

# MUSIC

## PROFILE

# LIVING LIFE LARGE

*Electro-dance trio Art vs Science has an irresistible new album.*

● If we could boil down a good live show, it would be something that moves you, something that makes you go: "Woah!" Dan McNamee (Dan Mac) and Art vs Science bandmate Dan Williams (Dan W) are trying to determine what makes a great live show. This debate has involved much energetic re-enactment, including screwed-up faces, pumping fists and roars of laughter at the memory of Williams weeping at a Flaming Lips concert. "I think that's why we went with the loud stuff," laughs Williams, "because it's the crudest." McNamee chimes in: "That's why we try to keep it really simple, because the simpler it is, the louder it can be." Back to Williams: "We are working on a complicated formula."

"Yeah," says McNamee, "the simplicity is directly proportionate to its loudness."

Whatever it is, the formula works. Art vs Science's shows are fast reaching legendary status, with a loyal and enthusiastic following. It was, in fact,



Dan McNamee, aka Dan Mac.

a live show that brought them together. High-school friends McNamee, Williams and Jim Finn had played together in various line-ups for years but, in 2008, when McNamee signed up to a gig with no songs, they quickly came together to become Art vs Science. Their take was fresh and original: playing electronic dance music live, not with computer and decks, but guitar, keyboard and drums.

Their first electro-pop singles *Flippers* and *Hollywood* made them festival favourites, but it was the impossible-to-resist *Parlez Vous Francais?* that really put them on the musical map. And now they have distilled that catchy energy into an eagerly anticipated debut album, **The Experiment**, out this month.

They've been working on it for about a year, on breaks from a hectic touring schedule. McNamee says there are plenty of dance tunes, with a few more "chilled" songs thrown in for good measure. "I think there's enough variation in the mood of the songs to put them in an order that makes the album listenable in a start-to-finish way."

Williams adds: "It kind of bashes you for a bit, but it also goes 'be cool' for two minutes, and then it bashes you again."

It's only when they come off the road that they realise how far they have come in three short years.

Is this the dream? "Sure, some version of

it," says Williams. "Whenever I take the time to think about it, I think it's awesome to be here but I'm not quite sure how we got here. I talk to people in other bands about it and they all say exactly the same thing ... I guess you try to appreciate it while you can before it all finishes."

Not that this is likely to happen soon. The boys have a full touring roster ahead of them at numerous festivals, including the legendary South by South West. For them, success means outdoing themselves live. McNamee is currently toying with various combinations of giant video screens, abseiling and Japanese drums, perhaps with a guest appearance by Cirque du Soleil. "That's where our ambition lies," he says, when he and Williams have finished laughing at the ideas. "It's not so much [about] CD sales or conquering markets, it's more the opportunity to make something really big and different."

From left: Art vs Science's Jim Finn, Dan Williams and Dan McNamee.

That would certainly make us go: "Woah!" AS

