

MUSIC

WITH SALLY BROWNE



PLAYLIST



COUNTRY
BLOWN AWAY
CARRIE UNDERWOOD

Being tied to the American Idol brand has served 2005 winner Carrie Underwood well. Underwood not only strikes a chord with country-music enthusiasts, but occasionally traverses into mainstream popular music with catchy rock beats and well-crafted hooks and choruses.

Her fourth album employs the same strategy: clapped beats and punky guitar riffs, country-pop hybrids and lyrical storytelling. While the album doesn't quite live up to its title, one can't accuse Underwood of false advertising, either.

Karen Tye



POP
... LITTLE BROKEN HEARTS
NORAH JONES

There's something different about Norah Jones on... *Little Broken Hearts*. She injects some heartache into this record, a collaboration with producer Danger Mouse, giving it a bit more edge than her previous placid outings. The melodic *Say Goodbye* and the sultry title track

showcase the singer's evolution. Rocking first single *Happy Pills* is also delightfully poppy. While this album starts a little too slowly with *Good Morning*, overall Jones's fifth solo album contains much-needed spark, while staying true to her bluesy roots.

Samantha Landy



HIP-HOP
FIRST SERVE
DE LA SOUL

De La Soul have done it again – and in the same vein as the Tupac hologram at Coachella, there is an almost ghostly and captivating quality to their most recent offering *First Serve*. The album takes fans back to the halcyon days, alluding to the full hip-hop sounds of the 90s and early 2000s.

It is a concept album – think Ugly Duckling's *Taste the Secret* – that takes the listener on a happy journey with fictional characters Witter and Barrow as they try to become rap stars. Skits help the narrative along while paying homage to hip-hop's golden era.

Lauren Bruce



FOLK ROCK
MY HEAD IS AN ANIMAL
OF MONSTROSITIES AND MEN

From the opening lines, the debut album from this Icelandic sextet is a stunner, hauling in listeners like fish in a dragnet with its haunting and dramatic lyrics, rousing chorus and anthemic melodies. The high drama of the folk-flavoured arrangements reflects what's

going on in the lyrics: howling ghosts, entwining seaweed, lurking sharks. With vocals shared by male and female singers, the atmosphere perfectly captures sub-arctic harshness. Truly, a monster of an album.

Graeme Hammond



REBEL WITH APPLAUSE

Spurred by the lack of feisty women in mainstream music, Shirley Manson reformed Garbage after a seven-year hiatus for an album of anthems for the outsiders, writes **Sally Browne**

The “get the band back together” conversations began when Shirley Manson was sitting down to dinner with her agent friend.

Her agent was lamenting the fact there were few cool female role models out there. Back in the 1990s (was it so long ago?) Shirley Manson, as the lead singer of Garbage, rocked on to the scene – a smart-talking, quick-witted, sassy and talented woman who exuded girl power before the Spice Girls wrapped it in a McDonald's wrapper and sold it as fast food.

Teamed with the writing and production credits of Butch Vig – who has supplied his Midas touch to records by Nirvana, Green Day and Foo Fighters – and bandmates Duke Erikson and Steve Marker, they made an unstoppable foursome.

They wrote songs that didn't seem to fit in any genre, yet were in everybody's record collection. They were on every music channel and in every music magazine. They released four studio albums, followed those up with world tours, and sold 13 million records.

But it's been seven years since Garbage released a new album. Their last tour ended early amid a crumbling relationship with their record company. Garbage felt they had been sold down the river to a major label that didn't care about them. “It got really, really bad. It got obstructive, oppressive and frustrating,” Manson says.

Now, though, they're experiencing a renewed vigour with the release of their fifth album *Not Your Kind of People* on their own label Stunvolume.

It's a welcome return to form. And so we have the band's agent to thank. And when you hear Manson tell the story, in her inimitable Scottish accent, it goes something like this: “She kind of gave me a ball-kick. What is your problem? Why are you not out there making music? We need women in bands. We need feisty girls. We need girls who are going to push up against the mainstream a little. Get your finger out of your arse, get off the couch, what are we going to do to get you out of this inertia?”

Not that Manson, 45, has been idle during those seven years.

She has, in her words, “bought a house, learnt how to drive, adopted a dog, got married, made a record, then travelled all over the world to India and Africa and Bhutan and Laos”.

“I had a life, you know.”
In 2010, she married producer and Garbage sound engineer Billy Bush; the TV role was as an ass-kicking killing machine on *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles* (“I was totally typecast,” she laughs; and the solo record was never released).

But for Manson, who has been in bands since she was a rebellious teenager in Edinburgh, it was refreshing to discover a life outside of music. There are so many dimensions that make up a good life, beyond fame and fortune, and Manson admits that with current generations, there seems to be an unhealthy obsession with celebrity and the spotlight.

While famous people, whether they like it or not, by default often have that weighty side-career of being role models, that blueprint shouldn't be just to be another famous person.

“In the last decade, people's obsession with so-called celebrity and fame and the spotlight and crooked notions of what success is through watching reality shows has skewed everyone's perceptions about what success is or should be,” she says.

“To me success is doing something that makes you happy. Going home at night and being happy in your home with whoever you've chosen to live your life with, the occupation you've chosen to do in your life. That's success. The showbiz side of success is really transient and irrelevant and somewhat boring,” she laughs.

Despite a seemingly perfect package, Manson has always been open and honest about her insecurities and imperfections – she was reliable. Although she is confident now, it wasn't an easy path. “It's probably taken me a long time, probably into my early 40s, to feel properly confident and I guess that just comes from doing something for a long time. Once you start to succeed at something you tend to become a little more confident in all aspects of your life. But confidence is

just perception. It's not much more than your own perception of self. And I wasn't a very confident child. Even when we were the top of the charts and first hit the airways, I was riddled with insecurity, and now I look back and think ‘You silly girl, you wasted such time and energy worrying about not being good enough’, and in fact that was just my own perception of myself at the time.”

It was a sentiment expressed in Garbage's classic hit song, *Stupid Girl*. “We all have these terrible negative voices,” Manson admits. “All human beings do, and sometimes we make the mistake of listening to them too well.” She may not have “figured it all out” as she's got older, but she's definitely found ways of drowning out the negative self-talk.

“I've found a way to go ‘Here comes that really scary, nasty voice that tells me ‘I'm not good enough. I'm going to turn that voice down and soldier on with my day’. I don't have time for that nonsense.”

In terms of role models, Manson says she admired the prickly, spiky characters such as Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders or Patti Smith. “There's lots of girls I admire (today), but I don't necessarily relate to,” she says. “I look at Beyonce and I admire her enormously, as an artist, a performer and a person, but I can't possibly relate to her. There's a dearth of women I can relate to and they are the women who tend to be the outsiders, the agitators, the rebels.”

Those outsiders are enshrined in the title track of Garbage's *Not Your Kind of People*.

“The sentiment behind that song is actually an inversion of constantly feeling we are outsiders. I think we have managed to invert that idea of feeling left out to instead embracing our outsider status and welcoming other people to join us.” Manson says. “That's kind of how I see that title. That we're no longer bummed out that we're not accepted, we have a sense of our own world as oddballs and freaks, and we're asking them to join us if they feel the same way.”

Not Your Kind of People is out now.



Pin-up pariah: Garbage's lead singer Shirley Manson (left); and (above) with band members (from left) Steve Marker, Duke Erikson and Butch Vig.

GIG GUIDE

TROY CASSAR-DALEY AND HARMONY JAMES
Brothers Leagues Club, Cairns, today 2pm.

PRINCE
Brisbane Entertainment Centre, May 18 and May 26. ticketek.com.au 132 849.

NICKI MINAJ
Brisbane Entertainment Centre, May 19. ticketek.com.au 132 849.

BARRIE GOTT'S QUEENSLAND POPS
QPAC, May 19. The Famous orchestra's On Broadway show. 2pm and 8pm.

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK AND BACKSTREET BOYS
Brisbane Entertainment Centre, May 23. ticketek.com.au 132 849.

BOY AND BEAR
Andergrove Tavern, Mackay, May 23; The Venue, Townsville, May 24; Brothers Leagues, Cairns, May 25.

ADAM HARVEY WITH AMBER LAWRENCE
City Golf Club, Toowoomba, May 25; Beaudesert Centre for Arts and Culture, May 26; Ipswich Civic Centre, May 27.

TIM FREEDMAN
The Venue, Townsville, June 1; Tanks Arts Centre, Cairns, June 2.

DEAD LETTER CIRCUS
The Spotted Cow, Toowoomba, June 1; The Hi-Fi, Brisbane, June 2; Brothers Leagues Club, Cairns, June 7; The Venue, Townsville, June 8; Magnums, Airlie Beach, June 9; Kings Beach Tavern, Caloundra, June 10.

TRIPLE S ONE-NIGHT STAND
Dalby Showgrounds, June 2. Featuring The Temper Trap, Matt Corby, 360 and Stonefield. Free.

MISSY HIGGINS
The Tivoli, Brisbane, June 6. ticketek.com.au 132 849.

PALM CREEK FOLK FESTIVAL
Mountain View Lake Eco Park, south of Townsville, north Queensland, June 8-11. palmcreek.com.au

LADY GAGA
Brisbane Entertainment Centre, June 13, 14 and 16. ticketek.com.au

TRAIN
The Tivoli, June 11. ticketek.com.au 132 849.

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COTTON KEAYS & MORRIS \$32
SAT 19 MAY 8.30PM

THE RAT PACK FROM VEGAS SWING WITH THE KINGS \$35
SAT 26 MAY 8.30PM

IT'S ONLY ROCK 'N' ROLL STARRING JADE HURLEY \$25
FRI 1 JUN 8.30PM

THE BIG O STAGE SHOW SPECIAL GUEST GERRARD O'DONOGHUE \$35
SAT 2 JUN 8.30PM

LANCE LIPINSKY ME AND JERRY LEE \$35
FRI 8 JUN 8.30PM

BUDDY'S BACK THE BUDDY HOLLY SHOW FEATURING SCOT ROBIN \$25
SAT 9 JUN 8.30PM

DOOLEY ROCKS COOLEY \$32
SUN 10 JUN 7.30PM

INXS COAST TO COAST
THURS 28 & FRI 29 JUNE 8.30PM TICKETS \$60