.

CHECK OUT:

Last year's emotional bumper car ride, debut solo album *In Memory Of Loss*.



"Can I use your Dictaphone? No, use your finger like anyone else"

Gentlemen's choice

The Mumfords on the other new acts they've got on their Gentlemen Of The Road Stopovers

MOULETTES

Brighton-based experimental folk troupe

FOR FANS OF: Peggy Sue, Fairport Convention, making corn dollies out of tinsel.

TED DWANE: "They're my old band - I played with them for seven years. I started when we were at school together and I stopped reluctantly when Mumford & Sons got really busy. I was playing bass and a bit of guitar for them."

Their sound is very unique.

The main ingredients are Ruth and Hannah's female vocal harmonies and cellos and violins, but it's

also got the masculine, drummy element - it's like tribal gypsy folk pirate music."

BEST SONG: 'Country Joy Song'



looking for a Huddersfield band to represent and it just felt good. I was just talking to them and they're really stoked.

Musically, it's a bit of patchwork - they seem to have every instrument under the sun onstage."

BEST SONG: 'The Robber'



ZULU WINTER

Londoners nailing that euphoric, hands in the air, totally tropical indie sound

FOR FANS OF: Friendly Fires, Wild Beasts, drinking mango-flavoured Rubicon in the rain

MAKES US SMILE: "Their record is so good. They're friends of ours, they're rock'n'roll, but really clever and really involving. We

saw them at SXSW. They were wicked. They were

playing this little café bar at, like, 3.30 in the afternoon to 50 people and they bought it.

They add a bit of diversity to the Gentlemen Of The Road line-up, because it's not folky or quiet."

BEST SONG: 'We Should Be Swimming'



THE CORRESPONDENTS

3am festival favourites and pioneers of electro-swing

FOR FANS OF: New Order, Can 'Big Spender' at karaoke.

BEN LOVETT: "We wanted to find something to close the night that'd be really fun and keep the energy up and so people didn't feel like Mumford &

Sons closed the show; we wanted to just be a part of what's happening here. It's like swing and jive, but remixed. I saw them at Neighbourhood in Notting Hill about five years

ago and loved it and booked them for Communion. It's really good fun."

BEST SONG: 'Cheating With You'



THE RAG TAGS

Five-piece folk collective and Huddersfield University Battle Of The Bands champs

FOR FANS OF: Mumford & Sons, Nickel Creek, raiding the music department's instrument cupboard.

BEN LOVETT: "They're a student, fun band from Huddersfield. Someone was interviewing Ted and Winston for a student paper and said 'I've got a band' and gave them a CD. He wasn't looking for a slot, but as it happened, we were

KING CHARLES

Dalston dandy Charles Costa: the sound of Notting Hill Carnival via Regency England

FOR FANS OF: Jack Peñate, Finley Quaye, fucking ludicrous hair.

WINSTON MARSHALL: "He was a few years above me at school. He always had cowboy hats and cowboy boots; he hasn't really changed that much in 10 years. I love his wild side, but essentially he's just a killer songwriter. I'm always a bit nervous when I watch King Charles play, because I'm really scared that something bad's going to happen. It's thrilling, you're on the edge of your seat!"

BEST SONG: 'Coco Chitty'



MEETING THE BOSS

Springsteen's just one star Mumfords have been hanging out with... here's their guide to all their other new famous friends



▲ BOB DYLAN

In front of a TV audience of millions, the band – along with the Avett Brothers – performed a version of Dylan's 'Maggie's Farm' with him at the 2011 Grammy Awards. According to Ben, "The Grammys wanted to put on a collaborative performance, and we were just one element of the collaboration." "He was very easygoing," adds Marcus. "It was musically directed by T Bone Burnett, who's had a close relationship with him, and he seemed into it. It was all quite easy; there were no falling-outs."



▲ SIR ALEX FERGUSON

The band played a gala dinner celebrating the Scottish football manager's 25th year in charge of Manchester United. Lifelong Utd fan Winston said: "That was wicked! He's a hero. Twenty five years at the top of your game is an amazing feat."



▲ JAKE GYLLENHAAL

During Mumford's Big Easy Express tour in 2011 – when they toured the US by train – the *Donnie Darko* star, who has since become a friend of the band, revealed himself as a fan, and ended up stowing away on the tour. "I've no idea how that happened," says Ben. "He just turned up, got on the train, and kept inviting himself to dates!"



▲ BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

The band joined The Boss onstage at Pinkpop festival in Holland last month, where they helped out on 'Hungry Heart'. "We were in awe by the side of the stage," says Ben. "Someone had said to us that he'd seen us play and had enjoyed it, so on the penultimate encore he walked over to the monitor desk and was like, 'Come and sing a song with me, boys!' We froze and he thought we weren't going to do it, then we just ran out onstage as fast as we could!"



▲ RAY DAVIES

The Kinks legend enlisted the band to perform on his 2010 collaboration album, 'See My Friends'. "He was doing a whole album of collaborations with artists he liked," explains Ben. "Some new, contemporary acts, and some others that he had met along the way. So he was like, 'Do you want to come over to Konk [Davies' London studio] to play some tunes?' We did a medley of 'Days' and 'This Time Tomorrow'. We take every decision as it comes, so when we get asked to do something like that, it was a big 'YES!'"



▲ THE CAMERONS

Looking for a British band to play a state dinner at the White House in his honour last March, the PM plumped for Mumford & Sons. "Our manager told us there had been a request that we perform at the White House," reveals Ben. "We found out later it was because they couldn't get Adele!"

▲ BARACK OBAMA

"We met him, but it was quick," says Marcus of the US President. "We stood in a line and he walked down, shaking hands. He said, 'Congratulations on all your success,' and we said, 'Congratulations on all your success'. He laughed, which was a relief, and we were moved along."

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**THE STONE
ROSES**

Photo: Ian Tilton

NME







**THE STONE
ROSES**
Photo: Ian Tilton



REVIEWS

THE BIG OPINIONS ON THIS WEEK'S IMPORTANT RELEASES

Edited by Tom Howard



SMASHING PUMPKINS

OCEANIA EMI/MARTHA'S MUSIC

Billy's back with a new band and some grand concept based on the tarot. No, come back! It's actually not that bad...



There's something comforting about Billy Corgan's stubborn refusal to let the whole Smashing Pumpkins thing go. The civilised music industry can crumble, the *News Of The World* can close, *Big Brother* can avoid the axe, Brian May can work with Dappy, and yet, oblivious to change, Billy will plough ahead making nasally ethereal alternative rock music with two interchangeable yes men and a hot lady bass player. For those of us who have never quite come to terms with the '90s ending, there's a weird sense of solidarity to that. And however much the returns diminish, none of these records from Corgan's post-aborted solo career have actually been awful. So we're way beyond wondering if this band actually can be

called Smashing Pumpkins. If Billy says so, they must be.

It gets better. 'Oceania' arrives with a marvellous amount of hubris. It's an 'album within an album', a phase of Corgan's conceptual mammoth 'Teargarden By Kaleidyscope', a 44-song album based on the four phases of 'The Fool's Journey' version of the tarot (those ancient playing cards that may or may not be able to predict your future). This multi-year conceit was conceived as a way of abandoning the traditional album format. But lo, here is something that sure looks like a traditional album. "I still stand by my view that I don't think albums are particularly relevant at

this time," Corgan has said. "That may change. But as far as making music... from a writing point of view, it's going to focus me to put a group of songs together that are supposed to go together." Plus he's not bothering with singles. Instead,

Billy wants everyone to hear 'Oceania' as one. Review copies can only be listened to as a whole, because he was "dead set on making an album where every song was just as valuable as any other". In the real world, restricting the ability of people to actually listen to the album could be compared to a Hollywood studio not wanting its movie reviewed because it knows it's a dud.

But this is not the real world, this is Billy Corgan, so 'Oceania' lands somewhere between those cynical real-world practices and the grand fantasy within Billy's mind.

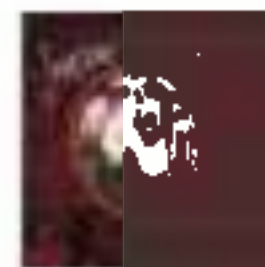
And it is, in many ways, the best Pumpkins album since 'Machina'. It's compelling, and finds new territory. The band themselves are no slouches compared to their fabled predecessors. But it doesn't do a huge amount to lodge itself in your memory. 'Quasar' rolls in on something approaching QOTSA channelling Zep's 'Whole Lotta Love'. 'Panopticon' is elegant and dreamy. 'The Celestials' even has a vague Californian twist on 'Tonight, Tonight'. And things briefly become very excellent indeed around the middle when 'My Love Is Winter' rolls in with a chorus that recalls their very best material.

The most dramatic departure, 'One Diamond, One Heart' is 'Adore' via Robyn's 'Hang With Me', and is perfectly lovely. 'Pinwheels' wears its heart most emotionally on its sleeve before rushing into the epic, multi-suite (ugh!) title track. The sparse and atmospheric 'Pale Horse', meanwhile, is gorgeous. A bloated final act descends into the psychedelic sameness that's cursed too much of Smashing Pumpkins' post-'90s output, and you're bored again. In fact the main problem with 'Oceania' is that Billy's big talk about 'the concept' is also really quite

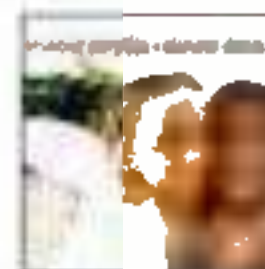
boring. Life's too short to bother with that, even if in plenty of other ways 'Oceania' can be considered a victory. **Dan Martin**

DOWNLOAD: 'My Love Is Winter', 'One Diamond, One Heart', 'Pale Horse'

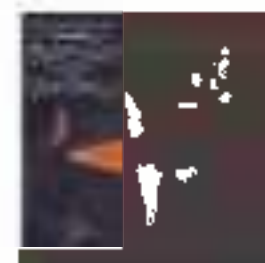
The Pumpkins' smashes



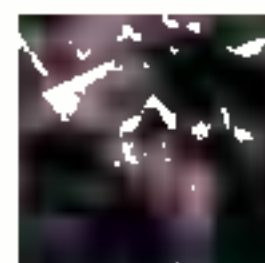
'GISH', 1991
Bratty debut drenched in reverb and RIFFS. Heavy as all hell.
Key track: 'Rhinoceros'



'SIAMESE DREAM', 1993
After Billy's breakdown, this is the Pumpkins at their most raw, angry and introspective.
Key track: 'Today'



'MELON COLLIE AND THE INFINITE SADNESS', 1995
The 28-track epic.
Key tracks: 'Bullet With Butterfly Wings'



'ADORE', 1998
A more sedate-sounding curveball. Described by Corgan as "a band falling apart".
Key track: 'Ava Adore'

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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RIZ MC

MICROSCOPE TRU THOUGHTS

You'll know Riz Ahmed as one of a bunch of hapless terrorists in *Four Lions*, and you'll soon know him as the lead in Plan B's film *Ill Manors*. But unlike fellow thespians who've embarrassed themselves by picking up the microphone (Depp, Crowe, Hasselhoff), Ahmed as Riz MC has stepped up to the plate as something of a hard hitter. Thought-provoking social topics pepper 'MICroscope', perhaps unsurprisingly from an Oxford University PPE graduate. And he flits with ease between tackling corrupt politicians ('Hundreds & Thousands') and twisted love ('All Of You' featuring Plan B), and climaxes with the old-but-still-poignant 'Sour Times', which goes heavy on Al Qaeda and the 7/7 London bombings. In parts Riz's flow is slightly awkward, but his rhymes are tight and full of razor-sharp quips, and the production is slick and energetic from electro legend Zed Bias, while Bok Bok, Sukh Knight and dBridge all contribute remixes for the deluxe version. **Will Gilgrass**

DOWNLOAD: 'Hundreds & Thousands'

6

LORN

ASK THE DUST NINJA TUNE

The first outsider signing to Flying Lotus' LA-centric Brainfeeder label for his 2010 debut 'Nothing Else', Illinois' Lorn was immediately detached from his peers; his glitches and groans evoked a gloom far from coastal azure skies. In reaction to the "cold and strict" (his words) design of album one, this Ninja Tune-released follow-up finds Lorn embracing a more organic approach to his craft. But don't expect instant-click accessibility: this is ambitious electronic music rewarding persistence. In the grinding machinations of certain cuts one can hear Stockhausen rumbles beneath vocals moaning like The Knife drowning in oil, and heavier affairs share common compositional ground with El-P's punchy hip-hop productions. 'The Well' could be Hudson Mohawke operating from the basement of a haunted house, while centrepiece 'Diamond' evolves from Judgement Day terror to buzzing euphoria. Lorn remains dark and scary, but he's learning to communicate with the masses. **Mike Diver**

DOWNLOAD: 'The Well'

8

LEMONADE

DIVER TRUE PANTHER

In 2008, Brooklyn and San Francisco dudes Lemonade released an album called 'Lemonade' that was ENORMOUS in every way and focused its attention on club bangers that capitalised on the whole LCD Soundsystem 'thing' happening at the time. It was great. 'Diver' is much less gigantic, favouring woozy afterparty synths ('Neptune') over the banging actually-at-the-party synths of their debut, and a helluva lot of crooning R&B vocals ('Eye Drops'). There's a pleasing amount of Ibiza nihilism within Callan Clendenin's lyrics, allowed to breathe on tracks like 'Whitecaps': "I've no opinion on these matters, but I'll just listen to you speak". Sometimes there's just no need to pretend you know what you're talking about. Occasionally 'Diver' drifts waaaaay too close to Junior Boys' territory, and the schmaltzy muck of tracks like 'Vivid' feel as insincere as the fake smile of someone who's about to fire you. But mostly: total bliss session. **Tom Howard**

DOWNLOAD: 'Neptune'

7

FACES TO NAMES...

What the reviewers are doing this week



EMILY MACKAY

"A bit quiet, really, just hanging out with Billy Corgan in Lisbon and shit like that. I am also loving 4AD's new lot Daughter, and their graceful, ghostly ways."



BEN HEWITT

"Pesky deadlines meant I slept on a very uncomfortable couch in the NME office, but listening to Liars' 'WIXIW' made me feel like a warrior again."



PRIYA ELAN

"Hiding from the sun with Light Asylum, the new Azealia Banks EP and the Fiona Apple album. Also re-watching the frankly astounding new *Mad Men* episode..."



FIONA APPLE

THE IDLER WHEEL IS WISER THAN THE DRIVER OF THE SCREW AND WHIPPING CORDS WILL SERVE YOU MORE THAN ROPES WILL EVER DO SONY

The lyrics may emerge from a bottomless pit of despair, but they float bewitchingly on some sublime music



Over three startling albums (1996's 'Tidal', 1999's 'When The Pawn...' and 2005's 'Extraordinary Machine'), Fiona Apple's sophisticated neuroses became emblematic

of a very American end-of-the-century angst.

Teaming a confessional sensibility with a dramatic edge, the New Yorker's seemingly endless well of demons to be exorcised transcended the usual '90s singer/songwriter clichés thanks to jaw-dropping levels of lyrical and musical prowess. Whether she was sharing details about a masochistic power struggle ('Not About Love', 'Shadowboxer'), contemplating the abuse she suffered as a child ('Sullen Girl') or seemingly reflecting on her role as enfant terrible of the Lilith Fair set ('Limp'), Apple's songs had the dangerous, addictive quality of watching a car crash in slow motion. Now, after seven years, she's finally back.

But where does an artist who was once the poster girl for adolescent naval-gazing go when she has turned 34, and presumably grown out of adolescent naval gazing? The answer lies somewhere left of where you'd expect. Her fourth and absurdly titled album is a complex beast, with a coal-black message of bleakness, but an execution that's both beautiful and unexpected. Lyrically, 'The Idler...' finds Apple as wonderfully conflicted as ever, filled with the need to "feel everything" (according to opener 'Every Single Night'). Almost two

decades after she began, and in a voice that's now more 'throaty sage' than 'bird-like alto', we are no closer to a resolution.

Those themes that have repeated throughout her career – the triple bullets of low self-esteem, uncaring partners and disillusionment – still stoke her creative fire. And yet, unlike her previous albums, the 10 songs here are soaked in a sense of grown-up disappointment; we're in a place of adult emotional inertia, trapped by chains of repetition that we're all tethered to despite our best intentions.

The calcified emotions on tracks like 'Left Alone' (where Apple calls herself a "moribund slut") and 'Valentine' (where the masochistic theme rears its head again on lyrics like "While you were watching someone else/I stared at myself and cut myself/It's all I'll do 'cos I'm not free/A fugitive too dull to flee") have a nihilistic pang to them. And as bald and bleak as these cul-de-sacs of lyrical desperation may be, the flicker of hope shines in the form of the music that accompanies them. Vaudeville rhythms collide with tribalistic harmonies and chalky jazz creating awesome crescendos. Closer 'Hot Knife', which pairs a singular cymbal loop with a series of Dirty Projector-like harmonies (with cabaret singer Maudie Maggart), is particularly unforgettable. The tension created by the lyrics and music is wonderful and uneasy, ensuring that 'The Idler...' is endlessly fascinating and unlike anything else you're likely to hear this year. **Priya Elan**

DOWNLOAD: 'Hot Knife', 'Valentine', 'Daredevil'

8



PEAKING LIGHTS

LUCIFER WEIRD WORLD

The Californian dub dabblers grow into their strange and seductive sounds on a devilishly good third album



There is music out there bursting with rage of the personal and political nature, music that comes at you with savage speed and giant riffs, music that will get you up to fling a

Molotov cocktail into a police station or flick the Vs at your history teacher. You can listen to it tomorrow. First, make some room in your life for the delightful deep bath of a third album by Californian duo Peaking Lights.

'Lucifer' is their second album for Domino sub-label Weird World, and it finds them sounding increasingly individual. Considering that Peaking Lights' previous blissful meanders through fields of dub, shoegaze and krautrock had very few modern comparison points, this feels like a mission accomplished. It feels more accomplished full stop, in fact.

Their 2011 album and breakout of sorts '936' wore its rawness and lo-fi amateurism on its sleeve, as is sometimes the case with the Cali DIY underground from which the band sprung, but 'Lucifer's' eight songs are produced with due care and attention. Should you assume this equates to a soft-soaping of Peaking Lights' aesthetic in an optimistic attempt to crack the mainstream, reconsider. Aaron Coyes and Indra Dunis pepper these tracks' six- or seven-minute lifespans with subtly odd touches.

'Beautiful Son', for example, is at heart a thing of simple gorgeousness – a Laurel Canyon-style quasi-ballad for keyboard and minimal blues guitar – but in lieu of a 'traditional' rhythm track, a swirling procession of electronic

chirps and scratches loops endlessly. Its title, we can assume, refers to Mikko Coyes, who was born to the duo last year (yep, they don't just make music together, they make babies), and whose infant gurgles earn him a vocal credit on the echoey lope of recent single 'Lo Hi'.

Peaking Lights' generous application of dub techniques is arguably their strongest weapon, and they've wisely retained it throughout the bulk of 'Lucifer'. While you can't exactly imagine this album booming from a Jamaican sound system circa 1973, Coyes and Dunis have obviously immersed themselves in King Tubby, Scientist and other old analogue masters. 'Cosmic Tides' makes good with booming digital drums and dusty organ melodies – by contrast, Dunis' guileless vocal makes the end product a deeply stoned cousin of Saint Etienne's 'Only Love Can Break Your Heart' cover.

For a group who enjoy the very modern luxury of 'blog buzz', it's strange how Peaking Lights' hybridism often feels transported from the early '90s. If 'Lucifer' had been released then, there's every chance that it would be lauded alongside 'Screamadelica' and the good end of The Orb's catalogue. In a modern context, their creation of atmosphere through minimalism warrants investigation by fans of The xx, although they're far from soundalikes. It's more chillout room than chillwave, all dub and little step, and the better for all of that. **Noel Gardner**

DOWNLOAD: 'Beautiful Son', 'Cosmic Tides', 'Midnight (In The Valley Of Shadows)'

7

KEY NOTES



Best Sleeve Of The Week
Lorn – 'Ask The Dust'
It's an eye but it's a hand! His cheek is made of ears! Everything is wrong but yet it looks so right! Clever work Lorn.



Worst Sleeve Of The Week
Fiona Apple – 'The Idler Wheel...'
Not so much for the sleeve, which has a comforting aura of AS Level art about it, but for the absolutely ridiculous 23-word title. Jog on.

POP ETC

POP ETC ROUGH TRADE



Pop Etc used to be called The Morning Benders, and if you're going to indulge in a name change you may as well also indulge yourself in a self-titled album.

Tying into an 'it's hip to be square' mentality, 'Pop Etc' is mostly good geeky. 'New Life' oozes with Drive soundtrack appeal, while 'Keep It For Your Own' (produced by Danger Mouse) is extremely Broken Bells, with frontman Chris Chu's vocals morphing breezily into James Mercer's Garden State croon. Occasionally, there's bad geeky, like 'RYB', which sounds as cool as 'that guy' at the party discussing the benefits of Google Chrome to the passed out girl on the couch. But overall it just about balances

out. **Anna Conrad**

DOWNLOAD: 'New Life'

7

REVEREND AND THE MAKERS

@REVEREND_MAKERS COOKING VINYL



Having tried to stuff right-minded but clunky 'George Bush = BAD' politics down our throats with his last albums as side-project Mongrel and with the

Makers themselves, this is Rev's reaction to no-one ruddy listening. Happily, while we were expecting an opus about how the coalition government's really lame, he's delivered a relentless bosh-pop thump that's more 'Bonkers' than bonkers. Most of it, from the vein-tingle rave-grind of 'Bassline', to the disco strings of 'Out Of The Shadows', to the '90s big beat of 'Shine The Light', is a riot. Actually, riots: that's what we thought he was going to write an opus about. Thank God he didn't. **Jamie Fullerton**

DOWNLOAD: 'Bassline'

6

POLYSICK

DIGITAL NATIVE PLANET MU



This is: bucketloads of ambient analogue acid that wash all over the listener. This is not: bucketloads of ambient acid that slosh the listener abruptly in the face.

Because Italian knob-twiddler Polysick has adopted synapse-tickling Balearica and a slow-mo psychedelic haze on his second full-lengther, There's rambunctious fare on offer too – 'Preda' is propelled by a hefty Detroit bassline and closer 'Smudge, Hawaii's' motorik flavours are mostly agreeable – but far too often 'Digital Native' descends into aimless, muddled noodling. Not a bad choice for zoned-out afterhours sessions or long lost summer afternoons, but it's just too indifferent to recommend with any real conviction. **Kristian Dando**

DOWNLOAD: 'Smudge, Hawaii'

5

NENEH CHERRY & THE THING

THE CHERRY THING

SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND



You might think you don't like free jazz. Hush now. Let Neneh Cherry, she of 'Buffalo Stance' fame, soothe your silly, tired little brain. Let her gloved,

sensuous voice stroke your knitted brow as cymbals gently plash. Shh. ShhhRRKKKKRRNNNGHTT! That's essentially the mode of attack of 'The Cherry Thing', a covers collaboration between Cherry and free-jazzers The Thing; lure you in with slink, then bend your mind with skronk. It's heady stuff, from a dizzyingly sexy take on Suicide's 'Dream Baby Dream' to a version of The Stooges' 'Dirt' that sounds, in a good way, like the end of all things. **Emily Mackay**

DOWNLOAD: 'Dirt'

8



CAN

THE LOST TAPES MUTE

The Holy Grail of krautrock has poured forth more of its exotic elixir... 30-odd years on, it still tastes bloody good



Radiohead, Primal Scream, The Fall, The Stone Roses, Kanye bloody West: the list of musicians who've sampled, stolen from, or simply lauded Can reads like the best bits of your record collection. Yet for all the praises showered on this '70s krautrock ensemble, it is hard to put a finger on exactly how their sound has changed music. Their fluid grooves, twisted exotica and satanic sound collage seem to defy appropriation. Simply, they sound like nothing else.

Can released 12 albums, and a number of outtakes have dribbled forth since. But for the krautrock aficionado, the tease that 100 tapes of unreleased material was sitting around was almost unbearable: akin to knowing the Holy Grail was sat in a cupboard in Cologne. Finally, Can keyboardist Irmin Schmidt and band associate Jono Podmore have dug in, and the results are pretty stunning: three CDs drawing

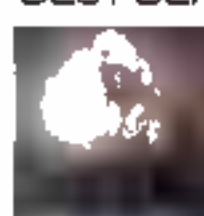
on film soundtrack work, live material, experimental segments and sprawling jams that show the workings of later Can favourites. Moments betray their difficult 'new music' beginnings: see 'Blind Mirror Surf', something like the sound of an exorcism played backwards as someone fastidiously detunes a room full of assorted string instruments. But much is brilliant. 'Millionenspiel' is a scorching spy-movie squall. 'Dead Pigeon Suite' is a haunted, raw, 12-minute prototype of 'Ege Bamyasi's' 'Vitamin C'. And 'Midnight Men' and 'Messer, Scissors, Fork And Light' sound like two of their all-time great pieces, the former all frothy synth and gravity-defying percussion, the latter a super-dense Jaki Liebezeit drum jam apparently stitched together by Dr Frankenstein. 'The Lost Tapes' is no barrel-scraping... it's more dark magic straight from the source. **Louis Pattison**

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Dead Pigeon Suite', 'Midnight Men', 'Messer, Scissors, Fork And Light'

THE CHAPMAN FAMILY CRUEL BRITANNIA EP

BEST BEFORE



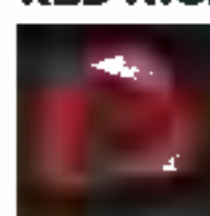
The Chapman Family may have gone through several stages of divorce since 2011's debut LP 'Burn Your Town' (only two original members remain), but their doomy post-punk has lost none of its embittered vitriol. 'No More Tears' begins in slightly obvious fashion, all angsty vocals and desperately chopped guitars, but in the more shoegaze-inflected 'Cruel Britannia' and the not-as-cheery-as-it-sounds 'Summer Song' the quintet manage to find a way of keeping the snarl without the cliché. Then there's a slowed-down, oddly soothing cover of Morrissey's 'Everyday Is Like Sunday', which is actually brilliant. A definite progression. **Lisa Wright**

7

DOWNLOAD: 'Summer Song'

THE HUNDRED IN THE HANDS

RED NIGHT WARP



THITH have long had the whiff of a duo who hammer out their electro ditties courtesy of a rigorous instruction booklet. Thank heavens, then, that they've paid less heed to the well-thumbed manuals on 'Red Night' and spruced things up: there's still no great balls-to-the-wall experimentation, and the limp likes of 'Come With Me' are distressingly safe slices of ElectroIndie 101. But the woozy, slow-burn banger 'Empty Stations' and eerie, otherworldly synth-pop of 'Stay The Night' are testimonies to the virtue of loosening one's top button, ditching the spit'n'sawdust functionality of yore and taking the odd plunge into the unknown. **Ben Hewitt**

6

DOWNLOAD: 'Empty Stations'

THE RIDER
What we're watching, checking out and wearing this week



Film
Rock Of Ages
The rock musical gets a silver-screen reworking, starring Russell Brand and a Guns N' Roses cover.



Exhibition
Manchester: So Much To Answer For
Proud Camden, June 1-July 15, 2012
proud.co.uk
This exhibition at Camden's Proud Gallery takes a look back through The Smiths' career in photos.



Shoes
Lakeside Espadrilles
These summer staples from Original Penguin are available in three shades so you can mix them up depending on your outfit. Kings of convenience.

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's
HAMISH MACBAIN



2:54 CREEPING POLYDOR



Once upon a time, many years ago, the demo of what is now the closing tune on the Thurlow sisters' just-out debut was one of the tunes that got us excited about them in the first place. Back then it was scuzzy and lo-fi. And yet fortunately the requisite big label production sheen - and the Zane Lowe plays and the video with horses and trees and rivers and all that - have subtly enhanced rather than totally smothered its melodic charms. Which makes a nice change.

MAROON 5 FT WIZ KHALIFA PAYPHONE PT MUSIC



It's not like Adam Levine's hyper-hateable troupe need to worry about their singles being smashes anymore, but just to be safe, they've roped in a megastar rapper. Also: 'Payphone'? To get anyone involved in the making of this tune even within a square mile of a payphone, there would have to be some kind of apocalypse. And speaking of apocalypses, when this shit is getting 25 million views on YouTube even prior to its release, God's trigger finger has got to be getting itchy.

BRETON FOAM FATCAT



You'll know the other side of this double-A ('Jostle') from Breton's debut album 'Other People's Problems', so we'll proceed straight to 'Foam', on which they cut the guitars entirely and head down a much more straight-ahead dancefloor path. Still, if you ask me, they're still a long way off making people who like dancing and are good at it get up and move their feet.

THE FUTUREHEADS BEESWING NUL



Let's be honest: the whole a cappella thing might have been a cute little idea in principle, but it was a bit much over a full album. Still, if you're looking for an example of when it works well, there ain't a better example on 'Rant' than this finger-clickin' good Richard Thompson cover.

FIRST AID KIT BLUE WICHITA



Jack White loves 'em, of course, but frankly if I was doing what First Aid Kit do and he didn't, I'd be worried. They covered 'We're Gonna Be Friends' with Bright Eyes earlier this month. Their last single was called 'Emmylou', for God's sake, and this one shares its name with a Joni Mitchell album and his fave new colour. Helps that it's quite beautiful as well.

FLO RIDA WHISTLE ATLANTIC



It begins... with a whistle. It continues: "Can you blow my whistle baby, let me know/Girl I'm gonna show you how we do it and we go real slow". The video setting: Flo Rida, topless, head shaved, shorts on, on a cliff edge. Other video personnel: women in bikinis, some allowed to whistle to take Flo Rida's dream outlined at the beginning of this track one step closer to reality.

LIVE

FROM PUBS TO ARENAS THE WEEK'S TOP GIGS

edited by Tom Howard



DIZZEE RASCAL

Dizzee's joined by Pepper, the Spice Girl it's OK not to hate

EVOLUTION FESTIVAL, NEWCASTLE QUAYSIDE SUNDAY 3 - MONDAY, JUNE 4

There's no new direction in evidence and barely even a change to last year's setlist, but grime's only genuine A-lister knows how to reduce a festival crowd to a sweating, screaming, grinning mess

A lot of people have been waiting for this moment for a long time. The moment the only true superstar to have emerged from the UK's grime scene gets back onstage after 2009's 'Tongue N' Cheek' made him England's greatest living rap star. The arrival of the man whose work with Armand van Helden, Calvin Harris, Shy FX and Tiesto saw him conquer Ibiza, the charts, every summer party ever. The crowd chatter as we wait. About "a new direction", about becoming "as big as Kanye", about whether he'll "ever, ever, EVER write another track as huge as 'Bonkers'".

At 9.45pm Dizzee 'back back back' Rascal takes to the stage to deliver his sermon. And as if the previous nine hours

of decadent behaviour have angered Thor, the heavens open. It does little to cool the fervour of the hormone-fuelled mob, and as grime's boy-gone-massive bounds on we're left pondering if the endless stream of people being dragged

When you've got a back catalogue like Dizzee's, it'd be selfish to hold back

past by the police is some sort of ironic performance art. But the real action's onstage. And for Mr Rascal it's not a great deviation from form, as he recreates his set from last year's V Festival almost to the note. It would be hard to get

annoyed, though, because it's still class. When you've got a back catalogue like Dizzee's it would seem borderline selfish to hold back. It is, after all, a set that's grown organically, with additions finding their niche, gradually, over time.

The result is an attention-grabbing mix of singles and classic album tracks, as 'Road Rage' is followed by 'Sirens' and 'Bassline Junkie' then 'Jus A Rascal'. It's relentlessly vibrant and irresistibly fun. Regularly pausing to check the embattled crowd are still sentient, he keeps up the pace with a show stopping version of 'Chillin Wiv Da Man Dem'. Dizzee protégée Pepper takes to the stage for a belting rendition of 'Scream', showcasing the

impressive pipes that have made her a favourite in the ever-growing Rascal family. From one pair o'pipes to another, Dizzee's Florence + The Machine love-in 'You Got The Dirt Love' whips the crowd into heart attack excitement as fireworks and streamers hurtle into the sky above the iconic backdrop of the River Tyne. Then he bounds offstage and into the night. But not for long! Re-emerging to his new single with DJ Fresh, the shuddering dub behemoth 'The Power', he continues headlong into 'Holiday' and then 'Bonkers' before careering offstage for good with a shout of, "Drive safe and wear a condom!" as the crowd screams "let's go fucking bonkers!" in unison, a scream that continues long into the early hours. He's back, and he's bangin'. *Rebecca Robinson*

DAN ROMAN, DAVID WALKER, STEVE WALKER/RED BULL STUDIOS, CHRIS BISHOP

Deadmau5's set?
It was squeaks
and troughs



TEED could
have made a
filippin



Ah, sunny
Newcastle



EVOLUTION FESTIVAL: BEST OF THE REST

DEADMAU5

As festival closers go, for sheer spectacle you'd be hard pushed to better techno's latest game-changer Deadmau5 on the Monday night. Dizzee had fireworks and confetti, but the Canadian rodent fan has all the lights in the world and puts the crowd through two hours of endurance even Bez would struggle with. The attention is on one man as his skill for composition and

subtlety is laid bare, rendering his contemporaries clumsy to the point of obsolescence.

TOTALLY ENORMOUS EXTINCT DINOSAURS

Orlando Higginbottom's set, up on Ballast Hill, is a world away from the orgy of destruction down the road. What he lacks on a stage plagued with sound problems - it's essentially someone's back garden - he makes up for in Lycra'd girls shaking their arses at the crowd.

DEVLIN

Delivering an appropriately

lukewarm rendition of 'Runaway' to a sea of apathetic bobbing that's barely heard over the crowd's chit chat and grunting, Devlin hammers home the extent to which humour and charm are a big part of what makes Dizzee Rascal special.

JESSIE WARE

A deathly dull affair, lacking the blissful subtlety of recent single '110%', that veers between simpering and squawking over the languid tones of backing music so pointless it's like an act of sabotage. We wander off as the chants of "get your tits out" make an unwelcome appearance.

BENGA

KOKO, LONDON SUNDAY, JUNE 3

Charts, you have been warned... the Magnetic Man-turned-solo star is heading your way

KOKO tonight is a Queen, Charlie, Prince Phil, bladder infection and flouilla-free zone. Everyone here is waving the flag for something different, but something equally British. Away from the rain and inside a roasting venue, people are wearing vests and crop tops, and NME's leather leggings are melting. It's all for Benga, the 25-year-old producer at the forefront of the most exciting UK genre for a decade.

When his album 'Chapter 2' drops later this year, it'll mark his big solo break into territory he's already visited as one third of Magnetic Man, 2011's breakout dubstep 'supergroup' with Artwork and Skream. To demonstrate just how BIG his solo turn's gonna be, he's got his own flashing platform to perform on, and he's surrounded by laptops, samplers and gadgets, all on pedestals resembling alien genitalia. From here, the master conductor manipulates his sounds.

Youngman (aka Derby dweller Simon Smith - a sort of male Katy B) is the hype man tonight, working the crowd into circle-pits and swirls of energy. "We want to see you guys jumping," he demands, before the crowd obliterate the cliché that 'dancing to dubstep' means clenching your arse cheeks in the dark corners of Plastic People.

There are Mexican waves, there are moments when the entire crowd moves

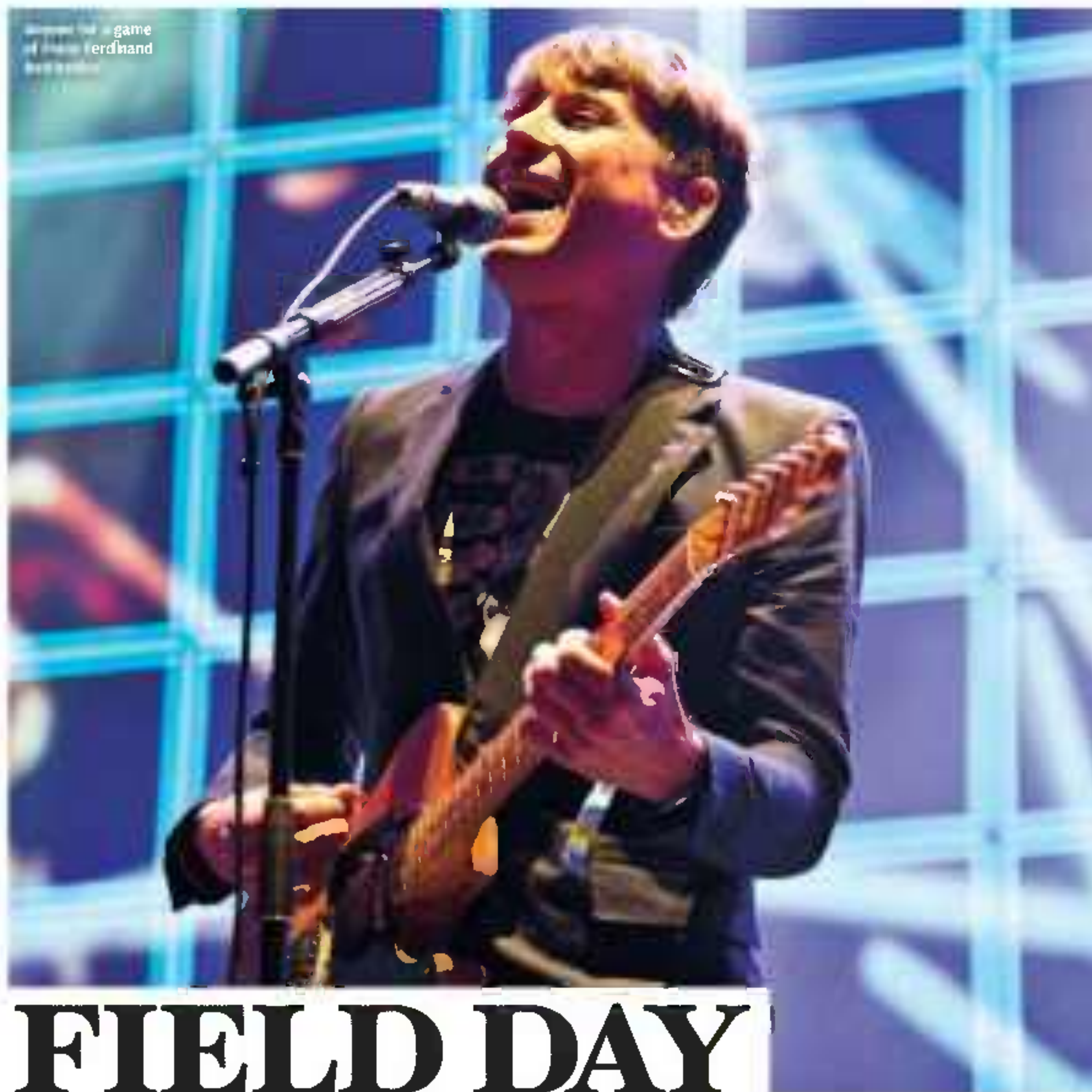
as one, and there are shout-outs to the drum'n'bass heads. "You've got to build the tension, you've got to take control," comes the boom from the stage. "You've got to break the mould!"

As the night progresses, numerous guests come out to decorate tunes which highlight the direction Benga's going in: The Charts. Sleek Croydon-based vocalist Marlene jumps on 'Formula' and 'Higher'. Dorset-born singer Bebe Black joins in the fun for recent single 'Icon', which doesn't (yet) have the gurny punch it does on radio, but retains the message about telling any doubters they won't drag him down. Benga seems to be saying: "I've got stage furniture that look like alien genitalia, I am unstoppable." The biggest track of the night, 'High Speed', features a quick-fire spot from grime MC P-Money.

Longtime Benga-ites are treated to 'Night', his most famous pre-Magnetic Man moment, before 'I Will Never Change' - a new, looping, vocal-less track that will creep slowly into your brain throughout the summer. As a finale, Youngman, Benga, P-Money, Marlene and Bebe Black take to the stage and bow, as sweaty bodies start collapsing in celebratory piles. Inside the heaving mass, one crowd member's T-shirt reads Keep Calm And Dubstep On. Another says Never Mind The Sex Pistols, Here's The Drop. It's a fitting end to a very British occasion. *Siân Rowe*



Er, Jessie... you forgot your top



FIELD DAY

VICTORIA PARK, LONDON SATURDAY, JUNE 2

Pond, Grimes and Sleigh Bells bring the buzz and bluster of the new, but it's the old guard Franz Ferdinand who fire off the biggest blast

In previous years, Field Day's had a bit of a bad rep – only two toilets, only 12 per cent volume, moan moan moan, etc. This year, problems resolved. So, as one of the few London-based events to not be branded to buggery or full of hipsters, it's probably just about the best festival in walking distance of the Tube.

The line-up, meanwhile, straddles the gap between discerning muso choices and actually-quite-popular bands. Early on we get **The Internet**, brainchild of Odd Future's Syd Tha Kyd, dropping missives of a far more R&B-laden nature than her polarising day job, and **Pond**'s Nick Allbrook running around the main stage flapping his arms and behaving like the weird kid at school who always had a pencil stuck up his nose. So far, so buzzy.

Liars provide the

day's biggest letdown, noodling around deep within the drone-based end of their spectrum, always well clear of the hits. In the darker confines of a Proper Venue, Angus Andrew and co's electronic meanderings will sit better, but in the blissful mid-afternoon heat, new album 'WIXIW' sounds, well, boring. A million miles away from ever being boring is a camo-clad, all-singing, all-flailing **Grimes**, who packs her tent out and then some, and thrashing noise-pop duo **Sleigh Bells** (now with an added third member onstage). Second album 'Reign Of Terror' may not have made the same slamming

impact as their debut, but from the squalling old kicks of 'Infinity Guitars' to 'Born To Lose's pseudo-sweetness, Alexis Krauss and Derek Miller prove they're a live leviathan.

And so to the big guns. **The Vaccines** liven up their endlessly toured set with fresh blood, opening with Strokes-y new single 'No Hope' and closing with a heavier, punkier offering from their imminent second album. But the real

coup of the evening cuts a far sharper silhouette. Returning to the live circuit, **Franz Ferdinand** make for a heartwarming familiar finale. At the time of their set it's chucking down, but the dedicated and decent-sized crowd is testament to the fact that, a decade into their career, Franz do louche, sexy indie-disco hits better than most. Tonight they showcase four new bangers – from the wired jangles of 'Right Thoughts' (back on classic form) to the slower strut of 'Brief Encounters' – but while these tasters provide proof the band are still functioning, it feels like Franz have been away for so long the real joy is found in remembering how good they actually are. From 'Ulysses' to 'The Outsiders' to 'Michael' to a still brilliant 'Take Me Out', it takes no time at all. *Lisa Wright*

Sleigh Bells put in the call for a fresh pair of trousers

VIEW FROM THE CROWD

Band of the day?



Lauren, London, 25

"The Vaccines were amazing. I've been listening to their new song non-stop since it came out and some of the other newer stuff sounded really fucking good too. They're basically the new Libertines."



Sarah, London, 28

"Grimes was so packed but worth fighting your way in for. She's just really cool. I don't think it matters that there's a lot of hype about her – she's doing something interesting so the music lives up to it."



Mark, Kent, 20

"Metronomy were great. I liked their matching mustard trousers. No lights anymore; that's a shame. If there's a song this summer that's as good as 'The Look' last year I'll be surprised."



Grimes is still refusing to wear that jacket



The Internet goes down



Guess who's the first to smell that fart...



Franz get started on the YMCA

GIRLS

HMV FORUM, LONDON MONDAY, MAY 28

It's a tried and tested format. Grow up in a cult, listen to rock music, leave cult, make your own rock music, inadvertently form cult full of American Apparel kids throwing themselves at your coolness. That's how Girls' Christopher Owens did it. Unorthodox, effective. His bandmate is Chet White, and usually they operate as a duo. Onstage tonight Girls are fleshed out to include drummer, guitarist and gospel choir, and their sound is dramatic. There's something about Owens' Kurt Cobain-chic too - with the flowers on his micstand, the blonde hair and the songs about heartbreak and vomit - that connects with the plaid-shirt-wearing crowd. Opener 'My Ma' is fragile, with Owens' raspy voice sounding like an ex-choirboy who's given up smoking. 'Heartbreaker', meanwhile, showcases what Girls are about - Cobain fronting The Beach Boys with added hip-gyrations. Owens' skill is to make the crowd uncomfortable, but keep them enamoured. On 'Lust For Life', anaemic-looking fans bawl, "Oh, I wish I had a suntan/Oh, I wish I had a pizza and a bottle of wine" triumphantly like they're in a Domino's ad. 'Vomit' sees the choir take the song to 'Gimme Shelter' grandiosity, and 'Honey Bunny' has kids twisting like Travolta in *Pulp Fiction*. It all connects. Perhaps people are desperate for something to cling onto during the recession, or perhaps Girls are the only band out there making pop music with meaning. **Anna Conrad**

SAVAGES

SHACKLEWELL ARMS, LONDON TUESDAY, MAY 29

"Too hot!" gasps Jehnny Beth, cheek-puffing and brow-mopping, as she surveys the sweat-soaked throng. Gatherings as raucous as this aren't common in the Shacklewell Arms, but Savages aren't like most who saunter through these rickety doors. They're brutal and already flanked by a bunch of wild-eyed devotees. And as early as the first few seconds of the frenzied opener 'I Am Here', it's easy to see why they've already amassed such zealous worshippers. What follows is 35-odd minutes of stern, uncompromising, icy goth-pop. 'Husbands' sees Jehnny flailing and shrieking, her cohorts setting out bilious clanging, while 'Flying To Berlin' makes like the feral lovechild of The Slits and PIL with its sexily sinister post-punk. Yet what distinguishes Savages isn't just their penchant for eviscerating earlobes - it's that when the red needle subsides, they keep their menace. Just witness the slower stomp of 'Shut Up', oozing with insidious malcontent as smoke-smudged guitars back Jehn's dark hints at unspeakable horrors: "Those dangerous things you do/That you do when no-one knew, with the eyes closed". A closing, cacophonous 'She Will' works everyone into a lather, but the battle's long since over and this ground is already Savages'. Shed your garments, flog your trinkets, renounce your worldly wares, and join the wild ones now. **Ben Hewitt**

JAKE BUGG

100 CLUB, LONDON THURSDAY, MAY 31

It's all in the eyes. Those prematurely creased and semi-closed eyes. Nottingham folk-rock sensation Jake Bugg is squinting from behind his busted-up six-string, as if with enough concentration he can turn back time in the 100 Club, restoring the '60s institution to its rock'n'roll heyday. Dylan and Baez will argue politics while the Velvet Underground chain-smoke in the corner and Keef gets to grips with the last vial of vein medicine: back when young men like the one onstage still believed in music's ability to change the world. Not just another troubadour nostalgist, with his ancient beatnik soul and crystalline voice, Bugg has our complete attention; he's every bit the real deal, only born too late and not of his time. The obligatory drunks are shushed into submission, the bouncer and the head-locked scamp call timeout and hug tenderly, ageing teddy boys and Weller clones cease their incessant hair-coiffing as Bugg reduces the blood-red confines of the venue to pin-drop silence. For just a fraction of a second those eyes open wide and bright, as in his incomparable voice he purrs "gonna sing you an old country song, from the heart". And that he does. Keef spikes his vein and the world turns again as 'Lightning Bolt's Delta-boogie puts sex into the hips of beautiful girls in the front row. Call us believers. **John Calvert**



COLDPLAY

RICOH ARENA, COVENTRY TUESDAY, MAY 29

You know who they are and what they do, yet their show has a power that can't be denied

Coldplay: the band who appeared on *X Factor*. Coldplay: the band Beach House-loving hipsters love to sneer at, despite the fact that the only thing differentiating Beach House from Coldplay is a Flaming Lips-esque Disney effect on the vocals. Coldplay: the band every bland, corporate indie band calls "corporate" and "bland". Coldplay: "a shit Radiohead" (Chris Martin's words). Coldplay: the... OK, you know who they are, and you made up your mind about them a long time ago.

All I can say is: no-one, *no-one* could experience a gig like this and not be moved at some point. Chris Martin may not be the man to soundtrack a riot or a revolution, but what he and his buddies do is concoct moments of collective euphoria in normally soulless environments like this one, through the medium of fluoro wristbands, lasers, balloons, confetti and undeniable songs. It's telling that the least convincing bit of tonight is where the band appear on a tiny "B" stage in the middle of the audience, playing stripped-down versions of lesser-known songs. For Coldplay, it's the bigger, the better. In this environment, surrounded by thousands of people of all ages with their arms

around each other, their eyes closed, 'Yellow', 'Viva La Vida', 'Paradise', 'Clocks' and 'Fix You' - *especially* 'Fix You' - are just completely irresistible.

And to go back to the non-music stuff, the wristbands may have "cost too much money", but they are the best thing anyone has ever come up with in the context of stadium gigs. It's all about Coldplay's incessant aiming to please... Not the coolest role in music, maybe, but as the supposedly un-shit Radiohead are going round overcharging for a self-indulgent two hours, and Guns N' Roses are showing up three days late 'cos they think it's punk, it feels nice. Yes, nice, OK? Coldplay are nice. So what? Coldplay: the best band in the world at playing stadiums. No question. **Hamish MacBain**

Watch the 10 best Coldplay tracks at NME.COM/artists/coldplay

SETLIST

- Mylo Xyloto
- Hurts Like Heaven
- In My Place
- Major Minus
- Lovers In Japan
- The Scientist
- Yellow
- Violet Hill
- God Put A Smile Upon Your Face
- Princess Of China
- Up In Flames
- Warning Sign
- Don't Let It Break Your Heart
- Viva La Vida
- Charlie Brown
- Paradise
- Us Against The World
- Speed Of Sound
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- Every Teardrop Is A Waterfall

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Thousands of festivalgoers have found The Cure



PRIMAVERA SOUND

PARC DEL FORUM, BARCELONA WEDNESDAY, MAY 30 – SUNDAY, JUNE 3

The Cure, The xx, Milk Music and Napalm Death unite for a fiesta of epic headline sets, great comebacks and a hefty dose of heavy metal

The sea, the sun, the most exciting bands in the universe – mainland Europe's most dangerously excellent festival's got it all. In 2012, it went a little something like this...

THE YOUNG PRETENDERS

Denmark's Iceage's performance is raw like a fresh wound, Elias Bender

Rønnefelt flinging aside his guitar and hovering stage front, bawling into a horribly contorted microphone stand. A handful of new songs from their written not-yet-recorded new album suggest 'New Brigade' was no fluke

THE ELDER STATESMEN

There are few better ways of asserting one's festival authority than by flashing a sizable chunk of back catalogue, and The Cure's Robert Smith – as ever, head to toe in black with hair like an explosion

at an oil refinery – has plenty to show off. Their three-hour, 36-song set runs the breadth of their work so far, but a quota of one hit to every two fan favourites strikes about the right balance, and three encores culminate with a heroic 'Boys Don't Cry'.

THE WEEKEND HIGHLIGHT

The xx, without a doubt. It's the far side of midnight, but there's still a warm glow as the three take to the stage. Romy

and Oliver's voices entwine beautifully as Jamie attends a control desk of synths, MPCs, cymbals and yes, those steel drums. There remains something introverted and private about their music – if they wished, songs such as 'Crystalised' could blossom into grand, communal sing-alongs – but self-control remains one of their strong suits, and even as they hold back, the rave-tinged new material from 'Coexist' achieves a heady euphoria.

THE OFF-SITE DELIGHT

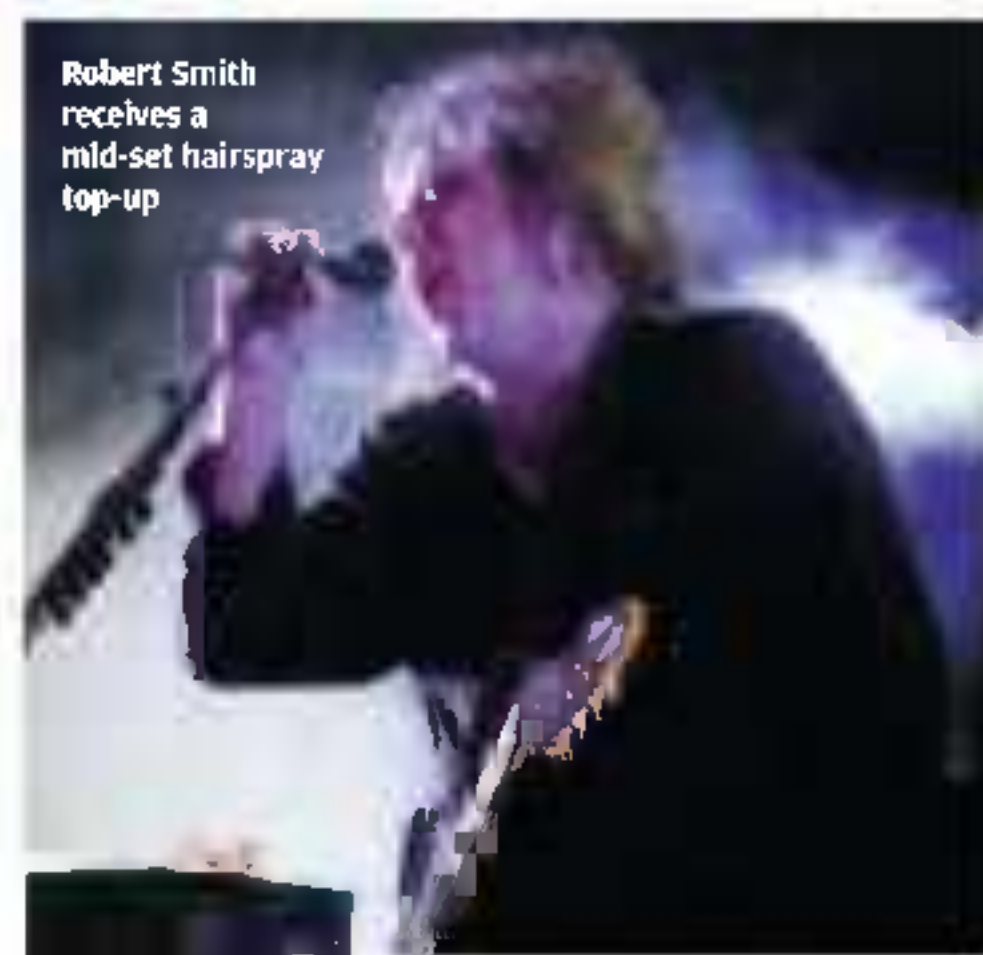
Milk Music tore it up on Friday on the Pitchfork stage, but if anything, it's their daytime set in the lush Parc de la Ciutadella that feels more special. Setting up on an outdoor stage surrounded by orange trees in front of the Geological Museum, it's the last show of the tour, and they're clearly made up. Their high times Hüsker Dü churn is gloriously addictive, and some dudey stage banter ("This one goes out to all the beautiful people... hey, you're aall beautiful," draws frontman Alex Coxen before 'Beyond Living') is pretty charming too.



Careful Alex Milk Music, you'll hurt your milk teeth



Iceage descending on sunny Spain



Robert Smith receives a mid-set hairspray top-up

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

Tonight marks the debut European performance from Abel Tesfaye, aka Toronto R&B auteur The Weeknd. But a run through the twilight slow jams of 'House Of Balloons' feels more soiled than oiled, trampled all over by a rather stodgy live band, and a mid-set power cut doesn't help matters.

THE HEAVY BITS

This year Primavera boasts an unlikely seam of extreme metal. Wolves In The Throne Room bathe the ATP stage in cold light and shoegaze black metal scree while old-timers Mayhem dish the Pope from a stage decorated with skewered pigs' heads and flaming torches. But with their two second songs and general mood of apocalyptic insurrection, Brummie grindcore giants Napalm Death remain a spectacle that's utterly unique. *Louis Pattison*



The xx's Romy sings the blues

Small venues are great and all, but the toilet queues are murder

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ENTER SHIKARI

TUNBRIDGE WELLS FORUM TUESDAY, JUNE 5

Britain's Best Small Venue is crowned in sweat-soaked style by St Albans' finest agit-punkers

Let's go fucking ballistic!" bellows Enter Shikari frontman Rou Reynolds as the walls of Tunbridge Wells Forum – a venue that's far, far too small for his mighty gang of noiseniks – threatens to crumble to dust. It's bedlam in here, but Rou and his bandmates look as calm as you like. They're used to destroying venues this size. They used to do it every night. But with their third full-length *'A Flash Flood Of Colour'* and its hook-laden choruses, it became clear Shikari were looking beyond the pubs and clubs of this nation to venues with capacities in their thousands all over the world. So we're grateful to J.D. Roots that, just for tonight, they've wrestled them back into a space where we can see the whites of their eyes and the fury of their tonsils in the place we've officially named Britain's Best Small Venue.

By way of celebration, when the intro to 'System...!' / 'Meltdown' gives way and

the band thunder into life, all hell breaks loose. From here on, the whole night is chaos, a flurry of elbows, sweat and flying fist-punches. Old classics 'Destabilise', 'Juggernauts' and 'Mothership' send the place predictably potty, and newer cuts from 'A Flash Flood...' have grown in stature. 'Arguing With Thermometers' has turned into a marching anthem, while 'Hello Tyrannosaurus, Meet Tyrannicide' gets a reaction you'd expect from a track four times its age. Even softer moments such as 'Stalemate' – which Rou performs acoustically on the venue's bar – go to prove Shikari can pretty much get away with anything.

The night's biggest reaction is reserved for the closers 'Sssnakepit' and 'Zzzonked', two tracks that encapsulate everything

WHAT TWITTER THOUGHT

@AmyyWhoWaited
Singing the national anthem while waiting for Enter Shikari to come on

@FuckYesSpud
If you don't clap along to 'Sorry You're Not A Winner' by Enter Shikari then you aren't even human

@AshhMoorr
Such a sick night at Enter Shikari, SOO GOOD



that's brilliant about the St Albans quartet. Hammering drum'n'bass collides with a thundering wall of guitars while Rou lyrically puts the world

to rights. The limp, lifeless and exhausted bodies in the crowd are catapulted back to life and collide joyfully one last time as the final jagged



notes ring out. We know you're a pretty big deal these days, boys, but let's do this more often *Tom Goodwyn*



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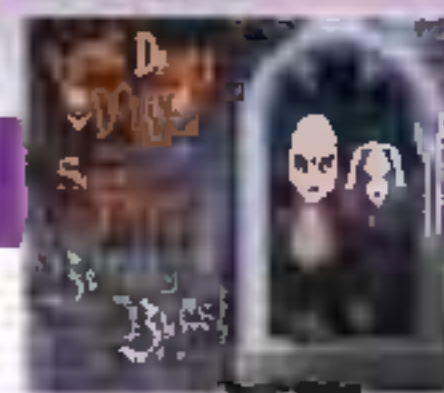
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GIG GUIDE

THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Lisa Wright

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ELECTRIC PICNIC

STARTS: Co. Laois Stradbally Hall, Aug 31

DON'T
MISS

The beginning of September may herald the final farewell of the summer festival season, but before you put your tent away for another year there's plenty of larks to be had at this Irish weekender. Located 55 miles from Dublin, Electric Picnic will play host to an array of musical, comedic and theatrical treats throughout the weekend. Heading up the bill are returning legends The Cure who, judging by last year's triumphant Bestival slot, will have no trouble slaying the crowd once again. The Killers and (pictured) Elbow join them in the weekend's other top slots while the likes of Grizzly Bear, The xx and The Maccabees will also be playing. Further down the bill there'll be sets from all-conquering stars of 2012, Alabama Shakes, *Radar* graduate Willis Earl Beal and a full comedy line-up, to be announced shortly.



MILK MAID

STARTS: London
Shacklewell Arms,
Jun 28

The lo-fi quartet take in a series of headline dates before supporting Stephen Malkmus And The Jicks this August.



M WARD

STARTS: London KOKO,
Jul 2

Following the release of new album 'A Wasteland Companion', the She & Him singer heads to London for a one-off performance in north London.



POST WAR YEARS

STARTS: London
Birthdays, Jul 17

The electropop newcomers take in three dates in London, Manchester and Brighton in support of their forthcoming EP 'Glass House'.



STEREOPHONICS

STARTS: Llandudno
Venue Cymru, Jul 22

In preparation for their massive date at the Olympic Opening Ceremony in London's Hyde Park, the Welsh rockers play four low-key warm-up shows.



V FESTIVAL

STARTS: Chelmsford
Hylands Park/
Staffordshire Weston
Park, Aug 18

Dodgy and Lawson join the bill, which is topped by The Stone Roses (pictured) and The Killers.



DIIV

STARTS: London
Hackney Downs
Studios, Aug 19

Radar favourites DIIV (formerly Dive) head to London as part of Sexbeat's Radfest, which also features Veronica Falls and Eagulls.



GRIMES

STARTS: Edinburgh
Liquid Room, Aug 28

Becoming Real has just been announced as main support for the Canadian star's string of UK dates this Autumn, kicking off in the Scottish capital.



MERTHYR ROCK FESTIVAL

STARTS: Wales
Cyfartha Park, Aug 31

The Welsh weekender has confirmed Deaf Havana and Kids In Glass Houses for the event, which also features Razorlight (pictured).



BERLIN FESTIVAL

STARTS: Berlin Various
Venues, Sep 7

Miike Snow (pictured) and Crocodiles are among those added to the European multi-venue shindig, which also features The Killers and Metronomy on its bill.



ROLO TOMASSI

STARTS: Bristol Fleece,
Oct 21

Eva Spence and her fellow Sheffield thrashers take to the road for what is sure to be a raucous 10-date jaunt, which will wind up at London's XOYO.



MAXIMO PARK

STARTS: O2 Academy
Liverpool, Nov 1

With well-received fourth LP 'The National Health' under their belts, the north east quintet return for an eight-date run of UK shows later this year.



GOTYE

STARTS: London HMV
Hammersmith Apollo,
Nov 12

The breakout Belgian pap-pop sensation of 'Somebody That I Used To Know' fame hits UK soil for two headline dates.

PICK of the WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help



LOVEBOX

STARTS: London Victoria Park, Jun 15

NME
PICK

After snaring Snoop Dogg, Robyn and The Drums last year, the three-day inner-city festival has another slew of top notch offerings. Friday's line-up sees geeky electro-pop heroes Hot Chip at the top of the bill in support of new release 'In Our Heads', while the likes of Crystal Castles, Magnetic Man, The 2 Bears and rising star Madeon also feature. Friendly Fires (pictured) will bring their hip-swivelling talents to Saturday, rounding off an eclectic day that also features Kelis, Emeli Sandé, Joy Orbison and Groove Armada. Meanwhile Sunday's final blow-out is headed up by the iconic Grace Jones. Lana Del Rey will be out proving her mettle after a host of rosey live turns, while old favourites Chic and Chaka Khan will battle it out against the young guns (including Crystal Fighters, Niki & The Dove and Azari & III).



Everyone's Talking About TRASH TALK

STARTS: Birmingham The Rainbow, Jun 17
The Sacramento punks return to the UK for a four-date jaunt, including a show at Glasgow's King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (Jun 21) alongside Off! and Iceage. Live reviews have reported "fists and even sometimes spin kicks" being thrown in the pit, and with the group recently signing to Odd Future's label it looks like things won't be getting any less mental any time soon.



Don't Miss PRIMAL SCREAM

STARTS: Aberdeen Music Hall, Jun 15
They may have lost Mani to The Stone Roses this summer, but Bobby G and his gang ain't down and out. Playing three low-key gigs in Scotland ahead of the summer's festival dates (including a Roses support slot at Heaton Park on June 29), the Glaswegian sextet will be showing off their new line-up, featuring replacement bassist Debbie Googe of My Bloody Valentine.



Radar Stars FEAR OF MEN

STARTS: Leeds Musiquarium, Jun 15
With 'Green Sea' the Brighton quartet proved a knack for hazily atmospheric summery soundscapes - perfect for a mini trip up north this June, then. Heading up to Leeds' Musiquarium, the four-piece are sure to justify why every hipster indie label worth its salt (the band have released through Sexbeat, Italian Beach Babes and Sex Is Disgusting) are queuing up to work with them.

WEDNESDAY

June 13

BATH

Woody Mann Chapel Arts Centre
0122 5404445

BELFAST

Blink-182/All American Rejects/
Four Year Strong Odyssey
028 9073 9074

Curtis Blackwell Black Box
00 35391 566511

BIRMINGHAM

Lucy Wainwright Roche Hare &
Hounds 0870 264 3333

Mark Stewart O2 Academy 3
0870 477 2000

BRIGHTON

Future Of The Left The Haunt
01273 770 847

Gareth Stephens Fishbowl
01273 777 505

Mancub Babywoman Prince Albert
01273 730 499

The Mojo Fins/Thomas White
Concorde 2 01273 673 311

BRISTOL

Justin Townes Earle St Bonaventure
0117 929 9008

King Charles Louisiana 0117 926 5978

Saint Vitus/Acid King Fleece
0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE

Bat For Lashes Junction 01223 511511

CARDIFF

One Track Mind/Harri Davis Clwb
Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199

EDINBURGH

Emeli Sande Castle 020 7771 2000

Jez Lowe/The Bad Pennies
Pleasance 0131 556 6550

Nell Thomson Captain's Bar
01316 682312

GLASGOW

All The Young King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Karen Matheson Oran Mor
0141 552 9224

Sebastian Bach The Garage
0141 332 1120

William Control O2 ABC2
0141 204 5151

GUILDFORD

Kyla La Grange/Fish Tank Boilerroom
01483 539 539

HULL

The View The Welly 01482 221113

LEEDS

Cave Birds Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866

Jack Savoretti HiFi Club 0113 242 7353

LIVERPOOL

Legend/Elijah Basement 20
LONDON

Age Of Consent MacBeth
020 7739 5095

The Albion Band Half Moon
020 7274 2733

All The Rage/Blindsight/Overthrow
Nambucca 020 7272 7366

Alpines Dalston Roof Park
020 7275 0825

Amanda Maier Hoxton Square Bar and
Kitchen 020 7613 0709

Baddies Barfly 0870 907 0999

Ben Montague/Kristyna Myles O2
Academy Islington 0870 477 2000

The Branco Heist Cafe 1001
020 7247 9679

Dam Funk/Kwes XOYO 020 7729 5959

Danny & The Champions Of The
World 12 Bar Club 020 7240 2622

Dark Horses Electrowerkz
020 7837 6419

Dead Flamingoes Slaughtered Lamb
020 8682 4080

The Dropper's Neck New Cross Inn
020 8692 1866

Gabby Young & Other Animals Scala
020 7833 2022

Hot Chip Heaven 020 7930 2020

Jack Lesser Lewis' Awkward Energy
Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

Joke Row Club Surya 020 7713 6262

Kitty Daisy & Lewis Garage
020 7607 1818

Kode9 KOKO 020 7388 3222

La Sera/Novella The Lexington
020 7837 5387

Luke Ritchie Monto Water Rats
020 7837 4412

Nife/The Blood Choir Borderline
020 7734 5547

Polly Tones/Josienne Clarke
Hackney Attic 0871 902 5734

Rhyn/Toy Soldier Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773

Sparks Bush Hall 020 8222 6955

Suzanne Vega Union Chapel
020 7226 1686

Syd Arthur Shacklewell Arms
020 7249 0810

Silver Tongue CAMP Basement
0871 230 1094

[Me]/Aiden Grimshaw/Last
Dinosaurs Proud Galleries
020 7482 3867

MANCHESTER

Caan Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392

Patterns Common Bar 0161 832 9245

Vamos Vaquero/Motion Empire
Retro Bar 0161 274 4892

MILTON KEYNES

Gandalf Murphy & The Slambolian
Circus of Dreams Stables
01908 280800

NEWCASTLE

Elton John Metro Radio Arena
0870 707 8000

NOFX O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

NORWICH

Little Red Kings/Dusty Soup
Brickmakers 01603 441 118

The School Waterfront 01603 632 717

NOTTINGHAM

Joshua Keogh Bodega Social Club
08713 100000

SHEFFIELD

Freya, Abbott & Ferguson
Greystones 0114 266 5599

SOUTHAMPTON

Fighting With Wire Joiners
023 8022 5612

STOKE ON TRENT

The Rapture Sugarmill 01782 214 991

ST ALBANS

Turin Brakes Horn 01727 853 143

WOLVERHAMPTON

Chantel McGregor Robin 2
01902 497860



RICHARD JOHNSON, DAN DENNIS, ROGER SARGENT, JESS BAUMING,
TOM MARTIN, STEW CAPPER, ANIKA MOTTESSAW, ROSS GILMORE

THURSDAY

June 14

Chlöe, King
Tim's Wah Wah
Hut, Glasgow



BEDFORD

The Electric Modern Esquires

01234 340120

BELFAST

The Low Anthem Empire

028 9024 9276

BIRMINGHAM

Lucy Rose Hare & Hounds

0870 264 3333

Sam Sparro 02 Academy 2

0870 477 2000

BRIGHTON

Fighting With Wire The Hydrant

01273 608 313

Melodica Melody And Me Blind Tiger

01273 681228

Suzanne Vega Dome 01273 709709

BRISTOL

Famy Thekia 08713 100000

The Jelas/Falling Stacks Croft (Main

Room) 0117 987 4144

Rude Tiger Fleece 0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE

Paper Aeroplanes Portland Arms

01223 357268

CARDIFF

Jack Lesser Lewis' Awkward

Energy/The Middle Ones The Moon

Club

DERBY

The Milk Venue 01332 203545

EDINBURGH

Blondes Sneaky Pete's 0131 225 1757

Blueflint Leith Dockers Club

0131 467 7879

Henry Ibbs Captain's Bar

01316 682312

Miaoux Miaoux Electric Circus

0131 226 4224

White Heath/Midnight Lion/

Steve Heron Voodoo Rooms

0131 556 7060

GLASGOW

Citizenz! King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

0141 221 5279

Our Future Glory/Wrongnote School

Of Art 0141 353 4530

Two Wings/Eric Chenaux Mono

0141 553 2400

LEEDS

Django Django Cockpit 0113 244 3446

Mark Stewart Brudenell Social Club

0113 243 5866

NOFX 02 Academy 0870 477 2000

Selby Green/Outside Asylum New

Roscoe 0113 246 0778

LEICESTER

Credit Crunchers Donkey

0116 270 5042

New Riot/The Hype Theory

Soundhouse 07830 425555

LIVERPOOL

Garaje Jack Zanzibar 0151 707 0633

LONDON

Abigail Washburn The Lexington

020 7837 5387

Bastille Scala 020 7833 2022

Bobby Tank/MSMR Barfly

0870 907 0999

Bobby Womack Heaven

020 7930 2020

Boy Mandeville/Keebo Bedroom Bar

020 7613 5637

Chantel McGregor 100 Club

020 7636 0933

Chew Lips/Fiction/I Am A Camera

Garage 020 7607 1818

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Future Of The Left XOYO

020 7729 5959

Guitars Have Ghosts/Beeches Dublin

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Nambucca 020 7272 7366

Herve Queen Of Hoxton

020 7422 0958

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020 7388 3222

Lucy Wainwright Roche Slaughtered

Lamb 020 8682 4080

Man Like Me/The Common

Hippodrome 0208 5414411

Mick Flannery Bush Hall

020 8222 6955

The New Forbidden/One Last

Night Arch Angel 020 7938 4137

NZCA/LINES/Raffertie Birthdays

The Promenade Club Surya

020 7713 6262

PRSDNT/Townspec MacBeth

020 7739 5095

Sebastian Bach 02 Academy Islington

0870 477 2000

Sunless 97 Shacklewell Arms

020 7249 0810

Talk In Code Bull & Gate

020 7485 5358

The Whisky Jax/FORM5 Silver Bullet

020 7619 3639

MANCHESTER

Alejandro Toledo & The Magic

Tombolinos Ruby Lounge

0161 834 1392

Dorje Dry Bar 0161 236 5920

Jack Savoretti Deaf Institute

0161 330 4019

The Minx The Castle 0161 237 9485

Mr Seb Valentine/Benatronic/Luke

Warin Common Bar 0161 832 9245

Nearly Dan Band On The Wall

0161 832 6625

NEWCASTLE

Arthur 2 Stroke & The Big Black

Bomb The Tyne 0191 265 2550

Boyce Avenue/ Ingrid Michaelson 02

Academy 0870 477 2000

Tarras Cluny 0191 230 4474

NORWICH

Bad Manners Waterfront

01603 632 717

Freeload Brickmakers 01603 441 118

Mor Karbasi Arts Centre

01603 660 352

NOTTINGHAM

Ben Montague Rescue Rooms

0115 958 8484

OXFORD

The School Bullingdon Arms

01865 244516

Spring Offensive/Count Dracula St

Barnabas Church 0186 555 7530

Troyka Wheatsheaf 01865 721 156

PLYMOUTH

Inner Terrestrials White Rabbit

01752 227522

POOLE

Willowin Mr Kyps 01202 748945

READING

Craig Murray/Bethany Black Milk

SHEFFIELD

William Control Corporation

0114 276 0262

STOKE ON TRENT

Still Rings True Minsters Bar

01782 416567

WOLVERHAMPTON

The Linelight/Fly By Nature/

Exodus Calling Slade Room

0870 320 7000

FRIDAY

June 15

ABERDEEN

Primal Scream Music Hall

01224 641122

BATH

Jenna Monroe Chapel Arts Centre

0122 5404445

BEDFORD

Eddie & The Hot Rods Esquires

01234 340120

BIRMINGHAM

Fighting With Wire HMV Institute

0844 248 5037

Johnny Kowalski/Frutaloka The

Ballroom 0121 448 0797

BOURNEMOUTH

Gold Road/The Hall Of Mirrors

60 Million Postcards 01202 292 697

Scroobius Pip Old Fire Station

01202 503888

BRIGHTON

Born Bad Komedia 01273 647 100

The Mixer Men Fishbowl

01273 777 505

Russ Rockwell Western Front

01273 725 656

Slivs/Shitmat Volks Tavern

01273 682828

WTF White Rabbit 01273 677 655

BRISTOL

The Blood Choir Rise Records

0117 9297511

The Rinky Dinks Fleece

0117 945 0996

Tir Na Nog Thunderbolt 07791 319 614

CEFN SIDAN

Chase & Status/Labrinth/Dellah/

Maverick Sabre/Mero/Clement

Marfo & The Frontline Beach Break

Live 0845 331 3040

CAMBRIDGE

Django Django St Paul's Centre

01223 354 186

CARDIFF

King Charles Club Ifor Bach

029 2023 2199

Life Imitates Art The Globe

07738 983947

CHESHAM

Billy Lockett/Aliman Brown Loft Bar

07737636401

EDINBURGH

Kathryn Nicoll/Tom Oakes Captain's

Bar 01316 682312

Malcolm Middleton/Human Don't

Be Angry Electric Circus

0131 226 4224

Mechanical Smile/Scarlet Shift The

Caves 0131 557 8989

Skippy Dyes Sneaky Pete's

0131 225 1757

EXETER

Jazz Morley Barnfield Theatre

01392 270891

GATESHEAD

Belcea Quartet Sage Arena

0870 703 4555

GLASGOW

Chris Cornell 02 Academy

0870 477 2000

Chris McManus Budda Bar

0141 332 2010

Duncan Maitland/The Cathode Ray

Syndrome The Bay 0141 572 4041

Here Stands Ilithyla/Silverlinedcity

Classic Grand 0141 847 0820

Martin Taylor/Alison Burns Dran

Mor 0141 552 9224

The Niblicks/Both Barrels 02 ABC2

0141 204 5151

GUILDFORD

Gwyneth Herbert/Al Cherry

Boilerroom 01483 539 539

HATFIELD

Grounded The Forum 0844 477 2000

SATURDAY

June 16

ABERDEEN

Savourna Stephenson Lemon Tree
01224 642230

BATH

The Producers Chapel Arts Centre
0122 5404445

BEDFORD

New Riot/The Hype Theory Esquires
01234 340120

BELFAST

The Distortion Project Limelight
028 9032 5942

BIDEFORD

Capital/The Jackdaws Woolery
Festival 07967021307

BIRMINGHAM

Boyce Avenue/ Ingrid Michaelson
02 Academy 0870 477 2000

Norman Jay Hare & Hounds
0870 264 3333

Slaughterhouse The Ballroom
0121 448 0797

The Ten O'Clock Horses Wagon &
Horses 0121 772 1403

Towns/Sulk Flapper 0121 236 2421

BOURNEMOUTH

Aba Shanti/Dubheart 02 Academy
0870 477 2000

BRADFORD UPON AVON

Megson Wiltshire Music Centre
01225 860100

BRIGHTON

Jeff Daniels The Globe
01273 770 685

The Mixer Men White Rabbit
01273 677 655

Scratch Perverts/Roska Digital
01273 202407

BRISTOL

Dragonflies Louisiana 0117 926 5978

Fighting With Wire/Cars On Fire
Fleece 0117 945 0996

Foxes/Antibang Start The Bus
0117 930 4370

Goldfish Don't Bounce Black Horse
0117 967 3132

Lady Made & The Silhouettes/Nick
Stephens Mr Wolf's 0117 927 3221

Skream/P Money/Plastician
Motion Ramp Park 01179 723111

CEFN SIDAN

BEACH BREAK LIVE Dizze Rascal/
Benga/Skream/Toddla T/The
Whip/Ghostpoet 0845 331 3040

CHESTER

The Jar Family Telford's Warehouse
01244 390090

DERBY

Abrasive Wheels Old Bell
01332 343701

EDINBURGH

Allan Johnston Captain's Bar
01316 682312

Kate Nash Electric Circus
0131 226 4224

EXETER

Eille Williams Phoenix
01392 667080

GLASGOW

Best Coast 02 ABC 0870 903 3444

Jake Mattison Captain's Rest
0141 331 2722

James Grant Oran Mor
0141 552 9224

Legend/Demoraliser/The Elijah
Stairway 0141 221 1009

Malcolm Middleton/Human Don't
Be Angry King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

The Sunset Clause Stereo
0141 576 5018



Dizze Rascal, Beach
Break Live, Cefn Sidan

HULL

Wreckless Eric/Amy Rigby New
Adelphi 01482 348 216

LEEDS

The Rezillos Brudenell Social Club
0113 243 5866

LEICESTER

Freeze The Atlantic Soundhouse
07830 425555

Larry Miller Band Musician
0116 251 0080

Little Night Terrors 02 Academy
0870 477 2000

LIVERPOOL

Jess Gascolne Leaf On Bold St
0151 707 7747

Liam Daley Zanzibar 0151 707 0633

Moose Machine/Vox/Enemy Poets
02 Academy 0870 477 2000

Sankofa/Dirty Rivers Shipping
Forecast 0151 709 6901

LONDON

Alexa De Strange/Obsessive
Compulsive Electrowerkz
020 7837 6419

And The Centurions/Inland Empire/
Automated Nambucca 020 7272 7366

A Body Of People/The Vulgar Poets/
Pink Crudge Caravan Dublin Castle
020 7485 1773

Colin Hay Bush Hall 020 8222 6955

CUD Garage 020 7607 1818

Damian Lazarus/Miguel Campbell
Ministry Of Sound 020 7378 6528

The Fades/Kelth TOTP Club Surya
020 7713 6262

Field Music/Three Trapped Tigers/
Tom Williams & The Boat Dixie
Queen

LOVEBOX Friendly Fires/Groove
Armada/Emeli Sande/Rita Ora/
Kells/Little Dragon/Stooshe/Dot
Rotten/Dellah 0870 040 0058

Gonjasufi Village Underground
020 7422 7505

Jazzanova/The Herbaliser KOKO
020 7388 3222

Lloyd Life/Nick Smood Purple Turtle
020 7383 4976

The Loose Cannons Hoxton Pony
0871 9624530

Malevolent Creation Boston Arms
020 7272 8153

March Violets 02 Academy Islington
0870 477 2000

The Meat/Grand Central/Army Of
Lights Barfly 0870 907 0999

NOFX 02 Shepherds Bush Empire
0870 771 2000

Our Man In The Bronze Age Bull &
Gate 020 7485 5358

Paul Hawkins & Thee Awkward
Silences Ryan's Bar 020 7275 7807

Port Erin/Straw Bear/The
Llymoons Hope & Anchor
020 7354 1312

The Revenge Plan B 08701 165421

Shoeb Ahmad/Leverton Fox Cafe Oto
0871 230 1094

The Troubadours The Lexington
020 7837 5387

MANCHESTER

Chris Cornell Lowry 0161 876 2000

Daystar/Dexters FAC 251
0161 27 27 251

Fidel The Castros/Bright Young
Things Roadhouse 0161 228 1789

Jack Lewis The Castle 0161 237 9485

Justin Townes Earle Academy 3
0161 832 1111

Mike Doughty Soup Kitchen
0161 236 5100

Prawn/Ape Upt Redhouse
0161 839 0477

Sam Sparro Deaf Institute
0161 330 4019

Show Of Hands Band On The Wall
0161 832 6625

MILTON KEYNES

Anti Nowhere League Craufurd Arms
01908 313 864

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This Is The Kit Butterfly Cabinet
0191 265 9920

Vamos The Tyne 0191 265 2550

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Hyetal/DRUGS Arts Centre
01603 660 352

Meltdown/Metal Lust Waterfront
01603 632 717

Throb Brickmakers 01603 441 118

NOTTINGHAM

B. Traits Rescue Rooms
0115 958 8484

OXFORD

Other Lives/George Ezra Bullingdon
Arms 01865 244516

Richard Walters/The Family
Machine/Listing Ships 02 Academy 2
0870 477 2000

PORTSMOUTH

The Lost Souls Club Edge Of The
Wedge 023 9286 3911

The Validators/Asylum Seekers/
Vice Squad South Parade Pier
023 9273 2283

PRESTON

Smoove & Turrell 53 Degrees
01772 893 000

READING

Screama Ballerina/Violet Class/
Adam & Elvis Rising Sun Arts Centre
0118 986 6788

SHEFFIELD

Alvarez Kings 02 Academy 2
0870 477 2000

Hangfire Dove and Rainbow
Refugee New Barrack Tavern
0114 234 9148

The Shindys/The Subroutines Plug
0114 276 7093

The View Leadmill 0114 221 2828

SOUTHAMPTON

Citizens! Joiners 023 8022 5612

STOKE ON TRENT

Rizzle Kicks/Wretch 32/Skept
Hanley Park 01782 234567

ST ALBANS

Donna Canale/Neil Angulley
Maltings Arts Theatre
01727 844222

SWANSEA

The Phantom Light Koopas
01792 446292

WOLVERHAMPTON

Under A Banner Newhampton Arts
Centre 01902 572090

BATH

Lucy Rose Moles 01225 404445

BIRMINGHAM

Call Atlantis/Platypus Duck 02
Academy 3 0870 477 2000

Citizens! Yardbird 0121 212 2524

Jack Savoretti HMV Institute (Temple)
0844 248 5037

Trash Talk Rainbow 0121 772 8174

Wreckless Eric/Amy Rigby Kitchen
Garden Café 0121 443 4725

BRIGHTON

Ben Montague Komedia
01273 647 100

The E.M.E Western Front
01273 725 656

The Greasy Strings Cobblers Thumb
01273 605 636

Magazine Gap/The Alex Bay Band
Latest Music Bar 01273 687 171

BRISTOL

Big Chief Weird Bird Mr Wolf's
0117 927 3221

Blaxar Crown 0117 956 9361

CEFN SIDAN

BEACH BREAK LIVE Friendly Fires/
Dry The River/Ben Howard/The
Milk/Abandoman 0845 331 3040

CARDI

Malevolent Creation Bogiez
029 2034 1463

CHELMSFORD

Marc Halls/Jakob Delst Hooga
01245 356 811

EDINBURGH

Jake Mattison Sneaky Pete's
0131 225 1757

Tom Oakes/Kathryn Nicoll Captain's
Bar 01316 682312

GLASGOW

James Ferraro/Heatsick Berkeley
Suite 0141 237 3235

Kate Nash King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
0141 221 5279

Michael Cassidy/The Spook School
Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722

GUILDFORD

Kirsty Folan Boilerroom 01483 539 539

LEEDS

New Street Adventures HiFi Club
0113 242 7353

LEICESTER

The Moonlights Donkey
0116 270 5042



Lucy Rose,
Moles, Bath

005 Soundhouse 07830 425555

LIVERPOOL

The Unthanks/Brighthouse &
Rastrick Band Philharmonic Hall
0871 230 1094

The View 02 Academy 2
0870 477 2000

LONDON

Aborted Underworld 020 7482 1932

Ash Garage 020 7607 1818

The Book Of Genesis Half Moon
020 7274 2733

LOVEBOX Grace Jones/Chaka
Khan/Lana Del Rey/Mika/Felix Da
Housecat/James Murphy/Chlc/
The Golden Filter/The Rapture

0870 040 0058

Neck New Cross Inn 020 8692 1866

Ninni Morgia/Temperatures Café
Oto 0871 230 1094

NOFX 02 Shepherds Bush Empire
0870 771 2000

Sanguine/Western Sand Nambucca
020 7272 7366

She Wants Revenge 02 Academy
Islington 0870 477 2000

MANCHESTER

Best Coast HMV Ritz 0161 236 4355

King Charles Ruby Lounge
0161 834 1392

Xibalba Star & Garter 0161 273 6726

NEWCASTLE

Borderland Star Inn 0191 222 3111

The Proper Boys The Tyne
0191 265 2550

NOTTINGHAM

Cable35 Maze 0115 947 5650

PORTSMOUTH

Anti Nowhere League/999/
Alternative TV South Parade Pier
023 9273 2283

SHEFFIELD

Blink-182/All American Rejects/
Twin Atlantic Motorpoint Arena
01142 565656

SOUTHAMPTON

All The Young Joiners 023 8022 5612

STOKE ON TRENT

Labrinth/Lawson/Juan Zelada
Hanley Park 01782 234567

WOLVERHAMPTON

Bravado Robin 2 01902 497860

WREXHAM

Legend Central Station 01978 358780

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MONDAY

June 18



Kate Nash,
Brudenell Social
Club, Leeds

BIRMINGHAM
 All The Young 02 Academy 3
 0870 477 2000
 Best Coast/Spectrals 02 Academy 2
 0870 477 2000
 Rue Royale/Melodica Yardbird
 0121 212 2524
BRIGHTON
 The Low Anthem Ballroom
 01273 605789
 Off! The Haunt 01273 770 847
 Yeti Lane Sticky Mike's Frog Bar
 01273 749 465
BRISTOL
 Jack Savoretti Start The Bus
 0117 930 4370
 Will Tun & The Wasters/Manners
 Fleece 0117 945 0996
EDINBURGH
 Ewan Forfar Captain's Bar
 01316 682312
GLASGOW
 Dorje/The Drills 02 ABC2
 0141 204 5151
 King Creosote/Pictish Trail Old
 Fruitmarket 0141 287 5511
 Suzanne Vega/Mike Doughty Oran
 Mor 0141 552 9224
GUILDFORD
 Polar Boilerroom 01483 539 539
LEEDS
 Boyce Avenue/ Ingrid Michaelson 02
 Academy 0870 477 2000

Kate Nash Brudenell Social Club
 0113 243 5866
LIVERPOOL
 Aborted/Ancient Ascendant Lomax
 @ Nat on 0151 236 4443
LONDON
 Being There/My Sad Captains The
 Lexington 020 7837 5387
 Capital Sun/Scina & The Soldiers
 Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
 Chris Cornell Palladium
 020 7494 5020
 The Cranberries HMV Hammersmith
 Apollo 0870 606 3400
 Eyes Set To Kill Underworld
 020 7482 1932
 Haight-Ashbury Hoxton Square Bar
 and Kitchen 020 7613 0709
 Islander/Halflight/Pistols At Dawn
 Social 020 7636 4992
 James Ferraro/Bodyguard
 Birthday's
 James Findlay Green Note
 0871 230 1094
 Jamie Williams and the Roots
 Collective Nambucca 020 7272 7366
 Javiera Mena/The One Old Blue Last
 020 7613 2478
 Karl Phillips & The Midnight
 Ramblers/Popes Of Chillitown 93
 Feet East 020 7247 6095
 New Riot/The Hype Theory 02
 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000

Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers/
 Jonathan Wilson Royal Albert Hall
 020 7589 8212
MANCHESTER
 Wisdom In Chains Star & Garter
 0161 273 6726
NORWICH
 Hillfolk Noir Arts Centre
 01603 600 352
 Marina & The Diamonds/Foe
 Waterfront 01603 632 717
NOTTINGHAM
 Legend/The Elijah Maze
 0115 947 5650
 The View Rescue Rooms
 0115 958 8484
OXFORD
 Lucy Rose/Nathan Holmes Jericho
 Tavern 01865 311 775
 Marcus Bofanti Bullingdon Arms
 01865 244516
SHEFFIELD
 Citizens! SOYO 0114 276 7552
 She Wants Revenge Corporation
 0114 276 0262
SOUTHAMPTON
 Unearth Joiners 023 8022 5612
WOLVERHAMPTON
 Popa Chubby/Rocket Fuel Robin 2
 01902 497440
WREXHAM
 Less Than Jake Central Station
 01978 358780

TUESDAY

June 19

BIRMINGHAM
 Cara Luft Kitchen Garden Café
 0121 443 4725
 Chris Cornell Symphony Hall
 0121 760 3333
BRIGHTON
 Dano Suzuki Green Door Store
 078 447 053
 Jake Shillingford/The Witches
 Prince Albert 0117 3730 499
BRISTOL
 Boyce Avenue/ Ingrid Michaelson
 02 Academy 0870 477 2000
 Trash Talk Croft (Main Room)
 0117 987 4144
CAMBRIDGE
 The Willows/David Youngs
 Boathouse 01223 460905
CARDIFF
 Legend/Demoraliser/The Elijah
 The Moon Club
 Prawn/Ape Up! Undertone
 029 2022 8883
 The View University
 029 2023 0130
EDINBURGH
 Jack Foster Captain's Bar
 01316 682312
 This Is The Kit Voodoo Rooms
 0131 556 7060
GATESHEAD
 Suzanne Vega Sage Arena
 0870 703 4555
GLASGOW
 Bloc Party The Garage 0141 332 1120
 David Goo Bloc 0141 574 6066
 Malevolent Creation Ivory Blacks
 0141 221 7871
 Sacred Reich King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
 0141 221 5279
 The Silverin' Sheiks Blackfriars
 0141 552 5924
GUILDFORD
 Dorje/The Drills Boilerroom
 01483 539 539
LONDON
 Apes Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
 Atlas Sound Scala 020 7833 2022
 Cold Specks Hoxton Hall
 020 7739 5431
 Exlovers The Waiting Room
 020 7241 5511
 Fear Of Men/Virginia Wing Old Blue
 Last 020 7613 2478
 Mara Carliye The Lexington
 020 7837 5387

Masaki Batoh Café Oto 0871 230 1094
 Midway Still New Cross Inn
 020 8692 1866
 Philip Jeays/Geoff The Speech
 Painter Battersea Barge
 020 7498 0004
 The Promise Garage 020 7607 1818
 POCA/King With No Throne/
 Club Of Rome Dublin Castle
 020 7485 1773
 Shlomo E4 Udderbelly at Southbank
 Centre 0844 545 8282
MANCHESTER
 Alyssa Reid Club Academy
 0161 832 1111
NEWCASTLE
 Blink-182/All American Rejects/
 Twin Atlantic Metro Radio Arena
 0870 707 8000
NORWICH
 Breaking Belief Brickmakers
 01603 441 118
NOTTINGHAM
 Unearth/Malefice Rescue Rooms
 0115 958 8484
SHEFFIELD
 Eyes Set To Kill Corporation
 0114 276 0262



The View,
University, Cardiff



BLACK GRAPE AND THE GREEN DEATH

Johnny Cigarettes had a near-death experience in 1996. The cause? A nibble on a slab of 'matter' belonging to Black Grape's Shaun Ryder

With only weeks to go before the Euro '96 football tournament, England expected.

But when Black Grape and friends went into Real World Studios in Bath to record their unofficial anthem – 'England's Irie' – not everyone was in a state of peak match fitness.

Black Grape rapper Kermit was recovering from a near-lethal bout of septicemia, a form of blood poisoning. It was nothing to do with any rumoured heroin addiction, the band insisted when I arrived to interview them. He became infected by "drinking dirty water," they told me, "and we'll find you if you write anything else."

Good to get that cleared up, then. Either way, Kermit bore a strong resemblance to a skeleton who had been wrapped in skin-coloured clingfilm, and I gently probed him about his ordeal. I mentioned the infamous urban myth about Keith Richards having to get his blood changed after years of heroin abuse. "Oh yeah, I had that," said Kermit, in a 'Isn't that a coincidence!' kind of way. "They changed mine twice."

When I spoke to Shaun Ryder, our conversation proved difficult as he would end up answering a question, then pausing, before saying "Sorry mate, what was the question again?"

He would then answer the question again, pause, and say "Sorry mate, what was the question again?", and answer a third time. He would also keep saying the end of sentences three times, sentences three times, sentences three times.

Anyway, after our slow-moving chat, I was invited to hang out at the all-night recording session, featuring appearances from comic/

actor Keith Allen and the late Clash legend Joe Strummer. Completing the surreal scene, every so often a white-haired huppy-looking bloke would pop his head round the door. He, it turned out, was the owner of the studios, Peter Gabriel. It was like Stella Street. On Mars.

By the time Shaun came up with lyrics like "Squeeze me in the box", and "My wife's lactating and I'm spectating" while shouting randomly "On me head! I'm off me head!", it was 2am and I was flagging. Enter my own fairy godfather, Shaun Ryder, holding a small lump of green... matter. You know the bit in *Blackadder II* when Lord Percy boasts that he

has discovered a precious gem known as 'green'? It kind of looked like that. Only squishy and crumbly, like wet chalk.

"Dewd," he growled conspiratorially, like Les



Dawson's evil twin, "this is good stuff, this'll sort yer out, sort yer out. Honestly, dewd, the Swiss Army use this to stay up for days on end, on end, on end... sorry mate, what was it you was sayin' just then, just then?"

"I was just asking what exactly is it, this 'stuff'?"

"This is good stuff, it'll sort yer out," said Shaun Ryder

"Trade secret, mate, trade secret, trade secret. If I told yer I'd have to kill yer. Kchhhhh!"

I had lived my life up to that point with a rough rule of thumb that I

would never put anything in my body that Shaun Ryder would consider "good stuff". But perhaps a small nibble would help 'take the edge off'.

I don't remember a great deal more about that evening, apart from the fact I was at one point wrapped in four blankets, curled up against a radiator (was I licking it at one stage? Or was that just some terrifying apparition?) then later slumped my head against a window to cool it down. I also remember trying to bite down hard on some kind of metal rail to push my teeth back into my gums, as I thought they were about to fall out. Jesus.

My notes from these few hours consist of the following words only: "Brilliant. Kermit rapping. Brilliant. Brilliant."

So, for a few hours, I think I caught a glimpse of what it must be like to be inside Ryder's head.

No wonder you never hear much about the Swiss Army's great military victories



Johnny Cigarettes (above) and (top right) the boys of Black Grape

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1+10A** It's not a patch on 'Wild Wood', but I dig it, man, I really dig it (4-4-7-9)
9 Near a different venue for Duran Duran performance (5)
10 (See 1 across)
11+34A Do tea cups get smashed by Super Furry Animals? (3-6)
12 Their debut album in 2004 was 'Who Killed... The _____?' (6)
14+29D When there's a period available to listen to a Shonen Knife album (4-4)
15 A run-down area with both a US hard-rock band and Irish blues rock band appearing (4-3)
16 "I don't need you to worry for me 'cos I'm alright/I don't want you to tell me it's time to come home", Billy Joel (2-4)
19+20A Lancashire lass who's been 'All Around The World' (4-10)
23 "We'll shine like the morning and sin in the.../ Oh if you stay, we'll be the wild ones", Suede (3)
24 A bit of wealth for band formed by New Zealand's Tim Finn and Ireland's Andy White and Liam O'Maonlai (3)
25 Left Boo, perhaps, to 'Me And You And A Dog Named Boo' (4)
26 Pete _____, who formed the Creation label bands The Loft and The Weather Prophets (5)
28 They did the 'Shaka Rock' (3)
30 Won't see a new version of a Ruts' number (4-3)
31 Steely _____, US band formed by Donald Fagen and Walter Becker (3)
33 DJ and producer who, as a musician, targeted the 'Hinterland' (3)
34 (See 11 across)
35 These New Puritans kept a release covered up in 2010 (6)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** EP's now a remix album for Lostprophets (7)
2+22D Brighton lads who took off on 'The American Adventure' (8-4-6)
3 A time when there was nothing by Nine Inch Nails (4-4)

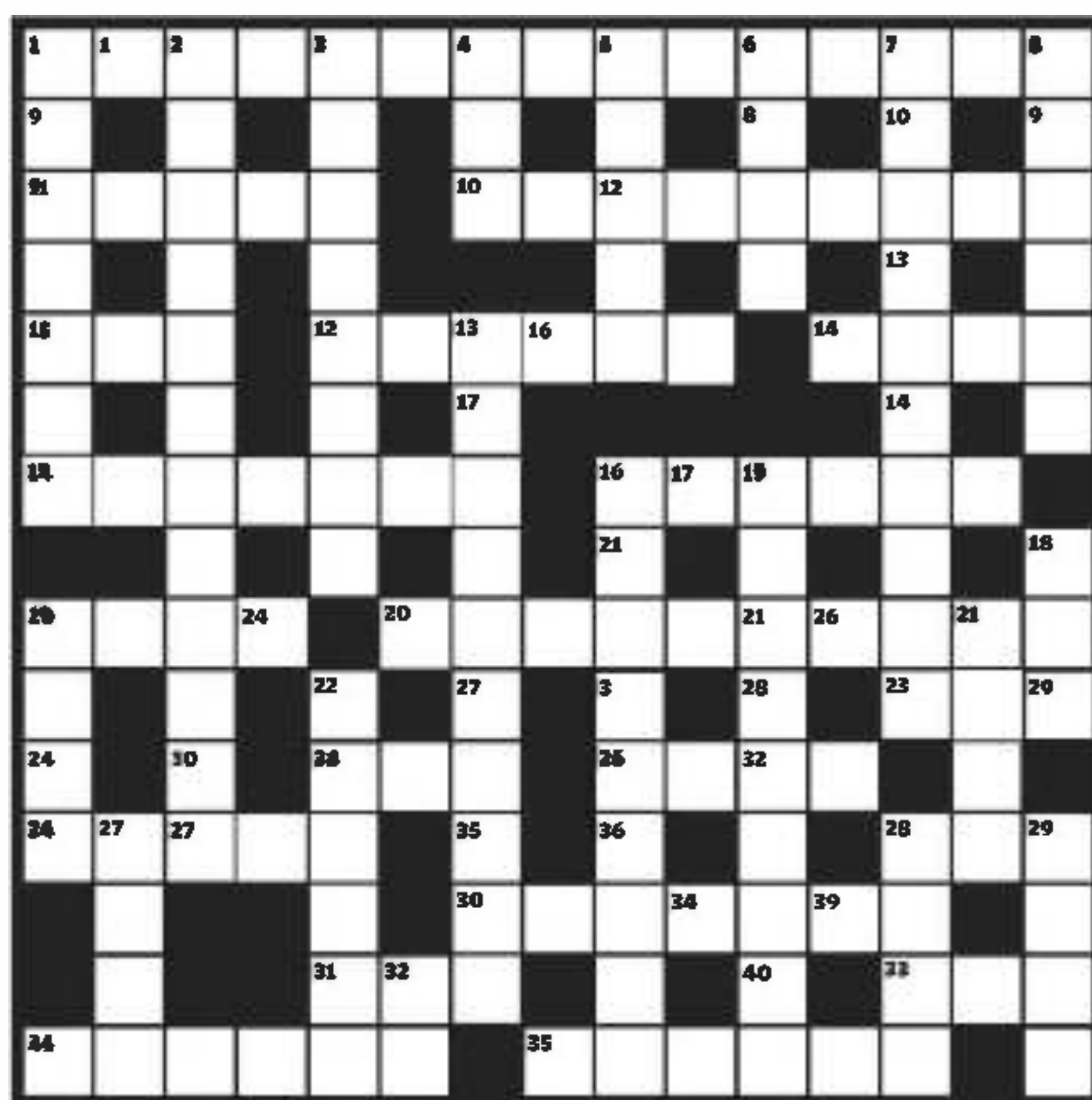
- 4** You forgot to include an old rock band (3)
5+16D Hearing seminal version of a Fleetwood Mac classic (5-9)
6 Goodbye Mr Mackenzie's debut album was finished with 'Good Deeds And Dirty _____' (4)
7 "Hello - hurrah - what a nice day for the _____", 1979 (4-6)
8 At the end of the day, it's either a number by Fatboy Slim or one by Nitin Sawhney (6)
13 Moving around the urban districts with '80s indie band Microdisney (4-2-4)
16 (See 5 down)
17 Old foible, perhaps, shows up on Manic Street Preachers' album (9)
18 Bit of a cold night for a Lily Allen performance (3)
19 "I've waited for a thousand years for you to come and blow me out my mind", 2003 (4)
21 The gospel according to a Kook (4)
22 (See 2 down)
27 Magazine cleaned up in 1980 with their album 'The Correct Use Of _____' (4)
28 Wyclef _____, of the Fugees (4)
29 (See 14 across)
32 _____ Rock, member of the Beastie Boys (2)

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MAY 12 ANSWERS

ANSWERS ACROSS
1+6A Come On, Be A No-One, 9 Losing My Mind, 10 Fans, 11+31A Second Coming, 14 Lucky Town, 15 It's It, 18 Emily, 20 Words, 23 Frida, 24 Tommy, 26 Belly, 27 Daly, 29 No Age, 32+16A Iron Deer Dream, 33+4D Time Bomb



ANSWERS DOWN

1 Celestine, 2+19D Music Is My Radar, 3 Oh No, Not My Baby, 7 Odd Future, 8 Not Now, 12 Tupelo, 13 OK Fred, 17 Mary, 20+5D Wall Of Arms, 21 Raydio, 22 Sting, 25 Miami, 28 LDN, 30 Eve



COLLECTORS' CORNER ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN

Here are the music gems that no Ian McCulloch fan should be without



REVERBERATION (1990)



This record occupies a peculiar place in the band's history, as

it's the only record they have released without singer Ian McCulloch, who departed to go solo in 1988. The band's remaining members, guitarist Will Sergeant and bassist Les Pattinson, were joined by three new members, including singer Noel Burke. Reviews were not favourable, and they were soon dropped by their label.

Need To Know: The album was produced by former Beatles engineer Geoff Emerick.

IAN MCCULLOCH - MYSTERIO (1992)



McCulloch's second solo LP was a relative critical and commercial

success, certainly in relation to the new Bunnymen line-up. The record even featured a minor hit single in the shape of his cover of the Leonard Cohen song 'Lover, Lover, Lover'. As with his 1989 solo debut 'Candleland', Cocteau Twins singer Elizabeth Fraser guests on a track.

Need To Know: The Cocteau Twins connection doesn't end there - guitarist Robin Guthrie produced two tracks on the LP.

ELECTRAFIXION - BURNED (1995)



The only album from the band put together by McCulloch and Sergeant,

who wanted to work together again after a seven-year break, but didn't want to use the name Echo And The Bunnymen. The record was a Top 40 entry in the UK, but reaction to the group was fairly mixed, and it was only two years later that Echo And The Bunnymen became a going concern once more.

Need To Know: Marion bassist Julian Phillips would join the band for live performances.

ENGLAND UNITED - (HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE) ON TOP OF THE WORLD (1998)



England's official song for the World Cup in France was bizarre

- a year after getting the Bunnymen back together, McCulloch found himself in a studio with The Spice Girls. It wasn't well received, and was overshadowed by Fat Les' 'Vindaloo' and the 'Three Lions' re-release.

Need To Know: Other guests on the song include Space and Simon 'Ocean Colour Scene' Fowler.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST MUSIC QUIZ

THE ANSWERS

Come on, you've had two weeks to look on Wikipedia. So how did you get on?

ROUND 1 FIVE TO GET STARTED

1. 'Kill Kill'
2. The Student Riots
3. I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor
4. Turtles
5. Kate Middleton

ROUND 2 OL' QUEEN LIZZIE'S LYRICS ROUND

1-D 2-G 3-F 4-B 5-C 6-A 7-E

ROUND 3 MISSING WORDS

"live as a tampon in another"
Bruce Springsteen 'There Will Never Be Another For Me But You'
"caper in their sawdust rings"
Oasis 'Go Let It Out'
"are the family"
Adam And The Ants 'Kings Of the Wild Frontier'
"I will have my reign as king"
Slipknot 'Bitchslap'
"My prescription's low/I wish you were queen"
Marilyn Manson 'Great Big White World'
"Camilla Parker Bowles"
Sway 'Back 4 U'

ROUND 4 20 QUESTIONS ABOUT NEW MUSIC

1. A\$AP Rocky
2. The X Factor USA
3. Lil Nas X
4. Nicola Roberts
5. Drake
6. 3 - two with The Dead Weather and one with The Raconteurs
7. Nathan Howdeshell

8. Occupy
9. Killa MacColl
10. Tyne & Wear
11. Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs
12. Ben Drew
13. The Clash 'Come On, Be A V.I.C.'e'
14. Number Three
15. The Real Friend Is You'
16. The Beta Band
17. The Goodband
18. Childish Gambino
19. They randomly chose a word from The Bible
20. Number Nine

ROUND 5 CRYPTIC CANVAS

1. Radiohead 'OK Computer'
2. The Streets 'Computers And Blues'
3. The White Stripes 'Get Behind Me Satan'
4. Limp Bizkit 'Chocolate Starfish And The Hot Dog Flavored Water'
5. Godspeed You! Black Emperor 'Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas To Heaven'
6. Manic Street Preachers 'The Holy Bible'
7. Dizzee Rascal 'Boy In Da Corner'
8. Arctic Monkeys 'Humbug'
9. Air 'Tenderloin'
10. Kate Bush 'Hounds Of Love'
11. Beastie Boys 'Check Your Head'
12. Muse 'Black Holes & Revelations'
13. Lou Reed 'Transformer'
14. Mclusky 'The Difference Between Me And You Is That I'm Not On Fire'

15. Crystal Castles 'Crystal Castles'
16. Tyler, The Creator 'Goblin'
17. David Bowie 'The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars'
18. The Stone Roses 'The Stone Roses'
19. Kasabian 'Empire Of The Senses'
20. Jay-Z 'The Black Album'

ROUND 6 20 QUESTIONS ABOUT PUNK

1. Poison. The track in question is 'Talk Dirty To Me' from their 1986 debut 'Look What The Cat Dragged In'
2. Sid Vicious
3. 262
4. James Brown
5. Prince Charles
6. Stingray
7. 'I Wanna Be Sedated' For The Living Dead'
8. Levi's
9. 'I Wanna Be Sedated'
10. Girls Aloud and Def Leppard
11. 'I Wanna Be Sedated' For The Living Dead'
12. Kurt Vile, Cults' Madeline Follin and singer-songwriter Jennifer Castle
13. Guys & Dolls
14. 'Guilty Of Being Right'
15. Three. 'Vultures' is 58 seconds long, 'Envy/Mo-e' is 44 seconds and 'I Do' is just 39 seconds.
16. Two. 'When You Fucked Grandpa' and the rarely heard 'I Know A Guy' ("I know a guy/He has sex with his sisters"). Dogs do not count
17. 'I Wanna Be Sedated'
18. Rancid
19. The Offspring announced on April Fool's Day that they would be naming their new album 'Chinese Democracy (You Snooze, You Lose)'. They ended up changing the name to 'Splinter'
20. Black Flag's Henry Rollins

ROUND 7 CARL BARAT SETS THE QUESTIONS

1. Take your pick from Oscar Wilde, Jim Morrison, Edith Piaf, Marcel Proust, Max Ernst...
2. Henry II speaking about Thomas Becket
3. Marathon
4. Sebastian Melmoth
5. Abyssinian Wire-Haired Tripe-Hound
6. Three
7. Steve Harris, Dave Murray
8. Noel Coward
9. LSD
10. Dennis Wheatley

ROUND 8 BUZZ BAND WORDSEARCH

1. Kaskadee
2. Benga
3. Howler
4. Spector
5. Azealia Banks

6. Niki And The Dove
7. DZ Deathrays
8. Tribes
9. Pure Love
10. Haim
11. Owl Culture
12. Pond
13. Santigold
14. Dot Rotten

72+107D Hot Tuna, 73 Primadonna, 74+98D New Risen, 75+82D Bright Idea, 78 Solo, 86 Gong, 88 Ace, 89 Just Jack, 90 Ryan, 91 Get Off, 95 Reegs, 97 Charmer, 99 R U Mine, 100 Boon, 101 Take It, 105 Kiss, 108 Fact, 111 Pop, 112 Tom, 113 Yeh, 115 Rev, 117 On

ROUND 10 SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

See below



ROUND 9 THE BIGGEST EVER NME CROSSWORD

ANSWERS ACROSS
1 Words And Music, 8 Document, 12 Bloom, 16 Lovin' Spoonful, 17 Wide Open Road, 18 Glory, 19+100A Only By The Night, 20 Tracks Of My Tears, 24+77A We Are Augustines, 27+44D Biff Bang Pow! 30 North Country Boy, 33+94A Hurry Up Harry, 34 Zero, 35 Sound, 36+29A Waiting For An Alibi, 38 Wrong, 40 Dreams, 41 Blur, 42 Abba, 43 Once More, 44 Rita, 45 Lie, 46 Bar, 47 Fear, 48 Noir, 50 Ernie, 52 Arthurs, 54 Sign, 55 Sleep, 56 Apple, 57 Massive Attack, 59 Doors, 61 Crank, 63 Watt, 65 Keen, 66 Infected, 68+9D Whistle For The Choir, 75 Bed, 76 Red, 79 Box, 80 Later, 81+106A Wonder Stuff, 83 Minute, 84 Tough, 85 Mirage, 87 Jagged, 90 Round, 92 Dirt, 96+119A Electra Heart, 102 No Doubt, 103 Queen, 104 Pause, 105 Kooks, 109 America, 110 Epstein, 114 Afroman, 118 Sneaker Pimps, 120 Virgin

ANSWERS DOWN
1 Walk On The Wild Side, 2 Revolver, 3+15D Song Away, 4 No Particular Place To Go, 5 Moonchild, 6 Sofa Song, 7 California Dreamin' & Dr Dee, 10 Mael, 11 Nurse, 12 Badge, 13 Ok Go, 14 Many Of Horror, 21 TLC, 22 Adult Net, 23 Sat In Your Lap, 24 Why, 25 Ray Davies, 26 Days Go By, 28+116A I Feel Fine, 31 How Soon Is Now, 32+93D Boo Radleys, 37 Flesh, 39 Overgrown Eden, 40 Daft Punk, 49 Islet, 51 Evil, 53 Rock N' Roll, 58 The Fox, 60 She Wants, 62 Keuning, 64 Trad, 67 Discotheque, 69 Hold On, 70 Storm, 71 Libertines,

ROUND 11 YOU VS THE STARS

THE CRIBS:

1. Oily
2. Gary
3. Ross
4. Squirrel Records
5. Lee Ranaldo, Jon Slade

WELLER:

1. Tracie Young
2. Keith Moon
3. Nick Talbot
4. '22 Dreams'
5. Syd Barrett

ROUND 12 WHEN HIP-HOP MEETS FOOD

1. Kanye West 'Waves In Paris'
2. Notorious B.I.G. 'Hypnotise'
3. A Tribe Called Quest 'Ham N' Eggs'
4. Nas 'Fried Chicken'
5. Drake 'The Ride'
6. Snoop Dogg, 'Nuthin' But A 'G' Thang'

SCORE
244

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The Big Issue

What everyone's talking about this week

THE VACCINES



WIN!

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

EXPECTING MORE FROM THE VACCINES

From: Neil K

To: NME

Whatever happened to The Vaccines? They were my favourite band of 2011, ramming every festival tent with their two-minute punk rock bangers that hit you like a smack in the face and made you want to form naked human pyramids in honour of their catchiness. Then what? Did they tour too much? Were they completely knackered when they finally got back to the studio? I listened to their new song 'No Hope' and it really does seem a bit hopeless, plodding along, falling well short of their usual passionate delivery and sounding like The Strokes noshing off The Libertines. I hope it's not a sign of their second album's direction because they're the sound of my youth and I'm not ready to stop moshing myself into an early grave just yet, thank you very much.

NME's response...

So what exactly did we expect from The Vaccines. Swedish reggae?

Met-step? Post-everything felchtronica? Well, no. As visceral and vital as their debut album was, it was a rock'n'roll record zinging with the attitude and excitement of

1976, so they could either a) make another album just the same and condemn themselves to a bright but brief career as a glorified retro punk tribute act - the CRGBs Darkness - or b) take tiny steps towards the modern age. Or, in this

case, quite literally 'The Modern Age'. 'No Hope' might smack of Strokesian string-slaughter, have an introductory drum-roll that suggests a 'Brianstorm's a-brewing and find Justin impersonating John Lydon, Bob Dylan and

Bryan Ferry like some kind of punk rock Jon Culshaw, but it's a grower, a future live favourite, a postmodern dissection of the art of the 'comeback' single (more on which later) and, at four minutes, it's frankly The Vaccines' 'Paranoid Android' - MB

'NO HOPE' THA DOPE!

From: Kitty

To: NME

I have to say how much I love the new Vaccines song. It's everything I hoped their new stuff would be - upbeat, snarling pop with a cynical bite. I've always admired the knowing edge to Justin's lyrics and 'No Hope' captures the confusion of coming of age in the spotlight perfectly.

From: Jamie Galway

To: NME

So Justin from The Vaccines doesn't want to be anybody's hero, eh? Much as I'm enjoying the new single 'No Hope', it does seem like a bit of a cop-out that he's singing about not wanting to represent his generation because he hasn't got his own life sorted out yet. Man up Justin, you're a pop star, that's your JOB. You snarl like Lydon in the song but

Johnny Rotten would have heard a lyric as wet and woolly as "I could make an observation, if you want the voice of the generation/ But I'm too self-absorbed to give it clout", spat it in your face, kneed you in the bollocks and nailed your head to the city walls as a warning to other say-nothing spouters of The Shitsdom. We want our rock heroes to inform, agitate, inspire and challenge, like Lydon, Lennon, Bowie and Richey did. Your new song's great, but it's rock music shrugging.

From: NME

To: Kitty, Jamie Galway
Jamie, you start Monday. But I think what 'No Hope' does is far cleverer than that. The second album is traditionally full of songs about dislocation, missing home, dead-eyed tour sex,

shitty promoters forgetting to remove all the red M&Ms from the bowl and how frigging hard it is to write an album's worth of songs in a month. With 'No Hope' Justin twists that whole process in on itself, dissecting what's expected of him, what the press and public demands and the reality of being a confused, self-obsessed 24-year-old from the New Forest that the world needs to instantly transform into a rock'n'roll messiah, bringing the Coalition, al-Qaeda and One Direction to their knees with a barrage of bilious revolutionary über-quote. "The whole thing feels like an exercise in trying to be someone I would rather not be", he confesses, while all the time "I try to second guess if you would be approving". It's like the I'm Alan Partridge episode about trying to get a TV show commissioned - an exposé of the hoop-jumping desperation behind the glossy sheen of 'entertainment', driven by the heavy, expectant poke of fame's finger. It's a song that needed writing and, much as we'd prefer The Vaccines' new single to unleash a New Rock Order manifesto to make the Manics look like LMFAO, it's a step on from "Wrecking bar! Wrecking bar! Ra ra ra, wrecking bar!", right? - MB

ZIGGY AT 40

From: Issy Cox

To: NME

Ziggy played guitar. And though he played that guitar left-hand, Bowie couldn't have possibly made this album any more right. For me, although personally being more of a 'Hunky Dory' kinda girl, 'The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars' entered my life at the greatest time;

just over a year ago when chart music slumped to an all-time low and teenage life seemed to drag. The first time I heard 'Hang On To Yourself', it was like my ears had hit the refresh button and then sent a signal of joy up to my brain, with Ronson's grimy guitar ringing true and clear within David's sexy and effortlessly cool vocals. This album, like many of Bowie's others, never gets the deserved recognition that it should... In my eyes, the bank holiday wasn't there so the British public could celebrate Queen Liz's Jubilee, but instead was a great excuse for us all to wish Ziggy and his Spiders a very happy 40th birthday... on this occasion, annoying glitter pieces falling out of the greeting card is acceptable.

From: NME
To: Issy Cox
I love the idea of albums having birthdays. That'd mean that, this year, both 'Parklife' and 'Definitely Maybe' are legally allowed to drink, George Michael's 'Older' can now apply for a provisional driving licence and 'The Slim Shady LP' still has three years to wait before it can legally have sex. And as for Bowie's 'underappreciated' (like, really?) '...Ziggy Stardust...', that's just started dyeing its hair, riding a Harley and running off with 'Kylie Minogue' - MB



STALKER

From: Bethan

To: NME

"This is just a quick snap with my mate and Miles Kane after we spotted him after his gig in Nottingham!"

From: Craig Heath

To: NME

Alabama Shakes are the best new band on the planet. Mumford & Sons sell two million albums in America. No-one seems to mind The Darkness coming back. What is this, 1983? 1946? 1405? It doesn't feel like 2012 - the success of tired old styles of music being rehashed in the shape of 'hot new bands' is starting to make me think that music has run out of ideas. And Adele can fuck off.

From: NME

To: Craig Heath

Music hasn't run out of ideas, Craig, it's run out of money. The major-label budgets only stretch to the safe, familiar-sounding bets, the mainstream gets swamped with lame nostalgia acts and I have to plough through a stack of promo CDs every

Web Slings

The highlight of this week's NME.COM blogs

SACRED COWS – 'SGT PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND'

Everyone knows how important 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' is. It turned music upside down. Rock musicians looked at it and thought, 'Wow! There's life beyond trad rock instruments! We can look beyond the blues as a blueprint!' It ushered in a new way of thinking for bands - for the first time, they didn't have to worry about recreating things live. The studio was an adventure playground to be explored. The world was a songwriter's oyster.

However, that all taken in, how many people actually sit down with 'Sgt Pepper's...' for prolonged listens? 'Revolver', 'Rubber

Soul' and 'Abbey Road' seem to be the LPs that people actually listen to. However, 'Sgt Pepper's...' is sprawling, indulgent and rather laborious.

'Sgt Pepper's...' is a great leap, for its time, making it an important museum piece for the spikes in human creativity. But it just isn't a very fun record to listen to. When it inevitably appears at the top of some Best Albums Ever list, you're reminded of this and, as such, it stops you being rational about any worth it has.

It's been misappropriated by critics and used as a weapon of conformity and technical appreciation. It



signalled the beginning of music taking itself far too seriously, and pop may

never quite recover. *Read Mof Gimmers' full blog on NME.COM*

Best of the responses...

'Revolver' is a better album in my opinion; the fact that 'Sgt Pepper's...' is always named as their magnum opus does irk me a bit. It's like a handful of

people agreed upon the fact that it was the best, it became the norm, and was never questioned again. I got the opportunity to approach

The Beatles (or most bands which we are too young to have lived through) on a fresh ear without preconceived notions. It surprised me to

discover that 'Sgt Pepper's...' is widely considered to be their best. It ain't bad, but it's hardly their best. *Sebastian Ospina*

day that all sound like the sort of Middle Ages farmer folk that the men picking limbs off Bosworth Field would've considered 'arena rock'. In tight times though, the underground thrives: check out DZ Deathrays, Breton, This Is My TV, Fractures, Jonathan Boulet, Grimes, Fixers, Turnpike Glow, Action Bronson, Zulu Winter, Savag... nurse! Quick! My Radar section delusion is coming on again! - MB

LIST HATE

From: Alex

To: NME

The list for ultimate icon is not what I'd hoped it would be. Liam instead of Noel? And as much as I love Amy and Alex, they're hardly the ultimate icon of the last 60 years. The biggest problem with the list though, is the fact that Sir Paul McCartney is missing. He was in the greatest band ever to exist, and continued to change music. He's continuing to write brilliant music today,

just listen to 'Memory Almost Full' to see what I mean. I can't help but think that if Paul had been murdered, he would be there instead.

From: NME

To: Alex

Tell you what, Alex, lists suck. They're all wrong. Never once has 'Seamonsters' by The Wedding Present made it into a single NME Best Albums Ever list, rendering all of them pointless. I mean, who votes for these things!?! What? I do? Ah. Anyway, I agree - Macca deserves his place among the Ultimate Icons, having written more brilliant songs than anyone else alive today, except perhaps The Wedding Present. Yes, had Macca died in 1980 he would be canonised by now, largely because the 20 previous years he'd spent knocking out stone-cold classics would never have become tainted by the following 30 years of knocking out virtually none, but let's not turn this into

New Morbid Express - best live act on the planet and pop's granddad, we (belatedly) salute you - MB

From: Hayley Cambridge
To: NME

I'm so sick of internet idiots block-voting for random bands and albums in polls. Last week Iron Maiden's brain-dead fan army managed to get 'The Number Of The Beast' to the top of an HMV poll of Best British Albums, with Depeche Mode's admittedly quite good 'Violator' in second, ahead of all the Beatles albums, Blur, Oasis, Radiohead and The Stone Roses. I'm sure there were pints of snakebite raised in the biker pubs of Wolverhampton the night that was announced, but to the rest of the world it just makes us look like miserable, formulaic, head-banging virgin twats with no taste or sense, when actually we've produced the best rock music in history.

Well done, 25 dedicated Maiden fans! Now die.

From: NME

To: Hayley Cambridge

I was vexed at this result too, Hayley, as me and my mate Steve spent three months in a knackered Honda Civic touring the HMVs of Britain attempting to 'block-vote' for 'Seamonsters' by The Wedding Present. It made Number 3,583 - MB



STALKER

From: Heidi

To: NME

"This is me with Ian and Max from Howler after their set at Pie & Vinyl in Southsea. They were brilliant and funny!"

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DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week

JAKE SHEARS SCISSOR SISTERS

QUESTION 1

Which Scissor Sisters song does The Master character sing to mock The Doctor in an episode of Doctor Who?

"I've never seen an episode of Doctor Who in my life but I think it was 'I Can't Decide'."

Correct

QUESTION 2

With whom did you sing the following lyrics onstage? "Oh leave me alone you know/Oh Henry, get off the phone/I gotta straighten my face/The mellow thighed chick just put my spine out of place".

"Oh, that was with Franz Ferdinand. We sang 'Suffragette City' together. To watch now, it looks like one of the most insane things you'll ever see in your life. It sounds like hell but it was a lot of fun."

Correct. A cover of David Bowie's 'Suffragette City' at V Festival in 2005



Old Franz dress in The Dark Of The Matinée?

QUESTION 3

Name three Scissor Sisters songs recorded before your debut album that can be readily downloaded from the internet.

"'Backwards Discotheque', 'Doctor (I'm Only Seeing Dark)' and 'Monkey Baby'."

Correct

QUESTION 4

What did Noel Gallagher (right) once brand Scissor Sisters? And what did Ana Matronic do to make up with him?

"I think he called us a bunch of stilt-walking circus freaks."

Wrong. Liam Gallagher called you "fucking weirdos on stilts". Noel said you were "music for squares".

"Oh, that's right. Then Ana approached him at The Brits and kissed his cheek and said he should stop being so hateful."

Is an insult from Noel a compliment in disguise?

"Totally. It's fun to hear what he's got to say."



QUESTION 5

What song did you dedicate to a woman in labour who phoned in when you stood in for Pete Tong on Scissor Sisters Day on Radio One in September 2006?

"Now, that's a tough question. Was it one of our own songs?"

I remember I asked her if she'd ever seen The Fly."

Wrong. Push It' by Salt-N-Pepa



QUESTION 6

Which private body part did you unexpectedly reveal to your own mother and the whole of the front row, when she was standing watching you support Elton John in 2004?

"Oh no. I remember that - that was embarrassing. My pants busted open and my balls came out."

Correct. Are you prone to wardrobe malfunctions of this nature?

"Not too much these days, actually. I've finally learnt now what fabrics are best to wear when I'm performing onstage and which ones are best to leave behind and avoid altogether."

QUESTION 7

From which Kylie Minogue video was your outfit taken when you dressed as Agnes The Oldest Kylie Impersonator on The Paul O'Grady Show in 2010?

"It was from 'Can't Get You Out Of My Head'. I was absolutely terrified."

Correct



Be careful crossing your legs, Jake

QUESTION 8

You dressed as characters from which show when you played London's G-A-Y in 2003?

"The Wizard Of Oz. I was so drunk. We'd played the Astoria three hours before in the same venue and there was 20 minutes of dead time due to a stage malfunction. So in between I got super wasted."

Correct

QUESTION 9

Name three things that sung and danced along with you when you sang 'Take Your Mama' at the Brits in 2005 (left). "Dancing eggs. Singing watermelons. And a singing barn."

Correct



You don't like see the eggplant



Dragon's Den gone lowbrow

QUESTION 10

From left to right as you looked at them while performing 'Only The Horses', seat The Voice judges.

"Will.I.am, Jessie J, Tom Jones. And that guy from The Script."

Correct. Ana said

she'd like to be a judge. Would you?

"Yeah. I think we'd both be good judges in our own ways. I think she'd be very funny. I wouldn't be as funny."

Total Score
8/10

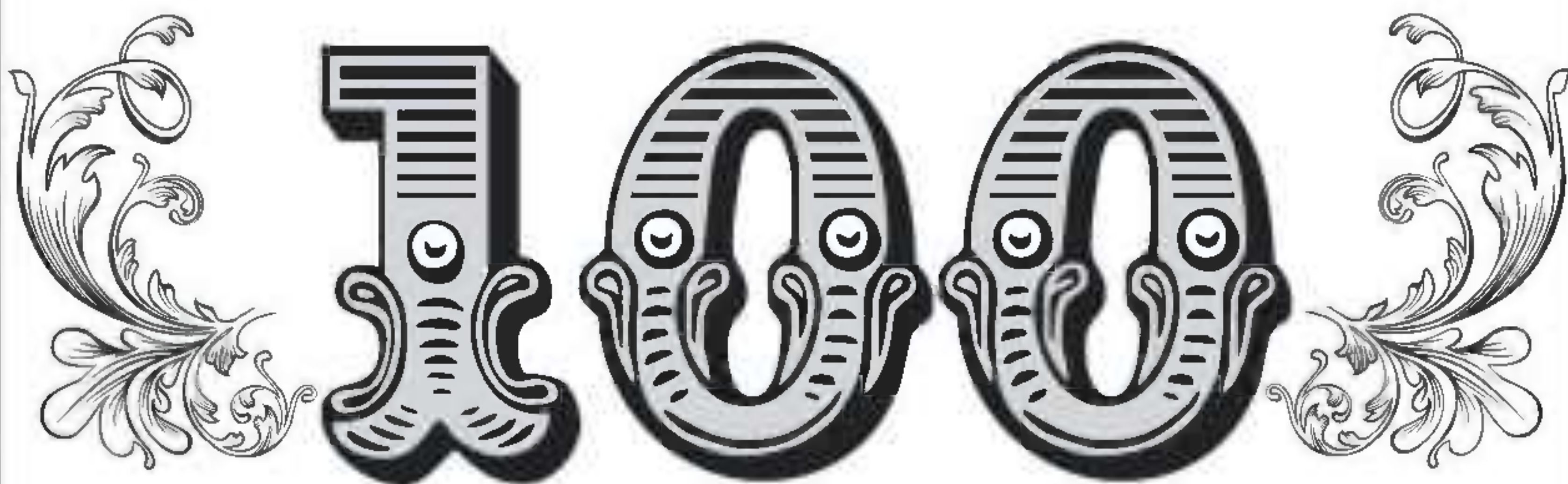
"I'm surprised, I have a hard time remembering anything."

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