

FREE

bido lito!

*the
liverpool
music
magazine*

Issue 62
Dec 2015 / Jan 2016



*The Kazimier
Sugarmen
The Vryll Society
Liverpool Music
Week Review
Bold Street Coffee
2016 Calendar*

WHAT'S GOING ON

TUES 1 DEC 7pm

TEA & CAKE CLUB
- RAW & VEGAN CAKES

FRI 4 DEC 18+ 11pm

GENERAL LEVY
(LIVE PA)

SAT 5 DEC 7pm

**IAN PROWSE &
AMSTERDAM**

SAT 5 DEC 10pm-18+

CHIBUKU

MON 7 DEC 7pm

VOLPONE

TUE 8 DEC 7pm

VOLPONE

THU 10 DEC 7pm

THE ZOMBIES

FRI 11 DEC 7pm

**CHRISTMAS
AT ARTS CLUB**

arts club

SAT 12 DEC 6pm

**KEEP IT HEAVY
2015**

WED 16 & FRI 18 DEC 6.30pm

HENRY IV PART 1

THU 17 & SAT 19 DEC 6.30pm

HENRY IV PART 2

FRI 18 DEC 7pm

DAFT AS PUNK

FRI 18 DEC 7pm

DAVE MCPHERSON

SAT 9 JAN 7pm

**ALIEN ANT FARM
+ INME**

SAT 23 JAN 7pm

LOUIS BERRY

FRI 29 JAN 7pm

LINDI ORTEGA

FRI 12 FEB 6pm

BARS & MELODY

THU 10 MAR 7.30pm

BILL RYDER-JONES

FRI 11 MAR 7pm

TRAGEDY

SUN 3 APR 7pm

MIKE DIGNAM

WED 22 APR 6.30pm

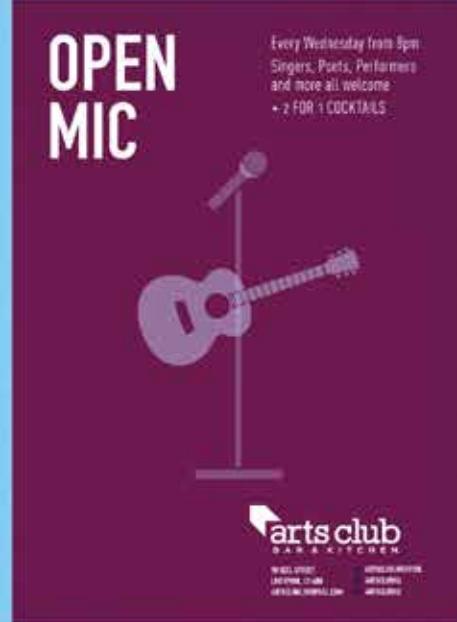
THE BLUETONES

WED 4 MAY 7pm

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OF THE SHOW, BEFORE 7PM



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Tues 1st Dec • £15 adv

Courtney Barnett

Tues 1st Dec • £13.50 adv

The Rifles (Acoustic)

Wed 2nd Dec • £30 adv

Public Enemy

Wed 2nd Dec • £10 adv

Dorje

Thurs 3rd Dec • £22.50 adv

Scouting For Girls

+ Mike Dignam

Thurs 3rd Dec • £12.50 adv

Electric Six

Fri 4th Dec • £13 adv

The Lancashire Hotpots

Sat 5th Dec • £20 adv

The Rutles

Thurs 10th Dec • £11 adv

Area 11

Fri 11th Dec • £7 adv

The Jackobins

Fri 11th Dec • £25 adv

Echo & The Bunnymen

Sat 12th Dec • **SOLD OUT**

Echo & The Bunnymen

Sat 12th Dec • £12 adv

Pearl Jam U.K.

Thurs 17th Dec • £22.50 adv

The Farm

performing Pastures Old and New

Fri 18th Dec • **SOLD OUT**

The Charlatans

Sat 19th Dec • £16 adv

The Beat

Sat 19th Dec • £18.50 adv

The Damned

Tues 22nd Dec • £6 adv

Baked A La Ska

Fri 22nd Jan 2016 • £17.50 adv

Daughter

Tues 26th Jan 2016 • £22.50 adv

Michael Schenker's

Temple of Rock

Wed 27th Jan 2016 • £11 adv

Cancer Bats

Fri 29th Jan 2016 • £16.50 adv

Gabrielle Aplin

Thurs 4th Feb 2016 • £20 adv

Bowling For Soup

Fri 29th Jan 2016 • £16.50 adv

Cash (Payin' Respect to the Man in Black) with full live band

Wed 10th Feb 2016 • £20 adv

Public Service Broadcasting

Thurs 11th Feb 2016 • £16 adv

Graham Bonnet

Sat 13th Feb 2016 • £14 adv

The Ghost Inside

Sun 14th Feb 2016 • £12 adv

Little Comets

Tues 16th Feb 2016 • £7 adv

Pins

Thurs 18th Feb 2016 • £15 adv

Cage The Elephant

Fri 19th Feb 2016 • £18 adv

Rhino's Revenge

100% Rhino Rock

Sat 20th Feb 2016 • £16 adv

Walk the Moon

Fri 26th Feb 2016 • £17 adv

Insane Championship Wrestling

Wed 2nd Mar 2016 • £15 adv

Exodus

Sat 5th Mar 2016 • £15 adv

AC/DC UK & Dizzy Lizzy

Tues 8th Mar 2016 • £24 adv

The Stranglers

+ The Alarm ft. Mike Peters

Wed 9th Mar 2016 • £22 adv

Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox

Fri 11th Mar 2016 • £20 adv

The Wonder Stuff & The Icicle Works

Sat 12th Mar 2016 • £16 adv

Foxes

Mon 21st Mar 2016 • £15 adv

Half Moon Run

Wed 23rd Mar 2016 • £17.50 adv

Battles

Fri 25th Mar 2016 • £12 adv

Crossfaith

Fri 1st Apr 2016 • £12 adv

Sex Pistols Experience & Ed Tudor-Pole

Thurs 7th Apr 2016 • £15 adv

Leon Bridges

Sat 9th Apr 2016 • £16.50 adv

Jack & Jack

Sat 9th Apr 2016 • £12 adv

Whole Lotta Led

Wed 20th Apr 2016 • £13.50 adv

Neck Deep

Sat 23rd Apr 2016 • £12 adv

The Clone Roses

Heaton Park show

Sun 24th Apr 2016 • £23.50 adv

Ben Haenow

Thurs 28th Apr 2016 • £13 adv

65daysofstatic

Liverpool

Guild of

Students

Sat 27th Feb 2016 • £29.50 adv

Rudimental

Sat 11th Jun 2016 • £28.50 adv

Dr John Cooper Clarke

Ticketweb.co.uk • 0844 477 2000

liverpoolguild.org



Fri 22nd Jan • £17.50 adv
Daughter



Wed 23rd Mar • £17.50 adv
Battles



Sat 11th Jun • £28.50 adv
Dr. John Cooper Clarke

ticketweb

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NEW GIGS

The Rails

Sunday 24 January 8pm, Music Room, £12

John Grant

Sunday 7 February 7.30pm, *from £22*

Ryley Walker

& Danny Thompson

Thursday 25 February pm, Music Room, £16

Cast with Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

Saturday 27 February 7.30pm, *from £25*

Mawkin

Sunday 6 March 8pm, Music Room, £12

Gregory Porter

Sunday 17 April 7.30pm, *from £30*

Kathryn Roberts

& Sean Lakeman

Saturday 23 April 8pm, Music Room, £14

Box Office
liverpoolphil.com
0151 709 3789

 LIVERPOOL
PHILHARMONIC

Image Gregory Porter



Bido Lito!

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bidolito.co.uk

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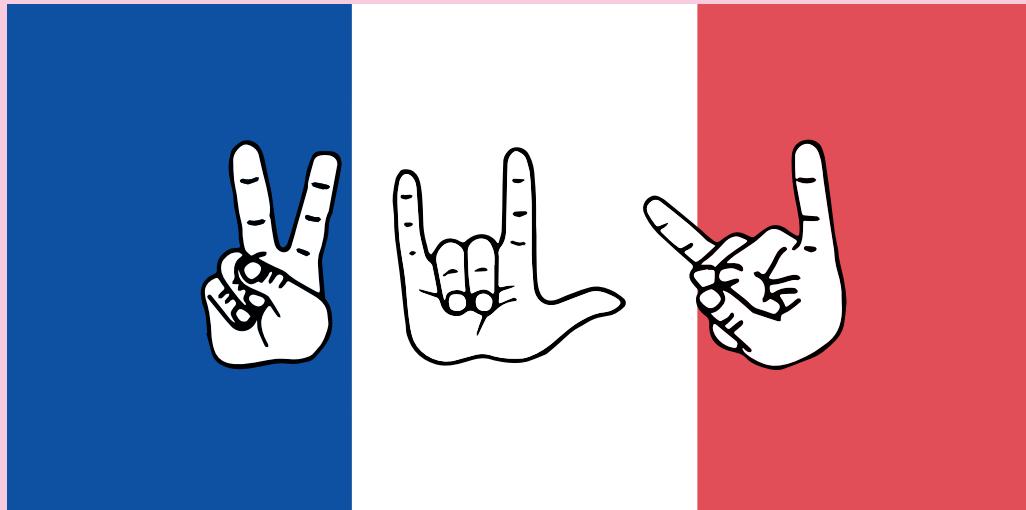
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VIVE LA MUSIQUE

Editorial

We started off the year with an editorial calling for greater responsibility in using our joint freedoms of speech and expression, in the wake of the atrocities in Paris at the offices of Charlie Hebdo. It saddens us greatly that we're forced to reflect on further terrorist atrocities in the city in our closing comment of the year, in the wake of the attacks of 13th November that took the lives of 130 innocent people, and injured scores more. Our hearts go out to the families affected by these senseless attacks, and to the people of Paris too. Once again, the solidarity shown towards France by people from around the world in condemning these attacks has been heart-warming to see - it would, however, be even more heart-warming to see the same respect given to acts of terror committed in Palestine, Indonesia, Baghdad, Mali and places outside of the Western world on a regular basis.

Here doesn't seem like the right place to discuss the finer points of the episodes that led to these attacks and how to deal with them, not least because the arguments on both sides are so nuanced that it would take thousands of column inches to tease apart the strands. What is clear, though, is how divided our political elite are in responding to the situation, on both a short- and a long-term basis. In the episode of Question Time that was aired a week after the attacks, no cross-party (or even cross-societal) consensus could be agreed about whether a military or a political solution was the best way for us as a country to move forwards. If we can't agree between ourselves, how can we ever expect to unite as an international bloc to help fix the issue? Once again we're in danger of letting knee-jerk reactionism dictate our response, with tolerance, common sense and the lessons of history falling by the wayside.

The harrowing scenes broadcast from the Bataclan Theatre were perhaps the most shocking, not least because that particular attack resulted in the largest loss of life. The 89 people who were mercilessly killed in this atrocity were in the theatre for a gig, an event they'd no doubt been looking forward to for a long time, and one that was meant to bring them great joy, not suffering. I think we all feel a shudder of disgust at the thought of being subjected to what the people in the Bataclan were when they attended the Eagles Of Death Metal show that Friday night. It's incomprehensible to imagine being in that situation - a situation you assume you will be safe and comfortable in. Going out to a concert is part of our own freedom of expression, one that we rightly believe to be inviolable. Are we to be deterred from expressing these views, these outpourings of emotion, these moments of liberating enjoyment? Absolutely not. We can't - and won't - let wanton acts of violence in the name of terror curb our right to celebrate art. And while we join Eagles Of Death Metal in saying "vive la musique", we also say "vive la responsabilité": the responsibility that we all have, as citizens of this world, to make it as fair and even and tolerant a place for as many people as possible.

One person who was killed in the Bataclan attack, Nick Alexander, was once part of our own music community - and his memory is very much still a part of it now. Having studied at the University of Liverpool, Nick immersed himself in the city's music scene and was a popular figure. It is partly for him - and for the Mercury Music Group/Universal employees Thomas Ayad, Marie Mosser and Manu Perez, who also lost their lives in the assault - that we will not be deterred from exercising our right to express our opinions and show our love for music. The show MUST go on.

Christopher Torpey / [@Bidolito](http://Bidolito)

Editor



is for

KAZIMIER

Just like the addresses of 10 and 7-15 Mathew Street, and the nearby 3 Parr Street, 4-5 Wolstenholme Square will forever be remembered as a cornerstone of Liverpool's music heritage, its impact indelibly inked on to the city's creative soul. The Cavern, Eric's and Nation will still dominate the popular history of Liverpool's great clubs, but, for those who've experienced it, THE KAZIMIER will be more than just a fond memory. The Wolstenholme Square venue may not have incubated anything as internationally renowned as the Beatles, The Bunnymen or Cream, but its trend for hosting and nurturing weirdly fantastic nights has become the stuff of legend, and has been the catalyst for the ambitions of the city's resurgent creative culture over the past seven years. The Kaz may be nearing its curtain call, but the effect of the collective around the club will be felt for many years to come.

In a statement issued in April 2015 by the team behind the club, it was announced that The Kazimier would be closing its doors for the final time on New Year's Day 2016. After discussions with Elliott Group - the developer behind the proposed multi-million pound redevelopment of Wolstenholme Square - time was called on the seven-year Kazimier journey. In the statement the group noted that the club has "grown to infinitely more than a building", an admission that it's not so much the bricks and mortar of the venue itself that make The Kaz special, but more the diverse range of people and ideas that have inspired (and been inspired by) the happenings within its walls. The octagonal wooden floor, scuffed staircases and low stage have never been the sleekest, but have always been part of the place's charm. After years of heavy use from packed-out gigs and nights, The Kaz is looking slightly jaded, but its character feels richer than ever, with each event leaking some of its own memory into the building's walls. And even amid the wear and tear the club still shows the traits of the team's attention to detail: the iconic sign, bannister spindles painted with unique motifs, the faded grandeur of the upstairs absinthe bar. When the lights are down and the room is full, the club takes on a life of its own, and brings so many different experiences to so many different people.

Everyone who's been to The Kazimier has their own view on what it is: in the eyes of the beholder it can be a dingy rave club or a sweaty gig venue; a sartorial speakeasy or a medieval

Germanic carnival. This versatility has undoubtedly been one of The Kaz's biggest assets, giving rise to so many different experiences. But what do the group behind the venue think of it?

"It's always been something that's difficult to quantify ourselves. Originally, we just wanted somewhere to put on events - but not just events, something that reflected our own individual artistic practice," explains Sam Crombie, one of The Kazimier's founder members and core creative team. Crombie, alongside brother Loz, has had a hand in many of the club's most defining moments as a member of The Kaz's house band Dogshow. The techno dancehall duo, aided by unseen third member Venya Krutikov on insane lighting/visual duties, have been the centrepiece at almost all of the collective's own shows, taking the idea of performance to new levels by embracing weird theatrics, weirder outfits, and even a treadmill drum kit. "Aside from buildings and shows, it's also a multi-faceted conglomeration of people that we've worked with," continues Crombie on his view of what the idea of The Kazimier constitutes. "I see it more as a map rather than an organisation or a building... this interconnecting three-dimensional map."

"When you boil it down, it's basically a community centre!" laughs Liam Naughton, the de facto manager and spokesperson of the Kazimier collective (which comprises founder members Mike Lill and Laura Brownhill alongside Krutikov and the Crombie brothers), who oversees all the projects that fall under the Kazimier banner. There are a wealth of strands tied up in the group's work that relate to different projects - sister venue and bar The Kazimier Garden on Seel Street, large-scale project-cum-installation Atalonia, regular themed events Krunk Fiesta and Kronos, Kazimier Records, and now the Invisible Wind Factory - but for most people the club will be remembered as a gig venue, but not just any old one. Though it doesn't have the expansive production capability that a venue like the O2 Academy has, what The Kaz has in spades is charm, and the ability to make the punter feel as important as the performer. There's a democratic equality to the space that means you're at the same level as the performers when you first walk in, and with no barrier between the crowd and the stage, it creates an intensely personal setting.



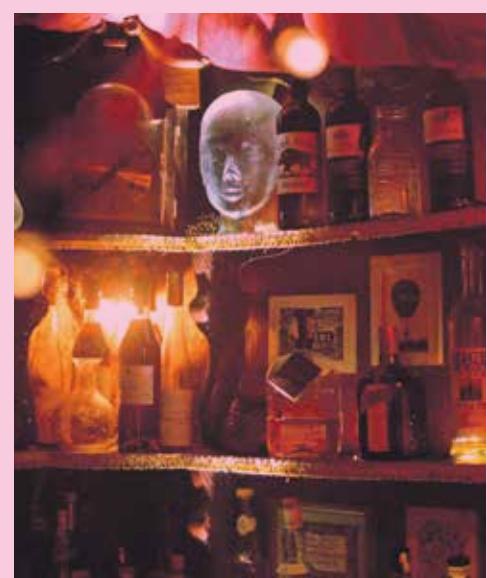
This makes
for a great
place to absorb
all aspects of a
performance, but it's
still up to the observer to
take whatever they want from it.

"I met a girl recently and she said to me 'Oh, you work at The Kazimier - that's the best drum 'n' bass club in the country!' Woah!" says Naughton as he reflects on the various bits of praise they've received over the years. "I'd never think of [the club] like that. But all she'd ever known of it is Eat Your Greens nights. It takes so many different shapes depending on who you ask. It could be anything."

"For all the different groups that come to the shows, it's their space and they can relate to it," adds Krutikov. "I think it's quite nice that the club can be this vessel, in some way, for all these different things. I really like the way it can be a home to so many different groups simultaneously."

"I think the best way to describe it is this," chips in Naughton. "The Kronos is the club - an intergalactic, time-travelling venue. Captain Kronos is the personification of that."

Some shows in the club will live longer in the memory than most; over the years, Sound City, Liverpool Music Week, Abandon Silence, Ten Bands Ten Minutes, Festival Bombarda, Speakeasy, FestEVOL and dozens of local promoters have all called The Kaz home at some point, giving rise to some legendary gigs: Seun Kuti & Egypt 80, The XX, Fucked Up, Ghostface Killah, Young Fathers, Sleaford Mods, Battles,



KRS-One... the list goes on and on.

My own memory of the club will always carry the imprint of Ariel Pink, Fat White Family v The Growlers, Factory Floor and Gruff Rhys and his surf boards. One of my abiding memories of The Kazimier actually comes from the first gig I attended there, when I was hanging around at the end of the night in search of one final can of Red Stripe. Just after they ushered me outside, the last

staff member out reached up and unscrewed the sign above the door, and stuffed it away in the shadows before locking up. It was almost as if, by removing the sign, the club itself melted back into the brickwork; the patch of wall became a nondescript patch of wall again, with not a clue remaining as to the magic that could happen behind the door.

As the team and venue gear up for its final, thrilling hurrah – New Year's Eve's Escape To Planet Kronos extravaganza,



it feels quite apt to look back at the collective's very first event in 2008, Reconstruct. The show was billed as "the first chapter in a series of one-off thematic events that are located between a mechanical past and an electronic future". As Crombie elaborates, this event served as their canvas, a place to dream up a world that drew together all of the group's varied expertise in lighting, sound, set design and performance. "A lot of the narratives to the shows were complex, but they weren't the key to them. Reconstruct was just about reconstructing an imaginary past to the building. We were free to do whatever we wanted with it then."

"For Atalonia, one of the bylines was 'A world within a world'. In some ways a lot of the shows adhered to that," agrees Krutikov. "The audience was invited to suspend their disbelief – whether or not they did, or were comfortable doing so, was down to us and the show."

This delightfully weird world-creating ethos has been in full flow since, entering terms like Factum Libero, Imperium, Karneval, The Fantascopic Fair, Kostrubonkos and, most memorably, Krunk, into the lexicon of Liverpool gig-goers. For all this, and the legacy the collective have created, they don't seem bitter at being shunted out of their home by the impending development – but you do get the feeling it's more because it

would be futile to fight against the inevitable expansion of the city's commercial sprawl.

"It's key that it ends in a way that it's not soured by a battle or leaves a bitterness," says Crombie. "It's had its time – and it could have gone on for longer. Change is sometimes difficult to see the benefit of while it's happening around you. The club going will also provide an opportunity for someone else to fill that gap. It's part of a changing time in the city, anyway."

The city is most definitely the richer for The Kazimier's presence, but the time has come to move on. Communities and cities have always developed over time, and nostalgia should never be a reason to prevent evolution, even if sometimes it feels difficult to stomach. "There's a certain memory attached to the building which will disappear, and that is sad," agrees Krutikov. "I don't think there'll be another place in the city centre that's built on such a lack of commercial focus, and built around people rather than business, essentially," adds Crombie. "It may well leave groups a bit more disparate."

Where the city goes from here is open, but then it was a similar situation that this group of people found when they moved here seven years ago. Great things don't last forever, and that's part of what makes them great. For the Kazimier collective as a whole, the shell may be changing, but the spectacular vision and daring appetite for more thrills and spills lives on.

"The club definitely is a serious heartbeat of everything and things do kind of orbit around it," says Naughton. "That building is ending, but it's all marching on; it's really like shedding a skin as opposed to losing a life. It's just another chapter."



Words: Christopher Torpey / @CATorp
Photography: Robin Clewley / robinclewley.co.uk

The final show at The Kazimier is Escape To Planet Kronos, which takes place on 31st December. There will also be a Kazimier Shopping Emporium called Arkade in the club on 6th December, where you'll be able to buy exclusive Kazimier merchandise and memorabilia. For tickets and all other listings go to thekazimier.co.uk.

WHAT DOES THE KAZIMIER MEAN TO YOU?

We asked this question to six of the supporting cast around the Kazimier Collective – the people who've played at, performed at, filmed, managed, soundtracked and enhanced the Kazimier spectacle over the past eight years. Here are their memories – accompanied by some of the Bido photographers' favourite shots from the club.

Laura Brownhill Founder member and performer

"The Kazimier bears a myriad of meanings for me. It has been intrinsically linked to every aspect of my being for the best part of a decade, and it has formulated my growth creatively, socially and spiritually. The Kazimier has served as a nucleus for the creative community and has been an epicentre and platform for local, national, and international talent, artists, musicians and revellers. "The intimate structure of the building has proved to be the perfect setting for so many special gigs, shows and happenings, and this will be hard to replicate anywhere, after its demolition, but to me The Kazimier is very much about the wider sphere of creative people that keep its essence fuelled. That is what will spawn the new beginnings for the Liverpool scene: the belief that the power to make things happen is within the passion of the people."



ROB LEWIS
Technical Manager and Master of Vibes
"The Kazimier is the best-sounding 500-cap venue in the world. And I feel honoured to have served the music/artistic community for best part of five years in my life to this space and have received a shit ton of wisdom and I will be forever in return. The Kaz experience and I will be forever jazzed about it. The Kazimier and the people at the centre (and concentrically outside) of it are my family. "Most of all I have loved the opportunity to hone my craft and create the perfect mood for artists to thrive. The world is worse off for the loss but human expression will find the right forum for the struggle ahead."



Hollie Coleman

TiLT performer and member of Harlequin Dynamite Marching Band

"It shows what can be done when people have a vision. No matter how big or how huge, dreams can be brought to life, and we're all invited to join in in their magical world! It is a centre of community, support, creativity and magic."

"If I could take one physical memento from the club as a souvenir, it would be the beautiful sanded, varnished and polished octagon floor, that was done for the first TiLT Dance event and probably only lasted one month after – well worth it though!"



Jack Whiteley Filmmaker and Kazimier documenter

"Pure vibes! Friends. Family. Music. Dancing. Laughter. Joy. Euphoria. Escapism. Hedonism. Getting krukked. Drinking. Dragging. Dreaming. Crazy nights. Getting Loz smash the shirt out his drums in various weird formations. Watching Sam stick his bottom jaw out whilst playing his synths. Turning around to see Venya and Vbz owning the sound booth. Looking up to see various objects/confetti/people come down from the ceiling. Moonwalking Billie Jean on New Year's Eve. Snogging babes. (mostly Rebecca Hawley). Basically The Kazimier = LOVE. Community will undoubtedly be affected by the closure of the club. I don't know any other place in town that attracts the same calibre of musician and artist. Don't get me wrong, there are other great places in Liverpool, but The Kazimier was always unique in not only what it offered but the way it offered it. It was the whole package. A unique dream venue. Shit-damn-funk, I'm gonna miss it!"



"Well it's been the place I've played the most, drank the most fun in the entire nine years I've lived in the city. It's so much more than just a venue, I think it's important to remember that.. The Kazimier is a creative collective which will go on doing things in the city.. it's just losing its shell for now. The first shows those dudes put on blew so many people's heads off and changed a lot for a lot of people. I don't think I'd be doing some of the creative projects I'm doing now without it. They've influenced the city and built a scene around the place."



Joel Murray Member of Barberos and Harlequin Dynamite Marching Band

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Stealing Sheep

"The Kazimier is a distinctive place that we'll remember for its fascinating visuals and music held together by incredible people with great ideas. We've been very inspired by this place and we love all of the people behind it. It represents friends, creativity and excitement!"

"It was the perfect platform for realising projects but we're optimistic that the artistic community will be pushed to find new ways of working. The Kazimier Garden and Cosmolodge will also maintain the communal spirit of The Kaz and keep everyone together."

Heavenly

25



H. HAWKLINE
IN THE PINK OF CONDITION
OUT NOW



NADE
STEALING SHEEP
NOT REAL
OUT NOW



KID WAVE
WONDERLUST
OUT NOW



GWENNO
Y DYDD OLAF
OUT NOW



HOOTON TENNIS CLUB
HIGHEST POINT IN CLIFF TOWN
OUT NOW



DRINKS
HERMITS ON HOLIDAY
OUT NOW



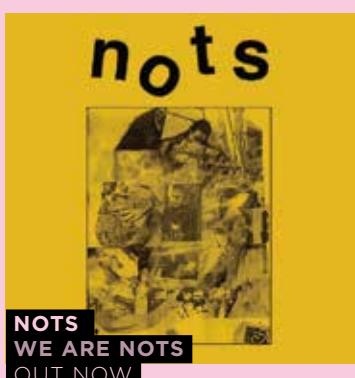
FEVER THE GHOST
ZIRCONIUM MECONIUM
OUT NOW



EAVES
WHAT GREEN FEELS LIKE
DELUXE EDITION
OUT NOW



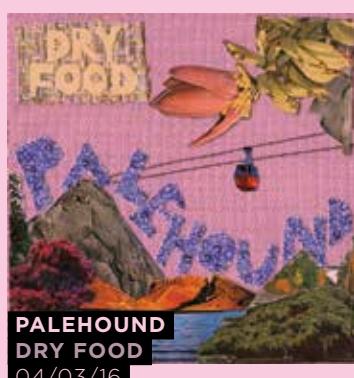
KING GIZZARD &
THE LIZARD WIZARD
PAPER MÂCHÉ DREAM BALLOON
OUT NOW



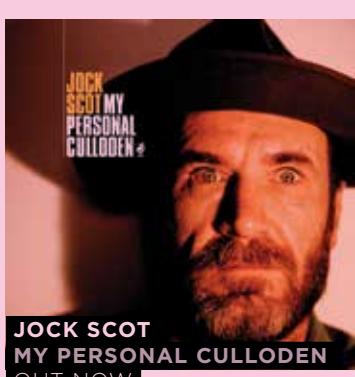
NOTS
WE ARE NOTS
OUT NOW



NIGHT BEATS
WHO SOLD MY GENERATION
OUT 29/01/16



PALEHOUND
DRY FOOD
04/03/16



JOCK SCOT
MY PERSONAL CULLODEN
OUT NOW



SAINT JACK
THE NECTARINE NO. 9
OUT 27/11/15



ROUGH TRADE SHOPS
PRESENTS HEAVENLY 25
2 X CD, OUT NOW

... BELIEVE IN MAGIC

Words: Stuart Miles O'Hara / @ohasm1

Photography: Nata Moraru



Since 2010 the number of people sleeping rough on the streets of the UK has risen sharply, and the effects of homelessness have become even more of a visible issue in our towns and cities. According to the latest figures, collected in the autumn of 2014 and published in February 2015, 2,744 people are estimated to be sleeping rough on any one night: this is up 55% from the estimated number of rough sleepers in 2010. North East England saw the biggest percentage increase, followed by London and the North West, which both saw increases above the national average.

Walking through Liverpool city centre it is clear to see how this trend manifests itself, with more people resorting to using shop doorways and park benches for shelter. Our musicians and creative community have the ability to raise much-needed awareness around this problem, but what exactly can they achieve? *Stuart Miles O'Hara takes a closer look at the issue, and focuses on the sterling work of the WHITECHAPEL CENTRE, Liverpool's leading homelessness and housing charity.*

"They're a moveable feast," offers Whitechapel Centre fundraising manager Ruth McCaughey when asked about core beneficiaries of the charity's work. Speaking with those who work around homelessness brings to light the multiple complexities behind the increasingly common sight of a heap of coats or cardboard in a doorway in the small hours of the morning. "We worked with 3,600 people last year, a 40% increase since 2010-11. We estimate that 15-20 people sleep rough every night. There are about 800 hostel beds in Liverpool, [but] lots of people still live the street life. We worked with 3,600 people last year, a 40% increase since 2010-11."

The Whitechapel Centre have three main streams of work. Primarily, there is the outreach team, who operate from the Everton-based centre. "We're open 365 days a year, 8am to 8pm, providing basic needs, and there's a 24-hour hotline," explains McCaughey. "They might get someone a taxi to a shelter or, if the person's asleep, we won't wake them up but we'll bring them here in the morning." As well as offering shelter, food, showers and clothing, the centre places a strong emphasis on social inclusion,

with daily activities including music, IT, football, gardening, yoga and poetry on offer to "help break whatever routine people are in". As McCaughey emphasises: "We used to be a place where people could crash out. Now we're a place of change, getting people into new routines or habits, but it's also about self-esteem. If people want lunch, they have to take part in an activity." The third arm of the charity is managing hostel accommodation like the Belvidere Family Centre, a 16-flat hostel providing emergency accommodation for homeless families.

The Whitechapel is comprised of 80 staff plus volunteers, the latter of whom are around 50% ex-service users, with McCaughey explaining that "people who have been there and done that are often the best to dole out advice". New arrivals go on a database that the centre, Liverpool City Council, and hostels can access. "It's how we track where people are - first question is 'Where did you sleep last night?'"

The organisation gets hundreds of calls per year to their 24-hour phone line No Second Night Out, which is something that McCaughey is keen to spread the word about. "If you see anyone sleeping rough in Liverpool, give us a call. Even 10 phone calls about the same person, who may be an entrenched rough sleeper, still help because we want to know their location as they move around the city." Entrenched rough sleepers are those who've slept rough repeatedly over three months. It's difficult to get them off the streets by that point. "The point of No Second Night Out is to prevent another generation of entrenched sleepers. We won't turf out a first-timer at 8pm, we put them into a communal room, then back here at half 8 in the morning, when we start again, trying to get them somewhere to stay."

This is not the kind of work that ever switches off: offering round the clock help, the centre require volunteers, funding and awareness to be able to function, as McCaughey explains. "Any regular donation is good. If a thousand people donated £5 a month, that'd be fantastic because it's guaranteed income. Money gives us flexibility to spend it in different ways - on a rent deposit, say, or support staff salaries. We get bread from bakeries, chicken

from Nando's, deliveries from local supermarkets. We're always grateful for it and we always get through it. Meals are cooked by volunteers, and people donating their time is a massive help."

But awareness counts too: homelessness and its visibility have risen in Liverpool and so has the need for the centre's work. "Let people know that we're here, even if it's someone who comes in and keeps busy for one day," McCaughey insists. "Our support team has spent so long building relationships with people, and we never give up; it's our mission to get people off the streets, however long it takes."

There is an uneasy relationship between invisibility and hypervisibility that trickles through the way the general public view those people on the streets. Homelessness is ever-visible and there, quite literally on our doorsteps, but our interaction is strange; the cardboard and blankets that people crowd round for warmth cast the human figure invisible, and this obscuring can be used as an excuse to ignore homelessness. They're the ghosts of the street, and heartlessly we remove ourselves from the immediacy of the problem.

Liverpool, however, is a city renowned for its warmth, and the music community here clearly has a conscience, although it would be difficult to ignore the increasing occurrences of encountering rough sleepers as we walk past city-centre venues on any night of the week. It's telling that there are established links between the creative community and the centre, as McCaughey explains: "We already benefit from the arts: HopeFest and We Shall Overcome are regulars, and we've had one-off gigs and benefactors. We can always use more! A lot of our supporters are younger people, who relate well to charity work. They're out and about at two in the morning in town and are best placed to call us."

The work that HopeFest has done in the past two years is remarkable, though it's somewhat bittersweet that the homeless

SLEPT LAST NIGHT?

situation in Liverpool has become so prevalent that musicians have felt the need to intervene. HopeFest majordomo and singer-songwriter Anna Grace Henney tells us how it came about: "I was volunteering with a homeless organisation, and I thought 'There must be some way of tying these two things together'. A lot of time they fell short of food and clothes to hand out, so I decided to try one event and see if I could get donations from it."

The first HopeFest, in March 2014, was supposed to be a one-off but the organisers realised the good they could do and chose to continue with their work: "This year we had 15 venues and 200 bands [including The Sundowners, Alias Kid and Tommy Scott from Space] playing over three days in September. The entrance fee was stuff that can go to the homeless, like clothes, food, things like that, collected into 600 'Hope Packs'. HopeFests Manchester and Berlin are coming up too."

As well as providing Hope Packs to local shelters, including the Whitechapel Centre, the September edition of HopeFest raised £1,300 which was supplemented by a £5,000 donation from the mayor. The £5,000 is being invested in HopeFest Academy, a branch of the organisation which will train homeless people in film production and stage management, with the aim of the festival eventually being entirely run by people with some experience of homelessness.

Henney is forthright on the causes of the rise in rough sleeping that caused her to want to help tackle the problem in Liverpool. "I think it's the government cuts, personally." It's telling that, since the Tory-led coalition was in power (2010-2015), the number of rough sleepers in the UK rose steeply. The work that the Whitechapel Centre or HopeFest does is invaluable, but really it should only be a supplement to state-provided care and shelter, not a lifeline or last point of call for the homeless and those failed by the housing system. Politics aside, what crops up regularly is the way homelessness hides in plain sight, and is a risk to everybody, not just the obviously vulnerable. McCaughey elaborates that the Whitechapel Centre "try to fundraise in a positive way, but there is no reason why you or your neighbour won't end up needing our help." Adam Baird, a writer who runs a series of workshops at the Whitechapel Centre, reinforces this point: "If you want to understand how it happens to someone else, understand how it could happen to you."

Baird is working on a play to raise awareness of homelessness and the centre, Seven Nights In Oblivion, which has already had a run at the Unity Theatre and draws on his experiences working with rough sleepers.

"I am trying to write that 'Where else do I go?' feeling. You go the library all day for somewhere to sit; when it shuts, there's literally nowhere else for you to be, so you enter this otherworld, where nothing - anything - can happen. There are stock characters - one is ex-military." Baird tackles some of the issue's complexities: "To homeless people with a background of domestic abuse, a home might be where awful things happen and you don't want to be in that environment. It isn't that there aren't enough homes for everyone; homelessness is a societal thing."

Liverpool is fortunate to be a socially aware city with a close-knit yet diverse community with ideas and the work ethic to realise them. This can yield great results on the relatively small-scale level of running a music publication or putting on a gig, but it could also effect changes of a higher order, as Henney and countless musicians, promoters, artists, fans, and punters on Merseyside repeatedly prove: "Almost all the major venues in the city centre hosted HopeFest. Music brings people who go to those venues together and unites them in the cause."

If current trends continue, homelessness is not going to disappear any time soon, and it needs round-the-clock attention like the kind offered by the Whitechapel Centre. If people need songs written by committee and publicised by celebrities to raise awareness à la Band Aid, that's a sorry comment on public engagement with social ill. In Liverpool, we don't need that. We've already got the tunes and we already know about the problems. What we can do is remind those who haven't noticed that homelessness is a nightly concern, and to give what they can, little and often. It adds up. We can point them in the direction of those best placed to collect donations. As individuals, we can't effect those changes like a government can, but a musical community can galvanise people, and raise awareness, funds and solutions, until the collective voice is loud enough to be heard in the corridors of power, and provincial efforts are recognised in national response.

With the Palace of Westminster in need of renovations that will likely force Parliament's temporary eviction in the foreseeable future, perhaps it's time to say to the Cabinet in terms they can understand: "Now imagine you had nowhere to go. Where would you sleep tonight?"

If you see anyone sleeping rough on the streets of Liverpool, call the Whitechapel Centre's No Second Night Out hotline on 0300 123 2041. If you'd like to volunteer with the Whitechapel Centre, or find out more about what the charity does, head to whitechapelcentre.co.uk.

Throughout December and January we will be running a fundraising campaign in conjunction with Liverpool's independent venues and promoters which aims to raise a substantial amount of money for the Whitechapel Centre, to help them carry out the vital work they do in helping the city's homeless community.

The **Bido #GuestlistGiving Campaign** will run from *Thursday 26th November to Thursday 28th January*, and will raise money by asking anyone who is on the guest list at any affiliated gig or show during this period to make a small donation to the charity. *Bido Lito!* Editor, Christopher Torpey, explains the reasons behind setting up the campaign.

"Christmas is always a time when we feel the pinch of homelessness more keenly, where you're more aware of those people who, through varying degrees of misfortune, have to sleep rough when most other people are inside celebrating with their families. There's a saying that you're only ever two wage packets away from being on the streets yourself - I think there are a lot of people in our city's music community that would empathise with that. There but for the grace of God go all of us."

"With this campaign we not only wanted to raise awareness of the issue and highlight ways in which we can help, but also back it up with a sizeable chunk of money that will help the Whitechapel Centre keep up and expand their work during this period."

"When we're queuing outside Arts Club or walking along Bold Street to get to a show, it's inevitable that we'll encounter some people who have had to resort to sleeping rough on the cold, harsh streets. Perhaps we'll see some of these people more than once on our regular trips. It will take little effort to put a few quid in one of our collection boxes - whether you're on the guest list or not - and the effects will be felt by those who need it most. Thank you."

Head to bidolito.co.uk for a full list of affiliate shows in our #GuestlistGiving campaign.

GIVING
GUESTS



the vryll society

Sometimes, in our grab-bag culture, waiting is the hardest part. Yet, in the gentle words of A.A. Milne, "Rivers know this: there is no hurry. We shall get there someday." Perhaps more bands should take heed from someone who was happy to write about a yellow bear and a honey pot, especially if their vision of success is likewise stuck fast to the bottom of an imagined receptacle, just out of reach forever. My evening with THE VRYLL SOCIETY - one of the hottest new acts in the city - has left me with a number of impressions, all of which hold great hopes for the intractability of Merseyside music. The biggest, however, is just how they've been willing to cut to the heart of their exceptionalism without revealing too much of themselves too early. As singer Mike Ellis, slumped on a small chair, says: "Once you're up there, the knives are out straight away. People just want to annihilate you. So, if we're that good, there's nothing you can say to me. You have to say, 'They're really good at what they do.'" He takes a moment, measuring me with his eyes, almost daring me to challenge his bold intent. "And thus far, it's worked."

I saw the Vrylls for the first time only recently. The Kazimier, of course, could inject drama into a Seasick Steve show if it wanted to, but this gig was tauter, leaner and more intense than I expected. Those responsible were five guys I'd spotted on one of those kaleidoscopic press photos you're used to seeing nowadays. Live, they are liquid, drawing shadows from strange angles, unashamedly tuneful and cabalistic in pursuit of a fresh sound; in person, they seem to have learnt all their strengths through their mentor, the late Alan Wills, who smiles out of a photograph to my right when I catch up with the band a week after the show. The Deltasonic boss has pride of place in the band's rehearsal room, deep in the belly of Crash studios. Stitched above him: a mosaic of baggies, which I realise might have had more of an influence on the Vrylls than anything an eager journalist could reference.

"He's always got a smile on his face, like," Mike says with reverence. "He said to us: 'You only need a practice room to conquer the world'. And he's right, isn't he?"

Judging by the décor - low ceiling, low lamps, reams of mystical wall tapestry - I can safely agree with him. This is the best practice room I've encountered thus far. It makes you want to sigh out something implausibly meaningful, meditate on a

bong hit, perch both feet on the sofa as you admire how closely the instruments are arranged together.

"He's the one that put us onto what we do," says Lloyd Shearer, the bassist. I'm deciding that he and Benjamin (Drums) are the ones paying attention to the band's musical development, then Ryan Ellis (Guitar) chips in: "We were working with Alan since we were that old band [The Dirty Rivers], when we were like, 'Turn everything on that you can!' But he's the one that really made us *listen* to what we are."

The Vryll Society's earlier incarnation, they tell me, was laddish and unexcitable. They had to step back from their egos to fix it; the songs became delicate, seductive, charged by a sense of freedom and encroaching darkness. All the while, Alan watched them. He told them to hold off gigging for as long as they could. To this day, they think he was right. The group hunkered down, spending three or four weeks on any given track, and emerged with a newfound appreciation for mood and texture. Just don't ever, ever call them psychedelic.

"Oh man, no!" Benjamin moans to the others' agreement. "We like it, but we don't want to be part of it."

"So that's the worst thing someone can say about you?" I ask. Lewis McGuiness (Guitar), the quietest of the bunch, says, "It's too bland of a label just to throw at someone."

"There are psychedelic elements," Mike explains, "but I guess we've only put out two tracks and an EP - we know there's so much more to discover. No-one else knows that. Hopefully, soon, you'll get more of the picture."

A look at Benjamin's 70s prog hairdo and bandana cresting the Indian wall-print does not quite banish my psychedelic suspicions. What else are they interested in? Unsurprisingly, it's what they claim other people aren't doing. Ghosts of The Verve and Ian Brown's solo records can be found in their new EP, *Pangea*, but the majority of it eschews the trappings of Northern Soul and wants instead to meddle with how one can approach relief and catharsis.

Take the lyrics to Coshh in the main hook, stung by tightly tremolo-ing string: "*Cos your son still needs you/And the mud will heal you/And jesus saves you/With his God above you.*" Offsetting images of power and dominance in the cleansing mud recalls the suffering of the martyr, or the pained suburbanite, or maybe the aged scenester waking up to a flood of acts that no

longer categorise him as a key demographic. It's alluring to break free from what we're told is important, because it is hard to get there, and means our selfishness is absolved for an impression of spirituality we may not fully understand. The band give a miasmic thrill when they play, fey and sinister and not wholly present, as if communion with an eldritch god has got stuck at the ritual stage and they're having too much fun to stop, but disappointment lies just around the corner.

Probing them, I try to define what makes fantasy the key to interesting art. "Mimetic qualities aside", I say, "perhaps it's more difficult to write songs about an average person's experiences than totally making them up, and making them purposefully vague? Even with the hum of erotic charge in the material, people might want a little to chew on aside from carnal, subconscious revel-rousers that aim well away from Northern grit." Mike jumps at the chance to speak of surrealism and its implications. He crackles when he talks, recommending Andrei Tarkovsky films, a concept for the underground survivors of World War 3, and a mandate to stay away from Arctic Monkeys-aping noughties leftovers. "It's easier for me to write abstract, instinctual stuff inspired by movies and other things - bits of jazz that I hear. I like soundtracks, really patient pieces of music with a feeling that the story is beneath them." Here again is the sensitivity that knocks me, fortified though it is in self-imposed isolation from contemporary Scousers. "Will you be popular?" I wonder. "All I know is that magazines like a movement," he says. "They create the movement by themselves. It's them doing it."

"Bands look out for themselves," adds Benjamin.

So, it turns out, does Lloyd. He admits to a fascination with other planets when I ask for any quirks in the closet. He says he would happily go to Mars and never come back.

Ryan reckons this sums them up perfectly: going to space every night. I'd go further and say they want their own universe, somewhere distant and un-guessable, and they're readying themselves to leap into the uncharted light of a fresh star. For now, content yourselves that they've toured, gained momentum, and are hungry to add a trail to their comet. As I close the rehearsal room door, I think: *I will remember this.*

Pangea is out now via Deltasonic Records.
soundcloud.com/the-vryll-society

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Jack McVann / jackmcvann.net



SUGARMEN

Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, transitions and passages, is depicted in the classical arts with two faces: one looks forward, the other looks back. Call me a dreamer, but it's an appealing image. Head stuck in the past depressingly clutching at the last sweet dregs of former glories? Nope, not Janus. That's all done and dusted; he has two eyes firmly facing the future. Sure, the past is viewed from a position of contemplation, something to be learned from and built on, but not something to dwell upon or define yourself by. Forward-thinking but not afraid to reflect and apply experience. That's Janus.

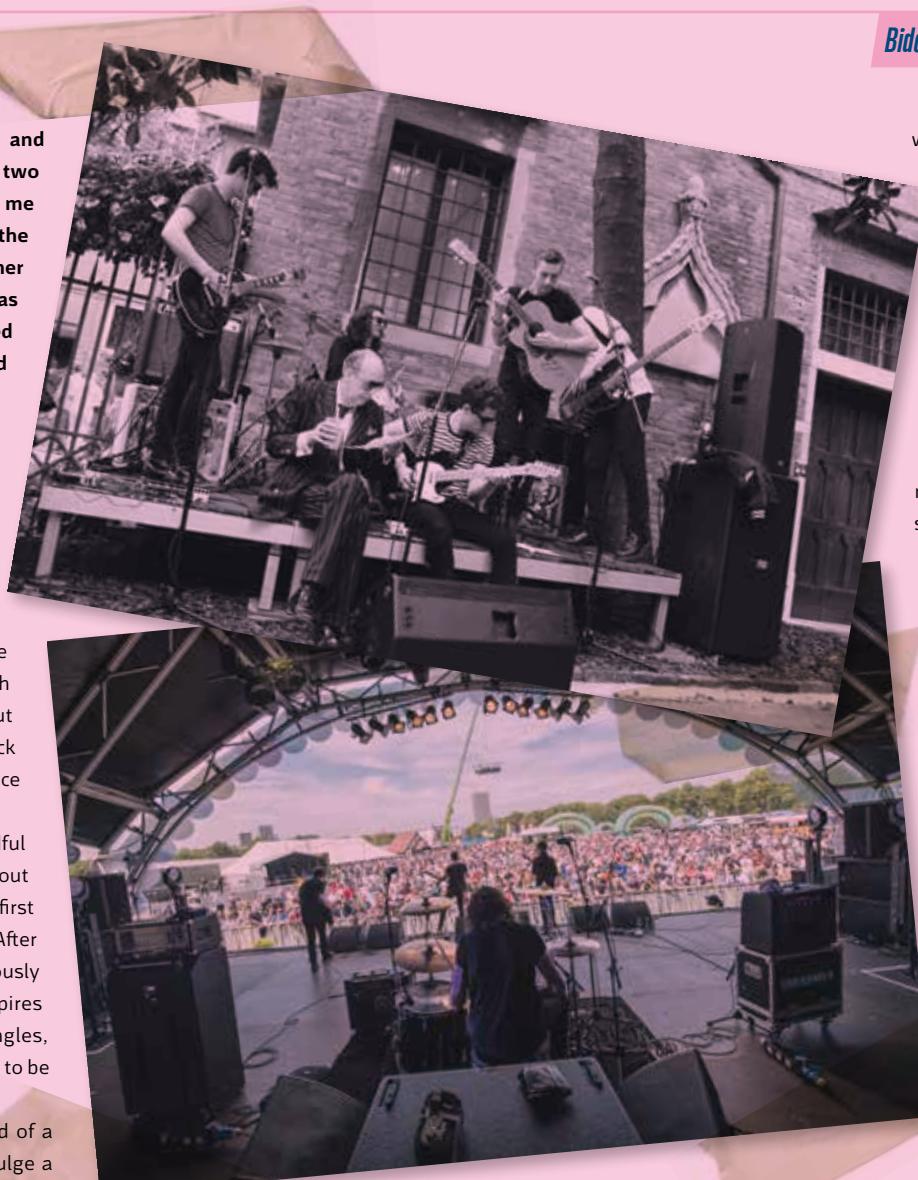
SUGARMEN have plenty of reason to share this outlook with the ancient keeper of gates: the past year has seen the four-piece accomplish such stuff as young bands' dreams are made on. Namely, two well-publicised Hyde Park shows with Blur and The Who, sitting pretty amidst big hitters Sleaford Mods and Metronomy, as well as a horde of other festival dates and high-profile support slots with the likes of Paul Weller and Buzzcocks, and a punchy debut single produced by none other than Mick Jones (whose Rock & Roll Public Library exhibition the band opened at the Venice Biennale - no biggie).

But, when I meet with them in their practice room a handful of times over a two-month period, they're more excited about the direction they're headed in next - even if, during our first encounter, they're not quite sure what this is themselves. After a couple of sittings in the spacious attic room surreptitiously tucked upstairs in District that they call home, it transpires that this period of transition has spawned two new singles, Plastic Ocean, released on 4th December, and Kool-Aid, set to be released in late January.

Catching them in this quiet interlude towards the end of a heady year, however, it'd be rude not to ask them to divulge a little about what they've achieved and how it's shaped their trajectory. "It's just good to see how that kind of thing works," guitarist and vocalist Chay Heney offers, unperturbed about the Hyde Park shows. "We were just so small compared to everything else around so it was incredibly interesting to experience it." Drummer Sam McVann coolly drops in: "I remember on the first night we realised that none of the other bands on the entire line-up were getting to play Hyde Park twice this year and the enormity of it just hit."

There's no denying the cultural significance of two Hyde Park gigs and some of the other heavyweights they've supported, but they treat the shows they've played this year more as a learning curve than a badge of honour. McVann discloses: "It was difficult: on the first date of those Paul Weller gigs we were completely taken aback by the fact that we were playing a huge theatre, and the sound is so different." Picking up the thread, Heney continues: "It doesn't feel like you're a band as much at first; everyone's right at the other end of the stage so you have to learn how to adapt. But I think we're pretty good at dealing with those different situations now."

The interplay between the four of them is telling of a gang of mates who have spent the best part of a year touring in close quarters. Discussing the impact these associations have had on the band's image, Heney begins, "I love all the musicians we've played with..." before bassist Tom Shields succinctly finishes his sentence, "but we're labelled." They nod in concurrence as Heney elaborates: "We got put into a corner we didn't want to be in cos of the things we've done - which have been really nice and we're grateful to have been given the opportunity to do them - but they're not really us. You could sit there and go crazy thinking about how other people are gonna put you across, but really the only point of control you have is what you create, and people will take it and see whatever they want."



Vocalist and guitarist Luke Fenlon agrees: "I think to the outside eye we've got Dirt out and played all these shows and that's our style, but we've been doing a lot of other things as well." Produced by Mick Jones, who Fenlon describes as like "an old friend and mentor", their debut single Dirt, released in March, was the result of a week-long recording session with The Clash and Big Audio Dynamite maestro. They are quietly proud of this relationship, and treat their work with Jones as a schooling, as Heney expresses: "Being in the studio and living with him for a week was definitely one of the best educations I've ever had."

Eager to put their end-of-summer lull to good use and getting restless waiting for outside forces to move things along, the band pressed forward, taking what they learned with them. Fenlon explains: "It's just been refreshing to come back in and start working on new stuff that's heading in a different direction. Our style has definitely changed - not cos we went 'we don't wanna do that' but it's just the way it's evolved naturally."

That evolution stems from that age-old nurse of creativity: boredom. To stop themselves tiring of their sound, they drink up influences wherever they can and keep a keen ear to what's going on around them. "I think music is like a receive and give - you'll listen to something and suddenly you'll write something and, it might not be obvious, but there'll be an element of it in there," Fenlon muses. Of course, no idea is ever created in a vacuum; influence-wise, "there are certain ones that always come up and repeat themselves," McVann offers before Fenlon interjects, "but you can take influence from anything really. Like, Psych Fest has been on and there's a lot we took from that." Or, as Heney puts it in more blunt terms: "I'll watch a band and think 'Fuck, they're doing something we're not doing and that's really good; why aren't we doing that?'" Ambition might seem a dirty

word, but it's evident that there's a drive within the band to keep listening and learning, and a willingness to sit up, take note and soak up what they hear in other artists.

That drive and attentiveness has seen them record two new singles with Parr Street Studios' engineer Chris Taylor, whose work with Bill Ryder-Jones and Hooton Tennis Club caught the band's interest. The admiration was mutual: they're releasing their second single Plastic Ocean on Taylor's Rooftop Records in early December, with third outing Kool-Aid following up in late January. It's not been a straightforward process, but it's certainly been a fruitful one.

During my first meeting with the band, Plastic Ocean was still in embryonic form. Starting life as Music You Can Walk To - a Talking Heads-inspired track with a self-explanatory name - when they first recorded it, the title "easily became quite a cheesy line," Fenlon concedes. Unhappy and unsure of where exactly they wanted to take it, they stripped the vocals, rewrote the lyrics and it came out as Plastic Ocean, a glittering palimpsest of a track, which was pieced and patched together in the studio, as

Shields explains: "We didn't know what we wanted when we went in to record and that's probably why it sounds so different." Different it is, but that doesn't really do it justice. Think more along the lines of funk brethren Catfish Collins and Jimmy Nolen soundtracking a Sergio Leone Spaghetti Western, driven by a rhythm section more relentless than a cold hard, Clint Eastwood stare, all silver pistol drums and a fistful of bass, fronted with Fenlon's helluva-hook vocal and cutting, cosmic, existential lyrics, and you're maybe halfway there. In other words: it's a belter.

The last time we meet it's obvious that securing the second single was an affirmative moment. As well as a headline homecoming show of sorts at District, they've got the cleverly-named Kool-Aid under their belt, which possesses the kind of shimmering riff and propelling bassline combo that wouldn't go amiss nestled in the opening credits of a Wes Anderson film. There's nothing twee about it though; a little surf, a little sea shanty, a little Glasgow Postcard post-punk, it's a nebulaic, melancholic, inky thing awash with surges of blissful, buzzing guitars. Littered with cynical, lyrical American dreams and sharp pop-art references, Heney's vocal makes for definite ear candy.

Noticeably different, the two tracks showcase a breadth of songwriting, sounds and ideas, which can only be a good thing. So do they have a direction yet? They laugh and tell me that they're "getting closer." From spending a few collective hours in their company over the past couple of months, it's clear that, whatever it is, it's unapologetically moving forward.

Plastic Ocean is released on 4th December via Rooftop Records and is available on Amazon and iTunes. Sugarmen play District on 11th December.
soundcloud.com/sugarmenuk

HOLY NOWHERE

In anticipation of the release of *Holy Nowhere*, the fantastic new book by Coral main man NICK POWER, P.Lee steps out with Power on the annual Lowry Lounge tour event curated by The Bluecoat, to discuss the new book, creative processes, influences and wider impact of not only Malcolm Lowry, but also Wirral as a backdrop for writing.

It's criminal that local history is not on school curriculums. Wirral is an area with such high cultural and historical significance, along with a massively undervalued artistic and creative heritage. What is not shared is ultimately lost. But in the minds of a few it exists in the hyper-real.

Wirral has been the living place and headspace (in formative years at least) of both Nick Power and Malcolm Lowry, and the region's place as an influence and a muse is significant in the work of both. All these location-specific references are captured, throbbing and reverberating in different ways, within the works of these significant Wirralians, a century apart.

Since the work with his 'day job' band The Coral has died down, Power has turned his focus to his poetry and short-story writing, achieving great success off the back of his first published work *Small Town Chase*. I meet up with him on a blustery Saturday morning at The Bluecoat ostensibly to talk about his new book, *Holy Nowhere*, but there's a bit of history to be waded through first.

The enduring brilliance of Malcolm Lowry's masterpiece *Under The Volcano* - frequently billed as one of the great novels of the 20th century - is the reason for our meeting. Each year on 31st October, The Bluecoat celebrate the life and work of Lowry by holding a series of events that take in his former haunts. Given the similarities between the two writers' work, it seems most fitting.

Lowry was born in New Brighton and raised in Caldy, before a life of long travel, nauseating drinking, majestic literature, magnetic genius and the all too predictable unhealthy and impoverished early death.

Our tour is programmed to trace key steps around Lowry's homeland, referencing his third major love (behind drink and literature), golf. As we enter the 9th hole of the famous Royal Liverpool Club (where Lowry won the Junior Golf Championship at the age of 15), I speak with Power about what he identifies with in Lowry.

"I bought *Under The Volcano* ages ago but it was years before I read it, because people said it was quite hard work. It is a slow burner, but it's really rewarding," he intones. "The style it is written in is not really in fashion, it's quite dense with really long sentences. Totally defiant, and I love that about it. He got rejected by tons of publishers and there are letters that exist where he is fuming with them. I love that about him, along with the symbolism and imagery, which is brilliant."

We arrive at the Dee estuary, whose cascading and crackling frame meets the unforgiving Irish Sea with such terrible beauty: a beauty which impossibly impacts upon a writer. Where Power's first book was written from a provincial perspective, this new one has a broader scope. The cover artwork - a pharmacy sign, enveloped by darkness - has deeper meaning in symbolising the

identity of *Holy Nowhere*, along with the central message and themes of the writer.

"The cover is a green pharmacy crucifix, [which] appears as a symbol in loads of the book. It's building upon *Small Town Chase*: [it's] written from the perspective of looking over the city, so loads of the pieces are characters standing on rooftops and seeing the crucifix. Looking at the cult of religion and the cult of drugs, and the way that pharmacies peddle drugs and ways in which people follow stuff, which is an addiction whatever it is. Very much a film noir with a weird, psychedelic edge."

What is ultimately inevitable is the familiar shadow that music

"Waste Disposal" is basically somebody going past Bidston Moss tip on the train. It was something of a dumping ground and they found a couple of dead bodies on there. He goes into a daydream between Birkenhead North and Bidston, because the train always stops for a few minutes there. It's all very true. 'Managed Decline' is indirectly about how Liverpool FC have bought up property in Anfield that surrounds the stadium, like Breck Road, in a bit of a dodgy way."

Just like the sole house that's still standing on the patch of grass in Birkenhead North (see the cover of Caravan Gallery: Is Britain Great 2), Power's work asks questions about the wild, marauding crusade against the invasion of modern life - dereliction by design. This wild, ragged old building, with its Union Jack fluttering above, personifies the weird, beautiful, glorious character and splendid uniqueness which *Holy Nowhere* examines.

As we arrive at Royal Liverpool's Hell Bunker, we discuss the caricature-y ideals behind the work of Tom Wood, New Brighton resident and pioneering street photographer. "He was the Chelsea Nightclub's in-house photographer, taking photos of loads of weird stuff,

gangs of kids in the 80s and 90s," Power explains.

"Photography and images like that are big influences on the book. Interpreting photos from the book is describing a scene, in a filmic style. A lot of it is one scene that I am just describing in a passage. A snapshot, similar to photography."

Sound familiar? The tour ends with me imagining Lowry, waxing lyrical in *Under The Volcano* about that same Dee estuary we visited earlier...

It looked like the sea; actually it was the estuary, seven miles wide, of a river: white horses westward marked where the real sea began. The Welsh mountains, gaunt and black and cloudy, with occasionally a snow peak to remind Geoff of India, lay across

the river. During the week, when they were allowed to play, the course was deserted: yellow ragged sea poppies fluttered in the spiny sea grass. On the shore were the remains of an antediluvian forest with ugly black stumps showing, and farther up an old stubby deserted lighthouse. There was an island in the estuary, with a windmill on it like a curious black flower, which you could ride out on a low tide on a donkey. The smoke of freighters outward bound from Liverpool hung low on the horizon. There was a feeling of space and emptiness.

Does the apple fall far from the tree?

Holy Nowhere is released on 5th November, published by erbacce-press.

The collage here was created by Low Coney especially for *Holy Nowhere*. You can read more about Low Coney's new Coney's Loft project on page 30.

soundcloud.com/nickpowerpoetry



casts within Power's literary world. Much of the writing reads like music and the reader can easily imagine each act unfurling in the manner of a song, churned with introspection or a hazy, wavy, scatty and crazy appreciation of the world - recurring themes and d.e.f.i.n.i.t.e.r.e.f.e.r.e.n.c.e.p.o.i.n.t.s. As we mount the weathered, weary, crooked frame of Caldy Hill, past the home of the Taskersons (see *Under The Volcano*), I wonder about the soundtrack he could envisage for the book.

"It would probably be something like *Blade Runner*, by Vangelis. Especially the small pieces of flash fiction, which remind me of the speech at the end. Maybe something by Sun Araw, or Miles Davies', *Ascenseur Pour L'échafaud*, which has that film noir feel to it."

While *Small Town Chase* resided in these gritty, surreal, introspective, peculiar small towns, *Holy Nowhere* is Birkenhead: big brother yet not big city. *Holy Nowhere* is snapshots of life from the inside looking in, but it's the small stories within that interest Power, with various chapters having more specific anchors to his home town.

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Almost three years since playing under the revered rafters of the Anglican Cathedral, DAUGHTER, the London-based trio of vocalist and guitarist Elena Tonra, Swiss-born guitarist Igor Haefeli and French drummer and percussionist Remi Aguilella, are returning to Liverpool in support of ruminative new album Not To Disappear. The second album from the minimalistic indie folk trio, the release builds on the intricate dynamics that won them critical acclaim on 2013's debut If You Leave. Though Tonra's delicate vocal delivering anguished words still fuses seamlessly with Haefeli's tight, melodic guitar and Aguilella's rolling drums, the sound of their follow-up record feels infinitely richer.

We caught up with drummer Aguilella mid-preparation for their January 2016 tour to discuss the ideas behind the new album and the band's creative process. "We want to be in the best shape possible so we can give each show our best. We're just getting back into rehearsals and we want to perform in a way that ensures that people will feel a connection with the new songs," Aguilella offers. That connection is an integral part of Daughter's appeal. Primary songwriter Elena Tonra has that rare skill of taking deeply personal experiences and transforming them into themes that chime with their listeners. Aguilella agrees: "With Elena's lyrics, there's this honesty in the sense that everything she writes is genuine. And I think that's one of the reasons why people do find such a connection with the music. There are universal themes in there that people really do seem to be able to relate to." And perhaps no more so than on the incredibly moving, desperately sad video for Doing The Right Thing, which details the devastating effects of dementia on an entire family.

Aguilella explains that the video came about through their previous work with filmmakers and artists Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard, a duo noted for their work with Nick Cave, Gil Scott-Heron and Tindersticks. "Iain and Jane have a friend called Stuart Evers, who is a short-story director, and he took the lyrics and used them to come up with the video. I was away when it was being made and so the first time I saw it, it was pretty much the final version. As I began to watch it, I started crying in the editing room." He continues: "There are people in my family who have been affected by dementia. It's a difficult subject, and Elena's also seen first-hand the effect it can have on families. It's a subject that people tend to avoid, but I feel it's good to get it out there and talk about these things."

So is there an overarching theme to be found on the forthcoming album Not To Disappear or is it a collection of

musical vignettes? For Aguilella the answer isn't that simple: "Elena writes about deeply personal matters - I'd say in the vast majority of the songs we've recorded, I haven't known exactly what she's singing about. And because her lyrics are so personal, I don't really want to ask her specifically. Which I think works well because people can take what they want from the songs, put their own interpretations on them, and relate them to their own lives. Even when we're playing them live, Elena might sing the lyric in a different way, which leads me to reinterpret the song. I'll follow her on the drums, doing something a little different rather than playing the same thing every time."

Though Aguilella comes from a classical and jazz background, his ability to adapt his drumming to suit different atmospherics of songs has translated well into his work with Daughter. The band formed when Tonra, who had initially started Daughter

unflinchingly red-blooded drumming. The album's evidently an emotive piece of work, so did they approach writing it any differently to their previous output?

"Not really, it's always been the same, a song-by-song process. Elena will come in with the lyrics and the melody and we'll all try them out. So when Elena wrote Doing The Right Thing she already had the whole guitar riff and when we rehearsed it together it all fell into place. Then there are others that take longer. There's a song called Numbers, which Elena and Igor had worked on, but I wasn't that happy with how it was going. I took it away to work on and scrapped everything bar the vocals that Elena had recorded. I came up with a new drumbeat, and changed the structure."

The recording process saw the band head to New York to work alongside Nicolas Vernhes, the stateside producer known for his

work with Animal Collective and The War On Drugs. "It was great; Nicolas' input was fascinating, showing us different ways of doing things," Aguilella enthuses. "On the previous album and EPs, we tried to record live, which didn't always work. So it was great to have the time to demo the tunes, work out how we wanted the album to sound, and take probably more songs than we needed into the studio, and then learn from Nicolas' expertise too."

Returning to Liverpool's O2 Academy in January, Aguilella reminds himself what it was like to play in the Anglican Cathedral in 2013: "It was a very scary but beautiful moment. The Cathedral is the sort of building that makes you thankful that you get the chance to play in such amazing spaces - we were blown away. We've since played at Radio City Music Hall in New York, which was like, wow! But the Anglican was one of the first where I thought, 'This is crazy, I'm

playing here and people are actually paying to see us.' We'll look forward to coming back to Liverpool and hope people enjoy the album, fingers crossed... not that I'm superstitious."

Playing a venue that's much less sacred, but charming in its own way, can we expect any debauched antics from the trio? "There's certainly not going to be any outrageous rock 'n' roll behaviour going on," laughs Aguilella. "To be quite honest, I'm a big fan of water, y'know, it tastes pretty good. A few years ago I used to take gin and tonic on stage but after a while I realised that I was enjoying the tonic more than the gin... I guess we're not exactly party people, as you can probably gather from our music."

Daughter play the O2 Academy on 22nd January. Their new album Not To Disappear is released on 15th January via 4AD. ohdaughter.com



as a solo project, began dating another like-minded musician, guitarist Igor Haefeli. Aguilella joined on drums and the critical response to the band's self-released EPs and debut album seemed to take them all by surprise. "We were really delighted at how well received the debut album was, we'd expanded our sound and loved what we were doing, but we felt really lucky to have got such a great reception. Hopefully it'll be the same for this album."

Permeated by embittered and empowering lyrics met with hauntingly atmospheric instrumentation, Not To Disappear is an emotionally unshackled offering. Borderline brutal in places lyrically, the themes of loss, alienation and loneliness seem to run through it. Alone/With You and No Care stand out as highlights: resonant and emphatic, their wounding lyrics give way to showcase Haefeli's majestic guitar lines, and Aguilella's



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PHOENIX VIOLINS

Nestled in a corner of the most historic of Liverpool city centre's historic buildings is a secret getaway, where a master craftsman goes about his work by the light of a flickering candle. PHOENIX VIOLINS has been a fixture of The Bluecoat for many years, presided over with great warmth by its wise and gregarious owner, Michael Phoenix. We sent Glyn Akroyd along to find out a little more about the world and work of one of the city's hidden gems.

A light shining through the autumn twilight guides me across The Bluecoat's garden to the Phoenix Violins workshop, a grotto of wood shavings, blueprints, wall charts, brushes, glues, and esoteric tools. The bodies of stringless cellos stand waiting, lifeless in a corner, and violins hang like glazed hams from the ceiling, next to bunches of thick, white horsehair.

Michael Phoenix is a big guy with a big beard, a shock of white hair currently tied back, and a twinkle in his eye. His craftsman's apron bears the symbol of his name and, after a quick summary of his journey to date - a brief career as a computer analyst, seven years of training at the prestigious Newark Music College for a J & A Beare Diploma, making, restoring and repairing a range of violins, violas and cellos from a studio at his home in Mold, and now The Bluecoat - he launches into the story of his long-term plan, the Scouservarius Legacy Project: "I got the idea in 2003. I think about it every day; it won't go away until it's done". The project is now in the delicate Arts Council funding application stage.

The idea is this: get 2400 Liverpudlians and visitors to the city to make a string quartet (two violins, a viola and a cello). Once created, the instruments would be hired out to orchestras, individuals, concert halls ("Sydney Opera House, why not!"). The resulting funds - managed by another of his projects, the Liverpool Quartet Trust - would be poured back into educational schemes providing instruments, tuition and exam fees for aspiring musicians, and to commission new pieces of music.

Each individual will contribute a single task, which could be as simple as drawing a line on the template or as intricate as carving part of the scroll that decorates the head of each instrument, depending on the skills of the contributor. Now, making such a contribution may sound fairly prosaic but with typical flair Michael manages to elevate proceedings: "In 400 years' time people will actually be listening to these instruments and going 'Who made these?';" he laughs. "When a musician plays an old instrument - say it's been stuck up in the loft - they go 'Oh, it's forgotten how to play', implying that it has a memory: 'It needs to be played in'. So if a violin has a memory it would be in the fibres of the wood." To demonstrate, he proffers an old mug filled with coloured straws. "These represent the fibres of the wood, so pick a fibre." I draw a straw from the mug. "Put the wood to your forehead and put a memory into the wood. Everyone who takes part will do this. Put your happiest memory in." I do so. "Then take another fibre and put your saddest memory in, and finally put your most romantic memory in, and lock it into the instrument and then when it's played the instrument is primed with happiness, sadness and romance. But it's not just about the making of the instruments, it's about demonstrating that if we all do one small thing together we can create something magnificent." It's a grand, romantic vision and Michael Phoenix makes its success sound both inevitable and desirable.

In order to raise the profile of the Scouservarius Legacy Project, he has collaborated with the Liverpool String Quartet since 2012 and they, and other guest artists, have been performing regularly at The Bluecoat and other Merseyside venues. Their current programme sees them based at the beautiful Nordic Church on Park Lane with monthly, themed performances including an upcoming Carol Concert on 21st December, a Charity Gala in conjunction with Radio Merseyside in January, and an afternoon of Parisian jazz in February.

The workshop is littered with objects, large and small, all of which play their part in the process of making and restoration, and many of which have a quality and beauty all of their own: nestled in the palm of Michael's hand, a set of five tiny wood planes, their bases curved to better follow the arches of the instrument's breast and belly; a spruce violin front which rises from its outer edges to a central ridge, its map-like contours marked by an un-named hand-tool designed by Stradivari himself, itself another triumph of art and engineering. "Sometimes," Michael says, "people leave messages or objects inside their instruments - one maker left a note stating that he was in poor health and that this was probably the last violin he would ever make. An American bluegrass player came in for some work on his fiddle and said, 'I'd better warn you there's something in there, I don't want you to freak out and drop it'. I peer inside and there's a rattlesnake tail. I said, 'I spend all my life trying to stop these things from rattling and you put that in!' 'It's to ward off evil spirits,' he deadpans. Didn't half resonate."

Does he play? "I've got a theory about that," he declares, unsurprisingly. "I am very suspicious

of players who make violins, because they tend to be failed players who go to making. I come to it through a love of wood first and then of music. Life's too short to be a player and a maker, because you can't work out the making, you've got to be taught. Players think they can create an instrument that will sound exactly the way they want, but it's not possible. If the musician is the painter, I'm the guy who stretches his canvas, puts hair on a stick and mulls some coloured powder, but only yellow, blue and red; it's up to him to mix the shades and to paint the picture."

It's a nice analogy, but one that somewhat undervalues the years of dedication Michael Phoenix has brought to his craft. In a world of throwaway, made to fall apart, short-termist junk, here is a true craftsman, an artisan who takes total pride in his work and has an eye on the long game. If he pulls off the Scouservarius Legacy Project then he just might qualify as a visionary too. So pop along to the Bluecoat and think about the happiest of times, the saddest of times, and that first romantic kiss.

The Liverpool String Quartet host their Christmas concert at the Nordic Church on 21st December, featuring Christmas carols and a full suite of the music from the film The Snowman. The LSQ also host a charity gala concert for the Scouservarius Project on 17th January 2016. All information and tickets for the events can be found at phoenixviolins.com.



Words: Glyn Akroyd

Photography: Antonio Franco / antoniofranco.net

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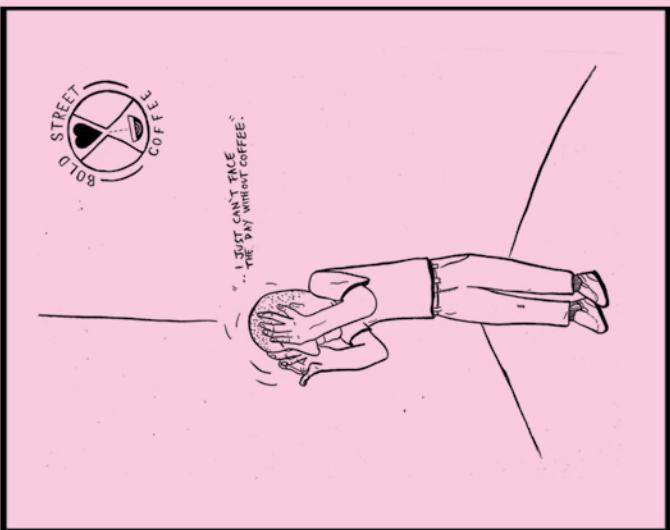
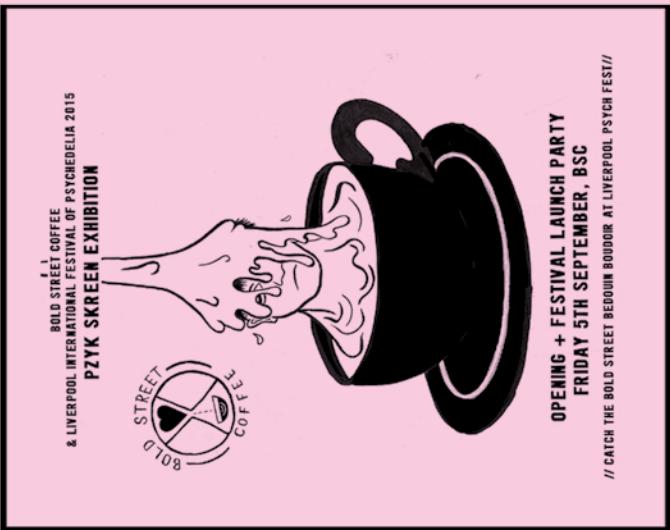
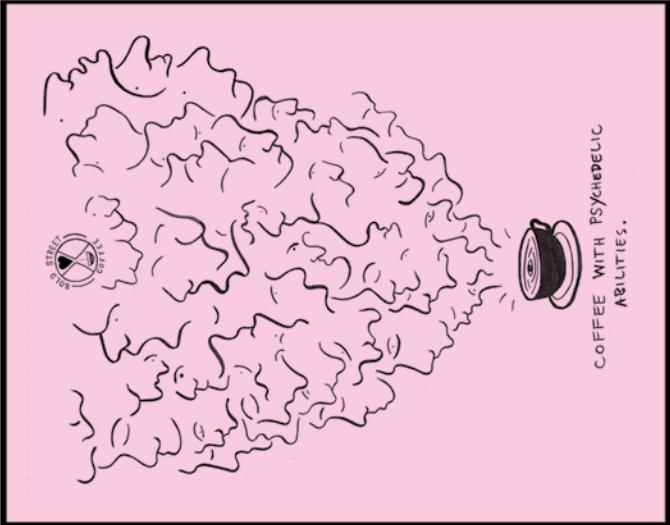
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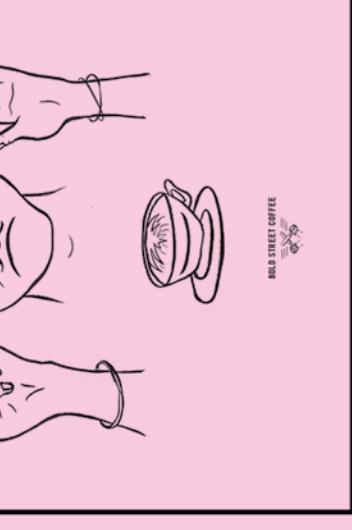
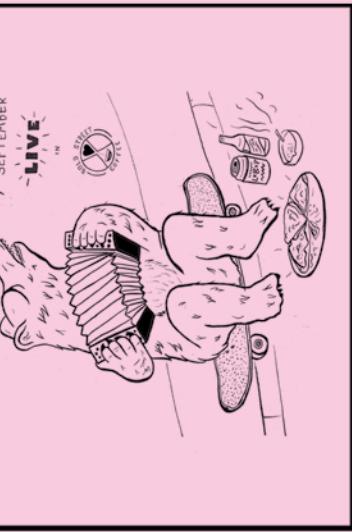
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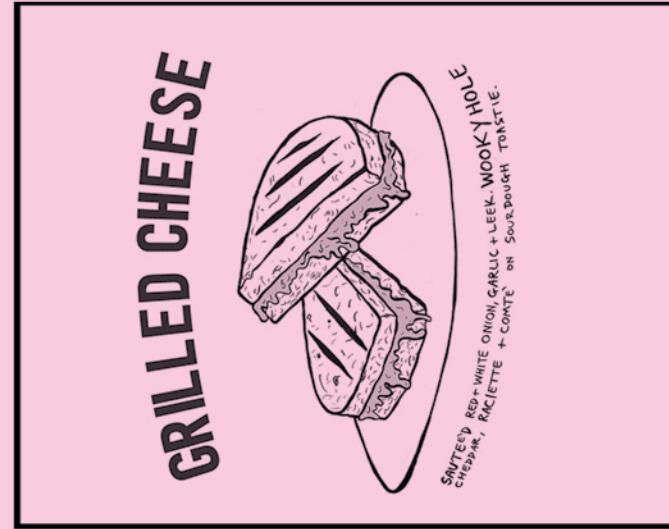
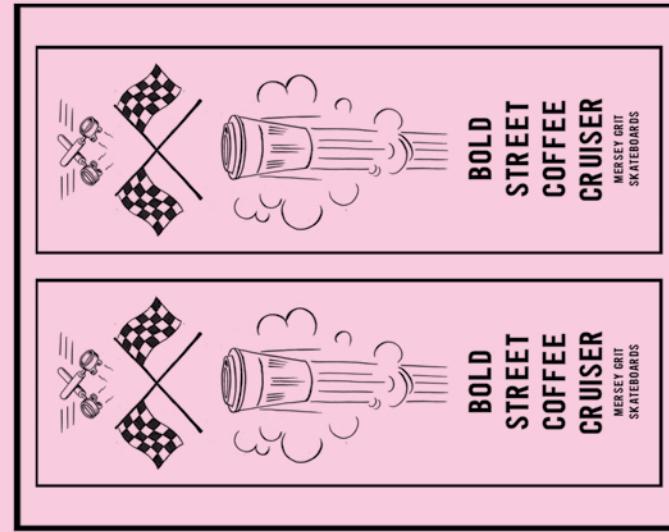
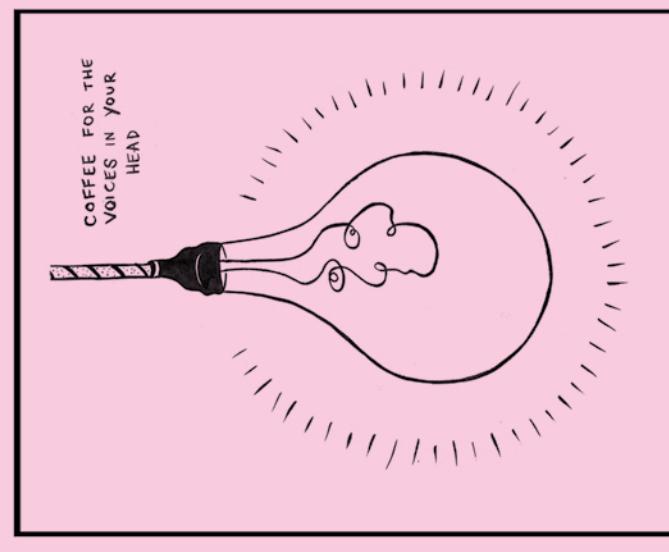


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2015 has seen our fair city enjoy a plethora of offerings on the festival front and, wrapping up another wondrous season, LIVERPOOL MUSIC WEEK brought us to the curtain call in glorious form. In its 11th edition, and with no signs of slowing down, LMW was one heady week (and a bit) in October that served up many a mouth-watering soundbite on an outrageously impressive bill. Our review of the festival starts at the top with the stunning opening event at The Kazimier, and is rounded off with a blazing Closing Party on a foggy All Hallows' Eve at Camp and Furnace.

Words: Alastair Dunn, Bethany Garrett, Christopher Hughes, Sam Banks, Sam Turner, Andrew PM Hunt, Stuart Miles O'Hara.

Photography: Aaron McManus, Stuart Moulding, Keith Ainsworth, Marty Saleh, Mike Sheerin.

LIVERPOOL MUSIC



Micachu & The Shapes

OPENING PARTY

The Kazimier

Liverpool Music Week is an undertaking that seems to grow in scope and quality with each passing year, bookended by the semi-mythical Opening Party and Closing Party, the two nights that have become the stuff of legend in the Liverpool music calendar. The electric-eclectic line-up for tonight's opening event at The Kazimier is testament to this legacy and it seems like we're set for another triumph. Starting proceedings are local sonic doom-makers BODY. Their melancholic, electronic wanderings are intriguing and memorable, and they prove to be a perfect root from which the rest of the night can grow. Aesthetically different but equally impressive, VEYU provide the sizeable crowd with a taste of their new, heavier sound. Still awash with their trademark reverb-laden guitars, the new tracks are not too far departed from the band's previous output, but suggest a darker and less refined approach to future material. Next up are the ever-evolving and enigmatic collective that is MICACHU & THE SHAPES. Their set expectedly reads like an encyclopaedia of the past three decades of popular music and is as melodic and beautiful as it is discordant and harsh. Never one to settle for convention, Mica Levi draws the crowd through glitchy pop territory into noisy grunge landscapes, refusing to allow passive consumption in lieu of piqued interest. After such an immersive experience it is with a grateful sigh that the now near-capacity audience welcome OUTFIT to the stage.

Their ambient take on synth pop is warmly received and offers welcome respite to ears that have had to adjust to different styles and extremities throughout the evening. As well as being massively enjoyable, Outft also act as a fitting segue into the penultimate performance of the night, which is provided by cerebral electronic act DARKSTAR. Aiden Whalley's combination of contemplative beats and samples with poppy synths and vocal melodies makes for a ponderous yet satisfying display. With the drinks now well and truly flowing, the attendees of tonight's party are evidently in the mood for just that, and though headliner HOLLY HERNDON caters adequately to those who simply want to throw some shapes, her set, combined with some mesmerising visuals, also offers much for those content to stand and admire.



Josh T Pearson

SHOWCASE EVENTS



HEALTH

Also competing for attention on the opening night of affairs is RICHARD HAWLEY but, judging by the queue the length of Renshaw Street outside Grand Central's Dome, he needn't worry. Under the pretty powder-blue and porcelain ceiling of the former Methodist church, Hawley and his four copycat band members gift Music Week-goers a smooth, skyrocketing and sublime set littered with gems from his brooding back catalogue and soon-to-be-classics from latest release Hollow Meadows; early on we're treated to golden oldies Tonight The Streets Are Ours and Standing At The Sky's Edge. While the sweeping orchestration and Mediterranean-lilt of the former conjure up images of cobbled, candlelit streets, the latter paints a different scene entirely, all storming blues crescendo and thundering drums. Both tracks showcase the range and strength of Hawley's vocal and his band's musical prowess, which are only amplified in the ornate venue.

Hollow Meadows seems to continue in the same vein as previous releases, meditating on relationships, ageing and frailty, and Hawley translates these themes into a stunning live performance. Beautifully unhurried tracks like What Love Means, I Still Want You and Tuesday PM, which Hawley introduces as "probably the quietist and saddest song" he's written, command stillness in the ecclesiastical venue, the audience rightly mesmerised by the most affable man in music spilling his soul. Mixed-in amidst fan favourites the wistful Open Up Your Door and warming Don't Stare At The Sun, his new material flows seamlessly.

Perhaps it's a lazy comparison to make but with those fathomless baritone vocals and a musical style that eludes easy categorisation and exudes crossover crooner cool, Hawley is very much the modern-day Roy Orbison (the thick-rimmed specs and deep black Brylcreemed quiff help a little too). He introduces soaring set-closer Heart Of Oak as an ode to his adoring fans, before encoring with the hauntingly atmospheric and slightly Doorsian The Ocean.

Now for something completely different. Fast forward a couple nights and experimental outfit HEALTH are headlining the black and white bowels of The Kazimier. Like HEALTH, local support acts

a.P.A.t.T and BARBEROS defy genre, the former mixing elements of electronica, ska, prog rock and industrial beats. Barberos, another Liverpool stalwart, are essentially a keyboard, two drum kits and three morph suits (if that seems strange to you, you've come to the wrong gig). Both set up the headliners perfectly, leaving just enough of the crowds' eardrums intact for HEALTH to finish off.

The Californian noise-rockers take the stage for their fifth Liverpool show, and a first return to Merseyside in five years. After gaining fame with the electro-stuttering Crystal Castles remix of their track Crimewave, each subsequent album release has pushed boundaries further, the quartet refusing to let their sound be limited by their instruments. The crowd are hit with a barrage of noise as the band open with Die Slow, overcoming some early problems with vocal levels. Stonefirst, from their latest release Death Magic, is a pummelling barricade of scratching synth that is given greater listenability by Jake Duzsik's haunting vocals. Hardcore fans headbang and fist-pump at the front, the rest of the crowd swaying to the industrious beats.

Finishing with an encore of the impossibly frantic Courtship, the band leave the stage as breathless as the crowd. Frenetic offerings like this showcase exactly why, in its 11th year, Liverpool Music Week continues to endure and attract hordes of fans from all over.

Now for GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR in the commodious Camp and Furnace. What can be said? A colossal machine rampages through our city, picking up where HEALTH left off. The Canadian eight-piece are regarded as the entrepreneurs, the originals, and the saviours of post-rock. A musical discipline, once upon a time overlooked. The creation of sonic landscapes, landscapes that delve deep, constructing an unwary path to future dystopia.

Meditative drones ring out. The atmosphere builds around this industrial warehouse. Melancholia floods down the dark, damp iron girders as the once derelict confines of Camp and Furnace host an unforgettable evening. So we have it. Loud, sustained dissonant noise rapturing throughout the venue, mesmerising anyone in its path. Analogue projections burn through the reel-to-reel



tape, painting the stage with lurid, breathtaking cinematography. Signature sonic soundscapes provide a contradicting feature, unsettling yet peaceful. Godspeed ease to the stage as they proceed through their never-ending archive, engrossing the audience with two hours of blissful textures. The eight-piece tear through material such as Storm and Mladic, to name but two.

Experiencing a show of this magnitude is astounding – every aspect so beautifully crafted, finely tuned and constructed. There is no margin for error, as the horror of a twisted, tormented soul emerging from a fictional realm creeps up your spine. Godspeed You! Black Emperor share their idealistic views on the world the only way they know how: by channelling their personal heart-felt emotion and beauty through the simplistic artistic medium of music.

Everything is slowed down somewhat over at the Scandinavian Church for an evening with JOSH T. PEARSON. The Texan, accompanied by friend Calvin Lebaron for much of his set, treats the captivated congregation to an unusual evening of laughter, religion and heartbreak. As an experimental side project Pearson performs old gospel standards with Lebaron as The Two Witnesses and introduces each as “a song your Grandma would love”. Looking resplendent in Southern Gent attire – one all in black, the other in white – their vocal harmonies work wonders in the exquisite interior of the Park Lane venue, and while irony propels Pearson’s between-song yatter, the duo clearly having nothing but respect for these moving hymns.

It seems Pearson was in a different place when he wrote 2013 album Last Of The Country Gentlemen, as tonight he jokes about getting a haircut, massaging his friend in his sleep and the danger of robots taking over the world. But when it comes to getting into the headspace for one his songs “that’ll make you cry”, he is fully committed to the moment and so is the entirety of the crowd. Every song ebbs and flows; as Pearson tickles crescendos from his acoustic and as Sweetheart I Ain’t Your Christ and Woman, When I’ve Raised Hell dance around desperation and redemption, it’s captivating.

It's impossible to tell to what extent confidence or fragility informs Pearson's stage persona, constantly reassuring us (or himself) that he feels alright, anguish over the sound of his guitar and getting his buddy Calvin onstage for a seemingly unscheduled performance. Whether he is under-confident or a master of stagecraft is irrelevant, as he has more than won over this Music Week crowd who hope this is not the ‘Farewell Tour’ that Pearson quips it is.

Unlike Pearson, who threatens farewell, EVIAN CHRIST, appearing at new Hardman Street-outing Buyers Club, appears to be an artist in transition. After signing to Warp earlier in the year, he announced the news of an art installation at the ICA. This installation, along with a few one-off parties he put together in London, was themed around trance – if not the genre itself then the idea of trance and the exploration of otherworldly 90s dancefloor utopia.

These events sought to engage not just with the idea of “meaningless euphoria” but with the social and political environments that surround trance as a movement and as a desire within club goers. These lofty ambitions, along with his gradual alignment with a new breed of US club experimenters like Fatima Al Quadiri and his famed collab with Kanye, all combine to make it feel like the music world has underestimated this young lad from Ellesmere Port.

The music tonight is intense (as are the lasers and constant strobes), either through sheer force of sound or by virtue of jarring sonic contrasts. Perhaps the overriding theme of the night is that of deconstruction, from EVOI’s troll-like set of endless hoover synths to the trance impresario himself, Evian Christ, and his muscular trap’n’bass abstractions.

A night like this is important for Liverpool, not just because the DJs play music you don’t hear outside of London or New York, but because of the attitude and agenda that the performers bring with them. Tonight that attitude is best expressed by the pairing of GHE20GOTHIK founder Venus X and LA’s most aggressive club collagist TOTAL FREEDOM. Their rapid-fire selections and ever-morphing tapestry of mutant hip hop and US club music feel

DIY PRESENTS – BREAKING OUT



Away from the bright lights of the established headliners, LMW 2015 provided us with a run of shows at the Shipping Forecast and Arts Club featuring a clutch of acts who we can be sure will be bill-topping names in the future. Our scouts were out in force – here's who impressed them...

Joint headliners THE AMAZONS bring a touch of swagger to the Shipping Forecast on the opening night of this Breaking Out run. It's also the first night of their UK tour with a literal mic drop moment at the end, but it doesn't detract from the quality of their set, which leaves the crowd wanting more from Reading's own rockstars.

The venue is soon filled with more fans of London based band, PALACE, who sing along to their easy listening favourites; So Long Forever and Head Above The Water from their second EP Chase The Light. Inspired by Jeff Buckley and taking influence from bands like Alabama Shakes, Palace deliver a set that is as pleasurable to watch as it is to listen to with the lead singer's humble interactions with the crowd making this a band to look out for in the future.

IDLE FRETS jumpstart the proceedings at the Shipping Forecast on the second night with pop music that oozes sunshine and warms the room on this chilly evening. The most recent single, Lifeline, is an obvious high point during the show.

ALL TVVINS take to the stage to headline the night. Sounding like a live band version of LCD Soundsystem, they are tonight's saviours. They provide some much needed proof that pop music does not have to be bland. With the right ingredients, as can be heard in tracks such as Too Young to Live and Darkest Ocean, pop music can be as cathartic as any other sonic form. Their live performance offers some unashamedly expressive dance moves from the guitar player. By far the stand-out group of the night and a deserving headliner, All Tvvins play an honest, raw and powerful set.

LIVERPOOL MUSIC WEEK 2015



Best Coast



Deerhunter

CLOSING PARTY

Camp and Furnace

fluid and exciting, like a bold adventure within the American underground.

The club has long been mythologised as a democratised zone for people to come together and look forward but it remains a myth unless promoters actively encourage new voices. Within a club context, the night's female onstage presence felt particularly refreshing, with NKISI and Berlin's KABLAM both delivering hard-hitting early sets to a handful of Liverpool's most dedicated.

LMW and Evian Christ should be commended for bringing a line-up like this to Liverpool. For a town so rich in musical heritage and culture, the club scene here can feel overly student-centric and techno-oriented, but tonight is proof that there is a growing audience for forward-thinking club culture whose purpose is to disorient.

Mischief night, but the BEST COAST crowd are above all that; too busy lining up to see the duo bring their Cali cool to the Kaz via the North West coast. First up though, to paraphrase Dorothy: are BATHYMETRY a good band or a bad band? If it's the latter, that may even be where their appeal lies. There's a void in their 60s sound - The Shirelles playing Pink Floyd's UFO Club set. Possibly vice-versa. Maybe refusing to learn to play their instruments stems from the fear that, upon mastery, they'll lose the Grimm factor that's borne out by their obvious songwriting ability. An illustrative example is that the perennially out-of-tune guitar has a lot in common with Sartre's lazy eye: distracting, but not relevant to an appreciation of the important work for which he's best known.

VIOLA BEACH might not seem to have a lot in common with tonight's headliners, sonically speaking, but their fine blend of the last 30 years of British guitar pop acts as the perfect link between Bathymetry's stripped-down wooziness and Best Coast. This set's delightful - as is seeing their (un-microphoned) drummer sing along to Swings And Waterslides and know it's not onanism, nor bravado, but simply joy at making music.

Best Coast sound massive these days, guitars filling The Kaz with adolescent fuzz and drawing a huge crowd with adolescent fuzz of its own. With studio-perfect vocals all night, Bethany Consentino proves her slacker credentials by rattling through California Nights, So Aware (both from their new album), Boyfriend et al. barely wasting any time on between-song chat. Highlights include I Don't Know How, a post-grunge Beauty School Dropout, and Do You Love Me Like You Used To, with a vocal that erupts from hidden depths.

Though the crowd might disagree, over a 19-song set, the patterns that emerge - lyrically and musically - are repetitive. There's a lot of being and feeling crazy, fading out and fading away, being in love and not knowing how to say it. But those sentiments ring true to so many it might be enough to get the point across.

BREAKING OUT



DMA's

As feisty newcomers DMA's take the stage at DIY's third Breaking Out show it becomes clear that they have a unique breed of Oz pop. Frontman Tommy Odell swaps ego and arrogance for modesty and a quiet swagger; this is a band with no need for idle chatter. With only one EP under their belt it seems the fans have already learnt-it-by-heart as they chant furiously in the face of the band. The room resonates with a raucous energy. When the opening chords of Laced ring out into the room, the crowd erupts into anarchy: beer flies across the room as a hundred sweaty heads start to slam their fists against the basement's ceiling.

Crowd favourites STRANGE COLLECTIVE fill the space out at the beginning on night number four. These guys are hard to pin down to one genre, but Britpop punk describes the majority of their set. OHMNS decide on an impromptu invasion/collaboration for the last song, which goes down a storm.

The room empties out after Strange Collective finish up, but sadly doesn't fill back up by the time TELEGRAM begin. The four-piece are a little more old school compared to the previous acts, dressed a little Gothic and more technical in their playing style.

A recent signing to the prestigious 4AD records, PIXX has been blowing people away with her own brand of alt pop. With ethereal backing tracks and a voice that haunts you in your sleep, it's hard to escape the hypnotic trance that the BRIT School graduate puts you under.

This isn't the sort of gig to jump around at and the audience exchange a lively commotion for respectful silence, basking in the full glory of her truly remarkable voice. Vocals are combined with a laid-back stage presence as the quirky Southerner taps at her drum machine with casual one-stick beats, her movement perfectly juxtaposes against the awkward tension of the music.

With the atmosphere in Arts Club's loft as electric as her sound, SHURA gives an energetic performance of singles White Light and 2shy that sweep you up on this closing night of the Breaking Out series. Her soft voice, honest lyrics and familiar synthesised beats that are reminiscent of a young Madonna but with a modern twist. It is clear that Shura is going to be a hot ticket in the next year, so catch her in these intimate venues while you can, but with performances on Later with Jools Holland and a US tour underway, that may be easier said than done.

Words: Portia Fahey, Matt Hogg, Kieran Donnachie, Christopher Carr.

Head to bidolito.co.uk to see a full photo gallery from this year's festival. liverpoolmusicweek.com

NEW MODEL ARMY

+ GUN + THE DUB PISTOLS + TV SMITH
SATURDAY 5TH DECEMBER DOORS 4.30PM / SHOW 5PM

THE DARKNESS

+ THESE RAVEN SKIES + THE RIVER 68'S
THURSDAY 10TH DECEMBER

NECK DEEP

+ STATE CHAMPS + CREEPER + LIGHT YEARS
THURSDAY 4TH FEBRUARY

BOWLING FOR SOUP

+ THE DOLLY ROTS + LACEY + MC LARS
FRIDAY 5TH FEBRUARY

NME AWARDS TOUR 2016

FT. BLOC PARTY
+ DRENGE + RAT BOY + BUGZY MALONE
SATURDAY 6TH FEBRUARY

HURTS

FRIDAY 12TH FEBRUARY

MARINA AND THE DIAMONDS

THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY

SOUL II SOUL

FT. JAZZIE B & CARON WHEELER
+ JAMES TAYLOR QUARTET + AFTERSHOW DJ SET
FROM NORMAN JAY MBE
SATURDAY 20TH FEBRUARY

SABATON / ALESTORM

SATURDAY 27TH FEBRUARY

AN EVENING WITH MACHINE HEAD

TUESDAY 8TH MARCH

WOLF ALICE

THURSDAY 10TH MARCH

CHRIS RAMSEY: ALL GROWN UP

FRIDAY 11TH MARCH

GRIMES

+ HANNA
SATURDAY 12TH MARCH

BOYCE AVENUE

SUNDAY 13TH MARCH

BEN HAENOW

FRIDAY 15TH APRIL

HOLLYWOOD UNDEAD

FRIDAY 22ND APRIL

IMPERICON FESTIVAL 2016

SATURDAY 2ND MAY

GIGANTIC INDIE ALL DAYER VOL 3

THE WONDER STUFF + THE HOUSE OF LOVE
+ THE DARLING BUDS + THE FRANK AND WALTERS
+ BMX BANDITS + CUD + S*M*A*S*H
+ THE TELESCOPES + MENSWE@R + BIVOUAC
+ JACK ADAPTOR (THE FAMILY CAT)
SATURDAY 28TH MAY

MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2

FORMERLY THE MDH

THE SELECTER

+ THE TUTS
FRIDAY 4TH DECEMBER

LISSIE

SATURDAY 5TH DECEMBER

SIKTH

+ HACTIVIST
SUNDAY 6TH DECEMBER

ONE OK ROCK

MONDAY 7TH DECEMBER

THE STORY SO FAR

WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER

CHAMELEONS VOX

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS... 2015
THE FAN AND THE BELLOWS & EARLY RECORDINGS
+ EVI VINE + FROM CARBON
FRIDAY 18TH DECEMBER £34

CHAMELEONS VOX

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS... 2015
P.S. GOODBYE - A MAD JACK JUKEBOX SELECTED BY
THE AUDIENCE + SPECIAL GUESTS OSKARS DRUM -
PATRICK FITZGERALD & YVES ALTANA (KITCHENS OF
DISTINCTION / CHAMELEONS VOX)
SATURDAY 19TH DECEMBER

NAHKO AND MEDICINE FOR THE PEOPLE

FRIDAY 22ND JANUARY

BAABA MAAL

SATURDAY 23RD JANUARY

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

SUNDAY 24TH JANUARY

MICHAEL SCHENKER

THURSDAY 28TH JANUARY

THE CADILLAC THREE

SUNDAY 31ST JANUARY

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

MONDAY 1ST FEBRUARY

THE FRONT BOTTOMS

THURSDAY 4TH FEBRUARY

TESSERACT

FRIDAY 5TH FEBRUARY

BASEMENT

WEDNESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY

THERAPY?

FRIDAY 4TH MARCH

THE RIFLES

SATURDAY 12TH MARCH

REEF

THURSDAY 17TH MARCH

KING KING

THURSDAY 12TH MAY

G-EAZY

MONDAY 23RD MAY

MANCHESTER ACADEMY 3

FORMERLY THE HOP & GRAPE

NOTHING MORE

MONDAY 7TH DECEMBER

MAXI JAZZ & THE E-TYPE BOYS

THURSDAY 8TH DECEMBER

THE RUTLES

WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER

ROXY MUSIQUE

FRIDAY 11TH DECEMBER

THE DEAD DAISIES

THURSDAY 10TH DECEMBER

BIG COUNTRY

SATURDAY 12TH DECEMBER

THE HIGH

+ MY IGLOO + STILL CITY SOUND + DJ TIN TIN
SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER

HOWIE DAY

TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER

KALIN & MYLES

FRIDAY 15TH JANUARY

RON POPE & THE NIGHTHAWKS

+ TREVOR HALL + TRUETT

SATURDAY 16TH JANUARY

CANCER BATS

SATURDAY 23RD JANUARY

PEARL JAM UK

FRIDAY 29TH JANUARY

RHINO'S REVENGE

WEDNESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY

SNUFF

THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY

LIMEHOUSE LIZZY

SATURDAY 27TH FEBRUARY

ROACHFORD

FRIDAY 18TH MARCH

SEX PISTOLS EXPERIENCE

SATURDAY 19TH MARCH

ROMEO'S DAUGHTER

SATURDAY 2ND APRIL

MATT & KIM

MONDAY 4TH APRIL

CLOUDBUSTING - THE MUSIC OF KATE BUSH

FRIDAY 22ND APRIL

THE SMITHS LTD

SATURDAY 23RD APRIL

CASH

SATURDAY 30TH APRIL

PINKED FLOYD

SUNDAY 4TH JUNE

CLUB ACADEMY

FORMERLY THE CELLAR

UK FOO FIGHTERS

SATURDAY 5TH DECEMBER

THE ZOMBIES

+ Josh Flowers & the Wild
WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER

THE LOX

THURSDAY 10TH DECEMBER

MANC FLOYD

SATURDAY 12TH DECEMBER

THE ARISTOCRATS

TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER

EVIL BLIZZARD'S BLIZZMAS BALL

SATURDAY 19TH DECEMBER

ALIEN ANT FARM

+ INME + THE DIRTY YOUTH
FRIDAY 15TH JANUARY

THERION

+ THE LUCIFERION LIGHT ORCHESTRA
+ IMPERIAL AGE
SATURDAY 16TH JANUARY

ESCAPE THE FATE

THURSDAY 28TH JANUARY

THE GHOST INSIDE

SYMPHONY X
SATURDAY 13TH FEBRUARY

SHUGGIE OTIS

FRIDAY 19TH FEBRUARY

BOY & BEAR

SUNDAY 21ST FEBRUARY

TRAGEDY: ALL METAL TRIBUTE TO THE BEE GEES AND BEYOND

SATURDAY 12TH MARCH

DAN REED NETWORK + TYKETTO

SUNDAY 13TH MARCH

TONY MORTIMER & HIS BAND

THURSDAY 17TH MARCH

LIFE OF AGONY

SATURDAY 19TH MARCH

ALIAS KID

FRIDAY 30TH APRIL

MANCHESTER ACADEMY PRESENTS

PETER HOOK & THE LIGHT

FRIDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER

o2 apollo

DEC/JAN IN BRIEF

Edited by Bethany Garrett

COURTNEY BARNETT

Warming up our cold winter nights with her Antipodean drawl and raucous shows is COURTNEY BARNETT, who returns to Liverpool with a date at the O2 Academy. Touring her hugely acclaimed album Sometimes I Sit And Think, And Sometimes I Just Sit, the garage singer-songwriter is known for her cunning way with words, which translates into observant, stream-of-consciousness lyrics akin to beat poets if they lived in Melbourne's suburbs. Head to [bidolito.co.uk](#) now to read Bethany Garrett's interview with Courtney Barnett, which looks ahead to this show.

02 Academy / 1st December



HOOTON TENNIS CLUB

Glorious lo-fi lovers and local lads HOOTON TENNIS CLUB have made their mark this year with their fine Pavement-style, clever and calculating indie rock, driven by melodies and storytelling lyrics. It's little wonder then that their scratchy-yet-superb debut album Highest Point In Cliff Town has been met with rave reviews. Expect live tricks aplenty from the four-piece in this year-ending blow-out, which also has beachy garage rockers TRUDY and youthful, surfy 60s-inspired trio THE ORIELLES in on the fun.

The Kazimier / 8th December



MANIFOLD: DANCE PLATFORM

TILT dance studio are bidding their own fond farewells to The Kazimier with a two-day event in collaboration with a whole host of local makers and shakers. Varying forms of contemporary dance are at the heart of their MANIFOLD event, which offers an exciting look at an entirely physical way of communication. Film, live visuals and theatrical food and drink (courtesy of Feasts Of Fantasia) will punctuate these performances, and the whole event will feature an improvised soundtrack from SCHISMATIC ENSEMBLE.

The Kazimier / 1st-2nd December



LINDI ORTEGA

With a dash of Johnny Cash here and a pinch of Frida Kahlo there, the lonesome clarity of LINDI ORTEGA's voice calls to mind Emmylou Harris and Dolly Parton, underpinned by an irresistibly smoky sophistication. The Canadian musician with Irish-Mexican heritage is one of alt. country's brightest lights, a genre she describes as "a roadside motel love affair between old-school outlaws and country darlings". Ortega's 2015 album Faded Gloryville – her fourth – continues this laconic journey through Americana hearts and heartlands; if you like your music with Muscle Shoals soul, mark this in your diary.

Arts Club / 29th January



MUMU'S 8TH BIRTHDAY W/ MATHIAS KADEN

For their eight-year anniversary mUmU are pulling out all the stops, staging a 12-hour day/night show full of the kind of energetic techno and dance that has put them firmly on Liverpool's clubbing map. German whizz MATHIAS KADEN (pictured) heads up the show alongside Londoner and FUSE resident ENZO SIRAGUSA. Kaden's 2015 album Energetic saw the globe-trotting DJ getting back in touch with his funk roots, which should make for dancefloor fireworks when combined with Siragusa's insanely popular "fusic" house strand.

New Bird Street Garage / 30th January



CONEY'S LOFT

Collage artist Low Coney, whose work has been featured on Design Week and is featured in this here issue (see page 18), has launched a new culture website which will showcase the work of other artists, musicians and writers. CONEY'S LOFT will host session videos with local artists, a culture publication and a shop selling premium vintage clothing. Plus, as a special treat for the site's launch, Coney's Loft will be premiering Nick Power's new book *Holy Nowhere*. New work from Austin Collings and the comic format of Matt Barton's infamous blog *What Would Matt Barton Do?* will also be featured. [coneysloft.com](#)



ON THE DOC'N ROLL

Picturehouse at FACT celebrates the art form of the music documentary with DOC'N ROLL FILM FESTIVAL, a series of five film premieres and accompanying Q&A sessions. Invisible England, starring everyone's favourite foul mouths Sleaford Mods, is *Bido Lito!*'s highlight: filmed on tour around the UK in the run-up to the General Election, it's "part band doc, part look at the state of the nation." Also on the bill for the weekend-long event is Jingle Bell Rocks, an exploration of the alternative Christmas song, starring Wayne Coyne and Run DMC's Joseph Simmons.

FACT / 11th-13th December



FRESH GARBAGE: 2015 IN REVIEW

Following on from the wonderful Sound Of Music podcast, Bernie Connor has transferred his sonic explorations to Buyers Club where he broadcasts FRESH GARBAGE live every Sunday via Ustream. A mixture of chat and musical treasures, the show takes place in the venue's bar while punters enjoy their leisurely Sunday beverages. For the Christmas Special, Bernie will be joined by *Bido Lito!* Editor Christopher Torpey, who will be sharing his favourite music from the last 12 months. Will you agree? Come along and contribute your own opinion.

Buyers Club / 13th December



NORTH LIVERPOOL LAUNCHPAD

A new £300k fund – LAUNCHPAD – has just been... well, launched, to seek ideas from artists, creatives, businesses and individuals to inspire change and grow enterprise in North Liverpool. The scheme, driven by The Beautiful Ideas Co. (a community interest company born out of a council-led regeneration project targeting North Liverpool), is looking to fund between 10 and 15 projects in the north of the city that use innovative ways to tackle some of the biggest opportunities facing the area. Themes such as “spaces for change”, “real-life social networks” and “down at the docks” are being targeted, and if you’re interested you have until 11th January 2016 to submit a proposal. thebeautifulideas.co



ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS SKA

North-Western ska 12-piece BAKED A LA SKA have released their antidote to the John Lewis adverts, X Factor singles and Strictly Come Dancing Finals with what is surely the region’s only ska Christmas record. *Ska Of Wonder* features 12 tracks of festive cheer that will have you skanking around the Christmas tree. Dub takes on *Walking In The Air*, *Winter Wonderland* and *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town* are all given the Baked A La Ska treatment, and the madcap funsters will also be playing a special gig at the O2 Academy in support of the album on 22nd December. Turn your Christmas traditions upside down and get skanking. bakedalaska.biz



WINTER ARTS MARKET

Open Culture’s WINTER ARTS MARKET in the lush expanse of St George’s Hall is a bona fide highlight of the festive calendar, our very own crafty wonderland. The market provides an excellent opportunity to get one-off Christmas gifts from the region’s top makers and the promise of great crafts, delicious food and drink, activities for the kids and a vintage fair make it a truly multisensory festive arts bonanza. Mellowtone will once again be programming a sonic accompaniment, with appearances from Liverpool Chamber Choir, Nick Ellis and Paul Dunbar on the cards.

St George’s Hall / 5th-6th December



THE GO-GO CAGE

If you need some stompin’ garage soul to warm up your winter blues then look no further than The Go-Go Cage’s December offering, which invites you to “unleash the mistletoe and delve into Santa’s sack of treats”. How could we refuse? There’s wild party action from London’s OH! GUNQUIT, whose B-52’s-meets-The Cramps fizz is fronted by the hula-hooping and trumpet-playing Tina Swasey. Local garage fuzz punks THE SHOOK-UPS complete the live line-up, with the usual slew of punk, surf and wild rock ‘n’ roll ready to be dished up by the Cage’s DJs.

The Magnet / 12th December



SOUND STATION SENSATION

After an ace all-day festival of live music at Moorfields Station, which showcased ten of Merseyside’s most talented emerging artists spanning a range of genres, as well as some electrifying live performances on Merseyrail trains, KATY ALEX waltzed away as winner of the MERSEYRAIL SOUND STATION PRIZE 2015. Along with the prestigious title, Katy Alex will receive a year of professional music industry management and mentoring, recording time and free Merseyrail travel. After wowing the judges with an stunning live performance, the next 12 months are set to be an exciting and productive time for the young artist. merseyralsoundstation.com



BIG MAMA’S CIRCUS

Indie jazz funksters MAMA ROUX are inviting Liverpool gig-goers to roll up, roll up and enjoy the delights of Big Mama’s Circus. The Zanzibar shindig has been curated by the band as an alternative to the regular tinsel-and-baubles festive fare, and they’re inviting all attendees to dress in circus attire. Joining Mama Roux on the bill are blues combo THE WOOD, INDIGO MOON and THE REVERBS, the new outfit of former La Cami. And we’re not ruling out juggling, trapeze artists and a lion-tamer being thrown in for good measure.

The Zanzibar / 12th December



TOP JOE’S FESTIVE GIG

Bemused Welshman TOP JOE is hosting a special festive edition of his Regular Gig at The Well. For Yule, the high-vis sporting Buddhism enthusiast welcomes guests A LOVELY WAR, TERRY ARLARSE, A MAN WITH A PORPOISE and more for a mix of music, comedy and contemplation, with all proceeds going to Claire House Children’s Hospice. Previous gigs have seen Top Joe attempt card tricks, hold live interviews with guests and keep a hamster circus from going awry. Expect similar at this special end-of-year bash.

The Well Space / 12th December





Foals (Aaron McManus / ampix.co.uk)

FOALS

Real Lies

Liverpool Olympia

I hold in my hand the hottest ticket of 2015. The final chance to see one of Britain's most enthralling bands in a setting as evocative as the Olympia, before they're lost to the arenas and enorodomos. As you'd expect at a show that sold out in 30 minutes, there's an audible excitement amongst the early gathering masses.

A fair amount of that electricity dissipates as support band REAL LIES deliver an anaemic take on electronic rock, plodding where it's supposed to shimmer. There's none of the tension or emotion of, say, New Order, which is clearly a disappointment to these North Londoners. Singer Kev Kharas is shooting for Bernard Sumner, or even Mike Skinner – but only hitting Neil Tennant.

FOALS re-ignite the atmosphere with the metallic bounce of opener *Snake Oil*, powered by the kind of towering riff Tom Morello wishes he was still writing. Initially described as a little bit angular, and insular, Foals are a more muscular proposition four albums in, and not just because tonight four of them have their

guns out. Where there was once a sludge to their heaviness, now there's a focused power, such as the gut-punch riffs that propel *Providence*, before giving way to drummer Jack Bevan's whiplash breakbeat.

Every note exudes the confidence of a band exactly where they want to be, who have their audience exactly where they want them. Their playful treatment of hit single *My Number* – allowing bassist Walter Gervers to take centre stage by turning up the funk – and the stadium-sized singalong that greets *Mountain At My Gates* suggests the Glastonbury headline rumours do not flatter them.

There's no need for singer Yannis Philippakis to indulge in onstage 'banter', aside from occasionally exhaling a "fuck yes, Liverpool" with the kind of satisfied grin that normally accompanies a post-coital cigarette. The closest he gets is a withering riposte to fading rent-a-quote "Noelly G", to raucous cheers, when in the midst of a moment so visceral it's hard to care about 12 seconds from now, let alone 12 years. The irony is that Foals have plenty of songs for the ages. *Spanish Sahara* will always inspire hordes of young men to recite poetry deep into each other's eyes, whilst *Inhaler* will always send arms and voices aloft, and teenagers barreling into each other.

As the audience struggles to come to, it's a shock to see the band coming off after 10 songs, but there's no panic. Just like a Charlautans show isn't over until they've played Sproston Green, you can't walk away from Foals until after *Two Steps, Twice*. Tonight it forms part of an incredible triple-peak encore with breakthrough single *Hummer* and the incendiary *What Went Down*. A superb way to open an album, *WWD* is also well equipped to bring a show to its climax: the Hitchcockian levels of suspense, Yannis' muttered rage slowly overtaken by Bevan's insistent thudding before the ejaculation of primal fury. Yet the climaxes keep coming. *Two Steps, Twice* relieves the room of all remaining energy, as Yannis ravenously eyes up the first-floor balcony above the bar. Most of us know what is coming – social media is awash with evidence of his lemming-like tendencies – but knowing makes it no less thrilling. The Olympia is a fittingly theatrical backdrop as he emerges like Caesar, before ushering his flock close and flinging himself into them from fully 12 feet above. They may still be very much of their people, but expect Foals to be flying in the opposite direction in the years to come.

Maurice Stewart /
theviewfromthebooth.tumblr.com

STEALING SHEEP

IMMIX Ensemble – Fearghus Ó Conchúir – Germanager

Liverpool Irish Festival and Liverpool Music Week @ The Bluecoat

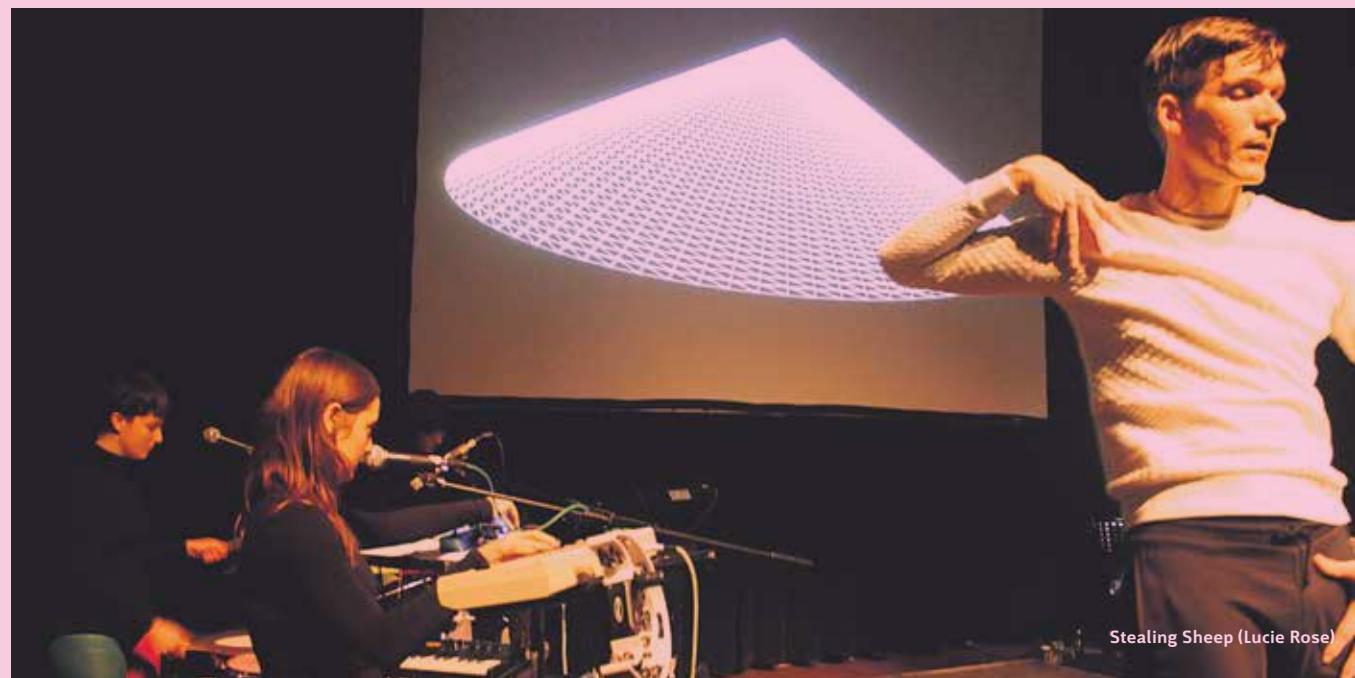
The lights dimmed in The Bluecoat's black and boxy performance room, a screen showing outlines of two teardrops rotating and spinning, always returning to face each other, becomes the focal point. The image of the two vortexing shapes moving apart then coming together seems apt for the night of collaborative endeavour that lies ahead between experimental synth pop trio STEALING SHEEP, classical instrumentalists with a keen ear for collaboration, IMMIX ENSEMBLE, and contemporary Irish dancer FEARGHUS Ó CONCHÚIR. Beneath the screen, the stage that provides the platform for Ó Conchúir is set up in the shape of a letter T, the long point jutting back towards the revolving image behind. Tucked away on the left-hand side of the stage stand Stealing Sheep's keyboards, synths and drums, while on the right sit the chairs and music stands that will soon cater to the members of IMMIX Ensemble.

Ahead of hearing and seeing the fruits of

this collective labour, GERMANAGER opens the show, sitting at a table in the centre of the T's shorter axis. One man and an array of musical accessories, he manages to hold the attention of the already full performance space. Using an iPad to play his music with the intermittent aid of a drum pad, electric guitar and violin, Germanager exudes intelligence, dexterity, warmth and humour despite using a set-up that could very easily be alienating. Juvenile, for which he brings out his violin, is the most intricate track of the set, and showcases the strength of his vocal, as well as the ingenuity of his intriguing and well-executed idea. It's an ideal warm-up to a night further imbued with innovation.

From the layout of the stage, it is evident that Ó Conchúir is the visual focal point of the performance, his athletic body exposed and accentuated between the two sets of musicians. The contemporary dancer from the Ring Gaeltacht was meant to be joined by Aoife McAtamney, a dance artist and choreographer, but she was unable to perform, and so he alone occupies the chasm between the classical musicians and dreamy poppers.

Stealing Sheep muster a sci-fi-like sound, infused with surges of folk courtesy of recurrent lap steel guitar. It's strange and romantic, futuristic and nostalgic all at once, and is met musically by the mournful sound of the cellist



Stealing Sheep (Lucie Rose)

and clarinet playing across the way. Ó Conchúir's lithe body contorts in perfect unison with the music; his leaps are acrobatic and his figure pulses in time with the ceremonial drumming and sombre oboe that underpin the set.

Summoning a prog pop sound, complemented by the orchestration of IMMIX, Stealing Sheep adapt Evolve & Expand from their latest album Not Real, filling the usually-stripped back track with droning sounds. It is this song that seems

to have the greatest effect on Ó Conchúir, who cowers in contorted despair, before stirring, ballet-like, in elation. This elation, however, seems minuscule in comparison to the joy that creeps across the reassured faces of all involved parties once the set is finished. The beaming smiles are well justified, the performance illustrates a true triumph in collaboration; not one element overpowered another, and each was equally integral to the whole. A compelling

case in point for song, dance and vision.

Bethany Garrett @_bethanygarrett

DONOVAN

Philharmonic Hall

It's dark in the Phil, and after 15 minutes' stage-crossing by shadowy figures the audience stop

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craning their necks at every roadie and usher to approach the microphone, giving the last of them the element of surprise. From Haydn to Malick, *fiat lux* has been depicted with orchestral tuttis and effervescent electronics – suddenly drenched in blue, DONOVAN does it with a harmonica. And it's good.

He sits in a lotus position, channelling an ersatz yogi with a guitar (the harmonica doesn't feature beyond opener *The Sun Is A Very Magic Fellow*). Stripped of bongos and sitars, his folk roots emerge in hippier numbers like *Jennifer Juniper* and *Sunshine Superman* as much as in ballad *The Alamo* and genuinely traditional material. *The Trees They Do Grow High*, a British folk song, stands out.

Donovan is clearly prolific, and shines brightest during album cuts and unrecorded songs. Of the latter, *The Promise* is marked out with nimble guitar-playing. Sadly, his voice doesn't share his fingers' longevity. He strains during *Sadness*, four songs in, and a disappointing trend is established.

This is a 50th anniversary tour, with patter collected on the way. Tame anecdotes about the Beatles, drug busts, and constant references to a "Gypsy Dave" – not a member of the travelling community, I suspect – sound so over-rehearsed they could be a voiceover, recited in a Woganesque non-accent from nowhere. It gets worse. A paean to 1969's skywards gaze

descends into a song about the bathroom habits of astronauts. Truly, it's hard to describe the awkward horror of remaining seated while all around aging hippies give a standing ovation to a scatological meditation called *The Intergalactic Laxative*.

Equally bizarre is the decision to mime along to *Mellow Yellow*. This is a song that'd be best sung cross-legged on a cushion, if only to put a guitar in Donovan's hands. It'd stop him "lighting" and handing round that invisible joint to those who are literally dancing in the aisles (I didn't realise this actually happened), and the less said about where he waggles his microphone, the better.

Let's be perfectly clear: this is not a hatchet job on a terrible gig. It's not even a bad gig. Bands have done far worse trying to revitalise their material over the decades, whereas Donovan clearly isn't tempted to fiddle with tried and tested interpretations. Besides, there are perhaps five people not having the time of their life. Some of these fans have seen Donovan 10 times in as many years – they know what they're getting. On a night that relies heavily on nostalgia, that adage about the 60s comes to mind: if you can remember it, you weren't there (man). That's no guarantee you missed much, but Donovan has enough aides-memoire in song form to be an authentic relic of a colourful decade – mostly yellow, it seems.

Stuart Miles O'Hara / @ohasm1



The Souljazz Orchestra (Glyn Akroyd)

THE SOULJAZZ ORCHESTRA Mama Roux

Bam!Bam!Bam! @ The Kazimier

Due to unforeseen transport hopelessness I arrive in time only to catch the last couple of numbers from support act MAMA ROUX. They take their name from a Dr John song, the singer is called Robert Johnson and he's a dead ringer for The Band's Robbie Robertson – and, if you like all of them, then there's a great chance you'll like Mama Roux's blend of southern rock, blues and funky New Orleans swamp. The combination of Johnson's guitar and Stephen Powell's saxophone allows for a jazzier feel than would otherwise be the case with a straightforward guitar combo, and Powell is given free rein, working sinuous solos and honking riffs into *The Voodoo's Got You* and a light, hooky motif which anchors Johnson's fluid guitar as their final number draws sustained applause from a growing crowd.

Hailing from Ottawa this is THE SOULJAZZ ORCHESTRA's first appearance in Liverpool and let's hope, pray, or sacrifice Tories to ensure that it's not their last. With albums entitled *Freedom No Go Die*, *Solidarity* and 2015's *Resistance* under their belt, they wear their heart on their sleeve, and from the first Latin rhythms of *Greet The Dawn* with its opening line "There's a better way of life for the workers and their poor", Souljazz Orchestra declare their musical and political intentions.

Several of the bands I've seen here recently seem to be vying to see who can get the crowd dancing quickest and this is right up there; literally about five bars in and the crowd are moving, looking at each other in confirmational delight as they realise that this looks like an absolute banger. "We got two rules," declares baritone sax player Ray Murray. "Rule one, you gotta dance. Rule two, if you can't dance we don't give a fuck, you gotta dance anyway."

Actually, with rhythms like this you don't need rules – who can resist? Not this crowd.

Not quite as stripped down as ESG last month, but cut from that same 'less is more' cloth, here are another band who conjure seemingly endless and interesting patterns from a relatively basic source. Drums, percussion, horns, and keyboards complete the line-up. Although their recorded material utilises guitar and bass, those traditional funk accoutrements are eschewed tonight. However, when you have a keyboard player like Pierre Chretien then maybe anything more would be clutter. The keys sound at times like vibes, like wah-wah guitar, like a Hammond, like electric piano, and are played with a virtuoso flamboyance and dedication to the groove. Drummer Philippe Lafrenier seems to throw his shoulders into each beat and, whether it's funk, jazz, Afrobeat or Latin – and all of those elements are in the mix – he absolutely nails it.

A horn section of three saxophones is also somewhat unusual but the mix of alto (Zakari Frantz), tenor (Steve Patterson) and baritone (Murray) provides a rich, heady brew. When all three are riffing together they punch holes in the ozone layer, and when one of them takes off on a jazzy solo voyage his comrades are there to keep things grounded. Marielle Rivard completes the line-up on vocals and everyone chips in on a plethora of percussion instruments and additional vocal, whether Bus Stop-style chant-a-longs or the 70s social commentary of *People People*. "We just ousted a right-wing asshole," yells Chretien, referencing the Canadian presidential election results announced earlier. There is some applause for this but generally I get the impression that this audience is here to party not to protest. Souljazz Orchestra indulge them in spades.

After a particularly groove-laden *Life Is What You Make It*, from the new album, Murray asks "are you ready to get funky?" Err, what, you can get even funkier? With a squirt

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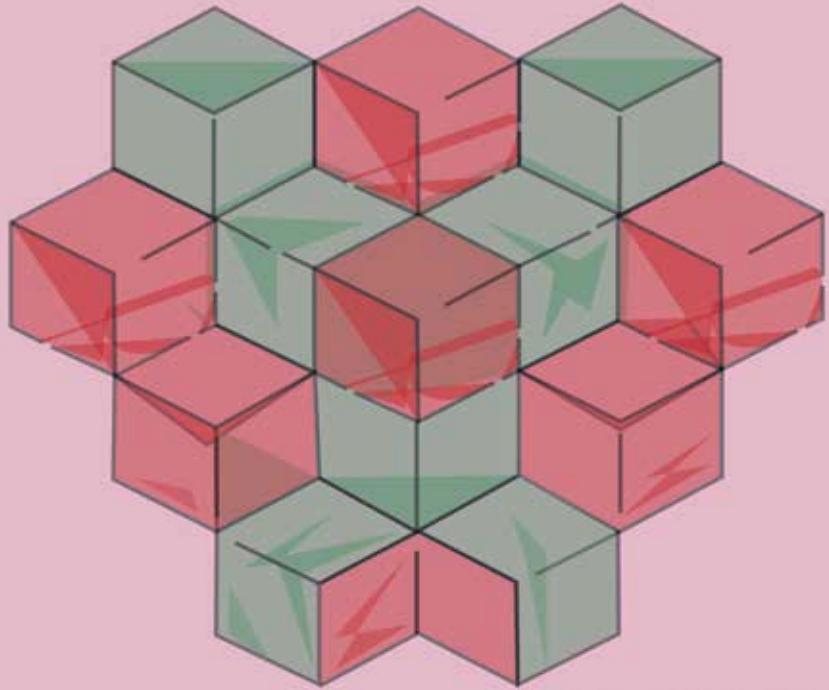
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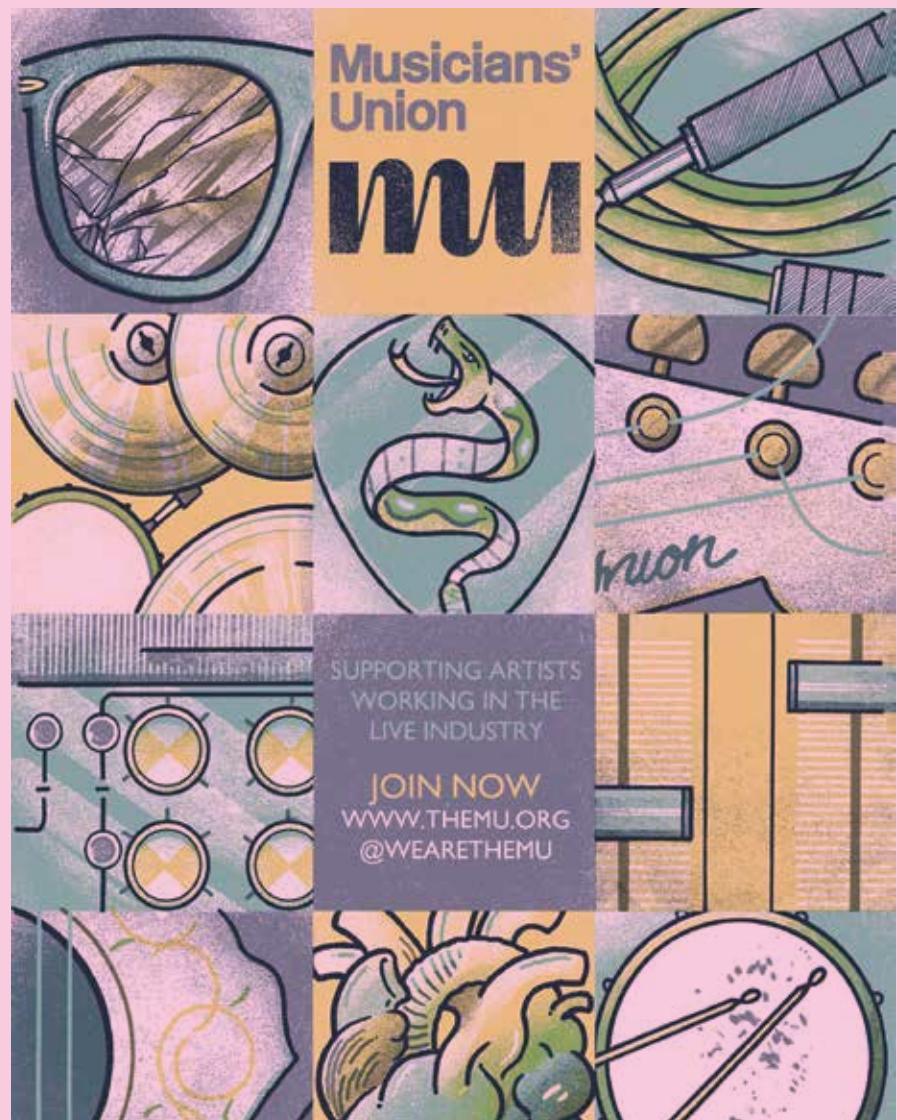
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THE KAZIMIER LIVES ON.....



Dustin Wong (Glyn Akroyd)

of slinky keyboard, a blast of the horns and a shimmering percussion they proceed to set fire to the dancefloor, the horn section adding visual rhythm with some tasty choreographed dance moves. Another irresistible rhythm worms its way under the skin – funky, funkier, most funky!

Glyn Akroyd

DUSTIN WONG *Yearning Kru*

Deep Hedonia @ The Everyman Bistro

The Everyman Bistro is around half full with a largely expectant audience. It is all very civilised: some people sit on chairs around long tables, some sit on the floor in front of the performance area. The whole ambience is mellower than a traditional gig venue, the lighting is slightly brighter and there isn't a stage or raised platform.

YEARNING KRU starts off the evening. Sat behind his table of gadgets he creates strange, alien, fractured and warping electronica. The back projections match the sounds perfectly: abstract and sometimes surreal images bleed and melt in and out of focus, all the while ambient soundscapes pitch and turn around us. It is dark and otherworldly; sometimes odd electronic bird calls are punctuated by clanking metallic sounds skittering into misshapen voices. It is an eerie and dissonant scramble of atmospherics, rising and falling choral samples caught in rotating and cascading machinery. It is a challenging listen due to a lack of any structure or narrative, yet it holds some fascination for its abundant artistry and sweep of imagination. It reminds me of Wendy Carlos's *Timesteps* from her soundtrack for *A Clockwork Orange*. Yearning Kru has managed to craft dark and unsettling ambience that demands some work from the listener, and it is worth spending the time to decipher his fearful code.

Next up is headliner DUSTIN WONG. He sits with a guitar on his knee and a row of loop and effects pedals on the floor before him. After a quiet hello and thanks to Yearning Kru for

"giving us a trip" he begins. He opens with the reverb-drenched beats of *Pink Diamond*, using an array of loop and effects pedals to create a sonic collage before us. Constructing the tunes layer-by-layer, he generates an ambient odyssey of sounds, manipulating and warping them, forming a sonic whole.

Wong is a hugely accomplished guitarist with an instinctive understanding of how to build a track of effects-laden guitar loops without it falling into formless and cacophonous disarray. He strums and picks notes that coil and spin out as new loops form, joining their companions on a circling journey, loop upon loop, all with technical and intricate artistry. This is meditative. It sounds organic, naturalistic and matured.

Wong uses touch and playfulness to create space and ambience, building sweeping melodies as we fly through *Cityscape Floated* and *Out Of The Crown Head*, so redolent of Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells*. It is mesmerising. During *Speeding Feathers Staring* Wong loops his vocals and harmonises with himself using his voice as an instrument to layer over the ping-ponging harmonics, adding a shimmering melodic bed and capturing the sound of the audience clapping and whooping, knitting it into the mix, involving them in a most intimate way. It is wonderful and captivating.

The sounds he creates seem to exist outside of his instrument. Sometimes his guitar is used like a percussion vessel, sometimes an Arp synthesiser or a hang drum.

This is an unforgettable performance of immense emotion and beauty, and the audience demand and get an encore.

Mike Stanton / @DepartmentEss

MURLO

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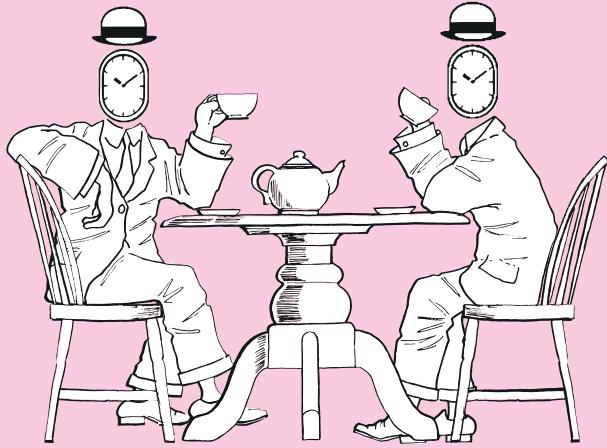
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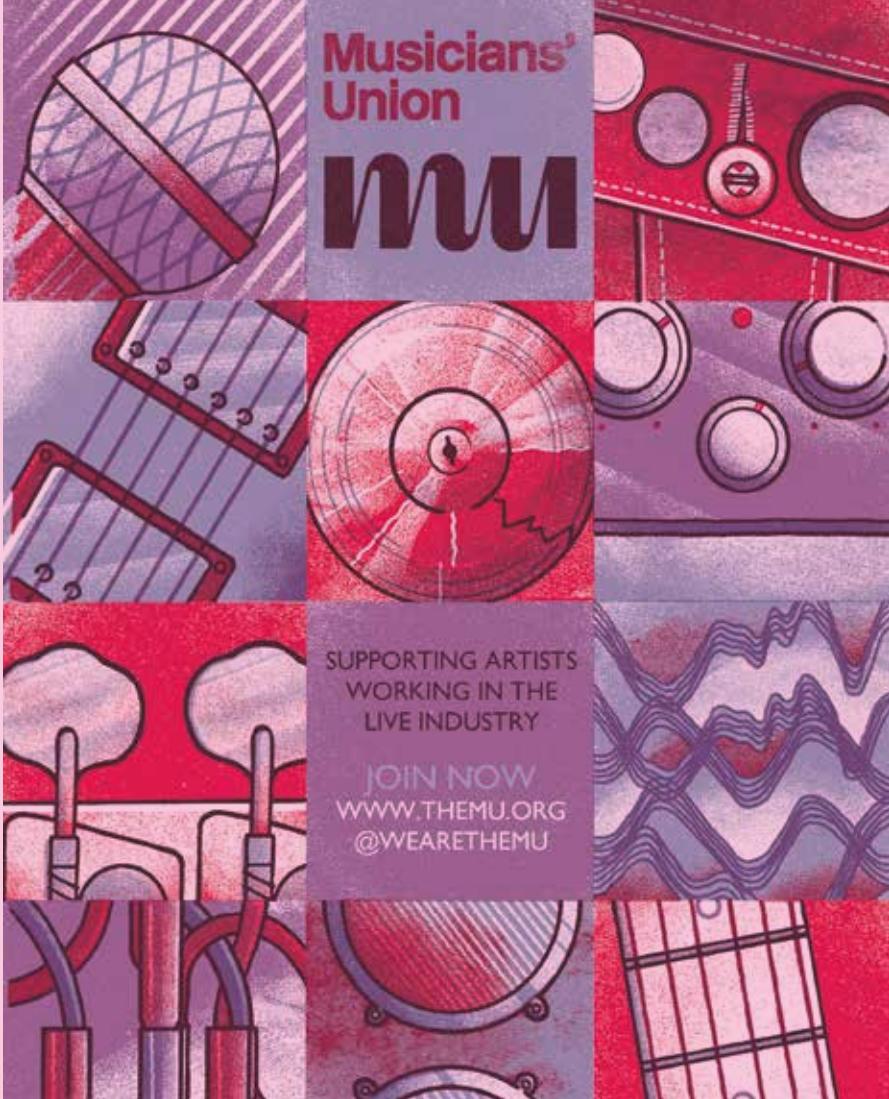
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city's prolific promoters of electronica and house music events, as well as everything in between, have come together to present this grand mesh of styles. In 24 Kitchen Street, it's about to kick off.

The tragedy of being the first to grace the stage at any event is that you're the welcome music to people's entrance to the venue. You become the background music to their first round of drinks; it can be hard to break through and grab their attention while the night is so young and they're waiting for the place to fill up. Unfortunately for ELECTRONIK, who takes on the challenge of being the first to take to the stage, this is his battle. His mix includes a heavy Caribbean and Latin American influence; the rhythms are quite often either centred around a skank, grimy reggae groove or a Latin American triplet feel. It certainly gets heads nodding. It doesn't matter whether there's a crowd here or not. The evening's first dancers fearlessly parade themselves under his guidance. The real crowd may be yet to properly form, but this set has at least caused a ripple in these otherwise calm waters.

One lengthy and calamitous changeover later, up steps THOM WHITE. It's a dramatic stylistic shift that is immediately noticeable. The crowd, now that there's enough gathered heads to be legitimately referred to as such, turn towards the stage and are drawn deeply into the atmosphere of the mix. It's a set that clearly leans toward the monuments of acid house or Selected Ambient Works 85-92-era Aphex Twin, with a little 1990s house thrown in for good measure. A very weighty, very dark, very deep mix, as stimulating for the ears as it is for these people's feet.

And finally, here's MURLO. At this point the place is full of people and they're all on their feet. It's a fitting welcome for the producer; he's one of the UK's most exciting new talents. With his new EP, *Odyssey*, he's here to turn this little crowded room into quite the sonic landscape.

There's grime, bassline and RnB in the mix, giving an instant bounce that propels the set. Murlo also showcases some pieces from his new release, such as *Into Mist* and *Roman Baths*. His own music carries with it a very geometric feel; there are certain progressive complexities that make it hard to imagine them fitting in to a set like this. But as the styles change to something reminiscent of a louder and more up-tempo Boards Of Canada, the transition is barely noticeable. This is a truly diverse mix which lends from both of the support acts. Just as dark, ambient cuts are faded into heavier hip hop and hyphy-sounding grooves, this is a truly rewarding, rich set. Everyone moves, and continues to do so until the very last beat has dropped. This is Murlo's crowd.

Christopher Carr

MR SCRUFF

The Kazimier

As we draw ever closer to its closure, The Kazimier seems, ironically, to be more alive than it's ever been. Its swan song is a chorus that sounds titanic.

The one and only MR SCRUFF, who has apparently been in line to play at the venue for a while but has not yet been able to do so due to scheduling conflicts. Tonight, though, he's here and so are we. 'We', being about 500 or more excited individuals, who bustle about the large room chatting and laughing with one another. The atmosphere is warm and the anticipation is unbelievably high. This show sold out pretty quickly when the tickets were released and the run-up to the day of the show has felt similar to that of the run-up to Christmas.

The wheels of steel receive a slow-burning warm-up session from the Madnice Marauders



Mr Scruff (Aaron McManus / ampix.co.uk)

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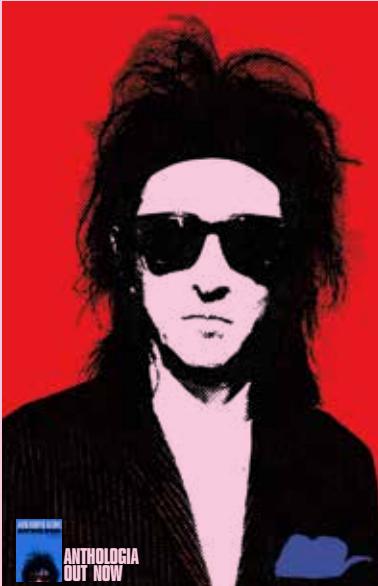
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Bassekou Kouyate (Glyn Akroyd)

DJs, who dip into their jazz and soul archives to set the scene. As the changeover occurs and Mr Scruff starts to ready himself, preparing his gear and sifting through the records, the crowd gather around the stage. Expectations are high.

The first beat drops and we're immediately transported. Scruff's first port of call is to delve into different styles of world music, covering Latin America, Africa and beyond. This is only the beginning of a monstrous five-hour mix and already Mr Scruff is delivering stylistically diverse cuts that are in tune and on time. Tonight is an all-vinyl celebration of turntablism in all its glory.

The rest of the mix showcases hip hop, gospel, soul, disco, funk and much more. The crowd dance furiously and even Mr Scruff shows us some of his own moves. He's visibly thrilled; all smiles and nodding to the beat. This is nothing but a party.

Throughout the set there is the occasional emergence of one of Scruff's own pieces. The reaction to the massive *Music Takes Me Up* has every hand in the air and every voice singing. The visuals on the screen at the back of the stage show dancing cartoons of Scruff's creatures playing instruments as well as boomboxes, bass monitors and messages including "big up Liverpool massive". That last one always generates a scream from the crowd.

This is one of the most energetic, diverse and powerful DJ mixes anyone is ever likely to witness. It's a one-night-only pairing of a perfect set played in a perfect setting. It may be a little late on in The Kazimier's lifespan, but it will surely become a big part of its history.

Christopher Carr

BASSEKOU KOUYATE
The Music Room

It's a rare treat for any musician to play for an entirely rapt audience, but tonight Malian virtuoso BASSEKOU KOUYATE is granted such standing (well, sitting). A rare, but awkward

treat, as I try to find a seat mid-song without disturbing a beautifully emotive, finger-plucked refrain with harp-like flourishes, delicately dancing over a bed of shuffling percussion. Ngoni Ba (Big Ngoni) is the band's given name, but the family Kouyate would be equally accurate, as Bassekou is flanked by his brother, son, nephew and wife, Amy Sacko. The tempo rises as brother Andra's percussion comes to the fore, extracting an impressive array of skittering beats from just a hi-hat and a canneva - a drum not dissimilar to an upturned salad bowl. African blues has echoes of its American counterpart in structure, but is a lot less sparse in arrangement, as all members - aside from the steady bass of son Mamadou - are allowed room to flourish.

Kouyate's image as the Jimi Hendrix of the ngori is well justified, and one could also say well cultivated, particularly when throwing his head back in abandon while maintaining complete mastery over his instrument, and his audience. Every complex lick teased out - either drenched in wah-wah or in piercing clean tones - is greeted with whoops from the crowd; this is what they came to hear. He's at pains to explain the ngori is not a guitar, and with good reason. It may be made of wood and strings, but the body has a drum-like texture, adding depth and context to every riff. Bassekou has elements of Hendrix's laconic cool - a charismatic speaker despite a paucity of English. However, Kouyate is more comfortable letting his ngori do the talking, wailing harder than any guitar virtuoso you could care to mention. The song that bears its name descends into full-on wig-out territory, as this time the band maintains an impeccable tightness while Kouyate flies to the sky.

Despite his struggles to hurdle the language barrier, it's clear tonight that the universal language of music needs no translation. Sacko's powerful voice effortlessly crosses the language barrier, translating emotions of sorrow and joy like an opera singer. Amid the many impressive talents on display, it's Bassekou's nephew who steals the show,

warming the crowd with his infectious electricity, inspiring people to throw off their shackles by throwing back their chairs to dance. His drum battle with Mamadou during the encore is pure theatre, toying with his less proficient cousin as they tease us into a frenzy with the kind of call and response patterns the Kouyate family have used to entertain the world for centuries.

Maurice Stewart /
theviewfromthebooth.tumblr.com

RIDE

O2 Academy

While the majority of their 90s shoegazing contemporaries have reunited to widespread acclaim, there was always the lurking sense that RIDE would never quite return to the stage again. Arguably the most popular band to emerge from the scene, it was no surprise then that Ride's reformation in late 2014 was met with fervent anticipation and a spectrum of expectation. Tonight, the walls of the O2 Academy await Ride's sonic presence.

Acting as your own support band is always a bold move, but if anything tonight it highlights the sheer quality and expanse of Ride's much-respected back catalogue. The soaring,



Ride (Keith Ainsworth / arkimages.co.uk)

sidewinding bass pulsations of Leave Them All Behind get Ride's set off to an exhilarating start, with howling, distorted guitars swirling throughout the room. The effervescent, floating riffs of Like A Daydream and Chrome Waves continue to delight the vast crowd of original shoegazers, sounding possibly even better than they did in their prime. Laurence Colbert (Drums) stands out in particular, with his perpetual, octopus-like percussion masterclass giving a solid backbone and fluidity to tonight's first offering of songs – largely cherry-picked from sophomore album Going Blank Again and earlier EP material. The unmistakeably bright, jangly Rickenbacker guitar tones of Twisterella enthuse the audience even further, while Mouse Trap finalises the first set of the night.

Coincidentally falling exactly 25 years after its release in the UK, the second half of tonight's show consists of Ride's legendary debut album Nowhere performed in its full, undiluted glory. The rip-roaring guitar feedback of Seagull builds in swathes around looping basslines, leading into the equally as mind-altering Kaleidoscope. It's an honour to be able to witness such a legendary album being played in its entirety, with the band themselves seeming to enjoy the nostalgia trip. The shimmering, droning tremolo of Polar Bear erupts into a haze of white noise, washing into the colossal waves of guitar distortion from Dreams Burn Down. Andy Bell and Mark Gardener (Guitars,

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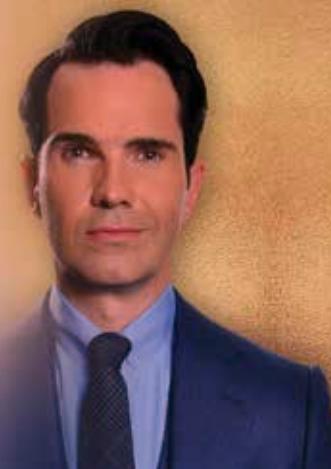
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Vocals) are both on stellar form tonight, with this second set showcasing them at their very best. The spiralling, clashing guitars of Vapour Trail encapsulate tonight's performance of Nowhere perfectly, with the band leaving the stage to loud crowd singalongs of the song's chorus.

With only a short encore to follow, the piercing, thumping sonic din of Drive Blind and Chelesa Girl draw the evening to a fitting end. The Oxford four-piece have performed like they've never been gone; taking tonight's adoring crowd for a ride away from the places they have known.

John Wise / @John_Wise

BILL RYDER-JONES *By The Sea - Jo Mary & Friends*

Harvest Sun @ District

There's a lotta precipitation in the air tonight but even more anticipation; though it's raining buckets, it seems every Tom, Dick and Harry have made their weary way to District to catch one of the Wirral's most prodigious sons. Towards the end of a UK tour celebrating the release of third solo album, the blaringly poetic and personal West Kirby County Primary, BILL RYDER-JONES is playing on hallowed home turf, so it's little wonder the show is sold-out.

There's something inherently languid and kinda bluesy about opening act JO MARY

& FRIENDS, who jam it out to early-goers in true slacker style. A little garage, a lotta nonchalance, the young outfit keep their heads down and play it fast and cool. With the vast venue quickly filling up, BY THE SEA perform to a full house, setting the precedent with their dreamy combination of jangly, glimmering riffs and wistful, gentle melodies. Playing a set full of hazy diamonds from 2014's celestial Endless Days, Crystal Sky, which Ryder-Jones co-produced, their post-punk-tinged tracks are rightfully well received.

Opening with a couple of strums from the mellifluous and melancholy A Bad Wind Blows In My Heart, Bill and his band Nantes break into the gloriously fuzzy Catherine And Huskisson to lift the mood of the subdued crowd. No-one in the home crowd needs telling what the track is an ode to, those misty morning-afters on the cobbled edge of town, and a shout-a-long arrives at the instant where a neighbour near Party is "fuckin' fumin'". It's a precious Scouse musical moment when the retort rings out loud and clear under District's cavernous rafters, and the man himself can't help but grin.

The set largely draws upon songs from emotive, effervescent latest release with appearances from 2013's A Bad Wind Blows In My Heart, in the shape of There's A World Between Us and He Took You In His Arms. These two earlier tracks dotted amongst the newbies highlight the flourishes of lyrical and instrumental brilliance that permeate his



Hot 8 Brass Band (Glyn Akroyd)

growing back catalogue. Mumbling into his mic between songs, Ryder-Jones also introduces a track that's "newer than the new album"; melodious and lilting, it's a good hint at what's to come from the Wirral polymath.

Wild Roses is dedicated to those affected by recent terror attacks in Beirut, Baghdad and Paris, and standing amidst gig-goers on a run-of-the-mill, soggy Saturday night, the tragedy of recent events hits home even further. With its heartrending chorus amplified by the quality of Ryder-Jones' live band, the song seems a fitting tribute.

Like the scraggly-haired singer, his band may look unassuming but their playing is sublime; their instrumentation honed to perfection and underpinned by understanding and familiarity. They leave temporarily part way through the set to allow Ryder-Jones to perform a couple of his quieter tracks solo. Put It Down Before You Break It is met with humorous hushes from a talkative audience before a special sing-along to the delicate, rasping number, almost louder than the singer himself.

The band rejoin him for the final half: latest single Two To Birkenhead is a highlight of a heavier kind, and towering closer Satellites follows suit, climaxing in cacophonous guitars. All in all, it's a warming gig, a little shambolic in parts but carried by the charm and wholly undeniable talent that lives up to expectations.

Bethany Garrett / @_bethanygarrett

of three of their members, who have died as a result of gang-related shootings since they were formed in 1996. Having endured this and the Hurricane Katrina disaster, they re-grouped and have released three albums since 2007: Rock With The Hot 8, The Life And Times Of The Hot 8 (2012) and Tombstone (2013).

A more positive part of the New Orleans tradition is for local bands to play the 'second line' (marching behind the main body of the parade) at street carnivals and it is this upbeat vibe that they bring to their live performances. Tonight's line-up features bass and snare drums, sousaphone, trumpets, trombones and saxophone. The sound, as you might imagine, is big and full, rooted in the dark, low growl of band leader Bennie Pete's sousaphone, the instrument coiled around him like a silver python, its giant bell reflecting the whirling, abstract shapes of the already dancing crowd.

The songs are propelled by Samuel 'Lil Sammy' Cyrus' crisp snare and Harry 'Swang Thang' Cook's thumping bass drum, and the rhythms are tight, whether swaggeringly upbeat or on a couple of the slower-tempo numbers such as their left-field cover of Marvin Gaye's Sexual Healing, which manages to maintain the smouldering ache of the original. They are well known for their cover versions and tonight's performance is littered with bravura performances of George Clinton's Atomic Dog, The Specials' Ghost Town (which they recorded as a post-Katrina awareness raiser) and a superb rendition of The Temptations' Just My Imagination, with which the crowd join in wholeheartedly and, it must be said, pretty damn well. They deserve their mention in dispatches from an appreciative Dr Rackle (Vocals/Trumpet).

The band are no less well-received when playing their originals, vocals veering from chanted funk repetitions, via sweet Southern soul, call and response gospel, to rapid-fire rapping. The peak on Dr Rackle's reversed flat cap is directing the sweat down his back in an almost continuous stream. All the while the

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HOT 8 BRASS BAND

Arts Club

The Loft in the Arts Club is as full as I've seen it for the visit of New Orleans based HOT 8 BRASS BAND, who mix traditional New Orleans marching band styles with jazz, funk, reggae and hip hop. Part of that New Orleans tradition is to play in funeral parades and they have had the misfortune to have played at the funerals

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Kelley Stoltz (Marty Saleh)

horns are blasting out riffs in a unified barrage of sound or taking it in turns to solo, jazzy trumpet and saxophone excursions adding dazzling bursts of light and shade to the mix. The crowd are smiling, singing and dancing and when the slinky groove of *Get Up* hits they follow instructions to the letter and get down lower and lower before another fine blast of horn blows them back to their feet, arms aloft, cheering.

They end their set with the skanky *Rastafunk* and a joyful version of Stevie Wonder's *Master Blaster (Jammin')*: but the crowd want more, and a fittingly triumphant version of Bob Marley's *Roots Rock Reggae* sends them scurrying to buy the albums and get the selfies with the band, who are all too happy to mingle.

Glyn Akroyd

KELLEY STOLTZ *The Cubical - Dirty Ghosts*

24 Kitchen Street

Since the release of his debut LP *The Past Is Faster* in 1999, KELLEY STOLTZ has been drawing attention with his boundary-pushing and at times baffling output. Stints as a fan-mail sorter for Jeff Buckley and as a producer for Thee Oh Sees have helped solidify his place on the fringes of contemporary popular music, and it is a place he seems to occupy with a great amount of comfort. Anyone present at tonight's show who witnessed his last Liverpool outing at the Shipping Forecast will be safe in the knowledge that we are in for a treat, but before that suspicion can be confirmed, San Franciscan compatriots DIRTY GHOSTS set the scene.

Currently in the midst of their first-ever European tour, they appear slightly unnerved as they emerge onto the small Kitchen Street stage. But any concerns about their readiness are quickly undone as they launch into an assured opening song. Their blend of new wave with a distinctly K Records brand of punk rock is a refreshing thing to witness in these humble climes.

THE CUBICAL, who are doubling as promoters of tonight's show (being huge fans of Kelley Stoltz), may seem like a slightly strange addition to tonight's bill. While the other two bands are clearly heavily indebted to the New York and Seattle scenes of the late 80s and early 90s, The Cubical seem to have been lifted straight out of the Bohemian London of the 1970s. There's a Beefheartian punch to their sound, which is more of a diversion from tonight's theme rather than a continuation.

Looking charmingly dishevelled, Kelley Stoltz takes to the stage backed by three of the four members from the opening act plus two others. This Californian cross-pollination proves to be a worthwhile endeavour and the result is an organic and satisfactorily loose display. Ostensibly still touring on the back of 2013's *Double Exposure* LP, Stoltz's set is a mixture of both new and old. The title track from that release is a definite highlight, and the psych folk strains of *Are You My Love* also appear to be a crowd favourite. Never one to let a soapbox pass un-straddled, Stoltz takes several minutes to inform us about the immorality of littering before easing into the brilliantly named *Hot Igloo*. The dichotomy of his serious speech and the absurdity of this song encapsulate the Stoltz aesthetic fairly well: a talented songwriter with a message who is also interested in the surreal and entertaining qualities that popular music can possess. The Bay Area vibe is always present, with hippy virtues, 60s psychedelia and garage rock sitting alongside each other like rambunctious guests. Add to this Stoltz's aptitude for thoroughly composed lyrics and unique imagery and you begin to get the picture.

Considering that Echo & The Bunnymen are his declared heroes, any show in Liverpool must have an extra edge for Stoltz, and it's safe to say that tonight has been distinct and memorable. Just don't leave it so long until next time, Kelley.

Alastair Dunn

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SOUND MATTERS

In this monthly column, our friends at DAWSONS give expert tips and advice on how to achieve a great sound in the studio or in the live environment. Armed with the knowledge to solve any common (or unusual) musical problem, the techy aficionados provide *Bido Lito!* readers with the benefit of their experience so you can get the sound you want. Here, Dawson's sonic Santa Harry Brown guides us through the wonderland of yuletide hits.

Whether this time of the year fills your heart with dread or joy, we will all have that moment when we walk into a shop and for the first time this year hear a Christmas hit playing. Since Al Martino made what is widely accepted to have been the first Christmas number one hit single in 1952 with *Here In My Heart*, the recording industry has thrived on Christmas record sales. Some of the most recognisable hits were strategically released during the week in which Christmas Day fell, specifically to nab the number one spot.

But to achieve true Christmas hit status, your record had to have something unique. It had to be recognisable within the first few notes or beats. The musical instrument technology available at the time of recording may, in the following cases, have played not a little part in securing that signature sound.

For example, Midge Ure and Bob Geldof are responsible for the second-highest-selling single of all time, let alone Christmas single, *Do They Know It's Christmas?* After writing the basic structure and melody of the song together, Ure went away to create a backing track. Using a sampler to recycle drum sounds from Tears For Fears debut album *The Hurting*, released the previous year (specifically the intro drum sounds from the title track), he created an instantly recognisable introduction.

The vastly popular Fairlight CMI sampler was more than likely the weapon of choice, as Fairlight were one of the only manufacturers with a sampler in production at the time this record was created. Fairlight unfortunately no longer manufacture, but one of their largest competitors from the 1980s, Akai, still do. Their current MPX16 sampler is a fraction of the size and weight, but offers infinitely more capacity courtesy of removable SD card storage. It has 16 performance pads, an in-built stereo microphone for sampling on the go, and can be used as a MIDI or software controller.

Not a Christmas number one but still one of the biggest-selling UK Christmas hits to date, Paul McCartney's 1979 hit *Wonderful Christmas Time* is instantly recognisable from the first few echoing notes of synthesiser. One of his favourite synthesisers to use in the studio then was a Yamaha CS-80, at the time one of the more powerful and expensive synthesisers available.

The high-resonance filter and its downward-sweeping envelope setting, along with a basic echo unit, produced a standout sound, especially on a Christmas hit. The spacey, sci-fi synth intro made for an unusual style not previously heard on a Christmas pop record.

Today's market of synthesisers would make very light work of this now commonplace synth setting. Even the smaller new Yamaha CS Reface series synthesiser will allow enough polyphony to play fairly complex chords, along with the oscillator and filter settings required to achieve the desired tone. To get a good approximation, use the multi-saw wave oscillator, set the LFO to 'OFF', and select 'Delay' on the effects unit. You'll need to adjust your envelope and delay time settings to get it sounding right.

A distinctive Christmas hit doesn't have to start with an instrument. What could be more distinctive than one of the most recognisable voices in pop music history stating "So this is Christmas..."? Not only is the sentiment quite striking, but Lennon's vocal sounds like it was recorded in a tunnel. Phil Spector, helping John Lennon produce the record, liked an interesting sense of space in his recordings. His famous Wall Of Sound style on his earlier recordings put the studio spaces and ambience to great effect. But this artificial sense of space was created through the use of a tape echo unit. Two popular units manufactured at the time were the Echoplex and Copicat.

Mechanical tape echo units are still available today: Fulltone's TTE Tube Tape Echo is a modern recreation of such units, with the same unique kind of sound. But tape echoes have their restrictions and drawbacks, and arguably are not solid-state technology. A solid-state tape emulation echo unit that has become a benchmark product over the years is the MXR Carbon Copy – the favourite of a generation of guitarists.

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THE FINAL SAY

Bethany Garrett / @_bethanygarrett

Each month we hand over the responsibility of having the final say to a guest columnist. This issue, our Editorial Assistant, Bethany Garrett, opens up debate on women, writing and media misrepresentation.

In my first issue as Editorial Assistant back in October, I wrote this very column in celebration of the joys of writing, but also of the political weight writing possesses. The crux of the piece was that words are loaded so we should choose them carefully; writing grants a voice to marginalised stratifications of society, and to tell your own story is to shed light on issues affecting you and to challenge the norm.

Given that women are disproportionately underrepresented in journalism, politics and academia, and consistently misrepresented in the wider media, I'd argue that, despite making up half of the population, they're a marginalised category. That being said, gender is fluid; it's a choice that is often divided into fixed binaries, but that in reality encompasses a whole spectrum. There are plenty of other injustices of representation that revolve around trans rights, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion and ableism that also need to be tackled and that often intersect to form a complex entanglement of inequalities.

What's bugged me in my *Bido Lito!* career, though, is that the immense pride I get when each new issue lands is met with a sinking sensation when I clock the contributors' section. In our October issue, three out of 19 writers were women; in the November issue, it was two out of 20. The trend isn't exclusive to this publication: *Getintothiss'* coverage of Liverpool Music Week featured zero women writers. I know that for *Bido* it's not a conscious decision – contributors approach us and these largely happen to be male, and I imagine it's the same for other publications. So why does it matter?

Firstly, it isn't representative to have blanket male coverage and it doesn't promote a diversity of worldviews. Media is complicit in the reproduction of social and cultural values: so as long as you keep subjecting women artists to the male gaze, women are going to be unnecessarily sexualised, their bodies regarded as public property – free bait to be commented upon, shamed, groped, whatever. There are wider implications of what we write. Of course men do resist the male gaze, and are aware and speak out about these problems, but it goes without

saying that women know the inequalities they experience best.

Secondly, you can't be what you can't see. A lack of visibility of women in music writing feeds into the dominance of men in this realm. The problem is cyclical: it's intimidating to dip a tentative toe into what seems like a man's world and it's difficult to aspire to be somewhere or something if there aren't role models you can relate to already occupying those positions. Shout outs here go to Viv Albertine, Patti Smith, Grace Jones, Kim Gordon and Chrissie Hynde for releasing memoirs that articulate their own stories, and offer a different lens on the well-told tales of fabled eras.

Thirdly, it matters because mainstream media consists of a majority of middle-aged white men spilling more mediocre white noise into the public realm. You'd hope that in alternative, independent media things would be a bit more progressive. It might sound ever so high and mighty, but people write from a positionality informed by their own life experiences. As a mixed-race woman, my life experiences are inevitably different and I might just be attuned to nuances that might be lost on others.

But does it *really* matter that much? Go on, tell me to look around at any gig on any night in this city and assure me that the lack of women writers is a reflection of the gig-going population; gigs are more often than not total dickfests, so it's only natural that coverage of them is dominated by men. Hmm. Have you ever been groped at a gig? Do you worry about how you're going to get home? There are other factors at play. Groping is so much of an issue that gig-goers have formed a multi-city group called Girls Against to raise awareness. It's early days but they've got artists to speak out and are getting venues on board, and rightly so.

This underrepresentation is a multi-faceted issue and one we want to look into further. Is it a reflection of wider sexism that's endemic in the music industry? How do we tackle it? Tell us what you think. Get in touch with editorial@bidolito.co.uk and keep your eyes peeled for a more in-depth discussion in our February 2016 issue.

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