

# SINGLE REVIEWS & ONE EP from Birmingham students | Issue 3

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## Ella Keyo, [No Meaning](#)



The party ain't complete without a bit of Drum'n' Bass - **Ella Keyo** hits us with a massive summer sound and it's hardly even Spring. Pop-infused DnB with that signature rolling sound and those complementary female vocals we're seeing become a staple of this reborn genre.

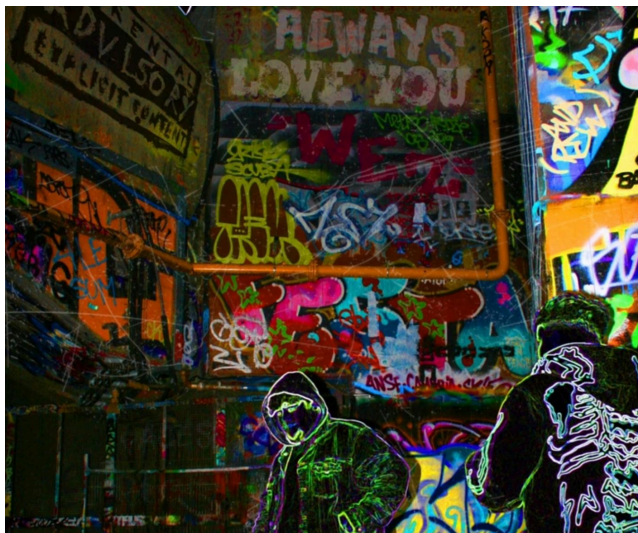
The tune captures that fleeting happiness of a night out, those high-octane few hours that punctuate the mundane week - the kind of thing we're told to control before it takes hold of you but hearing this I wonder if that'd be the worst thing. A hedonic beat with thought-provoking lyrics that shift with the stream of consciousness.

Tickling that part of your brain that just knows how to let loose, No Meaning is a tune to lose yourself to - a club vibe or the soundtrack to some unknown field out in Nowhere, Hertfordshire to reference the ephemeral Cocker, of PULP.

Including everything great about the genre without its more esoteric roots and elements and yet not losing any of its substance, its tracks like this that'll further popularise the sound. Consider the recent popularity of [Messy In Heaven](#), [fellow ACMer Kenya Grace and her No. 1 track Strangers](#) and even going back a few years to [Lily Allen's Shy FX feature, Roll The Dice](#). (JOS)

Stream [No Meaning](#) and follow [Ella Keyo](#) here and let's hear your thoughts: [thebuzz@acm.ac.uk](mailto:thebuzz@acm.ac.uk)

## James Barlow, [Always Love You](#)



Last year ACMer and Mancunian **James Barlow** dropped his collaboration with Antzz, Always Love You. A gut-wrenching modern ballad.

Barlow's deep and soulful vocals, reminiscent of Rag'n'Bone Man, that rip right through accompanied by Antzz's melodic and emotionally packed bars. Lovelorn and reflecting

on the ever-relevant need to masquerade brave masculinity, this track is poignant and rightfully bitter without appearing shallow or vengeful.

A song that has left me anxiously awaiting new music, Barlow's voice constitutes his greatest instrument - seriously powerful and possessing quite a vast range he sings to something deep within you.

Awash with feeling and caked in experience, or perhaps rightly labelled a pain, his singing evokes shades of Charles Bradley and Joe Cocker while demonstrating this vitality that is so necessary to the contemporary scene. (JOS)

Make sure to stream [Always Love You](#), and don't forget to catch James Barlow performing live with [Conn13 + Friends @ The Tooting Tram And Social](#) on March 14th.

## Regular Faces - [THE PLAZA](#)



## **Birmingham-based duo Regular Faces sneak in through the back with their EP 'THE PLAZA'. A contemporary concoction of dark and melodic sounds, in your face and in-motion.**

On a first listen, there's an argument that this is Gorillaz-esque or some darker, inner-city version of an MGMT sound but as it shifts and changes it becomes clear this is way more than that. With two distinct voices and styles but a keen know-how on how to best merge them, there is this uncut dynamic between bars that leads you along and this gruff but smooth voice interjecting almost mantrically - best depicted in Track 4, FLOOR 3.

As innovative as this sound is, its development is clear when you look at what they have previously released - leaning into the feel and cadences of Can't Explain while building on the layered atmosphere of an encompassing surround sound seen in ASID and OUT OF TIME, listening to SIGNALS there is this a wave washing you pulled by the tide of the backing. Clustered and electronic, the instrumentation and sample sounds like firing synapses. The whole experience is like a recording of internal voices, a stream of consciousness dragging you along on a night out.

The two never conflict but the tracks produce this image in my mind that is a warped redressing of the cliché of having an Angel and a Devil on each shoulder; with Regular Faces it feels like two smooth-talking Devil indulging in this fast and gritty lifestyle as they slowly hotbox you. There is a darkness behind the music but it does not inspire dread, rather it excites something primal. Not limited to that high-octane rush, FISH FINGERS gives you that clunky comedown slip of emotion.

The Plaza is a grungy and dark alleyway, occupied by unscrupulous characters who'll take you on the night of your life - but at what cost?

Stream [THE PLAZA](#), follow [Regular Faces](#) and check out the [music video for NOW AND THEN](#).

Let's hear your thoughts:

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