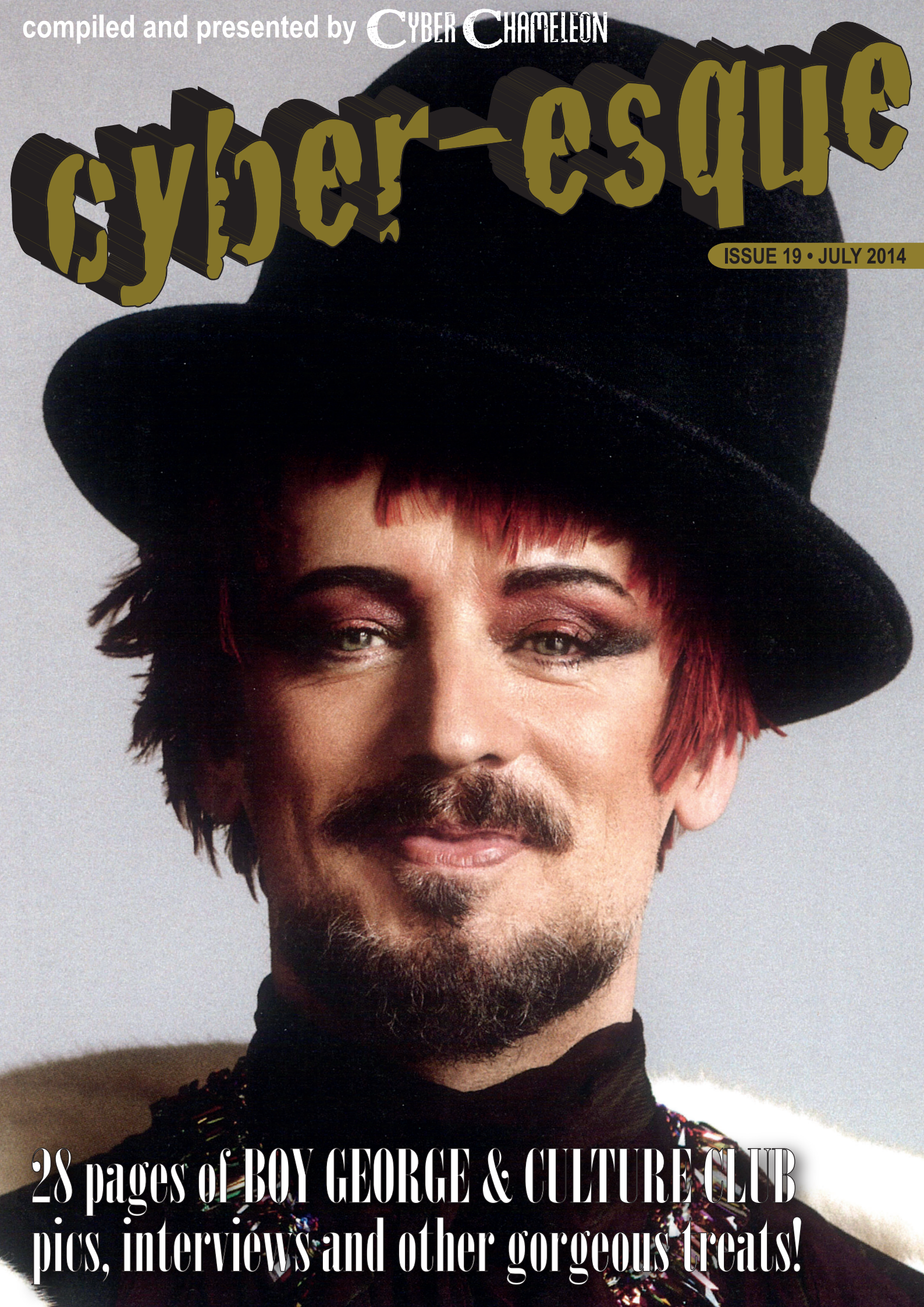


compiled and presented by CYBER CHAMELEON

# cyber-esque

ISSUE 19 • JULY 2014



28 pages of BOY GEORGE & CULTURE CLUB  
pics, interviews and other gorgeous treats!



**SNAPSHOT**





Welcome to...

# cyber-esque

Issue 19 - July 2014

(covering Nov 2013 - Jan 2014)

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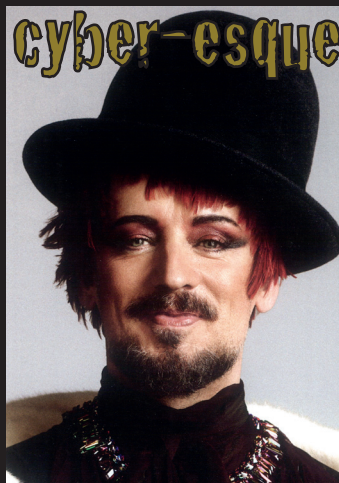
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**& so much more**

NOW FOR THE (slightly) TECHNICAL BITS... CYBER-ESQUE (Issue 19, July 2014) comes to you from Melbourne, Australia, via the Boy George / Culture Club fan-site Cyber Chameleon (www.cyberchameleon.com) and its Facebook page (facebook.com/cyberchameleon). Text and images in CYBER-ESQUE have been acquired from various (mostly online) sources, and every endeavour has been made to credit the respective sites/owners, but as some information comes in second hand, there may be some oversights - misplaced/missing credits are not intentional! No copyright infringement is intended - but with that said, CYBER-ESQUE is free of charge and is not intended for profit - it's merely a tool to share information between Boy George & Culture Club fans.

CYBER-ESQUE's concept and layout: Adrian Prosen, Cyber Chameleon's webmaster. Special thanks and love to all the usual suspects... you know who you are! Extra thanks to: Glenn Cunningham-Vilar, Steve Horler and Matthew Anderson.

Cover image and pages 2-15: Bryan Adams / Zoo Magazine



Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the new issue of CYBER-ESQUE, this time taking you through December 2013 / January 2014. You can't go past the Zoo Magazine feature - which interviewed George alongside Jean Paul Gaultier and photographs taken by Bryan Adams. You'll agree that the photos are amazing!

David Levine's book "Exposed" had a digital release, and featured many outtakes of his many sessions with George and Culture Club during the 80s. Many of the iconic record covers were shot by him, including Colour By Numbers, Karma Chameleon and Victims. Then there's another couple of Culture Club best-of releases - Gold and Icon...

And finally, there was video #2 from "This Is What I Do" for the second single, My God, shot by George and Dean Stockings and features George in many outfits and guises as he wanders around his house and neighbourhood.

There are some other great articles to read... and that brings me onto working on the next issue! Hope you enjoy this one!

*Best Wishes,*

*Adrian*



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# CYBER CHAMELEON







# Boy George and Mr. Gaultier

by Rebecca Voight / photography Bryan Adams

Boy George, a.k.a. George Alan O'Dowd, lead singer of the British group Culture Club, didn't know what hit him when he was catapulted to international stardom after appearing on *Top of The Pops* to sing the band's soft Reggae hit *Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?* in 1982.

A last minute fill in for Shakin' Stevens, the Boy's dreadlocks, arched brows, femme fatale pout and dresses covered with Haggadah symbols saw the band lose numerous TV dates at first while fans of both sexes fell for the soul singer en masse.

English rock had already pioneered mascara for men, but frills was new territory for boys back then. Meanwhile, across the Channel in Paris, Jean Paul Gaultier was earning his 'enfant terrible' fashion reputation for including the occasional man in tights in his women's shows. In 1983, his first men's show "L'Homme Objet" altered the rules of male seduction forever. The two met soon after and have been collaborators ever since.

Boy George came to Paris to talk with Jean Paul Gaultier about *This is What I Do* his first new album in 18 years, the reformation of Culture Club, the difference between style and fashion and how to survive fame one decade at a time.



Boy George  
coat GAULTIER PARIS FW '13  
T-shirt and hat Boy George's own

photos: Pal Hansen / gettyimages.com



**Rebecca Voigt: You've been friends since the 1980s when both of you became stars. How did you first meet?**

Boy George: Jean Paul came to one of my shows in '84. It was very early on at Wembley. It was an hysterical time during Christmas. We had this area where anyone important went, like family and visiting fashion luminaries. At that particular show a lot of my friends came, so there were lots of freaks from the clubs.

Jean Paul Gaultier: And after that you came to my shows. And you even did one of my men's shows.

BG: And we used to go clubbing in Paris. I'd come here, sometimes for weeks, for absolutely no reason. I've been DJing for about 25 years so I've also come here to play clubs. I've played Le Palace, The Queen and I have a lot of friends here as well. Paris is so near. In the 80s I used to just get on planes, even if we had to be back the next day. We'd go back and forth to New York, some times twice a week. It was crazy. There was a really good club scene here and it was very different to London, especially Le Palace's Sunday Tea Dance. Sometimes we'd come on a Saturday just for the Tea Dance and not even go to a club on Saturday. There were always things to do here; it was just a very exciting time. And I think fashion was an important part of that.

JPG: Yes, Vivienne Westwood was showing here and you always came for fashion week.

BG: The first time I went to a fashion show was in Paris. I think it was Yohji Yamamoto because we were all obsessed with him in the 80s. Fashion shows like Jean Paul's and Body Map's were like concerts. I remember going to one of the first Galliano shows where Patrick Cox had made these shoes for him. Galliano had gone out into the yard and rubbed dirt all over these new shoes. They were throwing fish and flour during the show and I remember Patrick Cox was crying because he'd made these beautiful shoes. The shows were like theatrical events. They were extravagant and decadent and you'd just see things you don't normally see. So we'd try to go to anything. Oh my god, I remember seeing Paco Rabanne in a warehouse in the 80s in Paris.

JPG: You know Paco Rabanne was making all these crazy predictions back then, like Neuilly and the 16th arrondissement — the most chic parts of Paris — will be destroyed. It was fabulous. It was crazy.

**RV: When did you first become aware of each other?**

JPG: I'd been aware of Boy George since the beginning when I first saw his image, even before meeting him. It was a shock. It was his voice, of course, and the music. And then what he represents, being such a beauty, and the incredible mix which really meant something to me. He personified London and what I love about England and its eccentricity, but he was particularly unique. It was really emotional for me when I first saw him because he represented such a big change. So when I met him, I was a true fan. He was my idol and when he spoke to me, and wanted to see my show it was the biggest compliment I could ever have.

BG: I described Jean Paul the other day as the Dolly Parton of fashion. You never hear anyone say awful things about Dolly Parton, or that she's complicated, even if she is. And you never hear bad stuff about Jean Paul, ever. I've never heard anyone say: 'Oh he threw a hanger at me.' I remember when we came to do a show in the 90s, my guitarist John, whom I've worked with for 30 years, came ahead. Jean Paul met him when he arrived and asked if there was anything he needed. When Jean Paul rushed back with towels and water, John asked him what his name was. I think that lack of ceremony is very typical with him.

**RV: What was the shoot like?**

BG: We did a shoot where I was squeezed into female couture.

**RV: Did you wear a corset?**

BG: I didn't wear a corset, no, but we pulled off what I call the great fashion lie. We just put it over here, pulled it over there. I do photography as well so I understand the process of how you create something that's beautiful. You create it from a kind of myth in a way, and that's what I love about fashion. You've got Jean Paul and you've got a load of other people and they're sticking something on your head and somehow you're looking sort of amazing. I wore lots of things during this shoot, I don't normally wear.

**RV: For example?**

BG: Well there's beige for a start, which I never wear. Then we had lots of feathers and jewels. It was quite exotic. It was definitely high glamour. It was gorgeous. And of course, my beard gives a strange, masculine twist to it. I guess this shoot is kind of like the Cockettes' meets Jean Paul Gaultier meets Boy George. I'm obsessed with Hibiscus and Goldie Glitters of the Cockettes.

I mentioned them in a track I did after seeing a film about them, one about Candy Darling and another about Diana Vreeland.

JPG: Oh, what luck.

BG: The thing about the Cockettes is that they didn't really do anything, they just kind of were. I was in Australia last year with a black performer called Le Gateau Chocolat who is this amazing black queen who sings in an opera voice with a beard and a gardenia in his hair. He's very Cockettes, but I don't think he even knows about them.

**RV: What was it like modeling for Jean Paul?**

BG: I'm not a model. And I'm less insecure now at 52 than I was back then. So the idea of being on the catwalk was terrifying. I did it for Jean Paul. I wouldn't do it for anybody else.

JPG: Didn't you wear the Hawaiian shirt in 3D with the hat?

BG: I also have had a lot of Gaultier in my wardrobe. Do you remember the skirt with the ties? I have the bomber jacket with the feathers, the see-through bag. I have a lot of stuff. My friends used to try and steal things. I would buy something, or get a present and bring it back to London. There was this one jacket with the studs on the left arm...

JPG: ...like the shoes from the shoot?

BG: Yes, and at least thirty people tried to steal that jacket. I had to go and get that jacket back from a lot of people.

**RV: Jean Paul began his menswear collection in the mid 80s when Boy George became a star. Were images of Boy George on your mind when you began your menswear?**

JPG: Of course. It was all part of the fantasy. What I wanted was to show a man who can seduce, have all the attributes of a woman, who can be beautiful and also can be an object.

BG: I remember Jean Paul's skirts. I got one right away, also the extra wide trousers. I remember that when those first appeared, Nick Kamen had them. You don't really have those moments so much anymore like the skirts with a bra and Alexander McQueen pants with the bum out which JPG did as well. It was memorable because people like your brothers would say: 'Oh, no man in the world is going to wear a fucking skirt.' It was just such an iconic moment.

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**“We pulled off what I'd call the great fashion lie. We just put it over here, pulled it over there. You create it from a kind of myth.”**  
**– Boy George**

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**RV: Then there were stylists like Ray Petri and the Buffalo Boys.**

BG: We were styled by him. Ray was a good friend of mine. Jamie Morgan, who worked with Ray, photographed our album sleeve. I had grown up with Marc Lebon and James Lebon, who's no longer with us now. We all lived on this street of squats which became this creative environment. There was James, Mark, Ray and Judy Blame, all of those characters. We fed off each other. It was like: 'Oh Judy's got some new jewelry, so let's go over there and get it before anybody else does.' We were very territorial about our individual style. People would be kind of nasty if you turned up with something like crimped hair and that was their look. I remember in the late 70s, long before I met Jean Paul, being on a bus on the Kings Road. I used to have these really red eyebrows and crimped hair and as far as I was concerned I was the only person in the whole world who had that look. Of course there were probably other people but as we were going along on the bus I saw this queen with red eyebrows. And we were like, 'Oh no!' It was Tasty Tim, the most beautiful boy ever. I mean, he was stunning, much more beautiful than me with long, blonde hair, like a girl. And we were like: 'Is this a boy or a girl?' So

head. It was exciting because there was a kind of juxtaposition. Jean Paul was always looking to twist things up and break the rules and not to be formulated, which is always what I'm trying to do. If someone tells me not to wear something I will wear it. And I will bring it back to fashion. Who makes the rules? You make your own rules. The thing that excites me more than anything else in life is ideas, whether you're creating music or doing fashion. Sometimes it's just instinctive, like: 'I'm going to chop the arm off of this.'

**RV: Boy George's look from the start wasn't typical drag. Your friend Marilyn was drag. But not you.**

BG: Marilyn had a great body, but I was skinny as a rake. I had no shape at all, so corsets were out. I was odd looking. I had a really big nose, a long neck and I was gangly. So I had to do what worked for me, which is what I've always done.

**RV: How did you work that out?**

BG: Well, first of all, there was the extreme poverty. I was friends with Stephen Jones, the hat maker. He made me this amazing Bodicea helmet with feathers. So I had this prized piece he'd given

I came to work in riding boots, and they would say: 'Where is the horse?' Stupid things like that. And then they didn't want to use black models because they said the American market wouldn't buy the collection when it was exactly the opposite.

BG: And that was what was so great about the 80s because all of those ideas about what was right and wrong, male and female, really shifted. Before I formed Culture Club, if you made soul music you were black, if you made rock music you were white. Suddenly, it's like we became unconscious. I had this band with a Jamaican, a Jewish guy, a typical kind of English Anglo-Saxon, and me, the Irish bird of paradise. We all came together and made a sound that wasn't really soul or rock. It was whatever it became. I was personally referencing Carmen Miranda and Liz Taylor, Marlene Dietrich, Sally Bowles and then it was Bowie, Mark Bolan all the kind of glam things. When I was 15, living with my family in South East London, there were a lot of Indian families and I used to nick the billowing trousers. It was a terrible thing to do, sorry Krishna. And I was fascinated by the Jamaican women who would be out on the street in multicolored curlers. That

## “Fashion used to be like church with the men on one side and the women on the other.” – Jean Paul Gaultier

we got off the bus just to walk past him. It was kind of hostile, but also kind of loving. Afterwards, he became a really good friend and we've stayed good friends. Back then there was such passion. I want that back. I'd kill for couture.

**RV: Jean Paul began with womenswear. Was menswear always on your mind and what made you decide to begin?**

JPG: To be honest my first women's show was without men, but I started with no money. Every time I had a bit of money, I'd add one or two men to my women's show. I thought it was stupid that the men's and women's show weren't held at the same time. It was like church with the men on one side and the women on the other.

BG: If you came out in the 70s, as I did, and you went to a gay club it was only men. In the 80s, there was a shift. I don't know about here in Paris, but in London we were young and we weren't part of that very closed environment, so we were used to hanging out with girls and wearing their clothes. When you went to a women's show in the 80s and two drop-dead gorgeous guys walked out it was refreshing. I remember being in the audience for one of Jean Paul's shows and it influenced my photography because I like to make people feel slightly uncomfortable and vulnerable. Jean Paul had these massive guys in tights and it just flipped the whole masculine stereotype on its

me and I worked around it. We used to scour the Oxfam shops. There were quite a few big theater clearances around that time so we had pirate hats and shoes in the wardrobe. But a lot of it was literally plastic fruit. We'd go to a Chinese shop in Soho and get birds and we'd sew them in our hair. I think the funniest one was bells. I sewed thousands of them in my hair once. It was hideous, and after about an hour I said: 'Cut this out.' A lot of my friends were in fashion college. They knew what was in, what was out, what was coming. We didn't care. As far as we were concerned we were what's coming. It was just a question of how it looks. We'd get up very late. We had odd jobs. I had worked in a trendy boutique on the weekends. And I had a job dressing windows which I had no qualifications for. My parents helped. It was a time of great freedom. And it was literally like, 'It's 2:00 in the afternoon, I'm having a cup of tea. Now what am I going to wear? Ooh look, this might work. A rubbish bin, cut the bottom out, wrap some fabric. I'm Nefertiti.' There are kids in London now who are doing what we did, but they do seem to be a bit more chichi, a bit more elevated than we were. We wore everything and the kitchen sink.

JPG: When I was working at Cardin it was marvelous because I saw somebody who was still free even if he was rich. But afterwards, when I worked at Patou it was exactly the opposite. When

multicultural mix of South East London really had an effect on me.

JPG: Yes, for me it was bikers with tutus. George arrived with dreadlocks, but they were romantic.

BG: In 1982, *Rolling Stone* said I had cultivated "the Bulgarian bag lady look." I remember there was a great headline: "Is it a bird, is it a plane? No, it's Boy George." I had a lot of time on my hands then. It wasn't unusual for me to redo my face four times before I'd go out to a club. I was into John Waters' characters and the kind of landscape his films painted for me as a kid in the 1970s. *Divine* was a big influence, because I really believed that America was like that. Some bits of it are. I'm very lucky that all my really good friends in New York are people like Amanda Lepore and Lady Bunny.

**RV: Did you feel transgressive when you were children?**

JPG: No, I didn't realize it. Everything was a reaction to what I didn't like. I thought women were more clever than men, that men had a certain sexiness, but weren't able to show it, that there was more than one kind of beauty, but no one realized it. This all seemed unfair to me.

BG: It was all instinctive when I was growing up. My parents were very interesting. On one level,



they were quite normal, but they were also quite open-minded, which I think is quite typical of working class families. During World War II, there was a high tolerance for gayness in working class environments. When I came out, I expected my father would kill me, but he was wonderful. My family was all quite butch. But I expect they always knew there was something different about me... My mother used to say I was theatrical and high-strung, code words for being gay in the 70s. Back then, it was like: 'Okay, we know what you are, but we don't want to talk about it', which wasn't going to work for me. I would sit in my parents' house with a mirror and tease my hair out to there. My mum would say: 'Jerry look at him; look how he's leaving the house.' And my dad would say: 'If he wants to get beaten up, that's fine.' Obviously, if someone had wanted to beat me up and he'd been there he would have killed them.

JPG: For me it was different because I was an only child; I didn't have a brother and sister. But my parents left me quite free — my grandmother most of all. I couldn't have a doll because that was for girls. So I dressed my teddy bear in a cone bra because it was the era of pinups around 1958. And later, when I started to sketch Folies Bergere clothes, my grandmother let me do it. When I was about 12, she gave me a book about the life of a guy who was going with men. Back then, she said it was a mistake. He was really sick, but not bad.

BG: My mother was a really great seamstress. There was a period when I first started to dress up that she would try to stop me leaving the house. So I would just throw the clothes in a bag outside the window. Then when she kind of surrendered to the fact that I was eccentric, she used to make things for me. I was obsessed with big prints on furniture fabric so she used to buy that and make big trousers for me. She put a copy of Rod Stewart's hit, *The Killing of Georgie*, in my drawer: 'Georgie boy was gay I guess / Nothing more and nothing less / Victim of these gay days it seems.' That was her way of saying something's up. Your parents think you've got a choice. They don't realize it's conditioned.

**RV: How did the emergence of AIDS affect you creatively?**

BG: I was like a nun back then. I was having sex with one person — my boyfriend. I was never really brave enough to be part of that really hardcore gay scene. I was too insecure physically so there's no way I would ever go anywhere near a back room or anything like that. I was very vanilla. I was really obsessed in my career, but even more than that, I was obsessed with my boyfriend. And of course friends of mine became ill and died. And I have some friends from around that time who survived. I wrote songs. There's one called *// Adore*, which is about a friend of mine who died of HIV: Like the most amazing light show you've never seen / Whirling swirling never blue / How could you go and die what a selfish thing to do.'

JPG: My boyfriend died of AIDS in 1990. It felt like a plague and even Donna Summer, someone who began her career singing in bath houses, said back then that it was a punishment of God against gays. For the past 15 years, my boyfriend

had been even more ambitious for me than I was. I thought of stopping after he died, but each collection was like a baby. So you know I'm going to do it. After that I decided I needed more adventure so I did couture. I designed for Hermès. I don't know if it's really coming from that, but since then there's been a kind of neo-puritanism. The things we were against in the 70s and 80s are back in fashion now. Everything has become a little bourgeois, even in London.

BG: It was like living in the Wild West back then. I knew about people like Peter Burns, who lived in Liverpool, or Holly Johnson. We didn't need the Internet to know there was a scene in Liverpool. There was a really trendy club there called Eric's that I always wanted to go to, but I knew that if I ever went I'd probably get beaten up because I was a southerner. I remember the excitement of doing a shoot for *i-D* in the street dressed as a nun. In a way, it's a bit like doing a record, the less equipment you have sometimes, the better it is.

**RV: In 2003, Jean Paul began designing for Hermès and George wrote *Out of Fashion*.**

JPG: I needed a new adventure. I never went to fashion school. Instead, I went straight to Pierre Cardin. Hermès was the exact opposite of me. It was a little bourgeois and I had never thought much about it before. So when Mr. Dumas asked me to do it, I thought: 'Why not put a little perversity, a little sex, and a little bit of myself into it?'

BG: I wrote *Out of Fashion* for the musical, *Taboo*, which was about my life. I always used to think it was a joke that the wrong earrings could ruin someone's career. And I love the fact that someone like Anna Wintour is in the world. I remember seeing Grace Jones at a show, laughing at Anna Wintour, who just scowled her way through it. *Out of Fashion* isn't a song against fashion. It's about taking all that too seriously and becoming what you wear.

JPG: I'm doing the things I dreamt of as a child. I was rejected for not being good at football, but I was accepted for my sketches. I guess we should say thank you to people like David Beckham, who are doing football so we can do something else.

**RV: In one video for the song *Out of Fashion*, there's a Jean Paul Gaultier show with fur protesters on the runway.**

BG: We probably stole that. There's a line in the song: 'Too much jealousy will make you crazy / I've been walking the street in shoes that kill my feet. / You're out of fashion. Your moment's over.' I suppose I'd taken myself too seriously. I was really surprised because you wrapped the fur protesters in fur!

JPG: This was my idea and I will tell you why. Because I was thinking about when you have a little cat that pees and you want to make it stop, you put its head in the spot. What they do is aggressive. They put hemoglobin on the clothes in my store when they didn't find fur.

BG: It was a punk moment.

**RV: You've been inspired by musicians and designed for them on tour from Madonna's**

***Blonde Ambition* to Marilyn Manson and Kylie Minogue. What was the first music that moved you?**

JPG: I grew up listening to French variety show music like Edith Piaf, Gloria Lasso, Charles Trenet and Aznavour. But one of my big shocks was to hear *Satisfaction* by the Rolling Stones. It was erotic.

BG: I remember hearing Diana Vreeland say: 'Mick Jagger was marvelous.' That was more than just music, Mick Jagger had everything. There's a band I saw two weeks ago called The Orwells. They're like the sons of Robert Plant. There's something about a man and a guitar that's very sexual.

**RV: What about the music in your spring show?**

JPG: The idea of the collection is biker jackets but I wanted to have movement so I thought of doing the show like a casting for 'Dancing with the Stars.' I think runway shows are boring. The models look like robots. I love it when a model doesn't know how to walk.

BG: I've just done a little tour in the U.K. for my new record, *This is What I Do* — with no sets, no props, no costumes, nothing, just because it feels right. It feels right to say: 'Okay let's focus on the music now. And then next year I'm going to do a Culture Club record. That will certainly be more of a spectacle.'

[www.boygeorgeuk.com](http://www.boygeorgeuk.com)

[www.jeanpaulgaultier.com](http://www.jeanpaulgaultier.com)

























## Review: This Is What I Do - Boy George

Sometimes being part of a successful band can hinder a musician. There aren't many legendary lead singers who have had solo careers that matched their band's successes. Sir Paul McCartney, Sir Mick Jagger, Roger Daltrey and Morrissey all had, and still have, great solo careers, however they certainly don't match that of the bands they fronted. The same can be said for Boy George. Fronting Culture Club, he was an icon of the '80s and is still very much an icon for millions all over the world, yet like the aforementioned stars, his solo projects have failed to have the same impact.

He really needs no introduction, his reputation precedes him. He's a one-off character and the music world would be a slightly duller place without him. 'This Is What I Do' is his ninth solo offering and, despite all we read about this superstar, we must remember that he is a musician first. One thing to remind us of that and one thing that has never changed is his soulful voice; this is apparent throughout the record.

The most Culture Club-like track on the album is upbeat catchy reggae song 'My Star'. Joined by rapper Unknown MC, it is sure to be the one you'll have on repeat - it's Boy George at his best. A reggae and ska feel to any Boy George album is, of course, expected; 'Live your Life' and 'Nice and Slow' are exactly that, not to mention 'Play Me' which features MC Spee. This combination works incredibly well; it's smooth, edgy and immediate. Another featuring artist includes Nizar Al-Issa who features on the album's last track 'Feel the Vibration'. This is a glorious ending to a fantastic album.

'King of Everything' opens the album and can be described as a soft rock track with engrossing lyrics. 'Death of Samantha' can also be described this way; a deep guitar lead track which really shows off the 52-year-old's voice. Backing singers can be heard throughout this record but perhaps most powerfully on 'Bigger than War'. This jazz track uses the choir perfectly to compliment Boy George's voice.

Many genres of music can be heard on this album, with 'It's Easy' having a country music feel to it. This soft number is a simple track with a beautiful melody. The album even sports a Christmas vibe in the track 'My God'; an Elton John-esque pop track with, again, brilliant use of a backing choir. 'Any Road' is soft flowing, meaningful ballad, with gripping lyrics such as, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there". It's perfectly timed, slotted before five back to back reggae tracks - the calm before the storm!

This is a fabulous album from a man that can only be described as equally fabulous.

4/5

- [contactmusic.com](http://contactmusic.com)



## Lou Reed Remembered

*'Lou Reed Remembered' is a BBC Four tribute documentary on Lou Reed, who died in October, and looks at the extraordinarily transgressive life and career of one of rock 'n' roll's true originals. George was one of the commentators, and this is what he had to say about Lou...*

"For me, the most important thing about Lou Reed was what he did musically, and I think if you're a kid and you want to be cool, there's two albums - 'The Velvet Underground and Nico' and 'Transformer' - those two records are so much a part of the kind of rock n roll rites of passage. You can't really be considered credible or cool if you do not have those records.

My first experience of Lou Reed was "Walk On the Wild Side", I think, that was the sort of beginning of my love affair with Lou Reed because that song was... if you were a little gay kid in suburbia that song had you walking on invisible heels. It was just so other-worldly. Even more so than say Bowie, because I think although Bowie was sexually ambiguous, Lou Reed delivered it with a kind of "so what" quality - it was almost like "who cares?"

That's why I love the seventies, because the seventies... a lot of stuff was made up. Mick Jagger and Bowie in bed, Marc Bolan and Mickey Finn having an affair - it was all great stuff, but it probably wasn't true. But you don't really want stuff like that to be true, you want it to be glorious gossip! (laughs)

I had to see him, and it was around the time of "Rock N Roll Animal", "Sally Can't Dance", the bleached hair and looking back - I think he was pretty wasted at that gig. But I didn't notice - I just thought he was fantastic!

I discovered recently that Lou Reed wasn't very fond of "Transformer", which is really shocking. He didn't like it and would never talk about it. It's one of those weird things with certain rock stars, that they embrace a kind of sexual ambiguousness but then when they get sensible and marry, they want to disown it... "I don't want to talk about the camp bit!"

If I was going to describe Lou Reed, I would say that he was always effortlessly cool, even as an older man. I don't really think of Lou Reed as a druggie, hard brute or savage, I think of things like "Caroline Says" or "They're Taking The Children Away".

If you're a kind of quirky kid, in ten years time you probably will find Transformer - be it in your dad's record collection or your grandfather's record collection - whatever - but I think if you've got an ear for music and you hear that, it will resonate with you, and that's the power of all great music."





## Boy George's Basel 2013 Bash at Mansion Miami

When Miami heard that the legend, the fashion (and karma) chameleon, and now comeback kid, Boy George, would be coming to play a DJ and an acoustic set during Art Basel Miami Beach week, every mouth was yapping about it from Hialeah to Wilton Manors. There's no one quite like Boy George. In the '80s, he was one hot mama-looking lad. In the '90s, he knew all that there was to know about The Crying Game, and he transformed into performance guru Leigh Bowery for his musical Taboo. And yes, he ended up in the slammer for a bit in the aughts. But these days, he's touring again with manager and DJ Marc Vedo (they have a residency at Amnesia Ibiza) and he very recently released, *This Is What I Do*, because this is what George does, ladies and gents. For Basel 2013, he and Vedo ruled the dance floor at South Beach's Mansion. It was a magnificent way to wrap up a week of insanity.

**Interview with Marc Vedo (excerpt): You and Boy George have been touring for a while. Any good stories come from it?**

Yeah, we had an argument yesterday. [Laughs]

**Do tell.**

No, no details. We spend a lot of time together. We make music together. It's kind of a strange relationship. I'm also his manager, as well, so I have to look after a lot of the stuff that goes on. We have a big team that does all the logistics, advertising and marketing. So yeah, I have two or three heads all the time when I'm talking to him. So it makes for an interesting relationship. Yesterday, you know, there's like this crossover all the time. We're really good friends, when we don't argue! [Laughs] He's also the godfather of my son.

**That's really cool!**

I told him he has to behave.

**How old is he?**

He's two and a half. And he watches this video George and I did all the time. He always goes, "That's George, with his hat!" He recognizes him. And then when he turns up with no makeup or hat, he's like, "Who are you?" [Laughs] With his beard now as well.

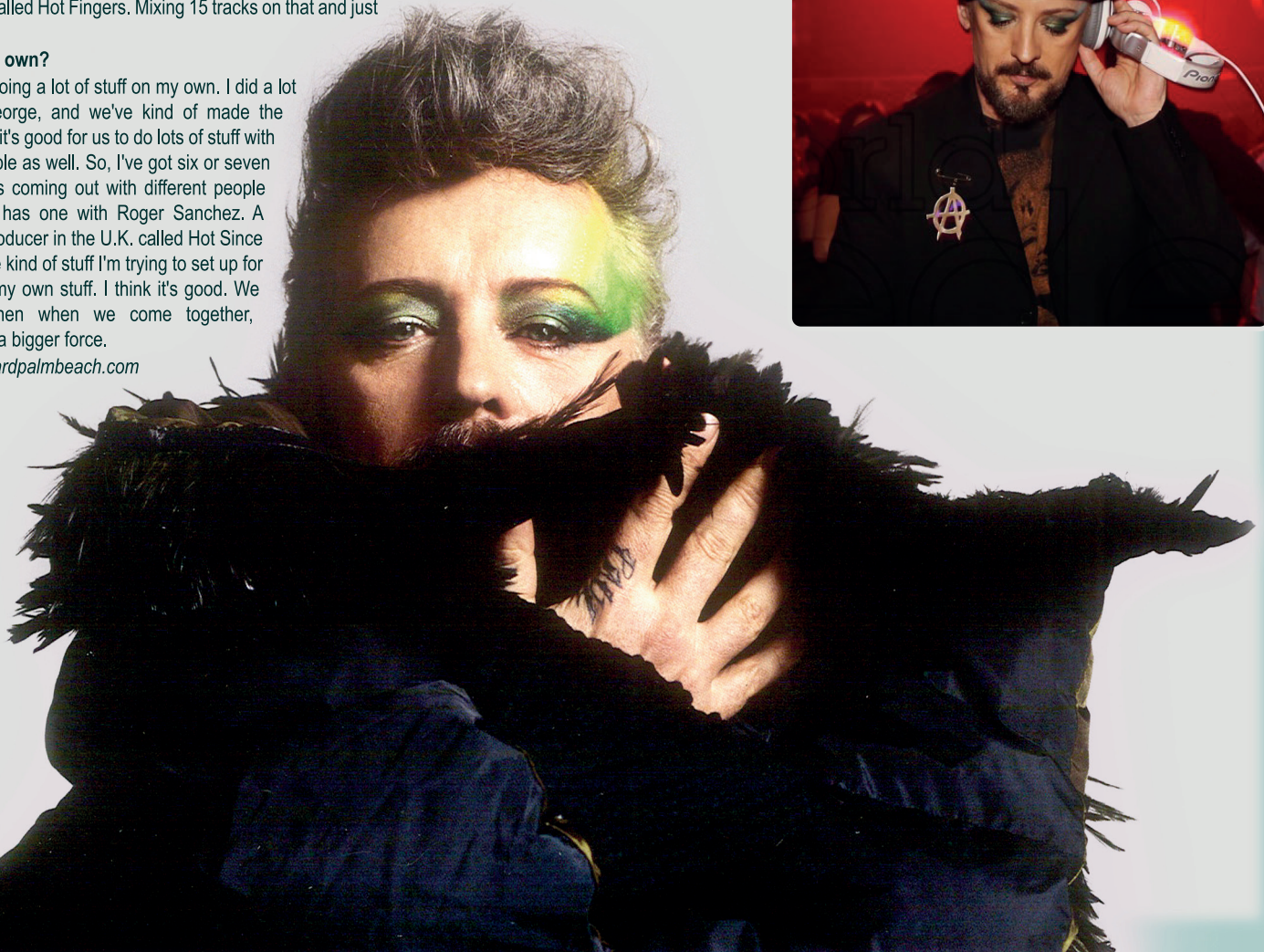
**What are you working on next?**

We're planning on Ibiza now. We're planning our new residency at Amnesia. Which is amazing. One of the highlights of my career. It's just incredible. The club, the vibe, the people who go there. We're planning that. We have a compilation we're releasing on an Italian label called Hot Fingers. Mixing 15 tracks on that and just playing out.

**And on your own?**

I'm actually doing a lot of stuff on my own. I did a lot of it with George, and we've kind of made the decision that it's good for us to do lots of stuff with different people as well. So, I've got six or seven collaborations coming out with different people and George has one with Roger Sanchez. A really cool producer in the U.K. called Hot Since 82. That's the kind of stuff I'm trying to set up for him and do my own stuff. I think it's good. We split, and then when we come together, hopefully it's a bigger force.

- [blogs.browardpalmbeach.com](http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com)





## Bridport crowd rocks out 'better than Miami' at Boy George gig

WEST Dorset played host to pop icon Boy George.

The star, who is now renowned as one of the world's top DJs headlined the HoneyTrap Disco at the Electric Palace in Bridport.

More than 350 people attended the event, with the worldwide icon taking to stage just after 11pm and playing music for more than two hours as he entertained the crowds with the house and dance music that he has become renowned for.

Boy George has been in the music industry since the late 1970s, recording number one hits with his band the Culture Club, such as 'Karma Chameleon' and 'Do You Really Want to Hurt Me', and has been DJ-ing all over the world for 25 years.

Speaking before he went on stage, Boy George said: "Wherever we go we enjoy ourselves and wherever we are we do have a good time, and I know tonight will be the same.

"I play all different types of places and venues and I always look forward to everything I do. It is not a question of size. The question is always do we have a party and are the crowd having a good time, and if they are then I'm happy because I just want to see everyone party.

"I have just been to Miami at a big venue, and the big difference between the USA and the UK is that people in the States only dance when the record drops, whereas over here the UK crowds just dance the whole time, and I much prefer that. I'm from the old school of dancing where you just get into it all the time."

He has recently released his latest studio album, called This is What I Do, his first album for 18 years. He said: "I have been DJ-ing for 25 years now as my other job, and I felt the time was right to do another record.

"It feels fresh and exciting and it is something I really wanted to do, and there was no pressure from record companies as it was released from my own label and it is a very different time in music now."

For upcoming musicians, Boy George did have some words of advice. He said: "I always say try to be different but also do what you want to do.

"We have quite a familiar pop scene where everyone sounds like each other and you get championed for doing someone else's work and criticised for doing something a bit different.

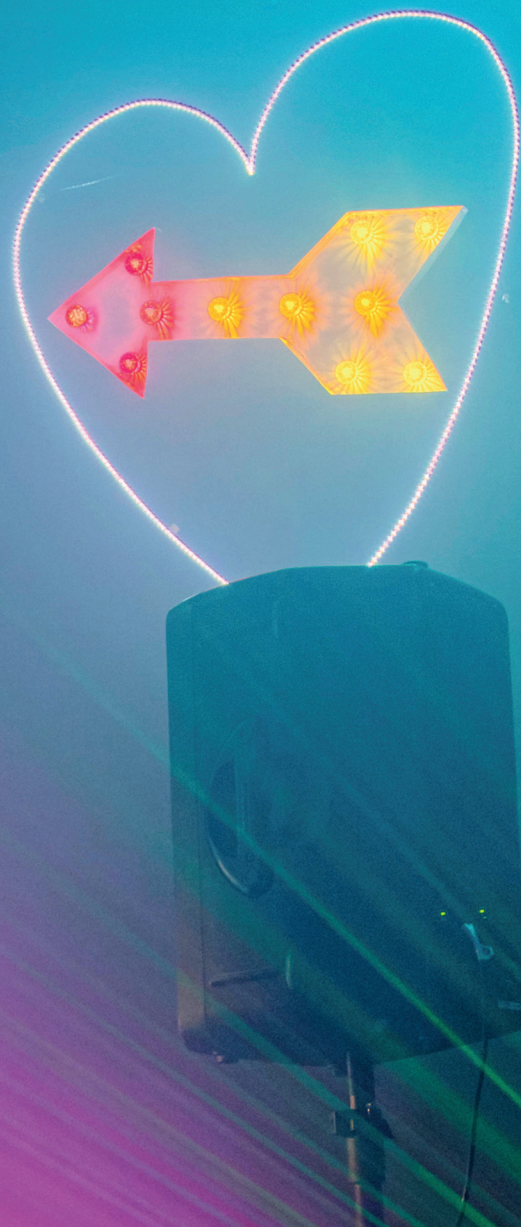
"You have got to stay true to yourself and true to what you're about, and most importantly make a record you love."

Local DJ Johnny Slut, a longtime friend of Boy George persuaded him to headline the gig and invited him to his home in Symondsburry beforehand.

Boy George added: "I would always come back to Bridport and the Palace if I was invited, it's lovely. Johnny has been inviting us down here for a long time and the jam he was making was delicious, so I definitely want to try some more of it."

It was obvious to everyone that Boy George was having as much fun as the packed dance floor, and after the event he said on Twitter that Bridport had "rocked over Miami."

-dorsetecho.co.uk





# Mr. Style Icon

Electronic Beats Magazine, Jan 2014



"With a voice like sand and glue / His words of truthful vengeance / They could pin us to the floor," David Bowie sings in his 1971 "Song For Bob Dylan". I didn't buy the album *Hunky Dory* until years later, but the song's lyrics were like hyperlinks: I had to find out who Dylan was, only we didn't have Google back then. And then I was instantly obsessed with him. I bought all of his albums, of course including *Blonde On Blonde* and the other two of that era, *Bringing It All Back Home* and *Highway 61 Revisited*. Legend has it Dylan invented the "thin, wild mercury sound" on those, a kind of sound with no bass and piercing treble. Plus he had this incredibly cool look! Dylan was miles ahead of his time.

Through Dylan I realized that, as a songwriter, I could write about all sorts of things, as well as interpret everything however I liked. Dylan never stopped surprising me. When, also years later, I first heard his song "Hurricane" I thought: "Wow,

**When former *Rolling Stone* editor-in-chief turned MTV VJ Kurt Loder interviewed Bob Dylan in 1984 in the musician's New York studio, he found him absorbed in a distinctly folk version of Boy George and Culture Club's "Karma Chameleon". Some thirty years later, Boy George himself retells the anecdote as a kind of artistic knighting and explains how Bob Dylan has remained a fixture in his list of musical influences, many of which are cleverly woven into the fabric of his latest album, *This Is What I Do*, out now on Very Me.**

**Photo: Bob Dylan, photographed by Jerry Schatzberg in 1965.**

this is like a proper story!" And the best thing was that Mick Ronson, who played guitar on Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue tour and had also played previously on Bowie's *Hunky Dory*, was a member of Bowie's band, Spiders From Mars. I think that Dylan influenced Bowie a great deal. Dylan wrote songs about real life events, and Bowie invented stories and told them like Dylan as though they were real. *Diamond Dogs* is a good example of that and it's also the most bizarre, most cinematic record ever. Bowie would never have written it the way he did without Dylan's input. With this Dylan-like style of writing, Bowie was painting a very different landscape to everybody else in the seventies. He seemed so much more intellectual and mystical and otherworldly.

The way I write today is still influenced by Dylan. I am now starting to write songs that are slightly less personal than they used to be, although people often think they are autobio-

graphical. I used to always spill my guts in my songs. Today I often start with the title or one distinctive line and go from there. It's a kind of cut-up process, a mixture of third party and my own ideas. I just finished working on a very Dylan-like song that I wrote for my American label who wanted a couple more songs for the new album. I had this line from a Sly Stone interview in my head, which became the starting point for the song: "Yes, I have regrets. I just can't think of one right now." When I read that I thought this could be a line from a Dylan song. Also, Dylan always wrote his songs this way, too—really fast. So I constructed the whole song around this one line in less than ten minutes: "The crowd, it roared, it was a sea of love / Into every song she bled / She cut the heads from the roses / And kept the thorns instead." I can totally relate. I have a lot of regrets, too. The only difference to Sly Stone is that I know what they are. ~

## CULTURE CLUB GOLD



## NEW AND UPCOMING RELEASES

**CULTURE CLUB: GOLD** is a rebranded release of the 2012 "All The Best" compilation since Universal bought out EMI, and features 30 tracks over 2 CDs. **CULTURE CLUB: ICON** is a European rebranding of the earlier US release, and features 19 tracks. **DAVID LEVINE: EXPOSED** is a digital book of photographs taken between 1977 and 1987 and features many outtakes of iconic Culture Club photo sessions, including the photo at right, and the Karma Chameleon record sleeve.





## Boy George Reignites Twitter Feud With 'Messy' Liam Payne After Slamming One Direction's X Factor Performance

*The pair have been feuding over the last year*

Boy George has once again reignited his ongoing feud with Liam Payne after mocking One Direction's performance on the X Factor last night, describing the heartthrob as "messy" while also claiming Harry Styles' new grungy look is inspired by Keith Richards.

It seems One Direction's fans weren't the only ones watching the boy band's anticipated performance during the X Factor finale live show yesterday as former Culture Club star Boy George gave somewhat of a running commentary as the boys sang album track 'Midnight Memories.'

It's no secret that 52-year-old doesn't think highly of the group but even some of his own supporters may be surprised by the unprovoked attack. During the live show yesterday, Boy George tweeted: "Liam looked quite....messy!!" before later adding in response to a follower: "He's in trouble! How's that good?" (sic)

He also commented: "Harry looked like a young Keith Richards!"

As if that wasn't enough, he took aim at Canadian crooner Michael Buble just a few hours later after watching his appearance on Alan Carr's Chatty Man, tweeting: "Is Michael Buble' off his nut on @chattyman," later adding: "He's been hanging out with Liam Payne!"

Boy George's comments didn't go unnoticed by the 1D lads as Liam retorted today: "Who is boy George?" to which George replied: "Really? You need to get out more!"

Of course, this isn't the first time the pair have gotten into a public spat with Boy George blasting the 'Story Of My Life' singer for allegedly snubbing him at the Brit Awards in February.

However, Liam denied he blanked the singer and his niece explaining the situation via Twitter: "@BoyGeorge now now boy lets not tell porkies firstly thanks for getting my name wrong three times secondly then asking me where is liam?...akward then when you finally got it right saying you wanted Niall instead.

"If you would have asked me for a picture i would have stopped bro I just did what you said and pointed niall out for you so u just keep wearing ur strange hats and enjoy yourself my little Georgie pie... It's still not cool you just look weird."

He later added: "@BoyGeorge do you really want to hurt meeee do you really want to make me cryyy come on 'boy' lighten up ... Can I borrow a hat and make up for next Halloween I'd love to look as scary as you ;)"

- entertainmentwise.com



## Madonna Run Over By Boy George's Hate Bus! Find Out What He Said HERE!

*Not Her Madgesty! Anyone but Her Madgesty!*

Boy George just majorly dissed Madonna in the French magazine Têtu and we cannot believe it! The Culture Club singer said Madonna & Kylie Minogue are denying who they really are!!! Wait, what?!?!

He revealed:

"I've never been willing to sacrifice myself for the latest trends. It's never been my thing. [Madonna and Kylie Minogue] try to cling to their pop crowns at all cost and even go as far as denying who they really are. It's better to take a break for a few years than denying who you really are, just for fame!"

OH NO HE DID NOT JUST SAY THAT!!!!

Boy George is still collecting hate mail from blasting One Direction's Liam Payne and already he's starting MORE static?

We haven't seen someone wade this recklessly into a two-front war since the Nazis took on the Western Allies and the Soviet Union at the same time!!!!

Spoiler alert: They LOST!

Do U think Boy George finally went too far this time?

**Boy George says: I never said anything about Madonna or Kylie to this magazine. I love them! How could I not being the total queen that I am! Perez, stop lying about me.**

- perezhilton.com



## Boy George announces comeback of Culture Club

*Boy George said the new album would not simply retread the pop group's older material, but would still reflect the group's signature mix of soul and reggae.*

British singer Boy George announced on Tuesday the comeback of his 1980s pop band Culture Club with a new album in 2014.

In an interview published in the French gay magazine Tetu, Boy George said guitarist Roy Hay, drummer Jon Moss and bassist Mikey Craig have all agreed to the reformation.

Fronted by androgynous icon Boy George, born George Alan O'Dowd, the band broke up for the first time in 1986 and had existed in various incarnations since then.

The now 52-year-old Boy George said the new album would not simply retread the pop group's older material, but would still reflect the groups signature mix of soul and reggae.

- gulfnews.com









## Boy George sports blonde wig and a bowler hat as he takes to the decks at fashion party

**BOY George proved that blondes do have more fun as he partied in London last night.**

The 52-year-old star sported a blonde wig and plenty of make-up as he took to the decks at a party for London Collections: Men. George teamed his new hairdo with a rather tall bowler hat and a black shirt and blazer as he grinned for the camera whilst playing some tunes. He completed his look with plenty of bronzer and some fake eyelashes as he performed in front of the likes of Dermot O'Leary and Game of Thrones star Kit Harrington.

The Culture Club frontman clearly had a good time at the party - which was thrown by Esquire magazine at the Rosewood Hotel - and later tweeted: "Great @EsquireUK party at @ScarfesBar in Holborn with some sweet young things like @daniellismore and the Dandy crew of tattooed tailors!"

Stars such as George Lamb, David Gandy and Luke Evans sipped on Johnnie Walker Gold Label Reserve cocktails in the Scarfes Bar. Evans, 34, looked very dapper in a black three-piece suit which he wore with a white shirt, whilst model Gandy wore a dark blue checked suit.

- [express.co.uk](http://express.co.uk)



## Food is the new rock'n'roll — pop stars are just lightweights, says Boy George

**Forget pop singers — chefs are the new rock'n'roll stars, according to Boy George.**

The Culture Club frontman said today's pop stars are "just lightweights". Boy George, 52, made the comments as he appeared as a guest DJ at the Esquire launch party of London Collections: Men. He said: "Food is like the new rock and roll, the really dangerous people are cooks like Nigella. Us pop stars are lightweights."

The singer, who has struggled with drug addiction, is now teetotal and swears by a raw food diet. He added: "Food is my life. I tweet a lot about food. This year is about keeping fit and spreading the word of good eating around the world."

George released his first solo album in 18 years last October. Asked about rumours of a Culture Club reunion, he said: "Right now I'm doing my own record and it's all about me, me, me and then I'll fit them in later, but it is possible."

He also admitted he was oblivious to politics when he first arrived on the music scene — but no longer. He said: "People talk about the Seventies like it was all grim with the strikes, I don't remember that. I just remember having a fantastic time. I was slightly oblivious. There are different things to worry about now. The world is becoming more intolerant. There was this great period at the beginning of the Eighties when it felt like everyone was chilling out and was going to be much more accepting."

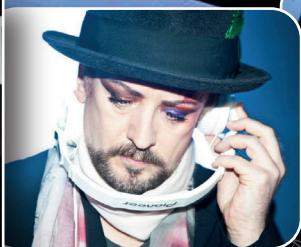
"And now it feels like we are going backwards. For me as an artist and as a gay person in the public eye there's work to be done."

cyber-esque • page 20

- [standard.co.uk](http://standard.co.uk)







# BOY GEORGE

## Boy George Heats Up Dirk Bikkembergs Party

**COLD FRONT:** Boy George entertained guests with a deejay set at the Dirk Bikkembergs after-show party on Monday night. The British musician, who was flanked by two burly bodyguards, worked the decks wearing a bowler hat. The dark room was lit up by artificial snow as Bikkembergs recreated an arctic-like atmosphere. Waiters carried glass boxes filled with ice cubes, and Popsicles were served at the bar. Despite the below-zero theme, hunky male models stood bare-chested on black podiums, wearing nothing but white jeans and ski gloves.

- wwd.com

## Planners consider Boy George home extension bid as architect reports Hampstead house lacks 'natural light'

PLANNING officials are to decide whether pop star Boy George can see through plans to build a new garden room attached to his home.

Documents filed at the Town Hall include the claim that his Hampstead home is cloaked in darkness throughout the day.

The former Culture Club singer, who has lived in the same Victorian home for more than 30 years, wants to knock a hole in a back wall and build a new sitting room stretching out into his garden, the plans show.

The application says "the house does not benefit from a great deal of natural light into its interior. A combination of factors mean that the interior often suffers from poor levels and quality of natural lighting".

It blames small windows compared to the size of the rooms, big trees which give the home privacy but rob it of sunshine, and tall neighbouring houses.

Camden's planners will check for local objections as they consider the scheme.

- camdennewjournal.com

## Boy George slams Evander Holyfield for homophobic comments

Boy George has hit out at Evander Holyfield for his homophobic comments that were aired on 'Celebrity Big Brother' last night (05.01.13).

The openly gay singer took to Twitter to slam the former heavyweight world boxing champion after he likened homosexuality to having a disability during a conversation with fellow housemate Luisa Zissman.

Boy George tweeted: "Shame, I had such admiration for Mr Evander Holyfield, he seemed dignified and I was sure he was a cool, smart, giant!"

He added: "I think anyone visiting this country for any reason should be cautioned and forced to swear allegiance to 'Queens & country!!"

"At customs there should be a huge sign! Welcome to Britain, racism, sexism, homophobia and bad hair are not tolerated! (sic)."

During the one-on-one discussion, Evander - who is handcuffed to Luisa for one of the programme's challenges - said: "All I'm trying to say, you know handicap people are born, you can't say because they are born that way you can't fix them."

Luisa told the born-again Christian she didn't think the two things were comparable and urged him to end the conversation, but he maintained his view.

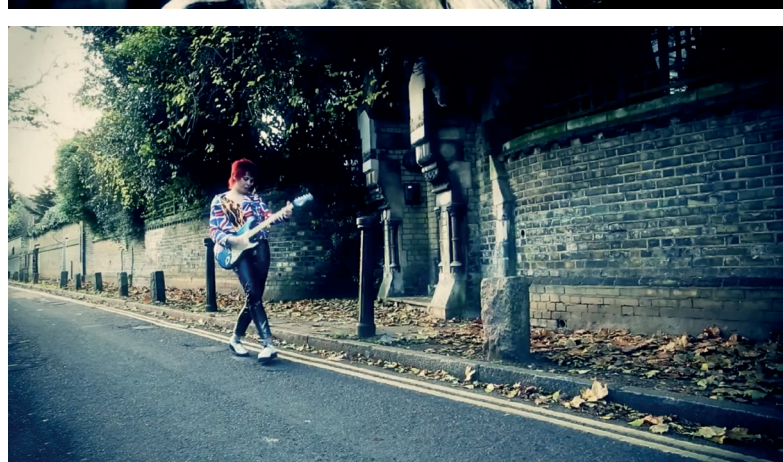
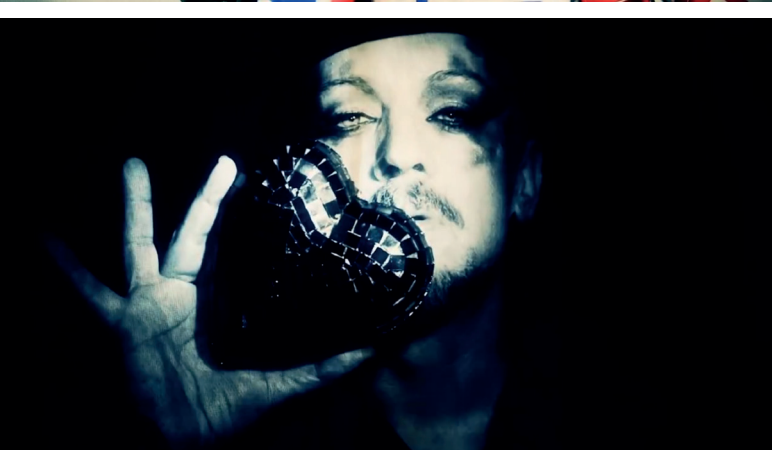
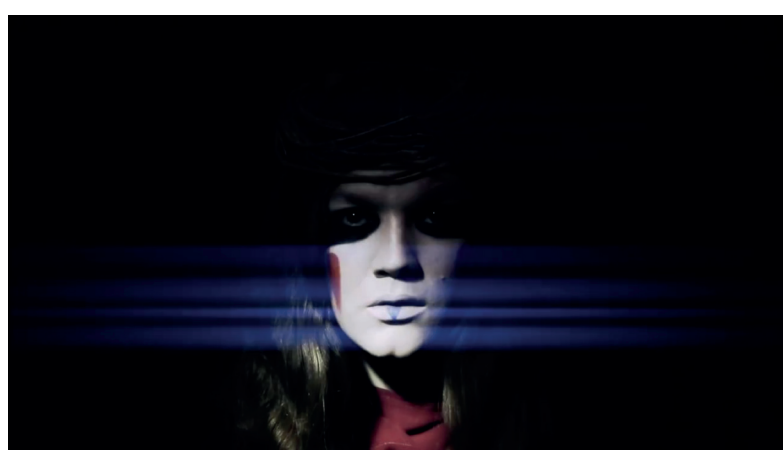
Evander was then summoned to the Diary Room where he was uncuffed from his partner and told his offensive comments would not be tolerated in private.

Attempting to defend himself, he said: "It is not like I would mention it to anyone else, it was just our conversation."

He was then let back into the house, but handed an official warning.

- www.tv3.ie







## Boy George premieres new video 'My God'

Boy George has premiered the brand new video for 'My God' at ahead of the release of the single on 26th January.

The song is written by Boy George and Youth and is the second single taken from his acclaimed new album, 'This Is What I Do.'

The video for 'My God' was co-directed by George with Dean Stockings, and filmed in and around George's gothic pile in Hampstead Heath. The crew got some strange looks as they filmed a couple of the clips. With both George and Daniel Lismore in full make up, they did actually bring the rush hour traffic to a standstill whilst making their way up to the Heath! Experimenting with different techniques, they pushed the studio lights aside and lit some of the scenes with an LED torch (borrowed from George's brother, Kevin). They also experimented with a Speedlight (flash gun) to light another scene.

Boy George commented "We made the video at home in my living room and roped in my make-up artist Christine to play Faye Dunaway! It's just a fun video and I've really got into the dressing up box!"

- [music-news.com](http://music-news.com)





## Outrageous dressing Welsh singer Danie Cox teams up with 80s legend Boy George

*Flamboyant Bridgend singer teams up  
with Culture Club star in bid for music  
success*

She's the Welsh glam punk hoping to hit the heights thanks to a helping hand from the '80s pop icon who has become her mentor.

With her electrifying red hair, extravagant make-up and outrageous dress sense, 23-year-old Danie Cox and her band The Featherz look every inch pop stars.

And fittingly enough the eye-catching singer from Bridgend met the equally flamboyant Culture Club star Boy George at an exhibition at the V&A for the greatest rock 'n' roll chameleon of them all - David Bowie.

The two Thin White Duke obsessives made a huge impression on each other with George taking Danie under his wing, asking her to star in his music videos, taking her band out on tour with him and acting as a guiding hand as she attempts to navigate the shark-ridden waters of the music business.

However, by her own admission it's not been an easy ride for the talented songwriter. When she first moved to London in 2010 it was another '80s pop icon who caught her eye and offered her a shot at stardom. Sadly, this was most definitely not a match made in heaven.

"You have to be academic to get on in life and I felt like the outcast," says the singer, on her reason for leaving behind her native Wales.

"When I came to London I had one friend. Within that first couple of weeks I managed to get into a private gig that Adam Ant was playing.

"I met Adam after the show and we talked about a cover he had played that night of Get In On by T-Rex as I'm a really massive Marc Bolan fan and a huge fan of glam rock.

"He noticed my accent and asked me where I was from, so I told him and also told him why I was in London and what I wanted to do.

"So he gave me his mobile number and asked me to give him a ring to come for an audition to join his band."

However, she didn't expect to receive a call from the Stand And Deliver star in the early hours of the following morning. It was a portent of what was to come from the multi-million selling singer, who has had some well publicised battles with mental illness – although Dannie didn't know it at the time.

"About 5am he rings me and asks me to come to his flat for an audition. I thought this is crazy. I turned up and then waited all day to see him – I then discovered he wanted to put together an all-girl rock 'n' roll band called

Poussez Posse."

Although Danie says she wasn't immediately taken with the idea because she thought it was just a vehicle for Adam Ant's girlfriend Georgina Baillie – the singer who was famously at the centre of the Sachsgate scandal when Russell Brand and Jonathan Ross rang her grandfather, Fawcety Towers actor Andrew Sachs, revealing how Brand had slept with the actor's grand-daughter.

"It was all a bit mediocre to be honest," says Danie. "But we went on tour with Adam and we recorded some songs. Whereas she (Baillie) just wanted to get famous all I wanted to do was all I've ever wanted to do and that's front a band and write my own songs. I'm not one of those people who settles for second best."

Danie made the decision to leave, and take the rest of the band - save Georgina Baillie - with her.

"He was really difficult to work with at the time and we couldn't deal with the obvious issues he was having.

"So I took the band with me and we left Adam Ant's management to form The Featherz. At the time people said to us we were stupid for doing it but I believed we could make it."

Having the ingenious idea of taking a couple of amps and plugging into to play for the hundreds of protesters who had set up the Occupy camp at St Paul's Cathedral in 2012, it was there that The Featherz – Danie, bass player Molly Spiers Macleod and drummer Dazzle Monroe - played a momentous debut show.

"We thought right that can be our first gig so we just plugged in and started playing.

It was pretty amazing because there were so many people there and we got such great

reaction."

Fate it seemed was just around the corner in the fantastical form of the man on the comeback trail – Boy George.

Turning up at a talk the leaner, fitter and creatively inspired pop star was giving at the David Bowie Exhibition at the V&A, the pair of Bowie fanatics were introduced and it was as if two worlds had collided.

"He was attracted to what I was wearing and asked me up on stage while he was speaking to tell the audience that this how they dressed when he was a young Bowie fan," recalls Danie. "He said 'come up here gorgeous, show them how you look'. I nervously jumped up, not wanting to steal his stage but not wanting to waste the opportunity either. I span around on the stage and struck a Bowie pose. The whole audience applauded and cheered.

"We had a magical chemistry between us," she adds. "He could see I was very much like he was before he got big. We're also quite similar in the way we act. We were like kindred souls I guess.

"George is such a nice guy. I was so nervous about meeting him initially. After my bad experience with Adam I thought maybe everybody from the '80s was like that. I had met Siouxsie Sioux not long after meeting Adam and she was really nasty and I thought 'oh my god maybe they're going through this hormonal thing. Keep me out of it!

"So when I met George we talked and talked and then he left. I thought that was it and I would follow him on Twitter. And before I followed him I saw message on Twitter that he had left saying 'does anyone know the lovely redhead girl from the band The Featherz. I was thrilled and contacted him and said 'it's me!'.

George hooked Danie up with his manager Jazz Summers – the legendary music industry figure who guided the careers of many of the biggest names in music from the last 30 years including Wham!, George Michael, The Verve, Lisa Stansfield, Soul II Soul and Snow Patrol.

Advising Danie that he would like The Featherz to support Boy George, who at that time was set to release his first new album in more than a decade This Is

What I Do, the Welsh rocker and her band set out on the road for what was to be a hugely enjoyable experience for all concerned.

"We supported

George on the first leg of the This is What I Do tour. That was pretty amazing and was so much better than going on tour with Adam Ant. The people were so much nicer, the places were fuller and everyone was really happy that George was back.

"I remember we played the most amazing show in Glasgow at a legendary venue called King Tuts Wah Wah Hut, I don't know if it was because they were all drunk but everyone went mad. I thought wow!"

Since then Danie and George have forged a close friendship with the musician becoming something of the muse for the Culture Club icon, starring in his most recent videos for the singles Coming Home, My God and King Of Everything.

At the same time has Boy George was proffering a helping hand so was Mark Charles – the cult punk designer whose Charles of London brand has featured Danie in successive fashion campaigns.

Charles loved what the band were doing so much he offered to put out their debut single RNR.

"He listened to our songs, then came to see us and said 'I would really love to help you out because you guys are amazing'," remembers Danie. "He loved our style, our don't give a damn attitude and that we were so full of energy, so he wanted to put out our record."

Now with Boy George and Charles of London on board there's plenty to look forward to in the coming year for Danie – including shows in Berlin and New York, as well as an under wraps TV project that she's hugely excited by.

However, for all the glitz and glamour that she's been exposed to the singer and guitarist reveals a sobering back story of struggle and homelessness that many who have arrived in London expecting the riches of the world to be bestowed upon them have experienced.

"Trust me since coming to London all I've ever done is be in a lot of debt or be homeless after living with an abusive drug addict boyfriend who put me in hospital. I've mainly been living on people's sofas, it's been really difficult. I just about had enough money to take myself to the recording studio and back to record our single.

"It's been difficult. Sometimes I feel so down and so depressed. Sometimes I feel like a shooting star and nobody is going to catch me and I'm going to go round and round until I combust.

"But thanks to Boy George and Charles of London, two people who really believe in us the future is looking bright."

RNR by The Featherz is out now. Find out more at [www.charlesoflondon.com](http://www.charlesoflondon.com) and follow The Featherz on Twitter @TheFeatherzReal

-walesonline.co.uk



*The singer, DJ and former Culture Club frontman on using Joni Mitchell as a marker of excellence, listening to Nico during his first sexual experience – and why David Bowie was a 'life-saver'*

Born George O'Dowd in 1961, Boy George rose to fame as the lead singer of 80s pop band Culture Club, whose hit singles included Do You Really Want to Hurt Me, Time (Clock of the Heart), and Karma Chameleon, which reached No 1 in 30 countries and was the bestselling single in the UK in 1983. With his colourful attire, braids and androgynous looks, Boy George became an integral figure of the new romantics movement in Britain, going solo in 1987 and recording music every decade since. His new single, My God, released on 26 January, is taken from his 2013 album, This is What I Do.

#### **THE ALBUM FOR WHEN I'M FEELING SENTIMENTAL: T-Rex, Electric Warrior (1971)**

The lyrics of Cosmic Dancer are so beautiful. Hearing his songs now, you remember how special Marc Bolan was in terms of what he wrote about – such bonkers lyrics. Although Bowie was out there as well as a lyricist, no one was quite like Marc Bolan, the things he wrote. He was so optimistic in a funny sort of way. It reminds me of being a kid in the 70s, that was when I first discovered music and particularly glam rock. The 70s was the biggest influence on me, and probably all the people that made music in the 80s who were growing up in the 70s. Electric Warrior was quite an interesting bridge from T-Rex's poppy stuff (later on Bolan got really poppy with Metal Guru) – but Electric Warrior was still a bit prog in a way, a bit dark, quite rock'n'roll. It's a little bit more downbeat as a production, I think. I still listen to the album – certain songs like Life is a Gas, Cosmic Dancer, I'll play them a lot. They're the sort of songs that I always remember to play if I'm having a sentimental moment. It's difficult to put into words, but the album is just so sassy: "Bleached on the beach, I want to tickle your peach, it's a rip-off" goes the song Rip-Off, another song on the album I love.

#### **THE ARTIST WHO MAKES ME TRY HARDER: Joni Mitchell, Blue (1971)**

I think Blue has a similar quality to another of her albums, Court and Spark, but it's a little bit more – dare I say it – maudlin, with songs like A Case of You and This Flight Tonight; with all of her songs I can always relate to doing the thing she's singing about. She sings on This Flight Tonight, "I shouldn't have got on this flight tonight" – I have done that! I had an affair with a boy in Chicago, and I flew to see him near Christmas and he didn't turn up. That was years ago, but when I hear that song now, I remember it. She gets into love very well, looking at it from a cynical angle and in a very honest way, and whenever I listen to anything she writes I think: Oh, why do I bother? I use her as one of my markers of lyrical excellence, she makes me think: I must try harder! I've met Joni loads of times. She talks like she writes; she talks in prose. She's not Aretha [Franklin] but she's able to tell a story – some of my favourite singers are people who have unusual voices, not traditional singers, but they are really good at telling a story. There's been so many times in my life when I've put Joni on: there's always a song of hers for when something goes wrong in your life. Hijira even, I know it's not on this album but I've sat and cried to that quite a lot in my life.

#### **THE ALBUM I LISTEN TO BEFORE GOING OUT: Spacehog, Resident Alien (1995)**

I discovered Spacehog quite by accident, I heard that song In the Meantime – it's got this great bass

– in America in the 90s, I probably saw it on MTV. I was going back and forward to the States a lot during the 90s. I just loved the song and ended up buying the album and it is brilliant – it was big in America but it wasn't big anywhere else. It's one of my favourite records and I play it a lot, it's totally rock. There's a lovely song on it called Starside which is so Bowie-esque. Around the time it came out, there was a spate of great records: Belly's Feed the Tree, Blur were going quite fiercely at the time, there were a lot of American bands, like Concrete Blonde. I'd recommend the album; it's a really good record to put on if you're going out somewhere and want to get yourself in the mood – I think it's uplifting.

#### **THE ALBUM THAT SAVED ME FROM SUBURBIA: David Bowie, Hunky Dory (1971)**

I probably could have chosen eight Bowie albums but I've gone for Hunky Dory because I remember the first time I saw the cover and heard the record; it was 1972-73, and it was just so different to everything else. And it's lyrically brilliant: songs like Eight Line Poem and Quicksand – "I'm sinking in the quicksand of my youth..." I even discovered Dylan through this album, because there's his Song for Bob Dylan: "Now hear this Robert Zimmerman, though I don't suppose we'll meet..." I ended up becoming obsessed with Bob Dylan and Lou Reed because of Bowie; it was quite an educational record. There are a lot of songs on there that, as a kid, you felt like he was talking to you. I was discovering myself, living in suburbia, feeling out of place – he was a life-saver, really. Such an artist. When I went to see Bowie in 1973, I must have been 12 or 13,, at Lewisham Odeon, it was a transforming experience, seeing other, older kids as immaculately dressed as Bowie. Many years later that happened to me – I'd do gigs and there'd be people in the audience who looked better than I did! Listening to this record I just wanted to know who Bowie was... I had dinner with him in New York once, and people always say you should never meet your heroes, but he was really charming. These days, when I'm asked to do certain publicity, or anything on TV, I always think: What would Bowie do? If I can't imagine Bowie on the show, then it's a no.

#### **THE ALBUM THAT GAVE ME HOPE: Lou Reed, Transformer (1972)**

The Who did a massive concert at Charlton football ground with 73,000 people in 1974, and Lou Reed was on the bill. I was 12 and was told emphatically [by my parents]: "You must not go." I went, obviously, and arrived as Lou Reed was about to come on stage. I was just amazed. After hearing Transformer, I went back to listen to the Velvet Underground and became a fan of everything Lou Reed had done. But Transformer was a great record. If you think about the music of the time, it was completely out of sync with everything else. It was vaudevillian, with songs like New York Telephone Conversation

## **Boy George: Soundtrack of my life**





and Make Up – very much later on I discovered Tom Waits and all of that sound – but it was a sort of weird, druggy, theatrical, marching-bands-on-valium sound. I've also chosen it because of the lyrics – particularly Walk on the Wild Side, it has such a great narrative. When you're a kid and you know you're gay, and you hear Bowie singing "a cop knelt and kissed the feet of a priest, and a queer threw up at the sight of that", and then you hear Walk on the Wild Side, you know there's hope – you know you're not the only one that has these weird thoughts.

#### THE SOUNDTRACK TO MY FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE: Nico, Chelsea Girl (1967)

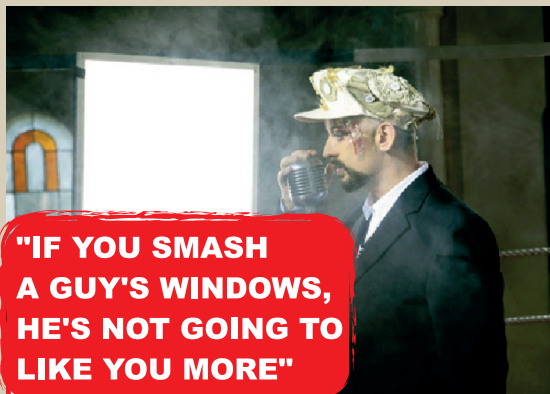
This was when I had my first boyfriend. I met this guy who was the editor of a pop magazine called My Guy at a lesbian club in Swiss Cottage. I went out with him for a while – he was older than me and had Nico's album Chelsea Girl. I never knew about Nico until him. I spent the one night at his house and he had that album on constantly, all night, so it was kind of like the soundtrack to my first real sexual experience, and I just fell in love with the record. Nico has an amazing voice (a bit like Marlene Dietrich, who I also love), and I thought she was beautiful as well. I particularly love that song Somewhere There's a Feather on the album – it's a Jackson Browne song. When you're a kid you devour all the information about the music you love.

#### THE TRACK I PLAYED OVER AND OVER: Sly and the Family Stone, If You Want Me to Stay (1973)

I went to live in Birmingham for a year when I was about 17, in 1978-79. I'd met this guy called Martin Degville who was in the band Sigue Sigue Sputnik – he was quite mad, used to wear fishnet tights on his face – at a punk weekend in Bournemouth. Punks at that point were the enemy of the state, no one would let us in anywhere because of the way we looked. We were gathering on a street corner that weekend, and there was this thing on the other side of the road, a vision: oh my God, this guy in high stiletto heels with a white face and a massive white quiff and shoulder pads – he was just outrageous, another level from what we were doing. And me and my girlfriends were in awe, looking at him. I befriended him and I started to go up to Birmingham for the weekend and hang out at the clubs up there for the punk scene. I had this relationship with my best friend, a boy, and when that went pear-shaped, I decided to leave home and move in with Martin. We lived with two girls called Janet Doublenose and Rhonda Beyonda. Rhonda was a big Sly and the Family Stone fan, and I remember one day sitting in her room while she played their album Fresh, and the song If You Want Me to Stay came on – it's just a great song, fantastic falsetto vocals. It's probably one of my favourites of all time. It's got the best bass line ever, and it's Sly Stone at his peak; it's just a great, emotional piece of music. I'd play it over and over, as you do, when you're that age. Sly Stone is one of the greatest singers, you can hear it – the emotion. I'd love to work with him, even if he just did a little warble on one of my tracks I'd be really happy.

#### THE ALBUM THAT I STILL LISTEN TO: Tubeway Army, Replicas (1979)

I was always dismissive of anyone who sounded like Bowie. But I forgave Gary Numan. I bought this album when I was living in Birmingham. Me and Jeremy Healy, my mate who went on to be a successful DJ [and a member of Haysi Fantayzee], sat and listened to Replicas and loved it, even though we thought he [Numan] was a bit of a Bowie clone. But it was a brilliant record, and he looked brilliant as well, which was very important then. It wasn't enough to be a good musician, you had to have a good look too! It was around that point that I was discovering early Human League, bands like Cabaret Voltaire, I was already a massive fan of Fad Gadget, who, for me, was the king of electro – the unsung hero. Even now, when you hear Are Friends Electric, it still sounds good. You're very lucky if you make a record that doesn't age – his album has aged brilliantly because it's so different, it's so electro. I always think you have to invest something of yourself in everything you do to be good, which is why I love Replicas. I can still put it on and get that feeling that I had when I first heard it.



**"IF YOU SMASH A GUY'S WINDOWS, HE'S NOT GOING TO LIKE YOU MORE"**

#### Pop icon Boy George, 52, on turning into his dad, drugs, relationships - and why Morrissey called him "unbearable"

**At 16, in my head, I was very advanced for my years.** I wanted to be an adult, not a kid. I was a punk, wearing the punk uniform, adopting the pose. I had spiky hair, black lips, eyeliner, bondage trousers. Then, in the blink of an eye, I switched to New Romantic: sky-scraper hair, make-up, another really outrageous look. At first my mum was very against me going out like that. She tried to stop me. My dad would just be reading a newspaper and he'd take a look and say, if he wants to go out and get beaten up, let him. Gradually my mum realised I wasn't going to change and she gave up and became an enabler. She was great on the sewing machine. She made lots of stuff for me, 'cause I couldn't afford things.

**My teens were a time of freedom, music, excitement.** I had a job as a runner in a printing place so I could wear whatever I wanted. I could use the London tube as my catwalk. Everyone stared at me – it was great. I met people on the tube, had affairs with them. I remember I was over in Bank delivering mail and this very handsome Italian man was staring at me. He asked me if I was a girl, which I liked, and then he asked if I had a girlfriend or a boyfriend. I ended up going to a party with him that night.

**When I was a teenager I did everything to be the opposite of my dad.** Now I see I'm just like him. I get him now. My dad wasn't the cliché. He was Irish. He had been a boxer. He could be unbelievably unreasonable – he had these huge bursts of anger, smashing things up – but he wasn't stupid. He had beautiful handwriting. He was very handsome. Everyone loved him. When I came out he was kind of amazing. He put his arms around me and said: "You're still my son and I love you." A total contradiction. I have his better qualities. He was incredibly generous and kind. He would do anything for a stranger or the woman down the road. But when it came to the people who really loved him, that was more difficult. When love was too close he couldn't handle it.

**My mum was so graceful and stylish when my dad left her after 43 years of marriage.** She forgave him. She was so respectful of his memory when he died. That made me love her so much. In my late 20s I had some long, late conversations with my dad and I said to him: "The way you treat mum, why don't you just divorce? You could be great friends." He said: "You don't understand, son." It was all "family loyalty". Then after 43 years he left her for a younger woman! He did some awful things but we laugh about them now. We say: "Oh my God, remember when dad chased the driving instructor down the street because mum had put her best coat on for her lesson and dad decided she was having an affair?" The whole cul-de-sac was out watching. We were all mortified but now we laugh about it.

**My advice to my younger self would be that jealousy doesn't make you more attractive.** If you go and smash a guy's windows he's not going to like you more. I was thinking about one of my last psycho relationships recently. I'd got a taxi to this boy's house and I managed to get myself past his security gates. How awful I must have seemed. Why did I think he would say, yes, now I really want to be with you, now that you've broken into my flat and tried to kill me. When I look back at my behaviour, how I dealt with heartbreak... I would never behave like that now. It was undignified. I'm a Buddhist now so anyone I've ever hurt goes into my prayers. And my last relationship, when it went wrong, I just let it go. I said to myself, come on kid,

don't make a fool of yourself – you're too old now.

**I would tell my younger self not to do drugs** [he was an on/off cocaine user and also a heroin user in the late 1980s]. If I'd known the kind of misery I would cause myself, all the drama, the pain I brought my mother, the waste of money and time... And it doesn't make you feel better. I'd also tell myself to talk less and listen more. I've met some amazing, spiritual people who said to me – you need to listen. I remember doing this therapy course, and I was playing up, being the centre of attention. And the teacher said: "Will you shut the fuck up?"

**I'd have been indifferent to the idea of fame when I was 16.** My whole career was an accident. The only reason I started a band is that everyone else was doing it. I had no ambition. At first, I just wanted the bohemian lifestyle. Then I met Jon Moss and he joined my band, and I was in a relationship with him and it was, oh my God, then I really got into the whole thing. But it's only in the last six years I've come to look at what I do as a job and I do it with more respect. But it's not 'all or nothing' any more, like it was when I was younger. I can't imagine living my life feeling like that ever again. I had no 'off' button. I was an extreme person.

**You often make sense of your life in hindsight.** When I was in prison [he was jailed for four months in 2009 for assault] it didn't feel like it was teaching me anything. I was just getting through this unpredictable day-to-day, dealing with people who were unhinged. Afterwards I did think it made me realise how much I need my own company, time on my own just to think. And I read a lot – everything I'd lied about reading in the past: Oscar Wilde, Dickens, Wuthering Heights, Catch-22. I got friends of mine to send me classics. I found so much I loved. And now I read loads.

**As an older man I understand why some people take a long time to come out.** I'm reading the Morrissey book now – I love Morrissey – and I understand why he never came out guns blazing. I think he wanted to avoid defining himself as anything clear-cut. Unfortunately when you come out people define you by what you do in bed. Lots of people get nagged – "Come out, come out" – then when they do the press say, all you ever do is talk about being gay. I keep telling people, being gay is about three hours a week. I met Morrissey when Culture Club were massive and he knew I was a massive fan. He was horrible to me. He wouldn't speak. And afterwards he called me unbearable. Then again, I probably was.

**Boy George's new single My God/Video Games is out now.** He is touring the UK from March 30. boygeorgeuk.com

**In 1977, the year Boy George was 16... Apple is incorporated by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak / Star Wars fever grips the UK for the first time as Episode IV: A New Hope hits cinemas / Seminal punk album Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols is released.**



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