

The Tubs

The Tubs' second album, *Cotton Crown*, sees the Celtic Jangle boyband venture into darker, more personal territory while continuing to hone their highly addictive brand of songcraft. It's a true level up album which sees the band expand their sonic palette to take in a kaleidoscopic range of influences: everything from soulful pub rock (*Chain Reaction*) to Husker Du aggression (*One More Day*) to melancholy sophisto-pop (*Narcissist*) gets a look in. As Pitchfork noted, **The Tubs** see jangle as a 'vast world of moods and muses' and *Cotton Crown* sees them continuing to explore this world and creating a distinctly Tub-ular sound in the process.

This is in no small part down to Owen 'O' Williams' vocal performance- often compared to a young Richard Thomson- and his frank, bleakly funny lyric writing. *Cotton Crown* sees him delve further into his favorite themes of love-psychosis, unsympathetic mentally ill behavior, and the humiliations of being a musician in London. This time around, however, there's a palpable sense of risk in his self assessments/confessions. No more so in the track's closing track *Strange*- an accounting of the clumsy, intrusive, well-meaning social interactions that took place in the period following the suicide of his mother (the folk singer Charlotte Greig.) As Williams says: "I'd tried a few times to write a song about it. The result had always seemed either mawkish, simplifying or like I was hawking my trauma. But then this one came out, and it felt right because it looked at something smaller: the weird, unsatisfying, strangely funny ways everyone, including myself, acted after the dust settled." The album artwork features an image of Williams as an infant being breastfed by Greig in a graveyard- a promotional shot taken around the release of her debut album (the re-issue of which was featured in *The Guardian* in 2023.)

The essential trick *Cotton Crown* plays is to offset Williams' lyrical bleakness with joyous, hook-laden blasts of pop perfection. This is largely down to the guitar work of George Nicholls, who, across the album, effortlessly slips between the virtuoso jangle of Marr, the driving folk-rock of Pentangle and the chorus-heavy hi-fi grooves of contemporary bands like *Tops* or *The 1975*. Add to that the breakneck rhythm section of Taylor Stewart (Drums) and Max Warren (Bass)- who attack each song with power-pop ferocity, recalling *Guided by Voices* at their drunken-yet-tight best- and you've got yourself a recipe for indie rock greatness.

The band's debut '*Dead Meat*' was a word-of-mouth sensation that saw the band earn accolades from Pitchfork, *The Guardian*, MOJO, SPIN and more. They even gained some celeb fans: the inimitable Mark Proksch (*The Office* (US), *Better Call Saul*, *What We Do in the Shadows*) starred in the video for their "Round the Bend" single & punk legend Iggy Pop has praised them on his BBC 6Music radio program. Standing in opposition to the UK norm of post punk, and hookless high-minded indie prog, the album was described by *Kitty Empire*

(Observer) as a “shot in the arm for indie rock”. The band’s hard touring and raucous, beery live show have seen them stand out at festivals like Greenman, End of The Road, Melbourne Rising and Canela Party. The band (minus Stewart) were previously members of Joanna Gruesome- who won the Welsh Music Prize, toured the UK and US extensively, and were praised in Pitchfork, Rolling Stone, The NY Times, The Guardian and others. Lan McCardle (Joanna Gruesome, Ex-Void) also provides backing vocals on several tracks. **The Tubs** are part of the Gob Nation collective- the London-based network of bands, writers and promoters who were recently profiled in The Guardian.