

# ALBUMS

week's most important releases  
and by the UK's most informed critics  
by Julian Marshall



"The huge success of **Kate Nash's** 'Foundations' has meant her debut album has been rush-released. James McMahon, who interviewed her before she became massive, reviews the album before any other music magazine. Also, we're celebrating Kevin Douch's **Big Scary Monsters** who prove it's possible for anyone to set up on their own and start releasing music."

**Julian** Julian Marshall  
Reviews Editor



"Ha ha ha, that's not really Superglue on the keys, is it?"

## BEHIND THE ALBUM

**KATE NASH**  
MADE OF BRICKS  
RELEASED AUGUST 6

### STUDIOS

Recorded at Eastcote Studios in London with Paul Epworth. Mastered at Sterling Sound in New York with Tom Jensen.

### EQUIPMENT USED

Recorded on tape, but with additional digital processing. Pro Tools, Rhodes keyboards, Fender Telecaster, vibraphone and grand piano.

### ALBUM INFLUENCES

**Kate Nash:** "I was trying to grasp the idea of what an album actually meant. I'd written everything before I went in, so rather than being inspired it was more developing a sense of what an album is. Rather than just skirting over people who were really cool, like Bob Dylan and Cat Power, I listened to their albums as a way to get a better understanding of their work."

### IT'S A FACT

- Sound effects on 'Mariella' were made by bits of wood taped to speakers which Kate jumped up and down on.
- Other unusual sounds are crisp packets and a ventolin inhaler.
- Scratch, from The Roots, did a rap and beatbox on one of the tracks but it didn't end up on the album.

# KATE NASH

**Made Of Bricks // Fiction**



Reviewed by James McMahon



To date, this is what we know about **Kate Nash**: in February of this year, she released a rubbish debut single called 'Caroline's A Victim' which then went on to provide the main hook for the anonymously released, poster-baiting satire 'LDN Is A Victim'.

In that track read like an A To Z of the current London indie scene, and took a pop at the likes of Klaxons, The Maccabees and Lily Allen, it unwittingly propelled Kate to the radar. At the time of writing, she's been sat in the top three of the pop charts for four weeks and counting, the success of her brilliant second single and this record's opener, 'Foundations'. Only last week she graced the cover of this very magazine with her pal, Jack Peñate, sporting the most curious shadow this side of Amy Winehouse. Right now, she's the talk of the town. Which all raises the question: what the fuck is Kate Nash?

'Made Of Bricks' is a record that answers that very question. Produced by Paul Epworth - who, after defining the indie sound of 2005 by knob-twiddling for Bloc Party, The Futureheads and The Streets, shows there's depth to his talents - it's a record that captures its 20-year-old, Harrow-born auteur in starkly honest detail. This isn't just a collection of songs; more a sketchbook of thoughts, fears and feelings as deep and as sore as anything you may have written in a ribbon-bound journal. These are not just words that sound nice with music, but subconscious thoughts of lust, self-loathing, insecurity and, frequently, the kind of things you wouldn't tell anyone other than your best friend. 'Made Of Bricks' up, and you'll learn much about who Kate is, and what she's about.

'Nicest Thing', beneath a quartet of weeping violins, we hear that she yearns to be loved ("I wish that without me your world would break"). Then on the Motown-aping 'We Get On' we hear some time listening to her broken heart ("I saw you kissing

that girl/My heart it shattered"), before moving on to the lusty fun of 'Pumpkin Soup' - the best song here that isn't 'Foundations' - with its refrain of "I just want your kiss, boy" coming on like the Sugababes dragging Kate Bush to the studio. Then there's the touching and irreverent, but pretty fucking funny 'Birds' ("Birds can fly so high or they can shit on your head... But when you look at them, and you see that they're beautiful/That's how I feel about you"), a song that nods to the influence of NYC antifolk acts like the Moldy Peaches and Jeffrey Lewis on Nash's songwriting.

Yet what's most extraordinary about Nash's debut - and in particular her turn of phrase - is embodied in the frank way she lays bare her innermost concerns for all to see. If you've ever stood naked in front of a bedroom mirror and

**It's no exaggeration to say that this album feels like leafing through someone else's diary**

sighed, you might find 'Mouthwash's' line, "This is my face, covered in freckles with an occasional spot and some veins", bores right through you. Then there's the way she addresses being the recipient of bullying on 'Dickhead' ("My brain and my bones don't want to take this any more", she opines). These are subjects rarely explored in the public domain, and on first listen, it's no exaggeration to say that the experience feels akin to leafing through someone else's personal diary. You might note that undisputed greats like Manic Street Preachers' 'The Holy Bible' and Joy Division's 'Unknown Pleasures' do all the above with none-more-unflinching, spine-shivering horror. Yet 'Made Of Bricks' differs in that it's a record that doesn't shine a light on

humans on the brink, instead concentrating on how human exist and duly lollop through to the other side.

Sure, it's not a record without its flaws; after the phenomenal and unexpected success of 'Foundations', the record was brought forward six weeks - six weeks in which time you can help but feel it could have been shorn of some of its chaff. 'Mariella', for example, sounds like one of those dorky Reggi Spektor tunes that plague the New Yorker's own albums, while 'Shit Song' is - as easy as this is to tee up - indeed both shit song. And while 'Mouthwash', 'Pumpkin Soup' and the lo-fi of 'Merry Happy' come within a whisker, there's nothing here as good as her breakthrough single.

So it's a very good record, then, instead of being a classic. Yet, what's most impressive about it is the way it holds itself as a mirror to its creator, dealing in subjects that will resonate with anyone who understands that, beyond what they wear, what they do, what they are - they are human, and to be human is to feel. Bravely honest, endearingly vulnerable, yet strong and charming, it's a record that makes us want to go get drunk with Kate Nash.

**DOWNLOAD CHOICES: 1) 'FOUNDATIONS' 2) 'PUMPKIN SOUP' 3) 'MERRY HAPPY'**

**WIN!**

**SIGNED KATE NASH VINYL SINGLES AND T-SHIRTS**

Head to [WWW.NME.COM/win](http://WWW.NME.COM/win) and answer: Kate's album's called a) 'Made Of Bricks' b) 'Foundations' c) 'F U LDN'

The first two entries picked out of the hat at midnight on Monday August 6 will win. Terms and conditions apply, see [NME.COM](http://NME.COM)



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