

Change of Scenery

Issue 6



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Issue #6 : Early 1997

Welcome to the first issue of 1997 . At last we have some new material and live dates . As always we require your opinions on the album / tour including : Marketing (are 3x cd singles value for money or ripping off the fans ?) , venue facilities and ticket prices etc. We also want reviews of the live dates and any 'sessions ' the band are doing whilst promoting the new album.

Thanks for now

John Pude

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We have sold out of all our back issues . SORRY!

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editor, anyone connected with the band or record company. We apologise for any inaccuracies and take no responsibility for any losses caused by information herein.

Press Biography by Craig Mclean 1996

On the east coast of America , it is August 1994 . After practically three years of non-stop touring in the states , James are about to come off the road. The slog has paid off: the bands most recent sixth album 'Laid' , has sold 600,000 copies in America while the title track , 2 minutes and 20 seconds of pointed perfection , has become the most played track on some American radio stations [and not just because it's brevity meant it could be slipped into those awkward time-slots just before the latest ad from the McBurger Megacorp].

For the 11-year old James it had been a long march to freedom-freedom from a roller-coaster past that went from cult acclaim on Manchester's Factory label , to an ill-starred sojourn at New York's Sire Records , to their self-saving live album 'One Man Clapping' (financed by the band members' participation in medical experiments) , to hitting the mass-motherlode with 'Gold Mother' [1990] , 'Seven' [1992] and 'Laid' [1993].

So now James are setting the seal on their success: by playing at Woodstock II . Between [gulp] Live and [double gulp] The Cranberries. In front of 300,000 people [most of whom seem to be camera crews]. In the rain . In the mud . In the middle the biggest corporate advertising free-for-all in the history of rock [triple gulp].

was where they began writing their new album . "We improvised a few songs in a weird barn near Woodstock " Tim Booth recalls. "Those were the first seeds..."

Apart from that , " smiles Jim Glennie, "Woodstock wasn't massively pleasurable...."

Sweetness through strength , and strength through adversity. James have always been about finding leg-ups in the breakdowns , the diamond in the muck , the brilliance in the humdrum. Tim Booth's searching lyrics , the bands' insistent melodies , Booth's yearning vocals , James' epic intimacy - these are the things that make James unique , and the things that shine ever clearer on their new album , 'Whiplash' . Through the deft simplicity of 'Lost a friend' or the sparse electricity of 'Blue Pastures' , through the clattering industrial disco of 'Go to the Bank' to the urgent energy of the junglist [junglist? oh yes] 'Greenpeace' , to the bold pop of 'She's a Star and Tomorrow , 'Whiplash' is a band proclaiming full steam ahead , fire done below , and unsteady as she goes . All at once.

All of which is especially remarkable given the backdrop to the writing and recording of 'Whiplash' . After escaping the Woodstock mire with a few recent song ideas , the band decamped to Wales and London for further writing sessions. Booth recalls that "At that point we had a very loose framework for the next album. We were gonna make 11 songs under three minutes, very well composed, almost Beatles-like things. But we never got round to doing that - and anyway , other bands have taken that idea in the meantime..."

Soon after came what the band refer to as Black Thursday, the day Larry Gott , a founding member of James alongside Booth and Glennie , announced that he couldn't go on being a part of the touring James , the day the band found they owed five years in back taxes; the day emotional crises gripped everyone in the band ; the day James very nearly split.

"That day could have gone two ways," says Saul Davies , " We could have collapsed or we could have got our shit together , recorded a new album , and just got better at being James. It was a big moment. A heavy day." "Still," sniffs Glennie, "We've had a lot of these days, we have been together for a long time , it had been me, Tim and Larry for hundreds of years. And when Larry left it really altered the balance. Suddenly everything was completely broken . All we had was totally shattered . Which meant that the rest of the band came closer into things. And what we've rebuilt from that is much stronger, much more open , and much more of an honest reflection of what James are about." "But it was painful. Seriously painful."

Throughout 1995 James worked . Dave Baynton-Power set up a studio at his house in north Wales . There all the band , bar Booth, began tinkering and overhauling and underdubbing and reworking and reflecting . They had plans , big plans . They had a glut of song ideas , sound ideas , new ideas , to work through. "Wah wah" , later 94's double album of improvisations and remodellings thrown up under the aegis of Brian

Eno during the making of "Laid" , has energised the band. "We experimented with sound" says Davies "We tried to interact with each other differently. It wasn't that it was drawn out- all this was just a logical extension of the earlier collapse. We needed to rebuild James. And that's gonna take a little bit of time. And we did that through music."

Booth , for his part , was doing his own rebuilding . He had hooked up with renowned composer Angelo Baddalamenti , and the two spent much of 1995 working on their "Booth and the Bad Angel" album in New



York.

The sessions at Baynton-Powers' house let James regroup and rebuild. Jamming things together , unjamming things apart , constructing

songs round snatches of Booths' vocals , deconstructing everything except Booths' vocals , five-sixths of James fiddled and noodled and doodled and drew together a new conception of the making of James' music . One-sixth of James , meanwhile, finally let go a little . "Things would have gone on festering otherwise," Booth shrugs now . " And we needed a new way of working. I do a lot of things - I act and I dance and I teach dance and I wanted to work with Angelo. On past James records I'd be there for every note. And I didn't want to do that anymore. And the band wanted more creative input. So we decided we had to find a completely new way of working for James to continue. And we found it ..."

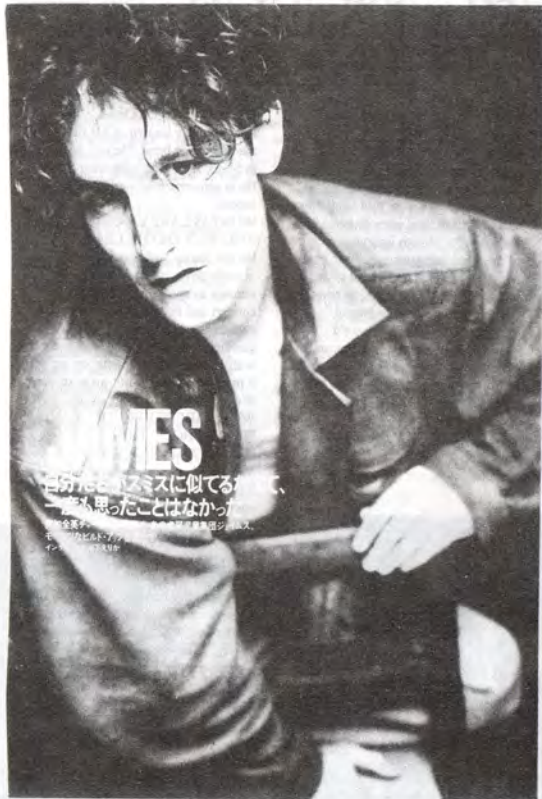
In February 1996 James finally began recording proper in RAK studios in London and Real World near Bath. As with "Laid" they set up two recording workstations in the studios , one for the final tape-down , and one for experimentation. As with "Laid" , Brian Eno was on board, although less as a producer , more as provider of tangential input, technological hints , backing vocals , and vibes . Or , as the band have it , "Additional interference and occasional co-production". Twin this with the proven pop suss and gloss of "Actual" producer Stephen Hague , and "Whiplash" was always going to sound special. Oh , and there was a third studio as well , for Booth to explore new lyrical and vocal avenues.

So . Three recording studios , two producers, nearly two years of writing and taping , one double album of improvisations , one solo album, one near-band split , a welter of personal emotional and financial crisis - any other band would have been ripped apart by such conflicting forces.

"Yeah I know!" Booth laughs. "But we somehow have a good centre of gravity . This new album has the same restless spirit as other James albums, it's looking for some new language , something new . It's got a lot more energy to it. 'Laid' was a hard record to tour because it was so delicate . But we want to tour this album . So it's a definite, thumping record , and it's looking to combine the esoteric side of 'Wah wah' with the pop ideas and the rock angles that we obviously have as well. We're always looking forward to take a snapshot of where we are"

And that's James '97 . United, invigorated, invigorating, more stand-up than "Sit Down" , always -not 'Sometimes'- hungry , creating hymns from the global village . And that's "Whiplash": born of frustration but shaped in visionary contentment. And Tim Booth still dances funny.

"Look at it!" says the singer of the new-school James . "You can hear it on record, you can see it between us, we're breathing again. It's lovely getting back together . We're still bold and bloody minded and arrogant and making the music we love . And this is it."



Sheffield-Frenzy

Interview by Su Pude

On Saturday 25th January, four of us from Change of Scenery went to The Leadmill in Sheffield to have an interview with JAMES. We got there just as they were starting the soundcheck. We were told to sit down and wait until they were finished, then we would be able to interview a couple of the band, although we didn't know which ones. As it turned out it was Jim and Saul with Tim joining us towards the end. It was a very informal interview and not at all as we'd planned, we sat in the tour bus and ended up having more of a chat and a laugh with a few questions thrown in here and there. The first question however was:
WHO IS THE NEW MEMBER AND WHAT BANDS HAS HE BEEN IN

BEFORE?

His name is Adrian Oxaal, affectionately known as Mr Pastry by the rest of the band. He was previously in Shark Boy, who supported Suede. He is someone that Saul knew from school.

WHAT IS LARRY DOING NOW AND WHY DID HE LEAVE?

He got fed up with touring and wanted to settle down a bit more. (we did manage to speak to Larry at the concert and he told us that he is studying Art and Design, he also quashed rumours that he may guest with James during the tour saying that it must be a clean break-away or none at all.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND FEARS ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING TOUR IN MARCH?

It's mainly that nobody will turn up and we'll be a failure, but hopefully it will be O.K.

DOES IT FEEL LIKE A COME-DOWN PLAYING SMALLER VENUES?

No, not really because we've had such a long break since the last tour, we don't want to jump in and say "Here we are." There's something nice about playing gigs again. It would be arrogant to think that we could just march into the G-Mex and let 15000

people see us. There is enough that we've got to, take on with these gigs without making things so hard for ourselves by playing to that number of people. We haven't played anything for two and a half years, four years over in this country, plus a new guitarist, a new album with songs that we've never played live to anybody before is a lot to cope with. But hopefully we'll do alright, although we are scared.

DO YOU FEEL OBLIGED TO PLAY SIT DOWN AND THINGS LIKE THAT OR LEAVE THEM OUT?

No, we don't feel obliged to do it, people don't really expect stuff from us, which is great, so you don't know what you're going to get, we've got less bloody minded though. We used to be particularly difficult for the hell of it.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE FROM THE TOUR, WHAT SORT

OF SONGS, IS IT GOING TO BE ALL OLD STUFF, ALL NEW OR JUST A MIXTURE OF BOTH?

It's going to be a mixture, working on the hard stuff is getting the new stuff sorted out. A lot of the album was pieced together in the studio. The way we've done it in the past is to "jam" them in rehearsals and then straight into the studio, which leaves now to make things work on stage rather than just in a studio with a mixing desk. It's like mixing it all together and it takes time.

ARE THERE ANY PLANS TO TOUR AMERICA OR FRANCE ETC?

Yes, not France, we've got a couple of gigs in the states in a couple of weeks, and we'd like to play Glastonbury this year.

WHEN SAUL DID A RADIO INTERVIEW WITH TIM AND ANGELO IN SANTA MONICA, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE



VERSION OF "A HORSE WITH NO NAME" THAT YOU DID?

I don't know, we recorded it but I don't know what happened to it. I think it was going to be released as a B-side to their next single, but then the James thing kicked off. It sounded really good and Tim thought it would be a great song to do, but nothing ever happened about it.

HAVE YOU BEEN DOING ANY SOLO PROJECTS?

We've been doing some stuff together (Saul and Jim) some pretty bad dance music. We've got a few tracks together, a range of stuff from very underground kind of techno trance to very, very over ground "handbag". It's fun to be in a setting like that where

you can just do anything, experiment, do stupid things, also in a way do stuff which is deliberately commercial which we never do in James. It's usually a surprise if we tell them the records because we just write the songs and the record company decides if it's a nice one. With this sort of stuff we're actually sitting down and saying "well right, this needs to happen".

We're keeping the market in mind and using that side of your brain, the more marketing, business side of it. It's really good fun and totally valid. We've done a lot of promotion recently that we wouldn't have done in the past. We've got to sell a hell of a lot of records just to break even.

FUTURE SINGLES?

We don't know yet, it's being edited at the moment. She's A Star is our first single but we don't know about the other stuff yet.

DO YOU GET A SAY IN IT?

We have the end decision, it's a two-way thing. We have to take into account what they say. It's a process of getting there together.

ARE THERE ANY PLANS TO RELAUNCH THE FAN CLUB?

There is going to be an information centre, with information about what is going on, but not a fan club. WHO IS THE SUPPORT FOR THE TOUR?

We don't know yet.

James

Local indie pop band James return to the fray on record and live - they appear at The Green Rooms on August 9 and 10. CRAIG FERGUSON (words) and IAN TILTON (photo) meet the foursome.

One moment you're there, 'flavour of the month' taking the stage on the back, and the next moment you've disappeared, a vanishing act, voluntary or otherwise. This, of course, is the very nature of the crazy world of popular music. God bless it. Upt and Down, Booms and Slumps - it's very much a cut-price cut-throat market. Suffer or not, nothing's guaranteed, certainly not success, nor it seems mere activity.

Take James, one of the better bands to emerge from Manchester over the past five years. Having built up a reputation as a superb live band, and with two fine singles on Factory to their credit, James were bound for a major label. They signed to Sire (American-based and part of the WEA empire) providing them with the debut L.P. *Stutter*, back in the summer of '86. For my money, it was a disappointing record. While it featured familiar songs of considerable quality, it neither committed the live James sound to vinyl, nor established a parallel studio sound worth of those songs. But this all seems by the by - the group have been firmly stuck in a frustrating lull since the L.P.

As Gavan puts it: "Last summer? You're going back a bit there must!" A year is a long time - they must have been doing something.

"We played in Europe, worked on lots of new songs and went into the studio, eventually." The tone of Tim's voice says it all; they could have done so much more. It becomes immediately obvious where the blame lies. James are not happy with the treatment they've received from their record company and they make no bones about it: "It was a mistake not going on tour after the L.P. came out," says Tim. It certainly doesn't make good business sense to publicise the product before it's available, rather than after. Add to that the lack of funds for advertising in the press, and their more recent awkward stance with regard to the new L.P. and you can see that this particular band-label relationship isn't all that it should be. It almost reached the divorce court before Sire relented and gave the band the money they needed for recording.

"I'm gone as far as to say: 'In the last year we've had a hell of a lot of business problems - it's an area none of us want to be bothered' with, but we've had it forced on us."

At the risk of labouring the point, the past year has not been very happy one for James - "the only thing that has kept us going is the music." As the mention of music, the room becomes charged with extreme enthusiasm. They've just had a month's break and their thirst for a return to playing is overwhelming: "You start rehearsing again and sooner or later this thing starts dividing in the middle of the room, and the song starts playing you." When Gavan says this, it sounds weird but you know what he means. They all nod in agreement and the passionate feeling is unanimous. Lee, James rarely fail to excite, but as every one

knows, getting that excitement onto vinyl is another matter. The first L.P. didn't work in that respect - "it wasn't tied together very well," says Jim - and we agree that live sound and recorded sound have to be regarded as two separate 'mediums'. Larry: "Hugh Jones who produced the new L.P. really staggled us off about *Stutter*. He said we'd lost so much between the last Factory single and the L.P."

Gavan: "The sound quality mainly. And I think we were a little more professional about it, working to the principle that 'less is more' - there's more space and thought." I take that to mean that they've held back at times where usually they'd give it the full James treatment. Gavan doesn't hold back: "It's a classic! I wouldn't have bought the first L.P. - I'd have taped it off a mate - I'd definitely buy this one though."

Given that so much was expected of the first L.P., are they not a little apprehensive about this one?

"We've had quite a cynical approach towards it, but it's a much better record," says Tim positively.

Sire probably don't think James are commercial enough - do they feel any pressure to sound more commercial? "It's inward pressure so much as anything because we want a bigger audience. We want success - you can only be an impoverished artist for two or three years and no longer, earning a reasonable living as important as gaining acceptance in the sphere that you're working in."

There's no doubt that the new L.P. - written as yet but out hopefully in September (Sire permitting) - represents a coronation or the latest road of progress. If all this you're laughing, if not, it's by the way to Sire: "Take" the single out in September, may be a good indication. Whatever happens, the band describe their new work as "wild in variation" with some "truly brilliant moments".

After years on the scene, James are still looked upon as an oddity - something they are positively pleased about. It's not the personnel who are odd but possibly their approach - they're away from convention, be it the song or the method. The identity they were given a couple of years ago - folk-singing vegans - is less true than it ever was, just the usual case of picking out extremes.

Unfortunately, people have a habit of reading, inferring and remembering. "The bodkins thought we all lived together in a big house in the country?" Jim laughs. Happily, James are set to re-emerge from the darkness of a long, quiet year. They're trying to do what they do best - what's so odd about that?



Whipping up a live storm

Mini tour January 25,26,27

At the Glastonbury festival '94, James played their last UK gig for 3 years, leaving behind an indie scene where Oasis, Kula shaker and The Bluetones were still practising in their local scout hut. The 'Britpop' phenomenon had yet to flourish.

Sheffield 'Leadmill' '97 : James return to a musical environment where the bands who had led the Madchester explosion have either split or been NME'd into obscurity (The Charlatans excepted). If you sounded like The Beatles , Small Faces etc - great! , if not - piss off.

James , influences including people such as Patti Smith and The Birthday Party- oh dear!. Who would have blamed them if they'd called it a day?. "Laid" and "Wah wah" had received a mauling from most music journalists and in '96-'97 the music papers, more than ever , adopted a view that if you've released more than 3 albums you're old , therefore not relevant.

So why carry on ? There is one simple reason ; music fans love'em.

The new Adventures of the long sailing ship 'James' starts here.

Their U.S. anthem 'Laid' opened the set instantly provoking crowd scenes of sheer excitement and jubilation- at last the return of a band who entertain , thankfully steering well clear of the characteristics of an Oasis gig (we'll stand here for an hour play our songs and you'll love us !).Their now best selling album 'Laid' provided the bulk of tonight's material. The new album "Whiplash" was also given its first airing with the superb 'Lost a friend (to the sea)'. The new single, 'She's a star' was optimistically introduced by an , as ever , Tim Booth as "Their biggest hit."

However his confidence in their music is well

founded , with the new album perhaps going back to the style reminiscent of the "Goldmother" album.

Tonight James give 200% , even the newly arrived Adrian Oxaal (replacement for Larry Gott) was prepared to play 'Johnny Yen' , a song he'd barely heard, let alone played. Versions of "Sit Down", "Out to get you" and a roof shattering finale of "Come Home" created a feeling of optimism within everyone at the venue.

James were back . They're comin' home.

So ,another day , another live gig. Bristol 'Fleece and Firkin' provided the intimate setting for the now experienced , James 'model 1997'.

The atmosphere at this gig was more subdued than the previous evening as a more diverse crowd assembled to pay homage at the James alter.

The band performed an almost identical set to the Sheffield gig , but Tim had a hard job projecting his energy to a lethargic , London type crowd (prove yourself before we dance). A storming version of "Honest Joe" was the a highpoint , bettered only by "Come Home" with Tim getting a dance partner who leapt out of the crowd , and Bez



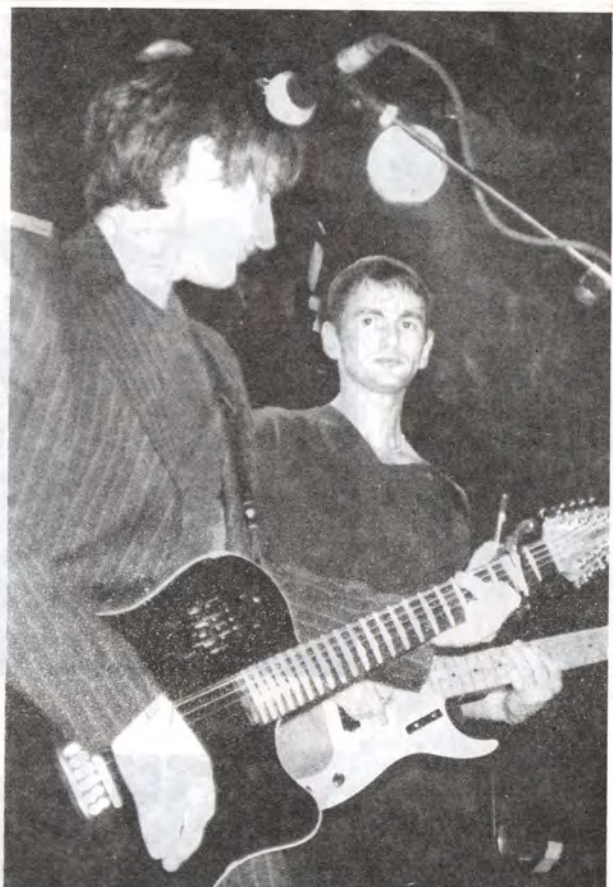


like coaxed everyone to imagine it was 1990 all over again, well almost.

Third day running , lack of sleep setting in , but the thought of a local gig was enough to fire us up for the final date of this mini tour. "Dingwails" in Camden was packed ,and some fans had shelled out in excess of £30 to get a ticket s which had cost £10 two weeks ago . As the band had done previously ,the opening bars of "Laid" kicked the metropolis into life and the

adrenalin was passed from fans to band and vice versa. The stakes continued to be raised through "Sometimes" and "Johnny Yen" until , grinding to a halt.

Dave had damaged the bass drum. A few nervous looks and general confusing from roadcrew charging around left a situation that had only one possible outcome. Until Tim announced "We'll play Sit Down acoustically". The version of "Sit Down" was fantastic , with Saul and Adrian on acoustic guitars, and Dave backstage probably stealing forty winks. "She's a star" was improvised acoustically and on cue , just as the chorus came in the drum kit was repaired and the song soared and the crowd were carried along by a song which , instead of being overshadowed by "Sit Down" , created a feeling of unity , the fans responded as one and the cheers could probably be heard in New York. So , back to the set list , next on the bill , "Sit Down!". We were being treated to James at their spontaneous best . They climaxed the evening with "P.S." and "Come Home" and the faithful went away ecstatic, having seen James for the first time in 3 years , yet disappointed that we have to wait 6 weeks until we can all do this again. If you can't wait , you better sort out your passport and get on the next flight to the States





Whiplash

Album review by Tim Allan

Take a pinch of *Stutter*, a spoonful of *One Man Clapping*, a slice of *Strip-Mine*, a few lumps of *Gold Mother* and *Seven* and a generous heaping of *Laid* and *Wah-wah*, simmer for about three and a half years and what do you get?

Whiplash, produced by Brian Eno and Stephen Hague, which mixes suffering and cynicism with environmental destruction and, er, jungle!

For a band releasing their eighth album James still sound remarkably fresh, and none more so than on the frantic opener *Tomorrow* - a lengthier and much improved version than that on *Wah-wah*; which sees singer Tim Booth at full throttle ('I got out of your range / All your suffering seems vain') backed by an army of guitars and drums, which makes it a strong contender for track of the album.

Lost a Friend follows, and fools you into thinking it's a medium-paced filler before unleashing a wave of sound with a cracking sing-a-long chorus, after which Booth tells us about spacemen coming through his TV screen.

Eno's influence comes across no more strongly than in the third track, *Waltzing Along*, a folk/blues number reminiscent of the *Laid* era with backing vocals that remind me of *Sometimes* and *Five-O*.

The single, *She's a Star*, is an upbeat guitar driven corker, with a Suede-esque falsetto chorus which should bring James some well deserved chart success. Moreover it has Booth at his poignant best: 'Whenever she's feeling empty/Whenever she's feeling insecure/Whenever her face is frozen/Unable

to fake it anymore.'

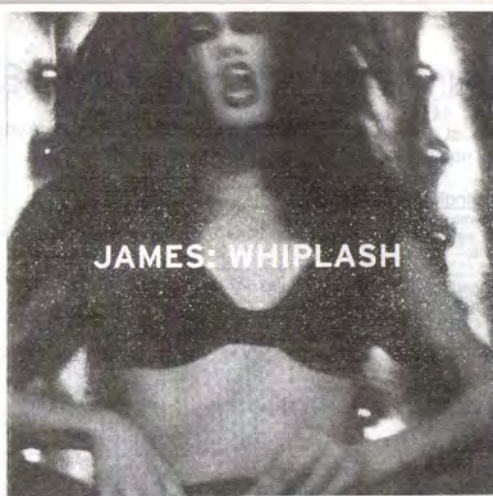
The album then takes a sharp change of direction through *Greenpeace* - a stop/start jungle/dance onslaught about the human races' carefree attitude to ecological ruin: 'Gonna f*ck with genes, I am what I am / Much more than a God, much less than a man.'

Go to the Bank is in much the same improvisational manner, as is the *Basic* Brian-ish *Play Dead*, and whilst not appealing to me as much as the other tracks on *Whiplash*, they show that James' creative variety has not dried up after more than a decade of releases.

A more conventional song structure returns in the form of the superb *Avantache*, with Booth launching a scathing attack on (I suspect) either the music industry or the government ('You don't own us/Can't control us'). But both are spared in *Homeboy*, a short, sharp burst of power-pop which reminds me of *Blondie* at their best.

The penultimate track, *Watering Hole*, (not an ode to the pub of similar name in Neighbours) sees the mood and pace changed again, this time to ambient, which balances well with the predominantly up-tempo feel of the album.

But for all the praise that has gone before, the outstanding track for me on *Whiplash* is *Blue Pastures*; a lonely soliloquy which is trademark Tim Booth: 'And just when I think it's clear it turns all grey again/And I wonder who will find me in the snow' he concedes. It is a fitting end to an excellent album which leaves me looking forward to next spring's live shows with great anticipation.



JAMES: WHIPLASH



JAMES: TOMORROW

JAMES: TOMORROW
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INCLUDING MIXES BY ARCHIVE,
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TAKEN FROM THE ALBUM 'WHIPLASH'
11 BRAND NEW SONGS INCLUDING
THE TOP 10 HIT SINGLE 'SHE'S A STAR'

GET IT

James Live: its official

This list collects all known official 'live' appearances (Audio only: not including 'Transcription discs' or video.)

UK singles

How was it for you 7" (Jim5): features *Whoops*

How was it for you 'cd' (Jimcd5): features *Hymn from a village* (Manchester Apollo)

Sit Down (Jim 8) 'All formats': features *Sit Down* (G-Mex)

Sometimes (Jim13) 'All formats': features *America* (The Palace, Hollywood)

Laid (Jimcx14): features *Laid*, *Five-o*, *Say something*, *Sometimes* (All BBC Maids Vaie)

She's a star (jimed16): features *Stutter*, *Johnny Yen* (Both Alton Towers)

UK Albums

One man clapping (one man 1)

Alternative NRG(74321 18091 2): features *Ring the Bells* (The Palace, Hollywood)

Imports

Say Something (858 797-2): features *Laid* (99x)

Live & Acoustic (4316): features *Protect me*, *Lose Control* (both KROQ Los Angeles), *Don't wait that long* (Parr Hall, Warrington), *How was it for you* (G-Mex)

Promotional

Set List (sacd561): features *Protect me*, *Lose control* (both KROQ), *Sound*, *Heavens*, *Don't wait that long*, *Seven* (All Warrington), *How was it for you* (G-Mex)

Sometimes (CDP 1089): features *America* (The Palace), *Laid* (BBC)

Too popular for their own good

ROCK
BEN THOMPSON

WHEN James first emerged several years ago, it was as likeably self-worshiping small-scale eccentric. "Oh go and read a book, it's so much more worthwhile" implored their chattering folk-pop spouses. "Hymn From A Village". No dog-eared paperbacks laid in the sparkling white sea of singer Tim Booth now. His occasional movements towards the limbo of the Britson Academy stage prompt buries of real pop-star screaming.

James's phenomenal popularity is a strange combination of sensitivity and niche marketing. After several years of releasing awkward records and playing to a devoted but invisible audience, they brought them an enormous hit with their misfits solidarity anthem "Sit Down". Swathes of teenagers and students were suddenly united by the desire to wear their T-shirts, the ones with the flowers on.

For a group whose success has come from live shows, James put on an oddly static performance. Their new songs rely on what you might call a "slow build", in some instances slow enough to bear comparison with the Channel Tunnel link. For all his trademark in Vaux dance and the megaphone which he twists round his head, Mr Booth seems subdued.

Perhaps he is reflecting that, like Harry Enfield's "Load-up", "Sit Down" is outlandish popularity threatens to overwhelm its creators' capacity for secrecy. Sammoned back for an answer by noise singing of the song's chorus, James delay so long that it humiliates the audience. It's said that a song, and a group, which began life as a celebration of individuality tonight, ends up as a confidant ritual, but I suppose that's pop music.

Finally, welcome to a brand new record label, humans, that barely exists from Steve Jobs's concern to promote "Artists and music that defy any categorisation." The first releases include the fusions of Frank Hague, and words by Kip Hanrahan, who started the experimental US label Clave.

One of his projects, *Conjure*, which is now revived for a wider audience, involved recording words by Ishmael Reed to music written or performed by a remarkable cast including Ted Mullen, Allen Toussaint, Lester Bowie and Caria Bley. The resulting blend of blues, jazz, and rolling New Orleans styles is so fine that it tends to detract from the lyrics completely.

James

James first emerged from Manchester at the end of 1983 at the same time as The Smiths and had to put up with living in the lowering shadow of Morrissey and the lads. If anything, they were regarded as 'The Smiths' thing; they were regarded as 'The Smiths' accidental neighbours, dismissed unfairly by many as flaky vegetable mystics with a weakness for carrot juice, churly cardigans and Nature Trax shoes. While The Smiths pursued a crooked path to international success, James were roundly ignored by all but a small gang of disciples.

Despite a string of fine singles and albums, each one a small masterpiece of sarcasm and surrealism, the man on the top of the Clapham omnibus didn't give a damn. Then in 1990, just when it seemed that they were on the verge of packing in the pop park and setting down to raise pigs on a small farm outside of London, James pulled up their socks, signed to Fontana and re-emerged with an expanded line-up which included a keyboardist and trumpeter. Their third studio album, *Gold Mother*, showed considerable maturity and secured their transition, all of a sudden, from cult eccentricity to major-league contender. A hugely successful nationwide tour and a triumphant performance at the Glastonbury Festival, enlarged their support which looks set to grow like bilbo. Singer Tim Booth, would make an unlikely and reluctant pop superstar, but he might have to learn to live with it.

TIME OF TERROR FOR TIM

★ LEADS FOOTBALL to the Big Thames they've taken on "we've got no understanding of real philosophy," they complain in the final moral outpouring. Refrain but they are far too good to be in the limbo between being indie cult heroes and an international signing that hasn't quite made it.

Finally, welcome to a brand new record label, humans, that barely exists from Steve Jobs's concern to promote "Artists and music that defy any categorisation." The first releases include the fusions of Frank Hague, and words by Kip Hanrahan, who started the experimental US label Clave.

One of his projects, *Conjure*, which is now revived for a wider audience, involved recording words by Ishmael Reed to music written or performed by a remarkable cast including Ted Mullen, Allen Toussaint, Lester Bowie and Caria Bley. The resulting blend of blues, jazz, and rolling New Orleans styles is so fine that it tends to detract from the lyrics completely.

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Misfits inspire

David Jennings joins the James gang

EVERY if they do hail from Manchester, James have always been so obviously intelligent and socially conscious to be full members of that city's lavish, hedonistic indie-dance movement. On Wednesday night as James played a secret show at the Camden Underworld in preparation for their imminent headlining appearance at the Reading Festival, the problems the band are having in adjusting to their new status could hardly have been more apparent.

Early James music was characterised by energetic songs that were as much as they were acoustic arrangements, but the band used this low-key occasion to try out an album's worth of new material and the result it seemed depressingly orthodox. There were exceptions — a fluttering, virtuosic instrumental, *Protect Me*, and *Never Lost* was a deliciously bitchy guitar-fueled start at the week-end. *Protect Me* and *Never Lost* were enthusiastically repeated. "Yes, we all want to be your new love!" in an increasingly ecstatic tone.

Generally, though, the new material both resembled the old-school characterless stadium rock of simple minds. "Sit down, the audience loved it all to death — almost literally. Booth was repeatedly obliged to threaten to stop the show because people near the front seemed in real danger of being crushed. At the end of his enthusiasm was channelled more positively into a heart-warming chorus of James' other emphatically quirky anthem, *Come Home*.

17.8.91

James Songbook: Chords to James songs

Stutter

Why so close
Dm C

Really hard
A D E
To be loving when the lights are out.

Strip Mine

What for
C F G
What for tell tell me what for

Ya-Ho
D G A
I nearly died when you jumped in

Left Out of her will
D G
Break away from home
D G
Break break the mould

Burned
D G A F
If you don't look cool they won't look at you
D G A F D G A F
But if your image is strong any song will do

Sit down
E A B
Sing myself to sleep a song from the darkest hour

Come home
E
It's that time again when I lose my friends
A B
Go walkabout I've got the bends from pressure

Walking the ghost
C G D
there's a knocking at my window
C G D
Not two for yes but one for no

Born of frustration
F C
Born of frustration
Eb Bb
I can't meet all my desires

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Protect me
A E Fsharpmin D
Oh dear what can the matter be

Out to get you
C
Feel so alone tonight
F C
my bed feels larger than when I was small

Sometimes
A Fsharpmin D A
Sometimes when I look in your eyes I can see your soul

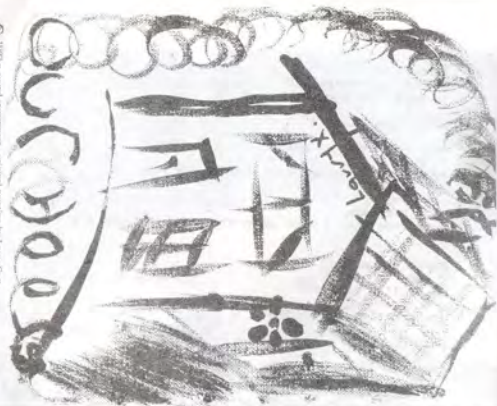
Dream thrum
C Em Em
Oh Oh I'll change

(main bit of song - Em)

Laid
C F C G
this bed is on fire with passionate love
C F C G
the neighbours complained about the noises above
C F C G F G
But she only cums when she's on top



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a sound investment

This fanzine is dedicated to James, and as such is a direct rival to CoS, therefore it is rubbish right? ; Wrong.

If you want a poorly researched, poorly printed, flimsy fanzine then do not buy "a sound investment".

Saul in Nov 93. Cover Artwork is provided by Mark.

This publication provides a lot of information mainly from America and Canada, so these back issues remain interesting to UK based fans who only usually read UK reviews.

Published in the U.S. the fanzine features high quality articles including exclusive interviews, live reviews and exclusive and well reproduced photographs and even some artwork from Larry and Mark.

Issue 4 is on the drawing Board, but if I were you I would send off my £3 (\$5 U.S) in the hope of securing a copy of the limited stocks of issue 3.

The only down side is they can't spell colour (color) etc.

Honestly, this fanzine is so professional in style and content, if it were more frequent it would wipe the floor with all the fanzines I've seen.

Issue 1 and 2 have sold out, but are well worth hunting down.

a sound investment is available from:

Issue 2 (1993) has an original painting by Larry as its cover, and features live reviews from 1992 and an exclusive interview with Tim and also some cracking pics of the band.

LORI CHIN
3815 LOS FELIZ BLVD,
LOS ANGELES, CA 90027
USA

Issue 3 (1994) contains a WOMAD review and a plethora of photos from the event as well as an interview by Gary Matos with



James fanzine
a sound investment, original painting by Mark Hunter

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All contributors whose articles
are used will receive issue 7 FREE