

The Freshers' Soundtrack

Music Editor [Chris Owen](#) offers some album recommendations for your first weeks at University, whether you're studying, partying or missing home

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There are lots of decisions to make in your first weeks at university: what should I wear, which societies should I join, what should I eat, would it be a good idea to jump in the lake, et cetera, et cetera. As seasoned students, we hope that we can impart some wisdom to make things easier (the answers to those questions are anything, all of them especially Nouse, anything, and absolutely not, in case you were wondering). As the paper's resident Music nerd, I've taken it upon myself to help with some choices of a musical nature, so you can concentrate on deciding the important things. Below are some albums that might come in handy for various points in your first few weeks at university – and if you absolutely have to jump in the lake, do it to some Queen.

For pre-drinking

Arriving at agreement for the pre-drinks music can be trickier than you'd think, especially in the face of that overbearing Music student flatmate and the wasted one who only wants to listen to 'Uptown Funk'. But there are plenty of agreeable options to flesh out a playlist to appeal to all.

The Killers – *Hot Fuss*

You'll be hearing 'Mr Brightside' at least twice a night each time you go out, so you'd better make sure you learn all the words beforehand if you don't know them already. Like the rest of the album, it's a song entirely resistant to the effects of age. *Hot Fuss* turns 10 this year and is comfortably one of the most memorable albums of the last decade, an emblem of the twitchy, awkward and recklessly anthemic indie

music of the early 2000s (see also Franz Ferdinand, Kaiser Chiefs – more strong flat party fodder). It's more than just a one-hit record too – 'All These Things That I've Done' and 'Smile Like You Mean It' all surfaced on *Hot Fuss*. It's an album that will keep even the most disparate flat happy at pre-drinks: energetic, custom made for singing and dancing or nodding along to nonchalantly, and not EDM. No pre-drinks playlist is over until Brandon Flowers sings 'Somebody Told Me'.

Disclosure – *Caracal*

Glitchy house pioneers Disclosure released their second studio album on September 25th, probably with the intention of monopolising Freshers' Weeks the country over. *Caracal* is a solid collection of electronic sublimity worthy of its inevitable whirlwind of attention, with feature spots from Sam Smith, Lorde, Miguel, The Weeknd and Kwabs. It strikes the balance between hype and chill that will make a pre-drinks playlist.

According to Guy and Howard, the record is so named because the caracal 'is an elusive creature that usually hunts at night. They are normally solitary animals, but some will stay in pairs...' Subtle, guys.

Arctic Monkeys – *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not*

Another generational classic that no-one can reasonably object to, 'When The Sun Goes Down', 'I Bet That You Look Good On The Dancefloor' and 'Mardy Bum' are destined to soundtrack slurred games of Ring Of Fire for the foreseeable future. You'd do well to throw 'Fluorescent Adolescent' and 'Arabella' into the mix too. There's nothing quite like Alex Turner's angsty Sheffield drawl hurling gritty commentary of teenage Britain to get you pumped for a night on the mean streets of York. Now get on your Dancing Shoes.

For late night library sessions

Every term you'll find yourself in at least one blind panic about the fact that you haven't done any work for your degree. The right album can turn this around just enough to get you back on some semblance of a track.

Nick Mulvey – *First Mind*

Nick Mulvey might seem like your standard Ben Howard cut-out if you've only ever caught him singing 'Cucurucu' on Radio 1, but his Mercury Prize-nominated 2014 debut is actually one of the most complex and multi-faceted easy listening records you're likely to find in recent years. It's an intensely atmospheric

yet gentle collection of acoustic songs, perfect for listening to from start to finish whilst trying to churn out an overdue 3000 word essay at 2am. Highlights are 'April' and 'Fever To The Form', and the brilliantly jilted, hypnotic 'Venus' will never be off your headphones after one play.

Chvrches - *Every Open Eye*

In many places Chvrches' second album is as compelling and immersive as their first. Singles 'Leave A Trace' and 'Never Ending Circles' are just the kind of sprawling, epic creations that you need to power you through to the end of that 30 pages of required reading. It also sounds as if the band members have been the subject to some messy breakups between records - lead singer Lauren Mayberry declares on 'Leave A Trace' that 'you talk far too much for someone so unkind' - so *Every Open Eye* might also become a source of solace as your perfect high school relationship falls apart around your ears, leaving you alone and miserable in a strange city. Or it might not.

Half Moon Run - *Dark Eyes*

My definitive studying album, *Dark Eyes* was released in 2012 to not nearly enough applause. Awash with sublime three-part harmonies, untidy yet precise percussion and drum-lines and a brilliant 70s, The Moody Blues psychedelic vibe, it's an album, much like Nick Mulvey's, to completely lose yourself in for an hour. Its balance of absorbing atmosphere and quietness makes it perfect for sticking on from start to finish to see you through a short, sharp work session. Play it twice a term and you'll bag that 40%.

For wishing you weren't here

Everyone has those moments in their first term at Uni where they can't remember why they ever chose to move away from home to a life of perpetual hangovers and eating tuna straight from the tin. It's times like these that you need a good miserable, friendly record.

Will Varley - *As The Crow Flies*

This is an album that captures exactly what it means to be living alone for the first time, with its mix of simple songs about family, downtrodden politics (you'll be amazed at how angry being a student can make you at the price of trains) and the trials of feeding yourself (see 'The Self Checkout Shuffle'). For fans of Frank Turner or Beans on Toast, Will Varley is one of the best British songwriters around today; his

debut 'Advert Soundtracks' is a work of genius, and his third album 'Poastcards From Ursa Minor', with artwork to make vinyl fans swoon, is out in October. Stick it on when you're missing your dog and you're ready to murder your flatmates.

Wolf Alice - *My Love Is Cool*

Wolf Alice's debut album was released earlier this year, and will remind you why you wanted to move away from home and live the uni life in the first place. Its furiously passionate grunge rock riffs and no nonsense lyrics are a celebration of living in the moment, and this is no truer than in the energetic and cathartic brilliance of their live shows. 'Bros' is a tale of what it means to make and lose friendships, while 'You're A Germ' is a scorching, scuzzy outpouring of euphoria, with lead singer Ellie Rowsell screaming the chorus with complete, blind abandon. It's also a record with truly sad, stirring corners that encapsulates the sense of pressurised chaos that comes with being a young adult in Britain today; it should undoubtedly form the alternative soundtrack of your Freshers experience, for when the club beats start to numb your brain.

MGMT - *Oracular Spectacular*

MGMT somehow managed to turn pure nostalgia into music on their 2007 debut *Oracular Spectacular*, a record twice as good as its name. When all you want to do is lie in bed, watch Game of Thrones and miss your car with all your being, blasting 'Time To Pretend', 'Kids' and 'Electric Feel' at an inhuman volume will bring new depth to that pit of despair you're wallowing in. The duo got all experimental on next two records, though many (but not me) say that *Congratulations* and *MGMT* are even better than the debut. There's no doubt though that *Oracular* is the one to help you through a healthy bout of homesickness. Also, I can't stress enough how much you're going to miss your car.



One comment

Alice

15 Oct '15 at 11:42 pm

Brilliant article - have added all of these suggestions to my spotify playlist!

 Report

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