

# The Hot Puppies



**The Hot PUPPIES**  
**under the crooked moon**

THE FANTASTIC DEBUT ALBUM  
OUT NOW

OMM's hot tips for 2006  
OBSERVER MUSIC MONTHLY

"A feisty entertaining album bristling with energy"  
ROCKSOUND

"...as fantastic as waking up  
in a sea of Oreo cookies with no option  
but to eat your way to safety"  
NME

\*\*\*\* THE GUARDIAN  
\*\*\*\* THE TIMES  
\*\*\*\* MOJO

"extraordinary debut... an instant classic"  
ARTROCKER

[www.fiercepanda.co.uk](http://www.fiercepanda.co.uk)

## Press



## BEST BAR NONE

Who still be the tunes in 2006? *By Matt Snow*  
*Some of the best music of the year is being made in pubs*  
*By Matt Snow*

We live in a superabundant age of music, in which bands are gobbled up and spit out at breakneck speed, ensuring that what's new can't be easily perceived as the wondrous, awe-inspiring zeal of grunge riffs up against a slew of lo-fi, neo-man bands, white-knuckled guitar rock ensembles, hungry Britpop revivalists and quirky dance ensembles.

Which gives some way to explain why OAMC's hot tips for 2006 have little in common. Apart from that, from spending a cozy afternoon in Ford Road to the George Tavern.

Aberystwyth's Hot Puppies, who half-cached their member from a Decoye pub, are still in a saucy manner on the brown leather banquettes. Fronted by the assy Becki Newman, the pub's guitar's mess staid. Terry showcased their sharp pop - a combination of Blondie's punk kitsch and the Skunkies's baroque lit.

The five diverse musicians are still by the bar are self-proclaimed folk rockers, including the Feeling. Don't let the choice, embrace it. Says singer Dan Gillespie, their debut release, "I'm My Little World" proved that the band's wide-screen tunes are undeniably affecting.

With the delectable of a man on top of his game, Steve Newman (the man at Derek Sudo) is already the very early winner of a Mojo Award. He's a soul music man who bypassed the music business by shifting more than 10,000 copies off his own back. With his first album proper, *This Is My Demo*, the Hartley rapper's playful rhymes are paired to his own music museum consciousness.

Huddled nearby by the window, with double over the sun of success, is 22-year-old Nathan Fake. He may have the look of a youthful Jimmy Page, but his forthcoming debut set, *Drowning in a Sea of Love*, flows a deliciously atmospheric strain of post-rock electronic.

Realtime virtuoso Nick Kelly's nuanced manner belies a cat-popping stage persona. Kelly is the unlikely subject of a solo album, *Electric*, which mixes his own music with a classical 18th-century style that Shirley Parvizi Prince would give his truck to.

Whether our pop picks ever top the charts is a moot point, of course. Whether they deserve it is anything but.



1 The Hot Puppies (left to right): Beth Gibson, Ben Parvizi, Steve Newman, Rupert Wood, Luke Taylor 2 The Feeling (left to right): Kevin Jeremiah, Colin Jeremiah, Paul Stewart, Richard Jones, Dan Gillespie 3 Dewy 4 Nathan Fake 5 Kite Kulu

www.hotpuppies.co.uk

## Observer Music Magazine

### Puppies: get 'em while they're hot

Mat Snow

Among the tasks that burden the music journalist's day, that of tipster is taken least seriously by those at the coalface. Journalists who "discover" such enduring legends as the Beatles or Nirvana can literally dine out on the claim for decades afterwards, so we habitually ramp up the value of an act on whose ground floor we hope to get in on. It's a vice we admit to ourselves but seldom to readers, who point it out anyway.

Most of our predictions are ludicrously wrong, yet we persist. So, on the 20th anniversary of the last time I was halfway right in tipping a Next Big Thing (*Wet Wet Wet*), here's another: the Hot Puppies.

Originally from Aberystwyth but now based in Cardiff, the Hot Puppies sound like Blondie, aspire to be Pulp, have the group dynamic of Fleetwood Mac, and confess that their biggest influence is the guitarist's mum. "My favourite lyricist is Leonard Cohen, and that comes from being brought up with his music in the house. Same with Nick Cave," explains Luke Taylor, who also writes the group's wittily melodramatic words. "On Saturday morning, when I'd had a late night at the youth club, my mum would always play Lay Me Low by Nick Cave to wake us all up. When you're 13 that's a pain in the arse, but gradually you really start to like them. Cave, Cohen and Lorca are the biggest influences on the tunes we write. It all comes down to my mum."

Mum is to be commended on inspiring music of a theatricality rare in today's dress-down scene, abounding in arresting storylines and imagery, and shaped around bittersweet tabaret-rock melodies where early Blondie meet the shade of Kurt Weill. Their debut album, *Under the Crooked Moon*, so plucked my interest that I'm reliving my professional



1980s by sitting in a pub and getting rather excited about the artistry of a bunch of 25-year-olds convinced they're on to something. Taylor is going out with keyboard, theremin, strings and marimba player Beth Gibson; drummer Rupert "Bert" Wood and Piaf-like singer Bec Newman are also an item; bassist Ben Parvizi's girlfriend is a recorder virtuoso who is not in the band, though it is surely only a matter of time.

The band members' day jobs involve care for the disabled, gardening, and selling fruit and veg and, over a pint or two, they seem as grounded and easy-going as the characters that Taylor writes and Gibson sings about are tortured and intense. The single *The Girl Who Was Too Beautiful*, for instance, is that rare artefact, an epistolary song to Observer agony aunt Marjela Frostup, confessing that no consumed is the letter-writer by jealousy of her boyfriend's dead ex that she has taken on her identity.

Unlike Hard-Fi or the Streets, the Hot Puppies seek not to reflect the reality of their world but transcend it. "I don't really like modern popular culture," says Taylor, despite not having a foyeish bone in his undandified body. "Our song Theda Bara is not about Theda

Bara. It's a fantasy standing for a different time, a more glamorous world. Your lyrics can moan about Tony Blair and the state of TV, or you can ignore it and write about your ideal. That comes from having a few rubbish jobs and imagining something else out there, creating it and living it through your music."

The return of fantasy to rock - a long overdue swing back of the pendulum, and the Hot Puppies are in the vanguard.

The Hot Puppies debut album, *Under the Crooked Moon*, is released on July 24 on Fierce Panda.

### Singalanga Nessun Dorma

Renato Balsadonna

On July 7, *Turandot* will be relayed live from the Royal Opera House to 12 outdoor screens across the country. Beforehand, Royal Opera chorus master Renato Balsadonna will give the vocalists in the Covent Garden Piazza a lesson in how



BY JAMES MURRAY

THE HOT PUPPIES  
Terry / Love in Practice, Not Theory  
[Label Fandango]  
The first release on Fierce Panda spin-off Label Fandango is this excellent double-A side available only on an incredibly limited coupling of 7" vinyl and CD. The three-track-and-two-essays combo works a treat here, as the band mould two perfect pop records packed with superb musicianship and scarring, passionate vocals. Check out [www.thehotpuppies.co](http://www.thehotpuppies.co)

**SINGLE**

**BAND**

**THE AUTOMATIC, Cardiac, Clouds II**  
Maybe you know the story by now: a few gigs, get a manager... get a record with a unique theme to the kit. Cardiac... penned a huge publishing deal and the industry doesn't stop there, a tonight they guess that they are also a brilliant live draw. Now stage recovered out in early November. Log on to [www.theautomatic.co.uk](http://www.theautomatic.co.uk) for more info

Cardiac Baby ([www.cardiacbaby.com](http://www.cardiacbaby.com)) boasts an impressive November output: Lady Spinning (10th), Peppers (7th), Virus Drill (8th), Fly Colours (11th), Arab Stars (12th), The 10th Hands Say Year (18th), The Church (14th), Johnny Hunt (24th), December Nights (1st), (12th), Editor (12th), The Koms (11th), Missions (7th), Arcadia (8th), Hysterical Reasons (13th) and No Comp (15th). Cloud for Books ([www.cloudforbooks.com](http://www.cloudforbooks.com)) November includes: Miles The Bear / The Take / Book in the Diamond (1st), The Watson / The Vines (2nd), Kinky / Zall (4th), Ciruela / Horder (5th), A Hawk And A Chalk (10th), Sincerely (11th), Bubbly (12th), For Your Anniversary (13th), Milk Banana / Spinning Around (14th), The Head / Violence (15th), Glass / Bob / DJ Br / Lute (16th), My Awesome Companion (21st), The Mystery (23rd), Access (24th).

The Fly

**THE HOT PUPPIES**

**Terry / Love in Practice, Not Theory**  
(Label Fandango)

With song titles, band name and label name all scoring high on the cool-o-meter, this would have to be pretty bad to grab defeat from the jaws of victory. Thankfully, The Hot Puppies are as fantastic as waking up in a sea of Oreo cookies with no option but to eat your way to safety. 'Terry' is pummeling smack-disco which manages to imbue the word 'Terry' with a menace normally reserved for terms like 'multiple power-drill murderer'. But it's the B-side that makes off with the garlands, being a truly terrific, vitriolic suicide waltz, full of withering put-downs ("If you tell me that you love me one more time, I shall be sick on your guitar") and going-home-alone-at-the-end-of-the-night sadness. **PC CD OUT MONDAY**

**Scary Grease** **rockers deliver bloodied goods**

NME



The Hot Puppies - Terry/Love In Practice, Not Theory

Strange and beautiful band from Aberystwyth, Wales make strange and beautiful music. From the angular, stylish guitar riff start to the breathless chorus closer, 'Terry' is a sleek and dramatic song from the first second. It is indeed something quite special. Mixing the drama of Nick Cave with the pop sensibilities of Pulp, The Hot Puppies have in their hands a song that should make people dance and sing for years to come. 'Terry' is a sleazy tale of a genuine libertine and the protagonist who loves him. Despite Terry's shortcomings (the fact that he might have killed someone, for instance), she'd still just like to dance with him. It will give you that special feeling you get when you hear a song that just hits a certain spot, and the hair on your back rises up.

Second song on the single, 'Love in practice, not theory' is a slower waltz number and what Pulp and all those other pop bands wish they could sound like. Hipshakingly good! The only thing that lets it down slightly is the fact that it's a limited release, put out on Label Fandango. More people should definitely hear this!  
Andreas Johansen

Disorder

**The Hot Puppies**

The Girl Who Was Too Beautiful (Fierce Panda NING181CD)  
Hitchcock's Vertigo and Mariella Frostrup are hardly familiar sources of rock inspiration, but here they make for an exhilarating ride. Traces of Abba and Queen join the rush in a dramatic anthem from Cardiff's hottest new act. The drums crash, the guitars drive and Becky Newman's stormy tones command attention. Expect big things in the future.

Music Week

**THE HOT PUPPIES - The Girl Who Was Too Beautiful. A song to get your tail wagging from the coolest guitar band to come out of Wales since the Manics.**

4. The Sun

**SINGLE OF THE MONTH**

**The Hot Puppies - The Girl Who Was Too Beautiful (CD Single)**  
(Out Monday 01/05/06)

It's the year 2000 and Bellatrix are whipping the indie scene into a frenzy and the world is a happy place. Six years on, the fantastically poppy Hot Puppies are replicating that excitement with their terrific 3 minute packages of female-fronted pure pop joy. Singer Becky Newman's sultry voice drives awesome guitar and keyboard masterwork that is *The Girl Who Was Too Beautiful* - a single EVERYONE must buy and get perfect indie pop back in the charts where it belongs. (TC)

Student Pages

## THE HOT PUPPIES



### The Girl Who Was Too Beautiful

(Fierce Panda)

Follow-up to the magnificent 'Terry'

It is, on the one hand, a great name for a band, as any name derived from a euphemism for a lady's breasts is (in an admittedly purile but still funny way). But if the Pups keep cranking out singles as beguiling and flushed with ideas as this, they'll wish they'd given themselves a moniker that is more 'stand the test of time' than 'comedy bow tie'. Two out of three tracks herein are spiffo, mainly the off-kilter PJ Harvey-esque title track, with its lovely swirls of Hammond and lyrics addressed directly to Mariella Frostrup, and the even better 'Just Like A Roman Candle, Joe', all nibbly Farfisa runs and dumbcluck 'WHOOH!' noises. Now sort that name out. **PC CD OUT MONDAY**

**NME**

## THE HOT PUPPIES



### Green Eyeliner

(Fierce Panda)

Puppies? Eyeliner? Someone call PETA

Before hearing this track *NME* wasn't too fussed with green eyeliner. Obviously it looks cool on Lily Allen, but so would psoriasis and fishnet socks. But The Hot Puppies like it and being the weak-minded bandwagon jumpers that we are, now we do too. Over tripping Britpop sounds singer Becki confesses her make-up fetishism with enunciation so clear you could stand it up and call it a window. This is the kind of elegant pop that Kate Long Blondes will shuffle gracefully to at her wedding, until *NME* stumbles on to the dancefloor spilling lager down her dress. Also, the B-side sounds like groove-meisters Michael Viner's Incredible Bongo Band, only minus the bongos. **AM CD OUT MONDAY**

**NME**

### The Hot Puppies

Green Eyeliner (Fierce Panda NING185)

Welsh new wave five-piece The Hot Puppies release this track as precursor to debut album *Under The Crooked Moon*, due on August 7. Handclaps and a Sixties-sounding keyboard give the tune a poppy edge, while Becki Newman's vibrato gives the band a sound like a moodier younger sister of Blondie.

**Music Week**

### HOT PUPPIES - Green Eyeliner

TALES of seduction from Wales' finest observational indie-poppers who have been described as the new Pulp. 4

**The Sun**

### Hot Puppies

#### Green Eyeliner

(Fierce Panda)

The claws are out. Somewhere between admiration and envy churns my feelings for the Hot Puppies. Doing more for Wales than those twits on Big Brother, this chic rock outfit are instantly likeable. I say "rock" outfit but it's not as simple as that. 'Green Eyeliner' lies somewhere between the feisty angular pop-punk delivery of the Puppies' 'Love or Trial?' and the smouldering croon of other tracks, like 'Under the Crooked Moon'.

While throwing out influences from Blondie and Saint Etienne, they cradle sounds of classic fifties rock n roll mixed with synthy keyboards, and passionately capture the sleaze of sexual come-ons by married men caged in a small town, to catchy and sophisticated effect. This is dancefloor for the post-teenage youth and it's just one of so many brilliantly crafted songs by this gorgeous group. You can see why I'm stuck between envy and admiration. But, for now, my only resort is to don some green-eyeliner of my own, hold hairbrush in hand, and sing my heart out.

**Angela Balakrishnan**



THE HOT PUPPIES PHOTO: RACHEL BEVIS

**Artrocker**



### The Hot Puppies

Under The Crooked Moon (Fierce Panda NONG42CD)

Much has been written about Cardiff's The Hot Puppies of late and much of that praise is justified by this debut album, which fuses Blondie-esque new wave pop hooks with an open approach to instrumentation that sees theremins, marimbas and cellos thrown into the equation. And in Becki Newman they have a fantastically charismatic singer.

Music Week



#### Debut effort from sugar-sweet popsters

■ This is classy pop done by indie kids – think Blondie on a budget.

■ Like a nymphomaniac Wicked Witch of the West, singer Becky's voice is as sexy as it is scary.

■ There are more tunes here than in a throat lozenge factory. 'Terry' and 'The Bottled Ship Song' are our favoured cuts.



Loaded

### The Hot Puppies

☆☆☆☆

#### Under The Crooked Moon

FIERCE PANDA

It's la nouvelle Blondie.

Just as 30 years ago Blondie took The Shangri-Las as their launchpad rather than destination, so The Hot Puppies – formed in Aberystwyth in 2000 but only releasing their debut album now – have their

roots in Blondie's first two albums but already are branching out luxuriantly. Singer Becky Newman evokes Edith Piaf's overwrought quaver, perfectly suited to tuneful and crisply performed songs that not only embrace the seeming paradox of cabaret cleverness and heartfelt yearning but leave lipstick on its collar. The latest single, 'The Girl Who Was Too Beautiful', and its predecessor 'Terry' fill a Pulp-shaped hole, while the brightest highlight, Theda Bara, rhymes the silent movie vamp of the title with "lunch hour", and that's just for starters.

Mat Snow

Mojo

### The Hot Puppies

Under the Crooked Moon  
(Fierce Panda)

☆☆☆☆☆

Coming straight out of Aberystwyth, there is a strangely alluring streak of grubby romance shot through the heart of the Hot Puppies' debut. "Terry won't tell me if that's blood or Campari on his hand," groans the lead singer Bec Newman to twangy new-wave backing on 'Terry', before pondering the ins, outs and her (potential) part in small-town infidelity on 'Green Eyeiiner' — Pulp fans' ears should be pricking up.

It's wry stuff, but for each moment of svelte pop sass that creeps up and whispers Blondie, there is the occasional flirtation with lumpy indie ordinariness, recalling any number of Britpop also-rans from the past decade. Still, one play of Under the Crooked Moon will raise the glamour quota in any indie disco, Aberystwyth or elsewhere.

BEN MACHELL

The Times

#### THE HOT PUPPIES – 'Under the Crooked Moon' (FIERCE PANDA)

Regular readers of this page will know that we're big fans of The Hot Puppies here, so we're pretty excited to have landed a copy of their debut long-player 'Under the Crooked Moon'. Kicking off with recent single 'Terry', the album continues in similarly excellent fashion with 'The Drowsing Nymph' and 'The Bottled Ship Song' standing out as future indie anthems.

The Fly

### THE HOT PUPPIES [7]

#### 'UNDER THE CROOKED MOON'



(FIERCE PANDA)

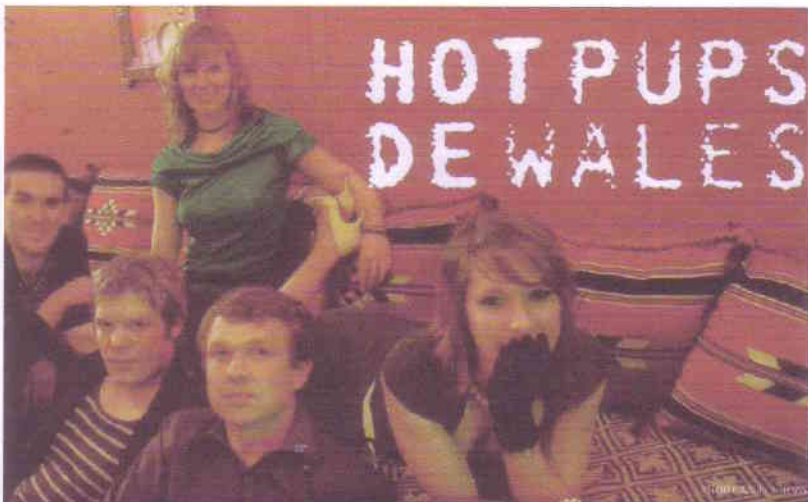
This sultry, roughly-hewn debut from the Welsh five-piece is clinical grrrr-pop. Charming vignettes take shape as singer Becki Newman lets

Morrissey take control of her tongue: tales of putting on green eyeliner, dancing the night away with a bloke called Terry and having your heart broken. Becki's seductive vocal power naturally brings to mind Blondie, and The Hot Puppies share trendy, polka-dot-dress territory with The Pipettes, but there are also tasty slabs of mystery and punk grit here. 'Terry', for one, sounds like he's been playing Patrick Bateman for the night: "Terry won't tell me if that's blood or Campari on his hands." A feisty, entertaining album, bristling with energy.

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

MIKE HAYDOCK

Rocksound



# HOT PUPPYS DE WALES

DIY classic pop? Could such a thing exist? **Richard Davis** looks closely at the Hot Puppies' extraordinary debut...

## The Hot Puppies Under the Crooked Moon

The Hot Puppies' debut is problematic. Rehearsing to fit in anywhere – neither art-rock proper (in its current Bloc Party/Future Islands-focused incarnation), nor indie-scholarly (in its current NME-fueled incarnation) – the Puppies willfully seeks to tread a singular path. And this album, in keeping with this singular path-treading, is a declaration of independence that is – quite literally – neither here nor there.

So, where is it? Without current reference points, we have to look elsewhere. We must look, for instance, to the past. We can also look to areas outside (does it suggest it?) the music industry. These external forays are actually more straightforward than they may at first appear: *Under the Crooked Moon* contains references to a wide-ranging disparate array of entities to Salome, to post bands, to cinema moments long past (a song

about silent-screen vamp p. Theda Bara) and to comic book king Gilbert Scream.

Beginning with 'Terry', the album sets its agenda early. A tale of love, perhaps unrequited, teenage-romance and a youthful obsession with appearance, this song is a good summation of the album's initial concerns. Two tracks later and 'Green Eyeliner' develops these concerns further: appearance has now become a useful metaphor for that most intense of emotions – jealousy. Described by the band themselves as probably 'the most tragic song on the album', it nevertheless is paradoxically poppy about. It's possibly the most engagingly infectious song you're likely to hear for a long time.

Missing from *Under the Crooked Moon* is the song which bears the same name – continuing a rock tradition which stretches back to the Doors' *Waiting for the Sun*. It apparently does not fit in well enough with the rest of the album. Yet it may return, albeit in a reworked form. This would be wise, seeing

as this particular song is one of the Puppies' best. Not that the album is bereft of great songs – quite the opposite, in fact. It is what one would have been called an instant classic, comprised of statistics in eloquent words.

The album was recorded under a boozing ting, and it is possible, during certain moments, to hear the sound of bodies hitting the deck, as they suffer the consequences of powerful slugs to the knees, neatly and corporally, representing the knockout, tragic blow suffered by many of the protagonists of *The Hot Puppies* album. And the Pups themselves potentially have a tragedy of their own approaching, as faddish music buyers find themselves not knowing what to do with them. It is always possible, however, for the discerning listener to reach out beyond the masses to grasp that rare gem, clutch it to the chest, and save it back home, to the protective land. And to the CD player.

**Richard Davis**

## THE HOT PUPPIES Under the Crooked Moon

FIERCE PANDA



### Pigeonhole-evading Welsh indie combo

Much as the South Welsh don't need any more stereotyping, their local rock history boasts an undeniable lineage of gutsy female vocalists – Shirley Bassey, Bonnie Tyler, The Darling Buds, Catatonia et al. The Hot Puppies – from Cardiff via Aberystwyth – bear clear resemblance to the last, with vocalist Becki Newman maintaining the proud tradition of apparently gargling with pebbles before enunciating. There's much to admire in her quintet's indie-pop, though, with dynamic twists and turns underpinning cute, cruel lyrics on "Theda Bara" and plaintive single "How Come You Don't Hold Me No More?".

CHRIS ROBERTS

## Artrocker

## Uncut



## The Hot Puppies Under the Crooked Moon



(Fierce Panda) £10.99

**The Hot Puppies reviewed on page 12**  
Of all this summer's girl-fronted indie-pop bands, the Puppies will come out on top

The emergence of the Pipettes, the Puppini Sisters and Cardiff's Hot Puppies gives this summer's indie-pop a female-fronted, theatrical slant. But who will come out on top in the autumn? It's got to be the Puppies, whose singer, Bec Newman, fills every tremulous syllable with Ronnie Spector-ish vulnerability. In a perfect world, she would have written the tunes herself, but the man who did, guitarist Luke Taylor, is obviously in touch with his feminine side: Green Eyeliner and The Girl Who Was Too Beautiful sound convincingly like the product of a vengeful woman's pen. The dramatic song structures reference early Pulp and the girl-group era, with one acoustic ballad, Heartbreak Soup, slipped in as a respite from the high emotion. The Puppies are limited only by the boundaries of their imagination; shame the album has come too late for this year's Mercury prize.

Caroline Sullivan



## HOT PUPPIES UNDER THE CROOKED MOON

FIERCE PANDA RECORDS

This eagerly anticipated release from the Welsh indie rockers is a refreshing and well put together album of 13 tracks – including the critically acclaimed singles 'Terry', 'The Girl Who Was Too Beautiful' and the next single 'How Come You Don't Hold Me No More'. 'Green Eyeliner' and 'Baptist Boy' are upbeat rocking tunes packed with thrashing guitars and powerful vocals in all the right places, and in contrast Becki Newman's lead vocals are truly showcased on the beautiful 'Heartbreak Soup'. A mini version of the Ella Fitzgerald song 'Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall' closes the album with the girls' harmonies leaving you wanting more. NOW



## The Guardian

## Notion