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+

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Cocker

Lily Allen

Haim

Drenge

Fat White
Family

Disclosure

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- 4 SOUNDING OFF**
- 8 THE WEEK**
- 16 IN THE STUDIO**
Future Islands
- 17 ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM**
Morrissey – 'Your Arsenal'
- 19 SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE**
Angel Haze
- 24 REVIEWS**
- 40 NME GUIDE**
- 63 THINK TANK**
- 65 THIS WEEK IN...**
- 66 BRAINCELLS**

▼ FEATURES



2014 Awards Special

Alex Turner celebrates no less than five victories. Macca chats to John Cooper Clarke. Damon and Belle & Sebastian discuss their honours. Metronomy, Blondie, Drengé and The Horrors storm the stage. Plus Eagulls and Fat White Family bring the chaos. It's the stone-cold rock'n'roll night of the year and this is your front row seat.

Blondie

From CBGB house band to global new wave and disco megastars, our 2014 Godlike Geniuses relive their spectacular and groundbreaking career. Along the way they talk to Amy Rose Spiegel about the death of the internet, the current stars with the talent to also last 40 years in the business and why they never wanted to be famous in the first place.

CONTRIBUTORS



Emily Mackay
Writer
Emily reviewed Drengé at London's Scala: "The balcony upstairs allows a good view of the heaving moshpits below. The scenes for Drengé were Bacchanalian in their fury."



Hazel Sheffield
Writer
"Swigging Patron, munching pizza and papping Peter Crouch while trying to bag quotes from Jerry Hall and Jarvis – this year's NME Awards were an absolute blast."



Dean Chalkley
Photographer
Dean took our cover shot of Damon, Alex, John and Macca. "It was like the Mount Rushmore of indie unfolding in front of our eyes, with a John Cooper Clarke photobomb."

THIS WEEK WE ASK...

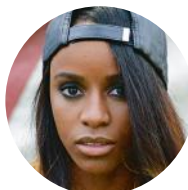


WHAT DO INTERPOL'S NEW TOURMATES

THINK OF THEM?

The headliners are eyed up by NME Tour buddies Temples, Royal Blood and Circa Waves **12**

WHICH SONG WOULD ANGEL HAZE GET A LAPDANCE TO?



And what did she sing at karaoke with Leona Lewis? **19**

WHY DOES TIM WANT TO TRASH YOUR TURNTABLE?



The Charlatans singer on his O Genesis label's destructive tendencies **10**

20 ESSENTIAL TRACKS

12 PAGES OF REVIEWS

31 NEW BANDS TO DISCOVER

THE NME BAND LIST

Angel Haze	19, 42	Kill Moon	22
Arctic Monkeys	44	Klaxons	40
Au Revoir Simone	32	Lady Neptune	22
Ava Luna	26	Letters To Fiesta	21
Axxa/Abraxas	26	Lil Wayne	6
Belle & Sebastian	48	Lily Allen	49
Black Submarine	25	Looks	21
Blondie	49, 54	Los Porcos	7
Brody Dalle	35	Mainland	21
Broken Twin	23	Maximo Prk	10
Cerebral Ballzy	8, 49	Metronomy	24, 49
Charlotte Church	25	Micah P Hinson	25
Chet Faker	6	Michael Kiwanuka	6
Chvrches	23	MKS	49
Circa Waves	12, 35	Morrissey	17
The Clash	60	Mother	21
Coldplay	7	My Sad Captains	27
Damon Albarn	47	Nick Waterhouse	7
Darla	6	Paul McCartney	44
DD Dumbo	23	Radkey	32
Dean Wareham	27	Roger Daltrey	26
Dena	20, 25	Royal Blood	12
Disclosure	48	Run DMC	65
Dornik	6	Sean Nicholas	
Drengé	33, 60	Savage	6
Eagulls	51	Shane Meadows	61
Earl Sweatshirt	6	Sharon Van Etten	6
Elbow	26	Slash	66
Eyedress	35	Slow Club	6
Famy	27	Snoop Dogg	14
Farewell Jr	23	The So So Glos	7
Fat White Family	6, 50	Soak	23
Fiancé	22	St Vincent	34
FKA x Inc	7	Temples	7, 12
Future Islands	16	Tensnake	25
Ghost Twins	22	The Acid	21
Gum	21	The Orwells	30
Haim	61	The Piques	14
Haim	7	The Quiet Boy	23
Hamilton Leithauser	7	The Smiths	14
Hester	21	The Stone Roses	14
Hole	14	The Twang	28
Honeyblood	23	The Wands	22
Interpol	12	The Wytches	33
Jack Garratt	23	Tim Burgess	10, 28
Jarvis Cocker	49	Traams	33
Jimi Goodwin	15	Trans	25
Joan As Policewoman	26	Tune-Yards	7
John Cooper Clarke	44	Vicky McClure	13, 61
Jon Hopkins	13	Wilko Johnson	26
Jonny Greenwood	7	Withered Hand	28
Jonny Owens	13, 61	Wolf Alice	21
Juce	21	Young Thug	21
Kenzie May	22	Zhala	21

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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SECTION 28 REVISITED

I'm sick of reading all that stuff about Pussy Riot and gay propaganda. These deals are not that huge in Russia and there are no laws against freedom and gay rights in my country. There is no "climate of anti-gay abuse", as Debbie Harry pointed out. Gay people can be whoever they want and do whatever they want, our government just doesn't want them to wave their dicks in front of children's faces. **Nastya Kazakova, Russia, via email**



Mark Beaumont: Pretty much every nation in the world has perfectly good laws against people waving their dicks in children's faces, Nastya – they're about public obscenity and child abuse, and if you break them you'll get Yewtree'd to Mongolia and back. That's not what Russia's anti-"gay propaganda" laws are about. They're about not allowing under-16s to learn about, discuss, understand or accept homosexuality. Including the gay ones. You may not personally see anti-gay abuse around

you everywhere, but reports suggest that attacks on homosexuals have risen in the wake of this legislation and a culture of distrust and intolerance is being engendered. And distrust and intolerance, the last time I checked my history books, only ever end in misery, inhumanity, war and death. For a country that's taken vast steps forward in human rights since *glasnost*, this – and the freedom-of-speech clampdown on the likes of Pussy Riot – is a big step backwards.

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POST NME, 110 Southwark St,
London SE1 0SU

Thanks one and all! I was really lucky to see them at The Old Market in Hove recently. Despite the mad woman giving all in her path a good whipping with her cat o' nine tails hair and broken ribs [Er, what? – MB], it was a really outstanding performance and I fell in love with the drummer! Don't tell my girlfriend though. Mum's the word!

Ashley Bambrough, via email

MB: I've told your girlfriend, Ashley, and she's leaving you. She says she never trusted you and that you and Anna from Metronomy are "bloody welcome to each other". I've also spoken to Anna and she says she's not interested, so it looks like you're fucked, mate. Still, glad you enjoyed the article!

NAY-TIES

Here we go again, dredging up the most boring musical decade ever [The 1350s? Man, that was grim. Nothing but plaugerock and ploughgaze – MB], namely the '80s [Oh – MB]. It is as if the New Morrissey Express is some part of a business franchise with The Smiths as we are continually bombarded with how great they are/were. When in fact they were as bland and sterile as all the rest, such as Pet Shop Boys and MJ. At the time I recall you deriding (rightly so) Culture Club's pathetic lyrics – "War is stupid and people are stupid" – but not a word about a crap lyric like "I was looking for a job and then I found a job". What piffle. Now the crowd cannot even see through the emperor's invisible clothes as they vote Johnny Marr as the greatest guitarist above Jimi Hendrix. Give me a break from this blind adulation... please.

Jimmy Decent, Cheshire

MB: Let's study those two "crap" lyrics, Jimmy, and see if we can fathom why one is genius and the other sounds like the work of the recently lobotomised. "I was looking for a job" – a narrative thread neatly set up; "and then I found a job" – narrative thread adroitly concluded. Aspiration and satisfaction, a complete story arc in 13 syllables, given a witty twist when it's revealed that successful employment merely becomes a source of more misery. Now, "War is stupid" – bold if blunt opinion, ignoring a myriad of political, social and economic factors; "and people are stupid" – crass generalisation that doesn't follow. The Smiths win,

blind adulation justified.

Anyway, it's now been mathematically proven by our team of very bored statisticians that 1994 was the best year for music ever. Keep up.

OASIS REUN... UM, REMASTERED

I was all excited [after all the online chatter about Oasis]. I wasn't too sure about a reunion, because there were no rumours of it before, but I thought it would have been a film, maybe, of what they've all gone through since getting together and breaking up, etc. I think I would rather it be a film than a reunion, because I know I wouldn't be able to get tickets and chances are they wouldn't have come to Sheffield. But 'Definitely Maybe' remastered is still good, because it shows they're getting along, especially since Noel and Liam supposedly made up at a wedding or whatever.

Lauren Smith, via email

Partially disappointed Oasis aren't getting back together as I've never seen them perform live before and it'd be something to see Liam and Noel sharing a stage together with my own eyes. Despite that, Oasis' time has come and gone, and it might well be time to move on to something new; the brothers have, for now at least... Give it a few years.

Chris Parkes, via email

MB: Just a few of the letters we've received disappointed that the big 20th-anniversary Oasis announcement was a remastered 'Definitely Maybe' rather than 63 Knebworths. According to the six-year rule of Festival Cheque Maximisation, however, Oasis aren't due to reform until 2015. Keep hoping, though – your dreams are their money.

LOVE LETTER

Fantastic article about Metronomy [February 15 issue] and a CD to boot. What a brilliant bonus!



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

I went to Drowners' recent in-store at Rough Trade and I got this snap with Matt Hitt. He's one of the nicest guys I've ever met and I think the fact that he called me a "lad" means we're now best friends.

Alex Cabré, Norwich

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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Sharon Van Etten
Taking Chances

Most musicians perform romantic post-mortems, slashing dead heartstrings from a safe distance. Sharon Van Etten is no stranger to that, but on fourth album 'Are We There' she's performing open-heart surgery on her extant eight-year relationship. The glimmering verses of lead single 'Taking Chances' give way to a chorus about the sacrifices hidden in any relationship: no matter how long you've been together, there's always a distance left to run.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

2. Sean Nicholas Savage
Naturally

Listen up, Robin Thicke, this is how you do seduction. With his chilled croon lilting over subtle bossa nova beats, Sean Nicholas Savage is an equal-opportunity sleaze. Out of "all the boys and the girls", he whispers in your ear, you're the one he pictures as "you come naturally... Someone so beautiful, coming so easily". Utter filth it may be, but I for one will be trying that line down the Dog & Duck this Friday.

Kevin EG Perry, writer

3. Dornik
Rebound

London imprint PMR really do seem unstoppable. First Jessie Ware, then Disclosure, followed by Cyril Hahn and Julio Bashmore, and now on to Dornik. Were I to claim that he's "the UK's answer to Frank Ocean", it might seem bold, but on the strength of this new single, potentially accurate. Classy synths and polished vocal licks meet the more aggressive house beats of the Lawrence brothers to produce a smooth slab of pumped-up soul. Delish.

Eve Barlow, Deputy Editor

4. Fat White Family
Yellow Woman

The B-side to 'Touch The Leather' sounds like it was recorded in the bathroom of a Brixton crack den – which it might well have been. Underpinned by crumbling Casiotone keys and layered with largely indecipherable lyrics, it's the sound of Spiritualized in the dole queue – a fuzzy, muddy and quite marvellous slab of chancer psych. Whether it will birth a beautiful, bottom-bearing video (like 'Touch The Leather'), however, remains to be seen.

Leonie Cooper, writer

5. Lil Wayne, Nicki Minaj & Tyga
Senile

Fresh on the scorched heels of Nicki Minaj's 'Lookin' Ass Nigga' comes another cut from the Young Money crew's incoming 'Rise Of An Empire' compilation. "I got this shit locked tighter than a bear hug", booms Minaj over demented bells before a rasping verse from Lil Wayne. It's rising Compton force Tyga who carries the most menace here though, barely lifting his flow above a chilling baritone whisper. Brrrrr.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

**6. Darlia**
Candyman

Darlia are without a doubt the best grunge trio ever to come out of Blackpool. In fact, after just one year together, they're probably the seaside town's best export since Syd Little. Less of a nod to Nirvana than a vigorous headbang, 'Candyman' justifies its three-minute existence with ferocious guitar and a typically sweet melody over the top. As exhilarating as a plummet down the Big One, it'll outshine the illuminations and outlast a dozen summer seasons.

Andy Welch, writer

7. Earl Sweatshirt
Untitled

Scrawny fan footage of Earl Sweatshirt performing a new song might not be the best way to introduce it to the world, but Earl didn't care – he tweeted a link, then promptly announced that his next album, after last August's 'Doris', will be called 'Gnososs'. Fans are guessing at a move away from the monotone style he used across 'Doris'. It's impossible to say for now, but this is promising if you like Earl super-animated and spewing rage.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

8. Michael Kiwanuka
You've Got Nothing To Lose

There's no doubting Michael Kiwanuka's talent, but his debut album positioned him as a young fogey, obsessed with Bill Withers, dusty vinyl and authenticity. It caught the ear of another fan of all things 'real' – Jack White, who produces this comeback single. Written in the form of a message to a young child, it blends 'My Sweet Lord'-like strumming with booming double bass and Kiwanuka's husky vocal to blissful effect.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

9. Slow Club
Tears Of Joy

Opening with a very un-Slow Club creeping synth bassline, the first taste of Charles Watson and Rebecca Taylor's forthcoming third album soon sees the duo return to more familiar lovestruck territory. "I'm holding you hard and I'm ready to stay/If you gave me your heart, I'm ready for it", belts Rebecca with all the emotion and power of a soul singer of old over the sort of janglesome pop she and Charles excel at.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

10. Chet Faker
Talk Is Cheap

Having grown one of the finest beards in pop, Chet Faker is now ready to deliver his debut album, 'Built On Glass', in April. 'Talk Is Cheap', the Australian's new single, is typical of Faker's tasteful, bass-driven pop. Like James Blake with added testosterone, Faker's deep voice booms: "I wanna make you move with confidence/I wanna be with you alone". You just know he's not talking about giving dance lessons.

David Renshaw, News Reporter

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Temples Waterloo Sunset

With the first glimmers of spring finally warming the floodwaters, what more apt pairing could there be than The Kinks' classic ode to dusky London romance and Kettering's Helios worshippers, Temples. James Bagshaw's wistful vocal flutters over the group's acoustic daydreaming as though the song was written for him, while Sam Toms makes the standard 'drummer plays the tambourine' acoustic-session trick actually benefit the track.

Lisa Wright, writer

12. Nick Waterhouse It #3

LA soul man Nick Waterhouse hails from the same Orange County school as Ty Segall, but if Ty is the long-haired indie dreamboat, then Waterhouse is the captain of the chess team. Yet despite his buttoned-down Costello aesthetic, he's at the suave end of geek, having already appeared in *Vogue*, *Esquire* and a Lexus ad. Now he takes on Segall's 'It #3', turning the erstwhile 13-minute-long garage jam into something so slick and tinkly it should be served cold with a green olive on a cocktail stick.

Hazel Sheffield, writer

13. Haim XO

This, my friends, is the problem when you try to spruce up the wares of The First Lady Of The Universe: you can meddle with the source material all you like, but it's hard to improve on Beyoncé, isn't it? She's bloody *Beyoncé*. Haim give it a good go with their take on 'XO', though, with its stripped-down slink and slow-jam spaciousness coming on like a straight-up love letter to Queen Bey.

Ben Hewitt, writer

14. Jonny Greenwood Loop

Out of the five new works Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood premiered in a Wapping power station last week, 'Loop' was the standout. Accompanied by orchestral strings, he loops his electric guitar and builds a track that blooms and pulses. It's mournful but electric, disorientating and hypnotic, and out of all the guitarist's classical works to date, has clear sonic ties to the Radiohead idiom.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

15. Los Porcos Disco Gangster

This is what half of Wu Lyf do these days: pretend to be Spanish and make concept filter-disco records about an Italian-American hustler called Tony 'DG' Travolini. 'Disco Gangster' frugs along like Stardust's 'Music Sounds Better With You' before warm, cushiony synths erupt into a ludicrous, cock-waving, fuzz guitar solo straight out of The Isley Brothers' 'That Lady (Part 1 & 2)'. This fretwankery lasts for two whole minutes but still feels agonisingly short.

Matthew Horton, writer



16. The So So Glos Blowout

Garage punks The So So Glos have been around since 2007 but have never got the same recognition as their peers Black Lips and Titus Andronicus. That could all change when they release their fourth album 'Blowout' in the UK this May. This title track is a scrappy, mile-a-minute rattle through rickety riffs and howled gang vocals, teetering on the brink of collapse throughout its three minutes but just about holding it together.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

17. Tune-Yards Nikki Nack Megamix

It's Merrill Garbus' birthday on March 3. And to celebrate, she'll reverse the present-giving trend by offering a 'megamix' of her forthcoming album 'Nikki Nack' to the masses. Due out in May, this hectic taster wades through colourful beats, a collage of hip-hop hollering, TV samples and aggressive soul. As album teasers go, it's clear the next Tune-Yards longplayer will be worth the wait.

Hayley Avron, writer

18. Hamilton Leithauser Alexandra (feat. Rostam Batmanglij)

After years of trying to match The Walkmen's brilliant albatross hit 'The Rat', frontman Hamilton Leithauser has finally racked up the nerve to go it alone. The result is an unexpected one. Far from the gritty howls of his day job, 'Alexandra' is an incorrigibly jaunty ode to his ladylove, full of sprightly piano trills and the kind of chirpy bounce that wouldn't be out of place on a Guillemots record. Who'd have thought?

Lisa Wright, writer

19. FKA x Inc FKA x Inc

At the end of last year, FKA Twigs went to hang out with 4AD-signed purveyors of smooth R&B grooves the Inc brothers in California. The result is another glitchy slow jam from the London singer, but Inc's production bolsters her sultry minimalism, creating something altogether warmer. Moments of soaring electronica meet forlorn vocal falsettos and jittering beats for an intense but utterly compelling listen.

Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor

20. Coldplay Midnight

Coldplay have assumed the role in pop music that *The Da Vinci Code* did in literature – making intriguing and important ideas instantly accessible to the benighted mainstream, advancing culture from the lowest common denominator up. Here, in this Jon Hopkins-produced track, they take on the minimalist falsetto electro-soul of James Blake, The xx and Bon Iver and blow it gently in the face of Fifty Pound Man. Radiohead did this 13 years ago of course, but Chris Martin's lot have kept the tune in.

Mark Beaumont, writer



TheWeek

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The NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas storm Brixton

8
“I love him – like millions and millions and millions and millions of other people,” gushed Damon Albarn, paying tribute to one of rock’n’roll’s biggest legends. And if it was odd to see the Blur singer babbling like a fanboy, he had good reason – presenting Sir Paul McCartney with the one-off Songwriter’s Songwriter title at the NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas.

The coming together of the two music icons, with Damon himself picking up the first ever Award For Innovation, was just one of the many highlights at the February 26 event. Returning to O2 Academy Brixton, this year’s bash was one of the most star-studded ever, with performances from Belle & Sebastian, Drenge, The Horrors and Metronomy with MKS and onstage appearances from Lily Allen, Haim, Jarvis Cocker, Johnny Marr, John Cooper Clarke, Disclosure and many more.

Arctic Monkeys dominated the medal table, taking home five awards including the prestigious Best Album supported by PS4 Infamous Second Son and Best British Band supported by Windows Phone, but the final word belonged to Godlike Geniuses Blondie. The New York deities ripped through a career-spanning set including ‘Atomic’, ‘Call Me’ and ‘Heart Of Glass’, plus a cover of the Beastie Boys’ ‘(You Gotta) Fight For Your Right (To Party!)’. And aptly enough, the party carried on all night.

■ BEN HEWITT

► For full coverage from the NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas, turn to page 44

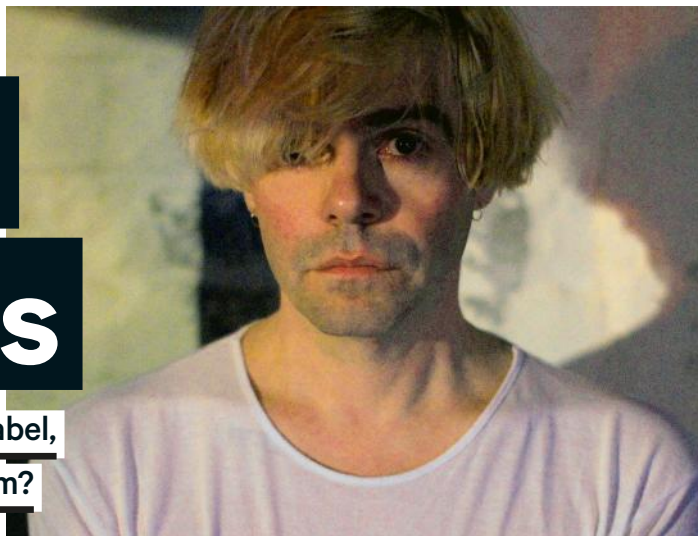




Macca accepts his award from Damon onstage at the O2 Academy Brixton, London, February 26, 2014

Sellin' stories

How did Tim Burgess' label, O Genesis, nearly kill him?



Most artists' record labels are vanity projects, but Charlatans frontman Tim Burgess' O Genesis stable has evolved into a respected home for underground talent over the past three years, as new compilation album 'And Now Our Lives Are Complete' proves.

Founded when Burgess was keen to release Essex singer Joseph Coward, the O Genesis name is a tribute to Genesis P-Orridge, formerly of industrial pioneers Throbbing Gristle. "Genesis left Throbbing Gristle at the time I needed a name," says Burgess. "I said to myself: 'Oh Genesis, why did you do that?' Genesis is the beginning of something, which links to Creation Records, and they're cool too."

Running the label with three friends, Burgess is involved with the minutiae. "I've

enjoyed organising photo shoots and putting our *Welcome To O Genesis* manuscript in mailouts. I'm a skilled secretary."

O Genesis has yet to score a crossover success, but Burgess says: "I'm not looking for a stroke of luck that turns us into Universal Records. I do want to keep going, though, and I'd like O Genesis to fund itself eventually."

Rather than find a Brits Critics' Choice winner, Burgess is more likely to come up with ideas like 'Gold E', a single by label partner Nik Colk Void, whose polyurethane sleeve is playable – but slowly destroys your turntable if you do so. "We had to wear huge masks in a room the size of a warehouse to make them because the fumes were so horrible," he recalls. "It looked like *Breaking Bad*. We made 500 copies and it nearly killed us." ■ JOHN EARLS

MEET THE O GENESIS ROSTER

R Stevie Moore

Tim Burgess: "When I was recording in Nashville, I drove every evening to R Stevie's trailer and he'd devour a box of limes as we talked about music."

Minsky Pops

"They did a great Factory single, 'Dolphin's Spurt', in 1981. I met their singer Wally Van Middendorp and told him it'd be great to hear his band now."

Kurt Wagner

"Kurt wrote the lyrics for my solo album 'Oh No I Love You' and did a spoken-word piece for a remix. He thought I was going to put music underneath!"

Jack Underwood

"I met Jack outside the Apple Store, where he handed me

a book of his poems. He's my John Cooper Clarke."

Asia Argento

"She's the daughter of Dario Argento, the horror director."

Hatcham Social

"I produced their first album and, by the third record, they played in my solo band."

Education For Death

"I was a little in debt by last July. The distributors said, 'Maybe hold off a little on singles by people no-one has heard of.' Then this crazy Italian duo sent me tracks and I had to do it."

Slowgun

"Their single somehow got used on Sky Sports' goals highlights for months."

The Membranes

"John Robb was one of the first journalists to interview me. When his old punk band reformed, I released a split single with *Throwing Up*."

Throwing Up

"I've known their singer Camille Bennett since her previous band, Headless. They're some of my favourite people to work with."

Pavlov's Children

"The sleeves they made are eight-inch, not seven-inch, so they won't fit in my record box. Genius or mistake? I don't know."

Keel Her

"I'd gone from putting out Joseph Coward, a 19-year-old from Brentwood, to R Stevie Moore, a bearded 60-year-old from Nashville. I wanted something in between."

Electricity In Our Homes

"An early band of Charlie Boyer, now of The Voyeurs. Most of their songs lasted 50 seconds; we made a seven-minute epic."

► 'And Now Our Lives Are Complete' is reviewed on page 28



MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Paul Smith



Maximo Park

BOOK
Tree Of Smoke by Denis Johnson

"It's about the Vietnam War, the people who are far from the action but have lots of mysterious things going on... Nobody quite knows what the tree of smoke is."



BOXSET Seinfeld

"We played a couple of gigs in China recently and Tom [English, drummer] bought the entire series of *Seinfeld*."

Once you get used to the Chinese subtitles it's just Jerry and the rest of them. It's good fun."

FILM

Anchorman: The Legend Of Ron Burgundy

"This has kept us chuckling on many a night. We'll get the sequel on the bus soon so we can stop seeing the same thing."

GAME

Registration plate word game

"You have to look at the registration plate in front of you and try and make a word out of the last three letters. I'm looking at one now. CXT – context."

HOME COMFORT
Polaroid printer

"You can Bluetooth photos from your phone and out pops a sticky little Polaroid. I'm going to print out photographs on the road and put them in a diary."

► Maximo Park's UK tour begins March 7 in Bristol

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The fab four

Meet the bands who will shortly be heading out on the NME Awards Tour 2014 with Austin, Texas



► THE TOUR DATES

Glasgow O2 Academy (March 18) ► Leeds O2 Academy (19) ► Manchester Academy (20) ► Liverpool O2 Academy (22) ► Nottingham Rock City (23) ► Birmingham O2 Academy (25) ► Bristol O2 Academy (26) ► London O2 Academy Brixton (27)

Buy your tickets for the NME Awards Tour 2014 with Austin, Texas at NME.COM/tickets



Temples

Slot: Second on the bill

From: Kettering

Who: James Bagshaw (singer, guitar); Thomas Warmesley (bass); Sam Toms (drums); Adam Smith (keyboards, guitar)

Sounds like: Even more faithful worshippers of mind-blowing '60s psych than Tame Impala, with extra glam and grooves to boot.

The lowdown: Hair like Marc Bolan. Blouses your mum would balk at wearing. Spouting gibberish about mystic crystals. If Temples' debut 'Sun Structures' had been anything less than a 21st-century masterclass in psychedelia, they'd have looked truly foolish. But their summoning-the-mystics modern revival of Jim Morrison and Marc Bolan already sounds like one of the year's finest albums. All hail the new Lizard Kings.

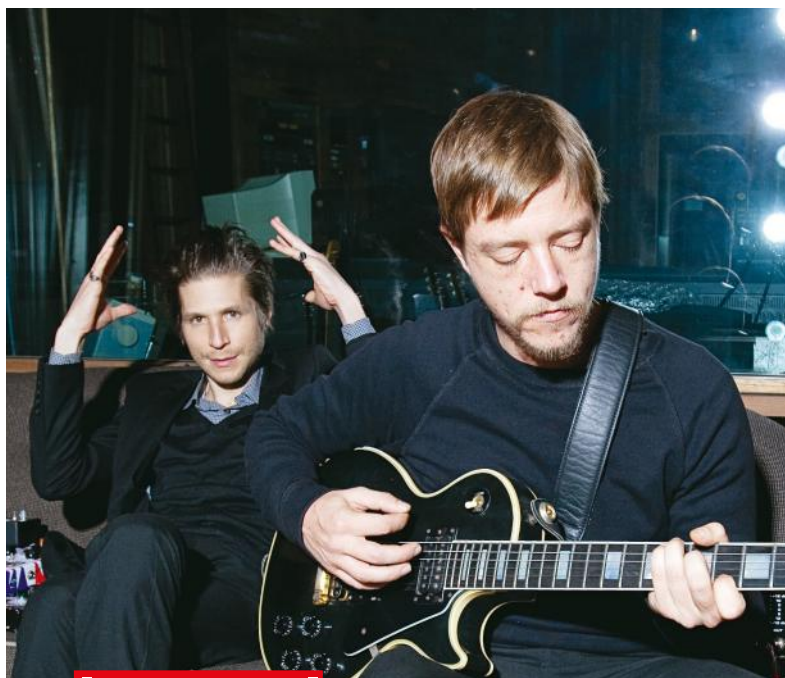
What they're bringing: "We're all about the songs, and our show is a more electric version of what we do on record. Every night is gonna be so different, because we play gigs according to how we feel – we try to never play the same set twice," reveals Bagshaw.

Venue they're most looking forward to playing: "We played Brixton with Primal Scream recently, but it'll be interesting to see how different it is playing there again on an NME bill. Rock City in Nottingham is a cool venue, too," says Bagshaw.

Most likely to: Do a Spinal Tap and bring a replica Stonehenge onstage.

Least likely to: Wear tracksuits.

Look out for: It's already a beast on record, but 'Colours To Life' sounds amazing live, like being trapped inside a huge, fuzzy kaleidoscope.



Interpol

Slot: Headliners

From: New York

Who: Paul Banks (guitars, vocals); Daniel Kessler (guitars, vocals); Sam Fogarino (drums)

Sounds like: They're the none-more-gloomy kings of New York nighttime misanthropy.

The lowdown: 2010 marked the end of an era for Interpol: shortly after they completed their fourth, self-titled album, original bassist Carlos Dengler quit the band. Now, there's a new chapter for the NY group. Playing the NME Awards Tour for the second time (their first appearance was back in 2003), the gigs will be their first in more than two years. "Interpol were a massive band for me when I was growing up," says Temples' James Bagshaw, while Royal Blood's Mike Kerr says: "They're a band we grew up listening to a lot and Ben's drumming style was quite heavily influenced by them."

What they're bringing: "We're still mixing the record and we haven't got a setlist yet, so it's hard to know exactly how many tunes we'll play, but we'll throw in a few from the upcoming album, definitely," says Daniel Kessler.

Venue they're most looking forward to

playing: "I'm pretty excited to be starting in Glasgow – that's where we played our first ever UK show, at King Tut's in 2001," says Kessler.

Most likely to: Bring the hits. With a healthy back catalogue to fall back on, expect to hear the likes of 'Obstacle 1', 'Evil' and 'Slow Hands'.

Least likely to: Ask Temples if they can borrow a top.

Look out for: New songs. With a brand new album on the way, Interpol have said that they will road-test unheard material.



Royal Blood

Slot: Third on the bill

From: Brighton

Who: Mike Kerr (bassist/singer); Ben Thatcher (drums)

Sounds like: Queens Of The Stone Age scrapping with Deap Vally in an alley.

The lowdown: Primal, sleazy and loud, Royal Blood became a sought-after commodity when Arctic Monkeys drummer Matt Helders wore one of their T-shirts during last year's Glastonbury headline slot. The Brighton pair will support the Sheffield band at their Finsbury Park shows this summer too, but first they'll be bringing their two-man chaos to the NME Awards Tour and road-testing material from their forthcoming debut LP. "There aren't enough bands and there aren't enough

risks being taken," Kerr told NME earlier this year. "We're very new to the game but we're actually doing it."

What they're bringing: "I'm hoping we bring something fresh," says Kerr.

Venue they're most looking forward to playing: "O2 Academy Brixton. It's such a legendary venue," reckons Kerr.

Most likely to: Channel the hard-riffing spirit of Jack White and Jimmy Page with their blues-rock voodoo magic.

Least likely to: Disappear up their own backsides with a jazz odyssey.

Look out for: Carnage. At a gig in Brighton last year, Kerr tripped over his guitar pedalboard and sacrificed his own instrument to save his skin. "I threw my guitar backwards, landed on it, and it snapped clean in half," he says.

Circa Waves

Slot: Openers

From: Liverpool

Who: Kieran Shuddall (guitar/vocals); Joe Falconer (guitar); Sam Rourke (bass); Sian Plummer (drums).

Sounds like: The long-lost offspring of The Strokes and The Libertines.

The lowdown: "It's the coveted slot, isn't it?" says Circa Waves frontman Kieran. "A lot of other great bands have had that spot, so it's a pleasure." Talk about an understatement: Franz Ferdinand, Peace, Azealia Banks and Coldplay have all used the hallowed opening slot on the NME Awards Tour as the springboard for success. But then, Liverpool lot Circa Waves have already batted away shitloads of hype and carried on making some of the liveliest, most epic-sounding guitar tunes around, including last year's debut single 'Get Away'/'Good For Me'.



What they're bringing: "The early-2000-y, indie kinda sound. I don't know if there's anyone else on the tour like that – Interpol are darker, Royal Blood are rockier," says Shuddall.

Venue they're most looking forward to playing: Shuddall: "Liverpool will be great, because we're playing to our home crowd in one of the best venues in the city."

Most likely to: Be anointed as the new saviours of British rock'n'roll.

Least likely to: Shit themselves when the time comes to back up the talk.

Look out for: Band-name high jinks. Their first gigs were played under the pseudonyms Malkovich Malkovich and Wet Wet Wet Wet Wet in order to keep the talent scouts at bay.

THE MINI INTERVIEW



Jonny Owen and Vicky McClure

Stars of new music movie *Svengali*

Your film *Svengali* is out this month. What can we expect?

Jonny: "It's about a music manager, and it came from a series of five-minute webisodes. Because I had an hour and a half to play with, I was able to bring in the band, The Premature Congratulations, and make it more reflective of how the music industry is. NME is in there, plus a couple of surprise cameos."

Vicky, how's the new series of *This Is England* coming along?

Vicky: "We did a bit of rehearsing for *This Is England '90* before Christmas. [Writer/director] Shane Meadows has a specific way of working and this is how it starts."

Shane's *Made Of Stone* just won Best Film at the NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas. What did you make of it?

Vicky: "It's an amazing documentary. The way it was shot was very Meadows, which I love."

You two DJ together. What kind of stuff do you play?

Johnny: "Yeah, we've done everything from Jake Bugg's birthday party to a Pretty Green launch. I play '60s beat bands, Manchester and indie."

Vicky: "I cover the Motown and reggae side of things."

Academy rewards

As the O2 Academy Brixton turns 30, its former owner looks back at some of the venue's pivotal moments

Last week's raucous NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas at O2 Academy Brixton came as the much-loved venue celebrates its 30th anniversary. In that time it has witnessed everything from The Smiths' last-ever show to Kylie duetting with Nick Cave and Pete Doherty dangling Kate Moss out of a backstage window. Former owner Simon Parkes was just 23 when he launched the Academy as a venue, and as he publishes his memoir of three riotous decades, *Live At The Brixton Academy*, he guides us through five moments that made the Academy what it is today. ■ KEVIN EG PERRY

The times it survived the riots

"When the 1985 riots broke out, I wasn't worried about the Academy being attacked because we were putting on bands that everyone in the community wanted to see. I was more concerned that as the police station was just across the road one of the petrol bombs might set fire to the building. There was another riot in 1995 while there was a gig on. The police asked the band to keep playing. It was the longest encore we ever had!"



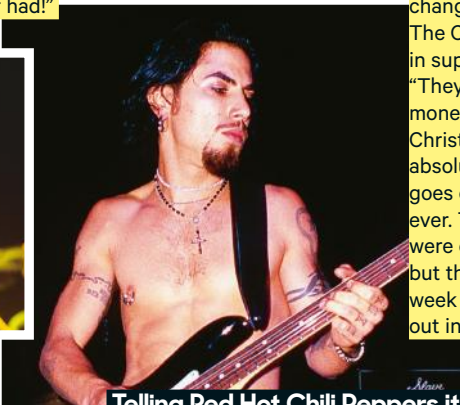
The countless memorable gigs

"There's no sound like the roar of a crowd when a band comes back on for the encore after a cracking gig," says Parkes, "and we had some great ones. We had Beastie Boys and Run-DMC, when Run-DMC blew the Beasties off the stage. James Brown (above). Bob Dylan. Radiohead on 'The Bends' tour. The Rolling Stones played an extra hour, so they must have enjoyed it. You can't get bigger than that, can you?"



The night The Clash played Arthur Scargill's Christmas party

In the early days the venue focused on reggae as Brixton was considered "too dodgy" an area for rock bands to play. That changed in December 1984 when The Clash played several nights in support of the miners' strike. "They did five nights to raise money for the miners' children's Christmas presents. It was absolutely outstanding and still goes down as one of the best gigs ever. The place went mental. They were only booked in for two nights but they came back the following week and did another three. It sold out in minutes."



Telling Red Hot Chili Peppers it was next door to Buckingham Palace

Brixton's reputation might have put off some British bands, but Parkes knew that Americans would be less troubled by it. "I put together a presentation for Chili Peppers' agent. It showed Brixton as 10 minutes from Buckingham Palace, which is stretching the truth, and that the Hammersmith Odeon and the Albert Hall are 25 minutes from it. Job done."

The day it was bought for a quid

The venue had been built as a cinema and theatre and briefly operated as a venue, but by 1982, when Parkes first visited, it was lying empty. "It was owned by a brewery who had ended up with it as it had been used as collateral on a loan by a previous enterprise. I didn't have the £120,000 they wanted, but I convinced them to sell it to me for £1 in exchange for a 10-year beer deal. It would have sat empty, so they had nothing to lose."

FIVE OF THE BEST BRIXTON GIGS

The Smiths

December 12, 1986
The last time Morrissey and Marr played together was at this Artists Against Apartheid show, which ended with a stage invasion.

Snoop Dogg May 16, 1993
Before Snoop previewed his classic debut album with Dr Dre alongside him, the pair sent a three letter catering rider: "KFC".

Hole May 4, 1995
The year after the Nirvana shows that never were, Courtney Love's band moved up a level here.

The Stone Roses

December 9, 1995
As the first UK venue to get a 6am licence, the Roses took advantage of its all-night raves and played one of their best gigs ever.

The Pogues

December 21, 2001
The Pogues reformed for this Christmas tour. Their festive shows have now become an annual event.



(Left) Giggs' London show in October 2013 was cancelled by police. (Inset) Omar Souleyman



IT'S TIME TO STOP CRIMINALISING THE GRIME SCENE

BY JME, RAPPER

With events cancelled and police advising venues about security risks, the authorities won't let the UK grime scene prosper, says the north London MC



On Saturday, March 1, me, Big Narstie, Omar Souleyman, Krupt FM and a bunch of other artists were meant to play a show called Just Jam at London's Barbican arts centre. Not particularly a 'grime show'. Definitely not a grimy venue. But the City Of London police apparently advised against it going ahead, a couple of days before we were supposed to play, for 'security reasons'. Eventually, the best we could do was a live stream of the show with all the acts, at a secret location in north London, and a crowd of about 50 people. Unfortunately, if you make a life for yourself in grime, you get used to feeling like you're being hounded around town, doing secret shows and underground raves. No-one wants to take a chance

on booking you, because the police have effectively had the scene under house arrest for the better part of a decade.

It's not as if we're all desperate for it to kick off – we're all trying to make money and promote our careers. If trouble starts at a show, that's the worst thing that can happen for any of us. Yet time and again – from Skepta being banned at the O2, to Giggs having permission revoked for his show in Chelsea – it seems that the police are arbitrary in their decisions, yet have to answer to no-one for them.

For guys like me – a don't-drink, don't-smoke, university-educated vegan just trying to do what I do – it's not a lot of fun. In any other genre you'd be making the bulk of your money from live shows and touring. In Britain today, that's not an option for grime stars. Hence why we all have to sell T-shirts, caps, branding, so we can keep on doing the music we love.

One of the key problems is that, despite everything that's happened since the introduction of the notorious Form 696 governing applications for live music licences, there is still no dialogue between

the authorities and the grime scene. They shut down shows without being bound by any appeals process: their word is law. And certainly, in all my time, we've never been given a consistent representative to talk to, or indeed any representative at all. The problem often seems to be ignorance on their part: if I could suggest one thing, it'd be to create a special squad responsible for policing these events, or to make one person responsible.

Sadly, I'd say there's still institutional racism in the Met. Of course, on an individual level, a lot of them are very level-headed, and many of them even like the same music. But collectively, there's an information gap. For things to change, it would take the whole grime community to step up and say: "Listen, we want to know what's going on, and we want to have a dialogue around this." But no-one's willing to do that because us artists all feel life is too short. We just adapt and move on to the next idea rather than trying to change the system. ■

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

LOST ALBUMS

#19

Alexander Spence

Oar (1969)

Chosen by Jimi Goodwin, Doves



"What an unbelievable record. It was reissued in the early '90s, which was when I heard it. Spence was the guitarist in the '60s psychedelic band Moby Grape. He wasn't in a good place mentally when making this; he'd just come out of hospital [he'd been committed for attacking his bandmates with an axe during a delusional episode], and you can hear that. He went into the studio for a week-long session and played it all himself. It sounds like he was writing directly to tape – it's so fluid and you don't know where the song is going next. I'm not sure he knew."



► THE DETAILS

- **RELEASE DATE**
May 19, 1969
- **LABEL** Columbia
- **BEST TRACKS** Cripple Creek, Little Hands
- **WHERE TO FIND IT** The album was reissued on CD in 2005
- **LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

IN THE STUDIO

Future Islands:
(l-r) Sam
Herring, William
Cashion, Gerrit
Welmers

The studio-hating
synthpop trio from
Baltimore have
recorded album
four in a “bells
and whistles”
place in New York

Future Islands



is stadium-sized synth rock that's effortless and without guile.

“The live room at Dreamland is the sanctuary of the church with 30-foot ceilings and stained-glass windows,” says Herring. “That room had its own kind of vibe that couldn't be totally controlled. That fed in to what we do.” As did the fact that Gerrit Welmers played a lot of the keyboards live instead of just programming them. “Chris Coady loaves old synths – he's an enthusiast and a collector,” says Herring. “When we first met him he said to Gerrit that every synth sound on the demos, which were all from computers, would need to be played on each original, old synth. That scared the hell out of Gerrit, but in the end Chris had to concede a number of times

that the sound Gerrit had got was actually better than the originals.”

The other big change was with Herring's vocals. “In the past I've wanted the vocals to be pushed down a bit in the mix, so when I break out they pop,” he says. “Even if I asked Chris to do that, he would ignore me. But in the end I liked it. It's the most direct I've ever sounded. That's the way it needed to be, because we want the songs to speak directly to people, for people to think about the words, for the stories to be clear.” Those stories,

says Herring, are about “childhood, self-doubt and self-belief”. Now, Future Islands want to get out there and start playing it live, at bigger venues, to more people. As Herring says: “It's what we live for.”

■ CHRIS COTTINGHAM

Sam Herring is on a high. The frontman with Baltimore synthpop three-piece Future Islands has just this morning returned from a “mindblowing” European mini-tour. “Paris was the highlight,” he says. “Y'know, when you walk onstage and everyone is already going crazy. I love being onstage. It makes me feel strong. You can share truths about your life and connect with people. That's all we want to do with our music.”

By contrast, Herring finds recording “tedious”, hates “having to replay a bassline five times over” and can't stand the way high-end studios are built to “control sound” when all he wants to do is run free. So cutting album four, ‘Singles’, could well have been the most tiresome process in the band's eight-year career. Previous records were

made in home studios, but for ‘Singles’ they travelled to Dreamland in upstate New York, “a proper set-up with a big board and all of the bells and whistles”. Big '80s names such as The B-52s, Suzanne Vega and 10,000 Maniacs worked there – plenty of scope for long-winded, meticulous song crafting, in other words.

If the process ran contrary to Herring's natural instincts, you wouldn't know it: the result is Future Islands' most direct and vibrant work to date. Producer Chris Coady (Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Yuck, Beach House) helped them shape a more polished take on their fusion of indie and electronics. ‘Spirit’ is a joyous tumble of crystalline keys and Herring's acrobatic tenor, while

‘Back In The Tall Grass’ dials down the tempo and folds a chugging bass into the mix. The overall effect

▶ THE DETAILS

- ▶ **TITLE** Singles
- ▶ **RELEASE DATE** March 24
- ▶ **PRODUCER** Chris Coady
- ▶ **RECORDED** Dreamland, New York
- ▶ **TRACKS** Seasons (Waiting On You), Spirit, Sun In The Morning, Doves, Back In The Tall Grass, A Song For Our Grandfathers, Light House, Like The Moon, Fall From Grace, A Dream Of You And Me
- ▶ **SAM HERRING SAYS** “It's the most polished, but also the most natural, album we've ever done.”

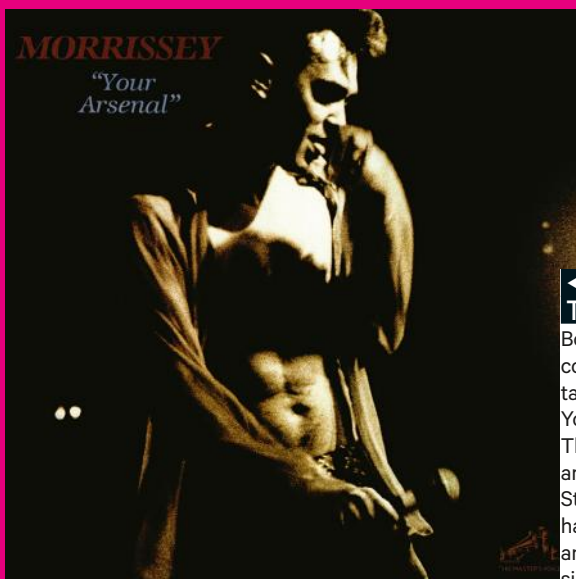
“I LOVE BEING ONSTAGE. YOU CAN SHARE TRUTHS ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND CONNECT WITH PEOPLE”
SAM HERRING



ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"I WANTED TO MAKE A PHYSICAL RECORD" Morrissey



STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

Both the front and back cover images are live shots taken at a 1991 gig at New York's Nassau Coliseum. The photographer was visual artist and punk singer Linder Sterling, whom the singer has described as "steadfast and constant in [his] life" since they met in 1976.

THIS WEEK...

Morrissey: Your Arsenal

Morrissey's third solo album, reissued this week, found him in fighting form

THE BACKGROUND

Following the dissolution of The Smiths in August 1987, Morrissey wasted no time in forging ahead on his own. 'Viva Hate', his solo debut, was released just eight months after the split and topped the charts, its singles 'Everyday Is Like Sunday' and 'Suedehead' ranking among his finest work. 'Kill Uncle', released in 1991, failed to ignite the same sparks, only reaching Number Eight, while its two singles ('Our Frank' and 'Sing Your Life') both failed to enter the Top 20. Come 1992, with a new backing band in tow, it was time for Morrissey to launch a fresh, reinvigorated attack. And, with the tellingly titled 'Your Arsenal', that's precisely what he did.

FIVE FACTS

- 1 The album's producer – ex-Spider From Mars guitarist Mick Ronson – passed away less than a year after the album was completed. "Mick certainly saved 'Your Arsenal', and by extension, he saved me," said Morrissey.
- 2 The minimal sleeve notes include a line stating that Morrissey's stomach scar, visible on the front cover, was "courtesy of Davyhulme Hospital" – the result of an earlier appendix removal.
- 3 When Morrissey pointed out the resemblance of a portion of 'I Know It's Gonna Happen Someday' to Bowie's 'Rock 'N' Roll Suicide', Ronson replied: "I wrote that original piece for 'Rock 'N' Roll Suicide', so there won't be any legal comeback."
- 4 'Your Arsenal' marked the first recorded outing of Morrissey's new band, including Alan Whyte and Boz Boorer on guitars, Gary Day on bass and drummer Spencer Cobrin. Boorer remains with him to this day.
- 5 The album lost out to Tom Waits' 'Bone Machine' at the Grammys. Two decades later, Morrissey claims, Waits sent him a message saying he could have the award if he wanted it.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"I am a poor freezingly cold soul/So far from where I intended to go" – 'Seasick, But Still Docked'

The track is said to have taken its influence from Joni Mitchell's 'The Silky Veils Of Ardor', which begins: "I am a poor wayfaring stranger/ Travelling through all these highs and lows".

"We hate it when our friends become successful" – 'We Hate It When Our Friends Become Successful'

In *Autobiography*, Morrissey wrote, "When my old friend Simon Topping [of A Certain Ratio] appeared on the cover of *NME*, I died a thousand deaths of sorrow and lay down in the woods to die."

"We look to Los Angeles for the language we use/London is dead" – 'Glamorous Glue'

"The English language," opined Morrissey in 1989, "has been hopelessly mucked about with and everything is American or Australian. It's astonishing, but it's so rife." The singer would later move to LA.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"This album is, if not a revelation, certainly less than a war crime. It ought to have been his tombstone, instead it is a milestone. Of sorts. If you still hate it"

THE DETAILS

►RECORDED March 1992 ►RELEASE DATE July 27, 1992 ►LENGTH 39:45 ►PRODUCER Mick Ronson ►HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 4 ►UK SALES 100,000+ ►SINGLES You're The One For Me, Fatty, We Hate It When Our Friends Become Successful, Certain People I Know, Glamorous Glue, Tomorrow ►TRACKLISTING ►1. You're Gonna Need Someone On Your Side ►2. Glamorous Glue ►3. We'll Let You Know ►4. The National Front Disco ►5. Certain People I Know ►6. We Hate It When Our Friends Become Successful ►7. You're The One For Me, Fatty ►8. Seasick, Yet Still Docked ►9. I Know It's Gonna Happen Someday ►10. Tomorrow

when Morrissey becomes successful, tune in. The Queen's not dead." **Andrew Collins, NME, July 25, 1992**

WHAT WE SAY NOW

'Your Arsenal' was a statement of bullish intent, a headstrong return to form. And in the sweeping sadness of 'Seasick, Yet Still Docked', Morrissey proved that he was still untouchable when it came to melancholy songwriting.

FAMOUS FAN

David Bowie covered 'I Know It's Gonna Happen Someday' on his 'Black Tie White Noise' album. "It occurred to me that he was spoofing one of my earlier songs," he explained. "And I thought, I'm not going to let him get away with that."

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I didn't want to use a lyric sheet. I wanted to make as physical a record as I possibly could instead of constantly being curled up in a little ball at the foot of the bed." **Morrissey, 1992**

THE AFTERMATH

Follow-up 'Vauxhall & I' gave Moz his second solo Number One. A seven-year hiatus followed 1997's 'Maladjusted', ending with 2004's outstanding 'You Are The Quarry'. He will issue his 10th solo album this year.

NEWS DESK



THE NUMBERS

2

Broken fingers on NME Awards by 3am on the night of the ceremony. Owners: Lily Allen and Eagulls

60

Stitches Sky Ferreira needed after injuring her leg performing as support for Miley Cyrus

15

Number of new songs Blur have recorded, according to Damon Albarn

£15

Price of a bag of James Murphy's signature coffee, House Of Good

BIG MOUTH

"It's an homage, not a pisstake. #SHEEZUS"

LILY ALLEN explains how Kanye West influenced her new album title



THE BIG QUESTION

FOLLOWING 'MIDNIGHT', CAN COLDPLAY REINVENT THEMSELVES?



Elizabeth Sankey
Summer Camp
"I kind of love

Coldplay, and I think it's never too late to do a 180 turn in a career. I mean, just look at Matthew McConaughey!"



Al Horner
Assistant Editor, NME.COM
"I like the idea of

Chris Martin as a secret troll who's spent the last 15 years making Coldplay into a stadium band only to deliver a set full of weirdo electronica to a bemused Wembley Arena."



Georgia Ivey
NME reader
"Coldplay are too much of a niche band

to reinvent themselves. They can always try new things, but songs like 'Yellow' will epitomise them for the rest of their careers."



WHO THE FUCK IS...



Natalie Hynde

She's the daughter of Pretenders singer Chrissie Hynde and Kinks frontman Ray Davies, who was found guilty of "besetting" a potential fracking site in a superglue-based protest.

What did she superglue herself to?

Not 'what' but 'who'. Hynde adhered herself to fellow protester Simon Medhurst at the Sussex site in July last year.

Was she inspired by her mum's hit, 'I'll Stand By You'?

No, as she explained: "I wanted it to look peaceful, with the hands around the gate, and superglue seemed fast... I thought it would be a good thing to try."



Katy Perry

Katy Perry this week turned emergency midwife when a friend went into labour at her house. "Finally, you can add 'Helps deliver babies in living rooms' to my resumé," she tweeted.



Tim Lambesis

The As I Lay Dying frontman pleaded guilty to plotting to kill his wife. The singer paid a police officer posing as a hitman \$1,000 (£630) to kill Meggan Lambesis, and now faces up to nine years in prison.

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK

AND FINALLY

Chiptune

Lady Gaga has been refused permission to perform inside a giant Doritos vending machine at South By Southwest on public safety grounds. Which seems tortilla-ly unfair.

Barking mad

Rock titan Ted Nugent has apologised for calling US President Barack Obama a "subhuman mongrel". The comments came amid rumours Nugent may run for president in 2016.

Only way is up

TOWIE's Joey Essex is the face of a new dance compilation called 'Essex Anthems'. The sound running through the album is that of the four horseemen of the apocalypse.

► Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS MARCH 2, 2014



NEW
01

Present Tense Wild Beasts DOMINO

On their fourth album, Wild Beasts explore a wide range of influences, from electronic producers such as Clams Casino to WWE wrestling. 'Present Tense' not only conquers this week's Official Record Store Chart but also triumphantly scales the heights of the Official UK Albums Chart, making its presence felt at Number 10.

NEW 2	Morning Phase	Beck	EMI
NEW 3	St Vincent	St Vincent	LOMA VISTA
NEW 4	Sun Structures	Temples	HEAVENLY
NEW 5	Blank Project	Neneh Cherry	SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND
NEW 6	AM	Arctic Monkeys	DOMINO
NEW 7	If You Wait	London Grammar	METAL & DUST
NEW 8	Chronicles Of Gnarnia	Gnarwolves	PURE NOISE
NEW 9	Bad Blood	Bastille	VIRGIN
NEW 10	So Long, See You Tomorrow	Bombay Bicycle Club	ISLAND
NEW 11	Settle	Disclosure	PMR
NEW 12	Burn Your Fire For No Witness	Angel Olsen	JAGJAGUAR
NEW 13	The River & The Thread	Rosanne Cash	DECCA
NEW 14	Rave Tapes	Mogwai	ROCK ACTION
NEW 15	Days Are Gone	Haim	POLYDOR
NEW 16	The Whippoorwill	Blackberry Smoke	EARACHE
NEW 17	Warpaint	Warpaint	ROUGH TRADE
NEW 18	Acoustic At The Ryman	Band Of Horses	BROWN
NEW 19	Working Out	Arthur Beatrice	POLYDOR
NEW 20	Transgender Dysphoria Blues	Against Me	XTRA MILE
NEW 21	Your Arsenal	Morrissey	RHINO
NEW 22	Halcyon	Ellie Goulding	POLYDOR
NEW 23	After The Disco	Broken Bells	COLUMBIA
NEW 24	Peroxide	Nina Nesbitt	ISLAND
NEW 25	High Hopes	Bruce Springsteen	COLUMBIA
NEW 26	Pure Heroine	Lorde	VIRGIN
NEW 27	Spaces	Nils Frahm	ERASED TAPES
NEW 28	Pale Green Ghosts	John Grant	BELLA UNION
NEW 29	The Full English	The Full English	TOPIC
NEW 30	Benji	Sun Kil Moon	CALDO VERDE
NEW 31	Gach Sgeul - Every Story	Julie Fowlis	MACHAIR
NEW 32	Fuck Off Get Free	Thee Silver Mt Zion	CONSTELLATION
NEW 33	Jake Bugg	Jake Bugg	MERCURY
NEW 34	Little Red	Katy B	RINSE
NEW 35	The Next Day	David Bowie	RCA
NEW 36	Emmaar	Tinariwen	WEDGE
NEW 37	Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not	Arctic Monkeys	DOMINO
NEW 38	Estoire	Naiant Patten	WARP
NEW 39	Random Access Memories	Daft Punk	COLUMBIA
NEW 40	Shangri La	Jake Bugg	MERCURY

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 BLACKCAT RECORDS TAUNTON FOUNDED 2007

WHY IT'S GREAT Dedicated staff and a wide selection of music spanning all genres.

TOP SELLER THIS WEEK Sun Kil Moon - 'Benji'

THEY SAY "Blackcat offers a dry and ready wit, a ridiculous interest in collecting LPs, and idle chit-chat about all things musical."

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



One Direction



Nelly



Angel Haze

Rapper

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING 'Hot In Herre' - Nelly

"I was maybe nine or 10 and had just moved to New York. I was on 161st Street and a car drove by playing 'Hot In Herre' and I was like, 'Whaaaat?' Growing up in [US religious group] the Greater Apostolic Faith, I'd never heard that shit. I'd had no exposure to music – like, none at all – so when my family moved away and all of a sudden I was surrounded by these sounds I had no idea existed, it was insane."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN 'I Knew You Were Trouble' - Taylor Swift

"You know how much money that song must have made? I'd have totally cleaned up if I wrote that song! Seriously though, I walk around my house for weeks at a time singing that shit. She's super-talented. It's also the song I'd get a lap dance to."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE 'What Makes You Beautiful' - One Direction

"If someone puts that on in a club, I don't care what

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD 'Dancing On My Own' (Robyn cover) - Kings Of Leon

"I've been singing this for days now. Robyn's original is awesome but Kings Of Leon do an epic job of covering it. 'Supersoaker' is a total jam too. I'm a bit of a Kings Of Leon super-geek."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO 'Echelon' - Angel Haze

"I literally cannot deal with this song any more. Whenever I listen to my album, it's the second track

I actually did karaoke in London once – with Leona. She was such a douche though – she sang her own song! I was like, really? You're really gonna do your own track? I mean c'mon, who freakin' does that? She's cool though."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT 'Drops Of Jupiter' - Train

"I fucking love Train! I don't care that they're ancient and not considered cool or whatever, 'Drops Of Jupiter' rules my life. If ever I want to feel like I'm in the middle of a forest surrounded by water, I listen to that song. I bought it from iTunes for, like, £16.99, which says a lot, 'cos I was poor as shit. But I had to have those songs, even though that was like my lunch money for a week."

THE ALBUM THAT MADE ME WANT TO RAP 'Graduation' - Kanye West

"I never stopped playing it from the moment I got it. He's always been such a freakin' impactful artist – his confidence, brashness and musical ability, how he's not afraid to try anything. I learned all the verses probably better than he knows 'em. That's not a challenge though, Ye!"

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL 'Stomp' - Kirk Franklin

"Kirk Franklin is this amazing gospel singer with a huge, happy voice. Which is great, 'cos I want my funeral to be a joyous occasion. I want people to be up on their feet dancing and having a great time. Good music, maybe some good food, just an all-round fun occasion."

"EMINEM SHAPED ME IN WAYS THAT NO-ONE CAN IMAGINE"

you say, I'm totally jamming! It's a great pop song. I don't have any kind of dance moves though. It's like watching a caterpillar die, these long limbs wriggling around. I have to concentrate to move my legs in a straight line, so dancing's out."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH 'Cleaning Out My Closet' - Eminem

"When I heard that song for the first time, it was like finally there was another

in and I hit skip right away. It's trauma – it gives me flashbacks to recording, working and working at it to get it right. I had to rework it so I could play it live without going crazy, so now it's got crazy heavy metal guitars."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE 'Bleeding Love' - Leona Lewis

"I suck at it, all those high notes, but it's fun to try to sing and I love that song."



Robyn

Rad ar

► YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST ■ EDITED BY MATT WILKINSON

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NME
**NEW
BAND**
OF THE WEEK



Dena

The beatmaker from Bulgaria is the new queen of hipster rap

With the minimal production of J Dilla, the lyrical wit of Das Racist and the sonic flair of MIA, it's no surprise Denitza Todorova, aka Dena, has racked up just shy of a million YouTube views for her signature track 'Cash, Diamond Rings, Swimming Pools'. What's more surprising is that until relatively recently she'd barely heard any hip-hop at all.

Growing up in a small Bulgarian town close to the borders with Greece and Turkey, Dena still remembers the day MTV started broadcasting. Before that she had to rely on the few tapes her father had managed to obtain on the black market, having himself grown up under communism. "A lot of the music my parents' generation experienced was actually Russians covering western bands," explains the rapper, who's now based in Berlin. "They believe it's a Russian song, but it's actually by Gershwin or somebody."

ON
**NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC
NOW**

► Hear an exclusive
version of 'Flashed'
with Erlend Øye

From a young age, Dena looked to music as an escape. "I grew up in a small apartment," she says. "Everyone was growing up in ugly utilitarian blocks. My musical history is about me trying to escape and create more space in my head by isolating myself with headphones."

After moving to Berlin to study media theory, Dena immersed herself in records by the likes of A Tribe Called Quest. Soon she was in bands herself, before going solo to pursue her languid rap and production style.

"I didn't want to hand the music over to someone else and then just be the singer," she says, explaining her obsession with musical detail. "The way I make music is much more similar to a singer-songwriter, it's just electronic and with beats."

After three years in the making, debut album 'Flash' drops soon, and Dena hopes it will resonate with people as much as 'Cash, Diamond Rings, Swimming Pools' did. "That felt like my diary when I wrote it," she says, "so it felt so weird when people started sharing it and hashtagging it. I didn't realise people would be naming their blogs after it. I didn't realise it was going to turn into a 'message'." ■ KEVIN EG PERRY

► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** Berlin, Germany
- **FOR FANS OF** MIA, Das Racist
- **SOCIAL** @dena_ftb
- **BUY IT NOW** Her debut album 'Flash' is out March 10
- **SEE HER LIVE** London Birthdays (April 15), Manchester Soup Kitchen (16), Sheffield Old Fire Station (17)
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Dena's dad played clarinet in a Beatles covers band, despite their music being illegal in Bulgaria at the time

MORE NEW MUSIC

Mainland

Amid all the thrashy down-Stroking that seems to have overtaken the five boroughs of late, Mainland can't help but impress. 'Shiner', the title track from their forthcoming EP, positions the fledgling NYC outfit as the über-melodic, neo-classical antidote to their gutter-punk contemporaries with its bright, airy chorus and sunny vocal harmonies. Credit to producer Jim Eno (Spoon, Poliça) for helping them soar.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/mainlandband

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

Mother

Hull might not be musically living up to its City Of Culture tag yet, but in Mother they've found an export to be proud of. Dealing in varying shades of no-nonsense indie rock, the likes of 'Up For Hours' (think Howler at their most exciting) and the Doors-y swagger of 'Jingle Jangle' are immediate earworms, while the heavier psych organs of 'The Blue Moon' show that the quintet are hard to pigeonhole.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/mothermusicuk

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

Looks

This new trio are keeping information about themselves to a minimum, allowing the shimmering synthpop of their first trio of tracks to do all the talking. 'Everest' comes on like a less bugged-out take on Late Of The Pier's 'Bears In The Wood' colliding with the soaring melodies of The Temper Trap, while 'Back To The Fire' and 'Wasted' give Troumaka's tropical grooves a polish.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/lookstheband

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/looks

Young Thug

When Kanye West and Drake are singing your praises, success can't be far off. The



Mother

ace card for Atlanta's Young Thug is a distinctive vocal style that hops between exuberant yelps, growls and weird alien utterings. On 'Black Portland' he teams up with Bloody Jay for an intense ride seated in the tension spot somewhere between the profound and the mundane. Hot contender for mixtape of the year.

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

► **HEAR HIM** livemixtapes.com

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Juce

These three girls have been holed up in a London rehearsal room for the past year working away on their songs. And the first tune to emerge is certainly worth the wait. 'Call You Out' is a fresh and exciting cut of near-perfect pop, ticking every box of their self-proclaimed "TIMELESS/FRESH/SOUL/LIVE GIRL BAND" biog.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/jucelovemusic

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

Hester

Hester come from the south London scene headed by King Krule, but that doesn't mean this six-piece are making the same dystopian music as



Zhala

Archy Marshall and friends. With a handful of gigs to their name so far – showing the same soft-style feeling of The xx's early performances – only the sweetly melancholic demo 'Home Sick' exists online. Seek it out.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/hesterofficialband

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

Letters To Fiesta

With members from Manchester and the Lake District, 'Tears Apart' sees quartet Letters To Fiesta tactfully build alt.pop atmospherics beneath Anna-Louisa Etherington's ethereal harmonies. Similar in magical gloominess to Bat For Lashes and Kate Bush, it's fresher than a local spring.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/letterstofiesta

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

The Acid

The Acid is Australian solo singer-songwriter Ry X with English DJ Adam Freeland and multimedia artist Steve Nalepa, who add fuzz and electronics to Ry X's stripped-back Bon Iver folk. The results veer from the haunting experimentalism of 'Animal' to the darting videogame beeps and thick falsetto fug of 'Fame'.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/acidthe

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/the-acid-sounds

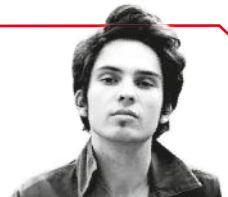
Zhala

It's taken Swedish pop superstar Robyn nine years to release an artist (other ➔)

BAND CRUSH

Joel Amey

Wolf Alice



Gum

"Gum is Jay Watson from Tame Impala's solo stuff. It's better than all the other bands in that scene. 'Growin' Up' is absolutely phenomenal. It's like Elton John put through a massive Tube Screamer guitar pedal. It's a really moving piece of music – one of the best things I've heard in forever."

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

than herself) on her own Konichiwa Records, and boy, it's been worth the wait. Zhala describes herself as "futuristic cosmic pop from Stockholm" and she's just landed – or taken off – with her debut EP, 'Prophet'. The key song is the title track: it seems like a Scandi take on Grimes, then heads off into double-time, then triple-time, ear-bleeding techno. Heaven.

► **SOCIAL** @z_h_a_l_a, facebook.com/zhalaofficial
► **HEAR HER** zhalazhala.com

Kill Moon

Brighton quartet Kill Moon received love on these pages with early single 'Jupiter' back in 2012, but support slots with the likes of Haim and Deap Vally alongside a wealth of new Garbage-inspired material has whittled their Wolf Alice-infused noise pop into something more impactful. While the rest of the city doffs its cap to the gods of lo-fi garage rock, this lot are aiming purely for ballsy anthems.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/killmoonuk
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/killmoonuk
► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Old Blue Last (April 20)

Ghost Twins

Derby duo Ghost Twins used to moonlight as Crushing

Jack Garratt

Blows. Now on the verge of releasing their debut album, they've ditched the strings in favour of synths. If opener 'Breaking Friends' is anything to go by, it'll be a loud and industrial assault with big beats and even bigger organ crescendos.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/weareghostwins
► **HEAR THEM** ghostwins.bandcamp.com

Fiancé

A matrimonial mix of Diiv's billowy shoegaze and Delorean's effervescent dreamwave, Fiancé might well be the most exciting band to emerge from Delaware in, well, ever. The first offering from their forthcoming EP 'Era' serves as a perfect encapsulation of their sound, with its pitch-shifted vocal sample cresting atop waves of glistening feedback. No word yet on a release date or a label, but you'd hope neither are too far off.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/fianceDE
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/fianc



Hester

Lady Neptune

Having attempted to help mankind with her debut release 'Saves Planet Earth', Londoner Lady Neptune changes tack entirely for new EP 'Destroys The Moon'. Granted, such an event will play havoc with the tides, but on the plus side we'll have great no-fi grunge in return.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/lady-neptune
► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/ladyneptune

The Wands

Hailing from Denmark, this psych duo are the aural sound of an acid trip at the blissed-out point when your arms appear to be made of rainbows. Early single 'Hello I Know The Blow You Grow Is Magic' gives a fair indication of their penchant for the mind-altering, while the warped guitar bends and lyrics about "opening your mind" in 'The Door' are as whacked out as they come.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thewands
► **HEAR THEM** thewands.eu
► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Birthdays (April 13)

Kenzie May

Kenzie May sang backing vocals on Metronomy's 'Love Letters' LP, featured on Sub Focus' 'Falling Down', and has co-written with

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

LYLA FOY HITS THE ROAD

Formerly known as Wall, singer-songwriter Lyla Foy became Sub Pop's first British signing in three years in 2013. She'll release her debut album 'Mirror The Sky' on March 17 and will head out on tour in support of it, beginning at Bristol Louisiana on the day of its release.

SEAN NICHOLAS SAVAGE PREPS NEW LP

Prolific Canadian musician Sean Nicholas Savage is to return with his 10th album in six years. Written last year, Savage says 'Bermuda Waterfall' captures "a feeling of loneliness and reflection". The album will be available on May 13 via Arbutus (Grimes, Majical Cloudz).



La Sera



Sean Nicholas Savage

BEATY HEART ENTER THE JUNGLE

As south London psych trio Beaty Heart edge nearer to the release of their debut album 'Mixed Blessings' this spring, they'll join XL's latest signings Jungle on the road for three dates. Catch them at Birmingham Hare & Hounds (March 20), Bristol Exchange (21), Manchester Deaf Institute (22).

LA SERA ANNOUNCES RETURN

Katy Goodman's other band, Vivian Girls, recently revealed their split, but the singer's not disappearing from music altogether, confirming the release of a new album under the alias La Sera. 'Hour Of The Dawn' follows 2012's 'Sees The Light' and will be released on May 13 via Hardly Art.



Lady Neptune

the producer and Lucky Number's FTSE. Despite these enviable credits, the 21-year-old Boston-born singer has yet to put out her own record. That all changes on March 10 with the 'Skeleton Key' EP, which puts May's soulful voice at the centre of the cool, skittering electronics.

► **SOCIAL** @kenziemay
► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/kenziemay

Farewell JR

Heartbreaking lyrics, alluring moments of near-silence and polished musicianship make for a stunning blend on Cambridge's Farewell JR's affecting tunes. With a new EP on the way and Communion Records' New Faces tour about to start, he's assuredly spreading the message that

folk needn't just be beardy and armed with banjos.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/farewelljr
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/farewelljr
► **SEE HIM** His UK tour starts on February 23

The Quiet Boy

The Quiet Boy certainly have good pedigree. Sugar-voiced singer Lester Noel was once a member of Norman Cook's Beats International, while partner Henrik Balling spent the best part of the '80s in Danish guitar-pop cult heroes Gangway. Fifteen years of leisurely collaboration later, their Anglo-Danish relationship has finally resulted in debut single 'Don't Want To Go Home', a synthpop beauty of mellow sweetness topped with gorgeously refined vocals. An album's worth of material is ready to go – but, in typical laidback style, only when the mood takes them.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/veryquietboy
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/the-quiet-boy-cph

Broken Twin

Danish songwriter Majke Voss Romme recently supported Daughter on their European tour in what must have been an emotional double bill. Romme shares Elena Tonra's ability to make tear ducts spring a leak with her elegant, Joni Mitchell-esque voice and lovelorn lyrics. Start stocking up on tissues – debut album 'May' is released on April 28.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/brokentwin
► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/brokentwin

Jack Garratt

Buckinghamshire-based Jack Garratt claims he writes one song per month, and judging by new single 'I Couldn't Want You Anyway', we're in for a treat for the rest of the year. Its R&B tendencies are compelling, but throw in Jack's breathtaking falsetto and it's impossible to resist.

► **SOCIAL** @JackGarratt
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/jackgarratt

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Partisan



► **FOUNDED** 2007 by Tim Putnam and Ian Wheeler
► **BASED**

New York City and London

► **KEY RELEASES** Deer Tick – 'War Elephant' (2008), Pure Bathing Culture – 'Moon Tides' (2013), John Grant – 'Pale Green Ghosts' (2013), Eagulls – 'Eagulls' (2014)

► **RADAR SAYS** The label themselves "believe that artistry in its many forms essentially has a singular purpose: to create and share the next new story". And there'll be plenty more tales to come.

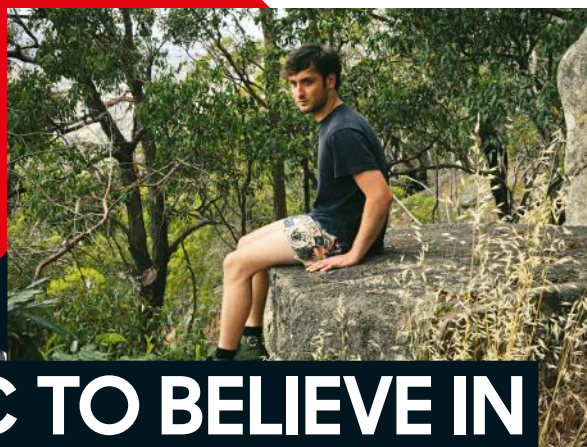
NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

LAUREN MAYBERRY
Chvrches



MUSIC TO BELIEVE IN



Honeyblood are a Glasgow duo made up of guitarist Stina Tweeddale and Shona McVicar, recently signed to Brighton label FatCat. Soundwise, the band owe a debt to The Breeders, PJ Harvey, Vivian Girls and Hole, and have honed their live chops supporting the likes of Pins, Sleigh Bells, Mazes and Deap Vally. Recording of the debut 'Honeyblood' LP wrapped at the end of last year in the Connecticut studio of producer Peter Katis (Interpol, The National, Frightened Rabbit, The Twilight Sad), and the two-piece are currently on a US tour with labelmates We Were Promised Jetpacks ahead of a SXSW appearance.

Until Chvrches, I operated in an 'always the support band, never the bride' capacity, so I'm conscious of turning up promptly to gigs I attend for fear of missing the opening act that blows my tiny mind. **DD Dumbo** (above), real name Oliver Hugh Perry, was one of those rare gems, who we caught as he was supporting the mighty Warpaint in Australia. Originally from near Melbourne, DD Dumbo combines Southern Americana/blues guitars with loop pedals and industrial percussion. The vocals recall Shearwater's Jonathan Meiburg

with hints of Jeff Buckley; other possible musical bookmarks include Grizzly Bear and Dirty Projectors. DD Dumbo's self-titled EP is out now on The Blue Rider, a singles label best known for giving a leg-up to Jagwar Ma and Kilo Kish.

Most articles about Irish singer-songwriter **Soak** open with a riff on the following information: Soak (aka Bridie Monds-Watson) is 17 years old. But for me, this information is irrelevant. Yes, it is impressive that

Soak is making soul-infused folk music interesting and mature enough to have come out of the brain of someone twice her age, but focusing only on her age is short-sighted. My own band just started looking for acts to support via our indie label/singles club Goodbye Records, and it is an

honour to have Soak's next EP, 'Blud', as Goodbye's first ever release on March 17. I was lucky enough to stumble across her 'Sea Creatures' EP last year during my hunt for new female musicians to include in radio shows for *TYCI*, the creative women's collective I help run, and on first listen I had no idea what age she was. I was struck by the quality of the songwriting, the individuality of her voice and the depth of her lyrics. Age be damned – talent shouts louder.



"Soak's soulful folk is mature enough for someone twice her age"

Next week: The Vaccines' Justin Young

Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY TOM HOWARD



Metronomy Love Letters

If 'The English Riviera' was for tourists, Metronomy's fourth album comes from a much more personal place



English Riviera' could hardly have happened to a more deserving band, but anyone expecting 'Love Letters' to pick up where its predecessor's tongue-in-cheek vision of seaside glamour left off will be disappointed. "Back out on the riviera, it gets so cold at night", yelps a forlorn-sounding Joseph Mount on opener 'The Upsetter', a song that drops references to early-'90s cultural touchstones like Tasmin Archer, Whitney Houston and *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves*, but whose droning atmosphere of dislocation

When last we saw Metronomy, they were strolling rakishly into the golden light of a Torbay sunset, a Mercury nomination in their back pocket and sales of their third album racking up like rows of cherries on a one-armed-bandit slot machine. The success of 'The

and anxiety has more in common with David Bowie's 'Space Oddity'. By the time the ghostly 'Never Wanted' brings things to a close, 40 all-too-brief minutes later, it's impossible not to picture tumbleweed blowing down a derelict promenade, past stacks of weather-beaten deck chairs, shuttered-up bars and empty arcades. The inference is clear: welcome to the off-season.

Where a more craven artist might have sought to cash in on a sleeper hit like 'The English Riviera' with a big, populist follow-up, Mount has returned with a small, unashamedly personal one, made with an auteur's ear for detail and disregard for expectation. It's an album about yearning to return to the things you've been dragged away from, be they the landmarks of your childhood (the quaint Casiotone melancholy of 'Reservoir') or your children themselves ("Honestly, it's all I'm thinking of", sings a distracted Mount of his baby son on 'Monstrous'). You'll find nothing here as

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

immediate or accessible as 'The Bay', and even among those who were predisposed to love them, the album's first two singles have polarised, not galvanised, opinion:

NEED TO KNOW

Joseph Mount shares some secrets about the making of 'Love Letters'

There was no concept

"The concept's more to do with the way it was recorded. There are a few tracks on this album where I used Toe Rag [Studios] for what it's set up to do – which is just put a band in the room and record them."

They drove the keyboardist mad

"'Monstrous' was supposed to be Oscar [Cash]'s George Harrison – or Ringo Starr – moment. He's probably quite disappointed it never happened... I drove him mad by asking him to play it over and over again on a harpsichord, on a synthesizer... I think he hates that song."

They embraced cliché

"The backing vocals are by Kenzie, Beth and Jaylene – who I think we're calling The Andromedas. I was talking to someone about what you do on your fourth album, and we said you get backing singers and a horn section – that's the classic mistake. And, of course, it's exactly what I did..."

one day reaching the Wembley-conquering enormity of his old tourmates Coldplay, which sounds comically premature. 'Love Letters' should assuage that angst. While not a 'difficult' album per se, it is an obdurate and insular one, whose charms are revealed coyly and across repeat listens. 'The English Riviera' was for the tourists; this one needs to be lived in, not just visited. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

8

► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 10 ► **LABEL** Because Music ► **PRODUCERS** Joseph Mount/Tom Schick ► **LENGTH** 41:19 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. The Upsetter ►2. I'm Aquarius ►3. Monstrous ►4. Love Letters ►5. Month Of Sundays ►6. Boy Racers ►7. Call Me ►8. The Most Immaculate Haircut ►9. Reservoir ►10. Never Wanted

MORE ALBUMS

Tensnake

Glow Virgin



The house-pop takeover led by Disclosure and Gorgon

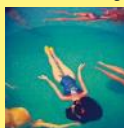
City has been an undeniably refreshing breeze through a chart that's often ruled by David Guetta and Calvin Harris. A template has now been set out for success in the genre, though, and this major-label debut from German DJ and producer Tensnake has the whiff of a by-the-numbers job about it. Luckily, Nile Rodgers appears twice here, popping up on disco revival tracks 'Love Sublime' and 'Good Enough To Keep' and bringing a star quality sadly lacking elsewhere on the cheesy likes of 'Feel Of Love'. Ultimately, 'Glow' will live or die on the strength of its singles. On this evidence, Tensnake seems to be missing that key part of his blueprint.

■ DAVID RENSHAW

4

Charlotte Church

Four EP Alligator Wine



As befits a woman who filed a lawsuit to demonstrate

her disdain for tabloid muckraking, Charlotte Church has had limited PR fanfare behind the EPs she's been releasing roughly every six months. She could release 40 more and still have sweaty indie dullards view her as a pop-classical reject gatecrashing 'their' music. These six songs are her most maximalist and crescendo-ridden to date; 'Entanglement' carries Dirty Projectors levels of screwy bombast, although it sometimes feels like her band are more invested in sounds than songs. Superficially Auto-Tuning her vocals on 'Little Movements' exposes Church as a newcomer to the world of experimental pop, but the EP as a whole is certainly more than a curio. ■ NOEL GARDNER

6



Micah P Hinson

Micah P Hinson And The Nothing

The singer-songwriter puts dodgy politics and car crashes behind him

Coming out in 2010 with political beliefs much further to the right than those of most young musicians may have contributed to a drop in Micah P Hinson's profile, but he also hasn't released an album since then after a car crash in Spain in 2011. Created from demos he'd written before the crash, which he later recorded, this is Hinson's darkest and most weary album yet. It starts atypically with the Gun Club-like 'How Are You Just A Dream?', before settling onto the alt.country terrain usually associated with the Texan singer-songwriter. Lead single 'On The Way Home (To Abilene)' and 'God

Is Good' are pure Hinson. There's family mythology, too, in 'The Life, Living, Death And Dying, Of A Certain And Peculiar LJ Nichols' and – here we go, communists – 'Sons Of The USSR'.

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

6



► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 10 ► **LABEL** Talitres ► **PRODUCERS** Micah P Hinson/Fernanda 'Mac' Macava ► **LENGTH** 50:50 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. How Are You Just A Dream? ►2. On The Way Home (To Abilene) ►3. The One To Save You Now ►4. I Ain't Movin' ►5. The Same Old Shit ►6. The Life... ►7. Sons Of The USSR ►8. There's Only One Name ►9. God Is Good ►10. The Quill ►11. Love, Wait For Me ►12. A Million Light Years ►13. The Crosshairs (Bonus Track)

Dena

Flash !K7



Bulgaria might have weathered brickbats from sections

of the British media last year, but there's no better riposte than progressive music to prove you've more to offer than just Dimitar Berbatov and baked cabbage. Step forward Dena. Mixing up 21st-century DIY beats,

'80s house/techno/soul and '90s video games, Denitza Torodrova invites us into her aspirational life where 'Cash, Diamond Rings, Swimming Pools' are things to covet and other people's partners are attainable ('Bad Timing'). The standout is 'Flashed', recorded in her adopted Berlin with former King Of Convenience Erlend Øye – proof that European integration brings good things. ■ JEREMY ALLEN

7

Reviews

Joan As Policewoman

The Classic

Play It Again Sam



Joan Wasser's fifth album might have a slightly presumptuous title, but it certainly has some greatness within it. From the cavorting orchestral waves of opener 'The Witness' onwards, the record's acrobatics never let up. Even the title track's take on '50s/'60s girl groups is complex and intricate beneath its simple waltz melody. 'Get Direct' is almost seven minutes of dark, minimal weird-pop, and 'New Year's Day' sees Wasser's vocals reach their emotional peak atop a meandering tune full of tension. It's not an easy listen and some tracks, notably the faux-soul of 'Shame', can grate, but this is a fascinating and rich record.

■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

6

Wilko Johnson/ Roger Daltrey

Going Back Home



Wilko Johnson and Roger Daltrey's long-mooted

collaboration has been hastened by Johnson's terminal pancreatic cancer. Not that 'Going Back Home' is a tranquil trip to the other side: the pair attack a chunky selection of bluesy Wilko originals with gusto, the choppy 'Ice On The Motorway' firing up memories of Johnson veering crazily across the stage in his Dr Feelgood days, with Daltrey growling as fruitily as ever on the harmonica-fuelled title track. There's one cover, an unsubtle holler through Dylan's 'Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window', but this is no time to be reining it in. If it's to be Johnson's epitaph, 'Going Back Home' has enough spike and thrust to be a worthy signoff.

■ MATTHEW HORTON

7

Elbow

The Take Off And Landing Of Everything

The affable northerners play it too safe on their sixth album



I once interviewed huggable indie bear and affable 6 Music radio host Guy Garvey about his love of astronomy. It turned out what Guy meant by 'love of astronomy' was more 'looking at pretty things in the sky'. When I asked him if he'd ever tried to find the Andromeda galaxy, there was a pause, and we both burst out laughing.

And that's Elbow's shtick all over. They're a band who gaze at the stars, but will still give a stoical northern snort if someone mentions the word 'Perseids'. A band only ever a sonic bollock-hair from Coldplay, but a world away in the minds of their fans thanks to their romantic yet sardonic sensibilities. But like any shtick, if left unchanged for too long, it has an expiry date. When the opening track here, 'This Blue World', hoves into view with its

tenative, heart-tremor percussion and rousing climax, it feels like that day has dawned.

Odd, because Elbow's sixth album should, on paper, be the one where they break free: for this record the songwriting was devolved to individual band members rather than worked up by committee. Perhaps their corner of the music landscape has just become too cosy, as even the lyrical themes are safe: there's a running motif of emigration and escape, especially on 'New York Morning' and the gravely trip-hoppy 'The Blanket Of Night'. It's a classically Elbowish topic: solid, emotional, full of northern history. 'Charge', with its oddly keyed, unsettling refrain is more leftfield, Elbow stretching out their little-explored nasty, heavier side. The sly, bluesy shuffle of 'Fly Boy Blue/Lunette' is intriguing, but too often the band collapse back into the merely comfy.

This isn't a bad or a lazy album, and Elbow are too good a band to ever be dismissed, yet you wonder what would happen if they stopped defaulting to the warm, slightly melancholic uplift of songs like 'Real Life', with its avowal that "the music pulls you through". It's a worthwhile sentiment, but making music shouldn't always be as easy as giving someone a big sonic hug.

■ EMILY MACKAY

6

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 10 ► **LABEL** Polydor ► **PRODUCER** Craig Potter
► **LENGTH** 55:51 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. This Blue World ►2. Charge ►3. Fly Boy Blue/Lunette ►4. New York Morning ►5. Real Life (Angel) ►6. Honey Sun ►7. My Sad Captains ►8. Colour Fields ►9. The Take Off And Landing Of Everything ►10. The Blanket Of Night ► **BEST TRACK** Charge

Trans

Trans Green



Tired of lugging their formidable pedalboards all over the

place, ex-Suede guitarist Bernard Butler and The Yummy Fur's Jackie McKeown formed low-key project Trans as an excuse to just play guitar without adding fancy effects. The result was 30 hours of improvised music edited to EP length. Like last year's 'Trans Red', this is a gentle

conversation between their instruments, not one fuelled by frenetic solos or egotistical excursions. It's refreshing to hear them playing with freedom on jangling opener 'Thinking About A Friend', but the lyrical repetition of 'Tangerine' gets tedious, and 'The Prince' meanders for over seven minutes without changing pace. At best it's a good listen for a lazy Sunday morning; at worst it's a collection of half-finished ideas.

■ SIMON BUTCHER

5

Black Submarine

New Shores



Black Submarine would have been the original

Verve reformed – minus Richard Ashcroft – if drummer Pete Salisbury wasn't, according to Nick McCabe, loyal to their former singer. As such, it's impossible to listen to 'New Shores' removed from the politics of The Verve. Not surprisingly, it's something of a confused album

recorded and mixed in sporadic bursts with rotating vocalists. Featuring McCabe, bassist Simon Jones, Coldplay/Goldfrapp/The Verve arranger Davidé Rossi and ex-Portishead drummer Mig Schillace, it covers space rock ('Here So Rain'), pastoral folk ('Move Me A Mountain') and psychedelic pop ('Is This All We Feel') without settling. It's an intriguing world for Verve fans, but more of a splurge than an album of conviction.

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

6

Reviews

Ava Luna Electric Balloon

Western Vinyl



The second album from Brooklyn's Ava Luna is delightfully bewildering. Opener 'Daydream' bleats a David Byrne tribute over jagged Television guitars: it's post-punk with a disco bent, its colours nailed firmly to the mast of its influences.

So far, so standard... until the next track. And the next. Each song is a new mast, with different colours nailed on. 'Aquarium' is a foray into freeform jazz, and 'Plain Speech' is like Stephen Malkmus and Otis Redding hashing out a tune together. Located between modern R&B ('PRPL') and the staccato angles of art punk ('Sears Roebuck M&Ms'), each song is so powerful and crafted you'll soon buy into whatever it is Ava Luna are selling.

■ HAYLEY AVRON

7

My Sad Captains Best Of Times



Bella Union
For their third record, My Sad Captains opt for a less-is-more approach, with vocals murmured beneath the surface of their spacious late-evening pop. But it's the album's instrumental sections that work best, as on the repetition-heavy 'All Times Into One' and the seven-minute 'In Time', the delicate, vine-like growth

of the music supported by a rigid beat. The London four-piece have never had trouble creating pretty atmospheres; where they struggle is in contrasting them with a bolder hook, lyrical or otherwise. When singer Ed Wallis wonders "why you feel the need to talk so loud" on 'Wide Open', you find yourself wishing for slightly more volume and impact, even while admiring their serenity in our ever-accelerating world.

■ SIMON JAY CATLING

6

Famy Donkey EP



Transgressive
Despite totting their alt.folk around London since

2011 – and messing around in disco side-project Los Porcos – Famy are finally getting round to putting out their first record. Recorded in a church in Wales with BBC Maida Vale engineer Miti Adhikari, the 'Donkey' EP sees the quartet going back to their roots and swapping synths for acoustic guitars. The soaring, stomping folk-pop of the title track sets the tone of the record, 'A Ho A Hand' follows suit, and a chiming rework of live staple 'Hebrew' shows their more placid side. Famy might not be your life (as the opening line of their take on The Minutemen's 'History Lesson – Part II' suggests) but where good, clean fun is concerned they'll more than do.

■ RHIAN DALY

7

Axxa/Abraxas

Dreamy guitar pop, big ideas and blooming talent from Atlanta's Ben Asbury



In an age when you can plug a couple of peripherals into your laptop and transform it into a music studio, there's no real excuse for *sounding* lo-fi any more. But the sound wasn't the only thing the original lo-fi wave was about. Back in the '80s, the humble four-track recorder was a tool of liberation. For the first time, you didn't need to pool your pennies to pay for expensive studios, where professionals could explain to you how you were supposed to be doing it. Now you could do anything, sound any way you pleased.

Which brings us to Ben Asbury. Twenty-three years old, originally from North Carolina but currently settled in Atlanta, Georgia, Asbury is an amateur screenprinter, runs a cassette label and has some big ideas about cosmic harmony, Gnostic philosophy and the like. All of this has a bearing on the music he



makes as Axxa/Abraxas: dreamy, thoughtful, expansive guitar pop that's rather too lush and developed to pass as lo-fi, but which owes much to the genre's spirit of invention and self-actualisation.

Though it's a project that fits neatly on the roster of Captured Tracks, a label where long-haired dudes playing jangly guitar is a standard mode, there's little here that feels rote. From Crazy Horse-style guitar jamming ('So Far Away') to eerie madrigals ('Beyond The Wind') to harmony-laden Byrds beat pop ('Painted Blue'), we get the sense of a young man fastidiously assembling his own musical language.

Exactly what 'Axxa/Abraxas' is all about is difficult to discern, and perhaps unimportant. Asbury seems like the kind of guy who lives deep inside his head, and lyrically speaking, the likes of 'I Almost Fell' feel vague, an expression of things deep-held and personal, not shaped to strike a chord. That'll come, maybe. Or maybe not, it doesn't matter. All we can say for sure is that here is a talent in bloom, the sound of ideas finding shape, winding out in all directions.

■ LOUIS PATTISON

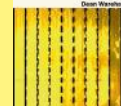
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THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 10 ► **LABEL** Captured Tracks ► **PRODUCER** Jarvis Taveniere ► **LENGTH** 40:09 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Ryan Michalak (Is Coming To Town) ►2. Going Forth ►3. I Almost Fell ►4. Beyond The Wind ►5. Same Signs ►6. So Far Away ►7. Ride Into The Night ►8. Painted Blue ►9. On The Run ►10. All That's Passed ► **BEST TRACK** Painted Blue

Dean Wareham Dean Wareham

Sonic Cathedral



During his time in the short-lived but highly influential

Galaxie 500 in the late '80s and early '90s, Dean Wareham specialised in writing perfect dream-pop that found the sweet spot between sleepy and beautiful. Little changed in his next band Luna, or when collaborating with his wife as Dean & Britta. On his first full-length solo record, the follow-up to last year's 'Emancipated Hearts' EP, the sleepiness outweighs the beauty. Over stroked guitars and brushed drums, Wareham's wobbling vocal decorates nine bruised songs that rarely do anything more than roll along gently towards an underwhelming conclusion. There are glimpses of life, such as the restrained wig-out of 'I Can Only Give My All', but mostly 'Dean Wareham' is too dreary, too often.

■ THOM GIBBS

5

27

Various Artists

And Now

Our Lives Are Complete

An eclectic compilation showcasing the best of Tim Burgess' O Genesis label

▶ Tim Burgess was never Britpop's most obvious polymath. Amid all the pointy-heads and schemers, this floppy-limbed Cheshire acid smiley always seemed to be just along for the ride. Yet as The Charlatans have gradually retreated towards the legacy act stages, Tim has found more and more things to do to keep busy. First there were the solo albums. Then the 6 Music DJing. The memoir. Then Carl Barat's 'supergroup' The Chavs. And then there's also his ongoing quest to become Factory Records boss Tony Wilson.



Along with long-time Charlatans producer Jim Spencer, for the past three years Tim has driven his own label, O Genesis, producing nearly 40

vinyl albums and seven-inches, from Hatcham Social to lo-fi legend R Stevie Moore. He catalogues them in a Factory-like 'GEN 001' format. And, like Wilson, he splits everything 50-50 with the artists, only asking them to sign a flimsy rights note he calls a 'non-tract'. The first label retrospective summarises just how far towards the fringes the man's taste has sailed since The Charlatans' 'How High' days. His new-found friends include Nik Cokk Void from Factory Floor, who adds blank Throbbing Gristle noise-blobs on 'Gold E', and Kurt Wagner from Lambchop, who reads lyrics from 'A Case For Vinyl', one of the songs from his 2012 collaboration album with Tim, 'Oh No I Love You'. There's a wave of so-2011 paint-by-numbers grunge from Throwing Up and Slowgun, and some excellent further adventures in coldwave from Education For Death and Pavlov's Children, as well as odder oddities from London poet Jack Underwood.

The overall feeling is of a good, mid-sized club night put on to reflect the tastes of one enthusiastic weirdo: not everything hits the mark, but there's always enough art-school flair in his big bag of curate's eggs to hold your attention. Direction, consistency – these may come later. For now, the former court jester of Britpop seems happy enough to have remade himself into a hip priest. Amazing the IQ you can hide under a haircut that wide.

■ GAVIN HAYNES

▶ THE DETAILS

▶ **RELEASE DATE** March 10 ▶ **LABEL** O Genesis ▶ **PRODUCER** Various ▶ **LENGTH** 59:36 ▶ **TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Jack Underwood – Certain ▶2. Electricity In Our Homes – Drumming Around The Room ▶3. Joseph Coward – If You Want To Get Going, Get Talking To Me ▶4. Tim Burgess – Anytime Minutes ▶5. Keel Her – Boner Hit ▶6. R Stevie Moore – Post Break Up Sex ▶7. Education For Death – Emma ▶8. Slowgun – Heavy Head Boy ▶9. Throwing Up – Big Love ▶10. Jack Underwood – Maths ▶11. Kurt Wagner – A Case For Vinyl ▶12. Nik Cokk Void – Gold E ▶13. Blood Music – Sea Of Leaves (Gabe Gurnsey Factory Floor Remix) ▶14. Pavlov's Children – Little Douglas ▶15. Minny Pops – Glistering ▶16. Asia Argento & Tim Burgess – Hours/Ours ▶17. Hatcham Social – More Power To Live ▶18. Membranes – The Universe Explodes Into A Billion Protos ▶19. Jack Underwood – Your Horse ▶ **BEST TRACK** Blood Music – Sea Of Leaves

The Twang

Neontwang

Jump The Cut In 1998, Gus Van Sant's near shot-for-shot remake of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* was panned for being wholly unnecessary. The world didn't need it. Likewise, the world has somehow managed to keep spinning on its axis without The Twang since 2012's '10:20'. Why, then, do we now have 'Neontwang'? The bluster-

heavy 'Happy Families' bravely tackles the desperate ills of prostitution with the thought-provoking observation: "She's on the game/Such a shame". And while the snappy sludge of 'Happy Families' hints at a slight reprieve, the jingle-jangle whimsy of 'Larry Lizard' is a tired reminder that there's only one crime worse than being outright bad – and that's being as mind-numbingly banal as this. ■ BEN HEWITT

3

Withered Hand

New Gods

Fortuna POP! The songwriter otherwise known as Dan Willson, one plank of modern folk crew Fence Collective, has taken his time over this follow-up to 2009's 'Good News' and it's worked wonders – a drippy, strumming caterpillar is reborn a bright pop-rock butterfly. Drawing on the same sort of sun-kissed



sounds as Real Estate and Best Coast, 'New Gods' is endlessly loveable stuff. The warmth and depth of the production is offset by Willson's otherworldly voice on the richly twanging 'Horseshoe', and 'Black Tambourine' zings with Teenage Fanclub-ish exuberance. There's still slight mawk on 'Love Over Desire', but the frisky and footloose 'Not Alone' and 'King Of Hollywood' mark a new lease of life. ■ EMILY MACKAY

7

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

Eagulls

"Follows a restless blueprint and comes off like some wounded beast that's more scared of itself than you are. They've got a knack for finding germs of unpleasant truths." (NME, March 1)

8

Phantogram

"New York's Phantogram specialise in a mix of spooked-out folk and synth-led R&B. They shoot for big-hearted romance, Josh Carter assembling symphonic electronica that's grand enough to contain Sarah Bartell's mighty, vocal." (NME, February 15)

7

Linda Perhacs

The Soul Of All Natural Things "After releasing her masterpiece 'Parallelograms' in 1970, Perhacs' second album is a glimmering offering of cynicism-free psychedelia." (NME, March 1)

8

Neneh Cherry

Blank Project "Fearless iconoclasm was always Cherry's stock in trade, and it's the fuel that powers this excellent new record that blends electronica with an organic authenticity. Fresh, vibrant and effortless." (NME, February 22)

8

Solids

Blame Confusion "The Montreal band take their cues from grunge and hardcore. Xavier Germain-Poitras lays down fizzing guitar chords over Louis Guillemette's rumbling drums." (NME, February 15)

7



THE NEXT.

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The Orwells/ The Amazing Snakeheads

The 100 Club

London

February 24

Onstage boozing and fan snogging are rife
as the Chicago hellraisers storm London

▶ It's the battle of onstage boozing. First, Glasgow's The Amazing Snakeheads, house band for the pub in *Trainspotting*, chugging Buckfast – sweet, sticky, revolting fortified wine, made by Devon monks, largely enjoyed north of the border – throughout their support set. Swigs of the stuff, poured by bassist William Coombe into the open mouth of singer Dale Barclay like communion wine, punctuate a fearsome performance. It sees Barclay contorting, gurning and screaming while wringing gut-wrenching riffs from his guitar, occasionally kneeling before his amp as if it were a shrine as drummer Jordan Hutchison punishes his snare like it's told him a "your momma" joke. Two new tracks, 'Rotten Blues' ➡



and 'Back To The Start', are aired, and suggest that the plan for this year's debut is to get even more intense, if that's possible.

The main act have a lot to live up to, and if The Orwells' sound is a little softer around the edges, their tippie is too: Mario Cuomo swigs from a bottle of red between barking out lyrics, leaving the fan who mounts him for an onstage snog during 'Who Needs You' to later comment that he tasted "winery". Arriving to a shout of, "We're The Orwells, from Chicago, Illinois!", the five-piece open with the frantic 'Other Voices', the Nirvana-like 'Righteous One' and former single 'Dirty Sheets'. 'Halloween All Year' sets the playful mood for the evening, segueing into a quick cover of wedding disco favourite 'Build Me Up Buttercup', and they later rip through Black Lips' 'Not A Problem', suggesting their tourbus listening lies halfway between the gutter and the glitterball. What The Orwells do is not big or clever, but it's as exciting as it is juvenile, a rough-and-ready mix of power-pop, ragged punk and grunge-influenced rock. Three new songs unveiled tonight suggest their second album – the first to get a UK release – won't stray too far from the path: 'Gotta Get Down' and 'Let It Burn' are nihilistic teen rockers, and 'Bathroom Tile Blues' is a song "about puking".

The band of brothers, cousins and friends have developed a well-earned reputation for hellraising on the road. Three days ago in Leeds, Mario was questioned by the police

"ROCK'N'ROLL WILL NEVER DIE? IT'S ALREADY DEAD. WE'RE JUST HERE TO JACK OFF THE CORPSE" – MARIO CUOMO



Orwell and good

Were you excited to play the legendary 100 Club?

Mario Cuomo: "We'd never heard of it. Then we got here and saw the pictures on the wall. We were like, 'Damn, Pete Townshend looks old.'"

It's where Sid Vicious blinded a fan in one eye at a Sex Pistols gig in 1976.

"Oh shit! That makes me

feel like a pussy right now. I didn't blind anybody."

But you did kiss someone...

"Yeah, I think she ran off though. It happens every now and then. The rest of the band get pissed but they don't mind so long as I'm not supposed to be singing lines."

You're supporting Arctic Monkeys this summer.

What did you make of Alex Turner's Brits speech?

"Rock'n'roll will never die?"

It's already dead. We're just here to jack off the corpse. Anybody would say the same shit as he said: Foo Fighters, Black Keys, anybody."

You played some new tracks tonight. How's the new album?

"It's done. Mixed, mastered, polished, done – and it's fucking dy-no-mite."

When is it out?

"Let's just say June 3. But shit always gets delayed."

following an altercation with door staff at the band's own afterparty. But, apparently, even The Orwells can get a case of the Monday blues. Coy rather than chaotic tonight, the only frisson of confrontation in the first part of the set comes whenever Mario stares down the audience between songs, looking, with his plastic gaze, like the product of Axl Rose mating with a keyring troll.

In between, he's explosive, curly blond hair flopping into his eyes, back bent double, at one point wiping his sweaty face on an *NME* poster and stuffing it down his pants. But he's still not willing to dip his toe in and get in among the kids. Three-quarters of the way in, the spirit of revolution is in the air. If Mario

won't join the masses in the crowd, the kids are going to make him. One duly pulls the singer into the swirling morass during 'Who Needs You', and that's when the stage invader seizes the moment: she hops up, jumps on Mario and sticks her tongue down his throat. The band retreat through the crowd before the encore, returning energised with a cover of The Stooges' 'I Wanna Be Your Dog' and a closing 'Southern Comfort'. Booze still on the brain, they neck Jägerbombs backstage straight after the show. "What's our favourite thing about being in Britain?" says Mario, before slamming the empty down. "The drinking." ■ DAN STUBBS



Get your coat, Mario Cuomo, you've pulled

MORE GIGS

Au Revoir Simone The Garage, London

Thursday, February 20



In the video for Au Revoir Simone's 'Somebody Who' from their 2013 album 'Move In Spectrums', Heather D'Angelo blows a bubble with bubblegum and it serves as a reminder that, for all the melancholy in the keyboard trio's songs, they remain at heart a quintessential pop band. As such, this one-off UK show in which they couple tracks from 'Move In Spectrums' with older material is not like the icy gigs of yore and more of a party. Eleven years together means they're now survivors; there's a sense of mutual respect between them and their audience, making this warm and benevolent performance feel like a victory parade. ■

PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

7

Radkey Sebright Arms, London

Friday, February 23



"I arrived in England last night, drank too much and hurt my leg – you guys healed me," says bassist Isaiah Radke, possibly overestimating his audience's medical ability. Isaiah and his brothers, singer Dee and drummer Solomon, may have been foetuses when their influences – which range from Ramones-style punk to DC hardcore – first emerged. But they bring them shrieking into 2014 tonight with 'Out Here In My Head' and 'Start Freaking Out'. The set ends with 'Romance Dawn', Isaiah lifting his bass up to reveal that in addition to "RAD" on the front, he has "DELICIOUS ROCK NOISE" on the back. On tonight's evidence, it's hard to disagree with either sentiment. ■

DAVID RENSHAW

8

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Kate Welch,
17, London

"I'm the one who snogged him onstage. I just thought, 'Why not?' The Orwells are fucking amazing. They're raw. They're like a modern-day Nirvana."



Dasha Lugovkin,
16, London

"It was really good. I've never seen them before and I've been looking forward to this. The end was the best bit – we were right at the front and there was a moshpit. I like their new songs the best."



Esme Gallagher,
19, Lanark

"It was amazing. I love their album and it completely lived up to that, plus the new stuff was amazing. My boyfriend bought me the tickets for Christmas and it was well worth the wait. I really liked when he got in with the audience – he held my hand, too."



Kealan Lafferty,
18, Derry

"It was fucking unreal. Immense! 'Who Needs You' is a banging tune. They're amazing, and their cover of 'I Wanna Be Your Dog' was the icing on the cake, because I love The Stooges. The support act from Glasgow were amazing too – I'll see them again."

Drengel/The Wytches/ Traams

Scala, London

Thursday, February 20

Romping riffs and strident rock'n'roll from the award-winning Loveless brothers

It's fascinating watching the molecular motions of moshpits from up above, and funnily enough, also the only way to really appreciate the three bands playing tonight's show. Traams may look like fumbling, mumbling *Inbetweeners* extras, but it's grunge not clunge that's on the grubby little minds of this no-nonsense Chichester power-trio. They make big noise for skinny boys, riffs big and drunkenly reeling with a formidable bounce that ripples across the Scala's floor. They're occasionally reminiscent of White Denim's harder moments, but much more fun. The Wytches are a spookier proposition, their heavy, simmering grind slashed with screamo howls and opening circle pits that then snap together on the cue of their megalodon riffs like the angry, sputtering valve of some psych-kraken.

SETLIST

- People In Love Make Me Feel Yuck
- Face Like A Skull
- Necromance Is Dead
- Running Wild
- Gun Crazy
- Dogmeat
- I Wanna Break You In Half
- The Snake
- Bloodsports
- Backwaters
- Standing In The Cold
- Let's Pretend
- Fuckabout

Both these bands share a post-Horror kraut, thrash that makes stars of the show Drengel's unlovely raw churn all the more arresting. There's something about the simplicity of a duo, and live, they have a tightness born of a band of brothers where you know no blushes are spared when it comes to rehearsal time.

The divinely titled 'People In Love Make Me Feel Yuck' hammers in with a thud-thud-scee, with the malevolent bounce of 'Bleach'-era Nirvana and a daft, sharp humour that is all the Loveless brothers' own. They've spent the last year-and-a-half owning festival shows and proving themselves the most exciting new live band around, and this night feels like a crowning.

The romping riffs and drum fusillades of 'Face Like A Skull' and the strident roll and stomp of 'Dog Meat' have bodies swaying and reeling as if the whole room is being tilted, kids hurtling over the barrier like they're playing Drowning Irishman Number Three in *Titanic*. The moody and grinding Crampsiness of 'Necromance Is Dead', B-side to 'Backwaters', is received with joy, as are three new tracks: the chugging 'Running Wild', previously cracked out at Reading Festival, the grinding, sexy 'The Snake' and the melancholy, bluesy 'Standing In The Cold'. A climactic 'Let's Pretend' is magnificent, stoned and sullen, Eoin letting out unholy shrieks as a shirtless stagediver circles him. The song ends in a huge, excessive thrashout. Eoin approaches Rory's kit and throws a can of beer over him for larks. Rory doesn't look highly amused, it has to be said. Boys, eh! They end with the odd, whimsical melancholy of 'Fuckabout', giving the moshers below some rest at last. They didn't look like they wanted it, though. ■

EMILY MACKAY

33

8

Reviews LIVE

High drama and stately grandeur from Annie Clark in the hallowed venue she last visited five years ago

Manchester Cathedral
February 21

St Vincent

“We’ve so many things in common, Manchester,” says Annie Clark, holding herself gracefully even though her bleached-silver hair and white dress stained with fake blood suggest an Alice who had to go to some grisly lengths to escape Wonderland. But Manchester isn’t so sure it has that much in common with the Oklahoma singer. She’s about to launch into the third of several soliloquies she’ll deliver tonight between songs. Her talk of building bed fortresses, school nicknames and passing out at the touch of a pastor (somewhere underneath Manchester Cathedral’s arches, the bishop cringes) has at least one confused member of the crowd calling out, “Are you high?”

In fairness to the befuddled few, St Vincent has yet again ascended to a plane way above the rest of us with her new self-titled album, as she enters the latest phase in what’s becoming a remarkable series of reinventions

SHE HOLDS COURT OVER THE CROWD LIKE A PREACHER, MAKING US BELIEVE IN THE CHARACTER SHE PLAYS

since her time in The Polyphonic Spree at the beginning of the millennium. In 2009 she played this same venue, supporting Grizzly Bear, and with that year’s excellent ‘Actor’ album not moving far beyond the softer tones of her multi-instrumental art-folk beginnings, Clark’s presence didn’t fill the near-600-year-old building in any way like the force of nature dominating the stage tonight. Even her own guitar trembles with distortion before being handed to her during opener ‘Rattlesnake’.

From the clockwork-like choreography – staged in sync with the punchier nature of new material like the shred-heavy ‘Birth In Reverse’ – to her porcelain doll look, she holds court over the crowd like a preacher on a raised platform addressing her flock. The way she maintains a sense of otherworldly mystique, drawing us into believing the character she plays, is reminiscent of Kate Bush or Ziggy Stardust-era Bowie. It was easier to suspend disbelief in a pre-internet age, though; one when artists didn’t have to be omnipresent online to promote themselves. Working in an age of hyper-

exposure – where videos of Clark have popped up showing off her football skills and reading out Amazon reviews – it’s a hugely impressive feat to maintain this aura.

Not everyone is pulled in, however. The historic cathedral pillars restrict views and its cavernous ceilings deaden some of the more delicate moments of the set while overly magnifying its heavier passages. Elsewhere, though, the venue adds a poetic backdrop to lines like “*I prefer your love to Jesus*” from ‘I Prefer Your Love’, which tricks the mind into thinking she is deliberately lingering on the lyric for particular effect. This stately grandeur contrasts with ‘Strange Mercy’’s gritty, bruised confessionals, ‘Year Of The Tiger’ and ‘Cheerleader.’

Beyond that, it’s clear that Clark’s oeuvre is improving even further. New album tracks like ‘Regret’, where she revisits her folksy singing style, are coupled with newly hewn punk guitar stabs; and ‘Prince Johnny’, a divine swirl of angelically delivered depravity (“*Remember that time we went and snorted that piece of the Berlin Wall you extorted*”) amid fluttering electronics, slot in seamlessly

JENN FIVE, AMY BRAMMALL

SETLIST

RATTLESNAKE DIGITAL WITNESS CRUEL BIRTH IN REVERSE REGRET LAUGHING WITH A MOUTH OF BLOOD I PREFER YOUR LOVE PIETA EVERY TEAR DISAPPEARS SURGEON CHEERLEADER PRINCE JOHNNY YEAR OF THE TIGER MARROW

How good?

10
2

alongside older numbers. 'Huey Newton' teeters along on a synth backing before Clark and her three-piece band gleefully tear it down with squalling feedback and battered drum skins, before putting it back in its place like nothing ever happened. New track 'Pieta' veers down a similarly melodic but noisy route, slipping between grungy verse and honey-sweet chorus.

Clark could always play the guitar, but there's a confident malevolence in the way she wields her axe to slice through the prettier moments tonight. Finale 'Krokodil' feels like the coming together of the bristling energy that's been building all evening, its unkempt cacophony disorientating the senses even more than the searing-white strobe lights that accompany it. It's only matched for histrionics by finale 'Your Lips Are Red', a track from 'Marry Me' and a time when St Vincent appeared more naive and introverted. In her current personas – her most extrovert yet – it takes on monstrous dimensions, shaking the venerable building to its foundations. Then, just as quickly as a lightswitch confirmed her arrival onstage, so the spotlights flick off instantly at its end, feeling she's gone in the blink of an eye, even after nearly two hours.

That her latest LP is called simply 'St Vincent' suggests that this is her most definitive, open guise yet. If it turns out to just be another step in St Vincent's ongoing evolution, then she's on a course to end up light years ahead of any other artist on the planet.

■ SIMON JAY CATLING

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Tom, 24, Hampshire
"She's really developed into a full-on artist, like Bowie or Prince. Her new material is a perfect continuation of her work; it's maybe colder emotionally, but that's not a bad thing."



Matthew, 26, London
"The transformation from something that was very beautiful into what is becoming a highly theatrical experience is incredible. There's no-one else doing what she does."



Gavin, 29, Manchester
"I enjoyed it! It's great to see someone give a shit about their stage performance – there's not a lot of people still doing that."



Lauren, 27, Manchester
"It was incredible. I saw her supporting Grizzly Bear in 2009 and she's barely recognisable from that time. The new material was probably my favourite stuff of the whole set."

8

MORE GIGS

Eyedress Sebright Arms, London

Friday, February 21

There's a skull staring out from the DJ decks.

Instantly familiar from Eyedress' Drive-
via-Enter The Void video for 'Nature Trips', the corporeal death mask is an eerie presence, but nowhere near as strange as the show taking place around it. While his Bee Eyes side-project bandmate Julius Valledor hammers out the beats, 23-year-old Idris Vicuña jumps down into the crowd and raps tracks from his 'Supernatural' EP, his vocals swathed in layers of reverb. His first UK gig is as far from the cliché of a bedroom producer as it's possible to imagine – it's punk as fuck, weird but utterly compelling.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

8

Circa Waves Sebright Arms, London

Monday, February 24

It's Liverpool quartet Circa Waves' inaugural London outing, but far from the folded arms

that traditionally greet new bands in the capital, the anticipation here is palpable. Despite only recently releasing their second single – the spiky, Strokes-on-the-Mersey bounce of 'Stuck In My Teeth', there's already a contingent down the front who know nearly every word. 'Young Chasers' opens with a frenetic slice of youthful escapism, while 'Good For Me' and 'Get Away' are the infinitely catchy children of 'Whatever People Say I Am...' and 'Is This It?', delivered with the enthusiasm of four kids who know they've got something good on their hands. Very promising stuff.

■ LISA WRIGHT

8

Brody Dalle



London, Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen Monday, February 24

The former Distiller previews her new solo album with mesmerising fire and fury

Midway through Brody Dalle's first ever solo show on these shores, she removes her guitar, releases the microphone from its stand and starts spinning around the stage singing 'Ghetto Love', a track by one of her former bands, Spinnerette. Suddenly she falls forward into the crowd before bouncing back up as gracefully as she had descended, finishing the song writhing on her back. It's a clear warning that, if you expected the return of the former Distillers frontwoman to be anything less than unpredictable and totally mesmerising, you'd better think again.

Tonight isn't just about reliving the past – either side of Brody's fearless acrobatics, she previews songs from her forthcoming debut solo album 'Diploid Love'. 'Rat Race' finds her boasting of her "own private road to hell" before threatening to "burn this city down" over chugging rock riffs. The fuzzy and ominous 'Don't Mess With Me' proves to

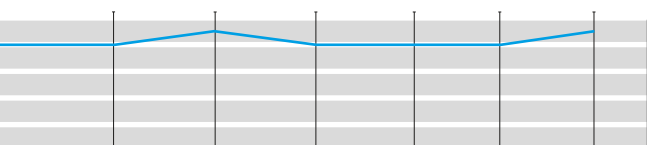
be one of the most infectious things she's done in her career so far, while comeback single 'Meet The Foetus' gets the surprisingly static crowd punching the air with the same enthusiasm as old Distillers tracks 'Die On A Rope' and 'Sing Sing Death House'.

Nearly 16 years after she first snarled her way into the spotlight, this is Brody, still burning with the same fire and fury as all those years ago, announcing her return the best way she knows how – attitude high, riffs blazing and songs refusing to be ignored. ■ RHIAN DALY

SETLIST

- Die On A Rope
- Dismantle Me
- Rat Race
- Don't Mess With Me
- Meet The Foetus/
Oh Joy
- Sick Of It All
- Ghetto Love
- Dressed In Dreams
- Blood In Gutter
- Hybrid Moments
- Sing Sing Death House
- Intro/Underworld

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BOOKING NOW

The hottest new tickets on sale this week

Klaxons

The dance-pop experimenters return with their third album, 'Love Frequency', on June 2. Before then, they'll preview the record at a handful of intimate dates around the country.

'Surfing The Void' was quite a polarising album – do you think this one will have the same effect?

James Righton [keyboards, vocals]: "We've always been an opinion-splitting band, to be honest. I think people will always have an intense reaction to our music – we don't make generic, safe music. I honestly think ['Love Frequency'] is our strongest record. It's weird,

it's pop – it's everything our band should be."

What was it like working with James Murphy, Tom Rowlands and Erol Alkan on the album?

"Really fun. They all bring their own thing to the record, really. What's great is they've all got a similar sensibility. Those guys are into the classier end of dance music – they're artists that have always pushed forward. It was a really inspiring atmosphere that we were working in."

How are you feeling about getting back out on tour?

"This is going to be our first UK tour since 2010 – it feels like

we've been playing everywhere but the UK. I love those 200–250 capacity gigs where you can see everyone's faces and see the reaction. It's a complete home audience as well – everyone's a fan and sings every lyric. It's going to be mad, I can't wait."

► THE DETAILS

► **DATES** Birmingham Hare & Hounds (March 31), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (April 1), London Oslo (2), Manchester Ruby Lounge (3)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £12; Glasgow £13, London £14
 ► **ON SALE** March 7, 10am
 ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.20–£1.40 booking fee

Tyler, The Creator

The Odd Future rapper returns to the UK for a one-off date in London. Expect cuts from his two solo albums, 'Goblin' and 'Wolf', and appearances by his friends.

► **DATES** London The Forum (July 23)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £20
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2 booking fee

Jungle

The mysterious collective will slink their way around more venues in May as they look to show just why XL made them their latest signing.

► **DATES** Cardiff The Globe (May 1), Nottingham Bodega (2), Oxford O2 Academy (21), Bournemouth The Old Fire Station (22), London Oval Space (23)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
 ► **PRICE** £9; London £12.50
 ► **ON SALE** now
 ► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1–£1.25 booking fee

Cate Le Bon

The Welsh singer leaves her new LA home and heads back to these shores, where she'll play last year's acclaimed album 'Mug Museum'.

► **DATES** Leicester The Musician (September 3), Oxford O2 Academy 2 (9), Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (10), London KOKO (11), Manchester Gorilla (12), Gateshead The Sage (13), Aberdeen Lemon Tree (14), Edinburgh Electric Circus (16), Sheffield Plug (18)
 ► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
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Jimi Goodwin

The Doves frontman takes his debut solo album 'Odludek' on the road in May.

► **DATES** Sheffield The Leadmill (May 2), Kendal Malt Room at the Brewery Arts Centre (4), Newcastle Think Tank (6), Norwich Waterfront (7), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (10), Belfast Black Box (11), Cardiff The Gate (15), London Islington Assembly Hall (15), Bristol Thekla (18), Oxford O2 Academy 2 (19), Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (20), Colchester Arts Centre (22), Birmingham The Library (23), Manchester Gorilla (26)
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Echo & The Bunnymen

The iconic Liverpool band put out 'Meteorites', their first studio album in five years, on April 28. Get to grips with their new tracks on this tour.

► **DATES** Leamington Spa Assembly Rooms (May 2), Oxford O2 Academy (10), Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall (11),



Cate Le Bon

Newcastle Tyne Theatre (13), Manchester Ritz (14), Edinburgh Queen's Hall (16), London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire (17), Bristol O2 Academy (18), Liverpool Philharmonic Hall (20)
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► **ON SALE** now
► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2.65-£4 booking fee; Leamington Spa TBC

Detestival

Last year, Yorkshire duo Wet Nuns hosted their own festival in Sheffield. It returns this year – despite the band's split – with three more days of new bands. Pins, God Damn, Slaves and Lola Colt are already confirmed, with more to come.

► **DATES** Sheffield Queens Social Club (April 18-20)
► **OTHER ACTS** Brown Brogues, Turbowolf, Happyness
► **PRICE** Weekend ticket £30
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► **FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2.40 booking fee

Eels

'The Cautionary Tales Of Mark Oliver Everett' is due for release on April 21. E and his band will recreate the record live in six cities in June.

► **DATES** Oxford New Theatre (June 15), Manchester Bridgewater Hall (16), Glasgow Royal Concert Hall (17), Cambridge Corn Exchange (18), Bexhill-on-Sea De La Warr Pavilion (19), London Royal Albert Hall (30)
► **SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
► **PRICE** Manchester £25; Bexhill-on-Sea £25.50; Oxford,

Cambridge and London TBC
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Dot To Dot

The one-day festival returns with a whole host of quality bands in the first raft of announcements. Peace, Wolf Alice, Courtney Barnett, Real Estate, Darlia and many more will make the trip to Manchester, Bristol and Nottingham this spring.

► **DATES** Manchester, various venues (May 23), Bristol, various venues (24), Nottingham, various venues (25)
► **OTHER ACTS** Barbarossa, Sivu, The Midnight Beast and more
► **PRICE** £20
► **ON SALE** now
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FESTIVAL NEWS

Standon Calling

The Hertfordshire festival has announced that Frank Turner & The Sleeping Souls and Maximo Park will headline this year's event, which takes place from August 1-3. Joining them on the bill will be Peace, Charli XCX, Clean Bandit and Ella Eyre, with more to be announced. Tickets are available from standoncalling.com and cost £119.

T In The Park

Arctic Monkeys have already been confirmed to top the bill at the Scottish festival, and now T organisers have announced that some homegrown talent will be joining them as this year's headliners. Biffy Clyro will follow up last year's triumphant Reading and Leeds sets on the opening night, while Calvin Harris will bring the party on Saturday. Pharrell Williams, Elbow, Tinie Tempah, Tame Impala, Pixies and Katy B will also perform. T takes place in Kinross from July 11-13, with tickets priced at £82.50 for the day and £184-£205 for the weekend.



41

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GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

Angel Haze

The outspoken New York rapper leaked her own album late last year, calling the move a "fuck you" to her label. The record gets a physical release this month, so Haze will play a handful of gigs to showcase tracks from it in her usual confrontational manner.

► **DATES** Manchester Gorilla (March 7), Birmingham O2 Academy 2 (8), London Heaven (11)
 ► **TICKETS** £11; London £13.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.10–£1.35 booking fee

Eagulls

Fresh from releasing their self-titled debut album and appearing on *Late Night With David Letterman* alongside Bill Murray, the Leeds band return to the UK to cause more chaos around the country.

► **DATES** London Electrowerkz (March 5), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (6), Glasgow Nice 'N' Sleazy (7), Newcastle Head Of Steam (8)
 ► **TICKETS** London £8 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee; Leeds £1.79 and Newcastle £7 from wegottickets.com with 18p–70p booking fee; Glasgow £7 from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee

Dumb

The Birmingham band, who cite Pixies as their heroes, hit the road in support of latest single 'Supersonic Love Toy'.

► **DATES** Newcastle Think Tank (March 5), Derby Victoria Inn (8), London Old Blue Last (11)
 ► **TICKETS** Newcastle £6 from NME.COM/tickets with 60p booking fee; Derby £4 from gigantic.com with 50p booking fee; London free entry

Maximo Park

The long-running indie band play highlights from new album 'Too Much Information' and a smattering of fan favourites as they embark on a fresh tour.

► **DATES** Portsmouth Pyramids (March 6), Bristol O2 Academy (7), Glasgow O2 Academy (8), Liverpool O2 Academy (10), Nottingham Rock City (11)

► **TICKETS** £18.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.85–£2.40 booking fee

Bugged Out Weekender

The electronic music festival moves to a new location this year as it celebrates its 20th birthday, and some of dance's biggest names will be along for the party. It takes place at Pontins in Southport, and Andrew Weatherall, Daniel Avery, Eats Everything, Jacques Greene, Joy Orbison, Julio Bashmore, Skream and Todd Terje will all feature across the weekend.

► **DATES** Southport Pontins (March 7–9)
 ► **TICKETS** Weekend tickets £159; day tickets £29.50–£45 from buggedoutweekender.eventgenius.co.uk with £6–£14.99 booking fee

Trans

Bernard Butler heads up the new band, who will release their EP 'Green' on March 10. Get a sneak preview of the record at these two dates.

► **DATES** London The Lexington (March 6), Bristol Exchange (7)
 ► **TICKETS** Bristol £6 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee; London £8 from billetterto.co.uk with 50p booking fee

MØ

Karen Marie Orsted has been compared to Grimes and Lana Del Rey since her first single 'Pilgrim' last year. This week

FIVE TO SEE FOR FREE

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1. Blood Red Shoes

Resident Records, Brighton
 The duo launch their new album.
 ► Mar 5, 6.30pm

2. Bloody Knees

The Old Blue Last, London
 The Cambridge punks, supported by Birdskulls.
 ► Mar 5, 8pm

3. Ekkah

Birthdays, London
 Former Arcadian Kicks members tout a tropical new-wave sound.
 ► Mar 6, 8pm

4. Nadine Carina

The Riverside, Sheffield
 Swiss singer-songwriter also plays Leeds.
 ► Mar 7, 8pm

5. Metronomy

Rough Trade East, London
 Joe Mount and co run through new album 'Love Letters'.
 ► Mar 9, 7pm



Blood Red Shoes



Maximo
Park

the Danish singer will celebrate the release of her first full-length LP 'No Mythologies To Follow' as she plays a handful of dates around the country.

► **DATES** London Heaven (March 6), Leeds Cockpit (7), Glasgow Broadcast (8), Manchester Deaf Institute (9)
► **TICKETS** £8.50; London £12 from NME.COM/tickets with 85p-£1.28 booking fee; Glasgow £8.50 from ticketweb.co.uk with £1.02 booking fee

Breton

The south London collective play tracks from their second album 'War Room Stories' as they wind up their latest tour in the capital.

► **DATES** London Village Underground (March 5)
► **TICKETS** £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

Stanley Brinks & The Wave Pictures

Stanley Brinks (formerly known as Herman Düne) and The Wave Pictures team up on their collaborative album 'Gin'. They play tracks from the LP in four cities this week.

► **DATES** Cardiff Moon Club (March 5), Manchester Chorlton Irish Club (6), Wakefield The Hop (8), Newcastle Head Of Steam (9)
► **TICKETS** Cardiff £8 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee; Manchester £8 from ticketline.co.uk with 80p booking fee; Wakefield £10 from ticketweb.co.uk with £1.25 booking fee; Newcastle £8 from wegotickets.com with 80p booking fee



Annie Clark,
aka St Vincent,
helps celebrate
International
Women's Day on
BBC 6Music

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

St Vincent

Mary Anne Hobbs

Annie Clark joins Hobbs, Debbie Harry and Woman's Hour singer Fiona Jane to celebrate International Women's Day. The four women will compile a playlist of pioneering female musicians and discuss how they changed the world.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7am, March 8

Speedy Ortiz

X-Posure

Sadie Dupuis and her band made their UK live debut last month, but if you missed out on those dates, they're popping in to the XFM studios to recreate their live show, playing tracks from their debut album 'Major Arcana' and recent EP 'Real Hair'.

► **LISTEN** XFM, 10pm, March 6

London Calling

Sky Arts

Managers are key to any band's success – and their sanity. In the final instalment of this series, The Police's manager Miles Copeland and pop guru Simon Napier-Bell will discuss the role of star-makers and their influence on music, from

The Beatles' Brian Epstein, punk icon Malcolm McLaren and, more recently, Simon Cowell.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 8pm, March 10

Pretenders

Live And Loose In LA

As Chrissie Hynde prepares to return with new solo material, relive her old band the Pretenders' greatest moments with this concert film. Shot at a sold-out gig at LA's Wiltern Theatre, it features

some of their classic hits, including 'Brass In Pocket' and 'Back On The Chain Gang'.

► **WATCH** Sky Arts, 11.30pm, March 8

Haim

Now Playing

The West Coast sisters will take it in turns to each curate a half-hour playlist inspired by listeners' suggestions, following a 30-minute run-through of some of their own favourite tracks.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7pm, March 11

Richard Hell

Liz Kershaw

The former Television member recently published his memoirs, *I Dreamed I Was A Very Clean Tramp*, and he'll talk to Liz Kershaw about some of the stories told in that book, ranging from his influence on punk fashion to writing his seminal album 'Blank Generation'.

► **LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 1pm, March 8



Haim



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ALL THE NME AWARDS ACTION



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NME awards 2014

with

austin TEXAS
LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD™

For 15 minutes, a tiny room backstage in Brixton hosted a summit between 50 years of rock'n'roll royalty: Paul McCartney, Damon Albarn, John Cooper Clarke and Alex Turner. What a way to kick off the party of the year, eh?

Photos: Dean Chalkley

best live band

supported by



Arctic Monkeys

best british band

supported by  Windows Phone

Arctic Monkeys



Matt Helders,
John Cooper
Clarke, Alex
Turner

best album

supported by

ABR
SECOND
SON

Arctic Monkeys

45

Speech! Best Live Band

Alex: "So as the sun sets on awards season, there's just the big two to go. I am, of course, talking about the Oscars and the NME Awards. So let me start by saying, I'd just like to thank the Academy. Only joking. To be honest, I used all my best shit up last week. But thanks."

Speech! Best Album

Alex: "What about 'Yeezus'? Nahh, thanks to James Ford, Liam Shay and, of course, Doctor Johnny Clarke."

Speech! Best British Band

Matt: "I dunno if you can tell watching online, but the atmosphere is bloody electric. It's like the big bang. There's gonna be a few collisions if you're not careful."

Alex: "Thank you if you voted. Thank you for the encouragement."

Songwriter Paul McCartney deep in conversation, while the venerable John Cooper Clarke appears to be running on the spot on the sidelines, barely able to restrain himself from accosting Paul at the first available opportunity. On the other side of the room The Horrors' Rhys Webb looks on in awe, having brought Paul's debut solo album, 1970's 'McCartney', with him in the hope of getting an autograph. At the edge of it all lurks the man of the moment, the leader of the band who will win five NME Awards tonight and the guy who's made shit-stirring into an art: Alex Turner.

Minutes earlier, he and his Arctic Monkeys bandmate Matt Helders were up on the

podium to collect the NME Award for Best Live Band supported by Gig Buddy. Acknowledging the coming end-of-awards season, Alex drolly thanked "the Academy" before confessing that he "used all [his] best shit up last week". Still, no need for Alex to be too loquacious – his Brits call-to-arms is still one of the night's biggest talking points, the room holding

its breath when he grabs the microphone.

Anyone hoping Alex would come out swinging again was left disappointed. And, he says in the photo room, they may have

At any given moment, there are between 20 and 30 people in the tiny photo room backstage at the O2 Academy Brixton, the flow of human traffic unrelenting. It's a claustrophobe's worst nightmare. At *this* moment, however, with the ratio of musical gods to mere mortals higher than at almost any other spot on earth, there's nowhere else you'd rather be: there's NME's Innovator Damon Albarn and our Songwriter's

hime songwriter's songwriter award

Paul McCartney

Macca meets
his songwriting
heir



Damon darts out of the photo room, and Rhys finally musters the courage to sidle up to Paul, congratulating him on his award (quite sweetly, Paul congratulates him back, even though The Horrors weren't up for anything) and proffering his copy of 'McCartney'. He spells out his name – “A lovely Welsh name!” proclaims Paul, who reveals that his favourite auntie, Dilys, was also Welsh, before testing Rhys on his (woeful) knowledge of places in Wales.

Dazzling as it all seems, five albums in, Arctic Monkeys are well accustomed to nights like this, and well inured to them too. “Yeah, good night,” Alex says. “I don't necessarily see winning trophies as like a victory in this game. Of course it's encouraging to have the acknowledgment, but it's auxiliary to the songwriting or the creation of the art rather than the other way round. That's just me not being ungrateful. It's great for the encouragement and I know a lot of these are voted for by people, and that makes me feel tall, but that's not ever what it's been about for me. Any victory comes at that moment when you create the thing, for me anyway. Perhaps it's difficult for some people to understand.”

At any rate, that's not the case with the other doyens in the room. As Alex and Matt pose for the photographer, John Cooper Clarke finally gets his

moment with Paul. “Fucking hell, man, I tell you,” Paul says, “we just keep fucking working, don't we! Come on, man, this thing grabbed us by the bollocks way back then and it continues to do so, you know it!”

A rare moment becomes rarer when John struggles for words. “Paul, Paul, the idea that you've ever even heard of me – that's just some kind of, some kind of...”

“I know, but believe me, I have!” Paul insists happily.

“That's just some kind of validation,” says John, quietly.

Creation, winning the respect of your peers, making art that endures: *those* are the spoils worth fighting for. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

BIG MACCA

What's your favourite Paul McCartney song?



Edwyn Collins

“I like ‘In My Life’, which has an amazing piano solo with George Martin that's like Bach. They recorded it on tape – probably one-inch tape – and then spliced it to slow it down.”



Thomas Warmlesley, Temples

“I love ‘The Fool On The Hill’. I like the change, where it goes very dark and minor. I listened to it two nights in a row and it gave me nightmares. Just brilliant.”



Iain Cook, Chvrches

“‘Live And Let Die’, blatantly. We'd want to do a Bond song. That would be the biggest honour of all time.”



Emily Eavis

“You can't beat when he played ‘Let It Be’ at Glastonbury – it was incredible. There are a few moments in the festival's history where you're brought to tears by a set – and it was like, ‘Is this really happening?’”



Este Haim, Haim

“This is a losing game. We love all of his records. I'm a big ‘Ram’ fan, ‘Monkberry Moon Delight’ is one of my favourite songs. I love everything he and Linda did, I love everything he and John did.”



Honor Titus, Cerebral Ballzy

“He's obviously almost a deity in terms of songwriting. In terms of his solo work, I really like his quirky, weird stuff, like ‘Temporary Secretary’.”



nme award for innovation

Damon Albarn

Whether with Blur, Gorillaz, countless other projects or solo, he hasn't stopped innovating for 26 years

DEAN CHALKLEY



The innovator's innovators

Damon chooses his two favourite boundary-pushers

Richard Russell XL Recordings founder



"He's genuinely been a musical innovator over the years. He's not a musician in the conventional sense of the word, but he's got an unbelievable kind of instinct for what's cool and what works. Just take Adele. Eighteen months ago, the world looked at a little label in west London and went, 'Hang on, you sold more records than the rest of us put together.'"

William Onyeabor Cult Nigerian musician



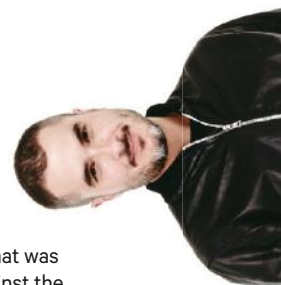
"I know a lot of people from Nigeria and he's definitely an outsider. But he's an outsider who's got a mansion, with grounds and everything. And you can't quite reconcile his underground records with this palace. It's very futuristic '70s afro-funk-disco-pop. I'd recommend it to any young listener. My daughter is into Jake Bugg and Vampire Weekend, and she's played it loads and loads, and you can't force a 14-year-old to like something. There's something in there that is very modern. Kids gravitate towards fresh music."

This is a Lowe

Zane explains why Damon is a deserving winner

Damon is an innovator by the very nature of who he is. By the way he thinks, the way he approaches life and his drive to do things differently – not just because it's different, but because he feels that that's the only way for it to be done. That's all that he can relate to. I always find it really ironic that people considered his biggest achievement up to that

point was this traditional Britpop thing. It's so not him. It's never, ever been him. And when he was doing that, for him, that was innovating and going against the grain of what was happening at that time: it was bringing music back into something that he felt was being overshadowed. So he's always thought that way, like, 'What's the next move?'"



Picture this

Winners, presenters and performers
visit the NME photo room



Belle & Sebastian

TEENAGE CANCER TRUST OUTSTANDING
CONTRIBUTION TO MUSIC AWARD

So you're working on a new album?

Stuart Murdoch: "Yeah, I kidded on the band; I said, 'Look, I'm a different guy now, I'm much older, I don't know if I can write these pop songs again, but you do turn into a child again when you start to write.'"

You've been talking about a Eurovision influence.

"We decided to come at it from different angles and Eurovision was one. I also saw the Ken Loach film *The Spirit of '45* and was inspired to write a kind of a Brechtian music-hall thing about postwar social justice! You take broad themes and narrow them into the essence of a song. There's a bit of

hi-NRG in there too, a few different flavours. We're heading out to Atlanta, Georgia in March to start working on it with producer Ben Allen [Animal Collective, Bombay Bicycle Club, Washed Out], and are aiming for autumn. It's a new chapter."

When will we get a taste of the new songs?

"We're going to do some gigs in the summer, so we'll form our show for the autumn. I'm drawn to a theatrical theme – I do want to combine cinema and theatre with the band, so people can come in and really see a show."

Disclosure

BEST TRACK

supported by Blackstar

What's your favourite Paul McCartney song?

Guy Lawrence: "Probably 'A Day In The Life', because I actually studied that song for a long time at college. I know the ins and outs of the harmony and the melody and the structure, even how they came up with the lyrics, cut out of newspaper clippings. To be sitting a metre away from him tonight is just crazy."





**Lily Allen and
Debbie Harry**
**BEST SOLO ARTIST/
GODLIKE GENIUS**

Lily, you won!

"Oh yeah, will you look at that. Best Solo Artist. Never mind Paul McCartney, never mind David Bowie, they gave it to me! I'm quite up for

tonight, I like the odd night out. I'm just really excited about Debbie Harry – she's so iconic and important that she puts everyone else in the shade. I've hung out with her before and she's so sweet and down to earth."



Jarvis Cocker

Good night?

"Yes, I'm sitting on a table with Jerry Hall tonight; I've never met her before. We said hello, she was very nice. I was at the Folk Awards last week and this is, er... very different. I enjoyed Drenge, as well. It's the first time I've seen them live, and I thought they were very good."



Metronomy

Did you ever dream you'd be performing with the ex-Sugababes?

Joe Mount: "No. I bought their first single, I'm a big fan. We haven't mentioned it yet, but we're all a bit stunned. I'm looking forward to chilling out now, having a few drinks."

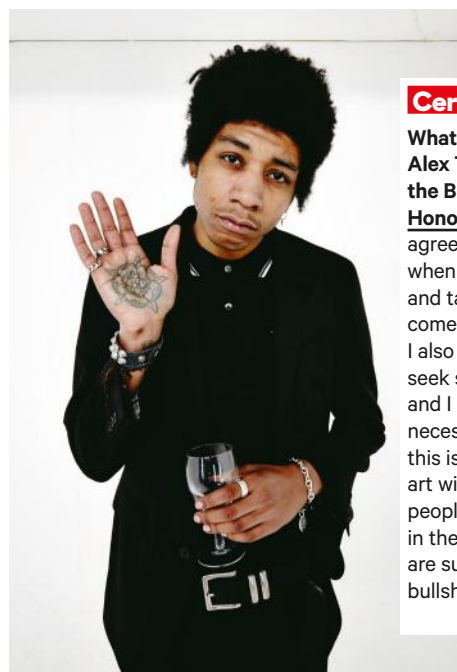
MKS

How did it go with Metronomy?

Siobhan Donaghy: "For us it's like a little Supremes moment. When they asked us, we said yes immediately."

How's your album coming along?

"We have an announcement coming shortly. I can't tell you, but it's good news. It's been majorly frustrating – we've literally been starting to get a bit of hate mail about it. The album's been finished for a long time. It's fantastic."



Cerebral Ballzy

What did you think of Alex Turner's speech at the Brits?

Honor Titus: "I completely agree, and I think it's a year when music of credibility and tangibility is going to come to the forefront. But I also think that people will seek someone with realness, and I don't know if that's necessarily them... I think this is the year that the art will be paramount. And people won't lose themselves in the idea of frivolity. People are subjected to so much bullshit and monotony..."

The south London lunatics hate awards ceremonies and Alex Turner. They came to the perfect place...

Fat White

Family



philip hall
radar award
supported by MONSTER HEADPHONES

It's the Fat White Family! Come to save America! Gonna turn into a wildfire, gonna burn all night long!" The queue of punters seems confused by the 60-something American gent in the tweed hat and trimmed moustache. But this is Pat Lyons – poet, radio broadcaster and, tonight, Fat White Family hype man – introducing them like a wrestling announcer at every stage of their journey to their first NME Awards. To random passers-by in the street, to the paps who totally ignore them on the red carpet because Haim happen to turn up at the same time and, ultimately, to the world.

To be fair, they need hyping. Frontman Lias Saoudi arrives, pre-fucked, in the same suit he's been wearing throughout Fat White Family's month-long tour. He necks tequila shots and digs into a bag of nourishing natural forest salad of which our Songwriter's Songwriter Paul McCartney would surely approve.

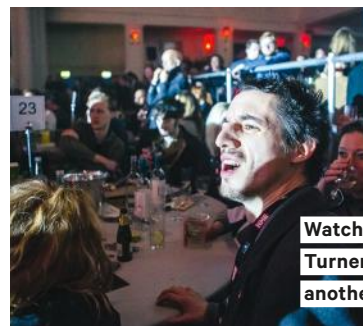
"I'm gonna take a big bag of magic mushrooms," he drawls, "get a little bit fruity. I'm gonna use the very last remaining bit of my energy to dig out whatever pleasure there is left in life and then collapse for three or four days. I'll probably embarrass myself at some stage."

Awards don't sit well with the Fat Whites' outsider philosophy. "I hate awards shows," Lias sneers. "It's contrary to everything I believe in as an artist and a musician, but at the same time it's free booze and free food and the novelty hasn't worn off yet. I find it mildly amusing but repulsive because there's all these insiders blowing sugar up each other's arses."

Presented with the idea that Fat White Family might attempt to rally rock'n'roll à la Alex Turner, Lias suddenly awakens. "Words are not enough to describe how much of a fucking buffoon I think that man is," he says, brimming with vitriol. "I find it unbelievable that people think of him the way they do. The guy is clearly a moron. He was talking about the universe and cyclical

natures and 'invoice me for the microphone'. What are you talking about, man? You're a fucking millionaire, man. His latest record, I fucking hated it. What stylist have they got in LA? They've got Brylcreem and quiffs and leather jackets – totally unconvincing. All of a sudden you think you're like Serge Gainsbourg or something. Fuck off, man! I hate that little cunt, he's a fucking joke. It was the least rock'n'roll thing I've ever seen in my fucking life. His speech was horrendously embarrassing. It made me sweat, like when you see something that really makes you cringe. Massive cock. Print that."

Fat White Family are seated approximately 12 feet from the Arctic Monkeys' table at the awards. By then, luckily, the fungus of fabulousness has worked its magic and, rather than asking Alex to invoice him for his face, Lias is busy



Watching Alex Turner collect another award

getting fruity with a lady friend. When they're announced as winners of the Philip Hall Radar Award supported by Monster Headphones, drummer Dan Lyons leaves the stage instantly and Lias refuses to say a word, leaving it to Pat to hype them hard. "Fat White Family! They're gonna save America! You have to see them live!"

Backstage in the photo room Pat preaches the eternal America-saving, see-them-live glories of FWF to the camera while Lias spends the entire shoot on his phone, pausing only to snipe "keep posing, lads" at Disclosure. As NME leads him back to his table and Pat puts his best moves on a passing Debbie Harry, Lias reaches a very dark place. In a backstage corridor he splurges his disgust at sharing air with Lily Allen and MKS, at the marginalisation of cult country music, at the fear and falseness he feels is crushing him with every puff of sugar up arse. After this, he's immediately carried out by his girlfriend. In his pulpy 'shroom-mush of a head he's the least awards ceremony guy on the planet. In reality, he fits right in. ■ MARK BEAUMONT



Drink this



Dan and Lias working the red carpet



Dan and Adam look ecstatic with their award

Eagulls

Eagulls made the 'Nerve Endings' video on a shoestring. Guitarist Mark Goldsworthy explains how to follow suit (pig's brain optional)...

GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

"You definitely get some right looks going around Leeds Market asking for a pig's head. One butcher told us to fuck off. We finally managed to convince someone we were serious and it wasn't some sick blood ritual. Getting the brain out is really difficult. I had to crack the head in half with a kitchen knife. You ever split an avocado? It was like that but more disgusting. Eventually the brain just evaporated, just became dust. Really makes you think about mortality and all that."



That pig's brain from the video

YOU DON'T NEED MONEY, JUST A STRONG IDEA

"It was maybe £300 all in [to make the video]. The less money you have to play around with, the more creative you get. We thought hard about what would best sum up the meaning of the song. It's about feeling your mind deteriorate, so it was quite a literal idea – a stop-motion mind deteriorating away..."

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR OWN AESTHETIC

"We knew what our song was about, so we made a video that reflected that – no middleman fucking with what we're about. You can't maintain integrity as an artist without 100 per cent control of your image – unless you're collaborating with someone you really trust. We set everything up, got all the cameras going and had to trust it'd be fine."

DON'T SHOEHORN IN A 'STORY'

"Some of the older '80s videos I quite like are like fucking feature films, they go on forever!

Unless you've got that budget don't try and force a story. You've got three minutes. What kind of story can you really tell in that time? I hate all those videos that cut between the band playing and a girl running through the woods, all that bullshit."

DON'T SWEAT IT

"We owed money to the gas board, who got a warrant to get in and check the meters. The pig's brain was rotting in the basement and we'd gone off somewhere when they came round and found it. They called the police, thinking... well, fuck knows. It's the size of a small child's brain and smelled so bad. They called the police, but luckily the police assumed it was an art project; there's loads of art students around there. They didn't want to get into it, which was just as well."



Eagulls with Brody Dalle

supported by

Domino's

best music video



Relive the action at NME.COM

Highlights include The Horrors unveiling new material

It's hard to believe that the NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas was over a week ago, but if you head to NME.COM now, you can still relive every interview, huge moment and acceptance speech – along with performances by Blondie, Metronomy and MKS, Drengé, Belle & Sebastian and NME Awards stalwarts The Horrors, who performed new track 'I See You' on stage at Brixton that night, the same day it premiered online.

How did you feel about playing the new song on the night it premiered?

Rhys Webb: "We first played it at Glastonbury when we headlined the Park Stage, which was a big night to decide to play two new songs. The shift from studio to live was quite a big one, but the reaction was amazing. This time we were really excited to play it live the day when people get to hear it for the first time. It's a great introduction to what we've been up to."

Do you have fond memories of past NME Awards?

Rhys: "The first one we ever went to was good. We hadn't actually released a single then."

Joe Spurgeon: "We all wore white trousers and I spilt a bottle of red wine over myself. I went to the toilet with a bottle of white wine, took my trousers off, doused them in white wine and then dried them off under the hand dryer. I put them back on and went out in an absolute state."

What do you make of this year's Godlike Geniuses, Blondie?

Rhys: "Debbie Harry recorded some great stuff in the late '60s, have you heard it?"

Faris Badwan: "The earliest thing I've heard are those demos when she was doing Shangri-Las covers. I found it at a record fair in New York, this early bootleg of her doing girl-group covers."

► Watch The Horrors' live performance of new track 'I See You' at NME.COM

The big guns of Brixton

Trophies! Twerking! Pizza
slices! Your scrapbook of
shots from the biggest
night of the year in music



Love letters!

Metronomy and MKS open the NME Awards 2014 with Austin, Texas



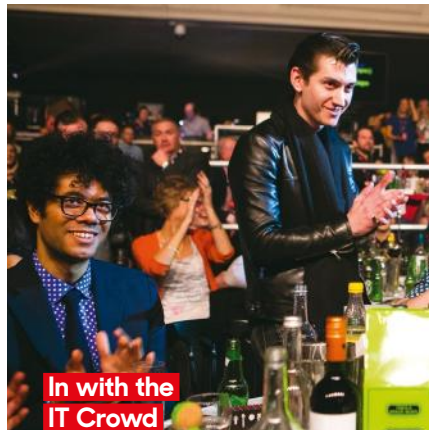
The Turner prize

Alex collects the NME Award for Best Live Band supported by Gig Buddy



Suit on my back

Swim Deep get dapper



In with the IT Crowd

Alex Turner reaches the top table



"Oh my god, Peter Crouch is here?!"

And Abbey Clancy, Sir Paul



Give Peace a chance

Our supposedly impartial host Huw Stephens makes his allegiances clear



Fight for your right to lamé

Godlike Genius Debbie Harry is resplendent in gold



Evidently twerking time

John Cooper Clarke and Guy Lawrence get down





Eagulls? Vultures?

Singer George Mitchell is some kind of scavenger anyway



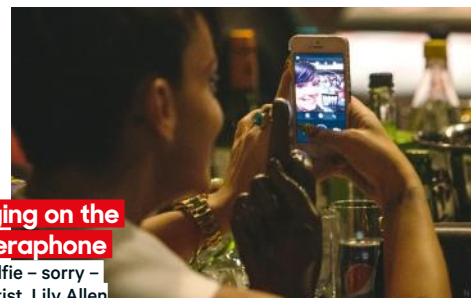
Sorted for cheese and fizz

Jarvis and Chilli get refreshed



Clap your hands say yeah

Chvrches' Lauren Mayberry



Hanging on the cameraphone

Best Selfie – sorry – Solo Artist, Lily Allen



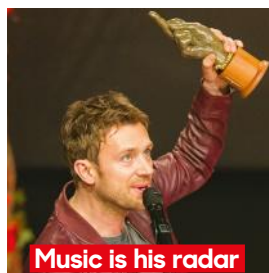
He is heavy, he's my brother

Eoin and Rory collect the NME Award for Best New Band supported by Mossimo



Shorts: officially in for 2014

Michael Eavis and Alana Haim model the latest trend



Music is his radar

A big hand for innovator Damon



Duo tone

Dreng's Loveless brothers take rock to the power of two



Tumbling slice

Jerry Hall doesn't mess around when it comes to pizza



This is Marrcore

Johnny Marr and Jarvis Cocker bogle to Blondie



The time is nigh

Blondie close the night with a career-spanning set

A very special thank you to

Austin, Texas • Mossimo • PS4 InFAMOUS Second Son • Monster Headphones • Windows Phone • Microsoft • Nokia • Domino's Pizza • Blackstar Amplification • Gig Buddy • Patrón Tequila • iHeartWines • Tuborg • IDSC • Teenage Cancer Trust • Bobby Mair • Huw Stephens • Nigel Downs, Octavia Harwood, Josh Rosen and all at O2 Academy Brixton • Pauline Carroll at Foxy Events • Alice Lindars, Paul Corrick and all at Reality • Louise Stevens • Louise Kovacs • Tim Holt and all at Acclaim Food • LD Communications • LoveLive • Streaming Tank • Locomotion • XL Video • White Light Jarman Lighting • Jared Papall • Toby Bryant and all at Solution • Josh Flaherty • Hannah Linnen • Stuart Bell • John Dubuque • James Sandom • Tanya Martin • Mike Grove • Bridin Murphy Mitchell • Scott Rodger • Miles Stowey • Russ Tannen • Lucy Collett • Arlene Dignam

Blondie

All hail **Blondie**, NME's
Godlike Geniuses 2014.
Amy Rose Spiegel meets
the band in New York to
reflect on a trailblazing
career spanning
five decades

godlike genius

(From left)
Clem Burke,
Debbie Harry
and Chris
Stein

55

According to Debbie Harry, the level of global notoriety and adulation Blondie have maintained since the 1970s wasn't one of the band's initial hopes. "My idea of fame was to be a beatnik – not megastardom," she says, reclining on a sofa that perfectly matches her leather pants, flanked by her bandmates in the lobby of their New York City practice space. Fortunately for Blondie's now gargantuan fanbase, Harry's place in obscurity was doomed by the band's string of game-changing singles: beginning with 1976's 'X Offender' through to radio totems 'The Tide Is High', 'Heart Of Glass', 'Call Me', ➔

Our Godlike Geniuses accept
their award in the company
of NME Editor Mike Williams, Lily
Allen and Huw Stephens

'Atomic'... Then there's Harry's ferociously iconic image – her likeness has graced hundreds of thousands of T-shirts and posters over the years, not to mention quite a few famous artworks by her friends Andy Warhol and Stephen Sprouse.

While the beatniks died out a long time ago, Harry and Blondie remain unimpeachable megastars after 40 years. Their continued contributions to music and their refusal to stifle their hyperactive impulse toward creative reinvention make them worthy recipients of NME's 2014 Godlike Genius Award, which they collected – and commemorated with a career-spanning performance – at the NME Awards in London on February 26.

Having outlasted many of their peers, perhaps Blondie's survival comes down to the way they've always prioritised a love of songwriting and performing over external opinions of their work, whether from label execs, critics or fans. "We all came from this place that was more about ongoing creativity than it was about getting a Rolls-Royce," confirms guitarist Chris Stein. "When we were starting out with this shit, we just wanted to play basements. That was my idea of being a rock star."

For a while, Blondie did play the kind of downtrodden rooms they thought they'd stay in forever, ensnaring audiences' attention at New York City's most sacred musical dumps of the late '70s, most notably during their tenure as one of the unofficial house bands of CBGB, a venue whose legacy they helped to define.

Harry and Stein will continue to reiterate each other's points throughout the course of the next hour's conversation, which seems to be a side effect of their longstanding and mind-melding partnership: they've not only been bandmates, but life partners, bound together since meeting in 1973, in a New York bar where Harry was performing with a group called The Stilettoes. Stein pursued her for motivations both musical and romantic and briefly joined The Stilettoes, but when that band broke up, Harry and Stein stayed together. The couple, who remained romantically involved for the next 11 years and continued their friendship after splitting in 1985, forged a more permanent union when they placed an ad in the *Village Voice* for a drummer, found Clem Burke, and embarked on their rollicking future together as Blondie.

As they started to write history with the band, Blondie's members continued to create

Blondie's Godlike Genius acceptance speech

Chris Stein

"Back in the old days we used to have an adversary relationship with the NME. They used to rake us over the coals. But Karl Marx told me that there's no such thing as bad publicity. Thank you."

Clem Burke

"It's great to be here, what an honour for us. It's very much appreciated. It's such an honour to be in the same building as Sir Paul McCartney, one of my all-time heroes. The Beatles changed my life. That's you, that's the fans in the UK, you have great taste in music."

Debbie Harry

"Thank you, NME. I'm very happy to be here tonight. Some of our friends are here. And all of the rest of you. Thanks for sticking around. That's Tommy Kessler on guitar, Leigh Foxx on the bass and Matt Katz-Bohen on keyboards. Thanks to all our fans – we wouldn't be here without you."

art for its own sake in other mediums – take Harry's pivotal role in the city's visual art scene, or the marvellously disorganised television show *TV Party*, an unscripted salon of downtown's finest that Stein co-hosted with

Factory alumnus and writer Glenn O'Brien. It aired to tiny audiences on a Manhattan public-access station and featured the improvisations of a revolving, and perpetually wasted, cabal of art and music stars including the rest of Blondie, artist Jean-Michel Basquiat – who drew the show's title cards by hand – Iggy Pop and, on almost every episode, the Ramones.

"One night a week, instead of going to a club, we'd just all go there," Stein says, laughing. "No-one watched it!"

Harry protests: "I watched it! It wasn't valuable – the concept of knowing it held no value and doing it anyway was a kick. Everything has

become valued. It's impending, almost like the curse of doom hanging over you." She Frankenstein-moans an elongated "vailllllll-ewwwwww" then continues: "If you're consumed with making something that's going to be valued by other people, instead of thinking about the value it holds for yourself, it gets in the way of your thinking."

In 1978, disco was less palatable than liquid bleach to most members of Blondie's downtown social milieu: the revulsion and contempt with which rock fans treated the genre would reach a climax the following year on Disco Demolition Night, when many burned disco records on a Chicago

football pitch. Nevertheless, in May '78, at a CBGB benefit to raise money to cover the medical bills of Johnny Blitz, the recently stabbed drummer from one of punk's seminal bands, The Dead Boys, Blondie



Debbie loves
Chris, 1976



"You have to refuse what's expected"

Debbie Harry

performed a cover of Donna Summer's 'I Feel Love'. Their contemporaries immediately condemned them for 'selling out', but the criticism fell on unconcerned ears. Blondie, ever forward-thinking and unruffled by public opinion, were gearing up to record 'Heart Of Glass', a disco mutant of a song they'd been tinkering with for years and were finally ready to release.

Blondie's pursuit of ground as yet uncharted by other punk bands proved to be their making: 'Heart Of Glass' was an astonishing success, reaching Number One in 10 countries around the world. The track was the commercial crown jewel in the band's brilliant 1978 album, 'Parallel Lines', which also served as home to some of Blondie's other most memorable singles, including 'Sunday Girl', 'One Way Or Another' and 'Hanging

bands to bring in synthesizers and work with electronic sounds versus acoustic or guitar sounds," Harry recalls, describing an early iteration of Blondie's freewheeling approach, which is so powerful *because* it's predicated on variability. "I'm always inspired by new technology. I think it's really exciting and wonderful," says Harry. For all the visual iconography surrounding the band's singer, Blondie were never interested in having a musical 'brand' so much as they were in indulging a collective urge to keep adapting new sounds into their work.

As far as the label executives were concerned, however, experimentation be damned: the accomplishments of 'Parallel Lines' and its star single brought about a new set of artistic confines for Blondie to contend with. "I don't know how many times we were told, 'Do another song like 'Heart Of Glass'!'" Harry recalls, exasperated. "It's impossible to really do that. I've seen artists come out with a second song

Blondie in
New York, 1978



On 'The Telephone'. It struck the perfect balance between the overtly confrontational sound of their self-titled debut and the ditzy, crushed-out love songs of 'Plastic Letters', which although it was released little more than six months prior, lacks 'Parallel Lines' killer self-awareness.

Profoundly unlike their dogmatic punk contemporaries, Blondie have remained admirably adaptable to experimentation and evolution since the outset. "We were one of the first

after they've had a big hit, and then they try to replicate it with a follow-up song, and it usually just falls flat. I think it's more of a challenge to be creative and do something that you like instead of taking the easy way out and doing another 'Heart Of Glass'!" Record labels weren't always pleased with this stylistic game of hopscotch, but as Harry maintains, "You have to take a stand. It's a toss-up between being in a business and being an artist. Sometimes you have to hold your ground and refuse to do what's expected of you, even if it could make you money."

Instead of kowtowing to the limitations industry executives limply attempted to impose on them, Blondie pushed forward, adopting yet another then-unconventional variety of music into their work, and the resulting single marked the beginning of a whole new era in popular culture. With the release of their 1980 single 'Rapture', Blondie brought hip-hop to the international radio-listening masses. Rather than a ham-fisted appropriation of rap culture, it was a love letter enthusiastically extolling its virtues. The

lyrics find Harry rapping about nightlife, cars and her friend Fab Five Freddy – one of hip-hop's first heroes, who is also featured in the track's video. "How did we meet Freddy, Chris?" Harry asks Stein. "Did he come down to CBGB?" "No," Stein answers. "He was on *TV Party* first."

Around this time, as Burke says, hip-hop culture was rarefied even in New York: "It was a real niche thing at the time – you had to seek it out.

Chris and Debbie had a couple of friends, like Freddy, that pointed the way." Harry concurs: "It really wasn't everywhere like it is now. It was in neighbourhoods like the Bronx, Harlem and Newark, New Jersey." In the years that ➔

FANNISH INQUISITION



Pharrell What happened to that 'Heart Of Glass'?

Chris: "He knows who we are! Well, it's still beating. And how is yours, Pharrell?"

Debbie: "My heart of glass is made of unbreakable glass, it's shatterproof."

Chris: "Pharrell is awesome and I like the hat he wore at the Grammys – amazing."

"Debbie's overt sexuality was scary in rock"

Clem Burke

followed 'Rapture', radio DJs and listeners became more open to artists who performed strictly hip-hop, and the song would later be sampled by rap monarchs like KRS-One and Grandmaster Flash on their own songs. In flouting the music industry's attempts to pigeonhole them, Blondie ended up changing it irrevocably.

It wasn't just the band's musical output that raised the hackles of preservationist institutions who preferred their culture static and familiar. "Debbie's overt sexuality was scary to the male-dominated rock world, and especially the media guys," insists Burke, while Harry, clearly uninterested, picks at her trousers. "It was really a boys' club – as much as the band scene was a boys' club, the fuckin' male rock-crit establishment was worse." Never before Blondie had a band so nonchalantly, and explosively, subverted the narrative of where women fit into contemporary pop and rock music – especially if they also liked to embody the type of performative sexiness that Harry's "character", as she sometimes refers to her persona as Blondie's frontwoman, experimented with onstage and in her public image.

"I was determined not to be portrayed, or portray myself, as a victim, which I felt had been the standard for women when they were singing," Harry says of her motivations. "It was always that your heart was broken, *BLUH BLUH BLUH*, you're all ripped up..."



Debbie at LA's famous Whiskey A Go Go in 1978

Blondie 2014: (l-r) Tommy Kessler, Matt Katz-Bohen, Clem Burke, Debbie Harry, Chris Stein, Leigh Foxx

She breathes a less than enchanted, staccato laugh, a polite signal to let Stein know that she's over this topic and it's his turn to talk. He takes his cue: "Janis Joplin was such a strong presence, but her lyrics were all 'Ball 'N' Chain', women are losers, 'Down On Me'. They're all about wanting to be submissive." On singles like 1976's 'X Offender' ("*When I get out [of jail], there's no doubt I'll be sex offensive to you*") and 1979's 'One Way Or Another', Harry portrays an image of female desire that was predatory and vicious, flipping the intent of the male catcallers who inspired her band's name. But even at its gruffest, her tone always maintains a wisp of silliness, as though she's acknowledging how dumb sexual-power binaries are as she's overturning them.

'Ghosts Of Download'

Blondie's 10th studio record, due on March 17, revisits these skewed dynamics of sexual dominance, which have long remained thematic touchstones for the band. Its songs have names like 'Sugar On The Side', in which Harry's narrator, annoyed by her lover, tells him their relationship will be all right as long as she vengefully sleeps with someone else, and 'I Want To Drag You Around', which has a sweeter sentiment than it sounds, but not by much. The overarching sound is largely dancey and electronic, in keeping with the futurism the album's title implies. On tracks like 'I Screwed Up' and 'Euphoria', Harry's lilting drawl is unexpectedly buffeted with pulsating Latin drumbeats and men rapping in Spanish.

"The reggaeton grooves [on the new album] are just so sexy," Stein says. "I started being more and more drawn to Latin electronica. I like drawing from obscure sources that haven't really crossed over



yet." The album, which follows 2011's 'Panic Of Girls', also features diverse guest appearances from Gossip's Beth Ditto on the techno-centric 'A Rose By Any Name', experimental rock musician Miss Guy on the club-appropriate 'Rave', and Stein-approved reggaeton artists Sistema Solar on the aforementioned

FANNISH INQUISITION



Stuart Murdoch, Belle & Sebastian

What was the downside to being loved so much by so many?

Debbie: "There wasn't a downside. Love is so different for everyone and there is no one kind of love. As many people as there are in the world, or who experience love, they experience it uniquely. The pressures came more from the business end of the music industry and keeping the band going."

Chris: "It's hard to say if it's a pressure. The support of the fans has always been good. We wouldn't be going if it wasn't for the fans."

'Sugar On The Side', the album's opener, which sets the tone for its interweaving of modern genres.

The album's title is an allusion to Blondie's divided viewpoints on how technology and connectedness impact on artists. "I wonder what is to become of the fact that everybody is now connected to somebody else all the time, 24/7," Stein says. "As [sci-fi author] William Gibson said, the body language of how people used to smoke cigarettes has now become cellphone manipulation. It makes for a whole culture that is less centred, maybe, where there's no place that people are drawn to because they're always connected to somebody else. With that said, I'm always on the fucking phone!"

Harry is less conflicted about the tension between her visual and digital worlds. "I'm really only concerned with letting people have a certain amount of me – not all of me. I've always fought very hard for a certain amount of anonymity and

GETTY, ANDY FALLON



privacy. I don't participate as much as Chris does – I'm very selective, and it's very minimal for me. People are looking for public notice without actually being in showbiz. Everyone thinks they're in showbiz online! If I choose to send something out, or write something to a friend, that's one thing, but I'm not looking for that kind of attention. I have another kind."

Burke points out that even when artists forego the publicity tools made available to them by technology, it's often a pointedly calculated PR move: "Bowie did the complete polar opposite [with 'The Next Day'] and just kept quiet, with no advance content or anything." He maintains that it's unavoidable to be a public figure without being subjected to all the newfound intimacy of the internet: "There's a lot more candid stuff now, like

people bringing their cell phones into gym changing rooms." Harry, who is clearly dubious about this prospect and now more interested in goofing around, coos, "Ooh! I think we should all just wear raincoats," and pretends to whip one open like a flasher.

Harry's scepticism about the internet goes beyond the idea of division between public and personal life, doubting its longevity on the whole: "I think that there will be some kind of Luddite backlash. People in general will just all of a sudden unhook themselves. It's such a waste of time." It makes sense that Harry doubts the necessity of the internet – Blondie and their music have endured just fine since before it existed, and they're not going anywhere. They exhausted that desire when they took a sabbatical lasting from 1982 to 1997, although they weren't exactly resting on their laurels during this period. Burke continued to play with other groups, and Harry and Stein stuck by each other creatively – and emotionally, while she attended to him during a bout with a life-threatening skin disorder.

"It was Chris' fault that we got back together!" says Harry. Stein, so consummately in tune with Harry, doesn't deny his responsibility in Blondie's reformation: "I always had it in the back of my head. I also had seen so much interest in Blondie over the past 10 years. There were more musicians referencing us, and just more stuff about us, so it seemed like the right idea at the right time."

Reflecting on the band's legacy, Stein says, "When we were starting out, there wasn't anybody in the rock or pop world who was in their fifties and sixties, since it's such a new genre. It remains to be seen who's going to be around from this generation in 40 years. I think Gaga will." Burke makes a case for the long-tail career of guitarist Jack White. Harry answers with her tongue lodged firmly in

"Everyone should own their records"

NME Awards guests on how Blondie changed music

Edwyn Collins



"I just saw Blondie outside, I said hello. I first met Debbie in the audience at a Talking Heads gig at Strathclyde University in Glasgow, in 1977. Ramones, Talking Heads, Blondie and Television all played that weekend."

Jerry Hall



"I. Love. Blondie. I remember Debbie from New York. We used to hang out with Andy Warhol and her partner Chris. We went to Studio 54 together a lot. She always had this slightly undone look that I loved about her. Now she's more polished."

Lauren Mayberry, Chvrches



"The rap in 'Rapture': that's all the reason you need to call them Godlike. It was pretty much when mainstream culture heard about rap music. That was a turning point."

Zane Lowe



"Blondie are Godlike Geniuses, but also innovators as well. They're one of the most important bands of all time."

Brody Dalle



"Debbie's the most incredible pussy. 'Parallel Lines', 'Autoamerican', those records are so classic. Everyone should own them. They stick in your mind and they never leave."

Honor Titus, Cerebral Ballzy



"Blondie are Godlike because they embraced New York's punk scene, but presented it in such a different, fashionable perspective."

cheek: "Will I still be around? I've been around! I don't know if I can go around much more, but I'll keep trying!" When pressed for a real answer, she says, "It's hard to predict, because it's a matter of whether you love it that much," as if to challenge the idea that anyone could like this job as much as she does.

"The return isn't as important as the process of staying active as an artist," says Burke. "That's always got to be in play – reaching for something else artistically." With their 10th album out in a fortnight, a greatest hits – 'Blondie 4(0) Ever' – and an international tour on the horizon, it's clear the band maintain the same motivations and approaches to creativity that they did 40 years ago. Burke is 58, Stein 64 and Harry 68, but for Blondie, developing and honing their artistry in the present is just as important as the authority they've accumulated in the past.

"I think [each one of us] is dedicated to being a musician," Harry says. "Obviously, if Clem wasn't in Blondie, he'd be playing music elsewhere – that's it. There's no doubt in my mind that Chris would be playing with someone else. For some reason, fortunately, we've come together with the same life force and desire to keep doing it. It never

feels forced in any way for us."

Harry is flattered to be the recipient of accolades such as this one: "It's great, you know. It's out of proportion, but it's nice to be recognised. It's outstanding, really," she says of the band's win, but her loftiest goals for Blondie are perhaps the only uniform element of their intensely varied and pioneering career. "I concentrate on doing good work and good shows and being satisfied with that."

Being lauded as Godlike Geniuses is no small deal, but for Blondie the real prize, from the *TV Party* days right up to now, is creating art of a value that can't be easily quantified – which is exactly what's made them so priceless. ■



Debbie Harry
in 1977

And the winners are...

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BEST MUSIC VIDEO

Eagulls, 'Nerve Endings'

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Domino's

BEST MUSIC FILM

Made Of Stone (Dir. Shane Meadows)

BEST SOLO ARTIST

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GODLIKE GENIUS

Blondie

BEST REISSUE

The Clash, 'Sound System'

BEST BAND BLOG OR TWITTER

Alana Haim, Haim

BEST BOOK

Morrissey, Autobiography

BEST SMALL FESTIVAL

Swn

BEST FAN COMMUNITY

Arctic Monkeys

MUSIC MOMENT OF THE YEAR

Noel and Damon come together for Teenage Cancer Trust

WORST BAND

The 1975

HERO OF THE YEAR

Alex Turner

VILLAIN OF THE YEAR

Harry Styles



Eoin and Rory Loveless

Dreng

BEST NEW BAND

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Pleased with your award?

Eoin: "Yeah, very. This time last year we started our first UK tour and we were a bit spaced out by touring the UK – that seemed a bit exotic to us – so it's been a fast year."

And you've conquered the US too?

Eoin: "Ha. Yeah, that's been fun and it's obviously somewhere we'd like to go and play a few more shows and explore that part of the world."

How's your night? What's going on down there?

Rory: "A lot of famous people, Paul McCartney, barely metres away, it's quite surreal."

Are you speaking to any of them?

Eoin: "We're not very good at that whole conversation thing, but I guess now with *this (points to award)* we'll be social magnets."

How do you feel about the supposed return of rock'n'roll?

Eoin: "We're so anti-rock'n'roll we're almost fulfilling the cliché."

Rory: "We're an ironic representation."

Paul Simonon, The Clash, 'Sound System'

BEST REISSUE

What does it mean to win an award?

"I'm very pleased. It's much better than the Brits. We were told by them, back when Joe [Strummer, who died in 2002] was alive, that they wanted to give us a Lifetime Achievement award, but the proviso was that we would have to do a couple of numbers onstage. I told them that we had split up years ago and asked, 'What you're saying is that if we don't get up onstage we don't win the award?' They said yes. Thank you very much to NME for the award."

How did it feel to revisit the old material?

"It was a bit like an archaeological dig. It took two years. The original artwork has all gone missing over the years. There were elements of sound missing, to the point where certain things weren't clear enough. Mick [Jones] took care of the remastering, along with Bill Price and Tim Young." **Did you have any concept with the design of the boxset?** "I thought about the thing that united us most and that was the cassette machine."

After shows we had an open-door backstage policy, so people hung out and we would play music. It was a way of sharing music wherever we went. The cassette machine symbolised us as a band and what we were trying to do with our music."

Is this another sign that rock'n'roll might fade away sometimes but it'll never die?

"I agree with that, and we found that back in our day. Sex Pistols kicked the door down and then it was for us to go through and do something that reflected how we felt, about the world."





Emily and Michael Eavis

Glastonbury

BEST FESTIVAL

Why do you think Glastonbury always stays at the top of the tree?

Emily: "Well, obviously we think it's the best, but we would because we plough every single minute of every single day into it. We're thinking about it all the time, dreaming about it, trying to make it better all the time. Always striving to make it better. That's our mission. We're really, really pleased to get the award, it means a lot to us and it's really lovely to get it."

While you're here, who's playing this year?

Emily: "Well, we just got Dolly [Parton] confirmed this afternoon, so that's big for us. Also, as we're sitting with Disclosure we can say that they'll be back, which is brilliant for us because they had an amazing year last year and they are one of the greatest British acts at the moment. So that's exciting too – you can see them in a big slot. Somewhere."

Shane Meadows

Director, Made Of Stone

BEST MUSIC FILM



Shane (centre) with Vicky McClure and Jonny Owen

Are you chuffed to win?

"I'm over the moon. I was in a band with Paddy Considine when I was 17 and we never went anywhere, I was obviously never built for music, so the thought of ending up here was off my radar. It's such a brilliant fucking thing too, I'm as proud of that as anything I've ever won."

What's next – a film on the making of the third Stone Roses album?

"I'm just hoping if they do release another album I get to make the first video! When I got to see them in Warrington I thought if nothing else happens that'll be plenty, and obviously I got to finish making the film and so my next port of call is maybe making a video for them."

This Is England '90 – is it back on?

"It's happening; I'm writing it now, we're shooting it in September/October. That'll be out next year and then I'm also shooting next year on my next feature film, which is a biography about Tommy Simpson the British road cyclist, who died in 1967."



Danielle, Alana

and Este Haim

Haim

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND

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LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

BEST BAND BLOG OR TWITTER

How's your night?

Este: "Great night, awesome night. We'll be back playing Brixton in about a week. We've never been here before and it's an awesome venue. All the

performances were great, even the comedian at the beginning. It's a tough crowd, you know. Huw Stephens is killing it, Paul McCartney killed it."

Any scandals?

Este: "No scandal at all. No one's, like, murdered anyone or anything, not at this awards show."

Are you releasing every song on 'Days Are Gone' as a single?

Danielle: "Do you think we should?"

Alana: "No, but if you want us to, we will... Oh, are you being cheeky?"

Este: "Come on, we won an award, you can't be cheeky."

John Rostron, Sŵn Festival

BEST SMALL FESTIVAL

You started Sŵn as a British version of SXSW, but it's developed into its own unique festival. What's the driving intention now?

"Where we once imagined having music industry delegates and seminars, that's no longer where we're heading. For us it's about the people, the community, the bands and great music. We see Sŵn as a catalyst for change in Wales: putting music, and culture, on the agenda for Cardiff, and inspiring others across the country to start their own events, or record labels, management or bands."

What will this mean for Sŵn?

"NME is a big, well-known name with an incredible history. We're incredibly grateful for this award. It will open doors to the organisations and people who have the power to prioritise music and the arts in Wales, I hope!"

What lies ahead this year?

"Sŵn has become an inspiration for change in organisations such as the Arts Council Of Wales, so we want to build on that."

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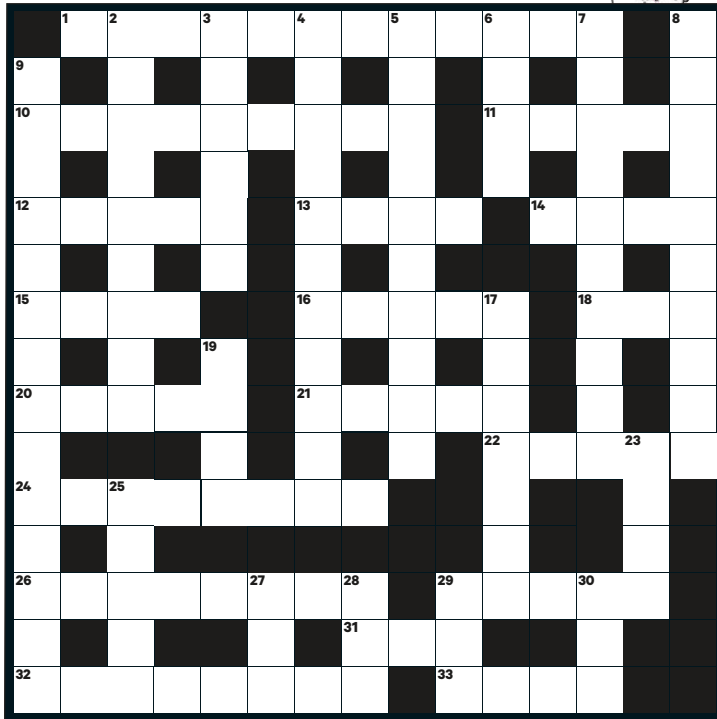
QUIZ

■ Compiled by ALAN WOODHOUSE (answers on page 67)

NME CROSSWORD

■ Compiled by
TREVOR HUNGERFORD

WIN £50 WORTH OF SEETICKETS VOUCHERS



CLUES ACROSS

- 1** Now saying that Wild Beasts have a gift for keeping it edgy (7-5)
10 Just can't see this being a hit for U2 (9)
11 The Style Council's '----- Like A Child' or Gene's '----- To Me Someone' (5)
12 Kenickie album has a strange tinge (3-2)
13+14A Half Moon Run album has a gloomy look (4-4)
15 Kim Deal's band were from Ohio, but to be found in New Hampshire (4)
16 By which name Graham McPherson is better known (5)
18 'Barbara ---', a hit for The Beach Boys (3)
20+33A Don't get up to dance - it's Shed Seven (5-4)
21 Awful delay for Editors (2-3)
22 Not a nice song at all from Janet Jackson (5)
24 Warpaint's current movements are low down (8)

- 26** "We got your message on the radio, conditions normal and you're coming home", 1980 (5-3)
29 (See 3 down)
31 Last track on Sex Pistols' 'Never Mind The Bollocks', which is actually in the middle (1-1-1)
32 The Peel -----, series of released recordings that include Joy Division and The Smiths (8)
33 (See 20 across)

CLUES DOWN

- 2** Mogwai's dance music recordings (4-5)
3+29A "Going over to -----/Walking south down Baxter Street", Eels (6-5)
4 Ooh! One Byrds arrangement by Stiff Little Fingers (7-4)
5 It's anything but the strong and sturdy construction with Nine Inch Nails (3-7)
6 Barman ashamed to have included someone from Bombay Bicycle

- Club (4)
7+8D "Hide on the promenade, etch a postcard/How I dearly wish I was not here", 1988 (8-2-4-6)
9 Snap! Both Thirty Seconds To Mars and Killing Joke have been dealt the same cards (5-3-6)
17 Agony so terrible listening to De La Soul (3-2-2)
19 A number on Bloc Party's album (4)
23 "Ticking away the moments that make up a dull day", Pink Floyd (4)
25 Band that took their name from Aldous Huxley's book *The ----- Of Perception* (5)
27 Sonic Youth album to go for nothing (3)
28 Both Rick Wakeman and his son Oliver have played with this band (3)
29 'Keep It ---' as a solo album from The Black Keys' Dan Auerbach (3)
30 A star at The Two Door Cinema Club (3)

JANUARY 25 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Misery Company, 9+21D All In White, 10 Suck It And See, 12 Emily, 13 Hurricane, 14 I Believe, 16 Manish, 19 Elephant, 23 Gun, 24 Seen It All, 26 Wrong, 28 Laid, 30 Hi, 32+20A Metal Mickey, 33 Pavement. **DOWN** 1 Mesmerise, 2 Sacrilege, 3+29A Rainy Night In Georgia, 4 Clash, 5+27D Modern Guilt, 6 America, 7+18D Ya Hey, 8 Slade, 11 Ravi, 15 Vintage, 16 Mu Mu, 17 NYC, 22 Kool, 23 Gloria, 24 Sulk, 25 Exile, 29 Gil, 31 BE

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 18, 2014, to: Crossword, NME, 9th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.

1 Which British band's 1991 debut single was called 'What Evil Lurks'?

2 Which musician had a cameo role as a security guard in the 2010 *Doctor Who* episode *The Time Of Angels*?

3 The Beach Boys have had two UK Number One hits. 'Good Vibrations' was one, what was the other?

4 Which Jesus And Mary Chain single was banned by Radio 1 DJ Mike Smith because he thought it was about illegal drugs?

5 Which alt.rock outfit have released the albums 'Bleed Like Me' and

'Not Your Kind Of People'?

6 What was Sonic Youth's first UK Top 40 hit single?

7 When U2 pulled out of headlining Glastonbury in 2010, who replaced them?

8 Who is James Newell Osterberg better known as?

9 What is the name of the 'lost' Nirvana song which was officially released on their 2002 Best Of compilation?

10 Which recently reunited band did Richey Edwards of the Manics once say he hated "more than Hitler"?

11 Which singer's first solo release was an EP called 'Campfire Punkrock'?

12 Cate Le Bon has featured on which Mercury Prize-nominated album?

13 What was the name of the album Lou Reed and John Cale released in 1990 as a tribute to Andy Warhol?

14 True or false: Joe Strummer was Lily Allen's godfather.

15 Spiritualized's first single in 1990 was a cover of a song by which '60s band?

THE NME COVER THAT I GONE AND DONE

■ by CHRIS SIMPSON'S ARTIST

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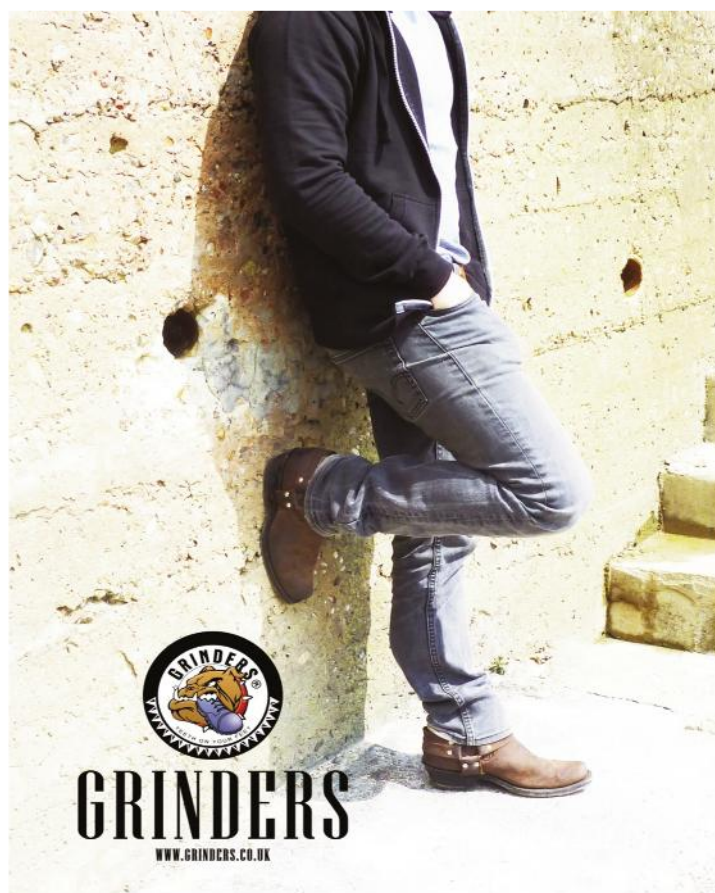
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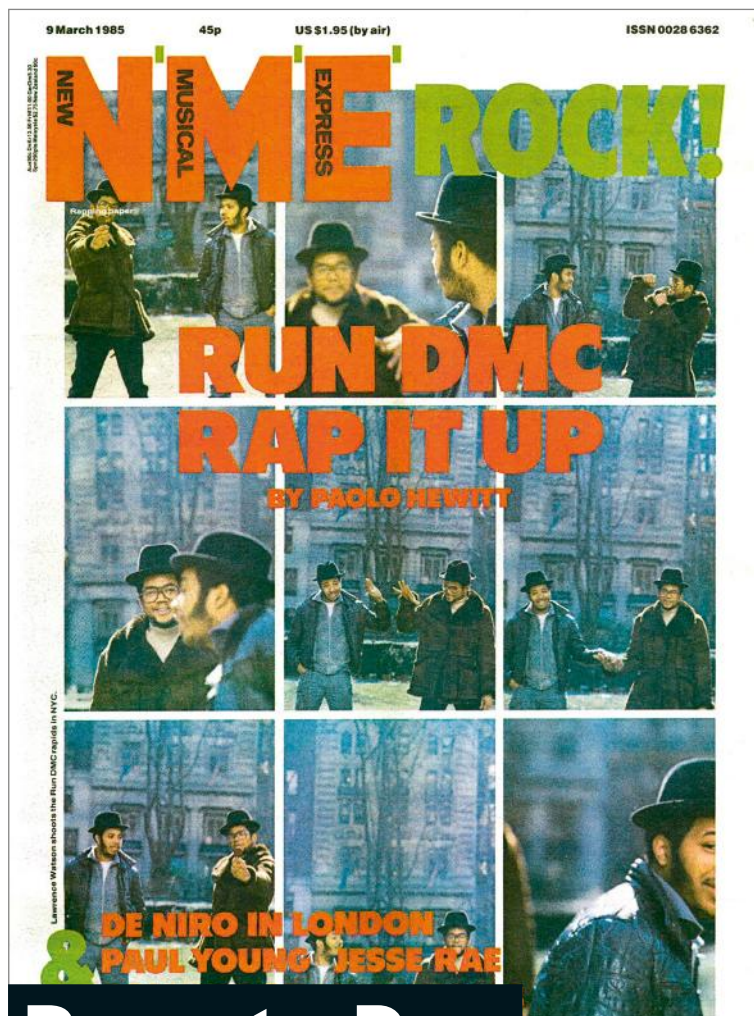
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THIS WEEK IN 1985



HOFFS OF THE POPS

"We are not anti-men," declare The Bangles to NME's Susan Williams (aka Steven Wells) in response to claims that their new single 'Hero Takes A Fall' is about "the emotional sterility of macho". Nor, they say, are they a greasy US hardcore band. "We're basically a pop group," says singer Susanna Hoffs, "and we get to do all these shows with guys like Black Flag, Social Distortion and the Circle Jerks." They've also recently had a ride in Prince's private plane: "That was great fun. We got to talk to his bodyguard."

ROBERT DI NACHO

NME's Andy Gill attends a Robert De Niro Q&A, where the actor reveals he was paid \$50 for his movie debut in Brian De Palma's *Hi Mom!*. On his routine for gaining 60 pounds in three months for *Raging Bull*, De Niro says, "I'd get up early and eat a big breakfast, in order to have it digested by lunchtime so I could eat a big lunch and have that digested for dinnertime."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK

HÜSKER DÜ - 'New Day Rising'
"Fifty-nine times the pain, 100 times the feeling, 1000 times the space. This is the big country - for real." ■ DON J WATSON

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

► With the music industry in crisis over a significant drop in revenue from fans home-taping albums and sharing them, the government announces it will tackle the piracy problem head-on with a levy on blank cassettes.
► Mick Jagger's debut solo album 'She's The Boss' gets a drubbing from Richard Cook, who describes it as "piecemeal work masquerading as something alive".
► Doctor And The Medics are forced to cancel all future gigs after lead singer The Doctor is involved in a severe car accident in the Champs-Élysées district of Paris.

"Kings of rock" Run DMC set out to offend America's parents

Visiting Def Jam Recordings' 22-year-old founder Rick Rubin at his NYU dorm room headquarters, NME's Paolo Hewitt finds New York hip-hop culture attempting to assimilate the hard-rock attack of AC/DC. Chief practitioners are self-proclaimed "kings of rock" Run DMC, who are combining "raw, brutal" beats with rock guitars to create what Hewitt calls "the logical conclusion of black meeting white and turning gold... the new Jackson Five, without the coy sweetness". "They don't always have to be records that make people mad," says Rubin's Def Jam partner Russell Simmons, "but sometimes they have to. I mean people's parents are going to say, 'Turn that shit off! What the fuck are you playing upstairs?' That's what teenage records are." The band themselves want to amuse rather than offend, though. "A lot of the time the lyrics we write are funny," says Run. "I don't want to make the same message telling people about politics. Sometimes I want to talk about it and sometimes I just want to make you laugh."

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

WE FIND THE ROCK STAR, YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS



Velvet Revolver

Madison Square
Garden, New York,
September 2001



to be my gift to posterity at
the moment."

WRONG. 'November Rain'

9 Which song on Michael Jackson's final album 'Invisible' do you play on?
Chris Herring, Norwich,
via email

"I have no idea. The sessions for that were such a jumbled mess; it all took so long. Some of it was in LA, some was elsewhere, and I can't remember what track I was working on."

WRONG. 'Privacy'

10 Which Joni Mitchell album did your father do the cover art for?
Roger Prince, Isle Of Wight,
via email

"He actually did cover art for several of them. 'Court And Spark' was definitely one of them."

CORRECT

"I remember as a kid him having all the artwork spread out around the lounge in our house when he was working on them."



SCORE = 6

"Well, I'd dispute some of these questions, especially what year I became an American citizen. Honestly, I'll have to go back and check."



Slash

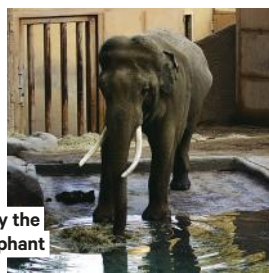
Guns N' Roses
guitarist

1 In what colour is 'Slash' written on the cover of your debut solo album, 'Slash'?

Zoe Allinson, Glasgow,
via email
"It's sort of blue-purple. It's several colours in fact."
CORRECT

2 What is the name of the animal you sponsor at LA Zoo?

Helen Cage, London,
via email
"I sponsor lots of animals



Billy the
elephant

there. Billy's one of them."

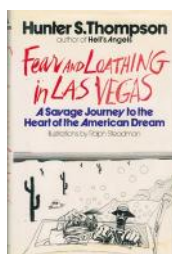
CORRECT. Billy the elephant

"I mean, I'm on the board of directors [he's a trustee]. I go to board meetings. You could say I sponsor them all."

3 Who is quoted in the preface to your favourite book, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas?

Jamie Lewis, Cardiff, on
Twitter
"Goddamn, I have no idea. I'll have to go and read it again tonight."

WRONG. Samuel Johnson



4 How many strings did your first guitar have?

Felix Holt, LA, via email
"One. That was just how it came! It was given to me by my grandmother."

CORRECT

"THE SOLO TO 'SWEET CHILD O' MINE' IS MY GIFT TO POSTERITY"

5 In which year did you become an official American citizen?

Amy Harding, Phoenix,
via email
"Uh. 1991? 1994? Honestly. I don't know."
WRONG. 1996

"I never went to any swearing-in ceremony or anything like that. I think most people are supposed to, but I think, as a touring musician, you pay enough

money, you get the lawyers to sort it all out, and the paperwork just comes through..."

6 Which Talking Heads song did your band Velvet Revolver cover on the 'Melody And The Tyranny' EP?

Julia Olgavina, Moscow, via email
"Psycho Killer."
CORRECT

"Some people say it's the favourite Talking Heads song of everyone who doesn't like Talking Heads. But me, I actually like them. Certainly those first three albums are incredible."

7 In the video for 'She Builds Quick Machines' by Velvet Revolver, who rides the motorbike?

Ian King, Manchester, on Facebook
"It's Matt [Sorum, drummer], isn't it? Why? That's just what he'd do."

CORRECT

8 Your solo from which song was ranked Number Six in Guitar World's list of the 100 Greatest Guitar Solos in 2008?

Tim Linkhouse, Derby, via email
"Well I did not know that at all. It's good to know though - I mean, normally all of these list things just choose the solo to 'Sweet Child O' Mine'. That seems

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