

NME

132 PAGES

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covers in
NME history

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1952-2015



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INSIDE



NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS | 1 AUGUST 2015

4 LETTERS

Whether it was called *From You To Us*, *Angst*, *Fanmail* or *Sounding Off*, the *NME* letters page has always been the place to tell us when we were right, when we were wrong, and why we should give you a job – and that's just Morrissey. Read his many missives and other entertaining celebrity communiqués here.

6 HISTORY

As *NME* prepares to make its great leap into the future, we look back over 63 years of the world's finest music magazine, from its origins as a Tin Pan Alley jazz mag to the bicep-troubling bumper issue you hold in your hands now. In the intervening years, we launch the singles chart, redefine rock journalism, throw countless awards bashes, make and break a million careers and argue endlessly about what goes on the office stereo. The story so far of *NME* is here.

14 BREAKING NEWS

While the world occupied itself with the moon landing, royal weddings and successive economic crises, we've always been more interested in what The Beatles had in their sandwiches. *NME* has been documenting the moments that shook the music world for more than six decades; we look back on some of them here.

26 FEATURES

We throw open the *NME* archives to revisit pivotal encounters with a troubled Nirvana, an enigmatic Bowie, Morrissey in his pomp and more. With words by some of *NME*'s biggest names through the ages, from Danny Kelly to Charles Shaar Murray, Steven Wells and Johnny Cigarettes, here are some of *NME*'s best ever features.

41 THE 50 GREATEST

NME COVERS

Clear a lot of space on your wall – we've selected 50 of the most iconic *NME* covers of all time and reprinted them in all their glory. Features: The Stone Roses, Joy Division, Amy Winehouse, Blur, Björk, Rihanna, Daft Punk, Ramones and many more.

106 LIVES

We revisit some of the most monumental onstage moments here, from early Arctic Monkeys shows to Rage Against The Machine sticking it to The Man in Finsbury Park via The Libertines playing a squat in east London. You had to be there! But not if you read *NME*...

124 PETER ROBINSON

VERSUS THE WORLD

It was a sad day for pop music when *NME*'s Peter Robinson retired his long-running *Versus* column, in which stars of the day were subjected to a dizzying barrage of personal, surreal and downright rude questions. The best are collected here.

126 THRILLS

We return to *NME*'s long-running 'humour' page *Thrills*, in which fake Wu-Tang members rub shoulders with made-up techno DJs, and we visit Mark E Smith's house and investigate the curious phenomenon of the "C-bag".

128 HOW THE HELL

DID THAT HAPPEN?

Damon dressed as Debbie Harry? That happened. As did Aphex Twin downing a bowl of lemons and us killing off a made-up band in a bus crash. How did it all happen? Because we just did it!



Letters

► Missives from famous NME readers, and a word about the future

EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear readers,

Before we begin the next chapter in *NME's* history, it's important to celebrate the first. For 63 years we've been passionate, argumentative and obsessive about the music that matters most to you readers and us staff. We were there when The Beatles exploded, saw first hand the birth of punk, turned Britpop into a national obsession and declared The White Stripes the saviours of rock'n'roll. We reported the news. We

created the news. We were the news.

If you're worried that this is the bell tolling for *NME*, don't be. Evolution and reinvention is what *NME* has always stood for, and it's what *NME* will continue to stand for. And on September 18, when you pick up a copy of the new free *NME* magazine, celebrate with us, knowing that the future is very bright for this vital and intoxicating old rag.

Until then, enjoy this 'best of'

special. We could never include every massive moment in our history, and we're bound to have missed something out that meant something big to you personally (and duly pissed you off no doubt!)

But then, isn't that how it's always been, and why you fell in love with *NME* in the first place? It's always been about the debate.

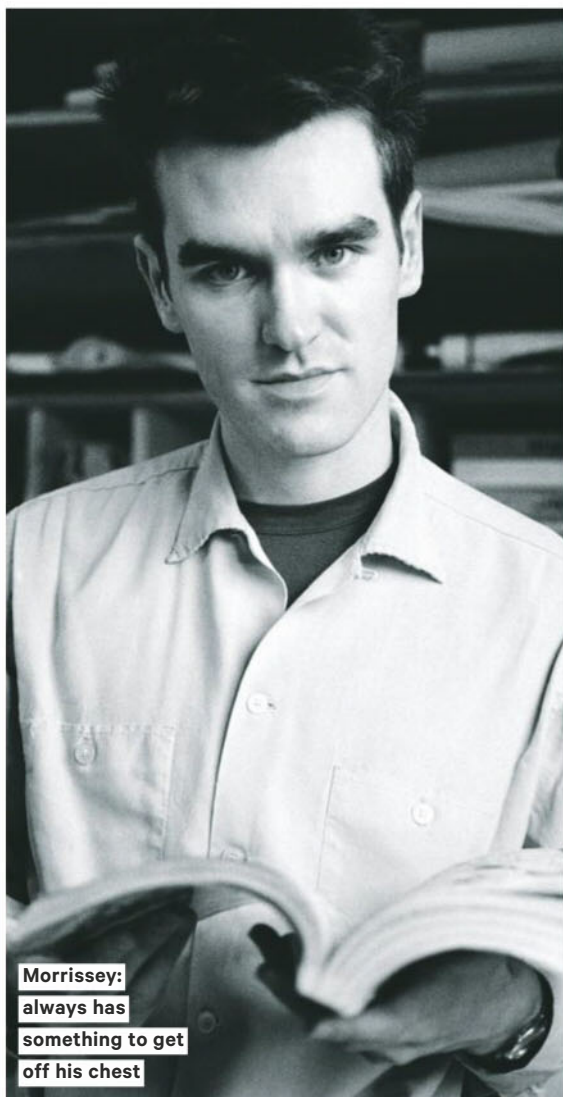
Long live *NME*.

Mike Williams, Editor

– we throw parties!” and “It doesn't bother us when people say that we can't play, when we met we actually couldn't”, etc, etc, but all these sweeping statements were launched in 1973, and when those same epigrams are repeated three years later by lesser mortals (ie Sex Pistols, Runaways, Ramones and Kiss), things begin to look synthetic. Methinks that The Dolls weren't the 'damp squib' that Nick Kent would have us believe because if you look closely at the increasing number of British 'punk' bands emerging by the shipload, you will see in each one, a little bit of the Dolls. I think it's time that *NME* broke the office rules and had an article on the New York Dolls. You know it makes sense.

November 1976

A mere further mention of punk rock would no doubt bring yawns from all quarters, as its five-minute stint at serious musical acceptance seems long overdue. The elements of punkitude are still apparent within my good degenerate self, however, and I have made the impertinence to inform the masses of a quartet infamously known as Buzzcocks who seem to fit so neatly into the punk category, yet have been eschewed from all chances of recognition. Buzzcocks differ only one way from their contemporaries: they have a spark of originality (that was important once, remember?), and their music gives you the impression they spend longer than the customary 10 minutes clutching the quill in preparation to write. Indubitably, Buzzcocks will hardly figure strongly – or even weakly – in the *NME* poll, and in these dark days



Morrissey:
always has
something to get
off his chest

BIGMOUTH STRIKES REPEATEDLY

Aged 15, Morrissey began a long-running correspondence with the *NME* mailbag on the topic of bands he'd seen and liked recently, including the Sex Pistols, The New York Dolls and the Buzzcocks. He also, in 1977, begged us for a job...

Today I bought the album of the year. I feel I can say this without expecting several letters saying I'm talking rubbish. The album is 'Kimono My House' by Sparks. I bought it on the strength of the single. Every track is brilliant, although I must name 'Equator', 'Complaints', 'Amateur Hour' and 'Here In Heaven' as the best tracks and in that order.

June 1974

I pen this epistle after witnessing the infamous Sex Pistols in concert at the Manchester Lesser Free Trade Hall. The bumptious Pistols in jumble sale attire had those few that attended dancing in the aisles despite their discordant music and barely audible lyrics. The

Pistols boast having no inspiration from the New York/Manhattan rock scene, yet their set includes '(I'm Not Your) Steppin' Stone', a number believed to be done almost to perfection by the Heartbreakers on any sleazy New York night and the Pistols' vocalist/exhibitionist Johnny Rotten's attitude and self-asserted 'love us or leave us' approach can be compared to both Iggy Pop and David Johansen in their heyday. The Sex Pistols are very New York and it's nice to see that the British have produced a band capable of producing atmosphere created by The New York Dolls and their many imitators, even though it may be too late. I'd love to see the Pistols make it. Maybe they will be able to afford some clothes which don't look as though they've been slept in.

June 1976

I thought it was terrific when David Johansen of the New York Dolls delivered such quips as: "Who cares about music when one has such sense of drama?", "We don't play too good but we can dance as bad as we want", and "We don't hold concerts

when Patti Smith, Loudon Wainwright or even The New York Dolls fail to make an impact on Radio 1 DJs, common sense is therefore not so common. Both this letter and Buzzcocks themselves will probably be filed and forgotten. But for now, they are the best kick-ass rock band in the country. Go and see them first and then you may have the audacity to contradict me, you stupid sluts.

January 1977

After witnessing Johnny Thunders & The Heartbreakers live, my much revered Carly Simon, Loudon Wainwright, Jefferson Airplane, Buffy Sainte-Marie, The New York Dolls, Phil Ochs and Patti Smith albums are presently smouldering on a low light. Don't talk to me about any band but the Heartbreakers because I just won't listen – these boys are newer than the New Wave and (surprise!) they can play! What's even more amazing is that the Heartbreakers' music is both memorable and professional, something which is seemingly least expected from a New Wave band. The '70s start here. PS: I work for the Inland Revenue – am I still allowed to be a punk?

April 1977

The Nosebleeds have also noticeably metamorphosed though probably due more to personnel changes than anything else. Last year they were the entirely forgettable Ed Banger And The Nosebleeds (who 'created' the dirge-like single 'Ain't Bin To No Music School'); now Banger has gone his own so-called eccentric way. The Nosebleeds resurface boasting A Front Man With Charisma. Lead singer is now minor local legend Steve Morrisson, who, in his own way, is at least aware that rock'n'roll is about magic, and inspiration. So The Nosebleeds are now a more obvious rock'n'roll group than they've ever been. Only their name can prevent them being this year's surprise.

May 1978

THAT SHIT KRAY

In 1987, while doing time for murder at Her Majesty's Prison Gartree in Leicestershire, notorious criminal Reggie Kray wrote a letter addressed to then-editor Ian Pye at the recommendation of one "Jooles Holland" to ask if we'd cover his mate Pete Gillett. Knees were shaking...



May 1987

A HARD DAY'S WRITE

Barely a week went by in the '60s without a note from the Fabbos arriving in the office. Such avid readers were The Beatles, in fact, that 'From Me To You' was named after the NME's letters page, then called *From You To Us*. The 'Alley Cat' mentioned in the January 1964 letter (below) was NME's gossip column. The postcard was a thank you for a Poll Winners' Party award. And come the '70s, John Lennon used the letters pages of the music press to send lengthy diatribes.

Dear Chris, Al and folks! Having fun, we've ordered NME (just to read Alley Cat of course). See you soon. Ta-ta. John, Paul, Ringo, George, from Paris.

January 1964



December 1968

If Chris Van Nose is referring to John and Yoko's 'Live Jam' album, it was never intended to go out until January. This

kind of dirt doesn't do any of us any good, least of all Paul and I. I suppose the story is based on the 'Happy Xmas (War Is Over)' single, which nearly didn't come out in the USA too. (As you know Northern Songs prevented its release in Britain). If your groupie from LA thinks I'm trying to steal a march on Paul with a live album (recorded in Lyceum Ballroom 1969 and Fillmore East with Frank Zappa 1971), and possibly part of John Sinclair benefit Concert (10th Dec '71) he must be dafter than I thought! – anyway, this is a John and Yoko album to boot! As for the Dylan and God and Buddha rumours, we'll see about that one... PS. By the way, EMI/Capitol are trying to prevent anything recorded by John and Yoko coming out unless we admit it's a Beatles record – ie, low royalty. (They only decided this after 'Imagine'!) Puzzled, John and Yoko

January 1972

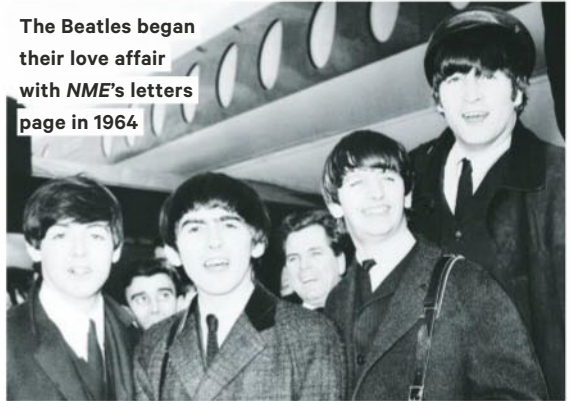
TOO RYE OII!

Kevin Rowland would often fire off poison pen missives to NME when he felt slighted. Here he takes issue with a misinterpretation of label offers, but he would also take umbrage when our gossip page correspondent insinuated that he'd been seen wearing a crap coat.

Re: your piece on myself in NME (April 15). It was nice to see the positive mention of 'Don't Stand Me Down' (my favourite Dexy's LP). However, I am frustrated at realising once again that the reason we're not currently recording is due to the lack of an "acceptable offer from an understanding record company". This is not true. The idea that this was the case did not come from me, but from the author

of the spring '93 piece, Stuart Bailie. He presumed it, he didn't ask me. We could make a record any time we want. There have been offers that are more than "acceptable" in every

The Beatles began their love affair with NME's letters page in 1964

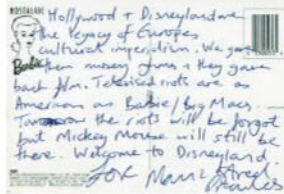


respect. I'm in the fortunate position of being able to do what I want and at this point I choose not to make a record.

May 1995

RICHEY GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

While on tour with the Manics in 1992, NME's Stuart Bailie had this note pushed under his hotel door, Richey exploding The Truth behind the façade of consumerist Amerikkka.



May 1992

THE LAST (WEIRD) WORD ON THE MANICS

We think this letter means that Pete Doherty was fine with the Manics going MOR, but hated his thicko schoolmates.

About your Manics article (NME, April 19). Mr Wells knows the Manics are middlebrow and they probably always have been. Kafka, Camus and Proust sit snugly on shelves



in assorted bedrooms around England, but if their owners were led to them by the inside of a CD cover, the true motivation stretches as far as the need to drop an esoteric title into a conversation in the common room. I know, I have to listen – and I have to clear up the mess. You can take a sixth-former to a Penguin Modern Classic but you can't make him think. The Marxists, Situationists [sic], pseudo-bisexual BAD POETS avec eyeliner, pseudo-leopardskin BAD POETS sans eyeliner and the rest of the Cult Of Nothing should accept, for the last time, that with Richey went all feeble hopes of purity and guitars and profound graffiti. Don't hold it against the lads – they want to do it. They are comfy. And they know that there is more chance of social equality through conformity than through locking yourself in a hotel bathroom and shitting in your purse. Besides which, the middlebrow ethos is far more revolutionary than the self-conscious political seriousness school of thought. PS. That's the final word on the Manics. Forever. So all fanzines must stop. Let it be known.

May 1997

AXE HERO

Addressed to Swells, this note came wrapped around an actual axe. Still, it was better than the turd that Jeremy from The Levellers sent to Andrew Collins...

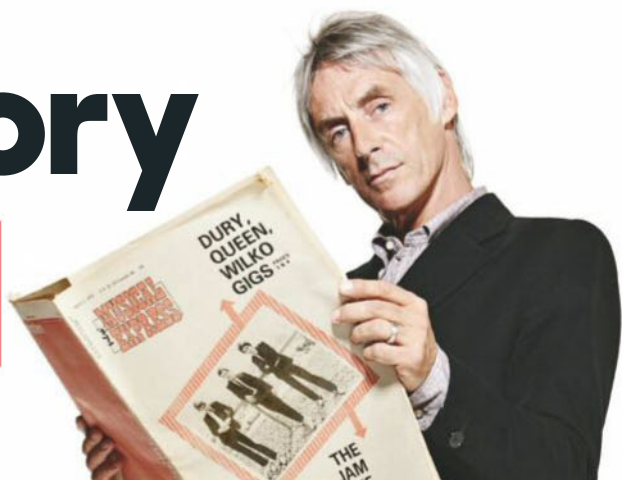
"LET'S BURY THE HATCHET" – Bono
Sometime in the late '80s

History

► NME's first 63 years in six pages



A brief history of **NME**



In its 63 years on the newsstands, **NME** has intertwined with the history of rock'n'roll more intimately and exhaustively than any other publication. As we prepare to make a bold leap into the future, Barry Nicolson takes a look back at six and a half turbulent decades reporting from the front line of popular music



As any writer who's ever refereed the letters page will tell you, nothing boils the blood of *NME* readers quite like a list. Of what, it hardly matters; music fans rarely

need an excuse to vent over the arbitrary and subjective. So it's fitting that it was an act of list-making which first put *The New Musical Express* – the mongrel offspring of a 1946 merger between two ailing music publications, the *Accordion Times* and the *Musical Express* – on the map.

In 1952, with the *Musical Express* (they'd long since dropped the *Accordion Times* bit) just minutes away from going into receivership, London music promoter Maurice Kinn agreed to buy the paper for the sum of £1,000. On the cover of its final issue, he promised readers that its new guise would be, "fresh and stimulating, because *The New Musical Express* will be produced by a brand-new, handpicked staff of editorial experts with long experience in music journalism".

Sure enough, *The New Musical Express* – whose first issue was dated March 7, 1952 – had a vibrant, lively tone which distinguished it from the dryer, dourer style of its main competitor, *Melody Maker* (a rivalry which would continue for the next 50 years). The paper continued to struggle for its first eight months, however, until Kinn – following the lead of the US trade magazine *Billboard* – decided to publish a weekly rundown of the best-selling releases in the record shops of London. Topping sales on that first week of November 8, 1952 was American crooner Al Martino with 'Here In My Heart' and, 3,272 weeks later, Kinn's editorial gimmick lives on as the UK singles chart.

At a time when a song's popularity was still measured by the sales of its sheet music, Kinn



March 7, 1952

NME's first issue hits the newsstands

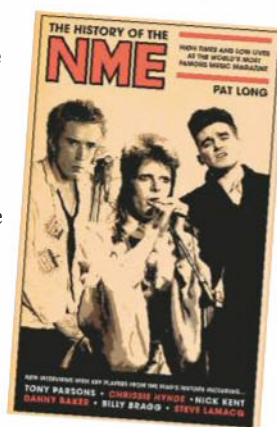
and Percy Dickins, his second-in-command, had been far-sighted enough to predict the phonograph record's explosion in popularity, and within a few short weeks of the chart's introduction, *NME* saw a 50 per cent rise in circulation.

What they couldn't have foreseen, however, was the effect the chart would have on the course of British music and, ultimately, of the magazine itself.

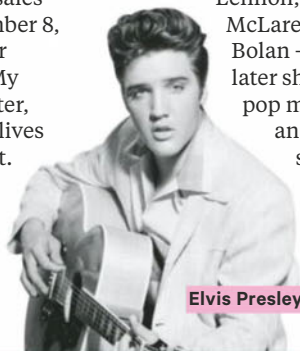
The 1950s were the age of the teenager, and of a new kind of music made for, and often by, them: rock'n'roll. While the jazz-minded *Melody Maker* adopted a generally dismissive view of rock'n'roll, seeing it as a strange American fad that would inevitably pass, *NME* looked at their singles chart and saw a fast-growing niche not being catered for by anyone else. In *The History Of The NME*, his superlative chronicle of the title's first 50 years, former staffer Pat Long writes that, "by the autumn of 1956, the paper was full of pieces on Fats Domino, Elvis, Bill Haley, Carl Perkins, Gene Vincent and the 13-year-old Frankie Lymon. Reading these interviews with wonder were hundreds of the children – among them John Lennon, Malcolm McLaren and Marc Bolan – who would later shape British pop music". It was

an early example of the almost symbiotic relationship *NME* has, at various points throughout its history, enjoyed with the musicians featured in its pages.

Yet precisely because of that relationship, the paper's fortunes



Introducing the
singles 'hit
parade' in
November 1952



Elvis Presley

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME?

Major stars' first appearance on the *NME* cover



► **Fleetwood Mac**
January 24, 1970

► **David Bowie**
July 15, 1972

► **Joy Division**
January 13, 1979



► **The Smiths**
February 4, 1984

► **The Stone Roses**
November 18, 1989

► **Blur**
July 20, 1991



► **Oasis**
June 4, 1994

► **Muse**
November 30, 2000

► **The Strokes**
June 9, 2001



► **The White Stripes**
August 11, 2001

► **The Libertines**
June 8, 2002

► **Arctic Monkeys**
October 29, 2005

DR. DRE EAZY-E ICE CUBE

STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON



IN CINEMAS AUGUST 28

LEGENDARY

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UNIVERSAL

have always been tied to the strength of the scenes it reports on, and at the dawn of the 1960s, with the rock'n'roll craze seemingly at an end and the British pop charts barren, *NME*'s sales dwindled once more. In 1962, Maurice Kinn finally decided to offload the paper to media magnate Cecil Harmsworth King's newly-formed International Publishing Company (or IPC) for £500,000, though one of the stipulations of the deal was that Kinn could stay on as Executive Director. The sale was a decision Kinn would come to regret almost as soon as a Liverpool-based stringer (and future *NME* Editor) named Alan Smith wrote the words, "Things are beginning to move for The Beatles..." in early 1963.

The Beatles gave *NME* the first of its many second winds. They were a cultural phenomenon the likes of which had never been seen, but they were also right on *NME*'s doorstep, and far more accessible than the American rock'n'roll artists the paper had previously thrived by covering. *NME* fostered a close relationship with the band, who played the inaugural Poll Winners' Party in 1963, and every year after that until 1966, where their 15-minute set at the Wembley Empire Pool marked their final appearance on a British stage. Meanwhile, as London started to swing, *NME* writers began moving in the social circles of bands like The Rolling Stones (another Poll Winners' Party fixture), The Who and **The Kinks**, ensuring the paper became the newswiest and best connected of the music weeklies.

As those bands pushed pop music into ever-more adventurous and sophisticated territory, however, rock



The Beatles at the NME
Poll Winners' Party 1966

THE BEATLES WERE A CULTURAL PHENOMENON... THEY WERE ALSO ON NME'S DOORSTEP

journalism struggled to keep up. Music was becoming more expressive, more meaningful and more and more important to the young people who consumed it, but the house style imposed at executive level meant that *NME* was writing about Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix in the same glib tone we'd used for Cliff Richard. The weekly charts continued to dictate the paper's direction, and as tension grew between the younger staffers and the middle-aged editorial team, *NME* began to seem quaint, archaic and out of step.

Once again, *NME* entered the new decade in a perilous position and, in late 1971, Alan Smith was installed as Editor and given three months to turn the paper's fortunes around before IPC wound it up for good. But Smith would do more than that: he would hire an entirely new staff and embark upon a root-and-branch reinvention. "We're happy to stick pretension where it belongs," he told readers in his first issue. "Simply, *NME* will be an intelligent weekly paper for music people who rate **Beefheart**, but don't necessarily slam Bolan."

Two of the new writers Smith hired – Charles Shaar Murray and Nick Kent – were integral to *NME*'s transformation from a failing title on the verge of closure to the most successful one in the IPC stable. ➔



NME writers Charles Shaar Murray
(left) and Nick Kent (far right) with
John Cooper Clarke in 1978

COVER STARS

The artists who've graced the front of *NME* the most



Liam and Noel
Gallagher **78**



David Bowie
32



Damon Albarn
and Blur **30**



Arctic Monkeys
29



Manic Street
Preachers **25**



The Strokes and Julian
Casablancas **23**

7 MOST NME
COVERS
IN A YEAR

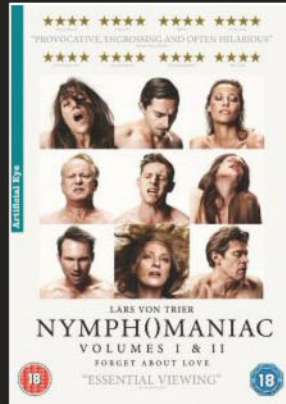
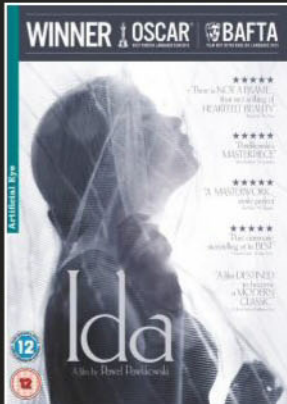
It's a tie between
T Rex (1972) and
Oasis (2002)



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Writer Mick Farren's 1976 feature on the arrival of punk

Poached from the underground press, Kent and Murray brought instant depth and credibility to the new-look *NME*: they were young, passionate and impossibly hip, and wrote about rock music with the eloquent conviction and high-mindedness it deserved. They also looked and lived like the artists they wrote about: it was a time of excess, of record company expense accounts, of flying around the world at the drop of a hat to go and hang out with Bowie, Jagger or

Led Zeppelin, and in true New Journalism style, the writers themselves often became the story. Kent's exploits, in particular, would become the stuff of legend: he would join an early incarnation of the Sex Pistols, got whipped with a motorcycle chain by Sid Vicious, and embarked on a doomed, smack-addled bromance with Keith Richards that almost killed him. These were heady times to be an *NME* journalist, but they were hazardous ones, too.

Under the influence of staffers like Charles Shaar Murray and Ian MacDonald, the *NME* office became a place where editorial meetings were held in clouds of dope smoke and copy was written on teeth-grinding amounts of amphetamines. It became a subversive countercultural bible, rock music's unofficial paper of record, but the arrival of punk – heralded by Mick Farren's seminal 1976 essay 'The Titanic Sails



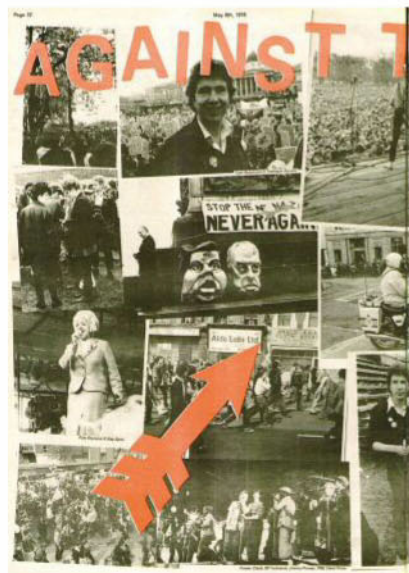
NME journalists Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons in 1978

At Dawn' – would propel *NME* to even greater heights.

While the paper had given the Sex Pistols their first piece of press coverage (and was later namechecked in the lyrics of 'Anarchy In The UK'), *NME* was slow to embrace punk, but the arrival of Tony Parsons and Julie Burchill would soon change that. After answering an ad in the paper looking for "hip young gunslingers", Parsons and Burchill would ultimately come to represent another changing of the guard: younger and better-connected to the punk scene than their predecessors, their writing gave *NME* an eloquence, influence and circulation which far outstripped its rivals.

Punk politicised everything it touched, and by the late '70s and early '80s, *NME* had developed a strong social conscience, editorialising against Margaret Thatcher and the National Front, championing the Rock Against Racism campaign and later throwing its support behind Red Wedge, a left-wing collective of artists committed to ousting Thatcher at 1987

General Election. But music – specifically new music – remained *NME*'s mission, and to some extent, the paper and emergent independent scene of the 1980s would come to define each other. *NME* faithfully reported on the goings-on at labels like Rough Trade, Postcard and Factory, but with its 'C81' and 'C86' cassette compilations, we also helped to define and contextualise these scenes for readers who lived far from where they were happening.



1996

Year *NME.COM* launched

2000

Year *NME* merged with *Melody Maker*

£2.95

Cost of *NME*'s scene-defining 1986 mail order cassette, 'C86'

38

Number of cassette compilations *NME* produced in the '80s



TOP MARKS

10 albums that got 10/10 in *NME*



► **AM**
Arctic Monkeys
(2013)



► **Let England Shake**
PJ Harvey (2011)



► **Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not**
Arctic Monkeys (2006)



► **OK Computer**
Radiohead (1997)



► **Magic And Loss**
Lou Reed (1992)



► **Random Access Memories**
Daft Punk (2013)



► **Stop The Clocks**
Oasis (2006)



► **Is This It**
The Strokes (2001)



► **Generation Terrorists**
Manic Street Preachers (1992)



► **Out Of Time**
REM (1991)



NME gets political, May 1979

Meanwhile, indie acts like The Smiths – whose frontman, Morrissey, had once been a fixture of the letters page (see pages 4-5) – became the paper's new deities.

Conflict loomed, however, in the form of the so-called 'hip-hop wars', when the office became factionalised between adherents of the predominately white, traditionalist rock music many of the writers regarded as the paper's purview, and the impossibly exciting sounds coming from the streets of black America. The hip-hop warriors eventually won, and 25 years before Kanye West upset the rock aristocracy by announcing himself "the greatest living rock star on the planet," the October 8, 1988 cover of

NME declared Public Enemy "the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world".

Indie remained the paper's bread and butter, however, and a series of questionable late-'80s cover stars (Cilla Black, anyone?) hinted at a scene in the doldrums. Things were briefly enlivened by the advent of baggy and acid house, as well as the inimitable, apoplectic scribbles of Steven 'Swells' Wells, but it wasn't until the arrival of Britpop that the magazine began to flourish again. The great Blur vs Oasis battle began at the NME Brat Awards (a modern-day successor to the old Poll Winners' Party) in January 1995, and the flames were stoked further by the mischief-making cover of August 12, 1995, in which Liam Gallagher and Damon Albarn were depicted as rival boxers ahead of the looming chart battle between 'Roll With It' and

'Country House'. Such was the appetite for all things Oasis, a recording of the Gallagher brothers' riotous 1994 interview with NME's John Harris, titled 'Wibbling Rivalry' and released on Fierce Panda, even managed to sneak into the UK singles chart.

In the modern era, NME was the first major publication to champion bands like The Strokes, The White Stripes, Arctic Monkeys and countless others who would go on to set the musical agenda for the next decade. Throughout its existence, the paper has weathered huge musical and technological



Swells (left) living the journalism dream in Florida



Public Enemy in 1988

OASIS VS BLUR

The result of the *NME*-endorsed 1995 battle of Britpop

216K

OASIS
Roll With It

274K

BLUR
Country House

THE BATTLE BEGAN AT THE NME BRAT AWARDS, A SUCCESSOR TO THE POLL WINNERS' PARTY

sea changes in the industry it covers, bearing witness to the births of rock'n'roll, Beatlemania, punk rock, hip-hop, the internet and the MP3, and in 1996

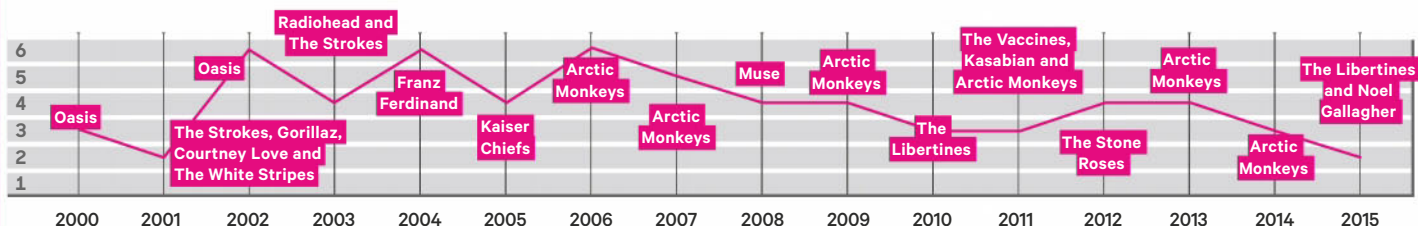
launched its online arm, NME.COM, presaging the publishing industry's move from print to digital. Change has been its only real constant, which is why every generation looks back on its own NME differently, and invariably through rose-tinted shades. It was always better back in whichever day you read it, because no publication survives this long by staying the same: the paper has always had to adapt to the times, and

move with them when necessary. Across every epoch of rock'n'roll, through the ups and downs, the lulls and booms, NME has always been at the forefront of new music, a source not only of news and reviews, but of debate, dissent, and above all, passion. We approach the future cognisant of the most valuable lesson learned from our past: that music doesn't stand still, and we can't afford to, either. ■



NME IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The artists who have dominated the cover since 2000



Breaking News

► Scoop! From Beatlemania to Pussy Riot, a look back at the biggest news stories and strangest happenings from NME's history – and how we covered them



Beatlemania

November 1963

It was a new dawn for rock'n'roll as The Beatles and their mop-topped ilk began to dominate the news pages of NME, even if they continued to be asked the same tame questions (who's the strongest Beatle? Ringo, because he has to carry the drums). The hysteria surrounding the band was

acknowledged by a report on the 1963 Royal Variety Show – the one where John Lennon told the toffs to “rattle your jewellery” – which marvelled at the fact that The Beatles got through their set “without a scream!”



Elvis meets The Beatles

August 1965

Arguably the two most important musical forces of the 20th century, Elvis and The Beatles crossed paths only once: on August 27, 1965, at Presley's home in Bel Air, California. It took three days of secret planning to set up, and NME's Chris Hutchins was the only journalist allowed to attend. What he saw was remarkable: Elvis, John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison jamming together (“Too bad we left the drums in Memphis,” Elvis told Ringo) and casually chatting into the wee hours about music, cars and life on the road. It was a fly-on-the-wall experience like no other, even if The Beatles later admitted to being unimpressed by the King's banter.



Hendrix hits London

January 1967

In early '67, *NME* was wowed by the arrival on our shores of a strange, exotic creature called Jimi Hendrix. He wore frilly blouses! He played guitar with his teeth! He was the

"scene's wildest raver"! As Jimi's version of 'Hey Joe' climbed the charts, *NME*'s John King got to know the "nervous, gentle kind of person" behind the "Wild Jimi Hendrix" image, discovering that

he loved sci-fi, hated miming, and that a lot of his songs came from dreams: "I wrote one called 'The Purple Haze' [sic] which was all about a dream I had that I was walking under the sea."



The Rolling Stones in Hyde Park

July 1969

The Rolling Stones' first live show in two years was meant to be their chance to introduce new guitarist Mick Taylor. But when his predecessor Brian Jones drowned in the pool of his Sussex mansion two days beforehand, the purpose and tone of the free festival became very different, with Jagger reading the poem *Adonais* (Shelley's elegy for Keats) and releasing hundreds of cabbage-

white butterflies – although half of them fell dead from their boxes due to lack of airholes. *NME*'s Nick Logan wasn't exactly swept away with emotion: "Mick Jagger... shook his bottom, as is his wont, and I, after six hours of earthly contact with Hyde Park, made the discovery that by pressing my palms to the grass I could lever mine a glorious inch above the ground and for a brief moment alleviate the discomfort."

Dylan's Isle Of Wight comeback

August 1969

The inaugural 1968 Isle Of Wight festival, headlined by Jefferson Airplane, had been a modestly attended affair. But the following year's crowd numbered in the hundreds of thousands, all of them there to witness one of the festival industry's first major coups: the return of Bob Dylan. Following his 1966 motorcycle accident, Dylan had largely retired from public life, so interest in his first live performance in three years was naturally huge, and watching intently from the crowd were members of The Beatles and the Stones. Yet what's most striking

about Richard Green's *NME* report is how little things have changed when it comes to music festivals. Even back in the summer of '69, attendees were already grumbling about delays, short set lengths, taxi drivers charging inflated fares and – worst of all – "the people who asked seven-and-six for a hamburger and chips".





THE WHO'S gold records battle begins: Keith swings one... and Pete Townshend wrestles for another

THE WHO HAVE A SMASHING TIME

SHORTLY AFTER midnight on December 10, 1971, in front of several hundred of their peers, the Who proceeded to destroy 28 gold and four platinum records which had just been presented to them by Mike Maitland, president of MCA/Decca Records.

The Who had just finished their concert at the Forum here in Los Angeles — an average gig at best, as they were admittedly tired and bothered by the overzealous security forces. There was a party in their honour at the Con-

most festive of moods.

The guests were mostly friends plus a few select pressmen and record company officials. Among those present were Cass Elliot, John and Catherine Sebastian, Mick and Bianca Jagger.

On a stage, neatly displayed on chromium stands, were the 32 aforementioned

From CHRIS VAN NESS in Los Angeles

Townshend, Daltry, Moon and Entwistle strolled quietly, at first, among the discs of gleaming precious metals, muttering under their respective breaths.

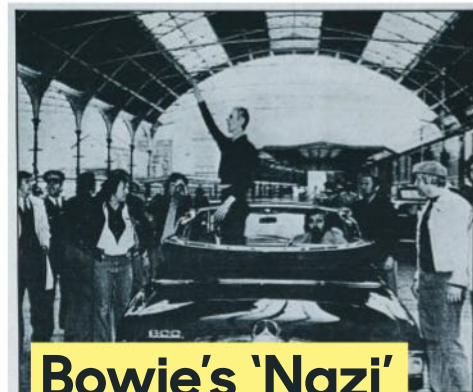
It was Townshend who started it all. He grabbed as many records as he could, screaming, "They're all mine! They're all mine!"

Just as suddenly, the other three were on top of him; and the entire display of gold and platinum

out the stage. If the stage, Mick sped up and down the carnage. Other simple evening of the simple lives of the Who.

FROM THE don't be lieve - every - rumour - you - hear - but - this - one - looks - like - it - might - be - true department. On December 11, a benefit concert was staged in Ann Arbor, Michigan, for American political prisoner John Sinclair. Acts were Stevie Wonder, Phil Ochs and John Lennon; also present were political activists like David Dellinger and Jerry Rubin.

The Dylan-Lennon-Ochs - etc meetings reported in this column exclusively two weeks ago have finally borne some fruit. If anyone doubted that John Lennon was becoming involved in American politics, the Ann Arbor concert should change their minds. So far Dylan is remaining in the background, but I believe that he is very much involved in planning future concerts designed to spur the youth into American politics.



Bowie's 'Nazi' salute

May 1976

A few days after foolishly suggesting to reporters that Britain could benefit from a fascist leader, David Bowie turned up at London's Victoria station making what looked like a Nazi salute from the back of his Mercedes convertible. *NME's* report was more concerned with Bowie's failure to address the crowd than any perceived Nazi undertones. Bowie has always claimed he was simply waving to fans, blaming his brief obsession with fascism on the coke-fuelled delusions of the Thin White Duke. However, *NME* was not prepared to give self-indulgent rockers an easy ride for much longer. A few weeks later, in the June 19 issue, Mick Farren would pen a legendary *NME* editorial entitled 'The Titanic Sails At Dawn', calling time on '70s rock star decadence and helping to usher in the punk revolution.

The Who smash their gold discs

January 1972

The Who wrote the book on rock'n'roll auto-destruction: Pete Townshend was the first rocker to trash his guitar, while Keith Moon, on the band's US TV debut, filled his bass drum with explosive charges, slightly deafening himself. So it was little surprise to find them, at an afterparty for a less-than-satisfactory gig at the LA Forum, smashing the shit out of 32 gold discs presented to them by their label. Townshend instigated the destruction, then "just as suddenly, the other three were on top of him", reported *NME's* Chris Van Ness, "and the entire display of gold, chrome and platinum flying about the stage. Mick Jagger jumped up and down, encouraging the carnage. Just another simple evening in the simple lives of The Who."



"You dirty fucker!"

December 1976

The nation was expecting to watch an interview with Queen, when instead it got an unexpected gob-full of punk. "You've got another five seconds. Say something outrageous," goaded Thames TV's *Today* host Bill Grundy. "You dirty bastard!" offered the Sex Pistols' Steve Jones,

before topping that with "You dirty fucker!" and "What a fucking rotter!" *NME* published the whole hoo-ha "unexpurgated" and reported on the banning of the Pistols' UK tour and the 'Anarchy In The UK' single. Malcolm McLaren is quoted as saying that Jones merely used language "in everyday use".

May 6th, 1978

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

Page 7



Bob Marley's One Love Peace Concert

April 1978

The One Love Peace Concert at Kingston's National Stadium was crucial not just for Bob Marley – whose return marked his first appearance on home soil since an assassination attempt in 1976 – but for the whole of Jamaica. Warring political rivals Michael Manley and Edward Seaga had finally declared peace, but, at a time when police brutality was stoking youth distrust of authority, it fell to Marley to unite the people. NME's Neil Spencer slowly came round to Marley's myth-making.

Once a revolutionary firebrand, the singer seemed, this time, to sympathise with the politicians. Maybe he was just sick of fighting (unlike band member Bunny Wailer, who had a machete slung round his waist), but Marley worked political magic. The concert climaxed as he brought out Manley and Seaga for 'Jammin', linking their hands together in one of the decade's most enduring images.



John Lennon's murder

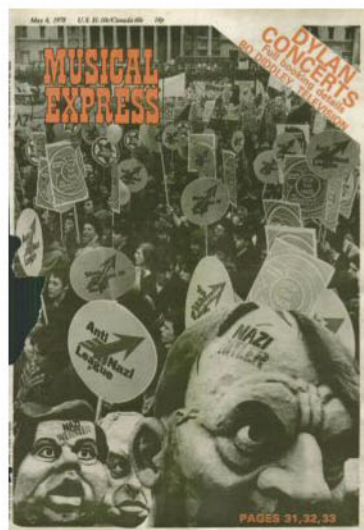
December 1980

A shining symbol of the promise of the 1960s, cruelly extinguished by the hand of an angry lone nutcase: the death of John Lennon was rock'n'roll's JFK moment, and no-one who was alive at the time would ever forget where they were when they heard about it. In addition to a blow-by-blow account of what went down that fateful night in New York, NME's coverage also included information about Lennon's final interview (given to BBC Radio 1 days before his death), a reflection on his five years away from the spotlight, and a personal reaction piece from Charles Shaar Murray, which perfectly articulated the sense of anger and confusion felt by millions around the world. "Next week we can talk about Lennon's life, his music, his contribution to the medium in which he worked," wrote Murray. "Today we just deal with the sorrow and the anger, and rage at the futility and the injustice and the madness."

Rock Against Racism rally

April 1978

With punk having revolutionised not only the music we covered but the way we covered it, NME threw its support behind the Rock Against Racism campaign, set up in 1976 to counteract the rise of far-right groups. The 1978 rally saw almost 100,000 people march from Trafalgar Square to Victoria Park for a special concert headlined by The Clash. To commemorate the event, NME ran a cover image taken from the demo itself: a sea of Anti-Nazi League and pro-immigration placards, juxtaposed with the grotesque effigies of National Front leaders Martin Webster and John Tyndall.



WEIRD SCENES AT THE HAMPSTEAD COUNTRY CLUB

body was pulled out and down, the deep dirty body was being carried out the side of the Country Club. He was a very angry, like a guy from the apocalypse but still normal looking who'd about Professor Hindu two nights before, needing offering himself as all good folk to the magic near 2 years.

It seemed a safe enough bet. From a spiritual brother had already imagined several gold and after watches from nowhere that I could see, and no-one seemed already of taking into a pretty, striped dress and skirt for a young female he'd pulled from the audience. I ran into her later in the ladies', and she seemed completely dead.

"The shirt's a suit bag," she said, tagging the waistband. A woman named Jessica Lee, saying, "This could mean great things for you, TV, because, just have your name and address." "I said," the girl breathed back, Professor Hindu is a jolly chap, with well-muscled legs and a protruding nose. The ball of sweating his tongue, saying the others on a piece of another road, and then I saw him, he was a young man with an incredible smile but no smile. I saw him drop a piece of his shirt on the dirty stage, and not even wait it before putting it back.

Stunning round, blood dripping down his bare chest, the Professor sharpened knives and machetes, then asked him to prove their point. The Prof said the gender's three, alright. Blood was everywhere, the second gapping. A piece of cloth was laid round his neck, and the poor soul was carried out into the rainy Hampstead January night, and I was in the deep hole that had as all glistening by the entrance.

Unfortunately, I had seen that when our backs were turned, the knife would have been the grave, or else, even more unfortunately, that the knife was all at once, as no-one would bother to check the Resurrection out.

But the Sunday was even more crowded. A crowd gathered, the Prof showed the room with weapons, then called another audience member. He already had a role to play, as the Professor, having previously described as a member of his tongue like a Maccaroni, and a member of the underground from scraps. I carried him later, and asked "What were they from Marks and Sparks?"

"Yes," replied the impressed young man. "It was even talked about. Professor Hindu's conversation." After the disappearance, the body was laid out on the stage, only the mental rise and fall of the chest looking at possible life. The Professor was rough with the resurrection. Being answered from a three-day sleep by shouts of "Yes!" and wild kicks in state and chest her legs off a wake-up call.



A THE PITS: After 48 hours underground, the victim is disinterred

RESURRECTION SHUFFLE

"Polluted Hysteria!" the Professor proclaimed. Fela had previously explained that the Professor, through a great spiritualist, was looking for a "spiritual" "When I say this, I mean, I can help a person with any problem! If you want, I can help you! Call me at the Hotel Rwanda! And boy

it's alive!" exclaimed the Prof, saying off the language to reveal a not, limited looking man, but not much. As he was helped off, the professor advertised his abilities. "I can help a person with any problem! If you want, I can help you! Call me at the Hotel Rwanda! And boy

these magic rings, only 13!" A few more aggressive hours were spent, looking to the African class of Justice Earthworks, when who should appear? One on the scene from the United Kingdom. Mr. Professor, now sprung up and wearing not underwear, he was not a pretty sight — he's got wandering, red eyes, a

big scar down his face, in fact everything but a ball through the neck. Although his English is correct, I understood he seemed to dance. I preferred to talk, "There you really under the ground?" He nodded, halfway between Harpo Marx and Lurch from the Addams Family. "Did you stay there for three whole days?" Mr. Professor shook his head. "You mean — I continued, when he interrupted, saying "I have you. Come to my hotel," and again waving a key in my hand. "Yes," I said. "It's lovely. So did you?"

"I had money. Plenty money," he started crying. "That's not the point. None, and I'm hungry." "So that was another person. Look, look."

4 SUNDAY This is your life again!

Professor Hindu's grave for the jugular

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Fela Kuti raises the dead

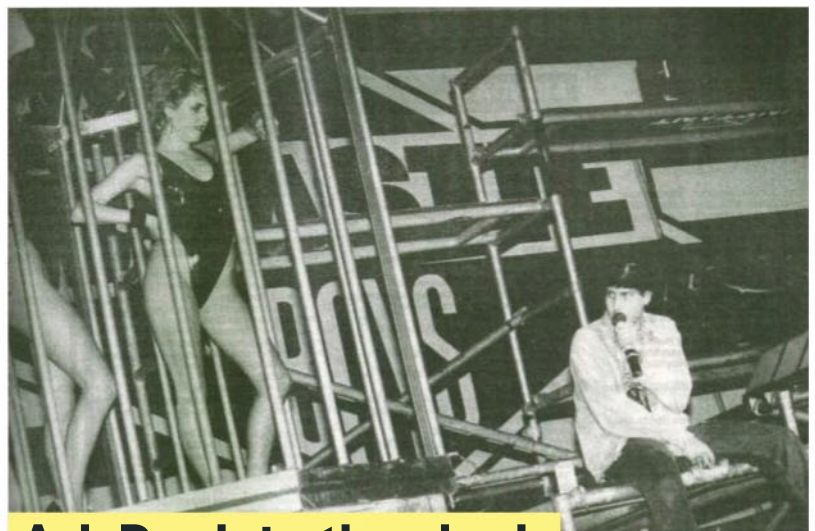
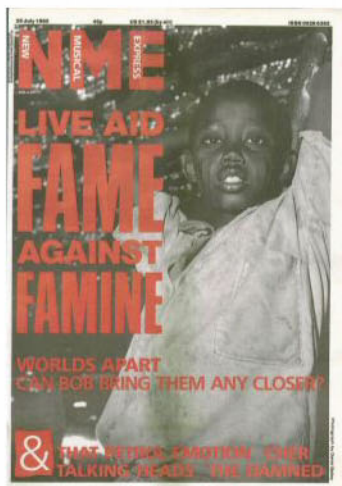
January 1984

Following a Brixton Academy show by Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti, *NME*'s Vivien Goldman was lured to a small club performance by Kuti's "spiritual advisor" Professor Hindu with the promise of a full-on resurrection. At Hampstead's Country Club, she duly witnessed a bizarre ritual in which a man had his throat cut with a machete before being buried outside the club. Two days later she was back to see his body hauled out of the ground before, with a shout of "Pollutina Hezekina!" and a few kicks to the chest, the Professor returned the man to the land of the living. It seems that spending 48 hours in the ground hadn't dampened the victim's libido: when Goldman attempted to interview him, he could only say: "I love you. Come to my hotel."

18

Live Aid

July 1985



Ad-Rock in the dock

June 1987

Following the success of 1984's Band Aid campaign, Bob Geldof rallied a cast of rock megastars for two televised concerts in London and Philadelphia, raising over £50m for African famine relief. *NME*'s tone was sceptical, epitomised by headlines such as 'Fame Against Famine' and a nagging feeling that, in Don Watson's words, this was "corporate pop turned corporate charity". Paul Du Noyer, reporting from Wembley Stadium, acknowledged that "at worst... it means you've got some hypocritical bastards in the pop world walking round with dry-cleaned consciences". Ultimately, though, he was moved by the event and noted that, for the first time since the '60s, the rock aristocracy were "starting to look at the wider world again, through thoroughly practical eyes".

Accompanied by women in cages, a 24-foot hydraulic penis and tabloid accusations of verbally abusing disabled kids, Beastie Boys' maiden UK tour ended in a riot when their Liverpool show was abandoned after only 10 minutes as a hail of beer cans hit the stage. Frustrated, the Beasties started batting the cans back into the crowd, where one was alleged to have hit a 20-year-old fan in the face, landing Ad-Rock in court

on assault charges. As *NME* reported, it was only one of several ignominies to befall the budding rap brats on these shores: MCA had a drink thrown in his face in a London club, while they had to cancel their Glasgow show because no hotels would agree to put them up. Was this opprobrium deserved? Not according to *NME* reviewer Gavin Martin, who called them "genuinely liberating... the air of threat and menace is not present in their cartoon-iverse."



The Smiths split up

August 1987

Whoever says The Smiths have split shall be severely spanked by me with a wet plimsoll," quipped Morrissey as the vultures circled, but the NME newshounds would not be denied – the following week they reported that Johnny Marr had left the band. "The thing that used to make me happy was making me miserable," explained the guitarist. Could The Smiths

limp on? EMI's A&R man, having only just signed the band, was optimistic. But despite the vague mention of "other guitarists", two weeks later NME announced with finality: "The Smiths are dead." Poignantly, the same issue carried a review of what was sadly now to be the band's final album, 'Strangeways, Here We Come', "a masterpiece that surpasses even 'The Queen Is Dead' in poetic, pop and emotional power".



Richey Manic is 4 real

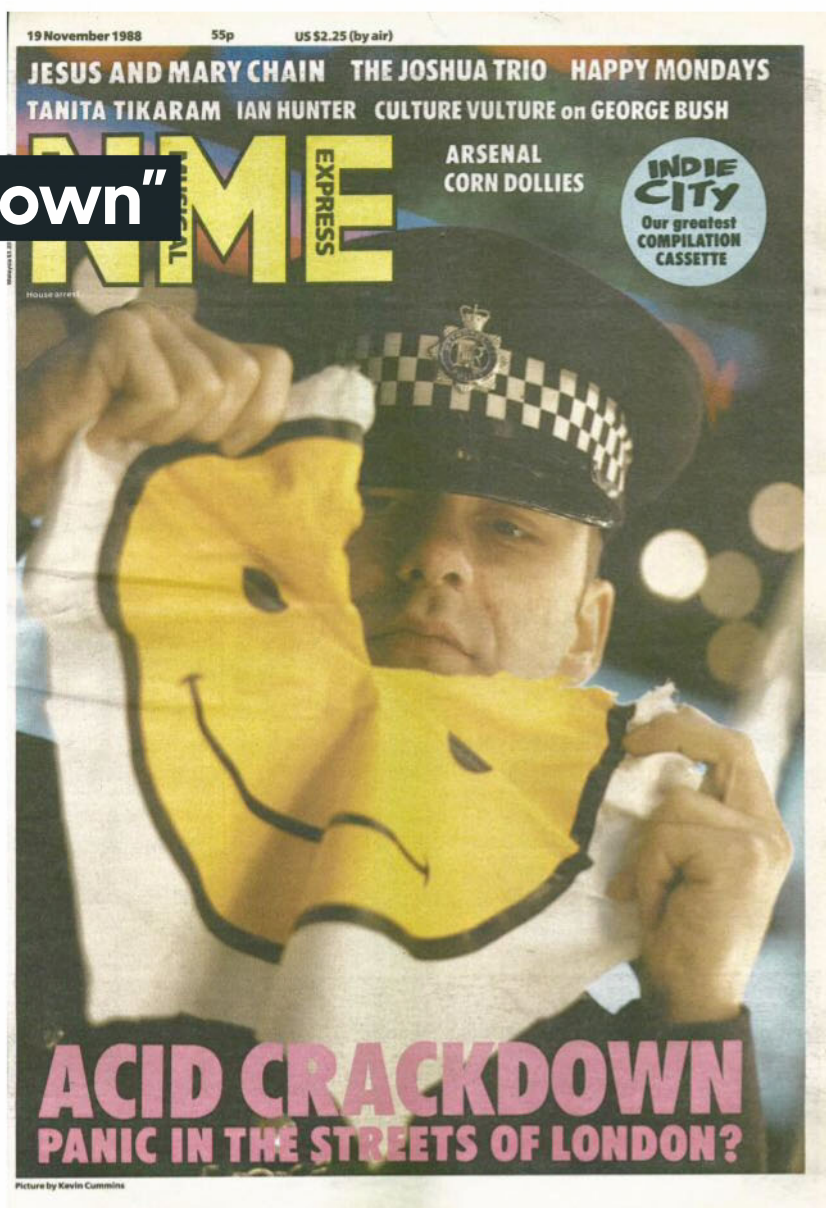
May 1991

Following their gig at Norwich Arts Centre, Manic Street Preachers sat down with NME's Steve Lamacq to talk about credibility, conviction and "what a sham some people think they've become". After the interview finished, guitarist Richey Edwards delivered a macabre coup de grâce to Lamacq's sceptical argument by picking up a razor blade and carving '4 REAL' into his forearm. "As Richie's arm turns into a wash of blood," wrote a shocked and shaken Lamacq, "my mind wakes up to the situation and I get away to tell their manager to help him out." Edwards was rushed to hospital, where he received 17 stitches. The incident caused a sensation, and the frantic debate in the NME office about how to cover it – recorded for a BBC radio documentary – was issued as a B-side on the Manics' 'Theme From MASH (Suicide Is Painless)' single, entitled 'Sleeping With the NME'.

"Acid crackdown"

November 1988

After 62 people were arrested at an "acid house party" in Ipswich – the latest in series of police raids in response to media-generated acid house hysteria – NME attempted to disentangle fact from tabloid fantasy. Naturally, it suspected the Murdoch press of attempting to orchestrate a police crackdown on a potentially subversive youth culture. "The press... has meshed drugs and acid house into a bog-eyed dribbling bogeymen in a smiley T-shirt," wrote Steven Wells. Some scene pioneers were already bailing as a result of the unwanted attention. "Anyone who holds a warehouse party now must be mad," said DJ Nicky Holloway. "As for acid house, it's finished."



The Stone Roses: Gotcha!

May 1993

Four years since the release of their epochal self-titled debut, The Stone Roses' inability to produce a follow-up album had led many to speculate that the band were finished. And so *NME* turned supersleuth, tracking the Roses down to a rehearsal studio in suburban Manchester. Strangely enough,

the band weren't particularly keen to talk to us, so we had to make do with just a few snatched photos of Reni's drumkit and Ian Brown walking to his car, plus the shocking revelation that the band had stopped wearing flares. Who says *NME* hasn't brought you the biggest scoops down the years?



Model shown Jeep Renegade 1.4 MultiAir II 140 hp Longitude 2WD Manual at £20,295 including Special Pastel Paint at £500. OFFICIAL FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES FOR JEEP RENEGADE RANGE MPG in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions. Factors such as driving style, weather and road conditions may also have a significant effect on fuel consumption. *Customer deposit is £5,046. Jeep Horizon PCP. With Jeep Horizon you have the option to return the vehicle and not pay the final payment, subject to the vehicle not having exceeded an agreed annual mileage (a charge of 6p per mile for exceeding 10,000 miles per annum in this example)

The wad couple

THE TWO men who have turned to the music industry with a week's notice after the 1993 Brit Awards and the dumping of a dead sheep on the steps of a London hotel introduced themselves to the art world last week by threatening to set fire to £40,000 in cash.

BILL DRUMMOND and **JIMMY CAUTY**, known as the KLF, announced the winner of their much-hyped K FOUNDATION award last Tuesday during an ad break in the middle of Channel 4's live coverage of the Turner Prize, the art establishment's premier award for young British artists.

But the other cheek of the art was exposed by the bizarre chain of events over the entire evening, culminating in the auto-burning threat which was described by one art world figure as "absolutely and comically".

Both the K Foundation award and the Turner Prize were won by Rachel Whiteread, creator of a controversial concrete casting of a house in a derelict part of London's East End. The Turner refuted her £25,000, while Drummond and Cauty put up twice that figure.

While the art world lavishly gathered at the Tate Gallery awaiting the Turner announcement, the K Foundation invited 25 "witesses" (art critics, music industry figures) to a field near Woking, Surrey, the setting



A K Foundation operative with the (nearby) £40,000 outside the Tate Gallery



Artful woodwork (Bill & Jim)

of the K Foundation winner. When the plan backfired slightly when her witesses pocketed their cash, Cauty, involved £2,000 was also found to be missing, ensuring Drummond and Cauty had to shell out an additional total of £8,000 to make up the shortfall.

Whiteread, who had refused to allow her name to be used in a series of three TV ads placed by the K Foundation,

therefore from a couple of successful singles. Artists aren't in that position. Threatening to set fire to £40,000 is pretty obvious." Former Factory boss Tony Wilson, himself no stranger to the wild publicity opportunity, was one of the K Foundation witesses and applauded their actions.

"The K Foundation is a very peculiar award-giving group whose ideas are as valid as



Cash from chaos: lines deliver Whiteread's prize

The KLF ambush the Turner Prize

December 1993

The KLF's expert-level trolling of the 1993 Turner Prize was one of pop's most spectacular publicity stunts. Having set up the K Foundation award for the "worst artist of the year" – the shortlist was identical to the Turner Prize's – merry pranksters Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty nailed £40,000 in cash to a frame and promised to burn it unless winner Rachel Whiteread accepted it (which

she did, reluctantly, at the last minute). No-one quite understood what the point was, but *NME* certainly revelled in the anarchy of it all, as did Factory Records boss Tony Wilson, who told us that, "The K Foundation is a very peculiar avant garde group whose ideas are as valid as anything the Turner people do." The following year, Drummond and Cauty would go one better by burning £1m in cash on the Isle of Jura.

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Kurt's suicide

April 1994

The news that Kurt Cobain's body had been found in his Seattle mansion was announced on April 8, a Friday. *NME* editor Steve Sutherland was working late, and called an emergency editorial meeting. "There's nothing useful in the papers, on the radio or on TV, so it's up to us," he told staff. "The burden of covering this story responsibly for an *NME* readership that's likely to be devastated when the paper hits the streets falls squarely on us." The cover was respectfully bare, the news report stark and comprehensive, covering the missing persons report filed by Kurt's mother, his disappearance from a Hollywood rehab clinic and the confiscation of his guns by police. Next to it was a tribute by Keith Cameron: "Spare him the deification that traditionally accompanies our talented youth; his is not a glamorous rock death but a pointless waste of life."



The battle of Britpop

August 1995

It was the chart battle (and *NME* cover) that defined an era. In the red corner, the lairy northern barbarians of Oasis; in the blue corner, the soft southern wankers of Blur. The feud began with some choice language at the *NME* Brat Awards in January 1995 and intensified over the following months until Oasis cheekily

brought forward the release of their new single 'Roll With It' to set up a decisive head-to-head with Blur's 'Country House'. *NME* assumed the Don King role, styling its cover after an iconic Ali vs Fraser poster. Inside, Andy Richardson talked up the significance of a clash which would decide "who – when the cash registers

have stopped ringing and the hype and hysteria have finally died down – are the true, undisputed people's champions of British rock'n'roll". Blur won this battle, selling 274,000 copies to Oasis' 216,000. But Damon would soon tire of the contest, complaining that people were blasting Oasis at him everywhere he went.



Jarvis vs Jacko

February 1996

If you think Kanye pioneered the awards ceremony stage invasion, think again. At the '96 Brits, Jarvis Cocker sabotaged Michael Jackson's 'Earth Song' performance in a stunt that divided the country and, ultimately, cemented his status as Britpop's rebel prince. It was all sparked by Jackson's outré performance – a quasi-Biblical spectacle full of worshipping kids that seemed somewhat tasteless in light of his child molestation charges. Sensing his opportunity – and with nary an "I'mma let you finish" – Jarvis scrambled onto the stage and wafted his bum at the audience. He was pursued by a clumsy security guard who barrelled straight into the kids' choir, leading to some bizarre accusations that Jarvis had



launched a child into the audience. While the tabloids missed the point and fumed – "We'll sue Pulp out!" ran the *Daily Mirror's* headline – *NME* had some "Jarvis Is Innocent" T-shirts rushed to the printers, which the band proudly sported on their arena tour.

Tupac shot

September 1996

Just before the East Coast-West Coast rap wars got alarmingly real, Tupac Shakur renounced thug life amid premonitions of a violent death. Tragically, his fears came true. *NME*'s first story went to press as the rapper clung on to life at a Las Vegas hospital. The next week, an obituary thoughtfully detailed Shakur's tragic journey from arts and ballet student to rap casualty, without glossing over his history of sexual assault. In the same issue, Angus Batey went in deep on the East Coast-West Coast feud. At a watershed moment for hip-hop, Batey also observed a sense of betrayal that Tupac's gangster showmanship had bled into reality, arguing, "Shakur's inability to disentangle the role-play and posturing of his career from the all-too-real dramas of his own life proved his fatal flaw."



Libs reunited

October 2003

At 7.45 on a nippy October morning, *NME* rocked up to Wandsworth Prison with Carl Barat to celebrate the release of one Pete Doherty. A few months earlier Pete had failed to turn up for The Libertines' European tour, prompting an in-band crisis, before he was sent down for robbing Carl's flat. But *NME* found the pair in bright spirits: as Pete spied his old comrade at the gates, he muttered, "It's Biggles!" in a frail voice. In the pub later on, the pair resumed regular antics ("There's an air of instability about Carlos' coat," Pete whispered at one point), quoting Oscar Wilde and William Blake while trading

snappy one-liners. But as their moving, triumphant reunion show that night proved, this was a poignant moment. "If Carl hadn't been there at the gate I wouldn't be sat here now," Pete reflected. "I think I'd be at the bottom of the river."



Radiohead break the music industry

October 2007

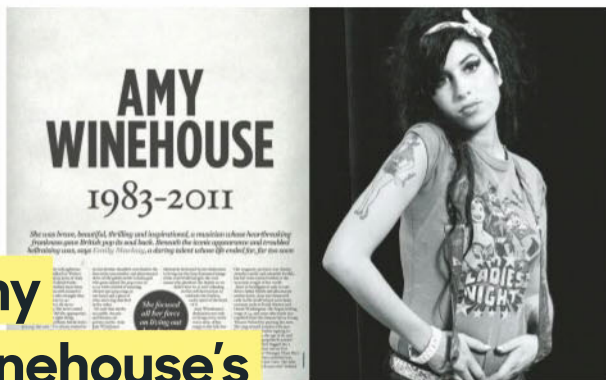
Just as the music industry seemed to have dealt with illegal downloaders, Radiohead dropped their bombshell: a post on their official site announced that their long-awaited seventh album 'In Rainbows' would be available exclusively from the Radiohead webstore, on a 'pay what you want' basis. At a stroke, the band obliterated the long-standing strategy of drawn-out pre-releases and left the major labels pondering their relevance. "It's not a fucking big deal, it's just a piece of music," protested Thom Yorke. But *NME* disagreed, hailing the move as "a challenge [to] the way we consume music, potentially revolutionising the entire music industry in the process".



Jay Z conquers Glasto

June 2008

Seven years before Kanye, Jay Z made history as the first ever hip-hop artist to headline Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage. "In case you didn't get the memo, I'm Jay Z and I'm pretty fucking awesome," he proclaimed after walking on to a karaoke version of 'Wonderwall', a neat kiss-off to Noel Gallagher, who said he was the "wrong" choice to headline. "This is historic," wrote *NME*'s Tim Chester. "Hip-hop is being embraced with diamond-shaped arms, punters of all persuasions hanging on Jigga's every word."



Amy Winehouse's death

July 2011

With the 2006 release of the 20m-selling 'Back To Black', Amy Winehouse established herself as one of the most gifted singers and lyricists of her generation, but she'd also suffered a very painful, very public addiction to drugs and alcohol. Her tragic death in July 2011 was shocking, but not entirely unexpected: Winehouse seemed to live full-time in the public eye, and we'd all become used to seeing her at her worst. Across 10 pages of coverage, however, *NME* chose to focus on Winehouse at her best, with a heartfelt reflection on her life, her music and her "spiritual as much as physical" home of Camden, also revisiting her forthright 2006 interview with former editor Krissi Murison, which found her witty, honest and at the peak of her powers.

Pussy Riot take on Putin

March 2012

Russian punk activists Pussy Riot became a worldwide name when three of their number were thrown in jail after staging their feminist “punk prayer” protest at Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ The Saviour, as a response to President Vladimir Putin’s draconian rule. “If we are silent now and don’t speak out, then we will never be heard,” the group explained to *NME*. Nadezhda Tolokonnikov and Maria Alyokhina were subsequently imprisoned for 22 months and, upon their release, took the Pussy Riot campaign global, via appearances with Madonna and on TV drama *House Of Cards*.



Thrown in jail and facing lengthy sentences for their punk-rock protests against Vladimir Putin's controversial election win, Russia's **Pussy Riot** tell NME why they're willing to die for their cause

of choice as a means of escape from the pressures of the workweek. "I like to read fiction, suspense and mystery books," says 36-year-old Susan. "I also like to read non-fiction, especially the general interest books that I have in my collection. I have a couple of books on the history of the world, and I like to read about the lives of great people. I like to read about the lives of great people. I like to read about the lives of great people."

...t speak out, then we will
... Nadezhda Tolokonnikov

prisoned for 22 months
campaign global, via
a *House Of Cards*.



The Stone Roses' comeback show

May 2012

The Roses confirmed their momentous reunion in front of the world's press in October 2011, but their first comeback show was strictly for the hardcore. At 4pm on the day of the gig, fans were instructed to rush down to Warrington Parr Hall – where Ian Brown's dad built the roof – clutching a Heaton Park ticket, CD or a genuine item of Stone Roses merch. Only 1,000 got in, but *NME*'s Hamish MacBain was among them – as was Liam Gallagher, who described the show as “better than sex”.



Alex Turner's rock'n'roll rant

February 2014

Artic Monkeys have never been ones to play the Brits backslapping game, refusing to attend in 2007 and turning up to collect their 2008 awards dressed as country gent's while ripping the piss out of the Brit School. In 2014, Alex Turner took the opportunity of winning Best British Group to deliver a wry, rambling sermon about the enduring nature of the music he loves. "That rock'n'roll, it just won't go away," he drawled, much to the amusement of his smirking bandmates. "It will never die and there's nothing you can do about it... And yeah, invoice me for the microphone." Putting Turner on the cover, editor Mike Williams saw Turner's speech as drawing a "line in the sand" – a swaggering endorsement of everything *NME* stands for.

Rihanna's transatlantic torture trip

November 2012

In one of the most ludicrous PR stunts of recent times, Rihanna decided to take a gaggle of 150 people – including press and members of her fanclub – on a Boeing 777 to see her play seven gigs in seven days in seven different countries, from Mexico to New York via Europe. Things started well, with lashings of tequila and bonhomie, but ended in mutiny, with an in-flight stalker as Rihanna refused to mingle with those in cattle class, was late for her shows and generally dicked everyone about. A sympathy hashtag for those onboard, #freetherihanna150, was coined. From her seat in Row DVT, NME's Siân Rowe likened the experience to both *Lord Of The Flies* and *The Hunger Games*.



Features

► A selection of the greatest, most pivotal features from the NME archives



Krist Novoselic,
Kurt Cobain and
Dave Grohl share a
cigarette in Madrid

"I've learned to accept being a rock star"

NME
August 29,
1992

Following the runaway success of 'Nevermind', Keith Cameron found a weary Nirvana being rocked by two forces: heroin and Courtney Love

PHOTOS: STEVE DOUBLE

Imagine a wedding without a bride and groom. Or a banquet without the food, a candle without a flame, a film without a star. A mother without a child. It's not right – it's not ready. It can't happen. They aren't here yet.

So, somewhere deep in the pristine recesses of Madrid's Velodrome, we have to wait. There's a slight commotion in the distance and all eyes turn at once. Here they come. She leads him by the hand and, from a distance, they resemble those drawings of Christopher Robin dragging Winnie The Pooh along the ground. As they get nearer though, the vision fades. Christopher Robin was never this female, never this pregnant and Pooh never wore such a sappy grin or had a blood-red lipstick welt on his right cheek. She looks angry. He looks cute. Everybody else looks relieved. Ladeeez an' gennullmen... I give you King Kurt and Queen Courtney, newly crowned monarchs of the former Republic of Nirvana. Pray silence for Her Majesty! "Here he is!" she shrieks. "Here's everyone's little investment!"

I hadn't seen Nirvana since December '91, when they'd played Les Rencontres Trans Musicales Festival in Rennes, France. It was the band's last date before cancelling the rest of their European tour due to Kurt Cobain's ravaged voice and, although messy in places, their performance still heaved with a sometimes dangerous, sometimes carefree sense of abandon, enough to be a vivid reminder of just why this band had meant more than any other for years. In the dressing room afterwards, all were exhausted.

Krist Novoselic rolled a cigarette with the

deliberate, weary motions of a man three times his age, while Dave Grohl sat motionless for 10 minutes with a towel over his head, every now and again moaning, "I think I'm about to die." Kurt, however, was remarkably animated, clearly happy it was all over, and talked enthusiastically about how much he'd enjoyed touring with Shonen Knife and was now just looking forward to going home for a rest. Considering his band had clocked up four months on a promotional treadmill that had become steeper and faster the more 'Nevermind' sold, he looked in pretty good shape. See you next year, Kurt. He smiled. "Sure."

Next year turned into this year; 'Nevermind' zoomed past Jacko, Bono and Axl. Nirvana did *Saturday Night Live*, the *Rolling Stone* front cover, landed the Reading Festival headline slot, the whole shebang, and suddenly ghoulish rumours concerning the health – physical and otherwise – of the frail genius at the centre of what was now the Nirvana Phenomenon started to become commonplace. It got harder to laugh at the weekly brace of 'Kurt is dead' stories when various credible sources were whispering about Kurt and partner Courtney Love doing heroin together, about them being completely out of it at their wedding in Hawaii, about them going into detox and then quitting, about how the band were on the verge of splitting up, about Courtney doing junk while pregnant... As far as the tabloid music press were concerned, Nirvana were just too good to be true.

Nirvana Inc battened down the hatches and made to ride out the storm. It was business as usual. The band were taking a break from ➔

each other, but they'd be working on some new material soon with a view to releasing a new song as a single to coincide with Reading. Everything was fine, really it was. During the rest period I interviewed Krist by telephone and asked him how the wedding of the year had gone. "Oh, quiet." Masterful diplomacy. Krist in fact hadn't been at the wedding, since Courtney had refused to let his wife, Shelli, attend. Meanwhile, Kurt repeatedly and vehemently denied taking heroin. As stonewalls go, this was all highly impressive.

Sure, the rumours continued, but while Nirvana weren't actually doing anything it wasn't hard to dismiss this as nothing more than the inevitable lot of a multimillion-selling rock band. After the gig at Belfast King's Hall, Kurt was rushed to hospital suffering from acute stomach pains. "Ulcers," says Nirvana. "Oh yeah," yawns everyone else. Could so much have changed in six months? Moving round the archways of Valencia's bullring where, that night, Nirvana would give Spain its first in-the-flesh taste of what this nonsense was all about, it was almost a relief to greet Kurt Cobain once again, a paler, bleached-haired bespectacled Kurt Cobain, but recognisably the same lovable scruff who late last year turned rock'n'roll upside down with a song named after a deodorant.

Krist ambled up to say "hi" and bemoan a chronic hangover – the inevitable punishment for a late-night sesh with support band Teenage Fanclub – and Dave Grohl soon emerged down the ramp that led to the sun-baked arena, all smiles as ever. Hmmm, I thought. This doesn't seem so bad. OK, so I've never seen Kurt look quite that pale before and I'm not sure it's such a good idea for Courtney to be zipping about with Kurt on that hired motorbike while seven months' pregnant but, hell, it's not as if anyone is dead.

We are sitting in one of Nirvana's dressing rooms after the taming of the bullring. By Nirvana's standards, it's been pretty lacklustre stuff, but the crowd didn't seem to mind. Kurt is showing me his glasses, which, along with his new hairstyle, are supposed to enable him to walk down the street unrecognised. I suggest that people will likely stare at him anyway. "You're probably right." Krist and Steve Double are talking cameras, the bassman's current hobby, while Dave dispenses beers. Courtney, meanwhile, is sounding off to anyone within earshot about Stefanie Sargent [lead guitarist of 7 Year Bitch, who died of a heroin overdose in June 1992]. "People say she was a junkie, but how do they know that? I mean, I don't think if you do it once or twice it means you are hooked, that's not a junkie. And if you have someone with you, too, that's good. She was alone, though, you know that? Still, it's sooo rock."

Spend two days in tour fatigues with this new, arena-compatible Nirvana machine – "I don't know the names of most of the crew," admits

Dave – and it dawns on you that the overriding issue here is not that Kurt is on heroin (or isn't, or was, or is and is trying to get off) but that his wife is a grade A pain in the arse. She seems almost universally disliked. "The Wicked Witch of the West," is one crew member's assessment, while someone else refers to Kurt as being a nice guy BC: "Before Courtney." Krist and Shelli simply ignore her. The irrepressible Dave alternates that approach with some impressive mimic routines. During the Valencia show, Courtney is sitting on the stage, near Grohl's kit. "Courtney!" he screams in mock petulance. "Get the fuck off my stage!" It's just the sort of thing Courtney would say.

For much of that day, everything is put on hold – Nirvana's soundcheck, interview, the *NME* picture session, Teenage Fanclub's soundcheck, everything – because Kurt isn't around, still holed up with the missus back at the hotel. The band's press officer Anton repeatedly tries to speak to him but, on the one occasion when the phone gets picked up, Courtney yells "He's asleep" and slams it down again. Eventually she lets Anton talk to Kurt, who seems unaware of all the fuss. After four hours of waiting, Steve gets a 15-minute photo-shoot. There is no Nirvana soundcheck.

Whether heroin is at the root of this unreliability I don't know for sure, nor am I about to proscribe the freedom – or is that stupidity? – of anyone to take whatever substance they choose to take. But the fact is that Courtney's dealing the hand of an unborn baby as well as her own. The health of little Frances Bean Cobain is the X factor that elevates all this second-hand scandal into something a whole lot scarier, something much more important. She doesn't have a choice. The most recent scare story concerning

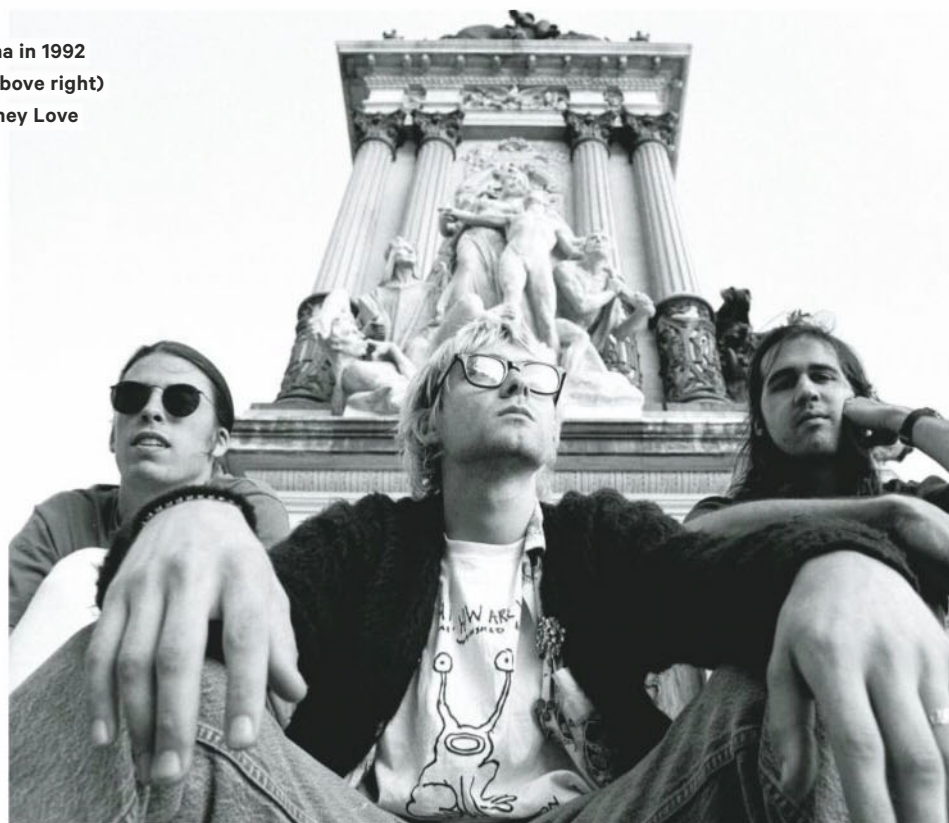
Nirvana involves Courtney being admitted to hospital in Bilbao – Nirvana's final port of call before heading back to the US – having damaged her womb. She is advised to stay there for five days but insists on going back with the band. Then Kurt has to shell out a considerable amount of money, maybe \$25,000, for the first class plane seats so Courtney can fly home lying down and a specially appointed ambulance to pick her up at LA airport. OK, another story, another rumour, but who'd take the trouble to make this stuff up? This is serious shit, and it's no wonder some people are freaking out and saying Reading will be it. Game Over. The End. And all this because this cool band sells a super tanker load of records! That's the disconcertingly prosaic truth of the matter.

In Spain, about the only times when things got put in this much perspective were when Nirvana were actually playing – Madrid was still below-par, frenzy-wise, but a thrilling experience purely because the audience was so enthused by it all – and when I finally interviewed Dave, Krist and Kurt, away from the panic, the waiting, the torn-up schedules – hell,

"Meeting Bono made me wanna give up rock'n'roll"

Dave Grohl

Nirvana in 1992
and (above right)
Courtney Love



it seemed almost like old times, almost normal.

"Petty tour drama can be an ordeal," considers Dave. "People have tantrums, people's tempers flare. But I can block everything out. I'm not really an emotional person at all, just because I'd rather ignore emotion than confront it, so when it comes down to really heavy shit it kinda just breezes right by me. I don't really want to get involved in anyone else's problems and I don't want to be the cause of anyone else's so I just lay low. I think maybe that's what'll keep me sane through this whole trip." What causes the madness? "Just constant gratification is unhealthy for anybody, y'know? This is why you've got people like Michael Jackson and Axl Rose, insane rock star A or B, because they're constantly being pampered."

Dave's closest brush with a total gratification zone came when he met Bono on U2's recent American tour. "Fuckin' asshole! It was such a bummer 'cos when I was 13 I thought 'War' was a great album. He reeks of rock-star-ness, he was not a human being. He wanted us to open up for them on tour and I said, 'No, that's not what we're into.' And he said, 'You owe it to the audience, you've got to take that next step!' And I said, 'I don't wanna take that next step!' He was desperately trying to make a connection. 'Do you like gospel?' 'Er, no, not really.' 'So what kind of music do you listen to?' 'Punk fuckin' rock, man!' And then of course he tells me about punk rock and he was the meaning of punk rock. After meeting that guy it made me wanna give up being in a rock'n'roll band."

Krist reckons he's got his priorities sorted.

After this tour, he's off to Croatia to see his family who live in Zadar, about 250 miles up the coast from Dubrovnik. "I try to have humility about things, just be for real. 'Cos all of this is fabricated. People, they build these institutions like governments or rock bands or anything, and reality is distorted. Some people are worried about eating and here we are off on this whole rock'n'roll circus. I have to take it with a grain of salt."

Has it changed the way you feel about Dave and Kurt? "No it's pretty much the same as it always was, just pretty laid-back. We spent some time away from each other just to do our own things, but now we're looking forward to getting back to how things were, lock ourselves away and work. Our new record's just gotta sound different. I've been on this big rant lately of how transition is natural, continental drift, the seasons, the weather's different every day, people grow older and change... When I think of 'Nevermind' now I think of interviews and being famous. Now I'm focusing on this new record and

not even considering anything that's happened and maybe we can come out absolved."

Is he worried about Kurt? "You hear all the rumours. Just media bullshit. You gotta have a good story." But there's usually no smoke without fire. "Yeah." Silence. "Yessirree." A sigh. "And after that fire, the fire still burns... But there's freedom of speech. What if you walked into a crowded theatre and yelled 'Fire!' Is that freedom of speech?" I should hope so. Sometimes there's an excess of freedom. "Yeah there is, isn't there? People lose perspective on things. Which is really easy to do in artificial environments. You just accept it. Today I'm here in Madrid and that's just what's going on. There's a light at the end of the tunnel. This is my reality. It is what I have to do."

By the time

I get to see Kurt, it's over an hour after the show's finished. Anton tells me I can have 20 minutes and then he's sending the other two on to finish things off. It's pretty obvious that Kurt has been running on reserve tanks for most of this Euro-jau. Never have I seen him so static onstage, so apparently unmoved by the whole experience of playing rock'n'roll. The contrast is made all the more poignant by the 'Lithium' promo vid and its scenes of psyched-up mayhem from last year's Reading. "Yeah, last year's shows were way better," he nods. "I don't think we've had a long enough break. I'm still not enjoying it as much as I should. According to our manager and most of the people we work with, the break that we had was too long. Everyone wants us to work and work all the time, and not stop. It was only four months of relaxation and I really needed that. I've come to a lot of conclusions about myself within the last four months. I've learned to accept being a rock star and how big the band's become. I can at least deal with it, I'm not as pissed off as I was. It's still... I dunno, I'm such a picky person that everything has to be perfect."

Does it feel like you created something that's got to be broken down now? "Well it's a bit embarrassing to play in front of kids who wear Skid Row T-shirts, y'know?" he chuckles. "It's really hard to overcome that, to just shake it off and say, 'Oh well, they're just dumb kids, maybe they'll throw away their Skid Row records and listen to Mudhoney because of us...' but that story's old. I'm tired of talking about the underground. I've never claimed to be a punk rocker, I've just claimed to have liked punk rock music. I'd like to be a rhythm guitar player in a band. No-one realises how fuckin' hard it is to scream at the top of your lungs and concentrate on playing guitar solos. We're actually thinking of getting Buzz from The Melvins to play guitar with us live. It's still not gonna relieve me of my vocal duties, through."

Oh, yes Kurt, but the band wouldn't be the same if you didn't sing. "No, I know that." He laughs. "Well maybe I could start another band.

I'm thinking of doing that, actually with Mark Arm and Eric from Hole. But then, I'm so lazy with this band I couldn't imagine being in two bands at once. Jesus!" It sounds like you'd like to escape from the limelight. Does it get you down to read every week that you are a heroin addict? "Yeah it does get to me, it pisses me

off. I had no idea that being in a commercial rock band would be like this, because I've never paid attention to other commercial rock bands."

There then follows the weirdest episode of a pretty weird two days. I've just asked Kurt whether the heroin rumours are true – to which he's laughed, said "No!" and made me feel his arms for any tell-tale scars or holes, though shooting up isn't the only way to take smack – when Anton walks in with Susan Silver, manager of Soundgarden. She waves at Kurt and says, "I just wanna say goodnight," then sits down next to him. Anton tells me to turn the tape machine off. Why? "Just turn

it off!" As well as being a sweet guy, Anton's a Thai boxer and he's got one of these dogs, see... So off it goes.

Susan talks intently to Kurt, looking directly into his eyes, the gist of it being just call me if there's anything you want, then she and Anton leave. Erm, Kurt, about what you were saying... "See! She thinks I'm on heroin!" he whispers excitedly. "She does! Didn't you see it in her eyes? And I've heard it from a whole bunch of people, she says stuff, she actually tells people I'm on heroin all the time. That's Soundgarden's manager, it goes from the fuckin' highest level of people in the music industry down to the street punk kids."

Make of all this what you will. Perhaps I was naive enough to suppose that, when you've sold as many records as Nirvana have, it would convey power, a means by which the band could control their own destiny. And maybe it has, but it also seems to have raised the stakes unhelpfully high. Maybe I'm reading too much into little things, maybe it's all as petty as Dave says and maybe I'm just fearing the worst. Frankly, having spent two days looking at how different it is for Nirvana right now – or rather, how it was six weeks ago – I found it difficult not to. Reading'll be great, just the boost they need. They can still do it, you know. Put Kurt, Dave and Krist on a stage, in a rehearsal space or a studio and they can still wreak magic, the three losers who took on the world and won. And once the baby's born everyone's bound to calm down and take stock of things, and realise what's important in life.

Dave: "Did you know if you take the N and the D and the first E out of Nevermind, it spells 'Vermin'?"

Krist: "Mmm."

Kurt: "Wow." ■



Brothers in arms

In 1994, in the midst of their fast and furious rise, Simon Williams joined a raucous Oasis on tour to stagger from hotel bar to gig venue and back again with the Gallagher brothers

PHOTOS: KEVIN CUMMINS

Liam: "My head's in ruins – so's my shirt."

Noel: "You're a mad cunt, you are..."

Liam: "No, you're the mad cunt!"
(Repeat to fade)

It all started off normally enough. A quiet Monday evening in Portsmouth, a sold-out gig for Oasis, followed by a drug pilgrimage and a 'crap' student party on the outskirts of town. Then back to the hotel for a few swift nightcaps. Simple, eh? In the bar, Oasis bumped into East 17, fresh from their own gig at Portsmouth Guildhall.

"Are you Blur?" demanded East 17.

"No, why? Are you Take That?" came the stropky reply. While the Walthamstow terriers wisely retired to their various rumpus rooms, Oasis settled down in the bar with a gin and tonic or 10. Then a bottle of champagne or two appeared on the table. Then the barman made the terrible mistake of abandoning his post.

Before you could say, "Bugger me, free booze!", two of the entourage were scrambling over the bar, emptying the fridges and passing the bounty over the counter. One minute later, 50 bottles of beer were being stuffed under chairs and into innocent bags.

Then things got really strange. Guitarist Paul 'Bonehead' Arthurs decided to go for a dip in the horribly convenient pool next to the bar. The Gallagher brothers, Noel and Liam, decided to have a scrap about an ex-girlfriend. Allegedly. Expletives started flying. Then punches started flying. Then bottles of beer started flying. Then furniture started flying.

Bassist Paul 'Guigsy' McGuigan valiantly tried to separate the Gallaghers, receiving two knuckle sandwiches for his endeavours. Someone started throwing chairs at Bonehead in the pool. Then tables. Liam had Noel on

the floor. Noel tore Liam's shirt off. Other residents, tiring of the mass brawl downstairs, started coming out onto their balconies and shouting abuse. One particularly aggrieved sort was accompanied by his girlfriend. While her lover's attention was focused on the mayhem below, she would calmly open her towel. At this juncture, the pissed-up band would roar their encouragement, causing the baffled boyfriend to turn and find his demure-looking companion safely covered by the towel. Then he'd shout more abuse and she'd flash again.

And so it went, with a few more punches thrown here and a few more items of furniture thrown there (ie, in the pool). Eventually, at around six o'clock in the morning, the night porter appeared to tell the fuzzy thrill-seekers that, actually, if it was all right with them, he was going to knock off because, um, someone had called the police.

It is common knowledge that hotels are utterly brilliant places. Let's face it, if you get smashed off your nuts in the confines of your own home and gleefully decide to trash your living room prior to catching a bit of shut-eye, are the cleaning pixies likely to rearrange the furniture into some kind of social order while your hangover works itself into a midday frenzy?

But, hotels being hotels, when Oasis shamle into the bar the following lunchtime – apart from the occasional dark stare from the receptionists – life is back to normal. Stunningly overpriced pots of tea are being drained. Liam and Noel are comparing wounds and laughing about their fight. The swimming pool has been cleared of chairs and Boneheads. And everyone decides it was the hotel's fault, anyway.

"It's a stupid place to put a pool, innit?"

NME

June 4,
1994





frowns Liam. "It was asking for trouble putting us in this hotel."

"It's true," nods Noel wisely. "Those plate glass windows are just saying, 'THROW A CHAIR THROUGH ME!'"

This is life on the road, Oasis style. You may not think it's big, or indeed clever. But it is rock'n'roll bastard bonkers.

Our task is to follow Oasis around the country for three nights, from Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms to Derby Wherehouse via Newport TJ's and points in between.

Fact: Oasis talk a lot of bullshit.

After the Portsmouth gig, Liam insists he's going to 'sort out' East 17 because, he alleges, "They've ripped off 'Imagine'." Half an hour later, the singer is insisting that all he wants to do is sit down with East 17, neck a few beers and sort out how they can "topple Take That".

The same applies for Noel when he's told that Manic Street Preachers are coming down to the Newport gig: "Do they wanna fight?" asks the guitarist. Nah, the Manics don't fight, comes the answer. "Right!" beams Noel. "We'll kick their heads in then!"

Simplicity is the key: Newport, much like any other set on the tour, is utterly straightforward and unnervingly familiar. There's the Coca-Cola song! The one-that-sounds-a-bit-like-Blur-song! The Wham! song! A cover of 'I Am The Walrus'! And no bleeding encores! It's the history of rock splattered over the past 30 years from The Beatles to Happy Mondays, played by five blokes who scarcely move a muscle onstage, who barely communicate between songs, and who are hardly likely to rival Bad Boys Inc in the "Woof woof! Down boy!" stakes.

A few more things you may or may not need to know about Oasis on the road. Already a seasoned autograph campaigner, Liam has sussed that signing fans' chests is a daft idea because cleavage perspiration prevents your pen from working properly. Whenever two or three of Oasis are gathered around the piano they will bang out a cheery version (to the tune of The Small Faces' 'Lazy Sunday') of, "*Wouldn't it be nice to be a fucking cock-er-nee/Wouldn't it be nice to be in fucking Blur - SLAG!*" And Newport witnesses some serious psychological collapse.

It may be something to do with the manner in which Oasis valiantly attempt to get a goodly proportion of the TJ's crowd into the hotel after the gig. Dispensing with the trite formalities traditionally deployed to convince suspicious hotel staff of their guests' worth, Liam simply harangues and abuses the night porter until the poor bloke's left with the choice of opening the front doors or being chased around by drunk Mancunians. It may then be something to do with the six-hour drinking session that ensues in – spookily enough – the hotel's Oasis bar. Whatever, the following morning is a sad sight for bloody sore eyes. ➔

Bonehead has trashed his room. You can tell this by the way the morning staff patiently file in from the street carrying paraphernalia (telephones, cushions, pillow cases scarred with tyre marks). Bonehead would have thrown the bed out as well but it was too big. Now he is sitting in the lounge with a transparent shower cap on his face, muttering, "I can't do it any more."

"There's no such word as 'can't,'" a worryingly wise Guigsy informs his colleague.

"But I CAAAN'T!" howls Bonehead. "I'm giving up this rock'n'roll business, I'm gonna be a Tory MP. GIVE ME A SATSUMA! GIVE ME A SATSUMA!"

Over on the other side of the bar, an irate Liam is throwing this morning's music papers around and ranting about Oasis being exploited or some such like. Noel watches his brother, adjusts his shades and sighs. Obviously, confronted with all this evidence, any sane sort without direct responsibility for this Oasis tour would pack their bags, slink off to the nearest mainline station and get the first train back home to normality, pronto.

Sadly, the *NME* crew simply sits in the midst of the chaos and twitches.

Eventually, after losing the band transport for half an hour, Oasis apologise to the staff, pile into the van and head off to Derby armed with half a local McDonald's. It's one of those afternoon-after-the-few-nights-before journeys, where a sense of communal numbness prevails, Bonehead wants to vomit and the tape deck blasts out The Beatles, The Who and the Sex Pistols. Then we hit the traffic jam from hell outside Birmingham.

When a sleek business type refuses to let the van sneak in front of his saloon in the outside lane, the previously dozy band suddenly erupt, banging on the windows and hurling abuse at the unfortunate driver. Then, as we crawl through the roadworks, Bonehead spots a clutch of archetypal British workmen doing bugger all and yells, "START DIGGING!" Five minutes later, and now fully warming to the task, Bonehead decides to stagedive. Clambering on to his seat, he throws himself headlong into the back of the van. Nothing wrong with that, you might say. Except Bonehead is driving.

It could be said that if in hedonistic terms Primal Scream are The Muppets, Oasis are more like The Muppet Babies: a danger only unto themselves. They're the sort of trainee rock'n'roll gits who may be sussed enough to go backwards for their musical inspiration, but they've mercifully left behind the nastier elements of the trad



**"If Liam's asking
for a smack
in the mouth,
he'll get one"**

Noel Gallagher

RAWK lifestyle. So their bag is speed rather than smack, and their attitude is based upon bewilderment rather than insufferable belligerence.

Noel's the one with the permanent half-smile who appears to get most of his kicks from watching the rest of the band's antics. Tony McCarroll barely utters a single word in the entire three days. Guigsy, general consensus has it, is coming out of his shell and becoming more and more unhinged the longer the tour progresses. Bonehead is simply bonkers. And Liam... Liam is the loose cannon, the one who spends 10 minutes abusing receptionists and the next half-hour trying to chat them up. Lippier than the rest, he's always up for something. And when he recounts the Portsmouth saga to an enraptured mini-audience in the Derby dressing room, you can see how much he gets off on the attention.

"Beer is the best drug ever!" he bellows at one point. "I do fucking care, me."

"I feel sorry for our kid sometimes," Noel had mused back in Newport.

"I get all this shit going inside my head and I can write it all down and get off on that. But he can't, so his release is to get off his head."

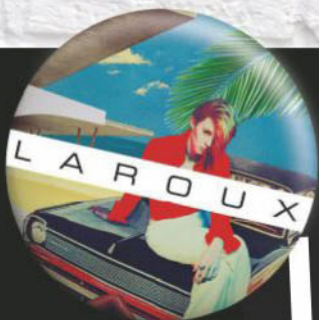
Noel admits that he worries about some of the, uh, less PC things Liam is inclined to blurt out. "There's no need to say them, really. He just sets himself up." He talks about his brother's responsibility towards the band, pointing out that he's representing five people, including himself. And sighs heavily again.

"Our kid thinks that I want him sitting in a room reading a book. I don't want that at all, man, but he fucking winds me up. He's the one person I argue with. He goes on about this and that and I'll say, 'Shut up, you fucking dick – I used to change your fucking nappies!' Basically, if he's asking for a smack in the mouth, he'll get one. And the same applies to me – if I'm asking for a smack in the mouth, I'll get one."

So Oasis do another cracking gig, and some more substances and more socialising. It all ends at 3am in the Britannia Hotel, where the Buzzcocks are retiring to bed and These Animal Men cower in shady corners. Noel Gallagher partakes of one last G&T and contemplates the next step in the Oasis plan for global domination: Glastonbury. "This is another dream: I always wanted to go to Glastonbury but I could never afford a ticket, and now, all of a sudden, someone's paying me to play to a load of people and give me beer and drugs. It's gonna be brilliant, 'cos once you're in that field, anything goes. When you're at home in your local pub and announce, 'I'm gonna get my face painted like a panda', everyone goes, 'What the fuck does he mean? Let's bottle the cunt!' But at Glastonbury you can take your clothes off and run around naked – that's what it's there for! Same with this band: let your hair down, man, have a good time, that's what it's there for. Then you wake up the morning after and do it again."

And again. And again. And again... ■

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Rhyme and reason

34

NME
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In 1988, Public Enemy were the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world. Danny Kelly visited Def Jam HQ to hear Chuck D's plans for global domination

PHOTOS: KEVIN CUMMINS

Public Enemy main man Chuck D has a variety of colourful ways of describing himself. Sat in Def Jam's downtown office waiting for an audience, I'm nervous. For days now – in the bath, in bed, on the plane over, and here, in my head – I've been practising those two little words of greeting: 'Yo Chuck!'... 'Yo Chuck!' over and over. Like I said, *real* nervous.

But most of my palpitations have nothing to do with the broadcast persona of Chuck D but rather with the realisation that has dawned on me over the last few months of just what an important hombre he is. For what it's worth, and for the moment at least, Public Enemy are the greatest damn rock'n'roll band in the world! Now the man at the hub of their steel web of intriguing parts, Chuck D, walks through the door and towards me. One more mental rehearsal – it's only two words – and my mouth goes into action: "Hello, Chuck, pleased to meet you..."

He is wearing his Los Angeles Raiders cap and jacket; silver and black, like the sides of 'It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back', the Raiders are the bad boys of gridiron football, the violent outsiders that the vast majority love to hate: draw your own conclusions. The way Chuck tells it, Public Enemy's ascension has been anything but haphazard, accidental or lucky, rather the result of talent bolted to scientific planning and attention to detail.

"In the '60s, my parents were in their 20s so the house was full of it. First jazz, then Motown and all that." There's always been music in Chuck D's life, long before the first explosion of rap turned him into a crusading fanatic. Motown, Atlantic, Stax, all the giant figures from the pantheon of black pop get mentioned. Were these people heroes? "There were idols that I didn't realise were idols 'til later... The Temptations, The Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield, y'know, most of the people that get followed today except now they call it 'rare groove'." Public Enemy offer a fairly apocalyptic world view on most things. Are they part of the black pop tradition? "Well yeah. Public Enemy is a reflection of the street, of how black people are living, just as all those groups and sounds were about how we were living back then. That's the problem with most R&B today; it doesn't reflect... the masses. Back then it did. Especially Motown. I *study* Motown: for its relationship to the streets, for song arrangements, for its ability to reach the listener's inner feelings."

The success of 'It Takes A Nation...' goes beyond the mere quality (massive though it is) of its music and lyrics. An hour long, linked by recurring themes and live inserts, and a distinct leap forward from their previous work, it is nothing less than a work of art. Its existence quashes forever the last vestiges of

the notion that rap acts can never be anything more than interchangeable parts on a hit-making conveyor belt.

Again, the word 'accident' is not part of Chuck D's vocabulary. "I'll let you in on a secret," he laughs, after I've harangued him about the godlike genius of Marvin Gaye. "When I was putting '...Nation Of Millions...' together, I wanted it to be the 'What's Going On' of rap. Not in its content, but in its sense of arrangement and going into places no rap LP had gone before. Now I'm not worried whether people like the individual songs – and I ain't going to start boasting about them – but I *know* that no rap album has been made in the places I made this one go. I mean, the live inserts, the beats, the totality, the attitude.

"The LP is also different because it ain't as immediate as most rap. Sometimes you can't make people feel as good as they wanna straight away. There are things on this LP that people aren't gonna like the first time they hear them, things that you have to keep going back to, things that'll take a bit of uncovering... It cannot easily be ignored or moved out of the way. That's very important for rap; that idea that the music was disposable got me hot, but then again it was true, *until* we did this album.

"I want everyone to realise black people feel things too"

Chuck D

We had to work against that whole network of prejudice – we had to make sure it stuck like glue." In succeeding in those missions, Public Enemy – like Gaye, Mayfield, Sly, Davis and very few others before them – dismantled the traditional, ingrained way that black artists are signed, marketed and listened to.

Chuck is not inclined to make any bones about it. Most of Public Enemy's success – with the listeners, with the press – is down to a combination of careful hard work and intuition that other groups are too lazy, or stupid, to employ. "It's a science," he insists. "I mean, rock'n'roll is there to be studied and learned about. Rap has closer links to rock'n'roll than to any other music. What is rock'n'roll? It's the projection of *attitude*, not the deliverance of sound. Attitude. Rap acts have that attitude, that character, that rock bands have used to get across to the public. They just haven't learned to project it."

Public Enemy's biggest problems have come from the less easy to control matter of how people respond to their image and stance, rather than their music. The gun-toting Security Of The First World comes to mind. "I've experienced this before, but in order to keep playing gigs we had to ensure that there was an order of those gigs we played. People need to see the presence of a force of order, and that presence needed to be uniformed, just like the security at a big office building will

be uniformed for easy identification. That was crucial in ensuring that people had the space and time in which to enjoy themselves.

"Now that we're playing places with their own security, Security Of The First World are a symbol, a symbol that Public Enemy are at war, and that black people should be at war to regain their enslaved minds. It's the war to regain awareness; that's what 'Countdown To Armageddon' is about." But the whole S1W seems so calculated to provoke. "Of course you're going to be worried by the sight of black men in uniform. To that extent, it's deliberate, of course. It makes people feel the same way I, and other people, feel when they see a policeman. Or how all the Vietnamese felt when they saw all those uniformed Americans coming. I want everyone out there to realise that black people feel things too."

The other part of Public Enemy that its inventor has to keep constantly tampering with is the non-musical output of Flavor Flav and, more recently, Professor Griff, the way that pair behave, the things they say. Chuck isn't daft enough to pretend he doesn't know the value of controversy, but he's aware too that there has to be limits or the group'll be ostracised. It's a tough line to walk.

"Well, Flavor," he begins slowly, "will be Flavor. Flavor's gonna make mistakes, but people aren't going to treat his mistakes in the same way they'd treat one of Griff's outbursts, where a real threat is perceived. Flavor is only a threat if *everyone* starts to think like him; then he's a threat to black people. I'm the mediator in all this. Flavor is what America would like to see in a black man – sad today, but true – whereas Griff is very much what America would *not* like to see. And there's no acting here – sometimes I can't put Flavor and Griff in the same room. I'm in the middle. When Griff says something too much, I come to the rescue of white people; when Flavor does something, I come to the defence of the black public. I do constrain them, but not much, because Public Enemy are the only black group making noises outside of their records. But that controversy has to be harnessed."

Chuck D is either the most literate, together musician I've ever met, or a brilliant actor and bullshitter. Probably plenty of each. He must, I just know, have a gameplan for the Greatest Rock'n'Roll Band In The World. "Public Enemy's programme is the taking of music followers, and those who are willing to listen, to see black life as it's lived. It's a college course in black life," he laughs, "as a matter of fact it's a whole damn degree you can earn." Maybe, I suggest helpfully, you could put the exam papers on the inner sleeves of forthcoming record releases. "You're giving me ideas! Maybe we could give out those little degree certificates with the Public Enemy targets in the wax seal..." "Yeaaaaah boyee!" I say. Well, in my head anyway... ■

Stories from the city.

On the release of **PJ Harvey's** second album 'Rid Of Me', **Stuart Bailie** travelled to Polly's family home in Dorset to find out what drove her from London, and what was driving her now

PHOTOS: STEFAN DE BATSELIER

The Harveys were disturbed when they first saw the birds. All their feathers had fallen out and they were so traumatised by the battery farm that they wouldn't lay eggs.

The battery farmer was delighted to get rid of them – the Harveys saved him the trouble of killing them. So he waved them away in the care of these hippy do-rights trundling down the road to Corscombe, Dorset.

After a while they recuperated. They began laying eggs again, even the blind one. Hers were weird eggs with points at each end and abnormally fragile shells, but Polly ate them anyway. And that was how it was for many years after, with the chickens and the old sheep that way until they became like family pets.

When Polly went up to London it seemed like she'd do something exciting – she'd got into St Martin's, one of the best art schools anywhere. And she was making this special music, using word pictures that left the imagination ravished and disturbed. The critics in Britain and America raved, and yet Polly wasn't happy. The press portrayed her as this grim harpy, and she felt confined by north London, cooped up. She had emotional problems and there were stories of a few breakdowns.

Polly's return to Dorset in summer '92 was upsetting for everyone. She'd lost much of her old humour and zip. So she went off down to the coast to find space and solitude.

Springtime again, and the man from *NME* has come down to take Polly's picture. So she shows him around the family place, with the little river and the chicken sheds and old stone quarry. Her chosen outfit for this session is astonishing: feather boa, lurex stockings, shiny coat, funk platforms, a suit slashed at the neck and leg. But that's not what makes the pictures so wild and amusing – it's the background: while Polly is vogueing and throwing mysterious shapes, there are feeding buckets and strips of corrugated iron behind her. Sheep have seemingly ambled on to this supermodel shoot, and there cradled in Polly's arms, all feathers, sinews and myopic squint – the blind bird!

"I've wanted to do that for ages," Polly explains, laughing, "to be glamorous and be

standing in the mud with the animals because that's the way I live. There are these different extremes. When I'm at home that's what I do, I feed chickens and stuff. And then there's this glamorous pop star bit – or so people think."

In our chosen interview spot, Jake's coffee shop, I tell Polly about my first reaction to new album 'Rid Of Me'. Maybe it was the tension of hearing it in a preview situation, or perhaps it was the pungent, passionate style of the record, but I broke up laughing.

"It's so nice to hear you say that because that's how I feel when I listen to it and that's what I want other people to feel. But I don't think people *do* a lot of the time. Now when I listen to it, I don't know whether to cry or laugh."

'Rid Of Me' may not be an all-dancing, wise-cracking trip – there's plainly some rotten experiences in there – but sometimes you get the impression that the singer has moved beyond grief and upset. You've got to laugh, really. There's the likes of 'Me-Jane' in which Tarzan's long-suffering mate gets to bitch off about his tedious macho ways, or the recent single '50Ft Queenie', a streak of hilarious self-aggrandisement to rival any rapper's bid for importance. And by the time the record ends, she, drummer Rob Ellis and bassist Steve Vaughan are rocking out, like Led Zeppelin...

"Yeah, I think that's another great breakthrough for the band and me as a person to be able to do that... we have this phrase in the band, 'Have you got your iron knickers on?' After we've done a gig it's like, 'Were the iron knickers on tonight?' And very often they *were* on, and none of us have let go. But nobody had their iron knickers on for that session at all."

I ask Polly about studying art, and about her admiration for the work of Andres Serrano, the New York-based artist who got notoriety by suspending a plastic crucifix in a glass of his own urine. Following on from *Piss Christ*, there's been a trend for artists such as Kiki Smith and Marc Quinn to devote themselves to making art from bodily fluids.

It's not really stretching a point to see this trend in Polly's songs – in 'Dry', for example,

NME
April 24,
1993



stories from the farm



which is about her vaginal/emotional aridity, or on the excoriating 'Rub 'Til It Bleeds'. So is she consciously echoing this stuff?

"Well, the last thing I saw was in New York. I went to see the Serrano exhibition of morgue photos. They made you feel a lot of things – one minute I'd feel horrified and appalled and the next I'd think, this isn't working at all, this looks staged and I don't feel anything for these people.

"He's just done loads of 'cum' pictures. Do you find things like that really turn your stomach? I never feel physically sick by things like that and I wonder if it's because I've had to deliver lambs and stuff, when I was younger. I used to ring all the lamb's tails and ring the testicles. I'd clear up dead lambs when they came out in bits – because sometimes they'd decompose inside the sheep and you'd take them out bit by bit. And I wonder if it's hardened my stomach to things like that."

Does it stop you getting sentimental?

"Yeah, it does."

In some of your new songs – notably in 'Legs' – you've got this idea of love turning into violence and mutilation, when the lover would rather butcher the other person than lose it all.

"I love you so much that I'll cut your legs off so you can't leave me.' I got that idea from when you're younger and you have your favourite toys that you play with and you love them so much that they fall apart."

I decide to bring up the subject of Steve Albini. His work with the indie rock'n'grunge constituency – his own Big Black plus Pixies, The Breeders, the Nirvana album – is practically a history of the guitar noise that's mattered in the last 10 years. Polly knew some of them and caught up on the rest later. She listened to Big Black after her initial meeting with the man, and remembers it feeling like "a wire being pulled tight". She was pleased that he could produce a similar effect with her songs.

'Rid Of Me' triumphs in many ways. The beats, the rhymes and the performances are overwhelming, but it's the noise, the wonderful, visceral rumble that first excites you.

The drums sound like the undercarriage of hell. Polly's guitar, particularly on the last song 'Ecstasy', is jack-hammer, hardcore Delta blues with attitude.

So was leaving London a practical decision? "There were lots of reasons. I was paying for this place and I was hardly there – I had to be here for rehearsing. But most of all I just couldn't handle living in London. It was the first time away from home, and then all this attention on the music, suddenly. And my first really big relationship that went badly wrong... and just finding that I couldn't stand up on my own any more, so I had to come home again."

When you listen to 'Rid Of Me' you almost feel like a voyeur – you're party to these painful emotions, but the singer is so far gone that she doesn't even know anyone else is around.

"It's strange you say that because I wrote half of the album after I moved back down

"I'd clear up dead lambs. It's hardened my stomach"

Polly Harvey

here. I was renting a place on the coastline, a flat very high up above a café, and the only way you could get to it was across a bridge, so I'd be sat up there all day looking at people out of my window, and thinking about the time I'd been in London. And it was all very voyeuristic, watching other people walk back and looking back at myself and how I was then.

"I did get really ill, and the time I was at this place on the coast, I was repairing the damage, so I was having to look over what happened and be a voyeur on myself. It was a strange time.

"I had a couple of breakdowns last year when I just couldn't do anything for myself for weeks on end – really little things like having a bath and brushing your teeth. It was really horrible and I never want to get back to that again."

Back in the office, we're watching the '50Ft Queenie' video. And there's Polly, in her fake fur coat and pink mohair dress, leaping around the studio, howling the words out: "Tell you my name: F - U - C - K..." and stomping in her gold wedges like a force-10 hurricane.

She looks so happy and liberated – maybe it's the tacky sunglasses that allow her to slip into another character, but now she's completely huge, unassailable, colossal. ■

Fell in love with a band

NME
November 3,
2001

Back in 2001, the only thing we knew for sure about The White Stripes was that they were the most exciting rock band in a generation. John Mulvey met 'brother and sister' Jack and Meg in their native Detroit, in a world built around numerology, taxidermy and poverty

PHOTOS: PIETER M VAN HATTEM

Open the front door to Jack White's house in south west Detroit, and the first thing you notice are the giant stuffed heads of antelopes and elks lying on the floor, slightly fusty, their stitching beginning to fray. These, Jack announces proudly, are new. That one's called Aquinas, that one O'Brien, the one next to the two old jukeboxes? Onion.

Since he bought them the other day – from a guy who told him they'd been worked on by hunting-mad '70s rocker Ted Nugent's personal taxidermist – Jack hasn't had a chance to put them on his walls. And where would they go, anyway? Next to the tiger's head with broken teeth? Between the rusty sculptures made out of bits of car? Beneath the large collection of old alarm clocks, or the photograph of bluesman Charley Patton's gravestone? Maybe he could put one near the battered piano, but wouldn't that spook out Beretta and Mellow Yellow, Jack's decidedly alive canaries?

As for King Christial Mark David Edison's Ghost, he's still in the big red van. King Christial's a noble if undeniably manky zebra head, stuck just behind the back seat, surrounded by all the rubbish of The White Stripes' endless touring, near the bright red umbrella and the spotless white rollerboots. Jack's especially pleased with this one: halfway through the photo shoot right by the Hotel Yorba, he'll announce, "I've just got to go and check on my zebra," and run back to the van. Next moment he's dragging it across the grass for pictures.

A man may jealousy guard his privacy,

but sometimes he can't stop himself from showing off his trophies. This is the way with Jack White, the boyish, hyperactive half of Detroit's astounding White Stripes. Myths and misinformation cling to Jack and drummer Meg White, the woman introduced as his sister but who's the subject of much more complicated rumours. Plainly, the Whites love to play with ambiguities. They're aware the stories that have clustered round them since their extraordinarily received British debut in July serve to protect the truths of their lives.

Nevertheless, when the van pulls up in front of his three-storey place deep in Detroit's Mexican district, Jack's only caveat is that we "don't go writing about [his] breakfast cereals". His house isn't the red and white one on the sleeve of their first album, 'The White Stripes'. It does, however, seem to be a clubhouse for the tight-knit Detroit garage scene. As Jack charges through the door, he swerves to avoid Ben from the Soledad Brothers, busy playing a 20-year-old arcade game. When NME's photographer goes for his cameras, the host goes for the stereo and selects an album of '30s jazz standards by the suitably obscure bandleader, Little Jack Little. Then he poses by his kudu and his white elk, while Little Jack croons delectably, 'You Oughta Be In Pictures'.

It seem The White Stripes can turn anything into an event. There are many things that make them the most remarkable rock'n'roll band to emerge in years: the taut brilliance of their songs and performances; the clean simplicity of their ideas and image; the way they use the

raw materials of tradition to make something new and madly exciting. But there's something else, too, a gift bestowed on the very band which allows us to see the simple power of rock'n'roll through fresh, clear eyes.

A few minutes later, we're up in the loft, full of The White Stripes' equipment. Jack makes Meg beat him over the head with a Barbie doll that, until seconds ago, was nailed to the wall. Checking out all the gear, the various room-mates, tour managers and band members hanging out downstairs, the thought occurs: how do the neighbours deal with casa White?

Jack looks bewildered, but only for a moment. "In Detroit," he says, "you can do anything you want."

The reason being, perhaps, that in Detroit there's no-one to stop you doing what you want. It's easy to see where the centre of this sprawling and impoverished city begins: the roads become empty, and the buildings are mainly derelict, burnt-out ghosts of past glory.

The downtown area of North America's car capital has been this way for some 30 years, since a series of race riots caused Detroit's white middle classes to flee into the suburbs. What they left behind was an anachronism: a major American city with a visible history. While other American cities continually erase the signs of their pasts, the monumental old buildings of Detroit have been accidentally preserved, only because no-one can be bothered to tear them down. As we drive around in The White Stripes' van and Jack points out the shop where he used to work as an upholsterer, your eyes are drawn instead to the massive disused railway station, looming up in the middle of nowhere.

"The race riots happened in the '60s and the city never recovered, I guess," says Jack. "It's an abandoned city. Even related to music and what artists do in the town, that desolation, that abandonment is the best part of it."

"As bad as it is, a lot of good music's gonna come from poverty," agrees Meg. "It's horrible people have to live like that, but a lot of times it's people in pain that come up with things. ➔"



Once you become rich and famous it's hard to keep your identity. This city has a lot of soul."

After three albums

and numerous singles for Sympathy For The Record Industry, The White Stripes have licensed all past and future recordings to XL in the UK, home of The Prodigy and Badly Drawn Boy. In the States, every major label and management company continues to chase them.

Today's tour of Detroit has ended. It's taken in an island industrial complex where the MC5 once had their pictures taken, a beautiful old building with "New York City type shit" graffitied on the side and, of course, the sprawling dosshouse Hotel Yorba, immortalised in the Stripes' rattling new single. As a child, Jack was told The Beatles stayed there.

Now we're sat in the bar of the St Regis, NME's shabby-genteel hotel, slightly distracted by the wedding party next door and, in Jack's case, checking out the upholstery. "I know this stuff, it's cheap," he says, fingering the slip cover of his chair. It's time, finally, to try and sift a little truth from the fictions that surround this fabulous and canny band, one for whom facts have been replaced by misheard and half-understood stories, waves of disinformation and Chinese whispers gleaned from the internet. Most notoriously, Jack and Meg were not, apparently, brother and sister, but a divorced couple. Jack's real name was Gillis, and he had borrowed his ex-wife's surname. Now he was going out with one of the girls from The Von Bondies, or brilliantly, Winona Ryder.

All of this is plausibly denied. Watching them together, they have the offhand affection you'd expect of a brother and sister. If it were an act, we'd be forced to applaud an amazing performance. Nevertheless, they both delight in playing with the myths that surround them, in smudging the facts about their private lives.

"I really respect Bob Dylan," begins Jack, namechecking someone whose early interviews were riddled with self-mythologising. "Maybe I wanna know what he has for breakfast, but then I don't wanna know what he has for breakfast. I respect him for not being interviewed on MTV every week. I don't like to see people dissected and obliterated so you feel you know them 100 per cent."

So how much of what you tell people is true?

He looks incredulous: "It seems that everything I do is true. I don't sit around spinning yarns. I always thought it was funny



"I've never made anything up. I don't have to pretend"

Jack White

when white rappers always claimed they were from the ghetto. I don't have to pretend – you've seen where I live. I've never made up anything about all that stuff. I just don't think everyone needs to know everything about everybody. If you say, 'My name's Bob Dylan', they'll say, 'The artist Bob Dylan (whose real name is Robert Zimmerman)'. Why do you have to write that in parentheses? What is the point? If he tells you he's Bob Dylan, he's Bob Dylan."

Jack White is the youngest of 10 children and grew up in the house he now owns. His father and mother worked for the Catholic church ("He was in maintenance and she was a secretary"), and his brothers and sisters are several years older than him save Meg, who's one year older. Now 25 and 26, the pair aren't particularly religious but continue to credit God on their album sleeves because, says Jack, "I think it's egotistical not to give some sort of credit to something."

When Jack left school, he worked in a few upholstery shops before starting his own, renovating antique furniture in spite of having neither a business mind-set nor what he calls "a drive for money".

"I was more in the cartoon aspect of it," he remembers. "The entire shop was yellow and black, all my tools, all the walls. I even had a yellow van, and I'd deliver the furniture in yellow and black clothes. People didn't think it was funny at all. I guess it wasn't working out."

The colours may have changed nowadays – Jack maintains the uniform is red, white

and black rather than just red and white – but one part of The White Stripes' mythology that endures from his upholstery days is the significance of the number three. Hence the big red digit roughly sewn on to his white T-shirt.

"It's really important, it means perfection to me. All the songs and lyrics, the way the songs are structured, everything we do with our artwork is based on the number three. I try to have it involved in anything we do, or at least things that are divisible by three. My studio's Third Man Studio, my upholstery shop was Third Man Upholstery.

"The first time I realised it was when I was an apprentice at an upholstery shop and I had a piece of fabric wrapped around a chair. There were three staples on it, one for the middle and one for both sides and that held it down, y'know? It hit me then that it was perfect and cool. The White Stripes are just vocals, guitar and drums – it seemed like that was all it needed to be."

Having only two members makes The White Stripes slippery and highly mobile, giving them an advantage over most bands that's "almost unfair". It also allows them to sneak into places like the Hotel Yorba, book a room for 65 bucks a week, and record the B-sides to the new single amid what Meg describes as "urine-soaked carpets and towels that are bar towels". They tried to shoot the song's video there, too, until the management got suspicious of all the coming and going, waved a hammer at them and barred Jack for life.

In many respects, Jack White is a man out of time. He rails against things which kill culture, and mourns the loss of local identity which makes most cities in America (save Detroit, perhaps) seem identical. Hip-hop, far from being the modern equivalent of the blues he loves, is dismissed as novelty music about "women, money and cars, where every other word is bleeped out. It seems so meaningless."

Do you ever worry about living in the past?

"I don't know... Hmmm, it's hard to say, maybe I should. It's very hard when you look around at modern music to find five things that are amazing, when in the 1930s or the 1960s they were all around. It's hard not to look back and say, 'Wow, those were the good old days.'"

When he gets home, he likes to be surrounded by all the stuffed animal heads. Always fearful of egomania, they make him feel humble and "not very important". "No matter where I look," he says, "there are eyes staring at me. And they're totally silent. They're such majestic creatures and I relate to that so well."

You can imagine him, in those rare moments when he stops moving, sitting there in this odd place that's part bluesman's homestead, part pop-art den, part baronial hall. The ideal lair, perhaps, for the most charismatic and talented rock'n'roll star of his generation. What he wants now isn't the money, the women or the cars. It's just one last thing – the buffalo head that would complete the collection. Every band has its dreams, of course. But when all the usual ones are coming true so fast, it's useful to have a speciality interest. ■

THE NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

No. 269 (NEW SERIES)

EVERY FRIDAY PRICE 6d.

MARCH 7, 1952

PICTURE

Bandleader Ivy Benson waves goodbye at Northolt before leaving on the Dusseldorf plane. She and her girls are fulfilling a return date in Germany, where they are very popular. (Below).



Above: The popular Keynotes take it from Johnny Johnson at rehearsal. Below: Big Bill Broonzy tastes his first cup of English tea.



Above: The spirit of extempore jazz is conveyed in this picture of Lennie Rush (bass), Hank Shaw (tp), and Ronnie Scott (tr).



Below: Proud papa Jack Parnell gives offspring Richard his first drum lesson.



Below: Ray Ellington, his Quartet and the Goons make merry on one of their crazy broadcasts.

Below: Stars enjoy the Mardi Gras Ball (l. to r.) Kenny Baker, Dickie Valentine, Harry Klein and Teddy Foster.



PARADE

Boxer - promoter - restaurant owner Freddy Mills has now turned disc jockey, and below he is seen sparring-up to the mike before one of his Saturday midday record programmes.



Above: At the MDA meeting this week (l. to r.) Mantovani, Eric Robinson, Jack Coles, John Thorpe and Sydney Lipton.



Among the hundreds of fans and musicians who attended the Mardi Gras in London last week was the above West Indian dancer. Dig the exotic sombrero!

**NME's
first issue**

March 7, 1952

NIRVANA and **HOLE** cancel tours; **PUBLIC ENEMY**, **ICE-T**, **ICE CUBE** for Reading - Page 3



Jocks away!
PRIMAL SCREAM
take off on tour

Teenage dicks:
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('Huh-huh, they said dick')

NEW NME EXPRESS

Big bonk theories



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April 9, 1994



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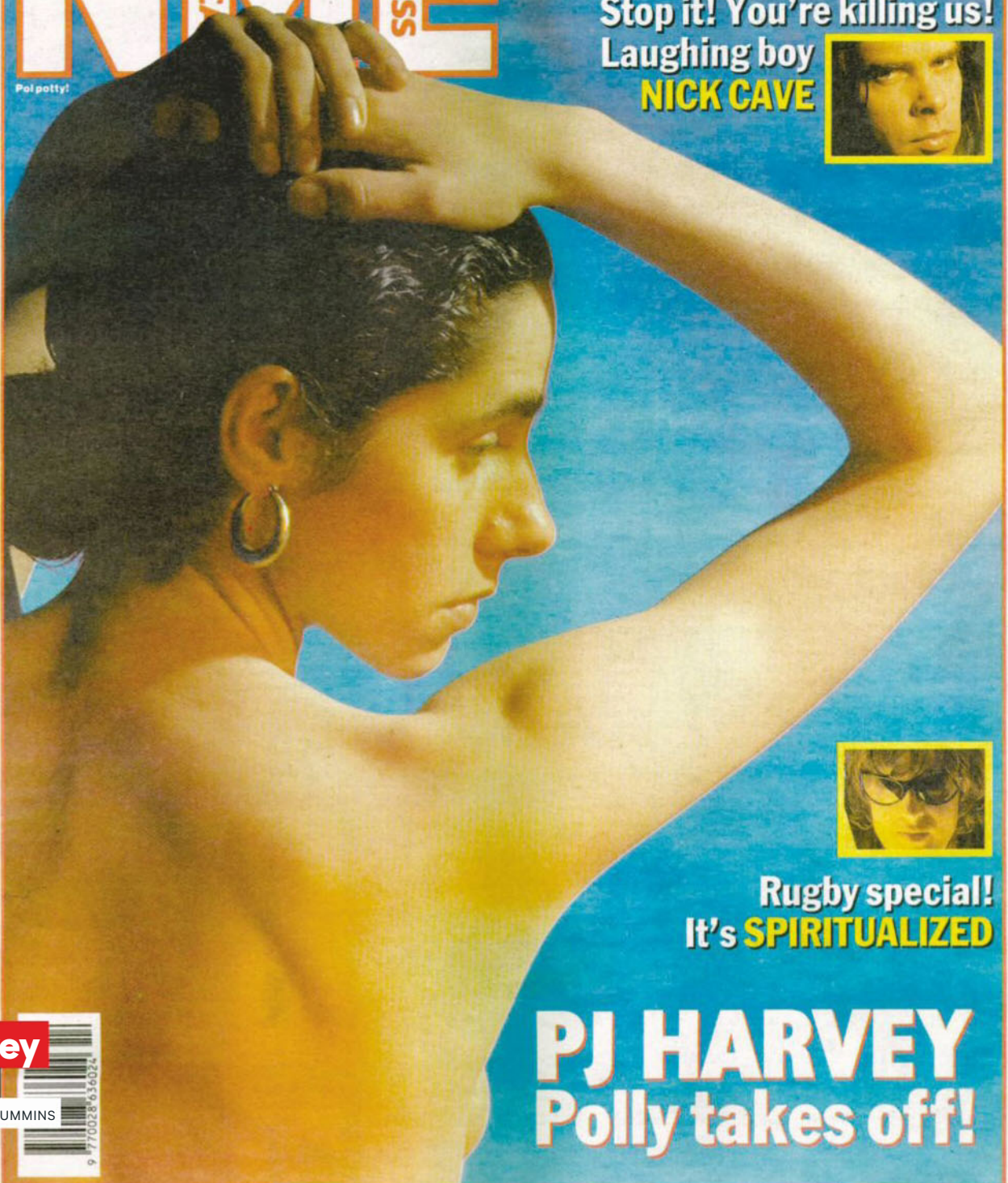
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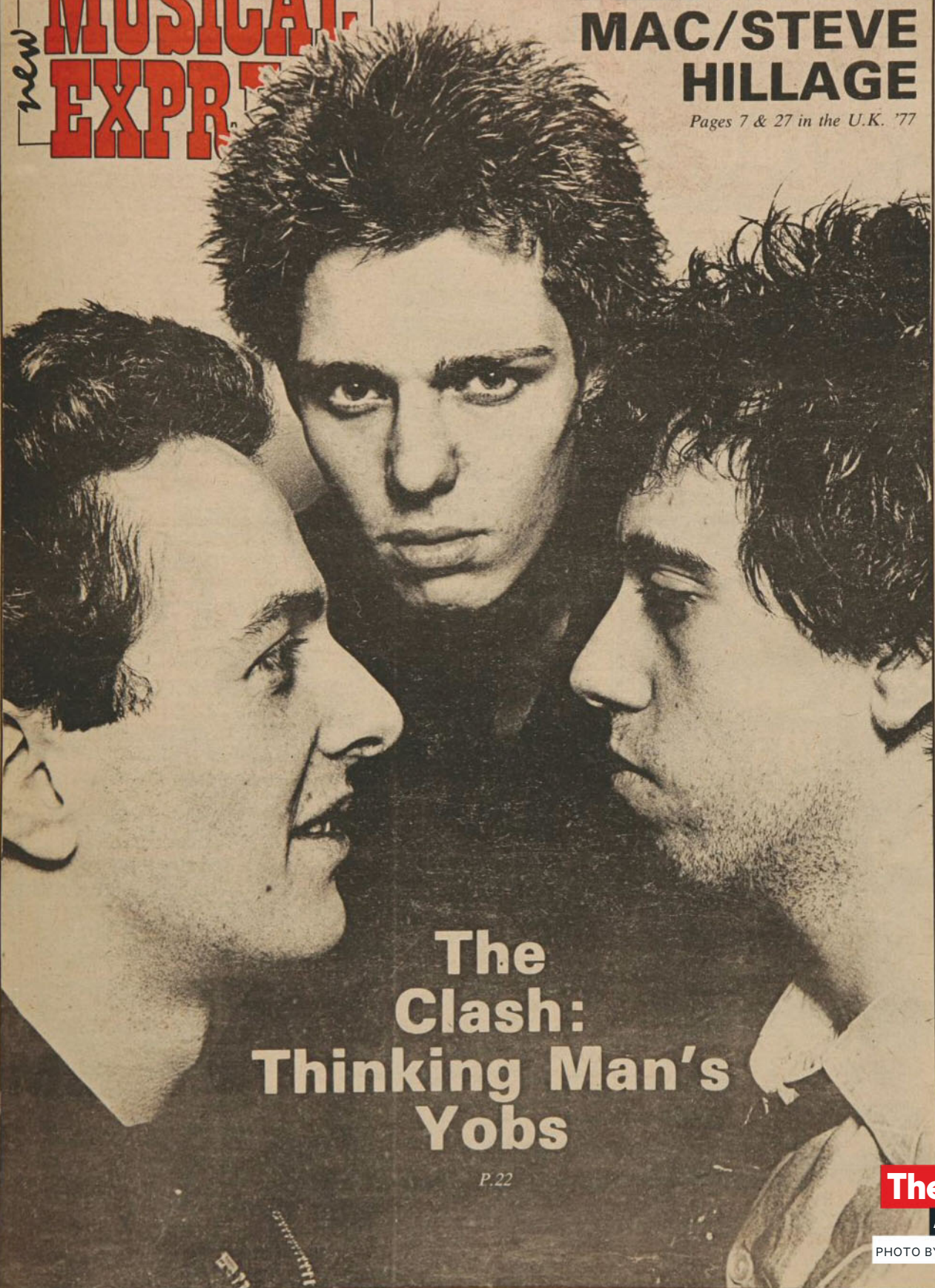
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The Clash: Thinking Man's Yobs

P.22

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April 2, 1977

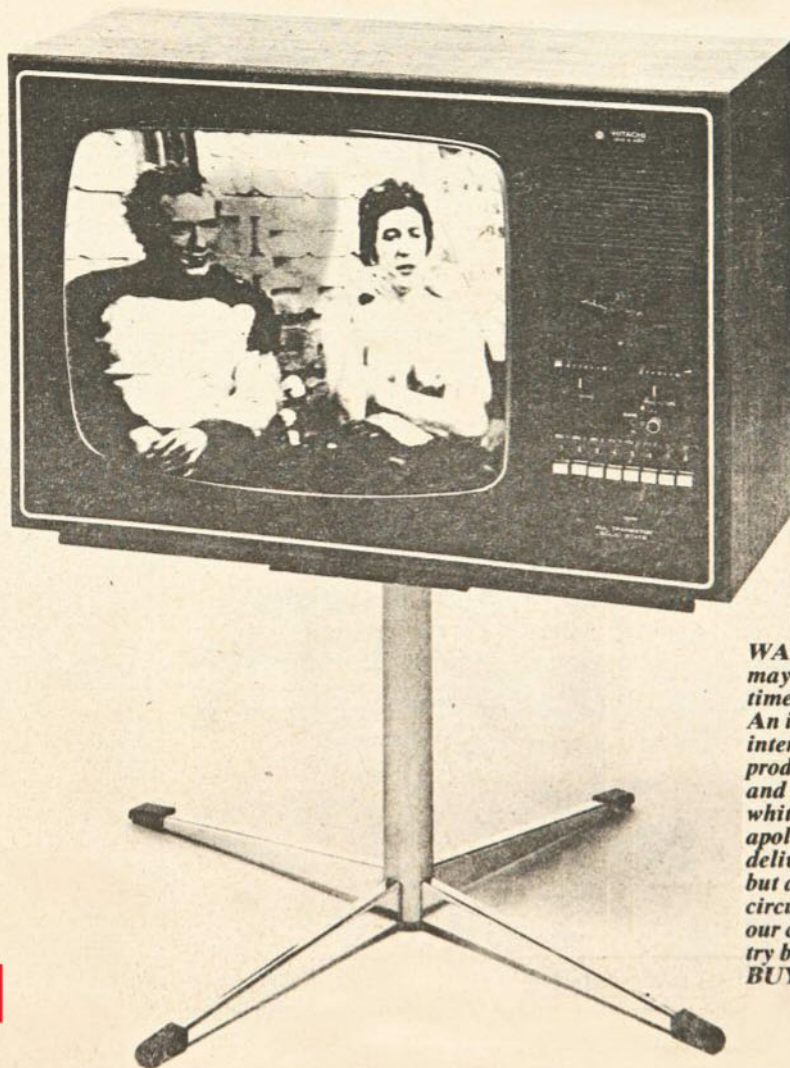
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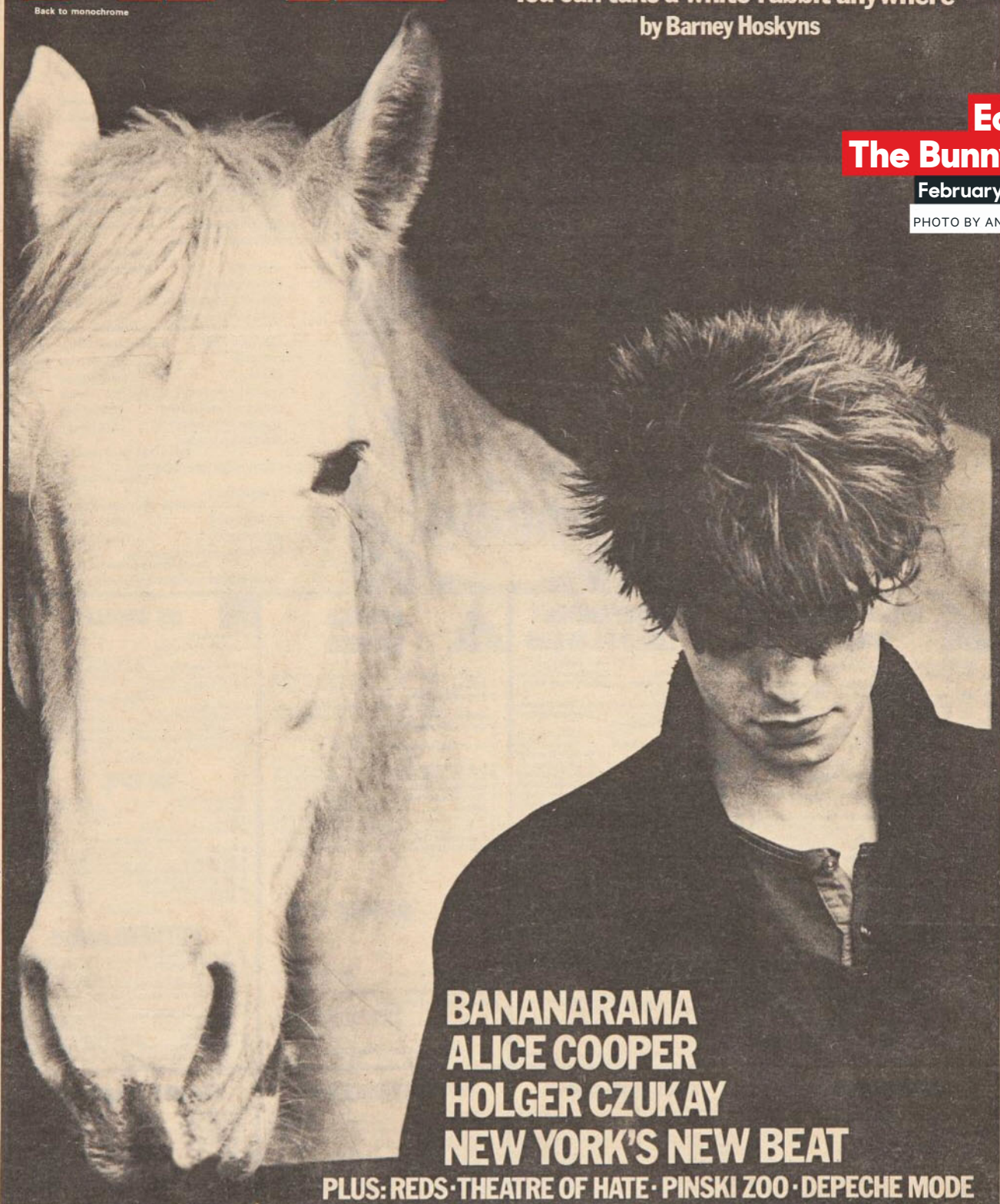
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Simon Cowell

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Naughty culture



Blur

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PHOTO BY STEVE DOUBLE

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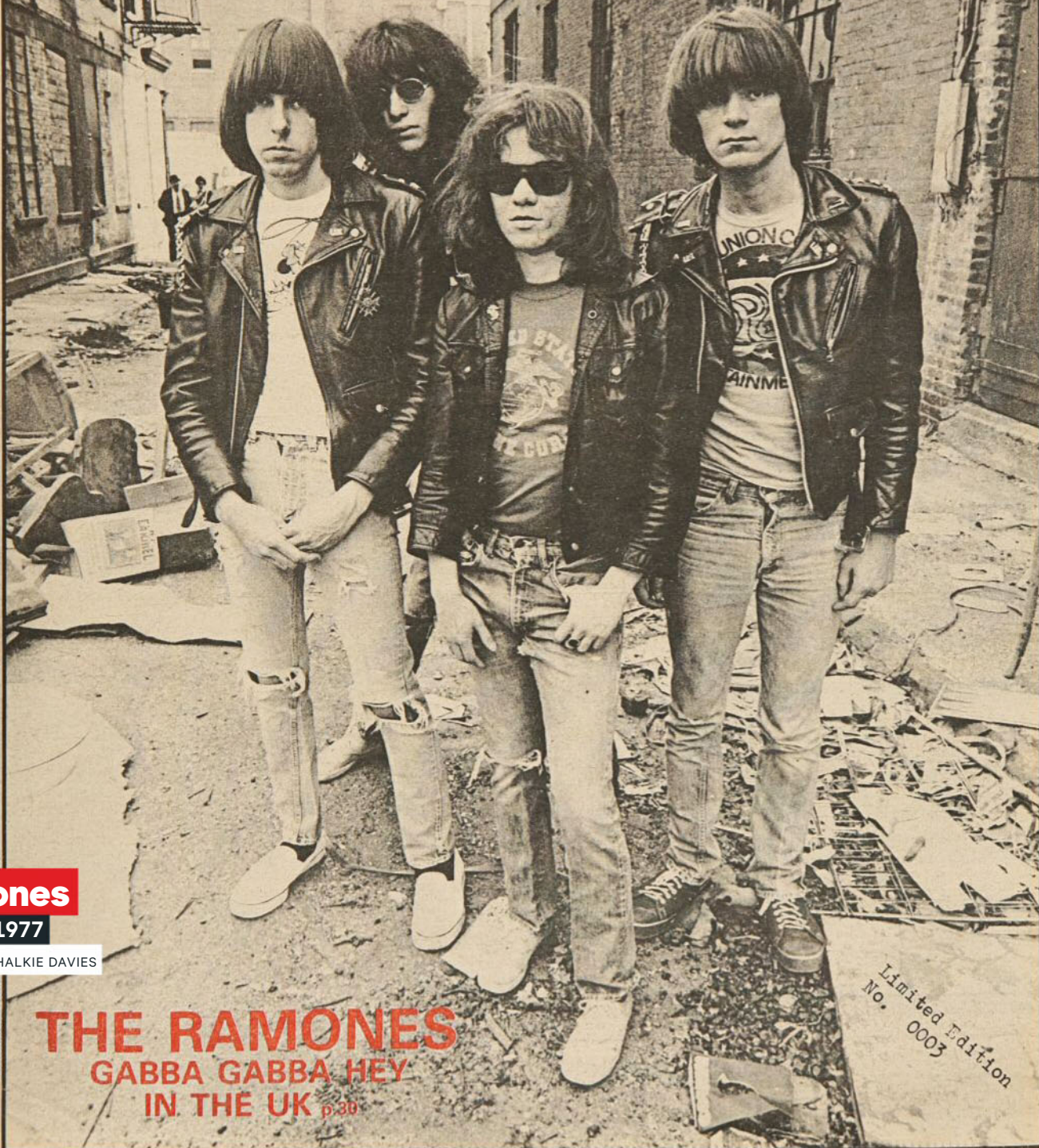
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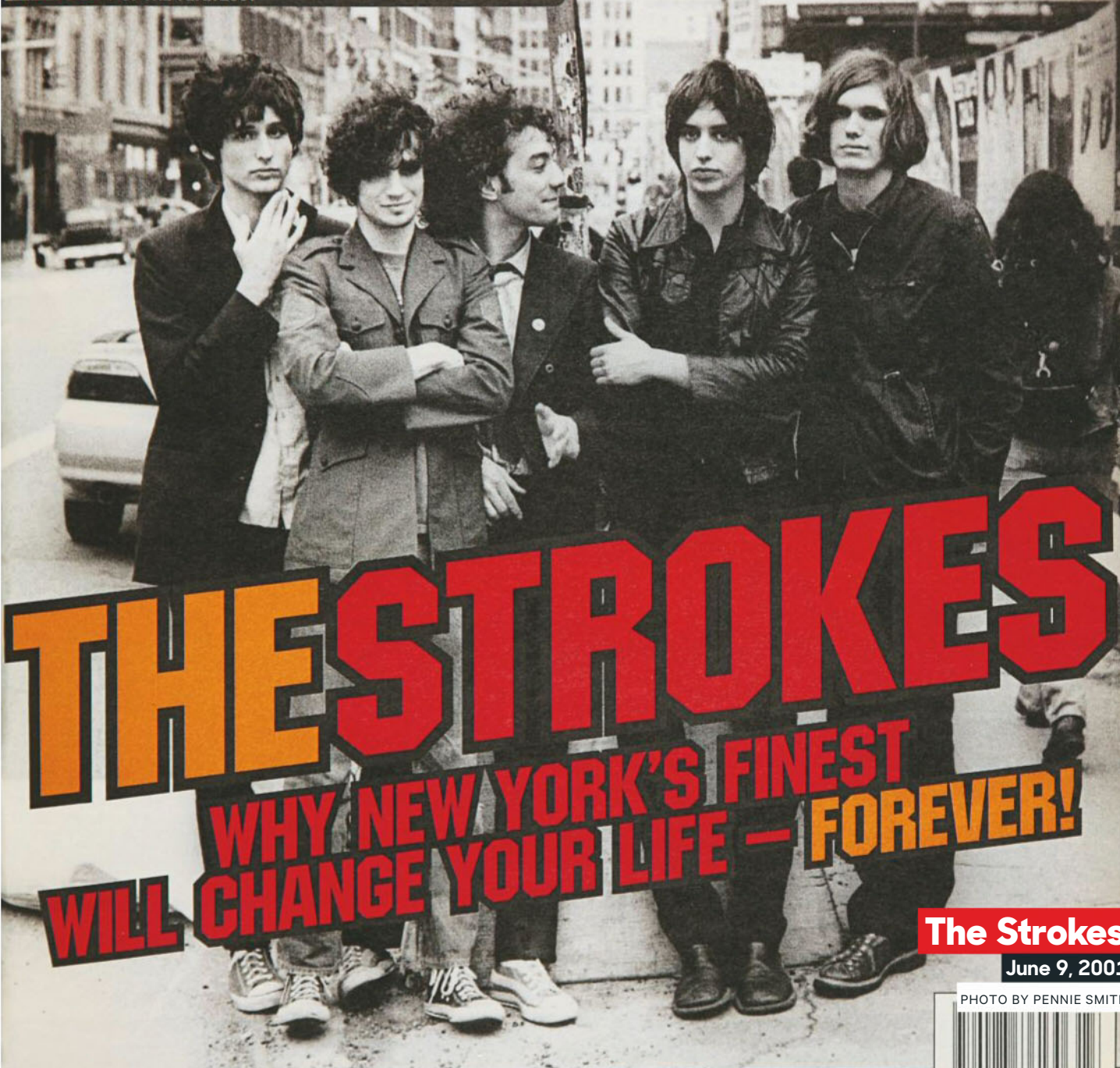
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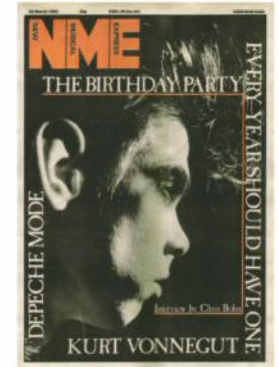
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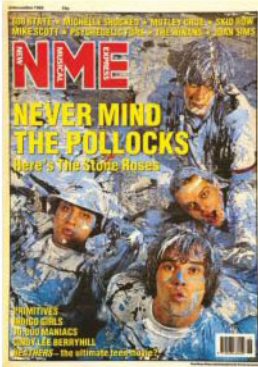
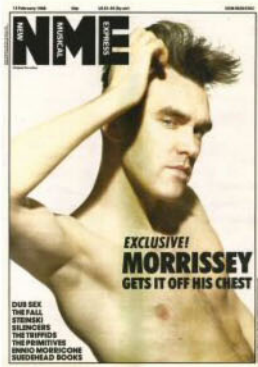
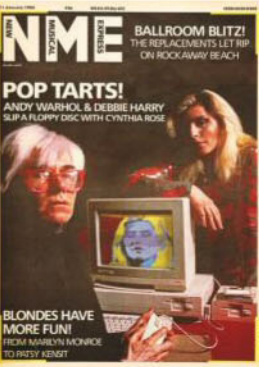
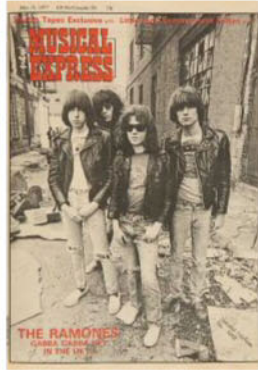
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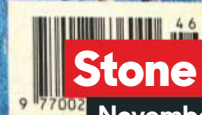
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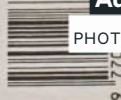
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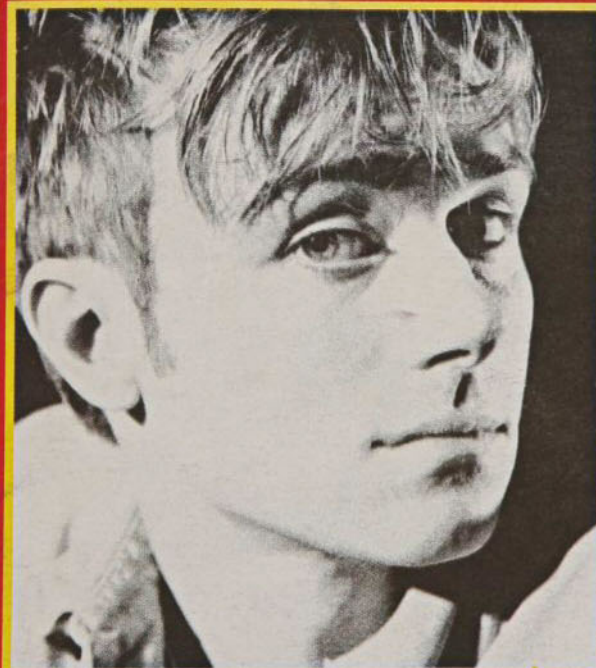
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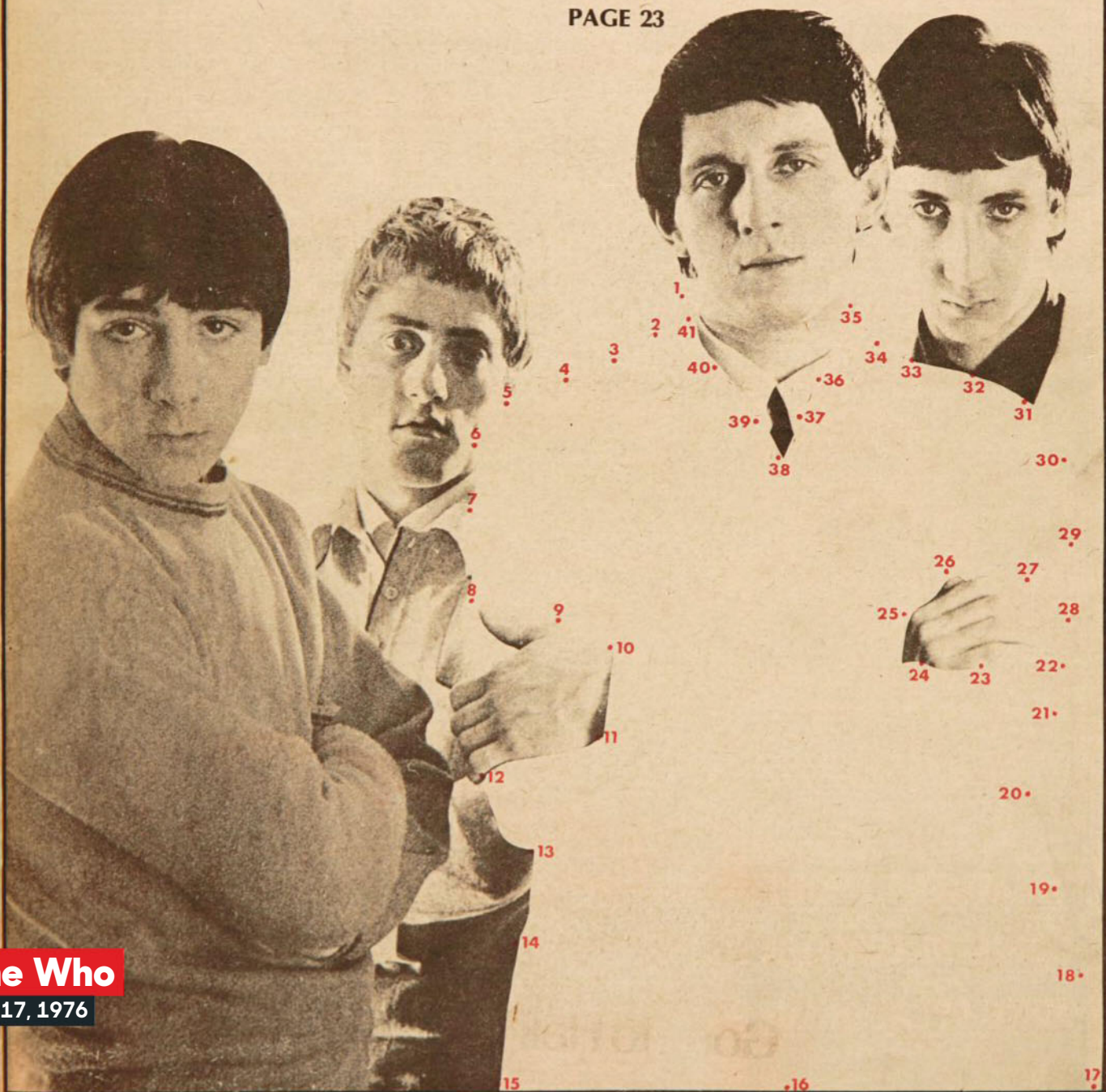
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BY NUMBERS

STARTS
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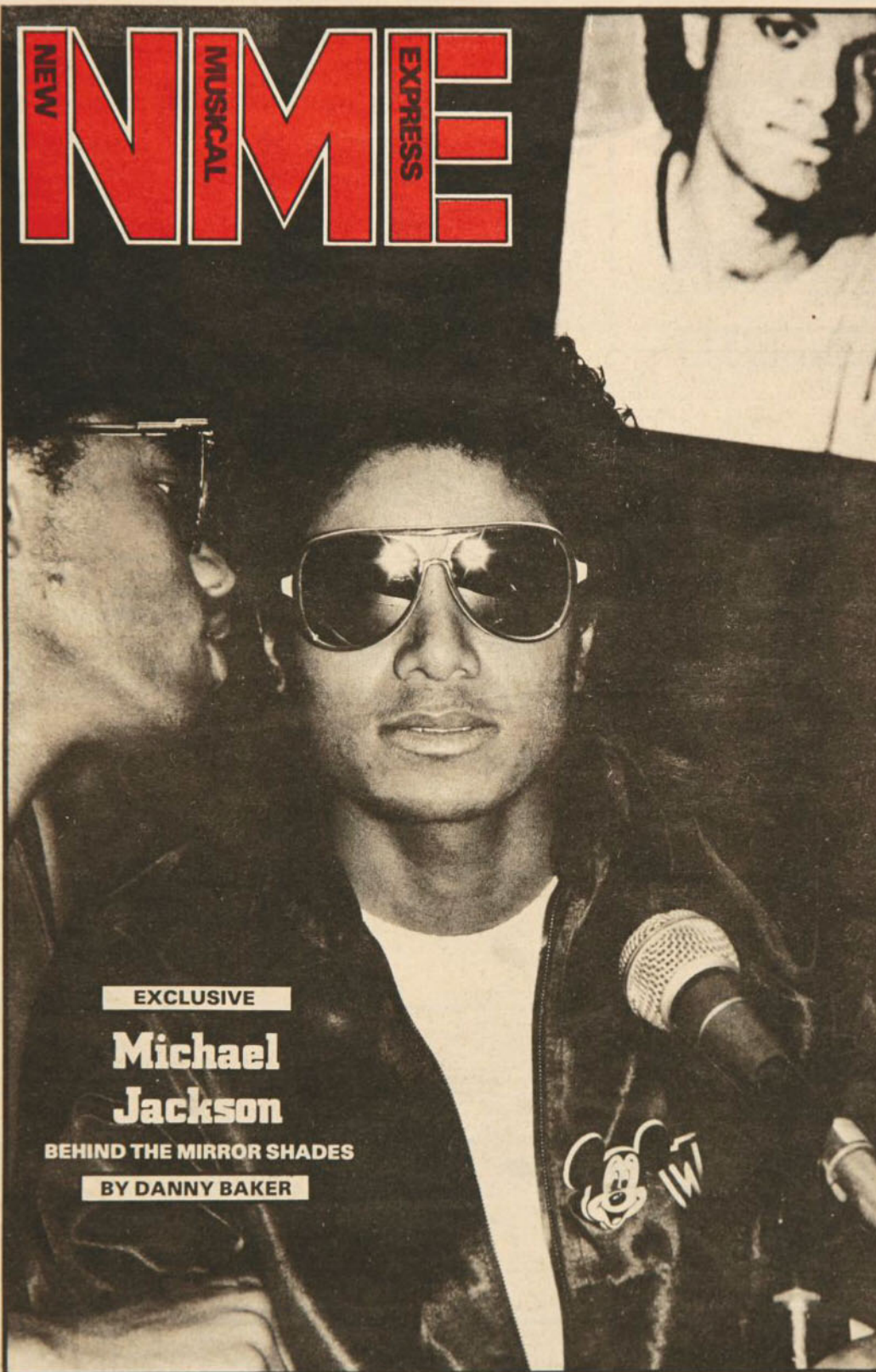
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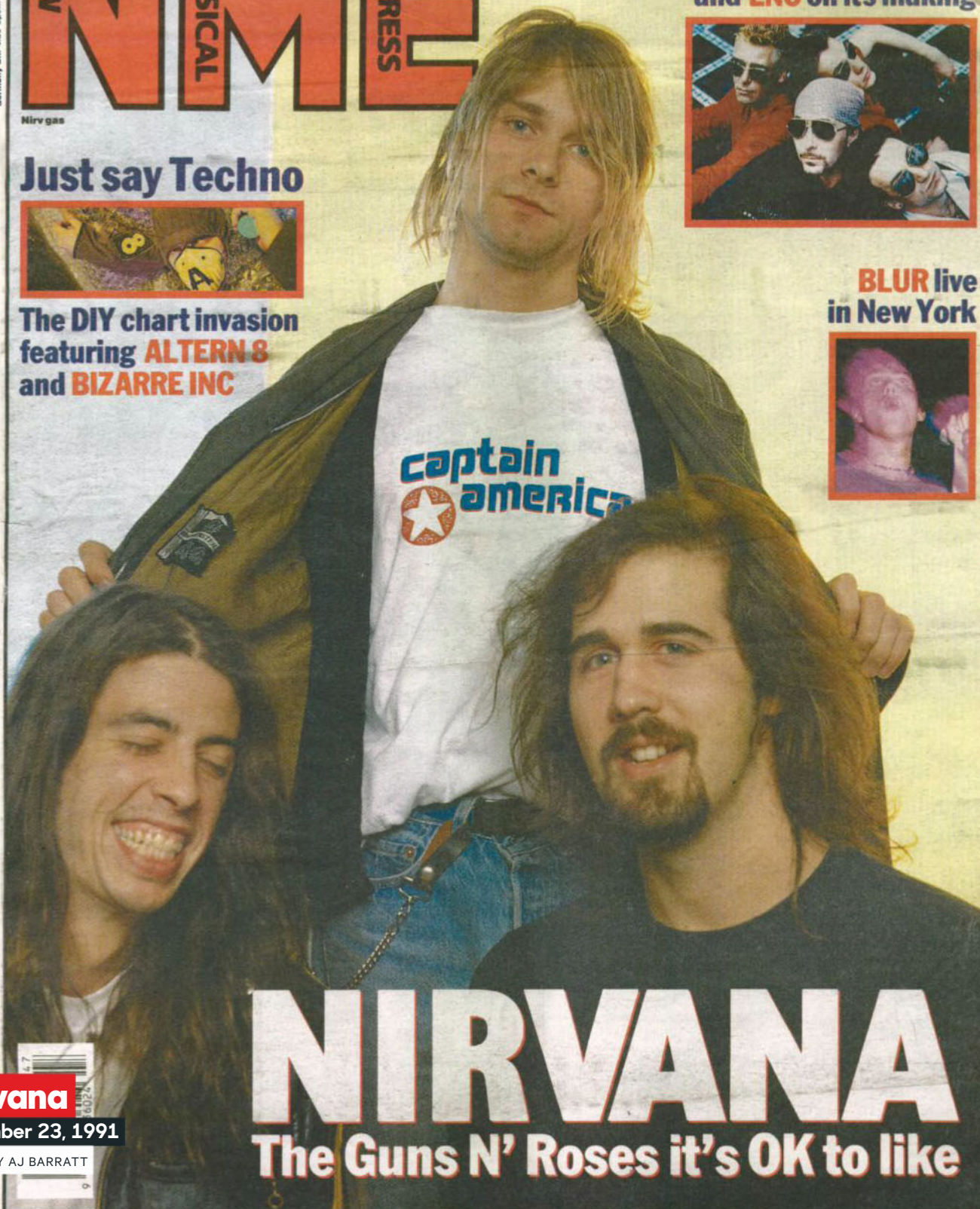


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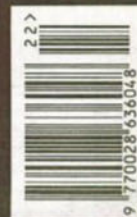
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BOYS DON'T DIE
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"It felt like we were in outer space"

In 2013, Arctic Monkeys returned to Glastonbury festival to prove themselves as one of the greatest bands on the planet. Matt Wilkinson hitched a ride with a spangle-suited, Elvis-channelling troupe brimming with bravado

PHOTOS: ZACKERY MICHAEL

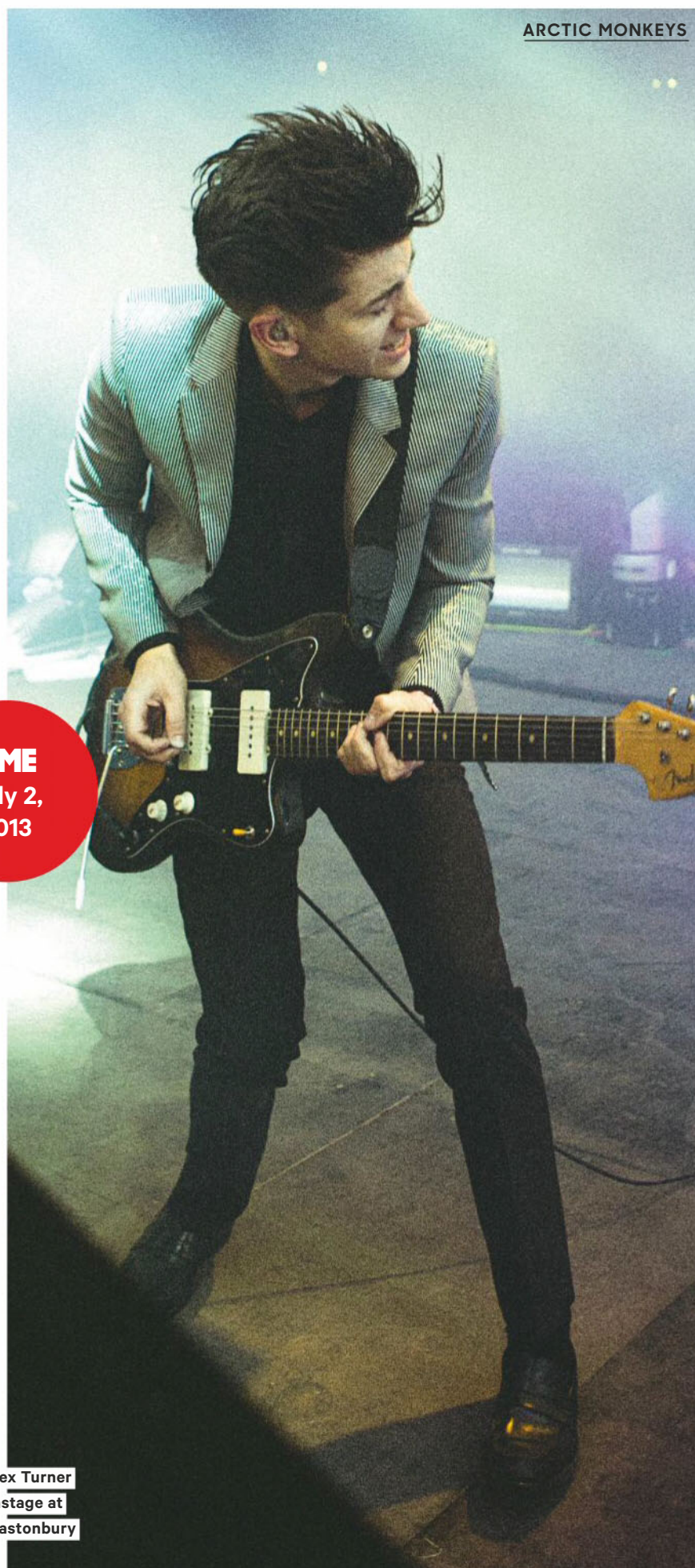
"**G**lastonbury... Glastonbury? I love you." In just five words, 49 minutes into what's turning out to be the biggest gig of his life, Alex Turner sweeps up 100,000 people and puts them right in the palm of his hand. He's just become the first man in Pyramid Stage history to have the audacity – and cool – to stop his band's set so that he can comb his quiff behind the amps. He's spent the past 24 hours wondering whether or not nerves will get the better of him, and whether he'll "fall on my arse" and make an embarrassment of himself in front of the world.

But right now, on a dry and jubilant Worthy Farm, all of the emotional baggage is suddenly gone. "Let's just leave all that showmanship shit for a bit," he shrugs. "I just want to tell you – I'm yours." In the wings, just a few metres to his right, an old man in a scarf and baseball cap watches with great intensity. Now Mick Jagger knows exactly what he needs to do on Saturday night.

For the last day or so, Arctic Monkeys have been twiddling their thumbs a few miles from Glastonbury. Every time I ask how they're feeling, they're adamant they're not nervous at all. Ensconced with their girlfriends and a small road crew at their plush hotel (owned by ➔

NME
July 2,
2013

Alex Turner
onstage at
Glastonbury



ARCTIC MONKEYS

Arctic Monkeys
headline the
Pyramid Stage

Duncan Bannatyne from *Dragon's Den*, no less) it's kind of easy to believe them. This is where the biggest acts in the world come every last weekend in June to psych themselves up before playing what could be the defining moment of their career – Beyoncé and Jay Z stayed in 2011.

Guitarist Jamie Cook is easily the most relaxed man in Camp Monkeys, with his stoic, solid-as-a-rock presence a cornerstone for the rest of the party. Basically, the gist is this: if he's cool then so is everyone else. Ask him on Friday morning for the first thought that went through his head when he woke up and he's totally deadpan: "Fry-up".

Bassist Nick O'Malley and drummer Matt Helders are more pensive ("I just kept thinking about the first song, singing 'Do I Wanna Know?' over and over," says the latter). Alex, meanwhile, has a typically poetic response. "I do that thing where you can never tell what's going on behind the curtains. Is it a bright day or not? So there was a bit of that this morning, a bit of a guessing game with the spirits." For "most weekends" in the past six years, he says, he's woken up in a strange city, sometimes not even knowing the name of the festival he's playing at. "Whereas this morning, I definitely knew – Glastonbury Friday. Because as you know, nothing has the properties of Glastonbury."

The crux of their planning this time has rested on two things, he says: what songs they'll play, and what songs they'll DJ to the crowd over the PA before they go on. "We got this playlist together for the changeover between Dizzee and us. We've just gone for big tunes. Usually you try and put a couple of weird ones so everyone's fucking Shazaming it or whatever, but there's definitely gonna be no need for that. Me and Cookie were doing it on the plane – you play a tune and try to imagine the crowd, all the flags and that, see if it works."

He and the rest of the band have taken it easy so far, partly because of what happened the last time they headlined here, in 2007. "Me and Miles [Kane] were just ripping it up on the site," says Alex, "and I totally had the fear the next day." Last night was as different to 2007 as can be, he says – a couple of glasses of red wine, a 'family' meal, everything nice and relaxed. "And then I put the telly on and the fucking Glastonbury documentary came



"I just don't know anything other than this, I can't imagine it any other way"

Alex Turner

on! I watched, like, five minutes of it. It's weird, maybe it should have shitted me up, watching that. But you know what, now it's come round – not to take anything away from it – but there's a bit of me that's like, this is sort of what we do now. It's not just another day at the office, definitely not, but so many things have changed since the last time we were here. I feel kind of... alright."

Cut forward five hours, and I'm in Arctic Monkeys' dressing room directly behind the Pyramid Stage, my arm covered in colour-coded wristbands. There's a coffee barista in

the corner, huge sofas everywhere, plasma TVs, band instruments and a ginormous white cake in the shape of the Pyramid Stage. There've been no trips to the site on the Wednesday or Thursday for the band themselves, so the first time any of them get to see the huge crowd is when Matt goes to check on his drum kit. The Monkeys go onstage in exactly one hour's time, and he couldn't resist having a peek outside just as Dizzee Rascal was bringing his set to a close.

"I remembered that same feeling from 2007 when we headlined, and Kasabian were on before us," he says. "I remember seeing it all and then shitting myself." And this time? "It wasn't quite as bad – I'm more excited than anything now. I feel ready, I think." And then he turns to Turner. "Someone's got a flag that says 'Where's Al?', Al. A big yellow flag with a picture of your face on it."

"Oh, nice," Alex quips. "Well, I haven't got time to go and look for myself. We're gonna spend the next hour-and-a-half staring at them – what do we need to go up now for?"

All four members seem pretty twitchy, talking loads quicker than usual about anything and everything: from the air conditioning



Alex and Matt
pre-gig at
their hotel



One last drink
backstage before
the headline set



Arriving onsite
on Friday

(which is freaking them out because it sounds like rain), to ping pong (Alex is brilliant, supposedly, but there's no table backstage for him to prove it), to Miles Kane, with whom the singer made a surprise appearance earlier on. "I went on and sang 'Standing Next To Me' at the John Peel Stage," he says. "It was full and it was fucking great. He's the Turbo Mod isn't he? Iron Mod 3, we call him!"

I ask if they're proud that after 10 years as a band they're still at the top of their game, when so many other key guitar acts – The Libertines, The Strokes, The White Stripes, Kings Of Leon – have fallen from grace. "Yeah, I definitely do feel proud," says Alex. "There's no doubt about it. It's like *(affects persona of his 17-year-*

old self) 'You're a long way from T'Grapes now, aren't ya, love?!' I can't believe it, who'd have fucking thought it?"

Helders cuts in. "Actually somebody who knew us 10 years ago was saying that earlier, but they were like '...you're still here. WHY are you still here?!'"

"But I just don't know anything other than this," Alex answers. "I can't imagine it any other way."

The next time I see the band I'm huddled at the side of the stage along with a bunch of friends and family, just opposite Mick Jagger and Chris Martin. 'Don't Look Back In Anger' plays over the PA and the entire crowd are going mental. As 'My Sweet Lord' starts, the band suddenly sidle up to the huge, paper-thin curtain that shields them from the masses. It's just the four of them, jostling around on their own for a good 10

minutes, by which time 'Imagine' has kicked in and everyone is singing along. It sounds like the loudest thing on earth. Jamie and Alex both do a shaky 'Elvis-leg' dance together, the kind of thing that Joe Strummer used to do when he got really intense onstage. They each point out where the other is going wrong with it, while Matt drums on his thighs and high-fives Nick. All of them look completely enclosed in their own little bubble, focused and confident as hell.

The gig itself is mesmerising. As all four have said, they're a completely different beast now compared to 2007. Back then they were great, but still timid. Now, they're a rollicking rock'n'roll monster with eight years of success under their belts. They've picked opener 'Do I

Wanna Know?' for a reason, says Matt. "It's new, it's us, and it's got exactly the right kind of groove to get people moving the way we like." He's proved completely right. The whole of the stage is swathed in dust and smoke, but when it lifts – just in time for 'Brianstorm' – the entire horizon is covered by people going batshit crazy. It's the first time the band have seen the crowd properly, and Alex instantly turns round

to his drummer and shoots him the biggest grin possible. He's spent the past 18 months becoming as extroverted onstage as possible, reinventing himself as a bullish modern-day Lennon (fronting his pre-Beatles band Johnny & The Moondogs though, with ultra gang-leader mentality the key ingredient). His patter is as much about who he can eyeball and point at, rather than what he actually says. And the whole band thrive off it.

There are moments where he snaps out of it, though, and these are the points when the gig becomes beautifully personal: his sincere declaration of love for Glastonbury, a bit in 'Pretty Visitors' where he waves his arms along with the crowd, and a sweet moment when he gets everyone to sing 'Happy Birthday' to his mum, Penny.

Straight after the set, I'm bundled into the band's dressing room where they're totally giddy with excitement. "I feel incredible!" says Alex. "It's one of the best gigs we've ever done. Ever! Just because it's... Glastonbury. It wasn't raining, and... it's Glastonbury!"

"I was saying to them in the encore that it felt like I was floating when I was up there, like I had roller blades on or something!" laughs Nick. "Honestly, I thought I'd be shitting it, but I just felt strangely calm!"

How does it rank compared to everything else the band have done? "This is the best it gets!" says Alex. "You only ever do, like, five gigs like this. That one was the one. You do big shows, big festivals all the time. But it's a different beast, Glastonbury. We'll be playing to a lot of people over the summer, but it won't have that feeling we had just then. It felt like I was in outer space. Now, are you gonna have a beer to celebrate?"

As the singer dives into the band's rider, I ask one final question. Where the hell do Arctic Monkeys go from here? "I don't see why we can't do it again!" Alex beams. "In a few years' time... I mean it! It seemed like everyone was having a good party, you know? And I know we certainly were. So why not?" Michael and Emily Eavis: you know exactly what to do. ■

This charming man

Like any long-term love affair, the relationship between *NME* and Morrissey has suffered turbulent times. But following a triumphant solo show in Wolverhampton, James Brown found the former Smiths frontman on the upswing and in provocative form

PHOTOS: LAWRENCE WATSON

NME

February 11,
1989

The doorbell rings once. Morrissey looks uncomfortable.

"I can't imagine who that is. We'll just have to ignore it. But they may not go away. It happens."

There is not a second ring but Morrissey is clearly alarmed.

"Some people sit and ring and ring. And circle the house and peer through the windows. It's very tedious and very embarrassing because I don't know why they do it. I often think that if people really liked me and understood me and appreciated me they'd ring once and go away. But the people who persist, and believe me this happens every day, I don't have anything to say to those people. To me that's not adoration, it's complete rudeness. How would you feel if I stood outside your gate and called your name out every day?"

It's Monday on the outskirts of Manchester and Morrissey is fencing with *NME*, his favourite music paper. The topics ahead are sex, crime, honesty beauty, fame, performance, adoration and, for the sake of capitalism and cliché, 'The Last Of The Famous International Playboys', a single.

"The Last Of The Famous International Playboys' is the first record that I feel hysterical about," he gushes, exercising his career-making talent for self-promotion. "And I'm very pleased to feel that way. I compare it to 'Shoplifters Of The World Unite'. I heard 'Shoplifters Of The World Unite' once on the radio, a chart rundown. It was a new entry. They had to play it. They had no choice. And I laughed hysterically as it listened to it. I felt a great sense of victory."

Morrissey is tangled up in blue jeans, blue T-shirt, blue deck pumps and blue eyes. His flat is spick'n'span. There's a portable typewriter and a pile of anti-vivisection leaflets on the table in the hall. The television is off, there are no clothes to tidy away, the settee and armchair are drawn a little closer, the tea is poured, the biscuits ignored.

There's a great deal to be discussed with Morrissey, yet as the shriek of the doorbell has proved, there are others beside *NME* who feel it is their privilege to have the man's attention.

"Some people see me as one thing and some people see another. And the people who see me as a 'pop singer' are the people who persist and ring the doorbell. But the people who see me as a valuable addition to music are the people who wouldn't dream of coming near the house. I am obsessive about practically everything, but I can control my obsessions. I am not uncontrollably obsessive."

So you don't go and stand outside people's houses then?

"Not lately, I'm rational, very, very rational. Even in days of old when I followed others and I stood by the coach at soundchecks and so forth, I wouldn't dive on top of people and slobber and say all the things you're supposed to say. It was just enough to see them drive by in a coach

and assume that they notice you. I've seen the film of Wolverhampton but I wouldn't call that diving or slobbering. I think that was quite different, it was love. Unmistakably it was love. I was choked before I sang a syllable really."

Ahh, yes, Wolverhampton. If there's one event to mark the triumph of Morrissey's solo career, and more specifically, to clarify the relationship between Morrissey and his public, it was his performance at Wolverhampton Civic Centre [his solo debut, December 22, 1988, at which fellow Smiths Mike Joyce and Andy Rourke joined his backing band].

The excitement and atmosphere inside the hall was the most electric I have ever experienced at any public event. Sensible and intelligent fans were transformed into screaming Mozettes (male and female) at the return of their beloved rebel boy. It was a night Morrissey, also, will never forget.

"The concert was a very impulsive thing... all the best things happen on impulse, I find. I was interested to see how people would react towards me. There was no intention to cause chaos. It wasn't an attention-seeking device, I just needed to see some particular faces. It was nice to be kissed repeatedly. I don't think that happens very often, I also think it's very rare for a male audience to kiss a male singer. I don't think it even happens. Does it happen?"

"For months previous to that I had languished in this very room, seeing practically nobody. And I had to go from that situation to Wolverhampton where your limbs are spread over... being distributed amongst an audience is an incredible feeling. Can you imagine being kissed by hundreds of people? It's probably happened to you, I don't know. Where do you spend your evenings? It was immensely uplifting. Practically medical really. They appear very aggressive and brusque but when they touch me it's very gentle."

What was it like to play with your former Smiths? Was it something you had planned?

"Well it was a part of it for me. It made me feel more confident than if it had been otherwise. So I was very happy and very pleased with the onstage line-up. That made me feel relaxed. It does help to have solid people around you."

"It's an interesting question whether we'll continue to work together. These days of course it isn't like earlier times when money and contracts were less concern generally. The secret of The Smiths was that we did everything on impulse for our own amusement. That's why it flowed so perfectly. But these days I suppose people are a little older and I suppose they need a safer arrangement, which is fair enough."

Do you find people are still interested in your relationship with Johnny Marr?

"No I don't actually. I think people have put that one away, in the cupboard, as it were."

Have you put it in the cupboard?

"Yes, I have. In all truth I have. It took me a while, but, yes I have. Ashes to ashes really."

Was there sadness when you realised this?

"Well, embarrassment more than sadness because it was utterly, utterly phenomenally stupid. The split should never have occurred. It was utterly stupid. 'You hate my cat, so I hate your cat.' It was pettiness, it was literally my cat and Johnny's dog."

How do you feel about the split now?

"Well there are personal, there are private, there are public reasons. The Smiths had reached a point where they could dominate the world if they wished to. After years of semi-struggle everything was finally laid out before us and that was when The Smiths ended. I was quite annoyed by that because suddenly there were questions. Suddenly the question was 'Well can he actually make a record now?' So it was a very dodgy period for me and I think my records very accurately illustrated that. I feel as though I'm actually in my third career now."

Morrissey is currently more popular than he has ever been before. His first two solo singles both entered the Top 10 in the first week of their release, and I have already heard serious suggestion that 'The Last Of The Famous International Playboys' will be Morrissey's first Number One hit record. Though lyrically concerned with criminal notoriety, using The Krays as its example, the title of 'Last Of The Famous International Playboys' screams for a more specific and familiar nominee. Appropriately Morrissey has already furnished himself with four candidates.

"The Last Of The Famous International Playboys are David Bowie, Marc Bolan, [former Buzzcocks frontman] Howard Devoto and me," he announces modestly.

Do you see similarities between yourself and Bowie?

"What, the living Bowie or the present dead one? The living Bowie, there are some, yes. Yes, I do see similarities."

Like all immediate success stories The Smiths have left in their wake a sea of assorted respectful, bemused, and sometimes embittered personnel. And like all successful rock'n'roll bands who don't splash their underwear, their sex, and their mother's little helpers across the fish and chip wrap of tabloids, there is an equally large stack of unfounded, unproven, and unwanted rumours, lies, and fantasies.

And yet, apart from a very early interview with our own Cath Carroll where Morrissey spoke directly about the eroticism of the male body (and an interview in a lesser rag that was littered with tawdry references to public toilets), Morrissey has rarely been questioned about the highly sexual nature of his lyrics.

Without wishing to undermine his aggressive challenge to the staid institution of compulsory heterosexuality and monogamy, I find it hard to believe that it is a Crown Prince Of Celibacy who is responsible for such knowing or flirtatious songs as 'Late Night, Maudlin Street', 'Reel Around The Fountain', 'Hand In Glove' and 'Alsatian Cousin'. Or for the specifically sexual visual control of his image, from the topless *NME* front cover to the particularly lustful dancing of the young tearaway hoodlum on the new video. ➡

Are your lyrics really honest?

"Yes I think they are very honest. They're honest to everything. Obviously that word is so dangerous because as soon as it's used you're suddenly suspect. They're very true to me and what I want."

There is a very high and strong sense of sexuality running through your lyrics.

"Well that's me all over. I don't think I've ever said words that don't have that tinge..."

It's not just a tinge.

"Well I'm being modest. That overblown brew of brimming sexuality, I think that's there. I think what I said was that me as a living, breathing specimen was bereft of any physical whatever. I listen to Stock, Waterman and Faceache with all its brimming disco and to me it's sadly clinical, it isn't sex; it's obviously the A-Z of cliché."

Do you see yourself as a sex object?

"I think I must be, absolutely, a total sex object. In every sense of the word. A lot of men and a lot of women find me... find me... unmistakably attractive. It amuses me, I sit down and wonder why, and then somebody writes a beautiful letter and tells me why. I find it baffling in a particular sense because, as I said earlier, I can't remember any figure who attracted so many male followers. And a lot of the male followers who are, as far as the eye can see, natural specimens, have very, very anguished and devilishly rabid desires in my direction. And I find that quite historic."

What about emotional circles and physical relationships?

"Well, I don't have them. I have very good friends and we can make phone calls and laugh hysterically for three hours but that's as far as it goes."

All the times when you have discussed your asexuality and celibacy, have you been giving a fair representation of the experiences that you also draw your lyrics from?

"I think they have been fair. Totally accurate."

Why are you so guarded about the life you write about?

"I'm guarded because a lot of people make fun and a lot of people think I'm clinically mad. So I'm ready to erect a small wall when somebody mentions 'silly butties' – celibacy. I've been around a bit now, I'm not a thin swirling creature any more. And I suppose manhood does arrive at some stage, you can't fend it off."

People have this impression of you as a...

"Yes I know, I've heard this."

...As a celibate, as someone who stands back, yet the knowledge you put across through your lyrics and the pain, the emotion, the

excitement that you capture, they aren't the words of a celibate. Unless the person was promiscuous prior to celibacy...

"Not true, because I think the people who are knee-deep in bodies and flesh can't be bothered to write about those things. If they sit down to construct a stanza they actually want to write about something a bit different. They want to get away from it because flailing flesh is very much part of their lives. It's not interesting and nothing new and perhaps they don't have a clear vision of it. They're so steeped in it."

"So I think if throughout my life I had been popular and active, shall we say [chuckles], I might have written about something else. But because I was, as I may have casually mentioned once, plunging, plunging, plunging I had to scribble, scribble, scribble."

Do you ever find yourself attracted to people?

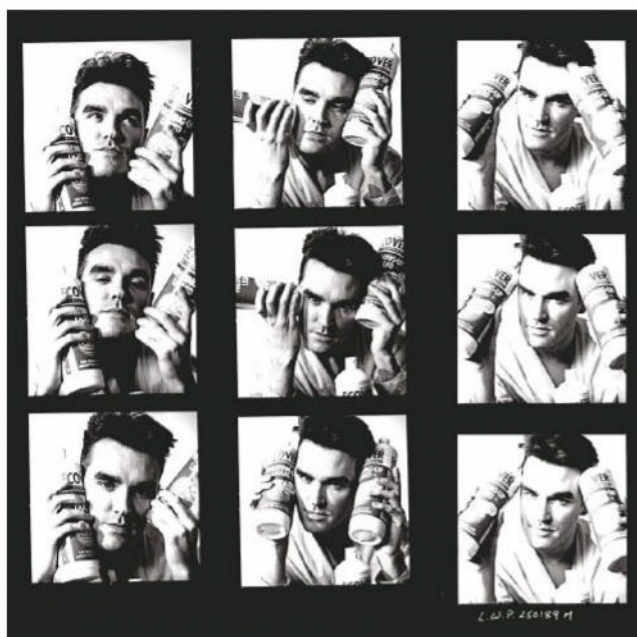
"Yes sometimes. I do have the occasional flushes but they do pass. I sit down and have a chip butty. You don't accept that do you? Yes, I do have flushes, usually at bank holidays. Mostly, no, people are a great disappointment to me. I think I am interested and then I discover the reality. People are quite light and frothy, which is fair enough. I know some people aren't frothy at all. I think there's a lot of frothiness about, especially in Peterborough."

When you write, are you trying to soothe the way you feel about sex?

"It's beyond 'nudge nudge'. I don't fit into any sexual category at all so I don't feel people see it as being sexual, but as being intimate."

"People to me were never sexual. I'm beyond that"

Morrissey



Meanwhile back at the raunch, it is this clever choice of asexuality, combined with a very physical sexual reality (even if it is only confined to the level of 'look, don't touch') that makes Morrissey so attractive to his hordes. The sweet and tender, untouchable, topless Adonis, always ready to reveal his inner thoughts and passions yet just as eager to veil them in lyrical and sexual ambiguity.

When I ask about the paradox of his two-sided character he replies with a standard, "Well I think it's easier to be oneself onstage."

Isn't that sad?

"Yeah but it's just like saying 'Isn't it sad that someone need drugs to be happy?'"

Have you ever felt like that?

"Err, when I was a teenager."

So you've never been a rampant cocaine fiend then?

"I don't even know what cocaine looks like. When I was a teenager I used to make my weekly trip to the GP and come away laden."

You must have been offered cocaine as The Smiths became the classic rock'n'roll band?

"I never heard the word mentioned, ever. More's the pity, ha ha."

Never on tour?

"No, not at all. I went back to the hotel every night with a tangerine."

Do you feel like you're constantly living out your fantasies?

"I'm not Batman. I'm not The Penguin. I have always been honest and it has always been worth it. There have always been risks from the very first Smiths sleeve to the very latest. I thought male naked buttocks were a risk. Not to me of course, but to everyone else."

Do you see your songs as being heterosexual?

"No. I was beyond all that when I was three-and-a-half years of age. I left heterosexuality, umbrellasexuality, whatever, behind. I always said people to me were just sexual. I lied; actually people to me were never sexual. I'm beyond that and I think if you consider what you have to do to be that, you have to be beyond it. Salvador Dali, who died today, was beyond that, although clinically heterosexual, I believe."

Your lyrics are so amazingly sexual, very flirtatious, very knowingly saucy, double-edged, steeped in innuendo. Is that all drawn from your past?

"Well, yes, because, as I've said, I've been around nearly 30 years now you know, I've seen quite a bit. I'm not a teenager by any means, despite outward appearances. I think I'd omit 'saucy', I don't feel very saucy now."

You laid yourself absolutely naked on 'Viva Hate', didn't you?

"Absolutely naked. Parts of it were quicksand but bravery won the day."

Would you like to appear actually naked on your sleeves?

"Well, it might detract from record sales. I don't want to enter at Number 92."

Shall we call it a day?

"Yes, I think I've been naked enough today. I feel like putting a very small flannel on." ■

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A manic episode

NME
January 5,
1991

100

One of *NME*'s most vicious and viciously talented writers, the late Steven Wells was suspicious of Manic Street Preachers at first, but following an epiphany found himself hopelessly "in hate" with their bile-filled, indie kid-baiting manifesto

PHOTOS: MARTYN GOODACRE

"**S** *mash Hits* is more effective in polluting minds than Goebbels ever was..."

The following article is 100 per cent head-over-heels hype. I am in hate with a poxy Welsh rock band. They look like shit. Their music is stunted and struggling. They will smash their way into the Top 10 or self-destruct in the process. Manic Street Preachers are a speed band in an E generation, slogan-vomiting missionaries for violence in The Garden Of Good Vibes.

"The E generation still faces the long suicide of work every Monday morning. We need a constant state of kicking. Turn on to a winter of hate. Keep Warm – Make Trouble. Music is

useless if it keeps on prompting hedonism in a war zone..."

At a recent London show, flowered-up muppets stood and stared when the Preachers, necks rigid with tension, knee-deep in bum notes and spittle, poured hate and war over an audience chemically inclined towards love. "You're wearing a girl's blouse!" yelled punk veteran and *Observer* journalist Jon Savage, pogoing furiously. "We're the first androgynous band of the '90s!" screamed the mascara-ed guitarist. He wore a page torn out of the London A-Z stuck to his mum's old cheesecloth and he'd disfigured it with the stencilled message, "DEATH SENTENCE HERITAGE".

"Parliament is more ugly than a gas chamber. Money controls. Palestine is invaded and occupied like Kuwait but there's no oil so nobody cares. The state says a soldier's or a politician's life is worth more than a dead Irishman's. The working class cannot draw its poetry from the past but only from the future." Look at the real legacy of punk – a generation of coked-out rock pigs, greying journos in love with George Michael and Van Morrison while former punk gurus, Garry Bushell and Julie Burchill, both jump through hoops and snuffle Good Boy chocolate drops from the sweaty hands of the Tory press. Manic Street Preachers are already beyond the reproach of ageing punks. They are, quite simply, the most articulate, and the most politicised and the most furious and the sexiest white rock band in the entire world. See, I told you this was hype.

Tight and jittery, singer James smashed to shards a guitar he had always hated. A 23-inch-beflared lovechild ran up to him like an eager puppy. "Uh!" said the kid. "Uh! That was fucking brilliant!" When you've grown up taking drugs that make you act nice and you're encouraged to think that a flickering strobe and a man dressed as little weed add up to something radical, Manic Street Preachers

(l-r): Nicky Wire,
Sean Moore, James
Dean Bradfield,
Richey Edwards



are a revelation. "I wish I could do that!" "Whenever we've played to a young audience," claims blond beanpole bassist Nicky, "they really loved us – even if they just thought we were nutters."

The Preachers are "cripples" from a south Wales comprehensive. Turned on by Albert Camus and early Who, George Orwell and the pre-senility Stones, Hunter S Thompson and Big Flame, they buy the first Clash album to see if it makes any sense. They think it is shit. Then, in 1986, they see the local mining community kicked to crap by the police and starved back to work by the Tories and they see The Clash perform on a Tony Wilson-presented 10th anniversary of punk TV show. Something clicks. When that happens to articulate, self-educated and dangerously angry working-class boys whose bollocks have just started kicking a natural amphetamine soup into their gangly frames, the results can be explosive...

When the dust settles they look again at the music papers pushing Simple Minds and The Wedding Present, they listen with fresh ears to the jangly introspective

wank of the indie scene and they ask – what the fuck went wrong?

1986: James has no friends at school – every weekend he decamps to Cardiff to scream "Garageland" at bemused shoppers. Meanwhile, Nick is putting on his make-up in the pit village of Blackwood. The locals call him Shirley.

Little Sean the drummer is also mistaken for a girl. He is lying in a pool of vomit after having drunk a bottle of his dad's whisky. Richey is ploughing his way through Timothy Leary and William Burroughs and trying to "Sid" his hair with liquid soap. They are fucked off about everything – the Labour Party, Jeremy Beadle, the local rugby players, The Alarm, the Conservative Party, U2 – you name it, they are fucked off about it. And nowhere can they find a music to hate to. Then they get to hear Public Enemy. Pissed-off black boys from a couple of thousand miles away. Something clicks again. It's time to form a band.

They bombard the music press with speed-addled, two-finger-typed hate mail – "In mundane 1991 we look like nothing else on Earth. A car bomb kiss-off to *The Face*. Politics and adolescent cheap sex. Fuck the rotten edifice of Manchester. Too safe in dressing like a bricklayer. Too boring. Too macho, males afraid of themselves. That's why we look up to the images of Kylie and The Supremes and not bald-fat-ugly-glutton-filth Inspiral Carpets... They make us vomit."

They write with the fury and teeth-gritted enthusiasm of the hatezines of the early '80s. And they mean it. "Yes. Of course we do, Kylie sells more records and they both stand for the same thing – perfect pop. She's bound to be better, isn't she? I find it offensive that Inspiral are on teenage walls." Whilst some of the young happyheads dig the Strummertime blues, older folk are wary. It's OK to clone The Velvet Underground, it's dead cool to stick a dance beat under a Stones riff or a Byrds jangle – but The Clash?

Manic Street Preachers want to release one double album, go on *Top Of The Pops* and change the world forever before splitting up to enjoy the tidal wave of spit and fury they think, will explode in their wake. Before they're

"Every 14-year-old who sees us goes home, sells his record collection and wants to burn down Barclays Bank"

capable of creating such a catalyst they're going to have to learn to seriously screw up The Clash the way The Clash screwed up R&B. And that means sounding more like Public Enemy without sounding anything like Pop Will Eat Itself.

In a world where MC Tunes, Happy Mondays and Flowered Up dribble on about 'faggots', the Preachers are more

unconsciously and joyfully anti-homophobic, anti-sexist, anti-racist and anti-shit than any band since it became fashionable to be an apolitical arsehole. Maybe it's something to do with coming from the politicised working class rather than the drug-gobbling lumpen sump. "The music papers constantly hold up political lyrics like 'This is how it feels to be lonely' as worthwhile. White groups make me disgusted. It is pathetic they wank on about scraping a wage while Public Enemy sing about repression, control, destruction of life. We want to operate alongside Chuck D and not some T-shirt-selling Inspiral Carpets singer."

They've staggered through three singles – 'Suicide Alley', 'New Art Riot' and now 'Motown Junk' – all the time desperately trying to distance themselves from the anarcho-grungies, the Steve Lamacq muso-punks and above all else, the punkywunky cabaret of Birdland, the band whose addle-headed corpse-worship renders them to rebel music what cosy, suburban "flame effect" fires are to Welsh cottage burnings. It irritates them in the way that bands like Mega City 4 seem to revel in the squalor of their slumming, bumming lifestyle. "We hate playing toilets. We hate losing £50 every gig and having to cram back into the Transit van..." And anybody who enjoys such a ghetto lifestyle, they affirm, is a fool. And the contempt is mutual. This band are hated by their peers.

"Every A&R man in London has come to see us and they hate us totally. They come up to us and tell us to learn to play our instruments. Don't they realise that we don't care? We don't want to live out their muso fantasies. They run around like headless chickens to sign the latest bunch of no-thinkers who successfully recreate 'The Dark Side Of The Moon'. They don't realise that every 14-year-old who sees us doesn't care that we sound awful. He goes home, sells his record collection and wants to burn down Barclays Bank..."

Pop music has many functions, one of which is to articulate and reflect the breathless, cynical, clenched-fist optimism of arrogant teenage naifs who seriously think they can change the world by screaming over a back-feeding guitar. Manic Street Preachers – operating in a vacuum – want to make that pop music. They want to be The Who, the Pistols and Public Enemy. Their critics accuse them of being 10 years too late. If anything, they may be 10 years too early. And who gives a flying fuck if they're totally and absolutely wrong? Better to burn out than to fade away, right? If I can leave rock journalism extolling the same virtues of passion, anger, shit-stirring and politicisation that dragged me into it in the first place, I'm happy. Like I said, I'm in hate. ■

Different class

Britpop made mainstream stars of perpetual outsiders Pulp. Next thing they knew, they were being invited to Norwegian “sex parties”. Johnny Cigarettes got stuck in with them

PHOTOS: STEFAN DE BATSELIER

Could someone please fuck me with a broken bottle?” asks Jarvis Cocker of a crowd of teenage girls not old enough to legally drink alcohol from one, let alone perform bizarre sexual practices with it. Suddenly, the louche, elegant and friendly facade is torn away to reveal the gnarled, twisted talons of hate that lie seething within the sick, perverted mind of Britain’s once loveable King Misfit.

Drooling with demonic rage, he picks up his microphone, throws it into the air and drop-kicks it into the eye of unsuspecting Steve Mackey, his long-suffering bass lieutenant. Then, muttering all manner of hideous blasphemy, he stomps offstage to howl at the moon. There’s probably a perfectly logical explanation for our hero’s unlikely behaviour. Marital breakdown or personal bereavement, perhaps? Deep early childhood psychological trauma? Secret broken-glass fetish? Nah, the keyboard’s on the blink again. Of course.

We’re halfway through a six-song TV special performance in Oslo, Norway, in front of an invite-only crowd of mildly disinterested club groovers, and the gods are interfering just when Pulp were thinking all their troubles were behind them. “Oh Jesus, me foot’s fucked!” he groans as we greet him backstage and watch the upper part of said extremity swell. “Typical, I didn’t kick the microphone right – I got it with the wrong part of me foot.”

Yeah, the boy Jarvis may finally have wriggled through the net marked ‘terminally uncoordinated nerdular inadequates’ into the sun-drenched, nymph-strewn oceans of pop stardom, but that doesn’t mean he’s about to be endowed with some supernatural ability not to trip over the cracks in the pavement or see without jam-jar glasses.

And yet, earlier this evening, it was all

going so well... OK, so outside was Oslo in November, minus three degrees, with only one second-hand clothes shop, a population of very beautiful but very boring people, beer £5 a pint, ciggies £5 a pack, in the middle of a gruelling promotional tour of Scandinavia. But, at 8pm, Norwegian hospitality came into its own in the shape of the gig promoter. “OK, so the band play six songs, then we have 1,200 litres of Absolut vodka, all free, and then it’s party party! The bar is open until lunchtime on Saturday if you want.” And crack vol-au-vents on the rider. Splendid!

Naturally, the mood has curdled rapidly by the time we rejoin Pulp, 20 minutes after the dramatic and disgraceful anticlimax of tonight’s show. “Aaaaargh! The Vikings are after us!” screams Steve. And he’s only half joking. Jarvis is refusing to leave the backstage area to go to the aftershow club, fearing a lynching by his deeply offended audience, who probably think he stormed off because he hates Norway. Paranoid? Surely not. The pink-haired make-up artist wishes to raise a practical question at this point. “If you like, you can all come to a sex party at my house.” “Well, I only really want a feel,” quips Jarvis. “Many coloured walls! Many fun people!” she argues, persuasively.

Eventually word comes

back from that there are not, in fact, hordes of medieval Nordic warriors with pitchforks baying for the blood of the evil Lord Cocker. So we brave the dark recesses of the aftershow party and are greeted by a scattering of youths frugging in all manner of bizarre European styles to a selection of techno hits. Oh yes, and they drink like fishes. Like alcoholic fishes adrift in a sea of flavoured vodka. And they screw, because, as the man once said, there’s nothing else to doo-hoo-hoo.

It comes as little surprise, then, that Jarvis is immediately handcuffed to a sofa by several fright-wigged über-babe crazies and tortured to within an inch of his life with weird conversation, fake fur and silk scarves. Then again, that’s Jarvis’s natural habitat these days. Everywhere you see him in London he’s surrounded by an entourage of hangers-on united only by eating disorders, ‘I’m Common’ lapel badges and a penchant for *Godspell* wardrobe cast-offs. Meanwhile, Steve is busy continuing his study into the behavioural patterns of the Northern European female. He has his ‘work’ cut out. Almost literally, judging by the uncompromising mood of one young fan. “Steve, you will now get your jacket and then you will come back and fuck me!”

“Noooooo! I, erm, have to go home to my hotel and call my girlfriend.”

“OK, I come with you, yes?”

“NOOOOOOO!”

“I used to think French women were mad for it,” gasps Steve, after prising himself from her grasps with the aid of a blowtorch, “but Norwegians take the biscuit. They practically bash you over the head with a club and drag you away. Quite impressive, really.”

Two Winter Olympic-strength coffees later, we’re just about ready to grapple with the oily beast that is fame, the one Jarvis chased vainly for the best part of 20 years, and which he’s just reached intimate first-name terms with.

So does it feel like he’s finally got his revenge on the world, and proved wrong all the sneering misfit-bashers? “Well, it’s not really getting my own back. It’s not as if there was a teacher at school who told me I was worthless, and then I’d thought, ‘Right, I’m going to rub your nose in it, and I’ll drive past your house in my Rolls-Royce and do a shit on your front step’. Nothing like that.”

Oh well. It’s just, listening to the new album ‘Different Class’, featuring the likes of ‘Mis-Shapes’, with its spitting determination to avenge the socially disenfranchised, you get the impression that there are scores to settle. And then you hear the startlingly



"When people say we're ironic, I feel so insulted"

Jarvis Cocker

unscrupulous revenge fantasies of 'I Spy', addressed to some anonymous class enemy whose wife Jarvis is shagging, and you think... You're not a very nice man, are you, Jarvis?

"Oh, you know how it is. Everyone's got a vindictive side. It was my justification for being a doley scumbag. I thought to myself that I was actually working undercover, trying to observe the world, taking notes for future reference, secretly subverting society. And one day, when the time was right, I would come out of the shadows and pounce on the world. I guess you could call that revenge, not only for myself, but for the kind of people I respect."

This week Pulp have just gone straight in at Number One in the UK album charts. Ten years ago this week, Jarvis fell out of a window at a party in Sheffield, and ended up in hospital for months, where he began to mentally (and physically) pick up the pieces of his increasingly shapeless life and art. Coincidence? Well, yeah. Nevertheless, there's a fairy-tale quality to Pulp's fall and fall and rise that makes you wonder whether supernatural forces were involved.

"I've often wondered whether I believe in fate," he muses, nicking his fifth fag in an hour from your impoverished correspondent. "I say to myself that I don't. But surreptitiously, I do. I have dreams where something trivial happens – like you're in a café and someone asks, 'Can you pass the pepper please?'. Then six months later you're in a café and someone actually asks you to pass the pepper. I interpret that as showing that your life could go a number of ways, which is revealed to you in dreams, and this déjà vu turns up to encourage

you that you've gone the right way, the way fate intended. It all sounds a bit Mystic Meg, but... well, it makes for a good chat-up line."

You wonder how much of Jarvis' lyrical concerns are truly autobiographical and how much is merely personaspeak. All this beastly voyeurism business, for a start. Does it really turn him on?

"Erm... well, no more than anyone else. I don't believe it's a very nice human instinct. But it's that forbidden curiosity. Sex is always a bit shadowy, isn't it? When it's done properly, anyway. I remember when I was a kid, me and a friend were out in the park and these girls on the swings said to us, 'Hey, do you masturbate?' I'd never heard of it before, but they giggled so I knew it was rude. So I says, 'I might do', so's not to show meself up. And they laughed even more. I ran home and looked it up in the dictionary, and it defined masturbate as, 'To abuse yourself'. So from that moment I thought it meant you just tell yourself you're a bastard all the time."

At this point Jarvis Cocker the man has to make way for Jarvis the pop star, because the latter has to go for a photo session. There, he suddenly turns into a camera-devouring monster who will toss, turn, pout, preen and pull every expression and pose known to humankind with every click of the shutter. It's kind of like watching a documentary about a mental patient who thinks he's a supermodel. Except, whichever way you look at him, Jarvis Cocker is no Claudia Schiffer.

As soon as those horn-rimmed specs go on, he's an early-'80s BBC newsreader out on a bender after being sacked. Or perhaps a delegate to the 1971 NatWest conference having had his drink spiked with acid. Rowan Atkinson in *Saturday Night Fever*? Kenneth Williams as Serge Gainsbourg? Lord knows.

And then you're struck by the fake-fur coat, the burgundy cords, the lemon shirt, the suave slip-ons. Then you see the satchel. And you ask yourself, is this bloke for real? "I would like to go on record as saying I've never worn anything as a joke," he pronounces, prodding the table. "In retrospect I may look at something I wore and regret it, but I know at the time I thought it was worthwhile. When people say we're ironic, I feel so insulted, because it implies that you don't care about what you do. I haven't devoted 15 years of my life to a joke. You may think we're misguided, but we're totally honest. Anyone who has listened properly should realise that we're never tongue-in-cheek."

Later, we prepare for one final assault on Oslo nightlife. But not before Jarvis makes the most astonishing revelation. "Prince William is a Pulp fan, you know." Get awaaaaay! "Honest. There was a thing in the *Evening Standard* about him, and his favourite band is Pulp! 'One wants to live with the common people...' Don't know quite what to make of that. Good name to have on the guest list, though..." ■

"Ziggy's my gi

The day after unveiling Ziggy Stardust at a now-legendary Aylesbury concert, David Bowie filled a London hotel suite with scotch, sandwiches and Lou Reed. Charles Shaar Murray dove headfirst into the myth-making surrounding Bowie's new persona

NME
July 22,
1972

Jill and Lyn are 17 and they're into Bowie. They've both got 'Ziggy Stardust...' and neither of them like Marc Bolan. Jill says she likes the way David looks.

She doesn't necessarily think he's good-looking, she just likes the way he looks. They and me and a sweaty hall full of other people saw David Bowie and the Spiders From Mars work Friars in Aylesbury at the weekend. It was alright, the band were altogether and Ziggy played guitar.

The Spiders are a surrealistic version of a rock band. Trevor Bolder's silvered sideboards hang several inches off his face and Woody Woodmansey's hair is an orange Vidal Sassoon duck's ass similar to David's. They go through the show at top speed until the final encore of 'Suffragette City' where David pulls off his most outrageous stunt and goes down on Mick Ronson's guitar. David is gonna be huge.

The day after the gig he's holding a press conference at the Dorchester Hotel. Lou Reed and his band are there, all the Spiders and, curled up in a corner in a Bolan T-shirt, eye shadow and silvered hair, is Iggy Pop. When I got there David was wearing an entirely different outfit. Before I left he'd changed into a third. Woody pours me a sumptuous Johnny Walker Black Label and peach juice. Lou Reed is talking quietly to David. He's wearing shades and maroon fingernails. Periodically, horrified waiters enter to deliver yet more scotch and wine and sandwiches.

At the moment, the most popular rock journalist words appear to be funk, camp and punk. To what extent do you think you've brought these words into essential usage?

"I think it's most probably due to the general inarticulacy of the press. They're very small-minded. They do indeed revolve around those three words.

Not revolve around. They crop up...

"Yes they do. I don't think I have anything to

do with funk. I've never considered myself funky. Would you say that? I wouldn't..."

Would you want to be?

"Yes. It's muddy. Camp, yes, I understand the camp thing. Once upon a time it was put down in the category of entertainer, but since the departure of good old-fashioned entertainers the re-emergence of somebody who wants to be an entertainer has unfortunately become a synonym for camp. I don't think I'm camper than any other person who felt more at home onstage than he did offstage."

Nobody ever called Jerry Garcia camp.

"No, but he's a musician and I'm not. I'm not into music on that level. I don't profess to have music as my big wheel and there are a number of other things as important to me apart from music. Theatre and mime, for instance."

You say you don't consider yourself a musician, but for somebody who's producing music of a very high grade, I would reckon that you're entitled to be called a musician.

"OK then, I'll shift my emphasis. I wouldn't think I'd ever be considered a technocrat on any instrument. I have a creative force which finds its way through into a musical form."

You were saying you didn't consider yourself to be a musician.

"In that terminology, in that definition: that a musician is a virtuoso on his instrument? By no stretch of the imagination. I play a good alto, I played a bit actually on the Mott album [1972's 'All The Young Dudes']..."

Rock'n'roll is increasingly becoming a ritual. Instead of the very down-to-earth stance of, say, the Grateful Dead. It's becoming very much of a spectacle, very formulaic.

"I've not seen many bands where I've noticed that."

Alice Cooper is an extreme example. I think you come into it to a certain extent. Marc Bolan does. Sha Na Na in their own particular way...

"Firstly, you must tell me your feelings on this before I quite know what your question is..."



ft to you"



David Bowie
performing
at Friars club
Aylesbury, 1972

I have mixed feelings about it. I think it works when you do it, but sometimes I get the feeling that the audience is being excluded.

"As you saw with us, we were using no props. We're not into props. If we have theatricality it comes through from us as people, not as a set environment or stage. Like playing an instrument, theatre craftsmanship is something that one learns. I'm a very professional person, and I feel that I contribute all my energies into my stage performance. When I'm onstage I give more to an audience than to anybody else offstage.

I've worked hard at it. It's important to know about the things you do as it is to learn your instrument. I wish myself to be a prop for my songs. I want to be the vehicle for my songs. I would like to colour the material with as much visual expression as is necessary."

Do you feel worried by people who regard you as a guru?

"I'm not that convinced that I am anybody's guru. I know there is a lot of interest in what I'm doing, and we seem to be getting our fair share of exposure, but I'm not convinced that we are leading any particular cult."

But it's happening almost in spite of you, people examining your albums almost line by line.

"Well, if this is going to be an inevitable situation with the chronicles of rock, and one must presume that it will be, then I would strive to use that position to promote some feeling of optimism in the future, which might seem very hypocritical related to 'Five Years'. There the whole thing was to try to get a mocking angle at the future. If I can mock something, one isn't so scared of it. People are so incredibly serious and scared of the future that I would wish to turn the feeling the other way, into a wave of optimism.

"If one can take the mickey out of the future, and what it is going to be like... It's going to be unbelievably technological. There isn't going to be a triangle system, we aren't going to revert back to the real way of life. It's certainly not a new thing, my god I haven't got any new concept. I juggle with them, but what I'm saying has been said a million times before. I'm just saying that we've gotta have some optimism in the future."

(At this point, Lou Reed entered the room. I hoped to get him to join in the conversation,

but he just came over and kissed David.)

Reed: "That's it." (*exit*)

I was hoping to get a two-way interview.

Bowie: "That was a two-way interview."

You retired after 'Space Oddity'. Would you ever do it again?

"I can't envisage stopping gigging for the next year at least because I'm having such a good time – I've never enjoyed it more. I'm one with the band I'm working with and that hasn't happened before. I've always felt I was dragging people into doing things."

Yeah, I saw you work at the Roundhouse once with Country Joe about two years ago.

"That Roundhouse gig was the kind of thing I cite in that I was into something that the band wasn't into. They were still only wanting to be musicians at the time, and it came off as no more than everybody dressing up. Was that

the one you came to where I was wearing a silver superman suit?"

You weren't. You did 'Cypress Avenue'.

"We did one at the Roundhouse about the same period when we appeared very much the same as we are appearing now, and that was with Mick Ronson. I was in a cartoon strip and we all dressed up as a different superhero."

Were they ready to cope with it at the time?

"No, we died a death. And, of course, the boys said, 'I told you so, let's get back to just being a band again'. That's the period that broke me up. I just about stopped after that performance because I knew it was what I wanted, and I knew it was what people would want eventually. I didn't know when though, so I held on. I've always been excited about seeing things that are visually exciting. I like seeing people pretending. I'm not a vegetable. I like to let my imagination run wild. I thought, well, if that does that to me, it has to do it to other people as well, 'cos I'm just a person. I'm not quite that much of a superman. And anyway, I'm glad I stuck it out really."

What's the next post-Ziggy development?

"I'm still totally involved with Ziggy. I probably will be for a few months getting it out of my system, and then we'll don another mask."

Thanks a lot, and I hope you and Ziggy will be very happy together.

"Oh, no. I hope YOU and Ziggy will be very happy. Ziggy's my gift to you." ■

"I'm just a person, I'm not quite that much of a superman"

David Bowie

Live

► NME has captured countless momentous shows. Here are some moshpit memories





The Rolling Stones

Deutschlandhalle, West Berlin

October 19, 1973

PHOTO: PENNIE SMITH

Writer Nick Kent travelled with photographer Pennie Smith to West Berlin to join The Rolling Stones, branding their show "rock'n'roll deluxe for the connoisseurs and the crazies". Kent also spent time with the band ahead of the gig, which took place in a city rife with political tension. "There are maybe 40 police vans parked around the side of the hall the Stones are playing tonight. Outside the hall a thousand 'polizei' are sifting out the potential troublemakers, the leftist politicians who are there to cause heavy disturbance, while the air is thick with cold rain." The show also marked Mick Taylor's last live appearance with the band until 1981.

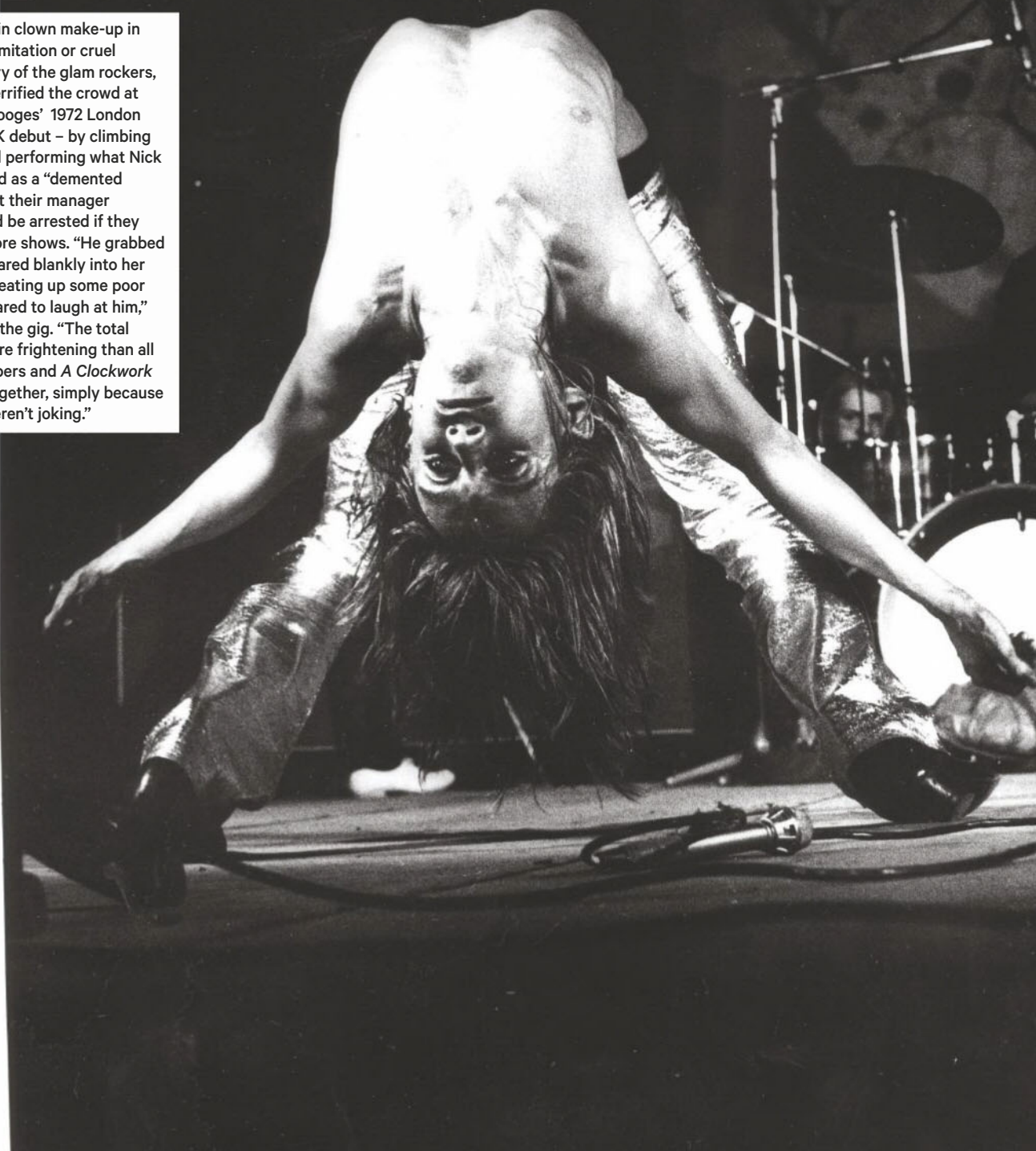
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Iggy & The Stooges

King's Cross Cinema, London
July 15, 1972

PHOTO: PENNIE SMITH

Caked in clown make-up in either imitation or cruel mockery of the glam rockers, Iggy Pop so terrified the crowd at Iggy & The Stooges' 1972 London show – and UK debut – by climbing over them and performing what Nick Kent described as a “demented boogaloo” that their manager thought they'd be arrested if they played any more shows. “He grabbed a chick and stared blankly into her face, almost beating up some poor wretch who dared to laugh at him,” Kent wrote of the gig. “The total effect was more frightening than all the Alice Coopers and *A Clockwork Orange* put together, simply because these guys weren't joking.”



Led Zeppelin

Earls Court, London

May 17, 1975

PHOTO: PENNIE SMITH

The 'Oasis At Knebworth' of its day, Led Zeppelin sold 85,000 tickets for their five-night run at Earls Court, at the time the biggest audience draw in the UK's rock history. It was also the first time a big screen was used to display the onstage action, at a cost of £10,000. Minds, understandably, were blown. "Jimmy Page is hunched over his Les Paul doing a kind of on-the-spot Chuck Berry duckwalk," wrote reviewer Charles Shaar Murray. "Black velvet with frequent outbursts of rhinestones, sensitive pout, ridges of razored chords, pure '70s guitar hero, pretty but mean. As he steps forward the light explodes around him on the screen. He's flaying the guitar alive and it's only seconds into the show."

Joy Division

University Of London
Union, London
February 8, 1980

PHOTO: ANTON CORBIJN

One of the last Joy Division shows *NME* would review, their gig at the University Of London Union found the band boosting their sound with extra instrumentation. Paul Morley was left stunned by the stark and harrowing spectacle. "The full new introduction of synthesizer has not damaged the coherence and balance of the music in any way, it simply increases the amount of mood, atmosphere and ephemeral terror they are capable of achieving," he wrote of the show. "It's simple music, but not simple-minded; cryptic but not impenetrable... Joy Division will tear you apart. Still."



Hole

Reading Festival**August 26, 1994**

PHOTO: KEVIN CUMMINS

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Just four months after the death of her husband, Nirvana's Kurt Cobain, Courtney Love made her first UK appearance with Hole. It was a troubled experience for the fans as well as the bereaved frontwoman. "Hole were never quite a great band, but this dark, shabby mess is still some kind of tragedy all its own," wrote John Mulvey of the Main Stage set. "Guitars grind numbly and Courtney slurs and croaks where she used to scream, a mere shadow... Parts of this are defiant and, yes, brave. Right at the end she strums and raves about not leaving, about sticking it out, then slings her guitar across the stage in a rare burst of energy. Mostly, though, it's a cathartic torture for us and them."



Foo Fighters

Reading Festival

August 26, 1995

PHOTO: STEVE DOUBLE

▶ “Let’s face facts: Foo Fighters headlining the second stage was a stupid fucking idea,” wrote Mark Sutherland of the packed-out tent gig that Dave Grohl found himself attempting to appease at 1995’s Reading Festival. “Whoever thought you could book one of the world’s hottest ‘new’ acts – let alone one whose frontman was in the decade’s most important American band – without half of Berkshire turning up to watch was surely kidding themselves. And whoever, when faced with the opportunity to switch to the larger stage [the Foos were reportedly offered a swap with Tricky] decided it was more punk rock to play under canvas, must have been away with the sodding fairies.”



The Strokes

The Monarch, London

February 7, 2001

PHOTO: ALESSIO PIZZICANNELLA

“Someday there’ll be volumes of breathless prose written on Julian Casablancas’ tumescent pout or the way he grips his leather jacket when he sings,” wrote Stevie Chick of The Strokes’ first London headline show. “They swoon with the pure romance and passion of punk rock NYC, swaggering street-poets who thrash out towering pop songs awash with love and hate and lust and the switchblade-agony of misunderstanding, all the frustrations of young adulthood writ in Technicolor widescreen with casual profundity by photogenic Bowery bands.”

The Libertines

112a Teesdale Street, London

March 21, 2003

PHOTO: ROGER SARGENT

▶ The Libertines' plan to stage a show in their east London home was foiled after riot police raided the premises and closed down the gig after only a handful of songs. The band, who charged fans £10 for entry, managed to get through 'Up The Bracket', 'Boys In The Band', 'I Get Along' and new track 'Don't Look Back Into The Sun' before the party was shut down. "Police bundled people out into the Bethnal Green streets with a defiant Carl Barât making sure he shook hands and kissed every fan as they left," read the *NME* news report. "As bucketloads of booze flowed and with the bathroom plumbing not working, Carl was overheard to remark to someone who had ventured into the toilets: 'I can't believe you did that...'"





Arctic Monkeys

Old Trafford Cricket Ground, Manchester

July 28, 2007

PHOTO: ANDY WILLISHER

▶ Touted as their Event Gig akin to The Stone Roses at Spike Island, Arctic Monkeys' show at Old Trafford Cricket Ground in Manchester was blighted by PA failures, allowing the band to snatch victory from the wobbly electric connection of defeat. "The fans, already worked into a frenzy, are teetering on the brink of a riot," wrote Alex Miller of the awkward moment the PA cut out during 'Balaclava'. But then: "“RAUUARGH!!” Alex Turner's guitar leaps back into life, disemboweling whatever ghosts dared stray into his machine. By the time 'This House Is A Circus' manic skat-rap is bursting from Turner's lips, there are bouncers peeling the Old Trafford crowd from the clouds."





Amy Winehouse

Dublin Castle, London

April 19, 2007

PHOTO: TOM OXLEY

She didn't turn up on time and she spent much of the show pouring pints of beer over the front rows of the packed-out venue while winking at Blake Fielder-Civil, who was to become her husband the following month, but Amy was still the best thing we saw at 2007's Camden Crawl. "The first night's closing gig sees the longest queue of the whole event for Amy Winehouse, who shuffles onstage half an hour late. 'I'm so sorry for keeping you waiting,' she growls sincerely – tits'n'tats on proud display – before jumping into her cover of The Zutons' 'Valerie', kickstarting a glorious soul-splattered homecoming, which leaves no doubt as to whom the queen of this castle is," read Leonie Cooper's review.

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Rage Against The Machine

Finsbury Park, London
June 6, 2010

PHOTO: RICHARD JOHNSON

After an anti-*X Factor* fan campaign saw Rage Against The Machine's super swear-y 1992 single 'Killing In The Name' named 2009's Christmas Number One, the band played a free show in the UK to say thanks to the British public. "The mood at 'The Rage Factor' is one of hope and pride and heroic moshing – and a renewed faith in the power of the human spirit, and music's influence over it," wrote Dan Martin of the incendiary show, which was attended by 40,000 punters. The band accepted a cheque for £162,713.03 – the royalties earned from the festive sales of the single – on behalf of homelessness charity Shelter onstage at the gig.





Florence + The Machine

Pyramid Stage, Glastonbury
June 26, 2015

PHOTO: ED MILES

The first British female-fronted Glastonbury headliner since Skunk Anansie in 1999, Florence + The Machine stepped in at the last minute to replace Foo Fighters, after Dave Grohl broke his leg. "Even if it was made under duress, Florence Welch's promotion is symbolically important," wrote Barry Nicolson. "From the moment she takes to the stage, barefoot and restless, banging a tambourine throughout 'What The Water Gave Me', she seems eager to please: indeed, you often get the sense that you're watching someone who knows they're playing the biggest, most important gig of their life, and is determined not to disappoint. Sure, Foo Fighters would have killed it. But tonight, Florence + The Machine prove that they're here on merit, and not just necessity."

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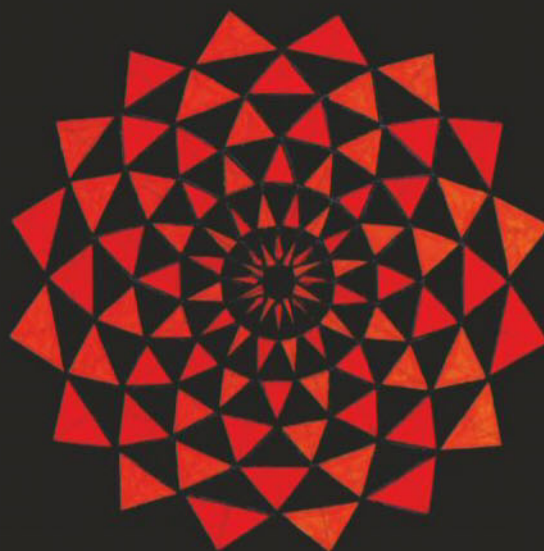
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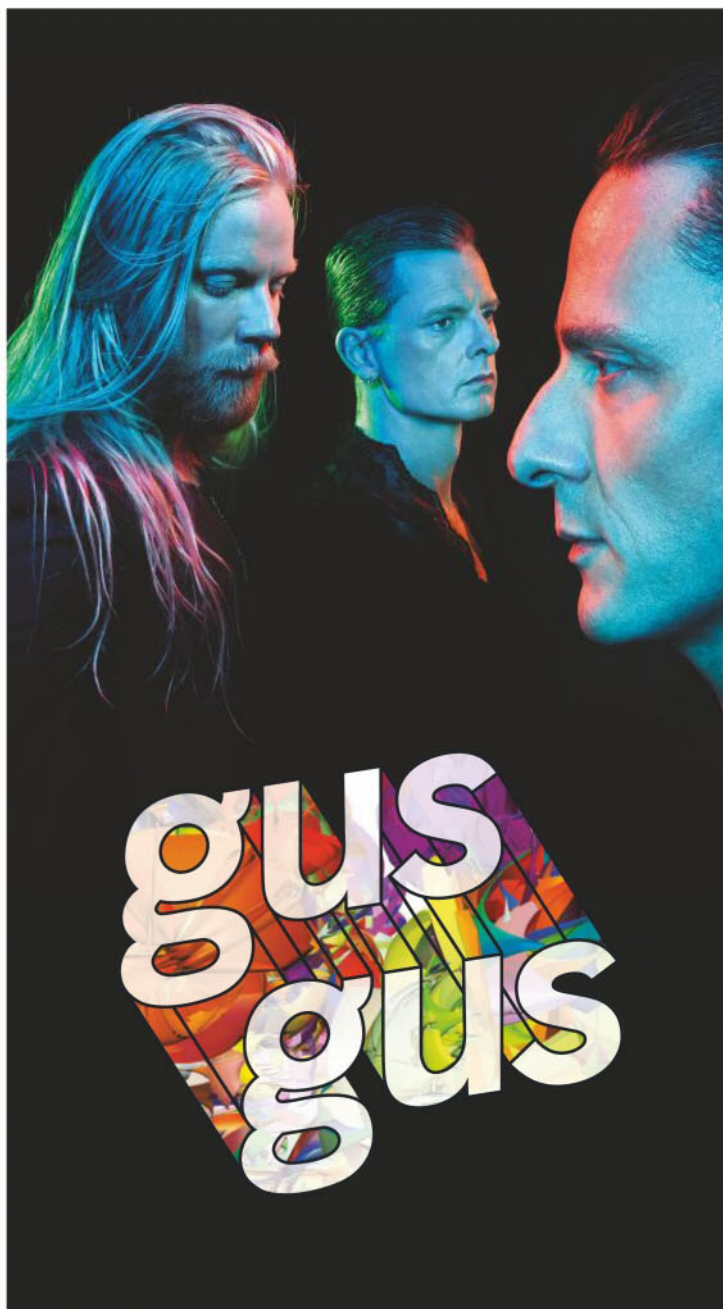
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PETER ROBINSON VS EVERYONE

► From 2003 to 2012, NME's Peter Robinson asked the questions no one else dared. Here are his highlights:



Amy Winehouse

August 14, 2004

When you were a comedy showbiz hack at an entertainment website, how many stories did you make up?

"Oh, I used to make up stories all day. I'd go, 'That's shit. Let's use this quote, where she goes 'I don't want to be nobody's bitch'. So it'd be, headline: 'Posh: I don't want to be nobody's bitch'. First paragraph: 'Posh said today that she never wanted to be someone's bitch'. Second paragraph: 'The lanky bitch, who said she didn't want to be anyone's bitch, spoke at a benefit for bitches'. New paragraph: 'I don't want to be nobody's bitch, she said.' Easy. Job done."

Has anyone pointed out the similarity between your new single 'Fuck Me Pumps' and 'Winter Wonderland', and which is best?

"Eh? No. (*Sings a bit*) Oh my god. You're right. Thanks for alerting me to that. I'd say 'Winter Wonderland' is best. Are we going to McDonald's?"

Now?

"Sorry, I'm talking to my driver. I'm about to go into McDonald's. I'm in Camden. (*Pauses*) You know you need to employ me for your magazine, right? I want a column. Where I just cuss everyone. It will be called 'Straight From The House's Mouth: Amy Winehouse Cusses Down All You Pop Bastards'. Do you pay well? You probably make more than I do. I've got about £20,000 in the bank. (*Pause*) Of course I fucking don't!"

Serge Pizzorno, Kasabian

October 23, 2004



Is Kasabian's success mainly down to having the name of a really rubbish indie band and then turning out to be quite good when you put the CD on?

"I just think we're connecting the people, you know what I mean? With everyone from all sorts of walks of life – nurses, people in offices, kids. My grandma's a big fan, too."

But to be fair, you could probably shit in a bucket and your grandma would say it was great.

"Yes, very true."

Chico, The X Factor

March 11, 2006

Will you do a version of 'It's Chico Time' called 'It's Christmas Time'?

"Brilliant! I'd never run out of advertising ideas, would I? It's chocolate time! It's, er, time out! And I've made a fitness video for (mobile phone company removed – gratuitous branding – Ed). And it works!"

And it's not just a phone company paying you £10,000 to put your name to any old shit?

"I just want people to get fit!"



Bryan Adams

October 2, 2004



It's been 35 summers since you got your first real six-string. Had you had much experience of six-strings that for whichever reason weren't real?

"Most guitar players have that experience. You go through a slew of cheapos until you can afford a good one."

Nick Carter, Backstreet Boys

May 28, 2005



Your advice for new boyband members in the UK is:

"Play instruments."

Controversial!!!

"Huh? I mean, we sing a cappella and now we've started to play instruments – guitar, bass, drums. Boybands should write pop music that can be played with instruments. Kind of like The Beatles!"

Or, perhaps more realistically, Busted.

Adam Ficek, Babyshambles

August 30, 2008

Do you make any art, apart from the art of popular song?

"Well, I try to draw now and again."

Do you draw with YOUR BLOOD?

"No."





Lily Allen

June 24, 2006

Are you a better pop star than your dad?

"My dad's not really a pop star."

He's had more records out than you have.

"(Giggles) Yeah, well. I don't really think I can possibly say I'm better than anyone, except perhaps Sandi Thom. And maybe Jennifer Ellison. And Jentina."

Are you a good role model for your young fans?

"Yes, I'm a realistic role model. I think it's better to be honest about the way you are in life than to hide it. Pop stars who pretend they're virgins, for example, when they're probably taking it up the arse more than anyone else. And then their fans are very disappointed. Whereas with me, you know what you're getting from the start."

Are you suggesting that you're taking it up the arse already?

"Oh, constantly. I'm always bending over."

Shaggy

September 13, 2008



Hello Shaggy. Have you ever thought about killing yourself?

"No. Never. Never crossed my mind."

If you were banned from music – and I'm not saying you should be, necessarily – what would happen next?

"I'm shit at everything else. I thank God for music every day because you don't want to see me playing cricket. I'm really shitty."

Could you work in a shop?

"I used to – I worked in a bakery. They fired me so fucking quick!"

Did you just spend all day filling tarts with cream?

"It wasn't that sort of bakery."

Howlin' Pelle Almqvist, The Hives

April 16, 2005



Tori Amos said in this here column that man-made beehives are NOT blocks of flats for bees,

but she's basically wrong about that, don't you think?

"Did she offer an explanation to back her theory that they were not blocks of flats? They even *look* like blocks of flats. I mean, what are they, if they're not blocks of flats?"

Quite. Can you please say now, for the benefit of Tori Amos, 'Tori Amos, you are wrong about the blocks of flats thing'?

"Tori Amos, you are wrong about the block of flats thing."

Calvin Harris

March 3, 2007

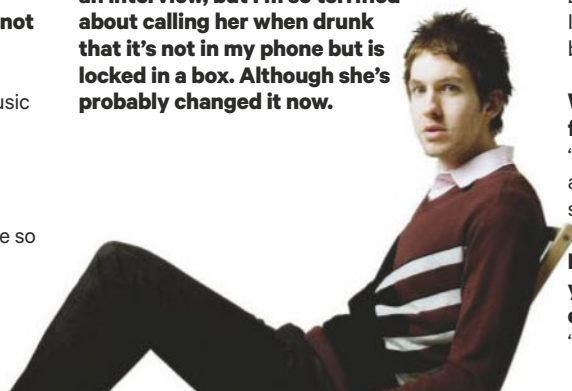
Did you really get your [record] deal off Myspace or is it a cute story to get you in the papers?

"It's true. I'm not like Lily Allen who already had her deal. It's a bit tragic being signed due to Myspace. I blame the A&R men."

As well as being Myspace's Calvin Harris you're also known as Kylie Producer Calvin Harris. It's nice, I think, so early in your career to have two things completely overshadow your own work.

"Hahaha, yes. Ever since I admitted that I worked with Kylie, I've been very cagey. The Kylie fans have been bombarding me – they want to know what she likes to eat, what her address is, what her phone number is..."

I've got Kylie's phone number from an interview, but I'm so terrified about calling her when drunk that it's not in my phone but is locked in a box. Although she's probably changed it now.



James Blunt

October 23, 2010

You are thought of as boring, but actually you are quite interesting. You go out, get off your tits, shag people. You're a lot more interesting than people give you credit for if, of course, those aforementioned activities are 'interesting', which they are.

"Er, thank you. Well, my mum doesn't think so when she reads the papers. But I do like to get out a little bit..."

Are you the person at the party who gets the guitar out to 'enchant' the ladies?

"Oh, good god, no. That would be the quickest way to clear a party. I do better at funerals."

What music would you like at your own funeral?

"I'd choose something happy."

Would people be happy you'd died?

"Some people would be."

Tulisa Contostavlos

December 4, 2010

Are you sad about the imminent end of the Harry Potter films or is it more a question of 'Thank god that's over, no more people pretending to be wizards'?

"I didn't even know it was over to be honest. I don't think it will affect my life too much. I was never a *Harry Potter* reader. I like all that fantasy stuff but..."

But it's made up! It's a load of rubbish!

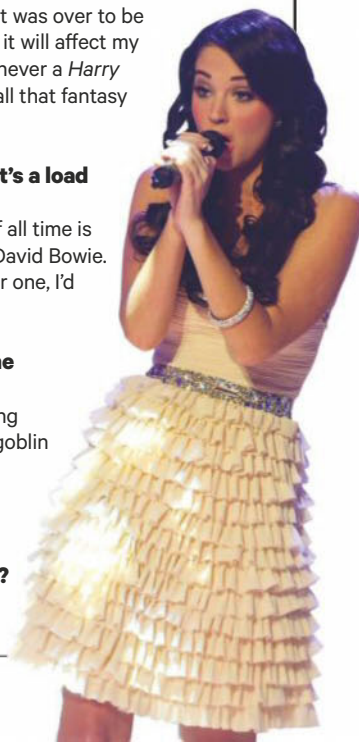
"My favourite film of all time is *Labyrinth*, starring David Bowie. If they made another one, I'd be ecstatic."

Would you take the female lead?

"I'd be the girl running around with a little goblin sidekick."

Isn't that what you're already doing with Dappy?

"EXACTLY."



Thrills

► For almost two decades, *NME's Thrills* page collected rafts of rock'n'roll satire and general made-up bollocks. Here are some of its prime cuts...

EDITED BY JOHNNY CIGARETTES

IT'S BRIAN HURST HE SAW THEM FIRST!

CONTRIBUTORS: ANDY DAWSON, RICHARD EASTER

WHY, FOR Christing F---'s sake, do bloody kids - BLOODY LITTLE PRESIDENTS - JUMP UP ENKIDDER. WETTING LITTLE BASTARDS - always have to jump on to every band I've ever liked and ruin gigs with their bloody pre-pubescent screaming and being pre-pubescent!

Why can't they just like Peter Andre and Mark Owen and leave REAL bands to the people who saw them first?

Only yesterday I was outside my local branch of Our Price, snoring at teenagers buying David Bowie's new album as if they've always liked him, and then handing them a signed affidavit that proves I saw Dave when he was 16, before their PARENTS were even born. He was walking down the street, and he was brilliant. It was only when he started making music, and people started liking him, that he went shit.

That wipes the smile off their bloody faces when they realise they know NOTHING about Dave. They think his real name is David Bowie.

"It's not," I tell them, "and if you'd been at Dave's first gig - which I saw but by then he'd gone all commercial and shit - you would have known that but you weren't because I SAW HIM FIRST."

Anyway, I saw this kid who can't have been a day over 14 - FOURTEEN! YES - wearing a Placebo T-shirt. That did it. "Oooh, look at you with your Placebo T-shirt," I said. "I suppose you are a HUGE fan, aren't you?"

And he said yes, he'd just bought 'Nancy Boy'.

I BROUGHT NANCY BOY FIVE BLOODY YEARS AGO WHEN NO-ONE HAD EVER HEARD OF PLACEBO - in fact, they weren't even called Placebo, they were called The Undertones, but the kids didn't care then, oh no. I WAS THE ONLY PERSON at their first gig and not even the band turned up, that's how new they were.

"Didn't want to know THEN," I said. "You bandwagon-jumping sheep. I SAW THEM FIRST, WHEN THEY WERE GOOD, BEFORE THEY WENT COMMERCIAL AND KIDS LIKE YOU STARTED LIKING THEM AND EVERYTHING."

I saw Placebo when Brian Mulka weighed 18 stone and looked like Van Morrison, that was when they were good. This is why bands go shit, and I should know, because I SAW THEM FIRST.

Wacky Wu-Tang
Thrills was the epicentre of all things satirical, leaping to the laughter barricades when the Wu-Tang Clan emerged with their many comedy monikers.

Original hipster

The *NME* letters page has, for eons, been full of angry old gets gnashing on about how their favourite band has become shit since they got popular. *Thrills* parodied those saddos in the form of perma-bitter walking corpse Brian Hurst.

TECHNO NEWS
TIDINGS PILOT:
TROY WEMBLEY

CONTRIBUTORS: ANDY DAWSON, RICHARD EASTER

◆ NINGLO HOLLODDY's new 12" 'Ridin' Beats Like A Parrot' comes in three different flavours: vinegar, oyster and hair... ◆ Expensive government testings have concluded that repeated exposure to the new album by NEABIC WIZARDRY can quell even the most violently disruptive schoolchild. The album is to be included on the GCSE syllabus in the autumn... ◆ JAVERTY CRUSETOOL (pictured) releases a new single, 'Painless Insertion', next week. The B-side includes a curse meaning that anyone who buys the single will suffer from grossly swollen nipples... ◆ BORROWED MAJORITY's Oily scooped the £3million Lottery jackpot last Saturday. His techno partner Scooby told me, "I expect Oily to spend a large amount of the money on new equipment and studio time so that our vast techno soundscapes can grow even larger." He was wrong. Oily instantly disbanded Borrowed Majority and paid a contract killer to shoot Scooby's face in. He is now believed to be pissed up in Rio de Janeiro... ◆ ONCE MORE AND YOU'RE FIRED are playing a gig on Saturday at Camden's Beardpit as a benefit for a group of eco-protesters who are picketing the site where a huge wanking toddler monument is being built overlooking the A25 in place of some trees... ◆ FATTY TWANG HANDLER has been forced to withdraw his 'Puerile Nastiness' single after it offended a woman who lives near Dunblane. A tabloid newspaper has offered £10,000 for one of his limbs and has revealed that his mother still regularly has visits from American servicemen, over 50 years after the end of World War II... ◆ FRIZZLEFACE have done a remix of DIRTY PROTEST's remix of No Doubt's 'Don't Speak', simply restoring the song to its original glory and putting a siren in the middle... ◆ WOODPECKERS FOR ALL plan to finally delete their 'Loops Of Mucus' single after three years, believing that sales will probably never exceed 15... ◆ ATHLETICO PINHEAD plan to leave Britain and move to Lithuania, where their 'High On Turps' album has topped the charts for two months, and where the band are treated like gods, with animals and whisky lavished upon them wherever they go. They even have their own private army, invade Estonia in the video new single...

From noise to norm

In the '90s, techno was a very alien world full of oddly named DJs releasing chunky great splodges of mental noise on sandpaper vinyl. Little has changed, we're just more used to it now, largely thanks to updates from regular *Thrills* column *Techno News* and its host Glacier Glider, Troy Wembley.

THE IAN BROWN SINGING MASTERCLASS

HAVE YOU ever wondered what it's like to be the singer of a rock'n'roll band? Well, so has Ian Brown. And now, thanks to the miracle of Her Majesty's Post Office, you can share Ian's experience in the black art of rock vocalising. This unique course is available now, and builds up week by week into an attractive binder which can be used for steedily rickety tables, or weighing down bin-bags to stop them blowing away.

Over the course of 25 lessons by mail, you too can master vocal techniques previously only available to dying animals caught in vicious traps, or elephant seals.

Lessons 1-10 are the basics. You'll receive an autographed picture of Ian (marked 'X') looking all a bit wonky and 'tired', you can share Ian's expression - you can do this at home, or at work, or in the secure wing, whatever is convenient. You'll also receive a house brick, which can be used for bashing yourself in the throat repeatedly until you've adequately smashed your vocal chords to buggery. DON'T ATTEMPT TO SING YET. This could be dangerous, as you may still be able to hold a note and pronounce words correctly at this point.

For lessons 10-15, serious dedication, ah ha, dedication, da-da-DAT, dedication, that's what you need. That and a struck-off surgeon who'll do 'jobs for cash' and, most importantly, has no experience in working on the throat. Alternatively, using Ian's 'Do It Yourself' cassette, and some ordinary household cutlery, you can perform the delicate surgical procedure of inserting a toilet

roll stuffed with cotton wool into your windpipe. Once again, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO SING. Instead, using your free ticket to an Arsenal/West Ham game, go along and scream and shout throughout, while chewing on sandpaper soaked in vinegar. Finally, lessons 16-25 will see you putting



your breathing technique ("don't") into use for the first time. Don't be afraid. These lessons come with a free phonetic lyric sheet of Stone Roses songs for you to master. You may be tempted to sing, "She's a waterfall", but after a few hours' practice, you'll be moaning, "Shhheooooeerrrr-rraathafaaaaaall", in a suicidally flat way that will make your neighbours call the police as they'll find funny business.

Now you're ready to meet the master. You'll receive a set of instructions, via phone, fax or carrier tortoise that will tell you where to meet Ian Brown. There, in his so-called 'flat', you will be required to sing like you've never sung before, while Ian listens, in a swivel chair, stroking a small white chinchilla called 'Derek'. You'll be required to sing a Stone Roses track of your choice, played by 'The Len Jackman Sounds Sensation' session band from Stoke Pages. If, at the end of your rendition, Ian himself says, "That was f---in' awful", you've cracked it.

The Ian Brown Singing Masterclass costs only a decent meal and a cup of tea. Alternatively, Ian will accept any spare change you may have, or a few copies of *The Big Issue*. No house callers please.

How to sing like Ian

No sacred cow was safe from *Thrills'* amusement. Here's Ian Brown being ribbed for his unique vocal abilities.

EDITED BY JOHNNY CIGARETTES

THOSE OTHER WU-TANG 'MEMBERS' IN FULL

CONTRIBUTORS: ANDY DAWSON, RICHARD EASTER, RUBBER SOUL BOY

Name: U-Bend
Real Name: Arthur Sowerbutts - aka Tony Ferrino, Eddy The Eagle, Bug Killa, Lenny Lottery, Corinne The Stool
Records To Date: 'Enter the U-Bend: Killin' All Known Germs Dead' (LP)
Sample lyric: "Caps try to arrest us/But we be stronger than Domestos"
Most likely to say: "F--- that watered-down 29-cents-a-bottle no-frills shit, my shit wipes the stains clean off your porcelain mother---er!"
Least likely to say: "Does the job or your money back?"

Name: Sir Alphonse The Maitre D'
Real Name: Tracey Sweetlove - aka Doctor Beeching, Tooth Fairy, Sal The Cocker Spaniel
Records to date: 'Sit Da F--- Down!' (LP)
Sample lyric: "Causing maximum grief, severe aggravation/Excuse me sir you got a f---in' reservation!"
Most likely to say: "Yeah weissup, yo table be ready when I f---in' say so, faaaaail!"
Least likely to say: "My humblest apologies Madame, little did I realise that you were you were the DA's mother, Garçon, a table for Madame toute suite!"

Name: Nasty Fat Paedophile
Real Name: Fat Paedophile - aka Deniz Armageddon, O'Kiley The Sun God, Chicken Livers, Moose Girdle, Ku Bude The Coot Herd, Umberto Twenty Stomachs
Records to date: 'Return To Rule 43: The Nance Years'
Sample lyric: "Put those nylons up to my nose/And sniffed my grandma's party hose"
Most likely to say: "The CIA, FBI, Mossad, M15, The Madelin Cartel, Secret Squirrel, Joe from EastEnders, Bob Holmes and the toon army are out to get me because I can make whole continents disappear just by sneezin' - who said crack makes you paranoid?"
Least likely to say: "Not tonight love, I've got to be up early in the morning."

Name: Detective Constable Mau Mau
Real Name: Vince Mince - aka Rashid The Caliph Of The East, The Insatiable One, Dave
Records to date: None
Sample lyric: Er, Scratch, scratch shite martial arts film dialogue, etc
Most likely to say: "Not much"
Least likely to say: "Actually, RZA, I don't think that works - try my idea."

AS ADVERTISED by Noel Gallagher, new 'C-Bags' are a great way to start the day!

Hand-picked in the breathtaking hills of Colombia beneath the watchful, but powerless, eyes of DEA helicopter squads, only the choicest leaves are chosen to become Britain's number one narcotic-based natural tonic, either with friends or on your own! 'C-Bags' contain only the best free-ground pick-me-up!

Brought into Britain as fresh as the day it was picked, sealed in our patented rubber freshness bags and enclosed at body temperature in someone's stomach, or fall-packed in the bottom of a teenage girl's luggage without her knowledge, your 'C-Bags' have a guarantee of quality from 'Stepney Paul', our chief taster in the UK and very handy with a shooter to boot.

As refreshing as a 'nice cuppa', with no added sugar, or flour, or scupper, 'C-Bags' are 100 per cent taste!

So come on! Join MPs, civil servants and pillars of the industry by starting, and flourishing, the day with a 'C-Bag'!

And look out for instant 'C-Bags'! Pure freeze-dried granules, with the taste locked in by 'cooking' - in our hi-tech, temperature-controlled 'pipes'. Why wait, when you can have immediate satisfaction from the glorious world of East Compton, LA.

Advertiser's notice: 'C-Bags' can help in an uncontrolled diet. May cause hypertension and pulling funny faces when you're trying not to. May affect jaw movements, liver and kidneys, and blow a great big 'f---' and help in your 'buns' balance for something, let's face it, which is not really much cop as 'buns' go, and you're only doing it because it's so expensive and you think it makes you dead shovels. 'C-Bags' are currently

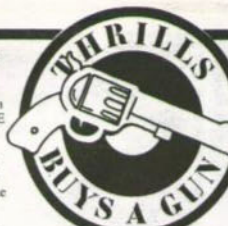


Healthy start to the day...
When Noel said doing drugs was "like having a cup of tea in the morning," *Thrills* ran away with the idea.



EDITED BY **Stars held at gun point**
Occasionally, *Thrills* went somewhat 'postal'.

WE'RE JUST playing music for ourselves and if other... I feel it's our best album... We've never really been away... Even though we've just signed to THE MAN Records, we've got complete artistic control... We're impossible to pigeon hole... We're not interested in cars and drugs and groupies... Some of those reviews, you'd need a thesaurus to understand them! Har har... Where's Syndrome? KER-BLAMMO!!! Die, Mr Saddy! Put a tourniquet round that! Aren't you just sick of the mewling, puking, boring drivel that today's pop muppets trot out every time a tape recorder is near? Frankly, we're at *Thrills* are fed up to the back teeth with it. We want straight talking and we want it NOW! To this end, *Thrills* last week took an important step for music publishing.



Yes, we bought a bloody big gun. We went to the Really Hard To Get A Licence gun shop, made our purchase, and took it along to all the interviews NME did last week. The effect was startling. Just look at these extracts from the interviews we conducted - Stephen from *Charterhouse*: 'I'm a baby-faced virgin who went to Eton and the chart position's a disgrace, we thought RCA could at least buy us into the Top 30. Don't point that thing at me!' Morrissey: 'Oscar Wilde was a ponce! I've lost it! The band can't play for toffee! It was just a misguided affection! I hated The New York Dolls! I've never seen *Giant*! Oh my God!' The Paris Angels: 'We're thieves scum who can't sing! Or play! We had a whole box of Phil Collins CDs out of the Virgin office the other day! Honest!' Tina Turner: 'I dance like a hippo! I sound like a wounded elk! Only middle-aged sad-act company directors think my legs look shapely, and I know it! Is that thing loaded?' My Bloody Valentine: 'Lazy? Yep, that's us! We're hoping to bankrupt Creation by taking five years on our next record! Now put it away!' Billy Bragg: 'I really miss the Army, it was ace! I particularly liked making the new recruits eat dog food and a spoonful of instant coffee! I've just applied for British Telecom shares! Stop waving it around, it might go off!' Elmar from the *Sugarcubes*: 'The band would sell many more records if I left! I'm just a tiresome Eskimo who shouts too much!' New Order: 'Okay, we delight in the mis-use of Nazi imagery! And we've split up! We only know one song! We're overweight! Try and get it off him, Gillian!' Lenny Kravitz: 'I wish I could, like, have John Lennon's remains and keep them in my house and somehow kind of become him! These ridiculous sideburns itch like hell! But I'm not on some retro trip... BANG! BANG! BANG!' Next week - at gunpoint - Mike Scott admits he's Scottish! Fish admits he stole all his ideas off Genesis! Phil Collins admits he hates homeless people! Elvis Costello takes off that comedy beard!



Hold on to your Blur albums, kids, it's...

"GOOD AFTERNOON, The Kids. Doubtless you've been sat at home planning the revolution again, pulling the limbs off Jason Donovan dolls and dreaming of the day when Fruitbat will lead a revolutionary army of crutches through the gated gates at the top of Downing Street while Jimbob writes passionate anthems of dissent to be played on heavy rotation on Radio Kill The Grown Ups.

Well, I've got news for you - it isn't going to happen! Because The Man is going to take the music from you, The Kids, and make sure The System stays in place.

"Take this summer for example. Perusing my copy of the paper that my part agents at IPC Magazines send me - ha! nothing is safe from The Man - I noticed that some of The Kids had formed a 'punk rock' group in Wales. They looked like trouble with their homosexual eyeliner, their anarchic slogans and their mind-blowing revolutionary music - just the sort of thing to cause war in the streets and make students start printing insurrectionary tracts instead of opening bank accounts in Freshers' Week.

"Calling themselves *Manic Street Preachers*, they were soon using the media to put forward their message of free love, world peace and cutting your arm off to annoy your mum and dad. A lot of people were worried - Cliff Richard and Mark Knopfler both sent me coded telegrams saying, 'Help us, The Man! The Kids are set to take over and our CD sales will plummet'.

"So I called my friends at Columbia Records - fully paid-up agents of The Man, every marjack of them - and suggested they dig into their Swiss bank accounts. Sure enough, within a week, the Manics had been offered a sum of money so hugely unimaginable to their DSS-addled Welsh minds that they readily agreed to drop the politics, work with *Pete Waterman*, play The Prince's Trust and shop all their dog-on-a-string bomb-making pals to M5.

"Another crisis averted with little fuss in the media. So remember, The Kids - The Man is going to take your music, again and again and again! Sleep well - if you can."

HOMES OF THE RICH & FAMOUS THIS WEEK: MARK E SMITH'S HOUSE IN MANCHESTER

DESPITE POSSESSING wealth beyond most people's wildest imaginings, The Fall's Mark E Smith is determined to remain a 'man of the people'. "I'm a plain man," he says when I meet him at his ordinary semi-detached suburban home in the Grimsbury area of Manchester, "and I believe in plain speaking. I've got plain tastes, and if some folk don't like that, then there's nowt I can do to change their minds."

This determination to remain part of 'ordinary folk' is evident in his choice of home. When he originally bought the residence, it was a rather luxurious eight-bedroom detached house, but he soon grafted it onto the house next door so that it would be "a normal place. A working class home. The type of place where a life-long trade unionist such as me Dad could visit without thinking I'd turned into some kind of fancy dan. What did I need eight bedrooms for? I gave them all away to charity, and I sleep on the sofa. I also had bad drains specially installed. Bad drains are the symbol of the working man."

Mark E, however, does have one luxury in his house, a 16-track studio located in the basement. It is here that I notice a strange smoke alarm-like construction dangling from the ceiling. What could it be?

"That's actually a tune alarm," says my host. "In case I'm writing a song, and accidentally start singing a tune, that alarm comes on to warn me. Luckily, it's only happened once. I could have turned into Phil Collins, or some other representative of middle-class, unchallenging rock bollocks."

Unbelievably, this year, Mark E celebrates an incredible 15 years in pop. My final question enquires about his thoughts on



the current music scene.

"It's daft. The musicians are daft, the people in the record business are daft, the songs are daft, and I'm daft. But I'm not as daft as those folk who think that the dafter you are, the more daft you appear to be. They're the daft ones. Now, I'm off down t'pub. Notice that? I didn't say down the pub. I said down t'pub. Just like real Northern folk. Are you comin'? Where's me whippets?"

Getting the inside story
For one weekly article, *Thrills* popped round various rock stars' houses for a cup of tea and a rummage through their knicker drawer.



Lenny: 'Hey, wasn't John Lennon shot?'

Memoirs of a Shoegazing Gentleman

TALLY HO! Everything's been a bit of a bish this week after the annual shifty match against Unwashed Poors School For Vulgar Lads From The Black Country. We fielded a top-hole side - captain was Steven from Lush, because he's leaving next term, and Russell from Catherine Wheel was second coxswain with Damon Minor from Blur holding the dolly stick as per. It started off jolly well until Clint the Butcher's Boy lobbed a mardy compton across the four furling line and the blessed pill went sailing through the posts like a dud postal order being bounced by Maf!

Of course, Russell from Chapterhouse was supposed to be

back shogger, but he was off in the changer hut applying the milky tourniquet so we were 9-12 down by tea-time! Miki from Lush gave him a scorching telling off and we came back 3-7 ahead so yaboo sucks to the poor people with bells and shoelaces! Oh then Rat from the Neds lobbed a pretty trinkler right at Nigel from Slowdive's boko and the claret flowed like billy-oh!

The whole thing ended in a stocious tiff when Miles from Wonder Stuff hit Algije from Chapterhouse with his bover boot and our PT wallah - Mr Blenkinsop-Phipps (MA, Delhi) - had to throw a bucket of water over them. On the coach back we sang

by LORD TARQUIN the school song - 'Tiny Pearls Set in A Glistening Pool Of Moodiness' - and put boot polish on Russell from Chapterhouse's nadders because he was revving up the pink Scalextrix in the back seat.

Next week should be a jolly jape since it's the annual Cocteau Twins Debating Cup challenge and we're fielding Dimmo from Catherine Wheel as our speaker on the theme 'Pretending Not To Have Been At Public School Is Really Clever' - in classical Greek! Beezer bish or what? *Rundus erat quam nunquam*, as Russell from Chapterhouse would say when he isn't peeling the private potato!



Boy - pick up those private potato-peelings!

Boo yar sucks to shoegaze
Today, shoegaze is rightly considered a pivotal and revolutionary early '90s movement of unadulterated sonic cathedrality. At the time, though, it was a bit of a joke scene full of 'ethereal' posh kids from the home counties, and ripe for public school pastiche in one of our most self-celebrating weekly columns.

Watch out kids
In 1991 the shadowy puppeteer of the music industry, old Satan's Cock himself, broke cover to mock readers with his wicked plots to kill off the good in rock.

How the hell did that happen?

► At *NME* we've never been ones to avoid an opportunity to abuse our power. Here are some of the sandwich-dropping moments from the past 63 years



Made-up band meets tragic end

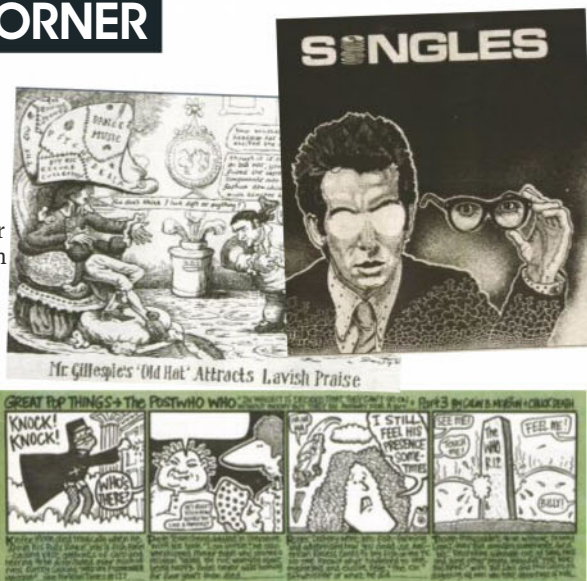
April 1995

In 1995, slap bang in the middle of Britpop, we made up an electro krautpop band called I Dream Of Wires (vanguard of the fictional New Wave Of Synth Pop scene alongside invented peers Monophone and Dresden Ludo) and wrote an in-depth feature on them for a laugh. Then, on April 1, we killed them off in a bus crash, to the despair of our more gullible letters page correspondents.

CARTOON CORNER

Way before Gorillaz we were quick on the draw

NME has never quite found its own Garfield. In the early '90s, *Father Ted* writers Arthur Mathews and Graham Linehan contributed Dickensian sketches on indie rock themes to *NME* under the guise of Dr Crawshaft. This gave way to *Great Pop Things*, a slapdash four-panel history of some of the most complex bands in rock. Other notable cartoon contributors include Alan Moore, Shakespeare of comics and drawer of trippy Elvis Costello illustrations.



NME's very own toon army through the ages

Aphex Twin drinks everything

December 1997

Of all the monumental rock star piss-ups that have appeared in our annual Pub Golf feature in the Christmas double issue, the battle between the rock and dance teams in 1997 was by far the wildest. Aphex Twin, realising he scored more points the fouler the concoction he was prepared to down, began mixing pints of bubbling alco-alchemy, necked an entire bowl of lemons and ended up so hammered he was clambering on cars in stopped traffic. He was carried home early, unconscious and



ER, TIME FOR ONE MORE PINT MR TWIN?

covered in sick, while 'Little' Stuart Braithwaite from Mogwai downed a pint of every shot behind the Good Mixer bar, securing a victory for the rockers.

BEATLES	JOHN	PAUL	GEORGE	RINGO (STARR)
Real name:	John Lennon	Paul McCartney	George Harrison	Richard Starkey
Birth date:	October 9, 1940	June 18, 1942	February 21, 1943	July 7, 1940
Birthplace:	Liverpool	Liverpool	Liverpool	Liverpool
Height:	5 ft 11 in	5 ft 11 in	5 ft 11 in	5 ft 8 in
Weight:	11 st 12 lb	11 st 4 lb	10 st 2 lb	9 st 8 lb
Colour of eyes:	Brown	Dark brown	Dark brown	Dark brown
Colour of hair:	Brown	Black	Black	Black
Brothers, sisters:	None	Mike	None	None
Instruments played:	Rhythm guitar, harmonica, piano, drums	Bass guitar, drums, piano, banjo	Guitar, piano, drums	Drums, guitar
Education:	Art school, Quarry Bank, Liverpool College of Art	Liverpool Institute High School	Liverpool Institute High School	Liverpool Secondary Modern, Liverpool Technical College
Age entered show business:	18	18	18	18
Primary occupations:	Writing songs, acting, peace and politics	Music, songwriting, art	Music, songwriting, art	Music, songwriting, art
Favorite singers:	Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Elvis Presley, The Beatles	Ben E. King, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, The Beatles	Little Richard, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, The Beatles	Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, The Beatles
Favorite actors:	Robert Mitchum, James Dean	Wesley Williams, Vic Mizans	Wesley Williams, Vic Mizans	Wesley Williams, Vic Mizans

The Beatles' trivial pursuits

January 1967

In the '60s, we literally used to ask major superstars what their favourite food was – and 20-odd other equally inane questions – by post. It was halfway between a Fearne Cotton interview and a passport application, but somehow we got The Beatles and Bob Dylan to do it.



Damon does Debbie

December 1991

For 1991's Christmas issue, we somehow managed to convince the indie heroes of the day to dress up as their favourite album covers. Cue Blur doing Blondie's 'Parallel Lines' complete with Damon in drag and Happy Mondays' Bez as Bob Marley, smoking the obligatory spliff.



Goldie Lookin Chain guest edit *NME*

January 2004

Few acts have been given the opportunity to guest edit *NME*. Blur had a go (and got their producer Stephen Street's kids to review the singles), Franz Ferdinand waxed lyrical about The Blood Arm and Buzzcocks, the cast of *The Inbetweeners* joined us as the work experience and, in a moment of madness, the reigns were handed over to hip-hop goons Goldie Lookin Chain in 2004. Cue features on drugs, GLC's unique fashion sense and Eggsy's handy guide to being abducted by aliens, swiftly followed by the mass dismissal of IPC Media's HR department.

Trousersnake named Earth's coolest being

November 2003

The annual *NME* Cool List was unarguably the definitive final word on the most credible artists on the planet. Apart from the year we decided to make Justin Timberlake number one in undoubtedly the most reader-angering list we've ever published (and that's saying something).



History is rewritten

2004

In the mid-'00s, a little-noticed feature under the gig listings highlighted notable events from that day in history, none of which actually happened. And so it came to pass that *NME* remembered the day Damon Albarn had his heart replaced with a Babybel, the time when David Bowie's range of chicken kiev was withdrawn from the market and the day P Diddy paid to have his butler god plated.



The Kaisersaurus lives



July 2005

During the Kaiser Chiefs' set at Glastonbury 2005, a large inflatable dinosaur was tossed onstage, dubbed the Kaisersaurus and roundly ridden by Ricky Wilson like the massive prehistoric lizard where it was. After the set, we adopted it and took it for walkies around London.

HOW THE HELL DID THAT HAPPEN?

THE MOST WTF *NME* COVERS EVER...

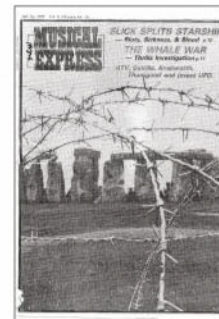
The strange things you end up doing
when Noel Gallagher's not available



Labour leader Neil
Kinnock 13/6/87



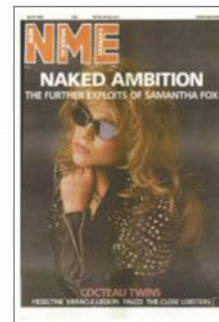
Blind Date host Cilla Black
15/11/86



Ancient monument
Stonehenge 1/7/78



Flop movie Popeye
11/4/81



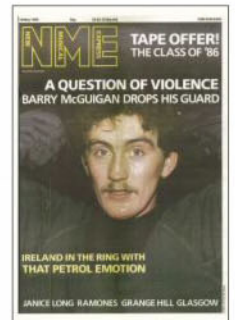
Page 3 girl-turned-pop
star Sam Fox 12/4/86



TV's Only Fools And
Horses 21/12/85



Boxer Frank Bruno
3/9/83



Boxer Barry McGuigan
10/5/86

READING LEEDS 2015

MUMFORD & SONS

alt-J

BASTILLE

ALL TIME LOW
PANIC! AT THE DISCO
PALMA VIOLETS
DRENCE
NECK DEEP
MARIACHI EL BRONX

CLOSING SET FROM: **KNIFE PARTY**

limpbizkit

RUN THE JEWELS
PEACE • SWIM DEEP
DON BROCO
AMERICAN FOOTBALL
PARQUET COURTS
ECHOSMITH
THE DISTRICTS • THE STRUTS

CILKINSON
LIVE

CAMO & KROOKED
HANNAH WANTS
DILLON FRANCIS • PORTER ROBINSON
JACOB PLANT • MY NU LENG
TOYBOY & ROBIN • HAYDEN JAMES
FERDINAND WEBER • ALL WE ARE
THE RAMONA FLOWERS
CARDIKNOX (L)

LOCK UP

NEW FOUND GLORY

AND SO I WATCH YOU FROM AFAR • AS IT IS • ATREYU • BARONESS • BEARTOOTH • BLACK FOXES • BLACK PEAKS • BO NINGEN
BURY TOMORROW • CANCER BATS • FORT HOPE • FRANK CARTER & THE RATTLESNAKES • FRNKIERO ANDTHE CELLABRATION • GOD DAMN
GOJIRA • HAWK EYES • HO9909 • LTNT • MODERN BASEBALL • MODERN LIFE IS WAR • MOOSE BLOOD • NO DEVOTION • PVRIS • QUEEN KWONG SIM-
PLE PLAN SINGLE MOTHERS • SKINNY LISTER • THE BRONX • THE BOTS • THE MENZINGERS • THE ONE HUNDRED • THE SMITH STREET BAND
TURBOWOLF • VANT • WHILE SHE SLEEPS • YOUTH MAN

STAGE

Djingo Djingo

ALVVAYS • ASH • BAD BREEDING • BEAR'S DEN • BLACK HONEY • BLOSSOMS • COASTS • DARLIA • DMA'S • ELLE KING
ELIZA AND THE BEAR GENGAHR • HIPPO CAMPUS • HUNTER & THE BEAR • JACK GARRATT • JAKE ISAAC • JOYWAVE • LITTLE COMETS • LITTLE MAY
LUCY ROSE • MANCHESTER ORCHESTRA • MINI MANSIONS • NEON WALTZ • PRETTY VICIOUS • PRIDES • RADKEY • RAT BOY • SAINT RAYMOND
SAN FERMIN • SEETHER • SUNDARA KARMA • SUNSET SONS • SPRING KING • THE BULLET-PROOF BOMB • THE LAST INTERNATIONALE
THE SHERLOCKS • VAULTS WALKING ON CARS • WE ARE THE OCEAN

STAGE

A\$AP FERG • FLATBUSH ZOMBIES
RAE SREMMURD

BUGZY MALONE • CRAZE • DJ SEMTEX (R) • DJ TARGET • DOPE D.O.D. • FEKKY • ISAIAH DREADS • KIKO BUN • LETHAL BIZZLE
LADY LESHURR • LOYLE CARNER • MS DYNAMITE • NICK BREWER • ONEMAN • PELL • RATKING REMI MILES • SIOBHAN BELL
STAR.ONE • STORMZY • TEMPA T • VINCE STAPLES • YOUNG THUG

STAGE

MILTON JONES • RUSSELL KANE • REGINALD D. HUNTER • ANDREW MAXWELL • STEPHEN K AMOS (L) • KATHERINE RYAN • PAUL CHOWDHRY
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PIFF THE MAGIC DRAGON (L) • PETE JOHANSSON (L) • ALEX EDELMAN (R) • IAIN STIRLING • JARLATH REGAN (R) • DAVID MORGAN (R) • DANE BAPTISTE (L)
SUZI RUFFELL (R) • CARL HUTCHINSON (L) • MARK GRIST (L) • ILIZA SHLESINGER (R) • JAGUAR SKILLS (L) • GEORGE THE POET • MAX COOPER (L)

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