

Something for the Weekend

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Friday, February 7, 2014 **Sun** 53



PHOENIX SOARING AHEAD OF UK TOUR

By CHRIS SWEENEY

I PREDICT a riot — that's the message from French mavericks Phoenix, ahead of their UK tour next week.

The lads are riding the crest of wave thanks to last album *Bankrupt!*. It rocketed into the top five in the US and all over Europe too.

But they've never played the game with the music business. And the album's success has given them license to push things even further — which is what they'll be doing at Glasgow's Barrowlands on Monday night.

Frontman Thomas Mars fizzed: "Venues do try to stop us or force us to act a certain way. It's a never-ending battle to play the show we want to."

"Every day, we have to talk to them and explain it. That if people want to come up on stage, it's fine. That we don't want the security to grab the girls who're enjoying it."

"We always have to battle to set it up like we want it."

"Everywhere has their own rules. Like in Germany it's hard to play a loud show."

Iconic

"Music should be loud but they don't allow it. We've been to the Barrowlands before, what I love about is the history and the fact that it's so iconic — and I love the riotous aspect."

The lads scooped a Grammy for Best Alternative album back in 2010. But *Bankrupt!* has really put them in the shop window. Thomas, 37, is married to Oscar-winning movie director Sofia Coppola.

But despite being seen as having a cool image and very trendy, the mainstream world has never welcomed the band. It's been that way since they started as youngsters in Versailles. However, crooner R Kelly is a huge fan.

Phoenix worked with him recently and appeared with them at US festival Coachella.

Kelly said last August: "There's the Michael Jacksons and the Ronald Isleys and all the other people that I've collaborated with. Don't get me wrong, I've worked with a lot of talent out there."

"But when you have a gift, it's different than just having talent. Phoenix are gifted — they've got that Beatles thing going on. You can't explain it. And even the band can't get their heads around that."

Thomas said: "It's the highest praise you can get, but at same time I'm thinking he's out of his mind."

"I want to frame that quote and put it up on my wall."

"The best thing is, all this attention makes it easier for us to do a better show and that's the thing that makes a difference in our lives."

● Get tour tickets at: wearephoenix.com

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With DAVE MASTERS



APPS and GAMES



USUALLY, we review games separately but the emergence of two similar titles has changed that.

Flappy Bird is in vogue. Perhaps aided by its inclusion of the word "bird" — the golden ticket in apps if Angry Birds was anything to go by — it has become the most talked-about app of the moment.

Its discussion rate has reached almost Candy Crush levels of

FLAPPY BIRD/IRONPANTS

Both free on iOS

trendiness. Which is strange given it has the most basic of graphics, feels laggy when you play it and is *incredibly* hard.

It's this excruciating difficulty that makes the game addictive, propelling it to cult levels of popularity. You move a bird up and down the screen by tapping,

and guiding it between two

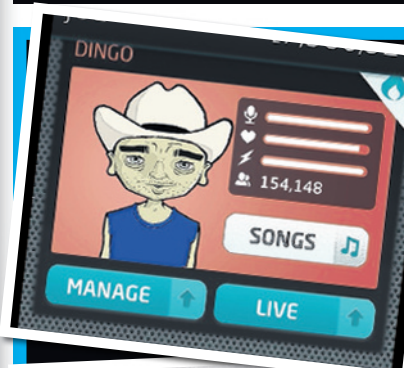
Mario Bros-style pipes, with gaps at differing heights.

For gamers who have come under the spell of its simplicity, there is another title — Iron-Pants. Comparatively jazzy and speedy, we quickly developed a tempestuous relationship with it.

Both, of course, are tried and tested game formats. But the model they've adopted literally taps into the brilliance of the iPhone, which can often be overlooked. While games offering

depth and exhaustive instructions do work, it's often the simplest that are most effective.

There's nothing "pants" about these games. Except the amount of time you find yourself sinking into them trying to out-score your smug mate Derek.



MUSIC INC

iOS, Free

I RECENTLY got nostalgic over a game I played as a teen, in which you launched a pop band and tried to make them global stars, managing their marketing, their tour dates, merchandise and so on.

So I was excited to play Music Inc, which does exactly the same. And though no music is heard during gameplay, it works fantastically.

Nurturing your artist and building a fanbase is addictive and you will plough hours into what began as an innocent toilet-break play.

My only criticism is that at a certain point, things become formulaic.

Once you have a star on your hands, churning out material is as easy as printing money. That is when my interest waned.

Played in short bursts, Music Inc should get you through a week of boredom. Hopefully they release some sturdy updates.

3.5



AFTER its success as a mobile game, PlayStation has launched *Surge* on the Vita.

The rapid block-matching puzzler is a strategy game for the Vita, like Candy Crush on acid.

You drag electrical currents to destroy blocks of the same colour, with special blocks inflicting extra damage. You

SURGE DELUXE

PlayStation Vita, £3.99

know the score. It looks good and plays good. But, at £3.99, it's a higher price point than similar smartphone titles.

It's a neat addition to a Vita library but it isn't going to prompt anyone into buying the handheld console.

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PAPER (for Facebook)
Free for all

AN official Facebook app which turns your newsfeed into a swipe-and-browse personalised magazine, a bit like Flipboard.

At the moment, you can only download it from the US iTunes store should you have an account. But don't worry too much — a UK version is just around the corner.

MAKE EVERY MILE COUNT
Free for all

SPORT Relief's new app wants the nation to log their miles, whether they run, walk, swim or cycle in the run-up to this year's Sainsbury's Sport Relief Games. The more mileage you clock up, the more medals you can earn. The iOS version is out now with the Android version following tomorrow.

PLAY TO CURE: GENES IN SPACE
Free for all

THIS space rocket app is the world's first free mobile game that uses the collective force of its players to analyse real genetic data. The aim of the game is to beat cancer, so by collecting "Element Alpha" as you drive through space, you're actually saving real scientists some time.

POPOGRAPH
Free on iOS

THIS handy app adds 3D effects to your photos to create the illusion your snaps are popping out of the screen. You can also add headlines to photos and play with loads of cool filters. And if that isn't enough, there's also the option to upgrade to the full version but it isn't essential.

TOP TABLE
Free for all

THE team behind this pulled together all the best Valentine's Day and weekend dining deals to save you money.

Make table bookings via the app, browse menus and check out pics of the grub with the integrated Foodspotting snaps.

Read reviews from accredited foodies, too.



By CHRIS SWEENEY

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I'm a numpty and try not to think too hard

RIISING star Nick Mulvey tries not to use his grey matter too much — and admits he's a bit of a twit.

That's why the impulsive singer's new single Cucurucuu is a made-up word, that no one can pronounce.

But that hasn't stopped Radio 1 cranking it out — and labelling it their hottest record last month.

Nick, 26, explained: "No one can say it. The word is made up, in Spanish it's the sound of a dove. And I wanted the noise a mother might make to a baby."

"So I mumbled it and thought 'that will do' — and here we are with a single no one can pronounce, what a numpty I am. I didn't think far ahead. At least it stands out."

Cucurucuu follows up on Nick's last single Nitrous, which was inspired by the craze of natural highs at music festivals. Anything and everything could become a song for him.

Nick said: "Your work as an artist is only as interesting as your life. So all the things I get up to, they work their ways into the songs so it ends up quite varied."

"If I sat down and thought 'what should I write about' I'd have less options and it would be less interesting."

"I'd end up thinking too much and that's not good."

Saying that, he's no fool. Nick has crafted a b u z z a f t e r

leaving acclaimed band Portico Quartet in 2011.

Since then he's taken it step by step — with his debut album now ready to go.

He said: "I was never worried it wouldn't happen, I knew it would happen — but I knew it would take the time and steps it has. The album is finished and is coming out in May. I'm really happy with it."

"The two years of developing the songs was a real journey. It's so much hard work, but the word fun doesn't even come close to how good it's been."

And adding to the fun, Nick is hitting the road for a European tour — and stops at Edinburgh's Electric Circus on March 5.

He explained: "The songs from the radio are much fuller than live."

Hypnotic

"But when you come to a show, you can see what I'm doing with my fingers as a musician. It's quite hypnotic, me and the crowd get into a groove together — I like where the repetitive and hypnotic qualities meet."

It's emotional for Nick to think back to the day in 2010 when he decided to go solo and make his album.

He was standing on a beach in Honduras. Nick said: "When you get the reward, you also get confirmation of the way by which rewards come. Or put it this way — it's very easy to have nice epiphanies when you're sitting on the beach."

"I met a lot of people there I'd never see again, so I had nothing to lose — I mumbled these songs out to them and they became the bulk of the album, it's blueprint."

"It is so exhilarating and it's like Paul Simon said, he's the first audience member and I felt like that over there too."

And to be honest, this is just the beginning."

● For tour tickets and downloads, go to: nickmulvey.com

ONE
2
HEAR

CAMBRIDGE is known for its sleepy river and university.

But Lonely The Brave are changing that.

Their new single *Trick of the Light* is a real gem — an uptempo, rock stormer.

Get it and watch the video at: lonelythebrave.com

ONE
2
SEE

PUNTERS can't seem to get enough of young gun

George Ezra. He's doing a massive six-week UK run of gigs that are heading for sell-outs. But there's still tickets for his Edinburgh show on February 11 and Glasgow gig on the 22nd. Get more info at: georgeezra.com

TODAY'S **Sun** CODE



By JIM GALLETTY



ALTERED SKY

WHO: Ana Novosielska (vocals), Neil Ramsay (guitar), Richard Passe (guitar), Ross Archibald (bass), Amy Blair (drums)

WHERE: Glasgow

FOR FANS OF: Paramore, You Me At Six, Avril Lavigne

JIM SAYS: Pumping out infectious pop punk, Altered Sky formed in 2010, and are now a mainstay of Kerrang! Radio and the video for Where I Belong has been on the Kerrang! TV channel. Ross said: "My teenage years were spent watching Kerrang! and Scuzz TV. To see our video on those channels was spectacular. The radio airplay has been tremendous and Johnny Doom has had such great things to say about us and our fans."

Where I Belong is from the band's second EP *Stop And Live*, which came out last month. It was recorded at Cardiff's Longwave Studios with Ramesh Dodagoda, who's worked with Twin Atlantic, Funeral For A Friend and Kids in Glass Houses. Ross said: "It's a progression from our previous release. It shows a growth and maturity in our writing."

Altered Sky are very much a sum of their five members and have a string of gigs at The Barfly and The 100 Club in London and King Tut's and The Garage in Glasgow behind them. They now have their sights on spreading the Altered Sky gospel further afield. Ross added: "We think our sound is very suited to the States and plan to be over there within the next 18 months."

They're planning European dates this year but first they play an under-18s show at PJ Molloy's in Dunfermline on Friday, February 14, and Glasgow's Cathouse for the Voodoo under-18s Valentine's Ball, on February 15.

MORE: alteredsky.com

● Jim will be playing Altered Sky on InDemand Uncut this Sunday from 7pm on Clyde 1, Forth One, Northsound 1, Radio Borders, Tay FM & West FM. indemandscotland.co.uk

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