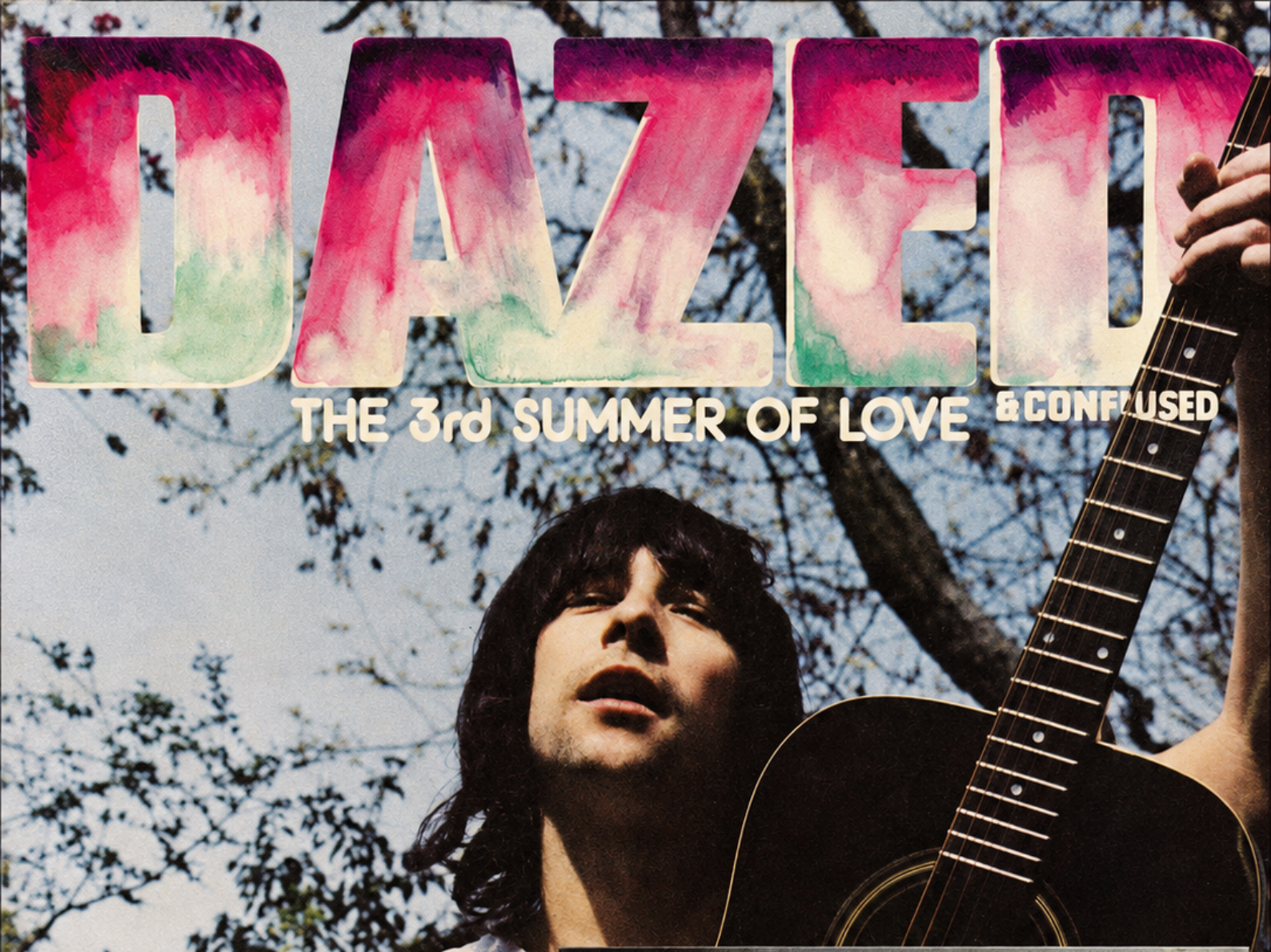
DAZED

THE 3rd SUMMER OF LOVE & CONFUSED





ROB DOUGAN Clubbed To Death THE CD:ROM EXPERIENCE
A PHORENSIC AUTOPSY

06
9 770961 970094
JUNE 2002 UK £3.20 US $8.25

BOBBY GILLESPIE PHOTOGRAPHED BY JUERGEN TELLER

PRIMAL SCREAM HUNTER S THOMPSON
ACCIDENTAL ANARCHISTS SPACE AGE



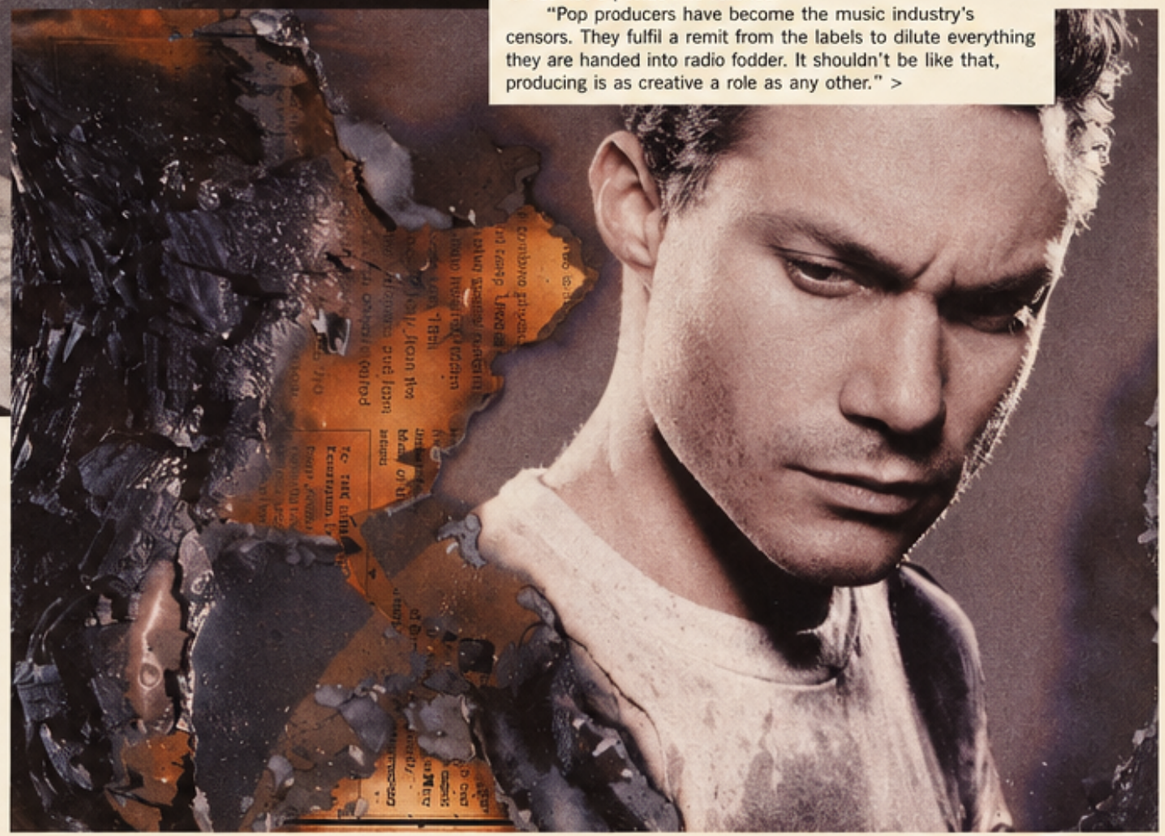
VISUAL MAGIC REALISM

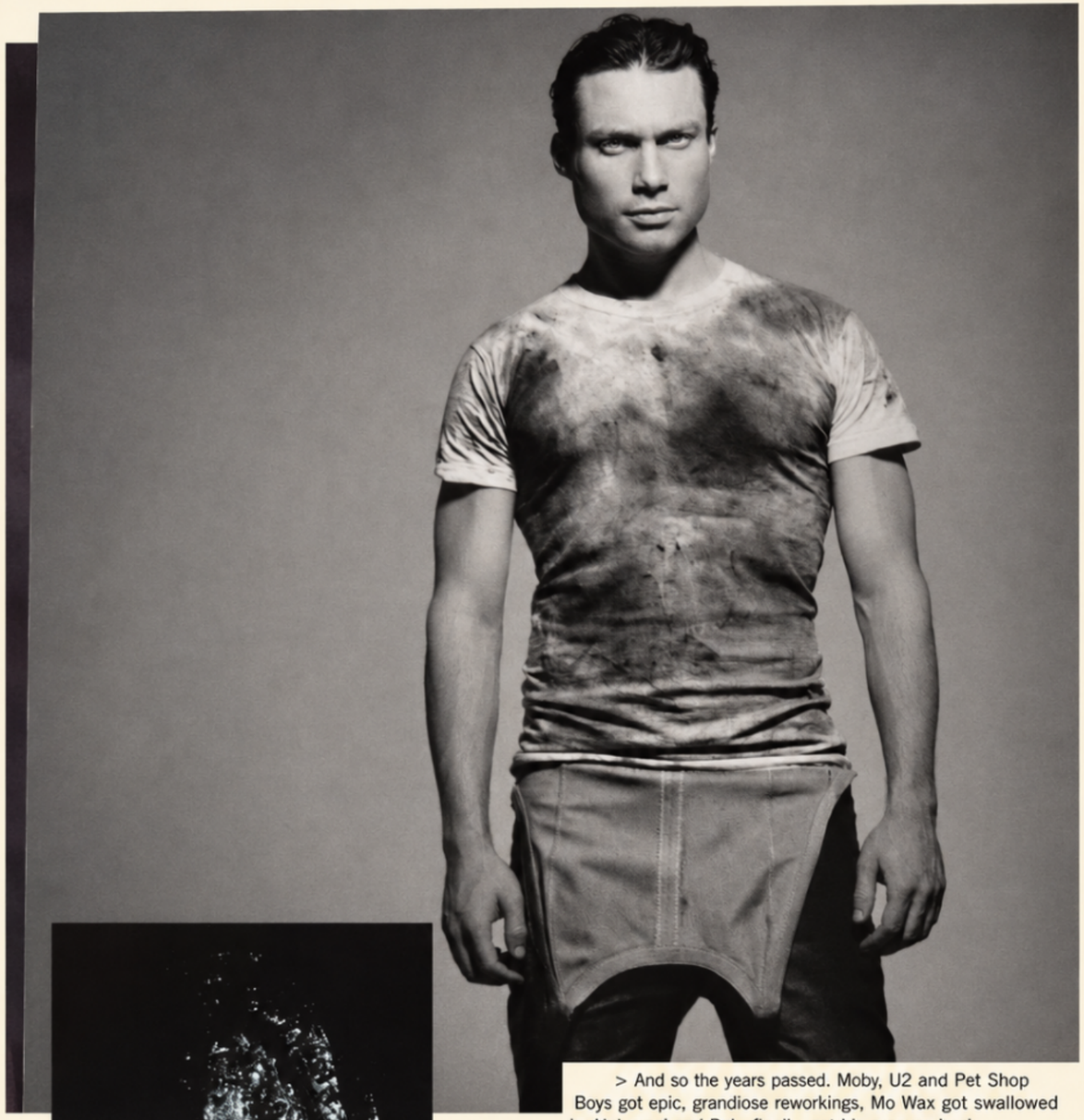
In these days of pop music by committee, where musical inspiration is more likely to come from a market research graph than a beautiful spring morning, Rob Dougan is a startling exception. Signed to the megalithic BMG, via his friend Rollo's Cheeky imprint, Rob has somehow managed to control each minute detail and fulfil every whim of his singularly ambitious six years-in-the-making debut album, *Furious Angels*.

"I decided a long time ago to do everything myself," recalls the London-based Aussie ex-pat. "There have been times when I've regretted it, when I've been pacing up and down outside the studio pulling my hair out thinking, 'God why am I putting myself through this?' But I'm glad I've stuck to my decision."

It comes as no surprise to learn that before fleeing the claustrophobia of Sydney and a traumatic break up, Rob was training to become a classical actor. *Furious Angels* ranges in emotion from tragedy to euphoria (and rarely in between) with orchestral arrangements on a scale that scream super-surround, wide-screen drama. Nowhere more so than on "Clubbed to Death", the overwhelmingly potent downtempo classic, that, on its original Mo' Wax release in 1995 completed the evolution of string-wrapped hip hop beats in the lineage following Massive's "Unfinished Sympathy" in 1991 and DJ Shadow's "In / Flux" in 1993. For reasons best put down to James Lavelle's skewed marketing nous the tune was deleted almost immediately leaving Rob with an eye-watering orchestra bill and a near-mythical status as a mysterious production genius. While "Clubbed to Death" set out on a career of its own in commercials and film (most recently on the soundtrack of The Matrix), Rob D put his own music on the "weekends only" schedule to accommodate the many requests for remixes and his services as a hired gun producer. It was not a position he relished.

"Pop producers have become the music industry's censors. They fulfil a remit from the labels to dilute everything they are handed into radio fodder. It shouldn't be like that, producing is as creative a role as any other." >







> And so the years passed. Moby, U2 and Pet Shop Boys got epic, grandiose reworkings, Mo Wax got swallowed by Universal and Rob, finally, got his grooves back.

That's not to say that Rob has wasted a moment's time. *Furious Angels* is an extraordinary accomplishment, an album that will undoubtedly take the unique joys of a 122 person orchestra to a mainstream audience. "Sometimes striving to be 'alternative' or trying to be 'cool' can be as much of a straight jacket on creativity as being commercial."

He has also used his time to pinpoint an inspired choice of visual collaborators. Designer Robert Nash, stylist Judy Blame, art directors Blue Source and photographers Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott have all cohered to Dougan's highly specific vision. "Traditionally, you either go for artifice and irony like Bowie, or to the opposite extreme like Dylan or Springsteen where you feel there really is no artifice. I'm interested in finding a space somewhere in between."

Furious Angels is out June 10 on Cheeky Records.

