

The Observer





The world lost an incredible artist in David Lynch.

Jan. 20, 1946 - Jan. 15, 2025

ISSUE 2

...

The Grammy Man

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Great Reads

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WATCH:

Editor's Message

THIS ISSUE OF THE OBSERVER IS DEDICATED TO Yoshimi the cat.
A lifelong companion and forever in our hearts.



Fan Art

Submitted by longtime fan Tom Seabright shows his cat Yoshimi preparing to battle the Pink Robots.

The painting was made by Tylar Jane / Honeybee Photography & Art.

Seabright said Yoshimi was found as a kitten under a truck and stayed with him for the remainder of her life.

We love love love this painting and the deep connection it has to Yoshimi and her owner Tom.

Thanks for sending this in!!!

UPCOMING SHOWS

FEB. 1
WEST MELBOURNE,
VIC, AUSTRALIA

FEB. 2
WEST MELBOURNE,
VIC, AUSTRALIA

FEB. 5
WEST MELBOURNE,
VIC, AUSTRALIA

MARCH 26
ZEPP HANEDA,
TOKYO, JAPAN

MARCH 27
ZEPP HANEDA,
TOKYO, JAPAN

[TICKETS](#)

From THE archives: FEBRUARY

5 years ago: 2020

Feeling Yourself Disintegrate



- Music release: February, 1989

"Drug Machine in Heaven"
Single from Telepathic Surgery

- February 1996

"is Here Giraffe"
Single from Clouds Taste Metallic

Chart Magazine February 1996 interview
with The Flaming Lips

FLAMING LIPS

Perhaps the unlikeliest of rock bands, Flaming Lips were formed almost 12 years ago in a decidedly unhip Oklahoma neighbourhood, and have developed a consistent sound across all of their records, due in part to Coyne's vocals and abstract lyrics, which, combined with a dreamy guitar pop sound, leave the band's imprint on everything they touch. The effect is somewhat akin to a warm, trippy, pop fuzzy. Coyne laughs. "We try to take the normal world and say 'Look how amazing it is!'. You don't have to go to Mars to see great things," he explains. "In our music we try to look at things in a new way and show how cool they are. You don't need millions of dollars to find them. The little things can be great, too."

After recording and touring on their own for seven years, Flaming Lips signed

of music. Just listen to it — If you like it, then explore it more. But to pick it because it's indie or it's major label or for reasons that have to do with trends is ridiculous.

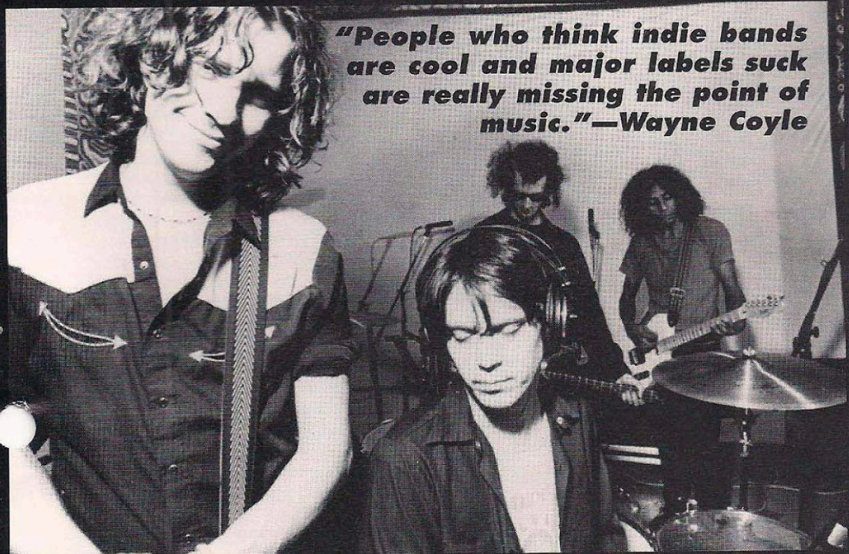
Nevertheless, being on the trendiest of TV shows and music festivals is a coup to some. All the fuss from their prime time appearance has yet to die down, but Coyne insists that it is really irrelevant. "We're lucky because we've known a lot of people that the same thing has happened to. We're not the first band to go from being a weird little underground band to being listened to by kids in malls. To think that you could be on the cover of *Rolling Stone* — I don't really care — I don't look at the magazine anyway so it doesn't really matter. I don't read it to find out what good bands are out there. I go to a record store or clubs for that. To us, if success happens, it's extra. We're more interested in music and ideas and science and those things."

It takes a minute to process the concept of something as transient and hard to pin down as a Flaming Lips song being tied to the fact-based world of science, where mathematical equations rule, but Coyne is totally in earnest. He explains: "Our idea of science is about inventing things, whether it's toothpaste, or atomic bombs, or finding a balance between industry and nature. Music is one of those areas where you aren't restricted because you don't have to worry about killing anybody. If you're out there testing atomic bombs or automobiles, you have to be careful. In music that doesn't happen. We can be as freaky and as free and as unrestricted as we want. Nobody gets hurt here!"

Nobody may get hurt in Flaming Lips' music, but being on tour with Lollapalooza 1994 is another story. Before he takes off to yet another interview, Coyne pauses to answer one last question: If all the bands in Lollapalooza '94 were involved in a free-for-all, who would be left standing when the dust settled? After thinking for a moment, he smiles and replies: "It would have to be Eye from *The Boredoms*. Everyday he got on stage and beat himself up, and at the end he's standing and he likes it... *The Beastie Boys* are all vegetarians, they don't smoke and they're in good shape, but no match for Eye. *Nick Cave* is tough, but he's thin and old and smokes. The drummer from *Luscious Jackson* is tough too, and she's a badass drummer, but I think she'd give up because she doesn't like to fight."

He pauses. "I think we'd act like we were on Eye's side, we'd help him, and then at the end we'd get the hell out of there before he went insane. Otherwise, we wouldn't last long at all!"

"People who think indie bands are cool and major labels suck are really missing the point of music."—Wayne Coyne



It's soundcheck time at Toronto's Opera House, where Oklahoma's Flaming Lips are busy setting up for tonight's show in support of their latest album, *Clouds Taste Metallic*. It's a bit of a last minute affair due to the cancellation of the Red Hot Chili Peppers/Silverchair tour that they had been signed up for. A broken arm in the Chili Pepper camp has moved the band from third-string openers to headliners, and it's doubtful that any of the attendees at this evening's sold out show are upset about it.

The crew are onstage hanging a blanket of Christmas lights. The lights cover everything — walls, amps, the floor — and inject an eerily festive atmosphere into what should be just another show. Kind of like the surreal, otherworldly ambience of your average Flaming Lips pop song, and at that moment, Flaming Lips frontman Wayne Coyne strolls in.

with Warner Brothers in 1991. In 1994, the spotlight was turned on when the single "She Don't Use Jelly" became an MTV favourite. Lollapalooza and Letterman followed. What put them over the edge however, was their performance on teen trashfest *Beverly Hills, 90210*. Not only did it make them a household name, but it sparked discussion from some indie puritans who accused them of becoming sellouts and questioned their credibility. Coyne impatiently brushes these criticisms aside. "Credibility or whatever that means is something they put on you. I mean, we don't have any more credibility than the next band that wants to play music. People who think indie bands are cool and major labels suck are really missing the point

by Jane Tattersal

18

CHART February 1996

Photo: J.M. Martin

33 years ago:

VIDEO: The Flaming Lips - Live at Trees
in Dallas, TX (February 6, 1992)



VIDEO: [thesatellitehead](#)

Setlist:

Lucifer Rising
Take Meta Mars
Hit Me Like You Did The First Time
Shine On Sweet Jesus
Rainin' Babies
Talkin' 'Bout The Smiling Deathporn Immortality Blues (live debut)
Hold Your Head (live debut)
Gingerale Afternoon (live debut)
Under Pressure (Queen & David Bowie cover)

FUCK YEAH!!!!

Heading into Tour In the Year 2025

January 30, 2025

VIDEO SOURCE:
[thesatellitehead](#)



The Flaming Lips open their 2025 campaign with 'Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots' from the Adelaide Entertainment Centre Theatre in Adelaide, South Australia.

The show left some fans stunned as to why Steven Drozd wasn't at the gig. Online speculation lead to theories about possible illness, a family emergency, or that maybe Steven forgot to set a reminder for the 2025 tour.

Either way, AJ Slaughter fills in for Steven and the group dropped notable favorites like "Riding To Work In The Year 2025," that song's first performance since 2013, and "Christmas at the Zoo" which was performed during both nights of the 2024 Summer Freak Out at the OKC Zoo.

Fans provided words through online comments on The Observer's social media accounts and through emails where they used just a few words to describe what the music of The Flaming Lips means to them.

Here is the word cloud from those submissions.

For the March issue, the new question for a word cloud will be, what is your favorite album and why?



the family
beautiful
important
warm soulful
fuzzies
fucking
life mesmerizing
friends
joy

The Grammy Man



February is award season in the United States and there is no award with a further reaching legacy than The Grammy. In 2025 The Grammy Awards will celebrate their 67th season of handing out the small, gold-plated statues to artists who have made incredible music from around the world.

The Flaming Lips have have been nominated for six Grammy Awards, and have won three times. Artist John Billings, aka the "Grammy Man," has been hand making the awards for over 40 years in a small workshop in Colorado.

Flaming Lips' Grammy History:

2003: Best Rock Instrumental Performance: WON
"Approaching Pavonis Mons by Balloon (Utopia Planitia)"

2004: Best Alternative Music Album: NOMINATED
"Fight Test EP"

2007: Best Alternative Music Album: NOMINATED
"At War with the Mystics"

2007: Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical: WON
"At War with the Mystics"

2007: Best Rock Instrumental Performance: WON
"The Wizard Turns On..."

NOMINATED

“At War With the Mystics 5.1”

Billings was a dental student in southern California in the 1980s when he landed a job in the studio of the original Grammy award artist Bob Graves. Before Graves passed away he asked Billings to keep the tradition alive. Billings obliged and moved to Colorado to open Billings Artworks in Ridgway Colorado.

"Each Grammy we make, in our minds, it's going to a superstar, you know it's going to somebody who's given to us, to our lives, and now we're giving back to them." Billings said.

"We're a small company in a dusty little shop, in a tiny little town in the mountains, but our work is recognized around the world and goes around the world."

Each award takes about 15 hours to complete, according to Billings. The statues are made from casts that are then hand polished and gold plated.

The first award ceremony was held simultaneously in two locations on May 4, 1959, the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California, and the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City, New York, with 28 Grammys awarded.

The number of awards given grew, at one time reaching over 100, and fluctuated over the years with categories added and removed. The second Grammy Awards, also held in 1959, was the first ceremony to be televised, but the ceremony was not aired live until the 13th Annual Grammy Awards in 1971.

Great Reads

Interview: Wayne Coyne of The Flaming Lips
reflects on the enduring popularity of *Yoshimi*
Battles the Pink Robots

A correspondence with Wayne Coyne
from 1997

WATCH:



ISSUE 3 IN PRODUCTION

Release: March 1, 2025

Did you celebrate a milestone with the band?

Have you had an incredible experience that
you want to share?

Do you have art, words, or drawings that are
inspired by the music?

Issue 3 of The Observer is taking submissions.

Deadline to submit is Friday, February, 21.

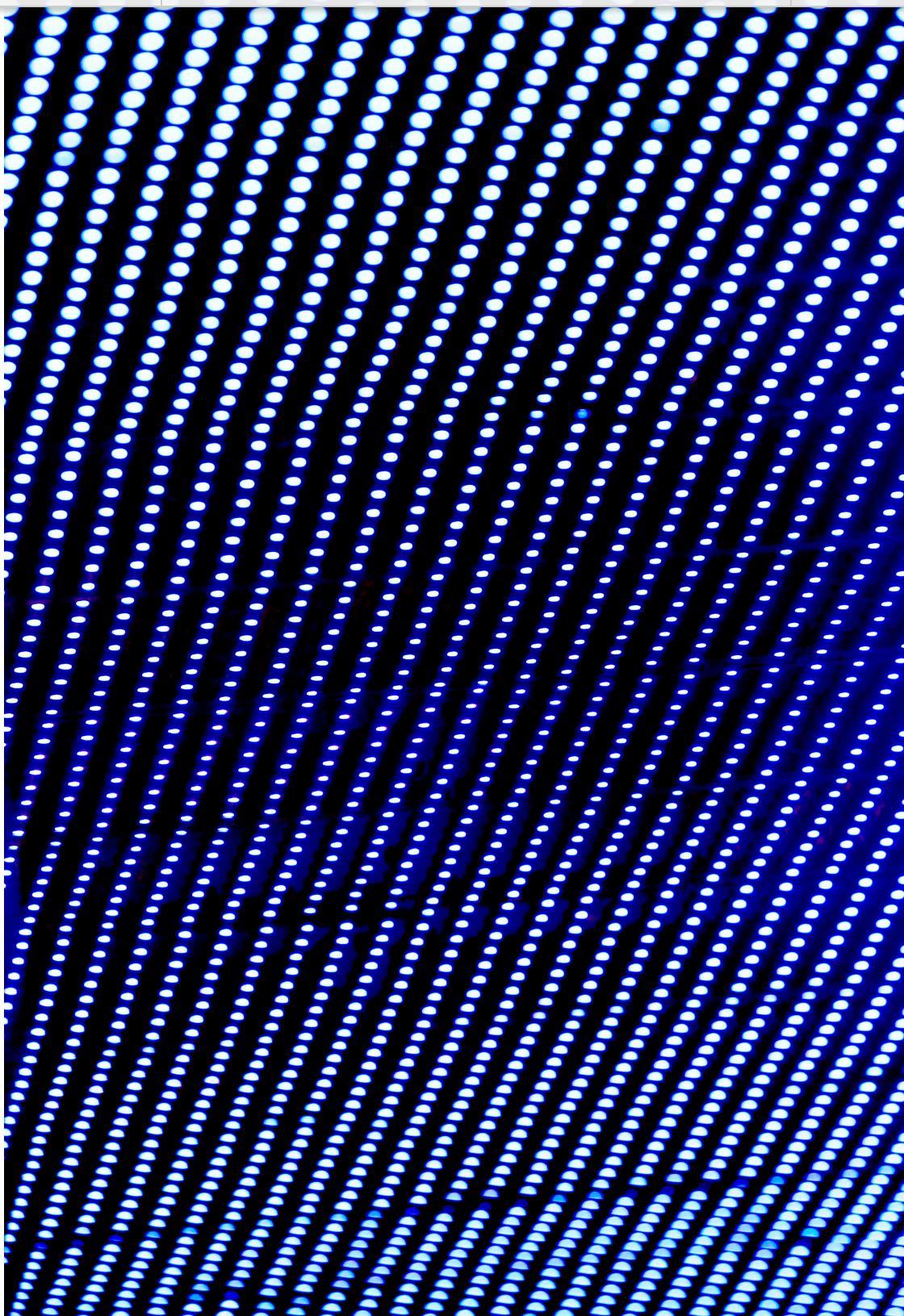
Send to: editorobserver1@gmail.com

ISSUE 2 BACKGROUND IMAGE: The stage screen at a Lips show.

This image appears behind each newsletter that viewed via desktop or tablet.

Please submit artwork for this space by reaching out to:

editorobserver1@gmail.com



Editor's Message:

Hello and welcome to issue 2 of the The Observer, a newsletter dedicated to the fans of The Flaming Lips.

We are a bit late with issue 2, I am recovering from a dreadful virus that seriously kicked my ass and kept me from working, but nothing good music, family and medicine can't cure!!!! And if you see a typo, my apologies, NyQuil is great for sleep, but not very good with copy.

Well, here we are in issue 2, and I just want to thank the 46 people who have signed up for this newsletter!

Holy shit. I was hoping to have a few people sign up. But 46?! Thank you to each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart.

In preparing for issue 2 I had a chance to listen to Feeling Yourself Disintegrate from 2020. I included it above in the archive section. I love this song so much, and it gets to me each and every time. The song reminds me that during these times, we need to make sure we tell the people in our lives that we love them. So after you are done with today's issue, reach out to someone you haven't talked too in a while and tell them that you love them.

And please think about referring this newsletter to your friends, or drop the link into your groups or whatever. This newsletter was designed for fans who maybe are not on social media. We are living in some interesting times to say the least. And I have certainly seen a mass exodus of people from social media looking to live without the toxic materials posted online. I can't blame them at all.

The Observer now has an account on Bluesky
<https://bsky.app/profile/theobserverfl.bsky.social>

The mission of this newsletter is to celebrate the fans and the music of The Flaming Lips. We want to create a safe space for those wanting to share stories of their connections to the music and the band.

I have been using other social media accounts to get people to submit materials to this newsletter. Submissions have been slow, but I am hopeful that more and more will want to submit their stories, art, and words. I have also been reaching out to many people I think would make great stories for this newsletter. I am hopeful they will return the messages and perhaps consider participating.

I want to thank Tom Seabright for sending the beautiful painting of his cat Yoshimi. When we use references from the band in our daily lives, it only strengthens our deep love of the group and the journey the music has taken us.

If you feel like sharing your story. Please drop a message!

PARTING SHOT:

The master at work.



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The Observer will not consider any form of advertising or sponsorship. The mission is to celebrate the music, and the lives of those who cherish it. For anyone wanting to contribute words, pictures, art and essays, please feel free to reach out.

Questions?

editorobserver1@gmail.com

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Send submissions to: editorobserver1@gmail.com

Thank you for being you,

– J. S. Applewhite

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