# The Kooks and Hard-Fi spearhead the unexpected revival of 2000s indie rock



# The Resurgence of 2000s Indie: The Kooks and Hard-Fi Lead the Charge

In an era where nostalgia reigns supreme, the indie rock bands of the 2000s are making a notable comeback, buoyed by the changing landscape of music consumption and the rediscovery of their anthemic sound. Among those at the forefront of this revival are The Kooks and Hard-Fi, who not only dominated the charts during their heyday but have now returned to the limelight, rekindling the spirit of a generation.

The Kooks' lead singer, Luke Pritchard, recalls a vibrant yet chaotic scene from the 2000s, during which the band enjoyed massive success thanks to infectious hooks and clever lyrics. The indie boom, sparked by acts like The Libertines in 2002, saw a proliferation of guitar bands that captivated audiences across the UK. As Pritchard reflects, "We were all part of the same scene, but... when you're on tour, everyone's like planets, orbiting around but missing each other." This golden era for indie music saw record sales soar; by 2006, seven of the UK's ten best-selling albums belonged to guitar bands, including The Kooks' own debut, *Inside In/Inside Out*. However, this was a fleeting moment in time, as by 2008, the industry began to shift towards more experimental pop and hip-hop sounds, leaving many of the beloved bands of yesteryear in their wake.

After their initial success, both Pritchard and Hard-Fi's Richard Archer experienced the harsh realities of an evolving music scene. The term "indie landfill" was coined during this period, describing the overwhelming number of similar-sounding bands flooding the airwaves, leading to a decline in opportunities for groups like theirs. "It got to a point where we were just exhausted," Archer admits, highlighting the weariness that set in as mainstream tastes shifted. He recounts how Hard-Fi's members diversified their skills in the 2010s, with some pursuing new careers altogether, like Archer's stint with the blues band OffWorld.

Interestingly, the resurgence of these iconic bands is intertwined with a modern cultural phenomenon: the power of platforms like TikTok. The Kooks have notably benefited from this resurgence, with their classic hits reaching a new audience as they trend on social media. This has culminated in an upcoming performance at the O2 Arena, where nearly half of the expected audience comprises young fans aged 18 to 24. "We're at that point where teenagers start going back to listen to the music their parents grew up with," Pritchard observes. This cyclical interest in music, combined with a thirst for the communal experience that comes from anthemic choruses, seems to have reignited the public's enthusiasm for indie rock.

While The Kooks continue to evolve musically—with recent albums featuring eclectic influences like Ethiopian jazz—Hard-Fi has marked its return with a 20th-anniversary edition of their acclaimed debut, *Stars of CCTV*, alongside plans for a new album. A spontaneous acoustic performance during the pandemic sparked a wave of nostalgia, compelling the band back onto the stage, culminating in a sold-out show at London's Forum. Archer aptly captures the excitement of their comeback, noting, "The response was just so warm. I was quite taken aback by it."

Yet, as these bands step back into the limelight, they face challenges that were unheard of two decades ago. The UK’s live music scene has seen a dramatic contraction, with venues closing at an alarming rate, undermining the traditional routes for emerging artists to gain traction. Archer expresses concern for the next generation: "What worries me is, if you're a new artist now, do you have the opportunity to go out there and make mistakes and fix them?" The stark contrast in album sales further illustrates the shift; while The Kooks sold 1.5 million copies of their debut in 2006, today's leading albums struggle to reach even significant numbers due to the dominance of streaming services, which have reshaped how audiences engage with music.

Despite the industry's upheaval, the resurgence of indie rock does not appear to be just a fleeting trend. Newer bands like English Teacher have entered the fray, releasing inventive albums that challenge conventions while fostering the same witty lyricism that characterised their legendary predecessors. By avoiding the trappings of commercial formula, they are breathing fresh life into the UK indie scene.

As fans embrace both the nostalgia of the past and the creativity of the present, the landscape of indie rock looks more vibrant than it has in years. With The Kooks and Hard-Fi steering the charge, the future of guitar music seems ripe for exploration—offering both familiar anthems and innovative sounds that celebrate the genre's enduring legacy. As Pritchard aptly puts it, “The scene, and even the fashion, has come around again.” In a world where the past continually informs the present, the potential for indie rock to flourish seems greater than ever.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr5d04r634go), [[4]](https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2024/10/mj-lenderman-indie-rock/680107/?utm_source=apple_news)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr5d04r634go), [[5]](https://pitchfork.com/features/article/the-shoegaze-revival-hit-its-stride-in-2023/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/69aef806-2f05-43b6-866b-fb7a0def5139), [[6]](https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/whats-on/hard-to-beat-the-return-of-hard-fi-9327379/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr5d04r634go), [[7]](https://www.stereoboard.com/content/view/239611/9)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/7a51cb6e46e1109c2f61b7d78799532e), [[5]](https://pitchfork.com/features/article/the-shoegaze-revival-hit-its-stride-in-2023/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr5d04r634go> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/69aef806-2f05-43b6-866b-fb7a0def5139> - Leeds-based band English Teacher has released their debut album, 'This Could Be Texas,' injecting fresh energy into the UK indie scene. Despite challenges like venue closures and low streaming revenue, the album showcases witty lyrics and distinctive vocals, blending various styles and avoiding conventional song structures. Tracks like 'R&B' and 'Not Everybody Gets to Go to Space' highlight the band's unique perspectives, reinforcing the resurgence of indie rock in Britain.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/7a51cb6e46e1109c2f61b7d78799532e> - Recent years have seen indie rock artists incorporating country music elements into their work. Mitski's success with 'My Love Mine All Mine,' blending indie rock, chamber pop, and country, exemplifies this trend. Despite not being a mainstream hit, the song remained on the Billboard Hot 100 for 12 weeks and topped the Billboard TikTok trending chart for 10 weeks. Other artists like Angel Olsen, Waxahatchee, and bands such as Plains and Wednesday have also embraced country influences.
4. <https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2024/10/mj-lenderman-indie-rock/680107/?utm_source=apple_news> - MJ Lenderman, a 25-year-old singer-songwriter, is hailed as the next great hope for indie rock. His album, 'Manning Fireworks,' is praised for its familiarity and authenticity, reminiscent of past decades. Lenderman's style is likened to artists such as Mac DeMarco, Pavement, and R.E.M., building on a lineage of guitar-based music that feels timeless. Despite the album's sound appearing dated, the lyrics address modern issues, particularly misogynistic views.
5. <https://pitchfork.com/features/article/the-shoegaze-revival-hit-its-stride-in-2023/> - The shoegaze revival has gained significant momentum in 2023, with bands like Slowdive and Drop Nineteens releasing new material. Slowdive's album 'everything is alive' offers a softer, more contemplative take on their brooding sound, confirming their enduring relevance. The resurgence of shoegaze has been fueled by social media and streaming platforms, introducing the genre to a new generation of fans and blending it with various electronic subgenres.
6. <https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/whats-on/hard-to-beat-the-return-of-hard-fi-9327379/> - Indie rockers Hard-Fi have announced a full UK tour following an overwhelming response to their live return in 2022. The band, formed 20 years ago, sold out the O2 Kentish Town Forum in under 10 minutes and played at Manchester’s Neighbourhood Festival. Their upcoming tour includes dates in Cambridge, Sheffield, Leeds, Glasgow, Newcastle, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol, Oxford, Brighton, Norwich, Nottingham, and London, marking their first UK festival appearance in 2023.
7. <https://www.stereoboard.com/content/view/239611/9> - Hard-Fi has announced their first UK tour in over a decade, comprising 13 dates across England and Scotland. The tour will begin in Cambridge on October 5, 2023, and conclude in London on October 21, 2023. The band returned to the stage in October 2022, selling out the O2 Forum Kentish Town in London, and played a Stand Up To Cancer charity show at London's Union Chapel in early 2023.