



**Client: hippih**

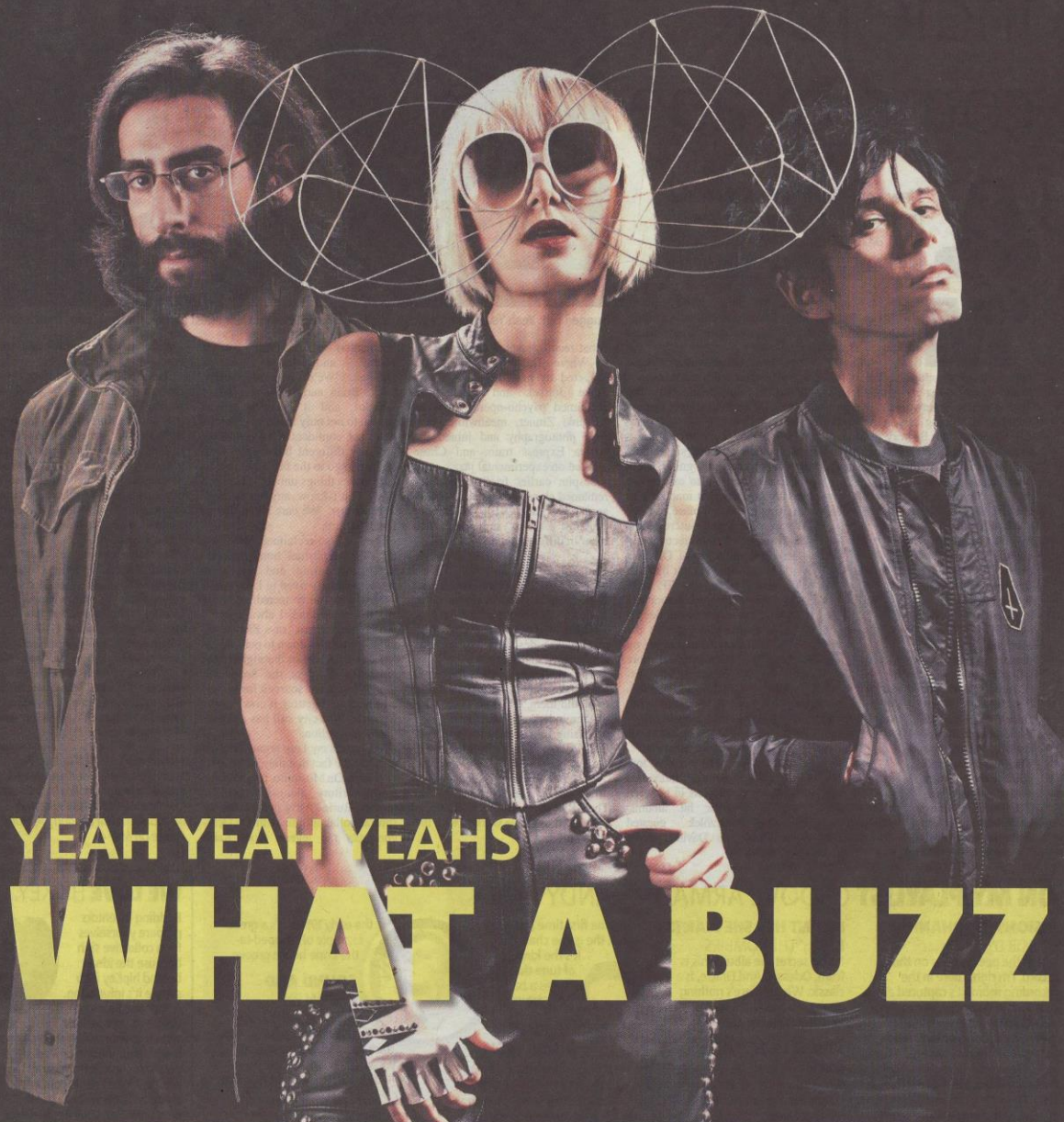
**Publication: Metro**

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**Circulation: 1.3 million**

**Readership: 3.8 million**

# METRO **Ents & Tech**



YEAH YEAH YEAHS  
**WHAT A BUZZ**

ENTS&TECH IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY **THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES** †††

**Ents&Tech cover story**

follow Arwa Haider  
@ArwaHaider

# Nice guys of indie rock come of age



New York-based **Yeah Yeah Yeahs** may have been around for more than a decade but their music still hits a sweet spot, says *Arwa Haider*



Bugged out: Yeah Yeah Yeahs' electrifying energy resounds on their latest album, the ambitious *Mosquito*

**M**AKING an album can feel like a pressure cooker. This time, things happened very naturally. We collected things along the way.' Yeah Yeah Yeahs frontwoman Karen Orzolek is sipping tea in a busy café/diner off The Bowery in Manhattan and mulling over *Mosquito*, her fourth LP with bandmates Nick Zinner (guitar) and drummer Brian Chase.

'We're hemmed in by hipsters chowing down on soul food and the din swells until we're yelling at each other. However, the atmosphere is still easy-going. More than a decade has passed since YYYs emerged as a gutsy, hyper-stylish indie trio. Their early gigs and 2003 debut, *Fever To Tell*, earned them a transatlantic fan-base, while Orzolek sealed her rock 'n' roll

icon status with attitude-fuelled, breathy vocals and outlandish outfits (mostly designed by her friend Christian Joy).

They now seem unburdened by the passing of their tenth anniversary – and the pressure around their last album, 2009's exhilaratingly synth-y *It's Blitz!*

*Mosquito* buzzes with ambitious highs, including current single *Sacrilege*, and exquisite guitar work from Zinner but it also exudes the blistering urgency that made YYYs so exciting in the first place.

'We were definitely interested in cultivating that raw, electric, carnal feel again,' says Orzolek.

'The last time we felt like that was 2007's *Is Is* EP, so it was really invigorating.

You've got to dig deeper once you get past the ten-year mark but you allow yourself more freedom to be nostalgic and playful.

'*Mosquito* felt like a cycle bringing us closer to our roots,' she adds.

The band tore through individual projects in between their hit albums: Orzolek guested on David Lynch's



debut record, penned the film score to *Where The Wild Things Are* (directed by her former boyfriend Spike Jonze), and created an acclaimed 'psycho-opera', *Stop The Virgins*. Zinner, meanwhile, pursued photography and joined the Africa Express train, and Chase worked on experimental jazz.

Despite earlier friction, they all remained close and started jamming again in late 2010, as Zinner explains: 'We've supported each other in different contexts.'

**C**HASE, who joined YYYs as a stand-in drummer in 2000 (both he and Orzolek attended Ohio's arty Oberlin College), describes *Mosquito* as a process of discovery.

'The challenge was letting new songs take shape, rather than trying to mould them,' he says. 'The vitality reminded me of starting out, practising in a small dirty space in East Village. There's still tension – but in a good way.'

*Mosquito*'s energy is also sharply produced by Dave Sitek (TV On The Radio) and Nick Launay, both of whom have worked with the band before.

'Perfectionism is Nick's worst enemy – and mine too,' admits Orzolek. 'We're a motley crew, Nick, Brian and I. We're kind of weirdos, and it takes a special person to not only make us comfortable, but confident. Our producers are very different but they're both willing to go to the fire with us.'

'It makes things unbelievably hard but I don't know any other way,' nods Zinner. 'We care about this so much, it hurts.'

They've also reclaimed New York as YYYs' spiritual home, despite relentless touring and relocation (Orzolek briefly lived in LA).

'New York can be incredibly brutal and incredibly kind; I always feel a need to return here,' says Zinner. 'Its influence trickles down to our music.'

'I don't partake in the nightlife as much, or a lot of the hedonistic things that were sources for songs, so where am I getting it now?' grins Orzolek. 'The city still has an emotional connection.'

The band's cool rep arguably owes much to the fact that they're unfazed by trends. On *Mosquito*, they explore fresh territory alongside familiar themes. *Buried Alive* is a fabulously surreal collaboration with Dr Octagon, aka rap legend Kool Keith

('We're massive fans of 1990s hip hop,' says Orzolek).

Elsewhere, there are recurring Far Eastern motifs. 'That's totally in *Under The Earth*,' agrees Orzolek. 'My ancient Korean pride comes out in the music sometimes. And Nick is like a reincarnated Indonesian, y'know?' She's referring to her half-Korean heritage and unexpected K-pop allegiance ('My dad sent me the *Gangnam Style* video'), besides Zinner's travels to study Indonesian gamelan playing.

*Mosquito* closes with the eerily beautiful *Wedding Song*. 'That was my wedding song, so it couldn't come from a purer place,' says Orzolek, who married video director Barney Clay in 2011.

Romance, family pride, earnest perfectionism... how did these nice kids become such feverish rabble-rousers? Orzolek leans across the table and reveals in a stage whisper: 'You know what? Always be wary of the quiet ones.'

*Mosquito* (Polydor) is out now. Yeah Yeah Yeahs' tour begins on May 1 at Manchester Apollo. They curate/headline *All Tomorrow's Parties*' I'll Be Your Mirror at London's Alexandra Palace on May 4.

## ON MY PLAYLIST GROOVE ARMADA'S ANDY CATO

**VISIONS OF JOHANNA**  
BY BOB DYLAN  
When the needle goes on the record, I'm right there in the recording room. It's captured a moment in time: the words, the delivery, the mistakes from the band. It's the kind of tune made extinct by computers.

**SECRET LIFE OF MACHINES**  
BY STERAC  
Techno at its tripped-out best. Listen through your headphones and everything becomes cinema.

**I WANT HER SHE WANTS ME**  
BY THE ZOMBIES  
It's no secret the album this is from, *Odessey And Oracle*, is a classic. When 'there's nothing on my mind and life seems kind', I put on *The Zombies*.

**STREET FIGHTING MAN**  
BY THE ROLLING STONES  
I'd been brought up playing blues so the Stones were always familiar

but the first time I heard this, the game changed. It's the kind of tune that turns a bad day around.

**FEELIN' KINDA HIGH**  
BY CAJMERE (FEAT. TERENCE FM)  
This is the soundtrack to the free party weekends that changed Britain during



the early 1990s. It's a great example of stripped-to-the-bone house groove.

**SOUND AND VISION**  
BY DAVID BOWIE  
This David Bowie (pictured) track has a killer groove that has wired Bertin written all over it.

Interview by Zena Alkayat  
Andy Cato's new album, *Times & Places* (Apollo), is out on Apr 23. His photography exhibition is at *The Book Club*, London, Apr 25 to Jun 25.

## WE LOVE HIPKEY

Budding inventors prepare yourselves for a collective sigh because the idea behind hipKey is so simple it's infuriating. Attach the Bluetooth device to your keys or slide it in your wallet then pair it with your iPhone or iPad. If you're separated from your phone, hipKey alerts you, and if you walk off without your keys or wallet, your Apple device pipes up. It has a range of up to 50m. **James Day**  
£69.95. [www.hippin.com/hipkey](http://www.hippin.com/hipkey)



## **WE LOVE** HIPKEY

Budding inventors prepare yourselves for a collective sigh because the idea behind hipKey is so simple it's infuriating. Attach the Bluetooth device to your keys or slide it in your wallet then pair it with your iPhone or iPad. If you're separated from your phone, hipKey alerts you, and if you walk off without your keys or wallet, your Apple device pipes up. It has a range of up to 50m. **James Day**



£69.95. [www.hippih.com/hipkey](http://www.hippih.com/hipkey)