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onstage sex cults,
gore... and
The Beatles**

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they don't
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Banned!

From Frankie Goes To Hollywood releasing the most controversial single ever in UK pop, to Madonna provoking the church, Elvis having his hips removed from US primetime TV, Marilyn Manson making the most obscene music video ever, and The Beatles getting into more trouble than any other band in history... Here are all the stories and images they didn't want you to see

Banned! Posters

Feast your eyes on some of the most notorious contraband album sleeves of all time

From The Vaults: Aphex Twin, 1994

Ahead of the 20th anniversary of 'Selected Ambient Works Volume II', we look back at Ted Kessler's classic interview with electronic auteur Richard D James

CONTRIBUTORS



Tony Ennis
Deputy Art Director
"Designing this week's issue was good fun.

Sex, violence and rebellion – the ingredients of a good design. Also I wish I could get Elvis' dance moves in the mag every week."



Hazel Sheffield
Writer
Hazel reviewed the latest album from

Stephen Malkmus And The Jicks: "Writing about this record is like putting on a pair of comfy slippers – Malkmus is reliably great."



Angus Batey
Writer
Angus interviewed So Solid Crew about their banned gigs in the '00s: "It's always a treat to talk to Megaman, one of British music's most fascinating and illuminating interviewees."

THIS WEEK WE ASK...



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Bowie, Spotify, Daft Punk, Pussy Riot, festivals and more: all the big questions, all the answers

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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SO, IS THIS REALLY IT?

My 2014 prediction is that The Strokes will finally split. After years of bad tensions due to drugs, the declining quality of their music and misinterpreted side projects, they will call it a day. The band haven't toured properly since their 2011 album 'Angles' and are rarely seen together in public. Frontman Julian Casablancas won't confirm the split, but there will be a rumour he hopes to live out the rest of his career as a wax doll for Daft Punk. Fab Moretti will decline to comment, but hopes that he will continue his pursuit of Hollywood actresses.

Alex Lyall, via email

Jenny Stevens: Meanwhile, Albert Hammond Jr will join forces with his dad Albert Hammond Sr and together they will continue the latter's great Olympic songwriting legacy (he was, after all, the man who wrote



'One Moment In Time'). After penning a father-and-son ode to Rio 2016, they'll both retire to sunny Gibraltar. Nikolai Fraiture and Nick Valensi, meanwhile, will drift into a life of domestic obscurity, occasionally taking time out from fatherhood to feature on *Saturday Night Live* and intermittent side projects of other former New York scene gods.

WETHER REPORT

It's extremely sad and disappointing that The Picture House in Edinburgh has been sold to the JD Wetherspoon chain. What Scotland's capital city needs is a venue that can attract the quality of artists that have played at The Picture House – the likes of The Smiths and Queen. What is doesn't need is another soulless boozer trading in cheap beer and discount lunches. It's unlikely that investors are going to fund the building of a new venue, so concertgoers in Edinburgh are now faced with the very real possibility that to see acts of a certain size they'll need to travel to the likes of Glasgow. It would be great if JD Wetherspoon see sense and retain the status of The Picture House predominantly as a music venue, but it's highly unlikely. Here's hoping it's not the start of a trend of much valued and loved establishments disappearing before our eyes.

Neil Renton, Edinburgh

JS: It is grim news and I'm sure music fans everywhere can unite in sadness when another one of our treasured venues gets shut down to make way for a vacuous boozer with a 'no music' policy. That's why we run our search for Britain's Best Small Venue in association with Jack Daniel's JD Roots every year: to support the venues that nurture and provide a platform for our artists from day one. Let's hope Scotland's MSPs backing the fight to save the venue make a real difference.

DON'T DRINK AND DIVE

Over the last few weeks, I went to see Peace and Palma Violets (above) at the Manchester Ritz. They were great gigs. However, I came away from both having seen the same problem – younger teenagers getting far too drunk and jumping into moshpits which were clearly too much for them. I had to



constantly stop watching the band to help drunk girls off the ground because they couldn't take care of themselves in the crowd. I'm not saying that concerts should be strictly over-18 but I just think there should be more control on wasted underage teens at concerts.

Nick Wyatt, via email

JS: While I get it that loads of puking, wasted people is irritating when you're trying to watch a band, accusing young women of not being able to "take care of themselves" in

a rowdy crowd is way off the mark. When Bikini Kill were starting out, Kathleen Hanna had a women-only rule at the front to combat the lad-centric mosh culture spawned by grunge that alienated girls at gigs. Gigs should be a safe space for people to freak out if they want to (and nothing is better than losing your shit to your favourite band) – let's just make sure everybody has the same opportunity to and it doesn't piss everyone around you off. Age or gender shouldn't be an issue.

ON REFLEKTION...

So, Noel Gallagher has been slagging off Arcade Fire for releasing a double album. I love Oasis and Noel, but how can he slag off 'Reflektor' without hearing it? It's refreshing somebody coming out with a double album. Besides that, it's fantastic – voodoo rhythms and dark rock'n'roll. He should take a long look in the mirror and see he hasn't made anything that good since 1997. And

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then do us all a favour and put Oasis back together rather than knocking out the same old Radio 2 fodder. I leave you with this thought, Mr Noel Gallagher: Oasis, 'Be Here Now' – running time 71:38, 12 tracks; Arcade Fire, 'Reflektor' – running time, 75:12, 13 tracks. Maybe it's him that "needs to pry themselves out of their own asshole".

John Harris, Leeds

JS: An excellent spot, John. Double albums or not, 'Be Here Now' and 'Reflektor' are as excessive as each other, both demonstrating a lack of quality control – and yet both kinda remarkable in their own way. If you can't disappear up your own arsehole once you've achieved the dizzying heights of super fame, then what is the point of rock'n'roll? Mind you, when Oasis finally do decide to reform, we want all the hits please. No 20-minute version of 'All Around The World (Reprise)', alright Noel?



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

This is me and Ian Brown. I met him on the tube while visiting London. Lucky girl I am. Cheers.

Ilaria, Italy

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2014:

the big

Experts and insiders
give us the low-down on
what's in store for the
music world this year



Daft Punk at
Coachella in April
2006, kicking off
the Alive tour,
their last outing
on the road



questions

answered

1

Will Daft Punk tour?

Back in May 2013, around the release of 'Random Access Memories', Thomas Bangalter told *NME*, "The nature of this record makes it not really possible to tour it." That didn't stop everyone (including us) from speculating that Daft Punk would play at every festival under the sun. Yet the robots put in just one appearance: at August's MTV VMAs, minus their instruments. The signs now look more positive, with news that the duo will perform live at the 56th Grammy Awards, where they're nominated in five categories. Executive producer Ken Ehrlich promises they'll deliver "a collaborative and celebratory stage performance" at the January 26 event. So they'll finally perform, but will they tour? In May, in the *New York Post*, 'Get Lucky' vocalist Pharrell claimed he'd be touring with them, but the duo promptly denied it. Fellow collaborator Nile Rodgers has said, "We've talked about it conceptually." Concrete information is hard to come by, and no national promoters were willing to comment when approached by *NME*. In that same interview, however, Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo did let slip that "touring will come later". Everyone has their eye on Glastonbury, though the festival's booker, Martin Elbourne, told *NME*, "I haven't heard that..."

2 Will Oasis reunite?

►The 20th anniversary of 'Definitely Maybe' looms, but it's unlikely to be marked by Oasis returning to the stage. According to tabloid reports, Noel recently turned down £20 million to rejoin Oasis, and although their unnamed 'source' seemed rather spurious, The Chief's reluctance is real enough. In November 2013 he claimed, "If there is a reunion, I won't be in it", and after an unproductive year, he's set aside most of 2014 to make a second solo record. Liam, however, remains receptive to the idea, so it can't be discounted completely. Oasis' original rhythm guitarist **Bonehead** recently joined Beady Eye onstage at a tribute to the late Charlatans drummer Jon Brookes, and while "there was no talk about a reunion", he tells *NME*: "If someone said, 'Here's a field, here's a stage and here's 200,000 people', I'm sure Liam would jump up and do it, and I don't think it would even take anyone offering him a massive bankroll of money. He'd do it because that's what

he loves, that's his passion. As far as Noel goes, I saw him in Glasgow with the High Flying Birds, but we didn't speak about reunions. With Noel, I only know what I read in the press, and from what I read it sounds like a 'no'." While the 'Definitely Maybe' anniversary doesn't look set to be a catalyst for Gallagher bridge building, fans should retain some hope. In 2015, it's 20 years since their biggest-selling album, '(What's The Story) Morning Glory', and the following summer marks the anniversary of those Knebworth mega-gigs, each of which would provide an equally valid excuse.

4 How will the fourth wave of feminism impact on music?



►Sadie Dupuis, Speedy Ortiz:

"It would be great if there was a lessening of the insinuation that every non-single-white-male musician is a novelty in

2014. Seldom am I described as a guitarist without some synonym for 'lady' in front of the instrument I play (I've never seen any of my friends described as a 'man guitarist').

Still, I do think we've made decent strides for feminism in 2013, if only in terms of visibility of the phrase. It was only a year ago that Katy Perry rejected the chance to label herself a feminist, but in autumn 2013, Beyoncé, Lorde, and Miley Cyrus reclaimed the word. The fact that three of the most successful pop artists are discussing feminism in interviews and in their lyrics is hugely beneficial to kids of all genders who idolise these stars, for whom an awareness of feminism from a young age could result in a different world.

"Feminism has been important to socially conscious punk music for the past 20 to 30 years, but recently we've seen a renewed media interest in young, radical artists. That's put smart women like the members of Potty Mouth and **Waxahatchee** in the limelight, and they have been able to speak eloquently about how feminism impacts their lives. 2013 was the year artists like Grimes and Chvrches' Lauren Mayberry came out against industry misogyny and internet harassment; in 2014 we've got a way to go in achieving a total understanding of and respect for feminism. But I have hope for this conversation gaining more public traction this year, because of the sheer number of artists of all genders – myself included – who identify as feminist. Because wouldn't it be sort of barbaric, as a female, to not believe you're every bit as important and every bit as human as any other musician?"

DAN DENNISON, GETTY, DAVID EDWARDS, FILM MAGIC, ALAMY, RETNA, CAMERAPRESS

3 What's the next big dance craze?

►2013 was very much the year of both the twerk and the **Harlem Shake**. However, while the former is still going strong, the latter has already become almost completely passé. According to Alex Kordek of London's Pineapple Dance Studios, this is entirely par for the course when it comes to this sort of thing.

"Nowadays," he says, "dance trends come in and out of style more often. They enter the mainstream as gimmicks: things that people see in videos, or things that have been highlighted by a celebrity. That's how people learn these dances now." So, according to him, what will be the big dance moves of 2014? Kordek reckons that "there's a lot of dancehall and reggae stuff being incorporated into videos at the moment, so



maybe there's a move within that style that will filter down from that. In terms of specific moves, I can see something like rockaway – rocking the shoulders, leaning back, swaying from side to side catching the rhythm of the dancehall beat – and bogo – leaning back, arm extensions rolling forward in a circular motion like a bicycle and a trigger finger – catching on next year." Erm, we might need to see a video of that one first...





Adele had a very quiet 2013

5 Will album sales continue to fall?

►In 2013, **Emeli Sandé**'s 'Our Version Of Events' – released 23 months ago – was Britain's biggest-selling album. When you consider that Sandé's own figures were down by more than 50 per cent from 2012, it's a worrying indictment for the future of the future of album sales in this country. Without another Adele or Sandé to prop up the stats, the drop in 2013 has been especially severe. A spokesperson for the BPI reckons it's not all doom and gloom. "We're not seeing the overall picture, as streaming, which is growing quickly, is not yet included in the official data," the spokesperson says. "So sales are actually stronger than might first appear to be the case." Likewise, HMV's music manager John Hirst is bullish about the prospects for physical sales: "We sold 17.5 million CDs in

2013, and 125,000 LPs, which is double what we sold last year," he says. The rise of digital downloads and streaming services will also continue in 2014, but it's possible that last year's low physical media figures were an anomaly.



6 Who will headline the festivals?

►One thing is for certain this year: Arcade Fire will dominate festival bills. They're headlining the Friday night of Glastonbury as well as a string of European events including Primavera, Northside, Pinkpop and Rock In Roma. Meanwhile, Kasabian and Foo Fighters are still the bookies' favourites to make a headline appearance at Worthy Farm and Arctic Monkeys, already lined up for T In The Park, Portugal's Optimus Alive and Belgium's Rock Werchter, are likely to crop up on another UK festival bill. As for any returning heroes like The Stone Roses topping bills, Glastonbury booker Martin Elbourne says it's unlikely this year. "The only band people would really get excited about if they reformed, apart from Led Zeppelin, would be The Smiths," he says. "But I can't see that happening. That's not going to happen in a hurry." The major trend we'll see, he says, are the bands who have been dominating the *singles* charts. "You'll see more dance and urban crossover acts on the

main stages this year – acts like **Disclosure**, who are growing and growing."

The wider festival climate looks to be improving, with Wireless announcing a second leg in the Midlands, Sonisphere returning to Knebworth with a huge line-up and dance festivals bolstered by the huge commercial resurgence in the genre. But increasingly, Elbourne says, it's the smaller festivals that are thriving – events that are more about the experience rather than the big names at the top of the bill. "The festivals that sold out in advance last year were all the boutique ones like Wilderness and Secret Garden Party – ones where you can dress up and hang out and that are much less reliant on the headliner."



7 Who will dominate the singles charts?



►While album sales dwindled, 2013 was a big year for the singles chart. James Arthur, Daft Punk, Passenger, Robin Thicke and Avicii all crossed the million mark, while Naughty Boy and Sam Smith's 'La La La' is set to do the same in early 2014. The linking factor between two of those records was **Pharrell Williams**, and Martin Talbot of the Official Charts Company believes that this year "you'll see Pharrell come out in his own right. With the album he's got coming out this year, I think he might be one of the biggest acts of 2014."

Talbot also reckons Sam Smith could become a household name in 2014, pointing to his high placing in numerous ones-to-watch polls and the fact that he's already won the Brits' Critics' Choice Award, historically a good indicator of who'll

do well in the coming year (Tom Odell picked it up in 2013). Radio 1's head of music George Ergatoudis reckons that male singer-songwriters like Ed Sheeran and Ben Howard will leave their mark on the charts this year, and that dance music and R&B will be "a super-competitive area once again".

The forecast for guitar bands, however, isn't quite so rosy. Though you can point to Bastille and The 1975 as success stories, Ergatoudis believes that "the bands that are getting talked up, like Royal Blood and Circle Waves, are decent, but if you're talking about proper success and proper sales, I'm doubtful. I actually think the market in terms of what the audience wants is shifting back to guitar-based music, but the acts that would be needed to fill that space... I'm just not sure they're there."

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Dominic O'Dair



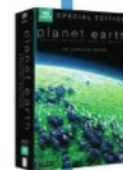
Toy



BOOK Byrds: Requiem For The Timeless, by Johnny Rogan

"It's this book about The Byrds. It's the ultimate band biography. Charlie [Salvidge, Toy drummer] just got it on this tour and now we're all going to get a copy."

BOXSET Planet Earth



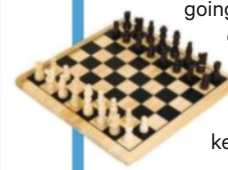
"On tour, it's incredibly blissed out to just watch amazing animals and amazing landscapes, and listen to David Attenborough as you're driving round. It's so peaceful. We've really been enjoying that lately."

FILM A Clockwork Orange

"It's one of my favourite films. I guess it's very, very far removed from tour life but, in other ways, it's not. Stanley Kubrick is one of my favourite directors."

GAME Chess

"We've played a lot of Monopoly recently so I'm going to change to chess. I'm OK at it, as is Alejandra [Diez, keyboardist]."



HOME COMFORT Duvet

"Without question, a duvet is essential to take on any tour. Alejandra and I have one that we pull over ourselves as soon as we get on the bus. We just crawl under it and pass out."

8 Will David Bowie play live?



►Despite David Bowie's surprise return this time last year, a full tour looks unlikely. Bowie never enjoyed touring, and it seems inconceivable at this point in his life that he'd willingly get back onto the treadmill. But that doesn't mean he'll never play live again. He was recently rumoured to be considering a one-off show in London, and according to 'The Next Day' engineer Mario McNulty, "During the recording there was some chatter about playing the songs live. David would say, 'This one would be good to do live.' But only David knows the answer to that. Everybody would love to see him tour, and I think the album would sound fantastic live. But it

remains to be seen." We may yet hear more from Bowie. According to producer Tony Visconti, 'The Next Day' sessions yielded 29 songs, 22 of which have now been released. That leaves another seven, and Visconti has speculated that those songs could be included in another album, revealing, "If all goes well, we will be back in the studio by the end of [2013]." There's every chance that's where he is right now.

10 What next for Pussy Riot?

►After their release, Pussy Riot will go from being the most famous prisoners in the world to the most famous activists in the world, their lives having changed irrevocably since performing their guerilla gig in Moscow's main cathedral in February 2012. But where do they go from here, with the glaring global spotlight shining on them? Andrei Tolokonnikova, Nadya Tolokonnikova's father, says his daughter plans to spend her first weeks out of prison at her grandmother's house to "take stock, get to grips with the situation and work out a plan of action". He tells NME: "People have talked so much about the girls and now they mustn't slip up or lower the bar for other fighters for human freedoms." Mariya Alyokhina says she expects the group will continue its modus operandi of attention-grabbing, impromptu protest. "I can't say much about the concrete content," she says, "because that would contradict the main idea of the band – spontaneity." Andrei insists they will be avoiding the spotlight to make long-term plans: "What they need is to find independent people, brothers-in-arms, who they can rely on in the long term. Because a lot of people right now want to profit from Nadya and Mariya's fame, he says. "It's good, but good later. For now, it's still necessary to work."



9 Can Spotify win over its critics?

►In 2013, Spotify came under fire from artists including Thom Yorke (below), Foals, Hookworms and David Byrne, who accused the music service of paying artists poor royalties. In response, it announced it has paid out more than \$1 billion in royalties since its launch in 2009, and created SpotifyArtists.com, a website explaining the business model in detail and addressing artists' concerns. Mark Williamson, director of artist services at Spotify, says it "simply isn't true" that the service is bad for new artists. "Spotify shares approximately 70 per cent of all revenue to rights holders, which is split depending on their popularity," he says. In the future, the service hopes to win over its critics by showing how much royalties will increase as the service grows. "We've gone from paying out just a few million in 2009 to over \$500m in 2013 alone," says Williamson. There are also big plans to boost artist income through ticket sales and merch. But will it be enough to convince the naysayers? Only time will tell.





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Love action

Jarvis Cocker, No Age, Rustie and more bring the voices of Indian 'untouchable' children to life

It was his sister's trip to India, says Jamie Chambers, artistic director of Transgressive North, that set things in motion. Working for a charity called Scottish Love In Action, she'd visited a children's home in southeast India called Light Of Love. Some of the residents were orphaned, disabled or abandoned. Others were Dalit, or 'untouchables' – the lowest of the low in the Hindu caste system. "The idea that some children might be born into a situation that makes them feel they're less valuable than other kids their age – that felt like something I wanted to engage with creatively," says Chambers.

In 2008, Chambers and his colleagues at arts community Transgressive North booked flights. Six years and a couple of return visits later, they have a documentary film and two full-length albums to show for it, all falling under the umbrella name Everything Is New. 'Sun Choir' is the debut album proper by Transgressive North's in-house band Marram, a psychedelic pop record packed with guests including Jarvis

"I HAD THIS HUGE BODY OF SAMPLES, ALL THESE AMAZING SOUNDS"

Jamie Chambers

Cocker, Irvine Welsh, Owen Pallett and the massed voices of the Light Of Love's Children's Choir, recorded painstakingly over several months. "We really wanted to make sure we'd captured the kids in the best possible light," says Chambers. Released separately, meanwhile, is the double CD 'Boats', a 29-track compilation featuring exclusive tracks from Four Tet, High Places, Rustie and No Age, each working with vocal samples



Transgressive North's Jamie Chambers with children from the Light Of Love home

recorded on Transgressive North's visits. "I had this huge body of samples, all these amazing sounds, and I thought it would be such a shame if this went to waste," says Chambers.

Proceeds from the record go to Scottish Love

In Action, which feeds, clothes and educates abandoned and orphaned children in southeast India. And on a visit to Light Of Love late in December 2012, Transgressive North got an opportunity to play the music they'd made to the

participants themselves.

"It felt so important to bring the circle whole, bring the project back to the kids," says Chambers. "We put on a premiere with a red carpet. Then we threw a big party on New Year's Eve, rigged up a big speaker system. I was wondering, is this music going to translate? It was thrilling seeing how they responded. They loved Rustie – everyone was screaming in excitement when the beat dropped. I showed the film to Brian DeGraw of Gang Gang Dance and he said that even if nothing else happened with the project, that made it worthwhile. They got to celebrate themselves, celebrate their own voices."

■ LOUIS PATTISON

INSIDE 'EVERYTHING IS NEW'

Artists from 'Boats' and 'Sun Choir' on why they got involved

Max Tundra

The electronica maverick is behind 'You, The Living' – one of the most euphoric moments on 'Boats'

"I was contacted by the fine folks at Transgressive North and it sounded bloody brilliant. The samples had been very well organised – it gave me the opportunity to play the voices as if they were musical instruments. I had a lot of fun creating the finished track."

Irvine Welsh

The *Trainspotting* author is an unlikely presence on Marram's 'Valuables'

"It's the sort of project that is very much outside what would usually be associated with me, but all the more intriguing for that. Scottish Love In Action is a great organisation, and

Transgressive North have done a wonderful job putting together all these beautiful sounds and images, utilising the talents of the kids in a very good cause."

High Places

'Boats' sprang out of Transgressive North's dealings with this LA-based electro duo,

who are behind the sweltering 'Future's Just Ahead' Rob Barber (instruments): "When they explained the whole film and concept, we immediately began asking all our friends to make songs. Everybody involved heard the library of sounds and went bananas – literally gigabytes of vocals, phrases and words, all organised by key and note! It was probably one of the most challenging songs we've worked on, because of the desire to compliment the voices in a way that felt elevated."

► The 'Everything Is New' project is released on January 20 via two separate releases, Marram's 'Sun Choir' and 'Boats' by various artists, both reviewed next week



The Beatles moved to London in 1963. By the mid-'60s, John, George and Ringo were living in Surrey



BOG OFF, BORIS – THE BEATLES BELONG TO LIVERPOOL

BY JOE ANDERSON

The Mayor of Liverpool rejects Mayor of London Boris Johnson's claim that the capital, not Liverpool, propelled the Fab Four to stardom



Boris Johnson's claim that London 'made' The Beatles is beyond ludicrous. I was amazed, but you shouldn't be too amazed by some of the things Boris says. That's why we call him 'The Fool On The Hill'.

What 'made' The Beatles was the exceptional talent of Lennon and McCartney. And where did they hone that talent and get the inspiration for the most iconic and memorable songs in history? Liverpool. From Strawberry Fields to Penny Lane, the city was their inspiration. Quite simply, Liverpool was the mother Beatle.

We're not arrogant enough to take all the credit, though – Hamburg also played an important role in shaping the band. But even before Hamburg, they played in the Cavern and many other Liverpool pubs and clubs.

was beheaded in Iraq. On both of those occasions he had to apologise. These were obviously more serious issues than popular music, but nevertheless it's another embarrassing gaffe by him, which he'll have to apologise for.

The Beatles went to pretty much every country in the world, but I don't think there's any country or city that has laid claim to them in such an arrogant way as Boris has. The next thing he'll be saying is London also 'made' Andy Murray and Bradley Wiggins because they won their Olympic medals within the city's postcode. We'll have to stop him putting people in Madame Tussauds at that rate.

Or maybe Liverpool should lay claim to The Rolling Stones, since their second single was written by Lennon and McCartney and their manager was schooled by Brian Epstein. But we don't need to try and take another city's glory. Those four lads are Liverpool. London may have polished them up a bit, but they were diamonds to begin with – and Liverpool made them shine. ■

► For more opinion and debate, head to NME.COM/blogs

LOST ALBUMS

#12

Linda Perhacs
Parallelograms (1970)

Chosen by Sky Ferreira

"I discovered this album while I was in my last year of high school, before I dropped out. It was the first psych-folk record I became obsessed with. Linda has only released one album until now; nearly 44 years later, she's finally releasing a second one ['The Soul Of All Natural Things' is out March 4 on Sufjan Stevens' Asthmatic Kitty label]. This album inspired me in so many different ways and opened a new door for me musically. It led me to Mark Fry, Ash Ra Tempel, Dave Bixby, Amon Düül II and many more."



► THE DETAILS

- **RELEASE DATE** 1970
- **LABEL** Kapp
- **BEST TRACKS** 'Chimacum Rain', 'Hey, Who Really Cares', 'Paper Mountain Man'
- **WHERE TO FIND IT** The original album is rare, but it was re-released in 2005 by Wild Places with six bonus tracks. A 2008 Sunbeam Records reissue is also available.
- **LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify



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ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"IT'S NOT MUSIC FOR GOING OUT"
Gerard Love

GRAND PRIX



STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

The cover features a 1994 Simtek F1 racing car, shot by fashion photographer Marcus Tomlinson. This was the model driven by Roland Ratzenberger when he crashed and died while qualifying for the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix. When asked if the band would be keeping the car to wheel out onstage, Blake replied, "Our logos were scrubbed straight off. It'd be too fuckin' expensive."

THIS WEEK...

Teenage Fanclub: Grand Prix

Guitarist **Raymond McGinley** celebrates his 50th birthday this week – ample excuse to delve into an underrated '90s classic

THE BACKGROUND

In 1991, Bellshill quartet Teenage Fanclub laid down a marker with their third record 'Bandwagonesque', an alternative pop beauty that defied the dominant baggy sound of the time. Following 1993's poorly received 'Thirteen', they reconvened in March 1994, when Norman Blake, Gerard Love and Raymond McGinley decided to ditch drummer Brendan O'Hare, McGinley explaining: "We didn't think Brendan was into being in a band." As they set about tightening their sound, the band remained at odds with the prevailing scene – Britpop was in full swing – but they occupied a niche making classic, 12-string pop, inspired by Big Star and The Byrds and embossed with their own Lanarkshire wit. They brought in brass and strings for the first time and divided the songwriting equally for a democratic triumph.

FIVE FACTS

- 1 Paul Quinn, who stepped in to replace Brendan O'Hare, formerly drummed with fellow Bellshill natives The Soup Dragons, who the Fannies had opened for in 1990.
- 2 Creation man Alan McGee was the one who chose 'Mellow Doubt' as the album's lead single. "It made me feel good about life every time I heard it," he wrote in the sleeve notes for 2003 greatest hits set 'Four Thousand Seven Hundred And Sixty-Six Seconds...'
- 3 The name 'Grand Prix' was a joke. The band claimed they just wanted to see if Americans would call it 'Grand Pricks'.
- 4 McGinley plays a Brian May guitar on the record, the model Guild introduced in 1984 as a copy of May's signature Red Special.
- 5 Producer David Bianco also worked on Frank Black's 1994 solo album 'Teenager Of The Year'. Black took Bianco to a Fanclub show, where he met the band. "It turned out we wanted to make the same kind of records," he said.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"Need a crystal ball to see her in the morning/And magic eyes to read between the lines"
– 'Sparky's Dream'

This starry-eyed poetry is reportedly about Love's relationship with US singer-songwriter Juliana Hatfield.

"Just something simple and unaffected/We're getting closer/Than we expected to be/It's me for you and you for me"
– 'I'll Make It Clear'

Norman Blake was a true romantic. 'I'll Make It Clear', however, feels less like a boy/girl thing and more like an ode to the brotherly bond felt within the band.

"I've got a pocketful of words in my brain/I pull something out when I think I should"
– 'Verisimilitude'

Raymond McGinley dissects his character in a song that's a master-class in rhyme, pairing 'verisimilitude' variously with 'attitude', 'platitude' and 'the verse is good'.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"Blessed with three distinctive songwriters, the Fannies are better qualified than most to ponder love's eternal puzzles." 9/10
Keith Cameron, NME, May 27, 1995

WHAT WE SAY NOW

An album is never going to date if it didn't quite belong to the time in the first place. While Britpop captured all the column inches, Teenage Fanclub carried on doing their own thing, bringing a chunky Bellshill bite to sunshine '60s garage pop. And it's as warm now as it was then, with reserves of joy undiminished in 18 years.

FAMOUS FAN

Liam Gallagher speaking to McGinley in 1997: "You're a fucking great band, man. Top songs, top tunes, top band... Oasis are up here, but you lot are down here, so that makes you the best fucking band... apart from me."

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"It's not music for when you're about to go out. It's music for when you get back in."

Gerard Love, 1995

THE AFTERMATH

Two years later, 'Songs From Northern Britain' would be an even bigger hit. The band signed to Columbia after the demise of Creation, coming back in 2000 with 'Howdy!'. Since then, Teenage Fanclub have been their own bosses, recording an album with US singer Jad Fair and releasing 2005's 'Man-Made' and 2010's 'Shadows' on their own imprint PeMa. Meanwhile, Blake formed the band Jonny with Euros Childs and Love worked last year as Lightships.

THE DETAILS

►RECORDED September 5–October 9, 1994 ►RELEASED May 29, 1995 ►LENGTH 42:09 ►PRODUCERS David Bianco, Teenage Fanclub ►STUDIO The Manor, Shipton-On-Cherwell ►HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 7 ►WORLDWIDE SALES 478,000 ►SINGLES Mellow Doubt, Sparky's Dream, Neil Jung ►TRACKLISTING ►1. About You ►2. Sparky's Dream ►3. Mellow Doubt ►4. Don't Look Back ►5. Verisimilitude ►6. Neil Jung ►7. Tears ►8. Discolite ►9. Say No ►10. Going Places ►11. I'll Make It Clear ►12. I Gotta Know ►13. Hardcore/Ballad

NEWS DESK THE NUMBERS



THE NUMBERS

59

Number of Beatles rarities hastily released on December 17 to prevent their copyright lapsing

192,486

Miles travelled by Local Natives, named "hardest-working band of 2013" by listings site SongKick

35

Sentence (in years) given to former Lostprophets singer Ian Watkins on December 18 for child sex offences

200

Capacity of Coldplay's December 16 show at the Ring O' Bells pub in Compton Martin, Somerset

BIG MOUTH

"I've joined the X-Men"

GRIMES celebrates signing to Jay Z's Roc Nation



WHO THE FUCK IS...



Paz Lenchantin?

When Pixies fired Kim Shattuck from their touring line-up in December, they wasted no time in announcing 40-year-old Paz Lenchantin as her replacement.

But she's not named Kim...

No, but Pixies' first non-Kim bassist brings a wealth of experience, having played with A Perfect Circle and Zwan previously in her career.

Any more strings to her bow?

Yes, quite literally. As a violinist, Lenchantin contributed strings to 'Mosquito Song' on Queens Of The Stone Age's 2002 album 'Songs For The Deaf'.

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK



Prince

Prince will turn TV purple in 2014 with a guest appearance on *New Girl*. The episode will air straight after the Super Bowl in February and revolves around one of his infamous house parties.



Dev Hynes

"Like somebody pressing delete on the last decade of your life". That's how Hynes – aka Blood Orange – described losing all his possessions and his dog, Cupid, in a Brooklyn apartment fire.

AND FINALLY

Country houseware

Cor, lumme! As well as their T-shirts and tote bags, Blur are now selling branded china tea sets and flat caps through their online merch store. It's like they've declared war on Cath Kidston.

Square dance

A petition is calling for the New York City intersection featured on 1989 album 'Paul's Boutique' to be renamed Beastie Boys Square. NYC already has Joey Ramone Place, so this could happen.

Waterloo stage set

Sunny Afternoon, a stage musical telling the early life of Kinks frontman Ray Davies and his "euphoric highs and agonising lows", opens next year. The fight scenes should be brilliant.

► Find these stories and more on NME.COM



THE BIG QUESTION

WHAT'S YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?



Chlöe Howl

Singer-songwriter "I'm going to start jotting down lyric ideas more often when I'm out or on tour instead of just napping. And eat 60 per cent less biscuits and pizza."



Leonie Cooper

NME writer "I resolve to spend as much time as humanly possible in Nashville, watching killer bands in dive bars and tenderly stroking the vinyl at Grimey's and Third Man."



Phoebe Clark

NME reader "My resolution is to stop singing along to songs when I don't know the lyrics at gigs. It gets embarrassing when you're caught out singing 'bla bluu bla'."

Official RECORD STORE Chart

THE BEST-SELLING ALBUMS OF 2013



NEW
01

David Bowie The Next Day RCA

'The Next Day' wasn't just a reminder that Bowie was still with us, it was a return to form. He went on to own the year with his stunning promo videos, the V&A exhibition and no less than three NME covers. A living legend.

- 2 AM Arctic Monkeys Domino
- 3 Random Access Memories Daft Punk COLUMBIA
- 4 Push The Sky Away Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds BAD SEED
- 5 ...Like Clockwork Queens Of The Stone Age MATADOR
- 6 Trouble Will Find Me The National 4AD
- 7 Tomorrow's Harvest Boards Of Canada WARP
- 8 Babel Mumford & Sons ISLAND
- 9 Jake Bugg Jake Bugg VIRGIN EMI
- 10 Modern Vampires Of The City Vampire Weekend XL
- 11 Our Version Of Events Emeli Sandé VIRGIN EMI
- 12 If You Wait London Grammar METAL & DUST
- 13 Silence Yourself Savages MATADOR
- 14 Pale Green Ghosts John Grant PIAS
- 15 Time Rod Stewart DECCA
- 16 Bad Blood Bastille VIRGIN EMI
- 17 Holy Fire Foals WARNER BROS
- 18 180 Palma Violets ROUGH TRADE
- 19 Right Thoughts Right Words Right Action Franz Ferdinand DOMINO
- 20 Wakin On A Pretty Daze Kurt Vile MATADOR
- 21 Swings Both Ways Robbie Williams ISLAND
- 22 Inform Educate Entertain Public Service Broadcasting TEST CARD
- 23 Amok Atoms For Peace XL
- 24 Long Way Down Tom Odell COLUMBIA
- 25 Kveikur Sigur Rós XL
- 26 13 Black Sabbath VIRGIN EMI
- 27 BE Beady Eye COLUMBIA
- 28 Reflektor Arcade Fire VIRGIN EMI
- 29 Once I Was An Eagle Laura Marling VIRGIN EMI
- 30 The 1975 The 1975 POLYDOR
- 31 If You Leave Daughter 4AD
- 32 The Dark Side Of The Moon Pink Floyd RHINO
- 33 Big Inner Matthew E White DOMINO
- 34 The Shocking Miss Emerald Caro Emerald DRAMATICO
- 35 In Love Peace COLUMBIA
- 36 Les Misérables Motion Picture Cast Recording POLYDOR
- 37 Don't Forget Who You Are Miles Kane COLUMBIA
- 38 To Be Loved Michael Bublé WARNER BROS
- 39 The Lumineers The Lumineers DECCA
- 40 Lonerism Tame Impala MODULAR

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops. This chart was compiled from sales across the Record Store Chart panel up to December 15, 2013.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK X-RECORDS BOLTON

FOUNDED 1985

WHY IT'S GREAT They specialise in rock and metal but stock records of all genres, and possess a huge range of rock memorabilia and merchandise. **TOP SELLER THIS WEEK** Hawkwind – 'Spacehawks'

THEY SAY "We have a very strong customer-driven, you-want-it-we'll-get-it approach, which has helped keep us cutting edge."

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



Disclosure



Judy
Garland

Nile Rodgers

Chic



THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING 'Blue Suede Shoes' - Elvis Presley

"I got the blue suede shoes to go with this from my grandmother for my fifth birthday. My family asked me to put them on and dance like Elvis. I don't know if I could do it – but they said I looked cute."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH 'Over The Rainbow' - Judy Garland

"My childhood was all about films and film music. We didn't listen to radio, we watched TV. I could sing 'Over The Rainbow' all the way through. Music was all-encompassing for me."

THE FIRST ALBUM I BOUGHT 'Impressions' - John Coltrane

"I can't remember not knowing about jazz."

It was almost like religion. I didn't like religion, but I loved music! But when I was able to buy my own records I bought this. The first Chic song I ever wrote, 'Everybody Dance', is all based on McCoy Tyner's piano playing here."

THE ALBUM THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND 'Bitches Brew' - Miles Davis

"I formed my first band, New World Rising, when I was about 17. We were the third band to play at Max's Kansas City club in

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO 'A House Is Not A Home' - Luther Vandross

"Every time I saw Luther Vandross live I would say to myself, 'I'm not going to cry', but I did. I cry every time I see *Breakfast At Tiffany's* when they go and get the cat. I cry every time I see *West Side Story* when they sing 'Somewhere'. All those songs tell powerful stories of love and loss and emotion."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE 'Get Off' - Foxy

"I danced to it 8,000 times at Studio 54. That place was like Sodom and Gomorrah on steroids. I was in the thick of it, completely out of control, and loved every minute of it. We were in the era of struggle: the Vietnam War, black liberation, women's liberation, gay liberation; it converged and exploded there."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD 'Latch' - Disclosure (feat. Sam Smith)

"It's not my record with Disclosure ['Together'], which I love, but 'Latch' is insane. Every time I'm working with someone

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN 'Hot Pants' - James Brown

"I so wish I had written every song I love. Every one of Beethoven's symphonies. Mozart. Sergei Prokofiev, the lot. And whenever I think about lyrics, I think there's no more brilliant lyric in the world than 'Thinking of losing that funky feeling? Don't' [from James Brown's 'Hot Pants']. It reminds me of James Joyce."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF STARTING CHIC 'Everybody Dance' - Chic

"The Chic concept was a cross between a black version of Roxy Music and the anonymity of Kiss. I wrote 'Everybody Dance' one afternoon; I thought it was too jazzy but I loved it. I played it for Bernard [Edwards, Chic bandmate] – he loved it too, but he said, 'My man, what does do do do do mean?' I said, 'The same as la la la la.' He said, 'Well, why don't we go, 'Everybody dance... la la la la'?' I said, 'Because the la la la era is over.'"

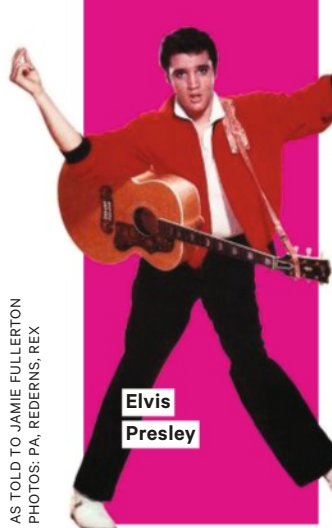
THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL 'Get Lucky' - Daft Punk

"I hope there's a fucking party! I'd want one of my own songs. Wouldn't it be weird if I didn't? Maybe play 'I'm Coming Out' [written by Edwards and Rodgers for Diana Ross] – it could make magic and I'll get back up from the casket. Or play 'Get Lucky' – I don't care!"

"STUDIO 54 WAS LIKE SODOM & GOMORRAH"

NYC. Everybody says it was Alice Cooper, but in my book you'll read that's not true. That was the first time I heard John McLaughlin, who plays guitar on this. When he came along it was like, 'Whoa, what is this?'"

they're always on my mind. A few months ago it would have been Avicii. Before that it was Adam Lambert. I'm unduly influenced by my life's current reality. And my current reality is Disclosure."



Elvis
Presley

Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY TOM HOWARD

NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK



Stephen Malkmus And The Jicks Wig Out At Jagbags

On his sixth album with
The Jicks, the ex-Pavement
man settles into his role as
an elder statesman of rock



India' from 2001's 'Stephen Malkmus'. This time though, the 47-year-old is matching his food with the books and records from his past on an album that sees him squinting through rose-tinted specs at "the music from the best decade ever" ('Lariat' again), and writing tunes devoid of the sourness and inertia that characterised much of late-period Pavement and his solo career.

It makes sense that Malkmus finds it easier to look back now. It's more than 10 years since he was showered

► "We lived on Tennyson and venison and The Grateful Dead", sings Stephen Malkmus on 'Lariat', adding another food pairing to the menu that's already given us oysters and dry Lancers wine on Pavement's 'Shady Lane' and saag aloo with gin and tonic on 'Pink

"with oceans of the past" and found "there's no time to breathe" on 'Ramp Of Death' from 2003's 'Pig Lib'. Since then he's survived the Pavement reunion in 2010 (even if he didn't seem particularly present for a lot of it) and left Portland for Berlin. 'Wig Out At Jagbags' is the sound of a man who finally has enough distance – geographically, psychologically – for nostalgia, even as he knows he's too old to do it all again. "I don't have the stomach for your brandy, I can hardly sip your tea", he sings on 'Independence Street'. "I don't have the teeth left for your candy, I'm just busy being free".

Freedom for Malkmus is freedom from expectations, freedom to get old comfortably, and '...Jagbags' is in many ways the album equivalent of a pipe and slippers. "I've been you, I've been everywhere you're going", Malkmus advises those bands following his tail-lights in 'Chartjunk'. He's now made more albums with the Jicks (six) than he did with Pavement (five), but it's

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

hard to imagine a new generation of musicians getting into Pavement through The Jicks. Partly because Pavement's influence is still everywhere – just listen to 2013 newcomers Parquet Courts and Speedy Ortiz – and partly because Malkmus clearly doesn't want to be in a

STEPHEN MALKMUS' BEST POST-PAVEMENT TRACKS

Good Kids Egg (2001)

This is what happens when Malkmus drinks a bottle of scotch and tapes a two-minute ditty about what it means to be a geek.

Jenny And The Ess-Dog (2001)

Malkmus does 'Common People' in this ode to a relationship between a rich girl called Jennifer and the son of a "Coca-Cola middleman".

Dynamic Calories (2003)

Malkmus goes all '80s for a tribute to New York new wave and its "jangly guitars, angular chops and those wet, wet drums". Weirdly, for a man famed for slacker rock, it suited him down to the hi-hat.

Stick Figures In Love (2008)

With its separately moving parts, heroic bassline and batshit lyrics, this is arguably Malkmus's greatest post-Pavement triumph. It pushes on and gains momentum in madness until it truly and brilliantly makes sense.

there, we were starting to exist," he says. "It was like an average birth, without pain." Average, without pain: it could be the tagline to the album. ■ HAZEL SHEFFIELD

► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** January 6 ► **LABEL** Domino ► **PRODUCERS** Stephen Malkmus, Joanna Bolme, Jake Morris, Mike Clark, Remko Schouten ► **LENGTH** 41:17 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Planetary Motion ►2. The Janitor Revealed ►3. Lariat ►4. Houston Hades ►5. Shibboleth ►6. J Smooov ►7. Rumble At The Rainbo ►8. Chartjunk ►9. Independence Street ►10. Scatagories ►11. Cinnamon & Lesbians ►12. Surreal Teenagers ► **BEST TRACK** Lariat

second cult band. Instead, '...Jagbags' is the product of an elder statesman who can't stop writing great songs. When writing with the Jicks previously, Malkmus' more experimental tracks have had a tendency to dwindle into aimless jamming. But here he tightens the screws a bit to make 12 purposeful, concise tracks. 'Rumble At The Rambo' is such a glorious send-up of a scene – in this case, a punk-rock band reunion – it calls to mind Ben Folds Five's 'Underground', complete with falsetto, while 'The Janitor Revealed' is so delicate in its treatment of narrative that it could, if it weren't for the razor guitars and Malkmus' distinctive drawl, belong to Belle & Sebastian. 'J Smooov', with its understated brass and fading acoustic finale, sounds like it was written wrapped up in scarves in a cold park in Berlin while the children played on the swings. This is a mature record.

Even the title is family-friendly. On his Tumblr, Malkmus writes that a Jagbag is "a smeared aspersion, not profanity". He also explains that moving to Berlin meant he could cease to exist, something he describes as a liberating fantasy. "But after two years

7

MORE ALBUMS

Ed Harcourt Time Of Dust EP

CCCLX Music



Since being nominated for the Mercury Prize back

in 2001, Ed Harcourt has been maturing in the shadows. He's gradually turned into a stylish, modernist cross between Anna Calvi, Nick Cave, Florence Welch and James Blake. It's only his 'are Starsailor still cool?' warble that jars on this six-track stopgap between albums, and even that has a little Dr John croak to it these days. The rest is brooding, theatrical elegance with a glitchy twist, the urgent 'We All Went Down With The Ship' providing some goth-Prodigy relief with its rampant beats, haunted submarine atmospherics and a chorus that could've kept the Titanic buoyant.

A dusky delight.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

7

Patterns Waking Lines

Melodic



Initially breaking through in late 2011 with melancholic

single 'Induction', Patterns could easily have pulled the trigger early on their debut, especially after fellow Mancunians Money and Pins surged past them last year. Holding off has served them well, though. Late-night hallucinations and dreamlike states are achieved by combining sounds that hark back to Cocteau Twins with the more chillwave-y transatlantic influences of, say, Youth Lagoon on the likes of 'Our Ego'. The four-piece are equally handy at brain-lodging indie pop ('Blood') and full-blown experimental Animal Collectivisms ('Wrong Two Words'). Patterns had drifted into the background, but 'Waking Lines' should change that.

■ SIMON JAY CATLING

8



September Girls Cursing The Sea

Dubliners' debut mixes Mary Chain

fuzz with Ramones spirit

► The debut album by Dublin's September Girls arrives in the wake of six singles in less than two years. It's a work rate that harks back to a bygone era of independent music – as does their dark-hearted, harmonic fuzz-rock. Their sound, at the nexus between '60s girl groups, '70s buzzsaw punk chug and '80s indie-pop naivety, has been a popular one in the past half-decade, but it's been nearly three years since the last album by Vivian Girls, and this is a more than adequate stand-in. Caoimhe Derwin and Jessie Ward's guitars have perfected that Mary Chain kettle-whistle sound, lending



a haunted air to energetic stomps like 'Heartbeats' and 'Talking'. 'Money' and 'Someone New' provide a victorious one-two punch, bursting with the spirit of the Ramones circa 'End Of The Century'.

■ NOEL GARDNER

7

► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** January 6 ► **LABEL** Fortuna Pop! ► **PRODUCER** September Girls ► **LENGTH** 37:41 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Cursing The Sea ►2. Another Love Song ►3. Left Behind ►4. Heartbeats ►5. Green Eyed ►6. Ships ►7. Talking ►8. Daylight ►9. Money ►10. Something New ►11. Secret Lovers ►12. Sister

Happyness Happyness EP

Weird Smiling



'Charming' is a word you'll hear a lot in conjunction with south

London trio Happyness, who write the sort of woozy and almost exclusively American-influenced college rock that brims with the bravado and naivety of youth. This is demonstrated

most vividly by the lyrics on 'It's On You': ("I'm an anarchist, communist, feminist, phlebotomist... yeah, right"). They have musical talent to go with the charm, from the depressed surf-rock twang of 'Lascascadas' to the country-rock lushness of 'Orange Luz'. It all amounts to something deliberately slight and timorous, but lovely nonetheless.

■ BARRY NICOLSON

7



NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK

20

Haim

HMV Forum

London

Dec 10



Haim end an epic year
with their biggest
ever UK show and
a stage invasion
from Florence Welch

It's two days since the Twitter beef that shook the indie world to its very core: the incendiary moment when Gareth from Los Campesinos! shared a photo of himself flicking a V-sign at the Manchester venue Haim were playing across the road from his own band. Sharp as a freshly stropped Victorian flick-knife, Haim posted a pic back that featured every single person in the crowd at their sold-out Ritz show swearing right back at him. Unsurprisingly, by the time Haim take to the stage for the second of two jam-packed nights at the Forum, the spat is well and truly forgotten. ➡

Reviews LIVE

This week there are bigger things happening than an online band tiff. It's not the shiny gold records that are presented to the group after tonight's gig for selling 100,000 copies of 'Days Are Gone' in the UK; it's not even when Florence Welch whirls onstage in a Haim shirt before gleefully flinging herself into the crowd, with Este Haim in hot pursuit. No, the moment that cements Haim's status as one of the most adored bands in the world right now takes place roughly 20 seconds before they rush out from the wings, when a deafening wall of screams and thunderous foot-stomping greets the flashing stage lights starting to throb on and off. When inanimate stage fixtures get such a euphoric welcome, you know you're playing in the big league.

The past 12 months have all been building up to this epic evening. From supporting their crowdsurfing chum Flo on her arena tour at the end of 2012, to winning the BBC's Sound Of 2013, via slaying Glastonbury and every other festival they graced over the summer (of which there were plenty), Haim's rise to the top has been swift and hectic but always graceful. Tonight is a near-perfect encapsulation of the Haim whirlwind, one which more than justifies the endless hype showered on the trio since they burst out of the local Los Angeles scene.

It might be freezing outside, with a dramatic Jack The Ripper mist descending on the capital, but Alana Haim will not be parted from her California hotpants, striding out with her sisters to slice through the cheers with 'Falling'. As glossy as a conditioner advert, the song's rockier leanings are ditched in favour of celebrating its brilliance as a pop song. It's followed by the glam shimmy of 'The Wire',

MAYBE THE PRESENCE OF THEIR PARENTS IS THE REASON ESTE SEEMS TO HAVE TONED DOWN HER BAWDY BANTER FOR THE NIGHT

a song almost unrecognisable from its former heavy self. The shrieks that greet Alana and Este's verses after Danielle gets the ball rolling prove that this is a band whose cogs are oiled as much by personality as licks. They're as accomplished at chit-chat as they are actual songs, announcing tonight's presence of their old bandmates, Momma and Papa Haim, who've flown in especially to surprise their daughters. "If you see them, say hi," says Alana, beaming. "My mom'll probably be crying." Maybe the presence of their parents is the reason Este seems to have toned down her bawdy banter for the night. Failing to proposition anyone in the crowd, she instead offers a simple "Give it to me, London" before their cover of Fleetwood Mac's 'Oh Well'. The windmilling, headbanging and gurning throughout shows they can still rock the fuck out when they feel like it. It's also the only reasonable excuse for Danielle's leather waistcoat.

The grimy hustle of 'My Song 5' – which has more in common with Kanye West's 'Can't Tell Me Nothing' than classic Brit blues-rock – sees

the venue bathed in sultry red light, and 'If I Could Change Your Mind' amps things up to great heights with its synth-driven majesty. Following Danielle's touching speech about last playing the Forum almost four years ago as part of Julian Casablancas' backing band, the emotions come thick and fast. There's a brilliantly mushy 'Running If You Call My Name' and the glorious 'Forever' ignites a venue-wide dance party that's like the final scene of a John Hughes movie, all swishing hair, sticky lip gloss and teen spirit. Haim have bowed out of 2013 with a bang. 2014 should be even more explosive. ■ LEONIE COOPER



SETLIST

FALLING

THE WIRE

OH WELL

HONEY AND I

GO SLOW

MY SONG 5

DON'T SAVE ME

IF I COULD
CHANGE YOUR
MIND

FOREVER

How good?

10
2



THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Georgie Bane, 18, Dartford
 “My Song 5’ was great – it’s just so edgy. I love the drums and the guitar solo and Este’s bass face! It was beyond amazing.”



Molly Mansfield, 17, Bexleyheath
 “They’re the best live act I’ve seen

this year. In October I saw MGMT here and Haim were so much better. I like the rockier stuff as it shows they’re not just a little indie girl band. They’re not as innocent as they come across.”



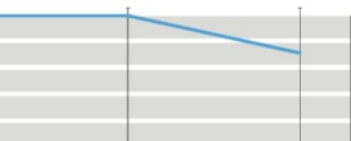
Sean Gillespie, 25, London
 “The bassist is most into the music – she’s not playing to the crowd like Alana, who was flirting with me a little bit. My mate thought it was him, but it was me.”



Ramsey Hassan, 28, Battersea
 “They’re the heaviest, poppiest live band you can get. It was great when Florence and Este stagedived! This is my 13th Haim gig – they know me! I dressed up as Chrismukkah for them, with a dreidel and a menorah!”

RUNNING IF YOU
CALL MY NAME

LET ME GO



MORE GIGS

Darlia

Cockpit 3, Leeds

Wednesday, December 11
 Someone get these guys a bigger venue. The Blackpool-formed, now Manchester-based trio make a hell of a racket with their spiteful grunge-pop, and they’re crazy loud in the confines of this tiny room. Nathan Day’s gruff vocals are frequently drowned out by his own slamming guitars, and he sounds like the Cookie Monster as he fights to be heard on single ‘Queen Of Hearts’. But within their wickedly titled tunes (‘Napalm’, ‘Choke On Bones’, ‘Blood Money’, all from the recent ‘Knock Knock’ EP), you can still hear the blend of softly sung verses and huge hooks that have got them all those Mudhoney and Nirvana comparisons. Expect more noise in 2014.

■ SIMON BUTCHER

Royal Blood

Bermuda Triangle, Brighton

Friday, December 13
 Royal Blood started the year as one of the more promising groups in a burgeoning Brighton scuzz-rock scene. They end it with a BBC Sound Of 2014 nomination, a support slot at Arctic Monkeys’ Finsbury Park shows next year and, finally, this first hometown headline show. The pair’s overpowering bass and drums soon see the tunnel-shaped Bermuda Triangle morph into the Large Hadron Collider, sucking the roar of the crowd into the vortex. Reversing the ‘Seven Nation Army’ trick, Mike Kerr’s bass spits out electric-guitar riffs. From the nagging opener ‘Hole’ to Ben Thatcher’s final snare attack on ‘Out Of The Black’, Royal Blood bust ears but win hearts.

■ STUART HUGGETT

7

8

Kurt Vile & The Violators



Brudnell Social Club, Leeds Friday, December 13

An evening of outsider anthems from the charismatic Philadelphian

Forty-five minutes after his scheduled start time, Kurt Vile walks onto the stage. A wry grin on his face takes the place of an apology. Acknowledging his tardiness, he introduces first tune ‘Wakin On A Pretty Day’ by drawling “aaaand this next song...” with a chuckle. After all, this is not a man who has built a reputation based on punctuality or precision timing. On the face of it, there is nothing remarkable about this 33-year-old from Philadelphia or his band, the Violators. This isn’t the first time a scruffy guy has

hidden behind the weight of his own hair and hunched over a guitar, and it won’t be the last. Yet, as he shifts the focus of his attention from the fretboard to the audience before him, Vile’s quiet charisma spreads warmth about the room. It’s this charisma that sets him apart.

The opening chords of ‘Jesus Fever’ prompt a huge cheer, and the gentle melody of ‘Girl

Called Alex’ creates the night’s first fingers-held-aloft moment as hundreds of people show their appreciation for the story Vile is telling. Such adulation, though, is nothing compared to the enthralled silence that befalls the room as the band leave the stage and Kurt plays ‘Peeping Tomboy’ alone. Each note plucked on his guitar rings out cleanly through the air, and the absence of the Violators allows his voice to pierce the collective psyche of the room. Vile treads softly through his gentle outsiders’ anthem, aware of the allure of his devil-may-care attitude. Followed by an equally endearing rendition of ‘Feel My Pain,’ these solo numbers provide the emotional highlights of the night.

The band return for ‘Was All Talk’. With the Violators having broken the trance, the crowd remember it’s a Friday night and start to dance. “*Making music is easy/Watch me*”, Kurt sings, and the room is saturated with polite devotion. “Ridiculous groove, Kurt,” shouts a fan as the song draws to a close. It’s as close as anyone will get to articulating their respect. The grin with which he first greeted us tonight is still on his face. He’s the most confident slacker of them all. ■ HAYLEY AVRON

SETLIST

- ▶ Wakin On A Pretty Day
- ▶ KV Crimes
- ▶ On Tour
- ▶ Jesus Fever
- ▶ Girl Called Alex
- ▶ Goldtone
- ▶ Peeping Tomboy
- ▶ Feel My Pain
- ▶ Was All Talk
- ▶ Hunchback
- ▶ Freak Train
- ▶ Freeway
- ▶ Runner Ups

23

8

DANNY PAYNE

Primal Scream

SECC, Glasgow

Saturday, December 14

A potent hometown show from
a band with fire in their belly again

Over the course of their 30-year career, Primal Scream have persisted through countless ebbs and flows in fashion, more line-ups than a police station wall and decades of pharmaceutical excess. They've been paisley-shirted indie janglers, sneering garage-punk revivalists, acid-house pioneers, Southern-rock boogiemens, industrial iconoclasts and resilient electro-agitators. They are one of the most restless and adaptable bands Britain has ever produced. One thing they've never been, however, is reliable: by Bobby Gillespie's own admission, the Scream were a perpetual 'cup team' in the live arena, as capable of skying it over from five yards out as they were of lashing it home from outside the box.

As anyone who has followed their progress this year will know, that seems to have changed of late. Tonight's sprawling, two-hour-plus set tips its hat to most of the guises this band have worn over the years, but more importantly, it serves to underline how, even with three members on the wrong side of 50, they are as potent, powerful and consistent a live force as they've ever been. Gillespie swearing off drink and drugs has probably played its part in that, but so has this year's 'More Light' album, a record whose dual sense of adventure and indignation almost sounds like a microcosm of their entire 10-album discography. They play eight songs

**GILLESPIE IS MOVED
TO REMARK, "THAT'S
FUCKEN BEAUTIFUL"**



from it tonight, ranging from the cluttered space-rock freakout of '2013' to the sparse, gospel-hued country-blues of 'Walking With The Beast' via the polemical funk of 'Culturecide' and a handful of other, equally improbable tangents. While some inevitably work better than others ('River Of Pain', for example, is perhaps a little too difficult and demanding for a room of this size), the diversity of ideas – particularly from a group whose place in the indie firmament is well assured – is nonetheless impressive.

So too is their ability to make old rock'n'roll clichés work for rather than against them. Case in point: Primal Scream are probably the only band on Earth in which a fiftysomething bloke in leather trousers can machine-gun the front rows with his guitar and look good doing it (in fairness to Andrew Innes, he does this on 'Shoot Speed/Kill Light', a song it's all too easy to get carried away by).

Similarly, were he anyone other than Bobby Gillespie, the average Glasgow audience wouldn't stand for the Americanised yelps of "Get down, baby! C'mon!" that come at the end of 'Jailbird' – but because it's him, they simply do as they're told. At a couple of points this evening ('It's Alright, It's OK' and 'Country Girl'), the band are more or less riffing on themselves riffing on the

Stones, and still it sounds absolutely sublime.

As 'I'm Losing More Than I'll Ever Have' segues neatly into 'Loaded', a closing medley of tracks from 'Screamadelica' is the audience's reward for sticking with them through some of the newer numbers. When they start chanting the familiar horn refrain that bridges both songs, Gillespie is moved to remark (this time in his broadest Glaswegian), "That's beautiful, that's fucken beautiful." It's hard to argue with the sentiment, but 'Come Together' somehow betters it, reaching an apogee of indie-dance transcendence that almost – but not quite – negates the need for 'Movin' On Up' to bring proceedings to a close.

On their day, Primal Scream have long been a match for any band. Now they're well into middle age, the fire in their belly stoked by "the Tory scum running the country" and a say-nothing generation of would-be usurpers, that day is occurring with more and more regularity. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

► NME and Windows Phone shot exclusive behind-the-scenes footage on Primal Scream's tour with the Nokia Lumia 1020. Head to NME.com/lumia1020 to enjoy a short film as well as the best moments from the gigs



SETLIST

2013 HIT VOID JAILBIRD SHOOT SPEED ACCELERATOR CULTURECIDE RIVER OF PAIN WALKING WITH THE BEAST GOODBYE JOHNNY TURN EACH OTHER INSIDE OUT AUTOBAHN 66 IT'S ALRIGHT, IT'S OK SWASTIKA EYES COUNTRY GIRL ROCKS

How good?

10
2



THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Jack Jones, 20,
London

"They were fantastic. I've been a fan of the band for a while and I've really enjoyed the way their music has developed over the years. Obviously it's great to see them at a homecoming gig, too!"



Louise Gerard, 20,
Crieff

"I didn't know too many of the songs – just the big ones really – but I thought the gig was great. 'Movin' On Up' at the end was a pretty special moment – that was definitely the highlight."



Paul Band, 18, Bo'ness

"It was smashing and Bobby G is just an absolute legend. Best bit? Has to be 'Swastika Eyes'. *XTRMNTR* is my favourite album of theirs."



Shaun Rafferty, 19,
Edinburgh

"I saw them supporting The Stone Roses at Glasgow Green this summer, but they topped that tonight. They played for over two hours, played a lot off the new album – which is quality – and they played a lot of the classics as well. They're one of the best live bands of the last 20 years."

Wooden Shjips Brudenell Social Club, Leeds

Wednesday, December 11
Ripley Johnson's vocals are so soft tonight they sound like they're melting into the bold psychedelic drone of Wooden Shjips' music. There is no conversation between the San Francisco act and their audience, just the polite trade of applause for the heavy blanket of melody and noise emanating from a stage bathed in kaleidoscopic lights. Moments like the fierce and rotund bassline of 'Ruins,' from new album 'Back To Land,' has the crowd bobbing communally. At times though, the Shjips' persistently static sound makes for an alienating experience, as though the band are trapped inside a broken TV set, just out of reach.

■ HAYLEY AVRON

7

Factory Floor Kazimier, Liverpool

Thursday, December 5
With tracks such as the slow-building 'Two Different Ways' and the thrilling thrum of 'Fall Back,' tonight Factory Floor excel in working the Kazimier crowd into line after line of automated dancers. The volume of the trio's heavily industrial sound is wrunched up to preposterous levels, often with spine-shivering effectiveness. The performance is occasionally indulgent, and Dominic Butler is especially capable of losing himself for five minutes when deeply involved with his synth lines. But the incessant rhythm that permeated the band's excellent self-titled debut album is present, and ensures this is joyous stuff from the most solemn of dance acts.

■ JAMIE CROSSAN

7

The Pogues



02 Apollo, Manchester
Sunday, December 15

A run through 'Rum, Sodomy And The Lash' from the ultimate everyman's band

▶ Bandmates have to lead him on and off stage, it's impossible to work out what he's saying between songs, and he's got a monitor screen to read his lyrics from – but when The Pogues' frontman Shane MacGowan opens up that gullet and sings, he commands a respect like

no other. Football-style "There's only one Shane MacGowan" chants ring out as the shock-haired, sunglasses-wearing singer throatily brings rampant opener 'The Sick Bed Of Cúchulainn' to a close, and there's no let-up from either him or the sell-out audience thereafter. A sea of bodies crashes like waves on the front barrier below their talisman, security running to and fro to quell the flood.

Tonight's run-through of 1985's seminal 'Rum, Sodomy And The Lash' is missing the record's departed bassist Cait O'Riordan and, sadly, guitarist Philip Chevron, who died two months ago. Those that remain do both musicians justice, and cover every inch of the stage in an energetic frenzy that belies their ageing limbs. The set is expansive – with up to 11 musicians and everything from dulcimers,

accordions and banjos onstage at various points – but maintains much of 'Rum...'s punk fire. With MacGowan in hearteningly good voice, the record's mix of traditional, borrowed and self-penned Irish folk tales loses none of its sharpness. 'Dirty Old Town', with its depiction of 1940s Salford, is rapturously received, while MacGowan's caustic tone transforms 'And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda' to characterise the raw sentiment within the story about an itinerant worker committing suicide to avoid charges of sheep theft.

When the frontman takes a break to smoke (mostly onstage, sometimes on), vocal duties are handed to Camille O'Sullivan and the exuberant Spider Stacy, who switches from tin whistle to sing, among other songs, a raucous rendition of classic folk song 'Jesse James'. Later, 'Thousands Are Sailing' is a fitting and earnestly delivered tribute to Chevron, and the early chants return – a crowd who've drunk the bars dry now hailing the late guitarist. It's apt, then, that boozers' anthem 'Boys From The County Hell' kicks off a three-song encore that includes 'Fairytale Of New York', O'Sullivan returning to join MacGowan for the embittered duet turned cherished Christmas favourite. The pair waltz together during its finale and thousands follow suit in a moment of gleeful unity. That's The Pogues: a group whose stories, whether borrowed or owned, will always connect. They are the ultimate everyman's band.

■ SIMON JAY CATLING

SETLIST

- ▶ The Sick Bed Of Cúchulainn
- ▶ The Old Main Drag
- ▶ Wild Cats Of Kilkenny
- ▶ I'm A Man You Don't Meet Every Day
 - ▶ A Pair Of Brown Eyes
- ▶ Sally MacLennane
- ▶ Dirty Old Town
 - ▶ Jesse James
 - ▶ Navigator
 - ▶ Billy's Bones
- ▶ The Gentleman Soldier
 - ▶ And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda
 - ▶ Streams Of Whiskey
 - ▶ Body Of An American
 - ▶ Thousands Are Sailing
 - ▶ Repeal The Licensing Laws
- ▶ Rainy Night In Soho
- ▶ The Irish Rover
 - ▶ Boys From County Hell
 - ▶ Fairytale Of New York
 - ▶ Fiesta

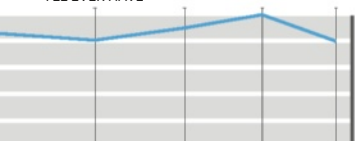
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I'M LOSING MORE THAN I'LL EVER HAVE

LOADED

COME TOGETHER

MOVIN' ON UP



25

8

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WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY
LONDON
SEBRIGHT ARMS

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THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY
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ONLY REAL

PLUS GUESTS
FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY
LONDON
THE LEXINGTON

PARQUET COURTS

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SUNDAY 16 FEBRUARY
LONDON
ELECTRIC BALLROOM

SWIM DEEP

PLUS GUESTS
MONDAY 17 FEBRUARY
LONDON
KOKO

Speedy Ortiz

EMPTY POOLS
TUESDAY 18 FEBRUARY
LONDON
BIRTHDAYS

WARPAINT

ALL WE ARE
TUESDAY 18 FEBRUARY
LONDON
KOKO

SUPERFOOD

PLUS GUESTS
WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY
LONDON
OSLO

CHILDHOOD

PLUS GUESTS
WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY
LONDON
ELECTROWERKZ

AU REVOIR SIMONE

MARIAM THE BELIEVER + THE RANGE
THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY
LONDON
THE GARAGE

DRENCE

THE WYTTCHES + TRAAMS
THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY
LONDON
SCALA

EYEDRESS

PLUS GUESTS
FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY
LONDON
SEBRIGHT ARMS

RADKEY

PLUS GUESTS
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NME Guide

► GOING OUT. STAYING IN. MISSING NOTHING ■ EDITED BY RHIAN DALY



BOOKING NOW

The hottest new tickets on sale this week

Fat White Family

Their demonic, snarling live show was one of the highlights of last year's Monster NME Radar tour, and south London's sleaziest will be heading out on their own Tour Of Struggle next year. Prepare to feel grossed out, offended and uncomfortable.

► **DATES** Brighton The Hope (February 14), Bedford Esquires (15), Oxford The Art Bar (16), Sheffield Harley (17), Manchester The Castle (18), Leeds Belgrave Music Hall (19), Stockton Georgian Theatre (20), Glasgow Broadcast (21), Birmingham Sunflower Lounge (22), Bristol Start The Bus (23), Nottingham Bodega (24), London Electrowerkz (25)

► **SUPPORT ACTS** Claw Marks, Phobophobes
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► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with 65p-£1 booking fee

Banks

Loved by The Weeknd and Katy Perry (whom Jillian

Banks can count among her 20,000+ Twitter followers), this 25-year-old LA singer hits the UK in March to build on the hype that's followed her recent EP 'London'.

► **DATES** Bristol Trinity Centre (March 20), Birmingham Library (21), Glasgow O2 ABC (23), Sheffield Leadmill (24), Manchester RNCM (26), Oxford O2 Academy 2 (28), Brighton Concorde 2 (29), London KOKO (31)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
► **PRICE** £11; London £14
► **ON SALE** now
► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2.75 booking fee

Childish Gambino

Donald Glover's second album under his rap alias is full of the actor-turned-musician's wit and honest takes on his life. He'll bring this raw and humorous mix to the stage in February at three special dates.

► **DATES** London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire (February 4), Manchester Gorilla (5), London KOKO (6)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
► **PRICE** Manchester £12.50; London £15
► **ON SALE** now
► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.50-£1.88 booking fee

Miles Kane

The Liverpool mod ended last year with two intimate dates in his hometown at the tiny Eric's venue.

GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

Todd Terje

Corsica Studios, London
The DJ shakes off the NYE hangover alongside live special guests.
► January 1, 11pm

Young Kato

Band On The Wall, Manchester
Rising Cheltenham sextet bring their sugary indie pop.
► January 3, 9pm

Swim Deep

Academy, Manchester
The Birmingham quartet support The 1975 in Manchester.
► January 6, 7pm

Let's Wrestle

The Lexington, London
The indie group preview tracks from their self-titled new album.
► January 7, 7.30pm

The Bohicas

Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen, London
NME Radar Tour alumni hit east London.
► January 7, 8pm



See Swim Deep support The 1975 in Manchester on January 6



Miles Kane

This year he's warming up for supporting his pals Arctic Monkeys at their mammoth Finsbury Park shows in May by running through his latest album 'Don't Forget Who You Are'.

► **DATES** Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall (March 14), Blackpool Winter Gardens (15), Warrington Parr Hall (17), Buckley Tivoli (18), York Barbican Centre (19), Edinburgh Picture House (21), Lincoln Engine Shed (22), Coventry Kasbah (23), Cardiff Solus (25), Brighton Concorde 2 (26), Leicester O2 Academy (28), Liverpool Olympia (29), Cambridge Junction (30), Belfast Limelight (April 2)
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Fanfarlo

On third album 'Let's Go Extinct', London-based Fanfarlo promise a concept record full of well-crafted pop songs about human evolution. Cathy Lucas, Justin Finch, Leon Beckenham and Simon Balthazar will tour the record in February.

► **DATES** Glasgow Broadcast (February 8), Manchester Deaf Institute (9), London Village Underground (11), Brighton Green Door Store (12)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £8; Manchester £9; London £12.50
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with 90p–£1.25 booking fee; Glasgow from ticketweb.co.uk with £1 booking fee



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STAYING IN

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Joni Mitchell

A Woman Of Heart And Mind

Over her 30-year career, legendary Canadian musician Joni Mitchell has dabbled in folk, jazz, painting and poetry. *A Woman Of Heart And Mind* tells her story, and features interviews with the woman herself as well as contributions from Bob Dylan, David Crosby and Graham Nash.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 8.30am, Jan 6

Diplo

Diplo And Friends

The man behind Major Lazer will jump onto Radio 1 in the early hours of New Year's Day to present a two-hour mix of tracks from his collection.

► **LISTEN** BBC Radio 1, 2am, Jan 1

Iggy Pop

Iggy Pop's Radio Show

The Stooges leader pops into the 6Music studio on New Year's Day to present the second of two festive programmes. This time, Iggy celebrates the beginning of 2014 with two hours of songs about heartbreak and heartache.

He's promised to play grief-ridden tunes from Billie Holiday and Frank Sinatra, among others.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 1pm, Jan 1

Mike Joyce

Mary Anne Hobbs

As the drummer in The Smiths, Mike Joyce provided the rhythm and spine to Morrissey and Johnny Marr's flair. Here he talks to Mary Anne Hobbs about those years and the art of keeping a beat.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7am, Jan 4



Albert Hammond Jr

Albert Hammond Jr

Liz Kershaw

Five years after the release of his last solo record, The Strokes guitarist returned last year with the sunny garage rock of the 'AHJ' EP. The time in between those records saw him both struggle with drug addiction, and rejoin his main band for their latest album 'Comedown Machine'. He'll chat about all of this and more with Liz Kershaw.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 1pm, Jan 4

Anna Calvi

Mary Anne Hobbs

In 2013, Anna Calvi built on the dark, baroque pop of her debut album with the follow-up 'One Breath', a record full of anxiety and melancholy. The softly spoken singer opens up about her career in this new interview.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7am, Jan 5

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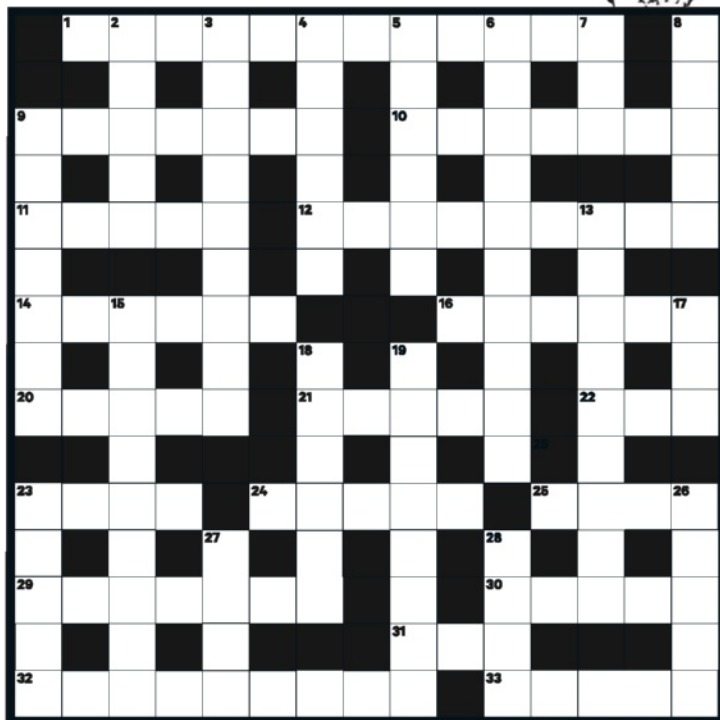
THINK TANK

NME CROSSWORD

Compiled by
TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1** Brendan Benson, Raconteur, tells us in his own words... or in other words, 'I was wrong' (3-4-5)
9 "We can go to Deptford, Catford, _____, Digbeth, Mansfield/Ah, anywhere in Albion", Babyshambles (7)
10+11A ELO's differed in a strange way from album by These New Puritans (5-2-5)
12 A secretly reformed band that had 1998 hit with 'Morning Afterglow' (9)
14 Maintain a firm grasp as Alabama Shakes (4-2)
16 Dutch Uncles' vocalist from Cornwall Island, Canada (6)
20 Conny _____, producer whose credits include Kraftwerk's 'Autobahn' and Ultravox's 'Vienna' (5)
21 At last it's Wham!'s album 'The _____' (5)
22 "This is the _____, beautiful friend/This is the _____, my only friend", The Doors (3)
23 "_____ Will Fade", album by Charlotte Hatherley (4)

- 24** (See 2 down)
25 "Control yourself, take only what you need from it", 2008 (4)
29 Londoners who ventured 'Beyond The Neighbourhood' (7)
30 "I pack my case, I check my face/I look a little bit _____", from The Killers' 'For Reasons Unknown' (5)
31 As the Stock Aitken Waterman songwriting and production team were often known (1-1-1)
32 Rock metal turned out from The Enemy (3-6)
33 Rapper who talks in 'Country Grammar' (5)

CLUES DOWN

- 2+24A** "You can put some joy upon my face/Oh sunshine in an empty place", 2013 (2-3-5)
3 Its opening act was Richie Havens and closing act Jimi Hendrix (9)
4 Dr Kaye takes wrong view of US hardcore trio (6)
5 Essex lads now on their fourth album, but still 'None The Wiser' (6)
6+18D "You shake my nerves and you rattle my brain/Too much love drives a man insane", 1957 (5-5-2-4)

- 7** Seattle grunge band make an appearance in Wembley Stadium (3)
8 Her second album went on 'Endlessly' (5)
9 A Place To Bury Strangers with music to pray to (7)
15+13D Ride's best-selling single will be far ahead of every other one (5-4-3-6)
17 "Hey Jude, don't make it bad/Take a _____ song and make it better" (3)
18 (See 6 down)
19+28D "Well, I never should have settled down/Hanging around in a _____", 2003 (3-5-4)
23 Allow the name of John _____ to be associated with 'Pale Green Ghosts' (5)
26 A domestic animal that's wandered away from Wild Beasts (5)
27 Did business at times with Pixies (4)
28 (See 19 down)

NOVEMBER 23 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1+36A What Doesn't Kill You, 8+9A Pearl Jam, 10+5D Magic Numbers, 12 Revelry, 13 Emerson, 15 GBH, 17 Husbands, 20 Real, 21 USA, 23 WOE, 24 Nancy Sinatra, 26 LA, 27 EP, 29 Rakes, 33 Annie, 34 Older, 37 Graceless, 38 Diary
DOWN 1 Wipers, 2 Alan Vega, 3 Delilah, 4 Enjoy The Silence, 6 Kim, 7 Logos, 11+19D Can't See Me, 14 Run Away, 16+28D Bloc Party, 18 Beat, 20 Ring Ring, 22 Ana, 25 Nikita, 30+21D Save Us, 31 Keys, 32 Loud, 35 DNA

Normal NME terms and conditions apply, available at NME.COM/terms. Cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, January 14, 2014, to: Crossword, NME, 9th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.

QUIZ

Compiled by ALAN WOODHOUSE (answers on page 67)

1 Which member of Coldplay is Scottish?

2 Which '90s band's singer was Tommy Scott?

3 Which singing legend missed an open goal during the opening ceremony of the 1994 World Cup in the USA?

4 What is the only Blur single featuring lead vocals by Graham Coxon?

5 The Killers take their name from a fictional band in a New Order video – for which single?



6 The band who became Doves had a UK Top Three hit in

1993 as Sub Sub (featuring singer Melanie Williams). What is the name of the song?

7 Which band's final album was to be called 'Release The Drones', but they split in 2010 before it could be completed?

8 Which Sonic Youth album was produced by Butch Vig?

9 Sophie Ellis-Bextor is married to the bassist from which band?

10 Whose 2013 biography was called *Bedsit Disco Queen*?

11 Hollywood soundtrack composer Clint Mansell was

formerly the singer in which British band?

12 Which is the only Beatles single on which none of the band play instruments?

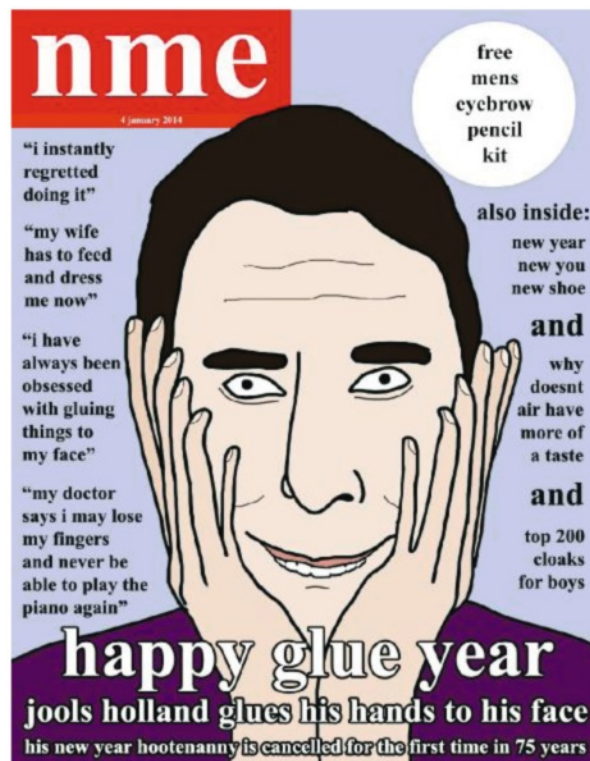
13 'Bohemian Rhapsody's successor at Number One in the UK is mentioned in the Queen song's lyrics. Name it.

14 Which UK band were originally known as Composition Of Sound?

15 What are the names of the two Bob Dylan documentaries shot while he was on tour in the UK in the mid-'60s?

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BANNED!

The album artwork they **didn't** want you to see



Bat For Lashes

The Haunted Man 2012

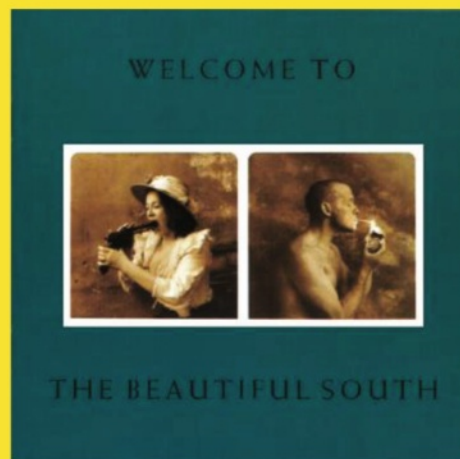
Banned for: Nude fireman's lift



Beady Eye

Be 2013

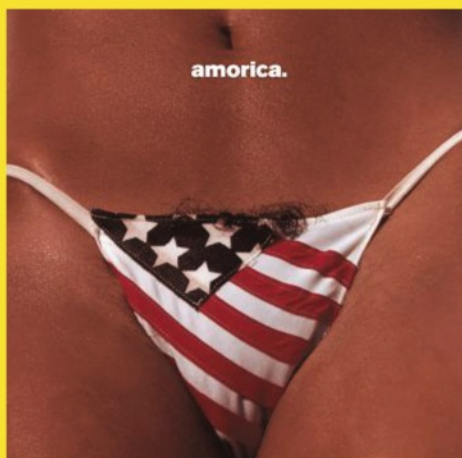
Banned for: "Classic '60s nipple" (Liam)



The Beautiful South Welcome

To The Beautiful South 1989

Banned for: Guns'n'smoking



Black Crowes

Amorica 1994

Banned for: Pubic profusion



Blur

She's So High/I Know 1990

Banned for: Naked hippo riding



Chumbawamba

Anarchy 1994

Banned for: Grumpy childbirth



Crystal Castles

Alice Practice EP 2006

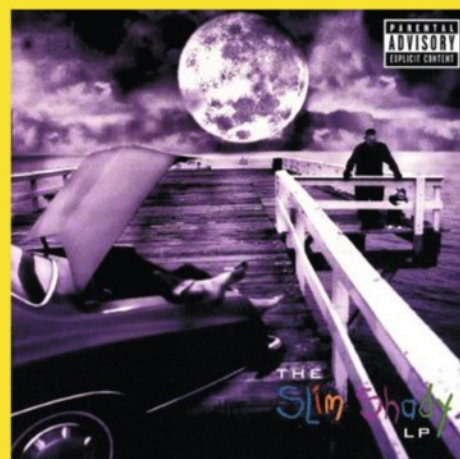
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David Bowie

Diamond Dogs 1974

Banned for: Dog genitals, on the back cover

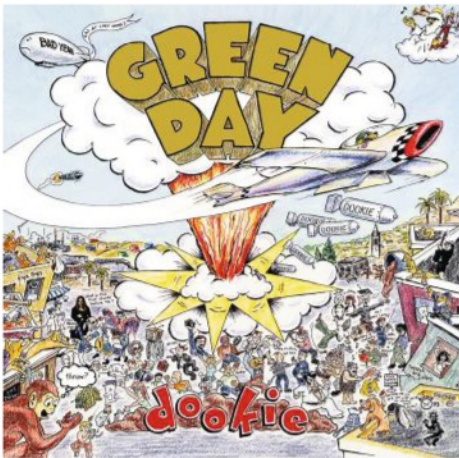


Eminem

The Slim Shady LP 1999

Banned for: Suggestion of murder

The album artwork



Green Day

Dookie 1994

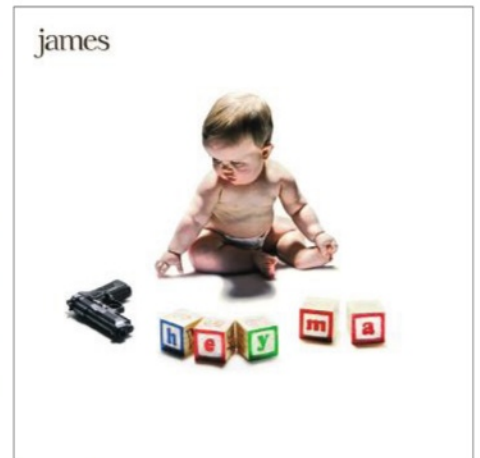
Banned for: Violence



Guns N' Roses

Appetite For Destruction 1989

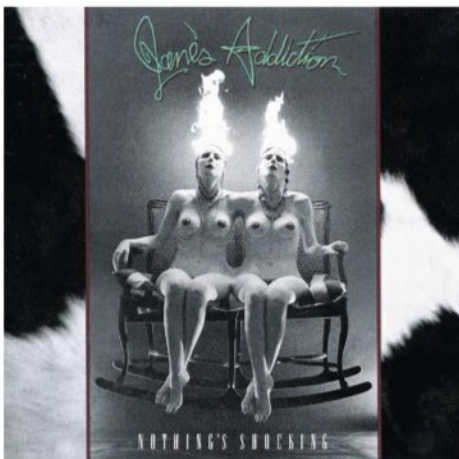
Banned for: Suggestion of robot rape



James

Hey Ma 2008

Banned for: Young guns



Jane's Addiction

Nothing's Shocking 1988

Banned for: Naked, burning twins



Jane's Addiction

Ritual de Lo Habitual 1990

Banned for: Arty threesome



Kanye West My Beautiful

Dark Twisted Fantasy 2010

Banned for: Racy painting

BANNED!

they **didn't** want you to see



Manic Street Preachers

Journal For Plague Lovers 2009

Banned for: Suggestion of violence



Marilyn Manson

Holy Wood 2000

Banned for: Crucifixion



Michael Jackson

Ben 1972

Banned for: Killer rats



The Mothers Of Invention

We're Only In It For The Money 1968

Banned for: Ripping off The Beatles



Nirvana

In Utero 1993

Banned for: Skinless angel



Nirvana

Nevermind 1991

Banned for: Baby nudity



Prince

LoveSexy 1988

Banned for: Nude Prince



Red Hot Chili Peppers

Mother's Milk 1989

Banned for: Near-nudity



Roxy Music

Country Life 1974

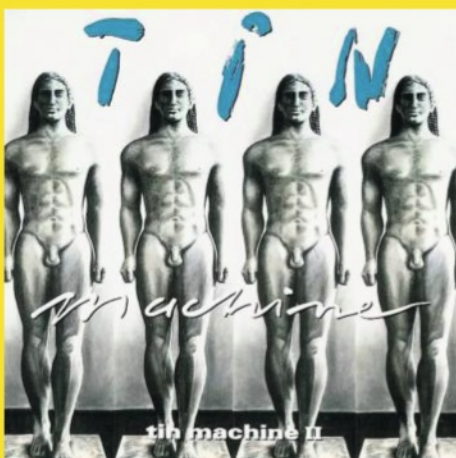
Banned for: Nudity



Tenacious D

Tenacious D 2001

Banned for: Satanism



Tin Machine

Tin Machine II 1991

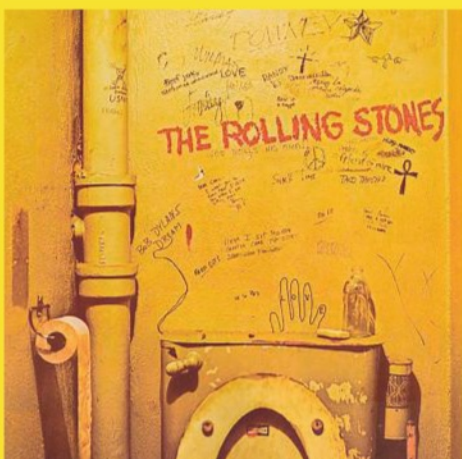
Banned for: Statue junk



The Coup

Party Music 2001

Banned for: Predicting 9/11 three months early



The Rolling Stones

Beggars Banquet 1968

Banned for: Lavatorial graffiti



The Strokes

Is This It 2001

Banned for: S&M-tinged nudity



Pink Floyd

Wish You Were Here 1975

Banned for: Burning man

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Holly Johnson and
Paul Rutherford,
London, 1984



Thirty years ago this week, the BBC banned 'Relax' by Frankie Goes To Hollywood live on air. The result: it became a massive pop sensation. As we look back at the most controversial music, tours and videos ever, Mark Beaumont meets one of the men who flung the filth at our pop kids

MAIN PHOTO: ANTON CORBIJN



BANNED!

The most provocative pop song ever



The morning of Wednesday, January 11, 1984, and BBC Radio 1 DJ Mike Read's weekly chart run-down show was going *wholesomely*. Reaching Number Six, he dropped the needle on the record, lifted his Radio 1 mug of steaming coffee and leant back into his swivel chair to take the song's advice. Ah yes, *relax*.

Then he picked up the sleeve of the record he was playing. Double take. A man in what could only be described as a leather loincloth was hoisting a flame-haired lady onto his back, and she was wearing what appeared to be a nipple-emphasising leather basque affair, black boots up to her doo-dah and absolutely no form of underpantage at all. The sleeve also featured some of the song's lyrics, and Mike started reading along. "*Relax, don't do it/When you want to go to it/Relax, don't do it/When you want to come*".

A penny dropped. This wasn't about grabbing a spot of well-earned 'me time' at all. This was about the sort of depraved, repugnant bondage 'action' that literally nobody in the 'normal', wholesome music industry ever got up to, as he was probably saying to George Michael, Freddie Mercury and that lovely girl from Culture Club just the day before. The moral indignation of a nation rose in his gullet. He pictured crushed, exploding pile-ups of school-run parents careering off the road in pure disgust. He leapt for the needle.

SCRAAAATCH!

"I've just taken a look at the cover," he said to his listening public, like a horn-rimmed Henry V making his death-or-glory stand against this deviant disco poison for closed-minded prudes everywhere. "I think it's obscene. This record is absolutely obscene. I'm not going to play this, you know. No, I'm sure I'm not going to play this, thank you and goodbye."

"The ban greatly enhanced our reputation"

Holly Johnson

Take that, Mike
Read: Holly
and Paul,
October 1982

At least that's the accepted story of how Mike Read inadvertently sparked a cultural revolution by banning Frankie Goes To Hollywood's 'Relax' live on air, instantly making the band a pop phenomenon – the thinking clubber's Sex Pistols – and thrusting the 1980s towards a groundswell culture

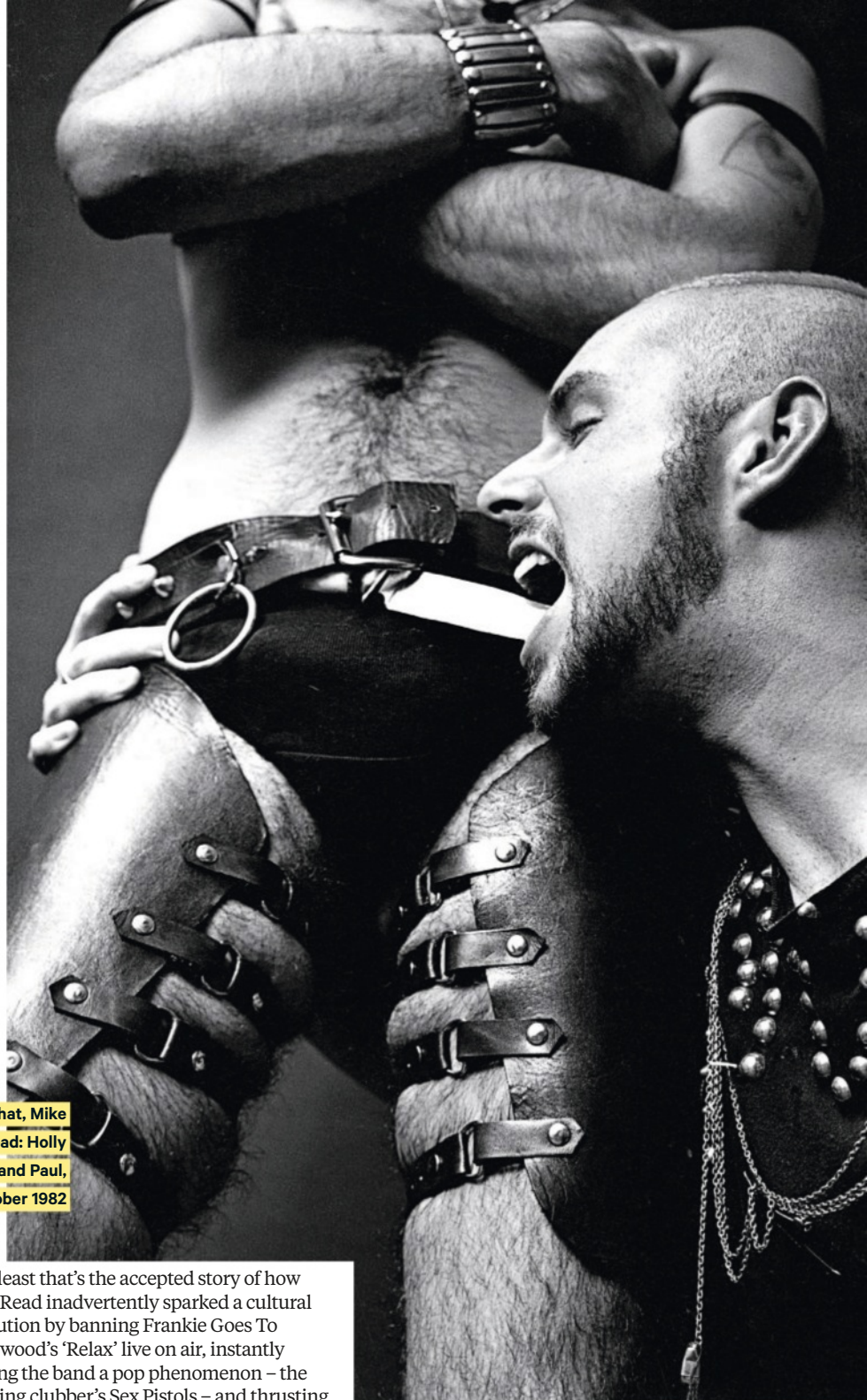
of hedonism, shock tactics and shattered taboos. Ultimately, the argument goes, it would make notoriety and controversy a prime promotional tool, a fast track to blanket media coverage and a dominating concern

in today's OMG-click-share world.

But Holly Johnson, the Frankie Goes To Hollywood singer at the eye of Hurricane Mike, has heard a different story.

"He apparently threw the record across the

studio and said, 'I'm not going to play this, this is obscene,'" Holly says today. "Well, I believe he was primed by his producer. So the story goes, Mike Read's producer came home one evening to find his children playing with a video recorder and fast-forwarding and freeze-framing the video to 'Relax' that we had first shot. He suddenly realised that this song had more to it than met the eye and that there was alternative sexuality going on here and that perhaps extreme decadence from his viewpoint. He drew Mike Read's attention to the fact that his children had been playing this video and drew his attention to the record sleeve that has a mild S&M scenario on the cover, and some slightly



twisted lyrics. So the hissy fit that Mike Read had on air, really to draw attention to himself more than our record, was likely staged."

Ten minutes before Read's outburst, Liverpool's Frankie Goes To Hollywood were a leftfield cult of a pop band. Emerging from the wreckage of various post-punk 1970s Liverpool acts, including Big In Japan and The Spitfire Boys, they had been playing 'Relax' around the UK's gay club circuit for several years, putting on an S&M-themed spectacle in clubs such as Heaven and the Camden Palace's Trash At The Palace night in London, and Cha Chas or the Cellar Bar in Liverpool. It was a provocative act, pounding pop disco accompanied by "stunning" dancer Paul Rutherford in arse-less trousers and a duo of leather-clad girls called The Leatherpets, "who were two girls from Liverpool who we used to chain to poles or the drumkits because they looked great, but they couldn't dance. They were great girls."

Johnson's vision for the band was "a Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars for the '80s. My line was always, 'It's not going to be just 'lock up your daughters', it's going to be 'lock up your sons' as well.' When people see this band, with this kind of ferocious homosexual lead singer, it was something that the zeitgeist needed really. We were in that post-punk lull when Spandau Ballet and Duran Duran were peddling a kind of Burton-the-tailors glamour at the universe, and being very successful at that. But it was as if punk hadn't happened at that time. Frankie Goes To Hollywood was more John Peel than it was Radio 1 or *Top Of The Pops* or *Smash Hits* magazine, in fact. There was no real thought in my head that it would be as commercially successful as it became. I did think it would become a sleazy, gay disco-rock hybrid thing that would be perhaps shocking to parents but the kids would love it. That was the design of the band, from my perspective."

FGTH were a tough sell, though. For two years, on the dole, they squirmed around in a restrictive

Frankie fans
mix pop and
politics in 1984



niche. "Because of the nature of our act and the two members of the band who were openly homosexual and our general look, it was difficult for us to get a record deal," says Holly. "At the time, there were no openly gay artists in the pop charts. Even Boy George, George Michael and Marc Almond were not actually saying the words 'We are gay', so it was a difficult climate."

Into such an atmosphere of pop repression, Frankie were a thrusting, studded strap-on of brazen homoerotic provocation. They set out to scream, 'We're here, we're queer, get a faceful of it' into the shocked, gaping maw of pop culture. When Trevor Horn and Paul Morley finally took

a chance and signed them up for the first release on their now legendary ZTT label, they came out with all tongues blazing. Initial adverts featured Rutherford in a leather sailor outfit alongside phrases such as 'All the nice boys love sea men' and 'Frankie Goes To Hollywood are coming... making Duran Duran lick the shit off their shoes... 19 inches that must be taken always'. An *NME* cover feature to tie in with the October release of 'Relax' was accompanied by a picture of a leatherbound Holly 'riding' Paul and found them frankly discussing the Amsterdam gay scene ("there's slings and jackboots hanging from the ceiling, then you ➔

BANNED BY THE BEEB

'Relax' wasn't the only thing that got Auntie's knickers in a twist...



Noël Coward 'Don't Let's Be Beastly To The Germans' (1943)

Popular in Britain during World War II, Coward's ditty included the lyrics, "It was just those nasty Nazis who persuaded them to fight/And their Beethoven and Bach are really far worse than their bite", leading the BBC to rule the jovial call for sympathy too controversial to broadcast.



George Formby 'With My Little Stick Of Blackpool Rock' (1937)

Back in the 1930s, the Beeb weren't too down with sexual double entendres. Hence George Formby's use of the, er, filthy lyrics, "With my little stick of Blackpool rock/Along the promenade I stroll/In my pocket it got stuck I could tell/Cos when I pulled it out I pulled my shirt off as well".



Cole Porter 'Love For Sale' (1930)

This song from composer Porter, which featured in Broadway musical *New Yorkers*, concerned a prostitute, with lyrics including, "Love for sale, appetising young love for sale/Love that's fresh and still unspoiled/Love that's only slightly spoiled". Despite, or perhaps partly because of a radio ban, it was a hit.



Bing Crosby 'Deep In The Heart Of Texas' (1942)

This seemingly inoffensive ditty by the bass-baritone crooner didn't contain any saucy lyrics, but the BBC banned it anyway. They deemed the song too catchy, with authorities in wartime Britain concerned that factory workers would be distracted by the song if they heard it during a shift.



Status Quo 'Deep In The Heart Of Texas' (1996)

Sex, drugs and religion have all got musicians banned from the airwaves, but Status Quo found themselves banished from Radio 1 for a different reason in 1996: seemingly just for being rubbish. The band launched legal proceedings against the station, claiming they were unlawful in not playlisting their 'Fun Fun Fun' single despite it making the Top 40.

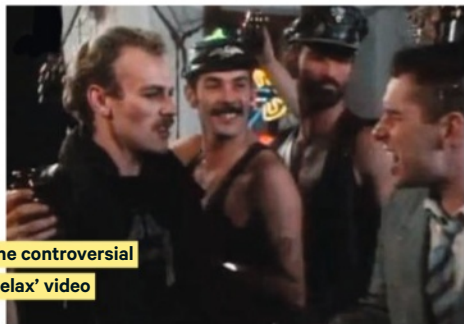
On the
NME cover,
November 5, 1983



go in the backroom and there's an orgy going on... you almost have to be prepared to fuck in front of 10 people"), their more outrageous performances ("we were put in a cage and suspended over the dancefloor... the support act was a guy in a leopardskin toga who put skewers through his face"), positing the view that punk was homosexual ("that whole punk thing was borrowed from a gay S&M attitude") and wondering whether famed anti-filth activist Mary Whitehouse had ever had an orgasm.

They also explained the thinking behind the bacchanalian scenes of the 'Relax' video, filmed in the then-disused Wilton's Music Hall in east London by director Bernard Rose. "The basic idea," said Holly, "is that there's this virginal character Frankie and his girlfriend's just left him. He's never had sex and he's walking down the street and gets lured into an orgy scene by this character in black... the sort of clubs we like to go to. It's Emperor Nero in this club, a huge man who gets his whole body shaved for sexual kicks and feeds people to tigers and lions."

"Really it was the video that was a very important item in regard to the band," Holly explains today. "We'd already made a video on our own, in the basement of the Hope & Anchor in London, doing our nightclub act in various S&M-inspired leather clothing. But if you watch the video set in Wilton's Music Hall, it's a kind of Rabelaisian Babylon with King Nero and his



The controversial
'Relax' video



On *The Tube*
in June 1984



courtiers – he looks more like Jabba The Hutt than Nero, in fact. We cast the video from the people we knew in the gay nightclubs like Heaven and the Copacabana; we went round inviting people and our friends like the dancer from Hot Gossip. So we had these 'freaks', really, in the video, and leathermen."

Despite this in-er-face promo clip, the song floundered in the middle 60s of the chart while the band did PAs around the nation's gay clubs performing 'Relax' and its B-side 'Ferry 'Cross The Mersey' with a drag act. "The record wasn't really doing anything except in the gay clubs," Holly admits. Gradually, word of the record's notoriety spread and it inched into the Top 40, then studio appearances on Channel 4's alternative music show *The Tube* and on *Top Of The Pops* ("by a fluke of chart placing or someone couldn't turn up") pushed the single to Number Six in the first week of January 1984 – high enough to hit Mike Read's moral radar. The rest is

disco-sex-punk history.

"I was kind of gutted by the news," says Holly about hearing of the BBC ban. "Although I knew on one level that this was an amazing coup, as the last record that had been publicly banned was 'God Save The Queen' by the Sex Pistols, and I knew this would add an amazing amount of rebellious cachet to the group. I was also disappointed that we couldn't do *TOTP* again... we couldn't hear it on Radio 1, which was the dominant radio station of the era. It was very different then, there were very few national radio stations. But what it

did do was enhance our reputation greatly, and all the other commercial and provincial radio stations started to hammer the record and say, 'You can't hear it on Radio 1, but here it is.'"

Most previous BBC bans had happened relatively under-the-radar, in playlist meetings and in-house memos. But this was flagrant; and by banning 'Relax' so publicly the BBC had

not only created a very noisy underdog of the gay club counterculture – and showed itself up as out of touch, prissy and intolerant in the process – they'd also sparked a glint-eyed phenomenon.

Hungry for sexual progressiveness and

keen to find out what it was they were being 'protected' from, the UK fell in love with the frisson of controversy, sex and danger created by the banning of something that was ultimately as coy and fun as a saucy postcard. 'Relax' shot to Number Two the next week, then Number One, and stayed there for five weeks. For its full run at Number One, *Top Of The Pops* showed a still of Frankie during the Top 10 rundown before a lower-placed act would perform instead of them. It would stay in the chart for a full year, selling two million copies and becoming the seventh best-selling single in the UK ever.

Frankie, meanwhile, became counterculture heroes with their T-shirts proclaiming 'FRANKIE SAY ARM THE UNEMPLOYED', and

"There was an atmosphere of fear in Liverpool"
Holly Johnson



The 1981 Toxteth riots provided the political backdrop to FGTH's music



Frankie sneak onto TOTP before the ban

the tabloids' new public enemies. As their "more serious" second single "Two Tribes" – mocking the Cold War right down to its video of Reagan and Chernenko wrestling in a dusty dog-baiting ring – hit Number One, they were thrust into an exhaustive European tornado of hype. "In Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, we'd perform on hundreds of television shows with this 'bad boys from Britain' reputation," Holly recalls. "So the BBC banning the record was a godsend in one respect, but it was also a bit of an albatross because controversy followed us wherever we went after that. People were looking for it – they were looking for bad behaviour, they were looking for hidden meanings in the lyrics of everything that I wrote. I remember [my press officer] Regine being telephoned by a journalist from *The Sun* or *News Of The World*, asking about my private life and 'What is this song 'The Power Of Love' about?' And Regine said, 'I presume it's about his German boyfriend called Wolfgang,

who he's been with for most of this year', and this of course horrified this bigoted journalist. That sort of thing happened all the time. I was quite a serious man in other respects, [but] I felt like I had to play up to this role to a certain degree in the media, of that devil-may-care hedonism."

Frankie would end 1984 with a huge hit album in 'Welcome To The Pleasuredome', almost bag Christmas Number One with 'The Power Of Love' and have the BBC ban lifted so they could appear on the end-of-year *Top Of The Pops*. But their impact would last for the rest of the decade. "It did have a wide-reaching influence," Holly says. "Duran Duran realised that they sounded a bit old-fashioned at that point and came out with 'The Wild Boys' and spent £250,000 on the video in an attempt to catch up. It was very influential in terms of pop culture. Even Pete Waterman tried to emulate 'Relax' with a record cover in a similar vein and the whole electronic disco sound was an aping of what had happened at ZTT."

Today, Holly stresses that Frankie "revived the fortunes of the pop single" by instigating the art of the multiple remix and inspired house DJs such as Frankie Knuckles, but the band also made a UK media ban a marketing push to aspire to, and created a tone of rebellious hedonism that the '80s took to its heart. Beastie Boys gave Frankie's accidental model a jock-rap slant on 'Licensed To Ill'; Mötley Crüe made their ultra-hetero version with 'Girls, Girls, Girls'. Come 1988, the acid house scene was a direct descendant of 'Relax', its illegal raves and surreptitious drug references built on Frankie's underground cult party blueprint. "I do believe that Frankie Goes To Hollywood created the dance music culture that followed it," says Holly.

Then, of course, there was Madonna, virtually a child of 'Relax'. "Madonna came to our shows when we played the Ritz in New York in 1984," Holly says. "And in America we had the same management company as her, so she was definitely aware of us, and being a very clever woman, would have seen what controversy does

to a pop act. So I assume, being a very savvy, Machiavellian superstar, she took it all in."

Holly also looks back at Frankie as an eye-opening socio-political force. "It had only been a couple of years previously that I was living in Liverpool 8 and the riots were raging around me. Liverpool was in a terrible state at that time, being controlled by quangos operated by Margaret Thatcher, and the Labour council being squeezed financially because they didn't toe the party line. There was a terrible atmosphere of fear and deprivation in Liverpool at that time. A million people lived in the city; half a million people left to find work and to escape the bleak social-political atmosphere of the town. So some

fans of Frankie Goes To Hollywood were politicos and enjoyed wearing T-shirts that said 'Frankie Say Arm The Unemployed'. There were different facets of the group, hedonism was only one of them. We didn't have the sexually confused fans of The Smiths, for example, who were scraping in at Number 22 while we were at Number One."

And how does the original

prince of pop filth feel about the current wave of Mileys and Rihannas attempting to twerk, strip and suggestively stroke their way to a slice of Frankie's global outrage dollar? "I can't pretend that I'm shocked or surprised," Holly says. "I can't look down on people pushing the envelope, because that has to happen with every successive generation, but I yawn occasionally at the desperate attempts at trying to push that envelope and wearing very little clothing. It's nothing new really."

It's tough, after all, to be Mike Read in a thoroughly 'Relax'-ed world. The legacy of FGTH is

pervasive in 21st-century pop culture; in their wake the relationship between taboo-stretching pop star and perma-outraged tabloid has been honed and perfected until it's now symbiotic and mutually beneficial, a well-oiled paper- and record-flogging machine that's essentially the

foundation of modern pop. But let's raise a chalice of poppers to the band that accidentally set the blueprint, just by refusing to be anything other than themselves. Frankie Say... Go Wild. ■

SAME-SEX BARRAGES

Four other pan-sexual tracks that fell foul of the censors...



Lady Gaga 'Born This Way'

Gaga's pro-gay track was banned by Malaysia's Amp Radio station. "The particular lyrics in 'Born This Way' may be considered as offensive when viewed against Malaysia's social and religious observances," said a spokesperson for the station.



Adele 'Chasing Pavements'

Adele's breakthrough tune was banned by stations across America who'd looked up the title on an online slang dictionary and found the phrase referred to hunting out gay sex. It's likely that the dictionary entry was posted after the song was released.



The Kinks 'Lola'

The tale of a denizen of Soho clubland who finds himself hypnotised by the Adam's apple of a lovely lass he meets in a bar. 'Lola' was banned by the BBC, but for unexpected reasons: it flouted advertising guidelines by referencing Coca-Cola. The lyric was changed to "cherry cola".



Tom Robinson Band 'Sing If You're Glad To Be Gay'

Written by one of the 1970s' few out gay artists for the 1976 Gay Pride march, the BBC refused to play this when it hit the Top 40 thanks to its mentions of gay bashing and criticism of the police for brutal raids on gay pubs.



BANNED!

44

The **hips** that shocked America

In 1957, Elvis The Pelvis was banned from the waist down on The Ed Sullivan Show, sparking a revolution of rock'n'roll teen hysteria. Leonie Cooper gets hip-notised...

It started with the hips. Well, if we're going to be specific, actually just a few inches lower. It's June 1956 and Elvis Presley, a God-fearing, handsome young rock'n'roll singer born in the small town of Tupelo, Mississippi, is set to appear

for the second time on NBC's popular television variety programme, *The Milton Berle Show*. In-between selecting the correct pomade to boost his towering quiff and strengthening the muscles needed for his signature lip sneer, the 21-year-old caught an act in Las Vegas covering the Leiber & Stoller-penned song 'Hound Dog'. He decided that he too wanted to add the rollicking blues number to his own swiftly expanding repertoire. What better way to confirm the track as a fully fledged part of his act than to give it an airing on national telly?

For the primetime recording, Elvis made the decision to leave his guitar backstage and performed the track with nothing to

shield the eyes of the squealing public from his wayward groin. Starting with a seemingly harmless soft-shoe shimmy across the stage, halfway through the act the band start to break the song down to a slower, sultrier rhythm. Then it happens – the most pivotal pop-cultural moment of the decade. Elvis lifts himself to his tiptoes and begins wildly thrusting away at the air like one of the very mongrels he's crooning about. Women scream. Men

gasp. Somewhere in Kentucky a shy 22-year-old typist falls mysteriously pregnant.

Looking back at the grainy black-and-white footage now, it's unfeasibly innocent stuff. All you see is a rather good-looking guy in a comically oversized dinner jacket working his way through some dodgy but undeniably classic dance moves. He's more like a drunk uncle at an engagement party than the pinnacle of all things provocative. But back then it was the socio-sexual equivalent of stripping naked on *The X Factor* while yelling out his lusty, demonic intentions for every single one of North America's bobby-socks-sporting teens.

The fallout from the performance was epic. Television critics declared Elvis vulgar, unmusical, animalistic and depraved. The Catholic Church ran a newspaper article titled 'Beware Elvis Presley' and Ed Sullivan, host of the country's biggest TV show, publicly condemned him, stating he would never appear on the show. Rival Steve Allen of *The Steve Allen Show*, however, honoured his existing Elvis booking, and the episode drew twice the viewers of Ed's show in the same ➔

"This is probably the greatest honour I've ever had in my life"

Elvis Presley



slot, despite Elvis singing 'Hound Dog' coyly to a basset hound on the show. So, inevitably, Sullivan relented. Elvis was booked for three separate appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, demonstrating that, even then, TV bigwigs like Sullivan weren't about to let a little thing like their personal principles get in the way of ratings.

Elvis was paid a handsome \$50,000 for his three slots in 1956

and 1957, but his raunchy image would have to be strictly camera-controlled. For the first of his two appearances on the programme in September, on a guitar-festooned stage set on location in Hollywood where Elvis was busy filming *Love Me Tender*, Presley self-

censored with a guitar. "This is probably the greatest honour that I've ever had in my life," he said to an audience comprising 82 per cent of the US viewing public, before setting about demolishing conservative America. While all of Elvis' six-foot figure was in the frame for much of the two-song performance of 'Don't Be Cruel' and the as yet unreleased 'Love Me Tender', the twitchy-fingered studio team in New York often reverted to cutaway shots of just his head and shoulders when things got too steamy.

But it was the second appearance, on October 28, that caused the real sensation. Sandwiched between an Irish children's choir and a ventriloquist act, Elvis made two appearances, first playing 'Don't Be Cruel' and 'Love Me Tender' once more, and for the second set, snarling his lip suggestively through 'Love Me' and unleashing 'Hound Dog', during which the aghast viewing public were treated to the Elvis Pelvis in full gyration.

America swooned, and gnashed. In the aftermath of the show, effigies of Presley were burned in the streets of Nashville and St Louis, and his teenage fanbase exploded. The cult of the teenager was a movement imbued with not just the joys of consumerism and a newfound youthful self-awareness, but full to the brim with sex. As the teens took firm hold of the 1950s, they needed something to throw those sticky feelings at. The burgeoning rock'n'roll scene may have been seething with suppressed sexuality, but the higher-profile TV and radio crooners that came before Elvis sang about candlelit romance, innocent strolls in the

park and maybe a chaste goodnight kiss; Elvis was about something far filthier. And it soon became clear that the more the middle-aged masses tried to shield their eyes, the more the youth wanted to stare.

The kids were in heat, threatening an all-out morality meltdown. Hence, by the time the third show swung around on

January 6, during which Elvis sang seven songs for an audience topping 60 million, he was to be filmed from the waist up only. His pelvis – for which read his penis – had been banned.

There was certainly a real sense of damage limitation to this final show. At the end, Sullivan

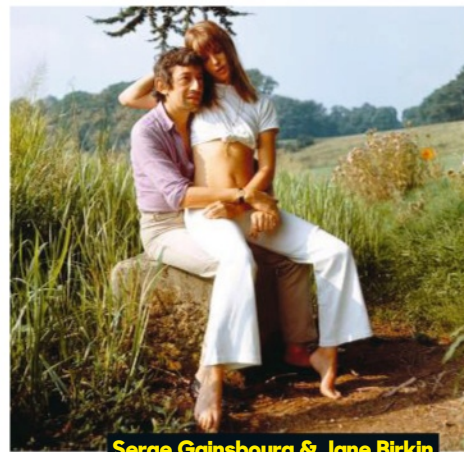
attempted to quench any upset that might still linger by putting his arm around Presley, describing him as "a real decent, fine boy" and declaring, "Wherever you go, Elvis, we want to say we've never had a pleasanter experience on our show with a big name than we've had with you, so now let's have a tremendous hand for a very nice person!" But the upshot of their waist-up ruling was perhaps not what the United States' stuffed shirts and self-appointed moral guardians had in mind. Instead of being shirked by the mainstream, Elvis was now the most famous man in America. ■

Filmed from the waist up, his pelvis – for which read his penis – had been banned

SEEDY FLESHPOPS

Sex sure does sell, and for decades pop stars have stretched the boundaries with raunchy lyrics, videos and literature.

Here's the cream of the sauce...



Serge Gainsbourg & Jane Birkin
'Je T'Aime... Moi Non Plus'

Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin's exceedingly suggestive raunch-fest of a snog-song sounded like an orgasm on vinyl, and was swiftly banned by UK radio stations, as well as those in countries you'd think may approve of that sort of thing – Spain, Italy, Sweden, Brazil, even in France before 11pm.



Elvis gyrates on
The Milton Berle
Show, April 3, 1956

Mötley Crüe
'Girls, Girls, Girls'

Well, you wouldn't expect anything less from those notorious perverts of the Sunset Strip, would you? Shot at the sleazy Seventh Veil club in Hollywood, the video for Mötley Crüe's ode to strip clubs was banned from MTV because of all the nakedness.



The Rolling Stones
'Let's Spend The Night Together'

Most US radio stations took against the song's saucy nature and decided instead to play the B-side, 'Ruby Tuesday'. The band ended up banned from *The Ed Sullivan Show* after dressing as Nazis when they were told to change the lyrics.

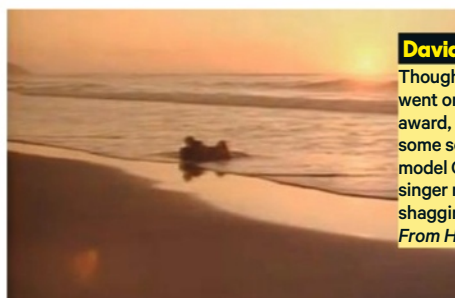
Duran Duran
'Girls On Film'

Things get more obscene than Simon Le Bon's feathered haircut in the six-minute uncensored video for Duran Duran's third single, with a high nipple and bum count via pillow fights, mud wrestling and erotic massage.



Robin Thicke
'Blurred Lines'

The horny-verging-on-rap video for 'Blurred Lines' – featuring topless models strutting around the seedy slimeball – was replaced with a slightly more clothed version once YouTube banned it.



David Bowie
'China Girl'

Though Bowie's 1983 promo went on to win an MTV video award, it was cut to remove some seaside nudity, when model Geeling Ng and the singer recreate the infamous shagging-in-the-surf scene in *From Here To Eternity*.

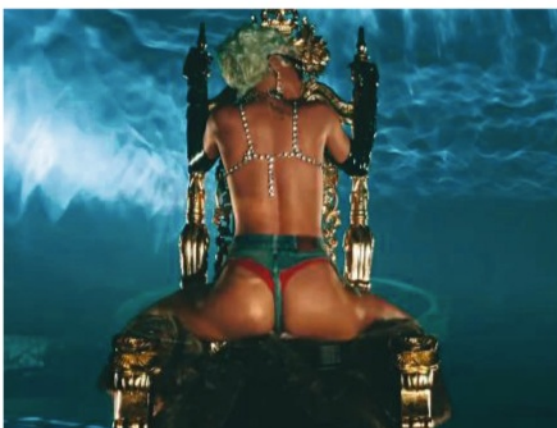
George Michael
'I Want Your Sex'

"This song is not about casual sex," stated George Michael in the TV-restricted, uncensored video for his 1987 single, which featured his girlfriend – yes, yes, we know – Kathy Jeung writhing about naked in silky bedsheets before George scribbled on her with lipie.



Madonna
'Justify My Love'

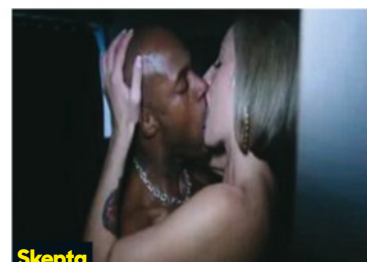
Family groups sought to ban Madonna's 1984 single 'Like A Virgin' but didn't succeed. However, the S&M-heavy, black-and-white video for her 1990 groanfest 'Justify My Love' was duly banned from MTV, so she sold the art-flick-inspired promo on VHS, raking in yet more profits. Likewise, her 1992 erotic coffee-table book, *Sex*, with its nods to bestiality and ultra-explicit imagery, had bookstores banning sales to anyone under 18. A best-seller was born, shifting 150,000 copies on its first day of sale in the US.



Rihanna
'Pour It Up'

Plugging into highly sexualised Bajan dancehall culture, Rihanna is never knowingly wearing too many clothes. Her video for 'Pour It Up', a song about chucking dollar bills at the strip club, was banned; the uncensored version featuring bare buttocks,

exuberant pole dancing, throne twerking and diamond nipples lasted just 10 minutes on Vevo before the streaming service set it to private view only. And back in 2011, BBC Radio 1 refused to play the unedited version of her song 'S&M' before 7pm and the video was banned in 11 countries.



Skepta
'All Over The House'

In 2011, grime MC Skepta released a video for his single 'All Over The House' that was basically a porno film. He called the promo an "adult movie", and it featured him rapping alongside porn stars while they got down to some seriously graphic business. It was banned from YouTube – though you can see some quite entertaining fan reaction clips on the site – but still the single was a, er, flop.

BANNED!

The act that was too dangerous to tour



They became UK rap's answer to the Sex Pistols. Angus Batey looks back at the furore caused by So Solid Crew's attempts to play live

We were in the newspapers for having Number Ones and achieving success," says Megaman, the man who was, for a few months in 2001, the Johnny Rotten of UK garage as leader of Battersea's So Solid Crew, "and we were in the newspapers for the wrongs that happened. We were stepping away from the underground because we saw those issues occurring, but we were still loyal to the underground."

The guns, the gangs, the arrests: back at the turn of the century, So Solid Crew were UK garage's public enemies numbers 1–30. With the punk threat long faded, hip-hop and grime came into the crosshairs: as well as being a superficially aggressive music, the fanbase and some of the artists were associated with criminal gangs, upping the ante for any public

figure concerned about the threat an art form could pose to society.

Perhaps the only ban of any significance ever placed on a UK rap group in Britain was the one that saw So Solid Crew cancel a tour in 2001. The furore echoed what had happened to the Pistols when they'd faced nationwide cancellations of gigs in the wake of the Bill Grundy incident a quarter of a century earlier, and it gave black British music its defining punk-rock moment. But to suggest that the group's shows were stopped by the concerted effort of authority figures would be to misrepresent what was – and still remains – a deeply complicated saga.

When their breakthrough single '21 Seconds' went to Number One in the UK for just one week in the late summer of 2001, several of the group's members had already found themselves in trouble with the law. They included Asher D, who had been arrested that July – and would later do time – for carrying a firearm that he subsequently claimed he needed for self-defence. He had been kidnapped for several hours in his mid-teens, and in the summer of 2001 he was sitting in his car in Brixton, south London when the vehicle

"It wasn't a lie that gangsters wanted to come to garage nights"

Megaman

was attacked, its windscreen and windows smashed by rock-throwing assailants.

Things came to a head at the Astoria, in the heart of central London's tourist district, in the late summer of 2001. Billed as a birthday party for So Solid member Romeo, the event wasn't even an actual So Solid gig. But the night ended in mayhem after shots were fired inside the venue, and the group wound up getting the blame.

"We were at a pinnacle at that time," says Megaman, aka Dwayne Vincent, today. "We

OUTRAGE RAMPAGE

Other artists who have had to deal with serious controversy



So Solid Crew
together
in 2001

were seen, we were there, we were viewable. And it wasn't a lie when people said that gangsters wanted to come to these events; [the authorities] wasn't bullshittin' that people who wanted to sort out their differences were coming to garage nights – not just So Solid nights – up and down the country, trying to deal with their problems."

A nationwide tour had been booked to capitalise on '21 Seconds' and help promote the Crew's debut LP. But, one by one, venues were telling the group that they'd received advice from local police forces that the gig was likely to become the backdrop for a battle between rival gangs. Some promoters pulled out, unable to guarantee public safety; others were willing to proceed, but only with additional security.

"I don't think every tour date was actually pulled," Mega recalls. "It was the majority of tour dates. My manager called me and said, 'Listen, it's gonna cost this much to put on the



Sex Pistols

The cancellation of more than half of the Sex Pistols' late 1976 UK tour came after their infamous appearance on the *Today* programme, where Steve Jones twice used the f-word on teatime TV. The subsequent Anarchy tour saw the band play only seven of the 20 scheduled gigs as local authorities and venues shut the shows down.



Jerry Lee Lewis

In 1958, the US rock'n'roller arrived in the UK for a tour, but when it was discovered his wife was only 13 years old, the tour was cut short. Back home, Lewis found that radio stations had started ignoring his music.



The Rolling Stones

The Stones were banned from playing in Blackpool after a 1964 gig at the Empress Ballroom ended in a riot. The ban wasn't lifted until 45 years later, when the council invited the group to drop by any time.



2 Live Crew

The Miami group's 'As Nasty As They Wanna Be' album was declared obscene by a Florida court in 1990. When the case eventually came to court the group were acquitted, and the album sold over a million copies.



Madonna

In 2004, the Egyptian parliament took umbrage at Madonna's study of Kabbalah – a mystical branch of Judaism – and a recent visit to Israel to celebrate Jewish new year. They attempted to ban her from the country, even though she hadn't asked to enter it.



In Battersea,
south London,
2000

tour, we're only going to make this amount, and for what the promoters are putting up I don't think it's gonna be feasible to continue the tour. But it's totally down to you guys." Reluctantly, the group took the decision to cancel the entire run of dates.

"It was always a good decision," a reflective Megaman says now. "I was really careful at those times, and really aware of the environments that I was putting my artists in."

The perception was reinforced that if you booked a So Solid gig, you were dicing with danger. For So Solid, the problem persists today. Touring in the summer of 2013 to support a greatest-hits set, 'Solid Soul', the Crew voluntarily pulled out of an appearance at the Lovebox festival after safety fears prompted by a double stabbing that took place at Wireless on the day Jay Z and Justin Timberlake had headlined.

"Intelligence was trickling around through the festivals that if certain acts were to perform there could be a risk attending," Mega explains. "I felt it was much more important to the public to just have an enjoyable time than experience what happened at Wireless. If it's gonna cause any issues for the public, we would rather just step back and allow people to come to our tour, where you can be a lot more secure and safe."

In 2003, the Labour minister Kim Howells had laid into So Solid, calling them "idiots"

who were "glorifying gun culture and violence". Turns out the group had shown a great deal more responsibility for their fans' safety than politicians looking for easy headlines had thought possible. Does Megaman feel any animosity towards those who conveniently used his group as a scapegoat, and in the process left his band's career as "collateral damage" of their war on street culture?

"I feel it was just a game at the time – and fair play!" he chuckles. "Round of applause – you done your job. Sometimes when you're looking on characters from the black community that have grown up around certain environments, you feel those characters are exactly how they dress or how they portray themselves in their music. Remember that at the age of 18, 19, this young kid, Dwayne Vincent, went to set up companies, and signed artists that wasn't gangsters from all parts of the UK, and built a crew, and set up radio stations and labels and distributed the stuff. That can't be the same rapper who you think is just some thug, jumpin' around tryin' to be a gangster. That's gotta be an intelligent kid there." ■

RAP VS THE TABLOIDS

In 1987, the *Daily Mirror* ran a front-page story alleging Beastie Boys had taunted disabled kids in Switzerland, and UK MPs wanted them banned. Their tour went ahead but a riot broke out in Liverpool. They came onstage to a hail of beer cans. Ad-Rock started smacking them back with a baseball bat. One hit a female fan; she pressed charges. He was found not guilty. In 1994, the *Daily Star* called for Snoop Dogg to be deported from his first British tour. The rapper was awaiting trial on an accessory-to-murder charge back home. Snoop was acquitted, but in 2004 a fight broke out between his entourage and police at Heathrow Airport. A three-year banning order was quashed after an appeals court found that Snoop's human rights had been abused.

BANNED!

The superstar who scandalised the church

When Madonna kissed a black saint in 1989, she sparked a new wave of pop sacrilege. Emily Mackay bows down to the legacy of 'Like A Prayer'

In ancient Sumeria, around 3,000BC, the first recorded mention of religion in human society was inscribed in stone tablets. The next day, although it'll never make it into the neighbouring museum display cabinet, a Sumerian of a more restless spirit doubtless chiselled a sister stone with the words 'GILGAMESH IS A COCK'.

For as long as there has been religion there have been sacrileges just begging to be committed, taboos aching to be breached. It's hardly surprising that an art form such as pop music, born of social oppression and youthful rebellion, has done its fair share of god-bothering, from John Lennon boasting that The Beatles were bigger than Jesus, through Kurt Cobain screaming that God was gay, to Marilyn Manson anointing himself the God Of Fuck – with all the attendant denunciations and placard waving by angry religious conservatives.

Few people, though, have actually managed to get themselves condemned by the Vatican. That's top-table stuff, and such is the very conscious, very deliberate theological thorn-insidery of Madonna Louise Ciccone. Named after the mother of God, from the beginning of her

career she worked the Christian taboo on sexual freedom and its denigration of women to the full. She became the Madonna/whore dichotomy and blew it wide apart.

Madonna was, by her fourth album, already adept at the art of controversy. 'Like A Virgin' and 'Papa Don't Preach' explored ideas of purity, female sexuality, control and abortion with a light, playful touch, the singer performing at the 1984 VMAs in a raunchy, punked-up wedding dress. So when she decided that she wanted the video for the lead single and title track of her fourth album to be the most provocative thing she'd ever done, she was going to have to go some.

The 'Like A Prayer' album marked Madonna's full artistic maturity, with the singer, riding the crest of three platinum records, digging deep emotionally and poring through journals for inspiration, writing about her divorce from actor Sean Penn, the death of her mother and her difficult relationship with her father. She envisioned the whole album as expiating her complex feelings about her Catholic upbringing and the lasting burden of guilt it left her with.

The first track written for the album, and the one that would launch it, rode head on into the issues of sex and religion. Madonna described the track as being written from the point of view of a young woman "so in love with God that it is almost as though He were the male figure in her life". Her use of religious language in ambiguous double entendres freaked out producer and co-writer Patrick Leonard, who begged her to remove the line "I'm down on my knees/I wanna



take you there" to no avail.

For the video, Madonna had originally wanted to tackle racism by depicting a forbidden interracial

relationship targeted by the Ku Klux Klan in America's Deep South. Director Mary Lambert wanted to focus more on the melding of sexual and religious ecstasy in the lyrics, and included a subplot in which Madonna witnesses a murder and is encouraged to exonerate a black man wrongly arrested for the crime through the intervention of a black saint (mistaken by many contemporary commentators for Christ).

The slightly overplotted and confusing result throws increased focus on stark individual images: burning crosses, Madonna's bleeding stigmata, Madonna lovingly kissing the saint's



Madonna's 'Like A Prayer' video;
(below) Bowie's
'The Next Day'

feet. Perhaps the strongest visual impact, though, comes from the aggressive joy shown by Madonna and the choir through their dancing. It could be said that Madonna is using black religious music as a prop, but her contrast of the happy glorification of God in Episcopal religion with the guilt and shame of Catholicism is knowing and pointed. Some controversies and bannings arise through misunderstanding, offhand comments, misinterpretation or intended offence. Madonna, though, knew exactly what she was doing. Every emphatic clap of the gospel-influenced dance she does in this video screams a set-jawed FUCK YOU to the Catholic Church.

Other factors that played into the scandal surrounding the video were less spiritually noble. Madonna's advertising deal with Pepsi took eight months to negotiate, and guaranteed Madonna a payment of \$5 million and sponsorship of a world tour in return for appearing in a series of TV commercials. The

first of these, called 'Make A Wish', was aired to an audience of 250 million days before the official 'Like A Prayer' video was released, and was the track's official debut. You can watch this delightfully butter-wouldn't-melt red herring on YouTube, a nostalgic Madonna watching her eight-year-old self in home movies before the two swap places to explore their past and future lives. "The treatment for the video is a lot more controversial. It's probably going to touch a lot of nerves in a lot of people," said Madonna at the time, no doubt chortling up her sleeve. Pepsi, remarkably, hadn't asked to see her own concept for 'Like A Prayer' in advance.

'Make A Wish' only aired once; when the real video hit MTV, outspoken Christian activists the American Family Association (fresh from a battle with Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation Of Christ*) rolled into action, threatening to make their members (numbering in the hundreds of thousands) boycott Pepsi unless they dropped Madonna. The group's Reverend Donald Wildmon fumed: "Madonna is ridiculing Christianity, while Pepsi is putting the woman up as a clean and wholesome role model." A Catholic bishop from Texas named Rene Gracida upped the stakes, calling for a boycott of all Pepsico's interests, including KFC, Taco Bell and Pizza Hut. This largely fast-food-based protest might not have spelled the end of the Madonna deal, until Catholic groups in Italy started protesting, resulting in a statement from the Vatican banning Madonna from appearing in the country. Cowed by the big man, Pepsi dropped their sponsorship of the world tour, although Madonna walked away with the \$5 million.

You know what they say about bad publicity, though. As well as boosting her already enormous profile to a truly iconic level, her ideological kerfuffle gave Madonna new depth in the eyes of many. She was, for the first time, taken seriously as an artist. The 'Like A Prayer' album got a full 10/10 in *NME*, reviewed by David Quantick, who concluded: "This is the first great adult Madonna album... [she] has not just come through with a new, wiser sensibility but has moved beyond that, into an area where sadness and experience can be transformed into joy and exuberance, where things like love and family and God can be both celebrated and subverted."

Madonna kept celebrating and subverting, using the lessons learned from the 'Like A Prayer' furore to orchestrate further scandals with 'Justify My Love' and 'Erotica', the Sex book, the cone bra, getting David

Everything she does in the video screams 'fuck you' to the Catholic Church

Letterman to sniff her knickers. She became the prime example of pop star as media manipulator.

Which isn't to say others haven't tried to grab a piece of profile-boosting hellfire and brimstone, with belief groups often as eager to soak up the publicity as the blaspheming stars. A few years later, fellow aggrieved Catholic Sinéad O'Connor ripped up a photo of Pope John Paul II on *Saturday Night Live*. Madonna, perhaps irked at having lost the outrage high ground, snarked, "I think there is a better way to present her ideas rather than ripping up an image that means a lot to other people."



More recently,

Lady Gaga's 'Alejandro' video took her long-standing Madonna emulation to ridiculous extremes, with the rubber-habited former convent schoolgirl Gaga suggestively swallowing rosary beads to represent

"the desire to take in the holy", according to director Steven Klein. David Bowie's clip for 'The Next Day' was similarly schlocky, with the Dame as a Christ-like figure, Gary Oldman as a dancing bishop and Marion Cotillard as a prostitute suffering from those bleeding stigmata.

No such subtleties for Kanye West – like Madonna, a believer. Many were shocked at his decision to not only call his album 'Yeezus', with the cherry topping of a song entitled 'I Am A God', but then to invite an actor playing Christ onstage with the words, "White Jesus, is that you? Oh shit!" while performing, er, 'Jesus Walks'. But to Kanye it's all a Bible lesson writ

large: "One of the things that I really wanted to get across is that you can have a relationship with Jesus. That you can talk to Jesus. This is the way I express it."

Express yourself, as a wise woman once said. For pop stars both faithful and faithless, religion remains an irresistible topic. But unlike many sacrilegious shock-tactic merchants (hello, Cradle Of Filth et al), Madonna was the one who showed how to blaspheme with passion. Amen to that. ■

UNHOLY ROCKERS

The bands DJs at one US radio station cannot play (or even mention)

The Jackofficers
Scrotum Staplers
God Dethroned
Deep Fried Abortion
Crucifucks
Goatwhore
Pre-School Tea Party Massacre
Baby Jesus Hitler
Wall Of Smeigma
Sexual Orange Master

**BANNED!**

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The most depraved video ever made

Full of vomiting, drug taking and empty sex, Marilyn Manson's notorious 2003 video for '(s)AINT' verged on torture porn. Phil Hebblethwaite dives into the squalor

The video for Marilyn Manson's '(s)AINT' banned itself. There was never a moment when he or its director – Italian filmmaker and actress Asia Argento – imagined the uncensored version would be aired on MTV, or have the support of Manson's label, Interscope, or even have much purpose besides being a stand-alone artistic project. It wasn't a promo (although Interscope had considered releasing '(s)AINT' as the third single from Manson's 2003 album 'The Golden Age Of Grotesque') and it was hard to get to see. If American fans wanted to witness the uncensored, unrated, banned-by-the-label video, they had to buy Manson's 2004 greatest hits comp, 'Lest We Forget', direct from his site (most non-US retail editions included the full version as standard).

The video, which Manson paid for, follows a few hours of depravity in Manson's hotel suite, with S&M slaves, junkies and a transvestite dominatrix visiting him in turn. It contains scenes of bondage, full nudity, masturbation, cunnilingus, drug use (jacking up and snorting coke off a Bible), cross-dressing, self-harm and vomiting. It shared imagery with the video that Manson's one-time mentor and producer, Trent Reznor, made with director Mark Romanek for the 1994 Nine Inch Nails single 'Closer', but it went much further.

A decade later, '(s)AINT' still ends up on lists of the most controversial videos of all time (as does 'Closer'), but to think that Manson and Asia Argento made the four-minute film simply to shock is to underestimate their intelligence and ambition, and also



Manson, alone
and desperate,
self-harms

misunderstand where Manson's head was when the video was shot – in November 2003, over two days in a Los Angeles hotel.

"It was never the point to shock," says Argento, who appears in the video as well as directing it. "But I do think that people want to be shocked... Everyone knows that the things you see in the video exist, and if you are shocked, you're probably getting what the video is about more than the people who dig it. You're being shown something very real; a mirror image of your soul."

And yet, '(s)AINT' is shocking – not because of the drugs or sex (it's just a film), but because of how truthfully and brutally Manson portrays himself. "He wrote it, and that's how he wanted to show himself to the world – with fragility,"



One of the less
graphic scenes
from '(s)AINT'

says Argento. "He can choose whatever character he wants to play and he wanted to project a more broken sense of himself."

Indeed, the Marilyn Manson you see in '(s)AINT' is lost, exhausted, afraid and depressed. He's a sad and pathetic sight as he cuts his chest with a razor blade, masturbates over a transvestite and bathes in milk, and the video stands up today as a snapshot of a desperate man absorbed by worries of his own worth. It's also a warning to anybody who still believes in the romance of a rock'n'roll life.

He was not in a good place in late 2003. The American public had tired of him after the 1999 Columbine High School massacre, which he'd been absurdly blamed for, and it had been reflected in his album sales. 'Holy Wood (In The Shadow Of The Valley Of Death)' from 2000 had bombed by his standards, especially in the US, leading to a free-for-all in the media. "Marilyn Manson Now Going Door-To-Door Trying To Shock People" ran a headline in satirical newspaper *The Onion* in 2001, and little had improved by the time 'The Golden Age Of Grotesque' was released in May 2003. It debuted at Number One in the US, but it was the lowest-selling Number One debut of the year; and although it contained an excellent single, 'mOBSCENE', the press remained twitchy.

Furthermore, Manson's longtime co-writer, Twiggy Ramirez, had walked out prior to recording 'The Golden Age...', and a gruelling eight-month tour arranged for summer and autumn 2003 separated Manson from his then girlfriend, Dita Von Teese, who he'd become dependent on. By the time '(s)AINT' was shot, with Von Teese in the video, Manson was at his wits' end. "Me at my worst," he said a year later. "Just the deepest, deepest depression – it's where I was."

Asia Argento,

daughter of Italian horror movie director Dario Argento, was introduced to Marilyn Manson in 2002. She cast him as a hillbilly character called Jackson in *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things*, her second feature as director. Before it came out, and with Argento riding high as the lead actress in the Vin Diesel vehicle *xXx*, Manson asked her to direct '(s)AINT'.

Argento last watched the '(s)AINT' video a year ago. "The feeling that remains is of solitude; of a person that has many 'friends', but is alone," she says. "I don't think people understand how hard it is if you're a rock star – travelling to different places every day; waking up and not knowing where the fuck you are; having all these people wanting a piece of you the whole time. I wanted to capture that sense of claustrophobia and alienation. He can't get out, because there are all these people who

want to be with him and they're able to come into his hotel room where, basically, he lives.

"At the beginning of the video, he's waiting by the phone – maybe for someone who can save him from this solitude, which comes from the projection people put on artists who are able to evoke extreme feelings in them. They project what they cannot do, or who they wish they could be, and that brings an intense loneliness to an artist's life."

Manson claimed to be on the mend by 2004, but there was further trouble ahead. Von Teese,

whom he'd married in 2005, left him a year later citing his "partying" and "relationship with another girl", actress Evan Rachel Wood. By 2009, even Trent Reznor felt compelled to speak out. "Seeing him now, drugs and alcohol rule his life and he's become a dopey clown," he

told *Spinner* magazine, making the '(s)AINT' video seem all the more devastating. Was it real? "Who gives a fuck?" says Argento. "The purity of purpose is what counts."

Ramirez returned to the band for 2009's 'The High End Of Low' and 2012's 'Born Villain' – but they were patchy at best. Arguably, the last great Marilyn Manson single was 'mOBSCENE' and '(s)AINT' the last great video. Argento, though, has faith. "I went to his concert in Bologna in 2012," she says. "I hadn't seen him in ages, and I was delighted that he hadn't lost his brilliant sense of humour and quick wit. People really have no idea how funny he is." ■

"He wanted to project a broken sense of himself"

Asia Argento, director

VIDEO NASTIES

Five more boundary-pushing pop promos



Björk 'Pagan Poetry'

NICK KNIGHT,
NOVEMBER 2001

Director Nick Knight said the video for Björk's 2001 single 'Pagan Poetry' was about "a woman preparing herself for marriage and for her lover". It's a highly impressionistic and artful film, but all MTV in the US saw was fellatio, piercing, breasts and ejaculation. They promptly banned it.



Robbie Williams 'Rock DJ'

VAUGHAN ARNELL,
JULY 2000

Robbie's 'Rock DJ' from 2000 should have been banned for crimes against music, but it was the bizarre video in which he starts pulling off his flesh that got him in hot water. European TV stations demanded a daytime edit and it was banned in the Dominican Republic as it was considered Satanist.



Michael Jackson 'Thriller'

JOHN LANDIS,
DECEMBER 1983

The John Landis-directed video for the seventh single from Jackson's 'Thriller' album – a mini-feature that mimicked zombie and werewolf horror films – wasn't banned, but it was premiered at midnight on MTV in the US, and even later over here on Channel 4.



Franz Ferdinand 'Evil Eye'

DIANE MARTEL,
OCTOBER 2013

Alex Kapranos called this compilation of classic gorefest clips "a gruesome blood orgy eye stab death romp wide-oh creep necro fest". Amazingly, you can watch it on YouTube without signing in. It's harmless, though, unlike the video for Robin Thicke's 'Blurred Lines', made by the same director.



Nine Inch Nails 'Happiness In Slavery'

JON REISS,
NOVEMBER 1992

Like '(s)AINT', NIN's video never hoped to get a mainstream release, and it remains just as disturbing today. Directed by Jon Reiss and featuring naked performance artist Bob Flanagan strapped to a chair and mutilated, the 1992 video tackles themes of pain and pleasure. Pain wins.

BANNED!

The band who helped bring down a regime

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What happens when a bunch of musicians bring about a real-life revolution? Barry Nicolson revisits The Plastic People Of The Universe and their pivotal influence on the demise of Communism in Czechoslovakia

Here in the west, we've grown cynical about the ability of rock'n'roll to alter the Radio 1 playlist, much less the political landscape of an entire country. Thanks to the internet, our choices are so limitless, our access so instant and our tastes so diverse that many people have never been less invested – emotionally or financially – in the music they listen to. The idea of rock'n'roll as an agent of change now seems a relic of a hippier age; it simply doesn't wield that cultural clout any more. In societies where basic freedoms cannot be so readily taken for granted, however,

governments still have much to fear from it – just ask The Plastic People Of The Universe.

The name alone may not mean much to you, but the cause they have become intrinsically linked with will: the 'Velvet Revolution' refers to the peaceful transfer of power between the Communist party that had ruled Czechoslovakia for four decades and the parliamentary republic that replaced it in December 1989.

The role of western rock groups in that revolution is well publicised: its leader was the dissident playwright Václav Havel, a lifelong fan of The Velvet Underground (who lent their name to the movement) and Frank Zappa (who later served as a cultural attaché of Havel's government). During the 20-year struggle against Communism, rock'n'roll became a source of resilience for many political prisoners – when Lou Reed visited the country in the early '90s, he was shocked to discover that his band were better known there than they were in the US.

From the other side of the Iron Curtain, Reed and Zappa could only provide inspiration from afar. The Plastic People,

however, were the band on the frontline – a perpetual thorn in the regime's side, ready to sacrifice everything for their right to play rock'n'roll. Yet when they formed – a few weeks after Czechoslovakia was invaded by Warsaw Pact forces attempting to suppress the democratising reforms of the Prague Spring of 1968 – the PPU were not a political band. As founder member and primary songwriter

Milan Hlavsa put it, "We did not reflect the causes or effects of the invasion, we just took it as a harsh reality." Hlavsa – who had discovered the Velvet, The Mothers Of Invention, Captain Beefheart and others through friends whose relatives sent LPs from abroad – was

not looking to become a revolutionary, but simply "loved rock'n'roll and wanted to be famous". Still, in Communist-controlled Prague, where musicians were supposed to be state-approved, you couldn't wear your hair long, your clothes weird or make western-influenced rock'n'roll without incurring the wrath of the authorities. After the Czech Ministry Of Culture decreed that the band's "artistic and formal value is absolutely

Pussy Riot in Moscow, January 2012



The Plastic People Of The Universe play an illegal gig at Václav Havel's Cottage Hradecek in October 1977



insignificant" and that their lyrics exposed "anarchy, decadence, clericalism, nihilism and cause negative influence on the lifestyle of our young generation", the PPU had their musicians' licences revoked, meaning they had no access to equipment and found it almost impossible to secure gigs.

They found ways around that, of course: some band members took forestry jobs to pay for the materials to build their own instruments and amplifiers, while Ivan Jirous, their manager and 'artistic director', hosted lectures on Andy Warhol at which he would show slides for 10 minutes, then let the PPU 'demonstrate' the songs of The Velvet Underground for two hours. Once the authorities figured out what Jirous was up to, the group resorted to playing shows in remote farmhouses (which were always at risk of being raided by the police) or at friends' weddings (which, though infrequent, were free from state interference). Yet despite the scarcity of live performances, by the time they recorded their debut album ('Egon Bondy's Happy Hearts Club Banned') in 1974, the Plastic People Of The Universe had become unlikely figureheads of Czechoslovakia's clandestine 'other culture'. Their lyrics were not overtly political and the band members were not activists – beyond the activism of continuing to play music, that is – but the authorities found the PPU's ongoing existence and popularity maddening because, in the words of keyboardist Josef Janíček, "the Bolsheviks understood that culture and music has a strong influence on people, and our refusal to compromise drove them insane".

Things came to a head in

February 1976, when the PPU and Jirous organised an underground music festival in the small town of Bojanovice. A month later, the authorities arrested the band and dozens of other counterculture musicians in retaliation. They were vilified as pornographers and subversives, tried on the charge of "organised disturbance of the peace" and sentenced to jail sentences ranging from six to 18 months. But their incarceration only served to spur the dissident community – led by Václav Havel – into action. Inspired by the group's indomitability, Havel published Charter 77, a manifesto that was scathingly critical about the Czech government's human rights failures, and whose distribution became a serious political crime. It was also the document that helped to politicise previously apolitical Czechs, made international *causes célèbres* of Havel and the PPU, and served as the catalyst for the chain of events that would – after 12 more years of struggle – lead to the Velvet Revolution.

One thing politicians never seem to learn about persecuting artists and musicians is that it only serves to make them martyrs for self-expression. This is as true of Pussy Riot in 2013 as it was of the PPU in 1976. Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina were unknown outside Moscow until they were incarcerated on trumped-up charges of 'hooliganism' last year; today they are feminist icons. In Turkmenistan, two pop singers, Maksat Kakabaev and Murad Ovezov, became symbols of their government's repressive policies when they were imprisoned in 2011 on spurious charges relating to a dispute over a TV antenna (their true offence was making a western-style



Fela Kuti onstage at Brixton Academy, 1983

"If the band helped destroy Communism, we are only glad"

Milan Hlavsa, PPU songwriter

music video). Fela Kuti's legend is based as much on his run-ins with authority – including a ban from entering Ghana on the grounds that he was "liable to cause a breach of the peace" and declaring independence from Nigeria, resulting in a savage beating by armed soldiers – as his music.

As recently as last month, the tragic deaths of two members of Iranian exile group The Yellow Dogs once again drew attention to the regime they had fled from – one that bans all forms of western music, yet has not

been able to stamp out a thriving underground rock'n'roll scene.

And the PPU themselves? After splitting up in 1988 (like any other band, they were subject to 'creative differences' and personality clashes), they reformed in 1997 at the urging of Václav Havel,

and in 1999 played a show at the White House with their hero Lou Reed. They continue to play and record today. Right up until his death from lung cancer in 2001, Milan Hlavsa remained humble about the Plastics' place in history. "Václav Havel was the engine of the efforts," he said. "The band itself had no political ambition and we did not intend to destroy Communism by our music, but if we helped it we are only glad."

All the Plastic People wanted to do was play rock'n'roll. Little did they know it would be tantamount to revolution. ■

ROCK REVOLUTION

When pop stars stick it to The Man

Sex Pistols are barred from Number One

Perhaps the most famous banning in British musical history took place in Silver Jubilee week, 1977, when the Sex Pistols' 'God Save The Queen' was kept off the Number One spot, allegedly on the orders of the Palace – who were a little miffed at being referred to as a "fascist regime". Rod Stewart's 'I Don't Want To Talk About It' was declared Number One instead.

YouTube bans MIA's 'Born Free'

The nine-minute video for MIA's 2010 single featured scenes of red-headed kids being rounded up and shot by police officers. It was intended as a comment on the treatment of minorities by authorities, but within a day of being uploaded to YouTube, the video was taken down. It's since gone back up, although it remains age-gated.

The BBC censors 'Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead'

Earlier this year, a Facebook campaign to get this song to Number One sprang up in the wake of Margaret Thatcher's death. In the end the song peaked at Number Two, but in the process caused a major political headache for the BBC, who refused to play it in full on the chart rundown for fear of offending Conservatives. Their eventual decision to play five seconds of the track – including the offending title – only served to piss everyone off.

Elton John enrages the Chinese government

In November 2012, Elton dedicated a gig in Beijing to "the spirit and talent of Ai Weiwei", the dissident artist who has been an outspoken critic of the Chinese government. The result was a severe tightening of China's already stringent restrictions on granting visas to foreign musicians. He's also been banned from Egypt for describing Jesus as "a compassionate, super-intelligent gay man".



BANNED!

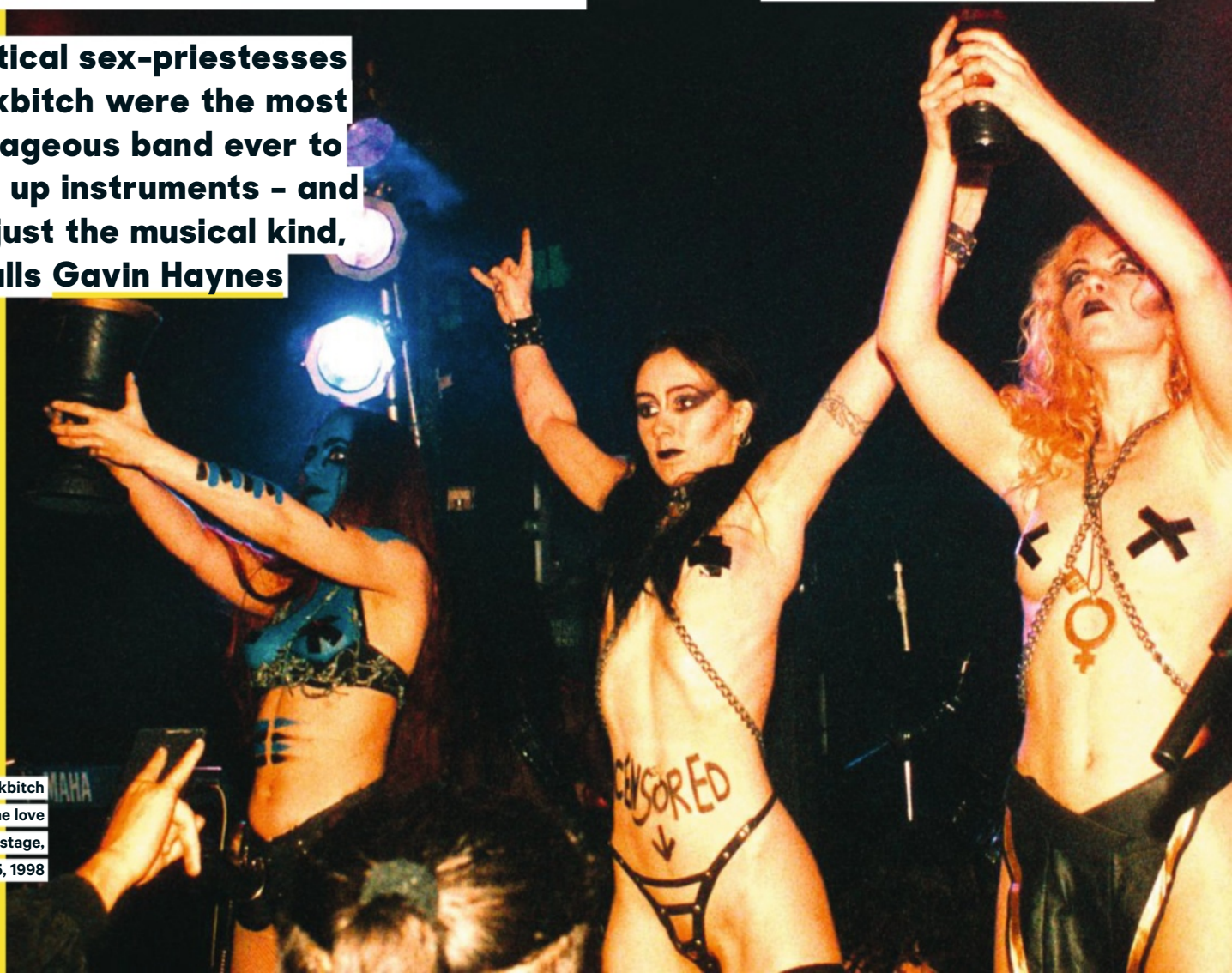
The onstage sex cult they didn't want you to see

There are cult bands. And then there are bands who are literally cults. It was into the underpopulated second category that you'd fling Rockbitch, a writhing fleshpot of strap-on dildos and screeching guitars who terrorised the few stages that would have them for four brief years.

The music was old-school metal and classic heavy rock: big, bruising licks, hearty tom-thumping drums and shrill banshee wails. But the music was less important than the spectacle. Rockbitch preached sex. The commune they grew out of in central France had brought together a group of about 10 British lesbians (plus one bloke). There, the sisters (and brother) had attempted to draw themselves back towards some imagined primitive, animal-like state in which they were all fucking all the time. They slept on one long communal bed. They'd hold marathon 69-ing sessions in which two members would assume the position in the middle of a circle of all the others, also naked and holding hands to 'channel the energy' around the room. Their drum circles descended into freeform group masturbation sessions. At their abandoned

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Mystical sex-priestesses Rockbitch were the most outrageous band ever to pick up instruments - and not just the musical kind, recalls Gavin Haynes



Rockbitch
spread the love
onstage,
June 15, 1998

monastery headquarters in the town of Metz, they'd hold indoor orgies in the winter and outdoor orgies in the summer. They had a masochistic lesbian cook called Piggy who would request a range of ever-larger objects be inserted into her vagina in the living room.

Female sexuality had been sold a lie, they told themselves. In truth, far from exhibiting prim indifference when it came to sex, women were constantly horny fuckpigs, who were unhappy precisely because they were having to deny their true nature. Thus it followed that the only way to free themselves from mental slavery was to run full-pelt towards their true sexuality with a tube of lubricating jelly. Not only was the exchange of sexual favours as natural as a handshake to them, it was also a kind of meditation: the way they showed their love for the universe and grew their inner selves. "The more you love, the more you grow your capacity to love," as they often put it.

The idea of starting a band grew out of that philosophy, rather than the other way round. The stages that rock offered would allow them to reach larger and larger audiences, to whom they could preach their gospel. In 1998, they began turning up in venues across Europe, led by charismatic singer Julie Worland and featuring the usual keyboards, guitars and drums, but also an additional 'Stage Slut' called Luci, who was in charge of getting naked and being fingered in front of the audience or being sexed with a strap-on. Luci later shifted to guitar and was replaced in her lubricious role by three similarly gimp-like 'Sex Magick Priestesses'.

Rockbitch shows soon became highly ritualised performance pieces. Worland would jog onstage in a thunder of guitars and lay into "the patriarchy", telling the audience about the impossibility of conforming to false madonna/whore distinctions, before attaching a strap-on dildo and penetrating a blow-up doll representing Cindy Crawford during their sarcastic song about the mole-faced '90s supermodel. The Stage Slut or Sex Magick Priestess would then be brought in for a bit of light fingering, or occasional heavy fisting, all of which would be worked around the ongoing soundtrack of their churning prog-metal. As time went on, they developed their rituals into their own comical blasphemy of a Mass. Worland would have wine poured across her chest and collected into silver goblets strategically positioned beneath her labia by the Priestesses. The band would offer the goblets to the audience, who would also be fed little morsels of flatbread, like communion wafers but cut into triangles designed to represent a woman's genitalia. All this ritualisation tended to climax with the flinging of the 'Golden Condom' into the audience. Whoever caught it would be invited backstage to have sex with two or three of the band while the show continued out front. Sex was, in the Rockbitch worldview, a gift they were free to

give to the universe. Faces, names, body odours, it didn't matter: they'd shag even the grungiest metallers, because by doing so they believed they were reaffirming their commitment to the universal. Spreading the love.

In 1999, they released their only album, 'Motor Driven Bimbo', laying out the ramparts of their new sex war. Yet even as their stature was growing, the same notoriety that was swelling their fanbase was causing promoters to get cold feet about all that onstage penetration. Practically banned in Germany and harassed in Norway, Rockbitch found themselves touring in ever-diminishing circles. Somehow, local bureaucrats and moral guardians seemed to

disagree with their right to fist each other in boozy bars without applying for the proper licences and permits. In Canada, their entire tour was cancelled after a moral panic. They never made it to Scotland for similar reasons. Often the objection was not so much to the sex itself, as to the sex not being properly regulated. Never having seen anything quite like them, councillors couldn't easily drop the Bitches in just one of their neat little boxes for rock concerts, for XXX shows, or indeed for performance-art spectacles.

Hemmed in by so-called 'basic standards of public decency', Rockbitch eventually gave

up on being Rockbitch. Back in England, they played their last ever gig in Worcester in 2002.

The band were reborn in a slightly different format a couple of years later, as MT-TV, a much softer proposition that leaned more towards Clannad than Judas Priest, and ditched the onstage sex to be 'all about the music'. But despite being able to tour at will, the new group never reached the musical heights of its predecessor. In 2006, bassist Amanda Smith-Skinner and drummer Jo Heeley went off to work with Erin Bennett on the more popular modern rock outfit Syren, before Heeley died of breast cancer in 2012.

Despite a growing cult around them, the old gang still have no plans to reunite. And why should they? Rockbitch was a moment in time – the wild naive spirit of the '60s pushed to '90s levels of sexual outrage: a slightly confused but still thrilling point that they were having fun making. Judged by the age of Gaga and Miley, their tongue-in-cheek sex evangelism seems both prophetic and totally outmoded. Events have run ahead of themselves, and sex in pop has taken a cringey, awful, postmodern turn. But whatever their legacy, their lifespan was a thrill a minute. In four short years they fucked literally hundreds of audience members and stuck a wide range of interesting items into each other's most intimate orifices. Surely more than you could ever say for The Jam? ■



At the Army & Navy club, Chelmsford in 2000

Their rituals climaxed with the flinging of the Golden Condom

HEDONISM HELL

The acts who gave good taste the middle finger



The Shamen

"Eezer Goode, Eezer Goode, he's Ebenezer Goode". Two decades on, The Shamen's Mr C finally revealed that, yes, he'd been talking about ecstasy. Who knew? 'Ebenezer Goode', with a video starring Jerry Sadowitz (above), got to Number One during the BBC's drug awareness week, but after being hounded by the tabloids, the band deleted it while it was still at the top.



Foo Fighters

If the sight of a cross-dressing Dave Grohl doing it with a cross-dressing Jack Black isn't enough to get you banned from MTV, then it's difficult to say what sort of bestial witchery is. Though the channel seemed to object as much to the heroic quantities of booze that Black and Grohl consume during the five-minute 'Low' promo (above).



The Flaming Lips

The Flaming Lips have made nudity a calling card – from 'See The Leaves' and its crotch-shooting woman, to 'Ashes In The Air' with its semi-naked people and disembodied torsos, to the gratuitous yes-those-really-are-his-balls close-ups of 'You Lust'. All have been banned at various times. Thank heavens, then, for Vimeo.



The Prodigy

The Prodigy hired Swedish director Jonas Åkerlund to shoot a first-person video of a messy night out in London for their 'Smack My Bitch Up' video (above). The clip, premiered after midnight on Channel 4, is popularly believed to have been 'banned' by most TV stations, though only in the same sense that CBeebies 'bans' porn movies.



GG Allin

GG Allin put on legendary self-mutilating, fan-attacking, shit-eating live shows that often ended with venues trashed and both Allin and his audience covered in blood and faeces. His regular threats to kill himself onstage, however, never came to pass; he died of a heroin overdose after roaming naked through the streets of Manhattan following a gig.



BANNED!

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The **most** banned band in history

Among all charting bands, one has been considered a danger to society more than any other: The Beatles and their various solo offshoots. **Jamie Fullerton** examines their rock'n'roll rap sheet

Beatles pictures
burn in Georgia on
August 12, 1966
after John Lennon's
"more popular than
Jesus" comment



The Cuba banning

Years banned: 1960s–1970s

Reason: being “too American”

Having had run-ins with the US authorities over the years, The Beatles must have found it somewhat disappointing to find that their music was banned in Cuba throughout the 1960s and '70s for being “too American”. Jorge Serguera, then the president of the Cuban Institute Of Radio And Television, implemented the ban of the Fabs’ output being broadcast in the country, saying that their music posed a threat to the revolution taking place there. After he left his position, however, he claimed he liked the band’s music and was only following orders.

Almost banned from the US (possibly)

Year (almost) banned: 1964

Reason: unknown

In mid-1964, with the Fabs having already toured the country that year, rumours circulated in the press that the US government were planning to ban them from returning. No reasons were forthcoming for the supposed move, but it still prompted an outcry from the nation’s teenagers. Whether it was the result of the protest or whether there was no such plan in the first place was unclear, but Department Of Labor Secretary W Willard Wirtz claimed the latter, responding publicly to quash the story. “You may be relieved to know that, while the Government of the United States is old, it is not run by old fogies,” he wrote.

The Israel banning

Year banned: 1965

Reason: provoking “sexual stimuli”

Those images of screeching female Beatlemaniacs losing their minds in the front rows must have got through to Israel: in 1965 the authorities there refused a request for The Beatles to perform in the country. A committee of politicians and civil servants put out the following statement: “There is no musical or artistic experience here but a sensual display that arouses feelings of aggression replete with sexual stimuli.” It would be 43 years before a Beatle performed there, the exclusion lifted when Paul McCartney played a gig in Tel Aviv in September 2008, although by that point the “sexual stimuli” issue surrounding his show may have been less of a problem.

The ‘bigger than Jesus’ banning

Year banned: 1966

Reason: religion

In March 1966, John Lennon made a comment that would provoke more controversy than a million James Arthurs with a zillion Twitter accounts each ever could, declaring The Beatles “more popular than Jesus”. Despite the comment being made in reference to the decline of Christianity rather than an inflated view of his band, the response in the southern US was predictable: amid public burnings of their records, the WAQY-AM station in Birmingham, Alabama implemented a ban and a domino effect was activated as others followed suit. Arguably the ultimate consequence was Lennon’s death at the hands of born-again Christian Mark Chapman 14 years later.

The ‘Yesterday And Today’ sleeve

Year banned: 1966

Reason: obscenity

When Capitol Records cobbled together songs from various Beatles albums for a US release as ‘Yesterday And Today’, the band responded to the ‘butchering’ by putting forward a photo of them by Robert Whitaker for the sleeve – the Fabs appearing in butchers’ coats surrounded by naked headless dolls and hunks of meat. The album was recalled and the covers replaced by a duller alternative. Harrison, who would become a vegetarian, said: “Sometimes we all did stupid things thinking it was cool and hip when it was naive and dumb; and that was one of them.”

‘A Day In The Life’

Year banned: 1967

Reason: drugs

In banning the epic closer of ‘Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band’ from Radio 1, the BBC not only stunted the spread of one of The Beatles’ loveliest songs but also made a howler. Their justification was that the lyric “*Found my way upstairs and had a smoke*” was a drug reference, but in fact the line “*I’d love to turn you on*” was the subtle allusion to narcotics, rather than Lennon getting seductive. It would technically remain banned from the corporation’s stations until author David Storey picked it for *Desert Island Discs* in 1972.

‘Fixing A Hole’

Year banned: 1967

Reason: drugs

Another Beatles song to be banned by BBC Radio 1 for supposedly having drug references

‘THE BALLAD OF JOHN AND YOKO’

Year banned: 1969

Reason: religion

It seems like a tame lyric in the context of today’s Tyler and Eminem blatherings, but the line “*Christ, you know it ain’t easy*” from ‘The Ballad Of John And Yoko’ meant that this song was not just banned by the BBC, but also in the States. Many US stations wouldn’t play it, with the fact that Lennon had declared The Beatles “more popular than Jesus” prior to its release probably being a factor. Aware he was stirring up trouble again, Lennon demanded of the Apple label: “No pre-publicity, especially the ‘Christ’ bit, so don’t play it round too much or you’ll frighten people – get it pressed first.”





in the lyrics, 'Fixing A Hole' is probably the most unfairly treated song in their repertoire in this sense. The word 'fix' was the problem, with "I'm fixing a hole where the rain gets in/And stops my mind from wandering" interpreted to mean getting juiced up on heroin. It's widely accepted today that the song was written by McCartney about him fixing a hole in his roof. That's it. It doesn't all have to be acid-stuffed walruses and kaleidoscopic eyeballs in The Beatles' world, you know.

'I Am The Walrus' **Year Banned: 1967**

Reason: sex

As John Lennon explained of the lyrics to 'I Am The Walrus' in 1980: "The first line was written on one acid trip one weekend. The second line was written on the next acid trip the next weekend." Yet despite this being The Beatles' most overtly acid-cooked concoction, the lyrics ("I am the eggman, they are the eggmen/I am the walrus, goo goo g'jo" and so forth) were so obscure there were no accusations of drug references. Instead, this got the Beeb ban for the mentions of a "pornographic priestess" and an invitation to "let your knickers down".

'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds' **Year banned: 1967**

Reason: drugs

John Lennon's son Julian once drew a picture of his classmate, Lucy, then showed it to his dad and said, "It's Lucy in the sky with diamonds!" Well, that's what Lennon Senior always insisted. To most others, including the BBC, the titular phrase of this song was actually derived from the acronym LSD, and as such it was banned from BBC Radio 1 on release. To be fair, the reference to a "girl with kaleidoscope eyes" could refer to either a schoolgirl playing with a kiddy toy or a massive brain-bending acid session.

"EMI said they wouldn't release it. I said they had to"

Paul McCartney



The Beatles
in June 1967,
the month the
BBC banned
'A Day In The Life'

'Come Together' **Year banned: 1970** **Reason: advertising policy**

With lyrics including

"He bag production, he got walrus gumboot/He got Ono sideboard, he one spinal cracker", 'Come Together' isn't the

Fabs' most political moment. But it did start life as a track for the LSD-loving psychologist Timothy Leary, who asked Lennon to pen a campaign song for his bid to be Governor of California. When Lennon couldn't come up with an apt one, he wrote "gobbledygook" (his term) lyrics instead. The initial druggy connection had nothing to do with the BBC ban, though: the mention of "Coca-Cola" led the corporation to think it was advertising fizzy pop.

'Imagine' (John Lennon) **Year banned: 1971** **Reason: war**

A victim of the BBC's list of 68 tracks not to be played during the Gulf War (see also 'Back In The USSR' and 'Give Peace A Chance', below). As such, one of the most beautiful pieces of music – nay, art – ever created was off limits for the country's biggest broadcaster for the duration of the seven-month conflict. Arguably more revolutionary lyrically than Lennon's more simplistic 'Give Peace A Chance', Lennon admitted that the words were "virtually *The Communist Manifesto*", adding, "even though I am not particularly a communist and I do not belong to any movement".

'Give Ireland Back To The Irish' (Wings) **Year banned: 1972** **Reason: politics**

After The Beatles split, most people thought of Paul McCartney as an amiable sheep farmer rather than an angry firebrand. Then Wings came out with this single in response to British soldiers killing 13 civil rights protestors in Derry on Bloody Sunday. The BBC branded it "unsuitable for broadcast", not quelling cynics' suspicion that he'd released it as a shock tactic to boost his post-Fabs career. "I was phoned by the chairman of EMI, explaining that they wouldn't release it," said Paul. "I told him... they had to." So Lennon wasn't the only politically charged Fab...

'Hi, Hi, Hi' (Wings) **Year banned: 1972** **Reason: sex and drugs**

With such a blatant title, it's little surprise that this was another Wings song banned by the Beeb. The drug links are clear in the "We're gonna get hi hi hi with the music on" line, though McCartney protested: "Look at Bob

Dylan, 'Everybody must get stoned'. Does he mean you get high... or drunk? There was that ambiguity." And the sex? "Sweet banana, you've never been done/Yes, I go like a rabbit, gonna grab it". Not so ambiguous.

'Back In The USSR' **Year banned: 1990** **Reason: war**

The Beatles were officially classified as "capitalist pollution" by the USSR's Communist government during the band's 1960s heyday, and as such their music was completely banned, distributed only via an underground network of bootlegs. But 'Back In The USSR' was to be banned in Britain, by all the BBC's radio stations, during the 1990–91 Gulf War, included on a list of songs that made reference to conflict. Other entries? Frankie Goes To Hollywood's 'Two Tribes', Blondie's 'Atomic', Eric Clapton's 'I Shot The Sheriff' and, er, 'Sailing' by Rod Stewart.



'GIVE PEACE A CHANCE' (PLASTIC ONO BAND) **Year banned: 1969** **Reason: war**

Reason: war

John Lennon and Yoko Ono's one-dimensional stomper was one of the few songs on the BBC's list of conflict-related tracks banned during the Gulf War to actually be about the opposite: peace (or at least the desire for it). It still found itself nestled among the likes of Cutting Crew's 'I Just Died In Your Arms Tonight' and Cat Stevens' 'I'm Gonna Get Me A Gun' on said list. Originally written during the Vietnam War, Lennon said of it: "In me secret heart I wanted to write something that would take over [protest anthem] 'We Shall Overcome'. I thought, 'Why doesn't somebody write something for the people now, that's what my job is.'"

'Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da' **Year banned: 2001** **Reason: 9/11**

Shortly after the Twin Towers fell on that dark day, September 11, 2001, a document was distributed by radio company Clear Channel – which owned around 1,200 stations across the US – named the Clear Channel memorandum. A whopping 165 songs were listed, including 'Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da'. While these songs were not banned outright, stations were advised that they "might

not want to play these songs". Other than its jaunty vibe and the repeated lyric "life goes on", it's hard to see what justifies its inclusion.

'Ticket To Ride' **Year banned: 2001** **Reason: 9/11**

When the Clear Channel memorandum was issued (see above), 'Ticket To Ride's unfortunate title meant it was included by dint of being about travel. Other songs deemed inappropriate in the wake of 9/11 included AC/DC's 'Shot Down In Flames', Ozzy Osbourne's 'Suicide Solution' and Bruce Springsteen's 'I'm Goin' Down'. Still, 'Ticket To Ride' may not have been about transport at all, as Lennon was said to have coined the phrase to refer to Hamburg prostitutes having a clean bill of health certificate. ■

Aphex Twin, aka Richard
James, plotting more
electronic mayhem

FROM
THE
VAULTS

Prankster tripping

NME, 8 January 1994

Shortly before the release of his second album, Richard James, the techno rascal better known as Aphex Twin, let Ted Kessler into his bizarre world – though not, sadly, his tank
Photo: Stefan De Batselier

First impressions: something's gone terribly wrong. The stage is filled with smoke, the lights are flashing violently out of sync and the whole venue is charged with a horrible metallic sound: grrrrchhrunchhhhh! This isn't an evening of industrial angst or a headbangers' ball; this is supposed to be the climax of five hours of everybody-in-the-place-say-unity! raving. What on earth is going on?

Suddenly, a lone, muscular figure darts out from the smoke. He stands tautly at the front of the stage, head shaved, stripped to the waist, chopping the air with his hands and throwing his bald head from side to side. He looks like he just disconnected himself from the mains.

Then, as the deafening pipe-gnashing crashes straight into a fuzzy drum machine at 200bpm, he jerks himself violently backwards, forwards, sideways and then right across the stage until it looks like he might throw himself off, just pulling back from the edge in time. In that instant you're able to catch a glimpse of his features: his huge black pupils, clenched teeth, furrowed brow and entirely expressionless mouth. It's as if he's been possessed by the

strange, filthy noise enveloping the disco. It's very spooky.

The mellow techno vibes of a few minutes earlier are instantly smashed by this Grade-A weirdness and the majority of previously ecstatic young ravers are sent scurrying towards overcrowded chill-out rooms. Only the genuinely inquisitive and visitors to acid hell stay close to the stage and try to keep up.

"Is that The Aphex Twin?" asks one incredulous retreating raver.

His mate shrugs. They've heard 'Selected Ambient Works 85-92' and 'Digeridoo', they've heard about The Aphex Twin's exploits as raider of the new techno frontier and pioneer of '90s electronic ambience. They know he's pretty sci-fi, but, well, they thought that meant *2001: A Space Odyssey*, not *Alien*.

But peer through the smoke towards the back of the stage and yes, you can see a stocky figure with shoulder-length hair hunched over racks of mangled, wired equipment, hitting out at various buttons, sending his dancer shooting demonically across the stage. Richard D James, aka The Aphex Twin. Get close enough and you can just about make out his face. He's staring right back at you and laughing out loud.

"OH YEAH, I remember that show," says James, surveying London from the top of St Paul's six months later. He's laughing again.

"It was fucking decent, wasn't it? Everyone just walked away because they couldn't handle

us. Brilliant. I thought that might happen when I played there again, but everyone tried dancing and stuff. Bit disappointing really. I like it when people get freaked out by my music, it's a good laugh. Still, it won't happen again."

Why not?

"Because I'm never playing live again."

Whaaaaat?

"Nah. I've had enough of that. I used to want to do PAs and tours and now I've done it, I don't want to do it again. I don't want to do something twice. Well, not unless I get offered a huge amount of cash."

So where does that leave his dancer? James shrugs, turns around and makes for the stairs.

"Up shit alley."

Richard James, 22 ("I fucking hate it. Who wants to be this old?"), is fast developing a reputation as a difficult maverick sod/genius to rank alongside the likes of John Lydon, Kevin Rowland and Mark E Smith. He claims to hate

every aspect of the music business, from making records to doing interviews, and he'd quit tomorrow if he could afford to. All he's interested in is making music, not because he really wants to but because he has to. He gets sounds stuck in his head,

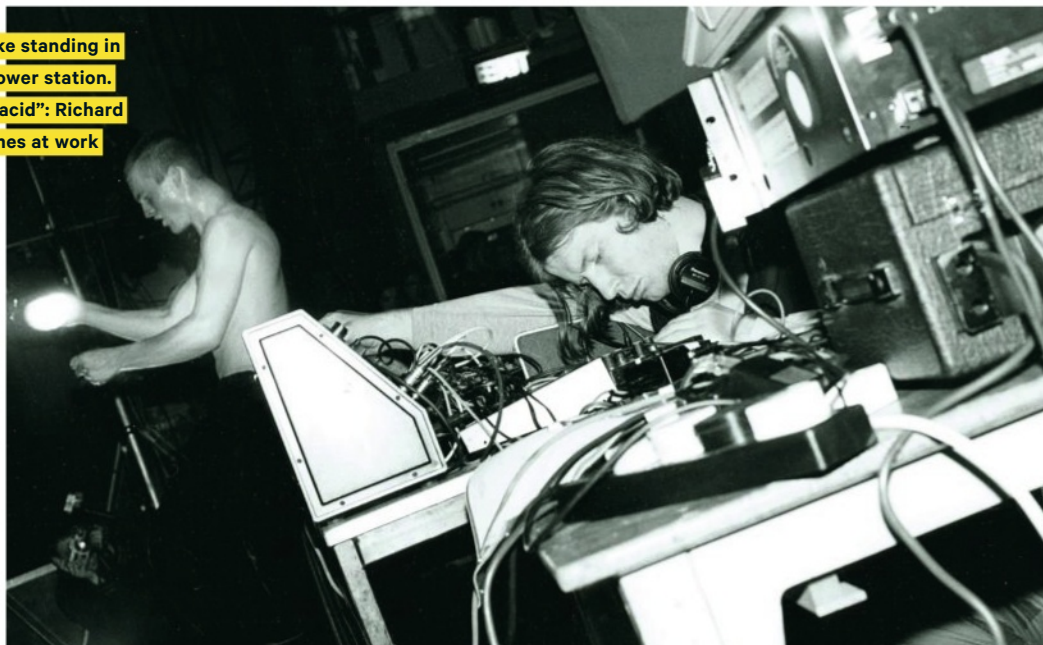
and if he doesn't get them out he goes crazy.

That's how it started down in Cornwall where he grew up. He was always interested in electronics and new sounds, so he started making his own instruments out of bits of old computers and keyboards and eventually he found a way of translating the noises floating inside him onto tape, noises that no-one can ➔

"I like it when people get freaked out"
Richard James

"Like standing in
a power station.
On acid": Richard
James at work

FROM
THE
VAULTS



ever copy because James has made them up.

That's his genius. He doesn't know where the sounds come from, but listen to his work as The Aphex Twin, Polygon Window, Blue Calx or any of his other aliases and it's obvious that this isn't someone following trends but a genuine innovator. He makes records that sound as if you're floating through space with a broken control panel; records full of unease, wonder, majesty, discomfort and occasionally breathtaking beauty.

He's Brian Eno crossed with Alex from *A Clockwork Orange* crossed with someone who smokes too much dope; an innovator of new sounds. He doesn't give a monkey's about anything other than his music, his girlfriend, family, some of his friends and the tank he bought earlier this year, which is now parked outside his ancestral home back in Cornwall.

"I don't make tracks for anyone other than myself," he says. "I'd be making tracks if I didn't have a record deal or anyone to listen to my tracks. Totally. I don't take any pleasure out of the work I do, I just like making music. Doing things like this, making records and playing gigs are all done for the same cause – and that's so I don't have to get a job and so that, in the long term, I'll have more time to make tracks.

"That's why I like it when people get freaked out by my shows. I'm not an entertainer or a pop star. I find the whole thing embarrassing. I get photos taken of me and so get recognised, but the whole thing about doing it for other people makes me cringe. I've just got to get the sounds out of me, that's my only priority.

"In America I had a backlog of 60 tracks floating in my head but, because I was playing gigs, I couldn't get them out. But by the time

**"My tank is nearly
fully operational. The
machine gun works!"**

Richard James

I got back to England I knew I had to clear them out because the new ideas were coming in and getting mucked up by the old ones. It was like a logjam up there," he says, pointing to his head.

This is what marks Richard out as truly unique in the pop biz. He genuinely appears not to be powered by any of the normal lusts of the budding pop empire, ie money, fame or ego-massage. The only reason he makes music is because he can't hear the sounds inside him anywhere else. And that's more punk rock than a thousand New Waves Of New Wavers.

"I don't take any pleasure out of the work. If I could stop tomorrow I would," he repeats.

"Sometimes I think that if I had a 16-hour-a-day job I'd get more time to make tracks than I do now. That's why I don't sleep for more than two hours a night if possible, so that I do all the crap I've got to do for the biz during normal hours, but when everyone else goes to sleep, I go into my studio."

It also means that he has a huge backlog of material ready to be released. Some of that will come to light when 'Selected Ambient Works Volume II' comes out in February 1994.

"But even that's over a year old," he snorts.

"I've had so many arguments with cunts

over the business side this year, people trying to rip me off, that it took a while to get it sorted out. Not trying to rip me off over ideas – I don't mind that, because I think music should be in the public domain – but money. I find it really amusing how sad people are in this business.

"The new ambient album is going to be a triple album. I wanted it to be five albums but that's a bit too long probably. What does it sound like? Like standing in a power station. On acid."

The rest of the year is hazily mapped out for James: he's going to take some recreational drugs; he's going to record a lot of tracks; and he wants to drive his tank through central London and into the City.

"Can you imagine? They'd freak because it's nearly fully operational. The machine gun works! I reckon there's tanks parked all over London that we don't know about and they'd all come out to blow me up. Maybe I should film it for a video..."

This is the sort of thing that Richard James likes to do with his time off. He doesn't go to the pictures, he doesn't follow sport other than laser-gun fighting, and reading books would be alright if they didn't take

so long. He sometimes plays chess, but only when he's tripping. Indeed he's just finished an evening of LSD enlightenment on the morning we meet. He spent most of this time, however, doing his accounts, because he claims to have a firmer grip on numbers when on acid. He's either a liar or a complete freak.

"I suppose I've just got a different set of priorities to most people. I don't give a fuck what you write in this article, except if you call me a cunt it would give me an excuse to stop doing interviews. That's all. I've certainly got a different outlook from most other musicians. Like, when I met St Etienne in the street one day they all had long faces and I thought something terrible must have happened, but they said, 'Oh, we're really upset because we got a bad review in the *NME* today.' I couldn't believe it! If you're not doing it because the music is inside you, then why bother?"

And with that James heads home to sleep off the previous night's exertions. But before he hits the sack he'll step into his studio. He's got a new keyboard pattern stuck in his brain, see, and unless he squeezes it out soon it'll mess up his head for the rest of the weekend. It seems there really is no rest for the wicked. ■

What happened next?

Well, things just kept getting weirder...

BATH TIME

Continuing his tactic of employing pseudonyms for different releases, James released the fourth EP in his 'Analogue Bubblebath' series under the name AFX. A reissue of the EP would include a track made up of a mangled snippet of beloved '70s motorbike stunt daredevil Evil Kneivel's press conference after he failed to jump over Snake River Canyon.

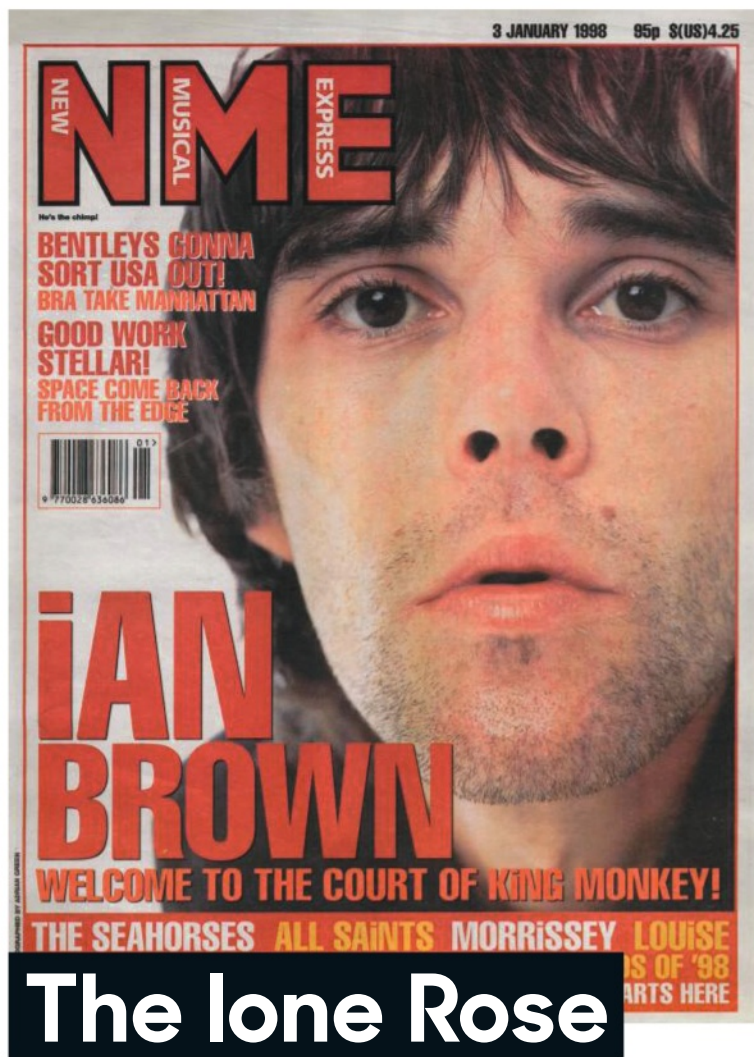
MORE AMBIENCE

A sequel to 'Selected Ambient Works 85-92', entitled 'Selected Ambient Works Volume II' emerged in 1994, with each untitled track represented by a corresponding image, including mould, curtains and rhubarb. James claimed the sounds of the tracks were inspired by his lucid dreams.

COMPUTER WORLD

James' last album recorded on analogue equipment, '... I Care Because You Do', was released in 1995. For the rest of the decade he would pioneer the use of computers and software synthesizers for composing music, as on 1996's acclaimed 'Richard D James Album', many tracks from which were used on adverts.

THIS WEEK IN 1998



As he heads out with his solo debut album, King Monkey looks back at how “the cocaine bus” split The Stone Roses

King Monkey Ian Brown sits down with NME's Keith Cameron to talk about smashing in the headlamps of a “cheeky” paparazzo and his new solo career, having put The Stone Roses and his legendarily tuneless turn at Reading 1996 behind him. “When I hear the tape now... oh, the singing's poor,” he says, wincing at the memory.

Declaring his debut solo album ‘Unfinished Monkey Business’ to be “a hell of a lot more compelling than The Seahorses”, John Squire's new band, he claims Oasis owe their career to the Roses (“I feel good that someone formed a band from seeing our band”) and exposes the internal divide that drove them apart. “Around '93, I wanted to finish it,” he admits. “As we walk into the sessions for ‘Second Coming’, John turns to me as Mani's putting his key in the door and says, ‘I'm not working with him again’, meaning Mani... It's not a band no more... In '95, on those tours there were two buses: the cocaine bus and the non-cocaine bus. I was on the non-cocaine bus. I can't stand cocaine. Everyone I know who takes coke, I've cut them out of my life and I feel great now.”

WHO'S NEXT?

NME's list of bands to look out for in 1998 includes such future indie notaries as Idlewild, Six By Seven, The Beta Band, Grandaddy, Ultrasound and Gomez, alongside less star-bound names such as The O and Campag Velocet. At the forefront of the new year's rock hopefuls, though, is a combo known as Theaudience, featuring one Sophie Ellis-Bextor.

SPACED OUT

Liverpool's premier psychedelic pop band Space appear to be losing it on tour, with guitarist Jamie Murphy ending up in psychiatric care on the eve of a US jaunt. Meanwhile, singer Tommy Scott reveals his career was saved by a psychic. “I lost me voice for two months. I'd been trying herbal remedies, massage, cortisone injections in me arse... [then a] psychic said, ‘Don't worry, it's stress’. He told me the day it would come back and it came back that day.”

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



The Flaming Lips - 'Zaireeka'
4 × 2.5 = 10/10

“Here is an album comprising four CDs... to hear the songs in their entirety you need four CD players playing simultaneously. Imagine the carnage it would cause if listened to by infants while driving.”

■ SYLVIA PATTERSON

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

► Reviewing the Spice Girls' movie *Spiceworld*, NME's Steven Wells calls it “a refreshingly, life-affirmingly CRAP product... a mess, a disaster, which will please pop punters of ALL AGES but really piss off dismally grizzly, terminally teenaged misogynist Radiohead fanwankers”.

► Morrissey plays Battersea Power Station to support his ‘Maladjusted’ album: “He should be Britpop's Grand Old Man Of Letters by now,” notes reviewer Stephen Dalton. “By bottling it all up he's cheating us of some great pop debates.”

► Spice Girls are Number One with ‘Too Much’. Teletubbies are Number Two with ‘Say Eh-Oh!’

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DOES ROCK 'N' ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS? Vs THE FANS

WE FIND THE ROCK STAR, YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS



**Nina
Persson**

**Singer,
The Cardigans**

1 On the album cover of 'Long Gone Before Daylight', what animal can be seen behind you?

Gavin James, Aberdeen, via email
"A swan."

CORRECT. Does that symbolise anything?

"It's my taxidermy swan and her name is Emmy-Lou. There's no symbolism, it's just pretty and one of the animals we could get our hands on for the shoot."

2 To the nearest 100, how many followers do The Cardigans have on Twitter?

Julie Farraday, New York, via email
"On Twitter? I've no clue. It's not many – 624?"

WRONG. 419, and zero tweets so far. Are you not a Twitter sort of band?
"That's not much! I've no idea who even runs the account."

3 How many hits has 'My Favourite Game' had on YouTube, to the nearest 100,000?

Julie Farraday, New York, via email

"Oh wow, I'll say 300,000? Much more than that? 3.3 million?"

WRONG. 17.5 million.
"Oh wow, that's crazy!"



4 In the video for 'My Favourite Game', what kind of car are you driving?

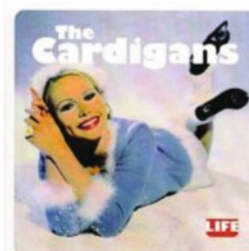
Eve Hawley, Warrington, on Facebook
"Oh fuck, I should know that one. Damn. A Cadillac?"
CORRECT. A 1974 Cadillac Eldorado convertible.

"It was amazing – the weather was really hot and the car was super-hot. I did try to drive it a couple of metres, but that shoot was surrounded by crazy security and insurance matters, so mostly the car is sitting on a truck and I'm pretend-driving. When you see the whole car it's the stuntwoman driving it."

5 What footwear are you wearing on the cover of 'Life'?

Jack Norbury, Kettering, via email

"Ice-skates."
CORRECT. Were you a big skater?



"Yes I was, actually – I was training at figure-skating for a couple of years, that's why I got the idea for that being my dream profession. I'd never been a very ambitious and competitive person, so it was a bad time for me to start competing. I did one competition and sucked at it, so I didn't think it was fun any more."

6 Can you name both films that 'Lovefool' features in?

Leanne Potts, London, via email

"I actually only know *Romeo + Juliet*. It's also in the *American Office*."

WRONG. *Romeo + Juliet* and *Cruel Intentions*.

7 Where did your collaboration with Manic Street Preachers, 'Your Love Alone Is Not Enough' get to in the UK charts?

Taylor Bradley, Liverpool, on Twitter

"I just don't keep track of these things. Maybe 17? Better than that? Nine?"

WRONG. Number Two.

"Really? That's great! Maybe I was told back then, but that's great to hear. I sort of miss them... I've got buddy-crushes on all of them. It's super-inspiring to work with others, because you get into another person's musical world, their musical mind."



10 In the US version of the video for 'Lovefool', what is the name of the newspaper in the opening shot?

David Taylor,

London, via email

"I've no idea."

WRONG. *Daily World*.

SCORE = 4

"That's pretty bad. Really hard questions. Whoever knows these things, it's really geeky stuff."



Claire Danes and
Leonardo DiCaprio in
1996's *Romeo + Juliet*

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