

OFF THE  
RECORD  
**25** YEARS  
OF  
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EDITED BY  
SEAN SENNETT  
& SIMON GROTH



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For Brenda, Melanie and Stella – SS

For Jo, who always knows what questions to ask. And for Xavier and Genevieve, who must endure a writer in the family. – SG



# The La's

## Liverpool lads on the track of the Fab Four

Noel Gallagher once asserted that Oasis's mission was to finish what the La's had started. From Liverpool, the home of British rock royalty from the Beatles to Echo and the Bunnymen, the La's were led by the gifted, and troubled, Lee Mavers. The band cut just one self-titled album helmed by the classic single 'There She Goes'. A slew of producers worked on the record, which was finally completed, under much duress, by Steve Lillywhite. Mavers, who sporadically reunites various versions of the La's, claimed he was never happy with the release and to this day is still working on the elusive follow-up.

And so the great Merseyside pop tradition continues. From the hallowed stomping grounds that formed the sounds of the Beatles, now come the La's: four lads from Liverpool with melody to burn.

Formed on the Merseyside four years ago, the La's released three singles on the Go! Discs Records label, which have since become serious collector's items on the UK underground scene. The second of these singles, 'There She Goes', is now making waves on the Australian indie front, as is the band's debut self-titled album.

*Time Off* asked singer, guitarist, songwriter and founding member (man, that's some title), Lee Mavers, about the formation of the band back in '86.

'The band that I've got at the moment has been together for about two years,' Lee explains from his Liverpool flat where he sits wrapped in a towel, my call having interrupted his shower (I

did offer to call back, by the way). ‘Before that we had a couple of change-arounds, the drummer and the guitarist. But me and John [the bass player] met in 1986 and we used to have a smoke and that in this club in town called Kirklands. We used to meet there every day and have lunch and just go and jam in the afternoon, like. There was a great buzz goin’ on. Do you know what I mean?’

As Lee explains, the current line-up had solidified by '88 and the La's began constantly gigging around Liverpool and London. In one single fortnight, the band performed a staggering *seventeen* shows. Early last year, the twelve-song debut LP hit the streets and the band became more selective about their live appearances, preferring to play larger venues. According to Lee, however, he and the other members are not at all pleased with the album.

‘We don’t like the record really. It’s just not a good indication of our music. What happened was we went into the studio, like, and tried to get the sound that we wanted and had to pull out after two months of slaving in there. When we pulled out I think our financial situation with the record company prompted them to put the record out and start recouping some of the debt. Do you know what I mean?’

Well, yes I do, actually.

‘It was a fair bit of a compromise, like.’ Lee continues. ‘It’s like the un-ideal situation because that music is now down in history. We’d have preferred it to go down in a much greater way.’

As well as his great desire for me to understand what he means, Lee is very concerned about finding a suitable producer for his band’s soon-to-be-recorded second album.

‘We’ve done a lot of looking around and tried out a lot of guys, like, but haven’t settled on anybody. We’ve just been working with a guy called Bob Pridden, who used to work with Pete Townshend and the Who. He was Pete’s guitar engineer. I reckon, judging by the work we’ve done with him over the past couple of days, he’ll be able to get a sound for us in a studio, when we come back from America in the Autumn.’

Is that America you say?

‘Yeah, we’re going to America for a few weeks, like, then coming back home for a couple of gigs. We’ll get down to Australia when we tour to promote the second album, but that won’t be until probably the middle of next year.’

Well, until then, check out the melodies, the harmonies and the clean-cut guitars of the La’s.

*July 1991. Original text: Brent Hampstead.*