

# Savages singer works with cult French star

Étienne Daho may be unknown in the UK, but Savages' Jehnny Beth leapt at the chance to sing on the French star's new LP. They explain how it happened

14

### Jehnny Beth, Savages

"Étienne is massive in France, so I grew up surrounded by his music on TV and radio. He's a solo pop star with loads of credibility. In the UK, the equivalent would be someone like PJ Harvey in terms of level of fame and respect, but as he sings in French he hasn't crossed over the Channel because of the language barrier. I met him when he was in London recording his new album 'Les Chansons De L'innocence Retrouvée'. As London-based French musicians, he wanted to hang out with me and Johnny Hostile, my partner in John & Jehn, so we took him to lots of gigs and ended up appearing on the album. He asked us to sing on the opening track 'Le Baiser Du Destin', which we loved - there's a real Bowie atmosphere to it.

"He's become like a guru to me. When we were looking for a photographer for the Savages album cover, he recommended Richard Dumas, and he helped us choose the title 'Silence Yourself', too. Similarly, he emailed me two potential photos for his latest album cover. The one I told him to go with

**"I GREW UP WITH ETIENNE'S MUSIC... HE'S LIKE A GURU TO ME"**

**Jehnny Beth**

has been controversial - it's been banned from the Tube. Blame me! People are calling it misogynistic because it features a woman with her breasts out, but it's a beautiful image that's about innocence. It's not about selling something."

### Étienne Daho

"I saw the very first Savages gig and loved it. I thought it was very intense, very strong. I asked John & Jehn to come and sing backing vocals and it felt magical. The song they do is about destiny - I'm obsessed with the role we play in shaping our own future.

"I've been called the godfather of new French pop, and when I organised a showcase night in Paris for new bands, I invited John & Jehn to perform. They covered 'Week-End À Rome', which Saint Etienne remade in the '90s as 'He's On The Phone'. I've worked for over 30 years, but in England people only know me from my collaborations with William Orbit or Saint Etienne. Over my career, I've worked with people like Marianne Faithfull, and on this record we can add Debbie Harry and Nile Rodgers to the list - they appear together on the song 'L'Étrangère'. I met Debbie in New York in '91 but was too shy to ask her to work with me. I bit the bullet this time, because the song's about her." ■ GARY RYAN

