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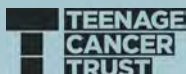
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BAND LIST

REGULARS

4 **SOUNDING OFF**

6 **ON REPEAT**

17 **ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM**

Bloc Party – ‘Silent Alarm’

19 **SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE**

Elias Bender Rønnenfelt, Iceage

20 **RADAR**

The long-time-coming south London garage-pop smarts of Crushed Beaks, plus 20 more new bands to discover

42 **REVIEWS**

► **ALBUMS**

Peace – ‘Happy People’

The Charlatans – ‘Modern Nature’

Aphex Twin – ‘Computer Controlled Acoustic

Instruments Pt 2’

Björk – ‘Vulnicura’

and more

► **FILM**

No Manifesto: A Film About

Manic Street Preachers

and more

► **LIVE**

Mini Mansions

Enter Shikari

The Vaccines

Slipknot

and more

47 **CROSSWORD/ THINGS WE LIKE**

50 MORE ALBUMS FOR 2015, FEATURING...



24 THE CRIBS

The Jarmans on hanging with Grohl, going pop and soaking up America while recording album six in NYC

27 NOEL GALLAGHER

From Weller’s wisdom to Marr’s wizadry, The Chief guides us through 10 things you need to know about ‘Chasing Yesterday’

31 THE PRODIGY

After six years away, the dance-rock titans return with an album Liam Howlett describes as “fresh” and “violent-sounding”

AND 47 MORE

...And The Hangnails	21	Explosion	6
A\$AP Rocky	38	Kaiser Chiefs	11
Alabama Shakes	38	Kanye West	35
Alex G	21	Kate Tempest	7
Alice Glass	32	The Kills	34
Anomie	22	Krill	43
Aphex Twin	44	Kris Peterson	23
Arca	6	Lana Del Rey	30
Babes In Toyland	10	Laura Marling	7, 34
Bad Vibes	22	Lil Wayne	7
Beirut	40	Lonelady	6
Best Friends	22	Lusts	21
Beth Jeans Houghton	34	The Maccabees	28
Big Noble	43	Manic Street Preachers	46
Big Nothing	21	Marching Church	6
Björk	16, 45	Marilyn Manson	40
Bluffing	21	Mew	6
Bob Dylan	7	Mini Mansion	48
Bottoms	23	Modest Mouse	6
Bruising	7	Muse	29
California X	53	Mystery Jets	30
Carl Barât & The Jackals	38	Nite Fields	44
Cat's Eyes	34	Noel Gallagher	27
Caught On Tape	7	Oscar	22
The Charlatans	43	Owle	23
Circa Waves	7	Peace	42
Coldplay	32	PJ Harvey	38
Colleen Green	21	Primal Scream	41
Courtney Barnett	7, 36	The Prodigy	31
The Cribs	26	Radiohead	39
Crushed Beaks	20	Real Lies	36
Cymbals Eat Guitars	50	Rolo Tomassi	38
Damon Albarn	8, 41	Savages	30
Darren Hayman	45	Silk Cinema	22
Deap Vally	32	Slaves	10
Death Grips	41, 44	Slipknot	53
The Dead Weather	34	Slowdive	30
Diiv	36	Slutface	22
The Districts	32	The Smashing Pumpkins	28
Drake	6	Spiritualized	36
Drenge	6, 40	Stalls	21
Dutch Uncles	11	Swim Deep	32
Enter Shikari	51	Young Fathers	30
Errors	41	Temples	11
Everything Everything	34	Tobias Jesso Jr	6
Fake Laugh	6	Toro Y Moi	6
Fat White Family	37	Torres	7
Florence + The Machine	28	Toy	10
Forced Random	21	Trust Fund	43
Frank Ocean	38	Twerps	44
Frank Ocean	6	Two Gallants	45
Gaz Coombes	40	Ume	22
Grimes	33	Unknown Mortal Orchestra	36
H Hawkline	45	The Vaccines	52
Haim	36	Vallis Alps	23
Happyness	10	Vision Fortune	44
Haybaby	23	Wand	22
Heaters	22	Waterstrider	23
Helsinki	53	Waxahatchee	22
Hunny	21	The Wombats	40
J Mascis	50	The xx	41
James Blake	32	Yes Sunshine	23
The Jon Spencer Blues		Young Fathers	30

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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BAN SELFIE STICKS

The recent news that selfie sticks have been banned from some of the UK's biggest music venues is music to my ears. It's bad enough seeing people watching the bands they're "dying to see" through the screen of their smartphones all the way through the gig, but now we're faced with a prospect almost as bad as those mile-high flags at Glastonbury festival. Fair enough, you manage to get a selfie, but a huge flaw is that you're always going to have a blurry crowd in the background or your back to the stage. I mean, just look at these selfie sticks – the storage of this extraterrestrial gadget is so impractical it hurts, literally. It's all too much hassle, and to be honest, I'd rather not feel like I'm at a jousting tournament when I go to a gig. Leave these things at home.

Izzy Boulton, via email

Greg Cochran: When NME put in the call to some of the UK's best venues to ask about their stance on the



proliferation of 'selfie sticks', we didn't anticipate the reaction being so big and the news travelling so far. Most of you are on Izzy's side, and I am too. They're monstrously daft. I can barely write the words without my toes curling with embarrassment. It's kind of acceptable if you're posing at the Taj Mahal (although you're still guaranteed to look like a plonker), but while watching Peace at The Old Blue Last? No, thanks.

AND IT SEEMS A LOT OF YOU AGREE

I love selfies and if I'm paying full price for a gig ticket then I want some memories to take home. Selfie sticks, however, are selfish to the people trying to view the show behind them and bloody dangerous in a room of 100 people jumping around. I'm all for the ban, especially as they make handy weapons when people get a drink inside them.

Matthew Wilson, via email

The selfie stick ban is great news. Ban mobiles too. I'm sick of seeing a gig through someone else's phone screen.

Glenn Meads, via email

What the hell is a selfie stick?

Keira Watson, via email

GC: Ignorance is bliss, Keira. Trust me.

STROKES ANNOUNCE GIGS. PEOPLE LOSE MINDS

Both Albert and Julian's projects since 'Comedown Machine' have been enough

to whet my appetite for new Strokes material, but it's time for the real deal. The UK has gone too long without an appearance from the Kings Of New York, so give us fans, old and new alike, exactly what we've been craving.

Ross Miller, via email

How excited am I for the possibility of more Strokes' shows in 2015? Any mention of them sends my heart and mind into a frenzy. A tweet sends me straight into an incessant Google search.

Jessica Roti, via email

I missed the first wave of The Strokes excitement when I was growing up. I got into their music when they weren't touring, and I presumed they never would again. But with the potential of shows happening in 2015 I couldn't be happier – definitely one to tick off the list. What about a proper comeback UK tour? Maybe they'd inspire a whole new generation to pick up an



instrument, form a band and create good music. Take a look at the Top 40 and you'll see why we need that.

Tom Sandford, via email

GC: Tom, I'm as hopeful as the rest of you, but with only a handful of appearances confirmed I think the odds on a full UK tour are slim. There's not really the whiff of new music at the moment either, but a UK festival slot? Well, you never know.

NOEL VERSUS ED RUMBLES ON

Noel proclaims that he can't live in a world where Ed Sheeran plays Wembley. I simply can't live in a world where Mr Gallagher makes

the prices of the tickets to his shows so extortionate. The only real way to afford to go is either not eat for a month or remortgage the house! I understand if Noel means that the prospect of playing to a stadium full of shrieking 13-year-olds isn't quite his scene (it's not mine either), but surely pricing out most of your fans from being able to see you perform your new songs and maybe a few Oasis hits is being a bigger sell out?

Emily Broncz, email

Finally someone has said it. I agree with Noel in the sense that it's a fucking tragedy that Ed Sheeran gets so much attention (both in the media and from fans) when there are so many artists with more talent and with something to say. It seems these days you can become successful by playing it safe and shovelling the same old sunny shit down people's throats, rather than actually trying to change the face of music. At least you can say Gallagher's done something worthwhile. What's Sheeran really done? Is anyone going

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to remember who he is in 20 years' time?

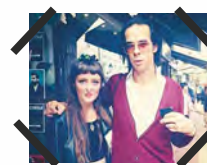
Robbie Dadomo, via email

GC: It's the fire that continues to smoke. Are you with Noel or against him? Sure we've heard Noel have a playful pop at artists time and time again, but that's exactly what makes him one of the rock'n'roll's most beloved characters. Some of you reckon Ed was the wrong target, though. But one thing is for sure...

If people can't deal with Noel Gallagher having an opinion about everything they should just re-evaluate their lives because that isn't going to change.

Ross Behrouzi, via email

GC: So there you go...



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

Me and my friend were going to see Swim Deep and ended up meeting them and Nick Cave in the same day! His ebony hair danced in the breeze and his silhouette seemed to elevate with every step! He is just as fascinating in real life as he was in The Birthday Party.

Alicia Carpenter

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NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Drenge
We Can Do What We Want

Their faces might still be fresher than most, but this new single sees Eoin and Rory Loveless return sounding revved up. "*Balacava on my boyfriend's head/Like he said, we've got to get away from the way we've been bred*", snarls Eoin over a riff that rumbles like thunder before veering wildly into blues chaos. With their second album due this year, Drenge sound full of free-spirited rebellion.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

2. The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion
Do The Get Down

2015 sees a welcome return for filthy rock'n'roll veterans The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, and on this clattering comeback they cause a commotion that's hard to resist. Funked-up guitars zap distortion over a shuffling drum track as Spencer feistily yelps, "*Can you dig it!/?/Are you ready!/?*" The New Yorkers' 10th album 'Freedom Tower – No Wave Dance Party 2015' is due in March, and promises to be full of "grit and terror and love".

James Bentley, writer

3. Toro Y Moi
Empty Nesters

Last year, with the debut album from his Les Sins side-project, Chaz Bundick indulged a taste for floorfillers. Now, though, the South Carolina musician is back under his Toro Y Moi guise and 'Empty Nesters' is a charming return. A lo-fi intro of melodic jangle gives way to something funkier and more psychedelic. Skilfully spinning genres like plates, Bundick sings "*Let's make another hit for the teens*". He's making it look easy.

David Renshaw, News Reporter

4. Mew
Satellites

Danish psych dreamers Mew are back with their follow-up to 2009's acclaimed 'No More Stories...', hooking up with US rock producer Michael Beinhorn for the first time in a decade. There's no looking back, though, as 'Satellites' – the first song from forthcoming sixth album '+-' – finds them sounding bigger and bolder than before. Growing from flutters of guitar and washes of synth, it surges to a peak of arms-outstretched euphoria.

Matthew Horton, writer

5. Frank Ocean
At Your Best (You Are Love)

Released to mark what would have been Aaliyah's 36th birthday, Ocean's cover of this seductive slow jam – originally by The Isley Brothers but featured on the late R&B star's 1994 album 'Age Ain't Nothing But A Number' – is as alluring as you'd expect. Stripping the song to sparse keys and a tender falsetto vocal, the 'Channel Orange' singer expertly captures the warm sentiment of Aaliyah's version without over-egging it.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

**6. Modest Mouse**
Coyotes

Modest Mouse continue the slow burn to the release of their first album in eight years (out in March) with this waltz of acoustic guitars and rattling tambourines. The main attraction here is the video – in which a real live coyote climbs aboard a tram and goes for a ride. It's reportedly inspired by a real coyote who snatched Portland headlines for similar trickery in 2002.

Hazel Sheffield, writer

7. Marching Church
Hungry For Love

"I pictured me in a comfortable armchair, adorned in a golden robe, leading a band while a girl kept pouring me champagne." That, according to Iceage's Elias Bender Rønnenfelt, is the inspiration behind the first album from his Marching Church project. This single is as weirdly decadent as that sounds. Whispered Spanish phrases precede Elias' wanton grunts and groans, which are accompanied by chattering cymbals and atonal guitars.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

8. Fake Laugh
Dopey Head

Sad at its core but with a spry spring in its step, the B-side to London pop scruff Fake Laugh's dreamy single 'Kinda Girl' sounds more like it was written on a walk through cobbled Parisian streets than in grubby east London. "*How could you take my love away?*" asks Kamran Khan over gently noodling guitars that underpin his resigned tone impressively. You couldn't even raise a fake laugh to this, let alone a real one.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

9. Tobias Jesso Jr
How Could You Babe

One of the fruits of LA newcomer Tobias Jesso Jr's recording sessions with former Girls man Chet 'JR' White, 'How Could You Babe?' is also one of his most affecting songs. Filled with the kind of longing for a lost love that only the truly brokenhearted can muster, it's that rare thing in music: a song that's from the heart, but not cheesy. White's added strings and '60s-ish accompaniment raise it to even higher levels of beauty.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

10. Lonelady
Bunkerpop

Following October's 'Groove It Out', 'Bunkerpop' is an urgent second taste of Lonelady's debut album, due on Warp next month. Fidgeting around a taut post-punk rhythm for six minutes, it also finds space for clean, melodic guitar lines and flourishes of funk and disco that recall Arthur Russell's work as Dinosaur L. But the overriding atmosphere is one of gritty Manchester groove that shows Lonelady is fully in tune with her city's sound.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Courtney Barnett Pedestrian At Best

The Courtney Barnett of 'Avant Gardener' was such a slacker that she made the breathless panic of an anxiety attack sound half-lidded and woozy. It's all change on this preview from the Melbourne singer's new album. Barnett's traded her laconic drawl for something sharper, too, sounding more scathing than ever as she sarcastically spits: "Tell me I'm exceptional/I promise to exploit you".

Ben Hewitt, writer

12. Bruising Can't You Feel

The first two volumes of London-via-Leeds label Beech Coma's compilations have thrown up a host of exciting new talent, including Teen Brains and Sully Boy. The third instalment, available to download in March, promises more of the same. This track from new Leeds duo Bruising could be the pick of the bunch, a sugar rush of noisy Pixies guitars and singer Naomi Baguely's soft, sweet and addictive vocals.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

13. Laura Marling False Hope

"Is it still OK that I don't know how to be alone? Would it be OK if I just came home tonight?" sings Laura Marling on this anthem for introverts. Written about feeling alienated by city life, 'False Hope' has shades of PJ Harvey's sneer and a forensic storytelling eye. Twisting and turning through intricate guitar lines that'll keep you on the edge of your seat, it suggests new album 'Short Movie' will be a career high.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

14. Bob Dylan Stay With Me

Bob Dylan recording an album of Frank Sinatra covers doesn't scream "It's 2015, welcome to the future", but this taste of the upcoming 'Shadows In The Night' record is evidence of one musical icon masterfully bending the back catalogue of another's to his own will. A raspy vocal and moody slide guitars bring Ol' Blue Eyes' 1964 single firmly into Dylan's world, piquing interest in what the rest of the album will bring.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

15. Circa Waves Be My Baby

Covering what is perhaps the finest pop song ever laid to tape is a challenge that Liverpool's Circa Waves blaze through with startling ease. Coming on like The Monkees had they lived in a grubby, fag-end strewn Manhattan flatshare in the heady days of 2001, their take on The Ronettes' girl-group classic is a ramshackle triumph. That there's over 50 years between this cover and the original is only proof of the tune's glorious timelessness.

Leonie Cooper, writer



16. Lil Wayne (feat. Drake) Used To

Your boy Weezy is really, really sorry for the wait for his delayed 11th album, 'Tha Carter V' (a consequence of a beef between him and the boss of Cash Money Records, Birdman). So much so that he's released a second 'Sorry For The Wait' mixtape. Key track: 'Used To', an original featuring Drake that finds the two superstars sparring over a super-minimal, rumbling WondaGurl beat.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

17. Kate Tempest Bad Place For A Good Time

Following last year's Mercury-nominated debut solo album, 'Everybody Down', is this haunting new single from Kate Tempest. The stripped-back, piano-led track continues in the same confident vein we're now used to, and sees the south London poet brooding about finding a place – both physical and emotional – where she can enjoy a good time. "When we're out for a couple we don't want no trouble, but trouble wants us", she rhymes.

Nadia Khomami, Acting News Reporter

18. Arca Sheep

Arca contributed twisted production to Björk's rush-released new album 'Vulnicura', but 'Sheep' shows he's keeping his weirdest stuff for himself. This 17-minute freakout opens with bleats from sheep that sound like they're floating in space. There's a clanging techno beat a few minutes later, but the Venezuelan producer smothers it with eerie snatches of vocals and melody. At the end, it sounds like he's setting fire to a church choir.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

19. Torres Strange Hellos

"How can you ever know anyone anyway?" asks the brutal first single from Torres' second LP. It's written about someone named Heather, whose mother has Alzheimer's. Mackenzie Scott is sorry and all, but her sympathy doesn't supersede her seething hatred for Heather's evident betrayal, which 'Strange Hellos' renders terrifyingly: lurching from horror-film creep into a ravaging sea of riffs and piercing electronic screams.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

20. Caught On Tape Full Bleed

Now a resident of Stoke Newington, north-east London, Thurston Moore may have left Sonic Youth behind, but not his avant-garde spirit: this new track as Caught On Tape is a thunderstorm of doomy, dirgey chords, with flashes of squealing guitar cutting through like lightning bolts. Sure, it sounds at times like a band falling into a vat of concrete, but you don't expect Moore's work to aim for 'All About That Bass' levels of catchiness.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

The Week

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

Damon in Wonderland

The ultimate renaissance man
announces brand-new musical

When Damon Albarn revealed last year that he was working on a musical based on a popular children's book, the smart money went on a Britpop coke-blizzard reworking of *The Snowman*. Instead, Albarn was concocting a modern take on *Alice In Wonderland*, a book he was terrified of as a child. "I'm fascinated by the idea of going down a rabbit hole – the otherworldliness and what that might mean," he said. "Alice aside, the Queen of Hearts, the Duchess, the White Rabbit and the Caterpillar were the most threatening characters of my childhood. I was genuinely very frightened of them as a kid."

Staged at the Palace Theatre as part of July's biannual Manchester International Festival, and directed by the National Theatre's Rufus Norris, *Wonder.land* follows bullied schoolgirl Aly as she escapes her real-life woes by retreating into a surreal virtual world. "But some of the people she meets – the weird Dum and Dee, the creepy Cheshire Cat, the terrifying Red Queen – seem strangely familiar," the billing explains. "As hard as Aly tries to keep them apart, real life and wonder.land begin to collide in ever more curious and dangerous ways."

With design by the team behind *War Horse*, *Wonder.land* seems set to dazzle. It goes on to visit London's National Theatre in November and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris next year.

■ MARK BEAUMONT



'Eat me':
Albarn refuses
to take the cake
onstage at 2014's
Latitude festival

The team behind London's Heavenly Social were never going to let their 25th anniversary pass without a party. Toy, The Voyeurs, The Wytches and more join the fun in Hebden Bridge



Heavenly up here

Last weekend, iconic indie label Heavenly Recordings celebrated its 25th anniversary in snow-covered Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire with a four-day party. It united indie icons who shaped the label (Bob Stanley from St Etienne, Doves' Jimi Goodwin) with younger bucks Temples, Toy, The Voyeurs and Stealing Sheep, who have recently helped make the label as vital as ever. At least, that was the plan – a last-minute injury meant Temples' slot at Hebden Bridge Trades Club was filled by All We Are, on loan from Domino Records.

For Danny Mitchell, the man responsible for signing the likes of Temples, The Wytches and Toy to the label, 'Heavenliness' is hard to define. "There's never been a specific sound but there's something inherent in all our bands," he explains at the venue. "There's something in the songs. You can tell it's a Heavenly band if you listen across the roster."

Heavenly Recordings was founded in 1990 by Jeff Barrett, then working as a PR for Primal Scream and Happy Mondays (not the easiest gig in the world). The label's first release – the Andrew Weatherall-produced 'The World

According To Sly & Lovechild' – came later that year, quickly followed by St Etienne's landmark 'Only Love Can Break Your Heart' and early Manic Street Preachers singles 'Motown Junk' and 'You Love Us'. Meanwhile, the notorious Heavenly Social night was thriving at London boozer The Albany, with the then unknown Chemical Brothers at the helm.

"My favourite labels were always Creation, Factory and Heavenly, but I never knew that Jeff had been [Alan] McGee's first employee at Creation and I didn't know that he'd done press for Factory," says Danny. "Jeff seemed to be involved in everything."



Heavenly grew steadily throughout the '90s, signing Beth Orton and, at the turn of the century, platinum-sellers Doves. The Social became a permanent bar near London's Oxford Circus, and the scene

Jeff helped create followed. Danny has been coaxing bands onto the label for 10 years, and for him a key turning point came when east London krautrockers Toy entered the fold: "It was just one of those moments with Toy," he says. "It flicked the light switch with us."

The feeling was mutual: "We wanted to sign with them straight away, and they pretty much

told us they wanted us to sign straight away too," says Toy guitarist Dominic O'Dair. "We felt like the first of a new batch of people that got signed."

That batch now includes The Wytches, whom Heavenly spotted opening for Temples. "I don't think they liked us at the time," says frontman Kristian Bell, with a smile. "Every now and then you get people who come up to you who are really big Heavenly fans," he says. "I've never known a record label to have its own fanbase. People really follow it."

Latest signings Hooton Tennis Club were actively courted by Jeff, who made regular trips to Liverpool to see them. "Everything we'd heard about labels was, 'Ooh, be careful, they're out to get you,'" says the band's Ryan Murphy, who was talked round thanks to Stealing Sheep's glowing references. "Every time I was speaking to them about Heavenly or about Jeff, they were always singing his praises and saying he's such a nice guy. He's like a long-lost grandad or something."

Temples frontman James Bagshaw is gutted to have missed the celebrations, as he knows what it means to be a Heavenly act. "We're part of their history and they're part of our history and you've got to be respectful of that," he says. "Hopefully we've done them proud and spread some Heavenly love wherever we are." ■ ROB COOKE

DANNY PAYNE, GETTY; ANDY FALLON

A HEAVENLY TIMELINE

1990 Along with distribution boss Mike Chadwick, Jeff founds Heavenly Recordings



1991 St Etienne's Mercury-nominated debut 'Foxbase Alpha' is released

1996 More critical success with Beth Orton's 'Trailer Park'

2000 Beth Orton wins Best British Female at the Brits

2002 Heavenly signing The Vines are hailed as the future of rock'n'roll by NME

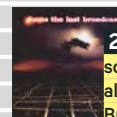
1988 Jeff Barrett founds press company Capersville, representing Factory and Creation bands



1991 Manic Street Preachers singles 'Motown Junk' and 'You Love Us' are released



1999 Heavenly opens its first bar, The Social



2002 Doves (right) score a Number One album with 'The Last Broadcast'





Danny Mitchell and Jeff Barrett (centre) with The Wytches; (below) the Chemical Brothers at Heavenly Social

"I'VE NEVER KNOWN A RECORD LABEL TO HAVE ITS OWN FANBASE. PEOPLE REALLY FOLLOW IT."

Kristian Bell, The Wytches

2011 Following a decade-long venture with EMI, Heavenly goes indie again, signing Stealing Sheep and Toy

2015 Heavenly celebrates its 25th birthday at Hebden Bridge Trades Club



Dutch Uncles, Slaves, Happyness and more for The Great Escape

Brighton new music festival announces impressive initial line-up

The Great Escape – Europe's biggest city-based new music festival – returns to Brighton from May 14 to 16. Alongside Slaves, The Garden, Bully, Thurston Moore, Happyness and Jack Garratt, the impressive line-up includes Dutch Uncles (), who'll be bringing their new album 'O Shudder' to the seaside event. The Manchester math-poppers also promise a new band member and a mystery 1980s cover version. "We're now a six-piece live band," explains lead singer Duncan Wallis of the addition of guitarist Pete Broadhead's brother, Henry, drafted in over the Christmas holidays to play Casio synths and percussion. "In the past, whenever we've had a session player it looks like they're doing our taxes behind us," jokes Wallis. "But Henry's a bit more lively – and he's a bit of eye candy, too!"

The group have previously treated festival crowds to their own idiosyncratic takes on Grace Jones' 'Slave To The Rhythm' and Tears For Fears' 'Everybody Wants To Rule The World', but are currently working on a new, hush-hush addition from the same era, which will get its first airing in Brighton. "It's a bit Live Lounge to do anything too contemporary, isn't it?" says Wallis. "Without revealing it, the cover we have in mind suits the guitar tones for this album. People will like it!"

Their set marks their third appearance at the festival, making Dutch Uncles elder statesmen of the event. "Great Escape is definitely doing it right," laughs Wallis. "I don't recognise any of the bands playing, which is obviously a good sign for a new music festival!"

■ LEONIE COOPER

THE GREAT ESCAPE

MORE GREAT BANDS AT TGE

Chosen by NME's New Music Editor Matt Wilkinson

Bad Breeding

► **WHO** Angry Stevenage punks
► **UNMISSABLE BECAUSE** They conjure some of the chaos that follows Fat White Family around

Bully

► **WHO** Steve Albini's tips for the top
► **UNMISSABLE BECAUSE** The Nashville band are masters of three-chord garage punk

Formation

► **WHO** New dance kings
► **UNMISSABLE BECAUSE** The duo's full band live come across like a more leftfield Friendly Fires

H Hawkline

► **WHO** Melodic Welsh maestro
► **UNMISSABLE BECAUSE** Huw Evans' lysergic tunes are spellbinding

Pretty Vicious

► **WHO** The band all the majors are hoping to sign
► **UNMISSABLE BECAUSE** This will be the first chance for most to see if these Oasis-influenced Welsh teens are much cop



Dutch Uncles

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Simon Rix



Kaiser Chiefs



BOOK 45 by Bill Drummond

"Bill Drummond was in The KLF, who were as famous for their stunts as they were for their music. 45 collects some of his memoirs. It inspires me to just try things and see what happens without worrying about what might go wrong."



BOXSET Justified

"It's like a modern western with an old-school cop, but he wears a cowboy hat. He's better at shooting than anyone else in his town in Kentucky, but he's trying not to shoot as many people as he used to."

FILM Pulp: A Film About Life, Death & Supermarkets



"I watch music docs on tour: the Pulp one, the Pink Floyd one."

GAME New Star Soccer

"It's a football management game for iPhone. You have to keep the boss and your sponsors happy while spending money on TVs and jets and racing horses."

HOME COMFORT Calming crème

"I've got a list of things to remember when I go away. It goes: passport, travel adapter, phone charger, hair dryer with diffuser and calming crème for my curls. It's all I need."



► **Kaiser Chiefs** kick off their UK arena tour at Liverpool Echo Arena (January 31)

There have been
fallouts, addictions
and mental-health
issues, but 14 years
after splitting, Babes
In Toyland are back



Grunge icons return

Straddling the riot grrrl and grunge scenes, Minneapolis trio Babes In Toyland – fronted by Kat Bjelland and featuring, for a brief time, Courtney Love on bass – were one of the most iconic groups of the early '90s. Having been on a rocky road from the release of 1995's 'Nemesisters', to their split in 2001, even the three members are surprised to see them on the reunion circuit.

It was bassist Maureen Herman – who quit in 1996 blaming an “intense” touring schedule and has since settled in LA – who set the wheels in motion by reaching out to Minneapolis-based Kat. “I hadn’t seen her in about 17 years, so I invited her to my family lake house,” remembers Maureen. “In the car, Kat said, ‘Do you want to play again?’”

**“I WAS LIKE,
‘HELL NO!’ BUT
TIME HEALS”**

Maureen Herman

“It just popped out of my mouth – and she said yes!” says Kat. Both women had been through a lot. “I was dealing with a lot of mental-health issues and alcohol and addiction issues,” explains Maureen. “I had started leaving messages for Kat because I heard she had been dealing with some similar issues at times.”

It was an emotional experience when Kat responded. “She was doing really well and we started crying. Ever since then, it’s been an even deeper friendship than it was when we were first in the band together.”

They contacted drummer Lori Barbero, who was living in Austin, Texas at the time, and who fell out with Kat when she felt she was stabbed in the back during a mooted 2002 reunion. “I had to sever my friendship, for my

(Above) Babes In Toyland in 1990 – (l-r) Lori Barbero, Kat Bjelland, Maureen Herman – and (left) in 2014



own health,” remembers Lori. “I didn’t think that Babes would ever do anything together again. I was like, ‘Hell no!’ But people grow and time heals.”

With the trio located thousands of miles from each other and Kat and Maureen both raising children, bringing the band back together looked set to be a struggle. Help came from a colleague of Maureen’s, an ex-Google employee who had been bugging her to get Babes In Toyland back together, and formed a start-up called Powersniff with the sole intention of flying Kat and Lori out to LA for rehearsals. “I don’t think we could have done it without that,” says Kat.

Kat, Lori and Maureen play their first official show together since 1996 on February 12 at Los Angeles’ Roxy, with a hush-hush warm-up show out in the Joshua Tree desert on February 10. *NME* can exclusively reveal that the John Peel favourites will also be touring the UK in May, before heading to Primavera Sound in Barcelona.

Though nothing’s been written yet, Kat, Maureen and Lori have all said new material could be on the cards too, because the group plan on sticking around this time. “I missed my girls,” grins Kat. ■ LEONIE COOPER

BABES IN TOYLAND ON TOUR

- Bristol Trinity **May 24**
- Southampton Empire Room **May 25**
- London O2 Shepherd’s Bush Empire **May 26**
- Manchester Gorilla **May 27**
- Glasgow Oran Mor **May 28**

“THEY WERE BADASS BITCHES”

Superfan Brody Dalle tells us why she’s happy to see the Babes return

Why are you so excited about Babes in Toyland getting back together?

Brody: “Because they were badass bitches and really good musicians. Their songs are so nostalgic for me – they make me feel 14 again.”

What does the band mean to you?

“The smell of the inside of antique purses from the thrift store, old perfume bottles, caked-on red lipstick, eating candy, babydoll dresses, sick and twisted words. I remember feeling really cool just listening to them.”

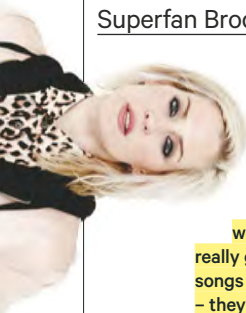
How did you discover them?

“I was into Hole, Nirvana, Sonic Youth, Mudhoney and

Smashing Pumpkins. I saw the documentary *The Year Punk Broke* and bought [1992 album] ‘Fontanelle’. Me and my friends just sat around smoking cigs and eating candy and listening to them. We’d stay up all night watching their rad videos.”

Would you like to see them record a new album?

“Fuck yes!”



STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



Listen to Sleater-Kinney's story on 6 Music, February 1

Sleater-Kinney

The Story Of Sleater-Kinney

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, 1pm, February 1

The punk trio returned earlier this month with 'No Cities To Love', their first album in nine years. This documentary tells their story, including contributions from producer John Goodman, The Cribs and REM's Peter Buck.

Enter Shikari

X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, 10pm, February 2-3
Rou Reynolds and co take to XFM to breathe fresh life into the raucous tunes on their latest album, 'The Mindsweep'. Tune in on Monday and Tuesday to hear a song per night.

Kim Gordon

Mary Anne Hobbs

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, 7am, January 31 - February 1
The former Sonic Youth

bassist and singer will publish her memoir, *Girl In A Band*, in February, revealing all about her family, work and marriage to bandmate Thurston Moore. She joins Mary Anne Hobbs on 6 Music for a two-part interview about the book.

Paul McCartney

A MusiCares Tribute

►WATCH Sky Arts, 9pm, February 3
Foo Fighters, Coldplay, Neil Young and more

give Beatles classics their own twist at this 2012 concert celebrating Paul McCartney's music. Then the man himself takes to the stage to perform a special headline slot.

Kate Tempest

BBC 6 Music

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, 3pm, January 31
The Mercury-nominated rapper and poet takes to the airwaves this weekend to guest present a one-off show. Over the course of three hours, Kate Tempest will reveal some of

her musical influences, discussing the effect the songs and artists on her playlist have had on her own music.

Gaz Coombes

X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, 10pm, January 28
Ex-Supergrass frontman Gaz Coombes releases his second solo album 'Matador' this week.

To celebrate, he'll join John Kennedy for a playback of the entire record – and a chat about some of the secrets behind the album along the way.



GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS THIS WEEK



Frankie & The Heartstrings

The indie-pop troupe head out on tour to play new material and old favourites.

►DATES Guildford Boileroom (January 28), Cardiff Gwdihw Café (29), Harlow The Square (30), Hull Adelphi (31), Leicester Cookie (Feb 1)

►TICKETS £7; Harlow £5; Hull £6 from NME.COM/tickets with 50p-£1.25 booking fee

Yak

Hotly tipped London-based trio take their psych spells to Scotland and the north-east.

►DATES Glasgow Broadcast (January 29), Sunderland Independent (30)
►TICKETS Glasgow £5; Sunderland £4 from NME.COM/tickets with 40p-£1 booking fee

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

- 1. Gaz Coombes**
Rough Trade East, London
►January 28, 7pm
- 2. Zun Zun Egui**
Rough Trade, Nottingham
►January 28, 7pm
- 3. Zibra**
Sixty Million Postcards, Bournemouth
►January 29, 8pm
- 4. The Black Tambourines**
The Old Blue Last, London
►January 31, 8pm
- 5. Röckkuró**
Start The Bus, Bristol
►February 2, 8pm

Telefonica

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WELCOME TO THE LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD



With its rich musical legacy, exciting line-up of festivals and huge variety of venues, bars and restaurants, Austin, Texas really is the dream destination for music fans

Austin is a city with a supremely rich musical history that backs up its brand of Live Music Capital Of The World®. With heaps of genres co-existing up and down its bustling streets and at its jam-packed calendar of festivals such as SXSW, Levitation, Austin City Limits and Fun Fun Fun Fest, it's no surprise many new sounds have been pioneered there. Take Roky Erickson and his band, The 13th Floor Elevators, who were instrumental in the birth of psychedelic rock back in the '60s. Then there's Stevie Ray Vaughan, influential blues musician, whose legacy is honoured by a bronze statue overlooking the shores of Lady Bird Lake; and Kurt Cobain's beloved Daniel Johnston, who began to make headway with his lo-fi rock while living in Austin in the late '80s.

It's not just legends with a decades-long legacy that make Austin such an exciting place for music fans, though. With a community of over 2,000 active musicians and more than 250 live music venues in which to

experience their sonic greatness, there's always heaps of new acts coming through the ranks. In recent years, the Texas capital city has birthed the likes of White Denim, Spoon, ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead and The Black Angels, while even-fresher prospects – like the scratchy power-pop of Warm Soda,

rapper Fat Tony and electro-indie artist Mystery Skulls – have all been making waves recently.

All over the city, live music venues are buzzing with bands old and new touting their craft. Stubb's BBQ – located in one of the edgiest entertainment districts on Red River Street – has hosted artists as diverse as Beck, Mastodon and Lily Allen in the last six months, all while serving up Austin's signature barbecue cuisine. Stubb's continues their streak of incredible live performances in 2015, with the likes of Cold War Kids, Sleater-Kinney and Kaiser Chiefs all slated to play.



**All over Austin,
venues buzz
with bands
old and new**

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Where music lives:
from Austin City
Limits to SXSW;
OutKast to Spoon;
Waterloo Records
to Sixth Street...



Across the river from downtown is another popular music venue, Emo's, which operates with a punk ethos and has brought the likes of Julian Casablancas + The Voidz, Charli XCX and Mogwai to town. If the desired vibe is a little more old Austin, head to South Congress, home of the historic Continental Club, which started out as a country-and-blues club, opening its doors to then-fledgling stars like Stevie Ray Vaughan and Joe Ely. No matter the night, you never know what legend will grace the stage – Sonic Youth even recorded 'Live At The Continental Club' over the venue's PA in 1986.

It's not just in the venues that you'll find a mix of genres – the world-renowned Waterloo Records lays Austin's eclectic spirit out in front of you, with stacks upon stacks of vinyl and

CDs. Blues, punk, reggae, rap, indie and more sit side by side in the shop's racks, categorised alphabetically rather than by genre. Much like the city it's called home since 1982, Waterloo echoes the city's borderless, all-embracing approach to music; passionate, diverse and imbued with a vibrant history. Voted one of the 10 best record shops in the world, Waterloo is known for amazing and impromptu in-store performances from the likes of Queens Of The Stone Age, Jeff Buckley, Nirvana, Willie Nelson, St Vincent and My Bloody Valentine.

Austin
— LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD® —

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THE NME AWARDS
TOUR WITH
AUSTIN, TEXAS**

Our friends in The Live Music Capital Of The World® are giving away tickets to this year's NME Awards Tour with Austin, Texas – featuring Palma Violets, Fat White Family, The Amazing Snakeheads and Slaves. Head to NME.com/win to enter.

Björk's Biophilia Tour (left); tracks from Madonna's new album were also leaked online



HAS THE 'VULNICURA' LEAK SCUPPERED BJÖRK'S NEXT EVOLUTION?

BY BEN HEWITT

The rush-releasing of the Icelandic star's new record denies her – and us – the chance to launch it the way she wishes



If patience is a virtue, then the people leaking albums months ahead of release are among the least virtuous sods around. Last week, Björk's new album 'Vulnicura' popped up online two months before its planned March release. The Icelandic performer decided to rush-release the full record on iTunes, and so – prematurely – the world got its hands on her ninth LP.

We've not only been denied that nice bit of anticipation before getting your hands on a new album, we've also been robbed of seeing exactly *how* Björk would have released this album. Remember 2011's 'Biophilia'? It wasn't just a record – it was an event. The songs were premiered in a series of incredible shows at Manchester's International Festival, at which a set of Heath Robinson-

like contraptions were played in the round and singing Tesla coils brought actual lightning to the stage. It was the first 'app album', too, with an iPad version that allowed listeners to play with the sounds, ideas and songs. A film and even an educational programme followed. Maybe Björk had something similarly mind-blowing planned this time, too. But we'll never know, because she had to just dump it on the internet instead.

Björk isn't the only artist to be the victim of a recent leak. In December, tracks from Madonna's new album 'Rebel Heart' popped up online, which prompted the queen of pop to rush-release six songs online. Last week, it was reported that Israeli police arrested a suspect; a man who, they claim, "broke into the personal computers of several international artists over the past few months and stole promotional final-cut singles which have yet to be released and traded them online for a fee".

The heart does not bleed for a wealthy pop star who earnestly compared the leaking of an album to "terrorism" and "artistic rape" (an even more impressively ill-informed statement when you consider that the LP has a cameo from convicted rapist Mike Tyson, and that real, horrible terrorism reared its ugly head in Paris soon after her comment). But she has the right to complain: it's her work, after all. And whoever leaked either 'Rebel Heart' or 'Vulnicura' isn't exactly Edward Snowden sticking it to The Man. They're just

a prat with broadband trying to score brownie points or make a quick buck online.

Of course, maybe Björk had nothing special in the works. She's said that 'Vulnicura' is essentially a break-up album, and it wouldn't be surprising if she planned a more low-key release for such a heavy, poignant record. It scarcely matters. Having turned her heartbreak into art, this was her chance to own all that personal confusion; to choose how and when it's consumed, to decide what people needed to know in advance, to be in control. And, really, what did anyone gain? The chance to hear some tinny MP3 rips that won't sound as good as the proper thing? The boon of listening to some songs a while before you were supposed to? Sometimes, it's best to just wait. ■

► Read the NME verdict on Björk's 'Vulnicura' on page 45

LOST ALBUMS

#61



Fifth Column To Sir With Hate (1985)

Chosen by Damian Abraham, Fucked Up

"Fifth Column were an obscure band, but key to the Toronto hardcore scene. I'd heard about them ever since I'd been aware of alternative music, but I didn't know about their first record until I found it in a record store five or six years ago. They could be described as 'proto riot grrrl' in a very real way and were influential to a band like Bikini Kill, who are a lot more recognised. They were an awesome political, feminist punk band and they kept going right until the mid-1990s. The music was dark and brooding and angry, but happy and joyous too."



► THE DETAILS

- RELEASE DATE 1985
- LABEL Hide
- BEST TRACKS Ghost Of A Buffalo, Modern Diseases, To Sir With Hate
- WHERE TO FIND IT eBay, if you're lucky
- LISTEN ONLINE On Groovespark

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



**"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN
STANDING ON THE
OUTSIDE LOOKING IN"**

Kele Okereke

BLOC PARTY.

SILENT ALARM



THIS WEEK...

Bloc Party: Silent Alarm

Ten years old this week, the explosive, political debut by the London dance-punks is due a revisit

THE BACKGROUND

Bloc Party's 2005 debut was a divisive album. Something to do with the fact that the band launched themselves with a po-faced online 'manifesto' quoting philosopher Bertrand Russell? Possibly. In any event, detractors derided them for being pretentious – Noel Gallagher remarked that they looked like a *University Challenge* team. Being a bit pretentious was the whole point, however. Bloc Party marked the start of a wave of art-rock bands – indie but not twee, hard-hitting but not oafish, self-consciously highbrow, and a reaction against bands that "made stupidity hip", as frontman Kele Okereke said, hitting back at Noel. Kele sang about how modern life is rubbish and how it felt to not fit in, something that – as a gay Londoner born to Nigerian parents – he knew something about.

STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

The bare winter landscape was photographed by freelance Ness Sherry and expresses a desolate theme of isolation, loneliness and depression. A negative version of the same photograph was used on the later release, 'Silent Alarm Remixed'.

FIVE FACTS

1 The track 'Like Eating Glass' was inspired by a remix of The Smiths' 'There Is a Light That Never Goes Out' that Kele became obsessed with. The singer said that he wanted to create a song just as "aching and melodic and yet at the same time, insistent, with a real groove".

2 Producer Paul Epworth now works with Adele, Coldplay and Azealia Banks, but it was his work on 'Silent Alarm' that made his name.

3 The band seemed to arrive fully formed on their debut album, but it had taken them some time to get themselves up to scratch. Kele took singing lessons before recording the album, and Matt Tong was their ninth drummer – even Spinal Tap would struggle to match that.

4 The title of the album comes from a *New Scientist* article the band read about an earthquake-detection system in Japan – the record presents itself as an early warning for seismic events to come.

5 'Silent Alarm' was one of the first records released on Dim Mak in the US, thus helping to launch the career of EDM colossus and Dim Mak label owner Steve Aoki.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"She's scared of the blacks/And she's scared of the Jews/She's walking around/She's yesterday's news" – 'She's Hearing Voices'

Loosely based on one of Kele's friends who suffered from paranoid schizophrenia. You can hear the first-hand experience of racism in Kele's delivery.

"I still feel you and the taste of cigarettes" – 'Blue Light'

There was a lot of speculation about Kele's sexuality before he tentatively came out around 2007's 'A Weekend In The City'. What got lost in the static was how he wrote about relationships in a way that everyone could identify with, no matter who they fancied.

"Just like his dad, just like his dad (the same mistakes)/Some things will never be different" – 'Helicopter'

The album was born in the turbulent aftermath of the 2003 Iraq invasion and overt political messages frequent its lyrics. Here, Kele has a go at the Bush dynasty.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"Bloc Party are to be believed in because they are a band for the whites, the blacks, the straights, the hip-hop kids, the freaks, the geeks, the emo kids, the

punk-funkers, the queers and, yes, the fashionistas." – Imran Ahmed, *NME*, February 12, 2005

WHAT WE SAY NOW

Time hasn't been kind to the 2004/2005 wave of art rock, much of which sounds arch and contrived. That's not the case with 'Silent Alarm'. The energy and emotion remains infectious.

FAMOUS FAN

"Kele told me Suede were an influence on Bloc Party in terms of spirit. It's lovely to have passed on that inspiration..." – Brett Anderson, *Suede*

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I've always been standing on the outside looking in at how these things work. Therefore, I've noticed the discrepancies, I've always noticed the borders between things. I've always been far more concerned with things that are fluid, things that aren't straightforward in terms of genre." – Kele Okereke, 2005

THE AFTERMATH

Bloc Party released 2007's 'A Weekend In The City', 2008's 'Intimacy' and 2012's 'Four' before announcing an indefinite hiatus. The three LPs – together with Kele's two solo albums – chart an ever-increasing move towards a more electronic sound. Drummer Tong left the band in 2013.

THE DETAILS

►RECORDED 2004 ►RELEASE DATE February 14, 2005 ►LENGTH 50:35 ►PRODUCER Paul Epworth ►STUDIO Deltalab, Copenhagen ►HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 3 ►UK SALES 500,000+ ►SINGLES So Here We Are, Banquet, Pioneers ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Like Eating Glass ►2. Helicopter ►3. Positive Tension ►4. Banquet ►5. Blue Light ►6. She's Hearing Voices ►7. This Modern Love ►8. Pioneers ►9. Price Of Gasoline ►10. So Here We Are ►11. Luno ►12. Plans ►13. Compliments

“[She] isn’t made for this Earth. She has this idea for a film... It’s about her, and it’s not about her. Just like her music”

Actor **James Franco**’s infatuation with Lana Del Rey grows

THE NUMBERS

170%

HMV’s reported increase in vinyl sales, year-on-year. They now claim to be the biggest sellers of physical music formats in the UK.

£5,000

Pledge required to get a sleeper with TLC as they fund a new album on Kickstarter.

2

Years in a row that Scottish festival RockNess has been put on hold. Organisers blame financial issues.

600

Capacity of London Tufnell Park’s Dome, venue for Noel Gallagher’s tiny, February 2 warm-up gig.



**WHO THE
FUCK IS...**



**Katie Farrah
Sophy**

This is the singer-songwriter who is suing Disclosure (above) for £200,000.

What are they supposed to have done?

Sophy claims they used lyrics from a notebook of hers, which was stolen by an ex-boyfriend, in ‘Latch’, ‘White Noise’ and ‘You And Me’.

Are they going to ‘Settle’ out of court?

Heck, no. The duo say: “We want to make it very clear that every Disclosure song we have put our names to has been written by us... We didn’t get into this industry to steal other’s ideas and we haven’t.”

+ GOOD WEEK +



Lil B

Rapper Lil B had a brush with death after a fire broke out at his California home. He escaped unscathed thanks to 15-year-old neighbour Mateo Ysmael running through the building to wake everyone up. “I’m grateful to be alive,” Lil B told local reporters.

- BAD WEEK -



Wes Scantlin

The Puddle Of Mudd frontman was arrested at Denver International Airport after being caught riding the baggage carousel. The band were playing a gig that night and only made it thanks to a fan coughing up the bail fee to free their singer.

IN BRIEF

Theatre of nightmares

A tweet from Man United goalie David De Gea from the “amazing” Slipknot gig was shared more than 2,000 times. His love of metal isn’t shared by his teammates, though. “When I put it on, everyone moans,” he says.

Where to stick it?

Numerous UK gig venues confirmed that they have banned punters from taking ‘selfie sticks’ into events. “Stick with the tried and tested use of an arm,” said a spokesperson for SSE Arena Wembley in London.

Blunt words

Responding to comments about his posh background from shadow culture minister Chris Bryant, James Blunt called the MP a “classist gimp” and a “prejudiced wazzock”. They clearly teach insults well at Harrow.

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

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS JANUARY 25, 2015



**NEW
01**

Belle And Sebastian Girls In Peacetime Want To Dance

The Scottish indie veterans have embraced pop on their ninth album, a change of direction that earns them the top spot on this week’s chart.

NEW 2	What A Terrible World, What A Beautiful World	The Decemberists ROUGH TRADE
NEW 3	No Cities To Love	Sleater-Kinney SUB POP
NEW 4	The Mindsweep	Enter Shikari PLAY IT AGAIN SAM
NEW 5	Modern Blues	The Waterboys HARLEQUIN AND CLOWN
NEW 6	Uptown Special	Mark Ronson COLUMBIA
NEW 7	Computer Controlled Acoustic Instruments Pt 2	Aphex Twin WARP
NEW 8	Viet Cong	Viet Cong JAGJAGUWAR
NEW 9	Ratworld	Menace Beach MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES
10	X	Ed Sheeran ASYLUM
11	Lost In The Dream	The War On Drugs SECRETLY CANADIAN
12	Hozier	Hozier ISLAND
13	Wanted On Voyage	George Ezra COLUMBIA
14	The Endless River	Pink Floyd RHINO
NEW 15	American Beauty/American Psycho	Fall Out Boy DEF JAM
16	Panda Bear Meets The Grim Reaper	Panda Bear DOMINO
NEW 17	The Pale Emperor	Marilyn Manson COOKING VINYL
18	A Perfect Contradiction	Paloma Faith RCA
19	Stay Gold	First Aid Kit COLUMBIA
20	In The Lonely Hour	Sam Smith CAPITOL
NEW 21	Grit	Martyn Bennett REAL WORLD
22	Our Love	Caribou CITY SLANG
23	1989	Taylor Swift EMI
24	AM	Arctic Monkeys DOMINO
25	Ghost Culture	Ghost Culture BECAUSE MUSIC
26	Royal Blood	Royal Blood WARNER BROS
NEW 27	Boxed In	Boxed In NETTWERK
28	Sonic Highways	Foo Fighters RCA
29	Rock Or Bust	AC/DC COLUMBIA
30	Mechanical Bull	Kings Of Leon RCA
31	This Is All Yours	Alt-J INFECTIOUS MUSIC
32	Never Been Better	Olly Murs EPIC
33	Very Best Of	Joe Jackson UMTV
NEW 34	How To Die In The North	BC Camplight BELLA UNION
35	No Sound Without Silence	The Script COLUMBIA
36	Liquid Spirit	Gregory Porter BLUE NOTE
NEW 37	If You Wait	London Grammar METAL & DUST
38	The Balcony	Catfish & The Bottlemen COMMUNION
NEW 39	Modern Nature	The Charlatans BMG RIGHTS
40	IV	Led Zeppelin RHINO

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 THE ROCK BOX CAMBERLEY

FOUNDED 1987

WHY IT’S GREAT They sell rock, metal and jazz, and give keen support to more underground bands, too.

TOP SELLER LAST WEEK Marilyn Manson – ‘The Pale Emperor’

THEY SAY “We are unpretentious, dirty and smelly. We do not serve coffee. We are one of the hardest working, proletariat shops in the UK.”

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



Fela Kuti



Townes
Van Zandt



Elias Bender Rønnenfelt

Iceage
frontman

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING David Bowie - 'Black Tie White Noise'

"My first words as a baby were 'yaw yaw', which I heard from the backing vocals in the David Bowie song 'Black Tie White Noise'. Before I was able to speak I had made up my own words for all of the musical instruments. My dad would listen to Miles Davis records and I would sit there and proclaim which instruments were playing on each track."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH The Velvet Underground - 'The Black Angel's Death Song'

"I bought 'The Velvet Underground & Nico' when I was 13 and it changed my entire understanding of what I thought music could be. I couldn't understand what was going on in 'The Black Angel's Death Song', but there was something about

that song that deeply struck me, crushed me."

FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT Sabrini The Organ- grinder cassette

"When I was five, me and my mother passed by an old man playing one of those mechanical organs in the street. His name was Sabrini and I bought a cassette from him. For the next couple of years, the only thing I would listen to was that tape of

"I AM A GREAT DANCER. I MAKE MOST MEN CALL IT AN EARLY NIGHT"

organ-grinder music while all the other kids were listening to stupid shit like Aqua."

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND Flux Of Pink Indians - 'Tube Disasters' "From [1981's] 'Neu Smell'.

I don't think there's one exact song that made me go, 'I'm going to start a band!' but it was around the age of 13 or 14, when I started listening to punk and no-wave that I began toying around with the idea of starting one of my own."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE Fela Kuti - 'Water No Get Enemy'

"I am a great dancer, though only a few people have seen the full extent of my skills. I can make most men call it an early night and go home. Lately, I've been dancing around to African jazz music at home. Fela Kuti is such a boss. He could easily put me to shame."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE Percy Sledge - 'When A Man Loves A Woman'

"A couple of months back, I absolutely killed it at a karaoke spot singing this song."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD Total Control - 'Black Spring'

"The guitar riff that runs throughout the song is so catchy. Daniel [Stuart] from

"I was listening to this song a lot when I was riding trains through the Balkans in 2013. It was perfect for it. I wouldn't mind having written 'The Narcissist', although I don't get jealous about songs other people write."

THE SONG ICEAGE LIKE TO COVER The Bahumutsi Drama Group - 'To The Comrades (Questions)'

"Dan was looking through old files on his computer, found this song and had no idea where it came from. I listened to it and tried to work out the lyrics, and I liked them so we covered that as well. It's hard to find any detail about the group, but as far as I can make out they're singing about soldiers coming into South Africa and pillaging, burning down houses, asking these accusatory questions, like, who are their leaders, who are their brothers, why do you do this? Our songs have some sense of accusing the listener of something, so it seemed to work."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY WEDDING Townes Van Zandt - 'She Came And She Touched Me'

"I'm not sure if I'll ever get married, but if I do, this would be idyllic for a waltz."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL Psychic TV - 'The Orchids'

"Having music at funerals is a little tasteless, but 'The Orchids' by Psychic TV is one of those songs that I've listened to in hard times. Although if I had to have music played at my funeral, I'd probably go with 'Bells Of Moscow' by Rachmaninov or something magnificent and gloomy like that."



David Bowie

Rad ar

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NEWMUSIC

► **YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST** ■ EDITED BY MATT WILKINSON

NME
NEW
BAND
OF THE WEEK



Crushed Beaks

South London garage-pop hopefuls take their time to make dream debut

Because people think our stuff is quite thrashy and lo-fi, they assume it's written in a day," says Scott Bowley, bassist and new addition to south London's garage-pop maestros Crushed Beaks. Their music – hardly pristine – might not reflect it, but it's a labour of love for the band, tirelessly built up through different progressions until it's the best it can possibly be.

It's partially why their debut album 'Scatter' – a gleaming stroke of brilliance that's as jagged and urgent as it is riddled with hooks – feels like it's been a long time coming. Released nearly five years since the group formed, the trio insist they've taken their time for a reason. "We didn't want to just get whatever together and release it for the sake of it," explains frontman Matt Poile down the phone from Nottingham, where the band are playing on tour. "We were just waiting until we were happy with everything."

With an arsenal of songs that satisfied their quality control, Matt and drummer Alex Morris flew out to Rome with producer Pete 'Hutch' Hutchings for a week to record in film score composer Fabio Frizzi's studio – a coup for the pair considering their well-documented love of the horror films Frizzi has worked on, including *Zombie Flesh Eaters* and *City Of The Living Dead*. Once there, they kept to an intense schedule, barely spending any time out of the studio.

"We were all in the same room every night and day. We didn't shower together but that was about it," recalls Alex wryly. "I don't think we discussed anything else other than [the record] and all the things we wanted to go and look at it in Rome but didn't get to see 'cos we were too busy."

"Our manager kept telling us we had to go to all these bars," laughs Matt. "She wanted to take us out and get us drunk but we were like, 'No, we've got to record.'"

Crushed Beaks might not have chosen to run through the hoopla of hype like some of their peers, but their drive, focus and ear for a killer tune make them worthy contenders. ■ RHIAN DALY

▼
ON
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NOW

► Watch the video
to new single
'Overgrown'

► THE DETAILS

► **BASED** London
► **FOR FANS OF** No Age, The Replacements
► **SOCIAL** @crushedbeaks
► **BUY IT NOW** Debut album 'Scatter' is released on February 9 via the band's own Matilda Records
► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Sebright Arms (February 9), London Rough Trade East (February 11)
► **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** The band were once featured in an online "lifestyle guide for shedworkers" (shedworking.co.uk) after revealing in an interview they rehearsed in Matt's shed

MORE NEW MUSIC

Lusts

Leicester brothers Andy and James Stones are one of the first signings to legendary A&R James Endeacott's resurrected 1965 label.

Debut single 'Temptation' is released on March 2 and has the air of 'Primary Colours'-era Horrors about it, while B-side 'Cross' sounds like something New Order might have toyed with in the '80s.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/lustsmusic

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

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Across the UK this March

Bluffing

New York quartet Bluffing take bite-size to new extremes on their debut album, 'Sugar Coated Pills Of Wisdom'. Its 10 tracks of short-but-sweet college rock clock in at just 17 minutes, meaning this is one band who don't even give you the option of getting bored. Their second LP is due early this year, but don't expect it to last much longer.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/pages/bluffing

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/papercup-music/sheltered

...And The Hangnails

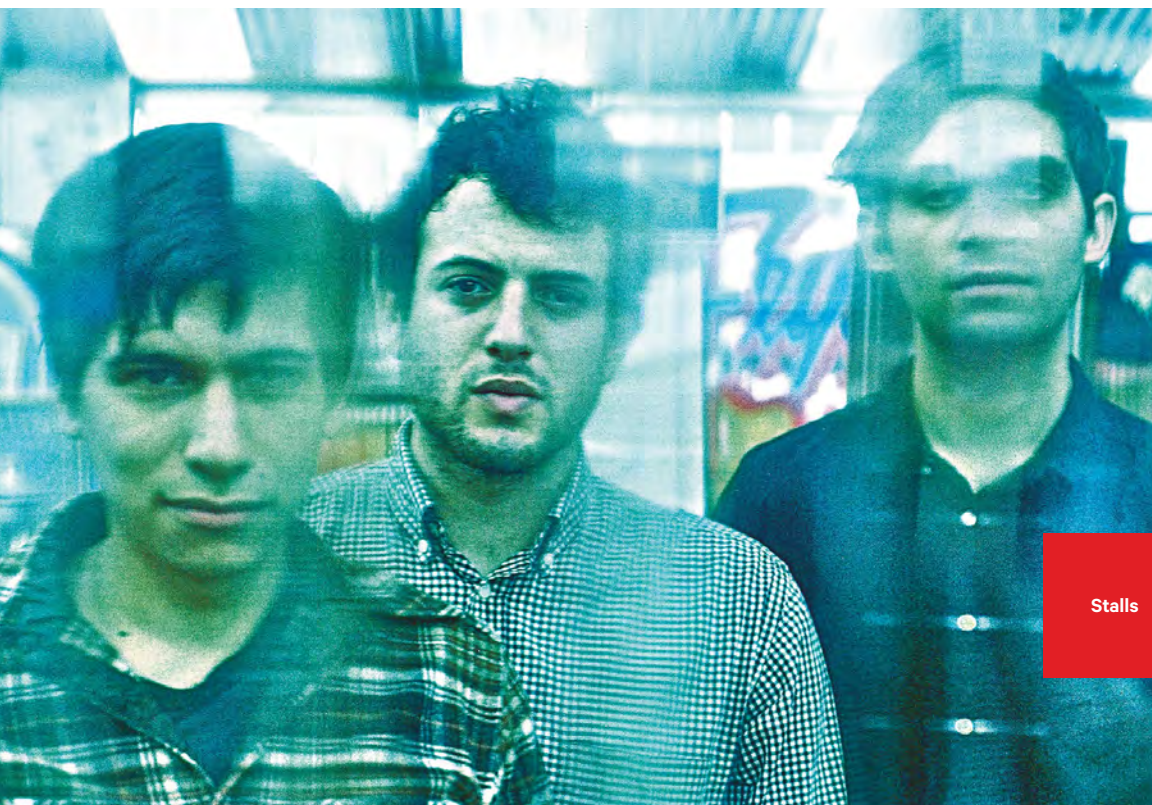
Rarely is a UK punk band as exhilaratingly competent as York's ...And The Hangnails. Their first gig was in 2011 after putting out debut album 'No Time For Naysayers', which was written and released in four days. Their next album will be their fourth, but the first to be widely distributed. It's tentatively titled 'Dog' and you can hear the excellent first single 'Everybody's Luck' on YouTube.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/andthehangnails

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

Hideous Sun Demon

This psychotic garage band wouldn't look out of place lined up alongside Eighties



Stalls

Matchbox B-Line Disaster and Fat White Family in Simon Cowell's nightmare vision of hell. With lightning punk riffs and neurotic yelps at every corner, their latest album, 'Sweat' (featuring such thoughtfully titled songs as 'Moan For Jesus' and 'FLEX'), is a horror show that doesn't skimp on the thrills. And with a moniker like Hideous Sun Demon we can't say we weren't warned.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/hideoussundemon

► **HEAR THEM** hideous-sun-demon.bandcamp.com

Colleen Green

On her imminent new LP 'I Want To Grow Up', LA musician Colleen Green leaves behind the lo-fi recordings of her twenties and opts for something cleaner but still with all her intimate, alt-pop charm. Recorded with members of JEFF The Brotherhood and Diarrhea Planet, her latest effort sees her transition from Jacuzzi Boys-esque fuzz to glimmering gem.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/colleengreen420

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/hardlyartrecords/pay-attention



Colleen Green

Hunny

South Californian six-piece Hunny have recently shared their debut offering 'Cry For Me'. Despite the emotionally charged title, the track runs on sunny upbeat textures and familiar post-punk/rock structures, but its Californian charm lends a distinct freshness.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/hunnytheband

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

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Stalls

Massachusetts man Sam Weiss has previous with a few other buzzy US bands including Pure Bliss, but his current project sounds particularly promising. A five-track self-titled cassette went online earlier

in January, featuring some of the most cutting guitar work we've heard in ages. Elsewhere, influences seem to range from the banal (Adam And The Ants) to the inspired (The Jesus And Mary Chain).

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/stallsband

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/vacant-stare-records

Forced Random

Londoner Oliver Girdler is a dab hand when it comes to releasing melancholically titled EPs. 'I'm Still Here If You Want Me' is his most recent effort, following on from 2013's 'It's Not Your Fault, I Don't Blame You'. Both EPs have treasures, but 'Under/Asleep' from



BAND CRUSH

Harmony
Tividad
Girlpool

Alex G

"Alex G's music is really special to me. I discovered it through the compilation '420 Love Songs'. There's just a certain emotion in his music that clicks with me and I think it's really interesting."



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his latest is a somnolent and heavily anaesthetised trip down the sinkhole of introspection. Indolence is rarely this thrilling.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/forcedrandom

► **HEAR THEM** forcedrandom.bandcamp.com

Heaters

Where the likes of Temples, Spires and Jacco Gardner have already forged ahead with '60s inspired psych-pop, Michigan's Heaters follow. But the trio add their own twist, merging lysergic hooks with driving garage-rock on last year's 'Solstice' EP, to make something that races ahead of their peers.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/heaterssss

► **HEAR THEM** heaters.bandcamp.com

Slutface

It takes confidence to name your group Slutface, and bandleader Haley Shea has it in spades. Hailing from the western Norwegian city of Stavanger, Shea and her boys would be right at home on the west coast of America, playing refreshing pop-punk with all the sunshine smarts of California's '90s wave. On chewy new EP 'We're Just OK', Slutface's heroes and villains include Beyoncé,

Owlie

Lena Dunham and Zoëy Deschanel, and live they're a fun, fiery blast of teen attitude.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/slutfaceofficial

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/slutfaceofficial-1

Anomie

Anomie is a new project from Philadelphia-based Rachel Browne, vocalist and guitarist for Field Mouse. The first collection of polished material to emerge is the 'Anomie' EP which was written in a week. First taster 'So Long' is a '90s-indebted pop anthem which recalls The Breeders at their fastest. The EP is scheduled for release on February 10 via Father/Daughter Records.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/anomiesongs

► **HEAR THEM** anomiesongs.bandcamp.com

Bad Vibes

Tennent McCabe combines the scruffy power-pop of Smith Westerns with the short and fast, tough and bratty force of the Ramones. His debut album 'Out In The Street' zips through seven



Heaters

tracks as infectious as they are rough and battered, while onstage his buddies Joey Genovese and Matt Costa add a new dimension to the chaos.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/badvibes666

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/bad-vibes-1

Silk Cinema

All we really know about Silk Cinema is that she's a 22-year-old from Tamworth. Debut track

'Hope' presents her sublime vocals, carried along by the sparkling house-inspired production. It's a confident first cut.

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/silk-cinema

Ume

Since storming last year's SXSW, Austin trio Ume have been spreading the hypnotic hard-rock riffs of their second album 'Monuments' far and wide. In summer, they made their way to the UK for a handful of intimate shows and a slot supporting Black Sabbath in Hyde Park, as well as touring the States including opening for Arctic Monkeys in Kansas. The next 12 months look to be just as action-packed, with a return trip to SXSW booked and new EP 'Too Big World' due in the coming months.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/umemusic

► **HEAR THEM** umemusic.com

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

OSCAR GETS OBVIOUS

Fresh from signing with Wichita, Oscar is set to play possibly the oddest gig of the year. Making use of his name, he'll play a show at his flat on the night of the Oscars (February 22). Anyone lucky enough to get in will even be invited to watch the ceremony take place – on TV of course.

WAXAHATCHEE RETURNS

Katie Crutchfield – aka Waxahatchee – will release her new album 'Ivy Tripp' on April 7 via Wichita. The follow up to 2013's 'Cerulean Salt' was recorded at Crutchfield's home in Long Island, New York. She's also announced a full band tour which will hit the UK this June.



Wand

MAGIC WAND

Promising LA psych trio Wand will release their new album 'Golem' on April 6 in the UK. The band, whose debut 'Ganglion Reef' was one of 2014's most invigorating, are also planning to hit the UK in May. If all goes to plan and they storm SXSW in March, they could be a very buzzy prospect indeed by then.

BEST FRIENDS INK DEAL

Sheffield's Best Friends have signed to FatCat Records, and celebrated by putting new track 'Shred Til You're Dead' online. The news comes ahead of a show at London's The Social on February 25, while rumours abound that their debut album proper is likely to drop around May.

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Ume

Haybaby

Brooklyn's Haybaby, centred around core members Leslie Hong (vocals/guitar) and Sam Yield (bass/vocals), are hard at work on their first full-length album right now. If it's anything like 2013 EP 'Superpresent', it should be full of intriguingly quiet grunge-pop and songs about envying your friends ('Pretty Hair') and ruling the weather ('Weather King').
SOCIAL facebook.com/haybabyband
HEAR THEM haybaby.bandcamp.com

Waterstrider

Oakland's Waterstrider start 2015 with the impressively

slick 'White Light', the first single to be taken from debut album 'Nowhere Now' out January 29. It's five minutes of indie perfection built on a Bo Diddley beat. You may have heard singer Nate Salman's vocals on Les Sins' disco-pop belter 'Why' last year. Waterstrider is a change of vibe but it's no less mesmerising.

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

Vallis Alps

Canberra's Parissa Tosif and Seattle's David Ansari are the duo behind Vallis Alps. Headed up with soft, well-crafted production and radiant vocals, the tingling compositions have been compared to those of London Grammar. Their debut, self-titled EP is available on Bandcamp now.

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

Owle

Owle is a Parisian artist who claims her eureka moment was when she stumbled upon a Brian Eno audio-visual installation. Standout track 'Fog' takes Eno's ambience as a starting point to create an electro-pop banger heavy on nocturnal atmospherics. Little wonder the Grimes comparisons have started rolling in.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/owllemusic
 ► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/owlle

Yes Sunshine

Having only formed last year, Coventry's Yes Sunshine have already penned a potential breakout anthem. 'Because Of You' keeps things simple with a twin-guitar assault that's reminiscent of early Strokes. Earlier song 'Ride' showcases their grittier side, like early Arctic Monkeys with the gain turned up.

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

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

KRIS PETERSON

DFA Records



FALL METAL RACKET

Last fall was a great one for new musical discoveries. I checked out Montreal's **Essaie Pas** during Saturday afternoon of the annual M For Montreal festival. Google tells me their name is French for "don't try", which totally fits their effortlessly cool analogue-industrial rhythms, drawing western guitar lines, and spoken boy/girl vocal interplay.

Steering the spaceship west, let's touch down in Columbus, Ohio – the home of visual artist Keith Rankin, who has recorded 'Dark Web', my favourite LP in recent memory, under the name **Giant Claw**. A collage of lush drum workouts, desecrated pop vocal samples and the occasional sound of an otherworldly creature gasping for breath, Keith brought his one-man show to Ridgewood, Queens DIY oasis Trans-Pecos. As he triggered samples from a drum pad precariously balanced on his lap, the PA shuddered with a blend of kosmische and trap beats, like if you threw Evian Christ and Vangelis in a blender. Also on the same bill was recent Godmode signing **Malory**. Barely visible behind a huge road case, her lightly bobbing head was occasionally illuminated by the displays of the various pieces of electronic hardware arranged within. She took a few basic ingredients and transformed them into brilliant, acidic freakouts.

At a showcase at art gallery Babycastles in Manhattan, things get even weirder with **Jahiliyya Fields**. A definite standout on Ron Morelli's banging, clanging LIES label, I've never heard a man do something quite this terrifying with a contact mic and sheet of aluminum. Playing the same gig and seamlessly transitioning out of an ambient set by Ivy Meadows was **Bryce Hackford**, with urgent vocal samples and club-friendly beats. He's recently remixed DFA veteran Delia Gonzalez's multimedia

project 'In Remembrance', turning her delicate piano score into left-field dance bliss. Check this out in April.

Bringing up the rear is **Bottoms**, self-described as "two shitty drag queens, a 303 and a drummer". They sound like Factory Floor fronted by an eight-year-old girl. Plus the singer has a gigantic tattoo from the classic Japanese horror manga *Uzumaki*. They just signed to Atlas Chair records for an EP featuring tracks titled 'Die/Rot' and 'HIV'. Fun for everyone!



Bottoms

"Bottoms describe themselves as 'two shitty drag queens, a 303 and a drummer'"

Next week: The Vaccines

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Ample Play



► **FOUNDED** In 2009 by Cornershop

members Tjinder Singh and Ben Ayres

► **BASED** London

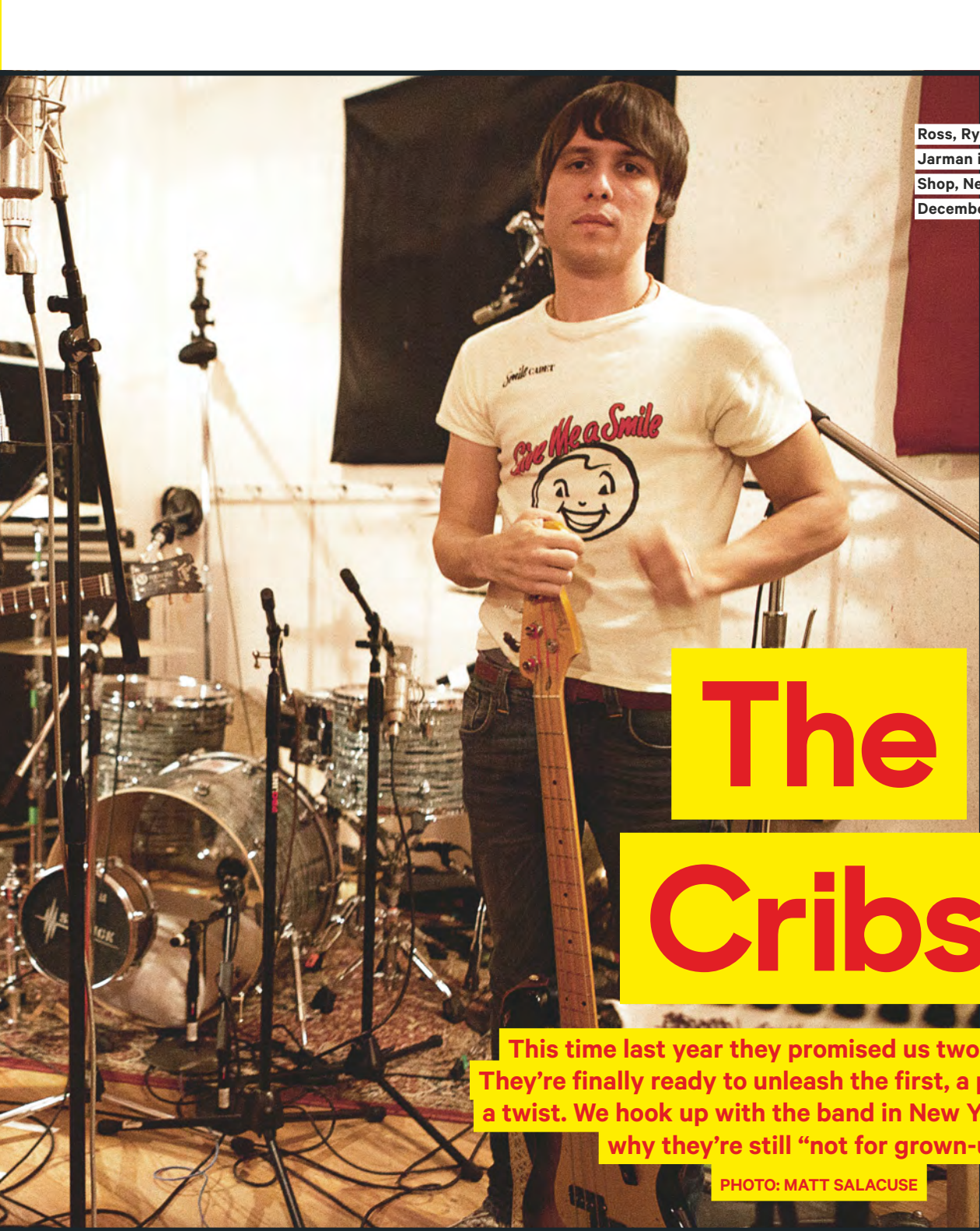
► **KEY RELEASES** The Sufis – 'The Sufis' (2012), Sudden Death Of Stars – 'All Unrevealed Parts Of The Unknown' (2014), Bed Rugs – '8th Cloud' (2014)

► **NME SAYS** Not just a home for their own material, Ben and Tjinder are also masters at unearthing weird sounds from around the world. "We want to be looked back on as classic and collectible," they say.

50 **MORE** NEW ALBUMS YOU NEED TO HEAR THIS YEAR



More comebacks! More debuts! More 'difficult' second albums! Following last week's half-century, we check in to see how 50 more of 2015's must-have records are shaping up



Ross, Ryan and Gary
Jarman in The Magic
Shop, New York,
December 10, 2014

The Cribs

This time last year they promised us two new albums. They're finally ready to unleash the first, a pop record with a twist. We hook up with the band in New York to discover why they're still "not for grown-ups"

PHOTO: MATT SALACUSE

Behind an inconspicuous grey door, camouflaged against the walls and pavements that surround it in Lower Manhattan, New York, is The Magic Shop studio where, in October 2014, The Cribs bunkered down to make their sixth studio album, 'For All My Sisters'. The Magic Shop is beloved of Sonic Youth, the Ramones, David Bowie, Arcade Fire and Foo Fighters, who featured the facility in their *Sonic Highways* series, and whose frontman sprung The Cribs a visit on day one after a chance meeting on the street. "We left to get pizza and within three minutes we returned with Dave Grohl,"

says bassist Gary. "We'd played with him in Ireland and he was like, 'The Cribs? I love you guys!' We thought it was a really good omen for the first day of the record – it was just like a rabbit's foot or something."

The band might have needed a bit of luck, given they were already 12 months off schedule. In *NME's* Albums Of 2014 issue, the brothers Jarman promised they were working on not one but two albums: one punk, one pop. Neither materialised, thanks in part to the changes

► **TITLE** For All My Sisters
► **RELEASE DATE** March
► **LABEL** Sonic Blew/Sony Red
► **PRODUCER** Ric Ocasek
► **RECORDED** The Magic Shop, New York

the band were going through behind the scenes. After years of calling Wichita their home, they left the indie label behind and signed instead with Sony Red. For Gary especially, it was an adjustment that took time to get used to. "Last year was strange, not having those guys [from Wichita] around and not making a record," he says, sinking back into the leather sofa in the studio's basement. "Maybe we would have made a record last year, but it took a while to readjust." ➔



The Cribs with
dream producer
Ric Ocasek and
(below) with
Dave Grohl

A year later than anyone – from fans to band – would really have liked, The Cribs have finally knuckled down to business on one of those pledged records. The punk one with Steve Albini at the helm is still to come; right now, the trio are indulging their pop side. “There’s this song called ‘Burning For No One’ that’s so pop,” explains Gary excitedly. “It might be too pop...” “Gary’s been listening to too much [’80s pop singer] Martika,” laughs drummer Ross. “I was thinking maybe that had an effect on it!”

Pop is the big buzzword in the studio. “I think this is the poppiest record since [2007 album] ‘Men’s Needs, Women’s Needs, Whatever,’” says singer and guitarist Ryan. “When we did [2012 album] ‘In The Belly Of The Brazen Bull’, we used that as a chance to get the more abrasive songs out. With this one, we fancied having that contrast of going back to where we concentrate on the melodies.”

Ryan sees the album as the beginning of a new chapter for the band; he talks at length about “not phoning it in” and coming back with something “fully realised”. A decade into their career, The Cribs want their next 10 years to kick off as strongly as possible. “There’s always some reason why [every record] has to be better than the last,” shrugs the guitarist. “The last record was the first one back as a three-piece [after Johnny Marr’s exit]. There was all this gravity and it had to be better. This one, because it’s the first one of the next 10 years, you feel that gravity again.”

In the past, the band have roped in some of the most venerated producers in alternative music to help them excel themselves. This time, they’ve finally got their long-held wish of working with Ric Ocasek, producer for Weezer, Hole, No Doubt and Suicide (among others), and frontman of ’70s/’80s power-pop group The Cars. “He’s almost like the last dream producer we had on our list,” Ryan explains. “It was always Steve Albini, Dave Fridmann, Ric Ocasek, and we’ve ticked off all those big, dream producers now. Ric’s someone who knows how to make pop records without it being obvious. He is one of those guys who has a pop sensibility but in a cool way.”

“We’ve changed. We’re not the same people any more”

Gary Jarman

One song on the record bears the most obvious signposts to Ocasek’s own work. ‘An Ivory Hand’, which went by the working title ‘The Geek Rock Song’, could easily nestle on an early Weezer album, all “woahs”, “ohs” and chugging guitars. It’s the track they’ve chosen to mark their return as a teaser for the record, and for good reason: it’s one of the best things the band have ever done. And there are plenty more to come, from what *NME* hears.

‘For All My Sisters’ is the first album The Cribs have made since Ryan left England and moved to New York. With Gary in Portland, Oregon and Ross still in the group’s native Wakefield, it’s allowed the album to come to life in some very different environments, with sessions taking place in each of the brothers’ homes. Wakefield became their base whenever they were all in the UK for festivals, while Ryan and Ross flew out to Portland at the beginning of last year to write in Gary’s basement.

“We’ve changed,” continues Gary. “We’re not the same people any more. We were like that when the band started, and that’s great – I love to see a band who’s single-minded and a gang, and it would be nice to be the Ramones, but even those guys pretty radically drifted apart. For us, I think it was great to have some space between us.”

For Ryan, taking up residency in the US has definitely had an impact on the record, giving him more positive experiences to write about. “I think a lot of my lyrics on ‘... Brazen Bull’ were much

more bleak and about feeling like you’re at the end of something,” he says, picking up a plastic toy spider and a pair of scissors from the table in front of him. With the spider’s head between the blades, he continues: “Since I moved here and started a new life, I feel my lyrics loosely deal with that. Slightly more optimistic, know what I mean? I don’t think I’ll ever be *that* optimistic, though...”

Gary wrestles the spider from his twin and puts it back on its shelf. “For me, music’s about escapism. I’m not the sort of person who’s like, ‘This song’s about the Tory government.’ My lyrics are sentimental – I jot ideas down in my book and turn them into songs. I just try to evoke that sentiment I originally had, without painting it too vividly.” He laughs. “It sounds very pretentious. Maybe it would just be easier to write a song about Thatcher or something.”

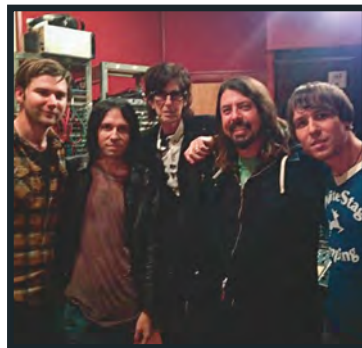
Taking the easy route isn’t The Cribs’ way, though, and recording this album hasn’t been the most painless experience. The three are knackered from long, “intense” sessions that have been booked to get the record done quickly rather than sit around fiddling with minute details for months. “Yesterday, I finished the lyrics on a song that I’d been working on forever, and it had to be done because we’re coming to the end now,” Ryan explains. “So you come out of the session feeling like you’ve accomplished something but super fried. It’s a weird feeling; you don’t know if you feel good or terrible.”

That feeling of being torn between two polar opposites is something that exists in the rest of the band too, which Gary describes as a “conundrum”, even after 12 years. “I believe we’re a pop band but we’ve always struggled with mainstream recognition,” he sighs. “But then we don’t really want mainstream recognition because we’re a punk-rock band. There’s so many conflicts.”

“Now we’ve been around for so long we have things like some people calling us a national treasure or a British institution,” draws Ryan. “But at the same time, the grown-ups still don’t like us. That’s absolutely undeniable. For some reason or another that I don’t care about, they still don’t like us. But whatever.”

Gary, noting the irony, grins. “Even though we’re the grown-ups now!”

This sixth album might be ushering in a new dawn in The Cribs’ existence and heralding it with big pop hooks and a major-label deal, but the Jarmans are still the same band they’ve always been – three principled, passionate brothers, railing against the mediocre and the bland with some of their finest work to date – whatever the grown-ups think. ■ RHIAN DALY



Noel tuning
up in the studio

Noel Gallagher

Ten things you need to know
about The Chief's new album,
'Chasing Yesterday'...

1. Paul Weller was the first person to hear it.

Noel: "He's always the first to hear anything I do because he's a devourer of new music. When I finish anything he's like, 'Let's hear it, fucking hell, let's hear it.'"

2. Noel plays acoustic, electric and bass guitars, the Mellotron, the piano, various keyboards...

...and the electric washboard.

3. It's full of "songs that make you kind of punch in the air while crying a little bit".

"That's the kind of thing I find most comfortable writing," says Noel. "It's the Irish in me, that's what we do. We're never happy. We rage joy. Even 'Some Might Say', for instance, is a very melancholic Irish kind of anthem."

4. Johnny Marr is "a fucking wizard".

Noel: "I tried to get him on the last record because there's a bit in 'What A Life' that I thought needed a bit of funk, and he's got the funk, but he couldn't do it, so I had to do it. And I was embarrassed doing it because I haven't got the funk. On 'Ballad Of The Mighty I', obviously the outro is all him. He's not in the fore or the background, but he's fucking amazing, what a dude. What's even more annoying about him is, he's been around on the scene and in the game since the pyramids and he's still only fucking 18 months

older than I am." (Actually, it's almost four years...)

5. The lyrics are classic Noel.

"The girl with the X-ray eyes, she's gonna see through my disguise" on 'Girl With The X-Ray Eyes'. "I tried my best to get there but I can't afford the bus fare" on 'The Dying Of The Light'. "Out of the blue I heard an angel say, 'Give me your soul and I'll be on my way'" on 'The Right Stuff'.

6. 'You Know We Can't Go Back' is not about Oasis.

Noel: "There's no songs about that kind of thing. I think it's sad when people write songs about things like that."

7. But bits of the album do sound like Oasis.

There's a bit of 'Talk Tonight' in the acoustic intro to 'Riveman', a string section in 'The Girl With The X-Ray Eyes' that recalls 'The Masterplan' and a drum break in the same song that's almost 'Don't Look Back In Anger'.

► **TITLE** Chasing Yesterday
► **RELEASE DATE** March 2
► **LABEL** Sour Mash
► **PRODUCER** Noel Gallagher
► **RECORDED** Strangeways Studios, London
► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Riveman
►2. In The Heat Of The Moment ►3. The Girl With The X-Ray Eyes ►4. Lock All The Doors ►5. The Dying Of The Light ►6. The Right Stuff ►7. While The Song Remains The Same ►8. The Mexican ►9. You Know We Can't Go Back ►10. Ballad Of The Mighty I

Then 'Lock All The Doors', which was almost an Oasis song, kicks in like 'Morning Glory' did.

8. 'The Mexican' almost didn't make it.

Noel: "On the original running order 'The Mexican' wasn't on the album, but I felt it needed something there to lighten the mood a bit. That and 'In The Heat Of The Moment' were the two most throwaway things on the record, and that's what I want there."

9. Even though it's 23 years old, 'Lock All The Doors' has never been played live.

Noel: "We used to do it before we were signed. I don't really think we've played it live, but when I wrote it was in '92 or '93, and the reason it got bumped off 'Definitely Maybe' was I was writing songs so fast it just got left behind."

10. The riverman in 'Riveman' is "anybody, innit".

Noel: "But definitely a guy with a beard and wellies." ■ TOM HOWARD



The Maccabees

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► With recording sessions finally wrapping up in January, The Maccabees' long-awaited fourth (it's been three long years since 'Given To The Wild') is nearly ready to go. Four tracks – the urgent-sounding 'Spit It Out', anthem-in-waiting 'Marks To Prove It', the glistening groove of 'Kamakura' and 'WW1 Portraits', which starts slow, then explodes – have been debuted at a recent run of support slots with Kasabian, while the rest of the album will be "more self-assured and confident" than their last, according to singer Orlando Weeks. Produced by guitarist Hugo White and recorded in the band's own south London studio, the as-yet-untitled album is hinged around a more communal approach, the band recording endless hours of music and "scrapbooking" the best bits to return to. "There's an unbelievable amount of terrible, terrible music that has gone into finding bits that we think were good enough to make it," says Weeks. The bits that have made the cut, however, are "much less layered; less conceptual; more direct" than material on 'Given To The Wild'. Expect the boys to come back with a bang. ■ LISA WRIGHT



Florence + The Machine

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► Like her icon Kate Bush, Florence Welch might be in possession of a belting set of pipes, but she's also pretty good at keeping quiet when she wants to. That there's going to be a new Florence + The Machine album this year is the music industry's worst-kept secret, but so far Flo has revealed little detail. Last summer, she made her live return at the Mark Ronson-hosted charity Other Ball in London. Speaking to *NME* before she took to the stage, she confirmed that, yes, she was definitely working on album number three, later adding that she'd been "hiding in a studio 24 hours a day". She's also been confirmed to appear at a host of European festivals this summer and a Glastonbury slot is also highly likely, seeing as she's also booked to play Belgium's Rock Werchter that same weekend. If you've got a new album to promote, then a major-league festival tour is the perfect way to do it, so by our estimation the album will be out just before the summer – after she's made her return at California's Coachella Festival in April. ■ LEONIE COOPER



The Smashing Pumpkins

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► Last year, Billy Corgan did the unexpected and returned with 'Monuments To An Elegy', a Smashing Pumpkins album that sounded like the band at their peak. Despite threats that the group's days are numbered, he's not finished just yet.

Previously described by Corgan as "darker and shinier" than its predecessor, upcoming LP 'Day For Night' will be a noisier experience – a reaction to the frustration he feels at the "processed, calculated" faux-alternative pop cluttering up

the American charts. "It feels like a musical stasis," he says of the album, which is still being recorded. "I no longer view [Smashing Pumpkins] as being able to evolve forward in the way that I would like to."

Despite that, 'Day...' should be equally as indebted to classic Pumpkins as 'Monuments...'. Corgan admits that the band is something he returns to when he wants to do what is expected of him. "People expect guitars, they expect passion," he explains, adding calmly, "The best thing to do is shine up what we have and punch everybody in the face from a different angle." ■ RHIAN DALY

Muse

Details are sparse but the band have hinted at a back-to-basics approach for album number seven



Muse's Instagram from Oct/Nov shows them rehearsing in a Vancouver studio



Given his geeky obsession with the final frontier, Matt Bellamy should know all about The Big Crunch. Some scientists say that the universe can't keep on expanding forever. Eventually it will reach breaking point: after growing bigger and bigger, reaching further outwards and spiralling off-kilter, it will shrink and contract and re-collapse, sucked into a new black hole. And then it's back to the beginning, all over again.

Study the stars, see how they're aligning, and it seems that the time has come for Muse's own Big Crunch, too: the album where they rid themselves of the 'bigger is better' philosophy, cast aside all the added celestial bells and whistles and get back to doing what they do best; starting again, and starting small. If 2012's 'The 2nd Law' found them playing with dubstep and recruiting violists, cellists and trumpeters, then this time around should be very different.

"I have this strong feeling that the next album should be something that really does strip away the additional things that we've

experimented with on the last two albums, which is electronics, symphonics and orchestral work and all that kind of stuff," said Bellamy in December 2013. "It will be nice to reconnect and remind ourselves of just the basics of who we are."

Since then, further details have been scant, but it looks like they're sticking to their word. Anyone poring over Muse's Instagram for details and hunting for breadcrumbs will have noticed how much smaller these sessions are on the whole, mainly photographs of Bellamy, bassist Chris Wolstenholme and drummer Dom Howard jamming in the studio together (although Bellamy *did* share one pic of an orchestra, with the caption "Milan strings"). And unlike both 'The 2nd Law' and its predecessor, 2009's dystopian, Orwellian 'The Resistance', it'll be the first time the band haven't self-produced an album in half a decade. Instead, grizzled knob-twiddler Robert 'Mutt' Lange – the man responsible for the nail-gun assault of AC/DC's 'Back In

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC
► LABEL Warners
► PRODUCER Robert 'Mutt' Lange
► RECORDED Vancouver, Milan

Black' – will be at the helm. "We are honoured to be making our new album with this legendary producer," said Bellamy on Twitter. Expect him to keep things sounding as skin-strippingly brash as humanly possible.

Bellamy's Twitter, in fact, is probably the biggest source of information about the LP right now. And he's been posting endless teasers on there for a while, all hinting at a more robust, back-to-basics record. He's promised it will be "heavy"; that it might feature a shed-load of guitar solos; that it should be ready for release this summer; he's even suggested that they're so keen to reawaken their link with the past that they've been working on a new track that stands as a sequel to 2001's much-loved 'Citizen Erased'. Don't be fooled, then, by his claims that the album's themes will be based on the "deep ecology, the empathy gap and World War III" – because none of the most spoddish concepts in the world can disguise that, for Muse, album number seven is Year Zero. After all, it's time for the crunch. ■ BEN HEWITT

"It will be nice to remind ourselves who we are"

Matt Bellamy

Young Fathers

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► After Young Fathers won the Mercury Prize last October, they said they couldn't party because they had a new album to make. The group decamped to Berlin the next day, where work began. Speaking to *NME* about the album, Graham Hastings laid out their simple manifesto: "We want to go out there with a big fucking megaphone and shout stuff and then fuck off." ■ DAVID RENSHAW



Slowdive

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► A year of reformation shows in 2014 had the feel of a victory lap, the resurgent Reading shoegazers taking their dreamy sonic cathedrals everywhere from China to the US. Last June, frontwoman Rachel Goswell said that there was "definitely a [new] record in there", while guitarist Neil Halstead alluded to recording sessions following their London shows at the end of 2014. Instagram pics suggest they're in full swing. ■ LOUIS PATTISON

Mystery Jets

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► "I haven't left the studio in 24 hours," tweeted Mystery Jets' Blaine Harrison recently from the Stoke Newington lair in which his band have spent the last few months crafting their follow-up to 2012's 'Radlands'. "My life has just become an arrangement of coloured blocks on a computer screen." A couple of low-key shows and a remix aside, last year was a quiet one, but don't expect 2015 to be similarly subdued. ■ AL HORNER



Savages

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC



► For Savages, looking backwards isn't an option. And though the London quartet are yet to start recording their new album, they have an abundance of new material to work with. "After we stopped touring in May 2014, each of us had specific ideas we wanted to try in the writing process," singer Jehnnny Beth says. "So far we've written more than enough for the second album, but we want to write more, to explore every avenue."

Beth, who's not known for being shy (last year she hit out against a variety of issues on her personal blog, including the system of class at music festivals, Viv Albertine's "naive" views, and recent UK porn legislation), says the songs might portray a different side to her. "Lyrically, there's been quite a turn for me

in the past year. While remaining naturally confrontational, I became more open. We started working on finding ways to use that as a strength with the music."

New material was tested out at Brighton's Drill Festival in December, and the tracks 'Slowing Down The World', 'Adore' and 'When You Love' stood out. "The audience's reaction was very strong," Beth says. "We left the room with a very warm feeling."

Savages are playing their new material at selected venues in New York this month. "As with the first record, the songs are crafted for the stage," says Beth. "We want the shows to be part of the writing process. New York is a challenge – once you sell out nine shows there's no turning back." ■ NADIA KHOMAMI

Lana Del Rey



► Not one to rest on her laurels, Lana Del Rey has already been talking up a follow-up to last year's 'Ultraviolence'. It will be called 'Honeymoon', according to a recent interview she gave to *Billboard*, and she hinted at a quick release: "It's very different from the last one and similar to the first two, 'Born To Die' and 'Paradise' [the extended version of her debut]. I finished my last one in March and released it in June, and I had a follow-up idea. It's growing into something I really like. I'm kind of enjoying sinking into this more noirish feel for this one." She added that nine tracks had already been written, the album would include a cover of 'Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood' –

► TITLE Honeymoon
► RELEASE DATE TBC

the standard first recorded by Nina Simone in 1964 – and that she was currently "looking for a few more songs to tie everything together".

In a separate interview, given to the *Los Angeles Times*, she spoke about a new song that flips a golden oldie on its head. Asked whether making music for film, as she did for Tim Burton's *Big Eyes*, was similar to making music for her albums, she said: "Definitely. I can see it and I can hear it. I'm working on a new record now, and I have this one song, 'Music To Watch Boys To'. The title lends itself to a visual of shadows of men passing by, this girl's eyes, her face. I can definitely see things." ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE



The Prodigy:
(l-r) Liam Howlett,
Maxim, Keith Flint

The Prodigy

The Essex group's 'violent-sounding' sixth album is almost upon us

Since 1997's chart-melting 'The Fat Of The Land' (10m global sales; Number One almost everywhere), Prodigy albums have been released at irregular, lengthy intervals. Its follow-up – 2004 fourth album 'Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned' – took seven years to emerge, 2009's 'Invaders Must Die' a further five, and although songwriter Liam Howlett told *NME* last June that their forthcoming sixth album would be out in the "last part" of 2014, it's now being released on March 30 – six years after 'Invaders...'

The new album will be called 'The Day Is My Enemy' and not 'How To Steal A Jetfighter', as once suspected. The song 'Jetfighter', which the band have been playing live, won't be on the album, nor will other new tracks such as 'Dogbite' and 'AWOL' (although 'AWOL' might become a bonus track). In fact, the only new songs they've been performing that will be included are 'Rok-Weiler' and 'The Day', now called 'Destroy'. Other tracks include 'Ibiza', which features Sleaford Mods, 'Nasty', the first single, and 'Get Your Fight On' – clues, perhaps, to its promised harder sound.

Howlett puts down the delay in the new album's release to changes behind the scenes: "I'm always writing, but 2013 and 2014 were bad years as far as the writing went. It's no

► **TITLE** The Day Is My Enemy
► **RELEASE DATE** March 30
► **LABEL** Take Me To The Hospital
► **PRODUCERS** Liam Howlett, with Neil Mclellan engineering
► **RECORDED** Tileyard, London
► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. The Day Is My Enemy ►2. Nasty ►3. Rebel Radio ►4. Ibiza ►5. Destroy ►6. Wild Frontier ►7. Rok-Weiler ►8. Beyond The Deathray ►9. Rhythm Bomb ►10. Roadblox ►11. Get Your Fight On ►12. Medicine ►13. Invisible Son ►14. Wall Of Death

excuse, but I was fucked about and had to move studios twice. I'm in a different place now – I had somewhere built; I'm in the Tileyard in King's Cross – I've got my own room and it's great. Actually, I had two studios running while I was finishing the record."

There have also been movements with regards to the band's label in the US (they signed to Warner imprint Three Six Zero, home to Calvin Harris and Deadmau5, in August) and changes in the way Howlett goes about writing: "I used to write a tune, finish it, put it to bed and either mix it then or

later. But it would more or less be done. Some of these new tracks I half-wrote a year or more ago, then I've come back to them and gone, "That's still a great idea, let's finish it off."

Howlett previously told *NME* the album will be "more violent-sounding", adding: "It's not so much old school, although the elements

which are the band mean that that sound will always be there. It's neither guitar-based nor synth-based; it's kind of a mixture of the two. Keith [Flint] and Maxim appear on it a bit more than they do on 'Invaders...' and Rob [Holliday, the band's live guitarist] is on a couple of tracks. Tracks that we like playing live from 'Invaders...', like 'Omen' and 'Take Me To The Hospital', are the template for what we wanted to do with this record."

Although Howlett won't yet be pushed on whether he thinks the album will stand up to the band's '90s work, he's confident it will. "I'm not worried about whether I can keep things fresh. If I don't feel the music I'm making, I don't do it. And if I'm in it, I really feel it – and I've been feeling these new tracks." ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

"If I don't feel the music I'm making, I don't do it"

Liam Howlett



Liam in his King's Cross studio with Keith

James Blake

► TITLE Radio Silence
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► With a Mercury Prize under his belt for 'Overgrown', James Blake is roving far and wide to create the follow-up, moving to LA to live with Chance The Rapper and collaborating with Kanye West and Bon Iver. "The album I'm writing now, I've had more focus doing this than I have before," he said. "I'm having more fun. It's hard to say what will end up on the record, but it's exciting." ■ LUCY JONES



Deap Vally

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► The second album from the heavy-rockin' 'crochet fans is being produced by their "brother from another mother", Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Nick Zinner, with recording having taken place in El Paso and LA. "We are not the little babies we were three years ago," drummer Julie Edwards tells us of the album's "world-weariness". They're thinking of calling their favourite song 'Fuck You #7', apparently. "As always, we spiral closer and closer to truth," they say. ■ EMILY MACKAY



The Districts

► TITLE A Flourish And A Spoil
► RELEASE DATE February 9

► After helping St Vincent make *NME's* favourite album of 2014, producer John Congleton popped on his 'bluesy Americana' hat and welcomed The Districts into his studio. The result is their label debut for Fat Possum. "The best thing John did for us was tell us to stop over-thinking," says frontman Rob Grote. "The record sounds really raw. I can't wait for people to hear it." ■ KEVIN EG PERRY



Swim Deep

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE Summer

► Swim Deep's 2013 debut, 'Where The Heaven Are We', was packed full of promise, *NME's* reviewer noting it "tantalisingly hints at a much more expansive, ambitious sound to come". Since last September the Brummie five-piece have been bolted away in a studio hunting for just that sound, something the band have taken to calling "psychedelic sex music". Frontman Austin Williams told us: "We wanted to radicalise chart music. So we've taken 'Yeezus' and 'Rumours' and put them together with acid house." While the band were once pigeonholed in the B-Town indie scene, in 2015 they're leaving their home town behind and setting controls for the heart of the sun. "If the first album was about getting out of Birmingham then this one's about getting off the planet," Williams told us. "It's a zero-gravity gospel record for the masses." ■ KEVIN EG PERRY



Coldplay

► TITLE A Head Full Of Dreams
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► When Chris Martin replied to a chat show host's inquiry as to whether Coldplay would be touring 2014's 'Ghost Stories' with a curt "no", you'd have been forgiven for thinking his and Gwyneth Paltrow's 'conscious uncoupling' had left him destroyed, road-shy and reclusive. Not so – it turns out that last year's low-key electro-ballad moe-fest was always intended to be swiftly followed by a more commercial accompaniment, tentatively titled 'A Head Full Of Dreams', and world tour. And that, folks, might well be farewell;

Martin has hinted at the band undergoing a conscious unrockulating after this album. "It's our seventh thing, and the way we look at it, it's like the last Harry Potter book," he said. "Not to say that there might not be another thing one day..." There's also speculation that Coldplay will headline Glastonbury 2015, which would suggest a summer-friendly release. As the band who turned stadiums full of fans into their own light show on their 'Mylo Xyloto' tour, don't expect them to go out with a whimper. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

Alice Glass

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► In October, Alice Glass announced her surprise departure from Crystal Castles on Twitter: "My art and my self-expression in any form has always been an attempt towards sincerity, honesty, and empathy for others. For reasons both professional and personal I no longer feel that this is possible within CC. Although this is the end of the band, I hope my fans will embrace me as a solo artist."

Since then, there's been no word of dates or definite releases, just a short DJ set from Alice at the Beach Goth festival in Santa Ana, California, before which she tweeted "no live music yet. soon." But: her management say there is no solo record planned. All very confusing. For now, we can only speculate as to what any Alice Glass music might sound like.

Crystal Castles fans are also left unsure for the moment as to whether Ethan Kath will continue without Alice. Their manager, on the day of Alice's announcement, told *NME*: "There will be twists and turns ahead for Crystal Castles, I wouldn't bury the dead just yet!" ■ EMILY MACKAY





Grimes

The lowdown on Claire Boucher's follow-up
to 2012's groundbreaking 'Visions'...

33

It was originally intended for a September release

Boucher initially started writing at home in Vancouver, living a reclusive lifestyle and “not seeing anyone”, as she told *The New York Times*. “Stewing” by herself had always worked in the past – for 2012’s ‘Visions’, she blacked out her bedroom windows, stayed up for days on speed, and wrote and recorded straight into her computer. This time, however, the process was coming up short. “It sucked,” she said of the material written there, “so I threw it out and started again.” Decamping to LA brought about a much more social – and fruitful – situation. “I’m just making way more music,” she said. “I took my advance and I used it to have my own studio. Recording in professional studios is the worst idea – I don’t know why anybody even does it... they’re so expensive.”

She spent “a really long time freaking out” after releasing ‘Visions’

In a motivational essay on being a boss for teen publication *Rookie*, Boucher explained that, despite the success of her third record, which she created independently, certain

people around her were still trying to tell her what to do next – that she’d have to “become a better musician” or get a band. Despite having a temporary freakout, Boucher soon realised that “none of those people have music careers” and that “as a fan, I am far more interested in things that I’ve never seen before” and decided to continue as she was.

She’s been writing with guitars for the first time

Unlike the laptop-rooted ‘Visions’, for album four Boucher has been teaching herself guitar, which she calls “a whole new sonic world, melodically, rhythmically. Playing ‘irl’ music is my biggest inspiration lately”. She clarified: “That probably seems ridiculous but I’ve only ever tried to make music with computers before, obvs more possibilities, but much less visceral.” One of the resulting tracks could be the third single for this album and was her “first attempt at a glam rock style song, feeling Queen and Bowie”.

► **TITLE** TBC
► **RELEASE DATE** TBC
► **LABEL** 4AD
► **PRODUCER** Grimes
► **RECORDED** At home in Vancouver and LA
► **TRACKS INCLUDE** David, Sleepwalking

‘Go’, which she wrote for Rihanna, won’t be on the record

Boucher got the opportunity to contribute a song to Rihanna’s long-delayed eighth studio album, probably because they’re both signed to Jay Z’s management company, Roc Nation. Together with frequent

collaborator Blood Diamonds, she wrote ‘Go’, a heavy track laden with a blaring horn hook in the chorus. Ultimately rejected from the Bajan singer’s pile, Boucher recorded it herself, premiering it live at New York festival The Governors Ball in June and releasing the recorded version a fortnight later. However, as Boucher recently clarified, it wasn’t her fourth album’s first single, and it won’t even be on the album – “cuz I didn’t produce it and I produce my albums”. She told *The New York Times* that she knows it “upsets” a lot of her fans, and she can see why: “Everybody was like, ‘Oh, Grimes is pandering to the radio.’” However, two more songs she premiered at Governors Ball, ‘David’ and ‘Sleepwalking’, might make the record.

■ LAURA SNAPES

The Dead Weather

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► Jack White will return in 2015 with his other band. In-between touring his 2014 solo album 'Lazaretto', The Dead Weather reconvened in Nashville, and the resulting third album will land this year. Both of the group's records so far have both been broody, feral garage-rock beasts. A couple of typically meaty tracks snuck out in 2014 signalled that six years in this 'side project' has lost none of the fire in its belly. ■ GREG COCHRANE



The Kills

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► When she wasn't working with The Dead Weather (see above) or guesting on Gang Of Four's 'England's In My Bones', Alison Mosshart spent the latter half of 2014 locked away in studios in London and Nashville pulling together the fifth Kills album, and first since 2011's 'Blood Pressures'. Mosshart has revealed that she and bandmate Jamie Hince are working on several songs. ■ KEVIN EG PERRY

Beth Jeans Houghton

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE March 10

► It's been three years since Beth Jeans Houghton's celebrated debut, 'Yours Truly, Cellophane Nose', but since then the Newcastle singer-songwriter has parted from her band The Hooves Of Destiny. "This record is a lot heavier," Beth says. "I have a lot of aggression I need to release."

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE



Laura Marling

► TITLE Short Movie
► RELEASE DATE March 23

► For a woman who's frequently hinted about a nagging urge to throw in the towel and give up on music, Laura Marling's been no slouch at putting out albums – at just 24, 'Short Movie' will be her fifth. Written during two years living primarily in Los Angeles, the album has both the stirring acoustic tracks we've come to expect from Marling plus electrified FM rock recalling – at times – the likes of Dire Straits. The lyrics document her travels around the USA – 'Easy' describes a trip to the Joshua Tree, and there's

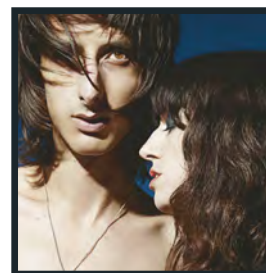
a track written while stranded in New York during Hurricane Sandy. In spite of its origins, the album was recorded in Hackney in June 2014, at drummer Matt Ingram's tiny Urchin Studios. There, Marling produced herself for the first time. "My idea was to have a metallic, urban sound," said Marling. "Living where I've been living, there's always a fucking helicopter, there's always the sound of a city behind you." ■ DAN STUBBS

Cat's Eyes

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE Summer

► The duo consisting of The Horrors' Faris Badwan and classical musician Rachel Zeffira may have taken a four-year break since their 2011 self-titled debut, but in 2015 they're making up for lost time with two releases. The first, due around March, is the soundtrack to the Peter Strickland-directed art flick *The Duke Of Burgundy*, which weaves a visually decadent portrait of two women's romance. "Everyone says they want to do a film soundtrack, it's almost a recurring joke

for people in bands, but this was immediately exciting," says Badwan of the collaboration. Then there's the duo's second album proper, currently being recorded in London and Bath. With a release pencilled in for late summer, it's an album that retains the idea of "structured pop songs" that informed their debut but adds a new "expansive" layer. "We're lucky in that the soundtrack does bridge the gap," says Badwan. "It feels like the natural middle stage between the two records." ■ LISA WRIGHT

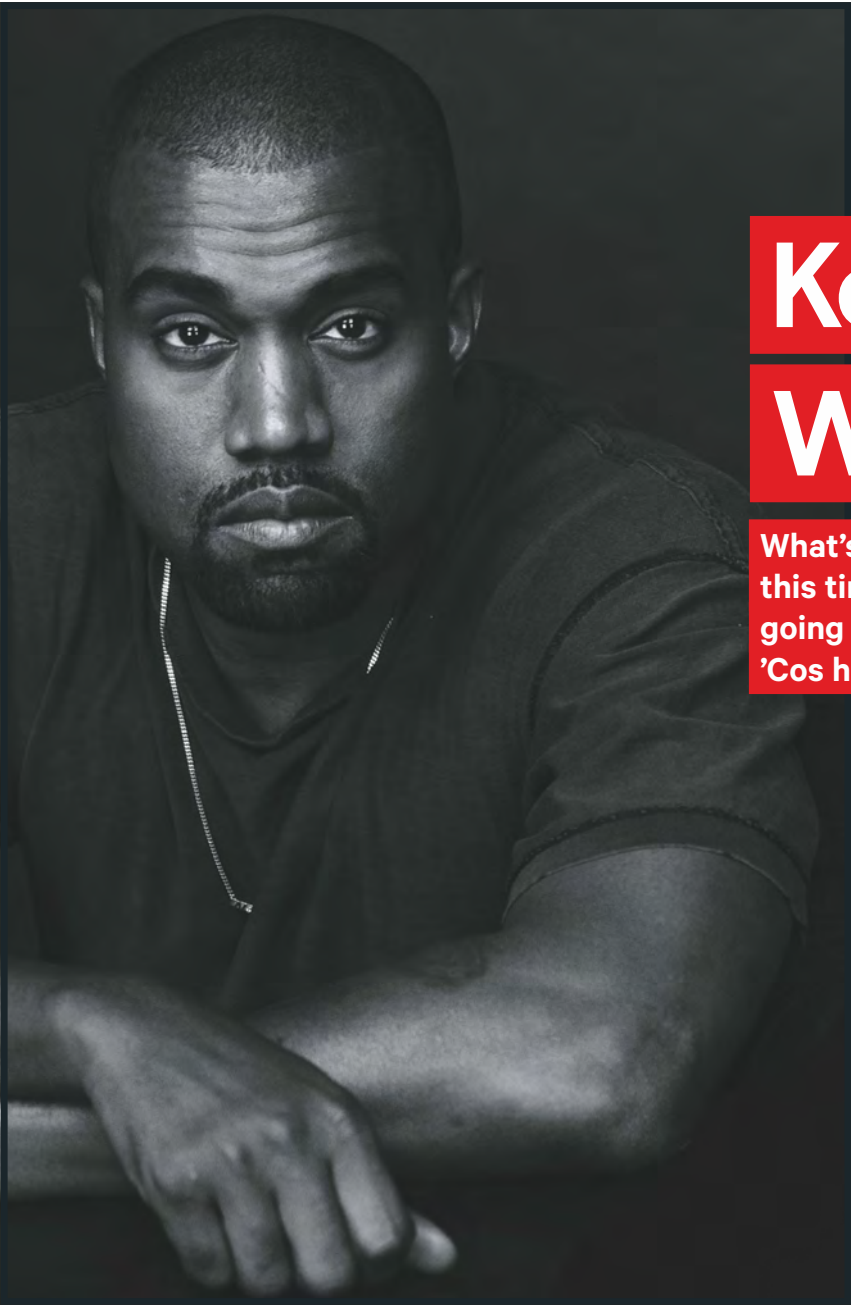


Everything Everything

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE Spring

► Everything Everything's last album, 2013's 'Arc', was mired in negativity: throughout its creation, the Manchester-based four-piece consistently questioned whether what they were making was any good, while Jonathan Higgs' lyrics took an apocalyptic setting to explore the doldrums of depression. Its as-yet-untitled follow-up takes a more defiant approach to the shit we're in. "I think you'd have to be blind and deaf to

have lived through 2014 and *not* shed a tear," says Jonathan. "If you put out a record this year and it's all smiles, then I think you're a liar, basically." Accordingly, the desperation of belief is the prevailing theme of the record, which will be their first without David Kosten at the helm – instead, pop specialist Stuart Price is producing. "This time, people are not gonna know what the fuck to do with [the record], and I don't care 'cos I think it's awesome," says Jonathan. ■ LAURA SNAPES



Kanye West

What's it going to sound like this time? And when's it going to actually come out? 'Cos he says it's good to go...

Judging by what's happened already, the road to the release of Kanye West's seventh album – the follow-up to 2013's 'Yeezus' – is going to be bumpy, windy and include many diversions. Or, equally, it could be out by the time you read this – posted online in the dead of night with no fanfare. Truly, it's become impossible to predict these things. "I hope I can get one of these songs out in the next couple of weeks, just to have something up and running," he told *GQ* last July. "But I think most likely September. I go back and forth. Like, should it be September or should it be October? Should it be November?

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC
► LABEL TBC
► PRODUCERS
Kanye West, Rick Rubin
(rumoured)
► RECORDED TBC

When Beyoncé was working on her last album, she took a while. I was thinking it could somehow come out in June, like 'Yeezus', and just kill it for the summer. But then I'm like, I have to work on [my range for] Adidas and be with my child."

Even by July, some very selected people had heard a version of the album, including film star Seth Rogen, who with James Franco had spoofed the ludicrous video to 'Bound 2' from 'Yeezus'. We didn't know about this until December when Rogan was out promoting *The Interview* – the comedy movie about assassinating North Korean leader Kim Jong-un that was thought to have

caused the Sony cyber-attacks – but Kanye apparently live-rapped the entire album to him and his wife over recorded instrumentals in a parked limo-van outside a hotel in New York. That was back in early 2014, long before a rough of a track thought to be from the album, 'All Day', slipped online in August, followed by rapper Theophilus London – rumoured to feature on the record – revealing that he and about 20 others had copped three full listens of the record in a dark room during Paris Fashion Week in September. Seemingly, Theophilus was hammered, as he mentioned on his Instagram account, his memories of the experience stop at "moshing drunk with mad babes". But then, on New Year's Eve, the first official single was released on Kanye's site. It was called 'Only One' and is one of many tracks he claims he's recorded with Paul McCartney (though not for the album), another of which was rumoured (incorrectly) to be called 'Piss On My Grave'

So what do we actually know about the album? Not much, and as always with Kanye, everything is subject to change. Rick Rubin is thought to be onboard in a production role, as he was for 'Yeezus', and other guests mentioned include Q-Tip, Mike Dean, Travi\$ Scott and Pusha T. As for what it might sound like, 'Only One' is melodic, calm and very unlike the brashness of 'Yeezus', but as Kanye said back in July, there's another track "that's so good that the album has to be balanced against it. This song is a song that can be in the club like 'I Don't Like' or 'Niggas In Paris'".

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

Spiritualized

► TITLE TBC

► RELEASE DATE End of 2015

► January 13 brought the announcement: “Spiritualized have started work on the new album with Youth in the producer role. Jason [Pierce] has started recording in London at Youth’s studio and will complete recordings in Spain this half of the year.” It will be the space-rock group’s first LP since 2012’s ‘Sweet Heart Sweet Light’. Youth, a founding member of post-punk band Killing Joke, co-produced The Verve’s ‘Urban Hymns’. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

Courtney Barnett

► TITLE Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit

► RELEASE DATE March

► The title of Courtney Barnett’s debut album references AA Milne but says much about the doings of a singer-songwriter who passed off 2013’s debut as a “double EP”. Out in March, her first album proper promises to be a tougher listen than ‘...A Sea Of Split Peas’; recently, the Melbourne-based singer-songwriter told *NME* that she’d identified a common thread of “darker songs to do with death, getting older and life-y kind of themes” when writing the album.

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

Haim

► TITLE TBC

► RELEASE DATE TBC

► “This is the first time we’ve ever written on the road,” Alana Haim told *6 Music* back at Glastonbury 2014. “We’re going home in a month to start recording. I promise record two won’t come in six years, it’ll come very soon.” Six months later we’re still waiting, teased by occasional glimpses of the band at work. Photos appeared on Instagram in November showing Danielle hunched over a guitar from which, we’re to assume, steaming-hot, molten-ass riffage was currently spewing. Then news broke that the band were

happen”. Also, his young son also appears on the record. “He was on my knee and started making noises like a monk in time with the music,” he says. Nielson won’t disclose the title or any track names, but snippets uploaded to Instagram hint at another heady dose of groggy psychedelia, with increased emphasis on keyboards and synthesizers. He adds that the drums, played by Kody Nielson – his brother and former bandmate in punk group The Mint Chicks – are more prominent than on the twinkling ‘II’. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

Real Lies

► TITLE TBC

► RELEASE DATE Spring

► “It sounds like a cross between DJ Sprinkles and Oasis,” says Kev Kharas of the debut album from London trio Real Lies, suggesting their big, baggy electropop has hit its stride. Currently being wrapped up with production team Local Hero at London’s Rave Cave studios, Kharas is clear about the album’s themes, which include “friendship and A-road pubs, cruciate ligaments, playboy living, Holloway hangovers and the traffic on the A406”, he says. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

Diiv

► TITLE TBC

► RELEASE DATE TBC

► In July 2013, Diiv frontman Zachary Cole Smith told *NME* that the New York quartet’s second album “would definitely shock some listeners”. And yet, 18 months on, the biggest surprise is that it still hasn’t materialised. The false starts began early in 2013, when sessions with former Girls member Chet ‘JR’ White in San Francisco

were aborted. The results of a spell recording in a remote house upstate in New York, away from the trappings of Smith’s city life – which became muddled after an arrest on drugs charges with girlfriend Sky Ferreira in September 2013 – were also scrapped.

Nonetheless, a handful of new songs have emerged. ‘Dust’ – an intense, grungy track first uploaded via a rehearsal room video in June 2014 – is now a regular in live shows, alongside another untitled song. On January 5, he reported on Instagram that the band are rehearsing in LA, before beginning to record with the engineer, Daniel Schlett (of their debut album, ‘Oshin’), in New York this March.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

Unknown Mortal Orchestra

► TITLE TBC

► RELEASE DATE TBC

Fat White Family
in New York,
December 2014

Fat White Family

Pop Tarts, magic mushrooms and Beatles offspring help fuel the band's forthcoming second album

Somewhere, in a remote farmhouse in upstate New York, there's a steam room in desperate need of scouring. "We've been steaming quite a lot," says Fat White Family's Lias Saoudi, and for once he's not referring to inebriation. "It's good to sweat it all out of your system."

The steam room in question – like the house itself – is owned by Yoko Ono, and Fat White Family are there at the behest of Sean Lennon, who befriended the band at last year's SXSW and is now co-producing the follow-up to 2013's 'Champagne Holocaust' alongside guitarist Saul Adamczewski. Needless to say, it's been a very different experience from their debut – recorded piecemeal in London on a tight budget and under spartan conditions – but there are similarities, too. When they haven't been recording at Lennon's house, they've been working out of a tiny shack in the countryside, which Adamczewski describes as "depressing". He adds: "There's only two tiny electric radiators and it's minus six outside. There are four beds and eight of us, no food, only a BBQ to cook on, outdoors in the snow. We were living off of cereal and Pop Tarts."

'Champagne Holocaust', he says, "was made when we were constantly hungover – we were

living above a pub, so we'd go back to drink there every night". By contrast, Adamczewski has been sober for the recording of its follow-up, with one small exception: "The first time we went to the studio, we took a load of magic mushrooms. It didn't help at all. For a while, I didn't think we'd be able to pull it off: we scrapped everything we recorded in those first five days."

What was so wrong with it? "It was the way we were recording: it had no live feeling, which was something I'd requested. But we re-recorded

it, and once we had five tracks down, I felt a weight lifted from my shoulders."

Adamczewski reckons that "people will be quite surprised by what we've done", adding: "Bits of it are almost like easy listening. There's another one that's a calypso song. We've got Sean playing double-bass and vibraphone and grand piano on some of the tracks."

"Bits of it are almost like easy listening!"

Saul Adamczewski

Lyrically, however, you can expect this record to be just as outrageous as its predecessor. "We've got a song about Ike and Tina Turner on there," Saoudi says. "I'm really into the idea of abusive creative types and the implications of that, but I'm trying to write about it in a way that's sensual and self-aware, to a punishing degree."

"There are a lot of humorous songs on there, too," Adamczewski says. "We've got one called 'Iain Duncan Smith's Eggs', which is about IDS going around stealing eggs from people. It's a bit Suicide-ish, a bit krautrocky. I fucking love that song, actually." ■ BARRY NICOLSON



Alabama Shakes

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE Spring

► Recorded in Nashville and produced in Los Angeles, the vibe for Alabama Shakes' second album is said to be funkier than a mosquito's tweeter. Singer Brittany Howard has namechecked Funkadelic, David Axelrod and Ennio Morricone's soundtracks as key influences, as well as soul legend Curtis Mayfield. There's also one song, according to the group, which sounds "a bit like if ET was in a band". Tom Kasabian might be interested. ■ MATT WILKINSON



Rolo Tomassi

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

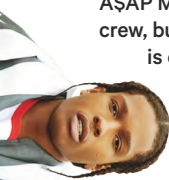
► This year marks 10 years of Sheffield hardcore group Rolo Tomassi, and they're back on their original label, Holy Roar, after 2012's self-released third album 'Astraea'. Their fourth album is scheduled for spring, will be produced by Lewis Johns (Gnarwolves, Funeral For A Friend) and – judging by 'Adrasteia', a single they released on a split seven-inch with Stockades in December – promises to be denser and more menacing than the last.

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

A\$AP Rocky

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► A\$AP Rocky called 2014 "a terrible year for music", branding 2015 the "rebirth". Fans wait on the delayed A\$AP Mob album with the rest of his crew, but Rocky's second solo album is due. One track, 'Flacko Jodye II', is out, and while the 2013 debut 'Long.Live.A\$AP' set the bar, Rocky is confident. "We're tryin' to give a reason to listen to music," he said in November. "It don't take much to be happy in life and we're trying to show people that shit." ■ DAVID RENSHAW



Frank Ocean

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► Remember this time last year when Frank Ocean's follow-up to 'Channel Orange' was the most anticipated album of 2014 in hip-hop/R&B circles? Not much has changed, except the year. We've heard about his management disputes and lawsuits against restaurant chains (he told Chipotle to "fuck off" when a failed commercial deal with the Mexican eatery led to court), but now – at last – it seems that we can start talking music again. Last April, he suggested his new album

was nearly finished, then on November 29, a ballad, 'Memrise', appeared on the singer-songwriter's Tumblr – his first new music since the debut. Our appetites have further been whetted by rumours of collaborations with Brian Wilson, Pharrell, Tyler, The Creator, Lana Del Rey, and talk of A-list producers Hit-Boy, Danger Mouse and Rodney Jerkins being on-board. It may just fall onto the internet when no one's looking, like his mixtape 'Nostalgia, Ultra' did in 2010. ■ AL HORNER

PJ Harvey

► TITLE TBC
► RELEASE DATE TBC

► Ever keen to break new ground, the Dorset-dwelling singer-songwriter's ninth album is being recorded before a live audience – albeit one gawping at her through a box made of one-way perspex at London's Somerset House. All 3,000 tickets for 'Recording In Progress' – which began on January 16 and ends on February 14 – were snapped up in minutes. Early attendees likened what they heard to her Mercury-winning 2011 album, 'Let England Shake', and they saw Polly playing violin, hurdy-gurdy and harmonica. Long-time

collaborators Flood and John Parish are producing the album and Harvey has stated that her intention is to shed light on the "flow and energy of the recording process". Having recently written a book of poetry inspired by trips to Kosovo and Afghanistan, expect PJ's lyrics to be sharper than ever, particularly with titles such as 'Near The Memorials To Vietnam And Lincoln'. A list of songs *NME* spotted in the recording room also includes tracks called 'River Anacostia', 'Homo Sappy Blues' and 'The Ministry Of Social Affairs', which sounded dark and sleazy at a January 20 session. ■ AL HORNER



Carl Barat & The Jackals

► TITLE Let It Reign
► RELEASE DATE February 16

► Carl Barat's album with new band The Jackals began *without* The Jackals in LA's Van Nuys neighbourhood – best known for dive bars and porno movie studios. Also there is Joby J Ford of The Bronx's recording studio, where Barat laid down initial tracks for 'Let It Reign' with an assortment of local players including Beastie Boys percussionist Alfredo Ortiz and an ex-My Chemical Romance drummer. Deciding that he didn't want the album to be a solo record, he returned to

London, where his new band – recruited from an ad on his Facebook page – provided overdubs. The two songs released to date – Word War I-themed 'Glory Days' and the garagey 'A Storm Is Coming' – show promise for the 10-track album, on which Barat says he became "completely obsessed" with the guitar again, adding: "If you listen [to 2010 self-titled debut solo], there's barely any guitar on that record. I'd hung it up, locked it away. It was gone and I didn't miss it one bit. But this time, I totally rediscovered it." ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE



Radiohead

The follow-up to 'The King Of Limbs' is being crafted behind closed doors, but insiders predict something special

▶ We know, through separate interviews from drummer Phil Selway and bassist Colin Greenwood, that Radiohead began recording for a new album in September 2014. "You never know which Radiohead songs will end up on the new record," says Adriaan Pels, editor of fansite Radiohead At Ease (ateaseweb.com). "Sometimes the long-forgotten tracks will make a surprise appearance and the most likely songs will be buried for a while. Songs like 'Identikit', 'Cut A Hole' or 'Full Stop', played on their most recent tour, are likely to be recorded. Or maybe much older songs like 'Open The Floodgates' or 'The Present Tense' will appear."

"We've developed ideas that have never been tried"

Collaborator Phil Barry

One thing that's fairly likely is that following their groundbreaking pay-what-you-like release of 'In Rainbows' and self-released surprise download for 'The King Of Limbs', we won't get a conventionally released album. Phil Barry, one of the Oxford University MBA students who advised Thom Yorke on the BitTorrent release of last year's solo album 'Tomorrow's Modern Boxes', set up a company called Edmund Hart to advise Radiohead on the release of their next album, though he's clear that nothing is definite until the record is completed. "We developed a load of ideas for them, using all kinds of different things – some of them technologically advanced and some of them not. And these are things that nobody's done before. But the most important thing is the music and getting that right."

There is a danger, though, with a different surprising release method for every album,

that it starts to be a more interesting story than the music itself. "I think there is a risk of that," agrees Barry, "but certainly 'In Rainbows' – because we have a bit of distance from that now – when it was announced it was a big shock and everyone talked about it, but nowadays among Radiohead fans, it's either their best album or their top two best albums that they've ever made... with all these things, the whole point of it is that people get to hear the music at the same time. It's all based around people getting to hear it; that's the number-one motivation. It's not about having articles written on TechCrunch, it's getting people to listen to the music and get excited."

As to what sort of music they'll be getting excited about... "It's always hard to guess which direction Radiohead will take musically," says Pels. "It's been different almost every album the band released. My favourite Radiohead albums are 'Kid A' and 'In Rainbows'. It took a while to get used to 'The King Of Limbs', which sounded amazing live, but I would much more appreciate the 'In Rainbows' approach. Thom Yorke just released a new solo album, in sound closer to 'The King Of Limbs', which might suggest that Radiohead are going for a different album with the full band."

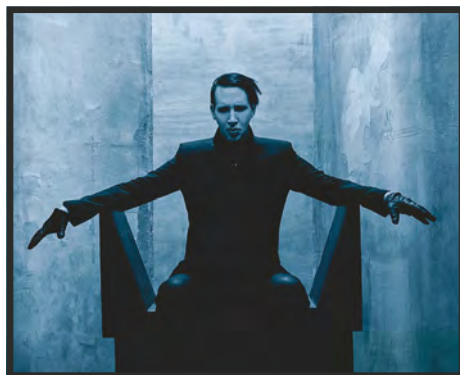
"My hope for a new Radiohead album," concludes Barry, "is always to hear something that I haven't heard before." ■ EMILY MACKAY

▶ **TITLE** TBC
▶ **RELEASE DATE** TBC
▶ **LABEL** TBC
▶ **PRODUCER** Nigel Godrich
▶ **RECORDED** Radiohead's studio, Oxfordshire
▶ **TRACKS INCLUDE** None yet

Marilyn Manson

► **TITLE** 'The Pale Emperor'
► **RELEASE DATE** January 19

► Marilyn Manson wrote his new album 'The Pale Emperor' in the shadow of a sombre anniversary – 1999's Columbine massacre. 2014 marked 15 years since supposed Manson fans Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold murdered 12 fellow students and one teacher at their Colorado school – a mess the goth-rock provocateur was embroiled in when right-wing media outlets accused the nightmarish imagery of his music of having corrupted the teenage killers. "My entire life and career was pulled out from underneath



me," says Manson, who received death threats and required constant police escorts in the weeks following the shootings. "But music has always been blamed this way."

As a result, 'The Pale Emperor', Manson tells *NME*, deals with scapegoating, as well as lessons America failed to learn that day: namely, the country's firearm fascination, touched upon in opener 'Killing Strangers' and the slow-burner 'Cupid Carries A Gun'.

Musically, Manson describes the record as "very cinematic", refining rather than reinventing the noir guitar dirge of 2012's 'Born Villain.' "It's a dark record, but that's me. If you tap the cobra, you're gonna get fangs."

■ AL HORNER



Drengé

► **TITLE** TBC
► **RELEASE DATE** Spring

► Much has changed since Drengé released their debut album in 2013. Most notably, they've multiplied in size and are now a trio. "We drafted in our friend Rob Graham on bass," says drummer Rory Loveless of the first non-family member to join the Drengé ranks. "We've known him since I was about 11. We were in a school play together." Graham is now a fully signed-up member of the band, but their new album, which should be out in spring, was mainly recorded without him. Instead, Rory and frontman Eoin have toiled away with producer Ross Orton for over a year between tours. "I never thought we'd get anal about our music, but when it's your full-time job you want it to be good. That's a commitment

that I'm happy to give to it," says Eoin.

'Drengé' was recorded when the brothers lived at home in Castleton. Now they live in Sheffield, and the move to the city has had an effect. "We're a lot less isolated now," says Rory. "We've grown up, so there's more freedom [in the music] and not so much brattiness." A major influence on the sound came from ignoring the advice of one of modern music's most celebrated figures. "We spoke to Kanye West [on the set of *Later...* in 2014]. He was talking about wanting to put more aggression into his music, but I think we've kind of backed off from that a little bit. It's not so abrasive. We've chilled out. There's one song that screams Fleetwood Mac."

■ DAVID RENSHAW

Beirut

► **TITLE** TBC
► **RELEASE DATE** TBC

► One's called 'Dim Sum', another 'Kebabs'. And there are three tracks named after a variety of burgers. Beirut's Zach Condon, you see, decides his working titles by whatever meal he had on the way to the studio. And since the band starting writing for their fourth album in a rented house near Coachella two years ago, his musical diet has been quite exotic, while either touring the world or wooing his Turkish fiancée.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

The Wombats

► **TITLE** Glitterbug
► **RELEASE DATE** April 6

► Liverpool's The Wombats found the fun factor in Joy Division on their 2007 debut, and antidepressants on 2011's 'This Modern Glitch'. On their third album they've gone all-out electropop, merging EDM, '80s synths and glossy chart indie into a shamelessly commercial sheen to disguise their seditious pop songs about domestic violence ('Greek Tragedy') and paps snapping Harry Styles ('Your Body Is A Weapon'). ■ MARK BEAUMONT

Gaz Coombes

► **TITLE** Matador
► **RELEASE DATE** January 26

► The ex-Supergrass frontman began work on his second solo album right after his first one, 'Here Come The Bombs', was released in 2012. The self-produced and almost entirely self-played 'Matador' features tracks that are sometimes wilfully lean ('The English Ruse' is just a drumbeat and synth), sometimes motorik and krautrock-like ('Detroit'), and for good measure there's even a drop of prog ('Seven Walls'). ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE





Death Grips

► **TITLE** The Powers That B
► **RELEASE DATE** February 10

► Last July, Death Grips announced their demise. But the Sacramento hip-hop outfit have certainly been active since. In October, they announced the completion of new record 'Jenny Death', the second half of double album 'The Powers That B' following 2014's Björk-featuring 'Niggas On The Moon'. Then, this month, they dropped bruising instrumental album 'Fashion Week'. It seems Death Grips aren't done just yet. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

Errors

► **TITLE** Lease Of Life
► **RELEASE DATE** March 23

► The Hebridean island of Jura is steeped in culture. George Orwell finished *Nineteen Eighty-Four* there, it features in an Ian Rankin novel, and it's also where the KLF burned £1m in banknotes 21 years ago. What a place, in other words, to write an album, as Glaswegian electronic post-rock trio Errors did last year. 'Lease of Life', their fourth, is out on Mogwai's Rock Action label in March and the celestial, seven-minute long title track is streaming online now. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

The xx

► **TITLE** TBC
► **RELEASE DATE** TBC

► "We've got quite a lot of songs that are not finished, but I'm excited about it," said Jamie xx of his group's third album sessions, which began in Marfa, Texas last year and continued back in London, "It feels a lot more free." And while release details regarding the eagerly awaited follow-up to 2012's acclaimed 'Coexist' are currently up in the air, more pressing is the release of Jamie's first solo album, which was reported to be finally reaching completion at the end of last year after three years in the works.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

Damon Albarn

► **TITLE** TBC
► **RELEASE DATE** TBC

► Solo albums, operas, veterans' comebacks, African Expresses, Blur reunions... for the past few years Damon's been practically omnipresent. It doesn't look like there'll be any let-up for 2015. In an interview with *The Sydney Morning Herald*, he claimed he already has a full new The Good, The Bad & The Queen album ready to record as soon as he finds the time, and hinted that Gorillaz might well be about to leap out of the Crayola box once more. The act fell apart in 2011 amid stories of Albarn and illustrator Jamie Hewlett's relationship breaking down, but it appears that Damon is in reconciliatory mood of late.

Indeed, there's even talk of a collaboration with Damon's old Britpop nemesis Noel

Gallagher. "He's got to finish his tour and I've got to go out on mine, so not in the near future," Noel said, "But I'd definitely do it." He last week announced new musical *Wonderland*, a modern reimagining of *Alice In Wonderland*, to be performed at this year's Manchester Festival (see page 8). And, as always, the prospect of a new Blur album – started in Hong Kong in 2013 but quickly discontinued – remains only slightly less rabidly anticipated than cold fusion. "I would imagine there's some kind of future [for Blur], but at the moment there's no time for the future – only the present," Albarn said. "I'm reluctant to say anything because if I do, it just gets taken out of context and I'm accused of being a wind-up." ■ MARK BEAUMONT

Primal Scream

► **TITLE** TBC
► **RELEASE DATE** TBC



► In the 18 months since Primal Scream released politically charged 10th studio LP 'More Light', the band lost estranged guitarist Rob 'Throb' Young, who served in the group for 22 years until 2006. It was an event that's understandably affected the band, and they have refrained from doing any interviews since. Despite their silence, however, the band have been working on a follow-up to 'More Light', due for release in late 2015. Little is known about the record yet, although around the release of 'More Light', Gillespie spoke with a renewed enthusiasm for making albums that connected with the current social climate. "I'm a conscious person, so I'm writing about what I feel and what I see," he told *NME*. "If there's a message, it's educate yourself, question authority." Elsewhere, he said: "We're living in extreme

times, and if you listened to modern rock music you wouldn't know that. I just think it's odd there's no protest, resistance or critique of what's going down. It's like people are tranquilised." It's unlikely that spirit will have disappeared by their forthcoming LP.

Meanwhile, on the other end of the spectrum, Sky Ferreira stated in November that she had been writing with Gillespie, though plans for the collaboration are yet to be revealed. "I set it up without anyone else involved, so we just sit and write in a room and there's no pressure," she told *Billboard*. Having also hauled Haim up onstage for the Primals' 2013 Glastonbury slot, Gillespie is clearly not short on potential new-generation collaborators. Though details of the release are still fuzzy, the options already seem exciting.

■ LISA WRIGHT

Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY BEN HOMEWOOD



Peace Happy People

**Its pop hooks and guitar
histrionics dazzle, but the
Birmingham waifs' second
album trembles with anxiety**



the bands who hark back to the glory days of Boy Indie, of waifish white males singing insouciant lust-songs full of celestial metaphors, squandering their per diems on charity-shop furs and teashade sunglasses. Peace's exuberant 2013 debut *'In Love'* (even their album titles radiate optimism) may have worn its early-'90s influences a little obviously, but a certain rose-tinted nostalgia for *The Way Things Used To Be* was part of its appeal.

In many ways its follow-up, *'Happy People'*, is an

Increasingly, there are two kinds of emerging British rock'n'roll band: those, like Sleaford Mods, Slaves or Fat White Family, who burn with incandescent rage and volume; and those, like Peace, Swim Deep or Temples, who seem committed to restoring indie through the power of positive thinking. These are

archetypal second album. Everything is a little bigger, broader and more immediate – refinement, not reinvention, is the watchword here. The twist is that *'Happy People'* is, for the most part, about unhappy ones, maybe not in an 'our two years of hell in a moderately successful indie band' sort of way, but cast a glance over the lyrics – on which frontman Harry Koisser apparently placed greater emphasis this time around – and you'll uncover all manner of needling anxieties. "*I'm a bad computer, slow to load*", he sings on the title track, before lamenting that "*sometimes I feel like we're made out of stone*". On *'Perfect Skin'*, whose Placebo-lite chorus equates happiness with a pristine epidermis and is one of the record's few misfires, he mewls that "*I need less of me in me and more of you in me*". Where *'In Love'* was full of rascally charm and self-confidence, *'Happy People'* seems angst-ridden and uncertain by comparison.

Peace being Peace, they do their best to mask it beneath a veneer of buoyancy, bookending the album with a pair of songs – ‘O You’, on which Koisser humbly pleads that he’s “just trying to change the world that you live in” and ‘World Pleasure’, whose sprawling instrumental coda recalls Primal Scream in their lamé-shirted pomp – that open and close proceedings on a misleadingly cocksure note.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

“Generation Strange’s general ache and pain/Is pressure from the weight of all the satellites in space” – Gen Strange

The permanently connected nature of the modern world crops up a few times on the album – elsewhere, Koisser laments those who “read about the world on a phone”.

“When I was in Digbeth I felt so alone/I’m not sure that violence was born in my bones” – I’m A Girl

The Birmingham district of Digbeth was arguably B-Town’s ground zero, but Koisser’s memories of it aren’t as fond as you might expect.

“If you call it ugly to squint at the world/Lie in on Monday and dress like a girl/Then I’m ugly, that’s just what I am” – Under The Moon

The album’s most melancholic moment, and possibly the most personal. Chin up, Harry, it might never happen.

into one of the most distinctive guitarists in the current indie-rock climate.

While their choices might sometimes seem a little safe – as starry-eyed torch songs go, for example, ‘Someday’ is certainly no ‘California Daze’, its excellent counterpart on ‘In Love’ – for the most part, Peace have made their ‘difficult’ second album look surprisingly straightforward. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

► THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE February 9 ► LABEL Columbia ► PRODUCER Jim Abbiss ► LENGTH 37:07 ► TRACKLISTING ►1. O You ►2. Gen Strange ►3. Lost On Me ►4. Perfect Skin ►5. Happy People ►6. Someday ►7. Money ►8. I’m A Girl ►9. Under The Moon ►10. World Pleasure ► BEST TRACK World Pleasure

MORE ALBUMS

Krill

A Distant Fist Unclenching

Steak Club



Krill’s last release, 2013’s ‘Steve Hears Pile In Malden And

Bursts Into Tears’, was a loose, goofy concept EP about the trio’s sense of inferiority to fellow Boston band Pile. This, their second album, retains their nervous energy and sardonic oddball-isms: “All I wanted was to hold your foot/But I couldn’t imagine how I ever could” sings Jonah Furman over wiry guitars on ‘Foot’. However, they offset this with increased confidence and a strident sound. From simmering grunge stomp ‘Torturer’ to the Built To Spill emotional grind of closer ‘It Ends’, this album is a powerful declaration that, when it comes to scrappy US alt-rock’s current crop, Krill have few superiors.

■ AL HORNER

8

Big Noble

First Light

Affiliates Sound



In the past, Interpol frontman Daniel Kessler and

sound designer Joseph Fraioli have teamed up as Big Noble to work on projects such as last year’s ‘Sounds Of NYC’ – a sound installation that acted as an “interactive conceptual map of New York”. ‘First Light’, the pair’s debut, continues along that experimental, instrumental path – ‘Turn On The Bright Lights’ this is not. There’s an eerie stillness to the record, but also a sense of exploration. ‘Pedal’ mixes frosty guitar chords with rattling echo and ‘Peg’s guitar work is resolutely Kessler. The sprawling, six-minute ‘Vikings’ sums up the record’s ambient beauty best though, with dusky atmosphere and slow, effects-heavy guitar.

■ RHIAN DALY

7

The Charlatans Modern Nature

Overcoming yet more hurt, the baggy survivors unveil a groovy, forward-facing album 12

For 27 years, tragedy has dogged and driven The Charlatans. When keyboardist Rob Collins died in 1996, they created 1997’s masterpiece ‘Tellin’ Stories’. Now, in the wake of drummer Jon Brookes’ death in 2013, their survival instinct has kicked in again. Twelfth album ‘Modern Nature’ focuses on classic Charlies attributes: airy, melodic, Hammond-heavy, sizeably foonk-eh. When upbeat (single ‘So Oh’, the Brookes-dedicated ‘Let The Good Times Be Never Ending’), it sizzles with the pop groove of ‘Wonderland’. When contemplative (‘Keep Enough’, ‘Emilie’) it pays tribute to their ‘60s and ‘70s roots with soul strings, bongos and Latino acoustics. ‘Come Home Baby’ is glorious and ‘Lean On’ could be the eccied-up twin brother of 1992 single ‘Weirdo’. There’s



expansion, too: the modernist beats on ‘Talking In Tones’ and ‘Trouble Understanding’ are out to tell a whole new story. Both modern and natural, tragedy has tugged defiance from The Charlatans once more. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

7

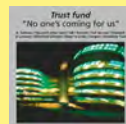
► THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE January 26 ► LABEL BMG ► PRODUCER Jim Spencer ► LENGTH 47:35 ► TRACKLISTING ►1. Talking In Tones ►2. So Oh ►3. Come Home Baby ►4. Keep Enough ►5. In The Tall Grass ►6. Emilie ►7. Let The Good Times Be Never Ending ►8. I Need You To Know ►9. Lean On ►10. Trouble Understanding ►11. Lots To Say ► BEST TRACK Trouble Understanding

Trust Fund

No One’s Coming For Us

Turnstile



Trust Fund originated in 2012 when Bristol musician

Ellis Jones began plying twee-pop on his acoustic guitar. Since then, Jones has expanded the project to include a rotating cast of backing members, signed to Turnstile and home-recorded this debut. ‘No

One’s Coming For Us’ is an obviously DIY record, its rough-round-the-edges feel adding to the sorrowful charm of much of its subject matter. ‘Idk’ tenderly swaps boy-girl vocals over guitar and subtle bass, and ‘Cut Me Out’ praises a former lover and builds to an emotional crescendo. Like the album as a whole, it’s a heartwrenching listen, but one that’ll keep you coming back for more. ■ RHIAN DALY

8

Reviews

Nite Fields Depersonalisation

Felte



While the first wave of shoegazers were notorious for

casting their eyes down in shy concentration, Brisbane revivalists Nite Fields sound like they're hanging their heads in misery. Produced by HTRK's Nigel Lee-Yang, much of 'Depersonalisation' is a stoned, sleepy crawl, with dark songcraft buried in its silvery guitar hues. The sparkle of 'Prescription' recalls The Cure, but Danny Venzin's murmured vocals ("You wanna pull me down/ You wanna raise a frown") wallow too obviously in gloom. Welcome breaths of air come with 'You I Never Knew', strung between Brisbane antecedents The Go-Betweens and New Zealand's The Chills, and the final cloud-breaking shimmer of 'Winter's Gone'.

■ STUART HUGGETT

6

Vision Fortune Country Music ATP



To record this second album, London experimentalists and Hookworms

alcalytes Vision Fortune decamped to the Tuscan countryside. But they haven't allowed a single bit of sunshine to dampen what is an impressively brutal record. 'Country Music' is far more aggressive than 'Mas Fiestas Con El Grupo', the debut brothers Austin and Alex Peru released in 2013. The drums and electronics on opener 'Blossom' clap and thunder into 'Habitat', which builds serrated effects and percussion into a mix of Liars and Total Control. All of what follows is unforgiving, but the LP's biggest reward comes at its climax, in the 90-second blitz of hammering drone that closes six-minute finale 'Back Crawl II'.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

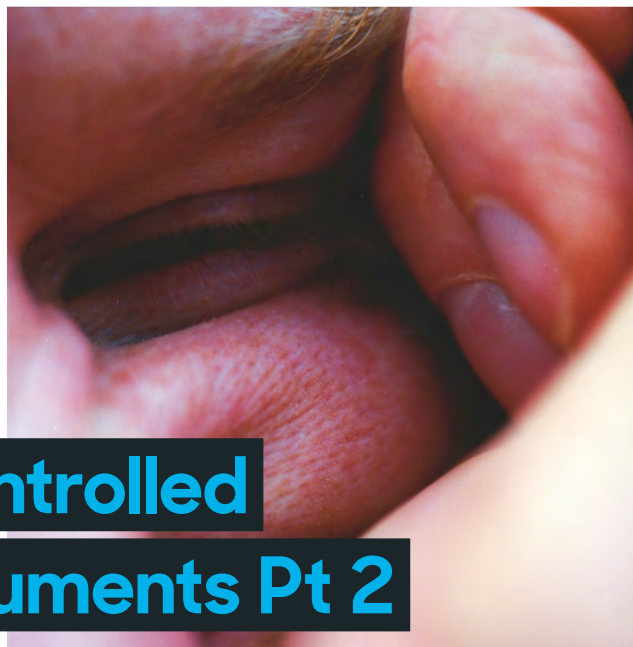
8

After last year's comeback, the robots threaten to take over on Richard D James' challenging new EP

Aphex Twin

Computer Controlled

Acoustic Instruments Pt 2



Among plentiful praise, one of the main criticisms hurled at Aphex Twin's 'Suro' when it arrived last year was that it sounded a bit straightforward, a bit safe. As if Richard D James – lest we forget, a man who once DJed using not vinyl, but a sheet of sandpaper – had, in his dotage, decided to give the people what they want. Well, rest assured, 'Computer Controlled Acoustic Instruments Pt 2' is not playing to the gallery. Billed as an EP, here are 13 tracks which suggest pretty much what the title implies: a room full of drums, cymbals, piano, pipe organ and various stringed instruments played not

by human hands, but by signals zipping around circuit boards. True, manufactured pop music.

In Aphex Twin's curious milieu, there is some precedent for this. Rephlex, the record label he announced the closure of last month, featured figures like Pierre Bastien, a Frenchman

who builds mechanical orchestras out of Meccano. More recently, old comrade Squarepusher teamed up with the Japanese robotics company Z-Machines and composed a strangely beautiful EP played entirely mechanically, 'Music For Robots'. Still, 'Computer Controlled Acoustic Instruments Pt 2' – don't go looking for a part one, you won't find it – sounds like it's on its own strange course. Electronics squelch and strings ring over stiff-armed drum breaks. Sombre melodies are picked out on a piano at a speed possibly just beyond the limits of human ability. A track titled, in classic Aphexese, 'disk prep calrec2 barn dance [s l o]' consists of just over four minutes of some oddly tuned stringed instrument ringing away in some alien chord.

There's a term, "uncanny valley", which refers to the unsettling feeling when something synthetic appears almost human, but crucially, not quite. 'Computer Controlled Acoustic Instruments Pt 2' makes this place its home. It is occasionally quite beautiful – see 'piano un10 it happened', a brief but delightful solo piano piece of the kind he does so well. Mostly, though, you suspect Richard D James makes this sort of music as a challenge – to his audience, and to himself. On those terms, it succeeds admirably. But don't worry: the robots aren't taking over quite yet.

■ LOUIS PATTISON

6

► THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE January 23 ► PRODUCER Richard D James ► TRACKLISTING

► 1. diskhat ALL prepared1mixed 13 ► 2. snar2(WAP375CD) ► 3. diskhat1 ► 4. piano un1 arpej ► 5. DISKPREPT4 ► 6. hat 2b 2012b ► 7. disk aud1_12 ► 8. 0035 1-Audio ► 9. disk prep calrec2 barn dance (s l o) ► 10. DISKPREPT1 ► 11. diskhat2 ► 12. piano un10 it happened ► 13. hat5c 0001 rec-4 ► BEST TRACK piano un10 it happened

Twerps Range Anxiety

Merge



Australia has recently been the home of fine cosmic

rock, a charge led by Tame Impala and cohorts including Pond and King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard. Along with fellow Melbourne act Courtney Barnett, Twerps follow a more earthbound tack of laid-back, lo-fi slacker pop, albeit – in their case – done

as gently as Bambi chasing a butterfly through a field of daisies. On 'I Don't Mind' – very much a statement of intent, you presume – this coalesces into a sound reminiscent of The Velvet Underground at their least biting. But on penultimate track 'Love At First Sight', the band really hit their stride, turning in a song of Modern Lovers-like simplicity that details the pain of the moment cupid's arrow hits its target.

■ DAN STUBBS

6

Death Grips Fashion Week



Self-released 'Fashion Week' first surfaced last year, when an unnamed

source posted some Death Grips instrumentals on a fan site, with no explanation as to their provenance. They were dismissed as fake, but Death Grips – who in July announced their split, only to confirm the release of a new album, 'Jenny Death' – have now authenticated the record. Increased noise

levels compensate for vocalist MC Ride's absence. Choppy synthesizers on 'Runway J' are attacked by bassline and breezeblock beats. On 'Runway E' (the last letters of each track spell 'JENNYDEATHWHEN'), drummer Zach Hill unleashes an ugly splurge. Car horns ruin 'Runway N' and 'Runway W' indulges slow rumble. Less an album, more a slipshod noise, 'Fashion Week' poses more questions than it answers.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

5

Reviews

Darren Hayman Chants For Socialists

Wiaiwya



Does Darren Hayman ever take a break? 'Chants For Socialists' is

the ex-Hefner singer's ninth album in five years and a weighty research project to rival 2013's 'Bugbears'. That was a recasting of 17th-century ballads; this one sees the 44-year-old

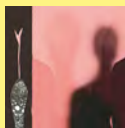
chisel out a collection based on a pamphlet of 19th-century lyrics by socialist legend William Morris that he found in a Walthamstow gallery. So far, so PhD dissertation, but Hayman breathes life into Morris' poems, making fuzzy power-pop out of 'May Day 1894', winding gorgeous electric piano around 'March Of The Workers' call to arms and imagining a folk Spiritualized on the stately, trembling 'The Voice Of Toil'.

■ MATTHEW HORTON

7

H Hawkline In the Pink Of Condition

Heavenly



H Hawkline's description of his output as "strange pop" is

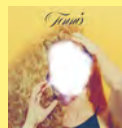
unorthodox, but we'll excuse Huw Gwynfryn Evansis – who has been releasing music under the name since 2010 – this folly. After all, if you're making indie in Wales – Evansis lives in Cardiff – you need to be certain nobody lumps you in with Stereophonics.

His debut LP for Heavenly is a delightfully curious record, but that's really only the half of it. In addition to the woozy, off-kilter guitar hymns that recall the H Hawkline of yore, 'Ringfinger' and 'Isobelle' are prime slices of delightful, melodic pop-rock, suggesting that – like long-time sparring partner and collaborator Cate Le Bon – Hawkline has more than enough musical education to perform for a much wider audience. ■ ROB WEBB

8

Tennis Ritual In Repeat

Communion/Island



Ever since Denver husband-and-wife duo Alaina

Moore and Patrick Riley wrote their first album, 2011's 'Cape Dory', about a sailing trip they took in the Atlantic, they've continued to expand their horizons. Their second album (2012's 'Young & Old') saw them escape the jangly restraints of retro indie-pop. Now, on 'Ritual In Repeat', they're going for broke with their boldest set of upbeat ballads yet. 'I'm Callin' grooves confidently into a lovestruck chorus where Moore warns her suitor "I'm comin' for ya", before the guilt-ridden pleas of 'Bad Girls' are cleverly cushioned by commanding girl-group harmonies. The uncomplicated acoustic strums of 'Wounded Heart' and the twitchy fuzz of 'Solar On The Rise' are further highlights of an assertive record.

■ ROBERT COOKE

7

Two Gallants We Are Undone

ATO Records



San Francisco duo Two Gallants remain

untouched by the mainstream success that has softened soundalikes The Black Keys' gritty, bluesy charm. Whether that bugs them or not, it allows them to eschew any kind of gloss in place of mean-ass Southern swamp folk and emotion as raw as their battered denim. At times, guitarist Adam Stephens and drummer Jason Vogel's fifth album is as dark as the most brutal corners of The Birthday Party's catalogue, with the title track coming on like Chris Isaak on a whisky-fuelled bender. Yet Two Gallants can also lift their ominous country veil, as on the lovelorn, ponderous 'My Man Go' and the decidedly perky 'Katy Kruelly'.

■ LEONIE COOPER

7

Björk Vulnicura

Ms Guðmundsdóttir's stunning break-up album is heartbreakingly candid

Björk's last album, 2011's 'Biophilia', was a multimedia project examining the connections between nature, sound and technology – or "the universe", as she succinctly put it. It became known as an 'app' album and it wasn't a gimmick. It made a powerful (and fun) statement about how the 49-year-old's home country, Iceland, could be run after the financial crisis, instantly making almost everyone else operating in the field of popular music seem a bit thick.

'Vulnicura', her ninth full-length, appears to forgo the grand gesture by concentrating on the personal within a very established format – the break-up album. But as Björk herself said on Facebook when the record was rush-released on January 20 (a consequence of it leaking the weekend previous), "First I was worried it would be too self-indulgent, but then I felt it might make it even more universal."

Opener 'Stonemilker' is set, according to the liner notes, nine months before her break-up from American artist Matthew Barney – father of her second child. On it, Björk sings, "I better document this". Perhaps what's most shocking about 'Vulnicura' is not that it's a traditional, straightforward collection of songs (that's just Björk not

repeating herself), but how true a document of real life it is. There's less allegory and metaphor to be found in the lyrics than usual, resulting in Barney getting a very direct kicking. Communicating with him is like "milking a stone" she sings on 'Stonemilker'; by 'Black Lake' – set two months after the break-up – she's bored of his "apocalyptic obsessions" and accusing him of abandoning their family.

So raw is the lyrical narrative (it ends ambiguously with three undated tracks that offer no real resolution, but some optimism), it almost distracts from how clever and detailed the musical backdrop is. Masterful string arrangements by Björk ('Lionsong', 'Family') express matters of the heart with the same candour as the words, while Venezuelan producer Arca's fractured, difficult beats ('Lionsong', 'Notget') – often in uncommon time signatures – reflect the disruption to Björk's real-life rhythm. It's not an easy listen, but a brave, beautiful and affecting album – an attempt to find order in chaos that, as she wishes for it, offers a "crutch" to the heartbroken. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

8

45

► THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE January 20 ► LABEL One Little Indian ► PRODUCERS Björk and Arca (mastering by The Haxon Cloak) ► LENGTH 58.36
► TRACKLISTING ►1. Stonemilker ►2. Lionsong ►3. History Of Touches ►4. Black Lake. ►5. Family ►6. Notget ►7. Atom Dance ►8. Mouth Mantra ►9. Quicksand ►BEST TRACK Black Lake

FILM

No Manifesto

Rare intimate footage and
painstaking fan interviews
lovingly tell the Manic Street
Preachers' story



One of the best things about this new Manic Street Preachers documentary from director Elizabeth Marcus and producer Kurt Engfehr is that it dispenses with the usual cast of journalists and talking heads, and lets a wealth of brilliant footage speak for itself.

Marcus and Engfehr interviewed nearly 100 fans for the film – which took 13 years to make – letting them narrate the story and taking their questions to the band, often in strikingly intimate situations. Like a skilful nature documentary team, the pair gradually earn their subject's trust, until not only do we get to see the Manics in the nitty-gritty of recording for 2007's renaissance album 'Send Away The Tigers', but also Sean Moore indulging his habit of target-shooting, Nicky Wire larking about in his garden and James Dean Bradfield cooking a righteous fry-up. Brilliantly, there's also Nicky's VHS recording of the Manics' second-ever gig at Blackwood Little Theatre, complete with Cardiff football fans bellowing, "You're worse than Swansea City."

The film errs, rightly, on the side of sprawl and humour, leaving in charming digressions such as Nicky and James nerdily interviewing Canadian prog rockers Rush, or one fan's introduction to her hamsters, Nicky and Richey, alongside well-chosen archive interviews. As one of the foremost fan tribes of their generation, it's about time Manics acolytes got a worthy tribute



►DIRECTOR
Elizabeth Marcus
►IN CINEMAS
January 30

and here, they come across as clever, curious, sardonic and warm – though, as Nicky notes, "sometimes they despise us, and sometimes we despise them".

That prickly relationship is illuminated beautifully, not least when James stomps down a Cardiff street mewling, "Oh, you're so fat now", "Oh, that song is shit", "Oh, they used a drum sample..."

This loose structure also means a welcome lack of editorialising; Marcus and Engfehr only really show themselves via some lovely editing. At one point, they segue from James talking about Richey Edwards' realisation that he'd taken a wrong turn as his mental state deteriorated, to Richey, wryly musing: "Future... that's a big nasty word, isn't it?" A clip from *Rumble Fish*, a favourite film of the band's, follows. In it, a young, beautiful Mickey Rourke, when compared to the Pied Piper, draws "They'd all follow me to the river, huh? And jump in?... Y'know, if you're gonna lead people, you have to have somewhere to go," before walking out of a door and in front of a huge clock face, being hauled away on a scrap van. That scene then cuts, beautifully, to the giant clock in the video for 'Everything Must Go', the 1996 single that declared the Manics' determination to survive Richey's departure. Such juxtapositions in this cleverly crafted labour of love remind you of the cultural collages so beloved of Nicky and Richey; images and ideas tumbled together to let meanings emerge by themselves. ■ EMILY MACKAY

CINEMA

The Gambler



In Rupert Wyatt's remake of 1974's James Caan-starring *The Gambler*, a leaner

than usual Mark Wahlberg plays Jim Bennett, a literature professor whose gambling addiction results in a \$260,000 debt to the owner of an underground gambling ring (76-year-old Hawaiian actor Alvin Ing) and a loan shark (*The Wire*'s Michael K Williams). When Bennett is handed an ultimatum – repay his debts in seven days or die – the foundations are laid for a gripping thriller, but *The Gambler* never generates enough tension. Wahlberg's character is off-puttingly detached and unfazed by his predicament, and his potentially interesting relationship with one of his students (21 *Jump Street*'s Brie Larson) is frustratingly underdeveloped. It all adds up to a lifeless and, ultimately, forgettable film. ■ NICK LEVINE

5

ONLINE

Girlpool: Things Are OK



Released in November 2014, *Girlpool*'s debut EP was raw and intimate. This

film, made last autumn to document the Los Angeles duo's first tour, is similar. It opens with guitarist Cleo Tucker and bassist Harmony Tividad onstage at an unspecified venue twanging through debut track 'Jane', plaster peeling from the wall behind them. Director Cory McConnell splices more live footage with scenes of the band in the van and nighttime shots of graffiti-covered city walls. Over the top, *Girlpool* explain how their band has impacted them personally. In the most poignant scene, they sit jamming and giggling on a bedroom floor and Harmony says, "Doing this stretches our ability to love not just each other, but all people." It's easy to love them back.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

7

CINEMA

Big Hero 6



As with 2014's *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, you'd have to be the most obsessive of Marvel completists to own the eight comics featuring Japanese superhero team Big Hero 6. And, just like with the *Guardians* film, that doesn't matter at all. This elaborate animation finds 14-year-old Hiro (voiced by Ryan Potter) and

his inflatable robot nurse, Baymax (Scott Adsit), teaming up with four science students to fight a conspiracy in the beautiful west-east mash-up city of San Fransokyo. Outrageous action, knowing nod-and-wink humour, a Stan Lee cameo – all the usual Marvel boxes get ticked: but there's a sentimental heartbeat and some painterly framing which mean this hugely enjoyable romp retains its unique character.

■ ANGUS BATEY

7

CINEMA

The Turning



Based on Tim Winton's 2005 short story collection, this ambitious Australian anthology film features nine self-contained vignettes each brought to life by a different director. Such a project could have ended up a sprawling mishmash of filmmaking styles but the consistent wistfulness of Winton's source material means it

hangs together pretty well. Each story focuses on personal turning points: Cate Blanchett's lonely housewife bonds unexpectedly with her mother-in-law; a teenage boy discovers his first crush is capable of arson; Rose Byrne plays a trailer park mum who finds God while her violent husband attacks her. Together, these stories make *The Turning* a series of vivid snapshots of human interaction.

■ NICK LEVINE

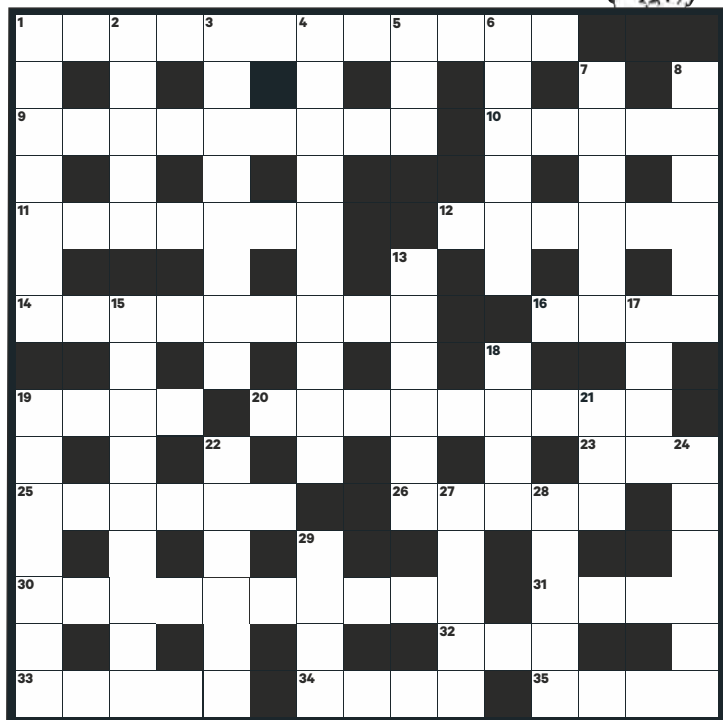
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CROSSWORD

Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD



WIN £50 WORTH OF SEETICKETS VOUCHERS



CLUES ACROSS

1 Needing a ticket to get to see The Charlatans? A return's dear... (4-4-4)
9 ...get a single from Hookworms at the time of departure (2-7)
10+13D Not The Orwells' own vocals used on this recording (5-6)
11 Outdated pieces from Circa Waves (7)
12 Blackpool trio fronted by Nathan Day (6)
14 South American venue for live album by Iron Maiden (4-2-3)
16 (See 1 down)
19 Swedish people living off a 'Commune' (4)
20 Take steps here to music by Tribes (9)
23+32A I get a quick knock-out twice over from The Dixie Cups (3-3)
25 Blur get a formal offer of work (6)
26 Trust broken by Lenny Kravitz for latest album (5)
30+2D "I know you've deceived me, now here's a surprise", 1967 (1-3-3-3-5)

31 Knowledge shortly needed to complete title of Jesus Jones' single '____ Freako' (4)
32 (See 23 across)
33 All female US rock band fronted by Belinda Carlisle (2-3)
34 (See 19 down)
35 Pleasant sounding music on Rollins Band album or from '60s prog-rockers (4)

CLUES DOWN

1+16A "And by the time I'm sober I've forgotten what I've had", Squeeze (4-3-4)
2 (See 30 across)
3 The Flaming Lips listened out for an album's position (4-2-2)
4 Lloyd Cole somehow in a stammer on this album (10)
5+6D R&B/hip-hop group who sang of their 'Favourite Things' (3-6)
7 It's a strange hallo after a century from The Joy Formidable (6)
8 "All your _____ are made when you're chained to the

mirror and the razor blade", from Oasis' 'Morning Glory' (6)
13 (See 10 across)
15+24D Having gone focal about a Raveonettes album (5-4-2-4)
17 "Do you feel like a puzzle, you can't find your missing piece", 2005 (4)
18 In the '60s she accompanied Sonny for hit 'I Got You Babe' (4)
19+34A White Lies smoothing things out while seeking revenge with a download-only single (7-4)
21 US alt-rockers who gave us 'The View From The Bottom' (3)
22 "And I've got one, two, three, four, five _____ working overtime" (6)
24 (See 15 down)
27 'We Were Here' with The _____ Brakes (5)
28 Having a get-together with The Boxer Rebellion (5)
29 'The Boxer' found him on his own for the first time (4)

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JANUARY 17 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1+4A Ghost Stories, 8 Vitalogy, 9 Pigbag, 10+11A Grey Britain, 13 Enya, 15 Turn Blue, 17 Record, 20 Androgyny, 21+25D Be Here Now, 22+29A Eyes To The Wind, 23 Motown, 26 Sun Arise, 27 No, 30+3D Talk Talk
DOWN 1 Give Get Take, 4 Sugar, 5 Repeater, 6 Engine, 7+2D Carry On The Grudge, 12 Ice In The Sun, 14 Audience, 16+28A Boomtown Rats, 18 Elephant, 19 Overkill, 23 MOR, 24 TNT

THINGS WE LIKE

OBJECTS OF DESIRE



JACKET

Pharrell Williams x Adidas

The 'Happy' singer has already designed his own range of trainers for Adidas, and now comes these snappy track jackets. Continue Pharrell's love of polka dots in red, blue or yellow.

► **BUY** £90, adidas.co.uk

SPEAKERS

Marshall - The Acton



Not content with making the best

guitar amps on the planet, Marshall have now branched into bluetooth speakers too. The best bit is that the design is exactly the same as those sturdy, brilliant black boxes we all know and love.

► **BUY** £230, marshallheadphones.com

FESTIVALS

Gigsak

This waterproof blanket doubles up as a cosy shelter, perfect for avoiding the rain and mud at festivals this year. Turn it inside out to sit inside the Gigsak and be able to watch your favourite bands whatever the weather.

► **BUY** £42, gigsak.co.uk



ONLINE

Nicki Minaj - My Time Again documentary



The Queens rapper opens up about the end of the relationship that inspired her latest album 'The Pinkprint' and the abortion she had as a teenager in this new documentary. It also follows her in the months leading up to the new record, in rehearsal for her VMAs appearance and around the making of the video for 'Anaconda'.

► **WATCH** youtube.com

DVD

Gone Girl



Based on the Gillian Flynn novel, this thriller follows Nick Dunne's (Ben

Affleck) search for his missing wife Amy (Rosamund Pike). Under suspicion of having murdered her, he pleads his innocence as the nation's television cameras watch.

► **BUY** £10, amazon.co.uk

NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK

Mini

Mansions

The Lexington, London

Monday, January 19

The LA trio test their synth-heavy new sound with a little help from an Arctic Monkey

PHOTO BY ANDY HUGHES

▶ Midway through the slinky funk of Mini Mansions' recent single 'Vertigo' a familiar figure strides out of the darkness. There's no introduction or suggestive nod, Alex Turner simply grabs a microphone, stretches a Chelsea boot onto a monitor and leans into a mass of desperately wielded cameraphones. His greasy quiff hanging between his eyes, he croons, *"Looking like a million dollars in a briefcase or a duffel bag by high noon tomorrow/Just make sure you're not followed"*, prowling the small stage and grabbing outstretched hands as he sings. Then, after less than a minute, he's gone, disappearing as quickly as he emerged. ➔

Alex Turner
onstage at
The Lexington,
London



At the song's end, the band – made up of drummer/guitarist Michael Shuman, bassist Zach Dawes and keyboardist Tyler Parkford – don't even acknowledge it, thanking the crowd like it's nothing special. The Arctic Monkeys' frontman hasn't been on a stage this size for years, but even *he* can't overshadow a rampant Mini Mansions performance.

With their name in lights behind them, the trio – in town to preview second album 'The Great Pretenders' – cut sharp figures in suits.

SETLIST

- ▶ Sherlock Holmes
- ▶ Monk
- ▶ Double Visions
- ▶ Creeps
- ▶ Honey I'm Home
- ▶ Mirror Mountain
- ▶ Heart Of Glass
- ▶ Death Of A Girl
- ▶ Any Emotions
- ▶ Vertigo
- ▶ Freakout!

Shuman – bassist in Queens Of The Stone Age – is wearing white, Dawes is in fetching floral print and Parkford rocks simple navy. An opening cover of 'Sherlock Holmes' by flamboyant LA band Sparks is followed by the staccato funk of 'Monk' from their self-titled 2009 debut. Along with a sultry cover of Blondie's 'Heart Of Glass', these three are the only songs not taken from their syrupy, eerie, synth-rock-heavy new album.

'Honey, I'm Home' is jaunty and creepy, creaking like background music in a hall of mirrors before segueing into the electric 'Mirror Mountain'. Parkford's synths are intense, but Dawes grabs the attention, lurching around and lifting his instrument to his face to play it with bared teeth.

'Death Is A Girl' ups the pace, Shuman alternating between drum bashing and frenzied fretwork. New single 'Any Emotions' is tinged with sadness, Parkford and Shuman's joint falsetto sighs of "*You could be happy but I don't understand any emotions*" accompanied by gentle synths and a perfectly-pitched bass riff. Closer 'Freakout!' is as wired as its title suggests and ensures an energetic climax.

Afterwards, speaking to *NME* as the crowd trickle past him and into the cold night, Shuman grins and says, "I'm an LA guy but I hate playing there. Everyone's really jaded – myself included – but London shows are really enjoyable." Tonight, Mini Mansions have returned triumphant, making Turner's cameo feel like an added bonus. Enjoyable is an understatement. ■ RHIAN DALY



MORE GIGS

J Mascis Whelan's, Dublin

Monday, January 12

J Mascis' version of a stripped-down solo gig isn't exactly a hushed affair. Though a crowd of mostly middle-aged men are here to gawp in reverence, the 49-year-old founding member of Dinosaur Jr is intent on rocking out. His semi-acoustic guitar rattles with distortion, his laconic vocals are laden with effects and a loop pedal allows him to burst into piercing solos. It also gives the set a hybrid feel. A medley of 'Drifter' and 'Heal The Star' from 2014's acoustic-led 'Tied To A Star' showcases Mascis' intricate finger-picking and more sensitive strain of songwriting, before blistering closer 'Alone' recreates the crunch of his old band, expertly balancing two distinct eras of a 30-year career.

■ CIAN TRAYNOR

Cymbals Eat Guitars The Garage, London

Monday, January 12

True to the sleeve of their 2014 album 'LOSE', which featured a face gagged by cables, Staten Island punks Cymbals Eat Guitars barely utter a word on their return to London's Garage. That frontman Joseph D'Agostino isn't in the mood for talking doesn't mean he's not up for having fun, though. Across an hour comprising tracks from the quartet's three albums, he's a frantic showman, capping crowd favourite 'Jackson' with a violent solo delivered with his guitar behind his head. 'Xr' is a blitz of guitar shredding, but it's a whisper-quiet encore of 'Child Bride', performed by D'Agostino alone, that brings the biggest chills.

■ AL HORNER

Enter Shikari

Rose Theatre, Kingston
Sunday, January 18

The St Albans foursome bring
righteous anger and grind-punk
anthems to the sleepy suburbs

Deep in the sprawl of southwest London, The Rose Theatre is more used to hosting am-dram productions and matinée kids shows than strobe-lit grind-punk shows. The place has only ever hosted one gig – from Californian ska punk grunts Reel Big Fish last summer – but it proves the perfect setting for the buoyant theatricality of Enter Shikari, who are as dramatic as any Tennessee Williams standoff. Here to launch their vibrantly political fourth album 'The Mindsweep', the Hertfordshire four-piece arrive bristling with intent. There are polite notices Blu Tacked onto the doors, warning of "shots and haze", as if we're stepping into a suburban revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's dystopic roller-musical *Starlight Express*. Instead, we get Shikari joking onstage about overeating at the Wagamama next door, as well as an uncompromising taste of their fourth album.

Frontman Rou Reynolds eschews his usual cap and T-shirt in favour of a shirt and jacket combo, complete with suede elbow patches. It's not your typical crowdsurfing attire, but the 29-year-old isn't your typical frontman. His lyrics contain an increasingly rare brand of unadulterated anger. Not since Rage Against The Machine have a mainstream rock band said so much, so fucking loudly. And Rou Reynolds isn't just angry, he's fucking livid.

Instead of sitting by as the coalition government chip away further at the welfare state, Rou's writing songs like 'Anaesthetist', a caustic attack on David Cameron and co's attempts to steer the NHS towards privatisation.

SETLIST

- ▶ The Appeal & The Mindsweep I
- ▶ The Paddington Frisk
 - ▶ Destabilise
 - ▶ Radiate
- ▶ Gandhi Mate, Gandhi
- ▶ The Last Garrison
- ▶ Never Let Go Of The Microscope
 - ▶ Myopia
- ▶ Arguing With Thermometers
- ▶ Juggernauts
- ▶ Anaesthetist
- ▶ Constellations
 - ▶ Slipshod
 - ▶ Mothership



Rou Reynolds in the crowd in Kingston

ROU FINDS HIMSELF IN THE PIT IN THE MIDDLE OF A CIRCLE OF RAISED FISTS

Tonight, over big bollocked beats that The Prodigy would gladly rip a limb off for, Rou screams, “*You will not profit off our health!*” until he’s red in the face. It’s powerful stuff, but by no means symbolic of an evening of po-faced preaching.

Before that, they tear through new album opener ‘The Appeal & The Mindsweep I’ – an anthemic call to arms that namedrops Scottish rebel William Wallace and King Arthur. ‘Destabilise’ and ‘Radiate’ form a frantic double-charged attack, during which Rou leaps across the stage with balletic poise. Next to him, Chris Batten swings his bass like a windmill, allowing guitarist Rory Clewlow to dash underneath. It’s a carefully managed piece of stagecraft that would likely see someone knocked unconscious, were it not executed so goddamn

perfectly. Rou soon finds himself in the pit, in the middle of a circle of raised fists and cameraphones, the modern mosh at its most Instagrammable. His mic disappears into the throng, leaving fans to indulge in some hardcore karaoke. As Rou surfs back to the stage during

‘Gandhi Mate, Gandhi’, his bandmates break from the intensity and belt out a little of Elton John’s epic ‘Can You Feel The Love Tonight’.

Any calm that brings is smothered by more frantic new songs. Incendiary single ‘Never Let Go of the Microscope’ and the thrusting ‘Myopia’ get an abrasive airing. So too does ‘The Last Garrison’, its piledriving hooks outing it as perhaps Shikari’s poppiest tune yet. From Rou’s brutal opening yelp of “*Can you hear the war cry*”, it seamlessly races into a shimmery electro chorus that’s got *Match Of The Day* highlights sequence written all over it.

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Eileen Sullivan, 18, North Wales
“The best show I’ve ever been to! I’ve seen them before at festivals, but the crowd were a lot more exciting here!”



Shane Griffiths, 18, Roehampton
“Probably the best Enter Shikari gig I’ve been to. I went to Reading last year, where ‘Juggernauts’ is banned. If you saw it tonight you’ll understand why!”



Megan Barnard, 19, Portsmouth
“It was good when Rou stood up on the speakers. We were in the moshpit. I loved it.”

Rou Reynolds Q&A

The crowd were crazy, how was it for you?

“I was actually really nervous. I don’t usually get that any more, but with all the new songs we hadn’t got as much practice as we wanted, so we weren’t really waltzing onstage with 100 per cent confidence! We were lucky, I didn’t forget any lyrics!”

The light show was pretty intense...

“That’s about 40 per cent of what we’ll be using on

tour in February. We’re going to add a brain that will be lit up, with all the neurons firing.”

Was the birthday cake a total surprise?

“It was! My birthday was a few days ago and it was a press day and we were doing signings in Berlin, so it was quite quiet and we didn’t go too crazy. We were going to have a party yesterday, but then I probably wouldn’t have had a voice for today!”

After the jackhammer blows of old songs ‘Juggernauts’ and ‘Constellations’, there’s a rendition of Happy Birthday for Rou. A cake is delivered by a guitar tech and then, after the frontman puffs out the candles, the lightshow kicks into triple intensity. Amidst blinding flashes even Skrillex would marvel at, menacing ‘The Mindsweep’ bonus track ‘Slipshod’ and EDM-assisted ‘Mothership’ blast out, turning this quaint venue into a sweaty rave.

As the latter’s choruses fade, Enter Shikari seem more vital than ever. Right now, this is the band to pin your politics to – as well as your most epic parties. ■ LEONIE COOPER

The Vaccines

Concorde 2, Brighton

Monday, January 19

Four new songs and that familiar ragged exuberance signal Justin and co's comeback

The '50s biker gang from the sleek side of town charge the stage and fire ramalama riffs direct from the hip. The room detonates like a C-4 blast. At their feet, Brighton's friskiest teens mosh their shins down to the bone as if zapped back to the big bang of rock'n'roll. At the bar, a middle-aged lady stops headbanging for a second to lean into *NME*, gesture at the stage and proudly bawl, "I'm his auntie! And godmother!"

Seems the world and its church-appointed surrogate guardian is thrilled to be witnessing The Vaccines' low-key club comeback. If the video for new single 'Handsome' is to be believed – and why would it lie? – after two years of hardcore kung-fu training, the London-based quartet have returned as a well-oiled retro-punk fighting machine, fully prepared to take on the scaly alien bully-boy bastards of popular culture circa 2015. And according to singer Justin Young they're touting a third album, 'English Graffiti', that's "creative and exploratory", "hyper-stylised", "genre-defining" and "future-sounding". Could they have succeeded in turning a deeply retro vision – in their case an amphetamine frazzled, Ramones-y take on formative 1950s pop music – into an indie rock record that will define 2015?

They make us wait to find out. First, a hyper-speed refresher. With Young punching the air and Freddie Cowan machine-gunning the crowd with his instrument like *Grease*'s most gorgeous guitar god, they blaze through 'Blow It Up', 'Teenage Icon' and 'Wreckin' Bar (Ra Ra Ra)' in quick succession, the rough edges and unpredictability of their ramshackle early shows shorn off by years of relentless touring but absolutely none of their raw, ragged exuberance lost along the hard shoulder. "It's good to be back, we've missed you," Justin says



as zombie-green lights flood the stage for the mutant jive of 'Ghost Town' and Árni Arnason's bass bubbles like a Munster in a microwave. Suitably reassured, we brace ourselves for the shock of the new.

SETLIST

- Blow It Up
- Teenage Icon
- Wreckin' Bar (Ra Ra Ra)
- Ghost Town
- Dream Lover
- Wetsuit
- I Want You So Bad
- Post Break-Up Sex
- All In White
- Melody Calling
- Bad Mood
- Wolf Pack
- Handsome
- I Always Knew
- If You Wanna
- 20/20
- Nørgaard

artists (see: Alex Turner), but it's the two later new tracks that hint at rock'n'roll's real re-evolution. The compulsive 'Handsome' adds a tongue-twisting panache to futuristic

THERE ARE GLIMMERS TONIGHT OF A TWIST IN THE VACCINES' TALE

Tornados surf guitars and clipped Vampire Weekend drums, while '20/20' has Justin stuttering high-pitched melodies over retro synths until the whole thing sounds like a Buddy Holly gig on the set of *Xanadu*. It's "future-sounding" only for 1961, sure, but it forces open new doors for The Vaccines.

For the rest of this dazzling hour, it's fizziness as usual. 'Post Break-Up Sex' remains the ultimate Tinder-era 'our song', 'All In White' a tremendous galloping epic and 'I Always Knew' a gunfight between disco rhythms and sharp riffs. As he hinted with mature, Smithsy 2013 single 'Melody Calling', tucked neatly mid-set tonight, Young has realised that the hell-for-leather sprint of 'What Did You Expect From The Vaccines?' is unexpectedly becoming a marathon, and his frantic scruff-punk persona has gradually refined to that of an experimental rock'n'roll historian exuding quiet confidence and coming to terms with his real-life teenage icon status. "I'm no Frankie Avalon", he once



The Vaccines onstage in Brighton

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Liam, 20, Surrey
"It was great, for The Concorde to get a band like that to play. Everyone was pushing, but in a nice way."



Dina, 19, Worcester
"It was amazing, but I was disappointed at the 16-year-olds that kept elbowing me! But then again I remember being 16 and doing exactly the same thing to be honest."



Ollie, 18, Ashford
"Fucking amazing, the sweatiest show I've ever been to! 'All In White' was definitely the best song."



Elliot, 18, from Kent
"Absolutely brilliant, all their new stuff was so good. 'Dream Lover' was brilliant."

sang, now he boasts, "My body is a temple, you can worship at my feet... lonely, bored and bad, thank God I'm handsome, so handsome/I'm as awful as they come, oh what a pity/So I thank the Lord above that I am pretty". Ego explosion or attack on the cast of *Made In Chelsea*, it's a bold volte face.

As the ecstatic bubblegum punk rushes of 'If You Wanna' and 'Nørgaard' – the sound of a burning Ford Thunderbird crashing through a school prom – trump their more considered new lounge-funk tunes, it's clear The Vaccines face a struggle convincing the world to accept them as anything more sophisticated than the *Back To The Future* Strokes. But there are glimmers tonight of a twist in The Vaccines' tale. Time to really blow it up.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

9

MORE GIGS

Helsinki Sebright Arms, London

Wednesday, January 14
As Babyshambles lie dormant in the wake of The Libertines' reunion, bassist Drew McConnell has announced the debut album from his Helsinki project. Tonight, he previews 'A Guide For The Perplexed' in a sweaty basement. Powered by brushed drums, new single 'Rising Heights' shuffles prettily, and folk tune 'Keys' sees McConnell and his band supplemented by singer Emma Gillespie's delicate vocals. Older songs like the infectious 'Ribtickling' and 'Ampersand' – which have been around for five years now – are brought to life by guitarist Pat Walden's flawlessly executed licks but the reggae-tinged 'Choices' doesn't match up. That blip aside, McConnell's new material is a charming diversion.

■ RHIAN DALY

7

California X La Cita, Los Angeles

Tuesday, January 13
"This is our first time here," says California X's greasy-haired leader Lemmy Gurtowsky. Two albums in, the Massachusetts punk foursome have reached their namesake state. They suit La Cita, a dive bar full of slackers and weirdos. There's no proper stage, so Lemmy struggles to make his snarled declarations heard over blown-out guitar solos and muscular drumming. Long-haired bassist Dan Jones and meathead drummer Cole Lanier captivate most during dirges like 'Nights In The Dark' and 'Pond Rot'. Lanier dismantles his kit the second they finish 'Mummy', an homage to their alt-rock forbears like Dinosaur Jr and Sebadoh.

■ EVE BARLOW

7

Slipknot



Manchester Arena, Manchester Tuesday, January 20

The metal maniacs from Iowa make a typically brutal return to the UK

With a huge demonic goat looming above his head, Slipknot frontman Corey Taylor growls at his audience. "When I tell you to lose your minds, I want to feel that shit in my chest!" he commands prior to 'Before I Forget'. The Iowan metal stalwarts' loyal fans – who the band refer to as "maggots" – oblige, transforming the standing section into a swirling mosh. For those up in the nosebleeds, they probably look just like a box of fishing bait.

On their first UK tour in over six years – now with live bassist Alessandro Venturella, who joined after founding member Paul Gray died in 2010 – it's clear the nine-piece have lost none of their knack for spectacle. They're on brutal form. When they rampage through opener 'Sarcastrophe', there are enough pyrotechnics to singe eyebrows. Twin percussionists Shawn Crahan – dressed as a mutant clown – and Chris Fehn – his giant nose waving wildly – ascend on pneumatic drum platforms. Of the new songs aired from 2014 album '5: The Gray Chapter', the thrillingly abrasive 'The Negative One' is best. During fearsome old favourites 'Spit It Out' and 'People = Shit' Taylor roars like Chewbacca on a bad day.

Being a slick touring behemoth suits Slipknot. They marshall the crowd – including Man Utd goalie David De Gea – to sit down and leap up during 'Cluster', before climaxing with a propulsive 'Surfacing'. As Taylor screams "Fuck it All! Fuck this world! Fuck everything you stand for!" during the chorus, the crowd go feral, and you can bet he feels it in his chest.

■ GARY RYAN

8

SETLIST

- ▶ Sarcastrophe
- ▶ The Heretic Anthem
- ▶ My Plague
- ▶ The Devil In I
- ▶ Psychosocial
- ▶ The Negative One
- ▶ Eeyore
- ▶ Liberate
- ▶ Frail Limb Nursery
- ▶ Purity
- ▶ Before I Forget
- ▶ Duality
- ▶ Left Behind
- ▶ Spit It Out
- ▶ Custer
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- ▶ People = Shit
- ▶ Surfacing



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BY ARRANGEMENT WITH 13 ARTISTS



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18 CAMBRIDGE PORTLAND ARMS •
19 BIRMINGHAM OOBLECK •
21 SHEFFIELD THE HARLEY •
22 LIVERPOOL KAZIMIER •
24 MIDDLESBROUGH THE KEYS

25 GLASGOW STEREO

26 NEWCASTLE HEAD OF STEAM

MARCH

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4 LEEDS BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB
5 LEICESTER THE COOKIE
6 COVENTRY KASBAH
7 SOUTHAMPTON LENNONS

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+ APRIL TOWERS

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DJ ALANA B DEVOTION

FRI 06 FEB
FREDDIE DICKSON
& THE GUARD
+ WINTERS ISLAND

FRI 13 FEB

M+A

FRI 20 FEB
NIMMO

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THU 26 FEB MANCHESTER RITZ
FRI 27 FEB OXFORD O₂ ACADEMY
SAT 28 FEB BIRMINGHAM INSTITUTE
MON 2 MAR BRISTOL O₂ ACADEMY
TUE 3 MAR PORTSMOUTH PYRAMIDS
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