16 AUGUST 2014

NME

The Holy Bible turns 20

The Manics' masterpiece

"Richey's lyrics spoke their own language"

"There was an EMPTY HOLE that we needed to fill"

BRAND NEW TESTAMENT

Nicky Wire & James Dean Bradfield on RICHEY'S MASTERWORK

Manic Obsession

Emily Mackay on the life-changing power of The Holy Bible

+++ Merchandise ▸ Indie record label focus ▸ Royal Blood

"I've seen horrors... horrors that you've seen" COLONEL WALTER E KURTZ

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David Renshaw
News Reporter
David got to grips with Protomartyr: "One of the best interviews I've done in a while. Sadly not enough room for the rant about men who wear flip-flops and piss on toilet seats."



Ben Patashnik
Writer
On Royal Blood's self-titled debut: "I've been stealing a lot of cars recently, and the new Royal Blood album is the perfect soundtrack for drowning out the sirens. Trust me."



Laura Palmer
Photographer
Laura shot FKA Twigs' gig at Heaven, London: "There were people on the front row who had been waiting for 14 hours – I didn't expect that at such an early stage in her career."

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COVER: TOM SHEEHAN

SOUNDING OFF

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

Answering you this week: Laura Snapes

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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PLAYLIST AND NOT TELL

Radio 1's decision not to play La Roux is frankly ridiculous. The fact that the station (or any station) would refuse to play top-quality music because of an artist's age discredits what was once so good about radio – the ability to find great new artists and sounds. Being a huge La Roux fan myself, I have found that a huge range of age groups love her music, so Radio 1's 'excuse' that it isn't suitable for their target audience is laughable. As if that wasn't enough, La Roux is 26 years old, for goodness' sake! This is 2014, not the 1800s – people tend to live past 35 these days.
Chloe Nester, via email



Laura Snapes: Chloe! Though a Radio 1 spokesperson said that Elly Jackson's exclusion from the playlist wasn't down to her age, the explanation given by their head of music is no more reassuring. In an interview with *The Independent*, George Ergatoudis said that it was more down to the number of female-fronted pop acts – Iggy Azalea, Charli XCX and Foxes among them – competing for airtime. Radio 1's commitment to daytime diversity is great, but I doubt that the playlist committee ever sit wringing their hands over there being too many white blokes on the air. It makes their decision to arbitrarily sideline La Roux because of her gender seem incredibly suspect. 'Trouble In Paradise' is a brilliant record by one of Britain's most exciting current artists of any gender. And, as acts like Pet Shop Boys and Kate Bush have shown, age should never be a criterion for admission to pop's knacker's yard.

BUGGIN' OUT

Well, I thought I knew Jake Bugg. Turns out I didn't. He's been to seven gigs ever? I've been to five. If two gigs is the difference between normal (me) and genius (the delectable Bugg), I'm booking in two nights at the Northampton Roadmender this week, buying a guitar, and getting a pudding-basin cut. I've also bought Metallica's 'Load' on his recommendation. Thanks for opening the secret doorway to a brilliant mind.
Becki Arm, via email

LS: Although Bugg's revelations weren't Wikileaks-level, Becki, the young minstrel has an intriguing mind. My favourite divulgence was that he's secretly a 49-year-old businessman, more concerned with house prices and taxes than smashing his expensive guitars for effect.

GIVE PEACE A SECOND CHANCE

Not too long ago, Peace could do nothing wrong in my eyes, but unfortunately I feel they've lost that spark. 'Lost On Me' is OK, but it's only OK. I guess music is leaving Peace behind a little bit. I'd like to think that they'll pull it together, as it would be bittersweet to have to admit to myself that I'm no longer a Peace fan.
Maisy Farren, via email



LS: Music will never leave Peace behind, Maisy. The addictive goofiness of 'Lost On Me' guarantees that even if everything else falls apart, CBBC will surely be calling for theme tunes before long. It's difficult breaking up with a beloved band, but if you need any help in this instance, just rewatch the pathetic, sexist video for 'Wraith', which should hasten the process along.

FALSE PROPHETS

I feel uneasy about the promotion that No Devotion are getting off the back of Ian Watkins' imprisonment. They deserve to tell their story and make music, but by releasing new stuff so soon it feels like they're capitalising on his infamy, which is gross.
Amy Powell, via email

LS: I agree, Amy. If you were considering starting a new band after such a horrible event, surely the thought of ghouls turning up to your shows to trawl for references to a convicted paedophile would be enough to convince you to reconsider.

NO BLOKES WITHOUT IRE

Having read Royal Blood's (pictured) thoughts on authenticity – "anything that's being done by a computer, to me, is not real" – I've decided to radically re-evaluate my life. I'm getting my car shod with horseshoes, swapping my washing machine for a mangle, and grinding my own flour in the back garden. Turns out the old maxim about only needing two short planks to make fire is true!
Martin Bushey, via email

LS: While it's amusing to imagine RB getting deep into Zizek's theories of "the real", Martin, I prefer to spend my time daydreaming of a day when bullshit rockism is finally overthrown, berks like this are first up against the wall and the weapons are the finest computerised ones technology can muster.

WATCH THEM PWN

If Beyoncé and Nicki Minaj's flawless 'Flawless' remix does not signal the early phases of their own (100 per cent superior) 'Watch The Throne' era, then I'll eat my sweet baby cheeses.
Jessica Green, via email

LS: Unfortunately *NME*'s typesetting doesn't allow us to include emoji, Jessica, but please imagine I've left an array of prayer hands, dancing red-dress girls and flexin' biceps right here: ___ For now, let's all reverentially whisper "*Onika*" at the same time to try and magic this unholy album into existence.



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

I've seen Swim Deep six times already and I've met them so many times that they recognise me if I see them out and about! (I'm not even ashamed.) I have so many more pictures, but here's me and Cav at Koko, Camden.
Charlotte, Godalming

JORDAN HUGHES, DEREK BREMNER

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ON REPEAT

NME 20

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Merchandise
Green Lady

'Green Lady' slinks along with such grace, it should be wearing a ball gown and floral corsage. Coming on like Suede if they spent more time supping dirty martinis in Hollywood's Chateau Marmont instead of moping about in south London petrol stations, this is grown-up guitar music complete with sky-scraping, soul-lifting riffs, and it's still not even the best track on their new album.

Leonie Cooper, writer

2. Ex Hex
Beast

The new project of Mary Timony – formerly of riot grrrl supergroup Wild Flag – is the glammy, scuzzy, ramshackle sound of pure rock'n'roll. Opening with a squalling riff before falling into a 'Roadrunner'-style two-chord jog, its ballsy simplicity is its key. The track's called 'Beast', the album's called 'Rips' and the band name sounds like they're cursing every last bastard that spurned them: what more do you want?

Lisa Wright, writer

3. Joey Bada$$
Big Dusty

"Jazz puts my mind at ease and at peace," Joey Bada$$ told *NME* while talking about his debut album 'BADA$$' back in 2013. 'Big Dusty', the first single, suggests he's still in that place, turning away from the boom-bap of the Pro Era/Beast Coast collective and towards sultry instrumentals that recall Dilated Peoples. Images of great whites, tidal waves and pizza dough combine to create something strange, paranoid and intriguing.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

4. Allo Darlin'
Romance And Adventure

Anglo-Australians Allo Darlin' are like the C86 Courtney Barnett, and this taster from third album 'We Come From The Same Place' adds beef to their superior melodic charms. Elizabeth Morris' lyrics have taken a turn for the surreal too: "*I saw you in a prism/Reeling against realism*", she sings to some errant paramour, where usually she'd be offering some boy round to watch cartoons and share whatever she's rustled up from the Meet-Cute Cookbook that night.

Mark Beaumont, writer

5. Johnny Marr
Easy Money

The tactic of recording in London in order to absorb and comment on its cash-obsessed culture has come up trumps for Johnny. Here, he comes on like a lost soul caught in a trap of sex, sleaze and dirty money, raging over itchy, scratchy and fidgety guitars. "*I used to want it all/And that's money, money*" he sneers over an evil, corkscrew new wave riff.

Ben Hewitt, writer









6. Stevie Nicks
The Dealer

Back with a new solo album of old songs she wrote but never released, Stevie Nicks' gossamer 'The Dealer' is an anguished throwback to Fleetwood Mac's tumultuous 'Tusk' era. "*I was the mistress of my fate/I was the card shark*", the singer laments over plaintive piano. "*If I'd have looked a little ahead/I would've run away*". A lesson that nostalgia's not always pretty.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

7. Twin Shadow
Locked And Loaded

Twin Shadow, aka George Lewis Jr, popped a new song, 'To The Top', online in April. If you want to hear another one, you don't half have to chug through a whole load of unfunny crap. Recently, he was a guest on a *Comedy Bang! Bang!* podcast, and over an hour in he plays 'Locked And Loaded' acoustically. It's a luscious, worried, late-night lament that might yet end up with the power-pop dressing of 'To The Top'.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

8. Bass Drum Of Death
Left For Dead

Life's getting exciting for Mississippi garage rockers Bass Drum Of Death. As well as recruiting drummer Len Clark, whose skills sound thick and fat on the MC5 barrage of 'Left For Dead', founder John Barrett has also nabbed Unknown Mortal Orchestra bassist Jacob Portrait on production duties. Portrait's finest contribution so far is the clank in the background that sounds like a mechanic using an exhaust pipe as a cowbell.

Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

9. Happyness
You Come To Kill Me?!

South London trio Happyness are back with another EP ('Anything I Do Is All Right' surfaces on 1 September) and its warning shot is this sexy two-minute slither that plants itself somewhere between Pavement and Ash while Benji Compston does his pin-sharp Jim Reid out of The Jesus And Mary Chain impression. Obvious influences, sure, but sickly synth strings and splurges of chainsaw guitar give Happyness their own slant and identity.

Matthew Horton, writer

10. BenZel & Stevie Neale
Wasted Love

According to their Soundcloud profile, BenZel are still two Japanese teenagers (Umi and Yoko) in New York on a foreign exchange programme. Umi and Yoko are in fact London producer Two Inch Punch and New York's Benny Blanco, recently responsible for Jessie Ware's 'Tough Love'. This latest track is a total blinder, TIP's signature bubbling beats gloriously elevated by dangerously catchy R&B hooks.

Eve Barlow, Deputy Editor

MATT MILLER, EMILIA ORVING, MILAN ZRNIC, ED MILES

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. The 2 Bears
Money Man

Joe Goddard and Raf Rundell released their debut album 'Be Strong' in 2012 – a banger-filled homage to big beat and piano house. This track, from their forthcoming follow-up 'The Night Is Young', is a change of direction, rooted in dub and reggae rather than electronica. Thanks to Stylo G's verses and a sweet refrain about the eponymous money man, it's no less ready for the floor, though.
Andy Welch, writer



12. Trust Fund
Reading The Wrappers

This is the best song yet from Bristol's Ellis Jones, who has a Waxahatchee-like knack for intimate understatement. It starts comically – parents anxiously eating sweets in the car, trying to ignore their kid curled up on the ground outside – but quickly becomes heartbreaking: he escapes to the beach, throwing "*every pebble into the sea*" to try and get over the insurmountable bereavement that floored him in the first place.
Laura Snapes, Features Editor



13. Lust
Looking Glass

Newbie trio Lust might hail from Sweden, but their icy detachment is about as far away from cutesy Scandi-pop as you can get. Hypnotic basslines ripple under thick layers of heady, reverb-soaked shoegaze guitars as Anna Haara Kristoferson, Moa Papillon and Andrea Muller harmonise like the kind of nonchalant sirens who, once they've drawn you onto the rocks, couldn't be fucked to give you the time of day.
Lisa Wright, writer



14. Early Ghost
Everything Goes With It

Brighton's Early Ghost might be slightly late to the psych party, but their stripped-back take on all things swirly and '60s-inspired is refreshing in its restraint. There are six members in the band but this is intimate music, with hushed harmonies and subtle Hammond organs that suggest the song might have been recorded in a thin-walled flatshare within earshot of grumpy neighbours.
Leonie Cooper, writer



15. Wampire
Wizard Staff

Eric Phipps claims that after extensive touring in 2013 he had built up so much creative energy that it was transforming him into a "Kafka-esque insomniac musical novelist". Turns out it's worked wonders for the Portland outfit. 'Wizard Staff', the first song released from second LP 'Bazaar', takes the band's kitsch, fantasy sound and transforms it into an opium den of Roxy Music saxophones, sleepy synths and glittery guitar sparks.
James Bentley, writer

16. YOU
Volvic

Elliott Williams (aka YOU) hails from the musical hotbed of Manchester, but instead of mirroring the drab, rain-soaked stereotype of northern England, he's tipping things on their head. 'Volvic' is a beach-ready synthpop gem, evoking New Order in a blissful state of euphoria or Hurts after they've been put through a tropical filter. The perfect soundtrack to the last throes of summer.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

17. Kindness
World Restart

The campaign for Kindness' 2012 debut 'World You Need A Change Of Mind' created one of the all-time greatest gulfs between massive weight of hype and pitiful lack of sales. Undeterred, Adam Bainbridge's new track aims not to brush history under the carpet but reference it directly – it's a funk jam titled 'World Restart'. And, post-Jungle, Kindness' acid-jazzy, white Prince shtick may find its audience yet.
Dan Stubbs, News Editor

18. Curxes
Valkyrie

Curxes describe their music as "blitz-pop" and 'Valkyrie' is their justification. In the space of just three minutes, Macaulay Hopwood and Roberta Fidora batter the senses with an onslaught of rattling, synthetic beats, shrill synth lines and Fidora's swooping vocals. It's part Sleigh Bells, part Chvrches, completely batshit ADHD electropop that's as focused on big hooks as it is kitchen-sink experimentation.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

19. Jessie Ware
Say You Love Me

Jessie Ware is sitting on potentially the biggest crossover album of the year with her forthcoming second record (due in October). This enormo-ballad, written in collaboration with Ed Sheeran, will help the campaign. "*We're running out of words to say/Love is floating away*", Jessie sings, painstakingly detailing the futile efforts at giving it another shot. Get ready to be buying this for your mum at Christmas.
David Renshaw, News Reporter

20. Team Me
Blind As Night

Norway's premier gang-pop band Team Me have a tendency to bury their best songs deep in EPs, like diamonds in a snowdrift – check out forgotten 2011 B-side 'Me And The Mountain'. True to form, double A-side single 'Blind As Night' is an intriguing slab of icy, Kate Bush-esque, string-stalked prog pop, but 'The All Time High' is the euphoric killer, resembling The Polyphonic Spree base-jumping off an erupting Krakatoa.
Mark Beaumont, writer

A new experience

Long-lost photographs of legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix come to light

Think you've seen every picture taken in Jimi Hendrix's short but brilliant career? Think again. A clutch of private snaps from London's Saville Theatre on October 8, 1967 have come to light. Shot by 20-year-old student Miki Slingsby, who blagged his way backstage with a homemade press pass, the four rolls of film include images of Hendrix performing plus intimate backstage portraits of the guitarist with his band, The Experience, and friend Arthur Brown.

Slingsby wasn't totally convinced by his work, and buried the negatives amid a pile of offcuts. "I was happy with some of the results in the dressing room but I didn't think my other pictures were up to the standard of the many studio and press photos of Jimi available at that time," he said.

After a selection of the shots received acclaim at a 2003 exhibition in Hendrix's former home near Bond Street, he began reworking all of the shots with a view to publishing them online. Sadly, Slingsby passed away last year, but with help from his widow the unique photos have been released in the run-up to the October release of *All Is By My Side*, the biopic of Hendrix's formative years starring André 3000. The OutKast man went the extra mile for the role, even learning to play guitar left-handed, though it's a shame that Hendrix's estate denied permission for any of his music to be used in the film.

Despite being gone for 44 years, 2014 is a busy year for Hendrix: Jack White covered his 'Manic Depression' as part of a marathon show in July; there are plans for a park in Jimi's honour in his birthplace of Seattle; and a host of his early recordings as a member of Curtis Knight & The Squires are being prepped for release. ■ LEONIE COOPER

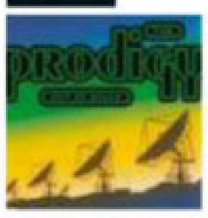
MIKI SLINGSBY/ REX

Jimi Hendrix backstage at London's Saville Theatre, 1967

XL all areas

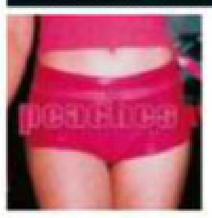
New compilation 'XL Recordings: Pay Close Attention' collects highlights from XL's 25-year history. Here's how the label evolved...

Rave



▶The Prodigy – 'Out Of Space' (1992)
XL was once one of London's leading rave labels. 'Out Of Space' caught The Prodigy on the cusp of the transition from club to festival.
▶SEE ALSO SL2 – 'DJs Take Control'

Electroclash



▶Peaches – 'Fuck The Pain Away' (2000)
Making a name for itself as a truly cutting-edge label, XL was at the forefront of the early 2000s electroclash mini-revolution.

Garage rock



▶The White Stripes – 'Seven Nation Army' (2003)
When XL finally succumbed to indie rock, they signed The White Stripes for their huge third album 'White Blood Cells'.

Grime



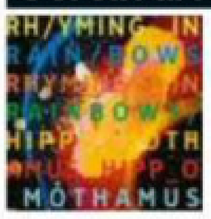
▶Dizzee Rascal – 'I Luv U' (2003)
XL dipped its toe into the emerging grime scene, scoring a Mercury Prize win with Dizzee's 'Boy In Da Corner' album.
▶SEE ALSO Wiley – 'Igloo'

XL BUT AWOL

The tracks XL didn't see fit to put on the comp

▶Friendly Fires – 'Paris' ▶Electric Six – 'Gay Bar' ▶Azealia Banks – '212' ▶Jack Penate – 'Be The One'

Cerebral rock



▶Radiohead – 'Weird Fishes/ Arpeggi' (2008)
XL became major players in the rock world when they bagged the biggest fish in the pond, releasing the physical edition of Radiohead's 'In Rainbows' in 2008.

Mainstream pop



▶Adele – 'Rolling In The Deep' (2010)
XL's venture into the mainstream soul paid off when they took a chance on Adele's '19'. Seven million album sales later, they're one of the pivotal players in British music.

Horror rap



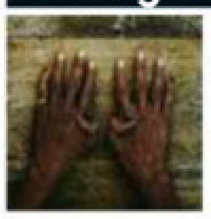
▶Tyler, The Creator – 'Yonkers' (2011)
Having broken grime, XL did the same for the next generation of dark rap, putting out Tyler, The Creator's 'Goblin' album in 2011.

R&B noir

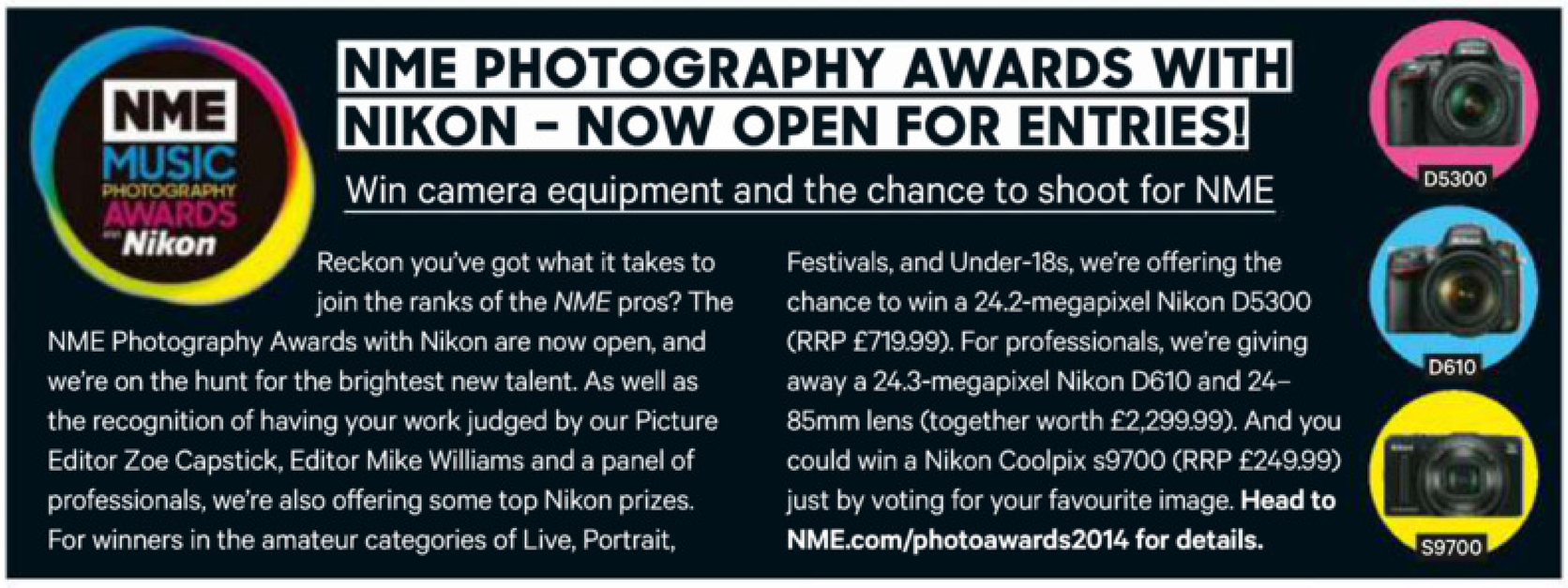


▶The xx – 'Angels' (2012)
As they were raking in the Adele millions, XL were also revolutionising indie with The xx's minimal alt-R&B debut.

Cult legends



▶Bobby Womack – 'Please Forgive My Heart' (2012)
As the label hit its third decade, it was time for XL to work on its heritage in its own inimitable way. Damon Albarn and XL owner Richard Russell reinvented Bobby Womack for the 21st century with his 2012 album 'Bravest Man In The Universe'.
▶SEE ALSO Gil Scott-Heron & Jamie xx – 'NY Is Killing Me'



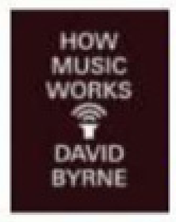
MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

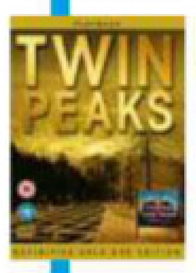
Tom Hudson



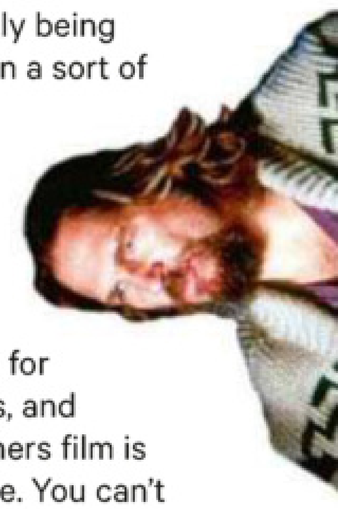
Pulled Apart By Horses



BOOK
How Music Works by David Byrne
"It's about how music is shaped by the environment. He talks about the CBGB bands, how they sounded that way because they were crammed into this tiny little venue."



BOXSET
Twin Peaks
"Something of the pacing of it suits being on tour – constantly being a bit tired and in a sort of dream world."



FILM
The Big Lebowski
"The tourbus is a great place for weird comedies, and this Coen Brothers film is a band favourite. You can't usually hear the audio because we're reciting the script back."

GAME
Metal Gear Solid 3
"Me and James are *Metal Gear Solid* freaks. It's a stealth game, a lot of sneaking around and murdering people."

HOME COMFORT
iPod
"In the early days, when we were sleeping on people's floors, it was useful to stick a bit of Joanna Newsom on and imagine you're in a magical dreamland, instead of a kitchen."



▶Pulled Apart By Horses' tour begins at Coventry's Kasbah on Monday, August 18

AS TOLD TO LOUIS PATTISON

XL WORDS: MARK BEAUMONT PHOTOS: DANNY PAYNE, REX

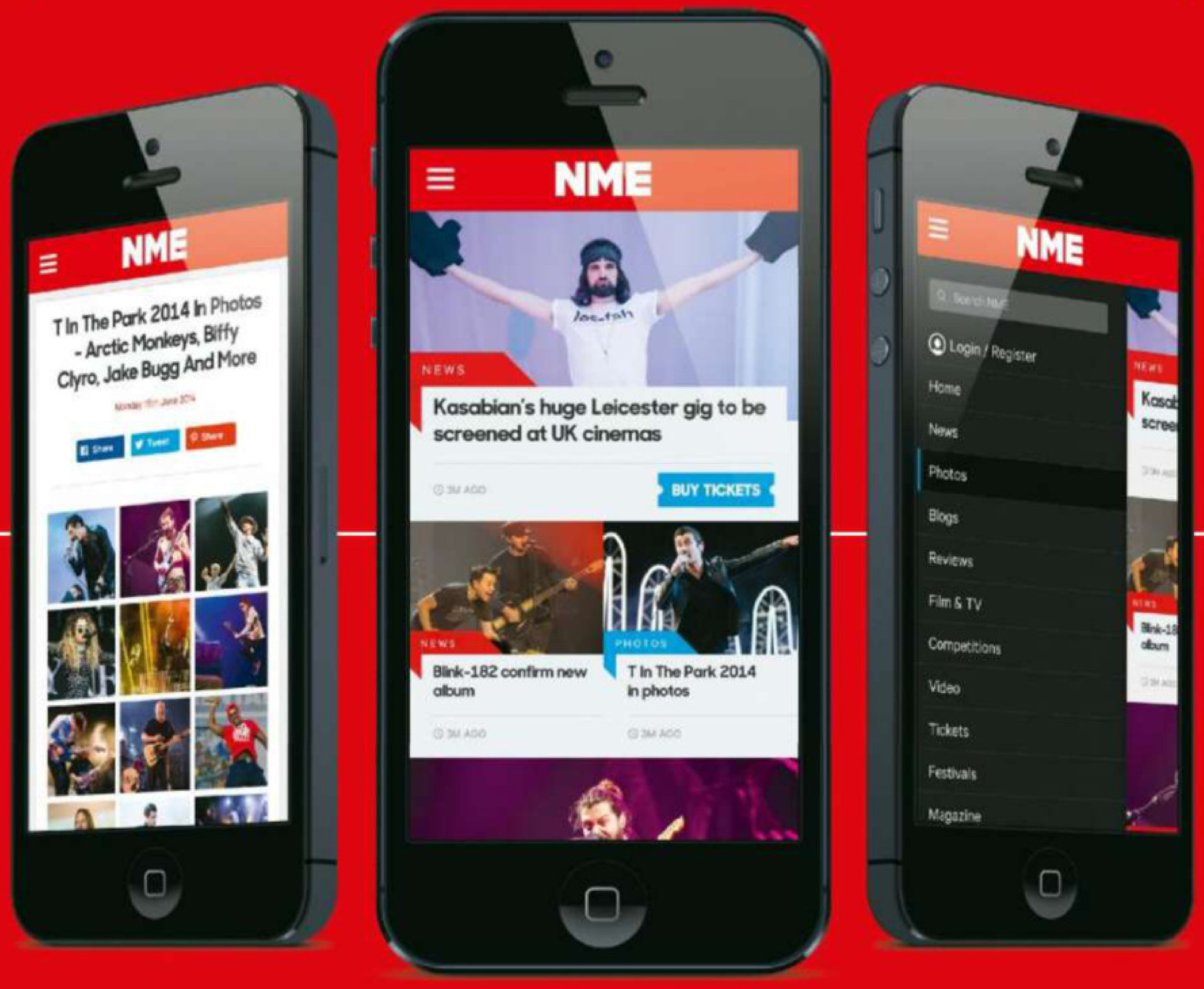
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NME.COM ON MOBILE - REDESIGNED WITH MUSIC FANS IN MIND

Strat's entertainment

The guitar played by everyone from Buddy Holly to The Smiths to Daft Punk turns 60 this year. Here's to the Fender Stratocaster



Nile Rodgers calls his The Hitmaker. Bob Dylan went electric with his. Jimi Hendrix set his on fire. Those Fender Stratocasters are the tools behind some of pop music's greatest moments, but they're by no means the only ones of note. The iconic, curvy guitar that links Buddy Holly and Kurt Cobain to Ronnie Wood and Arctic Monkeys is 60 years old this year.



Leo Fender

"Leo Fender's an artist, an original," said Rolling Stone Keith Richards of the man who designed the guitar. "The Strat is as sturdy and strong as a mule, yet it has the elegance of a racehorse. It's got everything you need, and that's rare to find in anything. The man made a work of art here." The late Beatle George Harrison, who played a Stratocaster consistently from 1965 onwards, was equally complimentary: "I just love the shape. I love the three pickups, the shape of the head, the neck," he said. "Even if it wasn't a guitar, if it was a doorstop or something, it would still be a great piece of design."

Fender's background in building PA systems, and later designing Hawaiian guitars, meant he knew what musicians wanted soundwise, too. The Strat was his second stab at a solid-bodied guitar after designing the Broadcaster, later renamed the Telecaster, in 1950. Taking on board comments from players, he made several improvements, including more pickups, more variety in tones and a new, space-age shape.

The first Strat was born in March 1954, and full factory production began in October that year. There have been countless variations, but the guitar has remained fundamentally unchanged ever since, lending its distinctive, bright tone to records in almost every genre. "You can make a Stratocaster sound like any other guitar," says enthusiast Johnny Marr. "But nothing else sounds like a Strat."

Marr bought his first, a white 1963 L Series, in 1984, paying £900 (around £2,100 in today's money) for it. "A lot of money – the most I'd ever spent – but totally worth it," he says. "The first song I wrote on it was 'The Boy With The Thorn In His Side', and that guitar's all over 'The Queen Is Dead'. You can hear it on the end of 'Some Girls Are Bigger Than Others' and the B-side 'Unloveable', and 'I Know It's Over' is pretty much all Strat. I used it solidly on the 1985 'Meat Is Murder' tour as well, and pretty much ever since." Like many others, Marr believes Fender's classic instrument sounds best 'clean' – without distortion – which best shows off the single-coil pickups. He notes the irony in the Strat's most famous proponent, Jimi Hendrix, playing one while pioneering distortion.

"I suppose that just shows its versatility, really," he says.



STRATOSPHERIC SOUNDS

Five songs where the Strat is the star



Nowhere Man
The Beatles
George Harrison and John Lennon bought a matching pair of sonic-blue Strats in 1965. They're best heard on the chiming, bell-like 'Nowhere Man' solo.

Misirlou
Dick Dale
While Buddy Holly was the poster boy for the Strat, the so-called King Of The Surf Guitar was reportedly the first musician to be given a guitar by Leo Fender.

Hey Joe
Jimi Hendrix
From its ringing opening note through the woody midrange and smooth-sounding licks that pepper the song, Hendrix's 'Hey Joe' tone is quintessential Strat.

Let's Dance
David Bowie
Bowie's 1983 hit features not one great Strat part, but two. There's the muted, funky sound of Nile Rodgers' Hitmaker and the bluesy solo from the then little-known Stevie Ray Vaughan.

I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor
Arctic Monkeys
Alex Turner may change guitars like the weather onstage, but once it was all about his Olympic white Strat, as heard on their debut single.

ED MILES, PIETER M VAN HATTEM, GETTY, RETNA, REX

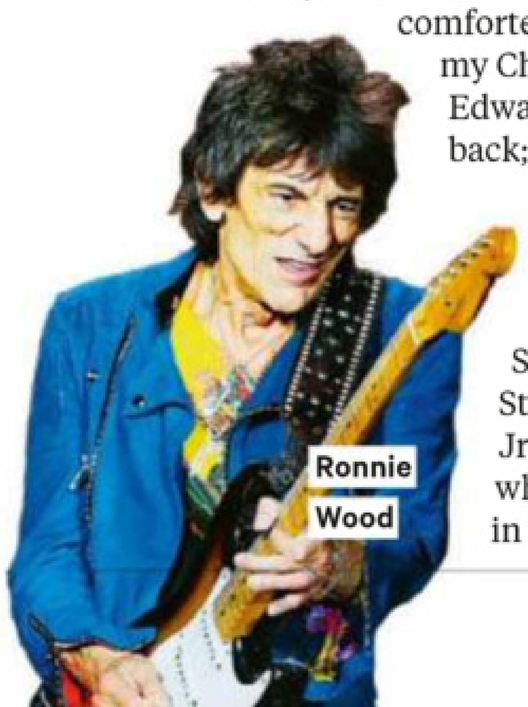


"NOTHING ELSE SOUNDS LIKE A STRAT"
Johnny Marr

Nile Rodgers and (below) Parquet Courts' Austin Brown



Marr cites Nile Rodgers as a major influence on his playing, and Rodgers used a 1960 model to write and record songs with Chic, David Bowie, Madonna, Sister Sledge and, more recently, Daft Punk – that's The Hitmaker you can hear on last year's smash 'Get Lucky'. It's estimated the combined worth of the music made with that guitar is $2 billion – little wonder he was so upset when he left it on a train last year. "I felt like a parent who'd lost a child," says Rodgers. "This is the one guitar I can't live without. It's played on so many records, at so many concerts, and even comforted me after the death of my Chic co-founder Bernard Edwards." Thankfully he got it back; after a frantic drive to the depot, he found it on the train seat where he'd left it.



Ronnie Wood

Another guitarist who wouldn't swap his Strat for the world is The Strokes' Albert Hammond Jr. He bought his Olympic white reissue of a 1972 Strat in Richie's Guitar Shop in New York, and can be heard chopping away at it on their anthemic single 'Last Nite'. "It was 1999," says Hammond Jr, "and I always really liked the idea of playing a big-bodied guitar. I bought the Epiphone Riviera that Nick [Valensi, fellow Strokes guitarist] plays, but the day after, JP [Bowersock, The Strokes' musical guru] – who was teaching me and Julian to play guitar – told me to go back and get the Strat. It just worked and I've very rarely played anything else ever since.

"There's something about the middle pickup – it just has such a high output," Hammond Jr says. "People always email and call to say they've seen one just the same and I should check it out, so I do, but they're never as good. There's just something very special about that Strat."

Another special Strat belongs to Austin Brown of Parquet Courts. The surf-green guitar he plays is actually a Squier Bullet Strat, a budget instrument made by Fender for college kids. It might not be fancy, but it does provide the backbone of the Brooklyn band's sound. "I got it from a roommate who couldn't make rent one month," says Green. "He gave me the guitar instead and I've played it ever since. At first I hated the way it sounds but played it anyway. Now, I absolutely love it and I've never found a guitar that sounds better. Being a good guitarist isn't about having an expensive instrument, it's about doing something instantly recognisable."

At the opposite end of the spectrum is '#0001', owned by Pink Floyd's Dave Gilmour. Despite its serial number, it's not actually the very first off the line, but it is a very early example. "It just doesn't get any better," Gilmour said of the guitar. "I think it's about as perfect as a guitar can be." ■ ANDY WELCH

FIVE STRAT FACTS

The things you never knew about the world's most famous guitar

1 The first Stratocaster bodies were made from ash, with the necks made from one piece of maple.

2 The first Strat cost $229.50 without a tremolo arm or $249.50 with. Adjusted for inflation, that's around £1,250 in today's money – about £300 more than a new American Standard model would cost.

3 Stratocasters were impossible to come by in the UK during the mid-'50s owing to a ban on the sale of imported American goods.

4 The first Stratocaster known to have been imported to the UK was a 1959 model purchased by Cliff Richard for guitarist Hank Marvin. It's now owned by his Shadows bandmate Bruce Welch.

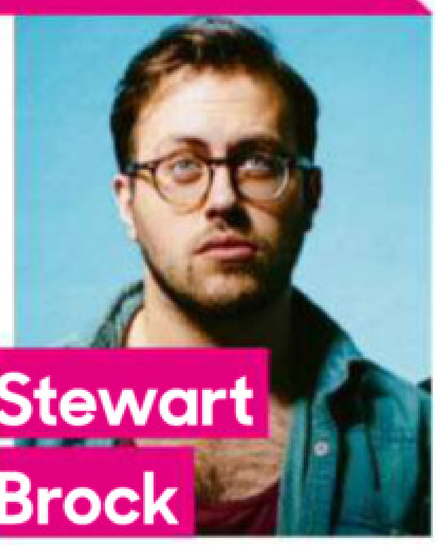
5 A Strat was the guitar Bob Dylan chose to play when he 'went electric' at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965. The guitar sold at auction last December for $946,000 (£562,000).

▶WIN A FENDER STRATOCASTER

NME has a **limited edition 60th anniversary Classic Player '50s Stratocaster** worth £994.80 to give away. To be in with a chance of winning it, see **NME.COM/win.**



THE MINI INTERVIEW



Stewart Brock

Frontman, Prides

Prides were the little-known band playing alongside Lulu and Kylie at the Commonwealth Games closing show. Who did you sleep with to get the gig?

"Ha! It was luck. The musical director heard our track 'Messiah' and thought it would work well. Being a new band from Glasgow, they thought they'd take a punt."

Did you worry about looking out to blank faces?

"We expected to be the 'everybody goes to the bar' moment, but lots of people said we were their highlight of the night."

You tweeted a selfie with Kylie. What was it like backstage?

"Everybody was in a shared green room, so we were drinking champagne with Lulu and her dancers. She had to sing 'Auld Lang Syne' at the end and she couldn't remember the words."

What's next for Prides?

"We've got a UK tour in October and we're headlining the BBC Introducing stage at Reading and Leeds, as well as finishing the album off."

Are you any cop at sport yourselves?

"Absolutely not! The drunken conversations at the ceremony were funny: 'What do you do? Oh cool... I don't know what that sport is, but well done on the medal!'"

■ GARY RYAN

Power out?

Why has the man who gave us festivals as we know them been banned from staging live music?



Vince Power convinced the Sex Pistols to play a one-off gig in Finsbury Park in 1996

"THIS WON'T AFFECT MY ENTHUSIASM FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRY"
Vince Power

He's known as the godfather of festivals, but last week, Vince Power was barred by from hosting live music events by London's High Court.

His firm, VPMG, had failed to pay PRS – the body representing songwriters, composers and music publishers – its fees for Hop Farm Festival from 2009 to 2012. Power claimed he hadn't been notified about the case because the company behind Hop Farm went into administration in 2012, adding that PRS were being "vindictive" in pursuing him. Either way, Power's empire has been hobbled over a matter of £7,987 plus unspecified PRS fees.

The ruling is the latest in the mogul's string of recent woes. In October 2012, Music Festivals PLC – a subsidiary of VPMG – collapsed owing that year's Hop Farm headliners Suede £46,000 and Peter Gabriel £100,000. This year's Hop Farm – headlined by Brian Wilson, Grace Jones and Ray Davies – took place last month under new promoters Kent Entertainment and Hop Farm Trading.



Power had retaliated to what he called the "hijacking" of Hop Farm by seeking to stage a new festival in nearby Tunbridge Wells. The name? Hop Farm Festival. It didn't happen.

It's all a dramatic reversal of fortune for a man who helped transform live music. Funded by his furniture business, Power opened his first venue, The Mean Fiddler, in Harlesden, London, in 1982. Soon, his Mean Fiddler Organisation (MFO) had taken over the Astoria, Forum and Garage, also in London.

In 1989, MFO began running Reading Festival, and 10 years later launched its sister festival in Leeds. Alongside Melvin Benn (who now runs Festival Republic), Power introduced ideas now taken for granted at festivals, such as multiple stages. In 2000, when Glastonbury's future was in doubt because of gatecrashers, MFO bought a 20 per cent stake. Power claimed he improved Glastonbury's security, which Michael Eavis denies.

Power sold his stake in MFO in 2005 for a reported £12 million, saying it had become too corporate. He bought into Spanish festival Benicàssim and made it a staple for fans seeking sunshine, cheap tickets and strong line-ups: Arctic Monkeys, The Strokes and Arcade Fire headlined in 2011. Loss-making years for Benicàssim and Hop Farm in 2012 saw Music Festivals PLC go into administration, only to be bought back by Power.

Opinions about Power differ within the industry. One former associate, who did not want to be named, said: "Vince was a revolutionary in his day, but he's failed to keep track with changing trends. His style is a bit heavy – he rubs people up the wrong way easily." Another long-time associate said: "Festival promotion is a tight-knit community, and Vince has been frozen out. That's massively unfair to someone whose ideas shaped the festival circuit in the first place. Vince is 67 and could have retired years ago – but you won't find anyone more passionate about music."



Power still has a small stake in Maraworld, which runs Benicàssim, having sold most of his share in 2013. His primary concern now is running west London pub The KPH. It's become an established addition to the London indie scene, but on July 12, when Superfood played there, part of the ceiling collapsed. The venue has since reopened, and Power is already looking at getting back on his feet, with a prospective new festival in France. "The music industry has changed and it is still changing," he told *NME*. "But this hasn't affected my enthusiasm to continue to work within the industry that I have for decades."

■ JOHN EARLS

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Vince's top successes

Sex Pistols at Finsbury Park
One of Power's rare excursions into one-off events. In 1996 he persuaded the punk legends to reform for their first show since 1978.

The Astoria
The 1,500-capacity club in central London saw early shows by Oasis, Eminem and Arctic Monkeys as well as intimate gigs by The Rolling Stones and David Bowie before it shut in 2009 to make way for Crossrail.



The Mean Fiddler
Power, a country music fan, modelled the original club on Nashville bars. Johnny Cash and Paul McCartney (above) played before it moved next door to the Astoria in the '90s. It was sold in 2006.

Reading & Leeds Festivals
From the moment Power took over Reading in 1989, it became the festival powerhouse it remains today, assisted by landmark early headline sets by Nirvana and Oasis.

Hop Farm
Intended by Power to be the most comfortable, family-friendly and sponsorship-free festival, the 2011 edition of the 30,000-capacity Kent event hosted Prince's only British festival appearance.





Insane Clown Posse say defining their fans as a gang has tarnished their reputation

JUGGALOS: DON'T WANT TO BE SEEN AS A GANG? THEN STOP ACTING LIKE ONE

BY **DAN STUBBS**

In the wake of a horrific assault, it's time the vast majority of peaceful Insane Clown Posse fans took a stand



Last week, Paul Martin Hurst and Cary Lee Edwards of Hebron, Maryland, were arrested for attempting to cut off their roommate's tattoo. After failing to do so, they reportedly set the individual, Zachary Swanson, on fire. The victim was left with facial fractures, broken ribs, a lacerated liver and a bleeding brain. The two suspects have been charged with attempted first- and second-degree murder, reckless endangerment and assault with a deadly weapon.

What makes the incident notable is this: all three men identified as Juggalos, the name given to fans of Detroit horrorcore hip-hop duo Insane Clown Posse. Papers charging the pair suggest that they were attempting to remove an Insane Clown Posse tattoo from Swanson's skin, believing he had "disrespected" the group and "hadn't earned" the right to wear it.

This is particularly bad timing for the band. The duo – Violent J (above, left) and Shaggy 2 Dope (right) – recently appealed to overturn an FBI report that classifies their fans as a "loosely organised gang", with all of the criminal menace that implies. It was thrown out of court.

Juggalos certainly look a lot like a gang: they replicate their heroes' 'killer clown' makeup, they favour certain colours (black, white and red), they have tattoos identifying their allegiances, including the group's 'hatchet man' logo, and they are thought to take part in bizarre initiation rituals, though some merely involve being sprayed with Faygo, a soda pop.

Juggalos also look a lot like passionate fans of any band: they meet once a year at music festival The Gathering Of The Juggalos, they wear Insane Clown Posse T-shirts and they attend shows. The FBI estimates that there are one million self-proclaimed Juggalos across the States, and that up to 90 per cent of them are peaceful, non-criminal music fans. The problem is, thanks to the menacing killer-clown makeup, they don't look like harmless music fans.

Understandably, Juggalos – and the band – are upset about being labelled as a gang. Imagine how you'd feel if your Smiths T-shirt marked you out not as a person who knows every word of 'Meat Is Murder', but as a person who might at any moment bludgeon a passer-by for tucking into a Big Mac. But at what point does a musical tribe become a malevolent entity? What responsibility does an artist have for the actions of their fans?

The answer, in this case, should probably come from up top. If Juggalos behave like a gang, then Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope are their de facto leaders, whether they like it or not. And if violent crimes are being committed not just in their name but in their honour, they need to issue a decree to the faithful telling them that it's simply not cool. As for the 90 per cent of fans, they will, at some point, need to decide if the 10 per cent have ruined it for the rest, and if their love for Insane Clown Posse goes deep enough to face persecution for it. ■

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

LOST ALBUMS #42



Connie Converse
How Sad, How Lonely (2009)



Chosen by Yuki Tsujii, Bo Ningen

"Connie Converse was a folk singer-songwriter from New York. She started making music in the '50s, then disappeared in the early '70s. She packed all her stuff into her car, posted a letter to a relative and just drove off. Some tapes of her music were rediscovered recently and used to make an album, which I think is her only release. It's really simple, beautiful folk. When I listen to it, it makes me sad, but that's the great thing about it – that it's so quiet and gentle, like a whisper, but it can make you feel such powerful emotions."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** 2009
▶**LABEL** Squirrel Thing Recordings
▶**BEST TRACKS** Trouble, We Lived Alone
▶**WHERE TO FIND IT** In good record shops and online
▶**LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

LOST ALBUM AS TOLD TO CHRIS COTTINGHAM PHOTOS: CORBIS, GETTY

IN THE STUDIO



Ryan Adams in his Pax-Am studio in LA, July 2014

Ryan Adams

The singer-songwriter ignites his punky side after scrapping a whole LP of "slow, adult shit"

Ryan Adams' 14th studio album could have been an entirely different beast. A couple of years ago he wrote and recorded a full LP with producer Glyn Johns, who worked on 2011's 'Ashes & Fire'. Then he sat down and listened to it. "It was slow, adult shit," Adams remembers now. "I'm just over that."

So he scrapped the whole thing, leading to an awkward dinner with his manager and distributors. "I had to say, 'By the way, I just spent $100,000 or more on this record, but I'm shelving it,'" he laughs.

The thing was, Adams' mind was elsewhere. While he'd been recording at Sunset Sound's famed Studio B, construction had finished on his adjacent personal studio Pax-Am. He says:

"I HAVE ENOUGH SINGLES TO LAST ME FOREVER. I'M ON THE WRITING STREAK OF MY LIFE"
RYAN ADAMS

"The whole time we were recording at Studio B I was thinking, 'I should be next door. I should be experimenting. I should just be writing for a whole year.'"

So that's what he did. "They must have thought I was completely fucking mental. More than normal," he says. "But I did it – 75 songs and numerous bags of weed later, I have a record and enough singles to last me forever. I'm on the writing streak of my life. Things could not be cooler."

The resulting self-produced album is scrappier and punkier than much of Adams' previous work. "The records I like sound more like this record," he says. "I love bands like The Wipers, Homestead Records bands like Antietam and New Zealand bands like The Verlaines, The Chills and The Clean."

It retains traces of Los Angeles AOR like Tom Petty and Fleetwood Mac, although Adams credits this to geography. "Well, I do live in LA. It would be weird if it sounded like a North Dakota album. I'd be like, 'Damn, I gotta change what kind of weed I'm smoking.'"

The album's eponymous title reflects how personal it is. "This seemed like a less pretentious way of saying that I recorded it myself at my own studio, rather than calling it 'On My Own Time' or 'Both Sides Now, Both Of Them Me'," he says. "Eventually I just said, 'Let's put a picture of my face on it and call it my fucking name.'"

Adams is adamant that whether or not people like his new direction is none of his concern. "I'm too old to care who likes my records," he says. "It's all bullshit anyway. People make judgements about records but the music is eternal. I like 'Be Here Now'. I don't even care if Noel Gallagher doesn't like it, because you know what? I will take two bong hits and that record will blow my mind. I've never spent a day hating something. You don't get a do-over. If you make it to 80 and you're dying, they don't say, 'Remember that day you spent blogging about hating Pink Floyd? We're giving you a 24-hour rebate. It's a special on life. You get the time back you spent being a useless fucking computer blogger.' I haven't heard about that happening. I don't give a fuck what somebody else likes, because I'm busy being passionate and being creative. I will say, though... it is funny as fuck when Noel Gallagher doesn't like something. He can really sum it up, man."

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

▶THE DETAILS

- ▶**TITLE** Ryan Adams
- ▶**RELEASE DATE** September 8, 2014
- ▶**LABEL** Pax-Am
- ▶**PRODUCER** Ryan Adams
- ▶**RECORDED** Pax-Am Studio, Hollywood
- ▶**TRACKS** Gimme Something Good, Kim, Trouble, Am I Safe, My Wrecking Ball, Stay With Me, Shadows, Feels Like Fire, I Just Might, Tired Of Giving Up, Let Go
- ▶**RYAN ADAMS SAYS** "I've been set free by being able to record in my own studio, in my own time and with my own label. This record is a little more in tune with what I am."

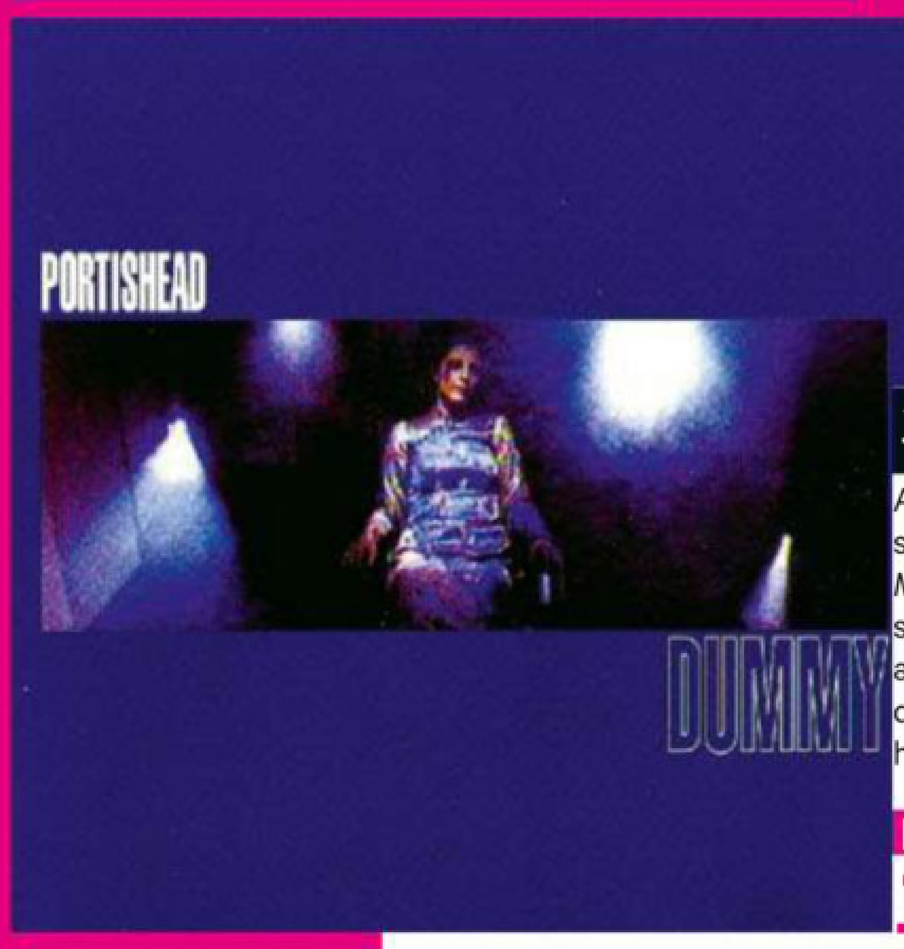
BRINSON + BANKS

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"OUR MUSIC WAS TOO BLEAK TO HAVE SEX TO"

Geoff Barrow



THIS WEEK...

Portishead: Dummy

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this month, the trio's Mercury Prize-winning debut took 'the Bristol Sound' into the mainstream

THE BACKGROUND

Portishead formed in 1991, when Geoff Barrow, a young beatmaker and studio engineer from Bristol moving in the same circles as hometown heroes Massive Attack, attended a government Enterprise Training Scheme and met Beth Gibbons, then a singer-songwriter performing Janis Joplin covers in local pubs. Teaming up with Adrian Utley, a local session guitarist with a passion for '60s soundtrack greats like John Barry, Lalo Schifrin and Riz Ortolani, the group took their name from a sleepy town eight miles down the Bristol Channel, where Barrow had moved at the age of 15 following his parents' divorce. Debut album 'Dummy' melded the trio's diverse influences into a smoky, gothic hip-hop lent much pathos by Gibbons' vocals, comparable to Billie Holiday in their wrenching romantic desolation.

◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

A still from the 10-minute short film *To Kill A Dead Man*, a spy movie homage starring Barrow as a rooftop assassin and Gibbons as the distraught wife of the man he's contracted to kill.

FIVE FACTS

1 'Mysterons' is named after the fictional alien race in the 1960s British sci-fi series *Captain Scarlet And The Mysterons*. The melody line, often thought to be a theremin, was actually made on a Roland SH-101 synthesizer.

2 The distinctive sample used on 'Sour Times' comes from 'Danube Incident' by the Argentine composer Lalo Schifrin, who scored numerous Clint Eastwood films and wrote the theme to *Mission: Impossible*.

3 'Dummy' employs a number of peculiar production techniques, such as recording tracks, pressing them to vinyl and then mixing them back through a turntable. Portishead's State Of Art studio was named with tongue in cheek, being heavily reliant on old analogue equipment.

4 The Isaac Hayes sample on 'Glory Box' also found its way onto 'Hell Is Round The Corner', a single by fellow Bristol artist Tricky.

5 Portishead's debut beat Oasis' 'Definitely Maybe', PJ Harvey's 'To Bring You My Love' and Tricky's 'Maxinquaye' to win the 1995 Mercury Music Prize. Barrow thanked his label but said of the event, "I just don't think you can judge music like this."

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"I'm so tired/Of playing/Playing with this bow and arrow" – 'Glory Box'

A glory box is a piece of furniture in which unmarried women would keep items for their wedding or married life. This song finds Beth Gibbons getting serious about love; she's after a man, not a boy.

"'Cos nobody loves me/It's true/Not like you do" – 'Sour Times'

With its invocations of "scattered seeds" and "forbidden fruit", 'Sour Times' might be a reflection on infidelity – but is Beth the victim or the other woman?

"Wandering stars, for whom it is reserved/ The blackness of darkness, forever" – 'Wandering Star'

This is grief reimagined as a lonely wanderer drifting through the cosmos.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"'Dummy' unspools with melancholy majesty. From one angle, its languid slowbeat blues clearly occupy similar terrain to soulmates Massive Attack and all of Bristol hip-hop's extended family. But from another these are avant-garde ambient moonscapes of a ferociously experimental nature."

Stephen Dalton, *NME*, 13 August 1994

WHAT WE SAY NOW

The dinner parties haven't dated it: 'Dummy' still sounds like a thing of icy perfection, its cold and bleak torch songs as emotionally potent and darkly powerful as Joy Division's 'Closer' or Leonard Cohen's 'Songs Of Love And Hate'.

FAMOUS FAN

"It's everything that I love about music. It's hip-hop, trip-hop, acid jazz, alternative... I don't want to call it R&B, but there's some soul in there. Very dark and tortured-sounding soul, but soul nonetheless." **CeeLo Green**

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I'd have thought our music was too bleak to have sex to. We're nothing like Barry White. Our sound is heavy, not sexy at all." **Geoff Barrow**

THE AFTERMATH

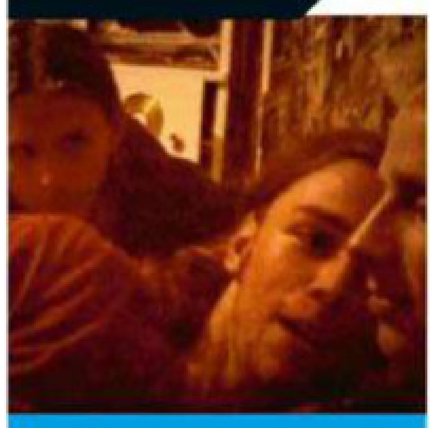
To Geoff Barrow's horror, 'Dummy' was adored by the dinner-party set. Possibly as a consequence, when Portishead returned three years later with 1997's bleak 'Portishead' they pared back the samples and ratcheted up the darkness. After live album 'Roseland NYC Live' in 1998, the band took a long break, returning in 2007 to curate ATP. A new album, 'Third', followed in April 2008. Barrow also plays in Beak, makes hip-hop as Quakers, is half of soundtrack duo Drokk, co-runs the record label Invada and is currently working on a soundtrack for Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*. Beth Gibbons is working on a solo record for Domino, while Utley also plays in Stonephace and Adrian Utley's Guitar Orchestra.

▶THE DETAILS

▶RECORDED 1993–1994 **▶RELEASE DATE** August 22, 1994 **▶LENGTH** 45:29 **▶PRODUCERS** Portishead, Adrian Utley **▶STUDIOS** State Of Art, Bristol and Coach House Studios, Bristol **▶HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 2 **▶UK SALES** 825,000 **▶SINGLES** Numb, Sour Times, Glory Box **▶TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Mysterons ▶2. Sour Times ▶3. Strangers ▶4. It Could Be Sweet ▶5. Wandering Star ▶6. Numb ▶7. Roads ▶8. Pedestal ▶9. Biscuit ▶10. Glory Box

WORDS: LOUIS PATTISON PHOTO: RETNA

NEWS DESK



THE NUMBERS

20

Years since Muse formed. To celebrate, Matt Bellamy posted this photo of the trio as teens

10

Years The Cribs spent with Wichita Recordings. They will release their seventh album through new label Sony RED in 2015

5/2

Ladbrokes' odds on Kate Tempest to win this year's Mercury Music Prize, making her the favourite ahead of FKA Twigs and Jungle

£250,000

Government funding awarded to bands including The Wombats and The Wytches

BIG MOUTH

"He went to see Jim Morrison and killed him. I mean, I'm sure it was an accident. Poor bastard. The smack was too strong. And he died"



MARIANNE FAITHFULL claims her former lover, heroin dealer Jean de Breteuil, was behind the Doors frontman's death.



THE BIG QUESTION

A STUDY SAYS BASS-HEAVY MUSIC MAKES YOU FEEL POWERFUL. WHICH TUNES HAVE THAT EFFECT ON OUR PANEL?



Josh Hayward
The Horrors
"I listen to the Origin Unknown track 'Valley Of The Shadows' from 1993. That really, really low note makes you feel uncomfortable, then the minute you turn it off, you feel elated."



David Renshaw
NME News Reporter
"Besides the obvious choices ('Simply The Best', the *Rocky* theme) the songs I turn to when I need a boost tend to be fast and heavy. 'Wait And Bleed' by Slipknot always works."



Aaron Skates
NME reader
"Seeing Fat White Family play 'Is It Raining In Your Mouth' with the entire crowd singing '*I was born to have it*' was pretty incredible."



WHO THE FUCK IS...



Igor Vorozhbitsyn

This is the Russian man who was attacked by a bear while on a fishing trip in northern Russia, only to be saved by his Justin Bieber ringtone.

Bears hate Beiber?

Looks like it. The sound of 'Baby' coming from Vorozhbitsyn's handset was enough to send the beast scampering back into the woods. The man did still suffer deep cuts to his face, neck and chest in the incident.

Presumably Vorozhbitsyn is a bigger fan than ever now?

He never liked Bieber in the first place. "My granddaughter loaded it onto my phone for a joke," he told reporters.

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK



Thom Yorke

The Radiohead frontman cut loose at boutique Devon festival Leopallooza, performing a DJ set for around 30 lucky people. The organisers deny reports that he was spotted barn dancing.



Gig-goers

Last week a man's fingertip was bitten off at a Beyoncé and Jay Z gig; then a man clamped his teeth into victim Ben Lenet's arm while watching the Arctic Monkeys headline Chicago's Lollapalooza festival.

AND FINALLY

Teetotal in the park

Nottingham is to stage its first alcohol-free music festival. Featuring a dozen bands and solo musicians, Sound Recovery will raise money for addiction-related charities in the local area.

Pyramid scheme

London Grammar have denied that they are members of The Illuminati after being pictured with an Eye Of Providence. But then they would say that, wouldn't they?

Doctor Woo Ha!!

The creator of *Orange Is The New Black* has revealed that she once wrote a superhero TV show for Busta Rhymes. Sadly, Jenji Kohan couldn't get the series commissioned.

▶Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS AUGUST 10, 2014



NEW **01** Charlie Simpson
Long Road Home NUSIC SOUNDS

The former singer with pop-rock act Busted and the somewhat gnarlier Fightstar builds on the success of his debut solo album 'Young Pilgrim', reaching Number One with its follow-up 'Long Road Home'.

▲	2	Lazaretto	**Jack White** XL RECORDINGS
▼	3	Eric Clapton & Friends: The Breeze	**Eric Clapton** POLYDOR
▲	4	X	**Ed Sheeran** ASYLUM
■	5	Jungle	**Jungle** XL RECORDINGS
▼	6	From Scotland With Love	**King Creosote** DOMINO
▼	7	Hypnotic Eye	**Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers** REPRISE
▲	8	World Peace Is None Of Your Business	**Morrissey** HARVEST
▲	9	Going Back Home	**Wilko Johnson/Roger Daltrey** UMC
▲	10	AM	**Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO
▲	11	Lost In The Dream	**War On Drugs** SECRETLY CANADIAN
▲	12	The Motown Years	**Michael Jackson & Jackson Five** MOTOWN
▲	13	Blue Smoke: The Best Of	**Dolly Parton** MASTERWORKS
▼	14	Wanted On Voyage	**George Ezra** COLUMBIA
▲	15	A Perfect Contradiction	**Paloma Faith** RCA
▼	16	The Voyager	**Jenny Lewis** WARNER BROS
▲	17	Stay Gold	**First Aid Kit** COLUMBIA
▲	18	Homecoming	**Nicola Benedetti** DECCA
▲	19	Alvvays	**Alvvays** TRANSGRESSIVE
▲	20	Caustic Love	**Paolo Nutini** ATLANTIC
▲	21	Ultraviolence	**Lana Del Rey** POLYDOR
NEW	22	They Want My Soul	**Spoon** ANTI
▲	23	48:13	**Kasabian** COLUMBIA
NEW	24	Angus & Julia Stone	**Angus & Julia Stone** REPUBLIC
▼	25	Blues Pills	**Blues Pills** NUCLEAR BLAST
▲	26	In The Lonely Hour	**Sam Smith** CAPITOL
▼	27	Trouble In Paradise	**La Roux** POLYDOR
▼	28	Ghost Stories	**Coldplay** PARLOPHONE
▲	29	If You Wait	**London Grammar** METAL & DUST
NEW	30	Lacuna	**Childhood** HOUSE ANXIETY
■	31	Led Zeppelin III	**Led Zeppelin** RHINO
▲	32	Led Zeppelin	**Led Zeppelin** RHINO
▼	33	Futurology	**Manic Street Preachers** COLUMBIA
▲	34	Complete Surrender	**Slow Club** CAROLINE
▼	35	Lese Majesty	**Shabazz Palaces** SUB POP
NEW	36	Turn Blue	**Black Keys** NONESUCH
NEW	37	Sea When Absent	**A Sunny Day In Glasgow** LEFSE
NEW	38	Very Best Of	**Joe Jackson** UMTV
NEW	39	Born To Die	**Lana Del Rey** POLYDOR
▼	40	Acoustic Classics	**Richard Thompson** BEESWING

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
SISTER RAY
LONDON

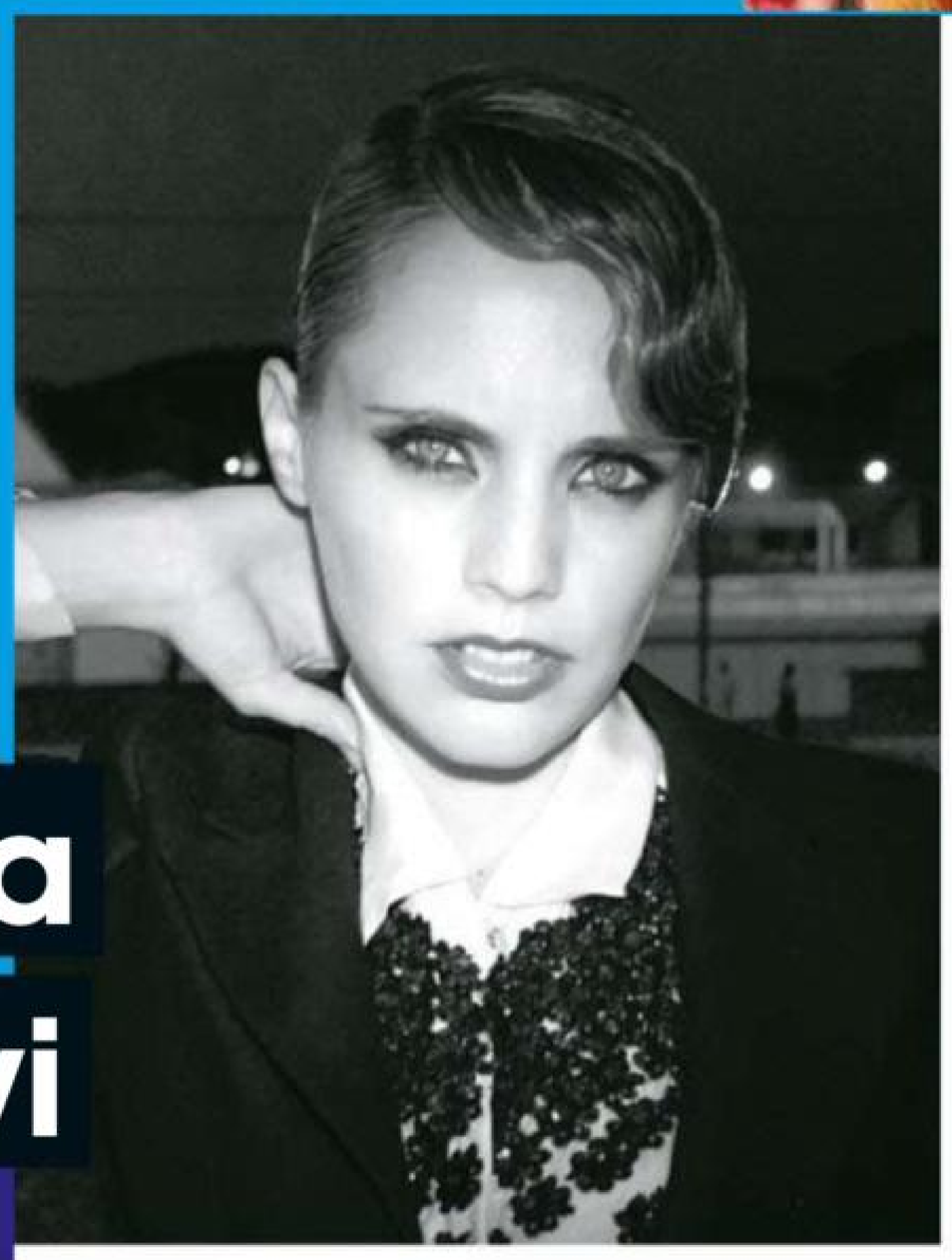
FOUNDED 1987
WHY IT'S GREAT A Soho staple, Sister Ray has a comprehensive range of eclectic buys and is also a key player in Record Store Day. There'll be a new branch opening at the Ace Hotel in Shoreditch soon.
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK Jungle – 'Jungle'
THEY SAY "Our stock changes so often that you can't help but keep coming back."

JENN FIVE, GETTY, CEN, ANDY FORD, ED MILES

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE


Cyndi Lauper


David Bowie



Anna Calvi

Singer-songwriter


Jim Morrison of The Doors

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING
'Space Oddity' – David Bowie

"My dad put it on the car when I was six, and at first I thought his voice was horrible. But by the end of the song, I loved it. That was it – my passion for David Bowie began and it hasn't stopped since."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH
'Baby It's You' – The Shirelles

"My parents played a lot of early-'60s songs and I was captivated by this – maybe by the beautiful melody. I've covered it in concert and whenever I sing it, it makes me think of being a kid."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT
'Aladdin Sane' – David Bowie

"I went with 'Aladdin Sane' over other Bowie albums aged eight because I liked the cover. Bowie's cool, but I also got an MC Hammer album around that time. I used it to squash a mosquito, and I never wanted to go near it again after that. Talk about 'U Can't Touch This'..."

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE A SINGER
'Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien' – Edith Piaf

"She wasn't afraid to sound rough, raw and a bit ugly. I can feel a lot of pain in her voice. Piaf was small, like me, and showed that it doesn't mean you have to have a tiny voice."

"MY PASSION FOR BOWIE BEGAN AT AGE EIGHT"

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO
'Something' – The Beatles

"I watched their *Anthology* TV series every day over breakfast as a teenager until it became too much. I can't engage with 'Something' any more, which I'm annoyed at myself for. George Harrison was my favourite – McCartney was too twee and Lennon seemed mean. George is the Beatle you'd have wanted to hang out with."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE
'Sign O' The Times' – Prince

"When I'm drunk, I feel like my dancing is OK, but that's probably just the drink fooling me. I'm certainly too shy to dance unless I've had a drink. I missed all of Prince's recent London shows as I've been too busy touring. Shame."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE
'Girls Just Want To Have Fun' – Cyndi Lauper

"I find the idea of karaoke terrifying, so I've never done it. The one time I got close was in Japan, as they have booths where it can be just among friends. It would have just been me and a bandmate, and I still ended up going 'Nah'."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD
'Blow' – Beyoncé

"Beyoncé's latest album ['Beyoncé'] is very, very far away from what I usually listen to or get inspired by. But I'm really enjoying it, and 'Blow' is more risqué than she is usually, so I find it quite entertaining."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN
'Cactus' – Pixies

"Every single line is to the point and very sexy. It's dark and suggests a bigger story that's left open to interpretation. They're a less interesting proposition without Kim Deal, but I wish I could see them live. They were on at the exact same time as me at Glastonbury."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF BEING HYPNOTISED
'The End' – The Doors

"I've used hypnosis as a restorative for a long time [Calvi's parents are both psychotherapists]. 'The End' best describes that state: it reminds me of lying on my bedroom floor as a teenager and drifting away."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF ITALY
'Surrender' – Elvis Presley

"I'm half-Italian on my father's side, and Elvis based 'Surrender' on a Neapolitan song called 'Torna A Surriento'. I do a cover of it in concert and it goes down well in Italy; it's a very Italian-sounding song, as the melody is extremely romantic."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL
'Young Americans' – David Bowie

"It'd have to be a Bowie song as he's been my inspiration for so long, and I'd want something cheesy and inappropriate. The whole 'Young Americans' album would fit the bill, as I'd want both weeping in the aisles and a celebration."

▶Anna Calvi plays Green Man Festival this weekend

AS TOLD TO JOHN EARLS PHOTOS: GETTY, REX, ROGER DECKKER

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NME NEW BAND OF THE WEEK

Protomartyr



The post-punks from Detroit bring their bleak humour to Britain

"The only reason I threw myself into a band at 37 was because I made terrible life decisions," says Protomartyr frontman Joe Casey. The crumpled David Cameron lookalike might have a point. When he's not making music, Joe works at a local comedy club in Detroit and lives at home with his mum. He met his bandmates – guitarists Greg Ahee and Scott Davidson plus drummer Alex Leonard – doing a similar job at a nearby theatre. "That, really wasn't a very good place. *Menopause: The Musical* was their longest-running play..."

His saving grace is Protomartyr. By his own admission, Casey isn't a confident man – early on, he had to get "drunk enough" just to get onstage. But the results are mesmerising, as evidenced on Protomartyr's superb second album 'Under Color Of Official Right'. The record takes small-time gripes and big issues and filters them through some of the most frantic and cathartic post-punk *Radar* has got its ears around since Parquet Courts, Merchandise and Milk Music first emerged.

"I'm doing it in a sense because I kind of realised that it's now or never," Joe explains. Despite this sense of carpe diem, he adds that the roots of Protomartyr lie in surrender: "The main thing that runs through our songs is resignation, actually realising that giving up is not a bad thing."

From the bottom of his barrel, Casey writes songs like 'Scum, Rise!', in which he calls out the deadbeat dads he sees at the opposite end of the bar, and 'Maidenhead', one of many Protomartyr songs with literary inspirations. Drawing on Patrick Hamilton's novel *Hangover Square*, it's about a man who dreams of moving away only to realise his new home is just as depressing as the one he came from. Darkly comic, it's entirely fitting for the band – and what's more, they might even get the chance to visit the actual Maidenhead when they head to Britain for a short tour later this month. Casey remains downbeat about those gigs, though, describing them as "45 minutes of a guy yelling at you". There is that, of course, but it's only the tiniest part of the story... ■ DAVID RENSHAW

▼
ON
NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC
NOW
▶An in-depth Q&A
with Joe Casey

▶THE DETAILS

▶**BASED** Detroit
▶**FOR FANS OF** Parquet Courts, Eagulls
▶**BUY IT NOW** 'Under Color Of Official Right' was released in April on Hardly Art
▶**SEE THEM LIVE** London Windmill (August 17), Manchester Ruby Lounge (18), London Lexington (19), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (20), Glasgow Broadcast (21)
▶**BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Kelley Deal of The Breeders is a huge fan of the band and has offered to record backing vocals for them

JENN FIVE

MORE NEW MUSIC



Zeahorse

Dog Legs

This female-fronted band formed after bashing out a song with chopsticks and Tupperware containers at a Japanese take-out meal gone awry, and they've now written one of the catchiest punk choruses since early Yeah Yeah Yeahs on new single 'Toot Toot, Hey'. Two minutes of noisy fun.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/doglegsmusic

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/dog-legs

Hopium

Shadowy Melbourne electronic duo Hopium's first couple of menacing, hook-filled tracks are enough to set them apart. The warped, bass-cloaked introduction of 'Cuts' was distinctive enough, but new track 'Dreamers', featuring Phoebe Lou of Snakadaktal, is a full-on future hit – all soaring synths and ethereal vocals worthy of Grimes.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/highonhopium

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/highonhopium

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

The Parrots

This Madrid surf-punk band are the Spanish counterparts to Atlanta's Black Lips, and on August 21 they come together for one night only in a gig that promises to bring the house down in San Sebastián. They're part of a growing scene in the Spanish capital that includes hotly tipped lo-fi girl group Deers, and their collective talents could easily take the UK by storm.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/theparrots1

▶HEAR THEM theparrots.bandcamp.com

Gudjohr

This duo hail from Bath and are partly named after Icelandic footballer Eidur Gudjohnsen, although their intelligent, experimental music doesn't sound like it was influenced by hot springs or modern sports. Instead, they mix the sequenced electronics of The Knife with This Heat's brand of percussive post-punk on fascinating tracks like 'Dive'. Their fourth EP 'Eliza Glow' is out on August 24.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/gudjhor

▶HEAR THEM gudjohr.bandcamp.com



The Parrots

Broncho

Oklahoma's Broncho are a medley of all your favourite good-time bands. Take a veritable melting pot of new wave à la Cheap Trick and The Cars, infuse it with some indie in the vein of The La's and you're getting close to what they're about. Check out single 'Class Historian'.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/bronchoband

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/bronchoband

Robyn Sherwell

David Kosten's studio has been one of London's most fertile breeding grounds for leftfield pop stars, having produced Bat For Lashes and Marina & The Diamonds in the past and, more recently, Cousin Marnie. His latest protégée is Guernsey-born vocalist Robyn Sherwell, whose sensitive, sprawling cut 'Love Somebody' evokes a deeper, darker, but no less polished version of Marina's pulsing, ambient pop.

▶SOCIAL @robynsherwell

▶HEAR HER soundcloud.com/robyn-sherwell

▶SEE HER LIVE London The Islington (September 11)

Zeahorse

In recent years Australian psychedelic music has often come flavoured like Tame Impala, so it's refreshing to hear such a heavy alternative as Zeahorse. Their heavy psych-metal takes influences from Electric Wizard and even Fugazi, and on new track 'Pool' they pump through downtempo sludge riffs like the apocalypse is on its way.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/zeahorse

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/zeahorse

Luvv

Cardiff's Luvv offer something similar to the reverberating charms of Eagulls, but also incorporate the nuances of various older bands like Gang Of Four. Their latest songs 'Free' and 'More' both show their huge potential.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/luvvluvvluvv

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.luvvluvvluvv

▶SEE THEM LIVE London Old Blue Last (August 16), Maidstone The Rafters (23)

Lilliput

Sounding not unlike Sunderland's answer to

BAND CRUSH



Samuel T Herring

Future Islands

Horse Lords

"Horse Lords are an amazing band out of Baltimore. They're guys from various projects who joined back together. It's straight-up krautrock, very motorik and driving. It puts you in a trance with the drums, but then they'll change it up."

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NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist
THOM GREEN
Alt-J



WEIRD SHIT PLAYED LOUD

Clipping (above) are one of the best bands I've heard recently. They're three guys from LA making hip-hop/experimental beat music. Their beats are sometimes extremely challenging and very unpredictable, and the use of noise is quite frequent too – particularly on their first album 'Midcity'. But that's what I like about it! I'm interested in people pushing the boundaries and challenging themselves, and Clipping are a great example of that.

Moving on, **Shanghai Den's** track 'The Sun' represents exactly what I'm into right now – hard beats with bright instrumentals floating around. The incredible production quality brings out these eerie sounds, and I can't figure out how they've been produced. It's very hard to do music like this justice with a few sentences, so without ruining it I'll just suggest you check it out and see for yourself. Be open-minded!

Another artist from the R&S label now – **Tessela**. 'Nancy's Pantry' in particular is very schizophrenic. It changes a lot throughout the first half, to points in which I can't see a theme, and then it lands into this industrial, chugging beat/synth pattern that gets heavier over time. I can imagine this being played really loudly at a rave – it needs to be heard loud. It's the kind of music I would have considered to be 'scary' back when I'd only really heard of Nirvana.


Tessela

Something a bit more established now – **Jamie T**. I'll admit I've never been a fan in the past; I never really bought the whole persona he seemed to project. But listening to 'Don't You Find', I'm happy to admit I was probably a bit quick to judge. While I love electronic music and I listen to a lot of very weird shit, I never fail to be taken aback by things a little more traditional. I love everything about this track: the simple beat carries along this breezy guitar lick and the vocal is so dry and honest. He's definitely won me over this time.

"Clipping are challenging and unpredictable – that's what I like"

I've also been listening to **Giorgio Moroder**'s 'Giorgio's Theme' a lot too. I recently started following the Adult Swim page on Soundcloud, and this was the first track I heard on there. I loved it immediately. I don't usually go for house/dance tracks, but I love the sound within it. The piano strikes and the synth sequences carry a lot of energy, and overall it reminds me of Jean Michel Jarre, which can only be a good thing.

Next week: Árni Árnason, The Vaccines

Robyn Sherwell



Fleet Foxes (they actually supported the Seattle act's side-project Poor Moon), this five-piece specialise in sweet, harmony-heavy folk-pop. They released their debut EP 'Who Knows Where The Time Goes' late last year, and have been building support ever since.
▶SOCIAL twitter.com/lilliputband
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/lilliputband
▶SEE THEM LIVE Sunderland, Split Festival (August 10)

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Sacred Bones

▶FOUNDED In 2007, by Caleb Braaten
▶BASED Brooklyn
▶KEY RELEASES Blank Dogs – 'Diana (The Herald)' (2007), Zola Jesus – 'The Spoils' (2009), David Lynch & Alan R Splet – 'Eraserhead OST' (2012)
▶RADAR SAYS Caleb started Sacred Bones so he could put out music by his friends. Now, having worked with David Lynch, Crystal Stilts, Moon Duo, Lust For Youth, Destruction Unit and The Men, the label has truly gone global.

Jeremy & The Harlequins

Making quite a name for themselves in their native New York, these noirish '50s/'60s rock'n'roll revivalists write songs as carefully constructed as their coiffured quiffs. Their song 'Trip Into The Light' featured in the Tom Cruise film *Edge Of Tomorrow*.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/jeremyandtheharlequins
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/jeremyandtheharlequins

Honne

Honne – 'true feelings' in Japanese – have released an intimate debut: 'Warm On A Cold Night'. Crooning, R&B-slicked production is introduced by the voice of a fictional US radio DJ (actually their housemate), who gives some advice: "If you don't got a lover, just close your eyes. And listen to Honne." Lover or no lover, the duo's late-night jam will crawl into your mind.
▶SOCIAL @hellohonne
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/honne

Palace Winter

Caspar Hesselager of My Heart The Brave/Rumour Said Fire and Carl Coleman of Sink Ships met when they were touring in their respective bands for six weeks last year. 'Time Machine' is the first product of time spent working together. A five-minute wonder, the track features spiralling guitar effects chasing the lulling vocals.
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/palace-winter

Stella Ella Ola

This good-times Toronto quartet recorded a couple of EPs at Tokyo Police Club's practice space, but they sound less like the 'Canadian Strokes' and more like Elastica, The New Pornographers and Wild Flag beaching it up in Tulum. Perfectly on-point, the 'Peter Sellers' video sees the loopy indie-

More new music on page 25 ↦

JONAS BANG, PIPER FERGUSON, HACHE

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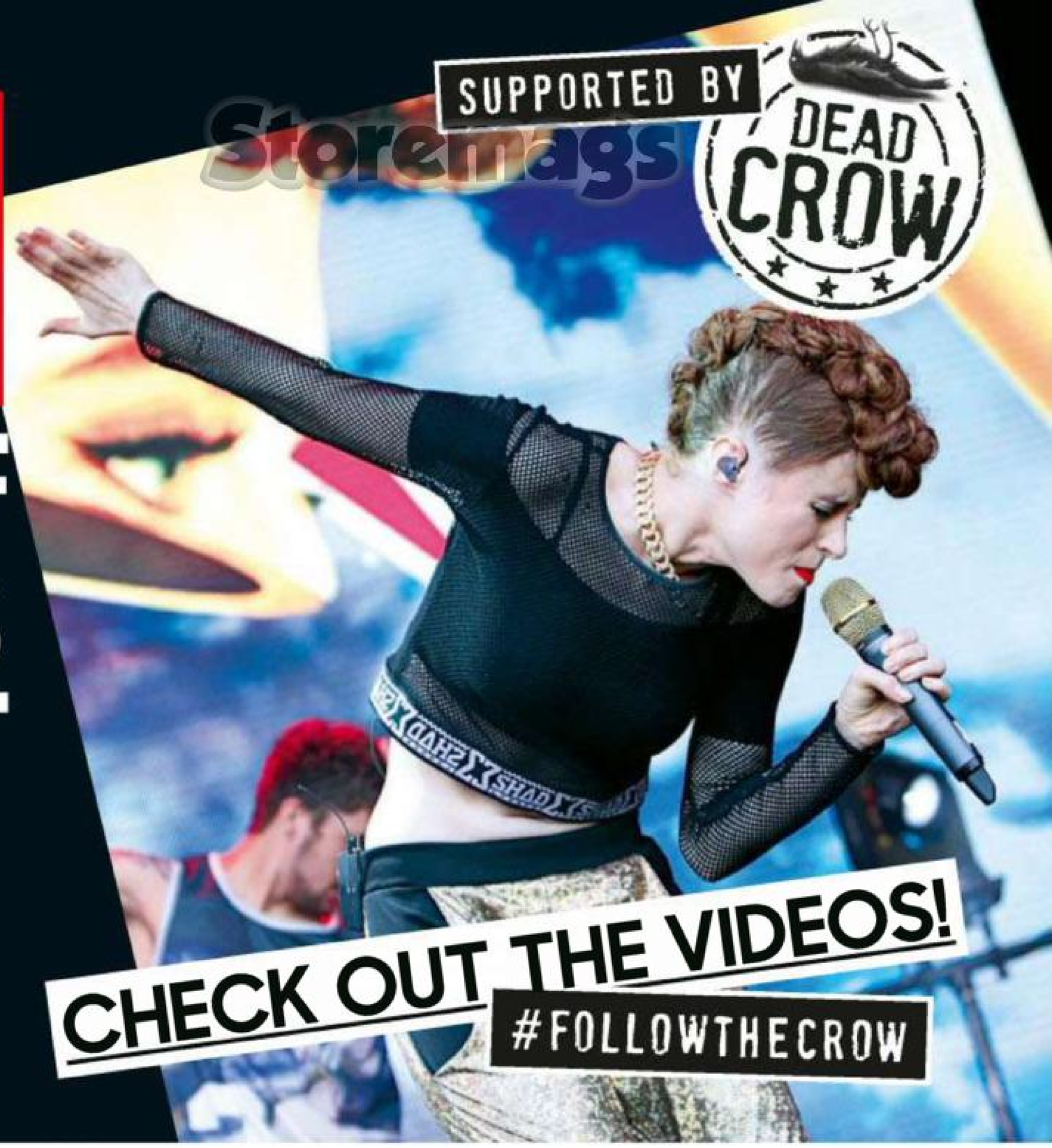
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popsters don animal masks and cardboard guns to terrorise sunbathers.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/stellaellaolaband
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/stella-ella-ola

The Woken Trees

Already cult-like in their hometown of Copenhagen, Danish six-piece The Woken Trees recorded their debut album 'NNON' after voluntarily swapping their rehearsal space for a freezing-cold cellar in an abandoned village. Lead single 'Yells' effortlessly reflects the move.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/thewokentrees
▶HEAR THEM youtube.com/watch?v=YFu3aE0IwBQ

Graveyard Club

Minneapolis' Graveyard Club sound like The Cure without the bouffant hair and smeared lippy or Echo & The Bunnymen wearing T-shirts and shorts on the beach. On tracks like 'The Night Is Mine' they breathe new life into the usually dark and gloomy genre of goth rock.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/graveyardclub
▶HEAR HER soundcloud.com/graveyardclub



The Woken Trees

Jagaara

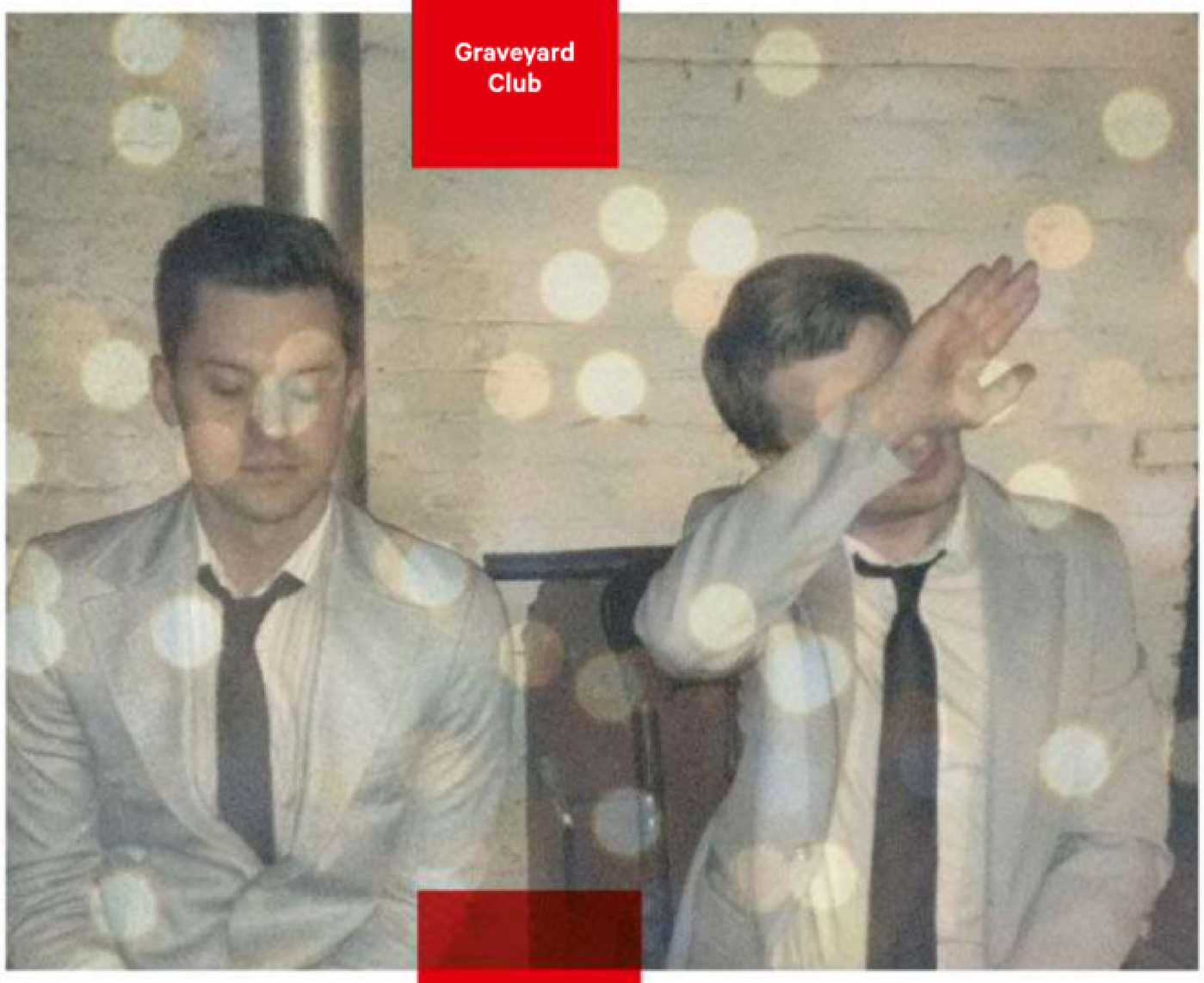
Jagaara are three harmonising sisters raised on a diet of vital radio rock and pop, Fleetwood Mac in particular. Sound familiar? The Haim similarities don't end there: they formerly played under their surname, The Edmondsons. As Jagaara they've put out 'Faultline' and 'Into The Night', both soulful slices of pining pop sung with a melodic and heartbroken conviction.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/jagaaramusic
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/jagaara

Mt Si

The internet is swimming with rumours that this trio are in some way connected to Kisses and RAC, but for now all we know for sure is that they're from LA. Hardly surprising, as the city's ice-cool mentality is imprinted on the four blissful minutes of 'Oh'.
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/mtsithelie

Chalk

Brighton's Steven Stride specialises in crunchy mope-rock somewhere between Elliott Smith and early Modest Mouse. It's Conor Oberst's Desaparecidos that his new single 'Everyone's Problem, No One's Problem' most recalls though.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/stalkchalk
▶HEAR THEM stalkchalk.bandcamp.com



Graveyard Club

Zola Blood

Zola Blood are currently on Pond Life Songs, the label that brought you the dazzling experimental sounds of Ninetails. Debut track 'Grace' serves to reiterate the label's knack for putting out the best leftfield wonders.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/zolablood
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/zola-blood

Early Ghost

Early Ghost aren't quite like all their psych contemporaries. Having initially bonded over a love of The Doors, it's that same whimsical approach to rock that informs cuts like 'To Be Heard' and 'Poor Man's Trill'. The former incorporates a Hank Marvin-style riff, while the latter toys around with fairground synths.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/earlyghost
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/earlyghost

GRAVEYARD CLUB BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO THE DARK AND GLOOMY GENRE OF GOTH ROCK

BUZZ WORDS: MATT WILKINSON, HAYLEY FOX, JAMES BALMONT, PHIL GWYN, TIM HAKKI, DAN CARSON, LUCAS FOTHERGILL, MISCHA PEARLMAN, AL HORNER, HAYLEY FOX

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

WHITE LUNG ON THE ROAD

Our favourite US punks White Lung return to the UK in November to build on their success at The Great Escape. They've announced four gigs, kicking off on November 3 at London's Shacklewell Arms, in support of new single 'In Your Home', which is released on August 25.

ROUGH TRADE SIGN SOAK

Derry newcomer Soak has inked a deal with Rough Trade. The news comes hot on the heels of her recent EP 'Blud' on Chvrches' label Goodbye Records. The 17-year-old, whose real name is Bridie Monds-Watson, first came to our attention in 2012 with the 'Sea Creatures' EP.



Kid Wave



White Lung

KID WAVE'S HEAVENLY DEAL

More record-label news: London-based Kid Wave have signed to Heavenly. The band release their Rory Attwell-produced debut single 'All I Want' on September 8 and will be hitting the road with Childhood throughout August, September and October.

THE CULT OF LUCERN RAZE

Luke Reilly of Sex Beet and the PNKSLM label has launched his new band Lucern Raze with debut tune 'Sunshine Blues'. Born out of a weekend in the studio in Copenhagen, the track more than stands up to the material he's released on his label over the years. He tours Britain in the autumn.

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Combat rock: Sean, Nicky, James and Richey in 1994



THE RECORD THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES

Twenty years ago this month Manic Street Preachers released their landmark third album 'The Holy Bible'. Emily Mackay explains why it will never be forgotten

Confessional journalism is not something I am a fan of, but since my favourite band, Manic Street Preachers, have to spend the next few pages returning to the bad times in order to celebrate the work of their friend and bandmate Richey Edwards on their mighty third album 'The Holy Bible', it's only right I should do the same in order to try and explain why it remains such a powerful record.

I became anorexic just before I turned 14. I moved from Aberdeenshire to England, mostly recovered, a year afterwards. It was then that I chanced upon 'The Holy Bible'. It struck me hard, but not as you might expect. People sometimes think of 'The Holy Bible' as an album for wallowers in teen angst. It's the exact opposite.

Listening to '4st 7lb', the first song recorded for the record, and one that was informed by Richey Edwards' own experiences of anorexia, was not like being seen, it was like being seen *through*. Sympathy, sure, but not the comfortable kind that talks of 'illness'. "*This discipline's so rare so please applaud/Just look at the fat scum who pamper me so*". Listening to it, harshly cleansing as wire wool, sounds exactly like the moment when you look in the mirror, and rather than admiring how much more fat you've dropped, suddenly realise you look like you're dying. And then you catch your mother's crumpling face in the mirror behind you. So when I say it hit me hard, I mean it hit me like a good hard slap. It sounds like waking up.

I still find it quite hard to listen to nearly two decades later, but then 'The Holy Bible' is a deliberately difficult listen. Not in the sense of 'difficult' that music critics often prize; it doesn't revere abstraction or melancholy. It's difficult because it's a record that studies its authors' own miseries and weaknesses in a hard, cold light, then ranges outward furiously, linking present, personal pain to structures of society and the failures of history, uniting seemingly petty woes with great wrongs, with an invigorating anger. It's a record that says yes, your rage and pain are valid and important, but there is more going on; look up, look sharp. Or, as 'Faster' puts it, "*Self-disgust is self-obssession, honey*" – a line Richey borrowed from the Manics' press officer's verdict on his own self-loathing.

So 'Ifwhiteamericatoldthetruthforoneday-itsworldwouldfallapart' furiously alternates between detailing the heinous interventions of US post-war foreign policy and the anodyne positivity of its global dominance of media and pop culture ("*Images of perfection, suntan and napalm/Grenada, Haiti, Poland, Nicaragua*") as the refrain condemns transatlantic ↦

racism: "*Conservatives say, 'There ain't no black in the Union Jack'/Democrats say, 'There ain't enough white in the stars and stripes'*". 'The Holy Bible' is an album that takes all those things you learned about at school or read about in the news and then shoved to the back of your mind as you lived your life and shouts: Look at this. *Look at it*. Make the links.

The political and the personal interact with particular power on 'The Holy Bible' when sex is involved, as in the needling, frayed, deadened and deadly sarcastic opener 'Yes'. Richey's fascination with prostitution was linked to his alienation from love, which he often spoke of as a distracting fallacy. Questionable as that view (and, indeed, his paying a young girl for a handjob while on tour in Bangkok) is, his diatribe day-in-the-life of an unwilling, brutalised sex worker dunging out the basement of patriarchal capitalism – "*Power produces desire, the weak have none, there's no lust in this coma even for a 50*" – still rings horribly true. The only semblance of love or desire on the album is the eerie, weary 'She Is Suffering', a study of the siren power of despair: "*A vine that can strangle life from a tree/Carrion surrounding picking on leaves*"; the only 'gentle' moment a brief longing for release in 'Die In The Summertime'.

Yet, in an inversion of the navel-gazing melancholia that seemed to pervade popular culture in 1994, particularly following Kurt Cobain's suicide, 'Of Walking Abortion' rails against all our complicity in everyday atrocity: "*Fucked up – dunno why – you poor little boy... The massacred innocent blood stains us all/ Who's responsible?/You fucking are*".

'The Intense Humming Of Evil' stares into the heart of Europe's darkest guilt – the Holocaust – raising the awkward spectre of Churchill's support for eugenics and opposition to social reform: "*Churchill no different/Wished the workers bled to a machine*". 'Mausoleum', meanwhile, questions if, judging by our behaviour, we can really say we honour the memory of victims of that genocide. 'Archives Of Pain' argues for the death penalty as it recognises the killer urge in us all.

It barely needs pointing out how relevant the lyrics still are, with Western intervention abroad still causing mass bloodshed, the far-right on the rise in Europe and the UK, racism still rife on either side of the pond. 'The Holy Bible' only seems to grow more relevant, and the only thing that's really changed is that we have the internet now so we can all sign an online petition and then look at funny animals instead of worrying about it.

It's a textbook's worth of furious lessons, but on paper, it doesn't sound much fun to listen to. What turns it from a self-righteous lecture into something genuinely inspiring is the thrill and energy of the music. Post-punk revivals come and go, but few people have ever produced such raw, cold, stark and yet joyous noise. 'Faster', where Richey, his life no longer becoming a landslide, but becoming something bigger than itself, is a kind of avenging angel of working-class intellect ("*I am stronger than Mensa... Miller and Mailer, I spat out Plath and Pinter... I am all the things that you regret/A truth that washes, that learned how to spell*"). It's brilliant to dance to, with its lunging, sawing guitars and almost gleeful fury. 'PCP', a rejection of linguistic lip service in place of actually acting against injustice has an anthemic, speedy jubilance, stomping all over liberal consensus with indecent enjoyment. (It's perhaps the only song on the album that now needs some context and translation, when today 'political correctness' is merely the bugbear of racist TV presenters and misogynist comedians.) And then there's 'Revol', its grotesque imaginings of the sexual proclivities of tyrants and world leaders driven by a huge, breathless release of a chorus.



Richey Edwards in Bangkok, April 1994

FEW PEOPLE HAVE EVER PRODUCED SUCH RAW, COLD, STARK NOISE

It's an album that gives if not exactly something as easy or trite as hope, then an energy just clear of cynicism, something particularly laudable given the mental state of its main architect at the time. Some lyrics, such as 'Of Walking Abortion' and 'Revol' hint at a feverish brain, skirting around the edge of comprehensibility; some of the lyrics Richey left behind when he disappeared early the following year were, as seen on 'Journal For Plague Lovers' and according to Nicky Wire, even denser, more cryptic and heavier. Here, sharp, bright and fully formed blades such as 'Faster' and 'Ifwhiteamerica...' are pulled free of any mental mire.

It's also an album that tends to have an electrifying effect on those who really listen to it, one that sets people reading books, researching, learning, knowing. In their earlier days, the Manics were often derided by contemporaries for flashing slogans, displaying literature and philosophy like a bookshelf that might get you laid, but 'The Holy Bible' is heavy with hard thought, genuine knowledge, and a real fire to make people *see*. Many Manics fans will attribute their educational choices, their careers, their whole way of thinking to the effect 'The Holy Bible' had on them. There's not many records that can really change people's lives, but this is still one. ■

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"Richey started doubting everything. From feeling indestructible, it all started to fade away"

From Cardiff's red light district to Thailand and oblivion, the Manics give Dan Martin an exclusive blow-by-blow account of their greatest ever album



Where were your heads at to lead you into making an album like this?

Nicky Wire: "It was a mixture of a really good feeling of regaining self-control and thinking we were gonna be 100 per cent truer to ourselves, going back to Cardiff, [recording in a] shitty demo studio. But there was a post-'Gold Against The Soul' [1993] emptiness and a realisation that we hadn't got as big as we thought we would have. There was a kind of empty hole within 'Gold Against The Soul' that needed to be filled."

So a move away from expensive studios and doing the rock-star thing was in order?

NW: "Not so much the rock-star thing. That album had some of the greatest guitar solos ever committed to vinyl! But there was a hollowness. The accusation of there being too much bluster was perhaps accurate."

James Dean Bradfield: "I remember being on holiday down in Bishopstown, towards west Wales. I didn't have a mobile, I was calling the office every other day, asking, 'Anything happening, anything happening?' No festival offers coming in, nothing. I thought, 'This could be the end of the band. Fucking hell, we could be over after two records.' And quickly everybody was feeling like that, Nick and Richey, and then this mission statement appeared: must record in red light district of Cardiff, must forego big name producer, must go home and sleep at parents' house every night. And that's what we did! And it did feel great straight away. I'd just been dumped by my girlfriend, I remember the first song we did was '4st 7lb', and... I felt there was tension and there was pressure, but it just felt good straight away. I felt alive with something again, whereas before that I was just fearing things – the end of the band, being a fuckwit because my girlfriend had dumped me, the world not even wanting us to play some shit festival – and as soon as we stepped in the studio and started doing these songs I felt alive with something I hadn't felt for about six months. It was actually a really strange way ↦

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of feeling good, all your nerves were on end, but it just felt great."

It was a do-or-die thing?

JDB: "I dunno if it sounds too dramatic but it did feel like that. Nobody at the record label made us feel like that, it was ourselves."

NW: "It's quite strange, Rob Stringer [Columbia Records chairman] recently told us that we were quite close to being dropped; he was the one who kept us. There were three signatures and one of the chiefs said, 'They'll never have the X factor'. But Rob insisted on keeping us. Even through something as dense and grim as ['The Holy Bible' track] 'Archives Of Pain' he could tell that there was something important as well as commercial."

JDB: "We were always aware that we were on a major label and they put out 'The Holy Bible', which has no commercial concessions on it whatsoever – from the artwork to the lyrics to the music. Let's face it, anybody who thinks that 'Faster' is a fucking smash hit first single

"MY WORKING TITLE FOR THE ALBUM WAS 'THE POETRY OF DEATH'"

Nicky Wire

of a campaign is fucking nuts, but we did. And I suppose we'll always recognise that while other people have had bad experiences with major labels, Rob and Sony gave art a chance, I suppose. Gave the artist a chance."

Did you know what you wanted to make?

NW: "We'd all somehow gravitated back to listening to a lot of the crucial records of our lives – [Echo & The Bunnymen's 1981 album] 'Heaven Up Here', I was constantly listening to The Skids, James was listening to Magazine, Sean was listening to PiL. It wasn't a forced record at all, it somehow became really natural. The *Apocalypse Now*, Bunnymen look was in our heads before we even made the record, because we'd tested it out on [1994 EP] 'Life Becoming A Landslide' – we started doing the camo look on the last tour of that. So there was definitely some serious intent. It's hard to explain how tiny the studio was, I mean, it was really small, the kind of office that me and Richey would sit in... A lot of people wouldn't even do their demos in it. But it did have this magical fucking drum room, which sounded great and somehow reacted really well with James' voice. There's something magical on that record vocally..."

Of course it came out on the same day as 'Definitely Maybe' – you couldn't have been further from the zeitgeist.

NW: "It did!"

JDB: "I remember being in a taxi with Richey and we heard 'Supersonic' on the radio for the first time. We all felt a bit bowed by it, in a strange commercial kind of way, didn't we?"

NW: "Yeah, we knew it was the fucking business. And we were in the studio doing ['The Holy Bible' single] 'Revol' when we heard [Blur's] 'Girls & Boys'. And I thought, 'Fuck, we've just written a song about group sex in the Politburo and really the biggest thing out there from an indie band is about going off on holiday to Ibiza. We couldn't be fucking further from the musical explosion than we are now! And I should say that a big influence *was* visiting the death camps, we did this terrible tour of Germany on 'Gold Against The Soul', Richey was drinking Johnnie Walker, and what did we visit? Dachau, Belsen... It was the maddest thing ever – what do you do on a day off? We had two days off on the whole tour and we visited death camps. And that did inform 'Mausoleum' in particular, and 'The Intense Humming Of Evil'.

"Anyway, you could feel the collapse of Europe. Bizarrely there's a lot of European references on 'The Holy Bible', like there is on our current album 'Futurology'."

You've always had an awkward relationship with 'Revol'...

NW: "For a long time we fell out of love with that song."

JDB: "We thought we'd finished 'The Holy Bible' and then two songs came at the end, which were 'This Is Yesterday' and 'Revol', which just goes to show. 'This Is Yesterday' is a lot of people's favourite moment because it has some kind of tenderness, some kind of openness, some kind of oxygen in the structure of the song. And 'Revol' doesn't. And they were the two last songs, written side by side. And I think I fell back in love with 'Revol' because it's one of those songs that actually becomes a tiny bit more relevant as time passes. You can't live in the age of Berlusconi and not actually find a tiny bit of relevance in 'Revol'. That hubris and folly actually feeds into ['Futurology' track] 'Sex Power Love And Money'."

NW: "I'll never forget Richey giving me the lyric. He was just mashed out of his head in Portugal, he was a mess and we weren't on 'til three in the morning in fucking Porto or somewhere. It's one of his finest, I think."

JDB: "Richey foretold bunga bunga parties [disgraced former Italian prime minister Sylvio Berlusconi's group sex parties] before they even existed!"

Can you put yourself in his head? Where does an idea like group sex in the Politburo even come from?

NW: "I think via a kind of highly intellectualised, oversaturated intelligence where Richey's got so much information going on. For him, what's coming out makes perfect sense. It's the classic sign of what you call the true artist I guess, whereas I always worry about how I communicate. Some people think my lyrics are fucking clunky but Richey was always like, 'Well I understand it, so that's enough!' Then you get something so fucking forceful and real and true that... I think they speak their own language, Richey's lyrics. On 'The Holy Bible', in terms of rock music, I think he invented a new lyrical language, which wasn't easy for James to fucking put music to!"

It's considered Richey's record, but how did the division of labour work?

NW: "Well, I'd always been really honest about it and [said that] 75 per cent of the lyrics are Richey's. Having now done the reissue for it, rummaging through my archives and notebooks there are actually probably a few more lyrics from me than I thought. Certainly on 'Ifwhiteamericatold-thetruthforoneday-itsworldwouldfallapart', 'Of Walking Abortion', 'Mausoleum'. Something like 'She Is Suffering' is purely Richey's lyric, apart from the title. 'This Is Yesterday' was pretty much me, he added a few great lines. I'm happy, fucking hell, most of it I'd never want to take or have taken any credit for it. I'd say it's 30 per cent me, 70 per cent Richey."



Did you write together?

NW: "We'd kind of stopped really, which is a bit sad, but again finding this archive, there are a couple of bits where it's my writing and he's crossed out and dropped the odd line in. So maybe it wasn't as severe as I thought. I found some quite interesting stuff, actually. I think my working title for the album is 'The Poetry Of Death'. Which is even more grim!"

JDB: "Fucking hell, for once you out-grimmed Richey!"

The record is inextricably linked to something very bad. So are you able to look back on that as a happy time in any way?

NW: "Well, the making of it was a really good feeling. The four of us were getting on great, Richey had just bought a flat down the Bay that he was decorating and collaging, I'd just got married and bought a house in the valleys – the joy of having a record player and stuff in my own little terraced house."

JDB: "I was still living with my parents."

NW: "James was the most feverish I've ever seen him work, really. I don't think he ever missed anything before three in the morning."

JDB: "Me and [engineer] Alex Silva would stay behind every night. We'd worked with Silva before, he'd recorded [1992 charity single] 'Theme From MASH (Suicide Is Painless)'. We wanted to use somebody local. Local recording engineer for local music! Even though he's about five years older than us, he knew the reference points we were talking about because he'd seen those gigs. He'd been with Magazine at gigs. He understood it all and he was just looking for his break, he was looking to move away and get somewhere so he was committed to it too. There was a bit of serendipity. Richey really got on with him as well, so he was a central part of it, it all fell in place. But it was seven-day weeks, we'd take half a Sunday off, that kind of thing."

NW: "The building was so cheap."

JDB: "Everything felt essential. There's only one B-side from 'The Holy Bible'. One: 'Sculpture Of Man'."

NW: "The darkest lyric ever!"

JDB: "That's completely Richey's. But that just shows how bullet-nosed we were. As the crow flies the studio's two minutes' walk over there [gestures]. There was a guy who used to walk round with a big gin blossom nose, he was a poor homeless chap, you know, and he had a bag of glue and he was always asking for 50p. And I saw him up until about 10 years ago, walking round here, and his numbers hadn't gone up with inflation – he was still asking for 50p for glue. That was the backdrop for the recording of the record. And people used to get shagged in the alley where the studio was, because it was where all the pimps used to do all their work. It really was grim, it was fucking grim! And I was getting a taxi home every night. Once every two weeks I think I was allowed a room in the Marriott Hotel. It was actually brilliant because it felt like we'd again committed to a vision of something, and in my mad raging adolescent world then it felt like method acting."

NW: "I'm trying to think if we had a car..."

JDB: "We did, Richey used to pick me up."

NW: "Oh yeah, I'm trying to think... He'd pick you up, but for some reason I wasn't on the route, so I'd get the bus from Wattsville to Newport and then get the train. It was freezing cold, it was a really cold winter, I had a football manager, Brian Clough-style sheepskin coat."

JDB: "I had a really bad donkey jacket."

But you were getting off on the whole bleakness of the scenario?

NW: "We were, but like I say, we were all getting on really well, Richey was in great spirits because he had his little typewriter set up, Sean had bought a primitive sampler. Sean was like a fucking jazz machine as well, the drumming on that record is out of this world. 'Ifwhiteamerica...', I'd never heard anything like that. And he was happy because he loves putting a fucking uniform on and being mean and grumpy at the best of times!"

JDB: "Once he'd found his United Nations beret he was fucking ready for it."

NW: "He couldn't wait to fucking just buy tons of badges and lapels. Everywhere we'd go around Britain we'd raid the army and navy surplus stores."

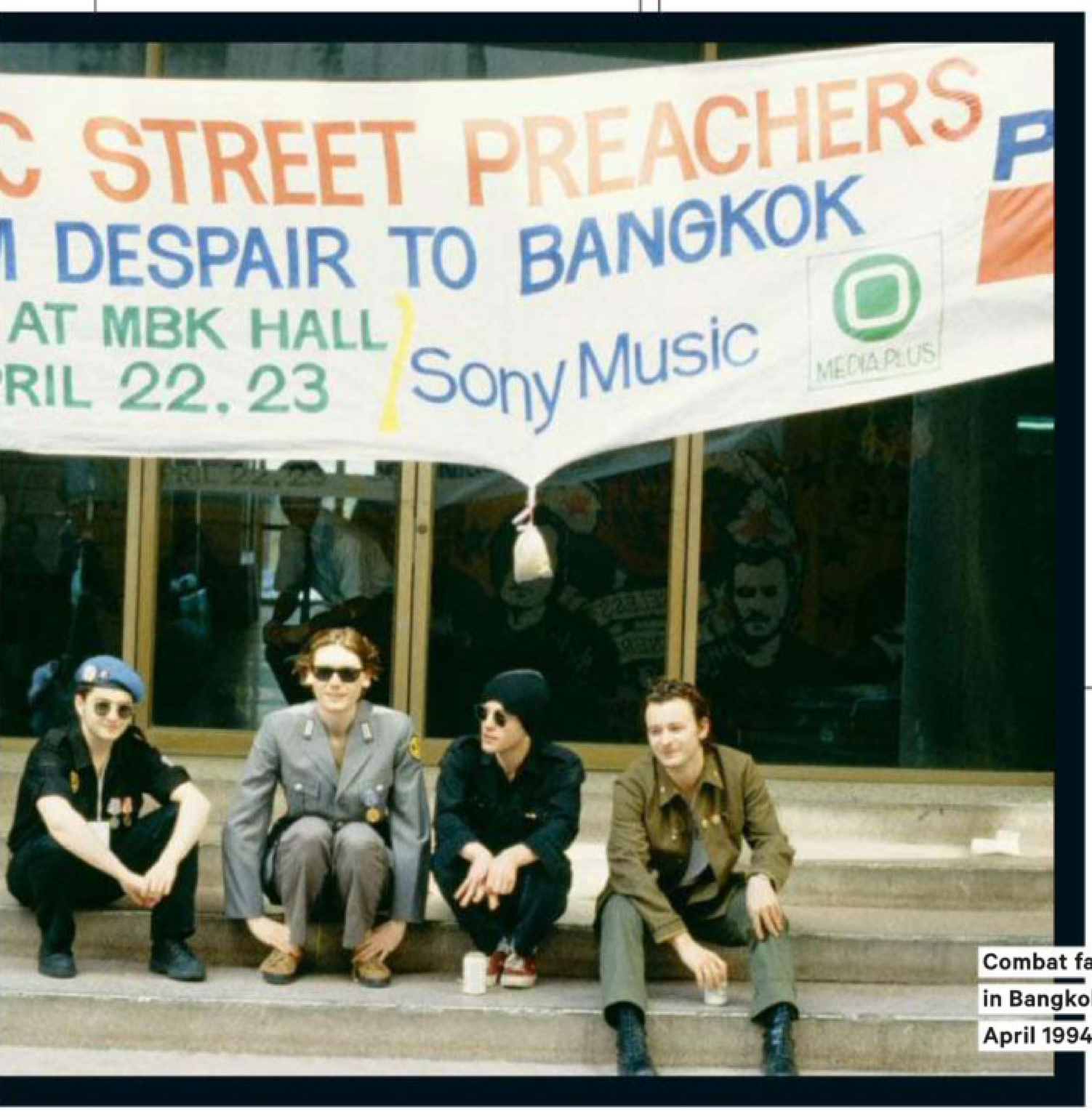
JDB: "The best one we found was in Hull."

NW: "Oh, it was fucking amazing!"

JDB: "And it just felt so simple. Once you know you've got a look as a band it feels so simple, it's such a relief to have that militaristic thing going on. It did seem to tie into the lyrics, obviously there's a lot of post-despotic-era Europe references. It did feel like there were signposts within the symmetry of the look, the lyrics, what we'd experienced prior to the recording of it."

NW: "We went to the NME Awards because we were given Best Radio Session for ['The Holy Bible' single] 'She Is Suffering', it was a Lamacq session – it was the height of wall-to-wall Fred Perry, Oasis, Justine and Damon having rows. We went full-military and I've never felt so intimidating and intimidated. Those awards shows in those days were just everyone calling each other a cunt, no recriminations as such, it was just fucking mad. But I remember feeling really fucking on my own."

JDB: "It felt like we were taking the band really, really seriously again. Whereas on 'Gold Against The Soul' we'd do the backing track and then I'd spend half a day doing a solo." ↦



Combat fatigued in Bangkok, April 1994

KEVIN CUMMINS/GETTY

NW: "Half a day?! '(*Laughs*) Get the Strat! Let's try it with the Strat!'"
JDB: "It felt like a big monolithic slab of stone had just planted itself in the middle of the band and we just had to follow every route. It was a good feeling again. It kind of felt like a restart."
NW: "And then all that goodwill kind of collapsed when we went to Thailand [in April], I think. That was when we realised what we'd made and that we had to play it every night. Even though those gigs in Thailand were fucking out of this world... 5,000 people two nights running, a country we'd never been to. Military police hitting people, the hottest, horriblest feeling. You've only got to read [Barbara Ellen's] *NME* piece, really, it's the best document of a band on the edge."

Richey had his own stuff going on but what was so bleak about it for you two?
NW: "I just felt increasingly fucking awful in myself, let alone the worry of Richey as well. There was something about that whole tour that unleashed a symptom that felt incurable to me. And I felt it as soon as I got home. When we'd been making it, it was our fucking private universe. But then unleashing that onto the world – I think 'Faster' came out the week after that, I remember hearing it on the radio and thinking... that sounds odd. From then on it just felt like a long summer of calamity. Things starting to fall apart."

You mentioned method acting... how does one put oneself inside the head of an anorexic teenage girl?
JDB: "And how does one go about putting oneself in the lyric of 'Yes'? Don't try too hard to be honest! Sometimes I asked questions about the references in the lyrics. I can't pretend to dive headlong into the lyric of 'Yes' and know what's going on all the time, and obviously on 'Die In The Summertime'."
NW: "I think 'Yes' is easier to dive into because it's more of a clarion call, but 'Die In The Summertime' is where you start to feel... slightly uncomfortable being the right words, really."
JDB: "I wouldn't delve too far into those lyrics because I don't think I'd ever come back if I did. But the potency of it, how committed the lyric is, I can't deny sometimes I'd see some of them and be like, are you sure you want to... are you sure that the Brady Bill [the 1993 US Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act that implemented background checks on people buying firearms] is that bad? 'Oh it is,' he'd say. He'd stare you in the eye and say, 'Yes, and it needs to be written about, fucking do it'. So sometimes it's just about believing it as much as the author believes it. 'Faster', I felt, was a really good commentary on how accelerated culture was becoming, how there was a collision of sensibilities that could only lead to bad things sometimes. Which again has a bit of a prophecy in it, I think. So sometimes it really was not about questioning anything in the lyric but just going along with it because you knew there was this militancy here that would only work if you're 100 per cent committed to it."

So you're in Thailand and the wheels are starting to fall off. Talk us through the chronology of that.
NW: "I think it was Thailand, then would it have been Glastonbury after that? You can [discern our] vividness and the utter contempt and hatred at that show, you've only got to watch it online to see. I'm not sure why we were all so ridiculously nasty and puerile and spiteful. It makes for great rock'n'roll but you could feel it that whole summer, doing Reading as a three-piece because Richey had been hospitalised. So it kind of goes in stages, really. When did we release 'Revol'? [August 1994] Was that before the album as well? Because 'Faster' was released in fucking June."
JDB: "You may be right. Because [I remember] waiting to see if 'Revol' had sold any more albums and it hadn't! I think in Thailand, there was a bit of a bad feeling among the band – he [gestures at Nicky] was having a bit of a wobble to say the least."
NW: "Well, if you look, I'm actually thinner than Richey in Thailand. I'm six-foot-two. I had this liver problem that wasn't diagnosed at the time, either. Richey was still kind of... we were worried about him, but for someone who had written so unremittingly about disavowing yourself of false gods and false beliefs, etc, and speaking truth, he suddenly became obsessed with getting a girlfriend didn't he, there was a bit of that. Not obsessed with getting a girlfriend, but was he loveable? There were a lot of conversations about that on the bus."
NW: "And about playing guitar – all of a sudden he cared about what he was playing and stuff. Just petty little things really that shouldn't really matter... the idea of being '*stronger than Mensa*' just started to deteriorate."
JDB: "It started to taper off a bit. He'd gone off message himself, which worried us a bit."
NW: "And you know, the fact you could see the way the drink was affecting him. It affects you quicker when you get into that alcoholic phase. He looked withered, he looked small as that summer went on. This fucking endless summer of just... we didn't even do that many gigs I don't think. We did Glastonbury, we did Reading, I think we did [Dutch festival] PinkPop as a three-piece when Richey was not well."

How much was he drinking?
JDB: "I dunno if I'd want to put a target on it, but a lot."
NW: "His resistance became low to it as well, it's just that classic alcoholic's thing."
JDB: "Suddenly it went from feeling we were an impenetrable division to it just starting to drift away. Richey started doubting everything, absolutely everything and so suddenly from feeling impregnable and completely indestructible, that just started to fade away completely."
NW: "The more exaggerated and more tabloid and bigger Britpop got, the more fucking internalised and weak and on the edge we started to feel. All those gigs are pretty... the Reading without Richey and wanting to smash everything up, I just stood there looking at the fucking crowd... I don't know where that bravado came from. Because there was no good feeling around, apart from thinking we may have done the best album ever."
JDB: "Usually [when you release an album] you fucking book the back page [advert] of the *NME* and the first inside cover or whatever. The advert for 'The Holy Bible' was the middle two pages of the *NME* with all the lyrics, and nothing else. We were realising that the music was completely beholden to the lyrics for once. You've got to buy into that, but once you start doubting it then things can... it really is a miserable experience. It's almost like setting up what a political party's gonna stand for and then halfway through you're thinking, 'Fucking hell, dunno if some of this is ↦

"THE BIGGER BRITPOP GOT, THE MORE ON THE EDGE WE FELT"

Nicky Wire

TOM SHEEHAN



Richey Edwards
in Paris,
November 1994

right.' It's that bad feeling of 'we can't quite deliver the message if we're not all on the same page'."

NW: "The tactic for the advert was brilliant as well – 'Well, they'll all be reading it at Reading and want to go and buy the album!' And Rob Stringer was like, 'That's a fucking good idea'."

JDB: "And Rob, the king of fucking unit-shifting, even bought into it."

NW: "It's a long fucking process, we'd finished the album for a long time as well."

JDB: "It was in our pocket for a long time. That's why two other songs got recorded at the end. We'd lived with it for so long that we realised just in time that it wasn't balanced. Well, in its own fucked-up way."

How close were you to quitting at this point? [They mishear the question as being about Richey quitting.]

NW: "Well, when Richey was in the Priory and we did those gigs as a three-piece just to play bills and stuff, I can't say he was in brilliant spirits but he was trying to work the programme."

JDB: "And everything was put on the table, you know, you can be like [Saint Etienne's] Bob Stanley, actually be in the band but not be onstage. Didn't wanna say Brian Wilson because, you know, no-one wants to say you can be like Brian Wilson. Or you can just write lyrics and be in the band that way."

NW: "Basically anything you wanna do, or you can fucking leave."

JDB: "We can split up, blah blah blah. Every single option was put on the table and just batted back remorselessly, he just so wanted to be in the band and he wanted to go on tour."

NW: "And that's what he fucking did. We did three massive tours. We did the UK, we did a tour of France with Therapy? and a tour of Europe with Suede and then did the Astoria in London."

The Astoria was where you famously trashed everything.

NW: "That was the worst thing that I can remember personally. There was really high tension and I don't remember [the time] that fondly, really. Apart from the gigs, which were fucking electric, but there was a lot of tension around."

JDB: "It was probably the least we've gotten on, just for those couple of days actually, just the tension. Richey was not nice to be around those couple of days."

NW: "I don't think he realised it."

JDB: "I don't think he was being spiteful at all."

NW: "Sean was particularly fucking angry, spiky, prickly."

JDB: "To smash everything up was just for effect – you know, 'I've had a bad couple of days at work here!' It was literally that, there was no pre-planned, 'Oh, I hope somebody's taking a photo of this', because actually there aren't that many photos."

NW: "It was Pennie Smith and she didn't take many!"

JDB: "We barely even had any gear left that worked after that gig. It was all the good stuff."

NW: "But the tours leading up to that had been alright. Funnily enough the Therapy? tour was kind of enjoyable, nice and comfy and we were on the bus together playing ['90s games console] Mega CD."

JDB: "I'd gone back into being a complete pisshead again, unfortunately. Sean'd be playing [video games] every night, Richey was actually getting on with Therapy?'s Andy Cairns quite well, they were talking about Foucault and that sort of thing. Although he had some dark moments on that tour, he was engaging with people."

NW: "The Suede tour was a bit harder because it was so long. Someone left my suitcase on the side of the road instead of the bus so I lost my clothes."

JDB: "We'd lost the guitar that most of 'The Holy Bible' was written on."

NW: "Suede were fucking cracking up because Bernard [Butler] had left. It was a good meltdown tour."

JDB: "Pre-Britpop, everything was as miserable as sin, wasn't it? Then Britpop came along and it was like the first fucking era to be about nothing but celebration. You woke up one day and everything's fucking changed!"

NW: "The only bad thing was I remember me and Richey being gutted that we hadn't won album of the year in the *NME*. I think we were number five or six. Who would have won? Probably Oasis." ['The Holy Bible' was Number Five, 'Definitely Maybe' was Number One.]

JDB: "But you know, contrary to popular belief, most people did genuinely fucking love that album. We went to play at the universities and it was these kids who got a first in English Lit, sort of thing.... It was an intense period for people you would call the quintessentially 16, 17-year-old indie heads. But you meet people and they've gone on to live fairly positive lives. It's one of the great reader albums."

Why *did* you call it 'The Holy Bible'?

NW: "That is the one thing that I thought you might ask and I don't actually know, and



MITCH IKEDA



I still don't know why. Obviously because it's Richey's fucking... whatever you wanna call it, his tract, but I don't actually think I ever talked to him about why. As soon as he said it, it just felt right. It sounded better than 'The Poetry Of Death'! There was never any discussion about it really, or any kind of controversy. And Rob Stringer came down to the studio and we played him 'Archives Of Pain' and he was shouting '*horses and chains*'! He totally wanted us to follow our map, really. I think they refused to release it in Italy at the time because of the title."

JDB: "It was the post-Nirvana age where you could hear the record company just thinking, 'Yeah, this bunch of fuck-ups might just have a chance on college radio!' That guy from [North Carolina hardcore band] Corrosion Of Conformity liked it, that sort of thing."

NW: "There was a lot of crossover into death metal circles, you know. And it was a rock beast, so vital. In a cult, Jane's Addiction way. And we had this huge [US] tour lined up with this band called Sponge. Obviously it never happened, but it felt like they'd remixed it and they were going to give it a push. I never really felt in my heart of hearts that we would go."

You always said that however things had gone, [1996 follow-up] 'Everything Must Go' would have been less aggressive, more melodic?

JDB: "Yeah, basically what happened before Richey went missing was that he gave us those booklets, he was giving us lyrics. Stuff like [third single] 'Kevin Carter' – I wrote the music to it because you could see it, there was a fully formed narrative of somebody's story that you could understand if you were given the background to it. Whereas with 'The Holy Bible' there's just not many songs like that at all. [Album track] 'Small Black Flowers That Grow In The Sky' was coming from that booklet of stuff he'd given us. And again we'd done a demo of that shortly before he went missing and we could feel that there was a humanity there, perhaps, there was a bit more empathy for his subject matter. And so we were going in that direction. But there were other songs there that were divorced from the empathy that 'Kevin Carter' and 'Small Black Flowers...' had. We just couldn't see ourselves carrying on. [Producer] Owen Morris told us he liked 'The Holy Bible' but that it goes too far. And we were aware that to go farther down that road probably would've been caricature. It would've been too bloody-minded for us, personally and artistically. I just didn't wanna write music to '4st 7lb' again. I didn't have the energy for it, I'll freely admit, I just didn't. It was lovely to move away from this airtight space. Just that thing of needing a change, it was as simple as that."

"PLAYING IT LIVE? THAT'S A MASSIVE QUESTION MARK"

James Dean Bradfield

Is it enjoyable to play songs from 'The Holy Bible' now?

NW: "It's taken a long time to make sense live, undoubtedly. Probably the last year or two with stuff like 'Die In The Summertime'... 'Faster' has never been enjoyable. It just doesn't work, unless you're feeling so hateful and strong and empowered. But it's been a long time, so I guess we feel that as a pure piece of art, we can celebrate it in that sense really. It took a long time. I think doing [2011 'farewell' compilation/tour] 'National Treasures' helped a lot. Doing that O2 show it did feel like perhaps we could leave a lot of... not the memories but the fucking baggage behind. It's always good to hear Richey's words playing to 25,000 people at Glastonbury trying to work out what 'Die In The Summertime' is saying. There is a real power in those last words of 'PCP' and everything. Just the desperation in that."

Have you decided whether to mark 'The Holy Bible"s 20th anniversary with shows yet?

JDB: "I dunno. There's a strong urge to play it live, but there's a massive question mark in our heads. I think Sean can fucking do it. I don't wanna speak for Nick, but I just want to know if I can do 'Ifwhiteamerica...', sing all those words to '4st 7lb', 'Mausoleum' – the bridges in that require you to not breathe for 55 seconds on end. For me to get those guitar sounds back, for me to link in with Sean's drumming on 'Ifwhiteamerica...'. Sean could do it tomorrow."

NW: "James has got the biggest ask, really. If we were to do it – and it is a big if – there would be a kind of symmetry. I'd like to look at doing something like the three Astorias. I'd like to do an American tour of it because we never took it to America and Japan. Obviously Richey disappeared so it would be drawing a line under that as well. Playing [this year's] Glastonbury 20 years on feels like... not putting the memory to bed because I loved the first time. But everything felt good on that Saturday. But it's a big question mark. Because if we do it and it's shit, that could be the end of us."

JDB: "It's as much on as it is off. The decision will be made downstairs when we plug in and just play those songs and nothing else."

NW: "I think if we can do it [we'll] present it almost as an art installation rather than as a gig."

Anything else to add?

NW: "Just the power of the words, really. Sometimes music is diminished or bands' memories are diminished but there's something about 'The Holy Bible'. Those lyrics are kind of in a pre-digital world. The amount of fucking information and intellect crammed into them, on a portable typewriter. There's just no technology involved, it's just pure fucking... knowledge." ■

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"The new suicide note to happened be

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record is like a everything that fore in my life"



Merchandise are ready to say goodbye to the DIY scene and their "greasy fucking" Tampa hometown. Phil Hebblethwaite meets them in Florida and finds out why the Sunshine State isn't always so bright

PHOTOS BY MATT MILLER



Merchandise: (l–r) Pat Brady, Elsner Nino, Chris Horn, Carson Cox and Dave Vassalotti





How is it that Tampa, this odd, mid-sized city on the opposite Floridian coast to Miami, has managed to produce one of indie-rock's most intriguing prospects – Merchandise, a band that last year joined 4AD's coveted roster?

At various points on my three-day trip to meet them, frontman Carson Cox calls his hometown "a hell hole", "the void" and "desperate" – fair descriptions, perhaps, but they don't conjure up Tampa's distinctive mood. It's my last night, we're drinking neat whiskey in my hotel room and I'm pushing him for a better characterisation. He talks about how Tampa is trying to become more "advanced" and "refined", but also how, as in Miami and Atlanta, there's a strip-club culture that doubles as a breeding ground for Dirty South hip-hop. With some pride, he mentions that one club has a 'make it rain' machine (feed dollar bills in, watch them shoot out over the dancers) and then he says: "This is a greasy fucking town." It's the perfect description.

Merchandise, who call themselves "equal parts punk misanthropy, fine art, low humour, classical study, psychedelic space-casing, mad science and pop genius" and have an almost intimidating knowledge of music, film, art and literature, might not immediately seem like a band that could spring from such a town, but spend time here and you begin to think, "Well, why not?" It's a blank canvas of a place, and the band were so starved of stimuli when they were teenagers that they cultivated culture for themselves – their own punk scene – and devoured culture from elsewhere. Also, there's a loucheness to their dark, arch pop – especially on 'After The End', their new, fourth album and first for 4AD – that seems connected to how hot and humid it is here. Stepping outside, even at night, is like opening an oven door; you feel continuously greasy, and locals, including Merchandise, drink and eat a lot of meat (the city's signature dish is a 'Cuban sandwich', which contains pork, ham *and* salami), adding booze and meat sweats to the already above-average perspiration levels.

"I live a public life," Carson says, acknowledging Merchandise's relative level of exposure, "but I don't really because I live in Tampa." It's easy to hide here: for four years from when they formed in 2008, they were buried underground. It was their second album, 2012's 'Children Of Desire', that got some online traction and caused a panic among labels to try and sign them. "I was washing dishes and living in our old house – a horrible, cockroach-infested punk house – but I was really happy, because I felt like we were playing a big prank on the world," Carson says. "I remember when [Rough Trade boss] Geoff Travis called – I was grocery shopping. He introduced himself and I was, like, 'Hmm, I know who you are.' He's an unassuming man, but to me he's famous. I was very moved to speak to someone who had ties to so much music I love. At that time, I just considered us to be a local band. I didn't think we'd ever be picked up by a label, or that people would be interested in New York, let alone the UK."

The previous day, and I'm in the front room of the new Merchandise House – or as their female friends call it, the Boy House – in a neighbourhood five miles north of downtown Tampa and quiet enough to not disturb a lethal-looking snake sleeping on the road. When the band started out, they were a three-piece comprised of Carson (motormouth, looks like Leonardo DiCaprio, used to be straight-edge, certainly isn't now), Dave Vassalotti (Italian-American, guitarist, a kind of Johnny Marr to Carson's Morrissey) and Pat Brady (big guy, bass player, went out with Carson's sister for ages). Last year they expanded into a permanent five-piece, adding their old pal Chris Horn (sax, appropriately, and guitar, father works in military intelligence, only non-stoner in the band) and Elsner Nino (Latino-American, drummer, moved down from New York to join the band). All five of them live together in this impressively tidy house, which is their home, their studio (they recorded 'After The End' here) and also the place where they smoke gargantuan quantities of weed and have regular sessions watching movies on a projector screen. Newly downloaded is *Soy Cuba*, a 1964 black-and-white Soviet-Cuban propaganda film about the Cuban Revolution, but for now we're burning through old YouTube videos, some shot by Carson, of hardcore and experimental bands they either played in or were part of their DIY scene.

Perhaps we have a tendency to romanticise American punk scenes, believing them to be sanctuaries of universal cooperation, shared values and anti-corporate spirit. The reality, according to Carson, is that you pick your friends (for Merchandise that means a few local artists and, from across the US, Olympia's Milk Music and Arizona's Destruction Unit, with whom they released a split 12-inch earlier this year) and the rest is just rivalry and bullshit.

"When we started we were making clear-cut, fuck-you-for-life, burning-our-bridges statements like, 'You suck, you compromise everything we want to do and you don't respect yourself,'" he says. "Then we started getting attention and it became about competition. We were considered elitist because we didn't play noisy hardcore. Other bands thought we thought we were better than them, and maybe that's true, but it doesn't matter – you can still come to our show. We had meaningless feuds over territory, but now it's chilled out, and with the benefit of hindsight it's like, 'That was all a bit silly.' We were still home all the time. Now it's different."

Signing to 4AD offered Merchandise both a way out of the local punk scene and a structure for touring that didn't require them to utilise the national DIY network. (They also quit what Carson calls their "700 other bands".) Carson being Carson, though, he can't help but throw one last punch at the punks. On 'After The End' there's a deceptively peppy song called 'Enemy' that contains the following lyrics he wrote: "*If I'm what you say I say I am/Then it shouldn't be hard to understand/If I'm your enemy/Then I'm keen to be your enemy/All your thoughtless words/All your trembling herds/All your point and*

DOING THE MERCH

Gareth Jones on mixing and engineering 'After The End'



"Carson [Cox] is a wonderful guy – loquacious, you could say; he can talk the hind legs off a donkey. He's also super-bright, knowledgeable and great to work with, although I didn't meet him until after the record was done. We worked remotely and had lots of Skype meetings. It was all about the language of music – they'd send songs, I'd send a version back, they'd congratulate me or complain, and we'd go from there.

"I didn't know the band before 4AD put me forward to work with them. I heard Carson's rough mixes for the album and thought, 'These are just great; I need to do







"I'm 100 per cent dead to music scenes"

Carson Cox

blame/It just makes me feel the same".

Asked what provoked the song, he says: "I'm officially over scenes. I'm 100 per cent dead to music scenes. I'm only interested in individuals. I don't care what background you come from and I don't give a shit about your politics; I'm just interested in you and your individual ideas."

The surprising thing about 'Enemy' is not how aggressive it is (there's always been anger in Merchandise songs), but where it's sequenced on the new album – directly after 'Corridor', the shimmering, instrumental opener that Dave wrote. Putting it in second place makes a clear statement, and also reveals what Merchandise are trying to do with 'After The End'. "It's like a suicide note to everything that happened before in my life," Carson says, adding: "The beginning and end are concrete things in fiction, but life isn't fiction – things continue. We're still putting out records, we're still a band, and everything is so different now – the band is totally different, we're writing songs differently, Dave has almost half the songs on the record, and I think we're doing everything in a much more advanced way."

It's certainly the most sonically poppy and focused of their four albums (or "edited", as Dave prefers to say), and that has much to do with Gareth Jones – former producer of Depeche Mode, Einstürzende Neubauten and Wire – working closely with Carson on engineering and mixing the songs. But it's also Merchandise's wildest record. Dave describes his songs as being "bleak" and "hopeless", and Carson comes across as being deeply frustrated and unhappy with his lot. "*I'm through with begging for approval/Now I'm asking to be free*", he sings on 'Green Lady', and then, on 'Looking Glass Waltz': "*Oh, nostalgia is just a looking glass/It's for us to distort and mould/Won't someone please help me/I'm too young to feel this old*".

Carson Cox is an extraordinary combination of characteristics. He can be lively, cocksure and glib, but when talking about his music he has a tendency to tie himself up in knots. He can speak for what seems like hours about the "deep concepts" in his songs, but equally admits, "Most of the time we don't know what we are doing. We're wilfully ignorant – it's pure pop experimentation." He defines himself as a "conservative" – if only to prove he's absolutely not a hippy – and you wonder at times whether half the enemies he claims to have even exist. He's constantly striving to be different, but he hasn't used the opportunity 4AD have offered Merchandise to completely rise above Tampa's "trembling herds", reminding me of something he said in 2012: "We represent some kind of dignity to people in big cities elsewhere. But, you know, it's hard to be a prophet in your hometown."

He also says he's undiagnosed dyslexic, a hypochondriac, and he probably has OCD. "My anxiety was really bad when I was younger, but now that the course of my life has played out a little a bit more, I can kind of tell what is happening. In 2012 I was like, 'Anything can happen! I could end up homeless, or dying on the street on my way home from work.' I felt like I was going crazy, whereas now it's like, 'We're putting out a record, I hope this is good.' I'm just glad it's finished. I was in a really moody, emotional, bullshit place when we were making it that I don't want to be in now, which is why I've been watching live wrestling and..."

"...a bunch of Jerry Bruckheimer movies," says Dave.

"Now that the record's done, I'm like, 'No more emotional shit,'" adds Carson. "I just want to have fun."

And so, the next day, we meet to eat monstrous plates of incredible food at the city's best Cuban restaurant, La Teresita, after which I find myself in a cab with Carson charging down a three-lane trunk road in the city's centre. Our driver sees a car coming directly at us, going the wrong way up what is a one-way street. "Look at that fool," he says, and casually slides into the middle lane to avoid a head-on collision. Carson is equally nonplussed. He glances up from the backseat, rolls his eyes and says, "Pure Tampa. That shit happens the whole time here."

It becomes a heavy, greasy night out. We meet Chris at The Hub, which correctly advertises itself as being "a true American cocktail lounge with honest charm, strong drinks, and best jukebox around", then a situation arises where bodies are piled upon bodies in Chris' car and suddenly we're in another bar in the Ybor City district, then back at the hotel, with a friend of the band's, Filthy Phil, wasted on some hideous cross between malt liquor and an energy drink.

"None of my deep punk rock friends are just punk rockers," Carson says later. "It's impossible to be just that, and it's a waste of time. You can't just be a cartoon. When labels starting getting interested in us, I didn't know many people who were having similar experiences, but then other people we'd met touring – Dirty Beaches, Parquet Courts, Milk Music, The Men – got picked up by labels and the press. Suddenly, it seemed like all these bands from the warehouse scene, some of whom I had booked shows for in Tampa, had become the legitimate music world – the next thing on from Dan Deacon, Lightning Bolt and even fucking Matt And Kim."

What does he expect to happen next? Could Merchandise become a band like REM who sprang from a similar DIY scene in the not-so-far-away Athens, Georgia? "It's still hard for us to think of ourselves as a professional band," he says, "but we have begun to think longer-term, and in whatever shape the band takes – as a five-piece, as a 10-piece, doing four-LP operas, doing wilder stuff live, whatever. But for now, this is us – this five-piece, here in Tampa, Florida. We're the cult of Merchandise. We're the die-hards. We're the baddest motherfuckers on the block." ■

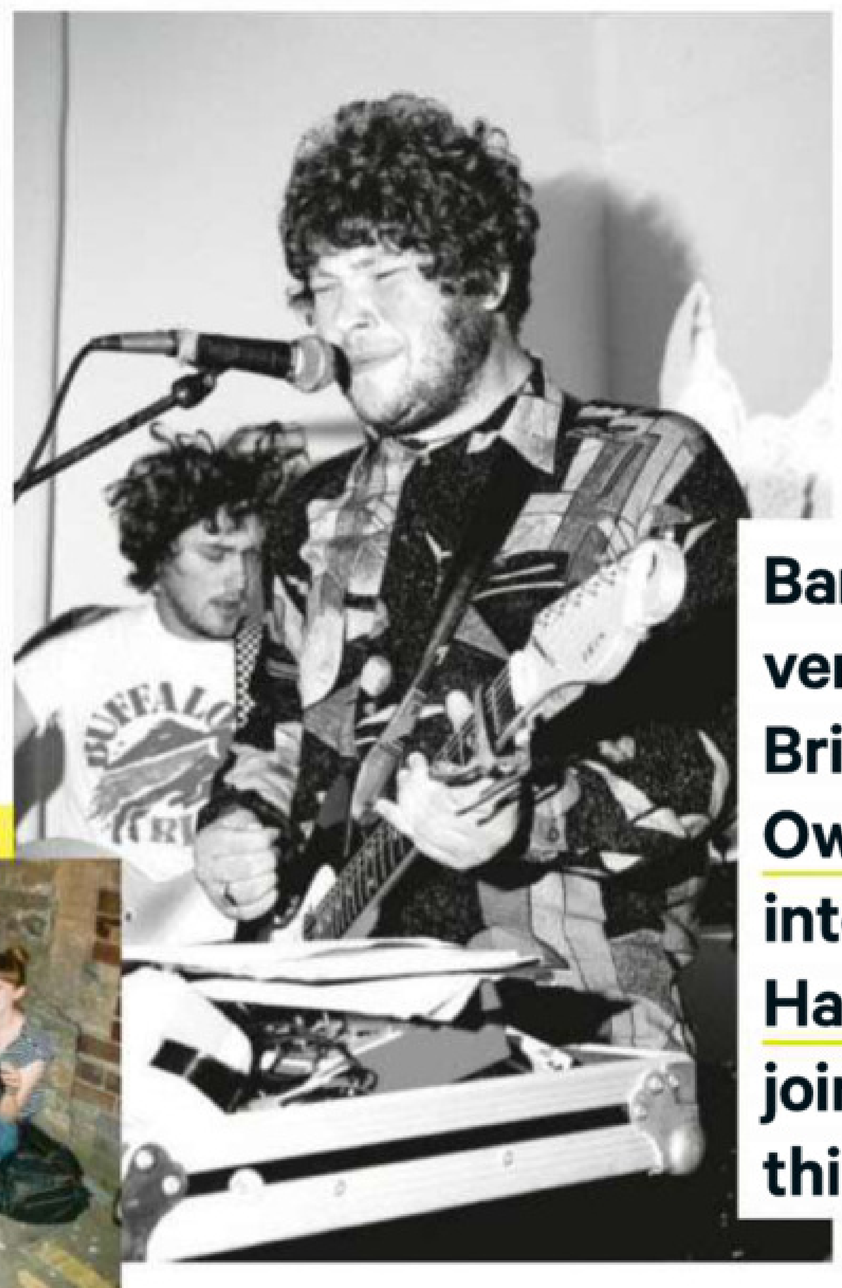
this.' They're young and at the beginning of their career, but they have a hugely encyclopaedic knowledge of the British music scene, from the early '80s on. Carson's funny; he said the reason he chose me was because of a Tuxedomoon record I did in 1981, 'Desire'. I was amazed he'd even heard it.

"I was very impressed, especially since they recorded it in their house. People have become so empowered by cheap recording technology now, but it's still hard to get the finished vibe. I think the record sounds great, but there's no way I could have helped if the band hadn't laid down good foundations."

This is the story of how one tiny indie label defeated a cartel of controlling promoters to rewire a city's entire live music scene



(Left and right) Jenner Blank, lead singer of Velcro Hooks and (below) Oliver Wilde





Barred from every venue in the city, Bristol label Howling Owl took matters into their own hands. Hazel Sheffield joins them on their third birthday



COLIN WILLIAMS

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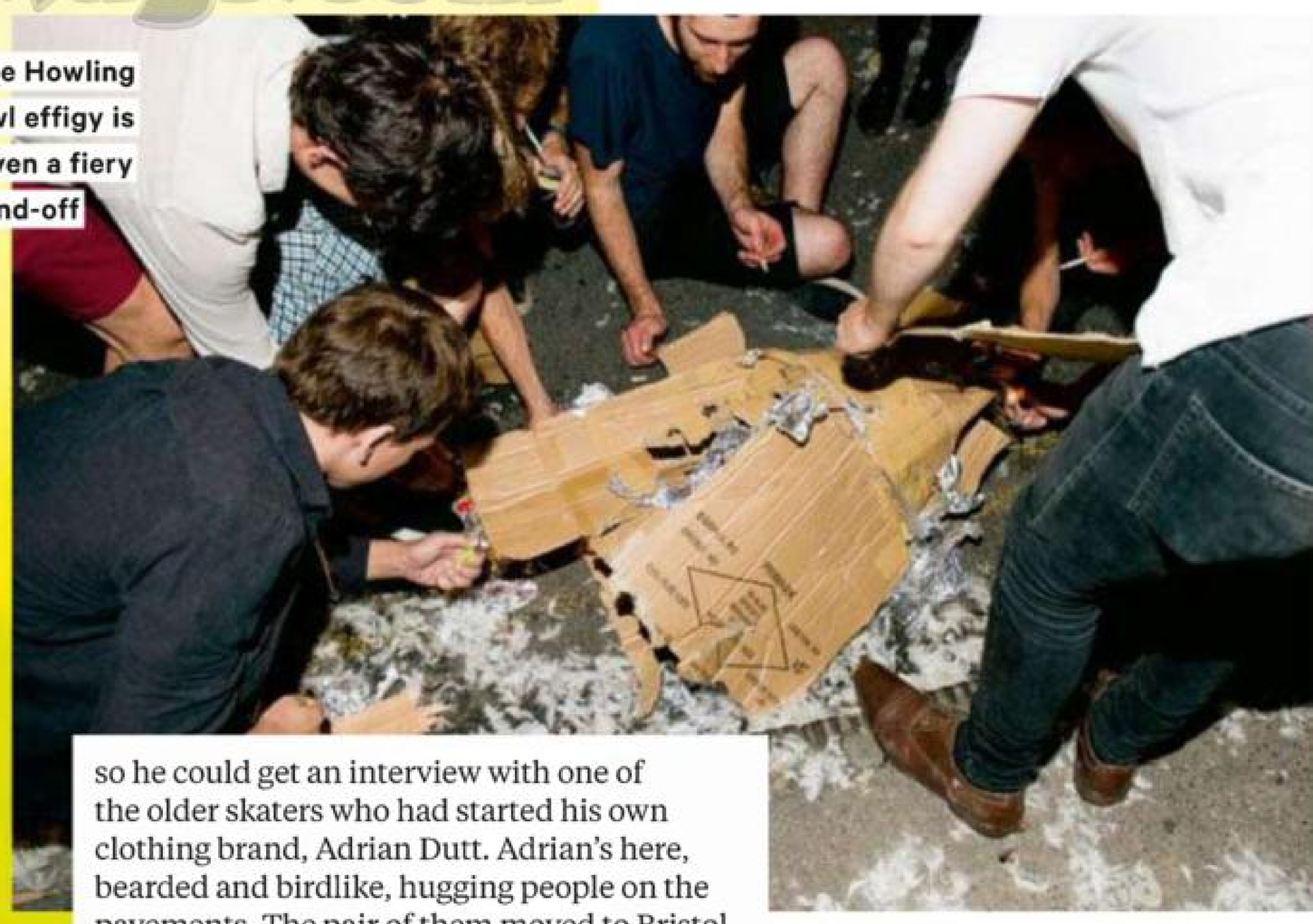




It's midnight on Bristol's beer-soaked St Nicholas Street and four shirtless men wielding wooden spears are destroying a giant cardboard, feather and foil effigy of an owl. Spilling out of a nearby bar, a group crowds around them in the muggy night air and begin pumping their fists. Passers-by stop and stare. A man at a second-floor window looks out nervously, clutching a phone. The owl sails past him, landing on the sharp point of a spear, and bursts, filling the air with white feathers that rain down on those dancing below. They clutch one another's clammy, feathered bodies and sing, "*Happy birthday, Howling Owl, happy birthday to you*".

Let the curtain-twitcher be reassured: this is not some kind of bird-slaughtering cult, but the start of the anniversary celebrations for Howling Owl, a record label that has been rewiring Bristol's microcosmic music industry for the last three years, pushing the people who thought they controlled the scene from their roost. Home to a small but diverse family of artists, Howling Owl has carved out a DIY scene in a city where music thrives but money-minded promoters and a few powerful venues run the show. This year alone, Howling Owl has filled Bristol's world-class Arnolfini gallery with white noise and experimental art, bridged the gap between noise bands and the city's enduring electronic focus, and made it onto the BBC 6 Music playlist with Oliver Wilde, whose woozy, looping melodies are about to lift him way beyond the West Country.

Who's responsible? There's Joe Hatt, still wielding his spear, kicking up damp feathers that stick to his skinny body and land in his black curly hair. He started a skateboarding 'zine in his North Devon nowhere town when he was 15, partly so he could get an interview with one of the older skaters who had started his own clothing brand, Adrian Dutt. Adrian's here, bearded and birdlike, hugging people on the pavements. The pair of them moved to Bristol in 2011, searching for a new home for their noise band, Spectres, who kept getting booed off stages during support slots for Devon's endless streams of reggae and ska acts.



The Howling Owl effigy is given a fiery send-off

Adrian and Joe knew Bristol was a breeding ground for arts and music. Two universities furnished the city with an annual influx of students with borrowed cash, looking for ways to waste time. After the St Pauls district's soundsystem scene and subsequently trip-hop put Bristol on the map in the early '90s, Roni Size and his Reprazent associates crowned it the home of drum'n'bass. It later became a dubstep stronghold, exporting then-teenage stars like Joker. Invada, a label set up by Geoff Barrow of Portishead in 2003, had a reputation for supporting outsider artists like Boris, Anika and his own side-project, Beak.

Bristol wasn't short on musical history. So Joe and Adrian were surprised to find themselves playing the same crappy support slots for ageing acts – this time of the punk variety. Within two weeks they had been banned from a local (and now defunct) venue called The Croft for not bringing in enough business. It took a couple of months to scratch beneath the surface and find bands like Holy Stain, who made frenzied math rock, and Towns, whose baggy melodies earned them a place on *NME*'s 50 bands to watch in 2011 within about five minutes of them putting something on the internet – something ripped from a £3 cassette that Adrian and Joe had designed and released under the umbrella Howling Owl. At the time, Adrian and Joe didn't think they were starting a label. To this day, they've never written a contract. Soon, the cassettes became CDs so that more people would be able to listen to them, and the CDs spawned more gigs. The first Howling Owl night that Spectres headlined was in March 2012 at a bar on the edge of the city centre ⟶



Velcro Hooks and (below) members of Spectres prep Centrespace



called The Louisiana, which once hosted early shows by The White Stripes. It ended in a fight. Word got out and the next time they went to book a show, they found they were banned from most of the venues in town.

Forced out, they went underground. They found a working church in the city's Southville district and fitted out the crypt with makeshift stages for a show with Towns and Spectres. They crashed an old diving school hidden away on Bristol's harbour to launch an album by local punk band Velcro Hooks, which ended in mayhem when the crowd got so rowdy that the electrics momentarily blew from all the beer being poured into the plug sockets. Local art galleries, impressed with Howling Owl's visual presence – Adrian's distinctive illustrated posters and Spectres' 'zines, the screenprinted album covers and tote bags – agreed to surrender their precious white spaces. One called Motorcade/FlashParade down in Bedminster (next to Southville) hosted Spectres' 'Hunger EP' launch in March 2013. Riverside arts centre Spike Island welcomed Oliver Wilde for an unplugged gig in January 2014, and today, on this sticky midsummer Saturday, a small central gallery called Centrespace (just across from the city's Colston Hall) has been stripped of art and filled with speakers for four nights of free Howling Owl birthday parties featuring the label's favourite bands, as well as the impromptu owl-slaying.

Centrespace fills with equal numbers Howling Owl devotees and locals who look like the last time they heard white noise was before televisions went digital. "It's like the opposite of music," one guy in a polo shirt whispers to his mate while Hitcha, a giant, pale-faced teenager in an oversized black T-shirt, mixes looping sounds from an Octatrack sampler hidden in a silver briefcase. "Good, though," he concludes, before they shuffle over to the makeshift bar where Adrian and Joe are selling dumpy bottles of lager for £1 next to vinyl and CDs from the Howling Owl back catalogue, hoping to make back the £300 it cost them to hire the space.

"They literally forced me to put my music out"
Oliver Wilde



Spectres: Hatt and Dutt's noise band

A crowd spills out into a narrow alleyway. Among them is Harry Wright, guitarist with The Naturals, who had been developing their atmospheric noise-rock for seven years by the time Howling Owl offered to make their album the label's first 12-inch release. Before that, Harry says the band was at the mercy of a cohort of Bristol promoters who expected them to support touring acts that came to town for free, to bring in local fans. "Spectres found new venues and that meant we didn't have to be the support act, we could curate our own nights and play with our friends. It transformed the music scene," he says.

Later, Joe tells me they got so fed up with promoters using Howling Owl bands as supports that he tried to set a £50 fee per show. It didn't go down so well. Tim Bailey, who has worked as a promoter in Bristol for eight years, says Howling Owl were rewriting the rules. "I wouldn't dream of putting these things on; it would be a practical nightmare!" he laughs. "I promoted 244 touring shows in Bristol last year, with a seven-person staff. I don't know how they do it – putting out a hundred handcrafted 12-inches, the hours and hours that go into that, for literally no financial gain."

Geoff Barrow agrees that the Bristol scene has become less diverse and more commercial over the 10 years he's run Invada. "Howling Owl are the good guys!" he says. "A lot of labels run by managers ultimately want to become funded by majors. Most – if not all – Bristol independents in the past wouldn't dream of it."

Neither would Howling Owl, who aren't precious about letting their artists fly the coop. Oliver Wilde will inevitably be the first to leave. The following night he sits hunched over his knees outside Centrespace, where Adrian and Joe have spent the whole day cleaning up bottles and cigarette butts in preparation for his set later that night. Oliver met Adrian while they were both working in Rise, a local record store, but it was only after Adrian found some of Oliver's music online that he admitted to being a bedroom songwriter. "They literally forced me to put my music out there," Oliver says. Later, Adrian says Oliver's reputation grew so quickly that they already knew they were "pushing it" when they put out his second record: "We saw and heard something that we believed in and we were able to help, even if we're just a stepping stone on a journey."

As his set beckons, Oliver's nervous. Almost all the Howling Owl bands have turned out to see him debut material from his new album, which he's recording down in Cornwall. Joe and Adrian chat with people and hand out beers from behind a table. As darkness descends, the band assemble behind the makeshift PA and the crowd squeeze in, forming a tight circle round them. Angled towards his drummer, Oliver lifts his guitar high and slams into the first chord. The room fills with a glorious fuzz. Smiles creep across the faces of his friends. He turns towards them, the feathers shifting underfoot. ■



Neo-punks Velcro Hooks play in a Bristol art gallery

WISE OWLS

Howling Owl's favourite indie labels on starting your own

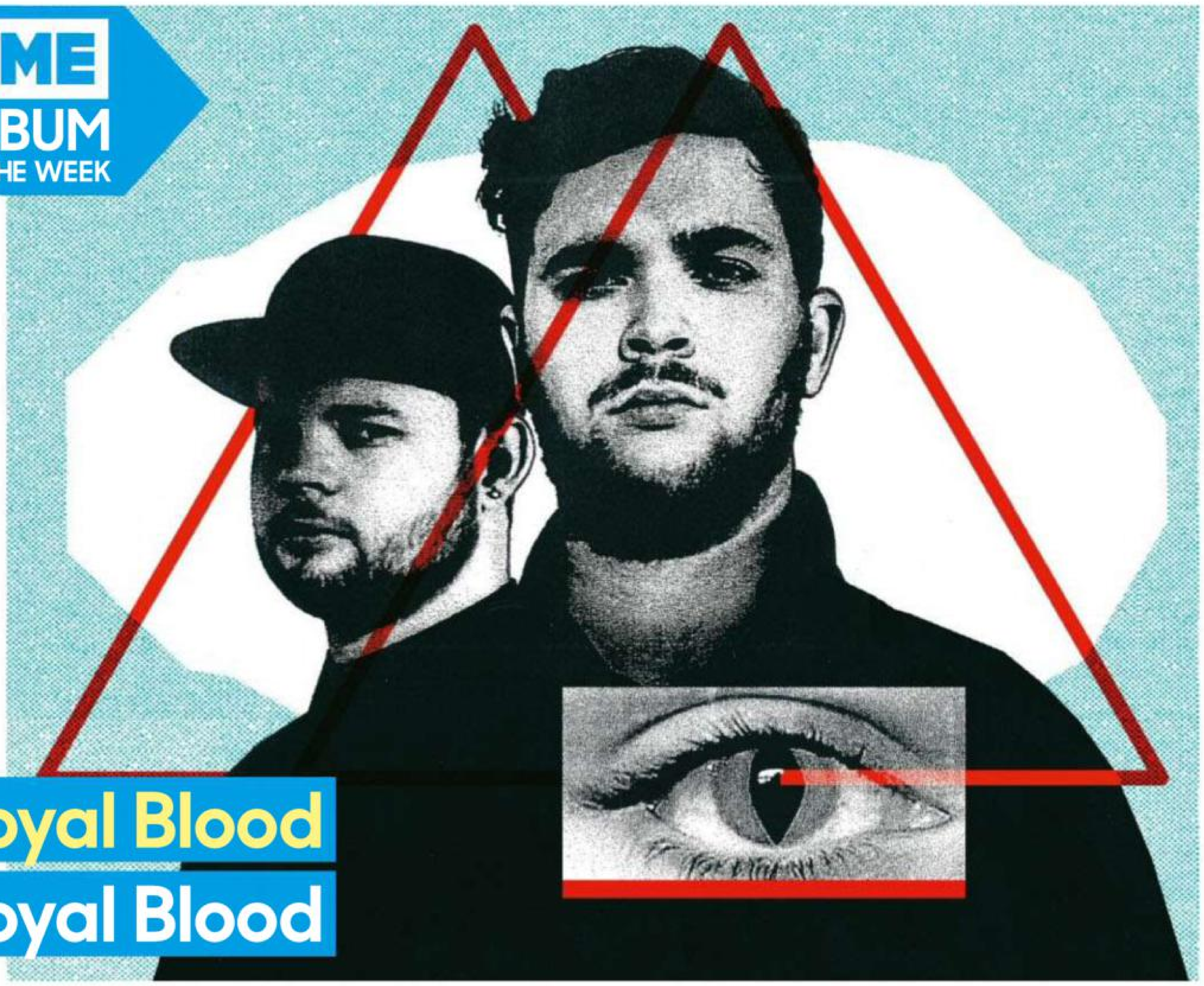
David West
Art Is Hard, Falmouth
"Be prepared to lose lots of money on something you thought was a really good idea to start off with. This could apply to a single release or the whole concept of running a label – I think we float around somewhere in the middle."

Nathaniel Cramp
Sonic Cathedral, London
"I started doing the Sonic Cathedral club nights in 2004 and a couple of years later had saved a little money and could offer to release seven-inch singles for people. Make sure you're doing it for the right reasons. In the current climate, running a label is very much a labour of love."

Dan Reeves
Faux Discx, Brighton
"I'm lucky that I have an incredibly talented group of friends who keep producing amazing music. Work with people you love and don't make promises you can't keep!"


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NME ALBUM OF THE WEEK



Royal Blood

Royal Blood

The Brighton power duo's turbocharged debut drags heavy-riffing rock out of the genre ghetto



It's all in the details. There's a moment about halfway through Royal Blood's self-titled debut – towards the end of the creepy 'Blood Hands' – when, rather than his usual skin-pounding assault, drummer Ben Thatcher reverts to a surprisingly hushed tap-tap-tap to accompany Mike Kerr's drawl and low-slung riff. Much of what has been written and said so far about this Brighton duo focuses on the noise and guts of their two-pronged assault and the idea that it amounts to far more than a mere two-piece should be capable of. But their excellent debut proves that, like all the best heavy music, it's the moments of vulnerable calm that elevate noisy bands highest. There's light, shade and careful nuance throughout. The crushing riffs of 'Little Monster' and 'Out Of The Black' might turn heads, but it's the dynamics of 'Ten Tonne Skeleton' or the deft melody in 'You Can Be So Cruel' that hold the attention.

That's not to say 'Royal Blood' isn't an absolute turbo-bastard of a rock record, though. Supercharged early singles 'Little Monster' and 'Come On Over' have blasted their way to the forefront of both rock and indie circles largely because, even at their most straightforward, this band are startlingly effective. Thanks to their employment of the base constituents of what is, at heart, an extremely simple genre, it's possible to throw a dart at the listings for any local venue in the country and find a band who sound similar to Royal Blood. Crucially, though, most of those will have less than one percent of the power.

That's down to the fact that, in songs like the pneumatic 'Ten Tonne Skeleton', 'Careless' and punishing closer 'Better Strangers', they hit upon

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

the alchemical Philosopher's Stone and transform what they do into much more than the sum of its parts. 'Blood Hands' coils and uncoils itself so confidently that it feels like it could be the work of a band with twice the experience. Royal Blood pull it off easily. In the wrong hands, the riff on 'Loose Change' could have fallen into a box marked 'Jet Offcuts: DO NOT TOUCH', but they execute it with a fluidity that rewards repeated listening. 'Figure It Out' also edges towards the predictable, but the elastic groove threaded throughout is the mark of a band who really know their shit. The result, as with much of the album, is a track that sounds and feels like much heritage rock. Influences trip from The Bronx to Led Zeppelin (Jimmy Page doubtless saw something of himself in Kerr's riffs when he watched them play in New York in May), but they're delivered with an edge that confirms why Royal Blood have been hyped quite so hard.

Led by avidly followed big hitters like Bring Me The Horizon and You Me At Six, the rock landscape they've gatecrashed is in rude health. Their album is no salve, because there is no wound. Their genre has become marginalised and largely unable to reach out of its own narrow confines. But Royal Blood aren't here merely to drag rock music out of the ghetto. Their impact will surely reach beyond rock. The cool swagger with which they dispatched meat-cleaver riffs and juggernaut choruses in front of 80,000 people when supporting Arctic Monkeys at London's Finsbury Park in May proves it can.

Unconcerned with anything other than how fun the shared language of rock can be, 'Royal Blood' is here to convince everyone in its path that loud is good. ■ BEN PATASHNIK

8

ROYAL BLOOD ON...

Taking risks during recording

Ben Thatcher (drums): "We were riding horses in-between takes!"
Mike Kerr (bass/vocals): "We pushed what we could do as two people, big time. We have no idea about the music industry really – we're doing our own thing and we've had no help with it."

The album's imagery

Ben: "'Out Of The Black' is dark and moody. You get this 'I really want to bite his head off' feel."
Mike: "'You Can Be So Cruel' wasn't written during a happy time. It isn't a murder plot, though."

Life on tour

Ben: "We're not alcoholics, but we're always in different time zones and everywhere you go there's a buffet of alcohol waiting. You walk offstage buzzing and the immediate thing is 'let's celebrate'. You can see how bands get into this cycle."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** August 25 ▶**LABEL** Warners ▶**PRODUCER** Tom Dalgety ▶**LENGTH** 32:30 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Out Of The Black ▶2. Come On Over ▶3. Figure It Out ▶4. You Can Be So Cruel ▶5. Blood Hands ▶6. Little Monster ▶7. Loose Change ▶8. Careless ▶9. Ten Tonne Skeleton ▶10. Better Strangers ▶**BEST TRACK** Blood Hands

MORE ALBUMS

The Bug
Angels & Devils Ninja Tune



Kevin Martin's last outing as The Bug, 2008's 'London Zoo', was an apocalyptic satire about his hometown featuring a plethora of MCs and his trademark brooding dancehall. 'Angels & Devils', his third LP, uses dourness to create an album of contrasts. Side A (the 'Angels' side) is full of moody trip-hop and collaborations with soulful vocalists Liz Harris of Grouper and Inga Copeland, formerly of Hype Williams. On side B, however, Martin is on typical form, deploying dirty ragga ('Fuck You'), grime ('Function'), and dark hip-hop ('Fuck A Bitch', featuring Death Grips). It's an impressive display, but the contrast between the two sides is so vast, they could easily be two different records. ■ HUW NESBITT

7

Celebration
Albumin Bella Union



Married duo Katrina Ford and Sean Antanaitis formed Celebration in 2004 with drummer David Bergander. For the Baltimore band's fourth album, keyboardist Tony Drummond and bassist Walker Teret have joined the family. The self-produced 'Albumin' shifts from post-punk ('Razor's Edge'), to dreampop ('Walk On'), with seven-minute Southern-fried jam 'I Got Sol' and piano bop-along 'Only The Wicked' jammed alongside. The whole thing is infused with a sense of hope (closer 'Don't Stop Dreaming' in particular), but that can't mask a lack of cohesion. The sultry vocal performance Ford maintains doesn't rescue things either, as her bandmates pull the songs in different directions underneath her. While charming, 'Albumin' suffers from a distinct lack of harmony. ■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

6



DZ Deathrays
Black Rat

The Aussie hellraisers find new ways to party on the follow-up to 'Bloodstreams'

On their 2012 debut 'Bloodstreams', DZ Deathrays' thrashy riffs put out a siren call to all headbanging pissheads. Two years on, it looks like Shane Parsons and Simon Ridley might have grown up.

'Black Rat' is just as fun, bright and sloppy, but this time the Brisbane duo are reflecting on sleep deprivation and broken relationships. Restlessness courses throughout, first appearing on 'Northern Lights' as Parsons sings "*So tired, lay awake at night*", before 'Nightwalking' has him wandering the streets searching for "*somewhere to be*".

There's respite from whatever is troubling DZ in the music itself, though. 'Fixations' is pure pop dolled up in crunching riffs and futuristic bleeps, providing giddy relief amid the darkness, and 'Reflective Skull' is too stupendously catchy to bring anyone down. The hangover may be setting in, but DZ Deathrays have found new ways to party. ■ RHIAN DALY

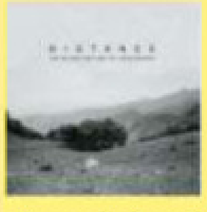


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▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** August 18 ▶**LABEL** Infectious ▶**PRODUCER** Burke Reid ▶**LENGTH** 39:16 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Black Rat ▶2. Gina Works At Hearts ▶3. Less Out Of Sync ▶4. Reflective Skull ▶5. Keep Myself On Edge ▶6. Northern Lights ▶7. Nightwalking ▶8. Fixations ▶9. Ocean Exploder ▶10. Tonight Alright ▶11. Night Slave ▶**BEST TRACK** Reflective Skull

Dan Michaelson & The Coastguards
Distance State51 Conspiracy



Written in the wake of his divorce, Dan Michaelson's fifth solo LP since disbanding Absentee in 2008 finds him trying to quantify heartbreak: feeling the weight of a phantom embrace, pinpointing the moment when "*love [runs] cold after crackling through your bones*". He's a beautiful lyricist, never self-pitying nor prone to blame or cliché, but the truest note he and his Coastguards strike is that despairing feeling when your heart becomes a stuck anchor dragging through the murk. Michaelson's oaken, hefty voice is flecked with creaks of optimism, while the band slump elegantly into their forlorn Americana, to stand proudly alongside the likes of Bill Callahan and The National. ■ LAURA SNAPES

8



The Mancunian arena-fillers' follow-up to their best album won't win over the naysayers

The Courteeners
Concrete Love

The Courteeners will always be a lightning rod for anyone with a distaste for guitar-based Mancunian triumphalism, the cottage industry of self-proclaimed prophets and bullshitters conceived by Morrissey and the Gallaghers to which Liam Fray belongs. In his defence, the axe-grinders usually overlook the list of not-inconsiderable achievements his band have to crow about, but coming off the back of last year's 'Anna' – The Courteeners' best LP to date – you suspect that 'Concrete Love' will only entrench opinions, not change them.

Fray's least of all, of course. "*The charts are full of cartoons and lawyers having a gap year*", he declares on 'Dreamers', the inference being that his band are perched, dignified, above such debasement. Yet much of 'Concrete Love' sounds less informed by the "*dreamers and writers, risk-takers and fighters*" he sings about than by well-known iconoclasts like Bastille and The 1975. You might be tempted to point the finger at producer Joe Cross, whose history with acts like Hurts and Chlöe Howl sits incongruously with a comparatively rough-and-ready group like The Courteeners, but his presence didn't do 'Anna' any harm. The real problem is a lack of inspiration, perhaps a result of the speedy turnaround between this record and the last: 'Black & Blue' is nondescript landfill-indie clatter, and for all its puff-chested braggadocio, the most notable thing about 'International' is the groan-inducing opening line ("*You wanna talk about plucky?/It's like Mohammed Ali tag-teamed with Rocky*"). 'Summer' stands out, but only because it sounds like a shameless manoeuvre to join all those soon-to-be lawyers on the Radio 1 playlist.



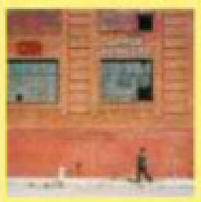
It's a shame, because there's always been more to The Courteeners than just hot air, as demonstrated by the likes of 'How Good It Was' and 'Beautiful Head'. Hot air alone doesn't sustain the kind of fervent fanbase that The Courteeners have built up, and while they've never been terribly fashionable, they've always used that to their advantage, projecting an underdog siege mentality while simultaneously selling out arenas. 'Concrete Love', however, is nothing to beat their own drum about. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

5

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** August 18 ▶**LABEL** PIAS Cooperative ▶**PRODUCER** Joe Cross ▶**LENGTH** 46:19 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. White Horses ▶2. How Good It Was ▶3. Small Bones ▶4. Has He Told You That He Loves You Yet ▶5. Black & Blue ▶6. International ▶7. Next Time You Call 8. Summer ▶9. Saboteur ▶10. Dreamers ▶11. Beautiful Head ▶**BEST TRACK** How Good It Was

Joel Gion
Apple Bonkers
The Reverberation Appreciation Society



Joel Gion, tambourine player with The Brian Jonestown Massacre, claims that his debut LP arose from a period of self-discovery, but 'Apple Bonkers' yields few surprises. Gion tries to conjure the sound of the mid-'90s West Coast psych scene his band led, enlisting some of its other faces to help. Ex-BJM member Miranda Lee Richards' chilling harmony on 'Change My Mind' is a high point that recalls their former cohorts The Dandy Warhols. Combining acoustic chords and Jesus And Mary Chain riffing, closer 'Don't Let The Fuckers Bring You Down' is Gion's best moment. Elsewhere, his Beatles-derived structures fall sadly short of the expansive trip he promised. ■ JAMES BENTLEY

5

By The Sea
Endless Days, Crystal Sky War Room



As Bill Ryder-Jones' backing band, By The Sea always had potential; but the five-piece opt to tread a different path from the former Coral man on their second LP. 'Endless Days...' is more in line with fellow Liverpudlians Echo & The Bunnymen, and a template of jangling guitars and world-weary vocals set amid spacious backdrops is quickly established. 'These Days Fall' is coated in a melancholy that recalls Simple Minds, but it doesn't last long. More hopeful melodies shine through 'Youth''s nursery-rhyme hooks and the glam-flecked 'The Stranger Things'. By The Sea wear their obvious influences well on an album that enriches their city's canon of melodic guitar pop. ■ SIMON JAY CATLING

7

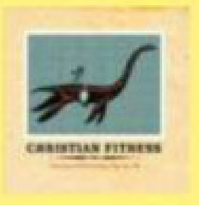
James Yorkston
The Cellardyke Recording And Wassailing Society
Domino



Softly spoken Fife song-writer James Yorkston's honesty, wry humour and rippling folk guitar are all on peak form on his collaboration-focused eighth album. 'TCRAWS' includes in its membership former Fence Collective pals KT Tunstall and The Pictish Trail, long-term partners John Thorne and Emma Smith and, bringing a swish of sensitive production tricks, fidgety Hot Chip frontman Alexis Taylor. Across a leisurely hour, the slow double bass pull of 'Broken Wave (A Blues For Doogie)', the deadpan spoken-word vocals and pattering steel drums of 'Guy Fawkes' Signature' and the chatty lyricism on cuckolding regret 'The Very, Very Best' stand out, but really it's all golden. ■ STUART HUGGETT

8

Christian Fitness
I Am Scared Of Everything That Isn't Me
Self-released



The fact that Future Of The Left's Andy Falkous is one of the most underrated guitarists around isn't down to lack of output. His band have released four albums and five EPs since their 2007 debut 'Curses', and now Christian Fitness arrives as an outlet for his home-recorded work. Lo-fi in process rather than sound, the jackboot-heavy likes of highlight 'Teeth' see him toss up the kind of alarm-siren riffs most bands would construct lead singles around while screeching "that's the hit!" Elsewhere, the lyrical quirkiness that makes FOTL divisive is wisely toned down – 'Soft Power Itches" repeated refrain of "*I never saw a Diet Coke in the hands of an Action Man*" is just about passable. ■ JAMIE FULLERTON

8

Storemags

Reviews

Electric Würms
Musik, Die Schwer Zu Twerk Bella Union



The press release for Electric Würms' debut sketches a fantastical mythology about super-acid, spaceships and sonic bibles, which 'Musik, Die Schwer Zu Twerk' purports to be a reading of. For the more literal-minded, let's just call it the product of Flaming Lips' Wayne Coyne and Steven Drozd combining with Nashville psych-rockers Linear Downfall to piece together the weirdest cosmic collage they possibly could. At 30 minutes long, the trip is brief, but it covers so much ground – from krautrock to prog-punk to ambient psych – it seems to move faster than light. And in case you were wondering about that title, it's fucking *impossible* to twerk to. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

7

Courtship Ritual
Pith Godmode



Since its formation in 2009, Brooklyn label Godmode has provided an antidote to the area's increasingly monotonous torrent of chillwave. Following inventive new music from brutal noise-rockers Yvette and disco-house Las Vegas teen Shamir, NYC duo Courtship Ritual (comprising Monica Salazar and Jared Olmsted) are the latest to flourish on the imprint. Debut album 'Pith' shows off a knack for restrained but experimental pop. 'Champagne Cages' is sparse, jerky and off-kilter, like a spun-out take on Micachu & The Shapes' 'Curly Teeth', and 'Abuela' thrums with industrial synths. 'Wild Like Us' is more elegant than its title suggests; its diamond sheen and hypnotic poise making it – like 'Pith' as a whole – impossible to ignore. ■ RHIAN DALY

8

Client
Authority Loser Friendly



Mixing shiny electropop with faceless bureaucracy, Client's fifth album finds group mastermind Client A (Kate Holmes, formerly of Creation act Technique and married to Alan McGee) joined by new vocalist Client N (Nicole Thomas), following the transfer of Client B (Dubstar's Sarah Blackwood). The opening track's soundbite politics ("*You rule by whose authority?*") see Client revive '80s sloganeering for the present day, but much of what ensues is far more playful. From the overtly steamy pulse of 'XXX Action' to the heavenly glide of 'The Shining Path' and the robotic wordplay of 'Artificial', their sound palette is broad and the hit rate high. Its skewed interpretation of pop makes 'Authority' Client's most accessible and enjoyable record yet. ■ STUART HUGGETT

7

JJ
V Secretly Canadian



Swedish duo JJ's cloudy electronics don't seem as weird now as they did when the band first surfaced in 2009. But as their shtick of gothic synths and standoffish vocals has become more widespread, JJ too have changed, welcoming conventional pop sounds like never before. Sometimes this shift is literal – 'Dean & Me' borrows from Alanis Morissette's 'Thank U' and pop perennial 'It's My Party'. Elsewhere the change comes down to a sound that has been scrubbed to within an inch of its life, removing JJ's insular mystery and emerging like Coldplay without the singalong choruses. The result is not just unimaginative and lyrically anodyne – it's boring. And that is the one thing pop music should never be. ■ BEN CARDEW

5

The Gaslight Anthem Get Hurt



Brian Fallon's band lose the Americana but keep the lovelorn anthems

Singer Brian Fallon's revelation that The Gaslight Anthem's new musical direction was instigated by The 1975 set alarm bells ringing. Would the band known for its greasy heartland rock trade burly riffs for shiny guitar pop? Thankfully not. Rather than swiping The 1975's style, they enlisted their producer, Mike Crossey, whose CV also boasts the meatier likes of Foals and Arctic Monkeys.

For all Fallon's talk of a massive switch-up, his band's fifth album doesn't shift too much from their usual lovelorn, jagged melodies. That said, opener 'Stay Vicious' is as brutal as they have ever dared be. "*I feel just a like a stranger/I feel just like a murderer*", growls Fallon, like he's been gargling broken beer bottles. Here, he briefly recaptures the rawness of their 2007 debut 'Sink Or Swim', before the song slides into a delicate twinkle.



'Get Hurt' is stuffed with anthemic moments, but its crowning glory comes in the barrelling, tortured chorus of 'Selected Poems', with major-to-minor chord shifts and Fallon's fervent croak. Though not one of their most technically perfect songs, it emphatically stakes his claim as one of the most passionate singers in contemporary rock.

His dramatic vocals might be in full force, but conspicuous by their absence are The Gaslight Anthem's usual lyrical canvases of Americana, save for a couple of brief glimpses of the old dive bar-dwelling, jukebox-thumping badasses in the pair of back-to-back weepies that close the album. During the harrowing acoustics of 'Break Your Heart', Fallon sings, "*If I played you my favourite song*", offering a flashback to the vinyl obsession that inspired '45' from 2012's 'Handwritten' LP. 'Dark Places' is equally earnest, set in a car, with Fallon playing the role of depressed road hog and threatening to drive it into the sea.

In largely ditching diners, AM radios and the rest, The Gaslight Anthem have crafted a more universal album, mirroring Kings Of Leon's move from rodeo-stomping Southern pride to a more general take on love, relationships and shagging on 2008's 'Only By The Night'. Yet in doing so, they might just have lost something intrinsic to their identity. ■ LEONIE COOPER

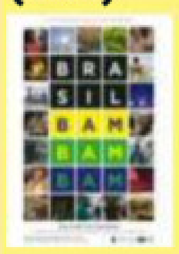
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▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** August 11 ▶**LABEL** Virgin EMI ▶**PRODUCER** Mike Crossey ▶**LENGTH** 41:20 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Stay Vicious ▶2. 1,000 Years ▶3. Get Hurt ▶4. Stray Paper ▶5. Helter Skeleton ▶6. Underneath The Ground ▶7. Rollin' And Tumblin' ▶8. Red Violins ▶9. Selected Poems ▶10. Ain't That A Shame ▶11. Break Your Heart ▶12. Dark Places ▶**BEST TRACK** Selected Poems

FILM

Brasil Bam Bam Bam: The Story Of Sonzeira (FILM)



Indulging his passion for Brazilian music in the film that accompanies his new album 'Sonzeira: Brasil Bam Bam Bam', Gilles Peterson shines a light on bossa nova, samba, baile funk and more. The DJ roams Rio De Janeiro, diving from beach and street to favela and studio; the titular Sonzeira is the name he gives to the Brazilian musicians he assembled to record a guide to the music. As a subplot, he goes on the hunt for 'Tam... Tam... Tam...!', a super-rare 1958 LP by José Prates. At just over an hour long the film only scratches the surface, but Peterson is a likeable presence, and the music is sublime.

8

■ ANDY WELCH

Big Star: Nothing Can Hurt Me



Astute documentary gives the influential Memphis band the respect they deserve



▶**DIRECTORS** Olivia Mori, Drew DeNicola

▶**RELEASE DATE** In cinemas now

For a long time Big Star were a forgotten band. When they released their debut album, '#1 Record', in 1972 it sold fewer than 10,000 copies. Many were first introduced to the Memphis four-piece during their latter-day renaissance. Still, great music usually finds its way out and sure enough Big Star eventually made it into the hearts of a generation of fans, some of whom turned out to be Primal Scream, The Flaming Lips, REM, Hot Chip, Elliott Smith and the guys who did the soundtrack for *That 70s Show*, who chose 'In The Street' from '#1 Record' as the show's theme tune.

Now, Big Star are the subject of an enlightening documentary that's a good way in to the band for a whole new generation. Sadly, singer-songwriters Alex Chilton and Chris Bell have both died in the interim, but directors Drew DeNicola and Olivia Mori have done a good job of rounding up a host of characters from their Memphis scene to tell the story.

Through them we get a glimpse of a time and a town so swinging in the '60s that a 12-year-old Chilton could be fed peyote by his arty parents without anyone raising an eyebrow. It didn't seem to harm his



prodigious talents, as the second time he ever sang into a microphone, aged 15, he was recording the vocals for a hit single, 'The Letter' by The Box Tops, which went on to sell four million copies. Three years later he was out on the road, playing 250 dates in a year.

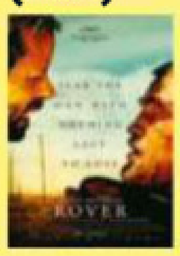
When Chilton got sick of life on the road and returned to Memphis he teamed up with the ambitious Chris Bell, who'd spent his university years dropping acid and had returned with a sound in his head that he desperately needed to unleash. Most contemporary reviews focus solely on Chilton, and one of the things that this documentary does best is to redress Bell's neglected reputation, emphasising how much he contributed to the sound of '#1 Record', particularly tracks like 'In The Street' and 'Thirteen'.

There are tragic elements to the Big Star story, as their distribution fails, their record label goes bust and Bell leaves the band, hurt by the poor sales and Chilton's near-monopoly on the critical acclaim. Nevertheless, they find some sort of redemption through music. As an aside, there's a great story about rock writers Lester Bangs and Richard Meltzer pissing through the gates of Graceland, something so outrageous it must be true.

If you already know Big Star, *Nothing Can Hurt Me* is a brilliant documentary and a fine testament to a brilliant group of musicians. If you don't, consider this a fascinating introduction. ■ KEVIN EG PERRY

9

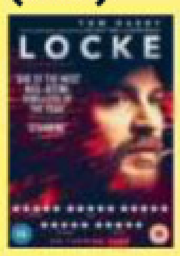
The Rover
(FILM)



At the start of this dystopian road movie we meet Eric, a semi-mute drifter played by Guy Pearce. Set 10 years after a global economic collapse, *The Rover* takes place in an Australian outback peopled by the bloodthirsty gangs and ruthless pimps who ended up there after the crash. After a robbery gone wrong, a stolen car brings Eric together with Rey, a desperate and gunshot-wounded Robert Pattinson. Forming an uneasy alliance built on survival and featuring bouts of extreme violence, they embark on a twisted tale of soul-searching. An existential take on Mel Gibson thriller *Mad Max*, this often gripping film sees Pattinson continue his post-vampire reinvention well. Not one for Twihards. ■ DAN BRIGHTMORE

7

Locke
(DVD)



Tom Hardy's standout turns have been as larger-than-life creatures like the maniacal terrorist Bane in *The Dark Knight Rises*. He wasn't built to be a bog-standard bloke. As Welsh builder Ivan Locke, however, he's just that. Locke drives from Birmingham to London with only a hands-free mobile for company. His ride is long and dark; a drunken one-night stand resulted in unplanned pregnancy and he's en route to hospital for the birth. The miles are punctuated by work calls and brutally awkward confessions to his wife. Director Steven Knight focuses so unflinchingly on Ivan that his BMW becomes a claustrophobic bubble. Bumbling through each conversation, Locke's life unravels at an almost unbearable rate. ■ BEN HEWITT

8

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

Childhood
Lacuna

"'Lacuna' retains a strong sense of the romance, sadness and nostalgia that hold it together." (*NME*, August 9) **8**

FKA Twigs
LP1

"Tahliah Barnett's craft is ripe for the digital age, when sound is aligned with image more than ever before." (*NME*, August 9) **8**

The Raveonettes
Pe'ahi

"It's a warts-and-all portrayal of a turbulent relationship, delivered with a tenderness and intensity." (*NME*, August 9) **7**



The Brummie band bring slacker beats, Britpop hooks and bubbles to London

It's the second night of Superfood's special four-show summer residency in London – third, if you count the 90 seconds of 'TV' they played before bailing out when the ceiling collapsed at The KPH in Ladbroke Grove – and the Brummie foursome are in full-blown party mode. The sugary 'Right On Satellite' gets a reverb-y makeover, all shonky guitars and spaced-out drums, while new tracks 'Mood Bomb' and 'Like A Daisy' from their upcoming debut album are smeared with slacker beats and Britpop hooks. When they drop 'Bubbles', soapy clouds spew from a foam machine on the stage, and by the time set-closer 'Superfood' finishes, the sticky bodies at the front have had the full Magaluf 18–30 experience. ■ DAN CARSON

8

ANDY HUGHES

Superfood

The Old Blue Last

London

July 31

Superfood's Dom Ganderton at The Old Blue Last, London

NME GIG OF THE WEEK

Graham Coxon



Roundhouse, London
Saturday, August 2

The Blur guitarist refuses to play the crowd-pleasers. But the fans love it anyway

Graham Coxon has always been a contrary kinda guy. Consistently providing an unapologetic, distortion-laden undercurrent to Damon Albarn's hooky Britpop choruses, the guitarist spent the best part of his Blur days freaking out with his pedal board. He openly greeted laddish larks like the bleary 'Country House' video with a weary and disdainful sigh. Since 1998 and 'The Sky Is Too High', he has sought solace in his solo output, which has so far consisted of three albums of angsty, antisocial melancholia (made while still a member of Blur during some of their most successful years), three albums of increasingly poppy material, having just parted ways with his former bandmates, an acoustic record and an album centred around a new-found interest in synths and drum machines. Of all his '90s fellow Britpop peers, Coxon is the difficult one.

It makes sense that tonight's show, his first solo date of the year, should be a succinct encapsulation of all this. It may take the form of acoustic half, interval, electric half, but Coxon's natural alignment with the leftfield ensures it's about as far away from a greatest-hits variety performance as it's possible to get.

Tonight, Coxon is the polar opposite of Albarn, whose latest ventures have seen him running through his most popular material, even bringing Coxon out for a rendition of 'Tender' at Latitude. There are no hits, no singles, just a full-pelt dash through new songs and obscurities for the die-hard fans. Coxon, unassuming in a loose striped T-shirt, looks like he's having the time of his life.

ALMOST EVERY SONG IS A BARELY PLAYED OLDIE OR A NEW OFFERING

It begins in typically awkward fashion. "This is one of my favourite old tunes, mainly because of the instrumental bit at the end where there's no singing," he mumbles awkwardly before laying into 'Bonfires', a cracking track from 2001's 'Crow Sit On Blood Tree'. Stark 2004 offering 'Ribbons And Leaves' is given its live debut, preceded by the confession that "most of my favourite songs are extremely melancholy". "This is a tremendous opportunity to play things like that and not what everyone wants," he continues after a soft 'Flights To The Sea (Lovely Rain)', laughing despite clearly meaning every word he says.

His hunched demeanour is far from traditionally crowd-pleasing, but strangely, his set definitely is. Sure, there's a distinct lack of radio-friendly classics, but almost every song is a live debut, a barely played oldie or a new offering. His dedicated audience – who know that a jaunty rendition of 'Coffee And TV' is about as likely as a Gorillaz cover – have struck gold.

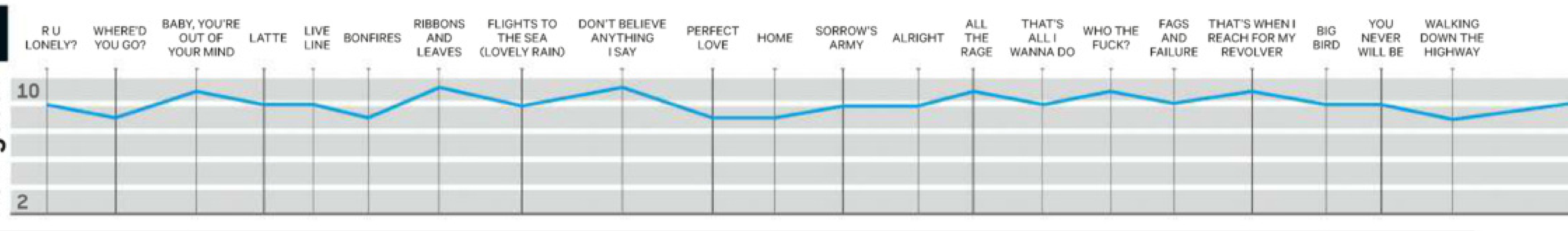
'Live Line' and 'Baby, You're Out Of Your Mind' are both stripped-back, pleasingly simple things, the former a bitter lament, the latter full of amusingly upbeat cynicism ("*Start where you finish, end up dead/With braincells diminished and underfed*"). Both show the rich quality of Coxon's earlier solo output.

When he returns with a full band for the electric portion, it's with squalling, antagonistic force. 'That's When I Reach For My Revolver' is spat out with more venom than a 45-year-old should really muster, 'Fags And Failure' and 'Tell It Like It Is' are greeted with whoops of "We love you, Graham" despite their noticeably miserable leanings, and a rare outing of 'See A Better Day' shows Coxon at his most vulnerable, croaking "*Baby, baby, baby what can I do?/I'm so in love with you*".

Adoration in the venue for the squirming figure front and centre is undeniable; even the

DANIEL HARRIS, JENN FIVE

SETLIST





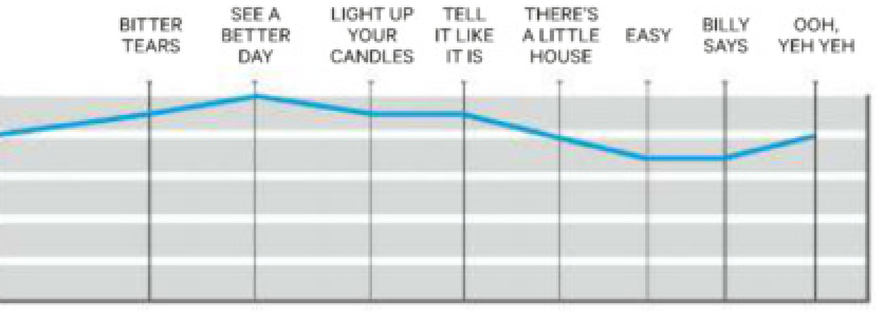




new tracks are greeted with loud cheers. 'Alright' and 'All The Rage' are delivered acoustically – the first a four-chord affair with a whistling solo, the second a typically self-deprecating tale of "*a life so forgettable*", full of harmonies and intricate melodies. 'There's A Little House' and 'Easy' ("Not the Commodores one"), meanwhile, are electric: mid-tempo, but laden with hooks, they hint at a return to the guitarist's most accessible output.

He finishes with 'Ooh, Yeh Yeh', the closer from 2012's 'A+E'. Sauntering along on a rudimentary chorus, it's the closest he gets to providing a singalong moment. But if you came for easy thrills, you probably backed the wrong horse from the beginning. ■ LISA WRIGHT

9



THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD

Paul, 29, Oxford
"I love the mixture of acoustic and punk – it's absolutely beautiful the way he does it. I think tonight suited everyone. It's a unique talent that he has."

Ellen, 18, Northamptonshire
"I thought it was absolutely incredible. The night had such a relaxed feeling. This is the first time I'd seen him, but it was brilliant. There were some songs I'd not heard before, but I liked that."

Matt, 20, Kettering
"I discovered him over the past year or so and I just think he's so good. He made the whole thing so relaxed; even though it was a really long show, it just flew by."



Romina, 32, Madrid
"I came from Madrid just for the gig tonight. I am a super, super, super fan. I saw Blur lots of times, but this is the first time with just Graham. He was perfect. It was too short!"

MORE GIGS

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds
Prospect Park Bandshell, New York
Saturday, July 26
As the sun sets over Brooklyn, a sinister feeling envelops Prospect Park's outdoor stage. Responsible for the rumbling atmosphere are Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, here to play to 5,000 hungry devotees. And from opener 'We Real Cool' to the second encore's intense run-through of 'The Lyre Of Orpheus', the whole performance is utterly spectacular. In-between are tender spaces on 'Tupelo' and 'Higgs Boson Blues', frantic crescendos on 'Jubilee Street' and 'The Mercy Seat', a spellbinding 'The Weeping Song' and the demonic debauchery of 'Stagger Lee'. Through it all, Cave sweats into his shiny gold shirt, a liquid-limbed monster. ■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

9

Neon Waltz
Gulliver's, Manchester
Thursday, July 21
"You've got the hair!" shouts someone at Neon Waltz frontman Jordan Shearer. The Caithness five-piece have caused ripples without releasing anything officially, and their psychy melodies recall the best bits of The Coral, Field Music and the Bunnymen – from the shimmering keyboards and hallucinatory guitars of 'Bare Wood Aisles' to the desolate hymnal 'Sombre Fayre'. Their key weapon is Shearer's vocal, which steals every heart tonight. They're joined by Bill Ryder-Jones for a cover of 'Something Like You' by cult Liverpudlians Michael Head & The Strands, before ending with the dreamy 'Perfect Frame'. Neon Waltz have the tunes, too. ■ GARY RYAN

7

Alvvays



Birthdays, London
Tuesday, August 5

An energetic, emotional set from the Canadian jangle-pop five-piece

"I can't believe you all came out on a Tuesday," exclaims frontwoman Molly Rankin as Alvvays begin to wind up their set. "We didn't even think we'd get people to come see us in *Canada*..."

Everything about Alvvays is this sweet – from Molly's disbelief onstage, to requests for applause for guitarist Alec O'Hanley managing to drive on the right side of the road, to the jangly twee-pop that makes up their self-titled debut album. It could easily become cloying, but the Toronto quintet avoid that by pouring as much energy and emotion as possible into their performance, transforming the breezy, romantic side of their songs into something more bruised and raw.

SETLIST

▶Ones Who Love You
▶Adult Diversion
▶Atop A Cake
▶The Agency Group
▶Next Of Kin
▶Dives
▶Your Type
▶Party Police
▶Alimony
▶Archie, Marry Me

The sparse, weaving guitar lines of 'Ones Who Love You' fizz harder as Molly spits "*You can't fucking feel your face*", her rage bathed in red light. 'The Agency Group' swells and soars, its chorus line lamenting a mutual lack of interest ("*When you whisper you don't think of me that way/When I mention you don't mean that much to me*") bristling with an undercurrent of hurt and rejection.

It's not all bleak, though. They end in jubilant mood, honouring one of their influences with a bright, punky cover of 'Alimony' by Australian '90s jangle-pop group The Hummingbirds before wrapping up the set with an ecstatic take on breakthrough track 'Archie, Marry Me' that has Molly beaming and bouncing like a hyperactive child and the crowd in front of her punching the air in delight. An impassioned success. ■ RHIAN DALY

8

Visions Festival

Various venues, London
Saturday, August 2



Despite some big-name dropouts, the east London shindig pulls it off again

The second Visions Festival hasn't got off to the best start. Original headliner Deptford Goth pulled out a month ago and Fat White Family announced their cancellation on the day. Joanna Gruesome are the last-minute replacement, but even with the Fat Whites' grotty antics off the menu thanks to Lias Saoudi's sore throat, spirits at the festival – which takes place in a warren of east London streets – are high.


Perfume Genius

In the sweaty warehouse hangar of Oval Space, **Jaakko Eino Kalevi** manages to look like a Norse god who's slipped out of his armour and into his Sunday best. Blond locks fall over his white shirt and flop over one eye in homage to The Human League's Phil Oakey. Fittingly, the Finn – he's a part-time tram driver in Helsinki – seems very much in a new romantic state of mind: his beats sound like Gary Numan shuffling up to Hall & Oates on the dancefloor. The highlight is 'Flexible Heart' and its gloriously kinky lyrics ("*You don't have to say that you love me/Just let me know how flexible you are*"). A somewhat rigid performer, Kalevi finally steps out from behind his synths for a subtle fist pump as its Soft Cell-style chorus kicks in, finishing up with a Mariah Carey-worthy warble on the fade-out.

Dirty Beaches' vicious no wave is nowhere near as entrancing. More terrifying than turn-on, Alex Hungtai's brutal experimentalism – complete with wailing saxophone solos – evokes the tense feeling of being followed down an alleyway. It doesn't possess even half of the joy of **Young Fathers**. The Liberian/Nigerian/Scottish rap trio might share Dirty Beaches' full-on sonic assault, but theirs is far friendlier. It's hard to see what's going on through the thick cloud of dry ice, but when 'Get Up' slams through the venue, they peel their shirts off, leap across the stage and crowd the mic, singing and rapping over its chunky beats.


Eagulls

Maintaining the sensitive yet slamming vibe is the party master himself. Crashing onto the basement stage of The Laundry in a white shirt and jeans topped with trademark flowing locks, **Andrew WK** gleefully launches his bubblegum metal upon a baying crowd. As he rips into 'Party Hard', accompanied by a hype man in a greying vest, crowdsurfers ping over the barrier, getting closer and closer to whacking into the low ceiling before an almighty stage invasion that topples his video projector, precipitating an early end to the set.

Across the road, conditions are just as cramped at The Brewhouse for a glimpse of the mysterious **Sophie**. The Numbers producer and DJ's blond curls can just about be seen in the darkness. It's too crowded to really dance, but his pitched-up squeals and neon rhythms make for the poppiest, prickliest set of the day.

But no-one at Visions can match **Perfume Genius** for intensity. Emerging in a deep V-necked jumpsuit, Mike Hadreas parks himself behind his keyboard in such a stately fashion that it seems he's about to play the Royal Albert Hall rather than a ramshackle tiki bar called The New Empowering Church. His grace and gravitas are appropriate, though – devastatingly emotive from the off, 'Learning', a tender, bare-bones piano ballad, provokes blissful applause and the agonised expression on Hadreas' face is startling. But it's the material from upcoming third album 'Too Bright' that really dazzles. 'My Body' pulses with furious falsetto and'Queen' thumps and dazzles like a Weimar cabaret showstopper. At its close, Hadreas grins ever so slightly. It might not have got off to a perfect start, but Visions closes spectacularly.

■ LEONIE COOPER

8

JENN FIVE, LAURA PALMER

SOPHIE'S PITCHED-UP SQUEALS AND NEON RHYTHMS MAKE FOR THE DAY'S POPPIEST SET



Andrew WK at The Laundry in Hackney



Andrew WK on...

...playing in east London

"I've been to Hackney before. We passed The Garage [in north London] – my first-ever show was there in 2000. It was the first time I broke my nose onstage."

...which co-performers could beat him in the arm-wrestling contest he's staging later

"I mean, they all look pretty formidable. I'm just going off sort of my instinctual impression, but Moon Gangs seem like they might be exceptionally good. There's a lot of intimidating-sounding folks here, but it's not always intimidation or strength, it's technique."

...where Visions rates on the party scale

"Ten out of 10! We didn't really know what to expect. What I like is how it's in many different spaces, but it's still internal. There's a lot of friendliness, which I was very pleased with. I feel very excited to be here."

MORE GIGS

Toy
The Lexington, London
Friday, August 1

Having sold out Shepherd's Bush Empire in April, The Lexington stage – scene of their very first gig – seems small for Toy's expansive shoegazing, especially as they've enlisted some mates. Fellow London krautrockers Astral Pattern somehow find space to add synths to a bleary opening jam. The set is a highlights reel of Toy's four-year career to date, with the sweet-sounding 'Lose My Way' back in after a couple of years' rest. As Toy motor towards its climax, Euan Hinshelwood of Younghusband and Max Clapps of The Proper Ornaments join them. Their 10-minute run through 'Fall Out Of Love' is a thunderous slab of psych, and tonight's undoubted highlight. **7**

■ ANDY WELCH

Lower
Broadcast, Glasgow
Tuesday, August 5

Lower are a product of the same Copenhagen punk scene that gave us Iceage, whose frontman Elias Bender Rønnenfelt has described them as so good as to be "almost annoying". Musically, though, there's something curiously Mancunian about them: their austere post-punk churn puts you in mind of a more brutalist Joy Division, while frontman Adrian Toubro's voice and delivery can sometimes seem Morrissey-esque. They come over as being terribly serious, yet the songs are so strong and propulsive that you can't help but be impressed. Brutal, intelligent and affecting, here's another disquieting transmission from the dark side of the Nordic miracle. **8**

■ BARRY NICOLSON

FKA Twigs



Heaven, London
Thursday, July 31

The new star of icy R&B stages a show every bit as unsettling as her videos

In her videos and press shots, FKA Twigs, real name Tahliah Barnett, looks like an unapproachable sci-fi high priestess, but 20 minutes into her biggest London gig to date, she shatters the illusion. Breaking the tension, she describes herself as "just a country girl" and thanks her mum for making her catsuit. Her chattiness is surprising, but it soon becomes apparent that behind the fashion-mag shoots and high-concept visuals lies a giggly 26-year-old who just wants to pay homage to her family and friends.

Everything about Twigs' aesthetic suggests she is anything but that. Prior to launching into set opener 'Ache', she strides out on three-inch heels and eyeballs the front row, poised and in control.

Her splintered sound draws parallels with artists such as Björk and Portishead, and people seem unsure of how to react to it. Some bob their heads to the skittering and percussive 'Water Me', the highlight of Twigs' 2013 release 'EP2'. Others try (and fail) to copy the exquisitely choreographed moves she's busting out onstage. Borrowing from street dance and voguing, she writes in reptilian fashion to 'Pendulum', the latest single from 'LP1', the slippery debut album she's unveiling tonight. Her joints double in on each other as a series of jabs, arm swings and chest pops, and stomps collide in time to the contorted music. In moments like this, prowling the stage and staring out over the crowd, her presence is chilling, the closest we get to the image portrayed in the videos she released during the two-year rise that led to 'LP1'.

Breaking between songs, she references her ascent, recalling a visit to this central London venue a year ago to see James Blake perform. Minimal and electronic, her live show operates on a similar basis to Blake's. A three-piece band surround her, shadowy figures lurking behind drum-pads loaded with thunderous samples. Between these electronic sounds and Twigs' airy vocals, they create a sound that flits wickedly from impenetrable to familiar. 'Two Weeks' is the highlight, but doesn't quite match the intense drama of its recorded version; 'Video Girl' and the lust-filled 'Papi Pacify' twitch and throb.

FKA Twigs doesn't offer her audience an easy ride. Instead she makes them squirm, trying to engage with an artist in her unique world. It's a disorientating experience that shows Twigs' live show can rattle the skull in the same way her visuals do. **8**

■ DAVID RENSHAW

SETLIST

- ▶Weak Spot
- ▶Ache
- ▶Lights On
- ▶Water Me
- ▶Pendulum
- ▶Hide
- ▶Give Up
- ▶Two Weeks
- ▶Papi Pacify
- ▶How's That

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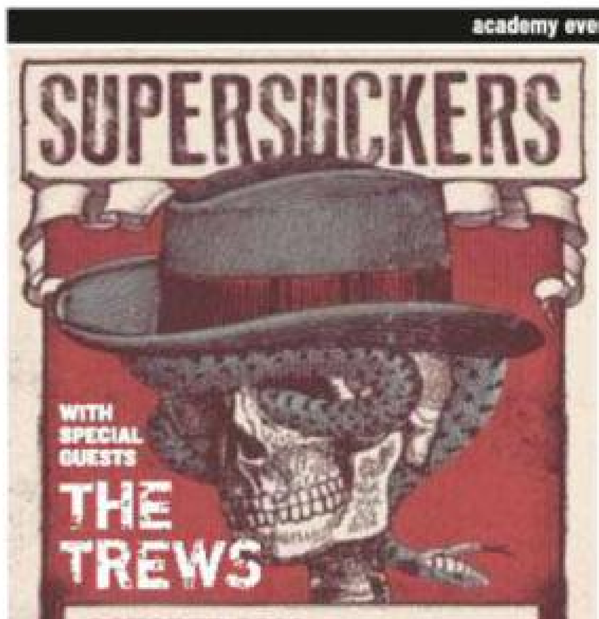


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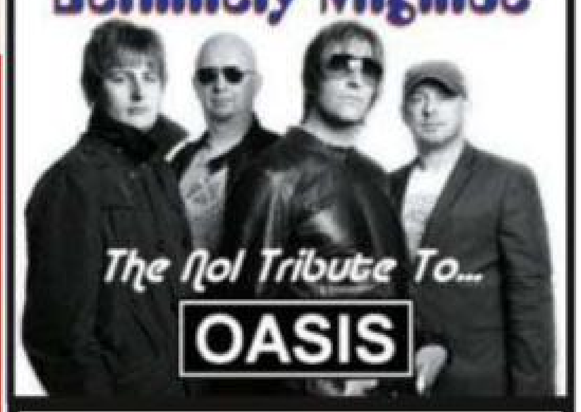
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Bill Ryder-Jones

Since quitting his post as guitarist for Merseyside psych-poppers The Coral back in 2005, when a stress-related illness prevented him from touring, Bill Ryder-Jones' career has followed a weird and wonderful path. First releasing a musical adaptation of 1979 novel *If On A Winter's Night A Traveller*, he's since put out a solo LP and moonlighted as the fifth Arctic Monkey on their 'AM' tour. Now he's hitting the road with former Groove Armada singer Saint Saviour. Bill tells us what to expect come December.

How do you and Saint Saviour work as co-headliners?
"I think our songwriting is quite similar. Hers is a bit posher than mine – her sound, not her; she's way rougher than I am, but her sound is a bit more produced."

How's your new album coming along?
"It's a progression from the last record – there's no big radical, Radiohead-esque change. It's mainly just songs about shit that's happened since making the last one; I'm not gonna be going into classical music or anything."

Do you enjoy touring more these days?
"Much more than I have done, ever. With the last record, realising that I can make a connection to people and talk about the way I see things and get that response from people – that became a huge thing in my life. It was a big turning point. "

▶THE DETAILS

▶**DATES** Cambridge Portland Arms (December 2), Stockton On Tees Georgian Theatre (4), Glasgow Nice And Sleazy (5), Manchster Deaf Institute (6), Birmingham Horse & Hounds (8), Bristol Lantern (9), Brighton Komedia Studio Bar (10), London Tabernacle (12), Liverpool Kazimier (13)
▶**OTHER ACTS** Saint Saviour
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Merchandise

Carson Cox and his band hit the road for a nine-date run this November on the back of third album 'After The End', which is set for release in August. With recent single 'Green Lady' adding another sumptuous string to their bow, it shouldn't be long until the Tampa boys are filling venues many times this size.

▶**DATES** London The Laundry (November 18), Bristol Start The Bus (20), Birmingham Hare and Hounds (21), Manchester Sound Control (22), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (23), Glasgow Stereo (24), Newcastle The Cluny (25), Liverpool Kazimier (26), Brighton Coalition (27) Manchester Soup Kitchen (5), Glasgow Stereo (6)
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The Enemy/ The Twang

Lad-rock fans, rejoice! Midlands troupes The Enemy and The Twang will be teaming up for a double dose of anthemic guitars and beery moshpits on this joint tour. Thumb-twiddlers and shoegazers need not apply.

▶**DATES** Bristol O2 Academy (December 4), Leicester O2 Academy (5), Liverpool O2 Academy (6), Bournemouth O2 Academy (9), Oxford O2 Academy (10), Leeds O2 Academy (11), Sheffield O2 Academy (14), Glasgow O2 ABC (17), Newcastle O2 Academy (18), London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (19), Birmingham O2 Academy (20)
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PHOTOS: JORDAN HUGHES, POONEH GHANA, GETTY

Jessie Ware

Following a pair of low-key cathedral shows this autumn and with new LP 'Tough Love' due on October 6, Jessie Ware is upping the ante with a headline date at her local venue, London's O2 Academy Brixton. Expect a joyous homecoming.

▶**DATES** London O2 Academy Brixton (January 29, 2015)
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▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £2.50 booking fee

Twin Atlantic

Since the release of debut album 'Vivarium', Glasgow rockers Twin Atlantic have been steadily building a loyal live following – as evidenced by their triumphant main stage show at T In The Park this year. Catch them back on the road this winter.

▶**DATES** Aberdeen Music Hall (October 23), Glasgow Barrowland (24), Newcastle O2 Academy (27), Manchester Academy (28), Sheffield O2 Academy (29), Leeds Metropolitan University (30), Birmingham The Institute (November 1), Cardiff University Solus (2), London Roundhouse (3), Southampton Guildhall (4), Cambridge Junction (5)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £15–£16.50
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.50–£2 booking fee

Jon Hopkins

Mercury-nominated electronics wizard Jon Hopkins has been making music for over a decade, but last year's 'Immunity' brought the Wimbledon man wider recognition. As the final gig on the accompanying tour, he'll take to the Brixton stage to cap off his biggest album cycle yet.

▶**DATES** London O2 Academy Brixton (April 24, 2015)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £19.68–£21.93
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** ticketmaster.co.uk with £2.18–£2.43 booking fee

The Drums

Having taken a fairly lengthy break following the release of 2011's 'Portamento', The Drums are back as a newly streamlined two-piece with third record 'Encyclopedia' in tow. Touting a darker sound, the album reflects a time when the pair were feeling "angry, confused and alone", says singer Jonathan Pierce. See how their live shows reflect this in November.

▶**DATES** London Scala (November 18), Manchester Gorilla (19), Glasgow Art School (20)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £15
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.50 booking fee

Oxford Oxford

A new addition to the festival calendar, Oxford Oxford (no prizes for guessing where this one takes place), is a three-day event split into film, music and community events. Saturday is music day, and the likes of Klaxons, Katy B and Supergrass man Gaz Coombes will all take to the stage.

▶**DATES** Oxford South Park (September 26–28)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** Tunng, Christian Gregory, Celeste, Pixel Fix, Dance A La Plage, Flight Of Helios, Balloon Ascents, Robot Swans
▶**PRICE** £32.50 for the music day
▶**ON SALE** now
▶**FROM** oxfordoxford.co.uk/tickets

Charli XCX

It's been a long slog, but thanks to the success of Icona Pop collaboration 'I Love It', Iggy Azalea co-write 'Fancy' and her own solo hit 'Boom Clap', Charli XCX is finally stepping into the big time. This London gig is the 22-year-old's largest UK headline show to date.

▶**DATES** London Heaven (October 30)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £15
▶**ON SALE** now
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Klaxons

FESTIVAL NEWS

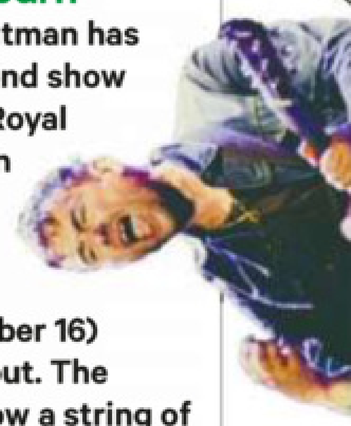
Reading & Leeds

The bank holiday weekender has a history of hosting surprise sets, from Them Crooked Vultures in 2009 to Green Day in 2012. This year, festival organiser John McIldowie has stated that there'll definitely be a secret show at the event. "I've had about seven [calls] this year from bands who want to do secret shows or last-minute things," he revealed. "One of them will be [doing one]..."

READING LEEDS 2014

TOUR NEWS

Damon Albarn



The Blur frontman has added a second show at London's Royal Albert Hall on November 15 after his initial date (November 16) swiftly sold out. The two gigs follow a string of low-key dates in April and a headline set at Latitude festival in the summer. Throughout, Albarn has been showcasing music from Blur, Gorillaz and The Good, The Bad & The Queen alongside his solo record 'Everyday Robots'.





Fat White Family

GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

Fat White Family/The Growlers/ The Wytches

Fat White Family are one of the most unpredictable bands in the UK and Californian surf-pop group The Growlers have a penchant for whiskey-fuelled partying. Add the grunge vitriol of The Wytches to the pot and you've got both a brilliant idea and a recipe for some serious high jinks. Venture to Bristol, Liverpool or Brighton to find out what happens – if you dare.

▶**DATES** Bristol The Fleece (August 17), Liverpool Kazimier (18), Brighton Concorde 2 (19)

▶**TICKETS** £12 from seetickets.com with £1.32 booking fee; Liverpool sold out tickets £75 from NME.COM/tickets with £4.50–£10.95 booking fee

Jabberwocky

The first edition of this new two-day festival, curated by ATP and Pitchfork, looks unmissable. James Blake, Darkside, Neutral Milk Hotel, Caribou and Kurt Vile & The Violators will all head to London's Docklands to play the first Jabberwocky. Danish punks Iceage may decide to show off their mellower side, as shown on new single 'The Lord's Favorite', and up-and-comers like Perfect Pussy, Big Ups, Ought, Eaux, Yamantaka // Sonic Titan and Clipping will all make a bid for future greatness.

▶**DATES** London ExCel Centre (August 15–16)

▶**TICKETS** One-day pass £35; weekend pass £60 from atpfestival.com with £4.27 booking fee

Slint

The Kentucky cult band's reunion last year wasn't their first – they've been reforming every now and then since 2005, having originally split up in 1992. Before their break-up, the quartet released two albums –1989's 'Tweez' and the critically acclaimed 'Spiderland' in 1991 – and they'll be giving them both another airing in London and Leeds.

▶**DATES** London Electric Brixton (August 13), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (14)

▶**TICKETS** London £25 from seetickets.com with £2.50 booking fee; Leeds sold out

Childhood

This standalone show is a bit of a homecoming for Childhood, who haven't played in a headline show in London since February. The gig also marks a special occasion, with the quartet celebrating the release of their long-awaited dreampop debut, 'Lacuna'.

▶**DATES** London Oslo (August 13)

▶**TICKETS** £7.50 from seetickets.com with 90p booking fee

Pulled Apart By Horses

At this year's Reading & Leeds festivals, Pulled Apart By Horses will be blasting out their third album 'Blood' and highlights from their back catalogue on the main stage. They'll warm up for those big occasions with two shows at the opposite end of the spectrum this week, taking up residence in far more intimate venues in Coventry and Nottingham before heading to Liverpool next week.

▶**DATES** Coventry Kasbah (August 18), Nottingham Bodega (19)

FIVE TO SEE FOR FREE

Thrills don't come cheaper than this

1. Flamingods
Oakford Social Club, Reading
Exotic, tropical pop from the London-based band.
▶August 13, 8pm

2. Mutual Benefit
Rough Trade West, London
Jordan Lee airs new record 'The Cowboy's Prayer'.
▶August 14, 6pm

3. Amen Dunes
Sticky Mike's Frog Bar, Brighton
See Sacred Bones signing Damon McMahon.
▶August 14, 8pm

4. Big Ups
Sixty Million Postcards, Bournemouth
The Brooklyn punks head back to Britain.
▶August 16, 8.30pm

5. The Magic Gang
The Old Blue Last, London
The Brighton boys preview new material.
▶August 16, 9pm



See Mutual Benefit for free on August 14



St Vincent

▶**TICKETS** £7 from seetickets.com with 75p–£1.25 booking fee

St Vincent

Annie Clark aka St Vincent released her self-titled fourth album earlier this year. It found her sounding more confident and inventive than ever, and her live shows were superbly choreographed. She'll recreate the record's intricate jams in Cambridge this week and at further dates in the following days.

▶**DATES** Cambridge The Junction (August 19)

▶**TICKETS** £16.50 from seetickets.com with £2 booking fee

The Garden

Identical twins Wyatt and Fletcher Shears have gone from making lo-fi garage pop in their Orange County home to treading the catwalk for Yves Saint Laurent after being handpicked by Hedi Slimane. Androgynous and slightly left-of-centre, the pair bring the irresistible weirdness of their debut album 'The Life And Times Of A Paperclip' to the UK for the first time.

▶**DATES** London 33 Chatsworth Road (August 14), Birmingham Sunflower Lounge (15), Brighton The Hope (16)

▶**TICKETS** London £5 from parallelines.ticketabc.com with 50p booking fee; Birmingham £6 from seetickets.com with 60p booking fee; Brighton free entry

POONEH GHANA, ANDY FORD, AMY BRAMMALL



Hear The War On Drugs' guest mix on BBC 6 Music, August 15

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

Green Man Festival

Tom Ravenscroft

Tom presents the show live from the Brecon Beacons festival site, bringing an exclusive set from headliners Beirut alongside guest appearances from the likes of Caribou and Teleman. There'll also be a special guest mix courtesy of The War On Drugs.

▶**LISTEN** BBC 6 Music, August 15, 7pm

Johnny Marr

Shaun Keaveny

Ahead of the release of second solo album 'Playland' on October 6, the former Smiths man pops into the studio to premiere new single 'Easy Money' and talk through album two. There are worse ways to start your day.

▶**LISTEN** BBC 6 Music, August 15, 7am

The Neighbourhood

Danielle Perry

The Californian indie-rock quintet made waves with last year's debut LP 'I Love You', while this year's mixtapes '#000000' and '#FFFFFF' showed them pushing in a more experimental direction. Check out this live session – which is also likely to feature their recent soundtrack offering 'Honest', from *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* – for a taste of what's next.

▶**LISTEN** XFM, August 18 and 19, 7pm

Queen Night

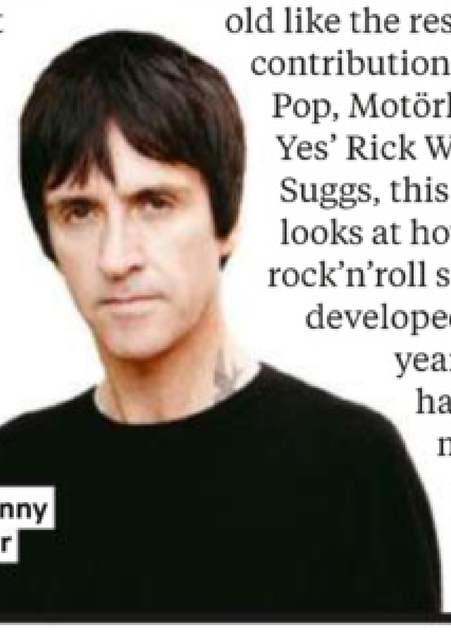
Get ready for a night with Freddie as Sky Arts bring a whole evening of Queen-themed offerings to the screen. As well as a reappraisal of the band's classic 1975 album 'A Night At The Opera', the channel will be showing vintage footage from the band's *Live In Rio* performance and a Freddie Mercury tribute concert. For fans, it'll be all kinds of magic.

▶**WATCH** Sky Arts 1, August 16, 6.40pm

Forever Young: How Rock'n'Roll Grew Up

Rock'n'roll may never die, but its chaotic protagonists still get old like the rest of us. Featuring contributions from Iggy Pop, Motörhead's Lemmy, Yes' Rick Wakeman and Suggs, this documentary looks at how the original rock'n'roll stars have developed in their later years and what happened to the mantra 'live fast, die young'.

▶**LISTEN** BBC Four, August 18, 1.30am



Johnny Marr

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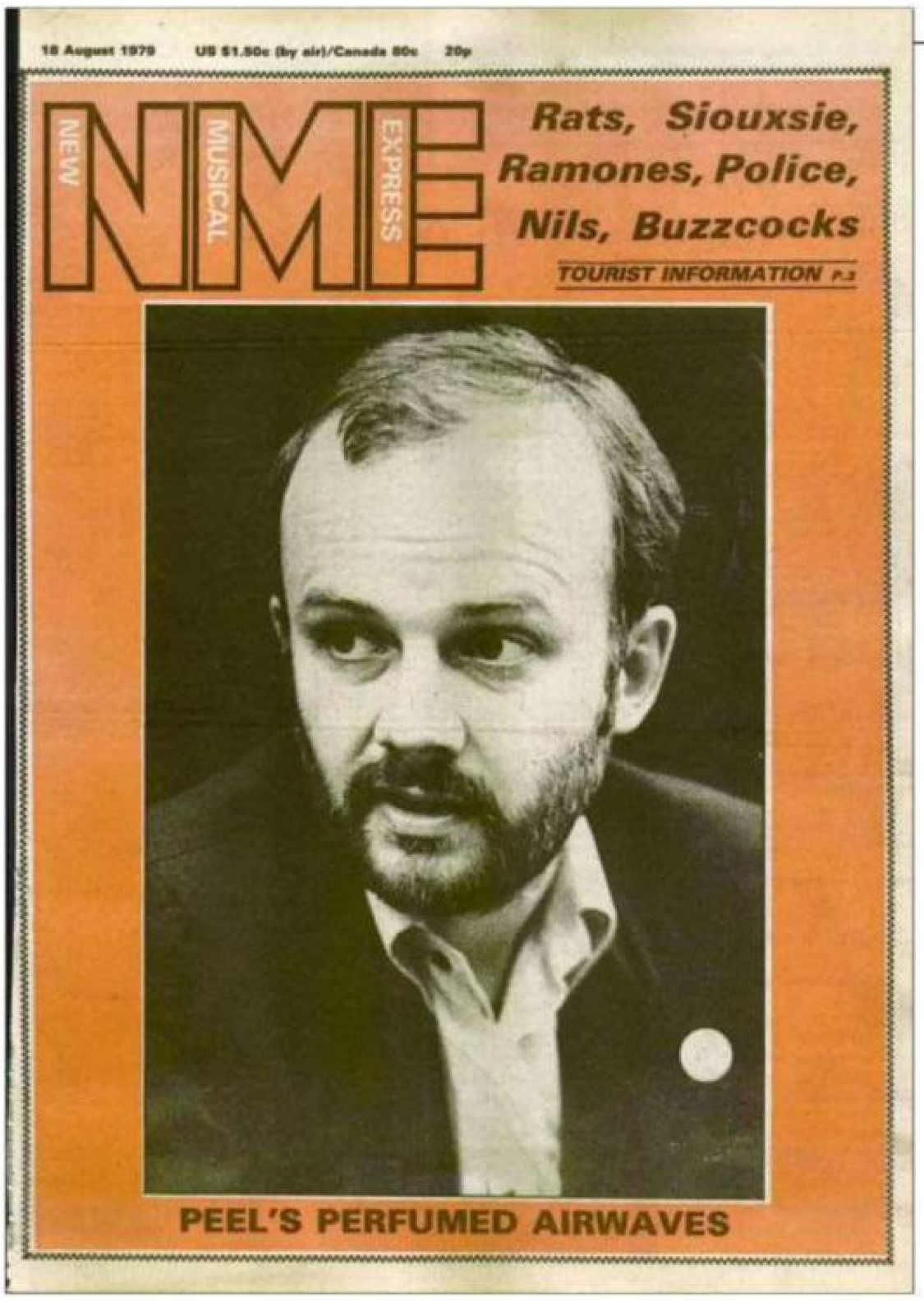
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THIS WEEK IN 1979



Harangue the DJ

Radio 1's John Peel shares his thoughts on punk, the BBC and music fans

John Peel is 40, and still the most influential man on the radio if it's alternative music you're after. *NME*'s Paul Morley visits Broadcasting House to see exactly how his Radio 1 show goes down. In his two-hour slot that evening, Peel plays Swell Maps, The Quads, The 45s, Penetration, The Stranglers, The Jam, Peter Hammill and XTC plus "a smattering of reggae". Afterwards, Peel shares his views on punk: "I thought that all the people who had been listening to old Grateful Dead albums, when they heard the Pistols and the Ramones and The Damned, their attitude would've been the same as mine – sort of, thank God for that, here's something that's actually lively." He has this to say about the BBC: "My father told me that I couldn't get a job there unless I was Catholic or homosexual." And he offers these sage thoughts on music fans: "If people were prepared to kill me for not playing Judas Priest records then things have got a bit out of hand."



DURY SERVICE

Tonight, in Aberdeen, Ian Dury And The Blockheads are playing the Capitol Theatre. "Where's yer pass?" demands an old man when Dury presents himself at the stage door. "We're working here tonight," says Ian, concealing his exasperation. Someone has to be fetched from the soundcheck to get him in. Apart from this identity crisis, the singer is in fine physical health. "His stick is a prop," says Koz, his manager. "He doesn't need callipers either, it's just that if he falls over he can't get up." He adds: "Callipers keep his legs straight. If it bends, it hurts him."

REGGAE ROUND-UP

In Nick Kimberley's reggae round-up, The Wailers' 'Hypocrites' is dubbed record of the week ("one of Jamaica's best ever records, and Bob Marley is clearly enjoying his singing"), while Marley's newest solo track 'Ambush In The Night' is "his best for ages" and "tells of the shooting incident which forced him into exile". Elsewhere, Dennis Brown's 'Cup Of Tea' (featuring the lyrics "*A fish for you, a fish for me/Break some bread and have a cup of tea*") is "a good, dependable record, even if it looks like Dennis' flirtation with *Top Of The Pops* has finished".

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



Talking Heads – 'Fear Of Music'

"Talking Heads don't sound like a band on this record, they sound like a band playing David Byrne's songs. Jerry Harrison's touch is mercurial, though crucial, and Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth's presence is merely supportive, though finally just as crucial. But the tension isn't there this time." ■ PAUL RAMBALI

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

▶The Undertones are reviewed live at the Marquee. Writer Adrian Thrills says: "If ever there was a group to make you want to throw away your Ramones albums, this is it."

▶The Fall's 'Rowche Rumble' is single of the week, and the band sound "recharged, rejuvenated and as excellent as ever" on a song that finds them "at their petulant, impudent best".

▶There's an introduction to "America's best young poet", Jim Carroll, who the previous year published his influential memoir *The Basketball Diaries*. "Move over, Lou. You too, Patti," says *NME*.

NME

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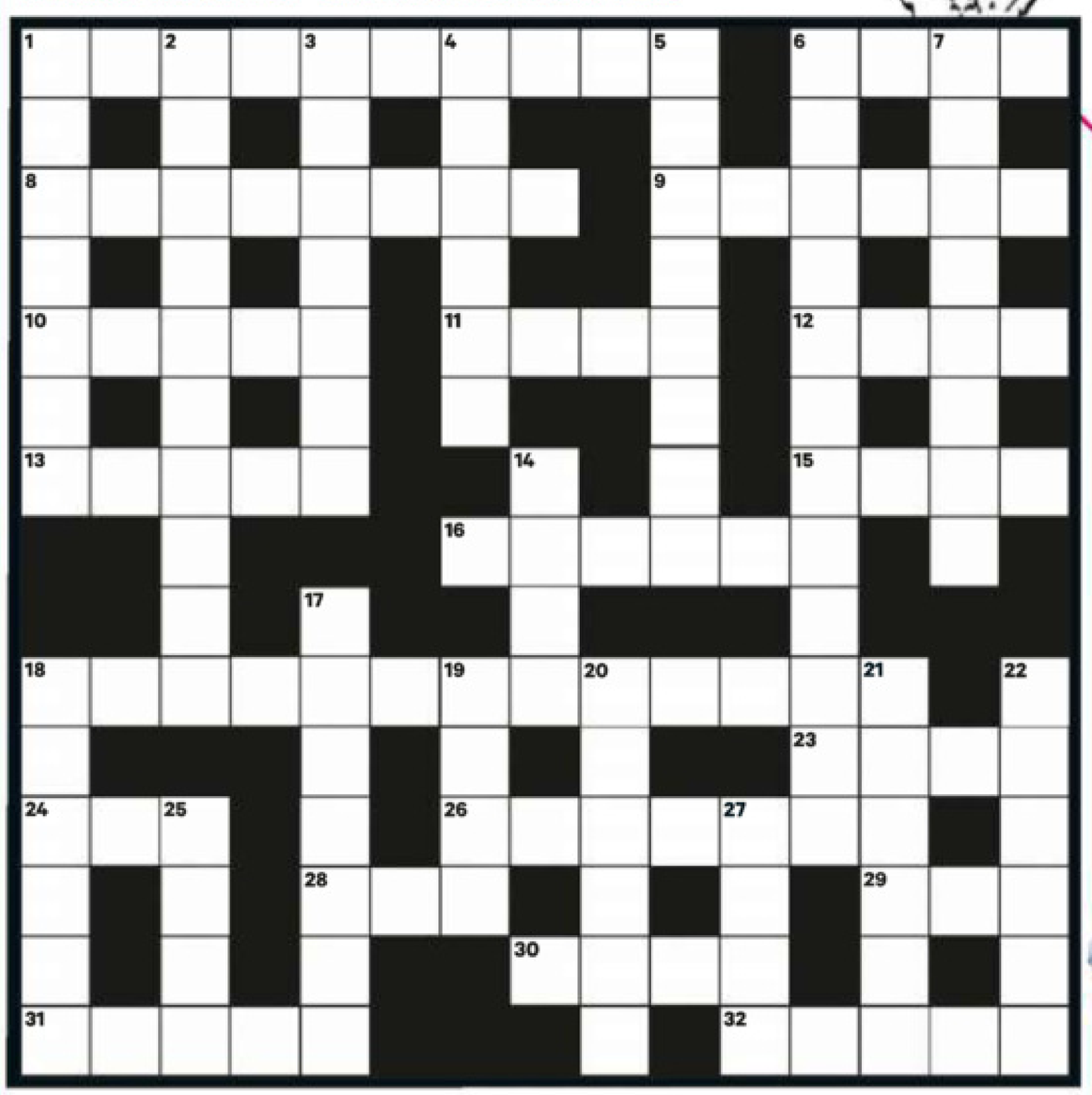
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NME CROSSWORD

■ Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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CLUES ACROSS

1+9A It's The Kooks. Pardon. I said it's the... what was it I just said? (7-3-6)
6+31A That Nigel has turned up with a Foals number (4-5)
8 Clive's OK about having a bit of Peace (8)
9 (See 1 across)
10 The Walter brother providing lead guitar in The Family Rain (5)
11 Candida Doyle plays keyboards for this band (4)
12 Gorillaz release in a caged area (4)
13 The whole group that performed 'Can't You See' with Notorious BIG (5)
15 The Damned's single was this times three (4)
16+14D He's not capable having two containers for one Green Day disc (6-4)
18 *"Shall I tell you about my life/They say I'm a ___ __ ___ _____"*, Fleetwood Mac (3-2-3-5)
23 British Sea Power may have slipped up when 'It Ended On An ____ Stage' (4)
24 Punctuation for the 'Diary' (1-1-1)
26 Their debut album featured an 'Orchestra Of Wolves' (7)
28 Fashionable to include guitarist from Bauhaus (3)
29 Lianne La Havas took quite some time to record this (3)
30 Inspiral Carpets single and '60s band formed by Roy 'Wizzard' Wood (4)
31 (See 6 across)
32 He's an ardent lover of Basement Jaxx (5)

CLUES DOWN

1 The consequences of an argument with Catfish And The Bottlemen (7)
2 Beatles B-side to be given a spin (10)
3 He still moves around to a James Brown album (3-4)
4 (See 7 down)
5 They had an 'Instant Crush' on Julian Casablancas (4-4)
6+18D God speed Oasis (4-4-4-2-4)
7+4D Get cheaper seat somehow for Blur performance (3-5-6)
14 (See 16 across)
17 Significant in the end that this is by 50 Cent and G-Unit (2-1-4)
18 (See 6 down)
19 *"I'm going out for a while so I can get ____ with my friends"*, Feeder (4)
20 Wow! All over the place for a splash around by The Coasts (6)
21 The Smashing Pumpkins win our confidence by taking our guns (6)
22 Foo Fighters hit with same title as a TV sitcom (2-4)
25 Guitarist from The Good, The Bad & The Queen spotted in a Brixton gig (4)
27 The number that finished Portishead (4)

JULY 12 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Shot In The Dark, 9+20A One Day, 10 Go With The Flow, 11 Talons, 12+23D School Of Rock, 14 Squeeze, 15 Stiff, 16 Salt, 21 Voice, 22 Strut, 24 Del, 25 Grass, 26 Factory, 28 Sound. **DOWN** 1 1 Sights, 2 Orwells, 3 Istanbul, 4 Toto, 5 Everclear, 6+27A All Too Human, 7 Kowalski, 8 Get Off Of My Cloud, 13 Leaves, 15 So It Goes, 16 Savage, 17 Laibach, 19 Newsom, 20+18A Did You Ever, 26 Fun.

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QUIZ

■ Compiled by ALAN WOODHOUSE (answers on page 67)



1 What was the name of Metallica's 1983 debut album?

2 Which Britpop-era band released the singles 'Swallow', 'Vegas' and 'Romeo Me'?

3 In which English city did Morrissey perform his first solo gig in 1988?

4 What was the working title for The Beatles' 'Abbey Road' album?



5 The drummer Ricky Gervais employs for his character David Brent's band Foregone Conclusion was in which UK chart-topping act?

6 Which band played Glastonbury's Other Stage this year, having once headlined the main Pyramid Stage in the '90s?

7 Which reclusive singing legend produced Pulp's final studio album 'We Love Life' in 2001?

8 T In The Park will head to a new site in 2015 – in which year did it last switch venues?

9 MIA's 2007 song 'Paper Planes' heavily samples which Clash song?

10 What was the name of the live album Oasis released in 2000?

11 Which rapper was married to Kelis between 2005 and 2010?

12 Which US rocker produced Lana Del Rey's new album 'Ultraviolence'?

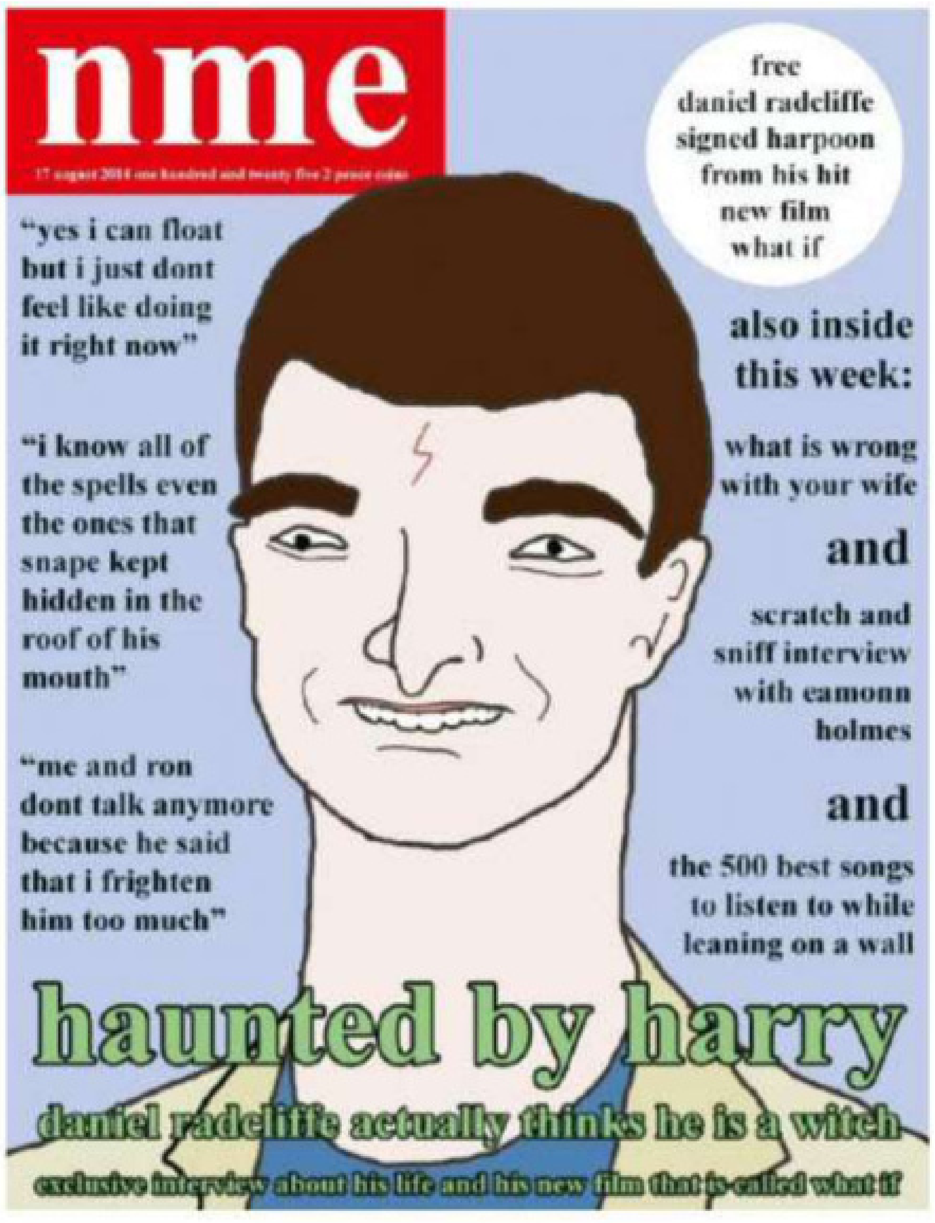
13 Which '80s band did Fatboy Slim play bass in?

14 Which US band's 2011 debut album 'American Specialties' was released on cassette only?

15 What was the name of the 2007 single by The Killers that Lou Reed guested on?

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NOEL GALLAGHER, AUGUST 1994



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SPECIAL READING & LEEDS 2014 PREVIEW

READING LEEDS 2014

QUIZ ANSWERS 1. Kill 'Em All **2.** Sleeper **3.** Wolverhampton **4.** 'Everest' **5.** Razorlight (Andy Burrows) **6.** Manic Street Preachers **7.** Scott Walker **8.** 1997 **9.** 'Straight To Hell' **10.** 'Familiar To Millions' **11.** Nas **12.** Dan Auerbach (The Black Keys) **13.** The Housemartins **14.** Parquet Courts **15.** 'Tranquilize'

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