

WINTER 2025

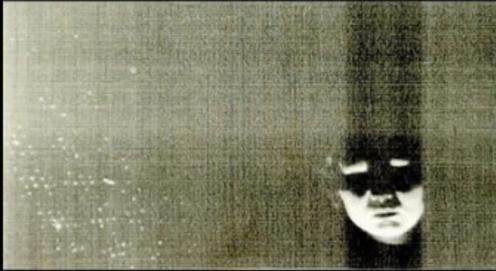
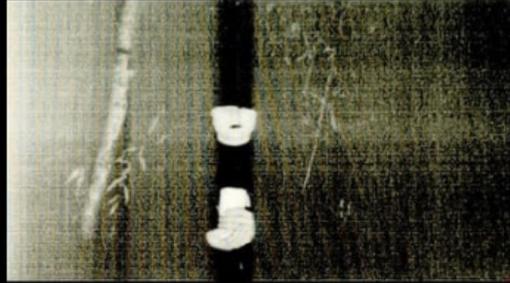
ESCAPE



THE SOFTER SIDE OF METAL
MONOCHROME

2ND ANNIVERSARY EDITION!
FREE!
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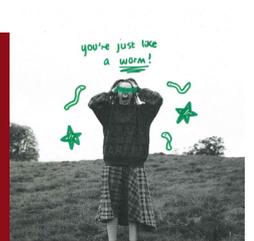
OUTSIDERS

UP AND COMING

(RELEASES YOU MAY HAVE MISSED AND GIGS THAT YOU HAVEN'T)

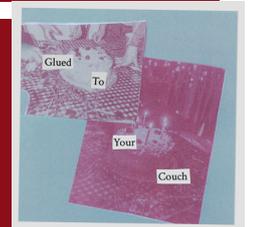
'You're just like a worm!' marks the second single from spiderhoney. Through hooky guitars, whirly synths and soft, vulnerable vocal layers, the track explores the world of gossip and how it feels to be caught in a cycle of toxic friendships. I guess ignorance is bliss. Also, it's about worms!

Spiderhoney
(@spiderhoney.band)
'You're just like a worm!'
Alt Rock



The fourth single from 90s-inspired band Nobody's Dad, 'Glued To Your Couch' presents a fuzzy offering complete with walls of guitars, ethereal bass riffs, crashy drums and delicate yet powerful vocals. As winter draws in, this emotive track is sure to get you through your angsty hibernation phase.

Nobody's Dad
(@nobodysdadband)
'Glued To Your Couch'
Alt Rock/Shoegaze



Take Cover is El Gorab's first release: an anxious yet warm response to love and loss. Songs were recorded live over a single weekend; we were lucky to capture the surrounding sounds of spring in the second track, Coordinates, a tale of the heart forever collapsing and breathing again. Just so, this debut EP is our last. It has meant so much; we hope it can mean something to you too.

El Gorab
(@el.gorab_band)
'Take Cover (EP)'
Folk Rock



GIGS, GIGS, GIGS!

Gopher It
(@gopherit.events)
28th January
Burdalls Yard, Bath

London-based alt-rockers **Heavy Wild** are set to bring an otherworldly wall of sound to Burdall's Yard in January. Get ready for some serious headbanging to shoegazey goodness.

Gopher It
(@gopherit.events)
29th January
Burdalls Yard, Bath

Garage-punk rockers **Hot Face** bring a slice of chaos to the stage, showing off a huge sound despite only sporting 3 members. Joined by punchy psychedelic rockers **Oral Habit** and the in-your-face new wave **Skinner**, this will be a night to remember. Expect screechy guitars, soul-hitting drums and a whole lotta moshing.

Bruno Dimitrov, How Du.
23rd January
The Arc, Bristol

Get ready for an ambient soundscape to hit your ears, as Bruno Dimitrov (as seen at the GEAR 9 launch gig!) takes to the stage with How Du in Bristol. What a way to start off the new year!

By Now is an energetic alt-pop track capturing the confusing and challenging moments of stepping into adulthood. At 19, having recently moved out and started managing her own life, Loula wrote this song to explore the unexpected struggles of independence and self-discovery. It's an honest reflection on how, even when you think you've got it all figured out, life often proves otherwise. With its vibrant sound and raw emotion, By Now connects with anyone navigating the messy transition into adulthood and learning to embrace uncertainty.

Loula
(@lloulaaaa)
'by now'
Alt-Pop



Stacked with harmonies and a catchy bass-line, Esther's first single is a head boppy pop song about trying to fill the void with someone you hate.

esther
(@esthaahh)
'how much can i take?'
Alt-Pop/Indie-Pop



The Barn is a live album recorded as part of an audio visual piece. The songs were performed and captured in and around a barn with a full band, choir and film crew, on a stage in front of the moon...

HUSHWING
(@hushwingofficial)
'The Barn (EP)'
Indie Folk



A quick high energy tune resembling the sweat-stained venue walls we hang out in.

Point 5
(@point5_band)
'Parking Lot'
Grunge/Alt-Rock



Better off is a song about outgrowing the drama of young love. It traces that feeling of believing every relationship is the be-all and end-all, only to realize it's not that deep and maybe you're better off that way. With conversational lyrics, soft edges, and a bitter-sweet tone, the song sits somewhere between reflection and release. It's for anyone who remembers what it felt like to care too much, then finally stop.

Sober Sundays
(@_sober_sundays)
'Better Off'
Indie



ANTI GOVERNMENT BANGER FROM PIRACYISTHEFT AND CURTISY

PIRACYISTHEFT
(@piracyistheft)
'WHERE'S YOUR REVOLUTION'
Hip Hop



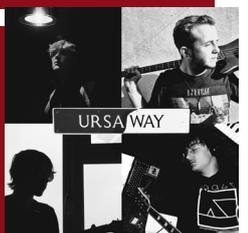
"The Deep End" is pure hard rock chaos. It kicks off with a nasty guitar riff that drags you right in, nodding to the big riffs of 80s and 90s hard rock while setting the tone for the rest of the track. The chorus is pure release. A high energy sing along where everyone in the room just lets go. The "GET OUT, GET OUT" part often has the whole room screaming their lungs off. After a huge wah-driven guitar solo, the song ventures off into a dark, operatic breakdown and then builds into an epic, unrelenting outro to finish on.

SPOOKY HUGE
(@spookyhugeband)
'The Deep End'
Alt Rock



Yesterday's Tomorrow captures the sound and look of our home town of Swindon. Written in a kitchen on the street of Ursa Way it took two and a half years to turn it from a passion project to a debut album. Its an album inspired by the 90's Brit-pop movement aimed at putting Swindon back on the map and bringing Brit-pop back to the forefront of the music industry.

Ursa Way
(@ursabanduk)
'Yesterday's Tomorrow'
Brit-pop



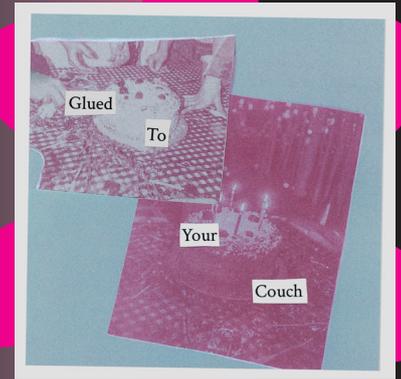
SPOTLIGHT

* ✨ ❤️ These are the songs that have taken centre stage on GEAR's release radar... ☆ 🌙 ✨

Glued To Your Couch

by nobody's dad

Seeing out a triumphant year of releases is nobody's dad with their latest track 'Glued To Your Couch'. Resentful and self-pitying, the track opens with an immediate tension, breaking at each formidable chorus; a true nod to their 90's alt rock influences. The song had its live debut back in April, whilst the band supported Clemencie at Bristol venue The Lanes. The studio recording was able to capture that live untamed angst and then some - with a wall of sound pushing yearning vocals and roaring guitars to the forefront. The band's very own Rahul Hasler and Max Earl were behind the production of this track, fulfilling their bands vision to the fullest.



The Barn (EP)

by HUSHWING

For the recent autumnal months, we have been bestowed with the perfect soundtrack thanks to HUSHWING with their debut EP 'The Barn'. We join the band around a crackling campfire for a night of soft harmonies and twangy guitars, an intimate first act of the EP. These live recordings immerse you into the scene, with an impressive natural reverb from the titular barn placing you right in the audience. As we follow along, HUSHWING are joined by their full band for the 2nd act, before unleashing their full potential, introducing a small choir in the 3rd. Released over a year after its conception back in mid 2024, this labour of love is heard throughout, creating a special experience for the listener.



WHERE'S YOUR REVOLUTION?

by PIRACYISTHEFT, ft. Curtisy

A track with many twists and turns, PIRACYISTHEFT has not only presented you with a question, but the feeling of searching for that answer. Their music is a bold statement, pairing hip-hop with electronica to create a current sound that enters a new sphere of alternative music. Balancing gritty rap and soulful vocals reflects the resilient attitude that the young people of 2025 are expected to carry, which bears the question of the song's title. Joining forces with Curtisy brings forward a sense of focus before returning to the ambitious rebellion of PIRACYISTHEFT. However it is not long before your attention is redirected to a saxophone lead outro, blaring like an alarm to call those to join the revolution.



Written and designed
by Jani Butcher



Dear Yaz!

Your agony aunt this edition is Yaz! Since founding events collective 'Cellar Door' in early 2024, she has taken on everything from bookings to finances to help the project grow.

What's the most crucial thing you have to get right for a gig to be a success?

Our events run a little differently from a standard gig – we usually take over three floors: one dedicated to visual art and installations, and the other two for live music. Because of that, the planning is quite intensive; it's more like producing a multidisciplinary showcase than a single gig.

I studied Fine Art at university, so when I organised my first event (originally just for a module) I genuinely had no idea how to run a show. To my surprise, it sold out. Since then, I've learned a huge amount, and I've realised that planning, organisation, and promotion are absolutely essential.

I plan line-ups months in advance and ensure every detail is covered. Planning includes setting set times, coordinating load-ins and soundchecks, managing spreadsheets, and making sure every team member is fully briefed. Organisation also means staying on top of emails, requests, and advances, and ensuring everyone knows their timings on the day. Because our events include art exhibitions as well as live music, there's an extra layer of logistics – luckily I have George, who manages the visual art side of things.

Promotion is just as important. We collaborate with our designer @dragnetstudio on strong visual branding, and I make sure the event is pushed across social media, within the scene, and through word of mouth. When planning and promotion are done well, the event runs smoothly and turnout is strong. I build in flexibility because things don't always go perfectly, and being adaptable is essential – but with clear planning, everyone feels supported and the event runs smoothly.

On the night of the show:

You can either hire a rep to run the event or manage it yourself, I usually handle smaller shows personally, and bring in a rep for larger venues.

The key is to be present and available. Make sure the tech team already has all tech specs and set times at least a week in advance, they do not appreciate last-minute information, especially for bigger line-ups. Ensure door staff arrive on time, are briefed, and have everything they need (card machine charged and logged in before doors open).

Be there to greet the bands, assist with load-in, and confirm their soundcheck and set times, and then confirm those again. I print the schedule and display it in the green room so everyone has it in writing.

Have the riders sorted before the show begins – Asda delivery is a lifesaver, or invest in a granny trolley to avoid lugging crates across town. Print any signage (set times, specs, etc.) ahead of time.

And importantly: eat a proper meal, have a drink if you want one, and stay present throughout the night for any questions from artists, staff, or techs. Being calm, organised, and visible makes everything run smoothly.

Love from
Yaz!

New Scene, Who Dis?

SOUTH WALK

A Dummies Guide to Rebranding and Community

Growing up in a sad lonely town, I found myself frequenting Stoke-on-Trent's beloved grassroots music venue, The Underground. And believe me when I tell you, this venue had its quirks. It was the most picture perfect, grotty (in the best way) basement that a girl could wish for – you just had to be there. Experiencing my first pit, and being surprised that I didn't stick to the floor, this was the place where me and my friends, well... we danced to South Walk.

The self described "throw away project," South Walk began during lockdown, 2020. Initially formed to "just to pass the time," they quickly began to generate traction from the West Midlands emo scene. Known for their authenticity, angst and overall excellent songwriting – it was hard not to love them. Due to growing apart and leading different lives, front-man Jack Pitchford describes himself as being "done with the project" and they played their final gig at Exchange, Bristol in 2022. And believe me when I say that I was personally gutted. The crowd was electric, and each member of it was hot, sweaty and singing every single lyric at the top of their lungs.

After "a chaotic" turn of events in Jack's life, the trajectory of South Walk had completely changed as they were thrust back together. Jack recounts that "[he] went through a really rough patch, after being robbed at knife point" and at this time of his life he craved to make music again. After spending some time with drummer Peter Holland, it was evident that something needed to happen. One rehearsal with Pete and guitarist Jalen Doughty proved that sparks were flying! Following this they turned to former bassist, Owen Price, as the last addition to the band. And due to the nature of their new sound, they felt as though a new name

might fit better. However (in typical South Walk fashion) the guys said "Fuck it. South Walk will do. It sounds cool."

During the making of this piece, South Walk shared some of their new demos with me so that I could get an insight into their new sound. Dark, grungey and gazey, the tone of their new songs definitely struck a chord with me. The track 'Mirrored Mind' was a stand out and was reminiscent of hardcore shoegaze bands such as Deftones, whilst sticking to the genre's roots with inspiration from My Bloody Valentine. Not only fresh but somehow familiar, the track feels like it captures the essence of chaos – it's honest, and raw, sticking to the classic nature of South Walk. Near the end of 2023, Jalen and Pete discovered Knocknarea by Marujua. Jalen exclaims, "It broke our heads for a while. We kept bringing up the idea of doing a project inspired by their sound, wanting to make abstract, ambient jungle that's played by a live band. I think that has crept into our sound for sure." In my opinion, their sound has matured beautifully, following the trialling times of the band's

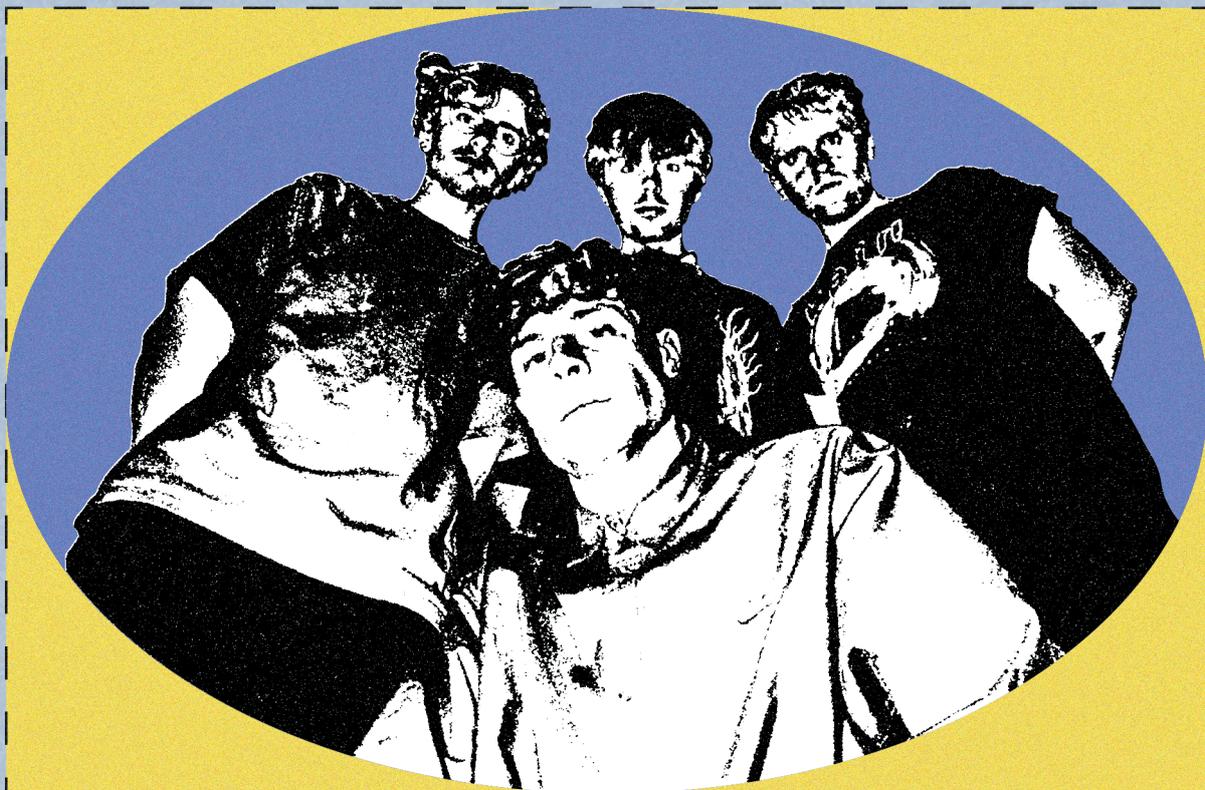


life. It's evident that all of this emotion and power has been carefully crafted into something really special.

When asked how it had been adapting to their new scene, Jack emphasised that the band had an overall great response from their new audience. "Our first gig back at Centrala, Birmingham was so dope. We played with So Far So Good and we weren't too sure on what the response would be, but everyone seemed to really fuck with us. And then every other gig has been so cool." South Walk carry a particularly good

different genres: So Far So Good, Kenya, Sativa and next Christian Music and Mercury which [they] are all buzzing for."

So what's next for South Walk, I hear you ask? Well, in Jack's words "[he] can't really go too much into [their] vision as it will ruin the story." He goes on to say "We have a pretty crazy idea. We just want to make sure that we execute it properly. But what [he] can say is that the book 'House of Leaves' has been a big inspiration." And personally I can't wait to see what they do next.



"I find it so cool that people go from throwing down...in front of 15 people to standing still and listening to us." - Frontman, Jack Pitchford

ethos towards supporting their fellow musicians and community, which is something that should not be taken for granted. Aligning with the band's beliefs, it is evident that they're "open to play with everyone and anyone," therefore it hasn't been particularly hard for them to ground themselves in their new scene. Jack goes on to tell me that they "have already supported a wide range of bands from

Many thanks to the members of South Walk, who have been friends of mine since college. Their music has followed me for years since, and I encourage you to check it out and stay up to date with them @southwalk_

Written and Designed by Jazz Jones

Mercury moves into the 10th House - Capricorn Season and the Winter Solstice

Horoscopes

Aries

You are beginning to focus on the long term plan. Throw your heart into a mood board and start making structured decisions about who you want to be and what you want to have.

Taurus

You work hard to maintain connections. Use the communities you already have to build some new relationships, and see what opportunities they can offer.

Gemini

You are keeping things from yourself and others. Take care to be honest with those around you and face the secrets you keep avoiding. They'll come out eventually...

Cancer

You're getting so tuned into your emotions, Cancer, it's time to focus on the feelings of those around you. Be a nurturing presence for your loved ones this winter.

Leo

With so much drive, your career goals are looking more and more attainable. Your work ethic precedes you. Keep it up.

Virgo

Your comfort zone is looking so cozy, but just know that it can expand. Allow people to surprise you beyond your judgement of them.

Libra

Make sure to spend time with loved ones this holiday. Take the time to recenter back to your roots, to the people that know you best, and rebalance yourself.

Scorpio

Romance is the theme for your hibernation season. Remember not to rush it, Cupid will not work on your schedule. Focus on being yourself and the rest will follow.

Sagittarius

While your optimism and desire to try new things is admirable, it would serve you well to find a routine that allows you to ensure you are prioritising the right things first.

Capricorn

Your focus on work is leaving other aspects, or people, in your life wanting. Take some time to communicate outside of your work to keep those around you feeling appreciated.

Aquarius

A period of transformation leaves you feeling a little all over the place, but you are ready for the challenge. Use that forward thinking to propel yourself onwards.

Pisces

Follow the call to travel and explore. Wherever it may be, it will bring a new perspective to more than one element in life.



BRISTOL NORTHERN SOUL CLUB

Where community and culture are inseparable.

Photo by Paul Lippiatt

Is it really a surprise that young people have found belonging within the northern soul scene in 2025? Rooted in togetherness, the subculture has continued to be a driving force in the UK's underground music scene since its heyday in the 1970s. Now, the Bristol Northern Soul Club [BNSC] has not only demonstrated the power of this community, but expanded it.

Eve and Lev (a mother-daughter duo) share a passion for northern soul, with Eve being a DJ for the last 20 years, and Lev getting "massively into" northern soul in her formative years. It's a lifestyle for them, one they describe as "niche" and "weird", but are nevertheless "completely obsessed" with. From the age of 16, Lev was travelling up to nine-hour distances for northern soul all-nighters. "You couldn't stop me," Lev explained. But, when she would return home and her mum ask how her night was, she would often respond: "I had a great time, but there was no one there my age".

In an effort to "bring a different flavour" to northern soul, Lev and Eve started to post videos online, and over lockdown, some started to go viral. Eve already had a personal mission to "bring northern soul to a new generation when [she] DJ'd", but together they knew they could take it so much further.

Bristol Northern Soul Club had their first gig straight out of lockdown, and they "threw everything at it". The groundwork had been laid, from Lev's presence online to Eve's DJ experience, the event sold out in advance, with a large young audience in attendance. Lev goes on to share, "I knew in my heart of hearts that it was going to work... I knew that there were other people [my age] like me that didn't have the access to northern soul". For Eve "the goal was to not recreate the same, the goal was to change, modernise, create in a different way to make it fit for this decade", whilst respecting the "core fundamental values" of northern soul: "the love of the music and dancing".

Eve emphasises how they "really [tried] to help people explore northern soul at a deeper level... We could just sell tickets, take the money and run, but I really want[ed] people to fall in love". And the impact was clear, a thriving community that crossed generations. Bringing community to the young, while expanding the scene for the oldies; an outlet for all.

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Issi, a member of the BNSC core team for the last 2 years, shared her experience on how the scene brings a form of catharsis in a place where she has now found “family”. “I’m a very emotional person and I [feel that] through the way I relate to the music I express myself while dancing”. But it’s a community that you may have to “struggle for... making those choices to go out, engage, have a conversation”, that involvement in the culture is how you can find your “outlet”.

Sahil, a year long attender of BNSC events and a recent university graduate, unexpectedly found his passion for the scene when his usual trip down the local pub was thrown off course. Tables and chairs had been swept aside and the room transformed into a dance floor. “After a few minutes, Eve comes up to me and says ‘you can’t just sit there. Are you going to dance?’”. Sahil then stayed till the end of the night, feeling free of judgment, but “[adored] for trying”, embraced by the club. From then on, these events have become part of his weekly routine. On reflection, he has not only seen a change in his wardrobe, but also his social confidence. “It makes me come out every weekend... Going places I would not go, doing things I would not usually do”.

From working the door for extra income to becoming “fascinated by it all” is Molly, another younger attender of BNSC, who “didn’t realise [there was] still a culture to be involved in”. It wasn’t long after her first event that she began to realise the dancing she found “beautiful” to observe was “not about trying to put on a show... everyone is just feeling the music”. Now, she finds that no matter how she feels, “going out and having a dance” will always make her “feel better”.

But Northern Soul isn’t having a ‘comeback’. It never went anywhere, with older soulies Paul and John consistently attending events since the 70s. Paul (60) grew up in Middlesbrough and recalls his first Northern Soul disco at age 14: “wow... the passion, the electricity, the emotion of the music”. That is what drew him to the culture. Paul now lives down in Cornwall, but has recently started attending the BNSC events, claiming he was “blown away by the vibe of the young people and their passion”, praising how all aspects of northern soul had been embraced. John (72) has been a northern soul record collector since he was 15, stating “57 years of nonstop buying”. He has seen many northern soul nights come and go in Bristol, but recognises how Lev and Eve are in a whole new ballpark. “This is the first I’ve known [northern soul nights in Bristol] that younger people have found an interest in and [stuck] by”, proving that BNSC aren’t just introducing a younger audience, but are educating newcomers on the artform.

Bristol Northern Soul Club celebrate their 4th anniversary this December, and are currently putting on 3 different events a week. A true force to be reckoned with, the club has even gone global with an event in Pordenone, Italy, scheduled for Feb 2026. A team with such tenacity, Eve finishes off stating “there is still loads further to go with it. I would love to see the whole world know what northern soul is”.

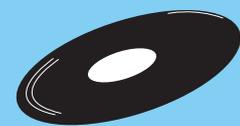
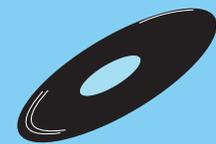


Photo by Paul Lippiatt



Photo by Sophia Stefelle



Written and designed
by Joni Butcher

Monochrome



SEAR



Monochrome



The softer side of metal

“I want our music to be something that you can

mosh

and

cry

to

at the same time.”



From the birth of metal in the 60s and 70s, there have been associations with Satanism, violence and aggression. However, ask anyone who actually is involved in the scene, and they will happily inform you that these connotations do not depict the majority of the alternative subculture. With diversification of genre being so prominent in modern music, it's hardly surprising that the heavier scenes are also evolving. I had the distinct pleasure of sharing a Monday evening with Monochrome, an up-and-coming metal band from the South West. I wanted to focus on how their band sits within alternative music and the communities that are behind the genre.

When asked about their ambient metal sound and their unique footing in the metalcore scene, I'm told: "I've always quite liked stuff that's equally pretty sounding and really heavy at the same time. I want our music to be something that you can mosh and cry to at the same time." [Algernon, vocals and lead guitar]. When listening to Monochrome, there is certainly an element of beauty within the harsher elements of the tracks. Within their latest EP, 'Haunted Faith and Hidden Trust', this is expressed lyrically, particularly in the song 'Bones', and also in the production: "It's perfect, but it's still raw" [Algernon]. I'm told that the band takes a lot of production inspiration from "the old Sleep Token albums, produced by George Lever, the Thornhill stuff, again, George Lever, and then a lot of Deftones" [Jay, drummer].



“To be able to be in a room full of people who understand who you are and take you seriously; it is affirming”

So where does this niche, forefronted by artists such as Loathe and Thornhill, fit into the metal scene? I was curious to know how the artists feel the wider community of alternative rock has reacted to this blended sonic experience. Joe [bassist] explains that “it’s got a lot of hate from a lot of different sides of metal, because it gets a little bit softer.” Algernon adds “The lyrics are more relatable [in this genre].”

From this new branch of blurred genre, we see bands come forward and start to season mainstream music. But, is this a good thing for those passionate about the metal scene’s rooted history in being a voice for the under-represented?

Jay and Josh immediately jump in and say “yes” here, with Algernon adding “I think it’s quite cool. Having

a wider sound palette lets you play with more bands, and gets people into metal that might not have already been into metal in the first place. [...] I think rising tides raise all ships. It’s cool that other people are getting into it as much [as they are] now.”

I was curious how Monochrome has found the reaction from people within the traditional side of the scene. Eliza says, “So often people are so confused by us because we are female fronted, and because there’s already the genre blending. And I just think people have so many preconceptions of what we’re going to sound like, and people are always surprised by something when they hear us for the first time.”

Being a female fronted band in a male dominated genre can, unfortunately,

mean bands such as Monochrome are labelled differently, regardless of their intent:

“We get compared to a lot of bands, for no other reason other than their singer is also female, even though [Eliza] sounds nothing like them.” [Algernon].

While Eliza has experienced blatant sexism within this scene, including an incident where a crew member at a festival had assumed she was the band manager, as opposed to the front woman, there are positives. She says: “90% of the time, it’s really great. And I think the best thing is getting to meet women in the audience and encourage them to do shit that scares them, and do shit that people think that they can’t do for some reason. If I can just inspire someone then that is really huge.”

This sense of building community and kinship is deeply rooted in metal, due to the people within it needing somewhere to feel as though they belong: "I feel like we've probably all experienced feeling othered and feeling like we don't fit in just for being who we are sometimes. So yeah, to be able to be in a room full of people who understand who you are and take you seriously; it is affirming." (Eliza)

This strong bond with those in the scene is further reflected in the live scene of metal, which truly is something that cannot be captured unless you are there. As Joe says, "it really thrives live", and this is so abundantly clear in the smaller communities. Joe goes on to explain the difference in the reception between genres: "I've been in different types of bands and when you play with smaller bands, you'd expect [other artists] to kind of pick you up and help you as they grow as well, but they don't. People see you as competition."

Jay mentions this idea of a safe environment: "Everyone who's in the crowd is into it. It's almost like these places have bubbles around them" and it's clear that the community will celebrate their own: "Like in the more kind of local DIY scenes, everyone just wants to support each other if they're an alternative or metal band." (Algernon)

If you're curious about becoming part of this strong and welcoming community, I was made aware of a youth club called Live Wire (@Livewire Youth Music on IG), based in Saltash in Cornwall, and Eliza summarises her experience for anyone in that area who is interested:

"There is a beautiful, vibrant metal scene in Devon and Cornwall because of this youth club called Live Wire, which I went to twice a week for 50p and I would have free instrumental lessons, free vocal lessons, a stage to rehearse, and rehearsal rooms. And I met so many amazing people, and I got free mental health counseling while I was there [...] It really is just such a beautiful culture."

This piece is just a fragment of how wide ranging the alternative scene really is and continues to become, so next time you think of going to a heavy gig, we say go for it! Support your local communities, and you might find a softer side of the darker genres!

Thank you so much to Monochrome for giving GEAR the opportunity to interview them, it has been a pleasure. If you want to hear more from these guys and what they have coming next, go give them a follow on IG @monochromemetal !

Written by Daisy McCaig
Photos by Sam Harbridge
Designed by Joni Butcher



GRAMMAS



C	X	B	D	I	E	D	S	L	T	E	B	Y	K	M
J	G	L	T	W	B	R	T	L	G	S	Y	C	S	O
L	F	P	P	L	A	I	R	C	B	A	J	C	D	N
S	C	A	K	W	I	C	A	S	L	E	A	P	O	O
G	B	J	H	N	P	K	N	W	U	F	A	H	L	C
R	Z	E	A	F	X	O	G	E	E	P	T	C	P	H
A	N	G	X	M	N	R	E	K	W	M	Y	T	C	R
T	H	S	R	X	U	R	B	C	U	Y	N	G	X	O
S	M	T	K	Y	Q	F	R	J	E	H	E	W	Y	M
B	I	W	T	C	O	T	E	N	T	H	M	A	G	E
W	D	U	U	W	Y	N	W	A	E	A	T	I	R	S
T	J	E	L	F	G	W	X	G	Y	H	Z	S	X	S
O	X	E	V	B	H	R	Y	N	G	S	G	G	F	H
U	Y	I	N	D	E	P	E	N	D	E	N	T	Q	E
E	S	Y	R	A	T	L	E	M	R	Y	N	B	Q	J

FINISH!

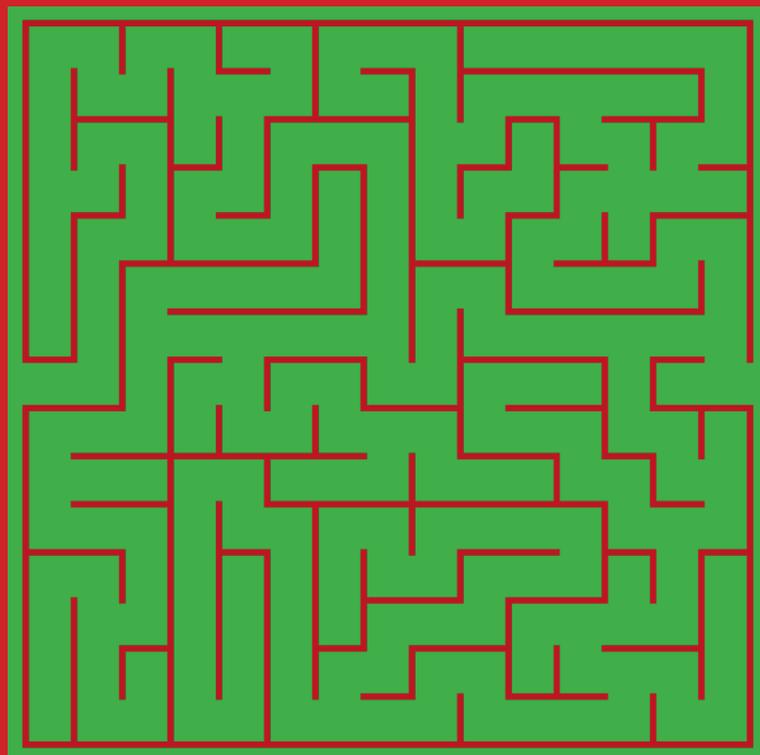
- Tenth
- Star
- Independent
- Monochrome
- Strange Brew
- New Years



SOLVE!



QUICK!
Monochrome need to go decorate the Christmas tree! Help them find their way



COLOUR ME IN!



GEAR

the musician's CHRISTMAS

Alternately Atticomatic recommended



ASM Hydrasynth

BEST SYNTH: KORG MONOLOGUE

My favourite synth would probably have to be the Korg Monologue. It's so fun to mess with and is incredibly simple in terms of sound design. A great synth to play about with for some fun. Although, if I had to have a desert island synth it would probably have to be its bigger polyphonic brother the Minilogue, which I use loads with Bellyful!

Recommended by: Fin Roach – guitarist for Bellyful (@finroach.music)



BEST BASS PEDAL: LEBASS

I highly recommend the Two Notes "LeBass" valve preamp pedal! It's what I use and I fully credit it for my tone. It has a clean channel that still has control of gain for a bit of bite and then a distorted channel. I use that channel as a middle ground distortion between clean and my full distortion pedal! Guitar nerds love it because you can see the valve too. For such a high quality pedal it's reasonably affordable (compared to most fancy pre amps anyway). There's also a newer version of it with three channels but that one is priced higher.

Recommended by: Mia Mallozzi-Corner – bassist for Butane Skies, Shutterspeed, and Wisdom Teeth, guitarist for Crooked Snout (@miaisntreallo)



PRS!!

PRS is a music-centric organisation that collects royalties for live acts. All you need to do is register as a writer for a one-time fee of £100 (if you're under 25, it's just £30!) and then you can start getting paid for gigs. Just save your setlists after each show and submit them to the platform.

Recommended by: The GEAR Zine team

PRS
for MUSIC

BEST PLUGIN: UAD 1176

A replica of the Universal Audio 1176 LN hardware, this digital version is great at smashing room mics and good for parallel compression on drums, adding excitement to any track. On top of that, it doesn't have too many knobs, which is ideal for finding the perfect sound quickly. And as if that wasn't enough, it costs a lot less than the real thing, with next to no compromise on sound quality.

Recommended by: Jack Busby – guitarist, drummer and producer (@jack_busby_04)



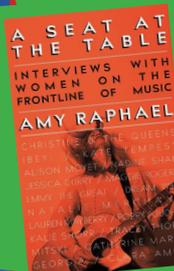
BEST VOCAL MIC: SE ELECTRONICS V7

If you're looking for a standout mic that can cover most things, look no further than the SE Electronics V7. Sounds great on vocals and instruments! It offers fantastic clarity, excellent off-axis rejection and it's cheaper than an SM58. Perfect for the Christmas list. If you're interested in getting one, feel free to give me a message if you fancy a little discount ;)

Recommended by: Louis Juckes, Live sound engineer from Komedia Bath (@louis.juckes)



S WISHLIST



BEST BOOK: A SEAT AT THE TABLE BY AMY RAPHAEL

After rising to fame in 1994 following her critically acclaimed debut book, 'Nevermind the Bollocks: Women Rewrite Rock', Journalist Amy Raphael continued to spotlight women in rock and beyond through interviews – determined to give female voices power amongst a male-dominated industry. 'A Seat at the Table' is her latest offering, and was released in 2019. Featuring artists such as Christine and the Queens, Mitski and Dream Wife, along with producers such as Catherine Marks (*My Love is Cool*, 2015), the book takes a deep dive into what it means to be a woman in the music industry.

Recommended by: Jules Elizabeth – spiderhoney frontwoman, bassist for nobody's dad and writer for GEAR Zine (@juleslizmusic)



BEST GUITAR PEDAL: ELECTRO-HARMONIX BIG MUFF

"Every guitarist needs a big muff"

Recommended by: Max Earl – guitarist for Nobody's Dad (@max_earl)

BEST STUDIO HEADPHONES...

As a mastering engineer, critical listening and fine-tuning with equipment I can trust is an integral part of my workflow. If in doubt, I will always reach for headphones that I know really well, and that give me a clear and precise reading of what I'm listening to.



BUDGET PICK: BEYERDYNAMIC DT 990 PRO HEADPHONES, 250 OHM

These were one of the first pieces of equipment I invested in when I was starting my audio journey as my studio was untreated and I needed to be able to trust what I was hearing with no interferences from the room. For the price, they give you an impressive audio experience, and the fact they're open back means you don't fatigue as quickly as you would with closed back headphones. I would highly recommend them to anyone starting out in their audio journey, as they can be used in any part of the music making process, not just mastering.

HIGH END PICK: AUDEZE LCD-X

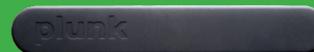
An extremely popular pick amongst mastering engineers and for good reason. I was blown away the first time I used these headphones! The headphone design means the stereo image and listening experience feels like you're listening through studio monitors, which is something I always tend to miss when using headphones consistently. They sound amazing, without overly colouring the sound which means I can trust what I'm hearing is the audio in its truest form and how it was intended to be heard. They are fantastic when I am doing audio repair, or when I am listening to something with a very critical ear, as I can hear every tiny detail in high fidelity.

Recommended by: Izzy McPhee, mastering engineer @izzymcphoeaudio

WILDCARD GADGET

Plunk is a small attachable rubber bridge that will fit any standard guitar, acoustic or electric, that achieves that perfect dulled endearing resonance. With this bridge, you will truly be in your Phoebe Bridgers era. Pun absolutely intended.

Recommended by: Joni Butcher – trumpet player for Custard & Technicolour Steam Train, and writer & designer for GEAR Zine (@joni.sky)



Piece by Jules Elizabeth
Design by Joni Butcher



Bailey's Loaf Cake Recipe

Equipment:

- 2lb loaf tin (900g)
- Microwave proof bowl/jug
- Mug/measuring jug
- Mixing bowl x2
- Whisk (hand-held is fine)

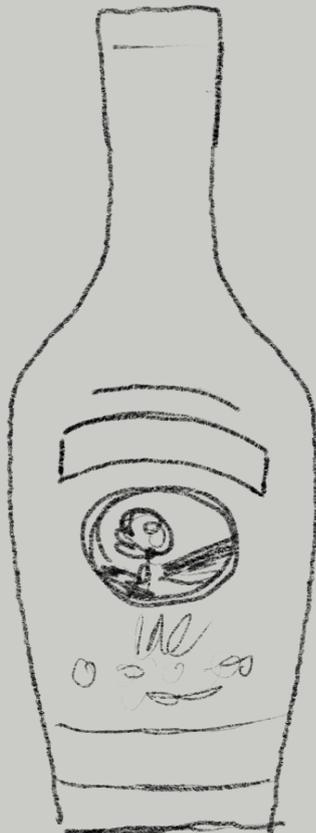
Ingredients:

The Frosting

- 80 g block unsalted butter (room temp)
- 160 g icing sugar
- 15 g cocoa powder
- 1/2 tsp vanilla (optional)
- 30-60 ml Baileys

The Cake

- 175 g dark chocolate
- 175 g block unsalted butter
- 2 tsp instant coffee granules
- 100 ml boiling water
- 135 g plain flour (unsifted)
- 25 g cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 200 g light brown sugar (or caster sugar)
- 3 medium eggs
- 75 ml Baileys (+1 tsp lemon juice)



Method

Cake

1. Preheat your oven to 180°C/160°F fan, and grease and line a 2lb loaf tin.
2. In a microwave-proof bowl, add the chocolate and butter and heat and mix until melted.
3. Add the coffee granules to a mug, and pour over the boiling water and mix until smooth - then add the coffee mix into the chocolate and mix until smooth.
4. In a separate bowl, add the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and sugar to a large bowl and whisk until distributed.
5. In another bowl, mix together the Baileys and lemon juice, and eggs.
6. Add the three mixes together.
7. Pour the mixture into the lined 2lb loaf tin - bake in the oven for 55-60 minutes, or until baked through. You can check with a fork stuck in the middle of the cake - if it comes out mostly clean, it's ready!
8. Leave to cool fully once baked, so the icing doesn't melt once applied.

Frosting

1. Make sure your butter is at room temperature.
2. Beat the butter on its own for a few minutes to soften.
3. Add in the icing sugar and cocoa powder 1/2 at a time, and beat until combined.
4. Add the vanilla, and then the Baileys a little at a time beating fully in-between each go.



Waning Gibbous



It was a waning gibbous rather than a full moon
when we talked about living or dying on it,
incinerated by the iron-rich core, or
using a pickaxe to make bricks out of its craters
And Stare down, pulled in by the brushstroke
of your hand and all the colours of the moon--
red, blue, silver, gold [until we grow old]
Sat with a telescope and night-mode on our phones
In my mind we have ventured the cosmos.
Visiting every bench, in every park, on every rock,
Parking ourselves with a good view for
People, Plant and Particle Watching. Waiting,
Anatomically.



That Green Star of you is captured in a jar
Gestured with a question about humanity and it's
substance
just there behind a black fence and gate
on a cold hill with small wakes; a beating heart



SARAH RECORDS

Formed in 1987, by Clare Wadd and Matt Haynes, Sarah Records was an independent record label, run from a flat on Upper Belgrave Road in Clifton, known for its jangly, indie-pop singles and anti-establishment DIY ethos. Only 8 years after its first release (Pristine Christine by the Sea Urchins) the label folded, leaving a hugely influential legacy, having worked with indie-pop royalty: the likes of Heavenly, The Field Mice, The Wake, and Blueboy.

"THE 100"

There was a clear ethos from Clare and Matt that they didn't want to rip off their fans. Suggestions that they should release their singles across multiple formats, perhaps with an extra track on the 12" version of each single, were dismissed as attempts to trick people into essentially buying the same product twice. As such, their output mostly consisted of 7" singles. With such simplicity in their release schedule, each single became synonymous with its catalog number (Pristine Christine being Sarah 1) leading many people to become avid collectors/completionists. Kept a secret for as long as possible, by Clare and Matt, the much anticipated Sarah 100 was eventually announced to be their final ever release: a full compilation LP of Sarah singles entitled 'There and Back Again Lane'. They put out a press release announcing that, to coincide with the label's final release, there would be 'A Day For Destroying Things' farewell party on August 28th 1995 on Thekla, featuring many of Sarah's most beloved bands on the bill.

BRISTOL

At the inception of Sarah, Clare had recently moved to Bristol for university, and the city became a crucial part of the label's iconography. The centre label of all 100 Sarah releases featured pictures of the city. Sarah 21-30 featured images of consecutive stations along the Severn Beach trainline, terminating at Bristol Temple Meads and Sarah 71-80 featured shots of the equivalently numbered buses in Bristol. The final 'There and Back Again Lane' compilation release featured the iconic Clifton Suspension Bridge on its cover. In fact, all compilation albums of Sarah singles were named after Bristol landmarks, and numbered after the buses that went there.

"TWEET" POP

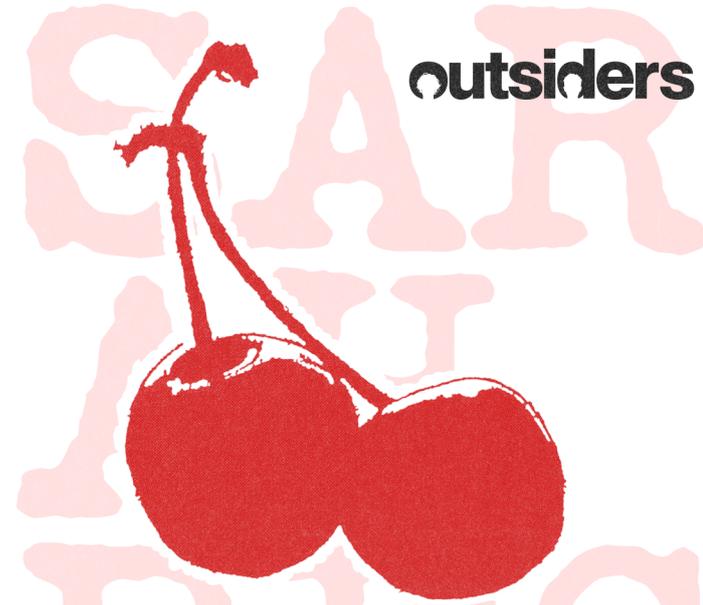
Clare and Matt had a disdain for the mainstream music press, and the feeling was mutual. Each Sarah release was met with scathing reviews in the likes of the NME and Melody Maker. Sarah was seen by many in the industry as being far too twee and frothy to be worth taking seriously (although even the most jangly Sarah bands tended to reject the 'twee' label altogether). One notable exception to this consensus was John Peel, who frequently invited Sarah bands to play sessions on his show. Many publications accused the label of going bust when they called it a day in 1995, failing to see the fact that it was a principled decision for Sarah to shut down on its own terms. It was only years later that feelings towards Sarah softened, with the NME ranking it as the 2nd greatest independent label of all time, in 2015.

FANZINES

Sarah leant heavily into fanzine culture, with both Clare and Matt having created their own fanzines before setting up the label. It was this connection that actually led to them meeting each other in the first place. Matt's fanzine 'Are you scared to get happy?', as well as Clare's 'Kvatchi', had started to be released alongside flexi-singles by local bands. This was their first experience releasing music and proved to be a clear precursor to the running of the label. Fanzines were such a vital part of the Sarah output that they were even given their own catalogue numbers as part of 'The 100'.

The legacy of Sarah Records is alive and well, even 30 years on from their dramatic farewell. In 2014, Lucy Dawkins made the documentary 'My Secret World. The Story Of Sarah Records' in which Matt noted that, due to seemingly forgotten albums resurfacing on streaming platforms, there's an argument that Sarah may be bigger now than it ever was in its lifetime. In 2023, Sarah fan Jane Duffus released 'These Things Happen', a book telling the label's story and its ties to Bristol through interviews with members of every Sarah band. Her book even inspired me to start @sarahrecordsphotos, where I recreate the photos from the sleeves of the label's 7" singles. Sarah's own Blueboy reunited at the book's launch event, at Rough Trade Bristol, joining Heavenly as another Sarah band to enjoy a recent resurgence.

outsiders



BECAUSE WHEN YOU WERE NINETEEN DIDN'T YOU WANT TO CREATE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL AND PURE

A quote by Sarah Records, taken from "A Day For Destroying Things", a half page advert placed in the NME and Melody Maker to promote their 100th and final release party, hosted on Thekla.



Written By Isaac Smith
Designed By Thomas Braniff





GEAR

Keeping musicians close, and communities closer



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