

GREEN FRIDAY

For musician Chris Singleton, Friday is green, the number 2 is a girl and the letter A is a wimp. It's not madness, it's 'synesthesia'.

I never used to think that believing Monday was orange, that Wednesdays were yellow or that the number 2 was a female was particularly unusual, until my girlfriend brought home a copy of a newspaper with a big feature about 'synesthesia' in it. Or, as Wikipedia, the font of all dubious knowledge, puts it, "a neurological condition in which two or more bodily senses are coupled."

Synesthesia is an odd condition, and manifests itself in lots of ways. For synesthesia 'sufferers', letters or numbers can be associated with colours; days of the week or months can take on personalities; musical notes can have a gender. Until I saw the article in the paper about it, I quite simply believed that everybody 'saw' life this way, and it was rather surprising to find out that those of us who make these kinds of associations are actually in a very small minority.

Here are some more examples of how I interpret the world:

Friday is dark green.
The number two is a strong-willed female.
The chord of E is also a strong-willed female.
The number seven is a bit of a fey man.
The month of May is white in colour, and female.
The letter Z is female.
The letter A is a wimp.

It happens with songs too. For example, even though it's sung by a man, I perceive 'Yesterday' by the Beatles as being a female song, whereas their 'Don't Let Me Down' is a male song. I perceive the first song as a grey-ish green; the latter as brownish-red.

The more I write these associations down, the more bizarre this all seems. The links seem completely arbitrary, but you could ask me a question about any letter, number, day or month and I could tell you what colour it is, what sex it is, and what kind of personality it



Chris Singleton (centre) and his band The Distractions.

has (and these descriptions wouldn't change, even if you asked me the same question a year later).

It's funny when you meet somebody else who experiences synesthesia, because invariably they associate different colours or personalities to things, and you end up having a rather strange debate about whether Thursday is white or just off-white (actually, it's dark red).

Regardless of why I 'have' synesthesia, I have to say I like having it. It's a nice feeling, and I like being able to assign little personalities and colours to everyday things that quite frankly don't "really" have them.

Besides which, famous synesthiacs include Beethoven, John Lennon and Jimi Hendrix - so I'm in good company. And the number seven IS a fey man.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SYNESTHESIA

You can find out more about synesthesia from Wikipedia:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synesthesia>

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CHRIS SINGLETON AND THE DISTRACTIONS

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- For Irish radio and press please contact Cillian McDonnell on +353 (0)86 384 7639 or email lakotamedia@gmail.com
- For print-quality photos, hi-res cover art and other resources, please visit www.singletonmusic.com/press
- Chris' new album, *Lady Gasoline*, is released on IRL on 28 June 2010. The catalogue number is IRL043.