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New band of the day



Chris Grant (No 1,578)

Scouse motormouth signs to label run by Scots motormouth



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Chris Grant...like a rocky Tears For Fears

Hometown: Liverpool.

The lineup: Chris Grant (vocals, guitar).

The background: You may have heard that Alan McGee has started a new record label called 359. One of his first signings, along with a singer-songwriter named after one of the Beatles (clue: it's not Ringo), is Chris Grant, formerly of the Grants, who McGee once described on this site as "the best unsigned band in the world". McGee also said there was every likelihood their debut album would be the greatest album, period, ever

made. We're not sure if the Grants even completed that album or if any of the songs have been carried over to Grant's solo debut, *It's Not About War!* The point is, prepare for plenty of McGee hyperbole as he declares the godlike genius of bands who are not averse to a little self-aggrandising themselves.

Grant comes from Liverpool, which has a fine tradition of gobshites, going back to the legendary Crucial Three (Julian Cope, Ian McCulloch and Pete Wylie). But even at their purple peak Copey et al may have baulked at some of Grant's more OTT declarations and withering denunciations of the opposition. "I need to cause a storm, a lot of people like storms, you know - I am one of them," the 31-year-old told John Robb's excellent Louder Than War. "When people look back at this moment in time they will know my record was a great start and influence to many a young artist... "[McGee] doesn't make rock stars, he finds them... I'm the king of the castle here now, I'm like Prince William... I'm ready to explain the world in a song and have my say, it's a great age to do it, like when Lennon wrote Imagine... Ignore everyone you meet in music apart from me and McGee... I always knew I was better than Noel Gallagher." He added that he intends to leave "that self-proclaiming bullshit to Bono and Chris Martin", although it may be a bit late for that.

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He's not just "better than Noel", he can also match Liam when it comes to humorous assertions that, ignoring the occasional absurdity of his imagery, do contain some useful kernels. "I've proved already £100,000 studios and £100,000 producers are bullshit, nothing to do with songs at all," he said, referring to *It's Not About War!*, which he apparently "recorded on a broken £80 computer in my garage" where, he insisted, "I can do anything Eno can do at home - and if you don't believe that, you're a watermelon and should be sold on a market." We liked his no-nonsense response to all those bleating, aspiring artists who complain about how difficult it is to make it today, given the affordability of the equipment and availability of modes of dissemination such as YouTube. "It costs nothing to do, nothing at all. Write a song, bang it out, if you get 10 hits, sack it, you're crap; if you get half a million, carry on."

In fact, we like a lot of things about Grant, who was briefly signed to Elton John's management as well as Sony. We like his candour - he was "addicted to drugs and partying" and he's bringing his hard-won experiences to his music - but sometimes his determination to speak his mind gets in the way. Honesty and authenticity are overrated, and just as easy to contrive as falsity and artifice. *It's You!* uses that trick employed by Lennon on God where you dismiss all of life's verities and boil it down to an essential truth. It betrays a belief in the song, that it should work stripped-down, a counter to the belief, that we hold, that the production, the arrangement - the whole

superstructure - are as crucial a part of "the song" as the simply strummed guitar chords. We met Paddy McAloon the other day and that made us dream that the age of the terrace-poet is past. That erudition and complexity are staging a return. We're trying to imagine this song produced by Thomas Dolby. Instead, it's very Noel, and yet the voice isn't low and laddish, it's high, keening. Our Story is music for people who prod you in the chest when they speak and shout in your ear down the pub. It sounds like a rocky Tears For Fears. Like a 45 is more encouraging, even though Grant sounds more like Chris Martin than he - or McGee - would dare admit. It is soaring and angelic not gruff and anthemic. Give him a string section and a soul-girl chorus, and he may yet write something as immortal as Story of the Blues or Come Back.

The buzz: "Dark, romantic, soulful sound."

The truth: He's an '80s Scouse hothead reborn.

Most likely to: Create some (wah!) heat.

Least likely to: Explode.

What to buy: It's Not About War! is released by 359 on October 21.

File next to: Pete Wylie, Noel Gallagher, Chris Thomson, Peter Deary.

Links: facebook.com/thegrantsliverpool.

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