

FACTORY

FODDER

NEW ORDER

THE WAKE
JAMES

Brixton Academy

FOR GRAND Master Flunkers of a less-than-Arthur Baker-ed funk, New Order have received more than a fair share of sycophantic press coverage in their three year history. While their monotonous guitar breaks rang around the country to cries of "Spectacular!", their superficial spirit sat twiddling its thumbs in boredom. Tonight New Order were spectacularly boring.

Thanks God then for James, a Factory band with the sort of talent that most headliners would struggle to find in a month of blue Mondays. If regulation guitar, drums, bass and vocals are back in style then add to your list of potential hit-makers this magnificent four-piece band.

Beginning a well constructed, well received set with the patting of a cow-bell in 'Hymn Of A Village', James build their sound around flurries of cascading vocals tacked on to the janglings of a post-Postcard guitar. Skipping from a chugging, almost Latin beat in 'Wither-down' to the up-and-down, fast-and-slow motions of 'What's The World', James not only make enjoyable music but actually look as though they enjoy making it. Throwing himself into spasms, lead-singer Tim Booth amazes the audience by singing full-pelt "I-I-I-I-I-I!" then modestly bouncing backstage and almost throwing away the lines "I wear an armour plated suit / You put your lips to helmet slits / You try to suck me out the tin / I can't get out, I'm welded in!"

In sharp contrast, The Wake are a classic example of how Factory can chide themselves almost to the point of ridicule. Three males and a female keyboard-player, The Wake don't so much gently model their songs around New Order's as steam in and plunder them lock, stock, and barrel. Distraught and wayward keyboards meet dull and listless vocals as pretentious guitar breaks limp into the dead ends of songs like 'Something Outside', and their atrocious cover version of Stevie Wonder's classic 'Living For The City'.

But then if The Wake were atrocious, what words to describe New Order's flaccid and paltry attempt? Utter hopelessness, nauseous repetition or perhaps, quite simply, 'Confusion'? Opening their brief but bloated set with a staggeringly long version of this

song, New Order instantly proved that essentially they are a studio band. Substituting what is (at least on record) a slick-tracked and tidied blend of new-wave and electro-funk with a disjointed dirge of metallic guitars hacked around a failing vocal.



Jim

Pic: Chris Clunn

Building up the set through the laboriously long introduction of 'Your Silent Face' and the equally monotonous drumbeats and keyboards of 'Thieves Like Us', it was a relief to be told by Bernard Albrecht at the end of 'Denial': "That's the boring stuff over, this is where the fashionable stuff starts". But 'Village' was a mess and the otherwise enjoyable 'Age Of Consent' an ultra-muddy mesh of distortion. The set finished with 'Blue Monday', followed by a rendition of 'Love Reaction' by Sim, the band's excessively corpulent roadie.

Stupefyingly boring and rat-arsed out of their heads, some day soon New Order are going to have to grow up or get out. Judging by the lame standard of tonight's performance they should do both.

Neil Taylor

ISSUE 9

Change of Scenery

£1
U.S. \$ 2

The James fanzine

"You can't sit down here,
This seat is Saved"WITH
TIM BOOTH



Change of Scenery issue 9

Welcome to Issue 9 of CoS. Since the last issue of the zine, the band have been busy (in Tim's case , performing on stage in Bolton,) finishing off the new album ,and preparing for this tour. They have also been taking a break.

This issue features the interview Tim gave to Dave Brown, our busiest reviewer, after criticism of the band in previous issues of CoS. This goes to show that the band do read the fans comments and aren't afraid to confront the record buying public head on. Well done Tim.

We also have contributions criticising : the fans, the management, the press company, the support bands. As well as praise for : the band, the press company, the support bands, the fanzine sellers.

Even in these five lines you can see the diversity of opinions James fans have. What I would like is for you to read this fanzine cover to cover, comment to us on your feelings of any issues raised, and tell us where we are going right / wrong. As a non-elected representative of the fanbase we are directly answerable to you the fans.

As far as the tour goes, we have articles on Stereophonics, Gene and Hillman Minx, as well as the audience. Please let us know what you think about us continuing to list previous support bands: Is this a solely James' zine, or are you interested in

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the latest issue of CoS including : my wife Su, Tim Booth, Steve & Sarah at Excess press, Laurie Russinko, Lori Chin, Dave Brown, Clare Royle, Philippa Lomax, Bob Simmons, Marcus Payne, Stuart Ralston, Mindy Silverboard, Tom Anderton, Phil Petts, Aled Morgan, Olly at V2, Paul at Savage & Best.

Back cover : DEJA VU : NME gig review from Dec 10th 1983 :
New Order & James on the same bill

We reserve the right to amend all articles as we see fit. We cannot return any articles / photos unless accompanied by an S.A.E. Only articles used qualify for a free next issue. Everyone who took the piss out of West Ham, where are we in the league table now. hah.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editor, anyone connected with the band or record company. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies or loss resulting from information contained herein. Reading this publication is itself acceptance of these terms and conditions

what "Silversun" are up to?

Cheers
John Pude
editor Change of Scenery:
The James Fanzine

Back issues are available:
Change of Scenery issue 6,7,8 @ £1 each
Sound Investment issue 3,4 @ £2 each
these include p&p. We prefer payment in 2nd class stamps to the value of the order.

All European correspondence for UK / US fanzines should be sent to:

Change of Scenery
1 Thackeray Road
Aylesford
Kent
ME20 6TH
ENGLAND

jpude@globalnet.co.uk

TIM TALKS!

The following is an abridged version of our conversation.

Many thanks to Tim for taking the time out to speak to the fans and Steve at XS Press for helping to sort this out.

Date: 18/04/98

TIM: I'd like to make a statement, if that's alright with you.

It was simply because I been reading in the latest **Change of Scenery** the stuff about us not changing the set list anymore and seeing you (note: fifteen of us had been following the tour in a minibus) there every night, I thought what I'd better do is address it. It's simply that that's gone now. James has changed and we won't be changing the set list very often again.

There's lots of reasons. I'm the only one that wants to change the set list and has wanted to for a year. And no one else does, and the reasons are quite sensible. It started out with the Adrian thing, and him learning a small set.

And it was also that, if we're playing to 4,000, and maybe a few hundred people come both nights we'd be changing the set and maybe making the set not as good just for those 400.

DAVE: I guess it'd mean messing around with the lights and other stuff as well

TIM: No, the lighting guy wants us to change it, that's what he's done for 10 years. He loves the difficulty of not knowing what the hell we're going to do next.

We feel we should make the set list for the 4,000 rather than the hundred or two that are coming both nights. That was one of the reasons. And the other was that most of the others believe we play better when we're playing the same songs. I actually disagree with that, but I'm outvoted. And that's as it is.

So I kind of wanted to say that, because I know people are coming with this expectation and it no longer applies. But, unfortunately, we just aren't.

DAVE: We've been coming watching you for

years, quite a few of us...

TIM: I know. I know. I mean, I miss it, but it's like... I also see why the others don't want it, and obviously when we do the Christmas tour it'll be all the new songs and it'll be that kind of change.

DAVE: Have you got anything specific planned for later on in the year?

TIM: Almost certainly something in December.

DAVE: How's the album going?

TIM: Fantastic, it's nearly platinum, by the fact that we get a platinum disc tonight, in advance.

DAVE: It almost stayed number 1 the week Pulp came out.

TIM: Yeah, even the second week we were only a few hundred copies away... and now we're at number 3. It's doing great. Oh, the other reason is that the last couple of years have been more about survival... like my physical survival and other people's kind of survival in different ways.

DAVE: Yeah, we weren't expecting you to come back last year, we thought it was all over.

TIM: Yeah. I think in a sense we probably did... or parts of us did. And changing the set list... the other reason why, which is, really sensible, is that it used to cause so many rows before we'd go on stage.

It could cause a lot of division, and it was like, well, you know, and in that sense "can't be arsed" is fair enough... (referring to an article in a **Change of Scenery** Issue #7)

DAVE: Well, that wasn't the exact comment I made.

TIM: No, I'm in two minds... because I can hear those arguments and I agree. I can see the sense in a lot of them, but there's something in my spirit that's very upset by it not changing, and "can't be arsed" can be levelled as a criticism sometimes. But it's not so much "can't be arsed", it's that we're very chaotic... and getting us to rehearse songs... let's say, two people don't

want to do the song, and you try to get people to rehearse it... it doesn't work anymore...

DAVE: Is that why some of the songs you've been doing, you've been doing with three or four members... the other guys not being involved?

TIM: On stage you mean? Not really...

DAVE: Ah, with the sessions...

TIM: Ah, the sessions... Partly, because those sessions sometimes the room's not big enough for bass and drums. It really varies. Partly it's been who wants to do that session. It's kind of shambolic...

DAVE: Because I guess it's the first time in a long time that you've been doing that many sessions in such a short period of time...

TIM: Yes... They've been great. I thought the GLR was the best we've ever done...

DAVE: Was the song you did at Radio 1 - the jam between playing into the show - was that a new song?

TIM: I can't remember it, actually. I don't know what we were doing at the time.

DAVE: I think Mike at the BBC was recording it.

TIM: No, that was just us messing around. Noone's even listened back to it. Like, we made up a song today in souncheck and one yesterday, but to be honest they get lost a lot, it's like us just playing.

DAVE: How much stuff have you got, like all this unreleased stuff that's hidden away?

TIM: The new stuff?

DAVE: Well not really

TIM: Over the years? Oh don't, I don't know

And the other issue, the one about us releasing different formats for the singles, again it's something I'm totally uncomfortable with, but has been a matter of us competing and surviving.

DAVE: If you don't get in the charts, you're lost.

TIM: All I can say to people is discriminate and don't buy them automatically. You know, look at them and see if you want them.

DAVE: But I mean the multimedia one was a lot better.

TIM: Good

DAVE: Because the remixes we thought weren't that great. The multimedia was something different.

TIM: We've been stretched a few times and it's been like... we haven't got it so there's been a few remixes and again it's kind of a compromise with the survival basically.

DAVE: Do you have a planned date for the album? Is there going to be a single with the festivals then the album?

TIM: I hope so. If we're lucky, we'll get a song out in the summer before the thing gets released, but I'm doing the play you see. So that's gonna be a little bit hectic. (to press officer) Is that it?

DAVE: I guess you need to go now. Thank you for taking the time out to speak to us.

David Brown.

James:
Aftershow

Saturday 18th April

DDGSTAR 389 COLDHARBOUR LANE
S.W. ENTRANCE IN ATLANTIC ROAD
PARTY STARTS STRICTLY AFTER THE SHOW
ENDS! THIS TICKET ADMITS ONE ONLY

James Live at Doncaster Dome

by
Tom Anderton

To say I was excited about this gig would be a huge understatement. As I'm sure many fans would agree, seeing James live for the first time is something truly special. Having been a fan ever since SITDOWN in 1991, when I was just 10 it has been a long wait. Now in 1998 aged 17 my turn finally came around to see them. The months of anticipation ever since I bought the ticket was finally over. I arrived at Doncaster at 2pm and for most of the afternoon I sat in a bar at the nearby bowling alley. Having drunk too much the night before I wasn't feeling too great during the day. The hours seemed to take ages to pass. Finally at 6.30 we went to the Dome and started queuing. Surprisingly the queue was only short at the time and from outside the hall I heard a short rendition of Destiny Calling. But in the space of 10 minutes the queue grew and grew and eventually twisted it's way around the bar in the centre of the hall. Some kind guys sold me a copy of Change Of Scenery and Sound Investment fanzines. I read these while I waited. At 7.15 we were finally let in to what looked like a sports hall. I saw the James flower logo on the top of the stage. I could hardly contain my excitement as I bought a T-shirt and then joined more expectant fans at the front of the stage. I could hardly believe my luck, getting right to the front of the stage. Eventually after what seemed like years of waiting, the lights went out and the support band aptly named Theaudience came on stage. The singer was pretty good looking and they played songs such as If You Can't Do It When You're Young, and A Pessimist Is Never Disappointed. I thought

they were OK but nothing too special. They played a small set, and I thought most James fans received them quite well. She said at the end "Enjoy James" and I thought I sure will. After about half an hour the lights dimmed once more and the distinctive sound of the 'new' Come Home track came on. Then the whole band came on stage and there in front of me was my hero Tim Booth. I couldn't believe it. Sometimes followed and the atmosphere was simply electric. The set consisted almost entirely of songs from The Best Of album, but there were a few surprises such as the appearance of Five-0 and especially Top Of The World which was the first encore song. Johnny Yen was also included in the set. Out To Get You was played to my delight as it is one of my favourite songs. The songs just kept coming and the band's performance was stunning throughout. Tim's beautiful voice and Adrians' great guitar playing were especially fantastic. Michael fits in incredibly well - it seems like he's been a member of James for years!! And his backing vocals continually lifted Tim's vocals to great heights. The gig was a great display of power and passion and it truly shows James are ready to conquer the world.

The major highlights of the gig for me was Out To Get You, Say Something, Destiny Calling and the final song Sit-down. The new single Runaground was not as well received as I had hoped. It is a great song that may not achieve it's full potential in the charts. If James can keep this great momentum going, the new album in the Autumn will be amazing and surely they will make further in-roads in America. How a gig like that could be bettered is beyond me. James you were fantastic, but how else could it be?

UNRESERVED
STANDING

(Subject To Booking Fee)
Doors 7:00pm

00055

A phonecall from Su at CoS and all plans for Friday night were forgotten. We were offered the chance to be on the James guestlist for TFI Friday, with some other fans. I didn't really know what to expect, but after managing to blag a ticket (also off CoS) for the Virgin Megastore show earlier in the year I was congratulating myself on the James freebies I have been getting.

We go to the Riverside studios in Hammersmith and found everyone in the pub opposite, meanwhile everyone else who weren't on the guestlist were queuing up to get in. I suppose this was the privilege of being on the guestlist. We could have done with a free bar.

When we finally got in to the riverside complex, my initial impression was how small the studio was. After being herded around and attacked by camera-men with cranes for a while, we looked for the James stage. James were introduced to the audience and they launched into the warm up song.

They played "Say Something", the newish 'rock' version which is less delicate than on the Laid LP. I think its a song that sounds best live. Tim looked smart in a pink shirt and tie with a suit that has become his trademark of late I guess. He seemed to be enjoying himself even if the rest of the band looked a little bored. The song seemed to go down well.

When the actual filming began, James played "Runaround", and as usual Tim forgot the words, being without his Virgin Megastore lyric sheet which is stuck to my wall at home. I thought we might get another song, but that was it and James were off to watch the football, leaving Del Amitri and Ally McCoist to entertain (?) us! It was soon over and we all went our separate ways: to the pub to watch the England match or home. It was a good afternoon and I think the show was a good advert for James and Runaround.

Robert Simmons

Buy It Now

This lists all the (known) James items that have become available since our last issue. All prices are approximate, and other items may also be available. If you find something not on our B.I.N. lists, please send all details to our usual address.

RUNAROUND

- 1 track promo video in custom sleeve £5
- 1 track radio edit in customised sleeve and jewel case JIM CDJ20 £5
- Runaround/Hang On/Crescendo/Be My Prayer - 5"CD JIMCD20 £4
- Runaround/Say Something (live at GLR) / Laid (live at GLR) / Lose Control (live at GLR) - 5"CD JIMDD20 £4
- Runaround/Runaround (The James Remix) / Egoiste / Lost A Friend (Aloof Remix) - 5"CD JIMED20 £4

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

15 minute video electronic press kit promoting the Best OFLP presented by Sean Hughes £15

FALL IN LOVE WITH ME (BOOTH AND THE BAD ANGEL)

- 1 track 5" promo CD in jewel case MERCJ503 £5
- Fall In Love With Me / I Believe (Session) / Hit Parade (Session) - MERC503 £4
- Fall In Love With Me / Butterfly's Dream (Session) / Fall In Love With Me/Session / Fall In Love With Me (CDROM video) - MERDD503 £4
- Fall In Love With Me / I Believe MERMC503 £2
- Fall In Love With Me (Damien Mendes Radio Remix) - CD-R of unreleased mix £10 (no cat no)
- 1 track promo video - £5

SIT DOWN 98

- Sit Down 98 (Apollo 440 Remix), Sit Down 98 (Zidane Zidane) - 12" custom blue label promo - SIT01 £8
- Sit Down 98 (Apollo 440 Remix), Sit Down 98 (Zidane Zidane), Sit Down (New Band Mix) - 5" CD promo in custom jewel case sleeve - SIT02 £8
- Sit Down 98 (Apollo 440 Remix), Sit Down (1991 Version), China Girl (Radio 1 Iggy Pop Tribute) - 5" CD single JIMCD21 £4 and cassette single JIMMC21 £2
- Sit Down 98 (Apollo 440 Remix), What For (live at GLR), Sit Down (live at GLR) - 5" CD single JIMDD21 £4
- 1 track promo video - £8
- There are also several CD-R promos available between £10 and £25 - these include a one-track Apollo 440 mix, a one-track promo Boilerhouse Boys mix (Zidane Zidane mix) and a three-track promo with the Apollo 440, Zidane Zidane and New Band Mixes.

Dave Brown

Saved

review by Philippa Lomax

I arrived at the theatre 2 hours early to pick up our tickets, and to give us some time to eat before the play. During the 2 hours I briefly met Matt from Casualty, who was very nice and laughed when I asked him if Tim had arrived yet, to which he said that Tim usually arrived between 6 and 6.30.

So by 6.30, I realized that Tim must already be in the building, and sat down for a drink. I was pretty pissed that I'd missed him, and my husband said "Maybe it's a good thing as if he is really obnoxious, then I won't ever enjoy James in the same light again." So I'd given up hope when my husband said really calmly, "There he is." So I ignored him, so he said it again with more force, and I turned round and there he was! I stood up and

said, "Excuse me Tim!" And he stopped and said he was really busy, and was about to go, so I told him I'd come over from Switzerland just to see the play. To which he came over and asked if I was the one who sent the good luck card. We shook hands and chatted. Tim had to move on, and apologized for having to go. Then he came back to us, and apologized for having to be in a hurry, said something about Switzerland being far away, and he hoped that the play would be up to my expectations. Then he left again, only to return seconds later, thanking us for the huge amounts of Daises we had sent him. So I asked whether I could have my photo taken with him, and I was expecting him to say he had to go, but he said, of course! He really gave us time, he was so nice.

The theatre was quite small and in an octagon shape, with the seats coming

directly on to the stage. It was a moving play about peoples emotions and how they relate to each other in certain situations. There wasn't really a beginning, a middle, and an end, it was as if we were suddenly allowed to go back in time, and observe a group of people with their lives, and see what they create.

The play was about, a guy called Len (Tim) who meets a girl, who lives at home. This was the opening scene and quite a comical one. Time passed and Len had moved in, but the girl no longer likes him, but Len is in love with her, obsessed with her. She treats him very badly, and Len does anything for her. She gets pregnant by another guy, and there is a scene where the baby is out in the park in its pram, and is left alone, it is this scene that had the play banned in the 60's. The baby is stoned to death by a group of thugs. Len is a witness to this but keeps quiet. The consequences are shown for killing the baby. The play then shows Len being frustrated with himself, wanting to move on with his life, he gets angry and decides to move out. But the play closes with Len still with the family.

As for Tim's acting ability, well, he was no longer Tim Booth of James, he came across as an actor in his own right. I was most impressed especially as this was his first play! He coped well with the slight cockney accent he had to create for the part.

The Next Big Weekend : 3 gigs from James

The plan was simple - to see James three times in three days, their postponed T in the Park warm-up at the Carlisle Sands Centre and the V98 festival in Leeds and Chelmsford.

Arriving at Carlisle Sands Centre, a Doncaster Dome type atrocity of a building awaited us, but once inside the venue, our fears were allayed as the main hall was actually a very decent venue. After a short support slot from the excellent Hillman Minx, James came on at about 9.20. Tim apologised for the postponement of the gig in July due to his bronchitis and, as at Oxford, they launched into Lullaby, a typically bold James move in front of an audience hungry for the hits.

Introducing new song Surprise, Tim informed us that this was the only new song they'd learnt, despite "the fan club that follows us around everywhere wanting new songs", and we'd have to believe him how great the others were. On the basis of Surprise we have to Michael's backing vocals blended into Tim's in the chorus and the verses demonstrate Tim hasn't lost any of his wordplay ability - "we all prayed you'd rise again, alone in resurrection



what the doctor ordered" and "love and laughter, I surrender, have no fear of what comes after, I've got a message for you, you're the one who makes it come true".

Following Surprise, James launched into a series of Greatest Hits - Waltzing Along, Say Something, She's A Star, Sometimes, Laid - "shamelessly enjoying their own songs" as Tim put it. Jam J followed and was, alongside Surprise, the highlight of the evening with Tim dancing again and an awesome strobe display. Out To Get You and Five-O followed, James slowing the pace down and wowing the stunned audience with their more fragile side.

Johnny Yen was strangely curtailed when the audience gave them a "standing ovation" before launching into Sit Down. Tim came out into the audience to meet the adoring masses and to soak up the red hot atmosphere before launching into Tomorrow as the finale.

The inevitable encore began with Come Home, now a shadow of its former self having aged less well

than other songs from the early nineties. "To test your concentration" Top Of The World followed and the show was rounded off by a ten minute frenzy of improvised noise called Sound. Carlisle left impressed and judging by the business at the t-shirt counter, James had won over a new young audience that had come to see one of the few gigs in the town that year.

Moving onto Leeds and James were disappointing. The audience did not even appear to recognise opening track Sit Down and seemed more concerned in when Robbie Williams was coming on. Persistent technical problems plagued the show, ensuring that the original set list had to be torn up and Surprise had to be ditched totally to keep within the time slot. With the threat of imminent rain, Tim tried his best to incite the crowd into activity with frenzied dancing, but the technical problems meant that whenever they gained momentum it was lost between songs. Destiny was dedicated to the "freaks" that like James. After the high of the previous night, this show was better forgotten.

Chelmsford, however, made up for it in spades. Faced with a torrential downpour, James took the momentum provided by the rather excellent Stereophonics and bombarded the crowd with an opening medley of Sit Down, Destiny, She's A Star, Sometimes and Come Home creating a moshpit going back beyond the sound desk. Tim's dancing seemed even more frenetic than usual and Saul took every opportunity to encourage the now drenched audience. Out To Get You was played to slow things down and seemed oddly inappropriate in the setting and was followed by another excellent version of Surprise. This audience (myself included) really just wanted to hear the hits in the rain and so Laid and

Tomorrow were dispatched as conditions got worse before the opening bars of Sound signalled the show was nearing its end. Tim took the opportunity to tell the crowd that "when you read in the papers how shit we were, remember what you witnessed with your own eyes". Tim's megaphone failed and he smashed it in annoyance, so we were treated to Tim hollering without it which made for an interesting take on the song, the sheer awesomeness of the improvised ending not being lost despite the rain and the size of crowd. This was James at their very best and a complete contrast to the day before and the tedious Space and Texas who were to follow later. They were the band of the weekend - but we knew that already.

David Brown,



Brookes Uni, Oxford

25th June 1998

Arriving early for this "secret" Glastonbury warm-up show, we were treated to being able to listen to James soundcheck sat outside the venue. Two new songs "Surprise" and "I Know What I'm Here For" were run through a couple of times along with Lullaby, Jam J, Runaround (not actually played) and a number of improvisations. This led to a great sense of anticipation entering the venue especially as we'd managed to get some kind of unofficial confirmation of the December tour as well. The audience opened for James again and played basically the same set as April, but had obviously worked on some of the arrangements and made the songs sound fresh again. I know a lot of James fans (particularly the female ones - I wonder why) despise them, but anyone remember Ambitious Beggars, The Spaceheads, Silver Sun?

James came on about 9.20 and started with a chilling version of **Lullaby**, a welcome change to the full-on intro of Come Home from the April shows.

Despite Tim's comments in his interview at Brixton (see elsewhere in the fanzine), it appears James are still willing to take risks. **Say Something, She's A Star and Laid** followed, Tim starting to dance more freely than earlier in the year. The next real surprise in the set was the inclusion of **Jam J**, one of my personal live favourites given its extreme energy and potential for improvisation, with the strobe lighting serving to enhance the chaos of the song. **Out To Get You**, which followed, provided an immediate and soothing contrast.

The band had now won the whole crowd over and saw this as the time to introduce a new song as we'd hoped they would. Despite only having played the song a few times **Surprise** was a total success reminiscent of Runaround but taken a step further.

A long introduction to a wild version of **Born of Frustration** followed, Tim dancing like a possessed dervish in the limited space available with the crowd chanting back the "woo woo woo" section. **Waltzing Along and Destiny Calling**

kept the momentum before a truly astonishing version of **Sound**. This had been one of the highlights of the April tour with the band taking the song up and down and stretching it to over ten minutes, but there was even more life in it tonight.

The encore started with an eerie version of **Top Of The World** before Saul announced they were going to play another new song but that "it might be shit". Shit hot, perhaps? **I Know What I'm Here For** starts off with a wall of "nah nah nah nah" chants from Saul, Adrian, Michael and Tim, before Tim laments on the sacrifices made in the quest of fame and then urges the crowd to "follow me". Apparently the lyrics had been written during the soundcheck and Tim was singing them from a sheet, but this song was truly special and hopefully the audience reaction conveyed this to the band. This was the real James, taking risks, creating unique moments of brilliance by semi-improvisation. More, much more please.

Sit Down was almost an anti-climax after this, but managed to rouse the crowd. There's probably been more written about this song than any other James song, but it seems to have gained a new lease of life this year. They're not playing it any differently, but it seems to have a focus for those who've followed James for years and the casual observer and, after a gig of this quality, it is a celebration.

The lights were back up and then suddenly it all went dark again and James came back out and ran through a frenetic version of **Tomorrow**, before leaving an audience well and truly mesmerised and me wondering whether Glastonbury would be a bad idea the next day.

Those fears we all had in April about James blinding out, not taking risks, playing safe set lists, the jury's still out, but this was a pretty compelling case for the defence.

David Brown

So Fleadh, so-so good

I never thought that James would find themselves at any festival more crap than Lollapalooza, but I must say that Fleadh came close in terms of music. At least at Lollapalooza there were a few other bands to watch and a variety of musical styles. Of course, James didn't get bottled at Fleadh. But after a day during which the highlight was seeing some Gaelic-sounding Canadian band play an Irish-style cover of REM's 'The End of the World as We Know It', and after a day of bands trying so hard to show James came bursting out of the gate with the opening bars of 'Come Home' only to discover that their monitors weren't working, so to fill the gap Tim told us a rather horrendous joke about penguins. Then the band proceeded to fly through cracking renditions of 'Come Home', 'Sometimes' and 'Say Something'. While Tim glowed at the audience, gyrated in a toned-down version of his stily dance, and yelled at the lighting guy to quit blinding him, the rest of the band warmed up to form as well, with Saul by far the highlight of the night was 'Johnny Yen', during which Saul launched into an impromptu Gaelic fiddle solo

which blew away all that had come before him that day and left us wondering why he has abandoned his violin of late for a guitar he cannot play nearly as well. Spirits high, the band left the stage only to return for the gratuitous playing of 'Sit Down', during which, as is becoming a regular part of James' shows, the crowd began singing the chorus back to the band. The band stopped playing. While I must admit that if I never hear 'Come Home' again at a James gig I would not be disappointed, and while it has become almost a joke knowing what song is coming next, the band certainly seem to enjoy the energy from the crowd each time they play one of their timeless classics, and we can only look forward to and hope that when the new songs are unveiled, they can create as tremendous a live atmosphere as the release of the Best Of and the rejuvenation of all their hits has.

The set included (not in order): Come Home, Sometimes, Say Something, Destiny Calling, Out To Get You, Five-O, She's A Star, Laid, Tomorrow, Waltzing Along, Johnny Yen, Sound, Sit Down. Mundy

'98 :Busy Year huh , but were you there?

27/02 Riverside Studios, London

04/03 MTV Up For It (acoustic)

06/03 GLR Sean Hughes Show (acoustic)

11/03 Virgin FM (acoustic)

15/03 BBC Studios, London (Mark Goodier Show)

23/03 BBC Maida Vale Studios, London (Jo Whiley Session)

24/03 XFM - Gary Crowley (acoustic)

27/03 Canal barge outside Piccadilly

Key 103 Studios, Manchester

10/04 Apollo Theatre, Manchester

11/04 Apollo Theatre, Manchester

13/04 Barrowlands, Glasgow

14/04 The Dome, Doncaster

17/04 Brixton Academy, London

18/04 Brixton Academy, London

29/05 Riverside Studios , London

06/06 Fleadh Festival, Finsbury Park, London

25/06 Oxford Brookes Student Union, Oxford

26/06 Glastonbury Festival

02/07 Oporto, Portugal

21/08 Sands Centre, Carlisle

22/08 V98, Leeds

23/08 V98, Chelmsford

29/08 Slaine Castle , Ireland

18/11 Radio 1- Simon Mayo

19/11 ToTP Elstree

04/12 Leisure Centre , Hereford

05/12 NEC , Birmingham

06/12 The Pavillions - Plymouth

08/12 The Centre , Newport

09/12 The Brighton Centre

11/12 Wembley Arena , London

12/12 MEN Arena , Manchester

14/12 SECC Glasgow

15/12 SECC Glasgow

James
THE CORRS

One Fan : Snapping

Can you remember the first time you saw James live? Or maybe the first time you bought a James record? The anticipation and the excitement of hearing songs you didn't know existed, the thrill the first time Tim took off, the shivers watching Saul play a violin solo or Dave tearing up his drumkit? Watching James, listening to James, experiencing James used to be a pure adrenaline thrill, an musical epiphany, and an emotional journey. Today I'm not so sure anymore. I used to put on a James record before any important event in my life. My flat at uni would burst with the sounds of "All My Sons" or "Charlie Dance" as we got dolled up for a night of clubbing. The walls would heave from "Come Home" or "Ring the Bells" as we jumped around the lounge taking out exam stress. And after a bad day, listening to "Protect Me" or "Lullaby" would sooth any troubled soul. Now, when I listen to "Come Home" all I get are visions of sweaty, drunken punters elbowing me in the head as Saul makes lewd gestures at the crowd in front of him. When I hear "Destiny Calling" I feel a sense of irony that the band wrote a song about selling out during a period where they are certainly writing songs to make money rather than for any sort of artistic merit. I'm not sure who I blame for this souring in attitude, but I know that something has to change it.

Five years ago, when Iaid was first released (can it be that long ago?!?) I can remember the heartpounding anticipation as I rushed down to Newbury Comics the day of its release, drove home madly and ripped the plastic off, hoping to have time to hear at least three or four of the tracks before I had to leave for work. Compare that to the release of the Best Of - I'd heard the whole thing. I even had the new songs on a cassette someone had sent me. It just seemed

appropriate to have it the day of release. Frankly even Whiplash was a let down. I'd received half the tracks on a tape of a radio session two weeks earlier. Somehow there's not so much thrill when you know what's coming up. It seems that many of us, fuelled by excessive contact via the internet, via fanzines and generally from reading too much of the music press, are more concerned with our collections than with what we're collecting. We're more concerned with getting our hands on that semi-rare promo of "Sit Down '98" than with the fact that James are cashing in on our obsession by rereleasing songs we all already have in 13 different sounding versions. We're more worried about getting down to the front of the gig in hopes of getting a smile off Tim Booth than with experiencing the full live James celebration. We're worried about having every possible song before we even fully comprehend the ones we already have in our possession. And we've become incredibly precious, annoyed by anyone else feeling the same emotions about them that we do.

Recently James announced an arena tour, and instead of getting excited about seeing the band play live, we all complained about the size of the venues and the cost of the tickets. Granted, James live are not what they used to be, not since they decided they only have 15 songs they should play ever anywhere for anyone or any reason. But why should they worry about the music they present us with when we all seem not to be so worried as long as it keeps coming? James have become an industry circus in the last few years, but why shouldn't they be when as fans we're the ones driving them to it? We demand releases, so we get 3-part CD singles and a Best Of album with mediocre extra tracks. We demand live shows so we get a band who don't really want to be on the road playing old, overdone songs

half-heartedly because they'd much prefer to be in the pub getting pissed. We complain when they won't talk to us, wave to us, give us special attention, but when we do get their attention we're just pestering them about how quickly they can get us what we want - live shows and new songs. We demand product, so how can we complain when the rushed product is inferior, or when we get charged twice what it's worth?

Look at the postings on the internet for the last year, you won't find intelligent discussion of James' music. You'll rarely find anything about the music at all. What you will find is people buying and selling product. And people worrying about publicity, media image and marketing.

What the hell are we doing?

James have a record label, a manager and a press agent to market and publicize them. They're big boys and they know what they want and how to get it. Why are we all sitting around wasting our time worrying about their pocketbooks when we could be spending our time enjoying what they've already given us? Instead of worrying about how to scrape up the money to see multiple shows on a tour, why aren't we simply exercising our energies to fully enjoy the one (or so) that we can see? I've been having a really hard time listening to my James albums these days. At first I thought it was because I've played them so much they just needed time to sit for a while. But I don't think that's it. The songs are as beautiful and as powerful as they always were. But now they conjure up entirely different images. All I can think of is this or that rumour that someone has been spreading about what a creep Saul is or what a freak Tim is or which football team Jim likes. Or that the band are too old or they're sellouts or they're drunks or they're about to break up. That's really not my concern. It may be important to know that the lyrics from Seven were written while Tim was dealing with a

painful break up, or that "Riders" is about a dream he had. But how can it help to know that the band argued backstage at this or that show? It all leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. Most of us would criticize the tabloid press at constantly bombarding us with the private lives of public figures. We're sick to death hearing about what sexual acts Monica Lewinsky performed on Bill Clinton, but if it were Mark Hunter involved then we'd all perk up our ears.

James are behaving like money-grubbing rock bastards these days. They're taking us for all we're worth by releasing old material and playing oversized venues which charge exorbitant prices. They're draining our pocketbooks with standard remixes of songs that are ten years old. Where's the thrill in that? Some people think James are a one or two hit wonder band from the early nineties, and why should they think anything else these days? But what do the band care when we lap it up eagerly and beg for more? Why should it bother them when we don't seem to care about the quality of what they release as long as they keep releasing anything? You know what I think, I think that at the end of this tour, it's time we went back home, gave the old records a few good listens and all try and remember what it is we first loved about James. Then, when the new record comes out, instead of instantly rushing down to the shop, wait, see if it gives you a twinge of that old feeling. If it does, buy it, preach it, give the band your money. If it doesn't, leave it be. DON'T BUY IT. Let them know that we don't just want them in any form, but that the only James we want is a James making the intelligent, emotionally vulnerable music that we all first got into, so that maybe they will listen, they will put their hearts back into the music, instead of into the money, so can finally leave "Come Home" off the set list in exchange for something new that's just as powerful.

T'rific

Stereophonics Biography

The Melody Maker review of Stereophonics debut album 'Word Gets Around' starts with the quote "As Lou Reed once said 'There's only one good thing about a small town - you hate it and you know you're gonna leave.'" Lou Reed obviously couldn't count but he did have a point?

'Word Gets Around' is dominated by stories of rumour, desire, whispers, murder, suicide and "Sex drives, oral highs, cheated wives and spies" ('Same Size Feet'), site-specific events witnessed and retold via the pen and voice of a 22 year old singer/guitarist Kelly Jones. Together with lifelong friends Stuart Cable (drums) and Richard Jones (bass) Kelly has been composing these steamy stories of sleepy lives from base camp Cwmaman (a traditional non-urban conurbation, midway between Swansea and Cardiff, one road in/out, houses, a pub) for more years than you would believe.

This is not voyeurism though more strikingly Stereophonics mine a rich seam of traditional rock'n'roll songwriting and storytelling. Indeed, "Some of these songs might be the stuff of ancient murder ballads, deep and mysterious. Songs that manage to unleash the spooks and stifle the head." (NME July 1997). Kelly details a loyalty-testing, village opinion-splitting drama on 'A Thousand Trees', Stereophonics recent Top Of The Pops debut, and pumps a dirty loathing through a darkly humorous wedding reception set piece ('Too Many Sandwiches'). He also introduces us, the listener, to a world where there's 'More Life In A Tramp's Vest', and where you can 'Check My Eyelids For Holes'. But this is not hick-talk, signposts or colloquialisms as Kelly infuses these snapshots with a literate, soulful, universal voice. "The sound that will probably become known as 'That Voice'. For Kelly Jones sings like the Devil himself, and the world ought to know it." (Vox, Sept 1997).

Having signed to V2 at the end of Summer '96 Stereophonics have wasted little time, playing out constantly and releasing a stream of glittering singles, more or less all gathered on 'Word Gets Around'.

Their first dates pitched them into the realm of the toilet circuit, but years attempting to impress the elder family on-stage at the local social club saw them through Wet Wednesday in Wolverhampton. A limited edition single 'Looks Like Chaplin' / 'More Life In A Tramp's Vest' hit the match in November '96, and dates followed with Manic Street Preachers, Kenickie, Skunk Anansie and The Who. The year ended with 60000 Scottish revellers singing along to '...Tramp's Vest' at Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations.

February 1997 saw the release of the first fully available Stereophonics single 'Local Boy In The Photograph', a story of a boy who checked the train times before checking out. This was followed in May by '...Tramp's Vest' musings on the plight of the market trader set to a terrace chant that strode into the Top 40 without any daytime radio airplay (almost unheard of).

Kelly, Richard and Stuart then risked health and sanity embarking on a full house

(fact) of Summer festivals and a sold out headlining tour. Starting at Glastonbury and ending at Reading the day before 'A Thousand Trees' reached 22 in the Nationals, countless casual eyes and ears were turned on by Stereophonics blistering live performances.

'(Word Gets Around) grows better and better, and then a bit better again with each repeated listen.' (Vox, Sept 1997). 'Word Gets Around' was released on August 26th 1997 and entered the Album Chart at number 6. From a whisper to a yell in a little over a year, 'Traffic' ("...one of the most beautiful songs of the year." Kerrang, August 1997) is the band's fourth single and it reaches 20 in the Charts at the beginning of November. Europe, America, Australasia and Asia beckon, the band are nominated for a Q award, and are voted Best New Band by the readers of the Melody Maker headline the sold out NME Miller Genuine Draft Awards Tour and are nominated for an award in January 1998, and sensationally win the Award for Best Newcomer on February 9th 1998. 'Word Gets Around' goes Gold (100 000 copies sold) and 'Local Boy In The Photograph' is rereleased in February (reaching number 14).

Meanwhile, the band have been in the US, Australia and New Zealand, before returning to the UK. The new album has now been recorded and is due for a March 8th release, preceded by the second single which has yet to be selected. The first of this new material, 'The Bartender and the Thief' shows that their popularity continues to grow, as it charted at no 3, four places above James 1, but both spent only 3 weeks in an increasingly changing top 30.

As for that one road in/out small town in South Wales? Stereophonics love it so much, they've all bought houses there.



Stereophonics

PHOTO: CHRIS HARRIS/REDFERNS



ToTP

19/11/98 by Marcus Payne

To be honest there isn't that much to tell...the build up to the recording was just as exciting as the actual performance. We left in a record company minibus from North London at tea time (from the hotel the band were staying at...if I'd have been slightly earlier I would have met them drinking in the hotel bar!) and drove to Elstree where TOTP is shot (along with EASTENDERS and GRANGE HILL). We sat in the BBC canteen for half an hour eating at the record company's expense ("tab 2: james!") and watching people like Jamie Theakston, Robbie Williams and Ronan Keating wander around with plates of chips. Then we moved next door to the BBC bar and sat drinking for about 2 hours! I drank a fair bit from nerves but it was really cool to be there.

Half the cast of EASTENDERS sat drinking a couple of tables away! After much drink and james chat among my fellow "winners" the band's manager (whose name I forget) brought Tim over for a chat with us all. We all sat and gawped at him, not knowing what to say (none of us had ever met him before) and he laughed nervously so I broke the ice, stood up and shook his hand. He was really cool. It's all a bit of a blur now but I remember asking him about BATBA (he said the record company don't want him to work with Angelo again as they think it's harmful to james) and the new album (Tim said he wants to call it "Millionaires", so if it "is" called that you heard it here first!). I was so nervous meeting him that I mostly ended up asking him questions I already knew the answers to!

("So...you're getting married, Tim?") How sad is that?... :-)) This lasted about 10 minutes then he asked if we wanted anything signed (silly question!) so we all got our CDs and pens out: I got my Greatest Hits signed and also my beloved 3 inch CD single of the original "Sit Down" from '89.

Tim signed his name on the cover and wrote "rare", too...so it's even rarer now! Then it was time for Tim to leave again and rehearse so we wished him good luck and off he went. A couple of us needed smelling salts after that so thankfully there was another break before we were due in studio. Then (after another couple of drinks :-)), we suddenly got the call to go into studio and we were there! Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately since Steps were on this particular edition) we couldn't watch the whole programme being made.

we were only there to see james. So they started recording and the rest you know...towards the end of the performance I ventured onto stage and had a good old thrash around even though security told me not to. Blame Saul!

After that it was back on the minibus and back to North London but there was one more glimpse of Tim before the night was over: as we arrived back at the hotel which was our starting point, Tim was leaving with his bag and getting into a taxi. We exchanged goodbyes and waves and that was that. One hell of a day that I won't forget in a hurry!

One more ambition crossed off my list then: I've finally met Tim! Didn't really get a chance to meet the others but I did shake hands with Saul as he left the stage (to thank him for inviting me on!) and I shouted "alright Dave!" to Dave as he left the stage to which he looked a little bemused....

Top day.

Rarity Value

by Stuart Ralston

"It's not the best of, but it's fucking good", not my words but Tim Booth's. So you've bought the best of...and you've read the sleeve notes only to discover that the lead singer of the greatest band on the planet does not rate this fine collection of James tunes as the best of.

Many of us believe that the best...has yet to come from James, and those of us who have heard new material such as "Surprise", and "I know what I'm here for" would certainly suspect that the best of James will soon be upon us.

However, if you have the money, the time and the patience, then you may want to seek out some of these hidden gems from the James archives:

The 1968 12" "Ya Ho" is well worth finding as it features three tracks unavailable elsewhere; "Mosquito", "Left out of her will" and "New nature" all differ to the material you'll find on the best of, but all three are classics. However, this is not an easy record to find, and it may well set you back £25.

At the moment, the most sought after James record is their 1989 live LP "One Man

Clapping". It includes the amazing tracks "Whoops", "Burned", "Leaking" and "Stutter". For many James fans, this is the ultimate James album, but it now commands a price tag of £40.

Following the Sire years, James released a couple of singles you may be familiar with: "Come Home" and "Sit Down" on the Rough Trade label. These original releases are far superior to the later Fontana releases. The "Come Home" 12" and CD single both feature the classic anti-Thatcher song "Promised

Land", and a demo of "Slow Right Hand". You can pick up a copy of Come Home on Rough Trade, but you may pay £10 or £20.

The "Sit Down" Rough Trade 12" and CD single is the preferred version of many fans, myself included. It is radically different from the Top 10 smash hits of 1991 and 1998! It's worth picking up a copy of this for the 3 cracking B sides, "Goin' Away", "Sound Investment" and "Sky is Falling". These tracks benefit from the addition of the mighty Saul Davies on violin. This one may set you back £25 on CD, but a friend in Edinburgh recently secured a 12" copy for only £2.

James' first outing for Fontana provided them with their first top 40 hit, and the 12" silver sleeve edition of "How Was It For You?" came with a James logo stencil, so that we could design our own T-shirts. Also featured on this edition were the beautiful tracks "Lazy" and "Undertaker". If you only buy one James

oldie, then buy this one. "Undertaker" was one of the first James songs I heard and it remains a firm favourite to this day. It's an acoustic folkie number which just builds and builds. Fantastic. You can pick this disc up for about a tenner, but I have bought a few copies in Glasgow and Edinburgh for just £2 each.

Laid is widely regarded as James' finest studio LP, but the single release of Laid was also a great

release in that a further 3 songs from the Laid sessions with Brian Eno were released. "The Lake", "Seconds Away" and "Wah Wah Kits" are three more classics you should listen to. However, it is not easy to find James CD singles these days, as most of the back catalogue is deleted, including the much neglected alternative LP "Wah Wah". You really should own this too. You can still get it on import however.



Why do we bother?

This past summer, those of us from the two James fanzines and the Stutter and One Fan Clapping web sites got together to create J.I.M. — the James Information Mailing list. We decided to start J.I.M. because it was becoming glaringly obvious that James' management, press company, and Mercury records were falling pitifully short in doing their job: promoting the band by supplying information to the public, and more importantly, to James fans. Let's face it, the "official" fan club is defunct, regardless of whether they continue to advertise it inside every CD you purchase. All you'll get for writing to the address is the occasional postcard announcing an upcoming album or single release — and that's only if you live in the UK. If you happen to be a member of the other half of the population of James fans in the world, well... you might as well just give up now, because you just don't count. Hell, if you listen to Mercury Records, you don't even exist!

The truth is, James have a world-wide following — it's evident from the people who send for copies of the fanzines, signed up for J.I.M., and from the statistics on who visits the web sites. The sad truth is, if you're a James fan who doesn't live in the UK, the only way you'll hear anything about James is by reading one of these "unofficial" publications. Mercury's "James Home Page" is useless; it provides information on James US activities only, which we all know are currently non-existent. But that's as close to an "official" world-wide representation as you'll find — apparently, the millions of people on the web aren't seen as an asset for James. Yet, each week, Stutter and One Fan Clapping get hundreds of unique visitors, over half of which originate from outside of the UK.

Thus the J.I.M. list was created to fill in the gaps: for those who don't have internet access or can't check the unofficial websites or buy the fanzines on a regular basis. We thought the job would be easy — after all, between the four publications we have connections with James management, press company, Mercury Records, and on occasion, band members themselves. You might think with sources like that, we'd have no trouble getting up-to-date and accurate information. But you'd be wrong...

Since last spring, we've all found it increasingly

difficult to get information out of any of the people responsible for promoting the band. Now that James have once again achieved a level of mass-appeal in the UK, it appears that the fanzines and websites (and the fans they serve) are no longer deemed useful. Prior to the release of the Best Of, some of us were asked to contribute photos and press clippings for the CD insert. In return we got information. Now that our help is no longer needed, the flow of information has all but dried up. Management no longer return phone calls. The press company provides info such as "listen out to Key 103 FM on Friday for our news" and when asked for confirmation on rumoured gigs or singles releases (which were publicly confirmed only days later), claim to know absolutely nothing about them! More recently they've begun passing out entirely false information, only to deny ever mentioning it when challenged. Mercury Records Publicity Department, based in LA, might as well not even be considered these days, as they know nothing of events taking place outside of the US, Canada or Japan. They didn't even know James were in the studio working on a new album until one of us told them!

Requests for promotional items — CDs or promo photos, etc. to be given away via the fanzines or web pages, seem to fall largely on deaf ears. Where once these items were offered, now it's considered a huge conp such as we manage to get anything at all. Answers like "we don't have anything available right now" are not uncommon, and even when we're told we'll get something to give away, either the package never shows up at all, or comes well after the event we requested it for takes place.

The only people who've remained at all helpful are band members themselves, who are generally willing to share information or answer questions. But the question remains — isn't promoting the band and making sure information makes its way to the public supposed to be the job of the press company and management? Isn't that what they're paid for?

Those of us who created the J.I.M. list have all been James fans for a long time, and each of us remember what it was like before James achieved any success in our respective countries. Three out of four of our publications have been around for over 4 years. We remember how helpful the management and record company were when

James were struggling, which perhaps is why the current refusal to help us out is so difficult to take. When things were rough, our help was sought, and the record company and management virtually bent over backwards to support us. Now that James are popular in the UK and have decided to ignore the rest of the world, we can't get a single straight answer. The truth is, in the past months, each one of us has discussed giving up our respective "zines" or web sites. They require more time than many people realise, and for two of us, a rather significant amount of money to support. When it was obvious that our work was appreciated and we had the support of the band, management, record and press companies, we gladly did what was required. Now that James' management and press company seem to consider us more of a nuisance than an asset, supporting our publications is more like work than fun.

Each of us started our publications with two goals in mind: as a way to show support for a band who has given us so much through their music, and to supply James fans with information. But these days the apathy seems to spread beyond James management and press company. While sales remain strong, both "zines" have had difficulty getting enough articles to publish their next issues — you may have already read your last issue of A Sound Investment, and this may be the last issue of Change of Scenery ever to make it into your hands. One Fan Clapping has received hardly any fan submissions over the past few months, and as a site "for the fans, by the fans" is highly dependent on input from the people like you. The Stutter site is now faced with moving to another location or closing down completely, as the high number of visits the page receives has resulted in excessive internet service charges each month.

It would be one thing if we were only having trouble getting accurate and timely information from the management, press or record companies. But without the support of James' fans, we're left asking ourselves, and each other, why we bother at all. So if you like what we're doing, and enjoy the service we provide, please show your support by helping us out. Send us articles, stories, rants, reviews, suggestions, or even letters simply letting us know that you consider what we do valuable. The more support we get, the louder the voice we'll all have when speaking with James' management and press company. In the end, that's the only thing that may force the band, management, press and

record companies to pay attention to the fans that have supported them through thick and thin. require more time than many people realise, and for two of us, a rather significant amount of money to support. When it was obvious that our work was appreciated and we had the support of the band, management, record and press companies, we gladly did what was required. Now that James' management and press company seem to consider us more of a nuisance than an asset, supporting our publications is more like work than fun.

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GENE

Gene formed in 1993 from the remnants of Spin, a band set up by Steve Mason and Matt James. Spin had been together for quite a while and released an album, but their promising career came to an end when their van was involved in an accident.

Matt and Steve wanted to carry on playing together, and luckily for them, an excellent bass player by the name of Kevin Miles lived in the same building as Matt.

One night the trio went down to Camdens' Underground club, where they met a certain Martin Rossiter, who was on the look out for a band who needed a vocalist.

From there, the band wrote and recorded many songs, and finally released their debut album, 'olympian', in 1995. Gene weren't given much coverage by the media, a few well known singles were released from this, including "Sleep Well Tonight" and "Haunted By You". They released their second 'proper' album in 1997, the much coveted "Drawn To The Deep End", containing the singles "We Could Be Kings" and "Fighting Fit". It also has my favourite Gene song on it, "Where Are They Now?"

In between these two albums, Gene won an NME brat award for best newcomer in 1995, and they released an album of 'b'-sides, "To See The Lights". During this time their popularity was forever growing, and they now have a large following of dedicated fans.

New material is on it's way in the early months of next year. During their recent British tour, they played a selection of the new songs to fans, and it can only be said that the best keeps getting better.

Written by Phil Petts <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~en6pip/gene/gene.htm>

THEAUDIENCE

Update: Sophie has collaborated with the Manics on a track on their current single "Everlasting"

theaudience have released 3 singles this year, "if you can't do it when you're young when can you do it", "i know enough (i don't get enough)", and "a pessimist is never disappointed", and their self titled debut album which was released during the summer, on single or limited special edition double cd. since the release of the album the following has happened...

Festival appearances at V98, Reading (they also appeared at glasto, and T in the park)

Billy Reeves, founder member, departure from the band...

a tour without Billy, in which theaudience seemed even better than usual...

They have decided to scrap the release of 'keep in touch', or anything else off their debut album, and will instead release a tie - in ep between the debut album, and second album, which is currently being recorded.

There are growing rumours, which Sophie has denied, that theaudience are about to become the latest band to be dropped by mercury, due to poor record sales, following on from Gorky's being dropped earlier this year...these rumours are unconfirmed, and the American branch of their record label has just released a 6 track ep in America...

Aled Rhys Morgan <http://come.to/theaudience>