

MUSIC

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SALLY
BROWNE

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PLAYLIST



FOLK ROCK

FADE

Yo La Tengo



New Jersey trio Yo La Tengo, whose 12 previous albums since 1986 have had a range of obscure and playful titles, opt for an ominous one for album No.13. Hopefully it's not their last. *Fade* is a sweet and unassuming folk-flavoured record that quickly builds a momentum with

shuffling drums and murmured vocals, easily pulling the listener into its slipstream. It's on the five-minute long *Stupid Things* that they really start to shine, and from there the mood is set. It's quiet, meditative and seductive. What a delight.

Graeme Hammond



ROCK

OPPOSITES

Biffy Clyro



We've always known rockin' Scots Biffy Clyro were good - we just didn't realise they were that good when they officially heralded their arrival in the big time with fifth album *Only Revolutions* in 2009. Much like the way rock giants Foo Fighters can't be pigeonholed, Simon Neil

and the Johnston brothers James and Ben have unveiled a powerful 80-minute double album of diversity: It's dark, then light; blissful and angry. Musically it's brilliant. They've entered the arena with swagger and offer a rocking treat.

Scott Podmore



POP

LOVE SONGS

Destiny's Child



On *Love Songs*, Destiny's Child is really scraping the bottom of the barrel. Having already released compilations in 2005 and last year, the trio have now lumped together a bunch of their ballads, which weren't what they excelled at. No, Destiny's Child was all about fiery hits

such as *Independent Women* and *Bootylicious*, so this collection of ballads that were initially album fillers simply falls flat. Of course, there are a few exceptions. *Cater 2 U* charted respectably and is one hell of a catchy number.

Karen Tye



NOSTALGIA

SO RARE 4

Barry Humphries



Famously, his acute ear and eye have been Barry Humphries' foundations for global success as a satirical writer and performer of rarest quality and longevity. Less well-known is his keen ear for, and knowledge of, music from yesteryear. Several years ago fellow Melbourne and

veteran record producer Bill Armstrong launched his long-time friend's "career" as a compiler of rare gems. Thus was created *So Rare 1*, followed by 2, 3 and now *So Rare 4* - some of the singers on it will surprise aficionados of nostalgic music.

Bob Crimeen

ECHOES OF SUCCESS

Singer-actor Josh Groban appreciates where he is in his life, writes **Sally Browne**

It's late in the evening and Josh Groban, on the phone from Los Angeles, is taking a look around his apartment. His dog, Sweeney, is snoring on the floor, wondering why his boss is working at such a late hour. There's a bag of leftover food from the place where he just went to dinner with his parents. The news is on TV with the sound turned down.

It's a "very messy apartment", he confesses.

Groban may have sold 25 million records, been on *Oprah* six times and sold out the Sydney Opera House several times over, but the 31-year-old performer is as down to earth as they come.

In fact, there are two sides to Josh Groban - there's the talented tenor singer, whose warm operatic tones have touched the hearts of millions around the world. And then there's the funny guy who sang a series of Kanye West tweets on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, who loves British comedy and has had cameos in a number of shows and films including *The Office*, the movie *Crazy, Stupid, Love* and most recently *Coffee Town*, in which he plays a tattooed, goateed "nineties rocker jerk".

"It was really fun for me to be playing against type," he says. "I love comedy and I love surrounding myself with funny people. Because music is so serious."

Right now, though, it's the music that's taking the spotlight as Groban releases his sixth record *All That Echoes*, out on February 1. The classic interpreter of songs has taken his talents one step further this time co-writing seven songs on the record.

One of those is lead single *Brave*, a soaring, cinematic number that's ripe for a film soundtrack. What kind of film might it be?

"Maybe it would go to the movie *Brave*," he jokes in classic Groban fashion. "Maybe the music video will have long, long red hair and a kilt. We'll see what happens."

On a serious note, the singer, who first gained attention when he stood in for Andrea Bocelli singing opposite Celine Dion at a Grammy rehearsal at the age of 17, admits he has had to be brave at many points in his life.

"If there wasn't (those times), I would have had a very boring life," he says thoughtfully.

"From the ages of one until 18, you're basically bombarded every day with the moments when you have to fight your fears. But I've been very lucky in my life.

"I've been lucky in the opportunities that I've had but I've also been lucky that I was given the strength to be brave in situations where I'm not sure I could have been otherwise, moments where my parents gave me courage, my teachers, friends. I'm lucky to

have such amazing friends around me. Obviously you think about the giant moments.

"You think about people who are out in the frontlines of a war or people who are fighting to save lives in a hospital but then I really think it's the smaller moments, the ones that are the day-to-day, get-you-out-of-bed kind of situations that can sometimes be the most meaningful."

As well as other self-penned songs, such as *Below the Line* - an uplifting song that came from Groban's experiences living on less than \$1.50 a day for charity - *All That Echoes* features a rich bag of covers from Glen Hansard's *Falling Slowly*, from the movie *Once*, to Stevie Wonder's *I Believe* to obscure Danish band Choir of Young Believers' *Hollow Talk*. It's a record he's proud of.

Groban, who grew up in LA, the son of a school teacher and a businessman, says he feels differently now he's in his 30s. He's finally reached the maturity to match his music, he says.

"I feel like I'm really in kind of a sweet spot of where I want to be musically," he says.

"I started when I was 17 years old. I think that I've had a lot of growing to do. I think my mind needed to match my sound a little bit.

"I think that once you put in that Malcolm Gladwell book, once you put in your 10,000 hours, once you've been on three tours and released six albums, there's a certain amount of experience and a confidence that you get, not in a cocky way, just a feeling of self-assuredness, just knowing who you are, what you want to portray, and being OK with all sides.

"At 31, I think I'm actually in the perfect position because I think I'm experienced enough to make the best music

in my career, and I'm still young enough to be really excited about the future. So there's a lot behind me, but there's a lot left to be done.

"It's a fun place to be."

And there is plenty of room in his life for fun. Groban is looking forward to the release of *Coffee Town*, written and directed by Brad Copeland, of *Arrested Development* fame. For the "nineties rocker" role he had to really stretch his acting chops by sporting fake tattoos and a real goatee.

"A real goatee," he confesses. "I'm quite meticulous about it. I've always had the same facial scruff forever and ever and ever, since I was like three years old. The producers were like, 'we want you to grow your beard, have it shaved, and do a goatee'. Which is great when you're on set because you're totally in that character.

"But then afterwards, you're like just hanging out with your friends and they're going, 'What the hell happened to your face?'"

Groban says it's his dad that makes him laugh the

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GIG GUIDE

NORAH JONES

Brisbane Convention Centre, February 19. ticketek.com.au

BARRY GIBB

Brisbane Entertainment Centre, February 19. ticketek.com.au

MY BLOODY VALENTINE

The Tivoli, Brisbane, February 20. ticketek.com.au

GLENN FREY

Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC), South Bank, Brisbane, February 21. qpac.com.au

THE ROYALES, THE MISTAEKS, HELLO HOKKAIDO

The Zoo, Brisbane, February 21. zoo.oztix.com.au

MAC MILLER AUSTRALIAN TOUR

The Arena Brisbane, 210 Brunswick St, February 22. eventfinder.com.au

BLINK-182

RNA Showgrounds, Brisbane, February 22. ticketek.com.au

BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE

The Hi-Fi, 125 Boundary St, Brisbane, February 22. thehifi.com.au

DEEP PURPLE & JOURNEY

Brisbane Entertainment Centre, February 26. ticketek.com.au

NEIL FINN & PAUL KELLY

Brisbane Convention Centre, February 27. ticketek.com.au

TIM ROGERS AND THE BAMBOOS

Concert Hall, QPAC, South Bank, Brisbane, February 28. qpac.com.au

FUTURE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Doomben Racecourse, 75 Hampden St, Brisbane, March 2. moshtix.com.au

NEIL YOUNG WITH CRAZY HORSE

Brisbane Entertainment Centre, March 7. ticketek.com.au

KISS AND MOTLEY CRUE

Brisbane Entertainment Centre, March 12. ticketek.com.au

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND THE E STREET BAND

Brisbane Entertainment Centre, March 14, 16. ticketek.com.au

COUNTING CROWS

Concert Hall, QPAC, South Bank, Brisbane, March 27. qpac.com.au

most. "He's the funniest person I know." And he's getting funnier in his old age, his son says. Either that, or as Groban grows older, he's getting the "dad jokes" more. "I think you might be right because I tried to sit down and tell the jokes to my friends, and they're like, 'ugh, really?' So I think I'm starting to develop sort of a dad humour minus being the dad. "One of my favourite things about going to England actually is British comedy. I've always been a fan of *Monty Python* and it's always been a place I can go to flex the funny

bone. I always watch BBC America and that kind of stuff. I like British humour. "And living in LA and New York, it's great to see things like the Groundlings and the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre. I've got a lot of improv friends doing stand-up comedy in New York." The ever-versatile Groban also has an upcoming cameo on *CSI:NY*, in time for Valentine's Day, for which he plays himself. Groban admits he's got a couple more guest cameos in the works but can't reveal what they are as he's been "sworn to secrecy".

He'd love to do some Australian TV, he says, and audiences will get to see him perform live when he visits in April.

"Obviously with the record coming out, my time's going to be limited so I'm not going to be able to do a full film or anything right now but I like making cameos. I'll leave it there. It's really fun to kind of tell a joke and then run out."

All That Echoes was released February 1. Josh Groban performs at QPAC Concert Hall on April 26. Tickets on sale through qtix.