

1 FEBRUARY 2014

NME

NME
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THE YEAR
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1994

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the cynicism...
something is
happening
here"

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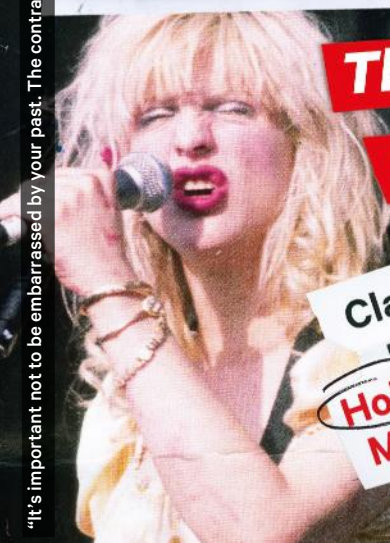
Steve Albini
on post-rock
*"What ridiculous
terminology!"*

The year trip-hop
(and Bristol)
exploded
Interview with Tricky

Bikini Kill on
riot grrrl
*"There was A LOT
of violence"*

The year
the East Coast
reclaimed hip-hop
Interview with
Digable Planets

...and don't forget
Britpop
Tales from the inside
(and outside)



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1994: FEATURING...

Hip-hop

Phil Hebblethwaite talks to Digable Planets' Ishmael Butler

Alt.rock

Sadie Dupuis from Speedy Ortiz in conversation with Stephen Malkmus

Trip-hop

Tricky tells Louis Pattison about the year trip-hop broke out of Bristol

Britpop

Sonya Echobelly tells Mark Beaumont how Britpop united the nation

Also featured:

The birth of post-rock in Chicago; how riot grrrl invaded pop culture; why *My So-Called Life* was the first TV drama to understand the power of the soundtrack; and the legacy of 1994's albums by Morrissey, Jeff Buckley, Nick Cave, the Manics and more

CONTRIBUTORS

Guy Eppel
Photographer
Guy shot Fucked Up at the closing of 285 Kent in New York: "Shooting the final show was a poignant moment for me. Never take shit for granted: embrace it and make the most of it."

Fraser McAlpine
Writer
Fraser wrote about the recent report on disability access at gig venues: "I've been gathering stories and talking to some incredibly generous and committed people."

Marc Riley
DJ
Marc is up in arms about the potential closure of Manchester's much-loved venue, the Night & Day Café. "I hope a solution can be found, for everyone's sake."

THIS WEEK WE ASK...



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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TOUR DE FORCE

I've been going to the NME Awards Tour for the past four years – since I was 15 – and I have to say that this year is one of the best line-ups yet. I've never seen Interpol live, but their debut album is one of the best guitar records ever, in my opinion. Temples I've seen before and I hope they won't mind me saying that they're basically the British Tame Impala, which can only be a good thing. The recent *Radar* issue of *NME* tipped me off about Royal Blood and Circa Waves – who are especially awesome, seeing as they come from Liverpool. Which only leaves me with one thing left to say – see you down the front!

Jim Drake, Liverpool

Leonie Cooper: Glad to hear that you're just as excited about the forthcoming shows as we are, Jim. Interpol first played the NME Awards Tour back in 2003, and they return 11 years later with new songs, new haircuts and, for the sake of hygiene, hopefully some new trousers. Alongside The Strokes and Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Interpol

made the most important post-millennial music to come out of New York, and fuck if they didn't half look cool doing it. What's more, we've picked three other acts that'll be nothing but bloody delicious when served up alongside them. Now all we have to do is skulk about in black denim, waiting for that fifth album.



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pie and you u fucking dare to nominate him as villain?! U need to reevaluate your god damn life. If you dont get harry out of that fucking award i will shove that fucking award trough your troath untill u admit harry styles is a fucking angel and i love him ok??

Danitzta, via email

LC: Who knew so many Harry Styles fans were *NME* readers, eh? And so goddamn awful at spelling too? This week's virtual postbag was stuffed to the brim with Styles-inspired psychosis, following Harry's nomination for Villain Of The Year at this year's NME Awards with Austin, Texas. Danitzta's is one of the more unhinged. If said award does end up being shoved through our "troath" then, officers, you'll know where to begin your inquiries.

DAMON'S RETURN

So Damon Albarn is back! And not only is the good man releasing an album, he's also playing Latitude, one of my fave festivals of all time. There are some excellent modern British songwriters – Alex Turner, for example – but no-one quite matches the majesty of Damon. Fingers crossed he'll be doing a solo tour too.

Jillian Hewitt, via email

LC: Transforming the most miserable 'Blue' Monday of the year into the rather cheerier Damon Day, last week Albarn announced his debut solo LP, 'Everyday Robots', streamed the title track's video and, somewhere in Utah, played a solo set as part of Sundance Film Festival – all in the space of 24 hours. He also probably pissed off a few thousand Aussies, as Blur were supposed to be playing the Big Day Out festival then too. Oh well, it could have been worse – he could have been making a booze called Britpop...

A BRITPOP BLUR

Alex James – seriously? I forgave you for the shitty festival you put on last year in the Cotswolds. I even felt a bit sorry for you when Waitrose stopped stocking your strangely flavoured cheese. And I've come to terms with the fact that you're mates with that festering tosspiece David Cameron. But hearing news that you're going to be making a booze called Britpop is too much. Please stop.

Dani Edwards, via email

LC: There was so much potential in Alex James. Tall, handsome, good



at wielding a bass, could write a rather entertaining memoir... But his transformation into a smug, befuddling cross between Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Jeremy Clarkson is essentially the worst thing to happen to the legacy of 1990s indie since Dodgy decided to make a comeback.

USE IT OR LOSE IT

I love working in an independent record store. What I can't stand about the job are some of the melts that waltz into these stores. "This is cheaper online," they'll say. If it's cheaper online, then for the love of all things musical, stay indoors, put your feet up, grab your laptop and click that order button. Don't spend your time filling these stores with your complaints. We don't have the cash money to be tossing around, throwing in casual

orders for 10,000-odd copies of the latest Arcade Fire album. Sack your price checks right off, please, and remember why you came here in the first place. Support your local record store and they'll support your music needs!

Luke Bartlett, via email

LC: We all know that it can be a little bit pricier to buy your music from an independent store, but nothing quite matches the feeling of thumbing through fat chunks of vinyl and getting to interact with wonderfully moody blokes in tatty Mogwai T-shirts like Luke here. And if you can't afford it all the time, at least pop down and show your support on April 19, this year's Record Store Day.

HARRY'S FAN CLUB

How in the hell do u even dare to nominate harry styles for villain of the fucking hecking year. Trust me he's like 10 times nicer than you will ever be in your whole damn life he is a sweetheart sugar cutie



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

I was behind the Vogue Theatre in Vancouver, Canada. Matt noticed my fluorescent Arctic Monkeys phone case and asked if it was glow-in-the-dark! Matt and Alex were talking about how cool it would be to have glow-in-the-dark merch.

Darya Aranii, via email

LOUISE AUBRIE



LOUISE AUBRIE

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SCALLYWAG MAGAZINE

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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Damon Albarn
Everyday Robots

Unless you count 2003 rough cuts EP 'Democracy', this is the first material from the prolific songwriter to simply be credited to Damon Albarn. It is everything you'd want from an artist who has always resisted pigeonholing. Peppered with samples and underpinned by hip-hop beats and an eerie string motif, it may seem experimental, but strip it back and it's an 'Under The Westway'-esque piano lament as gorgeous as anything Albarn's ever written.

Lisa Wright, writer

2. Meridian Dan
German Whip

One of the biggest grime tunes of the past few months is finally getting an official release via PMR (Disclosure, Jessie Ware). Although a veteran of the scene, Meridian Dan will release his debut album later this year. Here, he recruits JME and Big H for a frenetic burst of energy, all three bigging up their vehicle credentials over a chrome-plated beat. Don't bet against this track following Dizzee and Wiley into the Top 40.

David Renshaw, News Reporter

3. Tweens
Be Mean

Tweens are a three-piece from Cincinnati, Ohio and this bubblegum-punk single announces their arrival by bursting all over your eardrums like Karen O fronting the Ramones. It's a righteous din with a pop sheen, as if Phil Spector had produced Be Your Own Pet. Excellently named frontwoman Bridget Battles exhorts her lover to be less sweet. She keeps saying she wants me to be mean, but I can't – they're totally fucking rad.

Kevin EG Perry, writer

4. Keel Her
Roswell

Output has never been an issue for Rose Keeler-Schäffeler aka Keel Her, who somehow found time to post a new track to SoundCloud every day for several months. 'Roswell' reinforces her position as the new queen of lo-fi, a low-key beauty that encapsulates her style; a central idea doused in fuzz and echo with beach-pop melodies, drawling vocals and a guitar line you'll snag your tights on. It's low on complexity but big on emotion.

Hayley Avron, writer

5. Beck
Blue Moon

Get the bunting out because Beck is back with an album in February, six years since his last. If the first single from it is anything to go by, he hasn't cheered up much in the interim. "I'm so tired of being alone," he sings on 'Blue Moon' over a mandolin and drums pounding like a slowly beating heart. The cooing bridge even features what sounds like an oboe rocking out. Whatever helps, I guess.

Hazel Sheffield, writer

**6. Bass Drum Of Death**
Black Don't Glow

Mississippi's two-piece Bass Drum Of Death are for fans of the 'Nuggets' compilation and the current crop of Californian garage artists, like Ty Segall, Thee Oh Sees and White Fence. This new single, released to tie in with their US tour, follows their second album from 2013 and features a very early Kinks-like riff with frontman John Barrett singing, "Anytime you look you'll see me tryin'; every time I look you'll see me dyin'." Everything OK, pal?

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

7. Ratking
Canal

"We RATKING... Canal! Canal!" This is the sound of Ratking's return. You'll recall the XL-signed, teenage New York rap crew – Patrick 'Wiki' Morales, MC Hak and Sporting Life – from 2012's opinion-splitting 'Wiki93' EP; a spare, aggressive collection of rowdy raps over Clams Casino-aping trap beats, with titles like 'Piece Of Shit'. On 'Canal' the laidback assault continues: "Open your eyes, wake up, when the city gets loud," whines Wiki until ready to rage.

Eve Barlow, Deputy Editor

8. Blood Red Shoes
Wretch (feat. Eoin Loveless)

As if Dreng frontman Eoin Loveless wasn't busy enough touring the world with his brother Rory, Blood Red Shoes have roped him in to feature on the B-side for their latest single 'An Animal', meaning Laura-Mary Carter and Steven Ansell can take a bit of a breather. Loveless' almost-spoken vocal suits the ballsy riff-and-drum combination, while the lyrics, with streets turning to ice and all manner of sub-zero pleasures, is suitably menacing.

Andy Welch, writer

9. Cloud Nothings
I'm Not Part Of Me

Snotty Cleveland post-hardcore punks Cloud Nothings are down to a trio now with guitarist Joe Boyer taking his leave, but this stormer from their upcoming third album 'Here And Nowhere Else' is no less of a raw garage-rock assault. From a churning lo-fi verse to a flying, buzzing, singalong chorus, 'I'm Not Part Of Me' hurtles by and imagines a world where Dinosaur Jr really did win the alt.rock wars.

Matthew Horton, writer

10. Schoolboy Q
Break The Bank

Quincy Hanley's third LP and his major label debut, 'Oxymoron', is one of the most anticipated hip-hop albums of the year. This cut is an old-school, '90s edged, Alchemist-produced, piano-soul sampling, mood-rap banger. Following Kendrick Lamar, Schoolboy is on his way to being the next rapper from the Black Hippy group to go global, especially if this slab of awesome is anything to go by.

Leonie Cooper, writer

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

► LISTEN TO THEM ALL AT NME.COM/ONREPEAT NOW

11. Patti Smith Stay

In which the Godmother of New York punk takes on Rihanna's hot-eyed mega-ballad at a NY gig at the end of last year. The result is a starker, rawer, take on the original – peppered with Smith's typical self-lacerating humour as she declares she's "nervous" midway through. She needn't have been – it's better than any of the covers she put to record on her 2007 album '12' and evokes the devastatingly poignant heartbreak of 'Pissing In A River'.

Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor

12. Bishop Nehru You Stressin'

Fast-rising NY rapper Markel Scott, aka Bishop Nehru, hops on a deliciously chilled Disclosure production for this new single, effortlessly spitting rhymes about "aiming for the top, non-stop" over choppy codeine-slowed synths and a boom bap beat. It's Nehru's long-awaited album with rap veteran MF Doom that hip-hop heads are truly excited about, but in the meantime this is a brilliant three minutes of new school rap flavour.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

13. Thurston Moore Detonation

The former Sonic Youther is really settling in Stoke Newington if this solo single is anything to go by. A spunky proto-punk rabble-rouser that sees Thurston spitting lyrics about sabotage, revolutionary politics and "wildcat strikes", it's a sort of abstract social history about the Angry Brigade, a bunch of left-wing urban guerillas who operated out of east London in the early '70s. Ends with the words: "We may have to use a toy grenade."

Louis Pattison, writer

14. FAMY Donkey

Some of FAMY share another band with ex-members of Wu Lyf, but there's none of Los Porcos' disco grooves on 'Donkey'. In fact, the Londoners seem to offer their own take on the departed Mancunians' heavy pop. Reverb dials are turned up full, while the pounding drum rhythms sound like they've been dropped in a cave, vocals battling for attention amidst their clanging tumult. There are hooks here, too, lifting it from mere bedlam.

Simon Jay Catling, writer

15. Coves Cast A Shadow

The latest preview of what to expect from Beck Wood and John Ridgard's debut album 'Soft Friday', 'Cast A Shadow' struts as hard as The Kills, pausing only to inject mind-bending psychedelic motifs. "You make me move like I gotta/You make me move I wanna," sings Wood, all sultry over Ridgard's paisley-flecked garage riffs. This is sexy, smoky and totally enthralling.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor



16. Conway Big Talk

LA-based Kassia Conway might be an unknown entity in the UK right now but expect all that to change over the course of 2014. 'Big Talk' introduces the bleach blonde singer as an East Coast take on Karen O, loaded with the same bold and colourful sense of fun and give-a-fuck attitude but with a way sunnier disposition. It's electro-tinged, indie-friendly pop with its lip slightly curled and should, by rights, send Conway stratospheric.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

17. Chvrches Bela Lugosi's Dead

Bauhaus' original version of 'Bela Lugosi's Dead' – named for the actor famous for playing Count Dracula – creeps along in nine minutes of Cramps-like psychobilly weirdness. In Chvrches' hands, the sound is somewhere between Eurythmics and the synth theme from John Carpenter's *Halloween*, but candy coated by Lauren Mayberry's sugar-drop vocals. Find it on the soundtrack to forthcoming movie *Vampire Academy*.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

18. Wye Oak The Tower

Jenn Wasner is a shapeshifter: a sweet UK-G-influenced warbler as Dungeonesse, singer of groove-heavy torch songs as Flock Of Dimes, and conjurer of lugubrious magic with Wye Oak, her main gig with Andy Stack. The Baltimore band have also had an overhaul for their fourth studio album (due later this year): 'The Tower' sounds like the dream of Arthur Russell and Kate Bush collaborating, a baroque-formal synth two-step.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

19. Disclosure F For You (feat. Mary J Blige)

If you thought Disclosure were already big, this is the moment they go nuclear. During the US tour the Lawrence brothers hit the studio with R&B legend Mary J Blige to collaborate on a new version of 'F For You'. Along with a super-cool video of Howard, Guy and Blige outlined in the trademark Disclosure scribble it pushes the '90s house sound to another level – and predictably the top of the US charts.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

20. Breton S Four

There's always been something naughtily scuzzy about Breton: an eagerness to undercut their arch art-rock with helter-skelter beats and eschew the polite airs-and-graces of Alt-J et al. 'S Four', the next taster from the London four-piece's upcoming 'War Room Stories', is no different: it's a slow-burning little thing which starts off poised and pristine before a heavy WHOMP and jittery drums take hold, darting to and fro over a collision of skittering noise.

Ben Hewitt, writer

The Week

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS



8

Daft Punk return to the stage...

French duo win big at 56th Grammy Awards in Los Angeles

How do you compete with half a Beatles reunion? The 56th Grammy Awards in Los Angeles on Sunday (January 26) saw Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr singing the former's 'Queenie Eye' and sharing the same stage for the first time since 2009. But with five wins, including Record Of The Year and Album Of The Year, the night belonged to Daft Punk. Their star-studded and long-delayed return to public performance took place on a set resembling a 1970s recording studio, where album collaborators Pharrell Williams and Nile Rodgers plus soul veteran Stevie Wonder

accompanied the French duo on a version of 2013 hit 'Get Lucky' that segued into 'Le Freak', by Rodgers' Chic, and later Wonder's 'Another Star'. There was no sign of Thomas Bangalter and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo until almost two minutes in, when the blacked-out control room window flickered with light and revealed the two robots. Macklemore & Ryan Lewis made a fair bid at upstaging them, inviting rapper Queen Latifah to officiate the weddings of 33 same-sex couples during their performance of gay-rights song 'Same Love' with Madonna. Beyoncé and Jay Z opened the show. ■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

Getting lucky:
Daft Punk, Nile
Rodgers, Stevie
Wonder and
Pharrell Williams
at The Staples Centre
in Los Angeles,
January 26



with a little help from their friends

9

WIREIMAGE

Carnage

in the capital

In the run-up to the NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas, we're putting on a series of gigs at venues across London

This month, the NME Awards Shows with Austin, Texas will take over venues across the capital once again. This year's crop includes Warpaint, Chvrches, Phoenix, The Orwells, Fat White Family, Speedy Ortiz, Courtney Barnett, Radkey, Eyedress, Circa Waves, Childhood and more, all lining up for three weeks of mayhem before the ceremony itself at London's O2 Academy Brixton on February 26. We caught up with a few of this year's performers to find out what we can expect. The answer? A riot of new songs, stagedives and spinning around in confined spaces. Bring it on.



PHOENIX Thomas Mars

"We played Brixton Academy once before.

It's incredible: big, but still warm – it doesn't have that hockey arena feel. We haven't played our own show in London for a while and our last record seemed to get more attention than all the previous ones, so the planets are aligned for an epic night."

►GIG DETAILS O2 Academy Brixton, February 5



CHVRCHES Martin Doherty

"We've never played the Scala before. We're

touring the album so fans can expect a lot from that. Ever since I knew what being in a band was, I knew about the NME Awards, so getting the chance to go along to that and being nominated for an award is really great."

►GIG DETAILS Scala, February 17



SWIM DEEP Austin Williams

"I'm looking forward to playing KOKO for

the first time – it's a big venue. Our London crowd is always great. We'll definitely throw a party. I think



THE NME AWARDS SHOWS 2014 WITH AUSTIN, TEXAS

Black Rebel Motorcycle Club Electric Ballroom (February 3)
Pup The Miller (5)
Phoenix O2 Academy Brixton (5)
Slaves The Black Heart (6)
The Family Rain The Garage (11)
Courtney Barnett Sebright Arms (12)
Cheatahs Birthdays (12)
The Strypes O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (13)
Only Real The Lexington (14)
Parquet Courts Electric Ballroom (16)
Swim Deep KOKO (17)
Chvrches Scala (17)
Speedy Ortiz Birthdays (18)
Warpaint KOKO (18)
Childhood/Telegram Electrowerkz (19)
Superfood Oslo (19)
Au Revoir Simone The Garage (20)
Dreng Scala (20)
Eyedress Sebright Arms (21)
Radkey Sebright Arms (23)
The Orwells The 100 Club (24)
Circa Waves Sebright Arms (24)
Brody Dalle Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen (24)
Fat White Family Electrowerkz (25)

►Tickets for the NME Awards Shows 2014 with Austin, Texas are available from NME.COM/tickets



The Orwells play London's 100 Club on February 24

we're gonna put on a big lighting show – I've got something really special envisioned. We've got a very special DJ guest as well that we're not allowed to announce, but it's someone we all love. I can't wait for the Awards themselves though – I've always wanted to be nominated. It's incredible."

►GIG DETAILS KOKO, February 17



RADKEY Isaiah Radkey

"We're really stoked to be playing the Sebright Arms to kick off our very

first headlining tour! You can feel the vibe so much better in a small, packed room. Big rooms are still badass though. Fans can expect to feel exhausted, pumped up and thoroughly rocked. We will very thoroughly rock your dick off. We've never been to anything like the NME Awards, so we're excited for the whole night."

►GIG DETAILS Sebright Arms, February 23



THE STRYPES Pete O'Hanlon

"Shepherd's Bush Empire is the biggest venue we've

headlined so far, so it's special in that respect and of course it's a legendary venue. The last time we played in London was in the Electric Ballroom, which was amazing, so hopefully this one will be just as mental and sweaty! Expect blisteringly fast punk and rhythm'n'blues songs from our album and the new EP we've got coming out."

►GIG DETAILS O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, February 13



THE FAMILY RAIN Tim Walter

"We've never played The Garage but I've been there

a few times to see up-and-coming bands. It's the first show after our album drops and we're going to try to play every track from it. And we're putting in some new ones which haven't been heard yet. We've had a bit of time off to write over the past few months so we're really stoked to get out there."

►GIG DETAILS The Garage, February 11

STAR PICK

Nominees' own choices for this year's gongs



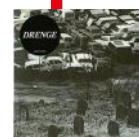
Ellie Rowsell

Wolf Alice

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds

"Jubilee Street" was one of the most amazing songs I heard all last year. No-one has managed to be cooler than Nick Cave either so he deserves it. He makes your forties and fifties seem like an exciting age to be in."



BEST ALBUM Drenge – 'Drenge'

"I'm so excited there's a band who give a shit about

their lyrics while still being rock'n'roll. They're lovely guys as well!"

BEST SOLO ARTIST Lorde

"It's good to have someone like that up against some of those manufactured pop artists. I'm quite excited about what's going to happen with her."

BEST LIVE BAND

Queens Of The Stone Age

"I snuck into the Roundhouse to see them at the iTunes festival. I superglued my fingers together trying to stick together an old wristband, but it was worth it."

MUSIC MOMENT OF THE YEAR

Kanye bringing Jesus onstage

"OBVIOUSLY. People haven't seen Jesus for a long time so that's pretty special. Much better than that resurrection many, many years ago."

►Vote at NME.COM/awards



Off the wall

Foster The People celebrate the release of their second album with a gift to the people of LA: its sleeve as a public mural

Foster The People last week launched their second album 'Supermodel' on a grand scale, playing a gig in front of a giant, seven-storey-high mural of the record's artwork on South Los Angeles Street in downtown LA. In the spirit of what frontman (and ex-advertising jingle writer) Mark Foster describes as the album's reaction to "consumerism and the ugly side of capitalism", gig-goers were encouraged to make a \$5 or \$10 donation to the city's Museum Of Contemporary Art rather than pay for tickets, while the large-scale piece of public art will remain on the building as a contribution to the area's "cultural growth". Locals were encouraged to get involved with the mural themselves and add their handprints to the wall at the launch event.

"The mural isn't meant to be a promotion of the album cover; it's meant to be a piece of art for the city that happens to be an album cover," explains Foster. "Over the past few years, arts programmes are the first things to be cut and it's been hard to watch. The art programming in school when I was

"THE MURAL ISN'T PROMOTION, IT'S ART"

Mark Foster

a kid was probably the only thing that kept me in school. We wanted to do a communally inclusive thing and give the wall to the city." Designed by LA music and art collective Young & Sick (who also created the cover for the band's debut, 'Torches'), the mural itself is an intricate, abstract piece, but there's meaning in its blue scribbles, insists Foster. "It has to do with a lot of the major themes in the record, about the development of culture and society," he says.

Beyond their visual-art pursuits, Foster The People have also been experimenting in the studio. Speaking about the recording of 'Supermodel', which took place during sessions in Morocco and LA with Adele and Florence producer Paul Epworth, Foster says: "I waited until all the music was done and wrote the lyrics in four weeks at the end. It's like a time capsule of thoughts and ideas and the things I was struggling with at the time. I look back at some songs now

and think, 'Wow, I was really angry when I wrote that!'"

The album's focus on bigger political themes is a natural extension of what Foster described as the "real life" topics of 2011's 'Torches', such as the high-school shootings detailed on breakout single 'Pumped Up Kicks'. "This record still retains the identity of who we are as a band from our first record," Foster says. "There are songs that act as a bridge that fans of the first record will grab onto, but also songs that show a side that wasn't there at all." And, with the band's giant piece of art providing a permanent reminder of their intentions to "inspire creativity", Foster The People's new preoccupations should prove hard to ignore – especially if you live in downtown LA.

■ LISA WRIGHT

24-HOUR ARTY PEOPLE

Artist Young & Sick on the album sleeve



How did you get involved in the project?

"Mark [Foster] and I have been working together for a long

time. Now we're on the same coast, we got together and he had some really big ideas because it's almost a concept album."

What was your brief?

"He wanted the cover to represent our current state of affairs in terms of consumerism and the model culture and paparazzi culture. There's

a supermodel throwing up, which represents the vanity of it all. She's meant to still look sexy even though she's barfing. The cameras and the background are meant to be as uncomfortable as possible. The album has a big stadium sound, but it's also very deep so I wanted it to reflect that."

Are you pleased with the mural?

"I was in New York at the launch time, but I had my friends Facetime me and send me photos. I'm really happy with it!"

Foster The People in front of their mural, January 23



Are disabled fans missing out on live music?

A new report finds venue and ticketing issues mean gigs are not accessible to all

Music fans will always have tales of gigs they missed out on: the sold-out ticket you couldn't buy; the bouncer who thought you were too young; the tall bloke who stood in front of you so you couldn't see.

But fans with disabilities often face a far bigger series of challenges to get closer to the music, and for many, these begin long before leaving the house. Will the venue be accessible? Will I need to buy a special ticket and, if so, how do I get it? Do I need to pay double if I'm bringing my carer? Can I get around the venue in a wheelchair or on crutches? Is there a lift or a ramp? Can I find this stuff out online before tickets sell out, or do I buy one first and hope for the best?

A new report by the charity **Attitude Is Everything**, which collated feedback from over 200 disabled music fans acting as 'mystery shoppers', reveals that searching for answers to questions like these is putting off disabled fans from going to gigs. As many as 95 per cent said they had experienced problems when trying to book disabled tickets, and 88 per cent felt the way tickets are sold is discriminatory, as it was far easier for standard ticket holders to get tickets before they sold out. Some 83 per cent said they felt discouraged from buying tickets in the future; 47 per cent said they would even consider legal action against a venue.

Part of the problem is that 80 per cent of venues don't sell disabled tickets online. If you need access to a wheelchair riser, or require help getting in or around the venue, you need to phone up and hope tickets don't sell out before someone answers. That's not always practical – especially if you have hearing problems. "You've got to ring the box office, and this can be a pain if you can't hear

them well," music fan and wheelchair user Abi Stone says. Sophia Notarianni, also a wheelchair user, agrees: "The lines are often busy, which means having to wait around on hold for ages just to get tickets. Another problem is the shortage of disabled tickets at smaller venues, which means that disabled people are unable to get tickets to gigs by smaller bands."

The Attitude Is Everything report found that only 44 of the 115 venues it surveyed had the three main accessibility components: a step-free entrance, step-free access to all areas of the venue, and a functioning accessible toilet. And even if you do manage to buy a ticket and facilities are available, that still doesn't guarantee a great night out. "Some venues put the wheelchair platform at the back in the corner," says Abi, "which can ruin the atmosphere, especially if you and your friend are the only two on it. It makes you feel left out."

"Many venues won't allow disabled people into the standing area," says Sophia. "When I go to a gig with my friends, I expect to get the same experience as every other gig-goer, including the atmosphere. I recently went to see Parkway Drive, supposedly a very rough gig, which I spent in the standing area and enjoyed thoroughly. I have come across wheelchair users crowdsurfing and in the moshpit!"

Of course, people with disabilities are not a unified group. Everyone has different needs. Simon Thorn just wants the ground to be safe underfoot: "I walk with crutches, and I have had particular problems after gigs when the floors are covered with spilt beer, so I have to walk very gingerly to avoid falling flat on my



"I EXPECT TO GET THE SAME EXPERIENCE AS EVERY OTHER GIG-GOER" – SOPHIA NOTARIANNI

face. What would help is if venues could let me use a side entrance to enter and exit."

So what can venues and promoters do to ensure their gigs are more accessible to disabled fans with a range of different needs? Two words: be flexible. According to the Equality Act 2010, venues are only required to provide access ramps and toilets for wheelchair users, physical aids (such as stair rails) and accessible information about the building and the event. But with so many ways to communicate with disabled fans online, it's easier than ever for even small venues with limited budgets to listen to the range of requirements their customers might have.

Manchester's Islington Mill invites fans to get in touch via social media to tell them their specific needs. "It's good to have guidelines in place as that can make you more aware of people's needs, but overall I think it's about how we treat society as a whole. We need to be welcoming to all," says Islington Mill spokesperson Jamie Hargreaves.

88%
FELT THE WAY
TICKETS ARE
SOLD IS
DISCRIMINATORY*

80%
OF VENUES
DON'T SELL
DISABLED TICKETS
ONLINE



Even explaining how to reach the venue on public transport can make a difference, as Mark Butler from London's Roundhouse explains: "One of our struggles is that we're between Chalk Farm and Camden Town Tube stations, neither of which are very accessible; but we have good bus services, so we've done our best to publicise what public transport we have available."

But how do you manage accessibility at a major festival in the middle of a field? Sally Blake, disabled access coordinator for Live Nation, says it's about making staff available to provide support when it's needed. "Download is our biggest festival," she says. "We have a massive disabled following. A couple of years ago we had horrendous mud, and wheelchair access was very limited around the site. At the end of the night, we had a team of security available if anyone needed assistance back to the campsite. Since then, we've changed the route to the campsite – across the hill rather than up – and we also now have two entrances to the site for disabled customers, and last year the feedback was incredible."

But for some, access to gigs goes beyond physical access to the venue. For example, many fans with learning difficulties can't make it to late-night gigs because their care workers don't work after hours.

Disability rights campaigner Paul Richards set up the charity Gig Buddies to help solve the problem: "It's about support workers working inflexible rotas, typically finishing at 10pm," he explains. "If you have a disability and need support, you're never going to see the headline act, or the end of the movie. We decided to do something about this by starting Gig Buddies. We match people with learning disabilities with a volunteer 'buddy' so they go to gigs together. It's our vision for the Gig Society!"

Slowly things are improving. Attitude Is Everything is working with all the major ticketing agencies to develop accessible online booking systems, and it says venues and promoters are asking for help with all manner of accessibility issues. But, as the report found, there is still a long way to go.

Ultimately, venues and promoters need to remember that even a small thing like succinct explanations on their website can make a huge difference to disabled music fans. As Abi Stone puts it, "I enjoy music as much as anyone else. I want to get out there and live life to the full – but I have to do things a little differently, that's all." ■ FRASER MCALPINE

83%
FELT DISCOURAGED
FROM BUYING
TICKETS IN
THE FUTURE*

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Justin Scrimaglia, Bournemouth
"I am a full-time wheelchair user."

There's a venue in my town I've visited to attend gigs and it's fairly accessible until you're inside – and then there is no disabled access. There's no ramp, so visibility is taken away thanks to able-bodied tall people. It's a lovely venue, I just wish it was better on the inside."



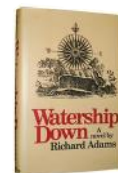
Tina Evans, Cardiff
"I'm a wheelchair user and have a neurological

condition that I've lived with for 16 years. Music is my passion, and hearing and seeing a live band makes me feel alive. I go to various venues – big, small and outdoor festivals – and so far have not had any bad experiences. Many venues offer a free carer's ticket to accompany a disabled person, which is a great idea."

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Connan Mockasin



BOOK
Watership Down
by **Richard Adams**

"It was the last book

I was reading, but it was an old copy so half the pages fell out. I'll probably take that on tour and finish it off. I don't read much on tour – or at all actually."



BOXSET
The Sopranos

"I don't watch too many DVD series but I enjoyed *The Sopranos*. I saw it

when it was on TV because my parents were watching it, but I think it's one I'll watch again one day."

FILM
Hall Pass

"*Hall Pass* is the best film to watch on tour. It's very funny, Owen Wilson's really great in it and there's nothing too complicated about it. You don't have to think too much."

GAME
Snakes And Ladders

"It's just luck really, isn't it? That's the thing. I hate card games. Everyone used to play them at school. Using your brain competitively is hard."

HOME COMFORT
Mobile phone

"I don't really take anything from home on tour with me except my cellphone. I don't have a laptop or anything. I rang my parents last night and told them about Niagara Falls being frozen over. That was a nice thing."

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JORDAN HUGHES, PIETER M VAN HATTEM, REX, ALAMY

The pictures
on this page were
taken on the Nokia
Lumia 1020



PUT YOURSELF IN THE PICTURE

Even if you're down the front in a sweaty, dark venue, the Nokia Lumia 1020 lets you capture the sharpest action

Music fans on the ground have broken dozens of music news exclusives using just their mobile phones in recent months – like the sharp shooters who captured Mac DeMarco playing material from his forthcoming third LP, 'Salad Days', in Brooklyn, and Wild Beasts debuting new songs from fourth album, 'Present Tense', back in November. It's testament to how smartphones put the power back in the audience's hands, allowing anyone to shoot anywhere using just the equipment in their pocket – making history in the process.

Recently we armed our photographers and videographers with their own Nokia Lumia 1020 smartphones so they could bring you exclusive behind-the-scenes photos and films from the photo pit, side of stage and the dressing room. Over the course of NME's partnership with Microsoft and the Nokia Lumia 1020, we've given you once-in-a-lifetime views of Primal Scream's majestic December jaunt, where we captured Bobby Gillespie telling the story behind 'It's Alright, It's OK', from their 2013 album 'More Light', and reminiscing about his gritty Glasgow childhood. We've given you a sneak peek into the photoshoot for the recent Warpaint feature, where Stella Mozgawa and Theresa Wayman talked about decamping to the Joshua Tree desert for the liberating sessions behind their second, self-titled record.

All this was possible due to the Nokia Lumia 1020, which was made to capture live music; its powerful zoom boasts

ZEISS technology aided by a special optical image stabilisation system, optimised

to give you crystal clear photos and videos, even in dimly lit gig venues. What's more, you don't need a backstage pass to produce amazing photos and videos: complete with Windows Phone, the Nokia Lumia 1020 boasts a 41-megapixel sensor and six physical lenses inside its slender, bright body, allowing you to capture the finest details of your subjects – even when you're stood deep in the throng at an insane gig. The Lumia 1020's video capabilities include all the above and more: Nokia's Rich Recording captures pristine sound, so you can enjoy your professional quality bootlegs again and again. If you record something really special and upload it to the internet, the rest of the world will, too.

►For your chance to win a Nokia Lumia 1020, and to check out all the photos and videos that NME has produced in association with Nokia and Microsoft, head to NME.COM/lumia1020 now. Who knows? Your work could end up on our website in the not-too-distant future...





Johnny Marr is among the artists campaigning to save Night & Day

WHY NIGHT & DAY NEEDS TO REMAIN OPEN

BY MARC RILEY

As the Manchester venue faces closure in the wake of noise complaints from neighbours, the BBC Radio 6 Music DJ says it's worth fighting for



I can't remember the first time I set foot in the Night & Day Café. Come to think of it I can't remember the last time I went either. Not that it's been that long; just because I go in there so often it all kind of blurs into one. A bit like

going to church. I do remember seeing some of the most memorable gigs of my life there. Two of them involved Eleanor Friedberger – the first being when Fiery Furnaces played a killer show on the 'Widow City' tour and the other being Eleanor's solo show there a few months back, with members of Field Music as her backing band. There was Ty Segall 18 months ago, when he did Black Sabbath's 'Paranoid' as his encore – four times back-to-back. I've seen Elbow there, and I saw an amazing show put together

as a tribute to John Peel shortly after his passing. Once again Elbow played, as did I Am Kloot, Badly Drawn Boy and Liam Frost. I can't remember what happened yesterday but I remember that night vividly. Former Night & Day band booker Johnny Bramwell (of I Am Kloot) was 'merry' and literally waltzed onstage as Elbow played on regardless.

For years, people used to talk to me about Manchester's "Northern Quarter". I didn't have a clue what they were talking about. Then it became apparent that the Northern Quarter was in fact pretty much three roads in the centre of Manchester that I've been milling about on since being a teenager up to no good. Tib Street, Oldham Street and Newton Street. And for years I'd been going there to either buy records (usually from Piccadilly Records) or to go to gigs at the Roadhouse or Night & Day. Back in the day these two venues and the Factory-owned Dry Bar were the only places for the Manchester music 'scenesters' to go in that part of town.

Now, it's Manchester's answer to Greenwich Village.

The Night & Day is a place where many of the bands who come and do sessions for me on 6 Music play. It was because of this that I first learned about there being some noise issues. Can't make any noise before 6 o'clock I think it was, or is. This struck me as a bit odd, considering the venue is – as the name would suggest – open all day and much of the night. And it's on one of the busiest streets in Manchester, in among a load of shops, bars and bohemian business concerns. As if that wasn't bad enough I've just heard about a 'noise abatement' issue that could see one of Manchester's most loved venues getting shut down. I doubt this is the first time this has happened and it won't be the last. City centre living is on the up, but I hope a solution to the problem can be found for the sake of the residents, the bands, the audiences, the public – and the people who earn a living working at Night & Day. ■

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

LOST ALBUMS

#14

Blue Phantom Distortions (1971)

Chosen by Dylan Baldi, Cloud Nothings

"Blue Phantom are an Italian expressive rock group, but on this record they play the music that this library music composer, Armando Sciascia, made for them. It's a bit of a weird story and I don't know it all, but it's a really good record. All the tracks are instrumental and really dramatic. At times it gets really far out, beyond the whole rock area. Those are my favourite ones, but they're all pretty good. I think it's a really hard record to find. I've been collecting library music records, which is a really nerdy thing, but you can find some good music that way."



► THE DETAILS

- **RELEASE DATE**
1971 (month unknown)
- **LABEL** Spider
- **BEST TRACKS** Diodo, Equilibrium, Psycho-Nebulous
- **WHERE TO FIND IT** Original copies are hard to find, but the album was reissued on CD in 2012 on the Kismet label with a bonus track
- **LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify



Black Lips

The Atlanta punks enlist
The Black Keys for their
seventh album, which takes
inspiration from Iraq, Tom
Cruise and Gary Glitter

Black Lips'
Jared Swilley,
Cole Alexander
and Joe Bradley
recording in
Nashville



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I wanted to call it 'Labios Negros', which is our band's name in Spanish, but everyone thought that was *soooo* taboo," sighs Black Lips' Cole Alexander of the band's seventh studio album. It's actually called 'Underneath The Rainbow', but they did have other ideas. "Let me ask," says Cole. "What do you think of 'Pumpin' And Dumpin' as an album title?"

Black Lips are adept at the art of seeming to take nothing seriously. Interviewing them is a bit like herding cats: they're prone to going off on wild tangents about how much they hate Metallica (clue: a *lot*), the new Arcade Fire album ("it sounds like tennis played by toddlers") or why there's too much "beards and friendliness and 'Free Tibet!' bullshit" in rock'n'roll these days. But when it comes to their new record, they are, bassist Jared Swilley assures us, "straight business".

"Making this album was like training to become a Navy Seal," says Swilley. "In fact, after what Tom Cruise was quoted as saying about his job being as tough as a soldier's in Afghanistan, I want people to know that our job is way harder than being Tom

Cruise. In the music world, this band is like Seal Team Six. When the shit hits the fan, we're the first-response team."

He's not entirely kidding. The last time Black Lips recorded an album – 2011's 'Arabia Mountain' – they almost killed their producer Mark Ronson by feeding him raw liver to 'get in the mood' for a take. This time, with Ronson unavailable due to scheduling issues, they started work on the album in New York and finished it in Nashville, with The Black Keys' drummer Patrick Carney manning the faders. Mercifully, he made it out alive.

"We'd met Patrick about a year before the recording started, in Mexico," explains Swilley. "We were in a hotel room and he kinda threw it out there that he wanted to work with us, and we were all drunk, so we said, 'Yeah, that'd be cool.'"

"He had a really well-rounded vision," says Cole of their sessions with Carney.

"The Black Keys started out as a garage-rock band, but they ended up working with Danger Mouse. That meant Patrick understood

our lo-fi roots, but he understood the pop element, too."

The result, Jared boasts, "is the kind of shit they're gonna send into space to let the Martians know what humans are about",

and is at least partly inspired by the band's notorious wanderlust, which led them to tour the Middle East last year, and currently has them embroiled in a race against Metallica to be the first band to play in Antarctica.

"There's a song called 'Do The Vibrate'," says Cole, "which is about being on tour in Iraq and not being able to sexually pleasure my girlfriend. It's basically me saying, 'Put the

phone on vibrate and put it in your crotch, that way I can shake your genitals, even though I'm not with you."

And what about those 'club bangers' you promised earlier this year? Did they ever materialise? "I don't know about that, but there's a song called 'Funny' which has this kind of funky, arena-rock Gary Glitter beat. I mean, just because Gary Glitter is a bad guy doesn't mean we can't take influence from him..." ■ BARRY NICOLSON

**"MAKING THIS
ALBUM WAS LIKE
TRAINING TO BE
A NAVY SEAL"**
Jared Swilley



ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"THE NME REVIEW LEFT ME DEPRESSED"

Edwyn Collins



THIS WEEK...

Orange Juice: Rip It Up

With their four albums reissued by Domino this week, we revisit the record that gave Edwyn Collins' band their first – and only – chart breakthrough

THE BACKGROUND

The year 1982 was a time of transition in British indie, the midpoint between the scene's earliest stirrings at the tail end of punk and the advent of The Smiths. Orange Juice's second album reflected this: disillusioned by the chart success of copyists like Haircut 100, the Glasgow quartet had resolved to get competitive, with frontman Edwyn Collins purging the group of the so-called "unprofessional elements" – founding members James Kirk and Steven Daly – and replacing them with Malcolm Ross and Zimbabwean drummer Zeke Manyika. The result was a slicker sound characterised by supple rhythms and white-funk stylings.

STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

The portrait of the band was taken by Eric Watson, who was then working for *Smash Hits* but later established himself as one of the most influential pop photographers of the 1980s. According to the Pet Shop Boys' Neil Tennant (himself a former *Smash Hits* staffer), Watson "made Edwyn Collins look so beautiful it intimidated me when he came to photograph us".

FIVE FACTS

- 1 Title track 'Rip It Up' was the first UK chart hit to feature the Roland TB-303 synthesizer, which eventually became synonymous with the acid house scene.
- 2 Guitarist Malcolm Ross was recruited from fellow Postcard Records alumni Josef K, who had recently broken up. Ross eventually left Orange Juice in 1984 to join yet another ex-Postcard group, Aztec Camera.
- 3 The album's saxophone parts were provided by British jazz performer Dick Morrissey, who has also appeared on albums by Paul McCartney, Peter Gabriel and Gary Numan.
- 4 The afropop-flavoured 'Hokoyo' was co-written and sung by Zeke Manyika, who sings it in his native African tongue of Shona.
- 5 Backing vocals on 'Rip It Up' are provided by Paul Quinn, an old schoolfriend of Collins who went on to front Bourgie Bourgie and The Independent Group, a supergroup comprised of ex-members of Orange Juice, Aztec Camera, Lloyd Cole & The Commotions

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"You know the scene it's very humdrum/ And my favourite song's entitled 'Boredom'" - 'Rip It Up'

It's an obvious dig at the state of early-'80s pop, of course, but also a sneaky reference to the Buzzcocks, whose debut EP 'Spiral Scratch' was a huge influence on Orange Juice's DIY ethos. The riff from Buzzcocks' 'Boredom' briefly appears after that line.

"Here's a penny for your thoughts/ Incidentally you may keep the change" - 'Flesh Of My Flesh'

The influence of Orange Juice's first album on The Smiths is pretty self-evident. Certainly, Collins was doing 'witty and acerbic' long before Moz was.

"And though I stood on tenterhooks/I still took one last lingering look/And there was so much left unsaid/ But as they say, you makes your bed" - 'Tenterhook'

The album's yearning, Motown-esque closing track is proof that, for all his insouciant cool, Collins remained an old romantic at heart.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"Orange Juice are a minor group trying hard to be bigger and more significant than they really ought to be." Richard Cook, NME, November 13, 1982

THE DETAILS

►RECORDED Summer 1982 ►RELEASE DATE November 1982
►LENGTH 42:16 ►PRODUCER Martin Hayles ►STUDIO Berwick Street Studios, London ►HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 39
►SINGLES I Can't Help Myself, Rip It Up, Flesh Of My Flesh
►TRACKLISTING ►1. Rip It Up ►2. A Million Pleading Faces ►3. Mud In Your Eye ►4. Turn Away ►5. Breakfast Time ►6. I Can't Help Myself ►7. Flesh Of My Flesh ►8. Louise Louise ►9. Hokoyo ►10. Tenterhook

WHAT WE SAY NOW

Despite its meagre sales, and the fact that the production now sounds a little dated, it's an unimpeachable classic of British post-punk.

FAMOUS FAN

"They were completely at odds with the surroundings of the time, so un-macho, taking their influences from disco as much as punk."
Alex Kapranos, 2013

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"When 'Rip It Up' got slagged off by *NME*, I would refuse to go on the tourbus because I was depressed! You can laugh about it now, but back then it was life and death."
Edwyn Collins, 2013

THE AFTERMATH

The album may have crept into the Top 40 by the skin of its teeth, but its title track gave Orange Juice their only hit single, and for a brief moment it seemed as though they'd finally found mainstream success. It wasn't to be, however – Malcolm Ross and bassist David McClymont left the band after 1984's 'Texas Fever' mini-album, leaving Collins and Manyika to record their final album, 'The Orange Juice', as a two-piece. The band went out with a whimper, but their influence is apparent in the music of Belle & Sebastian, Franz Ferdinand, The Drums and countless others.

NEWS DESK



THE NUMBERS

100

Artists confirmed for *The Great Escape*, including Kelis (above), Jungle and Circa Waves

\$35,000

Bail paid by Soulja Boy after being caught with a loaded gun in Los Angeles

12

Number of studios around the world that Foo Fighters are reportedly using to record their eighth album

3

Number of new D12 songs Eminem is said to have contributed to

BIG MOUTH

"There's quite a good way of sneaking in there. I've got into a bit of a countryish thing"

DAVID CAMERON revealing how he got to see his new favourite band First Aid Kit at London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire



THE BIG QUESTION

WHAT WERE YOU DOING IN 1994?



Jordan Gatesmith
Howler
"I was probably in my highchair being spoonfed Cheerios. I was two – I can't remember anything about '94!"



Mark Beaumont
NME writer
"I spent 1994 watching Blur more than anyone has ever watched Blur ever, and tearing up five indie clubs a week in London and Preston in a Brett Anderson blouse. NME employed me within a year."



Daniel Pascoe
NME reader
"I was born in 1994 so my memory is a little vague. Home videos show that I was a massive Johnny Cash fan – trying to squeak along to 'Ring Of Fire' being one of my favourite hobbies. Not much has changed really."



WHO THE FUCK IS...



Sherif Hassan

This is the unlikely story of a fan who claims his nose was broken during a game of basketball with Arcade Fire, among others. **So Arcade Fire play tough?** Apparently so. Hassan played the game backstage at the Auckland leg of the Big Day Out festival. He said: "All I heard was Win [Butler] going off about how the rules are rubbish down here and chucking a bit of a hissy fit." **Worth the broken nose?** Hassan has no regrets, telling a local radio station: "It was worth it. I got to meet Lorde and Major Lazer. We got to the front of stage for Pearl Jam – Eddie Vedder gave me a shout out!"



Karen O

The Yeah Yeah Yeahs singer was nominated for an Oscar in the Best Original Song category for 'The Moon Song' from Spike Jonze's *Her*. She's up against Pharrell and U2.



Courtney Love

Currently in court defending a potentially defamatory tweet she sent in 2010, Love broke down in tears after hearing a witness discuss Kurt Cobain and Nirvana's legacy.

AND FINALLY

Wub your enthusiasm

Calvin Harris, Jay Z and Will Smith have teamed up with Irvine Welsh to work on new HBO show *Higher*, set in the world of EDM. Here's hoping Smith raps the theme tune.

Gruff hangover

Super Furry Animals are launching a "psychedelic wild Welsh beer". It's named Fuzzy after the band's 1996 debut 'Fuzzy Logic' – and its effect on your head the morning after.

High-fiving bird

Noel Gallagher reportedly made a special appearance at Kate Moss' 40th birthday party and sang 'Happy Birthday' for the model. It wouldn't be the first time he'd stolen from Stevie Wonder.

► Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS JANUARY 26, 2014



NEW 01

Mogwai Rave Tapes ROCK ACTION

Glasgow's Mogwai still pack a punch on their eighth studio album. Filled with slowcore ballads and intricate layers, the record edges Warpaint off the top spot.

- NEW 2 Warpaint **Warpaint** ROUGH TRADE
- 3 High Hopes **Bruce Springsteen** COLUMBIA
- NEW 4 The Good Youth **Blitz Kids** RED BULL
- NEW 5 Brothers And Sisters Of The Eternal Son **Damien Jurado** SECRETLY CANADIAN
- 6 Total Strife Forever **East India Youth** STOLEN
- 7 AM **Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO
- 8 If You Wait **London Grammar** METAL & DUST
- 9 Pale Green Ghosts **John Grant** BELLA UNION
- NEW 10 F**k Off Get Free **Thee Silver Mt Zion** CONSTELLATION
- 11 Days Are Gone **Haim** POLYDOR
- 12 World Psychedelic Classics 5 **William Onyeabor** LUAKA BOP
- 13 Halcyon **Ellie Goulding** POLYDOR
- 14 Give The People What They Want **Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings** DAPTONE
- 15 Settle **Disclosure** PMR
- NEW 16 Choir Of Echoes **Peggy Sue** WICHITA
- 17 Wig Out At Jagbags **Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks** DOMINO
- 18 Pushin' Against A Stone **Valerie June** SUNDAY BEST
- NEW 19 Chiaroscuro **I Break Horses** BELLA UNION
- NEW 20 Strong Feelings **Doug Paisley** NO QUARTER
- 21 Push The Sky Away **Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds** BAD SEED
- 22 Live From KCRW **Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds** BAD SEED
- 23 Jake Bugg **Jake Bugg** MERCURY
- NEW 24 Light Up Gold **Parquet Courts** WHAT'S YOUR RUPTURE?
- 25 The Best Of **Keane** ISLAND
- 26 Has God Seen My Shadow? An Anthology 1989–2011 **Mark Lanegan** LIGHT IN THE ATTIC
- 27 Babel **Mumford & Sons** GENTLEMEN OF THE ROAD/ISLAND
- 28 ...Like Clockwork **Queens Of The Stone Age** MATADOR
- 29 Post Tropical **James Vincent McMorrow** BELIEVE
- NEW 30 Wanderlust **Sophie Ellis-Bextor** EBB&S
- 31 Beyoncé **Beyoncé** COLUMBIA
- 32 II **Moderat** MONKEYTOWN
- NEW 33 Lucinda Williams **Lucinda Williams** THIRTY TIGERS
- NEW 34 Greatest Hits **The Cure** FICTION
- NEW 35 Bad Blood **Bastille** VIRGIN
- 36 Random Access Memories **Daft Punk** COLUMBIA
- NEW 37 Inform Educate Entertain **Public Service Broadcasting** TEST CARD
- 38 Wishful Thinking **Neck Deep** HOPELESS
- NEW 39 The Lumineers **The Lumineers** DECCA
- NEW 40 Native **OneRepublic** INTERSCOPE

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops, from Sunday to Saturday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK BANQUET KINGSTON UPON THAMES

FOUNDED 2005
WHY IT'S GREAT They run their own club night in Kingston and offer a flyer printing service.
TOP SELLER THIS WEEK Warpaint – 'Warpaint'
THEY SAY "We place a big focus on live music and have recently put on local shows for Maximo Park and Bombay Bicycle Club."

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



James Brown



Britney Spears

Kevin Parker

Tame Impala
frontman



THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING 'Smooth Criminal' - Michael Jackson

"My older brother had the cassette. It had a lasting impact on me. I was so obsessed that I used to walk around school with my cardigan around my elbows, pretending I was Michael Jackson. The rest of the guys were having running races."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH 'Sleep Walk' - The Shadows

"They were an English surf-rock band. My dad was in a few cover bands and used to play them on guitar all the time. I'd just sit in the garage listening to him, saying 'fuck!' It was so emotional – the guitar lines made me want to weep."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT 'Batman Forever OST' - Various Artists

"I would have got it from a terrible CD shop my mum

took me to. It was just all these artists – I didn't know who they were. There's a Seal song, U2, The Flaming Lips. At that stage I didn't even know what an album was, I could just picture Batman being a badass and wooing Nicole Kidman."

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND 'Freak' - Silverchair

"It was super grunge. They just had this fucking attitude:

"I'VE LISTENED TO 'HEY YA!' MAYBE 500 TIMES"

three long-haired dudes slaying their instruments. I saw a video clip when I was 11 and realised they were young Australian dudes. I thought, 'It's not on the other side of the world, it's on the other side of the country, they're only a little bit older than me – so if I work hard now, I can get where they are by the time I'm 15!"

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO 'Hey Ya!' - OutKast

"You can never really wear a song out by listening to it too much – just give it a year or so, then when you go back to it, it feels fresh again. But 'Hey Ya!' is probably the closest I've come to listening out a song. If there was an iTunes play-count of my life, that song would maybe be in the 500s."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE

'Get Up (I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine' - James Brown

"It's real-deal funk. If I'm drunk enough then my body will begin to move before my brain has a chance to stop me. Anytime that I'm actually able to dance, I'll be in a position I don't remember. You'd have to ask the people that were sober enough around me about my moves."

MY KARAOKE SONG '...Baby One More Time' - Britney Spears

"The shittest, most disposable pop ever. The last time I did karaoke was in a bar in Perth. It was our manager's birthday. We used to do it every Thursday at this pub down the road

head was that generic iPhone ringtone, you know the one? 'Red Red Wine' is always my rescue song – if I've got a really shit song stuck in my head, I just start thinking about that and it dominates everything else in my brain."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN 'September' - Earth, Wind & Fire

"It's super-groovy party vibes. If you had a song like that in your arsenal, you could just bust it out and it would be instant good times. It would be like a secret weapon – a button you could push. If you were playing a gig and it was super cold, you could start playing that."

THE SONG THAT SUMS UP THE PERTH SCENE 'Smoking Durries In The Park' - Electric Toad

"Have you guys in England ever heard of durries? It's a slang word we use for cigarettes. The song just sums up what you do if you're a bummy musician in Perth – sitting around the park smoking cigarettes is something you look forward to! But the song makes it seem really good."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

'The Court Of The Crimson King' - King Crimson

"I was about to say something hilarious and ironic, like 'Start Me Up' by The Rolling Stones, but I'm going to go with epic. Let's say 'The Court of The Crimson King' as I'm lowered into the fire! It's probably the most epic song I know. It's seven minutes long, and just when you think it stops, it starts back up again."



Batman Forever

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Speedy Ortiz

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BIRTHDAYS

WARPAINT

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WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY
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ELECTROWERKZ

SUPERFOOD

THEO VERNEY
WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY
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OSLO

AU REVOIR SIMONE

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

DRENCE

THE WYTTCHES + TRAAMS
THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY
LONDON
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JLYY
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RADKEY

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Superfood

The slacker Brummie four-piece aiming to own 2014

It's good to start the year as you mean to go on. Superfood saw in 2014 onstage, surrounded by mates and covered head to toe in champagne. "We were playing the Club NME party with Wolf Alice and Swim Deep," explains singer Dom Ganderton of the New Year's Eve bash at KOKO in Camden. "We decided we should cover Robbie Williams' 'Millennium' at about one in the morning. Aussie and Cav from Swim Deep came on and there was so much champagne everywhere the stagehands were going crazy. I had my phone in my hand trying to read the lyrics of the second verse. I must have looked like a plonker."

The band – in which Dom is joined by Ryan Malcolm on guitar, Emily Baker on bass and Carl Griffin on drums – are getting used to being the centre of attention. Despite spending most of last year hidden away writing songs for their debut album, they've built a formidable

live reputation. They've sold out headline shows at London's Barfly and The Rainbow in Birmingham. "That was crazy," says Dom. "It was something like 200 days after our first gig and the capacity was 250. It was cool. I guess it means people like us."

Now armed with more songs than they know what to do with, they're currently holed up in London's Livingston Studios recording as many of them as possible before making the final call as to what makes the grade for the album. "We've got so many songs it's taking us ages to agree about what should be on it," says Ryan, "but that's a good predicament to be in."

Don't expect them to simply replicate their riotous, Britpoppy live show on record, though. "I don't mind when people say that we sound '90s because that's when a lot of the last great British bands were around," says Dom. "But when we release the album people will see that's not our main thing."

So what should we expect? "The main thing we've talked about is the drum sound," reveals Dom. "We want to make something you can dance to, like when you hear a Fatboy Slim song. We want those big beats!"

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

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► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** Birmingham
- **FOR FANS OF** Pavement, Peace
- **SOCIAL** @superfoodjunk
- **BUY IT NOW** 'Bubbles/' 'Melting' is out now. New EP 'Mam' follows on March 3
- **SEE THEM LIVE** NME Awards Show with Austin, Texas at London Oslo (February 19)
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Guitarist Ryan used to play football semi-professionally and was on the Wolverhampton Wanderers youth team. "I skived off though," he says. "I just wanted to go out..."

Turn the page
for more great
new music

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MORE NEW MUSIC

DonCat

San Francisco-based singer-songwriter Duncan Nielsen is inspired by George Harrison, Cream, and the "blue shades" of Jimi Hendrix, and on his debut track 'Ride On' he coos to their sounds with a whisper of Americana. 'Meanwhile At Starbucks', on the other hand, details an unconventional drinks order and the ensuing confusion. He's talented, and he's funny too.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/doncatmusic

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/doncatmusic

Favela

The Leeds producer has hit some incredible form with 'Easy Yoke'. It's a wide-eyed trip through those warm, atmospheric electronics that Gold Panda gave birth to, albeit injected with a soulful lyric that questions the difference between someone's projected image and their true emotions. By the time its five minutes are up you'll be ready to delve into his plentiful SoundCloud back catalogue.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/musicfavela

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/favelamusic

The Persian Leaps

They may hail from St Paul in Minnesota, but The Persian Leaps sound like they've heard more than

a few of the great British indie records of the '80s and '90s. The silky fuzz and solid hooks of tracks like 'Sleepless' echo The Smiths, Orange Juice and Teenage Fanclub with great enthusiasm, and they never fail to recreate that celestial guitar jangle.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thepersianleaps

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/persianleaps

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Happyness

South London's Happyness are keen to banish your winter blues with a warm and mellow slice of '90s nostalgia. Their eponymous debut EP has already garnered praise for uplifting

Highasakite

cuts like the infectious 'It's On You'. A love for acts like Yo La Tengo and Wilco is their driving force.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/happynessmusic

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/happyness-4

Tamu Massif

This trio recently had their laptops stolen, along with their demos. Fortunately, the mournful 'Azora' was already safely hidden on the internet. With lead singer Dave Dixon's hoarse vocal left to resonate in acres of space, the song has shades of Wu Lyf's anguish about it, but it takes that blueprint somewhere far more sparse. Well worth keeping an ear out for.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/tamu.massif.official

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/tamumassif

Res

"*Maybe she'll sink/Maybe she'll fly*", muses the most paranoid falsetto we've heard this year on Res' 'She's A Witch'. It's a minor miracle that the London outfit's best tune (about knocking sorceresses off their broomsticks, obviously) ends up



Happyness

sounding like Unknown Moral Orchestra's Ruban Nielson jiggling around the stake with Local Natives. These boys have more sugary indie-pop potency than your average Halloween haul.

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/res-11

Death In The Sickroom

Fans of The Smiths might fancy this Dublin four-piece – 'Brick To The Face' rings with all the bliss of a classic Johnny Marr guitar jangle, but with the blistering clout of Merchandise's 'Anxiety's Door' thrown in by way of reinforcement. Having made a name for themselves as part of the Reekus Records roster in Ireland, the band now hope to turn heads across the water.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/death.in.the.sickroom

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/reekussunfare

Spit Shake Sisters

There must be something murky lurking in Brighton's waters at the moment. Spit Shake Sisters come on like an entire band of mini Ty Segalls, all fuzzed-up riffs and howling vocals. Their 'The Pretty Youth' EP is the soundtrack to the kind of party you wouldn't want your mum to know about, while recent track 'Overdope' pretties things up enough to show a more harmonic string to their bow. Think of them as the glamorous cousins to fellow seaisiders The Wytches' twisted garage-psych squall.

► **SOCIAL** [@twitshakesister](https://twitter.com/twitshakesister)

► **HEAR THEM** [spitshakesisters.bandcamp.com/](https://bandcamp.com/spitshakesisters)

BAND CRUSH

Martin Doherty

Chvrches



Broods

"Broods are a synth-heavy two-piece from New Zealand who have worked with Joel Little, Lorde's producer, and have a similarly immediate feel to their songs – it's pop but also very layered. I'm pretty excited to see what they do. They're brilliant."

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Death In The Sickroom



Exroyale

Exroyale's only available track, 'Give It Up', initially brings to mind Grizzly Bear's 'Two Weeks', before reimagining it through a paper-thin R&B beat and their singer's fragile falsetto. There's no doubt that this trio know how to navigate a hook; pretty much everything that happens on 'Give It Up' is one.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/exroyale

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/exroyale

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK



► **FOUNDED** November 2007 by Will Street

► **BASED** London

► **KEY RELEASES** Jay Jay Pistolet – *We Are Free* (2007), Mumford & Sons – *Roll Away Your Stone* (2008), Swim Deep – *King City* (2012), MØ – *Bikini Daze EP* (2013)

► **RADAR SAYS** Will formed Chess Club having put on a club night of the same name since 2005 – hosting the first UK shows by acts including Bon Iver, MGMT and The Vaccines. This March he releases 'Chess Club Volume 1', with original recordings and rarities from the label's alumni.

Vyypers

You can tell a lot about Vyypers from the first four seconds of their track 'Summer Of Fun(k)'. A snotty, garbled moan that's the aural equivalent of sticking your finger up your nose, it typifies the Brighton quintet's attitude: rooted in punk, but with a bratty, youthful sense of playfulness. Think Black Lips if they'd grown up sticking out like a sarcastic sore thumb in a gaudy tourist hell.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/vyypers

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/vyypers

Sebastian Melmoth

Named after an Oscar Wilde pseudonym, this cast of creeps brew a strange brand of forested psychedelia that whiffs of early Mogwai. Their tribal sound may be indebted to some of the eight former members that completed the "sonic art project", and with a primary focus on "the darker aspects of the human condition", you can expect some misery with their melodies.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/melmothuberalles

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/sebastian-melmoth

► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Waiting Room (January 26), London Rhythm Factory (February 12), London The Lexington (February 23)

Highasakite

Maybe it's the clean and green surroundings or maybe it's the high standard of living, but Scandinavia tends to produce bands that sound like the crisp, sweet noise of joy itself. With their shimmering, glacial synths and effervescent harmonies, Norway's Highasakite make electronic indie-pop that's so pure and untainted it would probably make a successful antidepressant.

► **SOCIAL** @highasakiteband

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/propellerrecordings/since-last

► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Birthdays (February 19)

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

JONATHAN GALKIN

DFA RECORDS



WEIRD WILD NAKED FUN



The Beats In Space label, run by Tim Sweeney (who also hosts a very well known radio show of the same name here in NY) has released a staggering collection of really lovely and unique dance music in its first three years. Artists like Paradis (France), Lauer (Germany) and Crystal & S Koshi (Japan) are all worth seeking out, and **Secret Circuit** (above) released one of the best electronic full-length records of 2013 in 'Tactile Galactics'. Incidentally, Tim was among a small group that were the first ever interns at DFA (in the studio and at the label), so we are extra proud of him! The artwork and aesthetic of the label is second to none right now.

Diagonal Records in the UK has also given us three solid years of fantastic EPs, all rugged, jagged, goth and abrasive, yet still miraculously and repeatedly playable. For starters, check out **Powell** – he runs the label – who has released these fantastic EPs that blend flashes of post-punk, industrial and dancefloor techno. Other artists he's brought through, like Blood Music, Prostitutes and Shit And Shine, all contributed tough and very engaging EPs last year.

Two bands more local to us here in NYC are Yvette (Godmode Records) and Guerilla Toss (NNA), who both get a thumbs-up for a proper guitar/bass/drums ear-fucking. **Yvette** channel all the moody intensity and musical discipline of Wire and This Heat, which pushes all the right buttons. **Guerilla Toss** are a wild and weird and fun and avant-garde-leaning punk-rock band. They are sometimes naked and sometimes not naked and are just one of those bands you listen to and stare at in awe.



Guerilla Toss

"Guerilla Toss are a proper ear-fucking. A band you just stare at in awe"

Here at DFA we have a big year ahead with debut albums from Shit Robot, The Juan Maclean, Museum Of Love (who include Pat Mahoney from LCD Soundsystem) and **Dan Bodan**. I think he's one of the most remarkable vocalists we've ever worked with. He's collaborating with producers including Physical Therapy and DJ Richard (White Material Records). We're also pleased to welcome **Slim Twig** to DFA, a new artist from Toronto whose album 'A Hound At The Hem' is out in mid-2014. The string arrangements were handled by Owen Pallett (Arcade Fire), and overall they've come up with a sound that is dramatic and dark, the kind that Scott Walker and Serge Gainsbourg paved the way for decades ago.

More new music on page 24 ➡

Next week: Friendly Fires' Jack Savidge

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Elephantine

Birmingham trio Elephantine are bringing the riffs with their debut track 'Abreast'. It slaps you across the chops with a chunky, stomping rhythm and jittery structural quirks. Loud and exciting stuff.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/elephantineuk

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/elephantineuk

El Duque

The brainchild of Fair Ohs frontman Eddy Frankel, whose debut release as El Duque is a four-track tape entitled 'Cuatro Canciones Para La Paz Mundial' – a beguiling concoction of moody guitar instrumentals underpinned by atmospheric field recordings. If Fair Ohs are the party, El Duque is the sobering walk home.

► **SOCIAL** suplexcassettes.tumblr.com/

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/suplex/el-duque-tempestad



The Van Doos

Mistoa Poltsa

Great rock doesn't need theorisation and there isn't a second of navel-gazing to be had with Manchester acid punks Mistoa Poltsa. Frenetic live, their breakneck lo-fi squall has met with approval from Pins, who release the trio's new EP on their Haus Of Pins label on February 17.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/MistoaPoltsa

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Manchester Night & Day (February 6), Manchester Slade Hall (8)

► **HEAR THEM** mistoapoltsa.bandcamp.com/

The Van Doos

Their name sounds like a bunch of chirpy kids' TV characters, but North Yorkshire four-piece The Van Doos actually deal in an anthemic strain of indie that's far more palatable. Current single 'Airborne' is like Spector's 'Never Fade Away' with added spit'n'sawdust and a fists-aloft, redemptive ending, and there's enough character in Simon Hutchinson's slightly drunken drawl to give them an immediate identity.

► **SOCIAL** @thevandoos

► **HEAR HIM** thevandoos.com

J Roddy Walston & The Business

With their third album 'Essential Tremors' set to drop on March 10, now could be the time for J Roddy Walston & The Business and their blues-rock howl to transcend their Baltimore



J RODDY WALSTON & THE BUSINESS ARE LIKE EARLY KINGS OF LEON AT THEIR FILTHIEST

roots. Like early Kings Of Leon at their filthiest and most riff-heavy, Walston are a gutsy reminder that rootsy rock doesn't have to devolve into 'Sex On Fire'. No wonder they've already played *Letterman* in the States.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/jroddywalston

► **HEAR HIM** jroddywalstonandthebusiness.com/

Kanzi

These four gentle Brightonians, once labelled "geeks" by the University Of Sussex's student newspaper, unabashedly admit that "Radiohead made us like music in the first place". It is no surprise, then, that the tiptoe-ing pianos of 'Birds' and 'Water' recall the latter's own tearful treasures. With a delicate falsetto as sweet

as this, though, they've earned the comparison.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/kanziband

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/kanziband

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Brighton Sticky Mike's Frog Bar (January 31)

Psychedelic Black

The clue is in the name. On debut track 'Melting' we're treated to merry-go-round melodies and lucid licks, but Boise, Idaho resident Logan Hyde's project ditches the pink candyfloss in favour of solid black liquorice. It's hooky, riff-laden psychedelic pop grounds itself in the cold, hard spirit of grunge.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/psychedelicblack

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/psychedelic-black

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

BACK BY THE SEA

Wirral melody kings By The Sea have now finished their second album, 'Endless Days, Crystal Sky'. Like their debut, it was produced by former Coral man Bill Ryder-Jones ("This time in a studio, not a bedroom," says Danny O'Connell). The band will be playing new tracks at London Madame Jojo's this week (January 28).

PERFECT DEBUT

After wowing at CMJ last year, Syracuse punks Perfect Pussy release their debut full-length 'Say Yes To Love' on Captured Tracks on March 17. The eight tracks include recent single 'Driver' and they're as thrillingly abrasive as anything *Radar* has heard lately. Word is they'll play UK dates before summer.



Traams



Elephant

TRAAMS ON DRENCE TOUR

Chichester's Traams are gearing up to head out on the road with Drence in February, with the band's Stu Hopkins predicting carnage. "We hung out a bit last summer, had a lot of fun, but never actually got to play together. Two weeks is gonna be messy – and loud!"

ELEPHANT UNLEASHED

Amelia Rivas and Christian Pinchbeck have taken their sweet time, but Elephant's 'Sky Swimming' album is finally out on Memphis Industries on April 28. It's as emotionally raw as you'd expect from a duo who split as a couple during recording but vowed to keep the band going. *That's* dedication.



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Reviews

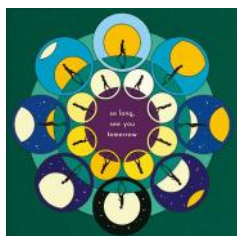
► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY TOM HOWARD



Bombay Bicycle Club

So Long, See You Tomorrow

On their fourth album the Londoners adopt another new identity – and this time it's a keeper



While Bombay Bicycle Club's desire to approach every new album as an opportunity to reinvent themselves is admirable, none of their guises has lasted long enough to really satisfy. Whether as spindly indie kids (2009's 'I Had The Blues But I Shook Them Loose'), fey alt.folkies

('Flaws', in 2010) or dance-rockers (2011's 'A Different Kind Of Fix'), something about them always ends up ringing a little hollow. They've been accused of lacking an identity, but the real problem lies with the fact that the identity they do have – nice, middle-class whatstheirnames with a grating air of precociousness and a frontman whose quivering, trepidatious croak sounds like a melancholic sock-puppet attempting to solicit your pity – just isn't a terribly interesting one. They're far from alone among

their peers in that regard, but the trajectory of their career – steadily improving album sales, sellout tours and ever more prominent festival slots – marks them out as something of an anomaly: just what does everyone see in this band that they don't in, say, Dog Is Dead?

'So Long, See You Tomorrow' is the best answer to that question they could've come up with. It's as different from 'A Different Kind Of Fix' as that record was from 'Flaws' – and as that one was from 'I Had The Blues But I Shook Them Loose' – but whereas each of those albums arrived within a year of the last, their fourth benefits from time spent away from Bombay Bicycle Club. Many of the songs were written during Jack Steadman's travels around Turkey, India and the Netherlands, and to use the hackneyed travel-brochure parlance, his band seem to have discovered themselves as a result.

As what? Well, they've been flirting with the notion for a while now, but from the multifaceted psychedelic

racket of 'Overdone' (more cowbell! more strings! more everything!) onwards, 'So Long, See You Tomorrow' makes a compelling case for Bombay Bicycle Club as

FOUR ALBUM INSPIRATIONS

Rae Morris and Lucy Rose

Jack Steadman: "Writing for female voices is like writing for a new instrument. Rae has such a different voice to Lucy, really powerful, so that was like having another tool too. I'll try to sing something I've written and it won't sound good, so I realise it's meant for Rae; she'll turn up and it'll be brilliant."

Books and poems

Jamie MacColl: "I always give Jack things to read to inspire his lyrics. This time it was [poets] WH Auden, Anne Sexton and Wallace Stevens. The album title also comes from a book: William Maxwell's *So Long, See You Tomorrow*."

Homesickness

Jack: "We were in Germany, the sixth night in a row or something, and we were all feeling horrendously homesick. I wrote 'Home By Now' that night, which I think says it all."

iPhone apps

Jack: "There's a Native Instruments app that has all these royalty-free samples on it. Lucy Rose and I would mess about on it for hours – I'd do a drum beat and she'd do a bassline or something. We came up with some good stuff. The piano on 'Home By Now' is from that app, so thanks Native Instruments."

could be the moment when everything clicks. After years of chopping and changing, Bombay Bicycle Club have finally found an iteration worth sticking with. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** February 3 ► **LABEL** Island ► **PRODUCERS** Self-produced ► **LENGTH** 44:56 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Overdone ►2. It's Alright Now ►3. Carry Me ►4. Home By Now ►5. Whenever, Wherever ►6. Luna ►7. Eyes Off You ►8. Feel ►9. Come To ►10. So Long, See You Tomorrow ► **BEST TRACK** Overdone

a sort of British answer to Animal Collective – perhaps not the most original idea, but one whose execution takes no small amount of skill. The emphasis here is on beats'n'loops rather than meat'n'potatoes, and the result is as vibrant and colourful as a Bollywood dance number (and indeed 'Feel' is based around an insistent Bollywood sample). Perhaps the most surprising thing is that after working with the likes of Jim Abbiss and Ben Allen in the past, Bombay Bicycle Club are at their most sonically interesting when the band themselves are in the producer's chair. 'Home By Now', with its crisply programmed beats and plinking piano hook, invents the genre of G-folk, while the title track sounds like the sort of thing you'd find yourself snapping back into consciousness to just as the sun rises over some far-flung Glastonbury dance tent.

On previous records, there's always been fat in need of trimming, or they've fallen back on dreary singer-songwriterly affectations. Here, even when they do that, the result is the haunted, James Blake-esque 'Eyes Off You'. The only weak link is 'Come To', a jarring moment of indie-rock convention that interrupts the album's flow. Nevertheless, if you've never quite understood the allure of this band, 'So Long, See You Tomorrow'

7

MORE ALBUMS

CEO Wonderland Modular



Four years separate Eric Berglund's debut solo album 'White

Magic' and its follow-up, and this timeframe is writ large on 'Wonderland'. The former Tough Alliance man's return is heralded by kids' choirs, Beach Boys vocal harmonies, twinkling *Exorcist* synths, a song titled in honour of the Japanese art of ritual self-disembowelment ('Harakiri') and an opening track where the Swede croons about being "lost inside a whorehouse" that's as cute as Zoëy Deschanel soundtracking a *Super Mario* pool party. Alas, his taste for sonic jumble can be overwhelming – see the Day-Glo Dan Deacon clusterfuck of 'Ultrakaos' – but when he pulls things back, as on swoonworthy closer 'OMG', he just about justifies his toil.

■ LOUIS PATTISON

6

Martin Creed Mind Trap Telephone



Martin Creed is a 46-year-old artist from Wakefield

whose work usually emphasises simplicity over intellectualisation. In 2001, for example, he won the Turner Prize with *Work No. 227, the lights going on and off*, a piece that did exactly what its title suggests. On 'Mind Trap', his second album and the follow-up to 2012's 'Love To You', it's not quite business as usual. Sounding like a mixture of Franz Ferdinand and Scottish wit Ivor Cutler, it's gloriously complicated. 'If You're Lonely' and 'You Return' are jagged post-punk, 'The New Shutters' and 'Mind Trap' are sweary and acoustic, and 'Work No. 955', 'Work No. 994' and 'Work No. 1375' form a triptych filled with brass and woodwind. Adventurous and fun.

■ HUW NESBITT

7



Arthur Beatrice

Working Out

Sophisticated pop debut with

shades of Wild Beasts and The xx

Like Aesop's tortoise racing the hare, London four-piece Arthur Beatrice are in no particular hurry. They first appeared in *NME* back in 2011, but after a handful of secretive shows they found a bolthole and spent 18 months crafting this debut album. Their unhurried approach is reflected in their spacious, elegant pop with shades of The xx, Wild Beasts and Alt-J. Vocalists Orlando Sheppard and Ella Girardot take it in turns to lead, and they work well together when duetting on songs like the gothic 'Grand Union'. But it's Girardot's darting, ice-cool vocals that provide most of the album's best moments, including the infectious 'Late' and the irresistible 'Midland'. By the time

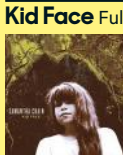
the house piano kicks in on closer 'Ornament & Safeguard' you'll be able to picture their blissed-out summer of 2014 festival sets. Running their race slow and steady has resulted in an album full of sophisticated pop. ■ KEVIN EG PERRY

8

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** February 3 ► **LABEL** OAR/Polydor ► **PRODUCERS** Arthur Beatrice ► **LENGTH** 41:22 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Councillor ►2. Late ►3. Midland ►4. Carter (Uncut) ►5. More Scrapes ►6. Interlude ►7. Grand Union ►8. Singles ►9. Charity ►10. Fairlawn ►11. Ornament & Safeguard ► **BEST TRACK** Ornament & Safeguard

Samantha Crain Kid Face Full Time Hobby



Oklahoma's Samantha Crain does weird so very well – she

just doesn't do it nearly enough. On her third album, the eerie Americana of 'Paint' brings to mind Dolly Parton wandering around a graveyard, or Joni Mitchell inviting you over for a tarot reading. Crain's aura owes

a lot to her voice, a husky wobble that threatens as much as it seduces on the gothic flamenco jam 'Sand Paintings'. That she doesn't stick to this strangeness is frustrating, as jaunty album opener 'Never Going Back' and the similarly sprightly 'Somewhere All The Time' offer conformist country melodies that sound swept from the bedroom floor of a teenage Taylor Swift. ■ LEONIE COOPER

7

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Reviews

Xiu Xiu

Angel Guts: Red Classroom

Bella Union
It's tempting to ponder what makes Xiu Xiu's founding

member Jamie Stewart tick – specifically, whether it's the suicidal impulses he's often discussed that fuel his creativity. 'Angel Guts: Red Classroom' is his third album in under a year, and superficially it resembles many of Xiu Xiu's others by draping wracked, fragile vocals over obtuse electronics. But Stewart and musical partner Angela Seo venture further than ever before into horror-soundtrack psychodrama ('El Naco'), while a kinship with serious-face industrial technoheads like Vatican Shadow is suggested by the raw, pulsating drum machines of 'The Silver Platter' and the deranged gibbering over a stuck-CD beat on 'Cinthya's Unisex'.

NOEL GARDNER

7

Gardens & Villa

Dunes Secretly Canadian



California's Gardens & Villa add synths and flute to the

traditional indie band setup to create a sound that's indebted to both '60s pastoral pop and early-'80s new wave. Former DFA man Tim Goldsworthy has given the production on their second album a little extra sonic sparkle, but they remain a confusing proposition. When they're good, as on 'Colony Glen' and 'Bullet Train', they're like an update of 'Remain in Light'-era Talking Heads. Yet they're also prone to writing wishy-washy, over-earnest, almost new age songs with titles like 'Chrysanthemum', 'Purple Mesas' and 'Thunder Glove' – proper sub-MGMT fodder that makes you question the strength of their convictions.

PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

6

The Family Rain

Under The Volcano

Retro? Maybe. But the brothers from Bath are raw, bolshy and still in love with rock'n'roll



You've gotta admire a band who dare to still think big. "We've got dreams of NME coming to do a piece on the second album, and it's us hitting golf balls into the sea from a castle in Mexico, on peyote," said Family Rain drummer Tim Walter in the Bath trio's *Radar* interview in late 2012. That the 10 songs of 'Under The Volcano' – recorded in a three-week burst at Hansa Studios in Berlin (home to Bowie, Iggy et al in the '70s) – sound quite so blatantly in thrall to Britrock's glory years should come as little surprise.

But are they doomed to failure for being as retro as you can get in 2014? There's a charm that flows right through this album that suggests not. Bolshy and raw-sounding, it's a warm record that entices because it pushes the Walter brothers' personalities to the fore. Had



THE DETAILS

►RELEASE DATE February 3 ►LABEL Vertigo/Virgin EMI ►PRODUCER Jim Abbiss
►LENGTH 32:22 ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Carnival ►2. Trust Me... I'm A Genius ►3. Feel Better (Frank) ►4. Don't Waste Your Time ►5. Reason To Die ►6. Binocular ►7. On My Back ►8. Pushing It ►9. Together ►10. All The Best ►BEST TRACK Trust Me... I'm A Genius

it been honed over two years in Abbey Road at a cost of billions, it wouldn't connect. But the simplicity that results from the relative cheapness of their setup means the songs resonate like early Supergrass or Charlatans records did. It's there in singer Will's voice – rich, proudly English and pushed to the absolute max (no reverb here whatsoever). And it's all over the melodies too: 'On My Back', 'Feel Better (Frank)' and opener 'Carnival' are all written with arenas in mind, while last single 'Binocular' is a blast of Faces-style blues. 'Pushing It', meanwhile, takes its lead from Arctic Monkeys' recent endeavours, with meaty riffs and sleazy vocals.

They're at their strongest when they lose themselves, as on 'Trust Me... I'm A Genius', the track that broke them all those months ago. It's been re-recorded for 'Under The Volcano' but it still sounds like the most anthemic thing they've done. The best bit comes towards the end, when Will defiantly sings, "I'm in love with a dead scene". It's a cocky, comical declaration

about their influences, and proves that, above all, The Family Rain are as indebted to the myths of rock'n'roll as all good dreamers should be in 2014.

MATT WILKINSON

7

Mark McGuire

Along The Way

Dead Oceans



Ex-Emeralds man Mark McGuire's latest solo record is

intended as "an odyssey through the vast, unknown regions of the mind", he writes in the liner notes. Though it never stumbles upon any particularly surprising or challenging territory, he approaches it with a curiosity of spirit that makes 'Along The Way'

a captivating and nourishing listen, less noodly than his early releases and with more of the composerly streak he exhibited on 2011's 'Get Lost'. It starts with 'Awakening', where the world seems to come into focus with intricate strings and ambient tinkling, before journeying through bucolic loops that conjure peaceful Chinese gardens, and into the darker, swarming grind usually associated with his old band.

LAURA SNAPES

7

Neville Skelly

Carousel

Setanta/PIAS



An associate of The Coral – and cousin of the band's Skelly

brothers – Neville Skelly comes from Liverpool, is influenced by classic American songwriters such as Cole Porter and George Gershwin, and cut his teeth in working men's clubs and big bands. Yet the closest point of reference for 'Carousel' is probably Richard Hawley, with whom

he shares a whisky-stained voice that works well with the very un-2014 musical backing, all tasteful acoustic guitars, brushed drums and soft slide guitar. The result is a warm and polished album. 'Carousel' was recorded in a friend's kitchen and at times it feels like you are there too, with Skelly singing into your ear over a candlelit sink. Only the odd David Gray-type wail – as on 'Love You Gave' – disturbs the effect.

BEN CARDEW

6

Reviews

Tennis

Small Sound EP



Communion From the sound of this stopgap EP by Denver husband-and-wife duo Tennis, Alaina Moore and Patrick Riley live in a house awash with Ikea, feed on macrobiotic cucumber smoothies and enjoy dinner parties with Summer Camp, Anna Calvi and Alex Winston.

Marvellous alt.pop snugliness all round, in short, as lead track 'Mean Streets' – a treatise on rags-to-riches pop stardom – slopes by with a jazzy Scandi-pop sway. It's a timely refresh of rosy-cheeked indie-pop mores: Gallic hula 'Timothy' takes on a contemporary electro fuzz, while on 'Cured Of Youth' and '100 Lovers' Tennis pay funky homage to '80s Madonna and '90s Beck like the most heavily bearded Brooklynites.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

Young Fathers

Dead



When Young Fathers appeared in 2008, they were

a very pop, synchronised-dancing hip-hop trio from Edinburgh, and it was hard to imagine they'd become so menacing. EPs released in 2011 and 2013 were grimy and aggressive, and now their debut album is called 'Dead'. There's Scottish, Liberian and Nigerian heritage in the group, and

that's key to getting a grasp on their wild mash of sonic and lyrical styles. 'Get Up' and 'No Way' echo the artful experimentation of South African producer/rapper Spook Mathambo, and there's something of the demonic righteousness of Shabazz Palaces about 'Hangman' and 'Mmmh Mmmh'. Yet somehow they've retained their pop nous, making for an album that's unique, but maddeningly all over the place. ■ PHIL

HEBBLETHWAITE

7

Augustines

Augustines

Votiv/Caroline International



Despite its success, Augustines' debut album was the sort

of thing you wouldn't want to replicate – a record of deep sadness born out of the suicides of frontman Billy McCarthy's mother and brother, both diagnosed schizophrenics. Little wonder, then, that their self-titled follow-up doesn't pack anywhere near the same emotional wallop. Too often, 'Augustines' seeks to lift the listener with bumper-sticker optimism ('Now You Are Free', 'Don't You Look Back') and unearned catharsis, evoking everyone from Bruce Springsteen to U2 to – repeatedly – Arcade Fire, yet never quite convincing of its sincerity. As a play for stadium-rock ascension, it may prove successful. As a successor to one of the most affecting and honest debuts of recent years, however, it feels a little empty.

■ BARRY NICOLSON

5

Sunn O))) & Ulver

Terrestrials



Southern Lord In their earliest incarnations, American duo Sunn

O))) played fearsome, bowel-loosening metallic drone, and Norway's Ulver were all about shrieking black metal. A decade of loose connections between the two culminates in 'Terrestrials', 36 minutes and three tracks of rich, enveloping heaviness. While your speakers are still liable to rattle, especially when Sunn O)))'s Greg Anderson drops depth-charge bass on 'Western Horn', extremity for extremity's sake is conspicuous by its absence. Fourteen-minute closer 'Eternal Return', notably, locks down an atmosphere that's like the *Twin Peaks* soundtrack stretched to breaking point, and is also kinda beautiful.

■ NOEL GARDNER

8

Breton

War Room Stories

Displaced experimental collective leave London behind and head to Berlin for their second album

London is changing, and changing fast. Last summer, the bulldozers rolled in on an abandoned NatWest bank in London's Elephant And Castle, razing the area for a new block of luxury flats. But this bank wasn't totally abandoned. Deep in its belly lay BretonLABS, a legal squat space that acted as studio, factory, rehearsal space and living quarters for the band Breton. BretonLABS ran like a backbone through Breton's debut album, 'Other People's Problems'. You could hear it in the grit-grey guitars, the angular MPC beats, the roomy natural reverb and the inner-city pressure. Now it's all dust and rubble before the yuppies move in. This difficult second album could be more difficult than most.

It's probably no coincidence that 'War Room Stories' was recorded far from London. The title is a reference to Funkhaus Studios, a former eastern bloc government



building in Berlin's Mitte district, and the opening 'Envy' suggests transience is playing on their mind: "You're a tourist/There's nothing wrong with that", sings Roman Rappak. "What you never could have noticed/Is how your bags were packed". A skippy mix of sparkling steel drum melodies,



electronic blips and classical strings, it's the poppiest Breton song to date, but delivered with a wrenching melancholy: "You're only here as long as they rented it to you".

BretonLABS might be gone, but 'War Room Stories' echoes – and in places, expands upon – its intricate production. 'S Four' is one of five tracks here to employ the 44-piece Macedonian Radio Symphonic Orchestra, pizzicato strings shunted forth on sped-up Burial beats. 'Got Well Soon' is a 3am k-hole of glinting synths and wheezing bass fog. Weaving through the moody beat clap of '302 Watchtowers' is what sounds like the chimes of an antique music box.

What diminishes 'War Room Stories' are the songs themselves, which can feel ordinary, and Rappak's vocal, a monotone half-mumble that doesn't make the most of his intriguing lyrics. Elsewhere, tracks pile layer upon layer onto subtle opening sketches, which buckle under the strain. Perhaps the same was true of 'Other People's Problems', but that album sounded like the anxiety and confusion that came from living in London in 2012. 'War Room Stories' sounds like a band cut adrift. ■ LOUIS PATTISON

6

THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE February 3 ► LABEL Cut Tooth/Believe ► PRODUCER Breton
► LENGTH 40:43 ► TRACKLISTING ►1. Envy ►2. S Four ►3. Legs And Arms
►4. Got Well Soon ►5. Closed Category ►6. National Grid ►7. Search Party
►8. 302 Watchtowers ►9. Brothers ►10. Fifteen Minutes ► BEST TRACK S Four

Reviews

Maximo Park

Too Much Information



The Tyneside survivors give their indie rock a lick of refined electro

▶ For bands from the mid-'00s, it's like the first 20 minutes of *Saving Private Ryan* out there. If you're not Arctic Monkeys, Kings Of Leon, The Killers or Kasabian, then every album release must feel like charging up the Normandy beaches into a barrage of anti-guitar gunfire from people who want the alternative world to be populated solely by blank-faced beard-and-model glitchpop duos. Of course, history records that a few plucky bands got through, and one of those was Maximo Park. 'Questing, Not Coasting' vowed the standout track from their third album 'Quicken The Heart' in 2009, and they're certainly living up to the promise; they dodged a few bullets over 2012's defiantly rockist 'The National Health' but this fifth album resolutely refuses to tread water, instead coming on like a literary pop version of The Maccabees' recent explorations in jittery psychedelia.



▶ THE DETAILS

▶ **RELEASE DATE** February 3 ▶ **LABEL** Daylighting ▶ **PRODUCERS** Maximo Park, Dave Okumu ▶ **LENGTH** 35:39 ▶ **TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Give, Get, Take ▶2. Brain Cells ▶3. Leave This Island ▶4. Lydia, The Ink Will Never Dry ▶5. My Bloody Mind ▶6. Is It True? ▶7. Drinking Martinis ▶8. I Recognise The Light ▶9. Midnight On The Hill ▶10. Her Name Was Audre ▶11. Where We're Going ▶ **BEST TRACK** Drinking Martinis

Perhaps it's the influence of Field Music, in whose Sunderland studio 'Too Much Information' was recorded. Perhaps it's their work with Jessie Ware's party-starting producer of choice, Dave Okumu. Or perhaps it's their fresh love of Fever Ray's music. But they've cleverly manoeuvred their way into the slipstream of far cooler alt.rock pioneers, softening Paul Smith's Geordie bawl to a velveteen wisp and draping it in synthetic honey, pitched somewhere between Kraftwerk, The Magnetic Fields and '80s Depeche Mode. Refined electro sweeps like 'Brain Cells', 'Is It True?' and 'Leave This Island' are as mellow and rich as fine chocolate or Keith Richards.

Despite embracing this new modernist tack, traces of Maximo's trademark Smiths-y melodies, tense jangles and occasional air of DH Lawrence getting amorous on Newcastle Brown Ale all linger. And if you're one of those people who can only enjoy your airy indie pop if it comes with an extensive reading list drenched in existential trauma, fill yer boots: 'Lydia, The Ink Will Never Dry' is inspired by the experimental short stories of US author Lydia Davis; 'Her Name Was Audre' is the tale of feminist poet Audre Lorde wasted by illness and 'I Recognise The Light' is the audiobook version of Roberto Bolaño's book on 'disappeared' Chilean citizens performed by 'Humbug'-era Arctic Monkeys.

But it's the suave stylistic twists that best signpost future Maximo quests: the compressed psych indie of 'Give, Get, Take', or the panoramic plushness of necking cocktails in Japanese skyscrapers that permeates 'Drinking Martinis'. A hard-fought victory. ■ **MARK BEAUMONT**

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

Peggy Sue Choir Of Echoes

"Peggy Sue's fourth LP impresses throughout, a record of soulful depths and heady highs. The sultry doo-wop of 'Longest Day Of The Year Blues' may be the catchiest tune you hear this winter." **8** (NME, January 25)

Marijuana Deathsquads Oh My Sexy Lord

"Ricochets from glitchy electronica to feral noise-rock via lysergic ambience, resulting in a perverse jumble of ideas that somehow hangs together coherently." (NME, January 25) **8**

East India Youth Total Strife Forever

"William Doyle doesn't quite know what he's created, and neither should the listener. It's quite odd, original and full of promise – exactly what you want from a debut." **8** (NME, January 11)

Mogwai Rave Tapes

"Nineteen years on, Mogwai seem to be approaching national treasure status: they are where you look first if you're after some undulating, affecting, occasionally extremely loud instrumental rock." (NME, January 18) **7**

Inside Llewyn Davis

"Even by the Coens' standards, Llewyn Davis is an odd character. There are many comic moments, but it's not funny; it's bleak, difficult, absorbing and brave." (NME, January 25) **9**

Pypy Pagan Day



Slovenly
Comprising members of assorted obscure Montreal bands – including Annie-Claude Deschênes of Duchess Says, who were Yeah Yeah Yeahs' tour partners in 2009/10 – Pypy are for those who like their rock abrasive, deranged and, crucially, danceable. Debut album 'Pagan Day' is a mixed bag, but this is

a stylistic issue rather than one of quality. Its opening title track is organ-powered krautrock, while 'Molly' combines girl-group cuteness and screwy psychedelic guitar gnarl in unlikely but successful fashion, and may or may not be a drug reference. Throughout, the frequent use of early-'80s dance-punk beats help temper Pypy's enthusiasm for the fuzz pedal with the sound of untamed funk. ■ **NOEL GARDNER**

Hatcham Social Cutting Up The Present Leaks Out The Future

O Genesis



Londoners Hatcham Social have been carving their own furrow with their blend of '60s beat music, avant garde and angular post-punk since 2006. Field Music and British Sea Power are the closest comparisons. Unfortunately, the odd flash of delicate

charm aside (shy ballad 'Don't Go To Sleep' is a real tearjerker), on this ever-so-slightly forgettable third album they are not their usual inventive selves. On 'Spirit Of 45' they sound like a depressed Best Coast, and 'More Power To Live' is just crusty classic rock. Yes, they write pretty and moving songs, but it's reasonable to expect more from a band with a history of writing such sophisticated pop. **5**

■ **JOHN CALVERT**



NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK

Fucked Up/Diiv/ White Lung/ Guardian Alien



285 Kent New York

January 19

A fond farewell to Williamsburg's punkest venue

There's not much point romanticising about 285 Kent. It is what it is. Or, rather, after tonight, it was what it was – a dingy, dirty dive of a DIY venue where anything, within reason, could happen. But that's what made it such a great destination for gigs and why tonight's last-ever show there is so significant. Gentrification is creeping across Williamsburg, rents are rising, and the building's owners have decided not to renew the lease. Having only existed in its current guise for less than four years, 285 might not be as legendary as CBGB or the Astoria, but its closure will still leave a gaping hole in New York's music scene. ➡

Diiv take to the stage on 285 Kent's final night

"I don't feel like there's another venue that will replace the gap this will leave in Williamsburg," says venue manger and booker Ric Leichtung before the show. "One of the things that made 285 so special was its lawlessness. As long as you weren't punching somebody in the face or dealing coke on the dancefloor, you could do whatever you wanted. The whole point was seeing music in an environment where you feel free and liberated to do what you want and not fit into somebody else's idea of what's appropriate."

It's a point that's made from the very start of the evening's proceedings, as oddball Brooklyn outfit **Guardian Alien** pass a joint around the stage before they even hit a note. Soundwise, they're a weird, trippy drone, like a black metal didgeridoo band, or a UFO with engine trouble. By contrast, boisterous Vancouver punks **White Lung**'s songs are shorter and snappier, and it's only when they start that it feels the night is warming



Fucked Up backstage

up. Their songs are manic and effervescent, with frontwoman Mish Way a commanding presence. And if the rather static band don't always match the energy of their belligerent, spiky punk sound, the pace and energy of their songs is certainly contagious, reaching far back into the vast room.

It's nothing, however, compared to **Diiv**'s set. They might make a less visceral kind of music, but Zachary Cole Smith's indie outfit grew up and evolved in this very venue, essentially becoming the house band that supported all the larger acts coming through, and there's a lot of love for them. "When I started the band," Smith says before the gig, "my only goal, really, was to play a show at 285 Kent. After we'd been a band for a month, we'd already played here, like, five times and I think we've played here maybe 20 times in total. It's just such a good vibe here. It really is like a community."

There's certainly a special connection between Diiv and the 285 audience. As a metallic sheen of guitars careens off the walls, crowdsurfer after crowdsurfer rolls across a sea of hands. As tonight's sets go, Diiv are hardly raucous – they are, essentially, a shoegaze band, dealing more with the hypnotic than the hyperactive – but the likes of 'Past Lives', 'Sometime' and 'Wait' crackle

AS FUCKED UP TAKE TO THE STAGE IT FEELS LIKE THE VENUE ISN'T JUST CLOSING DOWN, BUT CRASHING DOWN

with energy as they're launched into the smoke-filled air. As a mark of the import of the occasion, Diiv play, for the first time ever live, '(Druun Pt II)' and follow it up with an intense and almost unrecognisable version of Bob Dylan's 'Like A Rolling Stone'. There's an as yet untitled new song, and a poignant, set-closing rendition of 'Doused', the video for which was filmed right here.

Then there's **Fucked Up**. Never ones to put on a half-hearted show, from the moment the Canadian punks take to the stage, it feels like the venue isn't just closing down, but crashing down and taking the world with it. Hefty frontman Damian Abraham is nearly yanked into the crowd a minute after their set begins, and from then on it's a free-for-all. Soon he's topless, gleefully shouting in the faces of those crushed at the

Fucked Up

SETLIST

- Generation
- David Comes To Life
- Queen Of Hearts
- Black Albino Bones
- Running On Nothing
- untitled new song
- Turn the Season
- Baiting The Public
- I Hate Summer
- new song
- Son The Father
- The Other Shoe
- Police
- Blitzkrieg Bop

Diiv

SETLIST

- Druun
- Past Lives
- Geist
- How Long Have You Known
- (new song)
- Sometime
- Oshin (Subsume)
- (Druun Pt II)
- Like A Rolling Stone
- Wait
- Dust
- Doused

chapter than with this rambunctious, chaotic set. 'I Hate Summer' and 'The Other Shoe' are

delivered with head-busting, rip-roaring energy, and it all comes to a crushing climax as the six-piece rush through a frenetic cover of the Ramones' 'Blitzkrieg Bop' and the whole place erupts in a frenzy of uncontrollable joy. Midway through the song, a crowdsurfer clambers on top of the stage-left speaker and hurls himself off, the speaker tumbling after him into the dense crowd below. Nobody gives a shit, because this is 285 Kent, and if something like this hadn't happened – especially during a Fucked Up show – it would have felt wrong.

Afterwards, the air is thick with smoke, the sweaty crowd are high on adrenalin, and everyone hangs around to dance, drink and smoke. As Sunday night tips into Monday morning, the realisation that 285 Kent is no more is slowly sinking in. This sticky, booze-splashed floor will soon be pulled up, probably to be replaced by more luxury condos. But tonight will rightly be remembered for years to come, as the legendary send-off that 285 Kent deserved.

■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

front, picking up and swinging crowdsurfers over his shoulder before launching them – always with care and a wide smile – back into the throng. "This will rise again," he booms, like a punk preacher. "Maybe in a different form and in a different place, but this will rise again."

Before it does, though, there seems to be no better way to close this

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Elisa 'Doolittle', 26, Brooklyn
"Tonight was everything

I expected from 285. I've been here countless times and it's a tragedy it's closing. It maybe didn't have the best sound but it was a very personal place for music. I saw all sorts of shit here I've never seen before."



Matthew Molnar, 31, Brooklyn
"It's an incredible place. It wasn't

just a show space, it was a community and there was always cool shit going on. It was an incubator for a bunch of amazing bands. I felt like I was going to a wake when I got here – until Diiv's set; then I just let go and had a great time."



Kaitlin Browne, 24, Queens
"I was the day-of-show manager.

I sorted out the bar, the money, and making sure we don't get arrested! Every time we opened up was a huge risk, but tonight's atmosphere was totally positive. It was a perfect way to end."



Tricky Youth, '69', Brooklyn
"It was fun. Fucked Up played and

Fucked Up are always good. I wanted to party and tonight is a party. I'm sad that my friends who work here are out of jobs, but there will be other opportunities and other spaces."

9

MORE GIGS

Deer Tick Deaf Institute, Manchester

Sunday, January 19

Much like Deer Tick's more country-influenced songs, singer John McCauley's voice has gone south. Beer being far from an ideal sore-throat medicine, his larynx has crumbled to a croak by finale 'Christ Jesus'. No wonder Vanessa Carlton looks apprehensive when she pops up for a mid-set guest spot on 'In Our Time.' But the Rhode Island five-piece's take on Americana has always been a little raw, and fuzzier blues-rock jams like 'Let's All Go To The Bar' benefit from their looser renditions. There's no sick leave taken either; a 90-minute set peaks on an exuberant 'Ashamed' that leaves the audience singing – even if McCauley no longer can.

■ SIMON JAY CATLING

7

Wild Cub Sebright Arms, London

Tuesday, January 14

Nashville's Wild Cub have been touring with The 1975 and are about to make their debut on Jimmy Fallon's US talk show. Impressive, especially before they've even headlined a UK gig of their own, but during their first three songs, it seems like they've had a go at running before bothering to crawl. The venue sound is woeful, and it's distracting for both band and audience. Thankfully they pull it together for 'Hidden In The Night', where their intricate Blondie-meets-The Cure arrangements rightfully shine. A cover of Lykke Li's 'I Follow Rivers' is a highlight, and it seems certain we'll hear a lot more of songs like 'Black Tide' and 'Thunder Clatter' in the year to come.

■ ANDY WELCH

6

Waxahatchee



Katie Crutchfield defies the snow for the first date of her US tour – and it sounds exquisite

As Katie Crutchfield comes onstage in the tiny back room of the Mercury Lounge, the streets outside are quiet and mostly empty. Her show – the first on Waxahatchee's tour with Cayetana, a scrappy Philadelphia trio, and the cathartic Ohio quartet All Dogs – is officially sold out, but the room is only at about 75 per cent capacity thanks to the snowstorm that's currently ripping through the city.

"Fuck the snow," Crutchfield says simply, after a few songs. She's dressed in cut-off shorts and tights – truly, fuck the snow – and launches her set alone, with four solo cuts that are, incredibly, sweeter and more intimate than their recorded counterparts. Perhaps it's the afterglow of escaping the storm, but the entire night's performance sounds exquisite, crystalline, as if the Mercury's PA system had been custom-built anew for the specific timbre of Crutchfield's voice and guitar.

She takes her time with each song, eyes closed throughout, expertly streamlining her own accompaniment and singing with the kind of care that usually only emerges from unselfconscious bedroom rehearsals. Even when Crutchfield's band members join her onstage, the quartet are perfectly amplified and casually in sync, ploughing through the remaining songs with more teeth and more expertly sneered punk edges than their records might suggest. The roughness works brilliantly. It's like watching Waxahatchee become its ideal self; the rare kind of set that even those not particularly fond of live recordings would want to bring home and replay over and over, until the freeze finally melts away.

■ DEVON MALONEY

SETLIST

- Noccalula
- Blue Pt II
- Tangled Envisioning
- Bathtub
- Under A Rock
- Waiting
- Grass Stain
- Misery Over Dispute
- American Weekend
- Brother Bryan
- Lips And Limbs
- Dixie Cups And Jars
- Coast To Coast
- Peace And Quiet
- Be Good

8

Reviews

Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks

Gorilla, Manchester

Wednesday, January 15

Charm, absurdity and casual brilliance from the former Pavement man

With nearly half a century of existence and over two decades of music-making to his name, Stephen Malkmus has carved himself quite a niche in the alternative rock world, a steady flow of off-the-cuff lyrics and purposefully wandering guitar solos still drawing devotees to his lo-fi altar.

Although the ghost of his former band Pavement still looms large, The Jicks have carved a solid reputation in their own right. New studio album 'Wig Out At Jagbags' is The Jicks' fifth, and fills out the bulk of tonight's set. They take a little time to warm up through the album's opener, 'Planetary Motion' and the playful climbing melody of 'Rumble At The Rainbo', and it's not until the first song break that Malkmus shows a flash of nonchalant charm. He turns to observe the bizarre stage backdrop, designed to look like some kind of highly dangerous control room, plastered with yellow hazard signs, turns back to the audience and enquires, deadpan: "Didn't anyone talk about how weird that is?" There's a communal giggle and, ice broken, the band slide into 'No One Is (As I Are Be)', a song from 2011's 'Mirror Traffic'.

Malkmus and band may be laid-back, but that doesn't mean they don't demonstrate the occasional impulse to showmanship. As The

THE JOY OF HIS MUSIC LIES IN ITS APPARENT EFFORTLESSNESS

Jicks pick up the pace, guitarist Mike Clark climbs atop his amp, displaying a Cribs T-shirt – a friendly nod to Gary Jarman, the husband bass player Joanna Bolme leaves back home in Portland. It's Clark who continues to buoy levels of enthusiasm, leading a handclap section before rounding it out with a bit of flashy keyboard. On an effervescent 'Stick Figures In Love', he jokingly removes his guitar and makes to leave the stage in a pose of mock-triumph – but the rest of The Jicks gleefully kill his joke, rolling straight into the paper-thin blues riff of 'Spazz'.

For someone who could now walk around with the airs and graces of a rock legend if he felt like it, Malkmus still cuts an unassuming figure, beaming out at the crowd with the sleeves of his pyjama shirt rolled up to his elbows. The joy of his music lies in its apparent effortlessness – the lyrics that appear to have leapt straight from his skull to the page with no crafting and those guitar licks that sound like an act of casual spontaneity. Even now, he's not afraid to come across with a certain faux-naivety. "I've no idea how to play that song live," he says at the end of the upbeat, jaunty 'Lariat'. "But I just keep trying."

Yet these songs themselves are undeniably the result of wonderful craft. 'Jenny And The Ess-Dog', a track from Malkmus' 2001 post-Pavement solo album, takes a Beatles-esque melody and gives it a very sideways slant. There's a thundering version of 'Houston Hades', a romantic, spaced-out 'J Smoov' and a jubilant rendition of 'Jo Jo's Jacket'. Malkmus ends the set spouting lyrics of Robyn Hitchcock levels of absurdity. We may never know exactly what has inspired lines like "If you choose to copulate, you'd better get home fast... with Julie and Gina, the microscopic world...", but somehow, in Malkmus' hands, it all makes perfect sense.

Into the encore, and the other side of a comically misunderstood heckle – funny, but "get Jack Black out" does actually sound a bit like "get your cock out" – the crowd are finally treated to what we might call 'the hits'. First there's the Jicks tracks 'Tigers' and 'Senator', then an old Pavement tune, 'Harness Your Hopes', and finally a take on Led Zeppelin's 'Stairway To Heaven'. Stephen Malkmus might not take the straightforward route to crowd-pleasing, but he's certainly doing something right. ■ HAYLEY AVRON



SETLIST

PLANETARY MOTION RUMBLE AT THE RAINBO NO ONE IS (AS I ARE BE) FOREVER 28 JENNY AND THE ESS-DOG THE JANITOR REVEALED LARIAT ASKING PRICE STICK FIGURES IN LOVE SPAZZ CINNAMON AND LESBIANS HOUSTON HADES J SMOOV JO JO'S JACKET PICK UP THE SPARE SURREAL TEENAGERS

How good?

10
2



MORE GIGS

Adam Green Broadcast, Glasgow

Monday, January 20

In a city where 'cunt' is a term of endearment, perhaps it should come as no surprise that Adam Green is so beloved. He certainly has a way with profanity, sugar-coating debauched tales like 'No Legs' with a sardonic baritone that probably sounds wholesome to anyone who doesn't speak English as a first language. His one-note humour could wear out its welcome, but he plays for 90 minutes tonight and is never less than uproariously entertaining. His next album, he reveals, is the soundtrack to a self-directed

adaptation of *Aladdin*, starring Macaulay Culkin. No doubt it'll be an acquired taste, but if it's one you've got, you're probably already drooling in anticipation.

■ BARRY NICHOLSON

8

Jessica Pratt Café Oto, London

Thursday, January 16

It might be pissing down with rain outside, but Café Oto is doing its best impression of a cosy *Inside Llewyn Davis*-style coffee-shop folk-music gathering. Hushed beatniks gather around tables sporting serious expressions, while California-based singer-songwriter Jessica Pratt dazzles with her fragile but firm voice, bringing to mind the whispered tones of revived '60s singer-songwriter Vashti Bunyan. Nods to swirling psych add a Joanna Newsom-style slant to proceedings, but Jessica doesn't need to wield a harp in order to get her wonderful weirdness across – a simple acoustic guitar and a wisdom far beyond her years does the job for her.

■ LEONIE COOPER

8

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD

What is it about Stephen Malkmus?



Joe, 20, Barrow-in-Furness

"He's got a clever way of writing

songs, but he never overacts. I relate to him as not being, like, the best guitarist, but what he plays is just incredibly interesting. I've spent about four years of my life basically listening solely to Pavement, and it's been really strange to see him but I've really enjoyed it."



Emma, 36, Manchester

"I think it's the way he changes

the effects on his guitar, I've been fascinated with it for many a year. He's got a beautiful, distinctive style that I really like. And he's quite sexy as well."



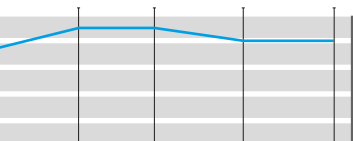
Dean, 20, Lake District

"My friend

introduced me to his music recently. But I get the impression he carries a lot of the energy he had in Pavement into this project. He hasn't lost any of it. He's as good as he ever was."

DANNY PAYNE, JENN FIVE

TIGERS SENATOR HARNESS STAIRWAY
YOUR HOPES TO HEAVEN



Warpaint



Electrowerkz, London Wednesday, January 22

A rich and rewarding showcase of the LA band's latest album – plus a new song

There's always a surprise when you come down to Warpaint's woods. Songs that have been familiar friends from long, obsessive listens take on new forms and guises, flickering and changing. And so what should be pretty much a mini album-launch for 'Warpaint' not only swells beyond expectation and beyond the bounds of this tiny room, but... up bobs a new song!

'No Way Out', also played at festivals last autumn, sounds so fine that it surely deserves a higher status than a mere offcut from album number two. "*Never again will I play that game with you*", begins Theresa Wayman, her voice heavily reverberated. The beats that back her have a modern, post-dubstep quality, with Jenny Lee Lindberg's bass and Emily Kokal's guitar twining around,

before the song picks up a more insistent marching rhythm. Then Kokal's guitar lets loose a rich twang and Stella Mozgawa's drums thump heavily in a down-to-business fashion. As the song builds, it becomes ever more insistently danceable, with an intense, punk-funky Pop Group feel, before deliquescing into a lovely, delicate ending.

SETLIST

- Keep It Healthy
- Love Is To Die
 - Biggy
 - Bees
- Feeling Alright
 - Hi
- Composure
- No Way Out
- Billie Holiday
- Disco//very
 - Drive
 - Undertow
 - Elephants

Impressive stuff – and the album tracks are no less so. 'Keep It Healthy' finds Emily's proud voice proclaiming romantic doom ("*You and I walked the flame/Don't forget, don't forget*") as Wayman flickers lightly over the drumpads. 'Feeling Alright' has a wonderful sassy lope, and playful drums, unfurling and purling gracefully like ink dropped into water. Kokal is sufficiently inspired to let out a little Mexican-style "AIAIAIA!" "Try it!" she laughs. "It feels good!"

The whole band and the whole crowd seem supremely comfortable all night. It's fascinating to watch a band as totally, hippyishly into the groove as this. Lindberg in particular is a masterclass in beatific, eyes-closed head-rolling, and at one point Wayman sits down on the stage to play her guitar. And they are right to be at their ease: these are elegantly structured, rich and rewarding songs. An hour seems too short. You could listen to the likes of 'Biggy', with its interlocking, trip-hoppish rhythms all night.

Old favourites such as 'Bees', 'Composure' and 'Billie Holiday' are delivered with magnetic assurance, but best of all – other than that new track – is 'Disco//very', a nasty, throbbing thing full of irresistible attitude: "*Don't you battle we'll kill you/We'll rip you up and tear you in two*". They could do it, you know, with one well-deployed shift of rhythm. Complacency is unwise in the world of Warpaint. ■ EMILY MACKAY

8

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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

Howler

Just over two years since Howler released their fuzzy debut 'America Give Up', the Minneapolis quartet return, still full of sarcastic scuzzy fun, with their second LP 'World Of Joy'. Frontman Jordan Gatesmith tells us all about why they're taking things more seriously second time round.

'World Of Joy' is a real step up for Howler...

"I think all the songs have this outstanding sense of humour and the rest of the band really brought something to the record. The song 'Al's Corral', to me, is hilarious. I think one of the funniest things we did on this record is start that with the cowbell counting off incorrectly."

This will be your new drummer Rory MacMurdo's first tour with the band – is he in for some hazing out on the road?

"You can inflict any sort of thing on Rory! I think he'll be hazing us. He's a road warrior. He's in this noise-rock band called Designer and they're always on the road. He's been on the road more than we have in the last few years, which is kind of insane."

How do you think the Howler live experience is going to change with this record?

"We're actually taking ourselves

more seriously live, which is odd because I think in the beginning we didn't really care. Maybe that's done more harm than good, but whatever, we had tons of fun. I think we're going to be able to put on a really powerful, good live show for the first time in the history of the band."

► THE DETAILS

► **DATES** Bristol Louisiana (March 24), Brighton Bermuda Triangle (25), Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach (26), Nottingham Bodega (27), Birmingham Temple (28), Manchester Deaf Institute (30), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (31), Newcastle Cluny (April 1), Leeds Belgrave Music Hall (2), London Oslo (3)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC ► **PRICE** £10; London £12
► **ON SALE** now ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1-£1.50 booking fee; Glasgow from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee; Cardiff from howlertickets.sandbag.uk.com with £1.50 booking fee

The Julie Ruin

Former Bikini Kill/Le Tigre frontwoman Kathleen Hanna brings her latest project to the UK for the first time this May. Expect fierce riffs and riot grrrl attitude.

► **DATES** London Dome (May 22), Leeds Brudenell (24), Brighton Coalition (26)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
► **PRICE** £12; London TBC
► **ON SALE** now
► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.20 booking fee; London TBC

Manchester Orchestra

Ten years after lead singer and songwriter Andy Hull started making music under the moniker Manchester Orchestra, he and Robert McDowell, Chris Freeman, Andy Prince and Tim Very return with their fourth studio album 'Cope', due on March 31. Hear them play the new record plus selected cuts from their back catalogue as they return to the UK just after the album's release.

► **DATES** Bristol The Fleece (April 7), Birmingham Glee Club (8), London Scala (10), Manchester Club Academy (11), Glasgow SWG3 (12)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
► **PRICE** £12.50; London £13.50; Manchester sold out
► **ON SALE** now
► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.25-£1.50 booking fee

Blood Red Shoes

Laura-Mary Carter and Steven Ansell escaped to Berlin to record their self-titled fourth album, due for release on March 3. They hit the road in April.

► **DATES** Nottingham Bodega (April 22), Bristol Trinity (23), Birmingham Academy 2 (24), Brighton Concorde 2 (25), Glasgow Oran Mor (27), Manchester Club Academy

(28), Norwich Waterfront (29), London Electric Ballroom (30), Leeds Cockpit (May 2)

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Mac DeMarco

Canadian singer-songwriter Mac DeMarco has become one of the most talked about new artists around. With new album 'Salad Days' imminent, he brings his unpredictable and wild live show back over here to kickstart the summer.

► **DATES** Brighton Old Market (May 19), Glasgow Mono (20), Manchester Sound Control (21), London KOKO (22)

► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC

► **PRICE** Brighton £11; Glasgow £10; Manchester £11.50; London £13.50

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NME Awards Tour with Austin, Texas



Interpol head up this year's NME Awards Tour with Austin, Texas. They'll preview new material from

their fifth album as they return to the UK for the first time in three years.

► **DATES** Glasgow O2 Academy (March 18), Leeds O2 Academy (19), Manchester Academy (20), Liverpool O2 Academy (22),



Mac DeMarco

Nottingham Rock City (23), Birmingham O2 Academy (25), Bristol O2 Academy (26), London O2 Academy Brixton (27)

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Latitude

"Someone showed me a flyer for Latitude and it's got my name on it – and that's a bit weird as I've always been a part of something else," says Damon Albarn, who's headlining the Suffolk festival as a solo artist.

Two Door Cinema Club also headline.

► **DATES** Southwold Henham Park (July 17–20)

► **OTHER ACTS** Röyksopp & Robyn, Haim, Anna Calvi, Willis Earl Beal, San Fermin

► **PRICE** £182.50

► **ON SALE** now

► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £8 booking fee

Tokyo Police Club

The Ontario quartet release their first album in four years this March.

► **DATES** Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (March 27), Manchester Ruby Lounge (30), Leeds Cockpit 2 (31), London Scala (April 1)

► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC

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Spring King

The Manchester garage-rock five-piece launch their debut single, 'Mumma', out on March 3, with a hometown show.

► **DATES** Manchester Soup Kitchen (March 1)

► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC

► **PRICE** £6

► **ON SALE** now

► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

FESTIVAL NEWS

Field Day

The east London festival has announced more acts who'll be performing in Victoria Park over June 7–8. Jagwar Ma, Courtney Barnett, Pond, Fat White Family, The Horrors, SBTRKT and Temples have all been added to the line-up, which also includes Pixies, Metronomy, Warpaint, Sky Ferreira and more. Tickets are available now priced £38.50–£78 from NME.COM/tickets.

Alt-Fest

Marilyn Manson will headline this year's Alt-Fest at Boughton Estate, Kettering. Electropop hero Gary Numan, Peter Hook & The Light and The Cult also play. The festival will take place between August 15–17 with £85 tickets available from alt-fest.com.

Melt

Crowned Best Medium-Sized Festival at the Festival Awards Europe earlier this year, a first raft of names has been confirmed for Melt in Germany, including Portishead, Röyksopp & Robyn, Haim, Fuck Buttons and Gesaffelstein. Tickets are on sale now from meltfestival.de at €124.



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GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

East India Youth

In a previous musical life, William Doyle fronted an indie band called Doyle & The Fourfathers. As East India Youth, he's moved away from his former sound and reached for new avant-garde heights. William's debut album 'Total Strife Forever' plots a path of experimental electronica that shifts from moments of ambience to cuts of pulsating intensity.

► **DATES** Sheffield Cathedral (January 29), Manchester Gullivers (30), Liverpool Korova (February 1), Bristol Louisiana (4)

► **TICKETS** £6; Liverpool £5 from NME.COM/tickets with 60p-75p booking fee

Samantha Crain

Samantha fuses classic Bob Dylan and Neil Young with the modern folk twist of former touring buddies First Aid Kit. She plays three gigs to promote her debut album 'Kid Face'.

► **DATES** Manchester Ruby Lounge (January 29), Middlesbrough Westgarth Social Club (30), Durham Old Cinema Launderette (31)

► **TICKETS** Manchester £8; Middlesbrough £7 from NME.COM/tickets with 80p-£1

booking fee; Durham £12 from wegotickets.com with £1.20 booking fee

Darlia

The Blackpool trio look to capitalise on their place in NME's Ones To

Watch in 2014 list as they bring their first tour of the year to a close. Hotly tipped indie-pop quartet Sundara Karma join them in support.

► **DATES** Bristol Louisiana (January 29), London Barfly (30)

► **TICKETS** Bristol £7; London £8 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

The Hidden Cameras

Canadian indie pop musician Joel Gibb assembles another rotating cast of musicians for this one-off date in London. Expect cuts from

new album 'Age' along with select tracks from his expansive back catalogue.

► **DATES** London Bush Hall (January 29)

► **TICKETS** £11 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.10 booking fee

Bill Callahan

On his latest LP 'Dream River', the man formerly known as Smog aimed to create the soundtrack to the "perfect end of a person's day". Relax as he recreates that smooth sound onstage.

► **DATES** Gateshead The Sage (January 31), Manchester The Ritz (February 3)

► **TICKETS** Gateshead sold out; Manchester £17.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.75 booking fee

Filthy Boy

The south Londoners cast shadows over four cities this week as they perform the dark and sexually charged tracks that form last year's 'Smile That Won't Go Down' album.

► **DATES** Newcastle Head Of Steam (January 29), Liverpool Shipping Forecast (30), Leeds Cockpit 3 (31), Brighton Bermuda Triangle (February 1)

► **TICKETS** £5; Newcastle £6 from NME.COM/tickets with 50p-£1.25 booking fee; Leeds sold out

Outfit

The Liverpool quintet honed their craft playing at mansion parties in their hometown. They're playing more conventional venues these days, but their

FIVE TO SEE FOR FREE

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1. Spectres

Sixty Million Postcards, Bournemouth
Howling Owl noise rockers hit the southwest.

► Jan 30, 8pm

2. Raleigh Ritchie

The Old Blue Last, London
Look out for his debut EP 'Black And Blue'.

► Jan 30, 8pm

3. Imp

A Nation Of Shopkeepers, Leeds
Leeds lo-fi band support Whales In Cubicles.

► Jan 30, 8pm

4. Skinny Girl Diet

The Finsbury, London
Self-proclaimed "fierce girl gang" with riffs galore.

► Feb 1, 8pm

5. Breton

Rough Trade East, London
The Londoners play tracks from new album 'War Room Stories'.

► Feb 3, 7pm



See Breton for free on February 3



Darlia

wispy, R&B-indebted indie still guarantees special moments.

► **DATES** London XOYO (January 29), Brighton Blind Tiger (30)

► **TICKETS** London £8.50; Brighton £7 from NME.COM/tickets with £1-£2.40 booking fee

The Wave Pictures

David Tattersall, Franic Rozycki and Jonny Helm hit the road to promote their 12th album, 2013's 'City Forgiveness'.

► **DATES** Leeds Brudenell Social Club (January 29), Manchester Deaf Institute (February 1), Nottingham Spanky Van Dykes (2)

► **TICKETS** Leeds £8; Manchester £9; Nottingham £7.30 from NME.COM/tickets with 70p-£1.35 booking fee

Mikill Pane

The rapper kicks off his latest tour in Scotland. He'll give debut album 'Blame Miss Barclay' another airing.

► **DATES** Edinburgh Electric Circus (February 3), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (4)

► **TICKETS** £9 from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee

Brazil

The London band have only played a handful of gigs, but debut track 'Hide Away' hints at a live show full of blistering energy and searing riffs.

► **DATES** London The Lexington (January 30)

► **TICKETS** £5 from NME.COM/tickets with 50p booking fee

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

Sound City

Dave Grohl produced, directed and stars in this documentary about the historic LA studio where Nirvana, Fleetwood Mac and Johnny Cash all recorded. Grohl explores some of the stories behind those classic albums, before bringing together friends like Josh Homme and Sir Paul McCartney to make a new record using some of the studio's original equipment.

► **WATCH** BBC Four, 10.15pm, Jan 31

Travis Bretzer John Kennedy

The Canadian singer-songwriter and radio jingle writer's acoustic psych-pop has drawn comparisons to his fellow countryman Mac DeMarco since he popped up on people's radars last year. Tonight he visits the XFM studios to play tracks from last year's 'Making Love' EP and talk about his future plans.

► **LISTEN** XFM, 10pm, Jan 29

The 55th Grammy Awards 4Music

See who picked up trophies at this year's

ceremony and watch performances from Lorde, Metallica and Daft Punk, who'll play with Stevie Wonder, Pharrell and Nile Rodgers.

The now-traditional group performance comes from Dave Grohl, Nine Inch Nails, Queens Of The Stone Age and Fleetwood Mac's Lindsey Buckingham.

► **WATCH** 4Music, 6pm, Jan 30



Daft Punk

Terry Hall BBC 6Music

As well as fronting The Specials, Terry Hall has worked with artists including Damon Albarn, Lily Allen and Sinéad O'Connor. He takes over the Sunday slot to play some of the music that has informed his career.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 4pm, Feb 2

Mike Joyce and Kevin Cummins Mary Anne Hobbs

The former Smiths drummer joins the legendary photographer to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Salford Lads Club – the backdrop to one of the most famous images of The Smiths – and discuss the art of music photography.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7pm, Feb 2

Bryan Ferry Discovering...

This new documentary explores the life, career and influence of Bryan Ferry, from his work with Brian Eno in Roxy Music through to his own solo material.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 8.30pm, Feb 1

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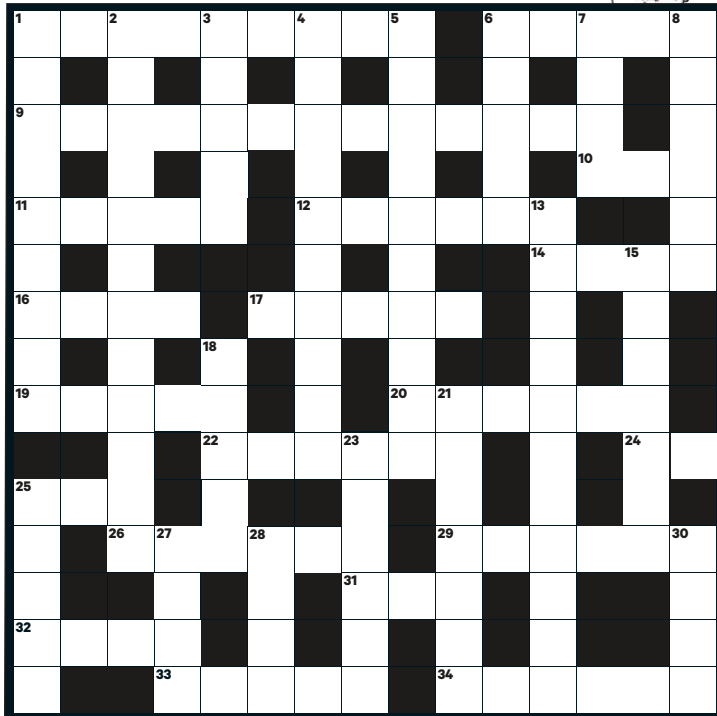
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1** Ten years ago it was the 'Funeral', much later it's the wake again (9)
6 That sweet sound of Swim Deep (5)
9+26A "Well the kids are all hopped up and ready to go/ They're ready to go now/ They got their surfboards", 1977 (6-2-1-4-6)
10 (See 25 across)
11+15D Being regular at the start of the day with Sugar Ray (5-7)
12 Albums '_____ And Everything After' by Counting Crows or 'Hot _____ Night' by Neil Diamond (6)
14 Edward Sharpe And The Magnetic Zeros are in a familiar place with this song (4)
16 At the end of the day it's the album from The The (4)
17 How communication was once relayed from Stereophonics (5)
19 There could be some change along with the notes played by The Drums (5)
20 (See 3 down)
22+33A Demo snorter remixed for homely track

- by Tindersticks (6-5)
24 Bill Ryder-Jones wasn't certain to release this debut album (2)
25+10A Think to go around the east and write of The Dutch Uncles (3-3)
26 (See 9 across)
29 Wild nights with a '60s hit by Bobby Darin (6)
31 "Your name isn't _____, but I didn't care for sand", Arctic Monkeys' 'I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor' (3)
32 Their albums include 2013's 'Live At Rome Olympic Stadium' (4)
33 (See 22 across)
34 "_____ comes and _____ goes/_____ always seems to move so slow", time drags by for Sonic Youth (6)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** 'If You Leave' with Daughter, you can end up here in Europe (9)
2 He's not to be shot by hit man Johnny Marr (3-9)
3+20A Singer-songwriter whose film score credits include the *Toy Story* series and *Meet The Parents/Fockers* (5-6)
4 "Excuse me if I spoke too soon, my eyes have always followed you around the room", 2011 (2-1-3-1-3)
5 Cocteau Twins might somehow gain eleven for this song (10)
6 There's time enough here for albums by David Bowie and Funeral For A Friend (5)
7 Swedish group _____ & The Dove (4)
8 The phonetic alphabet used by Wilco on album '_____ Hotel Foxtrot' (6)
13 Me? I can't hear, which is odd, when Simple Minds are playing (3-8)
15 (See 11 across)
18 Music from Billy Corgan's band Zwan had a song-like quality (5)
21 Somehow so tired of this band (7)
23 Peter risked including old indie band who dealt in 'Fabricated Lunacy' (6)
25 1969 rock opera album that included the track 'Pinball Wizard' (5)
27 This number was the finish for Drake (4)
28 English rapper spotted in a black anorak (4)
30 Hurts to remain in just one place (4)

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, February 11, 2014, to: Crossword, NME, 9th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.

DECEMBER 21/28
ANSWERS

See page 67

QUIZ

Compiled by ALAN WOODHOUSE (answers on page 67)

1 Who is the only other musician bar Dave Grohl to feature on Foo Fighters' self-titled debut album?

Soon Is Now? was originally released as a B-side.

even though the song doesn't actually feature on it?

2 Who links Liam Gallagher and Simple Minds frontman Jim Kerr?

6 Which year saw the first Coachella festival in California?

11 Amy Winehouse references which two legendary singers in the lyrics to 2006 single 'Rehab'?

3 Which of the following have NOT guest-starred on *The Simpsons* – Red Hot Chili Peppers, Tom Waits or Neil Young?

7 Everything Everything take their name from a lyric in a song by which UK dance outfit?

12 What was The Libertines' only UK Top 10 hit?

4 Edwyn Collins had a massive worldwide hit in 1995 with 'A Girl Like You' – what is the name of the studio album it features on?

8 Which US guitar band features the members Cubbie Fink and Mark Pontius?

13 Radiohead took their name from a song by which band?

9 Which American actor has a band called Dead Man's Bones?

14 Which rap legends claimed the NME writers' album of the year accolade in both 1987 and 1988?

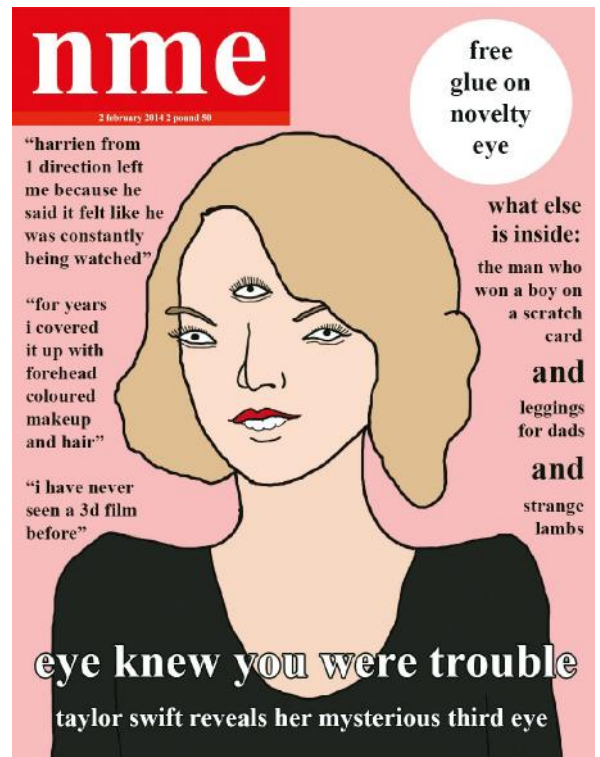
10 Which Elbow single was also the name of one of their albums,

15 Which rock icon's real name is Ian Kilmister?



THE NME COVER THAT I GONE AND DONE

by CHRIS SIMPSON'S ARTIST

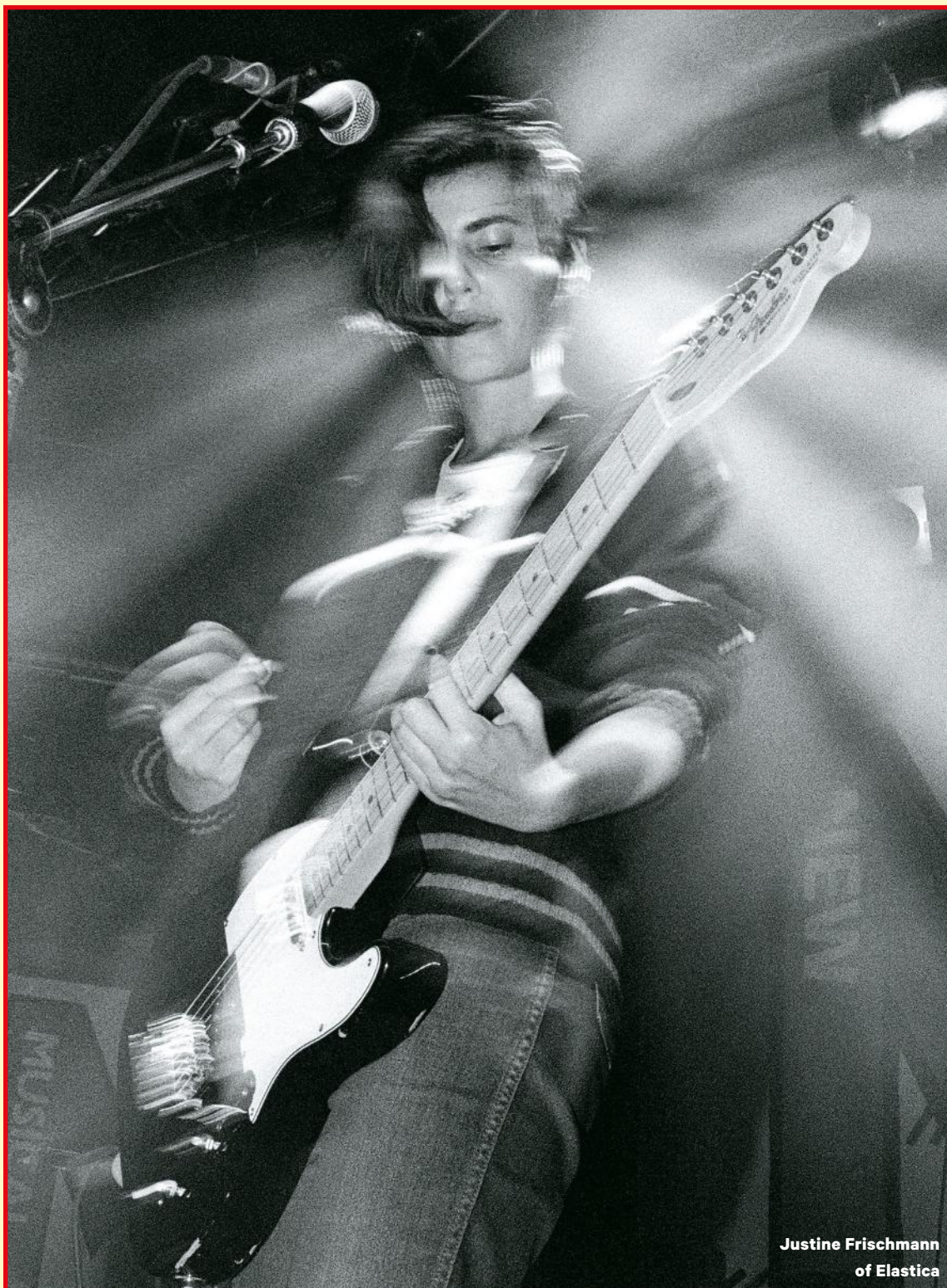


THE WORLD TH

Two decades on, the energy inked into NME's first issue of 1994 still sparks with excitement and potential. "It may spell DEATH to everything (navel-gazing tedium, primarily) that's bedevilled old-school British guitar pop over the past five years... The real beauty in all this homegrown excitement, all this intensity, is this: suddenly slackerdom seems like the most boring thing imaginable." So enthuses a manifesto-like feature on the "new wave of new wave" titled 'Speed for breakfast, speed for lunch and a square meal in the evening'. The headline's cunning twist on contemporary Slimfast adverts comes courtesy of NWONW-ers These Animal Men, whose guitarist Julian 'Hooligan' Hewings asserts that "guitar, bass, drums and attitude are the only things powerful enough to overthrow the artificial entertainment of the front room. People should be smashing their satellite dishes and fighting and shagging in the streets."

TO PRIME its readers for this feral, BSKyB-battering sex revolution, the feature outlines the tenets that the members of this new movement share: "a desperate desire to entertain", a respect for "brevity and the notion of the pop song", "high-speed energy", "fly-on-the-wall Englishness" and a concern with "the politics of everyday life". Oh, and most of all: "they want to be famous". The *On* section of the magazine (the equivalent of today's *Radar*), meanwhile, crams in short pieces on such up-and-coming acts as Echobelly, Sleeper, Marion, Oasis and Underworld. Scene leaders and cover stars Elastica, though less

● Era-defining albums, political activism, new technology and tragic loss: **EMILY MACKAY** travels back to 1994, the year that changed the face of music forever



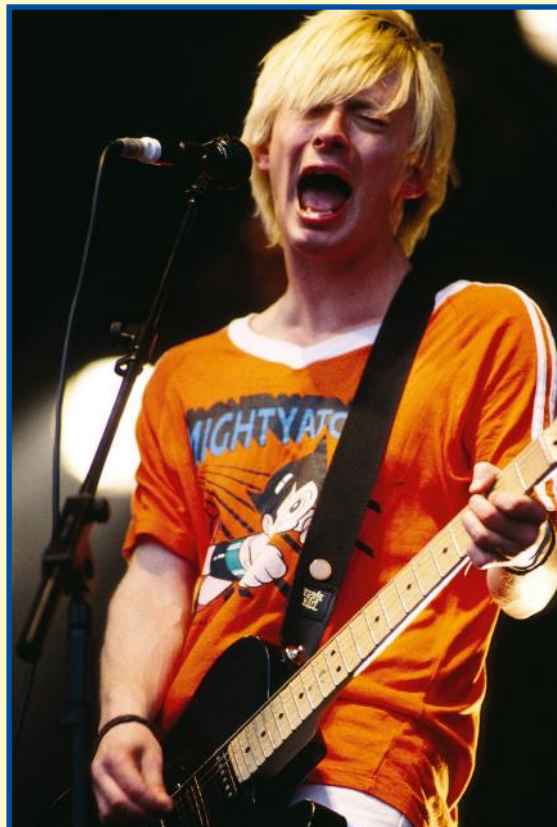
Justine Frischmann
of Elastica

HAT 1994 BUILT

strident, find the feeling of something in the air is getting a little intense at times. "I got sent a cross by someone who said they saw God when they were watching us," muses singer Justine Frischmann. "Which was a bit frightening."

If it wasn't exactly a manifestation of the holy ghost, everyone could feel a spirit moving at the dawn of 1994. "Let's ignore all those shrugs of modesty, those suspicions of hype, that hard-earned cynicism," argued *NME*'s John Mulvey, Frischmann's interviewer. "Let's just go with the gut reaction and follow the incontrovertible feeling that *something* is happening here."

AND A lot did happen in 1994. It's well known that British guitar bands flourished, but British dance did too, with Orbital, Underworld and Autechre, alongside the blooming trip-hop scene, coming into their own in a musical world already thriving with grunge, riot grrrl, the birth of post-rock and great R&B and hip-hop. New, alternative music was also gaining exposure and respect: the BBC's appointment of Matthew Bannister as the controller of Radio 1 was a new broom to sweep out the dead wood in the form of naff, old-school 'Smashie and Nicey' DJs Dave Lee Travis and Steve Wright, and to introduce a new playlist and young, music-focused jockeys such as Steve Lamacq, Jo Whiley and Tim Westwood. It was a brave move: although Radio 1 would lose many of its older and more conservative listeners, it gave a lasting



Radiohead's Thom Yorke, a year before 'The Bends'

platform to young British bands and revitalised both scene and station.

Another of Bannister's new presenters, Emma Freud, went on to marry Richard Curtis, the filmmaker whose *Four Weddings And A Funeral*, released in March 1994, turned around the fortunes of British cinema (although it also put Wet Wet Wet's version of The Troggs' 'Love Is All Around' at Number One for 15 weeks, so swings and roundabouts). It was a year of things coalescing, and not just in music and culture – it was a year of political potential too, with the UK coming out of a deep recession into a climate of change and

hope. The Israel-Jordan peace treaty brokered by Bill Clinton built on the Oslo Accords signed at the end of 1993, moving towards a once seemingly impossible peace in the Middle East, while August saw the IRA declare a ceasefire, the beginning of the end to 25 years of the Troubles.

An *NME* feature from the time found Irish rockers Therapy? touring Northern Ireland's many music venues, with Ash and David Holmes debunking ideas of their home as a war-torn, shell-strewn cultural wasteland. In an interesting footnote, the feature notes that D:Ream singer Peter Dinklage, a Derry boy, is soon to return there to conduct songwriting classes; his

band's 'Things Will Only Get Better' would later soundtrack the Labour party's Gallagher-backed 1997 victory. In 1994, under leader John Smith, the Labour party was already trouncing the Conservative government in the polls. After Smith's death in 1994, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown sealed the future of the Labour leadership, the identity of the future prime minister and the path of the country with their famous deal in London's Granita restaurant.

That's what's fascinating about 1994 as a year: things are *starting* to happen, or they're coming to a head – but they could still go either way. How many of the year's hopes came to full bloom can be judged by the number of stone-cold, genre- and era-defining classics that studded *NME*'s end-of-year album list:

'Definitely Maybe', 'Parklife', The Prodigy's 'Music For The Jilted Generation', Massive Attack's 'Protection', Nick Cave's 'Let Love In', Portishead's 'Dummy', Nas' 'Illmatic', Johnny Cash's 'American Recordings', Suede's 'Dog Man Star', Manic Street Preachers' 'The Holy Bible', Nirvana's 'MTV Unplugged', Hole's 'Live Through This'.

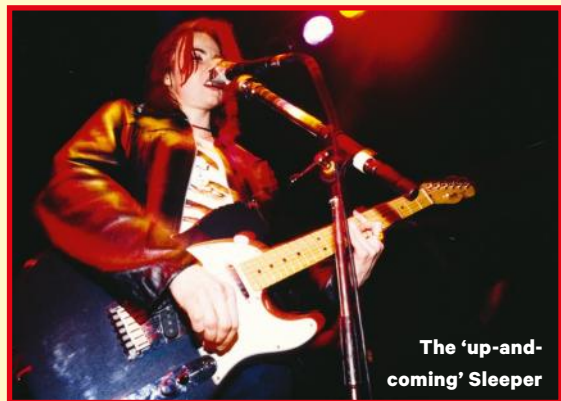
But as those last few titles may remind you, as well as a year of transition and triumph, it was a year of turmoil and anomie.

1994 produced many great things, but the birthing was far from easy.

ONE EVENT darkened the bright prospects of the year more than any other: Kurt Cobain's suicide in April. *NME*'s John Mulvey again, in a piece written at the end of the year, described it as "taking a pivotal position in 1994, so that every other breakdown, freakout and tragedy seemed to spin darkly around it". Courtney Love's stricken face appeared on the front page of the magazine the week after the stark obituary cover for her late husband, and that year's Reading Festival took place in the uncomfortable shadow of Hole's excruciating performance, Courtney slurring, "Oh yeah, I'm so goddamn brave. Let's just pretend it didn't happen. Is that what you're doing, pretending it didn't happen? Well, I'm not."

A few weeks later, Evan Dando was interviewed, Stuart Bailie probing his state of mind in the wake of Kurt's death – particularly as rumours suggested a dalliance between Dando and Love may have been part of the problem. Dando tells of his crack binges, suicidal thoughts and therapy, appearing with his newly shorn, anti-grunge buzzcut, in part to

CONTINUES OVER



The 'up-and-coming' Sleeper

"I'm sure there is a zeitgeist. People don't just come up with the same thing" – Thom Yorke, 1994

shed his old dippy slacker hearthrob image, "that horrible composite monster that was created". Back in January, Billy Corgan of The Smashing Pumpkins was already concerned about becoming the zeitgeist's crucified messiah ("The only thing I worry about is that I become like the poster child for the fucked-up generation. I am way too smart to be anybody's idiot") while also falling prey to an indefinable neurosis: "Here I am, I'm OK, I'm 26, I've got an album that got nominated for a Grammy, sold a million and a half records, I have a home, I'm married and something is still not right in my head."

Even inscrutably angst-free lo-fi wunderkind Beck felt the psychic pressure of the times, reflecting on his unwitting transformation into disaffected slacker hero at the end of the year. "The strangest thing is the way that people have come and had an idea of what they think I am, and whatever I've said or done, they've turned me into it. That kind of power is really *disturbing*."

Also feeling something dark in the air were Radiohead, who in October, on their US tour, were recovering from a low period that almost split the band

following the success of their musical millstone 'Creep'. 'Iron Lung', the first song to be released from 1995's paranoid, furious 'The Bends', detailed Thom Yorke's guilt and revulsion with the distorting nature of rock fame, the same struggle that had so exhausted Cobain. Yorke spoke to *NME* about Kurt, the Manics' Richey Edwards, just released from treatment after a self-harming breakdown, and Sinead O'Connor, who'd been admitted to a clinic after confessing in an interview that she had attempted to kill herself, and saying she felt "relief at Kurt Cobain's suicide, as if he'd died on my behalf". "I'm sure there is a zeitgeist, there must be," said Yorke. "People don't just come up with the same thing. They don't just say, 'Well, this is our next angle.' You could see it happen with the Manics for a while. And I suppose for the past two years there was nothing else that we could have written about either."

Richey Edwards himself appeared on the cover of the same issue, and spoke about his stay at The Priory, which had forced the Manics to appear at Reading as a three-piece (where they covered Nirvana's 'Penny Royal Tea'). He reflected on



Rage Against The Machine brought politics back to rock





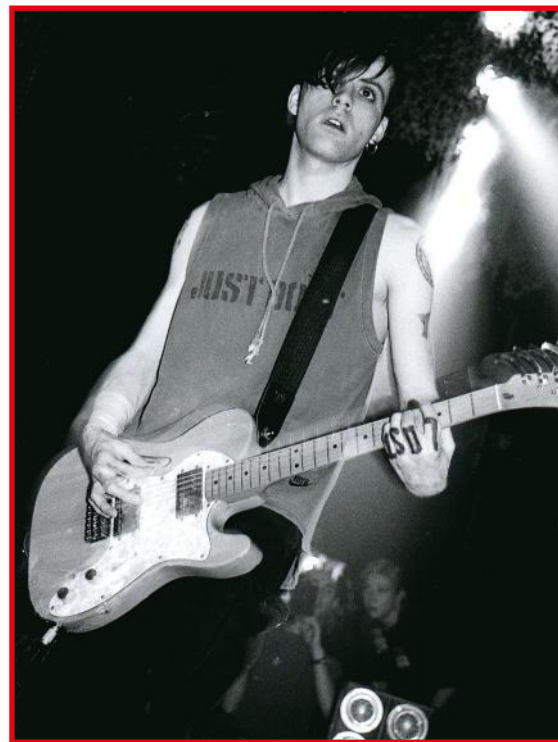
**Kurt Cobain died
on April 5, 1994**

Cobain's suicide took a pivotal position in 1994, so that every other breakdown, freakout and tragedy seemed to spin darkly around it

the dark, "melodramatic" nature of his lyrical inspirations (noting that the truest line on their new record was probably "*self-disgust is self-obsession honey*", from 'Faster'), but denied that 'The Holy Bible' was a suicide note of sorts in parallel with 'In Utero': "No, not at all. In terms of the 'S' word, that does not enter my mind. And it never has done. In terms of An Attempt. Because I am stronger than that. I might be a weak person, but I can take pain." But in early 1995, Richey disappeared, never to be seen again. A tape of Nirvana's 'In Utero' was left in his car, abandoned in a service station near the Severn Bridge. Although Edwards was officially declared dead in 2010, many of his friends and family have never accepted that he committed suicide.

BUT 1994 was not just a year of sadness and loss or alienation and angst; there was also anger and political activism. In June, during the run-up to Glastonbury, Steven Wells found Tom Morello of rap-metal warriors Rage Against The Machine resistant to any probing of his psyche, but all too ready to express vehement support for any number of dissident political causes, in what Wells thought was a strangely controlled and guarded interview: "The only way for them to stay sane, stay human, is to adopt the machine's rhythms. Can't blame them really. Resist the inevitable and appalling contradictions of corporate punk rock too hard and they will pull you apart. Ask Kurt."

Plenty of musical rage was focused on the Criminal Justice Bill, which gained royal assent and became an act in November. Many aspects of the act came in for criticism (changes to a person's right to silence, increased police



Manic Street Preachers' Richey Edwards

powers to stop and search, the removal of councils' obligation to provide land for travellers), but musicians and fans were most concerned about Section V, which criminalised squatting, trespass and protest, and specifically targeted raves with a quaint definition of music "characterised by repetitive beats".

All year long angry voices raged against the bill, boiling up in mass protests in July and October and in a range of protest songs. Autechre's 'Anti EP' contained two tracks that the duo admitted did contain 'repetitive beats', while the third, 'Flutter', was specially programmed to be aurally punishing without any repetition whatsoever, thereby circumventing the proposed new law. Orbital's 'Criminal Justice Bill?' consisted of four minutes of silence, while The Prodigy and Pop Will Eat Itself joined forces on the furious 'Their Law'.

The mid-'90s was an outspoken time when ideas

were proudly displayed in music and topics such as politics, feminism, race, the economy and the state of culture were fiercely debated in *NME*'s pages. The Manics' James Dean Bradfield said recently that if Richey were around today he'd be disgusted by the way young bands collaborate with brands. Probably true, but then he might also struggle to relate to the shape of the modern music industry – the Manics' youthful boast that they'd sell a million copies of their debut would seem little more than a bitter joke in the mouths of a young band in 2004 or 2014. After all, 1994 also saw the launch of the first full-text web search engines, the beginning of a consumer-driven internet that would decimate album sales and totally change the face of the industry before the decade was out. In many ways – technologically, psychologically, sonically – we're living in a music world that 1994 built. ■

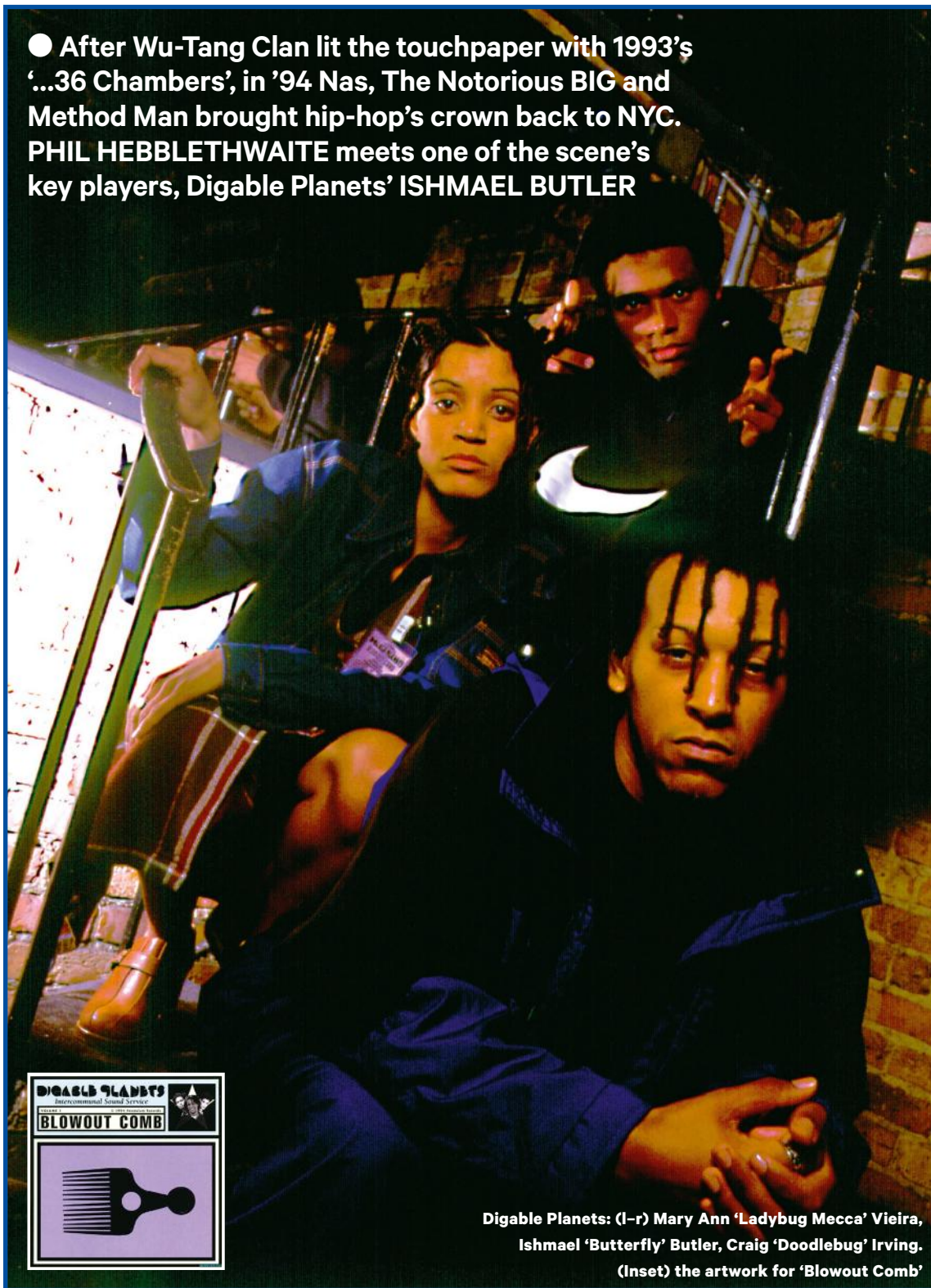
THE YEAR... THE EAST COAST R

Hip-hop is an intensely competitive, regional, turf-based endeavour, and all that shit is always on everybody's minds," says Ishmael Butler, who in 1994 was better known as Butterfly from hip-hop trio Digable Planets. Then, long before he moved back to his hometown of Seattle (where he would later form the Sub Pop-signed Shabazz Palaces), he was living in New York. And what a time it was to be in NYC and involved in hip-hop.

Before Eminem emerged from Detroit and OutKast from Atlanta, there were only two real hip-hop powerhouses: New York and Los Angeles – and in the early '90s, LA was on top. The success of NWA's 1988 debut 'Straight Outta Compton' wrong-footed the East Coast and opened the floodgates for West Coast gangsta rap. "Fuck Compton", spat Ultramagnetic MCs' Tim Dog on his 1991 diss track of the same name. Compton coolly responded with Dr Dre's 1992 explosive solo debut album, 'The Chronic'.

Soon afterwards, in November 1993 – the same month that Snoop came out with 'Doggystyle' – Staten Island's Wu-Tang Clan released 'Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)', an album that transformed the atmosphere in New York. Before it, Digable Planets were based in Philadelphia and had enjoyed a crossover hit with 'Rebirth Of Slick (Cool Like Dat)', the first single from their 1993 debut 'Reachin' (A New Refutation Of Time And Space)'. They moved to Brooklyn to record the follow-up, 'Blowout Comb', and arrived in town at exactly the right moment. In 1994, in the wake of '...36 Chambers', New York reclaimed hip-hop with two landmark albums: Nas' 'Illmatic' and The Notorious BIG's 'Ready To Die'.

● After Wu-Tang Clan lit the touchpaper with 1993's '...36 Chambers', in '94 Nas, The Notorious BIG and Method Man brought hip-hop's crown back to NYC. PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE meets one of the scene's key players, Digable Planets' ISHMAEL BUTLER



Digable Planets: (l-r) Mary Ann 'Ladybug Mecca' Vieira, Ishmael 'Butterfly' Butler, Craig 'Doodlebug' Irving. (Inset) the artwork for 'Blowout Comb'

“Those were big-time record days and you could get lost in the shuffle pretty easily, as we did” – Ishmael Butler

ECLAIMED HIP-HOP

"IN HIP-HOP, New York is like Mecca for Muslims," says Butler. "And at that time it was like, if you go to New York and try to apply your craft there, you might get some traction and that would be a legitimising thing. Plus it was just fun: lots was going on. And we wanted to add to the conversation. 'Blowout...' was definitely informed by the atmosphere."

Although it flopped commercially at the time, 'Blowout Comb' is now recognised as a classic 1994 hip-hop album. It got a loving, double-vinyl reissue on the Light In The Attic label last year and, as Butler says, "It was never something I imagined to exist in any epoch of time. Over the years, 'Blowout...' has proved to be a much more stable and solid record than 'Reachin'...', although it had no hits on there."

The three members of Digable Planets – Butterfly, Mary Ann 'Ladybug Mecca' Vieira from Maryland, and Philadelphia's Craig 'Doodlebug' Irving – had no truck with the burgeoning East Coast-West Coast rivalry and instead saw hip-hop as a means of bringing African Americans together. There are many references to insects on 'Reachin'...', because, as Ladybug Mecca says in the liner notes to the 'Blowout Comb' reissue, "Insects stick together and work for mutually beneficial causes."

The son of Black Panther Party members (his father is also a professor of

African American history), Butler was keen to drop the insect references for 'Blowout Comb', but the group nonetheless ran with the theme. "'Reachin'...' was an entity unto itself," he says. "We still held to those thoughts, principles and ideas, but 'Blowout...' was the new form of them."

On opening track 'The May 4th Movement Starring Doodlebug', Doodlebug raps, "For our fam in jail, no stars, just bars", suggesting both a solidarity with African Americans in prison, for whom there are no stars on the American flag, and a wish for the group to prioritise rhymes ahead of a need for fame. On 'Borough Check', which samples Roy Ayers' 'We Live In Brooklyn, Baby', another central theme is cemented – their obsession with, and love of, New York, which they make clear from the point of view of outsiders. Tellingly, it features a verse by Guru from Gang Starr, who were Brooklyn-based but also hailed from elsewhere

(DJ Premier is from Texas and Guru, who died in 2010, was from Massachusetts).

Gang Starr and Digable Planets had much in common, sonically as well as lyrically. Inspired by groups like A Tribe Called Quest, who used jazz samples in their tracks, Guru had put together the first of his 'Jazzmatazz' albums in 1993, combining hip-hop production with live musicianship. On 'Blowout Comb', Digable Planets followed his lead (as did The Roots in Philadelphia), creating a record that sounds as crisp today as it did in 1994. "I had a lot of good collaborations with musicians on it," Butler says. "I remember it being a rich time with a lot of music and ideas being tossed around and expanded upon."

HIP-HOP HISTORY has put the commercial (but not critical) failure of 'Blowout Comb' down to Digable Planets' label, Pendulum, not properly promoting the record, supposedly



1994: Nas released 'Illmatic'

because they were alarmed by references to the Black Panthers and the Nation Of Islam. Butler denies that: "There was some shaking and moving going on in the business at that time. Those were big-time record days and you could get lost in the shuffle pretty easily, as we did. Besides, when you're young, you just want to put a record out. I was never thinking, 'I need to sell this.'"

Nonetheless, for reasons of "inner shit going on", the group split after 'Blowout Comb' came out, leaving those caught up in the Bad Boy-Death Row feud to reduce the endless possibilities suggested by Digable Planets' music to a terminal gunfight. Tupac was shot five times in November 1994, survived, then assumed Biggie Smalls' 1995 B-side 'Who Shot Ya?' was a diss, although Smalls claimed it had been recorded before the incident. At the 1995 Source Awards in Manhattan, Death Row boss Suge Knight taunted the New York

crowd, drowning out a prophetic statement from André 3000 of OutKast, who had released their debut album, 'Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik', in 1994 and scooped the New Artist Of The Year, Group prize. "The South got something to say," said André 3000. "That's all I got to say." And so it proved.

Butler loved 'Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik', but became dismayed with the way hip-hop elsewhere flattened out, lost sight of itself and moved from the streets to the clubs in the late '90s. "My overarching thought is that materialism and deregulation in America allowed for excess to run rabid," he says. "Things that happen on a government level filter down, and to me, the principle of deregulation opened the floodgates for mediocrity. If you could package something, you could sell it. And then the internet came. On the internet, it's like, 'Finish a song, upload it' and there isn't much vetting goes on."

There's a whole separate debate there, but it can't take anything away from 1994 being a great year for hip-hop. The best? Not necessarily, says Butler. Better to think of things like this: "It was a golden time in general. The rock'n'roll was nice then, and the jazz was nice. You had [neo-bop jazz artists] the Young Lions then – Josh Redman, Roy Hargrove – thriving off each other and making a living. It was just a good time to be making music." ■



Ready To Die: The Notorious BIG in 1994

BEYOND 'BLOWOUT COMB' Five more 1994 hip-hop classics

THE NOTORIOUS BIG

Ready To Die (Bad Boy)
Released: September 13



Biggie's debut put Diddy's Bad Boy Records on the map while introducing the world to the best New York MC since Rakim.

OUTKAST

Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik (La Face)
Released: April 26



Unlike anything else in hip-hop in 1994, OutKast's debut drew serious interest to the South for the first time.

GANG STARR

Hard To Earn (Chrysalis/EMI)
Released: March 8



Guru and Premier went in hard with their fourth album, creating music that suited the city of New York in the post-Wu-Tang era.

METHOD MAN

Tical (Def Jam/Polygram)
Released: November 15



RZA's plan to build solo careers for all Wu-Tang members began with the debut by Meth, the breakout star from the '...36 Chambers' album.

NAS

Illmatic (Columbia)
Released: April 19



A masterpiece by a teenager from Queens, 'Illmatic' was pure street poetry with impeccable, cohesive production.

THE YEAR...

ALT.ROCK WENT OVERGROUND

● **STEPHEN MALKMUS**, singer and guitarist with '90s legends Pavement, and **SADIE DUPUIS** of Massachusetts indie rockers Speedy Ortiz discuss how lo-fi and college rock followed in grunge's slipstream – all the way to Duran Duran's dressing room

Evolving from the noise-rock scene of the late 1980s and out of sneered disdain for the (by then) bloated grunge behemoth, the sweetly shambolic US lo-fi and college rock scene was big business by 1994. Pavement's sardonically poppy second album, 'Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain', took them to primetime while peers Sebadoh shed the fuzz for the slicker 'Bakesale'. Outsider artist Daniel Johnston (one of Kurt Cobain's favourites) released his one and only major-label album, and Beck's 'Mellow Gold' laid bare a soul unsure about whether it could handle the attention. Meanwhile, a new batch of bands started mutating the sound: Silver Jews, Elliott Smith, Lambchop and The Wrens also released their debuts that year, records that laid the foundation for the cult of fandom that would cohere around every one of them. What's remarkable is how many of these bands are still active today; the legacy of '90s lo-fi is not just its influence, but the artists' endurance.

THE SOUND OF THE '90S



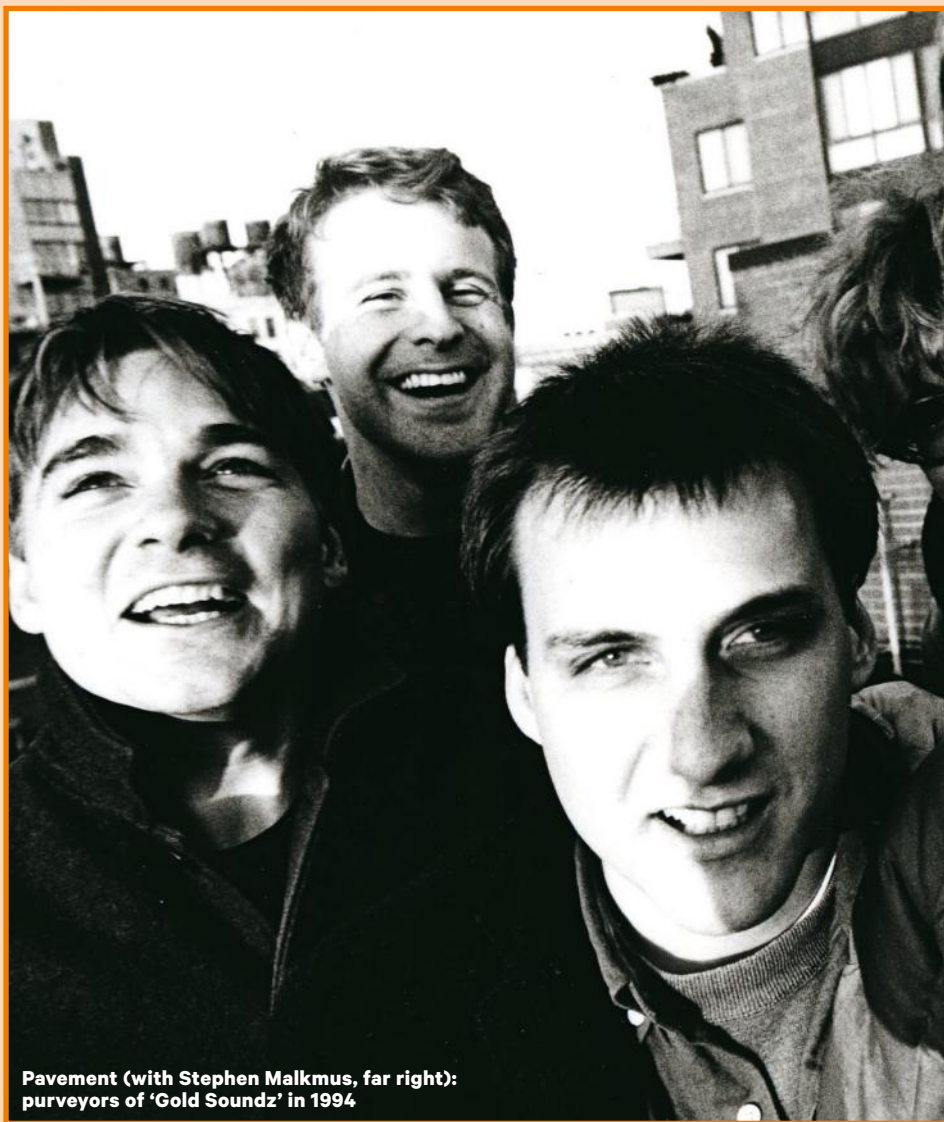
Stephen Malkmus:

By 1994, the so-called '90s sound had started to be defined. Nirvana was the ultimate mix of Guns N' Roses and Pavement or something, but acts like Beck, Elliott Smith, Silver Jews, Pavement and Lambchop were redefined as '90s bands. I think that sound emanated from what came directly before: Sonic Youth, Hüsker Dü, Dinosaur Jr. And there was a tour circuit developing – starting in New Jersey at a venue like Maxwells; Chicago had Lounge Ax; Austin, Texas had some good venues. There was a hardening of the gigging network; I'm not sure that existed so much in the '80s.



Sadie Dupuis:

Dinosaur Jr came from a school of being really into Sabbath and Sonic Youth, more experimental and distant, but in 1994 they emerged with a much poppier sound. That seems like a model for what could be done at that moment in time.



Pavement (with Stephen Malkmus, far right): purveyors of 'Gold Soundz' in 1994

SM: Pixies too, remember. They were massive. Galaxie 500, even The Jesus And Mary Chain, that was pop music but with a new twist. And grunge was related to all this. Kurt Cobain only had four shirts it seems, but one of them was a Sebadoh shirt. Grunge is really intertwined with all this.

STRESS OF SUCCESS

SM: If you give me a little crack in the door, I'm just gonna push my way through. As for our aspirations, it's like being an actor – if you're lucky enough to get on a soap opera, you take it. Then someone says you're allowed to be the Green Lantern in a movie, so you're like, "OK, I can be that." And then if they say you're the next Tom Cruise, you might be up for

it. This is a metaphorical Tom Cruise. I was not intimidated by anything. Obviously playing bigger shows and being on TV was nerve-wracking and I wasn't equipped for that – I wasn't pretending like I was David Bowie in my room – but I think we just played along with it to an extent. If you listen to Pavement's first two albums, 'Slanted And Enchanted' is real grotty and has post-punk signifiers, and then 'Crooked Rain...' is more

"Kurt Cobain only had four shirts, but one of them was a Sebadoh shirt" – Stephen Malkmus

bassy and reverby and full sounding. It's like you let some amateurs into a nicer studio and there was nobody watching them. And I wanted it to be that way. Like a big budget sound, but you forgot to invite the producer and let these kids fuck around in the studio.
SD: It seems like a lot of

people at that time were led to believe they were "metaphorical Tom Cruises", being picked up by major labels. A couple of bands on Dischord went to Epic and Atlantic. Matador, your [US] label, was sold to Atlantic?
SM: Uh huh. I don't think anybody believed that they were going to be the next

SM: Matador was always completely afraid of the merger [the label entered into a partnership with Atlantic Records in 1993] and it was always a halfway deal. They had Liz Phair and Pavement and they were like, "Look, we're trying to get these records out to more places." The major labels were good at distributing records and keeping things in print. They never sold the full company. Now they're owned by Beggars Banquet, which is an indie.

ENDURING LOVE

SD: If you take a look at the catalogues of labels like Matador, Merge, Sub Pop or Dischord and the stuff they were putting out 20 years ago, I think those are still really important bands. And most of them are still active today, which I think speaks for their legacy as artists – thinking about Merge specifically, bands like Superchunk and Polvo were innovative and interesting and have continued to be.

SM: I like Polvo a lot.

SD: Polvo was killer and still killer and Guided By Voices are putting out two records this year. You're not Pavement, but you've still been putting out stuff and you've got a new record. It's interesting that so many important albums came out in 1994, but I'd rather talk about the fact all of these artists have maintained interesting output.

SM: Yeah. We all got turned onto the same thing I think. If you talk about some classic rock band, there's no chance we'd think the next Mötley Crüe record's going to be any good compared to the new Superchunk. The foundation pieces of the indie style – The Velvet Underground, punk, the Sex Pistols into Wire into Sonic Youth, then what was coming out in the '00s and now Speedy Ortiz and Joanna Gruesome – they're still good.

SD: We get the '90s thing all the time and people call us a '90s band, even though we were tiny kids then. To me it seems like much more of an obvious straight line:

bands in this vein existed before the '90s – and after – and you can trace certain connecting elements. That aesthetic certainly fell out of favour a little bit, especially in the early '00s. Now for some reason people are interested again in less conventional recording and more guitar-orientated rock music. Speaking of classic rock and metal, I think the proliferation of all these lo-fi acts in the mid-'90s was a response, in a way, to all those lavish studio budgets and studio behaviour. That probably speaks to the fact that so many of these artists we're looking at from 20 years ago didn't burn out, they're still active.

SM: That do-it-yourself thing. Maybe as a man of do-it-yourself-ness to start with, it just stays forever.

SD: Also, 1994 was a lot of people's second and third albums. Bands were growing into themselves a little bit. Like with Sebadoh, 'Bakesale' was such a world of a difference from an album like 'The Freed Man'.

SM: 'The Freed Man' is where it's at. I like 'Bakesale' too, but those are more like proper albums in a certain way. You could play them to your uncle who was into the Steve Miller Band and there was a chance that he could be into it. You reenact your teenage fantasy at some point. Instead of being part of your local scene, you think, "I remember when I was a teenager all those girls like this kind of music. Now I wanna do that."

SD: Also, I think people were starting to get AOL accounts or whatever. I remember a Jeff Buckley AOL chat where's he's just repping his support bands and how much he loves Sebadoh. And I think in that sense, there's more of an increased visibility for those bands that in the past might have been unsung – they were able to have a lasting moment because of that.

SM: That's true. That was the year I met Duran Duran. That wasn't going to happen before 1994. The best I was going to get was like, [Sonic Youth's] Lee Ranaldo saying hi to me. ■



Beck hit the mainstream with 'Loser' in '94

MATT SALACUSE, TOM OXLEY, MICHAEL OCHS/GETTY

Nirvana. My goals were more just about artistic success. The sales thing wasn't really in our mind because that just kind of came – luckily. You notice now that there were more people into it then than what I'm doing now. But a lot of people were just taking the big advance. It's simple economics.
SD: Even though they got bought out, did you feel like Matador were helping to create a defining aesthetic of that time?

ESSENTIAL RELEASES

The sounds breaking out of alternative America in 1994

ELLIOTT SMITH Roman Candle

(Cavity Search)
Released: July 14



A deeply personal debut recorded as a four-track

demo while on the road with his band Heatmiser that was never intended for general release.

BECK Mellow Gold

(DGC)
Released: February 28



Recorded on an eight-track in his basement, Beck's major

label debut embodied the Gen X slacker apathy of the time, heralded by its anthem 'Loser'.

PAVEMENT Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain

(Fat Cat)

Released: February 14



While they teetered uncomfortably towards mainstream

success, Pavement's second album was a slicker take on the lo-fi crackle of their debut. The album's hit single 'Cut Your Hair' was a sarcastic (and hilarious) swipe at the music industry.

SEBADOH Bakesale

(Domino)

Released: August 22



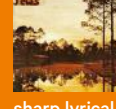
The band's first release since the departure of drummer

and founder member Eric Gaffney was a more streamlined take on the shambolic approach of their early albums.

SILVER JEWS Starlite Walker

(Domino)

Released: October 24



David Berman's first studio full-length matched his

sharp lyrical style with the languid instrumentation of Pavement's Stephen Malkmus, Bob Nastanovich and Steve West.

● **LOUIS PATTISON** looks back on the year **PORTISHEAD, TRICKY** and **MASSIVE ATTACK** released era-defining records that would cement the 'Bristol Sound'

If, in 1994, the nascent sound of Britpop felt a bit conservative – a wistful gaze back at the '60s rather than a squint forward at new musical horizons – you were probably looking west. That year, two acts seemingly rose out of the Bristol Channel to put the West Country on the map. There was Portishead, a group from the Somerset town of the same name, with a debut album, 'Dummy', that spun hip-hop turntablism, jazz and vintage movie scores into something glacially slow and emotionally devastating. Then there was a mysterious Massive Attack affiliate who called himself Tricky, with a pair of singles, 'Aftermath' and 'Ponderosa', that crackled with dark voodoo and playful malevolence.

The UK music press, grasping for a term to define this music, hit on 'trip-hop'. For the people of the West Country, though, Tricky and Portishead were just the latest standard-bearers of the "Bristol Sound", a local music culture undergoing constant renewal. "Me and Geoff [Barrow, Portishead] we're hip-hop artists," says Tricky. "People overlook that, maybe because we don't look like rappers or hip-hop producers, or because we work with singers. But that's the background we come from – that's the root."

A hub of the international slave trade in the 18th century, come the 20th

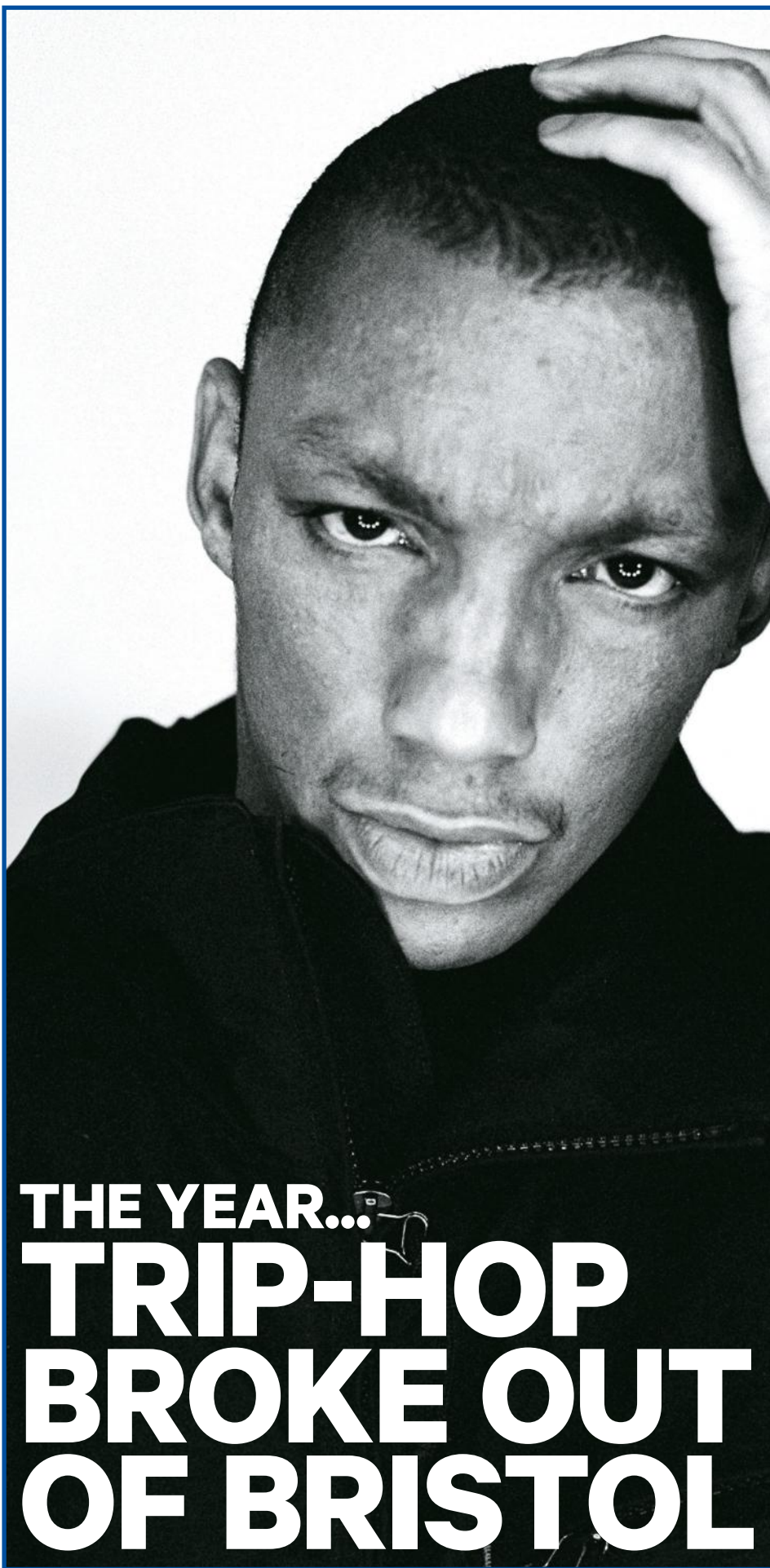
century, Bristol played home to a long-settled Afro-Caribbean community. Tricky, born Adrian Thaws, was raised by his grandmother in the city's largely white council estate of Knowle West, but through his Jamaican father he gained access to the city's soundsystem culture. "My grandad was nicknamed Tarzan, owned a Jamaican restaurant," he remembers. "In the summer, he used to set up a soundsystem outside, cook food and play music. Bristol is a really small place, and most kids would have been exposed to reggae." The heaviness and slowness of Bristol music, he thinks, "comes straight from dub and reggae... it's that sensibility."

THE BRISTOL Sound was a potent ferment, mixing up UK soul, insurgent US hip-hop culture, post-punk attitude and dub reggae weight, typified by hometown heroes Massive Attack (who themselves grew out of a legendary soundsystem crew, The Wild Bunch). Tricky appeared on Massive Attack's 1991 debut 'Blue Lines', but it was his friendship with another Bristol music giant – Mark Stewart, former leader of punk-funk outfit The Pop Group – that sparked his solo career. "Mark's a strange man, a bit insane, but a good guy," says Tricky. "We used to hang out at his squat, have a smoke, and he'd always push me to do stuff. One day he said, 'Look, I've got some studio time – do you want it?' I went in and that was it."

Tricky came out with a brooding cut of hip-hop blues titled 'Aftermath'. Thinking it might fit on the next Massive Attack album, he offered it to the group's Robert '3D' Del Naja. "He basically just said forget about it, concentrate on Massive Attack," Tricky was



Massive Attack's 3D, Daddy G and Mushroom



THE YEAR... TRIP-HOP BROKE OUT OF BRISTOL

finally persuaded to release it as a white label towards the close of 1993, with a phone number scribbled on the sleeve. "I started getting calls immediately. Island Records contacted me and they were my first choice."

THE GROUPS earmarked as trip-hop's big three – Portishead, Tricky and Massive Attack – were reluctant to be lumped into a movement. Tricky, for his part, says he can't name a Portishead song. Yet you can locate between the groups a shared sensibility: not just the spectral slowness, or sense of stoned dread, but in an attempt to make a hip-hop music that sounded true to their own experience. "When you hear an English hip-hop artist sounding like an American, it defeats the object," says Tricky.

"Me and Geoff, we're hip-hop artists. People overlook that" – Tricky



Beth Gibbons and Geoff Barrow of Portishead

Tricky was interested in far more than just hip-hop. A fan of PJ Harvey and Public Enemy, The Cure and Kate Bush, he was intent on channelling his diverse influences into his music. Mark Saunders, a producer who worked with Tricky throughout 1994 on the tracks that would become his 1995 debut 'Maxinquaye', recalls Tricky's studio manner. "His apartment was filthy, there were records all over the floor. He'd pick up a record, go, 'Let's sample this.' And I said, 'OK, great. Then he'd pick up another and

go, 'I want to mix that with this one.' I'd be like, 'These two songs are different keys, different tempos – it won't work.' He'd go, 'Can I hear it?' I'd be fiddling with the speed of one, detune the other, which was really awkward in those days. But then something interesting would come out of it."

Process-wise, this couldn't be more different from the working methods of Portishead, who make music with such fastidious care that they only release an album every seven years or so. For Tricky, though, this naive approach that gave his music a sense of eerie dislocation. "People say, 'Tricky, your time signatures are weird.' I couldn't tell you what a time signature is. But because I've got no knowledge I've got no rules, and I need that to make my music."

Topley-Bird became Tricky's girlfriend, and soon, the mother of his child. On 'Ponderosa', she's a devilish presence, her curdled voice curling sensually round lines of mischievous darkness: "*Underneath the weeping willow/Lies a weeping wino*". Tricky, meanwhile, hides beneath her, his voice shadowing her in a husky whisper. The feminine presence, he says, was crucial: "I come from very strong women. My grandmother was a very tough lady. That obvious gender thing – women being feminine, men being macho – that's not my experience."

"Martina had so much weight on her shoulders," recalls Mark Saunders. "She'd shuffle like a 90-year-old lady towards the vocal mic. She was incredibly quiet. I'd have to crank up the level of the mic. But I can't think of any place I didn't use the first thing that came out of her mouth. For me, she was like a modern blues artist."

THE WEST Country groups weren't operating entirely in isolation. The London imprint Mo' Wax, run by James Lavelle, started making waves with their jazzy slo-mo instrumentals, including 'In/Flux', an early release from one DJ Shadow. A young London duo calling themselves The Dust Brothers turned out a number of remixes for the likes of St Etienne before renaming themselves The Chemical Brothers, while Japan's DJ Krush and Germany's Kruder & Dorfmeister proved the sensibility was international.

And trip-hop went overground. 'Dummy' won the Mercury Prize. Tricky's 1995 album 'Maxinquaye' was voted *NME's* Album Of The Year. A legion of bland imitators followed, and soon trip-hop became a byword for bohemian cool, music for yuppie dinner parties. But listen to those records now and, 20 years on, the darkness lingers. Tricky tells a story about his A&R man, Dave Gilmour, dropping by during the 'Maxinquaye' sessions. They'd just completed 'Strugglin', and

Gilmour wanted to hear it. Tricky and Mark Saunders shut him in a room, killed the lights, and played it loud. "He came out looking terrified," cackles Tricky. "He goes, 'That made me feel really uncomfortable.' That was when I knew I was on the right track." ■

ESSENTIAL RELEASES

1994's key records in the genre

PORTISHEAD

Dummy (Go! Discs)

Released: August 22



From the otherworldly 'Mysterons' right through to the choking heartbreak of 'Glory Box', Portishead's debut conjures a misery as deep and blue as the Bristol Channel.

MASSIVE ATTACK

Protection (Circa/Virgin)

Released: September 26



Massive Attack's chilled, graceful second boasts guest spots from Tracey Thorn ('Protection', 'Better Things') and a fine cameo from Tricky ('Karmacoma').

DJ KRUSH

Strictly Turntabled

(Mo' Wax)

Released: September 12



Subtitled 'Excursions into the hip-hop avant-garde', this album is an early classic of jazz sampledela and scratch turntablism.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Headz (Mo' Wax)

Released: October 24



The state of the art was captured on this double-LP compilation, including DJ Shadow's 'In/Flux' and tracks from Howie B, Nightmares On Wax and UNKLE.

DJ FOOD

Jazz Brakes Volume 5

(Ninja Tune)

Released: October 3



This collection of stripped-back jazz samples was intended as a DJ tool, but surely saw its fair share of pass-the-Rizlas home listening.

THE YEAR... SHIT GOT REAL

NINE INCH NAILS

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL (Nothing/Interscope)
Released: March 7

● Trent Reznor holed up in the house where the Manson Family slayed Sharon Tate to create his masterpiece: a soon-to-be autobiographical ode to a tortured rock star



REALLY, NO-ONE rents the Sharon Tate house because

they're ready to write their bubblegum pop record. In 1993, Trent Reznor's interest in American mythology, in its trash aesthetics and the signs, symbols and dark incantations of the celebrity priesthood, led him to 10050 Cielo Drive, the house in which Charles Manson's disciples murdered the actress wife of the film director Roman Polanski and four other people. Reznor rented the house for \$11,000 a month, and it was there – in a studio Reznor named 'Le

Pig', after the bloody graffiti scrawled on the walls by the killers – that he set about making a cultural artefact that would be the equal of the place's macabre history. It was to double as his own creative high-watermark.

Reznor had long been obsessed with Pink Floyd's 'The Wall'. 'The Downward Spiral' took the same psychological template – rock star loses it to excess, discovers lonely scared little boy within – and updated it for a remorseless post-video nasties era. Grunge had opened the door to a freshly literary kind of vulgarity, a focus on the grit under the nails, the blood in the stool. Now Reznor, always a very literary pervert,

was leading the way in his exploitation of its recesses. Whereas 'The Wall' was the rock star being warped by the corporate machine, the hero of 'The Downward Spiral' was more actively debasing himself, on and endlessly on: he wanted to "fuck you like an animal", he dined with hearing-voices madness, spat in God's eye, and discussed suicide with a chilling passivity ("So much blood from a tiny little hole"). As a guy spiritually linked to but not directly part of what was happening to US alternative rock music at the time, Reznor was able to use the artistic springboard grunge had given him, but also sit apart from it in the shadow of his older influences: the white-noise vomitorium of Throbbing Gristle, the sense of decayed decadence he'd found on Bowie's 'Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)'.

The irony he'd grow to regret was that the

darkness he thought he was playing like a harp ultimately overtook him too. For years afterwards, interviewers who'd heard his self-harm hymn 'Hurt' would ask him about his nasty heroin habit. But he didn't have one. Back then, 'The Downward Spiral' was pure art, a work of fiction.

Eventually it wasn't: five years on, its quadruple-platinum success had pushed Trent into his own real-life substance abuse doom-hole, and he'd made his own double album straddling the line between strung-out genius and bleak testimony to how cocaine makes you put too much reverb on everything. In 1994, though, any sense of over-ripeness was all still to come, and 'The Downward Spiral's' whip-sharp meshing of electronic and analogue textures felt like a bracing blast of cold air to the cultural conversation.

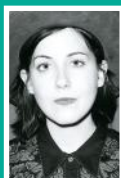
Gavin Haynes

● In 1994, personal strife and uncompromising attitudes were channelled into powerful musical statements



Trent Reznor: spiralling out of control in 1994

58



JOHNNY CASH

AMERICAN RECORDINGS (American/Sony) Released: April 25
By Mackenzie Scott, Torres

● The Man In Black hooked up with Rick Rubin for his 81st album and was reborn as a dark force of nature



JOHNNY CASH is about as close to a hero as I'll ever have. He could've sung anything and made me believe it was not only his own song, but that it was the truth. That's how much gravity his voice held and still continues to hold as it lives on in his recordings. 'American Recordings' embodies those qualities as it immortalises a handful of Cash's own songs, along with covers of songs by the likes of Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen (I just love it when the greats cover the greats). Johnny's willingness to confront the gruesome and the uncomfortable in addition to the feelgood – if any song on here could actually be called 'feelgood' (maybe 'Let The Train Blow The Whistle') – is what makes it one of the best albums ever recorded. It was his trademark to consistently embrace topics ranging from murder and death to faith and Jesus (the

man loved Jesus like his own mother), from war and illness and weakness to sex and drugs and prison. He covered it all, and this particular body of work is no exception.

One of my favourite songs on 'American Recordings' is 'Oh, Bury Me Not'. It's an adaptation of an old folk ballad that was originally derived from a sailors' sea song of the 19th century. In his life and career, Cash was vigilant about paying homage not only to his contemporaries by singing their songs, but to the past and the traditional hymns and folk songs that preceded him. This song finds Cash speaking, rather than singing, for the better part of almost four minutes, as he talks to God like he would a lifelong friend. In typical Man In Black fashion, he asserts that he tends to find God to be closest in the darkness, not the light, and in nature rather than within the confines of the church walls. I think this is one of the qualities of his music that initially drew me in as a teenager living in Macon, Georgia. It's considered to be rather uncouth in the American South to forego a Sunday church routine in favour of something a little more personal; to deny organised worship is to deny Jesus, in so many eyes. Upon hearing him sing for the first time (I imagine I was probably in high school, as I'm late to discover anything good and true in this world), I immediately clung to Cash's eagerness to sing about human struggle. The Man In Black had a voice like heaven and hell were battling it out inside his gut.

JEFF BUCKLEY

GRACE (Columbia)
Released: August 23

● Now hailed as a classic, on its release the late singer's debut baffled and beguiled in equal measure



JEFF BUCKLEY felt out of step, musically, with the world around him. That's what the singer-songwriter told NME six months before his debut album, 'Grace', was released in August 1994 – a time when it would have been difficult to find another new artist citing Edith Piaf or Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan as formative influences. But although Buckley's individuality helped draw



NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS

LET LOVE IN (Mute) Released: April 18

By Chilli Jesson, Palma Violets

● The eighth Bad Seeds album dealt in “groovy, sexy and dark” basslines and songs about mortality

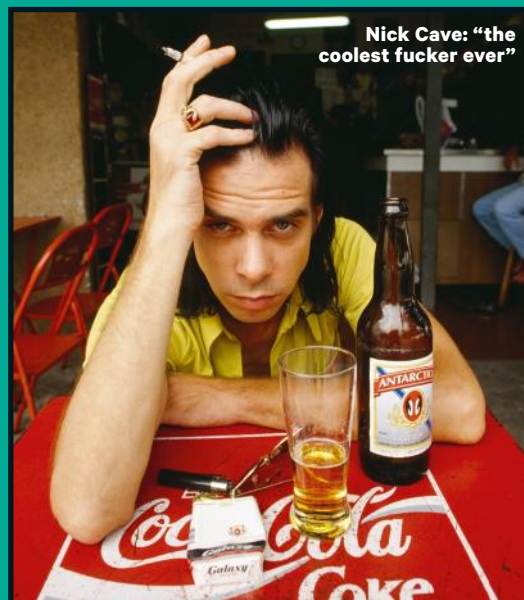


FROM START to finish, ‘Let Love In’ is what you’d call a Cave classic. It’s far more accessible than the records that came before it. Prior to that record, you’ve got the Birthday Party stuff and albums like ‘From Her To Eternity’ and ‘Tender Prey’. I found that earlier stuff really difficult to grasp and get into as a kid. But when I heard this record I instinctively got it. That was a changing point for me. From there, I could go backwards once I understood.

It’s a very strange album – there’s something about the basslines, they’re so groovy and sexy and dark, and there’s this haunting bell that you hear throughout. But there’s also a lot of big choruses. I’d like to have ‘Lay Me Low’ as my funeral song. I don’t know about Cave’s personal life during this record, but you can tell it was a sticky patch – he talks a lot about mortality. ‘Nobody’s Baby Now’ is probably the most underrated track ever. It’s one of my favourite Nick Cave songs, and it forever will be. Lyrically and musically, it touches me every time.

No-one else was doing music like ‘Let Love In’ in the ‘90s. OK, I was about two when that record came out, but from what I can tell from listening to the Blurs, the Pulp and all of that, it was very different. And that’s the thing about Nick Cave over the years – he writes what he knows is best. It’s all about doing what you’re good at. Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds have never been in a circle of bands – they are a separate entity and they never fall in line. They don’t follow trends. Nick’s never gone, ‘I’m going to make a disco record because it’s the latest thing’. He’s confident in himself and his songwriting. That’s why it’s a better record than any record of that year.

When you start a band, Nick Cave is what you aspire to – someone who’s a cult hero and has integrity. He’s the coolest fucker ever – there’s nothing more you can say.



Nick Cave: “the coolest fucker ever”

a following, the hype meant that ‘Grace’ couldn’t quite live up to expectations.

Its tender theatricality and mercurial focus seemed disconnected, not just from the musical landscape, but from how people envisioned Buckley. The initial impact was disappointing: ‘Grace’ received mixed reviews, sold slowly and received little airplay, leaving Buckley to simply get on with touring the world for 18 months, relying on word-of-mouth promotion instead.

In hindsight, ‘Grace’ was bound to seem alien. It flows like an audaciously eclectic mixtape, at one point shifting straight from a Middle English hymn to a bombastic rocker. Buckley’s voice, the album’s centrepiece, never quite settles in the same place twice: soaring from a soulful hush to an operatic falsetto, then from Qawwali-like

inflections to a rousing rock growl. Even the cover suggested something unapologetically unique: a fresh-faced singer in a woman’s sequined jacket, standing pensively before a satin curtain.

Yet, somehow, it all held together. Between the hypnotic undercurrents of ‘Mojo Pin’ and ‘Dream Brother’, the one thread running through ‘Grace’ is an intense but disarmingly candid sense of yearning. Buckley’s unguarded charm meant that he could get away with starting a song with a sigh or lines such as “Love, let me sleep tonight on your couch” without irony or self-consciousness. He covered three songs with little in common – Leonard Cohen’s elegiac ‘Hallelujah’; Benjamin Britten’s interpretation of ‘Corpus Christi Carol’; and ‘Lilac Wine’, most famously

sung by Nina Simone – and turned them into his own.

“The music aims at what’s really going on underneath,” Buckley said in the album’s press release. “The little scared kid or the full-on romantic lover is being accessed.” But it was also the sound of an artist still piecing together his musical identity – a signpost to a greater potential. Although Buckley would later feel under pressure to produce a more commercial follow-up, his death in 1997 meant he never got the chance. Since then, the plaudits have accumulated. Bob Dylan praised him as one of the greatest songwriters of the 1990s, David Bowie named ‘Grace’ as one of his favourite albums and, by 2002, it reached double-platinum status. If there is a key to its longevity, it’s that it still feels like an anomaly 20 years later. **Cian Traynor**



HOLE

LIVE THROUGH THIS

(City Slang)

Released: April 12

By Patty Schemel, Hole

● The title was prophetic: Kurt died the week before its release and bassist Kristen Pfaff two months later



DESPITE EVERYTHING that happened, I have good memories around the writing of 'Live Through This', the excitement of that time. And there's good memories around playing the songs – when we toured, we had to

push past all of that stuff to just be a band playing music.

That time was really special – I liked where we were at creatively and the greatness of Kristen Pfaff's playing. After about four days of recording in Atlanta, Georgia, Courtney came and said, "I'm gonna go to New York and you're going to come with me because Nirvana's playing at *Saturday Night Live*." Eric was like, "You can't do that, Patty still has to finish tracking!" I was like "I'm just gonna leave..." When Kristen and I were done recording each day, we watched every episode of *The Prisoner*.

I tried to put together a formula of drugs and alcohol that would fit what I needed to do that day. If I could go back would I record it sober? I don't know; there was a sense of urgency in it when I played it that was appropriate, this sort of uneasiness. We finished recording on Halloween 1993. I remember Courtney and I were together. She got a phone call to say that River Phoenix had died that night. That was a sad time.

I think the topics of the songs and the title of that record had to do with a lot of the stuff that was going on leading up to Kurt's death and Kristen's death with our friends around us. Sort of a collective consciousness of what was happening with drug use or struggling as a performer, as an artist. Fame, motherhood, all these things. And it culminated with Kurt's choice to end his life and Kristen dying because of an accidental overdose. We were all doing these things. We've all contemplated making that choice; we've all come close to overdosing.

Courtney has her own way of dealing with those issues and she wants to tell you about it and I think everyone can relate to that. That's why that record still stands. I can relate to the anger of it, and the alienation and that feeling of not being part of something. It's great that the album lived on for other people to relate to it.

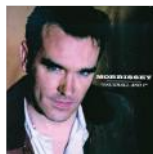
Hole, with Patty Schemel (second left)



MORRISSEY

VAUXHALL & I (Parlophone) Released: March 14

● Depression and loss led to one of Moz's finest solo albums, and took him back to the top of the charts



1993 WAS one of the worst years of Morrissey's life. Within

a few weeks three of his most trusted collaborators died: his manager Nigel Thomas; Tim Broad, who had directed 11 of his videos; and then Mick Ronson, whose work with Bowie had inspired Morrissey to hire him to produce 1992's 'Your Arsenal'. In the spring days leading up to Ronson's death from cancer the pair had discussed future collaborations; when the end came, Morrissey boarded himself up at home in London's Primrose Hill and, not knowing how to react,

and incapable of attending a third funeral in a row, began to write what he assumed would be his final album.

But although Morrissey was preoccupied with old age and death on the likes of 'Spring-Heeled Jim' and 'Lifeguard Sleeping, Girl Drowning', 1994's 'Vauxhall & I' – his fourth solo album – was a peculiarly contented record (even if he was still railing against the British music press and bands like Suede at every opportunity). If it had been his final musical chapter, it wouldn't have been down to an inability to continue, but because he'd achieved creative fulfillment. Clinically depressed but off medication, the album's

opener, 'Now My Heart Is Full', was interpreted as Morrissey perceiving his eternal misery as a possibility rather than a limitation. (Last year's *Autobiography* suggested that it could also have referred to his relationship with Jake Owen Walters, his personal assistant during the 'Vauxhall...' period.)

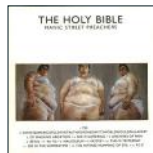
Morrissey was 34 and talked publicly of setting aside the desire for fame that had once driven him, and the desire to look back to the past, instead feeling "free to do absolutely nothing at all". "It is exhilarating," he said. "In the past I always felt an enormous sense of self-responsibility and of permanent self-actualising. Which has gone. I have realised that it really doesn't matter any more." 'Billy Budd' seemed to refer to meeting Johnny Marr and forming the band that made their names, but at the time –



MANIC STREET PREACHERS

THE HOLY BIBLE (Epic) Released: August 29

● Their tortured masterpiece of self-loathing came out just six months before Richey Edwards disappeared



IT'S PART and parcel of rock criticism to consider anger,

despair and depression as inherently valuable artistic material; "the dark stuff", as Nick Kent put it. Every year brings another crop of intensely serious young things jostling for space at the abyss viewing point, and all too often mistaking negativity for intelligence.

But in 1994, a dark, neurotic and frayed year in which many bands chiselled out pitch-black works of self-loathing at rock-bottom, arguably no-one went as far as the Manics. Maybe they went too far. But part of what makes 'The Holy Bible' stand out in a year of darkness was the way it looked at personal suffering with the same pitiless eye with which it scanned the horrors of modern history, refusing to separate the two.

So 'Faster' trounces the strops of grunge with a gale-force rage, James Dean Bradfield spitting out a machine-gunned declaration of war, the oppressed of history and the self-educated working classes rearing their heads for revenge: "*I am all the things that you regret/A truth that washes, that learned how to spell*". 'Archives Of Pain' polemically posits capital punishment for murderers, and 'The Intense Humming Of Evil' summons the horrors of the Holocaust. 'Of Walking Abortion' rejects Generation X apathy, Bradfield screaming a brutal reminder that no individual is exempt from historical guilt, no matter how bummed out they are: "*Who's responsible? You fucking are*". Even the more personal moments are riven with bleak humour, unable to take their own misery seriously. "*Colour my hair but the dye grows out/I can't seem to stay a fixed*

ideal", snarks 'Die In The Summertime', while '4st 7lb' is a mercilessly sharp examination of anorexia, a precise evocation of twisted narcissism that could only have been written by someone who'd been there.

When the Manics revisited the post-'The Holy Bible' lyrics that Richey Edwards left behind on 'Journal For Plague Lovers', Nicky Wire revealed that many of them were either too obscure or too unrelentingly bleak to use. Much of 'The Holy Bible' is clearly not the work of a well mind, making leaps that are sometimes hard to follow; much of 'Revol' and 'Of Walking Abortion' will provide bitter fruit for obsessive puzzlers for years to come. But it's never the work of a weak mind. It's an unflinching look into the dark, on both an individual and a societal scale, a milestone that stands out among the furthest that any artist has gone in any year, not just 1994. Be glad someone went there; don't try to follow. **Emily Mackay**

despite still reeling from the fabled court case with Mike Joyce and Andy Rourke – Morrissey and Marr were good friends again. Although they refused to appease the incessant badgering for them to make music together, Alain Whyte and Boz Boorer's guitar playing on 'Vauxhall...' underpinned the most melodic music Morrissey had made in years, warmly and implicitly referencing his most fruitful creative partnership.

'Vauxhall & I' became his first solo album to top the charts since 'Viva Hate' in 1988, and gave him his biggest hit single in America: 'The More You Ignore Me, The Closer I Get'. It was a song that saw him talking of love with uncharacteristic optimism, although *Autobiography* would later bear out the truth of: "*I bear more grudges/Than lonely High Court judges*". **Kevin EG Perry**

TLC

CRAZYSEXYCOOL (LaFace/Arista)

Released: November 15

● The most badass girl group ever ushered in a new era of R&B while Left Eye was on probation for arson



PISSED OFF about the paltry profits they were earning from their chart-topping second album 'CrazySexyCool', Atlanta girl group TLC stormed the offices of their label, Arista, and held then-president Clive Davis at gunpoint while the crew of female convicts they had in tow went to work bagging up every item of TLC paraphernalia in sight. The coup may not have freed them from their contract, but it cemented their status as one of pop's most badass bands.

Conceived as a female Bell Biv DeVoe (a spin-off from Bobby Brown's New Edition), TLC were signed to Atlanta's LaFace Records – an Arista imprint dubbed the Motown of the South – and had come up on the early '90s new jack swing wave: a funky, high-octane sound that married rap, R&B and pop. Tionne 'T-Boz' Watkins provided a mellow alto to Rozonda 'Chilli' Thomas' sweet high notes, while MC Lisa 'Left Eye' Lopes – the feistiest of the three – rapped about safe sex and female empowerment in a rambunctious, nasal flow. TLC were as tomboyish in their condom-accessorised baggy jeans as they were raunchy.

But by '94, new jack swing had evolved. Tempos were decelerating, the funk had mellowed, beats were bigger and 'CrazySexyCool' ushered in a sophisticated new era of crossover R&B, coming of age alongside the likes of Aaliyah, Mary J Blige and Blackstreet. With executive producer Dallas Austin helming the album's mix of provocative slow jams, socially conscious joints and sassy interludes, 'CrazySexyCool' dominated pop and urban radio simultaneously, producing two Billboard Number One singles: 'Creep', with its boom-bap percussion and haunting trumpets, and 'Waterfalls', the sunnier, Organized Noise-produced hit that would become TLC's signature on the pop world. 'CrazySexyCool' would make TLC the first girl group in history to have an LP reach diamond status by the time the RIAA defined the certification in 1999.

Teen girls imitated their harmonies and choreography. But whoever got to play Left Eye had very few raps to master; while T-Boz and Chilli had recorded 'CrazySexyCool', Left Eye had laid down her brilliant but scant bars during snatches of studio time grabbed during a five-year probation sentence (she'd been convicted for first degree arson after setting fire to her NFL football player boyfriend's trainers and, in the process, his house). Eight years after 'CrazySexyCool', following feuds, bankruptcy and game-changing pop success, TLC lost Lopes to a fatal car crash in 2002. Twenty years on, their legacy is unkillable, paving the way for the likes of Destiny's Child, who opened for TLC in 1999, and influencing magpie artists such as Grimes. **Charlotte Richardson Andrews**

THE YEAR... BRITPOP UNITED A NATION

● **SONYA MADAN**, singer and main songwriter with Echobelly, reflects on a scene full of positivity, camaraderie and creativity that turned into “a pastiche of a war between two infamous bands”

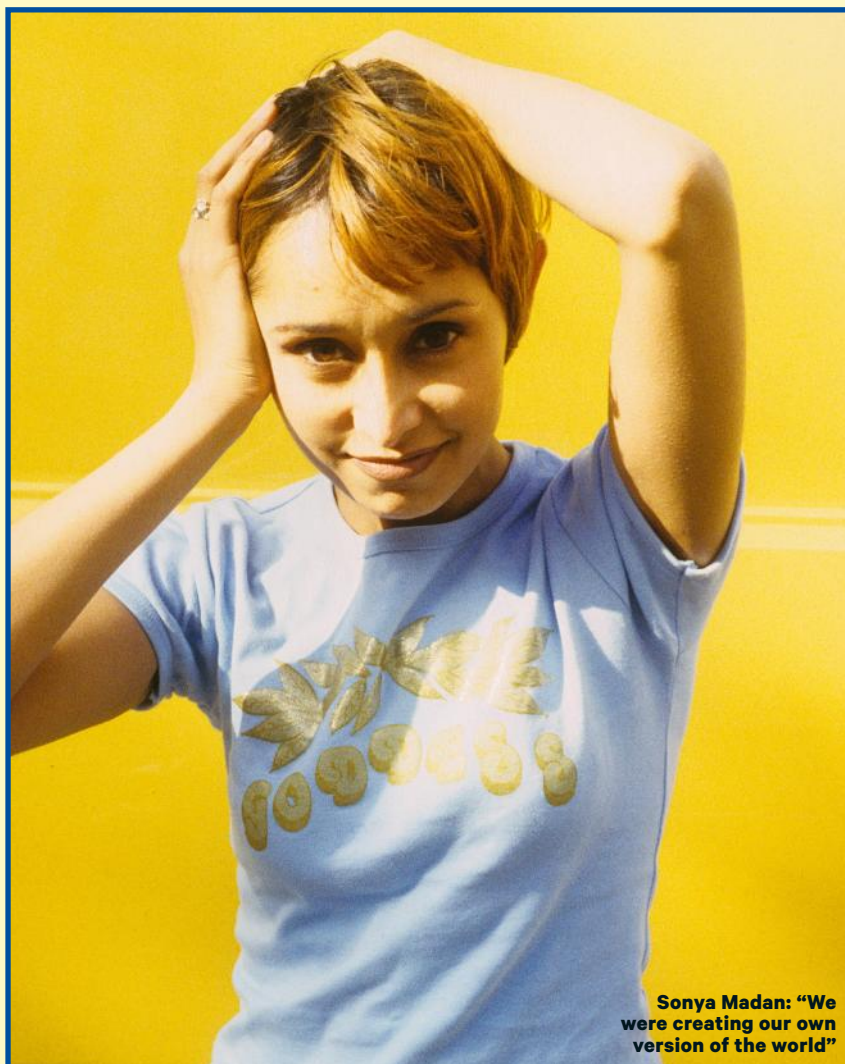
Back at the start of Britpop there was a feeling that something was about to happen. I had lived and worked in Soho since going to college and in 1993, I remember drinking in a pub just off Berwick Street with some of Echobelly. Two of the boys from Blur walked in wearing the same type of clothes as us and we clocked each other. It sounds trivial, but it meant something at the time.

Echobelly were an anomaly in many respects. We were Londoners from disparate backgrounds who were drawn together. We didn't think too much about being part of a Britpop scene. Eventually, there was a lot of pressure to pledge allegiance to the Britpop flag – mostly from record companies, but also from our own desire to be relevant: it felt like being part of something bigger than the sum of its parts.

At first Britpop was very positive; there was a sense of being in the right place at

the right time. It's not that guitar music was taking over the world, as rave was still very much in profile – rather, we were creating our own version of the world. Women were making rock music without being obliged to strip off. Music journalists could be personalities in their own right. British music was loud and proud and was coming out of every part of the British Isles, not just Manchester and Essex. There was a lot of camaraderie, and competition too. Many of the bands toured together and true characters, often at odds with their public persona, were revealed. There was an amazing amount of drug-fuelled self-gratification going on and perhaps it became a little one-dimensional with the flag-waving aspect, but Britpop was truly creative. Listen to the B-sides.

BRITPOP STARTED off being inclusive but quite quickly became exclusive, and eventually obtrusive.



Sonya Madan: “We were creating our own version of the world”

Many bands that we started out with became obscure pretty quickly. In terms of press attention, record company funds and even decent management

we didn't get the same opportunities as Blur and Oasis. There were many casualties, and the scene turned into a pastiche of a war between two infamous

bands that every clichéd article has referred to ever since. But if it was a war, then at least the Britpop women were warriors in their own right. ■

BRITPOP DON'T STOP... at Blur and Oasis. Here are five lesser-spotted Britpop gems from '94

ST ETIENNE

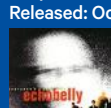
Tiger Bay (Heavenly)
Released: June 28



St Etienne's version of Britain was rooted in the Welsh port of the title and rendered in pastoral electronic folk music.

ECHOBELLY

Everyone's Got One
(Rhythm King)
Released: October 25



Sonya Madan's lyrics on their debut tackled difficult subjects ranging from racism to arranged marriage.

TINY MONROE

Cream EP (Laurel)
Released: June



Somewhat lost in time, the 'Cream' EP yokes guitar wash to the kind of defiant, grungy choruses that would become Garbage's stock in trade.

SHAMPOO

We Are Shampoo (Food)
Released: October 20



Britpop's girlband bonded at school over a love of Manic Street Preachers before releasing early singles produced by St Etienne's Bob Stanley.

DODGY

Homegrown (Mercury)
Released: November 28



The Midlands trio hit their stride on their second album, underpinned by acoustic guitars and multi-layered harmonies.

THE YEAR... CHICAGO BROKE THE RULES OF ROCK

● **STEVE ALBINI's Shellac** released their first record in '94. He explains how the Windy City's influence pushed rock music forward by marrying jazz with the '80s noise underground



By 1994, a sort of professional class of underground musician had been established, bands signing to major labels as a stepping stone to a career of general popularity. I hated all those bands. You'd also see a lot of cities where you find there's a lot of competition between musicians, everyone trying to be top dog. In Chicago that never really took hold. Instead, there's the

sense of a shared enterprise, everyone participating in one big music scene. Tortoise, The Sea And Cake, Gastr Del Sol – all of those people were socially associated. Went to the same bars, hung out with the same crowd, dated the same girls, that kind of stuff.

Chicago has a pretty vibrant underground scene going back to the '80s. There were a lot of bands around here and the Midwest in general – Naked Raygun,

my band Big Black, a scene going on in Minneapolis around the band Hüsker Dü. Gradually you began to see a shift away from the noisier, confrontational aesthetic of the '80s towards something more introspective. The people who came up through the punk rock or experimental music scenes were involved in making this more atmospheric music in the '90s. I couldn't tell you why, but I did notice a lot of the same faces.

In Chicago, jazz had a pretty established history, and it's not a surprise that the alternative rock scene started cross-pollinating with some of the music of the experimental jazz scene. The first Tortoise album came out in 1994. They were great. Their setup at the time was two bass players, two drum kits – a unique arrangement. The guys in the band were

smart and capable. John McEntire had studied music, and he was keen to take instruments like vibraphone or marimba that had normally only been played in a formal music context and bring them into dirty nightclubs.

IN THE '90s, there was the revival of the heavy guitar as a dominant instrument

in rock music. That Tortoise did not have these thick, distorted tones in their music was very intentional. Their music didn't have a dominant lead voice, which I thought was interesting. With jazz, or any other ensemble music, it was very common for people to take solo turns. There's an ugly cycle in jazz music where everyone is standing around waiting for their solo. I thought it was good to hear music where that ensemble element was the point of it.

Like most journalistic terms, post-rock didn't resonate with the people who were making the music. You would kind of know what people were talking about in a temporal sense, but post-rock as a style of music? That's ridiculous. Tortoise, Low, Slint – these were all rock bands. That terminology didn't resonate with anyone actually making the music. ■



Tortoise with John McEntire (centre)

AS TOLD TO LOUIS PATTISON

ESSENTIAL RELEASES

LOW
I Could Live In Hope
(Vernon Yard Recordings)
Released: February 18

THE SEA AND CAKE
The Sea And Cake
(Thrill Jockey)
Released: June 14

STEREOLAB
Mars Audiac Quintet
(Duophonic)
Released: August 9

THE YEAR... RIOT GRRRL MET POP CULTURE

● **Bikini Kill/Julie Ruin bassist KATHI WILCOX** recalls the moment the mainstream turned punk feminism into a cartoon



When I think back to '94, I think about Beastie Boys and Sonic Youth. [The Beastie Boys'] *Grand Royal* magazine was happening, Kim Gordon had created [fashion brand] X-Girl and Kathleen [Hanna] flew down to LA to record the 'Bull In The Heather' video with Sonic Youth.

I wasn't really into mainstream music in '94; I was tuned in to underground stuff. *Slant 6* put out a great record that year, 'Soda Pop-Rip Off'. I remember really liking the record Pavement put out too, 'Crooked Rain,

Crooked Rain'. The decision to release Bikini Kill's 'The CD Version Of The First Two Records' [on Kill Rock Stars] was a label one, because CDs had just become this new format that everyone wanted to do.

I'd met [Fugazi guitarist and future husband] Guy [Picciotto] long before '94. He was in DC, I was in Olympia and we were both in touring bands, so it was hard, but '94 was the year we started our relationship in earnest.

BIKINI KILL toured in '94. It was our second headline tour of the US. Joan Jett jumped

onstage with us at the Rock For Choice concert in NYC at Irving Plaza: we played 'Rebel Girl' and 'New Radio'. There was a lot of violence at Bikini Kill shows. We didn't have a tour manager or security people and we'd play these really crazy places. It was



Joan Jett joins Bikini Kill onstage, NYC, 1994

haphazard. We were really young and we didn't have a strategy, as a band, with how to deal with all the violence. Sometimes it was about making the space safe for women, if the pits got too violent. Kathleen was much more combative than the rest of us because she was up there getting the brunt of it.

We were tuned into feminism in such a weird way in '94. [Joyce Carol Oates' book] *Foxfire: Confessions Of A Girl Gang* had just come out and it was a really cartoony version of our band. We were being asked a lot of questions about the pop culture manifestations of what we were doing. There were all these weird terms floating around the mainstream – 'lipstick feminism', 'do-me feminism' – and lots of generalisations.

We were a feminist punk rock band before riot grrrl started. To us, riot grrrl meant something different to what the people writing about it thought. It's probably how

bands called 'grunge' felt: like, that's not even a thing, it's just a word. Twenty years later, it's like, of course they'd call us that! To us at the time though, [riot grrrl and Bikini Kill] were two parallel things – related but not the same. In reality, it was all jumbled.

Kathleen and I still play music together, in The Julie Ruin. We get on much better now than we did in '94. It's amazing to be friends with someone when you have all this shared history. ■

ESSENTIAL RELEASES

EXCUSE 17
Excuse Seventeen
(Chainsaw/Atlas)
Released: August 5

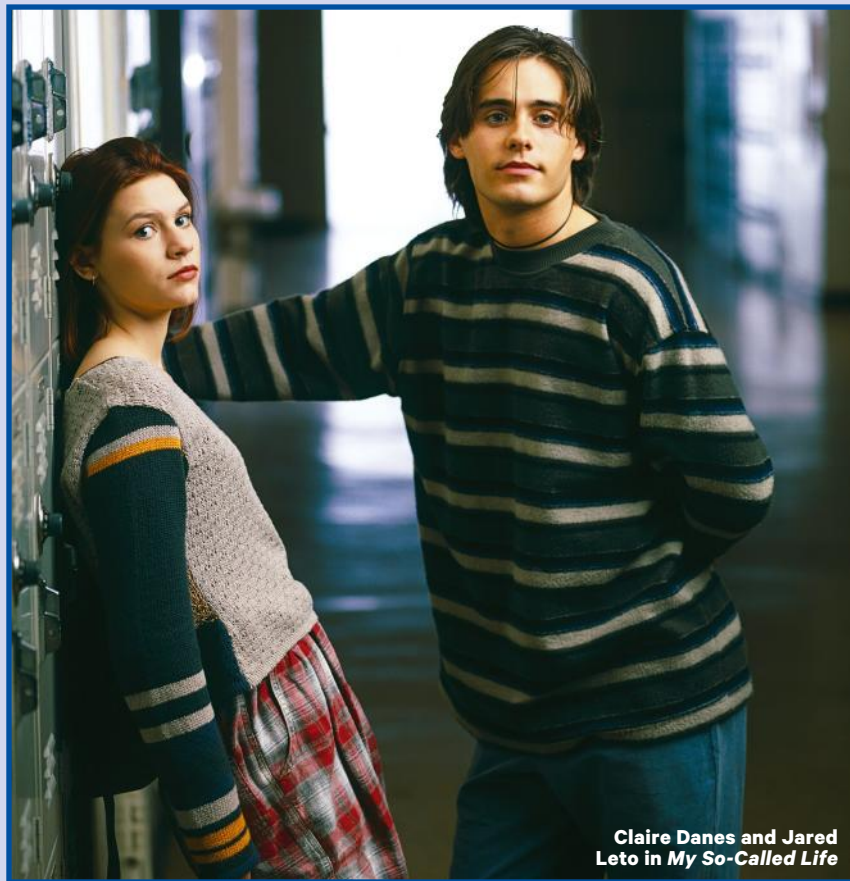
TEAM DRESCH
Hand Grenade
(Kill Rock Stars)
Released: May 1

HUGGY BEAR
Weaponry Listens To Love (Wiiija)
Released: December 9

AS TOLD TO CHARLOTTE RICHARDSON ANDREWS PHOTO: GETTY

THE YEAR... TV FINALLY GOT TEENAGERS

● High school drama **MY SO-CALLED LIFE** was the first network TV show to truly reflect the lives and musical tastes of its audience, says **CHARLIE LYNE**



Claire Danes and Jared Leto in *My So-Called Life*

Where was Tumblr in the early '90s when we needed it? In summer 1994, when *My So-Called Life* premiered on the ABC network, popular culture lived and died on numbers – cold, hard indicators of an outfit's success, devoid of the nuances required to properly understand a cult sensation. If shows were cancelled, as they so often were, the main course of action available to fans was a letter-writing campaign, which was great news for *Cagney & Lacey*, but didn't

do much for a show watched principally by 14-year-old grunge fans. Had *My So-Called Life*'s loyal followers been given a shared outlet for their enthusiasms back in '94 – Pinterest, Twitter, anything beyond the paltry excuse for visual communication that was an Eastpak bag coated in Tippi-Ex – the show might well have lived to see a second season. At the very least,

we'd be looking at an extra 20 years of Claire Danes cryface GIFs.

ON THE plus side, that's exactly what *My So-Called Life* gave its teenage audience over the course of 19 exquisitely paced episodes: an outlet. Teen drama in the early '90s was a series of loose variations on *Beverly Hills, 90210*, filled to bursting

with cast members in their mid-twenties, 'very special episodes' and soundtrack cuts from the likes of Paula Abdul. *My So-Called Life* was the antithesis of this stale, sanitised world. Centred around alienation poster girl Angela Chase (Danes) and her endearingly complicated high school social circle, the show featured a teenage cast who were actually teenage, social issues that didn't neatly resolve themselves by the time the credits rolled and a soundtrack that combined the more traditional soap opera stylings of Emmy winner WG Snuffy Walden (a name Angela would've mocked mercilessly) with tracks from John Peel favourites Madder Rose, Afghan Whigs and Daniel Johnston – the latter still a year away from becoming an indie OST mainstay with the hipster hat trick of *Kids*, *Empire Records* and *Before Sunrise*.

Best of all, these weren't needle-drop hits thrown arbitrarily into the mix to appease the plaid-wearing masses. Music was every bit as important to the show as it was to the real-life Angelas watching at home. Where Drake's alma mater *Degrassi High* might drop a five-second blast of M People over a scene transition to tick a box on some imagined youth culture compliance form, *My So-Called Life* dedicated entire episodes to the aching significance of alt.rock to its teenage protagonists. Perhaps the series' most famous musical moment saw Angela

finally brought together with pretty boy Jordan Catalano (Jared Leto) in a slow-motion sequence set to Buffalo Tom's 'Late At Night', but many forget that the same song accompanied the first speed-bump of their relationship: an awful pseudo-date during which Jordan found nothing to say to Angela beyond, "Uh, you're kind of crowding me." If teen relationships were unreliable, at least grunge was in it for the long haul.

In 'So-Called Angels', a bleakly poetic yuletide special aired just weeks before the show left ABC for good, Angela's confidant Rickie finds himself on the streets after coming out to his parents in the run-up to Christmas. Wandering the high school corridors unable to locate her friend, Angela finds herself drawn towards the distant sounds of an acoustic guitar. She finds an unnamed, apparently homeless teenager, played by Lemonheads contemporary Juliana Hatfield, who performs a soulful rendition of 'Make It Home' that leaves Angela awestruck – perhaps at the rarity of a network TV show including a musical sequence so decidedly lacking in star wipes.

It's only fitting that Angela's guardian angel is a musician. With *My So-Called Life*, teen drama finally acknowledged the transformative effect of music on the adolescent mind. As youth television exploded across the US a few years later, the most successful shows – from *Dawson's Creek* to *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* to *The OC* – followed the example set by the series, giving themselves over to the near-unlimited power of their soundtracks. ■

***My So-Called Life* acknowledged the transformative effect of music on the adolescent mind**

THIS WEEK IN 2000



The controversial band are under fire from the US authorities, but stick firmly to their guns

With 300-strong groups of police officers picketing their gigs in the US in protest at their support of convicted cop killer Mumia Abu-Jamal, RATM are, once more, under attack from the authorities ahead of their new album 'The Battle Of Los Angeles'. But they take it in their stride. "In the US the police spend a lot of time in doughnut shops drinking coffee," says guitarist Tom Morello. "We sent them out 300 doughnuts, courtesy of the band. We figured if they weren't out there protecting the community, they might at least be well-fed." It's the music that drives their message, the band claim. "It's somewhat unique, the way we choose to rock," says Morello. "There's certainly a long history of bands who have

combined rock power and powerful politics, from the MCS through Bob Marley and The Clash. We have some of the same intent [but] it's down to a number of factors. Not least that we do rock particularly hard, and that the locomotive on which the message rides is one with a sturdy engine."

LOON ON THE MOON

From Elvis impersonator to stand-up comedian, Andy Kaufman was always that guy who seemed a little bit more than your average crazy. Sixteen years after his death, he's been immortalised in Milos Forman's movie *Man On The Moon*. NME's Stephen Dalton remembers a "mad-eyed, wild-haired" daredevil, forever pulling wild stunts including wrestling his audience, sabotaging live broadcasts and even, some would claim, faking his own death.

THE BEATEN BAND

Having described their debut album as "fucking awful" and turned down £80,000 offers from Budweiser to use 'Dry The Rain' on ads, The Beta Band are now bankrupt. "Even a shite Beta Band album is still gonna be 90 per cent better than any other dross that's coming out," singer Steve Mason backtracks, adding, "We want people to hear our music. We don't wanna be the sort of band where folk look back and say, 'They were influential.' We want to mean something now."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK

Primal Scream
- 'Exterminator'
9/10
"That we

could do with a fully plugged in, turned on, fucked off Primal Scream at this point is hardly front-page news; for 'Exterminator' to pulverise the senses with quite such incendiary beauty most definitely is." ■ KEITH CAMERON

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

► Primal Scream gain a new member in the form of My Bloody Valentine legend Kevin Shields. Alan McGee calls Shields "basically Stravinsky for the fucking millennium".
► In a shock move that critics claim is undermining the value of new music, Alan McGee's new label Poptones announces it will be selling its CDs for the bargain price of £7.99.
► News emerges that Bonehead is recording his first solo album.

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

WE FIND THE ROCK STAR, YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS



**Tom
Fleming**

Wild Beasts
bassist and singer

1 In the video for your song 'Bed Of Nails', what kind of hat are you wearing?
Elisabeth Lake, Sunderland, via email
"That would be a beanie."
CORRECT. You're really rather fond of a good beanie, aren't you. Is that the kind of hat you always wear?



"It is, yeah. It's not particularly exotic. The thing is, I do like wearing a hat in the absence of having good hair."

2 Which of your previous albums did you once describe as an "anti-touring record"?
Callum Little, Kingston Upon Hull, via email
"Smother".
CORRECT

3 What type of animal features in the video for your single 'We Still Got The Taste Dancin' On Our Tongues'?
Graham Maguire, High Wycombe, via email
"That's a horse."
CORRECT
"It's actually a mare, to be precise. I can tell you that it was a female horse. I mean, that's pretty good, isn't it?"

4 Fill in the gaps: in a recent interview with *NME* about your new album 'Present Tense', you said that the record is more "something" and "something" than before. How did you describe it?
Hayley Palmer, Brighton, via email
"Oh fuck. Oh Christ. I'll think of some clichés... electronic?"
WRONG. You described it as being more "melodic" and "pop".
"Ohhhh. Oh shit. Well, I do agree with that. I stand by that description!"

5 In that same *NME* interview, which singer-songwriter did you

say you thought you were when you were 17?

Hayley Palmer, Brighton, via email
"Nick Drake."
CORRECT
"Yeah!"

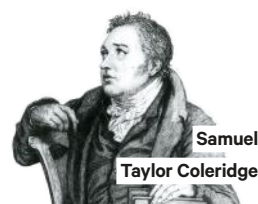
6 The first single from 'Smother' (released in 2011) was called 'Albatross'. But who or what made the albatross famous before you did?
Amy Hunter-Lewis, Stoke-on-Trent, via email
"Oh my god. I've

gone blank. It's something to do with mariners... is it *The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner*?"

CORRECT. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 1798 poem about a sailor who shoots an albatross, is subsequently plagued by bad luck, chronic thirst and bad spirits at sea, and is forced to wear the dead bird around his neck as a reminder of his curse.

7 In an old interview, how much did you once say that it costs, on average, for a person to live in Leeds per week?
Patricia Julian, Bristol, via email
"Um... is this according to us?"
Yes – it's something you said, rather than a random survey about Leeds.
"OK. God. A fiver?"
WRONG. £50.
"£50? Oh right, OK. That's a black mark against me, then."

8 What colour is the checked shirt that your bandmate Hayden Thorpe is wearing in the



Samuel
Taylor Coleridge



The 'Hooting And
Howling' video

video for your single 'Hooting And Howling'?
Michael Hughes, Corby, via email

"Oh my god. Argh! Is it red?"
CORRECT
"Yes!"

9 You headlined the Park Stage at Glastonbury in 2011. What was the first song you played?
Erica Pearson, Wolverhampton, via email
"(Laughs) Ha ha! Oh my god, it's going to have to be a guess. Um... is it... (long pause) 'Bed Of Nails'?"
CORRECT
"That was a complete guess."

10 What was the third venue you played on your November tour of the UK in 2013?
Dave Stewart, London, via email
"Oxford Academy 2?"
CORRECT. We would also have accepted just Oxford Academy as an answer.
"It was definitely Oxford Academy 2. I remember because Palma Violets were playing downstairs in Oxford Academy."



SCORE = 8

"I'm pretty pleased with that. Although it just goes to show how much time I've spent watching videos of myself on YouTube."

NEXT WEEK

songs

The 500 greatest ~~albums~~ or all time

***you didn't think we'd stop at
the 500 greatest albums, did you?***



***Remember
me?***

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NME

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DECEMBER 21/28 CROSSWORD ANSWERS ACROSS 1+4A Night Visions, 8 Crystals, 12+102A Sam Cooke, 16 Killers, 17 Albatross, 18 Arnold Layne, 19 Dolls, 20+91D Light Up Gold, 21+92A Echo And The Bunnymen, 22 Strangers, 23 Drowning In Berlin, 26+66D Your Sister, 28+75D Pearl Myotic, 32 Ryan, 34 Searchers, 35 Easy Easy, 37 Always, 39 Latch, 42 All Men, 45+47A Pass Out, 49 Rowsell, 51 Kiss, 55 Voices, 56 Ruts, 60+8D Car Button Cloth, 62 Hate, 64 Ritual, 65 Madness, 69 Toni!, 70 Bee, 72 Stars, 74 Numbers, 76+78A Nights Out, 80 T Rex, 83 Ashore, 85 Others, 87+11D Blue Lines, 94+95A Mid-Air, 97 Snap, 98 I Know, 103 Ideal, 104 Too Cold, 105 Mayo, 106 Die, 107 Byrds, 108 Gypsy, 110 Sky DOWN 1 Naked, 2 Gold Lion, 3 Treason, 4 Vaseline, 5 Shangri-La, 6 Orbit, 7 Set Me Free, 9 Yes I Am, 10 Teardrops, 12+109A Silence Yourself, 13 Mayberry, 14 Alarm, 15 Sense, 23 Dream River, 24 Bickers, 25+52A+81A It's The End Of The World As We Know It, 27 Reef, 29 Area, 30 LA, 31 Temples, 33 My Generation, 36 Southern Man, 38 William, 40 There There, 41+59A Hayden Thorpe, 42+43D Ass Like That, 44 No Surprises, 46 Side, 50 Street, 53 Faces, 54 Would, 57 Treats, 58+61A Teenage Rampage, 63 Ace, 67+67A Station To Station, 68 Autchre, 70+111A Blowing In The Wind, 71 Emotion, 73 RAK, 77 Tool, 79 Televisors, 82 We Walk, 84 Oceania, 86+89A Senses Working Overtime, 87+48A Bay City Rollers, 88 Useless, 90 Rolo, 93 Blood, 96 Roddy, 98 Ill, 99 Nico, 100 Weir, 101 Wolf, 102 Cry, 105 Mew

8. Foster The People 9. Ryan Gosling 10. 'Asleep In The Back' 11. Ray Charles and Donny Hathaway 12. 'Can't Stand Me Now' 13. Talking Heads 14. 'Public Enemy' 15. Lemmy

QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. Greg Dulli (Afghan Whigs) 2. They were both married to Patsy Kensit 3. Neil Young 4. 'Gorgeous George' 5. True 6. 1999 7. Underworld

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