

## Bat For Lashes

Two Suns  
Parlophone



**B**at For Lashes is one of the most progressive artists at the moment.

After being nominated for the Mercury prize in 2007 for *Fur And Gold*, Natasha Khan has become something of a phenomenon.

For *Two Suns*, Khan headed Stateside to New York and California to create a conceptual and ambitious piece of work.

The opening track *Glass* is expansive and captivating. Khan's vocals mix with a primal beat, which opens the album defiant and strong, quickly followed by *Sleep Alone* with vocals yearning for love, but a consistent beat throughout. It's a different overall sound to *Fur And Gold*, maintaining Khan's aching vocals, but an exotic experience laden with fascination. Sitting somewhere in between pop, folk and dance, Khan emerges as a truly innovative musician and soon to be icon.

Bat For Lashes tours the UK this April. For further details and dates visit:  
[www.batforlashes.com](http://www.batforlashes.com)

Shirley Stevenson

**Miles Benjamin  
Anthony Robinson**  
Miles Benjamin  
Anthony Robinson  
Album

*Transgressive*



**H**aving a self-titled album and a name something of a mouthful, with the release of eponymous debut album, the moniker, M-Bar is becoming widely accepted.

M-Bar has a destructive and troubled past. The confessional singer-songwriter feel of the album suits the intelligent and intimate lyrics. A surreal meditation on his own funeral, *Buriedfed*, begins with sparse, strummed guitar and builds into an astounding, discordant cacophony of drums and dissonant vocals. *The Debtor* continues the bleak content, over sweet piano melodies M-Bar's distinctive voice chimes in with the stark refrain: "I'm not sure I want to stay alive/it's so expensive."

This album starts brilliantly, with the opening tracks distinct and emotionally powerful. However, the second half is weaker, and the world-weary, half-mumbled lyrics begin to feel like a lurid dream you'll struggle to wake up from. Visit [myspace.com/milesbenjaminanthonyrobinson](http://myspace.com/milesbenjaminanthonyrobinson).

Samantha Cracknell

## The Balky Mule

The Length of the Rail  
Fatcat



**W**eird and wonderful, The Balky

Mule is the alias of UK ex-pat Sam Jones — a self-taught multi-instrumentalist who was a key figure in Bristol's vibrant music scene before emigrating to Australia in 2006.

*The Length Of The Rail* is his first release in eight years, so there's a lot at stake. The Balky Mule is not mainstream music, you won't hear this on Radio 1, but in its own right, the record has some admirable qualities.

Clearly an influence drawn from early Beck and Animal Collective, but also that disparate Pavement sound that shines through, but throughout these familiar sounds, there is something original through the use of a variety of instruments. Each song has its own identity, which is a highly commendable quality — no boredom here. Opening with *Dust Bath Birds*, the whole tone is set, and moving into track five, *A Moth Like Woodchip*, it's instrumental, experimental and just plain lovely. [www.myspace.com/thebalkymule](http://www.myspace.com/thebalkymule).

Cherie Federico



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