

Sherwood

Supporting roots Venues

FLIPTRIX



COWBOY
HUNTERS

GAS
REINS

AMTY



Welcome to Sherwood...

If this is your first time picking up Sherwood then welcome. Our goal is to improve the soundtrack of your life, with a little magazine to take home as a thank you for supporting grassroots live music, and hopefully somewhere in these pages you'll discover some new music you end up loving. We've been searching the nooks and crannies of a huge spread of genres and scenes to find the musicians who are doing something special, and this is the best of what we've found so far in 2026.

This issue's cover feature is the head honcho of *High Focus Records* **Fliptrix**, joining us in celebration of his massive new album *Elevation*. Elsewhere we meet **Cowboy Hunters**, whose cheeky reputation has been turning plenty of heads; the ferocious and explosive London mathcore outfit **Chaos Reigns**; and young performer **Amity** who has been making early waves after winning recognition from the *Royal Albert Hall's Future Maker Artist Award*.

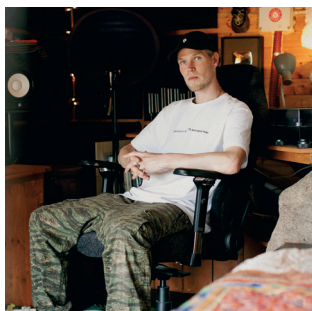
Alongside the interviews you'll also find packed selections of the latest album recommendations that have stood out in our neverending hunt for the best new music, from beat poetry and folk to death and doom metal to ska and mod to experimental jazz and beyond.

An enormous thank you as always to the growing network of venues, record shops, cafés and third spaces helping to distribute the magazine. Flip directly to the centre pages to see the full list of amazing places currently stocking Sherwood, who are all playing such a crucial role in keeping grassroots music culture alive. Lastly, thank you for being a part of the journey.

- Nick Cotton (Editor-in-chief, Sherwood Magazine)

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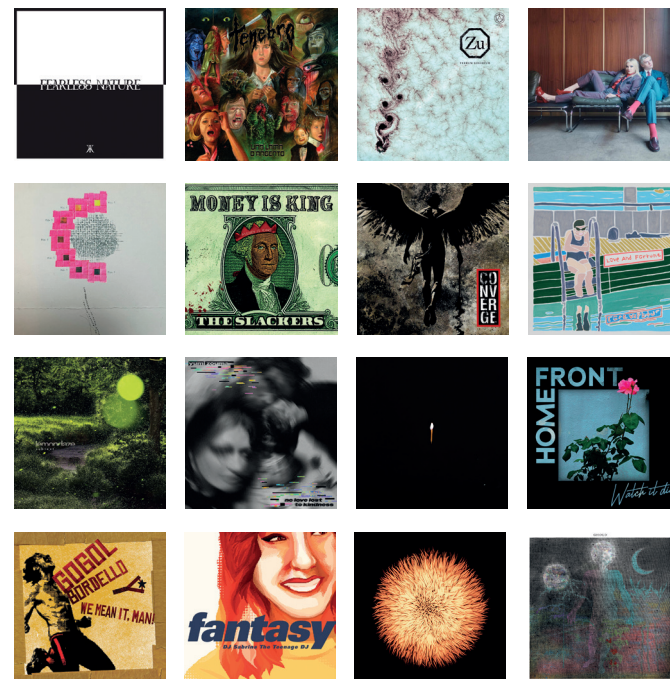
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Discover your new favourite band in 15 seconds...

Our discovery tool at sherwoodzine.com is built to make finding brilliant new music simple. Choose one of the four genre groups, then click on a legendary artist you already love. From there, we'll guide you to a recent release that captures the same energy. No paid features, just hand-picked records chosen because we think they're great. If you feel stuck and bored searching for new music, then visit sherwoodzine.com and let us help.

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Trix of

With his eleventh studio album *Elevation* on the horizon, we thought it was about time to shine a light on Fliptrix's massive contribution to UK hip-hop and the conscious themes running through his music.

Fliptrix's 2007 debut *Force Fed Imagery* laid the groundwork for his independent lyrical style. At the time, Low Life Records dominated the scene and Fliptrix was hoping to release music with them in 2010, but the label collapsed. On the advice of UK hip-hop veteran Jehst, Fliptrix founded **High Focus Records** that same year and spearheaded a renaissance in UK hip-hop.

With Fliptrix at the helm High Focus gave home to a new generation of UK talent. In 2011, he joined forces with Verb T, BVA and Leaf Dog to form The Four Owls, a supergroup of sharp-tongued MCs with airtight chemistry, that quickly gained cult status.

High Focus continued to grow in tandem with The Four Owls' success, with a prolific, tight-knit output and a roster that appeared all over one another's records and toured together to cultivate a dedicated fanbase, completely reinvigorating British hip-hop in the 2010s. By 2014 major UK venues were packed with young fans at sell out shows across the country, and High Focus was racking up millions of YouTube

views, as well as putting out early releases from Rag'n'Bone Man and Ocean Wisdom.

Amidst all this, Fliptrix's own identity as an artist has remained uniquely distinct, defined by conscious reflection. Contemplating existential questions of spirituality, mindfulness, and environmental awareness, Fliptrix is deeply concerned with getting closer to nature and away from the rat race, promoting self-empowerment and mental elevation.

His forthcoming album *Elevation* is a 19-track conceptual project packed with guest talent, and represents the culmination of his spiritual, mental, and musical values seeking to elevate the listener with his most diverse and star-studded release yet. Jungle icon General Levy, Boy Better Know veteran Frisco, and singer Ayah Mara all appear alongside underground rap stalwarts Da Flyy

Hooligan, Kamakaze and Coops, whilst the epic track *Dangerous* boasts no fewer than 19 guest MCs on a single song, all anchored by Forest DLG's production and artwork. Blending laid-back reflective styles with high-energy bangers and uniting voices from across the spectrum, *Elevation* is a statement of unity and a showcase of talent.

As a prolific solo artist, a member of acclaimed group The Four Owls, and the driving force behind one of Britain's most influential hip-hop labels High Focus Records, Fliptrix has spent decades carving out his legacy in the underground.

the light



When did you first realise rap was going to be more than just a hobby?

I knew from the age of fifteen that I wasn't going to be a miserable commuter going to work in the city. I used to see them on the train when I was heading to school and I just knew I didn't want to become one of them. I already had a creative mind and a do-it-yourself, hustling attitude. I used to go and knock on people's doors and ask if they needed any odd jobs done so I could make money to buy stuff. That same energy just spilled over into the music and as soon as I had my first album pressed I was on the streets, at all the shows trying to hustle it to anyone who would listen.

Did you have grand plans for High Focus in the beginning, or was this the work of fate?

As soon as I decided to do it I had big plans, however, I do think there was a lot of fate at play as well...

Particularly in the early days, say the first three years, there was definitely something special going on with the scene and subsequently the label. Some really incredible times were had. We pulled an incredible group of artists together on High Focus and really pushed the culture forwards, not just in the UK but in many other countries across Europe, Australia etc.

We continue to make a big cultural impact on the scene in 2026. I've seen hundreds of HF tattoos over the years, the love is real.

What are the core values that are essential to High Focus?

Real music for real people. Quality music with a message, delivered on multiple physical formats with high attention to detail and a big focus on live shows and face-to-face connections with fans.

Being independent is very important to us as is artist-to-artist connection. I think the reason HF works so well is that everyone who works at the label is an artist in their own right

so we are able to relate to each artist and their particular needs. No two releases are ever the same.

What do you think the label has given hip-hop that was previously missing?

We showed that it was definitely possible to make a full time living from rap music in the UK which I know a lot of people thought was impossible before we did it.

I also think we helped reignite a scene that was becoming slightly dormant and pushed it further than the people who had come before us. It is amazing to see new generations continue to push the envelope in exciting new ways.

The Four Owls were iconic instantaneously. What is it about the combination of Leaf Dog, Verb T, BVA and yourself that works so magically?

I think there are a number of factors. In the beginning, myself and Verb T were really good friends from South London who regularly did shows together, whereas, Leaf Dog & BVA were the same but from the South West of England.

We were already like two separate teams so when we came together the force became even stronger. Leaf Dog's production is also a massive factor; that raw, Wu Tang energy. That combined with 4 x vocalists rapping in their own UK accents about relatable, conscious subject matter really connected with people worldwide.

Can you speak about positivity as resistance, since it's such a persistent theme in all of your work?

We really do shape and manifest our own reality.

A lot of how you feel is down to perception. Two people could perceive the same situation with very different feelings so you can speak about positivity as resistance.

Whatever life throws at me I will try to view it as positively as possible, seeking out the deeper meaning to try and learn any life lessons, so even if it's a more negative situation, the lessons will be learnt the first time round so the cycle doesn't repeat itself.

Tell us more about what you're seeking to achieve on *Elevation*, and why you've chosen Forest DLG as the ideal creative partner?

The new album has an overarching theme of elevating the mind, body, soul and spirit.

Themes spanning transformation, generational trauma, energy, addiction, praising the divine feminine, societal change, self belief, positivity, run through the record.

I needed a producer who could match the energies I bring and Forest DLG was definitely the right man for the job.

We've done many songs together, he's also mixed and mastered all of my solo material over the past fifteen years as well as a lot of the High Focus catalogue. I've always held his production skills in high regard so it was only a matter of time before we connected on a full length album. *Elevation* is that record.

Can you run us through some of the guest features on the album and why you invited them on board?

We really pushed the boat out on the features as a means to turbo charge the *Elevation* concept. To build bridges with other scenes and showcase our music to likeminded fans...

We've got the legendary General Levy on *Energy! Energy! Energy!* And who better to link up with than the seminal voice of the jungle scene. We also worked with Frisco from Boy Better Know on *Visionaries* and Kamakaze on *Mighty*, both big names in the grime scene. Forest and I really respect their music so they were great to connect with. We also teamed up with Ayah Marah on *Transform* and it is great to have Ayah's energy on the project and she

really takes *Transform* to the next level.

High Focus events are a fantastic party every time. Was that always an objective of the movement? Also there is an 'Elevation' tour in May / June 2026 with DJ Jazz T. Can you let the people know where they can see you and shout out your favourite venues up and down the country?

As mentioned previously the live element has always been a key pillar. I went to so many shows growing up which inspired me as an artist but also as a promoter too. For me, there is nothing better than doing an epic show and performing new songs to a receptive audience. Over the years we've done some incredible shows, including High Focus shows at Brixton Electric & Scala in London, and venues like Lakota, Motion & SWX in Bristol.

I'm going to be taking *Elevation* on tour with DJ Jazz T this MAY/JUN with shows in London, Brighton, Bournemouth, Bedford, Manchester, Birmingham, Tunbridge Wells, Newcastle, Southampton, Bristol & Dublin. We've lined up some epic support and if you've ever seen me live before then you know the vibes are high and if you haven't, come get involved for the experience. Tickets available now from the shows section on high-focus.com, it's gonna be lively.

What do you hope people get out of listening to *Elevation*?

I hope it lifts the listeners' mood and spirit. I hope they take something away from the listen that helps elevate them to a higher place of being.

Tickets are on sale now for the *Elevation* Album Tour 2026 with DJ Jazz T, hitting London at Brixton Jamm on May 21, featuring brand new music from *Elevation* and classics from Fliptrix' extensive catalogue as both a solo artist and 1/4 of The Four Owls.



Amity

Guest column from @kittycat.kollective

Amity is a young man with an old soul who invites connection through his lyrics, music and conversation, sharing both his vulnerability and immense strength in his lyrically charged storytelling and cinematic soundscapes, writing about things that he is passionate about, whether from personal experience or a need to speak out on behalf of others.

Following a glowing review in The Guardian for one of his early performances, Amity went on to receive the *Real Business Entertainment Musical Excellence Award* for 2023 and become the *Royal Albert Hall's Future Maker Artist* of 2023/4. His current single *City of Stars* has a huge cinematic feel to it, full of depth and emotion with the music swelling and pulsing throughout. Lyrically it hits hard: a journey of self-liberation from isolation, control and destructive relationships.

I had the opportunity to interview Amity following his headline show in Feb 2026:

Who are your biggest musical influences?

I'm hugely influenced by lyrically dense work, where the lyrics and the instrumentation complement one another. For example, Will Wood is an incredible lyricist, genius instrumentalist and just all around incredible. Musical theatre has also been a big influence, playing a huge part in my life growing up.

My music is very much intended to be

cathartic for anyone who resonates with it and to inspire empathy in people who don't resonate with it. I write about things that I am passionate about, whether that is something that deeply strikes a chord with me, something that I've been through, or something that I need to speak out about.

Music is my way of speaking up on societal issues, things I've been through personally or for those who can't speak up for themselves; to be a foil for bystander apathy and the kind of loss of empathy and humanity found on social media.

Music saved me, not only writing music but consuming it as well.

What made you move from creating music for yourself to delivering your first live performance?

I performed a lot as like a little kid both through school and music academy which was familiar, safe and comfortable. Then we had lockdown, which was a devastating time for me, as it was for many people. I became a shell of who



I used to be; I didn't feel like a person anymore, I was just existing.

Post-lockdown, performance made me feel more like my old self, so I did an open mic night at a small pub. I was terrified as it was a completely different environment for me. People were a bit tipsy, no one was listening to the act who was on when I walked in, and for a moment I thought I'd made a terrible mistake. But I got up there and started playing and people went quiet and started listening. I ended my set on a song called *Ragdoll* which I wrote as a cry for freedom but now I sing because I am free. A few weeks later, I was lucky enough to have a performance reviewed in The Guardian.

How would you describe your new single *City of Stars*?

I think sonically I would describe it as cinematic; there's a big build up and it very much pulses throughout. Lyrically it's a journey; a journey of self-liberation from isolation, control and destructive relationships. There's a metaphor of a tower throughout, representing the isolation and the control - a tower to keep me locked blindly away. The metaphor extends throughout as the lyrics describe the journey; even though the relationship is ending, the control and isolation lingers. It ends with the declaration that your tower is gone now but there in its place grows a flower to mark where you let me decay. So there will always be a scar under the new growth and beauty.

Ultimately, I'd like to leave the world a little better than when I found it; to make a positive impact and I feel like this is my way of doing that. I'm human and fallible but I hope that when I leave this world my memory will be a good one.



How did you go about creating *City of Stars* - do you start with the lyrics, or the melody, or are they a simultaneous creation?

So I wrote *City of Stars* during a Physics exam. I was not able to write anything down, or hum to myself, so I had to keep it all in my head. Afterwards, I ran to a piano as soon as I could, found the chords and melody and recorded it on my phone as a voice memo there and then. I often write in slightly odd places or when multi-tasking, which somehow helps me focus.

The lyrics generally come first but they have a tune attached to them depending on the overall meaning, the meaning of the words and how they're strung together. They intertwine with the melody. I try to make sense of it all and capture the core concepts and feeling of it. But creativity isn't just mine, it is also the listener's. As listeners or consumers, we all take lyrics and remould the meanings to our own narrative and experience.

What musical goals are you currently working towards?

My biggest immediate goal is my UK tour: The Unredacted Tour. I'm terrified but so excited too. I'll be performing and taking my music to some venues that are completely new for me. I've got some more political music about the rise of fascism coming out soon and I'll be releasing songs every eight weeks or so in the run up to the tour. Plus I'm planning to release the music from the Royal Albert Hall show.

Catch Amity at his UK Unredacted Tour April/May 2026.

LOVE
NOISE
FREEDOM
FESTIVAL

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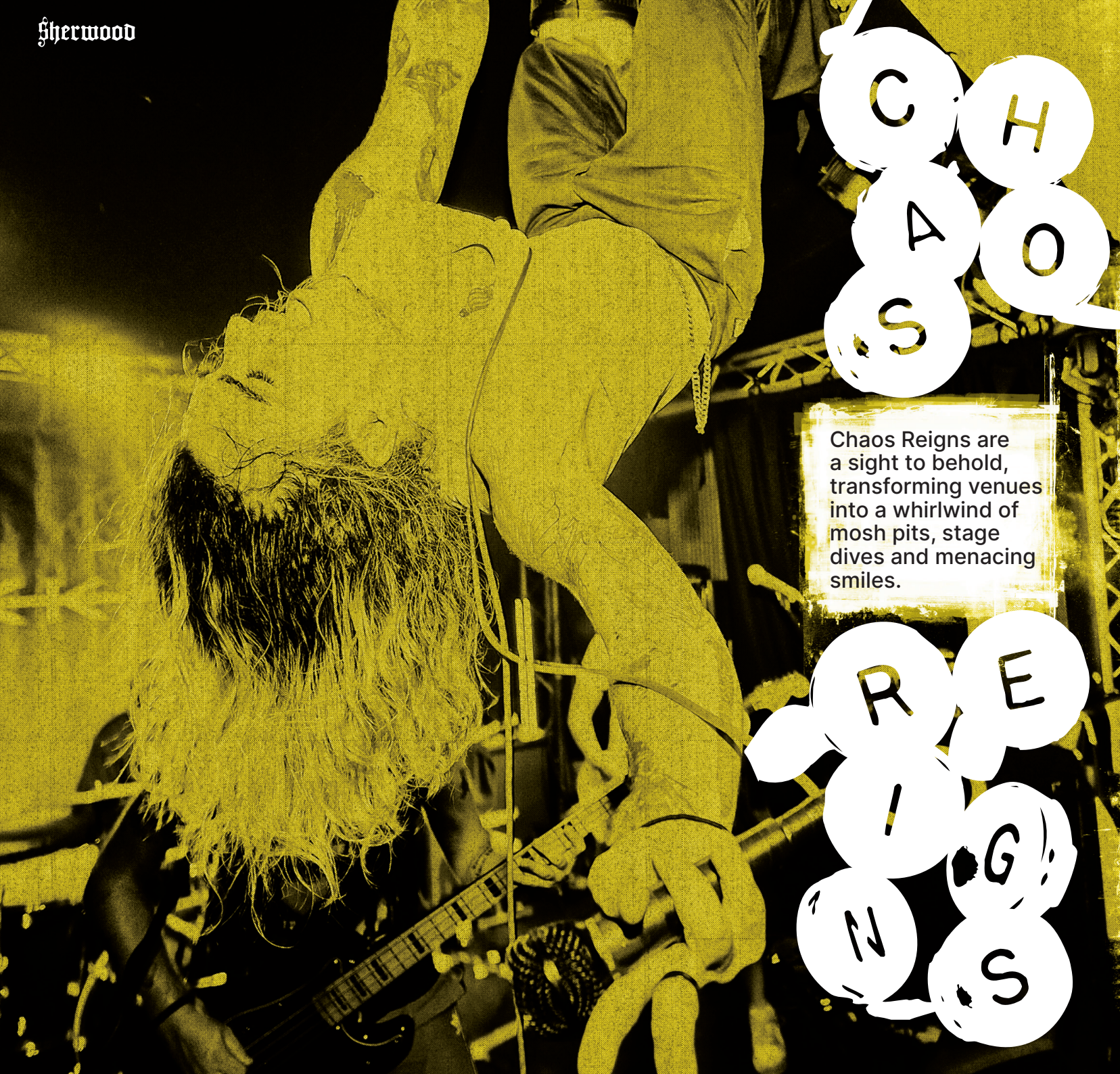
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Chaos Reigns are a sight to behold, transforming venues into a whirlwind of mosh pits, stage dives and menacing smiles.

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Cutting their teeth in London's grassroots venues, Chaos Reigns have quickly gained a reputation for their exhilarating live shows, with breakneck riffs and a fiercely intense presence. Evolving in just a few years from underground newcomers to one of the most exciting British hardcore acts, Chaos Reigns have shown that mathcore can be maddeningly complex and riotously fun at the same time.

Setting the tone early with a five-track blast of chaotic noise, their 2019 EP *A Horrific Accident* drew comparisons to Every Time I Die and Cancer Bats with a live stage presence likened to the wild, frantic performances of The Dillinger Escape Plan. Fast-forward to late 2024, re-energized with new members the band unveiled the unpredictable and exciting *Sweet Violence* EP, doubling down on technical mathcore with a balance between complexity and catchiness. A head-spinning ride that's complicated and aggressive with fiercely fun hooks, the EP is the first recording with the band's five-piece lineup, featuring Jason Heightman (vocals), Darryl Butcher (guitar), Joe Griffin (guitar), Billy Padmore (bass), and Dave Morris (drums).

In early 2025, Chaos Reigns won the UK edition of No Sleep Till Hellfest, earning themselves a slot on the Hellstage at Hellfest in France. Battling through multiple heats against nearly 300 applicants, the band were propelled from the London underground to one of the biggest and most respected heavy music festivals in the world. Playing extremely heavy music that you can throw yourself around to in celebration, few young bands are this chaotic, calculated and exciting all at the same time. We spoke to Billy and Jason to find out more:

Are we right in thinking the name Chaos Reigns is taken from a scene in Lars Von Trier's *Antichrist* in which a fox devours its own flesh?

Billy: Haha, yep. I'm not even sure I can say I'm a fan of the film, but such a shocking image felt like a good basis for naming a band.

You recently performed at one of the biggest metal festivals in the world. Can you talk us through the whole experience of winning the competition and performing at Hellfest?

Billy: The competition was probably my most stressful experience I've had with the band! Not because of the competition itself, but normally, when we play a show, there's no pressure. We know our songs inside out so we're confident in our performance, and we all think that they're strong compositions, so if people like it, great, and if they don't, then it's no big deal, it probably just isn't for them. But in a competition, we're actually being judged whether we're good enough to play at a festival, so there is actually something tangible at stake. Somehow we were deemed good enough to win, which is both baffling and validating. Guess our weird music isn't too bad then haha!

Hellfest is an insane festival though. Hands down the best festival I've ever attended, and to be lucky enough to play it too! We were so grateful for all the people who checked us out, considering how much amazing music there is on offer.

Jason: The whole experience was a bit of a rollercoaster ride if I'm honest. We ended up doing a 3 day residency at Moor Beer Vaults in London, the stakes rising with each set. When Nabila (the organiser) announced our friends BIND. as the winner, we thought that was it. In a shock twist she announced she was taking two bands to Hellfest and that we would be the other band. Proper nerve racking stuff.

Hellfest was a blur of fire and distortion. Not only our first major festival but our first time playing in France and first time outside the UK. The set went off mostly without a hitch (although Billy almost knocked me out swinging his bass around 10 seconds into the first song). We played our asses off and the crowd really embraced us. I was the first person to scale the Hellstage as well.

After the set we got to stay out and enjoy the rest of the festival, brushing shoulders with a lot of musicians I admire and respect, and just take the whole thing in. There are still times where I don't know if it really happened or if I just imagined the whole thing.

Is Chaos Reigns a live band first and foremost?

Billy: I'd say so. I think we're still at a level where most people discover us first live, rather than hearing our music from streaming etc. But we really put a strong emphasis on delivering a live show. There've been so many bands I've loved on record and been so disappointed when seeing them live, as they don't display any energy, or even visible enthusiasm for performing.

Yet when you see Dillinger live, not only are they playing the most complex music imaginable, they go harder than anyone else, and that is how they converted me into a fan. If we can emulate even a fraction of Dillinger's energy, then I'd say we've succeeded.

Jason: I'd lean towards us being a live band first too. It's definitely where we've made a name ourselves.

Backing tracks are increasingly common in modern metal, and

Chaos Reigns reject those developments pretty firmly, so tell us why?

Billy: I'd say my feelings on this don't just apply to metal, but all live music. I've seen some pop artists that have super complex arrangements, and yet live, the band only utilise guitar, drums and bass, meaning all the strings, horns, BVs etc are reduced to a backing track. I appreciate it's not viable or even affordable to bring a full orchestra or horn section on tour, but I personally believe in working within your limitations. If a certain instrument is present on all of your songs and is vital, then should that instrument not be part of the live set up?

Equally, I've seen a few metal bands who are on the more technical side of the genre use backing tracks for some of the complex lead parts, which, if I'm honest, feels like cheating. I've heard the excuse that 'the rhythm track is more important for a live guitar as it packs more punch', but it feels like an excuse, particularly when a lot of fans are drawn to certain metal subgenres due to the advanced musicianship, and they want to see that performed live.



How do you go about writing such complex songs built for the massive live impact? Are they more composed or jammed?

Billy: I write and develop the songs as far as I can take them instrumentally, which we then workshop in a rehearsal room, with Jason handling all vocal and lyrical duties.

It can be tough striking the balance for complex music, as if you go too far, it can almost become unlistenable. Music is about tension and release; it can't be all tension. Take Slipknot as an example. Even though their music is super heavy and aggressive, they still have hooks and choruses, which might explain why they're pretty successful!

Jason: Billy has the ability to create these beautifully Frankenstein-esque arrangements that are weird and wonderful. When it comes to putting vocals on top I try to compliment the track as best I can whilst also adding some sort of grounding for the listener. In terms of lyric writing I'm pretty much scribbling all the time. The world's burning, people are dying, and evil pedophiles are in power - I'm never short of inspiration.

What do you hope the audience feels and thinks at a Chaos Reigns show?

Billy: 'Damn, these guys are the best band ever, and I'm including the Beatles in that'

Jason: Whether they liked the music or not, I hope they enjoyed the show. We've played gigs where members of the audience have come up to me afterwards to compliment me on our set, sometimes it's their first time experiencing heavy music or something like us and you can see just how electrified they are by it all - that's really special to me.

What are your favourite venues in London and beyond?

Billy: Playing the Underworld was incredible, as it was such a staple venue I attended growing up.

Jason: I've got a lot of love for New Cross Inn; no barrier, open plan, low stage- It's such a great space. Beyond London, one of my



favourite venues is The Pipeline in Brighton, there's no room to swing a cat in there. We played a rowdy show there a few years back, I remember it being one of the first times I really felt like 'we're onto something here'.

Which bands have inspired you the most, particularly when it comes to live performances?

Billy: For live performance, and composition too actually, it would be Converge, Dillinger, and Every Time I Die - the big three, I call them. It's mad how much energy they bring, and it really helps energise the audience, which is why we always aim to give it our all, even when the audience don't know us or they aren't feeling it.

Composition wise, Slipknot are a big influence too. That balance of heaviness and hooks is vital in cutting through the noise of every other band, and they do it perfectly.

Jason: I love seeing brutal, unrefined, energy on the stage like Gallows, Jesus Piece and Dillinger, these bands really set the tone straight out the gate. Equally, I resonate with artists that can weave complex emotional components into their sound like Alexisonfire and Letlive.

What's on the horizon?

Billy: Working on new material and pushing towards our debut album, which would be a real landmark achievement for us.

Jason: New music, new tours, new territories, new fans. The machine rolls on.

What is the ultimate goal of Chaos Reigns?

Billy: To become as big as we can within this niche genre. I'm under no illusions that chaotic hardcore or mathcore or whatever we are isn't accessible, and even the biggest bands in the genre max out at venues around 1000 cap, but playing headline shows where people in the crowd already know us and came to the show specifically to see us would feel so rewarding.

Jason: To be mentioned in the same breath as the archetypes that came before us.

Where to find Sherwood

These are some of the treasured venues and record stores across London where you can currently find Sherwood:

Camden & North London

The Fiddler's Elbow

A well-known, intimate live music venue and pub renowned for hosting a diverse range of genres every night.

The Dome

A historic, independent music venue situated within a Grade II-listed Victorian building that dates back to 1884.

The Lock Tavern

A popular, historic pub and music venue located in the heart of Camden, known for its lively atmosphere and rooftop terrace.

Dingwalls

A legendary live music venue with a rich history dating back to 1973 that's renowned for hosting early shows for The Clash, Sex Pistols, and Blondie.

The Elephant's Head

A traditional Victorian pub and late-night music spot on Camden High Street, known for its lively atmosphere.

The Devonshire Arms

A long-standing Camden institution, dedicated to the underground metal and punk scenes.

The Dublin Castle

A legendary independent live music venue and pub, celebrated as a cornerstone of the UK's indie and Britpop scenes.

The Camden Eye

A historic pub and vibrant late-night spot, directly opposite the tube station known for its alternative spirit and classic pub food.

Raven Records

London's premier record shop for heavy metal music, combined with an alcohol-free bar and coffee shop.

The Black Heart

A renowned live music pub and alternative hub celebrated as a vital home for rock, metal and punk that's dingy and welcoming.

Werewolf Beer

An independent, American-inspired microbrewery and taproom known for its classic US-style craft beers and unique horror/rock'n'roll themed venue.

All Ages Records

A fiercely independent and renowned record store in Camden that's been a hub for the punk and hardcore music scene since 2003.

Soho

The Social

A compact but highly influential basement music venue and bar, hosting a diverse range of live music, DJs, and club nights for over two decades.

100 Club

A historic basement music venue that's one of the world's oldest independent venues, renowned for its significant role in the UK's music history.

Rough Trade Denmark St.

An iconic and historic basement music venue that's one of the world's oldest independent venues, renowned for its significant role in the UK's music history, including the blues, mod, and punk movements.

West London

Next Door Records

A record shop, café, bar, and live music venue that specializes in forward-thinking electronic, jazz, and soulful vinyl.

Rough Trade West

The original and oldest store in the Rough Trade chain has been open since the height of the punk movement in 1976.

North-East London

New River Studios

A unique, not-for-profit community arts centre, venue, cafe and bar that offers a diverse range of facilities and a friendly, inclusive vibe for underground live music.

Next Door Records Two

The second location of the popular Shepherd's Bush branch, functioning as a record store by day and a lively bar and music venue by night.

The Shacklewell Arms

A popular pub, music venue, and club night spot renowned as a vibrant hub for emerging indie music talent with a lively beer garden.

The Victoria

A historic Victorian pub known for launching emerging indie bands and hosting diverse club nights in a relaxed atmosphere.

Blondies Bar

A tiny, high-energy dive bar in Lower Clapton known for its hand-built, punk rock aesthetic.

Blondies Brewery

An independent microbrewery, taproom, and café that's the sister venue to the iconic Blondies dive bar featuring on-site brewing and a spacious outdoor terrace.

The Bath House

A not-for-profit community arts centre, cafe, bar, and event space located in a repurposed 1930s public bathhouse in Hackney wick, known for its inclusive atmosphere and popular outdoor sauna garden.

East London Signature Brew Haggerston

A vibrant taproom and live music venue located in a railway arch, known for its extensive beer selection, live gigs and comedy shows.

Colours Hoxton

A vibrant multi-arts bar, nightclub, and live music venue located in Hoxton Square, known for its diverse events, inclusive atmosphere, and unique lighting installations.

The Old Blue Last

A historic, iconic pub and influential live music venue, famous for hosting early and secret shows by major artists including Arctic Monkeys, Amy Winehouse, and Florence + The Machine.

Sebright Arms

A popular pub that's a staple of the East London music scene with an intimate basement gig space, known for its focus on new and alternative music, great pub food, and vibrant atmosphere.

Rough Trade East

The flagship UK store of the Rough Trade brand opened in 2007 and functions as a major cultural hub that combines a massive record shop with a café, a licensed bar, and a dedicated live performance space.

The George Tavern

A legendary, Grade II listed pub and live music venue with a rich history dating back over 700 years, known for its artistic community, vibrant live events, and a resilient, no-frills, old-school pub atmosphere.

South London

Amersham Arms

A popular, trendy pub and 300-capacity live music and comedy venue located in the New Cross area, known for its vibrant atmosphere.

If you run a venue or record shop and would like to stock Sherwood, we'd love to hear from you, so please get in touch at sherwoodmagazine@proton.me for more information.

COWBOY HUNTERS

Cowboy Hunters met studying music at Edinburgh Napier University, becoming a duo when the guitarist of their band Choka left. Since both members are drummers, they took up the bass as a necessity and began swapping instruments mid-set, mixing furious punk riffs with blunt and hilarious lyrics.

Alternating lead vocals whilst both deliver snarling lyrics, the band's live shows are legendary for their high energy and wild audience interaction, often ending their sets by involving everyone in the Macarena and Cha Cha Slide, turning a punk show into a chaotic cheese party. Slamming through furious songs, Cowboy Hunters' on-stage frenzy has translated into rapid momentum with several high-profile support slots in late 2025 including Franz Ferdinand at a sold-out Glasgow show in August, and several dates with Bob Vylan in November.

With their debut EP on the way, we caught up with the band to find out more:

What do you hope an audience thinks and feels when they witness Cowboy Hunters for the first time?

Feels: Overwhelming need to get down.

Thinks: I might just get down right now.

What can people expect from the forthcoming EP?

The expected.

What are your favourite venues and cities to play?

Anywhere but London.

You recently supported Franz Ferdinand. Can you tell us how that came about and how it was performing on such a massive stage?

We met them at a festival and they thought we were funny. It was good.

What's the worst thing about London?

The smell.

What makes a good crowd, and what makes a bad one?

Direct correlation between number of pints consumed and crowd vibe.

What's the worst thing about touring?

The smell.

Can you tell us a bit about your anti-fash banger *Shag Slags Not Flags*?

We needed a tune to coincide with the release of our onlyfans (<https://onlyfans.com/cowboyhunters>)

What did Gemma do to deserve her titular song?

She read my diary.

What is the ultimate goal of Cowboy Hunters?

1 million pounds, 1 million pints. Cowboy eradication. Meet Pitbull.

Punk & Metal

If you like Dropkick Murphys, you'll love Watch It Die by Home Front

Watch It Die announces itself by crashing in with huge, buoyant gang vocals squarely in the lineage of Dropkick Murphys, Sick of It All and The Bouncing Souls with an all-for-one optimism. Home Front fuse the rousing brotherhood of skate punk with the aching nostalgia of new-wave synths to turn punk into a vessel for sincere gratitude and brotherhood instead of aggression. This is a band that believes whole-heartedly in the power of people singing together. *Light Sleeper* is arguably the emotional cornerstone of the album, built on a welcoming bassline and an upbeat punk tempo, the chorus "We're born alone/We die alone/Don't ever think you have to live alone" is a rallying cry against isolation, hitting with force in a moment where loneliness is so acute. Home Front are using punk as social glue, and reminding us that catharsis only works when it's shared. There's a strong through-line to that era when skate punk broke into the mainstream via *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* and *Jackass*, and suddenly had the budget to aim high without losing its teeth. *Watch It Die* carries that same sense of ambition with choruses written to be screamed back, and each song somehow finding room for an even bigger hook. What *Watch It Die* understands, and what so much modern angry music forgets, is that punk's real power has always been in sweaty camaraderie, with arms around strangers, voices cracking as everyone shouts the same words at the same time.



If you like Sleep, you'll love Bludgeoning Simulations by GHOLD

This is metal that's not interested in speed, virtuosity or polish, but rather a slow heaviness that's ritualistic to its core. The opening track *Cauterise* is deliberately crude, feeling tribal rather than technical with two voices pitched a fifth apart like an incantation, leaning into major intervals in an unusual choice for music this heavy, subtly pulling the sound away from standard sludge expectations. The album then takes its first major left turn with *Place To Bless*



A Shadow, a long atmospheric piece that's less a metal track than abstract soundtrack work evoking dungeons and subterranean rituals, moving at a glacial pace if it moves at all. This is metal drawn directly from

the Black Sabbath school of riff worship, but an accessible record, but metal as ritual built around repetition and texture. A deeply satisfying, head-twisting experience.

If you like The Specials, you'll love Money Is King by The Slackers

Money Is King finds The Slackers delivering politically powerful ska rooted in moral clarity. Across five tracks, the band return to the lineage of songs like *Ghost Town* by The Specials, taking aim squarely at wealth impunity and the way truth simply dissolves once enough money is involved. The production holds a beautiful tension between old and new, with vintage equipment that sounds worn paired with crisp, high-definition recording. Glenn Pine takes the lead vocal on *Hold On*, delivering a high-pitched rocksteady performance that feels directly descended from classic Jamaican roots music, with loads of space and a gentle softness that contrasts with the earlier harsh observations. *Money Is King* is a brilliant EP from a brilliant band that proves that telling the truth may not win you much, but it's still worth doing.



If you like Cannibal Corpse, you'll love Una L'ama d'Argento by Tenebro

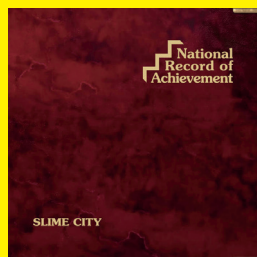
Una Lama d'Argento is a death metal album through and through, but one that understands that evil matters more than technique. With horror samples and interludes setting the tone, the riffs lurch and grind forward with a sense of menace that runs far deeper than surface-level creepiness. Tenebro are not interested in the hyper-clean, ultra-precise production that dominates so much modern extreme metal. Instead, this album sounds like it was recorded in a bog, every instrument bleeding into the next with cavernous, growling vocals that are



muddy and hostile. One track feels like a pursuit, another like an execution. The record stays at a constant ten, pummeling forward with a defiant rejection of modern metal's clarity and cleanliness.

If you like The Jam, you'll love National Record of Achievement by Slime City

Slime City are both sharply observant and gleefully ridiculous. Confusion and exhilaration run right through the record, with a nervy, high-pitched vocal delivery that recalls Johnny Rotten, but more giddy than angry. *Less burn it down, more should we dance?* The album constantly flirts with classic new wave ideas while keeping one foot planted firmly on a sticky club floor. For all the bounce and humour there's a persistent thread of anxiety running underneath the party, with *Two Types of People* wrestling with whether the world is run by incompetence or malice. Funny, frantic, and full of ideas, *National Record of Achievement* is a surprisingly sharp document of modern British anxiety.



If you like The Clash, you'll love We Mean It, Man! by Gogol Bordello

In their early days, few of their listeners could have pointed to Ukraine on a map, but Gogol Bordello's long-standing identity as New York's passionate and vibrant immigrant-led protest band makes them the perfect soundtrack to the drummers keeping ICE agents awake all night. The band remain exhausting in the best way, with drums that crack with punk aggression and violin that tugs fiercely at the



heartstrings played with devotional conviction. There are flashes of dub and spaghetti western grandeur, all feeding the same core message of solidarity in sweaty performance. Gogol Bordello haven't changed their

message or their sound, and they now deserve the biggest stages available.

If you like Slayer, you'll love Love Is Not Enough by Converge

Four people in a room making a deafening racket with no gloss, just instruments and fury. Jacob Bannon's vocals are more discernible than ever, and remarkably you can actually catch the words he's hollering, making his accusatory rage land even harder. The four-piece thunder with Ben Koller's drumming remaining some of the most engaging and relentlessly inventive in heavy music. Tracks like *Bad Faith* and *Amon Amok* don't trash so much as stomp with huge, Sabbath-sized riffs grinding forward with Kurt Ballou's guitar committed to true evil. Converge return with their most direct and blunt record in years, because it's exactly what the moment demands.



Alternative & Indie

If you like Paul Simon, you'll love Love and Fortune by Stella Donnelly

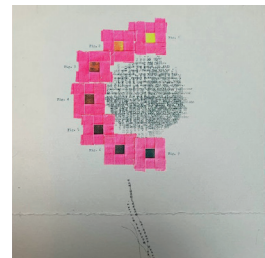
Love and Fortune is an album that earns your trust within seconds, with a softness that hangs in the air like a purple cloud and no rhythm section, just a warm pad and Stella Donnelly's voice repeating a gentle melody and letting it breathe. Again and again, Donnelly places herself in environments where you could hear a pin drop, using silence and sparseness as tools to assert emotional clarity. One of the album's great pleasures is its unpredictability of texture. From track to track, you're never quite sure what form the next song will take, sometimes just a piano and a voice, sometimes a fully orchestrated arrangement with layers of harmonies, with a through-line that puts the melodies and stories first. *Baths* feels like a timeless folk lullaby with minimal accompaniment whilst *Year of Trouble* and the title track *Love and Fortune* lean into more unusual chord sequences, and it all feels rooted in an older tradition of songwriting that treated simple melodies as the primary craft to be honed. *Love and Fortune* is special because of how strong the songwriting is, with production that enriches without stealing focus from the melodies or the stories at their core. Songs written to hold a silent room, imbued with sadness and millennial weariness but also a prevailing feeling of gratitude.



If you like Frightened Rabbit, you'll love Seven Sounds, Forever. by Clean Cut Kid

Seven Sounds, Forever. is an album about love lived under constant anxiety. The music sways gently, slowing and speeding, and throughout the album Clean Cut Kid use folk as a foundation, but with a low-end warmth that gives the songs a subtle groove that you can nod along to even while the lyrics spiral. The album is funny in its anxious bluntness throughout, as track titles like *I'm a Piece of Shit* suggest something far harsher on paper than what actually unfolds.

These songs are more about giving intrusive thoughts voice so that they can be defanged than genuine self-loathing and despair. There's warmth in the arrangements and humour in the self-awareness, as anxieties are shared rather than dumped on the listener.



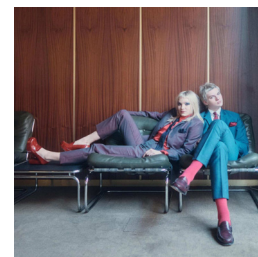
If you like Spiritualized, you'll love subtext by Lemondaze

Plenty of bands know how to sound big, but far fewer understand how to make scale feel meaningful, and from the opening seconds of *polari* it's immediately clear that this is a carefully constructed atmosphere where beauty is given time to breathe. *c=bain* slows everything to a funeral-doom pace, but still prioritises beauty over heaviness, feeling submerged, weighty and ominous until the massive final slow-motion storm. The closing track *terra* ties everything together with a reassuring chord sequence that gives way to an enormous stadium-sized guitar figure that enters like a curtain call. For a five-track EP built on softness and atmosphere, *subtext* lands with remarkable impact.



If you like The Who, you'll love Wasted On Youth by The Molotovs

The Molotovs are loud British rock revivalists with swaggering shout-alongs, and they do it extremely well. Many of these songs feel structurally pre-punk, like they could sit comfortably alongside The Who or The Kinks. At the same time there's clear Britpop swagger with flashes of Gallagher-style confidence in the delivery, and you can hear the kinetic rush of The Libertines or the youthful urgency of Arctic Monkeys' debut. Crucially, The



Molotovs feel a lot more polished, professional, and precise than many of those comparisons. Siblings Mathew and Issey can play, with twangy, melodic bass lines that are constantly moving and guitar

work that's pure rock 'n' roll muscle. Big room indie that swaggers and obeys the most basic enduring rules of rock.

If you like The Cranberries, you'll love No Love Lost to Kindness by Yumi Zouma

The album's fascinating polarity is a tension between dark tones and friendly, glowing warmth. *Bashville on the Sugar* rollicks at a brisk pace with drums in constant motion and a breeziness that keeps everything buoyant and the vocals yearn without collapsing into despair.



The enormous chorus on *Drag* exemplifies their dynamic perfectly with verses that are intimate and restrained before bursting into a hopeful and vast grunge chorus with the scale of 90s alt-rock but

none of the bitterness. *Blister* is pure sunlit indie and *Phoebes Song* bounces along with warmth and another effortless catchy chorus. The heartbreak is real and the regret is there, but the cohesive and tender sound of the band suggests resilience rather than collapse.

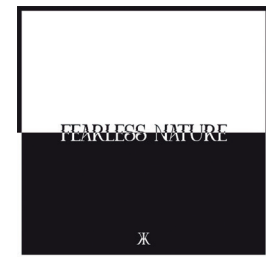
If you like The Get Up Kids, you'll love I Used To Go To This Bar by Joyce Manor

Most of the songs barely break the two-minute mark and yet somehow every last one of them lands like an anthem. This is direct, quick-fire emo with no indulgence and no wasted time. These songs arrive, state their case, and leave, feeling like fully realised pop-punk songs that trust their hooks. When *Well, Whatever It Was* crashes into its chorus there's so much confidence in how pop-punk works, and the warmth in the production separates Joyce Manor from a lot of their contemporaries with a rootsy authenticity. Joyce Manor write big moments and trust them to land without stretching them, and it's astonishingly anthemic given its runtime. Quick, hook-driven emo with subtle folk inflections and a warmth in the production that feels considered and authentic.



If you like The Verve, you'll love Fearless Nature by Kid Kapichi

Jack Wilson's way with words cannot be overstated, as the opener *Leader of the Free World* takes clichés, idioms, everyday common slang and pub talk phrases and layers them into something far more evocative. Beat poetry disguised as indie rock, you almost forget he's singing pitch perfect because the focus is so firmly on the clever tapestry of words. What makes *Fearless Nature* so compelling is that it's absolutely rooted in the British indie tradition, but with a distinct slant that places the lyrics as front and centre as they were on *Original Pirate Material*, becoming much more about the observations than the riffs. An impressive evolution that's dark, streetwise, and triumphant.



Jazz, Hip-Hop & Funk

If you like Naked City, you'll love Ferrum Sidereum by Zu

Ferrum Sidereum is gloriously unhinged, landing with the impact of a joke told at an unbearable volume. This is at heart a jazz trio, but playing the language of djent and groove metal with an obsession with riffs and endurance, and a loose and raucous execution that's splendidly messy. *Golgotha* sounds like Meshuggah being asked to perform on Sesame Street. At 80 minutes, *Ferrum Sidereum* is unapologetically expansive, with most tracks pushing past the seven-minute mark in an exhausting spell. Masters of tension, Zu repeat phrases over and over with grooves tightening into knots that you can't quite count. *A.I. Hive Mind* spirals into full-blown freakouts evoking the feral intensity of John Zorn, while others like *Kether* and *Pleroma* lean into atmosphere and dread. *The Celestial Bull and the White Lady* captures the hypnotic build of a classic Tool jam where repetitious drum passages become transcendent, and the title track closes the record with an uncountable phrase repeated and hammered into the ground in a staggering endurance test. *Ferrum Sidereum* is incredibly entertaining considering the vast 80-minute runtime, conjuring a staggering range of moods with a limited core setup. From claustrophobic dread to swaggering funk to ritualistic trance, this is three expert musicians building worlds with constantly escalating grooves, and the album feels less like a jazz album experimenting with metal influences, and much more like an experimental metal album that's been completely stripped of the genre's usual constraints. *Ferrum Sidereum* is a towering achievement for fans of experimental jazz, modern extreme metal, or anyone interested in the collapse of genre borders.



If you like John Coltrane, you'll love Cosmogonia by Yom

The first track *Origin* represents cosmic Genesis with almost nothing but lightning-fast clarinet arpeggios and no pauses or audible breaths for over five minutes, just a continuous fluttering torrent of notes that ripple and shimmer like a storm. The speed is staggering, fingers flying at a rate that defies comprehension, yet there's softness despite the velocity. Fluttering like a butterfly with relentless movement and subtle harmonic shifts, Yom will alter a single



note every few repetitions totally reshaping the chordal gravity beneath. The effect is both virtuosic and deeply evocative. The clarinet proves remarkably expressive under this spotlight, an instrument that

rarely commands centre stage in contemporary music. *Cosmogonia* is breathlessly fast, yet within that speed slower currents form, and calmer patterns emerge. Music of this level can often feel formal, academic and static, but *Cosmogonia* trembles with darkness and surges with enormous weight.

If you like Bootsy Collins, you'll love VIVACE by Vincen Garcia

Music this virtuosic rarely has so much personality, but *VIVACE* feels like something Ace Ventura would throw on while getting dressed for work. It's sun-drenched, playful, and ridiculous with a tempo range that runs from fast to very fast to absolutely outrageous.



APIETA 2.0 might be in 7/8, but at this velocity it's hard to tell, the band sounding like they're operating on pure faith as Garcia plays like Mario with a mushroom power-up bouncing off everything in sight. Despite the speed the playing is incredibly precise, often soft and controlled with a delicacy to the attack that prevents it from becoming a brute force, and the horns deserve enormous credit with tight, punchy melodies that are an integral part of the rhythm section. The sole vocal cut *NEW HOME* introduces a warm moment of shared joy amid the fireworks, whilst *JET LAG* is cartoonish in its speed, sounding like Sonic the Hedgehog with a hundred rings.



If you like Anderson .Paak, you'll love MOOLODIC: Hotep Luxury by MoRuf

Rather than being defined by bravado, hardness, status, or confrontation, this record is gentle and sunny with a loose and soulful calm. The album begins with reflective beat-poetry before the first full track *BENO!* which makes it clear that while this record feels relaxed, it's not retro or dusty in its execution. Crisp, modern hip-hop guided by a deep affection for soul and jazz, the album moves between moods and grooves like a mixtape. *PT Cruiser* with SZA is a standout slow jam that's hazy, romantic and unhurried as MoRuf moves effortlessly between rapping and singing. Their chemistry feels sharp and natural with the two voices sharing space and hooks rather than competing. There are moments elsewhere that carry the distinctly mischievous and playful swagger of Tyler, The

Creator in the spirit of curiosity and looseness, also bringing OutKast to mind in the way the record balances reflective soulfulness with bumping, head-nodding tracks. There's self-aware humour throughout that's clever without feeling like the record is trying to prove anything. It's classy without being snooty, and thoughtful without being heavy. The album is short and sharp, with every track earning its place and offering something distinct.



If you like Nubya Garcia, you'll love Momoko by Momoko Gill

Momoko is a debut that refuses to sit neatly in one lane, drawing on jazz, down-tempo, neo-soul, spoken word, and spiritual grooves. Reminiscent of the richness you might associate with Bonobo or Quantic, *Momoko* is deep and groovy, bending jazz tradition through a dreamy atmosphere. Momoko Gill's gentle voice is central to the unforced feel, with unpredictable melodies that rarely go where you expect, twisting softly and refusing to land in obvious places rather than resolving neatly. *Rewind/Remind* is perhaps the most representative single, capturing the way Gill blends jazz roots with studio expansiveness, feeling spacious and modern without sacrificing intimacy. *2close2farr* strips everything back to piano and voice before one of the album's most striking

pieces *Anyway, I'm Drowning*, in which Gill recounts a dream with vivid spoken word storytelling before looping into an immersive refrain. *When Palestine Is Free* builds around a choir, but feels more reflective than a protest anthem, posing its central question as more of an inquiry than a slogan, contemplative rather than declarative. *Momoko* is a compelling combination of gentleness and experimentation that's unusually quirky and thoroughly warm.

Electronic, Pop & Experimental

If you like Björk, you'll love *Her Side* by Maddie Ashman

On *Her Side* Maddie Ashman experiments, destabilises, and shifts the ground beneath your feet with microtonal intervals that bend the ear in unfamiliar directions. Microtonality has surfaced in recent years most famously in the experiments of King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, but Ashman's world is voice first with unpredictable studio textures shimmering and rearranging themselves mid-air. Each track feels like a new experiment in what can be detuned and reimaged with *Jaded* pivoting sharply into a manic jungle breakbeat while the chords drift in eerie half-movements that your brain wasn't expecting. *She Said* strips things back and deploys a sparse vocoder that recalls James Blake, while *Seraphim* emerges as the detuned centrepiece as a piano cascades in carefully delicate unease and what should sound tender becomes slightly eerie and strange. The technical skill required to compose and perform in this fluid, unnamed harmonic space is immense, with Ashman detuning everything she can get her hands on across seven tracks. A brilliant opening chapter for the astonishing and unorthodox Maddie Ashman.



If you like Stereolab, you'll love *Unclouded* by Melody's Echo Chamber

Unclouded is a short and sweet 30-minute indie pop album that's elevated far beyond its simple foundations by exquisite orchestration and an unusually active rhythmic bed, with every element chosen for its warmth and gentle joy. The chamber strings carry an elegant and cinematic quality,



and the music evokes a carefully tended garden in full bloom, glowing with colour. Everything about *Unclouded* feels fantastical and fairy-like, stepping away from reality and imagining a gentler, brighter

one, as if Melody has built a little Wonderland where nothing ugly or intrusive is allowed in. Everything here is exquisitely played and arranged, but none of it is complicated, instead choosing to remain effortlessly immediate and easy to love.

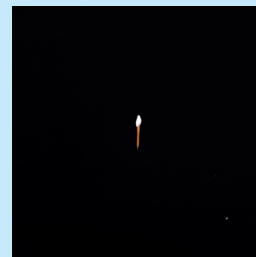
If you like The Avalanches, you'll love *Fantasy* by DJ Sabrina The Teenage DJ

The latest sprawling statement from DJ Sabrina the Teenage DJ is a four hour refinement of the very specific lane she's carved out for herself, and it's her most generous album to date. Swirling, sugary plunderphonics built from diva R&B vocals, glossy house drums, cheesy saxophones and endless glowing layers of 90s pop ephemera. This is club music drained of confrontational aggression and reimaged as something deeply kind and sentimental on an absurd scale. The technical prowess of assembling something this vast from so many fragments fades into the background, because the focus is on being silly, heartfelt and joyful on a completely unreasonable scale.



If you like Bill Withers, you'll love *Chapter 1* by SAULT

SAULT have become one of the most prolific and quietly assured projects in modern music, and *Chapter 1* only deepens that reputation. Dripping with class, poise and grace, each record they release feels like a meticulously considered continuation of their long spiritual conversation with a reverential level of care. Where last year's *10* leaned into the lineage of 90s female-led vocal harmony R&B groups, *Chapter 1* reaches further back, drawing from

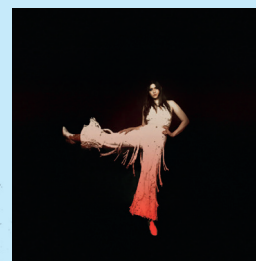


they pull everything back and keep things simple and direct, with slow, soft pop music rooted in a warmer, older tradition.

a warmer, earthier tradition that places it closer to figures like Bill Withers and Curtis Mayfield. There are moments where the sheer beauty of the arrangements tugs at the heart and feels overwhelming, but just as often

If you like Dusty Springfield, you'll love *Desert Queen* by Pearl Charles

The album sounds like something rescued from a lost 70s reel-to-reel tape, chasing a cinematic timelessness that plays under golden-hour desert landscapes and neon-lit motel signs. The arrangements are gorgeous and glamorous, gliding between rootsy Americana and glittering



pop-disco that leans into the lush sweep of ABBA or Dexys Midnight Runners. There's a generosity to the instrumentation with strings, saxophones, flute, slide guitar and piano that recalls artists who treated pop as an expansive and limitless art form. Stretching across country, soul, disco, tropical pop, and Laurel Canyon romanticism, *Desert Queen* is a beautiful reminder of pop done right with taste, craft, and rhinestone sparkle.

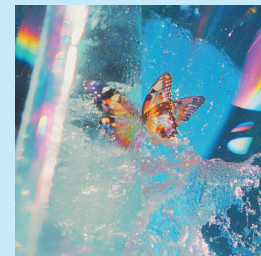
If you like Trentemøller, you'll love *No More Like This* by PVA

No More Like This is a record built on immaculate synth design and drum machines pulled straight from techno, but with a sleek, cool, sexy and threatening post-punk mood, with sound design that stands head and shoulders above most contemporary electronic releases. The synths are subtle, precise and sculpted with restraint and detail with considered textures that feel gothic and industrial, moody and spacious rather than abrasive. At the centre Ella Harris' vocal performance defines the sultry atmosphere with a detached and effortless cool that recalls the icy intimacy of The xx but with more intensity and shadow. *No More Like This* feels very of-the-moment in its production quality, but timeless in attitude with a grey, nocturnal palette.



If you like Frankie Knuckles, you'll love *Butterfly* by Daphni

Butterfly is a collection of tunes and DJ tools with groove after groove rooted firmly in the history of house music. Much of this could plausibly have been made in the early '90s with sample-based, tactile rhythms that feel like a tribute to classic Chicago house in both spirit and construction. *Waiting So Long* is a massive anthem that would slide seamlessly into a Carl Cox set whilst *Clap Your Hands* rides a super-groovy bassline that nods towards DJ Sneak. This is warm, celebratory house music that never drifts into the coldness of techno, and even when the structures are simple and the vocals sparse the tracks are loaded with melody and earworms, blooming into huge, hands-in-the-air moments without relying on obvious choruses.



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This time next year...

Despite all the problems our live music scene faces there are still so many great smaller bands who deserve your attention. Here are three artists with a very bright future that we're really excited for...

Compiled and written by marco@inkblack.co.uk



Test Plan

London trio Test Plan are the brilliant new emerging stars of noise punk. I'm willing to bet a lot of money that noise pioneers Big Black feature prominently in their record collections. They share that rare ability to blend hardcore noise and noise rock with a peculiar danceability built on some seriously groove-y drumming courtesy of drummer and principal vocalist Max Mason. Test Plan don't share the distinctive harsh janky tones of Big Black's signature use of metallic picks and aluminium necks, nor the Roland drum machine, but they have a similar structural approach in their songwriting and musical delivery. Harsh pummelling rhythms, distorted guitars, and fast and frantic vocals are their calling cards, delivering a blistering live experience that will soon see them filling out much bigger stages. Rounding out the sound you can hear shades of Bauhaus in there too. The late great Steve Albini is clapping in his grave.

Dead Rat Society

There is a buzz and a vibe to a Dead Rat Society release - or gig - which is driven entirely by their fearless energy and creativity. This willingness, or even obsession with exploring unexpected musical avenues is very reminiscent of Beastie Boys. DRS throw together a caustic mix of hip hop, dance beats, and rock, with an added sprinkle of industrial and a punky attitude. Did I mention the occasional jazzy vibes? The band themselves call it dance punk, but I find that inadequate to describe the creativity and imagination on show. Now, you might be thinking: 'if it's all these different things then it's probably a mess', but you'd be wrong. Everything comes together into a perfect storm of bars, samples and live music that is undeniably inspired and inspiring. The punk fans among us will especially appreciate new single 'Fuck your Northface jacket' as it leans more into that side of their sound.



Part Of The Theory

How does 'prog metal with a strong greek and arabic influence' sound to you? Not sure? Well, let me tell you: it's bloody great! Part of the Theory hail from Athens and they set the internet alight last year with viral sensation 'Famished Mammon'; a beautifully written and performed socio-political critique of the Balkan area. This is modern prog metal/alt rock at its best, with beautiful vocal harmonies by lead singer Vicky Kapetanopoulou weaved around sumptuous looping arabesque orchestration. The band are currently working on their debut album but in the meantime they followed up with a gorgeous acoustic version of 'Famished Mammon' that just leaves us wanting to hear more.





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SEEN AT
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READING AND 2000 TREES

FACEDOWN

10-6am
@ KINGS CROSS
SCALA

emo. pop punk. metal. rock



METAL ROOM * EMO KARAOKE * CONFETTI CANNONS * BALLOONS
BEER MEN * 2 PINT CUPS * GIVEAWAYS * AFTERPARTY TIL 60M



3 ROOMS PLAYING MUSIC FROM...

FACEDOWNLONDON   

BLINK 182 * BRING ME THE HORIZON * 21 PILOTS * SLIPKNOT * DON BROCO * FALL OUT BOY
BEARTOOTH * ALL TIME LOW * GREEN DAY * SLEEPING WITH SIRENS * WATERPARKS * FEVER 333
PARAMORE * KORN * EVERY TIME I DIE * ROYAL BLOOD * BURY TOMORROW * MGK * AVRIL LAVIGNE
FOO FIGHTERS * PARKWAY DRIVE * MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE * YOU ME AT SIX * A DAY TO REMEMBER
LOATHE * BOWLING FOR SOUP * THE GHOST INSIDE * WHILE SHE SLEEPS * NEW FOUND GLORY
YUNGBLUD * PVRIS * FOUR YEAR STRONG * CREEPER * SUM 41 * THAT SHREK SONG

