

## O Shudder Reviews:

### The Guardian

#### Beauty amid awkwardness on best album yet

*Manchester's Dutch Uncles allow the angst of adolescence to seep through to the "right side of 25" on an album preoccupied with sex, social media and self-prescribed health checks. Articulating the innermost thoughts of its suburban male protagonist, Duncan Wallis's nervous, fluttering falsetto is backed by graceful orchestration and delicately plucked minimalism, finding surreal beauty amid the awkwardness. Although their previous albums were rich in angular indie, this fourth sees the best realisation of their ambitions yet: there's an alien romance to the Kate Bush-borrowing Babymaking; single In N Out lists sexual intentions with a disgusted fascination; Decided Knowledge has a Tears for Fears-style pomp; and Drips is built around the call and response of two oboes, which proves surprisingly mellifluous. Dutch Uncles may be indebted to the 80s, but O Shudder paints a portrait of a very modern man, and establishes them as masters at sculpting an atmosphere of unease.*

Harriet Gibsone - Feb 2015

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/feb/19/dutch-uncles-o-shudder-review>

### Pitchfork

*"...If Wallis' exhortations find solace, it's in the backdrop's orchestral splendour, a complex lattice of woodwind, strings, percussion, and marimba that winds up feeling improbably cosy and lived-in. The band's secret weapon is Robin Richards, their composer and bassist, and his handiwork here glistens, ranging from elegantly odd curiosities ("Babymaking", "Drips") to obscenely lovely mini-symphonies ("I Should Have Read", "Given Thing"). On the livelier "Upsilon" and "Don't Sit Back (Frankie Said)", Dutch Uncles defibrillate third- or fourth-hand R&B with twinkly synths and piston bass pops, signposting the sort of disjointed grooves by [Japan](#) and [Talking Heads](#) that might've soundtracked their parents' own baby-making"*

Jazz Monroe – Feb 2015

<https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/20248-dutch-uncles-o-shudder/>

### The Quietus

*"...Whether that change is a result of maturity, the benefit of experience, or a conscious choice that they made is irrelevant. O Shudder shows what can happen when a band has the chance to develop. Over the course of their four albums the gaps have been filled, they've gone to great lengths with producer Brendan Williams to secure the smoothest of sounds, the clashes have been corrected, the conflict resolved. It is less urgent, but smaller movements have been made more effective with confidence.*

*The central pulsing point of each song is no longer the guitars or the drums, they've added depth and subtlety to their songwriting, and the intricacies of it have replaced jerky time signatures as the new math. Their intelligence lies in the formative heartbeat forcing each idea to propel towards fruition, how they use little staccato motifs to counterpoint legato melodies, it's the interplay between these two techniques that often finds the band at their most enthralling. Even when it feels simpler, or more obvious, as exemplified in 'Decided Knowledge'. This propulsion is led by an ever switching cast of vocals, synths, bass and strings, each taking a turn to carry the ideas forward. Listen to 'Given Thing' or 'Tidal Weight', two of the more poignant songs on the album, and it is the source of their engaging charm."*

Will Cook – March 2015

<https://thequietus.com/articles/17406-dutch-uncles-o-shudder-review>

## Big Balloon Reviews:

### Exclaim (Canada)

*Disparate elements of the band's music create a layered, insistent, yet gentle feeling on "Sink," as strings, synths and guitars meld into the deeply nuanced track. By harnessing the band's expert playing abilities, and directing their sound towards a live environment as opposed to a more insular, studio-based sound, Dutch Uncles have made a strong and lasting impression with Big Balloon. They are shaping their own pop form, and what an incredible listen it is.*

Anna Alger – Feb 2017

[http://exclaim.ca/music/article/dutch\\_uncles-big\\_balloon](http://exclaim.ca/music/article/dutch_uncles-big_balloon)

### **The Quietus**

*In much the same way the likes of Field Music and Deerhoof dream up wondrous realms where complexity is usually at the hands of the hook, Dutch Uncles' propensity for warping pop to the outer fringes of possibility has always felt akin to the quest for absolute inimitability. Refining their heady whirl of synth, strings, syncopated bass patterns, polyrhythmic twists and turns and the cryptic lyrical panache of Duncan Wallis, Big Balloon is a feat that, despite all its clever machinations, puts cutting loose and letting go centre-stage.*

Brian Coney – March 2017

<https://thequietus.com/articles/21991-dutch-uncles-big-balloon-album-review>