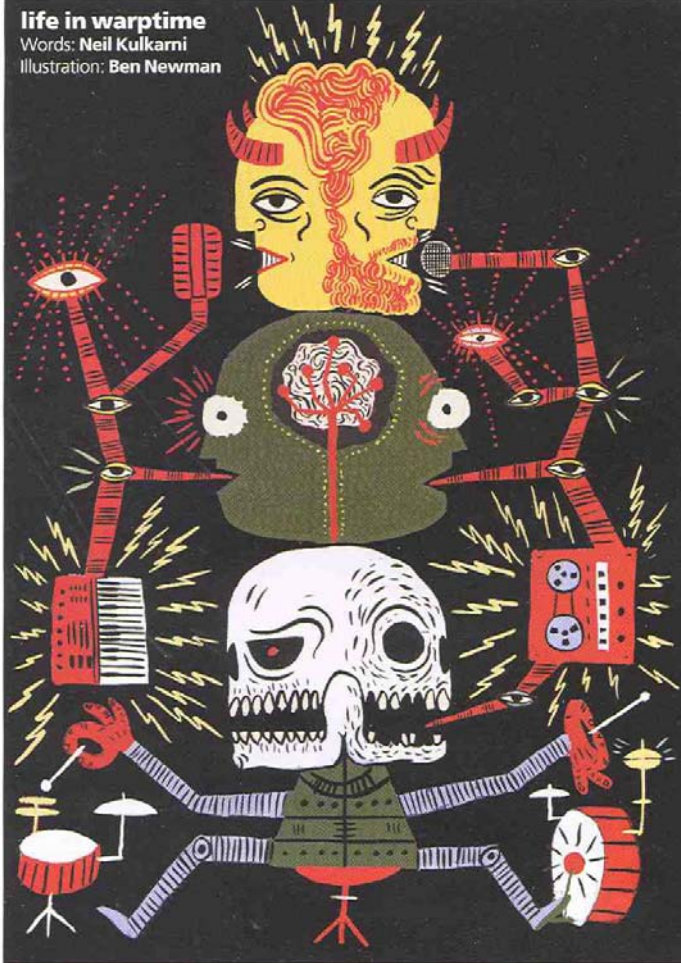


life in wartime
Words: Neil Kulkarni
Illustration: Ben Newman



The Young Gods

Twenty Years: 1985-2005 (PIAS)

Adrenaline's a weird drug. Easy to stimulate, less easy to maintain in the system. Probably a good thing too, because even though it's in you and on tap, it can invest even the most sloping-shouldered weedling with a boundless Promethean verve and energy that can so easily lead to split lips, shameful beatings or a bad asthma attack at the least. As a 15-year-old PE freak (and I don't mean physical education) I was pointed towards The Young Gods by *Melody Maker*; within a week I was stomping into fifth-form centres putting on 'Envoyé' at top volume and feeling like I'd dipped my dick in a pot of PCP.

Forget about The Young Gods' relationship to rock'n'roll. They were always postulated as both saviours and destroyers when in fact they were less concerned with rock history and more concerned with burrowing into the earth and shaking it till the pips squeaked. Helped that the Gods were never scared, helped that the Gods sounded not quite so simplistically 'like the future' but absolutely beyond time,

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able to leap all the way from the 55th Century back to the first yelp of primal man. It helped that Franz Treichler's lyrics and voice made him a seductive yet scarifying lovechild of Gainsbourg and Iggy, a poetic traducer of Rilke and Hendrix, with his band able to play Varese riffs while thumping like the Sex Pistols. Oh so manly, but all the more honestly perfect for adolescent dreams to drift on and be driven by.

And of course, even now, things like 'Pas Mal', 'L'amourir', 'Did You Miss Me' and 'Envoyé' fucking *rock* – make you holler along in the best sub-bass profundo baritone you can summon up. But it was the mystical and romantic pulse of The Young Gods that kept you so addicted – and though represented on this 20-track retrospective with 'Charlotte' and that divine skin-close cover of 'September Song' I'd have liked to have heard bigger chunks of *L'eau Rouge* (especially 'La Fille De La Mort'). This comp is the raft of Medusa, but you should really start with *L'eau Rouge* and then go forward and backward through the ages with the Gods as your whims take you. As this music testifies, you are a young god as well. Freedom and love never sounded so all-conquering.