

# Change of Scenery

ISSUE 11

# CoS issue 11

With December here at last, the waiting is finally over.

Yes, here it is, the latest version of Change of Scenery. In this issue, we have dispensed with the traditional "Classic Reprint" to print a transcription of a recent interview with Tim Booth, aired on BBC GLR. As this is a regional show, and as it has a great range of questions from James incarnations past and present, we felt everyone would benefit from it's inclusion. Gideon Coe, presenter of the afternoon show on GLR 94.9FM, at 4-6PM weekdays is a keen James and THEC. He was once a member of The Valderamas. GLR is currently looking to change it's format from a music station, playing a wide range of music aimed at 25-40 year olds to a mainly talk based format. Gideon was present when James played their acoustic set at GLR last year, and also on November 26th when they played the GLR basement before the whole station moves to Bush House. He often plays James, Roses, Mondays, as well as his favourite band, The Clash.

Debate regarding the new album has also flooded in, and we are always keen to print diverse opinions on anything James related. There is no reason why your opinion as a fan should be less vocal than that of Steve Sutherland or Mindy Silverboard. CoS has

and hopefully, always will give fans a forum to put their point of view across to anyone open minded enough to hear it.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and hope you feel motivated enough to join the increasing number of fans who contribute to the 'zine with articles or views. We make sure this 'zine is available for the band to read and contribute.

All photos in this issue are by Su Puide.

We thank all contributors to this issue, as well as Peter Rudge, Dean, Tim, Dave, Mike, Mark, Adrian, Jim and Saul for their help. Also thanks go to James (our contact) at Mercury and everyone who has supported us over the last 5 years.

Thanks for all your help, and good luck in 2000.

John  
John 007511

## Latest News 28/11/99

The listing for the GLR session on Friday 26th was Fred Astaire, Crash, IKWHE, Vervaceous and We're gonna miss you. A CD-R was made, and sold for £250 for Children in need. The chance to introduce the band on air was sold for £75.

Last years support band Gene play live dates in January (London Forum 14th)

The views expressed in this publication are those of the contributor, and are not necessarily those of the editor or anyone connected with this publication.

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# Mercury Biography Sept. 1999

Musical history is littered with bands who have briefly blazed brightly, to sink prematurely into depressing mediocrity as they repeat themselves with ever-diminishing effect. The path JAMES have forged has taken the band in exactly the opposite direction. Endlessly inventive, always taking risks and never satisfied with the easy option, James have dug deep into the wellspring of their creativity and come up with 'MILLIONAIRES' - the most adventurous and rewarding album of their 16 year roller-coaster career.

That they were threatening to produce something special was signalled last year when the band raced to the top of the album charts with 'The Best of James'. Although the collection contained 14 of their (top forty) hits, significantly it was the two new songs, 'Destiny Calling' and 'Runaround', which caught the attention and suggested a band returning into peak form. Both, of course, became hit singles in their own right and heightened the anticipation for the next album.

"We were aware that last year's success had created an expectation of this record," says guitarist Saul Davies. "The songs were written just as that album was kicking off and it generated a lot of energy. I think we struck a really good balance between being commercial and being interesting and different". "But we made the new album on the back of a mixture of things," adds Tim Booth. "The optimism of last year did give the band a real lift. But there were a lot of problems and conflicts at the same time which hadn't been resolved. Those tensions are all there in the songs as well. I think this is the best album we have ever made." It is a bold claim given James' impressive track record since they began recording for the Manchester-based Factory Records back in 1983. Championed by Morrissey as "the best band in the world", they toured with the Smiths, became Hacienda favourites and cult heroes and signed to Sire Records. Their debut album

'Stutter' in 1986 and 'Strip Mine' two years later established the basic guitar-driven James sound, and marked Tim out as a provocative lyricist and an emotive singer, but they found the label unsympathetic and unsupportive. By 1989 they were delighted to escape from Sire's clutches, even though it left them skint. "After seven years we were living on dole-level wages and radio wouldn't play us," Tim recalls. Many bands would have folded. Instead James volunteered as human guinea pigs in medical tests at a local hospital and used the cash to release 'One Man Clapping', a rather fine live album on their own label. Although it included an early version of 'Sit Down', the distributors Rough Trade told them it was "minority music with no commercial appeal" and let them go.

They then re-grouped later and added new members Saul Davies, Mark Hunter (keyboards) and David Baynton-Power (drums). They recorded an album of songs for Rough Trade who sold the record on to Fontana. It was released as 'Gold Mother' and was the breakthrough they had waited so long for, selling 350,000 in Britain alone while a reworked 'Sit Down' became one of the most memorable anthems of the nineties.

The Manchester scene was in full swing and, together with the Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays, James suddenly found themselves at its apex, hailed as the saviours of British rock music.

The sweepingly epic 'Seven' followed in 1992 and was only kept from the number one spot by Simply Red. The following year they secured the services of Brian Eno to produce the extraordinary 'Laid' and it's experimental off-shoot 'Wah Wah'.

Spending increasing amounts of time in America (including playing Woodstock Two), 'Laid' took off there too, selling 600,000 copies at a time when British bands were finding it particularly difficult to penetrate a grunge-foxed market. Then, at the highest

point of their career, James almost fell apart.

One day in 1995 guitarist Larry Gott, the longest serving member apart from Tim and bassist Jim Glennie, decided to quit. So did manager Martine and, for good measure, the band learned that they owed a huge sum in back tax. Shell-shocked they took a break that as it stretched into its third year looked like becoming terminal. Booth went off to make a solo album with Angelo Badalamenti and no one seriously expected ever to hear from James again.

Yet adversity has always brought the best out of the band. With the addition of new guitarist Adrian Oxaal they eventually re-emerged in 1997 with the boldly melodic 'Whiplash'. Brimming with rejuvenated confidence, it went gold and gave the band one of it's biggest singles in 'She's a Star'. Last year's 'Best Of James' only served to confirm their resurgence and gave them their first number one album keeping "Titanic" from the top slot in Oscar week, going on to be the band's first double platinum album and sell out tour.

'Millionaires' finds Brian Eno back as co-producer and the band at a new creative peak with a set of sumptuous songs full of light and shade - accessible and yet complex, dense but somehow full of space. "Saul and I basically disagree when we are writing a song. There are a lot of contrasts and paradoxes. We have totally different philosophies to life and that gives us a certain creative tension. It's that fight between us which produces the best writing," says Tim. "James is a very intense group. There's usually one of us cracking up at any given time." The conflicting lifestyles on the surface appear irreconcilable. The band has strongly hedonistic impulses while Tim is these days famously sober and ascetic. But as Saul explains: "We're all trying to get to the same place in our different ways. I can write the music for a song like 'Someone's Got It In 4 Me' at six in the morning after I've been up for three days drinking litres of vodka. Tim gets there through his trance states and meditation. But we're both experimenting with removing ourselves from the normal

humdrum day-to-day existence."

'Surprise' was written about a friend Tim thought was on the verge of suicide - although it could also be taken as an allegory for the band and a response to those who wrote them off. "Fred Astaire" is simply one of the best love songs the band has ever recorded. "I am completely and totally in love but I also have this English embarrassment that goes with it. That's what the song is about," says Tim. The slightly sinister 'If Anybody Hurts You' is a protective charm, he says. "There have been people who wished me harm and someone actually put a curse on me. The song is a shield."

Several of the songs emerged from jams, a traditional way of working for the band who like to trust first instincts. 'Hello' is an entirely intuitive song with an improvised lyric Tim professes not quite to understand. 'Vervacious' similarly started life as a jam before Sinead O'Connor was invited to lend some hypnotic vocals. Jamie Catto of Faithless helped out on 'Someone's Got It In 4 Me' and also on 'Afro Lover', an anti-war song with an almost religious intensity but a contrasting upbeat arrangement. Eno's ineffable influence weaves its magic throughout the album's eleven songs. "On some things he had fixed ideas and on others he was prepared to roll with the flow".

"We derived enormous encouragement just from him being there." As for the title, Tim has a strong belief that words have certain properties of cause and effect. "The album should have been called 'Love, Money and Revenge', because those are the themes. But when we made 'Laid', we got laid. When we made 'Whiplash', I got whiplash. This is the best album we have ever done so we settled on 'Millionaires'.

Well you can see the logic. And if there is any justice, it should prove to be yet another of James's self-fulfilling prophecies.



# SAUL'S SURVIVORS

by John  
Pude

Read any press biography, newspaper article; hear any radio interview. The press have their own set phrases that are tossed away during these, in attempt to scale James. "Going into their 3rd decade", "Bearded Buddhist vegans", "Morrissey's favourite band", "Madchester stalwarts".

Maybe the reason that the media (ourselves included) wheel out these catchlines is because, ever since their inception, the band have tried not to be pigeonholed. Anyone as old as, well ... me, will tell you, in 1983, popular music was more of the Duran Duran, Spandau Ballet type. Pop music now is possibly the most "indie" that it has ever been. The new album, follows in the tradition of previous James long-players of stretching the limitations of the James sound, denying the hacks an opportunity to confine the James fan base to either "folk-loving" middle agers, "stadium rock" thirty something's or "indie" students.

If you go back and listen to "Stutter" and follow it with "Whiplash", you will find it hard to trace a family line, but it is there.

Like "Whiplash", "Millionaires" creates different atmospheres and paints very differing pictures, a Janus effect of light and shade. As the Millennium advances, and the whole world seems to be in an emotional state of flux, who better than Saul Davies, to write a sound-track, that emotionally anyway, is all things to everyone.

With its happy clappy intro and scratching technique "Afro Lover" is 180° from the introverted and paranoid sound of "Someone's gonna Listen to Summersong", "Johnny Yen" and "Black Hole". Listen to "Greenspace", "Blue Pastures" and "Play Dead". All different era James songs yet all intrinsically James songs.

Fred Astaire in particular is one of those who, after a few listens, "Millionaires" seemed a compromise, a POP album designed specifically to shift units, the opposite of

"Whiplash"

Upon closer, and, repeated listening, I feel the album stands up alongside anything that James have ever done. Just look at the album credits to see how much personal attention Mark, Saul and Dave have put into mixing, described by Jim as "Above and beyond the call of duty".

The current material, including all b-sides is still of the highest quality, and will be the stuff that we will return to listen to in years to come, those moments when you need a song to suit your mood.

In fact, the album seems to have come out of, in my opinion anyway, an ominous period of inactivity and lack of creativity. The singles for the innovative (and underrated) "Whiplash" were backed with remixes that were easily forgotten. When the opportunity to challenge the listener was available in previous outings, additional tracks were of astounding quality (Out to get you, Sound Full version, Say something etc.).

The single releases for "The Best of ...", James big selling album, were accompanied with b-sides of RARE tracks and exclusive live songs, appearing to be little more than getting novice fans "up to speed", and "capitalise" on long standing fans loyalty for buying the product. The current single "We're gonna..." does have "Top of the world", but this track does have relevance, as it is retrieving numerous live outings.

On the current releases, it is noticeable that time has been spent creating tracks that can stand alongside any of the material on the album. With songs of the quality of "I Defiant" and, hopefully a studio version of "Confusion", a HWIFY for the millennium, it appears that from James darkest creative hour, has come a brilliant and intense light, which will hopefully illuminate the future recordings.

James third decade!

Just Someone's gonna Listen to Summersong, "Johnny Yen" and "Black Hole". Listen to "Greenspace", "Blue Pastures" and "Play Dead". All different era James songs yet all intrinsically James songs. Fred Astaire in particular is one of those who, after a few listens, "Millionaires" seemed a compromise, a POP album designed specifically to shift units, the opposite of



# GLR INTERVIEW BY GIDEON COE

transcribed by Su Pude

Starts off playing 'We're Going To Miss You'  
GC: 'We're Going To Miss You' is from 'Millionaires' the new LP from James which is coming out as I recall on the 11th of October. It's the 4th of October which sees the release of 'Just Like Fred Astaire' the latest single to be taken from it which was described on the crawl of it here at GLR towers as single of the year already. How would you describe it?

TIM: Oh I'm very happy with that epithet, it will do me fine

GC: One of you said "it should be put under a glass globe and Mr Sheened by angels"

TIM: Indeed

GC: Which is a lovely image too, I wonder if you should treat records in that way?

TIM: She was very moved I think

GC: I think so, Why is Fred Astaire the Iberian of feeling tip top, the very pinnacle?

TIM: I don't really know because I actually prefer Gene Kelly as a dancer, I think it's something about his likeness that when he danced it was just like this kind of complete likeness that you get when you're feeling madly in love you want to start dancing like Fred Astaire really don't you?

GC: I was tempted

TIM: Me too, it's disastrous isn't it when you actually get round to it

GC: Very rarely goes right

TIM: But the song is about a guy going to a doctor and saying you know "I'm sick, my hairs falling out, my eyesights bad, because when I hold her in my arms I feel like Fred Astaire and it's about being lovesick."

GC: I know you have a strong sense of association with words in album titles, and also the fortunes of the band, thus we have 'Millionaires' as this particular LP title as well, is it once again appropriate?

TIM: Oh yeh, I mean the reference is in Fred Astaire, 'I'm a bull not a bear, I'm a millionaire' you know like bull and bear from the stock market, and it's more like that feeling of being a millionaire like the luckiest person alive cos you're in love. Millionaire I think meant something different about 20 years ago than it does now they were so rare and now they're everywhere

like a plague of millionaires, erm we named it Millionaires because the last record we named Whiplash and I got whiplash and the one before we named Laid and I got laid, well we all got laid, and so this time we figured you know name it millionaires and maybe we'll make some cash

GC: Did that happen with Stripmine as well

TIM: Yeh Stripmine we still watched the earth decline, no the other ones were more kind of vague titles, although God Mother had definitely babies around it

GC: I remember, this is a minor point and please forgive me for it, you know the Kitten on the back of Stripmine

TIM: Yes

GC: Please tell me that kitten went on to have a full and active lovely life as a cat

TIM: It did, it was named Thomas and it had many siblings

GC: Thank goodness

TIM: None of them by me I hasten to add

GC: I'm glad to hear it. So there is no reason to doubt it when you say this is the best album you've made, but why I wonder, what's brought that about?

TIM: Well I always say that, it's like a habit.

GC: But why this time?

TIM: Because it's true this time, but I always say that too. So you know I don't know if you can believe me I'm just a second hand car dealer really when it comes down to it, you've got to hear it really. I think we've done a really strong set of songs, I think Whiplash is a bit scattered we were trying to achieve too many different things and I don't like the production on it. Laid I think is probably the best thing we've ever done so far and this is like a more extroverted version of Laid. Laid was a very introverted, quiet record cos we had just come off an acoustic tour with Neil Young and this one is like 'lets go out and get them' after the greatest hits records.

GC: Yeh the greatest hits record which also it seemed, to draw a line under a part of the James story in a way and is that the way you looked at it, that's the way I felt about it.

TIM: I think so, we didn't plan that way but that's the way it worked it was really good for us to go

through the back catalogue and pull out those songs and go "Bloody hell we've had all these hits," you know we were very shocked by it as anybody else was I think and then kind of I can't say I was shocked by it's success cos I kind of obviously hoped it would succeed in that kind of rather blind ignorance as a musician that I have for anything I think I'm rather proud of and think is magnificent I always think it's bound to sell and of course that isn't the truth unfortunately, but it did sell and great we felt great about that obviously.

GC: It's been a roller-coaster rock and roll ride for James in a way, I just wonder when you think of TIM: (interrupts) I would say more like tea and cakes and camomile actually.

GC: That's the way it's been.

TIM: Yeh. I don't know about rock and roll, no part of the band is rock and roll and then I'm not. GC: No I didn't mean in that sense I mean in terms of the fortunes you've experienced and everything. Any band goes through ups and downs.

TIM: 16 years, 16 rounds you're going to have some really strange times in that period to survive and you've got to have periods when you pull away and don't do anything for a couple of years to recharge, look at Neil Young you know.

GC: Oh for sure, that's a good example, I wonder if you leave things behind then people do think about, it's such a long way from 1983 from touring with The Smiths but people talk about that billing as being one of those classic billings that you had to see and to my dying day I'll know that I never did and it's a lifelong regret from my point of view but do you still hold sort of cherish memories from those times?

TIM: I remember them very strongly, they were exciting but it was also interesting watching our friends become famous and seeing how they dealt with it or didn't and it made us actually pull back because it was like oh god this is weird you know the audience reaction didn't seem to bear much relationship to the music some nights and it was like oh this is very strange, when we were very proud, shy musicians that's how we wanted success, we wanted it through the music, nothing else and they were amazing times.

GC: The closest I got to it were The Redskins and The Higsons. You see that's what I mean which isn't bad is it?

TIM: Grrrrrrrr

GC: U2 and the Composite Angels.

TIM: Grr worked with U2 OK.

GC: OK, What are you're recollections of going to gigs then were you a great music fan in that way before you were in a band?

TIM: I used to have music as background, kind of ambience until I heard Patti Smith's Horses and then I was converted and saw the power of what music can do and I organised, I was at a crappy English boarding school that I hated, and I organised a school trip to the White Riot tour with some friends and we all had to go

GC: (interrupts) was it with the help of a teacher too?

TIM: Yeh, well the teacher had to come and look after us and you know there would be 12 kids in uniform and it was like The Clash, The Jam, The Subway Sect, The Slits, The Buzzcocks and it was like fantastic and then I did Iggy Pop you know after that and it was like that was when I got into music.

GC: School trip to go and see The Tubes at that time would have been quite good as well

TIM: Not bad

GC: (mimics teacher) "Today the New York Dolls"

TIM: I'll tell you Iggy Pop was something, came on covered in blood with a tail between his leg looking like Satan, totally evil, and the organ teacher who had been sent along

GC: Organ teacher, wow,

TIM: Yeh, classically trained organ teacher was like, we actually ran away from him cos we figured he'd get us out of the building the minute he saw Iggy Pop and afterwards he came up and was like, 'that was amazing, when's another one on' and was like completely converted poor kid he had never heard any rock and roll in his life.

GC: What about the times when you had various brushes with record companies and weren't treated very well to say the least and weren't getting much airplay and yet at the same time you could fill the Town and Country Club at the drop of a hat as it was then, how frustrating was that side of things being on the verge of something and not quite meeting it?

TIM: Really frustrating but I'm kind of very stercial I always kind of again had this blind, well all I had was a blind naivety that we would eventually make it cos we had the songs. When we were sitting smouldering on Sire records doing nothing we'd written Sit Down and we wrote it in

20 minutes and had to stop playing because we were laughing so much so we knew we had written this great song that no one had heard yet and when you've got that kind of in your back pocket you know that eventually you are going to break through.

GC: Yeh, even when it is minority music with no commercial appeal I think was the quote put your way wasn't it? Was that in response to the earlier recording of 'Sit Down' as well.

TIM: It was. We gave him 'Sit Down', we gave actually Geoff Travis sorry Geoff, I shouldn't bring up this story again actually, and he just said you know you're going to sell 20,000 and that's it, that's your audience but you've got to remember radio and music were so different then it was just no one really listened to our kind of music and they certainly didn't play it on radio, we were never played on daytime radio for the first 8 years and so I can quite understand him thinking that, REM really broke so many things I think you know really the mould of that kind of music being played on radio.

GC: Has that changed then, has the landscape changed, if James were around at that stage of their careers now I guess the landscape would be better.

TIM: Oh totally, we partly changed it the whole Manchester scene changed it and we changed it and it was like, by the time we got played on radio I was selling out 2 nights at the G-mex 10,000 each night and they had to play us, I mean it was, we were too big and now I mean they are big supporters but then it was just unheard of.

GC: And this is a far cry from the times when you had to, is it true that you had to sell yourselves for medical research?

TIM: Indeed.

GC: At one point to pay for One Man Clapping?

TIM: Unless you ask me very carefully I'll make up some foul and lewd medical experiment.

GC: No I'm more interested in the time where you only made money on t-shirts.

TIM: Quickly changes the subject, it is a daytime radio show.

GC: Series of medical research experiments, band as guinea pigs, perhaps not, but was that true as well for a stage that that was it that was the source of income for the band?

TIM: Medical research sure yeh, they kicked me out actually, they said that my readings were too abnormal for them to test anything on they did all the others and that was how we made money for a

while.

GC: There's another James myth that I would like to look into briefly I'm conscious that we are running out of time and I'm going to play 'Just Like Fred Astaire' out of the news at 5 so we can talk.

TIM: It's a talk show isn't it?

GC: Of course it isn't, now then please don't be cheeky, yes is it true that t-shirt was designed by a fan?

TIM: The t-shirt was designed by a fan yeh we saw him in the audience basically with J-A-M-E-S written all the way around his body and I think we used the t-shirt and paid him something like £200 and when the t-shirt went on to sell like rather alot we had to kind of track him down and pay him some more money cos we figured that this wasn't really very fair.

GC: How very honourable of you that's very good.

TIM: Oh come on, you have to.

GC: Now you are off on tour as well you play Wembley on the 12th December aren't you? do you like playing somewhere as enormous as Wembley Arena?

TIM: Yeh, well we've done Wembley a few times in the past and I never liked it but the last Wembley gig was one of the best we've ever done and it felt tiny erm, which is what happens you can play a big gig and if you get it right it doesn't feel big at all but then we played Nynex a few days later and I'd nearly lost my voice and that was 18,000 and we felt tiny the gig felt huge.

GC: You have to find that in between.

TIM: And that's a bad day, no it's more like how you hit it if the sound is good, how you hit it, whether you've got the right edge that night.

GC: Just Like Fred Astaire is coming out on the 4th October, Millionaires is out on the 11th, Wembley Arena on the 12 December, my final question with a very brief answer if you wouldn't mind, what's with Lester Piggott?

TIM: Lester Piggott, oh it's just a joke on the b side of erm Sit Down we had a weird sound engineer who whenever he sound checked a microphone would sing Lester Piggott down the microphone in various cartoon voices and we just taped him one day and stuck it on the back of one of our records.

GC: Thank you, just another one of those questions, what have we got, guinea pigs for medical research, yes, t-shirt question, yes, Lester Piggott, yes, all ticked off. Tim Booth many thanks for coming in.

TIM: Keep GLR for music thank you very much



# Millionaires Review

by Mindy Silverboard

Millionaires, the eighth studio album from James is a bit of a confusing listen. Touted by the band as their best, most solid effort to date, it should have been a masterpiece of musical brilliance. It has all the essential parts - catchy, hook-laden singles, lighter waving live soon-to-be classics, introspective thoughtful ballads, and a bit of weirdness. It even has Brian Eno and Sinead O'Connor. But why, after about 30 plays, am I no longer interested? And why, when I do force myself to pull it out of the case, do I already feel the need to skip through at least half the tracks because I'm bored to tears by them?

This is an album which SHOULD be a classic, but it almost feels as if there's a missing ingredient. It's like buying a Rolls Royce and finding out they've put the motor of a go-cart inside. It's all flash and no substance. The songs on Millionaires are immediately striking, but, unfortunately, the first impression is the only impression they leave. Unlike past efforts where every listen reveals new, formerly-hidden instrumental pleasures and lyrical twists, with Millionaires, what you see is, unfortunately, all you get. Sure, it's radio friendly. Yeah, there's great production. OK, they've used tons of clever new technology for all sorts of odd sounds. And, of course, it bears the hallmark of any great album - diversity of style. But why does it feel like the band have left the building? Let's examine things track by track:

1) **Crash** - Despite the cheesy "woo woo" intro, this has a great hook and is a good singalong and is very pleasing in a live setting. But what the hell is Tim on about? It sounds like he took a bunch of words that rhymed, and MIGHT mean something clever, strung them together in typical stream-of-consciousness fashion and never bothered to turn them into a proper song.

2) **Just Like Fred Astaire** - Oh, isn't this lovely, Tim's in love and the band have provided him with some happy, lilting melodies so he could express his fascination with his new wife. Great. But would you play this at your wedding? Where is the dark, brooding romantic realism of "5-0", the clever metaphors and energy of "Sometimes" or the pent-up energy of "Laid"? This is just like James-lite.

3) **I Know What I'm Here For** - This one is great

for a dance around the bedroom, but the effects make Tim sound like Saul, the "hanging on through late December" line only makes sense if you wrote it, and it seems to be more style than substance, musically. A bunch of synthesized loops and not much more. And we expect a whole lot more when it comes to James.

4) **Shooting My Mouth Off** - Now this is a great tune - if you're Depeche Mode or OMD circa 1986. Not that I have a problem with either of these bands. Hell, to be honest I bought the best of OMD at the same time I purchased Millionaires and the former has become more play in my stereo. However, James have always managed to erase the overt influences in their songs, and here it seems they just couldn't be bothered. That said, it would make a great single.

5) **We're Going To Miss You** - Oooh, at first glance a great dark brooding song about revenge. But after about 5 listens, how much more plodding could a song get? Good luck releasing this as a single boys cause it is certainly not catchy enough to even go top 20. This is one that will piss off people forced to hear it every hour on Radio 1 to the point of homicide.

6) **Strangers** - What can I say? This song is a complete pile of shite. It's like they've taken some cheesy piano line they couldn't bother to make interesting and thrown a bunch of cliched lyrics about alienation over the top. Clearly Tim's lost his poet's thesaurus because there is nothing clever, nothing hidden, nothing even remotely emotionally moving on this song. It's all done to get the 14 year olds and their mums to pull out the lighters at Wembley Arena. It certainly hasn't been written for artistic merit. In fact, it's merely one big self-pitying whine which would be better off buried in a ditch, never to be heard again.

7) **Hello** - Now this is actually quite touchingly minimalist. It's sparse and lacking in the over-production and special effects of the rest of the album, and has a striking effect as a result. It is, however, only effective because of the songs that surround it. Stick this one on the brilliance that was Laid and it would quickly fade into the background.

8) **Afro Lover** - Finally, a track that doesn't profess to be more than it actually is. This is the ONLY track on the album where the inane lyrics work, but only because this is a simply dancey-pop song which is meant to be fun and nothing else. I must admit, it works well, but please James, make sure you never give us an album full of this, otherwise we might confuse you for Alice Deelay or something.

9) **Surprise** - Boy did I love this song when I first heard it live. The lyrics are clever, but after 3 or 4 listens, oh man is the backing track boring.

10) **Dumb Jam** - Fantastic. Can't complain. This is a great pop song with some wonderful noisy guitars, a great hook and some infinitely clever wordplay. But this was also written around 1994, so I wonder if that's indicative of something?

11) **Someone's Got It In For Me** - This song is the best new live track that James have debuted in about 7 years, so why does it fall on its face completely on the album? Tim sounds like he's singing through gritted teeth through most of it, and the intensity of the live version is completely missing here. They should have used the version on the extra live CD on the album, cause it's miles better. That said, with this track situated here, one has to wonder why "Strangers" is on the album at all as this song seems to be an ironic piss-take at the self pity of such whinies as "Strangers". So are they being hypocritical by putting these two tracks on an album together or was it just an oversight?

12) **Vervaceous** - The only potentially truly James track on this album. Finally, some experimentation that doesn't involve computer effects (Sinead's treated vocals aside), an unusual song structure, lyrics that have actually come from the heart, and a song that has more than one layer. It's actually quite eerie and gripping and rescues the boring tone of the rest of the record.

So basically, this album is hardly the best thing that James have ever done. In fact it's an album completely lacking in contemplation and soul. It

seems that James have spent the last two years listening to the likes of Embrace, Cast and the Stereophonics and have forgotten how to make interesting music. They seem to have discarded the notion that music should be experimental and should make you think for the tried and true Top 40 mainstream of immediacy and a chorus that you can hum. The most important elements of James has always been the experimentation, the weirdness, the complete lack of fear along with the vulnerability and thoughtfulness of the lyrics. Internal

emotive contemplation + sympathy for the outside world and a grasp of the full range of things which make living a wonderful thing have made Tim Booth the spokesman for thousands of us and when used the right way by a group of six musicians who constantly challenge themselves and their listeners have kept us all interested for 18 years. But they seem to have given up the challenge. Hopefully, they'll get bored of making easy music very soon, and will go back to doing something which tests us all again.



# Sing like a Canary

Norwich UEA Review by  
10th October 1999 Tim Allan

Another first for James - the hardest venue in the world to find !! After driving around Norwich for well over an hour (no, really) convinced I was going to be stuck in an East Anglian 'Groundhog Day' for life, I finally found the setting for James first 'proper' Millionaires preview gig. With our places at the front of the queue assured (along with some of the other usual faces), our appetites were soon whetted as the band sound-checked with 'Vervaceous', 'Lost a Friend' and 'Play Dead'.

Once inside, it was a case of killing time until James took the stage. Ben Christopher provided, in my view, a pretty uninspiring support set (twenty minute songs with er, no tune, are not really my cup of tea), and it was a case of 'out with the new, in with the old', as the mics, drums and guitars were assembled in the familiar line-up, ready for the band I've seen so many times. I feel I deserve a 'loyalty card'. And unlikely as that is to be James's next line in merchandising, my loyalty was rewarded by the opening 'Vervaceous', which blew the album version into oblivion, and which for me provided one of the most memorable moments of seeing James live, ever. Tim, looking drop-dead cool (not something we've always been able to say about him...) in denim jacket and DKNY hat, was instantly engulfed by the song, urging on Adrian's guitar solo as both he, and the song, twisted and turned with energy and... vivacity !! Not surprisingly, the reception was good rather than great (the

album wasn't released until the following day so the vast majority of the crowd wouldn't have known the song), but it was straight into 'Crash', Millionaire's catchy opener, and that familiar feeling of ribs being squashed against metal barriers... lovely 'If Vervaceous' had eased the crowd in gently, then 'Crash' was an invitation to go wild, and the Norwich crowd duly obliged, bouncing along to Kulas's 'Sympathy for the Devil' backing vocals throughout.

But we still hadn't had a hit, and Norwich wanted one. I, however, couldn't have asked for a better start - a slow one that no-one would have thought of as an opener, followed by one of Millionaire's best pop tunes. Maybe we should have trusted them when we were demanding mixed-up setlists and new songs a year ago.

Saul mockingly apologised for playing the new stuff and launched into the familiar intro of 'Laid', and Norwich was happy. It was, as it always seems to be these days, a blistering take on the song - full of the pace and power that seems to be missing when I listen to the album version. I could listen to 'Laid' a hundred times and never get tired of it, so I was delighted. James 3-0 Moaning Fans.

As always happens, the order of the rest is a blur, but the quality and tempo of the gig will remain clear for a long time. Okay, so I was a bit disappointed when they

announced they were going to do 'a song they haven't done for a couple of years' (P.S., Five-O ?), and it was 'Play Dead'. And yes, the new single 'We're going to Miss You' does sound a melancholy FA Cup charity single, but the highs were 'higher than our lows'. 'Fred Astaire' was gorgeous (those dreaded keyboards at the beginning have got the better of me after repeated playing, even if it's not nearly as good as the version on the Millionaires live CD), and I was just stunned with the first full-band performance of 'Strangers', perhaps my favourite track from the album. It's a shame the audience didn't know it - whether we like it or not, and we should, there are a lot of 'Greatest Hits' fans out there, and gems like 'Strangers' are likely to be forgotten (remember 'Homeboy', 'Blue Pastures' and 'Avalanche ?'), even though it stands above some of the most famous singles.

With 'I Know What I'm Here For', 'Someone's Got It In For Me', and a power-surge 'Surprise' making up the rest of the new tracks, it was time for a few hits. 'Johnny Yen' (which I think we can class as a hit, although not actually a single) gave the band the drive and pleasure it seems to have done throughout 1999. Tim described 'Say Something' as 'the song they fell out of love over', having apparently been divided on whether it was crap or great (sorry lads, but compared to your other stuff I'd have to say crap), but now they've made up, which probably explains why it makes its way into every James single set !!

'Destiny Calling' and 'She's a Star' filled me with familiarity and joy (I was so happy with the new stuff I wouldn't have minded if they'd played 'Sit Down '98... not 1'), until the opening chords of 'Tomorrow' told me that the end of the gig was approaching.

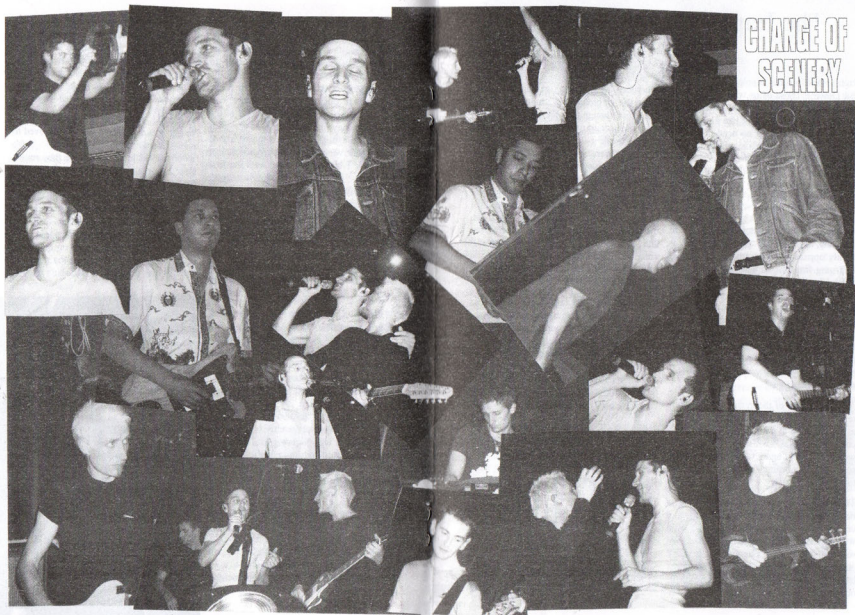
Just time then for 'Come Home', 'Top of the World' and 'Sound' (not a bad trio to end with !), before a James gig of the highest order was complete. No 'Sit Down', which I appreciated, even if the Norwich crowd didn't (I was talking to a bloke on the way out who was really disappointed they'd left it out).

No gig is ever perfect - I would've loved to have heard 'Dumb Jam' and 'Afro Lover' played live, and I hope they revisit 'Next Lover' and 'Protect Me' before long - but it wasn't far off. The set lists are changing, and the risks, once again, are being taken. No amount of marketing is ever going to make James's songs the No. 1 chart-toppers we hype-up each single to be - the pop world doesn't work on quality of music. But on the evidence of tonight's gig, No. 23 for a week will do me nicely.





# CHANGE OF SCENERY



# The Importance of Sit Down

by Emmet Murphy

Right. Hands up the people who don't like 'Sit Down'? Those of us who cringe when Tim begins "1-2-3-4..." - you know what's coming next, and you don't like it! Come on now, be honest, there's no need to be shy. Raise your arm up nice and straight. Hmm. Maybe it is a little bit extreme to label the song an embarrassment to them, but to those whiners it appears (to me at least) that they hold a certain degree of resentment with James playing it.

However, when you examine the lyrics of the song, its intensely personal nature is starkly apparent right from the beginning: "...a song from the darkest hour..." indeed! Much like 'Come Home', 'Sit Down' was written under a dark cloud, and the thought that it would one day become the anthem that it now is, was never seriously entertained by its creators when they wrote it. Perhaps this is the reason that so many people (including - it's been reported - the band themselves) now feel uncomfortable with them playing it.

As one member of the music press recently reflected, "it's sad that a song which began as a celebration of individuality ends up as a conformist ritual", which is a point that I would definitely agree with. It is sad when something that brilliant, ends up being taken totally for granted.

This, of course, assumes that the song is being taken for granted. I think that - to a certain extent - it is. There are many people who expect James to play it whenever they see them live. If it isn't on the set, then their automatic assumption is that there must have been some kind of technical problem, or even that they just simply 'forgot' to play

it! Of course, this does not apply to everyone. Many fans (myself included) enjoy the unpredictable nature of James' sets. Even though they are nowhere near as spontaneous and unpredictable as they once were, I think it is still possible to go to a James concert wondering what will be played. In issue 9 of CoS, however, Tim explained that there had been a deliberate change in the band's 'policy' on their set-lists: the band now prefer to use a basic list of songs as the backbone of any given set, making the odd changes here and there from one gig to another. They even - Tim said - voted in this change, demonstrating a reassuring level of conscientiousness and professional dignity!

Like the new James music, this new James set-list has been designed to be appealing to a wider and possibly younger audience than its predecessor. This suggests that - for a particular number of people - 'Sit Down' has become a representation of 'new' James; its inclusion in the set reminding them of what James once were, and what they have now become.

This has (perhaps) created a conflict between particular groups of fans, some of whom feel that James should stop playing 'Sit Down' altogether.

Indeed, this has been murmured on several occasions. And let's remind ourselves that Blur took the very brave decision to stop playing their enormously successful signature tune, 'Country House', in 1997 and have not - to this date - performed that song live. They have moved on with great success, fashioning an entirely new image for themselves and for their music. So, it's

not as though this hasn't happened before, and I'm sure it will happen again as more bands feel trammelled by their own success, and the inevitable expectations which come with that success, in the future. However, James will never permanently drop 'Sit Down'. As I hinted above, the song is still - in many people's eyes - their biggest attraction, and people do genuinely go to see them live simply to listen to 'Sit Down', 'Come Home', 'Laid', etc. The most important fact, though, is that there are a far greater number of people who fall into this category, than those who moan that you never hear anything off of 'Strip-Mine' or 'Stutter' any more.

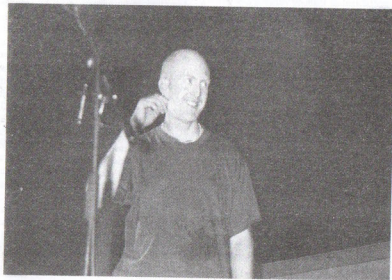
Don't get me wrong, I'd love to hear 'What for', 'Ya-ho', or (one of my favourite James songs) 'Scarecrow' live. But it isn't going to happen. Only a few hundred people (at the very most) know those songs, while there are several thousand who are standing around waiting to hear some of James' "good" songs!

This - I'm afraid - is the painful truth. One of the main reasons that they were able to confirm their upcoming December UK tour so far in advance, was because of the high sales of 'The Best Of', along with the revenue that it collected. And the band do need the money to operate. Without the money generated through 'The Best Of's' sales, there would be no December tour, and quite possibly no 'Millionaires' as well. I read recently someone suggest a small, low-key, James 'tour' where they would go through some of their lesser known classics. A tour aimed specifically aimed at the 'long-termers' (Tim's words, not mine!). That would be a brilliant opportunity to listen to what is truly some of their best music. However, I am even a little sceptical about the chances of this, as it would be hard for

them to make a profit from it without charging extortionate admission fees.

This is something which they have been criticised for - looking to be commercially appealing: to make money. Where on 'Millionaires', for example, is the risk, the invention, and the freshness that characterised 'Wah Wah'?

However, this angers me enormously, because I think it is an incredibly selfish attitude for anyone to hold. What exactly is wrong with James looking for some money? Is that not what we are all doing in our jobs - whatever we do? We need to remember that this is a band whose members are approaching a stage in their lives where their own security, and the security of their families, are very important issues. Tim and Saul are both married. Tim has a young child and - like any father - he will want his child to have the best education possible and be given the best start in life. I think that anyone who criticises them for seeking to make some money really does need to reconsider. 'Sit Down' is, at this point in time, James' most popular tune in the UK. It is what attracts people to their gigs, raising the necessary revenue that the band needs to finance future shows, and future albums. Therefore, I think that if they dropped it from the set with any hint of permanence it would be commercial suicide and, ultimately, an all-round disaster. Besides, if 'Millionaires' is half the album we all think it will be, then there are at least three or four new tracks which will seriously threaten the pedestal that 'Sit Down' currently rests on. In the meantime, however, I think that those whiners I spoke of earlier should enjoy James, and be grateful that they are providing the levels of entertainment that they do. Along with the rest of us.



## Millionaires Review

by Kerry Rafter

Finally, Millionaires is on the shelves and two words sum it up, Bloody Fantastic! After some of the tracks live in Blackpool I knew the album would be another James masterpiece. Crash is my personal favourite and Shooting My Mouth Off and Dumb Jam are close contenders. Millionaires has got to be the one that replaces Gold Mother but I don't think any singles released will get the huge success of the anthemic Sit Down.

Just Like Fred Astaire has got to be one of the finest singles but the critics are saying it's the most beautiful James song, well what about Really Hard from Stutter and Pressures On from Wah Wah. As I say Crash is my favourite and it's got to be released as a single. The gritty guitars have that James quality that make you unable to keep still. Shooting My Mouth Off has such a catchy chorus that it stays in your head. There's a good variation of songs from the upbeat Crash and I Know What I'm Here For to the haunting Surprise and beautiful Just Like Fred Astaire.

I'm looking forward to hearing more of the new stuff in December but a real treat would be some gigs of old material from Stutter, Stripmine and One Man Clapping. Although James have changed it's still unarguable that they are the best band. May the kings of Indie reclaim their throne!!

## James: I Praise You

By Emma Houghton

Due to my lack of funds and transport, I was forced to listen to James play at Heaton Park on Radio One. Half of me was pretty gutted and the other half of me wasn't too fussed, as I didn't fancy fighting it out at the front row with the non-appreciative people, who know nothing about James yet still claim not to like them in favour of All Saints and other such pap. No offence.

As I sat biting my stumps just a little further than is already painful, Sit Down being the opening song was fairly predictable but also acceptable. I figured that they wouldn't be able to go in too deep, as songs such as Out To Get You and even Born Of Frustration would mean nothing to an unfamiliar and varied audience. Therefore, Laid, I Know What I'm Here For and She's A Star were a good choice for all round entertainment.

I have of late been a little bit apprehensive and critical of James, worrying myself to sleep that all their future releases would be similar to Whiplash (I know some people say that it's their best album to date, but come on, it's just not), But on hearing some of the songs from the new album such as Crash, Stranger, Someone's Got It In For Me, and the delightfully curly wurly Just Like Fred Astaire, my faith is restored.

My highlight however, was Sound. It was the best version I have ever heard. It was like a non-toxic drug that touched on the spiritual. For nearly 15 minutes it was like a non-stop ride on the Big One and by the end of it I felt exhausted and amazed. All I have left to say is, thanks guys and roll on December.



## London: can you wait

A cold autumn evening in our nation's capital.

We exit the pub, and weave, briskly, along Tottenham Court Road, away from the fragrant warmth of the hostelry. We dodge puddles as we press on to our destination, a small, used to be wrestling venue deep in the West End. We enter the foyer, a vision of a Chicago speakeasy from America's past. A respectful nod to the keeper of the door, and we descend a winding staircase, ever deeper into the bowels of London. As we push the door, we half expect to be in an underground station, long disused, and frequented only by rats.

Instead, a low ceiling, a man behind a desk ala school discos on a Friday afternoon. We hand over the magic ticket, which we hope will transport us to an ethereal landscape, far from this metropolitan bunker.

A venue, filled with James fans of all persuasions, famous fans, local workers, middle aged office workers still in work attire, students from the nearby education establishments...oh, and Graham, who drove down from Durham.

We are, unfortunately too late for the support act, but it doesn't seem a mistake, as we sidle up to the bar to discover...No Guinness! We move through the throngs and attach ourselves to stage right.

The house lights dim, and we prepare to ascend the mystical staircase.

"It's Jim's Birthday", Tim informs us, and with "It's nice to be here" we are off and running.

"Vervaceous" eases us in, a flowing melodic request to everyone, we are now truly drifting through the atmosphere.

Micheals intro to Crash increases the pace. We are now racing along, the fans thrashing away trying to break free of gravity, challenging the combative side of nature and punching the air.

If the scenes of moshing during Crash were vibrant, then the reaction to Laid can only be described as frenzied. Tim has the eyes of everyone, including Saul, as he struts and manoeuvres around the small stage, delivering an electric two minutes of pop. Unfortunately, this is also the introduction for sound problems, which will plague the whole gig.

"We've been whoring all week" is Tims way of cueing us into Destiny Calling. This song gives Dave carte blanche to attack the drum kit, and, he takes full advantage with a virtuoso performance.

"I know." reinforces the quality of new material,

and the band is sharp, the singer is a-glow.

"Sometimes", continues the uplifting mood, before we are caused to crash down to earth with "We're gonna...". The pessimistic verses, and androgynous chorus permeating the subconscious.

Sing-a-long-a Tim with "Johnny Yen" illustrates the flexibility, and honesty of James, as they play this historic classic.

So new is "Strangers", that Saul can't remember the chords, a great example of James performing off the cuff.

Now this was impressive, "Music depresses me." leaps from the speakers, and we are into "Play Dead", the highlight of tonight's gig, as it transports me to memories of the Whiplash tour, and reminds everyone of the vocal dexterity of Mr Booth.

So, now a b-side. Long before Oasis were releasing "quality b-sides" James were doing that and more. There can be no better example of this, than "Say Something", which starts low and builds into the anthemic favourite of many fans, moving Tim so much, that he embraces the fans in a burst of emotion, an outlet which the fans gratefully swallow up.

The whole set is not a "Best of...", but it is the best of what James have done and "She's a Star" fits into both categories, one of their best, and one of the hits.

"Victim song" is how Tim introduces "Someone's got it in for me", and the melotronic beat from Mark momentarily hypnotises the audience, extracting all elation, and causing people to look critically at themselves. "If only I had scored the goal".

Dedication track from December turned touching love song dedicated to "Kate" is the current single "Fred Astaire", yet this is a harder edged version, maybe reflecting the coarseness of the sound. The bass of "Surprise" vibrates the floor, and you can feel the music through every pore and sing.

"Tomorrow" and "Sound" re-introduce us to former James triumphs, the latter sucking our emotions for the full 10 minutes.

"We don't deserve you" is how Tim praises the assembled mass, before caressing us with "Top of the World" and "Out to get you", two gems which never made it to the shortlist of singles, but, on tonight's display, would shame many bands attempts at translating heart-felt emotion to vinyl.

"One more?", enquires Tim, and the band oblige with a slow burning "Sit Down" which raises the roof, bringing us back from our journey with a crescendo...now there is a song!

Embassy Rooms

11th Oct. 1999 00691



# 'Millionaires'

It's been said that when they released 'Laid' in 1993, James got laid a lot! 1997's 'Whiplash' was closely followed by Tim Booth being involved in a car accident and - as a result - getting whiplash. Last year, James released 'The Best Of' - and it was their biggest selling record to date. Exactly why this album has been titled 'Millionaires' is still uncertain, but it is rumoured that someone somewhere, hoping that the title itself will be an omen for success, chose 'Millionaires' over the other contenders. However, while the album's title may be founded on optimistic superstition, the album itself is certainly not. It is a collection of confident, bubbly tunes and is - in my opinion at least - James' best piece of work to date.

Indeed, this is typified by the two opening singles: I Know What I'm Here For and Just Like Fred Astaire. Here are two catchy, fast-paced tunes, which are quickly etched into the listener's memory. The latter of those two tracks has been perceived for quite some time as the album's strongest. Yes - Just Like Fred Astaire is a fantastic expression of love: the song's seemingly relentless energy and enthusiasm is very strong, and it is this energy and enthusiasm which best portrays the hapless, love-struck, man about whom the song was written. However, the whole album is itself steeped in energy, not least the fifth track, We're Going To Miss You. This is an angry, guarded, and deeply neurotic song. It also has a huge presence, which it gets partly from Booth's almost lifeless opening commentary. However, the chorus is

awesome - angry and fierce, but still beautiful and reassuring: it plays a critical role in giving the song the immense presence which it undoubtedly holds. We're Going To Miss You contains all the ingredients for a classic James tune, and will probably be released as the album's fourth or fifth single according to Tim Booth. Amongst the other contenders to be put out as a single, must surely be the opening track, Crash. This is a song that has a very heavy guitar presence, and that is pretty much all it has been built on. The song's lyrics are surprisingly weak and - coupled with the bizarre opening lyric that was apparently performed by Brian Eno and Kulas - do not add much to it.

However, the chorus and its bridge possess an anthemic quality that may yet persuade Mercury to use it as a single. The lines "All of your mail is unaddressed / Cut the Herman free from the hesse" are very powerful, with the chorus simply consisting of the title "Crash" repeated several times. It's far more simple than most of the other tracks, but it does work - creating a monster of a song. Already, it is hugely popular when performed live and this popularity will surely rise spectacularly as more and more people hear it.

The album's lyrics have been taken to pieces by quite a few critics. Many have cited them as predictable, unimaginative, and - in some cases - downright lazy. Whilst many of those of those so-called critics are merely over-paid, juvenile hacks, hiding behind a thinly-veiled anti-James ethos, there has been a marked move away from the careful,

witty, thought-provoking, and sheer brilliant lyrics which have mesmerised so many of us in the past. Whether this is due to the fact that it was Saul Davies (and not Booth) who wrote a lot of those lyrics is still unclear. However, lyrics such as "This is not the end / This is not the end / This is the end" are - it has to be said - pretty poor. By their usually exceptional standards, James' lyrics on this album are quite a disappointment. However, the album's brilliance shines particularly bright in two other stand-out tracks: Afro Lover and the album's closing track, Vervaceous.

Afro Lover is a classy piece of bravado that builds on the album's previous tracks with loud effect: exactly why this has been omitted from the setlists of the band's warm-up gigs is a mystery. It is one anthemic chorus of happiness and joy, and really does have the potential to become as big and as famous as Sit Down. There are also other tracks on the album which merit some attention: Hello and Surprise are both very powerful songs. Dumb Jam and Shooting My Mouth Off are also quite handy tracks and serve to give the album considerable substance. These tracks, when lined up against the likes of Just Like Fred Astaire, We're Going To Miss You, Crash, Vervaceous, and Afro Lover, pale in comparison. However, they would almost certainly form the backbone of many other artist's album, such is their outstanding quality.

Yes indeed, Millionaires, contains many gems - outstanding moments of ingenuity and brilliance. But James really have saved the best of these outstanding moments for the final track, Vervaceous. It is sublime. Beginning with Tim Booth's barely audible "Drifting through the atmosphere", the song captures the listener and holds him (or her)

hostage for five and a half minutes of pure magic. From its beautifully slow beginning, the song gradually winds itself up into a bloody and ferocious crescendo then, when you least expect it, there's the sudden calm and melodic drift of Sinead O'Connor repeating the opening verse. Her voice was re-mastered to create a space-like effect of her actually drifting out into open space and it works excellently. Clear, assured, and very coherent are probably the best way to describe her vocals as they seem to drift into space so peacefully, to end the song. As the album's closing track, Vervaceous takes Millionaires onto a newer and higher plane, both ending the album on an exceptionally high note, and promising further riches from the band in the future.

So, between the opening track Crash and the closing track Vervaceous, is conclusive proof that James are as good as ever. If further evidence of this were required (and I do mean 'if'), then it must surely lie in the b-sides which have accompanied the two opening singles. Downstairs - in particular - is a track many lesser bands would die for. The fact that it is a James b-side speaks volumes. Overall, Millionaires, has surpassed my wildest personal expectations and it is very difficult to express enough gratitude to James for recording a record as good as this. Tim Booth did say a while ago that the new songs contained a lot of 'spunk', and he was right. Spunky, outrageous, confident, - however they are described - these songs are good. Very good.

**Emmett Murphy**

# .Heat is on

.Heaton Park Manchester  
12th Sept 1999

Review by Wendy Williams

Despite some crowd control problems, the organisation of this event was excellent.

Getting there early paid off with a prime position even though this involved the toleration of hordes of over zealous & hormone-raged teenage 'Travis', 'All Saints' and 'Mel C' fans. There were also problems with their parents who unbelievably thought that their 6 year olds would be allowed to sit on the barriers!

The mighty 'Shirehorses' were fab, a good example of typical 'Mark & Lard' humour. What a pity that they were not televised. This fine team can only be appreciated first hand.

I was impressed by 'Doves' performance and wondered if they would become another great example of talent to come out of Manchester. In my opinion they would go down very well as a warm up band at a James gig, maybe for the next tour.

'Supergrass' also played a good set which did get the place 'rocking'. I also noticed the large group of celeb's at the side of the stage dancing away like there was 'no tomorrow! These included Zoe & Norman as well as many of the performing artists. Earlier in the day we were treated to an excellent pre-gig James taster with the sound check, which admittedly had me itching to get up and dance. If James were to 'jam' in this fashion at a gig they could have 'Sound' going on for hours. It has to be said that their sound checks are something special in their own right.

Some 9 or 10 hours later the waiting was rewarded when Zoe 'Cook' introduced the boys for their full set. Jumping straight in with 'Sit Down' which every one would know, even Spice fans, and they 'rocked'. It was quite humbling to hear thousands of 'ordinaries' clapping and chanting along with the die-hards.

The followed with 'sexy song', 'Laid', with, thankfully, no lyric changes out of consideration the ages in the audience. Tim sang it as it was meant to be, as it was written. Mass approval was shown in the voluminous applause.

"I hope you know what you're here for", we did. And now everyone else was having a taste of our medicine, a tippie of our liqueur, an audio-sensory of our boys. Star... Tim certainly was as he seemed to try to achieve the highest note he could,

unfortunately this was not his best rendition of this wonderful song.

"Turn the spotlights down please... or I will have to take alternative action!"

Testing patience with the victim song, Someone's Got It In For Me. Testing was not required as goosebumps were soon raised on my arms by this heart-wrenching variant of such a beautiful song.

It was clear that Tim truly felt 'Just Like Fred Astaire' (for Kate) by the emotional sigh he emitted on the songs introduction. Again the crowd erupted with cheers and whistles.

"Say Something... Say Something... SAY SOMETHING!" Little did they know what Tim was about to do as he strolled casually across the stage. Suddenly grabbing hold of the steel pillar at the side of the stage he began to climb down to our level. He approached the crowd control barrier and climbed up. Balancing precariously on the edge whilst being held by a single support in a sea of hands he continued singing without flaw.

"All those people in radio land, they missed that great moment... you can tell them all about it later."

"Enjoy yourselves". For the penultimate time there was an explosion of approval to the opening bars of 'Sound' and the audiences vocal capacity was evident as they sang along to this, the final song of the day.

The boys gave a lively performance, which was not disappointing in any way, although sadly the atmosphere was not the 'James-gig-fantastic' that I adore. It sadly lacked that certain sense of 'James' family.

Earlier in the day..... In James' dressing room..... "I thought you'd be meditating... but their is vodka bottles and nude people...."

"there not mine, they're Jim's" Tim defended. "I believe that you must find God amongst vodka and debris of life. Er... and it's very important to find spiritual calm amongst the chaos"

Tim may have been joking about the vodka but James' music has certainly helped many find spiritual calm amongst the chaos of life.

My very special thanks go to my 'ring-wearing' buddy, mum & dad. Without whom....



# CAST

## A BEGINNERS FAN GUIDE BY MATT

Cast were formed in the early nineties after John Power, at the time playing bass with The La's, left the band to pursue what he was destined to do. He wanted to write songs, but while in The La's he simply didn't have the means to do so as he could neither sing nor play guitar. *"The day I left the La's I knew what I wanted to do: I just couldn't do it"* commented Power. So he took two years off, seemingly doing nothing, but he was busy working hard to get his new band together and learning guitar. Due to John's association with The La's the comparisons are always drawn, but Cast and The La's are very different things. They are both different expressions and should not be compared in this way.

It wasn't until 1995 that anything was to be heard of Cast in the public eye when they stormed the charts with their debut single, Finetime, entering the top 20 at Number 17, and went on to have another 8 singles all enter the top 20 in just 2 years. These included the indie hits Sandstorm and Walkaway from the album All Change, as well as Cast's biggest chart success to date, Flying, entering the UK charts at number 4. While this was going on Cast were still manically touring not only the UK but Europe and North America as well, continuing to build up their strong fan base. 1997 saw the release of their second album 'Mother Nature Calls' with a very different sound compared with the super charged riff packed All Change. However, it still sold well and included the singles Guiding Star and I'm So Lonely, after which Cast took over a year out to write and record their third album, Magic Hour. During this time they also donated a track to the 'Rock The Dock' album, released to raise funds for the striking Liverpool Dockers. The track being 'For So Long' which also appeared as a b-side in late '96.

April 1999 saw the come-back of Cast into the public eye once more, but this time with their

third album under their belt it was a much more mature looking John Power that emerged. Beat Mama was the single that preceded the album, Magic Hour, and although this was a great come-back song that did well considering the state of the UK charts today, it still didn't stop the music press giving the band yet more bad press. But Cast returned a stronger band and this does not fade John Power any more. He knows that fans get it, and that's what matters. Magic Hour the album is Cast's rockiest album to date with a much heavier twist than their last offering, Mother Nature Calls. It's full of rooster booster riffs and effects, marking for a very lively sound, but still trademark Cast.

June saw Cast headline the second stage at Glastonbury, their biggest gig to date, and this is the sort of place where people can really see what Cast are all about. Renowned by anyone who has seen them play as a great live band, Noel Gallagher once described seeing Cast live as *"a religious experience."* Cast were as triumphant at Glastonbury, and although their tour bus being involved in a crash on the way home, the boys were still up beat about the whole Glastonbury experience and went on to play V99 in both Staffordshire and Chelmsford.

However, due to differing opinions at the label there are to be no more singles taken from Magic Hour, leaving 'Magic Hour' the single, released back in July, to be Cast's last public offering from the album. This leaves John Power to now concentrate on writing new material for their 4th album which will get under way early next year.

For more information on Cast be sure to check out the Cast The Future web-site, found at [www.castfuture.cjb.net](http://www.castfuture.cjb.net). This site features up to the minute news, reviews and also exclusive interviews. Backed by the band themselves and with input from John Power, this really is the first stop for Cast info on the web.

**Change of Scenery** was initially produced, when information about James was scarce. The band were concentrating their efforts in the U.S., and U.K. fans were being deprived of any info. Myself and Tim Allan set about rectifying this, with CoS being a way of all fans linking up, sharing knowledge on releases, as well as sharing lifts, accommodation on tours, when the band did return to these shores.

From a poorly printed, thin booklet CoS with 70 copies, CoS has gone on to be a...thin booklet selling, well, a few more.

The current issue, as with all previous issues is printed on a Risograph Digital Printer. This is a very energy conscious way of printing, and uses very little power, as well as being capable of printing onto recycled paper and card, and also emits no ozone, unlike many photocopiers.

In an attempt to become even more environmentally aware, **Change of Scenery** hopes to become carbon neutral. We will calculate the amount of energy we use driving around the UK following the tour, and will convert the carbon amount into cash, and given to a tree replanting scheme.

To do this we will be recording the total miles we drive on the December tour.

To get everyone involved, we will be giving away a JAMES goodie bag, containing CD's, photo's, signed merchandise, as well as anything we can get hold of during December.

To win the swag, all you have to do is guess the number of miles we will travel from Brighton to London, and all gigs in between.

CLUE: From Brighton to Glasgow and back is about 900 miles (so we guess somewhere around 1500 miles total).

Send your guess on an A6 card / post card to our usual address. We will collate the info and inform the winner after our closing date of January 5th 2000.

Winner is the nearest to the actual mileage. Editors decision is final.

# CHANGE OF SCENERY

## c/o 1 THACKERAY ROAD

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### KENT

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Issues 1-5 and issue 10 are sold out.

Back issues available:

Issue 6 features: EXCLUSIVE interview with Saul and Jim, Album discography, BatBA album review, Mini tour 1997 reviewed, Classic reprint (City Life), Fanzine review, Chords, Whiplash review

Issue 7 features: EXCLUSIVE interview with Micheal Kulas, Live reviews of Leeds, Middlesbrough, Southampton, London, Cambridge, Liverpool, Wolverhampton, Manchester, Lollapalooza and USA gigs, Bootleg list

Issue 8 features: EXCLUSIVE interview with Saul Davies, Whitfield Street article, 1997 gig guide, Unreleased songs, GLR and XFM radio sessions review, Live reviews of: Virgin, Maida Vale, Theaudience press release, Money article

Issue 9 features: Statement from Tim Booth to the fans, Tim in "Saved", One Man clapping retrospective, Live reviews of: Doncaster, Oxford, Y98 and Fleadh. Info on Theaudience, Gene Hillman Mix and Stereophonics

The cost is: UK £6.20d glass stamps per issue  
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December 11, 1999  
9 pm - 2 am

JAMES night



CYBERIA cafe  
12 Oxford Street  
Manchester

(located across from the Odeon Theatre, just off St. Peter's Square)

JAMES  
night III

There will be a DJ playing all your favorite James tracks, including rare material, remixes and b-sides, as well as James-related artists such as The Stone Roses, Leggy Pop, the Wedding Present, Radiohead, and many more.

December 11, 1999  
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for more details, visit [http://members.xoom.com/james\\_info](http://members.xoom.com/james_info)

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