

21 MARCH 2015

92 PAGE BUMPER SPECIAL

NME

100

Greatest

Beatles

Songs

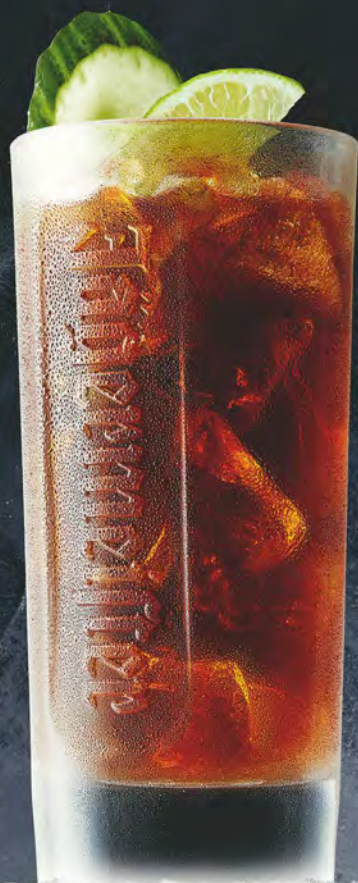
► AS CHOSEN BY MUSIC'S A-LISTERS

"And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make" THE BEATLES



DISCOVER OUR ROOTS

ROOT56 | MIX JÄGERMEISTER
WITH GINGER BEER



The origins of Jägermeister can be traced back over 80 years to the small town of Wolfenbüttel, Germany. Since production began here, ginger root has been a key ingredient in our complex blend of 56 herbs and spices. Which is, of course, why Jägermeister goes so naturally with ginger beer – especially served with ice, lime and cucumber. We call it a Root56. A celebration of our deepest bonds, and a worthy accompaniment to yours.



Jägermeister

IT
RUNS
DEEP

REGULARS

5 SOUNDING OFF

6 ON REPEAT

**17 ANATOMY
OF AN ALBUM**

MIA – 'Arular'

**19 SOUNDTRACK
OF MY LIFE**

Tom McFarland – Jungle

20 RADAR

Meet Dublin alt-pop duo All
Tvvins and 19 more new bands

76 REVIEWS

► ALBUMS

The Prodigy –

'The Day Is My Enemy'

Marching Church –

'The World Is Not Enough'

Mini Mansion –

'The Great Pretenders'

Circa Waves – 'Young Chasers'

and more

► FILM

Mommy

and more

► LIVE

Ariel Pink

Noel Gallagher's

High Flying Birds

Björk

Yung

and more

**90 CROSSWORD/
THINGS WE LIKE**

FEATURES

100

Greatest Beatles Songs

As slavered over by the biggest stars in rock'n'roll, including Johnny Marr, Arctic Monkeys, Jack White, Billy Corgan, The Vaccines, Peace, Palma Violets, The Cribs, Jake Bugg, Alt-J, Muse, Royal Blood, The Maccabees, Frank Turner, Wolf Alice, Fat White Family, Mumford & Sons, The War On Drugs, Suede, Noel, Liam, Dave Grohl, Graham Coxon, Arcade Fire and more, starting on [page 26](#)

70 Beatles: The Solo Years

In the wake of the split of the century, John, Paul, George and, yes, even Ringo turned in some of the best music of their lives. We trace the ups and downs of their solo careers and compile the 40 best post-Beatles songs

74 Ethan Hawke

The actor who compiled 'The Black Album' of solo Beatles songs for the film *Boyhood* explains why the Fabs' solo work isn't the end of the story, but a whole new story

All Tvvins	20	K-X-P	78
Andrew Hung	7	Kanye West	7
Arcade Fire	13	Kornél Kovács	23
Ariel Pink	82	Let's Talk Daggers	21
Attic Fowler	22	Lower Dens	79
Axel Boman	23	Loyle Carner	6
The Beatles	26	Marching Church	77
Bella Figura	23	MIA	7, 7
Benoit Pioulard	79	Mini Mansions	78
Best Coast	6	Mr Tophat &	
Björk	85	Art Alfie	23
Bo Rocha	22	Mumford & Sons	8
Britain	21	Muse	6
Broadbay	21	Noel Gallagher's	
Circa Waves	79	High Flying	
Cold Courage	23	Birds	84
Death Cab For		Only Real	77
Cutie	77	Organised Scum	22
Declan McKenna	21	Orlando	22
DJ Ulf Eriksson	23	Otherkin	23
Django Django	6	Pale Honey	23
Dolce	23	Petter Nordkvist	23
Drenge	14	Phil Spector	89
Ethan Hawke	74	Pins	22
Ezra Furman	22	The Prodigy	76
Föllakzoid	78	Public Access TV	6
Fraser A Gorman	22	Ringo Starr	78
Friendly Fires	23	Roberto Clementi	23
Giant Swan	21	Shirley Said	21
Girlpool	7	St Vincent	7
Gleam	21	Stormzy	21
Grimes	6	The Soft Moon	79
Hannah Cohen	78	Sufjan Stevens	7
Hinds	7	Sun Kill Moon	7
Hodgy Beats & Don		Take Turns	21
Cannon	77	Tame Impala	6
Hop Along	6	Venera 4	22
Jake Rollins	22	Villagers	6
Johnny Marr	7	Warpaint	10
The Jon Spencer Blues		Warpaint	6
Explosion	79	Wiley	21
Juan Wauters	22	Young Fathers	7
Jungle	19	Yung	85

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

WINS £50 OF See TICKETS VOUCHERS!
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SUEDE

REMEMBER ME!

It was such a pleasure to see Godlike Genius winners Suede live at the NME Awards. It was about one hour before the Gaz Coombes gig in Birmingham when I realised they were getting the award, and it meant I couldn't concentrate (so sorry Gaz), because I'd been waiting for a Suede gig so badly for the nine months since I saw them last in Japan. I think everyone at the O2 Academy Brixton understood why Suede deserved the Godlike Genius when they saw their passionate, aggressive, energetic and beautiful performance, especially Brett's showmanship. I read the interview in the magazine a week later, and after seeing the part about new fans I burst into tears because the Japanese girl Brett was talking about was me. Being remembered by my favourite band in the world makes me so happy – it's the most brilliant thing. I can't thank my mum enough for having me, and being a big Suede fan.
Rin Kato, via email

MW: Rin, as someone lucky enough to help organise the awards, I can tell you the exact point when I *knew* Suede



were the right choice for Godlike Genius this year: no, it wasn't when Brett and co pulled up outside the venue in a stretch limo looking like the cast of *The Matrix*, but when they *blew the roof off* the O2 Academy Brixton at soundcheck the day before. Watching the band blasting out the hits, totally at the top of their game, was a special, special moment. Big up to 'em – they totally deserve it.

THE NME AWARDS TOUR: A TRIUMPH!

I have to say 'thank you' for a great NME Awards Tour show at the Forum in north London on March 4. I was the bearded bloke dancing up a storm near the mosh. I was there to see The Wytches, who I saw at Glastonbury last year, and on both occasions it was funny seeing people trying to mosh to slow sludgy riffs – and Fat White Family, neither of whom disappointed. But *Slaves* were the real surprise for me, and they got me dancing like a complete loon. I don't see the point of *Palma Violets*, though, I left after 20 minutes. They get touted a lot on BBC 6 Music but sound like sub-Vaccines, sub-Libertines, which is not bad in themselves, but where are the tunes? I noticed quite a few people getting their bags and coats after the Fat Whites – in my mind any of the three

previous bands could have headlined better. But three out of four ain't bad.
Tim Baker, via email

MW: Each to their own, Tim. Personally I thought **Fat White Family** – and I truly love that band – were a little lacklustre at that gig. **Lias**, who's one of **THE great frontmen of his generation**, looked like he was going through the motions, and the band really need to start playing some new songs to ramp up the excitement again. I feel good about them, though – if the new album's as strong as their **Moonlandingz** side-project, they'll be fine. I really don't agree with you about the **Palmas**, either – I thought they totally owned it. Plus, the new album, **'Danger In The Club'**, sounds like the best bits of **The Gun Club**, **The Stranglers** and **Wreckless Eric** to my ears. **No bad thing.**

ALL HAIL DALE

A simple request: please interview Dale Barclay (below). Don't leave it six months, or ignore him. After the split of **The Amazing Snakeheads** I want to know what he is going to do next, even if it's going back to the day job. Solo career? New band? Playing with **Laura St Jude**? This band was one of the few who had as much meaning, passion and bollocks as the classic bands that came before them. His lyrics are simple but I believe them. Their riffs were like nobody else's and he has a stage presence that isn't just nicked from



Iggy Pop, **Ian Curtis** or **Jim Morrison**. Maybe this is the way it was meant to be – to burn bright and not burn out? Please prove to me somebody at **NME** is interested in music not made by art students.
Joe Herr, via email

MW: I spoke to the guys at **Snakeheads'** label **Domino** about this, and they're all as gutted as you. So far there's no word on what **Dale's** gonna do next, but everyone I know who knows him seems to think this isn't the end musically. I hope they're right, because he's one of the most electrifying people in indie. We need people like him: the glorious fuck-ups.

NOEL – BETTER THAN OASIS

I took my daughter down to Glasgow on Saturday night for the **Noel Gallagher** gig. The sound was incredible. 'Everybody's On The Run'

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is already a stadium-sized anthem and had the place rocking. 'Champagne Supernova' was a flashback in time, and something very special. You just had to look at the reaction of the fans from the very back row to the moshpit down the front, arms aloft and in full voice. We witnessed just what an influence **Oasis** had on thousands of people's lives. The encore of 'Don't Look Back In Anger', 'AKA... What A Life!', and 'The Masterplan' rounded off a truly fantastic gig, and a fantastic rock'n'roll show.

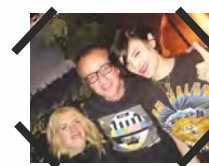
Stephen McCormick, via email

MW: What a comeback it's been for **Noel**! Almost everything's gone to plan for him – from topping the charts to selling out gigs and the usual raft of sidesplitting interviews. Although, what's this...

WHERE'S NOEL?

Someone tell me where **Noel Gallagher** is please. Shhh, it's a surprise.
Courtney Love, via Twitter

MW: Noel, take cover.



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

I had the honour of meeting the wonderful **Ex Hex** after their amazing gig in **Stockholm**. They were all lovely, of course. Rock on!
Paul Eade, Stockholm

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Tame Impala
Let It Happen

Let's get one thing straight right away: 'Let It Happen' is one of the songs of the year, by a band who've got it all to play for. Ambitious as hell and the perfect continuation from 2012 album 'Lonerism's dejected glory, it's a disco beast that takes giant strides rather than baby steps, and is the culmination of Tame's genesis from weirdo psych outsiders to the A-list. On this basis, 2015 could totally be theirs.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

2. Public Access TV
Metropolis

The New York gang have joined up with Grizzly Bear's Chris Taylor to release new EP 'Public Access' on his Terrible Records imprint. On its lead track, the boys encounter "a *siren with a song*" who "won't take your calls any more". Still as yearning and catchy as we've come to expect from PATV, 'Metropolis' also finds them ploughing darker disco-tinged routes, adding an alluring, dusky sheen to their exuberant indie.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

3. Loyle Carner
Mufasa

On last year's debut EP 'A Little Late', Loyle Carner proved himself a talented MC with an unusually sensitive take on the world and an ear for a mellow J Dilla-style beat. Same deal on 'Mufasa', a track named after *The Lion King's* righteous father figure that airs further thoughts from 20-year-old Carner about family life. "Everything's gonna be alright", he raps in the direction of his younger stepbrother.

Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

4. Sun Kil Moon
Ali/Spinks 2

"I'm a songwriter", goes Mark Kozelek on this cut from upcoming album 'Universal Themes'. Then he tells us he's "gonna write songs that make people laugh, cry, be happy/And songs that make grown men shit their pants like little fuckin' babies". Truthfully, 'Ali/Spinks 2' is more likely to prompt amused head scratching. Twisted in several different directions – ambient, lo-fi, country-rock – this is a typically challenging Kozelek tune.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

5. Muse
Psycho

A riff the size of the corporations they're looking to take down introduces Muse's return. Matt Bellamy's looking inwards, though, hinting at his split from Kate Hudson last year when he sings, "Love, it will get you nowhere". A distorted bassline and a vocal delivered in the style of Marilyn Manson's 'Beautiful People' gives way to a pounding guitar line that'll unite the Download festival in one almighty black-clad moshpit when they headline this summer.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

**6. Warpaint**
I'll Start Believing

Recent newie 'No Way Out' was a sultry slowburn, but 'I'll Start Believing' explodes immediately with screaming vocals and an almighty bass-drum thump. "He took off when I was six months old/ And he said, there's something difficult about this/ I've got to do my own thing now", bristles singer and guitarist Theresa Wayman on a track about her dad leaving home. It's sad, moving and catchy – and the bridge could be Warpaint's best ever.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

7. Grimes
Realiti

As the thirst for the follow-up to 2012's 'Vision' grows, a new Claire Boucher track arrives like a mirage on the horizon. 'Realiti' is full of handclaps, electro-pop synths and Grimes singing things like "Every morning there are mountains to climb/ Taking all my time". The track isn't an official release – merely a thank-you to fans – that begs the question: how good is the album going to be, if this is what the scrapped demos sound like?

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

8. Villagers
Hot Scary Summer

Conor O'Brien's latest track strips away all the experimental distractions of second album 'Awayland' and puts the focus back on his emotive voice and delicate melodies. Break-up lyrics such as "Remember kissing on the cobblestones" and "I live inside you and you live in me/Nothing's going to change that, dear, not even being apart" will have you reaching for the tissues.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

9. Django Django
Reflection

Shades of '90s house colour the latest track to be taken from Django Django's second album – in the bouncy pianos, the insistent beat and the synth bass that hits like a depth charge. There's also – oddly – a break for a blast of jazzy woodwind. When debuted live at recent shows, 'Reflections' saw bassist Jimmy Dixon joining Tommy Grace on a second set of keys, a symbolic swapping of analogue for digital.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

10. Hop Along
Waitress

Hop Along's Francis Quinlan sings like she's ready to chew up the world as it has her: jaw splayed wide, the longing in her belly clearly visible. 'Waitress', the first song from the Philadelphia trio's second album, documents a night when she had to satisfy other people's hunger, and some jackass old friends came by to make her shift worse; she's briefly rueful but chews them out ferociously as thorny, fragmented proto-emo riffs mount up.

Laura Snapes, Features Editor

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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

11. MIA CanSeeCanDo

'CanSeeCanDo' is MIA's first offering since 2013's 'Matangi' album. The beat is fluorescent, lively and almost K-Pop sounding, as though 'Gangnam Style' has been pitched higher and roughed up. But it's the highly political lyrics that have been grabbing attention: "Some people see planes/Some people see drones." So, a song about perspective and ignorance, with MIA placing herself one step beyond: "I stay on it/They can't catch up."

Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

12. Andrew Hung The Plane (Red Cave Level 1)

Andrew Hung is one half of Fuck Buttons, and this is the first track from his forthcoming 'Red Cave EP' – a collection of music made using a GameBoy. He's described the process of creating on Nintendo's obsolete device as "limiting but liberating, with an emphasis on fun". He's not wrong about the "fun" part, and 'The Plane...' is the Donkey Kong of electronic bangers: mean, aggressive, massively enjoyable.

Andy Welch, writer

13. Kanye West Awesome

Piano-ballad pastiche 'Awesome' was first aired at New York's Met Ball in 2013, and was recently leaked online. Its wash of autotuned vocals recall 2010's 'Runaway', but the track's self-aware romantic declarations ("Cos baby you're awesome/Also, I'm also awesome") make it hard to imagine it featuring on his follow-up to the lean, mean 'Yeezus'. A fun stopgap all the same.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

14. Sufjan Stevens Should Have Known Better

"When I was three, three maybe four/She left us at that video store", whispers Sufjan Stevens over gently picked guitar strings, as though he's recalling a traumatic childhood experience. Later he admits "I only want to be a relief/No, I'm not a go-getter" as an angelic echo swoops into the background. Stevens is a man who's built a world out of the sadder side of life, and 'Should Have Known Better' continues to make it turn.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

15. Young Fathers Shame

Last month, Edinburgh's Young Fathers released 'Rain Or Shine', a grimy, rattling first taste of 'White Men Are Black Men Too', the follow-up to last year's Mercury-winning debut album 'Dead'. 'Shame', the second track from it, shows a more upbeat, soulful side to the record. There's barely a trace of hip-hop here; instead the trio explore pop with jaunty, high-pitched vocals, buzzing bass and sharp TV On The Radio electronics.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor



16. St Vincent Teenage Talk

Annie Clark wrote this new song for an episode of Lena Dunham's *Girls*, to close out an episode in which substitute teacher Hannah convinces one of the teenagers in her class to skip school and get a piercing. "That was before we made any terrible mistakes", sighs Clark over minimal synths. "How do you see me now I'm older?" Dunham's fictional character might not have the benefit of hindsight just yet, but Clark delivers it in spades here.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

17. Hinds Davey Crockett

Taken from their upcoming Record Store Day split with fellow Madrid band The Parrots, 'Davey Crockett' sees Hinds – formerly Deers – cover Kent garage band Thee Headcoatees. The quartet imbue the ramshackle tune with the same sense of fun they do everything else, singers Ana Perrote and Carlotta Cosials singing "Gabba gabba hey!" repeatedly as spindly drums and riffs collide beneath. Simple but effective.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

18. Best Coast Heaven Sent

Thankfully, Best Coast's venture into fey Americana on album two was fleeting. This latest teaser for third LP 'California Nights' continues in the slacker-psych vein of its title track, but 'Heaven Sent' is chirpier, in thrall to The Cranberries. If, 20 years on, the employees of *Empire Records* were still running riot in an independent music shop, this would be on repeat.

Eve Barlow, writer

19. Johnny Marr I Feel You

No one expected Depeche Mode to come out with a riff as big as the one on their 1993 Top 10 hit 'I Feel You', but it suited Dave Gahan's skag-daddled rock'n'roll Jesus phase. Johnny Marr has no such demons, but on this cover version he's got the raw guitar power to attack it with lip-smacking relish. That he growls himself hoarse trying to keep up with the Mode's filthy grind just makes it all the more thrilling.

Matthew Horton, writer

20. Girlpool Ideal World

Another perfectly honed hit from Girlpool's debut album, 'Before The World Was Big', 'Ideal World' is more stripped back than a Kim Kardashian magazine cover, but the LA-based duo have a way of making their bare bones punk-folk seem brawny. "I feel safest in knowing/I am true," Cleo Tucker and Harmony Tividad harmonise, like the coolest girls on the block. There's no-one in indie we want to be best mates with more right now.

Leonie Cooper, writer

TheWeek

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

Plug in, baby

Mumford & Sons unveil their new electric sound
with two intimate shows in London

PHOTO BY WRENNE EVANS

Mumford
& Sons at
Oslo, London,
March 2015





Less than a week after announcing the release of their third album 'Wilder Mind', Mumford & Sons assembled in London for two small and sweaty gigs, the like of which they last played in the run-up to 2009's multi-million-selling debut 'Sigh No More'. This time, no-one was singing along – not due to a lack of enthusiasm, but because the 375 fans in Hackney's Oslo venue each night were witness to an 11-song set taken entirely from the new LP – the first time the songs had ever been played before an audience. And don't go looking for dodgy YouTube video rips shot from the middle of the crowd – mobile phones were checked at the door at the request of the band, and returned in a special hessian bag.

Unlike 2012's 'Babel', which saw the group trialling new tracks at their own shows for well over a year before the album's release, the band are keeping the new, banjo-free tracks close to their chest. "It's so different and we hadn't had the chance to try it out before,"

keyboard player Ben Lovett told *NME*.

"It plays into your insecurities. Before, we had a conversation with the people who were going to be hearing it, but the new material has been under lock and key. We've got no idea whether people are going to respond well to it, we just know that we feel really proud of it and it's an important record for us."

The answer came in the form of a rapturous reception at Oslo, where Marcus Mumford branded the audience "guinea pigs" and the punters whooped and hollered for propulsive opener 'The Wolf', the heavy 'Snake Eyes' and the epic 'Ditmas'. The latter is a nod to the area of Brooklyn that's home to the studio of The National's Aaron Dessner, who helped the band shape their new sound. The band's electric about-turn didn't go unmentioned on the first night. "What's happening with the banjos?" shouted a crowd member mid-set. "That's a good question," replied Marcus. "We don't really know. We'll get back to you on that one..." ■ LEONIE COOPER



Warpaint
(l-r): Jenny Lee
Lindberg, Stella
Mozgawa, Emily
Kokal, Theresa
Wayman

Single ladies

Hitting the UK for a series of gigs this week, the LA four-piece explain why they're releasing tracks ad hoc

For a bunch of perfectionists with just two albums and an EP to show for their 11 years in the business, Warpaint have been positively prolific recently. First came seven-minute single 'No Way Out', then news of a split EP with London group Daughter for Record Store Day. Then, last Wednesday, a clip of bassist Jenny Lee Lindberg's actress sister Shannyn Sossamon shimmying on the band's Facebook page unveiled another brand new song, 'I'll Start Believing', a caterwauling psych banger with a sharp riff and psychotic vocal harmonies that's reminiscent of 2014's 'Disco//Very'.

The LA foursome are basking in an extremely productive purple patch. Having banished themselves to Joshua Tree during the four-year gap between 2010 debut album 'The Fool' and last year's 'Warpaint', there'll be no further protracted agony in moving forward this time, they say. "We're writing here, spending lots of money on a really nice studio," says Emily Kokal, in their home

neighbourhood of Echo Park. "We don't wanna do an album right now or put all our eggs in one basket," explains guitarist Theresa Wayman. "All this shit of writing, recording, mixing, mastering, releasing, touring... it's two years dedicated to *one* thing. We want to do bits here and there, like back in the day when they used to make singles."

The letting-go of the double A-side release 'No Way Out'/'I'll Start Believing' is an experiment in self-discipline. "We have a new rule," says Emily. "When we write a song and agree that we're stoked about it, we're done. That's a lesson we've learned – not to over-

analyse – because then the moment goes." Since returning home, they've connected with a simpler life – DJing in dive bars, playing community fundraisers and spending time with family. "I hike, swim, see friends, walk my dog, bring him home and take him into the shower 'cos I have to wash his butt after he poops," says

Jenny. "I do what Jen does," nods drummer Stella Mozgawa. Theresa chips in: "Me too. Only mine's a kid and beyond the me-washing-his-butt stage."

Warpaint certainly appear to have mellowed. "Who knows how we'll evolve," says Emily. "But it's growing nicely." They've also found a newfound urge to let rip with audiences. Theresa dived into a Hollywood crowd recently, and looks forward to doing the same on the series of UK dates, beginning on Friday (March 20) in Birmingham and culminating in their biggest-ever London gig at Hammersmith Apollo on March 26. "I'm going to stagedive at every show now," laughs Theresa. "The fans are always there, putting their arms up. So I thought, 'Why don't I jump on them?' It was *fun!*" ■ EVE BARLOW



"WHO KNOWS HOW WE'LL EVOLVE. BUT IT'S GROWING NICELY"
Emily Kokal

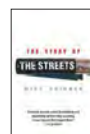
MY LIFE IN A SUITCASE

FIVE TOURING ESSENTIALS

Van McCann



Catfish & The Bottlemen



BOOK **The Story Of The Streets by Mike Skinner**

"He tells of riding a BMX into a London estate agents in a Lacoste tracky. They go to kick him out until he tells them he has a 100-grand-a-month budget."



BOXSET **Phoenix Nights**

"We love Peter Kay's *Phoenix Nights*. Our sound guy Mike is so southern that we have to watch it with subtitles on, because he has no idea what they're saying."

FILM **We'll Take Manhattan**

"It's about David Bailey, the photographer, and stars Karen Gillan. It's about him going to New York to shoot for *Vogue*, and the belief in yourself and ambition that it takes to be a success."



GAME **Fifa 15**

"We play a lot on the bus and at home. I try to go easy on Larry, our guitar tech. I'm cursed. I don't like beating my mates all the time, but I'm just too good."

HOME COMFORT **Lambert & Butler**

"I can't smoke any other ciggies, so I fly them everywhere. That's my foot on the ground. As long as I've got Lambert & Butler, I'm home."

► Catfish & The Bottlemen's tour begins at Leeds O2 Academy on March 23

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THE SUN



NEW



GRAZIA



DAILY STAR



EVENING STANDARD

THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY PART I



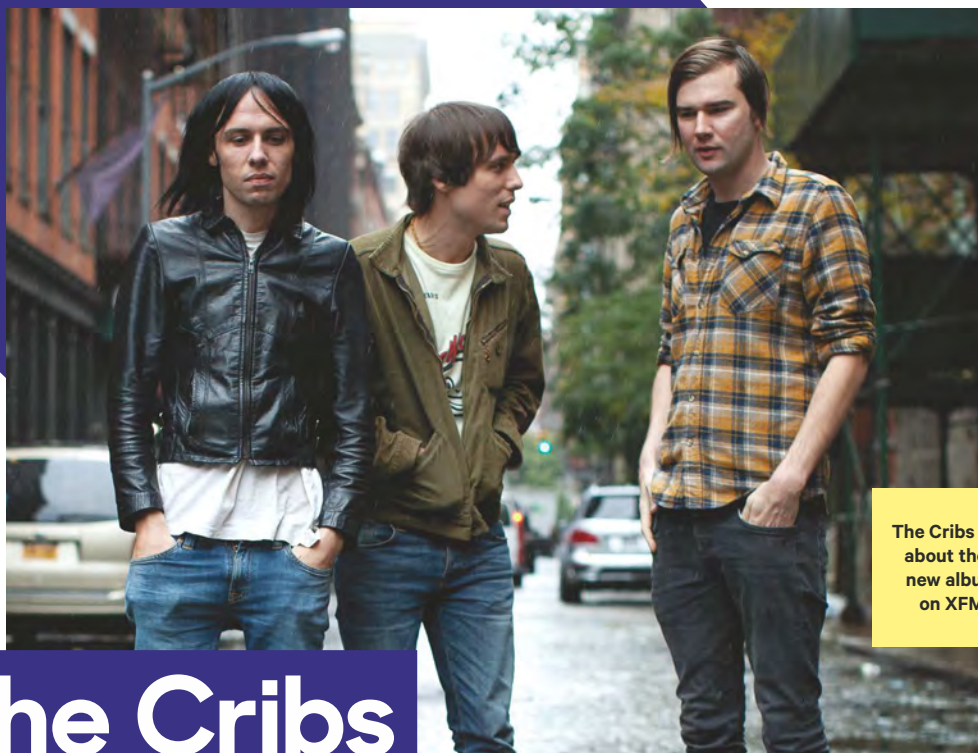
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STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



The Cribs talk about their new album on XFM

The Cribs

X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, March 24, 10pm

The Jarmans' sixth album, 'For All My Sisters', is released this week, and the brothers reveal some of the record's secrets in their track-by-track commentary for John Kennedy. Listen out for stories about Dave Grohl, producer Ric Ocasek and '80s pop singer Martika.

Marilyn Manson The First Time

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, March 22, 1pm

Brian Warner, aka Marilyn Manson, has long been synonymous with controversy in music. He sits down with Matt Everitt to talk about being a hate figure in the media, being blamed for the

Columbine massacre and his early musical passions – as diverse as Kiss and Olivia Newton-John.

Black Rebel Motorcycle Club Benicàssim

►WATCH Sky Arts, March 21, 1.30am

The San Francisco band have just announced a live

album and DVD, capturing the sweaty brilliance of their gigs. Get in the mood for the release with this footage from their performance at Benicàssim in 2013.

Twin Peaks X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, March 23–24, 10pm

Chicago's scrappiest rock'n'rollers (below) drop by the XFM studio to recreate some of the highlights of their 2014 album, 'Wild Onion'. They'll play four songs, including the ramshackle 'Flavor' and 'I Found A New Way'.

Gengahr Steve Lamacq

►WATCH BBC 6 Music, March 19–20, 4pm
Lammo presents his show live from Austin, Texas this week as annual music festival SXSW is fully underway. He'll be joined by guests from Soak to Frank Turner, but one of the highlights will be Gengahr performing live at his BBC Introducing showcase. Tune in to hear the best bits.



GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS

THIS WEEK



Hookworms

The Leeds-based band take the rich psychedelics of second album 'The Hum' on the road to London and Nottingham this week.

►DATES London Oval Space (March 21), Nottingham Rescue Rooms (22)

►TICKETS London £12 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.20 booking fee; Nottingham sold out

Johnny Marr

Godlike Genius Marr makes his way to Stoke and Sheffield for a pair of intimate shows.

►DATES Stoke-On-Trent Sugarmill (March 19), Sheffield Leadmill (20)

►TICKETS Sheffield £21 from NME.COM/tickets with £2.65 booking fee; Stoke-On-Trent sold out

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

1. Black Honey

Bleach, Brighton
►March 19, 7.30pm

2. Habitats

Start The Bus, Bristol
►March 20, 8pm

3. Hyena

The Old Blue Last, London
►March 23, 8pm

4. Courtney Barnett

Rough Trade East, London
►March 24, 7pm

5. Lonelady

Rough Trade, Nottingham
►March 24, 7pm

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(Right) The Verve's Richard Ashcroft, whose 'Bittersweet Symphony' sampled Andrew Loog Oldham's work



'BLURRED LINES' IS A RIP-OFF – BUT SINCE WHEN HAS THAT BEEN A BAD THING?

BY **ANDREW LOOG OLDHAM**



Last week, Pharrell Williams and Robin Thicke were ruled to have plagiarised Marvin Gaye's 'Got To Give It Up' with their 2013 hit 'Blurred Lines'. You can't argue with the verdict – the bottom end of 'Blurred Lines' is ripped off, but I've

got nothing against rip-offs. It's inevitable. Everything great in life comes from being influenced by people because it gives you a head start. It gives you hope.

Modern pop music works on production and groove, and this case set out to prove that the atmosphere of the track was lifted from Marvin Gaye. Pharrell and Robin Thicke's lawyer said the case sets a dangerous precedent, that the song is an homage or a pastiche, and if you can be sued for evoking the feel of another era then musicians everywhere should worry. I don't

The former Rolling Stones manager insists warnings of a 'dangerous precedent' being set by the recent court case are nonsense

that the topline melody is the same, too. People forget that, because of the clever way it's written – and it is a brilliant record. We settled out of court, and Richard Ashcroft had to share credit with Jagger and Richards.

The 'Blurred Lines' case is different. We've had Robin Thicke playing a medley of songs for the judge and the Gayes parading the whole family in court. Thicke and Pharrell initiated the thing, anticipating that the Gaye family were going to sue, which is almost like saying, 'I'm represented by Guilty, Guilty & Guilty.' It's been an emotive and involving trial. But a dangerous outcome? I don't think so. When an artist walks back into their own room, he or she is so full of themselves – and rightly so – that they will just get on with it. This verdict will have no effect on artists writing songs at all. ■

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

LOST ALBUMS

#66

Violent Femmes *The Blind Leading The Naked* (1986)

Chosen by Will Butler, *Arcade Fire*



"Milwaukee's Violent Femmes are best known for their 1983 debut. Their third album, produced by Jerry Harrison from Talking Heads, is excellent but not widely listened to. It's got a cover of T Rex's 'Children Of The Revolution' on it, it's got dark country songs, it's got straight-up Christian songs, and it's all over the place. I came to it because of the single 'I Held Her In My Arms' – on their greatest hits album, they do a live version of it and it sounds like a Springsteen song. The album starts with a punk song: just 30 seconds of yelled anti-Reagan sentiment, and there's a song about space too. Amazing."



► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE**

January 1986

► **LABEL** Slash

► **BEST TRACKS** I Held Her In My Arms, No Killing, Special

► **WHERE TO FIND IT** Second-hand copies can be found on eBay; also available on iTunes

► **LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

The Loveless brothers have gained a new member but ditched the gore for beefed-up new album 'Undertow'

Drenge



Eoin and Rory Loveless in their Sheffield studio and (below) with new member Rob Graham (centre)

"I don't think we were ever set on being a two-piece," says Drenge frontman Eoin Loveless. "It was just circumstance – we didn't have any mates that wanted to be in our band." Following the success of the Castleton duo's self-titled 2013 debut, it's unsurprising that's no longer the case. And so, for the forthcoming follow-up, 'Undertow', Eoin and drumming brother Rory have added former Wet Nuns guitarist Rob Graham to their ranks. "I met Rob when I was 10," says Eoin. "He was this complete 14-year-old rock star character. He's essentially the reason that I play guitar today. So it's like having Jack White or Johnny Marr in your band – he's my ultimate guitar hero. And we've got him playing bass instead, which is the biggest insult."

Recorded between September and December 2014, 'Undertow' finds the group

"WE WANTED TO ACHIEVE MORE THAN WAS POSSIBLE WITH TWO INSTRUMENTS"
RORY LOVELESS

working once again with Ross Orton (Arctic Monkeys, MIA) in his studio on the outskirts of Sheffield, next door to what drummer Rory Loveless bluntly describes as "a knocking shop". Learning lessons from making 'Drenge', during which their songs evolved radically through the process, Eoin left the lyric-writing until all 11 songs had been tracked. "It's like driving through really thick fog. Some songs started off sounding a certain way and then completely changed," explains Rory.

When it came to writing the words, Eoin imposed a 'no blood' clause. "The last record was just a bit too gruesome for me," he says. Instead, the songs reference French new wave cinema, his obsession with video game *Grand Theft Auto V* and nights in listening to 'Disintegration' by The Cure and watching David Attenborough's *Planet Earth* on mute. "That was a stepping stone into a new pool of creativity," he says.

First single 'We Can Do What We Want' is an uptempo getaway movie soundtrack compressed into three minutes and set in the atmospheric Derwent Valley. "I kept thinking about it when making the record," says country boy Eoin of the isolated spot. "If I was being chased by police, that's probably where I'd ditch the car. It becomes exceptionally rural very

quickly, and you can hide yourself there. It's the perfect location." 'Have You Forgotten My Name?' follows a similar path, seeing someone on the run, "setting fire to loads of shit" on doomy moors. Most impressive, however, is 'The Woods', with its Lindsey Buckingham-style guitar solo, sinister mood and Bible-quoting lyrics.

Though they've added a bass guitar (Graham plays on three tracks), the group are still trying to remain unconventional – Eoin banned himself from using the Les Paul guitar knocking around the studio because it "seemed like a rock'n'roll excess", and the focus is solely on beefing up their trademark mix of brute force, Sabbath-like rock sludge and deftly crafted, classic rock melodies. Though most of the new material is

yet to be tested live, the band promise that bigger sound will come through in their full-fat new material at forthcoming shows. "I don't know how long we could have gone on as a two-piece," explains Rory. "We wanted to achieve a lot more than what was possible with just two instruments." Mission accomplished. ■ LEONIE COOPER

▶ THE DETAILS

- ▶ **TITLE** Undertow
- ▶ **RELEASE DATE** April 6
- ▶ **LABEL** Infectious
- ▶ **RECORDED** McCall Sound Studio, Sheffield
- ▶ **TRACKS INCLUDE** We Can Do What We Want, The Woods, Have You Forgotten My Name?
- ▶ **RORY LOVELESS SAYS** "We went into the studio with only five songs ready. We'd be kicked out for doing that if we were a group in the '60s."



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ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"YOU DON'T WANT TO CHURN OUT THE SAME SHIT EVERYONE ELSE IS"

MIA



STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

MIA studied art at Central Saint Martins in London and exhibited paintings before she released music. She's always been closely involved with her visual presentation (sleeves, website, videos, styling) and her imagery has a strong correlation with her music. The 'Arular' cover, co-designed with filmmaker Steve Loveridge, works as a companion piece to the songs, which are also collage-like, vivid and rich with political symbols.

THIS WEEK...

MIA: Arular

Londoner Mathangi Arulpragasam's provocative debut is 10 years old this week

THE BACKGROUND

After a tumultuous upbringing that took her from London to Sri Lanka and back again, Mathangi 'Maya' Arulpragasam, aka MIA, first hit the cultural radar as an artist and filmmaker. She designed the cover for Elastica's second album, 2000's 'The Menace', and travelled with the band documenting their tour on video. The support act, Peaches, encouraged MIA to make beats on a Roland MC-505 groovebox. Back in London, and sharing a flat with Elastica's Justine Frischmann, she continued to make music and released her first single, 'Galang', in 2003, attracting the interest of XL, who signed her for 'Arular' – an intentionally raw, panoramic album that matched the sounds she grew up listening to (hip-hop, ragga, baile funk, dancehall, electro, grime) with fragments of fierce, mutinous lyrics gathered from her own experiences and from reading about the world around her.

FIVE FACTS

- 1 'Arular' was originally scheduled for release in 2004, but MIA donated many of its original vocals to a Diplo mixtape, 'Piracy Funds Backlash', building more hype for the album's eventual release.
- 2 Diplo would end up co-producing the single 'Bucky Done Gun' for 'Arular', an album that also features contributions from Justine Frischmann, Richard X, Switch and Fat Truckers' Ross Orton.
- 3 The album takes its title from the *nom de guerre* of her father, a Tamil activist who was a founding member of The Eelam Revolutionary Organisation Of Students, a radical left-wing group formed in London in 1975, the year of MIA's birth.
- 4 MIA's father reportedly trained with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), once considered to be a terrorist group, possibly inspiring the album's most talked-about lyric, "Like PLO, I don't surrender", from 'Sunshowers'.

5 The album was nominated for the Mercury Prize, but lost out to Antony & The Johnsons' 'I Am A Bird Now' – a controversial decision. However, it was later revealed that the biggest challenger to Antony wasn't MIA but Hard-Fi and their debut album, 'Stars Of CCTV'.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"London calling/ Speak the slang now" – 'Galang'

The first lyrics from the album's first single and a nod to The Clash, who MIA would go on to sample on her breakthrough song, 'Paper Planes', from her second album, 'Kala'.

"I bongo with my lingo/ And it beat like a wing, yo" – 'Sunshowers'

A statement of intent. She'll stir up controversy with her lyrics if she wants to, she's saying; keeping quiet is not an option.

"Everything I own is on IOU" – 'Pull Up The People'

A comment on living with debt, as everyone seemed to be in 2005. Three years later, the banks went bust, unsurprisingly.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"A genre-straddling debut of mind-boggling squelchy disco-rap from the Sri Lankan Lady Sovereign."

THE DETAILS

► **RECORDED** 2003–2004 ► **RELEASE DATE** March 22, 2005
 ► **LENGTH** 38:06 ► **PRODUCERS** MIA, Paul Byrne, Caveman, Diplo, KW Griff, Richard X, Switch, Antony Whiting, Wizard ► **STUDIO** Various ► **HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 98 ► **SALES** n/a ► **SINGLES** Galang, Sunshowers, Hombre, Bucky Done Gun ► **TRACKLISTING**
 ► 1. Banana Skit ► 2. Pull Up The People ► 3. Bucky Done Gun
 ► 4. Sunshowers ► 5. Fire Fire ► 6. Dash The Curry Skit ► 7. Amazon
 ► 8. Bingo ► 9. Hombre ► 10. One For The Head Skit ► 11. 10 Dollar
 ► 12. URAQT ► 13. Galang

WHAT WE SAY NOW

One of the most surprising things about 'Arular' – a very London-centric album – was the enormous influence it had on mainstream US hip-hop. In its wake, big-league producers like Timbaland searched further afield for original beats and samples.

FAMOUS FAN

"She is the future of music, and the future of music is here." **Public Enemy's Chuck D**

IN HER OWN WORDS

"You don't want to churn out that same shit everyone else is churning out, you want to push the envelope." **MIA in *The Stool Pigeon*, 2005**

THE AFTERMATH

'Arular' was very much celebrated by critics, but not a commercial hit. With second album 'Kala', MIA wanted to offer more, saying, "With 'Arular', the thing I proved was that I could sing over anything. The question that people were asking around me, and I was asking myself, was whether I was actually musical." 'Kala' was a more accomplished album, and included 'Paper Planes', which turned MIA in to a superstar after it was used in films *Pineapple Express* and *Slumdog Millionaire*. Then, at the 2012 Superbowl half-time show, she performed a song she'd written with Madonna and Nicki Minaj, flipped America the bird and all hell broke loose.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The world is run by drones utilising drones to turn us all into drones”

Muse frontman **Matt Bellamy** explains the thinking behind the band's new album – ‘Drones’

THE NUMBERS

89,000

First week sales of Noel Gallagher's *High Flying Birds* 'Chasing Yesterday' – the fastest-selling album of 2015 in the UK so far

\$20

What Wu-Tang Clan man Raekwon is charging to review your mixtape. The fundraising drive is for his 'Only Built 4 Cuban Linx' documentary

£4.8m

The sum Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams must pay Marvin Gaye's family after a US jury judged that 'Blurred Lines' ripped off his 'Got To Give It Up'

12 minutes

Length of the unheard, acoustic Kurt Cobain song in Brett Morgan's new documentary film, *Montage Of Heck*



WHO THE FUCK IS...



Alex Larke

The 35-year-old lead singer of Rolling Stones tribute act The Rollin' Clones is set to hit the world stage as one half of Electro Velvet, the UK's entrant for this year's Eurovision Song Contest. **Is the other half a Keith Richards lookalike?** Sadly not – it's Bianca Nicholas, whom you may remember from the last series of *The Voice*. Probably not, though, because nobody watches *The Voice*. **Will he get satisfaction in Vienna?** He's not given up the day job. Larke says The Rollin' Clones will continue – as if he doesn't think Electro Velvet will win...

+ GOOD WEEK +



Billie Joe Armstrong

The Green Day frontman is to open a guitar shop, Broken Guitars, in his hometown of Oakland, California, with friend Bill Schneider. The shop will mostly stock guitars from their personal collections – hopefully in working order.

- BAD WEEK -



Mick Thomson

Slipknot guitarist Thomson was rushed to hospital after being stabbed in the head by his brother. Both siblings were hurt in the fight, though neither sustained life-threatening injuries. Police claimed alcohol played a part in the fracas.

IN BRIEF

Sorted for E's & wi-fi

Jarvis Cocker has urged people to turn their backs on the internet. He claims that life would be better without the “endless, meaningless jabbering” that phones, TV and radio bring.

I'll tie anything once

The Strokes' Albert Hammond Jr has teamed up with New York-based designer Jacques Elliott to create a range of ties. The guitarist's designs can be seen online now.

Adams' apple

When Natalie Prass couldn't make a recent gig supporting Ryan Adams, he put on a dress and covered her songs under the name Natalie Sass.

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

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS MARCH 15, 2015



01

Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds *Chasing Yesterday* SOUR MASH

Still eminent post-Oasis, the Britpop icon loosens up without ditching the anthems on this second solo LP, which clocks up its second week at Number One.

NEW 2	Fresh Blood Matthew E White DOMINO RECORDINGS
▲ 3	In The Lonely Hour Sam Smith CAPITOL
▲ 4	X Ed Sheeran ASYLUM
NEW 5	Rebel Heart Madonna INTERSCOPE
▲ 6	Wanted On Voyage George Ezra COLUMBIA
NEW 7	FM The Skints EASY STAR
▼ 8	The Race For Space Public Service Broadcasting TEST CARD RECORDINGS
▲ 9	A Perfect Contradiction Paloma Faith RCA
▼ 10	Royal Blood Royal Blood WARNER BROS
▼ 11	Physical Graffiti Led Zeppelin RHINO
▲ 12	Lost In The Dream The War On Drugs SECRETLY CANADIAN
▲ 13	Liquid Spirit Gregory Porter BLUE NOTE
NEW 14	Tracker Mark Knopfler EMI
▲ 15	1989 Taylor Swift EMI
NEW 16	Lady Sings The Blues Rebecca Ferguson RCA
▲ 17	Hozier Hozier ISLAND
▼ 18	Mount The Air The Unthanks RABBLEROUER
▲ 19	Black Messiah D'Angelo & The Vanguard RCA
NEW 20	Sour Soul Badbadnotgood/Ghostface Killah LEX
▲ 21	Chapter One Ella Henderson SYCO MUSIC
▼ 22	I Love You, Honeybear Father John Misty BELLA UNION
▼ 23	Hand Cannot Erase Steven Wilson KSCOPE
▼ 24	Shedding Skin Ghostpoet PLAY IT AGAIN SAM
▲ 25	Smoke & Mirrors Imagine Dragons INTERSCOPE
▼ 26	The Killer Instinct Black Star Riders NUCLEAR BLAST
▼ 27	Shadow Of The Sun Moon Duo SACRED BONES
NEW 28	Sweet Soul Music The Overtones WARNER ENTERTAINMENT
NEW 29	The Velvet Trail Marc Almond CHERRY RED/STRIKE FORCE ENT
NEW 30	Raise A Little Hell The Answer NAPALM
▼ 31	Stay Gold First Aid Kit COLUMBIA
NEW 32	Sonic Highways Foo Fighters RCA
▲ 33	AM Arctic Monkeys DOMINO RECORDINGS
NEW 34	Never Been Better Ollie Murs EPIC
NEW 35	Tender Buttons Broadcast WARP
▼ 36	Shadows In The Night Bob Dylan COLUMBIA
▼ 37	Modern Nature The Charlatans BMG RIGHTS
▼ 38	Brave The Shires DECCA NASHVILLE
NEW 39	The Boatman's Call Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds MUTE
NEW 40	The Endless River Pink Floyd RHINO

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops from Sunday to Sunday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK MILQUE & MUHLE BIRMINGHAM

FOUNDED 2013
WHY IT'S GREAT Based in the Custard Factory, they offer intimate gigs and events featuring local acts.
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK Six Organs Of Admittance – 'Hexadic'
THEY SAY "We provide adventurous, underground vinyl and cassettes, and also music fanzines, comics, presses and occasional art prints."

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



Daft Punk

Tame Impala

Tom McFarland

Jungle



THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING 'Israelites' - Desmond Dekker & The Aces

"My dad had this incredible four-CD history of Jamaican music and this is the first song I have a vivid memory of listening to and connecting to. It's always been a part of my life. That boxset shaped my early years."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH 'Mellowship Slinky In B Major' - Red Hot Chili Peppers

"When you're a kid, you spend a lot of time listening to what your parents or your brother plays you, but [the Chili Peppers' 1991 album] 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik' was the first thing I discovered off my own bat and formed my own opinions about. I liked this track just because it was weird."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT 'Play' - Moby

"I bought this on cassette in

HMV in Shepherd's Bush for about three quid. I just saw it there, with the cool artwork with the guy jumping up and down. When you're about 10 or 11 you perceive electronic music as just techno - naked Germans in a club kind of thing. But with 'Play' there was melody and emotion. It was the first time I realised you could make electronic music human."

"YOU CAN'T BEAT A BIT OF DIANA ROSS DISCO"

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND 'Bulls On Parade' - Rage Against The Machine

"Or the whole of 'Evil Empire' [Rage's second studio album, released in 1996], really. My brother played it to me when I was 11 or 12 and I was like, 'That is massive.' I probably tried to reproduce it but I didn't have a good enough guitar amp."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO 'Get Lucky' - Daft Punk

"When this came out, I thought it was phenomenal: classic Daft Punk. But then, because of the way music is listened to these days, it just got over-saturated. It's like, if you sat in front of the Mona Lisa and looked at it for five hours straight, you'd get bored with it, wouldn't you? That's what happened with 'Get Lucky'. It's a real shame because it's an absolutely amazing track."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE 'Wild Thing' - The Troggs

"When I was nine, I was on holiday in Lanzarote with my parents and sang this in a karaoke competition. I won a T-shirt with the Pink Panther playing a sax on it. That was my favourite T-shirt ever. It fell apart a few years ago but, honestly, that was the best T-shirt I'll ever own."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE 'Upside Down' - Diana Ross

"You can't beat a bit of Diana Ross' '80s disco period and

but I love it. That's one I keep going back to."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN 'Feels Like We Only Go Backwards' - Tame Impala

"I was listening to 'Lonerism' when it came out and I was so jealous that Kevin Parker had written this song. It's the same with the whole album: I love every single sentiment in all the songs. It really spurred me on to sort out my own stuff in terms of creativity. Seeing other people you really admire doing amazing stuff inspires you to work harder and push yourself to be that good."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF HOME 'Baba O'Riley' - The Who

"The Who grew up in Shepherd's Bush and their first gig was at Shepherd's Bush Working Men's Club, which is on the road where I grew up. It was cool watching *Quadrophenia* and seeing Goldhawk Road railway bridge and Shepherd's Bush Market. The Who are probably my favourite classic British rock band."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL 'Small Hours' - John Martyn

"My choice has changed over the years but at the moment it's this track from the 'One World' album. It's absolutely incredible. There's a really great live DVD [John Martyn At The BBC] where John Martyn goes round playing universities, and the version of 'Small Hours' he plays in, like, 1976 or something is mindblowing. It's the first time I've ever seen a folk singer using a drum machine and some seriously cool delay pedals."



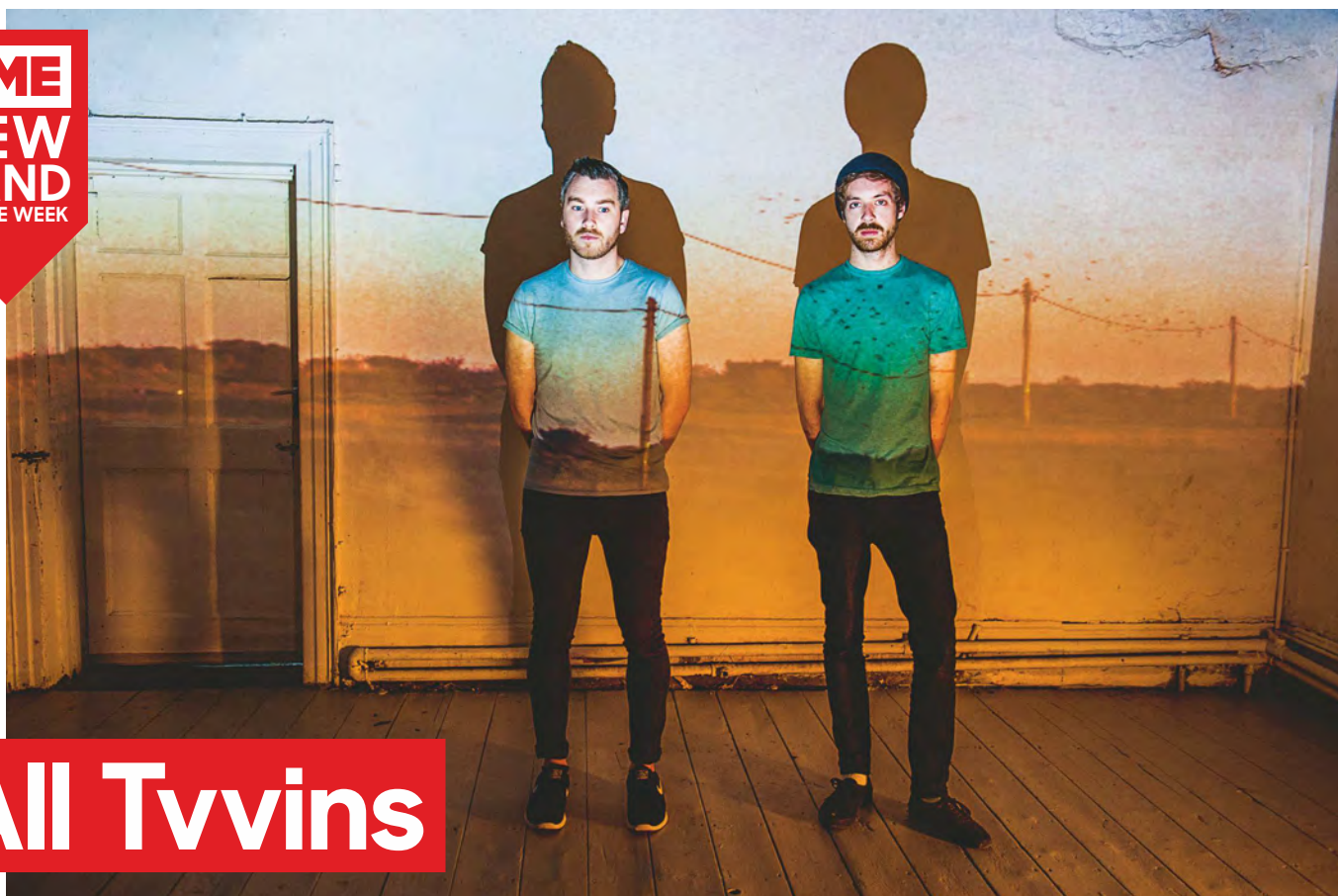
Rage Against
The Machine

Rad ar

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NME
NEW
BAND
OF THE WEEK



All Tvvsins

Dublin duo ditch math-rock for Hooky basslines and Killers choruses

We just stopped being music snobs – it’s all fucking fair game, isn’t it?” chuckles Conor Adams, vocalist, bassist and one half of Dublin duo All Tvvsins. “When we go in to write songs it’s a free-for-all, and some questionable riffs come out because anything goes. We can be seven hours into some tune and realise we’ve written a Christina Aguilera song. The key is to be as free as you like and then filter it at the end.”

After several years spent playing in various indie and heavy rock bands (notably Irish math-rockers The Cast Of Cheers, who breached the Top 40 with their album ‘Family’ in 2012), Adams formed All Tvvsins in 2013 with multi-instrumentalist Lar Kaye.

Though Adams maintains the backbone of the band is still “alternative rock”, All Tvvsins’ manifesto seems to embrace an eclectic selection of music.

“There are so many influences,” says Adams. “Peter Gabriel, Queen, The Police – all that ’80s and ’90s music is massive. I’ve been listening to loads of newer stuff too, like Wild Beasts, Caribou and Todd Terje recently. Then I went through a phase of listening to loads of ’90s rock like Pearl Jam and stuff. It’s a weird melting pot.”

At the intersection of all this is ‘Thank You’, All Tvvsins’ first single. A mix of Killers-esque drivetime indie, New Order bass and slick, polished synths, it puts them in the same radio-friendly alternative-pop bracket as Haim, and rings with the same kind of ambition.

“There does come a point when you realise you have to be serious about what you want to do with your life, and make a decision about whether this is what you really want – and for us, it is,” Adams asserts. “It sounds really serious, but [this time around] we’re definitely more aware of how things work and what we need to do to make it work.”

With a debut album half-finished and support slots with Arcade Fire, Pixies and Jungle already under their belts, it seems like All Tvvsins are already doing it.

■ LISA WRIGHT

▼
ON
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► Watch the video
for ‘Thank You’

► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** Dublin
- **FOR FANS OF** Haim, Jungle
- **SOCIAL** facebook.com/alltvvsins
- **BUY** ‘Thank You’ is out on March 23
- **SEE THEM LIVE** London Birthdays (March 24), Dublin Whelan’s (25), Limerick Kasbah Social Club (27), Galway Roisin Dubh (28), Belfast Voodoo Club (29)
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** All Tvvsins might be the latest arrival in the Chvrches/Alvvays school of ‘v’ usage, but the band formerly known as Twins say they only adopted that spelling when they needed an available Twitter handle. The other option was Twins1999

MORE NEW MUSIC

Gleam

These Birmingham shoegazers sound remarkably accomplished considering they only played their first gig in February. Debut track 'Isn't Real' reveals a strong My Bloody Valentine influence, with dizzying distortion and pitch-bending guitars recalling the work of Kevin Shields' pioneering outfit. A dominant lead vocal rounds off the band's noisy but melodic sound.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/gleeam

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/gleeam

NME BUZZ ACT OF THE WEEK

Britain

Despite the fact Britain have only played a handful of gigs, this enigmatic girl-boy duo's PJ Harvey-meets-Cocteau Twins aesthetic has a lot of labels excited. Live, they're minimalist and quietly confident – with a setup of keyboards, guitars, laptops and backing singer Katie Drew's pining vocals.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/britainmusic

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

Shirley Said

Shirley Said are an electro psych duo from Latina, near Rome, and their debut single 'Salvation' smacks of the same brooding sophistication as The xx and Polica. Frontwoman Giulia Scarantino's voice is a dead ringer for Björk as she artfully seethes her lyrics over a dark and cinematic trip-hop accompaniment.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/shirleysaid

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

► **SEE THEM LIVE** The Finsbury, London (March 26)

Take Turns

Leeds quartet Take Turns hail from Yorkshire, but their hearts lie across the Atlantic. Their adoration of Pavement

is obvious in their speaking deadpan intonations, but executed well enough to be charming. Recent EP 'Animal Fat's title track blends world-weary vocals with a squalling, intricate guitar solo, while Stephen Malkmus himself wouldn't turn his nose up at the quiet-loud-quiet rattle of 'Once A Saltwater Lagoon'.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/taketurnsband

► **HEAR THEM** taketurns.bandcamp.com

► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Old Blue Last (April 11)

Giant Swan

Giant Swan are an embryonic duo from Bristol who press repeat and take aim at the sun. Robin Stewart and Harry Wright coax raw-hearted live experiences that shift and bleed between sonic movements, drifting away, serene and discordant, from the noise-techno squall. Their self-titled debut EP is out on Bristol label Howling Owl, and they head off on tour with Blood Sport next month.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/giantswanmusic

► **HEAR THEM** youtube.be/LohBU7gMxmE



Declan Mckenna

Hertfordshire-based 16-year-old Declan Mckenna is still something of a bedroom guitarist, but latest track 'Brazil' has thrust him into the limelight following a clutch of Radio 1 plays. Hints of Jeff Buckley and Jamie T abound.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/deccoooo

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/declan-mckenna

Let's Talk Daggers

Beneath Eastbourne's sleepy seaside mentality lies a hotbed of bloodminded hardcore bands. Let's Talk Daggers are a trio peddling furious ADHD punk full of rapid Dillinger Escape Plan rhythm switches and blink-and-you-miss-it brass blasts. Signed to London indie Tangled Talk (launchpad

Britain

for Gnarwolves), the first single from this year's upcoming full-length debut is the heartfelt scream of 'I Love You Dad But I'm Mental'. It's a fair warning.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/letstalkdaggers

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/lets-talk-daggers

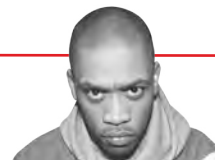
Broadbay

Brighton's Broadbay initially bonded over the first Yuck album, and although they tread close to that band's Dinosaur Jr-influenced sound, they're sticklers for pop hooks, too. Early song 'Plasticine Dream' adds the melodic, driving sensibilities of Cloud Nothings with great success, while 'EW' oozes with vitality, ➡

Giant Swan

BAND CRUSH

Wiley



Stormzy

"Stormzy reminds me of the hunger Dizze Rascal had when he made 'Boy In Da Corner'. He's got a song where he's questioning himself, 'cos he's quite tall and big... so he's got a bar that's like, 'How can I be scared? Big man like me with a beard?' He speaks about the topic at hand, about his life. He's honest."

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dripping endlessly infectious hooks straight into your head as though they're Chinese water torturers.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/broadbayband
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/fatcat-demo

Orlando

This is the new solo guise of Fanfarlo multi-instrumentalist Cathy Lucas, who labels Orlando gender neutral and the music as being made as "for telepathic amphibians". Early tracks 'It Sends My Heart Into A Spin' and 'Waltz In My Mouth' deal in experimental synth sounds and eclectic sampling, pinned together by space-age melodies.

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/oorlandooo
► **SEE HER LIVE** London Lexington (March 29)

Bo Rocha

London-based Kate Sproule had originally envisaged a career in classical music, but an Erykah Badu gig in 2003 transformed her perspective, convincing her of a future in "beats, hooks and stories". All three elements are present in her stunning debut 'Tangerine Flake', where a restrained drum track combines with airy synth

Bo Rocha

melodies and Sproule's soulful vocals to create an absorbing and dark electro-R&B ballad.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/borocha
► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/bo-rocha

Venera 4

With 2014 seeing shoegaze become truly global – both Tel-Aviv's Vaadat Charigim and Istanbul's Away Days made serious industry ripples – Paris act Venera 4 should have no trouble following suit. The quartet's latest single, 'Colored Fields', adds some call-and-response vocals to a brilliant, nostalgic wash of guitars, synths and Jesus & Mary Chain-inspired beats.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/venera4band
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/venera4band

Attic Fowler

Milwaukee guitarist Chris Rutledge channels the hazy Southern psych-pop of Kurt Vile on his latest track 'Bradford Beach', from second record 'City Hall', due in April. By his own admission, it's a song full



Venera 4

of nostalgia for adventures driving up mountains and floating down rivers – a sentiment reflected in the breezy vocals and unfettered guitar solos.

► **HEAR HIM** atticfowler.bandcamp.com

Jake Rollins

Jake Rollins is a lo-fi artist from Boston currently signed to slacker-pop haven 80N7. His recently released debut album 'Spend A Few, Make A Few'

is something of a triumph, featuring louche anthems such as 'Super Deluxe' and 'Breathing All Your Air'. Both come replete with Rollins' Malkmus-esque cooing. Looks like Mac DeMarco's got some competition...

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/jakerollins27
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/80N7

Organised Scum

This Cambridge outfit specialise in '60s-influenced "folky-stoner-rock", with jazzy drums and flowery arpeggios a mainstay – but there's also a Blur vibe on new track 'Baby, You're An Actant'. The song was apparently written after "binge-listening to Prince's 12-inch edit of 'Raspberry Beret'", in order to remain "submerged in the dream". The band are skilful in naming their songs, too – some of the best titles

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

JUAN'S DOUBLE RETURN

New York oddball Juan Wauters releases his new album 'Who, Me?' on May 11 via Captured Tracks. The Uruguay-born singer-songwriter, who used to be in The Beets, shared two versions of new track 'She Might Get Shot' online this month – one sung in Spanish and one in English.

GORMAN HITS THE UK

Aussie songwriter Fraser A Gorman has unveiled new track 'Book Of Love' ahead of his debut visit to the UK later this month. Out on Courtney Barnett's Milk! Records (Gorman will support on her dates here and in Europe) the new track recalls Evan Dando at his most whimsical.



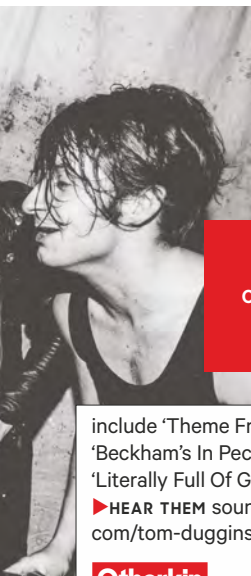
EZRA SIGNS

Ezra Furman has signed with Bella Union, marking the deal by putting new track 'Restless Year' online. He's also announced his biggest London gig to date, to take place at O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire on October 22. Bella Union promise that by that time a new album – currently untitled – will be out.

PINS GET WILD

Manchester four-piece Pins release their new album 'Wild Night' on June 8 via Bella Union. Produced by Dave Catching (Queens Of The Stone Age) and Hayden Scott, the album was recorded at Rancho De La Luna in Joshua Tree – the same place Arctic Monkeys started work on 'AM'.

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Otherkin

include 'Theme From Zlatan', 'Beckham's In Peckham' and 'Literally Full Of Glue'.
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/tom-duggins-1

Otherkin

Dubliners Otherkin love to play natty Britpop. Debut single 'Ay Ay' is more 1996 sounding than an overdriven Vox AC30 and Epiphone Riviera combo, calling to mind early Oasis. If their live show is half as rowdy they'll blaze a helter-skelter trail on the toilet circuit.
► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/otherkinok
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/otherkinok
► **SEE THEM LIVE** Dublin The Grand Social (April 2)

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Night-People



► **FOUNDED** 2005 by Shawn Reed
► **BASED** Saint Paul, Minnesota
► **KEY RELEASES** RaccOO-oo-oon – Is Night People (2005), Dirty Beaches – S/T (2009), Merchandise – Totale Nite (2013)
► **RADAR SAYS** Night-People have gained a rep for providing a home to some of the most forward-thinking, eye-opening acts to emerge from across the pond in the past decade.

Bella Figura

London trio Bella Figura combine elements of Pearl Jam with Kings Of Leon's scruffy blues on their superb EP 'Something New'. It's a defiantly earthy-sounding record, Justin Gartry's gruff baritone vocals lurching and murmuring over a set of heavy guitar grooves Neil Young would be proud of.
► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/bellafiguraband
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/bellafiguraband
► **SEE THEM LIVE** Brighton The Great Escape Festival (May 14-16)

Cold Courage

London producer Cold Courage uses YouTube clips, iPhone memos and obscure vinyl to craft his music, and has created an impressive ambience in debut track 'Her'. It will be the title track of his debut EP, out April 20, and is a heady mix of rippling soundscapes, crunching tropical noise and manipulated vocals.
► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/cold_courage
► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/coldcourage

Pale Honey

Tuva Lodmark and Nelly Daltrey are the dynamic duo behind Gothenburg's Pale Honey. Their blistering debut 'Youth' starts with a spindly synth riff and drums that sound like presets, before building into an explosive chorus resembling the kind of Brit grunge that saw PJ Harvey change the mid-'90s musical landscape.
► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/palehoney
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/bolero-publishing

Dolce

Swedish duo Dolce offer up something compelling in new track 'Inez Palema'. Delicate vocal harmonies from Anna Levander and Leopold Nilsson give things a laidback charm that will see them compared to the likes of Beach House.
► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/nomethod

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

JACK SAVIDGE

Friendly Fires



THE SWEDE SPOT

As much as the geography of the music world has shrunk in recent years, there's still much to be said for the local scene. People in your vicinity to borrow equipment from, give you production tips and act as band members can be more valuable than thousands of social media ghosts spread across the globe.

Right now a place I'm looking to is Stockholm. The Swedish can be relied upon to produce good music in a variety of flavours year upon year, and I think much of what emerges exhibits the self-sustaining benefits of the small scene perfectly. In the world of the hypnotic groove, three Swedish labels doing wonderful things are Studio Barnhus, Karlovak and Kontra-Musik.

Studio Barnhus has been running out of its Stockholm studio for five years now, around a trio of **Axel Boman, Petter Nordkvist and Kornél Kovács**. Boman is the big success story, having released two excellent albums and DJing regularly on the established big-club circuit. Kovács is due to release a new EP entitled 'Nincs' this March, and there's something truly odd and wonderful about his music. Woozy and ghostly, with snatches of melody that emerge and die like hallucinations dancing on the edge of your cornea, 'Tooth' is the first track to drop from it.

Karvolak is a sub-label of the eccentric Junk Yard Connections stable and only puts out the work of little-and-large combination **Mr Tophat & Art Alfie**. The 12-inches are almost infinite-feeling in structure – usually a minimum of 10 minutes per track. The formula isn't original – thumping house beats, dubbed disco samples and every type of whoosh and twinkle you'd ever need – but by god do they make it fresh. Check their upcoming 12-inch entitled, with a chucked-off matter-of-factness, 'House Music' to hear what I'm banging on about.

Moving south to Malmö and a chillier brand of music, **DJ Ulf Eriksson** corralled his wreckhead raving buddies into creating Kontra-Musik – one of the most exciting harder techno labels in Europe. Relying on talent both local and from further afield, Kontra-Musik pushes a melodic brand of murky, drugged-out techno. The recent **Roberto Clementi** EP, 'Diodes', is filthy hypnagogic night music, with pigments of iron-grey straight from the Basic Channel palette. Life-affirming stuff from Mother Svea.



Studio Barnhus

"Kornél Kovács' music has snatches of melody that emerge and die"

Next week: NME's bumper SXSW review

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FESTIVAL CITY

The Live Music Capital Of The World® has a festival for everyone in its round-the-year events

Want to break out of the habit of attending the same festivals year in, year out? It's time to book your trip to Austin, Texas – the perfect place to discover new thrills further afield.

Why Austin? It's home to an insane amount of live music venues – over 250, with many located on the city's renowned Sixth Street, nine blocks worth of restaurants, bars and clubs – and a community of over 2,000 active musicians. Austin played a massive part in launching the careers of Hank Williams and Elvis Presley, as well as breaking British bands like The Clash and Elvis Costello in the States – something it continues to do today with its year-round calendar of festivals that cement its reputation as the Live Music Capital Of The World®.

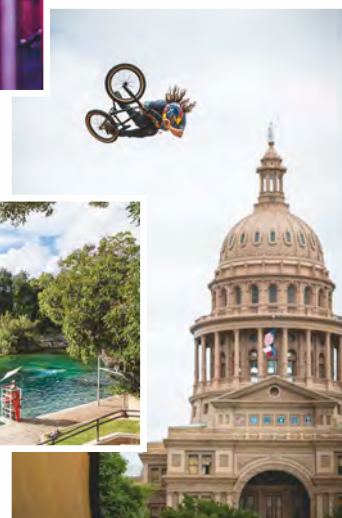
Every year, the excitement kicks off with the SXSW Music Conference and Festival – which this year takes place on March 12–22 – where attendees can discover the most exciting new bands from around the world. On May 8–10, lovers of all things psychedelic can get trippy at

You can discover the most exciting new bands from around the world at SXSW





(Top row, l-r) SXSW panel with Macklemore; Haim at Austin City Limits Music Festival; Waterloo Records; Ginny's Little Longhorn Saloon; Stevie Ray Vaughan Memorial. (Clockwise from left) 365 days of live music in Austin; X Games; Barton Springs at Zilker Park; Outkast onstage at ACL



Levitation (formerly known as Austin Psych Fest). The festival was originally launched to celebrate Austin's status as the birthplace of psychedelic rock in the late '60s, thanks to acts like Janis Joplin and Roky Erikson's The 13th Floor Elevators. This year, Primal Scream top a bill that also includes big guns like The Jesus And Mary Chain, Spiritualized, Tame Impala, The Flaming Lips and many more.

If you can't make it to Austin in the spring, don't worry – there are plenty of gems on offer in the autumn too. Austin City Limits Music Festival (ACL) takes place in the beautiful, scenic surroundings of Zilker Park across two weekends – the first on October 2–4, the second on October 9–11. Festival organisers are still working tirelessly to book the best line-up possible for this year's event, but 2014's outing saw 75,000 people each day enjoy amazing performances

from local artists and headliners like Pearl Jam, Lorde, Outkast, Beck, Lana Del Rey, Eminem and Belle & Sebastian, to name a few.

The final stop in Austin's festival calendar comes in November (6, 7 and 8, to be exact) with Fun Fun Fun Fest, which takes over the picturesque Auditorium Shores with cannons that blast tacos into the air. Like ACL, this year's line-up is yet to be announced, but quality is guaranteed, as past performers include the likes of Death From Above 1979, Modest Mouse, Slayer, Cat Power, Nas and Run-DMC.

► WIN! A HOLIDAY TO AUSTIN, TEXAS

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**BRITISH
AIRWAYS**



100

Greatest

Beatles

Songs

Are you a day tripper or a wild honey pie? A fan of 'Hey Bulldog' or 'Hey Jude'? Everyone has their favourite track by the Best Band Ever™, so we rounded up the usual rock suspects' choices of Beatles songs they envy, cover or adore into a frankly fab Top 100.

As chosen by Arcade Fire, Johnny Marr, Royal Blood, Alt-J, Matt Bellamy, Jake Bugg, Dylan, Noel and Liam Gallagher, The Killers, St Vincent, The Cribs, Fat White Family, Palma Violets, The Vaccines and many, many more.

► Disagree with the results? Direct your ire here: letters@nme.com



GETTY



100 Wild Honey Pie

► **CHOSEN BY** **Pixies**

► **ALBUM** **The White Album, 1968**

► **SONGWRITER** **McCartney**

► **DID YOU KNOW?** This track was originally just a fragment of an instrumental. The band weren't sure about it, but George Harrison's wife Pattie liked it, so they decided to keep it

'Wild Honey Pie' is a bit of a blank canvas, containing just five words (two, if you don't count the ad-libbed "I love you" at the end) and lasting for a mere 53 seconds. It started life as an instrumental muckabout in the studio, but thanks to Pattie Harrison it found its way onto 'The White Album' (as it's usually known; it's actually called 'The Beatles'), where it functions as a sort of palate-cleansing comic relief. The song was written by Paul McCartney, who said in 1997: "We were in experimental mode, and so I said, 'Can I just make something up?' I started off with the guitar and did a multitracking experiment in the control room or maybe in the little room next door. It was very homemade; it wasn't a big production at all." Credit to the Pixies, then, for taking something that barely qualifies as a song and turning it into something ferocious. A staple of the band's early live sets and released on the 'Pixies At The BBC' compilation in 1998, theirs is a caustic, snarling, discordant interpretation of a track that, on the face of it, doesn't appear to contain all that much to interpret.

99 Blue Jay Way

► **CHOSEN BY** **Colin Newman, Wire**

► **ALBUM** **Magical Mystery Tour, 1967**

► **SONGWRITER** **Harrison**

► **DID YOU KNOW?** In the *Magical Mystery Tour* film, George performs the song on a keyboard that had been drawn on the ground with chalk

"There's a fog upon LA, and my friends have lost their way", sang George in his spookiest drawl, and the otherworldly tone of one of The Beatles' scariest songs was set. Perfectly capturing the moment when an acid trip starts to head south, 'Blue Jay Way' mingled George's interest in Eastern mysticism with the real-life exhaustion he was suffering when he and his wife Patti reached their rented house on LA's Blue Jay Way after a long flight.

Colin Newman: "The Beatles should be rescued from the clammy clutches of the heritage industry. They were true innovators. 'Blue Jay Way' is just weird: it seems to grow, dreamlike, out of the fog it references, somehow living just at the edge of consciousness. Harrison never had the easy craft of Lennon and McCartney, but the competition made him bloom: this and 'Long, Long, Long' are two of my favorite Beatles songs. Why did I cover it [on 1982 solo LP 'Not To']? God knows. Seemed like a good idea at the time."

98 Now And Then

► **CHOSEN BY** **Liam Gallagher**

► **ALBUM** **Unreleased**

► **SONGWRITER** **Lennon**

► **DID YOU KNOW?** OK, technically it's not a Beatles song, but 'Now And Then' was considered for the band's 1995 comeback single in place of 'Free As A Bird'

Sometimes known as 'I Don't Want To Lose You' or 'Miss You', 'Now And Then' is a Lennon song recorded in demo form in 1978 but never finished. It first saw the light of day on a 2009 bootleg.

Liam Gallagher: "I'd say both Lennon and McCartney were very different, but both great. I like Lennon's stuff more because it's a bit more beautiful, and a bit more mad. McCartney's like Noel: he's a bit nice. Lennon was more twisted and I like that shit. 'Strawberry Fields...' was a good period, and I like the early Beatles stuff too, the rock'n'roll stuff, but I've been listening to that tune 'Now And Then' a lot recently - that's my favourite. Lennon's voice makes it the one for me. It was one of those demos he did in India or somewhere with George Harrison [it's actually a solo Lennon demo dating from the time he lived in the Dakota Building in New York]. But the rest of them all mixed it again around the time of 'Free As A Bird'. I don't even know if it's on the *Anthology* [it's not] or just floating around unreleased, but I love it. It's absolutely fucking beautiful."

97 Anna (Go To Him)

► **CHOSEN BY** **Saul Adamczewski, Fat White Family**

► **ALBUM** **Please Please Me, 1963**

► **SONGWRITER** **Arthur Alexander**

► **DID YOU KNOW?** This was the first song recorded by The Beatles that mentions a girl by name

A standout among The Beatles' many early covers, 'Anna (Go To Him)' was a Lennon favourite, which he delivered with more emotional punch than US soul singer Arthur Alexander had given to the 1962 original. That said, John's vocals were given additional rawness by the fact that he had a heavy cold on the day they recorded 'Please Please Me'.

Saul Adamczewski: "'Anna' is a beautiful song with a real rousing chorus. Me and Nathan [Saoudi, bandmate] lived in Barcelona in the summer; we were busking, and we'd play that song 10 times a day - that and 'Crying' by Roy Orbison. It's just a great, simple song: it's good to sing."



(From left) Paul, George, Ringo and (front) John in a scene from *Magical Mystery Tour*, 1967

96 When I'm Sixty-Four

► **CHOSEN BY** The Killers
 ► **ALBUM** Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967
 ► **SONGWRITER** McCartney
 ► **DID YOU KNOW?** Paul originally wrote 'When I'm Sixty-Four' in the hope that it might come in handy for a musical comedy

A song that stretches back to The Beatles' earliest days – McCartney says he wrote it on the family piano when he was 15, and Lennon remembered it from their Cavern shows in Liverpool, where they'd play it on the piano when the amps broke – 'When I'm Sixty-Four' is McCartney at his most vaudevillian. "I thought I was writing a song for Sinatra," he said later. He revisited the song in 1966, to coincide with his own father's 64th birthday, and originally intended it to be the B-side of 'Strawberry Fields Forever', but it was eventually swapped for 'Penny Lane'. It's a track that falls into the category of McCartney "granny music" that Lennon hated so much, but it's no surprise that it's become such a standard: the theme of imagining oneself many years from now is, after all, a pretty universal one. The Killers' shortened version of the song was played live at the Isle Of Wight Festival in 2013, where frontman Brandon Flowers changed the lyrics from "Every summer we can rent a cottage in the Isle of Wight" to "In the summer we can see The Killers at the Isle of Wight") to fit the occasion.

95 You Know My Name (Look Up The Number)

► **CHOSEN BY** Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor
 ► **ALBUM** B-side to 'Let It Be' single, 1970
 ► **SONGWRITER** Lennon/McCartney
 ► **DID YOU KNOW?** The song namedrops Denis O'Dell, a producer on the film *A Hard Day's Night*, resulting in fans calling his home

It was 'only' a B-side, tossed onto the end of final single 'Let It Be', but 'You Know My Name...' represents The Beatles at their most pure and is delivered with 100 per cent conviction. It only really features one eight-word line, something Lennon had seen written on a phonebook, repeated mantra-like for six minutes. Elsewhere, it's got Beatles aide Mal Evans shovelling gravel, Brian Jones from the Stones playing an out-of-tune sax, and Ringo burping. Yet it's *the* sound of The Beatles, post-acid, at one. Lennon and McCartney recorded

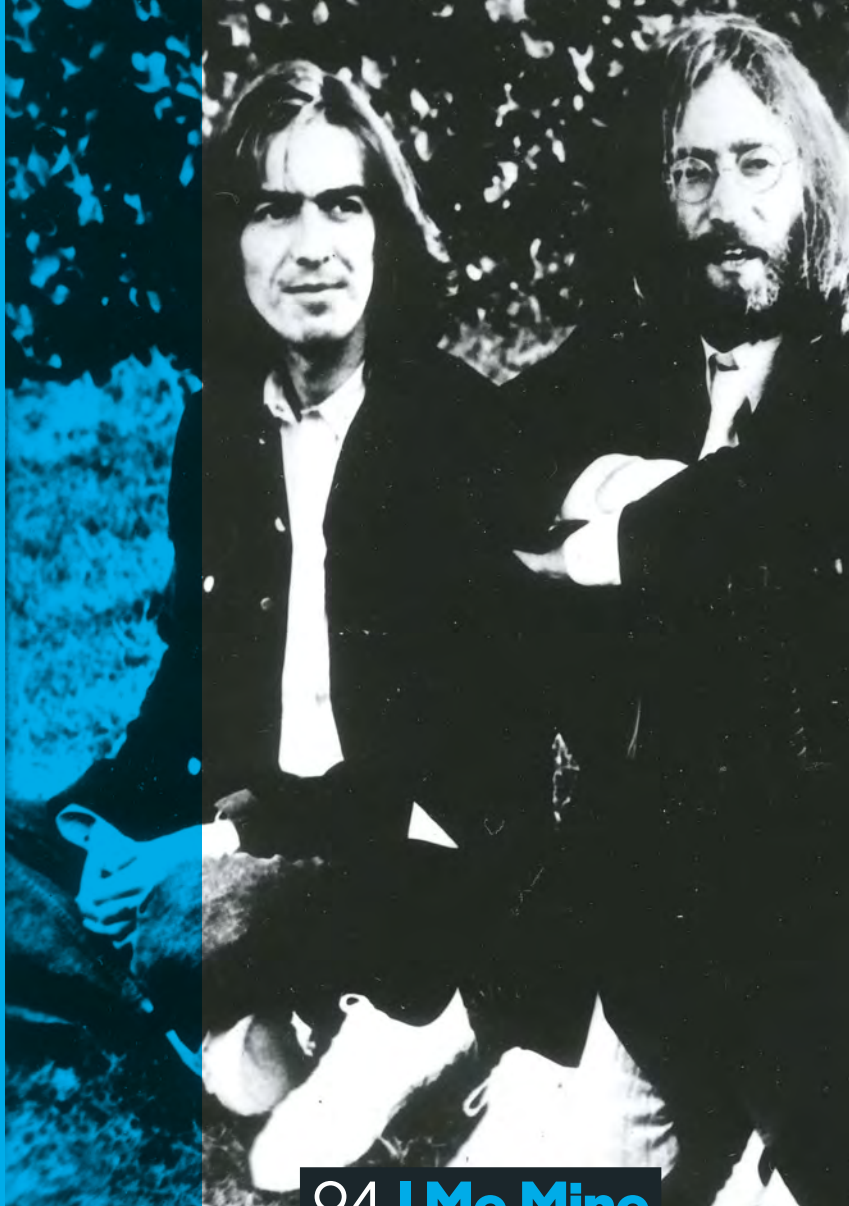
the vocals in April 1969, two whole years after all four had nailed the backing track. That week was particularly tumultuous: Lennon had banned Macca's stepfather (Linda's dad, Lee Eastman) from having anything to do with the band's finances, effectively delivering the blow that would finish them off. But here they are, days later, sounding utterly unified in Abbey Road Studio 3. Years later, McCartney would call it his favourite Beatles song. Maybe that's because it was the last time he and his friend were truly at peace with one another.

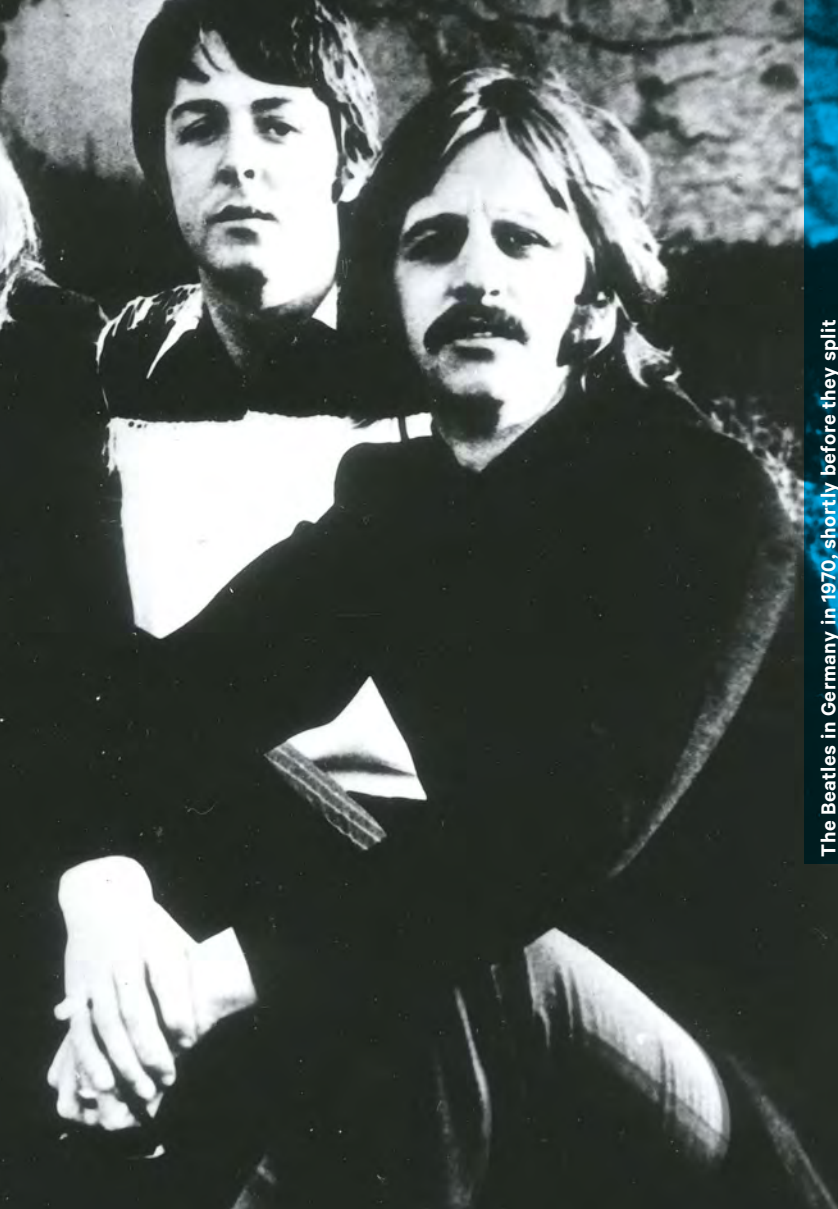
94 I Me Mine

► **CHOSEN BY** Gengahr
 ► **ALBUM** Let It Be, 1970
 ► **SONGWRITER** Harrison
 ► **DID YOU KNOW?** Harrison went on to use the name of the track for the title of his autobiography

The very last song The Beatles recorded before splitting up, 'I Me Mine' was George's exploration of the Hindu idea of ego, chopped into a folksy verse and bluesy chorus to emphasise the schizophrenic nature of human psychology, and what a headfuck it was being in The Beatles in 1969.

Gengahr: "When exploring music at a young age, I remember this song's weird change of time signatures and rhythm between sections confusing me as to how it was able to exist as one song – but it just does. The sound of the drums and the rhythm reminds me of an early hip-hop sound; I'm surprised I haven't heard it sampled yet. I read that George Harrison wrote this after a revelation of selflessness on LSD, about band members' egos and their differences. Not so coincidentally, it's the last song they ever recorded and it doesn't feature Lennon."





The Beatles in Germany in 1970, shortly before they split



91 Hello, Goodbye

► CHOSEN BY **The Cure**

► ALBUM **Single only, 1967**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? The song title came about when Alistair Taylor, Brian Epstein's personal assistant, asked McCartney how he wrote songs. McCartney proceeded to ask him to shout the opposite of what he sang: ie, black/white, yes/no, hello/goodbye

Written by Paul as a fun look at the duality of human nature, John didn't half get in a grump about 'Hello, Goodbye', mainly due to the fact that it was chosen for release as a single over his own 'I Am The Walrus'. It ended up topping the charts for a stonking seven weeks. A promotional movie for the song, helmed by Paul, saw the band wear their famous grey 'Merseybeat' suits for the last time, as well as being surrounded by Tahitian dancers for the lavish coda, which was given the name 'Maori Finale'. It was an unexpected choice for The Cure to cover with Macca's son James McCartney for the 2014 tribute album 'The Art Of McCartney' – presumably 'Baby's In Black' had been taken already – but they certainly put their sunniest face on for it.

93 Dig A Pony

► CHOSEN BY **St Vincent**

► ALBUM **Let It Be, 1970**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? Lennon wrote this song for his soon-to-be wife, Yoko Ono

'Dig A Pony' has made appearances in Annie Clark's live sets since 2007, and her bluesy, almost skeletal-sounding take on the song makes it one of those rare Beatles covers that may actually improve on the original. John Lennon might well agree: he was no fan of 'Dig A Pony', dismissing it as "another piece of garbage" shortly before his death in 1980. By his own standards, obviously, it's a fairly minor work, yet even at their most throwaway, The Beatles could come up with melodic hooks that other bands could only dream of – the gospel-styled refrain of "All I want is you" being a case in point. Similarly, few artists do snideness quite as well as Lennon, who sneaks a withering put-down of The Rolling Stones ("I roll a stoney/Well, you can imitate everyone you know") in among his nonsensical blatherings about road hogs and loading lorries.



DEAN CHALKLEY, SHAMIL TANNA, JENN FIVE, JORDAN HUGHES, ED MILES, GETTY

92 Like Dreamers Do

► CHOSEN BY **Jake Bugg**

► ALBUM **Anthology 1, 1995**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Produced by Mike Smith, it's the only song on this list that didn't involve George Martin or Phil Spector

Written in 1959, 'Like Dreamers Do' was one of Paul McCartney's earliest attempts at songwriting, and became a fixture of The Beatles' Cavern sets back when bands writing their own material was considered, as McCartney himself put it, "a bit plonky". Nevertheless, the song was deemed good enough to merit a place on their unsuccessful Decca audition tape, and was instrumental in securing their deal with Parlophone. They'd dropped it by the time they came to record their debut album, but it later became a Number 20 hit for Birmingham 'Brumbeat' group The Applejacks. Jake Bugg's

rendition, recorded in session for *NME* at the Cavern itself in 2013, is sparser than both that version and the Decca original, which featured Pete Best on drums and was eventually released on 'Anthology 1', the first instalment in the compilation trilogy of rarities, outtakes and live versions. Accompanied only by an acoustic guitar, Bugg gives this rough diamond of a song a much-needed polish.

Jake Bugg: "It's actually a Silver Beatles song from before they were The Beatles, and it's a great track."





90 Real Love

► CHOSEN BY **Gary Jarman, The Cribbs**

► ALBUM **Anthology 2, 1996**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? To date, this is the last piece of previously unheard Beatles music to have been released

Paul, George and Ringo came together in 1995 to finish off a track that was initially written by John Lennon and recorded in 1977 on a shonky home tape recorder. ELO's Jeff Lynne lent a hand in the process of melding the old and new recordings, which were overdubbed at Macca's Sussex studio. "What we were trying to do was create a record that was timeless, so we steered away from using state-of-the-art gear. We didn't want to make it fashionable," he commented. In 2014, the track was controversially covered by Tom Odell for a John Lewis Christmas advert.

Gary Jarman: "This is testament to how powerful that song is: I was on a flight watching an Adam Sandler movie – *Funny People* – that everyone had to watch because they were showing it on the plane. Adam Sandler was covering 'Real Love' for whatever reason and I was in tears! It's so dumb, and at altitude you do get really emotional, but it obviously shows it's the song as opposed to anything else. And the fact that it's taken from a rough demo, there's something so perfect about that. They're the biggest band ever and they release a single that John recorded on a boombox – I love that side of it."





A contact sheet of Beatles shots from an early photo session

89 Oh! Darling

► CHOSEN BY **Van McCann, Catfish & The Bottlemen**

► ALBUM **Abbey Road, 1969**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? An early version of this song – which appears on 'Anthology 3' – features jubilant backing vocals from John, who'd just heard that Yoko's divorce from her second husband had gone through

Macca's tribute to '50s rock'n'roll ballads, 'Oh! Darling' was an impassioned howl of devotion that Lennon thought would've been better sung by him. "It was more my style than his," John said. "If he'd had any sense he should've let me sing it."

Van McCann: "I love 'Oh! Darling'. I'm a sucker for straight-up songs that are just about wanting a woman, like when they sing '*Please believe me*'. It sort of reminds me of '*Confessions Part II*' by Usher, when he goes, '*She open up the door and didn't want to come near me/I said, "One second baby, please hear me"*'. McCartney sounds like he's on his knees, begging. My dad brought me up on tunes like this. The amount of times I've watched my mum fuming at my dad, and they've all had a drink, and he's going, 'I love you, Mary. Come and have a dance with me.' I love those kind of songs."



88 Baby It's You

► CHOSEN BY **Graham Coxon, Blur**

► ALBUM **Please Please Me, 1963**

► SONGWRITER **Burt Bacharach, Luther Dixon, Mack David**

► DID YOU KNOW? This was the 10th song recorded during The Beatles' marathon session on February 11, 1963, when they recorded the bulk of their debut album

Written by Bacharach and David alongside Luther Dixon for The Shirelles, who'd had a Top 10 hit with the song on both sides of the Atlantic, 'Baby It's You' was a staple of The Beatles' Hamburg sets in 1960–62 and a shoo-in to be covered on their debut album, alongside another Shirelles tune, 'Boys'. The Beatles' take on 'Baby It's You' differed from the original by repeating the first verse instead of the second, giving the song a more

optimistic feel. Numerous acts have covered it since, including such luminaries as Elvis Costello and Anna Calvi, but Graham Coxon's version for Jo Whiley's BBC Music Showcase in 2013, on the 50th anniversary of the legendary one-day recording session for 'Please Please Me', is among the most memorable.

Graham Coxon: "It's not one that people immediately think about as a Beatles song. It's a sort of soul song, which has its own challenges. Although I'm not a soul singer, maybe [when I covered it] I should have gargled some Rice Krispies to get a rough voice going, 'cos I'm not very gravelly."



87 A Taste Of Honey

► CHOSEN BY **Sam Fryer, Palma Violets**

► ALBUM **Please Please Me, 1963**

► SONGWRITER **Bobby Scott, Ric Marlow**

► DID YOU KNOW? This was the first time the band ever used double tracking – recording the same vocal or guitar line twice for a warmer effect. It was a method they'd use for the rest of their career

'A Taste Of Honey' was originally written in 1960 by composer Bobby Scott to accompany the adaption of Shelagh Delaney's stage play of the same name as it transferred to Broadway, but McCartney leapt on a vocal version by US variety singer Lenny Welch. Lennon mockingly referred to the song as 'A Waste Of Money'.

Sam Fryer: "It was one of the first songs I ever learnt on guitar. My old guitar teacher taught me it when I was very young in primary school, and it was one of the best melodies I'd ever heard in my life at that point. It really struck me at the time."

86 Honey Pie

► CHOSEN BY **Kristian Bell, The Wytches**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Scratches were added to the opening line from an old 78rpm record to give the song a dated feel

Macca's homage to the roaring '20s and the vaudeville tradition he was brought up on, 'Honey Pie' was a giggling Gatsby of a flapper tune imploring a movie star lady friend in America to "sail across the Atlantic to be where you belong" in his best Noël Coward voice. "This is just me pretending I'm living in 1925," he said, and it was this sort of carefree humour that intrigued Kristian Bell from The Wytches, who concocted a ramshackle clatter cover of the song for *Boon* magazine.

Kristian Bell: "My favourite part of The Beatles is Paul McCartney's silliness. His sense of humour, his really vague storytelling and how whimsical it all is. I like how he goes high-pitched at the end. I'm into the '20s flapper girl thing and I like doing covers. The guitar part was easy as well."

85 Getting Better

► CHOSEN BY **Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM**

► ALBUM **Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? John Lennon had to be taken to the roof of Abbey Road studios after accidentally taking LSD during one of the recording sessions for this song

Even as a young child, listening to 'Sgt Pepper...' for the first time, the dichotomy of 'Getting Better' had a profound effect on me. The chorus seems straightforwardly optimistic: "I have to admit it's getting better, a little better all the time" rings out with a bright, ding-dong melody, but the counter-melody brings in a dark

undercurrent, with Lennon singing, "Can't get no worse". The lyrics of the verses are also very dark. First, the protagonist is getting mad at school and his teacher is driving him up the wall. But then it gets a bit more serious: "I used to be cruel to my woman/I beat her and kept her apart from the things that she loved".



The Beatles photographed at Abbey Road Studios, June 1967

JORDAN HUGHES, GETTY, ED MILES, BRINSON + BANKS

Later, we discovered that 'Getting Better' was a true tale of Lennon's redemption after committing violence against women in his youth. "I was a hitter. I couldn't express myself and I hit. I fought men and I hit women. That is why I am always on about peace, you see," he revealed.

It's a strange song that somehow manages to combine a brilliant pop tune with an extremely personal story of pain and transformation, fitting a range of emotions into less than three minutes. The ultimate pop therapy.

84 And I Love Her

► CHOSEN BY **Kurt Cobain, Nirvana**
 ► ALBUM **A Hard Day's Night, 1964**
 ► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Some of the greats who have covered this song include The Wailers, Bobby Womack and Smokey Robinson

Paul's first ballad, 'And I Love Her' opened up a whole new wing of The Beatles' palace of wonders, setting McCartney on course to become the 1960s' greatest plucker of global heartstrings. He described it as "a love song written for nobody in particular", despite being in a long-term relationship with Jane Asher at the time, and its universal tone would make it one of his more covered songs. Cobain's version, premiering in forthcoming Kurt

documentary *Montage Of Heck*, promises to be one of the film's highlights. "That was a true find," director Brett Morgen told *Paste* magazine. "It's significant for two things. One, it had never been seen, it had never been heard. And two, if you're a student of Kurt Cobain's, you have to kind of smile when you realise he's doing a Paul McCartney song. No-one would think that Kurt would do a McCartney song, not a Lennon song."

83 Do You Want To Know A Secret?

► CHOSEN BY **Ryan Malcolm, Superfood**
 ► ALBUM **Please Please Me, 1963**
 ► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? This was the first Lennon/McCartney song to be a hit for another artist. It was recorded by Billy J Kramer with The Dakotas and reached Number Two in the UK

The first Beatles song ever sung by George Harrison, 'Do You Want To Know A Secret?' was written by John and Paul and laid down in a mere six takes. "I wrote it and just gave it to George to sing," said John in 1980. "I thought it would be a good vehicle for him because it only had three notes and he wasn't the best singer in the world. He has improved a lot since then, but in those days his singing ability was very poor." Harsh words, but maybe fair. "I didn't like my vocal on it," George agreed. "I didn't know how to sing; nobody told me how to." Its lush, dreamy approach is down in part to the song it's based on, 'I'm Wishing' from Disney's *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs*, which John's mum Julia regularly sang to him when he was little.

Ryan Malcolm: "It's just too sweet; it's beautiful. You can serenade anyone with that tune."

82 You Really Got A Hold On Me

► CHOSEN BY **David Tattersall, The Wave Pictures**
 ► ALBUM **With The Beatles, 1963**
 ► SONGWRITER **Smokey Robinson**

► DID YOU KNOW? The Beatles re-recorded 'You Really Got A Hold On Me' in 1969 for the 'Get Back' project, but never used this version

Smokey Robinson's original was a US Top 10 hit in 1962, when The Beatles snapped up an import copy and started playing it live at The Cavern. The song was the first to be recorded for their second album, 'With The Beatles'.

David Tattersall: "I'm not a huge Motown fan but The Beatles play it fantastically. They sound so happy and are having so much fun, and that's more appealing to me than when

they get druggy and studio-y and clever. The thing I didn't realise about The Beatles when I was younger is just what a great band they were and what a really, really genius drummer Ringo Starr is. He totally divides drummers between people who love and admire him, and people who think he's not very good and the weak link of The Beatles. I can't understand it, I think he's immaculate. He's a fantastic, very subtle, has so much energy and is very groovy."



81 I Need You

► CHOSEN BY **Only Real**

► ALBUM **Help!**, 1965

► SONGWRITER **Harrison**

► DID YOU KNOW? This was the second song written by George Harrison that the band released, after 'Don't Bother Me'

Only Real: "This is such a sweet song: it's so simple and intimate, just George speaking his mind on his lady, who's telling him that she doesn't want his lovin' any more. It's pretty short, like a lot of songs by The Beatles, but in its two and a half minutes you can really sense his loneliness. I actually find the vibe quite haunting and spooky, but it's also really tender and honest, which is one of the reasons I like it. It's also got a big splash of that classic Beatles charm that's hard to resist. It's definitely the type of song that would win a girl back; it would win me back, absolutely. It was recorded in 1965 and it's supposed to be about Pattie Boyd, who married him in 1966, so I guess it worked! There was a time when I couldn't listen to this song because it was too intense and it was like he was speaking my mind – and I think that's the beauty of it, because we've all been there! There are so many amazing Beatles songs, but this one is definitely my all-time favourite."

80 Yer Blues

► CHOSEN BY **Father John Misty**

► ALBUM **The White Album**, 1968

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? In 1968, John performed the song live with Eric Clapton, Keith Richards and, on drums, Mitch Mitchell

John didn't exactly consider The Beatles' visit to the Maharishi's gaff the holiday of a lifetime. If he wasn't chastising the guru for trying to cop off with members of the band's entourage on 'Sexy Sadie', he was ducking out of meditation sessions to pen suicidal blues tracks like this. "Although it was beautiful and I was meditating about eight hours a day, I was writing the most miserable songs on earth," he said. "In 'Yer Blues', when I wrote *'I'm so lonely I want to die'*, I'm not kidding."

Father John Misty: "Lyrically, what is really great about John Lennon is this sort of dialogue between the absurd and the absurdly plain-spoken. He has this economy of language where he knows how to say exactly what he means in a way that isn't banal. He uses just enough veiled mumbo-jumbo that when something very direct comes out of it you just sit right up. 'The White Album' is one of my biggest influences. I see it as the first great postmodern album – there seems to be this tone of resignation in it that I really love; this feel of 'oh, it's all been done'."

79 Glass Onion

► CHOSEN BY **Britt Daniel, Spoon**

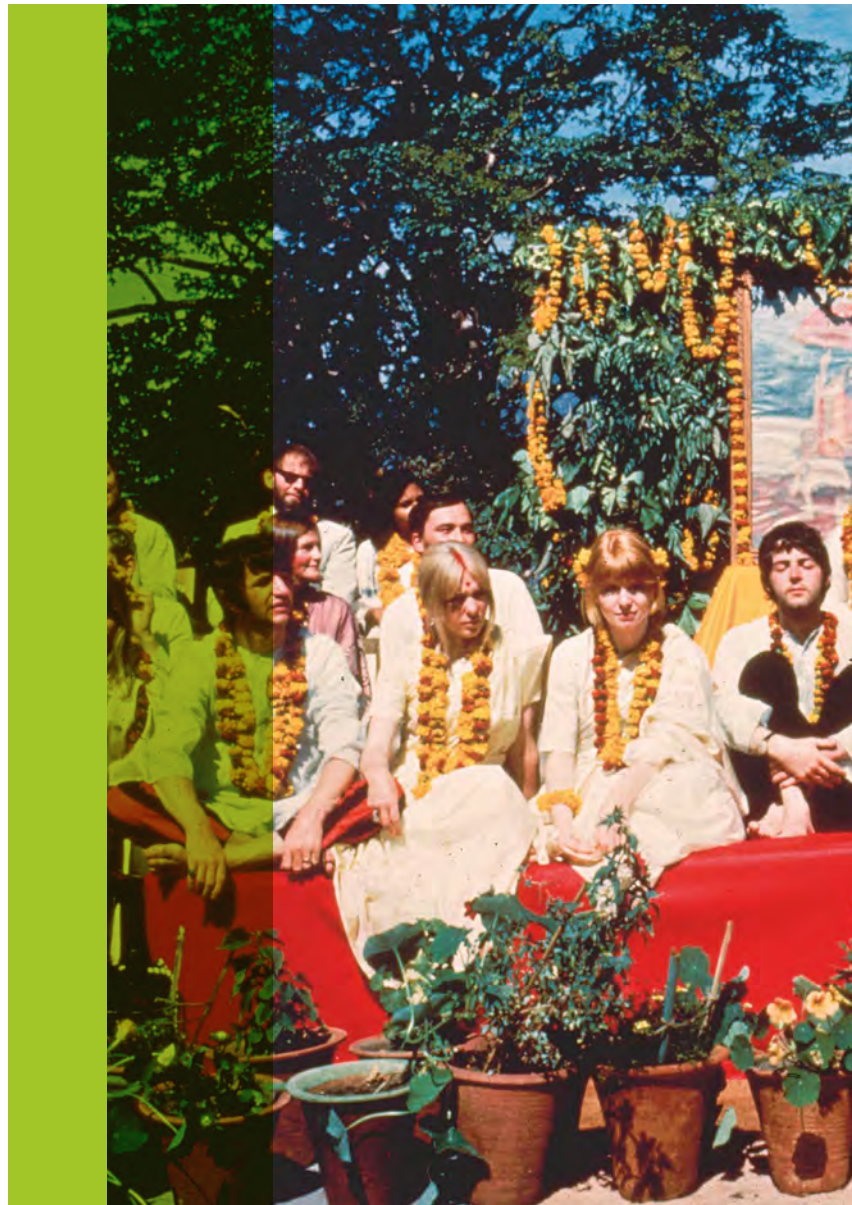
► ALBUM **The White Album**, 1968

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? John was originally going to give the name Glass Onion to the Apple band who became known as Badfinger

Layers within layers, wheels within wheels. 'Glass Onion' is a Beatles obsessive's wet dream, referring to earlier songs 'I Am The Walrus', 'Lady Madonna', 'The Fool On The Hill', 'Fixing A Hole' and 'Strawberry Fields Forever' in a sly psychedelic commentary on the band itself. At a time when the world was awash with 'Paul is dead' rumours, John threw his own comic curveball into the rumour mill with the line "*The walrus was Paul*".

Britt Daniel: "My favorite song on 'The White Album' and, for my money, one of the most effective uses of strings on any Beatles recording. The crescendo on 'A Day In The Life' is a great achievement, but the mood set by the string section on 'Glass Onion' has always hit me harder. That's some drama. Referencing your earlier songs in song – it's a lost art. Was it ever done better than on 'Glass Onion'? I count five references and I might be missing a couple. Somehow John Lennon pulls them all off while sounding like the coolest motherfucker on the planet."





78 The Word

► CHOSEN BY **Dom Ganderton, Superfood**

► ALBUM **Rubber Soul, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Like 'Long Tall Sally', 'The Word' was originally written around just one note

Ineffably jaunty, 'The Word' saw The Beatles diving heart-first into the mood of the decade. A serious smoking session followed the song's creation: John and Paul got the watercolours out and annotated the lyric sheet with some particularly psychedelic designs.

"'The Word' was written together, but it's mainly mine," John commented years later. "Read the words: it's all about getting smart. It's the marijuana period. It's the love-and-peace thing. The word is 'love', right?"

Dom Ganderton: "When the song comes in on the piano, it sums up the whole swinging '60s thing. The whole groove to it is pretty cool."

77 Birthday

► CHOSEN BY **Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? The Beatles put 'Birthday' together in a single evening, after they'd watched rock'n'roll film *The Girl Can't Help It*, starring Little Richard and Eddie Cochran

In a 1980 interview with *Playboy* magazine, John Lennon described this bluesy, two-and-a-half-minute return to the Beatles' 1950s rock'n'roll roots as "a piece of garbage" – and, characteristically, blamed it on Paul McCartney. Ultimately appearing on 'The White Album', it was, John sneered, "written in the studio, just made up on the spot". But for fans of the

track's sharp guitar licks, screeched vocals and Yoko's handclaps, the simplicity is all part of the charm. On an album threaded with experimentation, 'Birthday' – recorded in a single session at Abbey Road – is so loose, spontaneous and unapologetically feelgood it makes the traditional 'Happy Birthday' sing-song seem funereal in comparison.

76 I'm So Tired

► CHOSEN BY **Will Butler, Arcade Fire**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? A voice at the end of the song sounds like it's saying 'Paul is dead, man, miss him'. This further added to rumours that Paul McCartney had died in 1966 and been replaced by an actor

'I'm So Tired' was one of John's personal favourites from the entire Beatles back catalogue. "I just like the sound of it, and I sing it well," he said years later. It was written while the band were in India, and detailed John's insomnia, depression and frustration – not only with having to meditate all day, but also with the breakdown of his marriage to Cynthia. Transcendental meditation evidently wasn't doing the trick.

Will Butler: "If I'm excited, if I'm angry, if I'm in love, if I want to party, if I feel disdain for someone, if I've broken up with someone but kind of want to get back together with them but know it's a bad idea, if I'm marvelling at all the beauty that exists in the universe, if I'm sad – I can get all those emotions from other bands. But for world-weariness I really have to go to The Beatles. There have been whole weeks when I've woken up and gone to sleep singing 'I'm So Tired'. Weariness is almost a more important emotion than love sometimes. When you're working on something non-stop, and the ideas won't stop hounding you, and you wake up with your phone in your hand – I'd give you everything I've got for a little piece of mind."





The Beatles in Obertauern, Austria while filming *Help!* in 1965



75 I've Just Seen A Face

► CHOSEN BY **Rhian Daly**,
Assistant Reviews Editor

► ALBUM **Help!**, 1965

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? The working title was 'Auntie Gin's Theme', as Paul's aunt was a big fan of the song

Written by Paul McCartney and recorded in June 1965, 'I've Just Seen A Face' is one of the few Beatles songs with no bass part. Instead, McCartney joined John Lennon and George Harrison on acoustic guitar, taking the song in the direction of country music – a genre they'd begun to experiment with the year before on the album 'Beatles For Sale'. Ringo's shuffling, brushed drums added to the Americana feel of the track, on which McCartney spins a tale of serendipity, relating an encounter that had left him lovesick. "*Had it been another day, I might have looked the other way/And I'd have never been aware but as it is I'll dream of her tonight*", he sings. As with many of Paul McCartney's early songs, the charm lies in its simplicity and innocence. It's clearly a favourite, as he still plays it live today.

74 Wait

► CHOSEN BY **Albert Hammond Jr**, The Strokes

► ALBUM **Rubber Soul**, 1965

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Paul wrote 'Wait' in front of American actor Brandon deWilde

'Wait', although it ended up on 'Rubber Soul', was written by Paul McCartney while the band were filming *Help!* in the Bahamas, and was originally slated for inclusion on the album of the same name. The song's standing among Beatles aficionados might have been better if that had been the case, but by the time of 'Rubber Soul', the band's songwriting had reached a level of complexity that made the earlier efforts included on the album sound somewhat crude by comparison. The version by Albert

Hammond Jr and Ben Kweller – recorded in 2005 for the compilation album 'This Bird Has Flown: A 40th Anniversary Tribute To The Beatles' Rubber Soul' – is pretty close to the spirit of the original. Not that such obeisance should come as much of a surprise, considering that Kweller's father started indoctrinating his son with Beatles records when he was still a baby.



73 I Want To Tell You

► CHOSEN BY **Dominic McGuinness**, The Bohicas

► ALBUM **Revolver**, 1966

► SONGWRITER **Harrison**

► DID YOU KNOW? George struggled so hard to settle on a title, he almost called the song 'I Don't Know'

George gets tongue-tied in this soul-searching 'Revolver' classic, which he claimed was about "the avalanche of thoughts that are so hard to write down and say or transmit".

Dominic McGuinness:

"This is the first non-single of theirs I fell in love with. It's a great example of George Harrison upping his game as a songwriter. Also, he has Lennon and McCartney on backing vocals – ridiculous. In this song they still sound like a rock'n'roll band. Other tunes around this time saw them experimenting with the instrumentation, like 'Eleanor Rigby', 'Love You To', and 'Yellow Submarine'. But in 'I Want To Tell You', the engine of a rock'n'roll band is powering the song. George Harrison has a great way with guitar chords as well. I think this tune was written at a time when their Indian influence was in its infancy. Although the sitars and tablas haven't turned up yet, you can hear McCartney drifting into New Delhi with his vocal at the end. Epic outro, too."





72 Run For Your Life

► CHOSEN BY **Arcade Fire**

► ALBUM **Rubber Soul, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? In the '90s, Ottawa radio station CRFA banned the song for its misogynistic slant

The John Lennon of peace, love and endless odes to Yoko Ono was, it goes without saying, a very different guy from the one who wrote 'Run For Your Life'. He later declared it his "least favourite" Beatles track and claimed to regret ever having written it. Yet the song – which has its roots in Elvis' 'Baby, Let's Play House' (the line "*I'd rather see you dead, little girl/Than to be with another man*" is lifted wholesale) – was one of George Harrison's favourites, and the version played live by Arcade Fire's Will Butler, Richard Reed Parry, Jeremy Gara and Tim Kingsbury in 2011 (under the name Phi Slamma Jamma) was delivered with a garage-rock coarseness, a context in which the questionable lyrical sentiment (kind of) makes sense.



71 Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

► CHOSEN BY **André 3000**

► ALBUM **Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? The name Sgt Pepper came to Paul on a plane, when a Beatles roadie asked him what the S and P on the salt and pepper pots stood for

On June 4, 1967, Paul and George went to see Jimi Hendrix at the Saville Theatre in London. The pair were astonished as Hendrix took to the stage and performed a flawless rendition of the title track from 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band', even though the album had only been released three days earlier.

The track – written as an attempt to distance The Beatles from their own legend and make their new album from behind the smokescreen

of a cartoonish town brass band – was clearly ripe for cover versions, and André 3000 recreated that legendary Hendrix performance while playing Jimi in the 2013 biopic *All Is By My Side*. The film's co-producer Danny Bramson pushed André hard to recreate the iconic performance: "My code word throughout the film was that we weren't going to be a caricature or note-by-note replication of Hendrix or his performances, but an interpretation of what Jimi would've played," he said.



70 The Fool On The Hill

► CHOSEN BY **Jacco Gardner**

► ALBUM **Magical Mystery Tour, 1967**

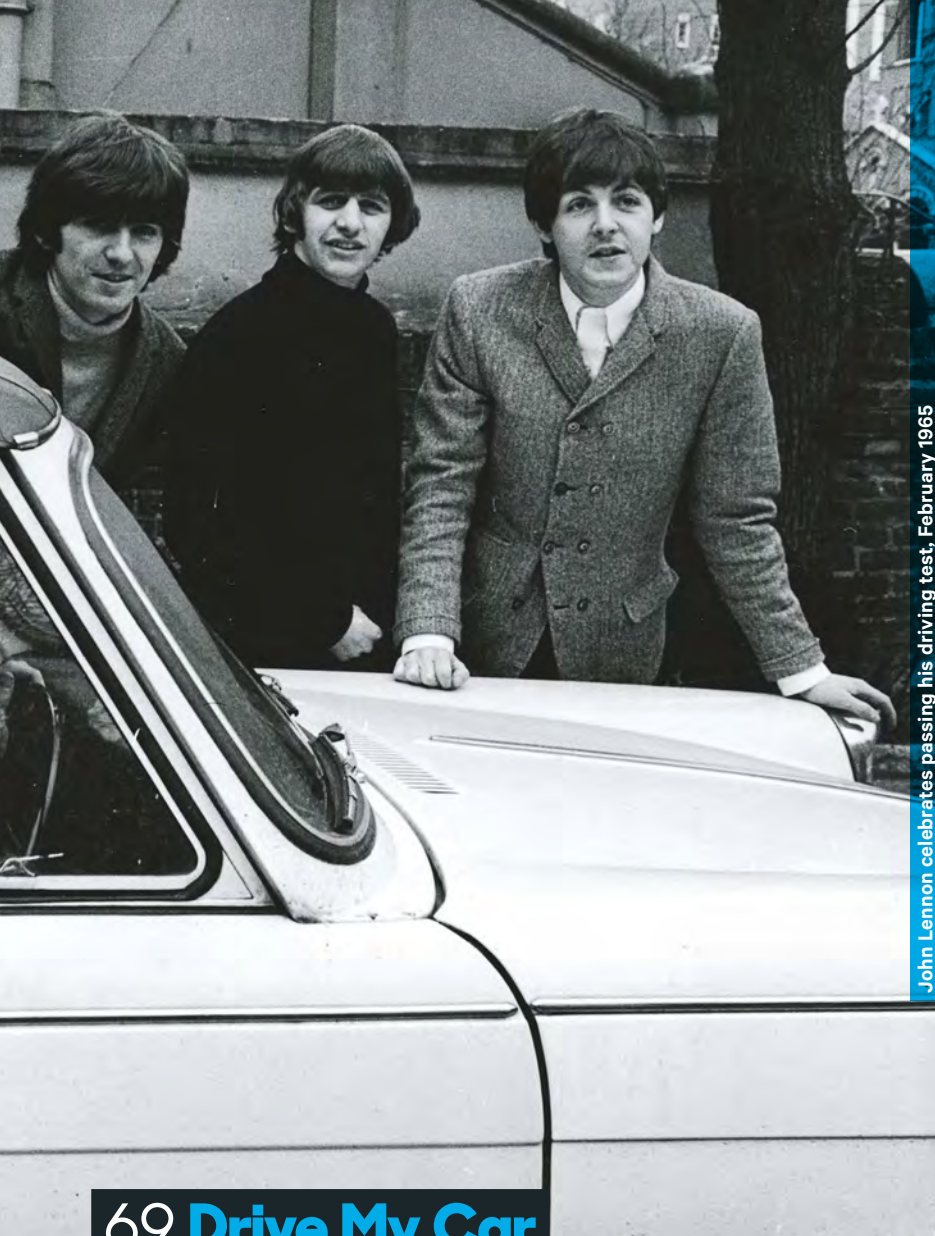
► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? The Fool was a collective of Dutch artists – one of whom, Marijke Koger, performed tarot readings, often turning up the Fool card. Inspired, Paul related him to the Maharishi to create this track

Jacco Gardner: "Every Beatles song was an experiment in itself, but the unique arrangement of 'The Fool On The Hill' makes it one of my favourites. I love the vocal melody and that amazing dark, mysterious chorus, which ends on a lighter and more hopeful chord. I like that contrast a lot. Using unusual instruments like the recorder and bass harmonica in the instrumental parts was a great choice, although I guess it was common at that time. That's something I miss in pop music nowadays. *Magical Mystery Tour* is not one of my favourite movies, but I really like the part where this song comes in. There's a touch of that singalong quality that Paul often has, which isn't usually my cup of tea, but it works here. It's a perfect song."



JORDAN HUGHES, GETTY;
CAHLOTTE PATMORE



John Lennon celebrates passing his driving test, February 1965

69 Drive My Car

► CHOSEN BY **Thom Burke, Citizens!**

► ALBUM **Rubber Soul, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? "Drive my car" is old blues slang for sex

Thom Burke: "This is where three sounds come together: the end of rock'n'roll, the beginning of rock and the eternal pop. It's not a million miles away from their early Chuck Berry covers, especially the lyrics. Chuck would have loved the line 'I've got no car and it's breaking my heart'."

"George Harrison has already developed that unique sound that we hear in his fills on 'Sgt Pepper...' and 'The White Album'. A friend once told me that George Harrison is all about texture. I thought that sounded a bit pretentious at the time, but in the last few years I'm certain he's become a bigger influence on guitarists, and I think that description was accurate. Bands like Tame Impala seem to understand that ability to be always compelling, but never obvious."

And then there's 'Beep beep m'beep beep, yeah', which has to be one of the great pop hooks of all time. I've always wondered which came first: did they say, 'We need a hook to go with this car song,' or, 'We need a car song to go with that "beep-beep" hook?'"



68 You're Going To Lose That Girl

► CHOSEN BY **Chris Batten, Enter Shikari**

► ALBUM **Help!, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? In America, Capitol Records originally titled this song 'You're Gonna Lose That Girl'

Lennon's a sexual scavenger here, warning a love rival that he's ready to swoop in and steal his girlfriend the second he lets his guard down. It's the sort of talk that might have got him glassed in many Liverpool pubs, but Lennon's gravelly charm just about enables you to forgive the fact that he's basically treating the girl in question like she's a dropped wallet.

Chris Batten: "We played it at [singer] Rou's cousin's wedding, completely oblivious to the sentiment behind it! We were only about 11 years old and we'd just started learning how to play our instruments, so we did a few Beatles numbers, some Oasis and some Lightning Seeds. I always remember it, because afterwards Rou turned round and said to us, "OK, I enjoyed that. I think this is what I'm gonna do from now on!"





66 The Long And Winding Road

► CHOSEN BY **Julie Edwards, Deap Vally**

► ALBUM **Let It Be, 1970**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? 'The Long And Winding Road' is cited as the song that split The Beatles after Lennon recruited Phil Spector to add orchestration to it, much to Paul's disgust. Paul left the band in protest

Julie Edwards: "I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna be the black sheep who chooses 'The Long And Winding Road', because if I'm being honest about it, I used to listen to this song – yes, the much maligned Phil Spector version – on compact disc on repeat many a night during my tumultuous teenage years, and yes, it would bring a tear to my eye. The way Paul's voice blends with the strings and heavenly backup vocals gives me goosebumps. It's just like room-temperature vanilla pudding, the American goopy kind – so utterly bland and yet so completely comforting and necessary in its squishiness."

65 Yellow Submarine

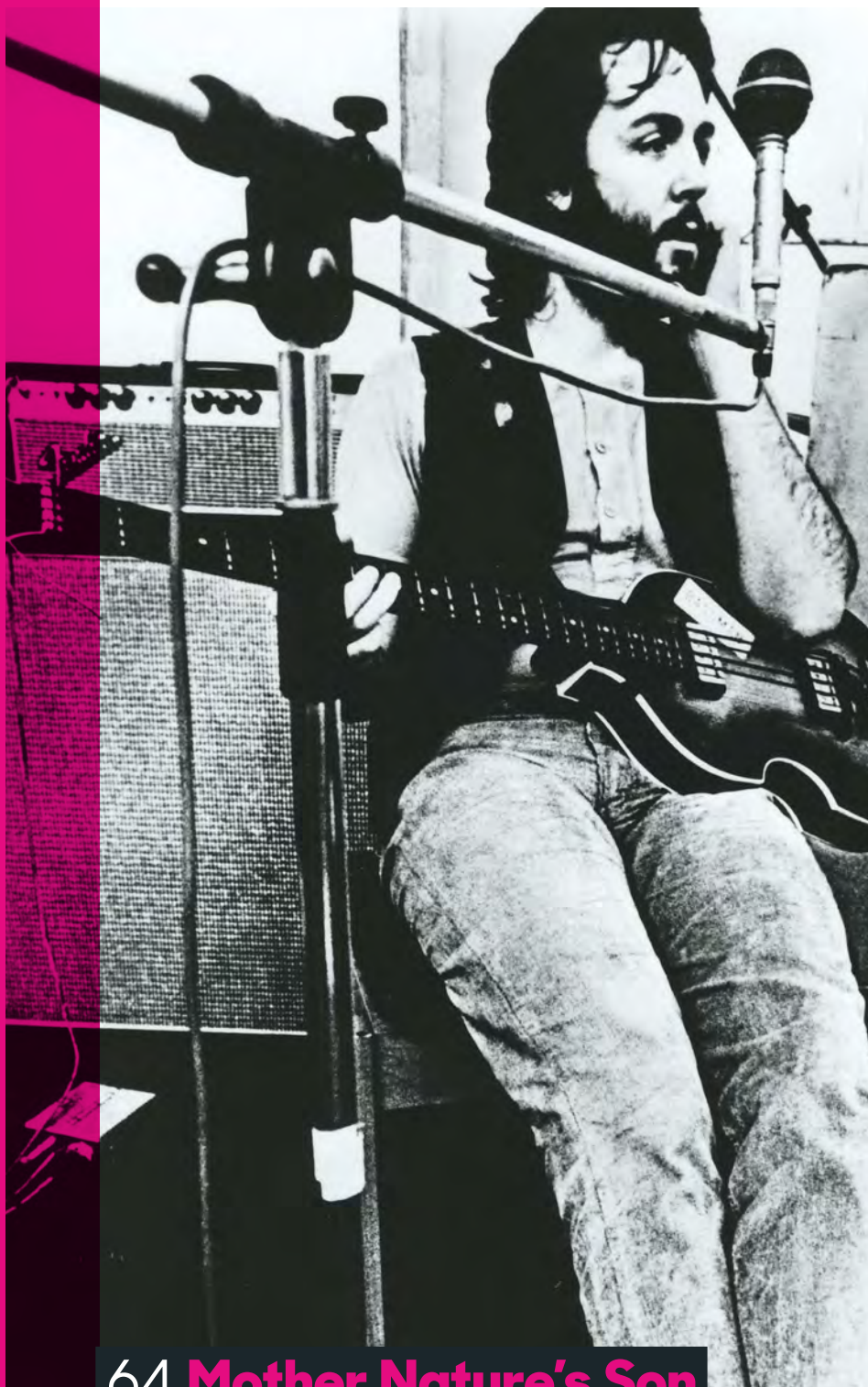
► CHOSEN BY **Greg Cochrane, NME.COM Editor**

► ALBUM **Revolver, 1966**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? The cash register you can hear on the song was the same one Pink Floyd used on 'Money'

"We were trying to write a children's song," said McCartney of 'Yellow Submarine', which he penned for Ringo to sing. "There's nothing more to be read into it than there is in the lyrics of any children's song." Nonetheless, the song has been subject to interpretation – Donovan, who helped Paul write the lyrics, believes it's about isolation and fame. Regardless, the song irks many Beatles fans, who find it simplistic. But, really, it's a classic McCartney melody coupled with lyrical imagery vivid enough to inspire a landmark animated film a year later.



64 Mother Nature's Son

► CHOSEN BY **Jack White**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? This song was recorded by Paul alone. Everyone else had left the studio after the 102nd failed take for a George song called 'Not Guilty'

Though it was actually written in McCartney's father's house in Liverpool, 'Mother Nature's Son' was inspired by a lecture given by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi during The Beatles' stay in India. Lennon's 'Child Of Nature', originally slated

for inclusion on 'The White Album' as a companion piece to this song, was inspired by the same lecture ('Child Of Nature' eventually morphed into 1971's 'Jealous Guy'). McCartney recorded 'Mother Nature's Son' himself, a practice that always enraged John Lennon, but



63 Savoy Truffle

► CHOSEN BY **Leonie Cooper, writer**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **Harrison**

► DID YOU KNOW? The song was covered by jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald the year after it was recorded

'Savoy Truffle' is a typically off-kilter track from the pen of George Harrison, who had a keen eye for the absurd. Brilliantly, it's about his close showbiz chum Eric Clapton's addiction to sweets. "He was over at my house and I had a box of Good News chocolates on the table and wrote the song from the names inside the lid," George later explained. The song tackles the dental repercussions of constantly chowing down

on chocs: "You'll have to have them all pulled out after the Savoy Truffle". Something of a musical pick'n'mix, as well as a lyrical one, electric piano comes together with tenor and baritone saxophones on the recording, and John was absent from the equation altogether. Incidentally, Good News chocolates were made by Mackintosh's – the company behind Quality Street – but ceased production in 1988. We bet Clapton was livid.

62 Love You To

► CHOSEN BY **Bez, Happy Mondays**

► ALBUM **Revolver, 1966**

► SONGWRITER **Harrison**

► DID YOU KNOW? The working title was 'Granny Smith'

One of George Harrison's first forays into the spiritual, the propulsive raga 'Love You To' was composed on the sitar and saw the band bringing in a tabla player for the first time. A clutch of Indian musicians played on the record, with extra sitar and tambura players from the Asian Music Circle, but Anil Bhagwat was the only name credited. There was a stripped-back showing from the band, as Ringo stepped out from behind the drums to play tambourine, with John nowhere to be seen and Paul's original backing vocals left out of the final mix. With 'Love You To', George finally nailed the vibe that was to define him as a musician – he'd been working on his sitar playing since debuting the instrument in the previous year's 'Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)' and after recording this he delved even deeper into the world of Indian instrumentation, hooking up with the legendary Ravi Shankar.

Bez: "I was doing the bed-in and I ended up listening to The Beatles' music and George's Indian songs like 'Love You To'. It was a little reminiscence of childhood."



Paul McCartney recording 'Mother Nature's Son' in 1968

it's hard to imagine how adding any more to the song's homespun beauty could make it any better.

Jack White's cover, which segues into McCartney's 1970 solo track 'That Would Be Something', is similarly stripped-down, and was played live at the White House as part of the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize event, honouring McCartney. Barack Obama was in the audience, and so was McCartney, which might explain why White spends the performance looking anywhere but the front row.



61 I Feel Fine

► CHOSEN BY **Gus Unger-Hamilton, Alt-J**

► ALBUM **Single only, 1964**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? 'I Feel Fine' was the first song to get a concurrent UK and US release. It topped the charts in both countries

It's impossible to imagine in 2015, decades after guitar feedback became a staple sonic flourish in rock music, quite how bizarre and exciting the opening of 'I Feel Fine' would have sounded to pop fans in 1964. Created by Lennon, who plucked the A string on a semi-acoustic, then leant into his amp, it's thought to be the first example of deliberate feedback being used on a record, giving 'I Feel Fine' an important place in music history irrespective of the fact that it's also a killer track. Lennon said it was inspired by a riff in a song called 'Watch Your Step' by blues-rock artist Bobby Parker, which The Beatles had been playing live.

Gus Unger-Hamilton: "When I was younger, I used to go on these long holidays to the south of France and the family friend we used to stay with had all these Beatles albums. I used to play them while I playing pool on the pool table she had. I have great memories of those summers because of songs like 'I Feel Fine'. It's so poppy and fun and has this really wicked riff. There's an innocence to it that is quintessentially early Beatles."

60 Happiness Is A Warm Gun

►CHOSEN BY **The Breeders**

►ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

►SONGWRITER **Lennon**

►DID YOU KNOW? The "Mother Superior" mentioned in the song was a reference to Yoko Ono – John called her "mother" in private

For much of the 'White Album' sessions, The Beatles worked apart, often in different studios at Abbey Road. But Paul and George were so intrigued by the shifting shades of 'Happiness Is A Warm Gun' that they came together to make it work, one of few true 'Beatles' songs on the album. Compiled from fragments of three different songs John had been working on but never completed, it opened with a section based on an acid trip he and press officer Derek Taylor had taken, all visions of "the touch of a velvet hand like a lizard on a window pane" and a "man in the crowd with the multicoloured mirrors on his hobnailed boots", and took in a bluesy middle section and a shoo-wop finale that was the result of Lennon being shown a gun magazine with the line 'Happiness Is A Warm Gun In Your Hand' on the cover. The song was banned by the BBC for perceived references to heroin in the line "I need a fix 'cos I'm going down", which perhaps piqued the interest of former users The Breeders, who made their version of the song a centrepiece of their 1990 debut album 'Pod'.

59 I'm Only Sleeping

►CHOSEN BY **Rou Reynolds, Enter Shikari**

►ALBUM **Revolver, 1966**

►SONGWRITER **Lennon**

►DID YOU KNOW? Inspiration for the song came from Paul having to wake John up in the early afternoons to begin writing

This song marks the moment when John Lennon began to feel truly comfortable with experimentation, setting him on the path that led to 'Strawberry Fields Forever'. Wonderfully woozy, it featured the innovative sound of George Harrison playing a duet with his own pre-recorded guitar run backwards, an effect that took six hours to perfect. The recording session for 'I'm Only Sleeping' was scheduled for 11.30pm, to help capture the perfect bedtime mood.

Rou Reynolds: "This was one we used to cover when we were kids. It reminds me of sneaking my Walkman and headphones under my duvet at night. After my mum had kissed me goodnight or read a bedtime story, she'd tuck me in, then I'd lie there and listen to The Beatles for an hour or so until I fell asleep. When you listen to this song, it sounds so simple, but it's such a brilliant melody – so beautiful and so clever. And it's got that great backwards guitar effect on there, too."

58 I Should Have Known Better

►CHOSEN BY **Ross Jarman, The Crips**

►ALBUM **A Hard Day's Night, 1964**

►SONGWRITER **Lennon**

►DID YOU KNOW? George Harrison met his future wife Pattie Boyd in a train carriage on the set of the film *A Hard Day's Night* – she was an extra. This song was playing at the time

It's remarkable how flippant The Beatles were about their own genius – John dismissed the incredible 'I Should Have Known Better' as "just a song, it doesn't mean a damn thing". It certainly meant a lot to the hordes of marauding fans, though. As the first song sung in *A Hard Day's Night*, John's blistering harmonica solo and lusty bawl of regret was kindling for the blaze of Beatlemania.

Ross Jarman: "A lot of people think it's cool to like The Beatles in the later era, but I really liked them as a boyband; when they were the equivalent of a boyband today. 'A Hard Day's Night' is my favourite album as well."



The Beatles at London Airport (now Heathrow), February 8, 1964



57 Back In The USSR

► CHOSEN BY **Kieran Webster, The View**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? In 1988, Paul released an album of rock covers exclusively for the Soviet market. It was called 'Choba B CCCP,' which translates as 'Back In The USSR'

McCartney's attention-grabbing first song on 'The White Album' cribbed its title from Chuck Berry's 'Back In The USA', but added a controversial twist, especially considering the fact that it was written in the midst of the Cold War. A belting rock song, it was penned in Rishikesh, India and was influenced by Mike Love of The Beach Boys, who was putting in the hours sitting in the lotus position at the Maharishi's meditation retreat at the same time as The Beatles. He managed to convince Macca to give the song a sunny, California slant by dropping in references to the quality of the local ladies, in lines like "the Ukraine girls really knock me out" and the "Moscow girls make me sing and shout". In 2013, Love commented: "I was at the breakfast table when Paul McCartney came down with his acoustic guitar playing 'Back In The USSR'. I said, 'You ought to put something in about all the girls around Russia,' and he did."

Kieran Webster: "It's rocking. It's fucking rock'n'roll."

56 Don't Let Me Down

► CHOSEN BY **Harry Koisser, Peace**

► ALBUM **B-side of Get Back, 1969**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? This was the first song John wrote for Yoko – the pair were married on March 20, 1969

Harry Koisser: "Genuinely, I always think I could have written that, and I didn't, they did. They had a head start on me. Every time I listen to it, I think, 'That's not anything I couldn't have done or couldn't do.' And it's great. That's my favourite Beatles song, definitely, hands down, 100 times over. It's just the perfect song. It's digestible, only a couple of minutes long, and every lyric, every line, every word is so simple and well placed. I love simple, repetitive things because I've got

a simple mind, but it kind of just hit me in the right spot and I've never grown tired of listening to it. I've been trying to get the band to cover it for however long we've been together, but it never happens. I just love it. I pour my heart out and this is John pouring his heart out, so it's my type of song. It's always been a song that I've loved to listen to."



55 Girl

► CHOSEN BY **Du Blonde (Beth Jeans Houghton)**

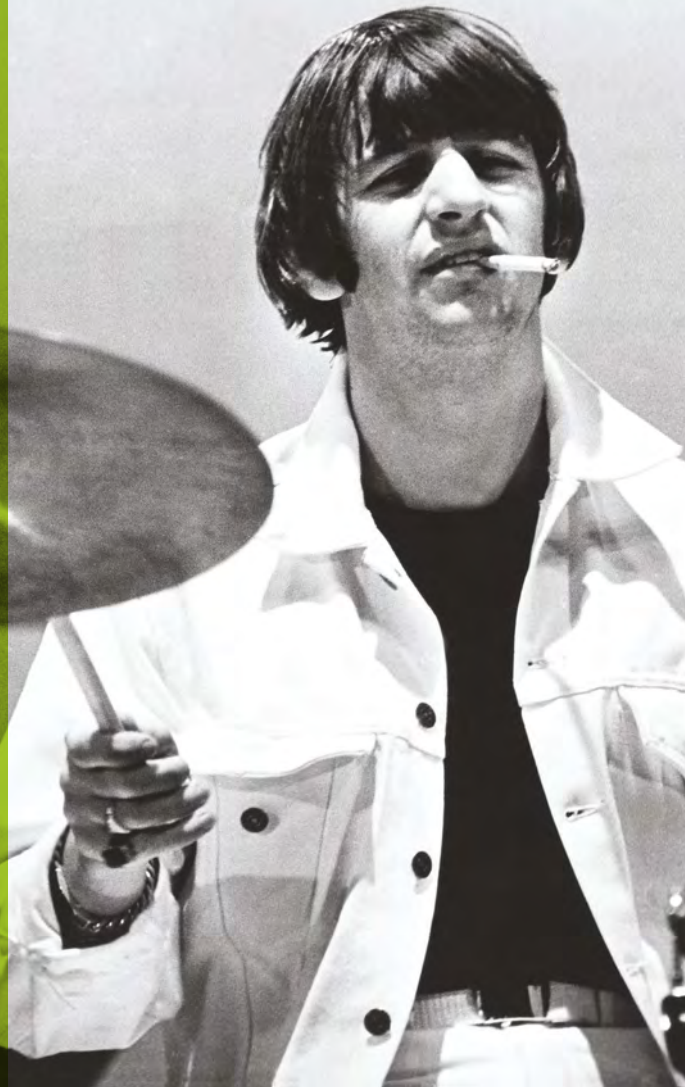
► ALBUM **Rubber Soul, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? 'Woman', from Lennon's final solo album, 1980's 'Double Fantasy', was a sequel to 'Girl'

'Girl' was the last complete song to be recorded for 'Rubber Soul', and what a song it is – highly poetic, musically rich and an example of The Beatles taking inspiration from The Beach Boys' signature vocal harmonies. McCartney once said he'd written some of the song's lyrics, a claim that Lennon denied.

Du Blonde: "It's about the torture experienced at the hands of an, albeit imaginary, girl – 'She's the kind of girl you want so much it makes you sorry/ Still, you don't regret a single day'. The song also touches upon Lennon's feelings about Christianity, especially the idea that to reach heaven you must be tortured first. He did not believe this to be true, and his musings lean more towards the idea that bad things don't happen to good people in order to propel them somewhere; they just happen. The defining moment of magic comes in the form of the long, slow intakes of breath offered by Lennon between the groans of 'Girl' in the chorus, made more intimate with the help of George Martin and a vocal compressor. They're known for slipping drug references into their songs, and it's possible that the sharp breaths are a nod to pot smoking, which the



54 Helter Skelter

► CHOSEN BY **James Brown, *Pulled Apart By Horses***

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? According to George Martin's records, there's a 27-minute version of the song that was never released

band were heavily into by the time the 'Rubber Soul' recording sessions came around. However, the slow delivery of the breath could also easily be translated as sexual frustration for a girl who cannot be pinned down or pleased – something most people could relate to, whether or not they indulged in a joint on a Sunday. The 'Girl' in question is manipulative and self-confident, but unfathomably attractive, her unattainability seemingly being the defining factor that Lennon revels in. It's a song of frustration and continuing down a bad path because the taste of the fruit is enough to make us forget the effects of its poison. It's the struggle for instant gratification, as opposed to long-term peace of mind. It's one more cigarette before we quit. It's a short and shockingly simple song, but much like unrequited love, its effects could stay with you for a lifetime."

The sound of The Beatles going in hard, 'Helter Skelter' was Paul's response to reading in *Melody Maker* that The Who had crafted a downright dirty bluesy stomp with 'I Can See For Miles'. "Just that one paragraph was enough to inspire me; to make me make a move," he said, and without hearing the Who track, he set out to write a beastly piece of music complete with "raucous vocal" and "the loudest drums" – the heaviest, hardest song the band had ever attempted. Mission accomplished. Its unrelenting heaviness offset by John and George's uplifting backing "aaaaah"s, 'Helter Skelter' is credited with launching the zeppelin of solid led and kicking off a decade of horny hard rock. Unfortunately, unrepentant nutjob Charles Manson heard the song and used it as proof that The Beatles were evil before ordering his minions to do some fucked-up murders on his behalf.

James Brown: "It ends with the line, 'I've got blisters on my fingers'. Too right! As well as inspiring the notorious Charles Manson to do naughty things, it paved the way for THE RIFF. And that was before Led Zep and Black Sabbath even had a chance to put in their claim. 'Helter Skelter' shows that even though The Beatles are known for their amazing pop craftsmanship, they also show their diversity by stepping into the realms of the heavy, getting dirty and turning everything up loud."

53 Because

► CHOSEN BY **Mat Osman, *Suede***

► ALBUM **Abbey Road, 1969**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? Lennon said the arrangement was terrible, but McCartney and Harrison felt this was the best track on 'Abbey Road'

Don't believe the doubters – Yoko played her part. One night, relaxing on the sofa at home listening to Yoko play Beethoven's 'Piano Sonata No 14 in C Sharp Minor, Opus 27, No 2', John saw through the Aphex Twin-esque title to the beauty of the chords and asked her to

play them backwards. Cue 'Because', the ethereal masterpiece that George loved for its three-part harmonies, recorded in a marathon five-hour session with John, Paul and George sat in a circle with the lights dimmed.

Mat Osman: "I really love 'Because'. It's just one of those pieces of music you hear and think they almost created a whole genre and did it once and didn't bother again."

52 Eight Days A Week

► CHOSEN BY **Alan Woodhouse, *Senior Sub-Editor***

► ALBUM **Beatles For Sale, 1964**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? The title came from Paul's chauffeur, who claimed to have been working for an impossible amount of time

The Beatles were churning out hook-laden odes to endless love with glorious predictability in this period, back when they were conquering the world with their affable charm and their almost effortless ability to consistently revolutionise the art of writing a pop song. There was always something a little different about each of their tunes at the time – this one's main selling point was using the 'fade-in' as an intro rather than closing the song, which they completed in two studio sessions. (For The Beatles in 1964, that was the equivalent of The Stone Roses making 'Second Coming'.) So while the subject matter may have been traditional, the methods were certainly not, and the result was another made-for-radio classic, its razor-sharp chorus featuring a call-and-response segment made even more irresistible by the inclusion of overdubbed handclaps. Even though Lennon was later to dismiss the tune as "lousy" (he was wrong), it became their seventh US Number One in an incredibly prolific 12-month spell. And Macca certainly doesn't share his old songwriting partner's view – it's been his set opener on recent tour dates.

Ringo in London, August 2, 1965

51 With A Little Help From My Friends

► CHOSEN BY **Katy B**

► ALBUM **Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Mumford & Sons closed their Glastonbury 2013 headline set with this song, joined by Vampire Weekend, The Vaccines and First Aid Kit

"What would you think if I sang out of tune?" went the original lyrics, "would you throw ripe tomatoes at me?". Ringo, fearing for his natty new bandleader's costume, refused to sing the line and had it changed, but the self-deprecating dig at his vocal abilities remained, and Ringo's signature tune was born. It's charming as

much for its comic honesty as its soaring melody – for years, detractors had been claiming that Ringo had lucked into such a talented band, and now here he was owning up to the leg-up he'd had in life with magnificent candour and a cheeky sparkle in his eye. Which makes the song so incredibly endearing that, had Facebook been around

in 1967, Starr would've been swamped with friend requests.

Katy B: "That and Cyndi Lauper's 'Girls Just Want To Have Fun' – they both make me want to scream my lungs out. 'With A Little Help...' is just one of those vocal hooks that the entire world knows. It's perfect."



50 Day Tripper

► CHOSEN BY **Shaun Ryder**

► ALBUM **Single only, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? German radio stations didn't want to play it as 'tripper' is German slang for 'gonorrhoea'

'Day Tripper'. Geddit? Yes, here was one of Lennon's first subversive and mischievous attempts to get the radio to broadcast blatant drug propaganda. "It wasn't a serious message song," Lennon said in 1970, "it was a drug song." The song sounded like an obvious single, with its infectious bassline and skipping guitar, but just four days after it was written, Paul turned up with 'We Can Work It Out' and a row ensued about which should be the A-side. They agreed on making both songs the lead track, thereby inventing the double A-side single.

Shaun Ryder: "Brilliant bassline."



49 You've Got To Hide Your Love Away

► CHOSEN BY **Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor**

► ALBUM **Help!, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? This is sometimes said to be the first rock song about homosexuality – it's supposedly about their manager Brian Epstein, who was gay

After 'You've Got To Hide Your Love Away' was released, Paul McCartney described it as "just basically John doing Dylan". Recorded on February 18, 1965 in Abbey Road's Studio Two, the song was, arguably, more influenced by Dylan's cluttered lyrics – or as Paul put it, "gobbledygook" – than he thought. This wasn't a protest song. Singing with crisp conviction over some dreamy interplay between his and George's acoustic guitars, John twisted Dylan's influence in to an intimate, lonely song about being a lovelorn laughing stock. Despite the undeniable sweetness of the melody – augmented by both alto and tenor flute from session player Johnny Scott – the song concludes with John repeating the chorus a second time before letting Scott's mournful flute do the rest.

48 Julia

► CHOSEN BY **Ryan Jarman, The Cribbs**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? This is the only Beatles song to feature John playing solo

Dedicated to his mother Julia, who died in a car accident when he was 17, and to Yoko, whose name translates as Ocean Child (a name referred to in the song), 'Julia' is thought to be John's answer to Paul's 'Blackbird', and uses a finger-picking style he learnt from Donovan while at the Maharishi's compound in India.

Ryan Jarman: "It's one of their most expressive songs, maybe because it's just John on the guitar

on his own, and obviously the subject matter is something quite close to his heart. With it being so stripped back, it really conveys much more than any of their other songs to me. I used to fall asleep with my earphones on, on years ago, and if a really good song came on, I'd always wake up. 'Julia' woke me up one night. It was the first time I'd ever heard it, and I thought, 'Man, that's one of the best songs I've ever heard.' I still think it's one of the best songs I've ever heard."

Paul McCartney next to the Magical Mystery Tour coach, 1967

46 Long, Long, Long

► CHOSEN BY **Felix White, The Maccabees**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **Harrison**

► DID YOU KNOW? George took inspiration from the chord progression in Bob Dylan's 'Sad-Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands'

George recorded this languid, dreamy ballad about faith and spirituality – his most laid-back contribution to 'The White Album' – while surrounded by joss sticks. Towards the end of the song, the mics picked up the sound of a bottle of Blue Nun vibrating on top of Paul's speaker cabinet; the band liked it so much they set up additional microphones to capture the sound more clearly, and George made the sound even odder by playing his guitar with a microphone.

Felix White: "I think it's amazing how good George Harrison's songwriting got towards the end of The Beatles. Good on you, man! It was such a brave thing to be in a band with John Lennon and Paul McCartney, who were constantly writing songs that will be around for hundreds of years, and just to stick his hand up and go, 'Um, I've got one too.' He had that sardonic wit and the tenderness that sometimes neither Lennon nor McCartney had."

47 She's Leaving Home

► CHOSEN BY **Mark Hoppus, Blink-182**

► ALBUM **Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Some of the lyrics are quotes from John's Aunt Mimi, who raised him after his parents separated

In mid-February, 1967, 17-year-old student Melanie Coe left home, leaving behind her diamond ring, mink coat and a car. *The Daily Mail* ran a story on her disappearance, and her parents were quoted as being baffled about why she'd want to run away when "she has everything here".

McCartney turned the story into one of his most tear-jerking piano pieces, reducing Brian Wilson to a blubbing mess when he played it to them.

Mark Hoppus: "For some reason that song has always affected me in a way that I can't quite explain,

and almost made me break down and cry. Right at the end, the part where it goes, 'She's leaving home/Bye bye' – it's a simple lyric, but it's so powerful. I have many, many favourite Beatles songs, but that one stands out in particular. It never ceases to choke me up every time I listen to it."



45 Can't Buy Me Love

► CHOSEN BY **Kieran Shudall, Circa Waves**

► ALBUM **A Hard Day's Night, 1964**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? This was the third of seven Beatles singles to hit Number One in one 12-month period

For two minutes and 11 seconds in 1964, The Beatles had a secret drummer. After writing 'Can't Buy Me Love' in their hotel during a run of no less than 19 shows at the Paris Olympia, and recording it in a studio in the same city, The Beatles sent the tape of this monster international smash – it sold three million copies worldwide in its first week – back to Abbey Road. When it arrived, studio engineer Norman Smith noticed the tape had a ripple in it where it had been spooled incorrectly, losing Ringo's hi-hat sound. Without telling anyone, Smith set up his kit and re-did Ringo's part. No-one noticed until 1991.

Kieran Shudall: "This is The Beatles at their simplest and most poppy. It kicks in with a chorus that hooks you from the off. The verse's weaving melody hurtles towards the end of each line. Paul wrote this just after 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' had blown up, and was seemingly unfazed by the pressure of a follow-up single. Apparently he said it should be called 'Can't Buy Me Love' after reflecting on the perks that money and fame bought him."





John Lennon in 1965

44 I Want You (She's So Heavy)

► CHOSEN BY **El-P, Run The Jewels**

► ALBUM **Abbey Road, 1969**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? This was the last time all four Beatles were together in a recording studio

We'll let you into a little Beatles secret: John *really* fancied Yoko. If you listen closely to later-era Beatles and his solo work, a few tiny clues emerge in the approximately 97 per cent of his songs that happen to be about her brilliance. 'I Want You...' is one example: a passionate, lusty ode to the wailing art goddess of his dreams. It caused friction in the studio: as John insisted that the white noise from his Moog synthesizer should increase in volume towards the end of the song until it completely consumed the music, Paul sat with his head in his hands on the floor, completely bewildered. It's since become a cult favourite – besides Run The Jewels being fans, John Legend has also covered it.

El-P: "It's always been my favourite Beatles song. It's sexual and heavy and dark and loving. The riff is just something else. As a musician, it's one of those pillars that you study. As a producer, you have to know it inside and out, because they broke ground with it in terms of the rhythm. It's also just a beautiful pop song."



43 Nowhere Man

► CHOSEN BY **Billy Corgan, The Smashing Pumpkins**

► ALBUM **Rubber Soul, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? The solo was played by both John and Paul, in unison

There's some confusion over the identity of the Nowhere Man. In the 1997 book *Many Years From Now*, Paul recalled John telling him he'd written the song about himself, adrift in his marriage to Cynthia Lennon and feeling he wasn't going anywhere. A few years later, Paul claimed it was about him. Either way, this tale of a lost and aimless soul "*living in his nowhere land/ Making all his nowhere plans for nobody*" certainly came out of nowhere: John was struggling to write a final song for 'Rubber Soul' when he went for a lie down and it rushed into his head. "Nowhere



Man' came, words and music, the whole damn thing... [It was] like being possessed, like a psychic or a medium," he said later.

Billy Corgan: "I sing this at karaoke – it suits my voice and I feel I can do an adequate job."



42 Two Of Us

► CHOSEN BY **Tom Howard, Assistant Editor**

► ALBUM **Let It Be, 1970**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? In January 1969, while working on 'Two Of Us', George briefly left the band

Lennon owns the intro by barking “*I Dig A Pygmy*” by *Charles Hawtrey And The Deaf Aids – Phase one, in which Doris gets her oats*”, and dominates the outro by whistling a melody reminiscent of the “*ella ella elloa*” coda in ‘Hello Goodbye’, but the meat of ‘Two Of Us’ is pure McCartney. A sweet and simple song with the lyric “*you and I have memories longer than the road that stretches out ahead*”, it can be interpreted as being about Lennon, but it’s far more likely that the subject was Linda Eastman, who would soon be Paul’s wife. According to Linda, it was written on one of the drives she and Paul would go on with their sheepdog Martha, to “get lost”. Either way, ‘Let It Be’s understated opener stands out because of a perfect Lennon McCartney co-vocal that betrays the beef they had at the time; a bass part lent a peculiar jaunt by George Harrison, who played it on his rosewood Telecaster guitar; and for being far heavier before Phil Spector got his mitts on it for the album version.



41 Help!

► CHOSEN BY **Frank Turner**

► ALBUM **Help!, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? ‘Help!’ was John Lennon’s favourite Beatles song

By 1965, John Lennon was starting to seriously despise himself. Unsettled by all the fame, money and success that had fallen into his lap in the space of just two years, he was “eating and drinking like a pig”, becoming overweight and entering what he’d later call “my fat Elvis period”. So when it was decided that the second Beatles film was to be called *Help!*, and Lennon was asked to write the title track, he took the opportunity to exorcise his innermost anguish. “I didn’t realise at the time,” he said, “but later I knew I really was crying out for

help.” Wrapped in such an upbeat tune, and with Paul’s jolly backing vocals following him through the song like a supportive friend, it was easy to ignore the genuine insecurity, confusion and desperation at its core.

Frank Turner: “One of the things I love about The Beatles – and I understand the history of them revolutionising modern music in about seven years – is that their early stuff was so incredibly lean from a purely songwriting point of view. It’s flawless songwriting, and this is a great example.”



40 Rain

► CHOSEN BY **Anton Newcombe, The Brian Jonestown Massacre**

► ALBUM **B-side of ‘Paperback Writer’ single**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? The song is usually credited to John, but Paul claims it was a co-write

And The Beatles said ‘let there be psych!’ The head music that the band had been developing over the course of ‘Rubber Soul’ came to, well, a head on ‘Rain’, a revolutionary tune tucked away on the B-side of ‘Paperback Writer’. Inspired by nothing more than a downpour that drenched the band when they arrived in Melbourne, it became a benchmark for many psych acts to come, as a result of its backwards tracking, some exceedingly stoned vocals and Ringo’s sensational drumming. “I think it’s the best out of all the records I’ve ever made,” Ringo said. “It’s out of left-field. I know me and I know my playing, and then there’s ‘Rain’.”

Anton Newcombe: “Ringo’s finest moment.”





37 Dear Prudence

► CHOSEN BY **Ben Thatcher, Royal Blood**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? Ringo left the group when the 'White Album' sessions became too tense, so Paul played drums. When Ringo returned a short time later, he found flowers on his drumkit to welcome him back

Mia Farrow's sister Prudence meditated herself out of her mind when she accompanied The Beatles on a visit to India. She immersed herself so deeply in the Maharishi's teaching that she became a recluse, rushing to her private hut straight after meals and lectures to meditate as hard as she could, and shutting herself in for three weeks while The Beatles were jamming out songs. "She'd been locked in for three weeks and wouldn't come out," John said later, "trying to reach God quicker than anybody else. That was the competition in Maharishi's camp: who was going to get cosmic first. If she'd been in the West, they would have put her away." John and George eventually managed to coax her out and, during their stay, John played the song he'd written for her as "a simple plea to a friend to snap out of it". 'Dear Prudence' became a 'White Album' standout and was made even more famous by Siouxsie And The Banshees' 1983 cover, which reached Number Three in the UK singles chart.

The Beatles on a flight to Manila on their final world tour

39 Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds

► CHOSEN BY **David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor**

► ALBUM **Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? The drawing by Julian Lennon that John said inspired this song is now owned by Dave Gilmour

'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds' is probably best known for being the Lennon and McCartney song that you don't have to play backwards in order to detect its hidden meaning. The BBC banned the song on its release in 1967, and although Lennon always claimed that this psychedelic cartoon daydream wasn't about LSD, McCartney confirmed in 2004 that it was – hardly breaking news.

With its "girl with kaleidoscope eyes" and "flowers that grow so incredibly high", the hallucinogenic nature of 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds' is not exactly subtle. Musically, though, it works much harder: a product of The Beatles' increasingly experimental side, this is a song filled with complicated time signatures and Harrison's use of the tambura, an Indian drone instrument. But it's far from inaccessible, and the band's unmatched pop nous comes through as strongly as ever on one of their most memorable choruses, topping off an unforgettable masterpiece.

DEAN CHALKLEY, TOM OXLEY, ANDY WILLISHER, GETTY

38 Here, There And Everywhere

► CHOSEN BY **Little Boots**

► ALBUM **Revolver, 1966**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? McCartney's vocals were an attempt to sing like Marianne Faithfull

Pulling up a sunbed and basking in the June heat beside the swimming pool at John Lennon's Kenwood home, Paul took out his guitar. With The Beach Boys' 'Pet Sounds' drifting through his head, he started strumming an E chord, waiting for his songwriting partner to wake up. By the time John joined him, Paul had 'Here, There And Everywhere' written almost in its entirety. A legendary piece of McCartney romantic whimsy, it would form the soft, fluffy underbelly of 'Revolver',

a huggable counterpoint to 'Taxman' and 'Tomorrow Never Knows'. It remains one of McCartney's most sublime love songs.

Little Boots: "I had this massive Beatles phase when I was 16. I was really into them. That's when I really clicked with music and writing songs. You could feel that connection: they meant it. I guess it's the first music that didn't feel throwaway to me. And this, off 'Revolver', is such a touching and intimate song."





36 Get Back

► CHOSEN BY **Adam Granduciel, The War On Drugs**

► ALBUM **Let It Be, 1970**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? On the single release, the band were credited as "The Beatles with Billy Preston"



"We were sitting in the studio and we made it up out of thin air," Paul McCartney wrote in the press release for the single release of 'Get Back' (which Adam Granduciel told *NME* was his favourite Beatles song), adding that the band "made it into a song to roller-coast by". The track had a darker genesis than this suggests, though. On early versions, McCartney set out to satirise Conservative MP Enoch Powell's anti-immigration "rivers of blood" speech from 1968, including lines such as "*you better get back to your Commonwealth homes*". Macca considered it a protest song, but there was perhaps an even deeper meaning for him. In 1980, John Lennon said that when singing the lines "*Get back, Jojo/Go home*", Paul would often be seen to glance in Yoko's direction.

35 Michelle

► CHOSEN BY **Michel Gondry, director**

► ALBUM **Rubber Soul, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? It wasn't about Michelle Phillips of The Mamas & The Papas; the name just "sounded French"

Dating back to the '50s, when Paul wrote it as a student at the Liverpool Institute High School, 'Michelle' is one of the earliest Beatles songs, resurrected in 1965 after John asked Paul if he could remember "the

French thing" he used to perform at school parties. Back then Paul had been improvising made-up French words, but a friend who was a French teacher helped him piece together the opening lines.

Michel Gondry: "All my life, when people see me they sing, '*Michelle, ma belle*'. One day I was asked to do a video for Paul McCartney. I walked past him in the corridor and he went, '*Michelle, ma belle*'. So that's my song, I guess, but at least I have the stamp of the author."



34 I Saw Her Standing There

► CHOSEN BY **Lemmy, Motörhead**

► ALBUM **Please Please Me, 1963**

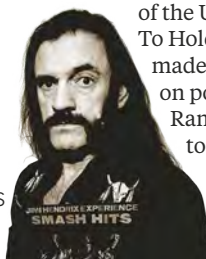
► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? John and Paul started writing it in Paul's living room while skiving off school in September 1962

The first song on the Fabs' first album, 1963's 'Please Please Me', shot straight into rock'n'roll's library of standards. Inspired by Chuck Berry's 'I'm Talking About You' and dedicated to Paul's 17-year-old girlfriend of the time, it was lobbed onto the B-side of the US release of 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' and made a lasting impact on popular culture. The Ramones were thought to be emulating

Macca when they started their songs with "One, two, three, four!"

Lemmy: "This was the first thing I heard by The Beatles that they'd written themselves, and it was really exciting – very raw and with very good harmonies. They just had great melodies and they had very unusual chords. We spent months trying to figure out the first chord to 'A Hard Day's Night'."



32 Taxman

► CHOSEN BY **Johnny Marr**

► ALBUM **Revolver, 1966**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/Harrison**

► DID YOU KNOW? The 'Taxman' solo was rumoured to be the 'Tomorrow Never Knows' solo edited. It wasn't

Back before the world and his property-portfolio-toting wife was embroiled in a dodgy tax-avoidance scheme, the UK's one-per-centers were royally hammered by the taxman. Many popular singers fled to Vegas to play lengthy residencies to escape Harold Wilson's 95 per cent top-rate supertax, but poor George, suddenly rich beyond his wildest dreams, found himself clobbered. His frustrations came out in 'Revolver's opening song – the basis for The Jam's 'Start!' – with a few lines thrown in by John, whom he asked to help out. It stands as one of The Beatles' bolshiest tunes.

Johnny Marr: "The amazing thing is that not everyone knows Paul McCartney played the solo on it. There may have been other psychedelic freakout solos around at the time – Pete Townshend had almost invented what I call the 'pop-art solo' – but McCartney on 'Taxman' is a piece of pop art. That solo actually does what good visual pop art does – it doesn't go with the flow of what's come before; it really announces itself like a frantic interruption and demands that you pay attention to it. They didn't hold back. It's a very anti-establishment song, especially for those times. They name names and point the finger, and it might be the first directly anti-establishment song."



31 She Loves You

► CHOSEN BY **Peter Buck, REM**

► ALBUM **Single only, 1963**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? McCartney's dad wanted him to sing "Yes, yes, yes" rather than "Yeah, yeah, yeah", in order to sound more dignified

A favourite among ageing rockers (Alice Cooper and Gene Simmons also picked 'She Loves You' as their favourite Beatles song, and Ozzy Osbourne credits it with sparking his determination to form a band) 'She Loves You' was written by John and Paul face-to-face in a Newcastle hotel room, based on a love letter John had written to Cynthia during their first Christmas together. On the day they recorded it, the crowd of girls who gathered to watch a morning photo shoot got so rowdy the police intervened; Beatlemania was go.

Peter Buck: "I was six years old at the time, and having been reared on Andy Williams and The Kingston Trio, this came as a total shock. It was my first ever rock'n'roll experience. In American pop history, we always think of 1964 as the year The Beatles hit the world, though of course they'd already been big in Britain for two years. It's a bit like the way our history books talk about 'World War II: 1941–1945.'"

33 All My Loving

► CHOSEN BY **Alex Turner, Arctic Monkeys**

► ALBUM **With The Beatles, 1963**

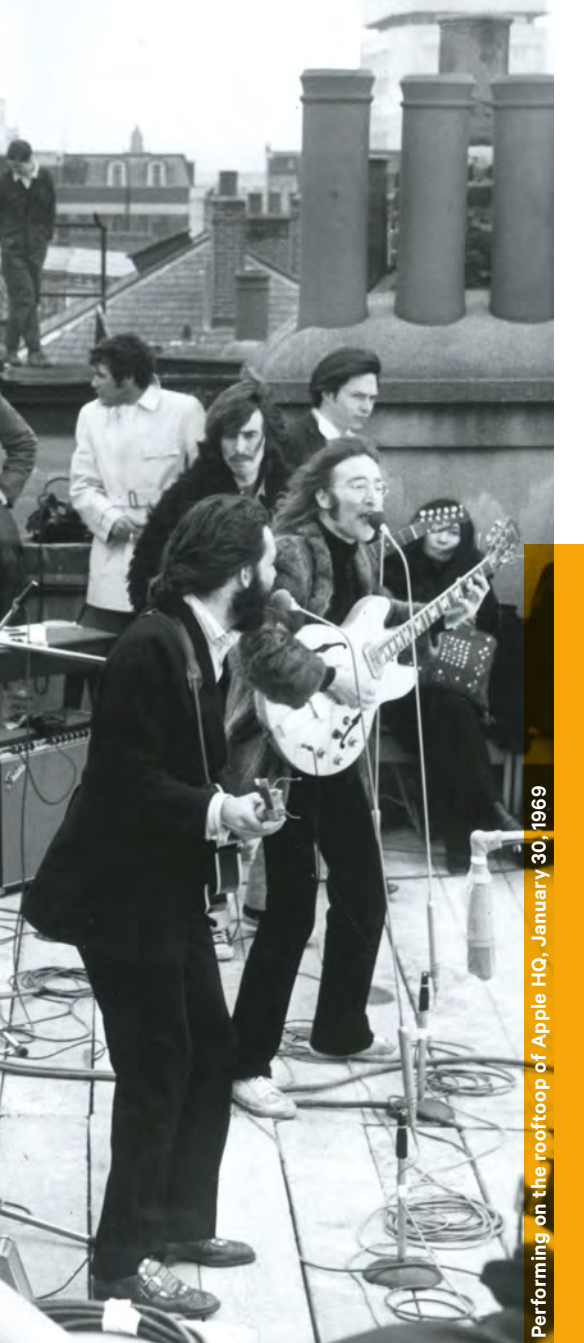
► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Despite John admitting this was Paul's song, John's wife at the time, Cynthia, believed the song was about her

As the first of five songs they played on their *Ed Sullivan Show* debut in February 1964, 'All My Loving' was The Beatles' introduction to America – or the estimated one-third of the country who were watching, at least. It also marked a milestone in Paul McCartney's development as a songwriter: up until this point, he had been the secondary creative force in the group, with Lennon the nominal leader. Once he started coming up with tunes like this, that equilibrium changed.

On their 2014 US tour, Arctic Monkeys

played the song twice to mark the 50th anniversary of that *Ed Sullivan Show* appearance. "Apparently one in three Americans actually watched that performance, so if we're lucky, one or three Americans might watch this YouTube video," quipped Alex Turner at New York's Madison Square Garden. The current play-count is hovering around 340,000 views, so he didn't do too badly.



Performing on the rooftop of Apple HQ, January 30, 1969



30 And Your Bird Can Sing

► CHOSEN BY **Phil Hebblethwaite, writer**

► ALBUM **Revolver, 1966**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? John Lennon considered this to be one of his worst songs

Lennon often rejected songs he'd written. He didn't think much of the classic 'I Feel Fine' until it was recorded, and he reportedly described 'And Your Bird Can Sing' from 'Revolver' as "another of my throwaways... fancy paper around an empty box". Possibly he was embarrassed about the lyrics, which some commentators believe to be a jibe at Mick Jagger showing off about his then-girlfriend, Marianne Faithfull – a "bird" who "can sing". Others think the song is about the only member of the band to not be married at the time, McCartney (although he wrote some of the words) – or even Frank Sinatra, who often called women "birds" and had made a jibe at The Beatles in a press release. What really makes 'And Your Bird Can Sing' a standout Beatles track is not the lyrics, but the intertwining double lead guitars, played by Harrison (certainly) and McCartney (probably, but it's possibly the other lead guitar is Lennon's). The effect is divine: psychedelic, but also propulsive, setting the song apart from other jangly psych-pop songs of the time – 'Eight Miles High' by The Byrds, for example – which seem far weaker in comparison.

29 Penny Lane

► CHOSEN BY **Mike Kerr, Royal Blood**

► ALBUM **Single only, 1967**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? There's no guitar on 'Penny Lane' – John Lennon played piano and George Harrison played congas

The barber "*taking photographs of every head he's had the pleasure to know*" was an actual person – a guy by the name of Bioletti. There really was a bank on the corner, although Paul made up the banker character. There was a fire station and a poppy sale every year on Remembrance Day. The kernels of 'Penny Lane' – Paul's answer to 'Strawberry Fields Forever', John's own cosmic zorb down memory lane – were real, all located on the titular street where Paul would meet John to catch a bus into town. Originally released as the flipside to 'Strawberry Fields Forever', it transformed an ordinary street in an ordinary Liverpool neighbourhood into a major

tourist destination. So many Penny Lane street signs were stolen and replaced that the council eventually resorted to painting the street name directly onto the buildings.

Mike Kerr: "I was probably about eight years old and my class at school had to learn 'Penny Lane'. I was never in the choir – this was a one-off – but I would retreat into the music room at lunchtime to play piano instead of playing football."



JENN FIVE, GETTY



'Revolver'-era Beatles, August 1966

28 Got To Get You Into My Life

► CHOSEN BY **Mark Beaumont**, writer

► ALBUM **Revolver**, 1966

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? 'Got To Get You Into My Life' was the first Beatles song to feature horns, with session musicians playing trumpet and saxophone

Sweet Mary Jane. Bobby Brown. Kevin Bacon. The chronic, la cucaracha, gangsta gumbo, Jupiter's beard or Mr Rizz's Puffity Snoozeroot. Call it what you want, in 1966 McCartney wanted some and he didn't want you hogging it. "In my mind I've always likened it to the peace pipe of the Indians," Paul said of the demon weed, and 'Got To Get You Into My Life' was his love song to toking on a nice fat chuffer. It's a miracle he made it sound so lively, to be honest – bristling with huge brass courtesy of members of Georgie Fame's Blue Flames and full of the joys of pop, it marked the climax of the unstoppable reel of magnificent tracks on side two of 'Revolver', and is still one of Macca's most vibrant tunes. Just when you thought 'Revolver' couldn't possibly maintain its staggering quality, 'Got To Get You Into My Life' catapulted it into the stratosphere and ensured the album's position as among the very best ever made. "One of his best songs," Lennon said, and he was about as generous with his compliments towards Paul as Noel Gallagher is towards the popular young chart acts of today.



27 Eleanor Rigby

► CHOSEN BY **Regina Spektor**

► ALBUM **Revolver, 1966**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? 'Eleanor Rigby' is the first recorded song in the Beatles' canon that none of the band played on – all of the music was performed by a string section

In the graveyard of St Peter's Church in Woolton, where Paul and John would sunbathe in their pre-fame days, stood a gravestone marking the final resting place of one Eleanor Rigby, a scullery maid who'd died aged 44 in 1939. A short distance away was another stone for a man named McKenzie. Whether these names were tucked away in Paul's subconscious when he sat at his piano and wrote 'Eleanor Rigby' is pure conjecture – the song, marking their progression towards being an experimental, studio-based band, was originally about Miss Daisy Hawkins and the priest was called Father McCartney. Eleanor's tragic story was the first time a stark depiction of loneliness, depression and death had made such a major impact on the charts.

Regina Spektor: "It has such a spirit to it with the strings. It's sad and happy at the same time, a really passionate song."



56

26 Norwegian Wood

► CHOSEN BY **Brian Wilson, The Beach Boys**

► ALBUM **Rubber Soul, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Ravi Shankar played sitar on the track

According to a conversation reported by Brian Epstein's assistant Peter Brown, John confessed to his wife Cynthia that he had had "an uncountable number" of affairs with other women in the early years of The Beatles. "In hotel rooms throughout the bloody world!" Lennon said. "That's what 'Norwegian Wood' was all about, the lyrics that nobody could understand. I wrote it about an affair and made it all gobbledygook so you wouldn't know." There was a suggestion that the song was about a night John may have spent with *Evening Standard* journalist Maureen Cleave, but from such flagrant deception came a track of sublime grace – The Beatles at their Dylan-aping folk peak and the beating, cheating heart of 'Rubber Soul'.

Brian Wilson: "'Norwegian Wood' is my favourite. The lyrics are so good and so creative... I can't forget the sitar, too – I'd never heard that before, that unbelievable sound. No-one had heard that in rock'n'roll back then, this amazing, exotic sound. It really inspired the instrumentation I ended up using for 'Pet Sounds'."



The Fab Four in 1963

25 We Can Work It Out

► CHOSEN BY **Jon Ouin, Stornoway**

► ALBUM **Single only, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? The promotional film for 'We Can Work It Out' was one of the first-ever music videos

Jon Ouin: "This is a classic slice of unabashed Paul McCartney optimism, and one of my favourite mid-period Beatles songs. I think it was inspired by a dispute with his girlfriend of the time, Jane Asher, but it's really the ultimate uncynical riposte to anyone who's reluctant to try and settle an argument. In a more universal sense, I suppose you could say it's a peace-and-love song before it became fashionable. One of my favourite aspects of it is that it feels like a joint effort from Lennon and McCartney. The middle-eight (or 16 to be precise) is a highlight, in that it contains

a – possibly sarcastic – mustn't-grumble rejoinder from Lennon: 'Life is very short' is almost a precursor to the 'it can't get no worse' backing vocals in 'Getting Better' two years later. There's also a brief, strange dive into slightly comic waltz time, which feels somehow European. You just know this bit was Lennon's idea, because it feels like a songwriting 'rule-breaker'. Most of all, though, it's just a great, instant melody allied to a simple backing track. I love the harmonium pad chords, and while this in itself isn't exactly groundbreaking, it was a first for them, and hints at some of the instrumental experimentation that was to follow. It's also got a hilarious video."





100 GREATEST BEATLES SONGS



23 Twist And Shout

- CHOSEN BY **Matt Bellamy, Muse**
- ALBUM **Please Please Me, 1963**
- SONGWRITER **Phil Medley and Bert Berns**

► DID YOU KNOW? John Lennon had a cold while making 'Twist And Shout'. He did one take and attempted a second, but by then he had completely lost his voice

Ooooooh! Wobble-heads ahoy as The Beatles tackle the Phil Spector-produced 1961 Top Notes tune, already a hit in 1962 for The Isley Brothers. But Lennon's ragged, throat-torn performance set a new standard for punkoid rock'n'roll and inspired the Stones, The Kinks and The Who to adopt an equally passionate attitude. Today, 'Twist And Shout' is a standard at retro clubs and wedding discos, but at the time it was a sensation, hitting Number Two in the US in a week when The Beatles held all five of the top spots.

Matt Bellamy: "I love that high-energy stuff. I'd love to hear that recorded exactly as they played it then, but with modern technology, because the sound quality is not doing justice to what they are actually doing in the room – you can hear the limitations of the microphones and pre-amps."

22 Yesterday

- CHOSEN BY **Nadia Khomani, writer**
- ALBUM **Help!, 1965**
- SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? A string quartet was brought in for 'Yesterday', making it one of the first pop songs to include classical instrumentation

Paul's most famous ballad has been covered by an huge range of artists, including Frank Sinatra, Otis Redding, Elvis Presley and Willie Nelson. In fact, it holds the Guinness World Record for being the most covered song of all time, with more than 3,000 versions currently out in the world. Such is the song's enduring brilliance, McCartney even scheduled his upcoming shows at the O2 Arena to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the tune that came to him in his sleep, originally going "scrambled eggs/Oh my darling how I love your legs". "Yesterday" feels like it has taken on a life of its own over the years,"



Macca said. "The song still is and always has been an important part of my live show. It's always very emotional for me to hear crowds singing it so loudly at my concerts." And why do they sing it? Maybe because of its poetic, wistful lyrics of longing for a time gone by. It's certainly a sentiment that has stood the test of time. This one's here to stay.

24 All You Need Is Love

- CHOSEN BY **Yoko Ono and Sean Lennon**

- ALBUM **Single only, 1967**

- SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? John Lennon's handwritten lyrics for 'All You Need Is Love' sold for \$1.25 million in 2005

If ever The Beatles were going to change the world, this was their chance. Asked by the BBC to represent Britain on the first-ever live international satellite link-up on TV show *Our World* to an audience of 400 million people worldwide, John chose to write an unequivocal message that could be understood by all those tuning in. His first slogan song, 'All You Need Is Love' – thought to be Yoko's favourite – encapsulated the flower-power era,

and certainly stole the show from the clog dancers of Venezuela.

Sean Lennon: "My list of favourite songs changes from day to day. I like when my dad said, 'There's nothing you can know that isn't known/ Nothing you can see that isn't shown/ Nowhere you can go that isn't where you're meant to be'. It seems to be a good representation of the sort of enlightenment that came out of the '60s."





21 Revolution

► CHOSEN BY **Pete Shelley, Buzzcocks**

► ALBUM **B-side of Hey Jude, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? The first version of 'Revolution' was over 10 minutes long and included a long end-section featuring sound effects and Yoko whispering "you become naked". This morphed into 'The White Album's' 'Revolution 1' and 'Revolution 9'. A faster version was released prior to the album as the B-side to 'Hey Jude'

Throughout the band's career, John Lennon was itching to speak his mind on the politics of the day, particularly the Vietnam war. Manager Brian Epstein had always reined him in, but once Brian had died John felt free to comment, although he wasn't entirely sure of his position. Hence there were two versions of the blues-pop grinder 'Revolution': one in which John resolutely declared, "*But when you talk about destruction/Don't you know that you can count me out*", and a less decisive take: "...you can count me out/in". "I put in

both because I wasn't sure," Lennon said. "I didn't want to get killed."

Pete Shelley: "Me and a friend used to get together at school and play along with Beatles records on acoustic guitars. I remember listening to 'Revolution' one morning, and it struck me: 'Yes! This is what I've got to do!' So I rushed off to a phone box, phoned him up and said, 'Let's concentrate on this! Let's get a band together!' But he wasn't in, so I ended up speaking to his dad instead. Anyway, this has exciting distorted guitars on it. It set me on that far-from-primrose path."

20 Come Together

► CHOSEN BY **Laurie Vincent, Slaves**

► ALBUM **Abbey Road, 1969**

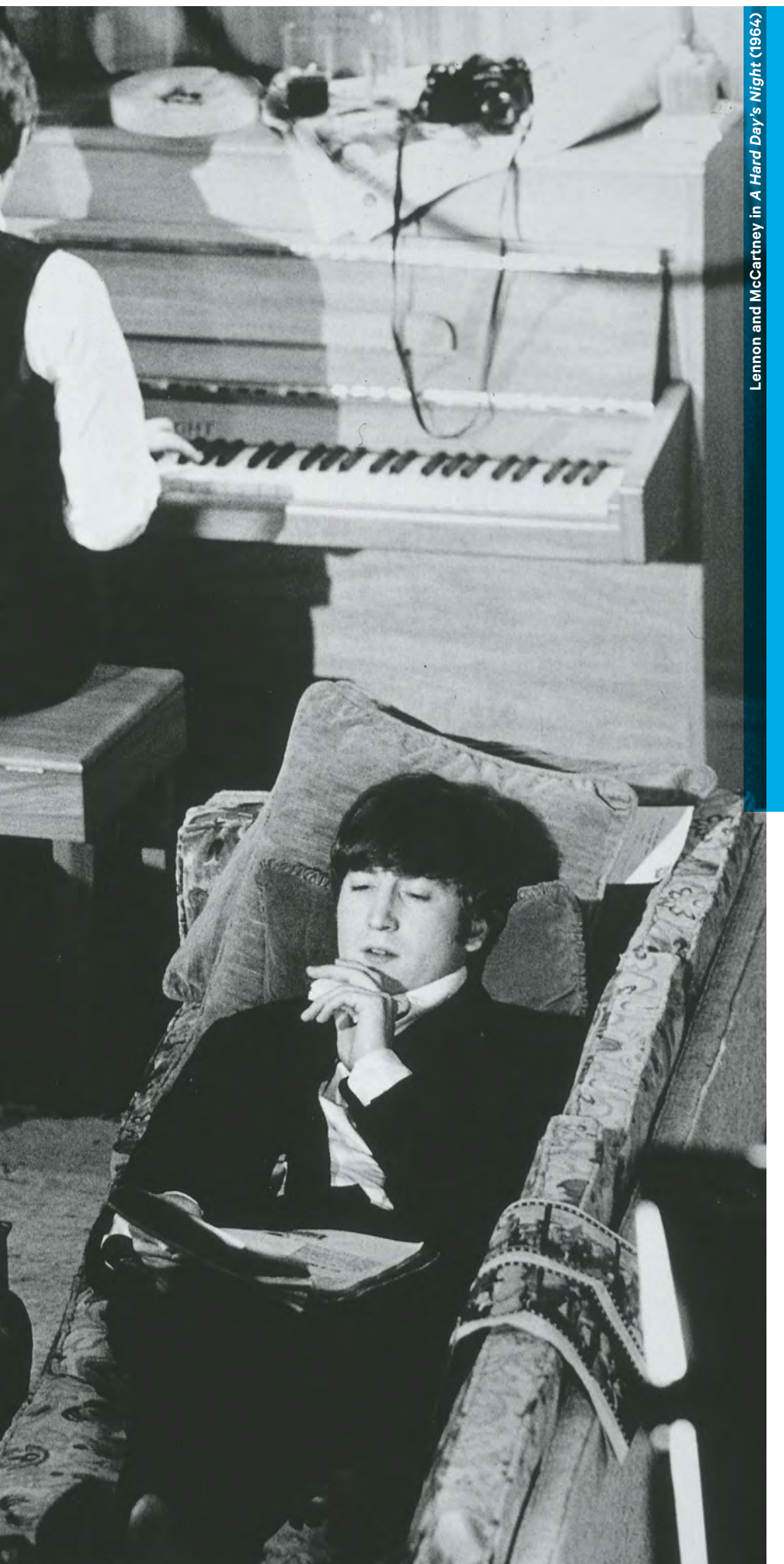
► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? 'Come Together' was one of Lennon's favourites among his own songs. "I'd buy it!" he said

Among the press, celebrities and rubber-neckers that visited John and Yoko during their two week-long bed-ins for peace in 1969 was counterculture leader and LSD champion Timothy Leary, keen to convince Lennon to write a song for his campaign to run for governor of California against Ronald Reagan. Leary suggested using the campaign slogan 'Come together, join the party'. When Leary was imprisoned for marijuana possession mid-campaign, John ditched the idea but kept the title, concocting one of his most surreal, intoxicating grooves around a few lines cribbed from Chuck Berry's 'You Can't Catch Me'. He'd pay for the appropriation later – the song's writer forced him to record three of his songs on his 1975 solo album 'Rock'N'Roll' as payback.

Laurie Vincent: "John's lyrics are so out-there, and when I first heard that drumbeat it made me think about beats differently. I'd always thought of drums to just back music up, but that song is really different."





Lennon and McCartney in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964)



19 **A Hard Day's Night**

► **CHOSEN BY** Ira Wolf Tuton, **Yeastayer**

► **ALBUM** *A Hard Day's Night*, 1964

► **SONGWRITER** Lennon

► **DID YOU KNOW?** Musicologists recently 'solved' the mystery of how to play the opening chord. The latest research claims George played a F add9 with the thumb holding the lower E string at the first fret, doubled by John and with missing notes added on piano by George Martin in the background

If Beatlemania had a defining sound it was the opening CLAAANGGG! Of 'A Hard Day's Night', a sound that spoke of mobs of screaming girls held back by endangered bobbies. Amazingly, the song itself was written just the day before recording, based on a legendary case of Ringo misspeak. "It's been a hard day..." he told someone before realising it was dark outside, "... night!" Filming for The Beatles' debut film was almost complete but still lacking a title or theme song, so the phrase stuck and Lennon brought the song in the very next day.

Ira Wolf Tuton: "The Beatles are universal, and it's also the greatest ever kids' music, too. It's very easy to sing along to. A lot of Beatles stuff is lullaby-y; it references folk music. From song to song, it's very easy to latch onto melodies, and as a kid you don't know what an octopus' garden is, but it's cool imagery for a child in the same way that it's cool imagery for someone who's feeding their head with tons of drugs."

GETTY



The Beatles at Chiswick House, London in 1966, making the 'Paperback Writer' video



18 For No One

► CHOSEN BY **Barry Nicolson, writer**

► ALBUM **Revolver, 1966**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? Paul wrote this gem from 'Revolver' in the bathroom of a chalet in the Swiss Alps. John liked it, later calling it "one of my favourites of his – a nice piece of work"

For six months or so following a particularly painful breakup, I would make myself miserable by listening to 'For No One' on a near-constant loop. Was immersing myself in a song whose working title was 'Why Did It Die?' the wisest use of my time? Probably not. Was it worth it? Absolutely, because 'For No One' is as perfect a song as Paul McCartney ever wrote. From its offbeat chord sequence to the drear melancholy of its lyrics – delivered from a cold, clinical second-person perspective – to the French horn solo that seems to arrive out of nowhere, 'For No One' is gold-standard songwriting, the best song on the best Beatles album, even if its understatement means it's rarely talked about in the same breath as 'Hey Jude' or 'Yesterday'. A product of the mid-

'60s musical arms-race between Paul McCartney and Brian Wilson, in which 'Rubber Soul' begat 'Pet Sounds', which in turn was eclipsed by 'Revolver', there's an obvious Beach Boys influence at play, but there's also a sense of quiet, stiff-upper-lipped desperation that could only be British. Even though the song was written about McCartney's own relationship with Jane Asher, whenever I hear it I imagine the two protagonists as characters in some Karel Reisz-directed kitchen-sink drama, one eking out a monochrome existence of regret and frustration, the other blossoming into a newly liberated life in Technicolor. As often as I've heard 'For No One' (and it must be in the mid-hundreds by now), I'll never, ever tire of it.



16 Ticket To Ride

► CHOSEN BY **Noel Gallagher**

► ALBUM **Help!, 1965**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? Joseph McGrath, who worked on the original *Casino Royale*, made a video for the song

According to Noel Gallagher, 'Ticket To Ride' is "one of the greatest, if not the greatest, two-and-a-half to three-minute pop song ever written". In fact, 'Ticket To Ride' was the first Beatles song to cross the three-minute mark, if only by 10 seconds. In doing so, it took the band into new territory, making extensive use of overdubbing techniques and, in John Lennon's view, becoming "one of the earliest heavy-metal records made". That might not be your first thought upon hearing the jangling 12-string Rickenbacker guitar riff, but nonetheless, here's the truth in Lennon's words: Ringo's thunderous rolls and fills, not to mention the double-time section at the end, provide serious heaviness, and were apparently suggested by Paul. In many ways, it was one of the most important milestones of The Beatles' career – certainly, it's impossible to imagine the complexities of 'Revolver' without the foundations laid by this song.



17 Paperback Writer

► CHOSEN BY **James Bagshaw, Temples**

► ALBUM **Single only, 1966**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? John called 'Paperback Writer' "the son of 'Day Tripper'"



Entranced by the lighter-than-air intro harmonies of 'Paperback Writer' and its whimsical subject matter, it's easy to forget that this post-'Revolver' classic was a heavy, pummelling rock song that used an entire White Elephant speaker as a microphone for Paul's bass. Over this proto-'Helter Skelter' backing, Paul wrote a letter from a wannabe novelist to a publisher that wasn't based a real-life character, despite decades of speculation about the

identity of "a man named Lear". Whatever novel this fictional Paul had written, though, it was bound to be a page-turner.

James Bagshaw: "I remember seeing The Strokes and wanting to be like that, but it was hearing The Beatles when I was 10 that made me want to play music with a group of people, more so than Elvis. I wasn't listening to the weirder stuff back then, it would have been the earlier singles, and 'Paperback Writer' was a standout."



15 'Abbey Road' Medley

► CHOSEN BY **Ruban Neilson, Unknown Mortal Orchestra**

► ALBUM **Abbey Road, 1969**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon/McCartney**

► DID YOU KNOW? The medley came about when George Martin suggested the band work "symphonically". John and Paul didn't write any of the parts together

How do you go one bigger than 'The White Album'? How about an all-you-can-eat symphony of pop snippets of eight tracks taking up around a third of your swansong album ('Let It Be' was recorded earlier), the grandest and greatest bow-out of any band ever? It was Paul's idea, but John leapt at the chance to offload a bunch of half-written songs he'd had lying around since 'Sgt Pepper...' and it all made for a glorious pop sprawl. Some of Paul's most magical moments emerge in 'You Never Give Me Your Money', 'She Came In Through The Bathroom Window' and the breathtaking, lullaby-like 'Golden Slumbers', while John was at his playful and raucous best on the likes of 'Polythene Pam' and 'Mean Mr Mustard'. A tour de force.

Ruban Neilson: "I have to choose the whole of the second side of 'Abbey Road', because it's almost like one song, the way they all bleed together. It's like the beginning of a whole new era of pop music; to me, they're responsible for the music of the '70s through that album. It's as if they knew they were splitting up and they had so much left to say that they had to cram it all in before they went."

14 Something

► CHOSEN BY **Duncan Wallis, Dutch Uncles**

► ALBUM **Abbey Road, 1969**

► SONGWRITER **Harrison**

► DID YOU KNOW? When George was first told how great this song was, his first thought was to give it to another singer called Jackie Lomax, who might release it a single

Duncan Wallis: "Apart from being Harrison's most successful Beatles single and his most celebrated song among the other writers in the band, it's a remarkable example of how their appeal stretched across the genres of the time – and how influential Harrison is among the psych bands of the present day. My personal reasons for picking this song are purely nostalgic, as it was the demo song on the first keyboard I ever owned. But even with the limited 8-bit sounds making it more like a level on *Sonic 2*, the tempo still made it both easy and intriguing

on the ears. My favourite rendition would have to be Isaac Hayes', mainly because his interpretive style of piano-playing sounds bizarrely like the *Thomas The Tank Engine* theme tune, making it even more Beatles-esque by association."



13 Let It Be

► CHOSEN BY **Isaac Holman, Slaves**

► ALBUM **Let It Be, 1970**

► SONGWRITER **McCartney**

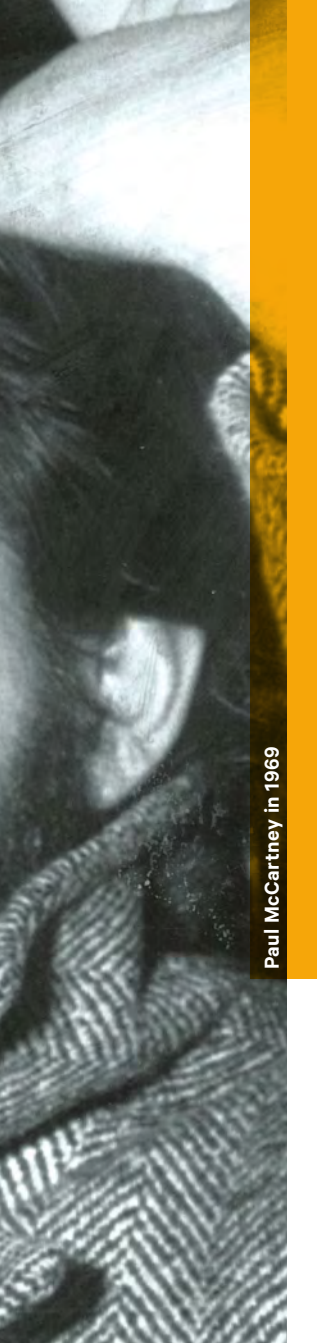
► DID YOU KNOW? John thought 'Let It Be' was "nothing to do with The Beatles. It could've been Wings"

As The Beatles fractured around Paul and his mind became more and more frazzled, his mother Mary, who'd died of cancer when he was a teenager, appeared to him in a dream. "It'll be alright," she told him, "don't worry too much, it'll turn out OK." Beatles-wise, the ghost of Mrs McCartney was very wrong, but her words inspired one of Macca's last great Beatles ballads, a song that became something of



a spiritual anthem thanks to his renaming of his vision as Mother Mary. "I don't mind," he said, "I'm quite happy if people want to use it to shore up their faith. I have no problem with that."

Isaac Holman: "You can't really go wrong with it, it's the ultimate classic."



Paul McCartney in 1969

12 In My Life

- CHOSEN BY **Bob Geldof**
- ALBUM **Rubber Soul, 1965**
- SONGWRITER **Lennon**
- DID YOU KNOW? 'In My Life' was performed at Kurt Cobain's funeral

A track John referred to as his "first really big song", 'In My Life' has taken a special place in the Beatles catalogue thanks to its glistening fug of nostalgia. Taking his starting point as a bus ride from his house at 251 Menlove Avenue into Liverpool, John went on to remember "friends I still can recall/ Some are dead and some are living", a line that he'd later confirm referred

to his ex-bandmate Stuart Sutcliffe.

Bob Geldof: "I went to see The Beatles in '64. My sister and her friend Michelle took me. And what I remember is the smell of piss as girls fainted. There was green lino on the cinema floor and all we saw was the streaks of dirt that the riviulets of piss made. I picked 'In My Life' because it's a great song; it has meaning to me."

11 Hey Bulldog

- CHOSEN BY **Dave Grohl, Foo Fighters**
- ALBUM **Yellow Submarine, 1969**
- SONGWRITER **Lennon**
- DID YOU KNOW? 'Hey Bulldog' was the last song the band recorded before Yoko Ono became a permanent presence at their sessions

On the 50th anniversary of The Beatles' 1963 appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, the likes of Katy Perry, Pharrell Williams and Imagine Dragons performed Beatles songs on a CBS special celebrating the band. Appearing on the show alongside ELO's Jeff Lynne, Dave Grohl chose to play 'Hey Bulldog', an often-ignored rock tune from the *Yellow Submarine* soundtrack. Thus he cast a spotlight on one of the most undervalued of Lennon's tracks, and one he fought hard to make the A-side of a single instead of 'Lady Madonna'.

Dave Grohl: "To me, it's a quintessential Beatles rocker. Paul's rolling bassline. The trademark Ringo drum fills. George's gritty, distorted guitar. And that sound that only the back of John Lennon's throat could produce. This is my mom's favourite band, my favourite band, and now my daughter's favourite band... I can honestly say that if it wasn't for The Beatles, I would not be a musician."



10 Hey Jude

- CHOSEN BY **Julian Lennon**
- ALBUM **Single only**
- SONGWRITER **McCartney**
- DID YOU KNOW? It was originally titled 'Hey Jules', for Lennon's five-year-old son Julian as the divorce of his parents went through. Paul later changed the title to 'Hey Jude' after the character 'Jud' in the musical *Oklahoma!*

It must be weird when someone who is not your Beatle father but his best mate writes a song as an arm-around-the-shoulder to help you deal with your parents' divorce. From those deeply personal roots came The Beatles' most universal song – one that, under the right set of circumstances (such as the opening ceremony of a major sporting event), can transcend all barriers of language and culture. You don't have to understand a word of the first three minutes (indeed, McCartney himself would have trouble explaining what he meant by "the movement you need is on your shoulder"), because the song's mantra of optimism and positivity can be summed up in a single syllable: na (na-na-nananana, etc).

Julian Lennon: "It's very strange to think that someone has written a song about you. It still touches me."

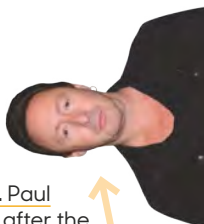
9 I Am The Walrus

- CHOSEN BY **Theo Ellis, Wolf Alice**
- ALBUM **Magical Mystery Tour, 1967**
- SONGWRITER **Lennon**
- DID YOU KNOW? The voices at the end of 'I Am The Walrus' come from a BBC radio play of *King Lear*, which John was listening to as he worked on the song

'I Am The Walrus' is the pinnacle of Lennon's surreal, disturbing psychedelic-nonsense imagery, with its "semolina pilchard climbing up the Eiffel Tower" and "yellow matter custard dripping from a dead dog's eye". Influenced by Alice In Wonderland, a large crate of acid and the sound of a passing police siren, it was considered an outré curio designed to confuse and infuriate intellectuals who, by 1967, were pulling apart Beatles songs for inner meaning – until Oasis made it a staple of their early live shows and turned it into the swagger-rockers' Beatles tune of

choice. Plus, in the line "Expert textpert... don't you think the joker laughs at you" he may well have predicted the LOL.

Theo Ellis: "Supposedly Lennon wrote the lyrics to 'I Am The Walrus' to confuse the shit out of everyone, as by this point people were breaking down Beatles songs, writing essays on them... It's packed with attitude, and I dare anyone not to scream 'goo-goo-ga-joob' when pissed and singing along. It sounds like a demented nursery rhyme. The woozy strings and the mad voices flying around your speakers create such a cool landscape. It's my perfect song, I reckon."



8 While My Guitar Gently Weeps

► CHOSEN BY **Justin Young, The Vaccines; Raekwon**

► ALBUM **The White Album, 1968**

► SONGWRITER **Harrison**

► DID YOU KNOW? Eric Clapton played lead guitar on 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps'. He and George were good friends, but George had difficulty persuading Eric to come to the studio as he feared the other Beatles wouldn't like him

George's sublime state-of-the-globe address stood head and shoulders above the vast majority of 'The White Album' by virtue of its urgent, pulsing piano, incandescent guitar licks and a chorus that rivalled those of Lennon and McCartney. It sounded like a summation of everything George had been building up to his entire Beatles life.

Justin Young: "My favourite Beatles album is 'The White Album'. It's maybe not the most focused record ever, but it's certainly full of good pop songs. I like 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps', from 'The White Album'... I'm trying to think of ones that aren't super cheesy! Beatles songs redefined pop music. The Beatles are pop music. We try and throw in a Ringo fill here and there, and at times I've even found myself trying to emulate the tone of McCartney's voice."

Raekwon: "First time I heard it was when we sampled it – Wu-Tang Clan, 'The Heart Gently Weeps', a beat produced by the RZA. It was dope. We just took it on a story level – it made me want to go where they went, that emotion. It's records like that that people want. It just had a cinematic feel to it. The Beatles are timeless dudes doing timeless things. We're the black Beatles. You can call me Chef McCartney 'cos I'm the same way – I'm just like Paul."

7 Across The Universe

► CHOSEN BY **Mark Stoermer, The Killers**

► ALBUM **Let It Be, 1970**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? 'Across The Universe' inspired Liam Gallagher to begin writing songs

On February 4, 2008, to mark the 50th anniversary of Nasa, 'Across The Universe' was broadcast into space, directly at the North Star. "Send my love to the aliens!" Paul said, making you wonder what sort of wild space jazz they may have developed out on Kuiper-VP18896 if the intergalactic airwaves had picked up this song – a gorgeous glacial swirl that reaches out of your headphones and embraces you like an acid high. John's celestial tone and spiritual lyrics – "*Jai guru deva om*" translates from Sanskrit as 'victory to the God divine' – were inspired by discovering the Maharishi's work and written in a dreamy, late-night cosmic mood in 1967, allegedly after having been kept awake by his then wife Cynthia talking in bed.

Mark Stoermer: "*Images of broken light/Which dance before me like a million eyes/They call me on and across the universe*'. I like the whole lyric but that's the best line. I recently found out that John Lennon believes these were the most poetic lyrics he'd ever written, and I think I agree."

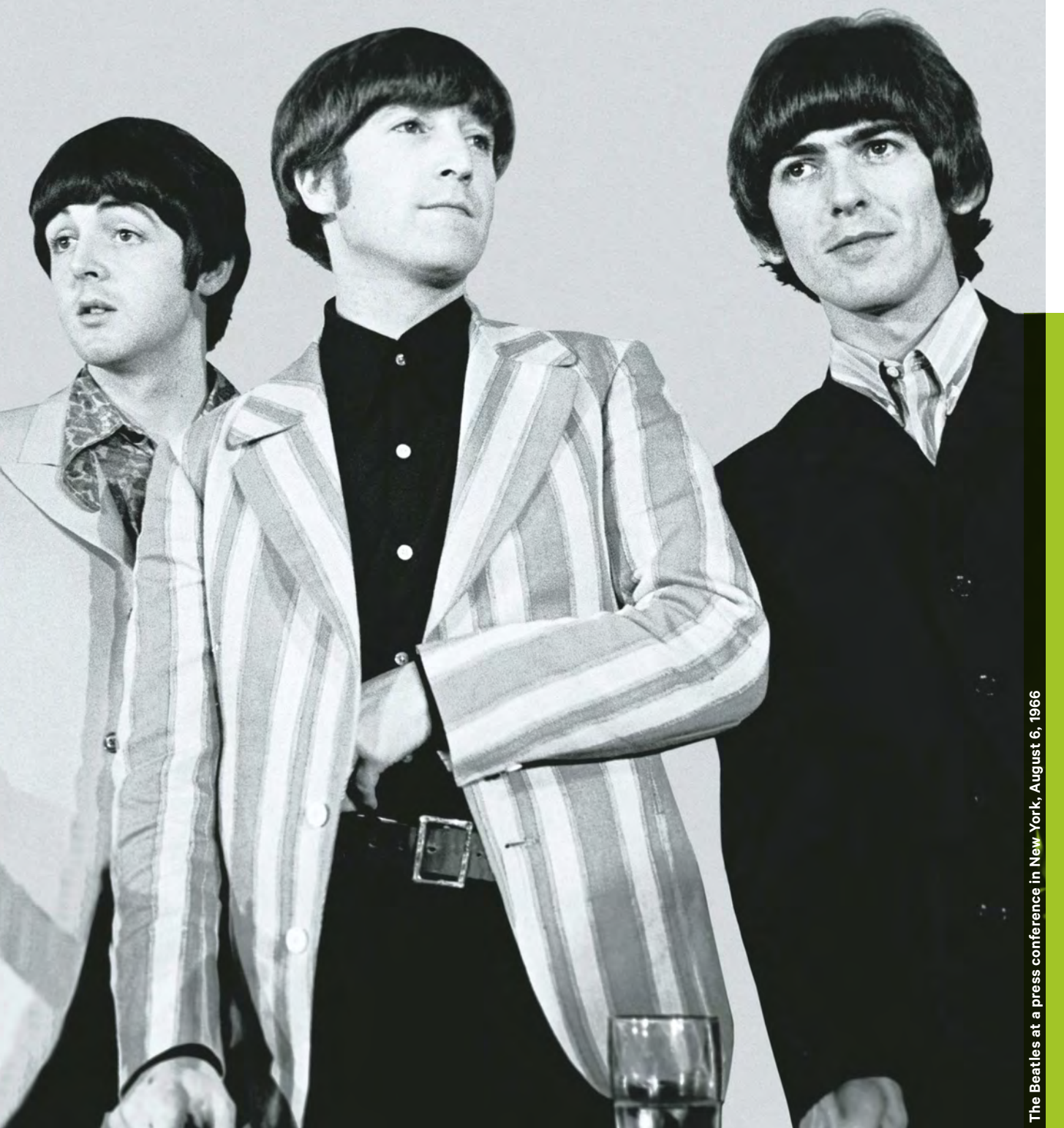
6 Tomorrow Never Knows

► CHOSEN BY **Bob Mould, Hüsker Dü**

► ALBUM **Revolver, 1966**

► SONGWRITER **Lennon**

► DID YOU KNOW? The title came from a saying of Ringo's, which they used to take the edge off the heavy, philosophical lyrics. Previous working titles for the song were 'Mark I' and 'The Void'



The Beatles at a press conference in New York, August 6, 1966

65

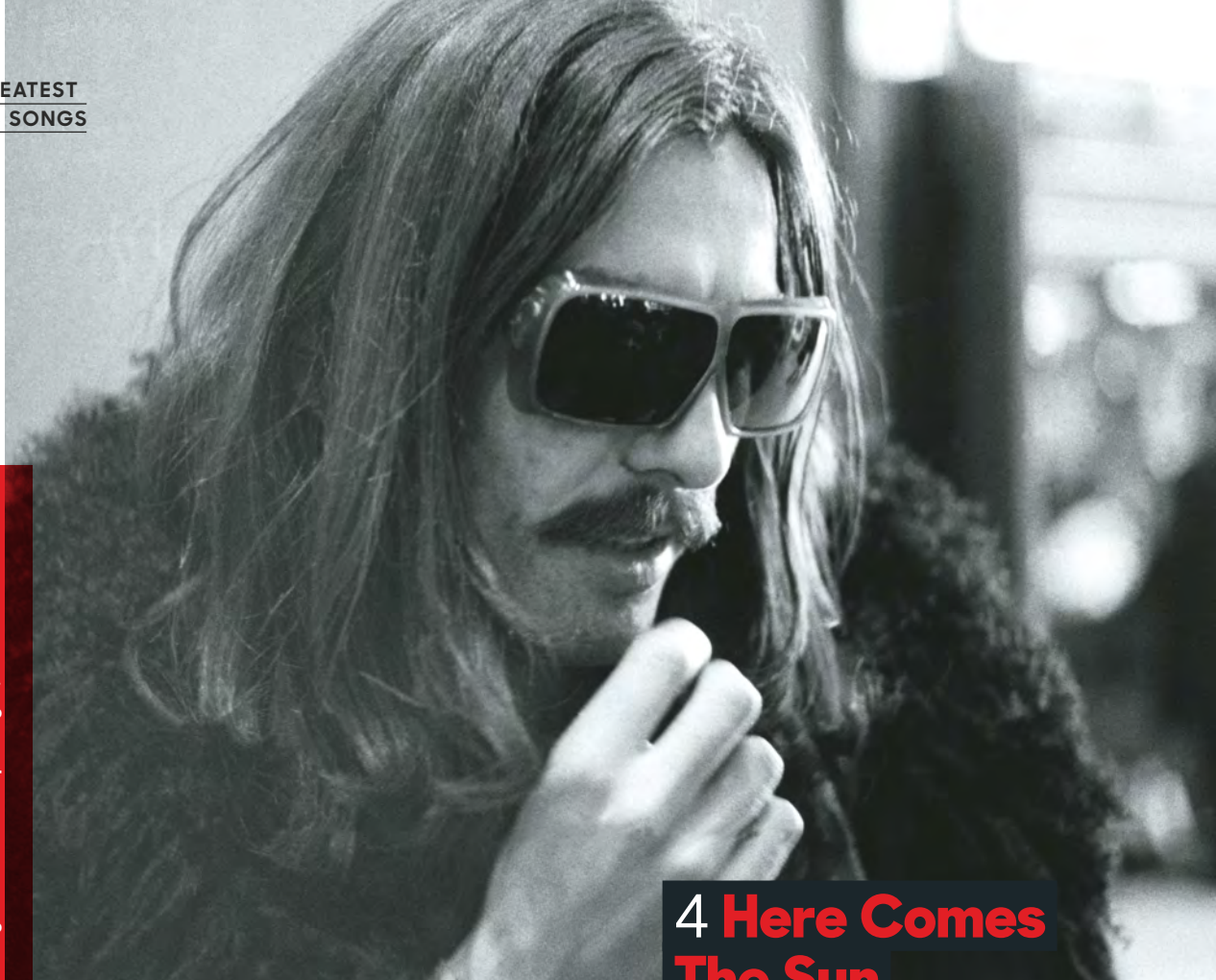
GETTY
This track included the first ever use of tape loops on a pop record, ensuring it would become hugely influential. With the backing track largely complete – an energised drone that John, attempting to put *The Tibetan Book Of The Dead* to music, imagined would sound like he was the Dalai Lama chanting with thousands of monks on a hillside –

Paul brought in a bag of 20 tape loops featuring a host of different sounds: laughter, a sitar, some grandfather clocks and various acid-fried effects. A complicated combination of BTR3 tape machines and a number of studio engineers using pencils to keep tension in the loops helped create the insane psychedelic squall of sound.

Bob Mould: “‘Sgt Pepper...’ was cute and clever, but this was the culmination of all their years beating it out in the clubs. It’s their speed record, really raw and elemental, not too sophisticated. And the drumming is amazing. The Beatles are the greatest group of that whole period – they forced everyone else to reinvent themselves, made pop a little redundant.”



George Harrison in Copenhagen, December 1969



4 Here Comes The Sun

► CHOSEN BY Courtney Barnett; Jamie Reynolds, Klaxons; Ricky Wilson, Kaiser Chiefs

► ALBUM *Abbey Road*, 1969

► SONGWRITER Harrison

► DID YOU KNOW? George wrote the song in April 1969, which was indeed a sunny month. It would take until 1984 for an April to record more sunlight hours

It's a credit to George Harrison's immense songwriting talent that 'Here Comes The Sun' ranks so highly on our list. Why is George so loved? Perhaps because – while complications with the band's affairs in 1969 resulted in The Beatles having, as Harrison said that year, “meetings and meetings... with banks, bankers and lawyers” – he “sagged off school”, drove out to Eric Clapton's house in Surrey and casually knocked out this bona fide classic, which uses three different time signatures, before it was time for lunch (he later finished the song in Sardinia). “It was just so sunny,” Harrison added, “and it was just the release of that tension that had been building up on me.”

Courtney Barnett: “It's so peaceful. I don't really know what the lyrics are about, but it's just so gentle. I want it played at my funeral, to make people feel sad.”

Ricky Wilson: “It was stuck on my car stereo when I didn't get into Central Saint Martins to do fine art. It's a song that should only

be listened to with tears streaming down your face.”

Jamie Reynolds: “I remember connecting this song to the film *Time Bandits* [even though it's not on the soundtrack] and the image of a small boy playing with a pigeon. I don't know why. I absolutely loved it. It's so warm and life-affirming.”

5 Blackbird

► CHOSEN BY Rebecca Taylor, Slow Club; Kyle Falconer, The View

► ALBUM *The White Album*, 1968

► SONGWRITER McCartney

► DID YOU KNOW? The only three sounds recorded for the song were Paul's voice, acoustic guitar and foot-tapping. The birds were dubbed on later

'Blackbird' is a McCartney song, and judging by the fact that he's kept playing it ever since, it's one of his favourites. It's simple and effective, and has illustrious origins – in 2005, Macca claimed it was inspired by Bach's 'Bourrée In E Minor', a lute piece that he and George had learned as teenagers to “show off”. In 2002, he said, “It's not really about a blackbird whose wings are broken, you know, it's a bit more symbolic,” adding that the lyrics are about racism in the American south. The title can be read as meaning a black woman ('bird'), which comes across as an insult in 2015, but that wasn't McCartney's intention. Today he'd probably admit that the song is naive, especially in light of continuing race struggles in the US. But for listeners, that's its charm: it's very much of its time – beautiful, innocent and instilled with the hope of the era.

Rebecca Taylor: “We used to go on holiday to Filey, and my dad had a tape with The Beach Boys on one side and The Beatles on the other. We'd rotate this tape for two weeks every summer. This was the song I always looked forward to. I knew every word.”

Kyle Falconer: “It's the first Beatles song that made me cry. I was babysitting when I was 14, which I probably shouldn't have been, and I watched *The Beatles Anthology* for hours on end on videotape. It was a beautiful time; probably the best time I've ever had.”





3 I Want To Hold Your Hand

► **CHOSEN BY** Bob Dylan; Ian McCulloch, Echo & The Bunnymen; Tim Wheeler, Ash; Marky Ramone, Ramones; John Hassall, The Libertines

► **ALBUM** Single only

► **SONGWRITER** Lennon/McCartney

► **DID YOU KNOW?** Bob Dylan thought the line "I can't hide" was "I get high" and a reference to marijuana. He was surprised to learn they had never tried pot, and became part of Beatles lore when he introduced them to it

Seventy-three million people tuned in to watch The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Five million people bought 'I Want To Hold Your Hand'; at its peak, 10,000 copies were sold every hour. It was a song that defined the times and revolutionised the possibilities of pop in 1963, and yet the Fabs' global breakthrough hit of coy, handclappy romance remains one of the most utterly compelling two-and-a-half minutes of music to this day.

Bob Dylan: "We were driving through Colorado, we had the radio on, and eight of the Top 10 songs were Beatles songs... 'I Want To Hold Your Hand', all those early ones. They were doing things nobody else was doing. Their chords were outrageous, and their harmonies made it all valid... They were pointing the direction of where music had to go."

Ian McCulloch: "I remember this from primary school. I called it 'I Want To Wash Your Hands', as I was forever washing my hands – right up to my armpits – in the sink."

Tim Wheeler: "My parents had this great Beatles compilation called 'A Collection Of Beatles'"

Oldies (But Goldies!); which contained their early singles. The last song was 'I Want To Hold Your Hand', which is a template for what I hold to be a great single."

Marky Ramone: "I hated school and I had no direction in life 'til I heard The Beatles. They saved my life. As soon as I heard 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1964, I knew I wanted to drum. I was nine, playing with my toy soldiers, when Mom called me to check them out. I never picked up those toy soldiers again. All I wanted to do was drum."

John Hassall: "It was released back in the dark ages of 1963, before The Beatles were bigger than Jesus and only just bigger than Cliff Richard. The youthful exuberance of the '60s had only just begun. For me it is always an impossibly

close call between 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' and 'She Loves You', both being equally catchy and brilliant. 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' is a little bit more understated, and the middle-eight – "And when I touch you I feel happy inside" – is just such a perfect match for the rest of the song. The lyrics are all very innocent and yet very suggestive. The early Beatles lyrics were pretty basic (compared to, say, Bob Dylan at the same time), but they were so good at describing love and desire. I really like the lead guitar, too – he just plays these cheeky little riffs that never get in the way of the song, but just add to it. It was this record that broke America, and you can see why."

2 A Day In The Life

► **CHOSEN BY** Brett Anderson, Suede; Joe Goddard, Hot Chip; Jonathan Higgs, Everything Everthing; Nile Rodgers

► **ALBUM** Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967

► **SONGWRITER** Lennon/McCartney

► **DID YOU KNOW?** At the end of the lengthy piano-chord fade-out, The Beatles inserted a note that's only audible to dogs

The grand closing opus of 'Sgt Pepper...' is widely acknowledged as one of The Beatles' crowning achievements. Its overwhelming conflation of the monumental (a full orchestra sawing towards a heart-stopping crescendo) and the everyday (bus rides to work, newspaper stories of suicides and Lancashire landslides) set out to make normal life seem somehow hyperreal. As ambitious and imposing as it was warm and welcoming, its stretching of studio techniques to shattering point blew the '60s apart and set a bar few have ever come close to clearing since.

Brett Anderson: "It's an amazing song. When I was a kid, my dad was a huge classical music fan. The only pop album he had was 'Sgt Pepper...', and so he would occasionally, when he was in a jolly mood, put that on. So I spent my formative years listening to 'A Day In The Life'. I love its haunting, dreamlike quality and the strange, slightly surreal sense of scale it has. It's still a very special song for me. It's just beautiful and brilliantly epic."

Joe Goddard: "It's still unsurpassed. The way it's put together is just incredible. You know that they weren't really writing together at that time, and you can hear that in the song itself because there are obvious parts to it: the instrumental sections, the John bit, and then the Paul bit with the tape edit where it changes speeds. They must have had to work at it so much to make all of that hang together and sound right; but it does, it sounds absolutely incredible. I've played it when I'm DJing and it always gets a massive reaction."

Jonathan Higgs: "It's quite a scary song and it's quite weird. But there's something in it that moved me in a way no music had up to that point."

Nile Rodgers: "This was the first song I learned to play on the guitar. My transformation from R&B happened years earlier, when I heard 'The End' by The Doors, but it wasn't as important as learning 'A Day In The Life'. I was 16 and really struggling, but my mother's boyfriend realised the guitar was out of tune, and once he tuned it, I was able to sit there and play it perfectly."



1 Strawberry Fields Forever

► CHOSEN BY Alexis Taylor, Hot Chip; George Martin, Beatles producer; Wiley; Pete Townshend, The Who; Sam Fryer, Palma Violets

► ALBUM *Single only*, 1967

► SONGWRITER Lennon

► DID YOU KNOW? A distorted voice at the end sounds like it's saying "I buried Paul", which fuelled rumours that Paul McCartney was dead. The voice is actually Lennon saying "cranberry sauce"

A distillation of every single bit of The Beatles' creativity, ambition and originality in just four minutes, the exquisite 'Strawberry Fields Forever' was written by Lennon in Spain in 1966, during breaks from acting in Richard Lester's film *How I Won The War*. The title is taken from the name of a Salvation Army children's home in Liverpool, near where Lennon's aunt lived, and was the first track recorded in the sessions for 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' (although it was eventually left off the album).

Alexis Taylor: "You don't need me to tell you it's a masterpiece, but what I find interesting is that it doesn't sound dated. That sound of the Mellotron is totally distinctive and completely of that era, but unlike some other songs from the '60s, it hasn't aged. John's voice really gets to you as well – it's just so English and unique and also so weird and perfect."

George Martin: "John wanted to keep his acoustic guitar for this session, so Paul took over on the Mellotron. With Ringo on drums and George on electric guitar, the song was heavier-sounding than I had imagined it from my initial run-through with John, but it came together very quickly. Almost immediately, we arrived at a take that we thought would be the final one. That first take is brilliant,

especially John's vocal: clear, pure and riveting. As he sang it that night, the song became hypnotic: gentle and wistful, but very strong too, his sparse vocal standing in sharp contrast to the full sound of George's electric guitar, Paul's imaginative Mellotron and Ringo's magnificent drums. Sticking to John's original idea, it started with what became, in the finished version, the chorus: "*Living is easy with eyes closed...*" Typically, John asked for a speed change on his vocal recording. I thought his voice was one of the all-time greats, but he was always asking me to distort or bend it in some way, to 'improve' it, as he thought."

Pete Townshend: "Me and Eric Clapton were summoned to the house of [Beatles manager] Brian Epstein to hear the playback of 'Strawberry Fields Forever'. So we sat and listened,

and then it finished, and Epstein said, 'So, have you got anything to say?' And I remember Eric said, 'Umm... could I hear it again, please?' For me, 'Strawberry Fields Forever' exemplifies the mood of that time, which was that sound had suddenly become important in itself – I firmly believed that one power chord said more than 100 songs could ever say, which basically goes right back to the original rock ideal."

Wiley: "Sometimes I think urban artists don't really appreciate The Beatles. But I can hear in 'Strawberry Fields...' that they had listened to urban artists, and them old American blues guitarists. I can hear that they know what the history of music is."

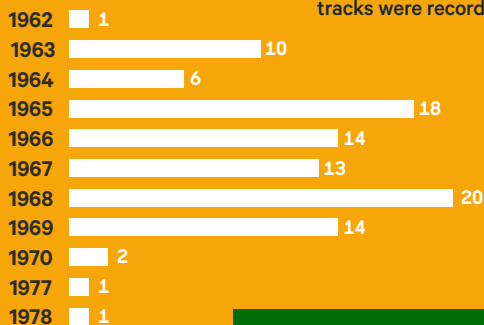
Sam Fryer: "It's the first song ever to sound the way it does in the history of music. It's groundbreaking."



Like a weird bushtucker trial, we have digested our Beatles list and reproduced it in number form

IN MY LIFE

The years in which the 100 greatest Beatles tracks were recorded



I, ME, MINE

How many songs in our list were written by each Beatle? (Sorry, Ringo – peace and love)



A HARD DAY'S NIGHT

The easiest and trickiest tracks to make out of the 100

7 SONGS ON LIST RECORDED IN 1 TAKE

- Hey Jude ► Michelle ► Honey Pie
- Savoy Truffle ► Martha My Dear
- Wild Honey Pie ► Dear Prudence

MOST TAKES HAPPINESS IS A WARM GUN

70

HELP!

Which producers worked alongside the Fab Four on the Top 100 songs?

GEORGE MARTIN ALONE

91

GEORGE MARTIN WITH OTHERS 3
PHIL SPECTOR 4
JOHN LENNON 1
MIKE SMITH 1

LONG LONG LONG

A veritable banquet of time-related stats

5:18:17

TOTAL TIME OF ALL SONGS ON LIST

0:52

SHORTEST TRACK
Wild Honey Pie

2:04

SHORTEST TRACK RELEASED AS A SINGLE
All My Loving

15:55

LONGEST ENTRY ON LIST
Abbey Road Medley

7:47

LONGEST INDIVIDUAL TRACK
I Want You (She's So Heavy)

3:18

AVERAGE TIME OF TRACKS

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

The number of tracks from each Beatles album in our list



► SINGLE ONLY 13

► B-SIDE 3

► OTHER 1

■ COMPILED BY GEORGIA BUTLER

There would be primal therapy albums, bagpipe anthems, Krishna pop megahits, Bond themes, tank engines, Traveling Wilburys and Kanye West. After The Beatles split, John, Paul, George and even Ringo kept their creative flames alive, as Mark Beaumont recounts

All things must pass

John

Even before The Beatles split, John was exploring solo options with Yoko, releasing three experimental albums and working on live performances together. These evolved into a pair of 1970 albums as Plastic Ono Band – one of John’s material and one of Yoko’s; the result of months of primal therapy sessions with Arthur Janov in London and LA that involved reliving traumatic life experiences. John’s made for a raw, personal album full of moments veering from headstrong political commentary (‘Working Class Hero’) to deeply harrowing reflections on the loss of his mother (‘Mother’, ‘My Mummy’s Dead’). Between the atheistic catalogue of non-belief that was ‘God’ – “*I don’t believe in Beatles*” he yelled at the climax of a list of cultural and spiritual forces he was denying – to the pure, simplistic emotion of ‘Love’, Lennon’s philosophy was never so starkly defined.

Phil Spector was too busy to co-produce much of ‘John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band’, but his plush work on 1971’s ‘Imagine’ made it relative light relief, despite being home to the vicious ‘Gimme Some Truth’, a sly attack on Paul called ‘How Do You Sleep?’ and ‘Crippled Inside’, a comedy hoedown about a psyche so scarred that Janov called him “completely non-functional” (or, some claim, another dig at Paul). But the gorgeous ‘Jealous Guy’ and the idealistic title track, before it became a byword for corny hippy schmaltz, were intoxicating and ‘Imagine’ would become Lennon’s most adored solo album.

Having released impassioned singles calling for social justice – ‘Give Peace A Chance’, ‘Power To The People’ – in 1971 John and Yoko moved to New York and threw themselves into the protest scene around Greenwich Village. Cue an FBI file and a politically charged third solo

album – ‘Some Time In New York City’ – that was somewhat hobbled by Yoko’s songwriting and vocal involvement. ‘Angela’ stood out as a stirring, Stonesy orchestral country beauty. His mojo returned, however, for 1973’s ‘Mind Games’; the title track was one of his most ambitious and strident solo singles and the ‘20s-inflected ‘One Day (At A Time)’ and jubilant Soweto party tune ‘Bring On The Lucie (Freed People)’ bucked John’s solo trend for rootsy filler. His 18-month ‘lost weekend’ separation from Yoko also inspired 1974’s funky and soulful ‘Walls And Bridges’, Lennon’s attempt at a Marvin Gaye boudoir record that included two of his most uplifting solo tracks in wry disco boogie ‘Whatever Gets You Thru The Night’ and ‘#9 Dream’, an airy gem that sounded like it was produced by the tooth fairy. Its epic, morose highpoint, ‘Nobody Loves You (When You’re Down And Out)’, was a fitting if pessimistic swansong for Lennon’s ‘70s career.

A lawsuit from Chuck Berry over the riff to ‘Come Together’ led to the inconsequential album of classic covers ‘Rock ‘N’ Roll’ in 1975 and Lennon, reunited with Yoko and father to young Sean, withdrew into a life of house husbandry in the Dakota Building. It’s rock’s biggest tragedy that Lennon was just re-emerging with some of his strongest solo material on 1980’s ‘Double Fantasy’ when he was gunned down at the age of 40.

Paul

Paul's insistence on releasing a solo album was one of the things that led to the tensions that split The Beatles, but when 'McCartney' emerged in 1970, played entirely by Paul, it sounded like half of a great Beatles record. 'Every Night', 'Junk' and 'Maybe I'm Amazed' were every bit as inspired as his contributions to 'Abbey Road' or 'The White Album', but it seemed he couldn't produce a full album of them and 'McCartney' came stuffed with half-conceived padding. Its languid tone continued into sessions for 1971's 'Ram', which produced Macca's first solo Number One (in the US) in semi-comic Beach Boys homage 'Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey', the masterful "Eleanor Rigby" in New York that was 'Another Day', Beatledeleic honky-tonker 'Eat At Home' and the majestic multi-parter 'The Back Seat Of My Car', his very own teenage symphony to God.

McCartney really hit his solo stride after forming Wings, though, blowing Bassey off every Bond compilation with 'Live And Let Die', selling six million copies of the hugely acclaimed 'Band On The Run' album in 1973 thanks to its proto-'Bohemian Rhapsody' title track, the monumental 'Let Me Roll It' and Alan Partridge favourite 'Jet', and then bagging the biggest-selling UK single of all time (until Band Aid in 1984) with 1977's 'Mull Of Kintyre'. Over a decade, The Band The Beatles Could Have Been built a formidable canon – 'My Love', 'Silly Love Songs', 'With A Little Luck', um, 'Crossroads Theme' – even

though Paul clearly hadn't learnt his lesson from all those Ringo songs and let the rest of the band sing.

After a brief flirtation with experimental synth pop on 1980's 'McCartney II', producing the ground-breaking 'Temporary Secretary' and US Number One 'Coming Up', Paul spent the '80s as the Collaboration King. He hit Number One in the UK with his 1981 piano-as-racial-metaphor duet with Stevie Wonder, 'Ebony And Ivory'. He sang with Jacko on 'Say Say Say' and the most unlikely love duel in pop history, 'The Girl Is Mine'. He co-wrote classics like 'Veronica', 'My Brave Face', 'That Day Is Done' and 'You Want Her Too' with Elvis Costello and infamously hung out with a bunch of cartoon frogs. There were periods around 1985, drenched in slap bass and Duran Duran synths, where it felt he was struggling to keep up with the times he'd once dictated, but his creative engines were still regularly churning out solid winners – 'Pipes Of Peace', 'No More Lonely Nights', 'Press', 'Only Love Remains', large chunks of 1989's return to form 'Flowers In The Dirt'.

Longevity is a fickle mistress, even for the Mozart of his age whose music will be played and studied for centuries to come. It's been a long time since Macca's studio albums have been essential listens, but he still innovates: in his electronic work with producer Youth under the moniker The Fireman; with the array of contemporary producers that made 2013's 'New' sound like the work of a man a third his age; and with Kanye West on 'FourFiveSeconds' and 'Only One'. You could argue that Macca's more relevant right now than he has been at any time since The Beatles. Thumbs aloft.



It's been a long time since Macca's albums have been essential, but he still innovates

George

Like Lennon, Harrison had begun releasing solo albums before the band broke up, putting out 'Wonderwall Music' in 1968 and experimental Moog album 'Electronic Sound' in 1969. But it was his first post-Beatles album, 'All Things Must Pass', that sealed his reputation as the equal of Lennon and McCartney. It was George's vindictory masterpiece, giving him the first post-Beatles UK Number One single with the Krishna pop of 'My Sweet Lord' and including timeless, widescreen beauties like 'Wah-Wah' and 'Isn't It A Pity'. The album stands amongst the very best post-Beatles collections; Harrison's very own 'White Album'.

Reputation reasserted and huge global solo success in the bag, Harrison refined his riffs for 1973's crystal-bright 'Living In The Material World' and its spritely lead track 'Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth)'. Elsewhere there was a 'Taxman'-style dig at the rest of The Beatles suing each other for the benefit of the lawyers ('Sue Me, Sue You Blues'), lush Procul Harum piano ballads ('The Light That Has Lighted The World', 'Who Can See It') and strutting boogies ('Don't Let Me Wait Too Long', the title track). The album found George struggling with the incompatibilities between the spiritual and the material, the political and the humane, and looking for solutions in Hindu philosophy. There was little karma in the reviews of 1974's 'Dark Horse', though; a rootsy affair widely considered his weakest solo effort only redeemed by the affecting 'So Sad'. The following year's 'Extra Texture (Read All About It)', the last ever Apple studio album, took a soulful, Smokey-infused turn for Motown stomps like 'You' and lustrous ballads 'Can't Stop Thinking About You' and 'World Of Stone', but cocaine and critical snipes were stifling Harrison's interest, and sales slumped.

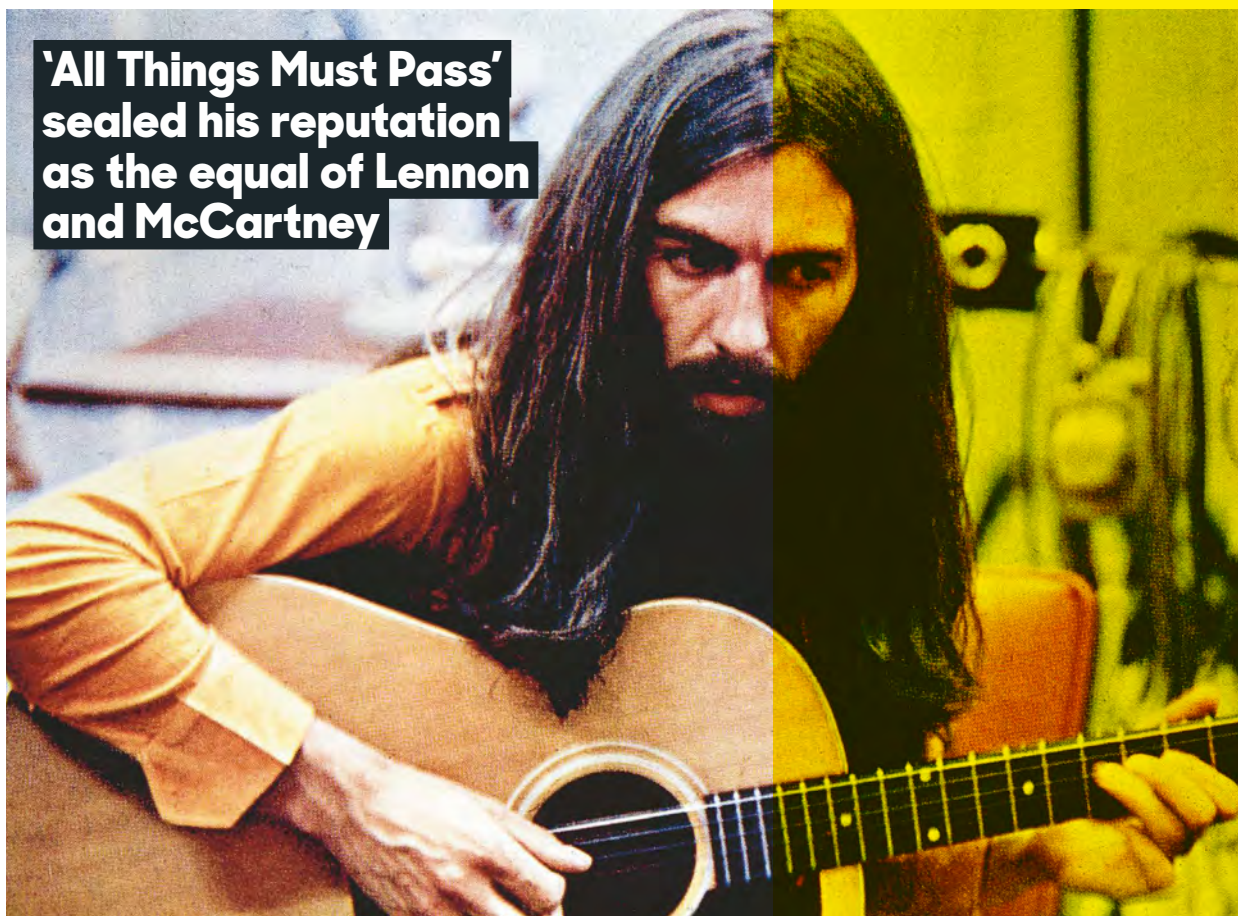
Bizarrely, it took a case of hepatitis and a clutch of lawsuits in 1976 to rejuvenate him for the cheery return to form 'Thirty Three & 1/3', released on his own Dark Horse

label. From the proto-new wave of 'This Song' (a comedy take on a plagiarism case he faced over 'My Sweet Lord') to elegant pop like 'Beautiful Girl', 'Dear One' and 'Crackerbox Palace', it set a bristling pop blueprint for the rest of George's career. His excellent eponymous 1979 album was similarly carefree and at one with his past: the loungey jazz piece 'Not Guilty' had originally been recorded for 'The White Album' and the gorgeous, twinkling 'Here Comes The Moon' was a sequel to 'Here Comes The Sun'. Carnival songs about mushroom trips ('Soft-Hearted Hana'), harp hulas ('Dark Haired Lady') and ELO-style orchestral tunes about Formula One ('Faster'); George was relaxed, happy and having fun with his legacy.

John's death, more legal wrangles with his label and a growing interest in film production sent George spiralling into disillusionment with the music industry, however, and after two more tepidly received albums – 1981's 'Somewhere In England' and 1982's 'Gone Troppo' – he withdrew for five years. When he re-emerged with ELO's Jeff Lynne as his wingman for 1987's 'Cloud Nine' he was welcomed like a conqueror returned thanks to a version of James Ray's 'Got My Mind Set On You' – a US Number One – and arguably his best solo ballad, 'Someplace Else'. His subsequent work with wrinkly supergroup The Traveling Wilburys alongside Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison, Jeff Lynne and Tom Petty surprisingly added up to the sum of its parts too, with 'Handle With Care' and 'End Of The Line' boosting George to the status of bona fide rock treasure.

After a quiet '90s, George very nearly went the way of John. After surviving throat cancer in 1997, a murderous intruder in his Friar Park home in December 1999 left him with 40 stab wounds. But it was lung cancer that finally took him in 2001, weeks after a final lunch with Paul and Ringo. In accordance with Hindu rites, his ashes were cast upon the Ganges, while his talent was set in aspic on his 2002 posthumous album 'Brainwashed'. In these grooves, Harrison knew he wasn't done surfing this cosmic wave just yet. "Universe at play inside your DNA/You're a billion years old today", he sang on 'Rising Sun'. Let's hope whatever he's been reincarnated as can play guitar.

'All Things Must Pass'
sealed his reputation
as the equal of Lennon
and McCartney





The Top 40 post-Beatles songs

As chosen by *NME's* New Music Editor, and Beatles obsessive, Matt Wilkinson

FACT: There can be no 'greatest' post-Beatles solo song. This is not because they are 'all' great – Lennon's 'Beef Jerky' is agonisingly shit, while Macca's 'Give My Regards To Broad Street' and much of George and Ringo's post-Beatles guff doesn't even bear thinking about. No, the real reason you can't put them in any kind of lasting order is down to one thing: justification. Why is 'Imagine', the song that's unconditionally and unarguably synonymous with the word 'peace', any more worthy of greatness than, say, 'Jet', the most perfect festival set-opener of all time? Why is Ringo's glam-rock masterpiece 'Back Off Boogaloo' (which Alex Kapranos nicked for 'Take Me Out') any more joyous than George's finest hour, 'My Sweet Lord'? Why is Lennon's last *truly* perfect tune, the back-to-basics 'Nobody Told Me', a more worthwhile number than Macca's still futuristic-sounding 'Temporary Secretary', recorded within a year of each other? The answer is simple: because John, Paul, George and Ringo are all geniuses, both together and apart. Collected here are my own Top 40 of the absolute best, must-hear post-Beatles classics. This is *the* definitive order – for today, at least...

73

Ringo

Since The Beatles split up, Ringo Starr has released 17 solo albums. *Seventeen*. The one who couldn't sing or write songs was handed a \$5 million, seven-album deal in 1975. *That's* how important The Beatles were.

Ringo's solo oeuvre consists largely of covers of rock'n'roll standards and charity contributions from John, Paul, George and his other celebrity mates, but even here there were glimmers of the old magic.

A string of four singles between 1971 and 1973 saw him rivalling his ex-bandmates in the UK charts, and with good reason: 1971's 'It Don't Come Easy' recalled something from the musical *Hair*, while 1972's 'Back Off Boogaloo' and 1973's 'Photograph', co-written with Harrison, were superior slabs of glam rock.

The novelty soon wore off in the UK, but America swooned over Ringo until, ironically, his Lennon-penned 1975 single '(It's All Down To) Goodnight Vienna'. Since then he's made slightly less post-Beatles impact than Yoko – whose recent 'New York Noodletown' is a campy Beatledeleic modern classic – but has become a huge name on the nostalgia covers circuit and in the tough-to-break-into world of talking steam locomotives. ■

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▶1 GEORGE
My Sweet Lord | ▶21 GEORGE
Beware Of Darkness |
| ▶2 PLASTIC ONO BAND
Instant Karma! | ▶22 JOHN
Watching The Wheels |
| ▶3 WINGS Jet | ▶23 WINGS
Let Me Roll It |
| ▶4 PAUL
Temporary Secretary | ▶24 GEORGE
I Live For You |
| ▶5 JOHN God | ▶25 PAUL Coming Up |
| ▶6 WINGS Live And Let Die | ▶26 RINGO Photograph |
| ▶7 WINGS
Band On The Run | ▶27 JOHN
Nobody Told Me |
| ▶8 JOHN #9 Dream | ▶28 GEORGE
Dehra Dun |
| ▶9 GEORGE Wah-Wah | ▶29 JOHN Jealous Guy |
| ▶10 JOHN Imagine | ▶30 JOHN
Working Class Hero |
| ▶11 JOHN Mind Games | ▶31 PAUL
Here Today |
| ▶12 GEORGE Apple Scruffs | ▶32 JOHN Mother |
| ▶13 PAUL Nineteen
Hundred And Eighty Five | ▶33 RINGO
It Don't Come Easy |
| ▶14 JOHN
Nobody Loves You When
You're Down And Out | ▶34 JOHN Whatever
Gets You Thru The Night |
| ▶15 GEORGE
Awaiting On You All | ▶35 WINGS
Maybe I'm Amazed |
| ▶16 JOHN Love | ▶36 JOHN Beautiful
Boy (Darling Boy) |
| ▶17 RINGO
Back Off Boogaloo | ▶37 JOHN What You Got |
| ▶18 JOHN
Surprise Surprise
(Sweet Bird Of Paradox) | ▶38 KANYE WEST/PAUL
Only One |
| ▶19 PAUL
Monkberry Moon Delight | ▶39 TRAVELING WILBURYS
Handle With Care |
| ▶20 PAUL & LINDA
McCartney Uncle Albert/
Admiral Halsey | ▶40 PAUL Queenie Eye |



Into the black

In the 2014 film *Boyhood*, **Ethan Hawke's** character gives his son a CD compilation of John, Paul, George and Ringo's best solo work, called 'The Black Album' – as the actor had done for his own daughter, Maya. Here he explains why the post-breakup years are such a significant part of the Beatles story

Paul McCartney always says, "People ask me what have I done since The Beatles, so I say: what have *you* done since The Beatles?" The work of the individual Beatles after the band split isn't a footnote to their story, it's a whole *new* story. On one level, it represents how brilliant they all are individually. On another, it shows that working together was what made them so special. And they were all brilliant on their own. In particular John and Paul, but also George and Ringo had a couple of Number Ones too.

What made them so special in the Beatles years was their ability to work *with* each other. Bob Dylan never had to sing backup, but Lennon and McCartney did that. Lady Gaga never had to play rhythm guitar, but these guys did that for each other too – total card-carrying geniuses though they were. That kind of celebrity – whether you're talking about Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley or Michael Jackson – it destroys the psyche. But because they had each other, I think they kept each other sane. What's it like to sing backup on 'Hey Jude', a song written about you and your family situation by somebody else? [It was written for Lennon's estranged son Julian by McCartney.] I'm sure it was really humbling, and really awkward. But it keeps it honest. It's that thing about respecting another person's talent and another person's voice that most bigshots are never asked to do. They're never asked to expose that kind of humility.

In the letter accompanying 'The Black Album' in *Boyhood*, I touch on the clichés about each Beatle's character, but it's more complicated than that. Lennon is considered to be the one with bite, but he wrote some of the schmalziest solo songs. 'Grow Old With Me'? Like, come on. I think what's so wonderful about their solo work is that if you put them next to each other – if you put 'Pipes Of Peace' next to 'Imagine', for example – you see how similar they all are. They were always writing about the same things, just very simple human things. I think Lennon has, like, seven songs about waking up in the morning. They cared about each other, politics, themselves and love. And their silly love songs are the best, because they were so serious about falling in love and being in love, whether you're talking about Yoko or Linda. Their partners became characters in their songs – 'Lovely Linda' and 'Oh Yoko!' – which was pretty radical because it's wildly self-referential to the point of being navel-gazing in a kind of absurd way. But I could listen to 'Oh Yoko!' right now – I love that song.

The idea of 'The Black Album' was to collect the best of the solo years, but I do have favourites within that. I'd say 'Crippled Inside' is just a classic Lennon song – it's the potency of that word 'crippled', and the weird, almost country sound to the production, even though it's more of a blues song. His ability to use very few words to great impact is unprecedented.

For McCartney, it's 'The Back Seat Of My

"They were always writing about very simple human things"

Ethan Hawke

Car', a lesser-known song that is absolutely phenomenal. 'Every Night' is another underappreciated McCartney track – it has the feeling of 'She's Leaving Home'. A lot of Lennon's best work has been widely promoted because of his passing and because there's not as much of it, but you know, McCartney's 'Junk' – what an amazing song that is. It would have been a Beatles song if it hadn't all gone to pot for the band.

For Harrison, you have to look at 'All Things Must Pass' – it's one of the greatest songs that any of them came up with. And when the third-best songwriter in the band is cranking out 'All Things Must Pass', you're doing alright.

And you can't write off Ringo. In the same way that 'Octopus's Garden' is an essential element of 'Abbey Road', they would always give Ringo a track per album. It puts that little element of unprofessionalism in the group,



makes them seem like they're your friends. Coldplay is so perfect, U2 is so perfect, but The Beatles were *never* perfect, and it's because of that friendship. For me it all comes together on 'With A Little Help From My Friends'. John and Paul wanted to give Ringo a Number One song, so they wrote it all in C. It's the easiest song to sing in the world and it's totally profound. I wish I had two friends do that for me.

If you want the best of Ringo solo, look at 'It Don't Come Easy', which he did with George. There's the distinct impression that those two had a lot more to prove, so they tried harder. I think it was hard sitting in the back seat with Lennon and McCartney in the front seat.

To pick a favourite Beatle is to misunderstand

The Beatles. It's their juxtaposition that makes them so significant. One of my other favourite McCartney quotes is when they asked him, "Do you think of John when you write?" He says, "I think of John every time I write. I think, 'Oh, John would hate this.'" Left to himself, McCartney can be really silly, and John Lennon can be really self-serious. Together they make something that we're still talking about. So the idea that there's a favourite, it's like, you're better off talking about their *outfits*.

The bitchiness of the McCartney-Lennon divorce played out on the 'Let It Be' album, but you've got to remember that they recorded the happier 'Abbey Road' after that. In a way it can be kind of healing to realise that they actually did find a way to get together and support each other even after 'Let It Be' tore everything apart. I feel pretty certain that, had Lennon been able to live, the bitchiness of it all would have ended eventually. The closest thing we have is 'Real Love', which the three surviving Beatles recorded over an original Lennon vocal for the 'Anthology' albums. A lot of people were down on it, but I like it – it moves me.

Would they have recaptured the old magic if they'd got back together properly? How could they not?! ■

Ethan Hawke's great lost Beatles album

In *Boyhood*, Hawke writes a heartfelt letter to his daughter for the insert of 'The Black Album'. Here's an edited excerpt

I wanted to give you something for your birthday that money couldn't buy. I present to you: THE BEATLES' BLACK ALBUM.

This is the best of John, Paul, George and Ringo's solo work, post-BEATLES. There's this thing that happens when you listen to too much of the solo stuff separately: too much Lennon and suddenly there's a little too much self-involvement in the room; too much Paul and it can become sentimental; too much George – I mean, we all have our spiritual side, but it's only interesting for about six minutes; Ringo – he's funny, irreverent, and cool, but he can't sing. When you mix up their work, though, they elevate each other, and you start to hear it: T H E B E A T L E S.

I listen to this music and I am filled with sadness that John and Paul's friendship turned so bitter. I know, I know, it has nothing to do with me, but damn it, tell me again why love can't last. Why do we give in to pettiness? Why did they?

I read an anecdote about when John's mother died: he was an angry teenager – switch-blade in his pocket, cigarette in his lips, sex on his mind. At a memorial service for his suddenly dead mom, he – pissed off and drunk – punched a bandmate in the face and stormed out. Paul, several years his junior – a young boy really, who was let into the band despite his lack of badass-ness due to the fact that at 14 he could play the shit out of the guitar – chased John out onto the street saying, "John, why are you being such a jerk?"

John said, "My mum's fuckin' dead!"

Paul said, "You never even once asked me about my mum."

"What about her?"

"...My mum's dead too."

They hugged in the middle of the suburban street. John apparently said, "Can we please start a fucking rock'n'roll band?"



This story answered a question that had lingered in my brain my whole music-listening life: if The Beatles were only together 10 years and the members were so young, how did they manage to write 'Help!', 'The Fool On The Hill', 'Eleanor Rigby', 'Yesterday', 'A Day In The Life'? They were just 25-year-old boys with a gaggle of babes outside their hotel room door and as much champagne as a young lad could stand. How did they set their minds to such substantive artistic goals?

They did it because they were in pain. They knew that love does not last.

With the BLACK ALBUM, we get to hear the boys write on adult life: marriage, fatherhood, sobriety, spiritual yearning, the emptiness of material success – '(Just Like) Starting Over', 'Maybe I'm Amazed', 'Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)', 'No No Song', 'God' – and still they are keenly aware of this fact: love does not last.

Once, when John was asked whether he would ever play with Paul again, he answered: "It would always be about, 'Play what?' It's about the music. We play well together – if he had an idea and needed me, I'd be interested."

I love that.

Maybe the lesson is: love doesn't last, but the music love creates just might.

I love you. Happy birthday.

Your Dad

Disc 1

1. Paul McCartney & Wings, 'Band On The Run'
2. George Harrison, 'My Sweet Lord'
3. John Lennon feat. The Flux Fiddlers & The Plastic Ono Band, 'Jealous Guy'
4. Ringo Starr, 'Photograph'
5. John Lennon, 'How?'
6. Paul McCartney, 'Every Night'
7. George Harrison, 'Blow Away'
8. Paul McCartney, 'Maybe I'm Amazed'
9. John Lennon, 'Woman'
10. Paul McCartney & Wings, 'Jet'
11. John Lennon, 'Stand By Me'
12. Ringo Starr, 'No No Song'
13. Paul McCartney, 'Junk'
14. John Lennon, 'Love'
15. Paul McCartney & Linda McCartney, 'The Back Seat Of My Car'
16. John Lennon, 'Watching The Wheels'
17. John Lennon, 'Mind Games'
18. Paul McCartney & Wings, 'Bluebird'

19. John Lennon, 'Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)'
20. George Harrison, 'What Is Life'

Disc 2

1. John Lennon, 'God'
2. Wings, 'Listen To What The Man Said'
3. John Lennon, 'Crippled Inside'
4. Ringo Starr, 'You're Sixteen You're Beautiful (And You're Mine)'
5. Paul McCartney & Wings, 'Let Me Roll It'
6. John Lennon & The Plastic Ono Band, 'Power To the People'
7. Paul McCartney, 'Another Day'
8. George Harrison, 'If Not For You (2001 Digital Remaster)'
9. John Lennon, '(Just Like) Starting Over'
10. Wings, 'Let 'Em In'
11. John Lennon, 'Mother'
12. Paul McCartney & Wings, 'Helen Wheels'
13. John Lennon, 'I Found Out'
14. Paul McCartney & Linda McCartney, 'Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey'

15. John Lennon, Yoko Ono & The Plastic Ono Band, 'Instant Karma! (We All Shine On)'
16. George Harrison, 'Not Guilty (2004 Digital Remaster)'
17. Paul McCartney & Linda McCartney, 'Heart Of The Country'
18. John Lennon, 'Oh Yoko!'
19. Wings, 'Mull Of Kintyre'
20. Ringo Starr, 'It Don't Come Easy'

Disc 3

1. John Lennon, 'Grow Old With Me (2010 Remaster)'
2. Wings, 'Silly Love Songs'
3. The Beatles, 'Real Love'
4. Paul McCartney & Wings, 'My Love'
5. John Lennon, 'Oh My Love'
6. George Harrison, 'Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth)'
7. Paul McCartney, 'Pipes Of Peace'
8. John Lennon, 'Imagine'
9. Paul McCartney, 'Here Today'
10. George Harrison, 'All Things Must Pass'
11. Paul McCartney, 'And I Love Her (Live on MTV Unplugged)'

Reviews

► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY BEN HOMEWOOD



The Prodigy

The Day Is My Enemy

**The Essex rave legends warned
us their sixth album would be
more “violent sounding”.**

They weren't kidding



albums as subsidiary to their shows. Liam Howlett, Keith Flint and Maxim Reality leave long gaps between records (the last one, 'Invaders Must Die', came out in 2009; its predecessor, 'Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned' five years before that), and they've been road-testing material from sixth album 'The Day Is My Enemy', in the run-up to its release for over a year, as if the primary purpose of recording new songs is to create more ammunition for their gigs.

Essex rave legends The Prodigy have become such a consistent and huge live draw in the 21st century – uniquely capable of headlining both rock and dance festivals like Sonisphere and Global Gathering, as they did last year – it's tempting to think of their

You could also argue that while their shows have lost none of their power over their 25-year career, their albums have. But that's not quite fair. 'Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned', which was received coolly as the delayed follow-up to 1997's 10 million-selling 'The Fat Of The Land', is a significant, leftfield record in their catalogue, and if 'Invaders Must Die' was their patchiest offering – despite reaching Number One – it's possible to understand it now as being a symptom of upheaval behind the scenes. It was the first Prodigy album not released by XL – a label built upon their success – and instead emerged on their own Take Me To The Hospital imprint, which they hoped to use to release other artists' music, but haven't.

To hear 'The Day...' is to realise that 'Invaders Must Die' was a transitional record. As songwriter Liam Howlett told NME last year: "Tracks that we like playing live from 'Invaders...', like 'Omen' and 'Take Me To

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

The Hospital', are the template for what we wanted to do with this record." That means 'The Day...' is more "violent sounding", as Howlett also said, and at times it's spectacularly aggressive. It opens with a bombardment of military drums and electronic noise (the title track, which features a vocal from former Tricky collaborator

LIAM HOWLETT ON...

...EDM

"It's an American thing. We watch it and think, 'What is this shit? There's a cool end – Skrillex and Diplo, who I love – but in the US it seeps into everything and the next thing you know there's a fucking EDM remix of a country-and-western song."

...Splitting with their label, XL

"It's sometimes better to move on. Sometimes you can't re-excite people. We were with them for that really mad '90s period, and then came the new phase of the band, which required fresh help. We were all sad, but XL is still a great label."

...Touring

"It's what keeps us moving. We couldn't exist without it: I don't know where we'd fit in, or what music I'd be writing. When I'm writing tunes, it comes out of this box and onto the stage straight away, and that's a good thing – it helps keep the music on some kind of track."

'Rhythm Bomb', a collaboration with Towcester DJ Flux Pavilion.

Unquestionably, every song has been written to add firepower to the band's live show, but it's nonetheless the strongest and most confident Prodigy album since 'The Fat Of The Land'.

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 30 ► **LABEL** Take Me To The Hospital/Cooking Vinyl ► **PRODUCER** Liam Howlett, with engineer Neil McLellan ► **LENGTH** 56:12 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. The Day Is My Enemy ►2. Nasty ►3. Rebel Radio ►4. Ibiza ►5. Destroy ►6. Wild Frontier ►7. Rok-Weiler ►8. Beyond The Deathray ►9. Rhythm Bomb ►10. Roadblox ►11. Get Your Fight On ►12. Medicine ►13. Invisible Sun ►14. Wall Of Death ► **BEST TRACK** Rebel Radio

8

MORE ALBUMS

Hodgy Beats & Don Cannon

Dena Tape 2 Odd Future



It's five years since Odd Future surfed in on a wave of cuss words and rape jokes – long enough for the enfants terribles to become, if not quite elder statesmen, at least part of the furniture. Hodgy Beats, aka Gerard Damien Long, was the LA collective's most energetic presence, his fiery flow a boon when OF came mob-handed. But 'Dena Tape 2' – a sequel to 2009's 'The Dena Tape' – suggests technical ability hides a shortfall of ideas. We get a couple of bangers in the guttural 'Hodgy X Doms' – a link-up with LA rapper Domo Genesis – and the flute-flecked nostalgia of 'Cudda Been'. But alongside the complex rhymes of Earl Sweatshirt or the malevolent charisma of Tyler, it feels visionless and not a little shallow.

■ LOUIS PATTISON

5

Death Cab For Cutie

Kintsugi Atlantic

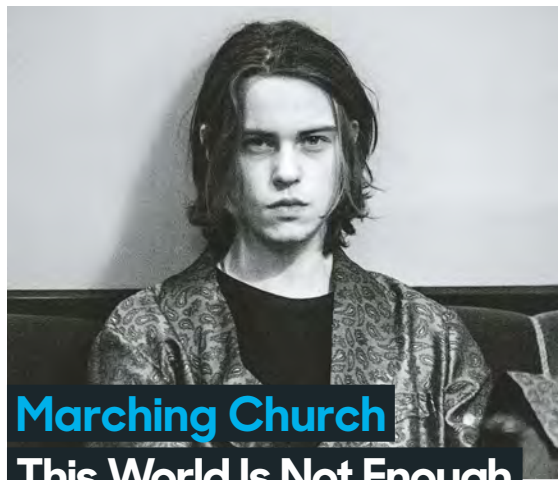


An insidious major-label slickness has crept into emo

heroes Death Cab's last few records. But enigmatic lines from Chris Walla – the guitarist who announced his departure during production – and Ben Gibbard's sophisticated timbre as he laments his split from Zooey Deschanel ('No Room In Frame', 'Black Sun', 'Little Wanderer') keep their eighth LP 'Kintsugi' just the right side of insipid. The Washington trio maintain their trademarks: 'The Ghosts Of Beverly Drive' and 'Everything's A Ceiling' are great examples of their itchy boffin pop, and 'Hold No Guns' and 'Binary Sea' add to their canon of ribcage-crushing ballads. Slick, but snug.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

7



Marching Church This World Is Not Enough

The Iceage frontman leaves punk behind on his unspeakably pretentious but riveting solo debut

Anyone who thought Iceage majorly wussed out with 2014's country-flecked third album 'Plowing Into The Field Of Love', look away now. 'This World Is Not Enough', Elias Bender Rønnenfelt's solo debut, sees the unsmiling frontman stray ever further from his hardcore roots, with help from members of fellow Danish bands Lower, Sexdrome and Choir Of Young Believers. Unspeakably pretentious and rarely less than riveting, it lurches from piano jazz ('Every Child (Portrait Of Wellman Braud)') and Bowie-esque plastic soul ('King Of Song') to demented early Bunnymen vibes (the electric 'Hungry For Love') – all delivered by a man who sounds like he's trying to vomit up his soul. Freakier still



is the lugubrious cover of soul staple 'Dark End Of The Street', which recalls Nick Cave's romance with classic songwriting circa 'Kicking Against The Pricks'. What next for our sweet Danish prince? A duet with Kylie? ■ ALEX DENNEY

8

► THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 30 ► **LABEL** Posh Isolation ► **PRODUCER** Elias Bender Rønnenfelt ► **LENGTH** 48:10 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Living In Doubt ►2. King Of Song ►3. Hungry For Love ►4. Your Father's Eyes ►5. Calling Out A Name ►6. Every Child (Portrait Of Wellman Braud) ►7. Up A Hill ►8. Dark End Of The Street ► **BEST TRACK** Hungry For Love

Only Real

Jerk At The End Of The Line Virgin EMI



When he emerged in 2012 with early tracks like the bouncy 'Cadillac Girl', many pegged Niall Galvin as a blissed-out indie kid. On 2013 EP 'Days In The City', the west London songwriter showed there was more to Only Real than that. 'Jerk At The

End Of The Line' is darker still, while 'Can't Get Happy' contains lines like "I stay asleep to stop the worst" and hollowed-out Nirvana bass. 'Break It Off' is downtrodden too, a break-up tune that puts a dark twist on the 23-year-old's pastel-hued melodies. Luckily, the wry humour on tracks like 'Yesterdays' saves 'Only Real' from total despair.

■ RHIAN DALY

8

Föllakzoid

III Sacred Bones



Five minutes into 'Earth', the second track on Föllakzoid's

second album, a rigid synth line is suddenly butchered by cacophonous cymbal crashes. The noise recedes, only to return, louder still, three minutes later. 'III' is littered with such unsettling surprises. The Chilean trio's excellent last album, 'II', was groggy and psychedelic, but 'III' – featuring Frankfurt electronica veteran Atom™ playing a Korg synth that Kraftwerk once toured with – is built from industrial motorik and techno. The textures on 11-minute opener 'Electric' are unrelentingly harsh, guitar smashing into its heavy groove like a wrecking ball into a concrete high-rise. 'Piure' and 'Feuerzeug' are mellow, but only marginally – 'III' quakes from start to finish.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

8

Ringo Starr

Postcards From Paradise

Universal



'Penny Lane' found Lennon and McCartney looking back

at their younger selves. On his 18th solo album, Ringo Starr attempts the same trick, opening with 'Rory & The Hurricanes', a rock'n'roll number named after his pre-Beatles outfit, and linking the names of Beatles songs for the title track's lyrics. Macca might be the one lathering Just For Men and cosying up to Kanye, but Starr seems to be the Fab who's losing his grip on reality, mixing reggae, rock and boogie-woogie to create a record that would have sounded dated in his '70s solo heyday. "Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down", he sings, like a man with piles of money who's not quite sure why he's making a new album. Funny, that. ■ DAN STUBBS

5

NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK

Mini Mansions

The Great Pretenders

Alex Turner and Brian Wilson
guest on the QOTSA side-project's
wonderful second album



On their '60s-pop influenced, self-titled 2010 debut, Los Angeles trio Mini Mansions combined the druggy whimsy of 'White Album'-era Beatles and The Beach Boys' 'Pet Sounds' with meandering melodies and surreal lyrics about things like "monkey vampires, mini shampoos and paranormal preachers". Five years on, it's all change for the follow-up. The trio (singer and drummer Michael Shuman, singer and keyboardist Tyler Parkford, bassist and multi-instrumentalist Zachary Dawes) have swapped dreamlike symbolism for deep and dark emotion on 'The Great Pretenders' – a record Shuman says is about "love, death and existentialism".



Opener 'Freakout!' sets the tone. "You can't see me crying", sings Shuman (who plays bass in Queens Of The Stone Age for a day job) before a chorus of "I've been down" is repeated in a comforting falsetto over a glistening new-wave melody

reminiscent of The Cars. 'Any Emotions' has keyboard player Parkford sighing "You could be lonely/But I don't understand any emotions" as Beach Boys founder Brian Wilson – who Dawes asked to collaborate after playing on the 72-year-old's upcoming album 'No Pier Pressure' – provides a foreboding echo to his call. On the gentle, piano-led 'Heart Of Stone', a wounded Parkford admits, "I need you to know/My heart ain't made of stone" as a whirring synth line spirals elegantly beneath.

'The Great Pretenders' thrums with anxiety, sorrow and regret, but that is counterbalanced by the uplifting, fuzz-laden 'Double Vision' and 'Vertigo's' sexy, gangster cool, blending '90s G-funk beats with the sexiness of Nick Cave's 1994 single 'Loverman'. The latter is enhanced by a devilish verse from Arctic Monkeys' Alex Turner and his lines about "Miss been-there-did-that-and-bought-the-catsuit" who looks "a million dollars".

That the guest spots from Turner and Wilson are mere footnotes in this album's story is testament to the glittering work Mini Mansions have created. Its peaks – the Kills-like 'Mirror Mountain' indulges cacophonous guitar freakouts; 'Fantasy' is all sci-fi-tinged merry-go-round keys; 'Creeps' is pure 'Ziggy Stardust'-era Bowie – thrill with an eccentric inventiveness that has become a grand tradition in pop. 'The Great Pretenders' is an emotional, emboldened triumph. ■ RHIAN DALY

9

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 23 ► **LABEL** Fiction ► **PRODUCERS** Mini Mansions
► **LENGTH** 45:58 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Freakout! ►2. Death Is A Girl ►3. Creeps
►4. Fantasy ►5. Any Emotions ►6. Vertigo ►7. Honey, I'm Home ►8. Mirror Mountain ►9. Heart Of Stone ►10. Double Visions ►11. The End, Again
► **BEST TRACK** Mirror Mountain

K-X-P

III Part I Öm/Svart



Those with a taste for astrally inclined electronic

rumblings might have encountered Finland's K-X-P last year: specifically, their EP 'The History Of Techno'. Which, for its malevolent nose-thumbing towards techno purists, was possibly the title of the year. The Helsinki trio don't play techno, but its influence has seeped into their second

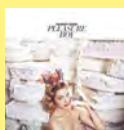
album: combining analogue synths with live drums, they're on a mission to entrance through repetition. They succeed sporadically: at times ('Psychic Hibernation') the record resembles the 45-year-old meditation soundtracks of Tangerine Dream, although 'Ra' updates matters with a clanking drum machine. But it's when K-X-P harness the power of rock on scorching closer 'Descend To Eternal' that they reap most rewards.

■ NOEL GARDNER

7

Hannah Cohen

Pleasure Boy Bella Union



This is a record born of heartbreak and all its recriminations, bitterness and sadness. If 'Pleasure Boy' was anything like San Franciscan Hannah Cohen's 2012 debut album 'Child Bride', these themes would be strung out over melancholy acoustic guitar and little else, but this time around Cohen and regular producer Thomas Bartlett

have explored new avenues. On the stark 'Claremont', she sounds like Portishead's Beth Gibbons, twisting torch song into interesting shapes; on the dipping, swelling 'Keepsake' she's Joanna Newsom meeting Zola Jesus. The vengeful, Lennon-like 'Watching You Fall', on which Cohen delicately sings "I'll take you apart", is probably the pick of the bunch, but this is an album best taken whole, a tremendous step forward.

■ MATTHEW HORTON

8

Reviews

The Soft Moon

Deeper Captured Tracks



Luis Vasquez isn't the first musician to sound like he's trying to

escape from an indie-rock straitjacket, but rarely do the results thud with such vicious, delicious abandon. The Californian's first two albums as The Soft Moon cribbed chiefly from the gothic end of '80s post-

punk, but 'Deeper' pushes the drum machines to the fore, cranks up the BPM and serves up leather-hearted industrial-dance anthems. Vaguely tender moments ('Wasting') are red herrings: emotion is conveyed in spades, but this'll either have you getting existential in the club ("Why are we alive?" asks 'Feel' over electro-EBM beats) or sending drinks flying in rockist frenzy ('Black' and 'Being' border Nine Inch Nails territory).

■ NOEL GARDNER

8

Lower Dens Escape From Evil

Ribbon Music



Seeping in on a languid guitar line that recalls the ones

Beach House filled 2010's 'Teen Dream' with, 'Escape From Evil' starts sleepily. The haze drifts into 'Ondine', but thereafter Lower Dens' third album sees the Baltimore duo explore new ground. Whereas 2012's 'Nootropics' was a thicket of looped guitars, 'Escape

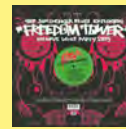
From Evil' puts emphasis on taut, accessible synthpop. Singer and guitarist Jana Hunter's voice surges through 'To Die In LA' as bassist Geoff Graham and drummer Nate Nelson provide a pacy rhythm, and 'Electric Current's isolated guitar and padded drums come on like The xx on fast-forward. 'I Am The Earth' is slower, and shows Hunter's impressive range, but 'Escape From Evil' is better when focused on the dancefloor.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

7

The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion Freedom Tower – No Wave Dance Party 2015

Bronze Rat



New York's TJSBE have zipped between blues, punk,

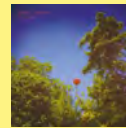
funk and rock'n'roll since recording 1991 bootleg album 'A Reverse Willie Horton' with Steve Albini and Mark Kramer (Low, Galaxie 500). This 10th album was conceived as a portrait of their hometown, but the result is a collection of cheesy, mostly average funk-rock. 'Betty Vs The NYPD' is best, blues guitars and rumbling bass lending an edge to Spencer's gabbled vocals, while 'Tales Of Old New York: Rock Box's mapping of the city's musical haunts is turgid ("I said CBGB, that's the place to be... Come on punks, do it"), and closer 'Cooking For Television' sums up the album's shortcomings with a muddled approximation of Parliament's classic funk sound.

■ RHIAN DALY

6

Benoît Pioulard Sonnet

Kranky



Composer Benoît Pioulard doesn't exist. He's a front

for Seattle-based musician Thomas Meluch, whose steady flow of releases under the pseudonym intersperse charming, lo-fi folk with field recordings and stretches of hazy instrumental shoegaze. On 'Sonnet', his fifth album, Meluch disappears further still, bringing suites of stately ambient collages to the fore. Heavy with tape hiss, only 'A Shade Of Celadon' retains the bones of a song, with a muffled verse and wordless chorus hidden deep behind gusts of fogged-out guitar. Adjust to its glacial pace and heavenly moments like 'Upon The Break Arch' and 'The Very Edge Of Its Flame' glow like distant stars, coming on like lost Sigur Rós tracks.

■ STUART HUGGETT

7

Circa Waves Young Chasers

The Liverpoolians
rekindle the spirit of
The Strokes on their
debut. It's a blast



As they're four Liverpoolians lads playing jaunty, catchy three-minute pop songs on guitars – no '50s slant, no electronic R&B, not the tiniest hint of a psychedelic tribal sacrifice – you won't be allowed to like Circa Waves. Snobs will demand this debut album comes plastered with stickers reading 'Warning: Contains Blatant Strokes And Toxic Levels Of Kook, View And Wombat'. Sniping reviewers will paint their fans as filthy scavengers of the indie landfill, gnawing on the rotting carcass of The Pigeon Detectives. And, for fear of being restrained and incarcerated in some institution for the culturally remedial, nobody will mention how refreshing, fun and free it all sounds.

So whisper it: Circa Waves are a blast. First single

'Get Away', 'My Love' and 'T-Shirt Weather' tear from the traps with the vivacity of Two Door Cinema Club mainlining military-grade Merseybeat. The title-track fires out jubilant "oooh-oooh"s, 'Lost It' is prime Shins and 'Good For You', 'The Luck Has Gone' and 'Stuck In

My Teeth' wish they'd been on 'Is This It'. 'Deserve This' even recalls Swedish pop of the '90s – bands like The Wannadies and The Cardigans, the sparkly outsider icing around the edge of Britpop. All glam-slammng indie pop angles are covered, with a distinctly contemporary alt-indie panache.

OK, the lyrical themes explored (girls, sunshine, youthful exploits) are basic. But Keiran Shudall's couplets are so deathlessly joyful – "We are flying through our best years/And I'm not quite myself/ Please take me out tonight/And lie with me tonight" goes 'Best Years' – that their dumbness is forgivable. On 'T-Shirt Weather' – whose riff is as jaunty and exuberant as the sunny teenage car journeys it refers to – Shudall breathlessly remembers "singing our lungs out in the back seat together" and "seatbelts burning our fingers". The title track's zippy ode to youth is simpler still: "So I was young only for a heartbeat", "Don't waste my time/Make your mind up".

But Circa Waves will be huge because even the most po-faced generation needs light relief, and in recent years all the pop kids have had is the hollow faux-indie of Bastille. So sod the scowlers – here's your permission to pogo.

■ MARK BEAUMONT

8



THE DETAILS

►RELEASE DATE March 30 ►LABEL Universal/Virgin EMI PRODUCER Dan Grech
►LENGTH 40:32 ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Get Away ►2. T-Shirt Weather ►3. Fossils
►4. Lost It ►5. My Love ►6. Deserve This ►7. Young Chasers ►8. Good For Me
►9. Stuck In My Teeth ►10. Best Years ►11. The Luck Has Gone ►12. So Long
►13. Talking Out Loud ►BEST TRACK Young Chasers

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FILM

Mommy

Tense French-Canadian drama explores the fraught relationship between a mother and her violent son



As the *enfant terrible* of French-Canadian cinema, it's fitting that Xavier Dolan's debut, 2009's *I Killed My Mother*, saw him symbolically offing his mum. Six years on from that film's success at Cannes, where it received an eight-minute standing ovation, he's returning to the issues that made his name with undimmed energy: only this time, it seems, he's come down from the naughty step and is ready to apologise.

Mommy, the 25-year-old prodigy's fifth film, concerns working-class mum Die (Anne Dorval, who starred in *I Killed My Mother*) and her attempts to keep her violent outburst-prone, ADHD-suffering teenage son Steve (17-year-old Antoine Olivier Pilon) out of trouble with the law. Early on, we're presented with a philosophical quandary. "Loving people doesn't save them," says the head of a correctional facility Steve has just been expelled from after setting fire to the cafeteria. "Sceptics," retorts Die with a dragon-like puff of cigarette smoke, "will be proven wrong."

Is she right? Despite the occasional lurch into melodrama, Dolan keeps us guessing right to the end of this deeply felt, electrically charged movie. Steve, whose violent tendencies are established early on in a scene where he terrorises his mother at home, is also a devoted son – perhaps *too* devoted – and strangely likeable sort. His prospects seem to improve when his neighbour Kyla, a lonely housewife with a stutter and a painful secret, strikes up an unlikely bond with mother and son.

But their happiness is jeopardised by Die's inability to hold down a job, and a lawsuit that threatens to put the youngster away for a long time.

Dolan handles this potentially bleak material with virtuoso style, bringing shades of Martin Scorsese's bulldozing energy to the film's storytelling rhythms, and lashings of director Gus Van Sant's outsider-empathy in the characters. There's even, as in one sequence where Steve slow motion-dances with a trolley, some of *The Tree Of Life* director Terrence Malick's lyrical eye to this terrifically tense, poignant film, which is presented intimately in 1:1 aspect ratio – a classic square image – and widened during moments of optimism. It's also darkly, daringly funny: another scene of bizarre familial bonding has Steve, wearing eyeliner, dancing to Celine Dion with his mum and Kyla, who is hammered and starts singing along. "Shout! She's our fucking national treasure," yells Steve triumphantly. His joy is not to last, you feel, as *Mommy* builds inexorably towards a heartrending climax.

But for all of Steve's livewire energy, the hero of *Mommy* is never in doubt. Anne Dorval is simply amazing as the indomitable Die, who refuses to cut the apron strings even as they threaten to choke the life out of her. In her and Kyla, the film's second maternal figure, Dolan pays glowing tribute to the unbreakable bonds of motherhood. Because even twisted little bastards deserve love. ■ ALEX DENNEY



DIRECTOR
Xavier Dolan
IN CINEMAS
March 20

CINEMA

The Tale Of The Princess Kaguya



This Japanese animated film from the legendary Studio Ghibli, the

makers of 2001's *Spirited Away*, was deservedly nominated for the Best Animated Feature prize at this year's Oscars. Based on a 10th-century Japanese folk tale, it tells the story of Sanuki, a bamboo cutter who finds a miniature girl inside a glowing bamboo shoot and takes her home to his wife to bring her up as their own. Convinced the girl is a princess, Sanuki relocates his family to the city, where her beauty attracts a line of would-be husbands. The centuries-old story then takes some unexpectedly sad and strange turns, but gorgeous hand-drawn visuals and a wistful score by Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi ensure it remains warm and charming.

■ NICK LEVINE

8

CINEMA

Chappie



In 2004, Neill Blomkamp (*District 9*) made his directorial debut with *Tetra*

Vaal, a short film about a crime-fighting robot in Johannesburg. The South African filmmaker expands that idea for *Chappie*. The titular machine is built by inventor Deon (*Slumdog Millionaire*'s Dev Patel), who finds a broken police robot and installs it with new software. But Deon's creation falls into the hands of gangsters played by Ninja and Yolandi of swearsy Jo'burg hip-hop group Die Antwoord. As they raise Chappie (voiced by Sharlto Copley) as a criminal, Blomkamp indulges in pyrotechnics that, while eye-watering, feel like a giddy homage to old-school sci-fi that lacks *District 9*'s innovation. Although the robot's human qualities are carefully rendered, *Chappie* comes alive too little to make an impact.

■ DAN BRIGHTMORE

6

CINEMA

The Voices



This ambitious black comedy is

the first English-language film from Marjane Satrapi, the French-Iranian director of 2007's Oscar-nominated animation *Persepolis*. Ryan Reynolds stars as Jerry, a factory worker with an unspecified mental illness who stops taking his medication and hallucinates that his cat is telling him to

kill people as his dog urges him to resist. Reynolds, who also voices both pets, is surprisingly convincing in a more nuanced role than his usual rom-coms and superhero flicks. But because Satrapi struggles to make gory moments gel with the visual comedy – often from Gemma Arterton (*Quantum Of Solace*) as Jerry's British co-worker – *The Voices* is too uneven to become the cult classic it sounds like.

■ NICK LEVINE

6

CINEMA

The Second Chance



This Danish thriller from Susanne Bier, director of 2010's Oscar-winning *In A Better World*, has a far-fetched but potentially gripping premise. When police officer Andreas (*Game Of Thrones*' Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) and his wife Anne (Norwegian-Swedish actress Maria Bonnevie) wake up to find their newborn baby has died in

the night, a panicking, grief-stricken Andreas decides to swap their deceased infant with one that's being raised neglectfully by a local junkie couple. Coster-Waldau's performance as the conflicted Andreas is brilliantly intense, but too many key moments feel clichéd and overwrought. Even a powerful and well-executed twist can't rescue Bier's sadly botched drama.

■ NICK LEVINE

5

Ariel Pink

The Old Market

Brighton

Wednesday, March 4

**The erratic, eccentric pop
provocateur manhandles his
audience at a tense show**

PHOTO BY POONEH GHANA

Part performance art, part meltdown, Ariel Pink's bizarre performance tonight is as exhilarating as it is depressing. The atmosphere throughout is tense and sour. Perhaps disgruntled about the patchy attendance, the 36-year-old, in pink jeans and a colourful shirt, repeatedly insults the crowd before bringing the set – drawn mainly from last year's 'Pom Pom' album – to an early close with no encore. We're called "losers", "too conservative" and "undersexed squares", as Pink staggers around, grabbing hold of the front row while his six-piece band play on behind him. Pink exists only to challenge his audience. This is punk rock; a grotesque farce heightened by crazed jingle 'Jell-o', fuzzy romp 'Goth Bomb' and the nightmarish 'White Freckles' – the kind of '60s acid pop only Pink is weird enough to pull off. One of rock'n'roll's last remaining provocateurs. ■ JOHN CALVERT

Ariel Pink meets
the "undersexed
squares", as he
calls his crowd



Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds

Capital FM Arena, Nottingham

Friday, March 6

Noel takes his brass section, choir and sweary patter to the Midlands

A one-note orchestral drone strikes up, atonal and abhorrent, growing to a hellish cacophony. The feather-cut Oasis veterans cover the ears of the modkinder they've brought along, and realise all of a sudden that they're not at Knebworth any more.

Far from it. Stadium-level Oasis shows were often a case of a surly band snarling out at huge, drunk crowds. When the art-noise intro tape reaches its crescendo and Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds flap from the wings to a jazzy remix of 'If I Had A Gun...' and chug pleasantly into the live premiere of 'Do The Damage' – accompanied by a brass section Partridge called Minor Fracas – it's clear Noel is setting out to create a very different experience. As he slopes casually towards his second Number One solo album ('Chasing Yesterday' will occupy the top spot in two days' time), gradually reclaiming the stature of Oasis, he wants to share the journey with his audience.

So he puts on a more personable front, gives a bit more of himself. A gently nostalgic acoustic run through 1994 B-side 'Fade Away' has "the dreams we have as children" illustrated by browning snapshots on the big screens, alongside brass bands on the corner of Burnage streets, '70s birthday parties, holidays on dilapidated piers. Onstage, too, he's open. He riles a gang of lads from Stoke in the front row over sharing a hometown with Robbie

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Katie, 29, Chesterfield
"It was amazing – so, so good. I've seen Oasis loads of times, and this was a bit more calm."



Arron, 24, Leeds
"It's a shame Oasis aren't still together, but Noel's still going, creating his own stuff. He's sticking to what he knows, and I think that's a good thing. Arctic Monkeys and Kasabian are missing the point a bit, trying to change with the times."



James, 29, Leeds
"I'm an Oasis fan, lifelong. Tonight he got it spot on. Old stuff, new stuff, bit of Oasis, got the crowd up cheering – that's what they want."

music can sometimes seem secondary to his overpowering persona. His lyrics are wit-free and deadly serious, his songs of an Americana bar-rock hue. There are moments during a mid-set slump of new tracks 'The Dying Of The Light' and 'The Mexican' when you'd much rather be watching him have it out with Ed Sheeran via live Twitter battle on the

Williams ("How does that make you feel? I'll prompt you – like a cunt") and chides a semi-fan. "I've never seen anyone as unimpressed as you. If you don't like this next song..." The next song is 'Don't Look Back In Anger', but amid the throng bawling their lungs out Noel's still got one eye on Mr Pffft, Whatever. "Fuckin' sing it then," he insists.

His stage patter makes up for Noel's flaw as a solo artist. His interviews are so hilarious, forthright and dismissive of anyone who's dared to so much as look at a guitar since 1997 that his

screens. If the music were as brilliant as the man, it'd be 1973 Lou Reed shrieking songs called 'Circa Waves? I've Had Catchier Squits'.

But Noel attacks his gigs with a vitality and melodic buoyancy that keeps him from becoming the lad-rock Mark Knopfler. He doesn't let many songs plod on for too long before throwing in a punch-the-air chorus – 'Dream On', the Charlatans-swirly 'AKA... Broken Arrow' and the Beatledelic New Orleans parade that is 'The Death Of You And Me' all rocket gloriously into the stratosphere 40 seconds in. A stage-wide choir adds angelic oomph to the likes of 'Everybody's On The Run' and the key Oasis covers, helping 'Champagne Supernova' and a closing 'The Masterplan' rattle the whole room with communal good vibes, and 'Digsy's Dinner' is transformed into a knock-about rinky-dink boogie-woogie knees-up ding-dong.

If 'AKA...What A Life!' bristles with thriller-theme atmospherics and 'Ballad Of The Mighty I' mimics the charging rock momentum of Pink Floyd's 'Run Like Hell', it only adds fresh depth to an artist some had mistakenly pigeonholed for a decade or so as a one-trick pony. High Flying Birds: flocking great. ■ MARK BEAUMONT





Björk

Carnegie Hall, New York

Saturday, March 7

The Icelandic avant-gardist plus chamber orchestra give 'Vulnicura' an intense live debut

▶ Cascading onto the stage at Carnegie Hall in a silver mask and a dress of billowing white silk, Björk resembles a Christmas tree bauble. The 49-year-old is performing new album 'Vulnicura' for the first time, and she emerges to wolf whistles and thunderous applause.

Onstage with her are 'Vulnicura's' Venezuelan producer Arca and Alarm Will Sound, a chamber orchestra who have previously worked with composer Steve Reich and arty New Yorkers Dirty Projectors. The seated audience quiets to absorb opener 'Stonemilker', which charts the beginning of Björk's heart-decimating break-up from artist Matthew Barney. "Show me emotional respect/ I have emotional needs", she wails with a stamp of her white platform trainer.

The Icelandic singer's charged vocals complement the visuals projected behind her – lyrics flash alongside images resembling a flickering heart monitor – with prickling intensity. After 'Black Lake's' poignant whispers ("Our love was my womb") and the sweeping 'Family', the first half of the show draws to a close with the furiously beautiful 'Notget', on which Arca's clattering beats swirl towards the high ceiling. Björk, who has been calm so far, begins to stomp, whirl and jab the air as she promises she "will not forget" her heartbreak.

She re-emerges in grey for some older cuts, including a powerful version of 'Undo' from 2001, then returns to 'Vulnicura' with 'Quicksand' and the gorgeous 'Mouth Mantra.' Though she may not have forgotten her pain, the overarching feeling is victorious. "I am not hurt!" she cries at the edge of the stage, stretching out the last word. Closer 'Wanderlust' is joyous, and after it the crowd break into two standing ovations. It's a fittingly affectionate reaction to Björk's triumphant return.

■ AMY ROSE SPIEGEL

8



SETLIST

- ▶ Do the Damage
- ▶ (Stranded On) The Wrong Beach
- ▶ Everybody's On The Run
- ▶ Fade Away
- ▶ In The Heat Of The Moment
- ▶ Lock All The Doors
- ▶ Riverman
- ▶ The Death Of You And Me
- ▶ You Know We Can't Go Back
- ▶ Champagne Supernova
- ▶ Dream On
- ▶ The Dying Of The Light
- ▶ The Mexican
- ▶ AKA... Broken Arrow
- ▶ Digsy's Dinner
- ▶ If I Had A Gun...
- ▶ Ballad Of The Mighty I
- ▶ Don't Look Back In Anger
- ▶ AKA... What A Life!
- ▶ The Masterplan



NME
GIG
OF THE WEEK

100 Club, London

Tuesday, March 3

Yung

There's only one word for the Danish punks' first visit to the UK: chaos

▶ Twenty-four hours before stepping onstage at the 100 Club, Yung were booted out of east London's Old Blue Last after a power cut forced the cancellation of their debut UK gig. The four young punks from Aarhus, Denmark decamped to the nearby Shacklewell Arms, with fans following behind. They eventually went onstage shortly before midnight, but a ferociously shambolic set was curtailed after guitarists Mikkel Silkjaer and Emil Zethsen snapped sufficient strings to leave their instruments unplayable.

Tonight, playing at the 100 Club supporting Toronto noise trio Metz, they plug in carefully. But from the moment they rip into opener 'Miss That Tree', it's clear tonight's set will be an equally exciting mess. The most striking thing about Yung is Mikkel Silkjaer's voice. Sometimes it's deep, delivered in an accented English similar to Iceage's Elias Bender Rønnenfelt's. Mostly, though, Yung's 20-year-old frontman and songwriter – who has a Leonardo DiCaprio bowl cut and a bumfluff moustache – screams as if possessed by a demon. The front row visibly recoils during a brilliantly rough 'Imaginary Calls', Silkjaer interrupting its jangling melody by stamping on his effects pedal and summoning a ragged screech. 'Nobody Cares', the highlight of last

month's 'Alter' EP, is even more unhinged. During its slow, strummed sections, Silkjaer furrows his brow and pouts, and for the angry, Nirvana-style chorus, he hacks at his guitar and growls its title over and over. The breakneck 'Don't Cry' follows, spilling into rasping closer 'Blanket', after which Yung depart, leaving behind a cacophony of feedback and a roomful of converts. ■ BEN HOMEWOOD

SETLIST

- ▶ Miss That Tree
- ▶ Shitty Mind
- ▶ The Hatch
- ▶ God
- ▶ It Happened Again
- ▶ Imaginary Calls
- ▶ Nobody Cares
- ▶ Commercial
- ▶ Apart
- ▶ Don't Cry
- ▶ Blanket

9

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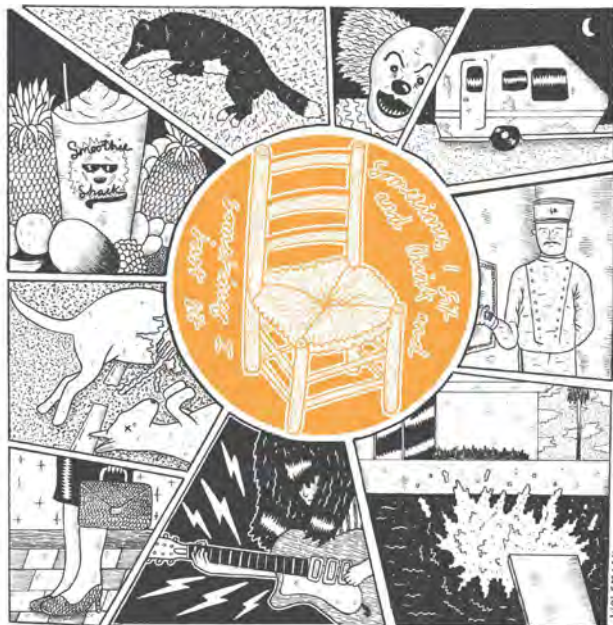
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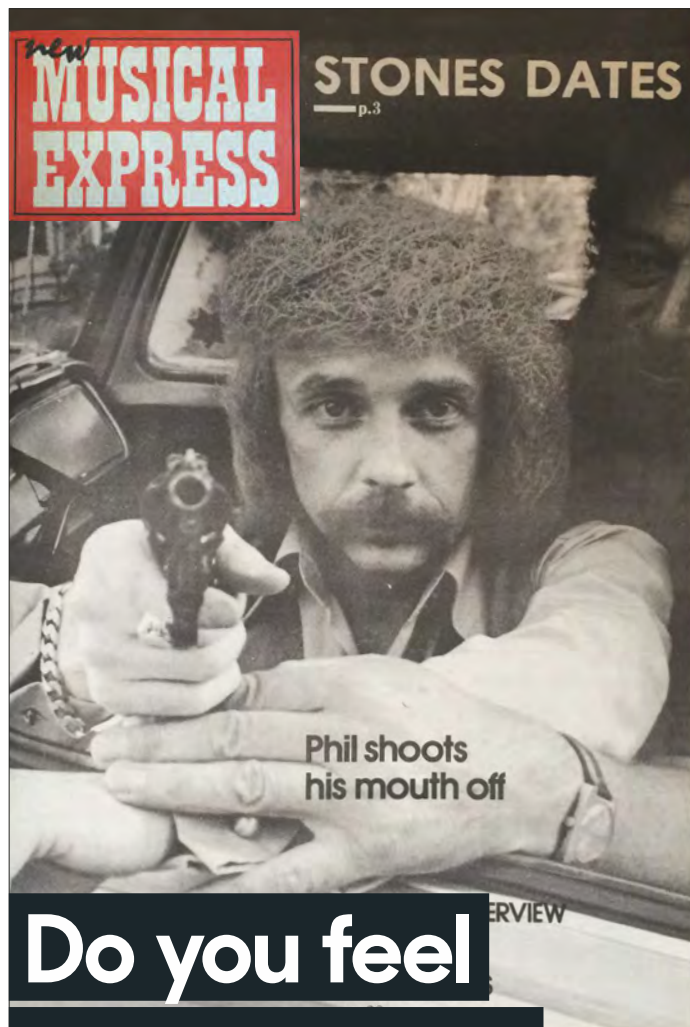

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THIS WEEK IN 1976



Do you feel lucky, punk?

NME has a tense encounter with legendary Beatles producer Phil Spector – who's currently in prison for murder – at his LA mansion

Arriving at the mansion belonging to Phil Spector, notorious wild man and creator of the 'Wall of Sound', NME's Roy Carr is greeted by the producer carrying a gun and a placard that reads: "It's better to have a gun and not need one than to need a gun and not have one". It's clear he's in for a turbulent interview. Nervously, they discuss Spector's sanity, the death of his close friends Bruce Lee and Lenny Bruce and his controversial work on The Beatles' 'Let It Be' album.

"I made that group what they were," Spector asserts when quizzed on The Beatles. "I love them and appreciate them, but they ain't the Fab Four any more." Spector also claims he worked with The Beatles prior to 'Let It Be' and spurs on George Martin for a fight. "Didn't John Lennon once say we were all a bunch of pricks?" he says. "Didn't he say the dream is over? God is dead, The Beatles are dead, you'll have to make it on your own, people. Maybe John was just telling the truth."

DOWN THE TUBES

NME's Stann Findelle follows controversial rockers The Tubes around San Francisco during their sold-out US tour. He chats to singer Fee Waybill about new ideas for their eccentric live performances, which have previously included leather bondage wear, throwing giant amphetamine tablets into the crowd, and Fee acting as a doctor helping a pregnant guitar deliver a ukelele baby. "I may grow some tits for the spring show," Fee suggests.

BEATLES GET BACK?

George Harrison's 66-year-old father has claimed there are plans afoot for a Beatles reunion, NME reports, citing a story in the *Daily Mirror*. Harrison Sr had apparently told the newspaper that George was on board for the big show, estimated to be worth up to £100 million and scheduled for July 5, with the venue already booked by a US promoter. The show was timed to coincide with the release of a new film, *The History Of The Beatles*, featuring rare footage from early shows in San Francisco.

REVIEWED THIS WEEK

Bill Wyman – 'Stand Alone'
"In the final analysis, you'd have to file it under 'curious'."

■ MICK FARREN

ALSO IN THE ISSUE THIS WEEK

► The Who are reviewed in Paris. The 'My Generation' rockers are beginning to show their age, according to reviewer Mick Farren: "Teenage angst can't be maintained right up to your 30th birthday," he writes.
► The *Thrills* section reports that a 2,000-year-old stash of cannabis has been recovered from the wreck of a Carthaginian warship, and is still potent.
► Bands announcing tours this week include The Rolling Stones, Genesis and The Sensational Alex Harvey Band.



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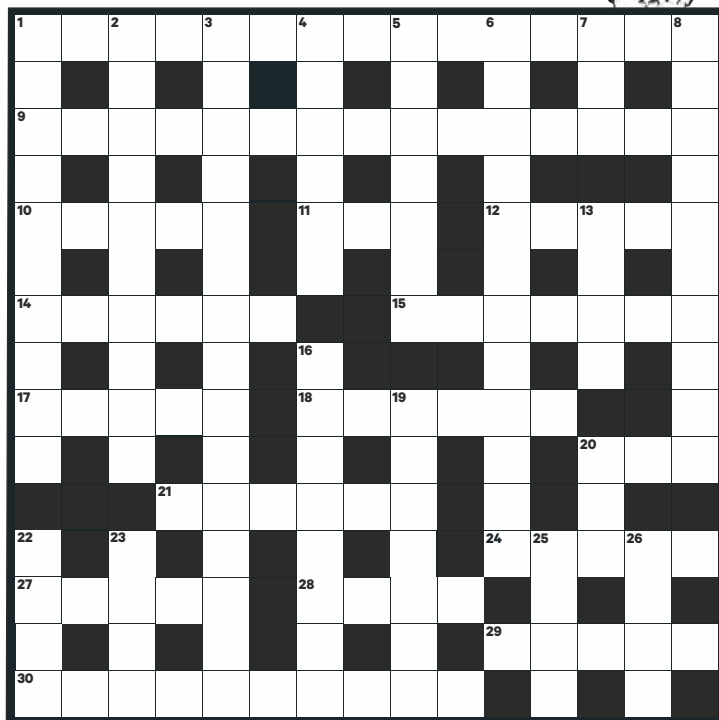
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Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1** The Cribbs are on fire, but there's not a single person there to see them (7-3-2-3)
9 Imagine Dragons are on fire somewhere and they're magic (5-3-7)
10 Blur became unfashionable and their fire has been extinguished (2-3)
11 Usher's short version of 5 down (1-1-1)
12 "I'm going to Wichita, far from this _____ for ever more", musical drama is missing from The White Stripes' 'Seven Nation Army' (5)
14 Well that's me rid of those Soup Dragons (2-4)
15+23D Everything Everything go far back in time for their latest release (7-4)
17 'Broken _____', Neil Young album or just part of Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds' debut album (5)
18 Don't be afraid to ask for a Rasmus number (2-4)

- 20** Chvrches have a shot at a number (3)
21 _____ Google, has played bass for My Bloody Valentine and Primal Scream (6)
24 "_____ rejected my soul, he knows my name", Morrissey (5)
27 Amazed that a new single by Bear's Den is included in a Lady Gaga performance (5)
28 'I've Never Been To _____' with Darlia, so not in such a state (4)
29 (See 13 down)
30 As a rule, permission is needed from Carl Barat & The Jackals (3-2-5)

CLUES DOWN

- 1** Bogus star I arrange to appear with Duane Eddy (4-6)
2 One from Rio is remixed by The Strokes (4-2-4)
3+19D Jackie Wilson song that gave him a touch of 'Sugar Sugar' (1-3-3-8-7)
4 Craig _____ played guitar for The Smiths,

- The Bluebells and Aztec Camera (6)
5 "Sucked more blood than a backstreet dentist", 2004 (2-2-3)
6 Death Cab For Cutie on album or in Star Wars perhaps (6-6)
7 The Plastic _____ Band, formed by John Lennon in 1970 (3)
8 T Rex laying down some 'Solid Gold _____' (4-6)
13+29A As a solo artist he declared 'Baby I'm Bored' (4-5)
16 Each song is taken as a single on Foo Fighters album (3-2-3)
19 (See 3 down)
20+25D Take a break on Circa Waves (3-4)
22 Their albums have been 'Grotesque' and 'Perverted By Language' (4)
23 (See 15 across)
25 (See 20 down)
26 Horace _____, roots reggae singer who appeared on all Massive Attack albums (4)

MARCH 7 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Girl In A Band, 7+8A I'm A Girl, 12+31D Not Fair, 13+26A Eleanor Rigby, 14 Omen, 15+36A Man I Need, 17 At Last, 21 Ire, 22 Dead, 23 Tyr, 27 Syro, 29 Metz, 30 Surf, 32+3D Future Islands, 35 Sad, 39+25A+9A Blood On The Tracks, 40 Morrissey
DOWN 1 Graceland, 2 Raise, 4+7D A Storm Is Coming, 5+20A Amen Corner, 6 Dirt, 10 Toxicity, 11 Synkronized, 16 Avengers, 18 Liars, 19 Tim Rose, 24 Ramones, 28 You, 32 Fab, 33 Two, 34 Red, 37 Eye, 38 AM

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