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SAM SMITH FEELING ALL THE FEELS



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NME

Hello...



I'VE JUST GOT BACK having spent two weeks living on top of a Spanish mountain with only two donkeys, four chickens, a duck and eight sheep for company. I didn't follow the news, hardly checked my email, and texted no one. The nearest visible house was about a day's walk away. The nearest village a properly terrifying half an hour's drive down. Basically the kind of place where you'd be brutally murdered in a horror film, having just witnessed all of your friends being brutally murdered first.

This fortnight up a mountain was, however, total paradise. Not just because I finally got round to reading *Catch-22*, which is brilliant and highly recommended to all, and not just because I slept more in a fortnight than I had in a year, but because I got to remember what it was like to not look at my phone every morning and read a story that pointed to the end of the world, or the revelation that a person in power was a serial abuser, or the reiteration once again of how utterly f**king self-immolating Brexit will be. Also, I now have loads of new music that needs listening to, very loud, to drown out the return to reality...

MIKE WILLIAMS
Editor-in-Chief
@itsmikelike

The NME review
of Shamir's
new album p31

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Sam Smith

"The saddest moments
in my life are when
I walk offstage"

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Broad City

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Charlie Sloth

"I never wake up with
a frown, I'm doing
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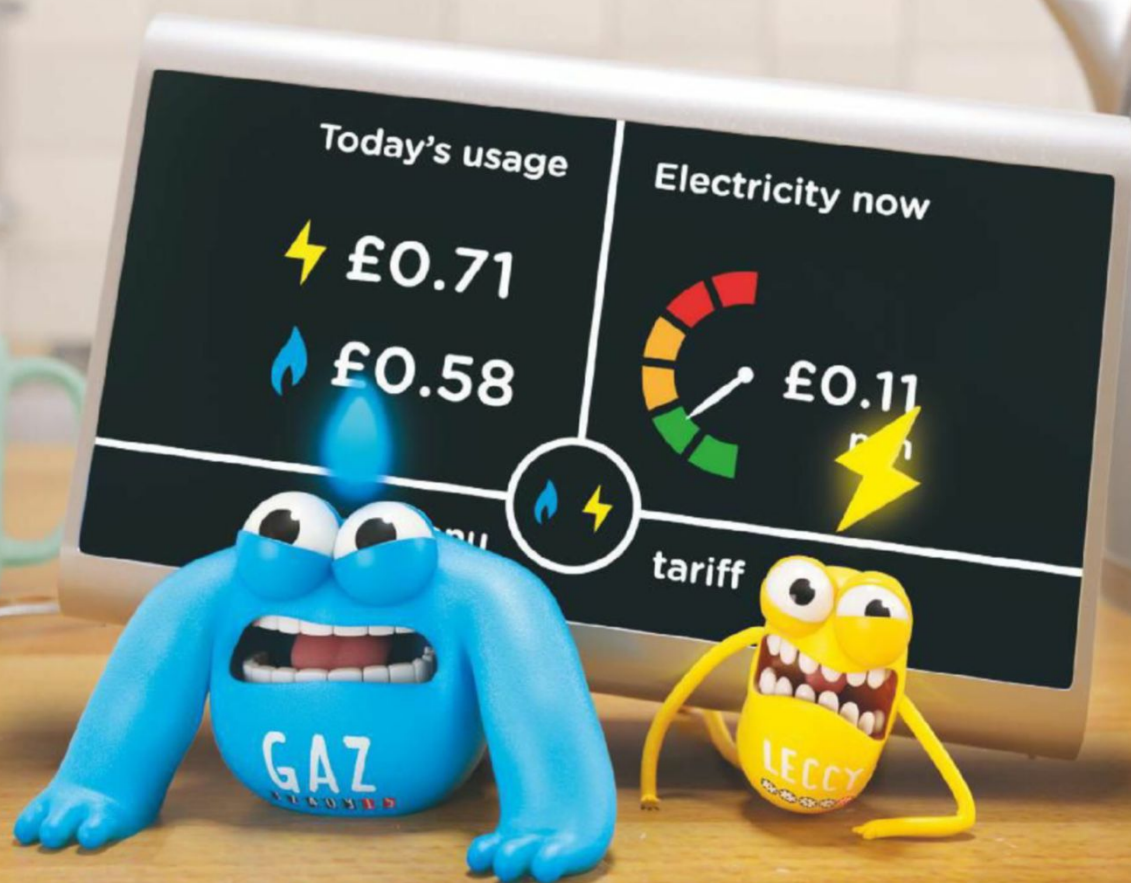
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AGENDA

WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT THIS WEEK



Noah Schnapp,
who plays Will Byers



Charlie Heaton
(who plays Jonathan
Byers) with David
Harbour (Jim Hopper)

Stranger danger

The biggest TV show on earth, *Stranger Things 2*, is back back back. Here's what happened when the cast were given disposable cameras to muck about with on set



Finn Wolfhard, who
plays Mike Wheeler



Joe Keery, who plays
Steve Harrington



STRANGER THINGS 2
IS ON NETFLIX NOW

Three excellent questions for Russell Brand

The stand-up, broadcaster, actor, author, columnist, political commentator and mental health and drug rehabilitation activist opens up

1 On your Re:Birth stand-up tour, you ask the audience to fill in a questionnaire detailing their most mortifying moments. Have any of the confessions shocked you? "Quite a lot of them. That's part of the reason I do it. When you're in a crowd, like the same as when you're in traffic, you don't really think of people as anything other than a crowd. But people have done strange stuff and everyone's a bit weird. Basically, we're not what we pretend to be. Everyone puts on a mask to go out into the world. The point is that people are nuanced and unusual, so it's a good way of drilling past the façade, getting some cheap jokes out of the mad things people admit to. But it's also exposing that I think a lot of people feel lonely and inadequate and not good enough; but we're also strange and similar."

2 Your fourth book is called *Recovery: Freedom From Our Addictions*. Are attitudes towards recovery shifting? "I think the idea of recovery is starting to make sense; I think people recognise it. People look at addiction in lots of different ways and recognise that obsessive-compulsive behaviour has lots of different forms. I've got friends – I'm sure you do too – that can take drugs and it's not a big deal. But there are some people who are doing it to hold their lives together, and they're trying to medicate themselves. It's an important difference."

3 Have you noticed a change in your fanbase since you started talking about recovery and politics?

"It changed the more I talked about politics and with The Trews [his political YouTube show], people started coming to feel part of something and that they're participating in this authentic conversation. What I think is happening is people have lost the means to talk about spirituality. It's gone into decline because religion has become synonymous with bigotry and hatred, and all the positive things have been lost: community, connection, surrender, service, kindness and need. It's interesting to me as an entertainer to address the way people feel. People drink and take drugs and buy stuff because they don't feel very good and they're trying to make themselves feel better. That's the conversation I'm interested in now."

Recovery: Freedom From Our Addictions is published through Bluebird. For a full list of Re:Birth tour dates, visit russellbrand.com



HARRY STYLES

Proved the vastness of his heart by sending pizza to fans queuing overnight to see him live.



GOGGLEBOX

Liam. Corbs. Sheeran. The Osbournes. All doing the greatest TV show on earth for charity, on Nov 3.



SIMON COWELL

Fell down the stairs, missed *The X Factor* live show. It's them silly shoes he wears.



PRUE LEITH

Accidentally outed Sophie as the *GBBO* winner, the morning before the final. A great British cock-up.



Shouldn't
sparklers
count
as light?



Pixel 2 with
low light
camera.



Carphone Warehouse

Pixel 2 in store now. Pixel 2 XL in store soon.

Nothing But Thieves

Nothing But Thieves to play intimate VO5 NME Awards 2018 launch party



And you, yes you, can be there

TO ANNOUNCE THE return of the VO5 NME Awards (on February 14, 2018 at O2 Academy Brixton) we are throwing a party, with our headline sponsor VO5. Southend rock monsters Nothing But Thieves are headlining, so things could get dangerous.

To win one of 50 pairs of tickets, go to NME.com/win

The details

THE EVENT

VO5 NME Awards 2018 launch party

THE HEADLINER

Nothing But Thieves

THE VENUE

Tape, London

THE DATE

November 16

WORDS: ALEX FLOOD. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Dirty John: the best true crime podcast since *Serial*

Binge it now, is our advice. Here's why

WHEN DEBRA NEWELL, A wealthy 50-something interior designer, meets John Meehan online, he seems dreamy: a handsome freelance anaesthetist who treats her, mostly, amazingly well. They're married within four months. Turns out, though, that John is an absolute rotter.

THE REPORTING IS STELLAR

It's hosted and written by *LA Times* journalist Chris Goffard, who interviewed members of Newell and Meehan's families, and uncovered loads of hidden info about everyone involved.



JOHN IS A GREAT VILLAIN

He's a cruel, vindictive, self-loathing drug addict described on more than one occasion as "evil". But he's also charming, and Debra loves him. He's fascinating.

THE END IS SATISFYING

Unlike a lot of true crime podcasts, *Dirty John's* finale gives total closure. No mystery is left unsolved; justice is served. You'll go away feeling completely satisfied.

Dirty John, a six-part series by the *LA Times* and *Wondery* is available now

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nightlife
just get
brighter?



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“It was a madness”

In an extract from his new book, Wiley looks back at an altercation between Crazy Titch (who's been serving a life sentence for murder since 2005) and a little-known MC called Dizzee Rascal

PIRATE RADIO HAS BEEN a part of anything that's ever come out of England – garage, hardcore, jungle, drum and bass, everything. It was the phone-ins that let me know that it wasn't just a bit of fun. People would ring up and be like, 'Yes, Wiley, you're killing it!' or 'Big up Blah-Blah from Blah-Blah!' and I knew then that we were making a culture.

I've been on pirate radio since I was fourteen. It's the reason I'm Wiley. We were never gonna get a set on Radio 1 or whatever, so we built a fan base ourselves. And it was illegal, you could get arrested and all that, but it was our blessing. You could get charges just for being on a rooftop, but it was our only chance to grasp at. To be honest, it was better than the other stuff we could have been getting up to.

We were always hiding, ducking around, couldn't tell no one where the studio was. It all had to be kept a secret. And it was that element of it that kept it all going. That was part of the magic; because it was illegal, it became a movement.

I don't know what would have happened if things went differently that night. It could have been the end. We didn't know how much danger we were in.

This is like summer of 2003. Hot summer. Crazy Titch had just got out of jail, and he'd heard that there was this kid called Dizzee Rascal. Until then, Titch saw himself as the king. But Titch had been away, and now Dizzee was the guy.

So we go to the Deja Vu block in Stratford, in the middle of nowhere, and everybody's there: Roll Deep, Newham Generals, Nasty Crew. That block's gone now, but back then it was mad. I walked out

once and this man was waving a shotgun around. Things happened there, you know.

We were in this room, about fifty people, no space, music loud. I was standing next to Dizzee. I spit, then give the mic to Titch. Titch in the middle on a mad ting.

Man was sweating, you get me. Titch wanted it. He had this anger and drive that just made him go for it. Plus you've got the fact that one's from Bow, and one's from Stratford. So there's competition. Automatic. So then Titch gives the mic to Dizzee. Dizzee was spitting fire, but not like Titch. Titch was on something else. He takes the mic back, then gives it to Dizzee. So they go back and forth like this, reh reh reh. Energy building.

And then suddenly Titch turns to Dizzee, kind of talking at him: 'What?'

Dizzee didn't want to clash, but he just wasn't having it.

Titch pushed Dizzee, and everything just went.

Music stopped, Titch bundled through the door onto the rooftop. And then everyone follows. It was a madness. Pitch black. People holding Titch, Dizzee standing shouting, 'Don't hold him back.'

Suddenly I realised that the edge of the roof is right there. No barrier. And I was looking at them, thinking that if Titch breaks through, that would be it. We all could have gone down. Fourteen floors.

It was mad, but that was the scene back then.



This is an extract from *Eskiboy* by Wiley, out in hardback on November 2 from William Heinemann. Order your copy on Amazon



NME

Actually inspiring career advice

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NME PROMOTION

Boxing clever

Frank Carter has teamed up with Samsung to shoot an epic music video in the Samsung Hypercube

FRANK CARTER & THE Rattlesnakes have teamed up with Samsung to make an innovative music video for new track 'Spray Paint Love'.

The single debuted on Annie Mac's Radio 1 show this week. Its neon-hued video sees Carter perform inside the Samsung Hypercube, inside which thousands of festival goers created their own unique 360° performances this summer.

Carter called the Samsung Hypercube "a space with infinite possibilities", saying, "Once inside it's easy for an artist's mind to run riot."

As part of the collaboration, Carter has also designed a special piece of artwork for 'Spray Paint Love' using a Samsung Galaxy Note8 handset.

Check out the 'Spray Paint Love' video on NME.com. For tour dates and more info, visit andtherattlesnakes.com

SAMSUNG x **FRANK CARTER & the rattlesnakes**

Frank Carter on...

...THE VIBE

"No grandeur (it's already grand), no overcrowding (less is more) and no forced energy (the space literally acts like it's alive already)."

...HOW HE DID IT

"I walked in, and I sang, and I celebrated life over and over again until the director yelled cut."

...THE EXPERIENCE

"The video has refined the experience within the space, and has allowed us to create something unique. We are incredibly proud to be one of the first to celebrate it."

Last W33K IN NUMBERS



1

George Michael topped the album chart with the reissued 'Listen Without Prejudice'. Still a legend.



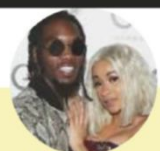
5

Minutes it took for Liam G to sell out his summer 2018 show in Finsbury Park. Supersonic!



31

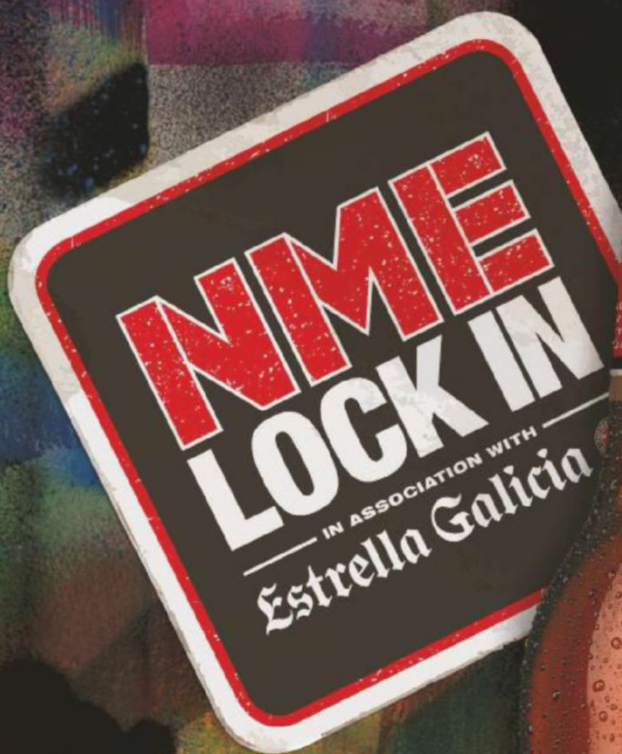
Age Drake turned, for which he threw a 're-bar mitzvah' including pizza boxes with his face on.



8

Carats in the diamond ring with which Migos' Offset proposed to Cardi B onstage in Philadelphia.

Estrella Galicia



SERVED IN THE
NME
BAR



Estrella Galicia  recommends responsible drinking



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Estrella Galicia UK

ON THE RECORD

BIG OPINIONS. NO FILTER.

THIS WEEK

Lower the voting age to 16 – you know it makes sense

THINGS YOU CAN DO when you're 16: get married, have sex, pilot a glider (note to self: must get around to piloting a glider), join the actual army, leave home, buy a lottery ticket and go to Reading Festival and cry about your GCSE results while missing Wiley on the Radio 1Xtra Stage because you're in a really long queue for cheesy chips. Things you *can't* do at 16: vote in general and local elections. Which, frankly, seems more than a bit b*****s.

Despite rumours to the contrary, today's 16 and 17-year-olds are switched on, politically engaged and part of many systems – the NHS, education and youth schemes, for starters – in whose running they currently have no say, even though said systems affect them every single day. I'm pretty sure the most fired up I've ever been

is when I was 16 and wanted to change the world. I was out being aggy on demos quicker than you can say 'hold my placard', studying government and politics A-level and convinced my vegetarianism was a powerful political act. I was more engaged with what was going on in Parliament than ever and knew my proportional representation from my first-past-the-post, but was still banned from casting a ballot, whereas I knew that people twice my age were regularly giving up their own chance to vote through general can't-be-arsedness.

It turns out I'm not the only one who thinks young people

"The most fired up I've been is when I was 16"

Never too young to get political



should be more included in politics in the UK. Today (November 3), there will be a debate about reducing the voting age in this country from 18 to 16. The Representation of the People (Young People's Enfranchisement and Education) Bill is set to have its second reading in the House of Commons and Cat Smith MP, Labour's 32-year-old Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs, is fully on board. "Lots of young people feel their future has been decided for them by another generation, including the 1.5 million 16 and 17-year-olds living in the UK who are denied the right to vote by this Conservative Government," she told NME. "The general election

should have served as a wake-up call to the Conservative Party that they can no longer ignore young people's views." Theresa May isn't having any of it, opposing the idea in July, stating, "We expect people to continue in education or training until the age of 18, and I think that is the right point for the voting age." But opening up voting to 16 and 17-year-olds isn't just the decent thing to do, it's embraced with open arms. In Scotland – where the voting age for local elections has been 16 since 2015 – 75 per cent voted in the Scottish independence referendum, compared with just 54 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds. If that's what counts as apathy in 2017, bring it on. @leoniemaycooper

PHOTOS: REX FEATURES



THINGS WE LIKE

THIS WEEK'S OBJECTS OF DESIRE



Take this

Reveal: Robbie Williams offers an inside look at the pop icon.

£9.99 with any other purchase in-store at hmv



Top tees

Topman's *Stranger Things* collab features a sweet line of shirts.

£20 topman.com



Definitely thirsty

Sip champagne supernovas – or a nice Earl Grey – out of this 'Tea Here Now' mug.

£9.95 nmemerch.com



Spritz o'clock

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£7.49 waitrose.com



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This X800 4K Ultra HD Blu-ray Player's cinematic experience is perfect for movie buffs.

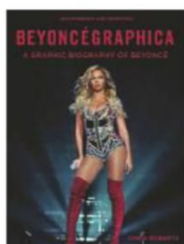
£400 sony.co.uk



Grime lord

Eskiboy is Wiley's new autobiography, documenting the MC's life and career in full.

£20 amazon.co.uk



Hero worship

Beyoncégraphica tells the legend's story via nice charts.

£9.99 with any other purchase in-store at hmv



Cult classic

Ian Dury's seminal 1977 'New Boots And Panties!!' LP has been reissued on lush vinyl.

£27.99 hmv.com



Hogwarts and all

Snuggle up with this swish *Harry Potter*-themed winter warmer.

£400 pendletonwoolenmills.co.uk



Keep on truckin'

Levi's is celebrating 50 years of its iconic Trucker jacket – this Sherpa style is cosy AF.

£110 levi.com



Tangerine dream

This Chubby Lipstick comes from 3INA's new 'anti-glam' Utility collection.

£8.95 3ina.com



Great shot

Kurt Cobain was a fan of Bata's Hotshot sneaker – they've just relaunched.

£60 thehipstore.co.uk



Shade chic

Ray-Ban's new Blaze aviators are straight out of the 1970s but with a modern twist.

£163 ray-ban.com



Fine wine

Tapas joint Barrafina now has its own excellently priced sauvignon blanc. Chin chin.

£8 sainsburys.co.uk

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LCD SOUNDSYSTEM

Yeah Yeah Yeahs > Phoenix

Glass Animals > Richie Hawtin CLOSE > Dixon

George FitzGerald Live

SAT 26 MAY

THE XX

Lorde > Sampha

Popcaan > Lykke Li

Rex Orange County

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What's ON your Headphones?

THIS WEEK

Leeds

< SOPHIE KNAPPER >

25, assistant retail manager

Listening to:

DRAHLA

Fictional Decision

"It's especially good live. They're a Wakefield band but I'm going to see them in Paris this month."

Wearing: Blue Rinse top, trousers, belt and hat.

Best thing about Leeds:

"I really like the art and music scene. All my friends are involved in loads of different little collectives."

If you could take an instax of any musician, who would it be?
Iris Apfel

< GYNNE LAGMAN >

19, student

Listening to:

BASTILLE

Pompeii

"I like to listen to it when I'm walking. It makes me feel at ease helps with my thinking."

Wearing: New Look jumper, Suite Blanco jeans, Vans trainers, Dorothy Perkins bag.

Best thing about Leeds:

"It's very multicultural and diverse. I think that helps people become more open-minded and learn to accept other cultures."

If you could take an instax of any musician, who would it be?
Selena Gomez

SAMUEL ASARE >

19, warehouse assistant

Listening to:

PLAYBOY CARTI

Magnolia

"It's a feelgood song with lots of energy."

Wearing: Vintage coat, Zara jumper, Vans jeans and trainers, Adidas bag.

Best thing about Leeds:
"Definitely the football."

If you could take an instax of any musician, who would it be?
Michael Jackson

ERIC STEVENSON BYRNE >

18, sales assistant

Listening to:

FTSE FEAT. SHOLA AMA

Work U Out

"The melodies, the layers of the song and the old organ sound are really cool."

Wearing: Topman jacket and jeans, Audere Couture shirt, Nike trainers.

Best thing about Leeds:

"The nightlife is really good."

If you could take an instax of any musician, who would it be?
Tinashe



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PHOTOS: RACHEL BILLINGS

"It's very multicultural"



SAM SMITH





PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVE NEAVES

NO PAIN NO GAIN

Last year, **Sam Smith** went through a break-up that sent him into a spiral of drinking, smoking and not looking after “my body, my mind or my heart”. It was during this period he started working on his intensely vulnerable new album ‘*The Thrill Of It All*’. “I was in a dark place,” he tells **Jordan Bassett**, “but I’m starting to be happier now”

IF YOU HAPPENED TO HIT the gay clubs in London last year, there’s a good chance you’ll have seen Sam Smith knocking back a tequila, kicking it in the smoking area and being generally – in his own words – “off-my-face drunk”. This is not necessarily the behaviour of an Oscar-winning pop star whose 2014 album ‘*In The Lonely Hour*’ made history in America as the fastest-selling debut by a British male solo artist and whose life experiences seem far removed from yours and mine. It is, however, the behaviour of a man who’s been through a bruising break-up.

“I was out gay-clubbing three or four times a week, smoking and drinking too much, giving my heart away a bit too easily,” he tells *NME*. “It was fun – it was super-fun – but it wasn’t me. I didn’t feel like I was treating myself with a lot of respect at that time. It was all because I broke up with a guy. I wasn’t in love with him, but it was more the hope of what it could have been. That hurts more, sometimes, because I was so close to something being so amazing. It just killed me because I wanted it to happen.”

It was during this freewheeling period that Sam began to work on his new album, ‘*The Thrill Of It All*’, released today (November 3). Although aimed squarely at the mainstream, with big, swooping choruses that showcase his vocal





"I'm an attention-seeker. I sing because there's a hole inside me"

acrobatics, it's a record that sees him explore new musical terrain and subtly provocative lyrics. A gospel influence runs throughout the record. This is only hinted at by the soulful lead single 'Too Good At Goodbyes'; standout album tracks 'HIM' and 'Burning' positively soar with jubilant gospel choirs and powerful religious iconography.

The album is so intensely personal and revealing that Sam has previously described it as "dangerous". He tells *NME*, "I don't want to be an easy listen." The aforementioned 'Burning' at first sounds like a typical Sam Smith piano ballad – albeit one with the moving lyric, "I've been burning up since you left" – before a booming gospel choir crackles with so much emotion that the title seems almost literal.

"It's just painful to sing that song now," he says. "It's about fame and that relationship that ended. I got to a point last year where I didn't care any

more about myself. I was being completely reckless and not looking after my body and my mind and heart and literally burning. I don't know if I'm ever gonna be as personal again in music, because I really had to go to a weird place to get the music out. I was in a bit of a dark place. I just didn't really like myself that much when I was making this record. But I'm starting to be happier now."

'HIM', also adorned with a soulful gospel hook, is musically reminiscent of 'As', the celebratory Stevie Wonder track that was later covered by Mary J Blige and George Michael. In September, Sam performed a mash-up of 'Father Figure' and 'Faith' at the BBC Radio 1 Live Lounge, where he described Michael as "my favourite artist of all time". When the singer passed away in December last year, Sam tweeted this tribute: "Words can't express how much you and your music meant and means to me... I would not

be the artist I am if it wasn't for you."

He saw his hero perform at Wembley Stadium at age 15 and says now, "That was the moment I decided I wanted to do pop music. The Live Lounge was the most nervous I've ever been singing a song because I wanted to do it justice. He's become more of an idol of mine in the last three years – I relate to him so much because he was an openly gay pop singer. I look to him for guidance because there's not many acts I can look to and idolise in that way."

'HIM' features the lines, "Holy Father, we need to talk / I have a secret that I can't keep / I'm not the boy you thought you wanted / Please don't get angry... It is him I love". Sam is keen to emphasise that the track isn't personal, but a narrative meant to convey a specific aspect of the gay experience. "That song is a coming-out song from a boy to his dad," he says. "It's just a general story. It's not my story. I wanted to make that song for my community, for the LGBT community."

Sam moved to London when he was 19, having spent most of his adolescence in Cambridgeshire. Although he'd come out at 10, he "didn't really meet many gay guys" until he relocated to the city. Then, when it became apparent that 'In The Lonely Hour' was poised to make him very famous indeed, he chose to discuss his sexuality in an interview with music magazine *The Fader*.

"When that article came out, it felt like I was coming out again," he says. "It was really weird for me. I didn't know how to deal with it. People were

throwing around words like 'spokesperson' and things like that. I got a bit nervous because I didn't want to offend anyone. I didn't know how to speak about a community that I didn't really feel a part of because I'd only just moved to London. But now I feel like I know what to say. I feel confident speaking about it."

That newfound confidence can have pitfalls. Take last year's Oscars ceremony. Sam won Best Original Song for 'Writing's On The Wall', the James Bond theme he co-wrote for 2015's *Spectre*, and dedicated the award to "the LGBT community all around the world".

Sam on stage

Catch Sam Smith at these live shows

MARCH
Tue 20 FlyDSA Arena, Sheffield.
Wed 21 Metro Radio Arena, Newcastle.
Fri 23 SSE Hydro, Glasgow.
Tue 27 Arena, Manchester.
APRIL
Tue 3 Genting Arena, Birmingham.
Fri 6, Sat 7, Mon 9 & Tue 10 The O2, London.

"I don't want to be a robot. I want to make mistakes"

Unfortunately he also implied, incorrectly, that this was the first time an openly gay man had ever won an Oscar. He'd read an article in which Sir Ian McKellen bemoaned the fact that no openly gay man had ever been named Best Male Actor at the awards ceremony. As many said on social media, it seemed Sam had misread the quote and ploughed in without checking the facts, thereby – unwittingly – undermining the achievements of others before him.

"I messed up," he admits. "I actually meant to say Best Male Actor and I didn't. I obviously did know that I wasn't the first gay person to win an Oscar. I was gutted – there was 90 million people watching that show; I wanted to say something positive and I f**ked up. When I mucked that up, I lost a lot of confidence. I can't express enough – it really upset me. It made me realise that what I say can be damaging."

The mishap hasn't, ultimately, scared Sam away from being outspoken. "I don't want to be a robot," he says. "I don't want to have everything prepared. I want to make mistakes. It's important to. I'm 25; I still don't really know what I'm doing. I'm still trying to figure stuff out. But I wanna be human in that way. With my first album I was a bit scared and guarded at points because I didn't know what's correct to say or what I should say. Now I'm just like, 'let it all hang out', really."

This is perhaps why Sam has become so forthright with his music. 'In The Lonely Hour' was the only album to shift more than 1 million copies in both the US and the UK in 2014 and sometimes sounded focus-grouped for mass appeal (he's confessed that its more commercial moments, such as the lead single 'Money On My Mind', now leave him a little cold). There are, for instance, few gender-specific pronouns used throughout the first album; he could be addressing a male or female lover. 'The Thrill Of It All' is much more open and direct.

"I am gay and my music is gay and what I speak about is gay," he says. "I can't help it be a thing. With my job, I travel around the world and get to meet so many amazing people. I've

seen so many different aspects of the LGBT community. I feel like if you're a true artist, you're gonna speak about what moves your core."

Where detractors often described his previous album as 'safe', the new one has the potential to help queer the mainstream, to bait homophobic s**ts and reach people who grapple with their sexuality. "I think it's so important to talk about this right now. What's going on [in America] is scaring the s**t out of me. I want to make people feel uncomfortable. We should be addressing these issues. There are not enough openly gay men or women in the music industry – any industry. And we need to be at the front, talking, shouting, so that those little kids that live in the middle of nowhere can hear it and hopefully be inspired."

Sam Smith is a vulnerable and emotional pop star. He talks openly about his feelings and says, "I've got a bit of depression in me, I think, and I'm always fighting it. It's a heavy word to use and I wouldn't say I have depression, but I have a depressive nature. I can slip into sadness. I always say that I feel everything entirely. Even when I'm feeling nothing, I feel nothing entirely."

It's impressive to see such a mainstream star refuse to conform to harmful, traditional stereotypes about what makes a man. In engaging freely with his feelings, exposing his weaknesses and even in admitting that he makes mistakes, Sam Smith is the opposite of toxic masculinity, which dictates that men should be 'strong', never wrong and always emotionally withdrawn. His father, Frederick, was a role model in this. "My dad is so emotional," Sam says. "He'll sit there and cry. He'll tell me 'I love you' and hold my hand and kiss me on the cheek. He's so – I don't want to say 'feminine', but he's so soft in that way."

As a result, Sam has grown up unable to understand why more men can't be vulnerable in this way. At the same time, though, he admits that "sometimes my softness and openness emotionally bite me in the f**king arse." Why, then, choose a career where you're so exposed?

"I don't know, honestly," he says. "Good question. I'm insecure. I think I'm an attention-seeker – obviously, because if you wanna stand on stage and sing in front of that many people, there's something missing. Like a hole inside. When I'm onstage, I feel fulfilled. I feel really content. And when I'm offstage, something leaves and I don't know what it is. The saddest moments in my life are when I walk offstage after a show. I think that those moments are

the things that make people do drugs and drink loads; those are the moments that kill pop stars."

Sam's been off the booze for three months now (though he's looking forward to getting back on the wine at Christmas). He confesses he "could go

off the rails 100 per cent", but for now has found contentment in friendships, a new relationship and newfound confidence in speaking about issues close to him.

He poured this feeling of belonging and peace into 'Palace', his favourite track on 'The Thrill Of It All'. "It's a love song," he explains. "My heart is a palace and in every single door of the palace there's a room that opens to a past lover, a ghost of my heart. It was about coming to terms with everyone I've ever loved and saying that real love – if that's what we had – is never a waste of time." Sam Smith, a man who's declined to keep his heart under lock and key, seems stronger than ever.

NME

SAMTV

What Sam loves to watch on the box

LOUIS THEROUX

"I'm currently watching his documentaries – they're unbelievable. I'm really new to the whole Louis Theroux thing. He's fit. I really fancy him."

GEORGE MICHAEL: FREEDOM

"It makes me so sad that he's not here but it also makes me think of his music and what he's left behind. It's just incredible."

WILL & GRACE

"I'm f**king obsessed. I wanna meet all of them. I wanna be in an episode. That would be my dream. Please put this in the interview."



BROAD CITY

REALITY BITES

Cult sitcom *Broad City*'s fourth season is its realest – and darkest – yet. Creators and stars Abbi Jacobson and Ilana Glazer tell Rhian Daly how the election and New York winters reshaped the show

L-r: Abbi Jacobson,
Ilana Glazer



IT'S NO LONGER ALWAYS SUNNY IN BROAD CITY

Every season of the show so far has been set in the sweltering heat of a sticky New York City summer. Who can forget, as a result, guest star Seth Rogen trying to deal with a case of "swamp ass" by stuffing a load of tissue between his bum cheeks? Season four, however, is set in the crisp chill of winter, and incorporates the weightier thoughts that time brings, like depression and mortality. "We wanted to see that version of New York and then, when we started looking into it, we were like, 'It's pretty depressing,'" says Ilana with a laugh. "New York in the winter is cold. It's lonely, but it's also hard to be lonely in New York. It's darker and heavier. When we started getting into specific ideas it was like, 'Well, I guess you drink a lot more.'"

TRUMP IS AFFECTING THEIR MOJO

While *Broad City*'s politics is mostly subtle, it's always had a very obvious set of lefty values – the kind that are directly at odds with President Trump's. As a result, Ilana's bedroom wall is now plastered in Planned Parenthood posters and protest signs, and the episode 'Witches' sees self-proclaimed "cum kween" Ilana visit a sex therapist when she realises she hasn't had an orgasm since the election. "The show always stems organically from what we're talking about," explains Ilana. "Even since the web series we'd get together, talk, vent, and then get to work." Reacting to Trump may not have been a conscious decision, but it was something the women felt they needed to do. "We couldn't stop talking about what was going on in our personal lives, and in the world, and with the country," Abbi says. "It became necessary. It was just infused in the world."

"DIRECTING STEVE BUSCEMI WAS WILD. IT WAS LIKE WE WERE PEERS"

Marching for Planned Parenthood



Abbi trains Shania Twain

SHANIA TWAIN IS IN IT

Throughout the show, Abbi's been caught in a lie about training Shania Twain at Soulstice, the bougie gym she works at as a cleaner. Finally, season four gives her closure on that fib with a sizeable cameo from the musician. "We never even thought of having her on," Abbi says. "Someone in her team slipped to someone in our team that she would be really into doing it. We were just like, 'Whaaat?!'" It's a real chance for fictional Abbi to grow, too, as her creator explains. "This season, she starts to deal with the fact that she lies all the time. Not only is Shania Twain at the gym, but this is a thing that's been haunting her so she actually has to *train Shania Twain* to get past that stage of living in this haphazard lying way."

THEY'RE STILL PULLING FROM THEIR REAL LIVES

Part of what makes *Broad City* so relatable is that its storylines have their seeds in Abbi and Ilana's experiences. Season four takes that to new extremes. In the episode 'Florida', the pair join Ilana's mum and aunt in the Sunshine State as they try and sell her grandma's old apartment. "As we were writing this, in my head I was like, 'It's probably going to be filmed in my grandma Harriet's condo,'" Ilana says. "You ever hear that Roxane Gay quote where she talks about how women have to cannibalise themselves to be successful with their writing? They have to share so much of themselves and men can do *research*? She's f**king right! It was like, 'Ugh, really? Are we going to do this? I grew up going to this f**king condo community every year of my childhood.' It's just so much of my real life."



Ilana and RuPaul

THERE'S A TON OF INCREDIBLE GUEST STARS HELPING OUT

Broad City has always attracted big-name guests, but season four is off the scale. RuPaul creates the sushi bar equivalent of *Drag Race*, and an acting legend joins the cast for one episode: Steve Buscemi. Even alluding to his role would be a "big spoiler", but Ilana has plenty to say about directing him. "It was *wiild*," she gasps. "It was definitely 'fake it 'til you make it'. At first it felt like, 'Oh my god – I've been watching these people since I was a kid', and then it just clicked and it was like we were peers playing."

NME

City slickers

Some of the unexpected walk-ons on *Broad City*



SETH ROGEN

As Male Stacy, Rogen hooked up with Abbi in the season two premiere, but passed out midway through sex because of a heatwave.



WHOOPI GOLDBERG

When Ilana lost her job at the Groupon-esque Deals! Deals! Deals!, Whoopi stopped by to lead her ex-colleagues in a *Sister Act*-style celebration.



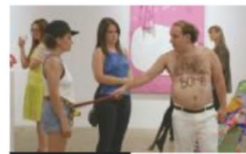
AMY POEHLER

The executive producer and *Parks And Rec* star turned up in season one as the chef of fancy restaurant Octavia.



ADAM LEVINE

The Maroon 5 frontman scored a gig singing the flight safety instructions in season three's finale, as the girls jetted off to Israel.



HAR MAR SUPERSTAR

Perhaps the most unexpected cameo of all came when the unlikely early noughties indie sex symbol turned up as a shirtless performance artist in season three.

FIRE IN THE BELLY

Charlie Sloth is the kingmaking BBC rap expert and self-styled “best-looking fat guy in the universe”. As he launches new multimedia show *The 8th*, he tells Jamie Milton why success was never in question

IN JULY 2010, HOURS BEFORE his first ever Radio 1 show, Charlie Sloth went up to the station’s then resident hip-hop don Tim Westwood and told him, point blank, “I’m coming for your job.”

There’s footage online of a wound-up Westwood introducing Sloth on air for the first time. “Here’s this new guy at the station,” he says. “I better crush him and destroy his career.” On the surface it’s all pantomime fighting talk, but Westwood was right in saying, “You might be the person who replaces me on Saturday night.”

Three years later, that’s exactly what Sloth ended up doing. He took Westwood’s daily 1Xtra show and his weekend *Rap Show* slot. Now he’s heading up Radio 1’s late show on weeknights, *The 8th With Charlie Sloth*, debuting November 6. He’s credited with helping kick-start the careers of Skepta, Stormzy and Wretch 32, and he’s been a launchpad for emerging grime acts such as Dave and Avelino.

Ten years ago, however, Sloth was scraping by in London, living in what he calls a “shed with no sanitation”, raising his son between jobs. Way before then, aged 14, he was already DJing for pirate radio stations such as Rinse FM and “lying about my age” so he could play residencies at haunts such as Camden venue Dingwalls.

He soon tired of pirate radio (“I just

didn’t feel like I was really getting anywhere”) and tried MCing, producing and making videos for other artists, but by 2007 he was broke and almost out of options. A surprise move to vlogging turned his fortunes around. He wrote and produced a show called *Being Charlie Sloth*, playing seven different characters involved in the hip-hop scene, including a manager, a street team and a web designer. His first upload only reached a few thousand views. “I was like, ‘Whoa, I’ve skipped sleep to make this programme and it’s not being as well received as I anticipated.’” But he got a call from Lee ‘Q’ O’Denat, the late founder of rap website WorldstarHipHop. “‘I think it’s genius, so creative, I’ve never seen anything like it,’” he told Sloth. His videos were made exclusive to Worldstar for a year, and “it got to a point where labels were hitting me up because guests in the States wanted to feature on the show”. He even signed a film deal with Atlas, an LA-based company, something he soon sacrificed when the BBC gave him a call.

“IF YOU WANT SOMETHING THAT BAD, YOU WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN”

Getting his big radio break, he decided to stick with the Charlie Sloth brand (it isn’t actually his real name, and he remains tight-lipped about his real identity). He also continued to push the baseball-cap wearing, self-styled ‘best-looking fat guy in the universe’ character, turning any potential insecurities about his weight into a positive.

But the excitable Sloth millions tune into every week isn’t an act. Hanging out on the top floor of BBC’s New Broadcasting House, he’s just as animated in conversation as he is on air. He speaks in motivational taglines and phrases you tend to find on Instagram – #inspiring words set against pictures of clouds.

On his risky presenting style, where a sense of chaos defines most of his shows, he says, “If you can take the risks, you will reap the rewards.” On his rags-to-riches journey this past decade: “When I chat to other

successful people, if you want something that bad, you will make it happen. As long as you believe in yourself.”

His steep ascent exceeded even his own expectation, but he’s restless in wanting to achieve more. Again in the form of an inspirational quote, he explains, “Once you’ve climbed a mountain, it doesn’t stop, does it?”

Instead of setting up a deckchair on said mountain and finally getting some kip, this year he released debut album ‘The Plug’, featuring a Who’s Who of grime talents.

Some of ‘The Plug’s tracks made the 1Xtra A List, but Sloth insists there’s no conflict of interest. “I take my credibility so seriously. Until it’s been put on the playlist and it’s not my decision to play that record.” His trademark ‘Fire In The Booth’ sessions – where MCs are given the spotlight to freestyle over backing tracks – are more famous than ever. But the work doesn’t stop there. “Last year I did 211 live shows,” he says. “I was on the radio six days a week. I’ve got so many things going on with the Charlie Sloth brand that excite me, so when I wake up in the morning, I never wake up with a frown.” He claims he only had two hours’ sleep the night before. “I don’t have a social life,” he admits, “but I am doing something I enjoy.”

New show *The 8th* is Radio 1’s latest attempt to mix radio and video in an appeal to young audiences, who might have their head turned by streaming or self-curation. “Radio is more important than it was 10 years ago,” Sloth states. “People need to know what’s hot, why it’s hot, and where they can find it. Do you trust Spotify or Apple Music enough when they say what’s hot? Have they not got an agenda? Radio’s always gonna be important, it’ll always have a stronghold.”

Sloth is convinced he always needs to stay one step ahead, and he has good reason to think as such. Just this month, someone he describes as a “young cat” who’d recently started at Radio 1 came up to him and said, “I’m coming for your spot.” It was a mirror image of the scenario back in 2010, although Sloth’s not taking it personally. “I said, ‘Good luck to you’. I shook his hand. ‘Anything you need from me to try and replace me, let me know.’ I want people to win. When I’m done, I want there to be someone who’s up to replacing me, so I can pass the torch.”

Sloth with Samuel L Jackson



Fire starter

Sloth's 'Fire In The Booth' videos now get millions of YouTube views a week. He picks out three of the best



BIG SHAQ

What happened: In August 2017, comedian Michael Dapaah blew minds with his tongue-in-cheek 'Man's Not Hot' freestyle.

Best line: "The ting goes skrrrahh, pap pap ka-ka-ka / Skibiki-pap-pap, and a pu-pu-pudrrr-boom"

Sloth says: "I had Wiz Khalifa ringing my phone, 2Chainz, all being like, 'Is this guy for real?!' I'm like, 'Nah, he's a comedian.'"



STORMZY

What happened: After stealing the show at Sloth's live 'Fire In The Booth' cypher event, Stormzy announced himself on the world stage in September 2014.

Best line: "All I need is a mic and a mic stand / And a 16-bar, and I'll light man"

Sloth says: "He grabbed it by the horns. I remember watching him, thinking, 'This kid is a force.'"



J HUS

What happened: In 2015, after his first stint in prison, the 'Common Sense' rapper gave an honest account of life in the streets of east London.

Best line: "I really should be out there trying to make mills / Instead I'm in a cell eating microwaved meals"

Sloth says: "Incredible. Such a talent. Such a good guy as well, to be fair."

**"RADIO IS MORE
IMPORTANT
THAN IT WAS
10 YEARS AGO"**



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RADAR

THIS WEEK'S ESSENTIAL NEW RELEASES

BEST FOR MAKING AN IMPACT

PLAN B

Heartbeat

Taken from his upcoming fourth album 'Heaven Before All Hell Breaks Loose', this is a seriously soulful tour de force.

Best NEW tracks

And when to drop them

BEST FOR BEING A BOSS

WILEY FEAT. JME
I Call The Shots

The first track from Wiley's 2018 album reps his grimey greatness. He calls the shots, for sure.

BEST FOR SPACING OUT

NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS
Fort Knox

Liam says it sounds like Christina Aguilera; we say it's like Tame Impala having their way with the Chemical Brothers.

BEST FOR FEELING FEELINGS

CLEAN BANDIT

I Miss You

Julia Michaels features on this soppy but special banger from the classical-pop giants.

BEST FOR DISCO DANCING

FRANZ FERDINAND
Always Ascending

FF pull an LCD Soundsystem on this deep, murky tune.

BEST FOR PIRATE RADIO SESSIONS

KURUPT FM

Suttin' Like That

Garageheads need to listen to the *People Just Do Nothing* crew's strangely-great single.

BEST FOR AIR VIOLIN

EZRA FURMAN

Love You So Bad

Like Tom Petty meets Bowie, this is queer heartland rock with heart, soul and groove.

BEST FOR SMOOCHING DREAM WIFE

Let's Make Out

Need a soundtrack for getting your snog on? Then this fast and furious headbanger is for you.

BEST FOR REGRETS

PALOMA FAITH

Guilty

Written the week of the Brexit vote, Paloma puts herself in the shoes of someone who voted Leave, then regretted it.

BEST FOR WHITTILING WOOD

PINEGROVE

Intrepid

Doing the quiet-loud-quiet thing to perfection are this indie-country gang, who make you want to get into the great outdoors and have a lovely stroll by some massive trees.

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MUSIC

Ballads of an emotional man

Album two from Smith and his majestic voice

SAM SMITH

The Thrill Of It All



BREAK-UPS BALLADS DRAMA



ALBUM
OF THE
WEEK

SAM SMITH'S MASSIVE debut album was dominated by sad love songs such as 'Stay With Me', so it was fitting that he named it 'In The Lonely Hour'. Now the 25-year-old is back with a second effort called 'The Thrill Of It All', which suggests he might have lightened up a bit. Smith started

out collaborating with Disclosure ('Latch') and Naughty Boy ('La La La'), so does this album herald his return to the dancefloor? Erm, no – the 10-track standard edition features nothing but ballads.

But that's not to say it offers no artistic growth. Co-produced by Zayn and Frank Ocean collaborator Malay, 'Say It First' is a spare and poignant track whose guitar line recalls The xx. The gospel-flecked 'Pray' features reasonably trendy R&B beats, which makes sense when you spot the name 'Timbaland' on the credits. Smith could have duetted with anyone here, so it's interesting that the album's sole guest singer is an unsigned artist called YEBBA: their wonderfully dramatic break-up song 'No Peace' is a highlight. In recent interviews, Smith has definitely seemed more comfortable in his skin, and that's reflected on 'HIM', in which he reconciles religion with falling for a man. "Don't you try and tell me that God doesn't care for us / It is him I love," he sings proudly.

Occasionally, Smith slips back into blandness. The unimaginative Motown-flavoured track 'Baby, You Make Me Crazy' could have been sung by Olly Murs; piano ballad 'Burning' is a bit boring, although redeemed by lyrics that will make Smith's vocal coach wince: "Baby, I've been smoking / Oh, more than 20 a day". In fairness, it hasn't affected his voice, which sounds typically majestic throughout.

It's a cliché to compare Smith with fellow belter Adele, but a fairly unavoidable one. Both have become enormously successful by singing emotional ballads that connect with huge numbers of people, and both are understandably reluctant to raise the tempo as a result. But like Adele's '25', this is an undeniably accomplished album that will, deservedly, shift a helluva lot of copies.

Nick Levine

PHOTOS: STEVE NEAVES; JASON McDONALD

Doesn't wanna disco

Ditching disco for raw, honest misfit-pop, Las Vegas' Shamir Bailey is a musician reinvented

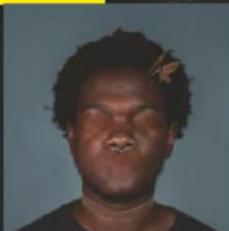
SHAMIR Revelations



LO-FI INTENSE CANDID

UNACQUAINTED with Shamir's disco-fuelled 2015 debut 'Ratchet'?

Not to worry. Follow-up 'Revelations' bears absolutely no resemblance to the glitter-ball, dancefloor-glued fix of his first work. It's a completely fresh start. In part, that's because Shamir Bailey's first stint at the big time saw him embracing a genre he didn't even like. He's confessed to having had no real knowledge of disco's roots and little love for dance. Instead, he'd been raised to enjoy country, indie and ragged, unfiltered punk. All three show



their face on 'Revelations', a dramatic back-to-basics release that swaps polished floor-fillers for raw honesty.

Technically, 'Revelations' is Shamir's third album. After

being dropped by his label XL, he recorded spur-of-the-moment LP 'Hope' in the space of one weekend, releasing it for free online. But shortly afterwards, he

experienced a psychotic episode, found himself hospitalised in Las Vegas and was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. 'Revelations', recorded in the immediate aftermath of his release from hospital, captures a feeling of picking up the pieces. Instruments are loose, notes are sometimes out of tune, and vocals strain alongside long, elongated power chords. Listen



GIRLPOOL 'Powerplant'

A collection of emotionally raw, grunge-nodding songs from Los Angeles-duo Cleo Tucker and Harmony Tividad.

closely, and you can hear feedback from an old, crackling guitar lead.

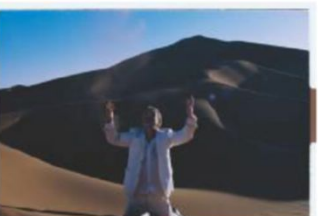
But these songs are *meant* to sound rough around the edges. On the raggedy '50s pop of 'Blooming' and the ultra-playful, spooky 'Games', Shamir finds solace in pure expression. Giving these songs a processed studio sheen would be to miss the point. On closer 'Straight Boy', he calls out those who give a damn about being cool: "*Being true is not their thing / Though it eats them up internally*". 'Revelations' is one big middle finger at music that tries to fit in.

That's not to say it can't be improved. Ditching disco is one thing, but songs like 'Astral Plane' are in severe need of at least some groove. On the flipside, the more refined 'Float' sounds like a gem discovered on a black-hole Bandcamp binge. Best of all is '90's Kids', which confronts every old, haggard so-and-so who claims today's youth don't work hard enough. "*Our parents say we're dramatic / But they always ask for more than we do,*" he chants, penning an anthem for anxiety-ridden millennials the world over. 'Revelations' wants to be unlistenable, but it can't always hide Shamir's songwriting strengths.

Jamie Milton

MUSIC

FILM



Dury service

Baxter's back with a brisk heartbreak record

BAXTER DURY Prince Of Tears



SADNESS LOSS SYNTHS



with the family influence, delivering sing-talk lines in that most recognisable

of London ways.

The album opens with Baxter in character, on the rebound and full of fake bravado: "I don't think you realise how successful I am / I'm like a shipping tycoon," he spits. The downcast 'Porcelain', by contrast, features Rose Elinor Dougall who sings, "I don't want to leave this house". It's Baxter who really skewers that post-relationship tangle of loss and anger, though.

The fact it's all delivered with a new sad-disco sheen – partly down to Metronomy collaborator Ash Workman – makes the emotions all the more amplified.

Saying that, 'Prince Of Tears' doesn't wallow. The 10 tracks disappear in a brisk 28 minutes, as if to say, 'Chin up, mate, get on with it'. A heartbreak record – done the British way.

Greg Cochran

BAXTER DURY HAD A sorry 2016: his heart got broken and he spent a few months crying in his flat. "I got the fire brigade round to put out sandbanks around my emotions," he quipped recently. So 'Prince Of Tears' is an adult break-up record. It's also a Baxter Dury one, which is to say, it's despairing, comically cutting and never dreary.

Musically, this is also a long way from the trill singing voice he employed on his folkly debut album 'Len Parrot's Memorial Lift' in 2002. Famously he'd only sung publicly for the first time a couple of years before at his father Ian Dury's funeral. He performed 'My Old Man', a song the Blockheads singer had written about his dad. These days, five albums in, Baxter's much more comfortable living

A bit of a headf**k

A chilling and nightmarish sort-of horror film that's easy to love and hate

THE KILLING OF A SACRED DEER

15 Colin Farrell, Nicole Kidman, Barry Keoghan



HORROR CURSE DETACHMENT

YORGOS LANTHIMOS HAS a very strange way of seeing the world and he doesn't seem overly concerned with whether or not you share it, which is really exactly how a movie director should be. You'd never confuse his films for anyone else's, nor suggest he was retreading familiar ground. That singular vision, though, does mean he is not for everyone.

Lanthimos' last film, the Oscar-nominated *The Lobster*, began with a silly, funny first half about unmarried people being turned into animals so as not to upset the rest of the population with their disgusting singleness, then became a much darker, inscrutable meditation on love. *The Killing Of A Sacred Deer* is much more like that second half, without the light relief of the first. It holds together well, but if you found *The Lobster* trying then this might bore you rigid.

Colin Farrell plays Steven Murphy, a surgeon who leads an unstimulating life with his wife Anna (Nicole Kidman) and their two children (Raffey Cassidy and Sunny Suljic). A kid called Martin (a very creepy Barry Keoghan) looms into Steven's life, seemingly keen for him to become a father figure. Initially, Steven is sympathetic but then cools. Martin, peeved, tells Steven that his entire family will die unless Steven chooses to kill one of them. It's quickly obvious Martin isn't lying.

It's a classic horror set-up, but Lanthimos' treatment of it is

Barry Keoghan as Martin

not horror-y, although it's extremely chilling. It watches everyone from a distance, rather than looking to get under their skin; his characters never get worked up, even as the events of their lives becoming increasingly mad; most lines are delivered with deliberate detachment. It makes it simultaneously uninvolved – it's hard to invest in characters who show little emotion – and nightmarish.

Lanthimos never bothers to explain *how* Martin has cursed on the family, which is either infuriating or scary, depending on your view. It's a film you could well love and hate at the same time, which makes it quite annoying to watch, but also oddly riveting. **Olly Richards**

Under THE RADAR

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST



AJ Tracey

Devilishly talented west London rapper who's ready for the big leagues

IT'S BEEN JUST THREE years since AJ Tracey first stepped on stage as an MC. Tagging along with a pal to a Jme Tropical club night in Bristol, AJ only went because he'd never been to anything like that before. Soon, he was the star of the show. "They let me spray a bar on stage," the west Londoner reminisces. "I didn't have my breathing right, didn't know how to project my voice

and I just freaked out!" But this meant he caught the bug. "I thought, 'This is a crazy adrenaline rush! This must be the best life ever.'"

And now, in 2017, this is AJ Tracey's crazy life. He's just finishing off a huge UK tour and his latest EP, the blistering 'Secure The Bag!', hit Number 13 in the album charts. But while it's all sunshine and big-time collaborations now, his current success is down to

years of hard graft. "I started rapping lyrics when I was six years old," AJ explains. "My dad used to just rap with me, like, little jokey vibes."

Since then there have been countless nights freestyling on pirate radio sessions, five stellar EPs and a brief stint at university. Now, aged 23, AJ is seriously in demand with fellow musicians and even brought it back full-circle by collaborating with Jme. "It was like a grime milestone, working with him, 'cos he's one of the old guard."

But while musically he's often pigeonholed as a grime MC, AJ Tracey wants to avoid being branded as one genre. "I'm definitely not grime and I'm not

rap... I'm just an artist, I just make whatever I think is good, and there's not really a label for it." He's also a huge rock fan, influenced by bands such as Thirty Seconds To Mars and Bullet For My Valentine. "That music made me open up a more emotional path. Now I put more emotion into my music rather than just letting people hear what they want to."

On 'Secure The Bag!', this blend proves his credentials – like on 'Blacked Out', a cocktail of braggadocio and fervent candour, that sees him assertively declare he's top of the pack. Who are we to disagree? **Hannah Mylrea**

DETAILS

From: Ladbroke Grove, London

Social: @AJTracey

Buy: 'Secure The Bag!' is out now

Live: The Forum, London (5 Nov)

Best track

'ALAKAZAM'

A slick, Pokémon-referencing banger that sees AJ more than hold his own alongside big-name pals Jme and Denzel Curry.

STRANGE & TRUE

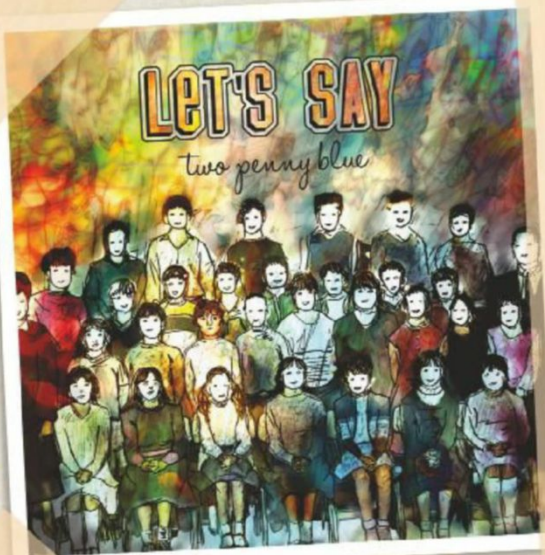
AJ Tracey loves Tottenham Hotspur so much he has their logo tattooed on his arm. His music is now played at their Wembley matches.

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live

THIS WEEK'S BEST TICKETS AND GIGS

Mars attacks

Bruno Mars is leading the headliner charge for next year's British Summer Time in London's Hyde Park

WHEN BRUNO MARS FIRST made it big in 2010, he was releasing irritatingly nice songs like 'Marry You' and 'Just The Way You Are'. Then came 2014's irresistible Mark Ronson collaboration 'Uptown Funk', and the game changed entirely. Now a two-time Super Bowl halftime show performer, Mars knows exactly what he's doing in front of an enormous crowd: the 65,000-strong set of fans at London's British Summer Time next year are in very good hands indeed.

Mars isn't the only draw, though: supporting him is the 19-year-old R&B breakout star of 2017, Khalid. He's just finished supporting the pop wunderkind Lorde on tour, and has racked up chart-bothering cosigns with Calvin Harris, Logic and Marshmello in just the past few months. Fans can expect him, like Mars, to be at the top of his game – and there are plenty more huge artists to be announced. Stay tuned.

BRUNO MARS
Pop superstar

JULY 2018
Sat 14 Hyde Park, London
TICKETS: £75.95

ON SALE NOW

Say hello to Yoti

Introducing a new wonder app that's your ID, on your phone

GETTING TICKETS FOR gigs has become a battlefield. We've all fallen victim to secondary ticketing, either forking out double for tickets or being scammed and not getting anything at all. Nightmare, right? Yoti is here to rescue you from all of that nonsense.

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ID on your phone, the Yoti app not only gets you into the gig but lets you buy booze at a self-serve check-out *and* sticks two fingers up at the touts. Win.

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For more info, take a look at @getyoti



Wild Front

Celebrate the launch of Yoti

With free booze at a free gig

THE DATE

Friday, November 10

THE EVENT

Yoti presents: The Night Café and Wild Front LIVE

THE VENUE

Victoria House Basement, Holborn, London

THE BANDS

THE NIGHT CAFÉ

Liverpool indie gang who'll bring their Circa Waves-esque stylings.

WILD FRONT

This Southampton lot will kick off the evening with their epic guitar sounds.

THE BOOZE

Is free

THE TICKETS

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The Night Café



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NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS

Oasis rocker's solo project

APRIL 2018

Sun 22 Centre, Brighton. **Tue 24** SSE Hydro, Glasgow. **Wed 25** BHGE Arena, Aberdeen. **Fri 27** SSE Arena Wembley, London. **Mon 30** Motorpoint Arena, Nottingham.

MAY 2018

Tue 1 Arena, Birmingham. **Thu 3** Metro Radio Arena, Newcastle. **Fri 4** Arena, Manchester. **Sun 6** Motorpoint Arena, Cardiff. **Mon 7** First Direct Arena, Leeds. **Wed 9** SSE Arena, Belfast.

TELL ME MORE: Swiftly following his brother Liam's solo debut, Noel is back with new album 'Who Built The Moon?'

TICKETS: £30-£54.45



MAJID JORDAN

Drake's mates

MARCH 2018

Fri 2 Garage, Glasgow. **Mon 5** O2 Ritz, Manchester. **Wed 7** O2 Forum, London. **Fri 9** O2 Institute, Birmingham.

TELL ME MORE: Best known for their ace single 'Her', this R&B duo also featured on Drake's 'Hold On, We're Going Home'.

TICKETS: £22-£27.50

PHOENIX

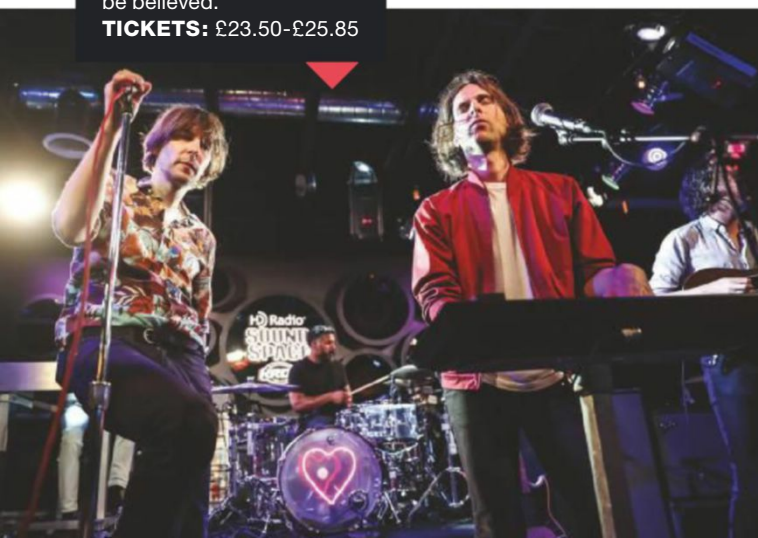
Starry-eyed synthpop crew

MARCH 2018

Sun 25 Academy, Manchester. **Mon 26** Barrowland, Glasgow.

TELL ME MORE: The mind-bending lighting and mirror set-up for the French band's new tour must be seen to be believed.

TICKETS: £23.50-£25.85



THE WEEK'S BEST GIGS

AJ TRACEY

Sun 5 O2 Forum, London.

ALEX LAHEY

Wed 8 Boston Music Room, London. **Thu 9** The Louisiana, Bristol.

ALFA MIST

Tue 7 Exchange, Bristol.

THE AMAZONS

Thu 9 The Limelight, Belfast.

BUGZY MALONE

Fri 3 O2 Apollo, Manchester. **Sun 5** O2 Academy, Glasgow.

CHLOE HOWL

Mon 6 The Waiting Room, London.

CRAIG DAVID

Fri 3 O2 Academy Brixton, London. **Sat 4** The Warehouse Project, Manchester. **Sun 5** O2 Academy, Birmingham.

DECLAN MCKENNA

Fri 3 KOKO, London.

FATHER JOHN MISTY

Sat 4 University SU, Cardiff. **Sun 5** O2 Apollo, Manchester. **Tue 7 & Wed 8** Eventim Apollo, London. **Thu 9** Dome, Brighton.

FIELD MUSIC

Sun 5 The Cluny, Newcastle.

FRANCOBOLLO

Fri 3 Moth Club, London.

GENGAHR

Fri 3 The Magnet, Liverpool.

GHOSTPOET

Fri 3 O2 Academy, Oxford. **Sat 4** The Booking Hall, Dover. **Mon 6** O2 Academy, Leicester. **Tue 7** Rescue Rooms, Nottingham. **Wed 8** Concorde 2, Brighton. **Thu 9** Roundhouse, London.

GIRL RAY

Fri 3 Think Tank? Underground, Newcastle. **Sun 5** Hare & Hounds, Birmingham. **Mon 6** The Cellar, Oxford. **Tue 7** The Louisiana, Bristol. **Wed 8** The Green Door Store, Brighton. **Thu 9** Scala, London.

GOAT GIRL

Fri 3 Broadcast, Glasgow. **Sat 4** Brudenell Social Club, Leeds. **Mon 6** Gullivers, Manchester. **Tue 7** Hare & Hounds, Birmingham. **Thu 9** The Joker, Brighton.

GORDI

Tue 7 Headrow House, Leeds. **Wed 8** Night & Day Café, Manchester.

HER'S

Sat 4 The Hug And Pint, Glasgow. **Sun 5** Oporto, Leeds.

INSECURE MEN

Wed 8 Scala, London.

JAPANESE BREAKFAST

Fri 3 Soup Kitchen, Manchester. **Sun 5** Nice N Sleazy, Glasgow. **Mon 6** Headrow House, Leeds. **Tue 7** The Dome, London.

JULIA JACKLIN

Fri 3 Thekla, Bristol. **Sat 4** Belgrave Music Hall, Leeds. **Mon 6** Oran Mor, Glasgow. **Tue 7** Gorilla, Manchester. **Wed 8** Rescue Rooms, Nottingham. **Thu 9** O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London.

LOGIC

Sat 4 Barrowland, Glasgow.

LOW ISLAND

Fri 3 Crofters Rights, Bristol. **Wed 8 & Thu 9** Corsica Studios, London.

LYYS

Fri 3 The Victoria, London.

MATT MALTESE

Tue 7 Oporto, Leeds. **Wed 8** Soup Kitchen, Manchester. **Thu 9** Broadcast, Glasgow.

PARCELS

Mon 6 Sound Control, Manchester. **Tue 7** Thekla, Bristol. **Wed 8** Patterns, Brighton. **Thu 9** KOKO, London.

PERFUME GENIUS

Fri 3 Gorilla, Manchester. **Sun 5** Roundhouse, London. **Mon 6** The Old Market, Hove.

PINS

Sat 4 The Haunt, Brighton. **Sun 5** Bodega, Nottingham. **Mon 6** Waterfront, Norwich. **Tue 7** The Joiners, Southampton. **Wed 8** The Garage, London. **Thu 9** Picture House Social, Sheffield.

PRINCESS NOKIA

Fri 3 The Invisible Wind Factory, Liverpool.

RUN THE JEWELS

Thu 9 Victoria Warehouse, Manchester.

SHOPPING

Tue 7 Wharf Chambers, Leeds. **Wed 8** Crescent WMC, York. **Thu 9** Gwdihw Café Bar, Cardiff.

SYLVAN ESSO

Mon 6 O2 Institute, Birmingham. **Tue 7** SWX, Bristol. **Wed 8** O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London.

THROWING SHADE & RHYTHM SECTION

Sat 4 Som Saa, London.

TOGETHER PANGAEA

Tue 7 Think Tank?, Newcastle. **Wed 8** Stereo, Glasgow. **Thu 9** Gullivers, Manchester.

TORRES

Tue 7 Soup Kitchen, Manchester. **Wed 8** The Dome, London. **Thu 9** The Haunt, Brighton.

VANT

Fri 3 Fibbers, York. **Sat 4** Georgian Theatre, Stockton-on-Tees. **Thu 9** Library, Barrow-in-Furness.

THE WAR ON DRUGS

Thu 9 Barrowland, Glasgow.

WEYES BLOOD

Fri 3 Brudenell Social Club, Leeds.

WILEY

Sat 4 Canal Mills, Leeds.

WOLF ALICE

Wed 8 O2 Academy, Bristol. **Thu 9** O2 Apollo, Manchester.

YUKSEK

Fri 3 Camden Assembly, London. **Sat 4** Duke Studios, Leeds.

YXNG BANE

Fri 3 & Sat 4 Omeara, London.

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE

Kathy Griffin

US stand-up star.
Does *not* like
Donald Trump

THE FIRST GIG I WENT TO

RANDY NEWMAN

"My first concert was when I was 16 and my brother Gary and my sister Joyce snuck me into a club to see the one and only Randy Newman, who I still worship. He has a song called 'Kathleen' about an Irish girl from Chicago. So I felt like I had a connection with Randy Newman. Later, when I got to meet him, I had the freakin' balls to walk into his dressing room where there was a tiny stand-up piano. I was like, 'Please play 'Kathleen', and he played it for me."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE

TLC

No Scrubs

"I had a role in a not very good but very fun movie called *A Diva's Christmas Carol* and freakin' Chilli [from TLC] was in it. She tried to teach me to sing 'No Scrubs' in a – how shall I say? – less Caucasian way. I was like, 'You're my karaoke song! I'm T-Boz!' She said, 'Girl, you are *not* T-Boz.' I was like, 'Alright, I'll be K-Boz.'"

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

SIA

Chandelier

"Sia's a friend of mine, so she'll probably say, 'You can use my song'. But I guess the song should mean something, right? It depends how I die. Because if one of the Trump people kills me – which they're very hell-bent on – then it should be something saying, 'It would have been better had she died a different way than if a Trumper shot her in the c**t'. Maybe I'll ask Sia to write a lovely ballad saying, 'Oh, I wish she hadn't been shot in the c**t'."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE

JESSIE J, ARIANA
GRANDE AND
NICKI MINAJ

Bang Bang

"I play that song at the beginning of my sets. Me and my boyfriend Randy – who's 18 years younger than me so don't start your s**t – went to see Gwen Stefani at the Hollywood Bowl and she uses powerful female songs as her intro before she comes onstage, so I stole the idea."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF DONALD TRUMP

THE ROLLING
STONES

Start Me Up

"We have a current Nazi president who still has rallies as if he's running. Like, he doesn't even know that he got the gig. He was playing this Rolling Stones song and Mick and Keith went public to say, 'You can't use our song anymore.' But [he] still uses it! He picks these popular songs and, unless it's a certain country star, these legit artists come out and go, 'You f**king idiot – stop using our song.' But because he's a dictator now he just does it anyway. When Mick and Keith call, first of all you've got to give them props for being alive. When they call and say, 'Don't use our song,' you just don't do it."

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MORE SOUNDTRACKS

THE SONG THAT I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD

GEORGE MICHAEL

Father Figure

"Now that I come to think of it, I don't know if George's intentions were totally clean [when] he wrote this song."

THE ARTIST I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO

SELENA GOMEZ

"Let me scroll through my iPod nano – you heard me, *nano*; print that, motherf**ker, I dare you. I'm not gonna lie, there's probably a couple of Selena Gomez songs that I would just skip through. And look, she's been through hell. Justin Bieber put her through hell, so I'm with her."

Kathy Griffin's Laugh
Your Head Off tour
comes to the UK from
November 10



The wisdom
of the NME
archives

THIS WEEK

BILLIE JOE
ARMSTRONG
Green Day
November 4, 2016

"I don't know how to get people fired up, but searching for some kind of justice in the world is ingrained into Green Day."



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