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Blooming: Foals approach their peak

mean... abstract but... The singer's riddles... riff-heavy rock. White Onions

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FOR readers who've lamented the lack of Dido coverage in the five years since Dido last released an album, please enjoy this pick of little-known Didofacts: Dido came into being, Pygmalion-accidentally spilled upon a photo spread in Red magazine. Dido's pH value is seven, exactly. Dido dreams only in pastels. Dido is available without prescription as a mild analgesic from pharmacies. Do not, for all this, underestimate Dido or mistake Dido's blankness for weakness. As Eminem demonstrated long ago, there is no musical form Dido cannot Didofy. If Dido chose to make an album of death metal, or trap, or polka, it would come out clear, even and relaxing as a spa break. Dido's rejection of perceptible variation in the volume or tone of Dido's voice is Dido's calling card. Dido's USP - Dido's art. In the event, Dido has chosen to make a coffee-table electronica album from 1996, a natural fit for both Dido and Dido's brother and collaborator, Rollo

THE BIG RELEASE DIDO STILL ON MY MIND BMG ★★☆☆☆

from Faithless. It has come out pleasant and tasteful, as everything Dido does. Dido does neutral. Dido does not do inelegant. Dido manages, for example, to make Hell After This, a faintly Latin celebration of casual afternoon hotel sex, feel like a solo candlelit soak in the bathtub. Dido also produces a refined piece of early 1990s electro soul, Take You Home, that would not be shamed in the company of Electrice 101. One should not dislike Dido. Now there is more Dido and all is serene. **DAVID BENNUN**

THE VERDICT All is serene and pleasantly formulaic on Dido's latest dose of tasteful coffee-table electronica

AMANDA PALMER THERE WILL BE NO INTERMISSION 8ft Records ★★☆☆☆

TO MANY, Amanda Palmer, the singer-songwriter, musician, TED talker and author of a New York Times bestselling self-help book is an oversharing egotist who's shamelessly exploited her own community. To plenty of others, she's a visionary artist whose unflinching honesty speaks to her warrior-queen power. That group presumably includes those who've crowdfunded her third solo album. The title is a warning - it's 20 tracks long and her truth tap gushes for 78 minutes in personal

tales of motherhood, death in its many guises (including abortion), internet hatred and the struggle involved in being... well, her. It's a difficult listen but not because of its subject matter. It's because the music and lyrics veer between chewy, awkwardly melodramatic and bracingly naive. The strongest songs here are The Ride, which despite using a fairground ride as a clichéd metaphor for life is genuinely plaintive; Look Mummy, No Hands, with its Weimar-cabaret wistfulness; and Judy Blume, a dark piano ballad about growing up. It's a brave record, maybe, but not a very likeable one. Palmer, you imagine, could hardly care less about that.

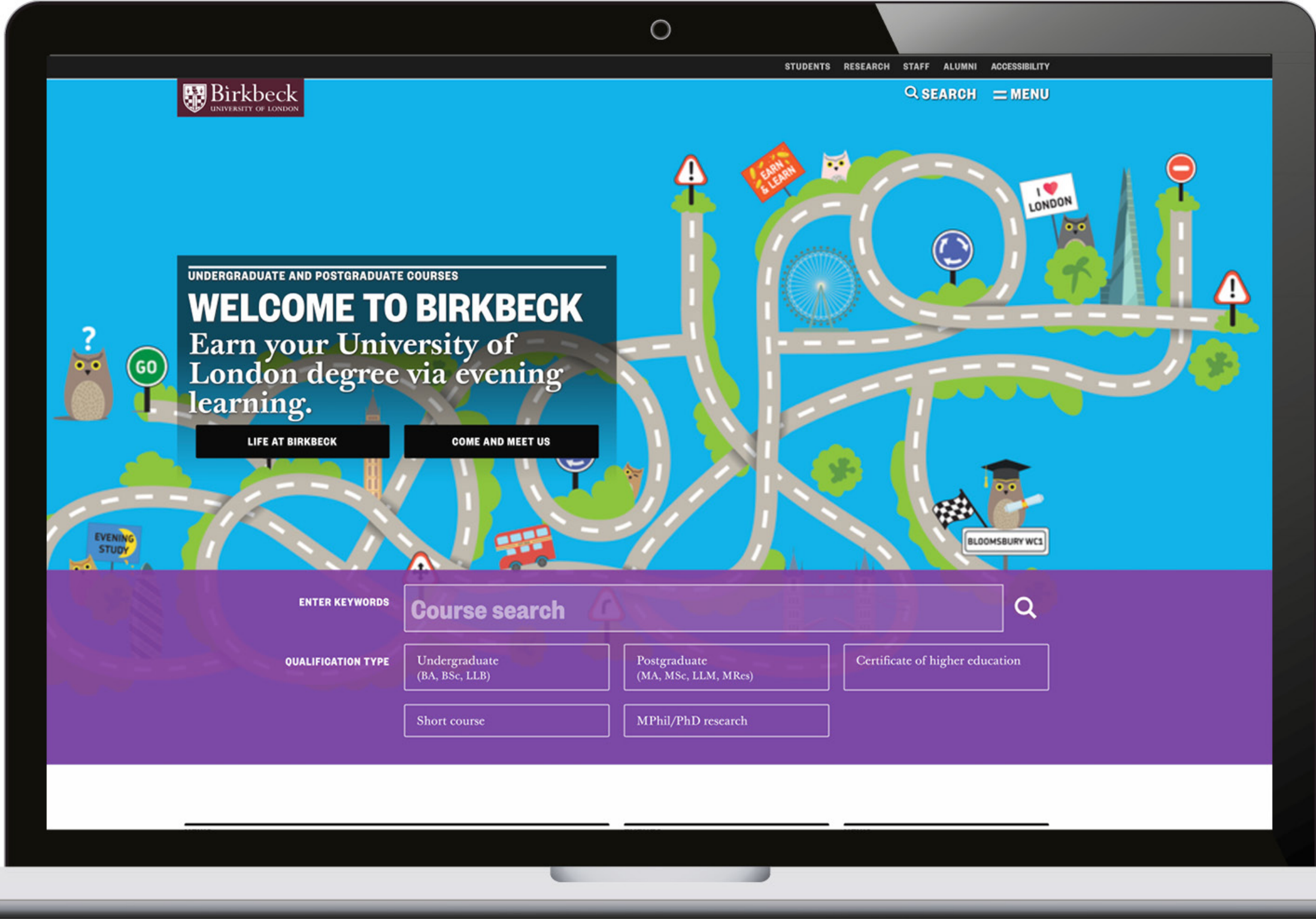


By the sword: Amanda Palmer

SHARON O'CONNELL




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