

1 MARCH 2014

NME



The Horrors

Beck

Neneh Cherry

Foals

Parquet Courts

ROCK

'N'

ROLL

Alex Turner's
speech:

one week on

Everyone's still
talking about it

R U inside?

NEEDS

YOU

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- 4 SOUNDING OFF**
- 10 THE WEEK**
- 22 IN THE STUDIO**
School Of Language
- 23 ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM**
De La Soul – '3 Feet High And Rising'
- 30 REVIEWS**
- 48 NME GUIDE**
- 53 THINK TANK**
- 65 THIS WEEK IN...**
- 66 BRAINCELLS**

▼ FEATURES



Beck

Beck spent the last six years recovering from a spinal injury, making music for other people. Finally he returns with 'Morning Phase', a gorgeous California record that's among his best, writes Ian Cohen.

Neneh Cherry

Neneh Cherry is back with her first solo album in 17 years, written following her mother's death. "Even though I've been a mother since I was 18 it really made me understand what being a mother is," she tells Matthew Horton.

From the vaults: Madonna, 1983

Twenty-five years since the release of 'Like A Prayer', we reprint Barney Hoskyns' feature with a fresh-faced Madonna on her first visit to the UK, back in 1983.

CONTRIBUTORS



Pooneh Ghana
Photographer
Pooneh shot Foals at Alexandra Palace: "I felt lost in a sea of emotions along with 10,000 other people. It was a huge experience, especially knowing what a milestone it was for Foals."



Kevin EG Perry
Writer
Kevin wrote about Alex Turner's Brits speech: "I'm just happy the bequipped one was on hand to distract me from James Corden nicking jokes from my old NME reviews."



Mike Williams
NME Editor
On the Alex Turner image that graces your NME this week: "If ever a cover was asking to be torn off and stuck on your wall, then it's this one."

THIS WEEK WE ASK...



WHAT'S THE STORY WITH THE NEW OASIS RELEASES?

Never-before-released tracks will feature on reissues of their '90s works **18**

WHAT DOES THE NEW HORRORS ALBUM SOUND LIKE?



First up, Faris needs to decide what he's calling the songs **14**

CLIFF ON TOUR WITH MOZ... WTF?



The man himself explains his decision to join Morrissey **21**

20 ESSENTIAL TRACKS

12 PAGES OF REVIEWS

31 NEW BANDS TO DISCOVER

THE NME BAND LIST

Addison Groove	32	Kwabs	27
ALX	8	Leif	9
The Amazing Snakeheads	29	Linda Perhacs	31
Ang Low	27	Mac DeMarco	8
Anthems	29	The Maccabees	16, 29
Arctic Monkeys	4, 10	Made Violent	27
Art Brut	16	The Men	33
Baby Pink	29	Miamigo	29
Beck	54	Mogwai	66
Best Friends	50	Morrissey	21
The Birthday Suit	32	Neneh Cherry	58
Blondie	14	Nick Waterhouse	34
Blood Cultures	27	Stanley Brinks And	
Blood Red Shoes	32	The Wave Pictures	34
Bombay Bicycle Club	12	Nine Inch Nails	33
Brody Dalle	48	Oasis	18
Carla Bozulich	33	Oliver Wilde	28
Childhood	40	Only Real	42
Cheatahs	39	Oscar Key Sung	29
Chvrches	8, 39	Parquet Courts	40
Cliff Richard	21	Perfect Pussy	26
Clipping	27	Pure X	26
Coil	33	Radkey	8
Coldplay	16	Rae Morris	29
Damon Albarn	9	Rainer	29
DA-10	28	Rainy Milo	31
De La Soul	23	Ramona Lisa	9
Dolomite Minor	29	Real Estate	30
Drenge	48	Relics	28
Drive-By Truckers	33	School Of Language	22
DZ Deathrays	9	Schoolboy Q	9
Eagulls	34	Shivum Sharma	33
Elara Caluna	27	Sisyphus	8
Elliot	29	Speedy Ortiz	41
Elton John	65	The Strypes	41
EMA	9	Superfood	32, 42
Eugene Quell	29	Swim Deep	41
Fat Ugly	28	Sylvan Esso	28
Fatima Al Qadiri	28	Tame Impala	49
Fear Of Men	8	Telegram	9, 42
Flatbush Zombies	9	Tense Men	29
Foals	36	Terror Danjah	8
Four Tet	8	Thee Oh Sees	8
Gentlemen	28	Tigercub	29
The Head And The Heart	32	Toy	48
Honeyblood	8	Traams	29
Hooks	27	Trash Talk	9
The Horrors	8, 14	True Widow	29
I, A Man	27	Warpaint	39
Johnny Cash	51	We Are Scientists	31
Juce	8	White Hinterland	9
		Wild Beasts	27
		Willis Earl Beal	31
		Yumi Zouma	28

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Inspiration comes in many forms. Last week it had a quiff and an agenda and stirred a whole world of shit at the Brits, and the trail of anger, nonsense, adulation and mild confusion left in its wake has made the last seven days an exciting place to live.

In those seven days since Arctic Monkeys' Alex Turner took to the stage and delivered his sermon from the mountain, the *NME* mailbox has been bombarded in a way that we've not seen in years. As I wrote on *NME.COM*, by declaring that rock'n'roll "will never die. And there's nothing that you can do about it," Alex Turner drew a line in the sand and asked every person watching which side of it they were standing on. It's pretty clear from these responses where the majority of you guys are at...

Mike Williams, Editor

LETTER OF THE WEEK

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FOLLOWING THE LEADER

The Brit Awards has always been the annual ceremony I find streaming live on my television screen in the background while I find something better to do with my time rather than being brainwashed by the likes of One Direction, or the next most popular mass produced four-piece robot machine boys regurgitating the information force-fed to them from their makers. This year, however, was different, as something changed to kick robo-pop stars right up their Botox buttocks.

It was the much needed reincarnation of rock'n'roll, incredibly appropriate on the eve of rock legend Kurt Cobain's 47th birthday. For those blissfully naive kids out there that never knew such a genre existed, or perhaps saw it as something dad listens to to feel young again, a whole new world found its way onto their television screens with the likes of David Bowie (in the shape of the rocking Kate Moss to pick up his award as he was unable to attend) and Arctic Monkeys, showing those kids that Auto-Tuning and lavish background dancers in some cases are just NOT the coolest thing about.



Arctic Monkeys
at the 2014
Brit Awards, O2
Academy, London

The night was kindled nicely with 'R U Mine?' humming throughout the arena, and ended with Al Turner warning those kids out there about the threat of rock'n'roll, preaching that no matter how much they may want to cling onto their UK chart music, rock'n'roll would break through those barriers, with the flaming riffs and all-important vocals that have no signs of fading away.

Last night was a night to be proud to be British – thank bloody god.

Hayley Sigrist, London, via email

"IF YOU'RE OFFENDED, GET A GRIP"

At last the Brits felt like the music mattered! Alex Turner can say what he wants, when he wants – as can anyone! It felt like real musicians had won something, instead of the boring money-makers' usual drudgery of thanking and mentioning labels, bosses etc. If you were offended by this, you need to get a grip. Politicians, talk show hosts and presenters are far more offensive on a day-to-day basis. As for David Bowie, the same rules apply – he's always had opinions and been more than a yes man, if he wants to talk politics, great, maybe the younger musicians might start caring a bit instead of just being silent consumers. Remember when most musicians had opinions and tried to make a difference? It's not a case of agreeing, it's a case of people having the backbone to say what they mean. It's exciting.

Diane McBain, via email

"THE WORDS STRIKE A CHORD"

Many people on Twitter seemed rather perturbed at the rather 'different' take that Alex and co had on collecting their awards, making particular reference to Mr Turner's acceptance speech when picking up the gong for Best Album. But I for one, was rather impressed by it. Yes, he may have delivered it with an air of disinterest and a slur suggesting many a can of Boddingtons (among other things perhaps) had been consumed, but so what? He's the lead singer of Britain's biggest rock'n'roll band for goodness' sake. Arctic Monkeys have never been ones to take awards ceremonies, or themselves too seriously. In 2008, they turned up to the Brits dressed in farming attire. When receiving a Mercury Prize in 2006, Turner famously told the audience: 'Somebody call 999, Richard Hawley's been robbed'.

When stripped back and read, rather than listened to, the words strike a chord with anyone with an ear for rock'n'roll and hatred of much that is displayed in the charts of today. What exactly do people want from Turner and the Monkeys? Do people still expect the band to hark back to the days of High Green and being 18? No. The band and the boys have moved on from there and so has their music and their persona. Less cheek, more a well-honed and sophisticated wit that seemed lost on so many last night. After all, who is to tell a man who is arguably the best lyricist since Morrissey how to conduct a speech? Not me. That rock'n'roll, eh?

Matthew Wattret, via email

"IT ENSURED ROCK'N'ROLL'S SURVIVAL"

Arctic Monkeys should never have to apologise for coming across as arrogant – as so many saw it – when trying to be rock'n'roll. The

greatest responsibility that any rock band has is to make the genre look exciting and effortless, ensuring its survival for the next generation; David Bowie didn't inspire Noel Gallagher to pick up a guitar by standing atop a podium, endlessly thanking people at his label who just did their jobs. If music's an art form and not an industry, what does that say about the Brit Awards?

Mark White, via email

"I WAS WAITING FOR SOMEONE LIKE ALEX"

I think it's brilliant that someone in this day and age like Alex Turner can easily give out a speech on what he truly believes in. I was waiting for someone to talk about the true natural modern ways of rock'n'roll, about how it sinks and swims in a sea of mainstream music and people. Turner is a man with a unique vision and true mind.

Victor Montufar, via email

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"ROCK'N'ROLL WILL ALWAYS OVERCOME"

I think everyone can agree on one thing about Alex Turner, which is that he's become incredibly narcissistic, which is becoming increasingly apparent. Although we love the music, love him, love the band, Alex has changed, and that needs to be accepted. What he was right about though in his possibly drunken ramble at the Brits was about how rock'n'roll will always overcome the "sludge" of current mindless pop music, and all these average bands ("cough" Bastille "cough" The 1975 "cough") at the awards and elsewhere. So yes, Alex Turner thinks he is an absolute god but well, we can forgive him, because sometimes, he is.

Steph Green, London

"A SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR SOMETHING SO VITAL"

The Brits, as usual, was an advert of all that's wrong with the music industry just now. And not a shiny placement in a glossy magazine, more a cheaply produced flyer lying discarded in the gutter.

Be it Ellie Goulding prancing about with the grace of a swan with its neck caught in a shopping trolley, some random award for One Direction to keep Simon Cowell happy and Bruno Mars being deemed the most talented International Male made me want to punch my telly in anger. ➡



Arctic Monkeys
at the Brits 2008.
They were invoiced
for the duck

But there were moments that made me punch the air in delight. Lorde showing Katy Perry how to put on a performance, Rudimental making Bastille sound interesting and Nile Le Freakin' Rodgers were all highlights. The best moment, though, was Alex Turner's speech. Arctic Monkeys are the greatest band Britain has produced in years so despite the criticism he's being hit with, maybe he's right. Rock'n'roll will never die. It might have to face the embarrassment now and again of being forced to share a stage with James Cordon and Jimmy Carr, but it's a small price to pay for something so vital.
Cal Mackay, Edinburgh, via email

"IT WAS A BIG FINGER UP TO THE SHITTY MUSIC INDUSTRY"

Yeah Alex Turner's a bit of a twat at times, as were Morrissey and many other musical geniuses, but he creates great music, so get over it. His speech was essentially a big finger up to the shitty music industry with their talentless chart toppers and false corporate events and I, for one, enjoyed his drunken babbling. Long live "that rock'n'roll".
Coni Phillips, via email

"A POIGNANT STATEMENT ABOUT TODAY"

Alex Turner gave one of the most memorable acceptance speeches the Brits has ever seen. Some of the negative responses were unfair. The most hilarious one being Peaches Geldoff's description: "Alex Turner acting like a pure twat #bethankfularsehole".

Firstly, the man is allowed to have some swagger after making one of the best British albums in years (and something more culturally significant than she will ever hope to achieve). Secondly, everyone can tell that he was clearly wasted. What some people failed to see was that behind the drunken bravado, there was a poignant statement being made about the state of guitar music today. Like Alex, I'm also waiting ever so patiently for it to break through the 'sludge' embodied by the boys from One Direction. It all would have sounded a bit corny if he was sober. It would have been boring if he just thanked his manager, the fans, his mum etc. It would have sounded pretty weird if he asked Scotland to stay with us. Yes Arctic Monkeys did lift guitar music last year, but my only criticism would be to leave out the profanities and the cool guy-microphone dropping next time, as that is treading dangerously close to Liam Gallagher territory. Don't be that guy, Alex!
Daniel Long, Bristol, via email

"IT WAS A RALLYING CALL TO ARMS"

Those that view Alex Turner's Brit awards speech as the words of an egotistical idiot have failed to grasp what his intentions were that night: yes, he may have been a little drunk, and yes, he had his diva moment with the microphone, but he championed everything that rock'n'roll stands for. He laughed in the faces of

the commercial acts with little talent that make up the majority of Brit award winners, and proved that even though these acts may have more places in the charts, a rock'n'roll band will always triumph in the end. Turner later said: "A band or a group or an artist's talent is not directly proportional to the size of their trophy cabinet," which goes to prove how for the Monkeys it has never been about the fame or the awards, but always the music. Amid the 'sludge' of acts there that night, Turner's speech was a breath of fresh air, and felt like a rallying call to arms. Thanks to bands like Arctic Monkeys, rock'n'roll WILL never die, and it seems clear we'll remember this speech for many years to come.
Tara Hodgson, via email

"ALEX TURNER CAN DO WHATEVER THE HELL HE LIKES"

Personally, Alex Turner's speech at the Brit Awards made me laugh. People will find a scandal in anything, and when he dropped that microphone he knew that. He also knew that he's Alex Turner, and he can do whatever the hell he likes. He also used some bloody long words, but like I said, he's Alex Turner and if he wants to swallow a dictionary, that's his own business.

Kate Moore, Ireland, via email

"IT'S ABSOLUTE GENIUS"

"That rock'n'roll eh?" Now, it isn't in the nature of someone commenting on

rock'n'roll to reference the most corporate event in the music calendar with much sincerity, but there is, no doubt, substance in the happenings of the Brit Awards 2014 last

Wednesday night that needs rescuing from the 'sludge' of a nation critically assessing it from the comfort of their popular-music nests. I'm referring to, of course, the acceptance speech made by Alex Turner, our very own northern poet, upon winning British Album Of The Year for 'AM'. Now, no need to cease interest there if the Sheffield boys' work never lay within your musical taste, oh no. Because the speech Turner made, if we look past that self-assured quiff protruding cockily into our eyesight, or that almost knuckle-bitingly cringey accent I can only compare to my grandad after 19 pints of bitter, I think we'll find more than the critics have given Turner credit for. In fact I think we'll find one of the most important string of obnoxious adjectives in the past decade, perhaps more, of music. By rock'n'roll of course we all mean different things – perhaps the very precise definition of it would be its death. If we attempt to cast that aside, however, I think there is a united entity of alternative, sometimes system-fighting, sometimes escape-seeking, rock'n'roll preachers we can find. The speech itself doesn't need my line-by-line analysis for you guys. I've read article after article of popular tabloid translation and can't help but wince at their mainstream blasphemy as they lightly and snobbily touch over the poignant words.

What we find in it isn't the arrogance of a homegrown Sheffield lad driven by

fame and fortune, it isn't the nonsensical babble of a troubled and bitter rock'n'roll star taking advantage of the guestlist free booze, but it is, to bluntly put it, absolute genius. Love or hate the Monkeys' work, cringe or swoon at Turner's persona, these words alone represent the pining souls of a generation looking for more than a cosy song about undying love with a mass of production at its heels. We're looking for something raw, something new but with layers of nostalgia and longing for the past – "that rock'n'roll". And I'm not talking about simply guitar music, whether he meant it or not, I'm talking about that fresh, undiscovered, hard-grafted alternative sound that graces the pages of this magazine every month and fills up our Monday evenings in the Kazimier or the enclosed musical caves of our ears under earphones. And I don't mean to get heavy with you – there's One Direction filling the walls of my house right now thanks to younger siblings' Harry Styles longing, and that's just fine. But it's nice to share this secret with Turner, this pact we have with the rock'n'roll gods that no matter how tough it gets, how many empty songs with painful synths take victory in the mainstream realms, we've got this proclamation off this lad Alex, and all that we reckon it stands for, to keep our spirit living a life only he can dream of, in the depths of our little tarnished British souls. And as for dropping the mic? I'll certainly be funding the invoices for his spontaneous acts of object-destruction for as long as he keeps funding my rock'n'roll spirit. So thank YOU, Al.
Hannah McEvoy, via email



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Littlewoods

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. The Horrors
I See You

"We want to make music you can dance to, music that elevates," Rhys Webb told *NME* earlier this year. 'I See You', the first taste of The Horrors' fourth album, matches up to that statement, building from synth loops into a psychedelic dreamscape that blasts the old gloom away. It's topped off by Faris Badwan getting his Mystic Meg on as he sings, "I can see your future... And all the things you might do/All the things you'd like to".

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

2. Sisyphus
Rhythm The Devotion

In Greek mythology Sisyphus was a disgraced king made to roll a massive boulder up and down a hill for eternity as punishment for trickery and lies. In 2014 it's the name of something way more positive: Sufjan Stevens' new project with Chicago rapper Serengeti and NY's Son Lux. Much more electronic than his previous work, 'Rhythm Of Devotion's an imaginative, infectious blast that suggests the three were made to work together.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, *NME.com*

3. Chvrches
Do I Wanna Know?

Chvrches jump on the Arctic Monkeys cover-version bandwagon also populated by Katy B, Jagwar Ma and, er, Miley Cyrus with their own take on the 'AM' single. Recorded for an Australian radio session, lead singer Lauren Mayberry wraps her Glaswegian burr around Alex Turner's lovelorn "I'm sorry to interrupt, it's just I'm constantly on the cusp of trying to kiss you" line, while the original's desert rock muscle gets a slinky synth-pop makeover.

David Renshaw, News Reporter

4. Four Tet and Terror Danjah
Killer

In November, Four Tet's Kieran Hebden tweeted, "The tracks me and Terror Danjah are working on right now are bananas." Set to be released on Hebden's Text Records, 'Killer' (backed with the more melodic 'Nasty') is heavily rooted in the Terror Danjah's grime territory, with deep breakbeats, reverberating vocal snippets, Danjah's trademark goblin cackle and an unyielding bassline that creeps in half way through.

Hazel Sheffield, writer

5. Honeyblood
Choker

The rawness of this Glasgow duo is at once immediate and remarkably accomplished. Comprising one scuzzy singer-guitarist (Stina Marie Claire Tweeddale) and one thud-loving drummer (Shona McVicar), the troublesome pair serve up an almighty racket. "What doesn't kill you just feeds your hunger", spits Stina. Honeyblood don't just sound hungry for success. They sound ravenous.

Eve Barlow, Deputy Editor

6. Fear Of Men
Luna

Taken from forthcoming album 'Loom', the androphobic four-piece are picture perfect on this piece of C86 emotional whimsy, delivered with Jessica Weiss' clean-cut glassy vocal. "I open at your touch", goes the refrain, over a jangle of reverberating guitars and a subtle bed of bass. Under any other guise, she'd sound crude, but even "I tried my best to destroy you" sounds like an act of pure innocence when its pouring from those lips.

Hayley Avron, writer

7. Mac DeMarco
Let My Baby Stay

The latest track to emerge from forthcoming third album 'Salad Days', 'Let My Baby Stay' finds Mac DeMarco at his most stripped-back and confessional. A sweet and simple acoustic guitar ode to his love, couplets such as "Far as I can tell she's happy/ Living with her Maccy" are delivered with such doe-eyed sincerity that they manage to avoid slipping into PDA awkwardness. Oh Mac, you old charmer.

Lisa Wright, writer

8. Radkey
Digging The Grave

Lots of bands claim not to play by the rules, but Faith No More really did do whatever they pleased (just check out their funk-sleaze version of The Commodores' 'Easy'). The brothers Radkey pay homage by covering 1995 single 'Digging The Grave'. It stays fairly faithful while squeezing the throttle a touch harder. They rock hard, Faith No More rock hard, but stick this on and you, most of all you, dear reader, will rock hard too.

Kevin EG Perry, writer

9. Juce
Call You Out

The '90s R&B revival has been bubbling under in the UK's hipster enclaves for some time now, but London's Juce – a trio consisting of Georgia, Chalin and Cherish (no surnames supplied) – are the first band to do it with a charming lack of irony. Applying the Dev Hynes template for expansive, bass-driven pop, the track kicks into a soaring, soulful chorus. It'll have you dusting off your TLC CDs in no time.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

10. Thee Oh Sees
Penetrating Eye

Thee Oh Sees rarely sound polite, but it's rarer still that they're heavy. 'Penetrating Eye' is like being whacked in the face with a particularly exhilarating medicine ball – it has downtuned proto-metal riffs that last for days and luridly psychedelic soloing, leavened by a cheeky "la-la-la" refrain. An album, 'Drop', follows, after which they've pledged to split. Fingers crossed they're the band who cried wolf.

Noel Gardner, writer

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. EMA So Blonde

New album 'Future's Void' promises deep themes of technology's impact on human interaction, but on 'So Blonde,' Erika M Anderson remains the lo-fi grunge kid next door. Like the best stuff on 2011's 'Past Life Martyred Saints,' 'So Blonde' is both a slab of noise and a deftly melodic pop song; Anderson's sneering vocal maintains a hint of saccharine, while an acoustic guitar undercuts the maelstrom above it. If the future's void, the present sounds mighty.

Simon Jay Catling, writer

12. Trash Talk and Flatbush Zombies 97.92

Bay Area hardcore band Trash Talk made clear their love of hip-hop by releasing a superb mixtape back in 2012, touring with Spaceghostpurrp and signing to Odd Future Records. This collaboration with Brooklyn's Flatbush Zombies manages to avoid all the many and varied pitfalls of rap-metal from years gone by. Produced by Trash Talk and featuring lyrics/vocal by the Zombies, it's understated, moody and seriously bass-heavy. Also, no guitar, thankfully.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

13. ALX Beautiful Criminal

If there's one question plaguing the universe right now – apart from why everyone's still banging on about Pharrell's hat – it's where the flamin' heck is Jai Paul? Because frankly, if he doesn't reappear soon then bedroom pretenders like 22-year-old ALX from Scotland will steal his thunder. This debut track – deliciously artful, dark-hearted – has all the glistening hooks of a song like Frank Ocean's 'Swim Good'. And we all saw where that took Frank.

Greg Cochran, Editor, NME.com

14. DZ Deathrays Gina Works At Hearts

Thundering in with a dirty buzz-guitar riff that feels like a grisly mix of Anthrax and Dananananaykroyd, Brisbane duo DZ Deathrays' 'Gina Works At Hearts' is a familiar thrashalong but has its sweeter moments: friendly chimes on the chorus and a few Weezer-esque "ooh-ee"s. "She doesn't want your money/But she'll take it – yeah!" yelps Shane Parsons, making robbery sound romantic – seems like Gina's worked his heart too.

Matthew Horton, writer

15. White Hinterland Baby

'Kairos', Casey Dienel's last album as White Hinterland, is a survivor of The Great Chillwave Glut Of 2010, a crystalline take on The xx's spooked intimacy. But 'Baby' – the title track of her new LP – is all bold gospel vocals somewhere between Julianna Barwick and Beyoncé. "My shyness was an act to make you feel secure", she seethes, before unleashing 2014's finest chorus so far.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor



16. Damon Albarn Lonely Press Play

Damon recently performed a version of 'Lonely Press Play' featuring strings and electric piano at Sundance film festival, suggesting the album take will be more fleshed out than this bare-bones radio session. Hard, though, to imagine it being any less startling. Albarn's voice is on the verge of breaking as he croons lyrics of isolation and loneliness. 'Everyday Robots' can't come soon enough – the man's rarely sounded better.

Andy Welch, writer

17. Telegram Rule Number One

Coming on like a particularly lurid Syd Barrett fronting The Undertones, 'Rule Number One' is a rambunctious psychedelic punk blast clad in a paisley-print lurex shirt that wants nothing more than to sidle up to you on the dancefloor of your nearest mod all-nighter and offer to buy you a pint of snakebite before attempting to get busy by the bins. You'd be a damn fool to turn it down.

Leonie Cooper, writer

18. Schoolboy Q Blind Threats feat. Raekwon

Former South Central gang member Quincy Matthew Hanley may have left his violent former life behind, but it catches up with him on the soul-purging 'Blind Threats'. "We will never make it out alive/Shit, we livin' to die/Oxymoron", he rasps over a slowed, sad jazz beat, before being joined by Raekwon – one of the many rap A-listers (50 Cent, Kendrick Lamar, Tyler The Creator) due to appear on his incoming debut album proper.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.com

19. Ramona Lisa Arcadia

We've all wondered at one point or another what 'Walking In The Air' from *The Snowman* might sound like if it was played on graveyard church bells and *Exorcist* hell-synths by the witch out of *The Conjuring*. It took Caroline Polachek from Chairlift, under her solo Ramona Lisa guise, to actually bother to make it, though – and it turns out, unsurprisingly perhaps, to be fucking terrifying.

Mark Beaumont, writer

20. Le1f Boom

In which New York rapper Khalif Diouf possibly references his previous accusation that Macklemore ripped off his 2012 single 'Wut' to create the monster novelty hit 'Thrift Shop'. "You know how we do, Macklemore say 'ooh'", he goes, over a trademark popping-bubbles beat. Mystery abounds, though, because the way he pronounces "Macklemore" sounds a bit like "make 'em all".

Someone needs to interview this man immediately.

Tom Howard, Reviews Editor

TheWeek

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10

'Rock'n'roll

will never die'

Arctic Monkeys frontman Alex Turner issues a rallying cry for
rock'n'roll at the Brit Awards. Here's his speech in full...

A photograph of the band Arctic Monkeys performing on stage. The lead singer, Alex Turner, is in the foreground, holding a microphone and looking towards the camera. He is wearing a dark shirt and a necklace with a shield pendant. Behind him, another band member is visible, looking slightly to the side. The background is dark with blue stage lighting.

“That rock’n’roll, eh? That rock’n’roll, it just won’t go away. It might hibernate from time to time, sink back into the swamp. I think the cyclical nature of the universe in which it exists demands it adheres to some of its rules. But it’s always waiting there, just around the corner, ready to make its way back through the sludge and smash through the glass ceiling, looking better than ever. Yeah, that rock’n’roll, it seems like it’s faded away sometimes, but it will never die. And there’s nothing you can do about it. Thank you very fucking much for this, I do truly appreciate it. Don’t take that the wrong way. And yeah... invoice me for the microphone if you need to *(drops mic, exits stage)*.”

Arctic Monkeys
onstage at the
Brit Awards,
Wednesday,
February 19

The week rock'n'roll fought back

Kevin EG Perry takes the rallying cry to the streets

Brits fans wonder if Alex Turner is drunk after rambling Arctic Monkeys speech" ran the *Metro* newspaper headline. Peaches Geldof took to Instagram to call the singer an "ungrateful twat". On Twitter people shook their heads ('smh') and called the speech "arrogant". Ha! You can have 140 letters and still not understand a character.

Turner's a character, and that makes him a dying breed right now. I guess that's what happens when rock'n'roll has been absorbed into the turgid waters of traditional establishment showbiz. It's a shock when anyone comes along and reminds you what a rock star really looks like. Arrogance is in the fucking job description.

You see, "rock'n'roll" can never die". Neil Young said that, and Neil Young is a man who knows. It's a timely subject for that young greaser Turner to start preaching about from the podium; just this week George Ergatoudis, Head Of Music at Radio 1, said that he thinks the time is right for guitar music to return to the Radio 1 playlist, like it's his decision whether rock'n'roll lives, or rock'n'roll dies. Rock'n'roll never went away. And I mean SHITTING CHRIST if even he's bored of the anaemic crud Radio 1 are currently playlisting then how the living hell does he think the rest of us feel? Is it any wonder that even the big cheeses at the Brits have admitted that last year's event was boring?

It's as if all the confidence has evaporated from mainstream music, and yet we all know that isn't the real story. You, me, in

fact every single one of us who's out going to gigs and hearing new artists twist our world into shapes we never knew existed know that there are plenty of people out there fighting the good fight and yet not breaking through.

We've seen Fat White Family tearing up dingy clubs. We've heard Eagulls play our eardrums like taut animal skins. We've watched Wolf Alice turn gigs into the best parties you've ever dreamt of. Parquet Courts, Palma Violets, Radkey, The Orwells, Hookworms, Perfect Pussy, King Krule,

Merchandise... it's easy to see that rock'n'roll isn't a slumbering beast that can be beckoned at whim to save anyone's playlists. It's already out there, fucking and fighting and clamouring to be heard.

What Turner was calling for is for rock'n'roll to find some of its old swagger again. It's not about saying that we want more people picking up guitars for the sake of it if they've got nothing to say. It's about an attitude to music, life and yes, even award show speeches that says shaking things up is why we're here. It's about talking shit to power. Yet conversely, rock'n'roll also means knowing that you come in a long line of rebels and truth-seekers. There is a red cord that runs through rock'n'roll and it's in Alex Turner and it's in David Bowie and it's in you and it's in me. You'll find it at the front of the sweaty gig in the toilet venue. You'll find it in the grooves of your vinyl or you can even download it as an MP3. You just might not find it at the Brits or on Radio 1.

So the question, dear reader, is this: is it you he's looking for? If someone gave you five minutes on a podium would you have something to say?

Would you drop the mic? If someone didn't give you the chance would you take it anyway?

We're a nation of rock stars, let's make ourselves heard. Hey hey, my my. Rock'n'roll can never die.

ROCK'N'ROLL IS OUT THERE, FUCKING AND FIGHTING AND CLAMOURING

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Jack Steadman

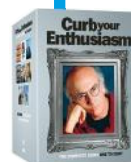


Bombay Bicycle Club



BOOK Travel guide

"Wherever we are touring, you can be sure I'm looking up the best places to eat local food. I get very overweight on tour and have to move around loads onstage every night to shake it off."



BOXSET Curb Your Enthusiasm

"I only ever watch the episodes with Leon Black in them. He is the greatest character ever to grace our screens and I like that you can see Larry David trying desperately to keep it together whenever he is around."

FILM The Aristocats

"I like singing along to 'Ev'rybody Wants To Be A Cat'. It's got a lot of scales and arpeggio, and also a lot of classic tunes to get my voice warmed up pre-show."



GAME Desert Bus

"There's an old Sega game called *Desert Bus* where you have to drive from

Tucson to Las Vegas in real time. It takes eight hours to complete, no scenery. Great for long tourbus drives."

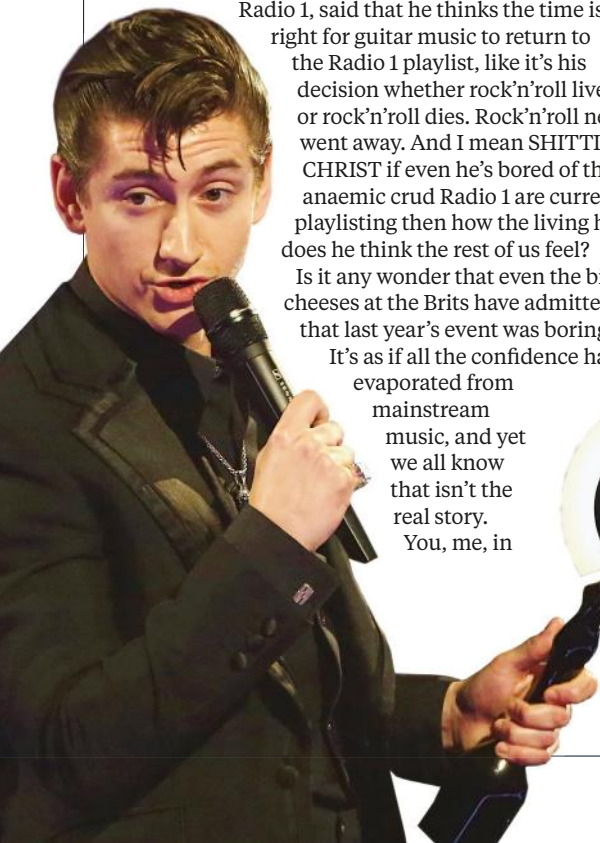
HOME COMFORT Humour

"Wherever we go, it's important to use very dry humour and be sarcastic all the time. That in itself is a kind of home comfort."

► Bombay Bicycle Club's tour begins in Leeds on March 2



Neil Young



The Orwells

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Neon dreams

The Horrors' new album, 'Luminous', in their own words

"I know this is literally the worst time to bring this up," says singer Faris Badwan to the rest of The Horrors, "but it still doesn't feel like that track's called 'Sleepwalk' to me." He grabs my

notebook, where I've hastily noted down the song titles for the band's fourth album, scribbles out the word 'Sleepwalk' and replaces it with 'Better Now'. The band members all take sides, and eventually he scribbles that out too and circles 'Sleepwalk'. "No, let's leave it as that."

If you hadn't gathered by now, The Horrors are perfectionists. After 15 months working on their latest record, it's finally got a release date of May 5. Although the song titles may still be up for debate, after lengthy discussion the record itself will be called 'Luminous'. "It's really tough to find a word or phrase that represents a body of work," says synth wizard Tom Cowan, "But 'Luminous' seemed to fit on a number of levels."

"It's a powerful image: giving off light and releasing energy," adds Faris. "It sums up a lot of the ways we make music. One thing that's always been central to the band is that we've kept the same level of intensity since the beginning."



The Horrors: "We've magnified the elements we enjoy the most"

There's a palpable sense of excitement in the band about presenting this music to the world. "I think we're constantly zooming in on what we can do as a band and how we can do it better," says bassist Rhys Webb. "We've magnified the elements we enjoy the most."

"This is the album I've been most excited about releasing," adds Faris. "I think it would be misleading to say it's got more guitars or more synths, because half the time the guitars sound like synths anyway. Is it fair to say there's more of *everything*?"

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

'Luminous' track by track

1. 'Chasing Shadows'

Faris Badwan: "We pieced it together in the same way that you might do a techno track, and then began playing it live afterwards."

2. 'First Day Of Spring'

Joshua Hayward: "It's a fast-moving train that has no intention of stopping."
Tom Cowan: "It's one of the least electronic tracks on the album. It has an expansive guitar outro."

3. 'So Now You Know'

Tom Cowan: "We hope it gets your hips shaking and your foot tapping. I like the idea of the kind of music that you can't help but move to."

4. 'In And Out Of Sight'

Tom Cowan: "That's the most overtly electronic dancefloor song."

5. 'Jealous Son'

Joshua Hayward: "It's a guitar monster. I studied vocal patterns because I wanted it to sound like a chorus of different people, not just a Foo Fighters-esque quadruple-tracked guitar doing one thing."

6. 'Falling Star'

Faris Badwan: "We tried loads of different vocal ideas and then I went in with Paul Epworth and tried out some of them. He's one of the most gifted producers I've worked with. I'd like to do something with him again."

7. 'I See You'

Rhys Webb: "When we were writing, this track made us realise we were going in the right direction. It started to shape the final picture."

8. 'Change Your Mind'

Rhys Webb: "It's probably one of my

favourite tracks on the album. It's a tender moment."

Tom Cowan: "It's the most spacious piece of music we've ever made. It was very refreshing to do something that wasn't so full-on."

9. 'Mine and Yours'

Rhys Webb: "It's got some killer guitar from Josh."
Joshua Hayward: "I saw it as, if you'd given Barry 7 from Add N To (X) a guitar and made him play it, this is what would have come out."

10. 'Sleepwalk'

Joshua Hayward: "I think that's my favourite. The lyrics have this really fantastic imagery."
Rhys Webb: "It's the perfect way to end the album. Everyone is doing what we do best, really. Everyone is pushing for something."



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Nominees' own choices for this year's gongs

NME awards 2014

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Blondie

Chris Stein & Debbie Harry

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds

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Debbie Harry:

"I did a video with Vampire Weekend and they're great guys, so I'm pleased they're nominated. But Nick's a total genius. He's multi-talented."

BEST TV SHOW

Breaking Bad

Debbie Harry:

"Chris is going to say *Breaking Bad* - he never shuts up about it! In fairness, it's miles above everything else on TV"



HERO OF THE YEAR

Lou Reed

Chris Stein: "It's a shame he had to go, and he did plenty for personal freedom and human rights. I would tie it with [fellow nominees] Pussy Riot, but you're not going to have anybody like Lou again anytime soon."

BEST SOLO ARTIST

David Bowie

Chris Stein: "We both really like Kanye, but David's a sweetheart, so I'd have to go with him. Lily Allen deserves a shout-out for being wonderful and inspiring too."

VILLAIN OF THE YEAR

Putin

Debbie Harry: "Putin's the obvious one. I don't know why Miley Cyrus is in this category - just because she has a longer tongue than Gene Simmons?"

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Two decades of Panda-monium

Fierce Panda, the little label that launched big bands, turns 20

The indie of indie labels, Fierce Panda celebrates its 20th birthday this month. Over 372 releases, they've helped launch the career of bands including Ash, The Bluetones, Coldplay, Keane, Placebo, Death Cab For Cutie and The Maccabees. Not bad for something that started out as a boozy lunchtime chat between three *NME* journalists in 1993.

At the time, Simon Williams, Paul Moody and John Harris only wanted to put out a 1994 EP – 'Shagging In The Streets' – to mark the creation of a scene they'd christened The New Wave Of New Wave, or "Britpop without the good bits," as Harris later said. "We had no intention to ever release anything else, which is why we called ourselves something as idiotic as Fierce Panda," says Williams, who soon realised he wanted to carry on with the label. Meeting so many new bands as an *NME* journalist, he realised he was in a position to help many of them who were struggling to get signed – and having his own label meant the freedom to release compilations with pun-heavy titles such as 'Built To Blast', 'Return To Splendour', 'Dial M For Merthyr' and 'From Greer To Eternity'.

"Return To Splendour" had a picture of Tottenham's 1961 double-winning side on the front and six young, upbeat, exciting British bands," remembers Moody. "It was the polar opposite of grunge, which was still big at the time. Blur had released 'For Tomorrow' and the tectonic plates were shifting. The opening line of my sleeve note was

'London ice cracks on a sceneless time'. It was the point Britpop truly started."

The idea of not chasing mega-money during the record industry's 1990s boom seems quaint and doggedly idealistic now, but despite recognising commercial potential in the artists he signed, Williams has never seemed particularly interested in the business side of things. Embrace were an early signing, the West Yorkshire band releasing a rough version of future hit 'All You Good Good People' in 1997

before signing to Virgin subsidiary Hut. The band's singer Danny McNamara recalls his first meeting with Williams after a disastrous gig at London's ULU. "We walked off after four songs – we'd gone all that way to play to about eight people – but Simon loved it. He came bounding over after the gig, with pink hair, to say he was blown away and ask if he could release our single. He was so enthusiastic, so we said yes.

No contract – just a handshake."

Another artist drawn to the label by Williams' infectious enthusiasm was Clint Boon, who first met Williams while a member of Inspiral Carpets. "We took a break from the band in the mid-'90s because we didn't think anyone was interested, but I was still writing songs and Simon wanted to release one, so we did," says Boon, whose Clint Boon Experience released the 1999 single 'Only One Way I Can Go' on Fierce Panda. "There are lot of nice people in music, but not many as special as Simon."

Around the same time, the then-unknown Coldplay released Fierce Panda single 'Brothers & Sisters' on their way to global stardom. Keane achieved a similar feat by signing to Island after Fierce Panda released 'Everybody's Changing' and 'This Is The Last Time'. Bands going on to great success post-Panda doesn't bother Williams, though he does joke: "I have a very small slice of Chris Martin's soul locked in the vault of the Stowmarket branch of NatWest. Collateral for any occasion, I hope."

Run as a singles club for their first 12 years, it was announced in

THE FIERCEST FIVE

The label's most essential releases

Various

Crazed And Confused 1994



The label's second EP features early tracks by Ash, Supergrass, Credit

To The Nation and Gorky's Zygotic Mynci alongside the lesser remembered Noise Addict and Tribute To Nothing.

Oas*s

Wibbling Rivalry 1995



NME's John Harris interviewed the Gallagher brothers in 1994. The resulting argument about an incident on a ferry and the definition of rock'n'roll was released as a two-track EP and charted at Number 52.

Coldplay

Brothers & Sisters 1999



Coldplay's second release, which features the title track, 'Easy To Please' and 'Only Superstition', was limited to just 2,500 copies. Anyone know what happened to them after this?

Art Brut

Emily Kane 2005



This is Fierce Panda's highest-charting release, and missed out on the Top 40 by a measly two sales.

The Maccabees

Latchmere 2006



The band's first single failed to win a following. They signed to Panda for this second release, to this day the world's best song about a south London leisure centre's wave machine.

From far left:
Ash, The
Maccabees,
Coldplay

2006 that Fierce Panda would only release albums. Long-players by acts including The Raveonettes, The Spinto Band, The Walkmen, The Von Bondies and Goldheart Assembly duly followed. The latter's James Dale says releasing music on the label felt like a rite of passage. "I'd always dreamed of a Fierce Panda single, but Simon released our album too. He wooed us, essentially."

Like so many of the most iconic, unmistakably British labels – Factory, Twisted Nerve, Stiff and Bella Union – Panda embodies an ideology that goes

beyond the actual music, possessing a human spirit fans can buy into. It's a tribal feeling, like supporting a football team; even if they change their players, your loyalty holds firm. Among those still cheering from the terraces are XFM's John Kennedy and BBC Radio 1's Huw Stephens. "The label has lasted 20 years through a combination of stubbornness, determination and perseverance," says

Kennedy, XFM's resident new band champion. "They've had their ups and downs but they've never lost the belief in what they do or given up on the idea that it's worthwhile." His BBC counterpart, meanwhile, says it's Panda's honesty that has seen them survive. "A lot of major labels won't take risks on bands. Simon just says, 'Let's put out a record out now!', which must be what so many bands want to hear. Fierce Panda means no bullshit."

And what about the next 20 years? There's a series of birthday gigs coming up featuring FP artists, while April sees a new album from The Crookes, making them the first band to release three albums with the label. Before that there's 'Endangered: Fierce Panda 2004-2014', a compilation of some of the label's saddest songs during the last 10 years. With a history this rich, there's no need for tears. ■ ANDY WELCH



The Great Escape just got greater



Huw Stephens picks 10 of the best
new additions to the Brighton festival

1 East India Youth

"His album 'Total Strife Forever' is so, so good; deep, luscious electronica with these amazing haunting tunes."

They're from London but they've obviously been listening to a lot of West Coast hip-hop. Very cool."

2 Rae Morris

"A great singer with beautiful songs, and she's on the new Bombay Bicycle Club album."

7 Bat And Ball

"They make laid-back music with beautiful vocals. They've got an amazing tune called 'We Prefer It In The Dark.'"

3 Adult Jazz

"It reminds me of the first time I heard Alt-J in that there's a nice bit of percussion going on, and they're also from Leeds."

EAST INDIA YOUTH ON HIS GREAT ESCAPE DEBUT
Looking forward to the festival?

William Doyle, East India Youth: "Yes. I've been in Brighton while it's been going on and there is a great atmosphere there." **What do you like doing in Brighton?** "I spent most of my time there drinking. The Black Dove in Kemptown, that's an incredibly good pub." **'Total Strife Forever' came out earlier this year – how have you found the reaction?**

"It's been mental, I didn't expect it really. It's pushed me into this year optimistically." **How has it been going down live?** "With my headline shows I can kind of do whatever I want, which is liberating. It's great doing all the instrumental bits."

4 Spring King

"For me, they're the most interesting indie band around. They've got great songs with massive, hooky melodies; the drummer sings. They really burst on stage."

5 FAMY

"They're an interesting guitar band. They recorded their debut album in a church with the engineer that did their Maida Vale session for my Radio 1 show."

6 Hawk House

"They've been described as the new Fugees 'cos it's two guys, one girl.

8 Big Ups

"I'm bigging up Big Ups. It's the most impressive punk album I've heard in a long time – eloquent and angry."

9 Bryce Hackford

"He's a techno producer from New York and his album on Prah Recordings is amazing. It reminds me of the first Daft Punk album."

10 The People The Poet

"They're a young band from Pontypridd in Wales and they have these huge, soaring songs."

► The Great Escape takes place in venues across Brighton from May 8 to 10. For the full list of more than 100 new names, visit NME.COM

► Huw Stephens hosts the NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas

In Bonehead's front room, Didsbury, Manchester, June 1994



Definitively Maybe

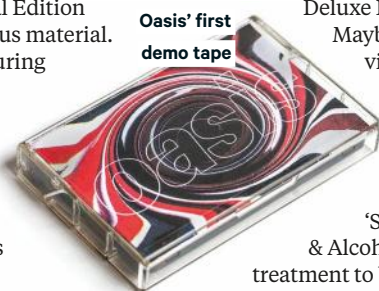
New boxset of Oasis' era-defining debut collects rarities, live performances and a previously unreleased track

It's one of the all-time classic debut albums, it helped define Britpop and it took the No 10 slot in *NME*'s list of the 500 greatest albums ever made. 'Definitely Maybe' celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, and a remastered edition – available in a variety of formats and packages from May 19 – marks the occasion.

As well as standard CD and download editions, the CD or vinyl Special Edition features a treasure trove of bonus material. Fresh treats include a disc featuring stand-alone single 'Whatever' and the era's 14 B-sides, plus a disc featuring 17 unreleased alternate takes, live recordings and demos – including the ultra-rare 'Strange Thing'. The five demos are taken from Oasis' first tape,

recorded in 1993 and pressed in an edition of just eight copies. A replica cassette with all eight songs is available now from oasisinet.com, featuring new sleevenotes by producer Mark Coyle.

Oasis also celebrate Record Store Day on April 19 with a 12-inch heavyweight vinyl replica of debut single 'Supersonic'. Along with the musical bounty, the lavish Deluxe Boxset of the 'Definitely Maybe' reissue contains the vinyl and CD special editions as well as a tote bag, keyring, postcards, badges, a 12-inch print and a 7-inch single featuring live versions of 'Supersonic' and 'Cigarettes & Alcohol'. Expect the same treatment to be applied to 1995's



'(What's The Story) Morning Glory?' and 1997's 'Be Here Now' later this year in what's being called the 'Chasing The Sun' series. Does all this activity mean a reunion is on the cards? "There were no discussions at all about any anniversary reunion shows," former guitarist Bonehead tells *NME*. "These reissues are the best way to celebrate, because all three albums have great extras."

...and how it nearly didn't happen at all

By the time 'Definitely Maybe' was released on August 30, 1994, Oasis were already huge. Pre-album singles 'Supersonic', 'Shakermaker' and 'Live Forever' had established them as stars, and the album sold 86,000 in its first week – making it Britain's fastest-selling debut LP until Arctic Monkeys' 360,000 sales in 2006.

But its recording, in summer 1993, was fraught. The novice band were sent to Monnow Valley Studio in the Welsh countryside with producer Dave Batchelor, whose technical methods confused Oasis. "We'd never been in a proper studio," says Bonehead. "We assumed a producer would say, 'Go for it', we'd play live and he'd press record. But Dave would sit Tony McCarroll down at the drums and, 40 takes later, we're all going, 'Surely he's got it right by now?' There was panic because we were doing our jobs right, but it just wasn't happening."

Noel Gallagher said in 1995: "I'd say I wanted to sound like an aeroplane taking off and Batchelor would reply, 'Oh, you want a Yamaha 9-60 Backwards Flange Loop?' We either went with his saneness or my madness – and I'm in charge." Creation Records boss Alan McGee agreed, and told Gallagher he and Oasis live engineer Mark Coyle should produce instead. Relocating to Sawmills, a studio on a creek in Cornwall, Oasis blossomed. "They were as excited as kids on a school trip," says Coyle. "But they were super-professional too."

"WE WERE DOING OUR JOBS, BUT IT JUST WASN'T HAPPENING"

Bonehead

Away from distractions, the album was recorded in a fortnight. "There wasn't the opportunity to go mad," says Bonehead. "You had to get a boat to the local pub and if you missed the boat back at last orders, you had to walk miles. The most dangerous thing that happened was me and Liam going canoeing on the lake." Tensions between the Gallaghers had yet to surface. "You see people running governments on the power Liam and Noel had when they clicked together," says Coyle. "They were so funny, but they were double



Oasis' first press shoot for Creation, November 1993

serious in their conviction for the music."

Despite the harmonious sessions, the album still lacked ferocity. McGee hired Owen Morris – later producer for The Verve – as mixer. "You could tell the power of the songs, but the tapes sounded surprisingly tame," said Morris. Coyle agrees, admitting: "We had never produced anything before, and we were

kind of bluffing it. Owen brought it to life, chopping and editing."

Finally ready, Oasis were unstoppable. Noel Gallagher was certainly aware how influential the album would be. Around the album's release, he said: "In 20 years' time, people will buy 'Definitely Maybe' and listen to it for what it is. That's what matters." ■ JOHN EARLS

'DEFINITELY MAYBE' SPECIAL EDITION: 10 HIGHLIGHTS

'Rock'n'Roll Star'

(from the 1993 demo tape)

Oasis' first demos were recorded at the Liverpool studios of the jangly Real People. "It was a relaxing environment to record a demo in, with a lounge where we could doss about and watch TV," says Bonehead.

'Strange Thing'

(from the 1993 demo tape)

A growling rocker similar to 'Columbia', the song never even made it to a B-side. "It's a great song," says Bonehead. "But does it live up to 'Live Forever' or 'Supersonic'? It just wasn't strong enough."

'Married With Children'

(from the 1993 demo tape)

"Barely any different to the version on 'Definitely Maybe'," says Mark Coyle. "For the album recording, Liam came round my house, sang it in one take and fucked off. Noel's guitar was done the same way, but he had a cup of tea first."

'Supersonic'

(Live, Glasgow Tramshed, April 1994)

From a show supporting Teenage Fanclub for Radio 1's Sound City festival. "The crowd seemed massive," says Bonehead. "I remember this gig because it felt cavernous."

'Shakermaker'

(Live, Paris in-store, August 1994)

An acoustic version recorded at a Paris record shop for the album's release. "Fans are in for a great surprise when they hear this," says Coyle. "It reflects the excitement and intensity when the album came out."

'Live Forever'

(Live, Paris in-store, August 1994)

"Liam's vocal here is just sensational," says Coyle. "He sounds so young and the notes he hits are absolutely beautiful. I'm not sure he's ever surpassed his vocals from that time."

'Half The World Away'

(Live, Tokyo hotel room, September 1994)

An early version of a B-side of 'Whatever'. "I found this at

the end of a soundcheck recording," says Coyle. "It's based on Burt Bacharach's 'This Guy's In Love With You' and you can hear Noel work out his own take on it."

'Cigarettes & Alcohol'

(Live, Manchester Academy, December 1994)

"I'd seen loads of bands there, but never thought I'd be on its stage," says Bonehead. "We were completely on it that night, and the crowd were so intense."

'Sad Song'

(Live, Manchester Academy, December 1994)

A live version of the song released only on the vinyl version of 'Definitely Maybe'. "Noel had the final say on which songs made the album," says Bonehead. "They were all great songs, so it didn't matter."

'Whatever' (Strings)

Coyle recorded this early version of the non-album single on a portable tape deck. "So much stuff wasn't recorded, and you think, 'I wish I'd caught that,'" he says.

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Tom Jones,
Moz's other
support act



WHY I SAID YES TO THE MORRISSEY SLOT

BY SIR CLIFF RICHARD

Morrissey's choice of US tour supports – Cliff Richard and Tom Jones – surprised fans. But not as much as it surprised Sir Cliff



"I haven't played support for anyone for 56 years. The last time was on my very first tour, when I shared a bill with The Kalin Twins in 1958. So me signing up to support Morrissey in Brooklyn is an unusual move, and I can understand why people are surprised. I was surprised myself when I got the call. I told my management, 'You'd better check this out', because we're poles apart, really. I was worried it might be a joke.

I know what I've let myself in for. Dropping in on someone else's audience is one of the most difficult things to do. But I did Google him and up came a very nice shot from an outdoor concert. The audience looked – dare I say this – really nice. They were good-looking

women, there with their husbands or boyfriends or whatever, and they were swaying and mouthing lyrics. I thought, 'Wait a minute, my lot do that.' So it may not be as difficult as I anticipate it might be.

His audience looked about 30 and above. Mine are more 40 and above. Or 50 and above. But, you know, rock'n'roll is a great leveller, and his music is quite rock'n'roll. I found a track called 'First Of The Gang To Die'. It's got such a great sound; the introduction has this great rock'n'roll thing. I know The Smiths were rock'n'roll, but it was quite impressive. People say, 'Are you a fan?' I say, 'I could be – who knows?'

So why am I doing it? Because it's a great opportunity. I need help in the States. I'm not known everywhere and I'm not loved by everybody on the planet. For various reasons, I've never found great success in America. With the Morrissey offer, I have one more little opportunity to make a mark for myself, and it may lead somewhere else – I've been asked to stay on for a couple of weeks in case they can get me a few gigs on my own.

It might change a few peoples' ideas of me back home, too. The press don't think I'm cool, and the persona that's projected for me has always been the Christian goody two-shoes. I think success is cool, and I'd rather be a Christian goody two-shoes than a non-Christian real bad guy. I know Morrissey is quite different to me. He has a very political side to his lyrics – he likes to protest and talk about issues. People have said to me, 'Do you think you're going to get along?' I say opposites attract. We'll probably meet at the soundcheck, and I don't see we're going to have a lot of time to have a conversation. We'll probably steer clear of talking about the monarchy. I just hope I get time to say, 'Thanks for having me, mate,' and wish him good luck.

And, you know, we do have a few things in common. We've both been known to put our hair in a quiff, even if I haven't done so for a few years. I don't know which of us has had the most impressive quiff, but I know I was the first. Well, the second – after Elvis." ■

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

LOST ALBUMS

#18

The House Of Love

The House Of Love (1988)

Chosen by James Mercer, The Shins



"The House Of Love had some success in the UK, but they never happened in the States. They had a great aesthetic. They're from London, but they had that retro feel you associate more with Manchester. I was living in England when this came out and saw them play, but I moved back to the States and lost track of them until I found their 'Destroy The Heart' single in Albuquerque. The Shins used to cover it. That got me back into them, but you just couldn't find their records in the States. I didn't even know they'd reformed, but I'd love to see them again."



► THE DETAILS

- **RELEASE DATE**
June 1988
- **LABEL** Creation
- **BEST TRACKS** Christine, Hope, Salome
- **WHERE TO FIND IT** A deluxe three-CD reissue was released in 2012
- **LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

David Brewis, one half of Field Music, revives his skewed-pop side project for an album about overcoming youthful fears



David Brewis in Field Music's Sunderland studio

School Of Language

In Field Music's 10-year existence, David and Peter Brewis have always operated in the margins. They reject traditional rock star excess, driving their own van, working from a riverside studio on the Wear and taking care of the pennies.

The outsider mentality has proved one of their greatest strengths, and this unique perspective results in records like 2012's distinguished 'Plumb', which tackled the deceptive ideas of 'change' wheeled out by campaigning politicians. It leaves them free to make records apart, too – in 2008, Peter became The Week That Was and released an album of the same name, while David transformed into School Of Language for the excellent 'Sea From Shore'.

With Field Music on a break again, David has put his School Of Language cap back on

"THE SONGS ARE ABOUT A PERIOD WHERE ANXIETIES WERE MOST INFLUENTIAL ON MY CHARACTER"
DAVID BREWIS

for 'Old Fears', a record that offers clues as to the origins of Field Music's anti-herd stance. Here, he's looking back to 2001 when he was a 19/20-year-old student at home in Sunderland, refusing to engage with his peers.

"Part of that was me being an arrogant dick, but a large part of that came from my own shyness and not being able to cope with it very well," he says. "I didn't intend to write about that time so much, but that was the period when those fears and anxieties were most influential on my character." A sweetly stubborn younger version of David comes through on 'A Smile Cracks', where he spends his birthday sitting

on a beach alone, trying to learn Catalan from a book: "Watching people having fun/My only language/ Was in my head/Just another teenage affection",

he sings over kindling-snap percussion and arid, funky guitar. With

meeting his wife, Laura, for the first time:

"I'm still as self-conscious as the day we met/

Leaning on a pillar, jean-jacket and hair/ Hoping you'd waste some time on me".

The final song, 'You Kept Yourself', reflects on returning from their first holiday together. "I dropped her off at her house, and that seemed like an insane thing to do," he says. "The idea that we would live in different places seemed wrong." They moved in together. It's the last song on the record because it signals an end to teenage David's self-imposed isolation. "It's about how my ability to cope with all those fears and anxieties

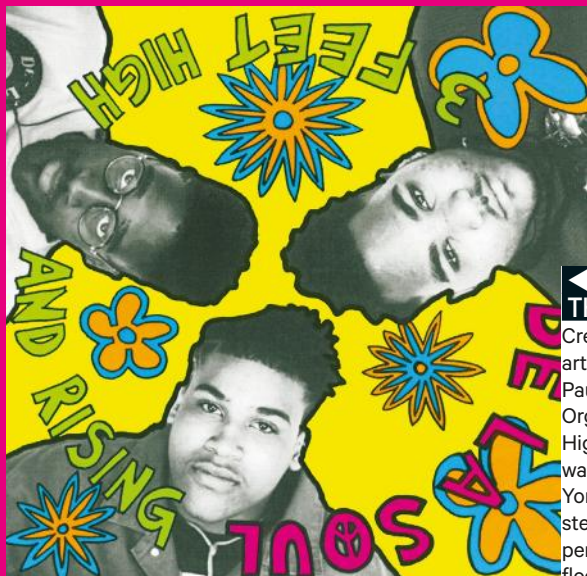
► THE DETAILS

- **TITLE** Old Fears
- **RELEASE DATE** April 7
- **LABEL** Memphis Industries
- **PRODUCER** David Brewis
- **RECORDED** Field Music's studio, Sunderland
- **GUESTS** Pete Fraser, sax
- **TRACKS** Distance Between, A Smile Cracks, Suits Us Better, Between The Suburbs, Old Fears, Dress Up, Moment Of Doubt, Small Words, So Much Time, You Kept Yourself
- **DAVID BREWIS SAYS:** "The moments of anthemic emotional release are few and far between. That feels honest. It wouldn't make sense for it to be grand."

changed fundamentally when I had love and safety to cling onto. That's what the record's about for me." ■ LAURA SNAPES



ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



THIS WEEK...

De La Soul: 3 Feet High And Rising

The positive
vibes hip-hop
classic – given
away free on
Valentine's Day
– is 25 years
old this week

THE BACKGROUND

Packed full of quirky ideas and unusual samples, the debut album by Long Island's De La Soul shook hip-hop's foundations in 1989. It started when they waved 'Plug Tunin' under the nose of Stetsasonic's Prince Paul, who took them to Tommy Boy Records and signed on as producer. Sampling everyone from Steely Dan to Liberace, '3 Feet High And Rising' seemed more a product of the acid summers of love than a hip-hop scene led by the hard edges of Public Enemy and Eric B & Rakim. De La Soul could do the serious stuff too – check the bleak 'Ghetto Thang' – but in 1989 they were a sunburst intervention on a rapidly changing artform.

STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

Credited to British artists Toby Mott and Paul Spencer's The Grey Organisation, the '3 Feet High And Rising' sleeve was created in TGO's New York loft with the help of a stepladder and some paint pens. The band lay "on the floor facing up", according to Mott, "their heads making a triangle". The designs were drawn on acetate over the monochrome photo to conjure a cartoon feel.

FIVE FACTS

1 The title comes from the Johnny Cash track 'Five Feet High And Rising'. That's his voice you can hear on 'The Magic Number'.

2 The game-show skits running through the album are not intended to be a unifying concept – it's just Trugoy and Prince Paul larking about in the studio at the end of the sessions.

3 The stories behind the nicknames: Dave Jolicoeur, aka Trugoy the Dove, liked yogurt (read it backwards); Kelvin Mercer, aka Posdnuos, flipped his DJ name Sop Sound around; Mase stood for 'make a soul effort', or the fact he was called Vincent Mason.

4 'De La Orgee' arose from Barry White's 'I'm Gonna Love You Just A Little More Baby' into the studio. It featured "Barry moaning all the way through," Posdnuos told *Melody Maker*.

5 De La Soul were sued by bubblegum pop act The Turtles for using elements of 1969 hit 'You Showed Me' on 'Transmitting Live From Mars'.

"IT'S THREE PEOPLE WHO THINK ALIKE" Pasemaster Mase



LYRIC ANALYSIS

"Take that Kangol off" – 'Take It Off'

What seems like an elongated skit is really an affirmation of De La Soul's otherness. Pleas to remove Kangol, Adidas etc go straight to the heart of LL Cool J and Run-DMC's trad hip-hop fanbases.

"You say Plug One and Two are hippies/ No we're not, that's pure Plug bull" – 'Me Myself And I'

Espousing the Daisy Age ("It stand for Da Inner Sound Y'All") and swanning about in peace signs and bright hues, the Plugs (Pos and Trugoy) certainly looked like hippies, but the assumption irritated them. "It's only one aspect of the De La deal", Pos insisted to *NME*.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"After this, things won't ever be the same. '3 Feet High And Rising' doesn't so much fracture hip-hop's historical progression as pummel it to death with a sustained salvo of sheer, unadulterated, inspired insanity." **Sean O'Hagan, NME, March 18, 1989**

WHAT WE SAY NOW

For five minutes, De La Soul and fellow 'Native Tongues' (A Tribe Called Quest, The

Jungle Brothers, Black Sheep, Digital Underground) seemed to herald a colourful, inclusive way forward for hip-hop, but NWA's equally brilliant 'Straight Outta Compton' emerged at the same time, capturing unrest on the streets and shifting the tone again.

FAMOUS FAN

"I love De La Soul. They're endearingly derivative but the way they put things together is unique." My Bloody Valentine's **Kevin Shields, 1991**

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Basically, it's three people who know each other really well, who think alike. The album is a result of that. It's like having a Lego set and putting the stuff together out of all the little bits and pieces." **Pasemaster Mase, NME, 1989**

THE AFTERMATH

De La Soul tired of the hippy goofball tag the press had slapped on them and flipped that flowerpot over for 1991's sour 'De La Soul Is Dead'. The jazzy 'Buhloone Mindstate' (1993) and tough-nut 'Art Official Intelligence: Mosaic Thump' (2000) are highlights of their career, but it's their appearances on two Gorillaz albums that brought them to a brand-new audience.

THE DETAILS

►RECORDED 1988 – 1989 ►RELEASE DATE March 20, 1989
►LENGTH 65:59 ►PRODUCERS Prince Paul ►STUDIO Calliope Studios, Brooklyn, New York ►HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 13
►WORLDWIDE SALES 2.6m ►SINGLES Me Myself And I, Say No Go, Buddy, The Magic Number, Eye Know ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Intro ►2. The Magic Number ►3. Change In Speak ►4. Cool Breeze On The Rocks ►5. Can U Keep A Secret ►6. Jenifa Taught Me (Derwin's Revenge) ►7. Ghetto Thang ►8. Transmitting Live From Mars ►9. Eye Know ►10. Take It Off ►11. A Little Bit Of Soap ►12. Tread Water ►13. Potholes In My Lawn ►14. Say No Go ►15. Do As De La Does ►16. Plug Tunin' (Last Chance To Comprehend) ►17. De La Orgee ►18. Buddy ►19. Description ►20. Me Myself And I ►21. This Is A Recording 4 Living In A Fulltime Era (LIFE) ►22. I Can Do Anything (Delacratric) ►23. DAISY Age ►24. Plug Tunin' (Original 12" Version)

NEWS DESK



THE NUMBERS

4.56M

Viewers tuning in to ITV's
Brit Awards coverage –
2.5m down on 2013

8 hours

Length of a jam session Billy Corgan is planning at his Chicago tea shop, inspired by the Herman Hesse novella *Siddhartha*

£800,000

Compensation paid by US band Fishbone to a fan injured in a stage-diving incident at one of their shows

£5,000-£50,000

Grants given to acts such as Dreng and Catfish And The Bottlemen by the government's Music Export Growth Scheme

BIG MOUTH

"We were just walking around Sochi when they grabbed us. They told us we are suspected of theft. Of course, there has been no theft"

PUSSY RIOT member Nadezhda Tolokonnikova on her arrest near the site of the Winter Olympics in Russia



THE BIG QUESTION

WHAT'S THE GREATEST SONG BY GODLIKE GENUISES BLONDIE?



Albert Hammond Jr
The Strokes

"'Union City Blue' is a song I got stuck listening to in my early New York years. Sometimes nostalgia of one's own memories creates a bigger meaning to a song."



David Renshaw
NME News Reporter

"'Atomic' is symptomatic of Blondie's ability to make a song sound so urgent yet stylishly detached. For a band who are the epitome of cool, this is their coolest song. An impressive feat."

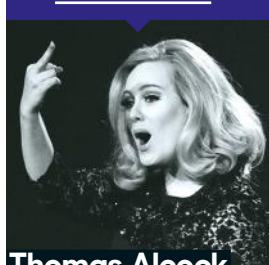


Hannah Brander
NME reader

"'French Kissin' (In The USA)' reminds me of being in the car with my dad when I was younger – he used to buy me sweets for a treat and not tell my mum."



WHO THE FUCK IS...



Thomas Alcock

This is the teenager who angered his neighbours in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire by playing Adele songs at what has been described as a "prominent, intrusive and very high level".
Does he own anything besides Adele albums?
If he did, he doesn't any more. Magistrates took over 200 CDs from the 18-year-old and also fined him £270.
Let's hope he pays up quickly.
Quite. You don't want the council "chasing payments".



Chris Wood, Bastille

The drummer, a big Plymouth Argyle fan, commented on the Argyle Vs Dagenham & Redbridge football match for BBC Radio Devon. He described it as "a dream come true".

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK



Vanessa-Mae

Former violin prodigy Vanessa-Mae swapped strings for skis when she competed in the Alpine giant slalom skiing event at the Winter Olympics. She finished last.

AND FINALLY

Fake plastic cheese

A chef in Detroit has devised a 10-course meal based on Radiohead's 'Kid A'. Kyle Hanley said: "One song flows into the next, and we kind of want to do the same thing with the courses."

Abba clobber

The reason behind Abba's outlandish outfits has been revealed: in their day, Swedish artists got tax breaks if they wore outrageous clothes. If only Gary Barlow had known it was this simple.

Little Monsters

Lady Gaga was reportedly bitten by a slow loris on the set of her new music video, 'GUY (Girl Under You)'. It begs the question, how slow are Gaga's reactions if a slow loris caught her out?

► Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS FEBRUARY 22, 2014

NEW
01

Peroxide Nina Nesbitt ISLAND

It was via a meeting with Ed Sheeran and a tour support with Example that Edinburgh singer-songwriter Nina Nesbitt's career took off. Her debut album was just 12 sales short of a place in the Official UK Top 10, but it's secured the top spot on this week's Record Store chart.

- ▼ 2 Sun Structures **Temples** HEAVENLY
- NEW 3 Burn Your Fire For No Witness **Angel Olsen** JAGJAGUWAR
- ▲ 4 AM **Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO
- NEW 5 Weird Kids **We Are The In Crowd** HOPELESS
- ▼ 6 So Long, See You Tomorrow **Bombay Bicycle Club** ISLAND
- ▲ 7 Settle **Disclosure** PMR
- NEW 8 Bad Blood **Bastille** VIRGIN
- ▼ 9 If You Wait **London Grammar** METAL & DUST
- ▲ 10 Warpaint **Warpaint** ROUGH TRADE
- ▼ 11 Rave Tapes **Mogwai** ROCK ACTION
- ▼ 12 The River & The Thread **Rosanne Cash** DECCA
- ▼ 13 Benji **Sun Kil Moon** CALDO VERDE
- ▼ 14 After The Disco **Broken Bells** COLUMBIA
- ▲ 15 Drowners **Drowners** FRENCH KISS
- ▼ 16 Little Red **Katy B** RINSE
- NEW 17 Old **Danny Brown** FOOL'S GOLD
- NEW 18 The Whippoorwill **Blackberry Smoke** EARACHE
- 19 Halcyon **Ellie Goulding** POLYDOR
- NEW 20 Pure Heroine **Lorde** VIRGIN
- ▼ 21 High Hopes **Bruce Springsteen** COLUMBIA
- ▼ 22 Cheatahs **Cheatahs** WICHITA
- ▼ 23 Emmaar **Tinariwen** Wedge
- ▲ 24 Pale Green Ghosts **John Grant** BELLA UNION
- ▼ 25 Days Are Gone **Haim** POLYDOR
- ▼ 26 Croz **David Crosby** BLUE CASTLE
- ▼ 27 July **Marissa Nadler** BELLA UNION
- NEW 28 Shangri La **Jake Bugg** EMI
- NEW 29 Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not **Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO
- ▼ 30 Dizzy Heights **Neil Finn** LESTER
- NEW 31 Our Version Of Events **Emeli Sandé** VIRGIN
- NEW 32 The Full English **Full English** TOPIC
- NEW 33 Diamonds On The Water **Oysterband** NAVIGATOR
- NEW 34 Greatest Hits – The Immediate Years **Small Faces** SANCTUARY
- ▼ 35 Too Much Information **Maximo Park** DAYLIGHTING
- ▼ 36 Jake Bugg **Jake Bugg** MERCURY
- NEW 37 Native **OneRepublic** INTERSCOPE
- NEW 38 Moon **Snowbird** BELLA UNION
- NEW 39 The Next Day **David Bowie** RCA
- NEW 40 Home **Rudimental** ASYLUM

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 FLASHBACK LONDON

FOUNDED 1997

WHY IT'S GREAT They regularly host a show on east London community radio station NTS and put on monthly nights at London's Strongroom.

TOP SELLER THIS WEEK

Marissa Nadler – 'July'

THEY SAY "Flashback has friendly, knowledgeable staff. We also have live instores, our most recent being Thurston Moore."

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



The Only
Ones

Sandie
Shaw

Steve Lamacq

6 Music DJ



THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING 'Puppet On A String' - Sandie Shaw

"I've got a vague memory of this being on the radio when I was very little. My folks always used to listen to Radio 4 in the morning and then Radio 2 in the evening."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH 'Tiger Feet' - Mud

"I'd started listening to the Top 20 on Sunday evenings, and this is the first song that I really liked. It's incredibly instant and has this terrific, cheap-sounding glam rock guitar."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT 'A New World Record' - Electric Light Orchestra

"I was quite late to buying albums because I used to splurge all my money on singles, so the first one I can remember buying was 'A New World Record' in my first year at big school. It's

like a weird sci-fi odyssey, but it was perfect to do your homework to."

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE A DJ 'Electricity' - Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark

"I remember John Peel playing it when I was about 15, and nine months later OMD were all the rage. And that's when I thought, 'Well, I'd like to do that. Find bands and play them on the

a girl in our class. I'd be quite happy to never hear that again."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE 'Gangster Trippin' - Fatboy Slim

"I did a bit of DJing at student unions for a while and would go indie clubbing around London with a mate of mine. And for some reason we'd stand at the bar 'til 'Gangster Trippin' by Fatboy Slim came on. As someone who was never much of a dancer, this is a good record, because you can just flop about a bit and get away with it."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE 'Another Girl, Another Planet' - The Only Ones

"I used to co-run a punk-rock karaoke night in north London, where you could sing with a live band. If things were a bit slow at the start of the night I'd get up and do 'Another Girl, Another Planet' or 'New Rose' to get things going."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD 'Absolved' - The Heartbreaks

"At the moment, the

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF WRITING FOR NME 'Creep' - Radiohead

"I started at NME in 1987 and worked for the magazine for a few years. I remember coming in one morning and playing the editor a cassette of 'Creep' by Radiohead and saying how amazing the guitar was. We listened to it about three times and then every time another member of staff turned up for work we made them sit down and listen to it as well. And 'Sliver' by Nirvana, which reminds me of interviewing them in a B&B in Shepherds Bush just before it came out."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF THE EVENING SESSION 'The First Big Weekend' - Arab Strap

"The Evening Session was the show I co-presented on Radio 1 with Jo Whiley. The first time we played 'Girls & Boys' by Blur was quite a pivotal moment for us, but 'The First Big Weekend' by Arab Strap is right up there too. I played it every night for two and a half weeks."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL 'The Impossible Dream' - Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine

"I've got two: 'Balthazar, Impresario' by Frank Turner and Carter's version of 'The Impossible Dream'. I've told Jim Bob from Carter that if I go first he has to turn up and play it live."

► Steve Lamacq presents at the BBC Radio 6 Music Festival, February 28 and March 1 at Victoria Warehouse, Manchester. Listen live or at bbc.co.uk/6music

"I PLAYED ARAB STRAP NIGHTLY FOR WEEKS"

radio.' That sounded like a brilliant gig."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO 'I Love America' - Patrick Juvet

"Oh God, this is a hideous disco record which I bought on a school trip to impress

song I can't get out of my head is this one from the forthcoming album by The Heartbreaks. It's like an upside-down Motown record, like a really dynamic girl group record, but with big guitars and a chorus that makes you want to punch the air."



Thom
Yorke

GETTY

Radar

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NME
NEW
BAND
OF THE WEEK

Perfect Pussy

Syracuse band fighting back hard against complacency and abuse

The title of Perfect Pussy's forthcoming debut, 'Say Yes To Love', offers a simple instruction, as if cajoling a wounded heart into opening up. On the record itself, however, the message of those four words get undermined on 'Interference Fits': "When did we all decide to give up?/Since when do we say yes to love?"

"I don't want to come out swinging and be, like, 'monogamy is terrible,'" says singer Meredith Graves, who leads the Syracuse, New York band, also comprised of guitarist Ray McAndrew, drummer Garrett Koloski, bassist Greg Ambler and synths/noise-maker Shaun Sutkus. "But it is."

Graves, who was formerly in the band Shoppers, works as a seamstress, fitting dresses for proms and weddings. Part of her romantic cynicism stems from working in this hotbed of societal pressure and artifice – but the rest is rooted in her own damning past experiences.

'Say Yes...' isn't a traditional break-up record. It's about "breaking up with myself," says Graves, "wondering who I am in the face of all these relationships I've had" – including an abusive one with a "psycho motherfucker". Once out of it, she retreated from music for over a year before realising,

"I have to run towards the things that terrify me. I retrained myself not to take shit."

Graves' willingness to scream about those experiences are part of Perfect Pussy's radical appeal. "I feel so fucking lucky that what led me to be in a place where people cared about the art that I was making with my friends was me being brave enough to talk about abuse," she says.

"That's crazy." It makes Perfect Pussy anathema to what the band disparagingly term "Nirvana goth": bands who are just having fun, *man*.

"It's the most piss-off obnoxious waste of space," says Graves. "That to me is a singularly offensive act, to have space and do nothing with it. That complacency is the reason I am never, ever, ever going to shut up." That's the reason Graves is pouring her own blood into the limited vinyl pressing of 'Say Yes...': it's in there already, so why the fuck not? ■ LAURA SNAPES

ON
**NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC**
NOW

► An extensive
Q&A with the band

► THE DETAILS

► **BASED** Syracuse, New York

► **FOR FANS OF** Hüsker Dü, Japandroids, Priests

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/prrfecpussy

► **BUY IT NOW** 'Say Yes To Love' is out March 17 via Captured Tracks

► **SEE THEM LIVE** They're hoping to tour the UK with Joanna Gruesome in May

► **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** The band started when Meredith Graves was asked to put together a fake band for the John Cusack film *Adult World*

MORE NEW MUSIC

Blood Cultures

Blood Cultures' 'Mercury Child' is the sound of MGMT if they hadn't looked out onto the bland festival-indie crop they inspired and decided to drop enough acid to scramble their pop instincts forever. The work of a mysterious producer working out of New Jersey, little is known about Blood Cultures, but the two tracks on SoundCloud ('Indian Summer' is also great) hint at an exciting, psychedelic synth-pop future.

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/blood-cultures

I, A Man

These Melbourne alt-rockers channel some of the dreamier aromas of Radiohead in the lush singles 'Less Travelled' and 'In Time', which presage their debut LP – set for April. Mixing Thom Yorke-flavoured pop vocals with the shuffling beats of the Oxford five-piece's later works, the music ultimately boils down to soft, pink and pensive swirls full of warm, rainy guitars.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/iamanmusic
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/i-a-man/

Ang Low

Brooklyn's R&B newcomer Ang Low has been releasing slow-burning jams since last summer, and new track 'Win Back Your Love' only adds to what's already an impressive back catalogue. Its mournful calypso gait combines with aqueous Metronomy-esque synths, before a cathartic finale. "The battle is on, to win back your love", he repeats, and there's no doubting he means it: this is defiant, unconventional pop.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/anglowmusic
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/ang-low

Habits

The LA sample obsessive is a master when it comes to wacky sounds fused with



Hooks

lulling vocals. His latest track, 'Splendor Of The Panic', draws comparisons to the driving force of 'Atlas' by Battles and is an intriguing preview of his new record, 'Unselves In Arrival', out now.

► **SOCIAL** [@habits_](https://twitter.com/@habits_)
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/habitshabits

Made Violent

It's still early days for the Buffalo, NY trio, who don't seem afraid of being labelled copyists. Their best track, 'Wasted Days', recalls the intensity of The Orwells and Twin Peaks and the precision-point riffage of Parquet Courts. It's every bit as catchy as those three bands' finest moments, too; which is presumably why US college radio has picked up on them so quickly.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/madeviolent
► **HEAR THEM** madeviolent.com

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Clipping

It's a good time to be a rap trio from LA: Kendrick Lamar's 2012 debut reflected the spotlight back on the West Coast, while local crews like Odd Future have created a frenzy of controversy in recent years.



Clipping

Clipping also seek to make envelope-pushing hip-hop in the style of Death Grips or Ratking. Their first mixtape, 'Midcity', is pretty nefarious, with the funk of tracks such as 'bout.that' peppered with white-noise glitches that make for an uncomfortable listen as rapper Daveed Diggs paints a dire picture of the City Of Angels.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/clppng
► **HEAR THEM** clppng.bandcamp.com/album/midcity

Elara Caluna

This Scottish duo recorded their first two tracks in a room in a dilapidated Glasgow mansion that was the site of the infamous and brutal murder of Marion Gilchrist, a spinster who met an untimely demise during a robbery in 1908. Despite this, their sound is one much

sweeter than the history that precedes it – with touches of Nick Cave's more theatrical recordings (only without all the devilishness), and some moody, Graham Coxon-inspired guitar play.

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

Hooks

London-based Hooks' first single 'Get It Out' is a rowdy trip down memory lane – calling to mind Oasis' early bombast with the romance of Elbow on much of their output. But it's early track 'Killing Time' that really shines through, a refreshingly new take on The Libertines' template.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/hooksinfo
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/hooksmusic

BAND CRUSH

Hayden Thorpe

Wild Beasts

Kwabs

"Kwabs is amazing, his voice is incredible. He has a very deep, soulful, beautiful voice, and he's had some production done by Dave Okumu from The Invisible. The results are really good."



► For daily new music recommendations and exclusive tracks and videos go to NME.COM/NEWMUSIC

Yumi Zouma

New Zealand's dream-pop disco trio Yumi Zouma currently find themselves split between New York, Paris and Auckland. That hasn't stopped them crafting a shimmering and heartfelt debut EP though, out now via Cascine (Chad Valley, Jensen Sportag). Packed full of breezy melodies and soft synths, it's the sound of the nervous and beautiful edging closer to the dancefloor.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/yumizouma
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/yumizouma

Sylvan Esso

Durham, New York-based Sylvan Esso craft gorgeous woodland electronica that's deeply hypnotic and straight-up luscious. It's not surprising, seeing as the duo is made up of Amelia Meath of Appalachian-style harmony group Mountain Man and Nick Sanborn of psych-folksters Megafaun. They're ones to watch at SXSW and the stunning glitch-soul single 'Coffee' is out March 25, ahead of their debut album, which is on the slate for May.

► **SOCIAL** @sylvanesso
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/sylvanesso

Oscar Key Sung



Tove Lo

As far as introductions go, Tove Lo singing "I eat my dinner in my bathtub/Then I go to sex clubs/Watching freaky people gettin' it on" on 'Habits' is a pretty bold way of saying hello. Instantly capturing attention, the song sees the Swedish singer marking the end of a relationship by getting as high as possible. The inevitable comedown arrives though, with recent single 'Out Of Mind' a more sombre ballad from Universal's latest big signing.

► **SOCIAL** @iamtovel
► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/tovelo

Full Ugly

Talk about a band whose name doesn't suit its music. The overly self-conscious fellas in Melbourne-dwelling quartet Full Ugly need to take a proper listen to their upcoming debut album, 'Spent The Afternoon'. It's a gorgeous collection full of lyrical frankness and a jangly melodicism.

Sylvan Esso



► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/pages/full-ugly/104284406297595
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/full-ugly

DA-10

DA-10 are the south coast's answer to the abstract instrumental hip-hop sound of SoCal and Flying Lotus' Brainfeeder stable. The Brighton duo of Danalogue (keys) and 10-David (MPC sampler) mix fat G-funk basslines with retro-

futurist Detroit techno synths, drawing on their backgrounds in avant-rock (check out Dan's Soccer96 project for starters). DJ Shadow featured 'Redshift' from their EP 'The Shape Of Space' in his mix for Diplo on 1Xtra last year, and an album is due "sometime in 2014".

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/da10.music
► **HEAR THEM** da-10.wotnot.tv

Relics

Londoners Relics return with new track 'Nothing Left To Lose'. It's a grungier slab of 2009-era Horrors replete with catchy vocal melodies soaring over fuzzed-out walls of guitar. Nineties shoegaze influences add muscle, and with song-writing like this the drunk circle pits surely await.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/relicsrelicsrelics

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

GENTLEMEN REEL IN THE NIGHT

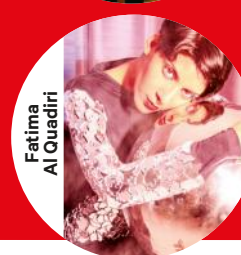
London psych group Gentlemen are to merge their first two EPs, 'Night Reels I' and 'Night Reels II', for one special vinyl release. Released on March 17 via Week Of Wonders, they'll recreate the record's lysergic imagery at a special launch party at London's Sebright Arms on March 18.

HYPERDUB SIGN FATIMA AL QADIRI

After five years in electronic music's underground scene, experimental producer Fatima Al Qadiri has signed with Scottish DJ Kode9's Hyperdub imprint. She'll follow releases on cult labels Tri Angle (under the alias Ayshay) and UNO with her long-awaited debut album 'Asiatisch', out May 5.



Pure X



Fatima Al Qadiri

OLIVER WILDE PREPS LP 2

Bristol's one-man psych star is set to release his second album 'Red Tide Opal In The Loose End Womb' on May 5, 10 months after his debut. "The two records were written alongside each other, so it would have felt strange to have left a gap between them," says Wilde of the quick follow-up.

PURE X MAKE ANGELIC RETURN

Austin, Texas' Pure X return in May with their third album, 'Angel'. Recorded at Wied Hall, a 100-year-old dancehall in their home state, it's the band's first as a quartet following the addition of new member Matty Tommy Davidson. The record will hit the shelves on May 19 via Fat Possum.

► For daily new music recommendations and exclusive tracks and videos go to NME.COM/NEWMUSIC

Yumi Zouma

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/relics
► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Shacklewell Arms (March 16)

Rae Morris

Blackpool pianist Rae Morris spent her late teens on the live circuit, honing her singer-songwriting craft while maintaining a charismatic modesty, before Bombay Bicycle Club invited her to sing vocals on latest single 'Luna'. 'Skin' is a first taste from her forthcoming debut and reflects her unassuming style.
► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/raemorrisblackpool
► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/raemorris/
► **SEE HER LIVE** Cambridge Portland Arms (26), London Lexington (February 27)

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Hardly Art



► **FOUNDED**
2007 by
Sub Pop
Records

► **BASED** Seattle
► **KEY RELEASES** La Sera – 'La Sera' (2011), Hunx & His Punx – 'Too Young To Be In Love' (2011), Jacuzzi Boys – 'Glazin' (2011), Gem Club – 'In Roses' (2014)
► **RADAR SAYS** An offshoot of Sub Pop, Hardly Art was started in 2007 and put under the care of its infamous parent label's employees Nick Heliotis and Sarah Moody. The pair now work on the imprint full-time and have snapped up the likes of Seapony, La Sera and Jacuzzi Boys for their burgeoning roster.

Miamigo

'Opinions', the Brighton-based duo's only track online so far, is impressive, with moody vocals pouring emotion over swelling synths. Recorded in their house, it's a confident offering that recalls Chvrches most '80s-sounding moments.
► **SOCIAL** @miamigomusic
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/miamigo

Tense Men

Sauna Youth are a bit of a promiscuous bunch. As well as the male bonding with Male Bonding that produced Primitive Parts, members have also partnered with those of label mates Cold Pumas and Omi Palone to form this scuzzy act. A mini-LP, 'Where Dull Care Is Forgotten', is due in March, with lead track 'RNFRON' foreshadowing a pile-up of Joy Division, Bauhaus and Bloc Party influences.
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/tensemene

Oscar Key Sung

Melbourne might not be the first place you think of when you hear slinky slow jams, but going by the quality of his new EP 'Holograms', Oscar Key Sung might well change that. A sharp mix of sparse instrumentation, side-chain compression and soulful croon mark him out as one to watch.
► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/oscarkeysung
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/key-sung

Anthems

Based in Paris, Anthems bring sun-kissed Balearic pop to our rain-lashed shores. 'Up In Mine' appears on a double A-side with a song by Champions League, who produces for Air France, via new label 25 Years & Running (Museum Of Bellas Artes). Expect chopped-up panpipes, a big bassline and ghostly female vocals.
► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/anthemsparis
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/25-years-running

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

FELIX WHITE
The Maccabees



PRECIOUS FINDS



For anyone who still listens to The Lemonheads' 'It's A Shame About Ray' and Longpigs' 'The Sun Is Often Out' with as much regularity as me, **Eugene Quell** will be a precious find. 'Weird Purr' is a good start, part of a four-track EP he released at the start of the year.

In Maccabees world, the new album is taking shape. Last month we had **Elliot** come to the studio and sing on one of the songs. She has a beautiful voice, and although her band, Deaf Club, have recently split, hers is a name worth knowing. Whatever she does next will be really good.

There seems to be plenty of nods to grunge going on at the moment, and some of the best are coming from **Tigercub**. They're from Brighton and they have this song called 'Little Rope' which I think is really great. **Baby Pink** (above) have also written a great Pixies-esque song called 'Petrichor', and **True Widow** are another name worth keeping an eye on – the guitar sounds on 'SHS' remind me of when I fell in love with Black Rebel's debut years ago, despite being quite a lot more Lynchian than that record.

Recent support for Parquet Courts, **Traams** have made some interesting music. 'Flowers' and new double A-side 'Fibbist'/'Swimming Pool' is especially good, and their tour with The Wytches and Drengé should be a good one.

Elsewhere, **Dolomite Minor** also sound very promising – at their age I couldn't even get my fingers to move from one chord to another without painfully forcing them to! However, they sound like they've got something going that really works.

On a similar tip but a bit bigger are **The Amazing Snakeheads** from Glasgow. People will draw some comparisons with them and The Birthday Party, and although that's a huge compliment, it's quite a crude signposting. From what I've heard of them, they're playing some of the most exciting music in ages. Rare, impassioned, both extreme and contained, it is really, really worth hearing. I can't wait to see them live.

Lastly, it's been nice to see **Rainer** start to get praise. We've known Nic Nell for a long time, he was part of Young Colossus and has been making music under the name Casually Here for a while. Rainer is a great example of his production ability, and by all accounts Rebekah Raa is a seriously great frontwoman.



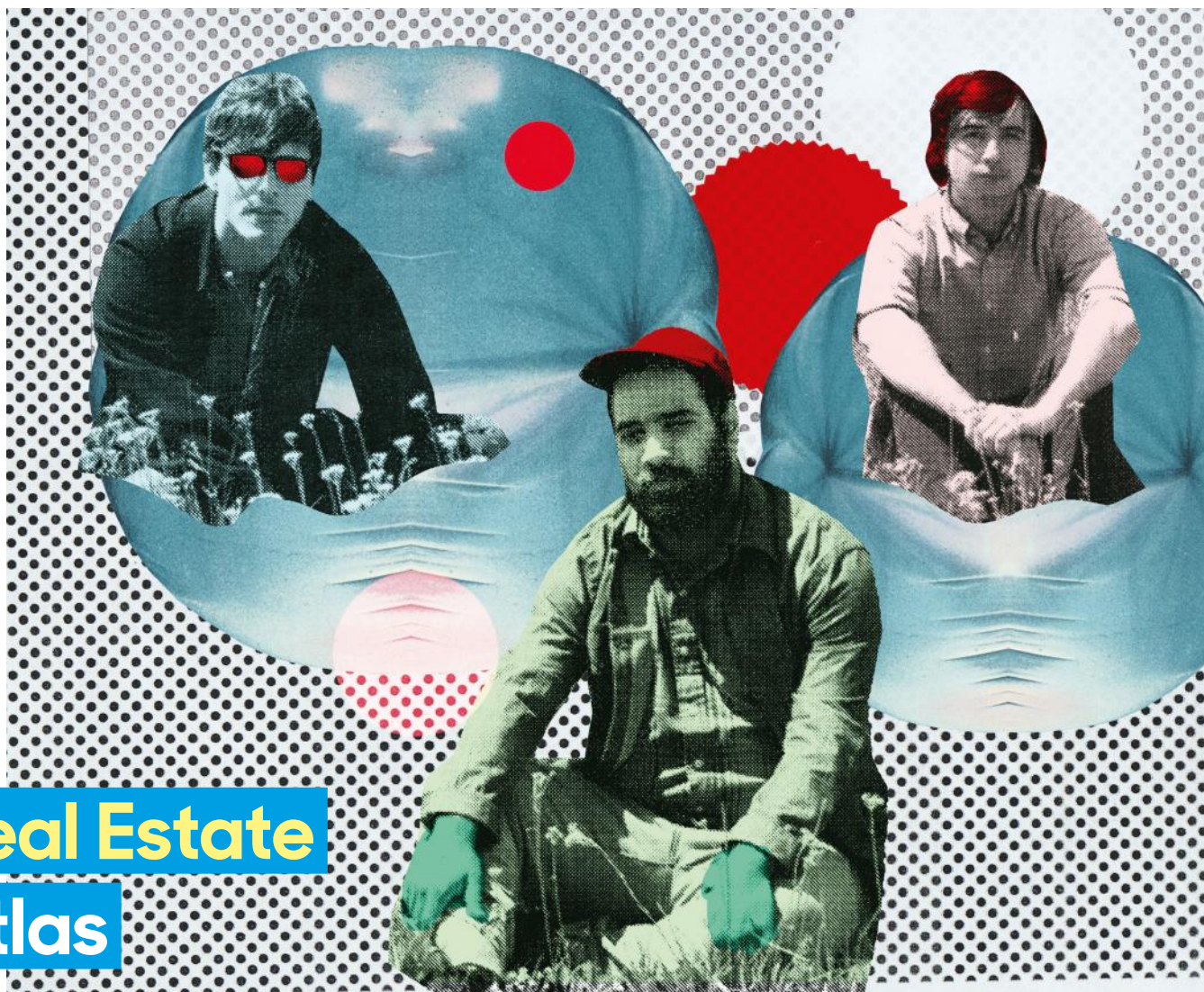
Rainer

"THERE SEEM TO BE PLENTY OF NODS TO GRUNGE GOING ON"

Next week: Chvrches' Lauren Mayberry

Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY TOM HOWARD



Real Estate Atlas

**New Jersey's premier
cinematic time-travellers forge
an opulent and wistful future
with one eye on the past**

Real Estate
Atlas



have given the band – now augmented by Girls keyboard player Matt Kallman – the confidence to stretch out, to relax, to find a third way. 'Atlas' doesn't stray too far from the old template, but everything's better – melodies, production, focus – as Real Estate pinpoint what got them here and identify where they want to go next.

Yet for all its moves forward, Real Estate's third album has a postmodern hue – it's full of sepia memories of past dreams of the future. The sleeve sets the scene: a cut-up

It could've gone either way for this New Jersey gang. Until recently they'd sat on the median line of shambling C86 indie and '90s shoegaze, combining delicate surf-tinged ditties with a fuzzy shimmer. But 2011's 'Days' made a minor splash on the Billboard chart and it might just

image of a vast mural by Polish artist Stefan Knapp that was bolted to the side of a derelict department store in singer Martin Courtney's neighbourhood when he was a kid. He'd gaze at it as he passed in the back of his mum's car, only remembering it years later as he and the band pieced together this nostalgic road trip. "I cannot come back to this neighbourhood/Without feeling my own age", he sings on the gliding 'Past Lives' over Kallman's soothing electric piano. It's filmic – he's the protagonist of a melancholic indie flick like *Garden State* or *Beautiful Girls*, harking back to the old haunts but itching to get away.

'Had To Hear' covers similar ground, its winding guitar reaching across the old landscape, painting vistas like the early work of idiosyncratic '60s producer Joe Meek. 'Atlas' dreams of getting away from all this, forging towards a tomorrow of driving cross-country and reliving everything that hasn't happened yet.

Courtney is smart enough to know that you can't ever really go back though – by the end he's looking to the horizon. On 'Primitive', with its Laurel Canyon

Martin Courtney: the key influences on 'Atlas'

Little Wings

"We've all been big fans of Little Wings [California artist Kyle Field] since school, and when he played New York Matt [Mondanile] and I were his backing band. After I listened to 'Gold Teeth' [from Little Wings' 2011 album 'Black Grass'], I wrote the chord progressions for 'Primitive', but what's neat is he's a fan of Real Estate too and wrote songs after being influenced by our music."

Nick Drake

"I've listened to Nick Drake a lot over the years, but he gets a bit much after a while. I wanted to write a song like 'Bryter Layter' – it's borderline cheesy with flutes, acoustic guitar and this pastoral vibe, but I really like the drum part, the rim click. That made its way into 'The Bend'."

Crosby, Stills & Nash

"I started getting into the first Crosby, Stills & Nash album just as I was sorting out vocal harmonies for the album. I'd think, 'These two harmonies sound nice, but what if I add a third?' They got mixed down in the end but those third harmonies made the album more lush."

Courtney's poetry, turning 'Atlas' into a gauzy, Super-8 movie soundtrack, somewhere between Galaxie 500 and The Jesus And Mary Chain, with Glen Campbell and Jimmy Webb along for the ride. Whatever the past has made them, Real Estate can now slip over that horizon and make their own memories. ■ MATTHEW HORTON

8

► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 3 ► **LABEL** Domino ► **PRODUCER** Tom Schick
► **LENGTH** 37:57 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Had To Hear ►2. Past Lives
►3. Talking Backwards ►4. April's Song ►5. The Bend ►6. Crime
►7. Primitive ►8. How Might I Live ►9. Horizon ►10. Navigator
► **BEST TRACK** Navigator

MORE ALBUMS

We Are Scientists TV En Français

Republic Of Music



What with their double-act shtick and quirky online comedy videos, it's always a surprise when WAS come out with another album of humour-free, largely indistinctive post-punk-flecked indie rock. Despite the presence of ex-Razorlight man Andy Burrows on drums and extra songwriting oomph, their latest offering feels like another exercise in anonymity. 'Courage' and the passably blustery 'Make It Easy' get closest to causing ear twitches, but rather more evident than such flashes of musical character is the feeling that if it wasn't for the goodwill generated by their mildly amusing screen turns, the We Are Scientists experiment might have been over some time ago.

■ JAMIE FULLERTON

5

Rainy Milo This Thing Of Ours

Limey/EMI



FKA Twigs is going to be leading a renaissance of sparse UK soul in 2014, and unfortunately that means someone is going to have to be the Remi Nicole to her Kate Nash. With her jazzy vocals and tediously tasteful trip-hop instrumentals, Rainy Milo dropped out of the Brit School to pursue her musical career, having just recently turned 19. Despite this early start, she oozes a smoky maturity that lifts this, her debut album, but unfortunately then shanks it off the fairways by prattling on about Air Max 90s and hanging on the District Line. Perhaps if only she'd gotten those last few precious lessons, this might not feel quite so incomplete.

■ GAVIN HAYNES

5



Willis Earl Beal

A Place That Doesn't Exist

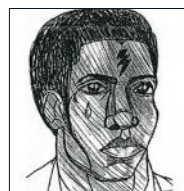
Chicagoan's unexpected self-release bristles with righteous ire

► Last year, Willis Earl Beal, a US army vet who was patronisingly marketed as a singing hobo after he signed to XL in 2012, said of his brush with the music industry, "My experiences make me want to be a nobody again." The unexpected self-release of these eight songs, just four months after his last album, 'Nobody Knows', is more a collection than an album proper. 'A Place That Doesn't Exist' finds Beal in a similar sonic place (blues, soul, street folk) to 'Nobody Knows', but there's added anger and confusion. The deeply satirical 'Toilet Parade (Ode To NYC)' wouldn't be out of place on a recent Scott Walker album, and on 'Hazel Eyes' he sings, "Everything is falling apart".

But there's sweetness, too, on lullabies 'The Axeman' and 'Babble On', lending truth to Beal's claim that, "All I can say about these songs is that they're tinted in gold... they all have a crackle."

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

8



► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** Out now ► **LABEL** Self-released ► **PRODUCER** Willis Earl Beal ► **LENGTH** 33:56 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Times Of Gold ►2. Bright Copper Noon ►3. Took My Heart ►4. The Axeman ►5. Toilet Parade (Ode To NYC) ►6. Babble On 7 ►7. Hazel Eyes ►8. A Place That Doesn't Exist ► **BEST TRACK** Toilet Parade (Ode To NYC)

Linda Perhacs The Soul Of All Natural Things

Asthmatic Kitty



Septuagenarian Linda Perhacs is the crate-digger's favourite cult folk singer who, after releasing her ethereal masterpiece 'Parallelograms' in 1970, returned to her job as a dental hygienist. Tempted out of retirement by muso

fans including Devendra Banhart, her second album is a glimmering offering of cynicism-free psychedelia, in which Perhacs' delicate vocals seem unchanged despite the passing of 44 years. From the near-mystical harmonies of the elaborate 'Intensity' and the choral trickery of 'Prisms Of Glass', this is an album in possession of a rare innocence and charm.

■ LEONIE COOPER

8

Reviews

Superfood

MAM EP Infectious



Superfood seem to be nostalgic for something they never

had. As frontman Dom Ganderton snarls, “*How am I t’ah dreeeeeem without tha TV on?*” on the Brummie foursome’s first EP, his pangs of boredom point to a search for enlightenment in times past. The results are such a ’90s pastiche, it’s clear the band just spent a hangover chewing over old episodes of *Don’t Forget Your Toothbrush* on VHS and chanting to Supergrass cassettes. The clattering drums and indie twangs mean fuck all – Superfood’s imitations are totally uninspired. Yet when they reproduce the brilliant ramble of their shambolic gigs – as on ‘Bubbles’ and ‘Melting’ – you’ll forget to ask such questions as: wait, what year are we in? ■ EVE BARLOW

7

Addison Groove Presents James Grieve

50 Weapons



Jungle, the older, rougher cousin of drum’n’bass,

is experiencing a revival among forward-thinking artists like Zomby, Lee Bannon and Special Request. Addison Groove – he of 2010’s ‘Footcrab’, a relentless floorfiller that represents Britain’s best contribution to Chicago’s juke genre – joins this jungle renaissance with his second album, a release packed with bangers and choppy breaks. Not that his sound is entirely retro: at his best, as on the sleekly ominous ‘11th’, Addison fuses the frenetic drum-machine scramble of juke with the bass menace of jungle. Elsewhere, largely thanks to some vanilla vocals, things sound a little too polite for a collision between two of the grubbiest forms of dance music.

■ BEN CARDEW

6

Blood Red Shoes

Blood Red Shoes

Renowned for a ferocious live sound, the tempestuous Brighton duo still can’t quite capture it on album four

Blood Red Shoes have been together for 10 years now, and without wishing to sound cruel, sometimes you wonder what compels them to keep going. It’s never exactly been a barrel of laughs: the way drummer Steven Ansell tells it, he and Laura-Mary Carter spend so much time at each other’s throats that he quit the band on three separate occasions during the recording of their last album, 2012’s ‘In Time To Voices’. That’s fine if you’re in the Eagles and you’re rich enough to never have to encounter your bandmates outside of the 90 minutes you spend onstage each night, but four albums in, Blood Red Shoes are still rolling their Sisyphean blues-rock boulder from gig to gig and album to album while bands like Drenge and Royal Blood bask in the acclaim that’s always evaded them. “Our default setting as a band is to write from a negative perspective,” says Ansell, and you can hardly blame him. If ‘In Time To Voices’ found them attempting to elevate



THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 3 ► **LABEL** Jazz Life ► **PRODUCER** Blood Red Shoes
► **LENGTH** 37:52 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Welcome Home ►2. Everything All At Once
►3. An Animal ►4. Grey Smoke ►5. Far Away ►6. The Perfect Mess ►7. Behind A Wall ►8. Stranger ►9. Speech Coma ►10. Don’t Get Caught ►11. Cigarettes In The Dark ►12. Tightwire ► **BEST TRACK** Tightwire



themselves beyond not-quite-cult status by adding a layer of polish and precision, their fourth album marks a return to the spit-and-sawdust rock’n’roll of their first two. It sounds like an acknowledgement of who they are and what they’re good at – not only is the record called ‘Blood Red Shoes’, but the opening track, a discordant instrumental thrash clocking in at under two minutes, goes by the name of ‘Welcome Home’. What Blood Red Shoes are best at, however, is playing live, and this album, like the three that preceded it, doesn’t quite capture the tooth-and-claw ferocity of that experience: the coiled, coital menace of ‘Grey Smoke’ and the pummeling psych-garage of ‘The Perfect Mess’ will always be better experienced in a dark, sticky-walled sweatbox with a few hundred strangers. Despite that (and a couple of unfortunate

missteps, like the quiet-loud alt.drear of ‘Far Away’), ‘Blood Red Shoes’ is probably the duo’s most satisfying effort to date – frustratingly short of the “quiet triumph” they sing about on closing track ‘Tightwire’, but an admirable racket nonetheless. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

7

The Birthday Suit A Hollow Hole Of Riches

Sing It Alone



Jones has kept busy. He formed this band the following year, and they’re already up to their third album. Unsurprisingly, there are shades of his previous group here – opener ‘A Bigger World’, featuring Frightened Rabbit’s Scott Hutchinson, and ‘Sold Your

Although Idlewild went on hiatus in 2010, guitarist Rod

Soul’ both come off as a mixture of Idlewild’s brash early years and their more mellow latter days – but these 11 songs also reach further. For example, hints of Interpol and The National appear in ‘Tonight Is Broken Hearted’ and ‘Lost But Not Forgotten’ respectively, although the former is let down by its clunky, trite lyrics. Still, with this album, The Birthday Suit are marking their place in the rich field of Scottish rock.

■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

7

The Head And The Heart Let’s Be Still

Kobalt Label Services



You can’t blame The Head And The Heart for sticking with

the familiar on their second album: the Seattle six-piece sold 10,000 copies of their self-titled debut before topping 300,000 when Sub Pop re-released it in 2011. ‘Let’s Be Still’ is more countrified and pensive (subjects include the Sandy

Hook school shooting, broken families and soldiers returning from war), but the same template remains. This is glossy Americana, mixing The Avett Brothers with Edward Sharpe And The Magnetic Zeros, its piano- and violin-led crescendos emulating old-timey grandeur. But lines like, “*With your boots of Spanish leather and my hat knit out of yarn*” (on ‘Josh McBride’) prove that in recycling the past, depth can be hard to come by.

■ CIAN TRAYNOR

6

Reviews

Drive-By Truckers English Oceans ATO



Most bands who'd been panning for gold in the streams of Southern rock since 1996 would be running out of nuggets by now, but Drive-By Truckers' 10th studio album is evidence that there's still treasure in them thar hills. The fact that singer-guitarists Patterson

Hood and Mike Cooley share the burden of songwriting helps them switch styles and emphasis easily. Opener 'Shit Shots Count' is a swaggering country rocker with big balls, while 'The Part Of Him' is a pretty funny political satire; no mean feat. The album's heart is 'Grand Canyon', a powerful tribute to their recently deceased friend Craig Lieske. Envy the man who has friends like these to sing his eulogy.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

7

Carla Bozulich

Boy Constellation



The word 'Americana' actually described something once, but it's now so overused it includes the watered-down likes of The Lumineers. In a better world it would aptly fit Carla Bozulich's intense marriage of industrial-age clank and old-timey folksong. 'Boy' is only the latest episode in Bozulich's 30-year tenure on the US rock fringes (most

famously as founder of The Geraldine Fibbers), but when she virulently mutters "I wish that I could fuck the whole world" over 'Deeper Than The Well's' sprawly dustbowl guitar, you'll appreciate that age hasn't mellowed her. Even when she plumps for relative orthodoxy ('Lazy Crossbones'), all is prickly and uneasy. A landscape where Tom Waits and Michael Gira enjoy critical tongue-baths ought to make room for Carla.

■ NOEL GARDNER

8

Shivum Sharma

Flicker EP National Anthem



London-based singer-songwriter Shivum

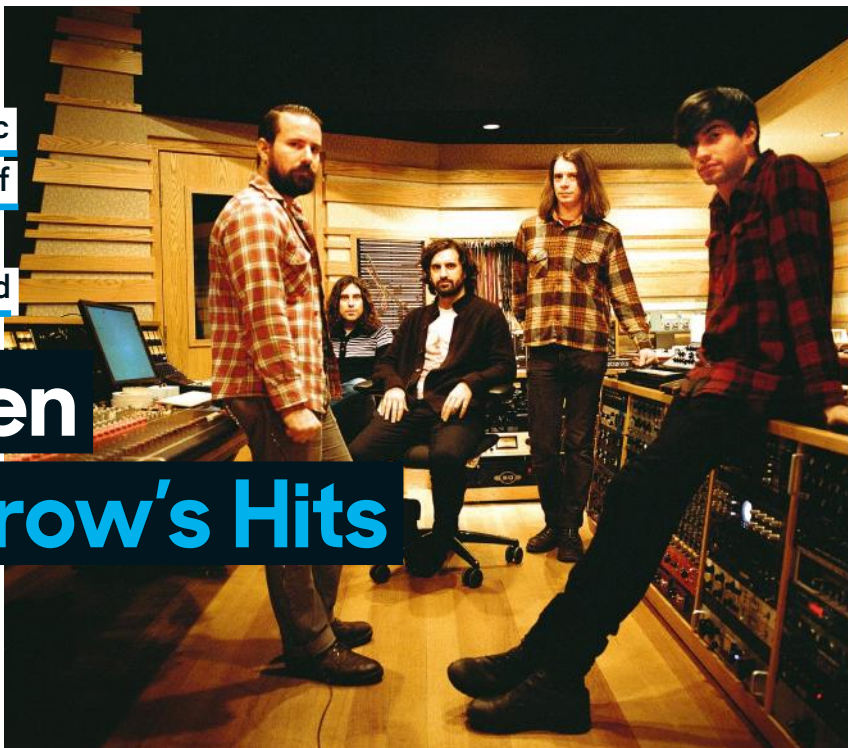
Sharma paints a haunted image of pain on this, his debut EP. 'Flicker' first caught the ear as a bedroom demo back in 2013 and is front and centre here, now with additional production from Warp's Kwes. The song remains as brittle as ever, quivering in similar style to Perfume Genius or James Blake. The delicate flower is Sharma's style, as 'Only You' proves, pulling the listener in with talk of "heavenly thoughts" that "lie deep beneath the sheets". Sharma's mere presence on a track leaves a lasting impression, as illustrated by two housey remixes that round the EP off. Mere filler they may be, but they allow us to linger in this promising artist's company a little longer.

■ DAVID RENSHAW

7

Rock gets a melodic rewiring courtesy of Brooklyn's wildest blue-collar bar band

The Men Tomorrow's Hits



We live not just in a fucked-up age, but in an age which demands that things be fucked up. Rock'n'roll, blues, indie-schm indie, disco, pop: it's all been

done to such factory-settings perfection for decades that there's just no point in playing anything straight any more. Sorry, The Strypes, but now is the time for taking baseball bats and sonic screwdrivers to the old accepted styles. If you're making glitter-gusseted electropop in 2014, it had better sound like you've dragged it warping and wobbling out of the core of a white dwarf. If you're knocking out nice, lager-friendly indie-rock tunes,

you'd better be playing them on amps made of asbestos, backed by a voodoo acid death cult. Fuck. It. Up.

Brooklyn's The Men know all about this. They play lovely blue-collar melodic country-rock songs and bar-boogie rock'n'rollers like the ones



THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE March 4 ► LABEL Sacred Bones ► PRODUCER The Men
► LENGTH 36:50 ► TRACKLISTING ► 1. Dark Waltz ► 2. Get What You Give
► 3. Another Night ► 4. Different Days ► 5. Sleepless ► 6. Pearly Gates ► 7. Settle Me Down ► 8. Going Down ► BEST TRACK Sleepless

Lynyrd Skynyrd, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty and Bachman Turner Overdrive used to make. Except, half the time, Mark Perro sings like he's hanging by his knackers from a skyscraper by a short length of piano wire. When Nick Chiericozzi launches into a solo it's like he's wrestling a poltergeist for control of his guitar. The saxophonist's a five-mouthed freak, the pianist thinks he's auditioning for the MC5 and the time-keeping seems to rely on a metronome made of ketamine.

Having started as a pile-driving noise band in 2008, this fifth album – eight songs in just over half an hour – is the result of just enough taming that 'Sleepless' comes built around a catchy, tripping piano hook and a spectral George Harrison vibe, 'Dark Waltz' is narcotic noir-country drenched in the scuzz of early REM, Parquet Courts or Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, and 'Get What You Give' is the homeless cousin of 'Sweet Home Alabama'.

But when The Men cut loose on 'Different Days', 'Pearly Gates' and 'Another Night', they're a speeding Spiritualized on a Kalashnikov rampage down E Street. Fucked up, gloriously. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

Coil/Nine Inch Nails

Recoiled Cold Spring



Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor was a major supporter

of British electronic group Coil, the pairing of Peter Christopherson and his partner John Balance, both now sadly passed away. 'Recoiled' consists of recently unearthed NIN remixes by Coil and long-serving engineer Danny Hyde, dating from Reznor's disturbing '90s peak and tracked down by dedicated fan communities. While alternate versions have appeared on other NIN collections, these lengthier interpretations are a welcome find. Fierce, dense mixes of 'Gave Up' and 'Eraser' build on NIN's maximal guitar grind, but it's the queasy ambience of their arrangements of 'Closer' and 'The Downward Spiral' that reveal the unsettling depths of Coil and Hyde's sonic treatments.

■ STUART HUGGETT

8

Eagulls Eagulls

Leeds scowlers' vital debut tackles drugs, depression and deformity



▶ Former Factory Records head Tony Wilson knew better than most how to explain Joy Division's genius in one nifty soundbite. "Punk enabled you to say 'fuck you', but it couldn't go any further," he once said. "It was a single, venomous, two-syllable phrase of anger. Sooner or later, someone was going to want to say more; someone was going to want to say, 'I'm fucked.'"

And fucked is exactly what Eagulls are: a group of pissed-off twentysomethings living in Leeds, stuck in a dead-end nine-to-five existence and loathing every second of it. They're not shy of taking on anyone who raises their hackles, as proved last year in an open letter published on their blog which scorned other bands for "sucking each others' dicks and rubbing the press' clit".

But beneath all the irascible itchiness and crude put-downs, they've got that same gift that turned Wilson on to Ian Curtis and co some 35-odd years ago: a knack for finding germs of unpleasant truths and uncomfortable flashes of real life beneath the snark. Witness last year's 'Nerve Endings' – one of 2013's finest singles – in which frontman George Mitchell yelped like he

was huffing on some fear-inducing gas while mid-panic attack, detailing his struggles with stress and anxiety over relentlessly coarse, catchy post-punk. "*The skin-peeling, embarrassing feelings/Growing worse each day and night*", he wiggled out in bug-eyed terror.

Their self-titled debut follows the same restless, fidgety blueprint, and comes off like some wounded beast that's more scared of *itself* than you are. Both 'Hollow Visions' and 'Yellow Eyes' are bitter, hardcore-meets-post-punk hybrids of nervous tension. 'Tough Luck' starts out deceptively jangly, like a rough-and-tumble take on The Smiths, before taking a U-turn via Mitchell's tale of birth defects caused by the drug Thalidomide. "*You wanted hands, you wanted feet*", he barks, before spitting out, "*Touch wood, tough luck*" – a chorus, you realise, that's less about a light-hearted gamble and more about its chilling consequences.

Similarly ferocious is the poppy, helter-skelter thrash of 'Opaque', which details how a work colleague of Mitchell and guitarist Mark Thompson was arrested for sexually abusing girls, only to evade charges, while the lurching 'Amber Veins' is full of seething contempt for some neighbourhood heroin addicts so desperate for a fix they're pawning all their possessions. It's nasty, yet

for all the ugliness, Eagulls are never anything less than vital. "*And forever you're lost/ And forever you'll rot*", sings Mitchell on the messy din of closer 'Soulless Youth'. Being fucked has seldom sounded so life-affirming. ■ BEN HEWITT

▶ THE DETAILS

▶ **RELEASE DATE** March 3 ▶ **LABEL** Partisan ▶ **PRODUCER** Eagulls, Matt Peel
▶ **LENGTH** 37:10 ▶ **TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Nerve Endings ▶2. Hollow Visions ▶3. Yellow Eyes ▶4. Tough Luck ▶5. Amber Veins ▶6. Possessed ▶7. Footsteps ▶8. Fester / Blister ▶9. Opaque ▶10. Soulless Youth ▶ **BEST TRACK** Hollow Visions

Nick Waterhouse Holly



Innovative Leisure
Despite beginning in the same Orange County scene as Ty Segall and producing the Allah-Las' debut, Nick Waterhouse is cutting retro-gazing soul rather than grainy garage rock. His second album has the analogue hum and nippy length of prime 1950s R&B. Trouble is, though it's an impressively dead-on

emulation, it's short on good songs. Even at just 30 minutes, the bulk of the album – period-correct three-minute workouts of wiry guitar, sleazy organ and brass honks – gets wearing. It fares better when Waterhouse channels Van Morrison on the sax-lined slink of his Mose Allison cover 'Let It Come Down' or the killer Doors swagger of 'Dead Room', but overall, 'Holly' ends up just too derivative.

■ LAURIE TUFFREY

Stanley Brinks And The Wave Pictures Gin Fika



The least gentle of alcoholic spirits has been the ruin of many a poor mother, and was both the inspiration and fuel for Mr Brinks And The Wave Pictures' 'Gin'. This lot have a strong constitution, though, and it gives their third album – their first collaboration in four years – a loucheness

more palatable than Mr Brinks' often overly twee former work as Andre Herman Dune. Though the Jonathan Richman-ish ambling indie rock will come as no surprise to those who've heard their previous albums together, the Wave Pictures' classy post-punkish bite is a great foil to Brinks' whimsy on these unhinged, loose-limbed story songs. Sometimes gin makes you win as much as sin.

■ EMILY MACKAY

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

St Vincent St Vincent

"The sound of an artist no longer battling to prove herself. Clarke's readiness to be freakish has translated into her songwriting, which is bolder... and out to connect." (NME, February 22)

8

Guided By Voices Motivational Jumpsuit

"It teems with two-minute songs that jangle Anglocentrically and have eternally teenage garage production values. A record that sounds like everything GBV fans love about GBV." (NME, February 15)

7

Skaters Manhattan

"Skaters couldn't make their allegiance to the 2003 school of New York cool plainer. Moments on 'Manhattan' could pass for long-lost outtakes from 'Room On Fire'." (NME, February 22)

7

Grouplove Spreading Rumours

"The LA college pop band has done the vogueish thing and gone electro for album two. America's most addictive export since *Call Of Duty* has gathered some modernist textures." (NME, February 15)

8

Beck Morning Phase

"Couples a moody sort of glamour with a concrete feeling of loneliness, and it makes for some of the most affecting comedown folk you're likely to hear all year." (NME, February 22)

8

FIVE REASONS WHY AUSTIN, TEXAS ROCKS

There's more to the Live Music Capital of the World® than meets the eye

Austin, Texas is the Live Music Capital of the World®, and the number of music events and festivals that take place in the city every year make it a perfect place to visit. But you can't spend 24 hours a day watching your favourite bands live. So what else is there to do in the 11th largest city in America?



There's lots happening at Zilker Park

1 THE GREAT OUTDOORS!

Austin is surrounded by perfect places to clear a foggy head from the night before. Take the McKinney Falls State Park, a place famous for its hiking routes among the armadillos and central Texas cacti. Or Zilker Park, where The Rolling Stones played to 42,000 people in 2006, with trails ideal for hurtling around on a mountain bike. If you'd rather swim your way back to good health, head for Barton Springs Pool – a natural, spring-fed watering hole – for a dip, or to the reservoir called Lady Bird Lake on the nearby Colorado River to hire kayaks, canoes and paddle boats.



Sail away on Lady Bird Lake

2 SO MUCH SPORT!

Biggest of all is the Formula 1 United States Grand Prix on November 2, when over 100,000 people will turn up to Circuit Of The Americas, the world's newest home for high-performance motorsports racing. On the same racing track on April 11-13 is the Moto GP, and from June 5-8 the skateboarding, and freestyle BMX biking that is the extreme sports mayhem of the X Games. And from August to December join 100,000 fans and cheer on the Texas Longhorns playing college football at the University of Texas Darrell K Royal Texas Memorial Stadium.



X Games offers extreme thrills

3 THE FOOD OF KINGS!

Hit up Guero's Taco Bar for the finest Tex Mex in the city, La Condesa for a posher take on the grub from neighbouring Mexico, or Lamberts Downtown Barbecue for a lesson in how good beef brisket and pulled pork can taste when cooked for a long time over an open fire.



Good food at Lamberts Downtown Barbecue

4 UNLIMITED SHOPPING BARGAINS!

Buy quality cowboy boots at Allens Boots, rare antiques from Uncommon Objects, trinkets from Eliza Page Jewelry or anything you like at The Domain – a giant outdoor mall with over 100 shops.



Thrift shopping is a must

5 AWESOME MUSIC LANDMARKS!

On the shores of Lady Bird Lake is a bronze statue of legendary local blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, who died in a helicopter crash in August 1990, aged 35. Outside ACL Live at the Moody Theater is a statue of 80-year-old country music icon Willie Nelson, who's lived in Austin since 1971. Most intriguing, though, are the 35 10-foot guitars dotted around the city that were erected by guitar-makers Gibson in 2006 as part of their GuitarTown project. The most eye-catching is called Keep Austin Weird, designed by artist Sara Hickman.



Discover the statue of Willie Nelson

► For more information go to austintexas.org; @VisitAustinTX; @MusicAustin; facebook.com/visitaustintexas

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NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK

Foals

Alexandra Palace

London

February 14

Love is in the air as
Oxford's finest play
their biggest venue yet

▶ Across London, swathes of dreamy-eyed couples are no doubt spending Valentine's Day sharing soggy spaghetti and romantic platitudes. Meanwhile, perched on the top of a hill overlooking the drizzly city – probably not the most sensible place to spend one of the windiest nights in recent years – 10,000 people have piled into Alexandra Palace for an altogether more ➡

fulfilling evening. They're here to prove that devotion is about much more than necking a cheap bottle of red before falling asleep in your lover's arms watching telly. It's about eight years of grind, about watching a band morph from local heroes into national treasures and about dancing like your feet are on fire.

Last year, Foals headlined their first festival, Latitude, a trick they pulled off with such consummate professionalism they're set to repeat it at both Bestival and the Parklife Weekender later this summer. The thrill of such an achievement has funnelled not just into this evening's gig but the entirety of this spectacular UK tour, which has given fans the kind of show they'll remember long after their ears have stopped ringing from the colossal volume. Which takes roughly 18 hours, by the way.

Tonight's venue is one of London's most majestic. The high-ceilinged Great Hall, in which the band play the first of two tour-wrapping shows tonight, is a room made for big things, and Foals expand their sonics and stagecraft to fill the vast space. Set opener 'Prelude' sees dry ice drench the stage as columns of light flood from above, seemingly preparing to beam up each band member into the unknown. Leaping

TONIGHT IS ABOUT EIGHT YEARS OF GRIND, AND WATCHING A BAND MORPH FROM LOCAL HEROES INTO NATIONAL TREASURES

about in matching black T-shirts as if to avoid teleportation, instead they set about producing a terrifyingly immense sound – their guitars more searing and serrated than ever, like razor blades stropping against barbed wire.

Even Yannis Philippakis, usually an unflappable frontman, seems impressed at the spectacle. "It's good to be home!" he yells as the house lights illuminate thousands upon thousands of sweaty, grinning and grooving punters. "You guys are fucking awesome!"

It's a swift romp through the bastard-disco squiggles of 'Hummer' and 'Olympic Airways' – which sees Jack Bevan stop atop of his drum stool, casually spinning his sticks in the air – before 'My Number'. Funkier than a day spent bodypopping with Nile Rodgers in Rio, it sees the crowd move as one

hedonistic heap until Foals bring the frenetic pace down with the meditative 'Milk & Black Spiders'. Its blipping breakdown causes the diminutive Yannis to spin like a ballet dancer, pivoting and pirouetting around his guitar, his curly hair perfectly

cultivated for an artful toss or two.

In production terms, the big guns aren't bought out until midway through the show. As 'Providence' starts up, a curtain of red lazars stream across the venue, and by 'Spanish Sahara' proceedings have become as ambitious and mind-altering as a Chemical Brothers gig. Projections of clouds hover above the vast room, materialising out of lights and smoke and hypnotising the crowd with a double whammy of superlative sound and vision. It makes Muse's stage show look like it was devised by a trio of Neanderthals

POONEH GHANA

SETLIST

How good?

10
2

PRELUDE

HUMMER

OLYMPIC AIRWAYS

MY NUMBER

BLUE BLOOD

MILK & BLACK SPIDERS

PROVIDENCE

SPANISH SAHARA

RED SOCKS PUGIE



Yannis Philippakis soaks it up at Ally Pally, February 14, 2014

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Jamie Lindsey, 22, Edinburgh

"There was a really good atmosphere and great setlist. I've been a fan for two years, but this is the first time I've seen them play live. The lightshow was great!"



Laura Aiken, 25, London

"I saw them in Glasgow on Sunday night and I thought I'd see them again... Glasgow was really good, and the setlist was the same, but this was much bigger – probably about four times the size!"

messing about with some damp kindling, trying desperately to create a spark.

'Late Night' is dedicated to "all the people who are here on Valentine's Day, alone". It's unnecessary, because what's happening right now is almost certainly sexier than anything going on in any bedroom within a five-mile radius. The ripping finale of 'Two Steps, Twice' is so vicious that most people don't even seem to notice Yannis has made his way to the very back bar for some of his legendary indie orienteering. No matter, because tonight Foals have given everyone here a near-perfect sensory seeing to. ■ LEONIE COOPER

10

MORE GIGS

Cheatahs

Birthdays, London

Wednesday, February 12



It's the genre we've been waiting 20 years for: popgaze. The brain-bending scree of My Bloody Valentine, Swervedriver and Ride smashed into the kind of huggable hooks that Chapterhouse forgot to write and might actually get this fucked-up noise onto a real-life radio. Better still, its founders, Cheatahs – a German, a Canadian, an American and a bloke from Leicester – lob in elements of Pavement, Dinosaur Jr and Smashing Pumpkins to make the whole set feel like the psycho-sexual bliss-dream of someone who fell asleep listening to 'Everything's Alright Forever' by The Boo Radleys in 1992. Immense.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

Chvrches

Scala, London

Monday, February 17



"When I need to charm a room, I like to pretend I'm Katy Perry," jokes Chvrches singer Lauren Mayberry midway through their set. Suffering severely from jetlag, the decision to summon their pop-star spirit animals (multi-instrumentalists Iain Cook and Martin Doherty decide they are The Jonas Brothers) is a surprisingly beneficial one. Where the beginning of the set feels disconnected, with Mayberry's voice overwhelmed by the heavily synthetic beats of 'Lungs', everything from 'Gun' onwards is a rejuvenated attack. 'Science/Visions' is a gothic electro highlight, while Doherty's lead vocal on 'Under The Tide' is performed with so much gusto he seems fit to burst.

■ LISA WRIGHT

7

Warpaint



KOKO, London

Tuesday, February 18

The Californians enchant their crowd with commanding presence and shapeshifting songs

"Give it some energy, people!" yells an effusively inebriated fan. There's a surge of swaying hips and nodding heads, but generally KOKO stays reverently hushed, too spellbound by the spectacle.

Warpaint are, after all, an entrancing proposition. Bathed in violet shadows, they take their places in a semi-circle and kick off with 'Intro', Jenny Lee Lindberg's bass throbbing a gentle yet gargantuan pulse in time with Stella Mozgawa's drums. As 'Intro' turns into 'Keep It Healthy', hair-hidden frontwomen Emily Kokal and Theresa Wayman's nymph song floods KOKO's highest tiers, the "nosebleed seats", as Theresa dubs them. They are a pleasure to watch, Mozgawa in constant motion behind her drums while Kokal, Lindberg and Wayman weave to and fro across the stage, dancing with a hippyish sensuality, bodies locked into the collective rhythm. 'Biggy' is a tidal swell of cruising synth-rhythm drops, and rare 'Warpaint' offcut 'No Way Out' causes ripples of movement with its dark, trip-hoppy bridge.

Warpaint's chemistry lies in the friendship that binds the women, manifesting in their penchant for improvising and shapeshifting their songs. 'Love Is To Die' is in for an

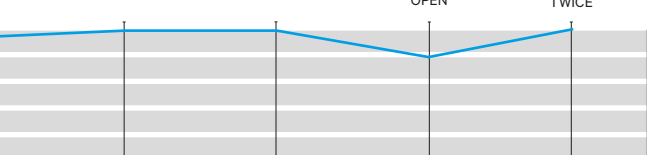
unexpected transformation, ending in a giddy crescendo, all fluttering cymbals and accelerating reverb guitar licks – a small tempest of noise and speed to break up an otherwise consistent pace. After much foot stamping from the audience, they gift the crowd with a muscular encore, 'Baby' morphing into 'Elephants', but they could have bowed out with just as much punch on set closer, and Warpaint's toothiest number, 'Disco//Very'. KOKO may not be moving, but it is undoubtedly moved. ■ CHARLOTTE RICHARDSON ANDREWS

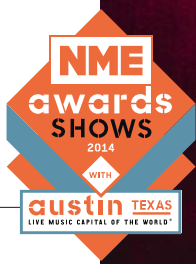
SETLIST

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

7

LATE NIGHT INHALER THE FRENCH OPEN TWO STEPS, TWICE





Parquet Courts

Electric Ballroom, London

Sunday, February 16

The NYC rockers step up to the next level in Camden

In January, Parquet Courts played *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon* in the US, which is the most modern signifier that a DIY punk band is going places. They performed 'Stoned And Starving', a song so clever it almost sounds dumb. Surrounded by goons told to clap and look excited, they played the verses tight, then jammed. Dual singers Andrew Savage and Austin Brown turned away from the cameras to feedback their guitars, leaving bassist Sean Yeaton and drummer Max Savage (Andrew's younger brother) to try and hold the song together. It almost fell to pieces. They pulled it back, but looked vulnerable for a moment and, accordingly, took some shit in the comments under the YouTube video of the performance. "Exactly like Television, except crappier," managed one viewer.

If that clip suggested that even the very literary Parquet Courts, a powerhouse of a



band from New York via Texas, can buckle under pressure, there are no signs tonight that the big occasion might trouble their confidence. Playing their biggest ever UK show at the 1,000-capacity Electric Ballroom in Camden, they step onstage, murmur a quick hello, then have the audacity to launch into three unreleased songs – 'She's Rolling', 'Bodies Made Of' and 'Black And White'. They're all tracks that Parquet Courts have been playing live for a while, but nonetheless, it takes gall for a relatively new band to confront the majority of their audience with unknown material straight off the bat.

For all their insolence, however, Parquet Courts understand showbusiness. Tension built, they drop into 'Master Of My Craft', the opening track on their celebrated second album, 'Light Up Gold'. Duly, the crowd explodes.

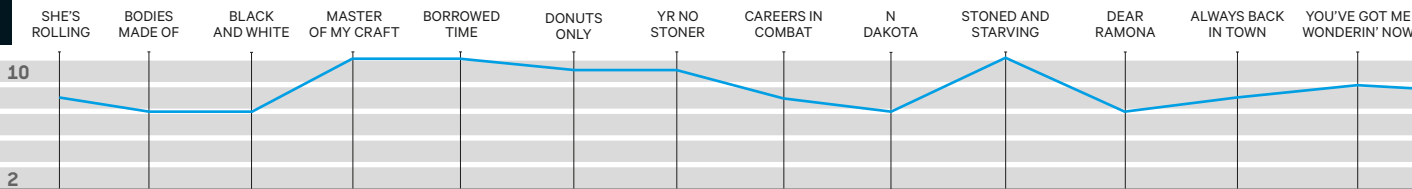
'Master Of My Craft' is part of an astonishing one-two on 'Light Up Gold' – it blends into 'Borrowed Time', as sweetly as 'The King Of Carrot Flowers' segments segue at the opening of Neutral Milk Hotel's 'In The Aeroplane Over The Sea'. There's something blackly comic about the fact that they begin to perform the album in order – up until 'Stoned And Starving' – skipping 'Yonder Is Closer To The Heart' and the title track, which they'll play later. The point is clear: Parquet Courts will give you what you want, but you sense also that the band, who write continuously, are tired of these songs. They rattle through them, playing them clean, straight and fast and only jamming on 'Stoned And Starving', which finds Andrew Savage and Austin Brown on the wings of the stage as always, but turned inwards to each other and creating noise that's as avant-garde as it is fantastic.

DEREK BRENNER, JENN FIVE

THEY CREATE NOISE
THAT'S AS AVANT-
GARDE AS IT IS
FANTASTIC

SETLIST

How good?



The back end of their set is comprised of two tracks from their recent EP, 'Tally All The Things That You Broke' – 'You've Got Me Wonderin' Now' and 'Descend (The Way)' – along with a slew of unreleased material, some familiar and some totally fresh. In an interview in December, Parquet Courts said they'd started recording their third album as far back as last April and there are whispers that it will come out this year. They're already road-testing new songs – 'Dear Ramona' and 'Sunbathin' Animal' have been set mainstays for some time while bassist Sean Yeaton claims the first time they played the very Lou Reed-like 'Always Back In Town' was at last night's Manchester Academy 2 show. 'Duckin' And Dodgin'' is pure rock'n'roll simplicity and also brand new, as is 'Vienna II'. These are songs that are more stripped-back and spacious than those on 'Light Up Gold', and possibly less wordy – but just as full of ideas.

In its own way, playing the Electric Ballroom is as much a sign of where a new band has got to as appearing on *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon*. Plenty of groups, after a year or so of being known, while still riding a wave of curiosity, get as far as the Electric Ballroom only to never play a London show as big again. Kings Of Leon made their name here in 2003 and, more recently, Savages, who managed to make the cavernous, difficult room feel intimate. Taught and punkier, Parquet Courts have a harder job, but are equally successful. They're a band of supreme certainty and intelligence, who intuitively know how to project themselves in bigger venues. Tonight is the beginning of a new phase for a group that people are still just finding out about. Incredibly, they've already mastered their craft.

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Hildy, 27, London
"Listening to Parquet Courts is like getting waxed: it stings at first, but 20 minutes later your skin feels like butter."



Michael, 19, London
"I've only listened to 'Light Up Gold' and this is the first time I've seen them. Massively excited."



Joe, 20, London
"I love the band. They've got that New York sound and I'm not surprised they're getting big. They should be bigger."



Oliver, 19, London
"Huge fan. 'Light Up Gold' was the best album of 2013 for me. This is the first time I've seen them and I'm pumped."

9

MORE GIGS

Swim Deep KOKO, London

Monday, February 17



As 'King City' reaches its final throes, frontman Austin Williams grabs a bottle of bubbly and leaps onto the speaker, spraying it everywhere. He's got reason to celebrate – Swim Deep's first London gig of the year is a proper champagne moment. The songs of last year's debut, 'Where The Heaven Are We', shine brighter than before – 'Honey's' "don't just dream in your sleep" is more inspirational, 'Make My Sun Shine' more romantic and 'She Changes The Weather' more dizzyingly euphoric. A new song 'Hotel California' (no relation) is a sun-kissed, infectious pop masterclass that hints the best is yet to come.

■ RHIAN DALY

8

The Strypes O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London

Thursday, February 13



Just over a year ago, Noel Gallagher hit The Old Blue Last to check out four Irish teenagers called The Strypes and their retro-manic blues and rock'n'roll covers act. Cue a three-month blitz of hype that didn't quite turn out as hoped, largely because they didn't have the tunes to match those of The Chief. A year on in London and the band get off to a rocky start, hampered by sound problems. They make up for it though with an excellent take on The Specials' 'Concrete Jungle' and a volley of their best loved tunes ('Hometown Girls', 'Blue Collar Jane' and their version of Bo Diddley's 'You Can't Judge A Book By The Cover'). A solid school night, by their standards.

■ DAMIAN JONES

7

Speedy Ortiz



Birthdays, London
Tuesday February 18

Sadie Dupuis and Matt Robidoux bring the flourishing US underground to the UK

A couple of hours after their first ever London date, Speedy Ortiz's Sadie Dupuis accepts the UK capital as an extension of their world: "it felt like being at home," she tweets. Watching Massachusetts basement bands like Speedy, Fat History Month, and Krill in their cramped native environment is a far-off feat for most of us, but the intimacy and fervour that gave that scene its reputation is replicated downstairs at Birthdays tonight. There's a stack of guitarist Matt Robidoux's Hidden Temple tapes for sale at the merch stand and the whole crowd seems to know every word of Sadie's knotty lyrics, which they bawl into each other's faces mid-mosh.

Speedy Ortiz are a real shot in the arm for underground US indie rock: a guitar-based four-piece with personality to burn and incredible guitar skills. The compellingly slippery nature of Dupuis' songwriting comes through in her performance, delivered with suspicious side-eye and a range of voices – from ragged on 'Major Arcana's' 'Pioneer Spine', to comedy horror on 'Everything's Bigger', off new EP 'Real Hair'. And somehow, Sadie and Matt wrangle hyper-complex guitar lines into supremely poppy choruses: early single 'Taylor Swift', the scorned 'Plough' and even bruised ballad 'No Below' make their cover of Blur's 'Bugman' pale in comparison. And in 'Tiger Tank', tonight's British Bostonian outpost has its national anthem.

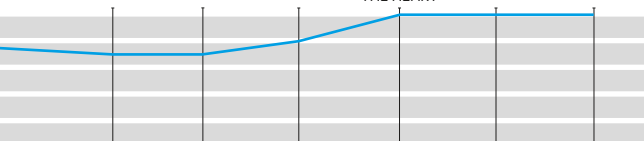
SETLIST

- ▶ American Horror
- ▶ Everything's Bigger
- ▶ Pioneer Spine
- ▶ Curling
- ▶ Gary
- ▶ Taylor Swift
- ▶ Casper (1995)
- ▶ Plough
- ▶ Bugman (Blur cover)
- ▶ Silver Spring
- ▶ No Below
- ▶ Tiger Tank
- ▶ Indoor Soccer

■ LAURA SNAPES

9

DESCEND (THE WAY) VIENNA II DUCKIN' AND DODGIN' YONDER IS CLOSER TO THE HEART LIGHT UP GOLD II SUNBATHIN' ANIMAL





Childhood/ Telegram

Electrowerkz, London
Wednesday, February 19

**Raucous glam rock
rhythms give way to hazy
West Coast wigouts as
London's finest new bands
prove their worth**

The buzz is as bright as the neon paint-daubed walls. London quartets

Telegram and Childhood may utilise their talents in largely opposing ways – the former roaring along like Roxy Music at 100mph, the latter treading a hazier path – but both are united with a hook-filled melodic knack that's seen them pique huge swells of expectation with barely two releases to rub together.

Telegram are first up tonight and deliver a set plagued with, but in no way defeated by, technical problems. 'Rule Number One' and 'It's Not Very Easy' fly out of the traps in a flurry of tightly wound guitars and singer Matt Saunders' clipped Welsh brogue, but as the band kick into forthcoming single 'Eons' a rogue spilt pint short-circuits guitarist Matt Wood's pedal board in a screech of feedback. Even without a vital component Telegram sound relentless; it's testament to the careering forward motion of their material (and waif-like drummer Jordan Cook's surprisingly muscular pummel) that, as they plough on through the pneumatic guitar spikes of 'Regatta' essentially as a three-piece, the band are still capable of creating a hurricane of glamorous racket. Wood returns in time to deliver a killer solo at debut single 'Follow's climax, while the group end 'Folly' entwined and on the floor like a three-headed hydra with extra hair.

Childhood, however, have no such issues. Swathed in blue-tinted smoke, the four-piece are practically flawless throughout. Though underpinned by a constant West Coast warmth, their aesthetic has expanded into an impressively multi-faceted affair since the hazy strains of 'Blue Velvet' first proffered them as another bunch of talented kids with a large stash of weed. 'You Could Be Different' is a euphoric slice of escapism, while 'Chiliad' finds frontman Ben Romans-Hopcraft's usually dulcet tones take a heavier turn. Beneath the wafty slacker surface, there's now a clear intent to grow out of being teenage dreamers and punch their melodic weight. The soaring peaks of 'Solemn Skies' are offset by drums straight out of Primal Scream's 'Rocks' and a squalling outro, while 'Right Beneath Me's falsetto is so sweet it's almost as if the singer is harmonising with himself. They finish with recent track 'Pinballs', a three-songs-in-one romp that veers from kraut rhythms and heady, slowed-down pulses to a fuzzy instrumental that Connan Mockasin would be proud of. Tonight everyone's a winner.

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Anya, 25, Russia
"I've seen Telegram three times now and this one was one of the best. There were some troubles in the set, but I still loved it."



Yessica, 24, Brazil
"I really like the vibe of Childhood, they're down-to-earth which I think is interesting for an up-and-coming band. The crowd were great too, everyone was really into it."



Anushka, 19, London
"Childhood were my favourites tonight; I saw them at Reading last year but this was better. 'Solemn Skies' is my favourite track, the jam they did at the end really added to it."



Ayma, 19, Birmingham
"The atmosphere was really great, especially down the front. This was the first time I've properly listened to Childhood and I was so impressed. I'm looking forward to the album."

MORE GIGS

Superfood Oslo, London

Wednesday, February 19

Now 1994 is

becoming roundly accepted as one of the pivotal years in rock

history, Birmingham's Superfood have found a crucial educational role with their spot-on historical reenactment. They have seemingly plugged their guitars directly into a 22-year-old Damon Albarn's cerebral cortex and mistaken hipster Hackney for the heyday of indie Camden. Shaggy hair is tossed, while the likes of 'Superfood', 'Bubbles' and 'TV' bounce with all the giddiness of Louise Wener on her sixth pint at The Good Mixer. They've just finished recording their debut album – if ever there was a timewarp to slip into, this is the one.

■ LEONIE COOPER

8

Only Real Lexington, London

Friday, February 14

"I love you," Only Real's Niall Galvin reads out from a heart-shaped sweet he picks

at random from a pack and then throws from the stage. This Valentine's Day crowd is certainly seduced by his surf-pop rap rhythms as the night goes on. His recent EP 'Days In The City', with its juxtaposition of Jamie T-style lyrical grit and tropical escapism, makes up most of this short-but-sweet 30 minute set. The quick-fire imagery of 'Punks And Potions' might get lost amid the band's live energy but woozy upcoming single 'Cadillac Girl' and the catchy chorus of recent EP stand-out 'Get It On' ensure the night is an Only Real love-in. ■ SIMON BUTCHER

7



8

■ LISA WRIGHT

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BOOKING NOW

The hottest new tickets on sale this week

Brody Dalle

The former Distillers and Spinnerette frontwoman plots her first solo UK tour in April, ahead of the release of her new album 'Diploid Love'.

You've played a couple of solo shows in America – how have they gone so far, Brody?

"The first show is a blur, I don't think I was in my body. The second show was at the Casbah in San Diego and all I could think about was [The Jesus Lizard frontman] David Yow getting his dick out and shaking it at people."

At the gigs, you've played a few of the songs you wrote with previous bands The Distillers

and Spinnerette – why?

"Why not? I wrote them, they're mine. I do what I want."

This tour will be your first in the UK since 2009. Where are you most looking forward to coming back to?

"London – I love it. I love the weather. I love the architecture. I love my sister [comedian Morgana Robinson] and my great friends and the buzz on the streets. Tea and scones, cream and jam in a fucking sweater – yes please!"

How much of 'Diploid Love' will you be playing on this tour? What should people expect from the album?

"I want to play all of them,

especially 'Parties For Prostitutes'. Don't expect anything, that way you'll be happily surprised. I don't compare my records to each other, it might hurt their feelings."

► THE DETAILS

► **DATES** Glasgow Garage (April 21), Manchester Academy 2 (22), London Electric Ballroom (24), Sheffield Leadmill (25), Birmingham O2 Academy 2 (26)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £12; London £14
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.20-£2.20 booking fee

Jabberwocky

The people behind ATP, Pitchfork and Primavera Sound team up on this brand new two-day festival. The reunited Neutral Milk Hotel headline the August event, while Caribou, Iceage, Joanna Gruesome, The Growlers, Speedy Ortiz, Hookworms, Connan Mockasin and Metz will all make appearances.

► **DATES** London ExCel Centre (August 15-16)

► **OTHER ACTS** Pissed Jeans, Eaux, Kode9, I Break Horses, The Ex, Chelsea Wolfe, Deafheaven

► **PRICE** Day tickets £35; Weekend tickets £60

► **ON SALE** now

► **FROM** dashtickets.co.uk with £3.50-£6 booking fee

St Vincent

Annie Clark follows up recent dates in London and Manchester with three more in support of her new self-titled album.

► **DATES** Bristol O2 Academy (May 15), Glasgow O2 ABC (16), Leeds Metropolitan University (17)

► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC

► **PRICE** £16.50

► **ON SALE** now

► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.65-£2 booking fee

Action Bronson

Arian Asllani is currently working on his first major-label album, set to follow last year's 'Saaab Stories' EP. Expect to hear the fruits of his hulking rap labours at these three shows.

► **DATES** Manchester Academy (May 5), Birmingham The Institute (6), London Forum (8)

► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC

► **PRICE** £16.50; London £19.50

► **ON SALE** now

► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.65-£1.95 booking fee

Tame Impala

The Aussie psych wonders will warm up for their gigs with Arctic Monkeys at their massive Finsbury Park shows with something a bit cosier.

- **DATES** Oxford O2 Academy (May 22)
- **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
- **PRICE** £18.50
- **ON SALE** now
- **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.85 booking fee

Paul Weller

The mod hero's 40-year plus career never lets up. Catch him this summer as he takes the hits of The Jam, The Style Council, and solo material to some unusual settings.

- **DATES** Nottingham Sherwood Pines (June 14), Cranbrook Bedgebury Pinetum (21), Pickering Dalby Forest (27), Staffordshire Cannock Chase Forest (28), Cheshire Delamere Forest (July 4), Warwick Castle (11), Cardiff Castle (24), Saffron Walden Audley End House (26)
- **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
- **PRICE** £42.50; Nottingham £42; Saffron Walden £40; Cranbrook, Staffordshire and Cheshire sold out
- **ON SALE** now
- **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £0-4.50 booking fee

All We Are

The Liverpool-based trio have recently opened for Warpaint. Get to grips with their shiny synth-pop at this one-off date.

- **DATES** London Bethnal Green Working Men's Club (May 1)
- **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
- **PRICE** £8



Tame Impala

- **ON SALE** now
- **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

Temple Songs

The four-piece craft '60s-indebted lo-fi gems and latest track 'Point Of Origin' is no different. The quartet take a break from working on their debut album to take a trip around the country.

- **DATES** London Sebright Arms (March 19), Brighton Green Door Store (20), Reading Oakford Social Club (22), Leicester Cookie Jar (26), Birmingham Sunflower Lounge (27), Nottingham Chameleon Arts Café (28), Manchester Night & Day (29)
- **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
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- **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with 30p-£2.40 booking fee; Birmingham from theticket sellers.co.uk with 50p booking fee; Nottingham from gigantic.com with 50p booking fee

Angel Olsen

The Missouri-born singer describes her album 'Burn Your Fire For No Witness' as a "collection of songs, grown in a year of heartbreak, travel and transformation". Enter her world as she returns to the UK in June.

- **DATES** Brighton The Hope (June 4), Birmingham Hare & Hounds 2 (5), Belfast McHughs (8), Glasgow Mono (9), Bristol The Lantern (10)
- **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
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- with £1 booking fee; Belfast from wegotickets.com with £1 booking fee; Glasgow from ticketweb.co.uk with £1.20 booking fee; Bristol from colstonhall.org with 60p booking fee

Big Deal

The London group take latest album 'June Gloom' to the St Pancras Old Church before visiting more conventional venues.

- **DATES** London St Pancras Old Church (March 28), Brighton Sticky Mike's Frog Bar (April 2), Birmingham Hare & Hounds (3), Manchester Band On The Wall (4)
- **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
- **PRICE** £8; London £10; Manchester £6
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- **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with 60p-£2.65 booking fee

TOUR NEWS

Superfood

Before the Birmingham band head out with Wolf Alice in May they join We Are Scientists.

The dates begin at Oxford O2 Academy (March 6), finishing at London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire on March 20.



FESTIVAL NEWS

OVO Fest

Drake's own festival returns in August and this year he's bagged another big act to join him on headline duties.

OutKast will play the event at Toronto's Molson Canadian Amphitheatre on August 3 while the rapper and curator puts himself top of the bill on August 4. Tickets are on sale now from livenation.com and are priced between \$107.50-\$303.50.

FOR Festival

Darkside, Klaxons, Factory Floor and Tensnake will all make the trip to Croatia this June to play the second edition of FOR Festival, held on the island of Hvar on June 19-22.



49

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GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

Dreng

"We're just writing, and that seems to be a pretty natural thing to be doing with any time off we get," Eoin Loveless told *NME* last year, hinting that Dreng's current tour could feature new material. Those dates wrap up this week, so grab these last two chances to get a sneak preview of what Eoin and brother Rory have been working on.

► **DATES** Bristol Fleece (February 27), Sheffield Plug (March 1)
 ► **TICKETS** £8 from NME.COM/tickets with £1-£1.25 booking fee

Skaters

Josh Hubbard, Michael Ian Cummings and Noah Rubin bring their debut album 'Manhattan' over from New York. Fellow NYC residents Drowners will join them in support.

► **DATES** Bristol Exchange (February 27), Birmingham Hare

& Hounds (28), Leeds Cockpit 2 (March 1), Nottingham Bodega (2), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (3), Manchester Deaf Institute (4)

► **TICKETS** £8.50 from NME.COM/tickets with 85p-£1.28 booking fee; Glasgow £8.50 from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee

Toy

'Join The Dots' gets another outing as Toy bring their tour to a close.

► **DATES** Newcastle Cluny (February 26), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (27), Liverpool East Village Arts Club (28), Norwich Waterfront (March 1)

► **TICKETS** £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1-£1.50 booking fee; Glasgow £10 from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee

Foxes

Louisa Rose Allen returns to the UK after winning a Grammy for her feature on Zedd's single 'Clarity'. Her debut album 'Glorious' is released at the end of this run of dates, so expect previews of the record's highlights.

► **DATES** Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (February 26), Oxford O2 Academy (28), Nottingham Stealth (March 1), Brighton The Haunt (2), London Scala (4)

► **TICKETS** £8 from NME.COM/tickets with 96p-£1.50 booking fee; London sold out

Rae Morris

The Blackpool singer-songwriter plays her latest single 'Skin' and more in intimate venues in Cambridge and London.

► **DATES** Cambridge Portland Arms (February 26), London The Lexington (27)

► **TICKETS** Cambridge from NME.COM/tickets with £7 with £1.25 booking fee; London sold out

Bombay Bicycle Club

After scoring their first Number One album with latest release 'So Long, See You Tomorrow', the north London quartet hit the road to give the record an airing for the first time since its release. They visit four cities, with more dates in the coming weeks.

► **DATES** Leeds O2 Academy (March 2), Glasgow O2 Academy (3), Aberdeen Music Hall (4)

► **TICKETS** £19 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.90 booking fee; Leeds sold out

Crystal Antlers

On last year's 'Nothing Is Real' LP, Californian trio Crystal Antlers shed the acid-psych sound of their previous records and replaced it with stadium-ready indie rock. They bring the record to the UK for the first time as they play their first dates in the country since 2011.

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A Nation Of Shopkeepers, Leeds
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2. Patten

Rough Trade East, London
 The producer plays tracks from new album 'Estoile Naiait'.
 ► Feb 28, 6:30pm

3. Best Friends

The Old Blue Last, London
 Sheffield garage-punks head to the East End.
 ► Mar 1, 9pm

4. Pixel Fix

The Riverside, Sheffield
 The quartet take their electro-tinged indie to Sheffield.
 ► Feb 27, 8pm

5. Night Flowers

The Shacklewell Arms, London
 The C86-inspired Londoners play the capital.
 ► Feb 27, 8pm



Best Friends



Toy

► **DATES** London Birthdays (February 26), Manchester Roadhouse (27), Glasgow Broadcast (1), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (2)

► **TICKETS** £8.50 from NME.COM/tickets with 85p-£1 booking fee; London £10 from billetterto.co.uk with 75p booking fee; Manchester £8.50 from seetickets.com with 85p booking fee; Glasgow £8.50 from ticketweb.co.uk with £1.02 booking fee

The Preatures

Izzi Manfredi and her band indulge in '70s funk riffs as the Australian band play breakthrough track 'Is This How You Feel?' and more in four cities across England.

► **DATES** Manchester Night & Day (February 28), Sheffield Plug (March 2), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (3), London 100 Club (4)

► **TICKETS** £8.50; London £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee; Sheffield £8.50 from gigantic.com with £1 booking fee

Traams

The Brighton-based trio take a break from supporting Drenge to play a couple of their own headline dates. They'll play tracks from their noise-pop 2013 debut album 'Grin'.

► **DATES** Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach (February 26), Manchester Fallow (28)

► **TICKETS** Manchester £5 from NME.com/tickets with 50p booking fee; Cardiff £5 from wegottickets.com with 50p booking fee



Watch an intimate portrait of Johnny Cash on Sky Arts, March 3

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

Johnny Cash

My Father And The Man In Black

Jonathan Holiff, the son of Johnny Cash's manager Saul, explores the Man In Black's life using hundreds of personal letters and audio diaries. This documentary takes in Cash's marriage to June Carter, his rediscovery of Christianity and his infamous gigs at Folsom and San Quentin prisons.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 9pm, Mar 3

6Music Festival

Kelis, Haim, Bombay Bicycle Club, Metronomy, Drenge and more will play the inaugural 6Music Festival this week and the station will be broadcasting live performances and interviews direct from the event.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, begins 7am, Feb 28-Mar 1

Temples

The Evening Show With Danielle Perry

The Kettering psych crew's debut album 'Sun Structures' recently found its way into the Top 10 on the Official UK Albums Chart. They'll play a different track from the record each night this week.

► **LISTEN** XFM, 7pm, Mar 3

Prince

Sign O' The Times

The purple-loving icon is deep into the flurry of impromptu gigs that will make up his Hit And Run tour in London, causing snaking queues outside venues like Ronnie Scott's and Shepherd's Bush Empire. This concert film relives a more vintage Prince show, capturing footage from a stop on his 1987 European tour.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 9pm, Feb 28

Toddla T

Toddla T In Jamaica

Sheffield producer Toddla T heads out to Jamaica to explore the country's music and its influence on the UK both in the past and the present. He's joined by Jamaican music expert David Rodigan on his journey and chats to the likes of Stylo G and Wretch 32.

► **LISTEN** BBC Radio 1Xtra, 9pm, Mar 2

Damon Albarn

First Time

The Blur and Gorillaz man unravels his life in music as he discusses his success with both bands, his more leftfield work on film soundtracks and operas, and the impact his first trip to Africa had on his love of music.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 1pm, Mar 2



Damon Albarn

51



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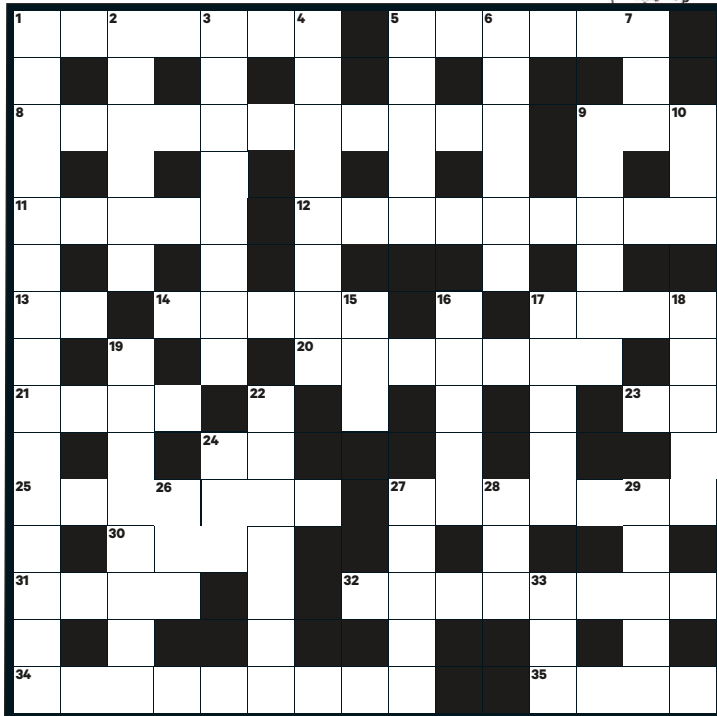
THINK TANK

NME CROSSWORD

Compiled by
TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1+8A** Released February 3. Begins with 'Give, Get, Take'. Ends with 'Where We're Going'. Eleven tracks. Deluxe version available. First single 'Leave This Island' (3-4-11)
5 Franz Ferdinand aimed to bang out another hit (6)
8 (See 1 across)
9 Scottish indie band get stuck into the cheap booze (1-1-1)
11 OK comeback, a bit rusty, with one of The Slits (5)
12+35A It's a piece of cake, jammy, and on the house from Bright Eyes (4-5-4)
13+14A The Longpigs may have finished, but their music just continues (2-3-2)
17 (See 24 across)
20 Find again that it's Chvrches (7)
21 As uttered by Laura Marling before telling us that she cannot swim (4)
23 Paul Simon allowed us to call him this (2)
24+17A A bit of bad rockabilly from Beastie Boys (2-4)
25 No legal basis to complete title of '____ Litter Dept' for At The Drive-In (7)
27 "Strange fascination,

fascinating me/____ are taking the pace I'm going through", David Bowie (7)
30 The tide turned and enabled Art Of Noise to complete 'Close (To The ____)' (4)
31 A strong compulsion to listen to The Wildhearts (4)
32 Manic Street Preachers single, a cover of a Number One hit from the previous year (8)
34+16D Hates tiny audio arrangement to hear act creating 'Total Strife Forever' (4-5-5)
35 (See 12 across)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** "I always said it could, they never said it would/The people are so pitiful I'm thinking that it should", 1986 (5-3-1-6)
2+27D "Who gives a fuck about an _____, I've seen those English dramas", 2008 (6-5)
3 Revolting stuff from Bob Marley (8)
4+19D Nirvana, with the option of the 'Entertainment Capital', for Cocteau Twins (6-2-3-5)
5 Nirvana, only, for Muse (5)
6+10D "Well your mama kept you but your daddy left you/And I should've done you just the same", 2011 (6-3)
7 The Cure were at their height with album 'The ____' (3)
9 Can chorus include title of this number by Cave In? (6)
10 (See 6 down)
15+22D Now I need it in a remix for group that had number one with 'Candy Girl' (3-7)
16 (See 34 across)
17 Terrible anger of girl from All About Eve (5)
18 Finishes off a band with 'Blood Pressures' (5)
19 (See 4 down)
22 (See 15 down)
24 Former UB40 vocalist making a comeback in Milan (3)
26 King Sunny____, Nigerian musician who had the backing of His African Beats (3)
27 (See 2 down)
28 "Red, white, blue is in the sky/Summer is in the ____", from Lana Del Rey's 'National Anthem' (3)
29 Her first name is in 'Lights' (5)
33 Selfish to include Ronnie James Dio's old blues-rock band (3)

JANUARY 18 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 One For The Road, 9 Doyle, 10 Ocean Rain, 11 Neil Young, 12 Idaho, 13 Rumours, 14 No Exit, 16+24D She Wants, 17+19D Love Natural, 22+6D Art Of Noise, 23 Low, 25 Velvet, 26 Hann, 27 Green, 29 Loser, 30 REM, 32 Moss, 33 Total.
DOWN 1 Ordinary Love, 2 Elysium, 3+20A Open Your Eyes, 4 Two Suns, 5 Emergency, 7 Dramatis, 8+34A In Too Deep, 15 Theo, 18 Elvis, 20+21D Ether Song, 23 Lee, 28 Ramp, 29 Lit, 31 End.

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

QUIZ

Compiled by ALAN WOODHOUSE (answers on page 67)

1 Who is Elliot Gleave better known as?

2 Which rock frontman's first band, which he formed aged just 12, was called Autocracy?

3 Which pop star had a small role in Tim Burton's 2003 movie *Big Fish*?

4 True or false? Johnny Marr had trials with Manchester City FC as a teenager.

5 What was The Rolling Stones' first Number One single written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards?

6 Which band guest-starred in *The Mighty Boosh* as The Black Tubes?

7 Which guitarist played the solo on Michael Jackson's classic 1983 single 'Beat It'?

8 What was the first UK Top 10 hit that Kanye West featured on...

9 ...and what was the first under his own name?

10 Including this year's recipient, how many American acts have claimed NME's Godlike Genius award?

11 The cover of which band's debut EP controversially

featured a member of the Hitler Youth beating a drum?

12 Which British pop duo originally called themselves West End?

13 What was the last Blur single to feature Graham Coxon before the band reunited in 2009?

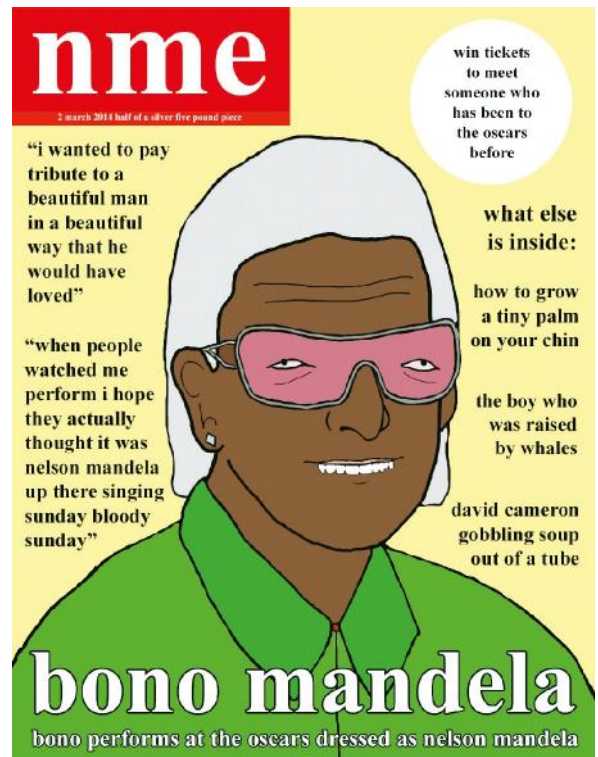
14 Which British album was named *Rolling Stone* magazine's album of the '80s, even though it came out in 1979?

15 Which one-time NME cover stars' only UK Top 40 hit was titled '(I Want To) Kill Somebody'?



THE NME COVER THAT I GONE AND DONE

by CHRIS SIMPSON'S ARTIST





Beck and pal in
his LA apartment,
January 27, 2014

Beck in black

After six years hiding in the studio and one serious spinal injury, Beck returns to the fray with his best record in years. Ian Cohen meets him

PHOTOS BY PAMELA LITTKY

When Beck Hansen was releasing groundbreaking, genre-bursting records like 'Odelay' and 'Mellow Gold' in the '90s, they were thrilling in a way that went beyond the music in the present moment. There was an underlying

assumption that we were actually looking into the future, that 20 years down the road, all music would be this omnivorous and people wouldn't be placing barriers between hip-hop, country, rock, alternative and indie. When 2014 arrived, Beck would probably find a lot to like about it. ➤

Beck catalogue

The many musical phases of Mr Hansen

Not quite.

Forty-three-year-old Hansen and I are in the Capitol Records Building in Hollywood discussing his new LP 'Morning Phase', which he's likened to Gram Parsons, The Byrds and other classicists of "California music" at least four decades old. It's two days after the Grammys, where the major post-ceremony talking points were: firstly, whether it was OK for a white boy in thrift-store clothes to appropriate rap music for a positive message; and secondly, what Kendrick Lamar and Imagine Dragons' collaboration said about the compatibility of hip-hop and rock. With resignation, Hansen admits, "I'm kind of an invisible influence now."

He's got a point if he's speaking specifically about whether anyone sounds like him. "You can hear Radiohead, Arcade Fire and Jack White everywhere. Occasionally I'll hear a mainstream country track with a hip-hop beat and think, 'Is that what I influenced?'" And it's true: Beck's been so self-admittedly scattershot and idiosyncratic in his work that you can only sound like *certain* Beck albums rather than the man himself. "I have to remind myself there's a lot of things on 'Mellow Gold' and 'Odelay' that hadn't happened yet or weren't prevalent. It was a great time – I wish I had made more records in that period. You have that territory to yourself, where it hasn't been subsumed into car commercials."

But in the broader context, "invisible influence" speaks to the idea of Beck as someone who's become an isolated cottage industry over the past decade. This plays a huge role in developing the narrative surrounding his new album, 'Morning Phase'. In some way, he's been more busy and active than ever since his last proper LP, 2008's 'Modern Guilt'. He's

written and produced an entire album for Charlotte Gainsbourg, and produced for fellow '90s alt spokesmen Stephen Malkmus and Thurston Moore. Then there was the collaboration with Bat For Lashes and *Song Reader*, 20 tracks released as sheet music. He gave a handful of songs to the box-office bomb *Scott Pilgrim Vs The World*, and made hundreds more we'll never, ever hear.

Describing what happened after 'Modern Guilt', Hansen tells me, "I would be in the studio every day and there'd be a Caetano Veloso tribute album, or I'd be doing something with [multimedia artist] Doug Aitken – he wanted a version of 'I Only Have Eyes For You'. I didn't tour much, I spent time in the lab."

This reticence to put out an LP sounds like Beck adapting to the times, as the traditional album wanes in both influence and sales. And yet, perhaps because of the era from which he came, people wonder where the next Beck album is, as if everything that falls shy of that format doesn't count in some way.

The six years between 'Morning Phase' and 'Modern Guilt' was long enough, but in reality Beck only recorded a single LP in a solid decade. "People don't realise that 'Guero' and 'The Information' were done 2003-2004," he says. Continuing to release one-offs and singles was tantamount to retirement.

"'Modern Guilt' almost took me out," he says. On one level, he means the arduous recording process: "We were so limited with [producer] Danger Mouse, we'd be in there until 6am, seven days a week, 18-hour days." Beck is notorious for spending up to a year fine-tuning tracks in his studio, but on 'Modern Guilt' admits he was "handing a lot over: 'You tell me when it's done.'"

But beyond the self-imposed recording regimen, there's a more pressing concern Beck was loathe to mention until very recently – while shooting a video for 'The Information', he was placed in a harness for too long and suffered a spinal injury that nearly ended his recording and touring career. "That's not something I talked about a lot,

because I figured it'd get better. I didn't think people really cared."

The physical restrictions prevented Beck from playing guitar and singing at anywhere near 100 per cent, and so, he says, "'Modern Guilt' was like making a record with both hands tied behind your back."

Golden Feelings (Sonic Enemy) 1993



Originally a cassette-only release, these 17 songs put Beck's experimental tendencies at the fore: surreal blues, aggressively distorted guitar, goofy samples.

Stereopathic Soulmanure (Flipside) 1994



A week before the release of his major-label debut, 'Mellow Gold' with its huge single, 'Loser', Beck released this home-recorded, defiantly lo-fi/noise record on an indie.

Mellow Gold (DGC) 1994



'Mellow Gold' was also pieced together from home tapes, but to wildly different – and revolutionary – effect. Rock, psych, industrial, country, folk and rap rubbed together – and it worked.

One Foot In The Grave (K) 1994



Another return to an indie: for this folksy, less eclectic record, Beck turned to K Records, recording in the basement studio of label founder, co-writer and producer Calvin Johnson.

Odelay (DGC) 1996



'Odelay' was almost a sombre record written in the wake of family deaths, before Beck hooked up with The Dust Brothers – who produced the Beastie Boys' 'Paul's Boutique' – for this hip-hop-inspired masterpiece.

Mutations (DGC) 1998



Nigel Godrich's first post-Radiohead production wasn't meant to be the official follow-up to 'Odelay'; while it's as eclectic as that record, it's more low-key, and didn't spawn a single video.



"I wish I'd made more records in the '90s"

Beck Hansen

Unsurprisingly, 'Morning

Phase' sounds like a record of relief; not triumph, but an absence of pain. Gorgeously recorded and evenly paced, Beck describes it as "that moment before dark and light, that in-between space. It's never quite total abyss but it's never bright sunshiny morning either."

It also signifies a transition in Beck's career, one where he isn't expected or demanded to make "another 'Odelay'." Beck's attempts and failure to live up to impossible standards set by that album resulted in – with one major exception – records that were greeted with both a warm reception and soft disappointment.

Though the psych-folk outlier 'Mutations' was the first post-'OK Computer' record to feature the production of Nigel Godrich, it was presented as a stopgap, which is how Beck still sees it. "I'm surprised when I meet a younger artist and they mention 'Mutations', like 'You know that record?'"

'Midnite Vultures' was supposed to be the "new 'Odelay'," but went so deep into funk, hip-hop and R&B that many people understandably heard it as parody, and not particularly sharp parody at that. And of course, by evoking 'Odelay's Spanglish title and featuring the party-starting 'E-Pro', 'Guero' was meant as the sampledelic return to form after the stone-cold-sober 'Sea Change' in 2002.

"In light of
'Yeezus', I
needed to do
something fresh"

Yet on the eve of 'Morning Phase', it's that album, 'Sea Change', that has become the gold standard. As the first Beck album to sound more "timeless" than "ahead of its time", it was initially viewed as a comic actor gone "serious", as a canny, career-shifting move – think Jim Carrey in *The Truman Show*. A classicist, singer-songwriter breakup record influenced by Serge Gainsbourg and Leonard Cohen, it attracted a new audience to its stark confessionals and it received a rare five-star review from *Rolling Stone*.

He's going all in on the 'Sea Change' nostalgia, first bringing the entire band

back – guitarist Smokey Hormel, bassist Justin Meldal-Johnsen, keyboard player Roger Joseph Manning Jr and drummer Joey Waronker. And to top it off, his father David Campbell is back as a string and horn arranger. About three years ago, Beck tried to record many of the songs from 'Morning Phase' in Nashville, but because of his spinal injury "I put it off a few years because I wanted to be able to do it justice and play my guitar". And then he realised what had been missing. "[The band and I] did this Neil Young benefit concert, and all of us came together to play the 'Sea Change' songs for the first time in 10 years. Going back to those songs made me think, 'We gotta do this again.' It took about a year to get everyone together."

Nearly everyone in the 'Sea Change' band has become much less available than they were back in 2002. "They do other things, but I like to think there is a kind of family there. We came up together, we spent years onstage, we figured a lot of things out together," Hansen says. Meldal-Johnsen produced M83's blockbuster 'Hurry Up, We're Dreaming' and worked as Nine Inch Nails' touring bassist, while another former stagehand, Greg Kurstin, has become a Grammy-nominated producer for Pink and Kelly Clarkson.

"It's harder and harder to get them," Beck says. "I'm not like other artists who have a band they can go back to for decades. They've all been really generous, even when it doesn't suit them financially."

But even though 'Sea Change's reputation grows every year, Beck realises that 'Morning Phase' could meet the same initial scepticism. "When we do a show and play something from 'Sea Change', some people will really be into it, and other people are... (*groans*). I like playing those songs, especially when it's an audience that's receptive. It's a record that's more meaningful after people have lived with it."

That phrase "lived with it" stands out, considering the equanimity in the lyrics and the calm of the music on 'Morning Phase'. Will people be able to see themselves in these songs? Undoubtedly, the backstory of 'Sea Change' allowed people to grasp what Beck was getting at – after all, that record was clearly documenting a breakup; Beck had split with his fiancée Leigh Limon after nearly 10 years together, and it also followed the randy, hedonistic 'Midnite Vultures'. Such romantic turmoil is not a part of 'Morning Phase's story: Beck is happily married to actress Marissa Ribisi and is a devoted father. There's also the matter of his affiliation with the Church Of Scientology (his father was also a Scientologist, as is Ribisi), a fact widely acknowledged and occasionally begrudged by fans, but still one that he rarely discusses.

All the same, he claims 'Morning Phase' is "coming out of a much, much less content period" than 'Sea Change'. He doesn't elaborate – his spinal injury? Having to seek out a new label? He hints at more of a spiritual awakening: "In your twenties, there's this kind of intensity and black-and-whiteness to things, and when things go wrong they're unredeemable. There's a point... some people have it when they're 20, some when they're 70. But you realise when the pendulum swings into rough times, you understand it needs to go back to the other way."

Acceptance has indeed become a watchword for Beck, especially in regards to his earliest material. Whereas he had a notoriously combative relationship with new fans when 'Loser' hit – playing extended jazz-punk versions of the song or just not playing it at all, setting fire to his instruments onstage – today he casually treats it like an embarrassing haircut or a silly high school yearbook quote. I'm surprised every time he mentions 'Loser' by name – it's not like Radiohead with 'Creep'.

When 'Morning Phase' gets released, it'll mark the 20th anniversary of Beck's major-label debut 'Mellow Gold'. At the time, it was seen as 'Loser' and 11 bizarre oddities that weren't 'Loser'; as with The Breeders' 'Last Splash', many may have traded it back to the used CD store, but those who kept it have made it one of the '90s most enduring documents. Surely it allowed confused bargain-bin addicts to stumble upon 'One Foot In The Grave' and 'Stereopathic Soulmanure' – and in light of the musty, squalid folk music being traded on cassette in New York and Massachusetts, it's clear some artists have taken the sound and approach of Beck's early years to heart.

What actually came out was just the tip of an untapped iceberg. "There were two other albums I made with Calvin [Johnson] at K Records, which I have," he says. "I had a lot of cassettes I made at the same time that never saw the light of day, some of them rightfully so."

Even if 90 per cent of his work will remain

unavailable to the general public, Hansen's maintained the wild creative streak of his past into his forties. "I made a record in 2008 and kind of shelved it. I recorded maybe 200 songs, or ideas, maybe three or four things that could've been turned into records. I wasn't sure if people would be into it." Some of the material subsequently ended up as single releases, but more intriguingly, he might actually have been trying to follow up 'Midnite Vultures'. "I was experimenting with pitching voices, all these arpeggiated vocals and stark hip-hop beats. But now it's on every pop record. That was exciting six years ago, it was jarring stuff, but in light of 'Yeezus'... I needed to start over and do something fresh and the antithesis of the stuff I'd spent years making."

And really, even if he speaks in terms of pendulums, circles and cycles, 'Morning Phase' is about moving forward, regardless of its backward-looking sound. When discussing the Grammys-closing jam that featured Dave Grohl and Trent Reznor – along with Beck, two of the Last Men Standing from Alternative Nation – Hansen puts things into perspective: "They were always in a higher echelon. By the time the '90s were done, I was only about five or six years in. It's like, 'How is it 2014 already?' Maybe other people feel like the past 20 years have been 50 years, but for me, I was just getting out some ideas. I'm just warming up." ■

Midnite Vultures (DGC) 1999



While the irony-loving hipster character had permeated Beck's records since the beginning, here it seemed bitter and cynical, and even a touch smug.

Sea Change (DGC) 2002



Reeling from a well-reported breakup, 'Sea Change' was intimate, heartbreaking, but comforting at the same time.

Guero (Interscope) 2005



Beck reunited with The Dust Brothers for his ninth studio album, which, in a way, became the official follow-up to 'Odelay' that never was – though without the original's absurd humour and giddiness.

The Information (Interscope) 2006



Move over Beyoncé – Beck released his own "visual album" (of sorts) back in 2006, producing a video for each song to take advantage of the then-nascent YouTube – and a sheet of stickers to decorate the blank artwork.

Modern Guilt (Interscope) 2008



Featuring guest spots from Cat Power, 'Modern Guilt' was a paranoid record touching on suicide, sickness and war, where Beck's familiar sounds were couched within co-producer Danger Mouse's lean production.

Morning Phase (Capitol) 2014



Beck has two records slated for 2014: an as-yet-unannounced project, and this, inspired by 'Sea Change' and recorded with familiar faces Justin Meldal-Johnsen, Joey Waronker, Roger Joseph Manning Jr, Smokey Hormel, and his dad, David Campbell.

"Do you know what I mean?"

58

Neneh Cherry, attitude-packing queen of late-'80s hip-pop, tells Matthew Horton how bereavement and depression forged her brilliant new album

PHOTOS BY ED MILES

Today is a disorientating moment for Neneh Cherry. Over in the UK for a week from her Stockholm home, this afternoon she attended the funeral of her old friend, filmmaker Roger Pomphrey.

Cherry met him in Bristol more than 30 years ago, during her formative years spent forging relationships that would last decades. It's been overwhelming. "It's sad that it takes something like this to bring everyone together," she says in a studio on east London's Hoxton Street, but equally it's been a chance to renew old acquaintances and celebrate the lives Pomphrey touched. "Keith Allen made a really important point at the funeral. He said, 'This is a real thing, we've lost a great friend but we have to remember we're alive.' We're alive!" Cherry's had to remind herself of this once or twice these last few years.

Released last week, 'Blank Project' – Cherry's terrific, soulful but sparse fourth album, made in collusion with British electronic duo RocketNumberNine and

producer Kieran Hebden (aka Four Tet) – is her first solo album in more than 17 years, and the first since her third daughter Mabel was born in 1996. "I think

this is the only album I've made when I haven't been pregnant," she says, laughing. That's how we met her, of course. When Cherry first came to public consciousness over 25 years ago – hanging in a 'Buffalo Stance' and bringing female-fronted hip-hop to the top of charts worldwide – she was seven months pregnant and making headlines for her motherly audacity. "Me and Cam [Cherry's songwriter/producer husband Cameron McVey] and [stylist] Judy Blame went to Jamaica for Christmas 1988 and I don't know how they let me on the plane. 'Buffalo Stance' was Number Five in the charts and we were like, 'OK, if the record goes down we'll just stay here', but it went up!" They flew back, and the ensuing heavy-with-child *Top Of The Pops* appearance

was seared into the nation's memory.

Cherry still peppers her conversation with "D'you know what I mean?"s, like subliminal little reminders of her most famous hit. It's no millstone. "I still love it. It's like a member of my family. We were just a weird bunch of creative people that kind of got it right." She was used to hanging around with weird bunches, from the days she'd divide her time between Stockholm and New York in the aftermath of her artist mother Moki's split from her stepdad (and legendary jazz trumpeter) Don Cherry, to her late teens when she arrived in Bristol in time for a cultural explosion. One such bunch were local post-punk scene-makers The Pop Group, whose drummer Bruce Smith was Cherry's first husband and the father of her eldest daughter. They splintered into various factions, one of which – Rip Rig + Panic – gave Cherry her first taste of the limelight. "That's where I learned to sing and where I also learned a lot about songwriting," she says, but it was still another five years after RR+P's demise before Cherry's debut album, 1989's 'Raw Like Sushi', showed just what she'd picked up.

In the meantime it was all about "hanging with the Wild Bunch". This loose Bristolian collective of "wonderful nutters", as Cherry now remembers them, consisted of DJs, party organisers, graffiti artists and the men who would become trip-hop pioneers Massive Attack. Their fates were intertwined. "Mushroom [Andrew Vowles, now-departed Massive Attack founder] had been helping us out on the TV shows when 'Buffalo Stance'



Let's stance:
Neneh Cherry
shot in Hoxton,
February 7, 2014

came out, and then when they started working on 'Blue Lines', they used our studio in our house in west London. They would come and stay with us for days at a time; I just see them as my family."

Cherry hasn't been entirely absent these last 17 years. She's collaborated with Gorillaz, formed a band – CirKus – with McVey and her daughter Tyson, and made a tentative return with Swedish jazz outfit The Thing in 2012 for the outré (and rather Rip Rig + Panic) stylings of 'The Cherry Thing', a near-improvised selection of (mainly) covers including a sax-fuelled version of Suicide's 'Dream Baby Dream'. It might not have flung Cherry straight back into the spotlight, but it was a chance to get her hand back in while she prepared herself for 'Blank Project'. "It was a way of doing something really fast," she says. "Part of my problem has always been that I'm really slow. It's become a bit of a wooden leg for me."

The death of Cherry's mother, in 2009, was a devastating event, but also revitalised her muse. Her relative silence had been prompted by the difficult gestation of 1996's 'Man' ("My stepdad was dying when we were in the process of recording the record and I was quite unhappy") and was perpetuated by a feeling she was "starting to get a bit repetitive". And then there was her family – husband McVey, daughters Naima (born in 1983) and Tyson (born in 1989, the unwitting star of the 'Buffalo Stance' and 'Manchild' videos), and new baby Mabel – plenty to take your mind off a career treading water. Moki's death changed everything. "Losing my mother – even though I've been a mother since I was 18 – made me understand what being a mother is," she says. It also made her seek solace in writing again, which she did sitting on her bed ("Where I've started a lot of things!"), before gradually bringing in her husband to write together, relying on stream-of-consciousness.

It was McVey who suggested Cherry work with The Thing after he and fellow CirKus member Matt Karmil saw them live. They were named after one of her stepdad's songs after all, and their firebrand freeform jazz was just the tonic Cherry needed: "What I was longing for more than anything was to get that kind of intense release that happens when you get the right people together." Meanwhile, the songs ➔

being worked up on her bed were nearly there and waiting for the right people too. This time The Thing's label boss – Joakim Haugland of Smalltown Supersound – told McVey that Cherry should meet Walthamstow brothers Ben and Tom Page of RocketNumberNine because, Cherry reckons, they're "electronic but in the same kind of spirit world as The Thing". The Page brothers, like Cherry and McVey, were friends and admirers of Kieran Hebden – and suddenly the team was complete.

Neither Hebden nor the Page brothers were the first collaborators on 'Blank Project' though. In a story touched by tragedy, there were sessions too with The Child Of Lov, aka Belgian/Dutch R&B visionary Cole Williams, who died in December. Three tracks – '422', 'Spit Three Times' and 'Cynical' – emerged from the team-up, but those versions didn't make the album, although they may appear as mixes. Cherry remembers an "amazing, talented guy, with such an individual way of recording. In his Amsterdam studio he had a little box he'd built that you'd sing into that just had black foam in it. It made this completely dry sound."

Cut to the start of 2013 and Cherry and McVey were focused on finding a way to record live but with an electronic sound – RocketNumberNine were the missing piece of the puzzle. Their sound's "kind of fearless," Cherry marvels. "It comes up through the floorboards." But it's the songs that grab you by the throat, straight from opener 'Across The Water', a song about the loss of Cherry's mum and complicated relationship with New York. "My dad had a reappearing problem with heroin and New York was always a place where he would disappear back into that dark hole. So 'Across The Water' is trying to process some of that."

It almost didn't make it. Having rehearsed the songs back in Walthamstow in the early



"Dancing has been my biggest medicinal outlet"

"I'm allergic to the industry's money-making side"

Neneh Cherry

part of 2013, Cherry and the Page brothers decamped to Woodstock in upstate New York, where Hebden could spare just five days to make the album. At the end of breakneck but fruitful sessions they had a nine-track album and thought they'd finished, but McVey encouraged them to have a go at 'Across The Water'. Hebden still sneakily removed Ben

Page's keyboards while no-one was looking, but Cherry believes "it tells the truth in its own nudity".

With a "black dog" running through its lyrics, 'Spit Three Times' represents Cherry's lingering depression in the aftermath of her grief. "I was thinking about that duvet-diving syndrome you get into, where your depression – even though it's this hard, black thing that takes you under – becomes something you almost find comfort in. I started to recognise an aspect to that darkness that was slightly addictive." Even among all this gloom 'Spit Three Times' still grooves, and 'Blank Project' as a whole edges closer to the dancefloor with the lithe, kinetic buoyancy of tracks like 'Weightless' and

'Dossier'. Does Cherry dance? "Dancing has been my biggest medicinal kind of outlet," she says. "People used to go out to pick up chicks and guys, but my best friend Andrea and I would just dance together for hours and hours." Is it as easy as that now? "My kids look at us and go, 'Don't', but it's a good place to lose yourself for a little while, isn't it?"

And drifting off into 'Blank Project's world has had a similarly therapeutic effect, with Hebden's habit of settling on the first or second take allowing Cherry to relax into the music and "capture the time we were in. The imperfections are part of what makes it perfect." It hasn't always been like this. "There's usually a stress about the release of a record, where it all becomes a big drama that has to be just right. That's one of the things that made me allergic to the money-making side of the industry, when something becomes a product rather than a body of work."

Cherry says she's not focused on the Top 10 these days. "That's not the motive and I'm glad about that. It's not that I don't care, but I don't really give a shit!" If anything's going to trouble the charts it's 'Out Of The Black', the long-planned, pulsating duet with Robyn, but it's not an obvious hit. All these vital young cohorts though – did Cherry think she'd still be doing this 25 years after 'Buffalo Stance'? "I imagined myself doing this at 60 or 70. For me it's always been about a long journey, unfolding all the way through."

And now it's opened on 'Blank Project'. Why the title? "It was the name of the track in Logic and it just stuck. But also it's about getting away from that whole drama of a new album coming out. It's just a sheet of paper with a few ideas on it. D'you know what I mean?" ■

Ben Page of RocketNumberNine on working with Neneh Cherry



Were you Cherry fans before all this?

"I was a big fan of Neneh as a 16-year-old. It's been wonderfully surreal working

together. If someone could have told me back then that one day we'd make an album together, I couldn't have even begun to get my head around it."

Did she come in with ideas fully formed?

"We were fortunate enough to work with just Neneh's vocals.

Her husband Cameron sent us the stems without the demo tracks and they asked us to do our thing with them – lucky, lucky boys! And the vocals sounded incredible – the strength of the songs was already very apparent."

'Blank Project' feels like the starker counterpart of 'The Cherry Thing' – were you influenced by that?

"We saw a fantastic show in London where Neneh did 'The Cherry Thing' and the raw soulfulness definitely struck a chord. That, coupled with the

heaviness of The Thing. But it's more like we're all coming from a similar approach."

Were expectations exceeded? How do you feel Kieran Hebden enhanced the tracks?

"We all set out to make the best music we could, and our expectations were very high to achieve this. I think the very personal songs that Neneh had written needed a rawness and immediacy, and Kieran was the perfect producer to achieve this. We've been incredibly lucky to work with Kieran."



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Madonna starts the church-baiting small with just a sacrilegious earring in 1983

Who's that girl?

NME, November 5, 1983

Twenty-five years since the release of 'Like A Prayer', we revisit Barney Hoskyns' profile of two Detroit artists on the rise – one a veteran soul slogger, the other a budding pop star playing her first UK show...

Oliver Cheatham's a soul gent who has been flogging his way from the ghetto to French cabaret and back again. In 1983, he looks set to break.

Madonna's a sweet petite fatale who's hustled her ass out of nowhere and within four years of touching down in Manhattan is on the books of the William Morris Agency and Michael Jackson's ex-management Weisner/DeMann. As you'd probably guess from her picture, she's white.

Otherwise, they've a few things in common. Both hail from Detroit, make nice dance music and are brilliant dancers who choreograph their own shows.

On the other hand, you don't need to ask why Madonna is playing Camden Palace, when Oliver is playing Best Disco In Town. One is chic, the other one's street.

You wonder that Oliver Cheatham didn't chuck it in 10 years ago. Yet he begrudges nothing, politely purring his story with a soft-spoken serenity that hints at no injustice. Oliver Cheatham is a man at one with his physical self. He currently has the fine 'Saturday Night'

album out, title track of which, a slinky mellow-down variation on Nora Jean's 'Saturday' of '78, has given him a first breakthrough to a British audience. Better still is the new single 'Bless The Ladies', whose subtle female chorus and slavish drum kick tests Cheatham's voice to its limits, making it stretch a scale from smooth Jeffrey Osborne tenor to spiralling Johnny Adams falsetto.

"I been classified as a Donny Hathaway, I been classified as a Peabo Bryson – all the singers in that low tenor range, with a gospel kind of feel. The difference is my range, which I can sing all the way through. The other guys can hit a high note, but they can't stay there.

"I started out playing keyboards for the Young Sirs, but when we auditioned, people would look at me, ask if I was singing. Time came when they needed someone to fill in for a cabaret date, and they had me sing 'Steal Away' [the old Jimmy Hughes classic]. I been doin' it ever since."

Another label saw the band's name change to The Gaslight, who played for seven years (through to 1974), before Cheatham bowed out. "A couple of the guys was gettin' into drugs, and I had to say, if you wanna destroy your lives, that's fine, but you're not going to destroy mine. I gave 'em the name, I told them I would help them any way I could, but I had to leave."

A long limbo followed. "I'd go to concerts and people would say, Butch [his nickname], what

are you doing? Where you been? All the guys I used to help, like Ray Parker, Reggie McBride, Ralph Armstrong – who were my guitarists and bass players – all of them were passing me by. I had an offer from Motown, but at the time they was deep into those 10-year contracts, and I didn't wanna tie up my life.

"My cousin, Bill Miller, was writing for them at the time, he wrote stuff like 'I Feel Sanctified' for The Commodores. He said, Butch, I can get you a deal, you gotta come out to Seattle, but the same thing happened with The Gaslight, so I ended up going to New York for three months, did a Vegas show at the Drake hotel singing in, believe it or not, French – 'The Look Of Love', 'My Way', that kind of stuff. The three months went by and I thought, well, time to go home again." Would the journey never end?

The man who turned Cheatham's career was shot dead just two days after completing all of Cheatham's tax/insurance/contractual forms and signing him to a new production company: Al Perkins was a Detroit manager who also handled the careers of One Way and Alicia Myers [NB another fine MCA album this year].

"The album is a cross between my style and One Way's style. You know, I would really like to do a song with Wham!, because I know they really liked my record from the beginning. I saw a video of them. I'd like to do a song like Michael Jackson did with Paul McCartney."

And dancing?
"I've always danced, dancing generates me. To stand still is to lose something". ➔

"My inspiration is simply that I love to dance"
Madonna

Oliver Cheatham
shared Madonna's
hometown, but not
her success

FROM
THE
VAULTS



Madonna would agree. Dance has framed and entwined the entire course of her life. Growing up in what sounds like an Italian Catholic sitcom – “eight brothers and sisters, plus two parents” – she was always the family showoff, always the one who was going to hike off to New York.

First, her mother used to twist. “That was the earliest music I heard, Chubby Checker, but then all the girls in my neighbourhood had all these little 45s, every girl group from The Crystals to The Marvelettes, and all those poppy records like ‘The Letter’, ‘Incense And Peppermints’, and ‘Quinn The Eskimo’, those records which I just loved.

“All my brothers and sisters were artistic, too, but I was the most manipulative and scheming. My two older brothers were jazz musicians, and that sort of had the reverse influence on me, because they would tell me my pop music was a pile of shit, they’d scratch my records so that I couldn’t play them. It only made me love pop more.”

Madonna’s esoterically snooty brudders are not musicians today. She is the only sibling in the music industry. At 16, she attended the school of fine arts at the University Of Michigan, performing with its famous dance company.

“For me, it was superstardom from the word go, and I thought, what is this shit, it’s just a home away from home. So I left and came to New York, and it was... hell. New York’s good to me now, but it was really horrible in the

**“For me, it was
superstardom from
the word go”
Madonna**

beginning. Luckily, I got into a dance company [Pearl Lange].”

She also starred in a couple of underground movies: she describes *A Certain Sacrifice* as “very sick”. “It was made by this guy in his final year at NY University Film School. It was sick in this childish kind of way, about this girl who’s like this dominatrix – me, of course. There’s hardly any, like, sex scenes, or anything like that, it’s just implied all the time. She’s got all these slaves, and she leads this really perverted, deranged life, but then this boy from the Midwest comes and saves her life, and makes

her get rid of the slaves.

“Anyway, I get sexually attacked, which you don’t see in the movie, and he goes crazy with revenge, kills the guy and performs this ritual sacrifice, gets all my ex-slaves involved. There’s a scene where we take a bath in fake blood.”

Very artistic, I’m sure. Since then, Madonna’s gone a little more upmarket. Say goodbye to downtown, darling. Currently she’s studying acting and already signed to William Morris, who feed her scripts all the time.

Behind all the canny strategy, though, is a gamine Marilyn Monroe with a voice like Taana Gardner and an unscratchable itch to dance. Her Sire album ‘Madonna’ has a couple of goodies in ‘Everybody’ and ‘Lucky Star’, but is otherwise a formula platter. Producer Reggie Lucas (ex-Miles Davis, Mtume crony, also producer of Phyllis Hyman and of Stephanie Mills’ superb Pendergrass duet ‘Two Hearts’) has only given her what any new maiden of motion needs: safety first.

“My inspiration is simply that I love to dance. All I wanted to do was make a record that I would want to dance to, and I did. Then I wanted to go one step further and make a record that people would want to listen to on the radio.”

What about James Truman’s point in his *Face* piece, that the selling of black/black music takes place largely on white/black terms? There must be problems in crossing from dance to pop chart, especially if you’re a white girl with a black voice.

“It’s strange because I think there are a lot of records that are similar to mine, records which are in the pop chart here, and they come over to the States and they’re considered pop songs just because they’re big in England. Whereas the same kind of stuff coming from America, you’re stuck in dance/R&B charts and you can’t cross over it ‘cos it’s considered black music.

“It’s so silly, ‘cos if you listen to the formats and the chord progressions, everything about it is exactly the same. It’s the problem in America that everything is categorised, whereas in England it’s all one chart.”

Madonna’s not overenthralled with ‘Madonna’ herself. She knows the songs could be stronger. What she wants is a producer who could push her vocally.

“I wanted Mark Kamins to direct me, but ‘Everybody’ was the first record he’s ever done. I have a friend called Steve who’s doing a version of that song, and it’s really full and lush-sounding, which is how it should have been. Reggie I thought might have been able to push me, having worked with Phyllis Hyman and Roberta Flack. The only problem was that he wanted to make me sound like them.

“I now know what I want on my next record. The production won’t be so slick, because where Reggie and Mtume come from is a whole different school. I want a sound that’s mine. There will be a more crossover approach this time. Maybe I should work with a British producer.”

Enough said! So people aren’t “offended” that you turned out to be white?

“It’s changing now, just because people are more aware of who I am and what I can do. It didn’t offend white people, but I think it offended radio programmers in the South. I think that’s just reverse racism.

“In America, Warners don’t know how to push me, whether to push me as a disco artist or as a new wave because of how I look. I’d rather just start another category.

“You just have to be patient. I’m not.” ■

What happened next?

Well, Madonna owned the ’80s and changed pop forever

THE SCANDALS BEGIN

Madonna followed her debut with 1984’s ‘Like A Virgin’, which was produced by Nile Rodgers and became her first Billboard Number One. She also performed at the inaugural MTV VMA Awards, creating what now seems like a pretty tame scandal by appearing fully clad, in a white wedding dress.

SCREEN STAR

After appearing in 1985’s *Desperately Seeking Susan*, Madonna returned to records a year later with third album ‘True Blue’. She gave the Pope even higher blood pressure with ‘Papa Don’t Preach’, a song that covered teenage pregnancy and became a vehicle for discussing Aids on her Who’s That Girl world tour.

SAINTS ALIVE!

1989’s ‘Like A Prayer’ dealt with Madonna’s relationships with her family, and her split from first husband, actor Sean Penn. Although you’d have thought the Vatican would know better than to look by now, they blew a gasket at the video for lead single and title track in all its cross-burning, saint-boning heretic glory.

THIS WEEK IN 1995

25 February 1995 80p \$(US\$3.95) **HOLE 'Unplugged' report**

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The ultimate rock'n'roll interview

Postcards from the Reg

Photographed by Derek Williams

9 770026 636059

Rock it, man!

Fresh out of rehab and clean from drugs, "the biggest solo star since Elvis" talks candidly to NME about coming back from the brink

To recount "probably the greatest rock'n'roll story of them all", NME's Johnny Dee sits down for the first face-to-face-interview with "the artist formerly known as Reg" for four years, to sift through 20 years lost to "cocaine, scotch, cockles and trying to get hotels to stop the wind". "I used to complain about the colour of the fucking private airplane I travelled on," Elton John rants. "I used to complain if hotel rooms had the wrong furniture in them. Once, when I was staying at the Inn On The Park, it was windy outside and I didn't like it, so I phoned up the front desk and asked them to stop the wind. I was a fucking cunt."

Now post-rehab and a friend of the royals, he's happy to discuss his ego trips, his bulimia, his straight marriage, his suicide attempts, his course of lamb's-piss injections and his eight-grams-a-day cocaine habit. "An ounce of cocaine was nothing to me," he says. "I lived through seizures and I would still take the fucking stuff. I'd have nosebleeds and I'd carry on putting coke up my nose. Stinging told me it was God's way of telling me that I had too much money."



RICHEY'S GONE

The search for Manic Street Preacher Richey Edwards enters its fourth week. As police discover his abandoned car near the Severn Bridge, the disappearance of the guitarist remains shrouded in mystery. It emerges that Edwards, who was "in really good spirits" the night before his disappearance, had withdrawn £2,000 in cash over the previous fortnight, shaved his head and handed the band a sheaf of finished lyrics. "If Richey does not want to come back then that is fine," says Nicky Wire. "We just want him to give us a call."

SHADOW PLAY

NME's Tommy Udo sits down with a jetlagged new trip-hop artist named DJ Shadow to discuss the hypnotic effect of his 30-minute single 'What Does Your Soul Look Like?', the virtual antithesis of 'breakneck' jungle. "Music can be very powerful in affecting people psychologically... it didn't begin as entertainment, it was like ritual, to affect people," he says.

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



PJ Harvey - 'To Bring You My Love' 8/10

"Mortality is a big thing on this record and, in this respect, Polly is closer than ever to Nick Cave and Tom Waits. 'To Bring You My Love' is an inspiring rite of passage. Her voodoo's working, alright." ■ STUART BAILIE

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

► **Credit To The Nation's** Matty Hanson reveals that he has suffered two mental breakdowns and was sectioned under the Mental Health Act.
► **Damon Albarn and Brett Anderson** call a "truce" on their long-running public feud. "I got to the point where every time I got drunk I got nasty about Suede. I was just in a bad way but now it's quits," says Damon.
► **Britain's best-known comedic toffs** Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie promote their "arse widening" series *A Bit Of Fry And Laurie*.

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65

DEREK RIDGERS

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

WE FIND THE ROCK STAR, YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS



**Stuart
Braithwaite**

**Mogwai
frontman**

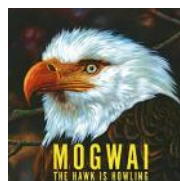
1 Who supported you when you played the Isle Of Bute in 2001?
Kelly Simons, Warwick, via email

"Eugene Kelly, whose music we've liked for years."
CORRECT. Memorable gig?
"It was, actually. It's an old-fashioned holiday town; we bussed everyone over. I remember it being very hedonistic."



2 What's the longest track on your album 'The Hawk Is Howling'?
Graham Jones, Cardiff, via Twitter

"There's a couple of long songs on that. Probably 'Scotland's Shame'.
CORRECT
"We abandoned the editing for that album, so there's loads of long songs on it! 'Let's let it breathe...'"



3 In the 'Hunted By A Freak' video, something gets run over. What is it?
Roger Hawley, Coventry, via email

"Oh, for fuck's sake... That's really hard. Um... is it the rabbit?"
WRONG. A turtle or terrapin
"There was a disturbed child throwing the toy animals off a building. Actually, that video got banned in Japan because there was some kid who did throw all of his pets off a building."

4 Whose voice did you come onstage to at Reading in '98?
Harry Bailey, Ipswich, via email

"I think we came on to [US power metal band] Manowar, so is it Orson Welles? He did the voiceover for the Manowar song ['Dark Avenger' from their 1982 debut 'Battle Hymns'].
CORRECT. Can you remember what he says?
"A load of crap? I don't remember it being particularly profound."

5 Where was your previous band Deadcat Motorbike's last ever gig?

Tim Atkins, Manchester, via email
"Nice And Sleazy."
WRONG. 13th Note, Glasgow.
"That's a long time ago. Who's giving you these answers?"

6 How high did 'Happy Songs For Happy People' get on the US Independent Albums Chart?
Lewis Nolan, Derby, via email

"Eight?"
WRONG. 13
"That's rubbish! That album was a slow starter. No-one told me to go and eye up a Lamborghini because we were at Number 13 in the Independent Chart!"

7 Finish the line: "...it's a term that's based on contempt..."
David Lewis, Bradford, via Twitter

"Yeah, that's from 'Punk Rock': 'It's a term that's based on contempt, style, fashion, elitism, satanism and everything that's wrong with rock'n'roll'. Me and Dominic [Aitchison, Mogwai bassist] were watching old footage of Iggy And The Stooges one night and saw that interview and we thought it was amazing"
CORRECT. Or close enough

8 Which Mogwai song featured in Skins?
Gail Ogilvy, London, via email
"Was it 'Cody'? I've never seen Skins – I just remember the request coming through."
CORRECT



9 How many Peel sessions did the band record?
Laura Cooper, Daventry, via Facebook

"I can actually work this answer out. We did one session when we'd just started going, we did one when 'Come On Die Young' was about to come out, we did a live one when 'Rock Action' came out, then we did a live one when 'Happy Songs For Happy People' came out, and I believe that was the last one. But I can't actually believe we only did four, so I'm gonna say five."
CORRECT

"John admitted to me that he couldn't believe that Mogwai had become popular. In a positive way."

10 What's the painting called on the cover of 'Mr Beast'?
Tina Wright, Glasgow, via Twitter



"I don't know. I remember the lady's name was Amanda."
WRONG. 'Milkbar' by Amanda Church

SCORE = 6

"I'm pretty pleased considering how hard the 'Hunted By A Freak' one was. I've had a look at some of the other ones and some of the bands that haven't been going that long do really shit. Maybe those bands take more drugs than we do."

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Brody Dalle

QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. Example 2. Josh Homme 3. Miley Cyrus 4. True 5. 'The Last Time' 6. 'The Last Time' 7. 'The Last Time' 8. 'The Last Time' 9. 'The Last Time' 10. 'Two - Dave Grohl and Blondie 11. Joy Division 12. Pet Shop Boys 13. 'Music Is My Radar' 14. 'The Clash' 15. 'S.M.A.S.H.' 16. 'London Calling' 17. 'The Clash' 18. 'The Clash' 19. 'The Clash' 20. 'The Clash'

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