



Sixth Form Mercury

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Blood, Sweat and Tears: OFWGKTA Live at Brixton

On Thursday 29 March OFWGKTA, or Odd Future for short, played the second venue of their UK tour at the Brixton Academy to a full crowd of 5,000 fans.

The infamous alternative rap collective - led by rapper Tyler, The Creator - has shot to fame over the past year, gaining renown for their unconventional musical style and controversial lyrics depicting rape, cannibalism and murder.

Odd Future has managed to gather an almost cult-like following in what could be a response to the music that has dominated the charts in recent years; Bruno Mars has already found himself in the lyrical crosshairs of Tyler, The Creator, in his most popular hit 'Yonkers'.

And their following is not just because of their music. To put it simply, Odd Future's live performances are insane - with critics likening them to the performances of many of the founding punk bands of the 1970s. Whilst playing at the Camden Crawl in 2011, one of their first ever UK performances, they incited a full stage invasion at the end of their set, not long after one of the group jumped off a 10ft speaker stack into the crowd.

With moshing, stage diving and general chaos ensuing wherever they play, Brixton promised to be no different.

The evening started with a long queue that stretched round the academy - full of 16-18-year-old 'hipsters' complete with vans, snap-backs and the signature Odd Future upside-down cross t-shirt.



Odd Future (full name: Odd Future Wolfgang Kill Them All), whose live performances have received critical acclaim for their direct crowd involvement and mad stage antics.

Unfortunately this wasn't the longest wait of the evening, with the group's only female member 'Syd Tha Kyd' taking to the stage to perform a warm-up DJ set almost an hour and a half after the official start time.

But when it eventually started, boy did it start. Stage divers were randomly flung on top of the people in front of them, teeth were knocked out, blood was spilt and at one point (ironically enough, during 'Transylvania') I was bitten on the shoulder for no apparent reason.

The drowning bass further antagonised the crowd and even during the slightly calmer songs it was hard to stand upright for any length of time. The atmosphere was electric and definitely helped to fill the void left by the poor sound quality of the speaker system.

But then live music isn't about the quality: it's about the performance the group puts on. Not a Beyonce-esque choreographed dance performance but a genuinely crowd-pleasing one.

Odd Future manage this perfectly, having on-stage play fights and banter between the members that made it feel like, for them at least, as it wasn't just another gig. They weren't just churning out music to make money; they were doing it because it was fun, and because they were part of the crowd. Overall, the live show was amazing - a view echoed the day after, all over the internet.

However, the night left me with a feeling that the life of Odd Future may be short-lived.

A group like this can only survive so long on the support of frustrated teens and the publicity gathered by controversial lyrics; all the hype surrounding the collective feels like it could disappear as quickly as it appeared, only a year ago.

More importantly, the group hardly makes any money from selling music. Most of their earlier albums are free to download on the internet and fans are not likely to be happy paying for the new albums, with mp3 players full of older, free music. Indeed, performances and the pop-up stores that Odd Future set up when they go on tour seem to be one of their only sources of income.

However, while they're performing and making music the many members of Odd Future seem to be having fun and living the dream. Let's just hope that this amazingly unique group continues to enthral audiences in the future.

By Oliver Rooke



Dear All,

The exams have emerged from the shadows of what seemed like ages away, and now they're on our doorstep, begging for time and attention.

Appropriately, this issue of the Mercury contains wise musings on the education system, the first appearance of our new sports correspondent, and perhaps less appropriately some enlightening views on Odd Future and the 3D phenomenon.

As ever, enjoy, and try to have fun revising.

Kane Walpole and Nikhil Vyas

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Are we mindless machines or people?

By Jake South

As an AS student, I shudder to think of the insane workload I must now manage and how, over the next five years, I'm going to see a massively increased workload. As soon as all that is done, I will be propelled in to the 'real world' of work. And from then on I shall be working non-stop.

It seems that modern education is focused only on getting us to the next part of life.

Obviously, this is the most important part of education and should remain so but the current system operates under the belief that this is the only role education should serve.

Education is also important for allowing us to develop as individuals, in addition to 'cramming our brains full of wonderful knowledge'. Yet all we now seem to do is 'cram that knowledge in'. Our school lives are dominated by exams. It appears that at present students are now doing only one of two things: taking an exam or panicking about one.

This is a modern development, stemming from the need to give us the best education we can get in order to better the world in general. But how are exams supposed to help in this? Previous generations managed to cope pretty well without SATs, GCSEs, AS levels and whatever other qualifications the government would like to throw at us.

Admittedly they did mess up the economy several times, start a few wars and so on. However, I'm fairly confident that

if Tony Blair had taken his SATs, he'd still have invaded Iraq, and that if Gordon Brown had passed his AS level in Critical Thinking we'd still be in an economic nightmare.

Exams are a great way to check if a student is good at sitting in their room the night before, reading a revision guide. They do not allow for a rich, developed understanding of a subject. Syllabuses are tight, restrictive dictators in every subject: we must learn 'x' and 'y' and know it in 'z' amount of detail.

Where is the room for free thinking?

Students should be allowed to pursue areas that interest them; they should be allowed to discuss and develop their own ideas about. Currently, we are taught something, we learn it by heart, we are told various interpretations that we must be able to justify equally, and then we expel this from our brains onto the exam paper. This is a great way to alienate people rather than inspire a real love for a particular subject.

At Wilson's we are very lucky to be taught in a way that allows for independent thought but even Wilson's can't escape the trauma that is constant examination.

Some progress was made a few years ago with the collapse of the Key Stage 3 SATs but very little else has changed. The worst area at secondary level is years 11 to 13. At the end of these years students will undertake the three most important exams of their education: GCSEs, AS Levels and A Levels. Once we reach this point it is a matter of 'learn this', 'revise this',

do an exam on this and repeat a further two times.

It is stifling growth.

The greatest, most successful people of the past hundred years would not attribute their success to the many exams they did. Would Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill, Steve Jobs or Richard Branson say they succeeded because of their school life and exams?

Education is critical in enriching a person, so they would say it had an influence. But exams are a bureaucratic measure to evaluate competence in a subject. And an inefficient one at that; Einstein himself was not regarded as particularly bright at school.

Exams are at heart a method to separate students into groups the government decides are intelligent or not, based on the current beliefs of the time.

Yet every truly great mind has broken the beliefs of their time. They have proposed theories that defy what we know. We don't know everything, yet the current use of exams suggests that someone thinks we do. If exams continue to grow in usage as they have recently then there will soon be very few independent thinkers with bold new ideas.

Enough with the indoctrination: it is time to bring back the freedom to think for ourselves - or we risk becoming mindless machines that simply download the knowledge of our forebears!

3D: Think twice before watching

By Harrison Gower

Titanic is back. Again.

I must confess that containing my initial joy was difficult. I mean, let's be honest, another chance to see Leonardo Di Caprio freeze in the Arctic Ocean is too good to miss.

But my delirious euphoria at this revelation was ruined by one number that when followed by a specific letter drains any shred of dignity from a film. Yes, that's right. They made it 3D. According to the big guns in Hollywood, 3D is the 'next big thing'. It is the technology that will finally create an 'all-immersive' cinematic experience - yet I'm finding it hard to see 3D as anything other than a means to an expensive headache.

Unfortunately for the industry, their 'next big thing' has developed a gimmicky nature which, despite James Cameron's valiant efforts, it will never shake off. Think of 3D and the stereotypical bullets flying towards the audience, or the antagonist's cruel fingers reaching to seemingly touch your face, are the only images that spring to mind.

The technology has for so long been abused by filmmakers as a 'cheap thrill' that now it is the only way to use it. The problem is that this no longer has any actual effect. I don't duck or swerve to avoid the customary flaming arrow and neither does anyone else. No-one spills their highly overpriced popcorn, or screams or even lets out a tiny 'ooh'. Instead we sit there in glee that the boring 3D bit is over and we can return to the story of the oversized Smurfs on a mission for Greenpeace.

It doesn't shock us or entertain us or fill us with awe and wonder anymore. So get rid of it.



3D has spread to film, TV and video games—but does it really live up to the hype?

3D has become a gratuitous feature which detracts from the overall storyline. Filmmakers see it as a way of making more money and would add a needless 3D chase scene into a film about the expenses scandal.

In fact, the new adaptation of the novel *The Life of Pi* has been made in 3D. If you don't know what *The Life of Pi* is, you don't need to. All you need to know is that nothing happens. The message behind it and the storyline is very interesting but action-wise? Nada. Like, literally nothing. Yet the film version of it will have a 3D fight scene. And why's that? Because add 3D to a film and you can ramp up the price of a ticket by a couple of quid without really actually adding anything to the film.

Some sly dog found this out in the early noughties and has been ripping us off ever since. So we all pay that extra money, so we don't miss out when everyone else goes and sees the 3D version of film. The mastermind's plan is genius, yes, but it's because of him that I can't afford my popcorn anymore. And I like popcorn. Damn him.

So anyway ... I've paid that extra money and hurried away from the concessions stand to avoid the grief of the movies with no popcorn but

it's fine because I'm going to be wowed by the awe-inspiring visual effects of 3D. I will feel like I'm part of the action, part of the Pandora world and immersed in the plight of the blue people because I've paid my extra money and got my 3D glasses.

But it's rubbish. The glasses add a dulling tint to the bright colours on the screen and cause you to focus your eyes so that by the time you take

them off you are blind and have a blinding headache. And to add insult to injury, nothing about the 3D added anything to the experience that wasn't already there in 2D.

3D does not make me hate, sorry, love the characters of *Titanic*. 3D does not entrance me into the storyline (rather it stops you by forcing you to adjust the glasses every few minutes). 3D does not cause me to appreciate a witty script. In fact, 3D adds nothing new that wouldn't have been there in the "flat" version of the film. As Roger Ebert said, "Every single frame of a 3D movie gives you something to look at that is not necessary."

After that rant it would be easy to assume that I have nothing but disdain for 3D. But don't get me wrong. The potential of the third dimension in films is incontrovertibly intriguing - and wondrous if the technology is used correctly and is developed enough.

However, at the moment the salient facts are these: 3D is expensive, gimmicky and, well, it's just a bit rubbish really isn't it?



Keep guessing... By Manu Pillai

It's another special celebrity from the genius of Manu Pillai, and as the observant among you may notice, he's been branching out in his artistic style.

For those who didn't manage to work it out, last issue's caricature portrayed actor Johnny Depp.

Good luck to everyone for this issue!

Whoever is the lucky first person to contact us with the right answer will win a pair of first class airline tickets to Mauritius.

Just kidding, of course.

The logic of Lorenzo

By Lorenzo Wong

Mercury's new sports correspondent sums up what could be next season's best buys

After a disappointing season for English football, with only one contender in Champions League left, the following players have the potential to revive the failing state of football in this country.

Demba Ba, Newcastle United: You'd have thought Alan Pardew wouldn't dare sell one of his star strikers to a rival Premier League side. Well, think again. Unfortunately, due to past problems with his right leg, Newcastle felt it appropriate to put a relatively low buy-out clause on his contract. And when I say low, I mean around £10m.

Things don't seem all that rosy for Ba in the Geordie nation either, with the Senegalese striker reacting angrily to being substituted against Swansea, a game in which fellow countrymen / arch nemesis Papiss Cisse notched both goals. Do I sense tensions arising within the Toon?

Edinson Cavani, Napoli: This man was made to play in the Premier League. Strong, hard working, and a deadly finisher, Cavani has scored an astonishing 61 goals in 89 games for Napoli. With his club looking as though they won't qualify for the Champions League, the Uruguayan could be tempted to move on in his career.

The favourites for his signature seem to be Manchester City and Chelsea, with both clubs having problems with their current strikers. However, any club considering signing the 25-year-old may have to offload first as Napoli won't be doing bargains this summer. Transfer value: £40m.

Clint Dempsey, Fulham: Admittedly, I struggle to give an unbiased opinion on this fella, which is why I'm just going to come out and say that Dempsey has been the best midfielder in the league this season. The American has been nothing short of brilliant, scoring 22 goals in 41 games, with most coming from left midfield. Versatile, skilful and good in the air, Dempsey can operate anywhere across the midfield and just off the striker - proving to be invaluable to a Fulham side who lack firepower elsewhere.

The Texan has openly stated that he is seeking pastures new, with Arsenal looking to be the frontrunners at the moment. With only a year left on his contract, and being 29 years old, Dempsey could be leaving the Cottage for a bargain. Transfer value: £10m.

Eden Hazard, Lille: Not a day goes by in which I don't hear someone mentioning this man's name. But, let's be honest, no one has seen this lad play a game of football and I wouldn't count on FIFA Ultimate Team being evidence

of his potential.

Having only experienced the dismal French league, and being 5ft 7 in, I have a feeling Eden wouldn't enjoy the 'cold wet Tuesday night in Stoke' test. Nevertheless, Hazard is supposed to be a terrific dribbler of the ball, possessing a fair amount of flair. He also appears to have an eye for goal, hitting the net 44 times in his relatively short career with Lille. Then again, wasn't Arsenal flop Gervinho supposed to have all of these attributes? (Apparent) transfer value: £35m (!).

Junior Hoilett, Blackburn Rovers: Perhaps a player who wouldn't be right at the top of anyone's shortlist, the Canadian has stood out from a poor Blackburn side this season, with 6 goals and 5 assists - a pretty impressive stat for a midfielder. Hoilett is unbelievably quick and is a very good dribbler of the ball. Most importantly, despite standing at 5ft 8in, he is able to handle the physicality of the English game. However, Hoilett has a tendency to be greedy.

So, why are so many of the top Premier League sides interested in him? He's available for nothing in the summer. Transfer value: £0.