

# BLUE CORNER STORE

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MONKEYS  
SPECIAL

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Mark Wood

@mrkwd

'Do I Wanna Know?' oozes of the morning after. 'R U Mine?' is the night before. 'One For The Road' persistently demands more bass, better speakers and a helicopter on the roof. 'Arabella' allures your subconscious to yell "Killing in the name of!" on multiple occasions. 'I Want It All' is a falsetto fuzz-fest that sits next to 'All My Own Stunts' at the dinner table. I dreamt I invented time travel and listened to Alex Turner's first solo album; it sounded like 'No. 1 Party Anthem'. 'Mad Sounds' would have been on the mix-tape that Oliver Tate's Dad gave



Lewis Harrison

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'AM' feels like yet another milestone for Sheffield's favourite foursome. This abruptly self-titled album isn't their magnum opus; but that's only because it's proved that they're still constantly refining and personalising their sound. With four albums worth of experience under their belt, their new album packs a punch whilst remaining calculated and beautiful — a controlled musical explosion. It still retains the dusty desert, motel blues feel of 'Humbug' ('Do I Wanna Know?', 'Fireside') and the raw, dynamic intensity of 'Suck It And See' ('Knee Socks'), but there is so much more going on under the hood of



Tara Jackson

Listening to all five albums in a row, you can hear how the band have changed and matured; from four young lads taking the UK by storm, to the fully-fledged rock 'n' roll band of our generation. 'AM' is close to the best I've heard from them. The backing vocals on 'One For The Road' have definitely developed well compared to the 'Dancefloor' ones. Alex Turner's lyrics are better than ever ('Arabella') but they've still got that teenage abandon about them in 'Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?'. And let's be honest, that was what got people into the Monkeys in the first

him in the film 'Submarine'. 'Fireside' is a Miles Kane riff away from a 'Last Shadow Puppets' reunion. 'Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?' is a 'WPSIATWIN' track that arrived seven years fashionably late to the party. 'Snap Out Of It' is the furthest from what anyone would define as Arctic Monkeys to date; but it still somehow remains Arctic Monkeys. 'Knee Socks' thoroughly cements the 'AM' blend of hip-hop and rock whilst simultaneously keeping the bottom half of Josh Homme's legs warm. 'I Wanna Be Yours' is the sound of minor-key exasperation; I was expecting unrequited, major-key dedication. 'AM' is modern romance.

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this release. Turner's cited R&B influence is clear throughout, with Nick O'Malley and Matt Helders providing creamy falsetto that wouldn't feel out of place on an Outkast record. There are big, orchestral Lennon-esque power ballads which show Turner's genius lyrical prowess ('No.1 Party Anthem', 'Snap Out Of It'). Then there's the riff-based monsters that have a slice of the old material with a touch of The Black Keys American rock 'n' roll aesthetic ('R U Mine?'). 'AM' is a prime example of a band that is consistently surpassing themselves musically. They've had a colourful past and by the looks of things they'll continue to paint musical masterpieces for the foreseeable future.

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place. Agile Beast Matt Helders has certainly still got it, Jamie Cook has finally shown what he is capable of and Nick O'Malley is getting better by the minute. They've grown so much from 'the band that my brother likes and I used to dance to when I was eight' to 'the band that I could never, ever forget'. From that small band with the lyrics about real life and bursting with power chords, to a Dr. Dre beat with a Foals-y sparkle. Arctic Monkeys, I am yours. The question is, R U Mine?

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It doesn't have to end. We're on the interwebs!  
[blog.bluecornerstore.co.uk](http://blog.bluecornerstore.co.uk) :)



Welcome to the world's weirdest 'love' album, it's called 'AM'. However, instead of celebrating love, it's largely written from a perspective of pursuing love; something which is often far from all senses of the word 'romantic'. This is the most realistic portrayal of modern romance to date in all its deadpan realism. Precariously constructed late night texts, awkward conversations fuelled by alcohol, namely set in a dark, sweaty room or a 'friend of a friend's house. It's hardly Romeo and Juliet, right?

But that's what's so brilliant. Spoiler alert ladies, but the closest thing you'll get to being serenaded on a balcony is your bloke having locked himself out after an all-night bender. Turner consistently challenges the idealised notion of love and romance in exactly this way; the animalistic attraction of 'Arabella', the ironic anti-ballad

that is 'No 1. Party Anthem' or the drunkenly motivated 'Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?'. Aren't these all notions of romance to clubs with "sweat on the walls", house parties "with the coats all piled high" as well as going "back to yours". However, the very next moment he's back to old tricks, describing Arabella's "Helter Skelter 'round her little finger" and her "Barbarella silver swimsuit". Lyrically, 'AM' certainly is the last four Arctic Monkeys albums all rolled into one, but musically? It's a world apart.

It's the same reason why so many people related to the songs and lyrics of 'Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not'. Turner wrote exactly what he saw and captured moments which people don't often acknowledge because they're so mundane and inconsequential. However, when pointed out, we all instantly relate to them like waking up on a Monday morning. Arguing with your missus, going out on the pull with your mates, getting jip from some jobsworth bouncer. It summed up a generation and people identified with its bleak and non-sugar coated portrayal

of reality; skip forward seven years and that's exactly what we've got here with 'AM', albeit from a slightly more mature approach.

'AM' is the perfect balance of the black and white observation of 'WPSIATWIN' and 'Favourite Worst Nightmare', contrasted with the nonsense poems of 'Humbug' and 'Suck It And See'. One minute, Turner simply wonders if the apple of his eye has departed yet. He then continues to set the scene with literal, mundane references to clubs with "sweat on the walls", house parties "with the coats all piled high" as well as going "back to yours". However, the very next moment he's back to old tricks, describing Arabella's "Helter Skelter 'round her little finger" and her "Barbarella silver swimsuit". Lyrically, 'AM' certainly is the last four Arctic Monkeys albums all rolled into one, but musically? It's a world apart.

It's dripping with style and sex appeal, yet remains thick with that trademark Turner lyricism which is as poignant and relevant as ever. I've no doubt that your initial romance with 'AM' will mirror the way romance is depicted on this album; short, sweet and always left wanting more. Fortunately for you, it's a romance you can relive as many times as you want.

# THE VERDICT



**Lauren Wade**

@laurenlily\_\_

It's bad boy time for Sheffield's Arctic Monkeys, who are back with a game-changer that seems a firm contender for album of the decade (yes, we're only in 2013, but you can just tell). Fan favourite 'R U Mine?' makes the track-list having been tweaked here and there; it's an anthem that sees the four-piece rip up the rulebook. 'AM' encompasses the darkness of 2009's 'Humbug', fused with trademark rock riffs and glints of fourth release 'Suck It And See'. Described as an "album of two halves" by frontman Alex Turner, 'No. 1 Party An-

them' re-imagines 2011's 'Piledriver Waltz' - perfect for sobbing away your summer blues to. Accessibly hooky 'Snap Out Of It' comes as a moment of excellence, but it's 'Knee Socks' that works the real magic; pulling you in for repeated listens, whilst Queens of the Stone Age's Josh Homme does Josh-esque things in a brief thirty second window. It's an album that matches the remarkable beauty of 'Humbug' through and through. 'Arabella' with her "Barbarella silver swimsuit" and "interstellar gatorskin boots" can vouch for this, whilst the group's take on John Cooper Clarke's 'I Wanna Be Yours' fades us out. Mad sounds? They veritably are.

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**Robert Miller**

@mostinept

Forget everything you know about shoo-wops. 'AM' is slick, bizarre, and overtly sexual. 'AM' is a head bobbing, cocky strut. It's an astronaut bound for the moon, wearing phosphorescent face paint. Okay, I have no idea what 'AM' is, but it's the Arctic Monkeys and I dig it. 'Fireside' is a glittery gallop with thick percussion and a vaguely Spanish strumming pattern.

When the harpsichord (yeah, a fucking harpsichord) kicks in, you'll get it. 'Knee Socks' goes from sultry to absurdly catchy in a single beat. "When you know who's calling even when the number is blocked" screeches Matt Helders, sounding very unlike a crow. 'No. 1 Party Anthem' and 'Arabella' are also stand outs, representing opposite ends of the album's spectrum; tender to lascivious. All things considered, the album exudes confidence. A truly well-deserved confidence.

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**Henry Small**

@harryhenrysmall

Arctic Monkeys are, in my opinion, the most important band of the last ten years and also my personal favourite. But after listening to 'AM' for the first time, I felt a bit lost. It's hard to explain. 'Suck It And See' is my favourite album and maybe it's due to the change in the sound on that record that makes me unsure of 'AM'. I do like the sound of 'AM' though. It's funky and its the sexiest they have ever sounded. From the sounds of it, it's what they truly wanted to

make. It also shows how good they are as a band; that they can completely change their sound but still make it sound like them. Lyrically, I'm not sure if it's up to scratch with some of Alex's previous work and song-wise, I think some are unfortunately forgetful ('I Want It All'). However, others shine and are stone cold Arctic classics, 'No.1 Party Anthem', 'Arabella' and 'I Wanna Be Yours', along with the singles. I don't feel let down by 'AM', it's a good, solid album, but I think I expected more... a perfection of 'SIAS' maybe? But for now, this will do nicely.

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**Adam Paver**

@Sublime\_Sophism

'Do I Wanna Know?' is a song fans will be familiar with, serving as an introduction to 'AM'; holding your hand into the band's new-found style, whilst smoothly flowing into the similarly pre-released song 'R U Mine?'. This deeper sound is pulled off so effortlessly, catapulting you into their new sound. 'One For The Road' brings with it a polished mystique, making you crave more. 'Arabella', the space-age lover, takes track four. This flows perfectly into 'I Want It All', where Turner longs to capture every moment with a beautiful woman; something which is indeed captured so eloquently by Turner himself. The slowest song on the album, 'No. 1 Party Anthem' mocks waiting for an anthemic tune to feel the vibe at a party (ironically, usually his

own 'I Bet That You Look Good On The Dance-floor'). 'Mad Sounds' and 'Fireside' serve to bring the pace back up; but also so beautifully form a lullaby of mesmeric proportions. The latest single 'Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?' follows, the shortest song on the album; almost written to be served as a single. 'Snap Out Of It' sums itself up within its own lyrics, "Under a spell, you're hypnotized". And that's exactly what you are, enthralled by excellence. 'Knee Socks' feels as a sequel to 'Mardy Bum', capturing the feelings of an infatuated lover. Ending with 'I Wanna Be Yours' (which features lyrics from John Cooper-Clarke) nothing could be more British, unless the Queen was on bass. All in all, it's Arctic Monkeys most well-written album. Sexy, after midnight, with that 'AM' title alluding to more than just the bands initials.

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**Nana Gongadze**

@\_THEPLAYLIST\_

For their fifth release, Sheffield rockers Arctic Monkeys absorb the dark night-life energy and grit of recording locale Los Angeles; 'AM' pairs rollicking guitars with blunt beats much like the rap music one might hear on the streets of the west coast capital. A number of excellent tracks hit all the right notes. The ultra cool, riff heavy 'Arabella', high speed high ride 'R U Mine?' and its lower key but slick cousin, 'Do I Wanna Know?'. They also bring a little smooth

soul in 'Mad Sounds' and night drenched, bass-filled funk in 'Why Do You Only Call Me When You're High?'. Dragging these down is a handful of lacklustre numbers that feature little of note and simply lack originality; like 'Fireside' and 'I Wanna Be Yours'. 'No. 1 Party Anthem' sounds too much like the 'Favourite Worst Nightmare' track 'Only Ones Who Know' for comfort. Such a disparity and a general feeling of shallowness creeping over everything makes it seem like 'AM' can't compete with the band's legendary past. The bottom line: 'AM' delivers, but barely.

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**George Samuel**

@georgesamuel95

I'll be honest, I thought 'Suck It And See' was going to be the best album by Arctic Monkeys. Personally, I was a little disappointed that it didn't measure up to albums such as 'WPSIATWIN' and 'Favourite Worst Nightmare'. This caused a little concern over a new album but I really am blown away by what I've heard. It's everything you'd want from a Monkey's album and more. With the classic dirty guitar

riffs of 'Do I Wanna Know?' and the softer "Ooh la la la's" on 'Mad Sounds', it delivers from beginning to end. I was a little worried about the cover of John Cooper-Clarke's 'I Wanna Be Yours', but it turned out to be fantastic and really does justice to the poet himself. My favourite track on the album is 'Arabella'; the powerful guitar riffs just give this older sounding rock song a classic Arctic Monkeys feel. With Alex's accent on the lyrics, it just makes it a superb song on another top album by the Monkeys.

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What did you #absolutebeauts think of 'AM'? Tweet us @bluecornerstore.

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