

'What Do I Do Now?': Encountering ourselves in music memoir

Jon Stewart, Louise Wener and Benjamin Halligan

Jon Stewart and Louise Wener founded what eventually became platinum-selling Britpop band Sleeper while at the University of Manchester. After graduating they moved to London and signed to Indolent Records, part of BMG/RCA, in 1993. Their 'Delicious' EP reached #1 on the UK indie singles chart in 1994. Sleeper's 1995 breakthrough UK Top 20 hit single 'Inbetweener' was followed by the gold-selling album *Smart* and the hit single 'What Do I Do Now?' (see Figure 16.1). 1996 saw platinum-selling album *The It Girl* and three additional hit singles: 'Sale of the Century', 'Nice Guy Eddie' and 'Statuesque'. Sleeper's version of Blondie's 'Atomic' also appeared in Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* movie that year. 1997's *Pleased to Meet You* entered the UK charts at #7, accompanied by two more UK Top 40 singles, although Sleeper broke up the following year. In 2002 Wener featured prominently in the feature documentary *Live Forever: The Rise and Fall of Britpop* (John Dower). She is also a published novelist, having authored *Goodnight Steve McQueen* (2002), *The Big Blind* (2003), *The Half Life of Stars* (2006) and *Worldwide Adventures in Love* (2008) for Hodder & Stoughton. She has also taught creative writing.

Wener's memoir was published as *Different for Girls: My True-Life Adventures in Pop* in 2010, and *Just for One Day: Adventures in Britpop* in 2011, by Ebury/Random House. The book was one of the first insider accounts of Britpop and is still one the best-received works in this genre. The *New Statesman* described it as a 'riveting memoir of that time', about 'a period full of promise which slowly expired' and a 'clear-eyed examination of the realities of fame' (Rogers 2010). Stewart, as Sleeper's co-founder and guitarist, is also one of the key figures in her story. Now widely published as an academic in his own right, Stewart interviewed Wener and discussed their shared experience of memoir