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BY CHRIS SWEENEY



FROM now until T In The Park, I'll be lifting the lid on T Break — the stage that showcases the skills of the best 16 unsigned acts in Scotland...

**THE Sunshine Social** have seen more knockout performances at T in the Park than you can shake a stick at.

Now they want to do one of their own.

But they are shocked they've even got the chance — after doubting they'd make the cut for T Break.

Calum MacDonald said: "We only sent in demos and I thought they sounded pretty s\*\*\* if I'm honest. We just sat around a table one night and sent them in."

"So we were shocked to get it but it was a pleasant surprise. It's a big thing for us. I've been going to T since I was 13, so it's a really big thing. It's a bit weird but it's not sunk in. I don't think it will until we're actually playing."

The Glasgow six-piece, above, have big plans for their Saturday night set. They're planning to get the punters properly involved — by letting them do the LIGHTING for them.

Calum, 24, explained: "We are big on our percussive elements. We want the barriers down between the audience and us."

"Sometimes we throw things out for the fans to play. But recently we'd been doing it with lighting and we'll do it at T."

"We chuck these big LED balloons into the crowd, then we kill the lights and let them take

## Our demos sucked so making cut was a shock

over. You want to showcase what you're all about and have a big party.

"We want to leave that little memory with people of doing a great show."

"I remember seeing The Flaming Lips when they did the Main Stage at T."

"The other big one was seeing Rage Against The Machine. I went for about seven years in a row, I'm a bit of a veteran — it will be so weird to be on the other side."

The T Break show is a well-

come distraction for the band. They're currently hammering away debut album — and it's been a struggle.

The plans are to get it out in early 2014.

Calum said: "We've been recording it for the last three months. The label set us up with this producer from LA who's over here, and at first I was totally against the idea."

"But when I started going through the songs, I realised he'd make an

album that I didn't think we'd make. It sounds different, which is quite exciting. We just need this momentum that we'll get from T Break before we release it. Getting exposure is the hardest part."

"We just need more of it. The album is our baby that we want to let loose."

"No one has any idea how much work the six of us have put in."

"You might only get one chance to make an album, so we want it to be different and push ourselves."

"All of our eggs are in one big basket."

"But our main focus with T Break and the album is connecting with people."

● For more info, check out: facebook.com/sunshinesocial

one 2 hear

PAISLEY's finest Michael Cassidy has a mega voice on him. And he certainly knows how to use it too.  
His single Battleships is a gem — it starts off as a slow tear-jerker and ends up a stomping rock tune. Give it a listen and watch the video at michaelcassidymusic.com

**NEW MUSIC**  
By JIM GELLATLY

### ARCHES

**WHO:** Michael Rice (vocals), Barry Morrell (guitar), David Johnston (guitar), Andrew Johnston (bass), Niall McGarvie (drums)  
**WHERE:** Glasgow  
**FOR FANS OF:** Biffy Clyro, U2, Coldplay  
**JIM SAYS:** Arches have a busy summer ahead, with performances at T in the Park's T Break Stage and at the Wickerman Festival in Dumfries & Galloway.

They've secured a deal with fledgling label Transmission Records, already home to Kids in Glass Houses and The King Blues. Transmission is part of the independent music giant Notting Hill Music, with a catalogue including Michael Jackson, Dizzee Rascal and Motorhead.

The tie-up came via Arches' manager Billy Kiltie, who ran the legendary 23rd Precinct record shop in Glasgow and set up pioneering house label Limbo.

The 23rd Precinct name lives on as Billy's management company, which has had a long-time relationship with Notting Hill.

Billy said: "I'd been talking to the guys for a wee while, went to a few gigs and got a feeling for their passion in what they are doing. They're brilliant live and write some big powerful songs."

"On meeting the band I just knew they were great



people to work with and share the drive I have to make things work. The deal for the EP has focused and re-energised the band and hopefully now we can kick on."

Fronted by original Yashin vocalist Michael Rice, Arches played their first gig to a sold-out crowd at Glasgow's Stereo in late 2011.

They gained early support from BBC Radio 1 and Kerrang! Radio, and last year toured across Scotland with acclaimed Dublin rockers The Coronas. They are now ready to step up a gear, and the T in the Park T Break Stage looks an ideal opportunity.

Niall, formally of the much-touted Jocasta Sleeps, said: "To be given the opportunity to play there is very humbling. We can't wait!"

Arches' Broken Clocks EP is released through Transmission Recordings on August 11.

They play 20 Rocks Dundee on July 11, July 14 at T in the Park and Wickerman on the 27th.

The band also have a headline show at King Tut's in Glasgow on August 1 as part of the venue's Summer Nights series of gigs.

**MORE AT:** facebook.com/ArchesUK

● Jim will be playing Arches on in-Dumfries Uncut this Sunday from 7pm on Clyde 1, Forth One, Northsound 1, Radio Borders, Tay FM, West FM & West Sound FM. www.indemandscotland.co.uk

## I love the pause when you turn a record over

KT TUNSTALL Invisible Empire // Crescent Moon

**WHEN** sweet-voiced Scots songstress KT Tunstall appeared in 2004, she enjoyed massive mainstream success.

Her debut, Eye To The Telescope, was filled with radio-friendly, hook-laden songs and so much promise.

But only through joining up with one of music's great outsiders has the 37-year-old made her best album to date.

Invisible Empire // Crescent Moon — emotional, poised, exquisitely sung — represents the full flowering of her considerable talents.

Her fourth studio album was produced over two sessions in Tucson, Arizona, by Howe Gelb, an eccentric, fiercely independent soul known for his band Giant Sand and a wide variety of solo projects.

It emerged from a period of turmoil for KT during which her marriage broke down and she lost her father, yet the music has a calm, beguiling quality that perfectly showcases her vocals.

Here, exclusively for SFTW, KT tells the story of her album, which entered the charts at No14 last Sunday.

**Can you explain why the album is split into two distinct halves?**

The album was recorded in two ten-day sessions, one in April 2012, and the second in November 2012. I didn't plan to split the record in this way, but I experienced huge changes in my life during the summer in between, part of which was losing my father. By the time I went back, I was in a very different place, and the material I wrote felt distinctly different from the first session.

I had also enjoyed listening to vinyl for the past couple of years, and I love the pause when you turn the record over, and how, as a listener, you develop a different relationship with the A and the B side. I wanted to recreate that.

**Can you describe some of its guiding lyrical themes?**

I feel the first half is introspective, more melancholic, and there is a subconscious awareness of what was to come.

Many of the songs on the first half have a weird fortune-telling quality to them.

This was something Howe and I had talked about — that songs often know you better than you know yourself.

I had started to think about my own mortality, and our approach to it in the West — how we are programmed to see it as a very bad thing always.

The second half, as the title suggests, is a sort of rebirth, letting nature take over, letting go of trying to control life.

**Do you feel that each half in some way speaks to**



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

By SIMON COSYNS

the other, producing a cohesive whole?

Someone said it was like an emotional road trip, which I liked. It does feel like it has a narrative to me. I think this makes it a hopeful record.

It's meaningful to me that the cover image, the start of the record, is me dressed in powerful clothes looking over a landscape in a leader pose, and the image for Feel It All — halfway through the second half — I am in a simple vest, hair in natural plaits, far less formal. It's almost like the cowboy lording over the land, in contrast to the native American spirit being in harmony with it.

**In what ways is the new album different/a progression from your previous works?**

This album is all about my voice, which I haven't focused on before. I was inspired by King Creosote and Jon Hopkins' Diamond

Mine. It's such a beautiful album and it gave me faith to slow down, follow my heart with what I wanted to make, and trust that people want to hear crafted, emotional music.

It's also the first time I have recorded to a tape machine, which was a revelation for me. You can't fix things or edit, so I upped my game.

**And how different a person are you from the one who made Eye To The Telescope?**

Definitely different! I spent ten years trying to get somewhere, playing gigs and surrounding myself with musicians.

I then spent the next ten years as a successful artist, playing gigs and surrounding myself with musicians. The music kept me very distracted. But, of course, you want different things and feel differently about life at 35 compared with 25, so it's been a big shift for me to look at where I am and accept those changes.

I suppose the major difference is that I don't feel defined by music any more. It is what I do, not who I am.

**How come Howe Gelb produced the record?**

We met on a tour put together by Robyn Hitchcock and hit it

off straight away. He said I should try recording in Tucson and I asked him if he would oversee it.

**What was it like working with him and what did he bring to the record — aside from his magic blue pedal?**

The magic blue pedal was a world of craziness! Although I think sadly it has since blown up. It took a bit of getting used to working with Howe. He has his own strange ways of making records.

He's a maverick and a great character, as well as a fantastic musician. It was good for me to spend time with someone who had a polar opposite approach to music and had never experienced a major record label. It helped me overcome any need for approval and to have fun again. My favourite phrase of his was: "I'm not late, I just arrive ready."

**Are you a fan of his Giant Sand and solo work?**

We didn't know each other's music at all when we met. I love his stuff, particularly his solo album Sno Angel Like You, with a gospel choir.

**The backing on Feel It All has that great laid-back desert rock vibe. Was that something you were keen to embrace?**

I took it slowly as I didn't want to just borrow that sound. I needed to get to a place where it was happening naturally.

I used a great lap steel player called Jon Rauhouse for a few tracks, and I had him play in a certain way and we tinkered with effects, so it still felt like my style whilst using a stereotypically country-music instrument.

But by Feel It All, yes, I had embraced being a desert rat!

**You must have been thrilled with the services of master whistler Andrew Bird on Made Of Glass.**

I was over the moon he was up for getting involved. He came through town for a show and we grabbed him for an hour or two in the afternoon.

I'd seen him play in New York a couple of years earlier and was blown away by his skill.

**Tell us about some of the other great musicians on the album (a couple of familiar names I see like John Parish and Martin Terefe)?**

Howe and John Parish have been friends for a long time and Howe suggested John do some mixing. I am a great fan of his playing style and his drumming on the album version of Feel It All is one of my favourite elements of the album.

Various members of Giant Sand joined in, including Brian Lopez, who is a solo artist in his own right, and has an incredible voice and playing style.

He'll be joining me as a member of my band over the summer.

**Are you enjoying taking these new songs on the road?**

I am, although it's pretty intense. I've had such a great reaction from people, though.

I'm particularly liking leading everything with my voice rather than my rhythm playing, and singing in a very different way.

ONE2WATCH AT

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