



EXCLUSIVE
by **LISA BOYLE**

ROCKER Albert Hammond Jr wants to team up with fellow music icon Alex Turner — after the Arctic Monkeys frontman paid tribute to The Strokes.

Alex mentions Albert's band on their new record, Tranquility Base Hotel And Casino. On the track Star Treatment, Alex, 32, sings: "I just wanted to be one of The Strokes."

And Albert said: "I just thought he was just writing a way to describe his youth and reminiscing."

"It's like he's saying, 'I just wanted to be one of them and now I'm an adult and I'm no longer young and I'm doing all this stuff'."

"You never really think about yourself like that so when you hear it you just chuckle."

"I should text him and say 'Why don't you have me open for you?'"

When asked if he'd like to perform alongside the Sheffield band on their next tour, Albert chirped: "Yeah, of course!"

"The alter ego is a way to hit the reset"
The guitarist — whose songwriter dad, also Albert Hammond, penned Starship's Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now and Whitney Houston's One Moment In Time — was speaking ahead of his solo gig in Glasgow next month.

His new record Francis Trouble explores a deeply personal topic — the miscarriage of his twin brother, Francis, in November 1979.

Albert's mother, Claudia, didn't know there was a second baby, and he was born six months later.

The Strokes star only found out about the whole story of his twin two years ago, aged 36.

He revealed: "It's almost a tribute... Alex Monkeys' Alex"

POIGNANT . . . Albert's fourth solo album was inspired by tragic twin. Above, with The Strokes

A Strokes of genius

allowed me a new way to perform, a new life if you will.

"He was the catalyst or the birth of the alter ego. I knew the kind of frontman I wanted to be and I knew how I was going to be in front of an audience and perform."

The alter ego is just a way to hit the reset and it's a way to tell the story while making it a little more interesting."

Singer-songwriter Albert is looking forward to revisiting Scotland for his latest

Scots gig at SWG3 in Glasgow on September 12.

He opened for Scottish rockers Franz Ferdinand in February this year and produced The View's album Ropewalk album in 2015.

But while Albert remains tight-lipped about his future with five-piece The Strokes, he understands he will always be seen as one of the band.

He said: "There's the whole journey with them but it's like apples and oranges, so it seems silly to be able to compare them."

"It was an unknown feeling

at first (going solo) because it wasn't like I'd planned to make a record or tour. I grew up wanting to write songs and play guitar and act, so I never saw myself as someone who would be able to do all of it."

"It took a few records to find my own version of that or to be able to say it out loud."

"I hope the audience walk away with a new side, musically and live, and if you haven't seen me I don't think you would forget me."

● **Albert will be performing at Glasgow's SWG3 venue on Wednesday, September 12.**

China is great for scale of warfare we want to show

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

TOTAL War fans have been a bit twitchy recently — the 12th game in the mega series is out next year and they can't wait.

Creative Assembly and Sega have been teasing them with Three Kingdoms titbits, but they want real news . . . so we went to Gamescom in Germany and tracked down senior game designer Dom Starr and Pete Stewart, the writer and narrative designer.

First up, the game is based in China in 190CE. Stewart said: "In a lot of ways it's the perfect setting for a Total War game. The geography is dynamic and vibrant, which is what we like in a campaign map, and in terms of content it is one of the largest and bloodiest conflicts in history with 13million to 14million people dying."

"That is great for the scale of warfare we want to show, but also the dynamic characters and the events help create the backdrop we want."

Starr, right, admits the team aim to get the history as close to perfection as they can. He added: "Every encounter within the game is steeped in historical accuracy from the variety of units, the weapons they use, the tactics to the buildings that make up the cities and the culture at the time."

"But there is also a bit based on the romanticised vision of the history which is reflected in popular classical Chinese literature."

Stewart, right, added: "The sandbox nature of the game lends itself to the player creating their own narrative but we have the rich source that is the romantic three kingdoms and the history."

"So while there are events and missions that may hint at the direction the player could take, it's by no means binding. We think of it as giving you the tools for your own story and you can use them any way you want."

The game will be a typically weighty campaign. Stewart said: "We aim for the sweet spot between 150 and 250 turns. Turn length may vary but it is into the tens of hours."

"You can still jump in and take a few turns and manage your economies or play a custom battle and not touch the campaign or sandbox."

Multi-player also plays a key role, but it could lead to an eSports revolution. Starr admitted: "The Campaign can be two players facing off or working together to find how the world evolves. We make it possible to have players come together and battle so it's 2v2 or 2v the AI."

Stewart added: "In my opinion I don't think eSports is impossible. You see DOTA and Legend which have a strategic element and we also have Total War Arena which does lot of tournaments. I have also seen tournaments of the likes of Rome 2 in the past and I find it always fascinating to watch. They are always better at the game than I am so, yes, maybe in the future."

STUART CULLEN



● **BATTLEFIELD V** has been delayed from October 19 — where it would have been up against CoD: Black Ops 4 and Red Dead Redemption 2 — to November 20.

The move does make a fair bit of sense. But it's not all bad news for game fans — an open beta is still coming out on September 6.



● **IF** you are already suffering from Red Dead Redemption 2 fever then beware. Rockstar have launched a new limited-edition collectibles —

T-shirts, shot glasses, blankets featuring the Van der Linde gang and even a candle. Find out more and pre-order at rockstargames.com

Too Few Thrills

THERE is nothing worse than a really interesting tale that doesn't get the game to match.

And if you were handing out raspberries for the effort then Compulsion Games would have a full punnet for We Happy Few.

You fill the boots of three characters — Arthur Hastings, Sally Boyle and Ollie Starkey — who live in a world where Germany won World War II. So far so good.

The core of the tale is in 1960s Britain, but not one you may remember (if you are old enough) or you might imagine (if you are a bit younger).

It is a state-run country where everyone is forced to take a drug called "joy". As the name suggests it gets everyone happy . . . and makes them forget the past.

First up, you are Arthur — a redactor at a newspaper company where he selects what news the public can read. It's all a bit George Orwell and 1984.

Events force Arthur into not taking his drug as he bids to find his brother and the truth behind what is happening.

The first tale is the longest of the three — clocking in at over the 10-hour mark, while Sally and Scot Ollie are just over five hours.

They each provide a new challenge — which keeps things interesting and adds a sense of urgency to the game. They overlap at times which is also a nice touch.

But then you get the gameplay — and everything goes flat.

It aims for a BioShock style but falls short partly because of the procedurally

We Happy Few
Xbox, PS4 and PC £47.99

generated world. It should be a good game, but you end up with an endless stream of streets filled with the same five or six non-player characters.

This is an open-world action adventure with a splash of survival gameplay thrown in. The main trick is the stealth, but you'll need to follow the rules — like wearing certain clothes in some areas or acting a particular way in others. It can be a real pain.

The skill tree that can remove that issue simply makes you run from point to point. It's like there is no middle — everyone either wants you dead or they don't care what you do.

The combat is also a bit hit and miss. The melee focus is OK as you block and swing at the heads of attackers, but nine times out of 10 you'll find yourself getting swamped. Running away is your only option — and we don't like that.

The crafting system is a relief as it lets you create items to save the mission, so make sure you search everywhere.

The lovely art style is ruined by the framerate yo-yo. The texture pops and interactive objects don't interact. We were forced to reload several times.

The biggest buzz was the soundtrack — the 60s-inspired tunes and the biggest range of UK accents we've seen in a game are highlights.

This should be a hit. The tongue-in-cheek humour and the attempt to tackle dark subjects like drug use, depression, the meaning of family, deserve better.

STUART CULLEN



● **UBISOFT** caused a stir at Gamescom with a view of the first big DLC slice for The Crew 2.

Gator Rush mode is out on all platforms on September 26 — and it's **FREE**.

The big news is that you get hovercrafts, opening up a whole new racing discipline.

That means five new vehicles, with three of them being hovercraft — the Bumblebeex, Double L-EEEX, and Speedster. You'll also get the XK Armored and the Ariel Nomad.

On top of that there will be over 20 new activities, including new Hypercar, Touring Car and Jetsprint events as well as the new Ace difficulty mode and the Legendary rides to upgrade your rides. Sweet.

TOP 5 GAMES THIS WEEK

1F12018
2Shennue I & II
3Crash Bandicoot N.Sane Trilogy
4Grand Theft Auto V
5Mario Kart 8 Deluxe

● **MICROSOFT** have revealed that PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds will leave the Xbox Game Preview programme and launch as a full title on September 4.

The 1.0 release will include some performance tweaks and bug fixes as well as dishing up new content.

That includes a third map, Sanhok. It has a tropical theme, new weapons, a dynamic weather system and a deathmatch-style War Mode. In-game currency can buy cosmetic items and add the Evac Pass system with its own missions and rewards.

IT'S been a 24-year wait, but Streets Of Rage 4 is on the way. Developers Lizardcube were behind 2017's Wonder Boy: The Dragon's Trap so they know their Sega. It's licensed by Sega too.



● **BUCKLE** up . . . The Grand Tour game is coming to Xbox One and PS4. It is being built by Amazon Game Studios in Seattle and will release a new episode each week during Season 3 of the Prime TV show, starring Jeremy Clarkson, James May and Richard Hammond.

It seems to be going for an arcade style with a power-up system as well as a four-player split screen. A short trailer also revealed licensed cars so plenty of racing.

Clarkson said: "If you've always wanted to come on the road with us, this is as close as you'll ever get."

This isn't their first foray into gaming — The Grand Tour trio have been narrators in Forza Motorsport.

Brute of a challenge that can Mug you



Mugsters
Xbox One, PS4 and Switch £9.99

is going on and what could kill you. Then it ramps things up and becomes much more of a challenge.

You can play the co-op game, which helps you find out how things work across the 24 main levels and the bonus ones that unlock after you complete the missions like collecting crystals or saving humans.

The game has a very clean and crisp style that is bursting with prime colours — although it would have been nice to be able to zoom in on the action at times.

As for music . . . well, there isn't any beyond a track on the menu screen and that is a really odd choice.

So the sound effects are the only noises you will get to hear. It all adds up to an intriguing game that is tough to master.

There are a variety of challenges to conquer and many of them are unexpected. And they all get tougher the further you go.

That certainly means it doesn't go stale because it keeps chucking new stuff at you — it's just that you are never sure why.

STUART CULLEN

THE ROOV

WHERE: Lissiemouth, Moray
WHO: Lewis Anderson (vocals/keys), Frankie Ralph (vocals/guitar), Jordan Slater (bass/vocals), Craig Howard (drums)

FOR FANS OF: Prince, The 1975, Jungle
JIM SAYS: The Roov's new single You Wanna Be Like Me was not what I was expecting. Their debut Alive, back in March, was a glorious punk offering. I was expecting more of the same, but not

With their latest track they've gone even further back, and it works a treat. They've created a wonderful slab of funk-ed-up disco rock that sounds like the legendary Nile Rodgers had a hand in it, with a bit of help from Scissor Sisters.

The track was born in Dundee of all places. Maybe not that unlikely considering Scots funk pioneers The Average White Band emerged from the city in the early 70s, and it's certainly got an AWB feel too.

Like so many classic songs You Wanna Be Like Me was a bit of an after-thought. Frankie explained: "We were recording at Magic Box studios in Dundee. We had four tunes written but we were booked in to record five. On our first night



NEW MUSIC
By **Jim Gellatly**

in Dundee, after a day's recording, we went back to the apartment and rustled it up in a couple of hours. We love disco music, so it's brilliant we're going down that road."

It might have been a gamble but the response was instant. Frankie added: "I was at the Sub Zero dance event in Keith the day after the single came out. They played the song and everyone seemed to know it already, dancing and singing along. What an amazing feeling."

Like music chameleons Primal Scream, they've skipped genres effortlessly to come up with something rather special.

Frankie, 22, and Lewis, 23, first started playing music together around eight years ago, but The



Watch a video of the band at: thescottishsun.co.uk

Roov formed in September 2016. Frankie said: "The majority of our earlier tunes were written in a rock-and-roll vein, inspired by artists such as Oasis, The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. More recently it's developed into a more disco and groovy vibe drawing inspiration from the likes of Michael Jackson, Prince, Abba and Nile Rodgers."

Last month The Roov lost their festival virginity. Winning an online poll set up by the Inverness Gigs blog they secured a place on the Seedlings Stage at Belladrum. The Lissie lads didn't have high expectations but were blown away by the response. Frankie said: "Despite being really thankful for being given the chance, having an 11.30 slot on the first morning of the festival didn't fill us with much hope for a wild gig. When we got our five-minute call the tent was empty."

"Then when we walked out it was packed!" The Roov play Elgin Town Hall on September 2, and then again on September 28 for Moray Oktoberfest (Moktoberfest). Next month they've got two cracking support slots lined-up in Aberdeen. October 20 at the Lemon Tree with The Snuts, and with The Dunts on October 26.

MORE: facebook.com/TheRoov
● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio Sundays 2-4pm.

amazingradio.com
jimgellatly.com



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