

World Domination



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Bat For Lashes

Natasha Khan is busy as hell. It looks like this is going to be a great year for Bat For Lashes. "Next week I'm doing SXSW in Texas, all the summer festivals and then I'm hatching my world domination plan!" she enthuses.

Natasha Khan is the brains and the beauty behind Bat For Lashes: "The name just popped into my head — it's onomatopoeic, it sounds like music, it sounds nocturnal, magical and feminine."

Bat For Lashes' debut album, *Fur and Gold* has met serious critical acclaim since its release in September last year. Its ethereal, multi-instrumental songs are reminiscent of Kate Bush and early Bjork. Her muses range from David Lynch and Angela Carter to *The Karate Kid* and *E.T.* via chamber music and voodoo conjurers.

"Symbolism, history and religion inspire me, and those magical films about children relating to things greater than their domestic set-up. It's frightening and epic and religious. It evokes emotions and magic that I still feel and draw inspiration from."

Bat For Lashes' live shows, with accomplices Ginger Lee and Abi Fry, are made up of thunderous marching band drums, desert guitar, ballet school piano, harpsichord, sub bass snarls, hand claps and naïve beats. "I like to create a journey for the audience: extremes of up and down, dark and light."

It's tempting to place Bat For Lashes under the "new folk" umbrella, but Khan refuses to be pigeonholed. "I think I've been labelled as that because I'm friends with Devendra [Banhart], but that's friendship. I use the harpsichord which sounds quite medieval, and there's also some 60s girl group inspired parts and then there'll be a hip-hop beat."

It remains to be seen what the rest of 2007 has up its sleeve for Bat For Lashes. Currently working on new songs and preparing for a summer of hardcore touring, Natasha Khan is poised for world domination.

Poppy O'Neill

Tom McRae *King of Cards*

King of Cards is Tom McRae's fourth studio album. Like any great work of art, it makes you feel and causes an immediate reaction. McRae's remarkable vocals and joyous harmonies create a sublime and unique perspective into the self. Produced by Sean Genockey (Manic Street Preachers, Kula Shaker, Suede), *King of Cards* is an album focused on identity and escape.

McRae, influenced by the likes of Nick Drake, Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds, and Jeff Buckley has produced an all-consuming album. Highlights are *Bright Lights*, *The Ballad Of Amelia Earhart* and the heart aching *How Long*. It's not often that an album of such intellectual and genuine fortitude comes along. It's well worth adding to your collection.

Elizabeth Shevlin



TALL FIRS *Tall Firs*

Coming with a recommendation from no less than Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth, this disarming, disturbing troupe of melancholy New Yorkers weave a rich, harmonious cloth of whispered vocals and woody guitars. After teaching each other to play the guitar over the telephone, Dave Mies and Aaron Mullan played their first gig eleven years later, and it took them five years to record this record. Like the good old, bitter whisky it evokes, it was worth the wait. Sparse drum kits thump, organs whirr and all the while the interplay between the two guitars creates layers you hear something new in every time. New Americana, Contemporary Folk or just good storytelling — a compelling album.

Alexander King

