

STEVE SMYTH

SOUNDS LIKE: Tom Waits and Jeff Buckley going on the mother of all benders, then singing gentle lullabies the morning after.

FOR FANS OF: Stomping blues rock, delicate folk and the strange spaces in between.

WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: Hailing from the South Coast of New South Wales where he and his three siblings grew up as the children of travelling ministers, Smyth has continued his vagabond lifestyle by living in far-flung places all over the globe, his intense live performances earning him a swathe of rapturous fans along the way. Currently based in London, where much of second album *Exits* was written on a houseboat, Smyth will bring his searing live show to Australia next month.

HE SAYS: "With *Exits* I tried to capture extremities, like having a really dirty, gritty, riff-y, cranking tune sit right next to a delicate and honest tune. I wanted to bring the contrast between the songs out as much as I could, but with the same thread running through the album: that we're in a

technological age which is the most rapid and uncontrollable time that the human race has ever experienced, and our emotions are being left behind. There's some kind of crash that's going to happen – our empathy for each other is becoming more and more removed... we're not focused on what's important."

HEAR FOR YOURSELF: Recorded live in L.A. over an intense 10-day period last year with producers Joey Waronker (Beck) and Gus Seyffert (the Black Keys), the yin-yang pull of *Exits* is captured perfectly on the LP's first singles – bluesy rocker "Shake It" and pretty acoustic lament "Written or Spoken".

JAMES JENNINGS



TKAY MAIDZA

SOUNDS LIKE: Giant attitude from a pint-sized party rapper backed by humongous, dance floor decimating beats.

FOR FANS OF: Azealia Banks, Major Lazer, Nicki Minaj, Angel Haze

WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: The daughter of an industrial chemist mother and metallurgist/musician father, 18-year-old Adelaide rapper Tkay Maidza moved from Zimbabwe to Australia in 2000 at the age of five. Deciding to mess around with her dad's music software at 16, Maidza began recording rap covers by the likes of Lil Wayne and uploading them to YouTube. After her parents encouraged her to write her own songs, Maidza entered an after-school music program that led to her working with Adelaide producer Badcop, their track "Handle My Ego" causing a ruckus among labels and booking agents after being picked up by Triple J.

SHE SAYS: "I've made a song with Kilter with just me singing, and then some other stuff with Swick that's a bit poppy and happy. I've also been working on lots of house-y stuff and some dub-step stuff that sounds a bit like 'Drop it Like it's Hot'. It's all over the place, genre-wise, but it's still dance beats and fun."

HEAR FOR YOURSELF: Singles "Brontosaurus" and "U-Huh", as well as a mixtape set to drop in October and an EP later in the year. J.J.