12 APRIL 2014

NME

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The full story of a Britpop landmark

Kate Bush
The Black Keys
Wild Beasts
The Cure

Glasto 2014
Everything you need to know

Jack White returns
Exclusive new photo and album details

Damon on...

...Noel
"We're talking about making a record together"

...Blur
"I'm certain we'll play live again"

...going solo
"This album is 100% honest"

...Gorillaz
"I could release something next week"

...Damon
"I fear death... and robots"

Inside his studio. Inside his mind

"The pursuit of approval usually ends in disaster" CHRIS MORRIS

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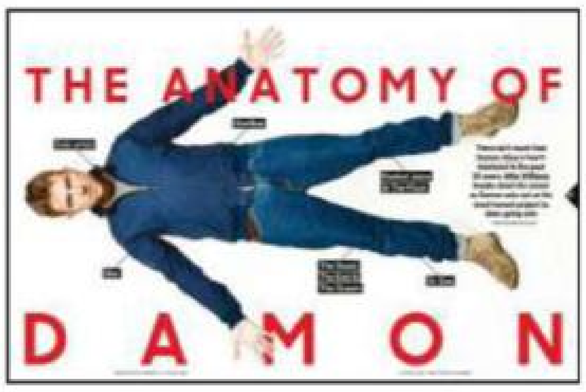

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Mike Williams joins the innovator at his 13 studio on the eve of his first solo album to talk about Noel, his fears and his female alter ego

Parklife
The record that *really* put Blur – and Britpop – on the map turns 20. Mark Beaumont tracks down the cast involved to tell its story

Courtney Love
With a Hole reunion tour ahead and Nirvana's Hall Of Fame induction this week, Dan Martin speaks to grunge's queen motormouth

Kate Bush
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Matt Wilkinson
New Music Editor
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Jordan Hughes
Photographer
Jordan shot Klaxons' triumphant gig at King Tut's Wah Wah Hut: "The band were proper up for it, shiny suits, the 'Atlantis To Interzone' hook and a Glaswegian crowd."

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SOUNDING OFF

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

Answering you this week: Mark Beaumont

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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BEATING AROUND THE BUSH

Babooshka! I know I was one of the lucky ones, having managed to bag a couple of Kate Bush tickets within minutes of logging on, but now I'm desperate to know what sort of show she'll be putting on. The pictures of her in a life jacket from the adverts suggest something pretty arty, a link to the plane-crash story of 'The Seventh Wave' from side two of 'Hounds Of Love', and the internet is full of ideas about her playing 'Aerial' and '50 Words For Snow' in full, but I can't be alone in hoping for some hits. I don't even mind if we don't get the obvious ones – 'Running Up That Hill' has been overplayed by the likes of The Futureheads anyway [wasn't that 'Hounds Of Love'? – MB] and you just can't imagine her doing 'Wuthering Heights' – but it'd be so brilliant to hear some more obscure classics like 'Army Dreamers', 'Sat In Your Lap' or 'The Sensual World'.
Craig Jameson, London, via email

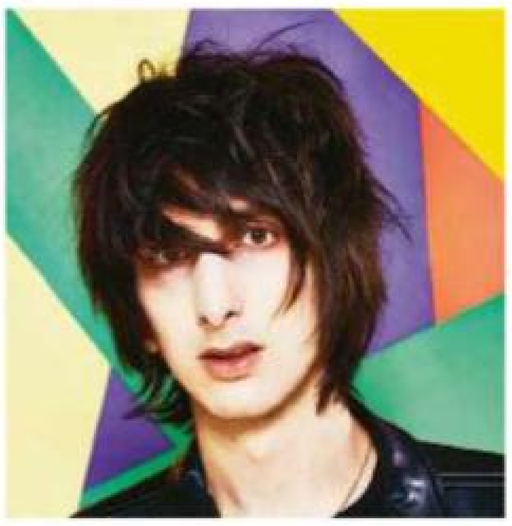
Mark Beaumont: Since the show's called Before The Dawn, Craig, I think the chances of Kate whacking out the greatest hits in front of a slow sunrise is about as likely as Vladimir Putin joining The Scissor Sisters. It stinks of high-concept performance art; Cirque Du Soleil all over the shop. My guess is she's talking about the dawn of the industrial age, so if she isn't pulled across the stage in an apple cart dressed as a Cornish peasant and warbling about the 1751 forfeiture of the Jacobites' estates to the Crown, I'd feel short-changed.

I feel that we have lost the real music; with bands like One Direction and The Wanted singing songs written by other people, we should encourage artists like Tom Odell or Jake Bugg, who are singing the old-fashioned way, just them and a guitar or piano.
Robin Hughes, North Wales, via email

MB: What a blissfully simple musical world you live in, Robin. A place where a singer singing a sensibly titled 'old-fashioned' song he's written himself on a 'real' instrument is instantly worthy of energetic fellatio. Where 0/10 *NME* album reviews are a positive recommendation and you can still complain about them almost a year late without fear of letters-page mockery. But we are here to guide and advise, so other shit 'real' acts you might want to check out include Ed Sheeran, Ben Howard and Mumford & Sons. Not a – spit! – sound effect between them.

HAIR TODAY!

Increasingly, something is troubling me. I guess it's something that's always been happening in music, but it seems to be becoming an epidemic of grand proportions at this moment in time. I'm referring to fucking stupid haircuts. You know who the main culprits are, naming no names (The Horrors). We need to get to the bottom of what is causing this problem before too many people die or are seriously injured from pointing and laughing too hard.
Luke, via email



'AM' – the weirder the hair, the better the music.

MB: Rock'n'roll, Luke, is the only career path, besides perhaps archaeology and animal husbandry, that actively encourages you to sport a tight, cucumbered trouser, the waistcoat of a flamboyant roundhead and hair that looks like it's been subject to several controlled explosions. The Beatles, Bowie, Nick Cave,

JIZZ-EYED? PLEASE!

I'm a dedicated, long-time fan of Hole and Miss Love, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading Ben Hewitt's article on the ranking of all of Hole's albums, and I agree 100 per cent with his numbers (including the teeter-tottering back and forth on 'Pretty On the Inside' or 'Celebrity Skin' for the Number Two spot). Anyhow, I did just want to point out one MAJOR flaw in his article that I think should be corrected: he included the wrong lyrics to the song 'Mrs Jones' off 'Pretty On The Inside'. Ben wrote, "*I fucking ran away with my abortionist/ My blue eye blacked with all the jizz*", and that last line is utterly absurd... and incorrect. That is what people guessed it was and what is written on most of those online lyrics pages; however, the lyrics are actually, "*I fucking ran away with my abortionist/ MY LITTLE EYED, BLACK DEMONOLOGIST... (and the knife they used to gut my face with)*". I'd hate to think that there are even more hordes of kids out there right now thinking CL is screaming about "*jizz*" all over her face and blinding her eyes. CL is WAY, WAY, WAYYY too intelligent and creative to use the word 'jizz' in any song. Hope this helped and hopefully it can be corrected!
Erica Joan, via email

MB: Yours wasn't the only complaint we got about Ben Hewitt's error, Erica. The National Association Of Ocular Semen Injury Sufferers were deeply offended and demanded the blog be taken down. "It's a serious issue," they winked, but in my un-ejaculate-bruised eye it stands as one of the great misheard lyrics alongside Everything Everything's classic "*Who's-a gonna sit on your face when I'm gone?/Who's-a gonna sit on your face when I'm not there?*" Now please excuse me while I kiss this guy.

LONG WAY BEHIND

I purchased Tom Odell's 'Long Way Down' in October, a week after reading your review of it. I hadn't listened to much of his music beforehand and wanted to see why you had given it such a poor rating, especially when many other critics were raving about how "fantastic" and "emotional" the album was [well, the *Telegraph* – MB]. After listening to the album, I really felt like it was a breath of fresh air. No sound effects or cheesy titles, just genuine music.

LOOK WHO'S STALKING

Met Billie Joe Armstrong down under during our round-the-world trip – literally stepped off our flight and there he was! HELLO SYDNEY!
Aimee Wiles, Bexhill, East Sussex, via email

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ON REPEAT

NME 20

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Jack White
High Ball Stepper

Here's a man who always intrigues, whether with The White Stripes, Raconteurs, Dead Weather or solo. 'High Ball Stepper' is the first slice from new record 'Lazaretto', and it's an instrumental. It initially frustrates, with White's riffing never quite exploding thanks to jittery piano interruptions. But the guy lives to confound. And come the 2:44 mark, he slips into Led Zeppelin-played-on-the-shittiest-shit-guitar-possible mode. Nice and dirty, as it should be.
Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

2. The Orwells
Southern Comfort

Southern Comfort was my choice liquor as a teenager: sickly sweet and almost whiskey, it's more sophisticated than Smirnoff Ice (just) but still brings the party when you're young, dumb and The Orwells. You soon move on, but that's yet to come for 20-year-old singer Mario Cuomo ("*I can't walk and I can't dance, give me a smile and then take off your pants*"). The Chicagoan wreckheads have youthful abandon in spades. Consume irresponsibly.
Eve Barlow, Deputy Editor

3. Maximo Park
Random Regrets

Maximo Park's gift for Record Store Day is a double-sided seven-inch – red vinyl with white specks! – featuring unreleased tracks 'On The Sly' and this, a hasty, tasty, typically taut sinew of Geordie post-punk. Paul Smith's up to his hips in relationship angst again, reeling off all he did wrong ("*I was crippled by a lack of my own adventure*", goes one soul-searching conclusion) over bluesy keys and buzzing riffs. Rock-based psychoanalysis.
Matthew Horton, writer

4. Bully
Milkman

At this year's SXSW, Nashville's best young band played to an empty room, proving that those with lanyards and free Doritos don't know they're born. On the follow-up to the exuberant, fuzzy guitar group's superb debut EP, Alyssa Bognano's sweetly curdled voice races around lyrics about being whatever she wants to be. This is Bully pushing past the cosy fuzz and into Marnie Stern territory.
Laura Snapes, Features Editor

5. Gil Scott-Heron
Alien (Hold On To Your Dreams)

While working on his 2010 comeback album 'I'm New Here', Gil Scott-Heron, who passed away in May the following year, recorded a series of stripped-back versions of his greatest tracks, which will be released as a full album on Record Store Day. The results – just Gil and a piano – remind us what an exceptional musician he was. This is a raw and tender reflection on a great talent who's sorely missed.
Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor

6. Friendly Fires & The Asphodells
Velo

You can't say they didn't warn us. After the release of 2011's 'Pala', FF said they wanted to take things in a more "expansive" and "psychedelic" direction. So it is, with this second trippy instalment, from their collaboration with Andrew Weatherall and Timothy J Fairplay (aka The Asphodells). It's a nine-minute, multi-layered, dizzying electronic fug-out, LCD Soundsystem style. Keep your Hawaiian shirts packed away for now; 'Jump In The Pool' this is not.
Greg Cochrane, Editor, NME.COM

7. Woman's Hour
Conversations

The title track from the London-based four-piece's forthcoming debut album has Fiona Burgess' airy vocals floating over a serene, blissful rhythm. It feels like you've tried to phone heaven but been placed on hold. Your prayers are important to us, the person on the end of the line says, but not as important as you hearing this dreamy ode to private communications and awkward moments. Like Warpaint but with the hard edges smoothed off.
Kevin EG Perry, writer

8. Honeyblood
Killer Bangs

Honeyblood have made one of the year's best albums and 'Killer Bangs' is typical of its sugar-rush combo of hooks, riffs and doomed romance. "*Time is against us, circumstance likes to dick around*", sings Stina Tweeddale, with the world-weariness of someone who's been floored by misery, but still has the energy to get back on their feet. This is the sound of a band with serious momentum.
David Renshaw, News Reporter

9. Courtney Barnett
Being Around

Before Arctic Monkeys (via John Cooper Clarke) sung about being your coffee pot, Lemonheads man Evan Dando was imagining himself as his beloved's fridge, haircut, rubber cheque, carpet, porch swing and booger ("*Where would you keep it? Would you eat it?*" is the stomach-churning lyric). One for a well-crafted lyric herself, Courtney Barnett's crackly-voiced acoustic cover brings the perfect mix of humour and cutesiness.
Dan Stubbs, News Editor

10. Spiritualized
Always Forgetting With You (The Bridge Song)

If you want a musician to work with a drone made from a recording from outer space, J Spaceman (or Jason Pierce as he's otherwise known) is your man. 'Always Forgetting With You...' is being released as part of the 'Space Project' album and will be available on Record Store Day on April 19. And it sounds every bit as out-of-this-world as you might imagine.
Andy Welch, writer

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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

11. Conor Oberst
Governor's Ball

Conor Oberst says his new album 'Upside Down Mountain', out at the end of May, sees "a return to an earlier way" of writing that's "more intimate" and "personal". If this track is anything to go by, it's a good move. Oberst does his flat, dead-eyed vocal thing over swelling organ riffs and blasts of brass that build to a triumphant climax. It's big and theatrical without being overwrought.
Chris Cottingham, writer

12. Thee Oh Sees
Drop

"*I don't expect to see them again, oh yeah*", John Dwyer sings over the buzzing hook that the latest taster (and title track) from Thee Oh Sees' 'Drop' LP hangs on. Worrying stuff, given the band's current hiatus. Luckily, Dwyer retains the capacity to surprise. This two-minute punk jive is oddly treacly. Guitars impersonate kazoos. Then, a blink-and-you'll-miss-it change in the final chorus: "*I expect to see them again*". Another contrary thrill from Dwyer? Oh yeah.
Ben Homewood, writer

13. Esben And The Witch
Butoh

Never a band to undercook their musical ambition, Esben And The Witch have let loose a new track that is almost 10 minutes long and named after a form of avant-garde dance theatre that sprung up in Japan in 1959. It's full of dazzling sonic passages, atmospherics and typically lofty lyrics from singer Rachel Davies, and it's taken from a split 12-inch with Thought Forms, released on Geoff Barrow's reliable Invada label.
Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

14. Kagoule
Encave

Nottingham three-piece Kagoule are making a play for our hearts and minds and they're treading a battle-path worn by the Pixies to get there. 'Encave' is greater than the sum of its parts; a behemoth of a riff gives way to a grungy vocal refrain as Cai and Lucy's vocals deliver the doom-laden message, "*There's no hope/It goes on and on and on and on*". A perfect blend of melody and brutality.
Hayley Avron, writer

15. The Antlers
Palace

Having released two EPs since 2011's impressive debut album 'Burst Apart', it's like The Antlers have never been away. With cooing vocals and Bon Iver-esque symphonic flourishes around a mournful music-box melody, 'Palace', from upcoming fourth album 'Familiars', only underlines the fact that when it comes to heart-wrenching indie balladry, few do it better than Peter Silberman's crew. Let's hope the world will wake up to that.
Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

16. Popstrangers
Country Kills

Popstrangers' 2013 LP 'Antipodes' was one of the most underrated debuts of last year – woozy and languid, but with a distorted, riff-heavy core, it kicked as hard as it caressed. With 'Country Kills', the first track from the Kiwi trio's forthcoming album 'Fortuna', the band reveal their rougher side. Wonky, clipped chords bolster vocalist Joel Flyger's disenchanted laments about his homeland, showing Popstrangers' return will have added bite.
Lisa Wright, writer

17. Wolf Alice
Moaning Lisa Smile

Arguably Britain's most exciting new band, Wolf Alice return to grab 2014 by the throat. Ellie Rowsell sounds positively intergalactic as she sings "*Scrap the blues if the blues don't work/Flash your teeth though the inside hurts*" over Joff Oddie's furious, beefy riffs. The lead track from new EP 'Creature Songs', 'Moaning Lisa Smile' is the Londoners' crowning glory so far, underpinned by the electric feeling that they're still yet to peak.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

18. Mikal Cronin
Soul In Motion

Don't let the toytown drum machine intro or The Shadows' 'Apache'-style guitar solo of Mikal Cronin's latest offering fool you into thinking he's running low on ideas. The San Francisco scuzz king is clearly broadening his palette, revelling in the notion of breaking free of those garage-act limitations he's been lumbered with. Just check the Stax-inspired sax for yet more proof of that.
Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

19. Janelle Monáe
Heroes

This song, a cover of the David Bowie classic, is Pepsi's theme for the upcoming Brazil World Cup. As such, it is accompanied by a video of a kid kicking a ball around a favela with some of the world's biggest football stars (and Clint Dempsey). Monáe lends as much of her lounge-funk R&B as the sponsor will allow – that's to say, not much – making it more Roy Hodgson than Rio Carnival.
JJ Dunning, writer

20. Lone
2 Is 8

Matt Cutler, aka Lone, has gone hip-house with '2 Is 8'. Woozy and psychotropic in the vein of his previous work, with a bright boom-bap beat, it samples playground chants and builds on synthesized textures, making it a little more De La Soul lounge-jazz than the electronic head trip of last album 'Galaxy Garden'. It's a shift that suggests mighty things for follow-up 'Reality Testing', out in June on R&S Records.
Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

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TheWeek

▶EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

Jack White, February 2, 2014

Jack's back

The former White Stripe builds on a busy year with a second solo album, special Record Store Day plans and a slot at Glastonbury

Jack White – pictured here in an exclusive new shot – has been teasing his return for some time, hinting that new material was on its way but not saying which of his projects it would be from. Last week he announced a new solo album, 'Lazaretto', and issued a searing instrumental named 'High Ball Stepper' as a teaser. The follow-up to 2012's 'Blunderbuss' is due on June 9.

Away from his solo album, White has had a busy 12 months: he produced Michael Kiwanuka's last single 'You've Got Nothing To Lose', recorded Neil Young's forthcoming covers album 'A Letter Home' in his 1947 Voice-O-Graph booth, and reunited with his Raconteurs bandmate Brendan Benson for a one-off performance on the Nashville stage.

On Friday, White was confirmed for a slot at this year's Glastonbury festival. "Getting Jack White was a really big deal for us," said organiser Emily Eavis. "When he said he wanted to play here and didn't want to do any other UK festivals, we were really excited. Having him here on a big Pyramid Stage slot will be just right – he's obviously got all the songs."

Meanwhile, a version of the title track from 'Lazaretto' will be recorded, pressed and sold on Record Store Day (April 19) at Third Man Records in Nashville – the fastest time ever in the history of recorded music that a record has made its way from studio to store. Record-maker and record-breaker – White is back with a bang. ■ DAN STUBBS

▶Turn the page for all the latest Glastonbury 2014 news

MARY ELLEN MATTHEWS

storemags.com

Kasabian to headline Glastonbury

Leicester's electro-rockers promise a "massive" close to 2014's festival

Kasabian topping the bill at Hard Rock Calling, June 29, 2013

"We can die happy." That's how Kasabian's Serge Pizzorno reacted to the news that they were to headline the Sunday night of Glastonbury 2014. "We knew we were in the running, which was amazing, but if you're in the race, you want to win it – you want to be on the podium," says the Leicester band's guitarist. "When we got the phone call I felt relieved, because we've wanted to do it from our first rehearsal. Day one of the first rehearsal, we kicked into a tune and sort of went, 'Glastonbury!' – a full-on shout-out. It's going to be massive."

The feeling is mutual – Glastonbury booker Emily Eavis tells us Kasabian were top of the wishlist this year. "Kasabian have got a great history here, they've had loads of great Glastonbury gigs and they've had a really brilliant connection with the crowd," she says. "It's really important for us to keep British bands coming through to keep creating headliners, and Kasabian were really clearly on their way a couple of years ago. With their new album on the way – I've heard it and it's great – we were like, OK, they're the ones to do it. There's a real energy to the Sunday-night slot. People give it everything because they're closing the festival, and Kasabian won't disappoint."

We catch Eavis on the phone from Pilton on the morning of Friday, April 4, minutes after a list of more than 80 additions to the Glastonbury line-up has been released. "It's mad here today," she admits. With new names including Pixies, Elbow, Robert Plant, MIA, Massive Attack and Skrillex, who will headline the Other Stage on the Friday (June 27), Eavis happily notes that her choices seem to have gone down well. "I've had loads of positive tweets," she says. "I try not to analyse the reaction too much. But nobody's returned their ticket yet!"

Conspicuous by its absence from the line-up announcement is Saturday night's Pyramid Stage headliner. Eavis insists that the whole bill has now been confirmed, but says the act joining Kasabian and Arcade Fire in the festival's prime spots cannot be named for "contractual reasons" until the full bill is issued in May. This has fuelled speculation over the reasons behind the hold-up and upped the anticipation for bookies' favourites including Metallica, Kate Bush, Prince, David Bowie, Kanye West, OutKast and Fleetwood Mac. Though she does rule out Kanye and OutKast ("You can't get them all!"), Eavis won't give any further hints: "We're under contract not to say something, and I can't tell you why we're under contract because that would give it away. I can tell you it's someone who's never been to Glastonbury before."

How exciting is the booking is on a scale of 10? "A nine or 10. We *never* book an eight."

■ DAN STUBBS

GLASTONBURY 2014: THE LINE-UP SO FAR

▸Arcade Fire ▸Kasabian ▸Dolly Parton ▸Jack White ▸Elbow ▸The Black Keys ▸Robert Plant ▸Lily Allen ▸Lana Del Rey ▸Skrillex ▸Pixies ▸Massive Attack ▸Disclosure ▸Paolo Nutini ▸Manic Street Preachers ▸MIA ▸Rudimental ▸Bryan Ferry ▸Richie Hawtin ▸Ed Sheeran ▸De La Soul ▸Goldfrapp ▸London Grammar ▸MGMT ▸Jake Bugg ▸Jurassic 5 ▸Dexys Above & Beyond ▸The 1975 ▸Bonobo ▸Kelis ▸Blondie ▸Warpaint ▸The Wailers ▸Wilko Johnson ▸James Blake ▸Gorgon City ▸Metronomy ▸Tinariwen ▸Chvrches ▸Little Dragon ▸Seun Kuti & Egypt 80 ▸Kodaline ▸Interpol ▸Foster The People ▸Mogwai ▸Royal Blood ▸John Grant ▸Annie Mac ▸Lil Louis ▸Daptone Super Soul Revue ▸John Newman ▸Chromeo ▸Rodrigo Y Gabriela ▸Midlake ▸Angel Haze ▸Four Tet ▸ESG ▸The Sun Ra Arkestra ▸François Kevorkian ▸Parquet Courts ▸Sam Smith ▸Crystal Fighters ▸Nitin Sawhney ▸DJ Pierre ▸Toumani & Sidiki Diabaté ▸Chance The Rapper ▸MNEK ▸Temples ▸Phosphorescent ▸Connan Mockasin ▸Public Service Broadcasting ▸Courtney Barnett ▸Gorgon City ▸Wolf Alice ▸Radiophonic Workshop ▸Suzanne Vega ▸Tune-Yards ▸Eats Everything ▸Jamie xx ▸Ms Dynamite ▸Breach ▸Chlöe Howl ▸Jagwar Ma ▸Danny Brown

EMILY EAVIS ON SIX CHANGES TO GLASTONBURY 2014

NEW STAGES

"We've got a few new little venues and a couple of new stages that are still to be announced – I can't tell you much about them. And Strummerville are coming up to The Park too."

FEWER LORRIES

"There's a lot of work being done on the long-drop toilets right now, because we're aiming to minimise gulley suckers. They're the trucks that carry the waste – so you won't have that thing of a big, smelly truck driving past you."

MORE NIGHTLIFE

"Arcadia has got a massive new space a bit nearer to The Park, and it's kind of like a whole town, really. The late-night area will be really spread out; there's so much late-night entertainment everywhere now, not just in one area."

ANOTHER 'PHOENIX MOMENT'

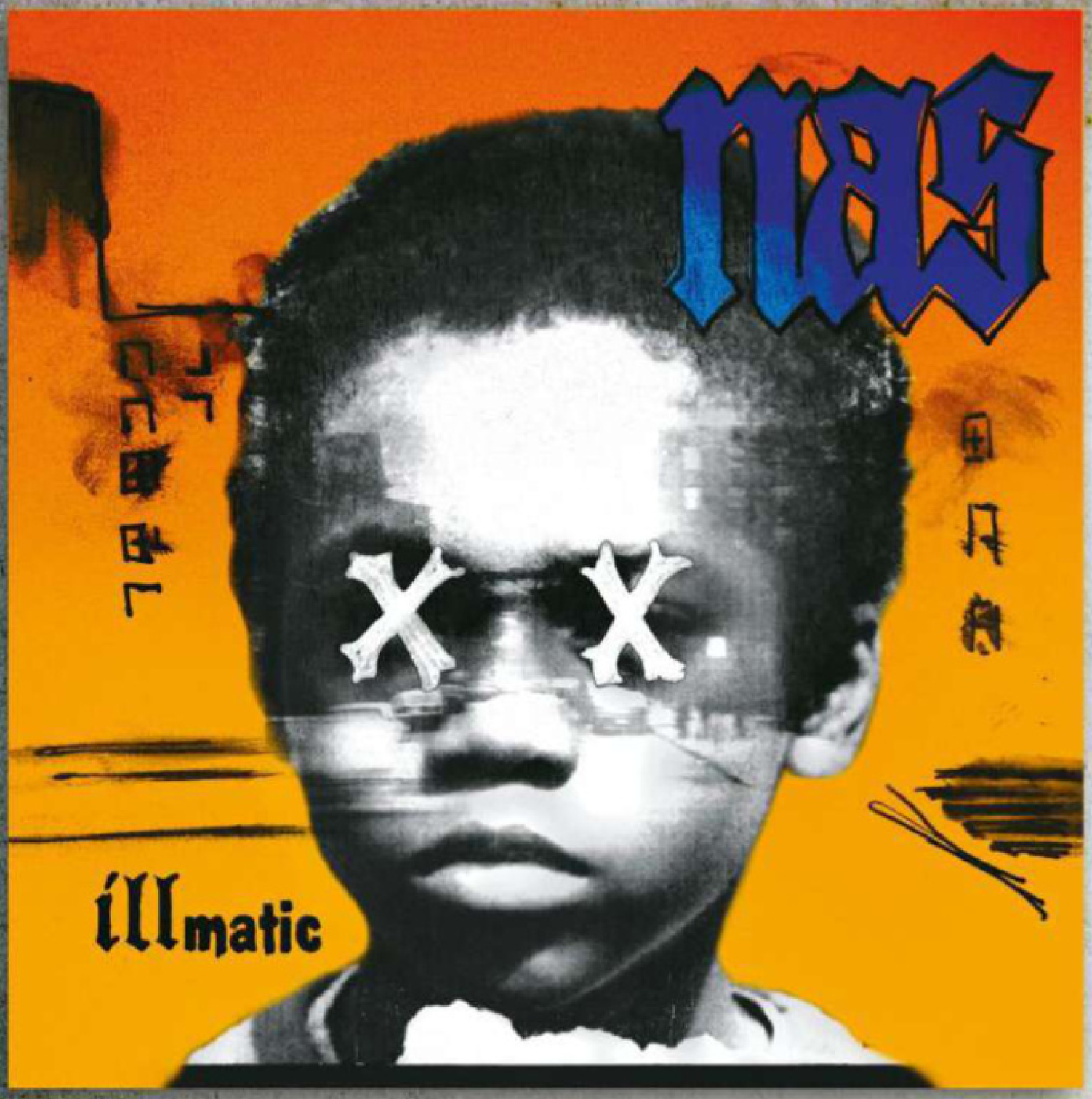
"Remember the fire-breathing phoenix on top of the Pyramid Stage last year? The artist behind that, Joe Rush, has got another big project this year... There's something on top of the Pyramid stage, but mostly it's on another part of the site."

MORE ART

"There's so much amazing visual art: all of the plans for Block 9 and Shangri-La, The Common and Arcadia are incredible. There are plans for installations and light displays and fires and all sorts of amazing stuff."

GUARANTEED SUNSHINE

Only kidding. "I don't make any weather predictions. I don't go anywhere near it. Come prepared. My advice? Don't trust the forecast until the week before."



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THE MINI INTERVIEW

Patti Smith

Punk poet

You've written a track, 'Mercy Is', for Darren Aronofsky's film *Noah*. How did that happen?

"Darren told me how he wanted a lullaby for Noah [played by Russell Crowe] to sing to a child. The idea of the song is mercy as a healing wind. Darren has given us all something to think about. It's a beautiful way to express a lot of concerns about what we are doing to our world."

There's talk of your book, *Just Kids*, being made into a film. What's going on with it?

"I'm fortunate because some of our greatest directors, producers and actors have approached me. When I'm in the right frame of mind, I'll take the plunge. Find two kids [the book documents Patti's friendship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe] to capture our hearts and let them tell our story..."

Are the rumours true about Charlotte Gainsbourg playing you?

"She looks so much like me she could be my daughter! But *Just Kids* is about two 20-year-old unknown kids so they should tackle it. By the time I was Charlotte's age I had left public life and was raising children."

Will you be coming to watch Kate Bush?

"I don't know a lot of her songs. I know the popular ones that everyone loves. She's so gifted, I'm sure she'll do something interesting."

■ JENNY STEVENS

Going viral

Once a stalling indie label, Infectious is marking the fifth anniversary of its relaunch

"I like to think everything on the roster is applicable to be played on *Blade Runner* – that's my A&R policy," laughs Infectious Music's founder Korda Marshall outside the Victoria pub in Dalston, east London. Inside, the bands that make up his alternative *Blade Runner* soundtrack – along with various members of staff and supporters – are celebrating the label's fifth birthday.

Originally set up in 1993 after Marshall left his position as head of A&R at major label RCA, Infectious' first phase boasted the likes of Ash, Pop Will Eat Itself and The Subways. It all came to an end when the label was sold to Warners and Infectious was merged with another imprint, East West Records. "I was going to retire gracefully," jokes Korda. "I got corporatised out and drilled down by the suits. But then I heard [The Temper Trap's] 'Sweet Disposition' and I just fell in love with Dougy [Mandagi]'s voice."

"Korda came to see us play at the Borderline and got excited and started talking to us," recalls Temper Trap drummer Toby Dundas. "He came out to Australia and was saying how he wanted to start this label up again. He just had the passion straight away."

That passion, along with a knack for seeking out the most exciting new bands across the world – including Drenge and Alt-J – is one of the key factors behind Infectious' success second time around. It, and the freedom offered by the label, was one of the lures for These New Puritans, who left Angular and Domino to release last year's 'Field Of Reeds' album with the label. "They let us do what we want, which is very, very rare," explains frontman Jack Barnett. "Very few bands get to do exactly what they want to do."

As a choir and beatboxer finish performing renditions of tracks from Alt-J's Mercury Prize-winning debut album 'An Awesome

The choir sing Alt-J

DEREK BREMNER

THE MARSHALL PLAN Five significant Infectious signings

Infectious boss Korda Marshall

Drenge
- ▶WHO Derbyshire brothers Eoin and Rory Loveless, wry of humour and brutal of riffs
- ▶WHEN THEY SIGNED 2013
- ▶KEY RECORD Debut album 'Drenge', released last summer

Superfood
- ▶WHO The Brummie four-piece with a knack for turning the mundanity of life into indie-rock gems
- ▶WHEN THEY SIGNED 2013
- ▶KEY RECORD The 'MAM' EP, released earlier this year

Alt-J
- ▶WHO Intellectual electronic trio known for crafting unlikely pop bangers
- ▶WHEN THEY SIGNED 2011
- ▶KEY RECORD 2012's 'An Awesome Wave' went on to win that year's Mercury Music Prize

storemags

Superfood play a set at the Infectious birthday party in east London

The Acid's Adam Freeland gets a smacker from Infectious exec Pat Carr

Gus Unger-Hamilton and Thom Green from Alt-J line up the tunes

Wave', the band's keyboardist Gus Unger-Hamilton reflects on the band's experience with the label. "Korda came up to our house in Cambridge and we just sat around talking for two hours," he says. "It was really unlike any other experience we had with any other label. We met the other guys and it felt like a nice little family."

"They're like our mates!" says Superfood frontman Dom Ganderton before the band play a short set in honour of the label. "There's no pressure when we send over demos. And every time we meet them, they give us tequila."

Infectious' latest signing – experimental electro trio The Acid – are only too keen to back up that sentiment. "Everyone just feels like they're already our friends," nods The Acid's Steve Nalepa. Bandmate Adam Freeland adds: "I've been a solo artist with my own record label for my whole career, so to be in a band with my friends and part of a family of people who are helping is a whole new trip. I'm loving it."

"THEY LET US DO WHAT WE WANT, WHICH IS VERY, VERY RARE"
Jack Barnett, These New Puritans

As shot glasses are emptied and the bands gathered take turns behind the decks, Korda reveals the secret behind becoming one of the most influential small labels going. "We only work with people we like and we work really hard," he says. "We're a family business and we haven't got aspirations to become a huge record label – I just want to get better at finding, signing and working with great talent. It's an exciting landscape to do that in right now." ■ RHIAN DALY

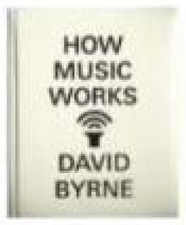
These New Puritans
▶WHO Southend-born experimentalists who embraced the neoclassical world on their challenging third album
▶WHEN THEY SIGNED 2013
▶KEY RECORD 'Field Of Reeds' is their sole Infectious release

The Temper Trap
▶WHO Melbourne synthpop group with an aptitude for creating killer hooks
▶WHEN THEY SIGNED 2009
▶KEY RECORD Single 'Sweet Disposition' was the track that kickstarted everything

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS
Dan Whitford

Cut Copy



BOOK
How Music Works by David Byrne
"I'm a massive fan of Talking Heads and was trying to get my hands on this for ages. I just finished reading it, and I'm going to read something by William Burroughs next."

BOXSET
Louis
"I don't buy DVDs any more, but I did recently stream all three seasons of Louis CK's *Louis*. It's the best comedy series since *Curb Your Enthusiasm*."

FILM
The Departed
"It's become a tour favourite. Plenty of Mark Wahlberg's character's quotes get thrown around between the band."

GAME
Chess
"We used to play chess before shows, but it got too competitive. Our drummer is now addicted to *Candy Crush Saga* on his phone, the idiot."

HOME COMFORT
Tracksuit bottoms
"We've all converted to wearing track pants on long-haul flights. Coming from Australia, we always have long flights to deal with. Comfort is essential."

▶Cut Copy's tour of the UK and Ireland begins in Glasgow on April 12

DEREK BREMNER

Tweenage dreams

Bobo, Klara and Hedvig, pre-teen punks in *We Are The Best!*

Director Lukas Moodysson has transformed his wife's graphic novel about an all-girl punk band into an inspirational big-screen adventure

Whether in *Show Me Love*'s tale of misfit lesbian teens, *Together*'s visit to a Stockholm hippy commune or *Lilya 4-ever*'s painfully bleak account of human trafficking, the films of Swedish director Lukas Moodysson have always challenged the basic, beautiful and sometimes brutal nature of human experience. In his latest, he's shifted his attention to punk rock; Moodysson's most recent film, *We Are The Best!* – or *Vi Är Bäst!*, to use its Swedish title – gets its UK release on April 18.

Based on his wife Coco Moodysson's autobiographical graphic novel *Never Goodnight*, the film tells the story of schoolgirls Bobo and Klara, a pair of aspiring teenage punks desperate to rebel but not sure what to kick against. The turning point comes when they're trying to revise at their local youth centre, but can't because of the noise coming from the all-male band rehearsing in one of the nearby rooms. Horrified that making noise is seen as a pastime reserved for boys, and unwilling to let their complete lack of musical talent get in the way, they immediately form a band, drafting in their gifted but devoutly religious classmate Hedvig and gearing up for a battle of the bands.

"PUNK MUSIC IS DEAD. PUNK SPIRIT, THOUGH, WILL NEVER DIE"
Lukas Moodysson

The band rebel against PE with their song 'Hate The Sport'

For Moodysson, it's been a labour of love. "In 1982, I was listening to a lot of punk," he says. "Mainly Swedish bands like KSMB, Ebba Grön and Ståålfågel, all of which are on the soundtrack, because I just picked my favourite bands. There's a line in the film where Bobo and Klara say 'Sex Noll Två' ('Six Zero Two') by KSMB is the best song ever and, well, that's very much my opinion. I also loved The Clash."

The girls pen their own punk anthem – 'Hate The Sport' – about bunking off school PE lessons– a track Moodysson says he wrote with Morrissey in mind. "He has a song called 'Sing Your Life' and I listened to that a lot when I was making this film. The lyrics go, '*Sing your life/Walk right up to the microphone/And name/All the things you love/All the things that you loathe*'. It's perfect for Klara and Bobo, who are very individual punks, singing about what they hate."

As with all Moodyson's films, there is a message planted not too deeply beneath the surface. As the girls deal with the teenage anxieties of fitting in at school, meeting boys and difficult home lives, there's a heart-warming theme of music being a unifying force in overcoming stereotypes. "Yes, there is a feminist streak, but it could be for boys too," says Moodysson. And he can prove it: he was recently sent a letter from an 11-year-old boy who started a band after first seeing the film last year. "Small things like that are the reason people write and make things. You try to find one or two or three people that can relate very closely. If one 11-year-old boy or girl starts a band because of this film, then great. Although I don't know if I want them to play punk music; they could maybe do something completely different. The characters argue about this in the film, but punk music was dead by 1982. Punk spirit, though, will never die." ■ ANDY WELCH

Three Swedish punk gems from the *We Are The Best!* soundtrack

Ståålfågel
'Stupet' ('Stupid')
A searing piece of post-punk that recalls Gang Of Four at their most angsty.

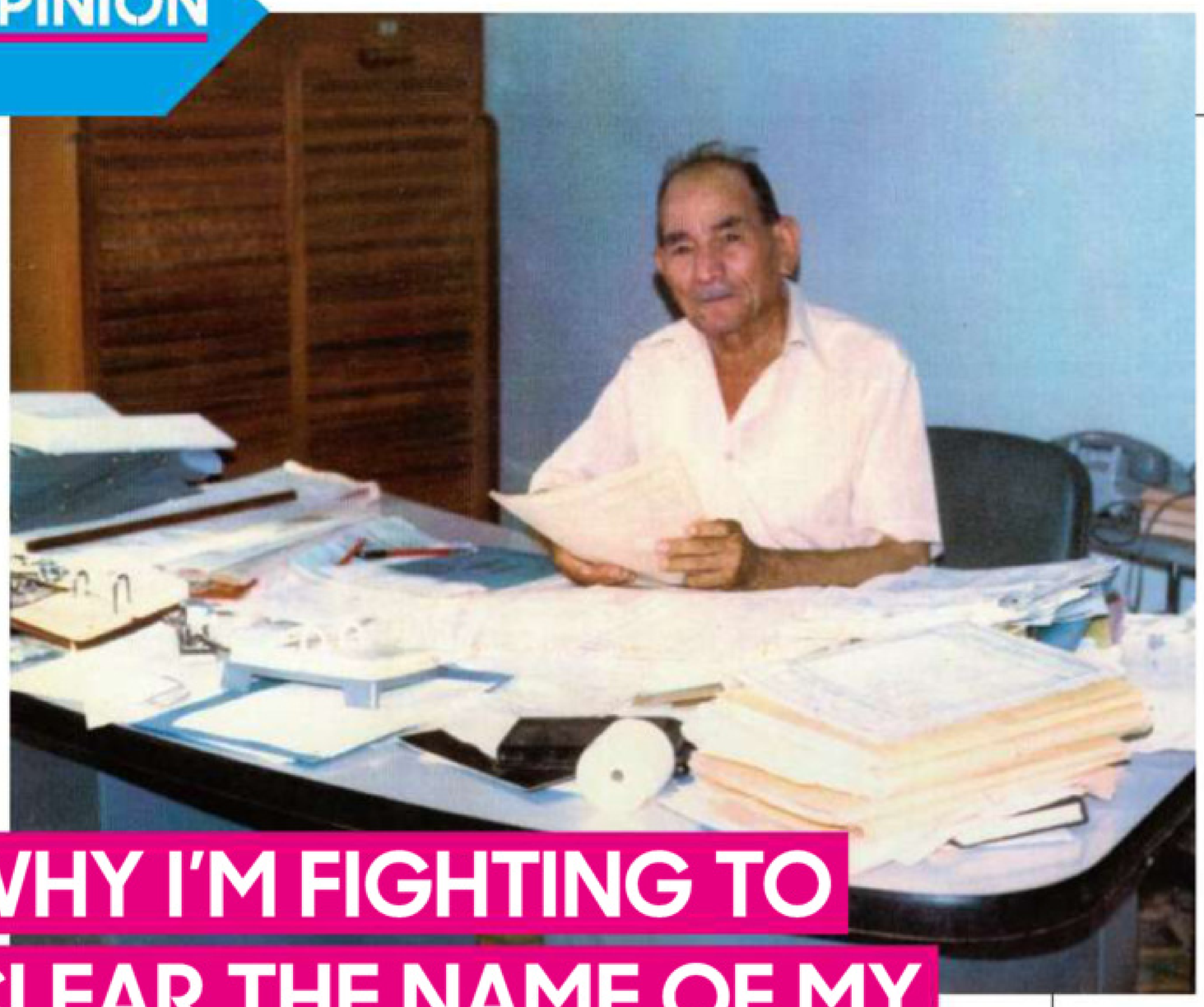
KSMB
'Jag Vill Dö' ('I Want To Die')
A roar of throaty howls and screeching guitars. The Sex Pistols and The Clash get a namecheck in the lyrics.

Ebba Grön
'Vad Skall Du Bli?' ('What Will You Be?')
A Swedish punk staple that twins the Buzzcocks' eye for a hook with the teenage fizz of The Undertones.

Director Lukas Moodysson

GETTY

OPINION



(Far left) Kaci Mohand Saoudi. (Left) 1973 film *Papillon*, set on the Devil's Island penal colony

WHY I'M FIGHTING TO CLEAR THE NAME OF MY DEVIL'S ISLAND GRANDAD

BY **LIAS SAOUDI**

The French state should pardon an innocent man who was faced with an impossible choice, says the Fat White Family frontman

Until 1953, Devil's Island in French Guiana was where France's most reviled prisoners were kept. It was the backdrop to the Steve McQueen film *Papillon*, notorious for the starvation, exhaustion and disease that carried off its inmates. Prisoners were naked. They were forced to work up to their waists in water, where they'd cut one cubic metre of hardwood every day or get nothing but a lump of dry bread at the end of it.

Escape was impossible. If the shark-filled seas didn't get you, the jungle's crawlies would take all the bites they needed out of you. Men who misbehaved would be walled up in solitary cells for years at a time until they went mad. When the woodcutting pens were full, you'd be sent to build 'Route Zero' – a stretch of track leading nowhere that took 40 years to extend just 25 kilometres.

My grandfather, Kaci Mohand Saoudi, was imprisoned on Devil's Island in the 1920s for a crime he didn't commit. Of the 70,000 men sent there, most died in their first year. Somehow, my grandfather survived 18 years there. But his name was forever blackened, and now we're trying to clear it.

My grandfather was Algerian. He was sent to Devil's Island because he refused to tell the French Algerian police force a name – the name of his cousin, whom he knew had murdered a French official. Among the Berber people of Algeria, family is a bond stronger than anything. If he'd named names, his cousin would have faced a public guillotining.

My grandfather faced an impossible choice: go to prison or see his cousin's head drop into the basket in front of a cheering mob. He chose prison, remained there nearly two decades, survived through a combination of guts, brains and blind luck, then came out and tried to build a normal life for himself. He met a woman and had some kids. But in their house, talk seldom turned to the years that had come before, and my father grew up knowing little of the horrors my grandfather had seen.

When my grandfather died, the full truth was revealed, and my father set out on his own 31-year quest to right the terrible wrongs this man had suffered. He wrote a novel called *The Guillotine Choice*, which was published last month. For me, it's been a way to connect with a man I barely knew. My grandfather died in 1990; I was so young that I have only the most fleeting memories of him.

No-one should be forced to choose between their own life and that of a family member. And that is what we want the French state to finally recognise. French law means it won't be easy – in 2012, a man called Marc Machin became only the eighth Frenchman since World War II to have a murder conviction quashed by the courts – but we feel we must try. To me and my family, this is one last way we can honour the legacy of a gentle, determined man who – despite everything – never asked for praise or pity. ■

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

AS TOLD TO GAVIN HAYNES PHOTOS: CAITLIN MOGRIDGE, REX

LOST ALBUMS #24

The Bumblebeez Prince Umberto & The Sister III (2007)

Chosen by Jono Ma, Jagwar Ma

"This album had all the ingredients to be a pivotal statement, but I think it just went over everyone's heads – too punk for the hip-hoppers, too electro for the rockers, too schizophrenic for the dancers and too dirty for the pop world. There's a concept to the album – it seems to construct these characters, alter egos that remind me of a Terry Gilliam film, humorous yet sinister."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE**
September 1, 2007
▶**LABEL** Modular
▶**BEST TRACKS** Dr Love, Freak Your Loneliness
▶**WHERE TO FIND IT**
Available online and in good independent record shops
▶**LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

IN THE STUDIO

The duo holed up in LA with producer Brian 'Danger Mouse' Burton for their sixth album

The Black Keys, Key Club, Benton Harbor, Michigan, Jan 18, 2013

The Black Keys

There are slow-burn success stories and there's The Black Keys, whose sixth album, 2010's 'Brothers', finally put them on the musical map after nine years as a cult concern. The follow-up, 2011's 'El Camino', made them one of the biggest bands in the world, with sold-out arena tours and a clutch of Grammy Awards on their mantelpieces. The expectation for this year's follow-up, 'Turn Blue', therefore, is high. "We're in a unique position, because our eighth album's our most anticipated," says drummer Patrick Carney. Our first six albums were not that way..."

Due for release on May 12, ahead of the band's second billing on Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage and a headline slot at Latitude, the album was recorded in Los Angeles, Benton Harbor, Michigan and Nashville. The latter is their adopted hometown – they moved there from Ohio in 2010 – and it's where *NME* meets the band the day 'Turn Blue' is announced to the world. They seem shocked to discover that this is the longest time they've ever taken between album releases. "In those three years we've played something like 275 shows," says Patrick, explaining that work commenced only when the lion's share of 'El Camino' touring had finished in January 2013. That's when the pair headed to the Key Club studio in far-flung Benton Harbor to record an album's worth of songs on Sly Stone's old console. "We left the building once in two weeks," recalls guitarist Dan Auerbach. "It felt like we were on a ship in the ocean."

'Turn Blue''s first single, 'Fever', sprung from those sessions, as did the massive – and quite shameless – Creedence Clearwater Revival-style 'Gotta Get Away'. While the band were far from disappointed with the songs laid down, they felt they'd unnecessarily rushed the process, and last summer went to Los Angeles' famous Sunset Sound for six weeks. It was at the suggestion of LA-based producer Brian 'Danger Mouse' Burton, who had travelled to Nashville to work on 'El Camino' and to Ohio for 2008's 'Attack And Release' and finally wanted them to come to him. "He's not just a producer, he's a buddy," explains Dan.

Fuelled by beef jerky, cigarettes and bottled iced coffee from the 7-Eleven across the road, they commenced work in Studio 2, where Led Zep recorded 'Stairway To Heaven'. Sadly, it has been completely remodelled since the 1970s. "It didn't feel like you were stepping into a time capsule," states Dan. "You couldn't smell Jim Morrison's sweat." Having recorded 75 per cent of the album there, they decided they were finished on August 31 and left California the very next day. "We were thinking, if we spend one more day we're going to be living here," remembers Dan. "Our shirts will be unbuttoned to here [points to navel] and we'll have spray tans."

As usual, the band wrote everything in the studio, taking particular inspiration from the spaghetti western-styled work of Italian movie soundtrack composer and singer Nico Fidenco. 'Year In Review' has a snippet of Fidenco on it and is, according to Patrick, "the first song we've ever included a sample on. 'Turn Blue' also features the band's longest-ever song, epic opener 'Weight Of Love', which comes in at almost seven minutes. "I've never done a guitar solo like that," says Dan. Heavy psychedelics seep through 'Bullet In The Brain' and Hammond-organ funk penetrates '10 Lovers'. Mostly, the album sees the band sticking to what they do best – sexy blues underpinned by beastly melodies and mammoth riffs. It's also a record that you can dance to. "Yeah, totally," agrees Patrick, before pausing. "I mean, like, horizontal dancing. You know what I mean?" We sure do. ■ LEONIE COOPER

▶THE DETAILS

- ▶**TITLE** Turn Blue
- ▶**RELEASE DATE** May 12
- ▶**LABEL** Nonesuch
- ▶**PRODUCERS** Brian Burton and The Black Keys
- ▶**RECORDED** Key Club, Benton Harbor; Sunset Sound, Los Angeles; Easy Eye Sound Studio, Nashville
- ▶**TRACKS** Weight Of Love, In Time, Turn Blue, Fever, Year In Review, Bullet In The Brain, It's Up To You Now, Waiting On Words, 10 Lovers, In Our Prime, Gotta Get Away
- ▶**THEY SAY** "We don't obsess too much about the little details. There are definitely hiccups, and actually the vinyl is different from the CD. We won't tell you how."

"THIS IS TOTALLY A RECORD FOR HORIZONTAL DANCING. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?"
PATRICK CARNEY

REID LONG, ALYSSE GAFKJEN

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM

"IN 10 YEARS IT'LL BE A LANDMARK"
Steve Albini, 1991

THIS WEEK...

Slint: Spiderland

Reissued as a deluxe boxset on April 15, we revisit the album that formed the foundations of post-rock

THE BACKGROUND

Before Slint formed in Louisville, Kentucky in 1986, Brian McMahan and Britt Walford played in Squirrel Bait, a mid-'80s punk band likened to Hüsker Dü. David Pajo, also Walford's bandmate in the short-lived Maurice, brought a hardcore and metal obsession to 'Tweez', the debut Slint album, recorded by Steve Albini in what would later be seen as his trademark discordant style. Bassist Ethan Buckler was replaced by Todd Brashear after the 1989 release of 'Tweez', which barely made a ripple on the US independent scene. After they signed to legendary Chicago indie label Touch And Go, they set about recording 'Spiderland', their second album and future cult classic, with producer Brian Paulson. But the intense sessions would push the band to breaking point.

◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

Will Oldham, a local friend of Slint who would achieve cultish popularity himself later in the '90s as the man behind Bonnie 'Prince' Billy and variations on the Palace name, took the cover photo of the band idling in a quarry. The selected shot seems puzzling as cover art, but added to the mystique of 'Spiderland' over the years.

FIVE FACTS

1 Unaware that Slint had split soon after recording the album, a young Polly Harvey responded to a request in the liner notes for "interested female vocalists" to write to the band.

2 The album title refers to the arachnids that populated the quarry on the album cover – although Britt Walford has also confirmed that the dark imagery it evokes is intentional.

3 The studio 'Spiderland' was taped in – Chicago's River North Records – had no history of recording rock music, having been largely used for jingles.

4 McMahan walked from a car accident in "miraculous" circumstances as the album's four-day sessions were due to begin. This may have influenced his decision to check into hospital shortly after recording, but he's always declined to comment. According to popular myth, the sessions were so intense that band members required psychiatric treatment.

5 Slint's lyrics were worked on by Walford and McMahan privately, and not shared with Pajo and Brashear until the time came to record them.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"My teeth touched her skin/Then she was gone again" – 'Nosferatu Man'

As per the title, vocalist McMahan voices the tribulations of a Dracula-like character, describing himself as "*a prince*" in "*a castle*" and likening his night-time movements to those of a bat.

"Don't let this desperate moonlight leave me/With your empty pillow" – 'Washer'

The only song on 'Spiderland' whose lyrics could unambiguously be called romantic, 'Washer' is almost painfully candid, especially when set to such quiet, deeply intimate music.

"I'm trying to find my way home/I'm sorry... And I miss you" – 'Good Morning, Captain'

The denouement of a track that alludes, in wilfully vague language, to storms and shipwrecks. Only on the final three words does McMahan venture above a whisper, screaming with unholy force.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

Not a word, like almost every other British publication. One notable exception was *Melody Maker*, who enlisted Steve Albini to froth: "It's an amazing record, and no-one still capable of being moved by rock music should miss it. In 10 years it will be a landmark and you'll have to scramble to buy a copy then. Beat the rush."

WHAT WE SAY NOW

Written without commercial concerns, 'Spiderland' grew to exert a vast influence on post-rock and emo.

FAMOUS FAN

"When we started the band we made mixtapes for each other of music that we liked. Dominic [Aitchison, Mogwai bassist] put 'Washer' on that tape and it totally blew my mind. It's got a unique atmosphere to it." **Stuart Braithwaite, Mogwai**

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"With all good rock music, there's tension there and whatever else. That might be part of what disturbs me about 'Spiderland'. It's kind of disturbing that people that young were making music like that." **Todd Brashear, 2014**

THE AFTERMATH

By the time 'Spiderland' was released, McMahan had left the band. Consequently, Slint broke up. As the album's myth grew, all four members maintained a presence in the US rock underground, occasionally featuring on one another's albums, and in 2005 they reunited to tour the US and Europe. Performances have been semi-regular since, although hardly any new music has resulted. 'Spiderland' is re-released in boxset form on April 15, and a new documentary, *Breadcrumb Trail*, tells the Slint story.

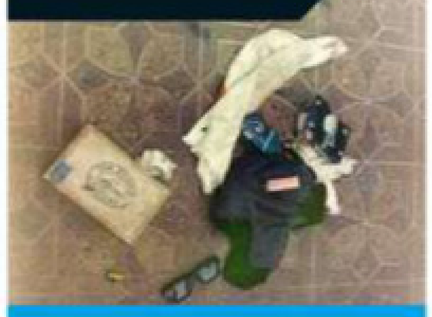
▶THE DETAILS

▶RECORDED August 1990 **▶RELEASE DATE** March 27, 1991 **▶LABEL** Touch And Go **▶LENGTH** 39.36 **▶PRODUCER** Brian Paulson **▶STUDIO** River North Records, Chicago **▶HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** Did not chart **▶WORLDWIDE SALES** 50,000–100,000 (estimated) **▶SINGLES** None **▶TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Breadcrumb Trail ▶2. Nosferatu Man ▶3. Don, Aman ▶4. Washer ▶5. For Dinner... ▶6. Good Morning, Captain

WORDS: NOEL GARDNER

nmemag.com

NEWS DESK
THE NUMBERS



THE NUMBERS

35

Photos from Kurt Cobain's death scene released by Seattle police in order to stifle conspiracy theories surrounding the case

£270k

Amount invested in world's longest aircraft by Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson

26/05/14

Date on which The Rolling Stones resume their 14 On Fire tour in Oslo, following the death of Mick's partner, L'Wren Scott

$5m

Offer RZA claims to have received for the only copy of Wu-Tang Clan's new album

BIG MOUTH

"We're a slow-moving animal, always have been. I guess we'll decide then what we do next"

JONNY GREENWOOD reveals Radiohead's plan to meet up this summer and discuss their next album

THE BIG QUESTION

THE CURE DEFENDED THEIR THREE-HOUR SHOWS FOLLOWING A LUKEWARM REVIEW. CAN A GIG EVER BE TOO LONG?

Lisa Wright
NME writer
"Criticising The Cure for playing a long set is like criticising them for wearing black. It's perverse to complain about being given too much for your money."

Jack Chown
NME reader
"It's not a prison! Plus at three hours, The Cure are still short of Springsteen at four, The Grateful Dead at six and Gonzales at 27."

Matt Berry
Comedian/ singer-songwriter
"I'd watch The Cure for six hours! Take them out of the equation though and a gig can definitely be too long."

WHO THE FUCK IS...

Svetlana Shusterman

This is the former reality-TV star (from *The Real World: Key West*) who's taken out a restraining order against Incubus frontman Brandon Boyd, claiming he is stalking her.

Sounds serious...

It is. Boyd is no longer allowed within 100 yards of Shusterman. She claims she was left "terrified" after Boyd followed her in his car and shouted that he was going to kill her.

How has Boyd responded?

The frontman's spokesperson stated: "[Brandon] doesn't know anything about it. He doesn't know this person nor does he recall ever having met her."

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK

Honor Titus

The Cerebral Ballzy frontman is to appear in new horror film *Condemned* as Loki, a musician living in a squat who uses his collection of vintage bass guitars to fight off attackers after an infection among local residents.

Wiley

When deported from Canada last week, the rapper was sent to Glasgow, and didn't take kindly to the local cuisine: "I got a breakfast in Scotland and they had square sausage... Trust me fam... square," he tweeted.

AND FINALLY

The Krayzie munch

Bone Thugs-N-Harmony's Krayzie Bone has hit on a get-rich-quick scheme. The rapper is installing his snack-vending machines in LA marijuana dispensaries.

Space, man

John Frusciante has launched his new solo LP into space. Fans can stream it only when its orbit fits their location on Earth. We launched the last RHCP album out of the window.

2 Become 1

MIA and Janelle Monáe played a duet in hologram form, appearing onstage together despite one singer being in New York and the other in Los Angeles. Oasis fans, there is hope.

▶Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS APRIL 6, 2014

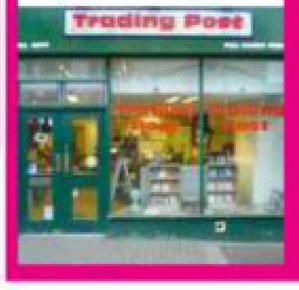
NEW 01 Wilko Johnson & Roger Daltrey
Going Back Home CHESS

He made a record with The Who frontman, then he announced he'd be playing Glastonbury, and now the former Dr Feelgood member has kept hold of the Number One spot for a second week.

NEW	2	Out Among The Stars	**Johnny Cash** COLUMBIA
NEW	3	Education Education Education & War	**Kaiser Chiefs** KAISER CHIEFS
NEW	4	Cope	**Manchester Orchestra** LOMA VISTA
▲	5	The Take Off And Landing Of Everything	**Elbow** FICTION
▼	6	Lost In The Dream	**The War On Drugs** SECRETLY CANADIAN
▲	7	Love Letters	**Metronomy** BECAUSE MUSIC
NEW	8	Salad Days	**Mac DeMarco** CAPTURED TRACKS
NEW	9	Himalayan	**Band Of Skulls** ELECTRIC BLUES
▼	10	Symphonica	**George Michael** EMI
▼	11	The Power Of Love	**Sam Bailey** SYCO MUSIC
▼	12	Singles	**Future Islands** 4AD
NEW	13	All You Can Eat	**Steel Panther** OPEN E MUSIC
▼	14	Odludek	**Jimi Goodwin** HEAVENLY
▼	15	If You Wait	**London Grammar** METAL & DUST
▼	16	A Perfect Contradiction	**Paloma Faith** RCA
▼	17	Mess	**Liars** MUTE
▼	18	Girl	**Pharrell Williams** COLUMBIA
▼	19	Days Are Gone	**Haim** POLYDOR
▼	20	AM	**Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO
▼	21	Goodbye Yellow Brick Road	**Elton John** MERCURY
▼	22	Morning Phase	**Beck** EMI
NEW	23	In My Soul	**Robert Cray Band** PROVOGUE
▲	24	Sun Structures	**Temples** HEAVENLY
■	25	Present Tense	**Wild Beasts** DOMINO
NEW	26	Here And Nowhere Else	**Cloud Nothings** WICHITA
▼	27	Kiss Me Once	**Kylie Minogue** PARLOPHONE
NEW	28	Broken Crown Halo	**Lacuna Coil** CENTURY MEDIA
NEW	29	Liquid Spirit	**Gregory Porter** BLUE NOTE
NEW	30	Head Or Heart	**Christina Perri** ATLANTIC
▼	31	Bad Blood	**Bastille** VIRGIN
NEW	32	Hot Dreams	**Timber Timbre** FULL TIME HOBBY
NEW	33	Small Town Heroes	**Hurray For The Riff Raff** ATO
▼	34	World Of Joy	**Howler** ROUGH TRADE
NEW	35	Shakira	**Shakira** RCA
▲	36	Born To Die	**Lana Del Rey** POLYDOR
▼	37	So Long, See You Tomorrow	**Bombay Bicycle Club** ISLAND
NEW	38	In Utero	**Nirvana** GEFFEN
NEW	39	World Psychedelic Classics 5	**William Onyeabor** LUAKA BOP
NEW	40	Warpaint	**Warpaint** ROUGH TRADE

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
TRADING POST
STROUD
FOUNDED 1977
WHY IT'S GREAT It's Gloucestershire's longest-established independent record store, with over 50,000 new and second-hand albums in stock.
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK Wilko Johnson & Roger Daltrey – 'Going Back Home'
THEY SAY "We have something for everyone, and offer a personal shopping experience."

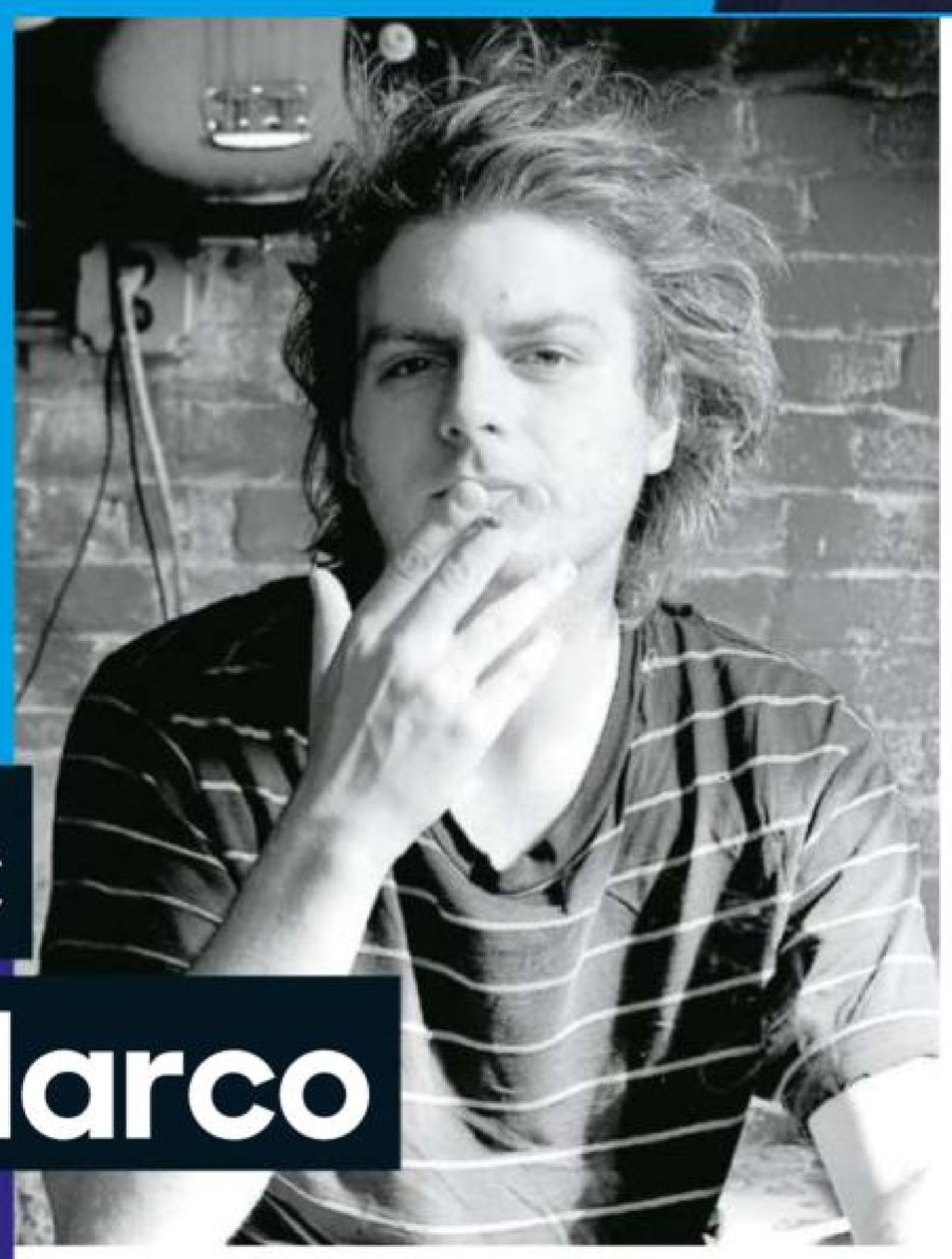
NEWDESK COMPILED BY DAVID RENSHAW PHOTOS: PA, DEAN CHALKLEY, JENN FIVE, RICHARD JOHNSON, WIREIMAGE

StoreMags

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE

Connan Mockasin

The Beatles



Mac DeMarco

Canadian singer-songwriter

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING
'No Milk Today' – Herman's Hermits

"My mum's into a lot of good music, but for some reason she was into the worst shit when I was young. Herman's Hermits are a typical example."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH
'(Keep Feeling) Fascination' – The Human League

"I remember being in the car with my mom listening to a radio station that played '80s hits. I was 13 or something and I'd never heard any of that synthy, poppy stuff. This turned me on to all of that."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT
'Sucks To Be You' – Prozzäk

"It was two cartoon characters – a 'virtual band' – and they were Canadian but they sang with South African accents. The internet was just getting big. It hasn't aged too well."

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND
'Here Comes The Sun' – The Beatles

"I'd started playing guitar, and I thought, 'These are nice songs, and I don't want to write giant riffs.' But as much as The Beatles were inspiring, they made me think, 'How the fuck am I going to write songs like these?' Then I found bands like Beat Happening and I was like, 'These guys can't even play their instruments – sweet!'"

"I'M USUALLY WASTED WHEN I DO KARAOKE"

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO
'She Looks Like You' – Sean Nicholas Savage

"I'm tempted to say that song 'Mother' by John Lennon because it's gnarly, but I'd still listen to it. Right now, my friends' songs really get me as I know what they're talking about. When you see Sean do this song live, he gets pissed and it gets you."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE
'Rock With You' – Michael Jackson

"Any time I hear something from his 'Off The Wall' album, I want to dance. He totally gives me the bug. People in the town I grew up in were like, 'You listen to Michael Jackson? That guy's a fuckin' queer.' Growing up, you go, 'Holy shit, he's the master.'"

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE
'What A Fool Believes' – The Doobie Brothers

"I love doing 'What A Fool Believes' at sketchy karaoke bars. Around Canada you do karaoke where all the hardened alcoholic people hang out. I'm usually so totally wasted when I'm doing it, it's not very triumphant."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD
'I'm The Man, That Will Find You' – Connan Mockasin

"That riff! One of my friends used to play with him and was sending me the stuff he was doing. I saw him play for the first time a couple of months ago. It's weird – he does OK in the UK, but it's hard to find out about him in Canada."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN
'Strawberry Letter 23' – Shuggie Otis

"This is the song I'd pick, musically speaking, because I just love the vibe of it, the guitar shreds. Lyrically it'd be 'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road' by Elton John – that song's a tearjerker."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF VANCOUVER
'Wild Combination' – Arthur Russell

"I'd just found out about Arthur Russell back at the time I was riding my bike around Vancouver. It reminds me of girls I was dating when I was there and just touring around."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF DOING MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS
'Bara To Yajyu (Rose & Beast)' – Haruomi Hosono

"He used to play in Yellow Magic Orchestra. I used to listen to this all the time when I was having stuff done. Some of my friends did the really fucked-up stuff. One had a triple muscle biopsy – they essentially took three pieces of his leg out. Some did stuff like getting locked in a room for a week. I considered doing some of those, but it's quite an investment for, like, $1,500."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL
'Stairway To Heaven' – Led Zeppelin

"You've got to get your money's worth. My friend's dad passed away a couple of years ago and they played the extended version of 'Free Bird' by Lynyrd Skynyrd. He knew!"

Led Zeppelin

AS TOLD TO JAMIE FULLERTON PHOTOS: MATT SALACUSE, GETTY, PIETER M VAN HATTEM

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NME NEW BAND OF THE WEEK

All We Are

The Merseyside trio making waves with their melodic psych pop

When *Radar* arrives at the disused primary school that serves as All We Are's living, rehearsal and writing space, vocalist and drummer Rich O'Flynn is online, tracking his stolen phone around the darker corners of Toxteth, the Liverpool suburb the band call home. Notorious for being at the epicentre of the city's 1981 riots, it's now been partially reimagined as an artistic enclave. Change and transformation is something All We Are can relate to, having swapped the alt-folk sounds they crafted upon forming in 2011 for an altogether more driven psych-pop haze.

Last June, that reinvention began to pay off when the trio – who were all born and raised in different countries before meeting while studying at the Liverpool Institute For Performing Arts – released their debut single, 'Utmost Good'. The languid, melodic jam soon set tongues wagging and Rich now describes it as a "watershed moment". In the months that followed they were snapped up by Domino offshoot Double Six, an honour of which bassist Guro Gikling says, "I still wake up every morning going, 'Wow!'"

As the band – completed by guitarist Luis Santos – enter the studio to start boiling down a "plethora" of demos into their eagerly awaited album, there's a real sense of snowballing momentum. Handpicked to support Warpaint on their recent UK tour, the band have also been nominated for this year's GIT Award, an annual celebration of Liverpool's blossoming new music scene.

'Feel Safe', All We Are's first release on their new label, should see that impetus continue. Disco-fuelled and full of nostalgia for a lost love, it's a melancholic follow-up to their debut. "The lyrics are quite dark," Rich says. "We're trying to connect with the paranoia within all of us."

With phone thieves lurking, in everyday life All We Are's suspicious minds might just be warranted. When it comes to their music, though, all signs point to the band covering themselves in glory. ■ PHIL GWYN

ON NME.COM/NEWMUSIC NOW
▶Listen to a playlist of songs that inspired the band – and find out who won the GIT Award on April 11

▶THE DETAILS

▶**BASED** Liverpool
▶**FOR FANS OF** Warpaint, The Bee Gees
▶**BUY IT NOW** 'Feel Safe' is out now on Double Six/Domino
▶**SEE THEM LIVE** London Bethnal Green Working Men's Club (May 1), Brighton The Great Escape (May 10), London Field Day (June 7)
▶**BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Bassist Guro's cat was born on the same day that the band signed their record deal – either a coincidence or a feline with a great sense of timing

DAVID EDWARDS

MORE NEW MUSIC

Huskies

Corbu

Taking influence, and a name, from the Swiss/French architect and designer Le Corbusier, Brooklyn's Corbu claim to write music based on the creative aesthetic of translating visual patterns and shapes into sound. That might sound erratic, but the soothing atmosphere found across their 'We Are Sound' EP is a world away from angular riffs and spiky beats. Soulful vocals in the vein of Twin Shadow's George Lewis Jr sum up a sedative and pastel-coloured sound.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/corbucorbu

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/corbu

Huskies

Nottingham's Huskies list their band interests as "chillin', Frisbee and jammin'" and their laidback '90s-tinged indie pop couldn't be better suited to those relaxed pursuits if they tried. 'Beach' adds a hint of serenity to their slacker aesthetic and, on latest track 'Whatever Together', frontman Antonio Panzera nonchalantly asserts, "*Take me there and I'll see whatever*" over rolling guitars indebted to 'Sally Cinnamon'.

▶SOCIAL @huskiesuk

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/huskiesmusic

Camden Cox

Signed to Little Boots' label On Repeat, Camden Cox is the latest artist taking sounds from the dance underground and pushing them towards the mainstream. Single 'Kinda Like' is a house-inflected pop gem reminiscent of AlunaGeorge, which could well see Cox surpass her new boss' own career.

▶SOCIAL @camdencoxx

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/camdencoxmusic

Michael Rault

"*When I think of what we had inside/Oh you know I cry*", sings a deceptively cheery Michael Rault on 'Too Bad So Sad', the first track to be taken from his new album, due later this year. Combining psych fuzz with '60s soul and lovelorn lyrics, the Toronto-based musician comes off like a one-man Tame Impala taking on the songs of Donovan.

▶SOCIAL @michaelrault

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/michael-rault

Gulp

Super Furry Animals bassist Guto Pryce and his wife, vocalist/multi-instrumentalist Lindsey Leven, make up this duo from Cardiff. Recent single 'Vast Space' signifies a determined, droning brand of '60s-inspired psychedelia akin to Wooden Shjips, full of vintage synths and organs. Theirs is not a threatening sound though, with warm textures and gliding vocals foreshadowing a soothing debut album, 'Season Sun', due in the summer.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/gulpmusic

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/e-l-k-1

▶SEE THEM LIVE Wrexham Focus Wales Festival (April 26)

Donovan Blanc

"Is it natural?" ask Donovan Blanc on their Facebook page, the only sign of life save for some months-old posts about gigs with Wild Nothing and Blouse. Just signed to Captured Tracks, the band release their self-titled debut album on June 24, and if teaser track 'Minha Menina' is anything to go by, it should be full of 'Congratulations'-era MGMT pop with the weirdness dialled down, making everything feel eerily creepy.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/donovanblanc

Yvette

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Yvette

Fans of Health will revel in the sheer, unbridled racket created by Brooklyn band Yvette. Recently signed in the UK by Tough Love, they release their self-titled debut on May 5. Check out opening track 'Pure Pleasure' online for a taste of the ear-splitting, chest-rattling sound of the world's newest cause of tinnitus.

▶SOCIAL @___YVETTE___

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/yvettemusic

Aquilo

Lake District duo Tom Higham and Ben Fletcher combine the sparsity of The xx with more dance-orientated sounds to create crystal-clear future pop. They worked with Bondax and Kidnap Kid on their self-titled debut EP, which is out now.

▶SOCIAL @aquiloUK

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/aquilouk

Bang Bang Bang

Natalie Chahal is "a one-woman weapon of mass →

JENN FIVE

BAND CRUSH

Dom Ganderton

Superfood

Ekkah

"There's a band from Birmingham called Ekkah. We saw them recently and it was a great gig. They're disco meets Blondie. Two girls singing and playing keyboard and sax, and two guys on bass and drums."

Stuff-NME-Says.com

Sulky

distraction", according to her Facebook page. She is also "an absolute powerhouse of talent and is hot, primed and ready for action". Luv Luv Luv Records' latest artist sounds like a modern pop princess – armed with a persona she developed from her time with a Hole and Pixies covers band. With a name like Bang Bang Bang you can be sure that she's got the good kind of bad attitude, too.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/nataliebangbang

▶**HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/nataliebangbang

Shamir

Shamir's 'If It Wasn't True' is an early contender for floorfiller of the year. The 19-year-old from Las Vegas' androgynous vocals soar over an exuberant house/disco combination that comes backed with 'I'll Never Be Able To Love' via Brooklyn label Godmode now.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/ENTERGODMODE

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/godmodeinternet/shamir-if-it-wasnt-true

Tourist

On his 'Patterns' EP (released April 21), William Phillips, aka Tourist, shows just why Disclosure have chosen to work with him on their own Method Records label. Over the four tracks, the producer moves through deep house, electro and disco while keeping a pop sensibility to his club-ready tunes. It's all backed up by guest appearances from Lianne La Havas and soul singer Will Heard.

▶**SOCIAL** @tourist__

▶**HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/touristmusic

▶**SEE HIM LIVE** Edinburgh Underground @ EUSA (May 1), Liverpool Sound City (2) Live At Leeds (3), Nottingham Rescue Rooms (4), Manchester Soup Kitchen (14), London Basing House (15)

Powder Blue

Built upon a canvas of tribal drums and droning guitars, Powder Blue's recent shadowy epic 'Run' is a statement of intent ahead of their first shows this side of the Atlantic in May. A mixture of Doors-like organ solos and towering '70s prog rock characterise this female-fronted "soundtrack to your dreams and nightmares". Fellow Canadian guitar titans Black Mountain would be proud of such a heavy, immersive sprawl.

Powder Blue

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/powderbluemusic

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/powder-blue

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** Liverpool Sound City Festival (May 1–3), Brighton Great Escape Festival (May 8–10)

Broken Hands

In the great rock resurgence, Canterbury's Broken Hands come hot on Royal Blood's heels, matching the Brighton duo for thundering riffs every step of the way. Singer Dale Norton adds a cocksure Tom Meighan twist to the band's brutal sonic assault, giving tracks like 'No One Left To Meet' an undercurrent of lairy excitement.

▶**SOCIAL** @brokenhandsband

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/brokenhandsband

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** London Camden Rocks Festival (May 31), Sonisphere Festival (July 5)

Sulky Boy

The Echo Champ collective in Brighton will not stop bearing new fruit this year, churning out their brand of baggy pop at every corner with projects like The Magic Gang, Abattoir Blues and Home School. Sulky Boy is the solo effort of Daniel

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

KIRAN LEONARD PREPS SECOND ALBUM

Kiran Leonard is set to follow up his 'Bowler Hat Soup' LP with 'Grapefruit' later this year. "Since I started college I've met a bunch of great musicians so there's more textural diversity," explains the teenager. "Oboes! Clarinets! A string quartet!"

Kiran Leonard

WHITE LUNG GET DREAMY ON NEW ALBUM

Vancouver punks White Lung have announced details of their third album, the follow-up to 2012's 'Sorry'. 'Deep Fantasy' will be released on June 16 on their new label, Domino, and will be available as a limited-edition LP with screen-printed poster.

White Lung

FRANKIE ROSE EMBARKS ON NEW PROJECT

Former Dum Dum Girls, Crystal Stilts and Vivian Girls member Frankie Rose has formed a new band, Beverly, with Avan Lava and The Pains of Being Pure At Heart touring musician Drew Citron. Beverly release their debut LP 'Careers' on Kanine Records on July 1.

PERFECT PUSSY HIT UK

Meredith Graves and her band bring the power of their recent debut album 'Say Yes To Love' to the UK for the first time later this year. The Syracuse, NY punk group will begin the dates at Brighton's Green Door Store with Joanna Gruesome on July 29, before hitting Glasgow, Manchester and London.

WORDS: JAMES BALMONT, RHIAN DALY, DAVID RENSHAW
PHOTOS: PIPER FERGUSON, MANOX, ROGER SARGENT, JENN FIVE

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Broken Hands

Taylor, the bassist from the latter, with Paeris Giles of the former on production duties. With a few '90s guitar riffs they provide yet more evidence to suggest that their fast-developing scene is one to pay close attention to.
▶SOCIAL twitter.com/dantayloor
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/sulkyboyband

Cayetana

Any band with a song named 'Hot Dad Calendar' have to be worth a few moments of your time. Based in Philadelphia, this trio have played shows with Waxahatchee and All Dogs on tour and have recently finished work on their debut album, due out later this year.
▶SOCIAL @CayetanaPhilly
▶HEAR THEM http://cayetana.bandcamp.com

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Aesop

▶FOUNDED 2012 by Adam Royal
▶BASED London
▶KEY RELEASES Sohn – 'The Wheel' (2012), Gent Mason – 'Eden' (2013), Wayward – 'Love Jones' (2013)
▶RADAR SAYS Founded with the aim of giving artists a starting point in today's digital landscape, Aesop is fast becoming a reliable source for new and exciting electronic sounds. The small label is also keen to put their own unique spin on records, with one track on each release so far relating to where the artist involved is based.

Colleagues

With a palette of heady electro borrowed from the likes of Cut Copy, Swedish five-piece Colleagues' new track 'Tears' has all the commercial clout of a Number One single. The layers of melody that supplement the basic pop framework would make Metronomy jealous.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/colleaguesband
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/colleaguesmusic

Mssingno

Mssingno recently finished touring Europe with Evian Christ, the pair of them travelling the continent and exposing people to their equally unique take on the intersections between rap, R&B and electronic music. Last year's 'XE2' EP falls roughly between the US trap sound and the resurgent grime scene in the UK.
▶SOCIAL @MssingNo
▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/mssingno

Tony Molina

The Bay Area singer-songwriter's 'Dissed And Dismissed' album has now been repackaged by his new home, Slumberland Records. Firing off 12 songs in as many minutes, Molina is the living embodiment of 'all killer, no filler'.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/tonymolina650
▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/slumberland-records/tony-molina-change-my-ways

Leaf House

These Belgians take their name from a track by Animal Collective, and possess a sound that could be described as a less frenzied version of their Baltimore brothers. 'Feel Safe', the lead track from their forthcoming album 'LLEEAAFF HHOOUUSSEE', is an electronic journey of organic beats and wintery gusts – a breathtaking adventure.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/leafhouseband
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/leafhouseband

EUROPE'S LEADING FESTIVAL FOR NEW MUSIC

THE GREAT ESCAPE

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RADAR HEADS TO THE GREAT ESCAPE

With The Great Escape just over a month away, *Radar* can finally announce the line-up for our stage at this year's festival. The event takes place on May 8–10 in Brighton, and once again we are returning to our favourite seaside venue, The Haunt, to host three nights of the very best new music.

Jungle, **Courtney Barnett**, **Childhood** and **Eyedress** are all confirmed to play, while the late-licence Friday showcase features a mammoth seven bands, including **Fat White Family** (above), **Telegram**, **East India Youth**, **Ratking** and an ultra-secret special guest performing just after midnight. Last year we snagged Palma Violets for that mystery slot, with the band playing the most raucous show of the festival. We can't reveal who this year's act is just yet, but we can say they are every bit as exciting as the Lambeth lot.

Courtney Barnett

Of the *really* new acts on our bill, we're hugely excited to bring hotly tipped New Yorkers **Public Access TV** over for their first-ever UK gigs, as well as melodic Scottish wonderkids **Neon Waltz**, playing their debut shows outside of the Highlands. There are also must-see sets by **The Districts**, who wowed crowds at SXSW, Liverpool's **All We Are**, **Hawk House** and Irish noise-punks **Girl Band**.

Public Access TV

▶ **Buy tickets to The Great Escape at NME.COM/tickets now**

THURSDAY, MAY 8
Childhood (10pm)
Courtney Barnett (9.15pm)
The Districts (8.30pm)
Neon Waltz (7.45pm)

FRIDAY, MAY 9
Fat White Family (1.30am)
Secret guests TBA (12.30am)
Public Access TV (11.30pm)
Telegram (10pm)
Ratking (9:15pm)
East India Youth (8.30pm)
Hawk House (7.45pm)

SATURDAY, MAY 10
Jungle (10pm)
Eyedress (9.15pm)
All We Are (8.30pm)
Girl Band (7.45pm)

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The Amazing Snakeheads Amphetamine Ballads

The furious Glaswegians fuse rockabilly, goth, blues and garage on their dark debut

With more bands than ever jostling for attention, it's tough to sell an emerging band merely by proclaiming how brilliant they are; they have to stand for something, or provide the antidote to some sickness. How, then, to approach the debut album by Glasgow trio The Amazing Snakeheads? Nothing you try to pin on them quite fits.

Having released their debut single last summer, they qualify as new to nearly everyone who hears 'Amphetamine Ballads', but with members in their late twenties and early thirties, they don't have the status of wild young bucks. The energy and malignancy streaked across these 10 songs feels ageless. Singer Dale Barclay sounds angry, sometimes to the point of hoarseness, but the social ills of this or any other day go uncommented on. Their music noisily solders together goth, rockabilly, blues and garage, and while slashing riffs and eerie unease can also be found in the music of Eagulls, The Wytches and Beastmilk, this is no fly-by-night sound of 2014. You could even call it timeless.

For years after his time in Amazing Snakeheads antecedents The Birthday Party, Nick Cave testily tried to shed the übergoth tag conferred by demi-anthem 'Release The Bats'. "It wasn't ABOUT fuckin' bats," he'd grouse. The first song on 'Amphetamine Ballads' is called 'I'm A Vampire', but it is not a study of the vampiric lifestyle. Instead, its standout lyric, "*She's more beautiful than any woman I've met/And she fuckin' knows it*", makes it a cousin of The Streets' 'Fit But You Know It'. With some of the biggest hard-rock riffs on the album, it's also a statement of intent.

It's fair to say that The Amazing Snakeheads are not reinventing rock'n'roll, though. At most, they fashion

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

some unusual hybrids: armed with an extremely long chain, the repetitious thud of 'Here It Comes Again' links Nirvana's 'School' with 'Rocket USA' by Suicide. 'Swamp Song' seems indebted to the pots'n'pans clatter of Tom Waits; 'Nighttime' gestures towards the voodoo percussion wildness of Screamin' Jay Hawkins and overwhelmingly cribs from The Cramps. The trio, you suspect, are acutely aware of rock'n'roll cliché, but when Barclay gurgles, "*They say I'm bad, I'm bad to the bone*", he threatens to cross the line into self-parody. You're not exactly Lemmy yet, chief.

Perhaps mindful of the punky chaos fans will have experienced at Amazing Snakeheads' live shows, 'Amphetamine Ballads' is a wilfully front-loaded album. The first four songs are all under four minutes, with the remaining six longer, stranger and more contemplative. 'Where Is My Knife?' touts gleaming guitars, march-to-your-doom drumbeats and handclaps in a malevolent, Gun Club-ish take on the urban blues. There's a saxophone on 'Memories', strong words softly spoken on 'Heading For Heartbreak' (it's not just Barclay's heavy Glaswegian accent that might have you recalling Arab Strap amid the jazz-tinged gloom) and abandonment of rock tropes on 'Tiger By The Tail' – frail desert-blues guitar, ghostly French chanson, and lack of drama, but no rock. The way 'Tiger...' departs into the mist, quiet enough to be almost unheard, is the trio's boldest move.

'Amphetamine Ballads' showcases a group with good taste (to quote The Cramps), and the ability to cook up an adrenalised racket or a melancholy fog. There aren't quite enough classic songs here to render their voice vital, but as long as boring bands exist, this kind of piss and vinegar will always be welcome. ■ NOEL GARDNER

7

SINGER DALE BARCLAY ON...

...lyrical ambiguity

"I don't know what my lyrics are about! I've never liked having things explained to me about music I like – I'd rather make up my own mind. If that's selfish... then we're a very selfish band, absolutely."

...the album's chaos-to-calm sequencing

"I only noticed this when I listened back to it. The peak is right at the start! In the past, playing live, it's always been about fuckin' going for it, but now we can play longer sets we're gonna bring the quieter songs in."

...Glaswegian pride

"Glasgow is really healthy at the moment. There are lots of bands we hang out with: Future Glue, The Rosy Crucifixion, Big Ned, Golden Teacher. Casual Sex are really great. I would hope people would get Glasgow from listening to our band, because it bleeds into the music; but once you start consciously presenting it, it becomes contrived, and then it's fuckin' pointless."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** April 14 ▶**LABEL** Domino ▶**PRODUCERS** Emily MacLaren, Stuart Evans ▶**LENGTH** 48:48 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. I'm A Vampire ▶2. Nighttime ▶3. Swamp Song ▶4. Here It Comes Again ▶5. Flatlining ▶6. Where Is My Knife? ▶7. Every Guy Wants To Be Her Baby ▶8. Memories ▶9. Heading For Heartbreak ▶10. Tiger By The Tail ▶**BEST TRACK** Here It Comes Again

MORE ALBUMS

Shonen Knife
Overdrive Damnably

Osaka's punk-pop ambassadors Shonen Knife were already a decade old when Nirvana's patronage resulted in a burst of '90s fame for the trio. Twentieth album 'Overdrive' finds founder, singer and guitarist Naoko Yamano paying tribute to the hard rock of her youth. Instead of the band's default Ramones influence, these 10 songs about animals and food are serviced by the stomp of Led Zeppelin ('Black Crow'), the riffs of Black Sabbath ('Green Tea') and the swagger of Thin Lizzy ('Bad Luck Song'). The turgid 'Robots From Hell' aside, they carry it off. Pay attention and the buzzing 'Jet Shot' and superficially banal 'Shopping' disguise lyrics far smarter than their cartoon image suggests. ■ STUART HUGGETT

7

The Afghan Whigs
Do To The Beast Sub Pop

Hey, mimsy, buttoned-up Sam Smith-alikes – call that soul? *This* is soul. Grunge's original noir screamer Greg Dulli is back from his 13-year dabbling with The Twilight Singers and The Gutter Twins, back with (most of) Cincinnati's original Afghan Whigs, back on Sub Pop and back on the trail of plaid-clad serial killers. 'Matamoros' – slinky, slaughterous – is about a Mexican town plagued by satanic murders ("*I cut you down, I stitch you up*"), while 'It Kills' and 'These Sticks' are revenge fantasies that see Dulli's seditious croaks peppered with Al Green whoops. Lush, passionate and stinking of a crime scene strewn with body parts, 'Do To The Beast' harks gloriously back to 1993's 'Gentlemen' and 1996's 'Black Love' but adds flutters of electronica and folk. A brutal and beauteous slither from the grave. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

The Birds Of Satan

The Birds Of Satan

Foo Fighter Taylor Hawkins pays homage to his hard-rock heroes

▶ A baby gurgles over a clattering drum roll before nine minutes of dramatic metal riffage and hulking prog licks. So begins the first album from The Birds Of Satan, Foo Fighters drummer Taylor Hawkins' side project. This ambitious Queens Of The Stone Age-flavoured opener, 'The Ballad Of The Birds Of Satan', is a strutting slice of Californian metal that's strangely misrepresentative of the rest of the record. The six tracks that follow are much easier to digest, sharing the Foos' commercial guitar leanings while gleefully paying homage to Hawkins' heroes Dio, Van Halen and Queen. Dave Grohl and Pat Smear both make cameos on the record, but high-profile guests aren't the album's high point. That accolade goes to the gentle soft-rock triumph of 'Raspberries', the shred-happy 'Pieces Of The Puzzle' and the piledriving, '70s-era Aerosmith ballad 'Too Far Gone To See'. ■ LEONIE COOPER

8

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** April 14 ▶**LABEL** Shanabelle ▶**PRODUCER** John Losteau ▶**LENGTH** 31:25 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. The Ballad Of The Birds Of Satan ▶2. Thanks For The Line ▶3. Pieces Of The Puzzle ▶4. Raspberries ▶5. Nothing At All ▶6. Wait Til Tomorrow ▶7. Too Far Gone To See ▶**BEST TRACK** Too Far Gone To See

Woods
With Light And With Love
Woodsist

Brooklyn's Woods continue their psych-folk trajectory on their seventh album in nine years. It sparkles with the light and love of the title, lending the 10 songs the lackadaisical summer vibe of 1960s San Francisco, especially on the nine-minute title track that swoops around with no boundaries. It's strikingly different from their sluggish 2006 debut, 'How To Survive In/In The Woods'. There's a rare moment of foreboding on the briefly gloomy 'Feather Man', but 'Shining' and the Avi Buffalo-style 'Only The Lonely' are more representative of this bright, optimistic, sprightly record. ■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

8

Chain & The Gang
Minimum Rock N Roll
Fortuna Pop

Chain & The Gang are not so much a band as a bullhorn for frontman Ian Svenonius. Svenonius is outspoken but erudite, enlightened yet irreverent, and he has a knack for tackling weighty ideas in an offhand manner that might give you cause to doubt his sincerity. At this stage though, 15 albums into his career, he deserves the benefit of the doubt. 'Minimum Rock N Roll' takes aim at the culture of instant gratification ('Got To Have It Everyday'), oversharing ('Mum's The Word') and Google-ads conformism ('Stuck In A Box'), but for all its high-mindedness, its garage-rock primalism is just as enjoyable with your brain switched off. Maybe that's the point.

7

■ BARRY NICOLSON

Odonis Odonis
Hard Boiled Soft Boiled
Buzz

On their 2011 debut 'Hollandaze', Toronto's Odonis Odonis, led by Dean Tzenos, introduced themselves with a record of wall-to-wall blistering noise that was as aggressive as a punch to the gut. Three years later, the first half of follow-up 'Hard Boiled Soft Boiled' takes the same brutish approach – 'Are We Friends' comes on like Klaxons' 'Four Horsemen Of 2012' with the neon replaced by jet-black industrialism. Come midway point 'Transmission From The Moon', though, Tzenos starts unclenching his fists. Sunkissed shoegaze wafts over chiming guitar lines and gently crashing drums, and 'Angus Mountain' is as close to euphoric as the band have ever managed. This is the sound of progress.

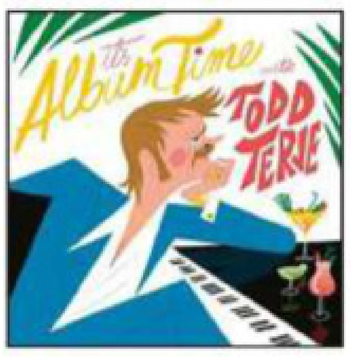
8

■ RHIAN DALY

Todd Terje
It's Album Time

Daft but infectious debut by Norwegian producer and Franz collaborator

Though he's been DJing, producing and remixing for a decade now, Todd Terje is a man so anonymous, even *he* doesn't care how you pronounce his surname. "I stopped correcting people many years ago," he recently told an interviewer. But the Norwegian producer's debut is packed with personality, its retro-futuristic, cosmic-disco grooves forming a clear picture of Terje as life and soul of the party. It's all wrapped in a cloak of daftness, from the cover art's illustration of a louche Terje, like an offcut from a Stella Artois advert, to the ridiculous title. In case you didn't get the message, the title track repeats "*It's album time, it's album time*" ad nauseam, like a theme tune.



Indeed, it feels as though the primary inspiration on Terje's work is that of the TV theme through the ages. The baroque keys, swirling disco strings and pensive synths of 'Leisure Suit Preben' are built for a Miami detective show, 'Delorean Dynamite' has the tense mood of the big-money-round music on an '80s daytime TV game show, and 'Swing Star Part I' evokes John Carpenter's synth-driven movie scores. Ironically, the one that sounds least like a TV theme is called 'Inspector Norse'.

The pace switches halfway through with a cover of Robert Palmer's 'Johnny And Mary' that would have slipped easily on to the *Drive* soundtrack, with whispered guest vocals from Roxy Music legend Bryan Ferry. Odd, but by this point, not unexpectedly so.

Terje's infectious music beds itself deep in the brain. He's one of the people Franz Ferdinand called on to assist with last year's 'Right Thoughts, Right Words, Right Action', and it's hard to imagine the band pilfering Snoop Dogg's 'Who Am I (What's My Name?)' for 'Evil Eye' quite so brazenly without Terje egging them on. Applying that spirit to his own music, he's turned in an electronic album that's full of character without resorting to robot costumes or Pharrell bloody Williams. So it's worth learning the following: it's pronounced *ter-yeah*, and it's *his* time now.

8

■ DAN STUBBS

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** April 7 ▶**LABEL** Olsen ▶**PRODUCER** Todd Terje ▶**LENGTH** 59:10 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Intro (It's Album Time) ▶2. Leisure Suit Preben ▶3. Preben Goes To Acapulco ▶4. Svensk Sås ▶5. Strandbar ▶6. Delorean Dynamite ▶7. Johnny And Mary ▶8. Alfonso Muskedunder ▶9. Swing Star (Part I) ▶10. Swing Star (Part II) ▶11. Oh Joy ▶12. Inspector Norse ▶**BEST TRACK** Delorean Dynamite

Chet Faker
Built On Glass
Future Classic/Opulent

He has the worst name in music, he came to fame with a cover of Blackstreet's 'No Diggity', and he sounds like Phil Collins gone James Blake: already, Australia's Chet Faker has a pretty big hole to dig himself out of on his debut album. Singing no faster than 2mph doesn't help either, but there's an unexpected range in his schtick that's disarming. It takes him from sounding like Bombay Bicycle Club in their Fela Kuti-worshipping phase ('Cigarettes & Loneliness'), to almost Alt-J levels of poppy R&B deconstruction on 'Gold', up to something that resembles Willis Earl Beal helping out on Brian Eno's ambient records ('No Advice'). Fewer tedious GarageBand Boyz II Men slow-jams next time and maybe he can keep the name.

6

■ GAVIN HAYNES

Silo
Work Novennial Paralysis

Danish three-piece Silo made two albums of abrasive synth rock – 'Instar' (1998) and 'Alloy' (2001) – before drifting apart, getting proper jobs and starting families. If this reunion after 13 years comes because they wanted to inject some excitement back into their lives, it sounds like it worked. Looping guitar fuzz is interwoven with a circling synth riff on 'Filaments', and 'Cabinn Fever' sees M Sayyid from experimental hip-hop crew Antipop Consortium performing vocal acrobatics over slabs of distortion that grate violently against one another. It's all a thrill. Special mention goes to 'The Inexorable Sadness Of Pencils', an excellently surreal song title. This is music that's confrontational and uncompromising, but sucks you in even so. Hard-hitting dad rock.

7

■ CHRIS COTTINGHAM

FILM

The Double

A shy office worker is haunted by his doppelgänger in the new film from *The IT Crowd*'s Richard Ayoade

Deep down, we all like to think we're special. We pirouette through life believing we're unique, even though we buy the same trainers, say the same catchphrases and watch the same TV programmes. We believe that, one day, we will meet another unique person and live uniquely ever after, posting sunset selfies with the hashtag 'winning at life'.

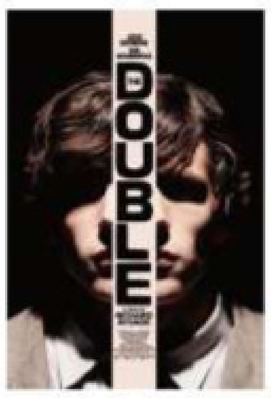
Simon James, the lead character in Richard Ayoade's new film, is definitely not winning at life. Played by Jesse Eisenberg (*The Social Network*), he's a mumbling office worker so shy he shrinks into his suit. His life is an endless series of suffocating situations that always go wrong. And to make things worse, he has a confident, charming doppelgänger called James Simon – also played by Eisenberg – who turns up one day to mess up his miserable life just that little bit more.

The film is based on *The Double* by the great Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky, adapted by Ari Korine (brother of Harmony, who directed *Spring Breakers*) and given an extra frisson of quirk by *Submarine* director Ayoade. Inspired by films like Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville*, David Lynch's *Eraserhead* and Orson Welles' *The Trial*, Ayoade combines surrealism, film noir and sci-fi with a sharp shock of loneliness and a gentle, dark humour. The result is a kind of dystopian unreality: trains are deserted, offices look like something out of a communist propaganda poster, suicides are frequent.

Everyone is isolated and alienated in *The Double*. Simon certainly feels alienated by James, and although they make friends at first, James eventually starts assuming Simon's identity when it suits him. He pretends to be Simon to help him talk to Mia Wasikowska's Hannah, the photocopying employee Simon fancies (he also spies on her in her tower block flat from behind his telescope). But James, smarmy bastard that he is, takes advantage of the situation. Then this sort of behaviour starts becoming more and more frequent.

The Double is more than just a remarkable story, though. Stylistically, Ayoade – best known for his acting role in *The IT Crowd* – has created a visual feast, marking him out as one of Britain's finest filmmaking talents. Each meticulously arranged shot exudes creeping dread and has a peculiar rhythm, somewhere between David Fincher and Mr Bean. There are cartoonish cameo appearances from Chris O'Dowd, Tim Key, Sally Hawkins and other familiar faces, all batting rapidly back and forth, their movements like physical theatre cramped inside a camera lens. There's even a brilliantly droll turn from Dinosaur Jr's J Mascis, who basically plays himself playing a caretaker. Bizarre, grim and worth every minute of your time. ■ KATE HUTCHINSON

7



▶**RELEASE DATE**
April 4
▶**DIRECTOR**
Richard Ayoade

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

School Of Language
Old Fears
"'Old Fears' could pass for a Field Music album, and a pretty good one at that. It provides a fascinating insight into the mind of an increasingly indispensable pop polymath."
(*NME*, April 5) **8**

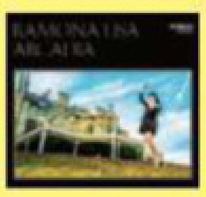
EMA
The Future's Void
"A shift to a starker sound is in opposition to EMA's easy way with a pop hook. Pockets of soul-bearing act as tangible moments of emotion amid the austerity."
(*NME*, April 5) **8**

Lucius
Wildewoman
"The Brooklyn duo, backed by three further musicians for this recording, excel on the lush pop of 'Tempest' and the sprawling Haim-gone-folk closer of 'How Loud Your Heart Gets'."
(*NME*, March 29) **7**

S Carey
Range Of Light
"S Carey's second album is hurty and affecting. Its sombre chords and lullaby-soft vocals knot themselves around your sensitive parts, making you swoon and need a Lemsip at the same time."
(*NME*, March 29) **8**

The Hold Steady
Teeth Dreams
"The Hold Steady advance on their trademark blokeishness to embrace a slicker kind of guitar-led groove. Singer/guitarist Craig Finn is on fiery form."
(*NME*, March 22) **7**

Ramona Lisa
Arcadia Pannonica



Caroline Polachek has decribed 'Arcadia', her first solo album under the name Ramona Lisa, as a "document of being alone," after creating the record on her laptop in private moments while out on tour with her band, Chairlift. Strongly reminiscent of Julia Holter's acclaimed recent output, 'Arcadia' moves away from Polachek's usually sugary way with a melody and into more esoteric territory. Lo-fi electronica ('Getaway Ride') and ambient pop ('Dominic') form the backbone of a charmingly off-kilter record, while 'I Love Our World' is essentially a field recording. It's not all abstract, though – 'Backwards And Upwards' is pure pop, and the high point of this touching ode to loneliness. ■ DAVID RENSHAW **7**

Smoke Fairies
Smoke Fairies
Full Time Hobby

That T Bone Burnett didn't include a tune from the fourth album by Smoke Fairies on his soundtrack for the acclaimed TV series *True Detective* is a crying shame, because British spook-folk duo Jessica Davies and Katherine Blamire are at their unsettling and atmospheric best here. 'Shadow Inversions' pulses with a bleak beauty and 'Your Own Silent Movie' is gentle and hypnotic, but there's a great deal more to it than a bunch of Sandy Denny and Kate Bush impressions. The pair embrace pop on 'We've Seen Birds', so much so you can picture Beyoncé belting out the closing piano ballad 'Are You Crazy?' with its passionate calls to "*put your headphones on*". It suits them just fine. ■ LEONIE COOPER **8**

DEAN ROGERS

Klaxons' Jamie Reynolds and James Righton at King Tut's

Klaxons

King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

Glasgow

April 1

The lamé-clad nu-rave survivors preview six tracks from their new album

"We've been shopping since the last time you saw us," says an out-of-breath James Righton, the sole explanation offered for Klaxons' striking none-more-lamé look tonight. Shopping isn't all they've been up to, however; there's also the small matter of incoming third album 'Love Frequency', which – if the six new songs they play from it tonight are any indication – marks a sort of coming-to-terms with the nu-rave legacy. Where 'Surfing The Void' was a conscious move away from the Cyberdog pop of debut 'Myths Of The Near Future', songs like 'Invisible Forces' and 'There Is No Other Time' are more like memories of the recent past, made all the more potent by a climactic (not to mention nostalgic) 'It's Not Over Yet'.

The gist of it, then: Klaxons are back, and this time they've remembered to bring some tunes. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

8

JORDAN HUGHES

NME GIG OF THE WEEK

Wild Beasts

Albert Hall, Manchester
Wednesday, March 26

The band make the leap to bigger venues with surprising ease

"Down in one! Down in one!" chants Tom Fleming across the stage at his booze-swilling bandmate Hayden Thorpe. For a moment it's as though Manchester's 104-year-old Albert Hall is the sticky-carpeted, club-night venue it used to be.

Although much of Wild Beasts' early bawdiness has been left behind on latest album 'Present Tense', as they celebrate their first night on tour, they're allowing themselves just a little brutishness.

So eager are these Beasts to burst out of the traps, their sound tech initially has a job keeping up. Opening with the usually fluid 'Reach A Bit Further', Thorpe's falsetto struggles for parity in the mix while the bass bludgeons the serenity out of the song. But after three tracks they reach the 'Sweet Spot', both literally and figuratively, with Fleming's own deliciously rich tones creeping out from behind his singing partner's for the first time and truly taking a grip on their surroundings, while Chris Talbot's sultry disco drumbeat clicks neatly into place.

LIVE, IT BECOMES CLEAR JUST HOW MUCH OF AN ADVANCE 'PRESENT TENSE' IS

Songs old and new have been tailored to fill this grand space. 2008's 'The Devil's Crayon' feels as though it's been deliberately uncluttered to allow it to sit alongside the more spacious 'Pregnant Pause'. The latter follows the former in the setlist and sees Thorpe left alone with guitarist Ben Little. Visual aids enhance the older numbers, making them fit for purpose: 'Hooting & Howling', for instance, now comes with the sort of green lasers Muse might blow a production budget on; and Thorpe is often illuminated by downwards-shooting white beams of light – an angelic vision to match an angelic voice. These country boys are growing accustomed to playing at being rock stars.

Thorpe, shirt partly unbuttoned and with hair slicked back, slinks and sways through 'Bed Of Nails' with a lothario's confidence. Fleming acts as his faithful wingman. In the encore, he takes the vocal lead on 'All The King's Men'; singing of carnal desires, he sighs and gasps as though in the throes of the dirty deed there and then.

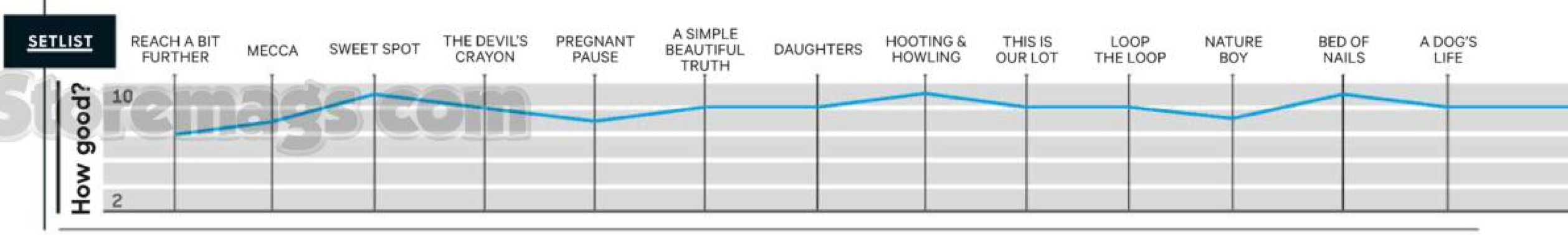
Away from the pair's in-song horseplay, though, there's an endearing humility. "Manchester's the gold standard for us," Thorpe will tell *NME* after the show, recalling their younger days of travelling here from their native Cumbria and, later, Leeds for early gigs; and even after they deliver a particularly brooding, drone-heavy rendition of 'Daughters', their faces break open in delight as the crowd responds with a fervour most bands don't really get for a just-released album track – but with family in the crowd too, this is effectively a homecoming gig.

Live, it becomes clear just how much of an

Wild Beasts on...

The crowd's reaction
Tom Fleming: "We couldn't have asked for more than that. The noise people were making, and seeing how many of them knew the words to the new songs already – it was incredible."

Nerves
Hayden Thorpe: "Manchester was the teenage 'big one' for us. We're doing Brixton too, and as a band you're taught that's a big deal, but for us it's always been here, so it was nerve-wracking! The first night's always quite experimental anyway, but doing it here was like, 'Fuck!'"



Supermags.com

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD

Dean, 29, Manchester
"I'm pleased they played a lot of the older stuff, because I prefer it. They built the set up really well by starting strong, dropping the tempo, then bringing it back at the end."

Adam, 28, Manchester
"It was great. I really liked all the atmospheric stuff and the rhythm section. I've not heard the new album yet, but there was one quite droney song ['Daughters'] that sounded really cool – I can't wait to hear that on record."

Laura, 25, Manchester
"I thought the new material sounded really good, and fitted in really well alongside the early stuff. Their vocals are always just so strong and the sound was great in here tonight, so it was a perfect setting for them."

advance 'Present Tense' is. Guitars are downed regularly, attention turning to keyboards and synths; the title 'A Simple Beautiful Truth' sums up their new direction well. They hit with an immediacy the group have never achieved before, which goes some way towards explaining their recent ascent to the Top 10 in the UK album charts.

'Wanderlust' kicks off a stunning four-song encore, Thorpe taking on bass duties and hearing his refrain of "*Don't confuse me with someone who gives a fuck*" sung back at him by an audience who give rather more than that. The four are visibly moved after the breathy apogee of 'All The King's Men' is applauded deliriously for what feels like an eternity. Lips are stiffened for 'Lion's Share' before they finish with an overwhelming 'End Come Too Soon', the climax to what's been a night filled with hot, heady euphoria. Boozy, coquettish but unendingly charming, it's no surprise that Wild Beasts have had their way with us tonight.

9

■ SIMON JAY CATLING

MORE GIGS

Linda Perhacs
Pappy And Harriet's, Pioneertown, California
Saturday, March 29
A 71-year-old dental hygienist on only her second-ever tour, cult psych-folk singer-songwriter Linda Perhacs' multi-textured melodies and hypnotic harmonies make for a fittingly spiritual show at this isolated Joshua Tree desert roadhouse. Cuts from her 1970 debut 'Parallelograms' are aired alongside the corkscrewing vocals of 'Prisms Of Glass' from this year's follow-up, 'The Soul Of All Natural Things'. Plus, she namedrops Notorious BIG and Daft Punk – both of whom are Perhacs fans – between songs, stopping the show from becoming an all-out hippy throwback.

9

■ LEONIE COOPER

Darkside
The Art School, Glasgow
Wednesday, March 26
As a large circular mirror rotates above the stage, a ring of light is trained upon it, refracting back upon itself and giving the audience the impression of staring into a wormhole. It's a neat little illusion that suits Darkside's weird, proggy ambience down to the ground. This is a band who are more about the journey than the destination: their songs evolve from amoebic formlessness to tentacled splendour over 15-minute aeons, often coming abruptly to an end just as everything seems to have clicked into place. The fire alarm going off and the building being temporarily evacuated rather scuppers things, but this show is little short of spectacular (and yes, they do return to finish it).

8

■ BARRY NICOLSON

The Cure

Teenage Cancer Trust, Royal Albert Hall, London
Sunday, March 30

The enduring band's set lasts over three hours. It's hard work getting through it, but they have the tunes to pull it off

In their 38 years of operation, The Cure have developed into a broad and benevolent church, in which multiple generations of fans come to worship in many different ways. Their three-hours-plus sermons, like tonight's at the Royal Albert Hall, are attended by congregations that stretch from the Neverland manbaby goths who first experienced rapture listening to tracks like 'A Forest' in the early '80s, to the sons and daughters of that generation who've picked up a taste for Robert Smith's brambly oeuvre by digging through Spotify (or just by accident while searching Google Images for 'sad clown').

The plus side of the band's lengthy performances is that they'll almost definitely play your favourite song (even if it's '2 Late', which they bash out this weekend for the first time since it was released in 1989). The downside is that it starts to feel like hard work around the two-hour mark. The casual 'Greatest Hits' fans who never quite managed the mid-teens emo blowout start to be more easily picked out as their faces glaze over, while the manbaby goths nearby keep on wailing. But when the hits come, they hit hard, 'The Love Cats', 'Close To Me', 'Boys Don't Cry' all temporarily gracing the venue, an aloof Victorian temple to high culture, with a peculiar bedroom intimacy that lingers long after the last note is (*finally*) played.

7

■ ALEX HOBAN

ANDY FORD, PA

StoreMags.com

Earl Sweatshirt

The Academy, Dublin
Wednesday, March 26

The Odd Future man finally makes it to the Irish capital to race through his 'Doris' highlights

As Earl's tour manager explains, to the rapper's bemusement, that he is forbidden from leaping off the venue's balconies and PA system, it transpires that this directive is a hangover from Odd Future's last appearance at The Academy.

When the hip-hop collective played here in 2011, Tyler, The Creator stagedived from great heights, despite having his leg in a cast, while cheerleading the crowd into a memorable frenzy. Earl wasn't with his group-mates that night... and reminding him of this triggers a scowl.

At the time, Earl (real name Thebe Kgositsile) had been sent to Samoa's Coral Reef Academy, a therapeutic school for at-risk boys, by his mother. He'd never even been to a concert before joining Odd Future, but by the time Earl returned to Los Angeles, in 2012, the group had blown up, Columbia signed him to a solo deal and he was expected to tour worldwide.

"My first shows were fucking huge and I didn't know what the fuck I was doing," says the 20-year-old, dressed in Ralph Lauren pyjama bottoms and a black shirt patterned with paisley teardrops. "I just got thrown into the deep end and learned how to swim that way."

Tonight, many have spent hours queuing just to get a good glimpse of Earl. Last year's 'Doris', which featured production from The Neptunes and RZA, generated widespread acclaim as one of 2013's finest albums. Its murky atmosphere, languid rhymes and vicious flow aren't exactly the makings of a killer live performance, but the two-dozen underage ticket-holders frantically pleading with bouncers outside show just how desperately it is anticipated.

Although Lucas Vercetti, Earl's DJ, kicks things off with a rousing mix of Fredo Santana, Prophet Posse and Soulja Boy, no primer is required. The crowd are more than revved up. Yet the moment Earl strolls out to the wonky piano lines of '523', he feeds straight into that energy with remarkable assurance.

Then, barely five songs in, he calls for some calm. It feels too weird to have people amped up for an introspective track like 'Sunday', he says, encouraging the crowd to contain themselves for a moment. But the respite is short-lived; the request unnecessary. Like many tracks tonight, 'Sunday' is condensed and dispatched in less than 60 seconds.

It's not because the missing guest spots leave holes in the material, as Earl cherry-picks verses indiscriminately, giving them the same authoritative punch whether they're his rhymes or not. Rather, the strategy is just to knock songs out at a throttling pace.

Though this makes the likes of 'Centurion' feel frustratingly brief, no-one seems to take any notice. The crowd has been bellowing almost every word from the start and by the time moshing breaks out during 'Hive', Earl cuts into a cappella mode as if to pull back some control.

"Dublin, y'all crazy!" he says after 'Guild'. "That was awesome. Are you guys proud of yourselves? What y'all want from me? Yell some shit!" When the crowd responds by breaking into a chant of "Olé, olé, olé!", Earl steps back and masks his bafflement with a self-congratulatory chant of his own: "I'm a fuckin' warlord!"

Despite being dwarfed by an inflatable caricature of his own head, Earl's diminutive frame has managed to convey a commanding stage presence throughout: shimmying back and forth with jutting elbows and dipping knees, cresting off the crowd's energy without appearing cocky. There's no sign of the obnoxious attitude or cartoonish menace Odd Future are known for. Instead, Earl seems content to savour the moment, leaving no doubt over his abilities. ■ CIAN TRAYNOR

SETLIST

- ▸523
- ▸Kill
- ▸Blade
- ▸20 Wave Caps
- ▸Molasses
- ▸Sunday
- ▸Centurion
- ▸Chum
- ▸Whoa
- ▸Couch
- ▸Orange Juice
- ▸Sasquatch
- ▸Hive acappella – Ruthless verse
- ▸Stapleton
- ▸Guild
- ▸Burgundy
- ▸Pre
- ▸Earl
- ▸Knight
- ▸Drop

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD

Tara Brennan, 21, Celbridge
"It was a much younger crowd than you normally see at hip-hop gigs. The show was short and sweet but he's excellent live."

Cian Cowley, 21, Dun Laoghaire
"It was deadly; just class. He generates a lot of energy and gets a good buzz going. Even the interludes were sharp."

Dennis Coyle, 33, Dublin
"The sheer energy of the man is impressive. He comes out with a lot of comical one-liners."

Dafe Orugbo, 19, Kildare
"It was really cool but it was short. He was on for about 40 minutes and I was expecting at least an hour. It was dope, though. People were expecting Tyler and Domo to come, but I preferred it as just Earl because there was no conflict of style. It was perfectly him."

RUTH MEDJBER

Earl Sweatshirt on...

Growing up
"The difference between me now and when I made 'Doris' is that I'm more comfortable just being alive. I know my limits as a person. I've figured out who I am."

Not becoming an asshole
"I don't know if it's too late for that. [It's a matter of] just understanding the difference between [an asshole] and myself, and not sweating it too much."

Life after Samoa
"There was definitely a transitional period with everyone I was interacting with: my mom, my friends, everyone I'd known up until a certain point in time. But you move on. Everyone grows at their own pace, evolving in their own way."

Planning a new album
"I just want the right beats. It has to be the right sound."

Keeping Odd Future together
"We were friends before, but growth is going to take any group in different directions. All that matters is being able to be the same niggas at the end of the day."

MORE GIGS

The Black Tambourines
Sticky Mike's Frog Bar, Brighton
Monday, March 31

Judging by tonight's jubilant show, Falmouth is currently a hotbed of garage-punk fever. Half the groups on this six-band bill are up from the West Country, each of them proudly wrapped in the Cornish flag onstage. Taking the midnight headline slot, Art Is Hard signings The Black Tambourines are an ear-splitting riot, cranking up their metallic psych nuggets to ferocious speeds. As 'I Don't Wanna Be Yr Lover' blurs into a barely-together cover of The Rolling Stones' 'The Last Time', first the support bands, then the promoters, then The Black Tambourines themselves crowdsurf into oblivion. The pure thrill of rock'n'roll is alive in their hands.

8

■ STUART HUGGETT

Suede
Teenage Cancer Trust, Royal Albert Hall, London
Sunday, March 30

"Now let's start the gig!" roars a sweat-drenched Brett Anderson as he clambers back onstage from the stalls and throws himself off the monitors and onto his knees for the 400th time tonight, while 'Trash' smashes from the speakers. An hour in, Suede have already delivered the indie gig of the year – a sublime run through 'Dog Man Star' and its various B-sides – and now they're about to knock out a second one. Backed by a string section and horns for a rare 'Stay Together', Brett proves that Suede's is the reunion to arse-slap all others out of the ring with a legacy-matching new song, 'I Don't Know How To Reach You'. Phenomenal.

9

■ MARK BEAUMONT

Manic Street Preachers

O2 Apollo, Manchester
Tuesday, April 1

The legends delve deep into their past, as well as their 'Futurology'

The Manic Street Preachers have always had a weird relationship with nostalgia. With year-zero abandon, the Welsh upstarts famously "*laughed when Lennon got shot*" on early single 'Motown Junk', and yet now, as they limber up for their 12th – 12th! – studio album 'Futurology', the past looms larger than ever: 'The Holy Bible' turns 20 in August, with all the ghosts that conjures up, and speculation has been rife about the prospect of the band performing it live.

That said, last year's 'Rewind The Film' suggested that misty-eyed reflection rather suited the Manics, and tonight they open with a track from the record, the Dexys colliery-band soul of 'Show Me The Wonder'. They follow it with concise run-throughs of 'You Stole The Sun From My Heart' and 'Motorcycle Emptiness', the smart-suited James Dean Bradfield a model of brusque efficiency.

Next we get '(It's Not War) Just The End Of Love' and a new song, 'Europa Geht Durch Mich', a juddering, semi-industrial take on Bowie's Berlin trilogy. There are other glimpses of 'Futurology' to be had, too: the title track marries chugging soft rock with a euphoric, big-sky chorus, and '30 Year War' is a folksy rabble-rouser inspired by the anniversary of the miners' strike (even their political stuff is linked to the past).

SETLIST

- ▶Show Me The Wonder
- ▶You Stole The Sun From My Heart
- ▶Motorcycle Emptiness
- ▶(It's Not War) Just The End Of Love
- ▶Europa Geht Durch Mich
- ▶Stay Beautiful
- ▶Everything Must Go
- ▶Rewind The Film
- ▶Die In The Summertime
- ▶Your Love Alone Is Not Enough
- ▶Enola/Alone
- ▶If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next
- ▶This Is Yesterday
- ▶From Despair To Where
- ▶This Sullen Welsh Heart
- ▶Archives Of Pain
- ▶Futurology
- ▶The Masses Against The Classes
- ▶You Love Us
- ▶Tsunami
- ▶30 Year War
- ▶Motown Junk
- ▶A Design For Life

The vanished-world lament of 'Rewind The Film' smashes into 'Die In The Summertime', slowed down to resemble something from The Cure's 'Pornography'. It's the first of two lesser-spotted tracks from 'The Holy Bible' to air tonight – 'Archives Of Pain' being the other – which suggest those 'Holy Bible' shows might be on.

There's time for a solo acoustic slot from James and the encore finds Nicky reminiscing about writing 'Motown Junk' with "my wonderful and very intelligent friend Richey Edwards", before citing James as his favourite guitarist – alongside Mick Jones, John McGeoch and the guy from Badfinger whose name escapes him (that would be the late Pete Ham, then).

8

■ ALEX DENNEY

DANNY PAYNE

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THE TIMES, JUNE 2013

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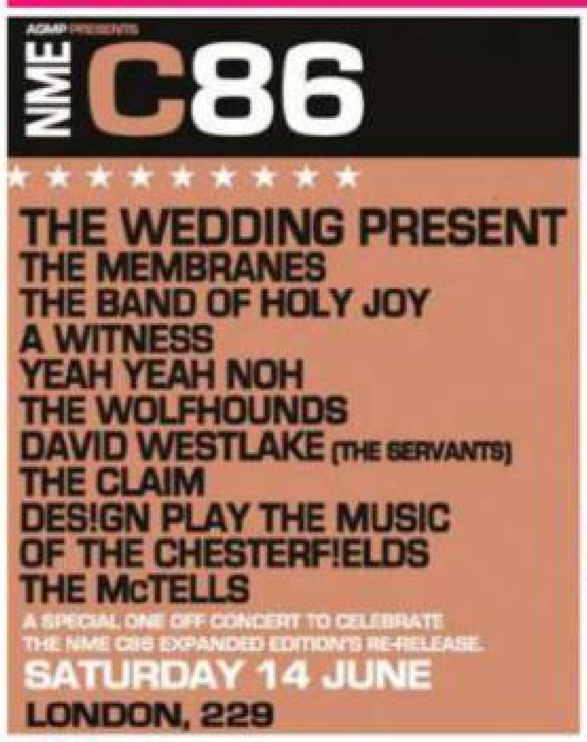

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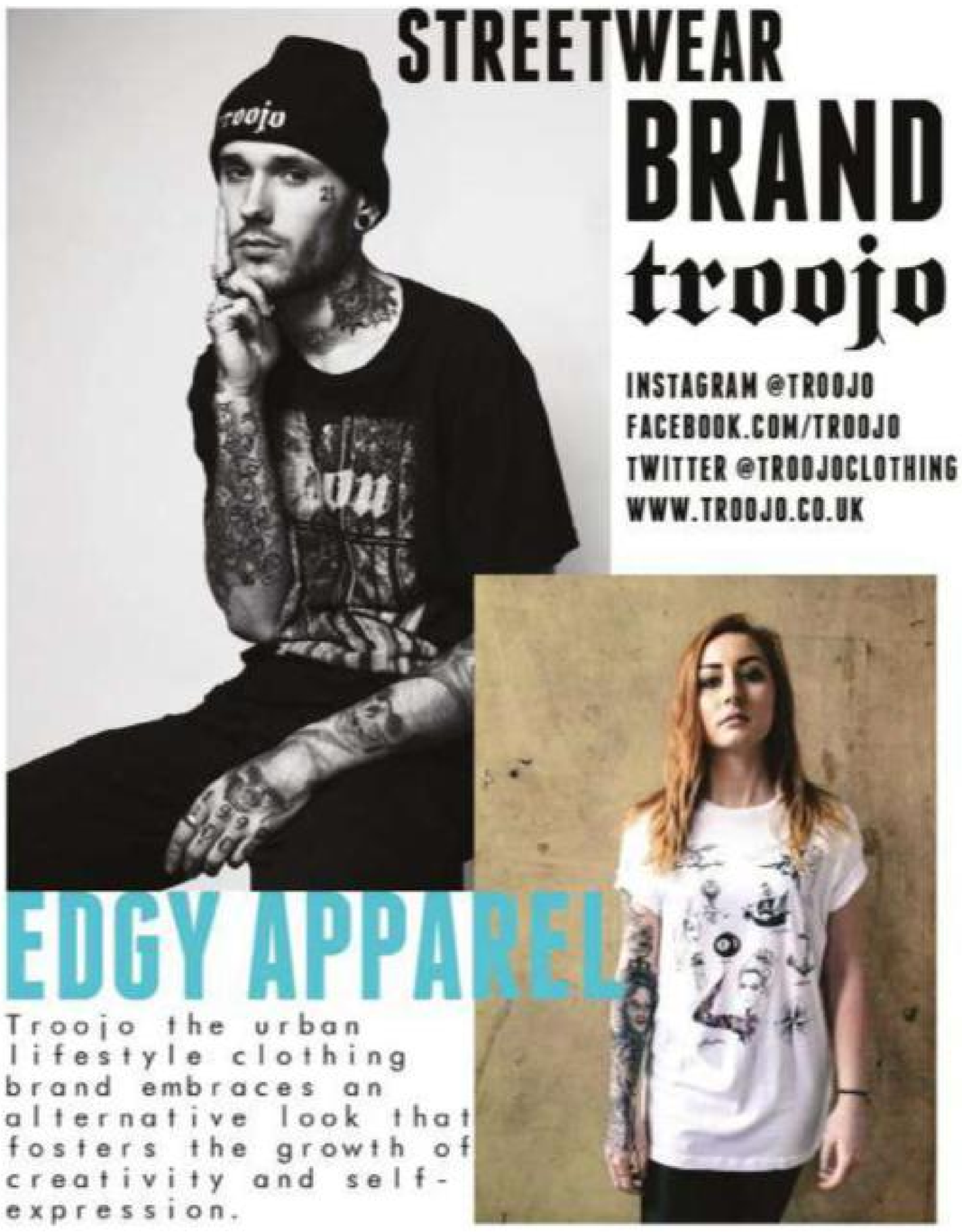

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BOOKING NOW

The hottest new tickets on sale this week

Circa Waves

Currently holed up recording eagerly awaited new material, Liverpool's newest indie-pop hopes Circa Waves will make the trip down to London in May ahead of what promises to be a busy summer of festivals.

What's the new material sounding like?
Kieran Shuddall, vocals/guitar:
"It's sounding really good! [The single after next] is a bit more raucous than 'Stuck In My Teeth'. There's lots of overdriven guitars on it. The next single's actually going to be 'Young Chasers', which was the original demo we put out, but now we've re-recorded it."

You avoided playing London until earlier this year. Why?
"We didn't play London for a while because we didn't want to play to any industry people. We wanted to keep to ourselves for a little while so we could get everything together. It's not that we dislike London!"

How have your shows in London been so far?
"They've both been completely different. I think we probably preferred the Sebright Arms one because it was our own headline show, so we knew everyone was there for us. Brixton [O2 Academy] was a bit mad though, just looking out at that many people. It was a lot to get your head around."

What can fans expect from this show?
"We'll essentially just play what the album's going to be, so it'll be a good chance for people to hear what to expect from the record."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**DATES** London The Lexington (May 28)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £8
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

Parquet Courts

On their third album 'Sunbathing Animal', which follows 'American Specialities' and 'Light Up Gold', Parquet Courts swap their power-punk for rattling, stream-of-consciousness jams. The Brooklyn band will head back to the UK to play the following shows this June.

▶**DATES** Glasgow SWG3 (June 21), Liverpool Kazimier (22), Birmingham The Library at The Institute (23), London ULU (25), Oxford O2 Academy 2 (26)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £12.50; London £15
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.25–£1.50 booking fee

Woman's Hour

Kendal-via-London quartet Woman's Hour have been around for a few years, biding their time as they've grown into their delicate, haunting sound. Now they're ready to unveil their first collection of songs in debut album 'Conversations' (due out July 14), and once festival season is done and dusted, they'll be recreating the tracks on it at this one-off date in their adopted hometown.

▶**DATES** London Village Underground (September 23)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £10
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** seetickets.com with £2.65 booking fee

Idlewild

The Edinburgh indie rockers return for an acoustic tour where they'll head off the beaten track and visit some of Scotland's more out-of-the-way venues. The shows will be Roddy Woomble and the band's first back together after announcing their hiatus

ANDY HUGHES, DEREK BREMNER, REX

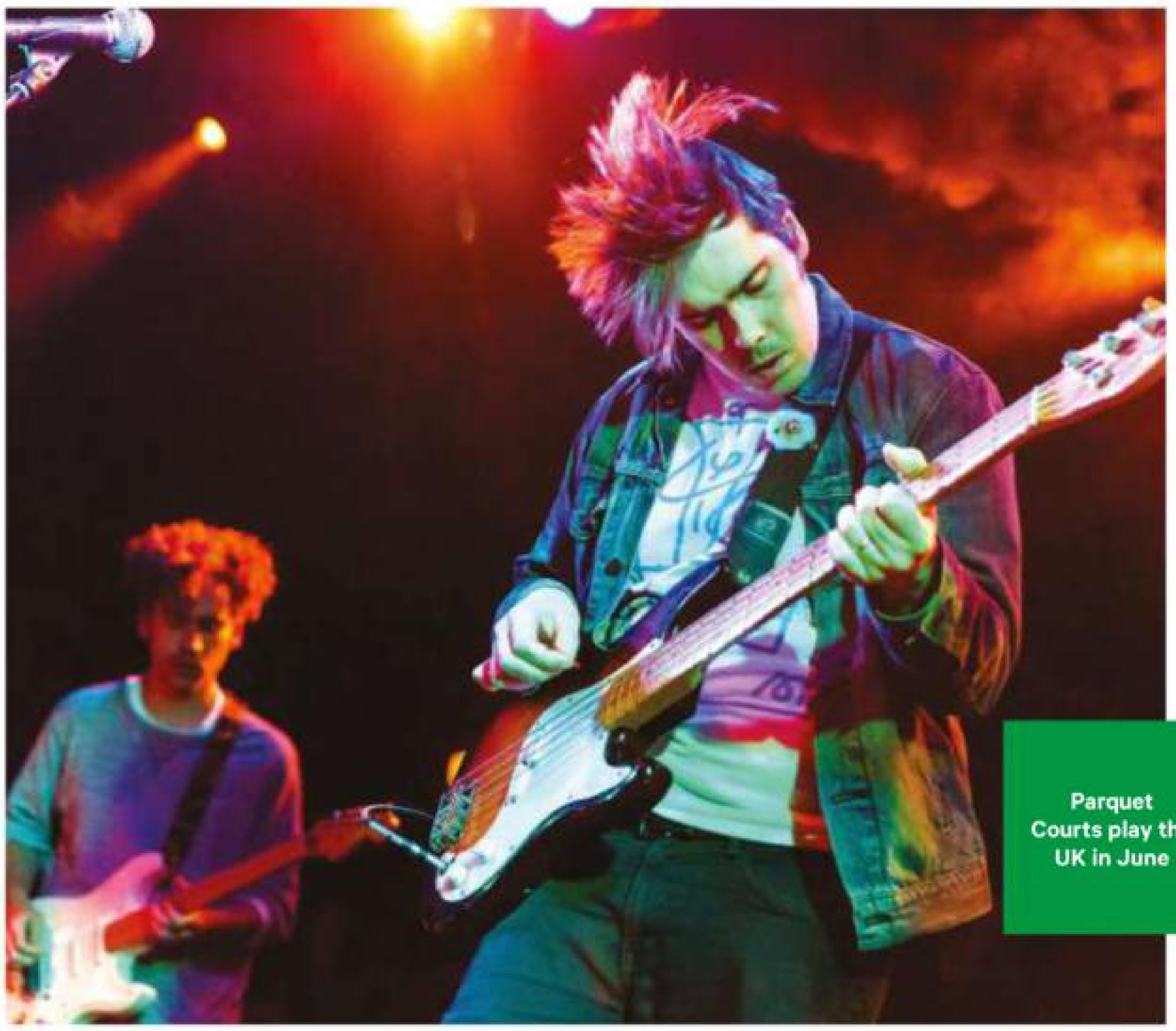
four years ago, and will see the group delving into their back catalogue as well as playing around with new songs and ideas.

▶**DATES** Tobermory An Tobar (October 4), Isle Of Mull Duart Castle (5), Sleat Sabhal Mor Ostaig (6), Isle Of Lewis An Lanntair (7), Ullapool The Arch Inn (9), Dingwall Strathpeffer Pavillion (10), Orkney Arts Theatre (11), Forres Universal Hall (13), Aviemore The Old Bridge Inn (14), Banchory Woodend Barn Arts Centre (15), Dunkeld Birnam Arts Centre (16)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £15; Tobermory, Isle Of Mull, Aviemore, Banchory and Dunkeld sold out
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2 booking fee

Lily Allen

The outspoken singer recently told journalists she was "fucking frustrated" at her "beige" comeback, hitting out at her label for releasing what she considers to be the safest tracks from her forthcoming album 'Sheezus' as singles. Judge for yourself whether Allen's right to be pissed off when she plays this one-off date, where she'll have the opportunity to preview some more adventurous material from the record.

▶**DATES** London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (April 28)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £30
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £3 booking fee



Parquet Courts play the UK in June

East India Youth

Since William Doyle quit his last band, Doyle And The Fourfathers, he's found success on his own. He'll take his one-man show back on the road in May, playing songs from his debut album 'Total Strife Forever'.

▶**DATES** Bexhill De La Warr Pavilion (May 13), Manchester Art Gallery (15), Kendal Library (16), Oldham Library (17), Edinburgh Cabaret Voltaire (29), Birmingham The Temple @ The Institute (30), Leeds Belgrave Music Hall (June 1), Nottingham Bodega (2), Oxford O2 Academy 2 (3), Bristol Thekla (4), Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (5)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £7.50; Kendal and Oldham £7; Bexhill £10; Manchester free entry
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** seetickets.com with 90p–£1.30 booking fee; Kendal and Oldham from NME.COM/tickets with 70p–75p booking fee; Bexhill from ticketweb.co.uk with £1.25 booking fee;, Edinburgh from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee

Interpol

During their headline slots on the recent NME Awards Tour 2014 with Austin, Texas, New York's gloomiest previewed new material plus tracks from their first two albums, 'Turn On The Bright Lights' and 'Antics'. Expect more of the same as they return for a summer date in London.

▶**DATES** London Electric Ballroom (June 25)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £20
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.20–£1.40 booking fee

The Internet

Odd Future's Syd Tha Kid and Matt Martians team up with Tay Walker, Patrick Paige and Christopher A Smith to form The Internet. Last year, the group released their second album 'Feel Good', and in June they'll be returning to British stages to treat fans to tracks from that record and 2012 debut 'Purple Naked Ladies'.

▶**DATES** Manchester Band On The Wall (June 30), London Jazz Cafe (July 1)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** Manchester £12; London £14
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.20–£1.40 booking fee

FESTIVAL NEWS

Jabberwocky

Liars, Kurt Vile & The Violators and Animal Collective's Panda Bear are among the latest acts to be announced for new festival Jabberwocky. Taking place at London's Excel Centre on August 15–16, those bands join the likes of Neutral Milk Hotel, James Blake, Sun Kil Moon and Speedy Ortiz at the event. Tickets are available now and cost £38.50.

Open'er

Jack White has confirmed the first opportunity to get a glimpse of his new album 'Lazaretto' live outside the States. He will headline this year's Open'er festival in Poland, alongside The Black Keys and Pearl Jam. Tickets for the weekender are on sale now, priced from 550 PLN for a four-day pass and 207 PLN for a day pass.

Latitude

The Huw Stephens-curated Lake Stage will feature a host of emerging acts to perform in Suffolk on July 17–20. Only Real, The Bohicas, Slaves and Chvrches' protégé Soak will all perform. Weekend tickets cost £187.50 and are available now.

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GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

Kurt Vile

The Philadelphian singer-songwriter leaves his backing band The Violators at home as he returns to the UK for two shows in churches. Expect intimate versions of tracks from last year's 'Wakin On A Pretty Daze'.

▶**DATES** London St James' Church (April 12), Brighton All Saints Church (13)

▶**TICKETS** Brighton £15 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.87 booking fee; London sold out

PMR Tour

Dance label PMR have been responsible for introducing the likes of Disclosure and Jessie Ware to the world. The time has come for them to show off some of the other acts on their roster. Vancouver-based DJ and Destiny's Child remixer Cyril Hahn headlines. London house producer T Williams and singer Javeon will join him.

▶**DATES** Glasgow Art School (April 11), London Shapes (12)

▶**TICKETS** Glasgow £7 from uk.patronbase.com/_Arches/Productions with £1.70 booking fee; London £14 from alt-tickets.co.uk with £1.40 booking fee

Dena

Bulgarian rapper Denitza Todorova mixes elements of J Dilla, Das Racist and MIA on breakthrough single 'Cash, Diamond Rings, Swimming Pools'. She'll perform tracks from new album 'Flash' in London this week, with more dates in Manchester and Glasgow to follow.

▶**DATES** London Birthdays (April 15)

▶**TICKETS** £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

Johnny Flynn & The Sussex Wit

Johnny Flynn takes a break from recent acting pursuits (including the film *Song One*) to take latest album 'Country Mile' back on the road.

▶**DATES** London KOKO (April 9), York Fibbers (10), Newcastle Cluny (11), Liverpool Leaf On Bold Street (12), Cardiff Glee Club (13)

▶**TICKETS** £15; London £17.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.50–£1.75 booking fee; York sold out

Cut Copy

The Australian dance group recently unveiled a video that featured 3D-printed characters for their single 'We Are Explorers'. Expect them to put just as much effort into their live shows.

▶**DATES** Glasgow O2 ABC (April 12), Manchester The Ritz (15)

▶**TICKETS** £13 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.50–£1.85 booking fee

Forest Swords

Liverpudlian producer Matthew Barnes battled hearing problems in order to release his debut album 'Engravings' on underground label Tri Angle last year. He takes the album out on the road this week.

▶**DATES** Bristol Thekla (April 10), Brighton Green Door Store (11), Leeds Belgrave Music Hall (12)

▶**TICKETS** £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1–£1.20 booking fee; Brighton sold out

Sky Larkin

Recorded with John Goodmanson (Girls, Sleater-Kinney), Sky Larkin's third album 'Motto' covers love, death, home and the changing seasons. Join Katie Harkin and her band for three cosy dates.

▶**DATES** Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach (April 9), Bristol The Old

FIVE TO SEE FOR FREE

Thrills don't come cheaper than this

1. The Wands
Birthdays, London
Copenhagen duo bring their tripped-out psych to the UK.
▶Apr 13, 7.30pm

2. Gwilym Gold
Ace Hotel, London
RSVP to rsvp@kayakayarecords.co.uk for entry.
▶Apr 9, 8pm

3. Esben And The Witch
Rise, Bristol
Thought Forms join the Brighton trio to perform their split album.
▶Apr 11, 7.30pm

4. Smoke Fairies
Resident Records, Brighton
Folk/blues duo play their new LP.
▶Apr 14, 6.30pm

5. Pins
Lock Tavern, London
Mancunian foursome air last year's full-length, 'Girls Like Us'.
▶Apr 17, 7pm

Smoke Fairies unveil their fourth album in Brighton

Stereoboard

Sky Larkin

Bookshop (11), Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (12)
▶**TICKETS** £7; Cardiff £6 from NME.COM/tickets with 70p–£1.15 booking fee

Peggy Sue

The Brighton folk-pop band describe latest album 'Choir Of Echoes' as "an album about singing. About losing your voice and finding it again". Rosa Rex and Katy Klaw will perform those songs in five cities, voices fully intact.
▶**DATES** Manchester Soup Kitchen (April 9), Liverpool Leaf On Bold Street (11), Sheffield The Harley (12), Bristol The Old Bookshop (14), London Oslo (15)
▶**TICKETS** Manchester £7; Liverpool £8; Sheffield £6 from NME.COM/tickets with 60p–£1 booking fee; Bristol and London sold out

The Strypes

The Cavan teenagers head to Northern Ireland for one date after a stint on the road in America.
▶**DATES** Belfast Limelight (April 10)
▶**TICKETS** £16 from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2.25 booking fee

Kiran Leonard

The whelpish and brilliant multi-instrumentalist from Oldham concludes his tour on the Kent coast.
▶**DATES** Ramsgate Music Hall (April 12)
▶**TICKETS** £5 from wegottickets.com with 50p booking fee

Eagulls will appear on *Later... Live With Jools Holland* this week

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

Later... Live With Jools Holland

After their American TV debut on *Late Show With David Letterman*, Leeds punks Eagulls bring their chaos to British screens. Bill Murray might not be hanging around this time, but the band, who released their self-titled debut album earlier this year, are sure to be as incendiary as ever. Elbow, Neneh Cherry and Danish singer-songwriter Agnes Obel will also perform.
▶**WATCH** BBC Two, 10pm, Apr 15

Wolf Alice
X-Posure

The north London upstarts have been busying themselves in Belgium of late, knuckling down on their second EP 'Creature Songs' with producer Catherine Marks (Howling Bells, Foals). They join John Kennedy in the studio to play new tracks this week.
▶**LISTEN** XFM, 10pm, Apr 9

Harry Nilsson
Who Is Harry Nilsson?

This documentary looks at the life of the singer-songwriter, featuring contributions from Dustin Hoffman, Yoko Ono and more.
▶**WATCH** Sky Arts, 6.40pm, Apr 10

The Pretenders
The Pretenders & Friends

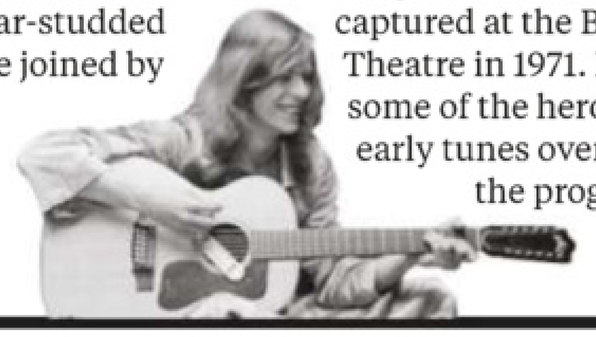
As Chrissie Hynde prepares to release her first solo album, relive this 2006 performance with her former band. It's a star-studded affair as the group are joined by Kings Of Leon, Iggy Pop, Incubus and Shirley Manson.
▶**WATCH** Sky Arts, 12.30pm, Apr 15

East India Youth
X-Posure

East India Youth (aka William Doyle) has just finished a support tour with Wild Beasts, which ended with his biggest show to date at London's O2 Academy Brixton. This week he returns to the smaller environs of the XFM studio, where he'll play John Kennedy a different track from his debut album 'Total Strife Forever' each night.
▶**LISTEN** XFM, 10pm, Apr 14–15

David Bowie
6Music Live Hour

The Thin White Duke doesn't look like he's going to be playing live any time soon. Instead, you'll have to make do with living vicariously through this archive recording captured at the BBC's Paris Theatre in 1971. Expect to hear some of the hero's best-known early tunes over the course of the programme.
▶**LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 2.30am, Apr 10



THINGS WE LIKE

This week's objects of desire

SHOES
Earl Sweatshirt
The Odd Future rapper has teamed up with Spike Jonze's Lakai company to make his own skate shoe collection.
▶**BUY** $65, lakai.com

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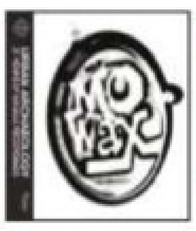
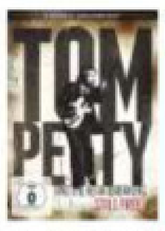


BOOK
Mo'Wax: Urban Archaeology
UNKLE's James Lavelle – this year's Meltdown curator – celebrates his label's 21st birthday with this new book.
▶**BUY** £40, waterstones.com



DVD
Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers: Still Free
Explore the story of the classic rock band from Florida. The Strokes were fans – just listen to 'American Girl'.
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DAVID EDWARDS, STEVE DYKE, GETTY

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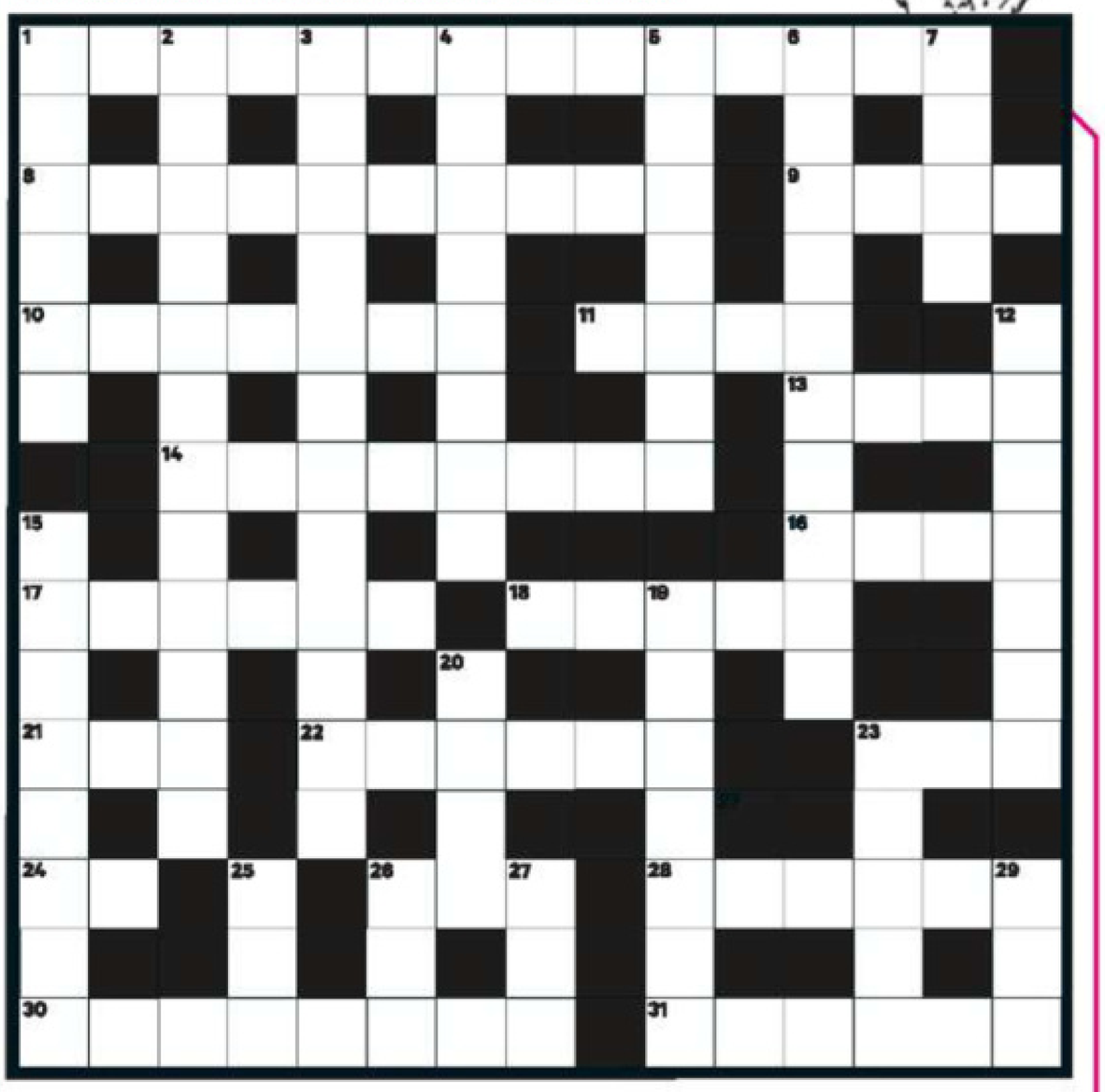


CLUES ACROSS

1 Conservationists get along with traditional music from Pixies (6-3-5)
8 Band Of Skulls sang REM hit terribly (10)
9 (See 1 down)
10 Different studio to the east for David Bowie album (7)
11 Put this Ellie Goulding number onto your CD (4)
13+26D We Are Scientists identified this as being a chart entry (3-1-3)
14 Shake your thing to this 2 In A Room number (6-2)
16 (See 12 down)
17 Texan manages to include a Pond single (6)
18 A life-changing song from Lily Allen (5)
21 "*The ___ age is coming, the sun's zooming in*", from The Clash's 'London Calling' (3)
22 A delicate connection between Feeder and Blur (6)
23 A certain star coming out of Two Door Cinema Club (3)
24+27D Played 'Layla', having included Editors' drummer (2-3)
26 Dublin band who 'Play The Hits' and started off 12 down (3)
28 Rap so terrible after the tiniest bit of volume from 'Turning Japanese' hitmakers (6)
30 (See 6 down)
31 Give us a break in school from the work of Skrillex (6)

CLUES DOWN

1+9A There was a number in this group of post-punks who gave us 'Entertainment' (4-2-4)
2 Somehow got hired when Patsy Kensit's old band appeared (6-6)
3+19D Echo And The Bunnymen single that'll wear out eventually (7-5-7)
4 "*And when she needs to shelter from reality, she takes a dip in my daydreams*", 2014 (7)
5 (See 12 down)
6+30A There, there, there. There's more? It's a Massive Attack (10-8)
7 "*Frankly, Mr Shankly, this position I've held/It pays my way and it corrodes my ____*", The Smiths (4)
12+16A+5D Merseysiders who began their musical career 'Back In The DHSS' (4-3-4-7)
15 Somehow in a trice, sex makes US girl group of the '60s (8)
19 (See 3 down)
20 Girl going backwards and forwards with The Cribs (4)
23 The written music for live album by Dream Theater (5)
25 Dad, it's a U2 album (3)
26 (See 13 across)
27 (See 24 across)
29 What The Police were sending out with their 'Message In A Bottle' (1-1-1)

MARCH 8 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Present Tense, 10 Invisible, 11 Speak, 12 Get In, 13+14A Dark Eyes, 15 Amps, 16 Suggs, 18 Ann, 20+33A Disco Down, 21 Ed Lay, 22 Nasty, 24 Undertow, 26 Enola Gay, 31 EMI, 32 Sessions
DOWN 2 Rave Tapes, 3+29A Susan's House, 4 Nobody's Hero, 5 The Fragile, 6 Nash, 7+8D Everyday Is Like Sunday, 9 Kings And Queens, 17 Say No Go, 19 Four, 23 Time, 25 Doors, 27 Goo, 28 Yes, 29 Hid, 30 Sun

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, April 22, 2014, to: Crossword, NME, 9th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.

QUIZ

■ Compiled by ALAN WOODHOUSE (answers on page 67)

1 Who was the first woman to have a UK Number One single with a self-written song?

2 What's the name of Kings Of Leon's record label?

3 Which band's drummer is called Bryan Devendorf?

4 What is Manic Street Preachers' Nicky Wire's real surname?

5 Which UK guitar hero released the solo albums 'Time Changes Everything' and 'Marshall's House'?

6 Which 2009 album shares its title with a concert venue in Columbia, Maryland?

7 Who are Saul Milton and Will Kennard better known as?

8 Which band's first EP release was called 'Xan Valleys'?

9 Which musical guest star featured in the episode of *The Simpsons* that fans recently rated the worst episode ever?

10 Which US rock band were originally going to be called Gamma Ray, only to find a German metal band had the same name?

11 Which US musician created the Lollapalooza festival?

12 What was Ride's only UK Top 10 single?

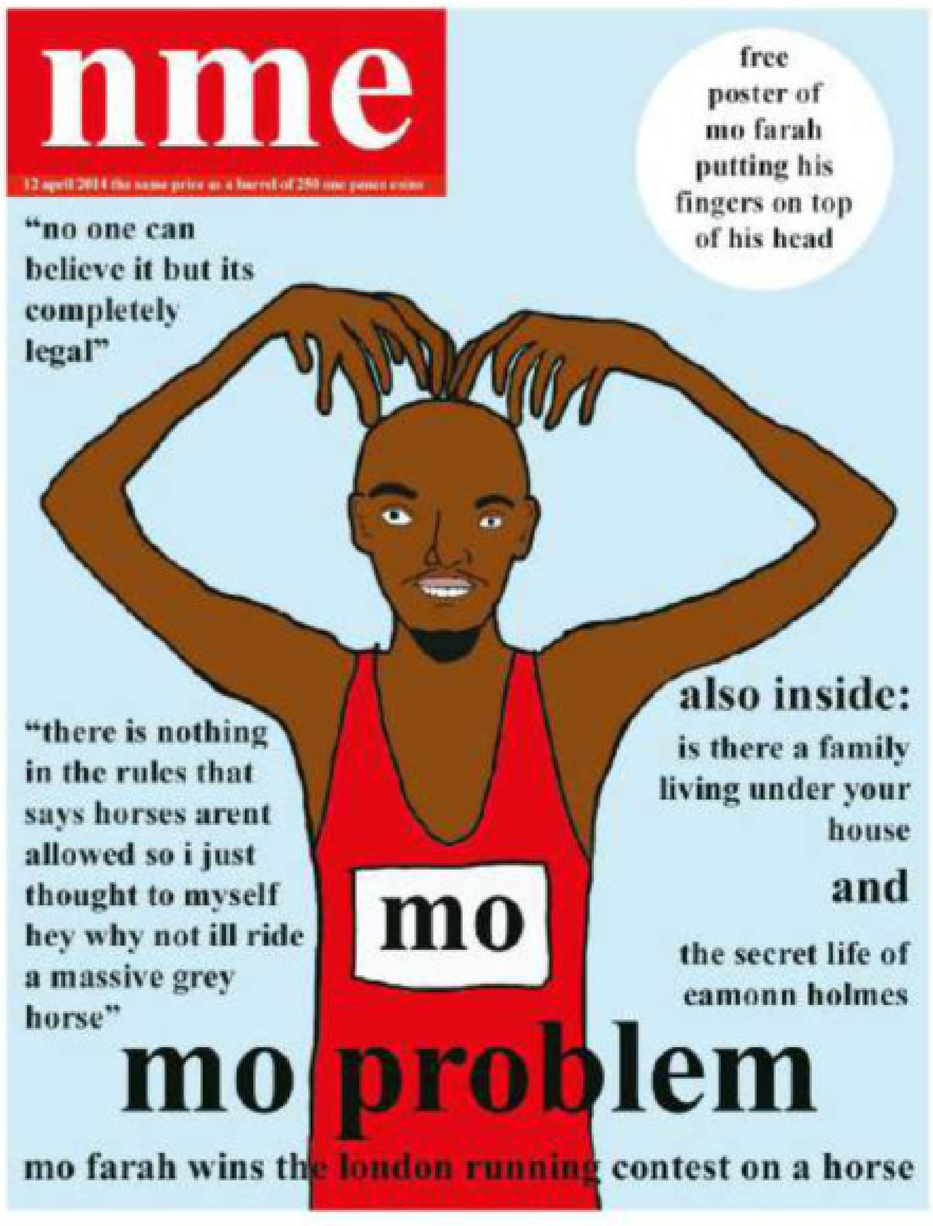
13 Which band have had UK Top 10 hits with covers of songs by Wings, Bob Dylan and The Rolling Stones?

14 When Nirvana played their final show, headlining the 1992 Reading Festival, which song did they start their set with?

15 Which American band released a 1991 single called 'Primal Scream'?

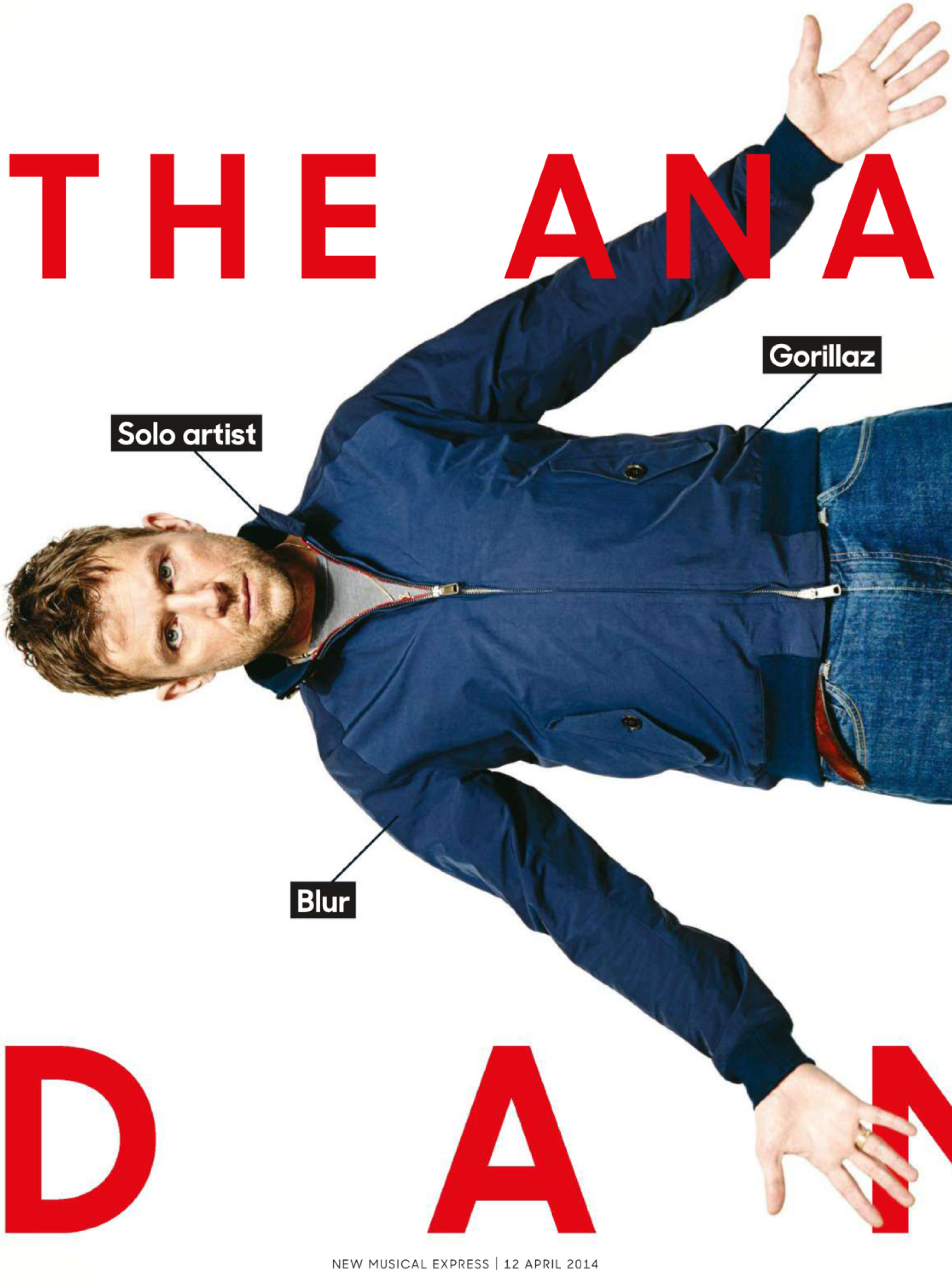
THE NME COVER THAT I GONE AND DONE

■ by CHRIS SIMPSONS ARTIST



ANDY WILLSHER, DEAN CHALKLEY, REX

THE ANA



D A M

TOMY OF

There isn't much that Damon Albarn hasn't mastered in the past 25 years. Mike Williams breaks down his career as Damon sets out on his most honest project to date: going solo

PHOTOS BY DEAN CHALKLEY

M O N

There's an idea floating around in space that Damon Albarn has never *really* opened up. That while he's always been willing and able to offer criticisms, witticisms and shrewd observations of the world in which we live and its effect on our hearts and minds, until now and the imminent release of his debut solo record, they've only ever been delivered from behind a mask of character or metaphor. This, as you equally shrewd observers know only too well, is not true.

Sitting at a cheap-looking table in the top-floor office of his 13 studio in west London, with the imposing sight of the A40 (otherwise known as Blur's favourite muse, the Westway) visible through the window in the middle distance, a Stella Artois glass full of nettle tea in front of him and a small statue of Chairman Mao watching him from across the room, Damon begins today's interview by dismantling this theory.

"I've heard people say that 'Everyday Robots' is the first time I've really written autobiographically," he begins, his head resting in his hand, the expression on his face pitched somewhere between pensive and bored. "But [1999 Blur album] '13' was a completely autobiographical record, but one that was written in the death throes of a relationship, so it's very much real-time personal, whereas ['Everyday Robots'] moves all over the place." He sits up, and perks up. "Some of it is how I feel now. Some of it is me casting a net back decades and bringing in a whole mad kaleidoscope of memories and emotions to make sense of in some sort of narrative. But I've been saying stuff about myself all along. Even on a song like [Gorillaz' 2001 debut single] 'Clint Eastwood', my contribution vocally to that is a very personal thing. It's always been there."

Cast your minds back across 25 years of Damon Albarn lyrics, and the personal portrait he's been painting stands out as clearly and brightly as that dodgy gold tooth of his: sometimes surreal, often melancholic, easy to mistake as obtuse and almost always riddled with some kind of inertia. What's new on 'Everyday Robots' is his exploration of his own identity, as he asks himself the questions of who he is, where exactly he comes from, and most

"The future is equal parts terrifying and inspiring"

interestingly, what the future holds for him, for us and for everyone else. On 'Hollow Ponds' he takes us on a walk through his personal history, stopping to point out key moments that have shaped him. On the title track, he tells us that "*Everyday robots just touch thumbs*", seemingly criticising the tech-obsessed 21st century. On 'Lonely Press Play' he lets you know that he's sad about his own absorption into the matrix: "*Can I get any closer?/What anecdote can I bring you?/ When I'm lonely, I press play*". And on the album's standout song, 'The Selfish Giant', he bemoans the fact that "*It's hard to be a lover when the TV's on*".

You could easily read the whole thing as a middle-aged man growing more and more afraid of the environment in which he finds himself, longing for the old days when things were simpler and warmer and the future was something to dream up and laugh at, rather than endure.

But Damon, now more animated and breaking occasionally into his golden grin, insists that it's much more ambiguous than that.

Damon: "It's not a criticism of the 21st century, and it's not a celebration. It's an observation."
***NME*:** So what have you observed?
Damon: "I think it's fair to say I have, over the years, written a lot of tunes which were set in the future. Take 'The Universal', for example. 'Everyday Robots' is another version of that. It's me in the near future, imagining possible outcomes, but not drawing, necessarily, any conclusions."
***NME*:** When you think about the near future, does it excite you or is it a scary place?
Damon: "Well (*laughs*) it's in equal parts terrifying and inspiring."
NME: What do you fear about the future?
Damon: "You know, sort of... absolute isolation of the human spirit. But also, it poses a question in a way. It's like, the end of 'Hollow Ponds', it gets quite euphoric, the last bit after the French horn. It goes up an octave, my voice, and I end on '*The dreams that we all share on LCDs every moment now and every day*'. It's like, are we in a period of such insane transition that we can't see anything really? Are we blind? Or is it a period of enlightenment? Will we end up being a kind of universal brain... we're all thinking together, all acting as one thing? Or is it gonna isolate the individual to a point where the organic senses of sight, taste, hearing and love, all of that stuff, is that all just gonna be digitalised?"
***NME*:** Hmm...
Damon: "And become... are we gonna become robots?"

An hour or so before we take our seats at 13 to discuss humanity's impending doom, a gathering of managers, PRs, a photographer and his assistant stand by as Damon, a few minutes late, is delivered by black cab to our photoshoot a couple of miles down the road. Sunglasses on, Harrington jacket zipped up to the top, he stops outside the door of the studio to light a fag, smokes half of it down, then flicks the butt into a drain. He's pretty chipper as he enters. "I've just been winding up an Arsenal fan cabbie. I'm in a great mood."

His great mood sours slightly when he spots the journalist across the room. "So what's it going to be today? Chat for a couple of hours then twist something into a sensational headline and slap that on the cover? Don't worry, I know the drill."

He's smiling, but half serious. That morning the latest issue of *Q* magazine has hit the shelves, the word 'heroin' emblazoned on the cover and the story inside dedicating a fair portion of itself to nonchalant chat about cocaine use and what Damon considered a manageable previous addiction to the brown stuff. He tells me later, "If this room (*acting out the scale of the huge room we're sitting in with his arms*) was the conversation, then that figurine of Mao in the corner was my conversation about drugs," but I think he's protesting a little too much. The truth lies more in what he follows up with: "All of this stuff is in the past, but it's turned into the headlines. So now it virally travels around to give the impression that that's all I'm talking about. It's *absolutely not* all I'm talking about."

Back to the photoshoot, and Damon's taking a keen interest in what's happening, checking the monitor regularly to see what he looks like in the shots. Again he's half serious when he sees one he particularly likes and says, "That's a good one, that could be me in any era!"

Shoot done, we get into a taxi to take us over to 13, where Damon works Monday to Friday, nine to five on the schizophrenic amount of projects scrapping for his attention. In case you're wondering, the latest is a Brazilian bossa nova piece. In the cab we talk about Texan festival South By Southwest, where he played two shows a few weeks back. The first, a rather subdued headline set at the famous Stubb's BBQ – supported by an equally subdued St Vincent – doesn't seem to have particularly pleased him. (Unbeknown to him at the time, that was the night a drunk driver ploughed into festival-goers.) The second, where he was joined onstage by Snoop Dogg, De La Soul and Gorillaz collaborators Dan The Automator and Del The Funky Homosapien was a lot more fun. As he'll say later, he's a "serial collaborator".

Up the stairs and on to the top floor, Damon points out that the balcony we can see outside the glass doors is where Blur played 'Under The Westway' live on Twitter in 2012. The obvious question to ask is, having given that 2012 Blur comeback more substance than the previous one by adding new material to the live shows, and knowing that the appetite for a Blur album is at a ridiculous high following his onstage comments in May 2013 that "we thought it would be a good time to try to record another record, so we're going to make one here in Hong Kong", why choose now to make his debut solo album?

Damon: "Well, really, because [XL Recordings boss] Richard Russell suggested it. After we'd done the Bobby Womack album, we had a real sound developing between the two of us, him being the percussion, and me playing the piano or guitar. We'd had this idea that we should maybe start a new band, but I think we both realised that would be a long slog, starting from scratch again. So we started experimenting."
***NME*:** Experimenting how?
Damon: "We went off on a complete tangent and started making really quite abrasive electro music and I kind of became this imaginary, forgotten female soul singer, with my voice being sped up."
***NME*:** Called what?
Damon: "What?"
***NME*:** What was the name of the imaginary soul singer?
Damon: "She was called Gladys. So we did Bobby Womack and then we had this brief ↦

"Making a record with Noel is a distinct possibility"

Damon declares the Cold War officially over

***NME*:** You've been spending a lot more time with Noel Gallagher over the past couple of years. How is he?
Damon: "I still see Noel from time to time. We text a bit."
***NME*:** It would be exciting if you actually made a record together
Damon: "I can imagine that being a very distinct possibility at some point in the future. But, as yet, we haven't really talked about it, although..."
***NME*:** You have a little bit...
Damon: "OK, we have a little bit. We're talking. It's not anything to get excited about *yet*. I mean, he's doing his own thing. He's finishing a new record. I've got my record out, but the principle of us making music together is something... you know, it would be fair to say, we have at least discussed it once."
***NME*:** How much of an influence was Noel doing a solo record?
Damon: "Well, I realised I had to call the band something, because he's got his High Flying Birds. The band had to have a name, so that's why we're The Heavy Seas."

GETTY

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"Music is a hub from which a lot of other stuff can be investigated"

sojourn where I was Gladys. But it wasn't serious. And then one day Richard arrived in quite a serious mood and said, 'Do you know what I really like to do... I'd like to produce you.' Which, you've got to understand at that moment, was quite a shock to me, because we'd established our relationship as being co-producers."

NME: And suddenly that had changed?

Damon: "Yes. He said, 'I'd like to produce you and what I'd like to do is focus on your more introspective, melancholic side, because that's the part of you I've always really liked in your music.' That is how it started. So I went away and started thinking about, 'Well, what does that mean?' Because it didn't mean anything to me, the words 'solo record'. But I realised that it had to be about, just about somehow...really about me. It had to be 100 per cent honest..."

NME: Did that make it a difficult record to make in that sense? It seems a little bit disillusioned in places.

Damon: "I don't think it's disillusioned. It's just honest. The melancholy thing, sometimes is a bit of a red herring because what it actually is, it's very much in a tradition. English folk music can have a tendency to sound melancholic, but that's just because that's the mode, the musical mode in which it is written and articulated. It's very English."

NME: Are you only really scratching the surface of what you want to tell us about yourself in a solo context?

Damon: "I've got an awful lot more to talk about, but that doesn't mean that this is the beginning of endless solo records. It's just... it's just what I did next."

When it comes to the career of Damon Albarn, a compressive and detailed history lesson is not necessary, so let's skip through the key points to bring us up to date. Growing up near Colchester, where he moved with his parents at the age of nine having been brought up originally in Leytonstone in east London, he met Graham Coxon at secondary school, where they formed their first band together, Real Lives, with Graham on guitar. In 1988, after enrolling at Goldsmiths College, Real Lives became Circus with the introduction of Dave Rowntree on drums, and then Seymour as bassist Alex James joined. Seymour became Blur in 1990, and Damon became the cheeky face of Britpop.

In 1997 he broke up with his long-term girlfriend, Elastica's Justine Frischmann, and moved into a shared flat with artist Jamie Hewlett, whom he'd first met in 1990 when Hewlett interviewed Blur for *Deadline* magazine, home of his comic strip *Tank Girl*.

Sat in front of MTV, they came up with the idea of Gorillaz, a satirical comment on the vacuous nature of pop music that turned into a global success that in other parts of the world casts Blur completely in the shade.

The concept of Gorillaz – Damon as the only constant surrounded by a revolving cast of characters – sums up the rest of his career to date, which has seen him release records as The Good, The Bad & The Queen (2007) alongside Paul Simonon, Simon Tong and Tony Allen; and Rocket Juice & The Moon (2012), again featuring Allen but this time joined by Red Hot Chili Peppers' bassist Flea. There's also been Mali Music (2002), DRC Music (2011) Afrika Express (2013), the operas *Monkey: Journey To The West* (2007) and *Dr Dee* (2011) as well as the soundtracks to Michael Nyman's *Ravenous* (1999) and the Icelandic film, *101 Reykjavik* (2001). Then there's the collaboration with Massive Attack; producing Bobby Womack; his involvement in Honest Jon's Records. It goes on and on and on and on and on... "I'm not a dabbler," he insists. "I am not a dilettante. I wouldn't for one second say I'm fucking good at anything, but I'm very excited about the prospect of learning more. Always. That's me."

For someone for whom collaboration is so key, he does have a tendency to fall out with people, most notably his closest wingmen, Coxon and Hewlett. According to Damon, both of these relationships are now fully repaired and closer than ever (see box on page 50). He says that he doesn't take himself too seriously any more, and that he is definitely more content in middle age. He describes the younger Damon as "precious", "arrogant" and "insecure" – "nothing unusual for a young man in their early twenties." ↦

Damon Albarn, London, March 28, 2014

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"I've got stuff to keep me busy for four years"

NME: You seem quite happy to describe yourself as middle-aged now.
Damon: "Well, I was 46 last Friday. So yes, I am very aware of my mortality."
NME: Do you exercise enough?
Damon: "Yeah. Bloody hell, do I? Do I look like I don't exercise?"
NME: Do you have enough sex?
Damon: "I'm not gonna answer that question."
NME: Do you still take drugs?
Damon: "Occasionally."
NME: And you still smoke?
Damon: "Not a lot."
NME: What about things like spirituality and faith? How do they change as you get older?
Damon: "I've always been interested in religion and the history of spirituality, but it's not just a Christian moral, you know. I'm interested in all religions; I love history and I love the history of religion. Religion, in its purest, most esoteric sense travels the same path as mathematics and physics and music. If you're interested in music, it's a great hub from which a hell of a lot of other stuff can be investigated."
NME: Tell me what a normal week looks like.
Damon: "I circuit train on Monday, I run on Tuesday, I circuit train on Wednesday, I run on Thursday, I box on Friday. In the week, I'm 100 per cent nine to five. Weekends I'm chilling out at home."
NME: What about your daily routine? What did you do today?
Damon: "I got up at 6.30. I had muesli this morning with a bit of banana in it. Then I had a cuppa tea."
NME: Nettle tea?
Damon: "I have nettle tea all day at the studio, but I have a normal cuppa tea at home. I went to the park, boxed for three quarters of an hour. Went and had a coffee. Came back, had a shower, got in a cab, went to the photoshoot."
NME: And if there hadn't been a photoshoot happening you would have gone into the studio and started work?
Damon: "Yeah, I'd be right into something. Lost in that world of music, which is where I choose to be during my working hours. That's the biggest treat of all, when you can go in the studio and just do anything. And I'm busy. I've got stuff to keep me busy probably for the next three or four years."

Snoop Dogg joins Damon at SXSW in Austin, Texas last month

Despite some protestations to the contrary ("I'm not going to change myself to get approval"), I think Damon Albarn is still someone who likes to be liked. At the NME Awards in February this year, as he collected his NME Award For Innovation, he spoke about his complicated relationship with *NME* as a young man and how gaining approval for what he'd done felt incredibly important. 'Everyday Robots' is a record where Damon is trying to make sense of himself, to himself, and I'm not sure he's found all of the answers he was looking for yet. It's interesting that none of the songs started life as Blur or Gorillaz songs, and every one of them, apart from the silly sore thumb of 'Mr Tembo' (a song about a baby elephant that Damon recorded on his iPhone, basically just dicking about, which Richard Russell convinced him to put on the album), was written and recorded from scratch in an intense period in 2013. You could almost look on the whole thing as some kind of therapy. When I ask him to describe to me the anatomy of Damon Albarn, he switches to third person and lists "Electro Damon, folk Damon, rock Damon, African Damon (*laughs*)... er, Chinese Damon?" like he's lying on a psychiatrist's sofa. I ask him what makes him happiest.

Damon: "My family being happy. Feeling well. Hanging out with friends and making music."
NME: And what are the things that make you unhappy or even angry?
Damon: "There's a lot that makes me angry. I find that anger and fear go together easily. A lot of things I'm fearful of, I'm also angry about. Like mortality. I think about it. I question stuff I'm in no position to affect."

What the future holds for...

Blur

"Graham was at my surprise party on Friday, along with Dave and Alex. Everything is good between us all. When you get to our age, you accept people for who they are, you know.

"It's bollocks that I said Big Day Out would have been our last-ever gig. I said it's the last gig of a brilliant period we spent doing these gigs and we didn't want to sully it by going to something that was badly organised and where things weren't as they should have been. I'm sure we'll play again at some point. It'd be mad to go for the rest of our life and never play any of those songs again."

Gorillaz

"I can definitely see another Gorillaz-esque record at some point, yeah. That will almost definitely happen. I could put a Gorillaz record out next week; I've got enough stuff that I haven't finished. The only thing really that defines a Gorillaz record in my head is when I just play most of it on keyboards.

"I've just been in Paris with Jamie Hewlett. There are points in everyone's relationship where they fall out with people that they're close to and then they reconcile, hopefully, and actually, you know, the relationship's probably in a healthier place as a result of that."

Damon

"I've got three records in the pipeline for Honest Jon's. They're all from West Africa, with new artists, they're new records. They're not compilations of old music, they're new records which I'm producing."

In the June 17, 1995 issue of *NME*, Damon wrote a profile of himself, which started: "Pop people are funny in the head and the more pop they get, the funnier their heads become." On mortality, he wrote: "Pop people seem to be preoccupied with not being forgotten. They are all trying to join the Immortality Club. Some try kicking down the door and shouting, 'Let me in! I'm for real, me!'"

So what would the 27-year-old Damon be writing about if he were 27 in 2014?

"I'd probably be writing about everyday robots. Probably..." ■

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PARK

It's 20 years since Blur released their landmark third album, one that rejuvenated the band and hurtled them into the big time. Here, the movers and shakers of 1994 tell Mark Beaumont about the record that defined the Britpop era

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THIS IS WHAT IS KNOWN AS... AN ORAL HISTORY

PAUL POSTLE

Pick an album that defines each decade in rock'n'roll. Those pivotal youth-rallying records that gave a shared meaning and identity to their respective generations; that you didn't just want to listen to, you wanted to *live*?

Easy. 'Sgt Pepper's...', 'Never Mind The Bollocks...', 'The Queen Is Dead', 'Is This It' – and 'Parklife'. Twenty years on from the moment when 'Girls & Boys' entered the Top Five and the gravitational waves of Britpop expanded to create the '90s, Blur's third album remains its defining artefact. It was the point where the archness and artiness of the British anti-grunge rebellion merged with the lager-funnelling, Mykonos-ruining masses. Where the ideas of national identity, Kinks-y melody and sociologically illuminating character sketches that Blur ↦

had dabbled with on 'Modern Life Is Rubbish' burst into vivid colour.

To celebrate the anniversary, we spoke to the people behind the album to get the inside track on the 18-30 holidays, shipping forecast wrapping paper and Ally Pally car crashes that went into making this Britpop landmark...

The beginnings of 'Parklife'

Graham Coxon (Blur guitarist): "We were pretty smashed all over the place at this point, because we'd been in our own bubble for quite a long time. 'Modern Life Is Rubbish' was created in our own fantasy world. For us it was nostalgia. We were looking back to our childhoods in the '70s and early '80s, things like [Mike Leigh film] *Meantime*; zip-up cardigans and DMs and three-button jackets; foppish haircuts; Great Danes and Primrose Hill. And after baggy, shoegaze and our fantasy land of 'Modern Life Is Rubbish', we were finding more about our identity. Before that we were kids learning how to play."

Blur bagged four trophies at the 1995 Brit Awards

Andy Ross (Food label boss): "The band had been through a torrid time emotionally and financially and were bruised by their experience during the 'Modern Life Is Rubbish' period. They'd fallen out with [Food boss Dave] Balfe over artistic issues and were out of vogue in comparison to Suede, their nemesis at the time.

"It was a very low ebb, but for no reason apparent to any of us, that opinion started to change over the summer of 1993, culminating in this legendary gig at Reading Festival in August, five months after 'Modern Life...' came out. It was a huge show, ballistic. That instigated a mass reappraisal in the press."

Stephen Street (producer): "The gap between 'Parklife' and 'Modern Life Is Rubbish' was relatively short. The band felt rejuvenated after the reception they'd had. It wasn't a huge commercial success, but the press were very positive and more importantly the fans were very positive. They felt they'd found the right kind of formula to take forward onto the next album – and I was delighted to be asked back to help guide them through the whole process.

"After we finished 'Modern Life Is Rubbish' there was that famous meeting with Dave Balfe coming in and washing his hands of it, and I know I wasn't Balfe's first choice of producer to work on that album. I assumed I'd never be called back after 'Modern Life...', but between us we'd found something that was right for Blur, so I was delighted to be asked back. We hit the ground running."

Graham Coxon: "I remember demoing a lot of it in Matrix Studios [in Fulham, west London]. You demo something quaint and charming, and you don't know you've created something that's going to become a monster. Things like 'Parklife' and 'Girls & Boys' take on their own energy; sonically, they start driving the car and you're in the back going, 'Flipping heck, slow down.' Before you know it you've got a monstrous record.

"That was when I got decent enough on the guitar to put some humour into it, some contrariness. My sonic contrariness really matched up with Damon's. I think my guitar playing was wilfully British."

Stephen Street: "These were the days when Blur had to demo their tracks to EMI and Food to be given authorisation to go in the studio and do the final masters, so [the album] was all pretty much written. The demos for 'Jubilee' and 'Parklife' were pretty similar to how they ended up.

"'Girls & Boys' was different – Damon brought in a basic home demo he'd done. I hadn't been authorised to record that one, but Damon played me it and I said, 'We gotta do that.' We used a drum machine and turned it into a 120bpm disco-type track, and it turned out really great.

"They were confident and incredibly prolific in that period. The amount of songs written in that year between 'Modern Life Is Rubbish' and 'Parklife' was immense. There were 16 on the album and plenty more left over. They were good times, happy times. The album was here, there and everywhere stylistically, but it hangs together really well."

Graham Coxon: "This is the time I was falling in love with French music. There was a lot of French influence on songs like 'To The End'."

Stephen Street: "'This Is A Low' is a strange one because we'd recorded the backing track but Damon didn't have a final lyric for it. That sat unfinished for a long time until Alex bought Damon a present wrapped in paper that had all the marine naval districts around the UK on it, and that triggered something in Damon.

"There was also a song called the 'The Debt Collector'. Damon was planning to write a poem about a nasty debt collector, and Phil [Daniels] was going to play the character reciting the story. At this stage we'd recorded 'Parklife' and were all thoroughly sick of it – it wasn't sounding great. Damon was doing the monologue in the verses and doing fine, but we were thinking it had to be a single, so we'd been too meticulous about it then put it to one side. Then we thought, 'Hold on, why don't we see if we can save 'Parklife' by letting Phil have a go at it?' Phil came in one evening, we did three or four takes, and it saved the song."

Breaking into the charts

Andy Ross: "Balfe and I really liked 'Girls & Boys' but it was a groundbreaking record in that it was completely at odds with the concept of traditional indie rock. It was a cheesy disco tune – Black Lace meets Public Image! And it had that really cheesy video, and everything just fell into place.

"It reached Number Five, out of the blue – in those days, for an indie group, that was a substantial hit. We all got *completely* pissed because they hadn't had many opportunities for celebration over the previous couple of years. That exorcised many demons."

Graham Coxon: "The video we made with Kevin Godley was just us dancing round in front of a green screen against images of 18-30 holidays: women riding bananas, wet T-shirt competitions. We paid a phenomenal

Cast list

Graham Coxon
The guitar genius who guided Blur's evolution from jangly baggy also-rans to spiky, all-conquering pop act. Noel Gallagher once declared him to be "one of the most talented guitarists of his generation".

Stephen Street
Celebrated producer who made his name working with The Smiths and, later, Morrissey, before becoming a key architect of Britpop via his long relationship with Blur.

Andy Ross
Andy co-ran Food Records with Dave Balfe. Blur were by far Food's most successful act, but the label also scored hits during the '90s with Jesus Jones, Shampoo, Dubstar and Idlewild.

Steve Sutherland
NME Editor from 1992 to 2000, Sutherland was right there on the frontline throughout the meteoric rise, dizzying peak and eventual fall of Britpop.

Karen Johnson
Karen had the unenviable task of being Blur's press officer during the tabloid-fuelled heights of Britpop.

Chris Thompson & Rob O'Connor
Design duo who worked closely with Blur to fashion the sporting-life imagery that gave 'Parklife' – and, to a certain extent, the Britpop era as a whole – its distinctive visual identity.

Mathew Priest
Drummer with three-piece Britpop group and scene players Dodgy, who supported Blur at Mile End and scored Top 20 hits with 'Good Enough', 'Staying Out For The Summer', 'In A Room', 'If You're Thinking Of Me' and 'Found You'.

Gearing up for the 'Parklife' video in 1994

amount for that video. It would get put on a lot in [Camden pub and Britpop hangout] The Good Mixer when I walked in."

Steve Sutherland (*NME* Editor in 1994): "'Girls & Boys' was great because it partly implied criticism of that herd mentality, yet the herd could embrace it. So smart."

A very British obsession

Andy Ross: "The 'Modern Life Is Rubbish' period is very introverted, but with 'Parklife' there was more bravado and swagger. Damon thought, 'If we're gonna do this, let's embrace the concept of popularity being acceptable as opposed to uncool.' That confidence spurred them on to write interesting pop songs. Damon was on his British obsession, so for the artwork he made a mood book featuring cartoon Bobbies wearing Union Jacks, and Eric Bristow might've been in there. The brief was 'British and proud'.

"We were gravitating towards a betting shop window – horses, fences, a footballer, greyhounds – but we thought, 'That's a bit messy,' and gradually we were drawn to just the dogs, because of the eyes."

Chris Thompson ('Parklife' sleeve designer): "Damon called one day and told us to meet him off the Kings Road – he said he wanted to show us something. When we got to the address it was a William Hill betting shop. He was interested in the atmosphere. The window display was very alluring: dogs, horses, athletic footballers. But inside was this seedy world."

Rob O'Connor ('Parklife' sleeve designer): "Damon had been reading Martin Amis' *London Fields*, which concerned the seedier side of London life."

Karen Johnson (Blur's press officer in 1994): "The album launch at Walthamstow Stadium epitomised the band's celebration of, and commentary on, British life. Damon appeared on the cover of *The Face*, backed by a Union

"I WANTED SUCCESS, BUT WHEN IT CAME I REALLY WANTED TO IGNORE IT"

GRAHAM COXON

Jack – unthinkable one album earlier. Suddenly the tabloid newspapers wanted to cover guitar bands."

Andy Ross: "It felt like payback for all the suffering they'd endured. Vindication."

Graham Coxon: "I wasn't aware [of having created a cultural benchmark]. I wanted success but when it came I really wanted to ignore it. I didn't know what to do with it."

Karen Johnson: "The Brits were exciting. The band were nervous, especially Graham. Liam [Gallagher] swaggers up to him and says ,'Look me in the eye and tell me you deserve these awards.' Graham in his usual quiet way said, 'Fancy a beer, mate?'"

Steve Sutherland: "Going on the 'Parklife' tour felt exceedingly exciting. Everybody sang every fucking word. This hadn't happened for a long time. Nobody sang every word at shoegazing gigs, because you didn't know what the bloody words were."

Britpop

Steve Sutherland: "There was a collective desire for Britpop to happen, although we didn't actually call it Britpop then. It was very hard on the heels of Kurt Cobain committing suicide. We were in a very dark place, then there was this other thing that was ours and jubilant and a bit silly, and about us and not about far-off Americans.

"While you had a guy on the other side of the world telling you that being famous and rich and having a family wasn't enough, you had a bunch of British kids saying, 'Let's just 'ave it. We want our young lives to be as fantastic as possible.'"

Karen Johnson: "The show at Alexandra Palace [in October 1994, and where Blur headlined above Pulp and Supergrass] was a real celebration. And guess who was there? Massive Blur fan Liam Gallagher. I know this because his girlfriend, who was dumped by him that night, was in tears in the ladies!"

Chris Thompson: "The Ally Pally gig was when we started thinking, 'This is getting crazy.' But we had fun with that. We had a bingo game at the beginning. Everybody got given a bingo card."

Rob O'Connor: "Of course everyone had the same numbers. So as soon as one person shouted 'House!', thousands did."

Graham Coxon: "Was it a gathering of the tribes? It was weird because the tribe was confused. They'd wear Fred Perry, then a tie, then a zip-up Adidas cardigan. It was casual and mod in one – kind of hideous, like when Plasticine turns into a brown lump.

"Then there were big things like the Mile End gig [in June 1995]. I was sort of confused. I kept my head down and turned my amp up."

Andy Ross: "I'm sure a few thousand people had their first ever gig at Mile End. It was a fairly evangelistic event."

Mathew Priest, Dodgy (support act at Mile End): "It defined what Britpop was. It was the last culturally important phase of music. Although I hate the term, when people say 'Dodgy – weren't you a Britpop band?', you just go 'Yeah.' I'm glad we were around for that."

The legacy

Stephen Street: "'Parklife' hangs together as a piece of work that's hard to date. Songs like 'London Loves' and 'Trouble In The Message Centre' sound like they could've been recorded recently. It's quality, and quality lasts."

Graham Coxon: "I don't know if it has endured. I hope it has. It was going to be about 'UK vs America' or whatever, but it's not about us wearing DMs or drinking tea. It's really about human feelings in the same way grunge was, just a little more guarded about its self-destruction. It was more coded." ■

REX, CAMERA PRESS

Stranger

Storemags

storemags

HEDI SLIMANE

Love is all around

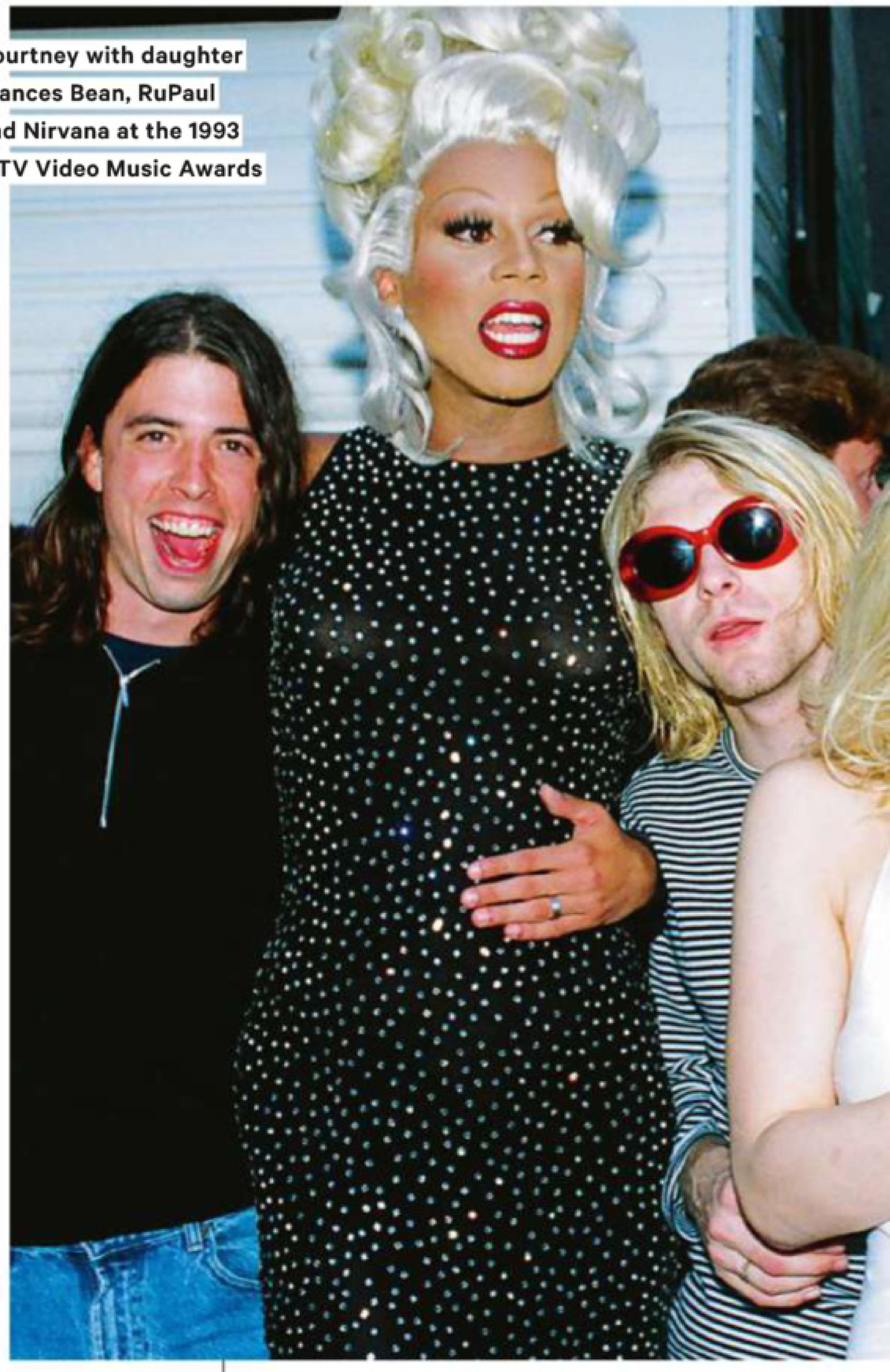
The feuds, the drugs and the badass behaviour are in the past, Courtney Love tells Dan Martin. Now it's all about honouring Kurt, new music and getting Hole back together

Whether Courtney Love Cobain is an unfortunate person to whom dramatic things happen, or a dramatic person who leaves this chaos in her wake, maybe we will never know. But after 15 years of drama and misdemeanours, the fact that she is a pretty fantastic rock star is not the first thing people think of when her name comes up.

That's all about to change – hopefully. She's back in the UK next month with a solo tour, her first since the misfiring Hole reboot that was 2010's 'Nobody's Daughter'. Soon there will be new music, and the punky track 'Wedding Day', which she's been touting about for the past year, is the stuff that returns to form are made of. A proper Hole reunion is probably on the cards – more of which later. And she's proven herself to be a genuine comic talent in the YouTube videos she makes with entertainment conglomerate Endemol, where she's tackled, among other things, the Kardashians, rock feuds (if there was ever an expert...) and Joan Rivers.

Now clean save for the odd sleeping pill, and with her legal travails almost over for the first time in a long time – she was recently cleared in a major test case for Twitter libel – now seems a really good time to be Courtney Love. So I hit her up on Skype, where she's bleary-eyed in the LA morning, to talk about all this and more.

As soon as she answers, she parades around, clumsily making coffee and showing ↦



Courtney with daughter Frances Bean, RuPaul and Nirvana at the 1993 MTV Video Music Awards

off her bedroom on the iPad, chainsmoking and talking in sprawling but smart sentences that go on for days and each cover around seven subjects. But first, she has wares to hawk. She calls her debut solo album, 2004's 'American Sweetheart', her "one really bad black mark", but other than that, denies that she's ever released a bad album or single. "I love 'Nobody's Daughter'," she says. "It might have only sold two copies but I don't give a shit, it's just a great, great record."

The new record is faster and punkier than that, with a lead song that's "just like an old-school '90s alternative single", she continues. "It's for the indie charts. There aren't a lot of indie charts – there's 52 alternative stations left in the United States, I think – but it's not gonna cross over, because it's got too many 'fucks' and 'shits' in it. At least I don't use the word 'whore', because I think I've used that word more in my oeuvre than anybody else, ever. Then we're gonna record some really pretty songs: 'And We Drown', and one that Linda [Perry] wrote. She might give me it, she might not – this tune called 'Diamonds And Rolling Stones'. It's really good, so I'm gonna see if she'll let me use that."

Yes, this looks like the start of a new sweet spot. But because not much in life ever happens in the right order, Courtney is currently staring down the barrel of the past. Last week marked 20 years since Kurt Cobain's death. This week (April 10), Nirvana will be inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, and 20 years of enmity will come to a head: that awkward moment when you find yourself sat across a table from your arch nemesis at an awards dinner, honouring his former bandmate and your dead husband, and you have to be civil because anything else would be a dick move.

Hole live at Brixton Academy, May 4, 1995

Nevertheless, she's trying to take the high road, not least because after initially being sceptical about the whole thing, her daughter with Kurt, Frances Bean Cobain (now 21), will be getting onstage to give a testimonial to her dad. Nobody wants to make a scene. At first, Courtney wasn't going to go – she wasn't in the band, so why should she? "But then [esteemed rock manager] Peter Mensch said that's just what wives and kids do," she says. "And Billie Joe [Armstrong] says to me, that's handing Krist and Dave the whole story, so that's rolling over in defeat. It's just like a deposition – everyone has a different version of events. My version is more accurate because I was there every single day of it."

Courtney's feud with the Nirvana camp is a long and messy saga tied up in ego, emotional trauma, personal battles and complicated legal scraps over legacy. We probably won't ever know the full story. Dave Grohl, a master politician, has always avoided the conversation. For her part, Courtney's mouth often lets her down, her oversharing on social networks is even worse, and the legal rows are tied up with the damage of being widowed by a man she loved completely, however destructive their relationship became.

So, given the chance to honour the man, 20 years after his death, could this be the right time to build bridges? She sighs. "The conciliatory thing... it's 20 years since the guy died. And I am so sick of decisions [where] somebody has to think about, 'Oh, shall we have Courtney on at this festival, does she have a problem with Dave?'"

She recently talked to a super-agent about getting out of 'movie star jail', her term for the consequences of ruining her successful acting career in 2004 – she tried to commit suicide on her 40th birthday, and ended up in rehab to treat a variety of addictions. That wasn't the problem, though. "He said the first thing I have to do is talk to Dave, because Foo Fighters are at his agency," Courtney recounts. "And I thought, this is absurd. And then Jon Silva [Foo Fighters' manager] said to Rick Canny [Courtney's manager], 'Dave would never cock-block her like that.' So I think it's just over, you know?

"I don't want to be a rock'n'roll cliché. It doesn't mean I'm a boring old fart"

Courtney Love

"Frances went to Dave's house and had dinner and made up her mind about him on her own. I'm not gonna speak for her, but basically... he's Dave. And that's not my problem; I'm not in his band and I don't have to deal with it. But Pat [Smear] and the Cobains have been really close. [Kurt's half-sister] Breanne stayed with Pat, [Kurt's sister] Kim Cobain stayed with Pat, so Pat's been really close to our family."

How do you expect the night itself to be?

"I don't know, it's the first time it's been open to the public; it's televised. I'm a little pleasantly plump right now so I don't really know what gown I'm gonna wear, because the gowns are all sample size, so I'm freaking

GETTY, REX

out. I'm not *fat* fat, I'm rock fat. My boobs are too big, I'm not gonna show my midriff onstage, put it that way. It's not always advisable anyway."

What will you say to Dave?

"Well, we're all at a table together. It's Krist, Dave, me, Frances. All our plus-ones have to go to other tables."

But nothing's ever fair in love and war...

"*This* is how unfair it is, I'm sorry: Krist's spouse or girlfriend or whatever, then Dave's spouse, and Kurt's plus-one is me and Frances. Me and Frances should get a plus-one. *Each*. The star tables which we're at, I think to buy one is like $300,000; and then there's all these random Cobains keep coming out of the woodwork; and someone told Wendy [Kurt's mother] she was getting onstage, but Wendy doesn't want to get onstage. I don't see why Dave's wife gets to sit at the table. I mean, I'm bitching about little admin things, but me and Frances can support each other pretty well. We've been through the mill."

That's where Courtney Love is at in 2014: still not over it, but in as diplomatic a mood as we've ever known her. For example, her book has gone back nine months because she realised, on reflection, that the first round of interviews (it's being ghost-written) sounded too bitter. And that, for this most fractured of rock dynasties, is probably about as good as it's ever going to get.

If Courtney and Grohl smiling for the cameras seems a reunion too far, she's certainly been getting her house in order in other ways. Not only are things back on track with Frances, the reunion of Hole is looking like a very real possibility. Courtney broke ranks by releasing 'Nobody's Daughter' under the band's banner, but quickly realised her mistake. Hole members Eric Erlandson and Melissa Auf der Maur were reluctant to let her, knowing that a proper reunion would actually happen one day.

After the brief activity around the launch of Patty Schemel's documentary *Hit So Hard*, which covered the drummer's problems with drug addiction, that's become something close to a reality. Both are on board, and they will involve Patty if they all decide she's up to putting herself through that again. "All I need is for Patty to play for 75 minutes a night," says Courtney. "I don't need her to be good in the studio, I can use someone else for that."

The genesis of the reunion came from Dave Navarro, backstage at a show by his cock-rock supergroup Camp Freddy: "He was saying how much he hated members of his band, and I was like, 'Look, bring home the money!' And then I thought, Mensch has been on at me for so long on it. But I said, I'm not gonna do an oldies tour. You wanna see misery? Watch that fucking Pixies reunion documentary, that's *misery on wheels*, man. They seem to hate each other so much. I don't wanna hate life. But it seems like we have a really magical thing. If it's not magical, we just won't do it."

Courtney's condition is that guitarist Micko Larkin (formerly of Larrikin Love and her current confidant) is involved, because as much as anything, the events of 2004 wiped her ability to play. "I mean, if I spent three solid months just playing guitar I could probably get it back, but I don't have time," she says. "And this single needs to do well or I'm not gonna have much interest in doing the Hole thing. And adding Micko to it, we'll see if it works. If it doesn't work we're fucked, because there isn't gonna be a rhythm guitar player." The first meeting back with Eric, formerly Hole's lead guitarist, freaked him out, Courtney says. That's how good she can be at patching shit up.

"Welcome to my fucking web series!"

The best bits of Courtney's new YouTube channel

...on life advice

"Wait, everyone poops – I don't get what the big deal is. Was it a really big one? I have given crappy advice to kids all over the world," Courtney admits at the end of a fan Q&A session that spans fake orgasms, self-love and farting in front of your partner.

...on Keeping Up With The Kardashians

"I don't watch it for the plot, it's just on E." Can you imagine watching ...*The Kardashians* for the plot? Will Kim get over her envy of Kylie's Tumblr? Will Bruce Jenner's forehead ever move?

...on the 'Twibel' case

"I don't think I'm gonna lose." Courtney becomes the first person in the world to go to trial for libel over a tweet. She wins!

...on dressing for court

"This is sexy lingerie, that's not for court! I dunno, why don't I just wear a corset to court?" Courtney puts her best court face forwards.

...on controversial US presenter Nancy Grace

Production values on the series reach their apex as Courtney does bug-eyed comedy parodies of the scaremongering right-wing TV show host's on-screen patter: "This mother sold her child into Satanic white slavery!"

Courtney had an equally dramatic reconciliation with her daughter. They had a public and bitter falling out in 2009, when Frances Bean became legally emancipated from her mother and was even granted a restraining order. The rift was messy. That's often the case with parents and teenage children, and having lived through that as part of a high-profile rock dynasty who experienced unimaginable tragedy is not exactly going to oil the wheels.

"We went through all of that crazy shit," says Courtney. "I don't wanna speak for her, but she's done a lot of maturing and growing. It took me five years to set up [Frances'] trust fund, and I think she finally realised that it took me five years and $5 million. There was some money from her dad's estate saved, and quite a lot of it. So she's gonna be OK for the rest of her life if she's careful."

So is Courtney finally ready to leave all the drama behind? She shrugs. She turns 50 in July and has no desire to carry on the fights of her youth.

"People expect this badass behaviour from you, but I'm just bored of it," she says. "So I'll be that girl onstage, but I'm just over it. Taking my bra off and showing my boobs was fun for a while, but I'm 50 and I'm not gonna show my boobs. You'll still get the unexpected, but I don't really have the desire to be a cliché. It doesn't mean I'm a boring old fart, but it just means I like to play rock'n'roll and play it really fast and really hard and I get off on that. That's where I put my energy. And I could use all that power and that energy for, at this age, good. And then I guess you are a boring old fart, but – guess what – it doesn't mean that you can't play rock." ■

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KATE

EXPE

As Kate Bush prepares for her live return after 35 years, Barry Nicolson looks back at her groundbreaking 1979 tour

In 1979, the 20-year-old Kate Bush was an auteur who kept being miscast as an ingénue. The success of her 1978 debut album 'The Kick Inside', and to a lesser extent its follow-up, 'Lionheart', had made Bush a huge star – the most photographed woman in Britain, in fact – but she was not an especially well understood one. That much was clear from the extra-curricular offers that were coming her way: acting roles in low-budget horror movies, and more notably, an invitation to record the theme tune for the next James Bond film, *Moonraker*. Bush eventually declined and the job passed to Shirley Bassey; in any case, something so committee-driven as a Bond theme would only have been a waste of her singular and idiosyncratic talents. ↦

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To the tabloids, meanwhile, Bush was pop music's "weird and wonderful little gypsy", but the dogmatic (and arguably totally sexist) punks of the music press saw imagined glimmers of something altogether more insidious. Their grudging admiration for her gifts was counterweighted by an inherent suspicion of her story and what she might stand for – after all, she had been discovered by David Gilmour of certified dinosaurs Pink Floyd, nurtured by the major label that had hamstrung the Sex Pistols, and the ornate, often whimsical nature of her music seemed to have more in common with the cultural evils of prog rock and folk than the fashionable post-punk brutalism of the age.

Amsterdam, April 29, 1979

Nowhere was this suspicion more evident than in a disastrous 1979 *NME* interview with a dismissive and condescending Danny Baker, who prefaced his piece by admitting, "I knew [Kate's] singles, but I really couldn't find it in me to go any deeper," before going on to make a series of misjudgements (her voice "could age the nation's glassblowers", her success was proof of "a hippy uprising of the most devious sorts", and so on) he later came to regret. Bush found the repeated attempts to pigeonhole her as this thing or that tiring – "You do a very straight interview with these people, without ever mentioning sex, but of course that's the only angle they write it from," she complained of the sex-symbol status that had been thrust upon her – but it was the doubts over her ability to perform live that rankled the most, and eventually led her to mount the most ambitious project of her still-fledgling career: the Tour Of Life.

Before Bush even knew what form she wanted her first concert tour to take, one thing was certain: it couldn't be like anything the audience had ever seen before. "Bands that do nothing, that just go out and play their latest album, or sing it and then just walk off, are boring," she told one interviewer, and she was determined not to be one of them. In fact, Bush had played conventional live sets before, but those were pub gigs in Lewisham with the pre-fame KT Bush Band; the Tour Of Life would be a different beast entirely.

In late December, 1978, Kate began meeting with set designer David Jackson to discuss her ideas for the production of the Tour Of Life. Gradually, things began to take shape: this would not be a pop concert in the normal sense, but an elaborately staged pageant of music, theatre, dance and poetry, split into multiple 'acts' featuring mime artists, magicians, back projections and a dazzling array of costume changes. Feeling that she'd allowed her vision for 'Lionheart' to be compromised by the whims and expectations of others, Bush vowed never to repeat that mistake, and exercised absolute control over every detail of the tour, from the design of the programmes to the all-vegetarian menu. With a cast of 13 dancers and musicians, a behind-the-scenes crew of 40 and a total cost of £250,000 (roughly £10,000 per night), the Tour Of Life was a monumental undertaking, and was effectively paid for – at an eventual loss – from Bush's own pocket. She would not only be the star of this particular show, but the writer, director and financier as well.

Bush's involvement in the minutiae of putting the tour together came in addition to undertaking three months of intensive physical preparation. From January to March 1979, she spent every morning in a Euston dance studio with choreographer Anthony Van Laast, working out every last pirouette in painstaking detail. In the afternoons, she could be found in a small waterfront studio in Greenwich, guiding her band through the subtleties of the 22-song setlist for hours on end. In the evenings, she would go home to continue practising her dance moves, or conduct endless meetings on some other aspect of the production. As bassist and long-term collaborator Del Palmer remembered, "She was getting up in the morning, going dancing, coming back, rehearsing with the band, going home, in a meeting 'til three in the morning, then getting up, going dancing..."

Though she was willing to take direction from the more experienced Van Laast in matters of choreography, that collaborative spirit did not extend to her band – when it came to the music, Bush was a Napoleon in legwarmers, driven and dictatorial, and there was no room for deviation, let alone improvisation. Even for the band members who had played on her records and with the KT Bush Band – like Del Palmer, guitarist Brian Bath and her multi-instrumentalist brother Paddy – perfecting these strange, unorthodox songs, with their structural pitches and yaws, was no small feat. "It took us so long to learn them because they were so complicated," admits Bath. "I worked at it day and night."

By mid-March, the entire company – dancers, musicians and stagehands alike – had moved to the Rainbow Theatre in Finsbury Park for final rehearsals, although there was still a sense of flux as last-minute additions were made and unforeseen events, like the stage prop that arrived having been constructed back-to-front, were overcome. With every show a sellout, Bush and her team impulsively added an extra date, at Poole Arts Centre on April 2, as a warm-up to the tour proper. It was there, just hours before showtime, that the Tour Of Life was very nearly derailed by the tragic death of Bill Duffield.

Duffield was a 21-year-old lighting engineer who had joined the tour only a few days earlier as an assistant to David Jackson. According to Jackson, "Bill had taken it upon himself to go back into the already darkened building to perform this completely redundant ritual we used to call 'idiot check'. You run around the theatre one last time to make sure nothing got left behind. The Poole Arts Centre had seating that could be retracted to the walls to change the shape and use of the space, but before it would retract, the staircase landings had to be taken out, basically creating a cavity over a huge drop in the dark. Bill ran up the stairs and landed on a landing

FIVE KEY PERFORMANCES

'Kite'
Bio's Bahnhof 1978
Dressed in a billowing red dress and performing to a disused tram depot full of bemused Colognians, Kate's first TV appearance came on this German light-entertainment show, playing 'Kite' live with her band and 'Wuthering Heights' to a backing track. Surreal, but brilliant.

'Wuthering Heights'
Top Of The Pops 1978
Forced to play to a dodgy-sounding backing track, Bush's *TOTP* debut wasn't a vintage performance. Her second appearance, sat at a piano, was much better and captured her innate sense of otherness, but she wouldn't grace the *TOTP* studio again until 1985.

'Do Bears...?'
Shaftesbury Theatre 1986
A Comic Relief duet with Rowan Atkinson in character as a lounge singer, the laughs from 'Do Bears...?' are all to be had from the pair almost-but-not-quite saying some naughty words. It's terrible, of course, but in a very watchable sort of way.

'Running Up That Hill'
The Secret Policeman's Third Ball 1987
Featuring her friend David Gilmour on guitar, Bush's rendition of her 1985 hit was the highlight of this Amnesty International charity gig, where she also performed a cover of 'Let It Be'. This being the '80s, everyone looks terrible, but she still sounds fantastic.

'Comfortably Numb'
Royal Festival Hall 2002
In 2002, Bush reunited with Gilmour once again, this time to play the part of the doctor in Pink Floyd's opiated anthem. She looks a little nervous and unsure of herself, but the reception she gets is extraordinary; proof that an onstage sighting of Bush, however fleeting, is one of pop's rarest treats.

Performing 'James And The Cold Gun'

"SHE USED TO JUST COLLAPSE AT THE END OF THE SHOW"

BRIAN BATH, GUITARIST

that wasn't there. There should have been flashing lights, there should have been guard rails, there should have been all sorts of safety stuff. But there wasn't."

He died after a week on a life-support machine. When she heard about what had happened, Bush was distraught; Duffield might have been new to the production, but according to Brian Bath, "Kate knew everyone by name, right down to the cleaner." In the hours after the accident, there were frantic discussions about whether the tour should be cancelled, but it was ultimately decided that the best course of action was to carry on. The day after Duffield's fall, the show opened as planned at Liverpool's Empire Theatre.

At any rate, the propulsive, all-consuming nature of the tour and its multifarious moving parts didn't leave much time to dwell on things. Bush was playing sets over two hours long every night, not simply performing the songs, but living them out – "a complete experience", as she later put it. Whether as the trilby-hatted thug of 'Them Heavy People', the World War II bomber of 'Oh England My Lionheart' or the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw in 'Wuthering Heights', Bush's dedication to her characters was unwavering; the fourth wall might as well have been a brick wall.

"A lot of people would say, 'Poooah!'," she said, "but for me that's what it was, like a play. That's why I didn't speak: 'For our next song...' and all that. You are a performer, and if you break the illusion, you break the whole concept." It was exhausting: Brian Bath recalled how "when she finished 'James And The Cold Gun' [the last song before the encore], I'd see her walking up the ramp in the middle and she was absolutely *finished*, sweat pouring off of her. Then she'd have to change costume, catch her breath and come out to sing 'Wuthering Heights'. I don't know how she did it. She used to just collapse, really, at the end of the show."

Bush: "It was like a play"

The reviews were gushing, five-stars-and-then-some declamations: *Sounds* declared the London Palladium performance "beyond rational criticism", while for *Melody Maker* it was "a nerveless triumph of energy, imagination, music and theatre". The sole voice of dissent was *NME*'s Charles Shaar Murray, who grumbled that the trouble with Bush "is that she's completely entranced with the idea of her own stardom and the concept of presenting an almost superhuman facade". Ultimately, he wrote, "what [Bush] does takes talent, but it ain't the kind of talent I respect".

In that respect, Murray was firmly in the minority. The Tour Of Life challenged perceptions of what a gig could be, and served as a blueprint for the conceptual stadium tours of the 1980s and '90s – Pink Floyd's The Wall, Michael Jackson's Bad and U2's Zoo TV among them. Today, viewed on unrestored YouTube footage, the production seems a little stagey and low-tech, yet some of the things it pioneered – not least the head-mounted mic designed by sound engineer Gordon Patterson, which allowed Bush to dance and sing simultaneously – are still with us today.

For Kate herself, however, it was enough to have set the bar for other artists to vault over. "People said I couldn't gig, and I proved them wrong," she said the following year, and having made her point, she retired from live performance – barring a handful of one-off appearances – for the next 35 years. Touring involved too many spinning plates, too many factors that lay outside her control; and for someone who had never particularly craved the attention and adulation of a room full of strangers, the rewards were not commensurate with the exertions it took to pull it off.

"She liked it," reckoned EMI executive Bob Mercer of the touring experience, "but the equation didn't work, it was too exhausting. I've seen that happen to other people, but nothing like as severely as it did to her. I went to a lot of the shows in Britain and Europe, and particularly in Europe I could see at the end of the show that she was *completely* wiped. She danced and she sang and did the whole number, and it wiped her out."

Over the years, however, there were a number of close shaves. The closest came in 1991, when she announced her intention to perform a series of shows, reportedly with a set designed by the Jim Henson company, but that idea was eventually superseded by her 1993 short film *The Line, The Cross And The Curve*. Her long absence from the stage means that no-one really knows what this year's Before The Dawn shows will look like: the 55-year-old Bush probably won't come close to replicating the physicality of the Tour Of Life performances, but it seems just as unthinkable that she'll be sat behind a piano on a bare stage; that, as she once said, "[would be] such a cop-out. I don't really feel happy doing something unless I've pushed myself to the limit... otherwise it doesn't feel like you've put enough effort into it." For an auteur with nothing left to prove, challenging herself is all that remains. ■

ROB VERHORST/REDFERNS, GETTY

IN THIS MONTH'S **UNCUT**

THIS WEEK IN 1994

This is hardcore?

Jarvis Cocker beds down with Jo Brand for some loose talk about lost virginity and celebrity sex

To celebrate Pulp losing their chart virginity with 'Do You Remember The First Time?' after 13 years on the music scene, Jarvis Cocker shares a bed with comedian and Pulp fan Jo Brand on the *NME* cover. Inside, they candidly "tell each other things they'd never dare tell their mothers". "I remember when someone first mentioned the word 'masturbate'," Jarvis reveals. "I raced home to look in the dictionary and it said 'to abuse oneself'. I thought, 'What, like shouting 'you twat' at the mirror?'" Discussing Pulp's documentary short, also called *Do You Remember The First Time?*, which reveals the awkwardness of various celebrities' early sexual encounters, Jarvis reassures us that "these famous people, all their introductions were as fumbling and untidy as anyone else's". Not least Pulp guitarist Russell Senior, who confesses to losing his virginity to his best friend's girlfriend, in a tent, right next to his best friend.

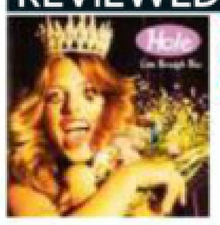
NO-VANA

Amid "growing speculation concerning Kurt Cobain's health" following his recent overdose drama in Rome, it is revealed that both Nirvana and Hole have cancelled their forthcoming UK tours, causing backlash from promoters who stand to lose millions. Despite this, a Nirvana spokesperson states that "the group are stronger than ever", dispelling rumours of a split. Meanwhile, criticism of the band's track 'Rape Me' prompts their label, DGC, to change the song's title on US versions to 'Waif Me'.

MIDDLE-CLASS RUT

On the second Auteurs album 'Now I'm A Cowboy', Luke Haines tackles the animosities between the middle classes and the, um, upper-middle classes. "Music always seems to be about young, angry, working-class bands doing this sort of... shouty thing," he says, but claims his problems lie with the pretentious rich. "There's this terrible, fraudulent thing about the upper-middle class," he continues. "This pathetic need to imitate blue blood."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



Hole – 'Live Through This'

"Makes you want to lie in the foetal position with your thumb in your mouth... It wakes rock from its cliché coma." ■ BARBARA ELLEN

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

▶Channel 4 have begun screening cult cartoon *Beavis & Butt-head* – "the apotheosis of the blank generation couch potato culture".

▶In their first *NME* interview, Green Day admit they have "done the indecent thing" by "selling out" to WEA. Drummer Tré Cool defends the move, saying their new label "take care of all the lame stuff".

▶*NME* visits the *EastEnders* set to find that "the 'houses' in Albert Square aren't real". Patsy Palmer (Bianca) states, "I'd carry on playing a tart for 10 years if I enjoyed the acting."

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STEVE DOUBLE

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

WE FIND THE ROCK STAR, YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS

Interpol

Guitarist Daniel Kessler and singer Paul Banks

1 Who did you share the bill with on the NME Awards Tour in 2003?
Jamie Butler, Derby, via email
Daniel Kessler: "The Thrills, The Datsuns and The Polyphonic Spree."
Paul Banks: "That was a great tour, man. We did a lot of partying with those guys. Just hanging out with The Polyphonic Spree was like a party in itself. It's nice doing the NME Awards Tour again, it feels like we've come full circle in a way."
CORRECT

The Polyphonic Spree

2 Where did *Rolling Stone* place 'Turn On The Bright Lights' in its list of the 100 best records of the '00s?
William Maplin, Tewksbury, via email
Paul: "I had no idea we were on the list."
Daniel: "Me neither."
WRONG. 59
Daniel: "Wait a minute, we weren't Number One? Nah, I'm just kidding."

3 What happens to the puppet in the video for 'Evil'?
April Hanson, New York, via Twitter
Paul: "It gets all fucked up and winds up in the hospital! That one was based on real events from my life, actually."
Really?
Paul: "No. Sorry, bad joke."
CORRECT

4 On which day did you play at Lollapalooza in 2007, and what was the name of the stage?
Francis Gordon, Chicago, via email
Daniel: "On the Main Stage!"
Also known as?
Daniel: "The... mainest stage?"
Paul: "Umm, when was it?"
Daniel: "I'm gonna say Saturday."
WRONG. The Bud Light Stage on Saturday

5 Who covered 'Slow Hands' in 2010?
Emma Adlington, Torquay, via email
Paul: "Azealia Banks."
Daniel: "I really dug it and was flattered that she covered the track."
CORRECT

6 Which of these names did you *not* consider before deciding on Interpol: Las Armas, The French Letters or Cuddleworthy?
Tony Jackson, Birmingham, via email
Daniel: "Cuddleworthy we used for a secret show in New York, but it wasn't really as a name, whereas the other ones were."
Paul: "It was just the most ridiculous name we could think of."
CORRECT. You performed as Cuddleworthy at Luna Lounge in New York in 2003

7 Paul, you were born in Clacton-on-Sea in Essex. Which TV show has brought the English county into the spotlight recently?
Ian Keele, London, via Facebook
Paul: "No idea."
WRONG. *The Only Way Is Essex*
Paul: "(*Suddenly excited*) Is it a show about how awesome everyone is there? Are there a lotta role models on there?"
Well, you *could* look at it that way...
Paul: "I love that Clacton is my hometown, man. I think as you get older you care more about your heritage. Everybody's English in my family. Me mum is an Essex gal and my dad is from Wisbech."

The Only Way Is Essex

Azealia Banks

8 What connects the lyrical style of all the songs on 'Interpol'?
Barry James, Glasgow, via email
Paul: "What does that even mean?"
WRONG. The lyrics are all written in the first person
Paul: "No they're not! Oh wait, you mean on the *album* 'Interpol'?"

9 Who is responsible for this quote: "I didn't have romantic notions in ninth grade. I was trying to fingerbang chicks"?
Kevin Oswald, Ipswich, via Facebook
Paul: "(*Groaning*) Ah man, that was me. It was sort of a Dave Chapelle reference. I was basically just stealing someone else's joke."
CORRECT

10 What's your biggest-selling single in the UK and at what number did it chart?
Fiona Carroll, Plymouth, via email
Daniel: "No idea. Is it 'Slow Hands'?"
WRONG. It was 'Evil', which charted at Number 18 in 2005
Paul: "Oh, I coulda told you that!"

SCORE = 5

Daniel: "I'm kind of glad we didn't do better."

WORDS: ALEX DENNEY PHOTOS: REX, TOM OXLEY

NEXT WEEK

WHICH RECORD CHANGED YOUR LIFE FOREVER?

Julian Casablancas, Skrillex,
Yannis Philippakis, Janelle Monáe,
Earl Sweatshirt, The Horrors,
Wild Beasts and more
reveal theirs...

+

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- Chuck D
- Metronomy
- Bo Ningen
- St Vincent
- Albert Hammond Jr

ALBUM REVIEWS
- Mac DeMarco
- Eels
- Kelis
- Thee Oh Sees
- Iggy Azalea
- Protomartyr

CAUGHT LIVE
- Real Estate
- Danny Brown
- DIIV
- Kiran Leonard
- School Of Language

QUIZ ANSWERS 1. Kate Bush ('Wuthering Heights' in 1978) **2.** Snakes And Serpents **3.** The National **4.** Jones **5.** John Squire **6.** 'Merriweather Post Pavilion' by Animal Collective **7.** Chase & Status **8.** Klaxons **9.** Lady Gaga **10.** Queens Of The Stone Age **11.** Perry Farrell (Jane's Addiction) **12.** 'Leave Them All Behind' **13.** Guns N' Roses **14.** 'Breed' **15.** Mötley Crüe

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