

**Critics, the suckers for novelty that they are, will often praise the debut while faulting the sophomore. We talked to bands on the eve of the release of their 2013 follow-ups.**

Interviews SARAH SCHUG

### LOCAL NATIVES

We've seen so many bands who've had a good first record just rush out a second one, which really screwed them over. So we spent a lot of time making it, because everyone knew the stakes.

HUMMINGBIRD is out now on Frenchkiss / Infectious

### BEACH FOSSILS

When we were recording, sometimes thoughts crept into my mind about the pressure and the fans and the critics. But as soon as that happens you have to stop and walk away. It's a bit unfair how it all works now, it used to be a much longer process. In the past, some bands needed four or five albums to actually find their sound. Now, the first album is so important. You can fall apart before you've even become what you're supposed to be.

CLASH THE TRUTH is out now on Captured Tracks

### DELPHIC

The first album is your first time in the public eye. It's scary because you have no idea what people will think. Our goal with the second album was to change things and challenge ourselves. It was maybe a bit risky and we knew we'd probably alienate people. We don't just want to be known for one thing, and we were tired of the English indie pop scene. We were interested in American-style production and we've always loved pop and are interested in pop-writing.

COLLECTIONS is out now on Polydor Records

### IS TROPICAL

Third albums are the new second albums; your debut is just an introduction, with the second you have the benefit of the doubt and you show what you've got and what you're really capable of. The third one is the really difficult one, because you have to maintain the same level. There are so many bad second albums because people get lazy. Too much touring and partying makes you lose focus. Peoples' expectations can also be dangerous. When you think about what people want then the result will be shallow and have no emotion, just the worst thing.

I'M LEAVING comes out in May on Kitsuné



### LITTLE BOOTS

In some ways it was easier the first time round because I was so naïve and just jumped into it, I didn't over-think anything. But if you've done something successful, the pressure is enormous and I must admit that I freaked out a couple of times. You don't want to repeat yourself, because that just doesn't work. But on the other hand, people want more of what you've done before.

NOCTURNES comes out in May on On Repeat Records



### ESBEN & THE WITCH

The curse-of-the-second-album thing, it never really came up. We only heard about it from other people. We didn't feel that much pressure; people who were intrigued by the first album will also listen to the second one.

WASH THE SINS NOT ONLY THE FACE is out now on Matador



### WAVE MACHINES

Of course, the second album always needs to be better than the first. Actually every aspect of the band needs to get better, otherwise what's the point? The first time we had to grab their attention, which was more difficult. That's why we had a bigger pop angle; in order to get noticed.

POLLEN is out now on Neapolitan



### YOUTH LAGOON

I would always joke about 'the difficult second album', but I think that sophomore slumps are just defined as record sales by a lot of people. It's a very corporate word. A real slump or failure, though, can only happen if someone creates something they regret. I've heard some brilliant records that fall into the category of sophomore slump, all because they didn't sell as well as a debut. But an album shouldn't be regarded as successful or not based on how many people buy it.

WONDROUS BUGHOUSE is out now on Fat Possum Records



### GHOST POET

What pressure? I don't feel any. Not because I'm arrogant in any way. I just don't associate such things with my love of creating music. To be honest, I don't really care. I just make music I want to listen to and all I can hope is that people will want to listen to it too...

SOME SAY I SO I SAY LIGHT comes out in May on [PIAS]

