



Jesus still working on 'difficult' second coming

With his fans getting increasingly impatient for the follow-up to his era-defining live performances, management acting for global megastar Jesus Christ were yesterday again forced to confirm that the artist remains holed up in the studio working on his long-awaited second coming. Many industry insiders believe that the performer's best days are behind him, but despite no indication of when we might hear some new material from Christianity's No.1 artist, die-hard fans are still keeping the faith.

'When he first appeared it was like he came out of nowhere,' said Garth Chivers, editor of trend-setting weekly, the New Theological Express. 'He was young and fresh, really of the moment, and he took things in an exciting new direction. There's no doubting the lasting influence of his seminal early work – it's just that the scene has moved on and those saviour stylings just sound so old skool now.'

'It's never easy following up a classic debut. Just look how things turned out for The Stone Roses,' said Ellie Carl, chief writer for respected industry organ, Me and My Maker. 'You've got to strike that difficult balance between giving the old fans more of what made you famous, while taking things on artistically and appealing to the younger demographic who weren't there the first time round. These days the industry simply demands that kind of regular reincarnation. Still, I'd be amazed if his management dropped him.'

Industry rumours are that Jesus has been suffering from saviour's block and struggling to find a new angle on the same old themes of peace and love to all men, but his management insist he is putting the finishing touches to new material with his regular backing group and label-mates, The Disciples. 'The new stuff will be darker and edgier than his earlier work, reflecting his experiences in the industry. Jesus really feels as if the critics built him up in order to, well, not knock him down exactly, but just leave him dangling there, you know.'

A spokesman for Christianity last night confirmed that details of Jesus's comeback 'This Really Is It' tour will be announced shortly. It's thought a promotional DVD, 'What Jesus Did Next', is also in the pipeline, with a 'making of' documentary that sceptics are really looking forward to, as well as re-issues of his classic Roman Empire tour T-shirt, 'I'm with the banned'. But despite demand, tickets for his live shows are expected to be extremely limited, with bouncers at venues given clear instructions only to issue 'Access All Areas' passes to those whose names are on the guest-list.