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# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month.  
Issue 114  
January  
2005

# On The Rise

The best new local  
acts to see in 2005  
*inside*

Fell City Girl by Miles Walkden

PENS, PAPER, FOLDERS, NOTEBOOKS, FRAMES

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# NEWS

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**ACTRESS MINNIE DRIVER** as well as 80s indie legends The Wedding Present and The House Of Love are amongst the big names heading to Oxford later this spring. Minnie Driver, who recently

supported The Finn Brothers on tour, plays at the Zodiac on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February. The reformed House Of Love, featuring Guy Chadwick and Terry Bickers reunited for the first time in nearly 15 years, are at the Zodiac on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> February, while The Wedding Present visit on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February. The Dears make a return visit to the Zodiac on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> February. Big names coming to other local venues soon include The Levellers, who play at Brookes University on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April, and chart toppers Girls Aloud who play at the New Theatre on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May. For all Zodiac gigs, plus the Levellers show, tickets are available from the box office, on 01865 420042.

## DR SHOTOVER

### Happy War, Christmas is over

Bloody hell. Rumours have been circulating about the Nightshift Xmas knees-up and the acts of seasonal terrorism committed after Yours Truly and assorted scribes, hacks and wastrels had consumed the hottest curry dishes that the East Oxford sub-continent has to offer, washed down with several crates of something called "lager". Suffice it to say, there is no truth in any of it. Messrs Lagun and Carrera, re-directing traffic the wrong way round the Plain in "borrowed" police uniforms? Ms Jerome, singing a bawdy song from the top of Magdalen Tower? Our noble editor, challenging our talented webmeister, Mr Bond, to arm-wrestle over an alleged slight to the hallowed name of Gary Numan? The assembled company, staging a sit-down protest in the billiards room at my gentlemen's club on being refused further alcohol by Bedingfield, the chief steward? While sporting Santa Claus hats? Oh God. It IS true, isn't it? Bloody hell.



*Chief steward Bedingfield: "Sorry, Dr S – the cat can come in, but you're barred."*

**Next month:  
February**

**SEXY BREAKFAST** release a new single later this month, entitled 'Launch the Missile, Conrad!' on their own label. It is the follow-up to 2003's acclaimed debut, 'The Grin and Nod EP'. Long-time live favourite 'Launch the Missile, Conrad!' is backed by two new tracks, 'Sadness Is The Easiest To Choose' and 'The World Had Changed'. Talking about the new single and Sexy Breakfast's future plans, singer Joe Swarbrick told Nightshift, "We've stripped everything back a little for this one. 'Grin and Nod' was great fun and I'm really proud of it, but it was guilty of a few too many 70s prog rock excesses. This one feels more modern and a lot less introspective. It captures our live sound a lot better than the last one. Thematically, it's a lot less about relationships and a lot more about the world and its woes - not as a direct political statement, just exploring conflict and its repercussions, personally and nationally, and you can dance to it all as well. It's funny and disturbing simultaneously. Over the top, but rooted in true feelings. Like a disco in the trenches.

"We'll all have finished university by next summer, so then we'll start properly touring, writing loads of new stuff and releasing as much as we can. I think we've always been a band that has shown a lot of potential. The time has come to start showing everyone that we can properly realise that potential, and I hope the new CD will go at least

**QUICKFIX RECORDS** release a compilation album of local teenage bands on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January. 'Under 18s' aims to showcase the best up and coming young bands in Oxford and features two tracks each from Harlette, Mondo Cada, The Walk Off and 20:20 Vision, plus more to be added. The album will be launched with a gig at the Zodiac, in conjunction with The Club That Cannot Be Named, on the 29<sup>th</sup>, featuring Harlette, Mondo Cada, The Walk Off and more.

**ALESIACHAIR** have split. The highly-promising Oxford-based Anglo-French indie rockers, whose track, 'Introduction To A Rainy Day' featured in Nightshift's Top 20 songs for 2004, bowed out with a gig at the Wheatsheaf just before Christmas, supporting Caretaker.

**LOCAL MUSIC ZINE OHM** has called it a day, having covered the Oxford music scene for over a year; financial reasons are blamed, as well as the departure of some of the zine's main contributors. As well as featuring interviews and reviews of local bands, OHM was notable for its excellent coverage of the local jazz scene.

**TWO LOCAL BANDS** have changed their names recently. Hardcore grunge merchants The Fencott Disaster are now known as The Holidays Stabbings, while post-hardcore / krautrock outfit Cardboard have finally relented and are now called The Corvids. So now you know.



**ATHLETE** play a secret, free gig downstairs at the Zodiac on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at the Zodiac. The gig marks the release of the band's second album, 'Tourist', on January 31<sup>st</sup> and is part of a series of low-key 'thank you' gigs to fans who made 2004 such a successful one for the band, with debut album 'Vehicles and Animals' shortlisted for The Mercury Prize. Since Athlete's last Oxford gig, at the Zodiac's upstairs venue, was a sell-out, tickets for the gig in February are bound to be in big demand, and they'll be available from HMV in Oxford and Polar Bear Records on Cowley Road. Pop in and ask for details.

# ON THE RISE

**JANUARY IS, OF COURSE,** A great time to look forward to the year ahead. Being named after Janus, the two-faced character from Greek legend, January, meaning looking both ways, is also a great time to look backwards over the previous year. You see we know poncey wordy learning stuff like this at Nightshift.

But, we don't want to look backwards, do we? We did last issue with our (rather splendid and not open to debate) Top 20 Oxford songs of 2004. No, here we're looking forward to some of the new acts you maybe should spare an evening or two checking out if you want to hear where local music is heading in 2005.

**THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE** witnessed the rise and rise of metal, punk and hardcore in Oxford, but 2005's crop of young talent seems to be heading in a different direction.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in the rise of a whole wave of excellent new female singer-songwriters on the scene. Rising up from the plethora of open mic nights around town are singers like **Laima Bite**, **Zoë Bicat**, **Chantelle Pike** and **Kate Chadwick** who are now following in the footsteps of Katy Bennett and Sharron Kraus, giving traditional acoustic pop and folk a new lease of life. Laima's stunning demo back in the summer heralded one of the most startling new vocal and lyrical talents around, with a dark, almost gothic twist on a traditional sound, recalling the likes of Kendra Smith and Heidi Berry. Her solo shows have been intoxicating enough, but we're really looking forward to seeing her with a full band sometime soon, while she's also apparently getting together an industrial

Chantelle Pike is a match for almost anyone vocally, her recent shows displaying a young singer who isn't afraid to stretch to try and emulate sirens like Lisa Gerrard or Sinead O'Connor. As well as her own minimalist folk-pop band, she's got together a rockier outfit, The Cliffhangers, hoping to take her talents in new directions.

Zoë Bicat's voice – part gravely growl, part ghostly whisper – has made her a favourite on the local acoustic circuit and her melancholic folk songs deserve a wider audience, while Brookes student Kate Chadwick tends to look on the brighter side of life, her infectious warble, closer to Edie Brickell.

**PROBABLY THE MOST** impressive young rock band to hit the Oxford scene last year were **Fell City Girl**, who seemed to grow in stature, sound and talent with every gig. From their earliest outings, coming on like an updated Cure, to more monolithic recent shows, where they seemed to be sucking in everything from Muse and Radiohead to Queen, they've never failed to impress, managing to inject a pop core into their often convoluted guitar workouts, while frontman Phil McInn has some of the nervous rock god feel about him, like a young Matt Bellamy.

No doubt about who were the most improved young band in Oxford last year: **The Half Rabbits** rose out of clunking indie pop scrap to become genuine big time pop contenders by the end of the year, while their debut EP, 'Disclaimer', was full of the classic indie and New Wave noises that today's guitar-wielding bruisers have long forgotten. In Michael Weatherburn, the Rabbits have a singer with the kind of gravely



Laima Bite

Morrison such a spectacle, while their obstinately out-of-time alternative pop thankfully refuses to fit in anywhere comfortably.

Amongst the other indie hopefuls around town, newcomers **Harry Angel** (yes, named after Mickey Rourke's character in *Angel Heart*) are worth a hearing, distilling their myriad classic pop influences into something, if not wholly new, then more than the sum of its parts, while **Warhen** now sound much more like the finished product after a couple of years of solid gigging, sounding like a band in the classic tradition of Oxford pop, like Supergrass, The Candyskins and The Bigger The God. Jazz-rock instrumentalists **P.Y.E** have also come on some of late, steering clear of obvious post-rock clichés in favour of a dynamic style that recalls Billy Mahonie as well as local innovators Nought.

**ANOTHER PART OF THE** local scene that has really come into its own in recent times is the (mostly studio-bound) electronic side. Live acts like The Evenings and Sunnyvale Noise Sub-Element still lead the way locally but the fall-out from the Rock of Travolta split has given us **Boywithatoy** – Phill Honey's solo project. Two demos of the month already, and featuring collaborations with Smilex frontman Lee Christian, Phill's unselfconscious and unapologetic fusion of post-rock, electronic experimentation and

epic soundtrack noise promises so much in the coming year, and with live shows being planned it's going to be exciting to see where he can take his music from here.

Already pounding and pummelling local stages are **The Walk Off**, a teenage three-piece who seem intent on soundtracking World War III before it even starts. Laptop carnage collides with Rammstein-style beats, hardcore guitar noise and lots of primal screaming to make for (depending on the weather) the most thrilling live spectacle in town, or utter bloody chaos.

Since The Animalhouse split we've heard little from any of the former members except Mark Gardener, but with the arrival of **The Spiralist**, that's set to change. Formed by bassist Hari Teah and keyboard player Jason King, their sound is all jazzy, cinematic grooves and funk-driven housey beats, with some great vocal performances from the likes of drum & bass MC Tali. They made their live debut at December's Peepshow at the Bullingdon and have a sure pedigree.

On a more rootsy dance tip is Big Speakers' AJ whose **Asher Dust** project is really shaping up into something special, from the dexterity of Ultramagnetic MCs to Horace Andy's more soulful vocal stylings. Breaks and hip hop and – it appears – a feud with local funk-rockers Hedroom still simmering away, he'll be well



The Half Rabbits

## **MAEVE BAYTON** **'Blues And Ballads'**

(Own Label)

Veterans of the local music scene, and in particular the acoustic and open mic clubs, will know all about Maeve Bayton, a regular at the Magic Café and Catweazle Club, as well as a member of possibly Oxford's first all-female band, The Mistakes, back in the late-70s. Maeve was also the author of *Frock Rock*, an excellent sociological examination of female experience in popular music, published by OUP a few years back and featuring Beaker guitarist Teresa Hooker on the front cover.

Maeve's debut album comes with a give-away title, telling you pretty much what you need to know about what's inside. Split between her own folky ballads and classic blues standards, it's an album happily steeped in tradition, respectful and contented in its treatment of songs made famous by the likes of Bessie Smith ('I Ain't Gonna Play No Second Fiddle'), Nina Simone ('Trouble In Mind') and Ida Cox ('Wild Women Never Get The Blues' – originally recorded back in 1924).



Nina Simone seems to be a primary inspiration for Maeve, even on her own, folkier songs, especially Letting You Go', which oddly seems to echo 'Lilac Wine' and, backed by Barney Morse-Brown's solemn cello, captures a little of that old smoky jazz melancholy. The harmonica-led 'Take It Slow' is the best of Maeve's own works, a bluesy folk shuffle,

while the gentle, wistful 'Red River', with its laidback, sunshiny 60s disposition equally shows off her way with an uncluttered pop ballad.

She can be a bit airy fairy and earth mother-ish at times, it's fair to say – the whimsical 'Willow', with its man-done-me-wrong tale being the obvious example, and we'll just take it in good faith that 'Inappropriate Man' is meant as a joke (Maeve, a self-confessed "Marxist feminist green" gets drunk and picks up a Tory-voting techno-addicted stoner who fails to satisfy in the bedroom department), although it smacks a little too much of one of those songs that Phoebe from *Friends* tends to come up with once in a while.

All in all though, 'Ballads and Blues' is an accomplished album, helped no doubt by contributions from the likes of Tim Turan, Frei Zinger and Jon Boden. It's a mature counterpoint to the emerging young local folk talents of Chantelle Pike, Laima Bite et al with whom Maeve comfortably shared a stage at the recent Klub Kakofanney Winter Weekender.

*Sue Foreman*

## **P.Y.E** **'Wreck Tangle'**

(Own Label)

In the shadow cast by instrumental rock colossuses Nought, Youth Movie Soundtrack Strategies and The Rock of Travolta, it's hard for any other similarly-inclined local band to flourish, damned as they ever will be by comparisons to those that have gone before. It's just unfortunate for Abingdon's P.Y.E that Oxford has already produced three bands of such immense talent in this field.

This three-track debut EP makes all the right noises and moves in all the right directions but it's always looking over its shoulder. Nought in particular are a major inspiration behind P.Y.E's jazz-inclined guitar workouts. Lead track 'Squoon' is a jagged, dynamic journey, alternately meandering and stabbing guitars underpinned by an almost jazz-funk rhythm, a lightweight nephew to its predecessor's bludgeoning output.

That's not to damn P.Y.E outright by any means. Live in particular they can pile on the pressure to a satisfying degree, and if the brevity of many of their pieces sometimes indicates an inability or unwillingness to take an idea to another level, at least they – unlike so many post-rock, instrumental types –

recognise when to bail out, having made their point. The best track here is 'Trademark P.Y.E Jangle', which rests on a darker, slightly heavier rhythm, the guitars chiming with echoes of The Chameleons. 'Wooden Drivers', by comparison is a little superfluous and rambling.

What shouldn't be ignored at this point, is that P.Y.E are still a young band but already trying to stretch themselves musically. As such this is a fine debut outing and a firm foundation to move on from. It's just that in Oxford at least they're going to have to work twice as hard to hit those highs.

*Dale Kattack*



## **SPELLBINDER** **featuring ALICE** **LOCKHART**

### **'Come Outside'**

(Throom)

While it's true that trance has never gone away, and is probably as big as it's ever been, and you still get some cracking stuff heading chart-wards, notably last year's 'Loneliness' by Tomkraft, it's sweet hearing singles like this made with the DIY spirit of the late-80s.

Spellbinder is production duo Andy Somerville and Anthony Barlow, plus London-based singer Alice Lockhart. 'Come Outside' rides on the bulging analogue synth and cheapo drum machine beat of the likes of Messiah, but with the sort of mischievous noise of Baby Ford. Alice's vocal is a frenetic squiggle of nonsense that appears to be a guided tour of her local farm and spirals into itself in slightly sinister fashion to the point where she collides with an old Polymoog and the whole track disappears into a black hole, possibly to start a whole new acid house revolution in a parallel universe. Ooh, it's like 2001: A Space Odyssey, but with drum machines. Great stuff.

*Victoria Waterfield*

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# GIG GUIDE

## SATURDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

Come on you Blues!

## SUNDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

Nothing happening today

## MONDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

Tum-de-tum, this is getting boring now...

## TUESDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB WITH THE TOM GREY**

**QUINTET: The Bullingdon** – Hurray! Some live music – the popular Bully jazz club kicks off the new year with resident band and DJs. And all for free.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:** Old School House, Gloucester Green

*Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>*

## HENRY ROLLINS SPOKEN WORD: Oxford Playhouse

It almost seems a lifetime away that Henry Rollins was the hardest, most furious man in hardcore rock. Back when he was tearing up the American underground scene with Black Flag, fighting and drinking every night to a soundtrack of brutish punk noise, you'd have laughed at the idea of him gracing the Oxford Playhouse. But, as his last spoken word appearance in Oxford (back at the Apollo a good few years ago) showed, if Henry hasn't exactly mellowed in his world outlook, he's contained his anger and what's revealed is one of the most intelligent, articulate and genuinely funny men in music and writing today. There are anecdotes from his hellraising days, a lot of self-deprecating humour, plus plenty of blunt but considered opinions on the state of the world, including the war in Iraq. All this and he's still the true godfather of American hardcore. You wouldn't want to get in a scrap with Rollins (have you seen the size of him?) but two hours in his company is a rare pleasure.

## JANUARY

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** Exeter Hall, Cowley  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT:** The Hobgoblin, Cowley Road

## WEDNESDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**WARHEN + DIATRIBE:** The Cellar – Promising indie pop from Warhen, picking up where Supergrass left off. Hard rock noise from Diatribe.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:** Bar Baby – All-comers welcome.

**COROFIN & FRIENDS:** Exeter Hall, Cowley – Weekly trad Irish folk session.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** Northgate Hall – All-comers club night for singers, musicians and performance artists.

**TONGUES OF FIRE:** Brookes University Drama Studio - Improvisational free jazz, folk song, laments and wild grooves from eight piece band featuring whirlwind drummer Steve Noble (ex Rip, Rig and Panic) plus reeds and brass players including saxophonist Pete McPhail and Geoff Hawkins. Music by Tim Hill.

## THURSDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**DEAD HORSES WILD:** Exeter Hall, Cowley – Local teenage rockers.

**TONGUES OF FIRE:** Brookes University Drama Studio – Second night of improv, as above.

**SKYLARKIN:** The Brickworks – Weekly dose of reggae, soul, jazz, dub and Latin grooves from DJ Aidan Larkin and guests.

**SABOTAGE:** The Zodiac – Weekly Club That Cannot Be Named night with a mix of metal, hardcore and indie.

**LOVE FUNKI:** Old Fire Station – Weekly funky house club night with live rhythms plus DJs Mr Smith and Lil T.

## FRIDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**THE SAMURAI SEVEN + NICK KENNY & THE PIG IMPROVEMENT COMPANY:**

**The Zodiac** – High-energy punk-pop action from the local stalwarts, getting ready for the release of their second album later this year. Former Four Storeys frontman Nick Kenny brings his new band to the show.

**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with FILM NOIR + SMUG**

**JUGGLERS:** The Wheatsheaf – Melancholy indie rocking from Film Noir.

**RAMI & THE EYE-LAND**

**MONK-EYES:** Exeter Hall, Cowley – Funk, soul and rock.

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB with KEITH KENDRICK & LYNN HERAUD:** The Port Mahon – Fine harmony singing with traditional songs.

**THE STRANGERS:** The Barn, Red Lion, Witney

**BACKROOM BOOGIE:** The Bullingdon  
**SKETCHY:** The Cellar – Hip hop club night with DJs Toby Kidd and Mr Brogan.

## SATURDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**PEEPSHOW:** The Zodiac – Now relocated to the Zodiac on a fortnightly basis, Peepshow brings the best in live dance with eclectic mix of dance DJs and visuals.

**JEREMY HUGHES PRESENTS:** Exeter Hall, Cowley

**SIMPLE:** The Bullingdon – Funky house club night.

**FRESH OUT OF THE BOX with THE INVISIBLE MAN + SOUNDZ:** The Cellar – New skool breaks, Apparently.

**THE WORRIED MEN:** The Barn, Red Lion, Witney – This month they have been mostly worrying about credit card debt and croup.

**CHRIS HAWES & MICK ING:** Magic Café (1pm)

## SUNDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**ELECTRIC JAM:** Exeter Hall, Cowley (5pm) – All musicians welcome to jam with the in-house rhythm section.



**THE YOUNG KINIVES / SMILEX**  
SPLIT E.P.  
Featuring Nightshift's number one song of 2004 'the Decision' by The Young Knives!!!!!!  
Oxford's Hanging Out with The Cool Kids is fast becoming a label to look out for, and this split EP from The Young Knives and Smilex shows why.  
- DROWNED IN SOUND

**SEXTODECIMO**  
THE BANSHEE SCREAMS FOR BUFFALO MEAT  
'Sextodecimo are a lot like a dead rat - pungent and bloated. The band moves just a little bit faster than the immobile vermin. Aside from that, it's very thick and sludgy, and in a way borderline lethargic but not in the least bit boring.' STONEROCK.COM

**SHOUTING MYKE**  
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'Adventurous, original and fucking brilliant!' PUNKTASTIC.COM

**N3AR LIF3 EXP3RI3NC3**  
I'LL TAKE YOUR SILENCE AS A LOUD YES  
'their debut album demonstrates the massive potential that these young musicians have' METAL HAMMER  
'Sounding like Atreyu, Shadows Fall and some non-existent Mike Patton side-project halfway through the first song' - TERRORIZER

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*Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>*

## ROOSTER: The Zodiac

So, like, someone's decided that the girls are sick to death of wimpy, asinine pop bands and really want some kick-ass rock laddies to stick on their bedroom walls. So here are Rooster: four late-teens / early-twenties fellas with guitars and a bunch of songs that, if you can suspend your disbelief for a few minutes, sound a bit like Aerosmith crossed with Busted. And so far it's all working out very well indeed, with debut single, 'Come Get Some' hitting the Top 10 and follow-up 'Staring At The Sun' set to follow. And you can't fault Rooster's commitment to the true rock and roll cause, neither – tonight's gig is part of a 30-date UK tour. Hey, they even write their own songs and play their own instruments. And frontman Nick Atkinson does a decent Mick Jagger impersonation, while looking a little like a young Jon Bon Jovi. So maybe it's churlish to point out that half their debut album sounds worryingly like Westlife, or worse, Savage Garden. They're very popular, and look set to become more popular throughout this year. But so does the Tory Party.

## MONDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**RESERVOIR CATS:** The Bullingdon – Hard rocking electric blues, fronted by Tony 'Flash Harry' Jezzard.

## TUESDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB WITH THE TOM GREY QUINTET:** The Bullingdon  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:** Old School House, Gloucester Green  
**OPEN MIC SESSION:** Exeter Hall, Cowley  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT:** The Hobgoblin, Cowley Road  
**INTRUSION:** The Cellar

## WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**REMTEK presents CHRIS BROKAW:** The Port Mahon – Still to be confirmed as we went to press, but hopefully a chance to see New York's mesmeric acoustic guitarist. Former drummer with Come and drummer with Codeine, Brokaw is an exceptional guitarist and performer, injecting his brand of haunted folk music with a punk attitude and a precise kind of violence.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:** Bar Baby  
**COROFIN & FRIENDS:** Exeter Hall, Cowley  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** Northgate Hall

## THURSDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**MAX:** Exeter Hall, Cowley – Led Zep and AC/DC tribute.

**THE INVISIBLES + ROB**

**HALLIGAN:** The Cellar –

Coventry songwriter Rob Halligan brings in influences as diverse as Bob Dylan, U2 and John Mayer to his emotional and political songs; indie rock from The Invisibles.

**SKYLARKIN:** The Brickworks

**SABOTAGE:** The Zodiac

**LOVE FUNKI:** Old Fire Station

## FRIDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**ONE LOUDER with THE HALF RABBITS + THE CORVIDS + HORSEFIGHTER:** The

**Wheatsheaf** – Oxford's most improved band of last year, and one of the best prospects for 2005, The Half Rabbits kick off their assault on the new year early, brandishing classic new wave and 60s rock influences with an admirable 80s indie feel.

**TRANSMISSION:** Exeter Hall, Cowley – Indie rock with an exotic Arabic edge.

**SLIDE:** The Zodiac – House club night.

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB OPEN NIGHT:** The Port Mahon

**BLON-D:** The Barn, Red Lion, Witney

**BACKROOM BOOGIE:** The Bullingdon

**HQ:** The Cellar – Drum&bass club night.

## SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**WIGOUT! with SIR BALD DIDDLEY & HIS WIGOUTS + PAINTERMAN:**

**Port Mahon** – Surf, swamp and garage rocking in a classic and authentic 60s style from Baldie and chums, plus moddish power pop from Newbury's, possibly Creation-inspired Painterman.

**VERBAL KINK + SMILEX + SEXTODECIMO + THE PROCESS:**

**The Wheatsheaf** – Grunge rock action from Verbal Kink, with all-action noise and mayhem from Smilex in support. Sextodecimo threaten to blow more than the bloody doors off with their monstrous stoner grind.

**MORPH + SATELLITE:** Exeter Hall, Cowley – Rock and blues.

**LOCAL BANDS NIGHT:** The Zodiac – To be confirmed.

**THE UNFORGETTABLE FIRE:** The Barn, Red Lion, Witney – U2 tribute.

**THE PETE FRYER BAND + REDOX:** Chester Arms – Crazy off-the-wall rocking from the Ex's resident legend.

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Fri 5 <sup>th</sup> Rami & The Eye-Land	Thu 20 <sup>th</sup> The Factory 8:30pm
Monk-Eyes - 8:30pm	Fri 21 <sup>st</sup> The Invisible 8:30pm
Sat 8 <sup>th</sup> Jeremy Hughes - Host An	Sat 22 <sup>nd</sup> LeBurn's Gimme Hendrix
Evening of Music - 8:00pm	Experience 8:30pm
Sun 9 <sup>th</sup> Electric Jam - 5:00pm	Sun 23 <sup>rd</sup> Electric Jam - 5:00pm
Thu 13 <sup>th</sup> Max - Led Zep/AC/DC	Fri 28 <sup>th</sup> Assassins of Silence 8:30pm
Fri 14 <sup>th</sup> Transmission 8:30pm	Sat 29 <sup>th</sup> Rami & The Salamies 8:30pm



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*Friday 28<sup>th</sup>*

## APOCALYPTICA / BREED 77:

### The Zodiac

One of only two UK gigs on their current tour for Finland's incredible Apocalyptica (*pictured*), a group of classically-trained musicians who specialise in interpreting heavy metal songs solely on the cello. Their debut album, 'Plays Metallica By Four Cellos', did exactly what it said on the sleeve and since then they've tackled Pantera, Faith No More, Sepultura and Slayer. Subsequent albums, 'Cult' and 'Reflections', have seen them writing more of their own material, while retaining the metal-classical crossover style, while new single, 'Bittersweet', features vocals by fellow countrymen Ville Valo of HIM and Lauri Ylönen from The Rasmus. Tell your folks it's a classical music recital and bring them along. They'll particularly enjoy co-headliners Breed 77 who have been on the up and up since relocating to the UK from Gibraltar in 1996 and winning Kerrang's Best Unsigned Band award in 98. Recent single, 'The River', scraped into the Top 40, while their appearance at Download Festival convinced everyone they are amongst the best live metal bands in the UK, mixing up furious riffage with Alice In Chains-style atmospherics and Flamenco guitars.

#### CHICKS WITH DECKS Vs

**ROLLERCOASTER:** The Cellar – Indie, electro, punk, riot grrl and 80s pop.

**SIMON DAVIES & COLIN FLETCHER:** Magic Café (1pm)

### SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

Anything good on telly? Best open a bottle of wine, then.

### MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**PETE BOSS & THE BLUEHEARTS:** The Bullingdon – Local Clapton-inspired blues guitarist stars at tonight's Oxford blues club.

### TUESDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB WITH THE TOM GREY**

**QUINTET:** The Bullingdon

**ACOUSTIC NIGHT:** The Port Mahon

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:** Old School House, Gloucester Green

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** Exeter Hall, Cowley  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT:** The Hobgoblin, Cowley Road

### WEDNESDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC**

**SESSION:** Bar Baby

**COROFIN & FRIENDS:** Exeter Hall, Cowley

**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** Northgate Hall

**BOSSAPHONIK:** The Cellar – Latin and jazz grooves.

### THURSDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**MOUNTAINMEN ANONYMOUS +**

**TWENTYSIXFEET:** The Cellar –

Occasionally sublime post-rock soundscaping from the masked guitar attack team, last spotted tearing up the Port Mahon with their Mogwai-inspired noise.

**THE FACTORY:** Exeter Hall, Cowley

**SKYLARKIN:** The Brickworks

**SABOTAGE:** The Zodiac

**LOVE FUNKI:** Old Fire Station

### FRIDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**PANDA BEAR + ARIEL SPRING +**

**SIGNER:** The Wheatsheaf – Carpark Records night in conjunction with the reliably esoteric Vacuum Pop. Brooklyn's Panda Bear is Noah out of Animal Collective, ploughing a more classical furrow, alongside his experimental pop and noise sounds, somewhere between Spiritualized and LaBradford. LA's Ariel Spring, meanwhile, makes karaoke-style electro-pop that – allegedly at least – bridges the gap between Englebert Humperdink and Mouse On Mars. We're open to anything round here. New Zealand's Signer are almost normal by comparison – dubbed-out fuzz pop that owes some to the mighty Flying Saucer Attack. Vacuum Pop, as ever, come up with the goods.

**THE INVISIBLE:** Exeter Hall, Cowley

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB BURN'S NIGHT**

**SPECIAL with IRVINE McCLEVY:** The Port Mahon

**BEAVER:** The Barn, Red Lion, Witney

**BACKROOM BOOGIE:** The Bullingdon

**SOLUTION:** The Cellar

### SATURDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**BOYWITHATOY presents AT RISK +**

**ZELEGA + INTERMEZZO:** The Port

**Mahon** – Cool triple bill of local talent tonight, with goth-popsters At Risk taking The Sundays and Cure on board, while there's Godspeed-inspired noise from Zelega and jazzy techno and big beat fun from Intermezzo.

**PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS +**

**OCTOBER FILE:** The Zodiac – Ugly, dirty and fierce US hardcore from Planes Mistaken For Stars, promoting their new album, 'Up Them In Guts' on No Idea Records. Local post-hardcore supergroup October File, featuring ex-members of Jor and Schindler, crank up the amps another notch and prepare for battle.

**LeBURN'S GIMME HENDRIX**

**EXPERIENCE:** Exeter Hall, Cowley

**FRESH OUT THE BOX with RICH**

**THAIR:** The Cellar – Red Snapper fella on the decks.

**DERORA:** The Barn, Red Lion, Witney

**VERBAL KINK + MINDEFINE + INNOCENTS + IVAN DRAGO:** Langdale Hall, Witney

**MARK ABIS:** Magic Café (1pm)

### SUNDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**ROOSTER:** The Zodiac – Young men play old men's rock music – *see main preview*

**ELECTRIC JAM:** Exeter Hall, Cowley (5pm)

### MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**THE OTHERS:** The Zodiac – Swift return to town for the wannabe indie revolutionaries, marrying the Manics' sloganeering with The Smiths' commentaries on small-town British life, and earning themselves a fanatical army of fans in the process.

**THE ADAM BOMB BAND:** The

**Bullingdon** – Big-haired rock and blues from LA, featuring ex-members of Aerosmith and AC/DC.

**THE BULLY WEE BAND:** Nettlebed Folk Club

*Friday 28<sup>th</sup>*

## JARCREW / THE YOUNG KNIVES / ASHER DUST: The Wheatsheaf

January being a quiet sort of month, gig-wise, it's a welcome return to Jarcrew – one of the most ferociously noisy bands Nightshift witnessed last year. Hailing from Ammanford (home also to John Cale, who was once the local church organist), Jarcrew have battered their way out of the Welsh rock underground with a frenetic live show that centres on wild man singer Kelson Mathias, a screaming dervish who spends as much time getting touchy, feely and in yer face with the crowd as he does spasming around his mic stand. Their high-wired fusion of Fugazi and Big Black-inspired hardcore and Kraftwerk-styled synthetics saw them signed to Gut Records and debut album, 'Breakdance Euphoria Kids' was the start of great things to come. Just don't go if you value your personal space. Top-drawer local support from The Young Knives, soon to be recording with Gang Of Four's Andy Gill, plus Asher Dust, the breaks and hip hop solo project from Big Speakers' AJ, fusing the contemporary urban storytelling of The Street with the rootsier sounds of Horace Andy.





## TUESDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB WITH THE TOM GREY QUINTET:** The Bullingdon DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: Old School House, Gloucester Green  
**OPEN MIC SESSION:** Exeter Hall, Cowley  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT:** The Hobgoblin, Cowley Road  
**UNIVERSITY ROCK SOCIETY NIGHT:** The Cellar  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT:** The Port Mahon

## WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:** Bar Baby  
**COROFIN & FRIENDS:** Exeter Hall, Cowley  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** Northgate Hall  
**HIT'N'RUN:** The Cellar – Hip hop club night.

## THURSDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**WILSON + THE RACE + THE NEW MOON:** The Cellar – Former Jazz Butcher Pat Fish returns with his new band Wilson. Back in the mid-80s the guy was a minor pop legend. His new band mixes the bounce and beats of Happy Mondays with the rockier side of Primal Scream. Reading's The Race offer a Pixies-influenced brand of noise while Abingdon's New Moon get things going in a more sedate folk-pop vein.  
**SKYLARKIN:** The Brickworks  
**SABOTAGE:** The Zodiac  
**LOVE FUNKI:** Old Fire Station

## FRIDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**JARCREW + THE YOUNG KNIVES + ASHER DUST:** The Wheatsheaf – Squalling post-hardcore noise – see main preview.  
**APOCALYPTICA + BREED 77:** The Zodiac (upstairs) – Cellos in a metal stylee – See main preview  
**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES** present **AIRPORT TIGERS + BONE MACHINE + THE FAMILY MACHINE:** The Zodiac (downstairs) – Mixed bill of local indie rock and sweet pop talents from the Gappy Tooth crew.  
**REAL LIFE:** The Zodiac – Hard house, techno and breakbeats club night.  
**ASSASSINS OF SILENCE:** Exeter Hall, Cowley – Hawkwind tribute.  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB OPEN NIGHT:** The Port Mahon  
**HOWLING ROLF:** The Barn, Red Lion, Witney  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE:** The Bullingdon  
**SKETCHY:** The Cellar – Hip hop and scratching sets from DJ Fu and Cuban John.

## SATURDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

**DOMES OF SILENCE + BLUE KITE + THE KICKS:** The Wheatsheaf – Doors-meets-Depeche Mode dark rocking from The Domes, with trip-pop and jazzy pop in support from Blue Kite.  
**THE WALK OFF + HARLETTE + MONDO CADA + 20:20 VISION:** The Zodiac – Launch gig for Quickfix Records' new 'Under 18s' compilation, showcasing the best local teen bands. Headliners The Walk Off do digital carnage with style, while Harlette do gothic grunge pop and Mondo Cada rev up their Black Flag and Damned engines.  
**RAMI & THE SALAMIS:** Exeter Hall, Cowley – Dylan-inspired local songwriter.  
**STICK IT ON:** The Bullingdon – Open decks night for local DJs. No 'Come On Eileen' now, y'hear.  
**SLEEPWALKER:** The Barn, Red Lion, Witney  
**FRESH OUT THE BOX with CONFIDENTIAL:** The Cellar – Live hip hop and house collective.  
**JAN MAURO Magic Café (1pm)** – Galecian hurdy gurdy player.

## SUNDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

**UNDER OATH + THE HURT PROCESS + SILVERSTEIN + ROSES ARE RED:** The Zodiac – Great bill for fans of new hardcore rock music. Underoath, Silverstein and Roses Are Red all land in the UK for the first time, with co-headliners The Hurt Process, returning to Blighty scene after recently being the only UK band to ever feature on the US Warped tour. They also had their album, 'Drive By Monologue', released in the States this year on Victory Records.  
**BEARD MUSEUM with MERZ + ANDY LOVEGROVE + UNDER THE IGLOO:** Purple Turtle – Passionate, poetic pop from Merz at tonight's gentle pop thrill club The Beard Museum. Support from someti e AwayTEAM chap Andy Lovegrove and delicate local pop dreamers Under The Igloo.  
**LA FAMIGLIA:** The Cellar – Live hip hop in aid of Odaid.

## MONDAY 31<sup>st</sup>

**3<sup>rd</sup> DEGREE LEBURN:** The Bullingdon – Live blues.  
**SECONDSMILE + THE SEVENTH CROSS + KING LIFTING + CHINESE FINGERTRAP:** The Cellar  
**CHRIS AND KELLY WHILE:** Nettlebed Folk Club



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Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion in January's gig guide is the 15<sup>th</sup> of December - no exceptions. Call 01865 372255 (10am-6pm) or email listings to [Nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto:Nightshift@oxfordmusic.net). This gig guide is copyright of Nightshift Magazine and may not be reproduced without permission.

# LIVE

## LAMB OF GOD / THROWDOWN

### The Zodiac

Not a night for the faint-hearted this, as Throwdown's pummeling straight-edge attack incites an almost Nuremberg-like atmosphere amongst the lads down the front and a violent slam pit expands with every song to consume half the venue. Throwdown's raw, unrefined brand of hardcore isn't the sort of thing you'd care to take home and inflict on your precious stereo, and the high levels of testosterone that leak from stage to pit aren't always attractive, but, by God, if you want your adrenaline levels shot through the roof and your sensibilities given a good kicking, you won't get much better than this.

And, in this day and age at least, you won't find better metal than Virginia's Lamb Of God. They got long hair and beards and it's motherfuckin' this and motherfuckin' that for a whole hour and half and the riffs just pile on, courtesy of guitarists Willie Adler and Mark Morton, while down-at-heel Elvis-alike Randy Blythe barks and growls demonically until you feel his throat must surely collapse under the pressure of it all.

Ahead even of Shadows Fall and Killswitch Engage, Lamb Of God are spearheading America's metal renaissance, wiping away the last cobwebs of nu-metal that now sounds so frail and embarrassing in comparison to tonight's grinding festival of the heavy. Like some kind of missing link between Iron Maiden (whose riffs you can spot throughout tonight's set) and Pantera (whose patented rage is prevalent in Blythe's delivery), Lamb Of God are so Very Metal, you can almost imagine a sharp-eyed cartoonist creating them. But you'd never tell them as much. Not if you valued your life.

*Sue Foreman*



Photo: Richard Hounslow (07761 682297)

## DHAFER YOUSSEF

### The Zodiac

This gig is all about going with the flow. Dhafer Youssef, Tunisian-born oud player who learned singing in a Koran school, now defies easy categorisation as Arabic, or world jazz. Tonight his beautiful voice is as much his instrument as his oud. His vocals are about stretching sound to see where it takes you, rather than the words. Soft breathy sounds made by cupping a hand to his mouth or by turning away from the mic become soaring spine tingling calls which climb the vocal register, by way of yelps and shouts.

Dhafer sits very still; the man has presence and this is part of the whole mesmeric effect. His calls echo Islamic call to prayer and his roots, but they call on his fellow musicians and the audience to immerse themselves in music, to come explore and enjoy with him.

His onstage soulmates are four of the finest of Norway's electronic nu-jazz scene. They clearly share Dhafer's desire to paint soundscapes and resist being confined within particular genres. Not a new idea to get away from boundaries but this is one band taking it further, using electronica

to puncture expectations of how their instruments usually sound. Dhafer's sparse oud playing frequently uses a single hanging note and he plays in short bursts. Not for him the traditional elongated serpentine runs of cascading notes. Arve Henriksen clearly draws inspiration from the Miles Davis of 'Silent Way' and Tomas Stanko. His soft trumpet is amazing, being a flute and then a clarinet. And he also gives us vocal sounds, some of which might be Sami, and are as beguiling and mysterious as Dhafer's. On guitar Eivind Aarset often sounds like he is playing an organ. Eivind Aarset's meditative, elegiac tribute to his mother, 'Norwegian Girl', is a standout. But the biggest surprise was just how much this band rock, especially as they spend most of the gig seated.

The danger with bands who are into the mystic and depth is that the music eventually meanders and fails to move forward. No chance with these brilliant musicians, whose modesty genuinely adds to their immense presence.

*Colin May*

## RODRIGO AND GABRIELA

### The Zodiac

It's not often you see an absolutely packed crowd here to listen to an acoustic duo. Especially if it's a relatively unknown (and un-local) act.

But Mexican-born Rodrigo Sanchez and Gabriela Quintero are so delightful and entertaining that it isn't surprising in the least to see a sea of smiling and rapturous faces beaming back up at the stage.

Rodrigo and Gabriela play their acoustic guitars with flair and a speed that sets your heart racing. If they were flamenco or classical Spanish purists we'd no doubt still be impressed. But like with any act these days – no matter if it's pop, jazz, country or rock – it's all the right combinations and added nuances that makes this couple stand out in their genre.

There's certainly chemistry between them. As the playing gets more frenetic and their 'question and answer' dueling is more charged, they smile at each other as if they've just remembered the same secret.

But most of all it's their total concoction of styles and cultural

allusions mixed in with their own material which is brilliantly executed, that leaves others treading in their wake.

A prime example is tonight's highlight - a cover of Metallica's 'One' that shimmies into Paul Desmond's jazz classic, 'Take Five', with a snatch of the White Stripes to boot. Get the picture? It's not surprising they went down a storm at Glastonbury and Womad earlier this year.

Their technical abilities are perfectly complementary, Rodrigo specializing in intricate melody, and Gabriela augmenting her plectrum skills with a tabla-style mastery of percussion on the body of her instrument.

Lucky for us they've upped sticks from Mexico City and have now settled in Dublin. Which should prove for some interesting forthcoming material (let's hope for more U2 influence rather than The Corrs).

Whatever they decide to do next no doubt it will be intriguing, surprising and certainly entertaining.

*Katy Jerome*

## ZOE BICAT / SHIELA SALWAY / MARK BOSLEY / DAVE NOBLE & SHARRON SUBBARAO

### Port Mahon

Hot Club of France-style instrumentals; unaccompanied blues and gospel; a song about Brian Clough and a singer songwriter leading a five piece band: another typically quirky mix at the Port Mahon's Tuesday night acoustic session.

Dave on guitar and Sharon on fiddle doing their Django and Stefan-influenced take of standards like 'Sweet Georgia Brown' generates a warm good time feeling. Dave is a gifted and subtle guitarist whether strumming or plucking, and Sharon's fiddle grabs your attention when it's fast and loud. They close with a favourite tune of mine, 'Blue Monk' with Dave doing fine work. What a pleasure to hear it live.

Sheila Salway dares to give us a couple of unaccompanied gospel blues. This taster makes me want to hear her with a band even though tonight's bold try doesn't really work. Then it's club organiser Mark Bosley living up to his gothic reputation with his Brian Clough songline and a dark song about poverty. Tonight Mark's sweet Tim Buckley voice

seems to have a harder edge to go with his newly shaven head, but his Beatles cover is too much sugar and not enough bitter zest.

Tonight Zoe Bicat is joined by different combinations of drums, electric bass, violin, cello and her talented fellow musicians' voices. They give us a restrained set of clever, carefully crafted and controlled arrangements, which heightens the melancholy of Zoe's songs. Her lyrics are mainly about failing to make that special, lasting, intimate connection and of the inevitability of relationship breakdown. The songs have titles such as 'You Just Use Words,' and lines like, "The end of it for you is where I begin", and they hit home.

We're not averse to tales of melancholy and pain, especially as Zoe has plenty of vocal variation, including a pleasingly gravelly voice and a penetrating whisper. Except that in this set, the mood is too unrelenting, too much of a downer. You want Zoe to lighten up a bit, and for her and her band to trust their undoubted talent and turn up the power and energy and make us smile.

*Colin May*

## THE THIEVES

### The Zodiac

"Hello, we're The Thieves, from Oxford, England," yelps Hal Stokes as he, brother Sam and drummer Jamie Dawson bound onstage for their first hometown gig in nine months. Just in case we'd forgotten, as they ply their rocking trade over in LA, that they're still local boys at heart, still dedicating songs to long-term fans who never fail to give them a heroes' welcome.

The Thieves' new EP, their first since changing their name from Vade Mecum, shows a band becoming even more of a pop proposition, but live they still rock out, cutting axe hero poses with feet on monitors, Hal diving into the crowd, all three of them shaking their shaggy blond manes in unison. A keyboard player though adds a whole new dimension to their sound, much like Charlie Coombes does with Supergrass. Hal and Sam have

been playing together in bands now since they were 13, and it shows – they're so well tuned and choreographed that you can picture them tearing up stadium stages already. And that's not such a far-fetched thought when you consider their talent for writing full-on rock songs with fast-beating atomic pop hearts. Like the new single, 'You Get It Easy', tapping into U2's epic style while borrowing a lick or two from Bowie's 'Heroes'. They can do bumptious rock'n'roll in the style of Free, but just as naturally beat it up with The Stooges, as with 'It Still Goes On'.

The last song, a cover of 'Whole Lotta Rosie', dedicated to Rose down the front sporting a Vade Mecum tattoo, displays their roots in every sense. But as well as roots, The Thieves have got wings too. Just watch them fly.

*Ian Chesterton*

## CHARLOTTEFIELD / THE EDMUND FITZGERALD

### The Wheatsheaf

There's a guy stumbling around the venue, all straggly hair, unshaven, and looking completely lost. For a minute he looks like he's just managed to scrape enough money to get into the gig, and then he's going to drink any pints he may find unattended. But he keeps on walking and heads towards the stage, and as he does the rest of Charlottefield follow him. He may look lost off stage, but behind that kit he's like the tramp Jesus of drumming. What Ashley Marlow can do with his drum kit occasionally defies the laws of physics tonight, and how lucky Charlottefield are to have him. They are thrashing a path between the noise and abandon of Nirvana, and the control and intelligence of Fugazi. Yes it's punky, in places almost jazzy, at times it's reminiscent of The Paper Chase, and it is very, very good. Their limited release on Fat Cat records is an absolute stunner, and when they take it to the stage, it's like the sun exploding.

When they finally release their debut album early next year, it would not be a surprise to see Charlottefield's star rise and rise.

If you are not already familiar with The Edmund Fitzgerald then you should hang your heads in shame, and think about what you've done. Easily one of the most impressive bands in the Oxford area, they fuse prog and post rock to create brutal but beautiful songs.

Certainly The Rock of Travolta spring to mind as The Edmund Fitzgerald hammer their way through instrumental sections, coping with tricky time changes with aplomb. But the Travolta's had a knowing sense of humour when they interspersed tracks with stolen riffs and clever segues; with the Edmund Fitzgerald, everything seems much more serious, it's played with their hearts on their sleeves, rather than their tongues in their cheeks.

*Allin Pratt*

# The W h e a t s h e a f

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Thursday 20th - The Spin Presents - DAVE O'HIGGINS Doors 7:45pm / £7/£5

Friday 21st - Vacuum Pop Presents a Carpark Records/Pawtracks Tour showcase featuring

**PANDA BEAR (Animal Collective)  
+ ARIEL PINK & SIGNER** Doors 7:30pm / £5

Friday 28th - Oxfordbands Presents

**JARCREW + THE YOUNG KNIVES  
+ ASHER DUST** Doors 7:30pm / £5

Saturday 29th - Pink Pancake Presents

**THE DOMES OF SILENCE  
+ BLUE KITE + THE KICKS** Doors 7:30pm / £4

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## WINTER WEEKENDER

### The Exeter Hall

The term Spirit Of Independence was made for events like this. A collaboration between three of Oxford's live music clubs – Klub Kakofanney, Gappy Tooth Industries and Mark Bosley's acoustic music club – at one of Oxford's best small venues, offering thirty acts over two days for a budget price and virtually nothing on show that wouldn't send major label A&R scouts scuttling back under the fridge.

Highlight of Saturday's proceedings is returning Inflatable Buddha hurdy gurdy player Jan Mauro, whose oddly exotic Galecian music is unlike anything else you'll hear on the local gig scene. Similarly Tandara Mandara's Balkan folk and Kaled Bahloul's North African songs, both of which complement the ebullient but laidback atmosphere of the day, with seemingly no-one bothered about trying to impress anyone in particular, preferring to simply do what they do best. Fencott Disaster doing what they do best – making a bludgeoning grunge racket – unfortunately finds their set cut short as the neighbours threaten to revolt.

Sunday lunchtime's acoustic session is a welcome oasis of calm (at least once Twizz Twangle has finished his bizarre, off-key trumpet rendition of 'Delilah'), with the likes of Maeve Bayton and a decidedly bunged-up Laima Bite happy to drift through genteel folk pop ballads with charm to spare. Former Eat frontman Ange makes up in urgency what he lacks in his old inspiration, while Station X's Rob Mclean makes up for an unforgivable cover of 'Echo Beach' with his John Foxx-inspired synth-pop doodlings. It's left to The Drug Squad though to really bring the party to its feet, with their blend of ska-punk and boozy pub rock, spaghetti western skanks and rhinestone ballads all knocked out with a good-natured dose of chaos. This mix of homeliness and exotic carefree attitude always makes these Klub Kakofanney-centred events an out of the ordinary pleasure, and as the masses spend themselves into a lather in the pre-Christmas rush down the road, it's a little like being lost in another age for a small time.

*Terry Molloy / Dale Kattack*

## TAURPIS TULA / THE MV & EE MEDICINE SHOW / SAMARA LUBELSKI

### The Port Mahon

Samara Lubelski is a former member of Jackie-O Motherfucker, the American collective at the forefront of the new wave of US alternative folk bands. Their approach is wonderfully refreshing: put 20 people in a club, get them into groups, make up some band names, write them on a poster, stick it on the door and you've got yourself a gig. Then record everything and sell it from a website, burning off CD-Rs as people ask for them. Lubelski's music is gentle and wistful, with breathy vocals and understated guitar, bringing echoes of early 80s British indie. Not immediately catchy, but new album 'The Fleeting Skies' is a grower.

The MV & EE Medicine Show are part of American band/collective The Tower Recordings, which includes Lubelski, and they continue the esoteric, psychedelic folk theme. They mix standards like 'Freight Train' with original material, Matt Valentine constantly swapping instruments

and styles. He plays that funny ukulele that looks like a deep saucepan with a neck, called a cumbush but pronounced 'junebush'. Erika Elder's voice is so delicate you get worried you're breathing too loudly, while third member Nemo plays around with things like mixing bowls to create sound effects. This is pretty out there stuff, but the quietest audience of the year lap it up.

Glasgow's Taurpis Tula and inject some urban grit into proceedings. David Keenan is best known as a writer for The Wire and ex-member of The Telstar Ponies, while Heather Leigh Murray is in Charalambides. They start out their all-improvised set in an alt-folky vein, but things soon build in intensity with complex, unusual chord progressions bringing to mind Spaceman 3 or even early Jesus and Mary Chain. To no-one's surprise, things end with a stage invasion by all parties, with a suitably chaotic but curiously coherent finale.

*Art Lagun*

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## NØUGHT / P.Y.E.

### The Wheatsheaf

Of all the artful, angular and abstruse instrumental bands doing the rounds in Oxford over the past year or so, P.Y.E. have consistently been the quirkiest. Their music is a hyperactive, pumped-up Frankenstein's monster of funk bass stitched onto stabbing guitar instrumentals, with a composite effect something along the lines of watching Level 42 try to cover Don Caballero. Only, y'know, in a good way. Bouts of spasmodic complexity rub up against the odd period of longueur when the band drop into a more predictable groove, but their enthusiasm is more than infectious enough to make up for it and, importantly, there's enough freshness and vigour here to make them a band well worth looking out for this year.

Taking into account their long-held status as one the figureheads of Oxford music a few years ago and the relative increasing popularity of whatever you want to call the latest strand of art rock, it's a mystery how Nought aren't more widely-celebrated.

Bewilderingly complicated but imbued with a sense of urgency that transcends any accusations of cerebrality, and technically mesmerising without ever wandering into cloyed ostentatiousness, Nought are nothing short of astonishing. Remarkable guitar work is underpinned by a flexible rhythm section, and for every elaborate guitar flourish, there's a wealth of imagination and precocity. 'Cough Cap Kitty Cat' might have won all the plaudits upon its release, but it's the B-side to that first Shifty Disco single, 'Ignatius', which has lasted the distance. The 2004 model loses the famed power drill solo, replacing it with further guitar pyrotechnics snaking around a towering bass figure. And five minutes through, everything kicks back in with a previously-unmatched ferocity that threatens to tear down the whole venue. Nought might just be simultaneously the best jazz band and the greatest punk rock band I've ever seen.

*Stuart Fowkes*



## **THE RELATIONSHIPS /** **THE WOULD-BE-GOODS /** **KATE CHADWICK**

### **The Wheatsheaf**

Freed from her native Brookes Rock Society spotlight format, Kate Chadwick's acoustic debut here is a delightfully wrong-footing experience of modest naiveté and natural assurance. From the perky ode to arrival, 'Here', to the closing allure of 'Home', her songs have none of the jilted acidity that is so often poured out, but instead it's the oxygenated excitement of love, and the surprising fact that men might actually be okay to have around. Her brilliant cover of Marvin Gaye's 'Sexual Healing', in a Lisa Loeb style, makes you think, forget the X-Factor, this girl is the whole alphabet.

I'm often reading that time is doughnut shaped and with Jessica Griffin's band The Would-Be-Goods, I'm ready to believe it. Seeing the Elvis Costello-like vision of Peter Momtchilof on guitar and my Jericho Tavern flashback to Talulah Gosh and Heavenly is complete. That whole cute / fey genre is still being kept shiny as silver Georgian candlesticks. Jessica's tricorn hat

lends it that cute air, as the jangle of songs like 'Cecil Beaton's Scrapbook' and 'Le Crocodile', each with their Mersey Beat intros, makes us jig like contestants on Junior Eurovision. Charming beyond belief.

Tonight's lesson has all been about still waters running deep, and no-one epitomises that more than Richard Ramage, songwriter with the woefully underrated Relationships. His owlsh, avuncular appearance almost detracts from his incisive observations on English Suburbia, narratives sung in a quiet offhand manner, like Al Stewart covering The Smiths' 'Cemetery Gates'. The hazy sunlight of 'Disappearing Girl', the minor chord changes in 'Something's Strange', and tales of flatmates likened to Brian Jones of the Stones, all get a rush from behind, with the wonderful 'bound and gagged' rock drumming of Tim Turan. Discovering The Relationships is like finding out you're not really stupid.

*Paul Carrera*

## **THE BETA BAND**

### **The Zodiac**

The Beta Band have never been ones to take the conventional route, theirs is a vision way beyond the norm. Everything they see and hear is digested then spat out in Technicolor and split into millions of buzzing balls of brilliance. Their first three EPs contained songs up to 15 minutes long and spanned dub, jazz, blues, dance, soul, pop, and created some styles of their own. Then they unjustifiably branded their debut album as crap. With their latest album 'Heroes to Zeroes' encapsulating and bettering their previous work into a cohesive masterpiece they bizarrely decided to call it a day.

Perhaps wanting the songs to speak for themselves, the lavish stage show is left behind tonight on this farewell tour. The songs still fizz in a schizophrenic manner, coiling themselves in coordinated knots and utilising that many samples and sounds they even render the customary kitchen sink redundant. Sauntering from

one cult classic to the next with 'Easy's shuffle and stomp, lyrical quirkiness and 'She's The One For Me' and 'Dog's Got A Bone's heart-rending inclinations, to the more recent unfussy slabs of skewed-pop brilliance from the heavier beat-laden 'Assessment' and 'Outside', with Steve Mason's unique lyrical complexity of the human mind: "I wish I had a pot to piss in, I'd take it outside", to "I think I cracked my skull on the way down, I think I lost my head better lay down, the fear facts presented in the cold light of day". Things do sometimes get bogged down, blurring into one, then you find your mind wondering to the tranquillity of your own private universe where they have always worked best – it's a personal thing in more ways than one.

Finishing at their peak, we salute The Beta Band and bid them a fond farewell onto solo projects and into further worlds of the bizarre.

*Gary Davidson*



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***Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>: STICK IT ON - Open Decks night for DJs.***

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# DEMOS

*Demo of the month wins a day's free recording at Ursa Audio. For special deals for local bands, call Ursa on 01865 242055.*

## DEMO OF THE MONTH

Earnest Cox refuse to rest on their laurels and are prepared to show off their versatility and imagination suggests they could grow into a serious pop monster very soon.

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## THE LONG WEEKEND

Not strictly an Oxford band any longer, having returned, after a spell at Uni, to their native Medway (a place they're happy to espouse the pleasures of, in all its scag-head, run-down shopping mall glory), The Long Weekend remain a classy but elusive act. 'What Have I Got' barely pauses for breath as guitars, drums and Farfisa pile headlong from start to finish while the singer does a grand job of mastering the whole process, in a frenetic Teardrop Explodes sort of way. He's their greatest asset, capable of doing rough and raw or slick and soulful within the space of a single verse. The Long Weekend formula is pretty simple: throw absolutely everything into the mix and squeeze it so tight it has to fit together. Which is why 'Itch' sounds like a cross between Hawkwind and 60s garage rock, while the more epic but equally crashing 'Stretch You Out' echoes The Godfathers or even a better-natured Fatima Mansions. We've never seen The Long Weekend live but we imagine them to wear ill-fitting suits, smoke a lot and get into fights with each other in the back of the van back home from gigs. Imagine if The Libertines were proper punk rock and wrote decent songs.

## EARNEST COX

Currently starting to make a serious impression on folks on the local live circuit, Earnest Cox have come up with a novel idea in this day and age: have loads of great ideas and make all your songs sound different from each other. Of course it'll confuse the hell out of children raised on Good Charlotte or Hundred Reasons, but the rest of us can sit back and enjoy the fun. So here's a nine-song demo that starts off sounding like fab late-90s pop freaks Tiger – all yelping vocals, ebullient, unselfconscious guitar melodies and great "Oo-wah-woo" backing vocals in the chorus – then gets all sensitive and melancholy on the ironically-named 'Oh Happy Day', a bit like The Go Between's Robert Forster on one of his downers. There's funky guitar pop, sax stabs and kitchen sink soul on 'Two Can Play At That Game' and a grungy guitar and synth dirge on 'No Joke'. This being a new band, it's not all fully formed just yet, but the way

## SCRIPT

We're a bunch of paupers here at Nightshift, really we are. And local popsters Script aren't much better off. So first off they apologised for the quality of their demo cos they couldn't afford a decent studio. So we said, send us a bottle of vodka and, being the desperate and immoral scum that we are, we'll make you demo of the month whatever and then you'll get a free day in Ursa Studios. Hurray! Except, being as poor as they are, they only sent us a bloody vodka miniature! That's not even enough to go on our cornflakes! Useless indie skinflints. Anyway, so we could've thrown them in the Demo Dumper, but being miserly on the spirit front isn't a crime deserving of such punishment, unlike being utterly fucking rubbish, which Script aren't. No, 'As I Do' is a sweet sliver of dreamy, dare we say shoegazing, guitar pop that hovers and bubbles on rising currents of keyboard hum and daydreaming female backing vocals, and then turns into something off 'Sgt Pepper' for no apparent reason at the end and is really rather good. They don't do indie rocking quite so well, as the somewhat clodhopping '6.5' demonstrates, although the singer's off-key Phil Oakley impression is cool. They're back doing what they do best on 'Any Last Words', a serene acoustic folk-pop flutter with a vocal that stays just the right side of the emotional turmoil line. Drink more vodka, that'll fuel those melancholy fires. Go on, treat yourself. To a whole bottle.

## NEW JACUZZI

Despite cursing themselves forever with a name that sounds like either a hopeless entry in a student band competition, or worse, a bunch of wacky, jazz-funk-playing hippy filth, New Jacuzzi are pretty decent and not what we expect. They stride in with a wall of guitar and brass noise that could be a mid-air collision between Ride and Beulah, before leaving us with a timid acoustic guitar and xylophone slope, finishing before it gets the chance to do anything of any great note. The more satisfying 'I'm Glad You're Here' comes with an almost obligatory these days urgent funky guitar lead and a vaguely David Byrne-ish talky lead vocal of the sort once preferred by crop-haired SWP-supporting frontmen of obscure militant 80s post-punk bands, which we remember fondly, and if it's a bit messy to be really

effective, it gives it a fair crack. And then it's on to the post-rock oblique guitar noise with 'Five 4', which unsurprisingly sounds a wee bit like Slint in places and at others like the CD is skipping. Oh, it actually is skipping. It suits them.

## JUNKIE BRUSH

Junkie Brush's demo comes accompanied by a copy of their recent Nightshift live review which hails them as proper punk rock. And are they? Well, we don't know since they've neglected to put a CD in the case. Which in its own sweet way is about as a punk rock as you can get.

## R-R-ROOSTER BAND

Stuttering blues silliness from Skittle Alley promoter Nigel Meehan and former Shrinkwrap chum Innes. It starts off promisingly enough with the Beefheart / Muddy Waters-styled 'Cows', an odd little dirge about cattle getting high on magic mushrooms, based on a slide guitar motif, but it quickly degenerates into a bit of a private joke, innocuous campfire blues and a lopsided Leadbelly ram jam pastiche that's at least tolerably good humoured, but letting themselves down badly with the final track, 'Hard On', which, arf, arf, is all about – oh our aching sides – is about taking too many drugs and not being able to get it up. Knowing Nigel to be an all-round good bloke, may we simply suggest he tries different drugs in future.

## SEVENTH LEVEL

Aagh! Shit! No! Jazz-funk! Get it out! No! Remember our duty to The Kids! Keep it on! We must fully understand evil before we can expose it and defeat it! But they sound like they should have been first on to The Blow Monkeys back in 1985! But, oh, oh, oh, what's this? It's getting better! Sucking us in! Scratchy production and spidery guitars. A man shouting rather than singing, a guitarist who only knows one riff and some ill-advised skat at the end of one song. Out goes the jazz-funk, to be replaced by an awkward indie-funk lurch. Scrap what we said earlier: first on to Joseph K back in 1981. That's better.

## TRUE RUMOUR

Now here's a fella, Mark Cobb, with a lot of time on his hands. Not only is he the singer in three different bands, he's sent us all their demos. Twice. Just so we absolutely, definitely know he exists. True Rumour finds Mark at his best, doing his country pop thing and letting his voice and the tune in hand breathe, which, as we shall discover

very soon, he doesn't always allow. 'Alligators' is a seductive, minimalist acoustic pop number, Mark's lispy voice leading it in a way that reminds us a little of Dominic Appleton, while musically it's close to Red House Painters. Stick a cello in there and they'd be flying. And hey, here's a violin, backing up the airy gothic folk of 'Different World, Same Planet', sounding like it's been lost in the early-80s indie wilderness all this time, again Mark's voice working with the song rather than against it. Quite what the hell is going on the final track on the demo, 'Beekeeper #2', is anyone's guess, but same band, different time zone might be a more appropriate title.

## TRANSMISSION

So here's Mr Cobb again, here in his rock incarnation. Claiming, correctly it appears, to be influenced by Arabic music, Transmission initially promise plenty with the epic 'Kings', part way between the soundtrack to *Lawrence of Arabia* and one of Kula Shaker's more ostentatious efforts. They hold it together long enough for 'Circles' to touch bases with both Muse – notable Mark's increasingly operatic vocalisation – and A Perfect Circle, but by 'Go' they're getting formulaic and overblown, while the backing vocals seem to have accidentally leaked in from an adjoining studio. 'Tammanrasset', meanwhile, is a stadium-sized folk-rock power ballad and thus must be hunted down with dogs and slaughtered mercilessly if only to save future generations from pain and embarrassment.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

## TSUNAMI

And here's Mark one last time, this time promising a more Neil Young-influenced take on the country rock beast. By now Mark is starting to sound seriously desperate if not deranged, elongating every line as if he's fading in and out of a dodgy radio transmission. At first the washes of organ and wah wah guitar are not unpleasant, unremarkable though they are, and appear content to go absolutely nowhere with any great haste. By the time Tsunami have repeated the idea twice more, wandering into a sea of semi-epic, self-contemplating soft rock indulgence, coupled with a recording quality that seems to have sucked dry what little life existed in the songs in the first place, and it's all we can do to ask the music vet to put them gently to sleep and not stab them repeatedly with a screwdriver until their eyeballs pop like small jelly-filled eastern delicacies.

**Hey, stoopid people, read this bit before you send a demo in!**

Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1ZU.

**IMPORTANT:** no review without a contact address and phone number (no email or mobile-only). No more than four tracks on a demo. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. Go and have a cry instead.

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