

Live previews: Catch one of Norfolk's finest



Sennen
Arts Centre, Saturday
Combining beautiful pop melodies with vocal harmonies over a gigantic background of guitars, this four-piece are also one of the most successful bands to have emerged from Norwich in a long time. With sweeping sounds and epic instrumentation, their music is the perfect sonic embodiment of the huge skies and wide seascapes of coastal Norfolk. The four met at UEA as members of a large instrumental post-rock band playing unrehearsed opuses to adoring fans of Godspeed! and Mogwai. However, uncomfortable with the quiet loud/quiet/discordant finale formula, they decided to fit these epic sounds around songs. With a shared love of Sonic Youth, Teenage Fanclub, Spacemen 3 and Big Star they left post-rock behind them and began their quest. Last year's album *Where The Light Gets In* combines unabashed harmonies, with lush instrumentation and some brutal guitar pieces. The NME gave it 8/10. Support slots with the likes of Editors followed. For this home town return they're supported by The Lost Levels.

■ **Further listening:**
www.myspace.com/sennenwidows



N Dubz
UEA, Monday
A re-arranged date, but still returns only as MOBO award winners N Dubz bring their love of eye catching head wear, signature catchphrases and catchy straight-up pop smashes with a street smart style to the UEA. The group's debut album, *Uncle B Album*, offered a mixture of straight-up pop smashes with street smart savvy, making N-Dubz – Dappy, Tulisa and Fazer – breakthrough artists. Album highlights included the single *Ouch*, which features a blistering attack of hip hop beats inter-woven with Tulisa's tones, the follow up to 2007's hit single *I Swear*. The video enjoyed incredible success online with over nine million views on You Tube, and record breaking views across other sites including Bebo, showing just what a massive fan base the group have built up over the last year. The masters of the melody, kings of the chorus and rulers of the adlib will bring their *Na-na-niiii*, 'Ha ha, ha ha, and 'tis N-Dubz (N-Dubz) What!'. Support from Tinchy Stryder – who has worked with local producers and is tipped for more chart success with his N-Dubz collaboration *Number One*, and Fe-nix.

■ **Further listening:**
www.myspace.com/ndubz



Friendly Fires
UEA, Wednesday
Sleepy suburban St Albans was previously only known as the base for the Campaign For Real Ale but its also home to these hotly tipped dance rockers. They sprung to success when their super limited seven-inch, *Paris*, was judged to be the single of the week in both the NME and The Guardian. This nu-rave masterpiece led to them being the first unsigned band to appear on Channel 4's *Transmission*. Now signed to XL, they count Radiohead, Vampire Weekend and Adele as their label-mates.

It's not hard to see what all the fuss is about. *Paris* was a deft combination of clattering percussion and a blissed-out, hum-along hook, while their self-titled debut album combined driving punk funk grooves with an unstoppable pop melodies and Macfarlane's joyous vocals in the chorus. The songs hark back to the 1980s, a time when pop music could be challenging, danceable and radio-friendly all at the same time. And they have a great way with an ethereally anthemic chorus, which always helps.

■ **Further listening:**
www.myspace.com/friendlyfires

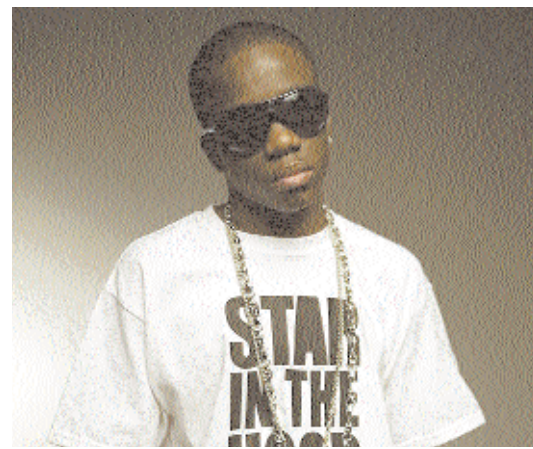


Essex
Arts Centre, Wednesday
Formally the drummer for hypnotic dance-rock types Ladyfuzz, eccentrically-attired Essex is the great white hope of geeky electro-pop. No longer wielding the sticks and leaving behind the safety of being in a band, he has stepped to the front of the stage and taken to the mic. It could all have gone horribly wrong – the track record of drummers head to the front of the stage isn't too good, Phil Collins is about the best (which says it all), but his confidence was boosted by successful slots at last year's Reading and Leeds festivals. And recently having caught the attention of Kaiser Chiefs drummer Nick Hodgson, he bagged himself a support slot on their arena tour. "I've kinda always been doing stuff on my own," he says. "It's not like suddenly I went solo. It's more when I had the bollocks for people to hear it." Musically he is difficult to pin down, spinning from the vaudevillian pop of the single *Satisfied*, to the electro-tinged *Headlock*, by way of *Specials*-esque meanderings of *I Love You*. He's currently working on an album to include a collaboration with Gnarls Barkley's *Cee-Lo*, another newly acquired fan.

■ **Further listening:**
www.myspace.com/esserhq

It's grime-time for a number one hit

Signed to MP Norman Lamb's son Archie's record label, Tinchy Stryder is on course to be celebrating a number one single when he appears in Norwich next week. **ROB GARRATT** got down with 'Prince of Grime'.



You were born in Ghana – how much of that is in your music, and how much is London?

A bit of both – just being born there it's part of me and where I come from. You value things because it's not the same everywhere. I came to London when I was about eight or nine and went to primary school here, I've been here more of my life.

How did you get into music?

My older brother had turntables and we just mixed and I got on the mic and did that stuff with Dizzee.

And then you did stuff on pirate radio?

That was the stuff to try and get into – otherwise it was just in my house in my room. It meant paying to get your stuff heard but that was the next thing.

What are you most proud of so far?

I am most proud of getting a number three on the radio with the last single, that's the biggest achievement. To be in the Top 10, to get a number three – that's the biggest thing when I sold 200,000 copies.

How are you going to celebrate if Number 1 is top of the official charts on Sunday?

I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm going to be shocked for hours. I'm going to have a party, but I'm going away on Monday so I'll have to keep it mellow. I'm going to America and I'm going to enjoy it to there and back.

What was it like working with The Streets' Mike Skinner?

I was 16, I looked up to their music and I was given the chance to be on that single remix. He was a cool guy. I just spoke to someone from his label and they said they wanted me on it and it was a big thing. I just went in the studio and went with it.

Your new album's coming out in July, how's it different to the last one?

Right now you can hear the growth in the music. Music is my reality, but no one's life is that exciting which is why I add stuff. It's all different sounds and I'm working with new producers.

Anything else you want to say?

I want people to know to check out the website, buy the t-shirts, get in the scene and help make Number 1 number one.

■ **Tinchy Stryder is supporting N-Dubz at UEA on Monday.**

■ **Further listening:** www.myspace.com/tinchystryder

Country boys without the country sound

Cage the Elephant hail from a small town in the American south best known for manufacturing Chevrolet Corvettes and Fruit of the Loom underwear. Just don't expect laidback country-rock. **SIMON PARKIN** reports.



Almost two years. We recorded the CD about 18 months ago, in about 10 days. Since then we've just been playing shows in the States. We started negotiating some record deals in the US, but we weren't getting the control we wanted, so we decided to come over to the UK and see what we could do there. It's so much easier to tour in the UK as things are nearer together, and radio in the UK is in a better situation too. There are guys like Zane Lowe and Steve Lamacz who actually go out to find good bands and tell people about them. It's very different in the States, with one company pretty much controlling everything.

You've had a lot of comparisons to Kings of Leon, can you see the similarities?

Not really. There is that southern vibe, I suppose, but I don't think we sound like them. I can see why people might think we're similar, the accents and things, but I don't think we sound alike. Then again, every musician doesn't know how to compare themselves to other musicians.

What's Bowling Green, Kentucky like?

It's a small town, 40 or 50,000 people. Outside the immediate city is just country land and

farming. We live in the more city area. The town has its own music scene, but it comes and goes in cycles – two or three bands will get really good, then they'll break up, and the members will all switch around and make different bands. There's no particular scene there, really, there are hardcore, punk, country, rock n roll bands, whatever. It was good for us because we could just make our own sound, and not be influenced or swayed by what was going on around us.

How do you deal with being away from home?

We get very homesick, but we just have to deal with it. We're staying in hotels and places, so it's not too bad. We're doing the Premier Inn tour, maybe we should ask for sponsorship.

What's it like spending so much time with your brother?

We've always been pretty close – we're only 17 months apart, I'm 26, Matt's 24 – so it's nothing different. We're from a lower-class family, so we had four boys in one room when I was growing up. Our beds were side by side by side, you could walk across them all. Me and Matt have always been around each other, so being in a band is nothing different.

Ain't No Rest For The Wicked was your breakthrough single, tell us about that.

Matt wrote that one, it's about judging people and all that sort of stuff. He picked up this lady one day, and she was hinting around, shall we say, exchanging something if he gave her a lift somewhere. He started to judge her for saying it, but then the more he thought about it, he realised that the lady was a person too, and started thinking about judging people in general.

■ **Cage The Elephant play the UEA on May 3.**

■ **Further listening:**
www.myspace.com/cagetheelephant

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music notes with Kingsley Harris

This week I'm checking out the triple launch party at B2 of The Kabeedies new single *Little Brains*. The three-day festival with a different colour theme – Red, White and Blue – each night kicked off the Tuesday after Easter. I missed Red night that featured *Tawney Owl*, *Vanilla Kick* and *Magpie* but caught a host of bands on the following nights of White and Blue. Most notable were **LUNAIRE** (White night) whose Myspace does them little justice. Still in the early stages of song writing their repertoire lacks a little direction with some great openings that sadly let you drift away rather than pull you in. They certainly have an eclectic appeal and the doubled-up double floor tom is an added dimension.

The set was somewhat short but no less effective, I remember *Magoo* starting out with similar material. I thought the best thing about the act though was the Japan quality about them, including the lead singer holding his voice in the same vein as David Sylvian.

CINECLUB followed Lunaire with lead singer Jamie getting into the colour theme wearing a full length 40's look summer dress, very fetching. The



Cineclub

group's set is now quite sturdy and I've watched many tracks grow in strength; like I've said before their charm is not in their warped wheel approach of performing which may sound derogatory but is the whole essence of their appeal. They have a whole bunch of good ideas, sadly some of the best seem to have fallen by the wayside. Their *Stroll On EP* is now available online. For me **COLD HANDS** (Blue night) are certainly the cream of new Norwich label Milkbar Records. It's still a bit loose with tracks that border the 60's



Lunaire

garage vibe and then go completely the other way with a post punk angst. I saw the band a year ago and it looked like they were on their last legs, the transformation in the band has been tenfold since then. It would be great if they could capture some of their live spirit onto tape, one thing I've found with bands with a bit of live bite is they tend to get ironed out in the studio. **THE KABEEDIES** put on an exciting and yet amazingly mature performance considering their age, both of the nights I saw them.

Their material is OTT pop and borders in some cases on an updated version of the bubblegum genre, although that would include the onstage madness of The Banana Splits. There hasn't been a local pop act with this much natural showmanship in a lifetime. If you haven't been to see them yet because you're still hanging onto some banal elitism over being able to hear, dance or sing to a chorus, now's your time to join the real music lovers who know it's only about how it makes you feel.

sounds in the city

April 24

Milkbar Night: feat. The Neat (indie) — Arts Centre
White Heat (rock) — Brickmakers
Dogtown (rock/blues) — B2
Replica (rock) — King Edward VII
Mollyhawk (Irish) — Cider Shed
Lick The Dice (rock) — King Edward VII
Blind Spirit (rock) — Nelson
In Rapture (rock/pop) — Regal
The Dirty Tricks (rock/blues) — Marquee
Agent Orange (indie/pop) — Blueberry
Night Flyers — Walnut Tree Shades

April 25

Sennen (rock) — Arts Centre
The Golden Years (50s/60s) — UEA
Sixth Birthday Party: feat. surprise band — Brickmakers
Piccadilly Dance Orchestra (swing/jazz) — Playhouse
Rules of Romance (pop-punk) — B2
Mister Pink (rock) — King Edward VII
Money Shot (rock/indie) — Boundary
Midnight Circus (rock/pop/soul) — Assembly House
Mild Peril (punk bands) — Marquee
Red Leaf (rock/indie) — Reindeer
Pete 'Kiwif' Keegan (skiffle) — Nelson
Rob Charles (easy) — Coach & Horses
Queens English (new wave/punk) — Stanley

April 26

Gary Moore (rock/blues) — UEA
Fightstar (rock) — Waterfront
Pinky Umbrella (Cajun/ kelzmer) — Cider Shed
Floating Greyhounds (rock) — Boundary
Blues By Two (blues) — King Edward VII
Lee Vasey Big Band (L2pm) — Brickmakers

April 27

N-Dubz (hip hop) — UEA
Yolanda Brown (jazz) — Arts Centre
The Creepshow (psychobilly/punk) — Marquee

April 28

Howback Hum: feat. Middle Ones (indie) — Arts Centre
City Collage Showcase (local) — Brickmakers

April 29

Friendly Fires (electro/indie) — UEA
Innerpartysystem (electro/rock) — Waterfront
Esser (pop) — Arts Centre
Stars Explode (alternative/rock) — B2

April 30

Access To Music Showcase (local) — Brickmakers
Charity Gig: feat. Rules of Romance + more (rock/punk) — B2
The Rum Brothers (Irish) — Rose Tavern
Square One (rock/blues) — Blueberry
Dogwood — Walnut Tree Shades

Your band in the spotlight

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