

LOUD AND QUIET

ZERO POUNDS / VOLUME 03 / ISSUE 42 / THE ALTERNATIVE MUSIC TABLOID

A close-up portrait of Gabriel Bruce, a man with light brown hair and blue eyes, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a patterned shirt. The background is a solid yellow color.

Plus

DAUGHTER

GROUP RHODA

EGYPTIAN HIP HOP

PUBLIC SERVICE
BROADCASTING

ALUNAGEORGE

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS

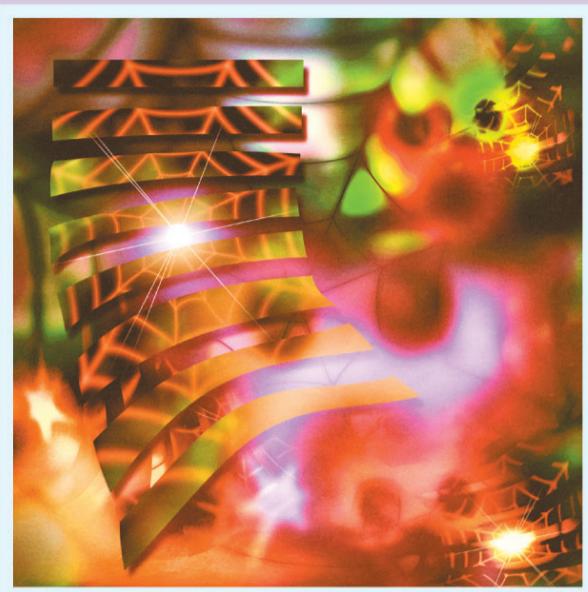
SHARM EL SHAKES

... AND YOU WILL
KNOW US BY THE
TRAIL OF DEAD

GABRIEL BRUCE

A MODEL RACONTEUR

DRACULA LEWIS

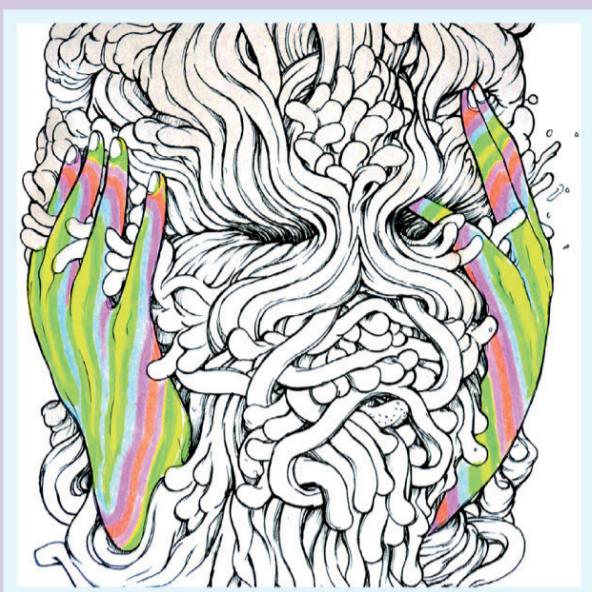


Permafrost 12" / Digital EP
Out November 12th

ON TOUR W/ THE SOFT MOON:

Friday, November 23 London @ Cargo
Saturday, November 24 Bristol @ Start The Bus
Sunday, November 25 Leeds @ Brudenell Social Club
Monday, November 26 Manchester @ Ruby Lounge
Tuesday, November 27 Birmingham @ Hare and Hounds
Wednesday, November 28 Brighton @ Green Door Store

DOLDRUMS

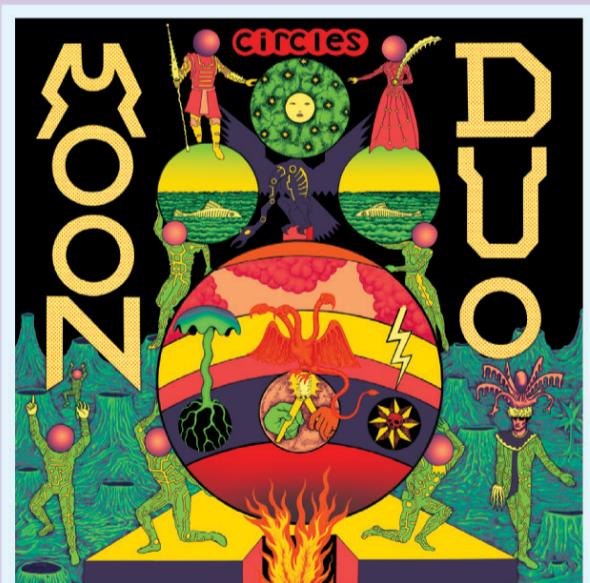


"She Is The Wave" 7" / Digital
Out November 5th

ON TOUR W/ PURITY RING:

Tuesday, November 20 London @ Scala
Thursday, November 22 Brighton @ The Haunt
Friday, November 23 Bristol @ Thekla
Saturday, November 24 Manchester @ Sound Control
Monday, November 26 Leeds @ Hi Fi Club
Tuesday, November 27 Glasgow @ Nice & Sleazy
Wednesday, November 28 Liverpool @ Kazimer

MOON DUO



Circles LP / CD / Digital

ON TOUR:

Monday, November 12 Glasgow @ Glasgow Art School
Tuesday, November 13 Leeds @ Brudenell Social Club
Wednesday, November 14 London @ Corsica Studios
Thursday, November 15 Wrexham @ Central Station
Friday, November 16 Bristol @ The Croft

THE FRESH & ONLYS



Long Slow Dance
LP / CD / Digital

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FIRST AID KIT

The Lion's Roar

CD / DVD BOXSET - OUT NOW

Deluxe expanded edition of the hugely acclaimed album. Now includes three bonus tracks, a DVD with a documentary and three videos, a poster and guitar pick.



SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO

A Form Of Change

12 INCH / DOWNLOAD - 1ST OCTOBER

Four new songs from SMD (ok, you may know one if you bought the iTunes version of the Unpatterns album). Deliciously deep dancefloor electronics from our favourite tech duo.



CHEATAHS

Sans EP

12 INCH / DOWNLOAD - 5TH NOVEMBER

The first release from new signings, Cheatahs. We are very excited about this London four-piece. Classic indie-rock that brings to mind many of our very favourite bands... Swervedriver, The Boo Radleys, Dinosaur Jr... with the killer tunes to match their influences!

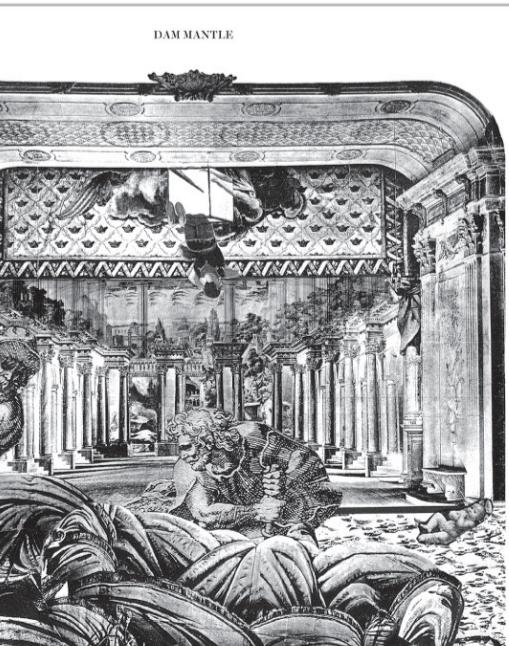


TIMES NEW VIKING

Over & Over EP

12 INCH / DOWNLOAD - 19TH NOVEMBER

Over & Over is the follow up to Times New Viking's highly acclaimed 2011 album (their first released on Wichita). Dancer Equired. It features six new tracks that fuse the primal panic-punk of their salad days with the sustained, keen pop skill found within their later catalogue.



Brother's Fowl, the debut album from DAM MANTLE

Limited double 180g vinyl in screen-printed sleeve with album download. Also available digitally.

IN STORES 15TH OCTOBER

See Dam Mantle live in October

- 2nd The Social, London
 - 10th Soup Kitchen, Manchester *
 - 11th Sound & Vision, Norwich *
 - 12th Hoult's Yard, Newcastle *
 - 13th Electric Circus, Edinburgh *
 - 17th Bodega, Nottingham *
 - 18th Heaven, London *
 - 19th The Cooler, Bristol *
- (* supporting Errors)

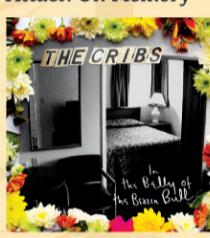
ALSO IN SHOPS NOW...



BEST COAST
The Only Place



CLOUD NOTHINGS
Attack On Memory



THE CRIBS
In The Belly of
The Brazen Bull



FIDLAR
Don't Try EP



SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO
Unpatterns



ON TOUR:

CHEATAHS

17/10 – 100 Club, London *
02/12 – Le Guess Who Festival, Utrecht
* with Frankie & The Heartstrings and Veronica Falls

CLOUD NOTHINGS

06/11 – Village Underground, LONDON

THE CRIBS

19/10 – SWN Festival, CARDIFF
20/10 – HMV Forum, LONDON
23/10 – Oxford Academy 2, OXFORD *
24/10 – Norwich Waterfront, NORWICH *
25/10 – 02 Academy, LIVERPOOL *
26/10 – Manchester Apollo, MANCHESTER *
28/10 – Haddow Fest, EDINBURGH
29/10 – 02 Academy, NEWCASTLE *
30/10 – 02 Academy, SHEFFIELD *
01/11 – Leicester Academy, LEICESTER *
02/11 – Hull University, HULL †
03/11 – York Barbican, YORK †
05/11 – Leamington Spa Assembly,
LEAMINGTON SPA †
06/11 – HMV Institute, BIRMINGHAM †
* Support from Mazes and Cheatahs
† Support from Frankie & The Heartstrings and Milk Maid

FIRST AID KIT

20/11 – Shepherds Bush Empire, LONDON
22/11 – Ritz, MANCHESTER
24/11 – QMU, GLASGOW
25/11 – Vicar Street, DUBLIN
27/11 – Academy, BRISTOL

FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS

17/10 – 100 Club, LONDON *
07/11 – Old Blue Last, LONDON
08/11 – New Slang, KINGSTON UPON THAMES
09/11 – Trof, MANCHESTER
15/11 – The Hub, DARLINGTON
20/11 – The Keys, MIDDLESBOROUGH
21/11 – Electric Circus, EDINBURGH
27/11 – Harley, SHEFFIELD
* with Cheatahs and Veronica Falls

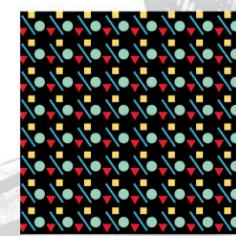
SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO

12/10 – Warehouse Project, MANCHESTER
27/10 – Fire, LONDON
08/11 – The Twisted Pepper, DUBLIN
09/11 – The Limelight, BELFAST
10/11 – The Arches, GLASGOW
17/11 – The Masque, LIVERPOOL

www.wichita-recordings.com



IN SHOPS NOW:



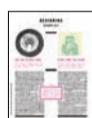
LUKE ABBOTT
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12" / DOWNLOAD



GOLD PANDA
Lucky Shiner
CD / LP / DOWNLOAD

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THE MONTH'S SINGLES, EPS AND PAGE-TURNERS, FEATURING PALMA VIOLETS, KING KRULE AND PINS



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DAUGHTER

A FINE SMOOTHERING OF YOUNG EMOTION

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CONTACT
INFO@LOUDANDQUIET.COM

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS

IN CONVERSATION WITH JOHN DARNIELLE:
ONE OF OUR GREATEST LIVING LYRICISTS

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LOUD AND QUIET
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LONDON
NW1W 8TH

GROUP RHODA

THE ALL ENCOMPASSING INDUSTRIAL
DUB PROJECT OF MARA BARENBAUM

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ART DIRECTOR - LEE BELCHER
SUB EDITOR - ALEX WILSHIRE
FILM EDITOR - IAN ROEBUCK

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ALUNAGEORGE

ALUNA FRANCIS AND GEORGE REID ARE ABOUT
TO MAKE THE CHARTS A LITTLE WEIRDER

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COCHRANE, TOM PINNOCK, TOM
WARNER

SHARM EL SHAKES

A VERY BRITISH PUNK BAND

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THIS MONTH L&Q LOVES
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SILVER, RICHARD ONSLOW, RUTH
DRAKE,

...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD. 24

CONRAD KEELY AND JASON REECE REMAIN TRUE
TO THE WAY THEY'RE WIRED. LOUD AND FREE



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ARE THOSE OF THE RESPECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS
AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE
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Egyptian Hip Hop

MANCHESTER'S EGYPTIAN HIP HOP RETURN WITH THEIR DEBUT
HAVING GONE TO GROUND FOR 2 YEARS AND DITCHED THE POP

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GABRIEL BRUCE

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END OF THE ROAD, FESTIVAL NO.6, SWIM
DEEP, KING TUFF, AT THE DRIVE-IN & MORE

PARTY WOLF

THE INAPPROPRIATE WORLD OF IAN BEALE
WIN RARE ALT-J VINYL / MY TIME / IDIOT PARADE



The Waiting Room

Tuesday 2 October
8-11pm | Free Entry
EAT YOUR OWN EARS
Live:
ONE LITTLE PLANE + SUPPORT

Thursday 4 October
8-11pm | Free Entry
THE WAITING ROOM & LOTTAROX PRESENT
Live:
LCMDF + SUPPORT

Friday 5 October
9-4am | £3 before 12, £5
WALLS PRESENT: ECSTATIC
DJs:
**JUNIOR BOYS
WALLS**

Saturday 6 October
10pm-Late | £8 on the door
DISCO BLOODBATH
DJs:
SIMONCINO + DISCO BLOODBATH

Friday 12 October
10-4am | £5 from RA
£7 on the door
JUNO PLUS
3RD BIRTHDAY
DJs:
**RON MORELLI (L.I.E.S)
BANKHEAD (TRILOGY TAPES)**

Friday 19 October
10-4am | Free Before 12, £5 after
PRANG
DJS PLAYING TRAP, TRILL & GRIME

Thursday 25 October
8-11:30pm | Free Entry
EAT YOUR OWN EARS
Live:
SEAMS + SUPPORT

Saturday 27 October
10-4am | Invitation Only
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RICHARD D. CLOUSTON + GUESTS

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Disclosure
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Lucy Rose
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Metronomy
Mumford & Sons
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SBTRKT
Skream
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The Horrors
Tribes
Veronica Falls
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WELCOME

OCTOBER 2012

Unable to make the specific date, we missed out on a trip to Paris this month, to spend an evening in the French capital with Gabriel Bruce – a cross between a vampiric troubadour and Tim Roth's Pumpkin in Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* – at David Lynch's night club Silencio. When we met up with Bruce six days later and one street from our office, he assured us that we hadn't missed out on much. It turns out it's not Lynch's club at all, he just dressed it, "a nice looking bar where no one can afford the drinks".

Such trips can be flattering carrots to us lowly music papers, but the truth is that Gabriel Bruce is on the front cover of issue 42 with us having met him in Hackney, where we go every day. He'd secured his place there perhaps as early as April, when we first saw him perform live. It was a remarkable show, as we reported in *Loud And Quiet* 38; an old cabaret act with modern pop songs and tales grim, bellowed by some wild, new showman who you'd have thought was opening The Brits, not playing the top floor of a posh pub. In this issue, Gabriel talks of imitating his idols, purchasing David Bowie, the flaws of ambition and worrying about whether anyone will even hear his debut album, 'Love In Arms', which may or may not be released this month.

'Pop' is what Gabriel Bruce does, although not necessarily pop from our time. That's more in the realm of AlunaGeorge, a duo more poised for the Top 40 than Will Smith's next drone. Aluna Francis will bat away the insincere with her English RnB speak-sing, while George Reid scratches a producer's itch in attempting to make inventive electronic music that's also melodic and popularist. They'll be two releases in by the end of this month and they've already pretty much cracked it.

So we didn't get to go to Paris this month, but a bit of San Francisco came to us (in the form of industrial dub enthusiast Group Rhoda) and some Austin, Texas (...Trail of Dead), and Manchester (the soon to be un-forgotten Egyptian Hip Hop). Staying home's not all bad.

CONTRIBUTOR



JADE SPRANKLEN
ILLUSTRATOR

Jade is no mathematician. She flopped her AS Level in the subject, which turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to her. Forced to pick up another academic subject, she "thought Art would be a good turn". While her classmates were swatting over still life fruit bowls, Jade scribbled away at spiders and misshapen monsters. Then she legged it to uni and after sending more emails than she cares to remember began being commissioned by Latitude festival, Lomography, Soho House, Tatler (BIG Spranklen fans) and Polydor. Her golden rule today is to draw something every day. "I live by this," she says. "It keeps your brain ticking, whether you have work on or not. It doesn't have to be a masterpiece!" Check out Jade's work at www.spranklen.com.



COVER SHOOT:
GABRIEL BRUCE BY GABRIEL GREEN
HACKNEY, LONDON.
11 SEPTEMBER 2012

BRAND NEW RELEASES IN GOOD RECORD SHOPS NOW

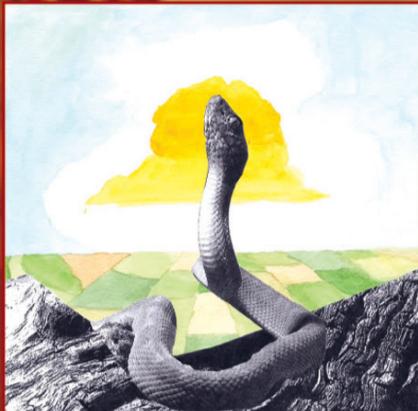


THEE OH SEES 'Putrifiers II'

In The Red CD/LP

John Dwyer & Co. expand their restless sonic palette into a more subtle musical awakening informed by Scott Walker, The Velvet Underground, The Zombies and Les Rallizes Denudés.

8/10 MOJO, 8.1 Pitchfork



WOODS 'Bend Beyond'

Woodsist CD/LP

'Lush and full bodied the work of a band in heavy harmony, capturing their live intensity but keeping the intimate sadness that made them so great in the first place' – Sam Hockley-Smith.

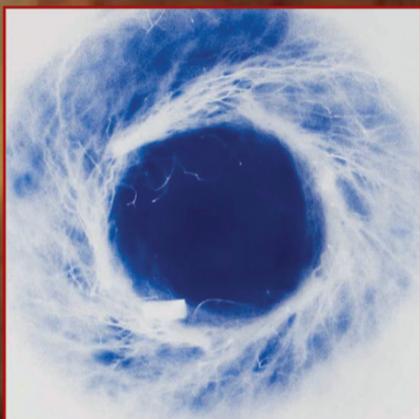
Deluxe vinyl & CD. 8/10 Loud & Quiet, 8.1 Pitchfork



BIRDS OF MAYA 'Ready To Howl'

Agitated CD

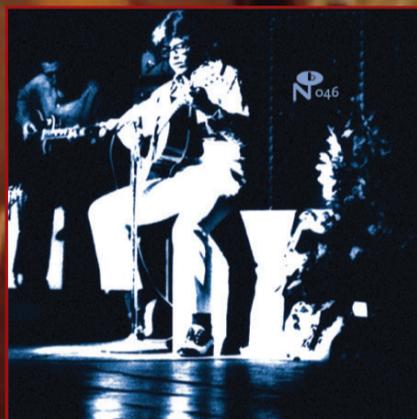
Over the past few months & years, dropouts all over the world have been nodding out to the amped up riffing of Purling Hiss & the economical chug-a-lug zen of Spacín'. Only the most committed seekers have been privy to the roaring big band that started it all: Birds Of Maya. CD features unedited full length tracks not available on vinyl.



**YOKO ONO, KIM GORDON,
THURSTON MOORE
'YokoKimThurston'**

Chimera Records CD

A wild collision of song-form, poetics, free-rock and classic glossolalic ecstasy. Yoko has not allowed herself to sound so raw since early Plastic Ono Band.



ALFONSO LOVO 'La Gigantona'

The Numero Group CD/LP

Imagine a Nicaraguan take on Herbie Hancock's Afro-jazz masterpiece Mwandishi with some of the most penetrating, left-field guitar you've never heard. Long unavailable La Gigantona has lived forty years lost in the grooves of a single acetate until now. Full Numero Group re-issue treatment.



DIVORCE 'Divorce'

Night School LP

Divorce is the culmination of four years of uncompromising noise-rock brutality. Since their formation in 2008 they have progressed from no wave dirge practitioners to an unique cult that blurs the boundaries of what 'punk', 'noise-rock' or 'metal' are presumed to sound like.



CARLTON MELTON 'PHOTOS OF PHOTOS'

AGITATED RECORDS LP & Bonus 12" // Clear Vinyl LP // CD // DL

Shards of molten psychedelia orbiting great washes of ambient drone and synth narcosis...strap yourself in to these blissed out trips.

Aided by fellow traveller John McBain (Monster Magnet / Wellwater Conspiracy). Bonus 12" features an all enveloping live version of "When You're In", recorded at Roadburn 2011, b/w John McBain remix of "The One That Got Away". Both vinyl versions limited to 500 copies each...and in a fancy gatefold sleeve to boot/vinyl comes with an MP3 DL postcard that contains all 6 tracks from the CD.

ON TOUR IN THE UK:

- 16 Oct 2012 - **BRIGHTON**, Prince Albert
- 17 Oct 2012 - **SHEFFIELD**, The Red House
- 18 Oct 2012 - **LONDON**, Corsica Studios
- 19 Oct 2012 - **LIVERPOOL**, Mello Mello
- 20 Oct 2012 - **BIRMINGHAM**, Supersonic Festival
- 21 Oct 2012 - **HEBDEN BRIDGE**, Trades Club
- 22 Oct 2012 - **BRISTOL**, The Exchange

ERRORS NEW RELICS

NEW MINI-ALBUM OUT NOW ON CD, LP AND VHS

OCTOBER TOUR

06TH - TOLLBOOTH, STIRLING

10TH - SOUP KITCHEN, MANCHESTER

11TH - SOUND & VISION FESTIVAL, NORWICH

12TH - HOULTS YARD, NEWCASTLE

13TH - ELECTRIC CIRCUS, EDINBURGH

17TH - BODEGA, NOTTINGHAM

18TH - HEAVEN, LONDON

19TH - EXCHANGE, BRISTOL

20TH - SWN FESTIVAL, CARDIFF



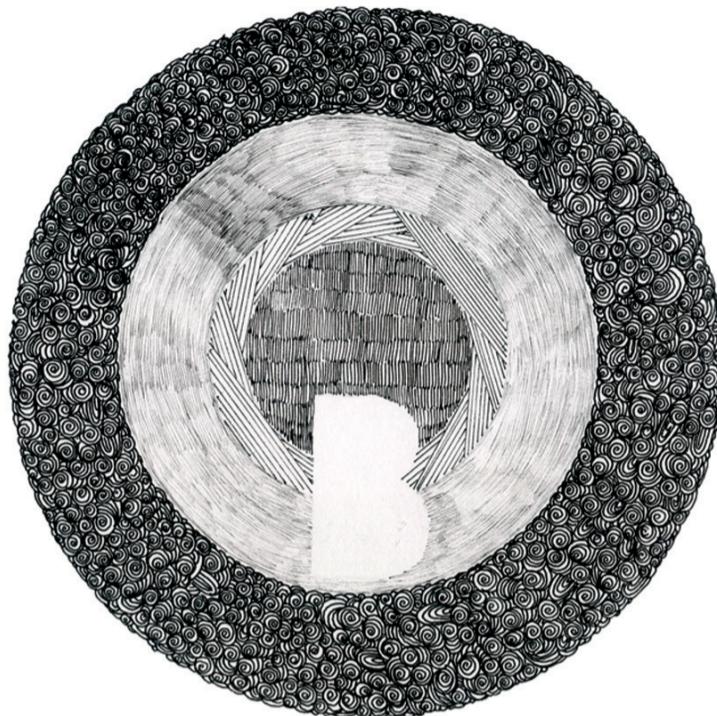
ERRORS
“NEW RELICS”



STILL AVAILABLE
“HAVE SOME FAITH IN MAGIC”

BEGINNING

OCTOBER 2012



ON THE OTHER SIDE

REEF YOUNIS LAMENTS THE LOSS OF WHAT MAGIC USED TO DWELL ON THE B-SIDE

The single used to be the dizzying climax of pocket money spontaneity; a moment of wild indiscretion when indiscriminate saving simply couldn't stretch to one more album-accumulating week at the end of the month. That one week was often the difference between haring into Our Price – or any number of second-hand record shops, after school (see after McDonalds) – and emerging with a single instead of its longer, finance-sapping counterpart.

There'd be the tireless run home, usually because I'd spent the meticulously calculated bus fare on a cheeseburger, but also because these singles were no second prize; they were there to be coveted and cherished as the keepers of something no album could ever replicate: the B-side. So after the adolescent excitement of hearing the lead track on repeat rotation for the first 72 hours, I'd let the curiosity take over, letting the undiscovered play out.

It was a glorious lottery, but where albums once weighed in at hours, not minutes, there was a love and selective obsession at work when it came to B-sides. Not all were session offal or the half-cut misfits squeezed onto short disc space, some even brazenly threatened to steal the A-side thunder. Of course one person's B-side is another's bloated filler, but music's rich history would regularly prove otherwise.

In the glut of Oasis' Britpop fever, it's easy to forget that the lyrical presence of 'The Masterplan' was the yin to 'Wonderwall's' anthemic, beer-fuelled yang; the deep-thinking, defining delivery of KRS One's "rap is something you do, hip hop is something you live", from 'Hip-Hop vs Rap', was buried and unearthed by the crate diggers; The Smiths' 'William, it was Really Nothing' had second billing to 'How Soon is Now'; even Dee-Lite's all-conquering 'Groove is in the Heart' was only worthy of B status back in 1990. The list is an endlessly celebrated one: The Clash, Pixies, Nirvana, Super Furry Animals, the Smashing Pumpkins, the Manic Street Preachers, Madonna, Elvis, Prince... (sic) all got B-side benefits.

Last year, the Office for National Statistics showed that 98% of chart singles in the UK were purchased digitally, and what might have been B-sides are now the carrots on the end of mailing address sticks; the free gifts fuelling a new social music currency of exchange. But even as these songs become redundant, diluted and disposable, reduced to isolated offerings as part of an iTunes market share, it makes the truly great B-sides all the more special. And while the death knell for singles was sounded long ago, the chart bothering songs aren't necessarily the ones we'll miss. Back then, £4 felt like all the money in the world. It feels pretty priceless now.

EVEN 'GROOVE IS IN THE HEART' WAS ONLY WORTHY OF B STATUS BACK IN 1990

KURT AND THE GANG

AUSTIN LAIKE LOOKS INTO THE STICKY SITUATION OF BELLY KIDS' LATEST BOOK PROJECT

Stickers. Like bloody knees and wearing a suit to get into a club, collecting them is one of youth's great must-dos. Sticker book obsessions teach us how to budget our weekly spend, stiff our friends and kick the habit. Then alcohol hammers those lessons home. *Kurt And The Gang* isn't one of those sticker books – the newsagent Panini type – but it is just as wide-eyed, in content and delivery. It's the latest from Belly Kids – the playful and imaginative outpost of Michael Coley, a young man intent on combining DIY's fidgety creativity with community spirit and throw-back innocence.

Planting packs of stickers in every Costcutter in the country is, needless to say, a task too far for any young enterprise, even one that's already published a cookery book made up of recipes from punk bands (*The Mona Pizza*), a Bill Murray themed colouring book (*Thrill Murray*), a collection of essays by *New York Times* and *Huffington Post* writer David Hill (*Tasteful Nude*), and a number of cassette tapes. *Kurt And The Gang* is a book that fondly revisits another chapter of our adhesive pasts – the sticker sheets that used to come with special editions of *Melody Maker* and *NME*, and were rapidly emptied onto your pencil case.

"I am a huge fan of the old football sticker books," says Coley, who bought a copy of Nirvana's 'Bleach' when he reached secondary school and was forced into buying a Pixies record at the same time, "the only one I completed was the '94/'95 season but here the stickers are firmly stuck down and you can peel them off and plaster them around. There are 72 stickers in total and pages of the designs throughout."

"Nirvana are one of those 'turning point' bands for me," says Coley. "They introduced me to a world of great music, a world that seemed to annoy my parents so much and sounded super loud. Even though my tastes have grown, Nirvana have stuck with me all this time. I know that's the case for a lot of people. Kurt has become an icon for a lot of art and music of the time. This is a celebration of it all."

Like everything Belly Kids has produced so far, *Kurt And The Gang*'s overriding message is one of fun as much as passion. A colouring book for young adults would attest to that in any case, but one called *Thrill Murray...*

"After that book, I had this throw-back world of colouring books and sticker annuals firmly stuck in my head. I just married the two – my love of '90s era music and stickers. I just went with it really and hopefully it looks good!"

300 copies of this month's *Loud And Quiet* have a free sticker stuck to this page, courtesy of Belly Kids and illustrated by Patrick Schmidt.

BEGINNING

SINGLES & EPS / BOOKS

01



**PALMA VIOLETS
BEST OF FRIENDS**

(ROUGH TRADE)
OUT OCT 29

Rock'n'Roll in the year 2012 is nothing if not regressive, which, until very recently, has meant that you really are better off sticking with your Clash records. There's the still-mushrooming DIY scene, of course, but it's more indebted to US post hardcore than anything else, which isn't the way to go if you're in the market for a modern day rock'n'roll anthem. New bands like Savages and Drop Out Venus are slowly changing things, and Palma Violets too, who, with tracks like this debut single, look set to make the biggest (or quickest) difference yet. A trio from London's not-so-glamorous Lambeth area, let's not pretend they don't sound a lot like The Clash, in fact, because they do. 'Best of Friends' – shouted in gang unison to clanky, worn, junk-shop guitars – marks British punk rock's return to the basement: the basement of Studio 180, to be exact – Palma Violets' squat-come-art-studio-come-party-venue. Retrospective as it is, 'Best Of Friends' does more than a pretty good job of sounding like it's yelled from the arse-end of Cameron's Big Society, and an even better job of capturing the band's live, jubilant ways – a big win from a band more interested in playing the party than being DJ'd at it.

02



**KING KRULE
ROCK BOTTOM / OCTOPUS**

(RINSE)
OUT NOW

To give you an idea of how 17-year-old Archy Marshall sings as King Krule, when he gruffly nabs the closing refrain from The Streets' 'Empty Cans' on new single 'Rock Bottom', he sounds less sweet but no more in tune than Mike Skinner did in 2004. It matters little as Marshall has clearly gone for the barbed Jamie T vocal approach to accompany his dusty break beats that wind up sounding like a less polished Balearic Jack Peñate by the time they get going. So ramshackle and ultimately guitar-lead, it feels like an uncharacteristic release for the Rinse label, and the next-room ambience of 'Octopus' is only slightly more Katy B, Skream and Benga, courtesy of a rudimentary 2-step beat that Marshall's sloshed vocals bob atop. There's no question that King Krule has a certain amount of understated swag to him though, like a less ADHD Kves, and this latest single is perfect daydream music for a railway bridge near you.

03



**PINS
LUVU4LYF EP**

(BELLA UNION)
OUT OCT 1

Pins sure are doing their bit to rebrand Manchester. On their first EP proper, they look to the west coast of the States and the reverberating vocals of demonised girl groups as much as they do to The North for inspiration. Maybe it's because they don't share a Y chromosome between them, but Pins don't yearn for the Hacienda, the Gallaghers or even Joy Division. 'LuvU4Lyf' sounds more like how Vivian Girls would if they'd seen rain every other day of the year. There's a certain sense of 1979 post-punk dejection to this kind of unpolished enterprise that ominously lurches to tribal drums, spindly guitars and a bit of art school noise on 'Little Sting'. Pins probably play dappled in kaleidoscopic projections, to people who dance with their arms down. That's how the four tracks of 'LuvU4Lyf' sound – borderline cliché, perhaps, but put together by a gang of girls rebelling against what's expected of them.

BY LEE BULLMAN



**THE HOUSE OF RUMOUR
BY JAKE ARNOTT
(SCEPTRE)**

Since his debut novel, 1991's London noir classic *The Long Firm* (which depicted the life of homosexual East End gangster Harry Starks in the 1960s), Jake Arnott has become an expert at blending fact, fiction and fantasy so elegantly that it is often no longer possible to tell in his work where one ends and the other begins. In *The House of Rumour*, the man that *Attitude* magazine once called "one of Britain's most promising novelist, quite regardless of sexuality" continues this tradition on an epic scale and presents us with a novel unlike any of the five that have preceded it.

Within his newest book's pages, dimly lit corners of the past are thoroughly researched and deftly reinvented, and all is just as it would have been if history had happened sideways.

Rather than a straightforward novel, this is a collection of whispered histories, short stories in chapters each named after a card from the Tarot deck. The series of stories unites a dizzying array of disparate characters, from rocket scientists to Deputy Führer to Hitler Rudolph Hess, to James Bond author and no stranger to the real life spy business Ian Fleming, all via flying saucers, the occult and 1950's science fiction.

The continuing theme of the occult perhaps comes as little surprise, with this novel coming three years after Arnott's last, *The Devil's Paintbrush*. Indeed, one of that previous novel's stars – the Satan-worshipping merry prankster, Aleister Crowley – also makes a brief but welcome return here and finds himself at home amongst the well known, the infamous and the almost forgotten.

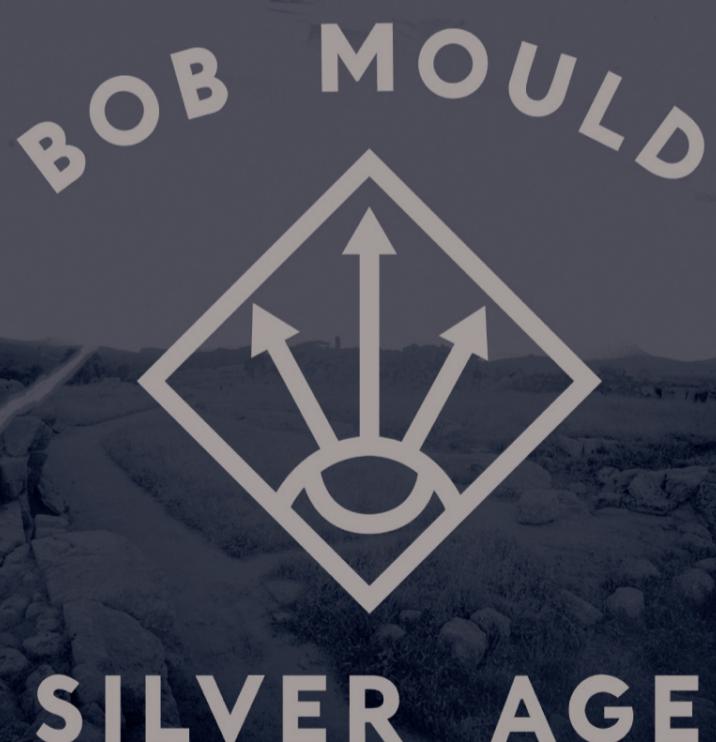
A lot of work has gone into creating something that feels this effortless, at the hands of a man who (fact hunters) played a mummy in the 1999 blockbuster movie and Brendan Fraser vehicle, erm, *The Mummy*. Perhaps most telling of Arnott's past positions held, though, is that of his time spent as a mortuary technician, no doubt fuelling his literary return trips to the macabre and doomed.

Intrigue and conspiracy are abound here, and there are no neat endings or easy answers, but there is surprise, depth and an awful lot of heart.

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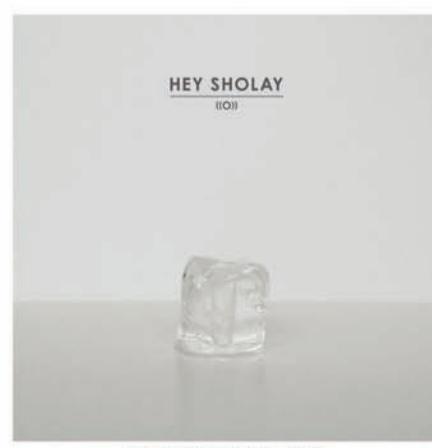
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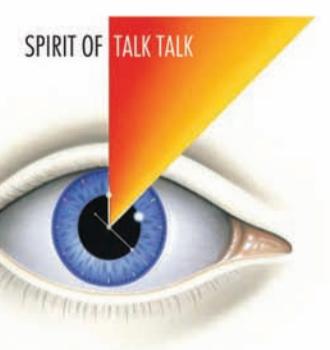
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BEGINNING

LEFTOVERS



SAUNA YOUTH

COLD PUMAS

LAST MONTH WE INTERVIEWED SAUNA YOUTH
THEY LEFT THESE QUERIES BEHIND FOR COLD PUMAS

Sauna Youth are a progressive punk band. Cold Pumas kinda are too, only with an added penchant for repetition and krauty ways. After four long years, their debut album is finally in the can and ready for release next month, supported by a tour with none other than Sauna Youth.

SY: Dan and Olly, when you get in the Cold-Pumas-swaying-stage-trance, are you feeling utter peace or complete tension?

Oliver [guitar]: "The fundamental selfish aim for me in the 'live arena' is to attain this state you speak of where I am no longer conscious of what I am doing, of people watching us, of 'performing'. It becomes seemingly instinctive and feels natural and uncontrived. But often some part of me is aware of something or ill at ease. I don't naturally feel comfortable playing in front of people."

What was the biggest eureka moment of writing and recording the album?

Patrick [drums]: "There was never a eureka moment, as dull as that is. The record itself being finished, the aligning of writing, recording, artwork, titling, lyrics and all those other time-consuming micro-decisions is ultimately it. So, eureka today! It has in contrast been a process that has been forged through something other than a contrived or conceptual epiphany, but more a grinding reliance on the most organic pedantry that has driven us on, that and the fear of failure. Too grandiose perhaps?"

Patrick, your voice is very dreamy. How do you write your lyrics and what do you write about?

P: "Firstly, thank you. To summarise: in a turgidly unevocative manner, very much after the moment has gone, on a computer, in my bedroom, in silence. The lyrics basically all tend to focus on the classic subject of ole faithful. I think when we began this band (I mean musical journey), I wrote some turgidly meaningless tripe (see 'Exhibit A', 'Jela'), most of which was contrived on a bench in Hoxton Square while Rory Brattwell was brewing up a nice cup of tea at halftime. Then we'd cake it so heavily in reverb, that it had ultimately been pointless writing anything other than a set of phonetic guidelines anyway. Oh the Golden Summer of Dude Culture."

Is this the definitive CP line up? You mentioned to us that you added keyboards to a lot of the songs on your album, would you consider adding that live?

P: "There were times when we considered, in moments of tonal frustration, of recruiting someone to play bass, but now the idea of having an entire other person with their own ridiculous things like opinions and tangents and frustrating habits to iron out until they become seen but not heard just seems like a lot of work. It's much easier to have a splitter pedal. I simply wouldn't change the peculiar dynamic of our awkward marriage for anything!"

Sound-wise, how has the band changed from 'Jela' era to now? To me, your songs are now a lot more concise and, dare I say, almost 'pop' sounding.

P: "I would agree, but then I want to agree. I'm not afraid of

"I WROTE SOME
MEANINGLESS TRIPE
WHILE RORY
BRATTWELL WAS
BREWING UP A TEA"

the 'pop' moniker that you've applied, as I really don't think we could ever be 'pop' in the traditional sense, not in that disappointing blandness that so many bands seem to aim to hit at just about the third album, where everything is covered in a lurid sheen and the saxophone or new keyboard member is wheeled out. For my two pence, it was that I felt myself becoming less engaged with something I couldn't imagine listening to at home, and the bubble had burst with whatever we were doing at the beginning being so invigorating to play live. I no longer wanted to be a vaguely conceptual band that would be almost only useful to put on in the midst of a DJ set as something sonically or technically impressive, and so yes,

I certainly pushed consciously for something that was more structured and varied and lyrically focused and less cold or clinical sounding; in essence a song in its most conventional form. Evidently it's difficult doing that when the instrument you play has no specific notes and you and your brother (who has emerged from his cocoon into a punk) hate each other about 15% of the time in the practice room."

Is there an element of your sound that nobody ever picks up on - something essential that everybody seems to miss?

P: "I suppose I could say the lyrics, but evidently I know why they're missed live, so, for a real damp squib of an answer, no? Although, I do find it weird, and perhaps this is when the sound is so pummeling it dazes the listener, but I do hope there is a lot more depth to the album than you may be able to hear sometimes live. I really don't mind if there is a separation between the two – although I know Oliver would disagree to an extent. I think it works really well when bands are, let's say, more cerebral on record and more visceral live."

Can you pinpoint a moment when you fell in love with repetition?

P: "I think 'love' is a bit rich. I suppose there were points, before we moved to Brighton from Exeter even, when the relentlessness of bands like Ex-Models were definitely pushing us to something that we tried doing in a bookshop and practice-room playing project named Oh Hell No, ultimately the precursor to Cold Pumas. And certainly repetition is something ingrained to the extent in what our default starting point is, but for me now it is something I don't even consider consciously - perhaps we are attracted to certain minimalisms and repetitions and kraut-aesthetics, but it's definitely not a grand concept in that sense anymore."

Do you want to plug your album a bit?

P: "The album is released formally on the 5th of November between Faux Discx, Gringo Records and Italian Beach Babes on both vinyl and compact disc. It's called 'Persistent Malaise', the wondrous artwork is by Flo Brooks and I'm excited that despite the arduous birthing process it is here, almost."



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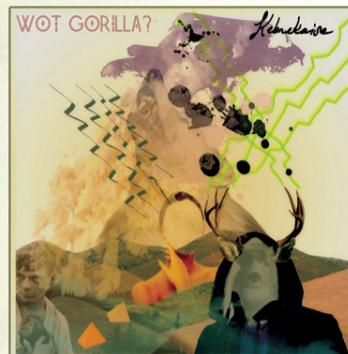
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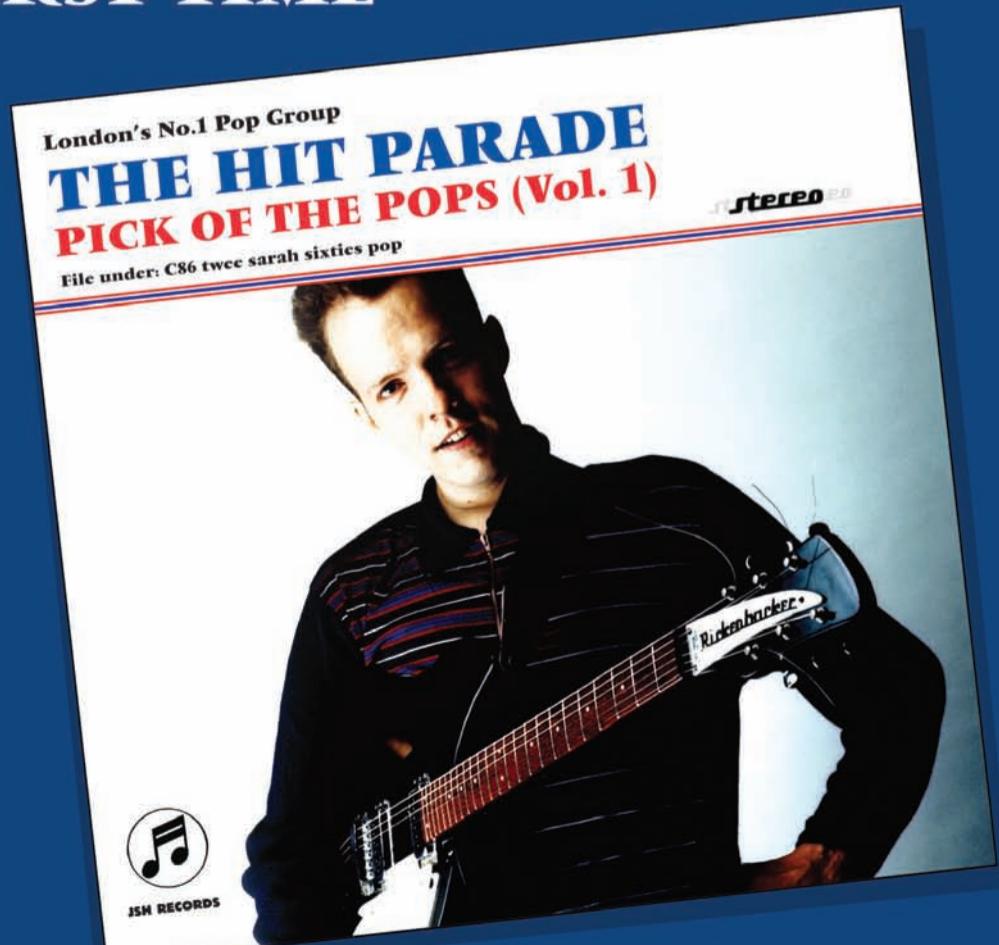
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DAUGHTER

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Photographer - Timothy Cochrane | Writer - Kate Parkin

“WHEN I DON’T THINK ABOUT IT, IT’S JUST A SONG AND THEN SUDDENLY I THINK, ‘ARGGH SHIT, WHY AM I TELLING EVERYONE THESE PERSONAL THINGS!?’”

Whispering out from the speakers of teenage bedrooms across the land, Daughter’s anthemic ode to the heady rush of ‘Youth’ is fast becoming a YouTube covers sensation. The band seem oblivious to the attention, sheltered within the confines of backstage ahead of a Beirut support slot, huddled against the driving rain outside.

With a fragile, slightly awkward beauty, lead singer Elena Tonra is both compelling and shyly disarming in her sweetness. The two boys, slightly rumpled with sleep, lounge quietly on the sofas. Previously a solo project, Eleanor was joined by her boyfriend Igor Haefeli on guitar and college friend Remi Aguilella on drums. They met while studying at The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance in London, becoming a fully-fledged group just two years ago.

“I suppose I just didn’t enjoy doing the solo shows because I find it quite scary,” says Eleanor, softly. “I first started mainly gigging with Igor, he just filled in for a few shows, then we started arranging stuff.”

“It’s very difficult to get the sounds that were in my head to actually work,” she says. “Remi and Igor really bring their strengths to what we have now.”

Often compared to Scandinavian acts like Jonsi and Bjork, Eleanor is in fact a London native, while Remi and Igor hail from France and Switzerland respectively. Igor also has a French mother. “I was born and raised in France and then moved to London, because I wanted to explore the scene I guess and play music. I come from a really small place in France and you see a lot of great international bands coming to the cities, but it’s pretty rare to see a regional band playing those really good venues.”

As we get round to discussing those heartfelt YouTube covers, they look slightly taken aback when I suggest that they might prefer people to just buy the record. Eleanor whispers, “I don’t think it’s a bad thing. I haven’t really watched them too much, just because I find it quite surreal I suppose, but not really in a bad way. It is flattering I think... quite strange but good!”

Igor agrees. “I think especially that they relate to it and feel like they want to sing it. Personally, when I was learning guitar, the songs I really liked, I tried to cover”.

“Someone showed me a drum cover once of ‘Youth’,” says Remi. “I remember going on YouTube and finding it and suddenly it’s the part you came up with being played by someone else.”

Eleanor gently furrows her brow beneath her heavy bangs, “Surreal...”

Remi laughs. “Exactly, surreal!”

Playing live their partnership becomes clear, communicating with shy glances and the faintest of smiles, backed by Igor’s shuddering guitars, with the technical subtlety of former jazz drummer Remi gently weaving it all together.

As the main lyricist, many of the songs are deeply personal to Eleanor. I wonder how difficult it is to share them with other people. Are there any she wouldn’t want to be heard?

“Yes, when I think about them too much.” She hesitates. “When I don’t think about it, it’s just a song and then suddenly I think, ‘Arggh shit, why am I telling everyone these personal things!?’ It’s like a moment of realisation.” Brushing it off with a shrug she adds, “Then I think that people already know my secrets anyway so it’s fine. There are days when you’re playing a song and

you get reminded why you wrote it and it can upset me a little bit. But while I’m on stage I try not to get too silly about things.”

“So has having others to share the songwriting process with helped?” I ask. Igor answers carefully. “I think that it’s a work in progress and it’s something that will take a long time for Eleanor to feel freer to let us other people into a song.” He adds as Eleanor laughs softly in the background, “because she’s been so used to doing things by herself that it will only grow as the months and years go by.”

Currently writing and producing their debut album, Igor is on co-producing duties with Rodaidh McDonald, the man responsible for both records by The xx. Eleanor explains, “We’re writing quite a lot of new songs and we don’t have a huge amount of time to live with them. We’re very much going on instinct and mood, following naturally where we think it should go and they are quite dark at the moment, a bit morbid maybe. I suppose it’s maybe easier for me to write about things like that.”

Darkness certainly becomes Daughter, with previous songs like ‘Love’ (from the band’s ‘The Wild Youth’ EP) carrying the biting sadness of love lost, twisted and tangled up with surging electro at its heart-rending conclusion. ‘Home’ has the slow percussive shuffle of Feist, with all of the shuddering, enveloping sadness and none of the joyful hum. The lyrics too provide little insights into the hurt contained within: *‘I think I should be a little bit more confident in myself, in my skin’*.

Taking things to a lighter place, I note that a recent interview commented on the artworks of ‘The Wild Youth’ and second EP ‘His Young Heart’, both of which feature pictures of a young Eleanor and her family. They laugh at my suggestion that Remi and Igor should be next and Eleanor explains the importance of having a connection to her past. “In the two EPs it was really important to embarrass myself and to have that link with that silly picture with me and my brother. Maybe in a way it made it less daunting to release something that has something familiar on it, made it a bit less scary, almost. But I think a lot of the songs have a running family theme to them. I write a lot about my parents and my family so I think I should probably carry on talking about them”. Laughing, she adds “Whether or not they’ll allow me to use anymore embarrassing photos or not I don’t know. But I’d like to.”

Daughter plan to release their debut album in January via 4AD, just in time for their first headline UK tour. It follows on from a two week American tour in October and one week in Europe in November, making for a long and busy road ahead. Eleanor smiles, determined. “It’s not going to be easy. But, you know, pressure’s good, right?”

New single ‘Smother’ with its sliding guitars and lushly orchestrated harmonies hint at a break from their usual Spartan sound, while still keeping the same soul-wrenching lyrics at its core: *‘Sometimes I wish I’d just stayed inside my mother, never to come out’*.

Backstage the debate rages on about what songs to include. Igor emphasizes that there won’t be many songs from the band’s previous releases. “We just kind of want to keep on progressing,” he says. “There might be one or two, we’re still weighing it up. It’s more about making something that glues together.”

Eleanor interjects, “It would be a nice touch to maybe just have one song.”

“So we’re not completely denying,” nods Igor.

Earlier this year they released a T-Shirt for mental health organization Mind, through offbeat charity scheme The Yellow Bird Project.

“They make T-Shirts basically that combine an artist with a charity and we were given the opportunity to choose, so we chose to work with Mind,” explains Eleanor before suddenly wavering and becoming fragile and birdlike.

“I thought it might be a really good idea and I really wanted to choose that charity.” Her voice fades to a whisper. “I think it relates quite a lot to...” She trails off as Igor finishes, “to the project.”

Personal demons aside, this year has been a confident one for Daughter. Currently on tour with Beirut, they have seen a slew of appearances at major festivals including Bestival and Latitude, and last year enjoyed support slots with Cloud Control, Sharon Von Etten and Mercury Prize nominated Ben Howard, who continues to champion the band.

Often mentioned in the same breath as female artists like Laura Marling, Eleanor is keen to make a distinction. “I think I’m quite different,” she says. “I’m not really a girl singer. I mean I am a girl, I’m not really a woman, but it’s not really like that, it’s more of a collaborative thing.”

“Maybe you’ll come across it more in the record,” says Igor. “Maybe not, but we’re very much in our own little bubble; we’re not really worrying about what other singer-songwriters are around.”

The band are elated to be having a break from the studio. Remi, in particular, enjoys the twist and turns of playing live. “I grew up listening to and playing jazz music,” he says, “so I don’t think I’ve ever played the same thing twice. Your mood is definitely going to define how you’re going to play that night, or what you’re going to create, or where it’s going to take you. Especially for jazz, but also for any kind of interesting music.”

Describing their previous recording experiences as “claustrophobic and intense”,

Eleanor explains, “It consisted of basically being trapped in flat for weeks on end, but I think when it’s not quite as crazy and confined it can be really great. It’s almost like a blank canvas, you can just start and chuck ideas at something and the whole creativity of it is amazing.”

She adds, “I think we’re massive perfectionists, to the extent of where sometimes it’s a bit ridiculous. There are times where we don’t agree on stuff, but with the album I don’t think we really have time. It’s our initial thoughts going out there, which will be terrifying but interesting. Because otherwise, knowing us, it would be five years from now and we’d still be tweaking something.”

Igor shakes his head. “Nah,” he says as Eleanor scowls at him disbelieving. “We would! Ok, maybe not 5 years, but...” She trails off again and Igor roars. “That’s for the second record,” he says.

I leave with an image of them still trapped in the flat, surrounded by recording equipment, constantly tweaking and reshaping their sound, only it’s five years later and they look like bedraggled castaways on a deserted island. Finally reconciling themselves to the past, it seems Daughter are ready to move on.

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS

IN CONVERSATION WITH JOHN DARNIELLE: LOU REED LOVER,
MITT ROMNEY SLAMMER AND ONE OF OUR GREATEST LIVING LYRICISTS

Photographer - DL Anderson | Writer - Daniel Dylan Wray

When I first interviewed The Mountain Goats, I started with the typical ‘so, new album...’ questions. He stopped me and said, rather refreshingly, “let’s just have a conversation.

“I’m going to get up on my soapbox for a second here,” he continued, “but we only live the one time, so when we have a conversation with somebody it should be fun, you know, instead of, ‘here are the same ten questions that just got asked before’. To me, why not just go ahead and work in a factory?”

And so, once again I (mostly) plunge into an agenda-free, all-topics-covered conversation with the wordsmith extraordinaire and furiously prolific chief Mountain Goat John Darnielle, ahead of his band’s (now consisting of long-time bass player Peter Hughes and Superchunk’s Jon Wurster) fourteenth studio album, ‘Transcendental Youth’.

Like many of Darnielle’s records, and especially the most recent offerings, it’s a slow-burner. An album carved out carefully and dexterously, one relying both on the intricate craft of the lyrics and the solid musical foundations they are built upon, it’s one that came together rather easily, John tells me.

“It’s the first time in a while that we’ve done the ‘dig in for a single long session’ style of recording and since the studio was only a mile or so from my house it was really a breeze.”

For long-time Mountain Goats fans, the inclusion of brass will be the most notable addition to the sonic palette. I put forward to John a recent quote from David Byrne regarding working with brass on his and St Vincent’s new record. Byrne told *The Stool Pigeon* last month, “Brass is always kind of big, whether it’s funky or orchestral sounding, or whatever – it’s not an intimate sound.”

I ask John if he has heard Byrne’s latest album? He hasn’t, “but I disagree with Mr. Byrne’s estimation of brass,” he says. “There’s actually an Ellington album called ‘The Intimacy of the Blues’, and it’s full of brass in that cosy, warm, intimate space. I’d disagree with the characterisation of any instrument or combination of instruments as having inherent qualities like ‘big’ or ‘intimate’ – it’s in what you do with it, not in the sound itself. Especially, like, if you listen to the horns on Van Morrison’s ‘And It Stoned Me’, they’re doing this small-section comment-on-the-lyric thing that’s as conversational and easy as a classical guitar echoing phrases in an unaccompanied voice-and-guitar piece... So I don’t think of brass as being something you can have a simple relationship to: it’s infinite, like any timbre.”

As demonstrated above, John’s instant ability and propensity to speak (often at length) perceptively and passionately about many given subjects has led him to not only be regarded as one of music’s greatest lyricists, but it has also seen him tackle a vast, often perplexing array of subjects and characters in his twenty-year career: from divorce concept albums (*Tallahassee*) to a record about methamphetamine users (*We Shall All Be Healed*) to an entire album based on and inspired by biblical passages (*The Life Of The World To Come*). In the last three albums alone you can also throw in songs about Charles Bronson, Liza Minnelli, Michael Myers, H.P Lovecraft,

Black Metal, Judy Garland and, if you dig further back in his career, you’d create a continuing list so varied and long it could fill up this entire article. It does, however, beg the question if any subject or character has ever proven too difficult to cover, or is maybe off-limits.

“Hmm,” he ponders. “I feel like there are stories I’ve come back to repeatedly and never fully gotten what I wanted out of them. I’m not entirely happy with any of my songs about boxing – I feel like the wrestling one, ‘Ox Baker Triumphant’, got a lot closer than any of the boxing-related ones have.

“There are some song titles that I’ve taken repeated stabs at and never gotten right. They go back into the drawer for later attempts.”

The subject of one song on the new record, ‘Harlem Roulette’, is based on the child-star Frankie Lymon, who, with his group The Teenagers, sang ‘Why Do Fools Fall In Love’ and shot to fame instantly as a teen himself. He was then drafted to fight in Vietnam, grew up and his voice of course changed from that of the boyish charm that had made him a star. After repeatedly going AWOL, he was dishonourably discharged from the army, was out of favour and within a musical landscape that had shifted dramatically, he struggled to get record deals or work until Roulette Records showed interest in him. A recording session was set for February 27th 1968. He cut a few tracks at the studio and celebrated by scoring some heroin. On February 28th he was found dead of an overdose on his Grandmother’s bathroom floor. John recently told *Pitchfork*, “I don’t know why, because I wasn’t myself a child star, but when people get famous too young and then it ruins them as people, I just get really sad thinking about it.”

Drugs have long been a staple part of Mountain Goats lyrics but not too much is known of John’s own relationship or proclivity towards them. “I took a lot of hard drugs when I was younger,” he openly tells me. “I generally try to avoid going into it at too much length – the main thing that’s interesting about drug use isn’t the mind-set or the actual drug experience, but the situations in which you find yourself when that’s the life your living, the people you run across and the places you end up spending time in.”

A prime example of this is ‘Letter from Belgium’, a glorious cut from 2004’s ‘We Shall All Be Healed’, with lyrical depictions of such conditions. “Yeah, we’re all here, chewing our tongues off/waiting for the fever to break... When we walk out into the sunlight we tell everyone we know it hurts our eyes/when the real reason we don’t like it is it makes us wonder if we’re dying.”

As anyone who has ever experienced a really great Mountain Goats show will testify, there is an energy and intensity John expels as a performer that can almost border on the frightening, such is the strength and concentration on display. I enquire if it’s a demanding task. Being human, John must not be in the mood from time to time?

“Sure, absolutely, but it usually only takes one song to get into the mood. The point shouldn’t be whether I’m in the mood or not – people paid to get in, the very least I

can do is find that mood that makes the night a good one and sustain it.

“I’d have to be pretty arrogant to think ‘well, I’m in a bad mood, and after all, you’re here to see what kind of mood I’m in,’ right? I just throw myself into the songs. Maybe I’ll throw some out of the list that I don’t feel like singing and replace them with ones that’ll make it easier to go into that lost-in-the-song place.”

When recently interviewing Michael Gira of Swans, he spoke to me about occasionally becoming possessed when performing live, transmuting into a character above and beyond his control, it taking hold of his body. Similar comparisons could be drawn to some Mountain Goats shows. “Probably not to the extent Gira does,” says John, “especially since his milieu is about transformation through excess, largely. I get very lost in the smaller moments, find myself disappearing into the narrative, but what Gira is talking about has to do with physical exertion to some extent, with the pure body-force of the sound. I have something like that, but it’s coming from a very different place, I think. It’s in the words themselves, in the stories and the power of telling them. There’s a similarity at the far end of thinking about these things, but mine isn’t possession, it’s more like some combination of memory and prophecy I think.”

Looking at John’s discography can be a bit of a head-spin. 14 studio albums, 23 EPs and multiple cassette-tape releases, demos, split releases and compilations. But the one consistent and clear thought that can be extracted from looking at these is John’s propulsion towards forward momentum. In a current age plagued by nostalgia and constant looking back, is it a culture that interests the Mountain Goats?

“I dislike it for myself,” says John. “If other people are into it, cool, it’s not my style to say ‘don’t enjoy what you enjoy’, but to me it is a somewhat sad idea. I go to shows to learn what’s new, not to tread over familiar ground. When an act I see plays a song I don’t know, I’m happiest: when they’re taking their newest songs to places they’re not entirely familiar with yet, when new things are afoot. The only band I’d go see doing a ‘plays x in its entirety’ show would be Souled American, and that’d only be because they don’t tour so I’d go see them no matter what they were doing. But this sort of intersection of nostalgia and celebration of canons that’s inherent in the thing you’re talking about: 100% not my scene. Totally ok if it’s other people’s scene, enjoyment of music is a net positive! But I won’t be doing one, no.”

In the 90’s John was notorious for recording straight into his boombox, recording entire albums of one-take bursts of guitar and vocals, caught gloriously on whirly, scratchy tape, the hiss in the background of his earlier material almost acting as an instrument itself.

“You know, I kind of am still a fan of tape cassette,” he says. “I don’t buy a lot of them, because a lifetime of music collecting has left space at a premium in our house, but when I do get one, I’m always kind of excited. There’s just a different feeling to playing one – the physical act of putting one in the deck has some weird muscle-memory effects and the slightness of the format is a virtue I think.”



"But I'm not in the neo-cassette scene or anything," he adds. "Occasionally I'll hear about something and I'll get it, but I listen to a lot of classical music these days: there is no movement to bring back the age of the cassette in the classical world," he laughs.

Earlier this year John made the press by laying the smackdown on Mitt Romney via Twitter. The Republican leader had commented on the death of Sally Ride, the world's first female astronaut, who was openly gay. "Sally Ride ranks among the greatest of pioneers. I count myself among the millions of Americans she inspired with her travels to space," Romney had said. John's response: "Kind of despicable and grotesque that her partner of 27 years will be denied federal benefits, don't you think?" It was a splendid, swiping hatchet at Romney's anti-same-sex-marriage views. I ask how the 47% are reacting, to which John responds in recurrently modest form. "Well, we're about to have an election," he says, "and the wheels seem to have come off the Republican party, which is a general good, though I'm not a cheerleader for the Democratic party, either. This country is essentially a plutocracy – the best we can do is elect the people who seem to have a little more of a conscience about things. I'm just some guy, though, I don't really consider myself qualified to lay out a terrain map of our political landscape. I'm very active in pro-choice politics, and so I support candidates likely to do less to erode the right to choose. I say 'do less', because the pro-choice movement here has few friends on either side of the aisle. A sad state! But I have to believe that the movement toward more rights, not less, will

"I GO TO SHOWS TO LEARN WHAT'S NEW, NOT TO TREAD OVER FAMILIAR GROUND. WHEN AN ACT I SEE PLAYS A SONG I DON'T KNOW, I'M HAPPIEST"

continue."

In true arbitrary fashion, as promised, we end with a discussion about Lou Reed and Metallica that turns into a further discourse on the state and existence of modern music journalism. John is a well-known Lou Reed fan and a devout and expert metal-head. "I actually lobbied Pitchfork to let me review it and they gave me the OK, and I started a piece, but it was very long and I couldn't get around to finishing it," he says. "Pretty complex piece of work. I think things like that are sort of bound to be ridiculed by people during their first listen to it, just given the climate now. I can't say I loved it, but people are generally given to responding as one would in a childhood classroom now, announcing their opinions on something without reflection, often during their first listen. What's the value in that? None, I think. I don't think an in-the-moment reaction or an immediately-after-listening reaction is of any particular value to understanding music; and the weirder the music is, the less value such a critical approach is going to have. I have this idea that nobody should review an album until he's lived with it for a few years. Obviously, given promotional cycles, that's never going to happen, it'd make a publicist's job very weird indeed, but if the question is 'How best to evaluate music?' the answer is 'over time', not 'based on one's first reaction'."

Thankfully, there is more than enough music in the Mountain Goats catalogue to appraise and ponder over a lifetime.

GROUP RHODA

THE ALL ENCOMPASSING INDUSTRIAL DUB PROJECT OF MARA BARENBAUM

Photographer - Suzy Poling | Writer - Daniel Dylan Wray

Group Rhoda is the one-women project of San Francisco's Mara Barenbaum. Her debut album, 'Out of Time, Out Of Touch', is out now on Night School Records and has proven to be one of 2012's beautiful, creeping underdogs; a glorious jarring of Suicide-like industrialism and Lee "Scratch" Perry dub-pop, the sort that made Peaking Lights '936' such a delight in 2011. Although, speaking with Mara, she tells me it wasn't a simple record to make. "This album was a bit of a struggle," she says. "I did not have the skills or resources to feel comfortable taking on the challenge entirely on my own... I went back to working with Brian Hock, who had initially helped me with my EP that I never released." The result is a dichotomous affair, a record that is at times dark, uncanny and elegiac, and at others bright, effervescent and sapid. "That is me!" says Mara. "Dark and light."

Mara is also both loquacious and deeply thoughtful when responding to questions.

"I think it has to do with my kind of Scorpio polar mood shifts," she ponders. "I want to be strong and self sufficient, but I also want to be sensitive and compassionate. Just because something seems dark and aggressive does not necessarily mean it is. Metal, for instance, can sound hard, but be really whiny. On the other hand there can be a stripped down quieted folk song with some of the darkest lyrical content possible. There is no reason to corner sounds or words into rigid meaning, it's just not that black or white."

Quite. It would be both redundant and difficult to paint 'Out of Time, Out of Touch' with such simple brush strokes and colours. The album is varied, textural and densely produced and layered, something seemingly mirrored in Mara's choice for inspiration. "My influences are really erratic," she tells me. "I have been noting Cabaret Voltaire as my favourite. It has sort of resonated with me the longest. Some other more referential influences include Alan Vega, TG, F242, Chrome, Anne Clark, Selda,

Aaliyah, Burzum, 2Pac, Legowelt. What do these acts share? They are all remarkably strong visionaries in both song writing and production; the 2D work of the songs becomes 3D through the production."

Mara, rather interestingly and in her own words via her website, describes the project as "an attempt at dealing with opposition, sharpening intuition, following instincts and turning ideas into actions. It exists under the influence of repetition, bad habits, fear, machines of decades past, the tropics, transient sounds, hazy recollections, light, colour, the desolate worlds around me and the spaces that are quieted from social noise. It is an effort to negate the sound of safety, control, wastefulness, weak mirroring, transparent shadowing and follow a path reflective of my own fabricated inner environment and imagination."

I ask whether this was something of a mission statement or a conclusion of your own, finished work.

"I think that statement on the website has always been a part of me," she says. "There, it is just slightly more poetic and articulate. It feels necessary and natural. I want to do anything I can to fight against control and complacency and I think that this medium is the best way I can do that. To me, fear is debilitating, so I told myself to fight those kind of instincts."

Mara, it appears, is a rapid worker too, whose plans for albums two and three are already well under way. As she plunges deep into explanation, she says, "The lyrical content of the new work, my forthcoming album and third album, is political. It's varied and subtle, and often-through metaphor, but it is definitely there. Themes include female independence via space travel, delayed maturity and the inability to leave home, the disempowered people that work as bearers of bad news for government and municipal authorities, homelessness and addiction, puzzlement towards excessive gentrification, 2Pac and his universal influence, the flow of wealth in America described through the water cycle

that is increasingly more toxic, faith in love, people who cannot see or care, the burden of difficult responsibilities – especially those in positions of conflict and power – children and their initial freedom from the oppressive awareness of gender roles and social conditioning. I can write about anything," she happily finishes. "These themes are not harsh and conclusive, but generally exploratory, aware and imaginative. I hope to continue that way."

As Group Rhoda isn't a group at all, but rather the sole work of Mara, freedom, as if the above list of topics didn't make it clear enough, is at the heart of the project, on stage as well as in the studio.

"One of my favourite things about this project is that I am not locked into the song," says Mara. "There are no backing tracks on stage, no song sequences I have to be in time with. I am free to play with the form and due to the analogue synths the tone as well. It feels more adventurous and reactive. For my set up, I have main keys, a bass synth above and drum machines, fx and a mixer by my side. It is often surprising for people to see me interface with all the components in real time and I like that..."

"The recordings differ from the live show, in that they are a bit more polished and they have some additional overdub work. I had to make this consideration and thought the recordings might benefit from some additional layers. Still, I do not think that the live act suffers; I feel, and others support this supposition, that the live act has some real tonal grit and personal character."

Us Brits will sadly have to wait until 2013 to find this out for ourselves, by which time Group Rhoda hopes to have a second album of material releases. "I plan to be in the UK late April or May," says Mara. "I waiting for the weather to become nice so I can really enjoy my time there." Hmm, could be a long wait...





PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

THE EVOLUTION WILL BE TELEVISED

Photographer - Dan Kendall | Writer - Reef Younis

Attempting to “teach the lessons of the past through the music of the future” is a bold mission statement, but it’s one that Public Service Broadcasting are equipped to deliver.

Based on a commitment to digging through BFI and propaganda archives, the elegantly monikered J.Willgoose, Esq. is a sample snaffler of the highest order, marrying the transcendent builds of electronica and post rock with the stiff upper-lipped nostalgia of wartime Britain.

Each track is a mini-masterpiece of craft and consideration; a triumph of crate-digging and archive footage given a new, powerful lease of life. A combination of spontaneous inspiration and careful planning, Public Service Broadcasting is a testament to the virtues of patience.

“Each song takes a while,” J begins. “There’s a fair bit of watching old films, a fair bit of contacting the people and getting the rights, and of course some people are more accommodating than others. Then you’ve got to write the flipping song. I couldn’t put a time on it in exact hours but a few months per track. The whole of the ‘War Room EP’ [released May of this year and featuring tracks as emotively titled as ‘Dig For Victory’, ‘Waltz For George’ and, simply, ‘Spitfire’] started in October and finished at the end of March so, that was a stretch – five songs, five months. It can be done a lot quicker but it’s better to take your time over it.”

“I’ve been doing it for three years now,” J continues, “but the first time it happened, I was listening to Radio 4 and Tom Robinson was interviewing someone from the national archives and they said they’d just published a lot of stuff from the 40s, 50s and 60s online. I went and had a listen, then in a very rudimentary, DJ Shadow-esque kind of way, put something together and played it to my friends. Contrary to everything else I’d ever played them, they said it was really good,” he laughs.

It’s a process that hinges on a dedicated tunnel vision

to single tracks, as opposed to churning through and refining a voluminous amount of content. It’s an intense process for J to perfect.

“I only ever work on one thing at a time,” he says. “That isn’t to say everything I start I finish, but it’s not like I can churn out 60 tracks and whittle them down. I definitely need four/five hour chunks of time so that if something hits me I can run with it. Often it’s three or four hours of banging your head against a wall when you’re trying to work out where a song’s going but sometimes it just makes sense. It’s just working hard to get what’s in your head out there.”

As with any instrumentally based act (there are vocals, but they come, facelessly from the archives), the transition from record to live performance is always a challenging one. It meant bringing in drummer Wigglesworth and evolving the show to rely on electronic backing as little as possible. For such a meticulous production process on record, it means that J puts particular emphasis on making the Public Broadcasting Service as much of a live event as possible. “And I’ve got better at it and better at writing things a certain way,” he says, “so things can be built up naturally live, and not rely on backing tracks. One thing I didn’t want to do was play live and be one of those people that just presses buttons. It’s all really clever but it makes it harder for people to engage with what you’re doing and I think it just creates a barrier between you and the audience. It’s finding a balance between giving the performance a live feel and also not making it prohibitively clever. Technically, it’s a bit of a challenge but it keeps it interesting.”

J “works on the principle that everything should be able to go horribly wrong.”

“Not something like your laptop catching fire,” he hastens to add, “more that you should be able to play a wrong note or if you reach a point where you miss a riff or a loop, the song is screwed. There has to be that risk of

you falling flat on your face.”

After releasing ‘The War Room’ EP, J is already planning ahead. Both live and on record, evolution is the prominent driving force and a healthy fear of predictability, not failure, continues to ensure that Public Service Broadcasting will continue to push on. But for all the sepia-toned sentimentality, the corduroy and elbow patches, and the 1960s TV sets, it’s evident that there’s a determined, futurist focus at work.

J explains: “I don’t want to come across as pretentious and unable to laugh at ourselves because I started this all with the intention of not making it about me, and pouring my heart and soul into it, although that invariably happens.”

“Three years ago it was just me, playing live and there was no video. Then Wigglesworth came on-board and started playing drums, I started using video on an old TV set and now we’ve got projectors. It’s become much more audio visual.”

When J goes to see shows himself, he’s usually the guy looking the opposite way to everyone else. “I watch to see what people enjoy,” he says, “and then, in a moment of madness, I signed up for a week at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and had to challenge myself to make the show much more entertaining. It wasn’t necessarily a cynical move; it was about making it fun for people to watch and leaving a room of happy people.”

“I know what the next EP is and even the next two after that,” he says. “The first album is basically written. A few things will need reworking but I want it to be a statement of what I can do. I don’t want to become pigeonholed so the challenge is always to develop and think of something new. But there hasn’t been an album yet so if I really need to change something, I’ll do it for the album and make sure it’s right. I don’t want to fuck it up.”



ALUNAGEORGE

HERE TO MAKE THE TOP 40'S R&B OBSESSION A LITTLE WEIRDER

Photographer - Phil Sharp | Writer - Stuart Stubbs

Halfway between Finsbury Park, North London, and Hampton Court, south west of everything, is Ravenscourt Park, a place for yoga, 4x4s, legions of dogs and, one suspects, chit chat about who might win The Great British Bake Off. The measurements have been calculated with impressive accuracy – it really is neutral ground. In Ravenscourt Park, the estates have electric gates that glide open to allow cars the privilege of slipping in and out.

Opposite one of these estates is a narrow alleyway squashed up against a large, black gastro pub. At the bottom we knock on the door of a skewed outhouse where we are greeted by George Reid. Aluna Francis is sat on the floor of the hallway twisting her hair around a curling iron. “I’m guessing you’ve heard,” she says, furrowing her otherwise fresh face. “Oh, you haven’t. My makeup artist has had a car crash.”

“She’s ok,” Aluna’s stylist quickly assures us, but it doesn’t take a genius to sense that the real problem is that she’s not coming.

Aluna says that she briefly considered going to Boots to get fixed up, atop one of the high stools in front of one of the beauty counters. Calling an emergency makeup artist (they exist) seemed like an even better option. She was on her way.

It’s all very new to us. In seven years of Loud And Quiet we’ve not once had a makeup artist, let alone stylist, on a shoot. The closest we’ve come was when we photographed Bat For Lashes in 2009, but even she did hers herself. Maybe others always did it before we/they arrived, or maybe we weren’t special enough. The latter is definitely more likely, but trumping both is that we’ve never really interviewed anyone so clearly poised for an assault on glossy chart music as AlunaGeorge.

The outhouse is the duo’s base and none-too-shabby recording studio, equidistant between their homes in Finsbury Park (Aluna) and Hampton Court (George). They’ve been here for almost a year, in a room down the end, creating polyrhythmic RnB pop embroiled in George’s glitch electronics and Aluna’s pitch-shifted vocals. They find duties like this, which have mushroomed since they stepped off tour with Brooklyn’s Friends this year, and more so since the release of debut EP ‘You Know You Like It’ in June, “distracting, but not horrible”. And in their corner of Ravenscourt Park, they cheerfully welcome me, pushing work on their debut album to one side for another afternoon.

“Music was never something I thought I could do with all my time,” begins Aluna, who, not unlike the quiet-but-only-by-comparison George, is instantly familiar, “but I was in Sainsbury’s car park, ready to go in for a job interview and my mum who had driven me there was like, ‘Erm, do you want to work at Sainsbury’s?’ So I said, ‘Erm, no, I don’t actually’. So she said, ‘Do you want to be a singer and do that properly?’, so I said, ‘Oh, erm, yeah’. And she said, ‘well, go on then’.”

Aluna says that her mum denies any recollection of this extremely humane act, even if it does paint her as the most understanding parent in recorded history. “She had her hippy roots out for a second,” says Aluna. “Well, she is a yoga teacher.”

Poor George’s pardon from gameful employment in French Connection never came. FCUK! And this, in the face of his natural gift for music, or a gift instilled in him from an early age, at least. “Like a lot of kids, I was

encouraged to learn a musical instrument,” he says, “so I did piano lessons and hated it. Then I thought, ‘oh, guitars are cool’, so I switched to that, but it was classical guitar and I realised I wasn’t in a rock’n’roll band.”

Years later, George learned ‘Mission Impossible’ on a friend’s bass guitar of a Christmas present, something he found even easier than most. Inspired, he started to pick up instruments again, “because everything’s better when you’re already good at it,” he notes.

By 16 he had started making music while Aluna, unbeknown to him, was doing as her mother had instructed, enrolling in singing lessons and lending her vocals to her then boyfriend’s compositions.

“When I started out, it was before the complete access-all-areas computer revolution,” says George. “I was so into Radiohead and then I heard ‘Kid A’ and was like, ‘oh, maybe I should be sounding like this as well now. Huh, my guitar isn’t making that noise?’. So I got a rubbish old keyboard and hooked it up through all of my guitar pedals that I’d acquired through being such a Radiohead fan, and I wrote a song with a loop pedal and digital 4-track.”

George – or Tall George, as he was then, he thinks – uploaded his new electronic experiments to Myspace, which caught the attention of a producer on the site. “But he couldn’t write music at all; he was just a technical producer, and he really liked this stuff I’d made so I would

figure out why no one was making them into proper songs. Why hasn’t this music got a song on it? Sometimes you try it out and realise, ‘oh, that’s why it hasn’t got a song on it’ – sometimes the music doesn’t let anything else breath.”

George was becoming more and more enamoured with the lighter side of electronic music, where Air, Prefuse 73 and Royksopp play. He “adored” Chris Clark too, and Aluna shared his quizzical obsession – why was so much of the most inventive electronic music never made into melodic, accessible pop songs? George’s beloved Radiohead has been onside for years. “It’s one of the most remarkable things about them,” he says. “They have all these eccentric sounds going on, but you can always hum the song back to yourself – there’s always a sneaky pop song in there somewhere.” He notes that there are some others out there doing it, making music that is simultaneously popularist and “bloody bizarre”, in Timberland’s case. “I find him quite remarkable,” says George. “There’s so much going on and I think, ‘oh, wow, he’s got away with that, hasn’t he?’”

“The thing about pop music is you can’t just let it come to you,” says Aluna, dispelling the popular myth. “You do need to find it because there’s tonnes of really good stuff, it’s just that the major players aren’t showing it to you. Occasionally you get someone like Gotye going to number one, but ultimately you need to do your research now.”

“Gotye’s not my cup of tea,” says George, “but when something like that does go to number one it restores your faith in people in a way, just because it’s a bit different and it’s not instant and it’s gone to number one. When that Usher track ‘Climax’ made it into the top ten, although it is a dubstep track it’s got so little going on in it, it’s wonderful. I think people are more accepting than some people give them credit for.”

AlunaGeorge’s next stab at your smarter-than-average pop song is new single ‘Your Drums, Your Love’, out later this month on Island Records. It’s a resounding success whatever way you look at it, featuring manipulated Purity Ring-style vocals one minute and Aluna’s girl band, cutesy chorus the next. George leaves the vinyl crackle in, and the globular intricacies of Royksopp. There’s a good reason why Radio 1 are pinning AlunaGeorge as popstars of La Roux proportions, and let’s face it, if Radio 1 think it they can make it so.

As we walk into the park for photos, George receives a text to let him know that their new single has made the radio station’s playlist, which sparks a short burst air punching. A week earlier AlunaGeorge played London Fashion Week, performing at Moschino’s runway show. George, who was given a suit from the fashion house for his troubles, to his credit, remains as grounded as any other Radiohead fan. “That show was fun,” he says. “I mean, you don’t get anything out of it, because no one gives a shit that you’re there, but you don’t know how fleeting this is going to be, and it’s good to have stories like that to tell your grandkids.”

When I ask Aluna if she’s less of a worrier than George, she simply shakes her head. She looks good though, in full make up, even if she didn’t really need it. When you’re going to be a pop star, you might as well get used to it.

“I WAS LISTENING TO A LOT OF INSTRUMENTAL HIP-HOP AND I COULDN’T FIND OUT WHY NO ONE WAS MAKING IT INTO PROPER SONGS”

trade with him. I’d send him my tracks, of, like, me pissing about on a keyboard for eight minutes, and he’d send me software.”

“I was in a band called My Toys Like Me, at the time,” says Aluna. “George asked if he could remix one of our tracks [‘Sweetheart’].”

Between them, Aluna still with one ear cocked to the studio door for the sound of an arriving makeup saviour, the pair tell me how, after a couple of serendipitous Myspace searches on George’s part, they began working on a batch of original songs together.

“Then it became a choice,” says Aluna, “because the guy I was working with at the time went a bit mental and was like, ‘You’re either one hundred per cent committed to me and this band or you can fuck off.’ I was like, ‘I don’t like you very much.’”

The makeup artist arrives and pokes her head into the studio. “Oh no, it’s even worse,” she says referring to the light (fairs fair, there’s not one external window in the small room), so we follow her back to the hallway.

“I was listening to loads of instrumental hip-hop music,” continues George while Aluna consults the makeup artist, “like really glitch heavy stuff, trying to learn how to do that sort of thing, and I just couldn’t



SHARM EL SHAKES

A VERY BRITISH PUNK BAND

Photographer - Owen Richards | Writer - Ian Roebuck

"There's really no way to answer that question and take it seriously." I've just asked George Haberis, lead singer of punk band Sharm El Shakes, a loaded gun of a question. "The whole concept of punk being dead comes from a really simplistic view of what it is – spiky hair, gobbing, pogoing and getting the national media in a tizz by swearing on TV. If that's what you're talking about, then, sure, it's dead. But that whole interpretation of punk is not something we prescribe to." You can probably guess the question and George is right to put me in my place. An evolving ideology, punk doesn't die, it simply moves with the times as unique forms of expression come and go. Besides, one person's punk is another's herbal tea.

Right now George's band are playing a particularly British take on the genre, albeit influenced by American bands such as Teenage Jesus and the Jerks and George's favourite, The Modern Lovers.

The world punk was shaped in, one which harboured a necessity for communal support and a strong sense of group mentality, is very different to the world Sharm El Shakes live and play in today, says guitarist Henry Withers. "Yeah, sure there's a community of bands like before who all help each other, but it's completely different," he says. "Just as the '80s hardcore community was different to the British post punk movement of the late '70s and '80s, we are different now. There's a community in the sense that we have a studio, friends do sound for us and work the bars, we have friends in bands like Sauna Youth, but there is no necessity in today's environment. We eat, we can use the Internet and we all have separate jobs."

It wasn't long ago that the tight-knit Sharm El Shakes were playing in separate bands too, Henry in Lovvers along with bassist Michael Drake, George in Prize Pets and drummer Dominic Haley in French Kissing. So this is a band born out of that community. A supergroup.

"Absolutely," chimes Dominic with expert timing making George laugh. "I've heard that phrase thrown about although I'm not so sure."

They've all walked the block with varying degrees of success, Henry arguably the most. This band was formed as a direct reaction to the demise of their previous bands, although not for any wanton desire or hunger for the limelight explains Henry. "One of our main criteria, well our only criteria really, was that we all had to live within a mile radius of each other. I don't want to mess about as my other band's in Nottingham (Henry's also in Human Hair) and I was in a band before where all four of us were in different cities, it was a nightmare."

George concurs that this really is a no stress band. "Yeah, Prize Pets were up and down from Nottingham to London too and now one of the band has moved to Korea so that was that."

Sharm El Shakes – who formed less than a year ago – now just have to hop on the 56 bus. Dominic was the final piece of the jigsaw. "I was on a date and Henry came up to me and said, 'hey do you want to be a drummer in our band?'. I must have looked like the coolest man in the world. It kind of looked like it had been planned though."

As for success, to Sharm El Shakes it seems to be marked by their continued friendship and maybe, just maybe, getting a record out. "Yeah, success isn't why we do this," says George. "Really, for us, it's a release and something outside of a job that's fun. There's no plan but it'd be cool to put out a 7 inch."

Dominic has a different stance on the matter. "I joined to get chicks, but it's not worked," he says. "That is definitely the most stupid myth about playing in a band ever."

There does, however, remain a real intent to the music of Sharm El Shakes. Fuelled by ennui and shot through with a dry wit, the band's visceral playing style

drives their material forward, and can end up sounding like Pere Ubu. It is punk of course but there are melodies, mid paced garage numbers in the mix and a full hearted, extremely British, delivery to every track.

"The music's quite like a skeleton," explains Henry. "It's not fleshed out with distortion and layers and you can hear everything that's happening, which is definitely a trait of older punk music. This is quite unassuming music though, a bit more held back."

For both him and Michael, who'd come from the distinctly America-influenced Lovvers, a more British sensibility gradually became important, "and I can't do a decent American accent," adds George.

"I tell you what," says Henry, "and this is probably quite boring if you're reading a magazine, but the way we write songs is very different, too. You come to realise that the workflow from band to band is radically different. This band is boy meets bass, writes sequential line and passes to guitarist who comes up with his parts and puts a twist on it. They practice and finally the singer adds lyrics. There is no ego in this band." They all nod in unison before Dominic tells us what it's really about. "Yes, let's be honest with ourselves here," he says and pauses. "It's all about who can pull the best face on stage." Henry chuckles. "I thought we were a blank faced band."

"We don't know what's going on behind us," says George. "Dom's obviously going crazy."

We start with a loaded question so refrain from finishing on one, but George's guidance seems prudent after spending time with the band. "That thing about punk, who cares anyway? I mean, what if we all agreed it was dead? What are people going to do then? Stop playing in bands? Stop putting on shows and releasing records? I don't think so! We do it because we simply enjoy it, right."

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...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD

EIGHTEEN YEARS INTO THEIR DEAFENING CAREER,
CONRAD KEELY AND JASON REECE REMAIN TRUE TO THE WAY THEY'RE WIRED.
LOUD AND FREE

...And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead have spent the last 15 years building a legacy of volume and grandiose power. There have been defining albums (the seminal 'Source Tags and Codes'), disappointments ('So Divided' is exactly that), roaring returns (the all-engulfing might of 'The Century of Self'), logistics, geographical battles and label upheaval.

But then Trail of Dead have always been fuelled by velocity and energised by a riotous ambition, happiest when simply recording, touring and "keeping on". A post-hardcore band with apocalyptic tenacity, when they get the bombast right, the force of the feedback is of richter-scale proportions; a scintillating blaze of visceral energy that sits poised and impending, balanced

by majestic composition and a patient anticipation for demolishing everything they build.

Now eight albums in, and with an ever-burgeoning history, the trials and tribulations of the last six years have put the band in arguably a better position than ever before. Conrad Keely's geographical displacement (he moved from the band's Austin base to New York and currently resides in Cambodia) and the notoriously awkward split from Interscope Records seemed to push Trail to their limits, but as founding member Jason Reece notes, some bands are built to last.

"It's come with a lot of ups and downs and it's something we've worked hard to maintain and keep together when it's felt like it's falling apart," he muses.

"We've managed to make eight albums and it's pretty crazy knowing we have so much out there, musically, to offer. Not all bands are built to last and it's best you do your best album and you're done. If this was our last record, we're ending on a high note. I'm proud of what we've done here."

The band's experience of being on a major (they were with Interscope from 2002 to 2006) was largely a happy one, but the commercial struggles of fifth album 'So Divided' seemingly exacerbated the disenchantment for both band and label. It culminated in an angry blog post from Keely blasting the Interscope management ("We finally have the artistic freedom we've always wanted, with no pressure to create radio music, no legal

department to OK our artwork, and no A&R breathing down our necks") and resulted in the ultimate "Fuck you, man!" with the band leaving the label.

"It's difficult to get caught up in the past," Jason starts. "You just start doubting yourself so it's best to just plough forward," he laughs. "I don't think we were manipulated by Interscope to do things... they pretty much left us alone. I think we had a bit of a fan base within the label when they first signed us but when they disappeared we just felt we didn't really fit into that world anymore. I don't relate to all these people and they don't understand where we're coming from so they left us to our own devices, really, but it felt like we had to make a decision."

"It was a question of whether we wanted to keep continuing on this major label track where it's a machine and I think we just felt no-one really supported us and that was why we decided to drop out of the label and do our own thing. It's just the philosophy of keeping on, but sure, we've looked back at the choices we've made and thought we could have done this but I could look back and think, 'What if I didn't smash that guitar... I'd still have it?' It doesn't achieve anything worrying about it."

The decision has, however, ultimately served the band well. After a three year absence to re-focus, regroup and coalesce, 2009's 'The Century of Self' re-ignited the firebrand spirit and creativity and put the band on the edge they needed to roar back, emphatically. But part of a major label set up for their previous three albums meant finding the time, budget and logistics to make sure their return didn't go unnoticed. Trail of Dead "didn't really have a home" and had little clue of what they were going to do next. Fortunately, they found a small label that would distribute them and provide a small budget to help with production costs.

Modest deals with Justice Records and Superball Music, along with their own Richter Scale imprint, have seen the band emerge as angry, hungry and forceful as ever with the progressive, mythical meanderings of 'Tao of the Dead' dropping to positive acclaim in 2011. Latest album, 'Lost Songs', is a full departure from the 15-minute scores of its predecessor, hitting with Trail of Dead's accelerated, blitzkrieg intensity. It transmits the speed, apathy, anger and frustration of world events, Conrad and Jason seething in unison about the Syrian conflict, global unease and, erm, Game of Thrones.

"Basically what we were seeing and observing helped us write," says Jason. "We were thinking about topical events but it's not all political. There are references to the Syrian conflict in one song ('Up To Infinity') but for the most part there are songs about Austin, Texas, and the apathetic party scene there. There are a lot of people who just hang out there, and they don't even have bands or are doing anything creative, it's just vapid. Austin used to have more of a family musical scene and it's a bit lost now. I think that happens when cities become bigger and things become more spread out, but we're just sort of aware of that and critiquing it in a sense."

"But yes, I wrote a song that's totally inspired by Game of Thrones, so it's all over the place," he laughs. "Before, we wanted to connect the two albums somehow but 'Tao' is more krautrock and progressive where you have 17-minute songs and with the new album it's fast and hard-hitting three minute songs. To me they're not polar opposites, it's still us, but with every record we've given people something different, for the most part. That's the intention and we've always tried to do that."

Logistics is something the band have had to get used to over the years, splitting time between Austin, Conrad and the various album recording locations in between. 'Lost Songs' presented another opportunity for adventure and exploration, breaking out of the band's Texan bubble and heading for Hannover, Germany.

Cocooned in the studio and settled in their relative ways, the sense of detachment seemed to feed the anger and apathy that fuels 'Lost Songs'.

"The idea was to get out of town and get out of Austin," Conrad explains, today wearing a 'Free Pussy Riot' t-shirt. "We wanted to go somewhere where we were away from anything familiar and comfortable to get us focused. It seemed like a long way to go to do a record but if you have the opportunity to do that, you should take it. It's adventurous and that was part of the goal. We've done a lot of different records that way - started off in Austin, went away and then came back and mixed. We have records where it was like, 'that was the California record', 'that was El Paso record'. They become snapshots, basically."

"It doesn't make it easy, but we have a tendency to work pretty quickly once we get into the state of mind and mode of recording," says Jason. "For this album, once the process got going and things got rolling, we had a ton of ideas that were coming out quickly. For days we did a lot of compiling of jams and making of noise and the structure started happening and we came up with the lyrics in Hannover, isolated from any familiarity or distractions because we didn't really know anyone there."

"It felt like we were the only Americans in town because it's a really German city. You go to Berlin and there's an expatriate presence of British and Americans but in Hannover we were in our own little world. I guess for us we would read about whatever was going on, and whatever we're into we tend to write about. Basically there are a lot of songs where we're singing about war and battle and the record's heavy for it and kinda like a ruckus."

In the search for a fresh focus, absconding to unfamiliar territory resulted in an album consciously clinical by Trail of Dead's previously lavish standards. Forsaking the progressive indulgence of 'Tao of the Dead', and the booming orchestral flourishes that characterised much of their output over the last decade, 'Lost Songs' is fighting fit, charged and uncluttered, a collection more intent on delivering constant jabs instead of building to a definitive knockout blow.

"I think we don't get analytical about it too much," Jason considers. "I just think whichever direction we were going, we weren't going to fight it. We just submitted to it and they were pretty raw-sounding songs and even the fucking drums, we'd take the mics down to make it more minimalistic and use less to gain more."

"Trail of Dead has always done more, layered a load of shit and this is the album where you hear my guitar on the side and Conrad's on another and it makes sense for the song. It's not clouded up with the orchestral but it still sounds that way, but that's our band. Even if we cut away a load of keyboards and strings and we're determined to take it to the bare bones, it still sounds big to me."

It's still unmistakeably Trail of Dead and after watching a short, rather strange, acoustic set after our interview, compared to the twin drum assault of previous tours, the prospect of showcasing new material at their infamously emphatic live show is an exciting one for fans and band alike.

"I don't know if we necessarily have a set method of how things should be but we kind of just let whatever comes together naturally happen," says Conrad. "It's one of those things; you do all this music and you're at the point where you're talking about it, it seems so far away right now. I actually made a record and wrote lyrics and flew and drove... it's been a couple of months since we finished it and it feels surreal. I guess once we get out and start playing it live, it'll feel more real."

The live show is arguably what the band have built

their proud legacy on over the years and 'Lost Songs' feels like an album designed to be played out with all the primal power and frustration the band can channel. There's certainly been a lot over their chequered history with the band's trajectory since 2002's 'Source Tags and Codes', by that high standard, flatlining for a while.

The freedom and release of doing things their way has helped shift the momentum once again, and while it's unlikely they'll ever generate the excitement their early releases did, Trail of Dead are very much a band to still be excited about.

Unencumbered by the past, unleashed in the studio and doggedly delivering on a promise of uncompromise, there have been mistakes and maybe a few regrets, but right now, no-one is pausing to give them any consideration. I'm not sure they ever really did. Just follow the trail.

"We have been perfectionists about records in the past and spent times tweaking and fixing. We tried to stay away from that this time and just let things fly off the handles and just let it happen," Jason grins. "If there's noise or feedback and it feels a little out of place, we just left that in. As aggressively as the music has come out, it's just about playing live and being in a room and playing really fucking loud. I think this record will translate really well live... maybe it's a subconscious thing that we just let happen? I think even if you don't intend to do something, it comes from your personality or the way you are. This is just the way we're wired."

"I COULD LOOK BACK AND THINK, 'WHAT IF I DIDN'T SMASH THAT GUITAR... I'D STILL HAVE IT', BUT IT DOESN'T ACHIEVE ANYTHING WORRYING ABOUT THE PAST"

EGYPTIAN HIP HOP

AFTER THE INITIAL MEDIA FRENZY OF 2009,
EGYPTIAN HIP HOP WENT TO GROUND AND DITCHED
THE POP TO FINALLY BRING US THE
APPROPRIATELY TITLED 'GOOD DON'T SLEEP'

Photographer - Tom Cockram | Writer - Daniel Dylan Wray

When Egyptian Hip Hop started making waves in 2009, they were the epitome of the 'Buzz Band', a term replacing such previous accolades and tags as 'flavour of the month' or – such was the pace of the churning blog-machine of hype – 'flavour of the week'. A new cultural phenomenon was in full swing and it was one that Egyptian Hip Hop was locked in at the helm, whether they liked it or not. Singles and an E.P were released, all to an ever-increasing wave of fevered hype. For some time they seemed omnipresent. At a frightfully young age they were sucked into the gut of the industry machine, chewed up – being offered a record deal from Universal, who disliked the album, fired the A&R guy that signed the group and sent the band on their way – and spat out with the same force and gusto they were initially consumed by.

At the other end of this journey they sit in front of me today, all the better and wiser from their experience and with a new record that their earlier material didn't suggest they were even capable of creating. Time, it seems, has been more than kind to Egyptian Hip Hop. Signed to R&S records, the A&R man that had taken their talent to Universal had stuck with them and brought them to his current label.

I sit down with singer Alex Hewett, drummer Alex Price and keyboardist Louis Stevenson-Miller, a staggering departure from the band we met in September '09, not surprisingly considering they were then school leavers. We meet in a bar nestled in the heart of Manchester's Northern Quarter, a fast rising kind of place that offers good quality beer at ever-escalating prices. "This area has become so gentrified," says Louis.

Initially the most talkative of the group, Louis talks of his hometown of New Mills, a bizarre-sounding, time-lapse town that lies equidistant between Manchester and Sheffield. "We've been trying for ages to arrange a gig in a burnt down cotton mill," he tells me, "but the guy is really health and safety conscious, so I'm not sure it will happen."

Talk flies back and forth between Alex P and Louis about the odd creatures that live there, while Alex H quietly sips tea. "Do you remember last time I was there?" Louis asks Alex P. "That guy just rode his bike straight into me, shouting 'Michael Jackson' at me," he deadpans. He continues to explain this increasingly bizarre sounding place: "Because it is equally as far away from any major city or culture, they just get everything really late, there," he says. "People still had curtains (the '90s haircut) up until a few years ago, and they only quite recently got chavs and because they are so far behind the times, they try really aggressively to fit in, so you have a lot of really angry chavs there."

As talk turns from the *League of Gentlemen*-like New Mills to the band's music, a role reversal occurs. Louis becomes silent, at times looking painfully bored and





later on even whistling and humming to himself to fill the time (I'm later informed he has been rather ill recently, which may explain it), while Alex H suddenly sparks into life and seems endlessly content to talk about his band's debut – and really rather great – album 'Good Don't Sleep'. By the way, the amount of times the word 'mature' will have been used to describe the album will be hitting five figures by Christmas.

From 2010 until now it seemed as though Egyptian Hip Hop had disappeared. No interviews. No shows. Nothing. As it transpires, during this absence Alex H became a touring band member of Connan Mockasin and subsequently Charlotte Gainsbourg for some time. So, did the oddball, wonky nature of Connan's pop have an impact on EHH's new material or writing process?

"I think the process is just so different, being a part of someone else's band," says Alex. "I was touring without the pressures and expectations of it being my own band. It's not really relatable or transferable in that respect, so our stuff was always a separate entity. Besides, we had already pretty much written the record."

When I ask if the album delay was label related, Alex P looks over cautiously at their manager who gives him the nod. He goes ahead to explain their flirtation and almost inevitable sour experience with a major label, albeit, one must add, that has ended up in a better situation for all. "To be honest, with the Universal thing, by the end everyone we knew there that had expressed an interest or believed in us had been fired or left. We're really happy at R&S, they have a great roster and there is a feeling of respect and having a little more attention where their roster is a bit more selective."

Like there was for certain people at Universal, for early fans of the band disappointment may loom ahead. While not only are previous singles and material dropped altogether from the record, stylistically it's a vast departure from their rather surface-level entry, earlier

material. The 'next MGMT' tag doesn't apply here, and the album's arguable highlight is rather a Brian Eno-like tangle of weird, electronic, almost dub-paced atmospherics – 'Snake Lane West'. It acts as just about the most glaring antithesis possible to the earlier likes of 'Wild Human Child', 'Rad Pitt' and 'Moon Crooner'. "I mean, you've heard it," says Alex of the frustration of people wanting to hear old material. "You know it already, why on earth would you want it on something new? It's even stupid from a value for money sense too."

An undeniable and apparently invaluable contribution to the album is the inclusion of producer Richard Formby, whose handy work has transformed Wild Beasts from idiosyncratic, archaic oddballs into fully-fledged pop stars through his silky production skills. "We wanted Richard because he has covered all aspects and territories," says Alex H. "He's done weird experimental music, jazz, ambient and pop music like with Wild Beasts."

"He brought a lot of analogue equipment with him," says Louis.

"And he was just great to work with," adds Alex P. "He allowed us a lot of room and flexibility whilst also being quite guiding and supportive."

The album seems to exist in a state of flux between relative pop convention and breathy, ethereal textures. There are moments that resemble a more electronic-tinged bleak-meets-pop fusion of The Cure's 'Disintegration' or 'Pornography'.

"I don't think we specifically had it in mind to divide the songs up into 'this one's a pop song and this one's a slow or experimental one,'" says Alex P.

Alex H continues: "Yeah, especially when we came to sequencing the album, we wanted a bleed between the tracks rather than thinking in terms of convention or in a calculated way."

The desired effect has worked; in many senses the

"KNOWING HOW FICKLE THINGS CAN BE, WE DID WONDER IF ANYONE WOULD GIVE A SHIT WHEN RETURNING WITH THIS ALBUM"

album feels mixed and – for want of a better word – floaty, as sonic atmospheres link the songs, creating a record that while varied and prone to experimentation, is remarkably coherent and complete. So fresh is their return to action that the band haven't even really had time to play the material anywhere outside of the studio.

"We recently played a festival in Tunisia (pop in Djerba) but that was the first time we've played in almost two years," says Alex P.

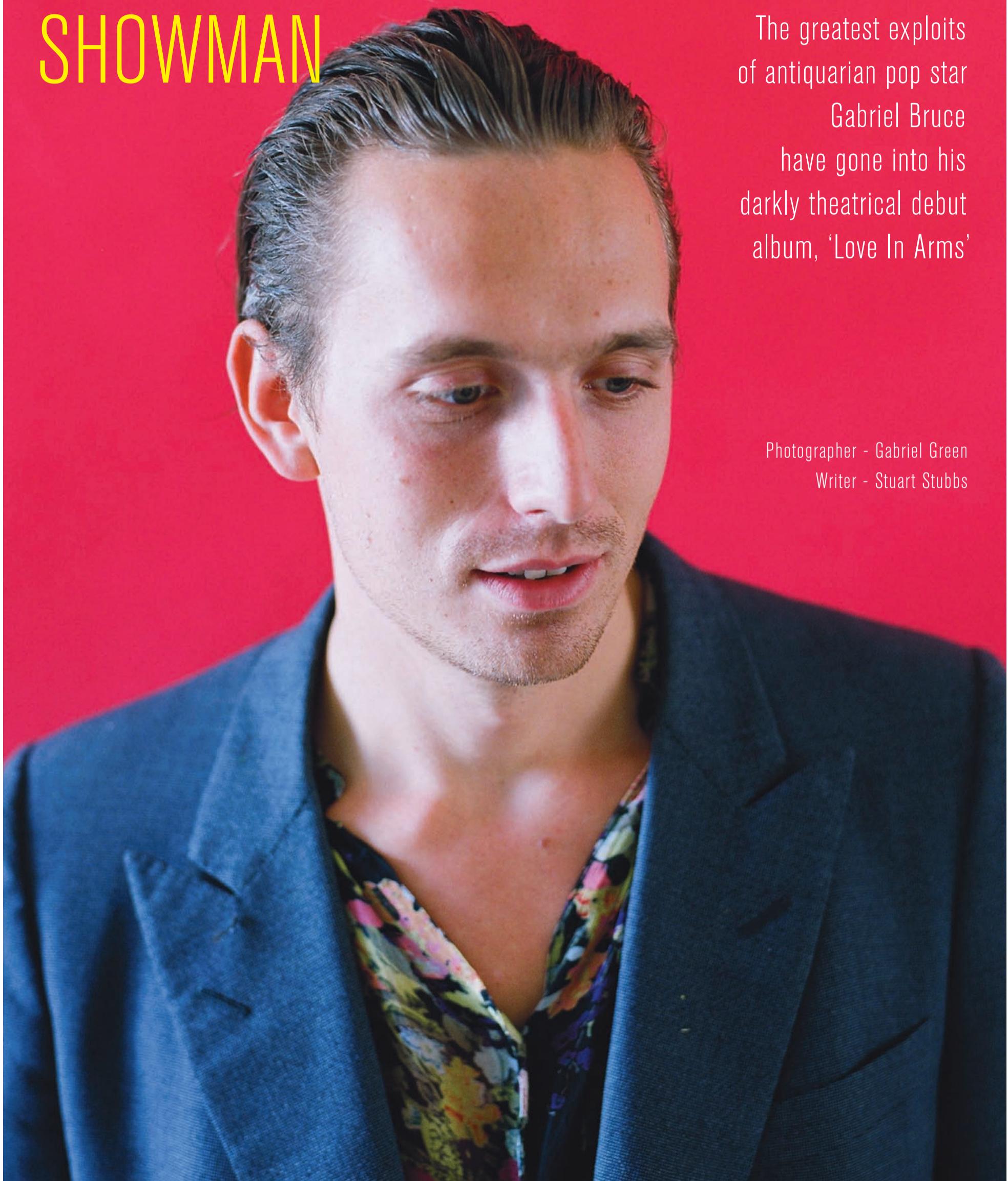
Ironically, the gap in which EHH have left since their last EP release is almost so long (in today's music age) that any element of not giving a shit about a previous 'buzz band' has now passed and recycled itself into genuine intrigue again. "Well, I hope that's the case," says Alex H. "Knowing how fickle things can be, we did wonder if anyone would give a shit when returning with this album."

Perhaps most to their credit is how Egyptian Hip Hop have coped with the extremities that come with buzz band boom and bust. They remain uncynical; perhaps more upbeat than ever. "We're not bitter at all," smiles Alex P. "We certainly don't hold any grudges or resentment towards anyone, certainly not in the press. It's just an unfortunate part of the industry we sampled. The rest has been great and we're really looking forward to what happens next."

CONFESIONS OF



A SHOWMAN



The greatest exploits
of antiquarian pop star
Gabriel Bruce
have gone into his
darkly theatrical debut
album, 'Love In Arms'

Photographer - Gabriel Green
Writer - Stuart Stubbs

G

abriel Bruce makes a bad suit look good. And a nylon blouse. The son to a Scottish Brazilian father ("the most handsome man in the world") and an antique dealing mother, Gabriel is 23 and a one-time model. "I did that for a bit when I needed some money," he notes, emptying his pockets to avoid any unsightly bulges and stepping in front of the camera. There will be no awkward hunching in the glare of the lens today. Gabriel Bruce has done this before. "I've been around forever," he'll exclaim later as we discuss his music making, not how well he can clench his jaw.

Bruce is a raconteur and a showman in an age where we have none. He has a morbid fascination that manifests itself in part-time taxidermy. He's enviably well read (citing Nabokov and Salinger as his favourite authors, and basing his new video on a dance piece by cult German choreographer Pina Bausch); possesses a wonderfully dry sense of humour; is admittedly self-conscious; and is nothing if not forthcoming with his insecurities. By the nature of his being he is a show off, and proudly so. He also does a pretty good impersonation of a fidgeting Tom Waits, a hero of his. On top of these many colourful virtues, Gabriel Bruce is also the one-preacher-owner of 'Love In Arms', his debut solo album: part vaudeville show-stopper/part graveyard hymnbook. "The record is made up of love, loss, some death, the coming and going, the gore and the grime. All the good stuff," he says. It's delivered, with no small amount of theatrical grandeur, by Gabriel's distinctive, not-so-secret weapon: his voice.

Gabriel has been singing ever since his voice broke and opened up a part for him in the school choir. Armed with a baritone burr, he joined his classmates as they travelled to France one summer, singing for their supper in Burgundy. Choirboys don't make for great frontmen, but that was fine by Gabriel – he didn't like the sound of his voice anyway. When he returned home he formed a school band, evidently with the wrong singer.

"The first time I had to sing was at a school concert," he says. "God, this is so indie, but I was playing guitar in a school band and we were doing a Futureheads song and we started playing the opening riff." Gabriel begins to sing the intro to 'Decent Days And Decent Nights'. "The singer just got complete stage fright and walked off stage, and so I just had to sing the song. For some reason I had the compulsion. I knew I wasn't going to play the riff one more time and leave, so that was the first time I ever sang in front of anyone. It was terrifying."

I ask him if his first performance was a successful one. "Oh, well, you know what these things are like," he says, "the sound is never good at those things."

Seven years on, Gabriel is still not bowled over by the sound of his own singing. "I would listen to a lot of other singers who sang in my register and then try on their idiosyncrasies and see how they looked on me," he explains. "I find that's still what I do today – there's a shame that I have and I'm afraid to show what the raw thing is. You become, I guess, like an actor, imitating people."

How alarmingly frank from a young musician carving out his place in pop music's over-ploughed, 60-year-old landscape. What he's meant to say, as unbelievable as it is, is, "I just do my thing and don't pay attention to anyone else," or, "people say I sound like *x*, but I don't hear that at all." People say that Gabriel Bruce sounds like Leonard Cohen and Nick Cave, and they're right.

"David Bowie is the best singer ever," he reliably informs me. "If he was a synthesiser that you could buy it would be the synthesiser that I'd have." Harry Belafonte, Stax soul singer William Bell, Cohen and Tom Waits are on Gabriel's list of greats he's tried to imitate, Iggy Pop is "one of the better ones" and Dylan's melodies provided him with his music schooling when he was 16. "But they're so muddled and many that hopefully it becomes a new vehicle."

"There is even a deep insecurity at the heart of what I'm doing now, though," he notes. "One of my biggest faults is the ambition I put on different projects. I just want everything to sound incredible, but the problem is you end up looking a little bit silly when no one is looking at you and you're being so ostentatious – if anyone does catch a glimpse at it, it can come across as a little pretentious."

Specifically, Gabriel is referring to his previous band, the mock-metal Loverman, who you might have heard of, but probably haven't. Gabriel is under no illusion that they're a generation's grossly overlooked outfit. They did in fact enjoy more success than most, releasing a single and mini album on Young And Lost Club Records, which at the time had the support of Universal Music. The mini album, 'Human Nurture', featured 'Barb'; a darkly eerie, Trent Reznor-ish track that Gabriel still stands by, so much so that he considered, for a second, including it on 'Love In Arms'. Loverman's real success was in their ambition, though, that took them all the way to Los Angeles to record 'Human Nurture' with Atticus Ross, who went on to win an Academy Award for his *Social Network* score (a collaboration with, funny enough, Trent Reznor), and Joe Barresi, engineer and producer to The Melvins, Tool and Queens of The Stone Age. "At that time I didn't have much love for British music," says Gabriel. "All the music I was listening to had come from the States, like Sonic Youth and Minor Threat and Butthole Surfers... Nirvana, of course..."

Gabriel liked being in a band. "I feel a lot more vulnerable now," he says. "When there's four of you being looked at it's easier to hide yourself, but I get confused by how much of myself I'm happy to show. The way I see it, I want to carry on making records, and when I think of people who've inspired me the most, they've generally been solo artists, so I guess in my more confident moments I'm like, 'fuck it, I want people to have a record collection that is like, Bruce Springsteen, PJ Harvey, Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, Leonard Cohen, Gabriel Bruce!' But sometimes I'm unsure if that's a

"When you're standing in the corner of the room shouting 'look and me, look at me', when people turn to look you'd better be entertaining, because otherwise why did you shout at them?"



reasonable expectation to put upon myself.”

I try the ‘but it must be so much more satisfying’ trick that people who work on their own are no doubt sick of hearing. Gabriel responds with a sullen, “I’m yet to feel satisfied at all.

“There was a sense of relief when I finished the record,” he concedes, “but it’s taken such a long time to get it out [when we first interviewed Gabriel he was just finishing the mixing process, last October], and you can’t stay still when you’re creating art – like, if you feel comfortable that’s the moment it starts to dry up – the tap always needs to be running – so if I was satisfied that would be the end of it for me.”

Love In Arms’ is instantly recognisable as a pop record, from a young man who spent his childhood listening to The Supremes and Annie Lennox with his mother. Gabriel had run to Woolworths the day ‘Song 2’ was released (“a seminal moment”) and became hooked on The Melvins and America’s DIY scene of the ’80s, but he’d also bought ‘The Immaculate Collection’ on the same day he bought his first single: ‘Trouble’ by Shampoo.

His debut album is frequently – and impressively – as accessible as, say, The Killers (the dramatic outpouring of ‘Dark Lights Shine Loud’, that has Gabriel declaring himself a boogieman ripe for flames and pitchforks to the fanfare of trumpets; the ’80s stadium pomp of ‘Honey Honey’; ‘Car’s Not Leaving’, which sounds how Springsteen’s ‘Dancing In The Dark’ would if huffed and bellowed by an undertaker), but it’s not without its more sombre moments either. ‘Sleep Paralysis’ – Gabriel’s debut single of 2011 – remains a minimal, organ-lead sermon that gently preaches the woes of night terrors, specifically waking up locked in your own skin. ‘El Musgo’ is even slower and ultimately sadder as it slumps to a tale of unrequited love. The same goes for ‘All That

I Have’.

“It’s not really a party record,” says Gabriel. “I’d like it to be, but it’s more cinematic, so it’s better for a train journey. Each song is like a scene to me, so put it on your headphones and walk around and feel self important, like I do.”

Gabriel would buy David Bowie if he were a synthesiser, but it feels like the Thin White Duke’s lasting impression is something greater than a singing style. Pop music isn’t what it was in Bowie’s day, *X Factor*-fied, void of concept and more often than not gleefully dumb.

“But there is always a place in pop music for genuine emotion and art,” Gabriel insists. “It’s a tough word that, ‘art’, when you think about it, because it sounds very pompous to call something art. Y’know, Adele is undeniably a pop star, but there’s something very real and quite raw about her, and that’s refreshing and there’s no reason why that can’t be the case. Pop music can be Tinchy Stryder, but it can also be Adele or Metronomy, who are a hugely sophisticated pop band. What else would you call it?”

Gabriel would love for his music to be considered pop, “although I guess that would mean that it would have to be popular,” he laughs. He says that he was most aware of how idiosyncratic ‘Love In Arms’ needed to be – “a statement about how I want to progress as an artist” – and that ‘Car’s Not Leaving’ and ‘All That I Have’ became the record’s early goalposts, which basically meant that he could do whatever he pleased and it would happily fall between the glossy freeway anthem of one and the heartfelt piano ballad of the other. “I’m allowed to do that,” he says, “because I’m a solo artist and there’s no one to say that I can’t.”

‘Love In Arms’ ends no less theatrically than it begins, with a violent waltz called ‘Sermon On The Mount’, by which time ‘All That I Have’ has checked The Bible, ‘Dark Lights Shine Loud’ has blazed with God-fearing melodrama and Gabriel’s whole vocal delivery has been that of an unstable, wild preacher man. (Loverman’s debut single was also called ‘Crucifixion’).

“It’s just because I grew up in the western world and so much of our art and culture is entrenched in religion,”

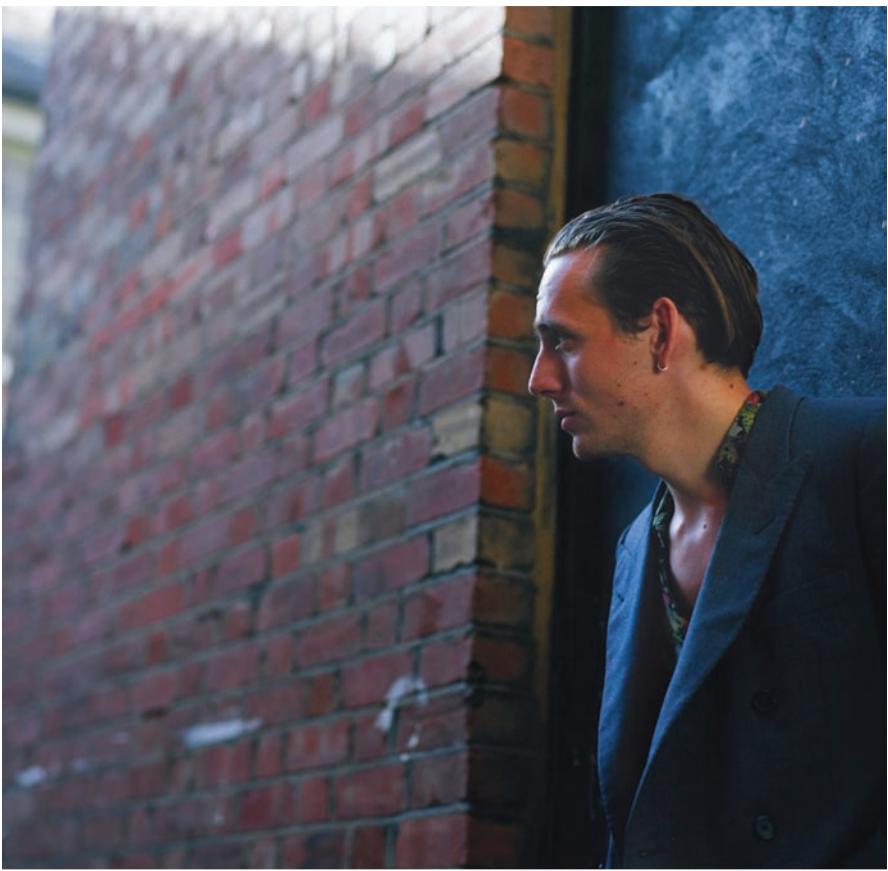
he says. “It’s unavoidable. I have a problem with organised religion. I think it’s really bad, but I think it’s a very rich culture to explore.

“The question of why we are alive is on there, which is the question we all ask. I guess there’s the question of God. I watched this amazing documentary that talked about the fact that the problem is it’s too regional. I mean, the universe is so massive and there’s really no reason why in this tiny corner there would be anything. And if God created the earth and the heavens in one day, the heavens is a lot bigger, so surely earth is a smaller accomplishment.”

With God invariably comes death, and so the Grim Reaper looms large over Gabriel’s work too, perhaps not surprisingly when his walls at home are strewn with dead creatures he himself has framed. Road-kill and sundried frogs.

“Understanding that you’re going to die is the only way of knowing you’re alive,” he reasons, “and that’s such a horrible thing to try to get your head around.” He pauses. “Erm... no... sorry... it’s hard for me to talk about really.” For the first and only time today, Gabriel would rather leave a topic of conversation there.

first noticed that Gabriel Bruce makes a bad suit look good, and a nylon blouse, in the top room of a pub in April. Flanked by two synchronised backing singers (Sybilla and Phoebe) and a man at a laptop called George Cassavetes, what started as an awkward side step soon erupted into erratic and exaggerated gesturing. Gabriel contorted his body as the drums dropped on ‘Sleep Paralysis’, stomped his feet to the sleazy disco of ‘Zoe’ and snatched at the air through ‘Dark Lights Shine Loud’. He repeatedly swept his hair out of his eyes and implored us to heed his evangelical advice – a crazed Count of gothic pop. He sat at the piano for ‘All That I Need’ and leapt from it to perform what will be his next



"We're never going to have another Ziggy Stardust, because Ziggy Stardust can't have Twitter, and you can't idolise someone who's posting photos of their hotel room or lovely breakfast"

single, the brassy 'Perfect Weather'. A cabaret star from some forgotten time, he laid on an incredible show in committing to the role.

I've seen Gabriel repeat this trick twice since, and it wasn't a fluke. Sybilla and Phoebe are just as much onside, mirroring each other's glittery makeup and wearing matching frills whether it be on a festival main stage or a grotty, damp basement. It's a package deal, and it works so well because of how brazenly (and consistently) it's delivered.

"It's a show," says Gabriel. "And one for the whole family. I'd love more dancers and set pieces and skits, whatever. I'd do that whole thing. I like to entertain people. In the studio I'm a little more introspective and considered, maybe, but when you're performing and you're standing in the corner of the room shouting 'look at me, look at me', when people turn to look you'd better be entertaining, because otherwise why did you shout at them?

"When you get these guys, who are like, 'oh don't look at me, I hate it, I hate it, I just want to play my music', well go and play your music in your bedroom, don't go into a room with 400 people in it, turn on microphones and amplifiers and then get pissed off when people look at you."

Watching Gabriel perform highlights just how few live acts have any 'act' in them at all. I ask him if he thinks there are too few showmen in rock and pop and he notes that "Kindness is one of the best people out there making music right now. When I heard his album I was green with envy." An old friend and recent tour mate, Fred Macpherson of London band Spector, is, for Gabriel's money, "a wonderful raconteur performing some of the best stand up comedy around. And brave stuff, too." Fred has also "been around forever". He and Gabriel, along with once toyed with the idea of a new project, which currently still stands at just a name.

"There are genuinely shy people," says Gabriel, "but for some it's just a different act. To pretend that you're unaware of the audience is as much an act as playing up to them. I just prefer to do my act. I'm a performer and I'm going to perform for you. I'm still getting used to how I'm going to perform in this situation," he says, gesturing at us talking over a tape recorder. "Maybe I should be more like Tom Waits." And with that Gabriel slips into his fidgeting Tom Waits, which really is very good.

A

At the time of our meeting, 'Love In Arms' had been completed and ready for release for the best part of a whole year. Three days after I had left Gabriel in the pub to dine with his flatmate, I heard that this month's belated release date could now be pushed back to the New Year. I wasn't too surprised. Throughout our interview Gabriel had expressed one overriding worry now that his debut album was finally to be released – that nobody was going to get to hear it.

"No one knows who I am, which is a bit of a problem," he said. "I don't want to bad mouth my label, but I could talk all night about the failures of the music industry and how disillusioned I've become, and so quickly. I really thought if I wrote good songs and I performed them well enough then that was my job, but I've found out that that isn't my job, it's a lot more than that. I've got to do a lot more and be a lot better at promoting myself, and I just don't understand how to do it or have the inclination to do it. I care about people and I love talking to people, but I don't want to be on Facebook and Twitter and on the Internet. It's a waste of energy to me. It's hard for me to understand why I should be doing those things, but it's the day and age. I'm coming into this like a young dinosaur who doesn't understand how the climate works and I have this sense of impending extinction and I just don't know what to do."

As a young man whose first two jobs were hanging chandeliers and selling antique books on the Portobello Road Market, Gabriel is not a 23 year old in love with technology like so many others. Rather than putting himself out there with a Tumblr feed and an Instagram account, he's tried to retain a certain degree of privacy leading up to his album's release. "... and it's impossible," he says. "We're never going to have another Ziggy Stardust, because Ziggy Stardust can't have Twitter, and you can't idolise someone who's posting photos of their hotel room or their lovely breakfast that's been made for them. That's something that I just don't care about. I don't care about the view from the yacht. I'd rather suspend my disbelief and be in love with the myth, because there's not enough fantasy in the world anymore, and it's a shame."

"But I do want people to hear the album," he reiterates. "I want them to download it illegally. It'll just be embarrassing if I have a mediafire file that hasn't been downloaded once, like, if I leak it myself and no one downloaded it – how embarrassing would that be?" he roars with laughter. "So please download it illegally, and then buy it if you like it and want the physical thing. The artwork is lovely, but just listen to the fucking thing."

"It's as good a record as anyone could make today," he says, "and it's definitely the best record I could make at the time. I mean, I'm sure plenty of people won't like it when they hear it, but I want them to have the opportunity to not like me."

"What do you think they wouldn't like," I ask. "Oh, y'know," he says. "I'm a very egotistical, self-obsessed, drunken bastard, really, who thinks too much with his dick and then instead of apologising feels sorry for himself."

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ALBUMS

09/10



John Cale
Shifty Adventures in Nookie Wood (Double Six)
By Daniel Dylan Wray. In stores Oct 1

The overwhelming gut-smack of disappointment felt from John Cale's last release, 2011's EP 'Extra Playful', led to real feelings of trepidation when approaching this record. However, the oddball, rather manic collection of songs gathered for that release make way for the slow burning yet delicately coherent 'Shifty Adventures', an album that has simultaneous cloths of pop-smattered genius and dark, ominous wonder. At 70 years old Cale's voice still resonates profoundly, rich, piercing and forceful – his brief screech at the end of 'Hemingway' is a glorious recall to the more deranged end of his spectrum; it's a shame a large chunk of the record is clouded in crass auto-tune. It does, however, ask fundamental questions about what constitutes experimental music in the current mind of John Cale, which, it seems, is a plunge into a warped take on mass popular culture. Cale's own production for the record is largely flawless, displaying a rich grasp in consistency and plunging deep into gloriously murky sonic ethers, with the irrefragable and melancholic 'Mary' being just one testament to this, while the gloom-laden hum of 'Vampire Café', with Cale's relentless viola drone in the background, almost traces back to the misunderstood genius of 1982's 'Music For A New Society'. This is a record that requires work and perseverance; it can initially appear cold, confusing and somewhat alienating, but time well spent in the hands of Cale opens up avenues, textures and wormholes that initially seemed filled in and smoothed over upon first listens. The fact that at this late stage in his career Cale is still pushing and forcing his listeners to work this hard is an unbridled testament to his endless proclivity for innovativeness.



08/10

The Bullitts

They Die By Dawn and Other Short Stories (Outfit Music Group)
By Omar Tanti. In stores Oct 8

When The Bullitts' track 'Close Your Eyes' snuck out in December 2010 it was a technicolour preview of an extraordinary project. Intriguingly, it featured the cold-hearted voice of samurai-wielding siren Lucy Liu and much-hyped New Orleans rapper Jay Electronica. Equally fantastic songs like 'Landspeeder', 'Supercool' and 'Strange Days' followed. All the while, non-musical elements were bubbling too – home-edited videos (or "FlixTapes") featuring everyone from Paloma Faith to Danny DeVito and a day-by-day Twitter diary telling the story of the project's lead-character, a blood-lusting serial killer on death row, called Amelia Sparks (played by Liu). The characters walked from one format into another like an interactive cartoon. The multi-tentacled creation even made it onto the stage at the Big Chill festival in 2011. The Bullitts' "5D" vision had come to life.

So, it's been a tantalising wait for a fully formed album. That's probably down to Londoner Jeymes Samuel (he's The Bullitts) co-producing Jay Electronica's permanently delayed LP. He's also produced a movie, a "black western", starring Rosario Dawson (*Sin City*), Michael K Williams (Omar in *The Wire*) and Erykah Badu, out later this year.

No surprise then that 'TDBD&OSS' plays out like a film itself. The album's opener, and

title track, announces itself with timpani drums, a blood-curdling whistle and flamenco guitars before Mos Def converts it into a slice of devastating hip-hop. It gives way to 'Murder Death Kill' – a dark-centred pop song, which somehow melds Mary Poppins and Nick Cave.

'Landspeeder' you may know – an outstanding slice of robotic, electronic pop which spotlights Samuel's creative mind at its best. 'Close Your Eyes' still glows almost two years on, while 'Strange Days' features beats so futuristic they could have been beamed back to earth by NASA's Curiosity rover.

That's the first half. But it's really the closing peloton of songs that hang together most successfully. 'Stay, Run Away' pops and crackles like Madonna's 'Frozen', all pillow-soft strings and wanting vocals. The alluring 7am-Glastonbury-reggae groove of 'World Inside Your Rainbow' is a moody dream. Finally, 'Bouquet Of Barbed Wire' – perhaps the album's highlight – and 'Wait Until Tomorrow', featuring the elusive Tori Amos, team up to be a pair of heart-stopping twists.

It's not a 5★ all the way though. Some tracks don't fit the feel and the story. 'Supercool', with its Clash-esque guitar stabs, is great but just shines too bright, as does the super-upbeat 'Everything Is Broken'. And while it's undoubtedly cool to have Lucy Liu lend her devious narration to most of the tracks, her monologues won't enlighten those unfamiliar with the Sparks story. But frankly these are minor plot holes. With a debut this good, we're already looking forward to the sequel.

06/10



Mac Demarco

2

(Captured Tracks)

By Stuart Stubbs. In stores Oct 22

Once a man who went by the name MakeoutVideotape, Mac Demarco caught our attention with “jizz jazz” debut ‘Rock and Roll Nightclub’ just 6 months ago – a record half comically sleazy lounge croon, half the kind of jangly, sweet indie that makes up the whole of ‘2’. This is Demarco’s serious(er) side, and one that sounds a lot like Spectrals on ‘Freaking Out The Neighborhood’, especially. The wuckah-wuckah, clean guitar of opener ‘Cooking Up Something Good’ sounds like the Canadian is still in a one dimensional frame of mind, but that’s not ‘2’s’ shortcoming, which is in fact far more varied than ‘Rock and Roll Nightclub’ was. It’s more a case that, having stripped away the pervy, Roy Orbison slur, Mac Demarco sounds less like a new king of sleaze and more like he belongs in North America’s bedroom indie swell. He wasn’t just funny but fun, and now he sounds like so many others.

07/10



Bo Ningen

Line The Wall

(Stolen)

By Chal Ravens. In stores Oct 8

Any Dalstonite who knows their Acid Mother’s Temple from their elbow should recognise this quartet of Japanese psych rock spacemen – their bum-length black hair and 26-inch waists can often be seen prowling the piss-stained pavements of E8 when they’re not savagely molesting speakers across the same postcode. London has been a fertile incubator for Bo Ningen’s Sabbath-gone-kosmische sound, what with The Horrors spearheading a revival of esoteric psychedelia and loping krautrock in recent years, ‘Line The Wall’s frenzied jumble of heavyweight riffing (‘Daikaisei Part 1’ and, er, ‘Daikasiei Part 2’), stabbing math rock (‘Nichijyou’) and even drifting electronica (‘Ten to Sen’) sounds surprisingly cohesive. While their debut lacked the energy of their eyelid-peeling performances, this album feels like more than just a souvenir of the live experience.

08/10



Dam Mantle

Brothers Fowl

(Notown)

By Sam Little. In stores Oct 8

Since emerging in 2009, Dam Mantle – aka Tom Marshall – has effortlessly played little brother to Gold Panda. The ‘Kanye to the Jay-Z of UK ambient techno’ likening is no less convenient now that GP is releasing Marshall’s debut album on his own label, but really because ‘Brothers Fowl’ has caught Panda’s ‘Lucky Shiner’ in many ways. Stylistically, although clearly homemade electronica produced by one man and a million mouse clicks, Marshall has never aped his peers, save for the obligatory vinyl crackle. Here, its inclusion seems to be for comfort rather than in order to provide some sort of authenticity to music so clearly synthesised. It’s Marshall’s use of ‘real’ instruments (spikes and flourishes of oboe, lush violins, jazz piano) that lifts his cut’n’paste programming higher than ever. That and how infused with jazz weirdness ‘Brothers Fowl’ is.

07/10



Tim Burgess

Oh No I Love You

(O Genesis)

By Austin Laike. In stores Oct 1

Since ‘I Believe’, Tim Burgess’ countrified debut solo album of 2003, The Charlatans singer has left the States behind, dropped the Gram Parsons infatuation and fallen in with the right crowd (Factory Floor, EIOH, R. Stevie Moore), as a producer and label founder. The hoedown isn’t completely over, it seems (see this album’s title track), and Burgess certainly isn’t trading in the avant garde or electronics that his fledgling O Genesis imprint has. ‘Oh No I Love You’ is a Burgess and friends (Moore, Factory Floor, My Morning Jacket and Lambchop) take on a Kurt Wagner record, aided by Wagner himself. At times it reaches the intense alt. country poignancy it’s striving for too, and is a stark reminder that Burgess – for all his hip, underground name-dropping – is a compulsive songwriter in a classic sense.

07/10



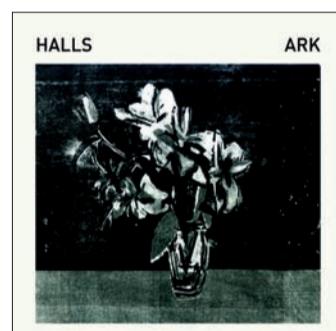
Paws

Coke Float

(Fat Cat)

By Nathan Westley. In stores Oct 8

One look at the charts tells us that guitars based music is dead in the water; a lifeless body being slowly floated down stream by the much more powerful current of euphoria synths and Rihanna guest spots. Paws offer good evidence to the contrary, though, in delivering this debut album of lo-fi, Scottish brewed indie that has a powerful melodic kick and comes with an extra dollop of American-styled brawling nous. The influences and sounds conjured up may both be pulled from and trapped in the past, but it heralds an almost timeless appeal; whether it be the Archers-Of-Loaf-with-better-production-values sound of ‘Homecoming’ or the sizzling, sped-up drive of ‘Miss American Bookworm’, which is decidedly inspired by Dinosaur Jr.. No, ‘Cokefloat!’ won’t topple Ri-Ri, ever, but Paws and happily fizzy indie pop is still kicking.



03/10

Halls

Ark

(No Pain In Pop)

By Sam Walton. In stores Oct 15

Albums containing a series of virtually identical songs tend either to be entrancingly consistent, or frustratingly samey, leaving you overstimulated by and slightly lost within a landscape of ever-repeating identical tapestries. Unfortunately, firmly on the “more ideas needed” side of this split lies ‘Ark’, a project by 21-year-old bedroom producer Sam Howard, whose tastefully arranged post-dubstep clearly yearns to be bleak and crystalline like the xx’s or James Blake’s best work, but whose choices of textures and musical touchstones – cavernous reverb, skittering beats, submarine sonar beeps – are so standard-issue and well worn by this stage in dance music’s recent history that the whole album sounds more like library music than the work of someone wanting to express their individuality. With little attempt at subversion or even a manifestation of soulfulness, ‘Ark’ is remarkable solely for achieving what most UK bass music hasn’t in the last year – to be simply rather boring.

ALBUMS

08/10



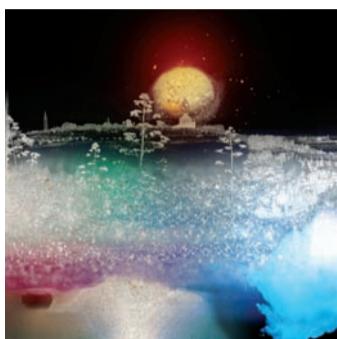
Deerhoof

Breakup Song
(ATP)

By Reef Younis. In stores Sept 24

Deerhoof make pop music a wonderful thing. Eleven albums in and their tireless joie de vivre in reclaiming one of music's dirtiest words is as joyously indiscriminate as ever. Picking up where 'Deerhoof vs Evil' left off, 'Breakup Songs' is an equally unpredictable maze of abstract noise, art rock, skewed indie and devilishly playful melodies. Every track is like cracking open a Kinder Egg where the toys were good, and from the *Sesame Street* mariachi of opener 'There's That Grin' to the double-speed modem meltdown of 'Bad Kids to the Front', Deerhoof's zeal for the infectiously zany is unerring and unnerving. Satomi Matsuzaki's vocals add equal measures of sweetness and insanity; coherent and coquettish one moment, unhinged and off-kilter the next. And where the Blonde Redhead-meets-Sleigh Bells night terror of 'Mario's Flaming Whiskers III' shouldn't make sense, it brilliantly does.

09/10



Calton Melton

Photos of Photos
(Agitated)

By Daniel Dylan Wray. In stores Sept 24

Carlton Melton is a project that revolves solely around improvisation. There is no plan, no rehearsals, no second takes. As they themselves describe the process, "What you hear is the first take, 'hit it and quit it', as Funkadelic would prescribe." If you throw together the fact that all of this is recorded within a geodesic dome, you have the makings of a truly idiosyncratic group. Astonishingly, for such a loose and uncompromising ethos, the results exude a breathtaking degree of coherence, expelled in lush waves of dense, opaque texture, gruelling noise and eerie ambience. The fact it was created in a dome – an environment so contained, unique and specific – is utterly embodied in the end output: stepping into this globe shaped record is like stepping into a world, you don't simply taste it or see it, you become engulfed and absorbed within it. Gladly.

06/10



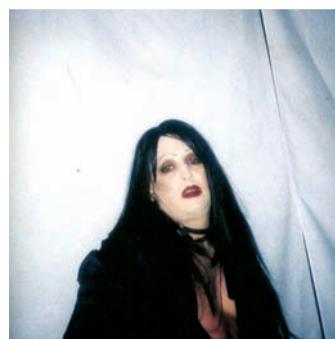
Taken By Trees

Other Worlds
(Secretly Canadian)

By Nathan Westley. In stores Oct 1

Taken By Trees is the solo project of Victoria Bergsman, former lead singer of Scandinavian indie pop group The Concretes, yet the differences far outnumber the similarities of her previous project. 'Other Worlds' is the third juncture of this carnation and sees Bergsman saunter into a new and distinct territory of blissful pop. Experimentally-leaning, this is a record that cuts a peculiar path. With swathes of atmospheric noise built in, it all sounds a bit like Scarlett Johansson's Tom Waits cover album, 'Anywhere I Lay My Head', but in and amongst the hushed vocal tones and the Cat Power country slide guitar of songs such as 'Highest High' lies a strong and distinct Hawaiian flavour that sees dub undertones strongly form the spine of this rudimentary skeleton. Trying to categorise it is pretty impossible, which is where most of its enjoyment comes from.

08/10



Trust

TRST
(Arts & Crafts)

By Austin Laike. In stores Oct 8

Who says goths have to mope? Well, everyone, I guess, but not Robert Alfons, aka Trust. On this, the Canadian's debut album, Alfons comes on like one big Interpol remix, or Cold Cave minus the cartoonish, principal warble of Wesley Eisold. Perhaps it's unfair to call 'TRST' a contrived effort, but that guy on the cover, that's not Alfons. Alfons looks like an Abercrombie model. Perhaps that's why 'TRST' doesn't mope, then, because it's a record dressed in black but born of euro trance. Frequently it sounds like a sung-not-shrieked Crystal Castles record, with the added bonus that you can listen to it at home, too, without it resulting in you smashing the place up. It's a new kind of dark dance – an album to make goths smile as they dance rather than fume as they thrash, even if it's not been made by one of their own.

07/10



Why?

Mumps Etc.
(City Slang)

By Melanie McGovern. In stores Oct 8

Relocating from Berkeley to Ohio in 2009, the Wolf brothers Yoni and Josaiah have named their fifth studio album after their favourite summer tour of 2008, Contraction of The Mumps, and these 13 tracks aptly draw upon disease and death. Rather bleak, you may think, but 'Mumps, Etc.' harbours dark comedy within its grizzly course of medication. Part playful, story-telling rap/part lemonade pop as accessible as Vampire Weekend, Why? flesh out their sound by enlisting a school professor string quartet on 'Bitter Thoughts' (an amusing, jazzy guide to being a gangster), and an eight-person choir for the woodwind/horn-accompanied 'White English'. Yoni adds an intelligent and mature dynamic to something that could otherwise seem like indulgent adolescent rambling, on another fine, mellow hip-hop lounge record.



09/10

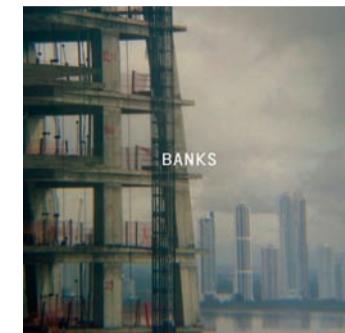
Flying Lotus

Until The Quiet Comes
(Warp)

By Daniel Dylan Wray. In stores Oct 1

Flying Lotus' ability to transform the listener into dream-like, nocturnal zombies continues with woozy, hazy ease as you awaken and find yourself in the biosphere of 'Until The Quiet Comes'. Serene, fragile textures whoosh and burst like stars in the sky, while beats fracture, pulse and swoop like the arbitrary path of a bat, twitching in the deepest dark of night. Sonically, Flying Lotus has always managed to remarkably capture a balance between the seemingly schizophrenic and the plaintively cohesive and on this record he has perhaps cemented this balance greater than ever. The overtly jazz-induced elements of 'Cosmogramma' are refined to snippets and mere whiffs of the genre. This whole record is about balance: balance of the palate, levels, textures and even the use of guests, from Thundercat to Thom Yorke. Flying Lotus seems to know how to best put his contributors in their place, twisting and manipulating them in the same distorted yet fragile way he does his music.

07/10



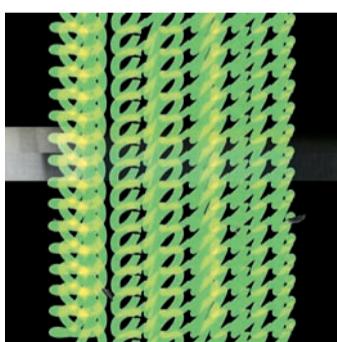
Paul Banks

Banks

(Matador)

By Stuart Stubbs. In stores Oct 22

In the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame there is, you'd imagine, a corner for rock's most distinctive vocalists. Paul Banks would be there – the man that gave a voice to Interpol's modern classic 'Turn On The Bright Lights'; a cross between the most heartless post-apocalyptic cyborg and a troubled spider. Banks sounds permanently cold and yet somehow human, and it's served the one-dimensional Interpol so well that they've so far lasted two brilliant albums, one that's completely decent and one stinker that, hey, still got made. 'Banks' is the singer's first solo album under his own name, but his second away from the band, following the plain dull 'Julian Plenti Still Lives' – a record you may have heard but definitely don't remember, and one that proved Banks' vocals couldn't save songs so void of imagination, regardless of the intended concept. 'Banks' is far, far better, still largely monochrome in its dark wave indie, but with a splash of colour that comes with the subtle use of programmed instruments. The instrumental 'Lisbon' sounds a bit like the vocals were written but never recorded, and the spoken word samples of 'Another Chance' that blab the confessions of a love rat are more than a little uncomfortable, but largely 'Banks' is a record almost as dynamic as that voice still deserves, from a surprisingly lasting singer who, he says, has just realised, "I now truly give zero fucks what anyone thinks about me."



Daphni

Jiaolong

(Jiaolong)

By ReefYounis. In stores Oct 8

Buoyed after rediscovering the dark joys of the club, Dan Snaith wasted little time diligently putting his grey matter to work. Determined to blindside and surprise, he dispensed with Caribou's bombastic static washes and grandiose psychedelic builds, and made 'Jiaolong' strictly business. Clinically constructed, it's Snaith's purest transition to the dancefloor, centred on crisp percussion, diverse, playful melodies and itchy, insistent beats. Opener 'Yes, I know' comes on lively with dirty soul clap rhythms, Boiler Room anthem 'Ye Ye' bubbles with a heavy dose of underground nasty, and the world music melting pot of 'Cos Ber Zam Ne Noya' gets a permanent home after months on DJ rotation. And where 'Light' takes you on a skewed, para-diddled journey of phaser guns and snare drums, 'Ahora' breeds the most familiarity, treading a stripped-down, restrained line, mordantly teasing for its near six-minute stay. An collection of tracks that just won't quit, those dark corners just got very interesting indeed.

09/10



09/10

Fairhorns

Doki Doki Run

(Invada)

By Sam Walton. In stores Oct 15

From the stable whose recent releases have included the icily beautiful *Drive* soundtrack and the foreboding sound of Beak>, comes another slab of uncompromising retro-futuristic analogue bleep and drone in the shape of Fairhorns, otherwise known as one-man noise machine (and taciturn keyboard player for Beak>) Matt Williams, whose form in the field of terrifying free-form jazz chaos is long and strong. Here though Williams reins in the out-and-out headfuckery and replaces it with a hulking grid of sound that undulates and mutates subtly across 'Doki Doki Run's duration, providing an underlying structure that makes its most outré moments more digestible and the entire record seem pleasantly shorter than its 44 minutes. There's a undeniably organic feel here too; a pulsation that gives the entire record a satisfyingly unprocessed, human touch. Baffling, startling, but strangely warm and never overwhelming, 'Doki Doki Run' is an eccentric gem that rewards and encourages careful listening.

ALBUMS

09/10



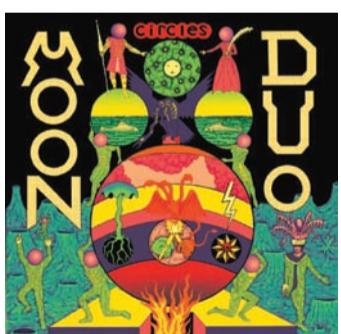
Bat For Lashes

The Haunted Man

(Parlophone)

By Danny Canter. In stores Oct 15

As we found in September's edition of *Loud And Quiet*, Bat For Lashes' third album is her most direct and personal yet. The fantastic rabbit holes of 'Fur and Gold' and 'Two Suns' certainly served Natasha Khan (and so us) well, but at 32 the fame-shy singer is done with hiding behind fairy tale imagery, planetary metaphors and bitchy alter egos. 'The Haunted Man' is Khan asking if *she* is 'magical' enough, without the glitter and feathers. With a voice like hers – bewitchingly choral, eternally yearning and still on the brink of good and bad tears – it's hard to argue that she isn't. Khan continues to sing like her life depends on it, like she's exorcising some deeply burrowed demons. It puts us, the listener, in an awkward position, between hankering for her to find the peace and love she craves, and knowing that once she does perhaps the magic of this highly emotional music might truly be lost. 'The Haunted Man' is decidedly more 'up' than Khan's previous albums, though, embracing electronics (especially on the Beck-featured 'Marilyn') to accompany her ongoing love for orchestration and returning to a pro life motif. From the sweaty summer night of 'Oh Yeah' to the jubilant "thank god I'm alive" cries of 'Lilies', Bat For Lashes' majesty may be less mythical, but it's still there, truer and just as vital as it has always been.



Moon Duo

Circles

(Souterrain Transmissions)

By Chal Ravens. In stores Oct 1

Starting life as a side project for Ripley Johnson's psychedelic drone machine Wooden Shjips, Moon Duo was a vehicle for Johnson and his partner Sanae Yamada to explore the grittier end of the endlessly repetitive space rock spectrum. But with a handful of EPs and an acclaimed album, 'Mazes', behind them, the pair now seem to have the edge on their wooden mothership. Like its predecessor, the title of 'Circles' gives you some idea of the territory we're in here. Lost in the badlands without a map, Moon Duo's desert rock takes a wrong turn and ends up on the Greyhound to NYC, where Silver Apples lend them an oscillator and Suicide provide the beat with a pawnshop drum machine. San Francisco breathes through them still as their muscle memory teaches them deadhead jams that loop round and around and around ('I Been Gone' and 'Rolling Out'), but the joyous inanity of garage rock shines through (the 'Nuggets'-ish 'Sparks' and 'Circles'). Deliciously deranged.

08/10



06/10

Nine Black Alps

Sirens

(Brew)

By Austin Laike. In stores Oct 8

Since its release in 2005, Nine Black Alps' debut album, 'Everything Is', has become something of a cult treasure – a meat'n'spuds re-imagination of pop grunge that most are willing to admit was rammed with hooks that made the indie disco less wet. But debut albums are only held in such fond regard when their successor(s) tank, which is precisely what happened – probably unfairly – with the following 'Love/Hate'. 'Sirens' is the band's third attempt five years later, although you might not guess that from how it sounds. Save for the vaguely hippy-dream verses of 1960s garage opener 'Be My Girl', it's as post-Nirvana rock as Foo Fighters ('My One And Only'), early Feeder ('Phosphorescence'), The Subways (Sam Forrest's vocals often opt for a Billy Lunn type of transatlantic yell) and NBA themselves. There's a finger-plucked, acoustic respite too, just like on 'Everything Is'. Hardly a grand progression then, but if we all love the band's debut so much, is that a problem?

06/10

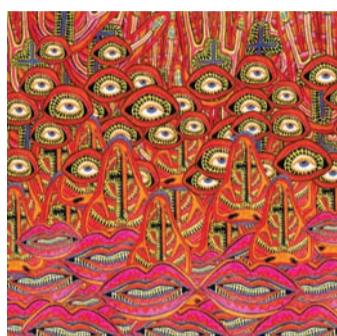


The Soft Walls

The Soft Walls
(Faux Discx/Suplex Cassettes)
By Sam Little. In stores now

Dan Reeves works well in a group. As one third of kraut jam band Cold Pumas he's an equal part of a very unified organism, pummelling forward in tight synchronisation with his band mates, locked into one endless groove. 'The Soft Walls' is all Reeves – the sound of solitude, recorded over the last 9 months, alone. That's certainly long enough for someone to lose their mind, so perhaps it's not too surprising that this debut album cruises the canals of deliria, hallucination, odd euphoria and hypnotic washes of ambient found sound. It's at its best when at its most jarring, coasting from the Wooden Shjips-ish 'Best If I Go' to the unexpected bedsit trance of 'House Concern', via a minute-long interlude that makes Blanck Mass look busy as hell. God knows what we're meant to now do with this collection of bad dreams, though. Stare, I guess.

04/10



Tilly & The Wall

Heavy Mood
(Team Love)
By David Zammitt. In stores Oct 1

The fourth album from this Nebraskan quintet announces itself with 'Love Riot', a barnstorming slice of post-punk revivalism that sees Kianna Alarid channel Siouxsie Sioux with aplomb, while setting Jamie Pressnall's tap-dance percussion to wonderfully jarring jangle-pop discord. Sadly, it the highlight in an album that never really goes anywhere. 'Heavy Mood' is dance punk cast in the DFA mould, but it lacks teeth, while 'I Believe In You' is The xx by numbers; a decent nocturnal ballad that's undermined by its lazy rhymes: "I believe in you / but I believe in me too". Elsewhere, 'Thicker Than Thieves' is a clumsy tribute to friendship that recalls The Offspring at their repugnant worst, while 'Static Expressions' is a syrupy Southern rock piece in the vein of Band of Horses. It's an album that tries its hand at too many genres and lacks the imagination to succeed.

07/10



Chris Cohen

Overgrown Path
(Captured Tracks)
By Sam Walton. In stores Oct 8

Chris Cohen is one of those play-anything, background-lurking indie journeymen who, despite probably collaborating with all of your top five US scratchy guitar bands, is still outranked by a Nottingham Forrest midfielder on Google. And while 'Overgrown Path' is hardly a bid for the mainstream, the former Deerhoof and Haunted Graffiti member's first album under his own name is a welcome step from the shadows. Combining bedroom psychedelia with sweetly woozy vocals to form an aesthetic that feels dimly familiar rather than directly derivative, Cohen's songs are full of unexpected rhythmic turns, elegant melodies and chiming guitar lines imbued with the spirit of Syd Barrett and John Lennon. While it occasionally veers from tweeness to tedium, the majority of 'Overgrown Path' is a gently seductive, rough diamond of a record.

07/10



Tamaryn

Tender New Signs
(Mexican Summer)
By Melanie McGovern. In stores Oct 15

Dream pop gauzy goodness is something of a creative conjuring of idyllic escape for New Zealand's Tamaryn. Her collaborations with San Franciscan Rex Johns Shelverton may date back some ten years, but fresh ideas are constantly emerging, and where 2010's debut album 'The Waves' comprised of minimal textures of sound, 'Tender New Signs' reveals a louder, more structured approach to songwriting, featuring more prominently melodic guitars that glisten against post-rock hues and retained, distinct woozy vocals. 'While You're Sleeping's heavy bass echoes through, as 'No Exits' exudes heady, reverb-laden streaks of guitar. Certainly the vocals are closer in the mix here, louder and more appealing, but there's still an intimacy and closeness, and little doubt that as the nights draw in 'Tender New Signs' will become a slow burner for the nostalgic of us.

02/10



The D.O.T.

And That
(The Beats)
By John Ford. In stores Oct 22

Mike Skinner's decision to self-destruct The Streets before it looked like he was faking it was extremely admirable. But what do you do when you've retired from music at 32? Form a band with Robert Harvey of The Music, it seems. The D.O.T.'s debut album sees Skinner step off the mic in favour of providing rather uninspiring beats and Ibiza synth lines for Harvey to sing over like Alexis Taylor of Hot Chip sucking on a helium balloon. Skinner does chip in on backing vocals from time to time, although unfortunately it's in order to 'sing' rather than rap, and if you've heard any Streets record post 'The Hardest Way To Make An Easy Living' you'll know that's a bad thing. More than anything, 'And That' feels extremely lazy, despite its year-long assembly time, with the drum'n'base 101 beat of 'What You Livin' For' being one of countless disappointments.



03/10

The Soft Pack

Strapped
(Mexican Summer)
By Chal Ravens. In stores Oct 1

How fitting that on 11th September I should turn my good ear to the latest effort from The Soft Pack, a pack of San Diego softies so hopelessly flimsy that they changed their name from The Muslims lest they cause offence to indie dullards by having the tenacity to come up with a single sparky idea in their entire one-note career. So it comes as no surprise that the second album from the renamed janglers is a plateful of microwaved leftovers from the golden age of indie rock, featuring tepid chords in a Bunnymen template, flavourless Iggy Pop 'tude and stodgy riffs nicked from Albert Hammond Jr's organic waste box. This all makes 'Strapped' sound so much worse than it is, of course – it's a ten-a-penny fucking indie rock album, and a pretty solid attempt at one, certainly. But alas, it's my job to step in and say, like a form tutor as she writes your abominable half-term report: "We both know you can do better."

LIVE



FESTIVAL NO. 6

Portmeirion, Wales

14-16.09.2012

By Reef Younis

Photography by Danny North & Andrew Whitton

Festivals aren't just about the headliners these days. We've spent the last decade watching the Mean Fiddled demise of the Carling Weekend, sat through the failure and frustration of the Glastonbury ticket experience, dabbled with the bloated Brit-abroad excess of Benicassim and railed at the Branson-branded bastardisation of V Festival.

The rise and rise of the boutique festival has been a welcome, discerning one, eschewing the lure of main stage excess in favour of overall experience. And where the size doesn't matter ethos of the smaller, more judicious festival has played out particularly well over the years, boutique has roughly translated to woodland fancy dress, for the most part finding regular homes in forests, secret gardens and even city centres. Here, Festival No.6 takes "boutique" and gives it the opulent charm few others can match.

Flanked by the windswept North Wales coastline, and to a backdrop of the verdant scenery of Snowdonia National Park, it's an awe-inspiring approach before you even arrive at the wild gardens and Mediterranean

multi-colour of Portmeirion's village designed by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis.

Taking a creative sidestep from the lure of the music on offer, the surreptitious attraction of Portmeirion lies in the scenery and the festival site itself. Equal parts *Midsummer Murders* mystery and faded seaside glamour, it's a weird and wonderful setting alive with colour and curiosity, inviting exploration of every furtive nook and cranny.

Refreshingly small in size (and stature, for now), on paper, the shuttle bus system from the car parks on Porthmadog's outskirts threaten to recreate the crowded, mud-bath horror of every Glastonbury escape, but with the requisite organisation so many festivals seem to lack on entry, and a bus service frequency Mussolini would be impressed by, it's a short, stress-free ride to the heart of Portmeirion.

The scenery becomes a permeating theme to the entire weekend with **British Sea Power**, somewhat aptly, playing out a fervent set to the darkening panorama of the estuary backdrop on Friday evening. In the intimate confines of the small stage tent, it's not long

before singer Yan can't resist the temptation any longer, hurling himself into the crowd and foliage, surfing the sea of hands as BSP reach a typically chaotic climax.

Saturday falls sunny side up and sets the tone for a day of exploration – from Castle Deudraeth on the hill, to the labyrinth of woodland trails, prisoner parades, costumed characters, whispering walls and forest discos, there's fun and technicolour to be enjoyed everywhere. For the hordes of yummy mummies, media dads and new age kids that have descended, there are playgrounds and mini farm yards, giant bubbles, health-minded food vendors and even a daily paper reliably informing everyone of the festivities and activities on offer.

It's a wholesome, happy atmosphere that carries through into **NZCA/Lines** early afternoon set of lustrous pop; Michael Lovett's measured mix of sexless vocal robotics, cut-crystal falsettos gently rousing with the casualties from the night before. **The Whip** boom and bip through a hallmark set of brash electro trash and a little later on **Beth Jeans**



Houghton injects a bit of colour and pizazz with her choice of attire, even if her equally vibrant anti-folk feels a bit quietened and overwhelmed by the open air expanse.

In the main tent, **Gold Panda** transforms the washing analogue beauty of his debut into a driving, live event. Raw and ready, the live imperfections fuel Derwin's already manic programming as he punches and battles with a chameleonic BPM and chopping changes in tempo. It sets the perfectly shadowy tone for **Death in Vegas** to play a show charged with light and shadow, slow burning and building to the transcendent big beat and droning, psychedelic anthems that have characterised their appeal for over a decade.

Yet somehow it all feels like a precursor to **Primal Scream**'s stomping, show-stopping performance. Tonight, we get the animals; the seething, feral Bobby Gillespie, prowling and snapping with anti-Royal, anti-Government intent. It doesn't even matter that for the most part he's preaching to a generation of middle-England and the Guardian-guided because it's a show of fire and fury that makes a mockery of

the apathetic, often incomprehensible collective that occasionally stumble on stage. It's a riot and the ideal energiser for a long night of excess in the afterhours Late Night Pavilion.

Will Tramp!'s house-infused set is a seamless, lively delight, effortlessly pulling in the spirit of Chicago's halcyon days, **Optimo** keep things eclectic, battling a few technical mishaps in a Saturday night jukebox set, and **Erol Alkan** to sees us into Sunday with adrenalin-fuelled verve, going deep and techno-heavy in the AM hours.

Then, in true September style, the rain came. But where the weather should have served to make Sunday a miserable, tent-cowering washout, the elements only served to make Festival No.6's quaint settings all the more intimate as the crowds dispersed across the site's playful grounds converged on the village. For all the delightful contrasts and variety, perhaps the weekend's most puzzling dichotomy was why Portmeirion was used in the 1960's spy-fiction series of *The Prisoner* – a story about keeping a former British spy hostage – when so many were so sad to leave.



KING TUFF

The Shacklewell Arms, London

11.09.2012

By Danny Canter

Photography by Sonny McCartney

You get the feeling that this is what garage rock used to be, before it was Pitchforkified; a sausage party of big hair and bigger riffs; unavoidably American; loud and rootsy rather than pretty and hip. We're an ugly bunch tonight, but there's something very real and bona fide vintage about King Tuff, which is an impressive atmosphere to muster when you consider that Kyle Thomas (for he is King Tuff) is younger than he looks and only two albums into this project. So Keith Lemon is on bass ("Can you believe he's only 23?" asks Thomas. No, we can't.) and Kyle frequently sounds like the Teenage Dirtbag from Wheatus; King Tuff can, believe it or not, really play. In that respect, and in terms of its weight, the band's recently released eponymous album is something of a red herring; tinny and ultimately underwhelming, doing little to separate it from the rest of the US garage rock fold. Tonight, old and new tracks are as meaty as they are steeped in heavy bluegrass and alt. country twiddling, most notably on 'I'll Still Be A Freak When I'm Dead' and the opening, barnstorming 'Anthem'. It's stadium rock done the DIY way, which is what happens when King Tuff nab the riff from 'Born To Be Wild', prompting a couple of goofs to continually hop on stage and air guitar like Bill and Ted. It's rather endearing more than it is ironically retro, while King Tuff are simply a rock band way above their humble beginnings and comparatively average recordings.

LIVE

01
Swim Deep

Photographer: Dan Kendall

02

Patti Smith at End Of The Road
Photographer: Ro Cemm



AT THE DRIVE-IN

Brixton Academy, London

29.08.2012

By Reef Younis

I wanted to see smoking amp stacks and splintered guitars; hear the primal angst and the seething vitriol; feel the energy and adrenalin hurtle and surge towards one wild, caterwauling climax. I got none of that from At The Drive-In 2012 and nor could I realistically have expected it from a group of men approaching middle age. A noticeably withdrawn Omar cuts a disconsolate comparison to his uncontrolled heyday but Cedric's determination to enjoy himself is wilfully evident, even if his leaps and bounds generate less velocity these days. Barracking their way through a balanced set designed to please and appease the pre and post 'Relationship of Command' crowd, opener 'Arcarsenal' ignites an already adrenalin-fuelled Academy, 'Enfilade' booms and barks with undiminished force and 'Cosmonaut' sounds as brutally satisfying as ever. After the torch-paper start, reverting to less-vaunted tracks from the 'Vaya EP' and 'In Casino/Out' cools the tempo, Cedric crooning through the timeless 'Rascuache' and '198d', but it doesn't matter, because from the first chord, anticipation was already accelerating towards the release of 12 years of apathy and acrimony, condensed into the collective primal scream of 'One Armed Scissor'. Both ATDI's triumphant signature and sign off, it's a fitting finale to a show that embraced the band's imperfections. But legacies are never perfect. Neither is closure.

EL-P

Green Door Store, Brighton

13.09.2012

By Nathan Westley

Given that tonight is only El-P's second UK show in five years, it's safe to say that many aficionados of underground hip-hop are very much looking forward to this highly respected individual appearing from behind the venue's side of stage cloth. This one-time member of Company Flow has struck out and released a string of highly acclaimed solo albums, which have helped push alternative hip-hop into new forward thinking directions and tonight this rap icon, flanked with a hype man and two musicians, brings much of rap's 'real' core to life. With his intelligently directed flow, dense and aggressive, new cuts such as 'Stay Down' and 'The Full Retard', with its twisted metamorphosing beats, sail out over head and into the ears of an audience gripped tightly by the fist pumping routine being up front, which is punctuated by the occasional guitar or story based interlude. That for the second half of his set El-P should invite fellow New Yorker and one-time Def Jux associate Despot on stage to perform alongside him is really just bonus at a show where P was doing a fine job by himself. As long as El-P's heart is still beating, hip-hop below the surface will remain in rude health. When El-P returns, whenever it may be, go and see him for a genuine taste of the underground.

SILVER APPLES

The Lexington, Angel, London

18.09.2012

By Chal Ravens

The music of Silver Apples is not so much timeless as it is out of time; an ex nihilo miracle that appeared almost a decade before it could be comprehended. Metronomic drums place the songs somewhere in the machine age, but after that it's anyone's guess. Violent synthesised disturbances recall the minimal electronic underground of the early 80s, and a discordant no wave vocal hovers uncomfortably on the wrong notes, but it's the bubbling oil lamp projections on the back wall that provide the clue to this apple's provenance. Simeon, the sole remaining member of the group, is 76 years old – and he's here not only to play songs from the band's 1968 debut, but also newer compositions that suggest his idea of a good night out is 14 hours in the darkest corner of Berghain. He cracks wise when his equipment fucks up before realising he's forgotten to turn up the volume, but otherwise he too is a wonder from outside of time playing macabre nursery rhymes from the not-quite-future. 'Oscillations' still sounds off its actual box and evocative of those vintage drugs us young'uns shall never imbibe – ludes, bennies, purple hearts – and for us, he's even gone and put a donk on it.

SWIM DEEP

Old Blue Last, Shoreditch, London

30.08.2012

By James Balmont

Tonight The Old Blue Last boasts a high-profile and emphatically 'indie' line-up, headlined by latest contestants in the hype game Swim Deep. It's the most packed the venue's been in a long time, where an emergency exit sneak-in is soon the only way in, leaving a room-length queue of distressed fans in the bar downstairs. The band had all the support in the world as the throng – which includes the likes of Spector frontman Frederick MacPhearson and O Children's Tobi O'Kandi – gaze on in suspense ahead of the show. When the band arrive it's clear from the start (following a bizarre introduction by a man impersonating Robert de Niro) that these tightly-wrapped guitar anthems were the sound of the summer to this devoted crowd. Standing on the podium looking like the youth of today, frontman Austin Williams triumphantly leads his troops with a flowery bouquet microphone stand, while Zachary Robinson supplies the eye candy at the back with his precision, topless, pink-haired drumming. Swim Deep steamroll through countless sun-soaked choruses, including new single 'Honey', in a lengthy set made up of simple-structured pop songs. It is what it is. You can do what you like when you've got a crowd as hungry as this, and there's barely a better set closer out there than the explosive 'King City' right now. A smashing performance of no-nonsense surf pop.

CALEXICO

The Forum, Kentish Town, London

18.09.2012

By Sam Walton

Calexico have made a career out of being the muso's Mariachi band of choice by sprinkling their trumpet flourishes with the dusty, sighing vocals of American indie and offering brooding post-rock soundscapes as a counterpoint to all the accordions and maracas. The only problem was that while all this was tastefully evocative on record, in concert it could get rather dull. Not tonight though: Calexico seem to have shaken off the sleepy heat haze that once clouded their live performance, and opted instead for infectious rabble-rousing on the part of leader Joey Burns' build-it-up-tear-it-down arrangements that draw whoops after each solo, and even a suitably south-of-the-border version of Love's 'Alone Again Or'. It doesn't all work, mind: in the more mealy-mouthed guitar solos it's the cheese of Carlos Santana, rather than the intended cool of Ennio Morricone, that looms largest, and the Speedy Gonzales-style ad libs from the enthusiastic trumpeter feel plain hokey, regardless of his nationality. But these are churlish quibbles in what is, in spirit, a terrific gig. As the elongated, throw-it-around-the-band version of 'Guero Canelo' brings the main set to a close and the house lights illuminate a collective crowd grin, it's hard to begrudge a group of musicians who've long been aware of the subtlety of their music finally relishing the downright joyous side too.



END OF THE ROAD

Larmer Tree Gardens, North Dorset

30.08.2012 - 01.09.12

By Chal Ravens

Among the many petty grievances to be endured during a long weekend in a field, one of the most aggravating (worse than the immutable fingernail grime and the dry-mouthed horror of waking up in a hot plastic bubble) is the sheer effort it takes to get suitably (but of course responsibly) trolleyed. If one pint is £4 and it takes around five minutes to reach the bar from your spot near the stage, plus another five to queue for your paper cup of one-flavour-fits-all Official Festival Beer, and 10 more for the return journey as you squeeze back through the sticky crowd, then you'll soon judge this whole festival binge drinking set-up to be deeply uneconomical.

Not so at End of the Road. This "boutique festival" (their words, sadly) on what must be the highest and nippiest hill in rural Dorset is a dream for the committed session drinker. Admittedly, there is a queue for the beer – but what beer! No brand names or continental fizziness here; these are dark and malevolent ales, with names like 'Fuggledeedum' and A.B.V.s at 6.0%. And what a queue! Orderly, softly spoken, largely bespectacled. And for the time-strapped, a separate booze shack offers a pint of cider with two shots of brandy splashed in, enabling the hasty drinker to get three, or possibly four or five sheets to the wind in the most efficient manner possible.

Festivals aren't just about drinking, of course, but nor are they about seeing lots of bands one after another – if that was the case we would be as excited for the Camden Crawl every year as we are about Glastonbury. No, the real purpose of a festival is to bring the sun-starved youth of Britain into the great outdoors, let them feel the

mud between their toes, sip an al fresco pint in the rain and lob cans of deodorant into little campfires.

So while the night time activities are more peaceful at End of the Road, the festival does an excellent job of framing the music, mud and beer in a serene arcadian landscape where bearded dads and bearded youth can mingle among the book stalls, ping pong tables and fairy-lit woodland grottos. And as a rule of thumb for the weekend, mingling is what you get – the line-up veers from **Van Dyke Parks**, the eccentric old uncle of the American songbook, whose piano-led set includes numbers about the Mississippi river ('Delta Queen Waltz') and the greatest American president ('FDR in Trinidad'), all the way to **Zun Zun Egui**, whose stuttering time signatures have the bucket-hatted and the pink-wellied dancing together in almost-unison. And that's just the Friday afternoon.

The first evening on the main stage is capped by sets from **Dirty Three** and **Beach House**, two much-loved bands who somehow fail to the bring the night to a complete climax. A sozzled Warren Ellis high-kicks his way through an especially rough and raucous set from the Three, but their softer, prettier material might've pleased this crowd slightly better. Beach House's static stage presence doesn't dampen our enjoyment of the songs that have quietly become private anthems since the release of 'Teen Dream' two years ago, and the stage set is great – shards of light streaming through slowly revolving fans – but the stately performance is too restrained to appeal beyond those already cosily familiar with their catalogue.

Highlights from Saturday include a bluster of raw emotion on the Garden Stage from **Perfume Genius**, whose introspective modern balladry shushes the audience but not the screeching peacocks (this is a 'boutique festival', remember) and a chugging caboose of funkadelia from **The Stepkids**, the de facto backing band of the Stones Throw label.

Alabama Shakes draw a huge crowd in the early evening with their family-friendly recycled riffola before **Grizzly Bear** close the night with a set that leans heavily on their new record, 'Shields'. The unfamiliar songs hold up well but it's minor masterpieces like 'Two Weeks' and the chilling electric version of 'Little Brother' that hit the spot.

Sunday brings a midday slot from the excellent new **Savages**, whose dark-as-night punk squall is a refreshing tonic for the crusty and exhausted flocks, while **Pinkunoizu** also get a warm welcome despite playing little that's recognisable from their strong debut, 'Free Time!'.

In the evening **Graham Coxon** goes heavy on 'Happiness In Magazines' classics before **Patti Smith** runs through her own greatest hits, shouting herself hoarse on the 'Horses' gem 'Free Money'. A reunited **Grandaddy** then pull off that great headliner trick of reminding the crowd just how much of their material they know and love (and not just that one off Charlie Brooker's *Screenwipe*).

With the booze, music and mud triumvirate optimally balanced, this little hilltop gathering is among Britain's best offerings in a saturated field of festival weekends – and surely the only one with added peacocks.

FILM

By IAN ROEBUCK



Alice Lowe in *Sightseers*

Cinema Preview

A look ahead to this month's London Film Festival

With Cannes, Venice and Berlin being driven by the industry, London Film Festival has always stood out from the crowd with its dedication to the movie-going public. This year, new director Clare Stewart insists the BFI's outlook remains the same, despite 12 films doing battle for the first time in a competitive structure and the festival shortening to 12 days from 16. That's not to say London will be bereft of must see movies; in fact it's brimming with talent and with over 100,000 tickets going begging for the 200 plus features on show, it's the audience that will benefit. A seemingly canny move, competition no doubt means exposure, but it's not without controversy. After 56 years, who likes change?

From October 10th to the 21st we will find out. The BFI's programme is a packed one but we've got more structure too. Creative or condescending, we're yet to decide, but titles like Dare, Laugh, Love, Debate, Thrill, Cult, Journey, Sonic and Family will now filter the festival into bite size chunks as well as the usual world premieres that include Rolling Stones doco *Crossfire Hurricane*. Sitting pretty in the Laugh category will be *Sightseers*, the highly anticipated film from British director Ben Wheatley, whose previous efforts *Down Terrace* and *Kill List* put him top of the sought-after pile.

A pitch black comedy with razor sharp teeth, Wheatley's charmingly gruesome looking movie has all the hallmarks of a British smash – what's not to love about a couple who go on a killing spree whilst on a caravan holiday? The couple in question (stars Steve Oram and Alice Lowe) wrote the screenplay themselves and actually made a short a few years back with Bunny and the Bull director Paul King, but it wasn't until Big Talk and Film 4 climbed aboard (exec producer Edgar Wright familiar with *Sightseers'*

aesthetic) that the project began to soar.

A ballsy trailer amalgamates all the best bits of British television comedy; think *Nighty Night* meets *Garth Marenghi's Darkplace* (Alice Lowe again, of course) on the Yorkshire moors. All this with whip smart direction and a killer cast make *Sightseers* impossible to miss come festival time.

At the opposite end of the spectrum and lining up in the Love pathway will be Michael Haneke's aptly titled *Amour*. Already garnering much praise, the Cannes Palme d'or-winner from Haneke is reportedly as riveting and game changing as his previous oeuvre including a couple of our personal favourites, *Hidden* and *The White Ribbon*.

A Paris apartment the backdrop for the Austrian director's heart-tugging tale of an elderly man caring for his frail wife, played with remarkable restraint and beauty by Jean-Louis Trintignant and Emmanuelle Riva, Haneke's trademark control and build will no doubt be on show. And when you add such poignant subject matter as lifelong love we're sure there won't be a dry eye in the house.

London opens with the European premiere of Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie*, a 3D animation that hopes to see his tiring stylistic touch back on form. Closing the festival will be Mike Newell's adaptation of *Great Expectations*, and with Burton's muse Helena Bonham Carter as Miss Havisham and *War Horse*'s Jeremy Irvine as Pip, Newell's effort already looks like it's desperate to snag the Potter faithful.

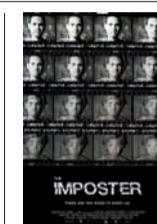
As ever there are some interesting quirks to look out for as well, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* gets an airing and Dustin Hoffman's directorial debut *Quartet*, about a home for retired opera singers, hits the screen starring Michael Gambon and Billy Connolly. Maybe change isn't so bad.

CINEMA REVIEW

THE IMPOSTER

Director: Bart Layton

Producer: Dimitri Dorganis



07/10

Watching the downright strange trickster Frederic Bourdin explain in childlike enthusiasm how he hoodwinked a Texan family into thinking he was their missing son stirs up emotions like no other documentary in recent memory. The sheer audacity of Bourdin's twisted plot leaves you floored and then floored again as his web of deceit grows deeper. As if this wasn't shocking enough, the family's blind acceptance and the authority's blasé attitude also beggar belief. The missing Nicolas Barclay would be 16, blonde and blue eyed. Bourdin has brown hair, brown eyes, a French accent and a 5 o'clock shadow... because he's 23.

It's testament to Director Bart Layton that this disturbing story carries a convincing edge, and with a palette of well shot interviews, lookalike reconstructions and home videos, he plants the audience at the centre of this compelling piece. However, Layton's formulaic ticks of documentary making and clichéd forms of reveal for the inevitable twists are a little disappointing. Should this matter a jot? With a true story so utterly horrifying, playing it straight may have been the only way to go.

This is a curiosity and it doesn't get more curious than Bourdin himself, an imposter who specialises in imitating abandoned teenagers. He's both charismatic and creepy – the perfect villain. In a much improved third act that fizzes with suspense our theories and allegiances are questioned, doors open and rules of deception fall. It's here the film glistens, partly due to the introduction of a knowledgeable private eye who adds a touch of b-movie brass to proceedings. His wonderful gravel and insistence on driving round and round in circles inject a spot of humour and common sense into the draining narrative and we're suddenly dragged back in. "Remember it's all in the ears," he says.

my inspiration

James Murphy



You don't have to be weird to be wired
you don't have to be an American brand
you don't have to be strange to be strange
you don't have to be weird to be weird
but I'm totally wired....totally wired
jj-just totally wired....I'm totally wired
my heart and I agree....my heart and I agree

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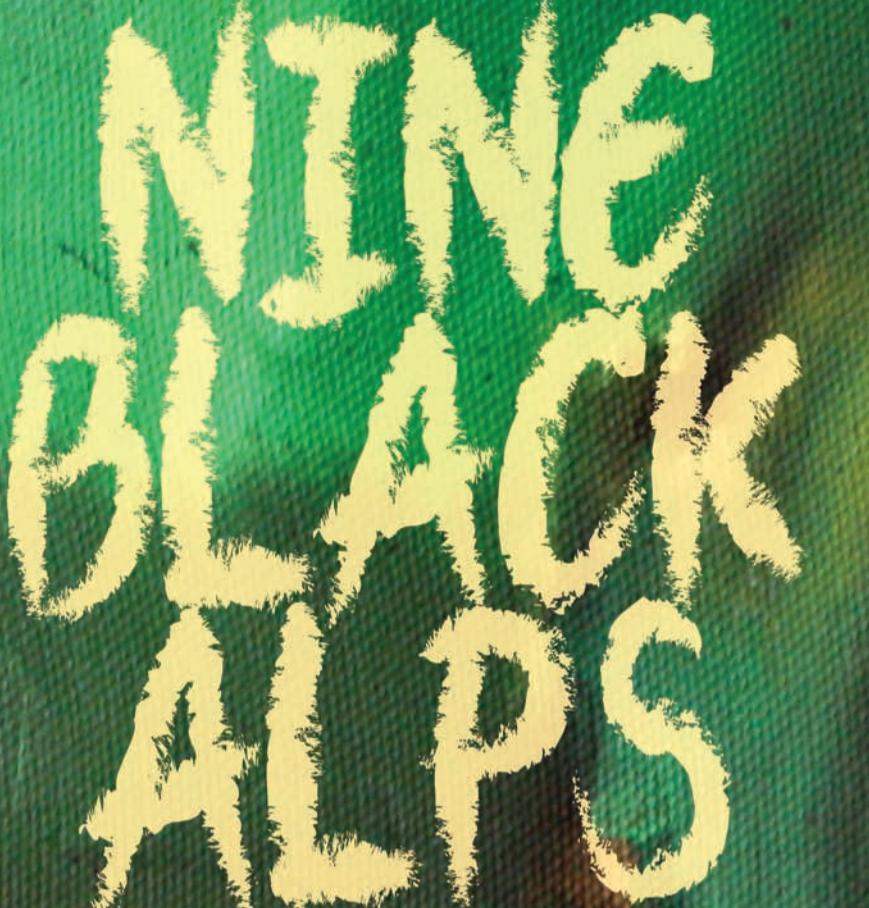
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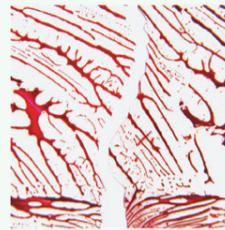


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Gloriously catchy, brilliantly uplifting and charmingly intelligent, Europe is full of perfect, sophisticated pop gems with influences from The Go-Betweens to Kirsty McColl.

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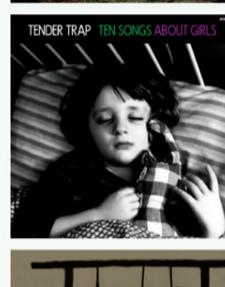


SHRAG / CANINES

CD / LP / Digital

Shrag's finest work to date, "Canines" is a visceral pop record bristling with urgency, melody, and danger that manages to mix elements of Love Is All, The Fall and New Order.

"A feisty offering which showcases some great songwriting." 8/10 NME

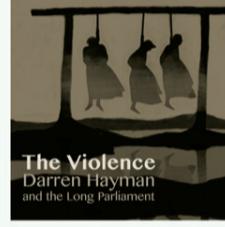


TENDER TRAP / TEN SONGS ABOUT GIRLS

CD / LP / Digital

Amelia Fletcher's merry troupe harken back to the indiepop sound of her Heavenly days with ten vignettes on being female in this day and age, all delivered with a huge dose of humour, joy and warmth.

"The songs are stronger, the three-part harmonies more dramatic, the whole affair more compelling." **** Mojo



DARREN HAYMAN & THE LONG PARLIAMENT / THE VIOLENCE

CD / LP / Digital

Sir Darren Hayman's latest is the third and final instalment in his Essex trilogy, a double album of strangely beautiful, haunting songs about the Essex witch trials of the 17th century. *Out in November.*

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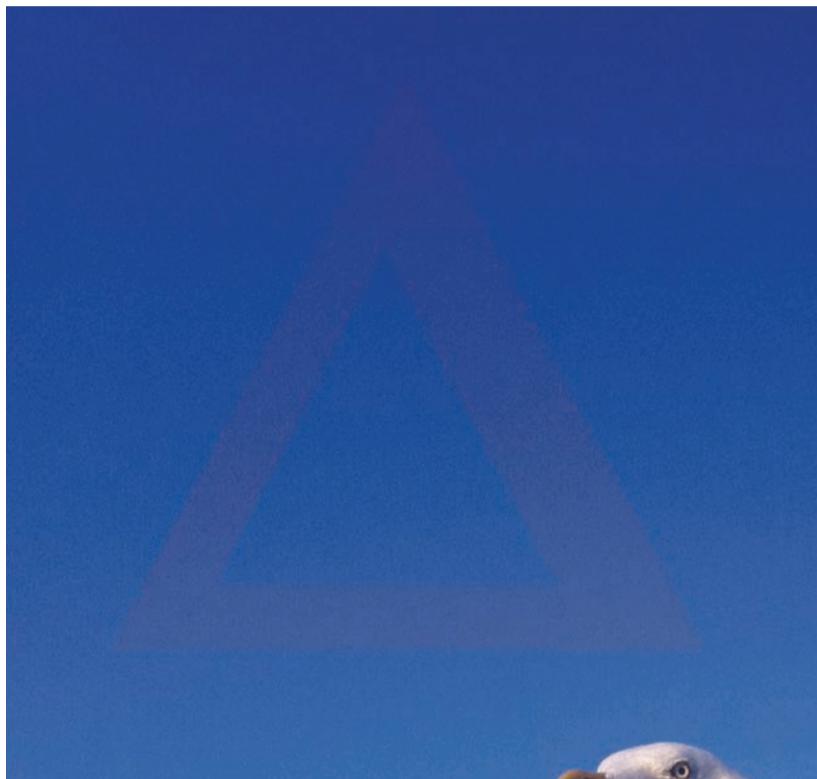
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PARTY WOLF



COMPETITION *Just that*



MY TIME *Diary of a somebody*

I've had a shitter of a week. It all started were David and I were giggling at the plods outside. Not at how much money they don't earn but at their cars - hatch backs! "Bet you can't get them to open the gate like I can," Dave wagered, mopping the swan from him chops and tossing 15 nicker on the table as if it was closer to 10 pounds. "For Mable [my trusty shopper]?" I laughed, "Course they will." After I'd squeezed through the side gate to the jeers of the fuzz, I just had to say something, so I let them have it. I admit I lost my usual cool. I could have sworn that even Mable was blushing. I never said 'pleb' though, and maybe if these peasants didn't have potatoes in their grotty ears they'd know that. As I looked back Dave and George sniggered in the window and Boris mooned me.



PHOTO CASEBOOK "The inappropriate world of Ian Beale"



WIN A RARE COPY OF ALT-J'S DEBUT SINGLE ON 7-INCH

If I may get a little sentimental, this month's competition prize is something very close to all of us here at Loud And Quiet - a copy of the debut AA single by the now Mercury Prize Nominated Δ.

We released 300 copies of 'Tessellate/Bloodflood' in October of last year with an instinctive hunch that the band were destined for great things, purely on the strength of their rough Soundcloud demos, forwarded to us by our Leeds correspondence Kate Parkin. Sure enough, the band soon signed to Infectious, hit the road, made Radio 1 weak at the knees and last month announced a headline show at London's Brixton Academy. Not bad for a band

with a name that you can't Google or even write on PC, and one that parents pronounce 'Old Jay'

The 'Tessellate/Bloodflood' 7-inch has long since sold out, but to celebrate the band's much deserved nod from the Mercury Prize this year, we've rustled up one last copy to give away to you. To be in with a chance of winning it email the correct answer to the below conundrum to info@loudandquiet.com by October 12th.

What were the band called before Δ?

- a.) The Flicks
- b.) Films
- c.) Straight To DVD

And last month's Too Pure Singles Club competition answer: 'Pure' is a song by my third favourite band from Liverpool, The Lightning Seeds. Stefan Lingg was our winner.

IDIOT PARADE



Fingers crossed that this series of *Strictly Come Dancing* is the one where Tess Daly lays an actual egg live on air. Good game, good game.

THE TEMPER TRAP

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HMV HAMMERSMITH APOLLO
Thursday 4 October

ULTRAISTA

SPECIAL GUEST

BIRTHDAYS
Sunday 7 October

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SPECIAL GUESTS

CORSICA STUDIOS
Thursday 11 October

ERRORS

SPECIAL GUESTS

HEAVEN
Thursday 18 October

RACHEL ZEFFIRA

SPECIAL GUESTS

ST. ANDREWS CHURCH
Thursday 18 October

FRANCOIS & THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS

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VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
Thursday 25 October

TOY

CHARLIE BOYER & THE VOYEURS

HEAVEN

Thursday 25 October

OPOSSOM

SPECIAL GUESTS

SHACKLEWELL ARMS
29, 30 October

HERE WE GO MAGIC

SPECIAL GUESTS

DINGWALLS
Tuesday 30 October

DUOLOGUE

CLOUD BOAT

THE LEXINGTON
Wednesday 31 October

TWIN SHADOW

SPECIAL GUESTS

BRIXTON ELECTRIC
Thursday 1 November

KINDNESS

SPECIAL GUESTS

HEAVEN

Wednesday 7 November

CLOCK OPERA

SPECIAL GUESTS

HEAVEN

Thursday 8 November

ANDREW BIRD

MICAH PHINSON

THE ROUNDHOUSE
Thursday 8 November

LOTUS PLAZA

SPECIAL GUESTS

ELECTROWERKZ
Saturday 10 November

SPECTOR

LULS + SPLASHH

O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE
Saturday 10 November

SIDI TOURE

SPECIAL GUESTS

CAFÉ OTO

Wednesday 14 November

JULIANNA BARWICK

SPECIAL GUESTS

CAFÉ OTO

Thursday 22 November

SHEARWATER

SPECIAL GUESTS

THE GARAGE

Saturday 24 November

ICEAGE

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HOXTON BAR & KITCHEN

Thursday 29 November

FLORENCE & THE MACHINE

HAIM

O2 ARENA

Wednesday 5 December

Thursday 6 December

STEALING SHEEP

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Monday 10 December

THE XX

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