MUSIC / FASHION / FILM

CLASH

EARL SWEATSHIRT

STEPS OUT OF THE DARK

DOUBLE ISSUE

ALBUMS OF THE YEAR

NEXT WAVE 2014

DAUGHTER

SPIKE JONZE

MIDLAKE

BRETON

JOEY BADA$$

ISSUE 91A • JAN / FEB 2014
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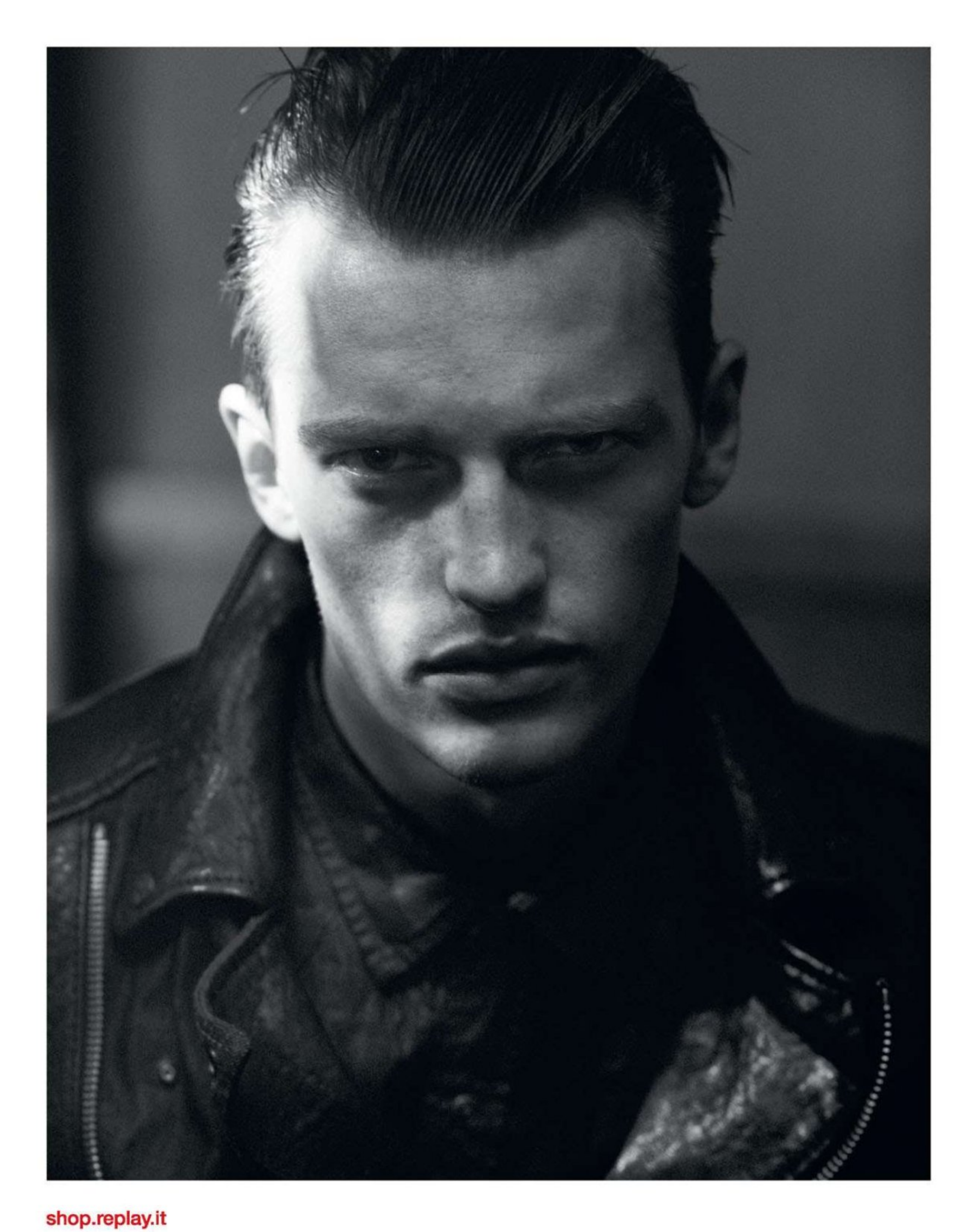

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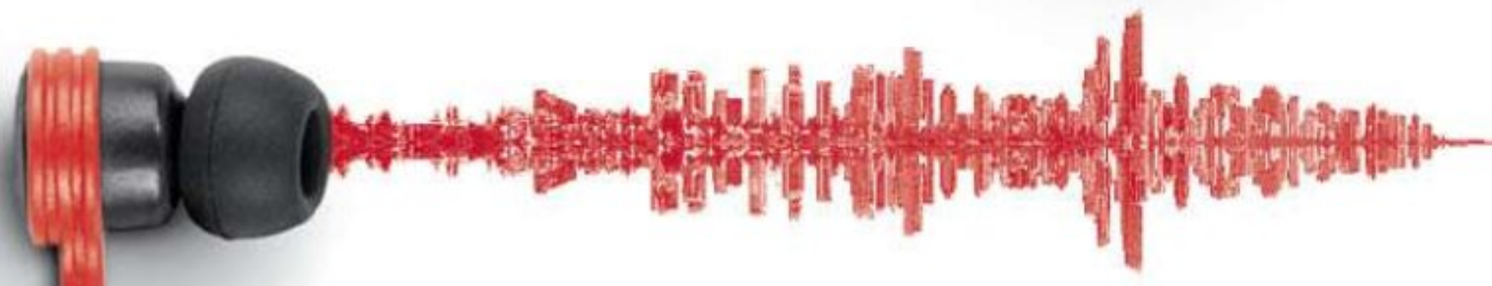

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WELCOME

EXTOLLING THE VIRTUES OF LITERARY SEX

Well, here we are again. The final gasps of another eventful year and the birth of a brand new one. Time to look back, forward and sideways, to appreciate the highs and lows of the last twelve months, and wonder what tricks and treats are set to come. It's our last issue of the year, which can mean only one thing: charts. We've got two definitive lists stuffed into this month's double Christmas special, with each getting its own cover too.

Through weeks of discussions, listening parties and glorious rediscoveries we have compiled our top 40 albums of 2013. It started - as they always do - as a wall full of Post-It notes, which accumulated staff votes, and evolved into a spreadsheet that gradually got whittled down to what we believe is a true representation of Clash's collective aural habits. It's suitably diverse, with a few surprises thrown in for good measure. Two stand-outs from the year are represented by our first cover: Earl Sweatshirt, whose album features quite prominently in the list, deserves his honour, and is shot for the occasion by his Odd Future friend and collaborator, Tyler, The Creator - himself a previous Clash cover recipient. It's a winning combination, and a revealing interview.

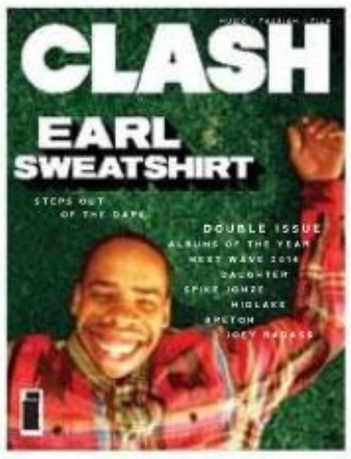
Furthermore, we present to you our selection of Next Wave artists set to dominate 2014. These are split into three chapters and are interspersed throughout the mag, intended to catch you unawares, as they may do next year. In addition to these nine newbies, we've got BANKS: a sultry soul star in the making, and someone we look forward to hearing a lot more of.

With more ranked memories and intrepid features for you to devour, I hope we've crafted a fine conclusion to 2013 for you. It's been a helluva year; see you on the other side!

Let's drink to the hard working people
Let's drink to the salt of the earth.

Your Editor.

Simon H.



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WORDS: MIKE DIVER

BECK IN THE GAME

Beck's first studio album since 2008's 'Modern Guilt' is set for a February 2014 release via a new label for the Californian, Capitol Records. Titled 'Morning Phase', the nine-track set is a tonal sequel to the artist's celebrated 2002 LP, the introspective 'Sea Change'.

"It comes from a slightly different perspective this time," Beck tells Clash. "There are a few different threads to this new record, whereas 'Sea Change' was more specifically about one thing. You have periods in your life where everything turns over, and you're in a new space, be that through choice or circumstance."

A record some time coming, 'Morning Phase' is an understated but beautifully arranged collection which manages to balance a sense of optimism - "I do feel like it's a fresh start record" - while also referencing the difficult period in Beck's life where he suffered physical difficulties enough to prevent him recording and performing.

"I've gone through a long period of physical challenges. So that went into this music. It wasn't an easy time. I was in so much pain. When I did look to music, to make music, it was frustrating because I was incapable of certain things. I was watching my peers go out and do their things, putting out brilliant records. I really wanted to be a part of it."

"A big part of this record was just us getting back together to play, and me being able to play my old guitar again. It just really felt…" He laughs at the memory. "There was a powerful energy in the room, I can tell you. It wasn't forced for anybody."

Recuperated, Beck can now begin to look ahead to a busy 2014. Alongside 'Morning Phase', he's enough songs to form a second album for the year. "I do want to put out something a lot more 'up', a lot more energetic," he says. "It'll be quite different to this record."

But first comes 'Morning Phase' - a strings-kissed, country-hued affair that is more than warmly welcomed. That its arrival is a marker for more material is but a footnote in the story of a record that stands proudly, defiantly, beautifully on its own terms.

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REPLAY EMBRACES A NEW CLASSIC FOR SS14

The black bustier, strapless top, boob tube, bandeau - or whatever else you might call it - is a classic. Not in the LBD sort of way; it doesn't bear an acronym, nor does it have the same day-to-day capabilities a pair of jeans offers.

What is does have is staying power; a timeless quality that makes it as right now as it was way back when. Plus, depending on your fabric choice, it can be worn as a skirt too; always a bonus when packing space is tight.

For Spring Summer '14 Replay favours a neoprene bandeau style, marrying the brand's two key trends: Pop Surf and Midnight Riders (another quality for the tick list, uniting powers).

With the wetsuit fabric, exposed stitching and chunky zip carrying the former, the latter is summed up via the garment's seductive nature and drool encouraging appeal; think Sandy Olsson if she'd been part of the synchronised swimming club before her Pink Ladies transformation.

Doing exactly as it says on the metaphoric tin, the 'Urban Surf' collection is enriched with a make believe story of summer road trips, taking in both Hawaii's striking beaches and gritty American motorbike culture.

Sat beside leather lace-up trousers, red PVC jackets, tie-dye tees and cotton maxi dresses, the black top pictured here is the visual embodiment of urban meets surf, perfectly matched up with both elements of the collection.

WORDS: BEN HOPKINS

2014 FILM PREVIEW

The most exciting January release that we weren't able to cover in this issue is The Wolf Of Wall Street. Judging from the trailer, Martin Scorsese's interpretation of Jordan Belfort's memoirs reflects the quirks of Herzog's Bad Lieutenant and the sleazy excess of Spring Breakers rather than the likes of Rogue Trader.

It's already shaping up to be a great year for the cult of the director. Lars von Trier's two-part Nymphomaniac will surely be his latest controversy, especially with promotional stunts such as the infamous collage of cast members posing mid-orgasm. You can't really expect similar provocations from Wes Anderson, but The Grand Budapest Hotel will hopefully be as innately stylish as ever, while Jim Jarmusch returns for the first time since 2009 with vampiric existentialism in Only Lovers Left Alive.

It should also prove to be a fruitful twelve months for British directors as Steve McQueen will surely be the star of the year after 12 Years A Slave. Elsewhere, Richard Ayoade directs Jesse Eisenberg in an adaptation of Dostoevsky's The Double and David Mackenzie's prison drama Starred Up should catapult lead Jack O'Connell to the next level. Kill List's Ben Wheatley, meanwhile, is detouring to the small screen with two episodes of Doctor Who.

If you can't wait for Christopher Nolan's Interstellar towards the year's end, his cinematographer Wally Pfister should provide an ample stopgap with Transcendence, starring Johnny Depp and Rebecca Hall. Other mainstream thrills should be provided by Darren Aronofsky's biblical epic Noah and the Wachowskis' sci-fi adventure Jupiter Ascending, which is full of rising Brit talent including the hotly tipped couple Douglas Booth and Vanessa Kirby.

Sequels abound as ever with new instalments from Transformers (Irishman Jack Reynor could be the next major heartthrob), Spider-Man, The Hobbit, Sin City, The Inbetweeners and The X-Men on the way.

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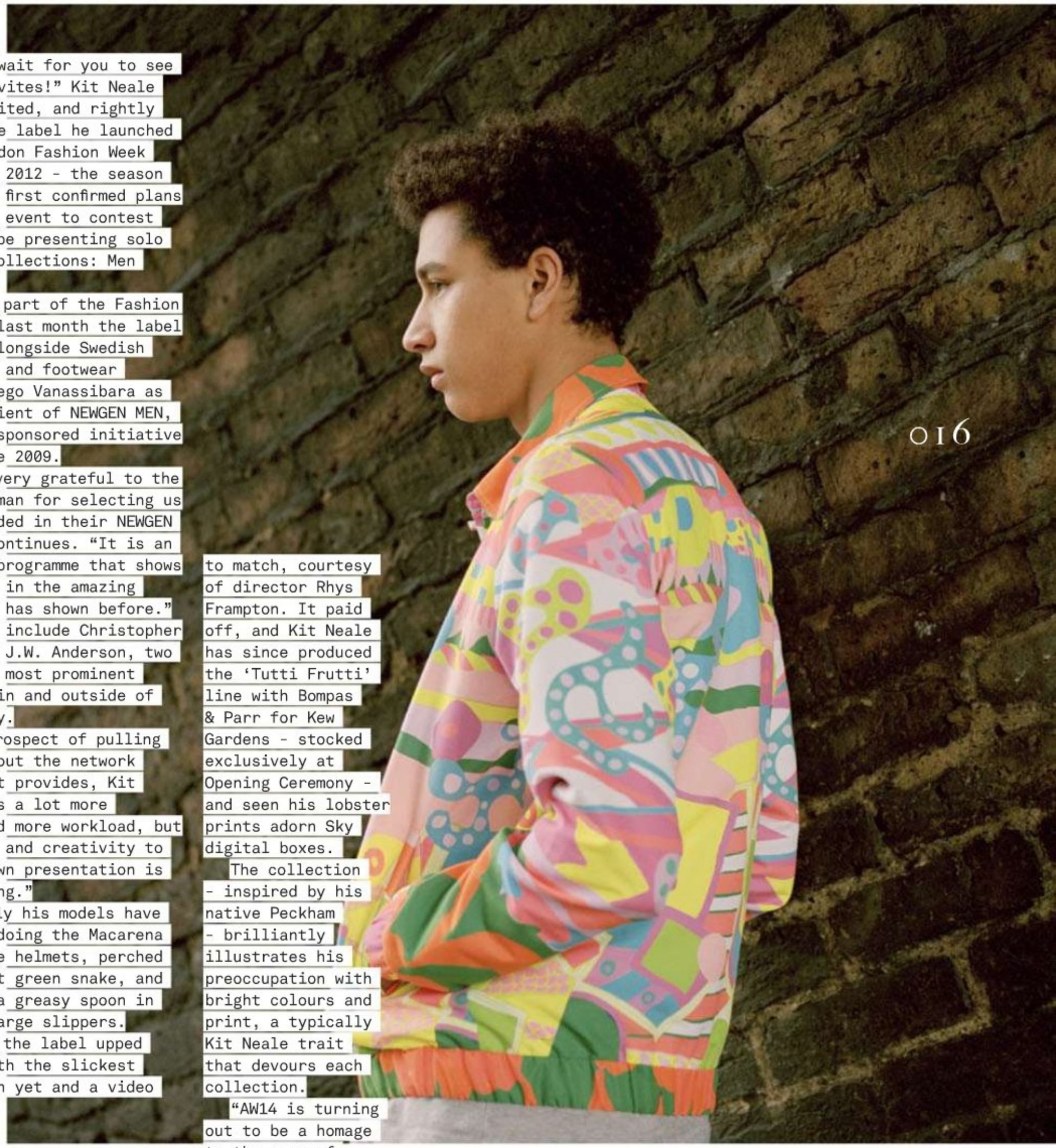
WORDS: ZOE WHITFIELD

KIT NEALE GOES IT ALONE FOR LC:M

BRIGHTENING UP NEWGEN



"I can't wait for you to see our invites!" Kit Neale is excited, and rightly so. The label he launched at London Fashion Week in February 2012 – the season Dylan Jones first confirmed plans for a men's event to contest LFW – will be presenting solo at London Collections: Men AW14.

Formerly part of the Fashion East crew, last month the label was named alongside Swedish pair Common and footwear designer Diego Vanassibara as a new recipient of NEWGEN MEN, the Topman-sponsored initiative active since 2009.

"We are very grateful to the BFC and Topman for selecting us to be included in their NEWGEN gang," he continues. "It is an incredible programme that shows its success in the amazing alumni that has shown before." Said alumni include Christopher Shannon and J.W. Anderson, two of London's most prominent names both in and outside of the industry.

On the prospect of pulling it off without the network Fashion East provides, Kit says: "It is a lot more pressure and more workload, but the freedom and creativity to plan your own presentation is very exciting."

Previously his models have been filmed doing the Macarena in motorbike helmets, perched atop a giant green snake, and sat around a greasy spoon in comically large slippers.

For SS14 the label upped its game with the slickest presentation yet and a video to match, courtesy of director Rhys Frampton. It paid off, and Kit Neale has since produced the 'Tutti Frutti' line with Bompas & Parr for Kew Gardens – stocked exclusively at Opening Ceremony – and seen his lobster prints adorn Sky digital boxes.

The collection – inspired by his native Peckham – brilliantly illustrates his preoccupation with bright colours and print, a typically Kit Neale trait that devours each collection.

"AW14 is turning out to be a homage to the area of Elephant and Castle," he advises. And after that, Waterloo? "Maybe."

WORDS: ROBIN MURRAY

ART AID, FROM SCOTLAND TO INDIA

TRANSGRESSIVE EXPRESS

In an era of globalisation, of the commercialisation of our every tweet, thought and utterance, it's heartening to find a project which thrives on sheer goodwill. Yet such is the case with Everything Is New: beginning in Edinburgh, it sought out the most disenfranchised children in rural India before inviting producers around the world to get involved.

An exaggeration? Hell no. The tale begins with Scottish arts organisation Transgressive North, who sent the group Marram out to Indian hospice The Light Of Love Children's Home. "We were looking to kind of channel our energies into something we thought was worth fighting for, I guess," explains Artistic Director Jamie Chambers. "A lot of the kids in the home are untouchables, and we were caught by the idea that some kid could be born into a notion that they were somehow less valuable than other kids their own age."

Working with the children, Marram wove those voices around their material. Recording extensive choral tracks, the project took some six years to bring to fruition, with Jarvis Cocker, Irvine Welsh, Owen Pallett and more offering their assistance as word of mouth spread about the endeavour.

The results are gathered on new album 'Sun Choir' - but the project doesn't stop there. Tracing those original recordings of impoverished schoolchildren, Transgressive North began inviting guest producers to craft their own mixes on the 'BOATS' compilation. The full list is imposing, and contains everyone from Rustie to Four Tet, Max Tundra to No Age and much, much more. Chuckling, Jamie reveals: "We just kept inviting people... It just steamrolled."

Returning to India, 'Sun Choir' was unveiled before the children at an emotional New Year's Eve rave. "We went back to India and we had a massive party, just dancing with the kids to the music," says Chambers, who leaves the door open on a potential return. "As for future plans... I would really like to go back and help the kids make something which was even more theirs and possibly try and even take some of the artists with us. But who's to say, man, who's to say?"

WORDS: FELICIA PENNANT

PUFFA X HARRIS TWEED X CLASH

Puffa turning 40 and teaming up with Harris Tweed, another British heritage brand, to mark the occasion is definitely something worth celebrating. So much so that Clash aided and abetted the whole thing by throwing an 'All Things British' Puffa party at Translate bar in Shoreditch. Soundtracked by a stellar DJ line-up that included The Vaccines, Eddie Piller of Acid Jazz Records and DJ Bootsie, Puffa's Harris Tweed capsule collection took pride of place through the gilt-framed campaign images, projected campaign video and the pieces themselves, which could be admired up close. The theme followed through to the pie and mash that was served, washed down with gin cocktails, ales and beer.

Even though brand collaborations are pretty standard these days, this one came about because Puffa and Harris Tweed are two of the last iconic British brands standing. Puffa has conquered the world, one padded style jacket at a time. The jacket style itself wasn't new but Penny Rodgers created 'Puffa' - the term and brand it has become synonymous with - in 1973. Inspired by the quilted jackets seen on trips to Canada and America, she initially made her jackets from Eiderdown quilts. The benefits of Puffa jackets are always extolled when it gets cold: they're warm, durable, light and innovative. In 40 years Puffa have stylishly married form with function with unique fill technology and the constant reinvention of their styles and shapes. That's why their jackets, and their imitations, have adorned the shoulders of everyone from the Royal Family to The Spice Girls, Will Smith and even Ugly Betty.

The use of Harris Tweed for this exclusive collection shows Puffa have upped the ante yet again. There are only three mills that genuinely produce this hand-woven Scottish cloth and it shares the quality, warmth and durability of Puffa jackets. By reworking styles from Puffa's Original Collection with the famous tweed, a limited 40-piece run of a retro two-tone collared bomber and matching gilet has been created. Although described as menswear, the styles could easily be borrowed from the boys. www.puffa.com.

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WHAT'S HOT ON THE CLASH STEREO, BY THOSE WHO PRESS PLAY

ESSENTIAL 10

MSSINGNO
'Skeezers'
(Goon Club Allstars)

From the hands responsible for the gorgeous 'Brandy Flip', London's mssingNo proves he's no one-trick pony by getting out this hugely recommended four-tracker on Leeds' Goon Club Records. Wind chime clinks, hollow block taps and a killer Rihanna vocal cut make 'Skeezers' one to set the repeat button on.

FELICITY MARTIN, EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

TEMPLES
'Mesmerise'
(Heavenly)

If the growing psychedelic resurgence is to impact on the charts, it'll need hooks galore. Thankfully, Temples have a pop touch heavier than King Midas in a tie-dye T-shirt. Sublime psych-pop bringing summer incantations to the wintery depths.

ROBIN MURRAY, ONLINE DEPUTY EDITOR

SHINY DARKLY
'Dead Stars'
(Crunchy Frog)

Nine minutes of divinely dirty feedback and raucous resonance from the Danish garage trio. A subterranean bass line and sonorous vocal conjure the Bunnymen and The Cure in a distilled dance of '80s angst and shadowy psychedelia. Gorgeously, gloomily vital.

ANNA WILSON, STAFF WRITER

BRETON
'Got Well Soon'
(Believe Recordings)

In an arresting bid to marry their DIY aesthetic with a crowded dance floor, Roman and co. have spewed out a molten banger that seems to have 'cross over' stenciled across its shivering soles. 'Got Well Soon' is yet another healthy step in Breton's understated ascension.

MATTHEW BENNETT, HEAD OF DIGITAL CONTENT

JULIA HOLTER
'Hello Stranger'
(Domino)

I've been going through some of my favourite albums of the year - what with the need to crunch them down into lists - and this track is a beauty from an album that just keeps giving. Music to make a lump form in any throat.

MIKE DIVER, ONLINE EDITOR

TOY
'Fall Out Of Love'
(Heavenly)

Clocking in at just shy of 10 minutes, the final track on the London five-piece's second album is a multidimensional psych epic, where strings flow into pounding drums and rhythms breathlessly shift before climaxing in one almighty motorik orgasm. Hypnotic.

SIMON HARPER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

JAAKKO EINO KALEVI
'No End'
(Weird World/Domino)

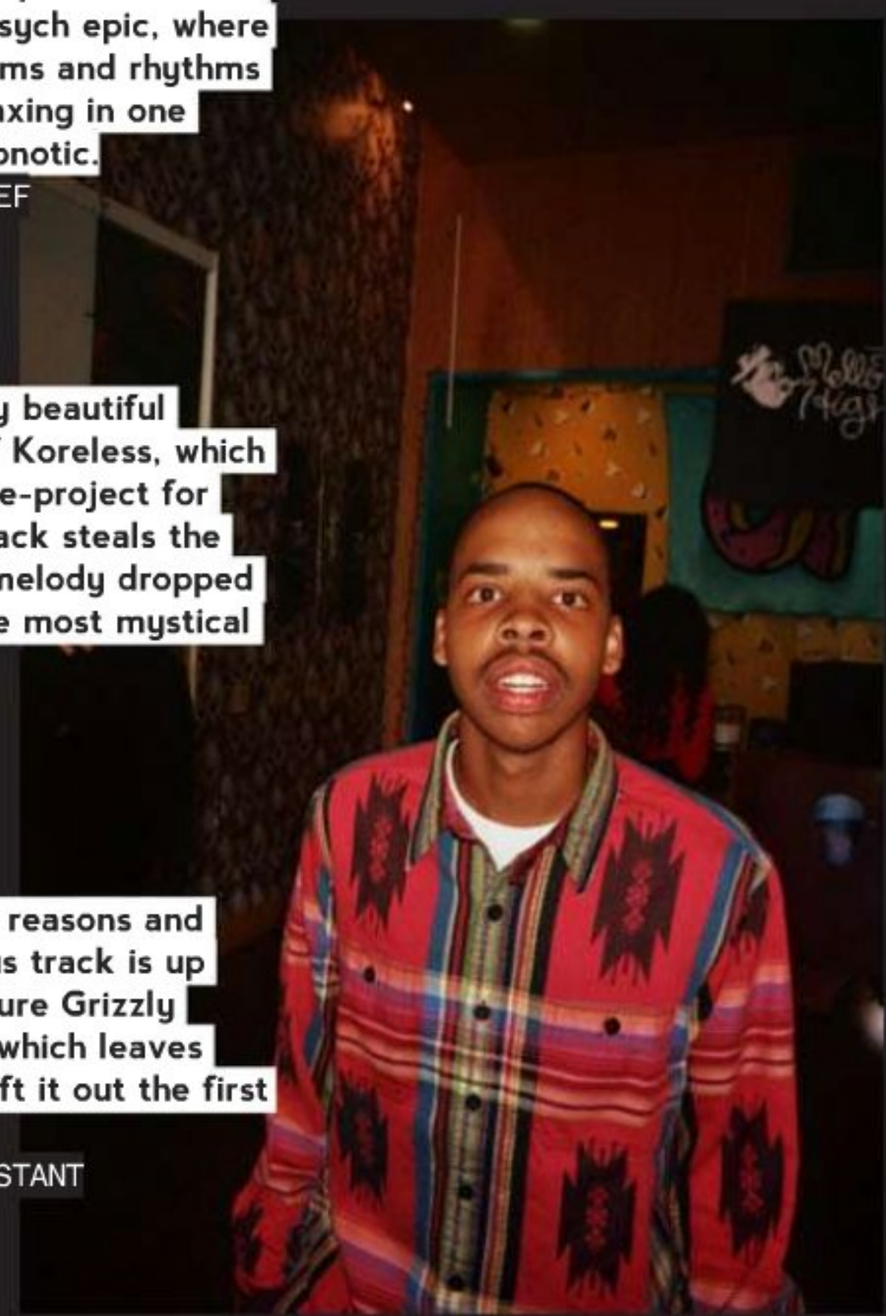
This young Finnish musician teetered on the peripheries of our Next Wave list for 2014, with a lush EP that blends Ariel Pink haze with a dreamy disco pulse. The video, by past Clash photographer Harley Weir, is a worthwhile visual representation of Kalevi's blissful musings.

JOE ZADEH, DEPUTY EDITOR

ROAD TO SHAANXI
'Who Am I'
(True Panther)

A complex, punchy and pretty beautiful electronic EP here for fans of Koreless, which exists as the experimental side-project for club DJ Alex Coulton. This track steals the show, with a fluttering synth melody dropped against a hard kickdrum in the most mystical manner.

JOE ZADEH, DEPUTY EDITOR



EARL SWEATSHIRT
'Centurion'
(Tan Cressida/Columbia)

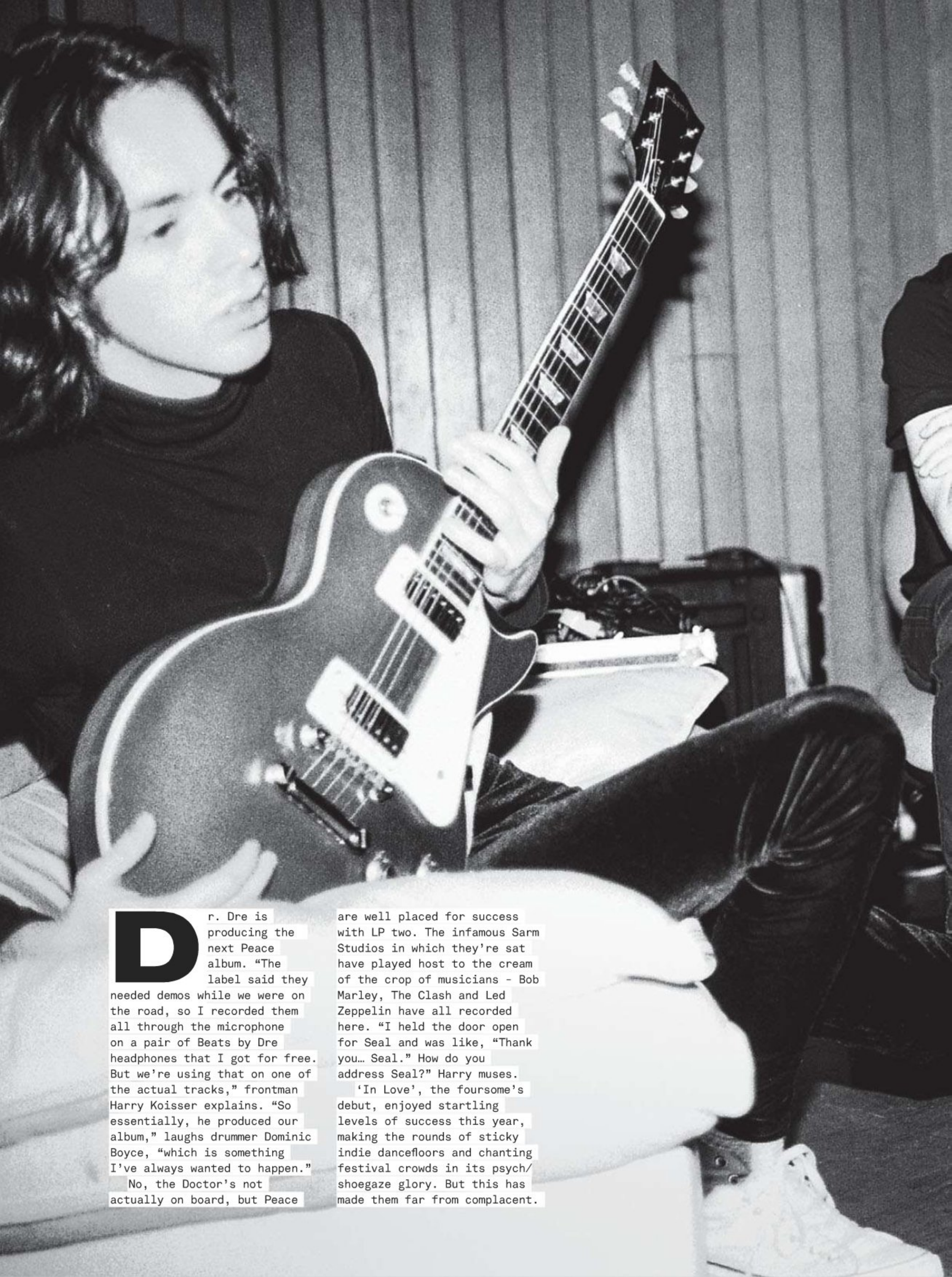
One of three collaborations with Long Beach's Vince Staples across his debut album 'Doris', Earl Sweatshirt comes in unannounced with one of the most densely descriptive verses of recent memory, providing a cinematic album highlight.

GRANT BRYDON, WRITER

GRIZZLY BEAR
'Listen And Wait'
(Warp)

Reissues are good for several reasons and for 2012's 'Shields', this bonus track is up there at the top. It reeks of pure Grizzly Bear - beautiful and intense, which leaves you puzzled as to why they left it out the first time around.

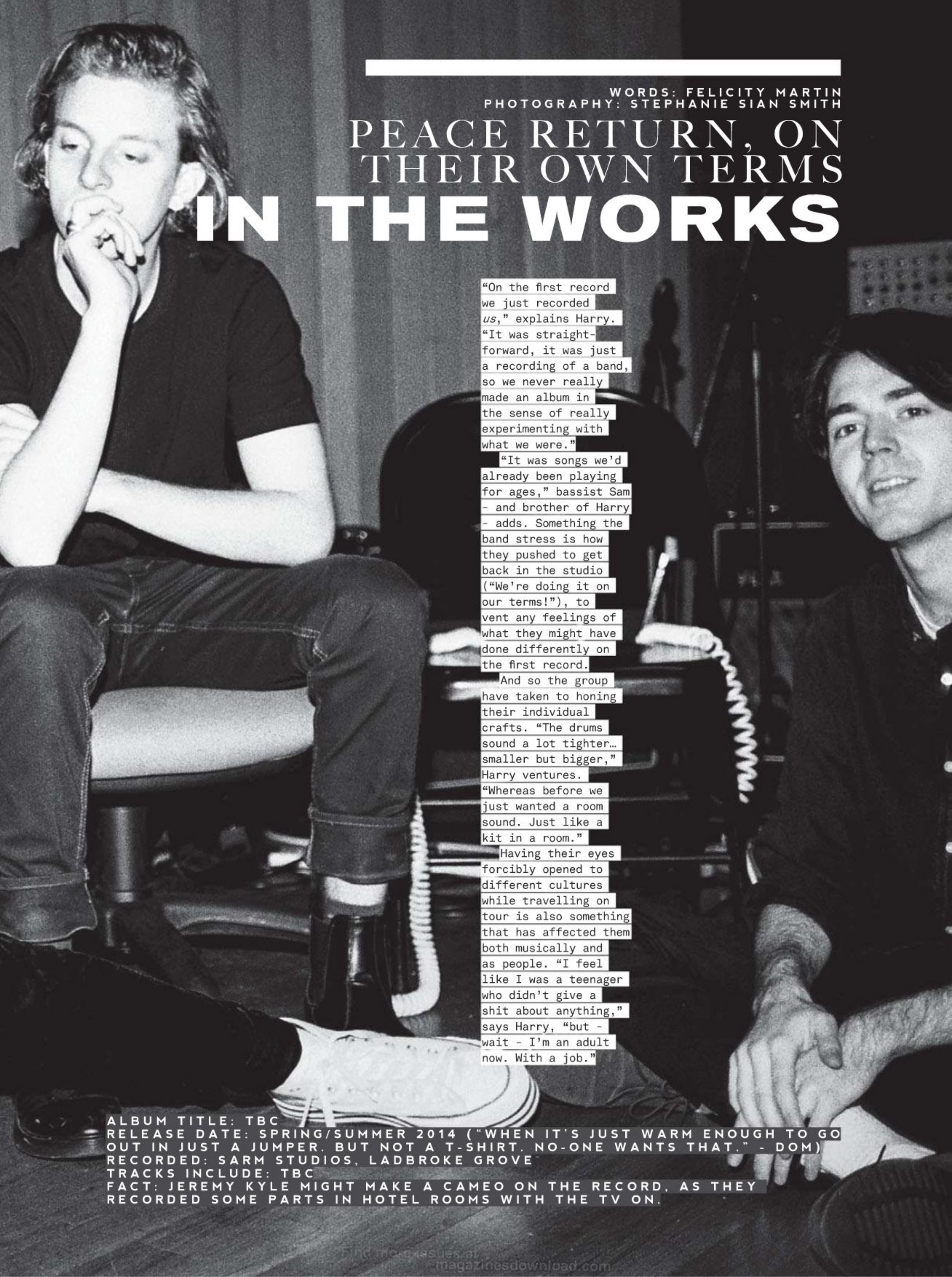
ZOE WHITFIELD, FASHION ASSISTANT



Dr. Dre is producing the next Peace album. “The label said they needed demos while we were on the road, so I recorded them all through the microphone on a pair of Beats by Dre headphones that I got for free. But we’re using that on one of the actual tracks,” frontman Harry Koisser explains. “So essentially, he produced our album,” laughs drummer Dominic Boyce, “which is something I’ve always wanted to happen.”

No, the Doctor’s not actually on board, but Peace are well placed for success with LP two. The infamous Sarm Studios in which they’re sat have played host to the cream of the crop of musicians – Bob Marley, The Clash and Led Zeppelin have all recorded here. “I held the door open for Seal and was like, “Thank you… Seal.” How do you address Seal?” Harry muses.

‘In Love’, the foursome’s debut, enjoyed startling levels of success this year, making the rounds of sticky indie dancefloors and chanting festival crowds in its psych/shoegaze glory. But this has made them far from complacent.



WORDS: FELICITY MARTIN
PHOTOGRAPHY: STEPHANIE SIAN SMITH

PEACE RETURN, ON THEIR OWN TERMS

IN THE WORKS

"On the first record we just recorded *us*," explains Harry. "It was straightforward, it was just a recording of a band, so we never really made an album in the sense of really experimenting with what we were."

"It was songs we'd already been playing for ages," bassist Sam - and brother of Harry - adds. Something the band stress is how they pushed to get back in the studio ("We're doing it on our terms!"), to vent any feelings of what they might have done differently on the first record.

And so the group have taken to honing their individual crafts. "The drums sound a lot tighter… smaller but bigger," Harry ventures. "Whereas before we just wanted a room sound. Just like a kit in a room."

Having their eyes forcibly opened to different cultures while travelling on tour is also something that has affected them both musically and as people. "I feel like I was a teenager who didn't give a shit about anything," says Harry, "but - wait - I'm an adult now. With a job."

ALBUM TITLE: TBC
RELEASE DATE: SPRING/SUMMER 2014 ("WHEN IT'S JUST WARM ENOUGH TO GO OUT IN JUST A JUMPER. BUT NOT A T-SHIRT. NO-ONE WANTS THAT." - DOM)
RECORDED: SARM STUDIOS, LADBROKE GROVE
TRACKS INCLUDE: TBC
FACT: JEREMY KYLE MIGHT MAKE A CAMEO ON THE RECORD, AS THEY RECORDED SOME PARTS IN HOTEL ROOMS WITH THE TV ON.

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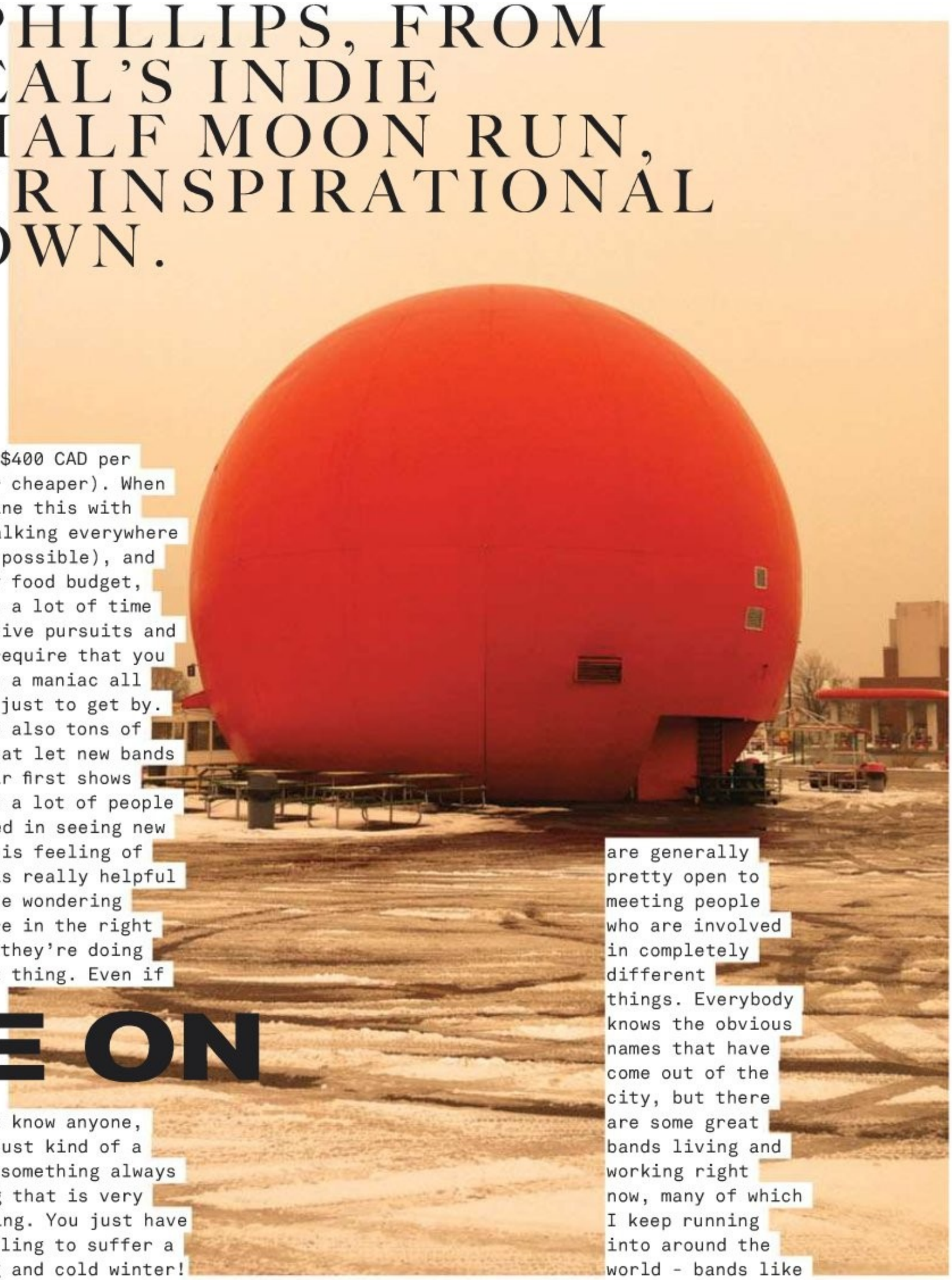
PHOTOGRAPHY: JONO NAMARA

DYLAN PHILLIPS, FROM MONTREAL'S INDIE HOPES HALF MOON RUN, ON THEIR INSPIRATIONAL HOMETOWN.



WRITE ON

"Our beginnings in Montreal were pretty different. I moved to the city to do my MMus in classical piano, Conner was struggling with his first year at McGill in psych, and I think Devon was kind of on the hunt for something like a band. I had no intention of ever joining a band, but it happened and felt somewhat fateful. The opportunity came to me through a mutual friend of Isaac and Conner's, and the first jam kind of brought us together in a way that probably wouldn't have been possible anywhere else. I'm sure the city has done similar things to many other non-Montrealers who now call the place home.

It's a home with a music scene that is culturally varied, very supportive of new bands, and mostly contained in the same area (Plateau/Mile-End). It was easy for us to get involved simply because it was and still is super cheap to live in Montreal. It's possible to get a room for between $200 and $400 CAD per month (or cheaper). When you combine this with biking/walking everywhere (totally possible), and a thrifty food budget, it leaves a lot of time for creative pursuits and doesn't require that you work like a maniac all the time just to get by. There are also tons of venues that let new bands play their first shows and quite a lot of people interested in seeing new stuff. This feeling of support is really helpful for people wondering if they're in the right place or they're doing the right thing. Even if you don't know anyone, there's just kind of a sense of something always happening that is very encouraging. You just have to be willing to suffer a very long and cold winter!

If you take a look at other bands that have come from Montreal, it's clear that something about the place is producing talent. It is a city that has a huge mixture of music; Francophone, Anglophone, classical, folk, metal, noise, lo-fi, pop, and even if you're not part of any 'community' as such, just the sense of there being a strong one helps to make you feel good about what you're doing. There's also quite a bit of crossover between genres, and people are generally pretty open to meeting people who are involved in completely different things. Everybody knows the obvious names that have come out of the city, but there are some great bands living and working right now, many of which I keep running into around the world - bands like Thus:Owls, Folly And The Hunter, Marie-Pierre Arthur, Patrick Watson, Plants And Animals, Blue Hawaii, Grimes, and Timber Timbre to name a few.

It doesn't really matter where you came from or what you came to do, Montreal feels like a place where anything goes and anything is possible."

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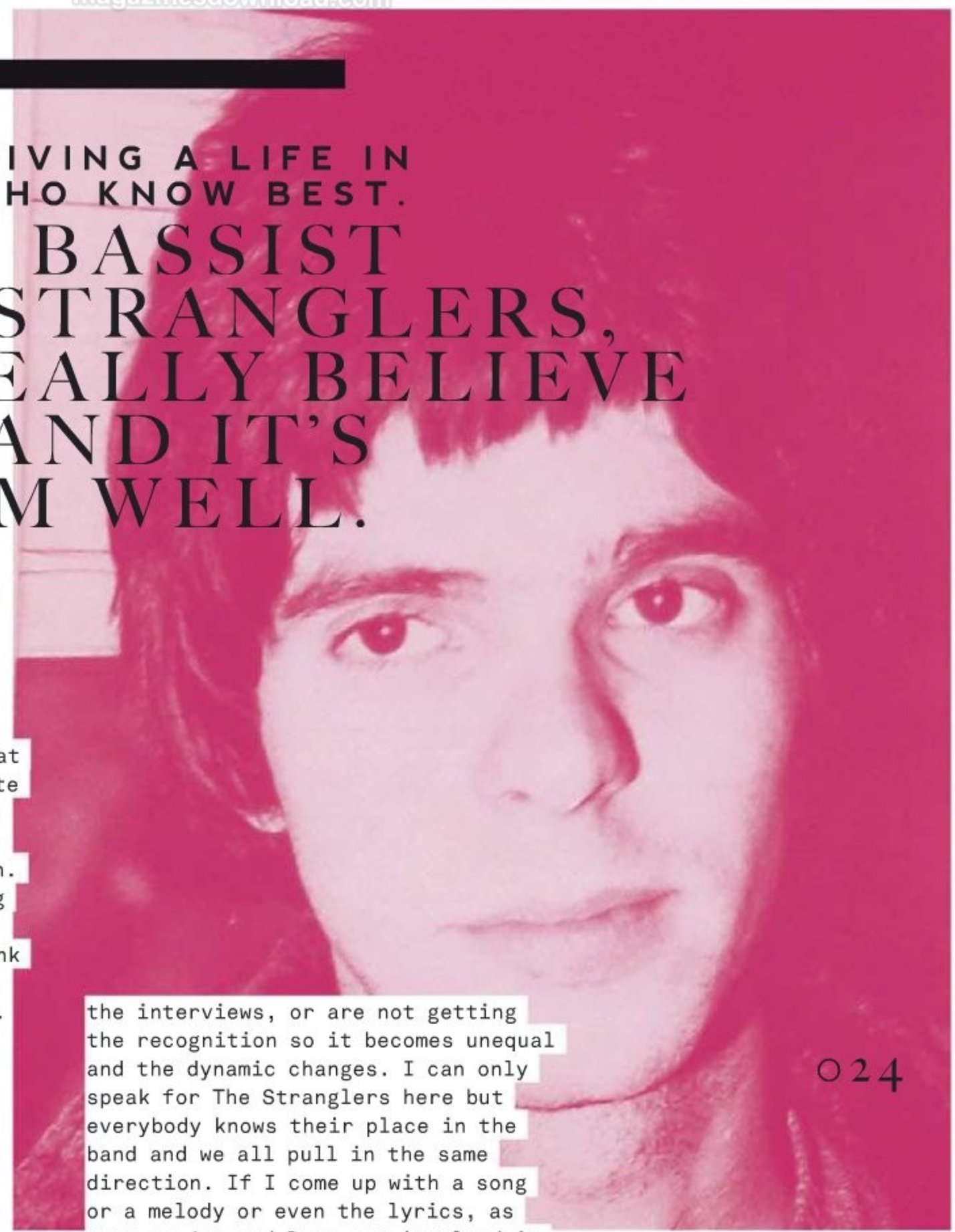
INTERVIEW: ANNA WILSON

THE GUIDE TO SURVIVING A LIFE IN MUSIC, BY THOSE WHO KNOW BEST.

JJ BURNEL, BASSIST WITH THE STRANGLERS, DOESN'T REALLY BELIEVE IN RULES. AND IT'S SERVED HIM WELL.



NEVER TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER

The Stranglers got turned down by 24 record companies. There's an irony in that although an artist is supposed to be quite a sensitive person, you get knocked back and knocked down and demoralised so many times that you need to build a thick skin. If you don't have a thick skin it's going to be much harder for you… the business model has changed considerably but I think the psychology hasn't changed; you still have to have the same kind of resilience.

DON'T BE CYNICAL

Do not allow yourself to become bitter or cynical. I've seen that so often in the music business. I've seen a lot more talented people than me, to be honest, who just didn't stay the course, or else they became completely wound up in their own bitterness. It's an ugly trait. I

ROCK AND RULES

know it sounds like a cliché but the important thing is to keep your creative side. Be like a child, however old you are. See the world through a child's eyes if you can. It keeps everything new and exciting. That's what I try to do.

SHARE

One of the reasons The Stranglers get on well is because from the very first day we never assigned royalties or publishing to one individual. We always thought that it was ugly to see people who had previously been mates falling out over money. That's not why we started. We didn't start to make money, it was because we wanted to create music and it was great fun. That way, there's no bone of contention over money. I've seen this with some very well known bands; one guy gets all the royalties, he also gets the kudos and the adulation. His mates, who were previously on an equal footing with him, become embittered because they're not earning so much money. They're not being asked to do the interviews, or are not getting the recognition so it becomes unequal and the dynamic changes. I can only speak for The Stranglers here but everybody knows their place in the band and we all pull in the same direction. If I come up with a song or a melody or even the lyrics, as soon as Jet and Dave get involved in it then it's partly theirs and they will defend it much more strongly knowing they have a true and equal share in it. It's like a co-operative.

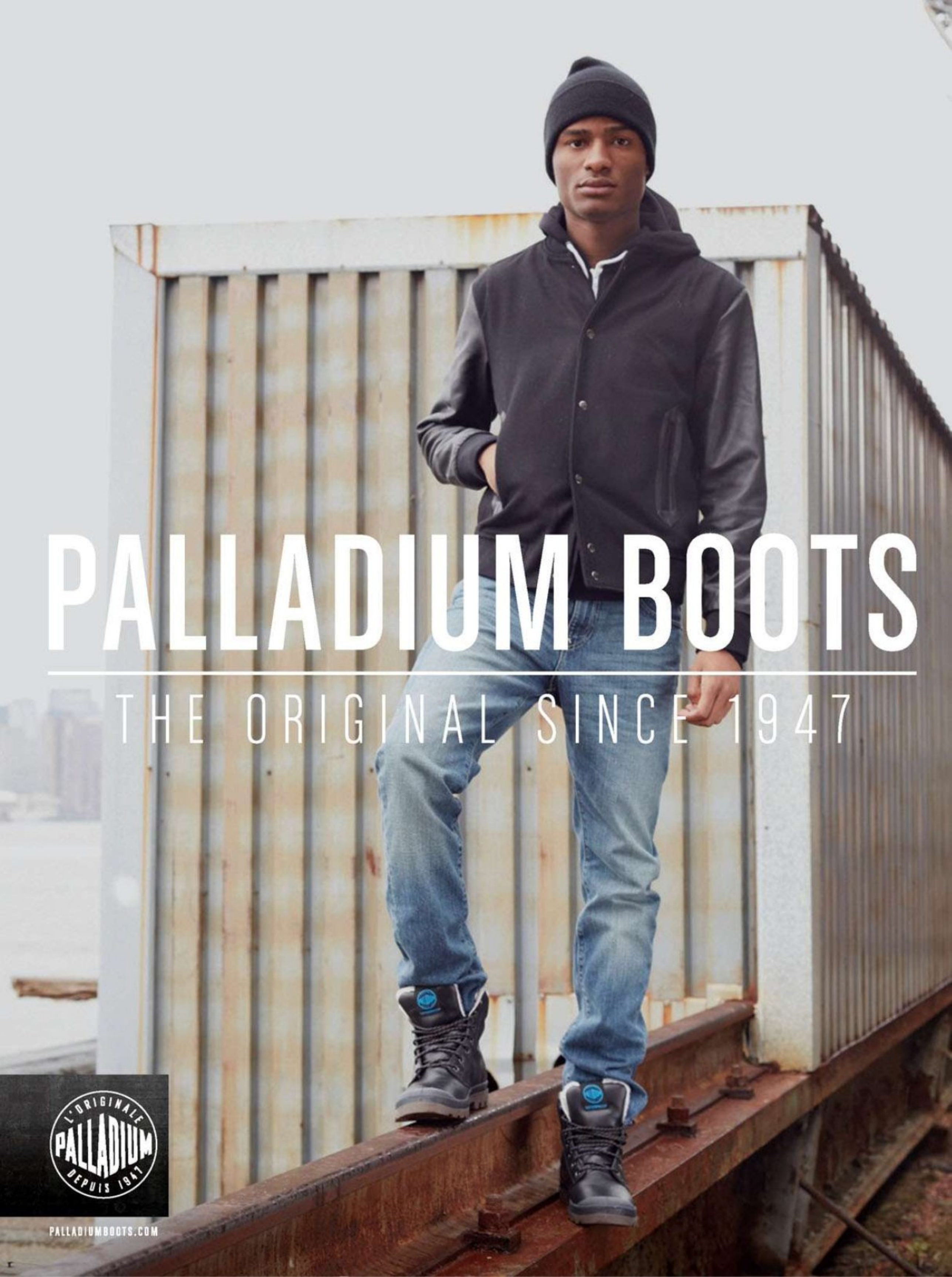
HAVE A HOBBY

I think the most dangerous thing for any musician is to live in a little bubble, a vacuum. And that sometimes occurs, especially when you're successful. You have to get input from your interests and the outside world to have some kind of empathy for what you are writing about. We can all be self-indulgent and delusional. It's not very attractive, not at all a pretty sight. Delusional and self-indulgent musicians and being up your own arse is not a very attractive thing.

MOST IMPORTANTLY…

Throw the rulebook out – there should be no rules in rock 'n' roll.

THE STRANGLERS' 40TH ANNIVERSARY 'RUBY TOUR' SPANS 28 UK DATES, BEGINNING FEBRUARY 27TH.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PERSONALITY CLASH

MIDLAKE

V

026

Eric Pulido replaces Tim Smith as frontman of experimental Texans, Midlake, whose new album, 'Antiphon', is out now.

Introduced at the request of Eric, Clash brought these two artists together for a phone chat...

Eric: What are you up to right now?

Rufus: I am releasing a Best Of. I wish I could call it a Greatest Hits, (laughs) but I can't officially call it that because I've never actually had a hit. It's coming out in the early spring. And I'm working on an opera as well. It's been lovely going through my albums and realising that in fact there is this sort of trajectory and different periods and different kinda sounds that I've toyed with but that are somehow unified at the end of the day. What about yourself?

Eric: We just put out a record a few weeks ago, and we've been touring.

Rufus: I have to say, I didn't know your music before, but I have been listening to it and it's really amazing. I'm mostly an opera fanatic, so I get kinda lost in the netherland of dead people… (laughs) But I was listening and it sounds really fantastic. But what I wanted to say is that last night I went out with a bunch of friends here in Toronto, who are very established in the Canadian music scene - which has actually become quite large and profound - and they were all very excited that I was talking to you today.

Eric: Wow. Well, the sentiment is the same and then some over here. I'm a huge fan, as well as a lot of friends and family. I was looking at our schedules and I randomly saw that you are playing in Aspen on the 29th, and we are opening up for The Flaming Lips on the 30th and 31st at that same club…

Rufus: Oh really? Fantastic!

Eric: Yeah, and my wife and I are actually coming up a day early on the 29th, so I might come over there and bug you and say hello if I may.

Rufus: Oh, that's perfect. My husband is an avid skier and therefore I guess I am, so we're gonna be hanging out up there for the week. That's kinda why I do this gig - so we can afford to look rich for a week! (Laughs) Do you ski at all?

Eric: I've skied one time and it was a sad, sad display. It happened to be a friend of mine's bachelor party and it was in Park City, and it was kinda off-season so a lot of the slopes were closed. I had just started knowing what a green, blue, black or bunny slope was, and all the green and bunny slopes were closed until you get down to the bottom of the hill, so you have to start on a

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RUFUS WAINWRIGHT

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Singer/songwriter Rufus Wainwright upholds his esteemed family's reputation in music with unique theatrical pop.

blue. I'm like, 'Okay, blue's my favourite colour, we'll go with blue'. And I got there and I just felt like cold death was waiting for me over this cliff. I was literally scared and spent more time on my ass than anything else. Your body contorts in all these weird ways to try to get back up, and then you get up only to fall again. It was the most defeating experience. But I had a blast, and everybody was like, 'Are you going to do it again?' And I'm like, 'Hell yeah I'm going to do it again!'

Rufus: Good! We'll have to go out and try it again but, you know, wear ass pads.

Eric: The pictures beforehand, with the goggles and the scarf, you look really cool, but when you're just laid out in the snow, it's kinda like a bum snow angel.

Rufus: My husband is from Germany and he grew up skiing in the Alps, so he always looks cool. I mean, he'll look cool in an avalanche! (Laughs) My favourite thing is that at one point we were in Austria. He has very good form, so I decided to take a ski lesson and work on my form. And so I spent the morning with an instructor and really concentrated on that, and then the lesson was over and I went onto the hill and I started skiing down, and I was concentrating so hard on my form that I absolutely smashed into this child and almost killed her. (Laughs) So I think it's probably better if I concentrate less on my form.

Eric: Everybody kept yelling 'Pizza pie! Pizza pie' to keep my skis in the right position, and I'm like, 'That's not helping!' (Laughs) But it was a good workout, I guess. I was definitely sore in the morning!

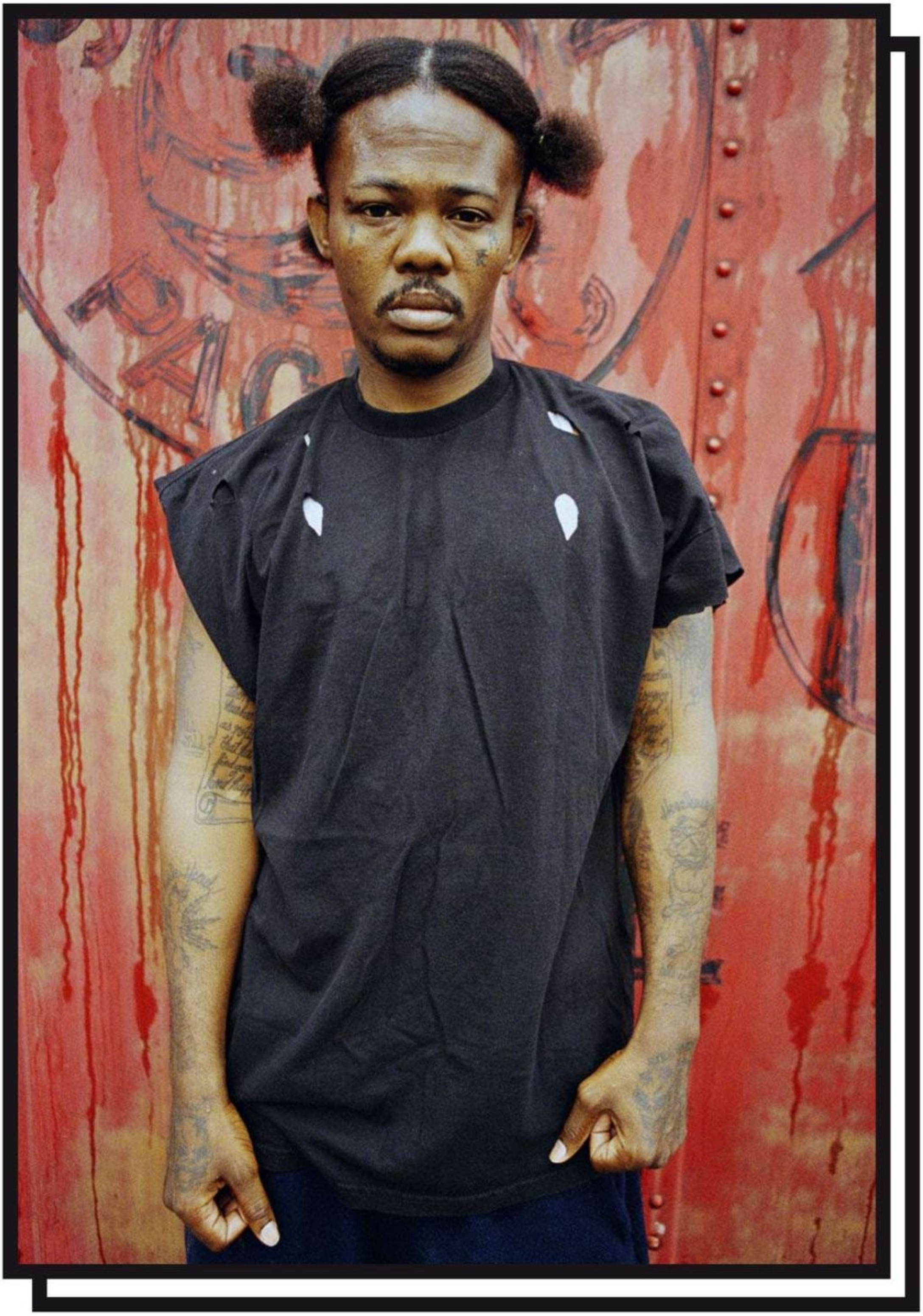
Rufus: Well, that will be fun to do in Aspen. And I love The Flaming Lips too; they're fantastic.

Eric: Are you gonna be sticking around past that?

Rufus: Yeah, we're staying there for New Year's and everything.

Eric: We've only been there one other time and it was kinda weird. I think it was off-season. We were having trouble breathing! Being so used to being down here, we were literally backstage with oxygen masks! We like to run a lot during tour, and I remember going for a run, and you start going up a hill, and I was like, 'You know what? I'm gonna turn around…' (Laughs) You couldn't breathe! They had an oxygen tank backstage, and now I understand why.

A best of Rufus Wainwright, 'Vibrate', is released March 3rd.



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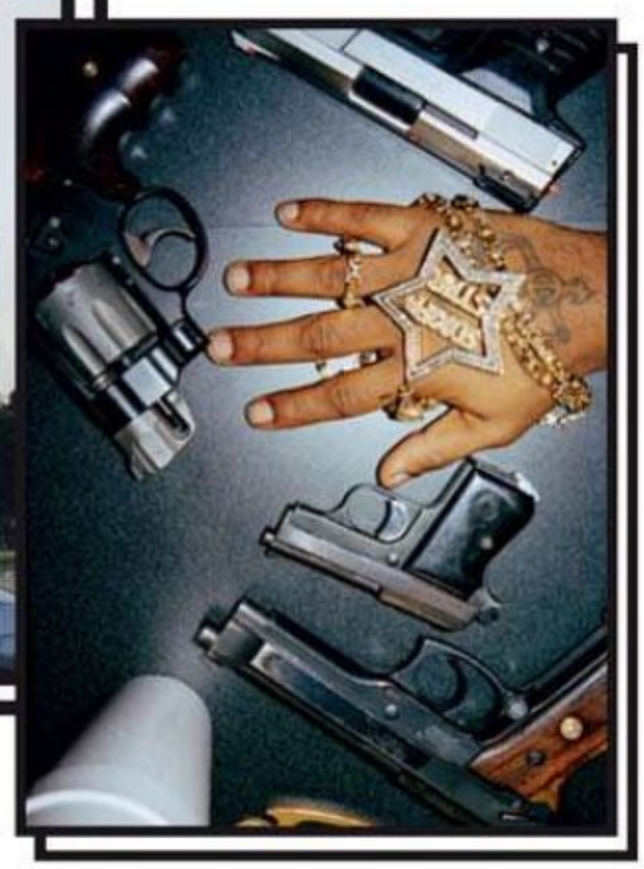
AN INTIMATE LOOK AT THE TEXAN HIP-HOP SCENE



HOUSTON RAP

Nine years in the making, Houston Rap is a remarkable and weighty hardback collection of photographs and interviews that document the microcosmic hip-hop community in Houston, Texas. Examining the music, the people, the culture and the neighbourhoods, it presents an immersive picture of a city that thrives on its own homegrown economy.

From the streets of Fifth Ward, Third Ward and South Park, these are images of real life America, where poverty threatens survival, and those who have sought to escape adversity through music.

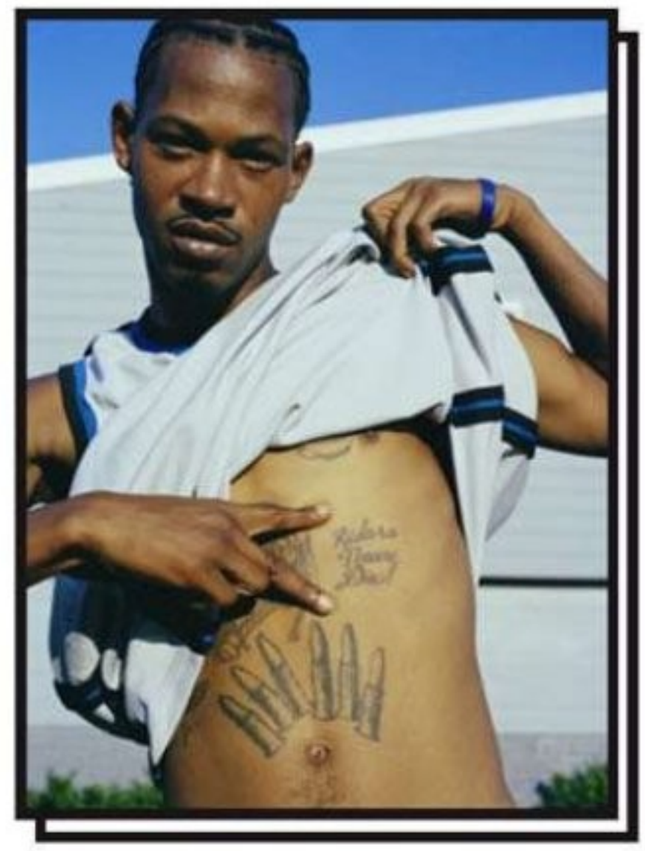
Here, among a selection of the book's pictures, photographer Peter Beste shares his experiences with Clash.

"Since I was a child growing up in the suburbs of Houston I've been fascinated by the storytelling rhymes of early Rap-A-Lot artists like Geto Boys and Ganxsta NIP. Years later, I became passionate about documentary photography and decided Houston's inner cities and its mostly untold story would be a perfect topic for me to explore. The city has historically been ignored by outsiders, and because of this independence its rappers have developed several unique musical styles that were completely homegrown. They have a DIY mentality in which the average Houston rapper records, releases, and promotes their music within their own networks, cutting out major labels and profiting handsomely. We saw mainstream recognition come and go over the nine years we were working on this project, but nothing changed at the heart of the way its artists do business.

It took time for the community to fully embrace us, but

we were fortunate to meet the right folks first, like Dope E of the Terrorists, K-Rino, and Street Military. Most of those guys realised we were for real and vouched for us, which went a long way. A couple of white guys in the hood with cameras and tape recorders did raise some eyebrows, but I think they could tell our intentions were pure and we weren't trying to sensationalise the story or exploit anyone.

I was most excited to photograph the rawest rappers who I looked up to in my childhood, like Willie D and Scarface, Ganxsta NIP, and Dope E. Each of these guys have a way with words and tell stories like no other, and I wanted to photograph them in their environments, showing the personas they present while trying to show honest and human moments. We tried to expand our focus beyond many of the stereotypical pitfalls that are constantly being promoted



in mainstream rap media. Of course there are women, cars, and codeine cough syrup in the book, but we made an effort to take it deeper, giving the artists a platform to speak in their own words on topics of spirituality, politics, philosophy, women's role in hip-hop, the prison-industrial complex, poor health in the hood, everyday struggles, and hopes for the future."

HOUSTON RAP IS PUBLISHED BY SINECURE BOOKS.
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WORDS: SIMON HARPER

CLASSIC ALBUMS REVISITED

SPOTLIGHT

THE ROLLING STONES

'BEGGARS BANQUET'

RELEASED DECEMBER 6TH 1968
PRODUCER JIMMY MILLER
MUSICIANS MICK JAGGER: VOCALS / KEITH RICHARDS: GUITARS, VOCALS / BRIAN JONES: GUITARS, HARMONICA, SITAR, MELLOTRON / BILL WYMAN: BASS, PERCUSSION / CHARLIE WATTS: DRUMS, PERCUSSION / NICKY HOPKINS: PIANO

In a year of demonstrations, assassinations, riots and rebellions, the arrival of the Stones' seventh album was as provocative and revolutionary as the times that infused it.

The band had barely survived 1967 - the forced psychedelic experimentation of the wayward 'Their Satanic Majesties Request' paled in the wake of 'Sgt. Pepper', while their future was made uncertain by the drug busts that temporarily had Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Brian Jones facing lengthy jail sentences. So, with a fresh sense of destiny the Stones entered 1968 intent on regaining direction by rediscovering the roots that had first inspired them.

Just as Bob Dylan and The Band had shunned rock's ornateness by retreating to Big Pink's basement to shape their rustic songs, or The Byrds forsook folk for country on 'Sweetheart Of The Rodeo', the Stones were also stripping back, revisiting their beloved blues and country records and embracing more mature acoustic textures and a focused ambience.

Producer Jimmy Miller was drafted in to bring together the group's teeming designs - a role he would successfully helm until 1973, recording the group's most iconic and best realised records, 'Let It Bleed', 'Sticky Fingers' and 'Exile On Main Street'. His impact was immediate: the full-on onslaught of taster single 'Jumpin' Jack Flash' in May demonstrated perfectly the Stones' new purpose; its primal urgency and menacing guitars, built around Bill Wyman's original organ riff, would make way for the demonic prologue of the album that followed.

'Sympathy For The Devil' may have started life as a slow Dylan-esque folk parable, but it progressed - as evident in Jean Luc Picard's avant-garde One Plus One film - into a seething samba with a wonderfully sinister climax. Inspired by the works of Baudelaire and Bulgakov's The Master And Margarita, it personifies Jagger as Lucifer, who's witnessed the world's barbarities from the execution of Christ to the recent slaying of Robert Kennedy. The satanic association would forever haunt Jagger - particularly after the tragic Altamont gig a year later - but this tune, its electric aura and thrilling clout, is surely worth the vicarious dabbling.

Acoustic sounds dominate 'Beggars Banquet' thereon in; 'No Expectations' is elegant blues, made tender by Brian Jones' swan song slide guitar; 'Dear Doctor' is tongue-in-cheek country twang; 'Parachute Woman' a louche blues laden with innuendo; the six-minute 'Jigsaw Puzzle' sounds like an outtake from Dylan's 'Blonde On Blonde'; the short-but-sweet cover of Robert Wilkins' 'Prodigal Son' pays genuine tribute to the Stones' delta obsessions, and 'Factory Girl' sees them channel that love into their own pastoral visions.

"THE STONES' SEVENTH ALBUM WAS AS PROVOCATIVE AND REVOLUTIONARY AS THE TIMES THAT INFUSED IT."

'Salt Of The Earth', meanwhile, brought the record to a glorious choral conclusion - its tribute to the "hard working people" was made more poignant when played at the post-9/11 Concert For New York City.

But darkness did permeate the album - 'Stray Cat Blues' drew inspiration from The Velvet Underground to present a droning, lascivious seduction of underage girls, while 'Street Fighting Man' strove to capture the political zeitgeist that ultimately rocked 1968. Though the Stones never directly protested or challenged particular causes, this was the closest they'd come to acknowledging the smouldering anti-war tensions that were spilling onto the streets.

As dirty and decadent as the toilet on its sleeve, 'Beggars Banquet' proved a transitional album, bridging the gap between the Stones' mid-'60s naughty pop and the outlaw rock they would forever define. Six months later, Brian Jones would be dead, and, with The Beatles on the brink of implosion, The Rolling Stones were well on their way to earning the title of 'Greatest Rock And Roll Band In The World'.

TRACKLIST

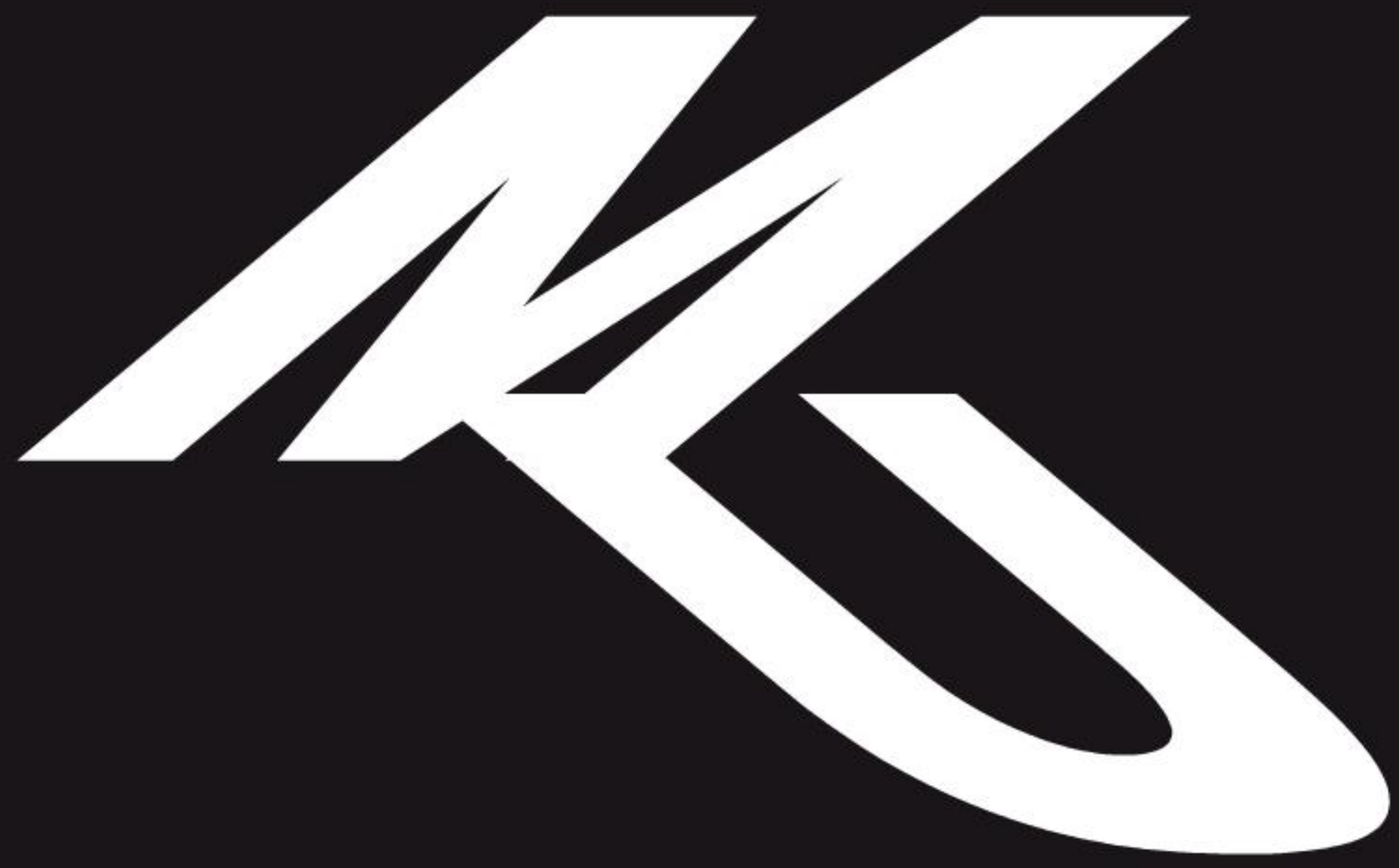
1. 'SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL'
2. 'NO EXPECTATIONS'
3. 'DEAR DOCTOR'
4. 'PARACHUTE WOMAN'
5. 'JIGSAW PUZZLE'
6. 'STREET FIGHTING MAN'
7. 'PRODIGAL SON'
8. 'STRAY CAT BLUES'
9. 'FACTORY GIRL'
10. 'SALT OF THE EARTH'

1968: IN THE NEWS

// MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. IS ASSASSINATED IN MEMPHIS
// PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON SIGNS THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1968
// STUDENTS AND WORKERS STRIKE IN PARIS
// FEMINIST VALERIE SOLANAS FAILS IN AN ATTEMPT TO KILL ANDY WARHOL
// THE TROUBLES BEGIN IN NORTHERN IRELAND AS SECTARIAN VIOLENCE ESCALATES

1968: THE ALBUMS

// THE VELVET UNDERGROUND - 'WHITE LIGHT/WHITE HEAT'
// THE BAND - 'MUSIC FROM BIG PINK'
// THE BYRDS - 'SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO'
// THE BEATLES - 'THE BEATLES'
// VAN MORRISON - 'ASTRAL WEEKS'



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ALBUMS OF THE YEAR

NEXT WAVE: CLASS OF 2014

DAUGHTER

BRETON

THE CLASH ALMANAC

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WORDS: SIMON BUTCHER
PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEX BRUNET

THE CONFESSIONAL APPEAL OF THE YEAR'S MOST CHARMINGLY BLEAK STARS.

DAUGHTER

As the year comes to a close and album shortlists are collated, Daughter's 'If You Leave' will be getting plenty of mentions for its bittersweet brilliance - one of the most eerily atmospheric and hauntingly intimate releases in a long time. If 2013's greatest records celebrated making the cut by having a Christmas party of their own this one would be hiding at the back of the room awkwardly flirting with James Blake's 'Overgrown' while Kanye's 'Yeesus' and the Arctics' 'AM' arrogantly dance-off for attention.

It's an introverted creation, with the melancholic heartbeat of Elena Tonra lyrically powering the chillingly sparse combination of gentle guitar picking and dramatic percussion. "I've lost it all, I'm just a silhouette / I'm a lifeless face you'll soon forget," she bleakly pronounces on 'Youth'. "I'm a foolish fragile spine," she coos desolately in 'Smother', then ends with the tragically insecure thought: "I sometimes wish I'd stayed inside my mother, never to come out," but is this merely melodrama? And if not, where does Elena conjure these feelings from? "I think a lot of people have felt like that," she says pensively about the final line of 'Smother'. "Sometimes I'm like, 'If I wasn't here maybe everything would be better for everyone else.'"

It's a surprising thing to hear Elena confess considering she's anything but shy and sullen as we chat during the last dates of Daughter's European tour. She's full of good humour, reflecting on what's been a "very weird year" for the band, who've almost circled the world performing to rapt crowds at pin-drop gigs across continents. "It's been really mad and I was thinking that if I hadn't made the small choice to go to college then I wouldn't have met Igor and none of this would've happened."

The college mentioned is London Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, where she took song-writing classes and met Swiss guitarist Igor Haefeli, then recruited French drummer Remi Aguilella, but Elena began writing long before that as a twelve-year-old struggling to come to terms with high school, where she didn't fit in: "They all just thought I was weird, which I

probably am," she laughs, in self-deprecating fashion.

"I had to adjust to people treating me like shit basically. I had to some way be like, 'FUCK YOU!' but I had no way, so I would literally write down fuck you songs and put them in a drawer. That was my way of letting it out."

Daughter's debut album, 'If You Leave', sees the tone of the 'fuck you' drawer converted into an introspective analysis of relationship trauma. "Now it's things that I'm maybe too afraid to say to other people… I'm just scared that if I do everything will be lost," she confides. It's deeply personal territory from someone who initially wrote songs in the London warehouse Igor was living in around 2010, and never imagined the wider world would care. Many people are finding cathartic comfort in her honest confessionals now, but it's a double-edged sword: "It's all out in the open now, which is enjoyable, but the album is a pretty weird subject at the moment because it hits harder now than when I wrote it, which is maybe because I was writing about something that I didn't know would happen and it obviously has now."

Her positive tone shifts towards the delicate whisper usually heard on record: "I feel like if I start talking to you about it you're just going to hear me crying on the phone for about 20 minutes." We ask what kind of music she likes listening to when feeling down and her positivity returns. "I tend to gravitate towards sadder music," she enthuses, listing Elliot Smith, Radiohead, and Sigur Ros. There's a similar undercurrent of honesty and vulnerability in all these artists and it's the same with Daughter. "It's exploring these topics that are sad but are truthful, real things," she describes.

"As much as I think happiness can be real I don't think that I've ever been in a state where I've been so happy that I've wanted to write about it. From my writing perspective the only time I'm really inspired is when I'm writing about things that

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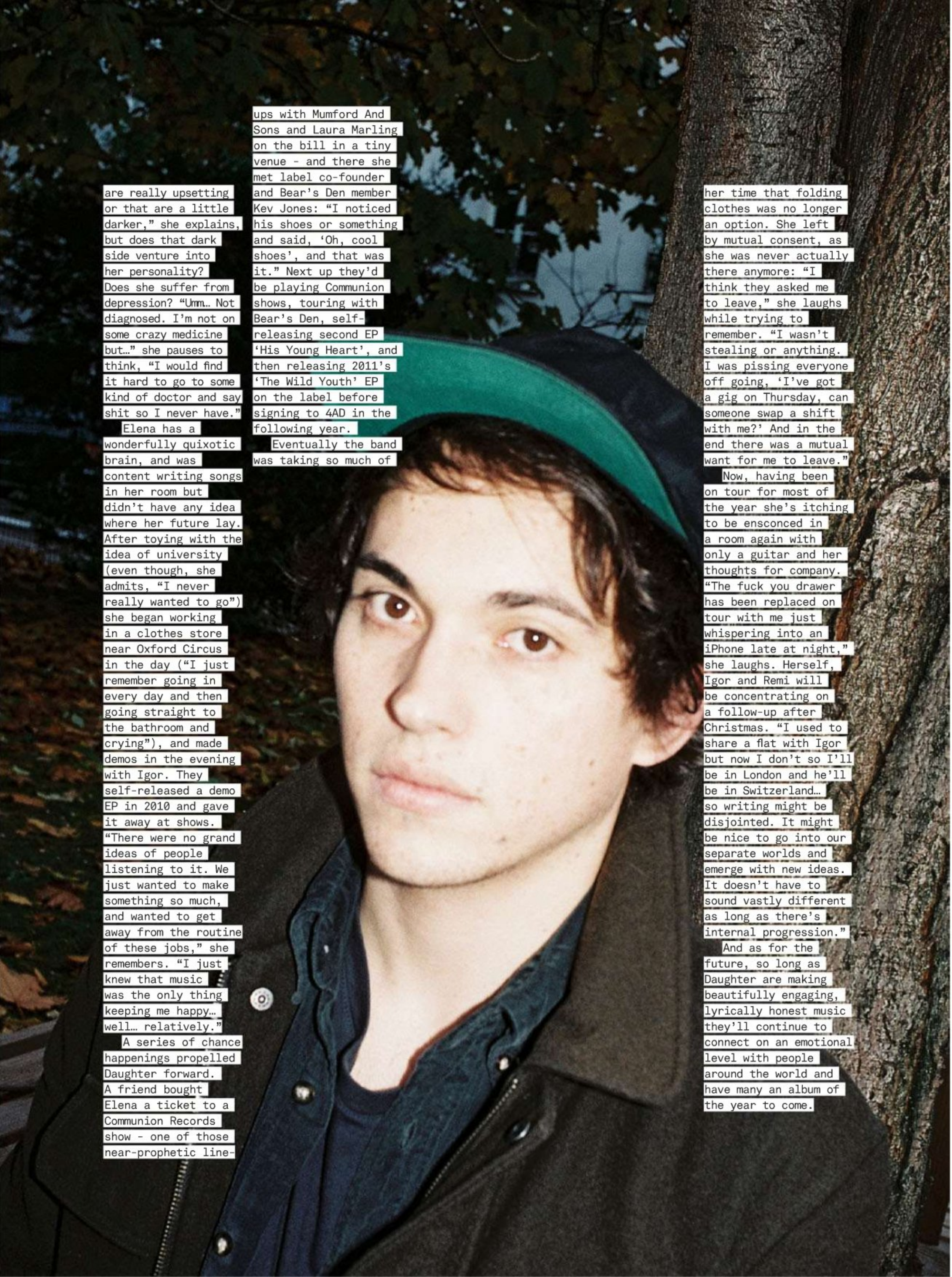


are really upsetting or that are a little darker," she explains, but does that dark side venture into her personality? Does she suffer from depression? "Umm… Not diagnosed. I'm not on some crazy medicine but…" she pauses to think, "I would find it hard to go to some kind of doctor and say shit so I never have."

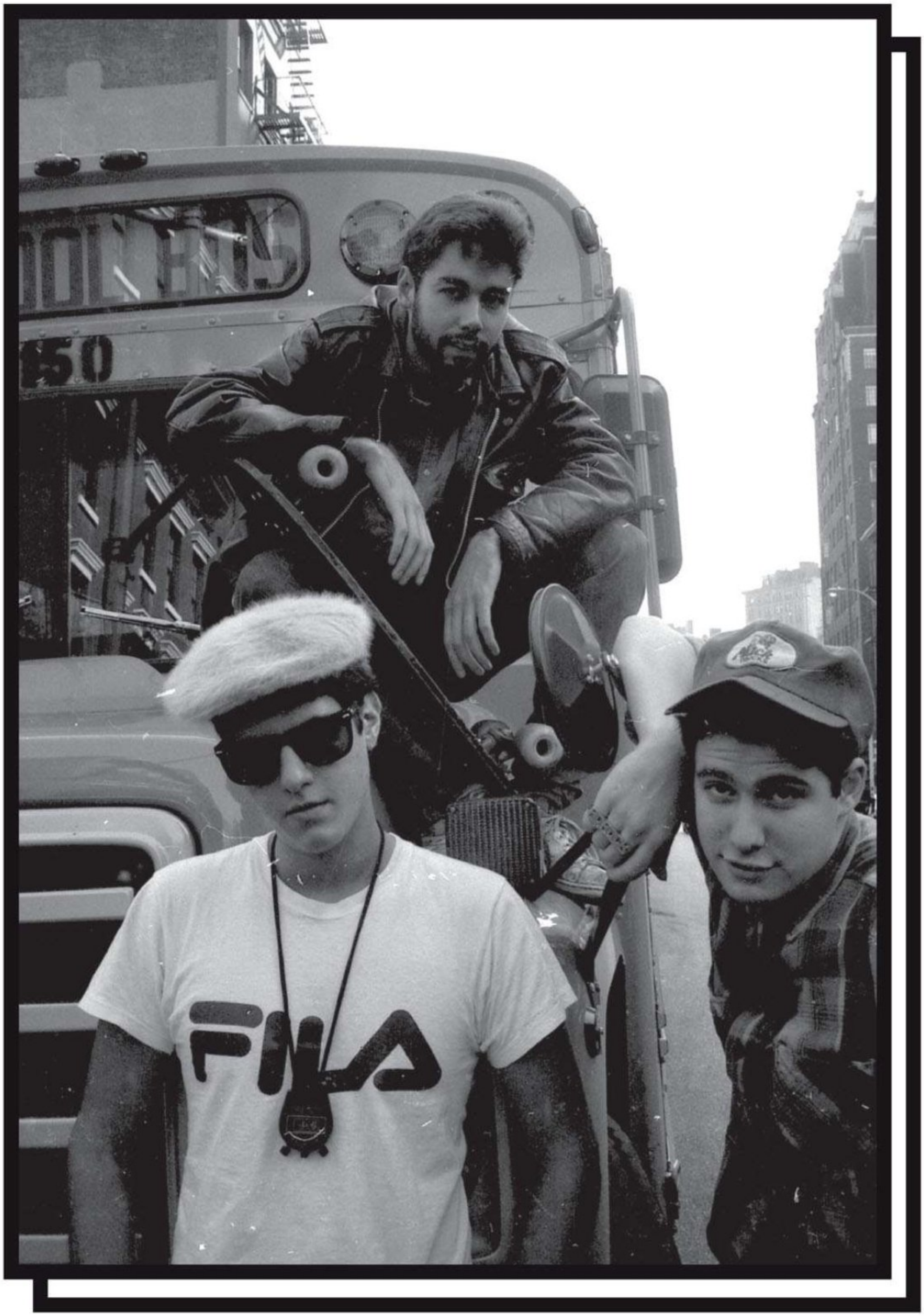
Elena has a wonderfully quixotic brain, and was content writing songs in her room but didn't have any idea where her future lay. After toying with the idea of university (even though, she admits, "I never really wanted to go") she began working in a clothes store near Oxford Circus in the day ("I just remember going in every day and then going straight to the bathroom and crying"), and made demos in the evening with Igor. They self-released a demo EP in 2010 and gave it away at shows. "There were no grand ideas of people listening to it. We just wanted to make something so much, and wanted to get away from the routine of these jobs," she remembers. "I just knew that music was the only thing keeping me happy… well… relatively."

A series of chance happenings propelled Daughter forward. A friend bought Elena a ticket to a Communion Records show - one of those near-prophetic line-ups with Mumford And Sons and Laura Marling on the bill in a tiny venue - and there she met label co-founder and Bear's Den member Kev Jones: "I noticed his shoes or something and said, 'Oh, cool shoes', and that was it." Next up they'd be playing Communion shows, touring with Bear's Den, self-releasing second EP 'His Young Heart', and then releasing 2011's 'The Wild Youth' EP on the label before signing to 4AD in the following year.

Eventually the band was taking so much of her time that folding clothes was no longer an option. She left by mutual consent, as she was never actually there anymore: "I think they asked me to leave," she laughs while trying to remember. "I wasn't stealing or anything. I was pissing everyone off going, 'I've got a gig on Thursday, can someone swap a shift with me?' And in the end there was a mutual want for me to leave."

Now, having been on tour for most of the year she's itching to be ensconced in a room again with only a guitar and her thoughts for company. "The fuck you drawer has been replaced on tour with me just whispering into an iPhone late at night," she laughs. Herself, Igor and Remi will be concentrating on a follow-up after Christmas. "I used to share a flat with Igor but now I don't so I'll be in London and he'll be in Switzerland… so writing might be disjointed. It might be nice to go into our separate worlds and emerge with new ideas. It doesn't have to sound vastly different as long as there's internal progression."

And as for the future, so long as Daughter are making beautifully engaging, lyrically honest music they'll continue to connect on an emotional level with people around the world and have many an album of the year to come.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FILA

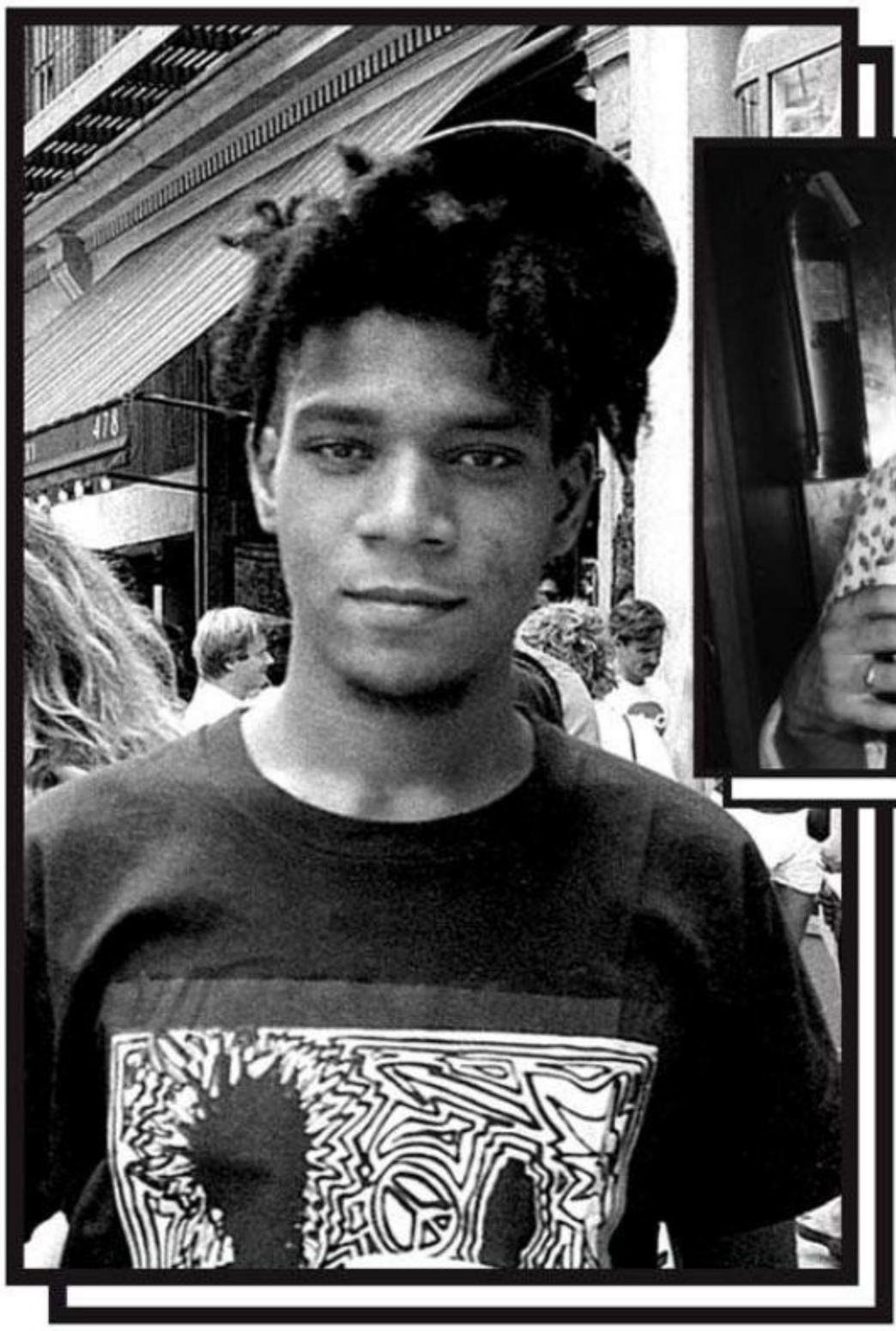
WORDS: ROB MEYERS
PHOTOGRAPHY: RICKY POWELL

THE CITY AS AN INSPIRATION, BY THE FOURTH BEASTIE

RICKY POWELL

Ricky Powell is one of those people that once introduced to, you never forget. A character to end all characters, he's New York through and through: quick mother-tongued, sharp-witted and filled with opinions. A well-known face on the downtown party scene, he witnessed and photographed some of the most iconic musicians and artists living and working in the city. He's also captured The Big Apple's essence in his unique street photography, which offers an intimate insight into the characters that continue to add to its bite. Present at the birth of Def Jam, he infiltrated the inner sanctum of the Beastie Boys and RUN-DMC, and immersed himself in the city's blossoming hip-hop scene, documenting historic musical moments and icons along the way. He is often referred to as the fourth Beastie Boy, due to the insightful shots he took of the groundbreaking hip-hop trio in their early days. Clash caught up with Ricky to discuss his Beastie memories, his brush with Warhol and Haring, and the secret behind his success.

You are one of *the* quintessential NYC photographers. How did you first get into photography?
Thank you. That's very, very flattering, I gotta confess, I like your taste! (Laughs) I started shooting on 'the reals' in early 1985 after I found an ex-girlfriend's camera in a bag - it was a Minolta Hi-Matic Auto Focus. I said to myself: "I'ma take this shit and come up with it," as in become a hot shot and shit on her for dissin' me for a repulsive cornball with tie-dye yoga pants. I started bringing it with me when I went clubs, art openings,



parties, wherever. And lo and behold I became The Rickster: Downtown photographer-in-the-scene for magazines like Paper, The East Village Eye, Details, and the like. I shot that famous picture of Basquiat and Warhol going to their show at Tony Shafrazi's gallery in Soho right off the bat. I actually was taking pictures of the dynamic duo of graffiti, Zephyr and Revolt, of Wild Style and Style Wars fame. I saw them across the street and skedaddled over to shoot them as well. It was a good sign, from the jump-off.

You came of age at a seminal time in NYC, shooting everyone from Andy Warhol and Keith Haring to Run-D.M.C. and Public Enemy. What do you remember of this era? Your reportage-style imagery would suggest that these characters were literally everywhere on the streets!
Well, throughout the '80s, shit was a great diverse selection of different genres crisscrossing, and the neutering of the art world and other worlds, by Mayor-cum-perp Giuliani, pretty much opened the floodgates for rich cornballs to invade, to infest, the city, Manhattan, the Village. I was lucky to come up when I did... in different ways.

You've been referred to as "the 4th Beastie" numerous times, and you're one of the only people to truly capture the rise of the seminal hip-hop trio. How did you first meet them?
Through Ad-Rock after their gig at The Cat Club in September of 1985, after the Virgin tour with Madonna. We just hit it off backstage afterwards and started hanging through winter. I knew Horovitz from the West Village area in Manhattan. I knew his older sister Rachael from 4th grade. He was five years younger than me but he was very mature for his age.

You seem to have shot them continually in the early days, but then it very much stops - why was that?
I think it ran its course. Shit changed over time, as in life. People come and go in life. I moved on to other interests. You gotta reinvent yourself continually - creatively and personally - or it's doomed. Street photography is my forte.

Tell us about the picture of you and Warhol.
I was shooting pictures for Paper magazine in the spring of '86 at a star-studded benefit at the Javits Center. I bumped into him and he remembered me taking him and Basquiat's photo a year earlier. I just asked a passer-by to get a quick flick of me and Warhol, said thank you, smiled, and continued on into the mix of highfalutin characters. Good time.

You were the unofficial photographer for Def Jam in their early days and shot a lot of their artists. Were you employed by them, or were you just always with them?
I shot whatever and wherever I

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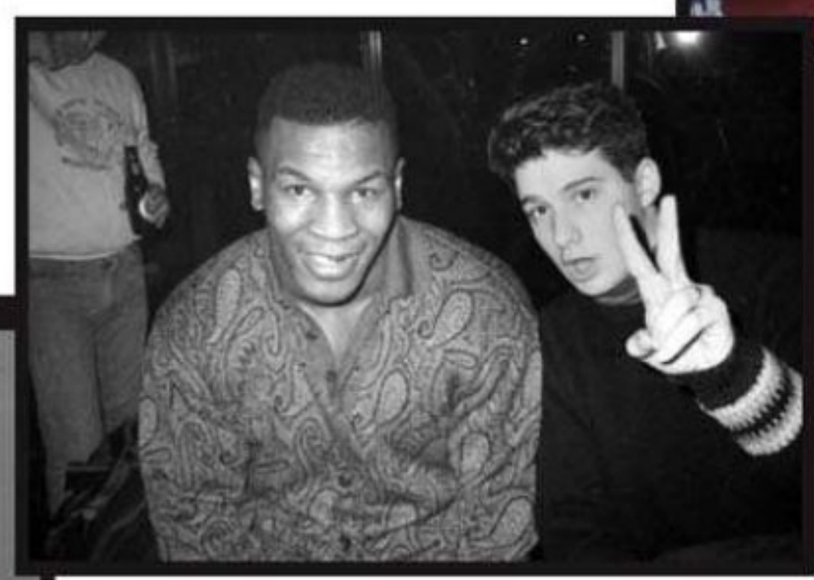
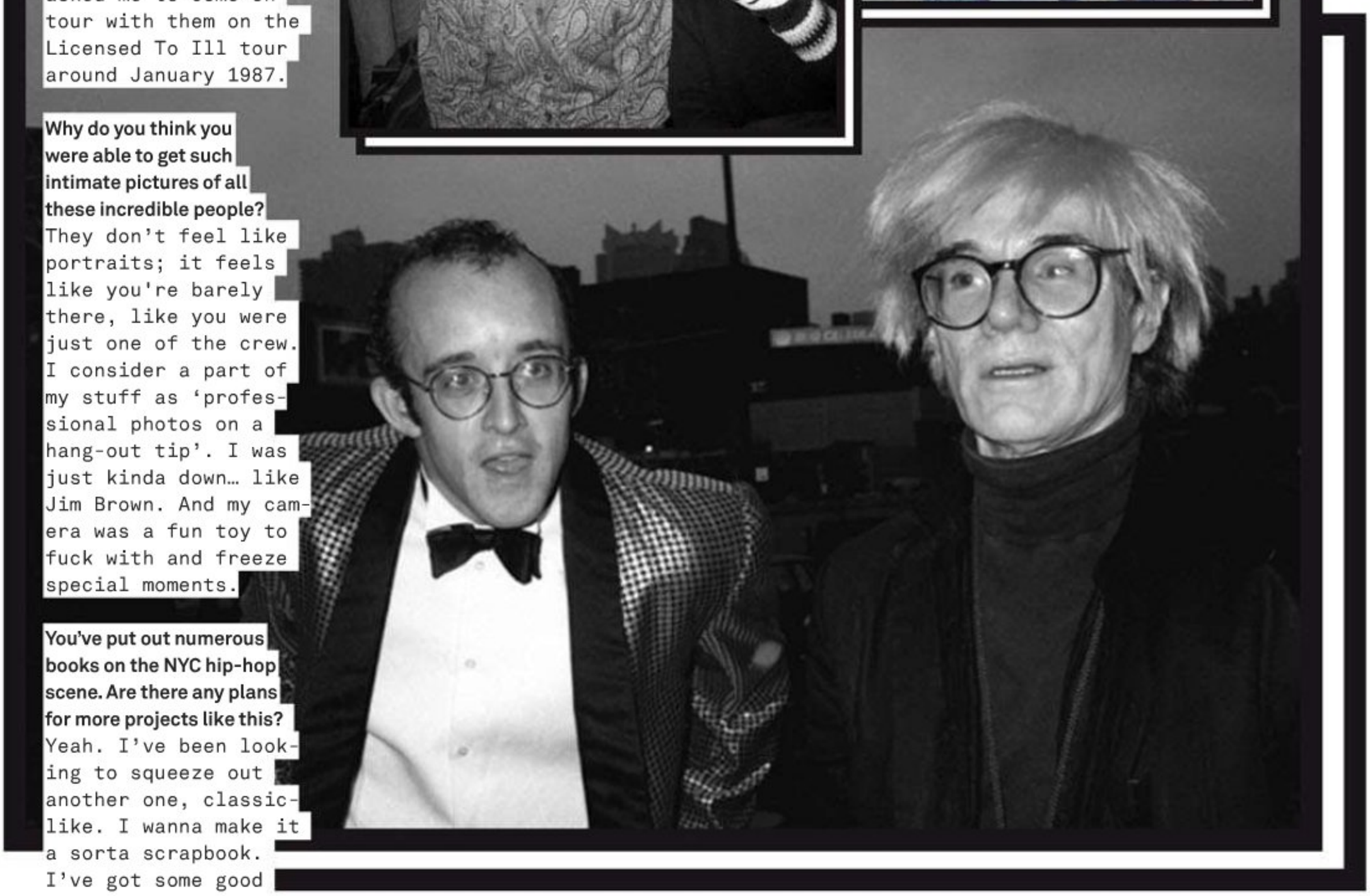
personally liked. But in this case it was both. I hung around the office, goofing on the employees. I actually became the office messenger. I was there a couple of weeks before the Beasties asked me to come on tour with them on the Licensed To Ill tour around January 1987.



Why do you think you were able to get such intimate pictures of all these incredible people?
They don't feel like portraits; it feels like you're barely there, like you were just one of the crew. I consider a part of my stuff as 'professional photos on a hang-out tip'. I was just kinda down… like Jim Brown. And my camera was a fun toy to fuck with and freeze special moments.



You've put out numerous books on the NYC hip-hop scene. Are there any plans for more projects like this?
Yeah. I've been looking to squeeze out another one, classic-like. I wanna make it a sorta scrapbook. I've got some good book companies interested. We'll see what happens. I got *maaad* shit never before seen. It's gonna blow some of current souped-up cornball photographers out the hole!

What is your single favourite image of those early NYC hip-hop days, and why?
Well, it's hard to break it down to one, but... maybe the shot with Run-D.M.C., the Beasties, and Russell Simmons on the bus. I think it was shot in Brussels or some shit on the European leg of the Together Forever tour in May of 1987. The groups had a unique relationship, a friendship, which transcended like no others. It was beautiful. And it was an honour and a privilege to be around them at that point especially.

Who is your favourite person or group to have ever shot?
Duke, you're slayin' me with these 'pick one' joints! Let's see… I dunno, maybe Debi Mazar, the actress. She was gorgeous but also diggy down. I started in like '87, but when I took some shots of her in the summer of '90, she got down in Goodfellas - she was the coke ho. I was thrilled for her. She's my homegirl for life.

Final question: if you could shoot anyone, alive or dead, who would it be and why?
Oh, that's an easy one: John Cassavetes. Dude was hard but also crazy creative. He was genius in The Dirty Dozen. I'm friends with his daughter Xan. She's crazy beautiful and cooooool. Props.

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HISTORY DOESN'T REPEAT ITSELF BUT, AS MARK TWAIN SAID, "IT DOES RHYME". BACK IN 1910, AN ECCENTRIC ITALIAN COMPOSER CALLED FRANCESCO PRATELLA WROTE THE MANIFESTO OF FUTURIST MUSICIANS. IT WAS A SAVAGE ATTACK ON BACKWARDNESS AND MEDIOCRITY IN MUSIC, AND THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF FUTURISM IN ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF VISUAL ARTS. IT WAS A WAR CRY FOR TOMORROW'S SOUNDS. TO PRATELLA, MUSIC WAS ABOUT INNOVATION, NOT REFLECTION; A LIBERATION FROM THE PAST. MUSIC HAD TO CHANGE, ALWAYS. "I APPEAL TO THE YOUNG," HE SAID, "THOSE WHO ARE THIRSTY FOR THE NEW, THE ACTUAL, THE LIVELY."

IN THIS SPECIAL EDITION OF OUR NEXT WAVE FEATURE, WE SPECULATE TO OFFER OUR SOUNDS OF 2014. SPREAD OVER THREE CHAPTERS, THESE NINE MUSICIANS ARE OUR NEW, OUR ACTUAL AND OUR LIVELY.

EDITED BY JOE ZADEH
PHOTOGRAPHY: NEIL BEDFORD
FASHION: MISCHA NOTCUTT

_LUCIUS
_BISHOP NEHRU
_INDIANA

CHAPTER.I
THE NEW

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LUCIUS

If you're finding yourself in dire need of an antidote to brighten up this grey and endless English winter, you may need to look no further than LUCIUS, whose debut album 'Wildewoman' is just around the corner. Packed with immaculate '60s girl-band harmonies, souring melodies and stomping percussion, the message of these five New Yorkers is clear: it will all be all right in the end.

After half-an-hour of trying to get through to Jess Wolfe, one-half of an incredibly powerful vocal duo (the other half being band mate and best friend Holly Laessig), she finally appears at the other end of a crackling phone line. Heart-warmingly positive from the off, Jess explains the concept of their debut album to Clash: "The song 'Wildewoman' was written first, and we were just recognising all the women we were surrounding ourselves with, who were real strong, pave-your-own-way, carve-out-your-destiny women. I think that Holly and I both struggled in our youths with feeling alone and not really having a community, but at the same time we were never hesitant or unsure of ourselves personally. We just felt like the album encapsulates that essence; that feeling of being a strong person and coming out in a positive way over negative experiences."

There's no doubt that it does. It's a colourful album at the very least, filled with songs that ooze nostalgia and the sort of positivity that can only come from lessons learned. We wonder if the liveliness of the album comes from living in a place like New York. "Absolutely," she says, animated. "You're constantly being overloaded with information, which can be overwhelming, but I think there's no place in the world where so many people are doing so many artistic things. It's impossible not to be inspired, if you want to be." Jess Wolfe's preoccupation with inspiration in life and ideas about destiny seeps into her work ethic: "When you're doing something like this it's all or nothing. It's such a commitment and you can't look back. Nothing else would have happened, it was supposed to happen."

DAISY JONES

WHERE: Brooklyn
WHAT: Infectious, bright and nostalgia-dipped indie
GET 3 SONGS: 'How Loud Your Heart Gets', 'Go Home', 'Wildewoman'
FACT: Holly and Jess first met at a party during university ten years ago and started by rearranging tunes from The Beatles' 'White Album'.

This Page:
All clothing artists' own
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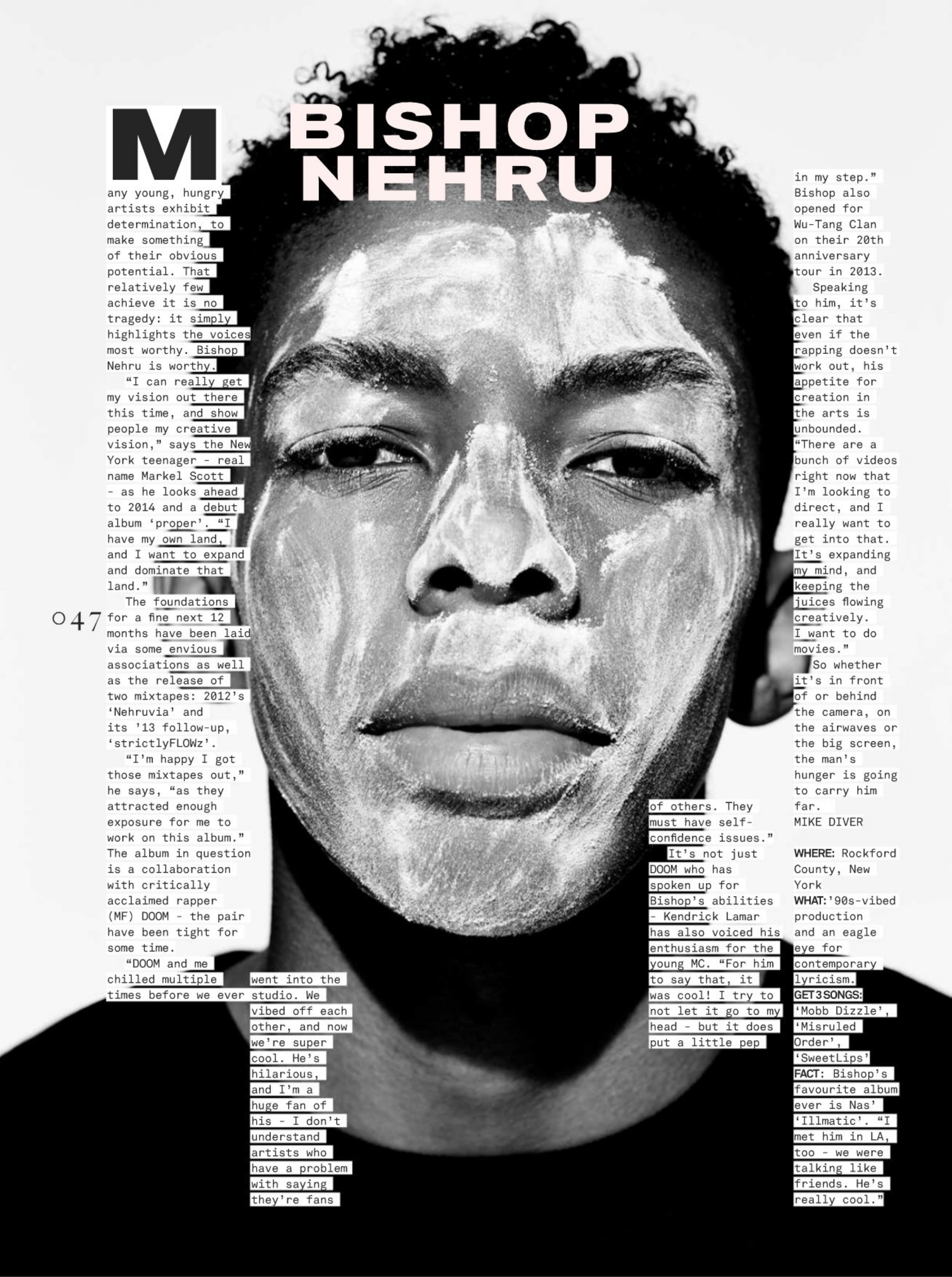
Top by The Hundreds

BISHOP NEHRU



Many young, hungry artists exhibit determination, to make something of their obvious potential. That relatively few achieve it is no tragedy: it simply highlights the voices most worthy. Bishop Nehru is worthy.

"I can really get my vision out there this time, and show people my creative vision," says the New York teenager - real name Markel Scott - as he looks ahead to 2014 and a debut album 'proper'. "I have my own land, and I want to expand and dominate that land."

The foundations for a fine next 12 months have been laid via some envious associations as well as the release of two mixtapes: 2012's 'Nehruvia' and its '13 follow-up, 'strictlyFLOWz'.

"I'm happy I got those mixtapes out," he says, "as they attracted enough exposure for me to work on this album." The album in question is a collaboration with critically acclaimed rapper (MF) DOOM - the pair have been tight for some time.

"DOOM and me chilled multiple times before we ever went into the studio. We vibed off each other, and now we're super cool. He's hilarious, and I'm a huge fan of his - I don't understand artists who have a problem with saying they're fans of others. They must have self-confidence issues."

It's not just DOOM who has spoken up for Bishop's abilities - Kendrick Lamar has also voiced his enthusiasm for the young MC. "For him to say that, it was cool! I try to not let it go to my head - but it does put a little pep in my step." Bishop also opened for Wu-Tang Clan on their 20th anniversary tour in 2013.

Speaking to him, it's clear that even if the rapping doesn't work out, his appetite for creation in the arts is unbounded. "There are a bunch of videos right now that I'm looking to direct, and I really want to get into that. It's expanding my mind, and keeping the juices flowing creatively. I want to do movies."

So whether it's in front of or behind the camera, on the airwaves or the big screen, the man's hunger is going to carry him far.

MIKE DIVER

WHERE: Rockford County, New York

WHAT: '90s-vibed production and an eagle eye for contemporary lyricism.

GET 3 SONGS: 'Mobb Dizzle', 'Misruled Order', 'SweetLips'

FACT: Bishop's favourite album ever is Nas' 'Illmatic'. "I met him in LA, too - we were talking like friends. He's really cool."

INDIANA

"It's hard out here for a female in pop. Especially one who's recently given birth to her second child. "I'm up all night but not for any rock star reason, I'm feeding a baby!" Indiana laughs. "It's so empowering, though. I'm proud of my situation."

With a name paying homage to everyone's favourite fictional archaeologist, the singer-songwriter was discovered without even meaning to be found. By chance, John Beck heard her version of 'Gabriel' that she'd put up online. "I thought it was by Joe Goddard but he'd remixed it," she says. Not only did Beck get in contact and invite her to his studio for some collaborative writing, he admitted to preferring her cover to the original.

For someone whose path into the industry was more or less accidental, she's already sung to two institutional giants in the UK - the monarchy ("It was a scary day, but at the end of the day the Queen's just a little old lady") and our most cherished festival ("I just remember thinking, 'Oh my God, I've just said hello Glastonbury!'") Having sprung up from the East Midlands at an alarmingly rapid pace, she is now on her way to releasing an album.

Some artists, when tasked with describing their sound, return little more than a blank stare and an 'umm' or an 'ahh'. But not Indiana, who looks us in the eye and declares that it's "moody, electronic, '80s-inspired synths with haunting layered vocals." Matching this dark, soulful sound, in visual form her tracks are fantastical, fairytale creations, where she's taken on a directing role.

Now her hard work is truly paying off as Goddard, the man who inspired her to record in the first place, is on board for remix duty on her next single. "He said he was really excited to get onto the project. For it to come full circle is amazing," she glows.

We round off on the topic of Harvey and Etta, her two children, and she emphasises that she'd like to think her situation "could inspire other people to not have to decide between having a family or a creative career. You've just got to be willing to be up all night and up all day!"

FELICITY MARTIN

WHERE: Nottingham
WHAT: Menacing, melancholic poptronica with swirling synths
GET 3 SONGS: 'Mess Around', 'Smoking Gun', 'Bound'
FACT: Simon Amstell came to a supporting slot of hers, specifically to see her, because he left immediately after her performance.

HAIR: ZOEY STIRRETT AT PHAMOUS ARTISTS USING LAURA MERCIER
MAKE-UP: DANI METCALFE AT PHAMOUS ARTISTS FOR WHITE SALON

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WORDS: JOE ZADEH + MATTHEW BENNETT
PHOTOGRAPHY: LORDE (OVER PAGE) BILLY BALLARD

IN 1964, ISAAC ASIMOV PREDICTED QUITE A FEW THINGS PRETTY ACCURATELY FOR 2014. WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY, 3D TV, MICROWAVE MEALS AND COFFEE MACHINES WERE ALL SPOT ON. ONE THING ASIMOV NEVER SAW COMING, HOWEVER, WAS AN OLD-SKOOL JUNGLE REVIVAL. IN THAT VEIN, HERE ARE THE CLASH PREDICTIONS FOR 2014...

THE CLASH ALMANAC

EPIC DRUM ROLLS GET ALL NATTY

If 2013 let us skip back inside UK garage's nostalgic 2-steps then brace just a year later for a visceral old-skool jungle renaissance. Much of the finest vintage Amen break-sponsored ragga from '93 and '94 is stranded on cassette battle packs, lost in lofts and presided over simply by spiders. But as modern producers like Rudimental, Paul Woolford and even Example are reaching more firmly for the jump up mojo of jungle then expect the lost names of Remarc, DJ Rap & MC MC and DJ Brockie to march straight into the middle of your noisy life, all natty from their metaphysical resting places of AWOL and Jungle Fever raves. **MB**

THE AGE OF CRITICISM MATURES

Daft Punk, Arcade Fire, Beady Eye, Dizzee Rascal, MGMT, Jay-Z, Eminem and Kanye West received their fair share of praise for their 2013 albums, but they also got some seriously savage whippings. Online communities across Reddit, Twitter and various other social media deltas are flooded with contrarians that analyse every detail of every album or video for even the slightest whiff of distaste. As Lily Allen found out most recently, no artist is safe. For every hero, there is a hate campaign. Next year, we expect more artists than ever to receive the harsh whiplash of our critical culture. In turn, we expect some high profile and ill-advised reactions. They thought Twitter would be our Roman forum, but instead it's the coliseum. **JZ**

AFRICA'S DIGITAL DIASPORA

Africa is an exciting place right now. 14% of the world's population is there, most of them are under thirty, and they are now responsible for the second biggest mobile telecom market in the world (second only to Asia). It's this market that is helping Spinlet (a mobile music streaming service) grow at an alarming rate. Already, the company has unearthed 85% of what they are calling an undiscovered African music landscape, providing a platform for artists who aren't signed to labels. What does this mean? Well, lots of producers and pop artists already incorporate

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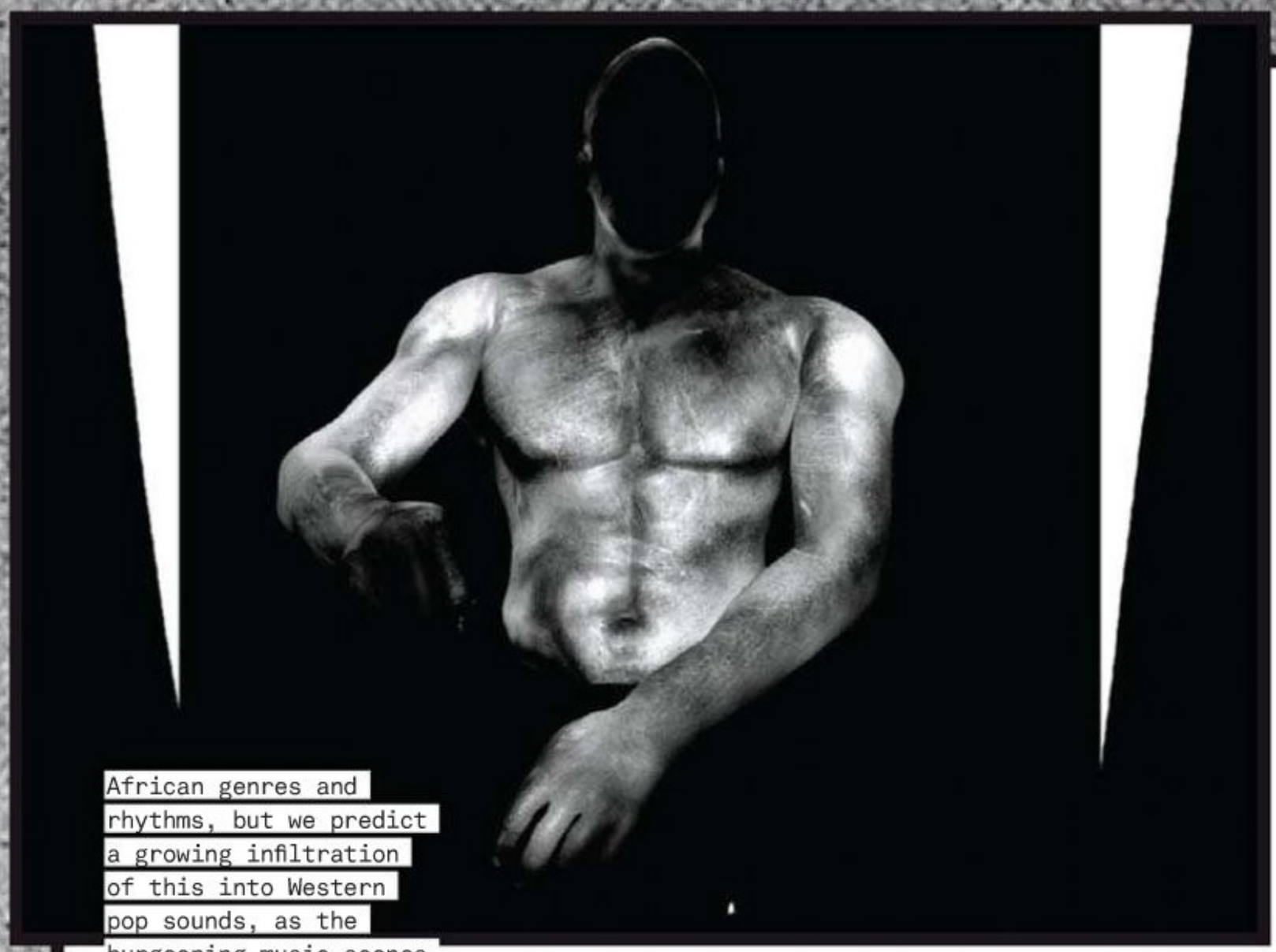

African genres and rhythms, but we predict a growing infiltration of this into Western pop sounds, as the burgeoning music scenes are mined for fresh talent. We expect to hear gqom, azonto and tarraxinhas penetrate the dance and pop realms of 2014. JZ

OPEN LETTERS SURPASS CLOSED LETTERS AS MOST POPULAR TYPE OF LETTER

Open letters have featured in society for centuries, but in 2013 it felt like the entertainment industry really decided to get knee deep into some Martin Luther-esque preachings. Sinead O'Connor, Boris Johnson, Russell Brand and even Jez from Peep Show got in on the act. Perhaps it's a reflection on our gradual realisation that the tide of an ugly future is coming in, and these are our high profile attempts to stop it. Or maybe, and more realistically, it's traffic bait masquerading as moral values. We all have to grow our Twitter followings somehow. Either way, we expect a flurry of open letters in 2014. JZ

WESTERN SPIRITS REMAIN LOBOTOMISED BY SMARTPHONES

As the Arab Spring's cultural fallout still floats down we hear Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan liberated voices address the past, present and future. The Internet is livid with outspoken thoughts as the once oppressive authorities are no longer present to smash down the freedom of speech. Yet, the web-noise in the West is very different. Protest music remains lobotomised through the youth's hypnotic obsession with their bubble-wrapped lives on their smartphones, and soon-to-be smart watches. With a digital world curated and firewalled from any suffering, a youth's illuminated handset offers the calm balms of numbing distraction. Thus, whilst our government's snooping surpasses that of Confessions Of A Window Cleaner, we are predicting another record year for political inaction and placid civil rest, whilst we all argue about 'Watch The Throne Pt.2'. MB

HOUSE MUSIC HAS ITS SOUL LEACHED FURTHER

Deep house is big business. Jamie Jones, Seth Troxler and Maya Jane Coles all plough their sunken and endless 4/4 furrows to global acclaim. However, hurl in the massive poppy success of Disclosure and Breach then

look at the fugly boy band potential of Hot Natured and we are suddenly staring at 2014's rather watery proposition that house music is going to move even more central from its leftfield origins. What the originators of Ron Hardy, Phuture and Derek May, or the visionaries behind Transmat, Trax or Dance Mania would make of such a gloopy, anonymous mess is best left unvoiced. House music was a movement. Now it's an industry. We'd like the soul back please! MB

TORRENTS FACE EXTINCTION

The war on piracy got hot this year, as revenue for the MPAA (AKA world film police) increased by 50%, in a bid to crack down on Hollywood's greatest enemy: the digital pirate. Here in the UK, the closest we get to a blockbuster is a Stone Roses biopic, but that didn't stop them from launching a British Intellectual Property Crime Unit back in September. Virgin Media customers are already finding most torrent sites blocked, but through 2014 we expect this to become widespread. Movies will go first, then your music, then your cracked copies of Ableton Live. The average cultural consumer will quickly realise that if they want to watch Larry Clarks 'Kids' on Sunday night, they may need to explore legal and paid means. JZ

DOWN UNDER GOES ON TOP

Australia and New Zealand unleashed a barrage of new music on the globe this year. Lorde, Chet Faker, Flume, Kirin J Callinan and many more sent depth charges into every genre under the sun. A&Rs and management teams are quickly preparing themselves for a veritable gold rush. With Courtney Barnett, Rufus, The Preatures, Vance Joy and Remi all set to release in 2014 we reckon Oceania will provide some of the year's biggest pop and indie albums. JZ

BRANDED CONTENT TAKES OVER

Bill Hicks once said: "If you do an advert, then you are off the artistic register forever." Music writer Ben Cardew rightly pointed out that viewpoint "seems rather archaic" now. These days Jay Z can write a fifty-nine minute album purely for Samsung, and judging from the fact it went platinum the day it came out, his fans seemingly couldn't give two fucks. Consumers are rapidly accepting branded content as a means to an end and musicians are recognising it as a natural revenue stream. In turn, brands are slowly realising they have an opportunity to do something

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special and create huge cultural moments in our conscious lives, thereby forever burning their logos onto the retinas of tomorrow's children. It's not about tonight's ITV film being sponsored by Motorola anymore; it's about moon jumps, or music academies turning skyscrapers into LED equalisers. In 2014, we expect to see more tours, albums, shows and experiences funded by brands than ever before, and we don't expect you to care. Want Oasis to get back together? Expect Carling to foot the bill. JZ

SHAZAM BECOMES MODERN EQUIVALENT OF FOAM HAND

In layman's terms, Shazam is an app that recognises whatever song is playing in ear's reach, so that you identify it without asking someone else and ultimately exposing yourself as a deep house charlatan. Most people are ashamed to Shazam, in case a nearby head heckles them for not knowing that "this is 'Atmosphere' by Kerri Chandler, you dick!" Consequently, you will often see people blatantly Shazam-ing from their pockets, pretending to take a photo of the speakers, or incorporating the action into an already monotonous dance move. Despite all this user paranoia, Shazam is having a huge impact. This year has already proffered a case study in MK's remix of 'Look Right Through' by Storm Queen. The track was Shazam'd almost 700,000 times on its way to chart success, something that has been credited for moulding it from club staple to chart botherer. In 2014, we reckon Shazam will help turn radio, podcast and club plays into true viral success. JZ

WORDS: GRANT BRYDON, MIKE DIVER, SAFRA DUCREAY ERROL ANDERSON, HAYLEY LOUISA BROWN,

PHOTOGRAPHY: LIAM MF WARWICK, DOM SMITH, NEIL BEDFORD, KEVIN AMATO, PAUL SETHI

DOING THE ROUNDS ONLINE THIS YEAR WERE THESE NOT-QUITE-ALBUMS: COLLECTIONS OF MUSIC THAT DON'T MAKE THE CHARTS BUT DROP LIKE INFLUENTIAL BOMBS ON A FRENZIED THRONG OF HIP-HOP DOWNLOADERS. HERE ARE THE BEST OF THE BEST.

MIXTAPES OF 2013

10. BISHOP NEHRU 'STRICTLYFLOWZ'

Markel Scott, AKA Bishop Nehru, proves he's a lyrical mastermind on the come-up after getting both DJ Semtex and Peter Rosenberg behind his polished sophomore effort, 'strictlyFLOWZ'. Taking an aggressive step forward from his jazzy 'Nehruvia' debut, '…FLOWZ' sees the precocious rapper layer his complex wordplay over harder East Coast beats. Playlist-worthy track: The Mos Def-like 'IntroVERTz'. **SD**

9. KILO KISH 'K+'

When 'K+' dropped in early 2013, there's no way its maker - a politely spoken, poetically inclined artist-cum-MC by the name of Lakisha Robinson - could have foreseen the demand for downloads. Cue: website standstill. But patience was rewarded: this is a sublime set of love-burned lyricism set against dreamy beats. **MD**

8. WORLD'S FAIR 'BASTARDS OF THE PARTY'

Opening with the mischievous 'Pre-Game' skit, World's Fair set the tone right off the bat - 47 minutes of catchy hooks, fun lyrics and playful one-upmanship. The kids from Queens take turns stealing the show - besting each other and repeatedly switching vocal cadence whilst simultaneously charming girls. "World's Fair / Your girl's here"; damn right she is. **HLB**

7. JOEY BADA$$ 'SUMMER KNIGHTS'

"Young scorcher trying to evolve like Charmeleon," spits Bada$$ in opening track 'Alowha', perfectly summarising the matured and harsher approach of 'Summer Knights'. The follow-up to his acclaimed '1999' (aside from his Rejex compilation), maintains the '90s influence of his debut but is considerably darker and sees him getting more experimental with flow patterns. **GB**

6. HAWK HOUSE 'A LITTLE MORE ELBOW ROOM'

Have a sniff and you'll notice that a harvest of hip-hip/soul futurists are blossoming out of London's concrete jungle. Hawk House declared themselves as good crop earlier this year when their brand of wisdom-anchored wordplay emerged out of the capital's

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pavements. Save it for a lazy afternoon to ensure optimum zoning out steez. **EA**

5. VIC MENSA 'INNANETAPE'

"Welcome to INNANET," salutes Vic Mensa. And like some job-winning cover letter, he wastes no time in detailing what he's about. 'INNANETAPE' is an oddball-driven tumble of non-sequiturs and tongue-twisting randomness backed by a respectable who's who guestlist of www. favourites. Welcome, indeed. **EA**

4. ACTION BRONSON & PARTY SUPPLIES 'BLUE CHIPS 2'

Following up his most popular release thus far, Action Bronson is reunited with Fool's Gold producer Party Supplies for another YouTube surfing session, which sees the pair sampling everything from The Champs' 'Tequila' to a medley of '80s hits for 'Contemporary Man'. Lyrically Bronson further consolidates his pulp appeal nimbly tightrope-walking diverse and disjointed references from Beau Brumell to Zinedine Zidane. **GB**

3. FLATBUSH ZOMBIES 'BETTER OFF DEAD'

Despite delays, Flatbush's sophomore tape built firmly upon their debut. 'Better Off Dead' swirled drug references, thought provoking references and Vaseline-smooth flows into a heady concoction. Erick Arc Elliot played autopilot with charismatic instrumentals, while elected guest speakers (Action Bronson and Danny Brown) only proved to awaken any ghouls previously dispelling their trademark steez. **EA**

2. THE UNDERACHIEVERS 'INDIGOISM'

New York's passion for hip-hop will never cease. But Brooklyn's The Underachievers offer Big Apple rap something rare: a cross-country liaison with a Los Angeles label, namely Flying Lotus' Brainfeeder. From the Beast Coast to the Sunshine State, this is nostalgia-dipped production with razor-blade wordplay. Edgy, whatever the weather. **MD**

1. CHANCE THE RAPPER 'ACID RAP'

Take the wacky flow of Slim Shady, the soul of Kanye West's 'The College Dropout' and apply to a kid reared on jazz melodies with a love of Michael Jackson and the result would sound something like Chancelor Bennett's sophomore mixtape effort, 'Acid Rap'. Unanimously voted for by Clash's contributors as mixtape of the year, 'Acid Rap' has opened up a new dialogue about the city of Chicago. Often known as 'ChiRaq', the city has been receiving a lot of negative press over the last couple of years due to high levels of gang violence, which is most regularly associated with the punk-esque aggression of drill music. Here we are offered a different point of view on the city where "they murder kids here / Why you think they don't talk about it / They deserted us here". Chance's views are a lot more hippie than the majority of his peers, with the right combination of optimism and positivity amongst the glimpses of the harsh realities that he touches on in tracks like the hidden 'Paranoia'. 'Acid Rap' secures Chance's place as one of the biggest breakout stars of 2013 and will undoubtedly be a mainstay in hip-hop for years to come. **GB**

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EDITED BY JOE ZADEH
PHOTOGRAPHY: LIAM MF WARWICK

_BEN KHAN
_SOHN
_ROSIE LOWE

CHAPTER.II

THE ACTUAL

BEN KHAN

There are only two tracks so far from this deep-thinking, guitar-wielding producer, but sometimes that's all it takes for you to recognise the alignment of creative planets in a musical mind. The mind in question is Ben Khan's, and it hosts an artistic galaxy that particularly fascinates Clash.

"I've been doing it for a long time," starts Khan. "The idea is to take what I've been doing throughout my life as a songwriter/musician/producer, take all my influences, and really try to express them best in one thing," he explains. "That's when the interesting stuff comes out. I don't want to release one hip-hop track or one R&B track."

The two tracks Khan has birthed amassed an instant online following. 'Drive (Part 1)' came first - more of a hypnotic beat than a typical song; a thick bass synth undulates beneath his hushed vocals, creating a sultry neo-soul troposphere. Latest track 'Eden' is a more structured affair and Khan brings his vocals to the fore. The "deep thinking" he admits to in our interview is present in his lyrics, which mess with "a religious high", "an all-seeing eye" and "sitting on the edge of time". Another thick wobbling synth blends with Khan's dry blues guitar bursts, as an occasional affected elephant's trumpet pierces the jam.

With his firm direction comes a pretty zero tolerance attitude to us tagging his sound or garnering his influences. Instead, he returns our serve with a volleyed Dali quote - "The secret of my influence has always been that it remains a secret" - and leaves it there. Dali is someone he'll admit inspires him; "That's a beautiful mind right there," says Khan. Like Dali, Clash asks if he utilises his Eastern lineage into his work? "It definitely seeps in. The melodies in Middle Eastern music are pretty different. The top lines they write are pretty out there, and recently that started to seep into my actual writing."

We finish by questioning Khan on his anonymity. Why would an artist be so explicit in using their own name, but seek to guard their face from photography? "To explain my own anonymity and mystery seems paradoxical. I'm not sure that is of use. I can say that I won't remain anonymous forever. How are people going to accept me as an artist if they don't know who the fuck I am? That's not what I want… I'm going to leave it there."

JOE ZADEH

WHERE: London
WHAT: A future-facing mix of neo-soul and R&B.
GET 3 SONGS: 'Eden', 'Drive (Part 1)' 'Savage'
FACT: Movies affect Ben Khan way more than an album ever could.

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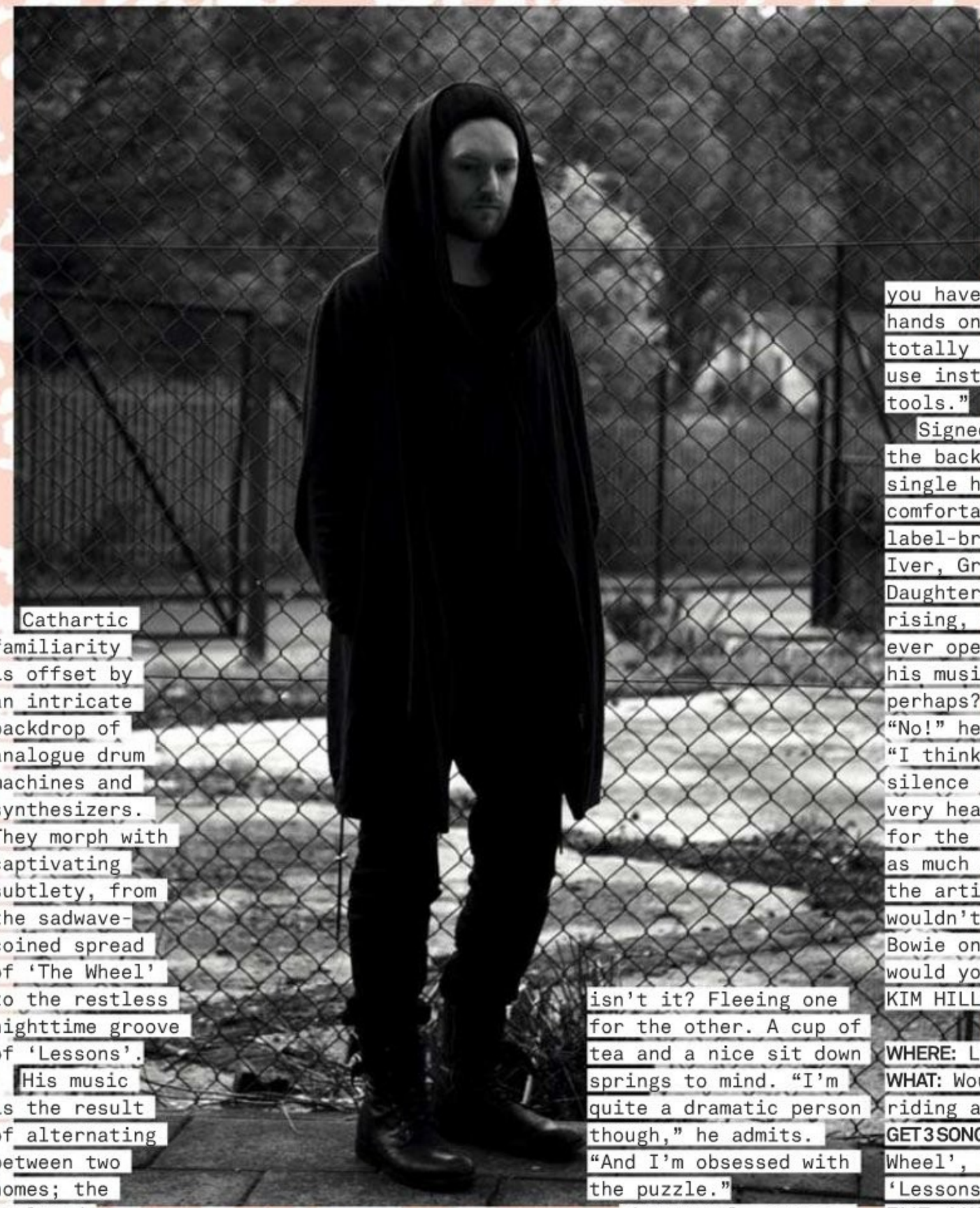
SOHN



In the moment before our phones connect Clash has been gazing at a photo of SOHN on tour. An artist enamoured by mystery, this is one of only a few pictures revealed to fans.

LA's postcard-ready palms dominate the frame, boldly stretching towards a bright wash of azure sky. A stark contrast to the man in the bottom left corner, hood up, dressed head to toe in black. Instantly affecting, it's a fitting epitome of his sound.

First his voice. A real direct hit. Rich, wounded soul, it easily justifies the a capella additions on two of his three releases to date. The tunes are infectious too, almost brazen in their overload of emotion.

Cathartic familiarity is offset by an intricate backdrop of analogue drum machines and synthesizers. They morph with captivating subtlety, from the sadwave-coined spread of 'The Wheel' to the restless nighttime groove of 'Lessons'.

His music is the result of alternating between two homes; the isolated mountains of Vienna and the dense, creative-insomnia of London. Ethereal soul meets stuttering beats. Still, it's a little dramatic isn't it? Fleeing one for the other. A cup of tea and a nice sit down springs to mind. "I'm quite a dramatic person though," he admits. "And I'm obsessed with the puzzle."

That puzzle centres on balance, principally voice vs. production. "Everything I do comes down to the voice. The rest is just the landscape you place it in. I never liked electronic music. I didn't feel like it had any emotion."

Then he discovered analogue synthesizers. "That's easily the most important reason why my sound is my sound. I use things you have to get your hands on, which is totally natural. I use instruments as tools."

Signed to 4AD off the back of his debut single he now sits comfortably alongside label-brethren Bon Iver, Grimes and Daughter. Awareness rising, will he ever open up outside his music? A vlog perhaps? "No!" he laughs. "I think a bit of silence is actually very healthy, for the audience as much as for the artist. You wouldn't want David Bowie on Twitter would you?"

KIM HILLYARD

WHERE: London/Vienna
WHAT: Wounded soul riding analogue waves
GET 3 SONGS: 'The Wheel', 'Bloodflows', 'Lessons'
FACT: SOHN works best nocturnally. "That sense of everyone else being asleep gives you something as an artist. You feel the right kind of alone."

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ROSIE LOWE

With a love of music pre-dating birth, Rosie Lowe found herself playing an impressive seven instruments by the time she was 13, and faced the decision of what to scale back as "it was getting a bit silly." However, despite such an impressive choice, she still found limitations in her abilities, explaining to Clash: "I'd get song ideas in the shower, run downstairs to the piano to play something, and it would be gone. All of these instruments I'd been studying were actually very limiting. I feel like my ear has always been a lot further than my fingers." Having always been a fan of electronic music and vocal manipulation, she decided to take up Logic and abandon her traditional instruments altogether.

"I think it's really important to capture intensely how you're feeling when you're writing the song," she says. "Because after that things can really change. I'm always putting ideas down into my iPhone. When I get an idea I just have to block everyone out. What's the worst that could happen? People think you're weird? There's lots of weird people in London, and I love watching them. So I just think, 'Come on, watch away. I'll sing into my phone. I don't mind.'" This mindset has often found her in interesting situations, singing on buses, in the gym, and most impressively on the first date with her now boyfriend. Did she sneak off to the toilet to record? "No!" she confesses, laughing, "I just did it right there. I just said 'Sorry, I've just had an idea' and started humming into my phone - he was pretty cool about it!"

After being picked up off the back of a gig by Domino Publishing, she was soon introduced to producers Dave Okumu and Kwes, who had been looking for a project to work on together. After initially trying one song, the trio ended up putting together the 'Right Thing EP'. "It was seriously one of the greatest experiences of my life," Rosie describes of the process. "I feel so thankful to have had two musicians who I admire so much to help me to tell my story. Especially ones who have such an understanding and sensitivity at such a fragile point in the process. It's been really amazing, and will continue as they're producing my debut album."

GRANT BRYDON

WHERE: London
WHAT: Spacious alternative pop with R&B melodies
GET 3 SONGS: 'Right Thing', '10K Balloons', 'Games'
FACT: Exercise makes her sneeze for 24 hours afterwards.

WORDS: FELICITY MARTIN
PHOTOGRAPHY: FABRICE BOURGELLE

WAR ROOM STORIES FROM EAST BERLIN

BRETON

It's an average day in the recording of Breton's second album, and they're sitting beside a giant UFO in the grounds of an ex-communist radio station. "This place is fucking weird. It's like being in a David Lynch film. I mean, in front of us there's a naked man in a pink speedboat, just chilling," frontman Roman Rappak points at the river Spree. "When people say 'That's so Berlin' they mean tote bags and fixie bikes. It's two different worlds here." After leaving the disused branch of NatWest in Elephant & Castle, where the band used to live and work, Dan McIlvenny, Adam Ainger, Ian Patterson and Roman relocated to the German capital for the studio set-up of a lifetime. Back in the peak of the July heat wave, Clash flew over to witness 'War Room Stories' in the works.

As a scene, indie has long been pronounced dead. But Breton are a British guitar band who surpass that very definition; they're a DIY art collective rather than a blank-eyed mob of apathetic strummers. Crafting cutting-edge visuals and constantly pushing the envelope in terms of creativity, the five-piece are a multimedia tour de force; a band that might seem infuriatingly 'art school' if they weren't so down-to-earth as individuals.

Berlin exists as the playground of the hip and the musical elite - those not looking to rave for hours, but two days straight. The boys dutifully take us to a few watering holes in the city on our first night, but it soon becomes clear that they've been locked away in the studio rather than hitting up Berghain or Watergate. "When it's that sunny outside, studios are horrible, bleak places," Roman says, between mouthfuls of sushi. "But I don't feel it as bad here."

His words ring true as soon as we reach the unsettlingly quiet outskirts of East Berlin to find the Funkhaus (we're not talking 'One Nation Under A Groove' - 'funk' is German for 'broadcast'). It's a huge, imposing compound of angular red brick - the old headquarters of the GDR radio where 3,000 communist workers used to write and broadcast propaganda to the Eastern Bloc. Period features are everywhere - we're shown an area where a clock used to hang on the wall, where you can see the microphone that the Stasi used to spy on that room.

The trio - who are a man down as Ian's suffering a serious virus - take us round the vast foley rooms which were used to stage radio plays ("Das Archers," quips Roman). As there were, of course, no sound banks or effect-filled hard drives back in those days, these now-surreal studios were built where you can pull up floorboard panels to find gravel, cobbles, or grass. You can twist and turn all manner of doorknobs, handles, locks and

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bolts which are nailed to a fake door, purely for the purpose of sound effect creation.

Being the resourceful individuals that they are, Breton have seen that none of this sound design goes to waste. “A recording isn’t necessarily capturing a performance,” Roman begins. “You could quite easily input everything into a computer and it would all play perfectly, on the beat. Compare that to a recording of an iPhone in a room of people playing it and there’d be shitloads of energy while the crystal clear computer recording would be this boring, soulless kind of song… It’s recording an atmosphere.”

An atmosphere is exactly what that this place can deliver. The foley complex houses a stone cave with vaulted ceilings for epic reverb, where they’ve recorded Adam’s drums. There’s an old ’50s payphone through which they send vocals to the phone room, recreating the exact noise and distortion that there would have been. “In a way, it’s coming back,” Roman continues. “People are starting to use the old American and British studios. Dialing up ‘room sound six’ on your Mac is cool… except it sounds like everyone else’s record.” Noting the irony of talking about democracy in this building, he goes on to chat about the six degrees of separation effect on music. “If

something gets shared on the Internet then it’s a much fairer way than depending on heavy rotation on MTV. If you see something that eight of your mates have all shared - from different parts of the world, walks of life - then chances are it’s a good track,” he says.

Phillip, the studio’s engineer, unlocks the doors to the two huge grand concert halls in the complex. “It’s mad - it’s for an 80-piece orchestra, and then there’s only 40 to 50 seats,” Roman’s voice echoes around the space. “It was only built for generals and the elite.” Even the fabric on the seats has been acoustically treated. The band have also taken advantage of the ’50s equipment left behind - for instance, a pre-amp that Roman points to. “It’s got communist tubes in it - you can only turn the volume up with a screwdriver! So every time I change the vocal we’re doing, I have to get the screwdriver out.” Phillip grins: “It’s really actual engineering!”

Just next

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door, there's a breathtaking selection of world percussion - the work of a man who spent 20 years accumulating them, and a favoured room of Sting's. For €100, Breton could use anything, so long as they replaced anything they broke. "So he told us, this is a one-of-a-kind Mongolian snare, so you'd need to locate and fly out to the tribe in Mongolia," explains Roman. "So now we're terrified and put everything on little rubber mats." In addition to Gordon Sumner, the Funkhaus's walls have witnessed many high profile recording artists. Mariah Carey walked into the studio, immediately said that she hated it and left. Fergie from The Black Eyed Peas apparently threw up on the couch next door after a coke binge. "It's a collector's item," laughs Roman.

The section of the complex dedicated to the GDR youth radio has been less well maintained, and now remains a dilapidated shell of a building, with trees twisting through window frames and all manner of plant life bursting in and out of its corridors. Here, the band have done found sound recording, to sit alongside the other atmospheric sonic elements on their album. In terms of instrumentation, who plays what is very loose. "We're free to make of it what we will, and maybe you get to a different place you intended to because of that," suggests Dan. With Roman on vocals, they've kept their trademark blend of glitchy electronics and instrumentation, along with echo-heavy pianos and hip-hop-style sampling.

Debut LP 'Other People's Problems', released back in 2012, also saw Breton in a fury of sampling but somewhat muggier electronics. "We didn't realise it at the time," says Roman, "but there was a particular type of person that listened to it that was in a hoodie smoking skunk at his mum's listening to Burial. As much as those dudes are really cool, you very rarely meet any of them!" After almost two years spent playing live shows and trooping the festival circuit, their sound has shifted towards capturing the energy of performing. "It's freed us up," he admits. "People in the audience are as much part of a show as the band, so our album's kind of a nod to that."

Next morning, we're invited round to their temporary abode for breakfast,

part of a suburban estate that was originally built for communist workers to operate a work-sleep-work-sleep pattern. The rooms, arranged by the band's manager, are in the outhouse of an old German couple. "On the website they added a photo of a massive, fancy indoor swimming pool", explains Dan. The band arrived to find themselves in a bungalow so flowery it'd threaten anyone suffering from a pollen allergy, with what was essentially a giant paddling pool in the backyard. But these cosy lodgings have cemented their brotherly bond. "We've developed such a rapport, with so many inside jokes," Adam relates, "that it's quite lonely when we're not with each other."

'War Room Stories' is in essence an album of experiences, past and present. "What we're trying to express is the furthest point of all the music that we like, of the ideas that we have, all the arguments we had, the things we've fell in love with, the shit things and the good," says Roman. "It sounds like such an obvious thing, but it was such a revelation to us." Tomorrow they're off to Macedonia to record the 44-piece Radio Symphonic Orchestra for four hours - and that's Breton for you. No doubt they'll return home with a few more stories to tell.

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PHOTOGRAPHY: HAYLEY LOUISA BROWN, OLIVER HADLEE PEARCH, DIMA HOHLOV, LIAM MF WARWICK, TYLER THE CREATOR, SIMON THISTLETON, BILLY BALLARD, RORY VAN MILLINGEN, NATHANAEL TURNER

AFTER ANOTHER DIVERSE AND DRAMATIC 12 MONTHS IN MUSIC, DURING WHICH OUR PAGES RIPPLED WITH INDIE ICONS, HIP-HOP HEROES AND BEAT-BRINGERS, IT'S TIME TO REDUCE THE YEAR'S LANDMARK ALBUMS INTO A CHARTED SOUNDTRACK OF DISCOVERIES AND NEW LOVES.

THE TOP 40 ALBUMS OF 2013

39. PUSHA T

'MY NAME IS MY NAME'
(GOOD MUSIC / DEF JAM)

Slinging his perfected brand of cocaine raps over a carefully curated selection of beats courtesy of executive producer Kanye West, Pusha T's official solo debut was proclaimed by the man himself to be the best rap album of the year. And with such high-grade product throughout the record's economic 12 cuts, it is difficult to argue.

BEST BIT: OPENING THE ALBUM WITH THE BASS-FUELLED FUNERAL MARCH OF 'KING PUSH'.

GRANT BRYDON

38. DANIEL AVERY

'DRONE LOGIC'
PHANTASY SOUND

All those years as Fabric resident, it appears, have paid off. The rocker-turned-electronicist put his debut LP foot forward, taking Drexciyan acid, shoegaze and big beat out for a spin. Minimal in the least clinical way, Dan eschewed both the gimmick and the zeitgeist - but to great, elegant effect.

BEST BIT: THAT MORE-ADDICTIVE-THAN-TWIGLETS RIFF ON 'ALL I NEED'.

FELICITY MARTIN

37. DEAFHEAVEN

'SUNBATHER'
(DEATHWISH)

Call it black metal for the mainstream, mutant-rock for the prefix-obsessed, punk processed through industrial noise... Call it whatever you want, but listen to it. 'Sunbather' is the greatest multifaceted racket this side of Isis' classic 'Oceanic' LP. The San Francisco band has surely set a new precedent for enveloping heaviness.

BEST BIT: ALL 10 STUNNING MINUTES OF THE GRIPPINGLY TURBULENT TITLE-TRACK.

MIKE DIVER

40. JOHN WIZARDS

'JOHN WIZARDS'
(PLANET MU)

A diaspora of African sounds and rhythms penetrated Western pop music like never before this year, and The John Wizards landed spectacularly on that money. Their knack for infectious riffs is twinned with an inventive attitude to ecstatically happy electronic soundscapes. Written from experiences in Maputo, Cape Town, Dar Es Salaam, their sunny debut effort was an explosion of imagination that won a deserved wave of praise.

BEST BIT: THE TWINKLING KEYS AND TENDER GUITAR LINE OF 'FINALLY/ JET UP' MAKE FOR A DREAMY FIRST 90 SECONDS.

JOE ZADEH

36. MOUNT KIMBIE

'COLD SPRING FAULT LESS YOUTH'
(WARP)

The feverishly anticipated follow-up to 'Crooks & Lovers' had Campos and Maker shifting from tracks to songs, with King Krule rearing his fiery head on two out of eleven for a South London bonanza. Stepping outside their comfort zone, the duo recorded their own voices alongside a giant library of sounds: a risk that paid off.

BEST BIT: THE DETECTIVE-PROGRAMME-CLIFFHANGER INTRO INTO 'HOME RECORDING'.

FELICITY MARTIN

35. MONEY

'THE SHADOW OF HEAVEN'
(BELLA UNION)

Within ten minutes of meeting Jamie Lee (Money's frontman) back in July, we had established the two things that he feels everything in life boils down to. "Number one," he begins, "is not wanting to die. Number two is not wanting to be alone. All the things that we cling to or have faith in, whether it's reality or whether it's family or your job, it all seems to satisfy or quell some kind of fear about dying or being alone." This fallibilist disposition of sky-high thinking seeps through Money's long awaited debut, 'The Shadow Of Heaven'. Sacred lyrical themes of deism, lust, heartbreak and faith are offset by the band's majestic instrumentation, particularly the lead guitar of Charlie Cocksedge, who gets almost African with his finger-pickings on 'So Long'. It all creates an epic amalgamation of dreamy psychedelia, melancholic balladry and atmospheric shoe-gaze.

BEST BIT: LEE'S LYRICAL IMAGERY ON 'BLUEBELL FIELDS' MAKES FOR A MOST TECHNICOLOURED NARRATIVE.

JOE ZADEH

34. DAUGHTER

'IF YOU LEAVE'
(4AD)

Amid the maelstrom of 2013, its continual churn of reunions, retreads and resurgences, the sheer intimacy of Daughter's debut stuck out like a sore thumb. Sonically soothing yet lyrically daring, 'If You Leave' saw the trio arrive with remarkable, almost immaculate confidence - and it's only their first step.

BEST BIT: WHEN 'YOUTH' UNFURLS LIKE THE FIRST LEAF OF SPRING. YEP, WE WENT THERE.

ROBIN MURRAY

33. JAKE BUGG

'SHANGRI LA'
(VIRGIN EMI)

Jake's second album is imbued with the expressive soul of his favourite guitar-slinging troubadours, and is matured by his broadening experience as he follows in their footsteps. As bristling Tennessee shuffles clashed with a steely Nottingham resolve, Rick Rubin expertly captured the Malibu sessions to ensure Bugg's perceptive songwriting shone.

BEST BIT: THE COUNTRY RESPITE OF APT ALBUM CLOSER, 'STORM PASSES AWAY'.

SIMON HARPER

32. JON HOPKINS

'IMMUNITY'
(DOMINO)

Gone is the folk-tinged, atmospheric, lo-fi electro of Hopkins' solo works, replaced with fizzing and pulses of dark techno that build into euphoric crescendos. There are still the sounds of everyday life - his trademark also - but this time it's about grimy beats you can get lost in. A brilliant new direction.

BEST BIT: THOSE PUNCHY CLIMAXES THAT RISE OUT OF COMFY AMBIANCE AND SLAP YOU ROUND THE FACE. ALWAYS A DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE.

GEMMA HAMPSON

31. DEPTFORD GOTH

'LIFE AFTER DEFO'
(COOPERATIVE/MEROK)

We tipped the reclusive Deptford Goth for our Ones To Watch of 2013 back in January. And so the saying goes, it's always the quiet ones. With powerful juxtapositions of connection and disconnection, hope and despair, life and death, possession and loss throughout, 'Life After Defo' is an absolute thesis on pop experimentalism.?

BEST BIT: THE CELESTIAL SYNTHS AND FRAGILE VOCALS OF 'UNION'.

JOE ZADEH

30. DANNY BROWN

'OLD'
(FOOLS GOLD / WARNERS)

An autobiographical tale of drug-dealer-to-recreational-drug-experimenter, Danny Brown's 'Old' manages the difficult balance of pleasing somewhat conflicting fanbases: the old Detroit hip-hop crowd who miss braided Danny's bleak tales of struggling in Motown, and the new hipster crowd who favour asymmetrical-haired Danny's hypnotic chants of clubbing and Molly-popping over hard hitting electronic production.

BEST BIT: DANNY SHOWING HIS INTROSPECTIVE SIDE ON 'CLEAN UP'.

GRANT BRYDON

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29. THUNDERCAT

'APOCALYPSE'
(BRAINFEEDER)

You can keep your Daft Punk records - we'll be getting down to this second LP from Brainfeeder-signed bass supremo Thundercat, thanks very much. Stephen Bruner was perhaps better known as a 'feat.' artist before this collection came along. Now, we know he's some kind of wicked funk overlord with demonically possessed fingers.

BEST BIT: S'GOTTA BE 'OH SHEIT IT'S X', THE FUNKIEST DISCO JAM OF 2013.

MIKE DIVER

28. RUN THE JEWELS

'RUN THE JEWELS'
(FOOLS GOLD/BIG DADA)

Killer Mike and El-P's previous collaboration saw the latter produce for the former on his 2012 'R.A.P. Music' LP. It was excellent - so naturally this twin-MC team-up was always likely to impress. And doesn't it. 'RTJ' is the most excellently curt rap record since Nas's 'Illmatic', but bumps twice as hard. Short, but stunning.

BEST BIT: THE BEATS COME SO BIG THAT IT CAN ONLY BE THEM.

MIKE DIVER

27. MAC MILLER

'WATCHING MOVIES WITH THE SOUND OFF'
(ROSTRUM / UNIVERSAL)

After reinventing himself on last year's 'Macadelic' mixtape, Mac Miller's return to the album format was surprising to fans of his debut. Having moved to LA and locked himself in a home studio, 'WMWTSO' is a much more organic affair; it is also a surprisingly collaborative affair, with his home having become a creative hub for an unlikely group of artists comprising everyone from Action Bronson to Schoolboy Q and Alchemist to Odd Future.

BEST BIT: MAC TRADING BARS WITH ACTION BRONSON ON THE ALCHEMIST PRODUCED 'RED DOT MUSIC'.

GRANT BRYDON

26. THE KNIFE

'SHAKING THE HABITUAL'
(MUTE)

If you thought Nordic sibling art-techno duo The Knife were weird then the good news is that they just got weirder. 'Shaking The Habitual' occasionally sounds like a schizophrenic six-month-old baby's interior monologue of primal grunts and terrorised insinuations. It's an uncomfortable journey, but one that's so unique it dazzles us with its dark vision.

BEST BIT: 'OLD DREAMS WAITING TO BE REALIZED' IS A SHORT ATMOSPHERIC BREAK MID-ALBUM. IT'S ONLY 19 MINUTES LONG.

MATTHEW BENNETT

25. KIRIN J CALLINAN

'EMBRACISM'
(XL/SIBERIA)

A deluge of dichotomies and genre splicing discordance, ferociously flamboyant, virile yet vulnerable, 'Embracism' is one brutal beaut. Licentious lyrics and dissonant guitar showcase an angular ambition exhilarating in its inconsistency; a careering cacophony of desolate abjection, exquisite aggression and muscular romanticism brandishing grazed knuckles at certain future magnificence.

BEST BIT: THE SOUL SEARING TITLE TRACK, A MANIFESTO OF MODERN MASCULINITY.

ANNA WILSON

24. KINGS OF LEON

'MECHANICAL BULL'
(COLUMBIA)

Not quite the "comeback story of a lifetime" as alluded within, but certainly the hearty spirit of 'Mechanical Bull' felt like a cathartic progression from the dense 'Come Around Sundown'. The Followills clearly reveled in the crisp dynamics, panoramic landscapes and funky chops that dominate, suggesting their reign is far from endangered.

BEST BIT: ANTICIPATING THE CHORUS OF 'FAMILY TREE' RESOUNDING THROUGH A STADIUM.

SIMON HARPER

23. DEAN BLUNT
'THE REDEEMER'
(HIPPOS IN TANKS)

Dean Blunt, the recluse - known for the lo-fi and looped musings of Hype Williams - branched out to deliver a foggy break-up album of the utmost weirdness. Passion, anger and promiscuity dominate, with Blunt delivering in an affected baritone, amidst brass, strings, accordion, guitar, piano and trodding beats. The album demands a commitment from the listener - a patient leap of faith - but it repays that like no other this year.

BEST BIT: ON 'THE PEDIGREE', BLUNT WARNS OFF A FUTURE LOVE INTEREST WITH STUNNINGLY HEARTLESS PITH.

JOE ZADEH

22. FOUR TET
'BEAUTIFUL REWIND'
(TEXT RECORDS)

Kieran Hebden's kept his head down this year, producing Syrian pop and spinning eight-hour sets. In a timely tip of the hat to pirate radio culture and the spidering spectrum of UK bass, 'Beautiful Rewind' fused the gritter elements of jungle with the kaleidoscopic delicacy that Four Tet has undoubtedly become an international treasure for.

BEST BIT: "HEY-HEY-HEY-HEY" - THE MC SPITTING ON 'KOOL FM'.

FELICITY MARTIN

21. FOREST SWORDS
'ENGRAVINGS'
(TRI ANGLE)

Forest Swords, AKA Matthew Barnes, was quiet for a time - but how he broke that silence with 'Engravings', an instantly familiar yet disconcertingly alien collection that resonates long after its first play. It sounds like a record you've known forever, but never really known at all. Creepily addictive avant-electro fare.

BEST BIT: THE REALISATION THAT MASSIVE TALENTS CAN SPEAK SO VERY DELICATELY.

MIKE DIVER

20. SPECIAL REQUEST
'SOUL MUSIC'
(HOUNDSTOOTH)

Dance music's ephemeral spirit thrives on ghosts and revivals. Yet rarely has there been such a vivid séance of old sounds than Paul Woolford's ode to hardcore. Seizing the Amen drum break and recalling the essence of Vics, Ford Cosworths, ring roads and natty MCs, 'Soul Music' reincarnates some of the most visceral dance music ever made and blesses it with the production punch of 2013. 'Soul Music' is a delicious Tardis of rave.

BEST BIT: THE VINTAGE MC SAMPLE PLEADING WITH THE OWNER OF A FORD FIESTA TO COME MOVE IT OFF THE DANCEFLOOR.

MATTHEW BENNETT

19. FUCK BUTTONS
'SLOW FOCUS'
(ATP RECORDINGS)

The most unlikely top 40 smash of 2013, this third album from the London-based noise duo took their pulsing, grinding, thrusting sound and refined it to the point where every spooked synth rattled the bones harder and each blasted beat threatened to crack the sky. As beautiful as an exploded skull.

BEST BIT: ARE FUCK BUTTONS RAP PRODUCERS TO BE? 'THE RED WING' SAYS: MAYBE.

MIKE DIVER

18. JOHN GRANT
'PALE GREEN GHOSTS'
(BELLA UNION)

Everyone's favourite caramel-toned former drug addict heartbroken gay lover returned this year with an unbelievable album, swapping the soft charm of Texans Midlake for Icelandic synths and Sinead O'Connor. The result was a dark, fuzzy, twisted, but beguiling album of lost love and torment... and 'Glacier', the song that could break any man.

BEST BIT: "THIS PAIN, IT IS A GLACIER MOVING THROUGH YOU". NEED WE SAY MORE? WEEP.

GEMMA HAMPSON

17. TYLER, THE CREATOR
'WOLF'
(ODD FUTURE / SONY)

With the controversy of his initial entrance to the scene having long blown over, Tyler, The Creator emerged with his strongest set thus far. 'Wolf' takes listeners to Camp Flog Gnaw where they contend with Tyler's various conflicting personalities as new arrival Wolf, and his bike Slater, battle against bully, Sam, for the heart of his girlfriend (whether she likes it or not), Salem.

BEST BIT: TYLER AND FRANK OCEAN'S DEDICATION TO AN ORANGE BMX CALLED 'SLATER'.

GRANT BRYDON

16. MACHINEDRUM
'VAPOR CITY'
(NINJA TUNE)

Finding inspiration in Chicago's footwork scene, 'Vapor City' saw Machinedrum rev up the tempos. Fusing that jittery, skittering hip-hop sound with British bass culture, 'Vapor City' was an imaginative paean to a dream state. Oh, and it goes off in a rave.

BEST BIT: THE DEMENTED, SCATTERED JUNGLE OF 'GUNSHOTTA'.

ROBIN MURRAY

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15. M.I.A.

'MATANGI'
(N.E.E.T. / INTERSCOPE)

The queen of controversy romps back into our lives after her precognition that Google were snooping on us further immortalised her last album '/\/\/\Y/\. 'Matangi' however sets its sights on Eastern spiritualism, a theme that conjures her most consistent set of bangers since debut 'Arular' ruled back in 2005. Welcome to M.I.A. 2.0.

BEST BIT: M.I.A.'S SLICK WORD PLAY ON HER COLLABORATION WITH WIKILEAKS FOUNDER JULIAN ASSANGE.

MATTHEW BENNETT

14. NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS

'PUSH THE SKY AWAY'
(BAD SEED LTD)

Sea and sky act as quivering meditative backdrops, over which Cave intones like a salty glittering eyed prophet, aided by the near messianic transcendence of The Bad Seeds. That such a distinguished and dazzlingly vital suite of songs has occurred 15 albums into a career is extraordinary. A majestic, melancholic liturgy.

BEST BIT: THE BELLICOSE YET BEATIFIC, BALLS-OUT GOSPEL OF 'HIGGS BOSON BLUES'.

ANNA WILSON

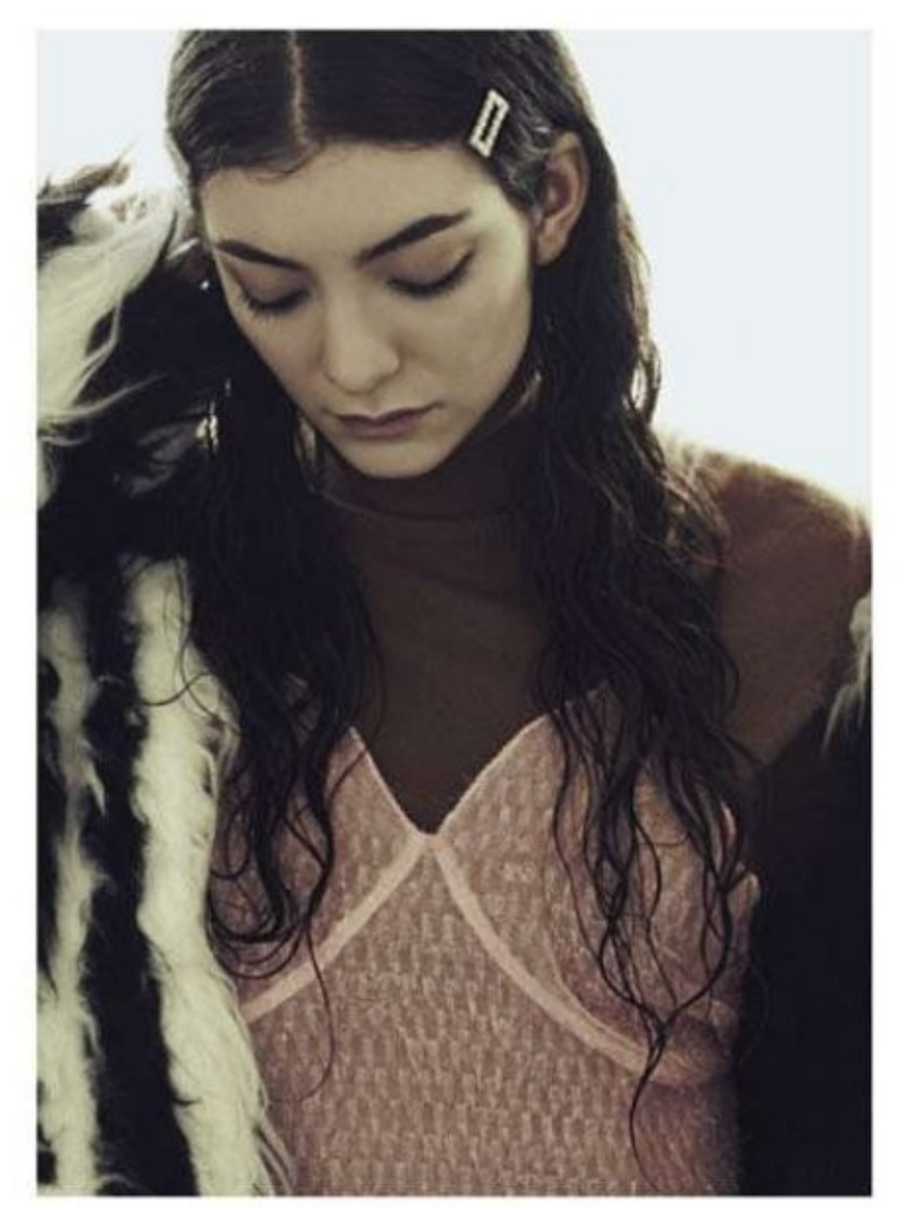
13. BONOBO

'THE NORTH BORDERS'
(NINJA TUNE)

Having found their sound, Bonobo's job now is refinement, not revolution. 'The North Borders' is soft, soulful and contains all the flexibility of jazz yet with the exactness of technology. Sculpted, rounded yet still daring, it's the same as before, then, yet somehow better than ever.

BEST BIT: WHEN ERYKAH BADU STEPS ON 'HEAVEN FOR THE SINNER' AND AWAKENS OUR SPIRITUAL SIDE.

ROBIN MURRAY



12. DAVID BOWIE

'THE NEXT DAY'
(COLUMBIA)

Echoes of a monumental musical past act as small illuminations, familiar signs taking us down unfamiliar roads. There's simplicity in structure and lyric that belies the near impenetrable denseness of this unexpected record. A contemplation on love and war, fear and redemption, it's a resolutely contemporary masterwork, effortless in its elegance.

BEST BIT: THE HAUNTED WORLD-WEARINESS OF THE REMARKABLE SCOTT WALKER-ESQUE 'HEAT'.

ANNA WILSON

11. ARCTIC MONKEYS

'AM'
(Domino)

Take THAT, religion. Finally, these simians provide definitive proof of evolution. From ickle spotty Yorkshire lads to international rock gods, Arctic Monkeys kick off their indie boots with 'AM' through sexy R&B melodies and kick ass riffs, all the while keeping their clever and quintessential Northern lyricism.

BEST BIT: 'ARABELLA' KICKING INTO A FULL-ON SABBATH-ESQUE ASSAULT.

JAMIE CARSON

10. LORDE

'PURE HEROINE'
(UNIVERSAL)

2013 saw a lot of albums projected for global domination, though 'Random Access Memories', 'Artpop' and 'Reflektor' all drooped onto the scene in a remarkably flaccid fashion. Lorde was the proverbial dark horse, and her debut album 'Pure Heroine' was the year's definitive 'blockbuster' album. With producer Joel Little she carved out a minimal pop marriage of satire and youth that went stratospheric.

BEST BIT: THE OUTRO TO 'WHITE TEETH TEENS' IS A MASTER CLASS IN SUBTLETY, AS A LONELY VOCAL HARMONY PLAYS OUT LIKE A FOLK CHOIR.

JOE ZADEH

9. VAMPIRE WEEKEND

'MODERN VAMPIRES OF THE CITY'
(XL)

Scoring three for three with each of their albums in Clash's end-of-year charts, VW's 'Modern Vampires...' fares better than 2010's 'Contra', as the group evolve with layered aural subtleties, more delicate electro-baroque adventures, and brooding considerations of mortality. Beautifully poignant in parts, invigorating in others, who knew songs about death could be such fun?

BEST BIT: THE PITCH-SHIFTING "BABY"S IN 'DIANE YOUNG'.

SIMON HARPER

8. MODERAT

'II'
(MONKEYTOWN)

Modeselektor meets Apparat for round two of their widescreen cinematic melodrama. It's a cruising narrative, which sees them kiss us harder on the lips, and even slip in some particularly rhythmic tongue. Stretching out Apparat's expansive emotions over Mdslktr's tough schooling in drums wins out. Again.

BEST BIT: THEIR ELEPHANT'S ROAR THAT LAUNCHES THEIR STAMPEDE OF CLIPPED DRUMS AND EMOTIVE BASS ON EVERY REPEAT LISTEN.

MATTHEW BENNETT

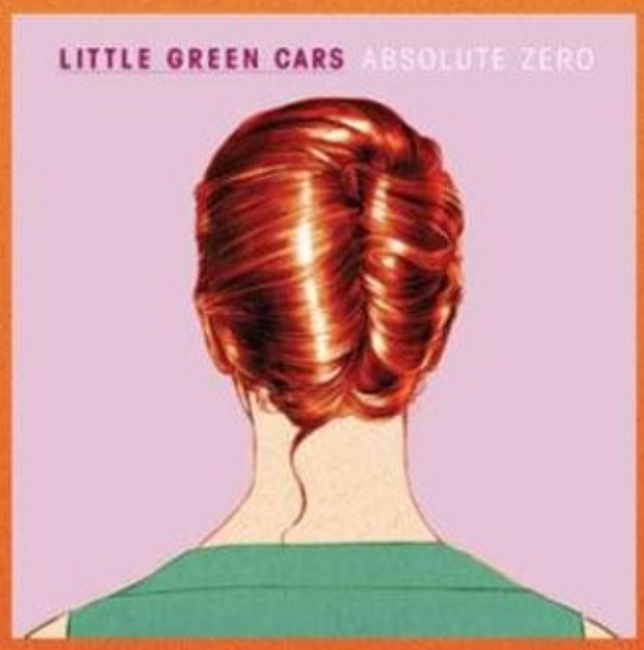
ISLAND LIFE

PAPA
TENDER MADNESS

EDWARD SHARPE
& THE MAGNETIC ZEROS

HALF MOON RUN
DARK EYES

DEAP VALLY
SISTRIONIX



LITTLE GREEN CARS
ABSOLUTE ZERO

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7. JAMES HOLDEN

'THE INHERITORS'
(BORDER COMMUNITY)

A cosmological stew of evolutionary ideas, self-built instruments and trance inducing beats. Loftily named after a Golding novel, it's a concept album more visceral than cerebral, its techno twisted into almost inconceivable shapes. Shamanistic in spirit, it's a mysterious, drone-propelled delight, straddling ancient and far future galaxies. Magical.

BEST BIT: THE UNAPOLOGETIC ANALOGUE ARMAGEDDON OF THE INCANDESCENT 'BLACKPOOL LATE EIGHTIES'.

ANNA WILSON

6. BOARDS OF CANADA

'TOMORROW'S HARVEST'
(WARP)

Of all the year's comebacks, few were as immaculately executed as Boards Of Canada's unexpected - yet joyous - return. 'Tomorrow's Harvest' found the band gently nudging their sound forward: from concept to execution, this is nigh on perfect.

BEST BIT: THE FINAL TEN SECONDS AS THE ALBUM FADES OUT IN THE PERFECT STILLNESS OF THE NIGHT SKY.

ROBIN MURRAY

5. KING KRULE

'6 FEET BENEATH THE MOON'
(XL)

Like some postman of youth disillusionment, Archy's Bourbon-flecked baritone delivers messages about Tescos robbing him and cold pavements on his debut LP. More often than not, it's atop intriguing soundscapes that effortlessly coil jazz/blues and J Dilla pitter patter. Praise KK's ambitious attempt to make this exist as a truly unique dissection of his austere headspace.

BEST BIT: THE DISREGARD FOR ANYBODY WITH A PULSE ON 'A LIZARD STATE'.

ERROL ANDERSON

4. ATOMS FOR PEACE

'AMOK'
(XL)

Thom Yorke remains busy. Revelling in his casserole of emotional lyrics, his tinkering with 60 years of bass culture and his ascendant steps into the electronica canon keeps this diminutive wailer youthful. 'AMOK', with its seductive post-hardcore breakbeats and Flea-sponsored bass work, sits throbbing as the most dense and channelled alternative statements of 2013.

BEST BIT: THE CHIMING ALLURE OF 'DROPPED' NEATLY TRANSPLANTS THE RAVE INSPIRATION OF THOM'S RAVE MUSE MODESELEKTOR.

MATTHEW BENNETT

3. KANYE WEST

'YEEZUS'
(DEF JAM / ROC A FELLA)

After crafting rap's Sistine Chapel with 2010's 'My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy' (a "backhanded apology" for Swift-gate) Kanye West polarised music fans this year with his latest solo outing, 'Yeezus'. Incorporating staple elements of Kanye's career - the Chipmunk soul of his early work, the Daft Punk sampling of 'Stronger', the Auto-tune of '808s & Heartbreak', his outspokenness as a celebrity, the porn-obsession of 'Hell Of A Life' and the Reggae-Trap fusion of 'Mercy' - Yeezus takes these elements and strips away the excess, which was so prevalent in 'MBDTF'. The result is a truly relentless Kanye West experience. Jarring on initial listens, only small pockets of beautiful sci-fi cinematic soundtracks are offered as shelter from the electronic-punk adrenaline of the record, with the listener being paid off at the close by the familiarity of 'Bound 2', a cut that is reminiscent of the early work that many fans crave. However, like many of the greatest albums it takes a while to really sink in, and once it does it soon becomes an addictive and cathartic listen.

BEST BIT: WHEN 'NEW SLAVES' FINALLY BREAKS DOWN TO REVEAL THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PART OF THE ALBUM.

GRANT BRYDON

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2. JAMES BLAKE

'OVERGROWN' (ATLAS/POLYDOR)

'Retrograde' was the first track to drop from this back in February. The repeated vocal hook and post-apocalyptic sub-frequencies were earworms alone. A rubato technique gave the track expressive and hypnotic undertones, as the tempo drifted up and down; locking back into groove before it could gently tear apart. It was the most beautiful auditory calling card one could drop, and it confirmed Blake's return, unshackled by major label pressures and the ghost of 'Limit To Your Love'. The scene was set. The album charted at eight, and then slipped inexplicably out of sight, until November's Mercury Prize. Sometimes these things happen in music. The planets don't align commercially. Thank God, they did creatively. 'Overgrown' is a simultaneous continuation of the ambition set out by his debut, but with a more direct purpose. It's a collection of ambient hymns and bass ballads, framed in respectful odes to the tonal scales of early jazz. It's written at night, under moons that could bring the devil out in bunny rabbits, in the far cast shadows of a long distance relationship, but never more than an arm's reach from an excitable cowbell and an undulating bassline.

BEST BIT: RZA'S MARITAL RAP ON 'TAKE A FALL FOR ME' IS SPINE TINGLING.

JOE ZADEH

WORDS: GRANT BRYDON
PHOTOGRAPHY: TYLER, THE CREATOR

CLASH ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. EARL SWEATSHIRT 'DORIS'

When his music broke through during the great Odd Future explosion of 2011, Thebe Kgositsile never witnessed the rise to fame that his peers enjoyed. Exiled away at Coral Reef Academy, a residential school in Samoa for "troubled youth", the elusive rap prodigy known as Earl Sweatshirt was denied access to the Internet and cut off from the outside world. Released 18 months after his return, the debut record he named in tribute to his late grandmother, 'Doris', has achieved well-deserved critical acclaim, including Clash's album of the year.

Proving ever elusive, when Clash try to make contact with Earl at the agreed time, he has lost his phone and is un-contactable for several hours. Waking up at 6am the following morning for another try, we finally manage to get through to his girlfriend Mallory, who kindly allows us to borrow her phone (and Earl) as the pair hang out in LA having just had a late dinner…

I know you don't like interviews, and I always find asking the first question pretty awkward, so I thought I'd ask the Based God, Lil B, how to start. He said: "Ask him does he love Lil B because I love Earl and Odd Future."
Hell yeah, dog. Oh man, of course I love him. He knows that, he has to know that!

What is it that you love about him? I know a lot of "purists" get confused about what you see in him.
I fuck with Lil B because when he came out he just changed so much shit. I remember seeing his shit in 2009, before it was cool to like him. Before it was some niche thing like, 'Yeah, like I'm really into like shitty photos and the only rap music I listen to is Lil B.' And the nigga is very thorough. You can tell he really listens to rap music, just because of how all over the place his music is. Like, he has shit that sounds like fucking Hot Boys shit, he has shit that sounds like Dipset, he has shit that sounds like literally everything. And at the end of the day, that nigga can rap his ass off.

How have the past 12 months been for you?
Fucking crazy, man. A lot has changed. I feel like I've come a long way in the past year; I've grown up a lot. And I've also figured out a lot of what I was trying to figure out. I'm fully comfortable again, so I'm moving forward from that position.

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What were your highlights of recording 'Doris'?
'Hive' was the first real moment because that was the first song I did for this shit. So that represented doing music again for me. And 'Pre' was a great moment, because that was when I was like fully down for rapping all crazy. SK La Flare asked me to get on the beat. I went to the bank, and in the time that I went to the bank and came back to the studio I had the skeleton of that verse written in my head. I just went in the booth, got that shit in one take and then left. That shit was very tight.

Were these the first songs you recorded when you came back?
Nah, I did 'Hive' first and then I think I did 'Chum' and 'Centurion' and then 'Hoarse'.

How about 'Home'? I remember that was the first thing that got released.
Yeah, that was the first thing I did. I didn't like it though. I thought that shit was weak. Yo! You ever lose your credit card and just have this fucking feeling of impending doom? Just every time you think about it? I'm having a terrible time right now, dude.

Why? What's happened?
I found out I lost my credit card like 20 minutes ago when I went to pull it out at dinner with my girlfriend and it wasn't there.

And you also lost your phone?
I'm not that mad about losing my phone

though. I actually don't fuck with having a phone. It's tight to like fully unplug. I haven't looked at no social media all weekend. It's been pretty good.

I heard you wanted to get rid of Twitter.
Yeah! Well, getting rid of Twitter, that's thirsty. Getting rid of my phone is tight. Like, because my phone is lost, when I do get a new phone out of the necessity of being able to call the people I need to call, I'm going to get a regular ass phone that's not an iPhone. Then at least I'll only be able to check social media shit when I sit down at a computer and carve out time for it.

What are your feelings on the Internet? When Tyler talked to Clash earlier this year he talked about a love/hate relationship with it.
I don't fuck with it at all. I don't like it. It's made everyone retarded. People have personalities online that they don't have in real life. It's like a big clusterfuck. At least what it's become.

How about for music and being able to put stuff out there?
For music it's tight because OF and Lil B came up because of the Internet. So without it I don't know where I'd be at. I feel like the platform is too accessible. So there's shit that wouldn't have gotten heard without the Internet, and then there is shit that doesn't need to be heard, but is getting heard because of the Internet. So it's a double-edged sword.

Generally when we see artists becoming increasingly famous in absence it's due to them passing away. We've seen the likes of 2Pac, Biggie, Big L and J Dilla all gaining more fame after they've gone than when they were actually here. You're

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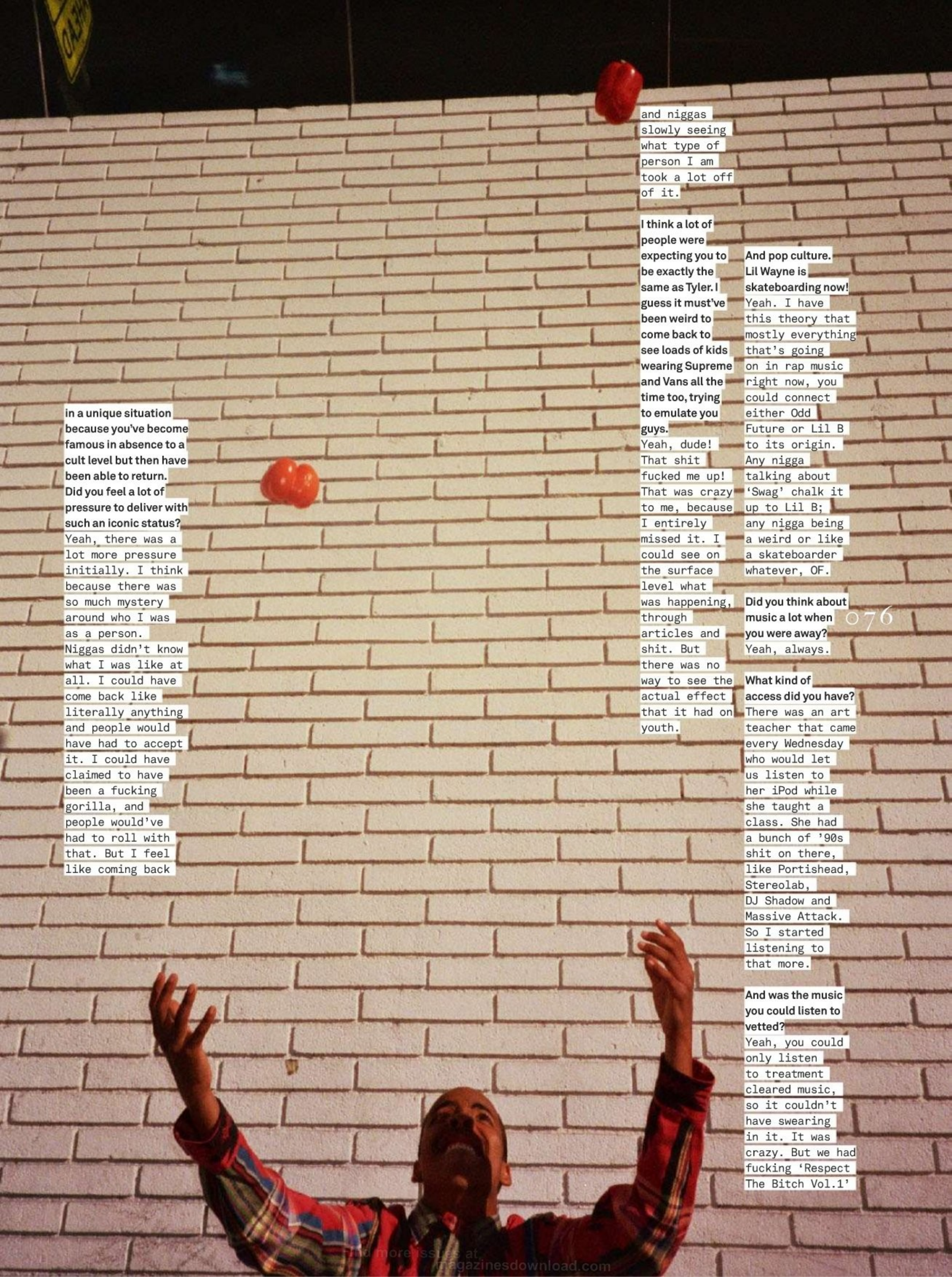

in a unique situation because you've become famous in absence to a cult level but then have been able to return. Did you feel a lot of pressure to deliver with such an iconic status?
Yeah, there was a lot more pressure initially. I think because there was so much mystery around who I was as a person. Niggas didn't know what I was like at all. I could have come back like literally anything and people would have had to accept it. I could have claimed to have been a fucking gorilla, and people would've had to roll with that. But I feel like coming back and niggas slowly seeing what type of person I am took a lot off of it.

I think a lot of people were expecting you to be exactly the same as Tyler. I guess it must've been weird to come back to see loads of kids wearing Supreme and Vans all the time too, trying to emulate you guys.
Yeah, dude! That shit fucked me up! That was crazy to me, because I entirely missed it. I could see on the surface level what was happening, through articles and shit. But there was no way to see the actual effect that it had on youth.

And pop culture. Lil Wayne is skateboarding now!
Yeah. I have this theory that mostly everything that's going on in rap music right now, you could connect either Odd Future or Lil B to its origin. Any nigga talking about 'Swag' chalk it up to Lil B; any nigga being a weird or like a skateboarder whatever, OF.

Did you think about music a lot when you were away?
Yeah, always.

What kind of access did you have?
There was an art teacher that came every Wednesday who would let us listen to her iPod while she taught a class. She had a bunch of '90s shit on there, like Portishead, Stereolab, DJ Shadow and Massive Attack. So I started listening to that more.

And was the music you could listen to vetted?
Yeah, you could only listen to treatment cleared music, so it couldn't have swearing in it. It was crazy. But we had fucking 'Respect The Bitch Vol.1'

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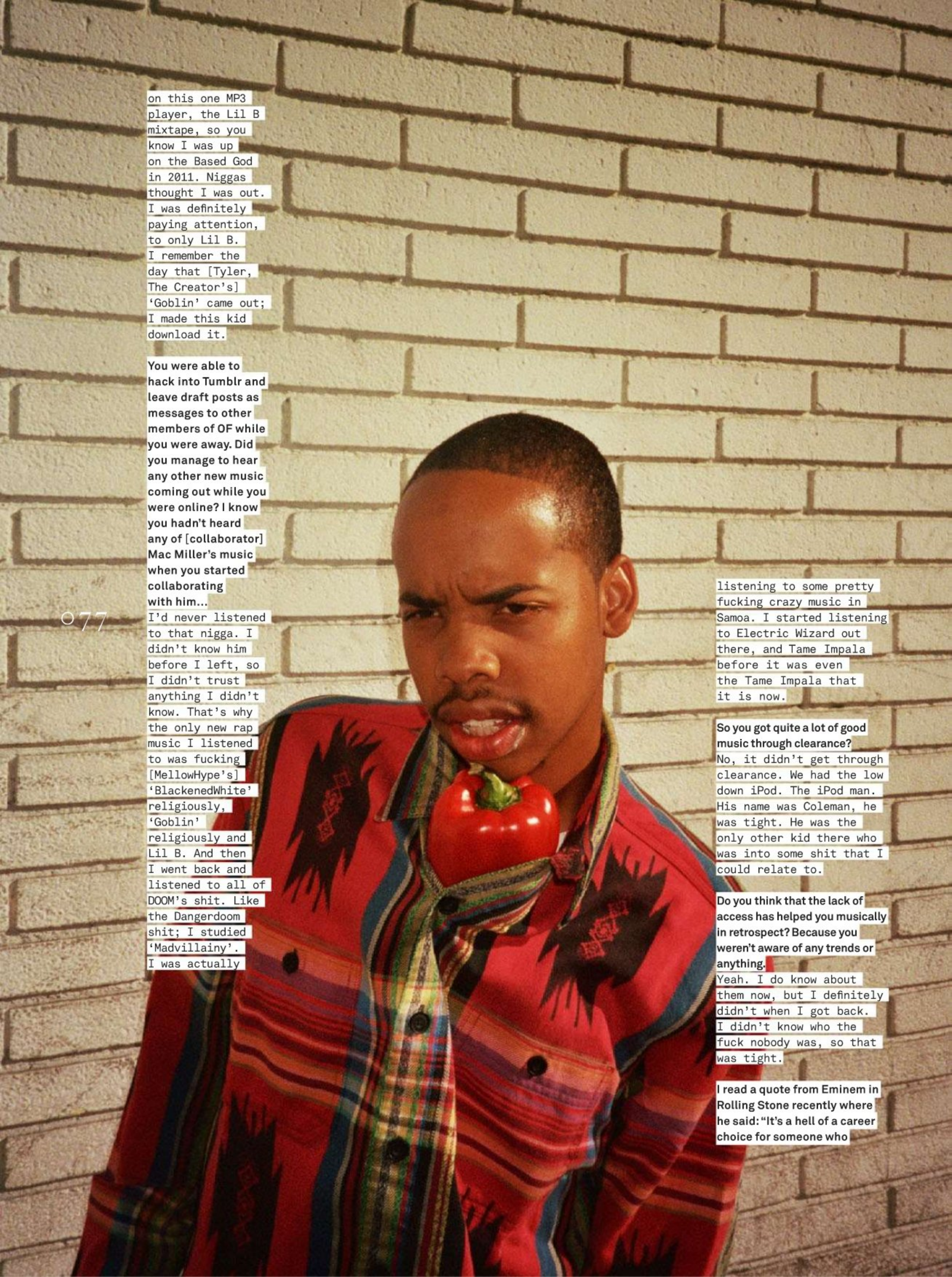

on this one MP3 player, the Lil B mixtape, so you know I was up on the Based God in 2011. Niggas thought I was out. I was definitely paying attention, to only Lil B. I remember the day that [Tyler, The Creator's] 'Goblin' came out; I made this kid download it.

You were able to hack into Tumblr and leave draft posts as messages to other members of OF while you were away. Did you manage to hear any other new music coming out while you were online? I know you hadn't heard any of [collaborator] Mac Miller's music when you started collaborating with him...

I'd never listened to that nigga. I didn't know him before I left, so I didn't trust anything I didn't know. That's why the only new rap music I listened to was fucking [MellowHype's] 'BlackenedWhite' religiously, 'Goblin' religiously and Lil B. And then I went back and listened to all of DOOM's shit. Like the Dangerdoom shit; I studied 'Madvillainy'. I was actually listening to some pretty fucking crazy music in Samoa. I started listening to Electric Wizard out there, and Tame Impala before it was even the Tame Impala that it is now.

So you got quite a lot of good music through clearance?

No, it didn't get through clearance. We had the low down iPod. The iPod man. His name was Coleman, he was tight. He was the only other kid there who was into some shit that I could relate to.

Do you think that the lack of access has helped you musically in retrospect? Because you weren't aware of any trends or anything.

Yeah. I do know about them now, but I definitely didn't when I got back. I didn't know who the fuck nobody was, so that was tight.

I read a quote from Eminem in Rolling Stone recently where he said: "It's a hell of a career choice for someone who

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out. I hate it when groups of people do it. I can handle one person, but when I get surrounded then I actually freak out!

And I can imagine that they can get quite rowdy, which seems quite the opposite of you.
There's different flavours of fans. There's fans who genuinely love you, there's normal people who are fans, who just let you know that they're fans then keep it pushing. There's drunk boys, there's nasty girls, there's parents of kids and then there's fucking weirdos.

doesn't like attention," and it made me think of you...
Yeah! I fucking heard that. He said that in the Zane Lowe interview too. I remember hearing him say that and then saying audibly, "I feel you". One hundred precent. I'm on the exact same page. Yeah dog, people make me squirm. Human beings freak me out.

Is it still as bad as when you first came back? I remember you once describing a situation where you were approached by fans when you were out eating...
Yeah. Yo! That's my biggest pet peeve bro. Like, 'Bro, I've got shit on my mouth, like my face is halfway around a cheeseburger. At what other point is this acceptable to do?'

Are you getting more used to that now?
Yeah. I'm definitely getting used to it more. But it still fucking freaks me

What are the parents like?
They always ask something for their kids. I fuck with the parents though bro. I definitely fuck with the parents, because the parents is where the funds come from!

In this issue we're counting down our top 40 albums of the year. So I was wondering, outside of Odd Future, what was your favourite album of the year?
Archy's [King Krule] shit. Let me see what else came out this year. A lot came out this year, but as far as I'm concerned not that much came out this year. I'm still looking for SchoolBoy's shit man! That nigga's shit is so tight! I've heard pieces of it and there's some fucking gems on there.

Are you on that at all?
Uh, I don't think so. He's tight though.

And are you recording new music at the moment?
No, I'm trying to though, I'm so thirsty. I want to do music so bad. I started revisiting the shit I listened to when I was learning how to rap; found a whole bunch of old Eminem freestyles. 'Marshall Mathers LP2' came out, which musically wasn't necessarily the greatest thing of all time, but that nigga's rapping his ass off. Every time an Eminem album comes out, it unlocks some rapping! I wrote a crazy verse in the past week. This shit's tight because, now that I'm comfortable, I'm starting to sound like myself again. 'Doris' is cool, but you can hear the doubt in my voice, that's why it kinda stayed at a monotone. Just not moving from out that pocket. But now I'm fully comfortable, I can rap like I'm fully comfortable, and that shit is tight!

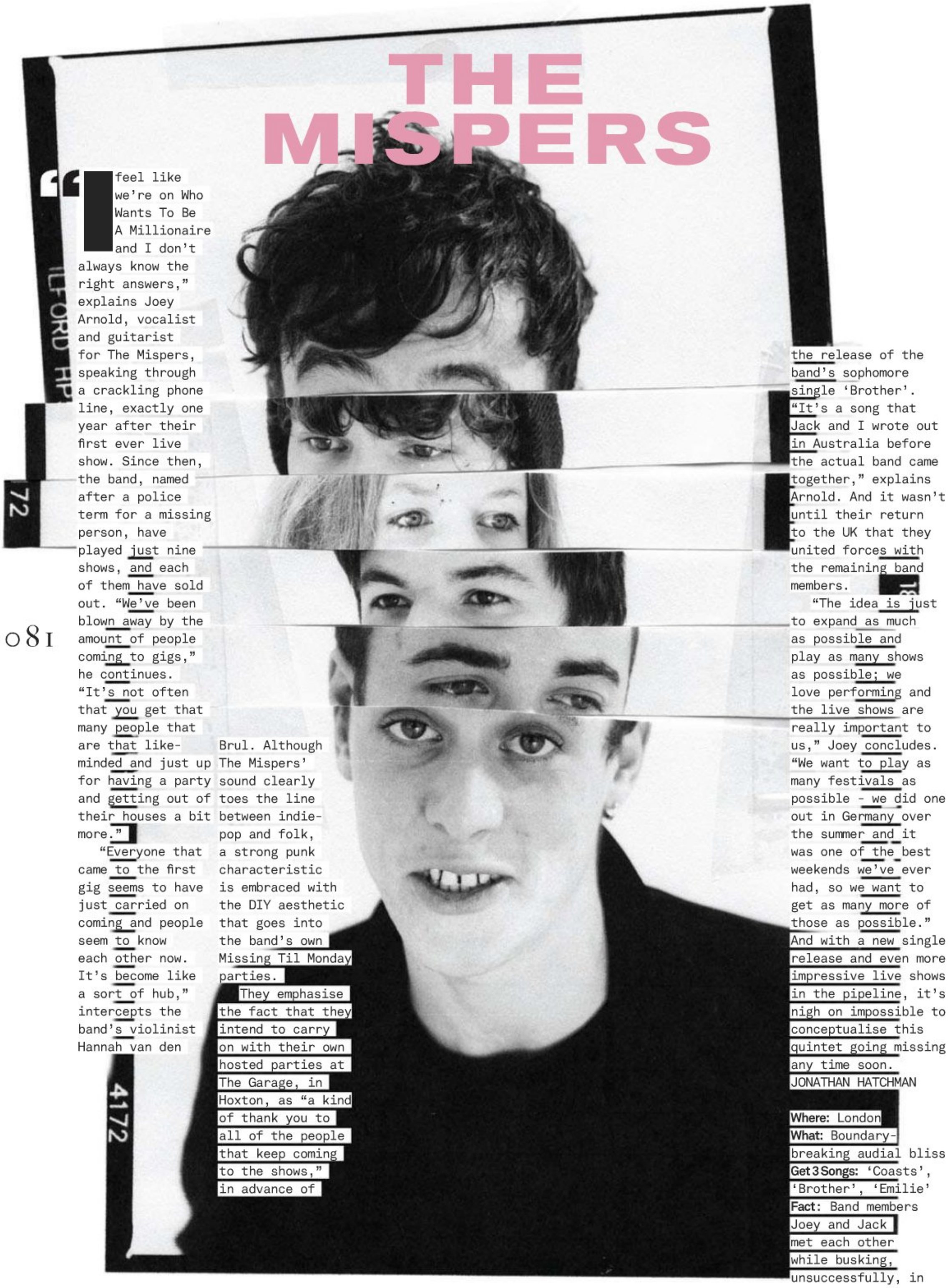
EDITED BY JOE ZADEH
PHOTOGRAPHY: HAYLEY LOUISA BROWN

_THE MISPERS
_CHARLOTTE OC
_DAN CROLL

CHAPTER.III

THE LIVELY

THE MISPERS



"I feel like we're on Who Wants To Be A Millionaire and I don't always know the right answers," explains Joey Arnold, vocalist and guitarist for The Mispers, speaking through a crackling phone line, exactly one year after their first ever live show. Since then, the band, named after a police term for a missing person, have played just nine shows, and each of them have sold out. "We've been blown away by the amount of people coming to gigs," he continues. "It's not often that you get that many people that are that like-minded and just up for having a party and getting out of their houses a bit more."

"Everyone that came to the first gig seems to have just carried on coming and people seem to know each other now. It's become like a sort of hub," intercepts the band's violinist Hannah van den Brul. Although The Mispers' sound clearly toes the line between indie-pop and folk, a strong punk characteristic is embraced with the DIY aesthetic that goes into the band's own Missing Til Monday parties.

They emphasise the fact that they intend to carry on with their own hosted parties at The Garage, in Hoxton, as "a kind of thank you to all of the people that keep coming to the shows," in advance of the release of the band's sophomore single 'Brother'. "It's a song that Jack and I wrote out in Australia before the actual band came together," explains Arnold. And it wasn't until their return to the UK that they united forces with the remaining band members.

"The idea is just to expand as much as possible and play as many shows as possible; we love performing and the live shows are really important to us," Joey concludes. "We want to play as many festivals as possible - we did one out in Germany over the summer and it was one of the best weekends we've ever had, so we want to get as many more of those as possible." And with a new single release and even more impressive live shows in the pipeline, it's nigh on impossible to conceptualise this quintet going missing any time soon.

JONATHAN HATCHMAN

Where: London
What: Boundary-breaking audial bliss
Get 3 Songs: 'Coasts', 'Brother', 'Emilie'
Fact: Band members Joey and Jack met each other while busking, unsuccessfully, in Camden Town.

CHARLOTTE OC

Charlotte OC's debut EP may have only dropped in November, but the Blackburn-born vocalist is already being hotly tipped as one to watch out for in 2014. While the anatomy of catchy title track 'Colour My Heart' conjures Florence And The Machine with its gothic ascension, track two's production sparks something of the Jessie Ware. And yet still, Charlotte's soulful sound distinguishes itself; for someone strikingly upbeat, her haunting pop possesses a fist-clenching sincerity.

The emotional resonance of the 'Colour My Heart' EP marks a change of direction for Charlotte, who was signed to Columbia in her late teens as a purveyor of, in her own words, "happy music about mango trees". The sound then was influenced by Jack Johnson - "surfy music," she calls it - but it didn't feel quite right. "There's just nothing beachy about me," says Charlotte, "The nearest beach is Blackpool and I definitely wouldn't be surfing there."

It was later on and further afield that Charlotte found her footing. On a trip to Berlin she wound up in Berghain's Panorama bar on a Sunday afternoon, as you do, and heard a remix of a Bonnie Byrd song that truly inspired her. She describes it as a piano instrumental with a driving beat behind it, overlain with Bonnie Byrd's vocal. "I want to create something like this," she thought, "something electronic with piano that lets my voice do the rest of the talking."

'Colour my Heart' does exactly that, with its arresting vocals over a subtle but timely configuration from renowned producer Tim Anderson, who's worked with the likes of Sia and Solange. Charlotte travelled to LA to record with Tim last January and the pair clicked immediately. She recalls one particular morning in the studio after a drunken night out with Tom Odell, when she and Tim turned her headache into a song - the familiar-feeling 'Hangover'.

Charlotte writes all of her own songs, and remembers first having the urge to "sing louder than everyone else" at just five-years-old; "It was that confidence, that's how I knew I wanted to be a singer," she tells Clash. That confidence is still with her today, both in her raw live performance, and when we ask whether it feels pressurizing to be acclaimed as 'the next big thing'. "No!" she replies, in a thick Northern accent. "It feels great!"

AMELIA ABRAHAM

WHERE: London via Blackburn
WHAT: Soulful piano pop
GET 3 SONGS: 'Colour My Heart', 'Cut The Rope', 'Hangover'
FACT: She used to have an imaginary mouse called Kenny, and named her first album after him.

DAN CROLL

Dan Croll might look like the nerdy white guy Azealia Banks is yelling profanities at in her viral '212' YouTube hit, but he used to work as a doorman and even had England training as a rugby full-back, so we won't say he looks slightly geeky to his face because he could probably have us!

In fact Dan was all set for a rugby career until he broke his leg on the field at 17 and serendipitously rediscovered his love of music while in a cast. "I listened to all the greats - Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell - just lying on my back taking it all in." With a guitar and a piano in reach he began sketching out future tunes and told his parents the scary news that he wanted to become a musician: "They were shocked. It was all rugby until then."

He recorded a demo and bagged a place at the Paul McCartney-founded Liverpool Institute Of Performing Arts, which is not easy to do - 2,000 applicants, only 24 spaces. Each student gets a 45-minute Macca master-class as part of the course and after playing the man himself a few songs, the song writing legend told him: "These songs are great. I wouldn't do anything to them, just get them released," Croll recants, in his best Macca impression.

One of those getting the ex-Beatle's approval was current single 'Home', a quaintly nostalgic ditty with swirling acoustic chords that build to an Afro-beat steel-drum close. It's a truly colourful blend of diverse sounds, and then there's 'From Nowhere', the DIY synth-pop number he released after graduation that kicked his career into action last Christmas, but our money's on upcoming album title-track 'Sweet Disarray' to surpass the others. It's written about Croll's experience with his grandma, who's got dementia; "'Disarray' references the tough time the family is going through at the moment but it's also nice because we're all coming together to deal with it," he says.

So Dan Croll is a name to remember for 2014: "I put tickets on sale for one of my first shows and it started to sell out even though I had virtually no music online. It turned out people thought Diana Krall was on. I bumped into a mate of mine who's a photographer in the foyer and he asked me, 'What are you doing here?' I said, 'I'm playing the gig. I'm DAN CROLL!'"
SIMON BUTCHER

WHERE: Liverpool
WHAT: Electro-folk with Afro-beat rhythms
GET 3 SONGS: 'Home', 'From Nowhere', Sweet Disarray'
FACT: Dan Croll isn't a secret alias of Canadian jazz pianist Diana Krall.

WORDS: JOE ZADEH, JAMIE CARSON AND ROB KNAGGS

THE BEST OF THE REST

FOOTNOTES

JUNGLE

"The music of Jungle is universally smooth, and inflected with Motown soul. The double tracked vocals - one octave apart - hark back to a '70s sound, but this is a faster groove than your casual mellow funk." Those were our thoughts when we met the mysterious collective in October. With one of the UK's best labels apparently in pursuit, we expect Jungle's debut album to be one of the most anticipated in years.

COURTNEY BARNETT

She's a Melbourne-based slacker pop songwriter with a wondrous imagination and some magical lyrics. On 'Avant Gardener' she makes a day of gardening into a fascinating tale, and 'History Eraser' is a quixotic daydream with tractor rides and lemonade-washed jeans. We expect her to grow into a cross between Mac DeMarco and Lewis Carroll.

SWAY CLARKE II

This Berlin-based Canadian has a voice smoother than brandy cream, and Frank Ocean fans can get a fix here. But Clarke also impresses instrumentally. 'I Don't Need Much' is a codeine-soaked R&B ballad yet, contrastingly, forthcoming track 'Secret Garden' is a stomping pop track. His current ascension should guide him naturally into 2014's limelight.

KWABS

As a Royal Academy student, it's no surprise that the gospel-inflected soul croon of Kwabena Adjepong has turned heads, but it wasn't until his recent collaboration with producer SOHN on 'Last Stand' that we realised the myriad of ways he could work those pipes.

THE HICS

The Hics specialise in lushly textured electro, and have been on the rise since their debut EP 'Tangle' hit the web in September. Their consequent debut headline show, at London's 750-capacity Electrowerkz, was a sell-out - not an insubstantial feat for a band barely past their first birthday.

LION BABE

This NY duo mix neo-soul with splashes of fierce R&B to create a sound that is danceable, nostalgic and lyrically flammable. After a year of being spun by everyone from Kate Moross to Solange Knowles, it's hard to believe that 'Treat Me Like Fire' is still the only fully mastered release to surface. Word has it that an EP approaches, so we wait like a quivering pronghorn for the aggressive advance of Lion Babe.

DORNIK

Dornik started out as Jessie Ware's drummer, but after releasing a hazy, Blood Orange-esque slow jam in 'Something About You', he's become a name in his own right on PMR Records. Expect his forthcoming second single 'Rebound', an upbeat '90s funk track, to get some serious love in the first quarter.

UNTIL THE RIBBON BREAKS

Welshman Pete Lawrie Winfield has surfaced in the music industry once before, but his new alias as Until The Ribbon Breaks marks the move to a distinct new realm of drum machines, bass lines, and powerful hooks. His 'A Taste Of Silver EP' has just dropped on Universal's Republic Records, and it's a bold sign of intent.

DENAI MOORE

Twenty-year-old Denai Moore's music has the intimate confessional feel of fellow Londoner Lianne La Havas: a bare-bones backdrop of piano and guitar set the scene for her world weary tales of love and loss. With Plan B already involved with production, a stage is being set.

ROYAL BLOOD

Face melting... If you had to sum Royal Blood up in two words, that'd be it. This insanely loud power duo from Brighton pack a ferocious punch. Matt Helders from Arctic Monkeys wore a Royal Blood T-shirt on stage when they headlined Glastonbury, and it's been all go since then.

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WORDS: FELICITY MARTIN
PHOTOGRAPHER: RORY PAYNE
FASHION: ELLIE GRACE CUMMING

AN EMOTIONAL SCHOOLING THROUGH MUSIC

BANKS

BANKS has done the unthinkable. While the 21st century has taught us that it's perfectly acceptable to broadcast your thoughts en masse and check in your every movement online, you should never, ever give out your digits on the web. So what was she thinking when she posted up her mobile number, writing, "If you ever want to talk..."? As soon as Clash arrive at the hotel room of the fledgling singer-songwriter and join her on the bed, we get it. Speaking to her is a very intimate experience, as though she's about to spill all her secrets in one breath. She's an authority on relationships, emotion, and the way we connect as people.

"I got a funny one yesterday," BANKS - born Jillian Banks - recalls, bouncing on her knees. "Somebody texted me to say, 'What kind of shoes do you like on a man? I'm going on a date tonight and I need new shoes.'" The musician-turned-footwear-advisor insists that she's not had a string of creeps breathing heavily into their iPhones, although she did provoke one attendee of her Oslo show to sing into his. "I was really inspired by the audience there; I felt really in tune with them so I decided to play a song that wasn't even finished. It just had a verse and a chorus. This guy called me the next day and wrote his own second verse to it - about me - and sang it to me!"

Hers is a story that begins with a gloomy adolescence. "When I was 14 or 15, I was in a really really dark place," the LA-born-and-raised singer remembers. "It felt like when I tried to talk to people about it they just didn't get it." The gift of a toy keyboard was all it took for her to begin imagining up songs in her bedroom, exorcising the sadness of her parents' divorce through music. "These melodies would come out of me and it released the most amazing feeling. I didn't feel as heavy walking around the next day."

Fast-forward ten years and here she is - perched on a queen-size bed, bare-faced and dressing gown-clad after performing to thousands of fans eager to purchase snapbacks emblazoned with her surname. But she's still happy to address her

NEXT PAGE:
Gold bird nest crown from
Mairead Lewin Vintage
Black crochet lace floral dress
from Vintage Modes

past. “That age was the first time that I needed something so bad like that. It’s kind of like falling in love for the first time - being really, really dark for the first time,” she wonders aloud. That darkness has crept into her current output, most notably in the aesthetic of her film noir-inspired videos, which paint her as an enigma via strokes of minimalist, understated chic.

Even the words that BANKS uses to describe her sound are enigmatic. “Dark blue and black. And infinite,” she offers cryptically. So how do we define her; into what box can we place her? According to the first line of her bio, perhaps we shouldn’t at all - “some things don’t need to be defined,” it reads. She shrugs when questioned. “No person fits into one label. People are so layered. Sounds are so layered.”

Her sound - a collision of pop, soul, ’90s R&B and strands of bass - reinforces this. ‘This Is What It Feels Like’ oozes a heavyweight synth line that smacks of Aaliyah or Destiny’s Child. “I LOVE Brandy,” she verifies. “I’m so attracted to those heavy, thumping sounds.” Citing Lauryn Hill and Fiona Apple as songwriting inspirations, what she’s creating is essentially soul music with a modern-day twist.

Using her father’s old university dictaphone, the aspiring teen musician took to composing and chronicling new tracks in a frenzy, with a brain that was “all over the place… I was just spewing everything out.” But she kept her inner vocalist on the down-low, strictly confined to her bedroom, until very recently. “At the beginning it was so personal and therapeutic,” she explains of this decision. “Writing was, and is - I always say this - it’s like water and air for me. I need it to live.”

It comes as no surprise that the subject Jillian Banks chose to study at the University of Southern California was Psychology, writing her thesis on the children of divorced families. “Seeing a dynamic between two people just drift so far away was really sad, but it made me realise what could happen between people.” And her favourite class? A module called Adolescent Development, due to a keen interest in “the human mind and how it develops. Why are people who they are?”

You turn into a full-on voyeur while listening to BANKS’s lyrics - like you’re hastily flicking through a diary she’s left under her pillow. “It’s this kind of stream of consciousness… Unconsciousness,” she corrects herself. Lines like “you can keep the dog we trained”, and “you said that you couldn’t sleep cos of me”, sting with raw honesty. Of course, the idea of an artist exploring their innermost feelings through the medium of music is nothing new. Where BANKS comes into her own is by fusing that emotional depth with bleeding-edge production. She’s knocked heads with a first-rate list of dance luminaries including Lil Silva, SOHN, Jamie Woon, TEED and Sampha, who are not only co-workers but now “really good friends” of hers. “I got to start from scratch - I’ve created my own little network of happiness and music in London,” she smiles.

We could easily see her name slotted into the Top 40, but - haven’t you heard? - that’s no longer a shameful place to be. Thanks to numerous crossover acts that have been sweeping dance tropes into the mainstream - Disclosure, Rudimental, MK, to name a few - noses are turning up less and less at the sound of the word ‘pop’. Successful acts are ones that boast both hook and a danceable edge, treading water between the gulliest of underground circles

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OPPOSITE PAGE:
Cape and shirt with tie both
by Mairead Lewin Vintage

THIS PAGE:
Cape and shirt with tie both
by Mairead Lewin Vintage
Skirt by Claire Barrow
Gloves from Beyond Retro
Tights by Wolford
Sandals by John Rocha

Jacket by Phoebe English
Blouse by Mairead Lewin
Skirt by Diane Von Fusrtenberg

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and shopping mall playlists. BANKS walks this tightrope with ease.

Sultry and ache-driven, her vocal licks have earned her comparisons with earnest male crooners James Blake and The Weeknd, the latter of which she's been supporting on tour. Only recently has she swapped her bedroom floor for the arena, but she's taken to performing like a duck to water. "I feel high when I'm up on stage," she grins. "Like it's in my blood to do it." A remarkable feat, when her second show ever was with Abel ("I was thrown in. *Thrown* in!" she emphasises). "Two nights ago we played at the O2 in Manchester, and during the first song the computer just crashed and died. If that happened to me at the beginning of tour, oh my God I don't even know what I would've done." Opening for an artist with such diehard fans as The Weeknd would be enough to make any new singer tremble, but she's been stunned by the pin-drop silence that's met her.

Scooped up in the US by Harvest Records, home to Death Grips and White Lies, and Good Years in the UK, where new BFF Lil Silva is signed, BANKS now straddles the Atlantic Ocean. But she admits to naming her debut EP 'London' after falling in love with the capital. "My first trip out for music was there… I ended up being so high off the music that

I made during that trip over three weeks I was like, 'Call it 'The London EP''! I swear, that was life-changing for me," she gushes. And she's already won the hearts of a fair few Brits, as her spot on the BBC's Sound Of 2014 poll would suggest.

But is she going to make the jump from the extended to the long play any time soon? She returns an excited nod of approval; the album's in the works for a 2014 release. Cautious not to let anything slip, she does reveal that she's worked some more with intelligent dance producers Lil Silva, TEED and Sohn - "I'm experimenting with new things that haven't popped up in my brain until this point… but it's all me. The next stage of me."

The school of BANKS, ultimately, is all about empathy. When asked if, as someone in the public eye, she feels a duty to be a good role model, she shakes her head. "Honestly? I feel a responsibility to be human." The whole reason she got into music, she rationalises, is because it's the "way to connect to the most people. It's the way to make people feel the most not alone and accepted."

It's ironic, perhaps, that the performance spotlight can be such a cold and alienating place. While she's hugely grateful for what a "crazy opportunity" she's been given, she admits to finding it overwhelming at times. "In this business you can get so in your head because you're under a microscope."

"People think I'm crazy," she laughs, returning to that decision to take calls or texts from anyone, anywhere. She confesses that, sure, it's become impossible to respond to everyone (just as she fails to reply to Clash when we text her pre-interview!), but is it not the perfect antidote to the artificiality of digital self-promo? 'Before I Ever Met You', the first song she ever released, was a nitty gritty song about "the dynamics of two people who love each other but hate to love each other. The response I got from that was just so beautiful to me," she beams. "I had so many text messages and calls about how much that song helped them. And made them feel not alone." Wearing her heart on her sleeve has been a risk for BANKS, but it seems to be paying off. "It encourages me to keep doing it," she concludes. "The second I stop writing the most honest, raw, vulnerable stuff is the day that I don't wanna see."

PHOTO ASSISTANT: LEWIS HAYWARD & WILL BUNCE, STYLING ASSISTANT: GERRY O'KANE, HAIR: PHILLIPE THOLIMET @ STREETERS, MAKE-UP: JENNY COOMBS @ STREETERS, MANICURIST: BECCA GRAY, SET DESIGN: ALEX KIRKPATRICK, DIGITAL TECHNICIAN: RUARIDH PAPWORTH, RETOUCHING: HEMPSTEAD MAY SPECIAL THANKS TO SPRING STUDIOS

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Dress by John Rocha
Trousers from The Contemporary Wardrobe
Choker necklace by Dominic Jones
Sandals by John Rocha

THIS PAGE:
Crown from Mairead Lewin Vintage
Dress from Vintage Modes

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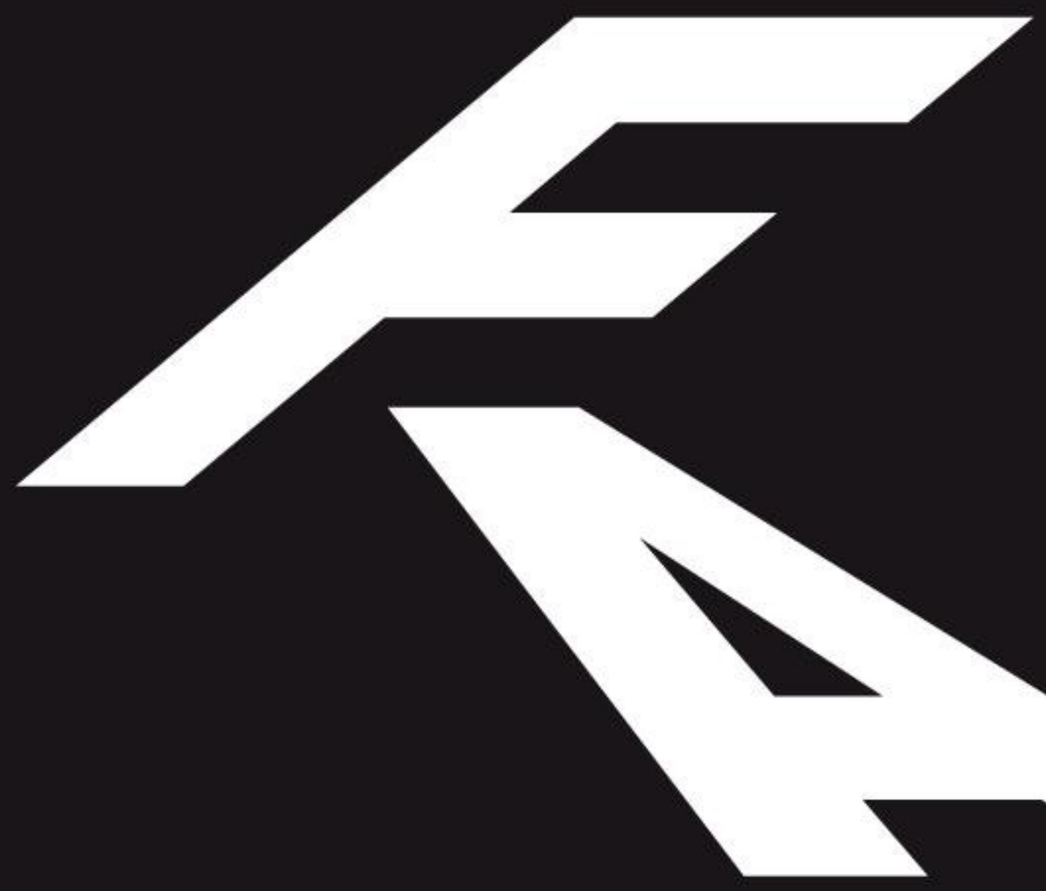

WHAT I GOT YOU GOTTA GET IT PUT IT IN YOU

WEDDING RINGS IN THE MOVIES

AN IDEAL FOR LIVING

I GET ALONG WITHOUT YOU VERY WELL

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Jeans by Ralph Lauren Denim and Supply
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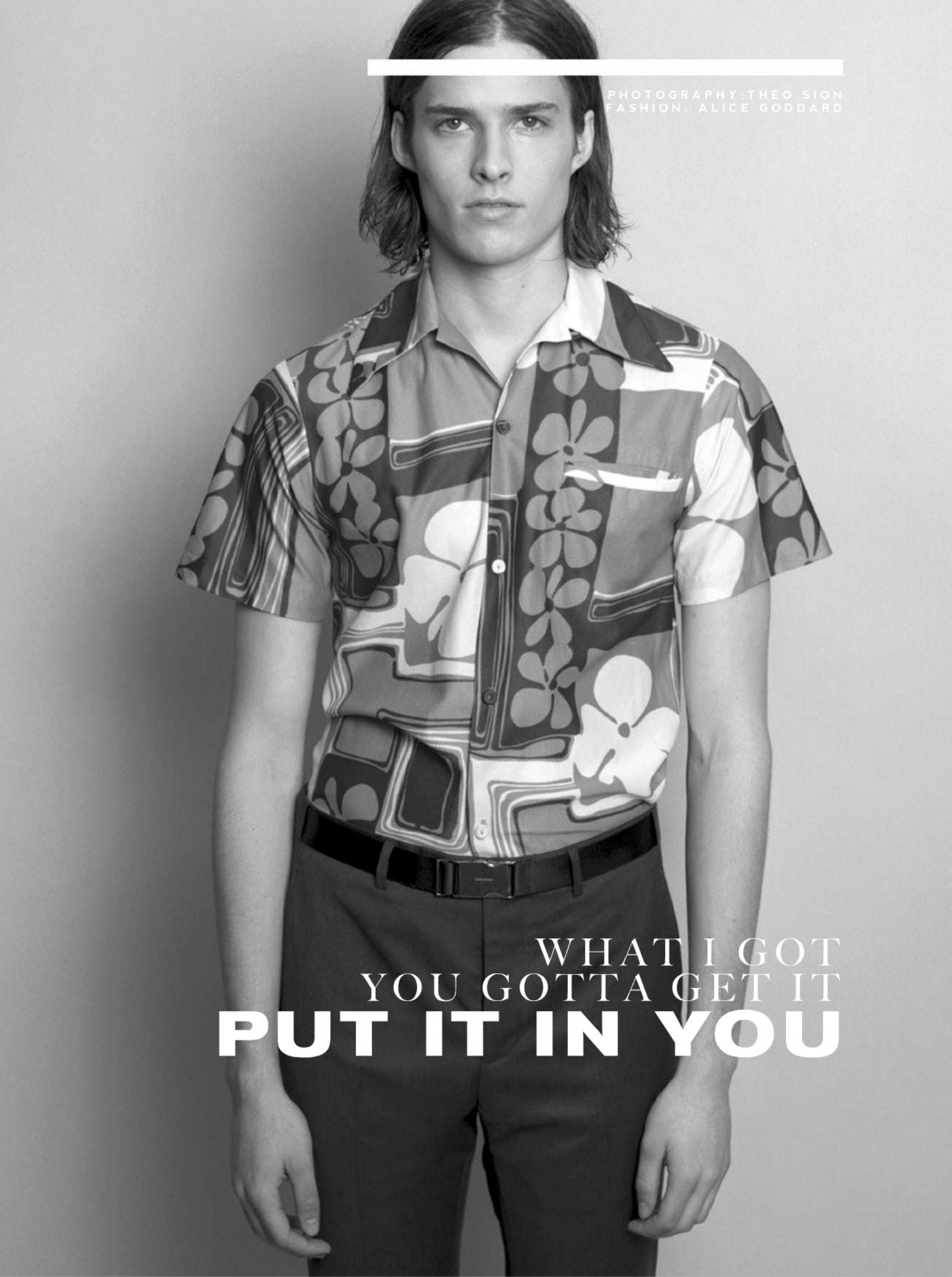

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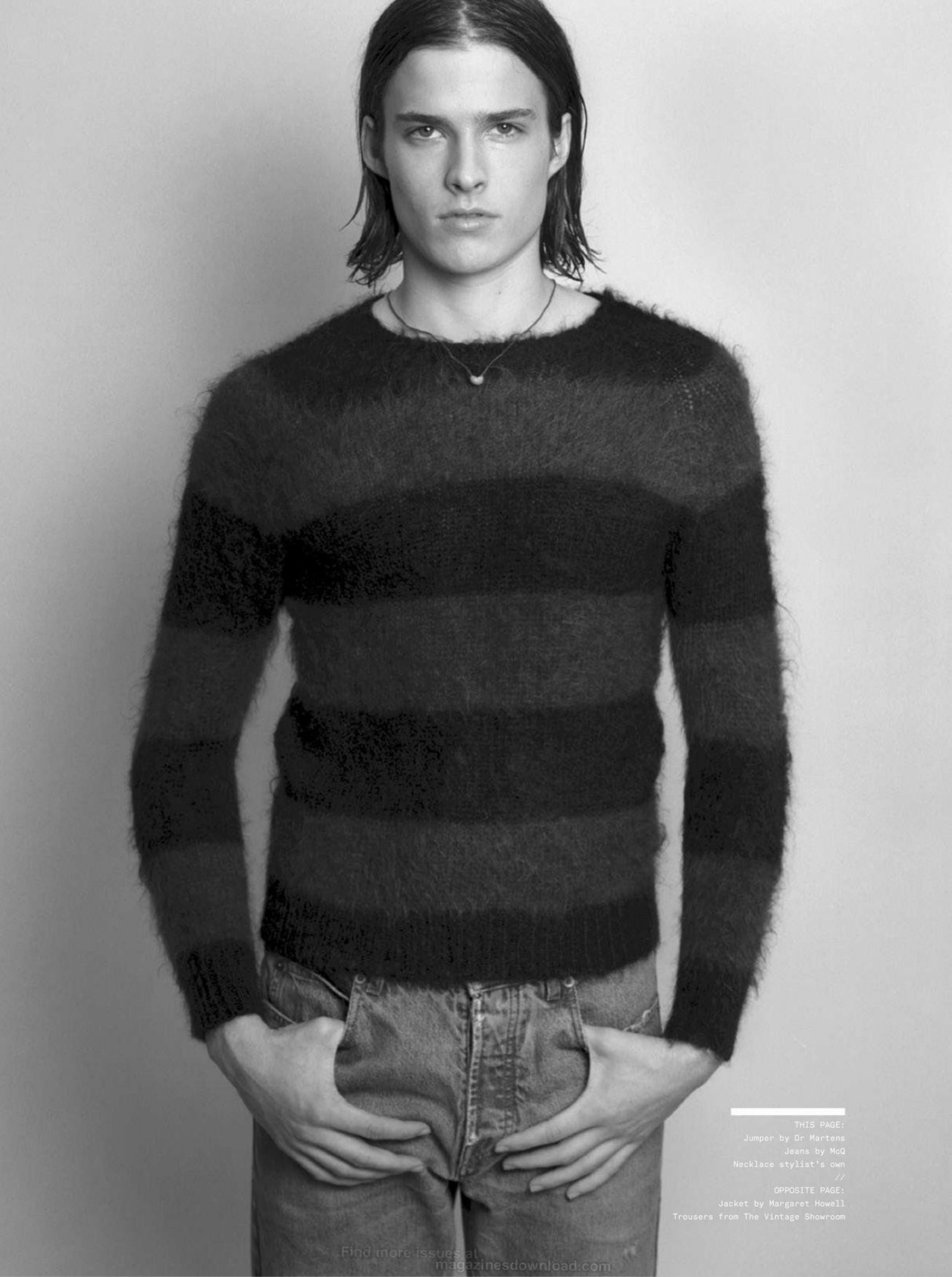
FASHION: ALICE GODDARD

WHAT I GOT YOU GOTTA GET IT PUT IT IN YOU



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Jumper by Dr Martens
Jeans by McQ
Necklace stylist's own
//
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Trousers from The Vintage Showroom

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Budweiser
GENUINE

THIS PAGE:
Top by Raf Simons
//
OPPOSITE PAGE:
Trousers by Adidas
Shoes by Meadham Kirchhoff

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FASHION: VICTORIA HIGGS

WEDDING RINGS IN THE MOVIES

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Dress by Adidas Originals x Opening Ceremony
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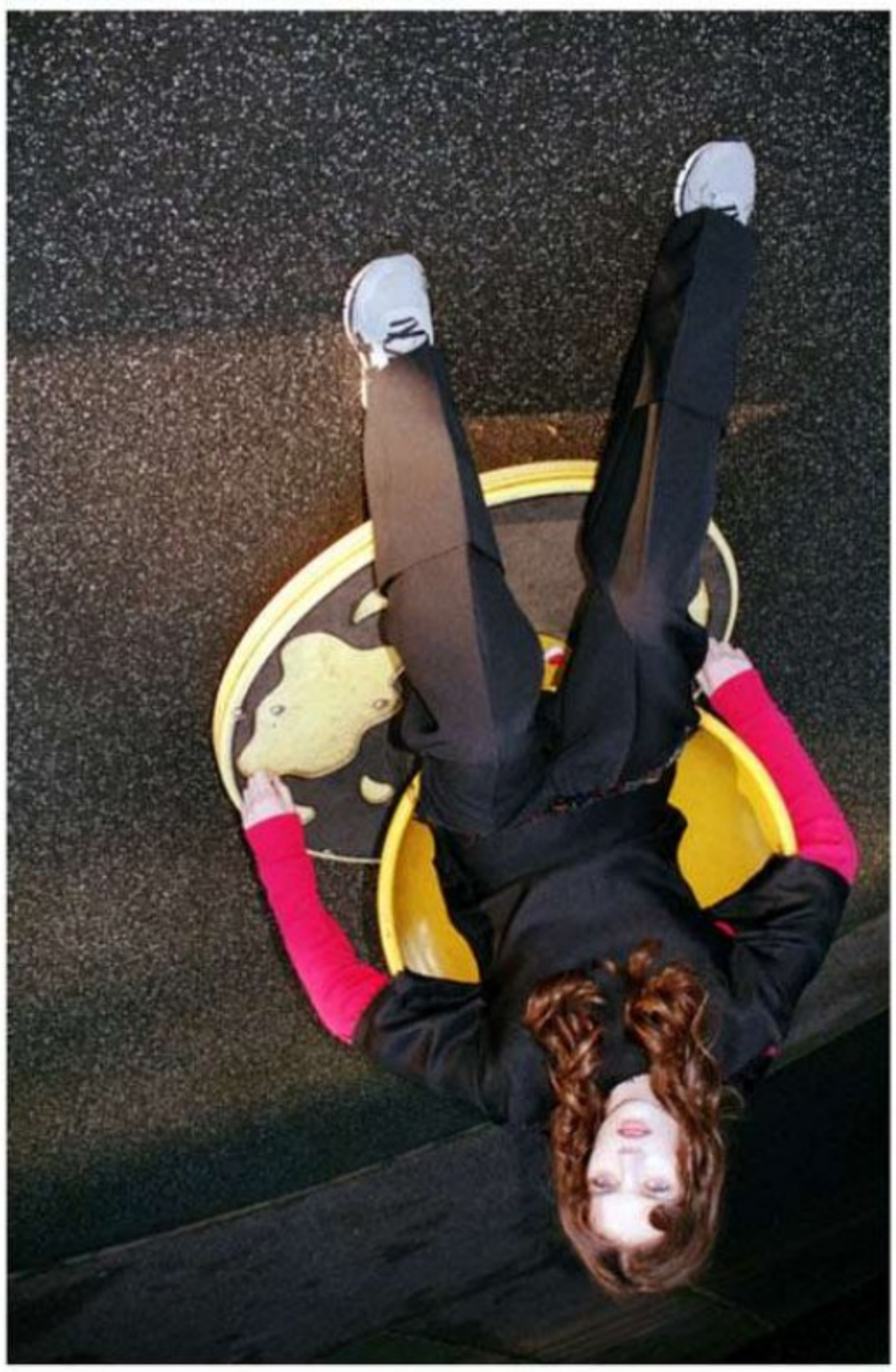
OPPOSITE PAGE:
Shirt and sweater by Meadham Kirchhoff



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Top and trousers by Calvin Klein
Jumper by Kenzo
Trainers by Onitsuka Tiger
//
OPPOSITE PAGE:
Jeans by Marques Almeida
Trainers by Raf Simons
Choker stylist's own

FASHION ASSISTANT: SAMUEL GALLAGHER, HAIR: KOTA SUIZU @ CAREN USING L'OREAL PROFESSIONNEL
MAKE-UP : VALERIA FERREIRA USING MAC, MODEL: GRACE ANDERSON @ ELITE

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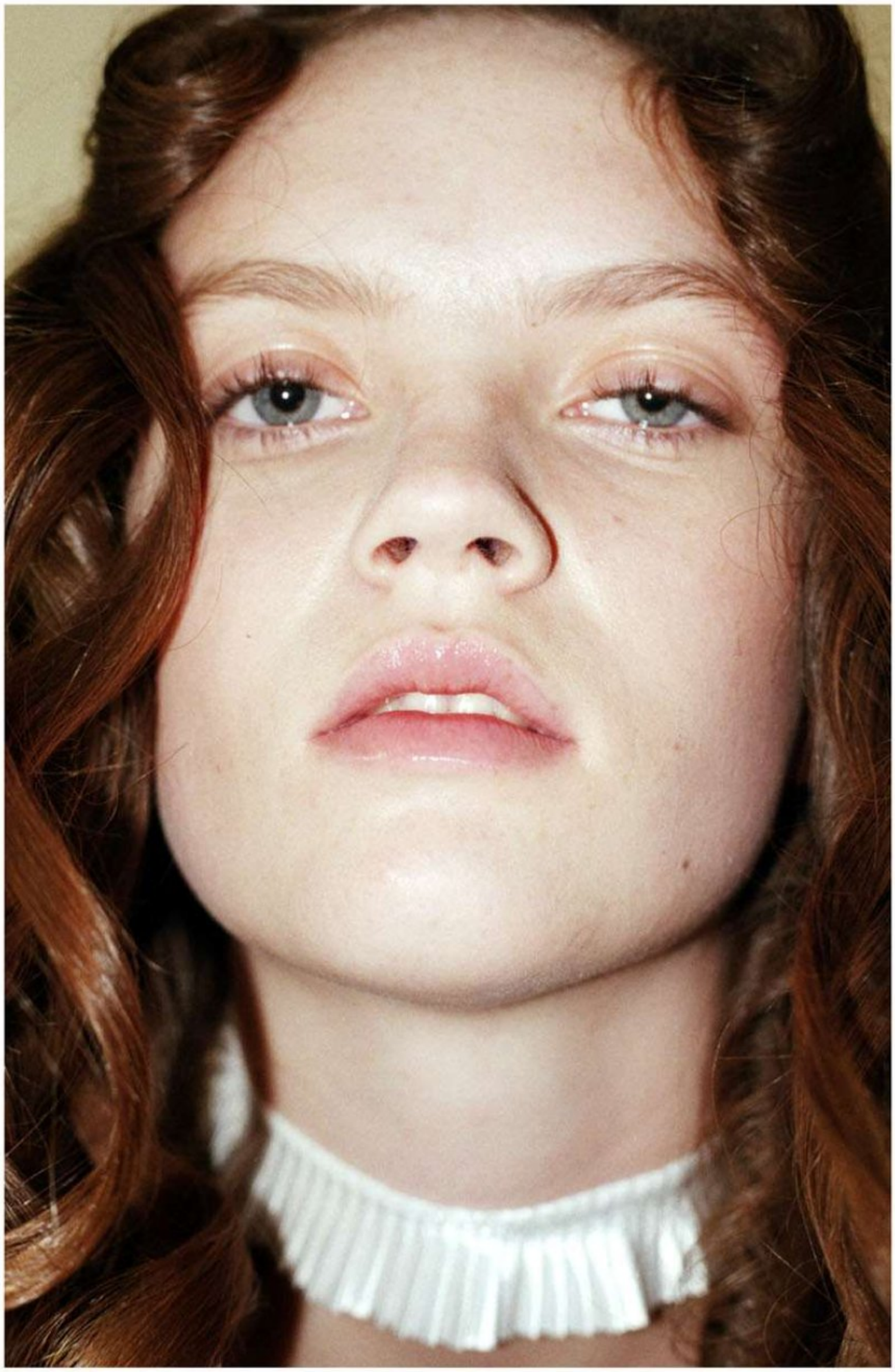

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Choker stylist's own
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Sweater by Y-3
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White shirt by River Island
Jumper by Marcus Lupfer
Trousers (in shadow) by John Varvatos
//
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PHOTOGRAPHY: ALESSANDRO DAL BUONI
FASHION: RAPHAEL HIRSCH

AN IDEAL FOR LIVING

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Shirt and floral waistband by Meadham Kirchhoff
Trousers from ASOS
//
OPPOSITE PAGE:
White Shirt by River Island
Print sleeve top by Topman
Lace top by Astrid Anderson

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Jacket by Diesel
Trousers by Kris Van Assche
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Shirt by Burberry Prorsum
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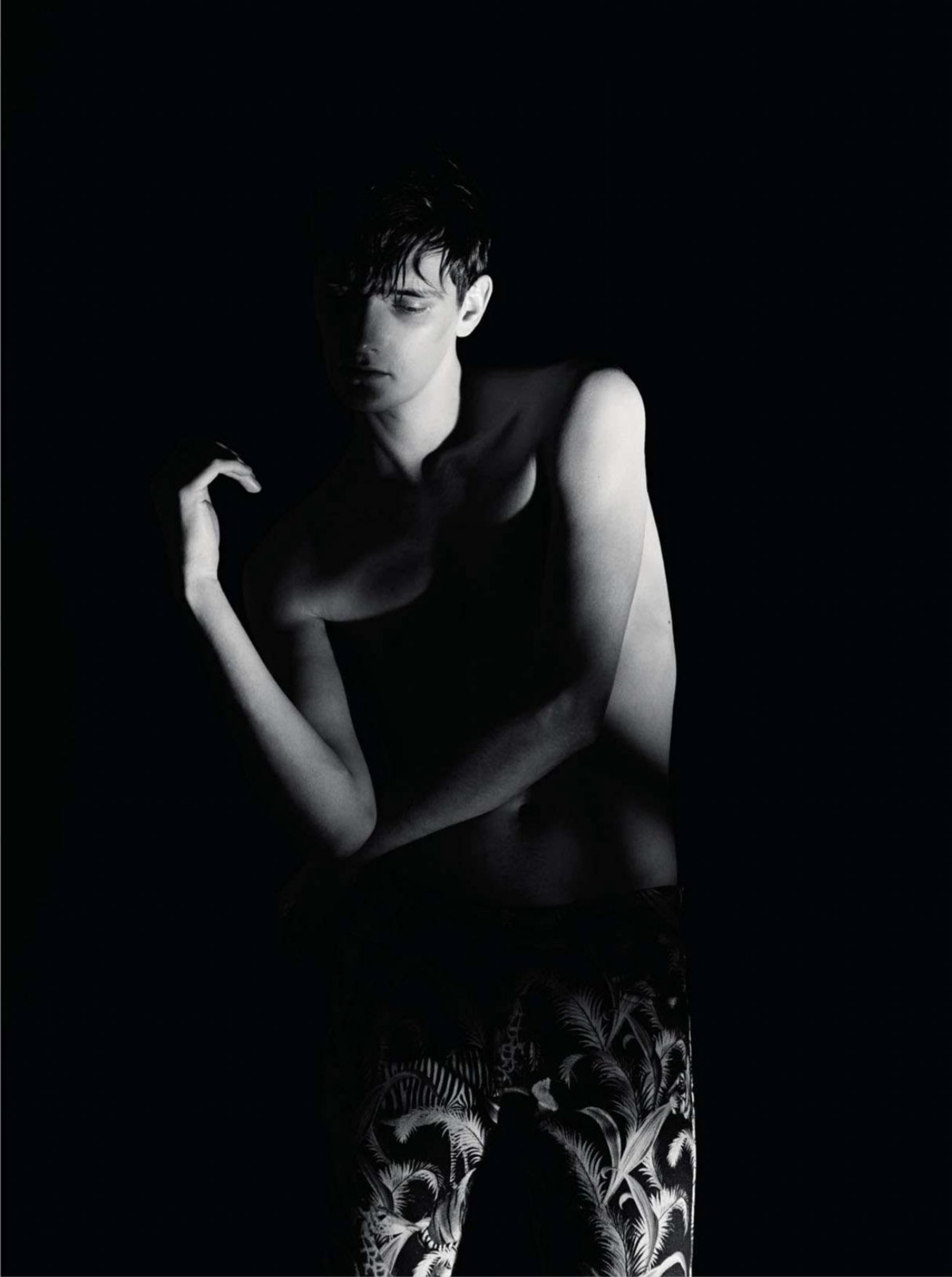
Trousers by Paul And Joe



MODEL: YANNICK @ SUPA, CASTING: ARAMINTA MARKES AT 10-4 INC,
GROOMING: SOICHI INAGAKI AT SAINT LUKE ARTISTS,
PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: JAMES DEACON, STYLIST ASSISTANT: JULIA LURIE

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Shirt by Lacoste
Jacket by Christopher Shannon
Shorts (in shadow) by Kooples
//
OPPOSITE PAGE:
Jacket by Umit Benan
Trousers by Christopher Shannon

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FASHION: LOLA CHATTERTON

I GET ALONG WITHOUT YOU VERY WELL

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE:
Dress by Peter Pilotto
Leather jacket by Richard Nicoll
Blue ring by Pebble
Silver ring and rarrings by Kyle Hopkins
Bracelet by Delfina Delettrez
Watch by Swatch
//
Top by House Of Holland
Skirt by Kenzo
Coat by Issey Miyake
Rings by Kyle Hopkins
Tights by Pamela Mann
Socks from Burlington
Shoes by Kenzo
//
OPPOSITE PAGE:
Jumper by Neil Barrett
Trousers and coat by Maxmara
Rolleneck from Urban Outfitters

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE:
Dress by Versus
Coat by Issey Miyake
Necklace by Delfina Delettrez
//
Top by Sibling
Trousers by Lacoste
Coat by DKNY
Necklace by Kyle Hopkins
Ring and bracelet by Pebble
Watch by Swatch
//
Trousers and shirt by Joseph
Top by Richard Nicoll
Dress by Versus
Rings and silver bracelets by Kyle Hopkins
//
OPPOSITE PAGE:
Shirt by Kenzo
Coat by Burberry
Trousers by Ashley Williams

MODEL: EMMA C @ VIVA, HAIR: PAUL DONOVAN, MAKE-UP: DORITA NISSEN, SET DESIGN: PENNY MILLS,
CASTING: BEN GRIMES, PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANTS: PABLO MARKS AND HARRY BURNER, STYLIST ASSISTANT: ROKAS KAMBLEVICIUS

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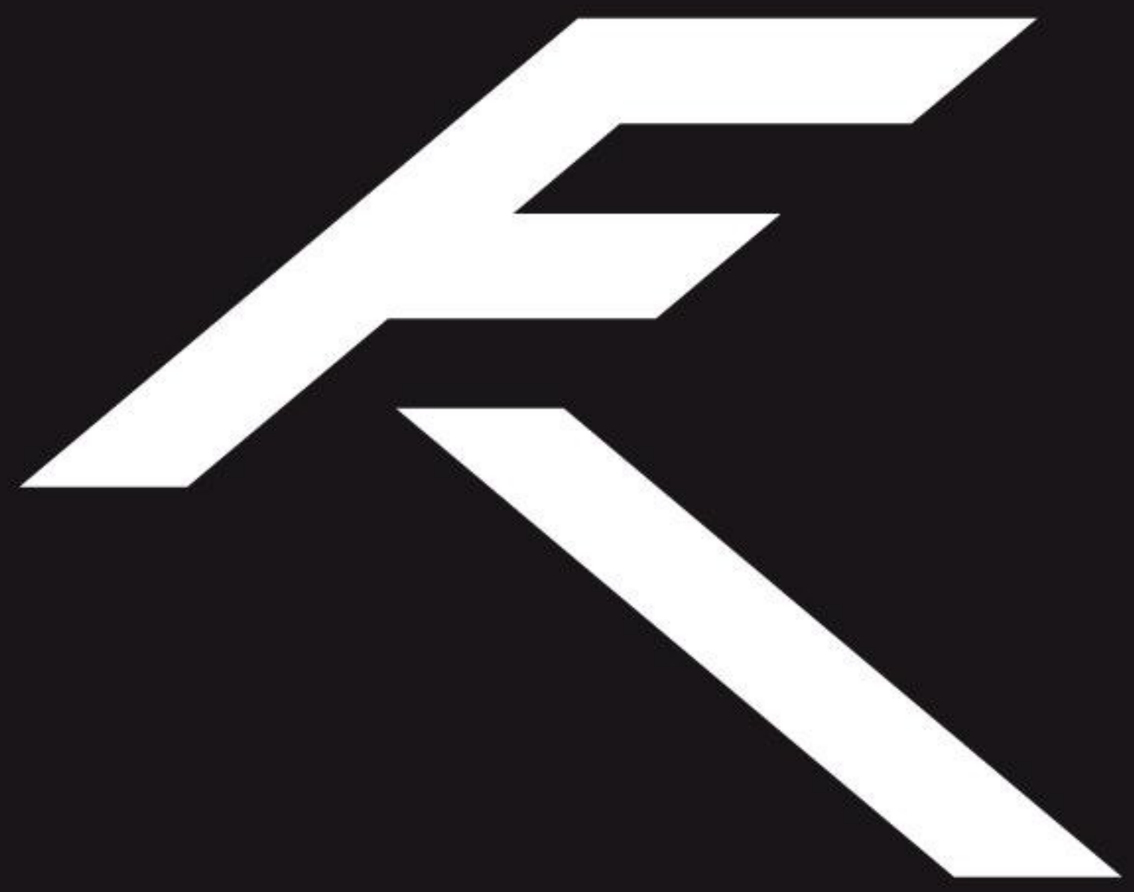

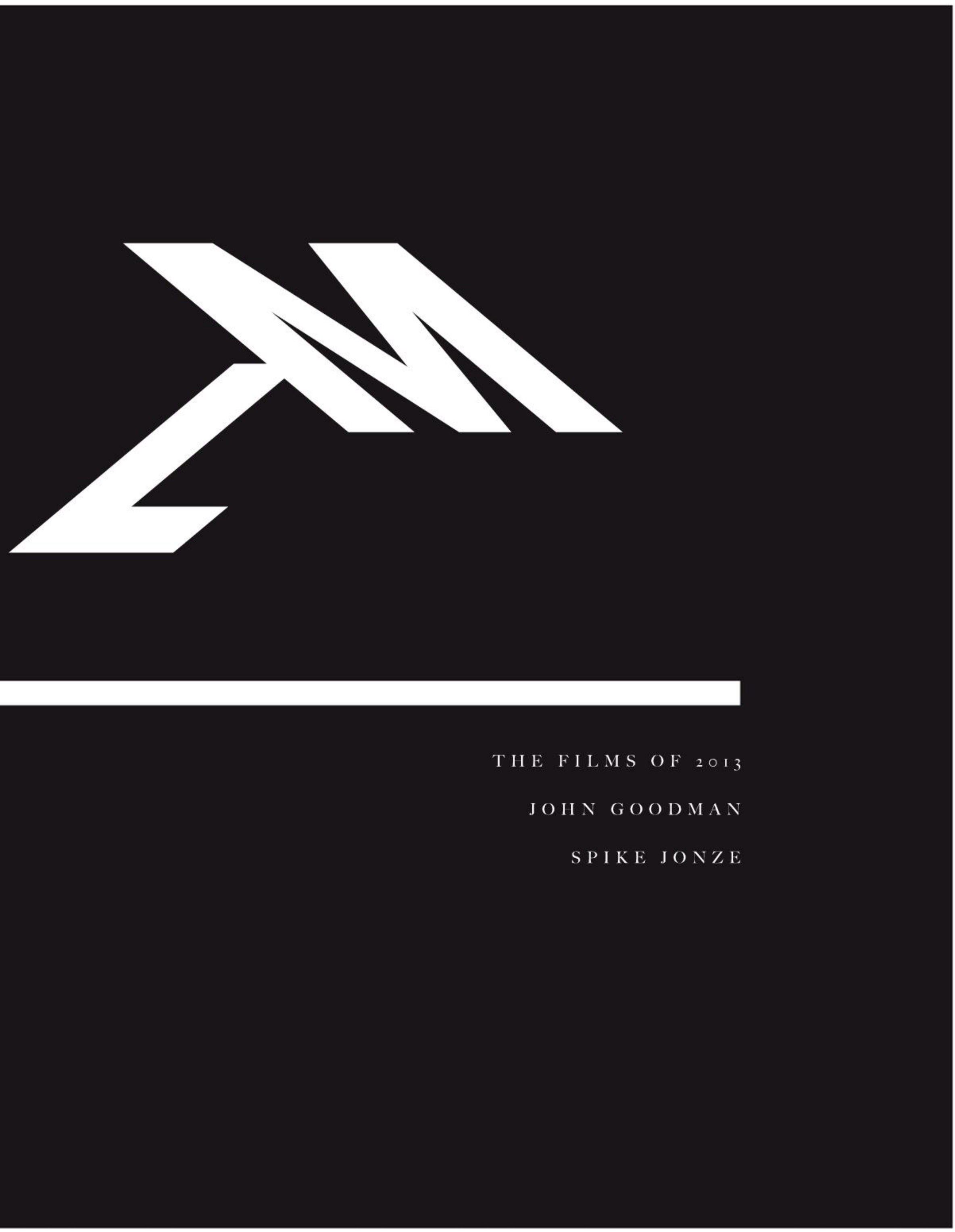
THE FILMS OF 2013
JOHN GOODMAN
SPIKE JONZE

WORDS: BEN HOPKINS, JAMES WRIGHT AND ELIJAH LAWAL

OUR CINEMATIC HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS

FILMS OF 2013

10. IN A WORLD...

Despite winning Best Screenplay at Sundance this year, distribution courtesy of Sony and a Rotten Tomatoes rating of 91%, Lake Bell's comedy In A World... came and went to little fanfare in the UK. That's no reflection on the quality of the film, however, as it's a wonderfully neat idea (a woman who tries to make it big in the world of movie trailers voiceovers) executed close to perfection. Although it wasn't the major breakthrough that she deserved, there's every reason to expect a glowing future for director/writer/lead Lake Bell. (BH)

9. FILTH

James McAvoy is a revelation as cop Bruce Robertson in this searing adaptation of Irvine Welsh's novel. Robertson is loathsome - a mass of addictions and manipulations - which feeds the almost constantly jet black humour, but as much as McAvoy relishes Robertson's darkness, it's his ability to convey the character's ultimate fragility that really impresses. Director Jon S. Baird also infuses the film with a personality of its own with numerous strange quirks that only add to Robertson's mesmerising downward spiral. (BH)

8. A HIJACKING

The Tom Hanks and Paul Greengrass film Captain Phillips told a similar story on a much grander scale, but Tobias Lindholm's Danish thriller excelled with its more restrained sense of dread. When a Danish ship is hijacked by Somali pirates, extreme stress spreads like a virus - from the ship's cook who is subject to vicious mind games from his captors, to the company CEO who spends months negotiating their release and the families who are left powerless to influence the situation. Pilou Asbæk and Søren Malling deliver two of the most acutely observed performances of the year. (BH)

7. FRANCES HA

Noah Baumbach has spawned a new genre of 'depressive comedies' and his latest work Frances Ha is no exception. It's a charming, funny and realistic tale of a woman who is trying to figure out who she is at 27, especially as her best friend with whom she shared her apartment with appears to be growing up and leaving her behind. Ultimately, it is an exploration into the oh-so-dreadful quarter-life crisis, an abyss where the title character seems stuck. This is summed up nicely by her proclamation, "I'm not a real person yet." (EL)

6. SPRING BREAKERS

If there's a film on this list that is unlikely to age well, it's got to be Harmony Korine's anarchic, pop culture-centric Spring Breakers. In the moment, though, this loose tale of four college girls whose quest for adventure ends up in the world of criminal mastermind and rapper Alien is brilliant. Rammed with hazy, hallucinatory visuals, it's a wild, debauched cocktail of voyeuristic tendencies, gratuitous violence and absurd humour. It's a provocation rather than a classic, but what a provocation it is. (BH)

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5. GRAVITY

It's not often that a film truly raises the bar for others to follow, but Alfonso Cuarón's stunning depiction of space in Gravity does exactly that - in fact, any space-themed film that follows and doesn't match the breath-taking visuals will surely be rendered immediately redundant. It certainly had a few faults (an unnecessary dialogue overload, a daft late scene) but they're easy to overlook when the overall package represents the very best of big budget movie making - especially as a rare example of 3D fulfilling its considerable potential. (BH)

4. THE SELFISH GIANT

Clio Barnard's beautifully shot The Selfish Giant is reminiscent of the politically informed social realism of Ken Loach. Society has failed young friends Arbor and Swifty, who spend their days scavenging for scrap metal with the help of a horse and cart after being excluded from school - a pursuit which means they're never far from danger; especially as more worldly dealers exploit their relative naivety. It's a bleak, devastatingly real tale that packs a hefty emotional punch; significantly strengthened by the naturalistic bond that the two leads share. (BH)

3. UPSTREAM COLOUR

Shane Carruth has made only two films in his career, but even then you could arguably label him as a modern day auteur, working amidst a sea of Hollywood reboots and Michael Bay explosions. Carruth's second directorial outing, Upstream Colour, is a world away from his first - the grainy and unrefined Primer, released in 2004 - but it's every bit as magnificent and thought provoking. Admittedly, it'll require (at least) two viewings to fully comprehend the film's beautiful and perplexing storyline, but the 96-minute visual feast should go some way to keeping things interesting. Regardless of how many times you watch it. (JW)

2. DJANGO UNCHAINED

Tarantino rarely disappoints and in Django Unchained he has once again created another ferociously violent love letter - this time to spaghetti westerns and blaxploitation films. The script's excellent and the cast even more so. Jamie Foxx shines, Leonardo DiCaprio stuns, Samuel L. Jackson is hilarious, and Christoph Waltz does what Waltz usually does and conspires to steal the show in every scene. It's undeniably 2013's ultimate popcorn flick (without resorting to big ass CGI robots) and you'll be hard pushed to find another film that entertains with quite so much energy. Bottom line, it shouldn't be missed. (JW)

1. THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES

After the intimacy of Blue Valentine, director Derek Cianfrance's The Place Beyond The Pines was a huge leap of ambition. With man of the moment Ryan Gosling in the lead, it features three dramatically different acts, a shocking twist redolent of Hitchcock's Psycho and a truly captivating cross-generational narrative. The visceral energy of Gosling's early scenes is the real draw, but its study of the father/son dynamic is what lingers in the mind afterwards. (BH)

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WORDS: BEN HOPKINS
PHOTOGRAPHY: LIAM MF WARWICK

INSIDE JOHN GOODMAN

Perhaps best known for his breakthrough role in the sitcom Roseanne as Dan Conner – a prototype of goofy man-child fathers, which has extended to the likes of Homer Simpson and Peter Griffin – it's remarkable that John Goodman has escaped the travails of typecasting. You might know him as the Judaist Vietnam vet Walter in The Big Lebowski, as CIA/Hollywood make-up artist John Chambers in Argo, or even as the definitive live action version of Fred Flintstone.

One thread that has remained consistent throughout the years is his working connection with visionary directors the Coen brothers. Since first working with the duo on 1987's Raising Arizona, the Coen/Goodman link extends to a sixth movie (and the first since 2000's O Brother, Where Art Thou?) with the release of Inside Llewyn Davis.

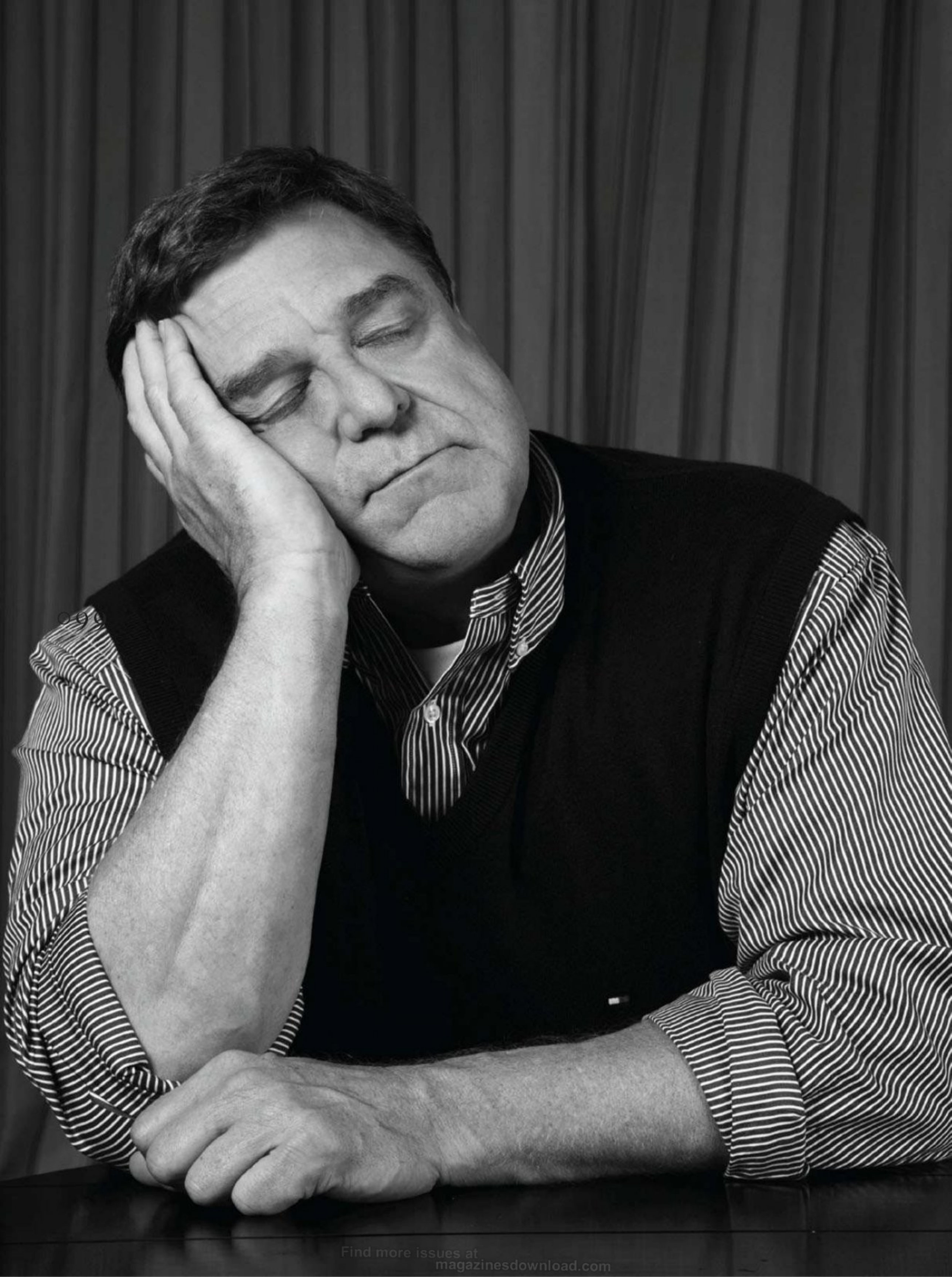
The film charts the misfortunes of singer-songwriter Llewyn Davis (Oscar Isaac) as he strives to become a name on the early-'60s New York folk scene. Goodman's performance as veteran jazz musician Roland Turner provides the film's comic middle-eight as he joins Davis and the silent but effortlessly cool Johnny Five (Garrett Hedlund) on a tense car journey to Chicago.

"He's such an angry bastard. I didn't want him to be representative of a generation of jazz musicians who I have a great deal of respect for," says Goodman of his character, referencing Charlie Parker as one of his personal favourites from the genre, adding: "Roland is a great gasbag, he's full of all sorts of arcana and self-hatred and it rubs off on everyone else." From his terrible haircut to his drug abuse and keen interest in the black arts, Turner is the sort of eccentric character for whom every line crackles with vicious wit, most of which is directed at the increasingly insecure Davis.

"This guy was just so well written that I didn't have to do a lot of homework. The crusty old bastard," he continues. In fact, his back story was so loosely defined that this musician's instrument hadn't even been defined: Goodman assumed he was a pianist; Joel Coen thought he was a trumpet player; and Ethan Coen guessed that he was a saxophonist.

While Goodman's character delivers scintillating dialogue that heightens the film's dark comic edge, the movie as a whole is reliant on Oscar Isaac's performance. Happily, he delivers with some aplomb – his musical performances (including collaborations with Marcus Mumford and Justin Timberlake) are a joy to behold, while his acting elicits his pendulous balance between sympathy and shambolic failure. "He's a tremendous guitarist," agrees Goodman. "Apparently he picked up this style of finger picking for the film just like that. [Producer] T-Bone Burnett said he was studio quality. He had to be a first class musician and a first class actor."

At the age of 61, John Goodman doesn't appear to be in perfect health – as he admits, he's eager for some time off so he can restart his exercise regime (he boxes three times a week when at home) and to have his second knee replacement operation. He wheezes a little, and sometimes pauses in search of the right wording. But mostly he's on top form with bursts of incisive, downbeat humour and a bellowing chuckle. Speaking of Hedlund, he



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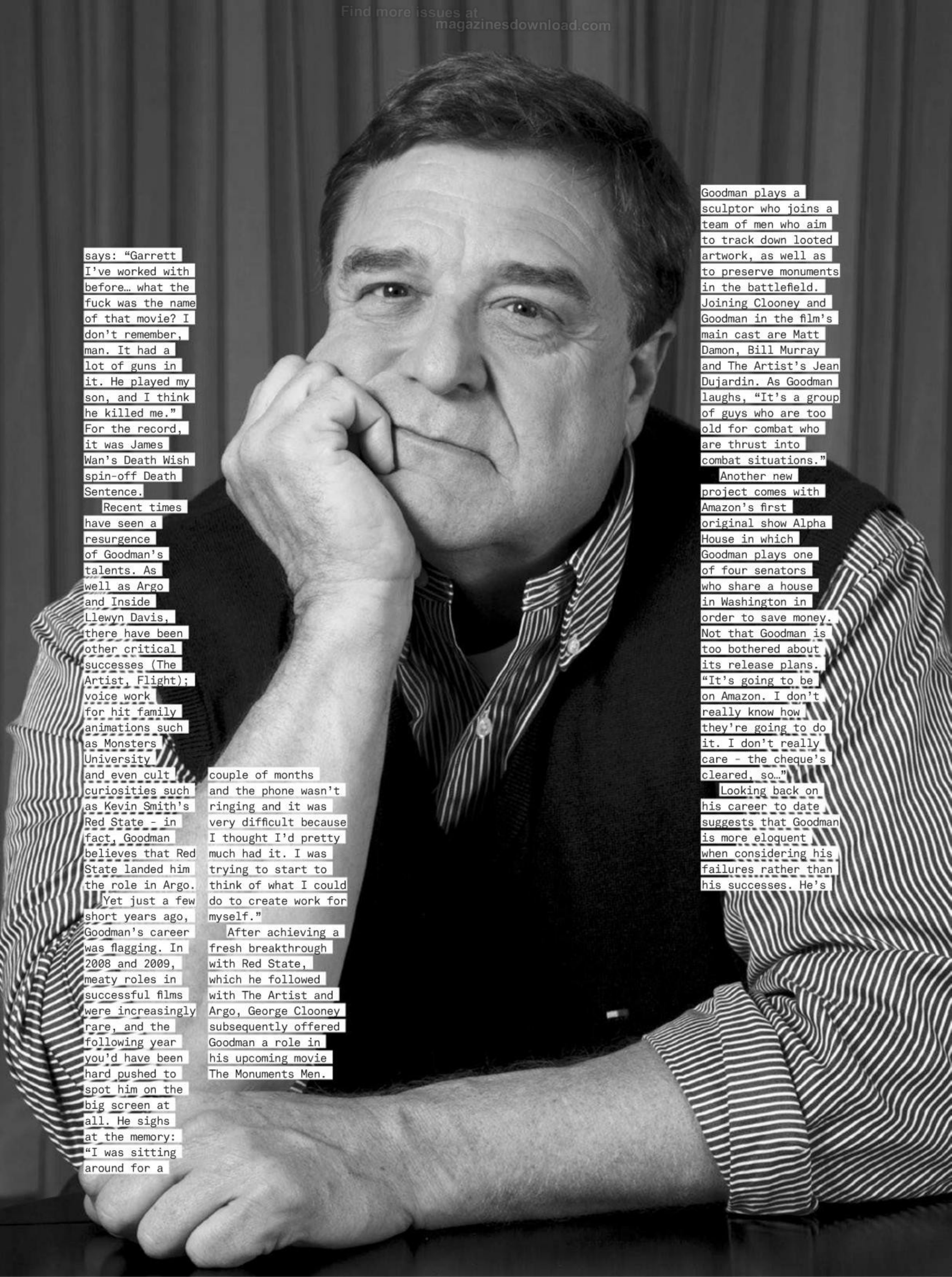

says: “Garrett I’ve worked with before… what the fuck was the name of that movie? I don’t remember, man. It had a lot of guns in it. He played my son, and I think he killed me.” For the record, it was James Wan’s Death Wish spin-off Death Sentence.

Recent times have seen a resurgence of Goodman’s talents. As well as Argo and Inside Llewyn Davis, there have been other critical successes (The Artist, Flight); voice work for hit family animations such as Monsters University and even cult curiosities such as Kevin Smith’s Red State – in fact, Goodman believes that Red State landed him the role in Argo.

Yet just a few short years ago, Goodman’s career was flagging. In 2008 and 2009, meaty roles in successful films were increasingly rare, and the following year you’d have been hard pushed to spot him on the big screen at all. He sighs at the memory: “I was sitting around for a couple of months and the phone wasn’t ringing and it was very difficult because I thought I’d pretty much had it. I was trying to start to think of what I could do to create work for myself.”

After achieving a fresh breakthrough with Red State, which he followed with The Artist and Argo, George Clooney subsequently offered Goodman a role in his upcoming movie The Monuments Men. Goodman plays a sculptor who joins a team of men who aim to track down looted artwork, as well as to preserve monuments in the battlefield. Joining Clooney and Goodman in the film’s main cast are Matt Damon, Bill Murray and The Artist’s Jean Dujardin. As Goodman laughs, “It’s a group of guys who are too old for combat who are thrust into combat situations.”

Another new project comes with Amazon’s first original show Alpha House in which Goodman plays one of four senators who share a house in Washington in order to save money. Not that Goodman is too bothered about its release plans. “It’s going to be on Amazon. I don’t really know how they’re going to do it. I don’t really care – the cheque’s cleared, so…”

Looking back on his career to date suggests that Goodman is more eloquent when considering his failures rather than his successes. He’s

proud of much of his work (especially because the average person in the streets asks about The Big Lebowski), but he's not overly reflective (Is there a film which he thinks was unfairly overlooked? "Nah!"). He's much more open when asked for a film which didn't work out as well as he hoped.

"That Babe Ruth movie," he says without hesitation, referring to 1992's The Babe, which was directed by Arthur Hiller of Love Story fame. "I trained to throw left-handed, to bat left-handed and I was pretty proficient at it until we started filming. We filmed all of the acting stuff first and none of the baseball stuff, so those skills fell off and I lost a great deal of confidence. I was goofing off too much on that film and I didn't take it seriously enough. I thought things would take care of themselves and I learned a great lesson: they don't. They require a great deal of work and concentration. I'd like to do that one over, but that's not going to happen. You don't get these chances."

Goodman states that he'd like to return to the stage at some point in the future, but he doesn't seem to have much else in terms of long-term targets. "I wish I was more ambitious. I see guys directing but I just don't have a calling for it. I don't have a burning need to do it. I wish I did, but I don't. That would be the logical next step but unless something falls out of the sky, I don't see myself generating that much energy."

But does he really need to achieve more? He has delivered a seemingly endless list of brilliant performances across a range of genres, and has presumably made a comfortable living while doing so. But that's the nature of the human condition. Music icons from the past push on with new projects fully aware that nothing will be as epoch-changing as what they've previously done. Goodman, however, seems to be in the midst of a deserved second peak.

And he's evidently more content than talk of his limited ambitions and regrets suggests, as his final word regarding Inside Llewyn Davis proves: "The last time I saw it, it socked me in the stomach. I saw it twice and the second time really affected me: a lot of questions about the fear of success and the sacrifices that you have to make of your soul in order to have a roof over your head," he pauses before a broad smile sweeps from cheek-to-cheek. "Go see it for the music and come away laughing."

INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS WILL BE RELEASED ON JANUARY 24TH, DISTRIBUTED BY STUDIO CANAL. THE MONUMENTS MEN (20TH CENTURY FOX) FOLLOWS ON FEBRUARY 21ST.

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WORDS: BEN HOPKINS

PUTTING THE ROMANCE INTO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SPIKE JONZE

He's the man behind the playfully inventive leftfield classics Being John Malkovich and Adaptation, as well as iconic music videos for The Beastie Boys, Weezer and Kanye West, but even a man as evidently talented as Spike Jonze suffers the occasional lapse in confidence.

In his new movie Her, Joaquin Phoenix plays Theodore, a lone soul drifting through a near future Los Angeles with little connection with the rest of the city's population. After the breakdown of a relationship, his bond with an intuitive, highly advanced operating system named Samantha grows into a full romantic relationship in which her artificial intelligence flourishes into something palpably real.

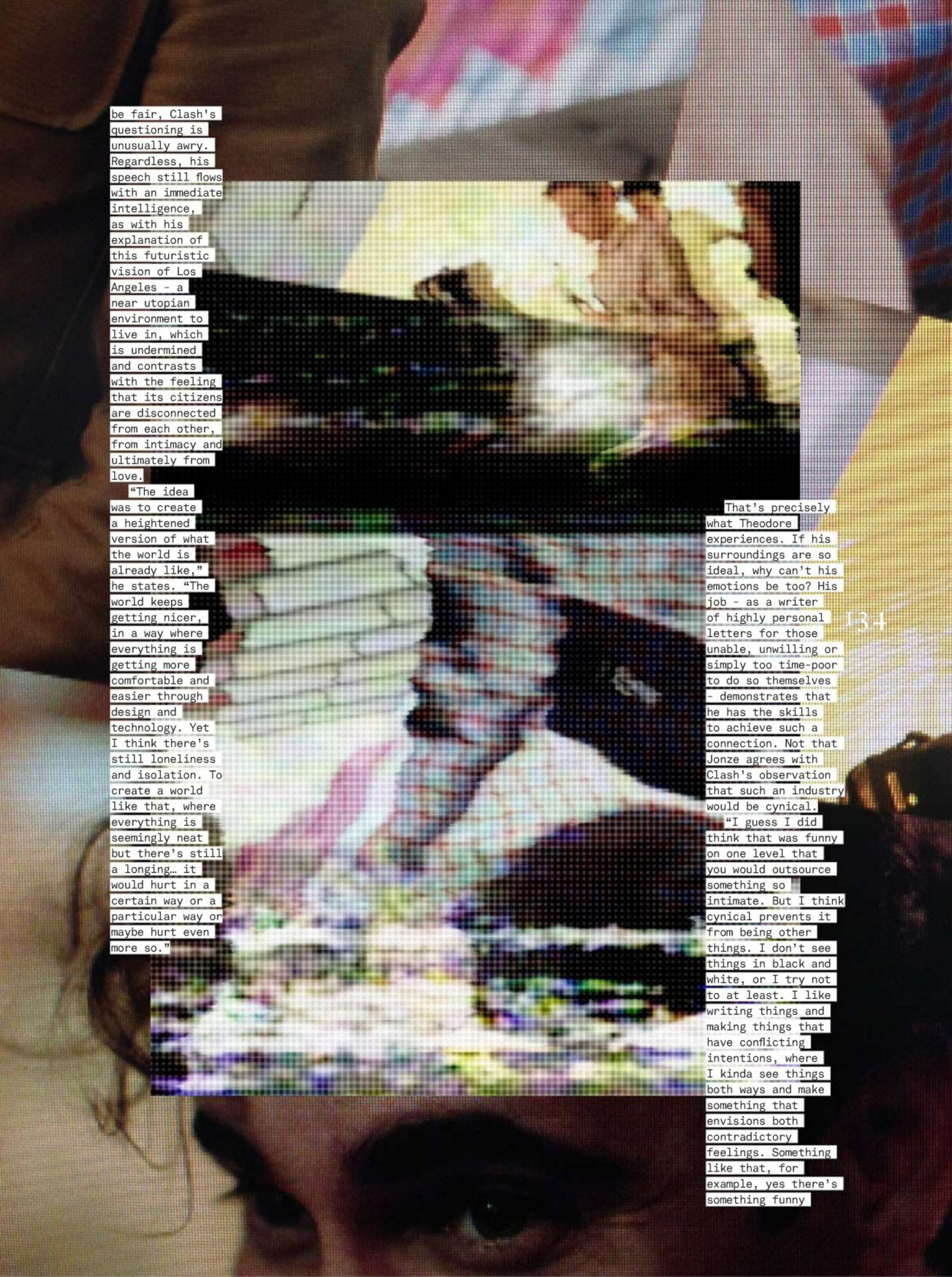
Although Phoenix's role sees him interact with a cast including Amy Adams, Rooney Mara and Olivia Wilde, he mostly plays off Samantha – depicted solely by the voice of Scarlett Johansson. Asked about the challenges that such an unconventional performance entails for director and actor alike, Jonze explains: "I think he's got such a rich imagination that it was like, 'Oh, this is what the reality is.' Also, good actors are good listeners, and he just listened. I think any great actor is a true listener. I think that was key."

Is it a case of being able to rely on your intuition?

"Yeah, I guess that's true, but I also wouldn't want to make it sound like it was easy at all because I think that's misleading. It wasn't easy and we don't know what we're doing. Even though I've made three movies before and Joaquin's been in other movies before, you never know if something's going to work. You kind of have an instinct that it's working, but ultimately you have to have a blindness to that instinct, you just have to trust it. There are definitely moments in the day where you're like, holy fuck, is this going to work?"

To an outsider, it sounds unlikely that two towering talents could feel that way. On reflection, however, it must be an innate part of mankind's emotions regarding the creative process. With the resources invested in a project and the sheer time it takes to complete a film such as this, it must be inevitable to experience such wavering emotions. Ultimately, says Jonze, it's a process that combines a feeling of stress with the awareness that experience will eventually triumph. "Knowing that I'm with my friends and we've figured how to get out of it before and trusting and hoping that we'll figure how to get out of it again gives me some piece of mind," he summarises, adding that the editing process drifts between waves of uncertainty and encouraging breakthroughs. Evidently it worked, as Her captures the intricate conceptual powers of his first two films while also delivering a more emotionally transcendent experience.

During the course of our interview, Jonze admits to feeling a little under the weather ("My brain is working at a quarter of the speed it normally works at") and to



be fair, Clash's questioning is unusually awry. Regardless, his speech still flows with an immediate intelligence, as with his explanation of this futuristic vision of Los Angeles - a near utopian environment to live in, which is undermined and contrasts with the feeling that its citizens are disconnected from each other, from intimacy and ultimately from love.

"The idea was to create a heightened version of what the world is already like," he states. "The world keeps getting nicer, in a way where everything is getting more comfortable and easier through design and technology. Yet I think there's still loneliness and isolation. To create a world like that, where everything is seemingly neat but there's still a longing… it would hurt in a certain way or a particular way or maybe hurt even more so."

That's precisely what Theodore experiences. If his surroundings are so ideal, why can't his emotions be too? His job - as a writer of highly personal letters for those unable, unwilling or simply too time-poor to do so themselves - demonstrates that he has the skills to achieve such a connection. Not that Jonze agrees with Clash's observation that such an industry would be cynical.

"I guess I did think that was funny on one level that you would outsource something so intimate. But I think cynical prevents it from being other things. I don't see things in black and white, or I try not to at least. I like writing things and making things that have conflicting intentions, where I kinda see things both ways and make something that envisions both contradictory feelings. Something like that, for example, yes there's something funny

about that, but there's also something very genuine about it at the same time, his ability to connect with these people is very sincere and genuine."

Her straddles two seemingly disparate elements - a world in which mankind's dependence on technology is becoming borderline unhealthy ("I didn't make the film as a message film, or even as a social commentary or a social satire. I was trying to explore our relationship with technology in the modern world and more so our relationship with each other and our need to connect and our inability to connect") and the fact that at heart it's a romantic comedy.

"I think that's fine," he concurs. "Being John Malkovich and Adaptation would technically be on the comedy shelf at the DVD store, but they're more than that to me. I'm not trying to make something for the purpose of fitting into any box, but if that helps someone connect to it or digest it or if that's how they feel about it, that's not my business."

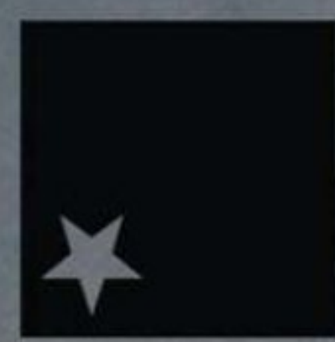
The film is supported by a score courtesy of Arcade Fire, with whom Jonze had previously directed the video for their track 'The Suburbs' as well as a live collaboration at the YouTube Awards. "I think it was very clear from the beginning that I didn't want to have an electronic soundtrack in that I didn't want it to be synths. I did want it to be handmade but I wanted to feel like there was an electricity to it," says Jonze, noting the very specific nature of his requirements. "They started writing off the script and then we started sending them footage and photos… just trying not to get them stuck on scoring any scenes but really just freeing them to write thematically and to write moods and pieces. They sent so many tracks it was amazing. Even on set we'd use some of them to play back just to imbue the set with some feeling. It really was a back and forth process where the music was part of the making of the film."

The film is a leap beyond the initial news reports, which Jonze notes were often approximately "man falls in love with a Siri device."

"I think that is probably pretty misleading until you see the trailer and the feel of it and tone of it, and see that she is a very compelling, fully developed being," asserts Jonze. "Their relationship is hopefully a very full and intimate and romantic relationship." Indeed that connection - together with the strength of the themes, the music and the rich humour - are all reasons to fall in love with Her.

HER OPENS IN CINEMAS ON JANUARY 24TH, DISTRIBUTED BY ENTERTAINMENT FILM.

REPUBLIC OF MUSIC



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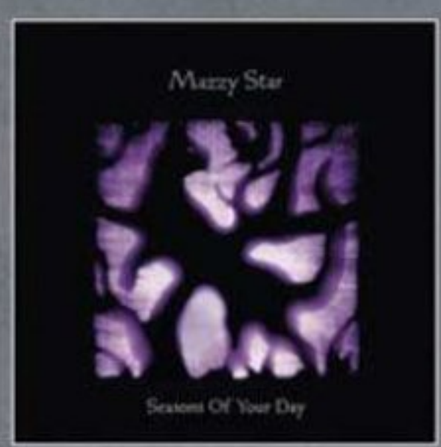
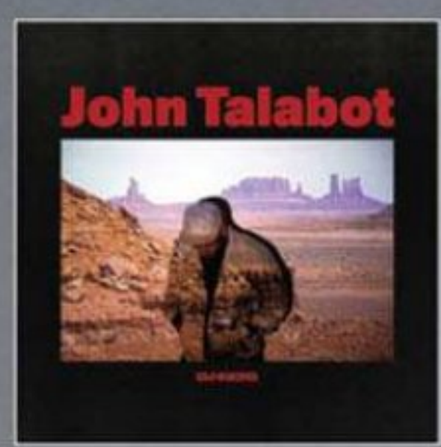
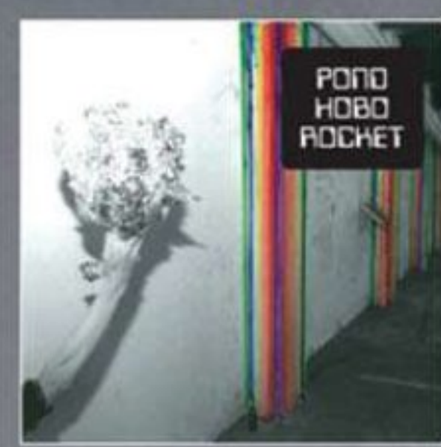


Mazzy Star
Seasons Of Your Day
Rhymes Of An Hour



John Talabot
DJ-KiCKS
!K7

Neon Neon
Praxis Makes Perfect
Lex



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Rituals
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BMG Rights

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World Psychedelic Classics 5: Who Is William Onyeabor?
Luaka Bop

Junip
Junip
City Slang

Sleigh Bells
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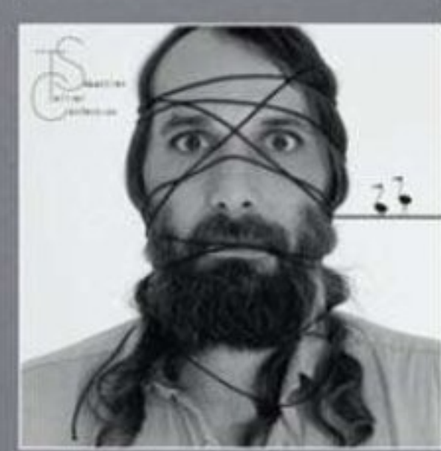

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ACTRESS

Ghettoville

WERKDISCS / NINJA TUNE

★★★★★★★★★★

In seething personal damnation Actress now addresses his very own sonic death. 'Ghettoville' crawls into our lives as a wheezing, irradiated corpse of Darren Cunningham's uncompromisingly organic pseudonym.

Four albums in and this South Londoner has all but obliterated his carefully devised image. 'Ghettoville' is a signed death warrant. It's the skeleton of a nom-de-guerre buried under noxious dust of exhaustion, or as his final communiqué sighs: "...the birds look back into the cage they once inhabited. Spitting flames behind a white wall of silence."

His 16 tracks of electronic emotion open up with 'Forgiven'; a laconic and grinding meander. It writhes with texture and the memories of a mechanisation that used to propel this artist so effectively through the nocturnal landscape. It's a deliberately oblique start that stretches through the next track 'Street Corp'; a difficult six minutes of duelling time signatures that further see the tourists disappear in his hearse's cracked rear-view mirror.

Yet from this exhausted nadir Actress reflects light from his metallic carcass. The next 14 tracks verbalise the stained blueprints of his sound as abstract hip-hop, jacking house, minimal techno and shattered rap try to emerge from beneath the swathes of toxic layers that Actress swaddles them in. The fabric of his ghosts may be haemorrhaging their form, but you can still glimpse their eyes.

'Time' glances into our lives via a murky and suffocated start before skipping brushed percussion brings a rhythmic salvation as a stale breath exults the word 'time' in an awkward loop.

'Towers' is fresher. It pulsates in a loose, shambolic structure; a fizzing tower of texture that evokes images of the death rattle of a contrivance found in a vision of H.G. Wells.

'Ghettoville' then drives us towards a dystopian funk on 'Gaze'. But where the once vibrant taut bass was found, now we stumble upon rusted structures drowning in distortion.

The final quarter of 'Ghettoville' yields even more vivid clues to Actress's twilight thoughts. 'Image' is a relatively kinetic instrumental that winks at the '80s from an acrid puddle, before the malignant a capella in 'Don't' snips our heart strings with an agonising 'Don't Stop The Music' loop, which then collapses into the two minutes and 40 seconds of detuned hip-hop homage of 'Rap'; a jukebox skipping in infinity but no-one remains to care.

Penultimate track 'Frontline' evolves techno out of the contaminated fizz that Actress deployed so effectively on 2012's 'R.I.P.', a track that in death surge hears a vitality briefly swell before the blackness rushes in.

And the end is strange. 'Rule' bursts shockingly into life; a livid and compressed rap sample that's spinning out of control and makes little sense. Appearing more like a computer malfunction than an epilogue, Actress then chases his own burning pyre with a warming low-tempo melodic outro that nonchalantly suggests the entire nightmarish hour was simply that: a feverish robotic delusion.

Rarely has an artist's death been so vivid. R.I.P. Actress; your dystopian electronic visions have widened our nocturnal vision. We now await your reincarnation.

MATTHEW BENNETT

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: SABRES OF PARADISE, SHACKLETON, ZOMBY

LISTEN FOR FREE ON DEEZER

SCNTST
Self Therapy
BOYSNOIZE RECORDS
★★★★★★★★★★

If you think you 'know' SCNTST from the tough-as-nails electro and techno putout thus far in his career, prepare to be surprised. The debut album from young Munich producer Bryan Muller is an odyssey through varied dance music styles and stances: from forward-thinking IDM to German rap to the jumped-up sounds that he's known for. What's more, for such a grab bag of musical genres, the album hangs together incredibly well, with Muller's intuitive ability to fuse terse beats with bewitching melodic arrangements making for a record that effortlessly situates itself between home-listening and club beats. As debut albums go, this is mightily impressive.

PETER ADKINS

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: EROL ALKAN, PAUL KALKBRENNER, GESAFFELSTEIN

QUENUM
Face To Face
SERIALISM
★★★★★★★★★★

Philippe Quenum might not be the most well-known techno artist on the planet, but over the last 20 years he has carved a reputation for being a producer's producer. His attention to detail, trailblazing sound design and ability to stay one step ahead of the trends has meant that he's remained on the cutting edge. 'Face To Face', Quenum's debut solo album, offers further testament to these capabilities. Drawing on his penchant for deep basslines, infectious rhythms and leftfield flourishes, the album's expansive and warm techno is of the kind that you can lose yourself in for days on end. Genuinely innovative and utterly captivating.

PETER ADKINS

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: RECLOOSE, GLIMPSE, LAWRENCE

ZED BIAS
Boss
SWAMP81
★★★★★★★★★★

Has Dave Jones paid the cost to be the 'Boss'? With last year's collaboration with Yannah Valdevit keeping the peace, Zed Bias' boxy, frugal, in parts unspectacular house takedown may be hard news to bear for those still gulping down the dubstep spectrum of 'Make A Change' as Maddslinky, and the bashment thrashes of 'Biasonic Hotsauce'.

'Boss' boils down to the old chestnut of vibe and a desire to disengage; where your head is nowhere in particular, and your ears are guided by a throb rather than pricked by riffs or vocals to interact with. Attention has undoubtedly been paid to the skippy muscularity of drums throughout, playing star quarterback behind bass that is measured precisely without it ever flying off the handle. Yet this is not a team sport - it's pure, eyes down, leave me alone, sweat-stained clubbing, a ritual of on-the-spot self-discipline.

So, pared down but still a champion bench presser; 'Boss Skank' and 'Ooh' appear to do little of note but approach irresistible upon mercury rising. 'Ye' trims up old skool breakbeats, 'Copper' hustles with little bustle; all doing enough when, upon realising he's not coming action-packed (and that's without making a substitution for something more sophisticated), you're about to question the LP's character. Wandering into the tribal with 'Tug' and techno-toothed with 'Flamm' while abstaining from new categorisation - he's not getting his 'crack-house' on - Bias reaches the logical progression/retirement fund of where dubsteppers start circling their territory with 4x4 releases: a solid set of club tools playing the water-carrier role in Zed's back catalogue.

MATT OLIVER

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: DANIEL DEXTER, MATHEW JONSON, FALTY DL

DANCE MANIA
Hardcore Traxx: Dance Mania Records 1986-1997
STRUT RECORDS
★★★★★★★★★★

If you ever wondered where Tiga found his house freak or where Daft Punk found their ghetto house jack, odds on it came from Chicago. This raw, street-level compilation soundtracks the dirty side of Chi-Town and timelines seminal label Dance Mania's risqué progression from the genesis of Chicago house to its wilder ghetto output. If you've listened to any set worth its 128(ish) BPM, you'll recognise 'House Nation' pepper the groove with its classic beat and chopped vocal repetition, Mike Dunn's gilded fingers slide all over the mix of 'Searchin' Hard' or the driven beat of 'Hit It From The Back' go harder. An essential history lesson.

REEF YOUNIS

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: MIKE DUNN, TIGA, DJ FUNK

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Present Tense
TOUCHIN' BASS
★★★★★★★★★★

Touchin' Bass' compilation of alternative dance jams brings together old stalwarts of the 12-year-old label as well as new talent. Opener 'Descent' by 214 sets the tone for the record with its ghostly voices, clatters and horror-film strings set to a foreground of compulsive percussion. Given that much of 'Present Tense' is eerie and austere, livelier moments like Sky Tucker's playful and synthy 'Notewithstanding' stand out all the more. It's good late-night music, specifically as a soundtrack for those lonely timeless hours before a deadline. Except, perhaps, Eniac's triumphantly cacophonous closer, 'The Painting Of Life', which in such a bind might bring on a nervous breakdown.

DARREN LOUCAIDES

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: LAPALUX, QUINOLINE YELLOW, KELLI HAND

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WARPAINT

Warpaint

ROUGH TRADE RECORDS

★★★★★★★★★★

It's been three years since Warpaint cast a spell on us with their glisteningly dark and lulling debut album 'The Fool'; conjuring up a time when gothic smacked less of Camden market and more of The Cure. The LA girls' latest creation 'Warpaint' is just as devastatingly brooding as ever. "Love is to die... Love is to not die... Love is to live," chime singers Emily Kokal and Theresa Wayman in 'Love Is To Die', a darkly sexy and off-kilter third track that elevates the album into something truly spectacular.

Warpaint have always managed to make music to totally submerge yourself in, like an oil painting mixed with blood, and their second album is no exception. With the addition of some murky synths in 'Biggy' and vocal hypnosis to rival 'Dummy'-era Portishead in 'Hi', 'Warpaint' uncoils before you in a meandering jam of rattling drumbeats and deep, silky bass. Is it a step up from 'The Fool'? Not exactly, but it exhibits the kind of difference that comes with success. When venues have to get bigger, the music needs to fill it. Maybe it's because of this that we hear a little more trip-hop style drum machines and ambience that's likely to make for an incredible live performance. As with their debut, there is always the trepidation that some might find their more obscure tracks a little dull, but in an era where Avicii and OneRepublic top the charts, we think the opposite.

DAISY JONES

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: PJ HARVEY, THE XX, CAT POWER

SUPREME CUTS

Divine Ecstasy

MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

★★★★★★★★★★

'Divine Ecstasy' finds Chicago duo Supreme Cuts in a more aquatic space, with consistent use of bubbling bass and reverberating keys. 'Gone' features rising and collapsing keys as French singer Mahaut Mondino freezes time with her performance. The title track rides through small-scale climaxes, including machine gun-rate percussion. While the two tracks are great peaks, the album does suffer from a lack of direction. Poor continuity and questionable abilities of their chosen vocalists means groan-worthy lyricism such as "Let's study the geometry, it's time to do the math," on 'Down'. The downfalls aren't something to fret too much over though; clearly Supreme Cuts have innovative ideas from a production standpoint.

BRIAN JOSEPHS

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: MOUNT KIMBIE, JAMES BLAKE, DJ RASHAD

I BREAK HORSES

Chiaroscuro

BELLA UNION

★★★★★★★★★★

A synthetic aesthetic coats the creations on 'Chiaroscuro', the second album from duo I Break Horses. The shoegaze sensibilities found in debut 'Hearts' are substituted by synth-laden, space-odyssey soundscapes - think Grimes with a cyber-infused heart. Lush electronica abounds, Maria Lindén displaying a yearning, melancholic feel throughout. Opener 'You Burn' is decadent and brooding, 'Heart To Know' feels like a final call to a lover; fragmented, distorted vocals losing frequency. Lindén and collaborator Fredrik Balck's embracing of antithetic themes means there's noir and euphoria in every song, even if they rely too closely on '80s new wave tropes. Nevertheless, crafting an unswerving electronic tapestry means 'Chiaroscuro' has no real filler.

SHAHZAIB HUSSAIN

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: GOLDFRAPP, SIGUR RÓS, M83

GOAT

Live Ballroom Ritual

ROCKET RECORDINGS

★★★★★★★★★★

Much has been made of these enigmatic Swedes' origin story, that inhabitants the village where they reside are dedicated to the practices of voodoo as a result of traveling witchdoctors. Combining elements of Can's 'Tago Mago', Funkadelic's 'Maggot Brain', the Swedish progressive rock of Älgarnas Trädgård and the afrobeat of Fela Kuti allows them to slip seamlessly into the myth. Musically they're not breaking boundaries but they do play their funked-up psychedelic trance immaculately. They wear masks, they dance, they whip an audience into a peerless frenzy. There's still no substitute for seeing them live but this album will provide just a glimmer of that goodness.

ANNA WILSON

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: WOODEN SHJIPS, FÖLLAKZOID, CAN

THE JEZABELS

The Brink

PIAS

★★★★★★★★★★

"Hit me with the rhythm of Beyoncé," The Jezabels' vocalist Hayley Mary sings on the fifth track on their new album 'The Brink'. Admittedly it's not the best line ever written (it might even be the worst) but don't hold it against the Aussie four-piece, who don't claim it to be anything else. Their second studio album acts as a showcase for some dramatic indie-cum-power-ballad creations, seemingly tailor-made for festival tents and stadiums. While their best songs sound like filthy and powerful stage soundscapes, their worst occasionally dip into the sort of po-faced earnestness you might find in a car advert or on The Killers' 'Human' album.

DAISY JONES

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: FOXES, THE KILLERS, PARAMORE

MAX RICHTER
Memoryhouse
FATCAT RECORDS
★★★★★★★★★★

Recorded with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra back in 2002, this is the fulsome original version of Richter's sound, at which he has slowly hacked in the intervening time. Having described writing music as "dreaming out loud", it seems fitting that this lengthy set feels like it should soundtrack a wistfully melancholic nocturnal train journey, dredging feelings to the surface and diverting thoughts through its emotive orchestral swells as rural shadows blur past. There is much to cherry-pick - especially 'Sarajevo', with a stunning vocal from soprano Sarah Leonard - but its 65 minute, emotionally-fraught duration makes 'Memoryhouse' an occasional, cathartic delight rather than a close, reassuring friend.

GARETH JAMES

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: ÓLAFUR ARNALDS, DUSTIN O'HALLORAN, JÓHANN JÓHANNSSON

CABARET VOLTAIRE
#8385 (COLLECTED WORKS 1983-1985)
MUTE
★★★★★★★★★★

This multi-format box set collates four of the band's mid-period releases in addition to 'Cabaret Voltaire Live' (1984) and the long-awaited DVD release of experimental video 'Gasoline In Your Eye' (1985). Stephen Mallinder, Richard H. Kirk and Chris Watson were dabbling with tape loops and cut-ups back in Sheffield as early as the mid-'70s. Inspired by the art of Dada and Fluxus and the music of John Cage as much as punk and funk, they were instrumental in creating the British tradition of industrial music. This provides an incisive, exhaustive and long-overdue overview of their pioneering electronica. Nostalgic and simultaneously stimulating.

ANNA WILSON

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: THROBBING GRISTLE, CLOCK DVA, TEST DEPT

LIVE ALBUMS

YEASAYER
Good Evening, Washington D.C.
MUTE
★★★★★★★★★★

This live recording from November 2012 is limited to a vinyl-only run of 1,000, and it's hard to get too upset about the small number of copies. In concert, Yeasayer seem a little too loose and disparate, lacking the cohesion that their songs' many elements require to work. The intricacies of the tracks are somewhat lost in translation here, but the quality of Yeasayer's back catalogue means that it's not an entirely worthless exercise. One for the die-hard fans only.

JOE RIVERS

ELBOW
Live At Jodrell Bank
FICTION
★★★★★★★★★★

Recorded last year during a characteristically British summer downpour, 'Live At Jodrell Bank' reiterates what we already knew. Namely that Elbow have slowly but surely become one of Britain's most reliable bands with a back catalogue packed with beautifully affecting songs. Singer Guy Garvey is the star here, transforming a performance in front of a cast of thousands into a personal and intimate event in a way few frontmen could manage. A worthwhile document of a group at their zenith. JOE RIVERS

MIX TOGETHER AND SIMMER

THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN
THE VINYL COLLECTION
DEMON RECORDS
★★★★★★★★★★

REID ALL ABOUT IT
Centred around brothers Jim and William

+

REVOLVING DOOR
Frequent line-up changes

+

FEEDBACK
Sonic trademark for 'Psychocandy'

BOBBY GILLESPIE
Drummer on legendary debut

+

HOPE SANDOVAL
Vocal guest on 'Stoned And Dethroned'

+

ALAN MCGEE
Early influence as manager

LEE HAZLEWOOD
Hallmarks heard on 'Darklands'

+

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND
Sonic footprint in evidence

=

Whether newcomer or hardened aficionado, the importance of some of the material within this box is hard to deny. While The Mary Chain weren't entirely consistent, their peaks were remarkable and their impact notable. Whether your allegiances lie with direct descendants like My Bloody Valentine and Primal Scream or the stoner-rock scene, these albums had their part to play in their existence. While the fuzzed-up charge of 1985 debut 'Psychocandy' is one of life's essential albums, the rest of their catalogue isn't always talked of in such hallowed terms. Listened to in chronological order, these six studio albums offer a portrait of a band that never stood still. Dismantling the noise, and with a nod to Lee Hazlewood's more gloomy tunes, 'Darklands' was a different, fascinating beast. Having let the brooding songs breathe, there followed 1989's slightly calculated 'Automatic' where the band seemed to lose direction. 1992's 'Honey's Dead' was a revitalised hotch-potch of sounds, while 1994's 'Stoned And Dethroned' was far better than its title implied, blessed with a little intervention from Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval. By the time they stumbled to a halt with 1998's decent but inessential 'Munki', the band had traversed genres, inspired many and ensured their legacy. Boosted by radio sessions, live tracks and fan-selected rarities, it is done justice by this essential collection. GARETH JAMES

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: MY BLOODY VALENTINE, SPACEMEN 3, GALAXIE 500

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THE ART OF NOISE

WHEN PEOPLE CHIMED THE OLD ADAGE "A PICTURE PAINTS A THOUSAND WORDS" THEY WEREN'T READY TO MEET THE DOOMED BIRDS OF PROVIDENCE'S MARK KLUZEK, WHO DAUBS US WITH A THOUSAND ROTTED, VIOLENTLY BLOOD STAINED WORDS. HIS SECOND ALBUM, 'BLIND MOUTHS EAT', RACES US AROUND NARRATIVES BASED ON THE MOST HORRIFIC MURDERS AND NATURAL DISASTERS TO HAVE EVER HIT AUSTRALIA.

So who is the rather cheery chap on your cover then?
He's sort of loosely based on a character called William Lanne, who is recognised as the last living full-blooded Tasmanian Aboriginal. He suffered an awful fate. There was this character - his name was William Crowther, member of the English College of Surgeons - who stole the skull and then put another skull into the skin of the head!

Ew. Lanne looks quite old or tired, but what do you think is going on in his head?
I think he's pretty fucking miserable really! (Laughs) I think what the artist Peter Aldrich has tried to do is convey something about the treatment of perhaps some indigenous people in Australia at that time, which some of the songs on the album depict. It also reflects the treatment of convicts, which is touched on a little bit in the album.

Before we spoke I couldn't decide whether he looked really dejected or whether he was having - or trying to have - a sneaky piss in the sea?
(Laughs) Well, I think he could be doing that, but mostly he is reflecting on things.

When you pee in the sea you've got to stand really still for it to happen. And also he's got his clothes on; he looks very suspicious.
It looks like he's almost on the run, and has kind of given up or something; it kind of has that feel to me.

When you started song writing was the plan always to be one of the most visceral doom mongers known to mankind?
(Laughs) You really are very kind! The whole project started out as being folk music that explored Australian history and mythology from that period. I'd say, for me at least, the most interesting stories are often the most gruesome ones, and this is stuff that hasn't been explored as much, certainly not in music any way. I think it's always been part of the folk idiom really - people talk about being murdered etc. - and I guess I've taken that to another step. I won't lie to you; we do tend to labour on that stuff a bit.

You've taken a kind of tabloid approach to song writing...
There is an element of that; there's one song on there called 'Hang From Your Neck', which is about a convict that finds an indigenous couple, chops the male's head off, wears it around his neck and takes the woman and subjects her to an awful level of violence.

Have you ever thought of penning a song for your own gruesome death, and if so, how would you like to die?
That's quite a heavy question. I would like to go down the Manowar route, the heavy metal band; I would want to go down on the battlefield, and I'd be more than happy to sing a song about that.

THE DOOMED BIRD OF PROVIDENCE

Blind Mouths Eat
FRONT & FOLLOW
★★★★★★★★★☆

The Doomed Bird Of Providence's Mark Kluzek may have flown the nest for the UK, but 'Blind Mouths Eat' takes its inspiration entirely from his Australian homeland's history. Presented as three distinct parts, it first deals with the savage convict occupation of Kangaroo Island, then the quotidian observations of a 19th Century woman's tuberculosis diary, and finally concludes with an epic 19 minute piece inspired by 1899's Cyclone Mahina. Uniformly sombre and stirring, a palette of mournful violin, funereal drums and doom-weighted lyrics colour these themes of death, depravity and destruction; there is little joy here, just a haunting exploration of hopelessness and violence.

MAT SMITH

DIG IT, DIG DEEPER: CRIME & THE CITY SOLUTION, DIRTY THREE, THE TRIFFIDS

DAMIEN JURADO

Brothers And Sisters Of The Eternal Son

SECRETLY CANADIAN

★★★★★★★★★★

Eleven albums into a career that has seen a gradual but charming evolution in his sound - largely folky, singer-songwriter material bedecked with his haunted croak - Damien Jurado delivers his full-bodied masterwork. Having begun working with label mate Richard Swift on 2012's 'Maraqopa', the alchemical relationship truly fizzles here, adding a heft that nobody knew was missing. The spacious production on 'Silver Donna', coated in reverb and ramshackle drums, is a delight, while the claustrophobic drone of 'Return To Maraqopa' gives way to a glistening chorus. While Jurado's music has, on occasion, seemed a little slight, this is an endearingly ambitious, somewhat unexpected folk-rock triumph.

GARETH JAMES

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: FATHER JOHN MISTY, RICHARD SWIFT, PHOSPHORESCENT

HOLOGER CZUKAY

On The Way To Normal

GRONLAND

★★★★★★★★★★

Co-founder of Can, pupil of Stockhausen, pioneer in ambient European sound; to claim Czukay is influential is an understatement. Here the motorik magician collaborates with Jah Wobble on his third solo release, remarkably recorded in 1981. Working with the radical German producer Conny Plank to create overdubs and effects redolent of Jamaican dub pioneers, it mashes up his Krautrock past with spectral, skeletal ska and intricate Afrobeat. Metronomic beats, Django Reinhardt guitar, throbbing bass and Clanglers-like swanee whistles meld with Arthur Russell-esque grooves to create a multicultural musical stew, packed full of surprises and not inconsiderable beauty. Intensely innovative.

ANNA WILSON

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: CAN, BRIAN ENO, CLUSTER

PEGGY SUE

Choir Of Echoes

WICHITA

★★★★★★★★★★

Peggy Sue's prior releases wove alt-flourishes of darkness through tales of vengeance and heartbreak. Now, in their third long-player 'Choir Of Echoes', they tackle belief systems - and boys, but with grounded realism. Intro 'Come Back Around' is a haunting beck and call of harmonies and gospel chants, and a similar refrain appears in 'Two Shots', striking, looped vocals leaving you feeling cleansed. Confronting religion on 'Idle'- a mantra-like tale of contemplation - histrionics are gone, replaced by a raw confessional. Katy Young and Rosa Slade are well mastered in collaboration, but there is a distinct feeling of inclusiveness and pragmatism in their words too; demons finally overcome, revelling in true resolute defiance.

SHAHZAIB HUSSAIN

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: BEACH HOUSE, LAURA MARLING, THE MACCABEES

KASIM KETO

Long Car Rides

BABYGRANDE

★★★★★★★★★★

Producer Kasim Keto's largely instrumental record perfectly evokes the golden age of hip-hop with its prodigious use of old-skool beats. However, nightmarish and unsettling sounds and samples ensure 'Long Car Rides' always remains the right side of Daisy Age nostalgia. Its most obvious comparison is 'Endtroducing....', but 'Long Car Rides' sets moods well enough to be considered as a great record in its own right. The soundscapes Keto creates transport you to a more relaxing, far less hectic place, and even though that place can be a little too horizontal for its own good sometimes, it's a place you'll want to visit again and again.

JOE RIVERS

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: DJ SHADOW, JURASSIC 5, GIL SCOTT-HERON

THE BROKEN FAMILY BAND

It's All Over - The Best Of The Broken Family Band

THE STATE51 CONSPIRACY

★★★★★★★★★★

When they disbanded in 2009, The Broken Family Band died as they had lived: unassuming, underrated and under the radar. It's taken them four years to release a best-of compilation, but we're glad they eventually got round to it. This collection is a wistful glance back at the band's most charming work, focusing on the alt-country tinged indie of their earlier years, which they had almost completely eschewed by the end. And gems such as the warm fuzz of 'Hey Captain!' and dusty, stomp and wry-humoured 'The Booze And The Drugs' are simply the best sun-soaked Americana ever to come out of Cambridge.

DANNII LEIVERS

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: SEAFOOD, PAVEMENT, MEKONS

THE RIFLES

None The Wiser

COOKING VINYL

★★★★★★★★★★

Unfortunately for The Rifles, this record came a few years too late. It would've been an ideal soundtrack for an Inbetweeners season, but in a new age where people in skinny jeans listen to pop music in a non-ironic way, it's utterly lost. Repetitive twangy riffs went out of style with beige chinos. To be fair, they do try and mix it up with elements of Americana and folk, but with lyrics such as: "There's beauty in tomorrow if it means that I can change" in the likes of 'You Win Some', it comes off stinkier than stilton. Ah, 2009; so close but yet so far away.

JAMIE CARSON

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: THE COURTEENERS, TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB, HARD-FI

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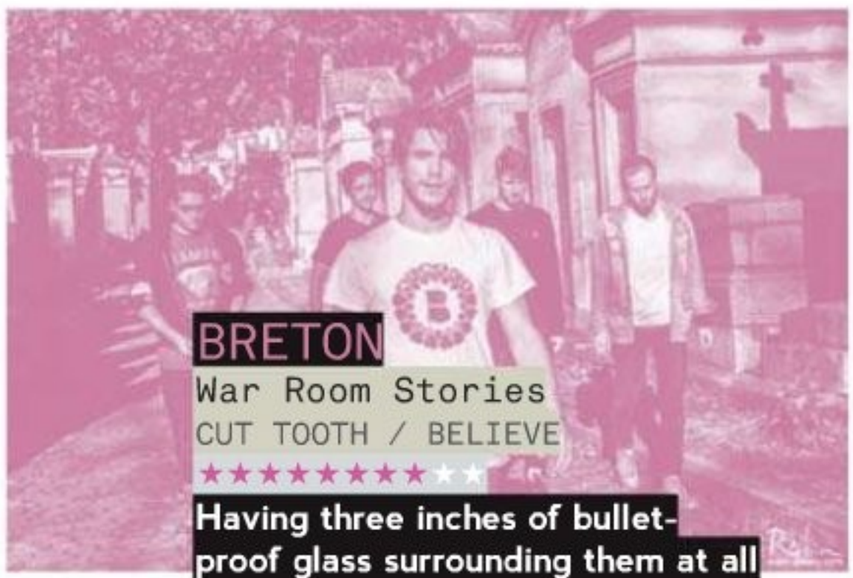


BRETON
War Room Stories
CUT TOOTH / BELIEVE
★★★★★★★★★★

Having three inches of bullet-proof glass surrounding them at all times seems to have provided the trigger for Breton to step things up a notch.

Following on from the thudding indietronica of 2012's 'Other People's Problems', the band has thrown itself into achieving an "atmosphere" for its second full-length, something they stressed when Clash paid them a visit in Berlin during the recording process. Working in an old communist radio station in the east of the capital, they were faced with a sound engineer's wet dream - loads of old '50s equipment as well as various nooks and crannies to carry out found sound recording. Using the Foley rooms that the GDR used to stage radio plays in, they've had every single sound effect they could dream of at their fingertips.

The five-piece have been mastering the DIY aesthetic for a while now. The product of squat culture, South London and Goldsmiths uni, the group serve as a reminder to the fact that guitar music - indie, really - is still relevant, and still deserving of our undivided attention.

When we met up with them, the boys professed to wanting to recreate the electricity that comes from playing live, a quality they've certainly captured over these ten cuts. Driving guitar strums and lightning-paced drums break into rousing choruses on 'S Four' and 'Legs And Arms', with emotion-laden wails from frontman Roman Rappak. Proving that the recorder and harpsichord marry happily with juddering synth sounds comes '302 Watch Towers', while 'Got Well Soon' unfolds like a motorbike revving its engine.

The attraction of this LP is the thought that's gone into it - every sound that you hear has been meticulously planned and recorded using - possibly - something that the Stasi might have once used. What more could you ask for?

FELICITY MARTIN

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: CLOCK OPERA, FOALS, IS TROPICAL

WOODEN SHJIPS
Back To Land
THRILL JOCKEY RECORDS
★★★★★★★★★★

Some albums are made to play out to the stars and 'Back To Land' is definitely one of them. A collection that'd sound equally as good on chevron-devouring open roads or on lazy days watching the sun sink into the horizon, Wooden Shjips' space rock-drench rarely misses. Take 'These Shadows' with its long, languid guitar lines that stretch on like a heat wave afternoon, or the rolling scuzzy melody of 'Other Stars', and you've got another set of rhythmic reverb haze that's insistent without ever being overpowering. It won't immediately blow you away, but that warm, overdriven sound makes 'Back To Land' another compelling LP.

REEF YOUNIS

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: JOHN CALE, THE VELVET UNDERGROUND, SLEEPY SUN

BRITISH SEA POWER
From The Sea To The Land Beyond
ROUGH TRADE
★★★★★★★★★★

The product of a number of live performances, 'From The Sea To The Land Beyond' is the soundtrack to Penny Woolcock's film of the same name. Very much a project close the band's hearts, the material is exacting and well thought through. 'Strange Sports' has an uncanny quality, while 'Bonjour Copains' is prime sea-faring stuff. Reworking some older tracks while embracing new ideas, this largely instrumental project has the air of British Sea Power indulging their rather more whimsical, experimental side. Undoubtedly beautiful but fairly inessential, this is rather fans-only fare.

ROBIN MURRAY

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: FIELD MUSIC, NICK CAVE & WARREN ELLIS, BRAKES

SIDE PROJECTS

BEEDEEGEE
SUM/ONE
4AD
★★★★★★★★★★

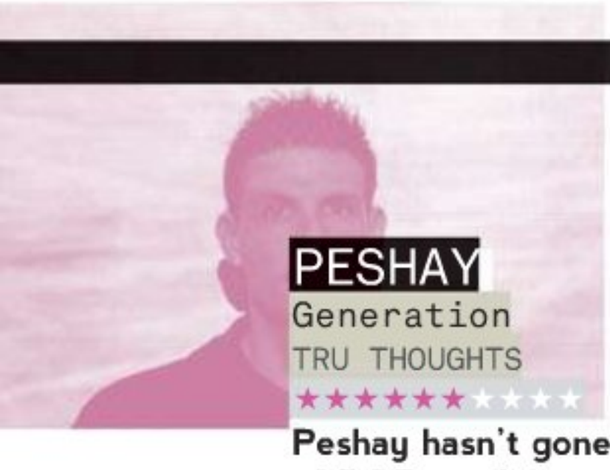
'SUM/ONE' marks the solo debut for Gang Gang Dance's Brian DeGraw, and the story of the album's creation rests prominently in the music itself. Recorded in Woodstock (a stark contrast to his usual dwelling space, New York City), 'SUM/ONE' is an absorbing journey into the mind of an artist clawing through a world of noise, desperate for clarity. Thus, the album is at its best when DeGraw's chaotic textures give way to more structured declarations of despair.

TRACE WILLIAM COWEN

7 DAYS OF FUNK
7 Days Of Funk
STONES THROW RECORDS
★★★★★★★★★★

The artist formerly known as Snoop Lion, now self-christened as Snoopzilla (homage to Bootsy Collins, known by many as Bootzilla), hasn't sounded this intoxicatingly energised in years. Album opener 'Hit Da Pavement', packing a youthful throwback punch, sets the pace for the rest of '7 Days...' - a pace that reminds the listener of the oft-ignored urgency of a more enlightened method of relaxation. Interestingly, it's that sense of malaise that gives the album much of its appeal.

TRACE WILLIAM COWEN



PESHAY
Generation
TRU THOUGHTS
★★★★★★★★★★

Peshay hasn't gone the route of D&B producers of past and sought a commercial cheque after making his name in underground roughage. But one of jungle's fusionists re-emerges with sieved jazz, and funk that's too clean and happy to recreate rather than innovate. He's on the right label in Tru Thoughts, but the frets and licks are not as spontaneous as they should be, conducting an ensemble poring over presets of easy Latino, crime-fighting jives, and smoky jazz made for just past earshot. Toe-tapping warmth and nicety will favour lie-ins and morning papers - at least there's room to kick on and shake things up from what's a tentative foundation.

MATT OLIVER

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: SKEEWIFF, THE HERBALISER, THE MITCHELL & DEWBURY BAND

DISCODEINE
Swimmer
(DIRTY/PSCHENT)
★★★★★★★★★★

There has always been something indefinably melancholic at the heart of the best disco tracks, a fact that French producers Pilooski and Pentile have long exhibited an awareness of. 'Swimmer', the duo's second album, further explores that unspoken pensiveness at the fringes of club music. Songs such as 'Aydin' and 'Dive Wet' combine catchy disco chords with moody vocals to great effect, and are complemented by instrumental numbers offering introspection and exertion in equal measure. Yet, with a slender running time and several tracks petering out before they peak, the album never quite realises its own potential. Memorable in places, but ultimately a missed opportunity.

PETER ADKINS

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: MUNK, MATTHEW DEAR, PRINS THOMAS

LADY GAGA
ARTPOP
INTERSCOPE
★★★★★★★★★★

The first four minutes of Stefani Germanotta's third album proper are fascinating. 'Aura', its opener, manages to be roughly 47 songs at once, jumping from nosebleed bass to (Middle) Eastern-coloured tones, a Spaghetti Western monologue to a stars-bound middle-eight, from quite-deliberately provocative talk of slavery and the burqa to mindless cosmic love lyricism.

It's indicative, early on, of an album that's not entirely coherent of message. It's so scattershot - the booming production is the only true glue that binds the disparate elements - that one can feel Lady Gaga's identity slipping. 'Venus', 'Manicure', 'Swine': these are tracks that one can easily imagine someone else - anyone else - singing, and the effect would be comparable.

Playing 'ARTPOP' a few times in a row on semi-decent headphones will put the listener in a neck brace, such is the bass on display. It pounds so intensely at times that the Gaga factor is all but drowned out - 'Donatella' is one such track; the beats of Russian DJ Zedd delivered loudly but without any real character, more identikit than inspirationally unique.

But 'ARTPOP' has its share of instant-hit winners, as you'd expect of someone with such chart-slaying pedigree. The handclaps and drawled chorus of 'G.U.Y.' immediately latch onto the synapses, and the R Kelly-featuring 'Do What U Want' is a dreamy mix of Drive-like synth ominousness and some excellent lyrical detachment on Gaga's part.

Taken as a whole, 'ARTPOP' prompts questions of whether we'll ever hear the real Lady Gaga. But perhaps we don't need to.

MIKE DIVER

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: CHRISTINA AGUILERA, MADONNA, MISSY ELLIOTT

ITAL TEK
Control
PLANET MU
★★★★★★★★★★

Alan Myson's music has long transcended the simple "dubstep" tag. His most-recent album - last year's excellent 'Nebula Dance' - straddled a huge variety of sub-genres, and this EP is similar in its broad reach. The best moments on 'Control' nods to jungle, Parisian house and numerous acts from the Warp/Rephlex/Mu axis, as well as the current bass scene. It's not a massive step forward, but that's OK - not every release needs to reinvent an artist. Instead, 'Control' works as a decent postscript to the LP and serves as a reminder of Myson's skills when it comes to making dance music with a heady, futurist sheen.

WILL SALMON

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: KUEDO, FALTY DL, DISTANCE

STROMAE
Racine Carée
ISLAND
★★★★★★★★★★

Album number two from hip Rwandan/Belgian producer Stromae mostly eschews the dubious references to '80s Euro dance music on his debut in favour of a more eclectic, worldly sound. 'Papaouti' is a slice of euphoric pop with evocative African guitar; the summery 'Ave Cesaria' highlights Stromae's stylish flow. The title of the angular digi-dub track 'Moules Frites' brings back haunting memories of GCSE French, while 'Merci' sounds like Moby circa the house-infused 'Last Night' album. Like a lot of Moby's work, 'Racine Carrée''s principal weakness is in its refusal to settle into one style, making for an ultimately confusing, though clever, album.

MAT SMITH

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: YEASAYER, THE STREETS, MAJOR LAZER

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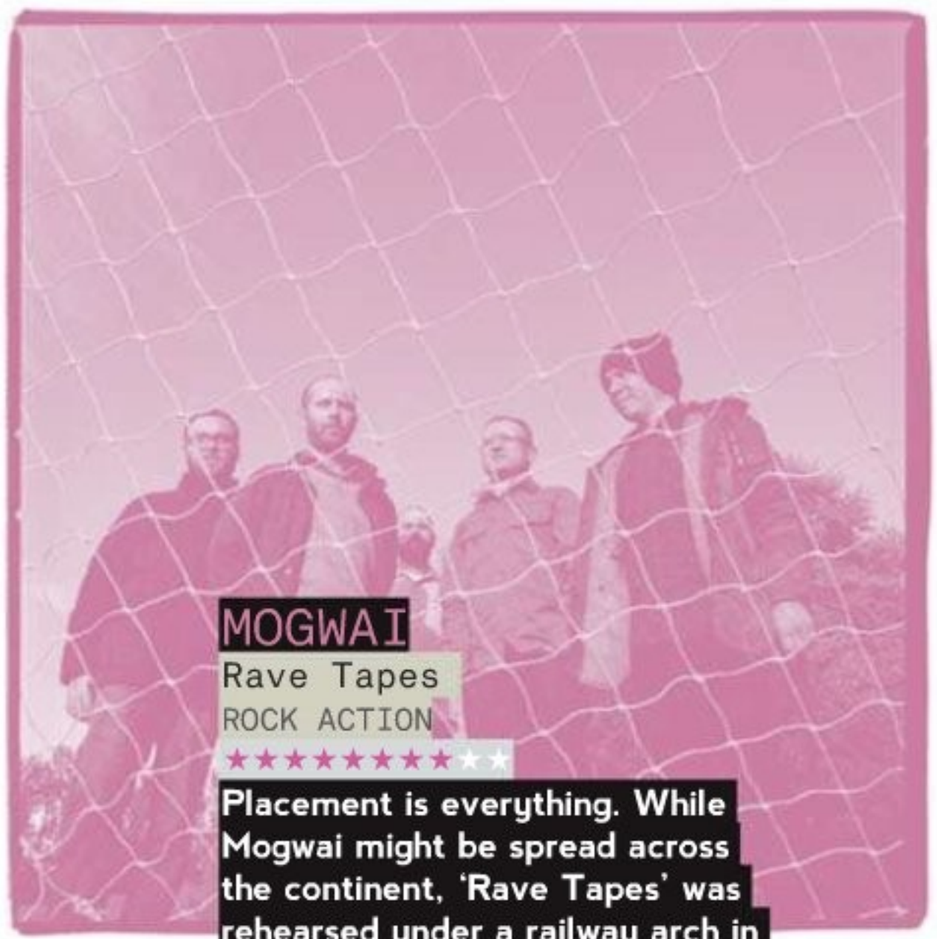


MOGWAI
Rave Tapes
ROCK ACTION
★★★★★★★★★★

Placement is everything. While Mogwai might be spread across the continent, 'Rave Tapes' was rehearsed under a railway arch in Glasgow's once-notorious Gorbals patch. Trite but true: there's an appropriate rawness to the sound, a muscularity that befits the one-time home of legendary boxer Benny Lynch.

Throwing some electronics into the mix, 'Simon Ferocious' is a languid, growling beast, while 'Hexon Bogon' is savage, the abrupt sound of Mogwai slamming a door into your face. 'Master Card' meanwhile has a jagged, Fugazi-inspired rhythmic kick, while 'Remurdered' - as ever, these are song titles to etch in your school jotter - is post-rock Kraftwerk, the sound of passengers being mowed down on the 'Autobahn'. It's just like GTA, kids, but strictly Teutonic.

Sure, Mogwai aren't exactly reinventing themselves here: it's almost two decades since 'Young Team' erupted out of Caledonia, and these are older, occasionally wiser men. Yet taken as a piece, as a work unto itself, 'Rave Tapes' is undoubtedly one of Mogwai's strongest, most complete statements; ebbing and flowing with rare security, the more orchestral passages quickly give way to near hardcore brevity. Continually surprising to the last, final cut 'The Lord Is Out Of Control' is a vocoder hymnal, the sound of Mogwai gleefully running down Daft Punk's batteries and shoving them in the Clyde. An apt step forward, 'Rave Tapes' finds Mogwai matching grace and irreverence, noise and beauty with the don't-give-a-fuck bravado of people who can only know better.

ROBIN MURRAY

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER! FUGAZI, KRAFTWERK, EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY

TOY
Join The Dots
HEAVENLY RECORDINGS
★★★★★★★★★★

With the failure to even release a first album with their previous outfit Joe Lean & The Jing Jang Jong, it's astounding to think that TOY are already on their second. You Won't Be The Same' is a sultry and hypnotic track, exactly what this band does best. Starting with a funky ass bassline that goes into a black hole of swirling, chaotic feedback, title track 'Join The Dots' is clearly the new epic signature song, leaving their debut single 'Left Myself Behind' erm, behind. They get the balance exactly right here, perfectly mixing noise and melody. It's clear that Joe Lean was the problem then...

JAMIE CARSON

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: THE HORRORS, CHARLIE BOYER & THE VOYEURS, THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

KIM WILDE
Wilde Winter Songbook
WILDEFLOWER RECORDS
★★★★★★★★★★

Christmas is a funny old time. As the battle for Christmas No. 1 rages the rest of us are stuck with the same 20 odd Christmas songs. Every year out of the dusty loft of stardom someone presents an album covering these said twenty Christmas songs. This year it's the turn of Kim Wilde. 'Wilde Winter Songbook' (see what she did there) is slightly more geriatric and sedate than those distant days of 'Kids In America'. The 12 track LP comes as a mix of classic Christmas covers and a few from Wilde's own workbook. For fans of Kim only but otherwise nothing to see here.

MATTHEW FRENCH

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: KIM CARNES, CUTTING CREW, MICHAEL BUBLÉ

X M A S J E E R

MARY J. BLIGE
A Mary Christmas
VERVE
★★★★★★★★★★

Blige's celestial, heedful voice lulls over R&B roasted classic Noël tunes in serenity. The first track 'Little Drummer Boy' offers an inclusive church aura with its concomitant choir. Pop producer legend David Foster bakes each musical component with infallible precision into a musical mince pie. Although at times this pie does get sickly sweet, as is the case in 'My Favourite Things', nonetheless it epitomises what all decent Christmas albums should be - joy rammed down your throat like pigs in blankets.

LIZZIE GOODMAN

BRIGHT EYES
A Christmas Album
SADDLE CREEK
★★★★★★★★★★

Have yourself a melancholy little Christmas with this eccentric, innovative covers album. Bursting with crude, experimental arrangements, 'A Christmas Album' is not your usual festive cash cow. It begins with a conceptual version of 'Away In A Manger', featuring feedback and eerie baby coos, proceeds into into 'Blue Christmas', which perfectly captures Bright Eyes' morbid yet quirky style. There are some hauntingly beautiful moments - intensified by looming string sections. The record comes to a close with a suitably strange rendition of 'Silent Night'. LIZZIE GOODMAN

A TRIBE CALLED RED

Nation II Nation

PIRATES BLEND

★★★★★★★★★★

The "powwow-step" trio returns with a second album mixing modern beats with traditional First Nation vocals, chants and drums. Listen to a couple of tracks and it's cool. The singing style brings a new flavour, while the beats stop it from being overly earnest 'world music'. 'The Road' has an early Warp/AI vibe, and there are a couple of EDM bangers. But you only have to listen to 'Indians From All Directions' - their collaboration with Das Racist, not included here - to see how much better they sound when working with MCs. Isolated, the interplay between the samples and the beats isn't as arresting.

WILL SALMON

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: NORTHERN CREE, DAS RACIST, MUNCHI

EAST INDIA YOUTH

Total Strife Forever

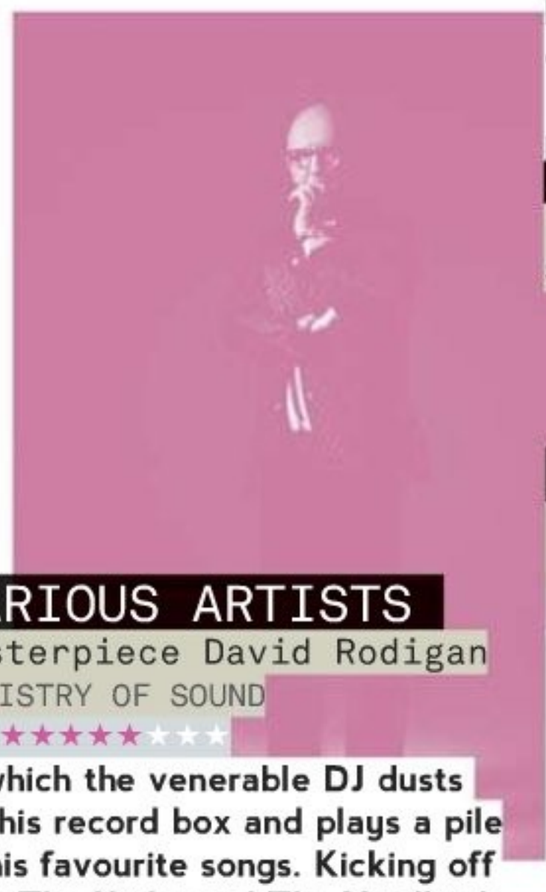
STOLEN RECORDINGS

★★★★★★★★★☆

If there seems to be a paucity of ideas in alternative music right now, it's probably because William Doyle, the man behind East India Youth, is using all of them. 'Total Strife Forever' is an astonishingly bold and inventive record, seamlessly moving from post-rock to ambient to techno, and more in between, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. This is music that's meticulous and expansive without ever falling into the trap of being boring or self-indulgent. It may be very early days, but it's no exaggeration to suggest that 'Total Strife Forever' is the first potentially great album of 2014.

JOE RIVERS

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: HOOKWORMS, SPIRITUALIZED, FUCK BUTTONS



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Masterpiece David Rodigan

MINISTRY OF SOUND

★★★★★★★★★★

In which the venerable DJ dusts off his record box and plays a pile of his favourite songs. Kicking off with The Kinks and The Yardbirds is an indicator that this is going to be a largely mainstream affair, and indeed cuts by Dusty Springfield, Marvin Gaye and James Brown all crop up. It is, unsurprisingly, extremely heavy on the dub and reggae. Bob and Damian Marley both appear, as well as King Tubby and an almost unrecognisable Amy Winehouse on 'You're Wondering Now'. It's here that 'Masterpiece' works best, as a laidback 101 on a genre from a DJ who knows it intimately.

WILL SALMON

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: KING TUBBY, AARON NEVILLE, DAMIAN MARLEY

CYMBALS

The Age Of Fracture

TOUGH LOVE RECORDS

★★★★★★★★★★

Named after a book by Princeton academic Daniel T. Rodgers, this conceptual album with accompanying short story and poem has refreshing substance in our digital world. Starting with a ruminating, bleak synth-led number 'Winter 98', which features lead singer Jack Cleverly's native French, it then works its way into disco-infused house with the likes of 'The Natural World', which, although succinctly follows the pre-tested electronic pop hit format, slays with its pathos-filled euphoria. Wallowing, dreary vocals are effectively juxtaposed with electronic twinkles, such as in 'You Are'. Whereas other tracks like 'The 5%' seem too chaotic and narrowly miss the mark.

LIZZIE GOODMAN

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: HOT CHIP, MGMT, ALI LOVE

BROKEN BELLS

After The Disco

COLUMBIA

★★★★★★★★★★

Despite all their seeming disparities, James Mercer and Brian Burton are one of the most compatible duos in contemporary music. In the past decade, Danger Mouse's 'The Grey Album' and his CeeLo collaboration Gnarls Barkley helped anticipate the increasing receptiveness of R&B and hip-hop crossovers. Similarly, The Shins' landmark 'Garden State' broke ground for future indie crossover triumphs. Both disenchanted with their separate projects, it was inevitable that their paths would eventually cross.

The sound of Broken Bells is neither explicitly that of Mercer's or Burton's; fans of either can expect to be instantly comforted. Though 'After The Disco' rarely sounds like an indie rock record, you can still hear elements of The Shins here: Mercer's vocal croon is instantly recognisable, while Danger Mouse's atmospheric digital soundscapes and resonant basslines are equally distinct. 'Holding On For Life's funky, mid-tempo groove recalls the album's predominantly post-disco themes, with Mercer's falsetto veering into Bee Gees territory, while opener 'Perfect World' coalesces all the trademark qualities of both artists.

The album's central appeal is its pop sensibility and the catchiness of its choruses, but it often runs the risk of sounding formulaic, and although it's the result of creative restlessness, 'After The Disco' never really takes us anywhere new. By playing it safe, however, they've made it pretty difficult for fans to feel disappointed by it.

HAYLEY SCOTT

DIG IT? DIG DEEPER: ELECTRIC GUEST, YEASAYER, CULTS

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WORDS: JOE ZADEH
PHOTOGRAPHY: DAN WATSON

UNKNOWN FESTIVAL

ROVINJ, CROATIA

We traversed plenty of festivals this summer, including Glastonbury, Latitude, Burning Man, Sonar, Optimus Alive, M For Montreal, and SXSW. Some were unforgettable (Oya in Oslo); some were regretful (Wireless in London). But one of our favourites came as a fresh shock. The debut year for any festival should be tricky, but Unknown glided onto the sunny shores of Croatia smoother than a cashmere hovercraft. Taking place near the cresting Adriatic town of Rovinj, a truffle-proud settlement with Venetian lineage, Unknown boasted beaches, mystical forests, art projects and a line-up for ravers old and young.

Poor Moderat reverted to a Modeselektor DJ set following Sascha Ring's unfortunate motorcycle accident, but their pounding mix of Monkeytown classics proved a worthy consolation. Tim Sweeney of Beats In Space took a boat party to Heaven and back via his mental vault of lost classics and future house, and The Horrors managed to fixate an enormously electronic crowd for over an hour with a 'Skying'-heavy set of mesmerising motorik.

However, the set of the week came from Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs. The Oxford producer nailed his custom rave vibe with a kaleidoscopic live set of 4/4 thrust, flawless vocals and dancers that make your hips move with some sort of techno-kinesis messaging. This one is the masterstroke of Hideout, Warehouse Project and Field Day, so we know the future is in safe hands.

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WORDS: ANNA WILSON
PHOTOGRAPHY: AMBER GRACE DIXON

WHITE DENIM

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND, LONDON

Let's not beat around the bush: White Denim are like a mythical Americana prog supergroup from the '70s - albeit much more unassuming.

They sound like the best parts of Yes, King Crimson and Rush with a dash of hot sauce added; they look like IT guys. Their music is resolutely masculine but it's fuelled more by intelligence than by testosterone. Such descriptions should leave us running for the hills, so why is it that such an unapologetically intricate, squall of psychedelic blues jazz noise feels so nerve-shreddingly vital in 2013? It's honesty, for one, and the remarkable levels of musicianship on display here tonight.

It's funny to watch people dancing that maybe don't know the songs all that well; the constantly shifting time signatures and syncopated percussion continually surprise. It's maybe a bit heavy on the guitar solos but that seems a churlish criticism. These overblown, unusual chord progressions could be cold in other hands but the passion of these guys lies in their precision. They're a live band and no mistake; a cavernous train shed in Shoreditch has been transformed into a Texan showdown, packed with heat and exceptional improvisational melodies. It's been a symbiotically soulful musical master class.

WORDS: JAMIE CARSON
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARC SETHI

TELEVISION

ROUNDHOUSE, LONDON

There's that old saying that television is chewing gum for the eyes. This can be reinterpreted for Television's Roundhouse gig in that the chewing gum has lost its flavour and needs spat out.

The New York post-punk icons fail in an awkward shambles to recreate the magic of their seminal album 'Marquee Moon'. Yes, we know it's obviously not going to be the same as it was in their heyday, but there's no spark at all; they're like statues on the stage, and the aging audience seems more interested in getting the pints in and tweeting about the show rather than actually watching it.

Someone does shine as bright as a mobile phone screen however, and that is guitarist Jimmy Rip, who has replaced the original Richard Lloyd. His solos are absolutely intense, but sadly that's not enough to save the punk originality of their canonical back catalogue. Maybe it was nerves (which they do point out halfway through the gig) or maybe it was the size of the venue that made Televison's rare London show such a downer, but the most likely and unfortunate reason is that history sometimes needs to stay as history.

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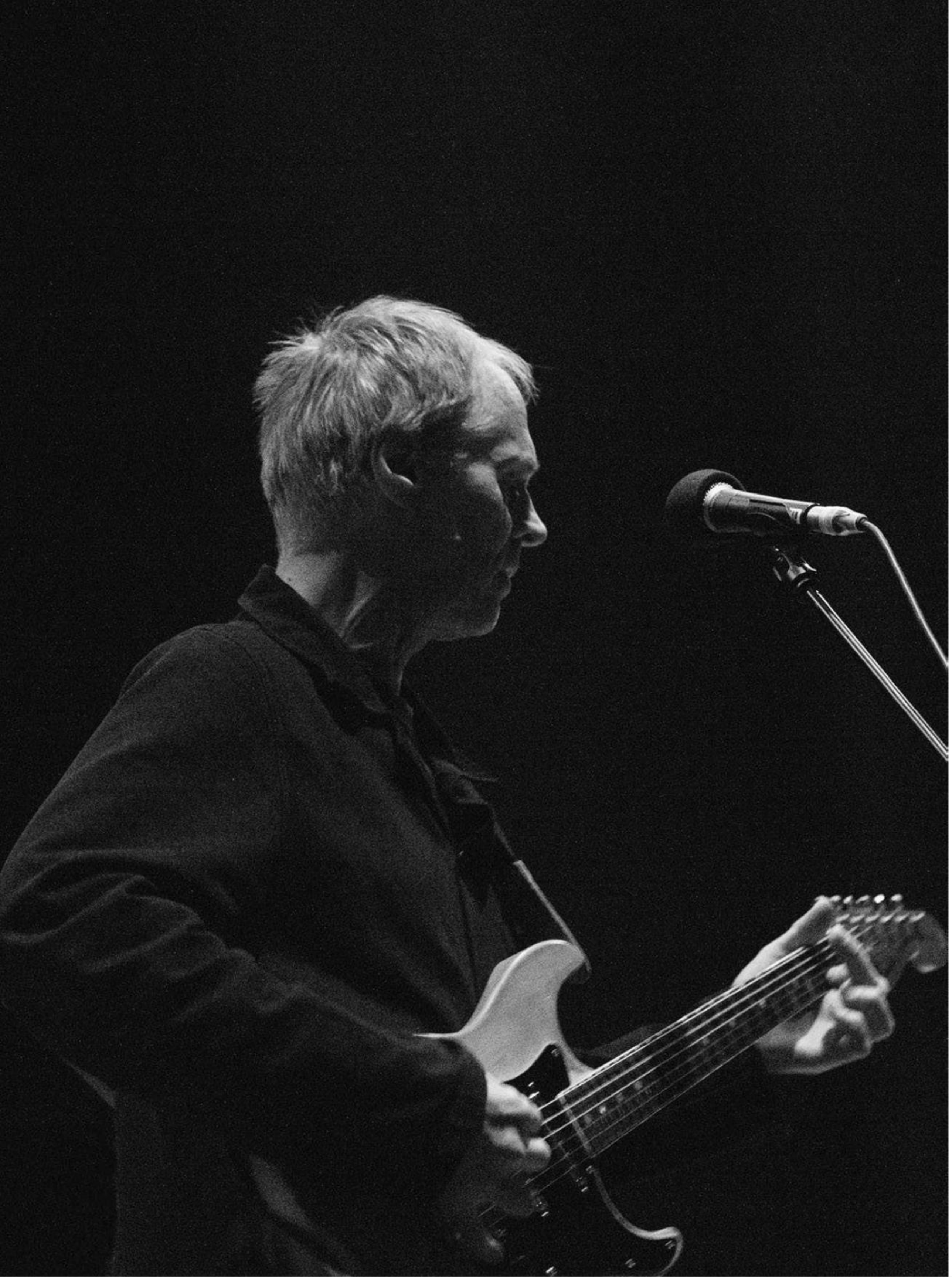

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CHELSEA GIRL COLLECTION LAUNCH
PHLO FINISTER

RIVER ISLAND, OXFORD STREET, LONDON

When one imagines the clientele of the original Chelsea Girl boutiques in 1965, they wouldn't look much different from the striking vision of Phlo Finister tonight. Glowing on stage in the line's white drop waist dress, the Californian songstress exudes vintage chic, and defines the mod ethic of freshness and stylishness.

Phlo is performing in-store at the Park House branch of River Island, the retail giant which Chelsea Girl rebranded to in 1988. The eponymous range survives, however, and celebrates clean, bold feminine designs in a vintage vein. In the corner of the first floor, she dominates an intimate stage with barely more than a whisper - her spectral R&B is lush, hushed tones, delivered with a sultry swagger, and is accompanied by a backdrop of visuals that attest to her love for Warhol's expressive films.

The five tracks she glides through are an enticing insight into her 'Poster Girl EP', where thick dark beats ground her ethereal vocals. 'Hotel Miami', produced by Def Jam's Benny Cassette, is a sensual suggestion of love for hire, while the glitchy 'Mod Dress' is rather more sinister than its pertinent title would suggest, as she bemoans the blood stains on her clothes from her friend's coke-ravished nose.

With more than meets the eye, Phlo is an artist of many layers. The gathered crowd, nourished as much by her captivating storytelling as by the Rekorderlig Cider making the rounds, forget for a moment their urban surroundings, and sway in time to her ghostly rhythms.

Mirroring Chelsea Girl's embrace of '60s heritage and a 21st century progression, here's hoping Phlo's endurance proves just as timeless.

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GEAR GUIDE

A-JAYS FIVE BY JAYS
£80
The old joke goes that NASA spent millions on developing a pen that could write in space, whereas the Russians just decided to use pencils. Well, JAYS didn't solve the wire tangling problem by focusing on wireless, they just made the wire flat and wide. We don't know how, but this new tagliatelle wire just refuses to tangle. Elsewhere, the sound is impressive for in-ears, with an exceptionally deep bass, but the strength of the a-JAYS is their compatibility with your smartphones. They have a smart three-button system that lets you skip tracks, play/pause and even take calls. You need never scuffle desperately through your pockets again.

BASSBUDS BASSBOOMZ
£49.99
Sounds in the palm of your hand. The small-but-mighty Bassboomz speaker connects via Bluetooth or AUX input, making portable audio easy… and loud. Its rechargeable battery ensures hours of pleasure, while an option to double up offers great stereo potential.

SONOS PLAY:1 AND BRIDGE GIFT PACK
£170
Another in the 'gotta catch 'em all' movement of home hi-fi as Sonos introduce their Play:1 range. This pack starts you off with a hi-fi system and bridge. Using the bridge and your home wireless router, you can link to the hi-fi to create a mobile soundsystem for the house, which you can control from your smartphone or compatible device. Better yet, you can just keep increasing your scope using the wireless network. So, add more hi-fis for each room of your home and within no time you have the most sickeningly consistent house party amplification of all time. Who needs legs?

JAWBONE MINI JAMBOX
£149.99
The little brother of the Jambox, one of the original and impressive portable Bluetooth speakers, is suitably sassy: lighter, thinner and just as chic, it sounds clear, rich and textured, and will probably steal its sibling's girlfriend.

THE FASHION ISSUE

ON SALE FEBRUARY 6TH

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WORDS: SHAHZAIB HUSSAIN

TEN THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT... DEPECHE MODE

STALKER

DEPECHE MODE ARE AN INCONTROVERTIBLE INFLUENCE WITHIN THE ELECTRO-INDIE MUSIC REALM, HERE ARE A FEW FACTS THAT DETAIL THEIR ASCENT.

WHILST Depeche Mode have gone through a few line-up changes, the three core members, Martin Gore, Dave Gahan and Andy Fletcher, are all original members hailing from Basildon, Essex. Gore and Fletcher, schoolmates and founding members considered themselves a "different breed" from the trendy, more charismatic Gahan whom they would audition to be their lead singer.

THE MEMBERS of Depeche were drawn to the punk decadence of the '70s, which was fizzling out by the time they came on to the scene. They were also drawn to the synth-heavy electronic works from the likes of Kraftwerk and The Human League. Their signature sound would therefore bridge the gap between the past and the future.

DEPECHE are pioneers in electronic music - a fact undisputed - yet they've still utilised modular and old-fashioned synthesisers from the '70s and '80s for their more recent releases.

COMMENTING on their varied fan base, they reference the die-hard, cult-like "black swarm" - fans in Germany and eastward from there, who care "less about the music, and more about the Depeche lifestyle".

DEPECHE MODE have never had had a UK No. 1 or even a top three single; the closest they came was with the 1984 single 'People Are People', 1997's 'Barrel Of A Gun' and 2005's 'Precious', all of which reached No. 4.

'PERSONAL JESUS' is an enduring anthem in Mode's discography. It's believed that their American label Warner Bros were hesitant to release the single in 1989, because of the radically different sound, in addition to the fear it would be perceived as a "double entendre of sex and religion" by conservative Americans. Lo and behold, the song would become the biggest selling 12" in Warner Bros history.

'MUSIC FOR THE MASSES', the album that would give them commercial US success, eschewed the band's reliance on long-term producer Daniel Miller, also Head of Mute Records. Miller had worked on all five previous Depeche releases, but their overwrought working relationship saw them turn to producer Dave Bascombe instead. It seems the change paid dividends.

QUIZZED for their least favourite song in a 2006 interview, Gore and Fletcher both chose 'What's Your Name' off their debut 'Speak & Spell'. This debut is seen by many as a phase that was characteristically lighter in tone, when compared with their darker, more contentious later work.

FASHION has been at the heart of the appeal for Depeche, their look provocative, at times unseemly. Gore was part of a band called The French Look, a prerequisite to his future aesthetic in DM. The long-held belief that 'Depeche Mode' is French for 'fast fashion' is a common mistranslation. The actual translation reads 'fashion dispatch', and is believed to be named after a French fashion magazine.

GAHAN revealed that during the 'Exciter' recording sessions, he would go through a phase of disenchantment with DM, due to his writing ideas being forsaken in favour of the tried and tested formula of him vocalising the lyrics created solely by Gore.

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INTEVIEW: SIMON HARPER

HOW WOULD YOU SPEND YOUR LAST DAY ALIVE? JOEY BADA$$ WILL BE SKYDIVING!

SWAN SONG

Where would you like to wake up?
I'd probably want to wake up on a plane. And then you wanna know what I'd do next? Skydive out that bitch! And you know what else? I'd land on the pyramids.

What would like to achieve on your last day?
Successfully wing suit diving. Have you ever seen those wingsuits? You can jump from one building to another. They're going to be really popular in the next 15 years.

You host a Last Supper: - what's on the menu?
I'd really go barbarian, I'd probably just find something. I wouldn't even want to get something official. I'd just want to go out and find something.

Who would be invited?
Whoever is with me, unless I don't know them.

What's the last song you'd want to hear?
Probably one of my songs. One that I haven't made yet, because by that time I'd have a lot more music out. It's going to be a long time away.

What would be your biggest regret?
It will probably just be wishing I could have touched more lives within my lifetime. But then I think after I die my music could continue to touch people, so I don't think I'll have any regrets.

What would be your deathbed confession?
Dude. I'm not dying any time soon so I definitely will not tell you that! (Laughs) I will definitely not tell you my confession before I die!

What would your final words be?
"One love."

What would you have written on your gravestone?
I really don't know. I haven't actually given it much thought, because I plan to be much older so I haven't thought that much about dying yet.

Who would you like to meet at the Pearly Gates of Heaven?
Any of my friends and family who have passed in my lifetime.

Describe your vision of Heaven.
I think it's more spiritual and mental than it is physical. I feel like you could possibly go into Heaven through your mind, like through meditation. I don't think it's a physical place, more a point of being. But I want to say one more thing: you have to be born again before you can enter the gates of Heaven.

If you could be resurrected the next day, what would you come back as?
As a hero. Stronger than ever. I'll probably die a hero so I could be like a super-gazillion-double hero; I might be like Godzilla or some shit.

The 'Summer Knights EP' is out now on Sony via Cinematic/ Relentless Records.

Superlative
Catastrophe
LOS MOMENTOS
SHOT BY AMBER & ASHLIE CHAVEZ
FOR FULL STORY PICK UP THE SUPERLATIVE CONSPIRACY No.9
AVAILABLE IN STORES IN JANUARY or at WeSC.COM
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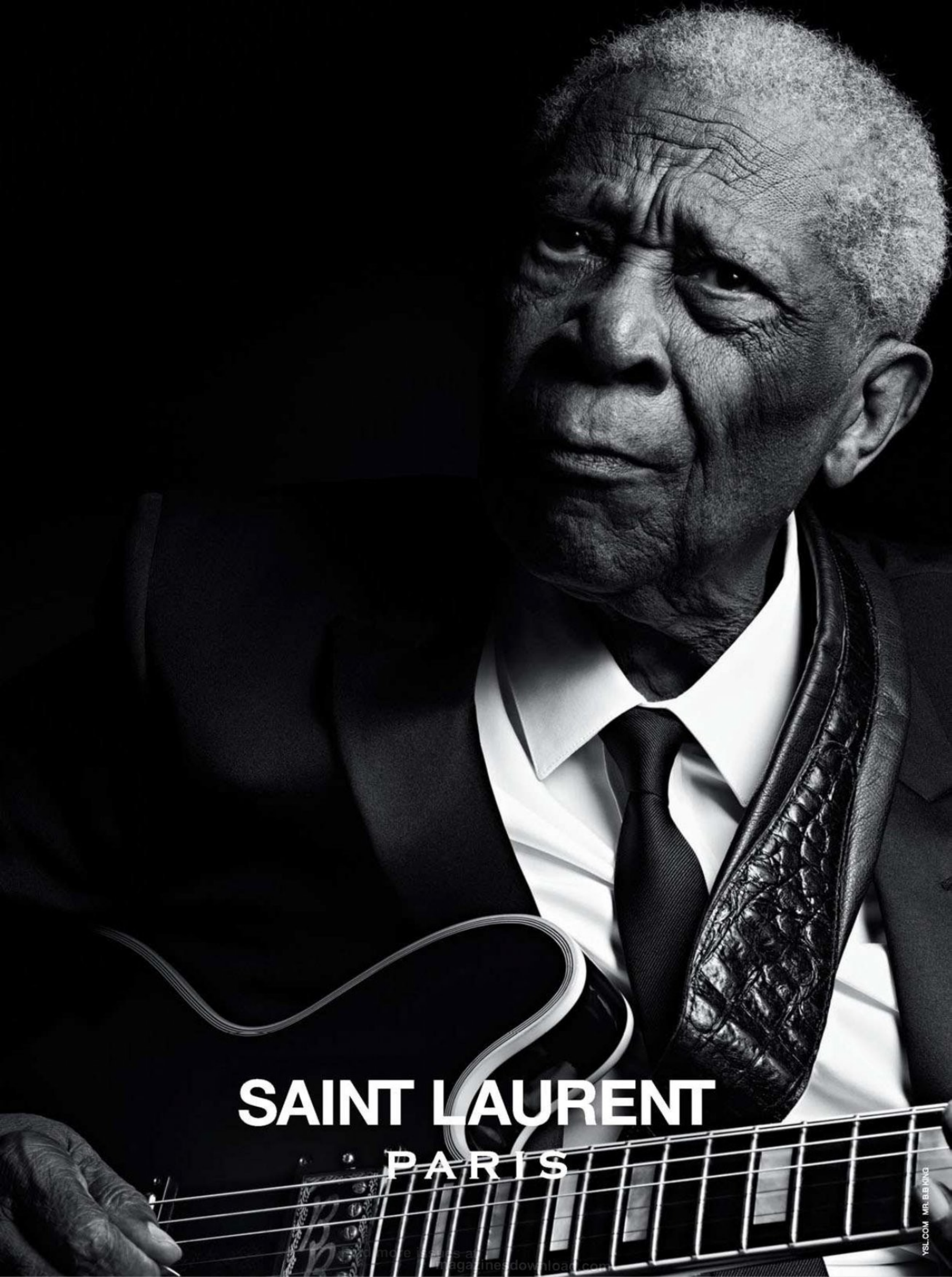

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