

MUSIC

with Helen Clarke



Charlixx Francheskaar
Single
Orange Red Green Yellow
August 18
★★★★☆

THE latest in a seemingly endless line of obnoxious teens queuing up to snarl heavily accented rants through MySpace, Charlixx proudly announces on her website that she's nervously awaiting her GCSE results.

But with any luck she won't be needing them. The 15-year-old already has an album under her belt, recorded last year, which she planned to sell to school friends. But it was soon snapped up by Orange Red Green Yellow, and *Francheskaar* is its first single.

It has echoes of a pre-Foundations Kate Nash – the same minimalist, vocal-heavy sound that made *Caroline's A Victim* an underground hit.

But *Francheskaar* sounds like three songs in one, and as Charlixx skips along, busily mocking her posh, Ug boot-wearing, glossy-haired rival, she throws scratchy beats and electro-funk into the mix – polishing it off shrieking rave sirens.

An exciting debut that should see her jump right to the front of the queue.



Vampire Weekend
Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa
Single
XL
August 18
★★★★★

VAMPIRE WEEKEND can do no wrong.

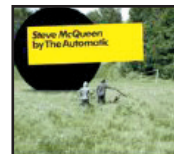
Three startlingly original singles and a massively successful album have paved the way to them being both painfully hip and critically adored.

This their fourth, and hopefully last, release from their eponymous debut, is their most ambitious yet.

For the uninitiated it's a window into the New York band's soul. An eclectic mash up of Afro-pop, orchestral chamber music and preppy college indie.

Singer Ezra Koenig gets the chance to flex his vocals, rumbling his quirky, off-kilter range, over a stop-start shuffle beat that is as catchy as it is intricate and clever.

They've showcased new songs during their summer festival sets, and on first listen they still sound fresh and exciting, but only time will tell if they can extend their reign as alt-pop's golden boys.



The Automatic
Steve McQueen
Single
B-Unique
August 18
★★★★☆

STEVE MCQUEEN is being touted as a more grown up sound for The Automatic.

Trying to break away from being known as That Band Who Did That Monster Song, the lead single from the Welsh band's upcoming second album is US punk-pop by numbers.

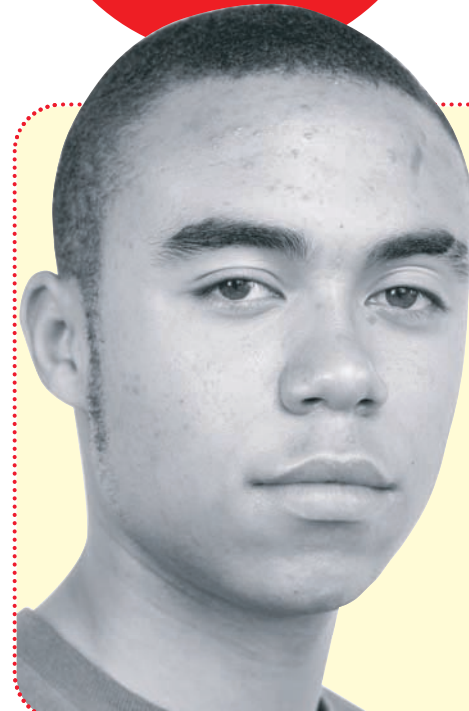
Like Weezer fed through a blender, it sounds like a diluted Green Day B-side but lacks the irony and anarchic spirit that turned both bands into masters of their genre. It's the sort of 'alternative' track they play to keep the moshers happy at student unions – a thumping bassline and barked lyrics, but still gentle enough to sway about to without spilling your pint.

"I was a teenage Steve McQueen, my best performance escaped me," whines singer Robin Hawkins... a little too convincingly.

informer review



CHRISTIAN McLAUGHLIN
MEETS THE STARS OF
THE LYRIC'S EXCITING
NEW YOUTH
PRODUCTIONS



ASHLEY ABBOTT

ASHLEY, 16, PLAYS AN ALADDINESQUE CHARACTER IN *ONE NIGHT ONLY*

DRAMA?
"My nan, Veronica, told me about the LYC a couple of years ago. This will be my second LYC show, but I've always wanted to act. I remember copying all the characters on soaps like *EastEnders* since I was a kid. Now that I've finished my GCSEs at Acton High School I'm going to study performing arts full-time at Uxbridge College."

DREAMS?
"I'd love to be a big film actor. I enjoy theatre, but with film you can reach a

bigger audience. My parents, three brothers and one sister are all behind me so I'm gonna try my hardest and take a chance."

THE SHOW?
"There's no script! I always get butterflies and think, 'How's this going to end?' The concept is about two characters who have been edited out of a film but don't realise it yet. They journey through snippets of different film styles trying to get out. I play an Aladdin-style character, an old, wise man trying to give them direction."

LYRIC Young Company – catch their upcoming shows and you won't forget the name.

Two teams of 16 actors, aged 14 to 16 and 17 to 19, are producing shows in collaboration with some of theatre-lands most innovative thinkers.

"Young people are often drilled into over-rehearsed plays which leave nothing to chance," says Alex Murdoch of theatre group Cartoon De Salvo. "We're lucky to have developed trust with the Lyric, so when we

say, 'How about this barking-mad idea?' they say, 'Go for it!'"

The trust was developed when Cartoon De Salvo successfully staged the impossible with *Hard Hearted Hannah*, at the Lyric Studio in May. To the amazement of audiences their show created a different, fully-improvised show every night over a three-week run.

Now they are co-producing *One Night Only* with the 14 to 16 year olds, a show about actors trapped with the clippings from an

edited film. At the helm of the 17 to 19 year olds will be Gecko, who took over the Lyric Studio in February with a daringly physical show, *The Arab and The Jew*. Currently putting the final touches on *Depth Charge*, their show will make visual the turmoil of transition between child and adult. Catch up with the cast below for the inside story.

● *Depth Charge* and *One Night Only*, by Lyric Young Company, Gecko and Cartoon De Salvo is at The Lyric Theatre, Lyric Square, from Wednesday, August 20,

until Saturday, August 22. *Depth Charge*, £7/£5. 8.15pm. *One Night Only*, £7/£5. 6.45pm. Call 08712 211 729.

See www.lyric.co.uk

Young people living in Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Ealing, Hounslow, Hillingdon, Harrow, Brent, Richmond and Wandsworth aged 14 to 19 can apply to be members of LYC. Download a membership form at www.lyric.co.uk, email lyc@lyric.co.uk or call 020 8741 6863.

LAURA HEPWORTH

LAURA, 19, PLAYS A BALLERINA IN *DEPTH CHARGE*

DRAMA?
"A play by the Icelandic theatre group Vesturport called *Metamorphosis* inspired me to try out. I was doing a theatre studies course at Gumley House, Isleworth, at the time and I couldn't resist auditioning for the LYC's Acting Up class. I was scared, but after 10 weeks I knew I was on the right track."

DREAMS?
"I dream the thought of conformity. Commuting to a desk job in formal clothes and a briefcase is not for me. I like being creative

and acting is a good place to start."

THE SHOW?

"I love the physicality of the show. Theatre in school was very theory based, so this is totally new. The character I play, unlike real life, is a ballerina who's fascinated by the office life and the suits. Amit pushes us to our limit, I just hope my body can keep up!"



COURTNEY MITCHELL

COURTNEY, 19, LEFT, PLAYS AN AMBITIOUS ACTOR IN *DEPTH CHARGE*

DRAMA?
"I feel like I've always been acting. Like when you get a pair of socks at Christmas and you say 'Wow! Thank you,' through gritted teeth. Turning that into a career, however, began with the Lyric. They visited my school, West Thames College, Isleworth, to raise awareness of the Lyric Young Company (LYC). After that there was no looking back."

DREAMS?
"Acting and writing are my passion, credit-crunch pressure won't chain me to a nine to five. *Depth Charge* will be my second show with the LYC and I've just finished writing a screenplay for a film called *British Beef*. It's a cross between *Gangs of New York* and *Adulthood*."

THE SHOW?
"The theme is the journey between childhood and adulthood. Every one of us has a journey. Some die, some escape, others use love or work as a vehicle for getting what they want. We're really going to shake people with the depth we've gone to, to show our emotions."



SOPHIE ROCHE

SOPHIE, 15, PLAYS A PERIOD DRAMA CHARACTER IN *ONE NIGHT ONLY*

DRAMA?
"I love the feeling of being in somebody else's shoes, trying to make the audience feel those adopted emotions."

DREAMS?
I've been acting in school plays since I was 10 and would love to do it as a career. I'm studying at James Allen's Girls' School, Dulwich, and want to study English at university.

Reading is such a big part of drama – the writers, the characters, the vocabulary – and then hopefully get in to drama school."

THE SHOW?
"The play works through lots of scenes from different film genres, such as western, horror or rom-com. My character is in the period drama scene. The spontaneity of improvisation is such a rush, working with Cartoon De Salvo has broadened my perception of what theatre can be."

ABOVE: A scene from *One Night Only*