

MUSIC

with Helen Clarke



Detroit Social Club
Sunshine People
Single
Stranded Soldier
March 30
★★☆☆☆

THE second indie release from Detroit Social Club is so late-80s Manchester you can practically feel the baggy T-shirt dripping from your arms.

But fast forward 20 years and a few hundred miles and it's almost embarrassing listening to the Newcastle six-piece snarl along in awe of Ian Brown.

I say almost, because *Sunshine People* is actually very good. It's got the groove, it's got the lazy swagger, the attitude and sing along chorus. Kasabian, anyone?

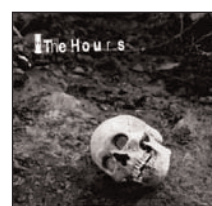


Jack Penate
Tonight's Today
Single
XL
March 30
★★★★☆

FAME, brutal fame. It picked up poor little Jack Penate and dumped him in his checked shirt and winkle pickers quicker than you could say 'MySpace' but, despite a disappointing beginning, he's bounced back with his best single yet.

Under Paul Epworth's guidance afrobeats combine with his trademark 50s rock 'n' roll sound, and a smattering of blissed-out house beats to create a brilliantly unexpected track.

Fingers crossed for the second album, due in the summer.



The Hours
Big Black Hole
Is Good Ltd
Single
March 30
★★★☆☆

MUCH has been made of singer Ant Genn's former life as a heroin addict and there's more than a nod towards his dark past in his next single.

"It's a message to me personally," he's said. "And it's a message to everyone. We're living in dark times."

But despite the sleazy, gloomy undertones, *Big Black Hole* sounds like an impassioned Keane.

Hammering piano and epic guitars make for a bold, soulful radio friendly track.

Their 2007 debut *Narcissus Road* set the blueprint for their brand of thumping, feel good indie and if this is anything to go by the follow up, released next month, should be more of the same... and then some.

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informer review

PEERING INTO ANOTHER WORLD



BANN RARA: A member of a Rara band, who go round the carnival playing haunting music by riffing on one-note cornets

All images courtesy of Leah Gordon

DIRT POOR BUT RICH IN IMAGINATION, THE PEOPLE OF HAITI HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN AN INTRIGUING PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION. CHRISTIAN MCLAUGHLIN TAKES A GLIMPSE AT LEAH GORDON'S SNAPSHOTS

INTIMIDATING; intoxicating; terrifying – people have tried to put their reactions into words, but nothing compares to standing in the room with the photographs.

Taken by Leah Gordon in Jacmel, southern Haiti, over a period of 13 years, the snapshots feel like a key-hole view to another way of life.

"Haiti is an antidote to the apathy in our society," Leah says. "There's a nationwide participation in culture, rather than an elite creating it for it to be consumed."

The power of the pictures shows a grassroots performance which would effortlessly eclipse so many of London's big-budget efforts.

Taken during pre-Lenten Mardi Gras street carnival, their simplicity makes a mockery of high-falutin' shows such as Alexander McQueen's latest collaboration at Sadler's Wells.

"Performance is not allocated to actors, it's a way of life," Leah, an aspiring photographer since the age of seven, explains.

From the politicians to the poorest, in Haiti there isn't an exclusive

hierarchy when it comes to self expression."

Tied in with the influence of the Vodou religion, carnival is a particular time of transformation.

Take Madame Lasiren, for example. She is a he (Andre Ferner, 59 years old) who wears a dress; hat; mask; necklace and gloves to carnival because Lasiren is a fish and 'she has to disguise herself as a woman to be at Mardi Gras'. All the text which accompanies the photographs defy expectations, especially in a country which is generally associated with images of destitution.

"In Creole they call it 'monte chwal', which translates as 'the spirit is riding you like a horse'," Leah explains.

TET MÔ: Members of the Phantom troupe which parade the streets of Jacmel during carnival. At every crossroads they nod their heads and show passers-by the directions to the cemetery with a little hammer

Whichever way you see the world, make sure you take a glimpse through Leah's eyes when looking for inspiration.

"Fiction becomes as strong as reality and the stories that arise are wonderful."

From Ellesmere Port, Merseyside, Leah, 47, says she didn't chose photography for the adventures it would bring, but that encountering Haiti has been the best thing to have come from following her craft.

Shot on black and white negatives with a Roliflex medium format camera, Leah refuses to be a part of the digital revolution.

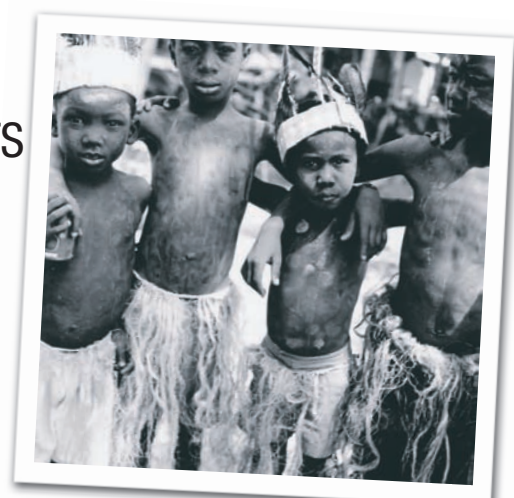
"The universe is built on spherical shapes, not squares. Film, at its most minute, is spherical in shape, whereas pixels are square," she says.

Leah Gordon, Kanaval, runs at

Photofusion 17A Electric Lane, Brixton, until April 24. Free. Tues-Sat 10am-6pm. See www.photofusion.org and www.leahgordon.co.uk

Leah Gordon talk and screening with John Cussans, author of *Voodoo Terror: (mis)representations of voodoo and western cultural anxieties*, is Tuesday, April 21, at 7.15pm.

The Book of Vodou: Charms and Rituals to Empower Your Life, by Leah Gordon, is available from Barron's Educational Series.



ENDYEN YO: Four boys with costume in memory of the Taino Indians, who were the natives of Haiti pre-Hispanic settlement



LANSE KOD: (Left) Carrying the ropes that used to bind the Haitian people as slaves. The slaves' revolt was 1791-1804

ESKLAV YO: Children partake in the performance as much as adults, sometimes using anything they can get their hands on