

NME

Morrissey

Live in London

The NME verdict on
his only UK show

**Catfish &
The Bottlemen**

"If you've got a sh*t
nine-to-five job,
we're for you"

**The War
On Drugs**

Meet the man behind
one of the year's
best records

"It's been our greatest year... The next album will
reinvent guitar... Now we're ready for Wembley"

KASABIAN

**THE BAND OF 2014
PLOT WORLD DOMINATION**

+

Eminem

Future Islands

The Wytches

White Lung

Ariel Pink

+

**In Hamburg with
Albert Hammond Jr
and The View**



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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PHONING IT IN

I attended three gigs last weekend – The Orwells, The Kooks and Kasabian – and the live shows that bug me the most are, as I like to call them, ‘phone gigs’. Inevitably, the only memories people took from The Orwells and Kasabian were black eyes and bruised toes, attended as they were by people who wanted to have a great time. But The Kooks on Saturday night killed me a little inside because of all the flapping phone cases and beepy recording noises. Being forced to watch ‘Ooh La’, through someone else’s screen was just depressing. I find it so weird that people seem to think getting a recording of a band playing a song is gig money well spent.
Georgina Chandler, via email

Tom Howard: First off, Georgina, I’m gonna be churlish and suggest that maybe some omnipotent being in the sky is punishing you for going to see The Kooks. But your letter’s interesting, because this comes up a lot. In April 2013, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs put notices up at Webster Hall in New York saying: “Please do not watch the show through a screen on your smart device/camera.



Put that shit away as a courtesy to the person behind you.” It’s something Savages, Björk, Neutral Milk Hotel, Jack White, Kate Bush and Prince have all tried too. Personally, I dunno. On the one hand I see why artists get annoyed when dodgy footage turns up on YouTube, and I also take your point about obstructed views. But I think gigs should be the last place where strict regulations are applied. The stuff that keeps people safe: yes. Much more than that: no. Music is personal, and as long as it doesn’t cause harm to anyone, people should enjoy it however they choose.

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Great list! I thought it was a brilliant attempt at compiling 2014’s best offerings. Seeing Jamie T, Caribou and Mac DeMarco all in the Top 10 was fantastic. There were a few I didn’t agree with, and not seeing SBTRKT’s ‘Wonder Where We Land’ was disappointing.
Alice Thomas, via email

I found myself flabbergasted at the omission of The Horrors’ fourth album ‘Luminous’. For a band really hitting their stride creatively, it was crazy that they weren’t in the top five, let alone the top 50! Plus: Damon at number 13?! You’re only pleasing Blur fanboys with that one.
Ed Canham, via email

PEASANT BLOOD

Having seen an overwhelmingly positive response towards the debut album of Royal Blood, I’m left slightly discouraged. This is not the future of rock music; this is a familiar formula recycled and repackaged to appeal to a mass audience. What kind of cool band performs at the MTV EMAs alongside Nicki Minaj? If this were coming from a four-piece, would it honestly be given a second look? The essence of rock is to go against the grain, not slightly nudge it. If bands like this continue to be put on a pedestal, rock music will never progress.
Sam Williamson, via email

TH: Thing is, Sam, it’s actually totally great when bands like Royal Blood play events like the EMAs, because that’s how you infect the minds of the masses. Cast your mind back to the 1992 MTV VMAs, when Nirvana caused havoc firstly

by playing the opening chords of ‘Rape Me’ at the beginning of ‘Lithium’ (having been ordered not to by the channel’s bosses), and secondly when Kurt and Courtney got into a fight with Axl Rose. Awards ceremonies are there to be infiltrated.

BAND T-SHIRTS: EXCELLENT, ACTUALLY

Considering he’s having such difficulty getting laid, I feel bad for writing to disagree with Mark Beaumont’s ‘Why I Won’t Be Joining In With Wear Your Old Band T-Shirt To Work Day’ piece. As someone (just about) over the age of 25, I obviously bristle with bile-invoking shame at the idea of wearing a shirt or hoodie with a band logo on it. People over the age of 25 are obviously far too cultured and mature to visually express artistic preferences, as

they prance around in adult-sized Spider-Man onesies. But wearing a David Bowie T-shirt in public? Pfft, I don’t want people to think I’m a LOSER. As for not getting laid, I wore a Cure T-shirt to work on Friday and proceeded to have eight hours of hot rocking sex.
Ian Pringle, via email

Writ large through Mark Beaumont’s piece was a fear of what other people might think of him. Once you succumb to that, your life is over. A part of me is still 20 inside. Then, it was The Smiths, Cocteau Twins, and the Mary Chain who adorned my torso. Now it’s Warpaint, The Black Keys, September Girls and Radiohead. That’s along with the dyed black hair, biker jacket, fake DMs and

band badges. When I drop, I’m going to go being me. So, if I’m eventually dragged down the A121 under the wheels of the 397 from Buckhurst Hill to Loughton, I’ll be damned if I’m going to suffer that indignity wearing a fucking fleece.
Mark Scott, via email

TH: Mark, Ian, your letters are so good, I have nothing to add other than you are both, clearly, far cooler than Mark Beaumont. God bless him, though, for having opinions that annoy the hell out of people.

LIST OPPORTUNITIES

I loved your Top 50 Albums of 2014, particularly the courage you showed putting Merchandise (left) in the Top 10 when most other critics hated ‘After The End’. It’s a fantastic, Britpopesque album and I haven’t stopped listening to it. The list is evidence that it was a cracking year for long players.
David Henry, via email



TH: David – Merchandise come from a DIY scene in Florida and have made a spectacular album by tinkering with their sound. Alice – for some reason the SBTRKT record didn’t really resonate with several of the NME staff. Too many guest vocalists? Ed – the Damon album’s great! Maybe his best non-Blur work.



LOOK WHO’S STALKING

Me with Orlando after the amazing Maccabees gig at O2 Academy in Liverpool. Can’t wait for the new album.
Robert Smith, Lincoln



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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Dave Grohl
Hooker On The Street

Dave Grohl's 1992 'Pocketwatch' album gave fans a glimpse into the drummer's early career, but nobody could have predicted the culture clash of this recently unearthed track. It's the most overtly Aerosmith or Chili Peppers anybody even remotely connected to Nirvana has ever sounded – but don't let that put you off. 'Hooker...' is Grohl letting his hair down – hair metal made likeable again, even.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

2. Wild Beasts
Soft Future

There have been some beautiful vocal-free tracks from indie bands in recent years (Foals' 'Prelude' comes to mind). This new one by Kendal's finest – featured on the soundtrack for a forthcoming novel made up of GIFs – is just as good. As lovely as Hayden Thorpe's singing usually is, 'Soft Focus' is pure escape. It builds like a tropical storm, turning into a blurred prog epic before gorgeous repetitive chords make way for clarity and hush.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

3. San Fermin
Parasites

If there's one topic that pop music simply doesn't cover enough, it's parasitical insects. So along come Brooklyn baroque poppers San Fermin to celebrate these blood-sucking wee blighters with a fittingly creepy-crawly scuttle of avant-garde jigging, its beats throbbing like a blood blister and its Balkan cabaret horns spiralling to crescendos as unexpected as finding a nest of scarabs living in your jacksie. Warning: this will get under your skin.

Mark Beaumont, writer

4. Title Fight
Chlorine

Pennsylvania punks Title Fight have been plying their shimmering brand of melodic hardcore for 11 years now, but show no sign of slowing on this track from upcoming third full-length 'Hyperview'. Threaded with dreamy vocals that bob above the surface of their wash of shoegaze ambience and skittering drums, and with occasional descents into guitar hysteria, it's three minutes and 10 seconds you'll want to soak in again and again.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

5. Lana Del Rey
Big Eyes

Lana Del Rey's work is often compared to that of the director David Lynch, but her two songs for Tim Burton's *Big Eyes*, a film about the artist Margaret Keane, prove that pairing to be a match made in heaven. With lyrics reflecting the film's plot – Keane's husband passing her bug-eyed art off as his own – Del Rey tunes in to the maverick director's spirit and delivers a soundtrack fit for an acid trip at Disneyworld.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

**6. Interpol**
What Is What

For their latest single, 'Everything Is Wrong', Interpol have reunited with designer Shepard Fairey to create a mural in Brooklyn. They're also giving away new song 'What Is What' on their website. It adds a new, skyscraping edge to their usual gloom. Daniel Kessler's guitar tremolos build as Paul Banks promises "I can show you what is what" in breathtaking falsetto.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

7. Sky Ferreira
Guardian

A year ago, Sky Ferreira was emerging from a hectic period during which she was arrested on drugs charges and released her much-delayed debut album 'Night Time, My Time'. This new song, posted online by a fan and followed by a snippet on Ferreira's Instagram, reflects that time with snarling attitude set to throbbing pop. "I always thought I needed a guardian/And now that I've got one/Let me be free", she kicks and screams.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

8. Sleater-Kinney
Surface Envoy

The second song from Sleater-Kinney's recently announced comeback album 'No Cities To Love' creeps up on you. A slow, twisted riff and drumbeat build tension in the intro, then a fearsome guitar scythes through both. The starting gun for the rest of the tune, it brings in Corin Tucker's urgent, repeated call of "We win, we lose/Only together do we break the rules" and cymbal crashes that sound like shattering glass.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

9. THEESatisfaction
Recognition

THEESatisfaction are Stas Irons and Cat Harris-White, two cosmic hip-hop freaks from the same Seattle community as Shabazz Palaces (and pioneers of the Black Weirdo movement). 'Recognition' features Shabazz and local multi-instrumentalist Erik Blood, and it's a slinky, unsettling séance of an introduction to second album 'EarthEE' (due next year), shifting from incanted vocals into blown-out, alloyed funk.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

10. Novelist x Mumdance
Shook

"When I'm on a mic I come with impact" spits rising Lewisham MC Novelist over a shuddering beat. 'Shook' sees the 17-year-old working again with producer Mumdance, who has been at the forefront of grime's musical evolution over the past 18 months. The duo's latest collaboration will be released in January on XL Recordings, and it's hard not to see comparisons between him and the label's previous work with Wiley and Dizzee.

David Renshaw, News Reporter

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Alex G Soaker

From the same bedroom sessions that birthed Alex G's recent (marvellous) 'DSU' album comes 'Soaker', one minute and 40 seconds of Elliott Smith-like acoustic melancholia. The track, says the 21-year-old, is "about a relationship where I just couldn't connect with something", which lends the line "I'm like water and you're like glue/And all I ever do is soak through you" a certain loveliness.

Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

12. Citizens! Lighten Up

Coming as it does at the beginning of December, 'Lighten Up' is the antithesis of the increasingly dreary weather. The first single from the second Citizens! album, which is due next year, jives along powered by a riff that owes a debt to Daft Punk's 'Get Lucky'. In the video, the London band are shooting pool and skimming stones on the beach, which would be annoying if this sunny slab of indie disco weren't so catchy.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

13. Nicki Minaj All Things Go

Far from the shock and awe of her filthy comeback track 'Anaconda', 'All Things Go' – taken from forthcoming album 'The Pinkprint' – shows a different side to rap's leading lady. Over sparse beats and synths, Minaj opens up about the pitfalls of fame with genuine sadness, rather than privileged whining: "Cos since I got fame, they don't act the same even though they know that I love 'em/Family ties broken before me".

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

14. Menace Beach Blue Eye

On 'Blue Eye', Leeds quintet Menace Beach bury feelings of insecurity in murky drone. Singer Liza Violet originally named it 'This Is My Song' because she "wouldn't let anyone else near it". Thankfully, she changed her mind and allowed 'Blue Eye' – Mazzy Star in a blender with Spiritualized – into the world. Taken from debut album 'Ratworld', to be released in January, it's a wonderful manipulation of guitar sounds.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

15. Arca Hips Don't Lie

Venezuelan producer Arca has made quite the name for himself as an expert summoner of twisted sonics. His beats lent dark, digitised menace to Kanye's 'Yeezus', and the album he released this year, 'Xen', was cloaked in spooky claustrophobia. Turning his attention to Shakira's 2005 Latino-pop staple 'Hips Don't Lie', he's in fine form, bending the song to near breaking point with synths that sound like they're choking for air.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM



16. Dalton Only Names

Nate Harar was born in Washington and is now based between LA and Brooklyn. His debut single as Dalton is rooted in the studied NY indie-rock of Grizzly Bear and the pillowy textures of Brooklyn's Wild Nothing. Its patient rhythm and background guitar buzz allow space for Harar's searching lyrics: "Who can say what's right/ It's all the same/ What was new turns old, turns yesterday".

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

17. Kagoule Gush

Though the title might hint at an uncontrollable surge of a track from the Nottingham trio, Kagoule's latest is a far more tactical affair than that. Intricate time signatures and slow-burning, almost math-rock guitars introduce the payoff: a short, sharp and loud chorus that kicks in forcefully. Then, just when you think you've got their distorted quiet-loud-quiet trope nailed, a brief major-key burst fools you again. Clever fuckers.

Lisa Wright, writer

18. Gucci Mane Dead People (feat. Raury)

Gucci Mane may be serving time in prison but even he knows that Raury is on course to be a very big deal. He grabbed the Atlanta teenager for this catchy collaboration, which sees Gucci brag about his wealth ("got a pocket full of dead people") and newcomer Raury rapping about his lack of Benjamins ("Been living like a king all week/I'm a peasant at the end of every day") with the same relaxed, confident style as OutKast's André 3000.

David Renshaw, News Reporter

19. Frank Ocean Memries

This new track, released without fanfare on Tumblr, may only be two verses long and less than two minutes in duration, but its hypnotic lo-fi production makes it sound like an AM radio jingle coming from a stereo in outer space. Bridging the gap between his stellar debut 'Channel Orange' and what looks to be an even more non-linear follow-up, it just about satisfies our thirst for new material from the R&B smoothie.

Luke Morgan Britton, writer

20. Liam Hayes Fokus

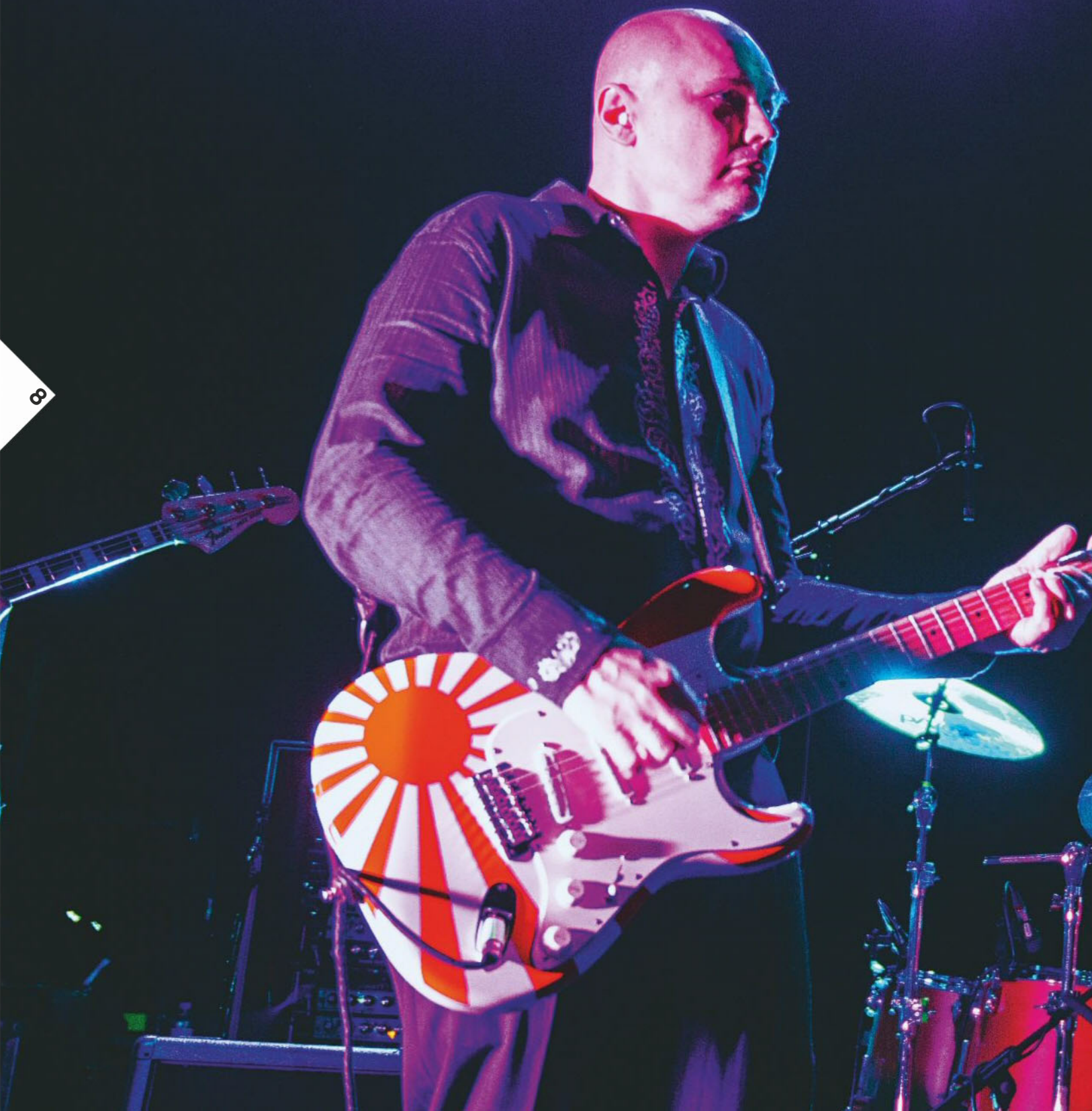
The man formerly known as Plush became a music-press darling with 1998's piano-and-vocal album 'More You Becomes You', but has failed to capitalise on it ever since, sporadically releasing albums that show a spectacular lack of what this track misspells in its title. Taken from Hayes' new album 'Slurrup', we find him tackling jangly power pop, and doing a fine job. "Focus, keep it on the daydream", he sings, tellingly.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

TheWeek

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

8



Fiends reunited

Marilyn Manson, Billy Corgan and Courtney Love team up in London

Two icons of 1990s US rock shared a stage last week when Marilyn Manson appeared as a special guest at The Smashing Pumpkins' December 5 show at London's Koko. The rocker played his own 'Third Day Of A Seven Day Binge' and the Pumpkins' 'Ava Adore', stopping to shout, "Goddamn Smashing motherfucking Pumpkins" between the two. The stage was packed with big hitters, given that the current line-up of The Smashing Pumpkins includes The Killers' Mark Stoermer on bass and Rage Against The Machine's Brad Wilk on drums.

Earlier in the week, Corgan and Manson were pictured at London celebrity hangout Chiltern Firehouse with Courtney Love, marking the apparent thawing of relations between the former Hole frontwoman and the Pumpkins singer. Earlier this year, Love said she likes lots of Smashing Pumpkins songs "because there are so many of them that are about me. 'Siamese Dream', 'Bodies', 'Today'... [Corgan] stopped writing about me and then he stopped making hits."

While Love's Instagram post saw the picture accompanied by the message "See all hatchets buried and true love never dies in the heart", and the hashtag "billybaby", Corgan played it cool. "I saw Courtney last night," he told *NME* on December 4. "I wouldn't say we're great friends, because I hadn't had any direct communication with her in four or five years. It's tough, because we were together at different times, so it's easier to explain our relationship in the context of an ex-girlfriend. I don't want to sit there hearing about Joe or Larry, you know? Actually, I have more of a relationship with Frances [Bean Cobain, Love's daughter] these days. But we're all in the same family – Courtney is family, and I think she sees me as family too, so if we don't talk it doesn't really matter. She can say what she wants, because we're family. And it was good to see her."

Love, for her part, announced a new union while in London – she's to tour the USA with Lana Del Rey on next year's Endless Summer Tour. ■ DAN STUBBS

► Head to NME.COM to see an exclusive video interview with Billy Corgan



Billy Corgan and Marilyn Manson onstage at Koko on December 5 and (inset) the pair with Courtney Love at Chiltern Firehouse in London

The art-poppers
are heading back
with a new album,
live dates and
thespian skills



Return of Django

Last month, Django Django announced they would be dusting off their flamboyant printed shirts and coming out of hiding to play Field Day 2015. Now *NME* can reveal that the London-based art-poppers will be playing a couple of special, intimate warm-up shows in February, where they'll be premiering tracks from their as yet untitled second album, due at some point in spring.

"I think we'll aim to play three new songs – the first single and a couple of other ones," says drummer Dave Maclean. Recorded in London and Banbury, near Oxford, the record promises to be slicker than their first, which was laid down in their own homemade Hackney studio. "There's more live stuff on this album – it's not a bedroom record," explains Dave. Don't expect the new material to sound exactly the

same as it will on the new record, though: "When we go live we extend the grooves and change them so people are surprised."

Come New Year's Eve it will have been

a whole year since Django Django last played live, at the Hogmanay party in Edinburgh's Princes Street. "It was probably the biggest crowd we've ever played to," remembers Dave. "I think everybody was steaming by then!" The band formed at Edinburgh College Of Art, so there couldn't have been a more perfect place to round off the two-year campaign for their Mercury-nominated debut. "It was great to be back where it all started," says Dave.

2014 wasn't all about knuckling down on album number two, however, with Dave branching out onto the silver screen too. His brother is former Beta Band member turned Bafta-winning film director John Maclean, who enlisted his sibling's services as an extra in his latest work, the Michael Fassbender-starring *Slow West* – a western set in the highlands of Scotland. "I think I may have been edited out!" laughs Dave. "I had ginger hair and a beard and a fight scene with Rory McCann, who plays The Hound in *Game Of Thrones*." Even if his scene does end up on the cutting-room floor, Django Django have supplied the music for the closing scene of the film, which looks set for release in 2015.

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New additions to NME Awards Shows

Telegram and Together Pangea join the expanding line-up



The line-up for next year's NME Awards Shows with Austin, Texas has just got even better with news that Telegram and Together Pangea will play headline dates as part of the 2015 celebrations. Londoners Telegram will bring their glam-punk romanticism to

the Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen venue on February 7, and US party boys Together Pangea fly in from LA to play songs from their new album

'Badillac' when they headline Birthdays in Dalston on February 17. The bands join a host of *NME* faves set to take over London next year, with headline gigs by The Cribs, Interpol, La Roux, Peace and more already confirmed. To get your tickets, visit NME.COM/tickets now.

Telegram

► FEB 7 Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen, London

Together Pangea

► FEB 17 Birthdays, London



MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Jamie MacColl



Bombay Bicycle Club



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from the '50s or '60s that was lost for ages. It's really beautiful and really makes you think."



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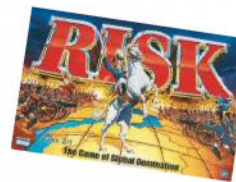
War and I think I'm still an 11-year-old boy inside."

FILM Some Kind Of Monster

"It's a documentary about Metallica that's a bit like ...*Spinal Tap*, in that it's a bit close to the bone. It's total reality, but a lot of it seems really farcical. It's very close to our truths when we're on tour."

GAME Risk

"We're not really an Xbox kind of band, so we usually play something lamer, like *Risk*. It usually ends with me sweeping the board off the table."



HOME COMFORT Yorkshire Tea



"I'm not a tea drinker, but the others will bring Yorkshire Tea on tour, especially in the States. I'd take it to make for other people. Selfless? I like to think so."

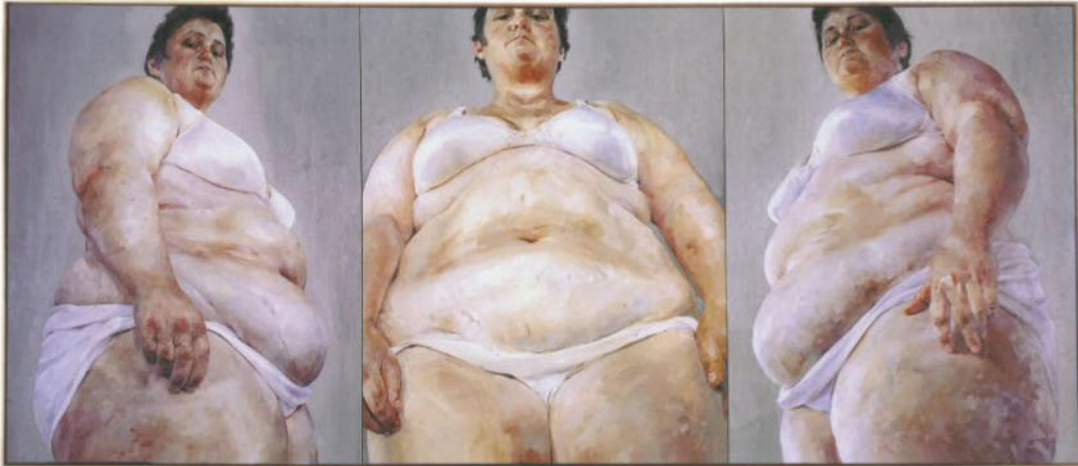
► Bombay Bicycle Club's tour continues at Wolverhampton Civic Hall (December 10)

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Albert Hammond Jr joins The View in Germany; boxer shorts-swapping ensues

"It's like he's a member of the band"

Sweet balls of ghee!". In a studio on an industrial estate on the outskirts of Hamburg, Albert Hammond Jr is practically combusting with excitement as The View's Pete Reilly experiments with his guitar parts. "That's a hook and a half my friend!" he exclaims. The Strokes' guitarist is here producing the Dundonian band's fifth album, their first since 2012's 'Cheeky For A Reason', and despite being only one week into the record, there's a jovial camaraderie between him and the group. "If you walked into the studio on the first day, you would have thought we'd been friends for years," notes frontman Kyle Falconer, who's prone to randomly singing Tina Turner's 'What's Love Got To Do With It' as he wanders around the complex. "We share the same banter and toilet humour. He's just one of the gang now – he gave me a lend of his boxer shorts the other day. He's bringing his Strokes secrets to The View."



The View in 2013



The hook-up came about at the behest of the group's management, but Kyle and co are card-carrying fans of Hammond Jr's work in and out of The Strokes. "Before The Libertines, The Strokes were the be all and end all," says Falconer. Drummer Steven 'Mo' Morrison is a little starstruck: "When you're sitting watching him learning a part, it's like witnessing Jimi Hendrix trying to figure something out on guitar," he says, reverentially.

It's a respect that's reciprocated by Hammond. "Kyle's voice is extraordinary," he enthuses, stroking a beard that he's pledged he

won't shave off until the album's completed. "It's soulful and unique. I like them as people, too. I felt Gus [Oberger, his longtime collaborator, with whom he's co-producing the album] and I could bring something to the record. It didn't feel like I was just being brought in because I'm from a well-known band."

Hammond Jr has a more hands-on and unorthodox production style than anything The View have experienced previously. The Strokes man's first act as boss was to rip up the 47 demos the band brought to the studio. "Normally, we go into the studio with the arrangements sorted," says Falconer. "But he's playing and coming up with parts – it's almost like he's a member of the band. We're doing pre-production during the day and laying down the tracks at night. We were stand-offish to the idea at first, thinking 'nobody can rearrange our songs'. But everybody's really embraced the idea. It keeps you on your toes." Reilly adds: "I think he's taking it personally because he's still new to the world of producing. He's putting everything into it, every little detail is scrutinised, nothing's being left uncovered."

You might have once got the feeling that sending The View to one of Europe's vice capitals – where

► THE DETAILS

► **TITLE** TBC ► **RELEASE DATE** Provisionally March 2015 ► **LABEL** Cooking Vinyl ► **RECORDED** Clouds Hill Studios, Hamburg ► **TRACKS** Tenement Lights, Cracks In This Town, Under The Rug, Living, Marriage (all working titles) ► **KYLE FALCONER SAYS** "We're trying to keep everything raw so we can deliver it live. This is the most time and effort we've put into an album – we've consciously done that, after taking a year out, we're hungry for it. Two years ago, I thought we'd already have an album out by this time. There's a couple of tracks that are just wee memos on my phone, recorded at six in the morning half-asleep, murmuring 'mwaha-ya-haha', that Albert and Gus have wanted to work on. We'll get an arrangement and I'll have to go off and write it. There's stuff that's comparable to 'Hats Off To The Buskers', but other elements are quite radical. We haven't suddenly become a techno band or something, but I don't think people would know it's us. I'm being challenged more vocally than before – some of the songs are the highest I've ever sung."

The View
with Albert
Hammond Jr
(left) in Clouds
Hill Studio,
Hamburg



"SOME OF IT SOUNDS QUITE STROKESY. IT'S GOT THAT EDGE" Mo Morrison

The Beatles famously honed their craft and discovered amphetamines – would be as counterproductive as holding a Weight Watchers meeting in Cadbury World. But in their late 20s, they're no longer the 'Liberteens' of old. "Maybe The View as 19 or 20-year-olds would be going off their fucking tits here, but it's more laid back these days," laughs Reilly. "We've been too busy focusing on the music to go out. Recording in a foreign country brings you closer together as a band. We're in a bubble, nobody can slope off home for the weekend."

"The main difference this time is we're sober," says Falconer. "Normally the first port of call would be to get wrecked. When we recorded with Owen Morris [who produced their 2007 Mercury-nominated debut 'Hats Off To The Buskers' and 2009's 'Which Bitch?'] we'd start off in the pub and stagger towards the studio. It was too much excess."

ALBERT HAMMOND JR ON PRODUCING THE VIEW

Why did you decide to work on the album?

"Drew from Babyshambles put me in touch. I met up with them and we hung out for seven hours in a Camden pub. I drank so much water – they were getting drunk – and I couldn't stop peeing. What excited me was talking to them. I listened to the songs and liked them, they're catchy. And Kyle's voice hit me straight away. [Co-producer Gus Oberg and I] do things unconventionally – and they seemed receptive to that."

Did you listen to their previous albums?

"No. I'd heard them, but I didn't study them. I felt like we were going to bring something different, no matter what. I think this will surprise people in a positive way."

What's your style as a producer?

"I like to break a song down to its simplest form, then build it back up because sometimes it can get cluttered. I always tell people not to get too attached, because we'll cut out or rewrite parts to make the song feel better. I like puzzles and enjoy the process of figuring stuff out. Being in a band helps because you can put yourself in their shoes – you know what they want."



At this early stage, hook-heavy songs with provisional titles like 'Tenement Lights' (featuring the lyric: "You tell me everything that's on your mind/You tell me everything is going to be fine/Tonight") boast catchy choruses that threaten to claim squatters' rights in your head. 'Under The Rug', meanwhile, is the first time Reilly has had one of his compositions recorded. "That's like a milestone for me," he beams. "Everyone's chipping into this album – it's like your midfield scoring goals." "[Under The Rug] sounds like nothing we've done before," elaborates bassist Kieren Webster. "It sounds both old-school and modern. I picture it going down well at a festival – it's passed the T In The Park test in my head."

Albert Hammond Jr's influence will be felt, they promise. "We've been saying some of it sounds quite Strokesy," says Mo. "There's a couple of beat changes that sound like the early Strokes stuff. It's got that definite edge."

Though we find the band hard at work, there's a break for a Scotland versus England football friendly, and Hammond Jr looks on with baffled amusement as Falconer and Webster – nicknamed Ying and Ying, for the fact they're both as naughty as each other –

belt out 'Flower Of Scotland' at the top of their lungs. Their national team may lose, but there's every chance The View will triumph with album number five. "When we started out, guitar bands were rife on the radio," remembers Mo. "But, while other groups have fallen by the wayside, we're still doing it – this album's going to restore your faith in rock'n'roll." ■ GARY RYAN

THE MINI INTERVIEW



John Giddings

Isle Of Wight
Festival boss

You've just booked Fleetwood Mac for next year's festival. How did you pull that off?

"I've been trying for seven years, so it wasn't an overnight sensation. The reaction has just been phenomenal. Normally on social networking, whenever you announce a headliner there's always a few critics – but there haven't been any!"

Glastonbury organisers must be gutted...

"I saw Michael Eavis last night and he asked me, 'How did you make it happen?' I wish I had an answer, to be honest. But it's nothing to do with getting one over on them. If it goes well maybe they'll play Glastonbury in the future, who knows."

The Black Keys and The Prodigy are co-headlining the festival too. Who is your third headliner?

"I can't say – that would be too dangerous. Until you get their name on the dotted line you're tempting fate. Verbally agreed, I think is the expression..."

You've worked extensively with U2 in the past. What can they do to get fans back on side?

"I just know as soon as they step foot onstage again people will forget everything and be back in the world of U2. And how wonderful it is."

■ DAVID RENSHAW

STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



Julian
Casablancas
+ The Voidz

Julian Casablancas

Mary Anne Hobbs

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, 7am, December 13

The Strokes' frontman released his debut album with new band The Voidz earlier this year. While he's over in the UK promoting that LP, he'll visit the BBC 6 Music studios to talk to Mary Anne Hobbs about its abrasive, industrial sounds, the making of the record and the influences behind it.

Coldplay
BBC Music Awards

►WATCH BBC One, 8pm, December 11

Chris Martin and his band will put in a special performance at the inaugural BBC Music Award, where a host of stars will gather to celebrate the year in music at a ceremony set to rival the Brits. Three awards will be presented: British Artist Of The Year, International Artist Of The Year and Song Of The Year.

Courtney Barnett
X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, 10pm, December 10
The Melbourne singer-songwriter is due to release her first album proper next year, but before that she'll take up John Kennedy's One Night Stand spot to remind listeners just

how great her 2013 release 'The Double EP: A Sea Of Split Peas' was.

Garbage
Soundstage Presents

►WATCH Sky Arts 1, 3pm, December 12

Shirley Manson, Butch Vig, Duke Erikson and Steve Marker play some of their greatest hits at Chicago's WTTW Studios. Expect to hear 'Stupid Girl', 'Queer' and more during the 60-minute show.

Best Of 2014
Live Sessions

The Evening Show with Danielle Perry

►LISTEN XFM, 7pm, December 15-16



Over two nights this week, Danielle Perry plays some of the highlights of XFM's many live sessions from the last 12 months.

The Horrors
XFM Winter Wonderland with Mountain Dew

►LISTEN XFM, 10pm, December 15

XFM are hosting their traditional festive concert at London's O2 Academy Brixton, with Frank Turner, Catfish & The Bottlemen, Billy Bragg and more lined up to play. The Horrors will also perform tracks from their back catalogue and their latest album 'Luminous'. Tune in to hear highlights from the night.

GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS

THIS WEEK



Wild Beasts

The Kendal band invite East India Youth, Evian Christ, Fryars and more to play their Soft Future event.

►DATES Leeds Canal Mills (December 11)

►TICKETS £17.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.75 booking fee

The Garden

Brothers Wyatt and Fletcher Shears bring their weird punk back to the UK.

►DATES Bristol Louisiana (December 10), London Boston Arms (11)

►TICKETS Bristol £5; London £6.50 from NME.COM/tickets with 65p-75p booking fee

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

1. Finding Fela screening

Rise, Bristol

►December 11, 7.30pm

2. Away Days

60 Million Postcards, Bournemouth

►December 11, 8.30pm

3. Broken Hands

The Joker, Brighton

►December 12, 7pm

4. Exit International

The Old Blue Last, London

►December 12, 8pm

5. Sulky Boy

Shacklewell Arms, London

►December 14, 8pm

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PRIORITY

O₂

Bobby Keys in 1971 and (right) playing live with Keith Richards



BOBBY KEYS EMBODIED THE ROCK'N'ROLL SPIRIT

BY KEVIN EG PERRY

He may have done it from the sidelines, but Bobby Keys helped create the myth of the rock star as we know it



The music world lost two big characters last week, even if neither of them were necessarily the biggest names. Ian McLagan, organist in the Small Faces and the Faces, session man of choice for Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, Chuck Berry, Billy Bragg, Frank Black and many more, died at 69 from a stroke on December 3. A day earlier, Bobby Keys, de facto member of The Rolling Stones, died at 70 from cirrhosis of the liver. When Keith Richards said he'd "lost the largest pal in the world", he got it right: the sax player was larger than life itself.

Even if you've never heard his name, you'll have danced to his tunes. He's on the best Stones records, blowing his heart out on 'Rip This Joint' and giving 'Brown Sugar' its signature solo. Aside from his defining work with Mick and Keith, Keys also played on great records by the likes of John Lennon, Harry Nilsson and Warren Zevon. That's

him you hear wailing on Lennon's 'Whatever Gets You Thru The Night', its brilliance belying the fact it was recorded in one take.

Not bad, considering he'd once feared rock'n'roll would end his career. When Keys first saw the Stones in 1964, he said he "saw the death of the saxophone unravelling before my eyes", because none of the new bands used one. It was Keys' playing that helped it become part of the British beat sound. He made the sax cool.

It didn't hurt that Keys and Keith got on famously. Shortly after they met they realised they'd been born on the same day: December 18, 1943. "Bobby, you know what that means?" Keith asked him. "We're half man and half horse, and we got a licence to shit in the streets."

And shit in the streets they did. Together, they basically invented the myth of the rock'n'roll star. Famously, Keys once filled a bath with Dom Pérignon and dived in with a model for company. It cost him all the money he'd made on that tour. "Kind of dumb," he said later, "but, you know, man, I'd do it again."

Picture the most archetypal rock'n'roll image of all: throwing a TV set out of a hotel room window. Bobby and Keith got there first, duly obliging when documentary director Robert Frank asked them to provide a bit more chaos for his film *Cocksucker Blues*.

Keys' drink and drug consumption was prodigious, and he was there along with singer-songwriter Harry Nilsson and drummers Ringo Starr and Keith Moon during John Lennon's infamous 'lost weekend', which ran from 1973 to 1975. Keys was imprisoned regularly, usually for crimes he didn't remember committing. He was once caught with heroin and syringes while attempting to fly out of Hawaii and avoided a serious stretch behind bars when he was bailed out by a local pineapple magnate, who just happened to be the father of a girl he'd just slept with.

So while his death is sad, Bobby Keys will live on. Not just in his music or the tall tales told about him, but in the debauched spirit of rock'n'roll that he helped to shape. Every time a young band trashes a hotel room or empties a can of lager into a bidet, they'll be carrying a small part of Keys' monster spirit with them. ■

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

LOST ALBUMS

#58

Scrapper Blackwell The Virtuoso Guitar Of Scrapper Blackwell (1970)

Chosen by Joshua Hayward, The Horrors



"With 1930s music, you hear about Robert Johnson, but Scrapper Blackwell tends to get ignored. It's Piedmont blues – straight-up, single-chap acoustic stuff. He survived into the 1960s and was rediscovered by the folk revivalists of the time in America. But as he was about to resume his career, he was shot and killed during a mugging. The police never solved his murder. He was argumentative – hence the name. This posthumous compilation is an entry point to his music."



► THE DETAILS

- RELEASE DATE 1970
- LABEL Yazoo
- BEST TRACKS Kokomo Blues, Hard Time Blues
- WHERE TO FIND IT A 2000 CD reissue is still available from record shops
- LISTEN ONLINE On Spotify



Big Noble:
Joseph Fraioli
and (right)
Daniel Kessler

Big Noble

Interpol's Daniel Kessler and
electronica producer Joseph
Fraioli finally find the time to get
their ambient project airborne

Big Noble's Daniel Kessler and Joseph Fraioli are the definition of a musical odd couple. Kessler is the guitarist in Interpol. Fraioli is a sound designer and producer of experimental electronica. The overlap between their worlds would seem to be minimal. But they have one important thing in common, Fraioli explains: "While we come from very different backgrounds, we do meet in a similar place. It's about saying things with music that it's not possible to say with words. It's about describing the indescribable in sound."

Big Noble's debut album 'First Light' is indeed an evocative record. The out-of-focus, drifting sonic textures on tracks such as 'Ocean Picture' and the lonely guitar twangs on 'Autumn' and 'Atlantic Din' – which sounds like a choral work played on synthesizers – are located somewhere between dubstep pioneer Burial and Brian Eno's landmark ambient albums,

**"IT'S MUSIC YOU COULD
LISTEN TO THROUGH
EARPHONES AND WATCH
THE WORLD PASS BY"**
DANIEL KESSLER

such as 1978's 'Music For Films'. There's a faraway, distant quality to the record, like something just out of reach. "I like that," says Fraioli. "That's what I'm talking about when I say indescribable. It's emotional music, but we don't always like to specify what emotion. We like to leave it open-ended."

The pair met 15 years ago. Kessler worked as label manager at leftfield imprint Caipirinha. Fraioli was signed under his experimental alias Datach'i. They bonded over Aphex Twin and other cutting-edge sounds. Kessler went on to start Interpol, while Fraioli became a sound designer working on projects for Google, Nike and Adidas. They had planned to work together long before Big Noble actually happened. "Interpol takes up so much time," explains Kessler. Eventually, during a period of downtime, Kessler decided to "make it happen".

The recording took place in Kessler's living room. "I'm not really a studio person," he explains. "I don't love technology that much. I liked that Joseph just set up a mobile microphone at my house and I could get to it straight away." Fraioli then took the recordings away and manipulated them. Field recordings played a big part in the process. "On a lot of the recordings we did

in Daniel's living room we purposely left windows open and let the sounds of the outside world leak in," says Fraioli. "It was interesting because it affected the way

Daniel played. The sound of traffic or people walking by – it became part of the performance."

'Atlantic Din' begins with traffic noise from an intersection on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, halfway between their two houses, together with spoken numbers denoting the GPS position. "Outside noise became like a collaborator," laughs Fraioli.

Scoring a film is Big Noble's next goal. They namecheck electronic musician and composer Wendy Carlos (*A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining*) and spaghetti-western soundtrack maestro

Ennio Morricone (*A Fistful Of Dollars*, *For A Few Dollars More*) as inspirations. "We definitely want to write some music for film. Maybe some music for art installations," says Kessler. "This record is definitely music that you could listen to through earphones and watch the world pass by. Actually, a lot of this album was inspired by films and photography." Such as? "Oh... I can't remember now." Don't try too hard to pin Big Noble down. Like their music, it's like trying to catch mist. ■ CHRIS COTTINGHAM

► THE DETAILS

- **TITLE** First Light
- **RELEASE DATE** February 2, 2015
- **LABEL** Affiliates Sound
- **PRODUCER** Joseph Fraioli
- **TRACKLISTING** Ocean Picture, Stay Gold, Autumn, Atlantic Din, Affiliates, Pedal, Weatherman Accountable, Peg, Traveler, Vikings
- **JOSEPH FRAIOLI SAYS** "It's about capturing moments rather than editing them. While we come from different places, we meet in a similar place. It's really natural. We've known each other for so long, it's unspoken."

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"SOME OF THE STUFF IS KIND OF WILD"

Krist Novoselic



STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

'Incesticide' is one of a few Nirvana releases to feature Cobain's own artwork on the cover: a painting of two poppies and a skeletal figure with a devil-horned puppet on its shoulder. He insisted on having full control over the sleeve as a condition of its release.

THIS WEEK...

Nirvana: Incesticide

Released 22 years ago to fill the gap between 'Nevermind' and 'In Utero', this compilation of demos and rarities showed Nirvana's newfound fans where they were coming from

THE BACKGROUND

When Nirvana released 'Nevermind', their second album, in September 1991, new paymasters Geffen hoped they'd blossom into solid, Sonic Youth-sized alt-rock performers. Instead, they became the biggest band in the world. Behind the scenes, though, 1992 was a troubled year for the trio. Frontman Kurt Cobain became a husband and father while failing to shake a heroin habit; live performances and songwriting sessions were sporadic; and a planned release for Nirvana's third album later in the year was nixed. Consequently, under Kurt's supervision, this 15-song compilation of demos and rarities emerged shortly before Christmas 1992. Much of it had been available in fan communities for some time, but it provided a lesson in the band's raw origins to their new followers.

FIVE FACTS

- 1 Earlier pressings of 'Incesticide' feature liner notes: a splendid, rambling essay by Kurt taking in *NME* back issues, a search for an LP by '80s post-punk band The Raincoats, and a plea for any bigots in their fanbase to "leave us the fuck alone".
- 2 Four drummers feature on the album: Dale Crover (also of the Melvins), Chad Channing (who played on 'Bleach'), Mudhoney's Dan Peters and Dave Grohl.
- 3 'Molly's Lips' is one of two covers of Scottish indie duo The Vaseles. The specifics of the lyrics – about having the hots for elderly actress Molly Weir, who starred in '70s kids' show *Rentaghost* – were probably lost on Kurt.
- 4 The compilation's third cover version, 'Turn Around', was originally the B-side to 'Whip It' by new wave conceptualists Devo. Kurt cited them as a teenage inspiration: a punk band who "infiltrated the mainstream" just as Nirvana did.
- 5 Manic Street Preachers include a bluesy cover of 'Been A Son' on their 'Lipstick Traces' collection. The lyrics are an uncanny mirroring of their own 'Born A Girl'.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"Mom and dad went to a show/They dropped me off at Grandpa Joe's/I kicked and screamed, said please don't go" – 'Sliver'

Cobain frequently found inspiration in childhood experiences, though his songs were rarely as prosaically descriptive as this 1990 single.

"All the kids will eat it up if it's packaged properly" – 'Aero Zeppelin'

Nirvana's first demo, taped in January 1988, featured this rote grumble about the music industry's machinations. Cobain, of course, never reconciled this stance with his own stardom.

"I love you so much it makes me sick/ Come on over and shoot the shit" – 'Aneurysm'

First heard on the 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' B-side, 'Aneurysm' is purportedly about an ex, Bikini Kill's Tobi Vail. Its mix of narcotic allusion and disgust at one's own emotions are curiously 'In Utero'-esque.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"Side One has the sound of an album that never was. Side Two is not terribly good... this patience-testing material from an embryonic, Green River-fixated Nirvana is

best forgotten, unless you're truly smitten."
– Angela Lewis, *NME*, December 12, 1992

WHAT WE SAY NOW

Equal parts battered pop melody and trudging sludge, 'Incesticide' is imbalanced, although 'Dive' and 'Aneurysm' are among Nirvana's finest moments.

FAMOUS FAN

"I'd pretend to get the train to school, come back, climb through the window and spend all day with 'Bleach' and 'Incesticide' on a tape. I think that visceralness gave voice to something I was finding difficult to express."
– **Natasha Khan**, Bat For Lashes

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"We thought it would be something nice for the fans just to see where we're coming from. Some of the stuff's kind of wild. Maybe the next step we'll take won't be that much of a shock."
– **Krist Novoselic, 1992**

THE AFTERMATH

Despite minimal promotion, 'Incesticide' sold well. As per Novoselic's hint, Nirvana's return harked back to their abrasive punk roots: a split single with The Jesus Lizard and recording sessions with Steve Albini for 'In Utero'. That album's release in September 1993 yielded an instant UK and US Number One, with a US tour and MTV Unplugged concert to follow.

THE DETAILS

► **RECORDED** between 1988 and 1991 ► **RELEASE DATE** December 14, 1992 ► **LENGTH** 44:44 ► **PRODUCERS** Jack Endino, Steve Fisk, Butch Vig and various BBC engineers ► **STUDIOS** Reciprocal and Music Source, Seattle; Smart Studios, Madison; Maida Vale, London ► **HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 14 ► **UK SALES** 400,000 ► **SINGLES** Sliver ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Dive ►2. Sliver ►3. Stain ►4. Been A Son ►5. Turnaround ►6. Molly's Lips ►7. Son Of A Gun ►8. (New Wave) Polly ►9. Beeswax ►10. Downer ►11. Mexican Seafood ►12. Hairspray Queen ►13. Aero Zeppelin ►14. Big Long Now ►15. Aneurysm

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"It's more like Oasis vs Beady Eye, except at the end of this week we'll all still have a career!"

Robbie Williams disagrees with Gary Barlow comparing Take That and Robbie to Blur and Oasis

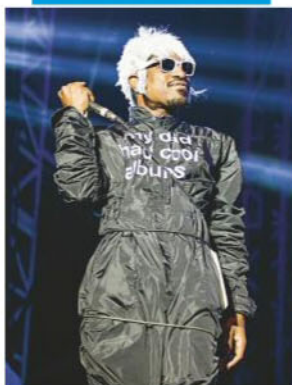
THE NUMBERS

£300,000

What the financially troubled Creed frontman Scott Stapp – currently living in a Holiday Inn – wants from fans to record a solo album

283,000

Copies of 'Now 89' sold in its first week, making it the fastest-selling album of the year



44

Number of dates on U2's Innocence + Experience world tour. It will visit 19 cities, including London and Glasgow

47

Number of André 3000's jumpsuits on display at the Art Basel exhibition in Miami

WHO THE FUCK IS...



Otto Schimmelpenninck

The bass player in metal band Delain made men worldwide wince last week with the news that he ruptured a testicle during a gig in Birmingham.

How hard was he rocking out?

Not as hard as the streamer cannon that fired off into his crotch. Schimmelpenninck said the injury caused him such severe pain he could barely stay conscious.

But he carried on?

All the way to the end. In hospital later, 500ml of blood was drained from his scrotum, which had swollen to "the size of a grapefruit".

+ GOOD WEEK +



Psy

The popularity of Psy's 'Gangnam Style' has forced YouTube to upgrade the technology used to count the number of views on a video. In crossing the 32-bit integer mark, 'Gangnam Style' surpassed the limit previously thought possible.

- BAD WEEK -



Xzibit

Former *Pimp My Ride* host Xzibit was arrested driving away from his own wedding ceremony. The rapper was leaving the venue where he and Krista Joiner were married when he was pulled over and arrested for speeding and drink driving.

IN BRIEF

Putin says no

Cannibal Corpse have had their lyrics and artwork banned in Russia amid fears they may damage the mental health of children. The band's tracks include 'High Velocity Impact Spatter' and 'Icepick Lobotomy'.

Borrowed blue eyes

The Who's Roger Daltrey crashed a wedding in Renfrewshire after being lured in by the chops of the band hired by Carl and Susan Smith. He hopped up onstage to perform 'I Can't Explain' with the group.

► Find these stories and more on **NME.COM**

OK Go prep DNA album

OK Go, the band whose innovative music videos are better known than their songs, have announced that they will release their new album coded into a string of DNA. It's almost like they don't want people to listen.

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS DECEMBER 7, 2014



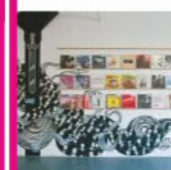
AC/DC Rock Or Bust COLUMBIA

A heap of controversy surrounding drummer Phil Rudd hasn't stopped the Oz rockers' 15th album hitting the top.

- 2 The Endless River **Pink Floyd** RHINO
- 3 X **Ed Sheeran** ASYLUM
- 4 Four **One Direction** SYCO
- 5 Never Been Better **Olly Murs** EPIC
- 6 In The Lonely Hour **Sam Smith** CAPITOL
- 7 Forever **Queen** VIRGIN
- 8 III **Take That** POLYDOR
- 9 Wanted On Voyage **George Ezra** COLUMBIA
- 10 Lost In The Dream **The War On Drugs** SECRETLY CANADIAN
- 11 Sonic Highways **Foo Fighters** RCA
- 12 Racecar Is Racecar Backwards **Reuben** Xtra Mile
- 13 1989 **Taylor Swift** EMI
- 14 Blue Smoke: The Best Of **Dolly Parton** MASTERWORKS
- 15 Love In Venice **André Rieu** DECCA
- 16 Music Industry 3 Fitness Industry 1 **Mogwai** ROCK ACTION
- 17 Chapter One **Ella Henderson** SYCO
- 18 Royal Blood **Royal Blood** WARNER BROS
- 19 Live In Concert **John Grant With The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra** BELLA UNION
- 20 Nothing Has Changed: The Very Best Of **David Bowie** PARLOPHONE
- 21 Sun Structures **Temples** HEAVENLY
- 22 No Sound Without Silence **The Script** COLUMBIA
- 23 Partners **Barbra Streisand** COLUMBIA
- 24 Dublin To Detroit **Boyzone** EAST WEST
- 25 I'm In Your Mind Fuzz **King Gizzard & Lizard Wizard** HEAVENLY
- 26 Nostalgia **Annie Lennox** ISLAND
- 27 A Perfect Contradiction **Paloma Faith** RCA
- 28 The Third Three Years **Frank Turner** XTRA MILE
- 29 Doolittle **Pixies** 4AD
- 30 I Forget Where We Were **Ben Howard** ISLAND
- 31 The Basement Tapes Complete: Vol 11 **Bob Dylan & The Band** COLUMBIA
- 32 Serenata **Alfie Boe** DECCA
- 33 Our Love **Caribou** CITY SLANG
- 34 Home Sweet Home **Katherine Jenkins** DECCA
- 35 Aquostic: Stripped Bare **Status Quo** FOURTH CHORD
- 36 It's The Girls **Bette Midler** EAST WEST
- 37 Hope **Susan Boyle** SYCO
- 38 This Is All Yours **Alt-J** INFECTIOUS MUSIC
- 39 5 Seconds Of Summer **5 Seconds Of Summer** CAPITOL
- 40 McBusted **McBusted** ISLAND

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 Sunday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK

VINYL PIMP HACKNEY, LONDON

FOUNDED 2007

WHY IT'S GREAT They sync their entire inventory to their website and Discogs store.

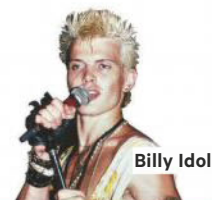
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK Various – 'Hardcore Will Never Die Vol 2'

THEY SAY "Our friends from London Modular host the only modular synth showroom in the UK in our shop."

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



Twisted
Sister



Billy Idol

Ariel Pink

Solo artist



THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING 'Las Mañanitas'

"It's a Spanish song you sing to wish people a happy birthday. It starts, *'These are the dawns/That King David sang about'*. That or 'Happy Birthday' in English. I love birthdays. They're always happy days, but (wistfully) you can't live in the past."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH Willie Nelson & Julio Iglesiass - 'To All The Girls I've Loved Before'

"My mum would always play it around the house, and I think it was the first morsel of music I was exposed to. Music is so amazing when you're at the age when you don't know what it is. I loved the plasticity of the sounds, the rubbery quality it has. It's like magic."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT Michael Jackson - 'Thriller'

"I don't think I actually

bought this myself – my parents would have bought it for me. I got it for my fifth birthday, and I remember a Michael Jackson impersonator came to Roxbury Park, where I was having my birthday party

"I WENT EMO AT 14. THAT'S HORMONES FOR YOU"

– he turned up with a boombox and balloons. It was a magical day, and it's on videotape somewhere, so I don't even have to imagine it. For a little kid, Michael Jackson was a superhero – he appealed to every kid's imagination."

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND Billy Idol - 'Dancing With Myself'

"A great beat, a snarling delivery – it made me feel totally badass. I used to write songs based around my heroes. I had one called

'Sexy Lady', which went, like, (sings) *'One day I saw a girl/A sexy lady'*. I had hundreds of songs saved up before I was 10, and over the years they used to build up, get louder and louder, until I was doing death metal in my head."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO Peter Gabriel - 'Sledgehammer'

"It was overplayed the first time I heard it. I hate those horns, I hate the vibe, I especially hate the video. It's a total shitshow. I didn't know who was supposed to be into that – adults or something I guess. Certainly not me."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE Lipps Inc - 'Funkytown'

"(Sings) *'Won't you take me to... Funkytown'*. They were a disco band, and this was their big hit. What can I say? Nothing makes me want to dance like disco."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE John Denver - 'Take Me Home, Country Roads'

"One of the great American songwriters. (Sings) *'Country roads, take me home/To the place I belong'*. There's a lot of emotion in that. It brings a tear to my eye every time."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD Twisted Sister - 'We're Not Gonna Take It'

"An American hair-metal band from the '80s. They

were on MTV all the time when I was way young. There's no song that plays in my head all the time, but this was the first example of a ridiculously catchy song I could think of. Most songs are too catchy for me. I hear it on the radio twice and – boom! – it's there in my head."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN Morbid Angel - 'Abominations'

"A death metal, proto-black metal band from Tampa. I had a long metal phase as a kid. I think it was the sense of self that I derived from it, a sense of identity. It has a quality that gives people a mask, a comfort system. Then at the age of 14, overnight, my metal phase was over. I got into The Cure and The Smiths – from totally heavy, extreme testosterone to sadface emo goth. That's hormones for you. And they're still raging."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF LOS ANGELES Belinda Carlisle - 'Mad About You'

"Or anything by her band The Go-Go's. It just feels like Los Angeles to me; it's the sonic equivalent of cruising down the Sunset Strip. It's the city in a song."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL Vashti Bunyan - 'I'd Like To Walk Around In Your Mind'

"This would be appropriate. She's an English singer-songwriter and her music was lost for years. The album it comes from, *'Another Diamond Day'*, is one of the most heartbreaking records ever. On the surface, it's so simple, but has all these emotional subtleties. She's a real diamond, a real gem."



Michael
Jackson

Rad ar

► YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST ■ EDITED BY MATT WILKINSON

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**NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC**

NME
**NEW
BAND**
OF THE WEEK



Silk Rhodes

Trippy US producer and opera singer team up for a lo-fi take on classic soul

Mike Collins (above, left) loves a drug pun. Before he and singer Sasha Desree (right) formed Silk Rhodes, which references the now-offline black market on the deep web (as well as the Fender Rhodes electric piano), he made music as Run DMT (album names: 'One Hitter Wonders' and 'Bong Voyage') and Salvia Plath – salvia is also known as 'diviner's sage', a powerful hallucinogenic.

Salvia Plath signed to Domino imprint Weird World (Hookworms, How To Dress Well, Washed Out) and there's a new album to come, but with Silk Rhodes he's taken a sharp left turn away from tripped-out psych music and straight into soul town. "There was a conscious effort for us to tap into something real," Collins says. "We were listening to Curtis Mayfield and music from the '70s that we found on lowrider compilations, and we also love '90s R&B."

Of the modern crop, they mention D'Angelo and Musiq Soulchild, but the feel of their self-titled debut album is one of classic soul – Stevie Wonder, The Delfonics and Sly & The Family Stone. Their take on it is minimal and lo-fi, but thankfully devoid of pose: "Before, we'd be like, 'Oh, we can't do that – we can't make soul.' We were having an identity crisis of sorts, but we got around it by allowing it to be fun. It's serious music but it's fun, and free of irony. Unabashedly, we're ourselves in Silk Rhodes – no-one can call shame on us."

They make for an odd couple: Sasha, from New York, is suave, handsome, a trained opera singer; Mike, from Boston, is rambunctious and funky in the same way as Mac DeMarco and Ariel Pink – both of whom are his close friends. Silk Rhodes got together in Baltimore, where Mike was "trying to go to college" to study film. Back then, he was "obsessed" with Stones Throw, the LA label he's now signed to, alongside Dâm-Funk and Madlib.

"It feels like a dream come true, but it's still weird," Collins says. "We grew up putting our songs on Mediafire, hoping our friends would download them."

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** Baltimore
- **FOR FANS OF** How To Dress Well, Prince
- **SOCIAL** facebook.com/silkrhodes
- **SEE THEM LIVE** Early next year is the plan...
- **BUY IT NOW** Their self-titled debut album is out now
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Early song 'The Lights' was a commission – after they advertised their services as songwriters, a stranger wrote lyrics and ordered a song as a gift for his mother. Sasha hand-delivered a cassette tape of the completed track to an address in New York City

MORE NEW MUSIC

Celebrine

This Moscow duo aren't shy about their '80s influences – in fact, they've even included an "89 Version" of addictive single 'Cellar Door' on their latest EP (a collaboration with fellow Muscovite Alien Delon). While this remixed version revamps the track with oscillating synthesizers and a pumping electro beat, it's the original's dark and dreamy Cocteau Twins vibe that's most impressive. Katya Logacheva's vocals mimic Elizabeth Fraser's distinctive coo superbly, as twinkling guitar arpeggios complete the band's shimmering sound.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/justcelebrine

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

Kelly Lee Owens

Grounding her sound amid waves of cavernous reverb, former History Of Apple Pie bassist Kelly Lee Owens' first foray into solo work is 'Lucid' – a digital-only single co-produced by Ghost Culture that sets the London-based artist's delicate voice against spacious plug-in strings and 'Vespertine'-like beats.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/kl_owens

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/kellyleeowens/lucid-1

Makee

The story of Perth's Daniel Cavalli is one of hard work and computer-related heartbreak. When a hard drive failure left him anguished, his compositions destroyed, Makee was the project that was rebuilt from those ashes. It's a brilliant, vibrant brand of Caribou-indebted electronica, fuelled by invigorating kraut and funk beats and rich, colourful atmospheres.

► **HEAR HIM** makee.bandcamp.com

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Pretty Vicious

Meet the band who "everyone's listening to but who nobody's yet seen",



Pretty Vicious

went a recent walesonline.co.uk headline. Merthyr Tydfil four-piece Pretty Vicious are all still under 20, but reportedly have every label in the country after them. It's all based on one track, 'Cave Song', which sounds like Arctic Monkeys fronted by a glue-sniffing Liam Gallagher.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/prettyviciousuk

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

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Merthyr Tydfil The Red House (December 13)

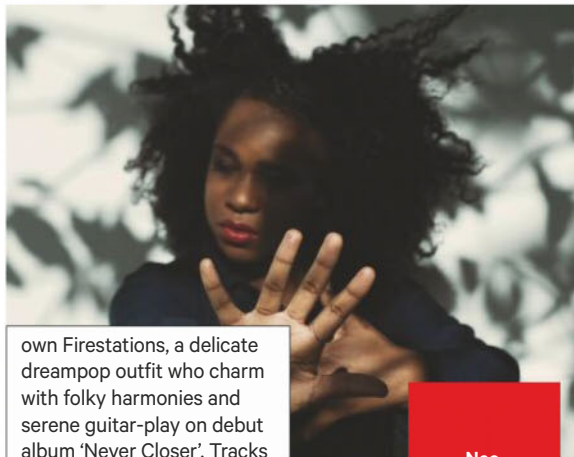
Dreamsalon

Seattle's lo-fi post-punks Dreamsalon have just released their second LP 'Soft Stab' – and for all their Television-indebted scratchiness, they offer a vital lesson in creating harmony through noise. The title track and 'Don't Feel Like Walkin'' stand out for their hooky choruses and dextrous fretboard mastery.

► **HEAR THEM** dreamsalon.bandcamp.com

Firestations

Assuredly on hand to extinguish the flames of any of the Big Smoke's noisier bands are London's



Nao

own Firestations, a delicate dreampop outfit who charm with folky harmonies and serene guitar-play on debut album 'Never Closer'. Tracks such as 'French Caves' are given a discreet drive by softly beaten drums as dual male-female vocals and fuzzy chords take the fore, while 'Never Closer' features shimmering, Felt-indebted guitar arpeggios.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/firestationsband

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/waltz-time

Nao

Nao (pronounced 'nayo') smashed the first half of 2014 with 'So Good', her perfectly wonky collaboration with Jai Paul's brother, AK Paul. Her recently released 'So Good' EP is claiming the second half of the year, too, via her silky collaboration

with production duo abhi//dijon, 'Adore You', and the slanted melodies of 'Good Girl' (produced by William Arcane). It's the ideal excuse to revisit 'So Good's' stuttering pop pomp, too.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thisnao

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/thisnao

Monogram

Thundering guitars, shuffling beats and hooky vocals mark an epic introduction to Glasgow's Monogram – debut track 'Romance' is played with exactly the kind of fervour you'd expect of an energetic young indie band. It's quite a surprise then, to hear that Monogram is actually only one person ➔

BAND CRUSH

Robby Grote

The Districts

Pine Barons

"Pine Barons are a four-piece from New Jersey. They sound psychedelic and folky, with a little bit of Built To Spill thrown in there, too. They're weird but cool – weird in the way that Animal Collective are weird, but also kind of raw. They do a lot of really cool harmonies."



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– who is also responsible for the track's notably high production values. Why the talented multi-instrumentalist wishes to keep his identity anonymous remains a mystery; he's certainly made a big impression here.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/thisismonogram

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

Dead Ceremony

This Kent four-piece don't give much away about themselves, opting to let the music do the talking instead – and luckily their new track 'Losing You' speaks volumes. Like the previously released 'Heartbeat', it's a soft, delicate ballad, built on piano samples and deep bass hooks.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/deadceremonyband

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

Mt Wolf

Staging a comeback of Lazarus-esque proportions, Mt Wolf have returned after disappearing a year ago. If 'Red' is what that they've been working on during that interlude, then it looks like time well spent; its blustery alt-folk is as life-affirming as it is spirit-crushing, both anthemic and wrapped in a thick melancholia that lingers long after the final fitting.

Bo En

sighed refrain of "I'm going away for a long time..."

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/mtwolfofficial

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/mtwolf

Bosco Rogers

This new duo evidently have a defined taste for all things groovy – debut EP 'Googoo' sounds like all the best bands from the '60s summer of love if they had never grown up. Everything from the avant-garde proto-punk of The Monks to the psych-tinged garage of Love can be heard on tracks like 'The Middle'. Temples fans will almost certainly dig.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/boscorogers

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

Sylas

New label Aesop's ridiculous run of form continues; after turning our attention to Sohn and Tälä, they've now put out an EP from sultry London duo Sylas. Standout track 'Shore' is full of gently pulsating rhythms and contorted melodies. Brian Eno even pops up on the dark final track, 'Layer'.



Bosco Rogers

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/syllas

Total Giovanni

This sprightly disco outfit have already made a name for themselves in their adopted home of Melbourne (they fled their native Milan due to "a change of luck"), but with "a hovercraft" and "dancers on rollerblades" among their future live show plans it doesn't look like they'll be resting on their laurels. Debut single 'Human

Animal' is six minutes of bone-jangling funk that recalls Talking Heads.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/totalgiovanni

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

FVC

Amsterdam-born Florence van Camerijk might be better known in her adopted east London for her roles in shoegaze band Parlour or producer Rory Attwell's Warm Brains – but FVC is her brand new solo project, and debut track 'Little Things' is as inviting an introduction as any. Produced by lo-fi bedroom prodigy Oscar, it's essentially a candy-coloured pop song – mixing the pixie post-punk of The Slits with woozy synths and a wealth of '80s-inspired hooks.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/FVCmusic

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/FVCmusic

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

GULF TELL IT AGAIN

Gulf continue their ascent into the psych stratosphere with 'Tell Me Again', a newly released demo which fizzles with a motorik, almost disco leaning verse that collapses into a revolving chorus that's equal parts disorientating, momentous and expansive. They hit the road to play The Kings Arms in Manchester on Dec 20.

SAN FERMIN RETURN

Following the release of their new track 'Parasites', San Fermin have announced details of their new album 'Jackrabbit'. Released on April 27, the album is their first with new frontwoman Charlene Kaye, after former singer Rae Cassidy left to concentrate on solo material last April.



Wolf Alice

WOLF ALICE ROLL THE DICE

The inaugural Dice Live Award for emerging live acts has been won by Wolf Alice. The band were honoured with the gong at London's Old Blue Last venue, after 100 music industry pundits voted them winners ahead of other acts including Slaves, Royal Blood and Rag N Bone Man.

SOPHIE JAMIESON'S FRESH 'TAKE'

London-based weaver of harrowing alt-folk, Sophie Jamieson, follows an even more brooding course on her latest effort, 'Take'. Swirling, muted guitars, pained vocals and a fog of echoing guitars and percussion feature heavily on the track, which is out now.

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Total Giovanni

Vision Fortune

Experimentalist duo Vision Fortune recently signed to ATP Recordings for the release of their second album 'Country Music', due in February 2015. It was recorded during a two-month residency at a villa in Tuscany – a photo of which provides the unconventional artwork for lead track 'Dry Mouth'. Judging by the sound of that number, we're likely to expect plenty of tribal chanting and clackety post-punk in the vein of bands like This Heat and Can.

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

Bo En

Londoner Bo En is likely tired of people saying his music "sounds like a video game soundtrack", so instead we'll say it's a life-affirming and highly accomplished burst of fidgety, wonky keyboard sounds and cutesy vocals that, um, doesn't sound dissimilar to scores of the electronic gaming variety.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/boenyeah
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/bo-en

Paradis

'Sur Une Chanson En Français' means literally "a song in French", but this house-inspired synth gem is much, much more than that. The latest single from Paradis recalls the romantic eloquence of fellow Français outfit Air, with its French language lyrics and tranquil, floating chords.

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

Stranger Cat

Cat Martino is known for her vocal contributions in the work of Sufjan Stevens and Sharon Van Etten, but Stranger Cat is a project of her own – and on debut single 'Sirens' she proves her worth as a soulful electronic artist of the highest calibre, her soaring vocals riding waves of swelling bass, bustling beats and synthesized hooks.

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

Plastic Mermaids

These natives of the Isle Of Wight go all out on new EP 'Inhale The Universe'. Lead track 'Saturn' sums it up well – opening with a string symphony before erupting with all kinds of Flaming Lips-indebted grandeur.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/plasticmermaids
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/plasticmermaids
► **SEE THEM LIVE** London The Lexington (February 24)

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

DAVE

BAYLEY

Glass Animals



ANIMAL INSTINCTS

When Four Tet works with someone, they're usually pretty good: Burial, Thom Yorke, Aphex Twin. Recently, he did some tracks with an Atlanta rapper called **Rome Fortune**. They're definitely worth checking out. He's insanely versatile, rapping over Four Tet's house, Les Sins' chill-out tunes, A-Trak's bangers, or Suicide Year's drank-trap. He came on tour with us in the States and is a great dude. And he has a green beard.

Badbadnotgood are actually quite good. So good that Tyler, The Creator and Frank Ocean have used them as a backing band, Earl Sweatshirt and Danny Brown used their beats, and super badass label Lex have made them the first band on their super badass roster of beatmakers and rappers by signing their work with Wu-Tang Clan member Ghostface Killah. Check out 'Gunshowers', the first taster track from the collaboration.

When I first heard **Shamir**, I thought he was a sexy woman. He's not. He's a skinny 19-year-old guy from Vegas who probably watched *The Fresh Prince Of Bel Air*, and he's got seriously funky grooves made with sounds from floppy discs. Listen to 'If It Wasn't True'. I put it on and end up dancing with my eyes closed, pretending I'm three Es down at a some kind of futuristic disco hosted by MJ in '95. Prince is there. Also dancing.

Gengahr are five dudes from London who write playful guitar pop jams. Kind of like Unknown Mortal Orchestra's shy but sassy little brother. I caught a bit of their set at the lovely In The Woods festival before I had to run to my own soundcheck.

These dudes can play, and it's fun to watch. Those guitar and bass licks hit you like warm little sunbeams soaked in reverb. On record it's tasty too... Listen to 'Fill My Gums With Blood'.

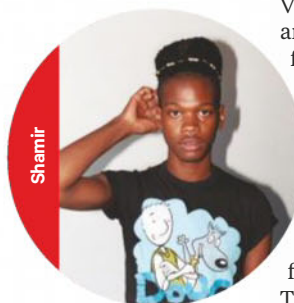
Deers make fun tunes and videos. They're from the funnest country of all (Spain), and I bet their live show is fun, too, but I keep missing it.

Their tracks have that raw punk simplicity and melody that made The Libertines (less aggro-heroin, more summertime swagger). Girls rule. Boys drool.

How about some rappers? **Chester Watson** is young. Really young. Seventeen. He's got a track called 'Phantom' that he made about two years ago that pretty much convinced me he's the next MF Doom.

Solo artists, rappers, bands... time to talk about producers! Listen to **Romare**. I've hit my word limit.

Next week: The Maccabees' Felix White



"When I hear Shamir, I pretend I'm three Es down at some kind of futuristic disco"

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Fuzz Club



► **FOUNDED** March 2012 by Casper Dee
► **BASED** London
► **KEY RELEASES** Dead Skeletons – 'Buddha-Christ' (2012), Various Artists – 'The Reverb Conspiracy Volume 1' (2012), Alan Vega/The Vacant Lots – 'Split Single No 4' (2014)
► **RADAR SAYS** Fuzz Club has long been a key player on the continental psych scene. It's noted for its ace 'Reverb Conspiracy' compilation series.

**"WE'VE
TAKEN
ON
THE
NITS
AND
WON"**



In 2014 Kasabian have banished all doubts about their status as one of Britain's biggest bands. Barry Nicolson joins them on their end-of-year victory lap to chat Billy Bragg, Ukip and why it's now "stadium time"

PHOTOS: ED MILES

No-one could ever accuse Kasabian of not walking the walk. *NME* is backstage at Glasgow's SSE Hydro, where, in accordance with Serge Pizzorno's recent denunciation of "chicken and broccoli" bands, there's neither a shred of poultry nor a floret of the green stuff to be found. Instead, laid out on the dressing room table is enough hard liquor to keep Keith Moon busy for at least 48 hours: multiple bottles of rum, gin, vodka, Jack Daniel's and champagne, plus a few fridges' worth of beer. The only nod to nutrition is a bowl of strawberries; when I eventually take my leave of the place 12 hours later, they remain untouched.

"Alright geez," offers Serge by way of a greeting. It's just past lunchtime on the first day of Kasabian's UK tour, and the guitarist looks edgy. Sporting leather trousers but shuffling around in his socks, his hair sprouting out every which way and talking about how the opening show of any tour is like "being lowered into a fucking shark tank", the impression is of a man who could use a nourishing plate of food right now. Instead, he sips from a mug of herbal tea and stretches his lanky frame out on a sofa. He looks happy, but tired. He has every right to be.

This has been an empire year for Kasabian. It started with the release of their fifth album, '48:13', which became their fourth in a row to top the British charts. Then came the massive homecoming gig at Leicester's Victoria Park in front of 60,000 people (Serge, after much thought, likens the experience to "winning the pools"). A week later, they triumphantly headlined Glastonbury ("I bumped into Lily Allen and she said ➔

it was amazing. Chris Martin, too," he says. "On that level, it was important for us not to fall over.") Now, to round things off, they're playing to tens of thousands of people a night on a 17-date victory lap around the UK and Ireland's biggest arenas (although for London they've chosen to play five nights at the relatively intimate O2 Academy Brixton). Pizzorno describes the last 12 months as "the greatest year since the beginning of the band". Later, Tom Meighan will sum them up like so: "Exhilarating. Exhausting. Amazing."

As the year draws to a close, Kasabian's place in the upper echelons of modern British rock is assured. Of their competitors, the only group that bears comparison for durability and popularity are Arctic Monkeys. The story of Kasabian's rise is arguably the more compelling of the two: they weren't quite, as Serge claims, "everybody's last pick to make it", but nor was their ascendancy a foregone conclusion. "If the ambition was just to sell millions of records," he points out, "then we'd have made it a lot easier for ourselves. We wouldn't have pulled so many moves along the way. We'd have played the game, but we never wanted to do that."

Nonetheless, he believes that "it's happened this way for a reason". Had they been one of those "pampered bands" who have everyone on side from the word go, "it could easily have ended up in a graveyard. And if it had gone the other way, where we weren't continually rising from album to album, that would've fucked us as well. If it had been a whirlwind, it would've been a disaster. We wouldn't have known what to do with it."

Instead, Kasabian's greatest triumph has come five albums into their career: not quite a whirlwind (though Pizzorno claims to have caned it so hard in the beginning that "I don't remember much of the first three"), but a gathering tempest. "At this point, everything I really wanted to do when I was a kid, we've kinda done now," he says, but there's no trace of best-band-in-the-world triumphalism. He describes himself as "fucking lucky" to be where is and shakes his head when I ask if stadiums such as Wembley and Murrayfield might be the next logical step. "In a stadium, half the people aren't really in the mix because they're sitting down. I suppose there's some weird Britpop hangover ingrained in my soul that strives to make outsider music and take it to Wembley; it would be great to say you've done it, and it would be a huge achievement, but that show in Leicester – 60,000 people in a field – felt perfect for us. Maybe we'd like to take something like that around the country."

"Outsider music" isn't necessarily how you'd describe Kasabian's output – they are, after all, signed to Columbia – but you can understand why they see it that way. Erroneously tagged as 'lad rock', they've always been more adventurous than critics give them credit for: if nothing else, you can't imagine Liam Gallagher turning up to a photoshoot with a fox tail hanging out the back of his leather kecks, as Serge does later that afternoon.

"It's the whole issue of cool," he says. "If you hide behind a 'cool' mask then you get revered, but if you just go 'this is us, this is it', then you've gotta have broad shoulders. It's like, I started wearing those T-shirts with the words on them; I've done the feather boas and all the rest of it, I could go to Comme des Garçons and get the best threads, but I thought, fuck it, I wanna wear



Kasabian (from left):
Ian Matthews, Serge
Pizzorno, Tom Meighan,
Chris Edwards

"WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN THAT BAND PEOPLE GET WRONG"

a plain white T-shirt with a different word on it every night. The word can be anything as long as it makes us laugh and it isn't cool. Being onstage and playing a huge tune, but then having 'flannel' written on your shirt... it's ridiculous but it's kind of beautiful, too. I mean, once you wear giant foam hands in your video – come on! I'm aware that I'm putting a target on myself. But people assume we're not [aware of it], because they don't think we've got any kind of intelligence."

With '48:13', there has been a shift in the way the band are perceived. "More and more people are beginning to say, 'Oh, OK, I've gotten them totally wrong.' We've had more apologies on this record than we've ever had before – people who've never really got it, people who saw the Glastonbury show or who lived with the record for a while and said to us, 'We just went along with what everyone else thought you were.'"

There's probably a case to be made for Kasabian being one of the most misrepresented bands of the last 10 years, I suggest.

"There certainly is. But I think history will smile on us. All that baggage won't exist, and people will look back on the time we were around, compare us to what else was going on, and they'll go, 'Hang on, what were these boys all about? What's *that*?' I saw something with Jack White recently where he was saying that he

gets frustrated because he does things his own way and people don't get it, so he finds himself having to explain it – and when you do that, you take the magic away. We've always been that band that people get wrong. They can't understand what we're about."

One of those people is Billy Bragg, who earlier this year remarked that Kasabian "are there to remind us how true Spinal Tap was". That quote was so widely circulated because there's a soupçon of truth to it: Meighan and Pizzorno, like Tufnel and St Hubbins, are two school friends living out an extended adolescence, who aren't afraid of being outrageous and who talk about

rock'n'roll with a conviction that might sometimes border on daft but which never sounds disingenuous. If more bands had those qualities, you suspect that Kasabian might find themselves fielding fewer questions about The State of British Rock. Still, it obviously wasn't intended as any sort of compliment.

"He later apologised," says Serge, "but it's always disappointing when someone like him stoops to that level, portrays themselves in that way. It's a broadsheet, middle class way of thinking, man. He made himself look a dick, but at least he apologised for it."

In person?

"No. I wouldn't recommend him doing that. I wouldn't recommend him coming anywhere near us, to be honest."

At this point, Tom Meighan bursts through the door unannounced. "Alright boys!" he cries jovially. "Hey, see that Bill Cosby? He's in a *lot* of trouble. He's been putting pills into people's drinks and..."

Meighan suddenly notices that we're still recording, and edits himself appropriately.

"Allegedly, of course..."

The personal qualities that make Tom Meighan so likeable – he has a childlike enthusiasm for pretty much everything – are the same ones that can make him difficult to interview. He's prone to going off on conversational tangents (e-cigarettes, chest infections, his missing bank card) and will often start answering a question while you're in the middle of posing it, focusing on what he thinks you're about to ask

rather than what you're actually trying to say. This applies even when it's Meighan who's doing the asking: in the dressing room after tonight's gig, once he's established that I'm from around these parts, he'll brusquely enquire if I'm "Rangers or Celtic". I try explaining that I grew up supporting Rangers before becoming disillusioned by their financial mismanagement and ➔

THE CHRISTMAS SINGLE

Serge discusses next year's seasonal smash

The inspiration

"We were drinking loads of margaritas one night and talking about writing the most uncool song ever, and how back in the day there were so many good Christmas tunes. But there's not been a good one for so long, so we thought, 'OK, let's try and write one in a night.'"

Getting Idris Elba involved



"We came up with this tune, then we thought, 'This'd be amazing with a rap on it!' So we got Idris to do it, which was amazing. So hopefully next year we're going to put it out."

The aftermath

"We did a Loose Tapestries album for the second series [of Noel Fielding's *Luxury Comedy*] and we'll probably put that out next year. Noel's on tour and I'm on tour, so we've not had a chance to do anything with it yet, but it's fucking ridiculous. It's like the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band."

"WE'RE READY FOR WEMBLEY. IT'S STADIUM TIME"

failure to tackle sectarianism, but I've already lost him. "Serge, Serge!" he shouts over me. "This one's a fucking Rangers fan!"

Kasabian wouldn't be the same without him. This is a band whose reputation was forged on the stage, and Meighan is able to command it with the sweep and surety of a Roman general. He may not write any of the songs, but it's his charisma that makes them work night after night. That contribution shouldn't be understated, because compared to other bands who've reached their level in the past, Kasabian have never sold millions of records; they've always been sustained by their live following. When I ask Serge about this, he simply shrugs that "it's just always how it's been for us. I'm sure it's stranger for bands that have been big for a long time [to see album sales fall away]. As soon as you can get music for free, there's no going back. And anyway, as much as it's funny to read about golden Rolls-Royces and palm trees made of pound notes, I'm not really into all that. If we'd had it, it would've fucked us up."

What they've always had, says Tom, is "a great base of people who love us, who never really went away: they've grown with us. We've got a great core of fans who really do love the band, but we've also reached a point now where a lot more people are jumping on board."

How many of those attending tonight are recent arrivals on the bandwagon is hard to say, but the Glasgow show is an imperious display from a band at their peak. Increasingly with Kasabian, there's a sense of providential forces at play: even the one glitch which occurs – a technical faux pas that sees the band playing 'Clouds' in front of a backdrop declaring that "London is full of cunts" – could hardly have happened in a better place than Glasgow, where it's greeted with cheers. They end up having to issue a statement of apology the next day, but in that moment, in front of this crowd, it's the most fortuitous fuck-up I've ever seen.

After the gig, while celebratory flutes of champagne are passed around in the dressing room, a still-buzzing Pizzorno takes me aside. "We've got three dressing rooms and a load of lorries – these are fucking massive shows, but after Glastonbury, they've almost started to feel normal," he enthuses. "With someone like Alt-J or Radiohead, these types of shows have a very different vibe, but we're not that band – over the years we've realised that doing big, relentless gigs is what we're good at. It's like The Chemical Brothers or Daft Punk: it grabs hold of you and rages and doesn't let go."

He also has something he'd like to clarify. "I wanna retract my statement," he laughs. "I was talking shit earlier – we are ready for Wembley. In fact, that's the next step: Wembley and Murrayfield, and then beyond. It's stadium time. It has to be."

Two days later, I rejoin the band in Leeds, where they've sold out the 13,500-capacity First Direct Arena. Since last we met, Ukip have won their second parliamentary seat in Rochester and Strood, while the Labour party have been thrown into disarray after a member of the shadow cabinet tweeted a photo of a terraced house festooned with St George's flags. For Serge, who has described Ukip leader Nigel Farage as "a very dangerous man", these are troubling times.

"It's really fucking frightening," he sighs. "And what's even more frightening are the alternatives. They're so weak and out of touch that it seems like Ukip are

JORDAN HUGHES

KASABIAN'S YEAR OF TRIUMPH

How Serge and Tom ended up owning 2014

APRIL

EEZ-EH IS RELEASED

The first single from '48:13' comes out, and provides the first glimpse of Kasabian's new visual aesthetic. "I've had about 300 T-shirts made," says Serge. "Originally I had 10, but then I thought 'I can't wear the same ones every night', without realising how many gigs we'd be playing. 'UHT' is my favourite one at the moment."

MAY

FIRST SHOWS OF THE 48:13 TOUR

Serge: "We went and played a lot of smaller shows in more out of the way places, and they were insane. It was great for two reasons: one, because it was great to play in towns that maybe don't get many gigs; and secondly, for us, because you're kind of learning how to play the songs live again. We were buzzing off it."

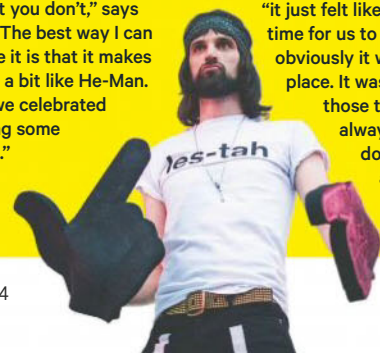
JUNE

'48:13' GOES TO NUMBER ONE

The band's fifth album supplants Sam Smith to become their fourth UK chart-topper in a row. "You'd think you get used to things like that, but you don't," says Serge. "The best way I can describe it is that it makes you feel a bit like He-Man. I think we celebrated by eating some goulash."

HOMEcoming GIG AT LEICESTER'S VICTORIA PARK

The band play to 60,000 people in their hometown. Serge describes it as "like winning the pools". For Tom, "it just felt like the right time for us to do it, and obviously it was the right place. It was one of those things we've always wanted to do as a band, and we've done it now."



only gonna win more seats. There's no Labour party any more. You can't say, 'Look, here's the alternative,' because there isn't one, so what can you offer these people? You can't go anywhere near that maniac and his cronies, but what the fuck is Ed Miliband gonna do? What's Cameron gonna do? I mean, I don't wanna say too much, but... drastic measures, you know?"

What do you think has to happen?

"It seems obvious to me, but for some reason, there's no-one talking sense. I suppose I'm sort of waiting for that to happen, for someone to come along. I'm a musician and I decided years ago to opt out of society. I don't exist: I make music, which is my way of escaping it all. Reality isn't for me, so I travel the world with a piece of wood with a few fucking strings on it, and try make music that brings people together. So I don't have the answers, but when I hear someone with the answers, then I'll write the theme tune for it."

Tom, meanwhile, seems more preoccupied by the fallout from the "London is full of cunts" thing, which wound up being covered by *The Guardian*. "I don't know what the fuck that was doing on the screen," he protests.

"I didn't even see it because I was so lost in the moment. I found out about it this morning and I was like, 'Oh fucking hell...' But it's a mistake, man, that's all it was." He'll assure me of this multiple times.

Tonight's show may not inadvertently stoke any regional rivalries, but the story is broadly the same as in Glasgow: here, as there, they're able to make an arena feel as confined and combustible as a small club show. From 'Bumblebee's' opening shot across the bow onwards, the set is one burst of acceleration after another: 'Shoot The Runner' into 'Underdog', 'Eez-eh' into 'Cutt Off', 'Empire' into 'Fire'. During the latter, a bloke is drenched with the contents of a plastic pint glass. "Was it piss?" I hear his mate ask. "Not sure. Don't care," comes the reply, as he launches himself back into the throng. Piss or warm cider, hell or high water, he's duty-bound to praise them like he should.

Earlier, I'd spoken to Serge about what comes next; there's talk of a Christmas single with Noel Fielding and Idris Elba (see panel, below), but as far as the sixth Kasabian album goes, he already has "a definite idea of where I'd like to take it", and mentions that "I've fallen back in love with the guitar, so it would be interesting to try and reinvent that somehow".

With that in mind, I asked Tom what's become of the solo album he's talked about doing. "It'd be nice to go off and do something, because when we take time out I do sometimes go and make music on my own. It's in the same style as Kasabian, but I've not really done much: just a few ideas, recording with friends. It's nice to break off and do other things, so maybe it'll happen one day. But my family's Kasabian, y'see, so they always come first."

That he's in no rush to leave that family, however temporarily, hardly comes as a surprise. Kasabian are the reigning kings of the Brit-rock jungle, apex predators on a remarkably lethal roll. This is not a time for stepping back, but pushing on and seeing how just how far they can take it. "What I notice more than anything now," says Tom, "is the respect we've got. I mean there's still a few nits out there, a few little headlice still running around who don't like us, but that's up to them. We've taken them on and won." ■



Kasabian onstage at
Glastonbury 2014

29

HEADLINING GLASTONBURY

Kasabian score another entry off their bucket list by headlining the Pyramid Stage. "It all went by in a flash," says Serge. "We did that acoustic cover of 'Crazy', and as I was going to pick up my guitar I remember suddenly being aware that there were 100,000 people behind me. Whatever gets thrown at me, I will take that moment with me. And the amount of people, from all walks of life, who've said they loved it was crazy."

JULY

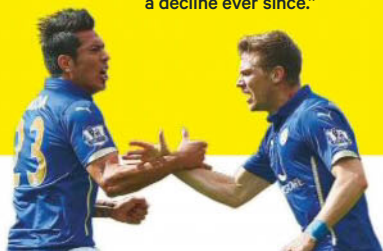
TOM RUNS OVER HIS DAD

A bizarre story breaks that Tom – who doesn't have a driving licence – has run over his dad in a "freak accident". Speaking to the *Daily Mirror*, he calls the experience "the worst day of my life. I can drive, but it was in an automatic car. It was too fast... we have laughed about it now and that's all you can do."

SEPTEMBER

LEICESTER CITY BEAT MANCHESTER UNITED 5-3

The band's beloved Foxes defeat the 20-time English league title winners in a major upset. "In my living memory, it was quite simply the greatest football match I've ever seen," says Serge. "The only thing is, the team's been in such a decline ever since."



NOVEMBER

UK ARENA TOUR

Kasabian's most successful year to date is capped with a mammoth – and long-since sold out – victory lap of the nation's arenas, as well as five nights at London's O2 Brixton Academy. As Serge himself says, it looks like it'll be stadiums next time around.



ARE WE HUM ARE WE DA

30

A single TV performance transformed Future Islands from a cult synthpop band to one of 2014's most heartwarming success stories. But it also risked turning them into caricatures. "You have to remain human to really reach people," frontman Samuel T Herring tells Cian Traynor

PHOTOS: BRINSON + BANKS

AN, OR NCR?



People close to Samuel T Herring knew that this year would test him. It wasn't just a sense that Future Islands' soul-baring synthpop was about to be embraced by a much wider audience. It was a concern that the singer's heart-on-sleeve qualities, the very things that make Herring such a unique frontman, would leave him feeling vulnerable in the glare of his newfound exposure.

"Friends warned me: 'People are going to be coming for you, Sam. You need to look out for yourself.' I said, 'You're crazy! That stuff doesn't bother me. I'm strong, I can handle it.' Then, a few months later, I started to feel some of those pains because I continued to be exactly who I was. I've had to step back a bit and not spend so much time with people because they have hurt my feelings."

Herring is wandering the streets of Washington DC, soaking up the last remnants of autumn and reflecting on the learning experience that 2014 became. When we met in Berlin back in February, Future Islands fever hadn't yet begun. The most pressing concern at that point was promoting fourth album 'Singles'. But that wouldn't turn out to be a problem.

Two weeks later, Future Islands had a watershed moment after performing 'Seasons (Waiting On You)' on the *Late Show With David Letterman*. The song showcases Herring's gift for distilling personal insight into simple expression, and sums up a tumultuous two-and-a-half-year relationship.

"I was trying to get her to change so that she would love me the way I wanted to be loved," Herring says. "And I tried to change too, until I realised that you can't do that. That's just one of those tragedies of love: it's not always going to work out, even if there is something there."

For the Baltimore-based band, performing 'Seasons' for their debut TV appearance wasn't such a big deal. They would play the same way they'd played for the previous eight years together: an upbeat but dramatic mix of Gerrit Welmers' new-wave synths, William Cashion's thundering bass and Herring's earnest vocal delivery.

What the band didn't realise was just how strongly its impact would be felt.



The sight of Herring – a stocky 30-year-old shimmying across the stage with his T-shirt tucked into his trousers, beating his chest with eye-watering intensity – stirred something in people. The clip became a viral sensation, amassing millions of views and polarising opinion. Some proclaimed Future Islands as the ultimate antidote to manufactured pop. Others likened Herring to an accountant taking ecstasy for the first time.

The jeering stung, Herring admits, but he has learned to see the funny side and not let it get to him. “It doesn’t matter if it’s a joke as long as it’s not a joke to everybody,” he says. “The spirit of the song is putting forth this idea that we need to live by our own rules to get what we want out of life. And you know what? There’s kind of a ‘fuck you’ in that too.”

Future Islands deny that their success arrived ‘overnight’ after *Letterman*. They’d worked hard to build a loyal following with their three previous albums. Relentless touring had earned them a reputation for ferocious live shows. They’d even recorded ‘Singles’ on their own dime before signing to 4AD, impressed by the label’s tenacious A&R staff. But Herring admits that ‘Seasons’ began to take on another meaning: *We’ve been waiting on you*. *Where have you guys been?* Their audience ballooned, the few gaps in their schedule filled up; and, just as he’d been warned, Herring’s resolve began to be tested.

When Future Islands played their 162nd gig of the year at the O2 ABC in Glasgow last month, Herring was approached outside the venue by a fan who wanted a picture. The singer says he politely declined, explaining that he hadn’t seen his girlfriend since the tour began six weeks previously, and that she was waiting upstairs. Minutes later, the fan tweeted his disgust, lambasting Herring’s ego. The issue was resolved with an apology from both sides, and Herring laughs about it now, but it hurt.

“The *one* thing I don’t want to be said about me is that I’ve a big head,” he says. “I share myself so freely because I want to, and ego is the last thing that it’s about. I’m not trying to be cool or to become that rock-star stereotype. Nor do I want to be that person who has to hide because they’re overwhelmed

by it. I want to be around people and I want to be myself.” He laughs again. “I don’t want to be a dickhead.”

Herring pretended to be a dickhead as part of his previous band, Art Lord & The Self-Portraits, which he formed with Cashion and Welmers in 2003 while studying at East Carolina University. The character was both a projection of the swagger he longed for, Herring explains, and a commentary on the nature of celebrity. Three years later, the joke wore thin and the trio opted for something more genuine.

“When Future Islands started, I was terrified because I couldn’t hide behind that mask of personality any more,” he says. “But I’ve worked hard to be free and feel like myself onstage. I think you have to remain human to really reach people.”

As the audience has changed, however, so has their interaction with the band. Herring has always enjoyed mingling after shows and hearing fans’ stories, but that moment in Glasgow has become a regular occurrence: people seem more interested in grabbing a selfie than having a conversation.

“I just want to be real with people, like a normal human being,” he says. “We give so much to our music and I give so much of myself onstage and in my words, so it hurts when I think people want a little bit more... It’s like, we can just be friends. That’s what the music is about. It’s about honesty, trust and sharing.”

The best example

of what Herring means by “honesty, trust and sharing” can be found in the song ‘Light House’. It recreates a moment in 2011 when he confided to his then-girlfriend that he’d contemplated suicide. Herring argued that she saw the world differently to him, that his perspective had been coloured by life on the road, by heartbreak, by friends he’d lost to drugs. But she refused to accept this, insisting: “You’re not that person. You’re better than thinking like that.”

“All of the songs are personal but that one came from the darkest place,” Herring says. “Every time I sing it, I feel like I save myself

in a little way.” Most people who hear ‘Light House’ might not pick up on the deeper meaning behind it, he adds, but fans regularly email the band to describe how it has helped them.

“It’s through that sharing that I feel like I’ve reached people, which takes away those feelings of darkness,” he says. “My expression comes completely from feeling misunderstood

STORY BEHIND A VIRAL HIT

Samuel T Herring on the origins of ‘Seasons (Waiting On You)’

Simplicity

“We wrote it in an hour and a half: Garret on the keys, building a simple drumbeat, William playing the bass and me sitting there, listening. We recorded a rough structure with the guys jamming and then we all went home. When I sat down again, the words just flowed.”

Insight

“‘Seasons’ was an idea to explain the passage of time in a rocky relationship. It means as the winter falls apart, by the summer we’ll feel love again. Then, as the winter comes, it will get rid of those things we’re holding onto.”

Life experience

“[My girlfriend at the time] had just gotten out of a long relationship; I was three years out of a long relationship and it was my first time having somebody again. I was saying ‘you’re the only person I want, I’ll give you everything I can’, but it was the opposite on the other side. She did love me, but there were times when she didn’t really want any part of it.”

A big idea

“The idea of the song is that you can’t change people. But time heals, and there will always be those remnants of love.”

Relatability

“When I introduce it [live], I say: ‘This is the song about that person you’ve been waiting on. I don’t know if they’re with you here tonight but I wish you luck.’”



and wanting to get my ideas across to people so I don’t feel isolated, so I have value in this world.”

Herring has never come close to committing suicide, he clarifies, as there’s a difference between thinking and doing. “It’s just a thought that you can have,” he says. “Sometimes it can get scary when you feel lonely, when you feel misunderstood, when you feel dumped upon or just weak. Things can creep up on you. But it’s important to know that there are people there. That keeps me from ever doing anything like [committing suicide]. But the thought is there. It’s one of the hardest things I ever shared, but it makes it easier to share that with other friends and to be told again: ‘That’s not who you are.’”

The most valuable lessons are won through adversity, he says, and the dark times are important because they reveal so much about us and what we can overcome. “I’ve had many problems in my life, but I wouldn’t take back those feelings and things that define who I am now,” he says, breaking into laughter, “even though they probably took years off my life!”

As challenging as 2014 has been, Herring is happy. Future Islands have continued to grow: *Letterman* wasn’t just a flash in the pan, and their sacrifices are paying off. The band plan on writing together again soon and although Herring has no idea where that process may lead them, a swell of emotion has built up this year and it’s best to capture that while it’s still fresh.

“There is the fear that a bar has been set and that

people *expect* something now,” he says. “But, at the same time, we like that challenge. It’s kind of a death wish to think you’ve got this in the bag. I’m just excited to see how we change. Right now it’s crazy to be getting respect from people who’ve had great success in music, while also inspiring kids to pick up instruments and start new projects. To come full circle like that is an amazing feeling.” ■

"Our music is about honesty, trust and sharing"

Samuel T Herring



(From left) Gerrit Welmers, Samuel T Herring and William Cashion



best of 2014

kasabian
48:13

£8



honeyblood
honeyblood

£8



alt-j
this is all yours

£10



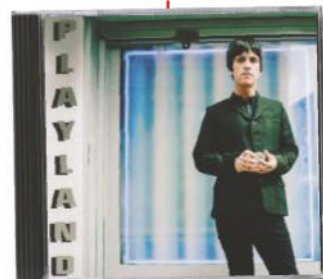
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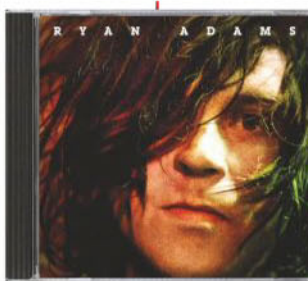
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YES. For sale? dumb cunt's same dumb questions • virgin? listen, all virgins are liars honey • and I don't know what I'm scared of or what I even enjoy • dulling, get money, but nothing turns out like you want it to • and in these plagued streets of pity you can buy anything • for \$200 anyone can conceive a God on video • he's a boy, you want a girl so tear off his cock • tie his hair in bunches, fuck him, call him Rita if you want • I eat and I dress and I wash and I still can say thank you • puking - shaking - sinking I still stand for old ladies • can't shout, can't scream, hurt myself to get pain out • I T them, 24:7, all year long • purgatory's circle, drowning here, someone will always say yes • funny place for the social, for the insects to start caring • just an ambulance at the bottom of a cliff • in these plagued streets of pity you can buy anything • for \$200 anyone can conceive a God on video • he's a boy, you want a girl so tear off his cock • tie his hair in bunches, fuck him, call him Rita if you want, if you want • I eat and I dress and I wash and I can still say thank you • puking - shaking - sinking I still stand for old ladies • can't shout, can't scream, I hurt myself to get pain out • power produces desire, the weak have none • there's no lust in this coma even for a fifty • solitude, solitude, the 11th commandment • the only certain thing that is left about me • there's no part of my body that has not been used • pity or pain, to show displeasure's shame • everyone I've loved or hated always seems to leave • and in these plagued streets of pity you can buy anything • for \$200 anyone can conceive a God on video • he's a boy, you want a girl so tear off his cock • tie his hair in bunches, fuck him, call him Rita if you want, if you want • power produces desire, the weak have none • there's no lust in this coma even for a fifty • solitude, solitude, the 11th commandment • don't hurt, just obey, lie down, do as they say • may as well be heaven this hell, smells the same • these sunless afternoons I can't find myself. • **IF WHITE AMERICA TOLD THE TRUTH FOR ONE DAY IT'S WORLD WOULD FALL APART.** Images of perfection, suntan and napalm • Grenada - Haiti - Poland - Nicaragua • who shall we choose for our morality • I'm thinking right now of Hollywood tragedy • big mac: smack: phoenix r: please smile y'all • Cuba, Mexico can't cauterize our discipline • your idols speak so much of the abyss • yet your morals only run as deep as the surface • cool - groovey - morning - fine • Tipper Gore was a friend of mine • I love a free country • the stars and stripes and an apple for mommy • conservative say there ain't no black in the union jack • democrat say there ain't enough white in the stars and stripes • Compton - Harlem - a pimp fucked a priest • the white man has just found a new moral saviour • vital stats - how white was their skin • unimportant - just another inner-city drive-by thing • morning - fine - serve your first coffee of the day • real privilege, it will take your problems all away • number one - the best - no excuse from me • I am here to serve the moral majority - cool - groovey - morning - fine • Tipper Gore was a friend of mine • I love a free country • the stars and stripes and an apple for mommy • Zapruder the first to masturbate • the world's first taste of crucified grace • and we say there's not enough black in the union jack • and we say there's too much white in the stars and stripes • fuck the Brady bill • fuck the Brady bill • if God made man they say • Sam Colt made him equal. • **OF WALKING ABORTION.** Life is lead weights, pendulum died • pure or lost, spectator or crucified • recognised truth acedia's blackest hole • junkies winos whores the nation's moral suicide • loser - liar - fake - phoney • no one cares, everyone is guilty • fucked up - dunno why - you poor little boy • we are all of walking abortion • shalom shalom we all love our children • we all are of walking abortion • shalom shalom there are no horizons • Mussolini hangs from a butcher's hook • Hitler reprised in the worm of your soul • Horthy's corpse screened to a million • Tisu revived, the horror of a bullfight • fragments of uniforms, open black ruins • a moral conscience - you've no wounds to show • so wash your car in your 'X' baseball shoes • we all are of walking abortion • shalom shalom we all love our children • we are all of walking abortion • shalom shalom there are no horizons • little people in little houses • like maggots small blind and worthless • the massacred innocent blood stains us all • who's responsible - you fucking are • who's responsible - you fucking are • who's responsible - you fucking are • who's responsible - you fucking are • who's responsible - you fucking are • **SHE IS SUFFERING.** Beauty finds refuge in herself • lovers wrapped inside each others lies • beauty is such a terrible thing • she is suffering yet more than death • she is suffering • she sucks you deeper in • she is suffering • you exist within her shadow • beauty she is scarred into man's soul • a flower attracting lust, vice and sin • a vine that can strangle life from a tree • carrion, surrounding, picking on leaves • she is suffering • she sucks you deeper in • she is suffering • you exist within her shadow • beauty she poisons unfaithful all • stifled, her touch is leprous and pale • the less she gives the more you need her • no thoughts to forget when we were children • she is suffering • she sucks you deeper in • she is suffering • nature's lukewarm pleasure. • **ARCHIVES OF PAIN.** If hospitals cure • then prisons must bring their pain • do not be ashamed to slaughter • the centre of humanity is cruelty • there is never redemption • any fool can regret yesterday • nail it to the House of Lords • You will be buried in the same box as a killer; as a killer; as a killer • a drained white body hanging from the gallows • is more righteous than Hindley's crotch lectures • pain not penance, forget martyrs, remember victims • the weak die young and right now we crouch to make them strong • kill Yeltsin, who's saying? Zhirinovsky, Le Pen, Hindley and Brady, Ireland, Allit, Sutcliffe, Dahmer, Nielson, Yoshinori Ueda, Blanche and Pickles, Amin, Milosovic • Give them respect they deserve • give them the respect they deserve • give them the respect they deserve • give them the respect they deserve • execution needed • a bloody vessel for your peace • if man makes death then death makes man • tear the torso with horses and chains • killers view themselves like they view the world, they pick at the holes • not punish less, rise the pain • sterilise rapists, all I preach is extinction • kill Yeltsin, who's saying? Zhirinovsky, Le Pen, Hindley and Brady, Ireland, Allit, Sutcliffe, Dahmer, Nielson, Yoshinori Ueda, Blanche and Pickles, Amin, Milosovic • give them respect they deserve • give them the respect they deserve • give them the respect they deserve • give them the respect they deserve. • **REVOL.** Mr. Lenin - awaken the boy • Mr. Stalin - bisexual epoch • Kruschev - self love in his mirrors • Brezhnev - married into group sex • Gorbachev - celibate self importance • Yeltsin - failure is his own impotence • revol - revol • revol - revol • lebensraum - kulturkampf - raus - raus - fila - fila • Napoleon - childhood sweethearts • Chamberlain - you see God in you • Trotsky - honeymoon, serenade the naked • Che Guevara - you're all target now • Pol Pot - withdrawn traces, bye bye • Farrakhan - alimony alimony • revol - revol • revol - revol • lebensraum - kulturkampf - raus raus - fila - fila • revol - revol • revol - revol • lebensraum - kulturkampf - raus - raus - fila - fila • revol. • **4st. 7lb.** Days since I last pissed • cheeks sunken and despaired • so gorgeous sunk to six stone • lose my only remaining home • see my third rib appear • a week later all my flesh disappear • stretching taut, cling-film on bone • I'm getting better • Karen says I've reached my target weight • Kate and Emma and Kristen know it's fake • problem is diet's not a big enough word • I wanna be so skinny that I rot from view • I want to walk in the snow • and not leave a footprint • I want to walk in the snow • and not soil its purity • stomach collapsed at five • lift up my skirt my sex is gone • naked and lovely and 5st. 2 • may I bud and never flower • my vision's getting blurred • but I can see my ribs and I feel fine •



my hands are trembling stalks • and I can feel my breasts are sinking • mother tries to choke me with roast beef • and sits savouring her sole rylvitta • that's the way you're built my father said • but I can change, my cocoon shedding • I want to walk in the snow • and not leave a footprint • I want to walk in the snow • and not soil its purity • Kate and Kristin and Kit Kat • all things I like looking at • too weak to fuss, too weak to die • choice is skeletal in everybody's life • I choose, my choice, I starve to frenzy • hunger soon passes and sickness soon tires • legs bend, stockinged I am Twiggy • and I don't mind the horror that surrounds me • self-worth scatters, self-esteem's a bore • I long since moved to a higher plateau • this discipline's so rare so please applaud • just look at the fat scum who pamper me so • yeh 4st. 7, an epilogue of youth • such beautiful dignity in self-abuse • I've finally come to understand life • through staring blankly at my navel. • **MAUSOLEUM.** Wherever you go I will be carcass • whatever you see will be rotting flesh • humanity recovered glittering etiquette • answers her crimes with Mausoleum rent • regained your self-control • and regained your self-esteem • and blind your success inspires • and analyse, despise and scrutinise • never knowing what you hoped for • and safe and warm but life is so silent • for the victims who have no speech • in their shapeless guilty remorse • obliterates your meaning • obliterates your meaning • obliterates your meaning • your meaning, your meaning • no birds - no birds • the sky is swollen black • no birds - no birds • holy mass of dead insect • come and walk down memory lane • no one sees a thing but they can pretend • life eternal scorched grass and trees • for your love nature has haemorrhaged • regained your self-control • and regained your self-esteem • and blind your success inspires • and analyse, despise and scrutinise • never knowing what you hoped for • and safe and warm but life is so silent • for the victims who have no speech • in their shapeless guilty remorse • obliterates your meaning • obliterates your meaning • obliterates your meaning • your meaning, your meaning • no birds - no birds • the sky is swollen black • no birds - no birds • holy mass of dead insect • and life can be as important as death • but so mediocre when there's no air, no light and no hope • prejudice burns brighter when it's all we have to burn • the world lances youth's lamb-like winter, winter. • **FASTER.** I am an architect, they call me a butcher • I am a pioneer, they call me primitive • I am purity, they call me perverted • holding you but I only miss these things when they leave • I am idiot drug hive, the virgin, the tattered and the torn • life is for the cold made warm and they are just lizards • self-disgust is self-obsession honey and I do as I please • a morality obedient only to the cleansed repented • 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 learnt how to spell • the first time you see yourself naked you cry • soft skin now acne, foul breath, so broken • he loves me truly this mute solitude I'm draining • I know I believe in nothing but it is my nothing • sleep can't hide the thoughts splitting through my mind • shadows aren't clean, false mirrors, too many people awake • if you stand up like a nail then you will be knocked down • I've been too honest with myself I should have lied like everybody else • 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 learnt how to spell, learnt to spell • so damn easy to cave in, man kills everything • so damn easy to cave in, man kills everything • **THIS IS YESTERDAY.** Do not listen to a word I say • just listen to what I can keep silent • the only way to gain approval • is by exploiting the very thing that cheapens me • I stare at the sky • and it leaves me blind • I close my eyes • and this is yesterday • someone somewhere soon will take care of you • I repent, I'm sorry, everything is falling apart • houses as ruins and gardens as weeds • why do anything when you can forget everything • I stare at the sky • and it leaves me blind • I close my eyes • and this is yesterday • I stare at the sky • and it leaves me blind • I close my eyes • and this is yesterday. • **DIE IN THE SUMMERTIME.** Scratch my leg with a rusty nail, sadly it heals • colour my hair but the dye grows out • I can't seem to stay a fixed ideal • childhood pictures redeem, clean and so serene • see myself without ruining lines • whole days throwing sticks into streams • I have crawled so far sideways • I recognise dim traces of creation • I wanna die, die in the summertime • the hole in my life even stains the soil • my heart shrinks



to barely a pulse • a tiny animal curled into a quarter circle • if you really care wash the feet of a beggar • I have crawled so far sideways • I recognise dim traces of creation • I wanna die, die in the summertime • I have crawled so far sideways • I recognise dim traces of creation • I wanna die, die in the summertime. • **THE INTENSE HUMMING OF EVIL.** You were what you were • clean cut, unbecoming • recreation for the masses • you always mistook fists for flowers • welcome welcome soldier smiling • funeral march for agony's last edge • 6 million screaming souls • maybe misery - maybe nothing at all • lives that wouldn't have changed a thing • never counted - never mattered - never be • arbeit macht frei • transports of invalids • Hartheim Castle breathes us in • in block 5 we worship malaria • lagerstrasse, poplar trees • beauty lost, dignity gone • Rascher surveys us butcher bacteria • welcome welcome soldier smiling • soon infected, nails broken, hunger's a word • 6 million screaming souls • maybe misery - maybe nothing at all • lives that wouldn't have changed a thing • never counted - never mattered - never be • drink it away, every tear is false • Churchill no different • wished the workers bled to a machine. •



P.C.P. Teacher starve your child, P.C. approved • as long as the right words are used • systemised atrocity ignored • as long as bi-lingual signs on view • ten foot sign in Oxford Street • be pure - be vigilant - behave • grey not neon, grey not real • life bleeds, death is your birthright • P.C. she speaks impotent, sterile, naïve, blind, atheist, sadist, stiff-upper lip, first principle of her silence, of her silence • PCP - a P.C. police victory • PCP - a P.C. pyrrhic victory • when I was young P.C. meant Police Constable • nowadays I can't seem to tell the difference • liposuction for your bad mouth boy • cut out your tongue, effigies are sold • words discoloured, bow to the bland • heal yourself with sinner's salt • doctors arrested for euthanasia • kill smokers through blind vanity • if you're fat don't get ill • Europe's gravestone carved in plastic • P.C. she says inoculate, hallucinate, beware Shakespeare, bring fresh air, king cigarette snuffed out by her midguts, by her midguts • PCP - a P.C. police victory • PCP - a P.C. pyrrhic victory • when I was young P.C. meant Police Constable • nowadays I can't seem to tell the difference • P.C. caresses bigots and big brother, read Liviticus, learnt censorship, pro-life equals anti-choice, to be scared of, of feathers • PCP - a P.C. police victory • PCP - a P.C. pyrrhic victory • when I was young P.C. meant Police Constable • nowadays I can't seem to tell the difference • lawyers before love, surrogate sex • this land bows down to • yours, unconditional love and hate • pass the prozac, designer amnesiac. **MANIC STREET PREACHERS • THE HOLY BIBLE 20 • The Anniversary Edition out now . Limited Deluxe Box includes 180gm LP, 4CDs and 40 page book**

**"When we write songs
I think, 'Will 60,000 people
sing this back to me?'
If not, I get rid of it"**

Catfish & The Bottlemen want world domination, and their adoring fans have set them well on the way. Dan Stubbs collars frontman Van McCann and investigates a genuine grassroots phenomenon

PHOTOS: ANDY FORD

There are moments in everyone's life when you could freeze-frame and roll the end credits. Good ending, job done, see you for the sequel. On November 7 at London venue Koko, Van McCann seemed to have dozens of those moments. Playing the biggest show of Catfish & The Bottlemen's career, he was visibly moved by the reaction from the crowd. The band fed off their constant roars; the audience fed off McCann's palpable excitement as he bumbled, for the umpteenth time, that this was the best night of his life. 'Sidewinder' saw crowdsurfers pile overhead and 'Hourglass' was performed with a chorus of 2,500. The songs seemed meatier than on 'The Balcony', their 2014 debut, the Kooks-like whimsy hammered out by sheer volume and energy.

At the end of the show, after diving into drummer Bob Hall's kit, Van stood onstage in a daze, drinking in the applause. As his bandmates celebrated backstage afterwards, he disappeared for 20 minutes, steeling himself before going to meet the public queuing outside the venue. He spoke to each one of them in turn, pointing out the ones with Catfish tattoos and the ones who've supported the band since their earliest days. It's those fans – and a good dose of bloody-minded ➡➡





determination – that Catfish & The Bottlemen have to thank for their big moment. The critics – *NME* included – have been less than kind.

Some months ago, McCann got a text telling him his band were in the new issue of *NME*. They were on the bus heading back to Llandudno, where they formed. They pulled up outside the local newsagent and took a copy to the counter. “I said to the woman working there, ‘This is my band, this is my band!’” says McCann, over lunch on the day of the Koko gig. “And she said, ‘It calls you Twatfish & The Cockmen.’” Later, when *NME* requested a review copy of ‘The Balcony’, McCann instructed his management to send in a photo of him naked instead, with a message reading “review this”. The picture got lost in the post; the album got 4/10. Van shrugs, as if to say “no hard feelings”. “I’m just a nugget from nowhere, so whether we’ve got the best album on the planet or you think I’m a dick, it doesn’t matter,” he says. “We save up all the bad press and then just get stoned in the hotel and read it. It’s funny.”

“The Balcony” undoubtedly *isn’t* the best album on the planet, but it is filling a popular niche that’s been overlooked lately: the kind of knockabout guitar pop that boomed in the wake of The Libertines and Arctic Monkeys in the mid-’00s, only to reach an inevitable saturation point. “I don’t think we’re 10 years too late,” says Van, when I suggest as much. “Guitar music’s not dead. We’re a guitar band and I fucking love it. Royal Blood are killing it, The 1975 are killing it. When we write songs, I just think, ‘Are 60,000 people going to want to sing this back to me? Is someone in a shit nine-to-five job going to feel euphoric listening to it?’ If not, I’m getting rid of it.”

Sometimes Van McCann

comes off like someone who’s won a competition to be in a band. He says of fame that he’s been “wanting to be chased up the street since I was a fucking baby”, and clearly intends to enjoy every moment of his success. Onstage, he’s known to thank the audience so many times that BBC 6 Music DJ Steve Lamacq – a long-time supporter – keeps a tally and reports the figure to him afterwards. It was 57 last time. Outside the venue, fans say they like Van because he’s just like them. He’s real, down to earth, undoubtedly a nice guy, but there’s got to be a ruthless streak to him too.

Early that day, after I make a throwaway reference to the band being friends, McCann,



(Clockwise from left) Bob Hall, Benji Blakeway, Johnny Bond and Van McCann

“I’m just a nugget from nowhere. If you think I’m a dick, it doesn’t matter”

VAN McCANN

surprisingly, chips back: “We’re not mates. Everyone’s content with it just being about the

music. Like, our drummer, Bob, he’s a nice lad but our personalities completely clash. Ben [Blakeway] is the only person who plays bass in Llandudno. Our guitarist [Johnny ‘Bondy’ Bond] is the only guitarist. We all wanna be somebody and make something of ourselves, so we need each other. But if members start drinking and getting fucked up and slacking, then I don’t want them to be a part of it. If I started being a dick I’d expect the same treatment.” Van attends the interview alone. Is he the boss? “Erm, yeah, I guess,” he says. “I’m definitely the mouthpiece of the band.”

Van says the band demoed 160 songs for their debut. They rehearse every day from 9am to 9pm, and already have the next two

albums written. The inspiration for Van’s steely determination seems to come from two men: his dad and the boxer Muhammad Ali, whose fighting talk and hidden depths inspire him. Both come up in conversation frequently, but pleasing his old man seems to be the source of his work ethic. “My dad pulled me aside one night when I got in drunk and put me up against the wall,” says Van. “I was smashed and being an idiot and he was like, ‘If you’re going to do this band thing, sort yourself out, do *not* be a dosser. No son of mine will be a dosser.’ From then on I wrote three songs a night, and I will do for the rest of my life.”

As fan-favourite song ‘Fallout’ attests, Ryan Van McCann was a test-tube baby, born to a free-spirited Merseyside couple who took the newborn travelling around Australia for two years. When they returned to their native Widnes, tragedy struck: Van’s uncle

intervened in a fight and was killed. "A lad and his missus were fighting outside a club," Van explains. "My uncle went over and the man turned round and stabbed him, killed him on the spot. And he was the fucking coolest man on the planet."

In response, Van's father moved the family out to Llandudno, on the North Wales coast, and the youngster found himself in the kind of seaside resort Morrissey was referring to in 'Everyday Is Like Sunday' ("We used to go play bingo on Thursday nights, it's that shit," says Van). Though proud of his working-class roots, Van does find life can be a struggle. "My whole family, my whole life, everything about my past is like everyone's trying to drag me down," says Van. "Even now, we're trying to tour the world and make something of ourselves, and all my uncles and cousins are like, 'Get a fucking proper job, your band's shit.'"

He's almost as hard on himself. Before the show, Van describes himself and his band as "ugly", and compares them unfavourably to "pretty boy" groups like his mates The 1975 and Bastille. He says he has "the worst teeth in the business, like Austin Powers", and explains that the group wear an all-black uniform because they "can't afford to look good". During the photo shoot he notes his band turn into "waxworks" as soon as the lens is pointed at them.

Named after Van Morrison, the 22-year-old believes he was born to be famous, whether as a musician or a football player. "I was playing for my county 'til I was about 15," he says. "If you make it as a footballer, you can get really rich, get a car, get a nice house for your mum and dad. Make it as a musician, you get on the telly, you get famous, you get all the same stuff but you get a lie-in and you get to smoke, so..."

McCann started Catfish & The Bottlemen eight years ago when he was just 14, taking the name from a bottle-playing busker he'd seen on his travels with his parents. Van's teenage years were spent playing Beatles covers in local pubs and hotels from Monday to Friday, with weekends on the road playing North Wales, Sheffield, Manchester and more. His dad was their driver and roadie, and Van acted as the band's manager. Single-minded in promoting the band, he would leave CDs on the windscreens of cars outside arena gigs. In 2011, they played a guerrilla show in the car park of

the Manchester Apollo when Kasabian's crowd were kicking out. "We got arrested that night for sound pollution," says Van. "And we got electrocuted. My guitar amp broke 'cos it was raining. But we still have people coming to our gigs from it."

Van missed his senior-school exams while recording his band's first EP, and says he was kicked out of school as a result. "Everyone used to know me as a little shit," he says. "I would come back from Sheffield at 6am stinking of smoke and turn up to school rough as fuck. Everyone thought I was an alcoholic. Half the teachers were like, 'You'll be a no-one.'" When asked if he grew up reading *NME*, he responds: "I can't read properly. When I read words I don't see things. So when it says, like, 'a monkey's holding a key', I don't see a monkey holding a key – I just see the words." The last book Van read – Mike Skinner's autobiography – took him a gruelling year and a half to complete. Van's love of The Streets spills into his own lyrics, which are conversational, vernacular and packed with expletives. "Someone in *The Guardian* wrote 'he's foul-mouthed'," says Van. "It was like being told off by a teacher. People swear, man, chill out."

It's not just the band's lyrics that have raised eyebrows. A much-circulated image from an early gig showed a merch stall offering a tariff of sexual favours: "signed

titties" at "£1 per melon", "cock snot" at £5 a litre. The accompanying review said Van instructed two women in the crowd to take their tops off and told a male fan his heckle was "a bit gay", all of which Van brushes off as misreporting. "For about 15 minutes I was like, 'Shit, everyone thinks I'm a sexist, they're going to kill me,'" he says. "I love women. I pull chairs, open doors, put coats on them when it's cold. Dead nice, me." He explains the reasoning behind appointing a female manager for the group. "Women get stuff done," he says. "They're efficient and they don't come in and drink your rider. Like, my dad and mum run a B&B and she's the boss. Even though my dad's smart, she's the one pulling all the strings."

Van doesn't agree that there's a whiff of '90s lad culture about the band. "We're normal," he says. "We sit and play *FIFA*, get stoned and eat Domino's and that. Are Oasis lad rock? Are Arctic Monkeys? Call us what you want. It's up to you. To me, lads are the sort of guys that whistle at girls and go, 'Alright, love! Get your tits out!' We don't do that. But I'd rather that

than being called fucking fairy boys." I groan and tell him that 'fairy boys' is often used as a derogatory term for gay men. He shouts over to his manager: "Is that what it means?!" He turns back. "See, this is the thing. I don't come from these sorts of places. I just say what I've been brought up on. It doesn't mean that to me. My PE teacher used to call me a fairy. Like if I roll around the floor when I get smashed in footy, he'd be like, 'Get up, ya fairy!' It just meant spending all day doing your hair and that."

It's not easy to pigeonhole Van. He's clever and ambitious, but an endearing guy rather than an insufferable show-off. Apparently he doesn't have a phone, which seems odd. It's not entirely true: "I have a phone but I don't use it. I don't need to: my mum and dad know I love them and I'm on tour with everyone else." What about girls? "I have a girlfriend, but I haven't seen her in seven months. She knows I love her and that." He says he doesn't watch TV, and rarely goes online either. I tell him he's not typical of someone of his generation. "No, not at all," he ponders. "That's probably why we come across like we're from 2007."

Success with Catfish & The Bottlemen has come at a cost. "I've lost girlfriends, I've lost best mates over it, my whole life's been like a car crash because of it," says Van. The reason he's ploughed through is because his ultimate goal is sheer massiveness. He wants to play stadiums, and he convinces me that he probably will one day. "You've got to be stupid not to want to play to 10,000 people at a time," he says. "I went to see Jay Z and Beyoncé in New York and the whole fucking city was there. The gig finishes and two helicopters take off. I'm thinking, I bet they've gone straight offstage into a helicopter to go and tuck their kid in bed. My goal in life other than music is to have a beautiful wife and kid who I love to bits. If you don't want to get in a helicopter and fly to your wife and kids, I'll do it."

On a recent promo trip to America, US radio DJs described the band as "Oasis with good manners".

It's not a bad summary: that humble, slightly gobby everyman thing. "I'm a dead simple lad," he says. "I smoke fags and I drink tea. I write my songs, I get in the van, I sing as good as I can. The people that get us are not the people that sit at their computers, they're the people working shit jobs or on the dole, like I was."

I ask whose career he'd like to emulate. Van thinks for a moment. "Beatles did alright, didn't they?" ■

Van's heroes

The Bottlemen frontman's inspirations

Muhammad Ali



Van: "He was a dead humble guy, but leading up to a fight he'd badmouth everyone. People would be like, 'I wanna go and see this guy get knocked out. I wanna go see him get battered.' So they'd all buy tickets to see him and he'd win the fight, and everyone would be like, 'Fucking hell!'"

Mike Skinner



"The thing I love so much about him is he didn't tell you, 'I really love you, let's drive off into the sunset.' He was like, 'I fucking love you, let's go and roll a joint in my flat.' And that's what my life was, you know what I mean? I'm a working-class kid. I didn't go through what The Eagles write about."

Alex Turner



"My first ever gig with my mates was Arctic Monkeys, and I remember getting in early and waiting for the moment the band came on when the lights went out. I think Alex Turner is a great songwriter. I mean, since me being alive, in this genre, I think he's the best songwriter apart from Mike Skinner."

Ben Lovett Mumford & Sons



"He's a fucking rock star. I've been out with him in New York and I've seen him do some crazy shit. I don't give a shit about what anyone says about Mumford & Sons. They're not my kind of band, but he is a fucking rock star."



War & peace

An album's success doesn't always banish the problems that helped create it, as The War On Drugs' Adam Granduciel knows well. He tells Barry Nicolson that even after a huge year, anxiety is still a fact of life – and laments Mark Kozelek's vendetta against him

PHOTOS: SOPHIE HARRIS-TAYLOR

The first things you notice about Adam Granduciel is his hands. They're telltale musicians' hands – big, shovel-like appendages, the fingertips coarse from a lifetime spent pressing down on guitar strings – but they're also the hands of someone not entirely at ease with himself. The cuticles are cracked and his fingernails have been gnawed down to the quick. Granduciel's struggles with depression and anxiety are well documented – he's been brutally honest about how *The War On Drugs*' third LP, *March's 'Lost In The Dream'*, was a direct result of them – but even after all the popular and critical acclaim he's enjoyed this past year, you only need to look at his hands to know his problems aren't over yet.

We meet backstage at Glasgow's ABC, where, in a few hours' time, *The War On Drugs* will close their current European tour in front of a sold-out crowd of 1,400 people. Last time they were in Glasgow, 18 months ago, they played a venue that holds around 100 on a busy night. To put things in further perspective, *'Lost In The Dream'* has come out

top – or very near it – in several end-of-year polls, and Granduciel has been reunited with his new girlfriend, *Breaking Bad* actress Krysten Ritter (an unspeakably cute picture of the couple is set as his iPhone home screen). To the casual observer, Granduciel would appear

to be living the dream, not lost in it. Real life, however, doesn't always work that way.

"Life feels pretty much the same," he shrugs. "That period [when the album was made] is still going on: it's not like the record came out and everything ended, you know? I'm still the same person, in that same period of my life. I wanted this record to be a step up in terms of my own abilities and also a stepping stone for the band to grow, which it has. But in terms of me, the person... I went through a lot of dark moments making this record and now that we're out promoting it, things have become a little easier, but everything is still day-to-day."

Sometimes, it can be easy to forget that albums are creative endeavours, not courses of therapy; the simple act of finishing one does not exorcise all the demons that were present during its making. Sure, *'Blood On The* ➔

WAR STORIES

Tracks' was Dylan's 'divorce' record and 'Tonight's The Night' was Neil Young's 'mourning' record – both, incidentally, are favourites of Granduciel's – but feelings like those can linger for years, even decades. In the case of depression, they can last forever. What can help, he's discovered, is talking about it.

"Doing interviews helps me understand myself a little more, I guess. I was pretty much consumed by these thoughts and emotions that were difficult to deal with, and I was able to seek some help and make some small steps towards not being paralysed by them. I talked about it here and there, and then I started hearing from people who really appreciated that I was open about it, and that meant a lot; they already had a connection to the album, but they read interviews, and they felt closer to it. And that's great. A lot of people struggle with the same things I was dealing with, many of them on a much grander scale, but I was fortunate that I had music to work it out in."

Granduciel's touring

commitments will finally come to an end in March, at which point he'll have played around 120 shows in the space of 12 months. The constant touring, he assures me, isn't so much about "booking shows so I don't have to go home" (and thereby risk falling into the same melancholy fugue that produced 'Lost In The Dream') as it is about capitalising on "these sorts of moments which only come once, maybe twice, in your career". Nevertheless, he admits, "I do wonder what's gonna happen when we come off the road. I like to think I'm in a better spot than I was before we made this record, so I'm excited to make music but I'm also prepared for the unstableness that might come with it."

Part of that "unstableness" stems from his plan to leave Philadelphia – the city he's lived in for the last 10 years – and the rickety house where much of the first three War On Drugs records were written. "The house has been a blessing and a headache, but it's the only place besides where I grew up that I've ever called home. There's definitely some attachment to the place, but it's time to move on, time to change it up."

He says he'll probably go to Los Angeles, "because my girlfriend lives there and my life is really nice in that area, so it's time to embrace that and not be held back by the distance of living in Philly. I'm building a little studio – I've

The rise and rise of Adam Granduciel

2003

Granduciel moves from Oakland, California to Philadelphia, where he meets fellow Dylan fanatic Kurt Vile. He later joins Vile's backing band, The Violators.

2005

Forms The War On Drugs. The original line-up features Kurt Vile and bassist David Hartley, who is now the only remaining original member, alongside Granduciel himself.

APRIL 2006

The War On Drugs play their first gig at the Khyber in Philadelphia.

MARCH 2008

TWOD release their first material, the 'Barrel Of Batteries' EP, on Secretly Canadian. Their full-length debut 'Wagonwheel Blues' follows a few months later.

The War On Drugs:

(from left) Adam Granduciel, Dave Hartley, Charlie Hall, Robbie Bennett, Anthony LaMara and Jon Natchez

been building it for years and years, but I wanna take it up to the next level. Any free time I have next year I plan to spend working on new stuff. I don't feel I need to race to finish anything, but by the time we're done touring, I wanna have a bunch of ideas recorded that I can let linger and think about."

Granduciel's eyes light up when talking about his studio. He's an avid gear collector, and after a year spent on the road, he's accumulated a lot of equipment, much of it spread across the world, waiting for him to figure out how to get it home. Some of

that gear, like the analogue mixing console he picked up in Tennessee, will be integral to his studio set-up; some, like the 1960s Dynacord amp he bought in Amsterdam that requires a European power source, is of no obvious use. But he loves this stuff, and I sense he'd quite happily talk about it until his tour manager has to drag him onstage.

On the topic of his ongoing (and increasingly one-sided) beef with Sun Kil Moon's Mark Kozelek, however, he's not quite so voluble. Back in September, Kozelek tore into TWOD onstage at the Ottawa Folk Festival, dismissing them as "beer commercial lead guitar shit".

This then snowballed into a non-apology apology, with Kozelek challenging the band to share the stage with him in San Francisco, where he would debut a song called 'War On Drugs: Suck My Cock' (which he later posted online). When Granduciel finally addressed the situation, Kozelek took his response verbatim and set it to *another* song, 'Adam Granofsky Blues', which featured him laughing hysterically between every line. So you can't blame Granduciel (born Granofsky) for choosing his words carefully.

"At the end of the day, it's just noise," he sighs. "I don't even know; I try not to take it personally. I mean, I've been a fan of his music for 10-plus years, including his more recent stuff. I remember driving across the country on our American tour, listening to 'Benji' and being fascinated with it. But all that other stuff... I'm just kinda confused by it."

There has been no further attempt by either party to make peace, says Granduciel, while he's not sure how he feels about Perfect Pussy's

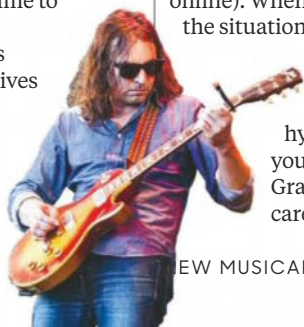
Meredith Graves characterising Kozelek's behaviour as "emotional abuse". "I didn't like that he criticised my fans," he explains. "He made it more about the people who come see us play, and he talked poorly of them and the kind of people they are. That seemed really cheap to me. But it's just sawdust blowing away as far as I'm concerned."

The whole thing has put Granduciel in an impossible position: either rise to the bait and fight back, or stay quiet and suck it up. He's taken a more diplomatic middle course, but the resignation with which he agrees to talk about it, and the curt, clipped nature of his answers, suggest he has more to say on the matter than he's willing to divulge. Still, he's come through bigger battles and won: 'Lost In The Dream' itself is proof of that. But, given that the most successful record of his career so far was born from a time of intense personal trauma, does he worry where

the next one will come from?

"Yeah, I've thought about that. I kind of wonder: there's such a story around this record now, what will the next one be about? But before I started doing press for this record, I wouldn't have said it was *about* that time in my life. Sure, at the time of making it I was entrenched in all this stuff, but I was still writing about some of the same things I'd written about on all the albums – thoughts and feelings I had when I was younger, themes that I keep coming back to.

"Anyway," he says, brushing the hair from his brow with a sweep of those big, weather-beaten hands, "in life, you never know what's coming around the corner." ■





JACK STRUCK A CHORD WITHOUT EVER PLAYING A NOTE.

When Jack Daniel was perfecting his Tennessee Whiskey, music was the last thing on his mind. But somehow the spirit he put into every bottle – his craftsmanship and his independence – made a big impression on history's more free-thinking musicians. And Jack's been in the band ever since.

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THIS IS H

Leonie Cooper joins Canadian punks White Lung on tour and finds them welcoming aggression at gigs, showing off their Oasis merch and schooling fans in the art of the circle pit

PHOTOS: ANDY FORD

It's the third day of White Lung's second European tour of 2014 and things have already got a little out of hand. Today the hardcore four-piece are in London; last night they were in Amsterdam. "It was interesting," says fireball frontwoman Mish Way with a knowing cackle. "We got super stoned. I feel like weed is stronger than coke or anything else – it's mental..."

"Mish and I were blasted," touring bass player Hether Fortune explains forthrightly. After they played, the band had to drive two hours to their hotel in Belgium before travelling to the UK and meeting here at east London's Shacklewell Arms. In the van, a fried Mish slunk into the safety of her headphones. "I was just tripping out, listening to Captain Beefheart. It was awesome."

Despite their hazy exploits on the continent, White Lung's music has few of the traits typically associated with stoners. Their caustic third album, 'Deep Fantasy' – the first ever hardcore release on Domino, traditionally the home of bands like Franz Ferdinand, Arctic Monkeys and Wild Beasts – is a passionate blast of punk fury grounded by Mish's searing lyrics about drug abuse, rape and body dysmorphia.

With the band's members scattered across North America – Canadian Mish lives in LA alongside Michigan native Hether, guitarist Kenneth William is "homeless", and drummer Anne-Marie Vassiliou remains in Vancouver, the band's original base – touring is pretty much the only time they spend together. As such, not a second is wasted on small talk. After we roll out of the venue to get some dinner (kebab meat and red wine), the conversation turns to The Dillinger Escape Plan's notorious onstage shitting incident at Reading Festival in

2002, and the likelihood of White Lung's next album being scat-themed. The fact that iconic British artists Gilbert & George – known for their work's fondness for the faecal – are sat at the very next table in matching tweed suits is marvellously appropriate.

Mish, meanwhile, is in her gothic regalia, all in black and rocking a tatty T-shirt bearing the name of cult metallers Corrosion Of Conformity. It's a touch more leftfield than the natty piece of bootleg Oasis merch she's bought with her to wear for the band's Manchester show. "It's horrible – it's a shitty drawing of them that my friend got me from Thailand," she says of the knock-off, which features warped versions of the faces of her favourite brothers. "Liam's on the tit and Noel's on the tummy."

Back at the venue in London, the crowd are a little stiff. "I know it's Monday, but don't make us feel like we're in a library!" shouts Mish, a disapproving look on her glittery face.

"Yeah, anarchy in the UK!" yells Hether.

"Prove to us your punk history," adds Mish, launching herself into the crowd, sparking a circle pit into life. "That's what I wanted!" she beams, crawling back onstage covered in sweat and beer.

The crowd would
be wise to do as Mish says. What she *doesn't* want is

anything like what happened in Brooklyn in September, when a drunken bro started flicking the finger at her and calling her a cunt during a gig. "Normally I'd ignore something like that, but I just didn't feel like it," she says. "So I walked in the audience and punched him."

The band are keen to point out that events like this are rare, although they do say that being onstage means having to deal with varying degrees of crap from crowds. "Stare at my tits, I don't care," Mish says. "They're popping out of my shirt, that's what they're there for – it's fine. But when people cross a line, I take care of it."

Aggressive behaviour at gigs is a hot topic right now, with acts like Perfect Pussy and Joanna Gruesome speaking out against macho culture at punk shows. White Lung

White Lung live at the Shacklewell Arms in London, November 3. (Below left, l-r) Hether Fortune, Mish Way, Anne-Marie Vassiliou and Kenneth William



ARD CORE

have a different take on the matter. "This is the place where I experience the least sexism," Mish says of the contemporary punk scene. "When people complain about it, it makes me raging mad."

Her view is that victim culture is partly to blame for the oppression some female performers feel. Hether backs her up, saying, "If you go around always expecting people to belittle you or think less of you because you're a woman, if you have that chip on your shoulder, and you're always ready to pin it on everyone, then you're going to find people to pin it on."

It's not just female-fronted acts that have

been calling for calm at concerts. California punks Joyce Manor recently took a stand against crowdsurfing on the grounds that it alienates their young female fans – who, the band say, regularly find themselves injured when larger, older, male stagedivers chuck themselves into the audience. "Great way to make young women feel safe at a show when the rest of the fucking world is hostile towards them already," they tweeted.

Hether snorts, arguing that such a stance fails to give female fans enough credit for their actions. "Gimme a break! If you wanna be up in the fucking pit or in the front, that's the

risk you take," she says, and proudly recounts the time she smashed her head open at gig by thrash legends Cro-Mags. "You're not at a fucking doo-wop show, you're at a hardcore punk show. Let's not be babies about it."

Mish nods in agreement. "Just pretend it's a GG Allin show [events legendary for their violence and poo-throwing]. If you don't want the faeces in the face, go next door."

Five key tracks

The best bits of White Lung's four albums to date

Viva La Rat

'IT'S THE EVIL', 2010

The opening track from White Lung's debut LP, 'Viva La Rat' sets out their stall as punk's most vicious newcomers.

Glue

'SORRY', 2012

Mish's vitriol is in full effect on this track from the band's second album.

Drown With The Monster

'DEEP FANTASY', 2014

The band tackle the subject of substance addiction in a typically ruthless fashion.

Snake Jaw

'DEEP FANTASY'

Mish has previously spoken about how 'Snake Jaw' deals with body dysmorphia and what she sees as the struggle women face surrounding what they look like and how that relates to their self-worth.

Down It Goes

'DEEP FANTASY'

'Down It Goes' is an anti-love song, with Mish chucking lyrical barbed wire at a lover.

Luckily, no shit is spilled tonight at the Shacklewell Arms.

Even the heckling is limited to a polite, "You're really good!", which Mish struggles to decipher. "I think he said 'guv'nor'," suggests Hether, who'd been practising her Dick Van Dyke-worthy cockney accent over dinner. Either way, White Lung aren't just good tonight, they're fucking great. Mish delivers her polemics like a crazed preacher, aiming gun-fingers at the audience, spitting rage and bile over the thundering 'Down It Goes', while Kenneth serves up intricate licks and Anne-Marie keeps the bpm deviously high.

After the show, Mish lets her classic-rock flag fly, belting out Fleetwood Mac's 'Go Your Own Way' at a local karaoke bar, then sleeps all the way to Brighton in the van the next day. She perks up after soundcheck for a typically controversial pre-gig discussion about Operation Yewtree, Jimmy Savile and Rolf Harris. "You Brits love a scandal," she gasps, before heading out onto the windy cobbled streets for a cigarette.

Onstage at Brighton's Green Door Store, the crowd again need a touch of sweet-talking before they fully lose their minds. "Come closer, you're not going to catch anything," says Mish. "Ebola doesn't work like that." Then, after headbanging her way through a visceral 'I Believe You' – a tribute to the oft-discredited victims of rape – she offers up a smile. "It's exhausting

being angry!" Serious one second and hilarious the next, White Lung's literate and emotionally intelligent side will please the responsible punks, while their incendiary performances and devil-may-care attitude hit the mark that all the best rock'n'roll should. ■



REBORN IN THE USA

Unhappy at home in Brighton, The Wytches and their intense riffing have found an adoring audience in America. Rhian Daly finds the trio “feeling like a new band again” in New York

PHOTO: BRINSON + BANKS

46

The Wytches: (l-r) Kristian Bell, Dan Rumsey and Gianni Honey in Silver Lake, LA, November 10, 2014

Nearly 3,500 miles from their adopted hometown of Brighton, two-thirds of The Wytches slump into the fur-lined seats in the lounge of the Ludlow Hotel on New York's Lower East Side. It's the final day of new music festival CMJ and the band are all carrying what they've termed a "Frankenstein" cold, picked up somewhere on their relentless touring schedule – by the time the year's out, they'll have played in the region of 150 shows.

Drummer Gianni Honey has been confined to his sickbed until their show later this afternoon, but monstrous ailments can't bring down frontman Kristian Bell and bassist Dan Rumsey. This is their third visit to America, and while past excursions haven't all been positive (Bell openly declares that last time was "terrible", and attributes it to his lack of enthusiasm), there's a sense that the bludgeoningly heavy band are beginning to find not only their place here, but also a respite from the misconceptions that surround them in the UK. "In England we're promoted as an 'indie band,'" says Bell, bemused. "Therefore it's weird when we start to riff out. In America, they just see it as a cool reference in an alternative band."

Bell still freely admits that Arctic Monkeys' 'Humbug' has been a massive influence on the group, but he finds their 'indie' categorisation odd, having come from a "crusty/metal" world prior to starting The Wytches. "It makes our heavy side seem like a weird statement," he says, sighing and staring straight ahead of him. "When there's an indie festival or something, people expect certain things that make a decent indie group, and I don't think screaming your head off and doing windmills with your hair is considered that," he reasons, looking far too docile to ever turn into the hair-flinging, yowling character he quietly describes.

Though they don't think they'll ever fully fit in anywhere – not even Portuguese metal festival Reverence, which they reminisce about fondly, nor their adopted seaside hometown – The Wytches are enjoying the "trust" of their steadily growing, open-minded American audience. Rumsey describes coming Stateside as being "like a new band again" – a strange statement on the face of it, given that they've spent the three years since forming relentlessly trekking up and down the British Isles.

All The Wytches' hard work peaked at the end of August, when their long-time-coming debut album, 'Annabel Dream

Reader', was finally released: 13 tracks of howling, spine-tingling grunge documenting Bell's former relationship and mostly written when he was 17. Underneath the blistering riffs and noise, his words betray lovelorn poetic depths ("The first time you came over I watched you so composed on a wire/Then drank you up like summer wine", from 'Wide At Midnight') that aren't normally associated with bands at the heavier end of the spectrum. Now 22, he's been carrying these songs around for years, and playing them night in, night out. To him, those tracks are bound to – and do – feel old.

"I'm just glad we got it out," he says of the album, which was recorded at Liam Watson's all-analogue Toe Rag Studios in Hackney. "I don't necessarily enjoy it any more, but it documented a certain time. Not necessarily the time when we recorded it; more when we got together with them songs."

Despite Bell's boredom with the album, he seems lighter and more optimistic over in the US. He describes coming to America as "fresh", even though they have to tote around those same old songs, citing the fact that "barely

anyone knows us" as part of the excitement. That's probably partially down to the fact that Bell admits he "likes to pretend the world hates me" – not out of some perverse martyr complex, but on the assumption that everyone in the UK must be as sick of their songs as he is.

That's hardly the case, given the recent presence of 'Annabel Dream Reader' in numerous British publications' Albums Of 2014 lists, but Bell seems to prefer the way things are for them in the US, where they have an album out but little status of any kind. "That's what I liked about Fat White Family – they had an album out before any of that stuff happened. I quite like that we're going to be one of those bands now." It puts them in the position of having to earn their chops again, but with the concrete achievement of an album already behind them, leaving them immune to any hype.

Over the course of six shows in New York, they prove themselves with furious recreations of that record. They admit that gigs in the earlier hours of the day don't suit their sound, but at NME's evening showcase in dingy Brooklyn venue Glasslands they show they can easily match the more buzzed-about bands on the line-up (from Bell's favoured Fat Whites to

INTO THE CAULDRON

Frontman Kristian Bell on the band's influences

The Birthday Party

"That kind of almost obnoxious screaming and the sound of chaos that you can make on the guitar... we're really into that kind of playing."

Nirvana

"The impression we all got from Nirvana was angst, but also this weird feeling of comfort. The whole world surrounding Nirvana got us into a lot of great things."

Black Sabbath

"We've always agreed with that thing Ozzy said: people go to see horror movies to be scared, and you can also do that with sound."

Rowland S Howard

"He was in The Birthday Party but his solo stuff was great too. The cover he and Lydia Lunch did of [Lee Hazlewood's] 'Some Velvet Morning' made us remember that creepy music can still be very tuneful."

Arctic Monkeys

"'Humbug' was a big influence – just that album, nothing else. I found it really moving. I loved the guitar sounds."

Chicago rock'n'rollers Twin Peaks) for straight-up, guttural thrills: no gimmicks, just gripping intensity and songs packed with power.

By the time you read this, The Wytches will be a week away from playing the final show of their gargantuan 2014 tour, at a festival in France. Between CMJ and now, they've experienced Halloween the American way (dressing up as explorers for their show in Chicago), made tourist trips to landmarks like Mount Rushmore and got excited about the DIY venues and dive bars they've been playing. They've also played the inaugural Drill weekend in Brighton, a festival curated by Wire and featuring some of the most interesting British talents around, from Savages to Bristol psych beasts Spectres, Mercury winners Young Fathers to East India Youth and Grumbling Fur.

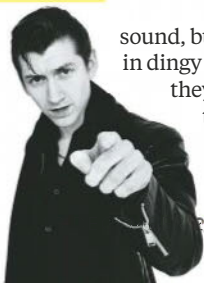
When all live commitments have finally been taken care of, the band will take some much-deserved time off. They'll still be busy, though, soundproofing the "disgustingly cheap, squatters' paradise" room that Bell rents in an abandoned building that's looked after by a property guardian scheme – they're planning to record the next album there. Another option is to make a trip to Geoff Barrow's Bristol studio, where the band recently did a session and Bell got the opportunity to geek out about Portishead's drum sound. "That was probably the highlight of my year," he exclaims.

"In England we're promoted as an 'indie band'"

Kristian Bell

The band promise the tone of the next album will be "a lot lighter", even though Bell has been writing more melodic songs on his nylon-string guitar, while Rumsey and Honey, the former explains with a grin, have "been jamming really heavy, intense thrash".

Whatever the record ends up sounding like, the plan is to avoid letting it hang around for as long as their debut did. With recording set for "January or February", they're keen to have it released before 2015 is out. Eager to get out of their "touring mentality", the band are looking forward to getting back into the studio and experimenting with new sounds. "We're a bit more open with things now," says a shrugging Bell. "Last time we had an idea months before we recorded and were too stubborn to change it. I think we can happily change things now." As such, album two should be a more accurate reflection of where the band The Wytches are now – older, wiser and more worldly – rather than the shadows of their former selves they've been lugging around for years. ■



Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY BEN HOMEWOOD



Parkay Quarts Content Nausea

NYC's Parquet Courts – minus the rhythm section – adopt an alter ego and push their sound into wilder territory



and that feels about right. This collection – released less than six months after third album 'Sunbathing Animal' and recorded, mixed and mastered in two weeks – takes ideas expressed and hinted at on their previous releases, and follows them somewhere altogether freakier.

Primarily the work of guitarists Andrew Savage and Austin Brown, with guest musicians including Jackie-O Motherfucker's Jef Brown on saxophone and Eaters' Bob Jones on the fiddle, 'Content Nausea' sounds like a sonic

Who are Parkay Quarts and what have they done with the real Parquet Courts? Featuring half of the New York quartet's regular line-up (drummer Max Savage and bassist Sean Yeaton are absent, completing a maths degree and starting a family, respectively), they describe this incarnation as an "alter ego",

playground where the duo can indulge some of their wilder impulses. The Brooklyn band have previous here: in 2013, less than a year after their second, breakthrough album 'Light Up Gold', they released the five-track 'Tally All The Things That You Broke' EP under this homophonic moniker, experimenting with a more expansive sound (the songs on 'Light Up Gold' were mostly two minutes or less of short, sharp indie-rock).

Picking up where 'Tally...' left off – on seven-minute opus 'He's Seeing Paths', which featured a loop of a telephone ringing – we find them in experimental mood on opener 'Every Day It Starts', a paranoid lament about sleep deprivation. The title track, too, is weird and wired, racing from double-speed guitar pop into snail's pace white noise with a spoken-word monologue over the top, and back again. They play it rather straighter on 'Slide Machine', a relaxed cover of Texan psych kings The 13th Floor Elevators, its spidery guitar lines sitting fairly

comfortably alongside their previous work; but the other cover on this mini-album is altogether more noteworthy: a sax-tastic take on Nancy Sinatra's Lee Hazlewood-penned 'These Boots Are Made for Walkin'' ('a karaoke favourite' of Savage's), which stays just the right side of Mark Ronson territory by virtue of the wanton

WHO ARE PARKAY QUARTS?

Guitarist Austin Brown explains...

The name

"It's a signifier that it's kinda the same but different. It's not like we've gone nu-metal or anything. It's not really Parquet Courts, but it is Parkay Quarts. We're lucky our name allows us to do it without looking too crazy."

The songs

"It's an experimental record for us: back to basics. Some songs were left over from 'Sunbathing Animal', some were completely reworked and some are totally new. Working on them was totally piecemeal – we started with nothing and in two weeks had the record mastered."

The backing band

"We've been on tour with what I call The Scabs. They're standing in for Sean [Yeaton, bass] and Max [Savage, drums] as Sean's just become a dad and Max is studying. They're scabs because they stop the band losing too much blood while the others are away."

Myth', a tune that originally dates back to Savage's old band Teenage Cool Kids. Featuring organs that recall Al Kooper's improvised lines on Dylan's 'Like A Rolling Stone' and some equally grandiose lyrical sentiments, it's a closing reminder that, even when they're only messing around, Parkay Quarts still mean serious business. ■ ROB WEBB

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** November 11 (digital) December 8 (vinyl) ► **LABEL** Rough Trade ► **PRODUCERS** Parkay Quarts ► **LENGTH** 35:15 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Every Day It Starts ►2. Content Nausea ►3. Urban Ease ►4. Slide Machine ►5. Kevlar Walls ►6. Pretty Machines ►7. Psycho Structures ►8. The Map ►9. These Boots Are Made for Walkin' ►10. Insufferable ►11. No Concept ►12. Uncast Shadow Of A Southern Myth ► **BEST TRACK** Uncast Shadow Of A Southern Myth

MORE ALBUMS

Clarence Clarity Who Am Eye EP

Bella Union



Last year, masked producer Clarence Clarity was

merely an enigmatic presence on music blogs. Now the Londoner has revealed his face and delivered this, his debut EP. Lead track 'Those Who Can't, Cheat' is a surge of hyperactive, catchy future-funk with convulsive electronic breaks and Prince imitations. 'Golden Gate' and 'Off My Grid' are equally fidgety, skipping past in a flurry of unstructured and obnoxious sound effects, neither making any decisive point. 'Exaltations' – twisted R&B full of distorted flute and a strong vocal – briefly realises Clarence's Flying Lotus-meets-Kindness dream a bit better. But one track can't atone for an EP that, on the whole, is a bit of a mess.

■ JAMES BENTLEY

5

The Knife Shaken Up Versions

Mute



The Knife's decade-long journey through the human

psyche came to an end this year when the Swedish art-tronica geniuses announced their retirement. They bow out with a record containing new renditions of seven of their best cuts, first reworked by the band for last year's 'Shaking The Habitual' tour. The modernist, seductive pop of 'Got 2 Let U' is swapped for anxious bass music, while the mighty 'Without You My Life Would Be Boring' is given the techno overhaul it was always begging for. Even the classic 'Silent Shout' – from the 2006 album of the same name – is fired with more energy. A sublime farewell from the millennium's finest synth act.

■ JOHN CALVERT

8



Joanna Gruesome/ Perfect Pussy

Astonishing Adventures! EP

Transatlantic tour buddies bring original tracks and covers to a shared vinyl-only release

After a year of sweat-soaked gigs on both sides of the Atlantic comes a vinyl-only split EP from touring partners Joanna Gruesome and Perfect Pussy (above), featuring a new song and a cover from each band, all wrapped in a comic book by Phil McAndrew, brother of Perfect Pussy guitarist Ray. The music opens in a blaze of percussion on 'Psykick Espionage', Joanna Gruesome firing harder and more tunefully than ever. Rising to the challenge, Perfect Pussy's 'Adult World (The Secret)' shakes itself to pieces beneath a barrage of feedback. Joanna Gruesome reveal secret emo powers in their rapid take on Florida screamers I Hate Myself's '...And Keep Reaching For Those Stars', while a feedback-drenched resurrection of The Sugarbushes' 'Leash Called Love' welds Perfect Pussy's fierceness to an empowering Björk lyric: "He controls you/You should do him in". ■ STUART HUGGETT



8

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** November 24 ► **LABEL** Fortuna Pop!/Slumberland/Captured Tracks ► **PRODUCERS** MJ (Joanna Gruesome); Howard Bilerman (Perfect Pussy) ► **LENGTH** 11:45 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Joanna Gruesome – Psykick Espionage ►2. Joanna Gruesome – ...And Keep Reaching For Those Stars ►3. Perfect Pussy – Adult World (The Secret) ►4. Perfect Pussy – Leash Called Love ► **BEST TRACK** Leash Called Love

Githead

Waiting For A Sign Swim



Making albums of minimalist gloom isn't on the to-do

list in most marriages, but it seems to work for Colin Newman (of Wire) and Malka Spigel (founder of '80s Israeli rock act Minimal Compact). With their fourth Githead album, the couple ape the ambient end of Newman's output with the

seminal post-punks, as well as the bands he's influenced; DIIV, Deerhunter and Dutch Uncles all spring to mind. Between the glum guitars of 'The Place We're In' and the title track's rapid motorik pulse there's a strange sentimentality: 'Bringing The Sea To The City' is sweetly soothing and the Neu!-inspired 'Today' reaches a gleeful conclusion. Mostly, however, Githead delight in darkness.

■ ROBERT COOKE

7

Reviews

Tetema Geocidal Ipecac



Faith No More singer Mike Patton's latest side project is a

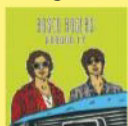
collaboration with Australian composer Anthony Pateras, who scored psychological thriller *Errors Of The Human Body* in 2012. Recorded in sessions at a French convent and a San Francisco studio, and featuring analogue electronics alongside strings, brass and woodwind, 'Geocidal' is monolithic. 'Pure War' sounds like UK drum'n'bass kingpin Roni Size getting spiked with GHB and fed through a woodchipper, while 'Tenz' surges and crashes like a malfunctioning machine, Patton's chants, screams and whispers dragging it to its conclusion. '3-2-1 Civilisation' is most impressive, a cacophony that would make an appropriate soundtrack to the world's end.

EDGAR SMITH

7

Bosco Rogers

Googoo EP Bleepmachine



Brighton duo Bosco Rogers have evidently drawn from

a solid base of garage influences to create the fuzzed-out sound of this debut EP. 'Googoo' is an upbeat reflection of the garage-rock revival that bands like Black Rebel Motorcycle Club helped define in the early 2000s – and, fuelled by a driving snare and a buzzing bass riff, it's a riveting opener. Lead single 'The Middle' stands out for its whistling hooks and wild flower-punk guitar licks, recalling both the looseness of The Dandy Warhols and the lush 1960s instrumentation that Temples have recently updated. But therein lies this EP's major drawback: although competently executed, it sounds way too much like something we've heard before.

JAMES BENTLEY

6

King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard

I'm In Your Mind Fuzz

Another batshit psychedelic classic from down under

Since Kevin Parker started Tame Impala in 2007, antipodean psychedelia has steadily gathered an audience eager to have their minds bent. Following the release of second album 'Lonerism' in 2012, Parker's band have cracked the UK Top 20, played megashows with Arctic Monkeys and amassed a worldwide fanbase. Their success has brought attention to former bassist Nick Allbrook and drummer Jay Watson's band Pond, who made their breakthrough with the eccentric psych of 2012's 'Beard, Wives, Denim'. On the more batshit end of the scale, artists such as Connan Mockasin and Unknown Mortal Orchestra, both from New Zealand, have also resonated. Flute-toting septet King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, from Melbourne, are hoping the same goes for them. 'I'm In Your Mind Fuzz' is the group's fifth record – their first for UK label Heavenly – and it impressively steers a path between repetitive motorik and



dreamy melody. It's split roughly into three parts: a four-song intro, a wild mid-section and an intimate conclusion. In the intro, three of the four tracks are named after variations on the album's title ('I'm In Your Mind', 'I'm Not In Your Mind', 'I'm In Your Mind Fuzz') and whoosh into each other in a surge of exaggerated riffs and soloing, and pounding percussion from drummers Eric Moore and Michael Cavanagh (yes, two of them) that even Pond might deem over the top.

The mid-section is bound together by flutters of flute, and veers from despondent glam-rock ('Empty') to freakish folk that's like New York's Woods on fast-forward ('Hot Water') via Thee Oh Sees-ish garage on 'Am I In Heaven?'. As the album nears its end, things get more sultry. Frontman Stu Mackenzie's vocals are warm and affected on 'Slow Jam I', and 'Satan Speeds Up' could be mistaken for a track from UMO's 2011 debut, if it weren't for the wild Sabbath riffing. 'Her & I (Slow Jam 2)' – an eight-minute carousel of twanging country guitars – concludes a mind-boggling but perfectly executed journey. They're too wilfully mad to emulate Tame Impala's success, but if you're after a freaking out, King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard's outrageous noise deserves attention.

LISA WRIGHT

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** December 1 ► **LABEL** Heavenly ► **LENGTH** 42:21 ► **TRACKLISTING**
► 1. I'm In Your Mind ► 2. I'm Not In Your Mind ► 3. Cellophane ► 4. I'm In Your Mind Fuzz ► 5. Empty ► 6. Hot Water ► 7. Am I In Heaven? ► 8. Slow Jam 1 ► 9. Satan Speeds Up ► 10. Her and I (Slow Jam 2) ► **BEST TRACK** Am I In Heaven?

Mary J Blige The London Sessions

Capitol



In February, Disclosure released a remix of their 'F For You' single featuring Mary J Blige on vocals. Guy and Howard Lawrence had a powerful effect on the New York R&B singer, and in July Blige moved to London, intent on injecting Disclosure's throbming house pulse into her own music. The result is 'The London Sessions',

a record that, in the skittish 'Right Now' and the crackling dancefloor thrum of 'Follow', contains two co-writes with the Lawrence brothers. Disclosure's sound seeps into the lion's share of the record, but the most enjoyable diversion from it is 'Therapy' – perhaps surprisingly, given that it's co-written by soul warbler Sam Smith – which pays homage to Amy Winehouse's 'Rehab'. Even still, Blige's enthusiasm is most powerful on 'Follow'.

ANGUS BATEY

7

H Hawkline Salt Gall Box Ghouls

Heavenly



H Hawkline recently joined Toy and Temples on the books of the esteemed London-based Heavenly label, and 'Salt Gall Box Ghouls' is his first release for them. It's a collection of tracks from the various limited albums and EPs the Cardiff-based songwriter – who previously lived on Lundy Island, off the Devon coast – has made

since 2011, and an odd and exciting introduction to music that former touring partner Gruff Rhys once described as "the catchiest thing to emerge from Lundy since the norovirus". Hawkline's loose style and baritone are undeniably infectious, as are the scraps of taped voices and jagged guitars on 'An Old Lady Sings Pentecostal' and the breezy tunes that recall '80s Birmingham band Felt on 'Surf Pound' and 'You Say You Love Me'.

BEN HOMEWOOD

8



NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK

9

Reviews

Krill

Lucky Leaves

Steak Club/Blood And Biscuits



If grungy Boston trio Krill prove anything on their debut album – originally out in the US in 2013 and getting a catch-up release over here ahead of a new record next year – it's that more bands should write their own theme tunes. Opener

'Theme From Krill' has frontman Jonah Furman barking their band name over and over, while the rest of 'Lucky Leaves' turns self-loathing into a sport. "Set the dogs on me/ I deserve what's coming" he sighs on 'Sick Dogs (For Ian)' and 'Tetherball' has him verbally kicking himself over weaving guitars. 'Peanut Butter', a new track added for this release, is most exciting, a rollercoaster ride of gloriously sloppy riffs.

■ RHIAN DALY

8

Trash Kit Confidence

Upset The Rhythm



Trash Kit have taken over four years to release this follow-up to their self-titled debut album. That might be cause for alarm if they were at all concerned with exploiting the hype cycle. Cheerfully, they're not: they're three London-based women who thrive in the city's DIY culture, and have spent the interim years

busy with other projects – like guitarist Rachel Aggs' excellent Shopping, who recently supported Merchandise. 'Confidence' finds them jumbling sharp rhythms and supportive harmonies. Glibly speaking, it's post-punk, but there's an adventurous jazz spirit ('Shyness') and the more jagged side of C86 ('Beach Babe') here too. The record prizes joy and vibrancy, two qualities especially evident on the sax-heavy 'Medicine'.

■ NOEL GARDNER

7

She & Him Classics

Columbia



This is the fifth album from New Girl star Zooey

Deschanel and Portland songwriter/guitarist M Ward. She & Him's earlier records, 'Volume 1', 'Volume 2' and 'Volume 3', positioned original compositions alongside carefully chosen covers, and 'A Very She And Him Christmas' tackled festive tunes. 'Classics' sees them covering 13 "timeless standards" and includes a classy version of 'Stay Awhile', made famous by Dusty Springfield. That song, and renditions of The Righteous Brothers' 'Unchained Melody' and the Burt Bacharach and Hal David-penned 'This Girl's In Love With You' are stunning in isolation. But a whole album of Deschanel's wholesome, entertaining-the-troops voice and M Ward's tasteful instrumentation is cloying.

■ ANDY WELCH

5

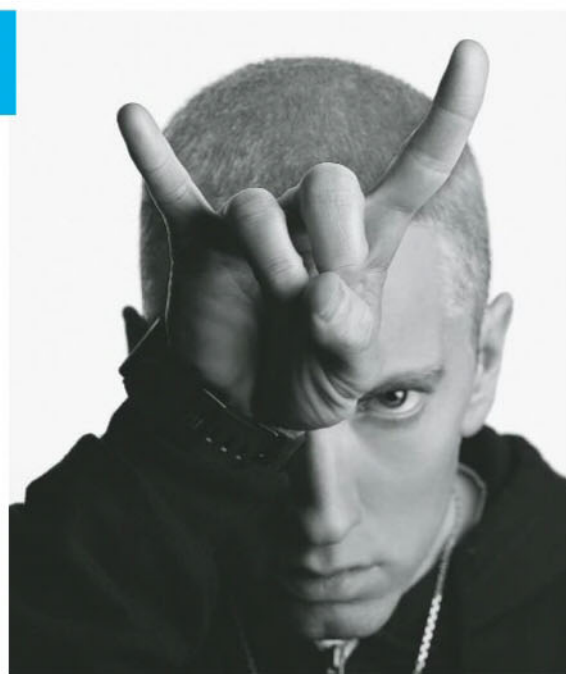
Various Artists Shady XV

Eminem releases four tired new offerings on a compilation celebrating 15 years of his label

In its 15-year existence, Eminem's Shady Records has enjoyed some monstrous successes (50 Cent), missed some golden opportunities (Detroit talent Obie Trice quit the label in 2008) and housed its share of dross (D12's 'Bane' functions here as an unwelcome reminder of their existence). This double-disc compilation – which features four new Eminem solo cuts – celebrates the label's past and sketches out its future, but the one constant is Eminem. As artist,

collaborator, A&R and CEO, the 42-year-old looms large. But his powers are undoubtedly waning.

No-one's questioning his technical prowess: as a reminder of Eminem's vocal showboating, 'Shady XV' is impressive. The problem – and it's a persistent one – is that where once his



anger was energetic, now it simply betrays lethargy. 'Die Alone' pairs clumsy ire with a cheesy chorus, and the single 'Guts Over Fear' (featuring Sia) screams tiredness: "There's no more emotion for me to pull from/ Just a bunch of playful songs that I make for fun/ So to the break of dawn, here I go recycling the same old songs". As road-to-Damascus moments go, it might have had more impact if, two tracks earlier on 'Vegas', he hadn't warned Iggy Azalea that "you don't wanna blow that rape whistle on me" – but hey, why miss an opportunity to manufacture controversy?

The rest is a mixed bag: 'Lose Yourself' notwithstanding, the three Obie Trice cuts are the highlights of the best-of disc, and Eminem's 'Detroit Vs Everybody' (featuring Danny Brown), Slaughterhouse's 'Y'all Ready Know' and Yelawolf's southern-fried 'Down' are the picks of the new stuff, consigning the other fresh Mathers songs ('Fine Line' is turgid, as is 'Right For Me') to the shade. Ultimately, it's all about the boss man, and it's hard not to wonder how that fire in his belly became a mound of smouldering coals.

■ BARRY NICOLSON

5

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** November 24 ► **LABEL** Shady ► **PRODUCERS** Various ► **LENGTH** 2:04:47 ► **TRACKLISTING** **DISC 1** ►1. Eminem – Shady XV ►2. Slaughterhouse (feat. Eminem and Yelawolf) – Psychopath Killer ►3. Eminem (feat. Kobe) – Die Alone ►4. Bad Meets Evil – Vegas ►5. Slaughterhouse – Y'all Ready Know ►6. Eminem (feat. Sia) – Guts Over Fear ►7. Yelawolf – Down ►8. D12 – Bane ►9. Eminem – Fine Line ►10. Skylar Grey, Eminem, Yelawolf – Twisted ►11. Eminem – Right For Me ►12. Eminem, Royce Da 5'9", Big Sean, Danny Brown, Dej Loaf, Trick Trick – Detroit Vs. Everybody ►13. Yelawolf – Till It's Gone **DISC 2** ►1. 50 Cent – I Get Money ►2. D12 – Purple Pills ►3. Eminem – Lose Yourself ►4. Obie Trice, Kuniva, Bobby Creekwater, Cashis, Stat Quo – Cry Now (Shady Remix) ►5. Yelawolf (feat. Kid Rock) – Let's Roll ►6. Slaughterhouse – Hammer Dance ►7. 50 Cent – PIMP ►8. Eminem, 50 Cent, Cashis and Lloyd Banks – You Don't Know ►9. D12 – My Band ►10. Obie Trice – Wanna Know ►11. 50 Cent – Wanksta ►12. Obie Trice (feat. Nate Dogg) – The Setup ►13. 50 Cent – In Da Club ►14. D12 – Fight Music ►15. Yelawolf – Pop The Trunk ►16. Eminem – Lose Yourself ► **BEST TRACK** Lose Yourself

Kid Astray

Back To The Ordinary EP

Cosmos



In lead vocalist/pianist Benjamin Giørtz and

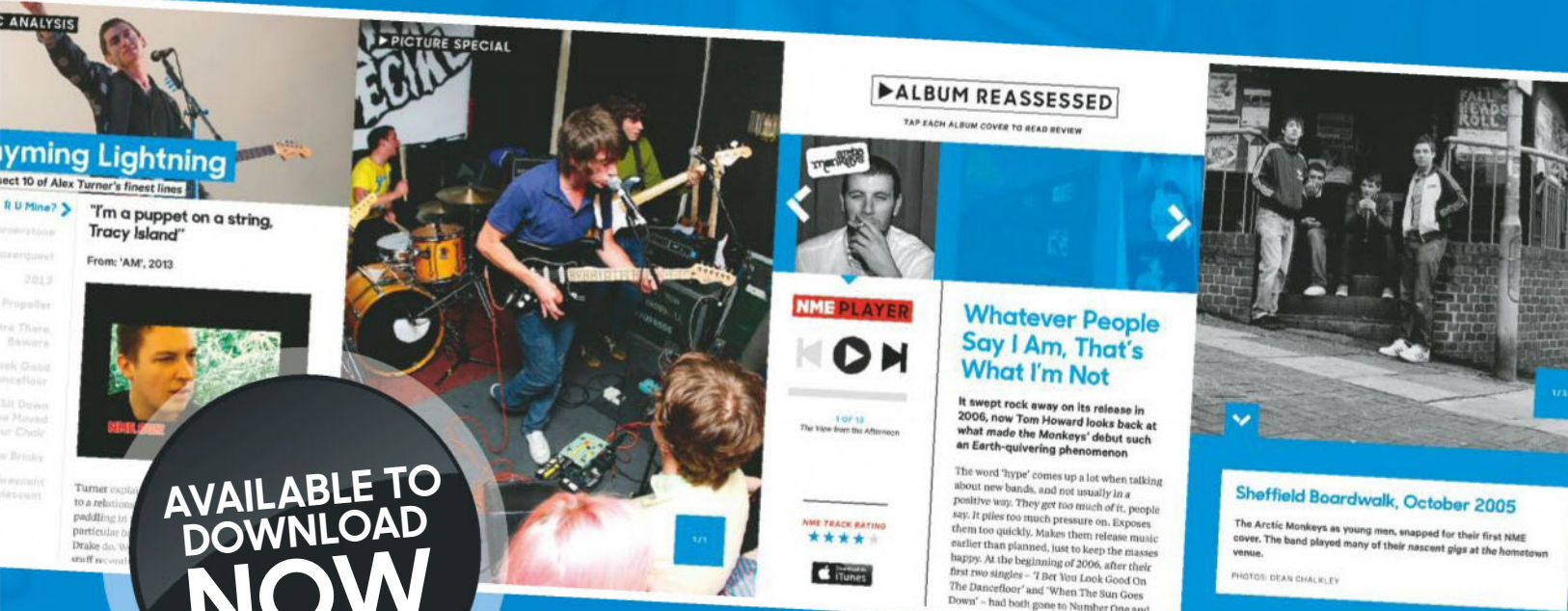
singer/synth player Elizabeth Wu, Norwegian pop band Kid Astray count a junior golf champion and a prodigious young pianist among their number. But the sextet's music isn't nearly as interesting as their starry childhoods. The title track wears its Foster The People influences with enthusiasm that's impressive at first but quickly becomes grating. 'No Easy Way Out' aims for buoyant and sparkling but ends up as a synthpop bore that would easily slot in to the blander end of daytime radio. Closer 'Taking You With Me', meanwhile, sets empty emoting ("Meet me in the night/Give up the things that bind you") to overly loud zapping laser effects.

■ RHIAN DALY

4

NMESPECIAL
COLLECTOR'S
EDITION

Arctic Monkeys

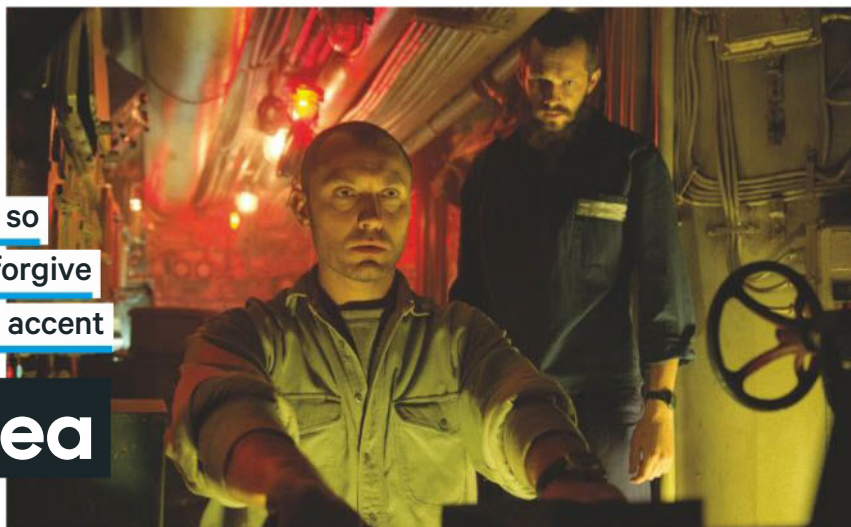
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FILM

A submarine thriller so good you can even forgive

Jude Law's Scottish accent

Black Sea



Submarines have provided a happy hunting ground for filmmakers almost since cinema began. In 1904's *The Impossible Voyage*, French illusionist George Méliès – who began making films in 1896 and was one of the first celebrated directors in cinema – had one falling into the ocean from a mountain on the sun. It's easy to understand the appeal: the combination of bringing men (and it is almost always men) together in a small metal box, coupled with the ability to move that box from one intensely dangerous place to another, provides an abundance of potential for drama and peril. Nevertheless, the submarine movie is now such a staple of cinema that it can be difficult to avoid tumbling into the chasm-like void of sub-genre cliché. It is therefore to the considerable credit of director/producer Kevin Macdonald and first-time screenwriter Dennis Kelly that *Black Sea* avoids plumbing most of those murky depths.

The story – set in the present day but partly inspired by the disaster that claimed the lives of the entire crew of the Russian military submarine, the *Kursk*, in 2000 – puts a volatile mixture of Russian, British and Australian civilian submariners on board a decrepit Cold War-era boat and sends them off in search of a horde of lost Nazi gold. The captain, Robinson (Jude Law), keeps the disparate personalities in check, but after the unstable Fraser (Ben Mendelsohn) snaps, the crew are left fighting for their lives.

Macdonald won an Oscar in 2000 for the documentary *One Day In September*. In his first fiction film – *The Last King Of Scotland*, a 2006 adaptation of Giles Foden's novel about Idi Amin – he coaxed an extraordinary, Bafta and Oscar-winning performance out of Forest Whitaker. Here he blends both skill sets, his understanding of how to get the best from his

on-screen talent as vital as his instinct to make his film feel real and believable.

Some of *Black Sea* was shot in an actual Russian submarine – handily, a private collector has one moored in Kent – and the actors' experience on board enhances the claustrophobic atmosphere and the sense of familiarity the men have with their environment. Making the story about an illegal salvage operation rather than giving it a military setting cleverly raises the inherent tensions of submarine operations, lending it the nerve-jangling suspense of a good bank robbery movie.

It isn't perfect. Scenes of Robinson's estranged wife (Jodie Whittaker) and son, while vital to provide context for his actions, feel underdeveloped; Law's Aberdeen accent, though consistently executed and accurate in an industrial sense, is occasionally distracting; and Robinson's decision to take teenager Tobin (excellent newcomer Bobby Schofield) on the voyage is irrational even though it aids the drama. But this is a superior-grade thriller that ratchets up uncommon intensity very early on, and maintains it throughout. ■ ANGUS BATEY



► **DIRECTOR**
Kevin Macdonald
► **IN CINEMAS**
December 5

FILM

The Green Prince



This intense documentary from the producers of *Searching for*

Sugar Man – 2012's Oscar-winning film about American folk musician Rodriguez – follows Palestinian whistleblower Mosab Yousef. Arrested in 1997, he worked under Israel's internal security service Shin Bet until 2007, spying on his father, Sheikh Hassan Yousef (co-founder of the Palestinian liberation group Hamas). Codenamed The Green Prince by his Israeli handlers, Mosab says his betrayal was motivated by a desire for peace, but this film suggests that he got a kick out of being at the centre of a political storm, as first-person testimony, archive footage and dramatic reconstruction draw you into a world of espionage and torture. Mosab's journey is gripping. ■ DAN BRIGHTMORE

7

FILM

Manakamana



Stephanie Spray and Pacho Velez's hypnotic and engrossing film is made up

of only 11 shots. In each, the stationary camera faces the occupants of a cable car as they make the 10-minute journey to or from Manakamana, a remote temple in Nepal. Some pilgrims look extremely bored; others are noticeably excited to have had their wishes granted by the temple's fabled goddess. On one trip, three young guys – members of a rock band – have, inexplicably, brought a kitten; on another, four goats occupy the car. Most relatable is the scene in which a woman chuckles with her companion as they struggle with rapidly melting ice-lollies. These concentrated, brief glimpses into other lives offer a valuable opportunity to consider the world around us. ■ ANGUS BATEY

8

FILM

Electricity



Bryn Higgins' adaptation of Ray

Robinson's 2006 novel follows Lily (played by model and actress Agyness Deyn) as she searches for estranged brother Mikey. Lily has been an epileptic since the age of two when her mother dropped her down the stairs, and it's the errant parent's death that sparks the quest, as Lily

seeks to divide a legacy fairly between her, Mikey and their poker-playing spiv of an older brother Barry. Epilepsy is her main obstacle – unpredictable, electric and hallucinatory, all rendered stunningly by Higgins' imaginative direction – as she leaves Lancashire for London, blacking out regularly. Deyn brings real emotional depth to Lily, picking through the debris of her life to put things right. ■ MATTHEW HORTON

8

FILM

Paddington



Paddington Bear's first ever big-screen adventure comes with a PG

rating awarded partly for "mild sex references". But the duffle coat-wearing bear from darkest Peru hasn't been given a roving eye with his CGI makeover; this likeable film, produced by David Heyman (*Harry Potter*), merely includes some tepid adult jokes

(in one scene, Hugh Bonneville's Mr Brown – dressed in drag – flirts with a security guard). After arriving in London, Paddington's struggle to adjust is worsened by having to dodge Nicole Kidman's taxidermist, who wants to have him stuffed. Voiced by Ben Whishaw, Michael Bond's much-loved character retains the hapless charm that's made him a family favourite for over 50 years. ■ NICK LEVINE

7



54



Iceage

100 Club

London

Tuesday, December 2

**The Danes return to
Britain and lay waste to
a punk landmark**

PHOTO BY ANDY FORD

▶ The Pistols in '76 can't have been more riveting and intense than this. With his eyes fixed on the ground, Elias Rønnefelt pushes through the bodies awaiting Iceage's first UK gig since August to join his three bandmates onstage. As they lurch into 'Let It Vanish', the frontman glowers at the crowd, twisting his body in time with their crashing set – largely drawn from October's 'Plowing Into The Field Of Love' – as the front rows claw at his clothes. During 'Glassy Eyed, Dormant And Veiled' he spits, lets a string of phlegm hang from his lip, then throws himself back into the scrum. A ragged encore of 'Everything Drifts' (from 2013's 'You're Nothing') is abandoned when fans storm the stage, and Iceage depart quickly, leaving a devoted, sweating heap behind them. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

8

Morrissey

O2 Arena, London

Saturday, November 29

Carnivores and the Queen get a kicking as Moz overcomes rumoured health problems to make a bold return

The images flashing across the screen in front of the stage before Morrissey walks out to play his only UK gig of the year are a window into his brain. A '60s crooner sings in French. A cabaret vamp has a meltdown. The New York Dolls play on a European pop show. Antique music-hall acts dance saucily. Bullfighters are gored through the chin in gruesome slow motion to the tune of 'The Bullfighter Dies', Morrissey's latest animal rights missive, in which we're invited to cheer on a reversal of bullring brutality – the first anthem of revengetarianism?

Yet still so much remains veiled. His cancer battle. Whether or not this might be his last ever gig on home shores, considering that health issues caused him to cancel several European shows in the run-up to tonight's show and a string of American dates in June. Palpable concern unites a worshipful fanbase. Will he be the careworn, unflappable Morrissey we've known, adored and occasionally been a bit embarrassed by all these years? Or a shell and shadow hobbling through an apologetic swansong?

To an arena's relief, the Mozzer who strides onstage to an operatic intro is as bold and brazen as any we've seen. Wearing a white outfit adorned with Peta badges, he huddles with his band, graciously mutters "I am privileged beyond my wildest dreams", and then roars into "The Queen Is

Dead'. His wit remains ultra-dry – "I still don't know what drugs are", he croons – and his connection super-strong as he catches roses flung at him from the front row and strains to reach the grasping hands over the frustratingly wide photo-pit. 'The Queen...' is frankly furious, and the subsequent 'Suedehead' a singalong to drown out a million match days. His whips of the mic lead are perhaps a touch frazier than usual, but the Moz Army is appeased: this is Stephen Patrick unabated.

Indeed, tonight the 55-year-old goes for the jugular. His band wear 'FUCK HARVEST' T-shirts – a clear message to the record label he maintains dropped him in August. "We released an album," he says, "which was immediately deleted by a very clever

record label." That album was latter-era highpoint 'World Peace Is None Of Your Business', and he devotes virtually the entire set to it. It's Morrissey's most sun-beaten record yet;

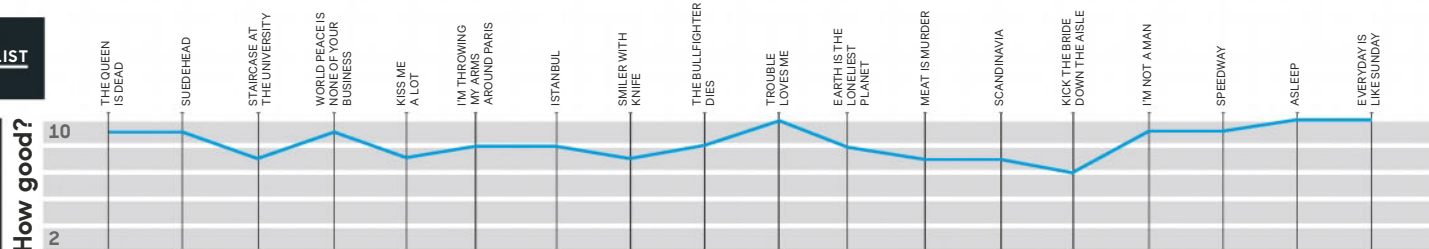
THE MOZ WHO STRIDES ONSTAGE IS AS BRAZEN AS ANY WE'VE SEEN

the suicidal student cracking under pressure in 'Staircase At The University' flings herself to her doom to the sound of a flamenco guitar solo with Moz on maracas. 'Kiss Me A Lot' is The Smiths gone mariachi. The father searching for his son through the underworld of 'Istanbul' is swathed in exoticism, and the title track lays out its smash-the-system politics – "each time you vote you support the process" – in several languages. If Morrissey's bowing out, he's retiring into a maudlin world cruise.

When he ventures away from 'World Peace...' he's equally merciless. 'Trouble Loves Me' – the saving grace of 1997's 'Maladjusted' – is a gorgeously heart-rending slab of self-reprisal from an ageing lothario "still running round, on the flesh rampage, at your age", while The Smiths' grinding carnivore-shamer 'Meat Is Murder' is introduced with a speech about poisonous



SETLIST





THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Matt Jarvis, 22, Bedfordshire
"Absolutely fantastic –

Morrissey on top form, note-for-note perfect. Not that many Smiths songs in there, but loads of stuff from his new album, which is arguably one of his best. He was on form with his quick witticisms and scathing criticism."



Sarah Chalmer, 23, Hertfordshire
"Amazing – it was the first time I've ever seen him and he was incredible. It was a really good time."



Toni Kitchen, 20, Huddersfield
"It was my first time and a special moment tonight. I really hope it's not his last UK performance."



Dan McEvoy, 28, Nottingham
"I'm glad I came, but if I'd have listened to the last few albums I'd have liked it a lot more, but I haven't."

supermarket chickens and accompanied by graphic abattoir footage, which Morrissey watches with his head in his hands.

The pace slows with 'Scandinavia' and 'Kick The Bride Down The Aisle', and the fair-weather element of the crowd start kicking their feet at the lack of familiar songs. There's nothing from 1992's 'Your Arsenal', 2004's 'You Are The Quarry' or 2006's 'Ringleader Of The Tormentors', but the epic 'I'm Not A Man' and a searing 'Speedway' quicken the pulse in time for a cut-throat finale.

Emerging for the encore in shadow, Morrissey declares, "Remember me, but forget my fate", an old line from German countertenor Klaus Nomi that he's used before, but which lands with tear-inducing import in the wake of his recent health problems and ahead of The Smiths' plaintive death lament 'Asleep'. Fearing it's their last chance, fans fling themselves forward during the fantastic finale of 'Everyday Is Like Sunday' and scramble to grab the sweaty shirt he throws into the throng. He departs topless as a lauded alt-icon playing whatever the hell he wants to a lapping big shed, but let's pray – for now – it's merely *au revoir*. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

PRIORITY

Get tickets 48 hours before general release. Only on Priority. Only on O2. Search O2 Priority.

ANDY HUGHES

MORE GIGS

Curtis Harding Soup Kitchen, Manchester

Friday, November 28
Curtis Harding looks effortlessly cool in a bobble hat and sunglasses on the second date of his first UK tour. Playing tracks from his debut solo album 'Soul Power' (released here in January), the Atlanta-based blues singer and Black Lips collaborator slips between retro Southern soul and spry garage thrash. His voice is outstanding, whether on the languid groove of 'Beautiful People' or the joyous gospel stomp of 'Keep On Shining'. It's a brief set, and when he signs off with the explanation that "we're on a tight curfew", the crowd chant back "FUCK THE CURFEW!" High praise indeed.

■ GARY RYAN

7

Parkay Quarts The Wardrobe, Leeds

Wednesday, November 27
Currently using an alternative spelling of their name to support new record 'Content Nausea', Parquet Courts are out to confuse. For this brief tour, drummer Max Savage and bassist Sean Yeaton have been replaced by Shannon Sigley and Justin Frye of PC Worship, leaving the same line-up as frontmen Andrew Savage and Austin Brown's noisy side project, PCPC. Confused? Brown is. "I was wondering why Sean and Max looked different," he mumbles. Still, 'Ducking And Dodging' and 'Black And White' create screeching tension, and the ferocious 'Sunbathing Animal' leaves the crowd wanting more. One guy grabs a microphone to request an encore, but Parkay Quarts simply depart, as frustrating and brilliant as ever.

■ ROBERT COOKE

8

Nothing But Thieves/Amber Run



Jack Rocks The Macbeth, London Monday, December 1

Headliners Twin Atlantic are ill and can't make it, so it's time for their tour buddies to step up



Tonight, this small east London pub was supposed to be blown to pieces by the raucous pent-up energy of Twin Atlantic. But the Glaswegians had to pull out because of illness, so it's time for Amber Run and Nothing But Thieves (above) – Twin Atlantic's touring buddies – to step up. Cometh the hour...

Initially, the Glasgow rock quartet's absence is felt. "We weren't supposed to be here," Amber Run's lead singer Joe Keogh says midway through their set, before thanking the crowd profusely for coming. He looks a little out of his depth. But his earnest spirit

bleeds into the Nottingham quintet's emo-pop, which is laden with hooks that burst out over the crowd, and soon revives the atmosphere. 'SAM' and 'Spark' are both wannabe epics with driving choruses that could own rooms much bigger than this.

Nothing But Thieves, a five-piece who emerged from Southend earlier this year following time spent writing in America, are less polished. Their set is packed with riffs, but first they indulge in stripped-back opener 'Lover, Please Stay', a song that initially sounds like a cover of Sam Smith's insipid single 'Stay With Me', but with chiming Radiohead-style

guitar work added in.

After that they crank up an intense noise, with frontman Conor Mason howling like Matt Bellamy over spiky riffs and pop choruses. Delivered with urgency, 'Wake Up Call' and, in particular, the emotional 'Emergency' – taken from this year's 'If You Don't Believe, It Can't Hurt You' EP – are the best examples of the band's ambition. Both ensure smiles on Twin Atlantic fans' faces. ■ JUSTINE MATTHEWS

NOTHING BUT THIEVES SETLIST

- ▶ Lover, Please Stay
- ▶ Itch
- ▶ Wake Up Call
- ▶ Tripswitch
- ▶ Excuse Me
- ▶ Emergency
- ▶ If I Get High
- ▶ Hostage
- ▶ Painkiller
- ▶ Graveyard Whistling
- ▶ Ban All The Music

7

LAURA PALMER

Mac

DeMarco

Concorde 2, Brighton
Sunday, November 23

After a cautious start, the
Canadian dives headfirst into
his biggest ever European tour

Mac DeMarco's star has been in the ascendant since third album 'Salad Days' came out in April, but a celebratory year took a knock last month when university police in Santa Barbara arrested him and two audience members for stagediving at his own gig. Part of the Canadian's appeal is that he's a charming, regular guy who strives to take care of the fans at his shows, and in Brighton for the first night of a three-date stint in the UK, the brush with authority initially seems to make him a little more cautious. These are his biggest British shows yet, and as has become normal for Mac, tickets sold out months in advance, leaving fans outside Concorde 2 in the cold desperately offering cash for entry.

Inside, with his previously unruly hair cut and tidied, Mac would be smartly dressed were it not for his baggy camouflage dungarees. The 24-year-old has been touring 'Salad Days' heavily all year, and is yet to add any new songs to his set, leaning on now-familiar second album '2' and adopting the DJ persona outed on his first release for Captured Tracks, 2012's 'Rock And Roll Night Club', between songs. Crowdsurfers are hoisted towards the stage from the opening strains of 'Salad Days', the introspective title track from his new album. That record's bummed-out tones aren't present tonight, though. Instead, Mac blends material

old and new into a cohesive, breezy whole. 'Blue Boy', also from 'Salad Days', is sandwiched between the rolling riff of 'The Stars Keep On Calling My Name' and the undeniable melody of 'Cooking Up Something Good', both from '2'. 'Passing Out Pieces' rides its magnificent synth line loud and proud, and during Mac's fag-smoking hymn 'Ode To Viceroy' his lyrics are gleefully shouted back at him. The slow drift of 'Brother' leads into a cover of fellow Canadians Bachman-Turner Overdrive's 'Takin' Care Of Business', which Mac delivers with a low-pitched rasp.

If there are any guesses to where he might be heading in 2015, tonight's plentiful covers may hold some clues. Disregarding new guitarist Andy White's unexpected attempt at Adele's 'Someone Like You', this band are coalescing into a much harder group live. Mac is delighted when bassist Pierce McGarry outs a snatch of Pink Floyd's 'Money', finally loosening up into the chaotic master of ceremonies of his earlier tours. The noodly riff of 'Freaking Out The Neighbourhood' leads into a heavy 'Chamber Of Reflection', lining up Mac's usual set

MAC LOSES HIS SHOES, THEN HIS SOCKS, HIS BARE FEET STICKING OUT AMONG THE SEA OF RAISED ARMS

closer – and a chaotic finale – perfectly.

As the heavenly 'Still Together' starts up, a fan gets past the barriers and up on stage. As he prepares to dive, security rush in and Mac calmly but firmly instructs them to "let him go". They step back, the fan jumps and no-one needs to summon Sussex Police. Barriers breached, Mac follows suit, diving into the throng as his band play behind him. In the scrum of limbs, he loses his battered red skate pumps and then his socks, bare feet sticking out among the raised arms. Then he's up, climbing the venue's iron support beams and swinging over strobe-lit heads before dropping back into the melee. When he hauls himself



SETLIST

SALAD DAYS THE STARS KEEP ON CALLING MY NAME BLUE BOY COOKING UP SOMETHING GOOD LET HER GO ODE TO VICEROY I'M A MAN BROTHER TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS ROCK AND ROLL NIGHT CLUB FREAKING OUT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHAMBER OF REFLECTION STILL TOGETHER TOP GUN/SMOKE ON THE WATER/ ENTER SANDMAN



Carl Barat & The Jackals



Sound Control, Manchester
Wednesday, November 19

While Pete's in rehab, Carl's new band get "in your face and dirty"

In September, The Libertines crowned their comeback with three all-time classic shows at London's Alexandra Palace. Three months later, Pete's getting clean in Thailand, so tonight in Manchester there's a sense that Carlos is back to reality: new band, new songs, a run of intimate shows far removed from the Libs soap opera.

The Jackals' first tour comes with three important questions: can Carl

still cut it without Pete, given his last solo venture (2010's self-titled record) was a flop? Who are The Jackals? And why are they getting in the way of the all-important business of The Libertines' third album?

The 36-year-old Barat charges onstage with plenty to prove. "*We are not afraid of anyone*", he growls on the stomping fury of opener 'Victory Gin'. Guitarist Billy Tessio screams confidence as he duels with Barat, Thin Lizzy-style, on 'A Storm Is Coming', and takes total ownership of The Jackals' version of 'Gin & Milk', from Dirty Pretty Things'

2006 debut 'Waterloo To Anywhere'. Hell, Tessio even looks a bit like guitarist Anthony Rossomando.

Bassist Adam Claxton, perhaps conscious of the surprisingly subdued audience, is more cautious as he approaches his mic to shout the grotty oi! punk refrain of 'We Want More'. But when the crowd erupts for 'Death On The Stairs', he eases up instantly. This is what he signed up for.

Carl's punked-up energy keeps the momentum going through the bruising bitterness of another new one, 'March Of The Idle', and the angry offbeat chords of recent single 'Glory Days'. He goes it alone with an acoustic guitar for captivating renditions of Libs oldies 'The Ballad Of Grimaldi' and 'France', then The Jackals return for 'Let It Rain' – a soggy ballad that aims for heartfelt but misses the target completely.

'War Of The Roses' banishes its memory with a riff you can imagine ringing round an early Oasis practice, and 'The Gears' hurtles by as the most scuffed-up piece of punk Carl's ever produced. By the ferocious finale of 'I Get Along', the crowd are converted. Libertines devotee-turned-drummer Jay Bone, solid as a rock throughout, surely can't believe his luck. Carl recently promised *NME* that this tour would be "in your face and dirty". He's kept his word. ■ ROBERT COOKE

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Emma, 22, Oxford
"I'm a fan, but this was the first time I've seen him. The encore was the best. I really liked it when he played 'Top Gun', it was my highlight."



Florence, 21, London
"I had so much fun, I thought I was gonna explode. He sat on my face and I had to try and lift his butt off with my hands. I tried to take his socks off as well."



Maria, 22, London
"It was the most fun I've had since I was about 14, at a gig anyway. I've never been this sweaty before. We've got his socks on eBay already. You have to put them up when they're still full of sweat, otherwise it doesn't sell."



Eugene, 21, Portsmouth
"It was fucking sweet, better than I expected. He's on the same level as you. I like that he jumped into the crowd and I really appreciate that he told the security to get off the stage."

back onstage, it's curfew time and people are staggering away from the front, colliding with the walls, battered and delirious. Those remaining call for an encore and get the Mac DeMarco band's classic rock medley. They crack out the riff from Harold Faltermeyer's *Top Gun* theme, and what starts as a goofy nod to shared cultural memory goes on and on, becoming a cock-rock endurance challenge.

They speed the riff up. They slow it down. They twist into Deep Purple's 'Smoke On The Water', then Metallica's 'Enter Sandman'. Five, 10, 15 minutes pass. The crowd thins and the queue for the cloakroom lengthens, but, grinning and sweaty, Mac plays on, the devoted rabble before him soaking up every last moment with their hero. ■ STUART HUGGETT

8

SETLIST

- Victory Gin
- A Storm Is Coming
- Gin & Milk
- Summer In The Trenches
- We Want More
- Death On The Stairs
- March Of The Idle
- Run With The Boys
- Deadwood
- Glory Days
- The Ballad Of Grimaldi
- France
- Let It Rain
- Bang Bang You're Dead
- War Of The Roses
- The Gears
- I Get Along

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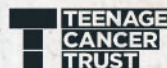
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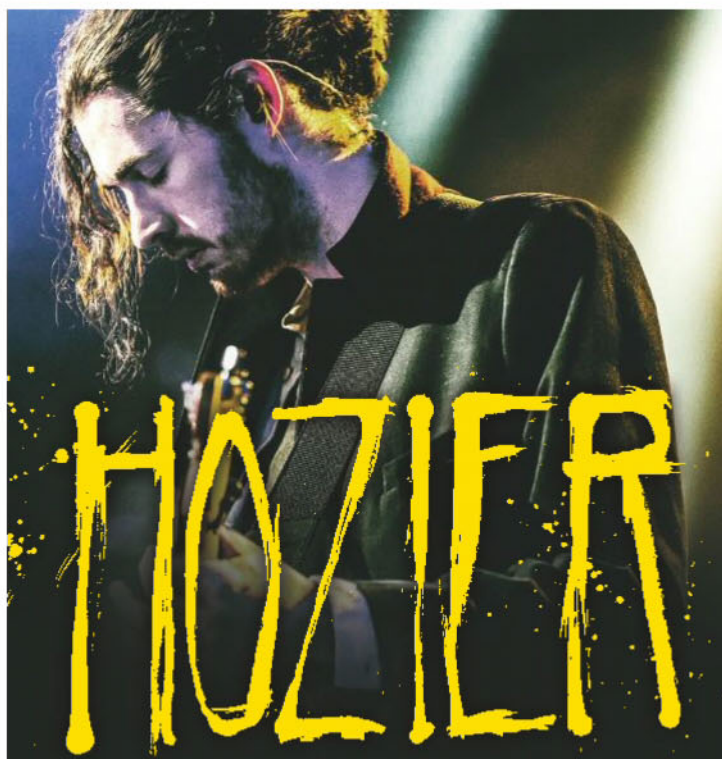
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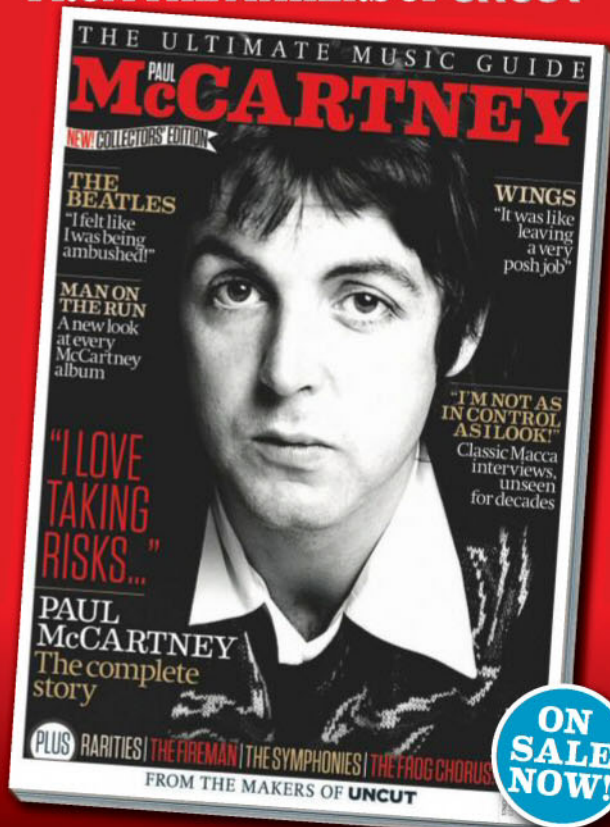
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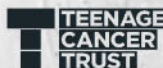
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riders and groupies,
NME looks back at
the careers of the
stars before they
were famous

Debunking the idea that most indie stars were born onstage with silver plectrums in their mouths, NME uncovers the previous jobs of the stars. Björk, we're told, started her working life filleting fish in an Icelandic cod factory. Mark E Smith fixed toilets as a plumber. Peter Hook cooked breakfasts at a holiday camp. The gods, it seems, have grafted.

The food industry provides the foulest stories. William Reid of The Jesus And Mary Chain tells of seeing his colleagues pissing in the huge vats while working in a cheese factory, while Ozzy Osbourne insists he once fell into vat of pig's blood in a slaughterhouse: "I stood under a hot shower for an hour but I still stank for two weeks." Crazier still, it's revealed that Sinéad O'Connor was once a kissogram, Siouxsie Sioux did a stint as a masseuse, Nick Cave worked as a zookeeper in Melbourne and Shaun Ryder was a bleary-eyed postman.

MY SEXY VALENTINE

Talk turns to pre-apocalypse orgies, shagging vicars and naked lynch mobs as NME's Jack Barron interviews My Bloody Valentine - all part of drummer Colm Ó Cíosóig's most vivid recent dream. Positing them as leaders of the 'young blood' scene, Barron likens their debut album 'Isn't Anything' to "the Elephant Man looking at himself in a hall of distorted mirrors". Which isn't, says Kevin Shields, down to their LSD intake. "[That] would be pretty unlistenable. It'd be very fast, for a start... taking one song and repeating it 30 times in three minutes."

THE BELGIAN FRONT

Hitting the Boccaccio club in Ghent, NME's Richard Norris meets electro terrorists Front 242 as their bloodthirsty hit 'Headhunter' attacks the Billboard dance chart. They exhibit astute business nous - "like every commercial product, we try to access the broadest area," says Patrick Codenys - and a next-decade approach to making music and sampling. "The world is in movement," Patrick says. "It's typical '90s to be able to adapt to different situations very quickly."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



The Smiths -
**'Louder Than
Bombs'**

"A pretty brilliant
compilation of

The Smiths' work up to and including 'Shoplifters...', and an indictment of the record company's attitude towards the public." 10/10 ■ DANNY KELLY

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

► Former Smiths bassist Andy Rourke has been sacked from Killing Joke after only a few weeks in the band, because he was "a miserable bastard".
► On tour with The Mission, NME's Simon Williams witnesses fandemonium, backstage vomiting and a bus burglary in Manchester.
► CD sales are set to overtake vinyl for the first time, with 28 million CDs sold in 1988.

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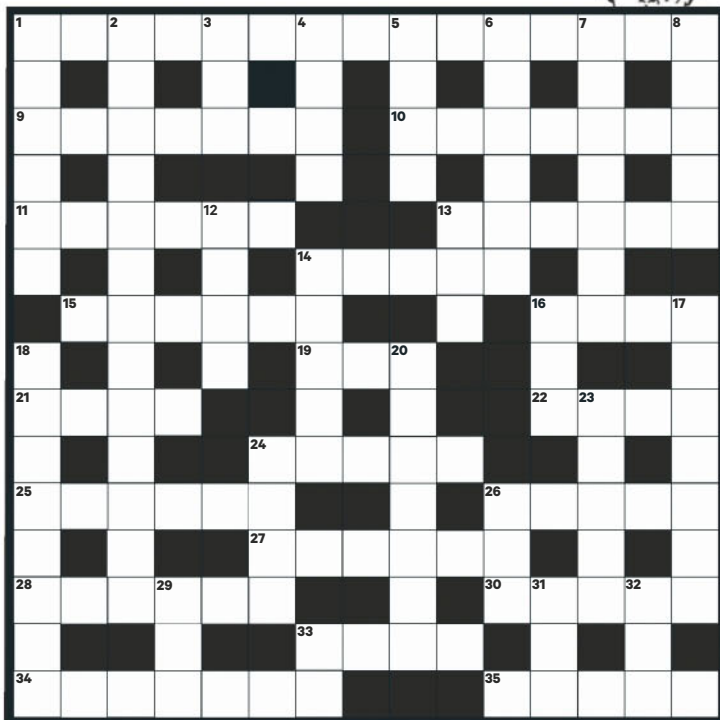


CROSSWORD

Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1** Lonely The Brave pocket 5 points and then another 3... (3-4-3-5)
9+17D ...as The Teardrop Explodes cue up a big score... (7-3-4)
10+20D ...and '80s new wave band get just a slight touch of their balls (7-3-4)
11 Fischerspooner single brings them out of obscurity (6)
13+23D Bloc Party product comes out of a smaller tin, somehow (6-5)
14 "So I'm moving to New York 'cos I've got problems with my _____", The Wombats (5)
15 (See 1 down)
16 Song that shows the individuality of indie band Fuzzbox (4)
19 Ange Dolittle's band who were into The Beatles and Meat Loaf (3)
21+32D Just the one bloke for Audio Bullys (4-3)
22+4D King Krule made this performance doubly simple (4-4)
24 Hears different for Peter _____ as producer for

- Morrissey's 'Live At Earls Court' (5)
25 He was born Marshall Bruce Mathers in 1972 (6)
26 Beautiful South performance getting cat-calls (5)
27 American alt-rockers who recently had a 'Tiff' (6)
28 Connection between The Strokes and Dan Le Sac Vs Scroobius Pip (6)
30 Album by The Who that begins with an 'Overture' (5)
33 He went to Number One with 'Grace Kelly' (4)
34 The Black Eyed Peas insisted on hearing the truth about this song (4-3)
35 (See 18 down)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** "The girl that's driving me mad is going away", 1965 (6-2-4)
2 Ollie lugged in a broken-down singer (5-8)
3 A bit of Velvet Underground that's not fully loud (3)
4 (See 22 across)
5 Bassist for Creation label's 18 Wheeler gets into 'Shake, Rattle And Roll' (4)
6 They're all the talk with

- 'A Joyful Noise' (6)
7 Franz Ferdinand gave us a nasty look (4-3)
8 "Come on baby light my fire, try to set the _____ on fire", The Doors (5)
12 "But the money's no good, just get a _____ on yourself", The Stranglers (4)
13 The facts of life from 1975 (3)
14 TV On The Radio album should be a grower (5)
16 Wolf Alice song only partly finished (3)
17 (See 9 across)
18+35A Simon & Garfunkel song, composed while waiting on the platform at Widnes Station in Cheshire (8-5)
20 (See 10 across)
23 (See 13 across)
24 Formed by Kim Deal between spells with the Pixies (4)
26 He's on the floor with Suede (3)
29 US alt-rock band that came out of The Slits (3)
31 Fluke music included by Motörhead (3)
32 (See 21 across)
33 Albums 'Martin And ...' by J Mascis or 'The Captain And ...' by The Doobie Brothers (2)

NOVEMBER 29 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1+4A Sonic Highways, 9 Angel, 10 Sunflower, 11 Of The Night, 15 Spacemen, 16 Zombie, 19+30A Glory Days, 20 The Model, 21 Budapest, 24 Bees, 27 Hot, 29 Once Upon A Time, 31 Fever, 32 Cold
DOWN 1 Seasons, 2 Nightcall, 4 Hostiles, 5 Gun-Shy, 6+12A Walk On By, 7 Yow, 8 Pray, 13 Nobody's Hero, 14 Zoom, 17 Eels, 18+3D The College Dropout, 21 Blood, 22 Decoy, 23 Smoke, 25 Evil, 26 Fame, 28 Todd

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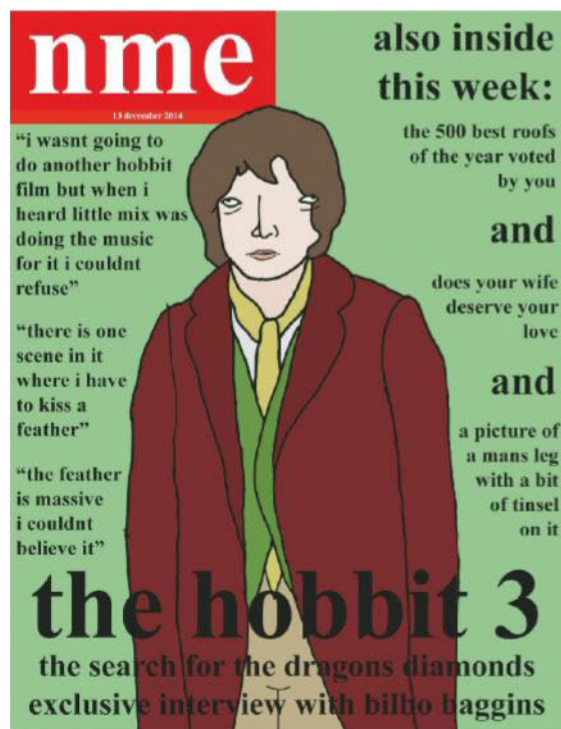
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