

# 15 NEW BANDS TO GET EXCITED ABOUT

SURFER BLOOD • DUM DUM GIRLS • FOOL'S GOLD • BABY MONSTER • ISLET

# NME

EXCLUSIVE!  
JULIAN  
CASABLANCAS  
CHRISTMAS  
SINGLE  
DETAILS  
P7

LIFE AFTER 'HUMBUG'

# ARCTIC MONKEYS

"We can't worry about  
what other people think"

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GIGS LISTED

"There's nothing you can't do/Now you're in New York"

# RADAR

FINDING THE BEST NEW MUSIC Edited by Jaimie Hodgson

## THE 10 MOST TALKED ABOUT BANDS

**N**ew York City's CMJ Music Marathon is the most dramatic and glamorous of all music industry conferences.

Once a year a huge cross-section of hopeful bands - the great, the good, the gash - descend upon 'the City of Dreams' for what's often a career-making/breaking week of gigs. Virtually every relevant name - whether mag, label, or cred-hungry brand - host their own party of hand-picked acts. If you're a band heading out there, chances are you're going to play as many mag, label, or cred-hungry brand parties as you can physically cram in over five days.

What makes CMJ better than Texas' South By SouthWest, or Manchester's In The City, is quite simply the setting. CMJ transforms all of the Big Apple's venues - from uptown Manhattan to dankest Brooklyn - into an onslaught of dream bills, hype-building and deal-sealing. Whether it's the steaming manhole covers, the yellow cab drivers, or the gigantic pizza slice that you drop down yourself while stumbling home at 4am, who knows? But there's cinematic tension everywhere. For many bands it will be the toughest, but possibly most worthwhile slog of their career, with every

label boss, manager, booker, journalist and trend-setter gathered in one grid of sidewalks to simply pass judgement. It's too tempting not to risk cliché and recall OJ Blues Eyes himself in remembering, "If I can make it there, I'll make it - boom, boom - anywhere..." We shall discover who'll be offering a reason to live and who'll be robbing us of the will to live over the next year. What 'buzz' will transcend industry circles, and be deemed fit for the consumption of you good people? Well, let's find out...

PETER B. VAN NUTT/DAN DENISON

**CMJ09**  
MUSIC MARATHON & FILM FESTIVAL

Dum Dum Girls (l-r): Franki, Jules, Dee Dee and Bambi



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Dum Dum Girls: intelligent

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**NEED TO KNOW...**

What: '60s girl group great run through a shredder  
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 Download: 'Catholicked'

**NME LOVES**

From the discordant depths of the indie underworld comes a lo-fi superstar

**1 DUM DUM GIRLS**

**D**ee Dee Penny peeps through the half-light like a black cat in the shadows. She's sheltering from the hoopla of New York City's Mercury Lounge, where her band just played one of their first-ever live gigs at their new label's annual CMJ showcase. Luring *NME* to a rare quiet spot in-between the webby kegs of the venue's basement, she opens up. "I don't really believe in clichés," she professes in lilting southern Cali. "If something is done in pure of heart and it's what the individual believes in, then it can't be cliché. Take my MySpace headline, I think it actually still reads: 'Blissed-out buzzsaw'. I mean, it's cheesy as hell, but it's a 'does what it says on the tin' scenario."

Dee Dee's Dum Dum Girls project, named as a double nod to Iggy Pop and The Vaselines - and until very recently a deceptive plural for her home solo recordings - is one of the key flag-bearers at one of this year's most influential-yet-elusive underground happenings. Over the past 12-months 'lo-fi rock'n'roll' in its latest abrasive bedroom form has echoed out across the globe, creating a new palette of almost indecipherable hooks. A series of mysteriously faceless bands and labels - from Blank Dogs, Crystal Stilts and Woods to Dee Dee's husband's own Crocodiles - have highlighted a network of DIY indie cool.

Yet when Dum Dum Girls announced signing to legendary bigtime Seattle imprint Sub Pop, it pointed to a potential breakthrough entry point. A token star in a murky sky. As it turns out, far from communicating in some especially developed language of fringes, lash flicks and fear, Dee Dee's straight-talking, sweet and succinct. "I always said as a little girl that I wanted to be in a band that sounded

like the kinda girls that went out with the Ramones," she half-smiles, with a glint of nose-ringed charm somewhere between Rizzo from *Grease* and a gothy John Hughes heroine. "My favourite lo-fi bands are all pop groups at heart," she says. "I dunno, I think it's a kinda coyness that makes us shroud the melody in noise. Like, they're too shy to shine..."

Tonight, on the same stage that The Strokes got signed on, the instant sure-shot hooks and three-part harmonies of Dee Dee's '60s girl-group tribute - joined by bandmates Jules, Frankie Rose and Bambi - shimmer into the air in a way that her punished, hiss-garrotted home recordings suppress. Their cover of GG Allin's 'Catholicked' sounds like The

**"I WANTED MY BAND TO SOUND LIKE THE GIRLS WHO WENT OUT WITH THE RAMONES"**

Supremes, had Motown-era Detroit's music industry fallen prey to its current crystal meth fixation. For her band's (almost) major label debut - produced by '60s echo-chamber legend Richard Gottehrer - she promises more of the same. "I think when you're recording with basically two plastic cups and a piece of string it's hard to get that acute balance of agony and ecstasy just right, so it was nice to do things for real," she rolls her eyes. "I'm pretty confident this album will facilitate my goal of meeting Lady Gaga." *Jaimie Hodgson*

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