

9 MAY 2015

NME

Amy Winehouse

Exclusive photos from the new film

Beastie Boys

Ad-Rock talks Daft Punk and immortality

The Wombats

How "forced paranoia" fuelled their latest album

Elliott Smith

New unheard music: quality or cash-in?

Ride

Big comeback interview with the shoegaze legends

*Killer
on the
loose*

Brandon Flowers

On stalking Morrissey,
his new solo record and
the future of The Killers

+

Muse

Jamie xx

Nick Cave

Tobias Jesso Jr

Holly Herndon

"I don't know what I am" MORRISSEY



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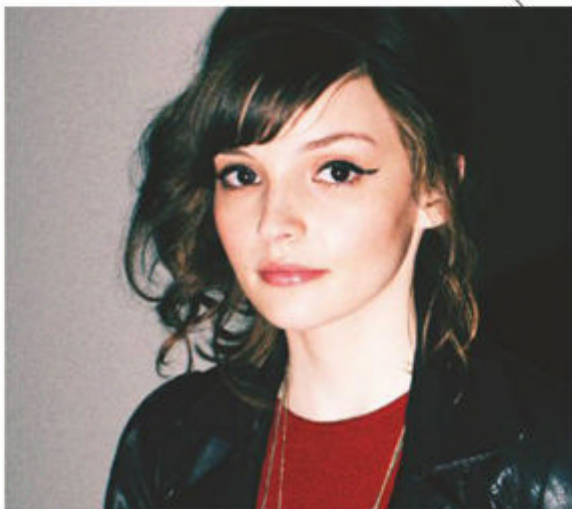
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ALL HAIL LAUREN MAYBERRY

I would just like to say how incredibly inspiring Lauren Mayberry's refusal to back down over misogynist trolls is. As a fellow feminist, I too notice how the norm for females who receive this type of attack is to "just ignore it" or "deal with it", especially when it comes to famous women, who are told it is just "a part of the job". This type of thinking is in no way OK, and in her post Lauren blows it out of the water. I believe these men do not realise the impact these comments that they didn't give a second thought about can have on a woman's every thought. Lauren's stand against these misogynist creeps is so empowering. I stand beside her every step of the way, and I do NOT plan on blinking first.

Haley Orshonsky, via email

Leonie Cooper: Last month Chvrches' Lauren Mayberry shared a screengrab of a vicious internet rape threat. Stomach churning as it was, the vocalist explained she receives similar messages on a daily basis, and while the content was shocking, sadly the fact that some fuckwit



had posted it wasn't. From the Protein World advertising scandal to threats of physical and sexual violence via social media, the lack of respect for women's bodies and minds in mainstream culture is everywhere. Mayberry's response – to let people know how inexcusable this kind of attack is – was perfect, but it's proof that we're still a long way from equality of the sexes.

16-year-olds obsess over the likes of One Direction, but what's the chances of them performing in a dangerously intimate venue with no barriers and people actually falling onto the stage, covered in glitter, and after the show coming out and getting to know their fans? Smaller bands make an effort and actually bother to make authentic and original music, and that's why I think modern music is just as good as it was. Rhiannon Calley, via email

LC: If their stunner of a debut album is anything to go by, Wolf Alice won't be small for much longer. In fact, they've just announced a Brixton Academy gig, proving that the major leagues beckon. No doubt they'll still be covered in glitter and meeting the fans when they're heading up festival bills in 2018.

FAT WHITES VS PALMAS

As excited as I am to hear Palma Violets' new 'youthful' album, I hope by their third they do decide it's time to grow up and tackle some more challenging topics. I think if they paired their exciting, energetic music with more lyrical intent, it would turn them into a truly great band. It's for this reason, I think, that the Fat White Family have an edge over them as the best British band at the moment.

Joseph Morgan, via email

LC: Um, just checking – you're talking about the same Fat White Family who sing about spunking in mouths and shagging in cars, right?

PALMA VIOLETS: FUCKING BRILLIANT

I recently attended the York date of Palma Violets' tour, and let me say this: it was absolutely phenomenal. I love the

feeling of splendour and extravagance you get with the band. The howling screams of Chilli Jesson and Sam Fryer rebound around the room into every nook and cranny, and you just can't escape it. It was one of the best live gigs I've attended and the sheer volume and energy in the venue were brilliant – [merch guy and 'mascot'] Harry Violent manoeuvred the crowd like a machine, hugging and slapping shoulders as he went. The highlight of the night had to be the energy and passion the band brought, the looks on their face showing 'yeah, we've made it, lads'.

Kirsty Jackson, via email

LC: Palma Violets are one of the most thrilling live acts around. Sure, they're not the smoothest of

bands – we've seen Chilli fall into the pit on numerous occasions – but their ramshackle ways are part of their charm. Punk rock was never about being pretty.

STOP BANGING ON ABOUT OASIS

I love your magazine and I buy it every single week without fail. But could everyone please stop talking about this Oasis reunion nonsense? Just because they're on speaking terms doesn't mean they're back in the studio together as we speak. A couple of weeks ago, Liam posted a photo of him holding a backstage pass to one of Noel's gigs with his High Flying Birds and as a result everyone lost their heads. Why? The day I see 'Definitely Maybe' Part 2 is the day pigs learn to fly. And anyway, who would want to go back to work with the bloke who "stormed into the dressing room

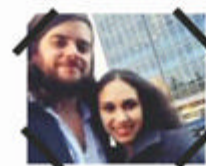
wielding a guitar like an axe", as Noel has described the band's final night together in Paris? I say keep the hype down, it's just silly rumours.

Lauren Bonham, via email

LC: A rumour it might be at the moment, but can you imagine anything more epic than an Oasis headline set on the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury 2016? Here's hoping incessant chatter manifests itself in a Gallagher reunion. Join us, Lauren.

WOLF ALICE FTW

I was lucky enough to win tickets to see Wolf Alice at the Monarch [in Camden] on Friday. It just got me thinking how wonderful the band are and how thankful they are for their following. Every time I've seen Wolf Alice they come out and meet the crowd, making a big effort with their fans. This is what makes me thankful for having such fucking good taste. Most



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

On March 30, I was lucky enough to meet Mumford & Sons outside the Roxy Theatre before their secret show in Hollywood [Winston Marshall, above]. I'd waited outside since 9pm the night before, without a ticket. It was my first time meeting any of them, so I'm not gonna lie – I fangirled! April Dalaman, via email



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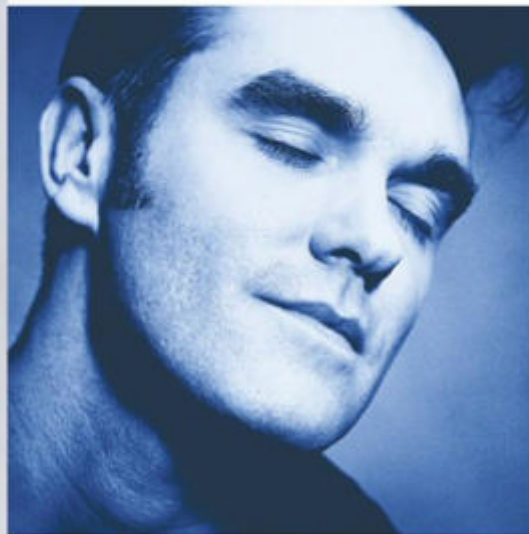
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planet could aspire to"

Guardian

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. The Big Moon
Sucker

The debut single from new London-based girl gang The Big Moon is an ode to ploughing on through the hard times. *"It got colder every day, but I wouldn't change my mind"*, frontwoman Juliette Jackson stubbornly assures over foggy guitars. The gloom lifts towards the end though, when with a hoot and a howl she declares, *"I'm a sucker for you"*. Commit to The Big Moon now.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

2. Ryan Adams
I Do Not Feel Like Being Good

'I Do Not Feel Like Being Good' was recorded in a single afternoon at Ryan Adams' Pax-Am Studio in Hollywood, alongside two other tracks set to feature on a new seven-inch single. This hushed acoustic strummer finds Adams at his most intimate, a bare-bones ballad that sees the 40-year-old channelling the ghosts of Woody Guthrie and Townes Van Zandt to create a beautiful slice of railroad-country melancholia.

Leonie Cooper, writer

3. Frankie & The Heartstrings
Save You Tonight

Frankie & The Heartstrings have been busy in the two years since 2013's 'The Days Run Away'. As well as transforming Sunderland's redundant tourist office into a record shop, they've integrated former Futureheads guitarist Ross Millard into the band. He's set to feature on the quintet's third record 'Decency', and this is the first cut – an upbeat, foot-swivelling indie number full of Strokes-esque guitars and bouncy melodies.

James Bentley, writer

4. Kehlani
The Way (feat. Chance The Rapper)

According to reports from a recent show in Michigan, Chance The Rapper told fans that new album 'Surf' is imminent. His guest spot on Oakland singer Kehlani's new single should tide us over in the meantime, winding his rasped lyrics about *"dirty laundry in my closet"* around gently wumping beats and lusty slow-motion R&B bass. Kehlani's the real star, though: her trilling vocals and widescreen take on the genre are compelling.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

5. Tame Impala
Disciples

We have Tame Impala's fans to thank for this latest taster of upcoming third album 'Currents'. Taking part in a Q&A on a Reddit forum, Kevin Parker was asked to release a new song. Enter 'Disciples', a sweet, airy tune on which the frontman laments a past relationship (*"I wanna be like we used to"*) over a dancing synth line and crisp, chunky drums. Another tantalising preview of what's shaping up to be one of the records of the year.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

**6. Doldrums**
IDONTWANNABELETED
(feat. Samantha Urbani)

Doldrums' album 'The Air Conditioned Nightmare' has flown under the radar a little. This offcut – with ex-Friends singer Samantha Urbani on the chorus – is testament to its quality. Somewhere between a basement rave and Radiohead's experimental moments, this is pop put through a techno filter until its eyes are as wide as its heart.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

7. Rat Boy
Sign On

Watch out, Jamie T – there's a new cheeky chappy telling stories about being young on the block. Rat Boy (aka Chelmsford's Jordan Cardy) makes the kind of rattling, exuberant indie that celebrates modern life being rubbish and recalls 'Panic Prevention'. *"I lost my job in Wetherspoons and since that day my bank has hit zero"*, Cardy raps over buoyant, breezy guitars, before the chorus joyously declares, *"It won't be long 'til I sign on"*.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

8. Meat Wave
Erased

Fans of Cloud Nothings and Perfect Pussy will buzz off the cathartic noise Meat Wave make on this new single. *"Now I pray to the napalm, I saw the light"*, sings frontman Chris Sutter while his rhythm section – bassist Joe Gac, and drummer Ryan Wizniak – do their best to pummel their way into the centre of the Earth. A full-length album from these Chicago mosh starters is on its way. Get excited.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

9. Yak
Distortion

The closing track on Yak's upcoming 'Plastic People' EP is the prettiest thing the London-based trio have done so far. Arriving on gently breaking waves of noise, 'Distortion' details *"when you can't see straight 'cos you're going round the bend"*, veering from twinkling verses to epic walls of sound and one almighty crescendo that has frontman Oli Burslem urging *"don't be afraid any more"*. Therapy in six gloriously emotional minutes.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

10. Alessia
Here

The debut track from 18-year-old Ontario singer Alessia is a gloriously disdainful affair. Ending up at a house party she doesn't want to be at, the newcomer issues a string of putdowns – from cries of *"I don't dance, don't ask"* to the declaration that *"I'll be here, somewhere in the corner, under clouds of marijuana"*. Set against Isaac Hayes' 'Ike's Rap 2' – the same sample Portishead used on 'Glory Box' – it's an icy, thrilling introduction.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Future Islands The Chase

Future Islands recorded this mesmerising new track in one day at Abbey Road for a Record Store Day release. It's now available in another version, recorded in Austin with Spoon's Jim Eno. They say never return to the scene of the crime, but Sam Herring and co went back to the *Letterman* stage to debut it last week. Was there dancing? You bet your Cossack trousers there was.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

12. Sheer Mag Fan The Flames

Swaggering into the power-punk boxing ring, Philly five-piece Sheer Mag just dropped melody-laden second EP 'II', on Bandcamp. It lands with a bang: opener 'Fan the Flames' slam-dances into your heart with loopy classic-rock riffs and hoarse Tom Petty melodies, charming the birds from the trees before drenching them in warm, gloopy scuzz. It'll start the kind of loved-up moshpits that leave screaming for another round.

Jazz Monroe, writer

13. God Damn Vultures

The 20-second intro on 'Vultures' sounds like five turntables playing Motörhead's 'Ace Of Spades' at different speeds. Suddenly, the noise falls away and God Damn strum a grungy quiet section. The Midlands duo (singer/guitarist Thom Edward and drummer Ash Weaver) alternate between bludgeoning noise and restrained calm for the rest of the song, which surges into a barrage of beats for the last of its five minutes. Horribly good.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

14. Brandon Flowers Lonely Town

Without the object of his affections, life is bleak for the Killers man. "I've been working overtime/Can't get you off my mind", he sighs at one point on the latest preview of new solo album 'The Desired Effect', before admitting, "I'm hanging on to the end of this rope/Somewhere on the outskirts of hope". Not even a silly burst of Auto-Tune in the final throes can cheer him up, and gospel backing vocals build his sadness into high definition.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

15. Hot Chip Burning Up

"Let's go for a rollercoaster ride/Even a shit rollercoaster ride", mewls an Auto-Tuned Alexis Taylor on this exquisite slow-burner, taken from Hot Chip's forthcoming offcuts EP 'Separate'. You can see why the song didn't suit new record 'Why Make Sense?' – it owes more to Postal Service emotronica than mature techno-soul – but 'Burning Up' is the sound of a band whose synths remain securely plugged into their hearts.

Jazz Monroe, writer



16. Titus Andronicus Dimed Out

Since 2008 debut 'The Airing Of Grievances', Titus Andronicus' self-described USP has always been "punk with a twist". Their ambitious flirtations with bagpipes and grand themes – new album 'The Most Lamentable Tragedy' is a "rock opera" about meeting your doppelganger – sets them apart. Lead track 'Dimed Out' condenses what the quintet do best to its purest form.

Luke Morgan Britton, writer

17. FFS Collaborations Don't Work

Easily the most post-modern art-pop union ever conceived, the FFS project – Franz Ferdinand and Sparks attempting to out-arch each other – continues with a dismissive commentary on itself. "Collaborations don't work, I'm gonna do it all by myself", strums Alex Kapranos, before Russell Mael prances in with a sprawling multi-part pop opera. It then collapses in a barrage of bitterness that proves collaborations do work. Confused yet?

Mark Beaumont, writer

18. Saul Williams Burundi (feat. Emily Kokal)

Poet, rapper and actor (he starred in an ambitious-but-cancelled Tupac-themed play/musical on Broadway last year) Saul Williams took a detour into dance and pop with last album, 2011's 'Volcanic Sunlight'. 'Burundi', the first track from forthcoming fifth album 'Martyr Loser King', finds him back in more familiar territory. It's provocative, righteous and fierce. A vocal by Warpaint's Emily Kokal matches Williams' intensity.

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

19. Earl Sweatshirt Solace

Shortly after the release of his introverted, stoned-sounding third album 'I Don't Like Shit, I Don't Go Outside', Earl Sweatshirt has dropped 'Solace', an experimental 10-minute sound collage. The 21-year-old told US radio station NPR that 'Solace' is "for my mom", and three minutes in, over jazzy piano and a threadbare beat, he grunts, "I'm seeing my mom soon/I'm faded, I stink, staying in". Earl isn't ready to open his bedroom curtains just yet.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

20. Elbow What Time Do You Call This?

Taken from Simon Pegg's new romantic comedy film *Man Up*, this is the first taste of new music from Elbow since last year's sixth long-player 'The Take Off And Landing Of Everything' album. It's typically elegant, Guy Garvey singing lines like "Love was just a word that friends didn't mention/Cos love was just a joke 'til it battered me senseless" over shuffling drums, sweeping strings and tinkling piano.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

TheWeek

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

Candid camera



EXCLUSIVE
Stills from
the Amy
documentary



Amy, an intimate portrait of the singer-songwriter by the director of *Senna*, premieres this month, but the Winehouse family aren't happy

Hot on the harrowing heels of *Kurt Cobain: Montage of Heck* comes *Amy*, a deeply personal look at the life of Amy Winehouse, whose death from alcohol poisoning in 2011 shook the world. Directed by Asif Kapadia – who also made *Senna*, the acclaimed, Bafta-winning 2010 documentary about late Formula One driver Ayrton Senna – the film premieres at the Cannes Film Festival later this month before opening at UK cinemas on July 3.

The emotive trailer for the two-hour-long film features a fresh-faced Amy discussing fame in an early interview. “I don’t think I could handle it,” she says, with eerie foresight. “I would probably go mad.”

The film has been criticised by Winehouse’s father, Mitch, who branded it “misleading”, recently telling the BBC: “The film does not represent Amy’s life.” Despite originally being backed by the singer’s family, Mitch has now stated that he is unhappy about how his relationship with his daughter has been portrayed, as the film features footage of the pair arguing. The filmmakers have refuted his claims, saying the documentary has been made with “total objectivity”.

More than 100 people close to Amy were interviewed during production and the film features candid video footage charting her rise to troubled megastardom. It’s set to be an exhaustive look at the north London soul singer-songwriter, whose personal demons not only made for fitting material for her heart-rending lyrics but also led to her tragic demise. ■ LEONIE COOPER



Third Glasto headliner: "It's not who you think"

NME phoned Emily Eavis this week to try and find out who Sunday night's mystery main attraction is. "They haven't even been mentioned," she said. So who could it be?

It's become the big question in the run-up to the festival season: who's headlining Glastonbury on Sunday night, and why is Emily Eavis waiting so long to make an announcement? She tells NME that all will be revealed "probably at the end of May" and also that "they're not even in the top 20 most-possible

on William Hill", seemingly counting out The Stone Roses, Blur, Depeche Mode and Kate Bush. Eavis specifically rules out the three acts pictured below, adding, "It's a British band," and, "They haven't even been mentioned." So, not Adele or Paul McCartney, as some have suggested – assuming, that is, we can take Eavis at her word...



Coldplay

► EMILY SAYS "I've already said it's not Coldplay."



AC/DC

► EMILY SAYS "I can tell you it's not AC/DC."



Fleetwood Mac

► EMILY SAYS "No, it's not Fleetwood Mac."

With The Who playing a gig in Paris on the same day and Pink Floyd only ever likely to reform for "some kind of charity event", could it be...



The Libertines

Already playing Reading, Leeds and T, so contenders



The Prodigy

The firestarters are back in the saddle this summer



Pulp

Could be tempted to repeat their legendary 1995 turn



Radiohead

Could the Oxford band use the festival to make their comeback?



The Kinks

Dave and Ray Davies hate each other too much to get back together. Or do they?



ELO

Everyone's favourite corny '70s hitmakers were a hit in Hyde Park last year

THE MINI INTERVIEW



Jonathan Higgs

Everything Everything
frontman

What have you got planned for election night on May 7?

"I'll definitely be watching it and I'll definitely be drinking – either to celebrate, commiserate or most likely just be confused by the result. I think it will be close."

Will you get together with your bandmates?

"I expect so. We'll probably set up an R Kelly *Trapped In The Closet* sandwich: 12 episodes, the election, then another 12 episodes."

Have you decided which way you're voting?

"Yeah, pretty much. I'll vote Labour. It's the only choice."

Were you tempted to support Bez's party?

"He's quite local to us. I thought his campaign was hugely entertaining, and a great reminder that politics doesn't have to be the same old people talking about the same old things."

Your new record's out in June – what should we expect?

"It feels like a pie we've all been carrying around in our pockets, and I can't wait for other people to taste it. The pie is acidic, delicious and dark red. It's very British, but with an Arab spice." ■

► Everything Everything are looking for the UK's next big act with *Relentless Here To Be Heard* – relentlesstbh.com



AS TOLD TO KEVIN EG PERRY

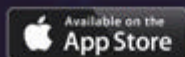
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Director Nickolas Rossi talks us through
five discoveries from new film *Heaven
Adores You*, a treasure trove for fans
of the late singer-songwriter's music

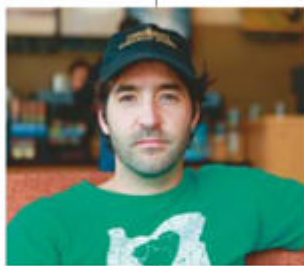
New Elliott Smith songs unearthed

When Chicago filmmaker Nickolas Rossi (pictured below) sought crowdfunding for his Elliott Smith documentary, *Heaven Adores You* – showing across the UK this month and reviewed on page 47 – he vowed to craft a visual love letter to the cult songwriter, who died tragically in 2003. Rather than retreading Smith's struggles with drug and alcohol addiction, alleged abuse by his stepfather, or the circumstances of his death (close friends say suicide; the coroner opened the possibility of murder), the film chronicles the Texas native's journey from teenage prodigy to indie-rock icon with a sensitivity befitting its subject, whose most recent biography was titled *Torment Saint*. Rossi's discretion is the reason he's managed to attract previously reluctant voices – notably Smith's sister Ashley Welch and ex-girlfriend Joanna Bolme – as well as Larry Crane, his friend and archivist, who helped assemble an enchanting soundtrack of lesser-known gems, some unheard even by Smith's most obsessive fans.

► I Love My Room

On this prog-pop epic, a freakishly young Smith plays a giddy piano line while playfully serenading his bedroom. “*Sometimes I’ll smoke a cigarette, but be careful so the ashes don’t collect*”, he sings with boyish wonder. Although your first question is who’s buying cigs for this barely pubescent teen, you soon succumb to the song’s manic virtuosity.

► **NICKOLAS ROSSI** “The first time Larry Crane played us that song, we thought, ‘There’s no way this kid is 13, 14’ – it’s intricate, super complex. And yet he probably really recorded



that in his room, on a four-track he borrowed from high school.”

► Outward Bound

After a teenage Smith left Texas to escape his stepfather, he moved to Portland, Oregon and slowly attracted his own cult. On a visit home he recorded this endearing piano waltz with childhood friend Steve Pickering, its muffled vocals describing “*leaving the cities*” to find “*a cool and wispy breeze*”.

► **NICKOLAS ROSSI** “When we interviewed Steve, he showed us this thumb drive, like, ‘Oh, you should hear this stuff we recorded!’ It’s amazing they had the sense to record it at 14. Lyrically, the song’s a beautiful moment – he’s got the excitement of a young boy leaving into the unknown.”

► 3

Although ‘3’ was recorded in the ‘80s, it materialised in 2004 as ‘King’s Crossing’, a resplendent highlight of ‘From A Basement On The Hill’, the album Smith left

unfinished when he died. While that take alludes to drug struggles (“*It’s Christmas time and the needle’s on the tree*”), this acoustic, harmonica-backed version alludes to a mysterious political assassination.

► **NICKOLAS ROSSI** “Elliott worked on certain songs for decades, recycling bits of music

and lyrics. He probably came up with this in high school, worked it out in college and was performing it in the early 2000s.”

► Don’t Call Me Billy

This grunge-infused folk song by Smith’s high school band Stranger Than Fiction eventually became ‘Fear City’, which surfaced on 2007 rarities compilation ‘New Moon’. In the faintly comical chorus, Smith sneers the title like an indignant kid haplessly confronting the jocks.

► **NICKOLAS ROSSI** “He’s trying out these voices in the earlier songs – sometimes it’s Elvis Costello, and on this song he’s emulating Joe Strummer. That reflects the theme that, after screaming in [Portland band] Heatmiser, he felt like he wasn’t getting his point across, so started whispering his lyrics.”

► Coast To Coast

‘Coast To Coast’ became the incendiary opener of ‘From A Basement On The Hill’, but this mid-’90s demo taps into the intimacy of Smith’s earlier classics. “*I’m all too patient/Sick and ugly*”, he rasps in the chorus, hinting at the studio version’s caustic self-loathing.

► **NICKOLAS ROSSI** “The instrumentation is so stripped down, which really contrasts the fuller album version. Lyrically, you can see how he was working things out between the two versions, and you gotta wonder: is [the album version] really final, or would he have written another one?” ■

The wisdom of Ronnie

Rolling Stones legend
Ronnie Wood is celebrating
50 years in rock'n'roll by
publishing a diary revealing
his 1965 exploits. Here are
his tips for young bands



Make the music your own

"My first band The Birds hung out with all the greats – The Who, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page and so on – but we were learning the ropes. We may not have had a hit record but we did our best. We took our influences from Tamla Motown, the blues and early rock'n'roll, and made it our own. That was important."

Play hundreds of shows

"There's a lot to be said for the grind – going up and down the country in a van, playing gig after gig after gig. I feel sorry for bands now that aren't exposed to that way of life. For so many, they think it's either straight on in front of millions of people or they're destined to be forgotten, but there is another way; it involves cutting your teeth the hard way, and it can be a slog, but it can be done. Rehearsing in a garage, getting in the gig wagon and playing hundreds of shows, that's what it's all about. More young bands should try it."

Dream big

"I always knew, even when I was in The Birds, that I was going to be in The Rolling Stones."



Ronnie with fellow Stone Keith Richards

I was going to be in that band one way or another, and I would broadcast the fact. I thought it looked like a good job, and it turns out that it is. It goes to show you can set your sights on something and get it, if you think big and put in the work."

Know your bandmates inside out

"Touring in those days, we were all piled in the van on top of each other and all the gear. It was rough, but it meant we knew each other inside out. There was backbiting and arguing,

being that hemmed in, and situations would come up that no-one would normally have to deal with. The Stones went through the same thing, too. Even though we travel a lot more luxuriously now, that grounding means we can all deal with all sorts of situations."

Keep a diary

"If you're lucky like me you'll be so busy you won't have time to remember all the great things you did. Going back through my diary from 1965 I remembered I bumped into Sid James one night. And another entry reads: 'Had a great time with Wilson Pickett.' 'In The Midnight Hour' was the biggest record there was for me, but I'd forgotten all about our adventure together until I picked up the diary again. One regret I have, going back through this diary, is that I can't remember what a lot of my girlfriends looked like years ago. I don't regret the drinking – I drank for Britain until I got sober five years ago – that was a learning curve I had to go through, but not remembering the wonderful girls is a regret."

► Ronnie Wood's *How Can It Be? A Rock & Roll Diary* is published by Genesis books

THE MINI INTERVIEW



Chris Wolstenholme

Muse bassist

You're playing Download for the first time next month. Are you planning anything special?

"I think we'll take it as an opportunity to get away with playing some deeper cuts and heavier stuff."

On your warm-up tour you've played some early hits that haven't been aired live for years. Any chance of slipping in 'Muscle Museum'?

"Yeah, I don't think we'd played that one in eight years. We'd get people holding up signs on that tour for songs they wanted, and a few of those jumped out at us. Like 'Assassin' – I don't think we've played that since we toured 'Showbiz'."

What about the stage show? Will you be bringing some drones?

"No drones this time. Obviously we'll do what we can, but there's gonna be a 20-minute changeover between bands, so the bigger things we'd do with our own shows may have to be scaled back."

What do you think about Kiss headlining? They always seemed much more of an American thing...

"They seem to be bigger in this country now than they ever were at their peak. But I guess they're so recognisable, people have caught on. They're part of the canon now." ■ GAVIN HAYNES

► Muse headline Download on Saturday, June 13. Buy tickets here: downloadfestival.co.uk/tickets

STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK

GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS

THIS WEEK



Warpaint drop in on Mary Anne Hobbs' 6 Music show

Warpaint

Mary Anne Hobbs

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, May 9, 7am

In March, LA quartet Warpaint played their biggest UK show to date at London's Eventim Apollo. Mary Anne Hobbs ushers the shimmering rockers into her studio to talk about life as a touring band and future plans.

Tobias Jesso Jr Later... Live With Jools Holland

►WATCH BBC Two,
May 12, 10pm

The Canadian singer-songwriter takes a break from his UK tour to shove Jools off his piano stool and recreate the brilliance of his debut album 'Goon'.

FFS – Franz Ferdinand and Sparks' new supergroup – will also play.

Alabama Shakes Lauren Laverne

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music,
May 11, 10am

The Alabama soulsavers released their second album

'Sound & Color' last month. This week they'll head to 6 Music to discuss the record with Lauren Laverne and play some of the album's highlights live.

Depeche Mode Live In Berlin

►WATCH Sky Arts,
May 12, 8pm

Renowned filmmaker Anton Corbijn started out taking moody photos of Joy Division and Depeche Mode. In November 2013 he teamed up again with one of his early subjects to make this concert film, capturing the Essex synth-rock giants live in Berlin.

Hot Chip Jo Whaley

►LISTEN BBC Radio 2,
May 12, 8pm

Geek-dance stalwarts Hot Chip return with sixth album 'Why Make Sense?' this month. They join Jo Whaley in the studio.



Alabama Shakes play live on 6 Music



Foxygen

The madcap psych-poppers bow out with one final tour.

►DATES Liverpool Kazimier (May 7), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (8), Glasgow Stereo (9), Bristol The Lantern (11), London Electric Ballroom (12)
►TICKETS £12.50; London £13.50 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.50-£2.28 booking fee; Glasgow £10 from ticketweb.co.uk with £1.50 booking fee

Bully

Alicia Bognanno and her band play preview their grungy debut LP 'Feels Like'.

►DATES London The Lexington (May 7)
►TICKETS £10 from NME.COM/tickets with £1 booking fee

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

1. Vant

The Stillery, London
►May 6, 8pm

2. TOPS

Bungalows & Bears, Sheffield
►May 7, 8pm

3. Hot Chip (DJ set)

The Shipping Forecast, Liverpool
►May 9, 10pm

4. Dan Bodan

Rough Trade, Nottingham
►May 11, 7pm

5. Spring King

Start The Bus, Bristol
►May 11, 8pm

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EDM don Steve Aoki appeared at the launch of *Ultimate DJ*



SIMON COWELL'S DJ SHOW BELITTLES THE ARTFORM

BY **GEORGE FITZGERALD**

The Domino-signed deep house DJ explains why the upcoming show, which will be live-streamed online, can only ever be a total farce



I don't find it very surprising that Simon Cowell is trying to launch a DJ version of *The X Factor* called *Ultimate DJ*. The guy doesn't seem to be motivated by anything other than money, and thanks to the global popularity of EDM, a certain type of 'DJing' is now the most profitable way of performing music. There are minimal touring costs for a DJ who comes round with a USB stick and reproduces his music perfectly each time. So it's entirely logical that Cowell wants to buy into this culture, just like all the other major-label execs have over the last few years. It's another cynical move from a very cynical person.

Remember that *The X Factor* wasn't ever just a TV programme – it's a way of cutting out the A&R process. You get your audience to pick you a winner and then you put out the record and it sells a few million at Christmas,

without you having to know anything about music. It's evil, but also genius. I don't know if *Ultimate DJ* is going to work or not, but it's a logical next step.

Having said that, I've no idea what the contestants will actually have to do to impress the judges – probably anything other than DJing. That's why the idea of a primetime TV show about DJing is so ridiculous: a DJ set needs to be experienced over several hours; you can tell if a singer can sing over the course of two songs, but you can't tell if a DJ's any good after two tracks. So it's all going to be about looks and personality – all the things that are complete anathema to dance music and where it came from. One of the things that's nice about underground dance music is that people who look like shit can still be really big. You don't have to look like Beyoncé or Bieber, you just *have to be good*.

Ultimate DJ could only be credible if it were a TV equivalent of the DMC mixing contest, showcasing traditional scratch DJ skills. But a primetime audience doesn't care about how many clicks you can do in an orbit scratch, or which break someone is beat juggling. They care about if someone looks nice and if they cry when they're told they might not make it to the next round. It'll make for hilarious viewing, but it's depressing as well. DJing has always struggled for mainstream acceptance, but I don't expect Cowell's programme to help people understand DJing as an artform. DJing is not about pressing play on tracks, it's about the curation of music, challenging people with new things and acting as a tastemaker. The EDM guys just play hits, and it's often pre-recorded to sync with the fireworks.

As a result, there is more of a celebrity element attached to DJing, and that has filtered down a bit to the underground. People do expect more of a polished image, whereas I like the fact that most DJs aren't celebrities – you can talk to them at the bar and have a conversation about music. It's not like seeing a really big band, these mythical beings who disappear backstage. The problem is that when people start thinking that DJs are stars, it changes the whole dynamic of a night out. ■

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

LOST ALBUMS

#72

Nancy Dupree
Ghetto Reality (1969)

Chosen by Alexis Taylor, Hot Chip



"It's made by a piano teacher at a school, writing civil rights-conscious songs for the children to sing. There's one about James Brown where they do impressions. The only accompaniment is piano, but it's still really funky. I first heard it at 3am after a big night out – we ended up at someone's house, and I was like, 'What the hell is this?' I had to keep asking and writing it down. I searched for the record for ages but it was £400 on Discogs, so I watched and watched, and when one came up a bit cheaper – but still a lot! – I bought it. Then it was reissued a week later by Mississippi Records."

► THE DETAILS

- **RELEASE DATE** 1969
- **LABEL** Folkways Records
- **BEST TRACKS** James Brown, Bag Snatchin'
- **WHERE TO FIND IT** The 2014 reissue is available on CD and vinyl from online stockists
- **LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

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The producer spent seven years on his colourful debut solo album, which he says acts as a bridge between the last xx record and their forthcoming third one

Jamie xx

Jamie xx: "I still feel like I could do stuff to it"

You may be miffed that The xx's third album is seemingly taking forever to arrive, but put things in perspective: the band's beatmaker, producer and drummer Jamie Smith's debut solo album – released next month – features tracks he's been tinkering with for seven long years. Crafted between high-profile production and remix gigs for Drake, Radiohead and the late Gil Scott Heron, as well as two acclaimed albums with The xx in 2009 and 2012, 'In Colour' is a bold, beautiful homage to London nightlife. It's also Smith's vibrant response to assumptions that he and bandmates Oliver Sim and Romy Madley Croft are a gang of grumpy goths.

"Everyone thinks we're dark and gloomy – and we're not really," Smith explains. "We used to be; we used to be moody teenagers." That said, we're talking to the east London-based musician at the Coachella Festival in the Californian sunshine and it's not like he's dressed as his album title would suggest – in colour. "Oh, I'm still more comfortable in black," he concedes with a chuckle.

"ALL THE TRANSITIONS ON THE RECORD CAME FROM THE CHATTER OF PEOPLE STOOD OUTSIDE CLUBS"
JAMIE XX

Smith mentions unfinished projects he's been working on with a who's who of indie dance – from John Talabot and Jon Hopkins to FKA Twigs – but they don't feature on 'In Colour'. Instead, the album's main guests come from very close to home, with Madley Croft featuring on the anthemic 'Loud Places' and jittery 'Seesaw', while Sim sings on the sultry 'Stranger In A Room'.

"They're the people who I work best with," Smith says. "The album feels like the next part of what we're all doing rather than just me branching off."

Should the uplifting feel of 'In Colour' give us an idea of what to expect from The xx's eventual third release, then? "It has definitely informed what we're doing for the next record," says Smith.

'In Colour's most outright smash is dancehall track 'I Know There's Gonna Be (Good Times)', which features a sample from New York a cappella soul group The Persuasions' 1972 album 'Street Corner Symphony', found on a crate-digging mission in Detroit, as well as vocals from Atlanta rapper Young Thug and reggae artist Popcaan. Smith has yet to hang out with either of them in person, though, having contacted both of them online. But, he says, "I'm going to meet Young Thug tomorrow for the first time!"

A dense array of samples have been woven into the 11-track record's complex patchwork, including recordings made by Smith while

loitering outside London clubs such as Fabric and the recently closed Plastic People. "I bring a field recorder with me whenever I go out – all the transitions on the record came from the chatter of people standing outside clubs," he says, like rave's very own Alan Lomax, the great 20th-century folk archivist. And for glitchy album opener 'Gosh', Smith's label Young Turks/XL had to do some detective work to clear a rare sample from a never-aired Radio 1 pilot about jungle. "We had to find these MCs who are now, like, taxi drivers or something," Smith says.

After missing four self-imposed deadlines, Smith has just about

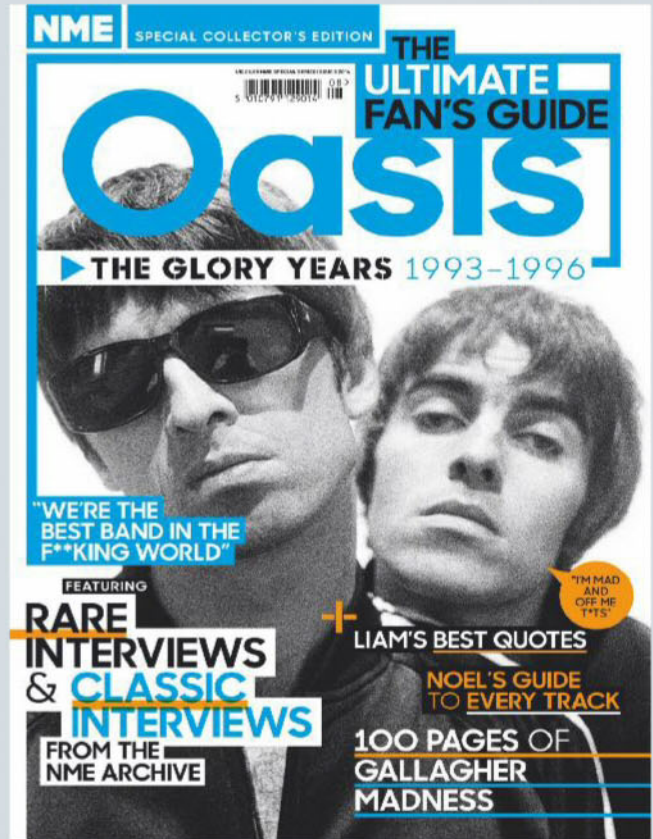
accepted he's had to draw a line under the record. "I still feel like I could do stuff to it, but I would just be driving myself insane," he says. "I need to not listen to it for a while and come back to it. Then I'll be happy." ■ LEONIE COOPER

▶ THE DETAILS

- ▶ **TITLE** In Colour
- ▶ **RELEASE DATE** June 1
- ▶ **LABEL** Young Turks
- ▶ **PRODUCER** Jamie xx
- ▶ **RECORDED** While on tour; also at two London studios – Smith's own and the Young Turks studio
- ▶ **TRACKLISTING** 1. Gosh
2. Sleep Sound 3. SeeSaw (feat. Romy) 4. Obsv 5. Just Saying 6. Stranger In A Room (feat. Oliver Sim) 7. Hold Tight 8. Loud Places (feat. Romy) 9. I Know There's Gonna Be (Good Times) (feat. Young Thug and Popcaan) 10. The Rest Is Noise 11. Girl
- ▶ **JAMIE XX SAYS** "When I make music is when I'm at my happiest. And because I'm really happy when I'm making music, the end result is joyous."



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ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM

CASH



**"WE PUT BLOOD,
SWEAT, TEARS AND
LOVE INTO THIS ONE"**
JOHNNY CASH

◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

The stark, solemn black-and-white profile of Cash that adorns the cover was taken by photographer Martyn Atkins, who worked on all of the 'American Recordings' albums, and has also designed sleeves for the likes of Depeche Mode, The Teardrop Explodes and Echo & The Bunnymen.

THIS WEEK...

Johnny Cash – American IV: The Man Comes Around

The fourth in
Cash's 'American
Recordings'
series is reissued
as part of a
seven-LP vinyl
boxset on May 11

THE BACKGROUND

Then at a low ebb in his career, Johnny Cash was approached by Rick Rubin in 1992 to discuss signing to the producer's American Records label, who wanted to give Cash a guitar and a microphone and let him "sing every song you want to record". Largely recorded in Rubin's living room, the first 'American Recordings' album was released in 1994 to great acclaim. 1996's 'Unchained' and 2000's 'American III: Solitary Man' duly followed, with Cash and Rubin mixing contemporary material – including songs by Beck and U2 – alongside more familiar folk and country standards. 'American IV: The Man Comes Around' would be the last album Cash released before his death in September 2003.

FIVE FACTS

1 At Rubin's suggestion, Cash sang 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' as a love song not to a person, but to God. "That idea really excited him," said the producer. "The idea was to give something a new point of view."

2 The idea for the song 'The Man Comes Around' came from a dream of Cash's, where he was in Buckingham Palace and the Queen said to him, "Johnny Cash, you're just like a thorn tree in a whirlwind."

3 'Hurt', the album's most famous track, had been suggested to Cash by Rubin many times, but he was resistant towards recording it because he couldn't imagine reinterpreting Nine Inch Nails' original.

4 The 'Hurt' video was partly filmed at the abandoned House Of Cash museum in Hendersonville, Tennessee. It closed in 1999.

5 During recording, Cash struggled with pneumonia and autonomic neuropathy arising from his diabetes. "I came in with no voice when I could have stayed at home and cried in my beer or my milk," he recalled shortly before his death, "but I didn't let that happen."

LYRIC ANALYSIS

**"One of the four
beasts sang 'Come
and see' and I saw/
And behold, a white
horse" – 'The Man
Comes Around'**

The quote that opens the album is taken from Revelation 6:1–2, which describes John The Apostle's vision of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

**"Your own personal
Jesus/Someone to
hear your prayers/
Someone who cares"
– 'Personal Jesus'**

Like 'Hurt', Depeche Mode's 1989 hit was another song suggested by Rubin. Cash later called it "probably the most evangelical gospel song I ever recorded".

**"I begged their
forgiveness/I wish
I was dead/I hung
my head" – 'I Hung
My Head'**

Regret and redemption are the key themes of the album, and Sting's 1996 murder ballad – about a man who accidentally kills someone and is made to face up to his crime – neatly encapsulates both.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

**"'The Man Comes Around'
was the finest song Johnny
Cash wrote in 20 years...
(both) sparse and telling."
– Paul McNamee, reviewing
'Johnny Cash: Unearthed',
September 12, 2005**

WHAT WE SAY NOW

The sound of a troubled giant facing up to his own regrets, personal failings and looming mortality, 'American IV's' resonance is amplified by the knowledge that Cash would be dead within a year of its release. **What a way to go out, though – with some of the best, most affecting music of his long career.**

FAMOUS FAN

"Having Johnny Cash want to cover your song, that's something that matters to me – the fact he felt that it was worthy of interpreting."
Trent Reznor, Nine Inch Nails, 2008

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"We put more blood, sweat and tears and love into this one than anything we've ever done."
Johnny Cash, 2003

THE AFTERMATH

In May 2003, June Carter, Cash's wife of 35 years, died following complications during her heart-valve replacement surgery. Cash was devastated, but kept working and recorded 60 songs with Rubin in the months before his own death that September. These recordings would form the basis for two more albums – 'American V: A Hundred Highways' and 'American VI: Ain't No Grave' – which were given posthumous releases in 2006 and 2010.

▶ THE DETAILS

▶ **RELEASE DATE** November 5, 2002 ▶ **LENGTH** 51:55 ▶ **PRODUCERS** Rick Rubin, Johnny Cash ▶ **HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 40 ▶ **US SALES** 1,000,000 ▶ **SINGLES** The Man Comes Around, Personal Jesus, Hurt ▶ **TRACKLISTING** ▶1. The Man Comes Around ▶2. Hurt ▶3. Give My Love To Rose ▶4. Bridge Over Troubled Water ▶5. I Hung My Head ▶6. The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face ▶7. Personal Jesus ▶8. In My Life ▶9. Sam Hall ▶10. Danny Boy ▶11. Desperado ▶12. I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry ▶13. Tear Stained Letter ▶14. Streets Of Laredo ▶15. We'll Meet Again

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The album's coming together really well, actually. The boys we've been writing with have come up with some great, great songs that are a bit Oasis-y"

Liam Payne reveals a surprising new sound for One Direction. Can't wait to hear what Noel Gallagher thinks.

THE NUMBERS

£130,000

Sum author Anthony Bozza is seeking from Courtney Love in a legal battle over her scrapped memoir, *The Girl With The Most Cake*. He claims to have only received part of the money he was due for his work.

8

Number of drug traffickers executed in Indonesia, despite the plea for clemency Axl Rose wrote to President Joko Widodo.

\$375,000

Amount a South Korean steel company was scammed out of by a fake agent claiming he would get Pharrell Williams to perform for them.

2

Tonnes of empty nitrous oxide canisters that were picked up during and after Glastonbury 2014. The drug is "not welcome" at this year's festival.



WHO THE FUCK IS...



**Alexander
Starovoitov**

This is the Russian politician who has asked for a state investigation into Apple for "distributing gay propaganda" through the release of U2's 'Songs Of Innocence' last year. **How is that deemed 'gay propaganda'?** Starovoitov is a member of the right-wing LDPR party and he is taking exception to the album artwork. **The one with drummer Larry Mullen Jr and his son with no shirts on?** Yes. If Apple is convicted of distributing gay propaganda, they could be forced to cease operations in the country for 90 days, or face a fine.

+ GOOD WEEK +



Billy Corgan

The Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan has taken up a full-time role at TNA Wrestling. His position as Senior Producer, Creative and Talent Development will see him develop characters and create storylines for the company.

- BAD WEEK -



David Guetta

The French DJ has been mocked after revealing how he struggled after his computer crashed at a recent gig. A straight-faced Guetta said: "I just had to do it really old school, scrolling to look for the records I wanted to play next."

IN BRIEF

From Ocean to Ocean

Frank Ocean has legally changed his name to... Frank Ocean. The American rapper was born Christopher Edwin Breaux, but will be known only by his stage name from now on.

Kendrick's salad days

Kendrick Lamar has teamed up with a health-food company to endorse their punning 'Beets Don't Kale My Vibe' salad. Sweetgreen have been selling the salad unofficially since 2013.

Freak me out

Slipknot frontman Corey Taylor says he once turned down the opportunity to star in American dating-game reality show *Rock Of Love*. Had he accepted, the masked rocker would have replaced Poison's Bret Michaels as the object of contestants' desire.

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

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS APRIL 29, 2015



**NEW
01**

Blur The Magic Whip PARLOPHONE

Their first album since 'Think Tank' 12 years ago, and the first to feature Graham Coxon throughout since 1999's '13'. Unsurprisingly, it goes straight in at the top.

- ▼ 2 Sound & Color **Alabama Shakes** ROUGH TRADE
- 3 Carrie & Lowell **Sufjan Stevens** ASTHMATIC KITTYY
- NEW 4 Who Is The Sender? **Bill Fay** DEAD OCEANS
- ▼ 5 Puzzle **Biffy Clyro** WITH FLOOR
- NEW 6 What Green Feels Like **Eaves** HEAVENLY
- ▲ 7 Stages **Josh Groban** REPRISE
- NEW 8 Songs From The Falling **Tracey Thorn** STRANGE FEELING
- ▲ 9 The Race For Space **Public Service Broadcasting** TEST CARD RECORDINGS
- NEW 10 MG **MG** MUTE
- ▲ 11 Short Movie **Laura Marling** VIRGIN
- ▼ 12 The Holy Bible 20 **Manic Street Preachers** COLUMBIA
- ▲ 13 The Ultimate Collection **Paul Simon** SONY MUSIC CG
- ▼ 14 Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit **Courtney Barnett** HOUSE ANXIETY
- ▼ 15 Pills 'N' Thrills And Bellyaches **Happy Mondays** RHINO
- ▼ 16 Chasing Yesterday **Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds** SOUR MASH
- 17 Vulnicura **Björk** ONE LITTLE INDIAN
- NEW 18 + - **Mew** PLAY IT AGAIN SAM
- ▲ 19 The Day Is My Enemy **Prodigy** TAKEMETOTHEHOSPITAL
- NEW 20 I Love You, Honeybear **Father John Misty** BELLA UNION
- ▼ 21 Edge Of The Sun **Callexico** CITY SLANG
- NEW 22 Stomachaches **Frnkierio Andthe Cellabration** HASSLE
- NEW 23 Lost In The Dream **The War On Drugs** SECRETLY CANADIAN
- NEW 24 Damogen Furies **Squarepusher** WARP
- NEW 25 Constant Bop **Bop English** BLOOD AND BISCUITS
- ▲ 26 Asunder, Sweet And Other Distress **Godspeed You! Black Emperor** CONSTELLATION
- ▲ 27 Sonic Soul Surfer **Seasick Steve** CAROLINE
- NEW 28 Undertow **Drenge** INFECTIOUS
- NEW 29 The Stone Roses **The Stone Roses** SILVERTONE
- ▲ 30 Royal Albert Hall **Eels** E WORKS
- NEW 31 Ivy Tripp **Waxahatchee** WICHITA RECORDINGS
- ▼ 32 Remixes **Erasure** MUTE
- NEW 33 Golem **Wand** IN THE RED
- ▼ 34 Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake **Small Faces** CHARLY
- ▼ 35 Chaos And The Calm **James Bay** REPUBLIC RECORDS
- NEW 36 Colours Of The Night **Peter Dinklage** BELLA UNION
- NEW 37 White Men Are Black Men Too **Young Fathers** BIG DADA
- NEW 38 Debut **Björk** ONE LITTLE INDIAN
- ▼ 39 X **Ed Sheeran** ASYLUM
- NEW 40 Musique De Film Imaginé **The Brian Jonestown Massacre** A RECORDINGS

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. Owing to the bank holiday, this week's chart runs from Sunday to Wednesday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK PLATES RECORDS NOTTINGHAM

FOUNDED 2014

WHY IT'S GREAT They're keen supporters of local talent.

TOP SELLER LAST WEEK

Madvillain - 'Madvillainy'

THEY SAY "We're committed to vinyl culture and keeping positive values alive in music."

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



Ramones



Kiss



Ad-Rock

Beastie Boy
and actor

**THE FIRST SONG I
REMEMBER HEARING**
Anything from
'Sgt Pepper...'
- The Beatles

"It has to be something from 'Sgt Pepper...', 'cos my dad used to play that and I would literally scream along with it. That and 'Rubber Soul' - I used to listen to that album every single day. The Beatles are great for everybody - they wrote the songs that made the whole world sing. You should look into them! Google them!"

**THE FIRST SONG I
FELL IN LOVE WITH**
'Detroit Rock City'
- Kiss

"I have older brothers and older sisters, so 45s were a big part of my childhood. I remember when I was eight years old we used to go at lunchtime to the sandwich place around the corner from school. My two favourite songs were 'Detroit Rock City' by Kiss and a song called 'Dazz' by a band

called Brick. I used to stand on the little stage there and do my dance performances."

**THE FIRST ALBUM
I EVER BOUGHT**
**'The Rocky Horror
Show' OST**

"I frickin' loved it! I probably got it from Crazy Eddie's, a chain store in Manhattan. I was eight or nine. I had

**THE BAND THAT
MADE ME WANT TO
MAKE MUSIC**

Ramones

"It was probably Bad Brains or The Clash... You know what, it was probably the Ramones. Me and my two best friends went to see the Ramones in 1979 and two weeks later I was like, 'We're starting a band, that's it.' We were in the very last row doing Whip-Its [nitrous oxide]. It was fantastic."

**THE SONG I CAN NO
LONGER LISTEN TO**
'English Rose'
- The Jam

"There's songs you listen to at really heavy times and you associate those songs with being depressed. 'English Rose' by The Jam, I can't listen to - it's just too heavy for me. 'Julia' by The Beatles, too. That popped up the other day and I had to skip to the next song. They're both really awesome, moving songs, but I can't listen to them."

**THE SONG I DO
AT KARAOKE**
**'Wake Me Up Before
You Go-Go' - Wham!**

"I've only done karaoke twice in my life. The first

was a battle and I shamefully lost. The other time was at Kathleen's birthday and me and my best friend sang possibly 'Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go', but I can't remember."

**THE SONG THAT
MAKES ME WANT
TO DANCE**
'Around The World'
- Daft Punk

"It came on when I was in the store the other day - it's great! Do I have a trademark dance move? Man, it's been so long that I've forgotten a lot of the names of my most popular dance moves. One of my dances is called The Creep At The Supermarket. I like to shorten it to just 'The Creep.'"

**THE SONG I WISH
I'D WRITTEN**
**'The Most Beautifullest
Thing In This World'**
- Keith Murray

"It's just a really good rap song. Oh, and 'Beat Bop' by Rammellzee and 'Where Eagles Dare' by the Misfits."

**THE SONG THAT
REMINDS ME
OF FORMING
BEASTIE BOYS**
'Hey DJ' -
**World's Famous
Supreme Team**

"That was the hit of the summer right at the time when I joined the band. I remember being at this New York club Danceteria, and that was the big one. Hearing it always brings me back to that time."

**THE SONG I
WANT PLAYED
AT MY FUNERAL**

"I don't know if I'll want it to be a crazy rap song or if I want it to be something background. Actually, I'm happy that I haven't thought about it. And I'm never gonna die, so what's the point?"

**"THE BEATLES ARE GREAT
FOR EVERYBODY - THEY
WROTE THE SONGS THAT
MADE THE WORLD SING"**

one album already: my dad stopped his car to get a sandwich and when he came out he said, 'Here, you should have this,' and gave me The Rolling Stones' 'Out Of Our Heads' album. I have no idea why he bought that for me. I've never heard my dad listen to The Rolling Stones. I guess he wanted me to start collecting records."

time I did it, Kathleen [Hanna, his wife] hosted a karaoke night when she lived in Olympia, Washington. Her friend Slim challenged me to a karaoke-off. I was like, 'OK, pick any song', and he picked Sir Mix-A-Lot's 'Baby Got Back'. He knew every single word and I knew the chorus and that was it. It

Rad ar

► YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST ■ EDITED BY MATT WILKINSON

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NME
**NEW
BAND**
OF THE WEEK



Kid Wave

Disillusioned Swede comes to London, assembles dream gaze'n'grunge band

There's a track I wrote called 'Baby Tiger', which is about a dream I had last year," explains Kid Wave's frontwoman Lea Emmery, speaking from a park in Yorkshire during a break on the band's tour with Palma Violets. "I had been feeling really down at the time, but then I had this dream where I was carrying a baby tiger around – just carrying it. And then I woke up... and I just felt amazing. Maybe it was a sign that things were going to get better."

New beginnings are a recurring theme with Kid Wave. Lea uprooted from her native Sweden to move to London in 2011 after becoming disillusioned with the indie scene on the country's east coast. "I was playing in an all-girl punk band," she explains, "but it just felt a bit dead. There was no market for new rock music, the stuff they played on the radio was uninspiring, there were no gigs and there were no festivals. I just wanted to get out of there."

▼
ON
**NME.COM/
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NOW**

► Stream album
track 'Best Friend'

It wasn't until the 22-year-old came to the UK that her dream-weaving grunge (think Lush on diazepam) began to take root. Taking up a course in sound engineering and spending the rest of her time recording demos on GarageBand, Lea was quickly snapped up by Heavenly Recordings just as the rest of the industry started knocking. "I started to get emails from people asking when we were going to play gigs and I just said, 'I dunno', because I hadn't even got a band together at that point. I had just moved over from a different country – I didn't know anyone."

Bringing new friends Serra Petale (drums), Mattias Bhatt (guitar) and Harry Deacon (bass) on board to complete the line-up, and with a stream of *loud* gigs behind them ("It's a lot more rock'n'roll live," she says), Kid Wave are now set to release their debut LP 'Wonderlust' on June 1. And as the sun-drenched fuzz of 'Gloom' and the blissed-out 'All I Want' make clear, it'll be a sound that's perfectly suited for a hazy summer.

"Some say *dreaming is a waste of time*", Lea sings on their most recent single 'Honey' – but with a sound as alluringly lucid as this, it's somewhat difficult to agree with her. ■ JAMES BENTLEY

► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** London
- **FOR FANS OF** Lush, The Breeders
- **SOCIAL** facebook.com/kidwavemusic
- **BUY IT NOW** Album 'Wonderlust' is out June 1 on Heavenly Recordings
- **SEE THEM LIVE** London Lexington (May 7), Bristol Start The Bus (8), Manchester Night & Day Café (9), Leicester The Scholar (10, all above dates with Bully), Cornwall Port Eliot Festival (July 30–August 2)
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Before moving to London, Lea lived in Iceland for two months, where she cared for horses. She insists that "it wasn't a serious career move."

Penalty Kick

There's no word on whether Portland local Gary Jarman has ever rubbed shoulders with the city's Penalty Kick, but they sure sound like they've been listening to The Cribs. Latest EP 'Crowded Mess' fizzles with the kind of deafening distort-punk that kickstarted the Wakefield trio's career a decade ago.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/penaltykickk
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/penaltykick

Angelic Milk

Swedish label PNKSLM said they were "blown away" when they first heard the work of 17-year-old Sarah Persephona – and it's easy to see why. The trashy guitars and grungey vocals on tracks such as 'I'm So Happy (I Wanna Die)' are full of teenage angst and hooky melodies. The St Petersburg starlet lives by a strong mantra – "too lo-fi to live, too gothpop to die".

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/angelicmilkofficial
► **HEAR HER** angelicmilk.bandcamp.com

The Dunes

Adelaide's The Dunes are straight up about their densely psychedelic sound – and tracks like 'When You Wake Up' are full of rumbling drums, mantra-like vocals and eerie, modulated guitars. It's a heavy trip reminiscent of Black Rebel Motorcycle Club and The Warlocks.

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

La Horse

On their debut track – 'Nothing From The Monkey Is Free' – London's La Horse sound like a glorious mesh of two of Britain's greatest bands. Tom Beecham's lurching vocals recall the swagger of Arctic Monkeys, while the wildly flailing organs sound like early Pink Floyd. Surprisingly, it works.



Penalty Kick

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

Beau

Formed by 20-year-old Heather Boo and Emma Rose, Beau first came to attention with last year's Kitsuné compilation. Now the girls are preparing their eponymous debut EP, which channels plenty of nostalgic '70s folk influences.

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

Mold Boy

Those lucky enough to have played with Mac DeMarco tend to go on to forge beguiling solo propositions. Last year, Peter Sagar put out freeform jams under the Homeshake moniker. Now comes Alex Calder, who played with DeMarco in Makeout Videotape, and has been working away on Mold Boy since 2010. His latest song, 'Disease Freak', is every bit as slack as his history suggests.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/moldboyband
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/capturedtracks



Mark Wynn

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Mark Wynn

York wordsmith Mark Wynn is one of the UK's most prolific newcomers. Often compared to John Cooper Clarke and Mark E Smith, Wynn's stream-of-consciousness recordings are often deviant affairs, but always beguiling. With song titles including 'The Clive Anderson Walk-Outs Song' and 'I Once Fingered A Girl Who Had Rejected Rick Witter', his latest Bandcamp album, 'Skivvy: A Much More Noble Occupation', is outsider material at its best.

► **SOCIAL** markwynn.blogspot.co.uk
► **HEAR HIM** markwynn.bandcamp.com
► **SEE HIM LIVE** End Of The Road Festival (September 4-6)

Babe Punch

This teenage outfit from Nottingham make a helluva racket. Their influences lie in punk and grunge, with feedback-laden, angsty anthems like 'Snake Tongue' recalling the energy of Sleater-Kinney. Female representation is a vital issue in guitar music currently, so there's no better time for riot grrrls like these to make their voices heard.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/babepunch
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/babe-punch-1

Moors

When he's not acting in films such as *Short Term 12* and *Straight Outta* ➔

BAND CRUSH

Jeremy Pritchard

Everything Everything



Slug

"That north-east stable centred around Memphis Industries keeps producing great music. I think Slug's album is the best thing they've put out. I really like Field Music but there's something even more out-there about this record."

Compton, Los Angeles' Keith Stanfield makes music with Victorville-based producer HH. The pair recently released their debut EP with four original tracks that fuse Stanfield's socio-conscious lyrics with HH's dreamy beats, including latest single 'Gas', a pinnacle of their encapsulating soundscape that's similar to Californian cohort Tyler, The Creator.

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

Loose Tooth

As their namesake would suggest, Philadelphia's Loose Tooth are a slack bunch whose music is ridden with decay and neglect. They benefit from sounding gloriously under-rehearsed on tracks such as 'Pickwick Average', trudging through bustling drums and scrappy guitar chords in a lo-fi cacophony that reeks of teen angst and raw energy. Their recently released debut album 'Easy Easy East' is as intoxicating as the booze that fuelled its creation.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/loosetoothphilly
► **HEAR THEM** loosetoothphilly.bandcamp.com

Jerry Paper

Jerry Paper

'Carousel', the latest LP by Brooklyn's oddball popster Jerry Paper – aka Lucas W Nathan – is a bit like the *Grange Hill* theme tune for a Captured Tracks generation. Spilling out gloopy, groovy, synth-led reveries, Nathan's as partial to a headset mic as he is to a silky kimono. His surreal videos really bring his far-out goofball vision to life.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/jerrypaper
► **HEAR HIM** jerrypaper.bandcamp.com
► **SEE HIM LIVE** London Rye Wax (July 16)

Silicon

Weird World's latest signing is fittingly oddball. New Zealand-via-Hawaii multi-instrumentalist Kody Nielson's debut single is a lucid mix of glacial synths, funky bass and skipping beats. It's a cosmic affair that will sound well placed when Silicon supports Unknown Mortal Orchestra in London later this month.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/godemoji



Silicon

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/weirdworldrecordco
► **SEE HIM LIVE** London Power Lunches (May 26)

Fred Thomas

Fred Thomas is a Michigan DIY lifer who's been in a dozen bands and released at least eight solo LPs. His latest record, 'All Are Saved', sounds like his one-time label, K Records, joining forces with the orchestral whimsy of Athens' Elephant 6 Collective and features

neurotic, emotionally complex songs about the minor events that constitute a life, and guest vocals from Andrew WK.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/fredthomasmusic
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/polyvinyl-records

Bloodsugar

Proudly named "after the rhythm guitarist's diabetes", Loughborough quintet Bloodsugar are a rough-and-ready act inspired by big hitters like Oasis as well as "lighter bands" like The Smiths. These influences are all audible on debut track 'Eye Of The Storm', which recalls indie progenitors The Only Ones.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/bloodsugarband
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/bloodsugar
► **SEE THEM LIVE** Leicester Sumo (May 16), Birmingham Rainbow Warehouse (July 24)

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

WHITE REAPER PREP DEBUT

Louisville punks White Reaper's debut album, 'White Reaper Does It Again', has been confirmed for release on July 17 via Polyvinyl. The record took just a week at engineer Kevin Ratterman's La La Land studio to complete. Fiery new track 'Make Me Wanna Die' is online now.

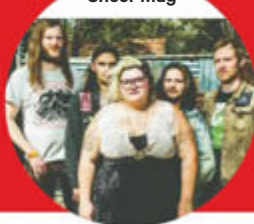
THEO'S RETURN

Brighton upstart Theo Verney will release his first new music of 2015 on June 8. Called 'Brain Disease', the EP's lead track, 'Mountain Rose', is online now. The song is a departure of sorts from Verney's earlier material, with a more grandiose production. But the scuzz that put him on the map is retained.

Theo Verney



Sheer Mag



GIRLPOOL GET BIG

Cleo Tucker and Harmony Tividad, aka Girlpool, have announced full details of their debut album, 'Before The World Was Big'. The Philadelphia-based duo release the album on June 1 via Wichita, playing two London gigs a week later, before embarking on a full UK tour this September.

NEW SHEER MAG STREAMED

Sheer Mag are streaming new 'II EP' on Bandcamp in full. Lead track 'Fan The Flames' premiered last month, and saw the band continue to garner interest after storming SXSW in March. There's still no word on when they might make it over to the UK. Rough Trade is at least stocking the EP.

► For daily new music recommendations and exclusive tracks and videos go to NME.COM/NEWMUSIC

Larry & The Babes

Larry & The Babes

New Yorkers Larry & The Babes have been playing shows with hotly tipped psych upstarts Sunflower Bean recently, but their brand of doo-wop is much closer to long-lost noughties Brit crooners Vincent Vincent & The Villains than their intricate, post-punk buddies. EP 'The Dolphin Tapes' is the place to start.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/larrysbabes

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

Cheena

Cheena are an NYC hardcore supergroup comprising Margaret

Chardiet from Pharmakon and members of other local outfits Crazy Spirit, LOTION, Dawn Of Humans and Hank Wood & The Hammerheads. Their debut seven-inch, 'Did I Tell You Last Night?', drives, rattles and rolls through the skull like a lysergic locomotive.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/sacredbones

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

Makelove

There's next to no information available about the London artist known as Makelove, but fortunately this summery brand of electronic soul needs no introduction. Debut track 'Head Up' is an alluringly laid-back cut that could easily be the soundtrack to beach sunsets and humid summers. It's a neo-soul heatwave that leaves peers like Jungle out in the cold.

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

Chui Wan

"China is a very psychedelic country," claim Beijing's Chui Wan, and their trippy sound backs them up. The experimental outfit channel the tribal experimentalism of Can and the spooky atmosphere of Bauhaus on latest track 'The Sound Of Wilderness' – a seven-minute odyssey of looping, echoing guitar lines and murky vocal mantras.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/chuiwanband

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/chui-wan

Foxtrott

Built on rat-a-tat percussion and rollicking bass throbs, 'Driven', the new single from Marie-Helene Delorme, aka Montreal artist Foxtrott, is a rumbling slice of innovative electronica that serves as an enticing introduction to her debut LP 'A Taller Us'. "My goal was to find the perfect balance between rhythms and frequencies," she says.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/iamfoxtrott

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

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

ÁRNI

ARNASON

The Vaccines



SHOP OF HORRORS

It might be the laziest comparison I've ever made, but **Ho99o9**'s homage to Bad Brains is just too blatant to overlook. The New Jersey duo's first single 'Casey Jones'/'Cum Rag' feels like a reference to BB's 'Pay To Cum', and no, not only because of the shared usage of porn terminology, but rather because of its ludicrous B-side. Fortunately, though, more recent EP 'Mutant Freakx' renders the attempt at lazy comparisons totally redundant. Ho99o9 somehow marry DC hardcore with brain-melting hip-hop, and the EP's impeccable production makes it all sound like it's from a terrifying dystopian future. Oh, and no, I've got no idea how you pronounce it [It's 'Horror', Árni – Elocution Ed].

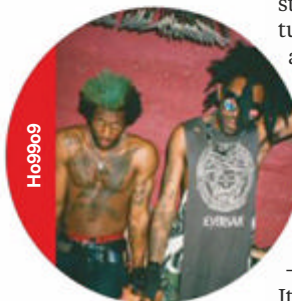
The slightly more blandly named (and considerably more polite) **Lois** has to be the next in line of Madrid artists to hit the UK, following in the footsteps of Hinds. His first release, 'Before You', is a woozy, lo-fi bedroom recording which, even after countless listens, still manages to surprise me. It's horrendously out-of-tune surf-guitar intro is almost comically misleading, as what follows is a mix of beautiful baritone and soaring falsettos delivered to the beat of a crappy old drum machine – all delivered with the kind of confidence and experience that just shouldn't be available to someone so young.

'Rabbit Hole' by **Riothorse Royale** is a song that has a certain sense of inevitability to it. It's perhaps a little folk, or even a bit new wave, but most certainly – at least to my tired ears – an anthemic no-brainer.

Its brilliantly minimal arrangement builds slowly and hypnotically, but always leaves ample space for Madi Diaz's and Emily Greene's intricate LA vocal harmonies, which are clearly the focal point of RR's writing. 'Rabbit Hole' is the stand out song, but the

rest of their EP 'The Guest House' is a gorgeous listen.

Since her days with synth-punk outfit Post-Pastel (worth a listen) ended, **Jessica Smurphy** has been a ridiculously prolific DJ and producer in her native Mexico. She's now moved to LA, signed to Leaving Records and is about to release her insane new album, 'A Shapeless Pool Of Lovely Pale Colours Suspended In The Darkness'. It's a collage of the strangest kind. A trance-inducing noise/trip-hop/techno/psych/dub concoction barely held together by her textural vocals. Beautiful madness. ■



"Jessica Smurphy's LP is a collage of the strangest kind"

Next week: The Maccabees

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

National Anthem



► **FOUNDED** 2012 by James Passmore

► **BASED** London

► **KEY RELEASES** Haim – 'Forever' (2012), Chvrches – 'The Mother We Share' (2012), The Orwells – 'Other Voices EP' (2013)

► **RADAR SAYS** A radio plugger by trade, James decided to launch his label after catching an early Haim show. Since then he's earned a reputation for unearthing talents, from Twin Peaks to Wet.



In bloom

Brandon Flowers says The Killers' last album "wasn't good enough". And while his group take a break, the frontman is back with second solo album 'The Desired Effect'. Is the title a hint that he's looking for megastardom in his own right, or just a functioning band to front? **Eve Barlow** meets him

PHOTOS: BRINSON + BANKS

It's getting too dark to see on a spookily windy evening in Hollywood. Brandon Flowers' hotel key is somewhere in his bag. "*Shine me a light in here, shine a light*", he sings as he rummages around, to the tune of Elton John's 'Philadelphia Freedom'. Then he stops, suddenly. "Wait! Do you know my Morrissey story? I've never gotten to *show* anyone this." Hurrying back over the bridge across the courtyard of the Sunset Marquis hotel, he points to where his eyeline was when, in 2010, he spotted an unmistakable, quiff-topped figure looming across the lobby lounge. "We couldn't see each others' faces because it was so dark, but you just know it's *him*. My heart was racing. He's my hero." Brandon recounts how he rushed to his room, brushed his teeth, ➔

Brandon insists
going solo means
"evolution is more
of a possibility"

then returned to wait at a safe distance, thinking about what to say. But Morrissey appeared from the other direction and caught Brandon off guard. "I'm in a band!" Brandon spluttered. "We opened for you!" He told Morrissey he was in LA promoting his solo debut. "I could hear him whisper in the darkness, 'Flamingoooooooo'." A Milky Bar Kid smile spreads across his face. "He *knew*! Morrissey knew the name of my solo record!"

The Sunset Marquis may be a favoured haunt of the rock'n'roll elite, but Brandon's room tonight displays all the trappings of a responsible breadwinner on a business trip. It's impeccably neat and tidy, and the complimentary wine is untouched by human hand. "You want a water?" he asks. "There's heroin in mine..." Downstairs, Flowers' band and crew are celebrating. At least one of them, drummer Darren Beckett, formerly of forgotten '00s indie band Ambulance LTD, remembers the days when Brandon would have got stuck in with them. "We toured with The Killers 10 years ago and we'd have debauched nights in London," he says. "I remember this little guy wearing eyeliner. He had that star vibe."

Earlier that night, Brandon and his new band – which also includes Joel Stein from Howling Bells, two female backing singers, two brass players and a bassist who's a dead ringer for The Killers' Dave Keuning – previewed material from his second solo album, 'The Desired Effect', to 200 fans at West Hollywood venue The Troubadour. Beckett reckons Flowers has rehearsed the band to a "supremely high level of musicianship", and it showed. During a 90-minute set, Brandon high-fived punters, punched the air and jostled like a lightweight champion through a selection of 'Flamingo' cuts. He belted out a cover of INXS' 'Don't Change', which he likes because it comes from an age when "bands weren't afraid to tell you who they were", and new tracks including 'Lonely Town' and 'Untangled Love' were debuted to a roaring reception. The set's surprising closer was The Killers' 'Mr Brightside' – and there seemed to be some poignancy to the way he delivered the line "*Just let me gooooooooooooo*".

"That was fun," Brandon chirped backstage, pinching a pizza slice. He gestured to the band: "There's something to be said for these guys' attitudes. They're the best. They're my friends. Their dispositions work well with mine."

The dispositions of

bandmates is something Flowers knows plenty about. On June 22, 2013, his band The Killers celebrated 10 years and four



albums together with a huge greatest-hits show at the UK's ultimate mega-venue: Wembley Stadium. It was the highpoint of what, for Brandon, was the band's best ever run of shows. "That last tour surpassed all my expectations," he says. "We were strong. We were accepted."

Afterwards, Brandon found himself at a crossroads. He wanted to restart the cycle of recording and touring; his bandmates didn't agree, and couldn't be cajoled back into the studio. Drummer Ronnie Vannucci Jr went off to do another

album with his side project Big Talk, bassist Mark Stoermer toured with The Smashing Pumpkins and guitarist Dave Keuning went back to "living in San Diego", according to Flowers' vague summary. Brandon, meanwhile, ploughed back into the solo career he had begun with 'Flamingo'.

Unlike the too-many-cooks broth of the last Killers record, 2012's 'Battle Born' (on which five producers worked), 'The Desired Effect' is a collaboration with just one in-demand producer, Ariel Rechtshaid (Vampire Weekend, Haim, Sky Ferreira).

"You want your rock star to be messed up? I got nothing for ya"

Brandon Flowers



Change' borrows from Bronski Beat's 'Smalltown Boy', and employs subtle spoken-word cameos from Pet Shop Boys frontman Neil Tennant. Elsewhere, they courted '80s AOR man Bruce 'The Way It Is' Hornsby to play keys on ballad 'Between Me And You'. "Why Hornsby? Why not?!" smiles Brandon. "He was so cool." More than anything, the record feels like a natural successor to The Killers' 2004 debut 'Hot Fuss' – it's more Duran Duran than Springsteen. Brandon insists that wasn't the sole intention. "[The sound is] not completely my doing," he says. "Ariel had a more calculated vision; he brushed off all the more Americana-sounding demos we came up with."

Some of the lyrics on 'The Desired Effect' back up the long-held idea that Brandon is an observer, not a doer. He shares his truths via characters, as in the honky-tonk 'Digging Up The Heart', about a down-and-out prisoner, Tony, whose mother forgives him because he's only human. "My parents taught me that if people did something wrong they were bad. I'm less narrow-minded now," he explains. He's also turning the lens on

himself. The album opens with the clarion call of 'Dreams Come True' – a romantic vision of how Flowers saw America from inside a limousine in his twenties, "*just a loser on two tender feet*" chasing success. "*Dreams come true/Yes they do/Dreams come true*", it goes. His "best lyrics ever", he reckons, are on 'The Way It's Always Been', which is reminiscent of The Band's 'The Weight'. "That line, '*Everyone's sitting about waiting for the sun to come again...*,' I use plain English to share the experiences of my sisters, whose husbands gave up on them," he says. 'Between Me And You', meanwhile, is about the pressures of being the man of the house – something Flowers acknowledges is a fairly old-fashioned concern. "Being the man and the provider is something nobody touches on. I'm really proud of it, though."

Despite the blossoming bromance between artist and producer, Brandon almost fired Ariel "four times" during the process, frustrated that the Los Angelean wouldn't up sticks to Vegas to help complete the record. Brandon laughs nervously when asked about it. "I'm

possessive. I think we should lock ourselves up and do it 'til it's done. He takes his time and will live 'til he's 150 years old."

To talk to Brandon Flowers in person is to weather a persistent charm offensive. There are boyish smiles, goofy laughs, and an ever-present facial expression that seems to say, 'Who? Me?' It's a neat way of preventing anyone getting under his skin. What makes him angry? Nothing. Where does his fiery passion onstage come from? Nada. He only gets fired up talking about the 'Blurred Lines' court case. He "agrees 150 per cent" that →

Flowers' people

Collaborators and bandmates on working with Brandon

Ariel Rechtshaid

Producer of 'The Desired Effect'

▶ ON HOW BRANDON WORKS

"Our way of working was different from the way he'd made music before, and it was different for me as well. Stepping outside the comfort zone makes you nervous but simultaneously expands your horizons. Still, Brandon is not complacent when he performs with The Killers. I saw them play a show while we were working and he was truly loving what he was doing. I just think once you've done something so well for four records, and you still have the fire inside, you're bound to try a new approach. He is so prolific and has so much music pouring out of him. He was brave, ultimately."

Darren Beckett

Co-writer of 'Can't Deny Me Love'

▶ ON BEING IN BRANDON'S BAND

"Brandon wants to push this album – he wants it to be on the radio. He's in a great position to have The Killers and do his solo thing; Don Henley had the Eagles, Phil Collins had Genesis and Brandon has The Killers. Our band has such a high level of musicianship and we're learning to play exactly like the record. He is a perfectionist."

Danielle Haim

Drummer on 'Lonely Town'

▶ ON WORKING WITH BRANDON

"I asked to play drums on 'Lonely Town' as I loved the demo. I came up with the idea for the beat, reacting to what he already had. It's cool that he's departed from The Killers. I joined them onstage in San Francisco last year. I said I'd love to play drums on a song I loved in high school – 'On Top' from 'Hot Fuss'. They hadn't played it for years but picked it up in minutes. Their dynamic is crazy. They're so tight, which is awesome to see at that stage in their career."

A kindred musical geek, Ariel matched Brandon's love of '80s pop, rock and indie. "My buddy Benji [Lysaght, also of Ambulance LTD, and in his solo band's line-up] recommended him," recalls Brandon. "I phoned him, we talked for 30 minutes and referenced everything from Dire Straits to Depeche Mode." Ariel paid multiple visits to Brandon's Las Vegas studios over the course of several months, and they conceived a 10-track record of could-be standalone hits. The idea was to be accessible but sophisticated, gunning full-throttle for drivetime airplay. "We worked together on ideas around a piano," says Ariel via phone. "I helped tap into a different side. We pushed each other outside our comfort zones."

Ariel encouraged Brandon to use samples for the first time – the disco-like 'I Can

it was right for Pharrell and Robin Thicke to hand over royalties to Marvin Gaye's family, and says there "are so many bands who should get sued. I'm so sick of hearing people steal. I hate it. I hear it all the time, but I'm not gonna tell you which bands. I won't, because I don't wanna start a whole thing." That's all he can think of right now that makes him mad. "I'm happy," he says. "Maybe it's all pent up inside of me and I'm going to have a meltdown..."

A track on the album, 'Still Want You', sees him referencing climate change and debt, which seems like a good excuse to talk about some big issues of the day. Where does he stand on the environment? "We should all take care of the Earth." What about Hillary Clinton's election bid, the Tidal launch, the aftermath of Ferguson? "I know what's happening a little bit. I stru... I'm not..." he pauses. "It's frustrating,

Flowers' people

(continued)

Ronnie Vannucci Jr

Drummer in The Killers

► ON THE BAND'S HIATUS

"If it were up to me, I'd be in a recording studio writing stuff... At the same time, I think it's healthy to grow a little outside the band and recharge your batteries. One of my big frustrations with The Killers is that it's not aggressive-sounding enough. I'm not saying my way's the right way, but I feel outvoted sometimes on wanting to chip it to the more aggressive side. That being said, I still think there's a lot of nutrients left in The Killers' tree."

Jimmy Somerville

Bronski Beat singer

► ON 'SMALLTOWN BOY' BEING SAMPLED IN 'I CAN CHANGE'

"I received the demo to ask for my permission, listened to it and thought, 'Yeah, this is great, this man gets it. The vocal on there is almost like a cry. 'Smalltown Boy' was part of my political and sexual coming-of-age in the '80s. The youth culture explosion in the '80s was intense - sexual politics, fashion, music, art, technology, heavy guitars combined with synths - and it was exported from the UK to the USA. If you were a kid at the time, like Brandon, it must have looked like the world was on fire."

Warren Fu

Video director

► ON WORKING WITH BRANDON ON THE 'STILL WANT YOU' VIDEO

"His brain is always at work, analysing, always wondering how things can be better. It's fairly common that we'll be talking and mid-sentence he'll say, 'Hold on', walk over to his Korg and start figuring out chords before the random spark of inspiration escapes him. Then he'll apologise and pick back up where the conversation left off."

because nothing ever changes no matter who's president." The thing Brandon is most vexed about, he says, is the treatment of US veterans. His great grandfather fought in the second world war. His father avoided the draft for Vietnam. His biggest bugbear is that he never finished a half-written song about post-traumatic stress called 'Look Alive'. Patriotism has dogged him since The Killers' early experiences in Europe. "There was a shame in being American at that time. I'd go over there and they'd treat me [differently] because of my accent. It put a real chip on my shoulder. When George Bush was president it was overwhelming how much I felt it. It was such a shameful thing," he says. "There's a song called 'The House I Live In' from 1945 that Sinatra did on 'The Main Event' [1974 live album], one of my favourite records. He introduces it by talking about how America is the greatest nation on Earth. And it is. America is a fantastic, amazing idea. I'm not afraid to say I'm patriotic. We're all different. We shouldn't all be the same. It's great that we're all different."

Beyond music, Brandon

is a man of individual pursuits, a gym enthusiast and a hiker. "My wife knows when it's time for Brandon to go into the wilderness," he says, employing the third person. His outdoor pursuits inspire him. "You hear this new-age mumbo jumbo about nature, but there's truth in it. It's crazy." Records by Jim Croce, The Smiths, Elvis and more noodle around his brain as he roams. "I think about great records, then I can hear them," he says. A dedicated Mormon, he prays daily. "I see the harmony in my religious beliefs and everything else the more I travel," he says. Other than that, his focus outside of work is concentrated on being a good husband and dad to his three sons in a house that, he says, has few status symbols belying the fact that an international rock star resides there. Drummer Darren divulges only that Brandon makes a mean homemade dip for crisps and is nifty with a barbecue.

"It's boring, I guess," says Brandon, stonewalling questions about his daily life. As a fan, wouldn't he like to know about Morrissey's routine? "Yeah, but he's... different." There's a distinction between being famous and being a celebrity, he says. "I know a person immediately. I see it in people's faces. The celebrities people worship aren't nice. They're fake. Even when I was little, I would have known that. It blows my mind that people don't know their heroes are bad..." He hesitates as the wind flings his hotel door open. "I'm afraid to say anybody's name."

Brandon

photographed in

LA on April 14, 2015

Brandon's biggest source of insecurity seems to come with the threat of being exposed as a phony, selling a lifestyle he isn't 'cool' enough to lead, searching for grit and heartache that just isn't there. "You want your rock star to be messed up? I got nothing for ya. Even the greatest storytellers have *something*. Johnny Cash picked cotton, his brother died, his dad was cruel to him. He was legit. I check none of those boxes."

Instead, he's the sort of rock star who considers education to be a lifelong pursuit. He's currently reading John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle*. "I'm still not a big reader. I struggle because I was so young when we started [in The Killers]. I'll forever be stamped with ['Somebody Told Me' lyrics] '*Somebody told me that you had a boyfriend who looked like a girlfriend that I had in February of last year*'. That's my own problem." He's embarrassed? "No, I just feel like that's what everyone sees when they see me. Nobody's really said it to my face. Maybe there was a misconception about me. That's something we're able to address



as I get older. The idea that I can evolve." Was he ever conscious of being painted as just a pretty face? "I used to think maybe it was that, but then if you look at some of the best-looking dudes they're also the brightest dudes." Like, Springsteen? "He does look great..."

Brandon starts talking about a dinner with Bowie's collaborator, Tony Visconti, who told him you don't have to be a poet to say something profound. "I said thank you! I'm not a poet, but that doesn't mean I can't pull a great line out every now and then. That makes me feel like my evolution is more of a possibility every time I sit down at a piano now."

'The Desired Effect' gives Flowers a shot at carving a new identity – as

the voice of his own storytelling, making "meaningful pop" that chimes with The Killers' roots but expands Brandon's growing ideas for visuals, production and performance. Old loyalties, however, run deep. With Killers shows booked for June, he insists the foursome *will* make another record, because the last one "wasn't good enough" and "we all know it". He seems shackled to the same goal he's been chasing ever since the band's first practices all those years ago: to be U2. "Come on. Everybody wants to be 'Achtung Baby' Bono," he says, convincing only himself. *"Everybody."*

Brandon's relentless search for greatness recently led to him describing the rest of The Killers as "lazy" in the press. He shuffles nervously. "Hahahaha. Did I say lazy? I tell you, recently Dave has really

shown a new interest in being the guitar player for The Killers..." So it worked? "I don't know if he saw it. I hope I didn't upset him."

Ronnie Vannucci Jr has his own take on the future of the band. "I don't fear the end of The Killers – if it's over, it's over," he says on the phone from a gas station midway through a family holiday in Oregon. "We scratch those itches [with side projects, like his own Big Talk]. I get a good feeling knowing Brandon is out there doing that too. I hope the other two do it. It gets weird sometimes when we start talking about our shit with the other two." Ronnie's heard "most of" 'The Desired Effect'. What does he think? "I... like it... I'm gonna wait 'til I hear it all."

Have "the other two" heard the album? "They've heard [lead single] 'Can't Deny My Love'," says Brandon.

The Killers can take some comfort in the fact they're not the only targets for Brandon's high standards. Everyone in a band and every single solo artist is too. "I speak for everyone making music right now: we are not as good as people used to be. None of us. It's baffling." The Strokes' frontman Julian Casablancas receives a Get Out Of Jail Free card, though. "I'm still depressed about how good 'Is This It' is," he exhales. "He's the best, better than all of us." Perhaps that's why Brandon insists he hasn't outgrown The Killers, because no matter how well 'The Desired Effect' does, he needs to return to trounce the greatest frontman of his generation. "Once [The Killers] all get on the same page, it'll work. I need to persuade them to like the same things as I do." Which is what? "Oh. Hahahaha. I don't know any more!"

Earlier tonight, after the gig at The Troubadour, in the back of his getaway van, Brandon unwrapped some gifts from fans: a copy of The Smiths' debut album on cassette and a Spanish issue of Springsteen's 'Born To Run' – the band featuring his "hero" and the solo artist he yearns to emulate. Leaving Brandon's room at midnight, walking over the Morrissey bridge, the wind picks up furiously. *"Flamingooooooooooooo"*. That's Brandon Flowers: caught between band and solo career, standing on one leg, not ready to put both feet in either one just yet. ■

"Musicians are not as good as they used to be. None of us"

Brandon Flowers

23

Gaze

Ride at their peak,
Oxfordshire, 1990

of our lives

Twenty-five years have passed since Ride's debut, and the shoegaze sound they helped create has been revived by a new generation of psychedelic dreamers. Ahead of their festival appearances this summer, Stuart Huggett joins the reunited band at their Oxford comeback show

It's a glorious Easter Sunday in Oxford and the city is thronging with visitors admiring the historic dreaming spires, basking on college greens or grappling with punts on the river Cherwell. Out along the Cowley Road, however, a different branch of Oxford history is about to be re-enacted.

Twenty years ago Ride's career fizzled out, with the 'shoegazing' sound they pioneered becoming a dirty word. Now, their reputation restored by numerous young disciples of their surging dreampop, Ride are back and playing the first gig of their comeback trail to 500 overjoyed fans in the venue where it all started for them – Oxford's O2 Academy, formerly the Zodiac.

Emotions are running high when the quartet take to the stage and recently freed Beady Eye guitarist Andy Bell rings out the opening chords of 'Polar Bear'. It's followed by the whirling rush of 'Seagull' – a startling reminder of how, by tethering the heady psychedelic noise of My Bloody Valentine and Spacemen 3 to accessible pop tunes, Ride became the first great guitar contenders of the '90s. Drawing largely from their classic albums 'Nowhere' and 'Going Blank Again', as well as the much-loved early EPs, the show is exhilarating, showing how Ride built the cathedrals of sound that bands from The Horrors to Toy and Cheatahs to Tame Impala now worship in.

Proud locals in faded 'Nowhere' T-shirts punch the air as the soaring guitars of hometown anthem 'OX4' rush skywards. "Welcome back!" someone shouts. "You're better than Oasis!" yells another. Bell, who spent 10 years playing with the Gallagher brothers, looks politely away. Among the crowd are newlyweds Simone and Rick, who flew in from the US that afternoon to make the show. "We woke up in New York on the morning of our wedding to find out Ride had announced the gig while we'd been sleeping," Simone explains. "There was a point, waiting for our connecting flight at Reykjavik, when we thought we might have gone slightly mad! But it's Ride – there's no way we couldn't be here."

Backstage before the gig, the band are



Back for the Ride:
(l-r) Steve Queralt,
Andy Bell, Loz Colbert,
Mark Gardener

admiring a gift from a local baker: a dozen yellow, flower-shaped cupcakes with the letters R-I-D-E iced on them. It's a tribute to the daffodil-strewn sleeve of Ride's second EP, 'Play', which broke into the Top 40 25 years ago this month – the first Creation Records release to do so. The old order, with chart music on one side and guitar bands on the other, was breaking down, and Ride were kicking the doors open.

"I used to work in a record shop," remembers bassist Steve Queralt. "I'd look at the charts, and indie bands would always get to Number 41. The Wedding Present would stall at 41, The House Of Love would stall at 41. Then all of a sudden there was that *Top Of The Pops* [November 23, 1989] where The Stone Roses and Happy Mondays were on. It was like it happened overnight. Suddenly indie bands were in the charts."

Ride duly made their first appearance on *Top Of The Pops* in March 1991, performing 'Unfamiliar' from fourth EP 'Today Forever'. "It was probably one of the most surreal experiences of my life," says

drummer Loz Colbert. "Looking back, it was like, 'What the hell were we doing on that?'"

"We didn't really enjoy it," adds Bell, "cos you think it's gonna be like [1960s TV show] *Ready Steady Go!* and everyone's gonna be having a great time. It's not. There's only about 12 people in the audience, they're being herded round really rudely and there's a boom swinging round and someone's ducking not to get hit by it."

"It did feel like we were gatecrashing a party," Queralt continues. "It was the establishment and we didn't feel part of it."

Yet while the Mondays and the Roses had spent years building up their fanbases, Ride were propelled into the public eye before they'd had a chance to hone their stagecraft or interview soundbites. As a result, they tended to hide behind their thick fringes and dreamy soundscapes. Critics accused them of having nothing to say, but their open-ended, hazily romantic songs are exactly what drew their fans in. Ride found themselves spearheading a whole wave of new, southern English guitar groups, their good looks and fey brand of psychedelia seized upon as an antidote to the laddish Manchester sound. Like-minded



Live at Oxford's
O2 Academy,
April 5, 2015



"Ride are one of those all-or-nothing bands"

Andy Bell

acts such as Slowdive, Chapterhouse, Lush, Swervedriver and Moose scored a string of indie chart hits in Ride's wake – a scene mockingly described as 'shoegaze', though the term has long since been reclaimed and deployed as a positive.

Ride hit their creative peak with 1992's expansive 'Going Blank Again', trailed by the masterful eight-minute single 'Leave Them All Behind', both of which landed in the Top 10 with ease. But by this point Nirvana were in the ascendancy and Ride's lack of lyrical conviction began to count against them. By the time they returned with 1994's disappointing 'Carnival Of Light', Bell and frontman Mark Gardener had become creatively estranged. The album failed to ride the coming Britpop wave, and the shifting balance of power was illustrated

by the fact that they ended 1994 supporting new labelmates Oasis at the 4,500-capacity Brighton Centre – a venue that they'd headlined just one year before.

It was to be Ride's last ever UK gig. As revealed on posthumous 1996 album 'Tarantula', former focal point and pin-up Gardener had become sidelined by Bell's songwriting ambitions. While 'Tarantula' was being mixed, Gardener seized the wheel and announced his departure, effectively ending the band.

"We'd been from school to college doing the band together," he says, "and we weren't very good at saying 'no' or 'stop', which might have done us some good. In the end we crashed the car, just to get out of it. But I think that's the beauty of it in a way – at no point was it a career."

"It was one of those all-or-nothing type bands," continues Bell. "Carrying on as a three-piece without Mark wasn't anything we thought of."

Bell tasted further success with his band Hurricane #1 before becoming a key member of Oasis during the noughties, subsequently following Liam Gallagher into Beady Eye.

Gardener and Colbert joined forces in a group called The Animalhouse, although their sole major-label album, 2000's 'Ready To Receive', failed to take off. "Me and Loz saw quite a lot of each other for a while," says Gardener. "We both did taekwondo, so we had these weekly fight sessions where we would regularly beat the crap out of each other." Colbert went on to drum for The Jesus And Mary Chain and Supergrass' Gaz Coombes, while Gardener turned to production work, acoustic shows, guest spots and collaborations with the likes of Oxford band Goldrush and Cocteau Twins' Robin Guthrie.

But while his bandmates moved on in music, Steve Queralt was left behind. "I did nothing," he shrugs. "I did a real job. Actually, I didn't know we'd split up. I stayed in Ride for 20 years."

"He's like one of those Japanese soldiers still fighting the war," jokes Colbert.

"Wondering why there haven't been any rehearsals," adds Bell.

"It has been a bit quiet," Queralt muses.

Ride on record

Nowhere 1990

 Bookended by the much-loved 'Seagull' and 'Vapour Trail', 'Nowhere' slowed Ride's speeding early sound for a shoegaze masterclass. With its cascading guitars and immense drumbeat, 'Dreams Burn Down' is the band's finest moment.

Going Blank Again 1992

 Eight-minute lead single 'Leave Them All Behind' was a bold statement and 'Going Blank Again' finds Ride brimming with confidence, excelling on the pop chimes of 'Twisterella', the surging rush of 'Time Of Her Time' and sweeping hometown tribute 'OX4'.

Carnival Of Light 1994

 The cracks appear, with all Mark Gardener's songs on one half and all Andy Bell's on the other. Roping in Deep Purple organist Jon Lord and a cathedral choir, 'Carnival Of Light' was often ambitious but ended up a pastoral Britrock folly.

Tarantula 1996

 Ride were disintegrating, and although lead single 'Black Nite Crash' recaptured some of their old spark, this lacklustre album sounded their death knell. Effectively disowned on release, Creation deleted it after just one day.

None of Ride are dwelling on their split today, and that's partly because, as Gardener points out, "We would have finished anyway. Personally, I had to put Ride out of my mind for a while." What everyone agrees on is that their friendship was repaired quickly.

"It never really went away," Colbert explains. "I think initially we did feel a bit weird about contacting each other, but that didn't last long. Everyone got on with what they wanted to do, and over those 20 years we've always met up."

"It was just easier to get on," confirms Bell. "It was all cool."

News of the reunion broke when Spanish festival Primavera Sound tweeted photos of a huge Ride banner wrapped around a Barcelona building last November (Ride play Primavera later this month). "We announced it, then got ourselves off to a house in the country in the middle of nowhere," Bell says. "We just wanted to make sure that there was something there to reunite."

"I remember having a sneaky smoke with you outside," Gardener says, "and these two were practising their rhythm rehearsal together. Me and Andy had a big grin and thought, 'We just need to show up.'"

"It was like, 'Yeah, that really sounds like Ride,'" adds Bell. "Phew!"

Onstage later, Ride's set builds to a roaring finale with early anthem 'Drive Blind', its feedback climax drawn out to ecstatic lengths. Summoned back for two encores, it's clear that, for the 500 fans here tonight – and the hundreds more who ensured their UK shows this month sold out within minutes – the chance to see these songs in their full live glory once again has been eagerly seized.

"The last 20 years just seemed to melt away," says Simone afterwards, clutching a wedding card signed by the band. "I was sobbing before they got to the third song."

"Personally, I'm playing catch-up with the emotional love out there," says Bell, when pressed on Ride's future plans. "My big priority is to satisfy people's nostalgia, give them what they want and make it as good as possible. We'll give ourselves time to develop later."

If they can match their blistering live form, Ride have it in them to create timeless music once more. ■



Mr

Nice

Tobias Jesso Jr's debut album, 'Goon', reframes classic American songwriting for a new generation, but is his everyman persona for real or just an act? Amy Rose Spiegel finds out

PHOTOS: DANIEL TOPETE

This time last year, Tobias Jesso Jr was living at his family home in Canada, working for a friend's moving company and helping his mother through cancer. It's a stark contrast to his current situation.

We meet the afternoon between two late-night shows – one in Manhattan and another at Williamsburg clubhouse Baby's All Right. They're both long-since sold out, reflecting the fact that the singer-songwriter has recently received endorsements from Taylor Swift, Haim and Adele, who tweeted in January, "This is fantastic, click away," in support of Jesso's song 'How Could You Babe'. Her admiration, Jesso says, is mutual: "She's my favourite, and that tweet was one of the highlights of my career."

Jesso began writing his debut album in 2012 after enduring a breakup and road accident in quick succession in Los Angeles, where he'd been trying, and failing, to launch a music

career. He found rich, heart-in-mouth material in picking over the former experience. "When I went back to Vancouver, it was no girlfriend, no more routine, not riding a bike – it was just alone time for me," he says. "Other than working for my friend, I was just sitting in my house writing with the piano. Complete isolation." Jesso hates being by himself. "When I write my own stuff, that's my only alone time. From wake-up to going to bed, I'm with someone. I don't like to do anything alone. I guess it's insecurity. When I travel, I won't go anywhere without people to go do something. I'm happier around people; the more people the better."

We meet in Jesso's agent's Brooklyn flat, where he's sorting and folding clothes. The protracted process seems to be a form of communication to the journalist sniffing the detergent in the air next to him, as if to say, 'I'm

a good ol' guy, just like you – I just got a lucky break.' When he says, "I'm a househusband – I'm just sitting here folding laundry", what he means by "house" is a beautiful apartment, and what he means by "laundry" is actually merchandise touting his music, name and face. He offers me a T-shirt and sheepishly says, "I'm not a model," as though I had made mention of his height (he's 6ft 7in) and Clark Kent-ish good looks, which I had not. Pompous-but-also-true statements about Jesso's music run beneath the portrait on the shirt: "He sings from the heart" and "He's your new best friend".

In person, if not on a shirt, Jesso is very mindful of seeming boastful. He says he doesn't consider himself "very impressive", and dismisses anecdotes relating to his success as the effect of "beginner's luck." His debut album is filled with earnest, straightforward songs about heartbreak, but he jokes them

"I don't like to do anything alone. I guess it's insecurity"

Tobias Jesso Jr

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Like his heart, Tobias Jesso Jr wears his influences on his sleeve. Here are three of the most obvious

'IMAGINE' John Lennon



Particularly in the gentle, striking chords of Jesso's 'Without You'.

Imagine there's no copyright, eh Tobias.

THE CHEERS THEME



Even Jesso himself will often introduce 'I Can't Stop Thinking About You' as

sounding like the theme tune to the long-running US sitcom. Still, who wouldn't want to go where everybody knows your song?

'WITHOUT YOU' Harry Nilsson



Echoes of the ultimate red-wine-and-tears anthem seems to crop up in a

fair few Tobias songs, notably 'Hollywood', but without the bawl-ye-eyes-out bit.

away with the record's title: 'Goon'. He explains, "A goon is somebody who doesn't take things too seriously. A goon is a dumb thug – a guy who doesn't ever express love or anything, and he's kind of fine with it. I've met a couple at my shows, for sure. I've had, like, a football player – I think a professional one; I didn't know his name, I'm not sure. I never would've thought a football player would get down with the sentimental ballads." He glances at my green hair as he continues, and seems to be figuring out how to appease or flatter me: "But, then again... I don't know many football players, so... I was happy he came." Jesso Jr just wants to be liked, which does not separate him from any of the rest of us hanging out on planet Earth. Not all of us have the charm to make it happen.

Jesso's apparent anxieties are perhaps exacerbated by his late-breaking success. "Music careers don't last forever," he says, grinning. "I'm 29 – I'm probably not gonna be a hyped person for very long. Once people get to know you, then it's kinda like the people who like you stick around."

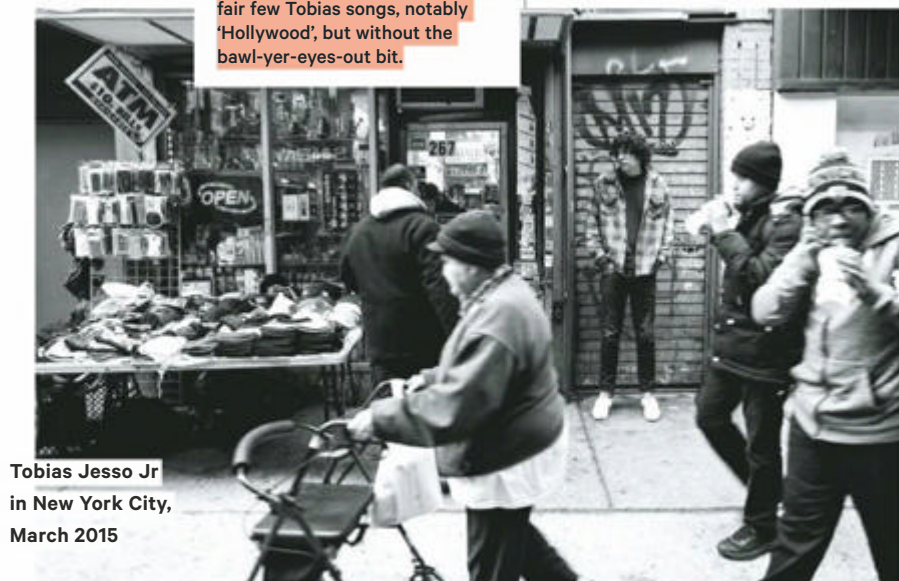
On stage at Manhattan's Mercury Lounge the night before, he openly talked about his perceived musical ineptitude, his predestined career failure, and the woman in his life – his mother. That didn't prevent him flirting with every girl present after the show, and ending up in a game of tonsil hockey that looked almost surgical. Jesso's need to publicly explain away his role in his own life can read as an obsessive self-awareness that's a bit off-putting, but it's the crucial foundation on which his success is staked. The music he makes is unquestionably egalitarian: classically American piano ballads with names and lyrics that are each a blank canvas on which listeners can impose their own romantic ensnarlements – 'For You', 'Without You', 'Can't Stop Thinking About You', 'How

Could You Babe'. It's difficult, listening to these Hallmark-ready schmaltzathons, not to catch yourself thinking, 'Could this be about that awful person I used to love and kind of always will?' "Whenever I used to play in my room for my friends, I always wanted to make sure they understood that it's just about the song," Jesso says. "Just listen to the song and imagine something a lot greater, someone with a big voice singing it." I don't have the opportunity to explain that to people now: 'OK, I know you're here to see me, but pretend it's *not* me...'"

The everyman appeal of Jesso's music is evidenced in his correspondence with his fans. "People write me about their own music, so I try to hit them back," he says. "If there's a cover of one of my songs [on YouTube], I'll put it up to kind of show it off. People have sent me whole entire movie screenplays that they have written listening to the music, and I write back as much as I can. My guest list yesterday had five people from Facebook who reached out asking for tickets. That's the people who you want there. I went to a lot of shows like that too. I've been going to shows since I was 14 years old. My email address was 'supermusicfan'." He laughs, knowing how charming this is – but in a self-denigrating "goon" way, so it needs no explaining away this time.

Despite this long-running music fandom, Jesso oddly didn't pay much mind to the presentation of his own record. When I ask about his choice to open the record with 'Can't Stop Thinking About You', a murmured piano ballad dedicated to an ex, he says, "To be honest, it wasn't my choice. I didn't do the song order. I'm not that precious about this stuff going into it." Rather, he let his label, Matador, decide how to put the record together: "They're real particular... I just left it up to them."

Even though his constant self-surveillance about not saying the wrong thing can feel exhausting, you can't help but like him – because you have those worries, too. At the show later that night, he realises I didn't take a shirt and wraps me in a sweatshirt stitched with the album's title. Despite myself, I'm just like him, according to both my updated outfit and my participation in a singalong of a track called – typically – 'True Love'. When I ask him what he takes pride in about his career, he says, "I feel better about I guess being able to pay rent, at least. Having something to show for my work, which was always sort of something I had trouble with before." Aw, shucks. Tobias Jesso Jr is the perfect everygoon. ■



Tobias Jesso Jr
in New York City,
March 2015

**"Sometimes
I purposefully
fuck myself up
to get a song
out of it"**



Liverpool trio The Wombats always found fun in unlikely places – see early single ‘Let’s Dance To Joy Division’. But in writing new album ‘Glitterbug’, frontman Murph found himself letting the darkness into his own life, learns Mark Beaumont

PHOTOS: ANDY HUGHES

I’ve waited four years for this!” yells the teenager barging through the bouncing O2 Academy Brixton throng to the opening synth twinkles of ‘Techno Fan’. “FOUR YEARS!” It’s a scene that’s being repeated around Europe, where

The Wombats – frontman Matthew ‘Murph’ Murphy, hyperactive bassist Tord Knudsen and wisecracking drummer Dan Haggis – have been met with heroes’ welcomes from their public. The lager flingers of Bristol go equally insane. The snogging couples of Cologne jump enthusiastically into the frugging mass. And in Berlin, they appear to mistake The Wombats for Bring Me The Horizon. “The crowd there were doing circle pits from the word go and they never stopped,” says Murph, hunched, hungover, in a back bar at Cologne’s 2,000-capacity E-Werk. “They did it to everything – they were circle-pitting to ‘Little Miss Pipedream’, which is the only slow one we’re playing at the moment. There was one guy who didn’t have a top on who was completely ripped; I just didn’t know that we had fans like that. It was great – they act like metalheads but they aren’t.”

Putting your finger on what a Wombats fan looks like is not easy. The trio are among the last – and among the most enduringly popular – of the bouncy alt-pop class of 2007 that included The Pigeon Detectives, The Fratellis and The Holloways. It’s the generation of bands written off as ‘landfill indie’ by a particular type of cultural commentator, pariahs for being late to the pointy-shoe party. But that’s not the real story. Their second album, ‘This Modern Glitch’, hit Number Three in the charts in 2011, eight places ahead of the peak achieved by 2007

debut ‘A Guide To Love, Loss & Desperation’. Last month, ‘Glitterbug’ – their third – reached Number Five, and the band announced a tour involving a show at London’s 7,300-capacity Alexandra Palace – not too shabby for three ‘has-beens’. “It was pretty disparaging to be lumped in with that ‘landfill indie’ thing, being surrounded by other bands that I wasn’t too happy being surrounded by, or that I thought we were better than,” says Murph. “I think a few people went quite sour towards the band at the end of that first album.”

Key to their success this time is evolution. Ignoring the chance to align with the next generation of good-time indie bands – Peace, Superfood, Circa Waves et al – The

Wombats instead recruited Bastille producer Mark Crew, who, in a Battersea studio, slathered the record with the same sort of epic bluster and quasi-EDM synths. It means it can slip edgelessly into the mainstream, which is fine by Murph. “I don’t think in terms of ‘indie’ really,” he says. “Should I? There’s something about the word ‘indie’ that doesn’t excite me any more. It puts a limitation on what I think we’re capable of. I think we’re a pop band. But I do think this album sounds a bit more leftfield than the second one. Maybe we will do weirder stuff, but the idea of me staring down at my guitar pedals and no-one dancing isn’t very appealing to me. I’d prefer people to be going completely ape-shit and dancing around to songs they’ve heard on the radio a lot.”

Oddly, for songs designed to get people moving, ‘Glitterbug’ is a record borne of darkness. The album tells of abusive relationships, parties spiraling into drug-crazed paranoia, downers, loneliness and romantic affairs so epically disastrous they could’ve been written by

Sophocles. It’s a record coloured by infidelity, drugs, lust and long dark nights of the soul. And it all sprung from Murph circling the globe creating drama for himself.

“I need to keep moving to find inspiration,” he says. “I went to Barcelona for a week and I’d just sit in a square and get drunk – the song ‘Pink Lemonade’ came from

that. I just upped and fucked off, and my girlfriend at the time, she went out and I had these ideas that she was fucking other people. I actually forced the paranoia.... Sometimes I purposefully fuck myself up to get a song out of it, I suppose. I wouldn’t purposely fuck up a relationship, but I do tend to say, ‘Right, I’m gonna go away for a while now.’”

The album traces the fall of a relationship in London and the rise of a new one in LA, where Murph would disappear for long stretches to hang out with friends and write. His Hollywood A-list adventures went as far as once inadvertently spilling red wine on *Twilight* star Robert Pattinson. But mostly, Murph’s California was a place of spiritual exploration. “Being in LA, you end up in a fucking tarot reader’s place,” he says. “I went to one and he got some things scarily correct. One of them was: ‘You have to stop playing the victim at some point. There’s going to be a point where you choose not to do that and it’s going to influence the rest of your life’. I’m still waiting for it.” ➔

“The word ‘indie’ doesn’t excite me any more”

MATTHEW MURPHY

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"The album is about losing control – and accepting it"

MATTHEW MURPHY

'Glitterbug' certainly paints Murph as a victim – mostly of his ineptitude around women. In the album's lyrics, tangled webs emerge, half fiction, half real life. 'Curveballs' is about discovering your partner favours an open relationship, to the point where there are "six hands in one bed". 'Isabel', inspired by someone he met on "a bizarre night in Las Vegas", is about going out with someone far more rock'n'roll than him: "God, you must be the biggest caner this world has ever seen". And there are numerous examples of romantic self-degradation, whether feeling inadequate next to a woman on 'Your Body Is A Weapon', going broke trying to keep someone happy on 'Emoticons', forseeing the nightmare break-up from the start on first single 'Greek Tragedy' or even, on 'Be Your Shadow', violence: "Kiss me with your fist, it's alright, wrap your hands around my throat, I won't mind". *50 Shades Of Grey* has a lot to answer for.

"'Be Your Shadow' was kind of positive to me," explains Murph. "I guess there was some kind of 'There Is A Light That Never Goes Out' button that I was trying to push. Isn't that like the essence of being romantic? Just being prepared to take as much shit as someone can throw at you and then still be loving back? I never thought about it as being in an abusive relationship. It's more of a twisted way of saying, 'I'd do anything to stay with you.' Maybe it's a love of playing the victim as well."

Murph certainly tortured himself writing 'Glitterbug'. "On this album most of the creative process is me freaking out in a room in Stoke Newington until 6am," he says. "There were kind of a lot of late nights and chain smoking and losing the plot about a couple of words." It reminded him of something Paul McCartney told him when he was a student at the former Beatle's Liverpool Institute For Performing Arts. "He said he spent two weeks trying to find one word once," Murph remembers. "And it was 'boat'."

Hard living plays its part on the album, too. There are references to "Vicodin on Sunday night" in 'Give Me A Try' and 'This Is Not A Party' details that wrecking point around dawn when "Edward's on the big white telephone to God/Charlie's coming on to every person he can touch". It sounds a lot like the party started to turn sour. "In 2013 there was one very odd weekend," Murph nods. "It was in

Murph braves the
lager flingers at the O2
Academy Bristol, April 8



Murph on...

Doing a solo album

"My heart and soul has been in The Wombats for 12 years now, and I would like to explore something else. I think Dan and Tord would like to as well. I don't know what a solo album would be like and I can't be bothered for it to be a vanity thing."

Man's best friend

"I recently got a pet dog called Daisy and it's opened up this whole new side of me – like suddenly I've found my soul. She's insane. She was a foster dog and she can open fridges and untie knots."

Playing arena shows

"Our sights are aimed high, but I don't know if we'll make it to arenas. I'm really excited about playing Alexandra Palace on October 1. I'm just greedy and I want to play something bigger and bigger all the time."

my old apartment in Shoreditch – there were four parties that happened in one night. There was like this revolving circuit of friends that would come and then they'd go somewhere else, then somewhere else. It was like being at Alton Towers going to different rides – just a very weird night. And Vicodin was used because the chorus was just too cheery. I was like, 'Let's shove something miserable in there.' Everyone loves downers in LA, it's very strange." Did it start to feel as though the lifestyle was controlling you? "I think as a band we're pretty good at moderating all of that stuff," Murph says. "But the first and second album especially, you kind of get dragged around a little bit and you're doing things that are essentially fun but you don't know if you're in control of everything that's going on. Maybe that's actually what the album's about – losing that control and becoming accepting of it."

When The Wombats first bounded onto the scene, there was an element of merry prankster about them; they used to cover the *Postman Pat* theme in Norwegian. They had a cuddly wombat, Cherub, who they claimed was their fourth member. Things seem a bit more serious now. Ask Murph which acts he feels aligned to and

he'll drop some surprising names: Morrissey, The Smashing Pumpkins, Depeche Mode, [The Cure's] Robert Smith, "all doomed romantics in a way". And though they may be far more upbeat than their influences, in truth The Wombats are slipping bitterness, frustration, melancholy and inadequacy – real life, basically – into the mainstream, much as their heroes did.

The turmoil that influenced the album is, however, over for now. Murph's in a stable transatlantic relationship, and the band's bid to align themselves with the sound of the biggest 'indie' names of the 2010s is a gamble that seems to be paying off, even if Murph insists The Wombats "aren't in the world" of Bastille, The 1975 et al. Is the singer approaching a state

of – gasp! – contentment? "I feel like there's hope in that respect," he chuckles. "I am looking forward to hopefully settling down and being an adult sometime. I just feel like I might be addicted to the push and pull and how exciting it can be when it fucking blows up in your face." ■

Backstage at
Cologne's E-Werk,
March 30, 2015



Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY BEN HOMEWOOD

NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK



The Vaccines English Graffiti

**A genre-straddling third album
tears down the Londoners'
garage-revivalists image**



few months back, “we wanted to make something that sounds amazing next year and then terrible in 10 years!” Those words might read like a throwaway soundbite he’ll live to regret, but he makes a good point about how all albums, even the sacred cows, eventually show their age. People get hung up on creating something ‘timeless’, but music increasingly exists and is experienced in the moment, not in perpetuity. Why not make it for that and let the cards fall where they may?

That idea is slightly out of character for The Vaccines – timelessness always seemed to be what they were going

for, after all – and the same could probably be said for ‘English Graffiti’ as a whole. The Vaccines of old had a clearly defined identity as garage-rock re-revivalists fixated on the evergreen themes of teenage angst and inadequacy. This new iteration gleefully tears all that down: if lead single ‘Handsome’ (or what The Vaccines might sound like if they guested on an episode of *Scooby-Doo*) didn’t make it plain, their third record is all over the map. This isn’t quite the same band you remember, and it may not even be the band they ultimately become, but it’s the one that works best *right now*.

Even when ‘English Graffiti’ sounds like The Vaccines, it’s a kitschier, more colourful, hyper-stylised version. ‘20/20’ feeds bits and pieces from The Jam, The Beach Boys and Teenage Fanclub through Dave Fridmann’s sonic wheelhouse, with The Flaming Lips producer given far greater licence to colour outside the lines than either of his predecessors (Dan Grech on

2011 debut 'What Did You Expect From The Vaccines?' and Ethan Johns on 2012's 'Come Of Age'), who seemed content to let them plug in and play. He outdoes himself further on 'Dream Lover' by making Freddie Cowan's

OFF THE WALL

Three of 'English Graffiti's stranger influences...

American nuclear tests

Bikini Atoll is a coral reef in the Pacific Ocean where the US military carried out more than 20 nuclear tests between 1946 and 1958. 'Radio Bikini' seems to reference the 1988 documentary of the same name, which examined the effects of the tests on the atoll's original inhabitants and the American soldiers who participated in them.

Ariel Pink's beat-maker

In addition to working with Dave Fridmann, the band also enlisted the help of Cole M Greif-Neill, a former member of Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti, on beat-making duties. "He's been taking everything we record into the other room and chopping it up," Justin Young explained to NME.

"Really weird shit"

The album's 11 tracks were whittled down from over 100 demos, with several of those being what Young called "some really weird shit" that didn't make the cut.

'genre-spanning' is probably more accurate.

Will we look back on 'English Graffiti' in 10 years' time and laugh at how gauche and quaintly of-its-time it seems? Who knows? But we'll almost certainly look back on it as the moment where the question 'What did you expect from The Vaccines?' no longer had a straightforward answer. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

8

THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE May 25 ► LABEL Columbia ► PRODUCER Dave Fridmann ► LENGTH 34:52 ► TRACKLISTING ► 1. Handsome ► 2. Dream Lover ► 3. Minimal Affection ► 4. 20/20 ► 5. (All Afternoon) In Love ► 6. Denial ► 7. Want You So Bad ► 8. Radio Bikini ► 9. Maybe I Could Hold You ► 10. Give Me A Sign ► 11. Undercover ► BEST TRACK Dream Lover

MORE ALBUMS

Twin Shadow

Eclipse Warner Bros



Having established himself as a chillwave synth

lothario on 2010's 'Forget' and 2012's 'Confess', George Lewis Jr has decided he'd like to be a pop star. He's swapped 4AD for Warner Bros and taken a sledgehammer to any subtlety in Twin Shadow's music. The best you can say about 'Eclipse' is that it will sound at home on mainstream radio. He'd clearly like to be Prince, but on opener 'Flatliners' he's just sleazy ("If I could just pick you up there's one thing I'd be screaming out"). 'When The Lights Turn Out' is bombastic Europop, and 'Locked & Loaded' is one of several cringe-inducing slowjams. The restrained 'Turn Me Up' shows he hasn't entirely lost his touch, but it might be time he deleted Tinder.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

4

Nick Cave & Warren Ellis

Loin Des Hommes: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack

Goliath Enterprises

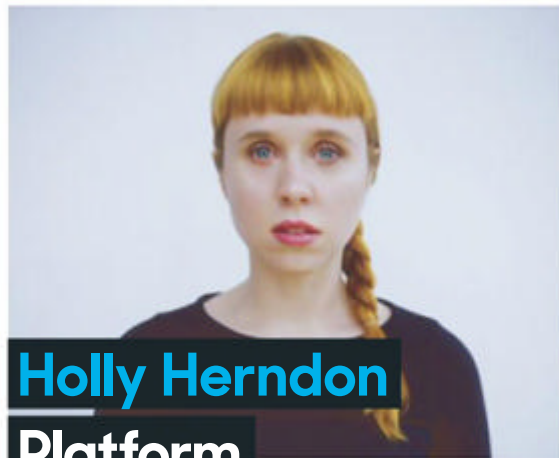


Loin Des Hommes sounds like the kind of film dirty old

buggers Nick Cave and Bad Seed Warren Ellis would make the music for, but it translates simply as *Far From Men*, which was a 2014 French drama based on an Albert Camus short story. As the song titles – 'Dead Horse', 'Dust Storm', 'No Class Today' – suggest, Cave and Ellis' score is impressionistic, and closely tied to the imagery and narrative of the film. The 14 tracks – almost entirely instrumental – play out as loose sketches of piano, violin and electronics, making for an ultra-sparse, carefully considered album. ■ PHIL

HEBBLETHWAITE

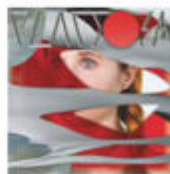
7



Holly Herndon Platform

The Californian academic's third album wraps protest songs in Knife-like electronic pop

It has become something of a cliché to wonder where all the protest singers are, as if the only way to tackle questions of politics through music is by pulling out an acoustic guitar. Holly Herndon offers something different. An academic studying at Stanford University's Centre for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics, here she tackles some very modern issues – inequality, the surveillance state – not through polemic, but through ideas. 'Platform', Herndon's third album and her first for 4AD, unveils sparkling, electronic pop that twitches like a corrupt video file, her voice fractured into glinting melodies. Unpicking the subtext occasionally involves close attention – when she sings "You know me/ Better than I know me" on 'Home', she's referring not to a lover, but the National Security Agency.



A good thing, though, as it means that – excepting curious conceptual moments like massage fantasy 'Lonely At The Top' – 'Platform' can concentrate on being beautiful electronic pop: think The Knife 2.0, perhaps. ■ LOUIS PATTISON

8

THE DETAILS

► LABEL 4AD ► RELEASE DATE May 18 ► PRODUCER Holly Herndon ► LENGTH 49:36 ► TRACKLISTING ► 1. Interference ► 2. Chorus ► 3. Unequal ► 4. Morning Sun ► 5. Locker Leak ► 6. An Exit ► 7. Lonely At The Top ► 8. DAO ► 9. Home ► 10. New Ways To Love ► BEST TRACK Chorus

Faith No More Sol Invictus

Reclamation/Ipecac



At their early-'90s peak, Faith No More were a

slightly weird fit with their alt-metal contemporaries like Soundgarden and Alice In Chains: experimental and ever-so-slightly screwball, they were lumped in with a lot of shit, but always rose above it. With their first

album in 18 years, the San Fran band (who disbanded in 1998 and reformed in 2009) have managed a rare trick – 'Sol Invictus' sounds like they've never been away. From the bluesy title track to 'Motherfucker's frenzied talk of smallpox blankets and cattle-brained conformity, the absence of original guitarist Jim Martin is soon overshadowed by just how focused this record is. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

8

Ceremony

The L-Shaped Man

Matador



In 10 years, California quintet Ceremony have shifted

from compact, thrashing hardcore to Black Flag-style nihilism to the snotty, Anglicised late-'70s clatter of 'Zoo', their 2012 Matador debut. Its follow-up reveals another stylistic shift, but sadly, a less inspiring one. 'The L-Shaped Man' sees frontman Ross Farrar mooning over his recent breakup in an echoey Ian Curtis voice, over Anthony Anzaldo's clean, doom-laden guitar. Ceremony's talent remains formidable, and this record is full of fine riffs ('The Party') and produced with aplomb by Hot Snakes' John Reis, but when Farrar pleads "Give your heart and soul to me" on 'Your Life In France', it's hard to obey him.

■ NOEL GARDNER

6

Wetdog

Divine Times

Upset! The Rhythm



After the release of Wetdog's second album

'Frauhaus!' in 2010, singer and guitarist Rivka Gillieron fell pregnant and drummer Sarah Datblygu moved from London to New York. It has taken the trio – completed by bassist Billy Easter, who plays in excellent post-punk band Shopping – four years to craft this follow-up. The long gestation has resulted in their best record yet. Introduced by the jarring 'Message', the 14-track 'Divine Times' is full of angular arrangements and playful interplay between clanging drums, chunky basslines and fidgety punk noise (see 'Small Talk'). Best of all is 'Sometimes I'm A Bitch', an unpredictable tangle of sweet vocal harmonies and stop-start rhythms.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

8

Paul Weller

Saturns Pattern

It won't scare the mods, but Weller's 12th solo album explores uncharted waters

Paul Weller's time with The Jam and The Style Council was marked by constant stylistic renewal, careering through genres like a speeding mod on a runaway scooter. For a long time, the solid rock of his solo years suggested he'd given up challenging himself, but late period triumphs like 2008's '22 Dreams' and 2012's 'Sonik Kicks' have found the 56-year-old broadening his palette once again, trying out styles from pulsing krautrock to harp-strewn jazz. Twelfth solo album 'Saturns Pattern' backs up recent promises of another shift in sound, sending him into uncharted, acid-spiked waters.

Across a concise nine tracks, Weller changes gear from the soft reverie of 'I'm Where I Should Be' to the revving Stooges riffing of 'Long Time'. Josh McClorey – guitarist for teenage Irish rhythm'n'blues revivalists The Strypes – adds daggers of electric slide to the latter, a reminder that Weller can spot fiery talent in even the most retro-minded musician. It's a point reiterated on the ticking funk of 'Pick It Up' and soulful closer 'These City Streets' by the vocal presence of Liam Magill, frontman of Canterbury psych



THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** May 18 ► **LABEL** Parlophone ► **PRODUCERS** Jan 'Stan' Kybert, Paul Weller ► **LENGTH** 43:30 ► **TRACKLISTING** ► 1. White Sky ► 2. Saturns Pattern ► 3. Going My Way ► 4. Long Time ► 5. Pick It Up ► 6. I'm Where I Should Be ► 7. Phoenix ► 8. In The Car... ► 9. These City Streets ► **BEST TRACK** I'm Where I Should Be

quartet Syd Arthur. 'Saturns Pattern' is the sound of Weller finding new ways to challenge himself.

Take bracing opener 'White Sky'. Based on Weller's sessions with psychedelic Manchester-based production duo Amorphous Androgynous (Gaz Cobain and Brian Dougans), it's a heavy drum groove, pinned down by a crunching guitar riff and shot through with growling synths and seemingly random overdubs, including what sounds very much like the studio computer crashing mid-song. "You can be king for a day/But still have nothing to say", Weller snarls, aiming his ire at an unspecified young pretender.

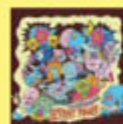
Keeping one foot in the past, the late-Beatles feel of cosmic love song 'Going My Way' ("Floatin' on the sound around/Flying through the universe") and 'Phoenix' – the album's simplest pleasure – aren't going to scare any longtime fans. But when even the stomping trad blues of 'In The Car...' is disrupted by bursts of squiggling synth and oblique piano jazz, Weller's promise of sonic surprises holds true.

■ STUART HUGGETT

7

Serpent Power

Skeleton Key



As The Coral's drummer, Ian Skelly's songs play second fiddle to those of bandleader and brother James. His 2012 solo bow 'Cut From A Star' was, therefore, a revelatory and heavenly set of daisy-fresh psychedelia. Now, he's teamed up with guitarist Paul Molloy (ex of The Zutons and The Stands) to

form Serpent Power. Their self-titled debut blossoms on cosmic synthesizer trip 'Lucifer's Dreambox', fuzz nugget 'Just A Broken Heart' and plaintive finale 'The Vision'. However, the record is undone by too much stale pastiche. Opener 'Dr Lovecraft's Asylum' comes off as a ham-fisted rewrite of Pink Floyd's 'Astronomy Domine', while 'Candyman' goes yet further back to ape 'Minnie The Moocher' by 1930s jazz singer Cab Calloway.

■ STUART HUGGETT

6

Róisín Murphy

Play It Again Sam



After taking a break to have children, ex-Moloko singer Róisín Murphy returned last year with 'Mi Senti', an EP of covers of classic Italian pop songs – an ambitious undertaking for a singer who didn't speak a word of the language. 'Hairless Toys', the 41-year-old's first album since 2007's glossy 'Overpowered', is equally

audacious. Murphy's music remains grounded in Hercules & Love Affair-style housey electronica, but these songs unfurl slowly and unconventionally as they take detours into skulking Grace Jones funk ('Uninvited Guest'), opulent cosmic disco ('Evil Eyes') and lush country balladry ('Unputdownable'). When Murphy lets her guard down on 'House Of Glass', singing about her "broken home", she puts a seal on a remarkable comeback.

■ NICK LEVINE

8

Reviews

Will Haven

Open The Mind To Discomfort

Artery



Will Haven's initial burst of cultish popularity, in the

late 1990s, was partly attributable to the era's nu-metal explosion. In truth, the Cali six-piece bore little resemblance to that crowd, or even pals (and fellow Sacramento residents)

Deftones. Their stifling crypto-metal owed more to early-'90s noise-rock bands such as Unsane. On this EP, their first release for four years, not much has changed. Grady Avenell bellows his lungs out over earth-moving basslines and guitars that will bring you out in a cold sweat; four short drone interludes break up five longer tracks that don't exactly reinvent the Will Haven wheel, but remind you of its industrious power.

■ NOEL GARDNER

7

Rose Windows

Rose Windows Sub Pop



This March, Seattle septet Rose Windows announced

that, "for the health of each individual band member", they were breaking up, making this second album their last. It feels like a statement of liberation: Texan vocalist Rabia Shaheen Qazi sings about escaping the capitalist rat race ('A Pleasure To Burn') and domineering men

('Hirami') over a borderless blend of folk, proto-metal and psych rock. 'Blind' portrays a soldier "uprooted from the garden of his youth" into a war he only half understands, its tender message a counterweight to the music's brawn. But elsewhere the political platitudes grate, and songs like 'The Old Crow' veer into jarring blues rock. 'Rose Windows', then, is a tantalising but inconsistent farewell.

■ JAZZ MONROE

6

Ex Cops

Daggers Downtown



Brooklyn alt-pop duo Ex Cops try out several different

identities on their debut album. Veering from the '90s guitar pop of 'Black Soap' to the title track's soulful balladry (which sounds regrettably like The Corrs) to punk on 'Weird With You', Amalie Bruun and Brian Harding sound like a different band on almost every track. Things get worse when they add Abba to the mix on the lightweight 'Modern World'. Versatility isn't necessarily a problem, and taken on an individual basis, some of these songs – notably the lush, melodic 'Tragically Alright' – are strong, but 'Daggers' is disjointed to the point of meaningless. Ex Cops come off less like artists and more like skilled impressionists who are yet to settle on a voice of their own.

■ JOHN CALVERT

5

Thee Oh Sees

Mutilator Defeated

At Last Castle Face



Thee Oh Sees have mastered the art of maintaining

a prolific yet diverse output without compromising on quality. Following a short-lived hiatus and a rejig of their line-up, the Californian five-piece's 14th album packs everything they're good at into one concentrated effort: frenetic rock, pulsating psychedelia and buoyant melodies. This nine-song, 33-minute record begins and ends with two of their finest songs in recent years, the throttling 'Web' and the dreamy 'Palace Doctor'. In-between, the new rhythm section of Tim Hellman (Sic Alps) and Nick Murray (Ty Seagall, White Fence) slot seamlessly into place, helping bandleader John Dwyer capture a sound that epitomises Thee Oh Sees: tight but unhinged, urgent but infectious.

■ CIAN TRAYNOR

8

Joanna Gruesome

Peanut Butter

JoGru veer between compassion and rage on exhilarating second album

Cracking open Joanna Gruesome's second album with a squall and a scream, 'Last Year' has singer Alanna McArdle repeatedly yelling "I will not" and threatening to crush some coward's skull. But the relationship in question swiftly goes from skull-crushing to pussyfooting ("I say nothing and you sleep in the day"), and a willingness to tolerate a bad relationship rather than risk loneliness.

'Peanut Butter's first six songs are rife with such indecision: lyrics about direction and commitment ('Crayon') and the inability to feel comfortable in relationships ('Honestly Do Yr Worst') are either screamed or cooed with the bored remove of someone desensitised to emotional violence. But this doubt isn't weakness. Within these songs, McArdle sings honestly about the way mental-health influences simple personal interactions. "I'm sick, I'm weird", she admits on 'I Don't Wanna Relax', which counterbalances her lyrical unease with the first of several rapturously silly cock-rock guitar solos on the album. On the muted grunge of 'There Is No Function Stacy', she highlights the way anyone who exists outside perceived social norms is viewed as "some variety of space alien".

This sensitivity to the nuances



of relationships is a crucial development for Joanna Gruesome, and the way their music veers between compassion and rage is an exhilarating dynamic they've brought into piercing focus on 'Peanut Butter'. 2013 debut 'Weird Sister' was fuelled by revenge fantasies; here, the five-piece – who used to be based in Cardiff but now live in different parts of the UK – channel their own power. McArdle's every scream is a sharp shock, while Owen Williams and George Nicholls' guitars play triumphant and tender. 'Peanut Butter' does more in 22 minutes than most albums do in 40.

The subject matter of the final four songs matches the music's unyielding directness, whether calmly accepting that a relationship is futile ('Separate Bedrooms') or calling out mind games with dizzy rage ('Psykick Espionage'). In context, closer 'Hey I Wanna Be Yr Best Friend' becomes a radically straightforward declaration where McArdle and Williams harmonise over a calm pulse before another brief pomp-rocking solo – a comic moment that works at the expense of their own sensitivity. 'Peanut Butter' sees Joanna Gruesome relishing the power of refusal, bending the tropes of macho rock and relationships to their own twisted whims.

■ LAURA SNAPES

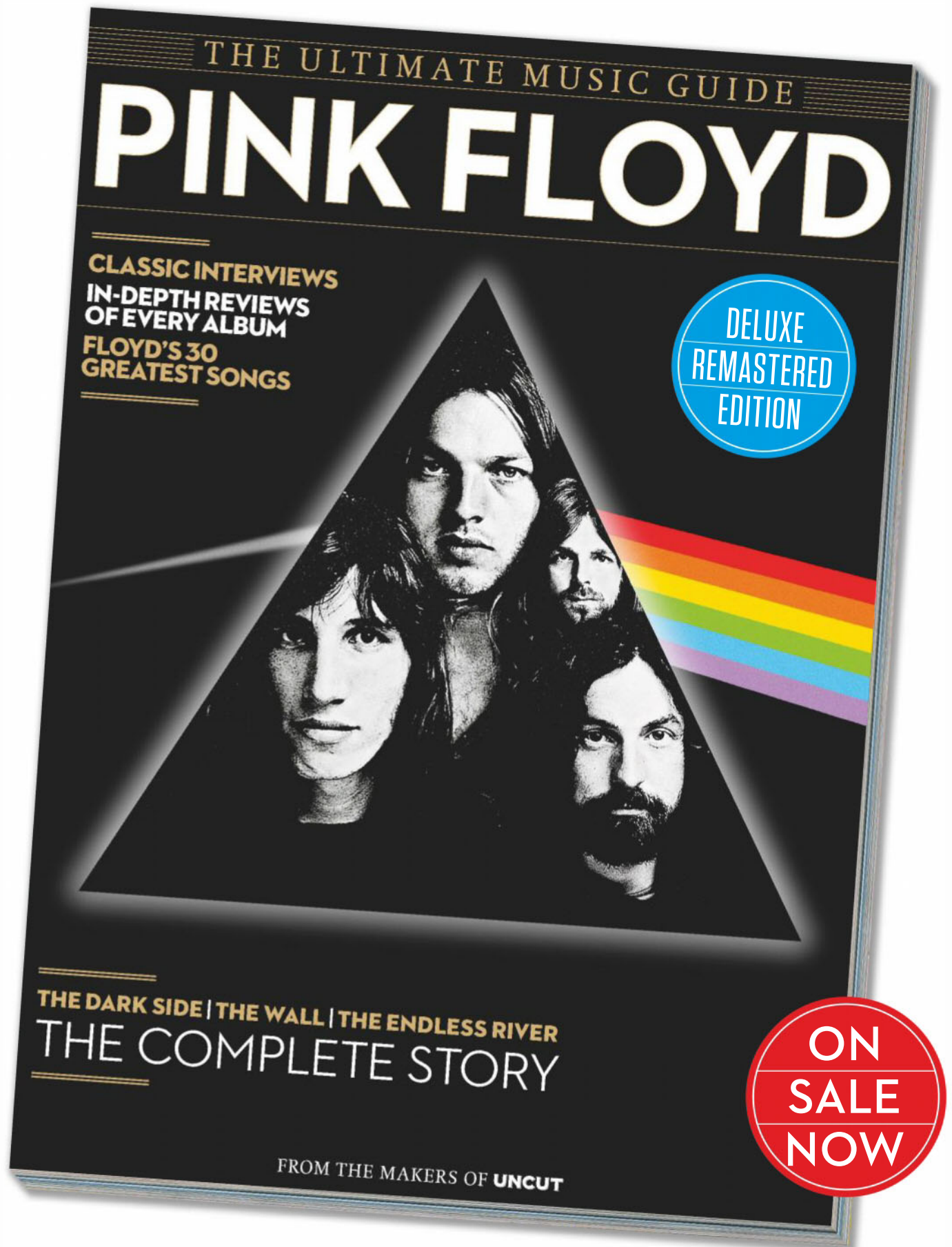
8



THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE May 11 ► LABEL Fortuna Pop ► PRODUCER MJ ► LENGTH 22:00
► TRACKLISTING ► 1. Last Year ► 2. Jamie (Luvver) ► 3. Honestly Do Yr Worst
► 4. There Is No Function Stacy ► 5. Crayon ► 6. I Don't Wanna Relax ► 7. Jerome (Liar) ► 8. Separate Bedrooms ► 9. Psykick Espionage ► 10. Hey! I Wanna Be Yr Best Friend ► BEST TRACK Psykick Espionage

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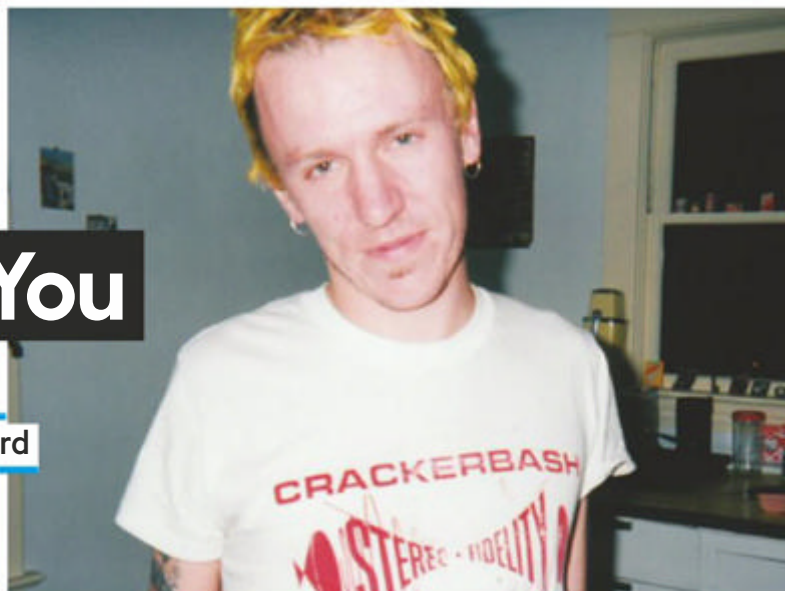


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FILM

Heaven Adores You

An intimate Elliott Smith biography reveals unheard music but lacks real bite



▶ Onstage at the Oscars on March 23, 1998, Portland singer-songwriter Elliott Smith performed the song 'Miss Misery' to a television audience of 55 million. The song was nominated for Best Original Song for its inclusion on the *Good Will Hunting* soundtrack, and the rendition heaped attention on a 29-year-old singer who said at the time: "I'm the wrong kind of person to be really big and famous." Fast forward 17 years. At the beginning of *Heaven Adores You*, Larry Crane – a Portland-based recording engineer and Smith collaborator – describes that glamorous night as "the worst thing, in a way, that could have happened to him".

It's a foreboding opening to the first official Elliott Smith biography ever made, and the first to use his music. Currently being shown in selected cinemas, the crowd-funded *Heaven Adores You* is directed by Chicago filmmaker Nickolas Rossi, who first worked with Smith on the video for 1995 single 'Coming Up Roses'. Previous accounts of Smith's life, such as the Gil Reyes-directed 2009 documentary *Searching For Elliott Smith* and Benjamin Nugent's 2003 book *Elliott Smith And The Big Nothing* felt rushed and incomplete, boasting a fraction of the access granted to Rossi. Here, Smith's career is detailed by those who knew him most intimately, from his sister Ashley Welch and ex-girlfriend Joanna Bolme, to a cast of journalists, collaborators and label bosses.

Rossi's vivid scrapbook of Smith's career milestones – from early band Heatmiser to his solo breakthrough and rise to stardom – makes the film's intent clear from the

outset: to separate Smith's story from his tragic demise. In October 2003, aged 34, he was found dead in Los Angeles, with two stab wounds to the chest. Suicide was suspected, but inconclusive autopsy results have made his death the subject of tireless debate ever since. Rossi consigns it to a simple on-screen message stating that the cause of death was never truly established.

The director spends time instead making the most of his unprecedented archive access, and we hear a wealth of unheard recordings, mostly very early stuff. But, while he pays admirable attention to the music, Rossi neglects to do the same with Smith's personality, and misses an opportunity to clear up some misconceptions about his life. For example: the singer's interest in drugs and alcohol is notably softened. Welch downplays the drug references in her brother's music, saying, "He was writing about drugs long before he was ever taking them." Lesser-known areas of Smith's life are glossed over, too, and in one scene Welch hints at her brother's troubled upbringing – he is alleged to have been abused by his stepfather – before suddenly dropping the subject.

The lack of in-depth probing could be down to the involvement of Smith's family, and Rossi has spoken of a desire to avoid making a "tabloid-style" film. This careful treatment results in an occasionally lacklustre but ultimately sensitive portrayal of a troubled character. ■ LUKE MORGAN BRITTON



▶ **DIRECTOR**
Nickolas Rossi
▶ **RELEASE DATE**
May 7

6

CINEMA

Spooks: The Greater Good



MI5's sleek London offices couldn't

be more different to Westeros And Essos, the eerie island setting of *Game Of Thrones*. Here Kit Harrington – Jon Snow in the fantasy series – swaps his sword for a handgun, playing ex-spy Will Holloway. Coming more than three years after the BBC show ended, *Spooks'* cinema adaptation revolves around the disappearance of agency boss Harry Pearce (Peter Firth) after a dangerous terrorist flees custody. Though its action sequences are exciting, the film never conjures the intensity of Doug Liman's *Bourne* series, its clearest influence. But a spectacular finale ensures *Spooks'* step up to the big screen is relatively smooth.

■ NICK LEVINE

CINEMA

Pitch Perfect 2



Loosely based on Mickey Rapkin's 2008 book *Pitch Perfect: The Quest For*

Collegiate A Cappella Glory, musical comedy *Pitch Perfect* became a surprise hit in 2012. This sequel sees fictional all-female a cappella group The Barden Bellas fighting to restore their reputation after a performance for the American president is derailed by a wardrobe malfunction the media brands "muffgate". *Pitch Perfect 2* is as cheesy as the original, but thanks to a witty script it's an infectious watch. *Twilight's* Anna Kendrick gets most screen time, but Fat Amy (Australian comedian and *Bridesmaids* star Rebel Wilson) supplies the funniest moments, including a memorable scene in which she belts out Grammy-winning New York singer Pat Benatar's '80s power ballad 'We Belong' while canoeing across a lake. ■ NICK LEVINE

47

CINEMA

Phoenix



World War Two might seem a worn-out subject for cinema, then something like

Phoenix comes along to prove that, 70 years on from the end of the conflict, we've barely scratched the surface of the stories waiting to be told. Writer-director Christian Petzold's careful, haunting, deeply thoughtful film follows Auschwitz survivor

Nelly (Nina Hoss – recently seen by English-speaking audiences in *A Most Wanted Man*) as she returns to post-war Berlin, her face altered by reconstructive surgery. But she is returning to friends, and a husband, who may have been the ones who sold her out to the Nazis. Hoss, superb and subtle, plays Nina as strong but brittle; a shattered woman struggling to make sense of a shattered world. ■ ANGUS BATEY

8

CINEMA

Anti-Social



Written and directed by Reg Traviss, ex-fiancé of Amy Winehouse, *Anti-Social* is a gangster flick set in early 21st-century London. Dee (Gregg Sulkin of MTV's *Faking It*) is a graffiti artist unaware that his brother Marcus (Josh Myers, who had a minor part in the 2012 remake of *The Sweeney*) leads a gang of jewel thieves. As Dee moves into

the art world, Marcus expands his criminal empire and the plot unravels into a story of thuggery and heists. Grime MC Skepta plays the steel-hearted Leon and the soundtrack features four original songs from Babyshambles' Drew McConnell. At times it's like watching two films stitched together, but as *Anti-Social* reaches its climax you realise how involved you've become in the brothers' stories.

■ ANGUS BATEY

7

Palma Violets

Chinnery's, Southend

Thursday, April 16



Bringing danger
to the club:
(l-r) Sam Fryer,
Jeff Mayhew,
Chilli Jesson,
Will Doyle

The gang head to the
seaside, prompting mass
devotion and utter mayhem

PHOTOS BY WUNMI ONIBUDO

▶ “DUR-NUR-NA-NA-NA-NUR-NURRRR!” Five minutes before stagetime, the ‘Seven Nation Army’ riff rises like a war cry from the moshpit. There’s a chant of “Let’s go fucking mental!” that sounds like it means business. And when Palma Violets tear from the side of the stage, grab their instruments like battle axes and bundle into ‘Rattlesnake Highway’ with a primal, rabid intensity like it’s the Cavern Club on free-speed-and-snakebite night in 1962, the first pint hits the ceiling just three chords in. Southend knows that the rock’n’roll riot club is making a stop on the penny-arcade circuit and it demands its indie-rabble thrills with minimal preamble. Within a song or two the first mosh acrobat rises to ➔

stand on his friends' heads and roars at the thrashing crowd with all the triumph of a World Cup winner and an expression that seems to say, "We must party like it's Andrew WK's 21st right now!"

For all their tracing of the Libertines blueprint – the slurry melodies, the hyperactive brotherhood vibe, the pissed-off-their-cheeseholes chanting – Palma Violets have become the most uninhibited night out in rock precisely because of their differences. Unlike the Libs, there's no sense of tragedy, fragility, addiction or fracture about them; they're this generation's providers of the sort of untainted, gang-like demento-rock larks that your grandad thinks died with punk, made your dad get an ill-advised Supergrass tattoo and is the root cause of your older brother's blind, unfathomable dedication to Pete Doherty. Their raucous unity inspires jubilation wherever they go, and doubly so in the danker provinces, so a tiny seaside club show like tonight's truly sparks with unbridled excitement. The entire front row is on its mates' shoulders by the time 'Tom The Drum' collapses in a heap of tangled chords, a wave of stage invaders give the limited security staff hernias and someone tries to steal the setlist while guitarist Sam Fryer's still reading it.

Off the main touring drag, Palmas can use tonight's show – the first of



THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Alex Deacon, 18, Billericay

"Amazing – it's the second time I've seen them. I saw them at Reading last year. It was even better this time."



Courtney Boreham, 19, Billericay

"Incredible – it's my first time seeing them. I got to the barrier and it was insane, crazy, I loved it."



Thomas Deacon, 18, Billericay

"Wherever you stood in the room, you felt part of it. Fantastic – 10 out of 10."



Fiona Petch, 18, Essex

"It was awesome, all of it. I'm very sweaty right now and also kinda drunk."

their latest trawl around the UK – to air more of second album 'Danger In The Club' than they could on February's NME Awards Tour with Austin, Texas, too. They've dubbed the record 'pre-punk' for fear that the phrase 'pub rock' stinks too much of East End oi-ness, but bar 'Rat Way Rock' (and the fact that they are, undeniably, rocking in a pub), there's little about the new material that makes you want to duck-walk

down to a Wilko Johnson fundraiser. Rather, it's a rambunctious British take on Americana pop: 'English Tongue' is Springsteen at heart; 'Girl, You Couldn't Do Much Better On The Beach' – which, judging by the sweaty stench that rises to greet it, makes the entire crowd shit itself in unison – ricochets with dweeby '50s surf riffs; and 'Matador' is a grinding grunge churn that sends the crowd spiralling into deranged circle-pits more regularly associated with the gnarliest Download Festival. Suddenly Chilli's slick, silk-shirted

A WAVE OF STAGE INVADERS GIVE THE SECURITY STAFF HERNIAS

Florida look makes a lot more sense and Palma Violets seem less like a Lahndahn knees-up high on red mist and meths, and more like a potential global concern.

That their dreadlocked roadie races out to play the harmonica solo in a frenzied 'Danger In The Club' and their merch guy Harry Violent leaps onstage to bellow back-up on 'Rat Way Rock' sends out a distinct message – if you've bought a ticket, you're in the band. As 'Johnny Bagga' Donuts' swirls out on its fantastic fairground waltzer hooks and 'Step Up To The Cool Cats' hits its beatnik finger-click high point, more and more bodies clog the stage until the barrier between band and fans dissolves and Chinnery's becomes one big celebratory hug-in. "AY WANNA BE YOR BEEHST FREEEYND!" Sam yowls on 'Best Of

SETLIST

- Rattlesnake Highway
- All The Garden Birds
- Girl, You Couldn't Do Much Better On The Beach
- English Tongue
- We Found Love
- Matador
- Tom The Drum
- Best Of Friends
- Johnny Bagga' Donuts
- Rat Way Rock
- Danger In The Club
- All The Cool Cats

►14





Chilli Jesson onstage in Southend

Chilli Jesson Q&A

That looked fun...

"I really enjoyed it, it was great. We've never played in Southend, but we're real big Dr Feelgood fans. The reception you get when you go off the beaten track slightly, they're often the best shows. Everyone's spoilt in Birmingham and Manchester."

It must be nice to see people go crazy for the new stuff...

Friends', and instantly makes a couple of hundred new BFFs.

What at first looked like a low-key warm-up tour to try out new songs on the road has become a blood ceremony to unite the Palma Army through this life and, it seems, into the next. As their trademark closer '14' – easily the most grandiose song ever written about a night bus to Putney – reaches its rapturous, anthemic finale, Sam bends out over the clamouring throng and delivers a chorus of Bob Dylan's 'Death Is Not The End' – "When you're sad and when you're lonely, and you haven't got a friend/Just remember that death is not the end". They're already 2015's most devotional band on the verge of becoming a culture-flooding phenomenon; now they're asking you to follow them into the dark. Take the plunge. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

"I know how hard it is for people to listen to new songs, I've been in their position, but it's been a really good reception, which is great. 'English Tongue', 'Danger In The Club' and '...On The Beach' are all going down really well, but it changes every night. Depends if you can get to the end of the song really. As long as we get to the end it's alright."

8

MORE GIGS

Sharon Van Etten Vicar Street, Dublin

Thursday, April 23

It's testament to Sharon Van Etten's authority as a songwriter that her performance can draw from an assortment of styles (rock, electropop, soul and country) and still hang together effortlessly. It helps that her four-piece backing band are accomplished musicians who clearly have fun together. As they barrel through songs stretching from 2010's second album 'Epic' right up to the title track of forthcoming EP 'I Don't Want To Let You Down', 'Give Out' and the closing 'Every Time The Sun Comes Up' emerge as stand-out moments. But the clear highlight of a night where the crowd is respectful and the artist is on form arrives when the band leave Van Etten alone to perform an untitled work in progress.

■ CIAN TRAYNOR

8

Stealing Sheep Bungalows & Bears, Sheffield

Monday, April 27

"We would've paid!" yells one pissed punter midway through Stealing Sheep's free-entry show. The Liverpool trio have strewn the room with balloons and their second album 'Not Real' dominates the set, with opener 'Sequence' launching a deft hour of psych-folk-goes-synthpop. 'This Time' comes on like like Django Django under a witch's spell, while Duncan Wallis from mathy Manchester outfit Dutch Uncles appears for krautrock lullaby 'Apparition'. "Grow a proper beard," our inebriated superfan rants at the stubbly guest singer, before cracking on with the best free night out he's had in ages.

■ ROBERT COOKE

8

The Fall



A slurring, gurning Mark E Smith steers a commanding run through his band's 31st album

Since erupting out of Manchester's punk scene in 1976, The Fall have never stopped moving, their career scratching a ragged, diagonal wound in British culture. The opening date of their latest tour, supporting raw new album 'Sub-Lingual Tablet' (their 31st), begins inauspiciously. The five-piece band appear late, grinding into 2007's 'My Door Is Never' with volatile leader Mark E Smith adding slurred vocals from the wings. They're notoriously erratic live, and a below-par show seems a strong possibility.

SETLIST

- My Door Is Never
- First One Today
- Quit iPhone
- Dedication Not Medication
- Mister Rode
- Auto Chip 2014-2016
- Weather Report 2
- Hittite Man/Junger Cloth
- Fibre Book Troll
- Stout Man
- Venice With The Girls
- Bury
- Theme From Sparta FC

As they reach the anti-mobile rant of new number 'Quit iPhone', however, the chemistry between the gurning, jerking Smith's wayward onstage presence and the tightly drilled musicians around him locks into place. Twin drummers Keiron Melling and Daren Garratt bash away perfectly in sync, and Smith snarls the track's "Quit looking at that phone" command into two mics at once.

The pressure increases through pile-driving current album workouts 'Dedication Not Medication' and 'Auto Chip 2014-2016'. Elena Poulou remains playfully aloof behind her synth, while Melling, guitarist Pete Greenway and bassist Dave Spurr, the core of The Fall since 2006, bow their heads in concentration. Most animated is Garratt, who joined permanently in 2013. His percussive contributions elevate the group's sound from

the narrow garage-punk channel that their most recent albums, 'Ersatz GB' and 'Re-Mit', occupied.

From 'Fibre Book Troll's immense krautrock clatter to the encore of 'Theme From Sparta FC', The Fall hit peak after peak. After all these years, they still sound vital and defiantly unique.

■ STUART HUGGETT

8

Nick Cave

Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow
Sunday, April 26

He might be playing solo in a civilised concert hall, but get too close at your own peril

In last year's fascinating Nick Cave film *20,000 Days On Earth*, there's a wonderful scene where the 57-year-old musician is going through his own archive with a pointing rod, telling the story behind a 1981 photograph of The Birthday Party onstage in Cologne. "We were billed by some promoter as the most violent live band in the world," he remembers wearily, "so what that meant was that every skinhead and biker and general lowlife and psychopath came along to these concerts." For those who haven't seen the film, the photograph depicts an audience member pissing on the band from the front of the stage. Something similar happened when he first played Glasgow, too, and while tonight's visit – which takes place in an all-seater concert hall more commonly used to host jazz bands and touring orchestras – is a rather more civilised affair, Cave can't help but project menace, his long, spindly shadow creeping up the auditorium wall like Nosferatu's. At one point, when a fan repeatedly tries to paw at him from the front row, he mock-admonishes

her that, "I'm in control here, not you." You never doubt that for a second.

His entrance, however, is made with a slight air of farce: taking a seat at his piano, Cave rummages through pages of sheet music, wanders off, then returns a moment later, having apparently found what he was looking for. "It's the first night," he shrugs, half-apologetically, as 'Water's Edge' softly murmurs into life. Though three of the four members of his backing band (Warren Ellis, Thomas Wydler and Martyn Casey) are current members of The Bad Seeds, these solo shows are a slightly different beast. Cave spends a good part of the set alone at the piano, while Ellis – usually found frenziedly shredding on a violin – sits cross-legged on his amplifier, leaning over to toll the bell on 'Red Right Hand', or wheezing away on an accordion during the rarely played 'Black Hair', from 1997's 'The Boatman's Call'. On 'Higgs Boson Blues', Cave crouches at the front of the stage while he knocks an audience member's fist against his chest, whispering "*Can*

you feel my heartbeat?" – and the hall is so rapt and reverent, you can almost *hear* it. There's an elegance and intimacy to the performance, but when he suddenly leaps up, voice booming with Old-Testament wrath, you're reminded of a jungle cat violently lashing out from the undergrowth: get too close at your own peril.

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Leigh Anne Elliot, 30, Glasgow

"I thought it was fantastic. I've waited to see him live for such a long time and it didn't disappoint. There's no-one else quite like him."



Amanda Cawley, 30, Glasgow

"I've wanted to see him since I was 15, and can't even begin to describe how overhyped this gig was in my own head. It wasn't a disappointment!"



Martin Taggart, 32, Glasgow

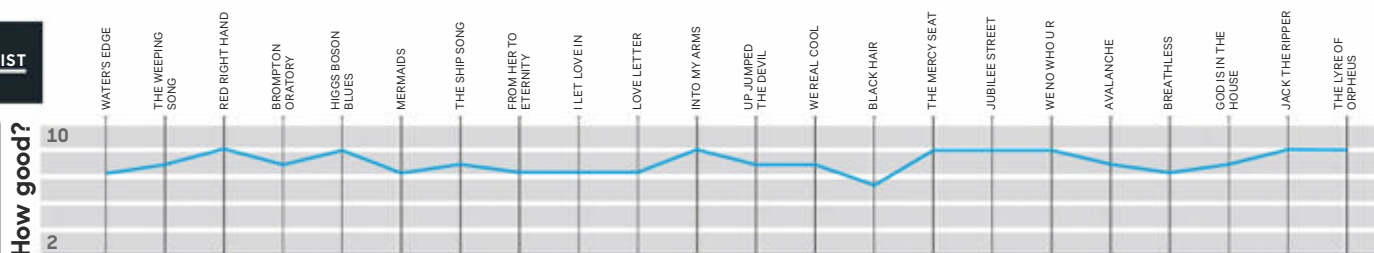
"This was my first Nick Cave gig, and he defined his own style, his own music, his own everything. The band were fantastic, particularly Warren Ellis, who I enjoyed watching."



Villy Karagouni, 28, Glasgow

"He's a real singer-songwriter who had nothing to prove, but he proved it anyway. There were so many highlights, like 'Red Right Hand' and 'Jack The Ripper' – it was unforgettable."

SETLIST





At other times, the vibe is informal, even jokey. "I don't know if we've played this song before, but it's a fucking classic piece of mid-period Cave," he says before 'Brompton Oratory', and later pleads with the audience to "speak clearly, because I can't understand you. I don't mean anything by it, I'm just Australian." 'Avalanche', meanwhile, is introduced with the disclaimer that, "If we fuck this up, it's fucking Leonard Cohen's fault for writing such a complex song." As piano-only renditions of 'Into My Arms' and 'The Mercy Seat' swell in intensity, however, Cave can become so transfixing that you almost forget to breathe, his tales of love, horror and

HE LEAPS UP LIKE A JUNGLE CAT FROM THE UNDERGROWTH

judgement unfolding like a particularly macabre zoetrope.

Returning to the stage for the encore, Cave asks the crowd what they want to hear next: "Anything but 'Stagger Lee'," he tells them, which is inevitably what most people call for. They don't get it – he's in control here, after all – but they are treated to a haunting 'God Is In The House' and a caustic, snarling version of 'Jack The Ripper', on which he thrusts and lunges at the crowd while his band moan away like a quartet of R&B zombies. He may be in a more sophisticated environment than usual tonight, but with Nick Cave, violence and danger are never too far from the surface. ■ BARRY NICOLSON

MORE GIGS

La Priest Secret Location, London

Thursday, April 23

Sam Dust's first gig with new solo project La Priest takes place in a tiny, Day-Glo painted shed at the bottom of a garden full of mirrored mannequins and other eclectic ephemera (Barbies, gnomes, a German rail sign). If you thought it was unlikely that the ex-Late Of The Pier frontman could venture any further down the rabbit hole than he did with his eccentric former band, think again. Clad in white silk pajamas, he flits between synths, samplers and guitar, linking the sparkling electronics of single 'Oino', 'Mountains' falsetto pop and the squelching funk of 'Learning To Love All Over' with impromptu jams and cries of "Hello shed!" to the 50 people crammed inside. Truly, Dust is a one-off. ■ LISA WRIGHT

9

Algiers Power Lunches, London

Wednesday, April 23

It's sweaty and fractious inside this crowded basement, but you suspect that's how Algiers prefer it. Playing their debut UK show, the three-piece – originally from Atlanta, now relocated to London and New York – offer a blend of glowering post-punk and fiery Southern soul. Bolstered by live drums from ex-Bloc Party man Matt Tong, the contrast between the guitar squalls of 'Old Girl' and the sinister death march of 'Remains' provides compelling drama, while every word hollered by singer Franklin James Fisher is mouthed with equal passion by synth player Ryan Mahan. Algiers mean it, man. Get involved. ■ SAM RICHARDS

8

The Districts



Green Door Store, Brighton Monday, April 27

Pennsylvanian quartet bring howling emotion to a sweaty, energetic south coast show

▶ Robby Grote is covered in sweat. A few songs into The Districts' first UK gig since the February release of debut album 'A Flourish And A Spoil', his curtain of curls is soaking wet. The Pennsylvanian quartet built their reputation on intense live shows, and tonight's is no different. They lock immediately into their swirling, folk-tinged rock and opener 'Rocking Chair' flies by, a rush of riffs and growls from Grote. 'Hounds' is similar, packed with energy and emotion that stays just the right side of earnest.

The Districts' intensity stems not only from their songs, but the power they put into playing them. Grote – sporting a bumfluff moustache – convulses with practically every violently strummed chord or howled, emotion-filled line. Bathed in green by the lights, he lurches from one side of the stage to the other like a man possessed. The venue is tucked deep into a railway arch beneath Brighton station, and drummer Braden Lawrence's clickety-clack rhythms during 'Funeral Beds' mimic the movement of the trains above. You can imagine festival crowds clapping along, but here the

audience just watches in reverent silence. '4th And Roebling' – about the street the band parked on when they first played New York – transports the room to Manhattan, Franklin's bass drum rattling like a subway carriage cutting through the dark and pulling into view.

However, the intensity wanes between songs, and things drag slightly as the band spool out noise from their amps to ensure there's barely a moment of silence. It feels unnecessary, a redundant attempt to build atmosphere when just keeping things moving would pin the intensity at just the right level.

The crowd's chatter threatens to drown out

Grote's evocative storytelling during the stripped-back 'Suburban Smell'. He raises his voice slightly in response and pushes even more feeling into the words, bringing the noise in front of him to a sudden stop. 'Young Blood' closes things out, an eight-minute-plus frenzy that builds around spiralling guitars. It ends with Grote crying, "It's a long way down from the top to the bottom", but its urgent noise finds The Districts at their heart-wrenching peak. ■ RHIAN DALY

SETLIST

- ▶ Rocking Chair
- ▶ Chlorine
- ▶ Hounds
- ▶ Long Distance
- ▶ Heavy Begg
- ▶ Lyla
- ▶ Peaches
- ▶ Suburban Smell
- ▶ Bold
- ▶ Funeral Beds
- ▶ 4th And Roebling
- ▶ Young Blood

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fri 15	O2 academy2	birmingham	sun 24	thekla	bristol
sat 16	the ruby lounge	manchester	mon 25	the bodega	
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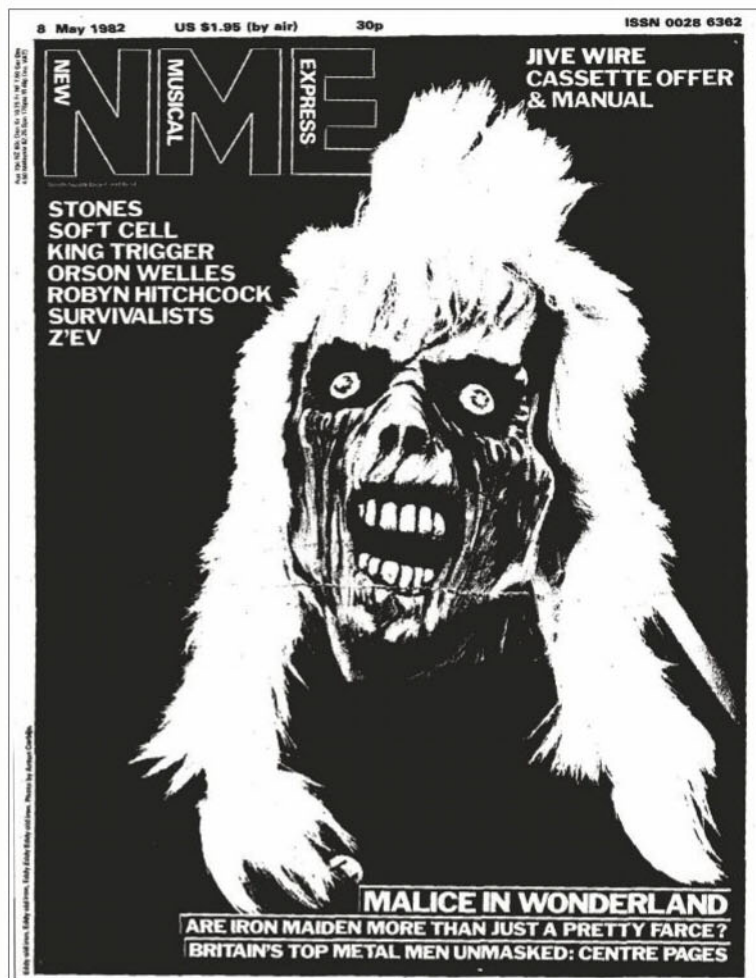


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THIS WEEK IN 1982



Maiden voyage

Heavy metal titans Iron Maiden are in Hamburg and intent on defending their "bland and superficial" kind of music

In a tour bus outside the Offenbach stadium in Frankfurt, *NME*'s Paul Morley finds Iron Maiden discussing their school days – singer Bruce Dickinson was thrown out of boarding school for "pissing on the headmaster's dinner" – and defending the new wave of British heavy metal. The band are figureheads of said movement, against Morley's accusations that it is "a pathetic attempt to introduce excitement into dull lives" and "bland and superficial".

"Fuck," says Bruce, "I would describe our music as being anything but bland. You put an Iron Maiden album on the turntables and watch your fucking mother-in-law drop the dishes." They consider their songs about rapists, monsters and murders "a good laugh... It's not as if people go away from our shows chopping people up with axes because of our songs." And is heavy metal's attitude to women inherently sexist, Morley asks? "There are only two songs that we've written about women as such, and both are really tongue-in-cheek," says bassist Steve Harris. "Fantasy fings about going with a prostitute."

MICK VS HACK

As The Rolling Stones confirm a show at Wembley Stadium for June, Mick Jagger braves a press conference packed with journalists at Le Beat Route Club. Although attempts to shunt him between tables of reporters turns into a chaotic scrum, Jagger is at least able to tell *NME*'s Andrew Tyler about his living arrangements. "I decided to buy summink in the country so I can enjoy it a bit. New York, that's a couple of rooms in the 'ilton. You've got to have somewhere."

SLEAZY DOES IT

Surrounded by fire-breathers, sexy ringmasters and midget ballerinas, Soft Cell's Marc Almond films a circus-themed video between fielding questions from *NME*'s Lynn Hanna about his fascination with sleaze. "I'm interested in the loser, the person who has to struggle to survive," he explains. He's talked to the girls, pimps and strip-club owners of Soho. "You meet people who are desolate and lonely," he reveals. "But these people are great because they'll let you right into their hearts."

REVIEWED THIS WEEK



The Cure - 'Pornography'

"The confessional returns, fragile, frightened,

horribly forlorn and very finely drawn. A killer of its kind."

■ DAVE HILL

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THIS WEEK

► **Legendary rock critic Lester Bangs is found dead in New York, aged 33. Suicide is deemed "unlikely" by "informed sources".**

► **Adam Ant has disbanded his band The Ants and embarked on a solo career.**

► **ABC's 'The Look Of Love' bags the Single Of The Week accolade from reviewer Gavin Martin, who concludes: "ABC are bringing it all back, the electric feeling that comes when you first lose your virginity to pop music."**



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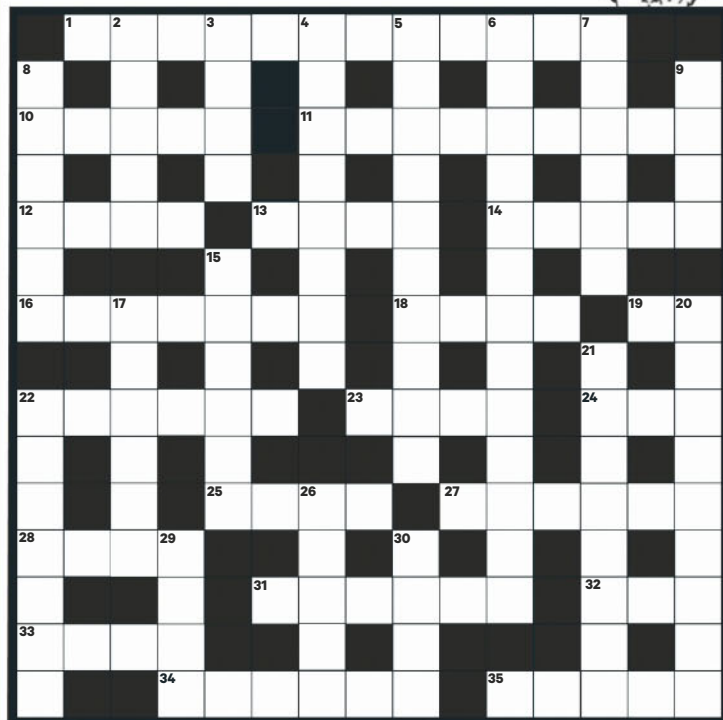
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CROSSWORD

Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Have spells of going on the lash with Blur (3-5-4)
 10 Annie Eve knows them and so understands the song (5)
 11 Roy sent to wrong setting for Neil Young recording (9)
 12 Singer with Morcheeba, she came 'Back To Now' solo (4)
 13 Singer with The Velvet Underground, she was the 'Chelsea Girl' solo (4)
 14 Kings Of Leon frontman _____ Followill (5)
 16+28A Three events arranged for Goldfrapp performance (7-4)
 18+20D Stevie Wonder classic from 'Songs In The Key Of Life', not released as a single but a hit for David Parton (4-3-6)
 19 Duet between George Michael and Mary J Blige was a bit of a disaster (2)
 22 Someone with a personality disorder gets a recent promo single from 3 down (6)
 23 Used wrong name for

- Belgian band (4)
 24 Prefixed by Verve in 1994 to avoid legal action from US jazz label (3)
 25 Charts the position for James Chapman, for whom 'You Will Find A Way' (4)
 27 We're ready to make a move with The Cars (4-2)
 28 (See 16 across)
 31 Natasha Khan, better known as Bat For _____ (6)
 32 "I know you _____, I'm still in love with you", from The Libertines' 'Can't Stand Me Now' (3)
 33 The Vines and Lana Del Rey have been on a similar trip (4)
 34 Warnings sounded out by Pearl Jam on a single and Nine Black Alps on album (6)
 35 'Had Enough' of them? 'You're Not Alone' (5)

CLUES DOWN

- 2+7D Cheery lot from 26 down who made 'Money' on this (5-5)
 3 They're making an appearance in the

- amusement arcade (4)
 4+15D Beneath an old lamp a song of praise sung in 'American Slang' (8-6)
 5 Get me an Echo And The Bunnymen album and make it snappy (10)
 6 Yes, the screen's in need of fixing for The Cries (3-10)
 7 (See 2 down)
 8 Alexisonfire, and there's an emergency situation on album (6)
 9 Jimmy _____, legendary songwriter whose sons are The _____ Brothers (4)
 15 (See 4 down)
 17 George Ezra is currently 'Wanted On _____' (6)
 20 (See 18 across)
 21 Soul bite turned out on Otis Redding album (4-4)
 22+30D "I will give you my finest hour, the one I spent watching you shower", 1978 (7-4)
 26 Hope acetate includes name of the band (5)
 29 "I'm looking for the light, light behind your _____", from Babyshambles' 'You Talk' (4)
 30 (See 22 down)

APRIL 25 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1+34A Desolation Sounds, 6 View, 8 Wild Frontier, 9 EC, 10+13D Isn't Anything, 11 One Fine Day, 17 Leafy, 21 US Male, 26 Age, 28 Envy, 32+31A In A State, 33 Was **DOWN** 1+23A+20A Down In The Tube Station At Midnight, 2+19A Silence Is Easy, 3+30A Life On Mars, 4 Thorn, 5+14A Out Of The Black, 6 Verve, 7 We Cry, 12 Nye, 15 Arabella, 16 Kim, 17 Lydia, 18 Alibi, 22 Abyss, 24 Train, 25 Oasis, 27 Evan, 29+23D New Shoes

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, May 19, 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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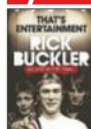


EXHIBITION Chalkie Davies - The NME Years

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► VISIT museumwales.ac.uk/whatson for more info

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luminaries along the way.

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BOX SET The Pretenders

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TRAILER The Visit

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► WATCH youtube.com



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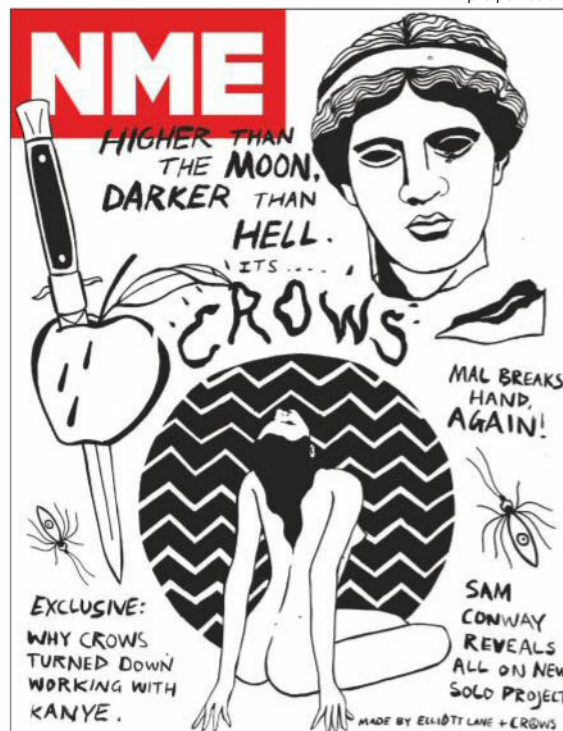
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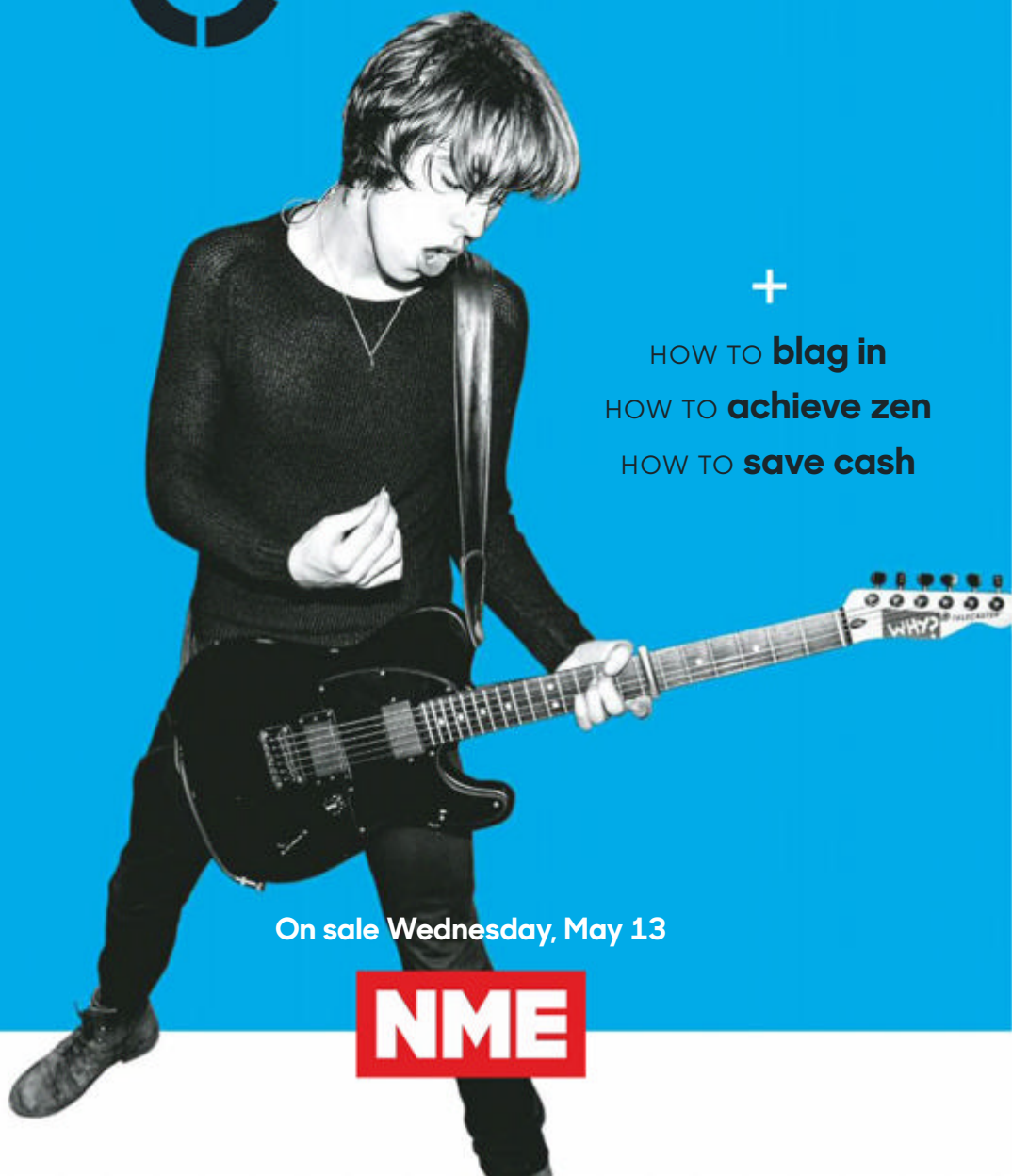
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