NOW THEN

IS A FREE, INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE PUBLISHED IN SHEFFIELD AND MANCHESTER. IT IS ALL ABOUT SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE IN ART, TRADE AND CITIZEN JOURNALISM. LOCAL PEOPLE ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO CONTRIBUTE AND EACH MAGAZINE INCLUDES ARTWORK FROM A DIFFERENT FEATURED ARTIST.

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EDITORIAL.

New year, new design, new faces. There’s plenty that we’re excited about for 2014. As well as smart redesigns, we’re delighted to welcome Amelia and Joe to the sales team.

We heard about another attempt at fraud by the conman we flagged up last year, so it’s timely to direct you to Amelia’s and Joe’s email addresses below as the ones to contact to find out more about working with us. Also, see our recent Tweets for an image of him caught on The Beagle’s CCTV. We never ask for money up front, so please don’t believe anyone who uses our name to take money from the till.

Onwards to this issue’s opinions, literature, reviews and interviews, as well as Beth Hoeckel’s collages.

Enjoy the read.
IAN.
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Our world is increasingly unequal, characterised by apathy, disconnection and the interests of the few. We can do better.

Now Then is a platform for independent art, trade, music, writing and local news.

It’s about supporting the things that make a community what it is – creativity, cooperation, collaboration, conscience and consciousness.

Anyone can contribute to the magazine, both online and off, remotely and in person, in support or in opposition – the discussion is what matters.

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Boot Hall, the former Blackley children’s hospital, may now be reduced to rubble, but its history remains worthy of celebration.

The hospital was built on land acquired by Prestwich Poor Law Union in 1907 following the demolition of the original Booth Hall, which was the residence of Humphrey Booth of Salford, a wealthy fustian merchant who established the Booth Charities in the 17th century. The new Booth Hall began life in 1908 as a general purpose infirmary before later being designated as a children’s hospital in 1915 following the amalgamation of local Poor Law Unions into the Manchester Board of Guardians. They reduced weekly working hours for nurses from 64 to 51 in 1916, but would later be superseded as appropriator of the hospital by Manchester Corporation following the 1929 Local Government Act to transfer localised Poor Law union powers to the local government.

On the establishment of the NHS in 1948, Booth Hall was united with Monsall Hospital and the Duchess of York Babies Hospital to form the Manchester Babies and Children Management Committee. All three are now consigned to the past, with Booth Hall the last to go in 2009 when staff were relocated to Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital as part of the recent development of the MRI complex on Oxford Road.

It is this history that has been an ongoing project for REELmcr, a not-for-profit social enterprise that exists to support and give voice to some of the most deprived, under-represented, alienated and vulnerable communities in the North West, whose creative director Jacqui Carroll “recognised a need to record stories of Booth Hall so it would never be forgotten”. “Booth Hall was very important not just to North Manchester but Manchester as a whole,” she continued. “Everyone in the area has memories of Booth Hall and its closure had a massive effect on the local community.”

The building itself may have been demolished, but even before its final block fell in September 2013 REELmcr began a “yearlong project in North Manchester working with the local community researching and archiving stories, memories and photographs, looking at the formation of the NHS and the changing face of children’s public health in Manchester” during the hospital’s century-long service to the area, focusing on the post World War II era. The project has produced a pair of films on the topic: a documentary named The Booth Hall Family and a drama written by and starring local community members named Angel. Both were screened publicly at the Middleton Arena and then Handmade Film Festival and are still available to watch online.

There is also a photography exhibition currently displayed in the Community Gallery at the People’s History Museum featuring photographs donated by former staff and patients.

Through these photographic and filmic media, Jacqui and the REELmcr team have been able to build a social history based on the accounts and anecdotes of those whose lives were touched by the hospital. “Everyone who we have interviewed had a different story as to why Booth Hall closed,” she said. “Many thought that Booth Hall and Pendlebury Hospital were replicating each other and costing a great deal of money, and if each hospital had specialised and joined forces they could have been saved. Others thought the South Manchester based consultants who had to travel across the city wanted a hospital which was centralised. The main reason I think from all the interviews was the fact that so many beds weren’t needed anymore due to the changes in treatment and children’s illnesses.”

“For example, a child with constipation would spend weeks in hospital. Lack of education in diet was the cause of this, so with patients now being treated in the community the need for so many wards declined. In the old days, patients were nursed as they didn’t even have antibiotics then, but now the average stay is one night.”

Ian Pennington

The Booth Hall Children’s Hospital photography exhibition continues until 16 March | phm.org | reelmcr.co.uk | youtube.com/reelmcr | handmadefilmfest.org.uk


"If graffiti changed anything it would be illegal," reads one of Banksy’s sardonic stencils. Whether it is seen as art or vandalism, graffiti or street art is part of the urban backdrop. The fashion and art worlds have tried to appropriate and monetise it, but when moved from a brick wall in the street to a white wall in a gallery, street art loses its social context, purpose and real value, becoming little more than decoration.

In 2010, workmen cleaning up an electricity substation in Manchester’s Northern Quarter found a forgotten piece of Banksy graffiti, a lion’s head on a poodle’s body. It was, by his standards, crude and unremarkable, but the currency of his celebrity made it a tourist attraction in the head of Councillor Pat Karney, who gushed, “It’s all very exciting”. In 2007, before Banksy’s show at Bristol Art Gallery, council workmen had painted over one of his murals, mistaking it for the work of someone not famous. Manchester City Council was not going to make the same mistake and spent some of its £100,000 graffiti cleaning budget on a wooden frame and a sheet of protective Perspex. This in turn was covered in stickers, which now rival marker pens for tagging, including one that parodied the council’s graffiti removal phone line. In an interview about Banksy’s re-emergence from the undergrowth, Manchester street artist Kelzo defined the difference between ‘street art’ and ‘graffiti’ as a question of permission.

There is also the question of intent – is the work selling or telling? Increasingly the difference is in monetary value. Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring have been joined by Banksy in ‘street art’ and ‘graffiti’ as a question of permission.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Banksy, council tax payers are being allowed to vote on whether to keep or remove pieces of street art.

In Salford, the council didn’t let democracy into the debate and, as part of its development of Media City UK, culturally cleansed Ordsall’s ‘graffiti palace’ that ran alongside the River Irwell. But it did pay for an officially sanctioned community mural – tagged with the names of Salford City Council, Salix Homes, Greater Manchester Police and Salford councillors.

A big sheet of Perspex would have been useful on the other side of the Banksy. Here the artist Akse included a chemical symbol of crystal meth, whilst the graffitiist had scratched a hammer and sickle – the symbol for communism – onto the mural, calling to mind another superstar stenciller, Shepard Fairey. Fairey appropriated Soviet propaganda imagery to flog his own Obey brand of sportswear before doing adverts for Saks Fifth Avenue department store. It was an entirely appropriate move, though one which prompted t-shirts with a “Dis-Obey” logo. Fashion is an industry dominated by multinational corporations who exploit cheap labour then manipulate and seduce consumers. To them street culture is just another marketing tool to sell to urban youth who might once have scrawled on walls. Tagging is not so very different to branding. There’s no law saying urban art has to be edgy, radical or counterculture. Its rap music soundtrack went from NWA urging people to ‘Fight The Power’ to Will.i.am trying to sell IAMAUTO cars.

Just as documentary photographers (if they’re lucky) work for news corporations or get sponsorship or grants from the people responsible for the problems they are documenting, maybe street artists too prefer painting on walls to breaking them down. And instead of rap, maybe they should listen to Simon and Garfunkel, who in ‘The Sound of Silence’ sang: The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls And temennt hall.

David Dunnico
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MARCH
- Space & Republica 20th Anniversary Tour Thursday 20th
- NME Awards Tour 2014 with Austin, Texas: Interpol + Temples + Royal Blood + Circa Waves Thursday 20th
- Ian Prowse & Amsterdam Friday 21st
- Quadrophenia Night Friday 21st
- Transmission – The Sounds of Joy Division Saturday 22nd
- Heaven’s Basement Saturday 22nd
- Azealia Banks Wednesday 26th
- Bonafide Wednesday 26th
- Jack Savoretti Thursday 27th
- Tyrese, Ginuwine and Tank (TGT) Friday 28th
- Loveable Rogues Friday 28th
- The Stranglers Saturday 29th
- The Lox Saturday 29th

APRIL
- Therapy? – Troublegum 20th Anniversary Thursday 3rd
- Emblem3 Thursday 3rd
- Bipolar Sunshine Saturday 5th
- Deaf Havana Saturday 5th
- Mentallica vs Megadeth UK Saturday 5th
- State Of Quo Saturday 5th
- Riverside Sunday 6th
- Devil Driver Wednesday 9th
- Hue & Cry Thursday 10th
- Johnette Napolitano (Of Concrete Blonde) Thursday 10th
- The Wildhearts Thursday 10th
- Memphis May Fire Friday 11th
- UB40 Saturday 12th
- Penetration Saturday 12th
- Gallon Drunk Tuesday 15th
- Augustines Wednesday 16th
- The Summer Set Thursday 17th
- Berlin Berlin Saturday 19th
- Kvelertak Monday 21st
- Brody Dalle Tuesday 22nd
- The Temperance Movement Wednesday 23rd
- Clutch Thursday 24th
- Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats Thursday 24th
- Jace Everett with band Friday 25th
- Patent Pending + People On Vacation Friday 25th
- The Smiths Ltd – The UK’s No.1 Smiths Tribute Saturday 26th
- John Butler Trio Sunday 27th
- Blood Red Shoes Monday 28th

MAY
- De La Soul Friday 2nd
- Northside Saturday 3rd
- Neon Trees Monday 5th
- Martin Stephenson & The Daintees + Helen McCookery Book + The Old Town Quartet Thursday 8th
- Jagwar Ma Saturday 10th
- The Clone Roses Saturday 10th
- Action Bronson Monday 12th
- Pentatonix Tuesday 13th
- Courtney Love Tuesday 13th
- CASH – The No.1 Johnny Cash Tribute Saturday 17th
- Capone-N-Noreaga & Onyx Saturday 17th
- Swans Thursday 22nd
- Goldfinger/Zebrahead Thursday 22nd
- Gigantic – Classic Indie All Dayer
  - Ned’s Atomic Dustbin + The Wedding Present + Chameleons Vox + CUD + The Sultans of Ping + The Frank & Walters Saturday 24th
- The War On Drugs Wednesday 28th
- The Three Johns Wednesday 28th
- AWOLNATION Thursday 29th
- Francis Dunnery Band Friday 30th

REST OF 2014
- Schoolboy Q Sunday 1st June
- The Polyphonic Spree Saturday 7th June
- Andy Jordan Wednesday 18th June
- Jurassic 5 Thursday 19th June
- Anberlin Thursday 7th August
- Axis Of Awesome Monday 22nd September
- Evile – Album Launch Show Saturday 27th September
- Miles & Erica Saturday 11th October
- Anti-Nowhere League Thursday 16th October
- The Orb Saturday 18th October
- Asking Alexandria Friday 31st October
- Dan Baird & Homemade Sin Friday 21st November

For full listings check out: www.manchesteracademy.net

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY RAY-JONES AND MARTIN PARR

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In collaboration with NATIONAL MEDIA MUSEUM
The internet age has seen a giant database of information created at our fingertips. In many ways we’re still learning how and why we should use this resource: for communication, commerce, creation or information? Adam Green has found a way to unlock some of the web’s more intriguing secrets by featuring creative and historical works that have an open licence on his website, The Public Domain Review. Here he tells us about his motivations behind the website, his favourite discoveries and the annual Public Domain Day, when at the turn of each year certain works are freed from copyright.

What made you want to begin the Public Domain Review project?
The main impetus was simply to share some of the amazingly strange and beautiful things I was finding in these gigantic online archives of public domain material. For a long time I’d been into exploring them to find material to make collages with, something I was into for a while. I started a little blog putting up the best of the things I found and then, with the opportunity of some funding through the Open Knowledge Foundation, it was turned into something more substantial. I started writing to academics and writers to contribute articles and then I guess the project was born.

How do you go about finding information and creative material?
Finding the material is usually a process of deep immersion in these online archives – particularly, when it comes to books, in the magnificent Internet Archive – and keeping an eye out for the weird and wonderful buried away. There’s also a whole slew of fantastic blogs out there featuring interesting old works, so I’ll
often trace the links back from these.

Do you have any particular favourite articles on the website?

A difficult question! I’d say one of my favourites is ‘Krakatoa Sunsets’ by a writer called Richard Hamblyn. It’s a really fascinating look at Indonesia’s Krakatoa volcano explosion of 1883, which sent a huge ash cloud out and had bizarre effects on the weather the world over. The article explores the series of letters the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins sent into Nature magazine, in which he describes the strange optical effects and surreal colours he observed in the evening skies of England.

Another favourite is Julian Barnes on when the French writer Maupassant visited the English poet Swinburne and his lover in their French holiday cottage for lunch, an invitation given on the back of the Frenchman rescuing a drowning Swinburne the day earlier. Things got a bit weird at the lunch – including a flayed human hand, pornography, the serving of monkey meat, and inordinate amounts of alcohol – all detailed by Maupassant in a great little story which we had translated from the French especially to accompany the article.

I’m also a big fan of one we had on the strange world of medieval animal trials, a surprisingly common occurrence in Western Europe in the 15th and 16th century. Animals would be subject to full-on human-style trials with legal representatives, all for a litany of bizarre offences, including sparrows being prosecuted for chattering in church, rats for thieving (which actually led to an acquittal on account of a technicality) and, in a more serious case, a pig being found guilty and hanged for the murder of an infant in its cradle.

How do you approach the concept of ‘open knowledge’. Is this a project aimed at freedom of information that is widely sought after or do you see it more as the recovery of stories, art and creativity lost in time?

For me, I guess, it’s mostly about the latter, but it’s a process which relies heavily on the “freedom of information” aspect, as you put it, i.e. the existence of these digital archives which anyone can access. It’s the fact that some museums, libraries and so on, have decided to digitise their material and make it open, which allows the process of ‘recovery’ to take place – particularly when they digitise content somewhat indiscriminately, an approach which leads to the creation of ginormous digital silos of, often unstudied, material, the sheer volume of which opens up the opportunity to find the really strange and obscure stuff, things that have, as you put it, been “lost in time”.

I guess it’s this “lost in time” aspect which is crucial to a large part of what The Public Domain Review is trying to do, that is to explore a sort of alternative history to the mainstream narrative, showcase just some of the excellence and strange-ness of human ideas and activity ‘in-between’ these big events and works about which history is normally woven. And also, importantly, through always linking back to the sources, we try to encourage others to do the same – to open up in our readers a sense of history which isn’t spoon-fed but which is more playful and open to new interpretations and fresh connections or associations. The historical digital content being free and open is crucial to this. When the digital content is itself openly licensed (ideally dedicated to the public domain) then it allows this engagement from the present to be unfettered by worries about infringing copyright. Artists and writers can re-use or re-mix material to create new cultural objects – a sort of recycling which I see being at the heart of all production of new works.

Which creative material were you most excited to see liberated following this year’s Public Domain Day?

In the EU, works fall into the public domain 70 years after the creator’s death – so from this bunch there is the works of [jazz pianist] Fats Waller now out-of-copyright which is great to see and also, a childhood favourite, Beatrix Potter. Some countries follow a ‘50 years after death’ rule and they saw a great haul this year, including Robert Frost, Sylvia Plath, William Carlos Williams, Louis MacNeice, Jean Cocteau, C S Lewis and Aldous Huxley. Quite a gang.

Do you think 70 years after the death of the author is too long or short a length of time to wait for information and creative material to enter the public domain?

70 years is too long. I understand the wish for artists and writers to want to build something for their children or family after they are gone, and I think they should have the right to do this, but I think 50 years has it about right if that’s the goal. Any longer and it just encourages a whole economy of artist ‘estates’, which can often do more harm than good when it comes to the work getting the widest possible reach, both in terms of dissemination and also new engagements with the work by a new generation. There’ve been some great studies done which show the benefit of works being in the public domain – such as a recent research paper from the US titled ‘Do Bad Things Happen When Works Enter the Public Domain?‘ which totally debunks the three common arguments for long copyright terms: 1) that works which fall into the public domain will be under-exploited, because there will be no incentive to produce new works; 2) that they will be over-exploited, with too many people using them and therefore reducing their worth; 3) and that they will be tarnished, by being reproduced in low quality ways or associated with undesirable things. All shown to not be the case at all.

Ian Pennington

This year’s public domain entrants: bit.ly/1eDQ1aG
Do Bad Things Happen When Works Enter The Public Domain: bit.ly/1as7fJl | publicdomainreview.org

“ANIMALS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO FULL-ON HUMAN-STYLE TRIALS WITH LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES”
The sun is setting fast. Soon the crepuscular skies will breathe dark and only the crescent moon will glow, and where the dark blanket has been pierced the stars will blink over the final hours, over this New Year tide. In 2013 I gave myself the task of slaughtering an animal. If in one year I hadn’t managed this then I would become vegetarian. By December my hands are still clean.

I turn over so that my face is away from the fire, which is still slowly crackling in the small pockets of cool air that pass from lapping waves off the black expanse. I feel the warm, stiff bristles of the pig’s hide as my arm slides over its big round belly. The pig lets out a soft, contented grunt. But it wasn’t always like this. Between the pig and me. One week before, when I landed on this island, its life was to be my salvation to a fulfilled carnivorous diet. Because I have heard that in south east Asia the slaughter at home is as much a part of the cooking process as adding chilli, because I have heard that fat, rich, white men come here to fill bovine full of holes with automatic weapons and because time is running out, I book a last minute plane to Bangkok in order to get my kill.

It was hard to find an island not packed with 7-11s and tattoo parlours, party bars run by young ex-pats clutching an insipid wet dream, but eventually I found an island uninhabited, off the tourist trail and a local agreed to drop me off in his boat and pick me up one week later. I left my luggage on the mainland and took with me only what I needed. One case of oranges, one case of water, two bottles of rum, a gallon of gasoline and a bagful of assorted salty snacks. The rifle was difficult to obtain, but after offering an exorbitant
amount of money the red tape seemed to disappear and the two boxes of cartridges came included.

After two days the only thing I'd managed to track was a clump of coconut palms on the north side of the island, though the sweet water did well to bulk out my supply of rum. Nearby I found mango trees, which came in handy because I woke up on day three to find that my oranges had been compromised. This was not all bad. It gave me definitive proof that I was not alone on the island. And the tracks that led away from the crime scene were not human. I followed the prints off the beach and into the bush that climbed in shaggy green blotches up toward the limestone cliffs, coming out at a clearing. On the other side I could make out the haunches of something black and bristly. I tried a couple of shots and, though I couldn't make out the form, I was certain that the beast stopped moving just to see what it was with such a lousy aim.

The next day I woke to find that my mangoes had been ambushed. No point tracking now, I thought. So I pitched up a couple of coconut shells and used the rest of the day for target practice and drinking rum. That night I fell asleep early by the fire, my mind in a hazy trance of determination. In my last days here I would take revenge on whatever it was that had been depleting my rations and enjoy a sumptuous meat feast on the eve before my departure from this lonely island.

In what seemed like the middle of the night I woke with a start. By my side a loud crunching was cutting through the furtive silence. There it was. In sync with the sound a huge silhouette cut through the darkness. It was a wild boar – its tusks branched out in sheaths of jet black shadow, head down, rummaging through the last of my salty treats.

The gun was at my other side, ready with the safety off. I reached softly and silently, lifting the rifle to my chest, but I reached too late. And I think he knew it. Then I realised, if I had been mistaken. I had not hit her at all. In fact, she had run into a loose branch that was now pronged up through the soil. With this realisation I breathed a sigh of relief.

As I lower the gun, the cubs come scudding over and whinny about their mother. She looks at me, then the cubs, and finally her head rests between us. I softly approach the wounded animal. With both hands I tug sharply on the branch and loosen it from the hog's shoulder. I soak my t-shirt with the rum and push it into the wound. She flinches but she will be alright. The hole is not too deep. I take the last packet of salty snacks from my pocket and open it between the cubs. They scrabble through it fast, bag and all.

As the flames retire back to the ashes and the sun climbs, I wake up next to this pig and her three cubs. With my departure nearing, a sated mind and a hungry belly, I think of a simpler meal awaiting me on the mainland – a hot and spicy king prawn tom yum soup. After all, I never said seafood would be off the menu.

Samuel Buckley
PORK SCRATCHINGS

Recipe by Samuel Buckley
Snack for two to share
—
500g pork back fat
Sea salt

Get a decent sized piece of back fat from your butcher. It’s the same type of fat you find on a pork joint that provides the imperative crackling for your Sunday roast.

Cut into generous bite-sized pieces. It will shrink a little in the cooking process.

Preheat the oven to 200°C and when hot, place the pieces of pork back fat on a roasting tray, keeping them separated. Roast for 25 minutes, returning to turn the tray every five minutes to avoid burning. You will be able to tell they’re ready by their golden brown, blistered, curly form.

Whilst still warm sprinkle liberally with salt. Use a good salt like Maldon or Halen Môn as this will also add to the overall taste and texture.

VEG CRISPS

Recipe by Samuel Buckley
Snack for two to share
—
1 beetroot
2 parsnips
1 butternut squash
Salt
Cumin and paprika

For those who have gone to the other side, take peel from your favourite veg. For me, parsnip, squash, and beetroot work best. Rinse under cold water and pat dry. Cook in oil between 160°C and 180°C whilst stirring to keep separated. Only cook a handful at a time.

Drain and season liberally with salt or your favourite spices – cumin and paprika work well – then leave under hot lights or a low temperature oven to dry and crisp a little more.

Serve in big bowls so your friends can grab handfuls at a time. These wintry snacks work great with any ale.

MARBLE BEER MATCHING SELECTIONS

Marble, Lagonda IPA
The pronounced tropical fruit from the American hops and citrus cut through the saltiness of the pork scratchings.

Burning Sky, Saison L’Hiver
The tartness of this Saison yeast provides a clean edge to balance the oily texture of the scratchings.
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NEW BROOM...
Half The Battle

I was standing in the queue of the staff canteen, waiting to order my lunch, when the man in front turned around and nudged me with his elbow.

'Have you been invited onto that new course?'

'What new course?'

He looked at me. He looked a little disappointed.

'You obviously haven’t been invited.'

We shuffled along in the queue.

'What is the course called? I asked, trying to be polite.

'Handling difficult conversations,' he replied.

'It doesn’t sound that exciting.'

'Isn’t it meant to be exciting.'

'Verily, in that case, I’m glad I haven’t been invited.'

He turned around quickly, and snapped in my face, oddly overweight eyes bulging.

'You’re a bloody idiot if you think everything in life is exciting!' I could feel his spit hitting the end of my nose. I wiped it off with the cuff of my jumper, watched him pay for his food and move off to the far side of the dining room.

I ate my lunch alone. I could see that man I had been talking to. He was now talking to my office manager. She kept looking over at me. She had a concerned look on her face that made me think of the new box of pens and paper clips next to my computer. I looked organised, if nothing else.

I got to thinking of last night and the conversation that I had with my mother.

'I’m so happy for you John, at last you have found a job you like.'

'Yes, and people seem to like me,' I replied.

'Well, that’s only half the battle isn’t it John, fitting in.'

And she was right, that was only half the battle.

After finishing my meal, I pushed the plate away and wiped my mouth with a napkin. I looked around the canteen. It was very busy. On every table, small groups of people laughed and chatted away. I noticed one man in particular. He seemed rather joyful, a sausage on a fork that he held aloft, halfway between his plate and mouth as he recounted some hilarious story to his fellow diners. There were blobs of gravy on his shirt but he didn’t seem to be bothered about it.

I turned and looked out of the window. To any onlooker, I probably looked calm and reflective, but inside I was panicking, thinking that I had just glimpsed the beginning of the end and that I shouldn’t get too comfortable. That is what happened in the last job and look how that turned out.

Steve Scott
Memorial

He pauses here most afternoons,
adjusts the weathered wreaths.
He won’t stay long, just time enough
to count a tithe of names he knows by heart.
Then home to catch the evening news,
one more coffin’s slow parade
from the belly of a transport plane.
He puts the teapot down,
and another day ends in Helmand
as two young men kick the desert
from their boots, stare at a camera lens
and think of home as a village like this.
Outside evening settles in the trees,
the street lights come on one by one.

James Caruth

Lao Tzu Says

If you don’t want people rioting,
don’t honour their bankers above them.
To keep them from breaking shop windows,
place less value on things.
If you want them steady and at peace,
market doobries within their budget.
When governing people,
relieve their minds and fill their bellies.
The true man of vision
shields the people from steam-rolling news,
and frees them from wish lists.
He constructs a city
where managers will sit on their hands.
Order will prevail most
following the plan of least action.

Matthew Clegg
Living with people really is the purple pim. I fancy it doesn’t matter how many qualities you share. There is nothing which can dilute the monster within us all. It might be a template from which to work, but sooner or later the blueprint will catch fire, setting alight the great chunks of hair pulled with fury from your own cranium and which have been silently littering the house, without purpose, for months. Forego the obvious: playing music at all hours, and styles therein, there are more sinister avenues of dismal exploration to be found in the unpredictable nadir of the human unconscious wherein uncharted territories, in the dark alcoves of our personalities, decency wears a death mask.

It is becoming, at least for me, increasingly important to go to my cupboard in the kitchen and reach for, when I like, my jar of mustard and find that it still has contents, or stride about in the nip strumming a strategically placed ukulele, than it is to look into the eyes of fellow occupants, daggers of disquiet sharpening my own to atom fine points. Company is another thing altogether. Company doesn’t come into it. Company is our friend, and it’s the sort of friend who goes away when you do, who sleeps when you sleep, who listens to the same music as you fancy listening to. It’s the type of friend who doesn’t filch your Colman’s wholegrain or reprimand you for urinating in a jug because the bathroom has been occupied for 40 years and the only chance of gaining entry is by turning into a gas. Yes, company is good. Living with domestic and social neophytes who ferret amongst your things is not.

Again it’s the simple things: over-usage of loo paper without replacement, increasingly frequent spoonfuls of Nescafe going missing and dishes piling up to stratus forming altitudes. And even when they have been done, I am saddened by the loam that remains. What remains is bewildering to say the least. I mean, spotless is good. It’s a good start, is spotless. But germs aside, I’ve seen visible grievances. Not just specks. I’m talking about ‘things’. Almost meals. Whole pie crusts have been spotted, full cups of tea hanging from hooks and mushrooms still on the ends of forks, upturned in the drainer.

Can communication prevent any of this? Well, communication probably has as good a chance as anything. Although you need to be reading from the same page to start with to allow this great wheel of understanding to turn in everybody’s favour. Whilst some people are reading from Keats, others are thumbing vacantly through a soft, vividly coloured bath book with lift up flaps about a duck with a magic bill. They say communication is the key and in many ways ‘they’ are right. But when you’re addressing issues which you feel the ambit of common sense should have been instrumental in halting, you inadvertently don the ghastly cloak of an oik. For then you’re not only pointing out their failings – or should I say the failings within the universe which you inhabit – but you also run the risk of bringing their intelligence into the fray. And that’s not pleasant for either party, even if you have knocked cleverer objects off the stand at a coconut shy.

I am by no means free from having the pistol of reproach waved in my sallow face but I don’t believe it should ever go off. Far from being the kind of chap who likes conflict, I still find myself sounding like an anus when addressing a hodgepodge of petty niggles which somehow I feel incumbent on me to petition against. I haven’t even mentioned receiving notes from people and the volcanic rage which ignites the paper, or often the back of a cereal packet, a fraction after reading the specious ramblings. Nor have I mentioned constructing little dolls in the shadows after being lied to again about the disappearance of my light bulbs, or the landlord who seldom fails to give you the dromedary protuberance on his arrival. There is no further space left to impart any sapient notes for a much needed epilogue.

All I can do is turn to a much misunderstood figure of the 19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche, and deliberately paraphrase from an apposite maxim which goes: “Where neither love nor hate is in the game I am a mediocre player”. Good evening!

Richard Barry

A HOUSE SHARED

IT’S A PROBLEM DOUBLED

“LOOK INTO THE EYES OF FELLOW OCCUPANTS, DAGGERS OF DISQUIET SHARPENING”
High volume slickwater hydraulic fracturing using long laterals is the technique commonly referred to as ‘Fracking’. ‘Hydraulic fracturing’ has been used since the late 1940s, but the key terms here are ‘high volume’, referring to the amount of water used, and ‘long laterals’, meaning turning the drilling sideways to drill laterally, away from the drill site. This is relatively new, and has only been licensed and completed once in the UK. The process caused an earthquake.

But earthquakes are not the biggest worry for those living near a fracking site, with a wealth of documented health and environmental impacts on humans, livestock and the landscape. Protests at the Balcombe drill site in Sussex last year were the biggest demonstrations against the fracking industry so far in the UK. In November the focus turned to Barton Moss outside of Salford.

In January, shale gas (and its broader term ‘unconventional...
that the UK would “go all out for shale”. In this and subsequent statements, the PM attempted to sweeten the deal by promising a share of the spoils to local communities. What people were not, and have not been, offered, is a choice as to whether they should be fracked in the first place.

Neither the 2010 Tory manifesto nor the coalition agreement contains the word ‘frack’ or refers to ‘shale gas’, but the latter does contain the word ‘energy’ 22 times. None of those mentions pertain to unconventional gas extraction. The final appearance of ‘energy’ is as follows (my bold, their irony): “We will ensure that UK Trade and Investment and the Export Credits Guarantee Department become champions for British companies that develop and export innovative green technologies around the world, instead of supporting investment in dirty fossil-fuel energy production.”

To recap, Britain will ‘go all out’ for a radical new technology which brings with it a litany of health and environmental problems, will carve up large areas of countryside and render those areas liable to pollution effects for an unknown period of years in the future, and create as much warming effect as coal over the significant period of the next 25 years. Britain will ‘go all out’ to do something for which there is precisely zero national democratic mandate, zero local democratic mandate, but already the razor wire is being erected and the trucks are moving in.

In the Barton Moss camp there have been two distinct phases to the protest. In the first phase, the tactic of the protestors has been to delay the entrance and exit of supply lorries and workers to the iGas site, by a combination of ‘slow walking’ and ‘locking on’. Greater Manchester Police, acting on the claim that Barton Moss Lane is a ‘highway’, has detained nearly 100 people, releasing them later with bail conditions applied. Although these people were all arrested, on reaching court no-one has been found guilty of any offence.

On 20 January the police clearly beat and hospitalised a protestor. Further embarrassment came for GMP when an officer was filmed attempting to falsely arrest a man, an incident which has since been referred to the IPCC. When reviewing video footage from the protest, it is difficult to believe that the police have behaved as neutral arbiters of the law.

Throughout this first phase, there was a constant debate about the status of the lane. This was resolved on 12 February when a court stated that to all intents and purposes Barton Moss Lane was a public footpath. As such, the parameters of the protest were altered. On 13 and 14 February only one truck was able to enter the site.

Since then, a new phase in which the police, unable to arrest people for ‘obstructing a highway’, have been attempting to use the offence of ‘aggravated trespass’ to remove protestors who are stationary on the footpath. On the first day of this phase, Saturday 15 February, the police were at their most violent to date, including the maltreatment of at least two protestors (see footnotes for links).

Steven Pook, solicitor for all of the Barton Moss arrestees, was present at the camp on this day, and made this statement: “Based on my observations and interactions of GMP, my experience today has given me concern for my own safety. I am firmly of the view that what took place today appears to be political policing in favour of a corporate agenda. I call on Greater Manchester Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner to tell the public why.”

In this phase of the protest the police coral the protestors down the road in a ‘moving kettle’ at a speed of their choosing, with the lorry convoy following behind. Protestors deemed to be moving too slowly are then snatched from the kettle and arrested. On Monday 18 February this was a firefighter and a mother, on Friday 21 a 15-year-old girl. Again, the priorities of the police are revealed in their eagerness to remove protectors and restrict the effectiveness of protest. Again, their role as neutral arbiters of the law comes into question, and it remains to be seen whether ‘aggravated trespass’ is even an appropriate law to apply in this instance.

Landowner and iGas landlord Peel Holdings upped the ante once more on 18 February, serving an eviction notice on the protest camp, which is located on Peel land. Despite the attempt to evict immediately, a judgement was not made until 10 March. It went in Peel’s favour. However, leave to appeal was granted in the appeal court the following day, and at the time of writing the appeal had not been heard.

It is a rare protest that does not face eviction eventually. Even so, since this diary began, there are more camps springing up to oppose the unconventional gas industry, in Cheshire and Nottinghamshire. It is already clear that the protest at Barton Moss has continued the struggle where Balcombe left off, as will the new camps.

Each new proposed fracking site forces a whole new community to start researching the consequences, which will begin to impact on the unconventional gas industry to an extent that no amount of soothing words and glossy PR can deny. With each new proposed fracking site, local support for this global movement is inevitable.

Nicole Jewitt and Stewart Shaw
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Beth Hoeckel is a collage artist based in Baltimore, US. We’ve had our eye on her for a while, so it’s great to finally feature her abstract, cosmic and absurd constructions, lifted from the pages of old books and magazines. I spoke to Beth about her inspirations and approach to collage.

Why did you start creating art and what brought you to where you are today?
I don’t remember why because it was so long ago. I had a sketch book at age 3 or 4. I went to an art school for high school and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for college, so back then I knew it was something I wanted to do. However, I then spent several years in professional limbo because I didn’t think it was possible to ‘be an artist’ for a living. Then one day I realised that it is actually possible so I went for it.

What is your working process when starting a new piece?
Generally I look through piles of materials and get in a mode of searching, then placing and rearranging, and a lot of cutting obviously. I put things together that speak to me visually but they also have to work conceptually, so it can sometimes take a long time.

What inspires you to create and where do you source your materials?
So many things inspire me in day to day life that it is hard to pinpoint anything in particular. Mostly looking through old books. I go through them for the pictures, but often end up reading a lot of it, especially in history or educational books, so that is inspirational I guess. Also, cutting with scissors, which I find meditative. All my materials are from old books, magazines and other publications. The main criteria is that they have to be vintage. I get those mostly from thrift stores and used book shops. I’ve gotten a lot for free from people who are getting rid of stuff.

Do you have a lot of unused materials that you hold onto until you can find a use for them?
Yes, way too many to keep track of. I wish I had a whole warehouse full of tables so I could lay them all out and be able to look at them all together.

How has your approach changed over the years?
I think now I am just more sure of what I want and more confident in my decisions. Those are qualities that only came from a lot of years of experience and trial and error. I find myself returning to a lot of old styles and melding them with new ones. It all goes in a cycle, so though some things change I am also often revisiting and refining a previous approach.

What themes do you always return to in your work? Family, nature and the cosmos seem to be quite important.
Yeah, those are definitely recurring themes. As opposed to family, singular figures are often in there and are sometimes just body parts instead of a full person. I’m also drawn to mountains, plants, gems and turbulent skies. I rarely use themes like technology or machinery. It’s usually nature.

Do you do much commissioned work, and is it difficult to stick to a brief when you’re working mostly with found images?
Yes I do and yes it is. Some are more open to letting me interpret things myself and some are alarmingly specific with what they want. Luckily I have such a large variety of imagery at hand after years of collecting. I rarely have to try to find something online, but once or twice I have had to.

What are you working on at the moment?
I am working on several illustrations for a book (not my book), and on getting my studio more organised and streamlined, which is dull and stressful but necessary.

Good advice you wish you’d been told earlier?
I wouldn’t say it’s that I wish I’d been told, more that I wish I had listened. Mostly simple things like ‘save your money’. I wish someone would have forced me to do that a long time ago. And things everyone hears like ‘be yourself’ and ‘follow your dreams’ as cliched as those sound, they are true. But most people learn on their own terms, no matter how much advice they are given.

Sam Walby

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The contemporary classical music scene in Manchester and other local cities is, I sometimes think, possibly the most underground arts scene there is. Whilst abstract art exhibitions, modernist theatre and improvised comedy events thrive to differing extents, behind all this there are pulsing, energetic and creative groups of composers and musicians making music that is thought-provoking, boundary-pushing, sometimes beautiful, sometimes harsh, but ultimately the most original and exciting thing you might hear all year. But whilst the classical music mainstream performs the same small number of pieces again and again, the local contemporary scene plays to far smaller audiences than it deserves.

Let's pause while I pay you a compliment. The average Now Then reader – in my mind, at least – is a discerning person, interested in new and exciting things, willing to try something different. So read on, find out what’s happening locally in the next few months and hear something you’ve never heard before. I’ve been speaking to the new Manchester-based music ensemble Sounds of the Engine House and Sheffield-based composers collective Platform Four.

Manchester’s Sounds of the Engine House are currently touring a Sound and Music sponsored programme inspired by cities, architecture and urban environments. SOTEH is a small ensemble consisting of oboe, clarinet, cello, percussion and voice. Alongside music by some more established composers, the ensemble’s three in-house composers have all contributed pieces, including Eve Harrison’s ‘The Tin Man and The Mirror’, a music theatre piece inspired by the discord between old and new buildings, ‘Keeps Spinning’ by Steven Jackson, a fast-paced, vibrant piece driven by complex rhythms composed after watching timelapse films of cities being built, and ‘Revolution’ by Ben Gaunt, inspired by a love of steampunk and Victorian machinery.

Platform Four was established in 2011 by a group of composers tired of working alone and seeking some strength in numbers. A loose ensemble of friends has grown around the group to perform their music and they have built some exciting collaborative relationships with other artists. Notable amongst these are Ffin Dance from South Wales, who have commissioned new music from Platform Four and performed alongside them, as well as Sheffield sculptor Gillian Brent, who produced live art in response to improvisation from the composers.

Chris Noble from P4 explained, “To begin with, she seemed responding to our music, but by the end, it was us responding to the sculpture she created. Both the music and the sculpture were intrinsically linked in a way none of us could have planned at the outset”.

Recently they performed all of JS Bach’s ever popular Brandenburg Concertos over three nights of music, with their own works inspired by Bach’s masterpiece linked throughout the movements. I made it to two out of the three and was overwhelmed by the ingenuity, couragelessness and above all beauty of the music I heard. Though I’ve been to new music concerts many times before, as an audience member and performer, I find I never tire of the excitement of a premiere – the knowledge that no-one has heard this music before, and that anything could happen.

Both groups are proud of their DIY entrepreneurial spirit and, though they do occasionally receive money from external bodies, they are coming from a position where their own drive is enough to make things happen. Small audiences are a continuing frustration. Both groups are taking steps to make their concerts open, welcoming and accessible as possible. People I speak to often worry about classical concerts being too formal, when in fact they’re anything but. SOTEH are increasingly taking their events out of typical concert venues and programming late night events in bars and cafes which are far more affordable than more mainstream classical events. Since 2013, P4 have operated on a ‘pay what you can basis’, so if you’re hard up you can see the whole thing for free.

Both groups were aware that the biggest barrier for many people to contemporary music was simply fear – of not liking the music, not knowing what to say, not ‘getting’ it – but both hope to find people willing to take a risk. Chris from P4 pointed out that every composer’s style is different, so there’s a huge variety of music to hear. And with the composers present at the concerts, you can always talk things through with them. Ben from SOTEH summed it up, “Not liking it doesn’t mean you don’t understand it. Just close your eyes, listen with an open mind, see what images come to you and revel in the joy of sound.”

Ben Eckersley

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LIVE

XMAS XTRAVAGANZA

14 DECEMBER
ACADEMY 2

“Sometimes when I’m in my zone, you’d think I was stoned / but I never, as they say, touch that stuff.” It’s Kurt Vile’s melodic confession on 2013’s fantastic Wakin On A Pretty Daze that threatened to upset his iconic ‘stoner rock’ appeal. Instead it unravelled another layer of intrigue to the singer’s character. Open, easy-going, appearing shy and confident in odd measure, Vile is something of an enigma already. Unsurprisingly, his live performance offers a similar sense of inconclusiveness.

It’s something the Philadelphian’s fifth solo release in as many years doesn’t suffer from. It is instantly likable, as easy-listening as it is complex, performed throughout with the lead’s legendary languor and a newfound cockiness in featuring four tracks which are seven to ten minutes in length. It’s one of these tracks, ‘Wakin on a Pretty Day’, that starts the set. At over nine minutes, it is a swelling medley of guitar parts and out-of-body crooning. On record it hardly changes pace, and you wouldn’t want it to. The frontman doesn’t miss a note, taking the audience through three musical seasons. The first is mostly new material from Wakin. With radio success, ‘KV Crimes’ is one of the highlights, as is the modern folk tale ‘Girl Called Alex’. Next, Vile alone performs an acoustic set, peaking with guitar-picking master-class ‘Peeping Tomboy’. The tempo again changes for the third part. The singer’s croon becomes a shout and guitarist Jesse Trbocivh dons a saxophone for a modern punk rendition of ‘Freak Train’ from the Childish Prodigy LP.

The set list is obviously well considered, and there’s no reason why on paper it wouldn’t work – but it doesn’t. This is somewhat due to Vile’s stage presence. Between drapes of long hair he provides no real engagement. Interaction is at most asking backstage staff for another Jägerbomb, or yelping sharply into the mic at no-one.

Ultimately, where Vile’s latest release benefits, his live act loses out. That mood is not really possible in a bustling gig atmosphere, and that’s not his fault. Wakin on a Pretty Daze is perhaps second only to Nick Cave’s Push the Sky Away as a new release in 2013, but where Cave’s excellent show to support it is equally impressive, Vile’s is far from it. If he is going to reach the indie heights expected of him he could do with inspecting this.

Mark Hattersley

7 DECEMBER
ISLINGTON MILL

As all nights should, tonight begins and ends with Morrissey, the Patron Saint of Bruised Masculinity. Arriving a little late, I enter Islington Mill’s brutalist playground to see Tranarchy, tonight rebranded as Joyce D’Ivision, crooning ‘Heaven Knows I’m Miserable Now’ with a ginger beard and beehive, complete with shoo-bopping backing singers. They end their set with a happy hardcore version of ‘She’s Lost Control’ which, together with their space-age silver and leopard-print outfits, proffers the most F.u.N. clashing of juxtapositions I’ve experienced in quite some time. Tranarchy were a heady highlight when they supported Hunx here last summer, a Bill & Ted supermarket sweep of an ensemble where each member are seemingly plucked from a different musical era.

Now, from the ridiculous to the sublime. Die Hexen is a statuesque woman who constructs eerie, imposing soundscapes by layering her voice infinitesimally while a huge projected moon rotates behind her. As she works her alchemy, I can feel her lunar lure pulling all the liquid in my body like tidal surges towards her. She reminds me of Laurie Anderson and HK119 and Fever Ray, those stark and delicious sentinels of futurity.

The only lull in the relentless quality is BONG, whose turgid noise feels like the post-Christmas dinner lull when unconsciousness calls. Headliners Terminal Cheesecake, however, are unrelenting -ly ace - sickeningly heavy and stunningly melodic, and fronted by a neckerchiefed imp with a Vidal Sassoon bob whose effervescence makes me punch the air in glee.

Chew Disco keep us footloose and frisky once the bands had subsided and supercool DJ Kahlil won big brownie points by playing Prince when I demanded it. Sadly I didn’t see much of the art, as I was too darn busy losing my mind on the dancefloor, flailing in a floral shirt like I was the Second Coming of Morrissey. Heaven Knows I’m Invincible Now.

Vienna Famous
VIDEO JAM

16 JANUARY
MANCHESTER ART GALLERY

There were many exceptional performances at the most recent Video Jam, which had been curated as a closing event for the Turner Prize-winning artist Jeremy Deller’s ‘All that is Solid Melts into Air’ exhibition. Starting with The Northern Quarter Boys Choir, whose rendition of ‘Heigh Ho’ was without filmic accompaniment, the night would go on to pair up live music performances with short films submitted for the occasion. Following this was my particular favourite film, Dream Machine by Sarah Hill, as its hypnotic flux of mechanical movements combined with the eclectic sounds of local duo Bernard and Edith.

The ground floor was at capacity, while people who ventured up to the balcony had the best view in town. One gripe with any event like this is that there are sometimes those who sneak in beers and those who don’t seem to care about the event. Manchester Art Gallery is a donation-only gallery. If you can afford to run across to Spar in the rain and grab yourself a small bottle of beer, then you can contribute to sustaining such galleries that host free events by buying a beer inside.

Halfway through the gig, a 16mm film that had been dangling from the ceiling was lowered down and clicked into the projector as Chaines from experimental Manchester label Slip Discs papered her vocals to Film as Fabric, Thread and Lace by Mary Stark. This was a great performance in which Chaines unleashed her potential onto an unknowing audience. The eerie melodic presence felt during this performance echoed all the way up to Ophelia’s nipples in Arthur Hughes’s painting hung in the first floor Pre-Raphaelites gallery. My partner said Trangram by Katharina Huber was his favourite, noting the perfect sync between the video footage and the band scoring it, Monster Island. The video had a similar feel to the cult satirical cartoon Monkey Dust. I’d been distracted by rolling a fag.

The crowd favourite by far was the infusion of David McLean and an extract from Marxism: The Theory that Split the World, edited by Kino. Never at the cinema, at the theatre, at a soup kitchen, wherever, have I seen an audience so involved in what was going on.

Kieron Sumner

LISTINGS
RECOMMENDED BY NOW THEN

FINGATHING
22 March | Sound Control | £8
The local double bass meets turntables hybrid is a must-see act for jazzy hip hop fans, so this show’s as good an opportunity as any. Hoya:Hoya resident tune selector Jonny Dub will be on hand to fill in the gaps.

DENIS JONES
27 March | Night & Day Cafe | £5
The bearded loop layer of Skelmersdale stops in at the Night & Day to turn the volume up to eleven and further piss off the neighbours. Walk support as the melodic blues foil to Jones’s avant-garde production.

KRTS
30 March | Soup Kitchen | £6-8
KRTS sits atop this Project: Mooncircle showcase of abstract hip hop, which claims the lofty accolade as one of the picks of this year’s FutureEverything event. Label mates submerse and Rain Dog tag along to add extra bite. Other FE festival picks include Darkside on 27 March, EMN’s visuals show from 29-31 March and Tim Hecker on 1 April.

DELIA DERBYSHIRE DAY 2014
12 April | International Anthony Burgess Foundation | £10
This celebration of the life, experiments and sonic compositions of Delia Derbyshire returns to Manchester with a fittingly eclectic roster of electronic artists all inspired by her work at the BBC’s Radiophonic Workshop. Expect film, discussion and performance.

GEORGE CLINTON & P-FUNK
17 April | The Ritz | £22-25
All aboard the Mothership for one of Band On The Wall’s out of house bookings: the reunification of one of funk rock’s finest bandleaders, who fronted Parliament and its offshoot, Funkadelic.

THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN
18 April | The Ruby Lounge | £15
Fire! Over at Ruby Lounge! Arthur Brown wants you to burn!

LIZ GREEN
26 April | First Chop Brewing Arm | £7
It’s album launch time and this show serves up the option to listen to Liz Green’s anachronistic vocal style reverb-erating around First Chop’s hops before taking the new record, Haul Away!, away with you.

SOUNDS FROM THE OTHER CITY
4 May | Various | £18
By now, its tenth incarnation, this linear gig crawl down Chapel Street needs no introduction. You haven’t been able to guarantee this good a time since good times began.
GO GO PENGUIN

V2.0
Gondwana Records

Manchester jazz trio GoGo Penguin have put out their second record. The title, v2.0, looks like an obscure document name or an acronym for insiders. The players are Chris Illingworth (piano), Nick Blacka (double bass) and Rob Turner (drums). The album consists of ten tracks of immaculate composition, stunning technical playing and tasteful production. The listener can dream and dance to it or otherwise attentively follow the lyrical arrangements.

DJs may put this jazz record in one section with Massive Attack, Squarepusher or Photek. It has break beat drumming. Coffee bar owners may put it on shuffle with Gonzales or Jamie Cullum. It has spherical piano arrangements on top of the break beats. Those in the know of contemporary European piano jazz might think they are being confronted with an Esbjörn Svensson album they didn’t know existed, because the music has an obvious Scandinavian touch. The piano playing is scandalously innovative in its repetition and heartwarming rationality and it’s refreshingly minimal, like everything else about this album.

American jazz academics may be baffled and hope this album is American in origin, but yet again fear that it’s not. Music geeks will spot the use of effects pedals here and there. Some might notice that GoGo Penguin have refined the use of those little machines to absolute perfection.

This record isn’t reinventing the wheel, because you can’t. As a reviewer I’d like to juxtapose it with others I like, but I don’t feel like it right now. Just let me play it again and enjoy what it does to my brain – a bit like what Glen Gould playing Bach does to my brain. But let me turn the hoover on first, like Glen did when he practised. A must have album.

Thomas Lebioda

ILLUM SPHERE

GHOSTS OF THEN AND NOW
Ninja Tune

A few years back, when Illum Sphere, aka Manc club night Hoya Hoya co-founder Ryan Hunn, had only a couple of releases under his belt, I remember discussing the variation in his musical styles with Daedelus, who was over from the US to play. “Ryan is still searching for his sound,” he said affectionately.

Ghosts of Then and Now, then, is the culmination of Ryan’s sonic ascension so far – his first album proper following a bevy of EPs and singles for Fat City, 3024, Tectonic and Young Turks. None of his music so far has been easily classifiable for those that feel the need, but the murky hip hop and beat leanings of his earliest forays have here been superseded by a resounding landscape of synth work conducted with a definite narrative in mind. Vocals, from NY’s Shadowbox on three numbers and Mai Nestor on the epic ‘At Night’, don’t overpower proceedings, but provide a sweet contrast to the potential darkness of an extremely layered piece of work.

‘Sleeprunner’ (the most aggressive and immediate track), ‘Near The End’ (sci-fi party jazz with soul: all mesmerising keys, tribal drive and chord build-up) and ‘Embryonic’ (the closer, a memorably-hummmable Shadowbox lullaby) are standout tracks for me. Tempos vary and percussion hits hard, but those synth lines are killer throughout. Illum remains steadfast in tone and demonstrates admirable restraint and subtlety (‘Near The End’ and ‘Liquesce’ with Shigeto end way too soon) over 13 tracks which in less skilled hands could have been a stylistic mess, and the underpinnings of live musicianship on such an ‘electronic’ album make it a warm affair which rewards repeated attention.

Ironically for someone identified with a pioneering club night, Ghosts... is unconcerned with scenes or what you think is à la mode. Illum has found his sound.

Jamie Groovement
HARP AND A MONKEY

ALL LIFE IS HERE
MoonrakerUK
At Ramsbottom Festival last year, Harp and a Monkey played an engaging set which deservedly won them new friends. To back that up they now deliver *All Life is Here*, the album they featured in that set. Established fans and new friends will not be disappointed.

This quirky album makes deceptively simple use of acoustic instruments. There are glockenspiels, a melodica, pots, pans and, yes, a harp, which together provide a perfect backdrop for the stories they want to tell. It is words, names and stories that dominate this record. Words drift in like telling ghosts in ‘Manchester Angel’, names like Rosa Parks rise up in ‘Dear Daughter’, and if you add fighting Franco in Spain the full picture forms. There is a fine tradition working here. This is not coffee table folk music. BBC Radio 2’s Mike Harding says they’re “an Incredible String Band for the 21st century”. Forget that. This lot are George Orwell’s boys.

Dave Jones

WEHKHA

BEACONS
Tru Thoughts
With the imminent release of his next EP, *Beacons*, Manchester-based Tom A Leah, aka Werkha, firmly establishes himself on the Manchester scene as a producer with a truly eclectic style. Here is a futurist sound with roots in funk and soul, jazz, afro-beat, deep house and dubstep, culminating into a fresh electronic mix layered with on-point percussion and featuring the pure vocals of Bryony Jarman-Pinto. The five tracks each metamorphose into the next, all tied together by a deep undulating energy. Imagine the soft trance-like rhythms of James Blake and the live instrumentation of Portico Quartet, then add a vibrant synth, trembling bass, and accelerate it to the brisk tempo of a dance beat. You are somewhere close to Werkha’s unique sound.

Set to support Bonobo on his European tour and with Gilles Peterson hailing it his Album of the Week, this EP firmly cements Werkha’s credentials as a major player in electronic music.

Daisy Kidd

KING OF THE MOUNTAINS

ZOETROPE
Melodic Records
In just over half an hour, *King Of The Mountains*’ debut album carves Phil Kay’s name on an ever-lengthening list of producers leering back over the analogue hum of bygone Casio keyboards. He treads less dance-orientated paths than fellow composer-cum-producer Jon Hopkins, tracing Fuck Buttons’ latest steps and holding a shrine to Boards Of Canada. Kay wisely shies away from the rhythmic pastures perhaps overwrought in Hopkins’ work, but in doing so we have a far more texturally diverse and less complex record in *Zoetrope*. Its best track, ‘Stranger Things Have Happened’, captures Kay’s talents for writing easy ethereal meanders that are hypnotic and nuanced.

But its simplicity is its undoing. ‘Surrounded’, ‘Zebra Girls’ and ‘Gunshots’ all sound like mediocre outtakes from *Music Has The Right To Children*. Though pleasant, these songs find Kay wearing his inspirations too boldly on his sleeves.

Thomas Dixon

THE YOSSARIANS

THE YOSSARIANS
Self-released
Sweeping whirlpool shanties shift and swoon amidst catchy guitar riffs and bass abyss drops with *The Yossarians*. Its dark folk and deep soul rhythms spin you round like musical leviathans then spit you on frenzied and entrancing tangents. ‘How To Know’ and ‘Knife Attack Reunion’ are prime examples of this churning, unpredictable impulse, whilst ‘Tsunami Watch’ is a whimsical ballad to Gaia’s rage. ‘Boat Song’ makes you want to drink spiced rum with Captain Morgan and his posse of mer-mates, only to wake up wasted on some foreign beach, nursing a hangover and trying to squeeze out from the arms of an amorous manatee.

Effortlessly cool, intricate and hypnotic, the shackled souls of a thousand sozzled sailors oscillate and warble alongside wobbling theremins and raucous psychedelic rock ditties. ‘Rolling Thunder’ is by far the standout track, a rolling, forlorn ode to heartbreak. Deeply soulful shanties from society’s fringes.

Stefanie Elrick
Polar Bear are a contemporary experimental jazz band based in London. With four albums under their belt, including the critically acclaimed Held on the Tips of Fingers and Peepers, they are now poised to release their fifth, In Each and Every One, next month on The Leaf Label. Loosely associated with the F-IRE Collective and with former punk-jazz outfit Acoustic Ladyland, Polar Bear are one of the freshest and most challenging bands in the UK today. I spoke to drummer, songwriter, producer and all-round talent Seb Rochford, who was taking a break in the US before the band’s upcoming UK tour.

What are you up to at the minute?
I’m just in the desert. I’ve been doing a bit of editing on some Polar Bear stuff with this singer. I’ve borrowed a drum kit from someone as well so I’ve been practising a bit. But mainly just been walking around in the desert. Just me and my girlfriend.

The new album is out in March. Tell me a bit about the writing and recording. I know with Peepers you recorded everything very quickly.
I think the recording was actually shorter than Peepers. We did three days instead of four days, but we rehearsed a lot more before, and I spent a lot longer doing stuff after, putting the
What sort of techniques were you using this time around?

It was kind of the opposite of what we did last time. With the last album there were no headphones and we were all in the same room. But this time we used headphones and everyone was in a separate room so I had complete control over the sound. I put the drums through a 70s distortion pedal, the toms and bass drum through some effects. And then I gave the guy Sonny, who was recording it, his own channel and said to him he could do whatever he wanted on it, but I wasn’t allowed to hear it until afterwards. So when I got back to my house it was a surprise.

Did you write scores for all the songs or were they memorised by the band during rehearsals?

Yeah I write parts out for everyone, apart from John [electronics]. Sometimes I just communicate to John what I want. For one track I made a little demo on my computer and sent him the sound to give him the idea. I did try that once with a band – recording the tune that I’d written and asking them to learn it by ear – but they all just wrote parts out for it. We just adapt as we rehearse – play around with it and see how it goes.

John played guitar on Peepers, but I didn’t notice any on the new album. Was that a joint decision, for him to focus on electronics?

It was something we both thought of at the same time actually. So it worked out well.

Well it is his specialist subject. That and the mandolin. One thing I always notice about your playing on record is that it’s understated. Are you conscious of not overproducing the drums and pushing yourself too high in the mix?

I’ve never thought about that. I just mix it to what I hear, I guess. Quite a lot of time with Polar Bear the drums are the last thing I’m thinking about. With this album, because of the electronics, I felt like I needed to pare my stuff down, so me and John were creating one rhythm together. So I think some of my parts are sparser. I think with my own band I probably play less intense than if I’m playing in someone else’s band, like Shabaka’s band [Sons of Kemet].

I was going to say that actually – that your playing on the Sons of Kemet album Burn is quite all-out. Is it nice to have those projects that are a bit more straight up?

Yeah definitely. I just like playing drums in different ways. But if I didn’t have a band where I’m able to do that I think I would really miss it, because that’s how I started playing drums – playing hardcore and death metal and grindcore. So I feel like it’s a part of me that needs to be there somehow. When you play that music you never forget the feeling of it and it’s quite a good feeling.

I think another thing is you’re not constantly on your ride cymbal in the classic jazz style, so the listener isn’t being reminded that ‘this is jazz’ all the time.

Actually, for this album I made the decision not to have a ride cymbal, which felt quite a scary decision to make. In fact, I completely changed my drum kit for this album. There’s a cymbal maker called Matt Nolan, and all the cymbals on that album I designed with this guy. I just wanted a different sound.

That reminds me of Robert Fripp from King Crimson. He didn’t want any cymbals on Discipline because he said they were interfering with the frequencies of his guitar.

Yeah, the cymbals that I’ve made with Matt – the idea of them is that they occupy less frequencies. They’re quite short, so you hit them and get the impact, but there’s no ‘washing’, which is generally what my cymbals do, so it’s quite a different thing for me to try.

Your Open Souls project with Ranjana Ghatek and Jason Singh went down really well. How did that come together and was it a challenge playing with a beatboxer?

It’s the same thing with Jason – I have to pare my beats down a bit and use the drums in a different way, because he’s doing drums as well. It’s about creating something together. I love playing with Jason. I know him through Ranjana. I was just having a jam with him at my house, and Ranjana came round. As she came in Jason gave her a mic and we started jamming and recorded it. We just spent about three days eating food and playing, and then we did some gigs. I think we’ll record an album in February or March.

Is it hard juggling so many projects? Do you ever write something and save it for a different project?

If I write a piece of music I write it for a specific thing, but I don’t just sit there and write. Things just come. I’ll just start hearing something in my head. I’ll think about something that I want to write, for Polar Bear or whatever, and then at some point a tune will come that will fit what I’m thinking. I don’t really understand how it happens. I think it just goes round my subconscious for a while.

Do you think you’ll get round to doing any more solo material or do you need the interaction with other musicians?

I do do that quite often, but I just don’t release it. I’ve been doing stuff by myself for a long time. I’m always doing something. I love playing bass and keyboards and guitar, playing all the instruments myself.

What is your advice for aspiring drummers?

There’s some advice that someone gave me when I first started playing that I think is the best, which is just that the most important thing is to listen. If you just listen then everything should be easy. I don’t really get nervous that much, but if you get nervous before a gig, I always try and tell myself to listen. The point of music when you’re playing in a band is to interact with other people.

Sam Walby
Janus, the Roman god of transition from whom the month of January gets its name, is usually depicted as having two faces; one looking forward, the other back. January is a good time to interview artists as they are, like Janus, contemplative about the year just gone and hopeful about things to come. I begin my chat with Louis Barabbas – songwriter and band leader at the helm of Manchester’s finest swing-folk-rock-circus The Bedlam Six, label director, and Un-Convention board member – by asking if he made any resolutions this year.

“I avoid them as a rule. I don’t mind breaking promises to other people, but breaking the ones I make to myself can be depressing. I have, however, made a few cautious statements of intent. The main one is just to get more stuff done, things I can actually see and hear, rather than the dubious achievement of getting indifferent faceless radio producers to take an interest. I’ve got two books planned – one academic, one fiction – plus a musical I’ve been meaning to get on with for about ten years. It’s time to do these things while I still have fire in my belly.”

2013 was a busy year for Louis Barabbas and The Bedlam Six. As well as embarking on a European tour that saw them play to their biggest ever crowd – 9,000 people in Nuremberg, a “dear diary moment”, as Louis puts it – they also moved into a house to record their not-so-difficult second album *Youth*. The decision to create their own version of The Band’s *Big Pink* certainly paid off. “I love that way of working,” Louis enthuses. “It’s both intensive and laid back and we were able to capture spontaneity without the usual attendant loss of quality. It also suited people’s individual rhythms. Some of us work best in daylight, others at night and we could just play and record whenever we felt like it.”

The whole experience was documented in a studio diary blog by Louis. The album itself is centred loosely around the concept of (you guessed it) youth and features new material, such as the defiant battle-cry of the inner child ‘I Ain’t Done’, alongside more familiar songs like ‘Mother’ and ‘The Debtor’s Wife’, which have been part of the band’s live set since as far back as 2006. But what was it about the idea of youth that tied these songs together? “It’s on my mind a lot. I’m not an old man by any means, but I am at an age where one’s perspective starts to swell up and jostle against everything else. I have lived longer than Jimi Hendrix, Kurt Cobain and Buddy Holly – young men who rewrote the rules of rock’n’roll. Some of my friends now have children and some are now dead. This stuff inevitably works its way into one’s writing, more so than soppy love songs.”

It wasn’t all smooth sailing though. Louis admits that one mistake was made when the band tried and failed to play the media game and create a “buzz”. Although fans will agree that the band deserve mainstream recognition, it was a gamble that didn’t pay off. “I hate buzz. I felt like an utter hypocrite fiddling about with singles when we had a whole album just sitting there.” One thing he can take from the experience is that he’s learned from his mistakes. “We won’t do it again,” he assures me. “For the next album we’re just going to get the songs out there as soon as they’re recorded and keep moving forwards. That’s how it should be done. We’re not in the 70s anymore.”

As with the band’s debut album, *Found Drowned*, and various EPs and live albums they’ve put out, *Youth* will be released on Debt Records, the independent label founded by Louis and various members of The Bedlam Six on a principle of collaboration. Readers of his blog can attest that not only does Louis possess a sharp lyrical wit and an ear for a good tune, but he is also extremely intellectually switched on when it comes to the ever-changing mechanics of the music industry.

It’s this change that inspired them to start Debt. “The only thing that seems to have remained constant in the music industry over the last decade is its transformation. I wish it would just hurry up. Aren’t the radio stations all supposed to have gone by now? Aren’t the major labels supposed to be dead? Wasn’t the internet supposed to have saved all the independent artists like some great musical Noah’s Ark? Formats change, fashions change, even the very nature of consumption changes. What doesn’t change is the way we as humans engage with art on a personal level. In the end, the only thing that makes any lasting sense is the art itself. That was always the ethos and mission statement.”

Adam Robertshaw
03.04.2014: 7.30PM
ED MOTTA

04.04.2014: 9PM
XFM FIRST FRIDAY W/ DJ JO GOOD
FEAT. BIG DEAL, AMBER RUN & TRAMPOLENE

05.04.2014: 9.30PM
MR SCRUFF KEEP IT UNREAL

06.04.2014: 6PM
ACOUSTIC BHUNA

08.04.2014: 7.30PM
STEVE FORBERT

10.04.2014: 7.30PM
THE LUMERIANS + BOOGARINES

11.04.2014: 8PM
THE SELECTER + SUPPORT

15.04.2014: 7.30PM
JOE DRESCOLL AND SEKOU KOUYATE

17.04.2014: 7PM
GEORGE CLINTON & P-FUNK + SPECIAL GUESTS (THE RITZ)

17.04.2014: 8PM
MIND ON FIRE MEETS TRU THOUGHTS
FEAT. WORKHA, HARLEIGHBLU & DJ MATTHEW HALSALL PLUS MIND ON FIRE DJ'S

19.04.2014: 8PM
HORACE ANDY & DUB ASANTE FT. MATIC HORNS

20.04.2014: 6PM
ACOUSTIC BHUNA

22.04.2014: 7.30PM
VEIN FEAT GREG OSBY

24.04.2014: 7.30PM
PANIC ROOM

24.04.2014: 7PM
ANGIE STONE (THE RITZ)

25.04.2014: 7PM
BRIDIE JACKSON & THE ARBOUR

25.04.2014: 11PM
SOUL:UTION EXIT RECORDS SPECIAL FT. DBRIDGE, SKEPTICAL, MARCUS INTALEX, BANE & MC DRS

26.04.2014: 9PM
CRAGH CHARLES FUNK 'N' SOUL CLUB FEAT LACK OF AFRO BAND LIVE

29.04.2014: 7.30PM
JOHN ABERCROMBIE & MARC COPLAND

01.05.2014: 7.30PM
SNARKY PUPPY (O2 ABC, GLASGOW)

02.05.2014: 7.30PM
SNARKY PUPPY (THE WARDROBE, LEEDS)

04.05.2014: 7.30PM
SNARKY PUPPY (GLEE CLUB, BIRMINGHAM)

05.05.2014: 7.30PM
SNARKY PUPPY (COALTION, BRIGHTON)

08.05.2014: 7.30PM
TIGRAN

09.05.2014: 8PM
QUANTIC (LIVE) + PAPER TIGER

11.05.2014: 6PM
ACOUSTIC BHUNA

13.05.2014: 7.30PM
SNARKY PUPPY

14.05.2014: 7.30PM
SNARKY PUPPY

15.05.2014: 7.30PM
SLOWLY ROLLING CAMERA

15.05.2014: 7.45PM
COREY HARRIS BAND (THE ARC, STOCKTON)

16.05.2014: 7PM
COREY HARRIS BAND (THE ROPEWALK, BARTON UPON HUMBER)

17.05.2014: 7PM
COREY HARRIS BAND (THE GRAND, CLITHEROE)

18.05.2014: 7PM
LEROY HUTSON AND THE VALENTINE BROTHERS (THE RITZ)

22.05.2014: 7.30PM
SAM LEE & FRIENDS

24.05.2014: 8PM
HOT 8 BRASS BAND

25.05.2014: 8PM
MAD PROFESSOR & THE ARWA POSSEE

27.05.2014: 7.30PM
SMOKE FAIRIES

29.05.2014: 7PM
THE MAGIC BAND

29.05.2014: 7PM
LEROY HUTSON AND THE VALENTINE BROTHERS (THE KID)

30.05.2014: 11PM
SLOWLIFE

31.05.2014: 9PM
CRAIG CHARLES FUNK 'N' SOUL CLUB FEAT NICOLE WILLIS & THE INVESTIGATORS LIVE

03.04.2014: 7.30PM
04.04.2014: 9PM
05.04.2014: 9.30PM
06.04.2014: 6PM
08.04.2014: 7.30PM
10.04.2014: 7.30PM
11.04.2014: 8PM
15.04.2014: 7.30PM
17.04.2014: 7PM
17.04.2014: 8PM
17.04.2014: 7PM
22.04.2014: 7.30PM
24.04.2014: 7.30PM
24.04.2014: 7PM
25.04.2014: 7PM
25.04.2014: 11PM
26.04.2014: 9PM
29.04.2014: 7.30PM
01.05.2014: 7.30PM
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30.05.2014: 11PM
31.05.2014: 9PM

WEB: www.bandonthewall.org / TEL: 0845 2500 500
LIVE MUSIC

Sixxi is based at Arch 66, Whitworth Street West, an iconic building that played host to Manchester Institution the brickhouse for over 20 years. Looking to the future whilst not forgetting its roots, Sixxi hosts an eclectic mix of alternative club events. With a capacity of 260 across 2 floors it has a feel of intimacy, without being claustrophobic; big enough to get lost in the music, but not from your friends. Live music, club nights and much more, Sixxi promises an unrivalled experience with a sound system to match.

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UPCOMING EVENTS AT SIXXIS

Saturday, March 22nd - Route 66 rock night, featuring guest DJ Robbie B. 10pm-4am
Friday, March 28th - RideLow Presents Blackout: The Snap Back Party, featuring DJ Lee Majors, HaremOor and DJ Darka. 11pm-5.30am
Saturday, March 29th - Route 66 Rock Night, featuring guest DJ Jim NYTHe HeEt. 10pm-4am
Saturday, April 5th - Route 66 rock night, featuring live searu, Driven Apart, Glory For An Idol and sixty minute man. 8pm-4am
Sunday, April 13th - The Argent Dawn Comeback Tour
Sunday, April 20th - TFI Easter Sunday Special, featuring Cee Gordon, DJ Rippa, DJ Darka, DJ Antbomb
Saturday, April 26th - 'Scary Monsters Presents': Diamonds are Forever
Friday, May 9th - Retro Silent Disco. 10pm-3am
Saturday, May 10th - 'Scary Monsters Presents': Diamonds are Forever
Saturday, May 24th - Despite My Deepest Fear, Lock and Key, Portraits
he keen-eyed among you may have noticed a change to our banner. We’re no longer the Theatre section – we’re now Stage. This means we’ll be expanding our coverage to cover comedy, dance, ballet, and, well, anything that takes place on a stage. In honour of our upgrade we bring you an interview with Kevin Finnan of dance company Motionhouse, whose production Broken has just spent two days at the Lowry. Broken examines our relationship with the Earth as the place we live and as the source of minerals from which we are made.

Boasting a CV that includes choreography for the much acclaimed Paralympics opening ceremony, Kevin and his company have exploded in the last few years, garnering international attention.
acclaim with their previous production, the water-themed Shattered. I spoke to Kevin the week before Broken went to the stage.

**How are preparations going?**

Great. We just finished rehearsals. It takes about a week to get everyone back up to speed. Broken took a break over Christmas. No-one can compete with panto.

**How long does a show like Broken take to create from the initial idea to the final stage performance?**

About two years. A long time. It starts with an idea milling around in my head, usually while working on something else. I’m always collecting ideas, music, films and movements as I work, and then all of these start to form together in a process of accretion. When you get a bit of space you think, “Ah, I am sure these can be tied together”. The question is, how do they connect?

**Is that where collaboration comes in?**

Yes, it’s absolutely crucial. I take these ideas to our filmmakers, dancers and composers and they help me realise them.

**So it’s an inclusive process?**

It has to be. For example with the film, I don’t just want a film. I want something that is part of the performance that the dancers are working with. I can’t just be flat. It has to feel three dimensional. Then with the dancers they bring moves to me, suggest ideas. It’s inclusive and organic.

**But what about the actual show itself? Once you have the ideas how long do these take to rehearse?**

That takes about ten weeks of intense work. It’s a process of feedback. The performance is constantly adjusting itself and gets refined as the different elements are balanced.

**Like the Earth itself?**

Exactly. That is why it works for a show like Broken.

**How did Broken come about? Was it a natural follow-on from doing a show about water (Shattered) to making one about the Earth?**

Yes. It’s an old joke that when choreographers get to a certain age they either do the elements or the rites of spring, so I suppose I am doing the elements. It came about because I was interested in how we’re all made up of minerals that were once part of the Earth, or part of our ancestors. We are built of the same stuff. I think it is an important theme because there’s a disconnect between us and the Earth in modern life. When you’re sat in your apartment looking at your iPad, you don’t think that the concrete and steel of the building were dug out of the ground, that the electronics in the iPad came from that same place too. From this very primitive and physical act of digging rocks we get this complex technology that we take for granted. I find it absolutely fascinating.

**Is it hard to express quite complex ideas like these through dance?**

Dance is actually ideal for this. It can create a theatrical world that’s lightning fast because it is all based on movement. It has dynamics, tension, and can work in and around other mediums like film and music. So it can express ideas about motion and time very well. And there is also spectacle. We’re really interested in spectacle – the size and scale of what we’re doing can captivate the audience as the dancers flow and transform before your eyes.

**What has been the audience reaction to Broken?**

Well, the feedback we’ve got has been great – people saying, “If that’s what dance is then I want more”. That’s what we want to do, to give people a way in, to entertain, and make them think a bit too. What we’re doing isn’t deep, obscure or contemplative, but fast and mercurial and interesting.

**What are you planning after this run of Broken?**

I had an interesting conversation with a mathematician the other day and I thought that might be a bit different, something with numbers. I’ll go away and do some research and see what comes together. Of course, our previous show Scattered is still touring, and has at least another two years ahead of it with a second American tour. We’re all hoping that Broken can do the same, because it has been amazing seeing the life that Shattered has taken on, and of course the shows are always evolving and changing.

**Do you have any advice for people who see the show and want to get involved in dance as a result?**

Well, our dancers are all very personable, and they’d be happy to talk to anyone, as am I, of course. Manchester has a great dance scene and a lot of schools, so whether you want to become a dancer or work behind the scenes, there are plenty of opportunities out there.

Andrew Anderson

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**“IT’S A JOURNEY, EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE EARTH”**

That takes about ten weeks of intense work. It’s a process of feedback. The performance is constantly adjusting itself and gets refined as the different elements are balanced.

**Like the Earth itself?**

Exactly. That is why it works for a show like Broken.

**How did Broken come about? Was it a natural follow-on from doing a show about water (Shattered) to making one about the Earth?**

Yes. It’s an old joke that when choreographers get to a certain age they either do the elements or the rites of spring, so I suppose I am doing the elements. It came about because I was interested in how we’re all made up of minerals that were once part of the Earth, or part of our ancestors. We are built of the same stuff. I think it is an important theme because there’s a disconnect between us and the Earth in modern life. When you’re sat in your apartment looking at your iPad, you don’t think that the concrete and steel of the building were dug out of the ground, that the electronics in the iPad came from that same place too. From this very primitive and physical act of digging rocks we get this complex technology that we take for granted. I find it absolutely fascinating.

**How do you show all of that on stage?**

It’s a journey, exploring the relationship between ourselves and the Earth. From the darkness at the Big Bang we follow the dust clouds collecting – accretion, again – and the formation of the Earth and light. Then we move onto the mining of the minerals and also look at our bodies after death as they are absorbed back into the Earth.

**Broken is touring throughout the UK until mid-March motionhouse.co.uk**
Finding our compass with Gravity, All is Lost, The Patrol and the Wolf of Wall Street

Lost. Abandoned. Disorientated. It seems that these powerful themes are hugely prevalent in a wide range of films currently doing the rounds, so these four recent movies make for fascinating analysis because each in their own individual way, with the exception of The Wolf of Wall Street, forces the central characters to question their current predicament and reflect on even bigger issues. The word ‘compass’ comes to mind. Literal, moral and emotional.

In Gravity, now the proud owner of a mantelpiece of Oscars, we see Matt Kowalski (George Clooney) and Dr Ryan Stone (Sandra Bullock) completely lose their bearings when routine repair work to the external comms panels of a space station is rudely interrupted by debris from a Russian satellite violently hurtling towards them, faster than a bullet. Had a bad day at the office? Gravity shows us just how the techno junk from discarded satellites orbiting around space can create havoc of untold proportions.

And so, the film takes us on an exhaustive journey of repositioning across a galaxy of physical, emotional and technical challenges, sending messages to ground control who have no prospect of hearing. When Stone finally falls back to Earth, we do get a sense that she has found herself, and her place, in more ways than one.

Reaching a moral position on one of the most pressing political issues of our time – why are we fighting a war in Afghanistan? – is the challenging ending to a brilliant low-budget British film by former army officer turned screenwriter and director, Tom Petch, whose film The Patrol made an all-too-limited release in February.

Following a tight-knit group of soldiers left with limited support as they patrol a remote village in Helmand, The Patrol powerfully conveys an aching sense of abandonment, isolation and disillusionment which culminates in a collective decision to leave their posting after a succession of morale-sapping events, including the loss of one of their comrades. One of the most salient lines in this must-see, subtle but acutely observed film comes from the commanding officer, who says, “Take a young kid of 18 and send him to Afghanistan and you might as well send him to the moon.”

Disorientation and disillusionment in a completely different environment besets Robert Redford, whose sailing trip changes direction altogether when his yacht is struck by a floating container, presumably full of cut-price consumer tat from China, mid-ocean. Solitary, isolated and with a vessel rapidly taking on water, All Is Lost sees Redford deliver a performance devoid of any significant dialogue as he battles against a relentless series of jaw-dropping challenges that leave little time for personal reflection, just survival.

The significance of the cause of the accident, being hit by an AWOL metal container, could just be a great narrative device for producing a tense action thriller on the seas, but there’s a deeper comment to be made about how we’ve all lost our compass in pursuit of material things. As Amazon founder Jeff Bezos once ironically declared: “What consumerism is, at best, is getting people to buy things that don’t actually improve their lives”.

Let’s face it, even orbiting space junk is the consequence of our growing need for consumer delights. But do they make us any better? SatNav gives us instant positioning details of where we are on the planet, but it clearly doesn’t guide our moral or spiritual compass.

Which brings us to the hedonistic materialism of Martin Scorsese’s The Wolf of Wall Street, a brave and, in the words of its director, “ferocious” film borne of his frustration with the unregulated financial world. It’s a voyeuristic foray into the big buck game of banking in which Leonardo DiCaprio plays Jordan Belfort, a ballsy, arrogant and greedy investment banker whose only regret at the age of 26 is that he made just $49 million in a year, $3m short of being able to have stashed away $1m per week. Nice work if you can get it.

For Belfort and his cronies, with their supercars, yachts, women, sex and hard partying, finding themselves amidst unspeakable amounts of wealth is probably not too dissimilar to finding your bearings mid-ocean or between space stations. Yet, unlike Gravity, The Patrol and All Is Lost, where there’s a genuine longing to find equilibrium, there really doesn’t seem to be the urge for any self-reflection.

Four great films, of which three are bank-rolled by Hollywood finance, but for me The Patrol really does make a noble attempt to reset the moral compass on the biggest issue of our times with a reported budget of just £1m. Interestingly, it took top prize at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, a laudable accolade won on US territory, of all places.

Tom Warman
You may not have turned to the magazine’s back page just yet, but when you do, you will spot that we have a colourful new design to illustrate all the independent traders, charities, community groups and local government initiatives that we’ve featured through this issue.

From the seedling of the vague desire to frame our back page map in a more abstract form, all the way through to its immaculate and functional appearance that you see today, Tim and Lee at Mogul Creative have been able to meet and exceed our expectations when working with them to mould our wandering imaginations into reality. We think the resulting map of Independent Sheffield reflects who we are and what we stand for, and we hope you do too.

Outside of working with us, Mogul has just celebrated its second birthday and during those years has worked successfully with a range of clients. For some fine examples, there is the logo, web and stationary design for Just Fabulous’s Vintage China Hire service, identity and logo design for Paul Prest Pest Control services or the addition of social media artwork for Heartbeat’s community percussion classes. Mogul has a growing portfolio illustrating their skills in all these areas.

Based in south Manchester, they offer a range of promotional and design work, from copywriting to website design, from bespoke videos to apps. Their aim is to provide high-level and professional solutions to these branding and company image tasks that are crucial in the modern world, in particular working with small businesses to add a personal touch.

If the last few months of ins and outs in the local real ale pub scene has shown us anything, it’s that running the whole operation independently, where possible, is becoming more secure and more popular. First Chop Brewing Arm has recently turned on the taps at a new bar in the back of its Salford-based brewery, while Marble has long been successfully running both brewery and bars. What is required now is for more to follow them away from chain ownership and bland lagers and towards a rich variety of passionately crafted, flavoursome ales.

Notably, Stockport’s Hope Inn, whose Fool Hardy ales are brewed onsite, has been attracting deserved recognition. Following the Pub of the Year award from Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA and the Best New Brewery Pump Clip 2013 from the National Pump Clip Museum, Hope Inn owner, manager and pump clip designer Martin Wood said, “The onsite Fool Hardy brewery has made a massive difference to the pub. It has attracted people from all over the country to try our monthly and seasonal ales. Obviously the product you’re offering needs to be top class otherwise you wouldn’t be attracting people at all, which I think reflects in our awards which have been gratefully received in only our first 12 months of trade.”

After a successful first anniversary beer festival, with their bottled beers now available at Beer Moth in the Northern Quarter and their Rash Dash 3.8% traditional bitter taking pride of place in the House of Commons’ Strangers Bar throughout March, The Hope Inn can look forward to a busy 2014.

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Not sure where to take your droogs for refreshment? The Engine House Cafe on Cambridge Street, off Whitworth Street, provides loose leaf teas, coffee and delicious food in the heart of all things Anthony Burgess. The cafe and shop, situated in the exposed brick of Chorlton Mill, has a wide range of books by, read by and related to the author most famous for writing *A Clockwork Orange*. The downstairs exhibition space is currently housing an exhibit (on until July) exploring Burgess and music, giving further insight into his masterful mind. The extensive collection and archive is available to explore in the reading room, available daily by appointment. Pop in or check the website for information on upcoming events.

Stockport Old Town’s revival sees a community of independent traders through its cobbled streets. Up on Bridge Street Brow, find glamorous fashion at Eternal Envy, retro electronics at A Gentleman’s Relish and pop memorabilia at Jewel on the Hill. In the market area, a vintage treasure trove at Room at the Top, a new creative hub at Seven Miles Out Arts Centre and bargains galore inside Stockport’s impressive Victorian Market Hall. The Wellington Street and Lower Hillgate corner boasts vintage interiors at Agapanthus and home cooked food at Pepper Mill Bistro, while specialist shops in the Underbanks include Black Sheep, Evolve, Fab Music Store, Peggy Mae Vintage and The Stage Door. For food and drink, head to The Little Underbank Tearoom or over to St Petersgate for Lord of the Pies, Eat Me, Da Vinci’s and the new Italian restaurant Pasquale’s.

12 April is designated the day to go out. During the daytime, it’s free to browse the zine and illustrator stalls at Manchester Print Fair in its new MadLab home. Later on, IABF (see above) hosts an evening’s homage to the original Doctor Who soundtrack composer Delia Derbyshire. Rewinding a little, check out two free entry photo expos. Northern Exposure’s snaps are adorning Portico Library until 29 March, while Wundercamera is at the Holden Gallery until 9 May. For paintings, until 13 April Castlefield Gallery hosts Iain Andrews’ vibrant works, or head out of town to Bolton Museum to see James Naughton’s Western US landscapes. Finally, look out for subliminal messenger Micah Purnell’s attack on the city’s billboards from 24 March.

Record Store Day (19 April), the celebration of independent record shops and labels around the globe, is now in its seventh year in the UK. Among the 200 participating shops nationwide are Manchester’s Eastern Bloc, Piccadilly Records, Clapdown and Beatin’ Rhythm, along with Kingbee in Chorlton, Beatnik in Altrincham and Endless Music in Prestwich, which will all have special events and RSD exclusives available in store. Indie labels everywhere have a range of extremely limited releases planned, but if last year is anything to go by you’ll need to queue early to catch them. The Video Jam team is curating an exhibition for the occasion to be launched at Soup Kitchen on 17 April, aptly named Records.

21-30 March sees Manchester’s biennial Histories Festival return to venues throughout the city. From a temporary exhibition on Belle Vue at The Flatiron to laser beamed artwork at Media City, there is something for everyone. Here are our top three free events. For Celebration Day on 23 March, Manchester Town Hall will be transformed into a histories and heritage hub with nearly 90 organisations exhibiting alongside performances, talks, film screenings and games. On 26 March, People’s History Museum hosts the Peterloo Discussion. David Haslam leads this commemoration of the Peterloo Massacre which took place in Manchester’s St Peter’s Square in 1869. Finally, Histonauts. Any technologically-savvy readers should join this digital scavenger hunt. With creative tasks each day, you’ll unlock Manchester’s music memories.

Manchester-based youth organisation Reclaim has new volunteering opportunities available for those looking to gain experience of leading creative and empowering workshops with young people. Their award-winning mentoring and leadership projects focus on enabling young people from some of the region’s most disadvantaged areas to engage directly with their communities, the police, politicians and the media. The programs are youth-led, building self-esteem and developing leadership skills, while challenging negative perceptions of young people in the media. Reclaim aim to build a safe and supportive network of caring adults to work directly with young people as well as volunteers to support the projects through fundraising, leading workshops and developing a new library space. If you’re interested, check the website to find you nearest Reclaim group.
STOCKPORT OLD TOWN

Discover the secret side of independent Stockport.

Find out more at www.stockportoldtown.co.uk
INDEPENDENT MANCHESTER
YOU CAN FIND NOW THEN IN THESE AREAS

1. MARBLE BEERS
2. THE OUTSTANDING BREWING CO
3. BAND ON THE WALL
4. MANCHESTER PRINT FAIR
5. GLASSWERK CONCERTS
6. MANCHESTER MIDI SCHOOL
7. SIXXIS
8. DELIA DERBYSHIRE DAY 2014
9. INTERNATIONAL ANTHONY BURGESS FOUNDATION
10. Q3 APARTMENTS
11. THE EIGHTH DAY SHOP & CAFÉ
12. MANCHESTER ACADEMY
13. MARBLE BEERS
14. PROOF
15. BATTERY PARK
16. KAGYU LING BUDDHIST CENTRE
17. THE HOPE INN / FOOL HARDY ALES
18. STOCKPORT OLD TOWN
   • SEVEN MILES OUT
   • LORD OF THE PIES
   • AGAPANTHUS
   • ETERNAL ENVY
   • ROOM AT THE TOP
   • FAB MUSIC STORE

CITY CENTRE
OXFORD ROAD
CHORLTON
WILMSLOW ROAD
STOCKPORT

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