

Rock & pop

'Just try to get me off the karaoke machine'

From singing along with Elvis to cutting a single with the Pet Shop Boys, Sam Taylor-Wood has always been passionate about music. She picks her top 10 tracks for **Dorian Lynskey**

Fit­tingly for an artist, Sam Taylor-Wood has made her passion for music visible: one wall of her airy east London studio sports framed black-and-white portraits of Johnny Cash, Shane MacGowan and the Beatles. This month, in addition to an exhibition at the White Cube gallery and screenings of her debut short film, *Love You More*, she is releasing a record of her own. Following cover versions of Serge Gainsbourg and Donna Summer, it is her third collaboration with the Pet Shop Boys, who have a studio downstairs: a slinky, deadpan reading of the Passions' 1981 hit *I'm in Love With a German Film Star*.

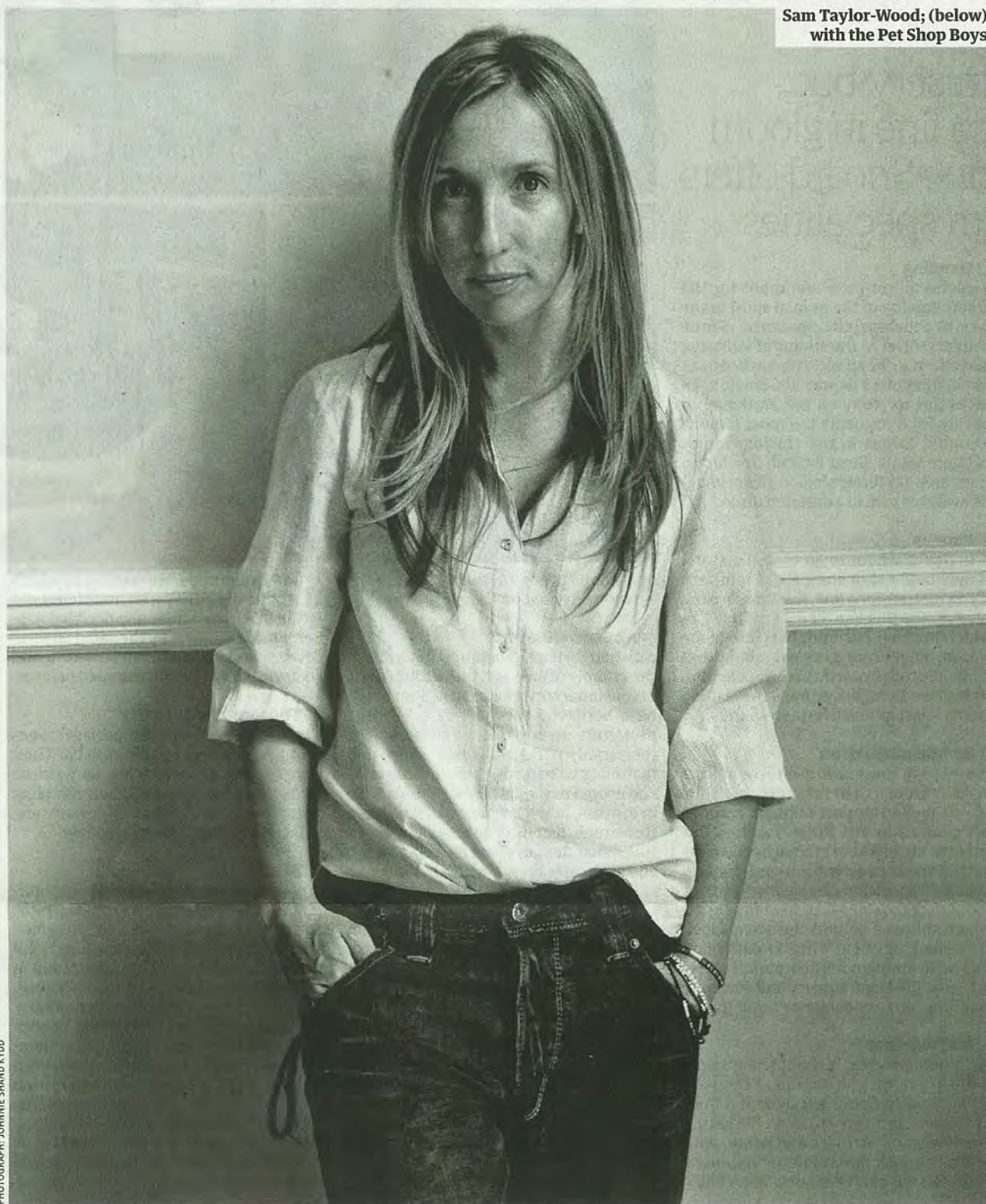
Taylor-Wood doesn't take much persuasion to get behind a microphone. When she appeared on *Desert Island Discs* in 2005, her luxury item was a karaoke machine. "Sue Lawley kept saying, 'Why did you pick this record? What significance does it have to your life?'" she remembers. "And I kept saying, 'None. I just really like it.' So I don't think I was quite as insightful as I ought to have been." *Film&Music* has asked her to choose 10 songs that represent periods in her life, so this is her chance to make amends ...

Elvis Presley Blue Moon of Kentucky
My family are all Elvis nuts. I grew up with him on repeat. My earliest memory of music is my gran standing me on the kitchen table and singing *Old Shep* to me, which is probably one of the worst songs ever. My aunt was really into GI Blues, my mum would be listening to *Separate Ways* as she went through divorce number one, and I've come around to liking The Sun Recordings, so there's lots of different pockets of Elvis throughout my family. My dad was more of a Stones man but he was outnumbered.

David Bowie Life on Mars?
My mum became a big Bowie fan so I would steal *Changes One* Bowie and listen to it relentlessly in my bedroom and think I was "the girl with the mousy hair" until I discovered bleach. Going out, I would branch off into my *Sister Sledge* outfit. The compilation album *Disco Fever* was my first foray into something that felt like mine, outside my family's music tastes. I still am a big dancer: at home, out, anywhere, everywhere.

Conflict Meat Means Murder
When I was at art college in Hastings, I had just met Jake Chapman and we went out for eight years. He was a crusty young punk so we were collectively into Crass and the Poison Girls. Jake sweetly gave me his studded, leather, too-big-for-me jacket and painted on the back of it, really beautifully, "The Clash", but he'd done it in gouache so the minute I went out in the rain it washed off. We used to go and see *Conflict* all the time. We were fervent vegetarians, apart from the leather jacket, obviously. Jake and I were proud that we single-handedly chased the BNP out of St Leonard's Square one day. There were two of them. I remember Jake kicked one of them up the arse.

NWA Express Yourself
After Hastings, we lived in Upton Park [in east London] for ages. We wouldn't go out much, so we'd listen to music and dance around the front room. I remember walking past the Wag Club in Soho and saying to Jake, "Oh go on, please can't we go and dance?" And he said, "No, I hate clubs." At home, I was listening to Public Enemy and NWA. Actually, *Express Yourself* is my party trick. I can sing that all the



Sam Taylor-Wood; (below) with the Pet Shop Boys



'I drunkenly went up to Neil Tennant and told him my mate fancied him. Then I was sick'

way through: "I'm expressing with my full capabilities/ And now I'm living in correctional facilities." It was angry music but it was great dancing music, too. That's the song I play when I set off running now. It's stayed with me.

Gluck Orpheus and Eurydice
Camden Palace was a mad place to work, full of psychopaths and bad music, and 1991 was a weirdly traumatic time for me. Then I went to work at the Royal Opera House, so it was from the ridiculous to the sublime. It was like I'd fallen in love. It was the most shaping period of my life in the sense of my work and how I thought about it. I would dress all the male opera singers and take them to the stage, so I dressed Carreras, Domingo, Pavarotti, all those people. It was just heaven. It was slightly indoctrinating because music was piped through the building 24/7, so when you got home and there was no music playing you felt an absence of something really special and important. That did fuel a

passion for opera. The one I put on most frequently is *Orpheus and Eurydice*. It's hair-tinglingly gorgeous. It's lamenting and loss and tragedy and euphoria and tragedy again.

The Pet Shop Boys It's a Sin
I met them first at a Gilbert & George exhibition in the late 1980s. They had a party and I was with a friend of mine who's gay, and he fancied Neil (Tennant), so I drunkenly went up to Neil and told him. And then I think I fell over and was sick. He doesn't remember that, of course – I was just some drunk, irritating girl. I met Neil again when I had an exhibition in 1995 and he asked if I'd be interested in

working with them on a show. We did the *Somewhere* shows at the Savoy Theatre in 1997, which was such a challenge and such good fun. I literally worked on it until I gave birth to my eldest daughter, Angelica, and two weeks after I gave birth I had to finish the bloody thing, so I was reeling. I like *It's a Sin*. That's a good one to get you going. We did the new song in half an hour. I'm a shameless show-off and that was too good an opportunity to miss. Just try to get me off the karaoke machine – I'm a nightmare. I'm not great, but who cares? It's boring when people are really good.

Elton John I Want Love
I met Elton on the opening night of *Somewhere*. I've done three album covers and two videos for him. I think it's essential you like the song before you take on the video job because you're going to hear it a minimum of 300 times. Now when I hear that song it makes me think of an amazing week with Robert Downey Jr in LA in 2001. It's like how a smell just sends you back – songs do that, too. Robert Downey Jr was just out of prison so I had to go to the rehab centre in Malibu and sign him out and take him to the shoot. That was the first thing he did sober, so it was quite serious for him. Suddenly all the words became so poignant because of everything that he'd been through. That was quite an extraordinary time for both of us.

Buzzcocks Love You More
I've done this short film that is about two teenagers in 1978 who lose their virginity to the Buzzcocks' song *Love You More*. They both go into a record shop and there's only one copy left and they can't decide who should have it, so they steal it and listen to it in the bedroom and end up shagging all afternoon. That's basically what the film is: sex to the Buzzcocks, with a cameo by Pete Shelley in the record shop wearing a mullet wig.

Kate Nash Foundations
Angelica's 11. She loves the Ting Tings, Kate Nash, Arctic Monkeys and Dolly Parton. She could sing you every bluegrass Dolly Parton song. She's totally obsessed. And we sing *Foundations* together. That's the only one I like. We play Marvin Gaye's *Let's Get It On* most mornings but we've changed the words to "Let's get your uniform on."

Johnny Cash One
I can't believe I've gone a whole interview without mentioning Johnny Cash! I'm obsessive. I listen to *One* a lot. That's quite a reassuring song for me. Those last five albums were a revelation; I think they're the most extraordinary releases of recent years. Him I turn to in times of needing comfort. Even though it's bleakly, depressingly sad, I just want to curl up on his lap.

I'm in Love With a German Film Star is out on Kompakt on October 20. Sam Taylor-Wood's exhibition at White Cube Mason's Yard, London (020-7930 5373), runs from October 24 to November 29. Love You More is showing at BFI Southbank (020-7928 3232) on October 24 and 27 as part of the London film festival.