

s f t w **MUSIC EXTRA**RAY
BLK

Q & A

WINNING the BBC Music Sound Of 2017 poll brought a lot of attention to South Londoner Ray Blk. Two EPs later, her debut album is everything that her early talent promised. She tells JACQUI SWIFT about herself and her music.

CONGRATULATIONS on your debut album – tell us how it feels to get it out there?

It feels great to finally release it. I've worked on it for two years and lived with this music for a long time. I'm excited for people to hear it and bring new life to it.

Are you aware of the responsibility of having a platform?

When you have the privilege of having a voice people listen to, it should be used positively.

There are people who want to emulate you, so I'm careful of the message I promote, whether that's to edify people or support a cause or speak out against injustice.

What are your favourite songs on the album?

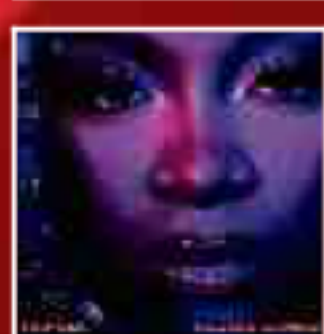
I think Baggage and 25. Those are the two I'm most proud of because it took a lot of vulnerability and confidence to say some of the things about my childhood and the internal battles I face. I was holding back when I started making this album. Over time, I built the confidence to be more real and let people hear about my experiences and where I come from.

Why did you call the album Access Denied?

A lot of it is about me feeling like I've been denied access into certain spaces in the music industry because of the struggle of breaking through as a black woman singing RnB in the UK. I had to keep fighting when I kept hearing no.

Tell us why you chose Lovesick as the first single.

I chose Lovesick because it



RAY BLK
Access Denied
★★★★



If you've ever cried in a club about lost love, then Over You is for you

was important to show from the outset what my sonics for this album would be. The sound is hip-hop led and is part of a new RnB wave that I love.

Tell us about current single Over You...

When I made Over You, I wanted to make what I call an emotional banger. It's a sad song you can dance to. If you have ever cried in the club because you are thinking about the heartbreak you came out to forget about, this is the song for that moment. But it also reminds you to keep dancing – you'll be fine.

What music has most influenced you?

Gospel music has influenced me hugely. It's what I was raised on at home. It's all such emotive music. Gospel music is made in a way that even if you don't believe in God, you still feel something. It has definitely impacted how I create music.

What did the BBC Music Sound Of 2017 poll win mean to you?

Winning that was a huge moment in my life. I was thrust into the limelight as a new artist and wasn't prepared for all of the attention. But it was a huge

blessing and I'm eternally grateful for it now.

How have you developed as a songwriter since your EPs?

When I made my first EP, Durt, I would write songs in my head but was scared to open my mouth with the producer in the room. Then I worked with a few co-writers on Empress but was still guarded about my ideas.

Now, making this album, I would get on the mic and freestyle melody and lyrics and share ideas with people and bounce off of each other.

All that growth took time and

confidence building to trust my ideas and get comfortable making mistakes in front of people. But I learned that nothing is a mistake – it's all part of the process.

What can people who come to see you live expect?

People can expect to feel so much better when they leave than when they came! That's my mission when I perform. The songs are uplifting and I give all my energy in every show I do and like to end on a high.

People can expect to feel invigorated after a Ray Blk show.

BOOKS

Edited by
NATASHA HARDING

THE MAN WHO DIED TWICE

Richard Osman, £18.99

PICK
OF THE
WEEK

GREAT news, the Thursday Murder Club is back – and feisty pensioners Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim and Ron are about to get stuck into their biggest case yet.

When Elizabeth gets a letter from someone in her past, she calls the others to action. What starts out as a simple reunion escalates and the gang are faced with the mafia, spies and stolen diamonds.

After last year's blockbuster debut, here is a sequel that's better than the original.

★★★★

JADE CRADDOCK



SHARPE'S ASSASSIN

Bernard Cornwell, £20

THE Battle of Waterloo is won. The Napoleonic War is over and all Lieutenant Colonel Richard Sharpe wants is to go home to the lovely Lucille.

But in Allied-occupied Paris, Frenchmen led by the ruthless Colonel Lanier want revenge.

Backed up by sidekick Patrick Harper, Sharpe must stop them fanning the dying embers of war back to life.

It's a rollicking adventure that leaves a sting of gunpowder smoke in your nostrils.

★★★★

BILL TODD



THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF: A BAKE FOR ALL SEASONS

With recipes by Paul Hollywood, Prue Leith & the Bakers, £22

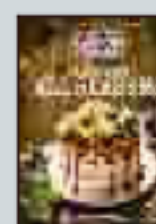
LOCKDOWN has taught us that banana bread on its own just won't cut it.

The latest book from the GBBO team pays homage to eating food when it's in season, and is split into sections on spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Favourites include the show-stopping primrose and lemon cake, Prue's malt loaf and Paul's jammy biscuits.

All of the recipes look divine, offering year-round inspiration.

★★★★



HISTORY

Miles Jupp, £16.99

CLIVE has landed a job teaching history at a posh school but has he made a terrible mistake?

He hates his colleagues and despises the rich, spoilt pupils. His marriage is breaking down too.

A typical midlife crisis, then, that's handled with dry, deadpan wit and sensitivity by Jupp, who you may know from his many TV comedy appearances.

It's not as hilarious as his brilliant radio show, In And Out Of The Kitchen, but this debut novel will chime with anyone who ever rolls their eyes at treacherous, brown-nosing workmates.

★★★★

SJC



NEW MUSIC

By
JIM GELLATLY



Paint no stopping them now

POSTER PAINTS

WHO: Carla J Easton (vocals/keys), Simon Liddell (guitars)

WHERE: Glasgow

FOR FANS OF: Cocteau Twins, The Pastels, The Sundays

JIM SAYS: Carlisle-raised Carla has been very much in the spotlight recently.

Some 10 years after being recorded, her previous band TeenCanteen's This Is How It Starts album finally saw the light of day in August. It's a collection of songs originally earmarked as their debut album four years before the release of the critically acclaimed Say It All With A Kiss.

It gives a great insight into the early sound of the band she fronted, and the glories that were to come. Say It All With A Kiss featured on the 2017 Scottish Album of the Year longlist. Carla went one better with her solo record Impossible Stuff making the 2019 shortlist.

Her latest album Weirdo has been selected for the 2021 SAY Award longlist, with the shortlist out on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Carla's new project Poster Paints is gaining momentum. Two singles in, they made their live debut a couple of weeks ago supporting the legendary Teenage Fanclub in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow.

She is joined by former Frightened Rabbit guitarist Simon Liddell. They first met through The Vaselines, who Carla also

plays keyboards with. She told me: "We started as a lockdown project, writing and recording remotely from our flats, emailing ideas back and forward."

While Carla and Simon are Poster Paints, they recruited other pals for the recordings. She added: "We were lucky to be able to involve a number of other musician friends from Scotland, Canada and America. Recording remotely allowed us to collaborate internationally to bring our recordings to life."

For live shows they perform as a five-piece. Poster Paints first emerged in May with the single Number 1. A wonderful clash of 60s girl bands and indie pop, Carla described it at the time as "Summer pop suzz. Jesus and Mary Chain meets Moe Tucker by way of The Supremes".

The new single Never Saw It Coming is even better. Carla added: "It was pretty much the first song we wrote together."

Poster Paints debut album should be ready for release next year, with a tour also in the pipeline. They play their first headline show on Thursday at The Poetry Club in Glasgow. It could be a double celebration if Carla makes the SAY Award shortlist. If not, all the signals are there for the Poster Paints record to be a future contender.

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

UB40
Featuring ALI CAMPBELL & ASTRO
THE 'UNPRECEDENTED' TOUR

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SAT 26 BRIGHTON CENTRE

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FRI 04 CARDIFF MOTORPOINT ARENA
SAT 05 BIRMINGHAM UTILITA ARENA
SUN 06 SHEFFIELD CITY HALL

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