

Posted by
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Why isn't this band huge?

We've all got a favourite band that ought to be massive but isn't - and mine is I am Kloot

The debonaire good looks of I Am Kloot, Pete Doherty-endorsed songwriter John Bramwell on the right. Photograph: David Sillitoe

For music nerds (that'll be us, then), it is an evergreen pub debate: which bands should have crossed over to massive mainstream acclaim but, for whatever convoluted reasons of record industry chicanery, sudden acrimonious splits or the general stupidity of the great British public, haven't.

Often this is pure wishful thinking. I will maintain to my dying day that [Fischerspooner](#) make better pop records than Kylie (latest Kitsuné single, [The Best Revenge](#), another great lost No1), but I also realise that there is something altogether too arch, too arty and too-[dressed-like-lunatics](#) about them for Radio 1, much less middle England, to take them to their heart. As Ministry of Sound, and then Columbia, [discovered to their cost](#).

Similarly, Simon Rivers of [The Bitter Springs](#) is arguably the greatest British lyricist of the last 30 years. In an imaginary alternative history of indie which I sometimes conjure in my mind, he is regularly mentioned in the same breath as Morrissey, Jarvis Cocker and Damon Albarn. The reality, however, is that Bitter Springs are a men of a certain age who release albums of Peel-friendly DIY indie on tiny labels. Despite Rivers's amazing tender, funny, embittered sketches of urban Britain, the reality is that a) your average NME reader is never going to hear about them, and b) even if they did, they'd still choose Arctic Monkeys over a bunch of middle-aged blokes who look like they spend their Saturdays selling fanzines outside League One football grounds.

However, the case of [I am Kloot](#) is one that I can genuinely get on my high horse about. Just to be clear: Kloot's is no sob story. At a cult level, they've forged a successful career. In April, they'll embark on a British tour playing the mid-sized likes of Koko and Manchester Academy, in summer they'll play various European festivals (they're surprisingly popular abroad) and their new album, [Play Moolah Rouge](#), will no doubt enjoy a certain critical acclaim. Pete Doherty, for his part, recently called Kloot's John Bramwell: "One of the four most talented songwriters this country has produced in the last 10 years." Even The Sun (!) has called Kloot: "The best kept secret in UK indie."

In short, Kloot have carved out a niche in British music. They have established themselves as a sustainable entity, despite a lack of press hype and TV advertising. That you can do so is, in its own, small way, inspirational.

Nonetheless, my flabber is properly ghastrated, and my ire fired, that Keane are being [voted the best at anything](#) by Q readers and HMV shoppers, while Kloot are out there releasing their fourth album on small Manchester indie, Skinny Dog - co-owned by long-term supporter, [Elbow's Guy Garvey](#).

The answers might be a bit depressing, but, on I Am Kloot's behalf, I have to ask three

questions:

- 1.** If it's melodic guitar rock you're after, who in their right mind would choose the smooth, glossy surfaces of Coldplay over I Am Kloot, a band who write similarly hummable tunes, yet achieve a much deeper traction, thanks to some bare, gritty production, moments of genuine soul and a deft, musical dynamism?
- 2.** In an age when Channel 4 ad breaks are packed with promos for polished, ersatz soul-searchers like [Ray LaMontagne](#) to [Damien Rice](#), how has wider Britain failed to recognise the much heavier talents of Kloot's songwriting focal point, John Bramwell? A man with Costello's gift for rhyme, and a desperate Lennon-like edge in his voice, he writes proper adult songs in which love, venom and self-destruction are - as in life - indivisible. He could eat James Blunt for breakfast. And polish off half a David Gray for elevenses.
- 3.** How, when live music is thriving, do I Am Kloot go unremarked as one of the country's best live bands? A three-piece with the fluidity, elasticity and mutual understanding of a good jazz trio, they not only sound heartstopping, but - given that the prickly, charming Mr Bramwell is seemingly trapped in a never-ending love/ hate relationship with everything about being onstage - are about a thousand-times more interesting, endearing and real, than the cabaret hoofers at the Kaisers-Killers-Razorlight end of the spectrum.

I know what you're going to say: "I Am Kloot aren't massive, because their name is crap." You may be right. But that doesn't stop their lack of chart-bothering, awards-scooping action sticking in my craw.

Now, it's your turn to get it off your chest. Which bands do you love, who should be huge and aren't?