

Be Here Loud:

Rethinking the loudness war and its role in ubiquitous music through listening experience.



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Dedication

I could not have done this without the mental and moral support of Charlotte van Beek, Frieda van der Heijden, close friends and family.

Abstract:

Throughout this thesis, I argue how the loudness war has affected our listening experience, through affect and attention, when listening to ubiquitous music. This is done in order to show that music is an ever changing activity. This means that how we understand music and consume it, can never be fixed. In the theoretical framework, the loudness war and ubiquitous listening are linked together through the concepts of listening experience and listening formation. The loudness war is a conflict in the ongoing history of sound reproduction where music is getting more compressed in order to achieve louder sounding music. This is in line with the demands of music consumers, but this goes against the grain of audiophiles. Ubiquitous music is a concept which says that music is becoming more ubiquitous and therefore requires a less attentive listening mode. Despite the fact that ubiquitous music requires less attention, it still produces affective responses. Listening formation ties this all together because it theorizes the shared listening experience. The case study of this thesis, which is a musical analysis, shows how the theoretical framework works in practice. Here, two albums of Oasis are discussed, first through contemporary reviews from 1995-2000. This is in order to show how music is generally reviewed and show the listening formation of the time that the albums came out. Secondly, I have showed my own listening formation by performing a new musical analysis. Because I am not a part of the same listening formation as the contemporary reviewers, my methods, observations and outcomes are different. All together this thesis shows how our understanding of listening experience affects our opinion on music.

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Introduction

Some time ago, on one of my daily summer road trips, I noticed myself enjoying the music I was listening to more than usual while driving by car. The sun was shining and my windows were all rolled down. Even though I experienced massive amounts of background noises, those occur naturally when you drive a 120 km/h on the highway with the windows rolled down, I noticed that it did not interfere with my listening experience. It seemed as though the speed, the sun, the warmth, and the noise of the wind created a perfect musical atmosphere for the rock 'n' roll tunes of Oasis' *Be Here Now*, an album highly criticized for its overtly loud production. But It was exactly the loud production, that appeared detrimental for others' listening experience, that enhanced my own listening experience. Whereas other albums I tried listening to in the car, that were hailed for their sound production such as Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side Of The Moon*,ⁱ did not seem to fit the listening environment.

In an ever-changing musical landscape, the way that we think about or perceive music cannot stay fixed. Big technological and ideological developments, such as the loudness war or the rise of streaming endless amounts of music, come paired with even bigger changes to the ways we listen to music as well as the music we listen to itself. This thesis will function as a response to that question raised by academic writers, such as Anahid Kassabian: what has changed in music, and what does that mean for our ways of thinking about music? The thesis addresses that question by combining literature from various authors, on topics such as the loudness war, ubiquitous listening, volume, and listening formations, with a case study.

Because “what does that mean for our ways of thinking about music?” is too broad to give a relevant and concise answer on, I will be focusing on listening experience. In particular, this thesis will focus on how the loudness war has affected our listening experience, through affect and attention, when listening to ubiquitous music. The theoretical framework of my thesis will address the ever-changing listening experience through a couple subjects. I will be looking at the influence of the loudness war on how music is produced and what this means for possible listening modes. This will be discussed through the concepts dynamic range, ear fatigue, hyper-compression, and listening modes. Secondly, recent changes in our listening experience will be addressed through concepts such as affect, attention, distributed subjectivity, and ubiquitous listening. Furthermore, this theoretical

framework will combine both the loudness war (as an example of technological musical changes) and ubiquitous listening (as an example of changing consumption of music).

The case study in this thesis is a musical analysis centered around Oasis' second album (*What's The Story*) *Morning Glory?*ⁱⁱ and third album *Be Here Now*. First, this case study will contain a discussion of primary sources, specifically album reviews, from multiple popular music magazines. These can be found in appendix 1 to 10. This is to establish how both albums were received back when they came out. I do this to show examples of how music, 'traditionally', is discussed. Secondly, I will be performing a new musical analysis of the music addressed in the first part of this case study. Here, I address the listening experience, through musical elements such as sonic flow, dynamics, and listening modes. As both Kassabian and Devine theorize throughout their works, the listening experience is often not considered an equally important element, in comparison to e.g. musical genre or song structure, in the appraisal of music. To address the listening experience, a dynamic range database, Camelot Wheel, and a Waveform of the concerned songs are used in my analysis. This is to create a new kind of analysis, which I call a transition analysis. This case study will be concluded by addressing some of the differences between the two methods, the old ones based on subjective perception and my new one based on listening experience, of analyzing music.

To conclude my thesis, I will be summarizing important points made throughout this study. These will be put together in order to support my vision. Which is: 'When studying music, you are not just studying a research object, but you are studying a practice as well.' By not addressing listening experiences or imagined audience, you are overlooking a vital part of the music. This is where the relevance of my study lies. Not just for music or media studies, but consumers and music journalists alike.

Theoretical Framework

Fidelity and the history of sound reproduction

With the invention of sound recording, the realm of listening experience inherited a new measuring unit called fidelity. Kyle Devine defines Fidelity concisely as “truth-to-the-original” (2013, 159) and describes that a sound recording has “to be faithful (utilising (sic) a frequency range wide enough to approximate the original sounds) - but it also had to be loud (capturing a dynamic range comparable to that of the original sound)” (159). This means that a realistic, or hi-fi, sound recording has to have a frequency range and dynamic range which is as close to the original performance as possible. This statement immediately brings to mind the following supposition: music achieved more fidelity over the years because of technological developments. Devine theorizes throughout the essay that achieving perfect fidelity is impossible because of the socially constructed nature of fidelity (161-163).

Within the social construction of fidelity, there is a gap between the public's preferential listening experience and audiophiles' aesthetical idealsⁱⁱⁱ (160-161). Even though loudness and fidelity work together to create the ideal sound, the inversely correlated nature of loudness and fidelity ultimately lead to preferring one over the other (166). According to Devine, “Audiences often choose loudness over fidelity, whereas audio enthusiasts tend toward ideals of fidelity. Instead of favouring fidelity, audiences like loudness because of its ability to furnish certain situations with music” (160-161). In this quote, the strong nature of the imagined listening experience can be seen. From a physiological point of view, the audiophiles' ideals do make sense. Daniel Schneck and Dorita Berger also theorize that sound-wise, softer-sounding music is preferred over louder-sounding music (2006, 218). This is because greater volume equals a bigger amplitude of sound vibration, which is perceived by the human auditory system as loud vibration. Excessive use of volume can lead to overstimulation and eventually even damaging the auditory systems (217-218). Even though greater loudness is not ideal from a physiological point of view, Devine shows, through a discussion of primary sources on the invention of multiple early sound recording media such as the phonograph, that it was nevertheless of great importance to the consumers' imagined listening experience (2013, 166-172).^{iv}

The Loudness war: Dynamic range, hyper-compression, and listening-fatigue

The loudness war is, according to Devine, a turning point for the role of loudness, thus dynamics as well, in “the problem space of fidelity” (2013, 161-162). So what is this so-called loudness war and how should we understand this? Earl Vickers described the loudness war as “a term applied to the ongoing increase in the loudness of recorded music, particularly on Compact Discs, as musicians, mastering engineers and record companies apply dynamics compression and limiting in an attempt to make their recordings louder than those of their competitors” (2010, 1). The notion that increased loudness is achieved by dynamic compression is important. The fact that recording companies have landed in an arms race, shows that they listened to the wants of consumers as described by Devine earlier in this theoretical framework. Achieving louder recordings is done by compressing the music tightly on the recordings, which can go as far as hyper-compression.

Compressing music too far, thus making the music too loud, can have detrimental effects on the listening experience as well as the quality of the recording. A possible result of too loudly mixed music is audio clipping. This is a form of audio distortion where the amplitude of a sound wave is higher than the sound recordings capability. The outcome is that the amplitude of the soundwave is capped off (McCallister 2018), which is heard as audio distortion (Vickers 2010, 9). Hyper-compression and clipping can lead to listening-fatigue (9-10). Vickers explained this as fatigue that occurs when listening to music, possibly hyper-compressed, that causes the listener to become physically and/or mentally tired (9-10).

Hyper-compression does have positive sides too. The distorted characteristics of hyper-compression can be fitting for aesthetic preferences of certain genres that lean heavily on distortion such as black metal or noise-rock. Hyper-compressed, and thus extra loud, music can be fitting for a more diverse range of listening environments (Vickers 2010, 7-8). Soft or dynamically rich music works well in stable environments but tends to fit less in rowdy environments with a lot of background noises such as cars, parties, bars, beaches, etc.

Where the loudness war has harmed an existing listening mode best described as highly attentive close-listening, it paved a way as well for a more diverse range of listening modes and experiences. Hyper-compression, loss of dynamics, and listening-fatigue have a detrimental effect on the close-listening mode since overtly loud mastered music does not fit the intended listening experience of the close-listening mode. Listening-fatigue makes it harder to pay close attention to the music for longer periods and the loss of dynamics does not

fit the aesthetical preferences of the close-listening mode. In return, the louder mastering of music made it possible for music to be listened to in every imaginable environment. Rowdy environments such as driving cars, supermarkets, or crowded beaches can be turned into new and enjoyable listening environments. Because environments such as these have to deal with a diversity of background noises, ranging from soft to loud and muffled or flat to shrill, the music has to cut through or drown out the noise. Loudly mastered or hyper-compressed music does just that. It cuts through the noise, drowns it out, and makes it possible for consumers to enjoy music in a lot more places than their own homes. This new way of mastering music enabled the invention of new collective listening modes and uses. Devine describes a similar occurrence throughout the history of sound reproduction where technological developments, such as the invention of louder music media, lead to new ways of consuming music, such as dance classes taught from the home of the teacher (2013, 167-168).

Ubiquitous Music/Listening and Listening Formations: ubiquity, affect/attention, distributed subjectivity, and listening modes^v

The invention of sound reproduction led to a big change in what it meant to listen to music. Namely, it lifted the finite condition of music and therefore made it possible for music to become infinite. This means that music used to end the moment that it sounded. Before the invention of sound recording, it was impossible to separate sound from its origins. This means that it was only possible to listen to a piece of music when someone was performing that music live. Sound recording, in combination with sound reproduction, made it possible to separate the music from its origin, store it and eventually play it back whenever and wherever you wanted. Over the past century, technological advancements enabled the understanding of play-it-back-when-ever-and-where-ever-you-want to become much broader. For instance, sound recording and reproduction made it possible for music to become ubiquitous.

Kassabian discusses this new property of music through the concept of ubiquitous music and its accompanying listening mode ubiquitous listening. Ubiquitous music comes with four important notions: Ubiquity/omnipresence, (secondary) attention, affect, and distributed subjectivity (Kassabian 2013, 11). First of all, the omnipresence/ubiquity of music plays a vital role. The fact that music has become omnipresent, means a big shift in our consuming of music. Kassabian theorizes that the boundaries between background music, which was solely made for secondary listening, and foreground music, which was made for primary listening, have disappeared (34-36). Ubiquitous music is everywhere at all times, and

can therefore be listened to as a primary or secondary activity (48-49). Attention-wise, this means that ubiquitous music uses a more passive mode of listening. Since this music can be everywhere and at all times, it does not require an attentive close-listening mode. Even though music is not our primary source of attention, it still affects our atmosphere (mood) by producing an affective response through our senses. After our senses have been triggered and affect is created, some sort of scar tissue-like residue is left behind in our affective system. This scar tissue is activated during future listening sessions and experienced as emotions (12-15). Because listening to ubiquitous music is an activity shared with the people who are in the same physical space, who all create affective responses, distributed subjectivity is created. This distributed subjectivity can be seen as a field on “which dense nodes (...) shift and move, sometimes appearing to come together in static groupings (...), but they are never actually standing still. On this field, human, nonhuman, subhuman, and suprahuman units aggregate, interact, and drift apart, creating what Deleuze and Guattari called assemblages” (138). In one location, there can be multiple fields. This is because not everyone shares the same emotional mood that is activated when they hear the music, but there are always people who have a shared identity or mood.^{vi}

What makes distributed subjectivity so important, is that it theorizes the shared listening experiences. These shared listening experiences occur most notably in the earlier mentioned rowdy environments. For example, take a beach party. At this beach party, one DJ is playing a set and there is a large crowd interacting with the beach party. The crowd at this party are all individuals, but at the same time, they are part of a bigger whole. The people who have the same affective reaction to the music and atmosphere of the party, feel connected to each other. For instance: some people think the music is too loud, people are enjoying the danceability of the music and some people enjoy having a conversation with others. All of them are connected to other people with the same affective response and attentive listening mode. When something happens, for instance, they get bumped into a lot, their mood shifts. This affects their affective musical response, shifting from a positive one to a negative. Here we see that this person, or node, has shifted out of their former field and into another one, shared with people who have the same negative affective response to the music. Because these fields, and in particular the groups on these fields, are not static and always in motion, people can enter and leave a field of distributed subjectivity. And in this same crowd, there are multiple fields of distributed subjectivity taking place, connecting people through affective responses to ubiquitous music.

But what ties all the aforementioned concepts together is Devine's use of Faulkner's listening formation. Faulkner defines listening formation as "the whole context of audition for historically specific audiences, taking account of expectations formed for them by the whole culture and technology of speech and hearing of which they are a part" (1994, 165). Devine uses this concept to describe "mutually constitutive functions of fragile coalitions" (2013, 161), better understood as: "negotiations between forms of mediation and modes of listening, these sets of contradictions between the practices of audiences and the ideals of audio enthusiasts" (161). In this light, the loudness war is a part of the listening formation of ubiquitous music and its listening modes. Within the loudness war, conflicts of imagined listening modes and musical ideals can be seen. The technological, and simultaneously ideological, development that the loudness war brought, enabled the further development of ubiquitous music and listening. In short, if the technological and ideological musical circumstances fit with the publics' imagined listening experience, it can lead to changes in how music is perceived and listened to.

Case Study: The Case Of Oasis V. Oasis

Musical context of the reception of (What's The Story) Morning Glory? v. Be Here Now

At the height of the 1990s, Great Britain was held in a spell called britpop. Britpop was a music-media rage (Huq 2010, 93), used to describe a range of popular British bands signaling the comeback of Britain's musical domination. Since the rise and fall of the British invasion in the 1960s, the world's musical culture and charts, thus Great-Britain's as well, were largely dominated by American artists.^{vii} Britpop was partially a reaction to the popularity of the American grunge genre in the UK (Harris 2003, 79). The American hegemony can be most noticeably seen within the term 'British invasion'. This term has the connotation that British influences in global music culture are not as naturalized as American influences, that when it occasionally does happen, it is seen as an invasion.

Amid the Britpop rage, Oasis and Blur were caught in a popularity battle coined 'the battle of Britpop' (Richardson 1995). This battle really lifted off when Blur and Oasis released their newest single, resp. 'Country House' and 'Roll With It', on the same day (Brennan 2002, 4). Beforehand, both bands started slamming each other more regularly in the press (DeRogatis 2008, 88). When Oasis released their second album *Morning Glory*, the UK press prematurely received it lukewarm. This played an incredibly important role in the premature over-appraisal of *Be Here Now* (Brennan 2002, 5). In the end, Oasis won the 'battle of britpop' by achieving more commercial success (DeRogatis 2008, 89). *(What's The Story) Morning Glory?* has since become one of the best-selling albums of all time in the UK (Official Charts 2020).

(What's The Story) Morning Glory?

In terms of the overall grading of the album, the reviews are quite diverse. The American music outlet Rolling Stone and Dutch music outlet Oor were the most positive about the album, resp. scoring it four stars out of five (Wiederhorn 1995) and labeling the album "of great class from a world-class band" (Kummer 1995, 59).^{viii} British music outlet NME was a little less positive scoring it a seven out of ten (Robinson 1995). The British music outlets Vox and Q were the least positive, resp. scoring the album three stars out of five (Sutherland 1995, 122) and a six out of ten (Cavanagh 1995). However, these reviews did have a lot in

common. Despite differences in their final judgment, the described musical factors (musical style, lyrics, production, and artistic development) presented have a lot of similarities.

In terms of musical style or genre, the magazines noted the important role that showing their influences played with Oasis whilst creating their sound. For instance, Oor described the music as “retro-pop” (Kummer 1995, 59), and Rolling Stone noted that “rather than hide from their influences, Oasis irreverently revel in them, even to the point of shoving a few in their critics' faces” (Wiederhorn 1995). Meanwhile, Vox described the explicit display of musical heritage as “excercises in classic construction” (Sutherland 1995, 103), “homage is paid rather than damage done” (103), “tune-robbery” (Sutherland 1995, 122), and Q as “That was then, but so is this” (Cavanagh 1995). These references were not only hearable in the music, but can be read in the lyrics as well. Alongside the pop music references, the pseudo-poetical nature of the lyrics is described in the reviews as well. Q described the lyrics as “nothing much about anything” (Cavanagh 1995) and Vox added that “seem thrown together with little thought for anything but scan and rhyme. (...) It’s a showcase assembled to sound good and fit right, but at times it’s downright clumsy” (Sutherland 1995, 103). NME’s more positive review noted that “in writing lyrics, this marks a huge extension of Noel’s Range” (Robinson 1995). However, *Morning Glory* has “only the sketchiest of lyrical conceits; but the fact is that when an Oasis song makes sense, it does so (...) in the most primitive way imaginable” (Robinson 1995). In terms of production, the magazines describe the loudness of the album. Oor magazine said that it sounds like “a wall of guitars” (Kummer 1995, 59)^{ix} and Rolling Stone described their sound as “revving on amplifier overload” (Wiederhorn 1995), sketching the guitar sound as “bristling” (Wiederhorn 1995). On the topic of Oasis’s artistic development, the judgments are yet again not unanimous. Where Q notes the use of sampling and orchestras, they still thought that “Oasis have not given themselves the chance to develop musically” (Cavanagh 1995). Oor mentioned the same use of orchestration and called it “successful experimentation” (Kummer 1995, 59).^x

Be Here Now

Album reviews of Oasis’s third album *Be Here Now* have a lot of common ground, but are quite different in reception. This is similar to the reviews discussed in the paragraph on Oasis’ second album. Where Oor was greatly positive about Oasis’ second album, they were greatly disappointed in their successor *Be Here now*, calling it a “consolidation of their commercial leadership but nothing much else” (Kummer 1997, 61).^{xi} Soundwise, they called it “boring

(...), with a lack of inspiration covered up by an even louder and bigger wall of guitars” (61).^{xii} In terms of songwriting, Oor mentioned as well that “the songs were too long and more of the same but of lesser quality” (Kummer 1997, 61).^{xiii} These views on loudness were largely shared by Q Magazine, describing its sound as “cocaine set to music” (Du Noyer 1997, 132). Spin labeled the album reasonably good by scoring it 6 out of ten (Norris 1997, 136), describing the album as the “latest collection of mid-tempo sonic dramas” (136). They found that the melodies were too “extravagant” (137), the lyrics “fatuous” (137), and the constant Beatles referencing “compulsive” (137) or even “almost autistic” (137). However, there were a lot of positive reviews of *Be Here Now* as well. A reviewer from pitchfork, who scored the album 7.9 out of 10, thought that it sounded like a combination of the first two albums (Schreiber 2000), “but with a lot more pump” (Schreiber 2000). While the first two albums contained “three- to- four minute pop slices” (Schreiber 2000), *Be Here Now* consists of “six- to- ten minute long epics” (Schreiber 2000). Roy Wilkinson, from Select, gave the album a rave review as well. He described it as their “most abrasive adrenalized album yet” (Wilkinson 1997, 89), the album that “in a year time every home will have” (89) and “Oasis at their most monolithic yet” (89). Throughout the review, the album is musically described as an assembly of the most important moments in rock history by “the finest rock synthesists the world has known” (89). This is greatly because of the expanded range of influences and musical references.

Whilst the conclusions, as well as the ratings, of the reviews vary from 3 stars to 5 out of five, most of the observations are quite the same. The reviews have in common that *Be Here Now* sounds like a combination of the first two albums, but longer and a lot louder. They also remark that the album is full of musical and lyrical references, as well as lyrics that seem to be meaningless or pseudo-poetical. The biggest difference between the reviews is that the same observations lead to differences on a scale of positivity, ranging from “the British Lynyrd Skynyrd” (Norris 1997, 137) to “the biggest thrill in town” (Wilkinson 1997, 89).

A contemporary review of (What’s The Story?) Moring Glory v. Be Here Now

In the reading of primary sources, we saw similar observations, from *Morning Glory* and *Be Here Now* still led to quite different receptions. This is largely the result of two reasons, namely (non-)musical context and imagined listening mode. The first reason, (non-)musical context, is touched upon in the contemporary reviews of both albums whilst the second, imagined listening mode, is not or has barely scratched the surface. As far as (non-)musical

context goes, the success or failure of both albums was largely dedicated to zeitgeist and media attention (Lynskey 2016). For example, this can be read in Select's review, where the anticipation of the album is described, and in an interview from The Guardian with reviewers who over-appraised the album.^{xiv}

The yet-to-be-explained musical cause that led to big differences between *Morning Glory* and *Be Here Now*'s appraisal, is the constant conflict of listening modes. As described earlier in this thesis, listening is not just done with or without attention. Listening to music can be done in various modes with the amount of attention invested in it measured on a scale, ranging from completely inattentive to a close-listening musical inspection used for example in musical analysis. The differences in the appraisal of *Morning Glory* and *Be Here Now* are the result of a conflict between imagined listening modes.

In short, I would argue that *Be Here Now* is musically written for an attentive listening mode, *Morning Glory* for a less attentive listening mode, and both albums are produced, mixed, and mastered for background listening or noisy environments.^{xv} Both albums play like a whole and have a feeling of sonic flow. Sonic Flow is a concept from film music theory by Michel Chion that explains how sound and images create a feeling of continuity, even when the images on screen are not (1994, 45-46). Ubiquitous music has this sense of continuity, even though the music is listened to in a less attentive mode. On *Be Here Now*, the song transitions play a big role in this continuity. The tracklist is ordered in a way that the songs that follow each other are in harmonically matching keys. This enables a smooth flow throughout the album as well as brings energy boosts or drops to certain moments on the album, which can be seen in the transition analysis, see appendix 11.^{xvi} The use of fade-outs, fade-ins, short transitions of a few seconds well as segueing songs reinforces the feeling of sonic flow. After taking a closer look at the song transitions, it seems like the album was written for a vinyl record rather than a CD. Since there are twelve songs on the album, with most of them longer than 5 minutes, the album has to be divided into two vinyl records instead of one. This means that the songs on the album will be divided into four sides. When looking at the transition analysis, I found that some of the songs had much cleaner transitions than others. When the songs with short transitions or segues are seen as one section then the album can be divided into four parts as well.^{xvii} This causes the songs that flow seamlessly into each other, to be on the same side of the record. The song transitions that are relatively longer signal the end of a part, and thus record side. The transition analysis of *Morning Glory* shows that the album was not written in the same way as *Be Here Now*, see appendix 12. The

flow on this album is more constant than on *Be Here Now*. All the songs have transitions of less than two to three seconds and a segue is used twice. This leads to the conclusion that the songs on the album cannot be divided into multiple parts that belong together. In five of the eleven song transitions, harmonic transitions are not even used. This means that harmonic transitions only partly play a role in *Morning Glory*.

Alongside the transitions, both albums are filled with enough attention-grabbing musical references to British rock heritage, fitting for an Easter egg hunt. Kassabian describes a method that tv-shows use, which attracts the consumers' attention. Here, an abundance of cultural references is used to attract attention back to the screen (Kassabian 2013, 87). Oasis uses a similar method. Their songs are filled with musical and lyrical references, from bands that were highly influential on them. This seduces the listener into a more attentive listening mode, where one tries to identify as many references as possible. Altogether, the elements on *Be Here Now* seem to fit a more attentive listening mode, while a less attentive listening mode fits better for *Morning Glory*.

The second musical element that signals a different listening mode is loudness. Whilst the songs seem to be written for a more attentive listening mode, the album itself is produced in a way that is more fitting for a less attentive listening mode. The loudness of the album can be made visible through a musical waveform and a dynamic range analysis. The results of the dynamic range analysis show that both albums score very low on the dynamic range scale. *Morning Glory* has an average dynamic range (DR) of 5, a minimum score of 3, and a maximum score of 10 (DR Loudness War 2018). *Be Here Now* scores respectively 5, 4, and 6 (DR Loudness War 2018). These marks are based on the difference between the peak decibel reading and the average loudness level (Head-fi 2017). This means that both albums are mastered vastly loud and compressed. However, after comparing songs from both albums through a waveform, resp. see appendix 13-14, we can see a big difference in loudness between both albums. The songs on *Morning Glory* give away a highly compressed and loud sound. The songs have some moments of hyper-compression, but it does not dominate the music. These cases of loudness and compression are nothing compared to the waveforms of *Be Here Now* songs. Here, we see songs that are incredibly loud, hyper-compressed, and extremely dense. Most of these songs seem to consist of more hyper-compressed sounds than not. As seen in the theoretical framework, the use of extremely loud production and hyper-compression can lead to listening-fatigue. Besides the abundance of hyper-compression, these songs are produced so loudly that most of the song structures are invisible. Often, there are

differences in volume between parts of the song. An example of this can be seen in the waveform of 'Wonderwall'. Thus, these albums seem to be produced for a less attentive listening mode.

Conclusion / Discussion

Throughout this thesis, I have been looking at how the loudness war affected the listening experience of ubiquitous music. The ubiquitous music variables affect and attention played in a vital role in understanding the loudness war's role. First of all, this research showed that the loudness war is not just a single historical event, but rather a part of an ongoing history of sound reproduction. This is a history characterized by conflicts of imagined listening modes,^{xviii} between music consumers and audiophiles. In The loudness war, fidelity was sacrificed to heed the consumer's need for loudness by using (extremely) high amounts of compression and lowering the dynamic range. Audiophiles believed that this would have a detrimental effect on the listener's experience. The Loudness war does have positive sides too, it enables music to be consumed in more and noisier environments. This is due to the loudness war's loudly produced music with a smaller dynamic range, enabling it to cut through or drown out background noise. This quality made it possible for music to become ubiquitous, making the loudness war both an important technological and ideological condition of ubiquity. Ubiquitous music is a new form of music that combines elements of background and foreground, becoming music that can be listening to anywhere and at any time. This comes with a new mode of listening to music, called ubiquitous listening. Here, music is listened to as a secondary activity and does not require our full attention.

Nevertheless, ubiquitous music still has an effect on our senses creating affective responses. Because ubiquitous music is often played in shared environments such as stores and cars, the shared listening experience plays a big role here as well. This is seen in the concept of distributed subjectivity. Distributed subjectivity is a field where subjectivity is distributed through nodes that are linked together by ubiquitous music. This means that people with similar affective responses to music are connected and create a field of distributed subjectivity. What connects ubiquitous music, listening modes, and the loudness war is that they are part of the same listening formation. What this means in practice can be seen in the case study. Here we see that how music is criticized depends on the listening formation that the criticizer is a part of. The contemporary criticizers from 1995 and 1997 were part of a different listening formation, where the concept of ubiquitous music was not yet well

developed and listening modes or environments did not play a big role. The listening formation that I am a part of does contain these ideas, resulting in my different analysis modes, observations, and conclusions. These changes in how music is consumed require new ways of thinking about music, which is something this thesis does.

However, this thesis does not give a final and complete answer to the aforementioned research question. This is due to three factors. First of all change. Science and the world around us are constantly in motion. The moment you write a thesis, such as this one, your research subject has probably already developed into something new. Nevertheless, it still gives a good insight into how a problem is perceived at the time. The second factor is space. Due to space limitations, there are some topics that I have not been able to include in this thesis. For instance, it would be interesting to add a discussion on how the medium that music is played on, affects the way music is received as well as consumed. It would be interesting to delve deeper into the technical side of the loudness war and consuming music as well. Finally, the present and the future. Since most of the literature used throughout this thesis is written between 1994 and 2013, it is difficult to say for sure what still applies to our new music media such as Spotify, and what does not. In addition, it is virtually impossible to predict our future consumption of and thinking about music. However, I do think that the growing omnipresence of music will continue. Ubiquity is here to stay!

Appendix 1

Rolling Stone: Oasis – (*what's the story*) *Morning Glory?*

The album cover for Oasis' 'What's The Story... Morning Glory?' shows a man in a white shirt and dark pants walking away from the camera down a city street. The street is lined with buildings and has a yellow curb. The word 'oasis' is written in the bottom right corner of the cover.

Oasis
(What's The Story) Morning Glory?
Sony Music Distribution

Rolling Stone: ★★★★★
Community: -NOT RATED-

Like 12 Tweet Pin it 2K+ Mix it! Comment 1

By JON WIEDERHORN

OCTOBER 19, 1995

Many new rock bands leave the starting gate with fists flying, eager to batter down obstacles on the road to stardom. But few have been as hands-on as Oasis. In England the band's popularity has almost as much to do with the number of black eyes and bloody noses that brothers Noel and Liam Gallagher have inflicted on each other as it does with the number of hit singles they've created. Ironically, this stormy relationship is also what makes their new album, (*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory?*, so galvanic.

It's no secret that tension and instability have been inherent traits of great rock teams, going as far back as Jagger and Richards, but for Oasis, the addition of shared genes gives their songs extra impact and dimension. No matter how much the Gallaghers fight — or pose — their brotherly bond holds at the center. This inner confidence allows the group to flaunt its jaded arrogance like a five-man biker gang — whether it's revving on amplifier overload or coasting through a pastel-washed reverie. It also permits Oasis to borrow shamelessly from artists like the Rolling Stones, T. Rex, the Kinks, Small Faces and, especially, the Beatles without losing their own snide identity.

Oasis' first album, *Definitely Maybe*, was rebellious and attitude laden, revealing the decadent dreams of working-class British youths who watched *The Kids Are Alright* a few too many times. The music mixed Stones swagger with soaring melodies, and titles like "Rock 'n' Roll Star," "Supersonic" and "Live Forever" conveyed the band's desire to transcend the mundane. But for all the supercilious sneering, the disc — as good as it was — didn't quite live up to the hype.

(*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory?* is more than a natural progression; it's a bold leap forward that displays significant musical and personal growth, not to mention a far greater familiarity with the Fab Four's back catalog. Since pledging themselves to "Cigarettes and Alcohol" on their debut, Oasis have apparently had plenty of sex, done loads of drugs and lived rock & roll to the limit, and now they're searching for something more. Twenty-seven-year-old songwriter Noel Gallagher has crafted a number of tunes that downplay bravado in favor of self-discovery and even (gulp) sensitivity.

While Noel once filled melodies with sharp, bristling guitars and crisp, cracking beats, these days he's relying on gentle, reflective rhythms. And instead of merely crowing in a nasal tone that sounds like a cross between John Lennon and John Lydon, brother Liam sings with warmth and occasionally hints at vulnerability. "Wonderwall" (this year's "Live Forever") is a pensive, jangly tune that expresses Noel's disorientation at sudden stardom. "Don't Look Back In Anger" and "Cast No Shadow" flow with weepy strings, muted drumming and equally memorable choruses. Featuring a piano passage that echoes Lennon's "Imagine," "Anger" addresses the star's inability to sustain a relationship on the road, while "Shadow" expresses the pain of an artist in a consumer society.

Yeah, Oasis have discovered their feminine side on (*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory?*, but that doesn't mean they can't still rock. "Hello" is bent and stretched by wiggly wah-wah guitars and a shuffling beat, ending with a Gary Glitter chorus lifted verbatim from the original. The title cut starts with helicopters and static, then bursts into an invigorating riff that circles endlessly over wailing guitar echoes and hedonistic lyrics. There's the obligatory T. Rex ode "Some Might Say" and the whimsical "She's Electric," which ends with a passage nicked straight from "With a Little Help From My Friends."

Rather than hide from their influences, Oasis irreverently revel in them, even to the point of shoving a few in their critics' faces. Two tracks are followed by brief, dark, druggy instrumental interludes reminiscent of the end of "Strawberry Fields Forever"; "Wonderwall" borrows its title from a George Harrison solo album; and "Morning Glory" cheekily drops a Beatles song title in the line, "Tomorrow never knows what it doesn't know too soon."

Yesterday, Noel Gallagher's troubles may have seemed so far away, but today Oasis are grappling with success and fear in a way that gives their glorious pop new potency. If Oasis can avoid falling prey to the kind of brotherly shove that eventually destroyed the Kinks artistically, the future looks bright indeed.

Like 12 Tweet Pin it 2K+ Mix it! Comment 1

< Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, 'Notorious' ALBUM REVIEW MAIN The Flaming Lips, 'Clouds Taste Metallic' >

INSIDE ROLLING STONE



Appendix 2

Oor: Vol zelfvertrouwen

V O L Z E L F V E R T R O U W E N

OASIS ● (What's The Story) Morning Glory (Creation/Sony) (releasedatum: 2 oktober)



Blur mag zichzelf dan de beste band van Engeland vinden, Oasis zal niet eerder rusten voor ze de Beste Band van de Wereld is. Wat dat betreft is hun ijzersterke tweede album een aardige stap in de goede richting. Het vorig jaar verschenen debuut *Definitely Maybe* bevatte weliswaar een handvol klassiekers, maar ook een stuk of vijf zwakkere broeders. Daarna is de groep echter alleen maar beter geworden. Dat bleek al uit de singles *Whatever* (hier niet aanwezig) en *Some Might Say* (wel) en dat wordt nu definitief bewezen door *(What's The Story) Morning Glory*. Gitarist Noel Gallagher is volwassen geworden als componist van op de sixties geënte popsongs en kent als vakman momenteel eigenlijk alleen in Neil Finn (Crowded House) en Dave Grohl (Foo Fighters) zijn gelijke. The Beatles zijn natuurlijk een belangrijke bron van inspiratie — *Wonderwall* verwijst naar George Harrison, *Don't Look Back In Anger* naar John Lennon en *She's Electric* naar Paul McCartney — maar daarnaast zijn er ook verwijzingen naar T.Rex, Kinks en Small Faces. Retro-pop? Zeker, maar dan wel van een heel hoog niveau. Oasis klinkt geïnspireerd en vol zelfvertrouwen: zanger Liam Gallagher heeft de zuerderigheid van zich afgeworpen en klinkt nu als een Echte Man, tus-

sen de gitaarmuren door horen we geslaagde experimenten met strijkers (cello in *Wonderwall*, violen in *Hey Now* en *Cast No Shadow*), terwijl hoogtepunten als *Hello*, *Morning Glory* en *Champagne Supernova* een enkel minpuntje als de huidige single *Roll With It* (Status Quo/Oasis?) meer dan teniet doen. Klasseplaat van een wereldband.

OENEKUMMER

THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS ● Roll Of The Dice (Private/BMG)

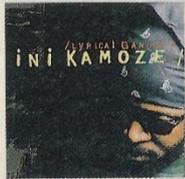


Ooit maakten The Fabulous Thunderbirds de mooit rockende en dansbare Texas/Louisiana-blues op deze planeet. Na hun fraaie doorbraak-plaat *Tuff Enuff* ('86) is het nooit meer helemaal geworden zoals het was. Inmiddels lopen er in Texas ongeveer een miljoen Thunder-

birds-kloontjes rond en zijn ze hun bedenker, oprichter en geheime wapen kwijt: Jimmy Vaughan. Hier wordt die klap opgevangen door gitarist Kid Ramos (ex-James Harman, ex-Red Devils) en producer Danny Kortchmar, die ze van het best passende geluid uit hun hele carrière voorziet (enigszins vergelijkbaar met de laatste Stones-plaat). Voor welgeteld één liedje kunnen de dansschoenen weer uit de kast, namelijk het bijzonder vrolijk stemmende Louisiana schuivertje *Do As I Say*. Daarnaast staan een goeie cover (Van Morrisons *Here Comes The Night*), een curieuze cover (Disney's *Zip A Dee Da Dah*), twee aardige country-soul ballads en een gemene Muddy Waters-variant. De rest bestaat uit gedegen funky roots-rock, waarin Kim Wilson opvallend veel en fraai harmonica speelt en die je rustig uit kunt zitten. Ik zei: Zitten. Alles bij elkaar opgeteld: lang niet slecht, maar waar het de Thunderbirds vooral aan schort, is een smool.

HERMAN VAN DER HORST

INIKAMOZE ● Lyrical Gangster (Eastwest/WEA)



Na het fenomenale succes van *Hot Stepper* gaat dancehallzanger Inikamoze verder op dat pad. Dus veel hiphopbeats aanekaar gebreed met micro-sketches. *Listen Me Tic*, met vette beats en oyo-oyooyorefrain is al een hit. Op deze CD horen we veel rappers. Nine, Guru, Da Brat en een

heleboel onbekende gasten, geproduceerd door 9 sounds Klik (Philip Burrell). *Lyrical Gangster* laat Kamoze van zijn machokant zien. Nine's ongemakkelijke stem rapt *Hole In The Head* op de hielen gezeten door Kamozes goedkeurende zang, die ook op andere nummers als een soort uppercut naar voren komt. Bij zijn pogingen tot Jamaicaanse G-funk, komt Guru een beetje voorbij lounge-n, net als Da Brat. Veel geschreeuw in dit nummer dat door Guru's intellecto-rap en geberde achtergrondkoortjes de plank mislaat. *Me & My Gun* is een echte ballistische affaire vol drumlicks als pistoolschoten, maar Inikamoze is het best in simpele dancehall, met subsonische bas, spookachtig gitaarlicks en simpele droge snaredrumtikken. Ook de dubremix van *Hotter This Year* dwingt respect af, evenals het van grommende 'tempo'-electro-licks voorzien *Officer*. Vervolgens is de housemix van *Hotter This Year* is weer helemaal niks. Zo zwalkt deze plaat heen en weer tussen gemakzucht, branie met nare bijsmaak en een paar goede songs.

PIETER FRANSSSEN

(advertentie)

THE DIARY OF NATHAN ADLER OR THE ART-RITUAL MURDER OF BABY GRACE BLUE

A non-linear Gothic Drama Hyper-cycle.

It was at precisely 1.47am on the morning of Friday 31st December 1999 that a dark, spirital pluralistic... of 14-year-old...

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1999, 10.15AM

As in any crime, my first position is to peruse the motive-gag. The recent spate, thru '98-'99, of concept-mappings pretty much had me pulling breath for an art-murder. It was a crime whose time was probably its beginnings in the '70s: a Viennese constructionist and the rituals of Nitsch. Public revulsions of that episode, but you'd on that ghoulish down. Spurred a good ghoul hunt. I had myself shot in a gallery, tied u in a highway and then... of a Volkswagen the nasty... rean air... of w... arat...



NIEUWSGIERIG?
BEL DE BOWIE-LIJN!

TEL. 06-904904 15

(50 CT PM)

Internet-adres:
<http://www.vpro.nl/vpro-digitaal/villab5/enobowie>

To be continued...

Appendix 3

NME: Tales Of The Expected

LONG PLAY

Edited by JOHN ROBINSON

OASIS

(What's The Story) Morning Glory
(Creation/All formats)

SO THIS is the morning after the night before.

The party has begun to disperse. The white lines have disappeared, the drinks have been drunk, the last cigarette smoked. The fighting has been broken up, the last binged-out cries of unstoppable self-belief have started to fade, and a somewhat inept drummer has been misplaced.

Quite a night, all told. There were songs written that weren't just about instant gratification, they were instantly gratifying. There was the knowledge that the simplistic genius of those present had been sufficient to turn them into what they had always dreamed of being: indestructible, untouchable Rock And Roll Stars. And though the party's been a little sordid in places, there's the knowledge that the band, our genial hosts, have provided peerless soundtracks for high times. Times that look, fairly reasonably, like they might not end.

Until, of course, the morning after. Which is where the songwriter wakes up and starts to think that, even though he has written true classics, maybe there's only so long he can keep writing them. He tentatively puts a limit on the group's lifespan and dabbles with a little of the old acoustic malarkey. He remembers a bit more about the night before, looks at the songs he wrote and thinks that maybe it was a laugh; but it all seems a bit shallow now. However, now's probably not the time to speculate: there's more stuff to be done, and his brother's considering growing a moustache. It's all going blindingly well...

Such is the situation in which we find Oasis on their second LP. This is an album which sends them off in an altogether different direction; away from conscience-free overloaded hedonism towards an understanding of its consequences. Away from uniquely invigorating punkedelic riot and just an inch or two closer towards our friend Mr Pipe and his colleague, Mr Slippers. And slightly away from the myth of the indomitable superhuman star into something approaching a series of personal confessions.

So this is not 'Definitely Maybe-Part 2'. This is not a mid-'90s good time agenda – but a subtler and potentially – were it not for a couple of fairly hefty shortcomings – just as moving a record. And, occasionally, it turns into what sounds like Noel's own *Confessions Of A Pop Star*.

What matters above all this, though, is that Oasis are still the people who remove pop music from the arenas of intellectual debate. '(What's The Story) Morning Glory' is, for example, littered with musical quotations – from the most apocalyptic moments of REM on 'Morning Glory', to the beatific final bars of 'With A Little Help From My Friends', to the slightly absurd use of Gary Glitter and the farcical removal from the album of Stevie Wonder rip-off 'Steep Out' – but their's is a use that is beyond cleverness and all to do with feeling.

Likewise, this is a record with remarkably few 'characters' and only the very sketchiest of lyrical conceits; but the fact is that when an Oasis song makes sense, it does so (sadly for only about two-thirds of those on 'Morning Glory') in the most primitive way imaginable. The plea for invincibility of 'Live Forever'. The ferocious pursuit of The Good Times in 'Cigarettes And Alcohol' and 'Supersonic'. These are records which have taken the mundanities of ordinary life and neither over-scrutinised, dramatised or quoted from them. Instead, the

TALES OF THE EXPECTED

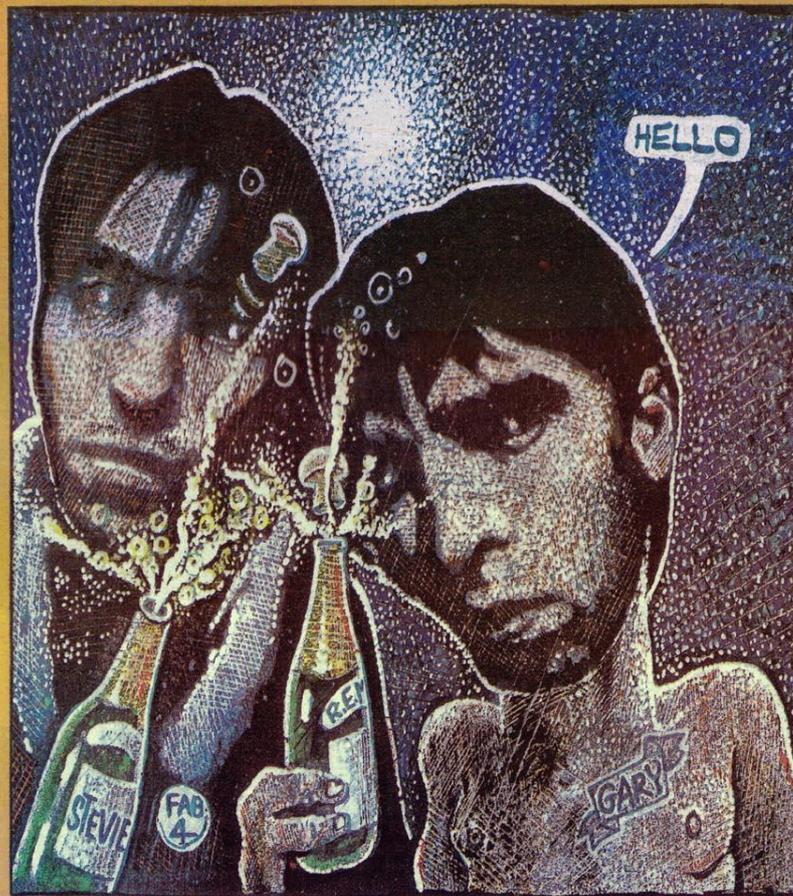


ILLUSTRATION: JOHN LAMBERT

the words with what sounds like an urge for total self-destruction. One is beginning to try to come to terms with the possible down side of the rock'n'roll dream, the other still intent on hurtling unchecked into the uncharted.

The result is brilliant: a fusion of the racket from 'Definitely Maybe' with a darker, nihilistic urge to piss life up the wall. But, shortly, there's a clearing of throat and the same melancholy strum that formed the very first seconds of the record. The fear is palpable: that Solo Noel Moment may have arrived.

'Wonderwall' instead turns out to be the best example of Liam's indispensability to Noel as we are plunged into the depths of a doomed urban romance. Fires have gone out, wills to live have departed, yet we still witness Liam questioning whether "Maybe you could be the one to save me". And yet the entirely twisted delivery turns it from a slightly sappy idea into a fantastically bleak song, adding an all-consuming anger to the sense of desperation.

What's more significant is that, where once Oasis described the euphoria of near-mythical pleasures and excess or made the ordinary extraordinary, they can now comfortably leave us in dull locations and leaves them dull. Here 'The roads are winding' and, fairly obviously, the "lights are blinding"; in 'Some Might Say' we are left standing at the station in the rain. It's as though the more their lives resemble the wildly excessive scenes they wrote about while they were still skint in Burnage, the more they root themselves on the ground. They've been propelled to stellar heights but for much of this album we find them looking back down, wondering what happened and whether they'll ever be themselves again. Having told us they were rock'n'roll stars they're pondering exactly what else they are besides.

Their faith seems to be wavering. When 'The Solo Noel Moment' arrives with 'Don't Look Back In Anger', he instructs us not to "put your life in the hands of a rock and roll band". 'Hey Now' continues the mood with us accompanying them on "A walk with my fame down memory lane/ Never to find my way back". Meanwhile, for 'Cast No Shadow' the weakness continues with a description of a man who, um, casts no shadow.

For someone who professes little interest in writing lyrics, this marks a huge extension of Noel's range.

There is some respite from the gloom. 'Morning Glory' pillages 'The One I Love' and – in among what may be the definitive piece of entirely monstrous Oasis – offers the redeeming prospect of listening to "your favourite tune" while being chained to the mirror and the razor blade.

What brings us to the end of the album is a slightly peculiar epic. 'Champagne Supernova' is basically 'Cigarettes And Alcohol' with a lifestyle of faster cars, better mini-bars, accompanied by the less-than-sober sense of disorientation that has seeped into this album. The band are caught in the throes of the wind-down from an utterly apocalyptic psychological party and we're back where we came in; slightly reluctant witnesses at an event where no-one's quite sure who's going to clear up.

This is the story, then: a second album of disturbing but slightly straight-ahead rock. Tales of a group that has peered over the edge and could lose their footing. And, ultimately, a nervous peek through the curtains, not a bold rise and shine.

Good morning good morning good morning good... (7)

John Robinson

mundanities have been amplified until they become epic.

So when '(What's The Story) Morning Glory' is touched by things like uncertainty, personal weakness and doubts about rock'n'roll bands themselves, the effect is of hearing a disturbing hollowness where the conviction of the kagool years has vanished and the hugeness of their sound is left to work on their more vulnerable moods. There are moments here where we recognise the influence of the first album (the dim-witted counterpart to 'Digsy's Dinner' that is 'She's Electric', the fantastic squall of the introductory 'Hello') but the record, steeped in an all-consuming religious institution echo, compounds the seriousness of it all.

And these are not the only echoes. The past is, throughout, on their minds. One moment, we hear a brief burst of an acoustic 'Supersonic'. Then after the surge of last year's white lines, they wake up in a position where they are "chained to the mirror and the razor

blade". Throughout, we're watching Oasis watching themselves, mindful that, after the bravado, there may well be the aftermath.

It's not difficult to spot where Noel has gone for solace. It's these moments when he disappears off with a guitar to write a song about 'some bird'. It's when he guests as token young bloke on that week's classic piece of dadrock. It's when, basically, he finds help in the Greats, The Hall Of Fame, the realms of Classic Rock.

Herein, before the frequent myth of the remainder kicks off, he finds enough aged inspiration left to merit the words 'heads down no nonsense boogie' stencilled onto his flight case. The culprits are 'Some Might Say' and 'Roll With It'. They were singles. More mysteriously, they were enormous hit singles. And compared with almost anything else on this album they are lowest common denominator oldster's arse: platitudinous and a bit of a cop-out. Kindly leave the long player.

What The Rock Of One's Father has left elsewhere is the desire to move slightly in the way of 'Whatever'. All around are signals of accelerated maturity. Wails of mouth organs on the unnamed linking track on Side Two. The fact that the unnamed linking track on side one sounds a bit like Hawkwind. The swathes of strings glossing songs like 'Wonderwall' and 'Don't Look Back In Anger'. The beautiful piano touches played, scarcely credibly, by Bonehead. As the pace of their initial progress was shown in flying chairs, their desire to move on now is revealed in their occasionally inspired grab for things of quality and substance. That, presumably, Noel trusts.

And so we get a showdown. On the one side, there's Noel the introspective riffmaster, while on the other there's Liam the malevolent rager. The first track, 'Hello' is the confrontation in a nutshell. Noel has written a song with a sense of perspective over the rage of guitar, while Liam is singing

Appendix 4:

Vox: Re-vox Oasis – (what's the story) Morning Glory?

Summary!

RE-VOX

Oasis
(What's The Story?)
Morning Glory
(Creation)

What's the story, indeed. On this showing, the mood in the Gallagher camp is getting curiouseur and curiouseur. There's still plenty of the usual tune robbery here ('Hello' gives up any attempt at originality halfway through and elapses into an exact copy of Gaz Glitter's 'Hello, Hello, I'm Back Again'; 'Morning Glory' itself is REM's 'One I Love' gone 'Supersonic'). But elsewhere, the mixture of Noel's lovelorn lyrics and Liam's belligerent drawl begins to sound faintly ludicrous. And with lines like "She's got a bun in the oven/But it's nothing to do with me" on 'She's Electric', the cringe-o-meter is never too far off, unfortunately. 6 (PM)



STEVEN DE BANSSEIER

Noel and Liam: the eyebrows have it

PM Dawn
Jesus Wept
(Gee Street)

The Cordes brothers once again come out looking like shrewd operators who metamorphose at will to extend their sell-by date. 'Jesus Wept' severs all connections with hip-hop and replaces the light-headed raps of yore with quasi-mystical musing, close harmonies, a psychedelic-rock feel and large shout-outs to God. But diversity is not PM Dawn's strongest suit, and blissful monotony soon takes over. 4 (DF)

The Pogues
Pogue Mahone
(WEA)

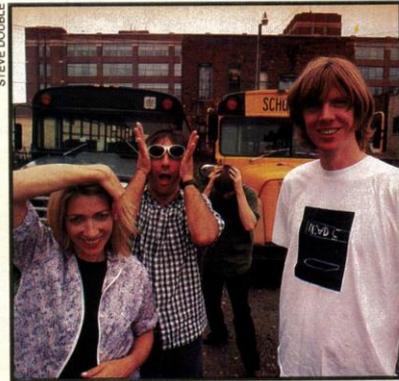
Life without the gravel-voiced, gutter poetry of Shane MacGowan has not been easy for the Pogues. In fact, you could say 'Pogue Mahone' suffers from terminal musical nostalgia for brasher, bolder times. Not only that, but, despite his best efforts, Spider Stacey is so patently unsuited to the role of frontman; he sounds like a coolminer trapped down a liftshaft... 50 years ago. 2 (DF)

The Gold Experience
(Warner Bros)

Our hero's stiffy is back to full strength once more after his much-documented record company tribulations. 'Pussy Control' is particularly terrific, recalling the ambidextrous glory days of 'Sign 'O' The Times', as is the worldwide hit 'The Most Beautiful Girl In The World'. And aside from a bit of input by boring mates of The Artist Formerly Known As... 'The Gold Experience' is ♀'s most consistently enjoyable, fully-rounded album for at least five years. 7 (JC)

122 VOX December 1995

Indesit proposal



Sonic Youth: car-park life

SONIC YOUTH
Washing Machine (Geffen)

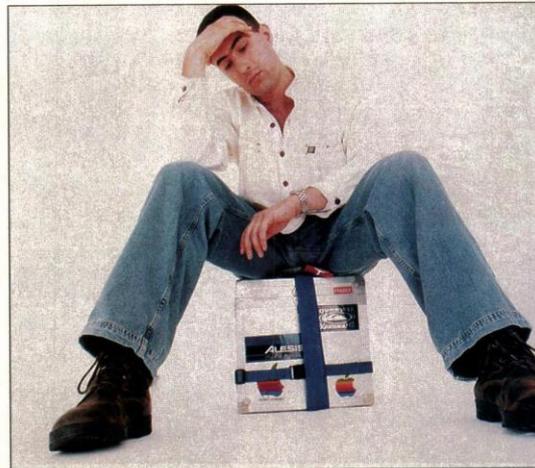
IT WAS all going so well. Back in the grimy plaidfest of 1992, Thurston Moore's mob released 'Dirty', a damn filthy steamroller of a record smelling so heartily of nicotine spirit that it threatened to make the weirdy uncles of grunge into proper rock stars! Gosh. We hastily dismissed last year's 'Experimental Jet Set, Trash And No Star' as we-can-still-be-weird (honest), Kurt-exorcising filler. We clenched our buttocks tight to prepare for the chart annihilation to come. And so we get 'Washing Machine' – an album that sounds as if it was recorded in a tin kettle, with heads planted firmly in colons, on the day *Art Wank Monthly* gave away free skunk. Bar one moment of sleazy, ironic pop mastery (Kim Gordon's Shangri-La's-on-methadone growler 'Trouble Girl'), it sounds like the bad-trip noodlings of people who think Pink Floyd's 'Meddle' was a top idea. Sonic Youth live in Pompeii? Don't joke about it. See, whereas 'Dirty' sped by like a half-glimpsed car crash, 'Washing Machine' is crammed (ten songs in 67 minutes! Phew!) with introverted half-tunes that mope around, picking at the stains on their underwear. The title track's Velvets-style, Harlem-vibe poetics are drowned under droning seagull guitar noises, while the sickly sweet ballad 'Unwind' forgets its melody halfway through and wakes up on the Spiritualized B-side. Worst of all, 'The Diamond Sea' ('Echoes' with a malfunctioning chainsaw) waits about for 20 tedious, teeth-grinding minutes. And this is only the single. So the Youth prove, once again, that they can fail to write tunes if they really try. Experimental, dead-set and... well, bollocks, frankly. 3

Mark Beaumont

The zzzz files

DAVE CLARKE
Archive One
(Bush/deConstruction/all formats)

UH-OH. Just when we thought all those jibes about techno being the new prog rock were mere jealous jests, along comes a record to put the E into ELP. Not that 'Archive One', the high-profile debut album from hard techno man-of-the-moment Dave Clarke, is a total concept noodle in the shape of Sven Vath's last oeuvre. Anyone who opens their album with a gothic bit of neo-classical synthplay has to be watched, especially if they opt to call it 'Intro – Rhapsody In Red'. Then there's 'Thunder – Red 3', a dated bit of ravey techno with all the charm of a wine-soaked Tory MP, complete with a doomy sci-fi narrative spoken by Mr Clarke himself and put through some crap Darth Vader toy effects. In the cringe stakes, it's up there with catching your parents having noisy sex.



Dave Clarke: "It ain't heavy, it's my archive"

At least 'Archive One' goes some way to explaining why Dave Clarke has become the world renowned and respected jock and knob-twiddler he is today. 'Wisdom To The Wise – Red 2', the anthem that helped him cross over from metal-banging obscurity to serious dancefloor innovator, is here in full and untampered form. Its drums kick like a donkey on PCP, the keyboards stab away like a madman in a Swiss knife factory and, basically, it rocks like nothing else on this album. Because, unfortunately, there's precious little else here to persuade us that 'Red 2' was anything more than a fluke. 'Southside' and a few of the straighter dancefloor efforts would no doubt make it into most hard-ish jocks' boxes, but they're unlikely to lodge themselves into your psyche like a good album track should. Even the version of Clarke's universally respected 'Red 1' single, 'Protective Custody', teases and tempts before ending just where it should kick in. Bah. Add an interesting but ultimately funkless hip-hop effort ('No One's Driving') and you've got disappointment on the dramatic scale of the pretentious intro of 'Archive'. We know Clarke's capable of combining house music's glorious euphoria with techno's crunching dynamics. It's just that he doesn't do it well or often enough for the right results here. Boring, not soaring. 4

Ben Willmott

Blatant

Hello. Hello. Oasis are back. Oasis are back. Hello. Hello.



OASIS
(What's The Story) Morning Glory?
CREATION CRE 189

Try to raise the suggestion that Definitely Maybe by Oasis was nowt but a jolly good guitar-vocal album of the kind released bi-monthly by the Creation label – and many others – and you face the same reaction as the two computer scientists who proved recently that Geoff Hurst's goal in the 1966 World Cup Final did not cross the line. "Interesting theory, lads – but that match was 29 years ago. It's a bit late for a replay." Definitely Maybe has officially crossed the line from word-of-mouth to work of genius. So be it. Perhaps it was.

Oasis, this Alan Hudson of a rock'n'roll band, have milked the applause entertainingly. Not since Mohammed Ali's pre-bout interviews of the 1970s has any man predicted so confidently what he will do to the opposition as Noel Gallagher when he gets on to the subject of upcoming Oasis records. Not even Mark Lewisohn has talked so much about The Beatles. To his lasting credit, Gallagher has held up his hands whenever allegations of copycat songwriting have been levelled – often, amusingly, suggesting additional ideas for the lawyers to consider – and indeed this very album starts with his most blatant use of an old song yet. He gives the impression of a man who will always land on his feet. He is clearly obsessed with making landmark albums. One day he may do just that.

But on (What's The Story) Morning Glory?, he and Oasis have fallen short.

The problem has nothing to do with plagiarism. (It is now widely accepted that Gallagher borrows occasional riffs and vocal melodies from the past. Soon – possibly already – younger bands will be lifting ideas from him.) The problem is creative growth, or lack of it. Warning bells ought to have rung when Gallagher boasted to the press of recording (What's The Story) Morning Glory? in a fortnight. Wonderful albums have been made in a week before. Bringing It All Back Home took two days. In A Silent Way by Miles Davis took one.

But two weeks at Rockfield's residential studios in Wales should ordinarily be spent getting to know the sheep in the nearby fields, prior to a scintillating three-month adventure into music and craziness. By operating to such an exercise-defeating deadline, Oasis have not given themselves any chance to develop musically. The result is that one – and only one – song on (What's The Story) Morning Glory? possesses unfamiliar qualities: the beautiful Cast No Shadow. All the others (and there are only 10 in all) could have been on Definitely Maybe – or, worse, on B-sides. For a group that was getting into six-minute orchestral arrangements as early as Whatever, last Christmas, this is a disappointing turnaround. A wasted opportunity, if you're being generous. A shot in the foot, if you want to be more melodramatic.

The album takes a surprisingly long time to get going. The first song, Hello, is a poor start. Given that the final quarter of the record contains some pretty effective sampled noises (lapping water, voices on a radio, a rarrulous seagull), Gallagher and his co-producer Owen Morris were apparently up for making (What's The Story) Morning Glory? something of an aural trip. That would have been an excellent decision: Definitely Maybe's beat group simplicity yielding to a fun-packed audio joyride. Why, then, begin with an unpromising

shuffle like Hello which, just when the listener has recognised it as Slade's Far Far Away, rather overtly becomes Gary Glitter's Hello Hello I'm Back Again? The second half of the song is, to all intents and purposes, a cover version (credited to N. Gallagher): "Hello, hello, it's good to be back..."

Roll With It – very familiar by now – was never a great track and won't suddenly become one now. Still, its dynamic riffsterism is important to the pace of the album. Only the semi-title track Morning Glory, which appears towards the end, is anything like fast. Appropriating tiny elements of R.E.M.'s The One I Love and Blue Oyster Cult's (Don't Fear) The Reaper, Morning Glory has the notable – and possibly tell-tale couplet – "All your dreams are made/When you're chained to the mirror and the razor-blade". But as deafening as the guitars manage to get, the song drags after a few plays.

The watchword would seem to be melancholia. A ballad-laden album, it has nothing as helter or as skelter as Up In The Sky or Bring It On Down. (A fairly zippy number, Step Out, was removed at the eleventh hour. Apparently, it "didn't fit" the overall feel of the album. That Step Out's chorus was instantly reminiscent of Stevie Wonder's Uptight may have been a more deciding factor.)

Wonderwall, third song in, is a ballad and a Live Forever revisit that – not to be cruel about it – becomes a bit of a dirge.

Liam Gallagher (as he does throughout the album) sings with bite and with ringing clarity, and the brushed drums of relative newboy Alan White are busy and skilful (although mixed well down, in typical Oasis style). Yet Wonderwall achieves no real lift-off; it is as unremarkable as Whatever's B-side, Half The World Away.

The rather cloying, clichéd lyrics of the three songs so far will become more of an irritant as the album proceeds. They scan; they fill a hole; end of story. There's no phrase as strange or as hypnotic as Up In The Sky's "it's just a case of never breathing out before you're breathing in"; no brazen rhymes of the "supersonic/gin and tonic" sort; nothing much about anything, in truth.

"A wasted opportunity if you're being generous. A shot in the foot if you want to be more melodramatic."

More tellingly, there are no dramatic equivalents on this album of the first 30 seconds of Columbia: that near-Gimme Shelter sense of there being something loud and vengeful coming round the corner. Indeed, the most compulsive guitar swagger to be had here is on Some Might Say, another previously released song. Robust and still effervescent, Some Might Say begins the second half of the record and is as thoroughly welcome as an episode of Sledge Hammer in an otherwise uneventful night-time's viewing on ITV.

Two songs rescue the first half from the doldrums in the nick of time. Don't Look Back In Anger, sung by Noel (with rhythm guitarist Paul "Bonehead" Arthurs on piano), is another ballad. This one, however, has a head-spinning chorus full of flashbacks to UK pop radio circa 1968, when such treats as I Can't Let Maggie Go by Honeybus and Jesamine by The Casuals duopolised the playlists. This Noel Gallagher vocal is anything but second-string; it's warm, wistful and charming. And there's a hell of a drum fill from White after a short, fierce guitar solo. On Hey Now, Liam Gallagher chimes over a crunchy, Shaker-maker-esque beat. Its chorus is a blissful, slow head-nod as the salty twang and layered guitars of the two Gallaghers work in harmony.

After Some Might Say, (What's The Story) Morning Glory? begins to dazzle in earnest for a while. It does this by decelerating, once again, to ballad pulse for Cast No Shadow. And suddenly Oasis are making brilliant music. Slide guitars and acoustics, soft, autumnal keyboards and genuinely fantastic falsetto harmonies fashion a mood slightly similar to The House Of Love's 1992 single The Girl With The Loneliest Eyes. But there is also plenty of the transatlantic yearning of The Rolling Stones' 100 Years Ago from Goat's Head Soup. Cast No Shadow has everything going for it; even low-key bassist Paul McGuigan plays lines that make you strain to hear.

Almost as good is the album's epic finale, Champagne Supernova. After some delicate guitar harmonics, Liam Gallagher relates another sad, lost song of early morning displacement – with a wistful hookline

("Where were you while we were getting high?") that grows more poignant the more he sings it – until the electric guitars kick in and the track soars off into the glam wonderland of Ziggy-era David Bowie and Mott The Hoople. Much better than the kiddie-paddle beat of She's Electric, this album's Digsy's Dinner.

As a crucial release in the eyes of the world, (What's The Story) Morning Glory? is mostly a case of "that was then and so is this". As a statement of intent, it balks at most of the hurdles facing it, seemingly content to re-iterate certain basic points from Definitely Maybe. As a journey into the heart of Oasis, it reveals little, except that Noel Gallagher is capable of some great work and is having problems writing lyrics. It's unlikely that he or the band have peaked; one erratic flight cannot blow up all four engines, but now it's time for a musical re-think. ★★★
David Cavanagh



Oasis: (from left) Paul "Bonehead" Arthurs, Noel Gallagher, Alan White, Liam Gallagher, Paul "Guigsy" McGuigan.

Albums

RE-VOX

The Cardigans

Life (Stockholm)
Sweet as candyfloss and twice as insubstantial, The Cardigans exist in a world of Technicolor and tinkling good vibes, where Mary Quant rules. Astrid Gilberto makes records on Sarah and everybody is happy forever. Swish, confident and irresistibly sunny stuff from home-of-the-hits Sweden that shows up St Etienne as candy frauds. A bit tooth-rotting after a while, mind. (JM)



The Charlatans get it right

The Charlatans

Beggars Banquet
It took The Charlatans a while to really play to their strengths for 45 minutes on the trot. But just from the classic look of the sleeve and the no-pretensions eponymous title, you get the feeling they've found what they're looking for, fourth time round. Namely, an organic, jammed-out, free-flowing, loose-hipped groove of a record in the image of the posters on their wall. Oh, and the songs are top. (JC)

Chef Raekwon

Only Built 4 Cuban Linx (BMG)
Speedy dialogue and stun-gun Shaolin/gangsta-movie soundtrack samples power the latest astonishing Wu Tang Clan offshoot. Using a mesmerising blend of crazed beats, warlike aggression, wanderlust melodies and battering-ram raps, Raekwon unveils a modern-day, gangland adventure tragedy that begs big-screen exposure. Vivid imagery, delirious vernacular, tirelessly mind-zapping, martial-art invention — a cocktail of pure dynamite. (GM)



Edwyn Collins

Georgeous George (Setanta)
Destined, it seemed, wearily to wheel out 'Rip It Up' as his one hit every time he played live until the end of time, Sir Edwyn has now become world-famous once again. He's more passionate, richer voiced and armed to the teeth with more tunes than he has been for a good ten years. Even an over-populated comeback bandwagon needs this man on board. (JC)

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Just say Noel

OASIS
(What's The Story) Morning Glory (Creation)

TWO WORDS: Status Quo. Only joking. Close call though. Perhaps too close at a time when, rather than admit they were wrong, cynics who cheerfully dug a grave for Britpop a year or two back are now seeking to justify their error by claiming they've heard it all before. Incredible as it may seem, in the very week that news broke about Oasis and Blur releasing singles head to head, *Newsnight* had a camera crew in the *NME* office conducting an interview about the death of creativity in modern music. They had an expert, they said, who could prove popular music as we know and love it had reached the end of its life cycle; that the only activity left was rehash.

And so it is — even in this, the brightest summer of Britpop, a golden era for homegrown talent — older generations are still scrutinising, determined to impose their belittling historical perspective on our fun. These people are crabably reluctant to accept that anything new, meaningful or

passionate is happening in the charts right now. And no matter how often we explain that all music need not be revolutionary, that it isn't absolutely necessary to dismiss all that went before to move on, they won't have any of it. To describe the glorious guitar pop being made at the moment as evolutionary, borrowing from its heritage and interpreting it to touch a new generation is to hand ammunition to critics set on dismissing our thrills as worn-out hand-me-downs.

For those of us battling this mean-minded bullshit, (What's The Story) Morning Glory' can't be less helpful. True, a large portion of Oasis's appeal is the way they brazenly flaunt their burglaries, but the overpowering impression made by this album is archeological.

Maybe time and familiarity will erode the imprints of Noel's record collection on 'Morning Glory'. But right now it's hard not to transplant the influences. Those readers who caught Oasis at Glastonbury this year will have gaped already at the band's sheer audacity, ripping off the terrace-chant chorus of Gary Glitter's 'Hello Hello I'm Back Again' for a

song called, um, 'Hello', which opens the album. 'Morning Glory' offers up so many other blatant examples. 'Step Out' could see them locked in a legal wrangle with Thin Lizzy's lawyers over grand-riff larceny and Motown over the way it steals its chorus wholesale from Stevie Wonder's 'Uptight (Everything's Alright)'. The title track announces before rising on a riff filtered from REM's 'Orange Crush', a song about Agent Orange, the defoliant used by the American forces in the Vietnam war which was sprayed on the jungle from, er, helicopters.

Originality was never one of the many accolades laid at Oasis's feet, but when they appropriated the Coke theme for 'Shakermaker', the gesture smacked of malevolence and mischief, as if the band were during the record business to get into a legal barney.

'Morning Glory' lacks this spirit of piracy; clichés are used, not abused. In the mass accumulation of Beatles imagery — a track called 'Wonderwall' after the George Harrison solo soundtrack LP, the Lennon-esque references in the embarrassingly titled 'Don't Look Back In Anger' ("So I start a revolution from my bed," and so on) — it seems as if homage is paid rather than damage done.

This safe, slightly smug and, let's face it, dead-soft attitude permeates the album. It's not that 'Morning Glory' isn't good. It is. It's full of the confident simplicity that easily elevates Oasis above most of their peers and rivals. But this is not the masterpiece Noel promised us.

Perhaps after 'Definitely Maybe', which so perfectly defined all that Oasis are about, anything was bound to sound anti-climactic. Perhaps in pre-writing the songs and then banging them out in only three weeks, Oasis have taken their talent a little too much for granted. Perhaps success has beguiled Noel into thinking it all comes piss-easy.

Whatever, 'Morning Glory' doesn't sound like much sweet went into it and its teeth aren't that sharp. Oasis seem to have put all effort into

ensuring each song has a memorable chorus, that no nuance is left unexaggerated and that they sound like they can play. Witness how, on the very average 'Roll With It', Liam's every line is echoed so obviously it virtually suffocates the song. This rather pernickety method smooths out all Oasis's rough edges. Where's that swaggering threat? Where's the sneer?

'Morning Glory' is too much Paul Weller and too little John Lydon, too little Liam and too much Noel, to qualify as the classic the group want it to be. The songs sound like exercises in classic construction, but the absence of any real chaos, passion, anguish or any real emotion renders it ultimately soulless.

While only a pedant would ask for anything literally meaningful in pop, the other problem with 'Morning Glory' is that the lyrics — never Noel's strong point — seem thrown together with little thought for anything but scan and rhyme. There is no sense of anything said, no real attempt at communication. It's a showcase assembled to sound good and fit right, but at times it's downright clumsy. 'Morning Glory' goes: "Slowly walking down the hall/ Faster than a cannonball," while 'Don't Look Back In Anger' boasts a rousing chorus about someone called Sally and starts: "Slip inside the eye of your mind," and reckons: "Summertime's in bloom!" Um, poetry anyone?

At their best, Oasis are still masters of inspired nonsense. 'She's Electric' is this album's 'Digsy's Dinner', a right dirty *Carry On* around the kitchen sink. And sometimes, when Liam can be bothered, they still flout that scary gang bravado. 'Some Might Say' has the snarl, 'Cast No Shadow' is ready to ruck over a matter of honour and 'Champagne Supernova' achieves a beautiful state of arrogant gace based on a druggy delusion of invincibility ("Where were you while we were getting high?").

But ultimately (What's The Story) Morning Glory' falls well short of greatness. Measured against 'The Great Escape', Blur are better.

Steve Sutherland

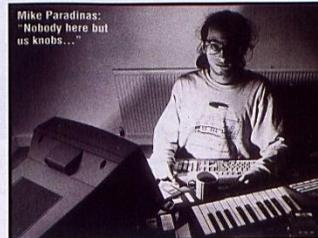
House of pine

µ-ZIQ
In Pine Effect (Planet µ)

AH, FATAL FAME! While his old mate Aphex jets off to New York to record with Philip Glass and wow the SoHo aesthetes with his witty beard, Mike Paradinas is at home in SW19 with his soldering iron and second-hand synthesizers, rewriting the bleeps and beats of his previous low-key µ-Ziq offerings. 'Tango N Vectir' and 'Bluff Limbo'.

'In Pine Effect' might suggest a radical change of direction, coming hot on the heels of the electro-funk masterpiece he created under the Jake Slazenger alias. The opener is a bizarre trumpet-driven romp dedicated to the

Mike Paradinas: "Nobody here but us knobs..."



supersonic tap-dancing skills of Roy Castle. Still, this is a much deeper delve into the sonic psyche.

'Within A Sound' veers curiously close to the distorted drones of My Bloody Valentine (were they ever to be produced by Giorgio Moroder), while 'Melancholo' brings in a

doomy cello sound for some menacing, *Jaws*-esque undertones.

Still, for every electronic exorcism featuring the sound of screwdrivers being scraped along rusty girders, there's a cheerfully cheesy rejoinder, whether from the title track's doodling Casiotone organ-line and bar-room piano shuffle, or the chattering percussion and snarling brass of 'Funky Pipecleaner'.

Since Mike apparently has another nine albums worth of material stashed under his mattress, it's hard to consider this as anything other than a stop-gap. Judged against the standard ambient-techno yardstick it's a masterpiece, but you can't help feeling that the best is yet to come.

Rupert Howe

Albums

RE-VOX

D'Angelo

Brown Sugar (Columbia)
Normally, you'd expect a soul debutant to come on with swing, smooth R&B, jazzy vibes or retro independent soul. D'Angelo ignores these options and instead creates a trendy-beats-free environment from a weave of upset/ecstatic-sounding harmonies, the likes of which we haven't heard since Marvin popped his clogs. Add a great throbbing slash of sexual ambiguity and you've got the soul debut of the year and a Prince for 1996. (IM)

Steve Earle

Train A Comin' (Transatlantic II)
A plucky return from the former crack-smoking demon of new country. Now rehabilitated and rattling out the acoustic-based bluegrass and countrycore that's plainly dear to his heart, Steve reminds you of his songwriting prowess over the years. The proper, plugged-in record due next year should be ace. (SB)

The Fall

The 27 Points (Permanent)
After a brace of lacklustre studio efforts, Mark E Smith snaps back into five-star punk-general mode with this monstrously raw double-disc sprawl of ferocious tunes, junk poetry and barking invective, captured live at various far-flung corners of the Fall map. Among the highlights, 'Glam Racket' and 'Free Range' get severe mailings, while Smith turns his machine-gun vitriol on Spangles, Prozac and — no kidding — Ian McShane in *Lovejoy*. Give this man a knighthood. (SB)

Foo Fighters

Foo Fighters (Roswell/Capitol)
Those who dismissed Dave Grohl's post-Nirvana project as the inflated aspirations of a "grunge Ringo" were soundly ridiculed the moment 'This Is A Call' blazed its trajectory up the charts. The rest of the album burns the same high-octane fuel, like *The Beach Boys* reborn as Seattle slackers. (SS)

Goldie

Timeless (frr)
For all his B-boy grafter hard-man image, Goldie's 'Timeless' (now only available as a single album) is an inexhaustibly broad, transcendently cool collage. On 'Angel', or the lingering hit 'Timeless', the frontier techniques of abstract drum'n'bass collide with MOR soul and rock; 'Saint Angel' is psycho jazz funk; 'Sea Of Tears' is Pat Metheny on Vitamin K. Before Goldie, the notion of hardcore rave, soft rock, jazz, psychedelia, ambient and reggae forming a coherent soundtrack for hallucinatory city life would've been risible. Now it's all 'After Goldie'. (RM)



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Appendix 7

Oor: Meer, Maar Minder

ANDREW DORFF • *Hint Of Mess* (Columbia/Sony)

Op *Supercool*, het openingsnummer van zijn debuut-CD, doet singer-songwriter Andrew Dorff een beetje aan Vic Chesnutt (*Supernatural!*) denken. Dat geknepen stemmetje, die vreemde stembuigingen, de onverwachte melodieuze wendingen, de betrekkelijke lofi-productie. Maar als je verder luistert, verdwijnt deze eerste indruk en openbaart zich een geheel eigen en gevarieerde stijl, al blijft de vreemdheid in elk nummer sfeerbepalend. Het zijn songs die moeten groeien, maar op den duur verslavend gaan werken. Zijn frasering is eigenzinnig, soms houdt hij een toon erg lang aan (*Rosey Red*), soms laat hij middenin een nummer zomaar vijf seconden stilte vallen (*No Butter No Oil*). De teksten zijn niet altijd even helder, soms zwaar op de hand, maar niet van humor gespeeld: *Two wrongs don't make a right / But three left turns do*. In *Deaf To Sorry* werkt hij met beproefde instrumentale middelen als de mondharmonica en de slide-gitaar, waardoor het nummer vrij traditioneel aandoet, maar elders roekt hij die indruk weer weg, bijvoorbeeld in potentiële hits als *I Splash* en het reeds genoemde *No Butter No Oil*. Een mannetje om in de gaten te houden.

BERT VAN DE KAMP

16 HORSEPOWER • *Low Estate* (A&M/Polydor)

'Every man is evil, yes every man's a liar', zong David Eugene Edwards op *Sackcloth 'N' Ashes*, de doorbraak-CD van het trio 16 Horsepower. Het loog er niet om. Edwards is streng en bijbelvast, want ook de titel van het tweede album van zijn inmiddels tot een kwartet uitgebreide groep is uit het Boek der Boeken afkomstig. De wereld is slecht, dus *gimme that ol' time religion*. Banjo in de aanslag, bandoneon om de schouder, slide-gitaar in de buurt, aldus gewapend trekt Edwards, telg uit een oud domineesgeslacht, ten strijde. De ritmes zijn aanstekelijk, de zang klinkt gekweld. Het totaal is intens en opzwevend zoals wij het sinds de beste dagen van de Gun Club niet meer hebben gehoord. De muziek is beïnvloed door oude folk-stijlen, de blanke gospel songs uit het Appalachen-gebergte, maar ook de Cajun uit Louisiana, waar dit album is opgenomen. Producer John Parish heeft een veller, rijker geluid neergezet zonder de authenticiteit ervan aan te tasten. De dertien songs zitten weer vol hel en verdoemenis.



Edwards jaagt je de stuipen op het lijf. Hoogtepunten zijn *For Heaven's Gate* ('I am weak without the joy of the Lord...'), *Coal Black Horses* en *Pure Clob Road*, maar eigenlijk zit er geen zwak nummer tussen. *I Love that sound*, zingt hij in *My Narrow Mind*, yodelay, yodelay! De beste rellipop die er is.

BERT VAN DE KAMP

A.C. ACOUSTICS • *Victory Parts* (Elemental/Virgin)

Als de doelgroep voor ruïmendekende, intelligente en na enige tijd zwaarverslavende gitaarpop - denk aan Chavez, Yatsura en Blonde Redhead - niet zo klein en elitair was, zouden we het Schotse A.C. Acoustics eens lekker gaan hypen. Anderzijds: populaire acts als dEUS, Tool en Radiohead maken ook geen gemakkelijke muziek, dus misschien moeten we het toch even proberen. Gaat-ie. Mag in geen enkele platenverzameling ontbreken! Aanrader! Verplichte kost voor elke liefhebber! Nee, serieus: *Victory Parts*, naar mijn weten de tweede CD van dit kwartet, behoort tot de meest avontuurlijke platen die ik dit jaar hoorde. Toegegeven, het ding heeft wat tijd nodig, maar daarna ontvouwt de muzikale rijkdom zich op verpletterende wijze. En oké, men is dol op de beproefde licht/donker- en hard/zacht-concepten van bijvoorbeeld Smashing Pumpkins, maar voegt daar een enor-



MEER, MAAR MINDER

OASIS • *Be Here Now* (Creation/Sony)

Twee jaar geleden werd de CD (*What's The Story*) *Morning Glory* voorafgegaan door de single *Roll With It*, het zwakste nummer van een CD die in dit blad (terecht) tot beste album van 1995 werd uitgeroepen. *D'You Know What I Mean?*, het voorproefje van opvolger *Be Here Now*, klonk al vrij saai, maar is niet eens het minste nummer van een plaat, waarop een krachtig en energiek geluid een bij tijd en wijlen schrijnend gebrek aan inspiratie moeten verhullen. 'Als de melodieën niet willen komen, dan zetten we de gitaren wel wat harder,' moet opperhoofd Noel Gallagher hebben gedacht. 'Dan lijkt het nog heel wat.' En soms is het ook wat. *My Big Mouth* en *I Hope I Think I Know* zijn lekker arrogante rampestampers waar niks mis mee is. De toekomstige singles *Stand By Me*, *Don't Go Away* en het negen minuten durende *All Around The World* zijn voor *Be Here Now* wat respectievelijk *Wonderwall*, *Don't Look Back In Anger* en *Champagne Supernova* voor *Morning Glory* waren. Alleen waren die nummers net effe beter. *Fade In-Out* klinkt bluesy met een intro dat aan Bon Jovi's *Wanted: Dead Or Alive* doet denken, het door Noel zelf gezongen *Magic Pie* verzandt na een veelbelovend begin in zeurderigheid, *The Girl In The Dirty Shirt* is een vrolijk niemendalletje en *Be Here Now* en *It's Getting Better, Man!* zijn nikserige rockertjes. Liam G. doet in vocaal opzicht zijn best, de band klinkt vooral door de inbreng van drummer Alan White behoorlijk hecht, maar de songs gaan vaak veel te lang door en het blijft een kwestie van 'meer van hetzelfde, maar dan minder goed'. *Be Here Now* is de CD waarmee Oasis haar commerciële toppositie consolideert, maar dat is ook alles.

OENE KUMMER

me scheut Brits popgevoel aan toe en verrijkt de muziek bovendien met het soort smaakvolle accenten (orgeltje, strijke) dat ook dEUS vaak toepast. Verder valt over deze muziek weinig eenduidigs te melden. Ze is beurtelings grimmig, spannend, uitbundig, melancholiek en onberekenbaar. Wie in de moderne pop naar zulke waarden zoekt, ontkomt niet aan A.C. Acoustics.

ERIK VAN DEN BERG

PANTERA • *Official Live: 101 Proof* (Eastwest/Warner)

Pantera live, dan weet je wel zo ongeveer wat je kunt verwachten. Aan de keihard klinkende, spartaanse studio-opnames wordt live namelijk weinig meer toegevoegd. De veertien live-tracks op *Official Live: 101 Proof* klinken dus bekend. De CD bevat een zo goed als integraal Pantera-optreden, maar waar de opnames zijn gemaakt wordt niet vermeld. Wat zijn de extra's voor de fan die alles van de groep al heeft? Ehhhh, de fucks en andere kozende woorden die Phil Anselmo tot hem richt, natuurlijk. En de twee nieuwe studio-tracks, *Where You Come From* en *I Can't Hide*. Die goed klinken, maar verder gewoon op *The Great Southern Trendkill* hadden kunnen staan. Enfin, we moeten weer eens verder.

MARK VAN SCHAICK

CRUSTATION WITH BRONAGH SLEVIN • *Bloom* (Jive/Rough Trade Zomba)

Twee jaar lang heeft de ene na de andere Portishead-kopie getracht het gat na *Dummy* op te vullen, maar uitgezonderd het prachtige debuut van Lamb heeft dat bijzonder weinig memorabele muziek opgeleverd. Ook Crustation voegt helemaal niets toe aan de bekende Portishead-formule van dromerige triphopbeats, spookachtige soundtracks en lijkzige vocalen van een troelala (dat zal Bronagh Slevin zijn) die overdreven mysterieus loopt te doen. Tjongejonge, wat een farce. Ooit, zo'n drie jaar geleden, Portishead bestond misschien nog niet eens, was Crustation een van de belofes van de Bristolse triphop-scene. De groep bracht enkele sterke instrumentale singles uit bij het lokale Cup Of Tea-label en verdween vervolgens van de aardbodem. In de verloren jaren moeten de heren verwoed op zoek zijn gegaan naar de zangeres die met hen de stap naar het grote publiek zou gaan maken, en in de persoon van Slevin lijkten ze daar uitstekend in geslaagd. Rest ons niet veel meer dan Crustation With Bronagh Slevin veel succes op MTV toe te wensen en nog paar weken geduld te hebben. Want dan zal de *echte* Portishead eindelijk ontstaan en de langverwachte tweede CD afleveren en praat niemand meer over Crustation. Olive, Ruby, Sneaker Pimps, Moloko, Morcheeba, Archive, Smoke City...

KOEN POOLMAN

GREGORY ISAACS • *Yesterday* (VP/Walboomers)

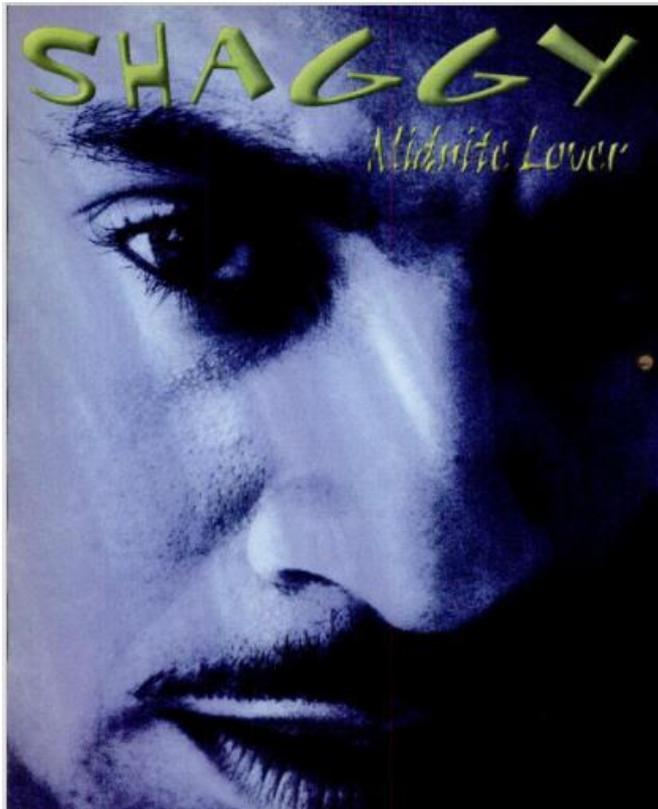
Er zijn critici die vinden dat Burning Spears huidige albums niet in de schaduw kunnen staan van zijn oudere werk. Daar valt over te twisten, maar bij de laatste CD van de vroegere André Hazes van Jamaica is er geen twijfel mogelijk. Isaacs' amechtige stem is nog maar een schaduw van wat hij vroeger was, ondanks de verhuulende, onopgesmukte en best smaakvolle productie van Bobby 'Digital' Dixon. Los van het feit dat de songs niet echt kunnen boeien, zowel in de backing als in de uitvoering, maken ook de twee 'yesterday'-referenties *Breaking Up* en *Oh What A Feeling* duidelijk, dat Isaacs' escapades een zware wissel op zijn stem hebben getrokken. En met een titel als *Yesterday*, tevens de niet onaardige openingstrack, vraag je natuurlijk om moeilijkheden. Dus koop zijn twee prachtige Heartbeat-compilaties, *Soon Forward* met Sly & Robbie of zijn doorbraakalbum *Nightnurse*. Om dit album aan te schaffen moet je wel aan de 'lonely lover' verslaafd zijn, of medelijden met hem hebben.

PIETER FRANSEN



Appendix 8

Spin: Oasis – *Be Here Now*



MR. BOOMBASTIC IS BACK WITH HIS DYNAMIC NEW ALBUM MIDNITE LOVER

featuring "Piece Of My Heart," the follow-up to the platinum album BOOMBASTIC. In stores now.

Produced by Robert Livingston and Shaun "Sling" Pizzonia for Big Yard Music Group Ltd.

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reviews

SPIN RATING SYSTEM

10	A CLASSIC
9	NEAR PERFECT
8	VERY GOOD
7	WORTHY
6	REASONABLY GOOD
5	MARGINAL
4	POOR
3	DUD
2	WORTHLESS
1	VILL

B Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott
Supa Dupa Fly (EastWest/EEG)

The prospect of a second album by R. Kelly's supposed child bride, Aaliyah, was so enticing, I left her *One in a Million* moldering unplayed for damn near a year. Then radio got hold of "4 Page Letter." The slinkily beautiful song was built on a gradually

head-turning Hype Williams video, instantly familiar Ann Peebles sample, and array of readymade catchphrases ("Beep-beep / Oooh got the keys to the jeep / Vrrrrrooom"), remade summer of '97 in Elliott's image. At the risk of wandering into the realms of overstatement, *Supa Dupa Fly* is distinctive, cohesive, and innovative enough to wind up as the most influential pop record since Dr. Dre's *The Chronic*.

Elliott's proficiency with a hook is unerring; everything here has "hit" stamped all over it—the insidious got-me-hot pop trifle, "Sock It 2 Me"; the mile-high smoocher, "Friendly Skies"; the self-aggrandizing "Izzy Izzy Ahh"; and the totally lovely display of sisterly solidarity, "Best Friends." Timbaland's production scenarios—he constructs "Beep Me 911" from a maelstrom of skittering drum patterns, human beatbox effects, and ringing telephones—breathe new life into a stagnant genre, even recalling Sly & Robbie's '80s collaborations with Grace Jones. Although choked with celebrity guest shots from songwriting clients

uncolling melody, a tropical backdrop of chirping birds and creaking frogs, weird time signatures, and heavy-on-the-hi-hat programming that suggested it had been culled from some obscure drum'n'bass compilation. *One in a Million*—the album that sat untended while I gave serious consideration to crap like Morcheeba and Sneaker Pimps—was liberally sprinkled with more densely atmospheric songs, and almost all of them were written by Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott and produced by Tim "Timbaland" Mosley.

(Aaliyah, Ginuwine, 702) and like-minded contemporaries (Lil' Kim, Da Brat, Busta Rhymes), this album is Elliott and Timbaland's show. There is no shortage of voluble artist-producer pairings these days, but on the strength of *Supa Dupa Fly*—which even comes with its cursing pre-excised—these two are the team to beat.

Jonathan Bernstein

G Oasis
Be Here Now (Epic)

"Look into the wall of my mind's eye," sings our cosmic Liam. "The questions are the answers you might need," counsels the young Gallagher. And finally, over a looming tapestry of psychedelic guitars, he calls out to his flock: "All my people / Right here, right now / D'you know what I mean?"

Okay, people, let's see some hands. Who knows what Liam means? This momentous, meaning-free call to arms is, in a way, the perfect introduction to *Be Here Now*, Oasis's latest collection of mid-tempo sonic dramas. From their very first single, these kings of Britpop have been all about *not* being you. They are rock'n'roll stars. They're going to live forever. Where were you when they were getting high? Now in *Austin*

A one-time member of Sista (Jodeci's dud, distaff counterpart), Elliott has spent the past few years becoming hip-hop-soul's Steve Buscemi, stealing scenes and warbling cameos on other folks' hits. But her debut solo single, "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)," with its

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Auteursrechtelijk beschermd materiaal

Powers mode, they're calling all around the world, telling us to be here now, baby. Since this global community is purely imaginary, the question—"D'you know what I mean?"—hangs in the vaulted ceiling of majestic chord changes and shimmering distortion like a lone worshiper's burp in a cathedral.

Which is all to say that what we have here is another quality Oasis record. Truly, there is an art, or at least an impressive lack of self-regard, to the construction of such extravagant melodic spaces for such fatuous lyrics. Like a skilled Cadillac manufacturer, songwriter brother Noel cites the superior material that goes into his songs (stainless-steel Beetle) and cranks out sleek, luxury product. Aside from a few Morse-code guitar bleeps and seagull distortion, the only electronica hangover from Noel's romp with the Chemical Brothers is the album's dance-club editing. "All Around the World," with orchestral strings, French horns, and "Penny Lane" trumpets, runs almost ten minutes.



No one ever accused Oasis of having mad rhyme skills, but they're definitely pushing new boundaries of *de minimis* here: "All around the world / You've got to spread the word / Tell them what you heard / We're gonna make a better day?" Oasis have gotten away with this until now because Liam's projected arrogance scorned any yearning for meaning and Noel's compulsive Beatles referencing let us know that it's all just songs. The latter tic, however, is beginning to sound more and more like autism, the language of someone who can't speak a word about life without lapsing into McCartneyisms like, "And all the roads we have to walk are winding," or Lennonisms like, "Start a revolution from my bed."

"There are many things that I would like to say to you / But I don't know how," Liam sings, in what some might assume is Oasis's most candid lyric.

But I doubt even that. Unarticulated emotion isn't what you hear in that Mancunian drawl, it's more the slouching disdain of an assembly-line worker. Note to all young Americans currently growing out their eyebrows: Imagine an American band whose unofficial logo is their nation's flag, whose main lore is intoxicants and football affiliations, whose biggest single is greeted in homeland bars by young and old alike with a solemnly raised brew. Folks, meet the British Lynyrd Skynyrd. *Chris Norris*

Organized Konfusion

The Equinox (Priority)

With their machine-gun-quick rhymes and quirky sense of humor, Organized Konfusion could be the Coen Brothers of hip-hop. While other rappers (Notorious B.I.G., Wu-Tang Clan, Bone Thugs-N-Harmony) deliver explosion-filled, blockbuster sequels, Organized MCs Prince Poetry and Pharaoh Monch drop art-house joints, full of intricate, personal stories told from shifty perspectives. Gun talk is easy, but try writing a rhyme from the bullet's point of view, as Organized did on 1995's "Stray Bullet" (from *Stress: The Extinction Agenda*), a full two years before Nas delivered a simplified version on his "I Gave You Power."

Of course, most of the public never heard "Stray Bullet," and the early moments of Organized's latest album, *The Equinox*, find the duo bitterly walking the streets of New York, blathering about the end of hip-hop like bums with placards spouting gibberish about the apocalypse. How many different ways can an MC, as on "9X Out of 10," complain that most rappers are phony and unimaginative (imagine that). Luckily, the production (by the likes of Diamond, Showbiz, and Buckwild) is rhythmically and melodically expressive, and by



SPIN 137

Produced by DJ Scratch for B.G.D.K. Productions, Inc.; Jay Dee for The Unlabeled; Busta Rhymes for Rhymezone Entertainment Inc.; Showbiz and Buckwild for Priority Productions; Latif for Madhouse Entertainment, Inc.; Easy Mo Bee for Real All Day Productions, Inc.; B.O.P. Backkallid; Rashad Smith for Sunstar/Don Productions, Inc.; Puffy for Real All Day Entertainment, Inc.

Co-produced by Lyman for Priority Productions; Clarence Strayer; Akmal and arranged by Busta Rhymes for Rhymezone Entertainment, Inc.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: BUSTA RHYMES FOR RHYMEZONE ENTERTAINMENT, INC. AND RICK ROSADA.

Management: Chris Lighter and Brian Kelly for Starline Management; and Kevin "Moke" Mack for Rhymezone Entertainment, Inc.

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Autorechtsrechtelijk beschermd materiaal

Appendix 9: Pitchfork: Oasis – *Be Here Now*

INTERNET ARCHIVE
WayBackMachine
28 captures
14 Nov 1999 - 16 Dec 2019

http://www.pitchforkmedia.com/record-reviews/o/oasis/be-here-now.shtml

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Neutral Milk Hotel's old traxx
Granddaddy to release new LP soon

too godamn funky

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10.13: Top 100 of the 1990s

OTHER RECENT REVIEWS
And You Will Know Us...
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Cure
Dismemberment Plan
Flying Saucer Attack
Jesus Lizard
Kid Koala
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Les Savy Fav
Luna
Magnetic Fields
Modest Mouse
Mouse on Mars
Mudhoney
Robert Pollard & Doug Gillard
O.Tig
Sigur Rós
Sonic Youth
Ronnie Spector
Storm and Stress
Superchunk
Supernass

Oasis
Be Here Now
[Epic]
Rating: 7.9

Other day, I was dragging my sand-filled shoes through the desert wasteland known as commercial alternative rock, the sun beating on me like a sadist with a whip, my brow the only moist thing in sight. I spotted in the distance some really pompous British guys with guitars who wouldn't give me the time of day, let alone water from their canteens. Some fucking oasis.

These were the rudest folks I'd met in my entire life, and somehow when they turned up the amplifiers, I couldn't resist their instantly memorable rock music. Realising I'd heard this stuff somewhere before (whether it be from their last two albums or old Beatles records), I started to feel guilty. Then I decided. Fuck it.

Oasis' third record, *Be Here Now* is, predictably, a lot like *Definitely Maybe* and even more like *What's The Story, Morning Glory*, but with a lot more pomp. What were formally unforgettable three- to four minute pop slices are now six- to ten minute long epics. It's like "Champagne Supernova" altered the course of their journey toward Edgar Winters' part of the universe.

Regardless of whether or not it's "cool" to like them (they're certainly not as safe- to- like as some of my other pleasures, Yo La Tengo or Nick Drake), "D'You Know What I Mean," *Be Here Now's* first single, is the catchiest song of the year. So take your holier- than- thou, elitist musical tastes and sod off -- Oasis are cool in my book.

-Ryan "Defensive Man" Schreiber

Sound Clip:

Appendix 10

Select: And on the third album, Noel Created...



And on the third album, Noel created...

...rock! Oasis are back with more pub rock bollocks, and it's the finest sound in the world. So come on God, you're album's a bit overdue, isn't it?

OASIS Be Here Now CREATION

"Oasis, O-a-sis, O-A-SIS!"
Some 100,000-odd Oasis admirers from Exeter Westpoint Arena to Birmingham National Indoor Arena, September 1997

"Damn my education/I can't find the words to say/For the things caught in my mind," Noel Gallagher, 'Don't Go Away', eighth song on 'Be Here Now'

Words, words, words and words. Imagine if it were somehow possible to measure the words to be spent on this band in coming weeks. Tabloid newsprint. Broadsheet newsprint. Rock-press newsprint. TV news story. Radio news story. DJ blather. Pub chat. Paolo Hewitt. Not to mention the reams of legalese this band are quite capable of summoning up, whether it be via class-A drugs or courtroom showdowns with a former drummer.

Yet where do Noel Gallagher's own

song-bound words figure in this verbal big bang? How important are they to the whole circus? Certainly less important than his melodies and the gurning, heart-gripping expression that his brother twists into them. Possibly less important than the unquantifiable attitude of his band. Maybe even less important than the length of his guitar solos.

If, as the old chestnut goes, poetry is that which is lost in translation, the essence of rock 'n' roll may be the yawning gap between the recorded

performance and the printed lyrics and formal notation of sheet music. Endlessly attitudinal, utterly guttural, it could also be argued that Oasis currently occupy this visceral void more emphatically than anyone else. That, despite the way the likes of "And after all you're my wonderwall" and "I'm feeling supersonic, give me gin and tonic" have scored themselves into the national consciousness, Oasis are defined not by lyrical nicety but by melody plus heroically leering intonation, rvetting amp sound

F THE

BBC here now: Oasis before their Top Of Pops performance, 17 July 1997

and judiciously pounded drum skin. If all this is true, they're about to renew their tenancy. And not by leaving two months' deposit with the great rock estate agent, but by hoofing the door clear off the hinges. Because, despite the big-rock manoeuvres of 'D'You Know What I Mean?', the nine-minute Beatles fantasia of 'All Around The World' and the lovely, lilting 'Don't Go Away', this is Oasis' most abrasive, adrenalinised album yet. The abiding impression is 'Cigarettes And Alcohol' writ large. There's also an immediacy and raw excitement that equates with the wave of hype that's trailed the album.

The frenzied auspices have been many: a single that casually trumps even Spice-mania for sheer salesforce, record shops opening specially at midnight, the fact that Oasis are the only major band who operate without today's standard marketing crutches. They resolutely sell their single only at full price. Of course, this has all been nicely topped by the way Noel's bigger-than-God claim goes one up on Lennon's mere bigger-than-Jesus outrage.

Even the legal document that the band's management company had journalists sign on receipt of their advance review tapes only adds to the sense of drama.

"In connection with this Review,"

dictates the agreement, "you will receive a cassette copy of the album entitled 'Be Here Now' by Oasis ("the Cassette"). By signing below, you confirm that you will not duplicate the Cassette in any medium, nor will you allow any person other than yourself to hear the contents of the Cassette, nor will you discuss the contents of the Cassette with any persons other than those necessary to produce the Review.

"You acknowledge," it goes on, "that to do any of those acts above may cause substantial and unquantifiable damage to Oasis." Hmm, perhaps My Life Story should try this sort of thing.

After all this, the album itself begins with 'D'You Know What I Mean?'. As the world already clearly knows, it's Oasis at their most monolithic yet. The booming stomp is pure Led Zeppelin, while the opening snatch of humming aero engine somehow reminds of a similar inclusion on a record beloved of Noel - Pink Floyd's 'The Wall'. But, despite this and the avant-garde, experimental mood of the backwards NWA samples and rainforest-lush backwards guitar, the song is, by Gallagher's own admission, a red herring.

More indicative is the following 'My Big Mouth'. It's 'The Swamp Song' with words and more than one chord. The song opens with what might be a nod to Noel's self-confessed occasional lyrical bollocks ("Everybody knows/They know we're saying nothing") and then, seemingly, broadens into a musing on celebrity and fame. The lines "As you look into the eyes of a bloody cold assassin/It's only then you realise with his life you have been messing," could be a reference to the way songs this potent have the habit of lodging in the mind of the Mark Chapmans of the world.

'Magic Pie', Noel's sole lead vocal, is Oasis at their most stolidly Weller-esque, oozing bluesy mid-paced values and the odd Brendan Lynch-style FX flutter. Again it seems to ponder fame ("An extraordinary guy can never have an ordinary day"), expanding such personal concerns into the global impact of the impending millennium: "There are but a thousand days to get ready for a thousand years".

'Stand By Me' is prefaced by a dash of exotic, vaguely honky-tonk keyboard that recalls Beatles curio 'You Know My Name (Look Up My Number)'. This type of colouring recurs through the album - virtually every track bookended by a mix of spluttering, leaking amp noise, studio chat ("Shuddup!"; "Shall I just go...") or unplaceable incidental sounds. The song itself is the first obvious second single, with strings, nobly sentimental everyman chorus and a mood somewhere between 'Slide Away' and 'Cast No Shadow'. The lyrics are Noel reverting to the blithely conversational ("Made a meal and threw it up on Sunday") and clankingly time-honoured metaphor ("I've found a key upon the floor... Maybe you and I will not believe the things we

find behind the door".)

The following 'I Hope I Think I Know' had already been dismissed by Noel: "A bit 'Roll With It', a bit pie-in-the sky fucking shit, really." Fair do's - with its heltering boogie pace and stock lyrics-of-defiance ("You don't like me/So why don't you admit it"), maybe it is the kind of song he can knock out during his tea-break. But scarcely anyone else can and, come those September shows, it'll represent a premier time to jump around like a monkey. Or maybe even one of the higher apes.

'The Girl With The Dirty Shirt' is the closest the album comes to a 'Diggs's Dinner' or 'She's Electric'. With its jaunty keyboard-leavened ways and nicely colloquial tone ("Give me a smile and make it snappy/Get your shit together girl"), it's also more substantial than its spiritual forebears and another contender for single release.

For vinyl loyalists, 'Fade In-Out' will herald the start of side two. Arguably it's the album's biggest departure, taking Oasis into folksy blues-riven territory somewhere between 'Who's Next'-period Townshend, 'Led Zeppelin 3' and Bon Jovi's peerless 'Wanted: Dead Or Alive'. As with the album in general, Liam's voice is a sandblasted treat, benefiting from the new Rod-like propensities displayed on the 'Stay Young' B-side. But while this song can boast such gritty vocals and ruffly cowboy-hatted airs, it's the following 'Don't Go Away' that sounds like the surefire future single. Brimming with both sentiment and dignity, it's replete with strings and chorus melody. Noel has spoken of this album as, lyrically, his "most personal,

Oasis are clearly the finest rock synthesists the world has known. It seems that all the key thrill-points in rock history are marshalled here



realistic" yet, and this song's vulnerable tone ("Damn my education" etc) bears this out. The acoustic-guitar coda casually slips free of mawkishness to emerge shimmering, utterly lovely.

The title track is clearly well chosen. 'Be Here Now' is this LP incarnate - 'Cigarettes And Alcohol' grown up and ready to settle any number of scores. The lyrics are both self-referential and somehow hugely touching: "Wrap up cold when it's warm outside/Your shit jokes remind of Diggs's". It also contains the most explicit of the lyrics' several Beatles references: "Sing a song for me/One from 'Let It Be'". At such triumphant moments as this, you almost find yourself believing that all of rock music has been leading to this point. Whatever, Oasis are clearly the finest rock synthesists the world has known. From Iggy's elemental grunt to Zep's giant steps and the Stones' misanthropic undertow, to a goodly slice of McCartney and Lennon's melody and even Sonic Youth's amp-strafting, it seems that all the key thrill-points in rock history are marshalled here.

Which brings us to 'All Around The World' - nine minutes long and allegedly written before Oasis had put a record out. The story goes that it's been held back till now, when it could be unleashed complete with 36-piece orchestra. What's it like then? Just fine - ridiculous and sublime and the Christmas Number One already. Touching down gently with acoustic guitar, it wends seamlessly into rock cliché ("It's a bit early in the midnight hour for me") and a fantastically varied, supple array of verse melodies. A chorus bridge brings a point of heartstopping self-reference ("These are crazy days but they make me SHE-INE-AH") and then, two minutes in, they hit the chorus for the first time. Ludicrously hummable and underscored by sawing strings, it's Noel at his most Rutles-esque. At three minutes it hits the chorus again. From then on in, they're flying some inspirationally daft autopilot of crescendo. As they pile on the horns, key changes, guitar breaks and multiple middle eight-styled devices, it amounts to perhaps the ultimate expression of a certain logic of rock climax. At once silly and undeniable, it peaks with Liam mouthing a starburst of Noel hyper-bollocks: "Pigs don't fly/Never say die". Hey hey.

After that there's 'It's Gettin' Better (Man!!)' - more 'Cigarettes' Navy Cut - and the closing 'All Around The World (Reprise)'. The latter is a fluting, horn-parping instrumental sign-off, a kind of 'Fanfare For The Common Man', this time written by the common man.

Perhaps appropriately, it ends the record with nary a lyric in sight.

Words, words, words. Ridiculous and sublime, heroic and daft. The biggest thrill in town. The final part of the opening three-album 'box-set' - innovation postponed till next time, 'Be Here Now', yesterday, today and tomorrow, next week and the month after. In a year's time every home will have one. ■■■■■■

Soundbite: "For the man who thinks that little bit bigger."

ROY WILKINSON

Appendix 11

Transition-Analysis *Be Here Now*^{xix}

<i>Be Here Now</i>	Tempo	Key	Camelot key	Transitions
1. 'D'You'	80 BPM	Em	12B	
1 -> 2				High Energy Boost
2. 'Mouth'	135 BPM	Fm	7B	
2 -> 3				Segue + Low Energy Boost
3. 'Magic'	148 BPM	Cm	8B	
3 -> 4				Low Energy Boost
4. 'Stand'	170 BPM	Gm	9B	
4 -> 5				Low Energy Boost
5. 'Hope'	137 BPM	Dm	10B	
5 -> 6				Low Energy Drop
6. 'Shirt'	166 BPM	Gm	9B	
6 -> 7				Perfect Harmonic Match
7. 'Fade'	86 BPM	Gm	9B	
7 -> 8				Low Energy Drop
8. 'Don't'	81 BPM	Cm	8B	
8 -> 9				Moderate Energy Drop
9. 'Be'	112 BPM	Am	11B	
9 -> 10				Moderate Energy Drop
10. 'World'	82 BPM	Gm	9B	
10 -> 11				Pseudo Segue + Low Energy Boost
11. 'Better'	126 BPM	Dm	10B	
11 -> 12				Segue + Perf. Harm. Match
12. 'Reprise'	164 BPM	Dm	10B	

Transition notes:

1 -> 2: Distortion faded out in the last second, song two starts immediately with guitar distortion

2 -> 3: Segue

3 -> 4: Ends on a piece of music that sounds like an intermezzo, which is very different from the song, followed by approx. five sec. of silence. 4 Starts directly afterwards with guitar distortion

4 -> 5: Ends on guitar distortion. 5 starts immediately with guitar distortion. Not a clean segue, but a feeling of flow is undeniable.

5 -> 6: Ends on looped guitar distortion, fades out in the last two seconds. 6 starts two seconds in.

6 -> 7: The last part of 6 consists of multiple subdominant chord progressions (I –IV), creating a feeling of tension. The music stops abruptly two seconds before time on a subdominant chord progression (I –IV).^{xx} The music on song 7 begins right from the start.

7 -> 8: Ends 2 seconds before time on guitar distortion. 8 starts immediately by counting down with drum sticks

8 -> 9: Ends almost ten seconds before the end on mellow guitar strumming. 9 starts three seconds in on guitar distortion.

9 -> 10: Ends on distortion right till the end. 10 starts directly with light guitar strumming.

10 -> 11: Ends with a fade out, 11 starts with a fade in creating the illusion of a segue

11 -> 12: Segue

Appendix 12

Transition-Analysis (*What's The Story*) *Morning Glory*?^{xxi}

<i>Morning Glory</i>	Tempo	Key	Camelot key	(Harmonic) Transitions
1. 'Hello'	132 BPM	Amin	8A	
1 -> 2				Perfect Harmonic Match
2. 'Roll'	127 BPM	Amin	8A	
2 -> 3				Does not apply
3. 'Wonderwall'	175 BPM	Dm	10B	
3 -> 4				High Energy Drop
4. 'Anger'	164 BPM	Cm	8B	
4 -> 5				High Energy Boost
5. 'Hey Now'	202 BPM	Dm	10B	
5 -> 6				Does not apply
6. 'Swamp 1'	143 BPM	B _b m	6B	
6 -> 7				Does not apply
7. 'Some'	110 BPM	Cmin	5A	
7 -> 8				Does not apply
8. 'Shadow'	158 BPM	Gm	9B	
8 -> 9				High Energy Boost
9. 'Electric'	125 BPM	Am	11B	
9 -> 10				Does not apply
10. 'Morning'	137 BPM	Dm	7A	
10 -> 11				Segue + Low Energy Boost
11. 'Swamp 2'	107 BPM	Fm	7B	
11 -> 12				Segue + Moderate Energy Drop
12. 'Supernova'	150 BPM	Dm	10B	

Transition notes:

1 -> 2: Song 1 ends on an extended (dotted) or stretched note that sounds till the very end of the song.

Song 2 starts directly afterwards

2 ->3: Song 2 ends on a similar stretched note, that lasts till two seconds before the end and is

followed by a cough. Song 3 starts right from the beginning.

3 -> 4: Song 3 ends on a stretched note, followed by some soft guitar playing that lasts till the end of the song. Song 4 starts right from the beginning.

4 -> 5: Song 4 ends on a stretched note, that runs till the end of the song. Song 5 starts right from the beginning.

5 -> 6: Song 5 ends on a stretched note as well, that runs till the end of the song. Song 6 starts directly with a fade in .

6 -> 7: Song 6 ends with a fading out deformed sound. Song 7 starts directly.

7 -> 8: Song 7 ends on a fade out that lasts until the very last second of the song. Song 8 starts directly after.

8 -> 9: Song 8 ends on a stretched note that lasts till the end. Song 9 starts directly afterwards.

9 -> 10: Song 8 ends on a stretched note followed by a combination of a single guitar and drum tone

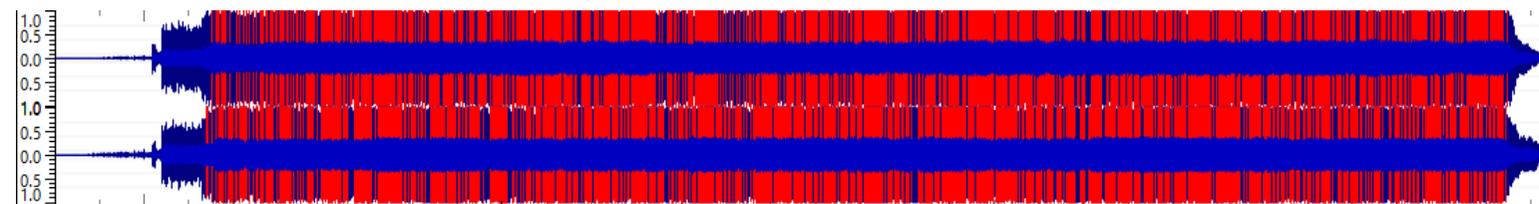
10 -> 11: Segue

11 -> 12: Segue

Appendix 13

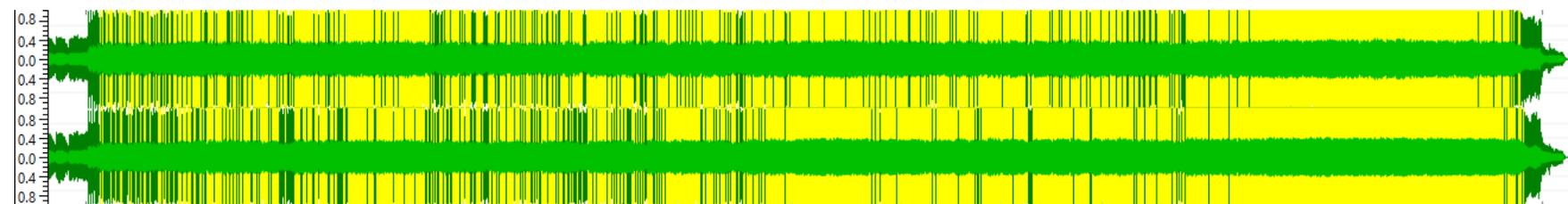
Waveforms Oasis – *(What's The Story) Morning Glory?*:

1. 'Hello'



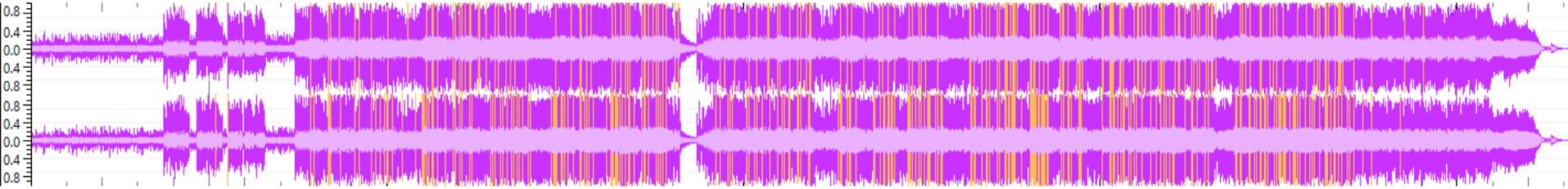
Note: The music is displayed in blue, the red parts are clipping.

2. 'Roll With It'



Note: The music is displayed in green, the yellow parts are clipping.

3. 'Wonderwall'



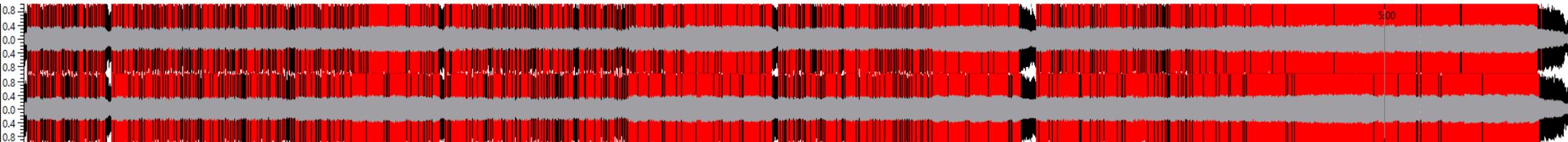
Note: The music is displayed in purple, the yellow/orange parts are clipping.

4. 'Don't Look Back In Anger'



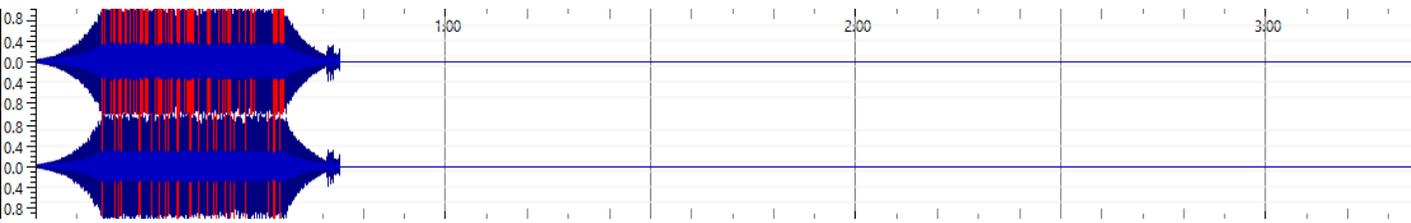
Note: The music is displayed in bright orange, the yellow/light orange parts are clipping.

5. 'Hey Now!'



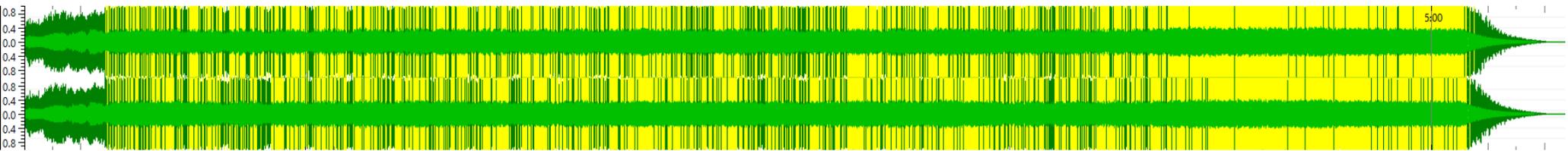
Note: The music is displayed in black, the red parts are clipping.

6. 'Swamp Song 1'



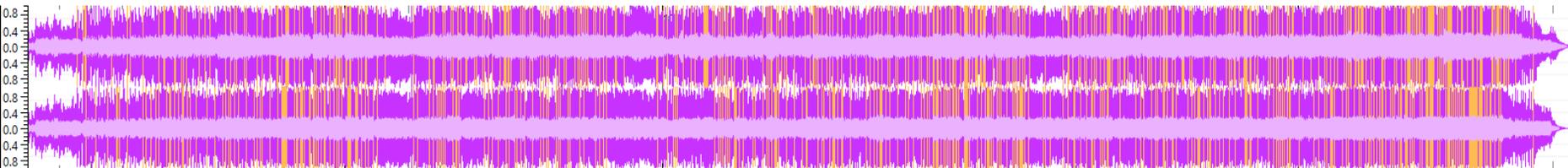
Note: The Music is displayed in blue, the red parts are clipping

7. 'Some Might Say'



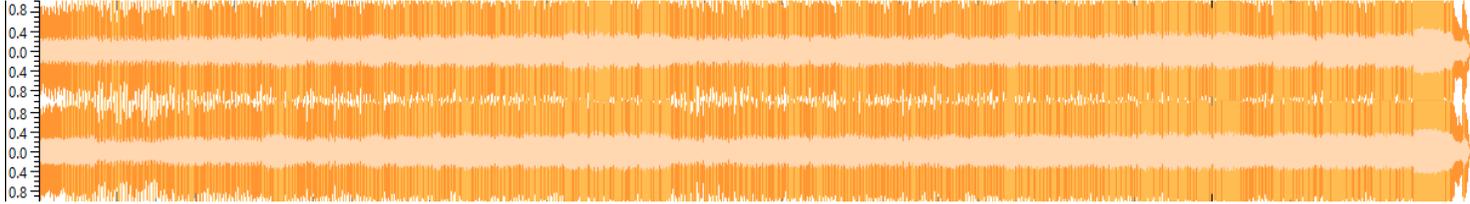
Note: The music is displayed in green, the yellow parts are clipping.

8. 'Cast No Shadow'



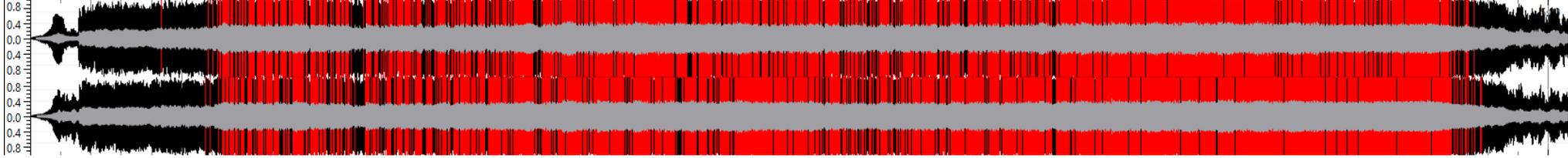
Note: The music is displayed in purple, the yellow/orange parts are clipping.

9. 'She's Electric'



Note: The music is displayed in bright orange, the yellow/light orange parts are clipping.

10. 'Morning Glory'



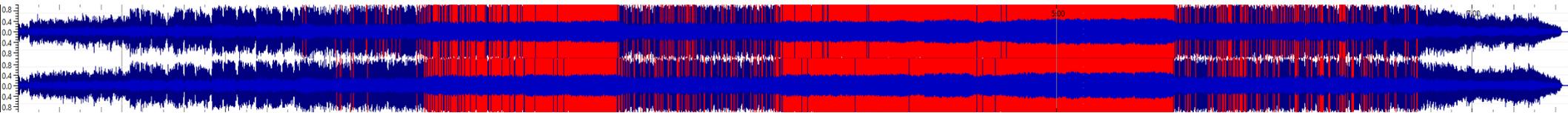
Note: The music is displayed in black, the red parts are clipping.

11. 'Swamp Song 2'



Note: The music is displayed in red, there is no clipping in this song

12. 'Champagne Supernova'

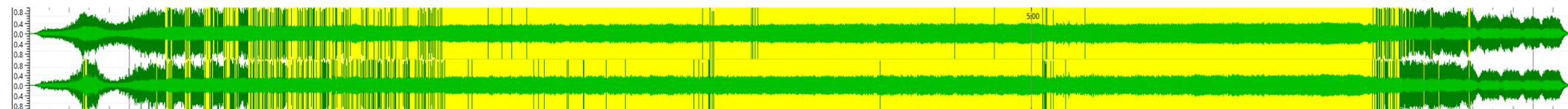


Note: The music is displayed in blue, the red parts are clipping.

Appendix 14

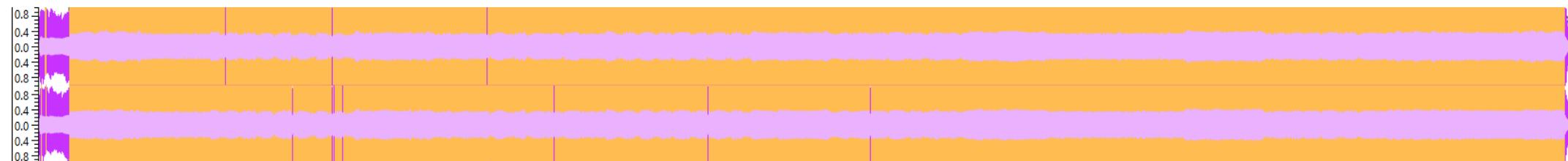
Waveforms Oasis - *Be Here Now*

1. D'You Know What I Mean



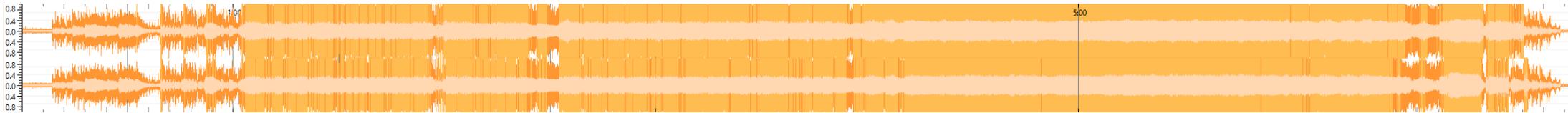
Note: The music is displayed in green, the yellow parts are clipping.

2. My Big Mouth



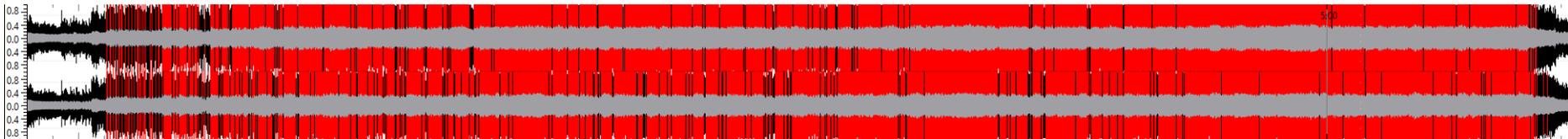
Note: The music is displayed in purple, the orange parts are clipping

3. Magic Pie



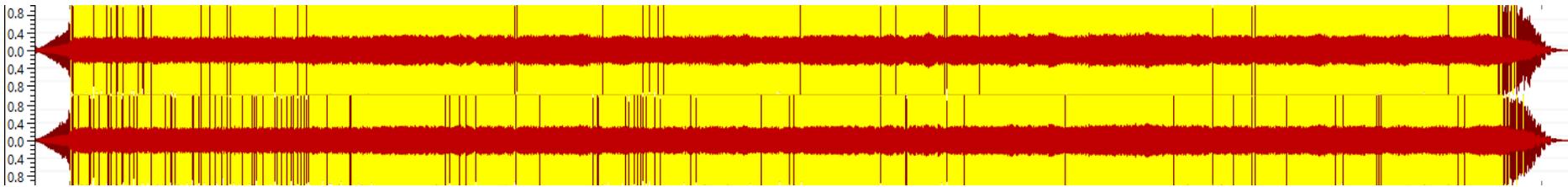
Note: The music is displayed in bright orange, the light orange parts are clipping.

4. Stand By Me



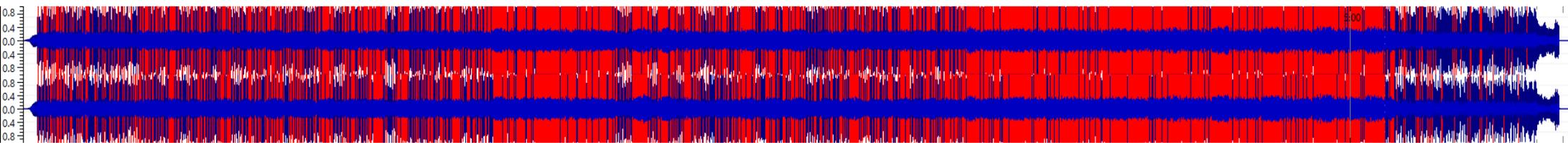
Note: The music is displayed in black, the parts in red are clipping.

5. I Hope, I Think, I Know



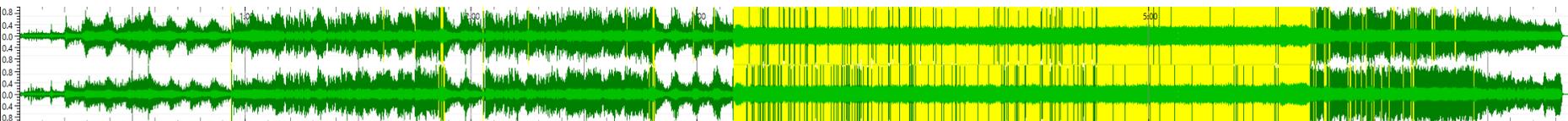
Note: The music is displayed in red, the yellow parts are clipping.

6. The Girl In The Dirty Shirt



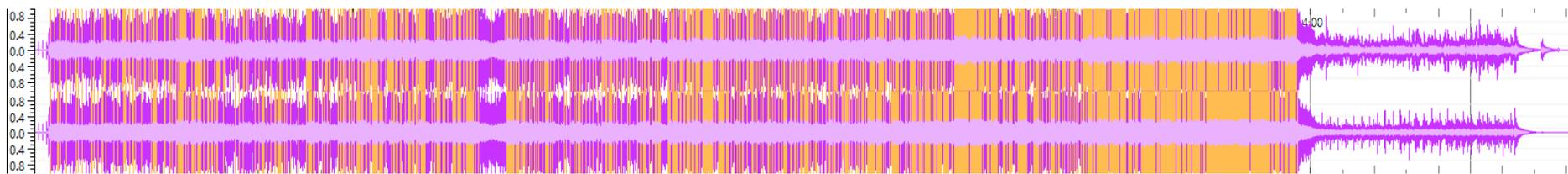
Note: The music is displayed in blue, the red parts are clipping.

7. Fade In-Out



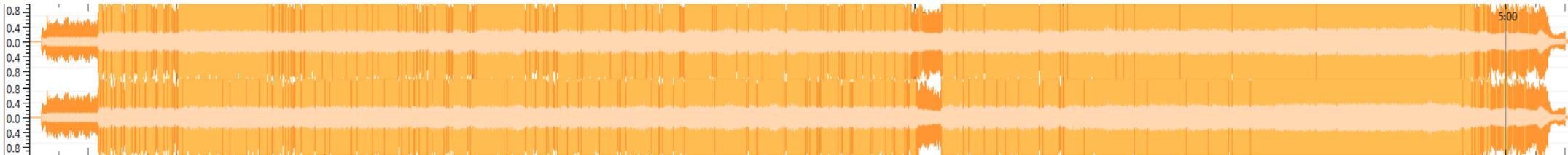
Note: The music is displayed in green, the yellow parts are clipping.

8. Don't Go Away



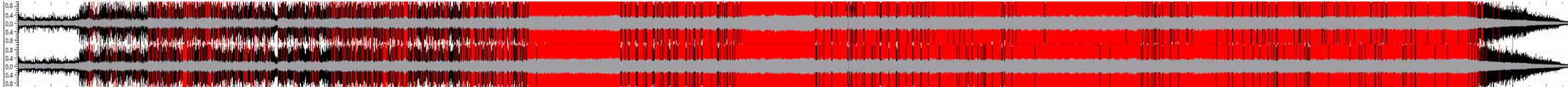
Note: The music is displayed in purple, the orange parts are clipping.

9. Be Here Now



Note: The music is displayed in bright orange, the light orange parts are clipping

10. All Around The World



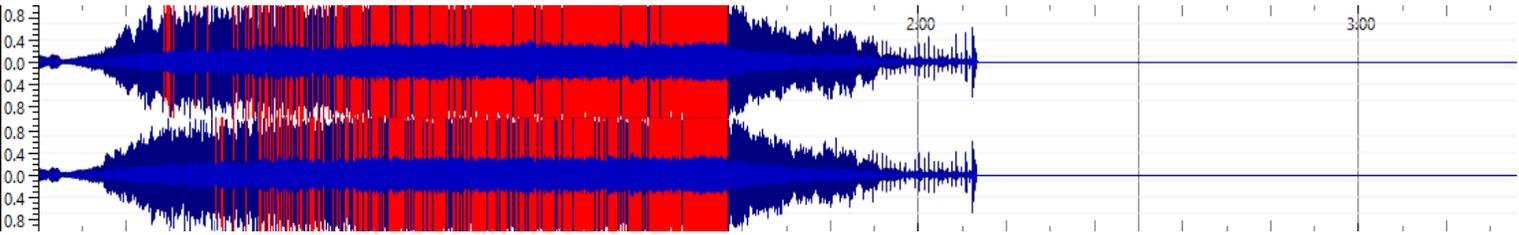
Note: The music is displayed in black, the red parts are clipping.

11. It's Getting Better (Man!)



Note: The music is displayed in red, the yellow parts are clipping.

12. All Around The World (Reprise)



Note: The music is displayed in blue, the red parts are clipping.

Endnotes

ⁱ This article written by Anthony Sfirse called ‘Engineering the Sound: Pink Floyd’s ‘Dark Side of the Moon’,’ explains why the album is hailed for its production.

ⁱⁱ <https://happymag.tv/engineering-the-sound-pink-floyds-dark-side-of-the-moon/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ The title of this album is shortened throughout this thesis to *Morning Glory*

ⁱⁱⁱ especially with dynamic range and loudness.

^{iv} this discussion ranges from page 166 till 172 and shows multiple instances of listening formations and clashes between music consumer’s imagined listening mode and audiophiles musical ideals.

^v A forward slash is used here to signal an important relation between the two concepts. These concepts cannot be used interchangeably but do belong together as if they are yin and yang.

^{vi} Basically, every identity or emotion has its own distributed subjectivity field.

^{vii} With the exception of a few uprisings such as punk and new wave.

^{viii} “Klasseplaat van een wereldband”

^{ix} “gitaarmuren”

^x “Geslaagde experimntatie”

^{xi} “Waarmee Oasis haar commerciële topositie consolideert, maar dat is ook alles.”

^{xii} “Saai (...), waarop een krachtig en energiek geluid een bij tijd en wijlen schrijnend gebrek aan inspiratie met verhullen.”

^{xiii} “De songs gaan vaak veel te lang door en het blijft een kwestie van ‘meer van hetzelfde”

^{xiv} <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/oct/06/flattened-by-the-cocaine-panzers-the-toxic-legacy-of-oasiss-be-here-now>

^{xv} such as cars, bars or beaches.

^{xvi} The concept of the importance of harmonic matches in the sonic flow of a playlist or album is based on the Camelot Wheel. This is a wheel that shows what keys are a good harmonic match to each other, to aid a DJ in achieving the mood that he wants.

^{xvii} I have labeled a transition short when there is a maximum of 4 seconds between the end of the first song and the beginning of the next song. A song ends or begins when, resp., the sounds stop or begin.

^{xviii} most notably on the musical elements loudness and fidelity.

^{xix} <https://songdata.io/album/6MYqpAbjxmm65kiqYolbfY/Be-Here-Now-by-Oasis>

^{xx} <https://tabs.ultimate-guitar.com/tab/oasis/the-girl-in-the-dirty-shirt-chords-35474>

^{xxi} <https://songdata.io/album/2u30gztZTylY4RG7IvfXs8/Whats-The-Story-Morning-Glory-by-Oasis>

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