

18 APRIL 2015

NME

Bye bye, banjos!

Mumford & Sons

Super Furry Animals

BIG COMEBACK
INTERVIEW

Jay Z

TIDAL: WORTH
YOUR CASH?

Earl Sweatshirt • Paul Weller

WORLD
EXCLUSIVE

"Our new sound will
freak people out"

Tim Burgess • Alabama Shakes

Blur

NEW ALBUM
VERDICT

The Prodigy

ON WORKING WITH
SLEAFORD MODS

+ RECORD STORE DAY

- ▶ Essential buyers' guide
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I WANNA ROCK



URBAN BEATS



MUSIC FOR ALL AGES



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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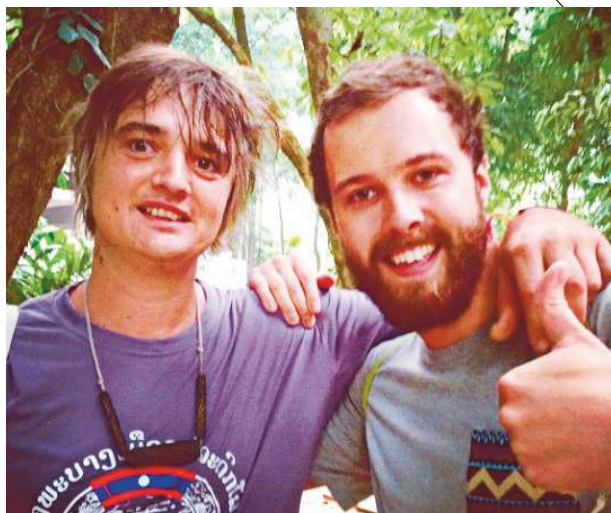
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I FOUND PETE

I'm currently travelling round South East Asia, and you can imagine my surprise when I bumped into none other than Mr Pete Doherty next to a waterfall in Laos! I got a quick snap with him and had a little chat, which I'd love to share. With a beer and fag in hand he explained that the new Libertines album has been fully written, Carl has headed back home to London for a week and recording is going to commence in 10 days (as of April 5). All very exciting stuff. He mentioned that finding their recording studio in Thailand was like "striking gold". After our little impromptu interview I left Pete to continue walking up the waterfall (he was in for a surprise... it was bloody steep). After uploading the picture to Instagram I had a flood of messages from fans who were happy to hear the album updates and see him looking so well.

Andy Gale, via email

DS: Pete seems to have found his happy place in Thailand and South East Asia – and he seems to be delighting the string of British tourists who, like you,



find him there on their holidays. There's a heap of expectation on this new album but the signs so far look positive: Pete's 'Flags Of The Old Regime' showed he's on good form, and Carl's warmed up with his Jackals album. Looks like Pete's even got a harmonica around his neck in the jungle, just in case...

IT'S CRIBSMAS!

I'm so glad The Cribs are back with new music and back on the *NME* cover. Their new album is amazing. Really can't wait to hear this "grunge" album they keep talking about, and just hope they release it soon. PS Gary's hair is still the best.

Clare, via email

DS: The Jarmans are as reliable as a Volvo. Another album, another batch of cracking tunes. Are they in competition over their hair? If so, we're not sure Ryan's trying. And on the subject of competition...

WHIP SMART

Listening to the live broadcast of 'The Magic Whip' last week, I had two thoughts. One is that it sounds like it's going to be a really good album – lots of slow-builders you want to hear again and again. Second,



there aren't any obvious standout radio friendly tracks. Does a great album need singles? Probably not, and there have been plenty of great albums without singles. But I also wonder if this is the future – no 'singles' as such, but make a new track available online every few weeks until the album comes out. Pre-order the album in order to buy tickets to see the band live. If this trend is here to stay then it could place the album above the single.

Kevin Carr, via email

DS: Kevin! Do yourself a favour and have another

listen to 'Ong Ong' – the track's got festival singalong written all over it! And 'Lonesome Street' is more like Blur than anything on 'Think Tank'. Either could be a single. But you're right – things have changed. Hit singles aren't prized like they once were, the chart is moving to CBBC and bands are wary of playing new songs live because they're up on YouTube before they've had their morning Coco Pops. Blur's game – playing the whole album live and streaming it later – is pretty clever. Those at the gig didn't need to film it themselves and fans got to hear the tracks weeks before the release, but are no less likely to buy the album as a result. Magic.

OASIS REUNION LETTER NUMBER 695,342

Dear Sir, Oasis reunion. Let's cut to the chase. Noel's vocals are shrill and occasionally out of tune. Liam can't write songs. In

short they need each other. Wembley, July 2016? Yes please.

David Coombs, Corby

DS: The Gallagher relationship is thawing before our very eyes. Noel's said he'll write songs for Liam's solo career; Liam shared a picture of him with a backstage pass for High Flying Birds. They'll be back, but surely not before Liam's tasted proper success out of his big brother's shadow.

KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS

In one month, the public will have decided whether they want the prick with a blue tie to run the country or the prick with the red tie. With a rise in the anti-establishment movement from the likes of Russell Brand, music now has to play its part. Music has always been important in historical events, from Bob Dylan's protest songs to The Special AKA's 'Free

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Nelson Mandela'. I only hope that more bands will get involved and show that we're sick of austerity and we're sick of Westminster.

Liam Menzies, via email

DS: Nelson Mandela's incarceration, war and peace – these are situations where there's clear right and wrong. Modern British politics, on the other hand, is a muddy headfuck of a situation where the truth is a little harder to find. Start by turning to page 32 to read some home truths from Super Furry Animals. Plus: the election campaign has thrown up two protest songs so far – a fake boyband in that party political broadcast for the Green Party, and Alcopop! Records' 'The Wit And Wisdom Of Nigel Farage'. The latter is genius.

KANYE HELP ME?

Dear *NME*, could you answer a question for me? Who is the main rapper on the planet today, is it Kendrick Lamar or is it Kanye West? Ilya Kuziev, Tatarstan, Russia

DS: Ask a Yeezy question, get a Yeezy answer. Kanye!



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

Courtney Barnett and I post-gig on Good Friday at Manchester Gorilla. An exhilarating gig from an exceptional talent.

Kevin Tanswell, via email



DRENGE

U N D E R T O W

'Sinister and gripping' 9/10 NME

'A pivotal moment' ★★★★★ DIY

'Thrillingly uncompromising' ★★★★★ Q

C D / L P / D L O U T N O W

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Tame Impala
Cause I'm A Man

Part of you wishes Tame Impala would stop fucking about and write a record full of tracks as enormous as 'Elephant' from 2012 album 'Lonerism'. An even larger part of you, though, is grateful for the restless artistic spirit that drives Kevin Parker to keep pushing things forward. So it is with 'Cause I'm A Man', on which he expertly incorporates smooth R&B grooves into his music.

Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

2. Sharon Van Etten
I Don't Want To Let You Down

Last month, Sharon Van Etten's music actually managed to reduce a New Zealand newsreader to tears. Quite a feat, but her new track – the tender and life-affirming 'I Don't Want To Let You Down' – makes it easy to see why. "I don't wanna let you down", she sighs like someone convinced that's exactly what they're about to do, over twinkling xylophones and roughly strummed guitars. It's powerful stuff.

Luke Morgan Britton, writer

3. Big Deal
Veronica

Anglo-American grunge-pop duo Big Deal (aka Alice Costelloe and Kacey Underwood) added a rhythm section for 2013 second album 'June Gloom' and they're still with them on 'Veronica', the first offering from their currently untitled third album. It's a whopper at six minutes and it finds the pair exchanging verses before the track drops, builds and finishes in time-honoured pop tradition with lots of "ooooohs". Easily their best song yet.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

4. Tunde Adebimpe
Speedline Miracle Masterpiece
(feat. Sal P and Sinkane)

Recorded for the new *Grand Theft Auto V* score, this jerky post-punk number sees TV On The Radio's Tunde Adebimpe hire Sudanese maestro Sinkane and punk-funk legend Sal P to craft a propulsive odyssey that sounds... well, a bit like TV On The Radio's last album. No complaints here: clunky car puns aside – "Oh holy motor!" goes the shaky opening line – this is eccentric future-pop of the highest calibre.

Jazz Monroe, writer

5. Brandon Flowers
Still Want You

'Can't Deny My Love', the first track Flowers shared from his second solo album, might have been a stadium epic, but this new cut shows he's got plenty of variety left in his arsenal. 'Still Want You' takes things to the beach, where jaunty organs whirl with distant girl-group echoes as the Las Vegas singer croons chirpily about "climate change and debt" and "nuclear distress".

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

**6. Parrots**
All My Loving

Parrots' friends Hinds might be the ones getting all the attention, but the Madrid garage-punk trio are providing more than a little competition. 'All My Loving' – a cover of Black Lips/King Khan supergroup The Almighty Defenders and the boys' half of their Record Store Day split with their mates – is full of glorious chaos, Diego Garcia howling for the full exhilarating three minutes.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

7. Rihanna
American Oxygen

Rihanna's already said she wants her eighth album to be more soulful and timeless than her previous seven and, judging by 'American Oxygen', that could mean plumbing deeper topics for her lyrics. "This is the American dream", she sings as footage of Martin Luther King, 9/11 and the Ferguson riots plays out in the video, "Young boy hustling, trying to get the wheels in motion". A politicised Rihanna comes as a welcome and refreshing surprise.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

8. Tom Vek
Dirty Water

Londoner Vek's debut album 'We Have Sound' was a cult hit in 2005 that still ranks as one of the decade's most underrated marvels. To mark its 10th birthday the 33-year-old is putting out a handful of stripped-back early demos. 'Dirty Water' isn't his typical bag – a soft, piano instrumental stripped of his usual mechanical drum loops and booming baritone vocal. A neat glimpse of what came before an album of true genius.

Greg Cochran, Editor, NME.COM

9. A\$AP Rocky
M\$

A\$AP Rocky's back with the first slice of music from his new album, 'At.Long.Last.A\$AP', which is due later this year. 'M\$' may not be a single but it goes hard and suggests Rocky's moved his 2013 wound-down trap style to a different, even slicker place. It's an ode to making money and shows A\$AP in typically witty, hooky style over a funky beat and addictive bassline. Not just a PMF, after all. Bring on the new album.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

10. MS MR
Painted

The house piano riff in MS MR's new single comes as a surprise. When New York duo Lizzy Plapinger and Max Hershenow emerged in 2012, their half-asleep pop songs were built on seeping chillwave, but 'Painted' is a sign their second album will be different. With Plapinger asking "What did you think would happen?" over booming beats, this sounds like something from the dancier disc of a 'Now That's What I Call Music...' comp from the '90s.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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

11. Jamie T All About That Bass

There's a moment, about two thirds through the Live Lounge video of Jamie T's Meghan Trainor cover, where he looks the happiest he's been for about five years. Almost too happy – which is why straight after that you can also see him catch himself and rein it all in. That's not to say this cover's only fleetingly great – from the Chuck Berry guitars to the a cappella chorus, it's a gas.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

12. Slaves Cheer Up London

The rent on your fifth of a shed in Catford is three times your income, TFL rob you blind daily, you're ruled by a man-sized Muppet and you can barely move for oligarchs. Now here's Slaves to hammer home the helplessness of the capital-dweller. "Are you done digging your grave yet?" yelps Isaac Holman over punkoid guitar riffs, "You're dead already! Dead, dead already!" Clearly regulars in the Chicken Cottages of Seven Sisters, this lot.

Mark Beaumont, writer

13. Darkstar & Hayden Thorpe Temporary Secretary

'Temporary Secretary' was the unlikely floor-filling banger lurking on Paul McCartney's experimental 'McCartney II' album. Electronic trio Darkstar and Wild Beasts man Thorpe twist it into the stuff of nightmares with creepy effected vocals, ominous drones and haunted fairground sounds. Thoroughly deconstructed, this version could only fill a floor at a psycho clown convention. Worth a listen nonetheless.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

14. Gengahr Heroine

Gengahr are back with a new single that sees them shaping up like The Maccabees at their most sugary. "All I ask is that you wait for me", frontman Felix Bushe sings, like he's collapsed into the foetal position. His bandmates are much more combative though, charging forward with momentum and reviving their singer who ends this early-relationship anthem with butterflies in his stomach as he decides, "Sure, you can be my heroine".

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

15. Florence + The Machine Ship To Wreck

Following the mighty 'What Kind Of Man', 'Ship To Wreck' is the second single from Florence Welch's new album, 'How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful'. The song rolls in on an acoustic riff and lines about "sleeping pills", "great white sharks" and "killer whales", and it takes a while for her unmistakable vocal to kick in. When it does, it's spectacular, Flo sounding as fiery as she has in years.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor



16. Desaparecidos City On The Hill

Thirteen years after their cult debut 'Red Music/ Speak Spanish', Desaparecidos' mix of socio-political critique and gnarled pop-punk mania is as potent as ever on this first single from their imminent second album. "All the founding fathers sowed their seeds in the southern coast", growls Conor Oberst over chunky power chords, with backing vocals from Cursive's Tim Kasher.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

17. Tyler, The Creator Fucking Young

"I'm a fucking walking paradox – no, I'm not", confessed Tyler, The Creator on 2011 breakout track 'Yonkers'. Four years later, he may have evolved beyond the menace and pitch-shifted raps he's known for on this Frank Ocean-ish lead single from surprise new album 'Cherry Bomb', but retains his love for contradiction. 'Fucking Young' may be about the obsessive power of teenage crushes but it's his most grown-up moment to date.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

18. Bully Trying

"I question everything, my focus, my figure, my sexuality", sings Alicia Bognanno of Nashville band Bully. She flips the introspection on its head, though, and later analyses how much it really matters to dissect your life on such microscopic scale. Bognanno is unafraid to lay herself bare ("Been praying for my period all week, a relief that I just can't see") and the fact she can do so around a massive chorus boosts Bully's huge potential.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

19. The National Sunshine On My Back

It's a common trope in National songs for frontman Matt Berninger to characterise escape in the form of one reliable, comforting person – take the trusty domestic boltholes he sings to on 'Gospel' or 'Lemonworld' and this tense, silvery 'Trouble Will Find Me' off-cut. "I'm glad that you came/I need someone who knows me", he sings of a woman called Tina, before realising – in an unusually sung high part – that he doesn't know her at all.

Laura Snapes, writer

20. DMA's Feels Like 37

It only takes a minute for 'Feels Like 37' to imprint its beery chug onto your cranium. With a radio-ready riff and a lairy vocal hook from frontman Tommy O'Dell ("All I want has gone away, gone AWAY, GONE AWAY!"), the lead track from DMA's' forthcoming self-titled mini-album comes on like an Oasis covers band. As it ticks into its second minute however, a bleary psychedelic atmosphere suggest the Aussie trio are more than copyists.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

TheWeek

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

8

Video

Nasty



On the set of
the new Prodigy
video: (l-r) Maxim,
Jason Williamson,
Keith Flint and
Liam Howlett

Sleaford Mods' Jason
Williamson causes chaos
with The Prodigy in the
band's new promo for 'Ibiza'

The third video to come from The Prodigy's sixth Number One album – 'The Day Is My Enemy' – is also the first to feature the band themselves. Vocalist/dancer Keith Flint and Sleaford Mods' frontman Jason Williamson star in the promo, which is set inside a travel agent's office in a literal take on the song's subject: 'Ibiza'.

"It's a bit of an attack in the travel agents," says Prodigy leader Liam Howlett, on the day of the shoot at a disused shop in north London. "It revolves around this guy who's an OCD character behind the desk. It's basically him trying to sell us the dream of Ibiza. He keeps getting upset, because things keep getting moved on his desk. Things get smashed up." ➡

"I FELT LIKE WE HAD AN ENERGY IN COMMON WITH SLEAFORD MODS"

Liam Howlett

The vibe is meant to be lo-fi. "It's very much a performance video, lyrics to camera kind of vibe," says Howlett. "Just trying to get some of the points of the tune across."

"We like to keep it loose on the day, not have too much of a plan, make it feel real, then grab the best bits in the edit," says Flint. "Videos are a pain in the arse to make, but they are all about the edit. I mean, if I told you that for one video I'd go down to a tunnel and crab back and forth, you'd say, 'Well, that doesn't sound very good'. But of course, that's 'Firestarter'. You've got to trust the process."

The track has the Mods' Williamson laying into the ravey isle's superstar DJ culture. But Howlett's also keen to stress he often has a nice time out there. "It's not an attack on the island. We like to see it as a news report about these guys that just turn up with their songs on a USB stick, in their Learjet, and don't engage at all. Because after going to Ibiza and various



The video shoot and (below) the LP cover projected onto the House Of Commons

places, you get a certain taste in your mouth. But this is just one aspect of the record, it's not the whole thing, even though some people are saying that."

The collaboration came about late last year, when Howlett was roughly three-quarters of the way through making 'The Day Is My Enemy'. "I just needed to do something

else. Put my head out. I'd been checking the Sleaford Mods for ages, and I felt like we had an energy in common, that it could work. So I sent him the beat – I knew he'd like the beat – then we were off."

It turned out to be the LP's only guest vocal. "We didn't want to do any collaborations on this record because we wanted it as a band record," says Howlett. "But once Keith was on it too, we just felt that it carried

so well. I'm not really into collaborations, but it doesn't sound like a collaboration somehow."

'The Day Is My Enemy' has already become the band's sixth consecutive UK Number One album, kicking James Bay off the top of the album charts in the process. The campaign around it has involved them projecting the kohl-eyed urban fox from the album cover on various sites around London, including Battersea Power Station, the Houses Of Parliament and Shoreditch High Street railway station. "On the album cover, the fox is meant to be lost – he's a British fox in a US city," says Howlett. "I wanted to get something that expressed that sense of being in an alien environment but just going about your business."

The Prodigy tour Europe this month, then the UK in May, including two dates at Alexandra Palace and a headline set at the Isle Of Wight Festival in June. ■ GAVIN HAYNES



Shirley you're not serious?

Comedian Stewart Lee tells us why he has joined Graham Coxon and more on a tribute to folkie Shirley Collins

NME: What makes Shirley Collins so special?

Stewart Lee: "Her music is brilliant in a way I doubt people today could ever replicate, because her voice is without ego. Emotions flow through her."

Why choose 'Polly On The Shore' to cover in particular?

"It's the only one I knew how to play. I'm a rudimentary guitarist, but it's easy for even me to boil 'Polly On The Shore' down to three or four chords."

Have you sung before?

"I was in a droney band where I copied

The Dream Syndicate in the late '80s. We did three gigs. It was me on guitar, Simon Oakes of the band Peach on bass and Al Murray on drums."

Is this the start of a music career?

"Making a record would help me head off a midlife crisis, but I have no plans to switch. I am on to something in comedy, but all I would ever be in music is a fan channelling things."

'Shirley Inspired' is out for Record Store Day. Will you be found queuing up at your local record shop for anything in particular?



When Shirley met Stewart

"Probably not. All the things I want will be hanging around for weeks."

What's your favourite record shop?

"Backbeat Records in Edinburgh. It's a place where you'll find something you never even knew you wanted. Everything's in crates in unstable nine-foot piles. It feels dangerous."

■ DAN STUBBS



Ride here, right now

Reunited for live shows, the shoegazing legends aren't yet looking beyond the summer...

Two full decades since they last performed live together, shoegaze pioneers Ride – the band co-founded in 1988 by Andy Bell, who went on to join Oasis and Beady Eye – staged their own Easter Sunday resurrection at a rapturously received gig at O2 Academy Oxford. The hometown show – announced just five days before – sold out within minutes, and some fans travelled across the Atlantic to make the date. Around 500 of them packed in to see the reunited four-piece play a 90-minute set drawing heavily from their first two albums (1990's 'Nowhere' and 1992's 'Going Blank Again') and classic early EP tracks.

Talking to *NME* before the show, the group revealed that their reunion had been on the cards for some time. "Every year we'd get together to have a Christmas dinner and a few drinks," bassist Steve Queralt explained. "The

"WE NEVER MADE PLANS BACK IN THE DAY. WHY START NOW?"

Mark Gardener

reunion was always an elephant in the room. Finally one year Mark [Gardener, singer/guitarist] just said, 'Are we doing this or not?'"

"I had a growing feeling inside that I really wanted to do it," admits Gardener, who released 'Universal Road', a collaboration with former Cocteau Twin Robin Guthrie, last month. "Without getting morbid, I'd lost my dad a couple of years before and things like that make you realise that time isn't forever."

Gardener and fellow frontman Andy Bell made a tentative live comeback in February, when the duo appeared at a War Child benefit at the 100 Club. "It was actually a big deal doing that, because there was nothing to hide

behind," says Bell, "I was probably more worried about that than I am tonight." "Yeah, they were rubbish," jokes drummer Loz Colbert. "They needed some bass and drums behind them."

The morning after their Oxford comeback, Ride flew to the US for the Coachella festival and a short American tour. They're back in the UK in May for dates in Glasgow, Manchester and London that, like their hometown warm-up, sold out within an hour of their announcement last year. They then headline the Field Day festival in east London's Victoria Park on Sunday, June 7.

Amid this surge of summer activity, the one thing the band are deliberately keeping close to their chests is the prospect of new material. For now, simply enjoying this run of nostalgic, celebratory concerts is uppermost in the group's mind. "We're trying not to look beyond it really," says Bell. "We're just putting all the energy into the gigs and then we'll see where we are in a few months' time."

"Yeah, we never made plans back in the day," smiles Gardener, "so why start now?"

■ STUART HUGGETT



Ride backstage in Oxford, April 5, 2015

MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Drew McConnell



Helsinki

BOOK

The Jeeves series by PG Wodehouse



"For a lot of British comedy, Wodehouse was ground zero. There's something about the writing that's so simple and joyous it helps me get to sleep."

BOXSET The Wire



"All the people – the police force, the drug dealers, the journalists – no-one achieves what they set out to. It's about how everything in life is a compromise."

FILM

The Last Temptation of Christ

"I grew up in Ireland and Spain, Catholic countries, and the idea is that Christ was half-God half-man. The deity side is explored in literature, but the fact he's also human is never touched on. The film deals with that very effectively."

GAME 80 Days



"It's a narrative-driven app, based on Jules Verne's novel. You have to choose what's gonna happen and make it around the world in 80 days."

HOME COMFORT

Simon Mayo and Mark Kermode's movie podcast

"Listening to two middle-aged men bickering about whether 3D is any good puts me in a very relaxed state."

► Helsinki kick off their UK tour at Start The Bus in Bristol (April 19)



Full stream ahead

Jay Z's relaunch of streaming service Tidal came with a tidal wave of publicity. Is it really worth your hard-earned?

In March, a company controlled by Jay Z bought streaming service Tidal from Aspiro, a Scandinavian tech firm, with the promise of providing higher quality sound and better royalty rates for artists. The press conference for the relaunch was attended by a whole host of A-listers – collectively called the Tidal 16 – including Rihanna, Beyoncé, Jack White, Kanye, Colplay, Madonna and Arcade Fire, all of whom have a stake in the company along with Jay Z. In the increasingly hard-fought streaming wars, Tidal is now the greatest challenger to market leader Spotify. They each sound like brands of washing powder, but which gives you the whitest whites? Crucially, which one is worth your subscription money?

THE FACTS



► LAUNCHED

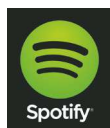
In 2009 as WIMP, but wisely rebranded late last year.

► USP

Enhanced “lossless” sound files, increasing quality for those prepared to pay for their most expensive service.

► COST

\$9.99/month for Premium; \$19.99 for Tidal HiFi (with those “lossless” FLAC files). Each alternative offers a 30-day free trial right now.



► LAUNCHED

First appeared in 2008.

► USP

Free, ad-funded platform, if you're prepared for interruptions and some blocked-off content. Established user base is key to its power and longevity.

► COST

£9.99/month for Spotify Premium, or the free, ad-funded service.



The Tidal 16 at the New York relaunch event

USER EXPERIENCE

► TIDAL

Typical features like new releases, curated playlists and play queues are all accessible and easy to operate. The ever-present search icon on the mobile platform is an unexpected boon.

► SPOTIFY

There's a Rizla paper's difference between the two interfaces, with Tidal either taking inspiration from Spotify, or both realising there's one way of doing this well. That search icon though – you have to flick through too many screens on Spotify.

ARTISTS NOT INCLUDED

► TIDAL

The Beatles, AC/DC and other big-leaguers. But hang on – AC/DC's tracks are listed, just not playable. Is this a hint?

► SPOTIFY

Ditto. Add Taylor Swift to that, of course. She's thrown her lot in with Tidal but is still keeping '1989' to herself.



USER BASE

► TIDAL

500K

Paying subscribers at the end of 2014. Recent events will substantially hike that up.

► SPOTIFY

60M

Users in January 2015, of which 15 million were paying subscribers.





SIZE OF CATALOGUE

► TIDAL

MORE THAN
25M
TRACKS

► SPOTIFY

MORE THAN
30M
TRACKS

SOUND QUALITY

► TIDAL

We trialed both on an iPhone 5s with SoundMagic e10 earbuds, and through a laptop plugged into a reliable old Pioneer amp. Sound quality is Tidal's big thing, and it shows – you can make out what each member of Hot Chip's doing on 'Huarache Lights', and hear Tobias Jesso Jr's every breath on 'Leaving LA'. It's a full, bass-heavy sound.

► SPOTIFY

There are various settings for Spotify, so for fairness' sake we picked 'Extreme'. Anyone who's used an iPod can testify to Spotify's current superiority when listening on the move, but it's not as detail-rich as Tidal. Neuroscience experts-for-hire reckon the human ear's not as great as we'd hope at picking out differences between audio files. Even so, Spotify appears to suffer slightly in comparison.

CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

► TIDAL

The Tidal 16 have already made their presence felt. Witness how Rihanna's 'American Oxygen' was streaming exclusively on Tidal shortly after the relaunch – and how Jay Z's 1996 debut album, 'Reasonable Doubt', was removed from Spotify on April 6.

► SPOTIFY

Plenty of famouses have spoken up in support of Spotify in the past (Britney Spears, Ashton Kutcher for example), but it's divisive. In 2013, Thom Yorke colourfully described it as "the last desperate fart of a dying corpse".

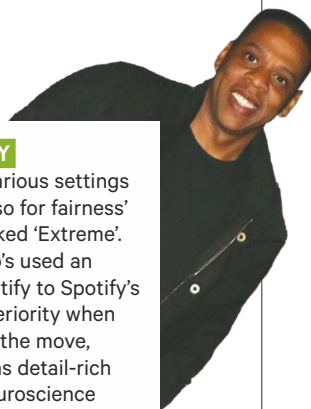
WHAT DO THE ARTISTS EARN?

► TIDAL

Artists are estimated to earn – on average – around \$0.007 per Tidal stream after their label, publisher and other interested parties have taken their cut.

► SPOTIFY

Spotify pays around \$0.001 per stream, but can deliver scale thanks to the number of subscribers. Its payment methods are all out in the open thanks to an information hub for artists.



THE MINI INTERVIEW



Henry Darnall

Young Knives

You're releasing a 'zine for Record Store Day. How did that happen?

"We're super disorganised people, so we've always been too late to do anything for Record Store Day in the past. This time we decided to definitely get something together, so we're releasing an EP, 'Something Awful'. The EP comes with a 'zine too, as a kind of tribute to bricks-and-mortar record shops, where people would go to pick up fanzines and find out what was going on. It's got contributions from Savages, Hot Chip, Maximo Park, Art Brut and more."

Do you still go to record shops?

"I do – Truck in Oxford, Rise in Cheltenham and Sound Knowledge in Marlborough, where we play sometimes. But I never buy anything when I'm writing music, because I sometimes hear stuff and go, 'Shit, nothing I can do is as good as this.'"

You're playing the Berwick Street Festival in Soho, London on Record Store Day. What should we expect?

"Have you ever seen Queen's set from Live Aid? It's going to be like that; we're basically going to take loads of coke and own it. Actually, we're on first at midday, so perhaps we won't. But I love doing shows like these – there's nowhere to hide. You can't come on through dry ice, you're just there and when you plug in and nothing works, everyone knows. It's the way things should be."

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

VERDICT

If you're after flat value for money, Spotify's the one – but how long will the ad-funded version survive? Tidal's for audiophiles, and for fans of the music of the Tidal 16 – it's possible any of them might decide to take their ball home, remove their catalogue from Spotify and force punters' hands. But you might equally want to sit tight and see what Apple do with Beats Audio – they're due to unveil their long-overdue streaming service soon.

WORDS: MATTHEW HORTON PHOTOS: CORBIS, GETTY

STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



Noel Gallagher and his High Flying Birds will play live on Later...

Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds

Later... With Jools Holland

► WATCH BBC Two, 10pm, April 21

The Chief drops by Jools' Maidstone studio to play a handful of tracks from his recent album 'Chasing Yesterday'. Also on the programme are Compton rapper Kendrick Lamar, Mumford & Sons previewing new album 'Wilder Mind' and funk maestro George Clinton.

Beach Boys Live At Knebworth

► WATCH Sky Arts, 9:15am, April 20

Think Knebworth and you'd think Oasis, but in June 1980 another band of brothers – The Beach Boys – thrilled the Hertfordshire crowd. Witness them blast away the summer rain with a hit-heavy

set including 'California Girls' and 'I Get Around'.

Future Islands Mary Anne Hobbs

► LISTEN BBC 6Music, 7am, April 18
The Baltimore band recently spent one day at Abbey Road studios in London creating a song from start

to finish. They'll present it to Mary Anne Hobbs this morning, while talking about the experience of making it.

Pete Doherty Poetry: From Pete Doherty To Andrew Motion

► WATCH Sky Arts, 3am, April 19
Pete's poetic leanings are well documented and, in 2006, he took to television to read Siegfried Sassoon's *Suicide In The Trenches*, having recited it with Libertines bandmate Carl Barat at the NME Awards in 2004. Relive Doherty's solo reading and more this week.

Gaz Coombes Lauren Laverne

► LISTEN BBC 6 Music, 10am, April 16

The former Supergrass man stops off at BBC 6 Music to recreate highlights from his second solo album, 'Matador', and to chat to Lauren Laverne about that record and his future plans.



GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS

THIS WEEK



Palma Violets

The Lambeth lads head to some of the country's most intimate and sweaty venues ahead of second album 'Danger In The Club'.

► DATES Southend Chinnery's (April 16), Norwich Waterfront (17), Hull Fruit (20), York Duchess (21)
► TICKETS £12 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.20-£1.50 booking fee

Will Butler

The Arcade Fire man steps out to give his debut solo album 'Policy' another airing in Glasgow and Manchester.

► DATES Glasgow Art School (20), Manchester Deaf Institute (21)
► TICKETS £15 from NME.COM/tickets with £3 booking fee; Manchester sold out

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

- 1. Bad For Lazarus**
Green Door Store, Brighton
► April 16, 8pm
- 2. Menace Beach**
The Old Blue Last, London
► April 18, 8pm
- 3. Traams**
Castle Road, Southsea
► April 18, 12pm
- 4. Polar Bear**
Jumbo Records, Leeds
► April 18, 12pm
- 5. K-X-P**
Start The Bus, Bristol
► April 21, 8pm

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PRIORITY

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The osprey is a protected species



DON'T BLAME THE BIRDS FOR T IN THE PARK PERIL

BY CHRIS PACKHAM

Nesting ospreys are a threat to T In The Park's debut year in its new venue, but our feathered friends are the real victims, says the presenter of *Springwatch*



T In The Park has run into trouble as their new site at Strathallan Castle is home to two nesting ospreys, which are a protected species. The organisers say the festival will go ahead, but the needs of the birds will not be ignored.

The first thing I'd like to stress is that the birds are an innocent party here. They're not trying to ruin anyone's festival. They're just trying to breed – and we all like to breed. What's ruining the festival is a human conflict in which wildlife has unwittingly become a factor.

The RSPB in Scotland feel that the organisers haven't been taking this issue seriously enough, but equally they were being hampered by groups of people who don't want the festival to take place there for a multitude of reasons – nothing to do with birds.

There's a nesting platform at Strathallan, but it's not on the property that the organisers want to use. It's just over the fence. The organisers have been advised to build another nesting platform further away and encourage the ospreys to move there, but the original platform is on the side of the fence where the festival's detractors live, and they've refused to take it down. So much for an effective compromise.

Sadly, a combination of the festival organisers not understanding the gravity of their obligation to wildlife plus the obstructive nature of their opponents is a recipe for disaster. You've got nobody willing to compromise, and caught in the middle are two endangered birds who are national treasures.

The organisers were trying to dissuade the birds from returning to the original site. They had cherry pickers up, balloons and tractors sounding their horns. It's illegal to disturb ospreys when they're nesting, so when a video emerged that appeared to show the pair trying to return, the police were called.

As the organisers' plans stand, the new nesting site would be 750 metres from the main stage. With the best will in the world, Noel Gallagher might have his High Flying Birds making an appearance, but they won't be impressing the high flying osprey.

We need a solution. I'm a music fan. I love The Prodigy and I'd love to see them there in July. But I don't want to see wildlife in conflict like this.

There is another spanner in the works: there's been no decision made about planning permission. The local council haven't yet given permission on numerous accounts, not just birds. There's noise, logistics and policing involved in the decision. That decision isn't due until May. Why on earth couldn't the local council have made the decision earlier? That would have helped the organisers to go through with their plan.

The council, organisers and neighbours are at each other's throats, and on top of it all is perched a pair of ospreys. It would be so much better if the humans had found a solution to this. It's time to swallow pride on all sides and think about protecting these birds. ■

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

LOST ALBUMS

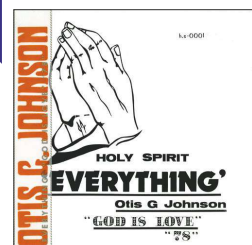
#69

Otis G Johnson *Everything God Is Love '78* (1978)

Chosen by Alloysious Massaquoi, *Young Fathers*



"It's a church gospel album from the late '70s and it's one of the most unique things I've ever heard. It's just this one guy from Detroit fucking about. He sings badly, and he's playing on this old Hammond organ, but somehow it sounds really good. It's religious, but it's universal. My mate Robbie played it to me and it blew my mind. The sound is so basic – all those old Casio sounds – and it's so raw. It's a little bit like [long-lost Nigerian funk musician] William Onyeabor, but a bit less together! He's kind of the step before Onyeabor. The third track, 'He's Everything', is a standout. Everyone should check him out."



► THE DETAILS

- RELEASE DATE 1978
- LABEL Numero Group
- BEST TRACKS 'Walk With Jesus', 'He's Everything'
- WHERE TO FIND IT £15 on Discogs
- LISTEN ONLINE Some tracks on YouTube

“Bonkers” but “very tuneful”, album 12 finds the funk-rock soul brother taking his sound further into the cosmos



Paul Weller: “my so-called contemporaries all seem stuck in a rut”

Paul Weller

You can always tell when you’re talking to someone who thinks they’ve just made a great album. They lose their breath when they talk about the sessions, stumble over ways to describe their new sound and speak at double-pace as if to hurry along the day when the world hears it. So it is with Paul Weller, who recorded his 12th solo album ‘Saturn’s Pattern’ over two separate month-long sessions in May and October last year and emerged declaring, “We’ve gone into the future – we’ve got this 21st century music and I think that it’s going to be an inspiration to people... It’s just bonkers in places, but there’s really great tunes on there. It’s a little bit of a leap into the unknown.”

Bearing in mind he was assisted by Ocean Colour Scene’s Steve Cradock and Josh McClorey from The Strypes on the album, this might stretch credulity if Weller wasn’t currently jagged up on some sort of insane, bathtub-synthesized inspiration juice. His last

album, 2012’s ‘Sonik Kicks’, was arguably his most groundbreaking to date, incorporating psychedelia, krautrock and shoegaze elements into his soulful rock stew. ‘Saturn’s Pattern’, which also features contributions from acid-psych band Syd Arthur and Noel Gallagher collaborators Amorphous Androgynous, looks set to rocket even further into the unknown.

‘Saturn’s Pattern’ just kind of comes from out of space,” Weller says of the title track. “It’s kind of got a little bit of funk in it, but it’s music that I haven’t possibly heard of – it’s pretty original, I think. There’s a few tracks on the album you can’t really place, but they’re very, very tuneful. ‘White Skies’ is really heavy funky rock, with a little bit of Betty Davis in it. The sky’s the limit for me really; I have no idea where it’s going to go.”

That ‘Saturn’s Pattern’ is so unpredictable is testament to Weller’s ability to adapt to, assimilate with and ultimately leave his inimitable stamp upon successive musical generations. “You kind of hit upon the right circumstances or whatever, but I’m always trying to look forwards and see where else can this music go. I don’t feel in any way shackled to any of my past at all – I think it’s wide open.”

Is it important for established act to stay involved with contemporary music? “It’s important to me, but that’s because I love music. I don’t know if I understand people when they get to a certain age and they’re just kind of happy with what they know. I’m on the lookout for whatever’s happening, it still

holds my interest. It’s the general inspiration of good music, just using it to take you off somewhere and showing you other possibilities. It does involve taking a few risks, and sometimes those risks aren’t popular, but that’s a chance you take as opposed to just making the same records year after year. Who are my peers, really? I’m not sure. I’ve probably got more in common with a lot of younger bands than my so-called contemporaries who all seem stuck in a rut just doing the same thing.”

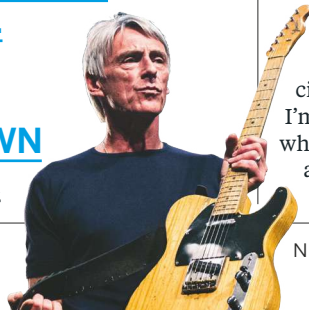
▶ THE DETAILS

- ▶ **TITLE** Saturn’s Pattern
- ▶ **RELEASE DATE** May 11
- ▶ **LABEL** Parlophone
- ▶ **PRODUCER** Jan ‘Stan’ Kybert
- ▶ **RECORDED** Black Barn Studios, Surrey
- ▶ **TRACKLISTING** White Sky, Saturn’s Pattern, Going My Way, Long Time, Pick It Up, I’m Where I Should Be, Phoenix, In The Car, These City Streets
- ▶ **PAUL WELLER SAYS** “The drums are really big. I wouldn’t say it was dance, because I wouldn’t do a dance record as such, but it’s got a lot of kind of movement to it.”

Somehow ‘The Modfather’ tag seems out of date for this interstellar sonic explorer. Step forward, then, The Psychspinner...

■ MARK BEAUMONT

“WE’VE GONE INTO THE FUTURE... IT’S A BIT OF A LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN”
PAUL WELLER



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ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"WE WANTED TO MAKE AMERICAN MUSIC OF ANY TIME"
BRIAN RITCHIE



violent femmes

◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

The barefoot child peeking into an old building is Billie Jo Campbell, then aged three, who photographer Ron Hugo spotted walking with her mother in Los Angeles. Tracked down by MTV News in 2007, Campbell explained, "I remember looking into that building, and they kept telling me there were animals in there. I had no idea there were photographers there. I was pissed off that I couldn't see the animals."

THIS WEEK...

Violent Femmes: Violent Femmes

As the band release their first new music in 15 years for Record Store Day, we look back at their influential alt-rock debut

THE BACKGROUND

Violent Femmes formed in Milwaukee in 1981, after teenage songwriter and guitarist Gordon Gano was recommended to bassist Brian Ritchie, who had already formed a busking duo with drummer Victor DeLorenzo. Favouring acoustic instruments, Violent Femmes played on the city's streets as well as in its coffee houses and small venues. Taking cues from Lou Reed, Jonathan Richman and early Talking Heads, they merged danceable folk-punk with elements of skiffle, blues, gospel and reggae, while Gano's lyrics were wracked with adolescent trauma and thwarted sexual desire. The unsigned band recorded their self-titled debut with the help of a \$10,000 loan from DeLorenzo's father, then offered it to various American labels. LA's Slash Records took the plunge and 'Violent Femmes' was an immediate underground hit.

FIVE FACTS

1 Opening track 'Blister In The Sun' is Violent Femmes' best-known song, but it wasn't released as a single until 1997. Ten years later, Gano licensed the track for a Wendy's fast food advert, prompting a lawsuit from Ritchie. This acrimony was one reason behind the band's temporary 2009 split.

2 As part of his minimal stand-up drumkit, DeLorenzo plays the 'tranceaphone', actually a large, upended metal basket placed over a floor tom.

3 The third verse of 'Gone Daddy Gone' ("Tell by the way that you switch and walk/I can tell by the way that you baby-talk") is paraphrased from Willie Dixon's blues classic 'I Just Want To Make Love To You'. Later issues of the album credit Dixon as co-writer.

4 Closing ballad 'Good Feeling' features Gano on violin and producer Mark Van Hecke on piano. It ended up on the soundtrack of John Elias Michalakis' 1987 B-movie *I Was A Teenage Zombie*. Following its release, Michalakis is reported to have become a monk.

5 Artists who have covered 'Violent Femmes' songs include Gnarlz Barkley ('Gone Daddy Gone'), The Wannadies ('Blister In The Sun') and The Duke Spirit ('Good Feeling').

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"Body and beats/I stain my sheets/I don't even know why" - 'Blister In The Sun'

Despite its sticky subject matter, Gano has insisted in interviews this isn't about masturbation.

"Why can't I get just one fuck?/I guess it's got something to do with luck" - 'Add It Up'

After all, when Violent Femmes want to sing about sex they do so directly. 'Add It Up' exhibits worryingly Oedipal overtones.

"I hope you know that this will go down on your permanent record/Oh yeah?" - 'Kiss Off'

A school principal's admonishment, delivered by Gano in a voice dripping with sarcasm.

WHAT WE SAY NOW

Quirky, creepy and too clever by half, 'Violent Femmes' remains an out-of-nowhere classic of alternative rock, all the more admirable for its largely acoustic sound. From Weezer and They Might Be Giants to Ariel Pink and OK Go, any American musician with a fondness for chipper tunes and nerdy humour is in its debt.

FAMOUS FAN

"The band were these nerds who were punk, or violent toughs who were femmes, or aggressive musicians playing acoustics – it sounded so complicated and it blew open my ideas about maleness in rock. It was wussy and tough at the same time!" **James Murphy**, LCD Soundsystem, NME, May 28, 2011

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"We wanted to make a recording that was American music of any time. The album could have been released in the '60s, it could have been released when it was released, it could be released now." **Brian Ritchie**, 'Violent Femmes' Expanded Edition sleeve notes, 2002

THE AFTERMATH

'Violent Femmes' sold steadily in the USA and UK, where it was licensed to Rough Trade. Their second album, 1984's 'Hallowed Ground', consisted of songs Gano had already written but not recorded for their debut, but neither this nor its successor, 'The Blind Leading The Naked', matched the impact of their first. DeLorenzo departed after 1991's fifth album 'Why Do Birds Sing?' and the group have split and reformed intermittently ever since. They are still touring (with Dresden Dolls' drummer Brian Vigliano) but haven't – until this month – released any new music since 2000's album 'Freak Magnet'.

▶ THE DETAILS

▶ **RECORDED** July 1982 ▶ **RELEASE DATE** April 1983 ▶ **LENGTH** 36:15
▶ **LABEL** Rough Trade (UK), Slash (US) ▶ **PRODUCER** Mark Van Hecke
▶ **STUDIO** Castle Recording Company, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin
▶ **HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** n/a ▶ **UK SALES** unknown ▶ **SINGLES**
Gone Daddy Gone ▶ **TRACKLISTING** ▶ 1. Blister In The Sun ▶ 2. Kiss Off
▶ 3. Please Do Not Go ▶ 4. Add It Up ▶ 5. Confessions ▶ 6. Prove My Love
▶ 7. Promise ▶ 8. To The Kill ▶ 9. Gone Daddy Gone ▶ 10. Good Feeling

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TheWeek NEWSDESK

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I don't really like Nirvana that much. I'm more into Mercury Rev, Oasis, Brian Jonestown Massacre. The grunge scene is not what I'm interested in."

Frances Bean Cobain likes dadrock, but not literally

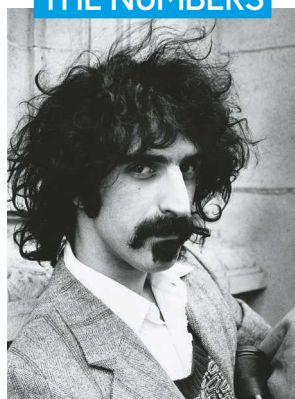
THE NUMBERS

100

Number of albums the late Frank Zappa will have put out after the release of 'Dance Me This' in June

£4,000

Amount Drake lost to The Game in a bet on a Kentucky Wildcats and Wisconsin Badgers basketball match



£800,000

Winning bid for Don McLean's 16-page transcript for the 1971 hit single 'American Pie', sold at auction in New York

100

Hours of community service Vanilla Ice must serve for stealing a pool heater in Florida

WHO THE FUCK IS...



Danny McGahey

The 12-year-old became a viral sensation last week after joining Nicki Minaj during her set at a gig in Belfast.

Is he an aspiring rapper?

No - he's the fan that began to cry after Minaj brought him onstage. "I've waited for this moment for so long!" he said. **And that's why he went viral?**

Not quite. It's because of the devilish grin he had while Minaj hugged him to her chest. "Look at how he stopped crying when he laid his head on dem thangz. They have real power beaming out of them that can cure the sick," Minaj later wrote on Instagram.

+ GOOD WEEK +



2 Chainz and Diplo

Diplo and 2 Chainz tested water that costs £65,000 per diamond-encrusted bottle for the latter's online series, *Most Expensive Shit*. 2 Chainz said it was like drinking "the most expensive water when you can just drink rain."

- BAD WEEK -



Marilyn Manson

The singer was punched in the face in a Canadian diner in what he claims was an unprovoked attack while taking pictures with fans. A witness says Manson was left with a bloody nose and looked "pissed off because he was being nice."

IN BRIEF

Yeezy dubs it

The *Book Of Yeezus* is a new version of the Bible that changes every mention of 'God' to 'Kanye'. And Kanye said it was good. Does that mean his forthcoming album will confusingly now be called 'So Help Me Yeezus'?

A little less impersonation

Priscilla Presley has banned Elvis impersonators from her new Elvis-themed Las Vegas wedding chapel. "Elvis had a lot of dignity. Elvis had a lot of class," she said. "He was a beautiful specimen of a man."

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

Ashes to clashes

The father of the late Gwar frontman Dave 'Oderus Urungus' Brockie is suing the rest of the band for reportedly refusing to hand over his son's ashes. Given their penchant for wearing horror masks, the case is likely to get ugly.

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS APRIL 12, 2015

NEW
01

All Time Low Future Hearts HOPELESS

The Baltimore rock band score their first ever UK Number One album in the Official Record Store Chart with their sixth album, 'Future Hearts'.

NEW 2	Undertow Drenge INFECTIOUS MUSIC
▼ 3	Carrie & Lowell Suffjan Stevens ASTHMATIC KITTY
NEW 4	Fast Food Nadine Shah APOLLO
▼ 5	Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit Courtney Barnett HOUSE ANXIETY
NEW 6	Culture Of Volume East India Youth XL RECORDINGS
▼ 7	The Day Is My Enemy The Prodigy TAKE ME TO THE HOSPITAL
NEW 8	Ivy Tripp Waxahatchee WICHITA RECORDINGS
NEW 9	White Men Are Black Men Too Young Fathers BIG DADA
▼ 10	Chaos And The Calm James Bay REPUBLIC
▼ 11	Vulnicura Björk ONE LITTLE INDIAN
▼ 12	Asunder, Sweet And Other Distress Godspeed You! Black Emperor CONSTELLATION
▼ 13	Short Movie Laura Marling VIRGIN
NEW 14	Chambers Chilly Gonzales GENTLE THREAT
▼ 15	Sonic Soul Surfer Seasick Steve CAROLINE/THERE'S A DEAD SKUNK
NEW 16	The Toerag Sessions Emily Barker EVERYONE SANG
▲ 17	I Love You, Honeybear Father John Misty BELLA UNION
NEW 18	Two Hands Turbowolf SPINEFARM
▼ 19	Chasing Yesterday Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds SOUR MASH
NEW 20	No Pier Pressure Brian Wilson CAPITOL
▼ 21	The Race For Space Public Service Broadcasting TEST CARDINGS
▼ 22	If I Was Staves ATLANTIC
▼ 23	Young Chasers Circa Waves VIRGIN
▲ 24	III Follakzoid SACRED BONES
▼ 25	In The Lonely Hour Sam Smith CAPITOL
▼ 26	Primrose Green Ryley Walker DEAD OCEANS
▼ 27	Tracker Mark Knopfler BRITISH GROVE
■ 28	Duets - Re-working The Catalogue Van Morrison RCA
▲ 29	Wanted On Voyage George Ezra COLUMBIA
▼ 30	X Ed Sheeran ASYLUM
NEW 31	Strange Trails Lord Huron PLAY IT AGAIN SAM
NEW 32	Golem Wand IN THE RED
▼ 33	Fresh Blood Matthew E White DOMINO RECORDINGS
▼ 34	To Pimp A Butterfly Kendrick Lamar AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
NEW 35	AM Arctic Monkeys DOMINO RECORDINGS
NEW 36	Black Messiah D'Angelo & The Vanguard RCA
▼ 37	Royal Blood Royal Blood WARNER BROS
▼ 38	Hinterland Lonelady WARP
NEW 39	Hozier Hozier ISLAND
NEW 40	Elsewhere Denai Moore BECAUSE MUSIC

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 FOREST VINYL CINDERFORD

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WHY IT'S GREAT They stock over 10,000 new and second-hand vinyl offerings.

TOP SELLER LAST WEEK

Foo Fighters - 'Sonic Highways'

THEY SAY "There's a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, with a lounge area with comfortable seating and free real coffee (or tea if preferred!)." **PHOTOS: CORBIS, GETTY**

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



Buzzcocks



The Cribs



Tim

Burgess

The
Charlatans'
frontman

**THE FIRST SONG I
REMEMBER HEARING**
'Long Haired Lover
From Liverpool' -
'Little' Jimmy Osmond

"I must've been five or six when I first heard this. I saw this kid who didn't seem much older than I was and he was doing something that sent everyone crazy. It was maybe a year later that The Bay City Rollers came along. Overnight, all the boys seemed to have a haircut like Woody and the girls were wearing white flares with tartan trim. My dad worked at ICI and I was thinking I'd prefer a job like theirs to a job like his. So yeah, 'Little' Jimmy Osmond made me want to become a singer. Thanks, Jim."

**THE FIRST SONG I
FELL IN LOVE WITH**
'Ever Fallen In Love
(With Someone
You Shouldn't've)' -
Buzzcocks

"If you'd have told me at the time that this was a pop song, I'm sure I would have

argued that, like the 11-year-old me, it was pure punk. It is a pop song, though, and one of the best ever written – under three minutes, with an angsty lesson in life, plus great for singing in front of the mirror with a tennis-raquet guitar."

**"THERE WAS AN
ALOOFNESS TO NEW
ORDER THAT REALLY
STRUCK A CHORD"**

**THE FIRST ALBUM
I BOUGHT**
'The Great
Rock'n'Roll Swindle'
- Sex Pistols

"It's a kind of concept album, which is odd really as that's the kind of thing the band came to overthrow. It's a bit of a circus of outtakes, covers and swearing, but I loved it."

**THE SONG THAT
MADE ME WANT
TO BE IN A BAND**
'Blue Monday' -
New Order

"If it was 'Little' Jimmy that made me realise I'd like to be a singer, it was New Order that made me want to be in a band. There was an aloofness to New Order that really struck a chord with me – they were like anti-pop stars, down to the fact they didn't put their name on their records. They gave New York disco a Macclesfield/Salford twist. I still play 'Blue Monday' when I DJ and it sounds as fresh as ever even though it's over 30 years old."

**THE SONG I CAN
NO LONGER
LISTEN TO**
'Bottle Up And
Explode!' - Elliott
Smith

"Elliott's songs make me cry. I knew him – not like a close friend, but we met a few times and always ended up talking music and adventures. It breaks my heart to hear him singing something so raw knowing what the outcome would be."

**THE SONG I DO
AT KARAOKE**
'White Lines (Don't,
Don't Do It)' -
Grandmaster Flash
& Melle Mel

"It goes down well. Let's leave it at that!"

**THE SONG I CAN'T
GET OUT OF
MY HEAD**
'Burning For No One'
- The Cribs

"I heard it on the radio and it got me straight away. There's a timelessness and a catchiness that made me stop what I was doing until I heard who it was by. To me that's kind of the ultimate accolade for a song."

**THE SONG I WISH
I'D WRITTEN**
'I Couldn't Say It
To Your Face'
- Arthur Russell

"It's a song I played on my solo tour. There's a beauty to it that you hear in so few songs. Some songs just have a resonance that chimes with you; this does that for me."

**THE SONG THAT
REMINDS ME OF
BAGGY**
'Can You Dig It?' -
The Mock Turtles

"It was a great time for us, and this song always reminds me of being broken down on the side of the motorway on our way to a gig – sun shining and none of us with too much of a care in the world."

**THE SONG I WANT
PLAYED AT MY
FUNERAL**
'Let The Good Times
Be Never Ending' -
The Charlatans

"I was trying to think of something uplifting, and this has the bonus of maybe bringing in some royalties too. Maybe enough to buy the first round of drinks at the pub afterwards."



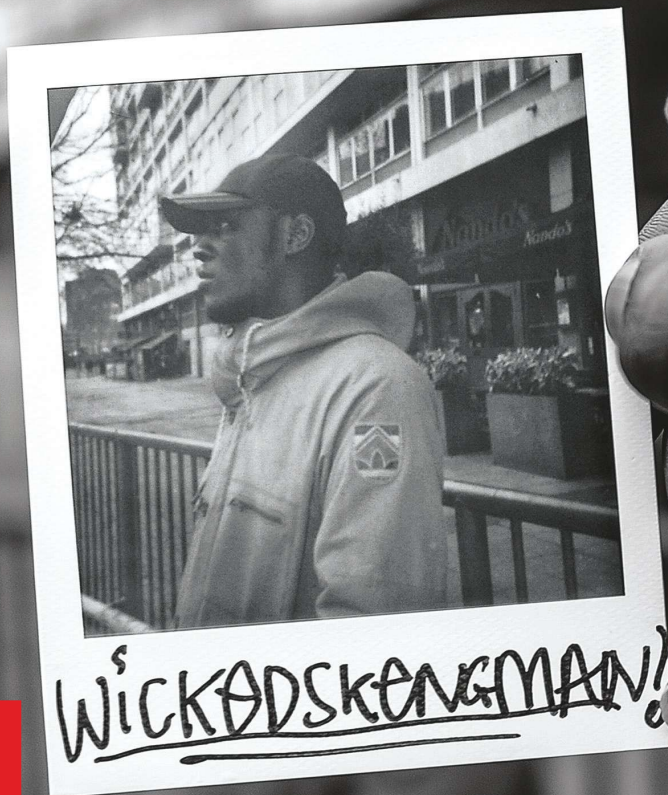
Grimes

Rad ar

► **LISTEN NOW**
NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC

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

NME
NEW
BAND
OF THE WEEK



Stormzy

The Skepta-tipped MC is kicking up a storm, while staying happily unsigned

You may not have spotted him behind the flame-throwers, but back in February, when Kanye West made the Brit Awards interesting for the first time in years, grime MC Stormzy was stood on the stage behind him.

It was a big moment for the 21-year-old from south London, although he's quickly getting used to the attention. He picked up a Mobo for Best Grime Act in October last year, and a week later became the first unsigned MC to appear on *Later... With Jools Holland*. Then, in January, he came third on the BBC Sound Of 2015 list – not bad for someone who, a year ago, was working as an engineer in Leamington Spa.

"I was in north London when [grime elder statesman and Stormzy's inspiration] Skepta texted me," he says of the Brits. "He was like, 'We're going onstage with Kanye at the Brits, be there in an hour in all black.' I had to stop off at a JD Sports and get a hoodie. It was a proper rush."

Although he can now count Wiley, another of his

heroes, among his friends, Stormzy didn't get the chance to meet Kanye at the Brits. "I hope one day that Jay Z and Kanye West know my work," he says. "As much as they're your idols, though, they're also your competition."

Stormzy's singles, including recent underground hit 'Know Me From', have offered listeners a forceful introduction to an artist looking to capitalise on renewed interest in grime. The aggression in his sound is something he credits to "south London culture and what I've been through growing up there".

However, he claims there's more to his music than what we've heard so far, as he plans to show fans on his upcoming UK tour, starting this week. "I know a lot of people just know me for the gas. I want to pull out some other tricks to show them that there's more to me than that, and see how they take it."

After that, there's the small matter of signing a record deal. Not that he's in any rush. "There

are signed artists that can't get a Top 200 record, but you have acts like Chance The Rapper who isn't signed and is smashing it," he says, while revealing that "loads" of labels want his signature. "I'm a big believer that if you make enough noise, you can't be ignored. My mission for now is to just keep on killing it." ■ DAVID RENSHAW

▼
ON
NME.COM/
NEWMUSIC
NOW

► Read a 'day in the life' photo blog on Stormzy

► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** London
- **FOR FANS** of Wiley, Skepta
- **SOCIAL** twitter.com/stormzy1
- **BUY IT** 'Know Me From' and 'Not That Deep' are on iTunes now
- **SEE HIM LIVE** UK tour begins in Bristol on April 16
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Stormzy does not own a mobile phone, much to the frustration of his manager and PR

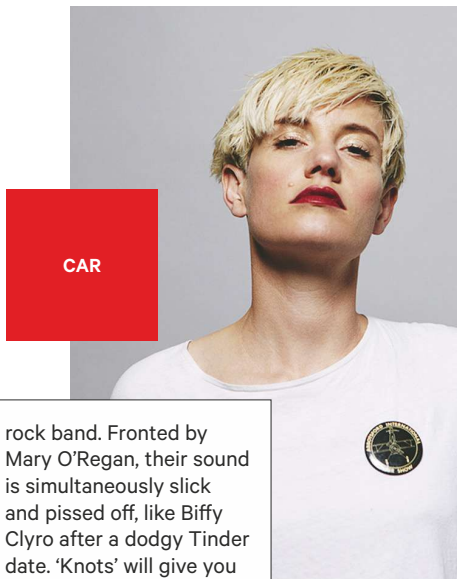
MORE NEW MUSIC

CAR

Former member of London cold-wavers Battant, Chloé Raunet has reinvented herself as CAR, a solo artist indebted to the stark sounds of Soft Cell, Visage and The Normal. Hints of electroclash seep through the icy 'Idle Eyes', with lyrics originally written for Gesaffelstein. The EP 'Glock'd' is out now and she is booked to play at The Great Escape in May.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/c.a.r.official

► **HEAR THEM** c-a-r-music.com



CAR

rock band. Fronted by Mary O'Regan, their sound is simultaneously slick and pissed off, like Biffy Clyro after a dodgy Tinder date. 'Knots' will give you a pretty good idea of their Warped Tour-worthy sound.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/heartsunderfire

► **HEAR THEM** last.fm/music/Hearts+Under+Fire

Taymir

While Dutch quartet Taymir contain all the tropes of an indie lad band – chantable hooks; an early Beatles fixation – they're more nuanced than their Stella-chugging peers. Recalling the retro-fixation of The Last Shadow Puppets, 'All We Know' and 'What Would You Say' are giddy enough to separate them from the pack. We'll even forgive the fact they've got a track just called 'Aaaah'.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/taymirmusic

► **HEAR THEM** taymir.nl



Taymir



Ho99o9

their apocalyptic, GG Allin-inspired music when they hit the UK in May.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/ho99o9

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/ho99o9

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Brighton Great Escape (May 14–16)

Redspencer

Melbourne trio Redspencer veer between shoegaze-tinted jangle and early-'90s melodic Brit-rock. 'Here Or When' has a hook and wistful harmonies, while 'Tell' picks up the pace to something a little antsy. You imagine the group have spent their fair share of evenings poring over sounds from these shores.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/redspencer

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

NME BUZZ ACT OF THE WEEK

Ho99o9

Frustrated by the stop-start mentality of Death Grips? Then look no further than LA-via-New Jersey's Ho99o9. Pronounced Horror, the thrashcore rap duo caused a stir at SXSW, with fans hanging off the rafters at one show. Catch

Hearts Under Fire

Recently releasing their debut album 'Outlines', Surrey punks Hearts Under Fire are a fiery homegrown

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

MEREDITH GRAVES' NEW LABEL

Perfect Pussy's Meredith Graves has launched her own label, Honor Press. The first release will be the debut by Sacramento post-hardcore trio So Stressed, 'The Unlawful Trade Of Greco-Roman Art', out May 26. The band were ready to delete the 12-track album had no-one released it.

LOOM KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

Loom, the London quintet led by Tarik Badwan, return with the first song from upcoming debut album 'Bleed On Me', released on April 27 via Raft, the label run by Tarik and elder brother Faris from The Horrors. The band play four shows at London's Black Heart (April 15–May 13).



Loom



TOTAL BABES' SECOND ALBUM

Ohio's Total Babes will release their second album 'Heydays' on May 18 via Wichita. The follow-up to 2011's 'Swimming Through Sunlight' features several guest spots, most notably founder Jayson Gerycz's Cloud Nothings bandmate Dylan Baldi, who plays saxophone on 'Circling'.

WHITE REAPER FLIRT WITH DEATH

Fresh from a chaotic SXSW, Louisville quartet White Reaper have announced a new single. The bratty punk of 'Make Me Wanna Die' is the first track to be taken from their debut album 'White Reaper Does It Again', which follows last year's self-titled EP. Listen online now.

Religious Conversion

The artist formerly known as Sam Dust, frontman of Late Of The Pier, now lives in Wales, where he makes escapist, experimental pop as La Priest.

Lisa Wright joins his congregation

▶ In the middle of an isolated field just outside Welshpool, in a village he calls Fairy Canary, lives Samuel Eastgate – the genre-melding electronic fantasist behind La Priest. Eastgate moved to Llanfair Caereinion (as it's actually called) around six months ago, because having two-legged, non-feathered streetmates was limiting his creativity. Here, he just has "a donkey, a grouse and a peacock" for neighbours. "I'd think, 'I can't shout that at the top of my voice in case people are listening,'" he explains. "Here, I can just drag speakers into the garden." But speakers and shouting are merely the tip of the technicolour iceberg in Eastgate's strange and singular world.

Eight years ago, with the day-glo MDMA-zing heyday of nu rave in full swing, Eastgate – then going by the name Sam Dust – fronted eclectic cult favourites Late Of The Pier. Hailing from Castle Donington, the quartet were a melting pot of synth squelches, prog rock, yelping samples and everything in-between. Their only album, 2008's 'Fantasy Black Channel', sounded like a mash-up of what people 40 years ago would imagine music from the future would be like, while *NME*'s 8/10 review labelled it "ludicrousness par

excellence". Then, with no real explanation, they disappeared. One stand-alone single, 2010's 'Blueberry', followed and nothing more. "We were still pretty young and we didn't have a lot of experience," Eastgate says. "We had all these voices telling us different things and we thought the only way we would know what we really wanted to do was to take a proper step back. I guess we all really

liked the feeling of that, so we've been doing it for longer than we planned." The band have, he adds, continued to get together and write throughout the interim years, but there are no concrete plans to release any new music.

If Late Of The Pier were the ADHD kids of the mid-2000s class who'd turn up on non-uniform day in their mum's dress, La Priest (pronounced 'laah', rather than LA) is perhaps their more refined older brother, but no less

Eastgate constructed a synth from scratch and has also discovered how to make a room talk

adventurous. And although he first released music as La Priest in 2007 on Errol Alkan's Phantasy label, Eastgate is marking a more formal identification with the name with new single 'Oino' (pronounced 'Oh-I-know'), which combines Blood Orange-like sultry beats laced with falsetto vocals, bubbling synths, a saxophone sample and a brilliantly OTT guitar solo that Brian May wouldn't sniff at. Lacking in ideas it is not. Elsewhere, on the tracks that *Radar* hears from his forthcoming debut – written at various points throughout the last six years and self-produced with help from Croydon producer LXURY and friend Leon Vynehall – Eastgate veers between glitching samples reminiscent of Aphex Twin ('Learning To Love All Over'), smooth-yet-smart pop ('Lady's In Trouble With The Law') and otherworldly falsetto dreamscapes in





Sam Eastgate in 2015 and (below, left) with LOTP in NME, 2008

the vein of sometime collaborator Connan Mockasin ('Mountain').

Inspired by various trips to New Zealand, Greenland and more ("Most songs are just a soup of all these places I've been to," he says), the album hoovers up ideas and spits them out via sonic experiments that are more Doc Brown than Ian Brown. In Greenland, Eastgate recorded on an electromagnetic hotspot in an abandoned mining town. "It's caused by this chemical in the ground called Cryolite," he says. "I made loads of recordings where I manipulated this waveform, then I thought it'd be funny to use that and create something that sounded like reggae or hip-hop. I think a lot of people would take it so seriously and try and be really postmodern about it, but I wanted to make a record that's a treat for people with no experience of recording, as well as for nerds."

At other times during the sessions, Eastgate nearly started his own company after constructing a modular synth from scratch. And – stick with us – he also discovered how to make a room talk. "I've got a lot of effects

for microphones and I found that if you leave a microphone on a drum and the drum reacts to soundwaves in a room, you get a representation of the physicality of that room," he explains. "When people walk in, it changes notes; it's like the room is singing to itself."

Lyrically, much of Eastgate's early work started from "freestyling gibberish", then deciphering words from within the resulting sounds. "I don't really do that any more," he says, adding that lyrics remain a less important part of his writing process: "I tried writing some lyrics without a melody the other day and they're pretty bad – I saved it as 'My First Poem By Sam', so if anyone reads it they'll think, 'Oh, it's only his first one, that's alright.'"

Eastgate's new tracks (bar 'My First Poem By Sam', let's hope) will be

debuted at low-key shows in London (April 28) and Manchester (May 4) before La Priest headlines the NME Radar stage at The Great Escape in Brighton (May 14). Live, he's keen to avoid the trap of looking like the lone man checking his emails on a Mac laptop, instead performing with an array of homemade sequencers, effects pedals, synths and guitars. "I want to get as much improvisation as possible into it; it's not gonna be a DJ set," he says. "The machine I built has really bright LEDs. When I was practising, I realised I could turn the lights off and still see everything I was doing, so hopefully the venues will let me turn the house lights completely off. Maybe I'll have an interval where they can turn them back on to check no-one has died. I think that's important. You don't want someone to have a panic attack. It's compassionate gigging."

Creative, idealistic and willing to try anything and everything, La Priest aims to embrace the escapist, imaginative possibilities of music. "The one thing that I want more of from other artists is more

information in their imagery; there's something really important about giving people something that they can get carried away with," Eastgate says. "I really like the sort of abstract scenarios when people say, 'Oh, I listened to some music and it made me feel like I was on fire.' As you grow older, some people think they're too mature for that and it's a bit silly. But I'd like my songs to have an effect on people. I hope it encourages them to get carried away with their imagination." It's time, it seems, for more than "a donkey, a grouse and a peacock" to hear La Priest's new music. ■

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The other three Late Of The Pier members are dotted about all over the place

Sam Potter

Samples, vocals

Potter was involved with London clubnight Dollop and also launched Blackout with fellow LOTP-er Andrew Faley – a series of gigs conducted anonymously in the dark.



Andrew Faley

Bass, synth

As well as Blackout, which the bassist says will be returning soon, Faley now works behind the scenes managing Nottingham trio Kagoule.



Ross Dawson

Drums

As of 2014, Dawson joined London "glitch indie" trio Zibra, who sound really quite a lot like Klaxons.



Between

rock

and a

hard place

With their third album, Mumford & Sons have run a country mile from their trademark banjos and embraced drivetime rock. Kevin EG Perry interrogates them about this volte-face, and what it will mean for their legions of fans

PHOTOS: JAMES MINCHIN III



O

ver a band was equally loved and loathed it is Mumford & Sons. Their first two albums have sold over three million copies each and they've cracked America in a way that no British band has managed since Coldplay. Their brand of earnest folk rock has taken them to the White House, where they played for

Obama, and Glastonbury, where they headlined in 2013. Yet the same sincerity that's won them legions of fans has brought them an equal number of detractors. They are gentlemen of the middle of the road: wildly successful, but deeply uncool.

Nobody knows this better than Marcus Mumford. On a recent night out in Brooklyn, in his adopted home of New York, a man approached the singer in a bar to tell him: "I fucking hate your band." He recounts the incident as he heads across town in a cab to meet his band mates at the Brooklyn studio owned by their friend and now collaborator, The National's Aaron Dessner. "I was like, 'You're a legend, mate. Have a good night!'" he says. "I quite like that. I don't want everybody to like our music. That would be really boring. It's about taste, isn't it?"

But from what he and his bandmates say, even they're not sure they still like their trademark sound: those twanging banjos and that pounding, four-to-the-floor kick drum.

"We've been working within quite narrow parameters," says bassist Ted Dwane (the next member of the band to dial in for a half-hour chat). "As a band, we feel that over two records we've pretty thoroughly explored that sound. Nobody in the band was that excited about playing a drum with a foot any more. And there was no way we were just going to churn out another album for the sake of it pleasing fans."

"We started doing this in 2007 and the worst thing we could have done would be to get trapped making the sort of music we'd been making," adds keyboard player Ben Lovett. "That would have put our lives on pause until the band ended."

What that means is that Mumford & Sons' third record 'Wilder Mind', due this May, finds the band adopting a rockier sound, more in tune with Dessner's densely-constructed work with The National and the racing drivetime of The War On Drugs than The Band's rootsy Americana. Banjo player Winston Marshall now plays electric guitar. Mumford's kick-drum has been replaced with a full drum kit: on the record, Mumford plays half the drum parts and producer James Ford the other.

Dwane, who has gone seven years as a bass player without a fully-fledged rhythm section, is ecstatic. "We've always imagined ourselves as a rock band," he says. "We've always been a rock band playing the wrong instruments. Now we have the right instruments."

"We always saw ourselves this way," says Marshall. "We didn't really think we were a folk band."

For their fans, though, Mumford & Sons are the figureheads of the modern folk movement, and any switch in direction leaves them wide open to desertion. The band recently posted a plug for new single 'Believe' on Instagram. One fan commented: "Just heard this on the radio. Sad day for music when you can't tell Mumford & Sons from David Guetta and such any more." Another added: "You now sound like every other band on the radio." A handful of them used the hashtag: #bringbackthebanjo.

In truth, there's always been something of the surging rush of EDM to Mumford's music, driven by that pounding beat. It's no coincidence that Avicii lifted their style for his massive global hit 'Wake Me Up' in 2013. But if anything the band are less bombastic now – 'Wilder Mind' is subtler and richer in texture than their previous work. It would be churlish and missing the point to criticise Mumford & Sons for not making their own

version of Lou Reed's borderline unlistenable 1975 noise album 'Metal Machine Music', yet the band know that the variation will upset the #bringbackthebanjo brigade. Dwane admits that the fact they could lose existing fans

"We were a rock band playing the wrong instruments"

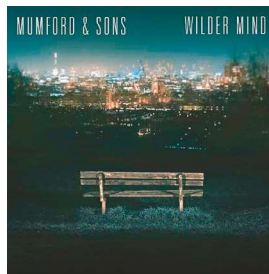
Ted Dwane



is “not something that hasn’t crossed our minds”, but adds, “We wouldn’t last a year on the road playing music that we didn’t love. We made the only record that we could have made. It’ll freak a few people out, but it was the only thing we could do.”

‘Wilder Mind’ was born at Aaron Dessner’s backyard Brooklyn studio in 2013. At the time, Mumford & Sons were still finishing off almost five years of non-stop touring. In soundchecks and during downtime they had already begun playing around with electric instruments, so they relished getting back into the studio under The National composer’s watchful eye. “Aaron was almost like a mentor,” explains Marshall. “He let us use this studio in Brooklyn just to fuck around in. Obviously we’re all massive National fans so we jumped on that without hesitation.”

New York is present in the titles of the songs on the record – ‘Ditmas’ and ‘Tompkins Square Park’ are named after city locations – and also in the urgency and shadows of the music. Set against their previous work, this is the most urban record they’ve ever made: the rushing guitars mimic streams of traffic; its glinting, dark production the reflection of skyscrapers. The band returned to London to finish the record with James Ford at AIR Studios in



‘Wilder Mind’ Story behind the sleeve

Ted Dwane: “The front cover was shot just near AIR Studios, from Parliament Hill [in north London]. On our covers so far we’ve had four people – the four of us – but we thought it would be cool to have four strangers or something like that. We went up the hill very late one night with some smoke grenades and stuff and made that photograph. That was actually the test shot. We were going to be in it, but everyone just really liked that shot. There’s no great meaning to it, but I like that there’s lot of poetic narratives you could overlay onto the image. We were keen for it to be the London skyline, and certainly at night time it felt like the record, one way or another.”

Hampstead. “We didn’t want to make a ‘New York’ record,” says Dwane. “We’re obviously a London band, and British at heart. We’ve started referring to it as ‘a tale of two cities’, which I quite like.”

Despite their reluctance to uproot entirely, Mumford & Sons have always been deeply in thrall to Americana. They pulled off their folksy bluegrass so convincingly that when they won the Grammy for Best Album for ‘Babel’ in 2013, Twitter was awash with Americans reacting with surprise that they weren’t from the Deep South. On ‘Wilder Mind’, they’ve simply switched one strand of American rock for another: from hoedowns to drivetime AOR.

It’s by no means unusual for British bands to embrace American influences, but in Mumford & Sons’ case, America often seems like a bolthole – a country ready to embrace them regardless of their class backgrounds, which have always been a frequent sticking point at home in the UK. The band were privately educated, and Marshall’s father is a millionaire hedge fund owner and an advisor to the current Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg. The band refuse to discuss class, but Dwane does lament that in Britain the band have been discredited for many things they have no control over. “I think people overlay their perceptions onto you,” he says. “We don’t sing about eating local produce or growing beards or anything

like that. It’s funny to find yourself in a position where people associate you with things that are completely arbitrary to your songs.”

These problems pale in comparison to being named one of David Cameron’s favourite bands, however, as Mumford & Sons were in 2013. “I felt quite sorry for The War On Drugs recently because Cameron came out and said he likes them,” says Mumford with a laugh. “A bunch of that kind of stuff happens with us, and I suppose it comes from just getting way bigger than we ever anticipated or intended. It all happened really fast. We have to get comfortable with that, and not say: ‘Fuck it, we want to be a tiny pub band.’ It’s an opportunity to make more music, and as long as it’s about that I’m cool with it all. If we were big for any other reason then I’d be questioning it, but we’re not male models, I can tell you that.”

Religion is another area the band refuse to discuss, but which plays much better for them in the States than it does at home. Mumford’s parents run the evangelical Christian Vineyard Church group, and many of his lyrics contain earnest biblical allusions as well as references to writers like John Steinbeck and Hilary Mantel. “There ➔



Mumford & Sons
2015: (l-r) Marcus
Mumford, Ben
Lovett, Ted Dwane,
Winston Marshall

has been some of that in my lyrics,” says Mumford, “There are those references on this record, but we’ve been a bit less forthright about them. We’ve decided that’s OK. We haven’t called the record ‘Sigh No More’ or ‘Babel’, which is a start.”

“Wilder Mind” sees the band writing more collaboratively than ever before, particularly when it comes to lyrics, and Mumford says he found new pleasure in singing lines the others wrote for him. This is where the album’s more lovelorn lyrics have come from. Dwane says it’s the half of the band who are single who’ve contributed those lines – rather than Mumford himself, who is married to the actress Carey Mulligan.

“We’re all writers and we’ve got a near enough even share of songs on the record,” explains Dwane. “The first record was mainly Marcus’ songs, the second record was much more collaborative and this record was purely collaborative.”

“I definitely regret the band name,” adds Mumford, ruining the impression that he’s the band’s only creative force. “If I’d known that it was going to go this way I would have wanted to call it anything other than my last name. It’s a ball-ache. We thought about changing it, but it’s a bit late now.”

They may be stuck with their name, their backgrounds and with having David Cameron as a superfan, but there is evidence that Mumford & Sons are currently attempting something of a rebranding. The tweed waistcoats and bow ties are gone. In their place are standard-issue indie leather jackets. “I think it would be fair to say that we’ve noticed that in some of our old photos we look like absolute idiots,” says Lovett. “There were so many car crashes. We look like us in our photos now. I don’t even want to describe how we used to look.”

“I do cringe when I look at the old shoots we used to do,” agrees Dwane. “You realise that your identity as a

Banjo-era Mumfords onstage in Hyde Park and (right) Huddersfield in 2011



band is so much stronger and more cemented in the outside world and in other people’s minds than it is in your own. We’re four mates who write songs together. To us, there’s no aesthetic or fashion about it.”

Mumford, though, bristles at the suggestion that their new fashion choices have a calculated edge. “We didn’t sit down and say, ‘Let’s wear leather, guys,’” he says. “Over an eight-year period you behave differently. You go to different places, you probably have different friends. You wear different clothes. We didn’t hire a stylist and say, ‘Let’s rebrand ourselves.’”

Although they’ve played Reading And Leeds before, 2015 marks their first headline set at the festivals. “Reading And Leeds are rock festivals, and that’s exactly why we wanted to play them,” says Lovett. As well as positing them as a going rock concern, it also holds special significance for a band that came of age there. Back in 2003, it was Mumford, Marshall, Dwane and Lovett who were in the crowd



The busker years, July 2008

The rise of Mumford & Sons

► **DECEMBER 2007**
Marcus Mumford forms the band to play songs he wrote while drumming for Laura Marling

► **JUNE 2008**
The band’s first visit to Glastonbury sees them play to just 200 people at the Tango Café

► **AUGUST 2009**
Their first single, ‘Little Lion Man’, is named Hottest Record In The World by Zane Lowe

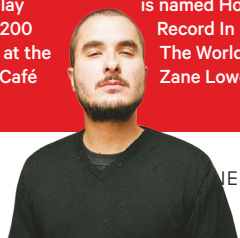
► **OCTOBER 2009**
Mumford & Sons’ debut album, ‘Sigh No More’, peaks at Number Two in the UK charts



► **FEBRUARY 2011**
At the Grammy Awards ceremony, Mumford & Sons play as the backing band for Bob Dylan

► **APRIL 2011**
Join Old Crow Medicine Show and Edward Sharpe And The Magnetic Zeros for the Railroad Revival Tour of the US

► **OCTOBER 2011**
The band back Neil Young on ‘Dance, Dance, Dance’ at his Bridge School Benefit concert





"Reading & Leeds are rock festivals, and that's exactly why we want to headline them"

Ben Lovett



watching Metallica. Now they find themselves billed alongside them.

"I cannot wait for it," says Marshall. "I went every year as a kid. This is a dream come true. Even if we get bottled off, even if they chuck shit at us, at least I can say I've headlined Reading And Leeds – even if we only last 10 minutes."

"It's part of the deal, isn't it?" asks Mumford of the threat of piss bottles, while Marshall guiltily confesses to once bottling Good Charlotte at Reading. "I'm not worried about it, though, especially because there's nobody else on after us," he says. "You won't have people waiting to see someone else, so they can just go and do drugs in their tent."

If Mumford has his way, the band could end up pursuing more unlikely directions yet. "I went to that Kanye gig in London recently and was blown away," he says. "I grew up listening to Jurassic 5 and Nas. I've

been getting into that again recently. I've been hanging out with an amazing guy called 88-Keys to learn how to chop up beats. That's really fun for me. I don't really care about how we're seen right now, because I think the story of this band will be a long one. People are always going to say stuff in the moment, but I hope that the arc of the band will be interesting."

If a Mumford & Sons hip-hop album seems improbable, Mumford is keenly aware that Kanye is something he's not: a rock star. "It feels like he's the only rock star left in the world who truly does what he wants," he says. "Kanye is a rock'n'roll legend. I don't feel like that. I don't really feel like I want to go out there and spray my mouth off on various issues. I'd rather just play my guitar and sing songs. Obviously there are things that we as a band all believe in and values that we have, and sometimes that will come across in the lyrics, but I don't really feel like the band is my platform for expressing that kind of stuff. Whenever it starts getting not about music, I'm out of my comfort zone. Someone like Kanye clearly isn't. He's as happy talking about philosophy. It's like Joey Barton, the 'philosopher footballer'. I'm more of a route one football man."

What Mumfords' "beliefs and values" are is hard to pin down. Mercury Prize winners Young Fathers argued recently that middle class bands have nothing to say. Push Mumford & Sons for an answer, and you get simple clichés about the music coming first. "We're definitely not writing songs with a mission statement," says Lovett.

"We started off just playing in pubs for the love of music, and really our message is just that," adds Dwane.

Yet Mumford & Sons have become improbably big business. Eight years, six million records and a tractor-load of Grammys and Brits into their career, they know it's time to mix it up. Their success has bought them the freedom to change, and 'Wilder Mind' captures a band more than happy to move on. You just have to listen to Marshall's curling riff on 'Believe' to realise how ecstatic he is to be freed from that banjo he's been shackled to. The same goes for Dwane, over the moon to find himself in a proper rhythm section. Mumford, too, sounds relieved that he doesn't have to scream every song until his heart bursts any more.

Whether or not they can take their fans with them on this journey remains to be seen, but love them or loathe them, 'Wilder Mind' is a sign that Mumford & Sons want to be in this for the long haul. ■

Ted Dwane
onstage at
Glasto 2013



► MARCH 2012

At David Cameron's invitation, the band perform for Barack Obama at the White House

► SEPTEMBER 2012

The band's second album, 'Babel', is released to mixed reviews but massive commercial success

► FEBRUARY 2013

Mumford & Sons take home two Grammys, including Album Of The Year for 'Babel'

► FEBRUARY 2013

They add the Brit Award for Best British Group to their trophy haul

► JUNE 2013

A month after Ted has brain surgery to remove a blood clot, Mumford & Sons close Glastonbury with a Sunday night headline slot

► MARCH 2015

The band unveil their rockier new direction on the James Ford-produced 'Believe'

► MAY 2015

Mumford & Sons release their third album, 'Wilder Mind', on May 4



IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD!

32

After six years away, Super Furry Animals return to reissue and tour their landmark Welsh-language album 'Mwng'. But there's more than that at stake, as Tom Pinnock discovers in NME's exclusive interview. "It will be the start of the revolution!" says Gruff Rhys

PHOTOS: ED MILES





Super Furry Animals have persuaded the manager of Cardiff's premier multiplex to let them into a locked, abandoned floor of the cinema – a dusty scrapyard of screens, hidden behind the cardboard standalone Doritos ads and the imposing wall of pick'n'mix (“£1.35 a scoop”). “There’s Grangetown, that’s the Cardiff City ground,” says keyboardist Cian Ciarán, squinting out of a window at the Welsh capital’s landmarks. “The Taff. And there’s Ikea...”

With the city spread out in front of them through floor-to-ceiling glass, the returning Welsh band are getting changed into some super-expensive borrowed tracksuits ready for their first photo session since 2009. It’s been even longer since the five have been interviewed together.

After six long years of silence, Super Furry Animals’ upcoming reunion gigs – to mark the reissue of 2000’s *Mwng* – should by rights be celebratory affairs. But despite the Welsh five-piece’s supremely melodic and euphoric back catalogue, the mood is in grave danger of being dampened by events in the middle of their tour – the general election falls on May 7.

If David Cameron remains in Number 10 (or if worse incumbents move in), however, Gruff Rhys reckons that the fightback will start at London’s Brixton Academy the night after. “It will be the start of the revolution,” the singer and guitarist says, wryly. “It’s a battle for civilisation, this election. It could be horrific if a right-wing coalition came in; it could be the end of civilisation as we know it.”

The Furies’ sense of outrage at the world is still as strong as ever, if expressed with characteristic mildness. In protest of the prospect of five more years of hard rule, they are reissuing *Mwng* on Friday, May 1 – aka International Workers’ Day. It’s an uncharacteristically hushed and melancholic collection, and the band’s only album to be completely sung in their native Welsh.

“We’re a band, we’re obsessed with music,” explains Gruff, discussing the significance of the record today, “and we’ve played a lot of music together. *Mwng*’s as an album is a celebration of that; it’s a celebration of our love of harmony and rhythm and texture, but also in this political climate it does represent diversity, and we should celebrate diversity in life and in music. Living in Cardiff, there’s probably

hundreds of languages spoken, and long live that.”

Super Furry Animals came together in Cardiff in the early ’90s, united by a love of rave, ’60s psychedelia, techno and Welsh-language punk. Though Alan McGee thought he was signing a Welsh Blur to his Creation label, the five-piece soon showed themselves to be a little more idiosyncratic than that. For a start, the Furies have always been thrillingly contradictory – a group signed to two major labels, but still staunchly socialist; a collective with punk roots mixing sweeping ballads with fuzz guitars, and orchestras with ear-bleeding techno, sometimes all within the same song; and a band fiercely proud of their Welsh roots, yet hungrily seeking out influences as diverse as Brazilian tropicalia or Turkish psych.

Adored by their more commercially successful Britpop peers – Damon Albarn invited Rhys to sing on Gorillaz’ *‘Superfast Jellyfish’*, while Noel Gallagher asked

the frontman to appear at a Teenage Cancer Trust show in 2013 – the five-piece have always been a band out of place, both physically and geographically. Just that little bit too weird to conquer the mainstream, they nevertheless racked up four Top 10 albums in the UK and 19 Top 40 singles. That’s especially impressive if you consider that two of those were for the release and reissue of 1996’s standalone single *‘The Man Don’t Give A Fuck’*, their blistering finger to the establishment that features over 50 instances of the word “fuck”. They haven’t been above a spot of career sabotage either, most notably when in 2001 they released *‘Juxtapozed With U’*, a slick disco single about rising house prices inspired by plastic Philadelphia soul, well aware that a garage rock revival was in full swing.

“We were always in disbelief that people were allowing us to do what we were doing,” says Gruff of the band’s well-

funded tenures on Sony and Creation.

“Sony did spend a hell of a lot of money on us,” marvels bassist Guto Pryce. “But I don’t think we wasted money, we didn’t buy yachts or anything like that.”

Instead, their corporate paymasters’ cash went on a huge array of instruments and a treasure trove of eccentric gimmicks, including a tank that pumped out hardcore

OUT OF CONTROL

SFA’s most out-there moments



The techno tank

For 1996’s festival season, the Furies bought a WWII tank, adorned it with SFA logos and a giant PA system, and blasted techno from inside. Once the summer was over, they sold it to The Eagles’ Don Henley, an avid tank collector. Plans to buy an aircraft carrier and dub it ‘SFA Island’ never materialised.



techno, a quadrophonic PA, 40-foot-high inflatable bears, yeti costumes, an onstage golf cart and glow in the dark, fibre-optic cloaks. Though the band are certainly aware of the ridiculousness of their own excesses, many of their actions have been steeped in strongly held principles, and a distaste for neo-conservatism, multinational strangleholds and capitalist exploitation. In one typical move, when Coca-Cola asked to license 2003 single *‘Hello Sunshine’* for an advert for a seven-figure sum, the Furies donated the song for free to an anti-poverty charity who had campaigned against Coke’s treatment of its workers.

“We’ve never made comfortable career moves, really,” explains Gruff. “We could have done things extremely differently and made a load of money – for example, with adverts.”

“We’ve never thought about our audience,” says guitarist Huw ‘Bunf’ Bunford. “Blur are probably doing it by the book... they’re probably doing it really comprehensively. If you’re a businessman, you’d be thinking, ‘Yeah,

that’s how you should do it.’ Not like... how we do it.” They all laugh. “But I think that’s refreshing.”

After 2009’s groove-centred *‘Dark Days/Light Years’*, the band went on hiatus, exhausted from recording nine albums in 13 years in their dysfunctionally democratic fashion.

“We’ve sat in mastering suites arguing for hours and hours about the seconds of silence between tracks – to the point of fucking psychosis,” says

Yeti deaths

After introducing their yeti alter egos on the *‘Phantom Power’* tours of 2003/4, the band got fed up with the gimmick and unceremoniously ‘gunned them down’ onstage at London’s Hammersmith Apollo in April 2004, with the help of some fake blood.



"IT'S NICE TO WORK WITH LASERS AGAIN"

GUTO PRYCE



Gruff Rhys onstage during Super Furry Animals' heyday

French drum'n'bass

On an early tour, the fledgling Furries supported Welsh band Anhrefn on a tour of France, performing a set of industrial drum'n'bass specifically to terrify the Gallic punk audience.

drummer Dafydd Ieuan, visibly reliving the experience.

Over the course of their break, each of the band pursued solo projects, with Rhys receiving acclaim for his 'American Interior' project and Neon

Neon's electronic concept albums, and the others releasing albums with new groups, or in the case of Bunf, soundtracking the Bafta-winning, Oscar-nominated short film, *The Bigger Picture*.

"It's not like we stopped working with each other," says keyboardist Ciarán, who's mixed the majority of the band's solo work, "we just stopped working as the entity that is Super Furry Animals."

"It was inevitable, in a way," says Gruff of their reanimation as a working unit. "We've spent too much time together. Every record was mixed and mastered with every member of the band present – it's an extremely tense way of working, so we're extremely close. We're not associates... it's personal!"

True to the Furries'

maximalist ethos, the band's previous tours featured all kinds of bizarre staging dreamt up in conjunction with their regular designer Pete Fowler, including an onstage lighthouse for 2007's 'Hey Venus!' tour and Trojan horses with spotlight eyes adorning the stage in the 'Phantom Power' era, circa 2003.

"It's gonna be extremely intense," says Gruff of their upcoming tour. "It'll involve video

feeding back on itself, and sub-bass."

"The brown frequency," adds Cian. "Wear your incontinence pants and eyeball stabilisers."

"It's nice to be working with lasers again," says Guto, laughing as he describes trying to tour with his band, Gulp, whose equipment stretches to a Volkswagen Golf that has to transport all four members and their gear.

"There'll be no yetis because they got shot in the Hammersmith Apollo and got chopped up into little yeti costumes," says Daf, referencing the old stage outfits that they destroyed in 2004. "I guess this will be no different from any other tour we've done, except we need a bit more rehearsal..."

Each member has submitted a list of the songs they want to play in typically democratic Furries fashion, enabling them to effectively curate their own greatest hits live. 'Mountain People', 'Arnolfo/Glô In The Dark', 'The Citizen's Band' and 'Zoom!' are just four songs that feature on some of their longlists.

"The criteria is to play good songs," Bunf says. "Instead of shit songs."

Despite the outpouring of love that has greeted their return, the band have no plans to record a 10th album just yet, claiming that the intense process of their past work might be hard to recreate now they have children and aren't bonding and experimenting on endless tours.

"I couldn't imagine us going into a studio right now and making an album," Daf explains, "because every time we've recorded before, it's been in an environment where there are constant ideas coming through, on the bus or in soundchecks, in this climate of always being together."

"If we lived in a culture that celebrated the number nine, it wouldn't be an issue," says Gruff, "but we live in a decimal culture. So

it's always going to be hanging over us."

Though they haven't spent as much time together in the last five years, Super Furry Animals visibly still get on better than most bands, new or old. Over a few pints of local ale, they crack up about the time they attempted to

McCartney on celery

In return for remixing The Beatles' studio chatter for 2000's *Liverpool Sound Collage*, Paul McCartney was a guest on SFA's 2001 album *'Rings Around The World'*. Sir Paul can be heard chewing celery and carrots on 'Receptacle For The Respectable', as he did on The Beach Boys' 1966 'Vega-Tables'.

damage that it's doing here."

With the new version of 'Mwng' delving deep into the group's archive of unreleased sessions and live recordings, talk soon turns to the matter of other archival releases, with a follow-up to their 1998 B-sides set 'Out Spaced' one of the projects in contention.

"We'd like to reissue other albums," says Gruff. "All in good time. There's so much unreleased material around the other records, it will take some time to sift through it. [Former Flaming Lip, Gruff's solo drummer and SFA obsessive] Kliph Scurlock is on the case, though."

"Nearly every year from this point on is an anniversary of some sort," Cian points out. "It's the 20-year anniversary next year of 'Fuzzy Logic'. If we reissue everything, though, all the originals I've got would be worth less money!"

Future plans might be typically hazy, then, but if this tour, and the band's headline slots at Green Man and new Sussex festival Forgotten Fields, remind anyone of the Super Furry Animals' unique genius, then the group will be satisfied. Other than that, they're happy to just see what happens, kick back and enjoy playing live without the pressures of a release schedule.

"The love for the band that we've felt has been really nice," says Guto. "Because we didn't stop for however many years, it felt like maybe we didn't appreciate it at the time. It's nice that people appreciate what we've done and are willing to stick with us."

"What we're doing this year is not a career move," stresses Gruff. "We've done nine albums and I think it's very hard for people to get a grasp on that many records. And in that sense, it's nice to remind people what we've done. Because there aren't many bands who've released nine albums with the same line-up. It's something to celebrate." ■

Every ending of 'The Man Don't Give A Fuck' ever



SFA's swearsy 1996 standalone single was regularly extended

to well over 20 minutes live, incorporating post-rock atmospheric, banging techno meltdowns and a looped Bill Hicks warning, "All governments are liars and murderers." All together now: "You know they don't give a fuck about anybody else..."



LONG - PLAY

Soho is dying, say the headlines. But while gentrification flattens the famed London district's bohemian side, the record shops left on collectors' paradise Berwick Street are thriving. Phil Hebblethwaite meets their optimistic proprietors



Sister Ray has recently moved to these smaller premises

In 2008, Sister Ray, perhaps the best-known record shop on what used to be called the “golden mile of vinyl” – Berwick Street in London’s Soho – fell into administration. It was rescued, but the very idea that Sister Ray could almost fail seemed to shake other shops in the area. Two years later, Vinyl Junkies on the southern, market end of the street closed, with its proprietor John-Paul Cuesta-Vayon telling *The Independent*: “Maintaining a business here has become impossible. The overheads are massive. Rent now costs around £35k a year, business rates are spiralling and the constant roadworks and congestion charges are driving visitors away.”

More bad news was to come. In 2013, JB’s on nearby Hanway Street shut. Later that year, Tim Derbyshire – exactly the kind of Soho character everyone wants to believe is extinct – listed his shop, On The Beat, also on Hanway Street, on eBay for £300,000, only to be bombarded with trolls offering a pittance for a business he’d run with love since 1979. He closed it soon after. Back on Berwick Street, meanwhile, things looked to be going awry too: Sister Ray moved from the open-plan premises it occupied at numbers 34-35 to a different, smaller address across the street. Then back in March, dance music specialists BM Soho shut up shop and, next month, the Music & Video Exchange will

Soho survivors Phonica
(far left and below right)
and Sounds Of The
Universe (left)



people getting into vinyl, which he believes is a significant contributing factor to LP sales cracking the million mark last year for the first time in 18 years. Regarding the so-called vinyl boom, Sister Ray's Phil Barton says, "Vinyl still accounts for a fraction of all music sales, but for independent record stores it's very significant – it's a huge amount of what they sell. If there wasn't this upsurge, all the shops would still be struggling. We also sell second-hand records; they're not accounted for in the figures on vinyl sales, but they're a very important part of our business."

There have been changes, too, in what record shops offer and how they treat their customers. Jones believes there's been a natural cull of the kind of unfriendly, elitist places like the one portrayed in Nick Hornby's novel *High Fidelity* and that the modern, successful record shop is more than just a music retailer. "The difference between now and 10 years ago is that virtually every record shop puts on local bands, or bands that are touring, and so many of them serve coffee and food – they're meeting places. Also, if you look at a map of where record shops across the country are opening, you'll find they're either in smaller towns, or if they're in cities, they're not on the high street – they're off the beaten track, where they can make more noise and rents and rates are cheaper. In some cases, the property is cheap enough for the people running the shops to buy the building." ➔

close – hopefully temporarily – as developers spend the next year and a half building a hotel above it.

Is the Berwick Street area – so associated with record shops that Oasis used a photograph of the street for the cover of '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?' – doomed? You'd imagine it was, but when I call Sounds Of The Universe, just off Berwick Street, and ask manager Nicole McKenzie whether she's feeling optimistic about running her shop in the current climate, she replies, "One hundred per cent. It's an old story that record shops are going downhill. We've been doing well for quite a number of years, and from what I hear of other shops in Soho, they're also doing well."

Simon Rigg, who runs nearby Phonica, agrees and so does Sister Ray's Phil Barton, who bought his business out of administration with the help of family and friends and says he moved premises simply because he couldn't come to an agreement with his old landlord. The new shop, he adds, has exactly the same amount of stock, thank you very much; it's just "better organised". As for BM Soho: no-one seems

to know what happened. They closed because of a "separate issue" is all anyone will offer and NME's emails to the managers currently remain unanswered.

When Graham Jones decided to write a book about record stores, published in 2009, he called it *Last Shop Standing: Whatever Happened To Record Shops?* Now on its sixth edition, new chapters have been added and the subtitle has been changed to *The Rise, Fall And Rebirth Of The Independent Record Shop*, the same subtitle he used for a tie-in documentary, which became the official Record Store Day film in 2013.

"It's staggering how things have changed," he says. "When *Last Shop Standing* came out six years ago, there were 269 independent record stores in the UK selling new product. We now have 339."

Asked what's changed, he says: "The catalyst has been Record Store Day. It got people going back into record stores, and perhaps more importantly, it brought positive publicity to them. Pre-2009, all the publicity was negative – centred around record shops closing down."

Jones also points to something he thought would never happen – young





In Soho, Phonica own their premises and are part of a larger company called The Vinyl Factory, which includes a venue, label and online music magazine *Fact*. Sounds Of The Universe is also home to celebrated reissue label Soul Jazz, and while diversifying certainly

helps record shops to stay open, it doesn't entirely explain why the Berwick Street shops, the massive majority of which rent – and pay huge rates – are thriving. The area, after all, is meant to be in the midst of mass, irreversible gentrification, with the recent closures of two much-loved venues, Madame Jojo's on Brewer Street and Denmark Street's 12 Bar Club, causing not just debate, but protest.

Phil Barton has a morbid fascination with keeping a list of all the Soho record shops that have shut since Sister Ray opened 27 years ago (more than 20, by his calculation) and the fact that there are only five left is a major reason why they are surviving. "I wouldn't say vinyl sales are as healthy as the BPI [British Phonographic Industry] makes out, but there are far fewer shops in Soho these days, which benefits the ones left," says Phonica's Simon Rigg. "For us in the Berwick Street area, we're probably doing better because

HMV on Oxford Street closed, but what's also important is that all the shops round here have their niche, and with that comes a customer base."

He adds that one land owner in particular, Shaftesbury PLC, "seem to recognise that record shops are part of the culture of Berwick Street", adding: "The impression I get is that they don't put their rents up by excessive amounts like other private landlords in the area do."

Shaftesbury PLC is a £2.6bn company that owns 14 acres of land across London's West End, on which they have 582 shops, restaurants and cafés, 491 residential addresses and 415,000 square feet of office space. "We had a vacant shop that we put Sister Ray into, and in that respect, we want to maintain the music shop heritage of the area," says Simon Quayle, an executive director at Shaftesbury. "Of course they pay market rent, as anybody else would for a retail unit, but we do think about who we offer our properties to. Berwick Street also has a heritage of fabric and clothes-making shops, and we've recently put three fabric stores in. We could just fill these vacancies with fashion businesses and coffee shops, but we don't feel that that's the right thing to do. It's always about getting the balance right; we don't much like having big chains on the street, and that goes for all our holdings across the West End."

Shaftesbury PLC also fund the Berwick Street Festival, which takes place to coincide with Record Store Day and this year will feature live performances from John Cooper Clarke, Young Knives, DJ Yoda and others. "The festival is about promoting the record stores in the area," says Sophie Oller from Sister (no relation to Sister Ray), who run the event on the day. "There was a boom of shops in the early '90s and we've lost many, so the festival is about celebrating the culture of record stores and drawing attention to the ones left."

"A lot of people have moved out, not just record stores," says Sounds Of The Universe's Nicole McKenzie when asked if gentrification is killing Soho. "And it's not a sudden thing – I've worked here for 10 years and things have been gradually changing, as they have everywhere else in London."

Phil Barton says, "It's a lot safer here than it was, and it's less smelly. But I am worried about the current rate of change. It seems like every building is being knocked down and replaced. Pockets of London – not just Soho

(Left) Frank Turner at the Berwick Street Festival in 2013



"Fewer shops in Soho benefits the ones left"

Simon Rigg, Phonica

– should come under some kind of planning regulation. You can't blame the developers for making money, because that's what they're in business for, but you can look at the planning laws and realise that Berwick Street, Denmark Street and many other places are special and worth preserving."

He adds that running a record shop in Soho is hard for countless reasons, but chief among them is getting stock in to sell. "Nearly all vinyl gets pressed abroad because the plants in the UK closed years ago," he says. "We'd be 25 per cent busier if we could get hold of enough records to meet demand." He admits that Record Store Day exacerbates the problem, and it's become the key criticism of the day, with even the event's UK organiser Spencer Hickman telling *The Quietus* last year: "It puts a huge strain on the industry and it probably puts that strain on the part of the industry that has the least amount of money."

But stand back from the issue and it seems almost implausible to imagine – a vinyl market in 2015 where demand outstrips supply. Can it last? *Last Shop Standing* author Graham Jones has his concerns. "I saw an advert in *The Sunday Times* recently for a building society with a man standing in front of an LP collection – it's crazy. It does worry me that vinyl won't remain as popular as it is at the moment, but you have to remember that the shops that have survived – the 10 per cent or thereabouts – are very well established and well run. I see a long-term future for them."

All markets need new businesses, though, and – for now – opportunities are rife. Fancy, for example, becoming part of the Berwick Street boom? Shaftesbury PLC's Simon Quayle wants to hear from you. "If there are people out there interested in opening a record store in the area, we'd like to talk to them," he says. "But there isn't anybody who wants to at the moment, as far as we're aware." ■

THE FIVE LEFT STANDING

A look at Soho's last remaining record shops and their specialities

Harold Moores

Where? 2 Great Marlborough Street, W1F 7HQ

What? Classical music CDs and vinyl, and also jazz

Need to know: In 2010, Harold Moores left 4,000 records in a skip outside the shop for anyone to take. Pandemonium ensued

Online: hmrecords.co.uk

Phonica

Where? 51 Poland Street, W1F 7LZ

What? Essentially an electronic music specialist, but sells hip-hop and rock music too

Need to know: Underneath the shop is a 6,000 sq ft venue, scene of a massive Record Store Day party

Online: phonicarecords.com

Reckless Records

Where? 30 Berwick Street, W1F 8RH

What? Second-hand only; used to have a sister shop in Islington

Need to know: First record

shop on Berwick Street, opening in 1984

Online: reckless.co.uk

Sister Ray

Where? 75 Berwick Street, W1F 8RP

What? Named after the Velvet Underground song; new and second-hand records of all genres

Need to know: Recently opened a vinyl-only shop in the Ace Hotel in Shoreditch

Online: facebook.com/sisterrayrecords

Sounds Of The Universe

Where? 7 Broadwick Street, W1F 0DA

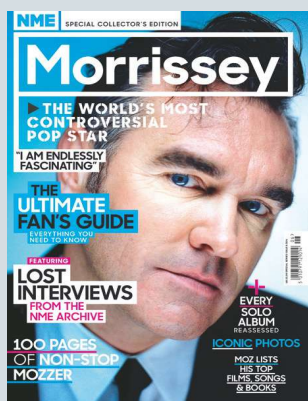
What? Best shop for reggae, dub, dubstep, house, disco, funk, soul, Latin and afrobeat

Need to know: So associated with its in-house label, Soul Jazz, many people think the shop is called Soul Jazz

Online: soundsoftheuniverse.com



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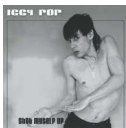
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YOUR RECORD STORE DAY SHOPPING LIST

To save you trawling the 500-strong release list, *NME*'s staff and writers have picked the greatest limited releases that RSD 2015 has to offer

40

Iggy Pop Shot Myself Up



After producing Iggy Pop's 1977 album 'The Idiot', David Bowie went on tour with Iggy and his band, assuming the minor role of keyboard player. Bored in Chicago, they recorded this 10-track radio session. 'Shot Myself Up' comes on coloured vinyl with two bonus seven-inches. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

Loose Joints Pop Your Funk



Arthur Russell's Loose Joints only ever released three songs, including this one. The experimental, stripped-back 'Pop Your Funk' – a lesser-known track than 'It Is All Over My Face', which remains a club classic – has been out of print for years, but is no less of a gem. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

Run The Jewels Bust No Moves



Fresh from releasing one of the most thunderous albums of 2014, Killer Mike and El-P are back with this new track, backed on 12-inch by 'RTJ2' album favourites 'Love Again' and 'Pew Pew Pew'. This should tide fans over till the duo's next move. ■ AL HORNER

ESG The Moody EP



South Bronx band ESG were at their funky, polyrhythmic peak in the early '80s. Four of their best grooves from this period – 'You're No Good', 'UFO', 'Moody', 'Moody (Spaced Out)' – have been committed to three-colour splatter vinyl for a one-off exclusive repress. ■ LUCY JONES

Daughter/Warpaint Winter/Feeling Alright



British doom-folk trio Daughter and their hypnotic LA brethren Warpaint have remixed each other for this limited-edition 12-inch. Warpaint majestically rework 'Winter', while on the flipside their 'Feeling Alright' gets a dubby makeover. ■ DAVID RENSHAW

Red House Painters Box Set



Two decades before Mark Kozelek became an MOR-baiting curmudgeon, he led San Francisco's Red House Painters, a band who made slow magic out of extreme sadness. Their first four albums, released on 4AD, are reissued this RSD as a boxset. Highlights include 'Katy Song' from their second album, as great a tribute to a lost muse as anyone will ever make. ■ LAURA SNAPES



Chvrches

Get Away/Dead Air



Mopping up a few tracks that might have slipped past unnoticed, Chvrches have combined the glistening 'Get Away', from Zane Lowe's rescue of *Drive*, and 'Dead Air', their anthemic electro ode to teenage slaughter from *The Hunger Games: Mockinjay Part I*. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

Hinds ♥ Parrots Split #1



Two of the busiest, buzziest bands at this year's SXSW join forces on a split release

that showcases Madrid's worth as a hotbed of garage-punk fun. **Hinds** offer up a ramshackle cover of Thee Headcoats' 'Davey Crockett', while The Parrots provide an exhilarating 'All My Loving', originally by King Khan and The Black Lips' The Almighty Defenders side project.

■ RHIAN DALY

Dexys Midnight Runners

Don't Stand Me Down



Stripped down to a four-piece, Kevin Rowland's band returned with a weird, City worker image and sophisticated northern soul-meets-'80s pop sound on this third album, a flop in 1985, but the connoisseur's choice. Buy it on purple vinyl and acquaint yourself with the brilliance of 'This Is What She's Like'. ■ DAN STUBBS



Mclusky

Mcluskyism



A year after Mclusky's 2005 split, the Cardiff trio released a retrospective of A-sides, B-sides, rarities and live tracks. It came in two formats: one disc of classics, or three discs that included obscurities and oddities. The one-disc version gets its first vinyl release for RSD. ■ TOM HOWARD

Pulp

They Suffocate At Night



First released in 1987, Pulp's fifth single signalled a sea change for the band. It was their first single with Russell

Senior on guitar. That this repress still sounds so fresh some 28 years after its first release is testament to the beginnings of a fertile songwriting partnership. ■ DAVID RENSHAW

Off!

Live From The BBC



Watching Off! live is preferable to listening to their records because frontman Keith Morris, 59, delivers an onstage assault that a piece of vinyl can't rival. With BBC studio acoustics enhancing Off!'s maniacal hardcore, this 10-track live LP will be great. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

Frank Ifman

Big Bad Wolves: Original Score



Reissue label Death Waltz Recordings, which specialises in horror soundtracks, usually pop out a few exclusive releases for Record Store Day, but are sticking to just one this year: the OST of 2013 Israeli black-comedy/horror flick *Big Bad Wolves* by Israeli/German composer Frank Ifman. Expect colour-splattered vinyl and luxurious packaging. ■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

Laura Marling

False Hope



Marling straps on a Fender Jaguar for this biting track from her excellent new album 'Short Movie', here

detailing days spent in a New York apartment contemplating her life's failings. It sounds a bit like Blue Oyster Cult's '(Don't Fear) The Reaper' but still manages to come out on the right side of cool. ■ DAN STUBBS



John Grant

John Grant And The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra: Live In Concert



Late last year, BBC 6 Music broadcast John Grant live in concert with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in Salford. Bella Union are now issuing the entire thing as an LP and CD set. As a nod to Grant's 2013 album 'Pale Green Ghosts', the record comes on snazzy green vinyl. ■ LUKE MORGAN BRITTON

Various Artists

Shirley Inspired



This July, the great British folk singer Shirley Collins turns 80. She has lived a remarkable life, as both a pioneering figure in British music, and for her role in music historian Alan Lomax's infamous trip to the American south to document the blues, as relayed in her book, *America Over The Water*. This tribute compilation features the likes of Graham Coxon and comedian Stewart Lee covering her best songs. ■ LAURA SNAPES

Suede

Dog Man Star: Live At The Royal Albert Hall



In March last year, *NME*'s current Godlike Geniuses celebrated the 20th anniversary of their seminal second album, 'Dog Man Star', by playing the whole thing at the Royal Albert Hall in west London accompanied by an eight-piece string section. Growly and glorious, it was one of 2014's best gigs, now commemorated with an elegant vinyl release, limited to 1,000 copies. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

Various Artists

Thai Pop Spectacular (1960s-1980s)



The Seattle-based reissue label Sublime Frequencies specialise in unearthing musical gems from across the world. For Record Store Day, they're pressing 500 copies of 'Thai Pop Spectacular (1960s-1980s)', a heady and diverse mix of blues, surf rock, disco, funk-out organs and catchy hooks. ■ LUCY JONES

J Dilla feat. Pharoahe Monch

Love



Another posthumous cut from the 'Donuts' pioneer's vaults, this seven-inch, featuring Queens rapper Pharoahe Monch, includes a track taken from his unfinished 'The Shining' album, released in 2006, which is backed by unheard material. That's not all for Dilla fans this RSD, though: a 45 of his 2001 tune 'Fuck The Police', shaped like a police badge, will also be on limited release. ■ AL HORNER

William Onyeabor

Atomic Bomb



Nigerian electro pioneer William Onyeabor was releasing forward-thinking synthesizer music in his native land around the same time as synths first made it to the region. While he turned to religion and faded into obscurity, this was the single that caused his legacy to live on. ■ LUKE MORGAN BRITTON

Peace

Since I've Been Loving You



The Birmingham band's love of all things Zep is no secret, to the point that they paused one February gig to indulge in a full-length and flawless cover of 'Since I've Been Loving You'. That makes up one side of this 12-inch, completed by a live version of their own funk-filled 'World Pleasure'. ■ RHIAN DALY



Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY BEN HOMEWOOD

NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK



Blur

The Magic Whip

**Familiar but also exploratory,
the legendary band's first
album since 2003 is a triumph**



sounds of Seattle grunge on 'Blur' and outer space for '13', then taken to a Moroccan cypress grove to write the lyrics for 2003's 'Think Tank'. Now it brings us to Hong Kong, a layover on their way to ever more exotic locales, 'The Magic Whip' reads like a flick-book of postcards gathered along the way, and a few as yet unwritten.

A hint of 'Popszene', a squelch of 'Crazy Beat', a swirl of 'This Is A Low'. As alien as it initially sounds – smothered in the stark global synthetics Damon Albarn introduced on 'Think Tank' and carried through to last year's solo album – 'The Magic Whip' is peppered

► The global Blur journey continues. From their corner of Colchester they've hit London's Primrose Hill for 1993's 'For Tomorrow', the vomit rivers of Greek island Mykonos on 'Girls And Boys', engaged with the

with notes of familiarity. So what slowly strikes you about Blur's long-awaited eighth album is how reassuringly *Blur* it feels; advancing the formula but warmly accessible. And complete, too; it was, we're told, thrown down in just five spare days in Hong Kong and later pieced together by Graham Coxon and Stephen Street from extended jams lingering on Damon's laptop, yet it sounds like the work of slavish months spent recapturing the magic and whipping it into fresh flavours. Clearly the old chemistry came easy.

Parklifers are thrown the bone of opener 'Lonesome Street'. With its Britpop swagger and talk of catching 'the 5.14 to East Grinstead', it's a pleasing self-pastiche, a welcoming beckon inside. Other tracks hark back to their history – the grinding 'Go Out' could sit on '13' with its coruscating guitar squalls, and catchy knees-up 'Ong Ong' will be the new song lapped up at Hyde Park this summer, resembling a beery Ziggy Stardust.

But a crowd-pleasing recreation of past glories à la Suede's 2013 comeback 'Bloodsports' just wouldn't be Blur. The fascination of 'The Magic Whip' is in how a reanimated Blur imagine they'd have developed by

THE ORIENTAL EXPRESS

Three of 'The Magic Whip's east Asian reference points...

PYONGYANG

Damon visited the North Korean capital in 2014 and described the city as "a magical kingdom, in the sense that everyone is under a spell". It's this strange, dreamlike atmosphere Blur capture in 'Pyongyang'.

NEW WORLD TOWERS

Slap bang in the heart of commercial Hong Kong, the 43-storey New World Tower houses a shopping centre, restaurants and multinational companies galore and, on 'The Magic Whip', acts as a symbol of Hong Kong's icy allure.

OCEAN PARK

Mentioned in closing track 'Mirrorball', Ocean Park is essentially the Chinese SeaWorld crossed with Disneyland, an amusement park and aquarium in Hong Kong where cuddly man-sized pandas and jellyfish wander around a site split in two by a massive mountain.

into oblivion. Blur have always striven to make their albums era-defining snapshots of life and culture, and 'The Magic Whip's' portrait, in contrast with its garish artwork, is often a mournful monochrome.

But you only need listen to the stunning 'Pyongyang', the album's lustrous 'This Is A Low' named after the downtrodden North Korean capital, to see how Blur still find hope and beauty in desolation. This is a reunited band making music to rival their very best. There's airmiles aplenty in these Essex Dogs yet. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

8

► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** April 27 ► **LABEL** Parlophone ► **PRODUCER** Stephen Street ► **LENGTH** 51:27 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Lonesome Street ►2. New World Towers ►3. Go Out ►4. Ice Cream Man ►5. Thought I Was A Spaceman ►6. I Broadcast ►7. My Terracotta Heart ►8. There Are Too Many Of Us ►9. Ghost Ship ►10. Pyongyang ►11. Ong Ong ►12. Mirrorball ► **BEST TRACK** Pyongyang

MORE ALBUMS

Braids

Deep In The Iris Arbutus



Braids' previous albums called to mind Björk

fronting the Cocteau Twins, but on 'Deep In The Iris' their sparkle fades. The Montreal trio have left their shoe-gaze roots behind in favour of lightweight piano-led electronica that finds Raphaëlle Standell-Preston's vocals delivered with a newfound clarity. Her lyrics, though, need work, and 'Getting Tired' actually features the couplet "Ha ha ha, laugh a little/Ha ha ha, you're so brittle". Worthy attempts to address issues such as pornography ('Sore Eyes') and slut-shaming ('Miniskirt') are even clumsier, and the latter's attempt to reclaim various terms of abuse ("I'm the slut/I'm the whore/The one you hate") is awkwardly reminiscent of Meredith Brooks' 'Bitch'. It's an embarrassing listen.

■ STUART HUGGETT

5

Mew

► Play It Again Sam



Six years in the making, Mew's sixth album is opulence

in excelsis, the Danish dream-weavers gathering all the synths and power chords at their disposal to conjure a feast for the ears. Nu-metal guitars butt up against a chiming pop chorus on 'My Complications'; the 10-minute 'Rows' is a startling prog indulgence – and soft-rock ballads like 'Water Slides' and 'Cross The River On Your Own' are beyond saccharine, but there's usually a redemptive hook. Jonas Bjerre's falsetto is at the heart of all that's good, exercising an emotional pull on the Empire Of The Sun-like 'Interview The Girls' and riding the epic phases of 'Satellites', the best track here.

■ MATTHEW HORTON

7

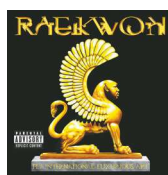


Raekwon

Fly International Luxurious Art

Delayed by Wu-Tang's "soft" last album, the rapper's thunderous seventh is finally airborne

► The journey to release for 'FILA' has been a turbulent one, disrupted by a frustrating two-year layover. After finishing it long before last December's 20th-anniversary Wu-Tang Clan album, 'A Better Tomorrow', Raekwon delayed its release "out of respect to my brothers", only for work on that record to overrun. When it finally emerged late last year, the 45-year-old rapper described it to NME as "disappointing" and "soft". The same doesn't apply here: Blaxploitation synths and siren sounds line the bruising highlight '4 In The



Morning', 'Live To Die' is a thunderous Mafioso fable and the A\$AP Rocky-starring 'I Got Money' is a calypso riot. Raekwon's steely signature East Coast flow has seldom sounded more imperious. ■ AL HORNER

8

43

► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** April 26 ► **LABEL** Ice H20/EMI ► **PRODUCERS** Jerry Wonda, Scram Jones, S1, She Da God, Snaz, Frank G, Scoop DeVille, Bluerocks, Matthew Burnett ► **LENGTH** 43:10 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Intro ►2. 4 In The Morning (feat. Ghostface Killah) ►3. I Got Money (feat. A\$AP Rocky) ►4. Wall To Wall (feat. French Montana and Busta Rhymes) ►5. Heated Nights ►6. FILA World (feat. 2 Chainz) ►7. 1, 2, 1, 2 (feat. Snoop Dogg) ►8. Live To Die ►9. Soundboy Kill It (feat. Melanie Fiona and Assassin) ►10. Revory (Wraith) (feat. Ghostface Killah and Rick Ross) ►11. All About You (feat. Estelle) ►12. Nautilus ►13. Worst Enemy (feat. Liz Rodrigues) ► **BEST TRACK** 4 In The Morning

The Brian Jonestown Massacre

Musique De Film Imaginé

A Recordings



This 15th BJM LP was conceived in homage to the great

European filmmakers of the late '50s and '60s, its brittle compositions marking something of a departure for 47-year-old frontman Anton Newcombe. Opener 'Après Le Vin' and the brooding 'Le

Souvenir' provide moments of understated beauty, but the problem is the uneven quality of instrumentation. 'Elle S'échappé', for example, sounds like a midi version of a BJM song. Newcombe is a gifted songwriter, but rather than evoking the richness of French film composers the listener is left to imagine how much better these songs would sound with real horns and strings.

■ CIAN TRAYNOR

5

Reviews

Peter Broderick Colours Of The Night

Bella Union



Portland resident Peter Broderick's back

catalogue is pretty eclectic, though generally the 28-year-old's more obtuse, experimental stuff tends to arrive on smaller labels, while Bella Union is handed responsibility for lush, tuneful and songwriterly albums like 'Colours Of The Night'. Using the studio judiciously, even a vaguely Will Oldham-y folk mope like 'Red Earth' is garnished with layers of production trickery, while efforts to be upbeat, as on the title track, come off as twee and bloodless. The weirder nooks harbour some fine moments, though – see 'If I Sinned', a creepy a cappella reading of the Great American Songbook, and the cracked organ drone of 'On Time'.

■ NOEL GARDNER

6

Bop English Constant Bop

Blood And Biscuits



Billed as a solo venture from White Denim frontman

James Petralli, Bop English is actually a collaborative affair featuring his three bandmates – drummer Josh Block appears throughout, guitarist Austin Jenkins and bassist Steve Terebecki on a few songs – and six other musicians. However, this richly diverse record is markedly Petralli's own. Opening with the funk-up bass and piano of 'Dani's Blues (It Was Beyond Our Control)', 'Constant Bop' begins a journey that takes in twanging bar-room rock ('Struck Matches') and marauding psych ('Fake Dog'). Petralli's guitar and familiar vocal style lead the way, and are most engaging on the countrified 'Falling At Your Feet' and 'The Hardest Way'.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

8

Earl Sweatshirt

I Don't Like Shit,

I Don't Go Outside

Fluid, complex flow and downbeat poetry mark the Odd Future rapper's low-key second album

Odd to recall, looking back, how Odd Future were greeted as potential wreckers of civilisation on their arrival in 2010. They didn't, as it happens, rape and pillage hip-hop and dance around in the ashes. Instead, Frank Ocean came out, Tyler, The Creator made a couple of long and rather emo albums about his troubled mental state and absent father, and the collective have tended towards introspective hip-hop rapped over chill, stoned beats.

No-one typifies this more than Thebe Neruda Kgositsile, aka Earl Sweatshirt. We live in an era where hip-hop is again making huge statements – from the radical black consciousness of Kendrick to the polarising ego moves of Kanye. In contrast, Earl's second long-player since returning from mum-imposed exile in a Samoan boarding school in 2012 feels almost oppressively low-key. The beats, largely self-produced, amble along jazzily. There are relatively few guests – just a handful of brief cameos from the likes of A\$AP Mob's Dash and Ratking's Wiki (who adds weasly charisma to 'AM // Radio'). And instead of high concepts or big choruses, Earl tunnels into his art, twisting his gloomy, hyperarticulate flow into ever more complex patterns.



► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** Out now ► **LABEL** Tan Cressida/Columbia ► **PRODUCERS** Earl Sweatshirt, Left Brain ► **LENGTH** 29:56 ► **TRACKLISTING** ► 1. Huey ► 2. Mantra ► 3. Faucet ► 4. Grief ► 5. Off Top ► 6. Grown Ups ► 7. AM // Radio ► 8. Inside ► 9. DNA ► 10. Wool ► **BEST TRACK** Grief



It works because Earl is a rare talent. He can write about pretty much nothing and the words sing, which is fortunate because that's largely what he does. On 'Huey' he smokes, drinks, misses his late grandmother. 'Mantra' and 'Faucet' pick coldly over the bones of a collapsed relationship. But it's all in the way the words drip off his tongue, the acrobatic allusions and carefully constructed assonance. Some might say they like to be kept on their toes, but here's how Earl puts it on the Left Brain-produced 'Off Top': "I'm only happy when there's static in the air cause the fair weather fake to me/Living in the scope, hairs crossed like adjacent streets..." And so on.

The little dude is a poet. Still, at a lean 30 minutes, it's hard to argue this is a heavyweight album. Its strongest track is 'Grief', a wispy lament that feels like it comes from a sad, bad place. Earl Sweatshirt is 20 years old. He needs to get over the girl and go outdoors. Maybe then he'll again sound ready to take on the world.

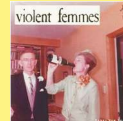
guitarist Brennan Greaves heavy-breathes about "legs wrapped around me" on highlight 'Honey Pot', which features a corkscrewing lead guitar part, and there's playful call and response with singer Britty Drake on the jaunty 'Acid Reflex' where both echo the couplet "I need love/I need drugs". Mostly, though, the Michigan quartet concentrate on noise, hiding their lyrics and leaving the rest to your imagination.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

7

Violent Femmes Happy New Year EP

Add It Up Promotions



After a gap of 15 years since this Milwaukee trio last

released new material, it might have been wise to wait the extra eight months to make this EP's seasonal (and pretty naff) title track timely. Instead, these four songs are unleashed on Record Store Day, with the promise of more to come. Still employing howling

vocals and thumped-crate percussion, the Femmes capture some of the energy that makes their self-titled 1983 debut an enduring cult favourite – the breakdown in 'Love Love Love Love' evoking the bit before classic track 'Add It Up' explodes into life. The fixation with religion and death that coloured their later work is ever-present – 'Fast Horses' is about the death of John Lennon. Hardly reflective of the wait, but fans will approve.

6

Pity Sex Feast Of Love

Run For Cover



With a sleeve adorned with inter-twining naked

bodies, Pity Sex's debut album makes a provocative first impression. The 12 songs on 'Feast Of Love' don't live up to it. Carefully layered with heavily fuzzed guitars, faraway basslines and softly thudding drums, the record forms curtains of poppy shoegaze. Singing

Reviews

Jackson Scott

Sunshine Redux Bloodmoss



In 2013, North Carolina songwriter Jackson

Scott released his debut album 'Melbourne', a mix of heavily effected vocals and lo-fi slacker-rock. This follow-up builds on those off-kilter foundations. Two instrumentals feature early on, the blink-and-you'll-

miss-it 'Woodworkk' – a ten-second snatch of eerie strings – and 'Steal Me', a loop of childlike burbling built over creepy piano. 'Merry Nightmare' continues the dissonance, with Scott's vocals gently ushering the challenging cacophony into the background and replacing it with a slurred lullaby. It's not all dark and uncomfortable, though – both the pretty 'Save The World' and 'Ripe For Love II's arpeggio guitars balance things out nicely. ■ RHIAN DALY

7

Marker Starling

Rosy Maze Tin Angel



Chris A Cummings has been hanging around the

margins of Toronto's music scene for years under the guise of Mantler. Now, as Marker Starling, he's making an unlikely push for mainstream recognition. He would probably have more success if this was 1973, where his impossibly plush meld of early solo Paul McCartney melodies and

Steely Dan jazz chords would be right at home, but there's still a timeless quality to 'Rosy Maze'. Fuelled by Wuritzer electric piano, 'Husbands' is a flowing, sun-dappled tale of "a weekend with the boys", while 'Uphill Battle' and 'Only Speak Your Name' are immaculate, mannered and blessed with killer choruses. Elsewhere, Cummings could almost be Al Green or Curtis Mayfield, finding the smoothest soul in his muso creations.

■ MATTHEW HORTON

8

Reptar

Lurid Glow Joyful Noise



On their second album, Reptar are making an

unnecessary attempt to become 'serious artists'. It's a failure, centred on an experimental hybrid of soft rock and blue-eyed soul that's neither as fun nor as engaging as the colourful afro-pop of the quartet's 2012 debut 'Body Faucet'. By suppressing their pop instincts, the Georgians have ended up with a musically accomplished but stuffily laboured album. The general tone of sombre contemplation (the brassy 'Ice Black Sand' repeats the line "No good person in the heart of life") seems part of a misguided bid for emotional weight that falls flat. The overcooked 'Cable' (bad Tom Petty) and 'Every Chance I Get' are particularly weak.

There are better, poppier moments ('Breezy'), but the lesson here is: stick to what you know.

■ JOHN CALVERT

4

Nai Harvest

Hairball Topshelf



After screaming themselves hoarse on 2013's

emo-filled debut album 'Whatever', Sheffield duo Nai Harvest have taken the unexpected step of enlisting Sky Ferreira and Empire Of The Sun producer Bob Cooper for this follow-up. Cooper adds gleaming sheen to 'Hairball's 10 scrappy, infectious tracks. The zippy 'Sick On My Heart' is emo-tinged pop-punk, while 'Drinking Bleach' is a scuzzy thrash about getting on the wrong side of people. Previous single 'Buttercups' is the shining centerpiece, all meaty riffs and Ben Thompson drawling languidly about feeling "like a lowlife". With 'Hairball' under his and drummer Lew Currie's belts, he shouldn't be feeling that way for much longer.

■ RHIAN DALY

8

The roots quartet's second set subtly updates their sound - but it's still all about *that* voice



Alabama Shakes

Sound & Color

One of the biggest hurdles facing Alabama Shakes on 'Sound & Color' is that you'll never be able to hear Brittany Howard's voice for the first time again. The novelty of that vicious, weather-beaten drawl coming from such an unlikely source – a 22-year-old former truck driver and postal worker who'd never left her home state of Alabama – was an integral part of the band's appeal, and the fact that Howard managed to do something with it other than becoming an *X Factor*

sideshow-of-the-week made their success that much easier to root for. The question now is whether it will still sound as impressive the *next* time you hear it. Novelties eventually wear off, but true soul has no sell-by date.

As expected, there's nothing

here that impacts with quite the same force as 2012's introductory single 'Hold On', whose opening line ("Bless my heart, bless my soul/ Didn't think I'd make it to 22 years old") was as all-encapsulating a statement as "Tonight, I'm a rock'n'roll star".

Instead, what 'Sound & Color' does is add a little bit of both to Alabama Shakes' palette – whereas their debut was cast in sepia hues and downhome earthiness, its follow-up is a more kaleidoscopic affair. The seven-minute 'Gemini' – a psychedelic slow jam on which Howard's vocal is adorned by tolling-bell guitars and a rhythm section that sounds like it's creeping through a swamp of molasses – is the most prominent example, but right from the opening chimes of the title track's retro-modernist R&B, or the taut, lascivious funk of 'Don't Wanna Fight', it's obvious that 'Sound & Color' wasn't made in a 'same again' spirit.

The cumulative effect is to make the band about more than just Howard's (still remarkable) set of pipes. Their musical range may not yet be as expansive as her vocal one, but any group who are able to segue from the psychotropic '70s soul of 'Guess Who' to the proto-punk sturm und drang of 'The Greatest' are clearly no one-trick ponies. The biggest hurdle facing Alabama Shakes on album number three? Bettering this one. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

8

THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE April 21 ► LABEL Rough Trade ► PRODUCERS Alabama Shakes, Blake Mills ► LENGTH 47:26 ► TRACKLISTING ► 1. Sound & Color ► 2. Don't Wanna Fight ► 3. Dunes ► 4. Future People ► 5. Gimme All Your Love ► 6. This Feeling ► 7. Guess Who ► 8. The Greatest ► 9. Shoegaze ► 10. Miss You ► 11. Gemini ► 12. Over My Head ► BEST TRACK Gemini

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FILM

The Falling

Game Of Thrones' Maisie Williams stars in an eerie '60s-set drama scored by Tracey Thorn



Written and directed by Carol Morley (sister of former *NME* journalist Paul), *The Falling* tells the mysterious story of a fainting epidemic at a girls' school in 1969. Following a tragic incident that devastates her friendship group, headstrong student Lydia (Maisie Williams, who plays Arya Stark in *Game Of Thrones*) falls into a trance-like state during a lesson and faints. Soon, many of her friends and the school's youngest teacher are exhibiting similar symptoms. Played formidably by Bafta-winning *Appropriate Adult* actress Monica Dolan, fag-puffing headmistress Miss Alvaro is initially sceptical, convinced Lydia is acting up.

However, Morley's film – rendered in lush, murky hues by French cinematographer Agnès Godard, who worked on 2006's *Golden Door* – doesn't provide anything like as simple a conclusion. The 49-year-old's last feature, 2011's *Dreams Of A Life*, was a docu-drama that attempted to join the dots in the sad story of Joyce Carol Vincent, a reclusive London woman whose decomposed corpse lay undiscovered in her bedsit for three years after her death in 2003. Even though *The Falling* is fictional, Morley based it on extensive research into mass hysteria and its links to sexuality, and the film benefits from her obvious flair for handling ambiguous subject matter.

We're given several reasons to presume Lydia's fainting is an extreme form of attention seeking, particularly her strained relationship with her agoraphobic single

mother, played with gruff emotional distance by Maxine Peake. However, as the film speedily unspools, there are suggestions that something more sinister is afoot. Lydia's older brother Kenneth (*Peaky Blinders*' Joe Cole) is fascinated by the occult and cryptically tells his sister the school is situated close to a historic leyline. The intrigue deepens when Lydia undergoes a shocking sexual

awakening – she poetically describes orgasm to her free-spirited best friend Abbie (newcomer Florence Pugh), throws up and then discloses something shocking – fully justifying Morley's description of the film as a “twisted coming of age story”.

Morley played in short-lived 1980s Manchester band TOT before becoming a filmmaker, and has said her “way in to a project is often through music”. Here, she's helped by

a wonderfully evocative, gently psychedelic score from Everything But The Girl singer Tracey Thorn, whose unpublished compositions are designed to echo the music played by the girls' Alternative School Orchestra.

Williams conveys Lydia's infuriating complexities brilliantly, but Pugh more than matches her. As their friendship frays, Abbie's captivating, otherworldly presence looms large over *The Falling*, and she holds the key to Morley's haunting film. ■ NICK LEVINE



► **DIRECTOR** Carol Morley
► **RELEASE DATE** April 24

CINEMA

The Invisible Life

Fans of the writer-director Vitor

Gonçalves have learned to be patient. The 64-year-old's 1986 debut, *A Girl In Summer*, was hailed as a landmark of Portuguese cinema, but this is his first film for 27 years. There is no sense of him making up for lost time by overloading the narrative or rushing through fast cuts: this study of the emotionally paralysed life led by Hugo (Filipe Duarte) unfolds in enigmatic long shots down empty corridors and in darkened rooms, but is let down by creeping pace and a lack of action. As Hugo struggles to relate to his ailing workmate Antonio (João Perry) and ex-girlfriend Adriana (Maria João Pinho), Gonçalves intersperses Super 8 footage of sunsets, mountains and seascapes. The loneliness is contagious, the isolation chilly.

■ ANGUS BATEY

6

DVD

Partir To Live

Directed by Domingo Garcia-Hubidoro, of

Chilean psych trio Föllakzoid, *Partir To Live* is inspired by the guitarist's obsession with paranormal activity. Premiered at ATP Festival in 2013, this unsettling film is largely free of dialogue and has no clear narrative. The camera tracks a male character (unknown Chilean actor Martín Castillo) through dimly lit, anonymous landscapes. The misty greyness of scenes showing him alone in a barren field evoke Jim Jarmusch's surreal 1995 western *Dead Man*. Dutch composer Josef Van Wissem – winner of 2013's Cannes Soundtrack Award for *Only Lovers Left Alive*, which Jarmusch directed – scores the film, and his droning accompaniment is most effective in a strobe-lit closing passage that leaves you marvelling at Garcia-Hubidoro's twisted imagination.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

8

CINEMA

Glassland

Twenty-seven-year-old writer-director Gerard Barrett won acclaim for his first feature, the 2012 *Irish Times* Best Film Award winner, *Pilgrim Hill*. This follow-up, shot over 18 days in a dark, rain-swept Dublin, is a stark, deeply moving examination of a family stretched beyond breaking point by addiction and poverty. Barrett has found

formidable collaborators in Toni Collette (*The Sixth Sense*) and Jack Reynor (*Transformers: Age Of Extinction*), who are utterly compelling as a mother filling her emotional emptiness with alcohol and her patient, heartbroken son, trying to keep it all together. This is lean, sharp filmmaking in the spirit of Ken Loach or Alan Bleasdale: *Glassland* may be bleak and brittle, but hope burns like fire at its heart.

■ ANGUS BATEY

8

CINEMA

Good Kill

Good Kill sees Ethan Hawke and *Gattaca* writer-director Andrew Niccol reunite for a war film with a topical twist. Hawke's US Air Force fighter pilot Major Tom Egan has six tours of duty under his belt, but now operates drones remotely from an air-conditioned hut in the Nevada desert, dropping bombs over Afghanistan from 7,000

miles away. The 44-year-old *Boyhood* star's performance is a triumph of skilled economy, as he slowly reveals Egan's shame in completing jobs he considers unheroic and the way they isolate him from his wife (*Mad Men*'s January Jones). A romantic subplot involving Egan's co-pilot Suarez (Zoë Kravitz) feels underdeveloped, but this tense film is a thought-provoking take on the ethics of modern warfare. ■ NICK LEVINE

7

NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK

Circa Waves

The Riverside, Newcastle

Wednesday, April 8

48

CIRCA WAVES

Circa Waves
onstage in
Newcastle



Libs-like Liverpool
foursome are red hot on the
first night of their UK tour

PHOTO BY ANDY HUGHES

▶ "It's hot outside," grins Circa Waves frontman Kieran Shudall as he introduces 'T-Shirt Weather'. It's blistering inside, too. On the opening night of the Liverpool quartet's first tour since the release of their Top 10 debut album 'Young Chasers', sweat drips from the balcony and clouds of pungent steam rise from the crowd. Opening with the irresistible "Whoo-hoos!" of 'Young Chasers', Circa Waves wind the clock back to the noughties heyday of The Strokes and The Libertines with their boys-in-the-band spirit and buoyant riffs. Shudall and lead guitarist Joe Falconer even ape Pete 'n' Carl's bromantic neck nuzzling as they sing unapologetic choruses on 'Fossils' and 'Lost It'. It's a taut, hour-long rush of euphoria, and as boisterous closer 'Get Away' climaxes, Circa Waves strike poses on the speaker stands, wearing the lottery-winning expressions of a band who know their time has come.

■ GARY RYAN

The

Wombats

O2 Academy, Bristol

Wednesday, April 8

**Bristol goes crazy for the
Liverpool indie electro-pop
survivors' euphoric return**

There's a strange scent in the air in Bristol tonight.

The backlit shadows hitting the stage are *bouncing* and the mingling crowds of pop kids, indie hardcore, beer boys and West Country Kardashians scream like #cutforzayners at the first note of 'Your Body Is A Weapon', an obscure Wombats stop-gap single from 2013. The air fills with "woah-oh!"s and the ecstatic mob yowl every word, revelling in the song's semi-comic self-deprecation: "*Your body is a weapon/It makes me want to cry/My body is a temple of doom*". It takes a few seconds but you can isolate the odour. It's *relief*.

Relief not just that The Wombats have survived being shot in the back by the marauding anti-indiepop militia and also four years in the wilderness as singer Matthew 'Murph' Murphy worked through his romantic ping-pong between London and Los Angeles, but that this sold-out comeback tour is where the fun bursts back into gig-going.

So when hyperactive bassist Tord Knudsen starts leaping around like a horny Pekingese and Murph, sporting a trendy dollop of a

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Harrison Ward, 17, Taunton

"From what I saw it was very good."

I saw my favourite song 'Techno Fan' and the new song 'Greek Tragedy', but I'd eaten too much before so I had to leave the room."



Joseph Cooper, 18, Taunton

"It was amazing! I liked 'Let's Dance

To Joy Division' at the end, that was a great way to end it."



Harvey Gill, 17, Taunton

"It was quality. 'Techno Fan' was

the best bit, the crowd were up for it, I got involved!"

haircut, declares tonight "basically the first gig we've done in the UK since 2012, so can we go fucking insane please?", Bristol duly complies. The moment a rising squall of noise makes a sudden handbrake turn into 'Moving To New York', a roar so exuberant you'd think Christmas came early goes up. The stomping waltz of 'Laura' becomes a massive bawl-along and the kick-off chorus of 'Techno Fan' – in which Murph discovers his inner Avicii – is met with such communal euphoria you'd imagine they'd just legalised *everything*.

Sensing their excommunication from the court of cool, The Wombats embraced the plush synths, tribal percussion and Guetta-friendly sizzles of mainstream dance pop on third album 'Glitterbug', overseen by Mark Crew, the man who made Bastille sound so lucratively plastic. He's worked his anti-magic on the likes of 'Be Your Shadow' and 'Headspace' too, but Murph's superhuman way with a chorus and his dark, damaged lyrical confessionals fight off any cheesiness. Pharrell-like new single 'Give Me A Try' speaks of "*Vicodin on Sunday*

night" while 'Greek Tragedy' concerns a girl who "*hits like Ecstasy*". 'Be Your Shadow' – the most EDM of their songs yet – is introduced with Murph confessing to having a "diarrhoea episode" in a backstage corridor when they played in this same venue with Babyshambles in 2006, and revels in the masochism of the domestic violence victim. "*Kiss me with your fists, it's alright*", Murph sings over jubilant chart beats, "*Put your hands around my throat, I won't mind*".

Most subversive of all is 'This Is Not A Party', a dispatch from the K-hole at the very end of a debauched night of carnage when "*Edward's on the big white telephone to God*" and "*Charlie's coming on to every person he can touch*", set to a retro Abba disco pulse. Indie stalwarts might shout "Judas!" at this cynical shift into pop territory, but The Wombats are scrambling aboard HMS Mainstream, steering the ship's wheel back into choppy waters.

By the time the sad-clown doormat anthem of old favourite 'Little Miss Pipe Dream' gives way to the Franz frenzy of 'Kill The Director' and an encore of 'Tokyo (Vampires & Wolves)' and 'Let's Dance To Joy Division', indie electro-pop is declared well and truly Back With A Bang. Come on, jump in. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

SETLIST

- ▶ Your Body Is A Weapon
- ▶ Jump Into The Fog
- ▶ Moving To New York
- ▶ Greek Tragedy
- ▶ Laura
- ▶ Be Your Shadow
- ▶ 1996
- ▶ This Is Not A Party
- ▶ Headspace
- ▶ Techno Fan
- ▶ The English Summer
- ▶ Little Miss
- ▶ Pipedream
- ▶ Kill The Director
- ▶ Give Me A Try
- ▶ Tokyo (Vampires & Wolves)
- ▶ Emoticons
- ▶ Let's Dance To Joy Division

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Matthew 'Murph' Murphy and a few fans

Murph Q&A

How does it feel to be back playing the UK?

Murph: "I loved it. The room sounds a bit crap but the crowd was amazing, we definitely didn't expect it."

Everyone knew all the new songs...

"It's so hard to gauge. We release albums so sporadically it's hard to tell are they first album crowds, second album crowds or new people. But they're young and up for it. I have no idea why there was such a broad spectrum – there are some shows where it's clear they're all men and there's some where it's all kids, there's no rhyme or reason."

What were the maddest crowds at your recent European shows?

"In Berlin, they were properly ripped. I just didn't know that we had fans like that. It was great, they act like metal heads but they aren't."

MORE GIGS

Bo Ningen Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen, London

Wednesday, March 31

Tonight, this tiny east London back room can barely contain Bo Ningen's psych maelstrom. It's the second of two low-key hometown shows and the quartet have a pair of new songs in tow. Their set melts faces at every turn, with frontman Taigen Kawabe gurning like an acid casualty and writhing in sync with every convulsion of his guitar. The cyber-blues assault of 'Zankoku' is a punishing first taste of their fresh material and is cushioned by the softer 'Yuruyakana Ao' and the futuristic alt-rock of second new track 'Aka'. They finish by unleashing finale 'Daikaisei', a 20-minute blast of hurricane-strength guitar noise that's mad, rad and not a little brilliant.

■ JOHN CALVERT

Frank Turner Royal Albert Hall, London

Sunday, March 29

Most of the big names that Roger Daltrey assembles every year to headline the Royal Albert Hall to raise money for the Teenage Cancer Trust are happy to wheel out their greatest hits and trundle off home. Not Frank Turner. The 33-year-old's sixth album is imminent and, before playing four tracks from it, he tells the crowd it's "really angry". 'Get Better' and 'Out Of Breath' live up to his description, while the Springsteen-aping 'Try This At Home' and 'The Angel Islington' are more wistful. Of the 21 other songs he bangs out, the rousing 'Wessex Boy' and a thundering 'Recovery' shine brightest, but it's the new songs that linger most.

■ TOM GOODWYN

Swim Deep



Deaf Institute, Manchester Tuesday, March 31

Manchester's brief taste of the indie pop foursome's "psychedelic sex music" leaves the crowd begging for more

Swim Deep look like they've rolled out of bed, gobbled some pills and headed to a warehouse rave. On this opening night of a four-date run previewing material from their upcoming second album, the Birmingham baggies are shrouded in smoke with trippy visuals swirling around them.

SETLIST

- Namaste
- Honey
- Red Lips I Know
- One Great Song
- And I Could Change The World
- Francisco
- She Changes The Weather
- King City
- Fueiho Boogie
- To My Brother

Opener 'Namaste', the first of four new songs, is a jubilant pop sugar-rush featuring synthesizer fanfares straight out of Van Halen's 'Jump'. Clad in a striped top and with his trousers hitched up somewhere near his bellybutton, frontman Austin Williams prowls the stage wielding a tambourine. 'Honey' causes the crowd to ricochet around like dice, all summery Soup Dragons charm and sing-a-long "Oooh ooohs!", powered by cravat-sporting bassist Cavan McCarthy (who resembles the IVF child of Blur's Alex James and Suede's Brett Anderson). Pints fly and mates are hugged to early single 'King City', as Williams' kiss-off of "I wanna pretend/That Jenny Lee Lindberg is my girlfriend" is shouted back at him.

The saucer-eyed new material – clearly influenced by late-'80s acid

house – impresses the most, and sees Williams flaunting an all-new testicles-in-a-vice falsetto. It could be those trousers. The brilliantly titled 'One Great Song And I Could Change The World' is a psych-pop gem, coming on like the missing link between MGMT and Happy Mondays. Williams recently described Swim Deep's new record to *NME* as "psychedelic sex music". 'Fueiho Boogie' is surely its most ecstatic moment. The title and lyrics refer to Japan's crackdown on the perceived immorality of clubbing, where arcane 'fueiho' laws are being used to impose strict regulations on dancing in social spaces. Over an eight-minute rave-a-thon that builds hypnotically and explodes, Williams barks: "It's four to floor here, how could they resist?/Ooh, we're in the house of fun, oooh we're gonna run and run". After its climax, Williams notes that "The last time we played the Deaf Institute, James [Balmont, recently added multi-instrumentalist] was in the audience. Two weeks later, he was in the band."

Euphoric new single 'To My Brother' capitalises on the night's Madchester vibe. All that's missing is a stage invasion from Bez. Then, suddenly, they're off, leaving the audience chanting "We want more!". When no encore is forthcoming, there are boos. At only nine songs, it's hardly a lengthy show but, delivering an exciting taster of things to come, these 42-Minute Party People impress all the same.

■ GARY RYAN

Future Islands

Plug, Sheffield
Sunday, March 29

Baltimore synth-pop trio
debut two new tunes at
a hip-shaking show

Yorkshire-based fans of Baltimore's Future Islands have an extra reason to remember November 5, 2014. That's when the trio should have been making their Sheffield debut at Queens Social Club, a venue just down the road from Plug – and a third of the size. That date was pulled and the show ultimately upgraded thanks to what had become an unworkable touring schedule after the YouTube clip of their March performance of 'Seasons (Waiting On You)' on David Letterman's American talk show went viral, capturing imaginations the world over.

The decision to cancel November's show is especially notable because, pretty much since their inception in 2006, Future Islands have spent their entire career on the road, hawking their loveable synth-pop around upwards of 150 destinations per year, playing in spaces much less salubrious than this one. Tonight, Samuel T Herring, the band's hip-shaking, sweat-slickened, guttural talisman, seems intent on making up for the no-show. "We feel so fucking bad about last year," he tells the capacity crowd, before a note is even struck, "but now we're here and we've got a fucking monster set for y'all."

He's not kidding. The majority of their breakout album, last year's 'Singles', is aired



tonight, sounding as tight and enormous as you'd expect it to. After all, unlike most buzz bands catapulted into the spotlight, Future Islands are seasoned musicians with four records to their name. They've got the chops, and also an unconventional ace up their sleeve in the perfectly rounded form of Herring. His finger licking antics during 'Singles' highlight 'Sun In The Morning' elicit a particularly lusty response early on.

'Walking Through That Door', from 2010's 'In Evening Air', is a harder sell, but once the frontman gets into his groove (in this case, a sort of odd one-legged jig) the more rugged, punk-funk side of their catalogue shines – a little too brightly, perhaps, as a couple of lads causing aggro at the front with some overly physical horseplay are shot a stern look and urged to "Chill out, dudes!" before Herring introduces a less-than-sedate 'Balance' as, "A song about chilling the fuck out."

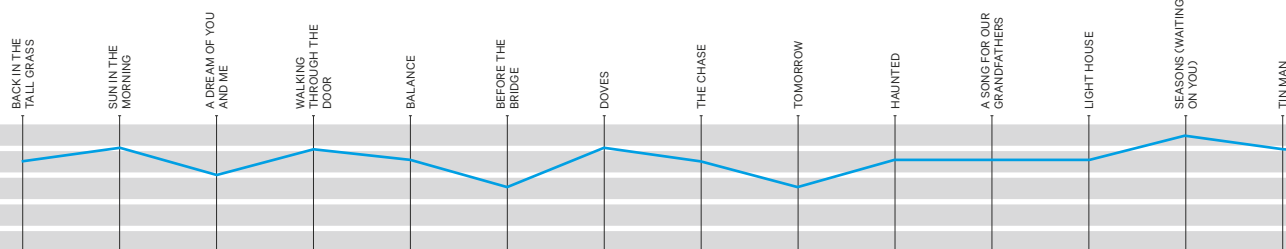
There is, of course, still the not-so-small

HERRING'S FINGER LICKING ANTICS ELICIT A LUSTY RESPONSE

matter of 'Seasons (Waiting On You)', but before that come maiden airings for two new songs. First up, 'The Chase', which could easily be named after bassist William Cashion's dexterous fretwork (those who can tear their eyes away from Herring's centre-stage gyrations long enough are treated to some exemplary low-end fingerplay). Vocally, it's classic Future Islands, with Herring channelling that most basic instinct, desire: "Something I feel, fee-eee-eel!". 'Haunted', the second new song, slows the pace right down to a sleazy, slow-jam crawl, with lyrics suggesting that the relationship chronicled therein might not necessarily be reciprocal: "This song's for you... I can't leave you alone" offers one of its

SETLIST

How good?





MORE GIGS

Ghostpoet

Komedia, Brighton

Monday, April 6

Obaro Ejimiwe peers into the darkness of Komedia's basement, surveys tonight's capacity crowd and says, "I really can't understand how people like you, who live peacefully by the sea, can be so crazy." His domestic storytelling has made the laconic rapper a big draw, and his four-piece band skilfully channel the downtempo grooves of current album 'Shedding Skin', with lead single 'Off Peak Dreams' sounding particularly sleek. The crowd echo his every "I just wanna live life" line during highlight 'Survive It', on which he duets with singer and keyboardist Emma Topolski. After jumping off the stage to hang around with his fans long after the lights go up, Ghostpoet is welcomed as an everyman star.

■ STUART HUGGETT

8

The View Barrowlands, Glasgow

Friday, March 27

The View on a Friday night in Glasgow is not for the fainthearted: big, burly men who've thrown spatial awareness to the wind careen into each other with unruly abandon, strike up that seemingly deathless chant ("The View are on fire!") during every momentary lull and, at one point, become so rowdy that bassist Kieren Webster threatens to end the gig if they don't stop fighting. The only respite from the madness comes in the shape of the handful of new songs the quartet preview, like the 'Rubber Soul' jangle of 'Voodoo Doll' or the scuzzy, slow-burning 'Psychotic', which sound more refined and not quite as breakneck as their usual fare.

■ BARRY NICOLSON

8

Tobias Jesso Jr



Baby's All Right, New York

Friday, March 27

The Canadian pianist delivers a tentative, heartwarming set to an adoring Brooklyn crowd

▶ "This is my first tour... and my farewell run," jokes Tobias Jesso Jr at Brooklyn venue Baby's All Right on the sold-out, over-packed last night of his debut charge around the nation. The 29-year-old's performance is rife with self-effacing, nervous chatter, suggesting Jesso is still unused to being the focus of an overpopulated room.

His soft, straining voice on opener 'Bad Words' is affecting, although it sometimes veers into nasal whining. His piano murmurs simple chords on 'Can We Still Be Friends' and 'True Love'. Released online last summer, the latter didn't make his excellent debut 'Goon', but it's a clear favourite – the whole room chirps along as he sings the spindly, caramelised chorus. Then, as Jesso pulls out a guitar before 'The Wait', he says, "I'm not a perfect-pitch kind of guy; compared to my mom I am, though." He tunes for so long that it almost seems like more self-parodying. When it eventually begins, the song includes an unfortunate whistled interlude, but its sentimentality is loveable.

After a few songs on guitar, his piano sounds fresher, and Jesso is more relaxed: "I've had a few crowd-surfing moments," he says. "I've had a few singalongs. If either of these interest you, it would make me feel good." Though it's hard to imagine anyone stage-diving to 'Just A Dream' – a languorous, Lennon-influenced ode to an imaginary daughter that he first posted on YouTube in 2013 – the audience complies with his second request, making his spare melodies feel bombastic.

Two of Jesso's last four songs are covers: a too-faithful, overlong version of Big Star's 'Thirteen' and the classic standard made famous by Ray Charles, 'Georgia On My Mind', which sadly falls flat. Still, when he plays 'Without You' between them, the emotion in his voice as he wails "There's nothing out there, without you" causes knee trembles. He might still be a little green, but the love in the room is palpable, a clear sign that this tour will be the first of many.

■ AMY ROSE SPIEGEL

SETLIST

- ▶ Bad Words
- ▶ Can We Still Be Friends
- ▶ True Love
- ▶ The Wait
- ▶ Tell the Truth
- ▶ Hey
- ▶ Just a Dream
- ▶ Hollywood
- ▶ Thirteen (Big Star cover)
- ▶ Without You
- ▶ Georgia On My Mind (Ray Charles cover)
- ▶ How Could You Babe

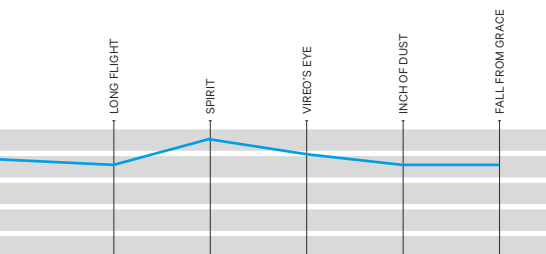
key lines. Neither suggests any drastic stylistic departure, but by this point Future Islands' soulful electronic pop, with heart worn firmly on its sleeve and as comfortable and comforting as an old sofa, has more than earned its victory lap. Speaking of which, when they finally deliver their biggest hit, everybody here goes bananas for Herring's chest-thumping, stage-stalking delivery, every bit as affecting tonight as it was that famous first time around.

Sadly, there are those who leave immediately afterwards, their objective fulfilled, the "dad dancing on YouTube" experienced first hand. For the rest of us, we're left to hear perhaps the sincerest and most accurate appraisal of Future Islands' charm.

"It's about doing what you feel in your heart," explains Herring before 'Spirit', and tonight Sheffield has taken his band firmly, finally, to theirs.

■ ROB WEBB

8



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THIS WEEK IN 1998



Pet Shop Boy Neil Tennant ropes in some famous names to help pay tribute to a British cultural icon

On the centenary of Noël Coward's birth, Pet Shop Boy Neil Tennant has pulled together a coterie of Britpop acts – and Vic Reeves – to record some of Coward's greatest hits for a tribute album, 'Twentieth Century Blues'. He, Vic and Suede's Brett Anderson gather to discuss the fallout of Coward's work and the wild hedonistic parties he was said to have attended.

"Coward must have been around some drug-taking scenes, particularly in the '20s," says Neil. "They all did in those days, didn't they, with all the laudanum knocking around... What do you do in an opium den, anyway? You basically go in a room, get in a bunk bed and go to sleep, don't you?" "And shit yourself!" Brett laughs. "Shit yourself and get robbed!" "And what goes on at orgies?" Vic continues. "I have this image of mid-'70s window cleaner types." NME's Stephen Dalton suggests these kind of scenes might take place after every series of *Shooting Stars* wraps. "No," Vic reveals, "we all go silently away on our mules."

BABYBIRD TAKES WING

In the wake of releasing five albums of homemade songs and having a UK Top 10 single in 1996 with 'You're Gorgeous', Stephen Jones of Babybird returns with a full-band album and new single 'Bad Old Man', about how "there's a bad man in all of us. I don't mean rape – that's an extreme circumstance – but we all have that capacity for doing bad things". "When I drink certain things I get a bit nasty," he tells NME's Johnny Cigarettes. "I don't think I'd make that next step to committing violent crime, but I am capable."

A DAMN GOOD REED

Lou Reed meets NME's Keith Cameron to discuss new documentary *Lou Reed: Rock And Roll Heart*, the BBC charity cover of his song 'Perfect Day' – "Ian Broudie out of The Lightning Seeds? I didn't know who he was" – and his notoriously difficult 'Metal Machine Music' album from 1975. "I thought it was great electronic music," Reed explains. "They took the record off the market. There are some CDs that have been made of it, but they're not what the record was."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



Massive Attack - Mezzanine
"Mezzanine" is the hangover from hell. Being

so close to this stuff simply can't be healthy." 8/10

■ KEITH CAMERON

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THIS WEEK

► Country singer Tammy Wynette dies in her sleep, aged 55, after undergoing 30 operations on her stomach over a bile duct disorder.

► In other tragic news, both Wendy O Williams of The Plasmatics and Rozz Williams from Christian Death have died by suicide. Milli Vanilli's Rob Pilatus is found dead from an alcohol-and-pills overdose and one-time Black Sabbath drummer Cozy Powell is killed in a car crash.

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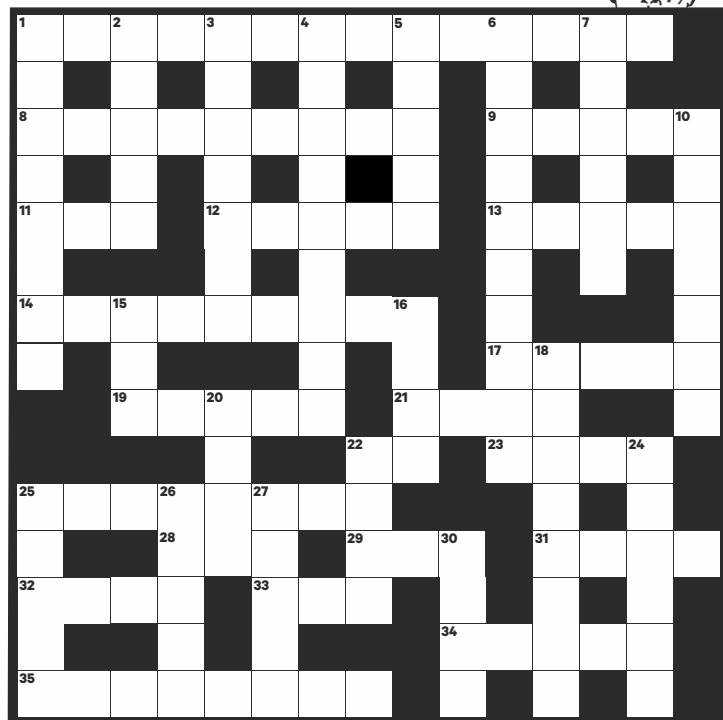


CROSSWORD

Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1** Unable to quell the passion? Say it with Flowers (4-4-2-4)
8 Got any ELO remixes from these US indie rockers? (2-2-5)
9 'The Cautionary _____ Of Mark Oliver Everett', as told on album by The Eels (5)
11 'Join The Dots' to find band featuring ex-members of Joe Lean And The Jing Jang Jong (3)
12+13A The Verve went to town with their music (5-5)
14 View point could result in album by either Roxette or Joe Jackson (4-5)
17+22A I forgot about this Stiff Little Fingers album (2-3-2)
19 Kele album is magical (5)
21 Put an end to Black Rebel Motorcycle Club's recording (4)
22 (See 17 across)
23 Prince initially went in all directions for this 2003 instrumental album (1-1-1-1)
25+10D Music that is closely related to The Cibs (3-3-2-7)
28 Corinne Bailey _____, who requested that you 'Put Your

- Records On' (3)
29 Their hits include 'The Sun Always Shines On TV' and 35 across (1-2)
31 'I knew that she'd seen me, 'cos she dropped her bikini, the one that I got her in _____', from The Kursaal Flyers' 'Little Does She Know' (4)
32 DJ _____ had 2001 Number One with cover of '60s hit 'Hey Baby' (4)
33 By which name Mark Berry, born 1964, is better known (3)
34 Band featuring brothers Harry and Sam Koisser (5)
35 Make note, somehow, of first hit for 29 across (4-2-2)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** Of Monsters And Men are either of transparent material or of a Phil Spector-produced group (8)
2 Rapper who was in a 'Dilemma' with Kelly Rowland (5)
3 New Zealanders who played the 'Harmonic Generator' (7)
4+30D Len's pal back in reformed alt-rock

- band from Manchester (4-5-4)
5+24D The Deftones could make mummy worsen somehow (2-3-6)
6 We need to keep a grip on The Four Seasons (4-4-2)
7 That which had to be pumped up for M/A/R/R/S (6)
10 (See 25 across)
15+20D Red Hot Chili Peppers going somewhere on the West Coast (3-2-1-1)
16 Björk with a remix of 21 across (4)
18 It's not a dead end for the music of either Donovan or The Cowboy Junkies (4-4)
20 (See 15 down)
22 I take on part of Yazoo for act that had 2009 number one with 'Replay' (4)
24 (See 5 down)
25 Twelve inches is about right for Marina And The Diamonds' new album (5)
26 Sepultura are on the way up with this album (5)
27 Noble move made from Duran Duran (23)
30 (See 4 down)

APRIL 4 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1+9A Strangers To Ourselves, 10 Enema, 11+12A To Lose My Life, 15 Homesick, 18 Russia, 20 Regime, 24 Neil, 25 T.O.S., 26 Job, 28+27D Panda Bear, 29+26D Elmore James, 31 MIA., 32 Sun, 33 Dying, 34 Seeds
DOWN 1 Shoot The Runner, 2 Rory, 3+28D Needles And Pins, 4+21A Elvis Costello, 5 S.O.S., 6 O'Neal, 7 One Of Us, 8 Ewan, 13 Ypres, 14 Halo, 16 Maggie May, 19 She, 22+17D Teenage Kicks, 23 LFQ, 25+7A The One, 30 Run

Normal NME terms and conditions apply, available at NME.COM/terms. Cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, April 28, 2015, to: Crossword, NME, 8th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.

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