



O.A.R.

O.A.R. is often compared to the **Dave Matthews Band**, owing to vocalist and guitarist Marc Roberge's close vocal approximation to Matthews, as well as their mutual love for jamming. The roots of O.A.R. ('Of A Revolution') stretch back to the early 90s, when Roberge and drummer Chris Culos were classmates in junior high school (in Rockville, Maryland, USA), and would listen to music and jam together. By the late 90s, Roberge and Culos had welcomed two others into their fold, Richard On (guitar) and Benj Gershman (bass), resulting in the formation of O.A.R. in 1998. Building up a solid fanbase owing to live shows from the east coast through the Midwest, O.A.R. issued two releases on their own in 2000, *The Wanderer* and *Soul's Aflame*, the latter of which featured the arrival of a fifth member, Jerry DePizzo (saxophone). The quintet's next two releases were recorded live, 2001's *Risen* and 2002's *Any Time Now*, the latter of which sold a staggering 100,000 copies by word of mouth alone. Deciding that being with a major label would take their career to the next level, O.A.R. signed with **Atlantic Records**, and issued *In Between Now And Then*, in 2003.

● ALBUMS: *The Wanderer* (Oarfin 2000) ★★, *Soul's Aflame* (Oarfin 2000) ★★, *Risen* (Everfine 2001) ★★, *Any Time Now* (Everfine 2002) ★★, *In Between Now And Then* (Lava 2003) ★★, *34th & 8th* (Everfine 2004) ★★, *Stories Of A Stranger* (Lava 2005) ★★.

O Lucky Man

Noted British film director Lindsay Anderson (*This Sporting Life*, *If*) cast Malcolm McDowell in the leading role of this enthralling 1973 feature. Arthur Lowe, Ralph Richardson, Rachel Roberts and Helen Mirren were among the first-class supporting players. Screened at the Cannes Film Festival in its original three-hour form, *O Lucky Man* was later trimmed for US audiences. The plot revolved around the antics of a self-serving young man, initially intent on gratification, who later attempts to make amends for his perceived wrongdoings. A taut score from former Animals pianist/vocalist Alan Price suitably enhanced the proceedings. Aided by guitarist Colin Green, formerly of **Georgie Fame's** Blue Flames, Dave Markee (bass) and ex-**Jethro Tull** drummer Clive Bunker, Price committed some of his finest songs and performances to the project, notably 'Poor People', 'My Home Town' and the ironic title song. One of the finest British films of the early 70s, *O Lucky Man* demonstrates Price's maturity as a songwriter as well as Anderson's considerable cinematic gifts.

O-Town

This Orlando, California, USA-based teen pop outfit rose to fame on the back of the ABC network's documentary about the creation of a boy band, *Making The Band*, a series which could be viewed as either a savage indictment of the state of

pop music or compelling, voyeuristic television. Over the course of 22 weekly episodes the viewer saw the many hopeful young singer/dancers whittled down to a quintet by a panel of judges headed by boy band impresario Lou Pearlman. The lucky five were Trevor Penick (b. 6 November 1979, Fullerton, California, USA), Ashley Parker Angel (b. 1 August 1981, Redding, California, USA), Jacob Underwood (b. 25 April 1980, El Cajon, California, USA), Erik-Michael Estrada (b. 23 September 1979, New York City, New York, USA), and Dan Miller (b. 4 September 1980, New Hampshire, USA). At the end of the series the band was seen signing a recording contract with **Clive Davis'** new venture, J Records. Pearlman, who recently settled financial disputes with former employees **'N Sync** and the **Backstreet Boys**, had the last laugh when the name-dropping, zeitgeist-hugging single 'Liquid Dreams' climbed inexorably up the **Billboard** Hot 100. The group's debut album was also an instant Top 5 success when it was released in January 2001.

● ALBUMS: *O-Town* (J 2001) ★★, *O2* (J 2002) ★★.

● DVD/VIDEOS: *Live From New York* (BMG Video 2001).

Oak Ridge Boys

Originally called the Country Cut-Ups, the Oak Ridge Boys were formed in 1943 in Knoxville, Tennessee, USA. They often performed at the atomic energy plant in Oak Ridge, where, in the midst of a war, their optimistic gospel songs were welcomed, and hence they were renamed the Oak Ridge Quartet. They recorded their first records in 1947 with a line-up featuring leader Wally Fowler (b. 15 February 1917, Adairsville, Georgia, USA, d. 3 June 1994, Tennessee, USA), Marshall Lon Freeman (b. c.1921, Berryton, Georgia, USA, d. 30 July 2003, Rocky Face, Georgia, USA), Curly Kinsey, and Johnny New. Handled by Fowler, they recorded their first records in 1947, moving their base to Nashville. Various members came and went during this period, with Fowler the one constant before he elected to disband the group in 1956. A year later, they re-formed in a revised line-up organized by a long-serving member, Smitty Gatlin. They became full-time professionals in 1961 and the album on which they changed from the Oak Ridge Quartet to the Oak Ridge Boys included strings and horns, an unusual move for a gospel group. William Lee Golden (b. 12 January 1939, near Brewton, Alabama, USA), who had admired the group since he saw them as an adolescent, became their baritone in 1964. When Gatlin decided to become a full-time minister, Golden recommended Duane David Allen (b. 29 April 1943, Taylor-town, Texas, USA), who became the group's lead vocalist in 1966. With bass singer Noel Fox (b. 1940, USA, d. 10 April 2003) and tenor Willie Wynn they established themselves as the best-loved white gospel group in the USA and won numerous awards and Grammys. Further changes came in 1972 with bass singer Richard Anthony Sterban (b. 24 April 1943, Camden, New Jersey, USA) and in 1973 with tenor Joseph Sloan Bonsall (b. 18 May 1948, Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania, USA) becoming part of the group. Although most gospel fans enjoyed their high-energy, criss-crossing performances, they were criticized for adding a rock 'n' roll drummer to their band. They recorded a single, 'Praise The Lord And Pass The Soup', with **Johnny Cash** and the **Carter Family** in 1973.

In 1975, the Oak Ridge Boys switched to country music, but their first secular single, 'Family Reunion', only reached number 83 in the US country charts. Their total income fell to \$75,000 in 1975 and they posted a loss in 1976. **Columbia Records** dropped them, ironically at the same time as they were accompanying their labelmate, **Paul Simon**, on 'Slip Slidin' Away', which featured sentiments diametrically opposite to gospel music. They opened for Johnny Cash in Las Vegas, played the USSR with **Roy Clark**, and had a major country hit with 'Y'All Come Back Saloon'. They topped the US country charts with 'I'll Be True To You' (a death disc), the classic 'Leavin' Louisiana In The Broad Daylight', and 'Trying To Love Two Women'. In 1981, they made number 5 on the US pop charts with the doo-wop novelty song 'Elvira' and followed it with 'Bobbie Sue' (number 12). Ronald Reagan, in a presidential address, said: 'If the Oak Ridge Boys win any more gold, they'll have more gold in their records than we have in Fort Knox.'

Further country hits followed with 'American Made', 'Love Song', 'I Guess It Never Hurts To Hurt Sometime' (written by **Randy VanWarmer**), 'Make My Life With You', and 'Come On In (You Did The Best You Could)'. In award ceremonies, they ousted the **Statler Brothers** as the top country vocal group. Golden, who stopped cutting his hair and beard in 1979, became a mountain man, going bear hunting and sleeping in a teepee. When he was dismissed in 1986 for 'continuing musical and personal differences', he filed a \$40 million suit, which was settled out of court. He released a solo album, *American Vagabond*, also in 1986, and went on to form a family group called the Goldenes. His replacement was their rhythm guitarist, Steve Sanders (b. 17 September 1941, Richmond, Georgia, USA, d. 10 June 1998, Florida, USA), formerly a child gospel performer and Faye Dunaway's son in the movie *Hurry Sundown*.

The Oak Ridge Boys continue with their philosophy to 'keep it happy, keep it exciting', and do nothing that might tarnish their image. They turn down beer commercials and only sing positive songs. To quote Joe Bonsall, 'We're just an old gospel group with a rock 'n' roll band playing country music.' In 1996, Golden returned to the line-up when they signed to **A&M Records**, but tragedy was to follow when Sanders, who had left the group because of personal problems in 1995, shot himself in June 1998. In 2000, the Oak Ridge Boys was inducted into the Gospel Music Association's Gospel Hall Of Fame in Nashville. Golden suffered a mild heart attack in August 2004.

● **ALBUMS:** *The Oak Ridge Quartet* (Cadence 1959) ★★★, *With Sounds Of Nashville* (Warners 1962) ★★★, *Folk Minded Spirituals For Spiritual Minded Folk* (Warners 1962) ★★★, as the Oak Ridge Quartet *In Concert* (Cumberland 1963) ★★, *Sing For You* (Skylite 1964) ★★★, as the Oak Ridge Quartet *Sing And Shout* (Skylite 1964) ★★★, *I Wouldn't Take Nothing For My Journey Now* (Skylite 1965) ★★★, *The Sensational Oak Ridge Boys From Nashville, Tennessee* (Starday 1966) ★★★★★, as the Oak Ridge Quartet *The Solid Gospel Sound Of The Oak Ridge Quartet* (Skylite 1966) ★★★, with the Harvesters *Together* (Canaan 1966)

★★★, as the Oak Ridge Quartet *River Of Life* (Skylite 1967) ★★★, *International* (Heartwarming 1971) ★★★, *The Light* (Heartwarming 1972) ★★★, *The Oak Ridge Boys* (Columbia 1973) ★★★, *Sky High* (Columbia 1975) ★★★, *Old Fashioned, Down Home, Hand Clappin' Foot Stompin', Southern Style, Gospel Quartet Music* (Columbia 1976) ★★★, *Live* (ABC 1977) ★★, *Y'All Come Back Saloon* (ABC 1977) ★★★, *Room Service* (ABC 1978) ★★★, *Have Arrived* (ABC 1979) ★★★, *Together* (MCA 1980) ★★★, *Fancy Free* (MCA 1981) ★★★, *Bobbie Sue* (MCA 1982) ★★★, *Christmas* (MCA 1982) ★★, *American Made* (MCA 1983) ★★★, *Deliver* (MCA 1983) ★★★, *Step On Out* (MCA 1985) ★★★, *Seasons* (MCA 1986) ★★★, *Christmas Again* (MCA 1986) ★★, *Where The Fast Lane Ends* (MCA 1987) ★★, *Heartbeat* (MCA 1987) ★★, *Monongahela* (MCA 1988) ★★, *American Dreams* (MCA 1989) ★★★, *Unstoppable* (RCA 1991) ★★, *The Long Haul* (RCA 1992) ★★★, *Country Christmas Eve aka Christmas With The Oak Ridge Boys* (Capitol/MCA 1995) ★★, *Revival* (Halsey 1997) ★★★, *Voices* (Platinum 1999) ★★★, *From The Heart* (Spring Hill 2001) ★★★★★, *An Inconvenient Christmas* (Word 2002) ★★, *Colors* (Spring Hill 2003) ★★★, *The Journey* (Spring Hill 2004) ★★★, *Common Thread* (Spring Hill 2005) ★★★★★.

● **COMPILATIONS:** *The Sensational Oak Ridge Boys From Nashville, Tennessee* (Starday 1965) ★★★, *Greatest Hits* (MCA 1980) ★★★★★, *The Very Best Of The Oak Ridge Boys* (Warwick 1982) ★★★, *Greatest Hits 2* (MCA 1984) ★★★, *American Harmony* (Heartland 1985) ★★★, *Greatest Hits Volume Three* (MCA 1989) ★★★, *The Collection* (MCA 1992) ★★★, *Favorite Songs* (Sony 1995) ★★★, *The Very Best Of The Country Gospel Years* (Cleopatra 2000) ★★★★★, *The Best Of Oak Ridge Boys: The Millennium Collection* (MCA Nashville 2000) ★★★★★.

● **FURTHER READING:** *The Oak Ridge Boys—Our Story*, with Ellis Winder and Walter Carter.

Oakenfold, Paul

b. 30 August 1963, England. Oakenfold was active in club promotions from the early 80s and became one of the most successful DJs and remixer of the 90s. Having trained as a chef, he decided instead to pursue a career in music after he had been introduced to the decks by his friend Trevor Fung in 1981. He later moved to New York City where he worked for a number of record companies and regularly visited the Paradise Garage. When he returned to the UK, he worked for **Champion Records**, promoting **Jazzy Jeff** and **Salt-N-Pepa** among others, and later **Profile Records** and **Def Jam Records**. He also DJed at the Project Club in Streatham, London, and wrote a hip-hop column in *Blues And Soul* magazine under the name Wotupski. In 1987, along with **Danny Rampling** and a few others, he visited Fung and Ian St. Paul (who later helped to set up **TIP Records**) in **Ibiza** where he went to clubs such as Amnesia, which were playing a mixture of Chicago **house**, pop and indie—known as **Balearic**.

On his return, Oakenfold recreated the Balearic feeling at a few after-hours parties at the Project Club and towards the end of the year, with St. Paul, he organized a similar club at the Sanctuary in London's West End called Future—it became Spectrum when it moved to Heaven in 1988. Spectrum, along with Rampling's Shoom, helped to establish the underground **acid house** movement. Later, Oakenfold played at a number of the huge Sunrise and Biology raves,

opened shows for the **Stone Roses** and the **Happy Mondays** and later toured the world as a support act for **U2**. In 1989, he set up the label **Perfecto Records** and remixed the Happy Mondays' 'Wrote For Luck' with his musical collaborator Steve Osborne. The pair have subsequently remixed for a variety of artists including **Arrested Development**, **Massive Attack**, **M People**, **New Order**, the **Shamen**, **Simply Red**, the Stone Roses and U2, and have recorded under a number of names including Grace, Virus, the Perfecto Allstarz, and Wild Colour. Oakenfold has compiled a number of compilation albums for the **Ministry Of Sound** and, in 1994 was employed by EastWest Records as an A&R consultant. The label also became the parent company to Oakenfold's Perfecto imprint, after his association with BMG. In 1998, Oakenfold parted company with EastWest and his next mix album was released through **Virgin Records**. During the late 90s, he helped to popularize the **trance** sound and has become one of the best-known DJs in the world, graduating from house towards a melodic, commercial style of trance, particularly through his residency at the UK's **Cream**—which is commemorated on *Resident—Two Years Of Oakenfold At Cream*. In 1999, Oakenfold found his name in *The Guinness Book Of Records* as The World's Most Successful Club DJ, although the book's estimate of his annual earnings at £250,000 was laughably short of the mark. He was also voted number 1 in the UK's *DJ* magazine's Top 100 DJs in the world, and became Director of Music at home, London's new superclub. He released his first album of original material, *Bunkka*, in June 2002. The set included the worldwide hit single 'Starry Eyed Surprise', featuring vocalist Shifty Shellshock.

- ALBUMS: *Bunkka* (Perfecto/Maverick 2002) ★★★.
- COMPILATIONS: *Sessions 2—Paul Oakenfold* (MOS 1994) ★★★, *Perfection—A Perfecto Compilation* (Perfecto 1995) ★★★, *Global Underground 004—Oslo* (Boxed 1997) ★★★, *Global Underground 007—New York* (Boxed/Thrive 1998) ★★★, *Tranceport* (Kinetic/Reprise 1998) ★★★, *Resident: Two Years Of Oakenfold At Cream* (Virgin 1999) ★★★★★, shared with Pete Tong, Fatboy Slim *Essential Millennium* (ffrr 1999) ★★★★★, *Perfecto Presents Another World* (ffrr/Sire 2000) ★★★, *Travelling* (Perfecto 2000) ★★★, *A Voyage Into Trance* (Hypnotic 2001) ★★★, *Perfecto Presents Ibiza* (Perfecto 2001) ★★★, *Bust A Groove* (Hypnotic 2002) ★★★, *Perfecto Presents . . . Paul Oakenfold: Great Wall* (Warners 2003) ★★★★★, *Creamfields* (Thrive 2004) ★★★★★.

Oakenfull, Ski

b. Dominic Oakenfull, 28 January 1971, Sevenoaks, Kent, England. Originally a keyboard player, Oakenfull has also developed his writing, production and remixing skills. He was an early signing to the nascent **Talkin' Loud Records** label as part of K-Creative in 1991. He co-wrote and produced their debut *Q.E.D.* and toured with them throughout Japan and Europe. Following this, Oakenfull toured and recorded with UK soul outfit, **Raw Stylus**. He also performed as part of the house band at **Gilles Peterson's** nights at Bar Rumba in London, a cornerstone of the blossoming acid jazz scene of the period. In 1994, Oakenfull joined former label-mates **Galliano**, co-writing and co-producing their final studio album, *4*, before moving on to production work for **Incognito**. Oakenfull also contributed tracks to a compilation, *Sun Sun*, featuring several respected artists such as **DJ Cam**,

Bob Sinclar, **Kruder And Dorfmeister** and DJ Die. On the strength of one of these tracks, 'Montreux A Marseille', he was signed to Sony Records. His first release was a cover version of **Joe Henderson's** 'Tress-Cun-Deo-La', which was remixed by **King Britt** and featured the vocal talents of Valerie Étienne (Oakenfull also produced her debut long-player, *For What It Is*). Oakenfull's remixing skills have been sought after since 1998, and he has transformed tracks by artists including **Heaven 17**, **Cevin Fisher**, **Helicopter Girl**, **Funki Porcini**, **Afro-Celt Sound System**, and **Speeka**. In 2001, he also remixed Jakatta's 'American Dream' for the **Ministry Of Sound's** Rulin' label. Sampling the theme music from the hit movie *American Beauty*, this **Joey Negro** track became a huge club hit and reached the UK Top 20. Oakenfull's well-received debut, *Life Changes*, which drew from funk, jazz and hip-hop, appeared in 2000. Something of a renaissance man, Oakenfull was credited with vocals, production, engineering, mixing and instrumentation.

- ALBUMS: *Life Changes* (Columbia/Ngenda 2000) ★★★.

Oaktown's 3–5–7

Half-hearted female rap troupe from the USA whose strings were pulled by an indulgent **M.C. Hammer**. Following the latter's defection from **Capitol Records** the crew was washed up in the blood letting. They comprised local Oakland, California–rappers Sweet LD (b. Djuana Johnican), Terrible T (b. Tabatha King), Vicious C and Sweat P. The latter was formerly a cheerleader with the Oakland Raiders. By 1991 only Johnican and King remained.

- ALBUMS: *Wild And Loose* (Capitol 1989) ★★★, *Fully Loaded* (Capitol 1991) ★★★.

Oasis

From Manchester, England, Oasis became overnight sensations in 1994 on the back of sublime singles and exponentially increasing press interest. Widely regarded in the press as natural successors to the **Happy Mondays**, Oasis proffered a similar working-class, roughneck chic. The band's creative axis is the Gallagher brothers, Liam (b. William John Paul Gallagher, 21 September 1972, Longsight, Cheshire, England; vocals) and Noel (b. Noel Thomas Gallagher, 29 May 1967, Longsight, Cheshire, England; guitar/vocals). They were brought up by Irish Roman Catholic parents in the south Manchester suburb of Burnage. While his younger brother was still in school, Noel, whose part-time DJ father had purchased a guitar for him at age 11, discovered punk, and like many of his peers happily engaged in truancy, burglary and glue-sniffing. After six months' probation for robbing a corner shop he began to take the instrument seriously at the age of 13, later finding his role model in **Johnny Marr** of the **Smiths**. Liam was not weaned on music until 1989 when his elder brother took him to see the **Inspiral Carpets**. Afterwards, Noel befriended that band's Clint Boon, subsequently becoming a guitar technician and travelling the world with them. When he telephoned home in 1991 he was informed by his mother that Liam had joined a band. Paul 'Bonehead' Arthurs (b. 23 June 1965, Manchester, England; guitar), Tony McCarroll (b. Manchester, England; drums) and Paul 'Guigsy' McGuigan (b. 9 May 1971, Manchester, England) had been playing together as Rain (not the Liverpool band of similar moniker) before meeting with Liam, who became their singer, as they changed their

name to Oasis. When Noel returned to watch them play at Manchester's Boardwalk in August 1991, he recognized their promise, but insisted that they install him as lead guitarist and only perform his songs if he were to help them. Noel continued as roadie to the Inspiral Carpets to help purchase equipment, as the band set about establishing a local reputation.

The incident that led to Oasis being signed to **Creation Records** quickly passed into rock mythology. In May 1993, they drove to Glasgow with fellow denizens of the Boardwalk rehearsal studios, Sister Lovers, to support **IB Wheeler** at King Tut's Wah Wah Club. Strong-arming their way onto the bill, they played five songs early in the evening, but these were enough to hypnotize Creation boss **Alan McGee** who offered them a recording contract there and then. However, they did not sign until several months later, during which time a copy of the band's demo had been passed to Johnny Marr, who became an early convert to the cause and put the band in touch with **Electronic's** management company, Ignition. With news spreading of the band's rise it seemed likely that they would join any number of labels apart from Creation, with **U2's** Mother label rumoured to guarantee double any other offer. However, loyalty to the kindred spirits at Creation won through by October 1993, and two months later the label issued the band's 'debut', a one-sided 12-inch promo of 'Columbia' taken straight from the original demo. BBC Radio 1 immediately playlisted it (an almost unheralded event for such a 'non-release').

The following year began with a torrent of press, much of it focusing on the band's errant behaviour. Punch-ups and the ingestion of large quantities of drink and drugs led to gig cancellations, while frequent, often violent, bickering between the Gallagher brothers lent the band a sense of danger and mischief. 'Supersonic' reached the UK Top 40 in May. 'Shakermaker', owing an obvious debt to the **New Seekers'** 'I'd Like To Teach The World To Sing (In Perfect Harmony)', duly made number 11 two months later. High-profile dates at the **Glastonbury Festival** and New York's New Music Seminar ensued, along with more stories of on-the-road indulgence (including a career threatening row between the Gallagher brothers in Los Angeles). The **Beatles**-redolent 'Live Forever', with a sleeve featuring a photo of the house where **John Lennon** grew up, reached the Top 10, all of which ensured that the expectation for a debut album was now phenomenal. After scrapping the original tapes recorded with Dave Batchelor at Monmouth's Monnow Valley Studios, the songs had been completed at Sawmills in Cornwall with Mark Coyle and Anjali Dutt, with subsequent mixing by Electronic producer Owen Morris, at a total cost of £75,000. At the start of September 1994, **Definitely Maybe** entered the UK charts at number 1, becoming at the time the fastest selling debut album in the history of the UK charts. Backed by a live version of the Beatles' 'I Am The Walrus', 'Cigarettes & Alcohol', a stage favourite, became the band's biggest UK singles success to date, when it reached number 7 in October. In December, Oasis released the non-album track 'Whatever' (not quite the Christmas number 1), a lush pop song with full orchestration that sounded astonishingly accomplished for a band whose recording career stretched over only eight months. It also served further notice of Noel Gallagher's magpie approach to songwriting, with former **Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band/Rutles** member **Neil Innes** receiving a percentage of the royalties

for the track's appropriation of the melody from his own 'How Sweet To Be An Idiot'.

Oasis' assault on America began in January 1995, and with a few gigs and word-of-mouth reports, they were soon hovering around the US Top 50. In mid-1995, it was announced that drummer McCarroll had left the band after making his final performance in April in front of 12,000 people at the Sheffield Arena. He was replaced by Alan White (b. 26 May 1972, London, England) who made his debut on the band's second album. The eagerly anticipated (**What's The Story**) **Morning Glory?**, released in October, was a rich and assured record. Gallagher's Beatlesque melodies were spectacular, from the acoustic simplicity of 'Wonderwall' to the shimmering harmonies of 'Don't Look Back In Anger' and 'Morning Glory'. The album also included the stomping 'Roll With It' and 'Some Might Say', the latter having already provided the band with their first UK chart-topping single during the summer. 'Some Might Say', like many of the band's singles, included a number of non-album tracks, on this occasion two of Noel Gallagher's finest compositions, 'Talk Tonight' and 'Acquiesce'. 'Roll With It' and 'Wonderwall' were also UK number 2 hit singles, the former losing a notoriously hyped-up chart race with Blur's 'Country House'. 'Don't Look Back In Anger' was more successful, becoming the band's second chart-topper the following March. During this period Oasis also made the all-important American breakthrough, with 'Wonderwall' climbing into the US Top 10 at the start of 1996. Nobody could dispute that (**What's The Story**) **Morning Glory?** was one of the finest albums of the modern pop era, and it went on to become one of the bestselling albums of the 90s by a UK act.

Oasis were suddenly receiving the media attention that was previously bestowed on the Beatles. They played two shows at London's Earl Court in front of over 20,000 people in November 1995, which were subsequently dwarfed the following year by concerts at Manchester's Maine Road and, on 10 and 11 August, at Knebworth Park, Hertfordshire (in front of an estimated 250,000 people). With the massive attention and success of Oasis the volatile relationship of the Gallagher brothers came under public scrutiny. Their sex lives, drug habits and fist fights were all examined and dissected, their uncompromising behaviour and laddish attitudes increasingly both entertaining and irritating. Rumours of the band splitting came to a head on their ninth attempt to break into America in September 1996. Following a fight with his brother, who had not even made it out of the country for the initial US concerts, Noel returned to the UK with the band in tow the following day. The rest of the US tour was cancelled and the press statement that followed reported that although touring was unlikely the band would stay together. Nevertheless, awards continued to flow throughout a remarkable year, highlighting the fact that few modern rock bands had managed to create such a body of high-quality work in such a short time, and no other (except the Beatles) became a such a massive media success.

Oasis' greatly anticipated third album was introduced to the world in July 1997 by the UK chart-topping single, 'D'You Know What I Mean?'. The title of **Be Here Now** was inspired by John Lennon's response to a question regarding the transient state of rock 'n' roll. This philosophy was applied to the album: not since the release of **Sgt. Pepper's Lonely**