



Polly math Clockwise from top: a bird-fight in Afghanistan – not to the death but heavily gambled on and banned by the Taliban; 'The Hand'; PJ Harvey and Seamus Murphy; a more rural scene from Afghanistan.

The Hand

People pass the hand.
There are sounds of car horns and music.
People pass the hand that begs.

Three boys in hoods fold their arms
and swerve away from the hand,
the hand that begs in the rain.

People come and go, looking
at their phones.
Nobody takes the hand
stretching out, shining in the rain.

In the hollow of the hand
is a folded square
of paper,

but nobody looks twice at the white paper
that gleams in the hand that begs,
stretching out and shining in the rain.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH... Girl Band



No girls aloud Singer Dara Kieley stoops to conquer

I'm on it – I bet there are no females in Girl Band. Wait... Maybe it's a post-ironic double bluff and they're actually all girls?

Triple bluff; you were right the first time. Girl Band are four young lads from Dublin, to be precise, making gravelly, droney, angry and seriously weird noise rock.

Of course. So are they trying to be un-Googleable with that name?

Maybe when they started out in 2011, but they now have a decent web presence, probably because they're really, really good.

Oh yeah? Impress me.

Well, their guttural, guitar-mangling riffs are gritty enough to asphyxiate an industrial cement mixer. Plus they broke through by fearlessly covering underground techno overlord Blawan's beastly track 'Why They Hide Their Bodies Under My Garage' in 2013, sounding even more fearsome than the original.

Props to them. But what have they done recently?

A lot of touring – including a stint in the US – and a bit of album releasing with recent debut full-length 'Holding Hands with Jamie'. Sample lyric, from single 'Pears for Lunch': 'Spend my time watching

'Top Gear' with my trousers down, covered in Sudocrem and talking to myself – garlic, curry, cheese, chips.'

Sounds like a Chas & Dave lyric...

Chas & Dave after a three-day absinthe bender, maybe... But Girl Band's song has the rhythmical insistence of punk-funk act Factory Floor slathered in stomach-churning guitar attacks beloved of acts like industrial rockers Swans.

Not bedtime music, then?

Not unless you want weirder dreams than that time you demolished a whole wheel of brie. Everything Girl Band does ends up sounding wholly unsettling. At any point you're never sure if singer Dara Kieley is

about to have a teary breakdown or punch you in the throat. But morbid as it is, you'll want to find out.

He won't really punch me, will he?

Probably not. But find out at the 100 Club on Tuesday October 6, where Girl Band will be charging through their terminally twitchy tunes with frightening amounts of nervous energy. *Tristan Parker*

THE BOTTOM LINE Superbly surreal alt rock that's edgy enough to give David Lynch the willies.