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THE FINE ART OF QUALITY INSTRUMENTS

NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU
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SUPERGRASS return with a new album and single in August. 'Road To Rouen', the band's fifth studio album, is released on the 15th August. A single, 'St Petersburg' precedes the album on the 8th August.

THE PORT MAHON is set to continue, and expand, its live music output with the arrival of a new manager, John Russell-Smith, this month. The pub, now regarded as one of the best small venues in the area, is installing a new PA and looking to build on the reputation it gained under previous landlord Ralph Crabtree. John is keen to hear from bands wanting to play, especially acoustic acts. Send demos to him c/o The Port Mahon, 82 St Clements, Oxford, OX4.

SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT release a new album, 'Of Motets and Misdirection', on Friday 5th August on Thin Man Records and will play a gig in the unlikely setting of the front lawn of Tate Britain to launch it. The eleven-track album is basically a compilation of their first two mini-albums, 'Plenty More Neurologists In The Sea', and last year's 'A Sinistra Case For The Laevus Levus', with many of the tracks remastered. The Tate Britain gig is free and includes support from White Night, Two Men In A Boat and The Mabuses, as well as a barbecue. Check out suitablecasefortreatment.myanalogue.net for more details.

SEXY BREAKFAST launch their new website with another of their legendary boat parties on Sunday 31st July. The boat trip will include a trip down the Thames to Abingdon and back plus a gig by Sexy Breakfast, with support from The Thumb Quintet and The Walk Off, followed by a glam-rock party at the Wheatsheaf which will include a performance of Hedwig and the Angry Inch by SB frontman Joe Swarbrick. There will be a limited number of tickets available for the boat party, priced £10, available from The Polar Bear, The Music Box and Salters Steamers on Folly Bridge. Further boat trips are planned for Sunday 21st August, featuring Suitable Case

For Treatment, Richard Walters and Smilex, and Sunday 4th September, which will be a launch party for The Evenings' new CD, with support from The Family Machine and Fell City Girl.

AVID RECORDS could be forced to close after Oxford City Council imposed a backdated rent increase that could see the shop faced with a 50% hike in its rent. Avid, in Gloucester Street, which is the only independent record shop in Oxford city centre and has been a goldmine of rare and second hand vinyl for years, could be facing a backdated bill for around £40,000 after the rent review is implemented, an amount that would spell ruin for a small retail operation. Councils are required by law to charge commercial rent rates but at a time when the Zodiac has just had its planning application for an extension into a vacant neighbouring plot turned down by the council who want to encourage retail outlets, these rent increases make a mockery of such a decision. So, another corporate coffee shop for the city centre? It's looking more and more likely.

AUDIOSCOPE festival will run over two days this year. The mini-festival, which has raised over £10,000 for homeless charity Shelter since 2001, takes place at the Zodiac over the weekend of the 29th and 30th of October. Audioscope regularly showcases the best underground and leftfield music from around the world and locally. Last year's event was headlined by former-Can frontman Damo Suzuki.

THIS YEAR'S FOX FM Party In The Park takes place on Sunday 28th August in South Park. Texas are the first band to be confirmed at the mini-festival, with more chart-friendly acts to be announced soon. Tickets, priced £10, are on sale now, from 0870 042 7477. The price includes a £1 donation to Help A Local Child.

THE FACTORY have split into two factions with both sides looking for musicians to form new bands. Guitarist and songwriter Aaron, plus Andy, Chris and Joe

FELL CITY GIRL are set to perform at this year's Carling Weekend: Reading and Leeds Festivals. The former Nightshift cover stars, who are unsigned but have been earning themselves an enviable reputation on the local gig circuit and in London, have been picked to play on the Carling Stage, which aims to showcase the best up and coming acts around. The band will be the second act on the Carling Stage on Friday at Reading (August 26th) and Saturday at Leeds (27th). They will share a stage with headliners Ladytron and Charlotte Hatherley.

Speaking to Nightshift about the gig, Fell City Girl frontman Phil McMinn described the band's excitement at earning such a prestigious slot: "I guess you'll understand when I say it's a massively big deal for us - we've not been around that long but we've played hard and playing at Reading (we're even on the yellow poster!) is way beyond anything I ever expected we'd ever be doing at this stage in the game. No doubt we'll break a bass string during the first song though! Jokes aside, we have much to prove, to ourselves more than anyone."

Fell City Girl release their new single, 'Weaker Light', in August on Nomadic Records.

Win weekend tickets to the Reading Festival – see page 16

will continue to work under The Factory name, while singer Laima and guitarist Moty are also looking for new musicians for a new project. Both sides cite the usual musical differences as the cause of the split.

BIG SPEAKERS follow up their recent Make Poverty History benefit gig at the Zodiac last month by releasing a cut-price compilation CD of local bands in aid of the campaign. The eleven-track CD features contributions from Big Speakers themselves, plus Asher Dust, The Evenings, Sexy Breakfast, Oliver Shaw, J/Tusa, Sunnyvale Noise Sub-Element, and Fragger, it costs just £3 and is available from The Polar Bear on Cowley Road as well as from www.bigspeakers.co.uk

THE MUSICIANS UNION will be hosting an open meeting at the Zodiac on Thursday 7th July, from 7-10pm. The first hour of the meeting is for MU members and potential members to meet face-to-face with regional representatives. From 8pm there will be a presentation on the new licensing law and what it will mean for publicans, venue owners and promoters. Call South East Regional Officer Jo Lavery on 0207 840 5523.

URSA AUDIO is looking to relocate this summer. The recording and rehearsal studio in Cave Street, east Oxford, will be closing temporarily this summer before setting up in a new location. In the meantime the URSA crew are looking for anyone interested in taking over their current premises. Anyone interested should call James on 07870357748.

THE CATWEAZLE CLUB takes a well-earned summer break throughout August. The all-comers live music, poetry and performance club, which celebrated its tenth anniversary last year, opens its doors for the last time this summer on Wednesday 27th July and returns on Wednesday 7th September. Thereafter it every Wednesday night at Northgate Hall in St Michael's Street. More details at www.catweazleclub.org.

LOCAL FIDDLE'N'SYNTH rockers Red Star Cycle play their final shows this month before going their separate ways. The band play their last two gigs at Bicester Hobgoblin (Thursday 7th and the Wheatsheaf (Friday 8th).

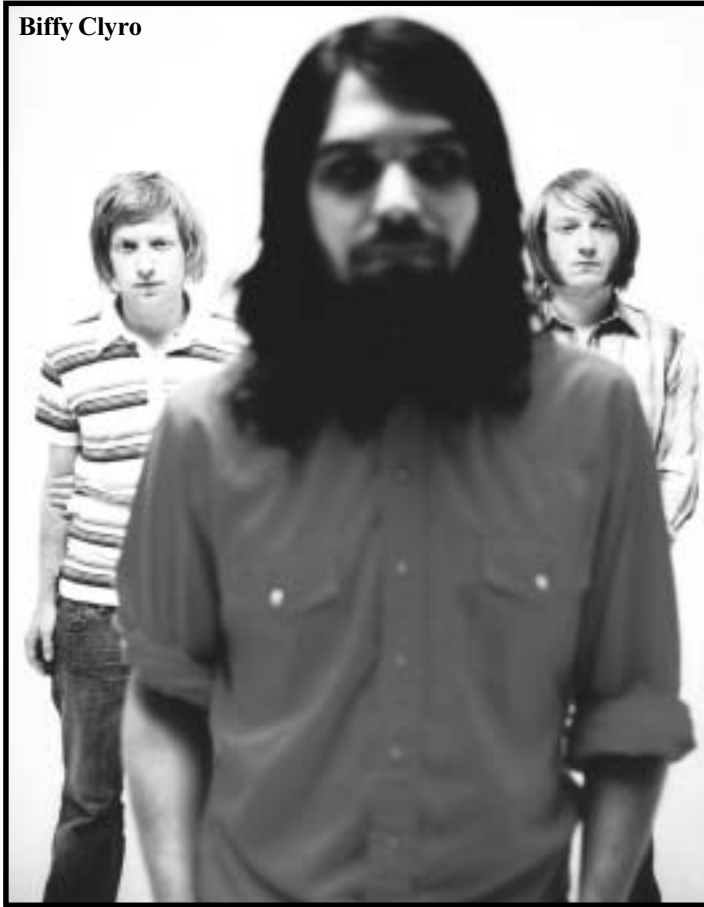
DON'T FORGET to tune into The Download each Saturday at 6pm on BBC Radio Oxford - the best of local music on the radio.



photo: Miles Walkden

Truck 2005

Biffy Clyro



THERE ARE TWO MAJOR indicators of just how much Truck Festival has become an established part of the UK's festival season. The first is that this year it has sold out in advance quicker than ever before. Half the 4,000 tickets were snapped up by music fans from outside of Oxfordshire which means that, even more than last year, the festival will feel even more like a major event and less like a parochial fair. The second signifier is in the quality of the headline acts. While Saturday's bill-toppers Biffy Clyro perhaps typify the Truck way – of doing things yourself and caring not for the fickle hype of the national press – they're still major players,

having worked their way up, hand over hand, into a genuine cult band. Sunday's headliners, The Magic Numbers, are the real coup, though. Last month their debut album crashed into the Top10, while the press and radio have unanimously hailed them as one of the best new bands around (they were recently voted Best New Band at the *Mojo* Awards).

Below these two is a festival bill of incredible breadth and depth. Something for everyone, and plenty more besides.

WHAT MAKES TRUCK SUCH a joy and a problem to preview is the riches on offer, and the guarantee of so many new treats to

Saturday 23rd - Sunday 24th July
Hill Farm, Steventon

discover. It's impossible to do full justice to a bill that takes in over 100 acts across six stages in just over a page, without it descending into a list of names you simply have to see. Equally, you can pretty much bet your last penny that the best thing you'll see all weekend will be a band or artist whom you'd never even heard of beforehand.

No act bears this out more than Do Me Bad Things. This year they're second on the bill to The Magic Number having blazed a trail across the UK's live circuit since last summer. At Truck 2004, however, they were complete unknowns who stole Nightshift's hearts and sense of reserve, almost lost halfway down the line-up on the tiny Trailerpark stage. Truck is a great place to discover new, exciting, exotic and sometimes downright daft new bands.

(essentially Truck's host band) are enduringly popular and reliably cool, while The Schla La La's feature another Truck regular, Piney Gir, in her 60 garage punk girl band mode. Best of the local contingent should be the effusive and inventive Sexy Breakfast.

Over in the Trailerpark Tent, you could check out lo-fi screwballs Fonda 500, Leeds' dynamic post-rock assassins 65 Days Of Static and Oxford's hottest band, The Young Knives among a host of quality new acts.

The Barn That Cannot Be Named, which was so much better for its increased capacity last year, is host to headliners Capdown with their high-energy ska-core, plus Echo & The Bunnymen acolytes The Editors; frenetic post-hardcore types Summer of Mars with Silent Film, Harlette and P.Y.E leading a strong local contingent.

SO, WHO TO SEE?

Well the two headline acts of course: Scottish post-grunge rockers Biffy Clyro are a dynamic, rousing live act well suited to a festival atmosphere. The Magic Numbers, meanwhile, outwardly seem more homely, in a 60s folk-pop kind of way, but they've got a rougher, rockier edge too and are almost the epitome of a great summer band.

Also essential viewing on the main stage on Saturday are Sweden's Ravonettes, a gorgeous, fuzzed-up take on classic Phil Spector-produced girl bands, only stuck through The Jesus and Mary Chain's guitar mincer. Truck regulars MC Lars and Goldrush

Yourcodenameis:milo



The Cliffhangers, Peepshow Paddy and the Ralfe Band are among the highlights of the Lounge Tent, while the Acoustic Tent hosts the likes of Zoë Bicat, Dive Dive, The Tenderfoot, KTB and headliner Neil Halstead, one-time

THE PROMOTER'S VIEW

Truck Festival Co-ordinator Robin Bennett on this year's event

What new things can festival-goers expect from Truck this year?

"A spoken-word stage, better disabled viewing, a larger market field and acoustic tent, and possibly a giant inflatable pig."

Apart from size, what do you think makes Truck so different to other festivals?

"Truck is different because it doesn't follow a script on how to do things, and as almost everyone is working for free, they all do things with a spirit of fun. The music is diverse because we have all kinds of different tastes. It would probably be safer to appeal to one niche, but I like seeing goths dancing to drum & bass and vice versa!"

If you had to recommend three acts that people hadn't heard of before, who would they be?

"There are many, but how about.. Absentee, from London, who have some noir-ish music and a guy with a very low voice but still sound uplifting. The Ralfe Band play weird European sounding polkas and I'm looking forward to them, whilst Nervous Test Pilot will probably be making some of the strangest electronic sounds you are likely to hear to a packed tent."



The Magic Numbers



The Raveonettes

lead singer of Slowdive, now ploughing a sweet folk-pop furrow. And after all that, and so much else besides, there's dance music into the wee small hours from a wide range of DJs and sound systems; enough to send every party animal home to their tent happy.

SUNDAY, AS TENDS TO BE traditional at Truck, starts in a mellow fashion and quickly picks up speed. On the Main Stage you can skank lazily to The Drug Squad, do a spot of robot dancing

synth meddlers Mesaplex (formed by various ex-Meanwhile Back In Communist Russia members) and Truck Records' own Trademark. Wander further and you'll find some great local stuff in the Lounge, including Cassette For Cassette, The Mon£yshots, The Walk Off, and Mark Cope's Nine Stone Cowboy, while country legends Chip Taylor and Carrie Rodriguez, sublime goth wraiths The Cranes and former Ride leader Mark Gardener are the highlights at the Acoustic stage.

For a full Truck Festival Line-up, go to www.truckfestival.org

along to Piney Gir's synth-pop set or try line dancing to The Epstein's full-blooded country rock before south London soul-punk-funk-metal collective Do Me Bad Things take the party to another level altogether.

In the Trailerpark Tent Truck stalwarts Black Neilson headline, carving out splendid desert pop landscapes, while local supergroup Easy Tiger turn it into a stadium-sized celebration, The Half Rabbits mine a dark New Wave vein and new Truck Records signings Forward, Russia make their first mark on the local scene.

Leading UK metal lights Sikth headline The Barn Stage, along with Newcastle's mighty Yourcodenameis:milo, who recently tore rock a new backside at the Zodiac. They're joined by the truly dreadful Towers of London, UK emo vets Reuben, Hondo Mclean and local

BUT REALLY, THAT'S JUST the tip of the iceberg and we know that the band we enjoy best will probably be something strange and wonderful from beyond this list. While the UK's expanding summer festival scene becomes ever more corporate and homogenous, Truck remains an example of what a great festival should be like. Make the most of it.



Do Me Bad Things

Band's Eye View

We asked some of the local stars of this year's Truck for their feelings about the festival

"My first truck was 1998 and I was just 15. My brothers Robin and Joe and their now-deceased band Whispering Bob were one of the headline acts and I'll never forget doing the crazy marching dance to 'Don't Bring Me Down' in front of the main stage with the sun setting over Stevenston Hill. At Truck 98, I played one song and I caught the performance bug there and then and have loved playing live since. Truck 2003 was a crazy year cos I was headlining the main stage on the Sunday night with a 16-piece band and so was nervous for the whole weekend. The gig was fab but I'd been so worried cos we'd only had about two hours rehearsal with the full band. I'd love to headline again one day, maybe with the LSO and a samba band and an 80-strong choir. In my dreams."

Katy Bennett (aka KTB)

"Truck for me is like a sweet shop where all the sweets are made of music, except there are none of those stupid little blue bobbly ones that taste of chlorine and wasteful sterility. My experience of playing has been akin to crashing a truck full of batteries into a robot Bar Mitzvah, but wandering around a field full of sweating teenagers and catatonic hippies who probably have names like "Sky Spectrum Mansion Carnival" is really why I return year after year, like a moth to a sparkler."

Paul Taylor (aka nervous test pilot)

"To my eternal shame I've never been to Truck before, so you can't believe how excited I am that we're playing this year. The bands I'm looking forward to the most are sikTh, Editors and yourcodenameis:milo. The only problem is that we're playing early on Sunday; not that that will stop us enjoying ourselves."

Michael (The Half Rabbits)

"Truck is a great example of how thriving the music scene is here in Oxford, so good that it's attracting people from outside the city now too. The line-up this year looks to be one of the best yet, with Captive State, The Spiralist, The Epstein, DJ Marky, Meat Katie and The Magic Numbers being potential highlights for me."

DJ Peepshow Paddy



"We love Truck. We recorded our very first demo as part of the Truck Club Juniors Project in early 2004, so it's great to be part of the Truck experience this year. Especially as we're looking forward to seeing 65daysofstatic, The Walk Off and Forward, Russia."

Staz (Harlette)

"This is our first Truck ever! The label as a whole was a major reason why I picked Oxford to come and 'do' university, so it's kind of nice to be involved with something like that. My tip for the weekend has to be yourcodenameis:milo; they're going to destroy."

Phil McMinn (Fell City Girl)

"I want to see how Truck has changed since I've been away, and I'm looking forward to playing some new stuff. Favourite thing about Truck: the proximity of everything, so people passing by your gig *en route* to a radically different one sometimes stop by for a listen. Least favourite thing: the food"

Zoë Bicat



"As a veteran of all but one Truck, it is always an honour and pleasure to play. What's so special about Truck is that it is a weekend wandering around in a field in a trance, watching some great bands and camping with friends from all parts of the Oxford music scene and beyond. There is never a dull moment and there is always something to suit anyone's tastes. It will be great to see The Bear (from The Walk Off) in a more natural environment - will he shit in the nearby woods? Oh and of course, let's not forget the cross-dressing bar staff, the badger in a dress and ice cream from the local vicar."

Dave Crabtree (The Mon£yshots)

I'm really looking forward to playing Truck this year; there's always such a great atmosphere. This year, I'm really looking forward to seeing The Young Knives - they're one of my favourite Oxford bands, and it's been too long since I've seen them. I also want to check out the Schla La Las, and The Raveonettes. I really admire the opportunity it gives to smaller local bands. The thing I like least about Truck is the ridiculously hard ground that leaves me with bruises when I wake up. Gah.

Emma Short (Cassette For Cassette)

"Favourite memory: getting into a fight with a boy's jealous girlfriend over me singing with him and consequently waking up with 'twat' written in nail varnish on my tent! Also the great Schla La Las performance, which inspired me to form an all-girl band with, erm, Jeremy."

Chantelle Pike (The Cliffhangers)

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DIVE DIVE

'Tilting At Windmills'

(Diablo)

Given their lengthy tenure at the top of the Oxford pop tree, it's a wonder that Dive Dive can still sound so abundantly full of life. But so it is with this long-awaited debut album, following on from three chart-bothering singles for the label.

Named after Don Quixote's desperate squaring up to imagined monsters, 'Tilting At Windmills' finds singer Jamie Stuart venting his frustration at self-created or imagined problems, but the angst is kept bottled at home, self-pity subsumed by splenetic exuberance. While several years of almost constant gigging may have stolen some of Dive Dive's live spontaneity, as it does with many bands, it can't smooth away their sharp edges and this album is one of those rare occasions where the music seems to physically reach out of the stereo and compel you to have fun.

Dive Dive's strength is their remarkable individual components: singer and guitarist Jamie with his grunge choirboy yelp and puppy dog bile; fellow guitarist Ben Lloyd who never imposes his ego on the task in hand and allows the songs to breathe; Tarrant Anderson who attacks his bass with something like complete contempt and is so much more than just part of a rhythm section. And finally drummer Nigel Powell, surely one of the best sticksmen Oxford



has ever produced. But of course it's the songs that matter: their gleeful aggression, the sudden breakdowns and charging melodies that stick their barbs into you and just won't let go. If much of 'Tilting At Windmills' sounds familiar it's because once you've heard the songs, they stay with you. So previous singles 'Good Show', '555 For Film Stars' and 'Name And Number' are instant easy friends. It's a clamouring mini riot but meticulously executed. Mostly it's rapid-fire punk-pop but the likes of new single, 'The Sorry Suitor' are nervy ballads of a more tender nature. There's plenty of rumbustious fun, but intelligence too. Dive Dive are as lithe and sweet as Bambi but as hard and spiky as a Persian chariot. Ready for battle and destined for victory.

Sue Foreman

AT RISK

'Faith In Fairytales'

(Quickfix)

Who on earth would happily describe their own band as goth in this day and age? Well, At Risk



for one. And it's hardly a label of shame when the music has more in common with the varied and often colourful (yes, really) world of the original early-80s goth sound than the Eldritch-leeching dirge-mongers that inhabited the cul-de-sac goth later became.

Fronted by effervescent and coolly glamorous singer Cat, At Risk cut out smoky, bolshy slabs of distorted pop of a slightly darker shade, the fizzing guitars providing a solid but unobtrusive canvas for Cat's alternately girlish or soaring vocals. At their best, as on the billowing, haunted pure pop of 'Frostbite', they're somewhere between Bang Bang Machine's epic art-grunge and Strawberry Switchblade's polka dot pop. Of course there are odd moments when it sounds like they're trying a bit too hard to be, like, all dark and mysterious, like on 'Drowned' with its images of waves washing over the hapless victim as a metaphor for drowning in life, but they never layer the misery and panstick on too heavily.

Victoria Waterfield

THE RELATIONSHIPS

'Scene'

(Trailer Star)

"This is a very English blues / Falling like rain on barbecues." If any couplet sums up The Relationships, it's this. Twelve-string guitars might shimmer and chime with the idle elegance of The Byrds, but 'Scene' feels as English as Elgar and semi-detached houses.

The Relationships exist in the comfort zone of sadness: staring through net curtains, large brandy in hand, reflecting on the rain and missed opportunities. This, their second album, like its predecessor, is full of mysterious girls, galleries and strange suburbia. But The Relationships have never sounded this complete before, at once ephemeral and timeless. Richard Ramage's delicately-arranged songs and reflective, slightly surreal lyrics take centre stage but it's Angus Stevenson's spangled guitar licks that complete the sometimes magical effect.

'Flying Saucer Girl' is almost a perfect pop song: solid and simple, full of fanciful thoughts and understated hooks. Similarly 'Princess', a dinky nursery rhyme that oozes loneliness but forever carries you along with a sunshine guitar twang. But it's 'English Blues' that takes The Relationship's sweet, simple formula takes to its conclusion, with its mentions of butlers, potting sheds and eiderdowns and shrouded in a warm fug of melancholy that doesn't want to impose.

Oxford produces so many great new bands; there always seems to be another shooting star ready to speed through our field of vision, but The Relationships, ten years young, and with members whose musical history goes back to the early-80s, might just have eclipsed the lot of them with one of the most gently wonderful albums you'll hear this year.

Dale Kattack



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DAVID K FRAMPTON

'Dragonslayer'

(My Initials)

Local experimental soundmaker David K Frampton's latest mini-album is released on My Initials, a label that prides itself on its esoteric roster. In the past David's punished us with some seriously brutal electronic noise, but with 'Dragonslayer' he claims to have toned down some of the mayhem. Initially at least he seems to be telling the truth, with 'Taurokathapsis' washing in waves of textured electronic sound like a cross between a primitive Jean Michel Jarre and a more simplistic Steve Reich, but after that things get a bit random. There are bursts of sparse dub, abstract drill'n'bass, doomy bass synth doodles and more menacing snatches of horror film scores, like something ripped from *Hellraiser* or *Event Horizon*, with barely decipherable vocals masking untold horrors. At its best, like in the more nightmarish 'Crushface Roosevelt' and 'Sweetheart', it's captivating, although you feel it'd benefit enormously from some gut-churning visual accompaniment. At other times you just feel like David's simply discovered an interesting sound patch and pissed about with it for a minute or until he got bored. Unlikely to be filling a dancefloor anywhere near you, or supporting Coldplay on tour any time soon, Mr Frampton needs a proper vessel to carry his sounds. If you notice any gateways to hell opening down your street, grab a camcorder and give him a ring.

Victoria Waterfield

BIG SPEAKERS

'Big Speakers'

(Own Label)

The idea of hip hop from Oxford – hell, predominantly white hip hop from Oxford at that – should be anathema to the whole so-called urban schtick, but anyone who caught Big Speakers rip up the Cellar at the Punt back in May will testify to their authenticity.

Of course Big Speakers in their continually expanding form have been around the local scene for a few years now, earning themselves a clutch of Nightshift Demo Of The Month awards in the process, but 2005 finds the collective fully formed (four MCs plus vocalist AJ, decks, samples, drums and guitars), this is their first full-length CD, part album part collection of recent demos.

The vibe is predominantly old school rap with a softer trip hop underbelly and diversions into ragga, jazz and soul. The five-vocal frontline gives Big Speakers plenty of scope for variety and they play their hand well, the lead switching from Sourface's lispy Frank Black delivery to AJ's softer, Horace Andy-leaning offerings.

The beats and backing are rarely punishing, giving this 10-track album a more laid-back feel than their contorting live show. "This is an Englishman's rap", they offer on 'Wake Up', with its echoes of Credit To The Nation and you realise that this is a different beast entirely to its American cousin. Funny and sad that it's only in the last couple of years that the Brits



themselves have started to take their homegrown rappers seriously, years after the French, Italians and even Israelis. Big Speakers, like the best of their British counterparts, know that the best way to sound true is to rap about what they know – in this case, anything from feelings on the Iraq war and the potentially imminent death of Maggie Thatcher, to simpler love songs. Once in a while, like on the stoner tilt of 'Science', they can be a bit stilted, but such moments are rare and for the most part there's a warm fluidity as they switch leads.

London-centric snobbery might make it harder for Big Speakers to be taken seriously outside of Oxford but with successful gigs around the rest of the country already under their belt, they're already proving they can lead an unlikely revolution.

Dale Kattack



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GIG GUIDE

FRIDAY 1st

THE WALK OFF + THE SHLALAS + THE KEYBOARD CHOIR + CAMP

ACTOR: The Zodiac – Baton down the hatches and head for the air raid shelter as The Walk Off unleash another volley of their industrial hardcore mayhem: pressure cooker electro-rock with a dancing bear. Support comes from Piney Gir's 60s-themed garage rockers, coming on like a cross between The Runaways and The Ronettes.

LEBURN: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Live blues.

Wednesday 6th

LOVE with ARTHUR LEE: The Zodiac

A welcome return visit to town for Arthur Lee, two years after his last gig at Brookes, now celebrating almost 40 years of inspiring young pop pups to greater heights of psychedelic wonder. Following a critically-acclaimed return to live performing in 2002, after a spell in prison, Arthur Lee embarks on another extensive tour. From those early days on the Sunset Strip club circuit and becoming the first rock band to sign to Elektra Records, through groundbreaking albums like the proto-punk pop of 'De Capo' and the epoch-making 'Forever Changes', to the drug and alcohol-fuelled turmoil that precipitated the band's collapse, Love were always above and apart from the hippy dreamers, and Arthur Lee, the only member to survive the band's entire career, has never lost his ability to exude individuality and cool while constantly offering glimpses of his pop genius through a patchy solo career. So here he is, perfect pop's great uncle.

JULY

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT + HELLSET ORCHESTRA + THE MULES: The Wheatsheaf – An excellent bill at tonight's KK, with mutant gospel metallers SC4T headlining. Inspiringly camp noise from the suitably orchestral Hellset – an eight-piece ensemble featuring Hammond lead, a string quartet, drums, bass and sampler and coming on like Sparks, ELO and Tindersticks soundtracking an old Hammer Horror flick. Don't be surprised if they're huge a year from now.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho
OXFORD FOLK CLUB OPEN NIGHT: The Port Mahon

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon
LIVE AT COOPER 10: Cooper School, Bicester – Local young bands showcase in aid of cancer research, featuring Andensum, ATN, Black Mesa, Carnage, Chokehold and Grinder.
HQ: The Cellar – Transmute Records night with Linus and Exxon.

SATURDAY 2nd

PHYAL + JUNKIE BRUSH + VERBAL KINK + HARRY ANGEL + THE PROCESS: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Launch gig for the new 'Fresh Faces For The Modern Age' compilation, featuring a selection of local up and coming punk, metal and heavy rock bands.
WHOLE LOTTA LED: The Zodiac – Led Zeppelin tribute band.

BROTHERS OF INVENTION + BLUEWAX: The Wheatsheaf

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – Funky house club night.

30th BIRTHDAY SPECIAL: Nettlebed Folk Club – South Oxfordshire's legendary folk club celebrates its 30th anniversary with a night of old favourites, including Hugh Crabtree, Pete Lincoln, plus stars of Feast of Fiddles.

LIVE AT COOPER 10: Cooper School, Bicester (2pm) – Second day of the cancer research benefit fundraiser, featuring a full day of local bands, including Enola Tribe, Fatally Yours, Girls R Louder, Inacus, Krissy's Blues Boys, Mainstream and more.

NED KELLY: Chipping Norton FC

SLIGHTLY MAD: The Red Lion, Witney
FRESH OUT OF THE BOX: The Cellar – Breakbeats party style.

SUNDAY 3rd

ROCK IN THE PARK with HARRY ANGEL + OUTOFINTO + ALL YOU MISS + AT RISK + THE CLIFFHANGERS: Manor Road Recreation Ground, Wantage (1pm) – Outdoor all-dayer with a goodly selection of local noise makers, including gothabilly heavyweights Harry Angel and old school

metallers Outofinto.

THE CHAPEL: The Bullingdon – Local bands showcase.

SUEDE ALIENS: The Black Horse, Kidlington

MONDAY 4th

THE PAUL COX BAND: The Bullingdon – UK blues and soul singer revisits the Monday night blues club.

SALSANEROS: The Cellar – Weekly Latin dance club night with live salsa from Salsaneros.

TUESDAY 5th

JAZZ CLUB with ROGER INNES: The Bullingdon – Excellent free entry jazz club with guest band providing the live sounds, plus DJs til late.

THE LITTLE EXPLORER + THE JESUS YEARS + THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS: The Wheatsheaf – Local bands showcase.

DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: The Old School House
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley

CHIARINA: Café Rouge – Weekly acoustic folk, jazz and pop residency.

WEDNESDAY 6th

LOVE with ARTHUR LEE: The Zodiac – Legendary 60s psychedelic pop fella continues the comeback trail – *see main preview*.

COROFIN & FRIENDS: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Weekly trad Irish folk residency.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall – All-comers live music and poetry club.

PHONIK SETIONS: The Cellar

THURSDAY 7th

VALIUM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley
THE YOUNG KNIVES + FORWARD, RUSSIA: The Cellar – Truck Festival warm-up with local favourites The Young Knives and new Truck Records signings Forward, Russia.
DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ AND BLUES SESSION: Far From The Madding Crowd



THE HALF RABBITS + RED STAR CYCLE + HARRY ANGEL: *The Hobgoblin, Bicester* – Various shades of new wave noise with Chameleons-inspired Half Rabbits headlining.
SPIN JAZZ CLUB with STEVE LODDER: *The Wheatsheaf*

SKYLARKIN: *The Brickworks* – Weekly DJ session with Aidan Larkin and guests playing a varied selection of ska, reggae, funk, Latin and Afrobeat.

SABOTAGE: *The Zodiac* – Weekly club night from The Club That Cannot Be Named playing classic and new metal, punk and indie.

MAMPI SWIFT + IC3: *Atlantic Bar* – A Night of drum&bass as Charge Records launch their latest album.

FRIDAY 8th

PLACE ABOVE + HARLETTE + 20/20 VISION + ACCIDENTALLY INNOCENT:

The Zodiac – Place Above bow out as the members head off for university, with support from goth-grungers Harlette and more.

RED STAR CYCLE + SHIRLEY + CHANTELE PIKE: *The Wheatsheaf* – Red Star Cycle bow out with this final gig, taking the various parts of their New Model Army-influenced synth'n'fiddle rock to the far corners of the globe.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: *The Victoria, Jericho*
OXFORD FOLK CLUB with DAVE WEBBERS & ANNI FENTIMAN: *The Port Mahon*

BACKROOM BOOGIE: *The Bullingdon*
THE UNDERDOGS Vs SLIDE: *Studio Lounge, Westgate* – Weekly club night playing funky house and breaks.

OVERDRIVE: *The Marlborough Hotel, Witney*

SOUNDS OF THE JAM: *The Red Lion, Witney*

SATURDAY 9th

THE TREAT: *The Exeter Hall, Cowley* – 60s-styled melodic rockers.

BARAKA: *The Coven* – A Night of psy-trance with DJs Arvy, Ryan H and 22 Bing.

HIGH VOLTAGE: *The Red Lion, Witney*
ENDLESS GROOVE: *The Cellar* – Hip hop and drum&bass club night.

SUNDAY 10th

ELECTRIC JAM: *The Exeter Hall, Cowley (5pm)* – Join in with the in-house rhythm section; all musicians welcome.

FAJITA EATERS: *The Black Horse, Kidlington*

THE CHAPEL: *The Bullingdon* – Local bands showcase.

MONDAY 11th

THE WILDCARDS: *The Bullingdon* – The band formed from the ashes of The Nightporters and currently ripping it up on the European blues festival circuit with their blend of classic blues, jump and rockabilly, fronted by singer and guitarist Vince Lee and promoting new album 'On Fire'.

SALSANEROS: *The Cellar*

THE KARINE POLWART TRIO: *Nettlebed Folk Club* – Sometime singer with Scottish folk giants The Battlefield Band and winner of three awards at this year's BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards.

TUESDAY 12th

JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: *The Bullingdon*
DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: *The Old School House*
OPEN MIC SESSION: *The Exeter Hall, Cowley*
CHIARINA: *Café Rouge*
INTRUSION: *The Cellar* – Goth and industrial club night.

WEDNESDAY 13th

COROFIN & FRIENDS: *The Exeter Hall, Cowley*
GIGSWAP UK SHOWCASE: *The Wheatsheaf*
CATWEAZLE CLUB: *Northgate Hall*

THURSDAY 14th

ANTHRAX: *The Zodiac* – The classic line-up of the metal legends reunites – *see main preview*
THE DOMES OF SILENCE + THE UNISEX + THE RACE + SEAGULL STRANGE: *The Zodiac* – Shifty Disco Records showcase tour with Bicester's glam-goth rockers Domes of Silence headlining.

KOHOUTEK: *The Exeter Hall, Cowley* – Local acoustic rockers.

BROTHERS OF INVENTION + ASHER DUST: *The Cellar* – Live funk and breakbeats from the Brothers, plus Streets-y electro, dub and hip hop from Asher Dust.

UZIZI: *The Red Lion, Witney*
DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ AND BLUES SESSION: *Far From The Madding Crowd*
SKYLARKIN: *The Brickworks*
SABOTAGE: *The Zodiac*

FRIDAY 15th

FUCK OFF MACHETE + HARRY ANGEL + HOOKERS GREEN N°1 + AND NO STAR: *The Wheatsheaf* – Scuzzy Sonic Youth-inspired post-hardcore noise from headliners Fuck Off Machete at tonight's Vacuous Pop club night. Support from gothic rockers Harry Angel, Aberdeen's pastoral pop people, Hookers Green N°1 and instrumental post-rock from Wantage's And No Star.

PORTER BOYS: *The Exeter Hall, Cowley*
SOURCE: *The Zodiac* – Drum&bass club night with sets from Jibba and Rogue, Hussla, Dubplate and Smokey.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: *The Victoria, Jericho*
THE EVENINGS + FELL CITY GIRL + THE CLIFFHANGERS + KAZOR + RETRIBUTION + DJ REACTOR MIND: *The Net, Abingdon* – Local bands showcase at tonight's special under-18s gig. Synth-rock experimenters The Evenings headline with support from fast-rising rockers Fell City Girl and more.

OXFORD FOLK CLUB OPEN NIGHT: *The Port Mahon*
EVOLUTION: *The Red Lion, Witney*

BACKROOM BOOGIE: *The Bullingdon*
BOSSAPHONIK: *The Cellar* – Latin dance night with live bossanova act tbc.
THE UNDERDOGS Vs SLIDE: *Studio Lounge, Westgate*

Thursday 7th

SUZANNE VEGA: The New Theatre

One of only a handful of UK dates on her current acoustic tour finds Suzanne Vega still able to fill a venue of this size, 18 years after her biggest chart hit. New York-born songstress Vega emerged out of the same Greenwich Village folk scene in the mid-80s that had spawned Bob Dylan and Joan Baez in the 60s, and initially at least she followed a similarly political lyrical path, albeit with a strangely skewed and personal perspective. Hits like 'Marlene On The Wall' and 'Luka' dealt with bedsit isolation and child abuse respectively, while songs like 'Men In A War' detailed the experiences of military amputees. Her career received an added boost in 1990 with DNA's remix of 'Tom's Diner'. In recent years her songs and subject matter have mellowed considerably, tending towards more romantic themes, but she's gone on to be a massive influence on subsequent generations of female folk singers, notably Alanis Morissette and Beth Orton, and she remains a uniquely talented singer.

SATURDAY 16th

THE RELATIONSHIPS: *The Port Mahon* – Launch gig for the veteran band's excellent new album, 'Scene'.

PHYAL: *The Exeter Hall, Cowley* – Punk-metal noise from the Bicester faves.
GUNNBUNNY + IN THE FLESH + HOLIDAY STABBINGS: *The Wheatsheaf* – Howling grunge-blues and garage punk from the mighty Gunnbunny, with support from metallers In the Flesh and riotous dissonance

truck club juniors

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TRUCKRECORDS





Thursday 14th

ANTHRAX:

The Zodiac

Yes that's right, Anthrax. At the Zodiac. Anthrax. Gods of metal. Anthrax, who just played to 60,000 people at Download and won best metal band in the world in Metal Hammer's Golden Gods Awards. Anthrax who, along with Metallica and Slayer, rejuvenated a crumbling dynasty in the mid-80s, going on to sell over 10,000,000 albums worldwide and becoming one of the most influential rock bands of the past 20 years. Yes, *that* Anthrax. At the Zodiac. One hell of a coup for The Club That Cannot Be Named. From their early skate-punk-influenced racket, through classic albums like 'Spreading The Disease' and 'Among The Living', including return-to-form album, 'Stomp 442', as well collaborating with Public Enemy on 'Bring The Noise', Anthrax have rarely lost their grip, survived various line-up changes and the vagaries of fashion and always retained a sense of humour that metal often lacks. It's the classic line-up of the band too: Joey Belladonna, Frank Bello, Charlie Benante, Scott Ian and Danny Spitz, and it's gonna rock. Like a bastard.

from Holiday Stabbings.

DOGS: The Zodiac – Indie rock from Dogs, recent support to The Ravonettes.

R'N'B & REGGAE NIGHT: The Bullingdon

NBS: The Red Lion, Witney

THE DANCETTES + LEGENDARY + THE

DIRTY EARTH BAND: City Farm,

Eynsham

ROLLERCOASTER Vs CHICKS WITH

DECKS: The Cellar – Indie, 80s, post-punk and electro-pop club night.

SUNDAY 17th

JOSH ROUSE: The Zodiac – Rising American folk singer makes his Oxford debut – *see main preview*

THE CLIFFHANGERS: The Bullingdon – Singer Chantelle Pike's all-girl-with-token-bloke rock project.

BEN DUGGARD & LEE DAVIES: The Exeter Hall, Cowley

NATION: The Black Horse, Kidlington – Chart-friendly stadium pop from the local hopefuls, set to headline their own New Theatre gig next month.

THE CHAPEL: The Bullingdon - Local bands showcase.

MONDAY 18th

AYNSLEY LISTER: The Bullingdon – Heavy duty blues rock from the acclaimed young British guitarist, equally at home playing it raw and acoustic or pumping it up in a Hendrix style on the electric.

INME: The Zodiac – Sigh. They're back. The Essex grunge starlets fritter away their major label advance on pristine production values, while wringing the last desperate droplets of Kurt's creative spirit onto their by-numbers angst-rock and hoping their pubescent fans don't grow up too quickly and realise what utter pish they're wasting their time and money on. New album, 'White Butterfly', is out soon on V2. Bush, Silverchair, Puddle of Mudd: look at their lineage and weep, dear music fan.

SALSANEROS: The Cellar

PETER KNIGHT, TOM LEARY & KEVIN DEMPSEY: Nettlebed Folk Club – Steeleye Span fiddler Peter Knight teams up with his Feast Of Fiddles compadre Tom Leary again with Kevin Dempsey on guitar and vocals.

TUESDAY 19th

JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY

QUINTET: The Bullingdon

DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC

SESSION: The Old School House

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley

CHIARINA: Café Rouge

WEDNESDAY 20th

COROFIN & FRIENDS: The Exeter Hall, Cowley

20/20 VISION + THE CLIFFHANGERS +

HARLETTE + SARGE'S MUM + LOST

GENERATIONS: The Vibe, Didcot – Under-

18s gig with metallers 20/20 Visions headlining.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall

PHONIK SETIONS: The Cellar

THURSDAY 21st

SPIN JAZZ CLUB with

CURIOUS PARADISE: The Wheatsheaf

ANDENSUM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Complex proggy

hardcore in a Tool kind of vein from the young local rockers.

DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ AND

BLUES SESSION: Far From

The Madding Crowd

THE WITCHES + THE

CLIFFHANGERS: The Cellar –

Former Eeeblee frontman Dave returns with his new band, while

local siren Chantelle Pike supports with her band.

SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks

SABOTAGE: The Zodiac

FRIDAY 22nd

TRANSMISSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Epic indie rock in a Muse vein.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho

OXFORD FOLK CLUB with LARKRISE +

RANTERS & FRIENDS: The Port Mahon –

Assorted local folk luminaries join on harp, hammer dulcimer, bouzouki, accordion and fiddle.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon

BLON-D: The Red Lion, Witney

BLUNTED: The Cellar – Hip hop club night.

THE UNDERDOGS Vs SLIDE: Studio

Lounge, Westgate

SATURDAY 23rd

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm Steventon

(from midday) – Day one of Oxford's premier live music festival with a headline set from Biffy Clyro on the main stage – *see main preview feature*.

Sunday 17th

JOSH ROUSE:

The Zodiac

He comes from Nashville, his new album is called 'Nashville', and it's got a pedal steel on it, but Josh Rouse doesn't wear a Stetson or rhinestones, thankfully. Instead country-folk star Rouse is closer to the likes of Ryan Adams or Carol King, with a rootsy feel and an introspective, soul-searching lyrical bent. 'Nashville' is his fifth album in a career spanning ten years, but the first to be recorded outside of his native city, having briefly relocated to Spain after the break up of his marriage. Unsurprisingly that break has infected the new songs. They're simpler, more countrified than those that made its 2003 predecessor, the critically-acclaimed '1972', such a hit. Dig deeper into Rouse's career and you'll find nods to British indie music, Philly soul and even hippy-period Van Morrison. What it boils down to is a sweet-sounding collection of languid, melodic, melancholy acoustic country pop that probably sounds best when played around an intimate campfire setting but deserves a wider audience.





Saturday 30th

DUCKFEST:

Ducklington

Duckfest organisers don't actually get any more specific about the location of this one-day mini-festival in aid of RESTORE, but then Ducklington – just outside of Witney – is pretty compact so it shouldn't be too hard to find it. You could probably just drive to the village, wind your window down and follow the sound of guitars being mangled in the name of charity. This year's line-up is topped by the mighty Dive Dive, now honed into the tightest musical fighting unit in Oxford after countless jaunts around the nation's toilet circuit. Joining them will be spangled guitar dreamers The Workhouse, all-action power-pop crew The Samurai Seven, darkly-inclined new wavers The Half Rabbits, old school rap mob Big Speakers (*pictured*), gothic noiseniks Harry Angel, fragile pop torch singer Richard Walters, inspired folk-pop siren Laima Bite and assorted other local talents. With Truck Festival now a national concern, selling out months in advance, the considerably smaller and even more homely Duckfest is already being called 'The New Truck'. Always room for more of these events. Make a day of it.

INACUN: The Exeter Hall, Cowley
LIVE BANDS NIGHT: The Bullingdon – Acts to be announced.

SUPERNATURAL: The Red Lion, Witney
SUNDAY 24th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm Steventon (*from 11am*) – Day two of the festival with Magic Numbers rounding proceedings off in a dreamy 60s style – *see main preview feature*.

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

INTERN: The Bullingdon – Band showcase night.

SOUL IN DIDCOT: Edmonds Park, Didcot (*2pm*) – A day of Christian rock and pop.

BURN: The Black Horse, Kidlington

MONDAY 25th

CONNIE LUSH AND BLUES SHOUTER: The Bullingdon – Winner of the best British female blues singer award for five years and best female vocalist in Europe for the last two, the Monday blues night welcomes back one of its regular star attractions.

SALSANEROS: The Cellar

TUESDAY 26th

JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon
DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: The Old School House
REVENGE OF THE CORNDOLLY with KING FURNACE + SHADOW MACHINE: The Cellar – Chili Peppers-influenced funky rock from King Furnace.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley

CHIARINA: Café Rouge

WEDNESDAY 27th

COROFIN & FRIENDS: The Exeter Hall, Cowley

GIGSWAP UK SHOWCASE: The Wheatsheaf

CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall

THURSDAY 28th

DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ AND BLUES SESSION: Far From The Madding Crowd
WARHEN: The Cellar – Heavyweight indie rockers.

SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks

SABOTAGE: The Zodiac

FRIDAY 29th

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with THE DRUG SQUAD + NAILBOMB CULTS + MICHAEL BERK: The Zodiac – Party-friendly ska-punk, pub rock and spaghetti western themes from headliners The Drug Squad at tonight's GTI night. Support from local gabba techno misfits Nailbomb Cults.

HEDROOM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Funky rap-rock from the hard-gigging Thame crew.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho
OXFORD FOLK CLUB OPEN NIGHT: The Port Mahon

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon

INDEFINITELY: The Red Lion, Witney

BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – With live music from 10-piece funk act Tonic.

THE UNDERDOGS Vs SLIDE: Studio Lounge, Westgate

SATURDAY 30th

DUCKFEST: Ducklington Village – The second Duckfest, in aid of RESTORE, featuring an assortment of local luminaries in the sedate setting of Ducklington village – *see main preview*

GRAVENHURST + THE EVENINGS + THE THUMB QUINTET: The Wheatsheaf – Sweet, sad songs and murder ballads from the pen of Bristol's Nick Talbot – *see main preview*.

TOUNSI: The Exeter Hall, Cowley

MOFO: The Red Lion, Witney

SUNDAY 31st

FRESH OUT OF THE BOX: The Cellar
THE CHAPEL: The Bullingdon – Local bands showcase.

Saturday 30th

GRAVENHURST / THE EVENINGS / THUMB QUINTET: The Wheatsheaf

You want sad music? You got sad music! Gravenhurst's first visit to Oxford is a minor cause for celebration, but it'll be no party. The Bristol band, centred around songwriter Nick Talbot, find themselves in the strange and wonderful position of being signed to Warp Records, despite making some of the least danceable music possible. Instead they're a less-is-more neo-folk band in the vein of Low and Red House Painters, but equally inspired by Slint and Joy Division. So yes, jolly hockey sticks from start to finish. The band's most recent album, 'Black Holes In The Sand', finds Gravenhurst lost in a lysergic fog of gentle despair, covering Husker Du's haunting murder ballad 'Diane' in suitably bleak style but buoyed by some seriously lovely folksy melodies. Excellent local support at tonight's Oxfordbands.com night comes from retro-futurist synth manglers The Evenings, plus ambient electro-folk from The Thumb Quintet.



VENUE PHONE NUMBERS

The Zodiac: 01865 420042
Point Promotions: 07711 628021
The Bullingdon: 01865 244516
The Wheatsheaf: 01865 721156
The Exeter Hall: 01865 776431
The Red Lion, Witney: 01993 703149
The Cellar: 01865 244761

The New Theatre: 0870 606 3500
The Black Horse: 01865 373154
Nettlebed Folk Club: 01628 636620
The Port Mahon: 01865 202067
Delicious Music: 07876 184623
The Victoria: 01865 554047
Brookes: 01865 484750

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LIVE

THE MAGIC BAND / THE E BAND

The Zodiac

Black shades, white noise, Krautrock rhythms, muttered monologues, dislocating samples - the E Band are a Neu! for now, a short-haired Hawkwind for tomorrow. Watch this (inner) space.

The Magic Band are... The Magic Band. For now and always. Their former leader Captain Beefheart is out painting the desert, but these guys are still bringing the desert to a town near you. 'When It Blows Its Stacks' and 'Floppy Boot Stomp' whip in like a hot Mojave wind, as a man in a crumpled hat patrols the stage, gesticulating and growling his way through tales of strange and disturbing forces on the prowl. This is Magic Band original John "Drumbo" French, and he does a spooky impersonation of the Captain on vocals and mouth-harp, while bringing his own wired energies and mannerisms to the hoodoo hoedown. The guitars of Gary Lucas and Denny Walley lock together to create a clanking, humming composite of avant-blues slide and supernatural twang, underpinned by the juddering drums of Michael Traylor and the loping bass of Rockette Morton. Mr French takes his place behind the drumkit for a swathe of instrumentals, and the sound moves from skewed gutbucket blues to something more abstract - which still retains its "rusty clockwork toy" feel, as if about to trip over, but always lands triumphantly on its syncopated feet. Then it's back to the front for Drumbo, and a fizzing version of 'Electricity', prefaced by a



Photo: Richard Hounslow (07761 682297)

touching tribute to John Peel. Finishing with a monumental triumvirate of 'Moonlight on Vermont', 'Big-Eyed Beans From Venus' and 'Mirror Man', The Magic Band then stroll out to meet the audience, nice as (hair) pie. I am reminded of when I last saw these songs performed live, aged 16, and am proud to get the guys' autographs. The Captain may have retired, but his music lives on... long may The Magic Band continue to booglarise us.

Harry Lime

DEVILS GUN

The Zodiac

In the midnight hour and suitably monged, tonight's crowd is ready to make the floor bounce. London's Devils Gun, up for their second ever gig, look set to help them. A gangling afro-ed MC, born to mob-orate, like a lovechild of Bob Marley and Phil Lynott; a riffing guitarist; two producer/ FX samplers and a percussionist working mostly on toms, make up a cabal bent on audio-sedition. At first they blaze away well with everything, including the kitchen sink. An industrial 'Addicted To Love' beat is given broad brushstrokes of Prodigy-lite rap, Art of Noise-style breaks and Kool And The Gang samples, like a Fire House remix of Dreadzone's 'Little Britain'. Its promise outweighs its lack of definition, but definition is what it desperately needs. Three tracks in and the great party atmosphere Fresh Out Of The Box had engendered is flatlining, and hectoring the crowd to "Come on, get down" is not the answer.

When we want it to bang it doesn't bang way hard enough. The tom-toms are no substitute for a four-to-the-floor, wall-cracking bass, and when we want phasing, walking-through-water, electro-synth breaks it has all the emotional depth of a puddle. Things get a whole lot better when they bring on Kelly, a six-foot tall Zoë-from-Eastenders lookalike, to perform double MC vocals and her kicking cover of The White Stripes' 'Blue Orchid' is a major league treat.

Devil's Gun eventually come home winners with their own 'London's Calling', one of the best club anthems I've heard in a while and one I expect to hot-wire their success. It has the crucial mix of house, electro and synth-rock in and if the band were seriously doing their homework, careful note of the crowd's overboard reaction to that track alone should have them writing six more like it post haste.

Paul Carrera

JOANOVARC /

HARLETTE

The Wheatsheaf

It's unfortunate but true, that all-girl bands (particularly all-girl rock bands) are still considered as something of an oddity. They are always held up for inspection to see if they can play as well as their male counterparts. Is their songwriting as good? Is their lead singer a fox? A lot of female bands face the kind of questions that shouldn't and don't matter before anyone actually starts to take any notice of their music. Harlette won't suffer from these problems, however. They may be young, but somehow they can remember when Riot Grrl was a major force in contemporary music. There's plenty of distorted guitars, screeched vocals ('Sometimes She Pisses Me Off' is a particular highlight) and frantic drumming that brings to mind Babes In Toyland. Singer Iona brims with a brattish confidence that brings to mind Molly Ringwald in *The Breakfast Club*, if *The Breakfast Club* had been soundtracked by Huggy Bear, and not Simple Minds. Their confidence speaks for itself.

JoanovArc are from a different era entirely. Not the 14th Century thankfully, but from a time when the likes of the Runaways and Girlschool were at their prime. Joanovarc evidently never really left the New Wave of British Heavy Metal behind, because tonight is a lesson in how to rock. Gone is the garage punk of the Suffrajets (sisters Shelley and Sam Walker were both members) replaced by the metallic sheen of Queen, and Guns'n'Roses. Their cover of Hendrix's 'Purple Haze' is inspired rather than tedious; Shelley Walker's solo would make Jimi himself blush. They may not be playing the most fashionable of music but they play well, and with passion. Just for a moment, they make rocking out like a hoary old biker seem like a possible life change.

Allin Pratt

THE RAKES / CAZALS

The Zodiac,

Having attracted favourable mutterings in the praise-happy national music press, tonight's gig seems likely to be either a chance to catch The Rakes in such intimate surroundings before they really take off, or another crash and burn case.

First however, are Mod revivalists Cazals. With stabbing staccato guitar sounds, their rapid-fire set quickly emerges from the muddy mix that plagues the opening couple of songs. Their ragged, yet melodic sound is emphasised by a vocalist who, as the set progresses, moves from sounding like Paul Weller with a sore throat to Joe Strummer after swallowing a bag of gravel. In terms of sound and songs, they're not too far behind The Futureheads, yet the set never really catch on with the crowd. Be it a largely static stage presence or a failure to interact, their set fails to provide the dancefloor call to arms offered elsewhere in an already overcrowded genre.

Mobilising the crowd doesn't pose any problem once The Rakes get settled into their set, however. While much of the press surrounding the band has thrown them in with this generation's batch of Joy Division acolytes, on the strength of tonight's set the length seems a touch dubious. While frontman Alan Donohoe plays the eccentric card, with the jerky stage moves and darting eyes, he comes across less Curtis-crazy more a poor man's David Byrne. However, not sounding exactly like Joy Division isn't something to be ashamed of. Instead their short, sharp songs are more guitar heavy, with their brand of post-punk at times cheekier than it is dark. Yet for The Rakes the proof is most certainly in the pudding and their set, mostly of material from their 'Automatic' album, clearly goes down well with a very vocal Oxford fanbase, already enough attached to the band to passionately plead for their favourite songs.

Patrick Casey

DR SHOTOVER

Royal Variety Bollocks

The Caesars. Kaiser Chiefs. Kings of Leon. What is it with these young whippersnappers and their regal aspirations? Personally, I blame... myself. Since I set up NobSearch UK three years ago with "Tuppy" Ware and some of the other chaps, all these ghastly minor pop celebrities want to up their scores on the Blue-Blood-o-meter... as if Queen weren't bad enough in the first place, with their vulgar pretensions to being "rock royalty"... What's that you say? Double meaning? Ah, that sort of "Queen". He'd have been drummed out of the regiment in my day... well, yes, of course we knew it went on... the C.O. would generally turn a blind eye, as long as the getting vamped up in wigs and cocktail dresses was confined to musical numbers at the Christmas Concert. One year I did a rather fetching impersonation of Merle Oberon myself, I seem to remember... Same again? Make mine a Campari and soda.

Next month: Progressive Frock.



*Merle Oberon impersonates
Dr Shotover*



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MONDO GENERATOR / SEXTODECIMO / DEGUELLO

The Zodiac

This is exactly what you need at the end of a bank holiday weekend – a deep soul cleansing. Bank holiday torpor means we arrive too late to catch Winnebago Deal's metal side project Spine Christ, but we'll catch up with the two Bens later when they play with Nick Oliveri's Mondo Generator.

Before that there's Deguello, one of the best teenage bands on the scene. Since we last saw them they've come on massively, from fuzzy garage punk beginnings to their current state where they mix up rabid New Wave melodies with passages of virulent, explorative noise. A serious blast of hot, fresh air, but just a warm-up for what follows...

"We're Sextodecimo and this isn't going to be very pleasant", announce Sextodecimo, moments before the jaws of hell open amid a blizzard of strobes. Putting a lie to their old stoner/sludgcore reputation, tonight they're singularly brutal. They're even more of a cacophony than last time we encountered them; although they've opened up a bit musically and visually, there's no compromise. This goes way beyond metal. Time slows to a crawl and the air becomes thick with the pressure of it all. It sounds like warfare, it's bleak and cruel and it feels absolutely magnificent.

That Ben Perrier and Ben Thomas have been recruited into Mondo Generator shows the level they've reached, and tonight it proves beyond doubt just what incredible musicians they are. Nick Oliveri was born to be a rock star. He looks like a gothic backwoods serial killer and he's playing breakneck backwoods rock and roll. The two Bens presence has lifted the experience from last time's disappointing show. They just don't let up. Walls of slasher guitar fuzz coat punishing velocity punk songs. Occasional slower songs pile-drive like bulldozers, while a sprawling blues number morphs into hair metal thrash partway through. There's even a moment when it all sounds like Slade. Or at least Slade if they'd just returned from the abyss. It's punishing, but varied enough to keep the show interesting, and we get a clutch of old Queens Of The Stone-Age songs into the bargain. Years of gig going means we rarely get a ringing in our ears any more. Tonight our ears are ringing. Tomorrow we have to return to work. Fuck that, we want to fight!

Ian Chesterton

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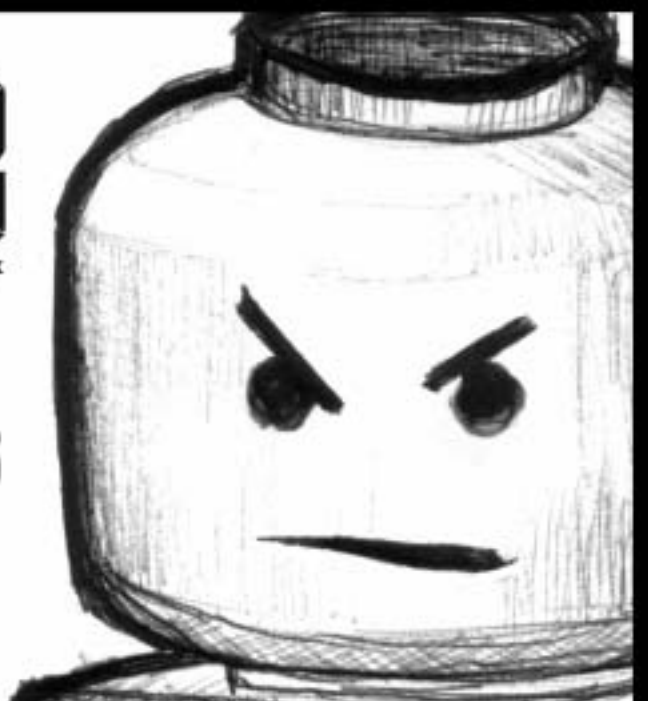
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LOU BARLOW

The Zodiac

Lou Barlow, member of Dinosaur Jr, Sebadoh and The Folk Implosion, announces that he is nervous. The reason behind his anxiety is, he explains, that tonight is the first time he has played in front of an English speaking audience in some time, and thus he will be unable to pretend that any heckles are, in fact, cheers of admiration. He needn't worry, however, as those here tonight are totally enthralled with him from the offset. With songs such as 'Legendary', in which bittersweet sentiments are cloaked in melancholic and haunting guitar melodies, Barlow holds the crowd gently in the palm of his hand. He is gifted with a voice that is both comforting

and fragile in its softness, and his self-deprecating humour in between songs only seems to endear him all the more to the audience. The occasional vintage Sebadoh track, such as 'Freed Pig' and 'On Fire', are all received with rapturous applause, and Barlow's attempt to leave the stage at the end of his touching performance of 'Brand New Love' is vehemently opposed.

Barlow's songs are portraits of striking intimacy, while his chatter is so friendly and unassuming that those watching him feel a sense of involvement in the performance. He opens his heart to the audience tonight, and is accepted with open arms.

Emma Short

HELP SHE CAN'T SWIM / CASSETTE FOR CASSETTE / GO! TEAM! GO!

The Wheatsheaf

Welcome to another unbearably hot night at the Wheatsheaf, but London three piece Go! Team! Go! seem not the slightest bit daunted by this. Throwing themselves around the stage with abandon, what they lack tune-wise they make up for in energy. It's shouty, jerky, disjointed and infectious.

Cassette For Cassette provide the calm in the eye of the storm tonight. Unfortunately it's a little too peaceful for a band that threatens to let rip like the early Hole recordings did, but the promise is never fulfilled. The problem is there's no real dynamics in the band; they promise menace without there being a threatening bone in their bodies.

It takes a while but eventually Help She Can't Swim win me over. It's great to see a

band that really give it their all and make a tremendous noise with little regard for their own safety. Which I guess makes them a fully-formed version of Go! Team! Go! You can see the early Sonic Youth and riot grrl influences in the band, but most of all they resemble a beefed-up Bis, kinda cutesy but with extra guitars kicking the songs off in different directions. The band works best when Leese and Tom are both singing, sparring off each other and creating endless kinetic energy that infuses the songs with vitality. To further the Bis comparison Leese has a very Manda Rin style voice, one which fey indie kids will adore. Their music attracts the shy outsider and for this reason alone I wish more power to them.

Russell Barker

BIG SPEAKERS / FLOODED HALLWAYS / CAPSKY

The Cellar

Opening tonight's Oxfordbands.com relaunch gig, showcasing some of the city's best hip hop acts, is Capsky, whose staccato lyrical patterning is layered over the guitar of partner Greasy Red and their interesting, glitchy electronic Aim-like backing. The contrast works well, but the vocals may be suited to something less mellow, and the backing would sound good enough on its own, in an Ulrich Schnauss kind of way. It's all a little unpolished and the delivery could be more confident, but promising nonetheless.

Flooded Hallways are similar in composition but differ in style; their looped samples become quite wearing after a while and they sometimes stray into Streets territory, but tracks like 'After All' and 'Formulae' show off clever rhymes and rhythms. The two rappers' voices work play off each other dynamically, but the whole thing would work better with fewer monotonous loops.

Even though they're an MC down tonight, Big Speakers still barely squeeze their

seven-strong personnel and equipment into the Cellar. The instrumentation blends a wide range of styles - hip hop, soul, jazz, funk and even ska - by way of synth, guitar, bass, scratching and sample sounds, while MCs Tomohawk and Soulface's aggressive Gravediggaz / Wu Tang Clan-like vocals both meld nicely and contrast sharply with the more laid-back Fragger and soulful, yet underused AJ. Always tight despite their size, tracks like "Overpaid Slave" and "Apocalypse Rising" are catchy, though still have heartfelt and provocative lyrics.

It would be a shame to deny a larger audience the intimacy and immediacy of Big Speakers experiences like tonight's, but their conviction, and how much they care about the music and their message, will be palpable however large the audience is. It's such a delight and so refreshing to come across an act not frightened to mix genres, be outspoken and experiment.

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DKT/MC5

The Zodiac

There will be few sights more memorable this year than a freeform improv set featuring MC5, Gilby Clarke from Guns 'N' Roses and our very own Suitable Case For Treatment (who played a wonderful opening set earlier in the evening). Throw in a surprise appearance from Julian Cope and you've got a pretty surreal all-star line-up, encoring with a twenty-minute starship ride into uncharted territory.

There's precious little revolution on offer at the beginning of MC5's set, and not exactly a surfeit of the band's legendary urgency and intensity, suggesting that perhaps this is just another in a long line of financially-, rather than creatively-inspired reformations. Opener 'Ramblin' Rose' is almost precociously smug in its delivery, and for a while it looks as if self-satisfaction could be the watchword of the evening.

Hang on, though. These are, after all, three of the men responsible for penning one of the greatest punk rock anthems of all time, so

let's give 'em a chance. What ultimately wins through is an irresistible sense of celebration – of the legacy of Rob Tyner and Fred Smith, and of some amazing songs.

One-time Dictators frontman Handsome Dick Manitoba does a decent job on vocals, while Gilby Clarke is one of the few guitarists capable of trading solos with Brother Wayne Kramer without coming off worst.

It's Kramer who's the focal point of the ensemble, leading off with a series of mercurial solos. His enthusiasm is infectious, and is eventually matched when the group start to kick loose and discover the sense of freedom and exploration that leads them onto their exhilarating collaborative climax.

A triumphant tribute snatched from the jaws of listless karaoke, then. And I've got through my word count resisting the urge to shout 'KICK OUT THE JAMS MOTHERF-

Stuart Fowkes

WIN TICKETS FOR THE CARLING WEEKEND: READING FESTIVAL!



Hurray! It's summer! And summer means festivals! Hurray! Cos festivals means loads of great bands! In big fields! And sometimes massive tents! With beer! And sunshine! All of which are the very foundations of a truly happy life. And of course if we're talking about big, fat rock festivals, then they don't come much bigger or fatter than **The Carling Weekend: Reading and Leeds Festivals**.

This year's Carling Weekend: Reading and Leeds Festivals, which runs from **Friday 26th to Sunday 28th August** sees headline appearances from godlike pop pioneers **The Pixies** (pictured), grunge giants **The Foo Fighters** and metal legends **Iron Maiden**. And of course there's loads and loads and loads more. Quite literally hundreds of live acts spread across various stages over the three days of each festival (with each day's bill appearing at the other festival site on a different day).

On the **main stage** over the weekend you'll find the likes of The Killers, Queens of the Stone Age, Kings of Leon, Razorlight, Marilyn Manson, The Coral, Elbow, The Charlatans, Roots Manuva, NoFX, Funeral For a Friend, Turbonegro and of course the very excellent Iggy Pop and the Stooges. A feast of fiery fun.

But wander up to the **NME Radio 1 Stage** and you'll find headline sets from Kasabian, The Tears and Bloc Party, along with appearances from Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, Fightstar, The Subways, Babyshambles, Arcade Fire, Futureheads, The Kills and Sons and Daughters.



And that's just the tip of that particular pop iceberg.

Of course one of our favourite bits about the whole Carling Weekend: Reading and Leeds Festivals is **The Carling Stage**, where you can catch up on some of the best rising stars and best kept secrets on the scene. Among those this year will be Nightshift's favourite band in the world, Ladytron, plus the fantastic Go! Team and enduring legends Echo & The Bunnymen. They'll be joined by, amongst others, Charlotte Hatherly, Saul Williams, The Raveonettes, Sleater Kinney and – oh yes – Oxford's very own Fell City Girl, who'll be opening proceedings at Reading on the Friday – so get there early to cheer them on.

How can you possibly not have a good time?

Of course Reading is just down the road from Oxford so there's even more reason to go. Except that the whole event is completely **SOLD OUT**. Well, what do you expect with a bill like that?

There are some day tickets still available for the Leeds site, priced £60 (plus booking fee) available from **See Tickets on 0870 060 3775** or go to **www.readingfestival.com** or **www.leedsfestival.com** more for details.

But here's the good news: thanks to those nice people at The Mean Fiddler, and our friends at Hall or Nothing press, we've got a pair of weekend tickets for the Carling Weekend: Reading Festival. That's right, you can't buy them for love nor money, but you can have a pair on us for free!

All you have to do is answer the following question:

What is the name of Iron Maiden's pet monster?

Just send your answers on a postcard to: **The Carling Weekend: Reading and Leeds Festivals Competition, Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU**. Deadline for entries is the 20th of July. No email entries. Multiple entries will be used to line the cat's litter tray. The editor's decision is to drink copiously and dance embarrassingly throughout Ladytron's bound-to-be-brilliant set.

ELIOT

The Cellar

How refreshing. Not the Cellar, mind, on a balmy evening, but Eliot, a pop trio consisting of Jim Eliot, ex-Oxford student and now London-based producer, and local pop folkstress Maria Ilett. Their chillout grooves, funky keyboards and samples are being backed up with a live drummer. It's clear he is an essential part of this threesome even if he has listened to 'Mezzanine' too many times. Maria sometimes struggles to be heard over the punching rhythm, but without him we'd be heading into karaoke territory. Thankfully that is far from the sound tonight. As Jim twiddles knobs, Maria coyly sings, giving the likes of Jem, Zero 7 and Dubstar a run for their money. She seems to relax more the further they get through their set. A quick switch on 'Front Room' leaves Jim singing (not unlike Matt Hales from Aqualung) and Maria on bass and backing vocals. This keeps the audience on their toes and means songs take on different shapes.

Maria sings in a softly unassuming manner, pleasantly careless, while Jim creates complex arrangements with fine electronic melodies. Only occasionally do we stray into bland, background dinner party blah, with the likes of 'Fade'. But all is made up for by the astounding 'Shine'. Pure pop genius, which they save until last. The backing track consists of jangly, Smiths-like guitars and Maria's confidence is booming. She sways back and forth and there's nothing shy about her now.

I like Eliot, but Eliot seem to be a little unsure of their footing, not quite sure which road to take. Whether it be down the Dubstar or Dido route (and with a set of songs as good as 'Shine', they wouldn't go wrong) or a more chilled-out, down tempo direction like Massive Attack, Bent, Abraham or Zero 7, which they pull off equally well. It's a road trip I can't wait to see progress.

Katy Jerome

SKA CUBANO

The Zodiac

Skylarkin' Soundsystems has been growing in popularity at a rapid rate recently. Taking their regular nights to the Zodiac stage with Reggae legend DJ Derek has served to cement their reputation further. The next step is this, moving into the live arena, and they couldn't have got it more right. Eleven-piece London / Cuban party merchants Ska Cubano hit the stage running and for the next two hours there is absolutely no let up. Their fusion of ska, and rocksteady with the Latin Cuban influence is spot on. It's a thoroughly dirty mix, and one that forces you to dance with a rum spiked grin on your face.

Singers Natty Bo and Beny Billy focus the attention brilliantly, always moving, continually whipping the crowd up until the whole place is jumping. By the time 'Revolutionary Ska' makes an appearance, the audience is under complete control of

the band. Not one person is left unmoved; it's the most complete reaction I've ever seen to a band at the Zodiac. The call and response of 'Ay Caramba' is a delight, as is their reworking of 'Jezebel'. Every song is a gem and Ska Cubano continue on their mission to tear the roof off of the place. Only a fool or a hardened cynic could fail to have a good time here tonight. Ska Cubano are about as close to a perfect live band as you could hope to find. By the end of a thoroughly exhausting but entirely enjoyable two hours, DJ Derek takes to the stage as he needs to tell us all something. "I've seen just about everyone in the world of ska," he drawls in that peculiar Bristol-cum-Trenchtown patois of his, "and you've just seen the best performance I've ever seen." It's been a legendary night in every sense of the word.

Allin Pratt



Photo: Sam Shepherd

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

JABERWOK

Recorded live, this three-track demo gives a better impression of Jaberwok than they would probably have got through hours spent on studio overdubs. It captures the band's fluid, funky feel, jamming out on extended Hammond, bass and guitar journeys, trying to evoke the spirits of Stevie Wonder, Isaac Hayes and JTQ. Here on CD you perhaps don't quite get the feeling that you would at a gig where Jaberwok's onstage energy can react with that of an audience, but the wah-wah guitar-heavy 'Spiewak', with its wobbly bass lines, or 'Chicken Song' with its dirty keyboard sound and arpeggiating bass carry a convincing 70s vibe. 'It Ain't Ting', meanwhile is pure cocktail lounge retro jazz-funk, content to wander any which way as you sip on your vodka martini. Ah, now there's an idea. Maybe not the most original demo we've heard, but performed with gusto and anything that makes us think about vodka martinis has to be good.

FORMALDEHYDE

Ah bless, here's a Didcot band apparently looking for "the ultimate break". And while it's tempting to suggest sticking their necks in a noose and jumping from the nearest bridge, they don't deserve such treatment, although we should perhaps warn the young hopefuls that the ultimate break simply doesn't exist: it's all sweat, tears and bloody hard work and even if you do ever make it big in the cruel world of rock and roll, you'll be far too busy playing endless gigs in godforsaken eastern European towns and enduring soul-sapping interviews with regional radio DJs to notice that this is where you always wanted to end up. So there, simple dreams viciously punctured, all that's left for us to say is that Formaldehyde sound extremely cross. If you cut them up at a junction they'd probably shout at you so long and so loud your head would fall off. This sounds like Liam Gallagher in a bad mood trying to keep up with Oasis' new hair metal direction. Which isn't such a terrible thing all things considered, although the vocalist's idea of shouting the same couple of lines over and over again in the vague hope they might take on some kind of spiritual significance doesn't work very well. Keep the dream alive, kids.

DELINQUENT

This fella's not lacking in self-confidence: "I am an aspiring songwriter, performer and producer creating exciting alternative music", chirrups Rob Greenaway about his radical idea of mixing up traditional acoustic instrumentation with exciting new electronic gadgetry and samples. You know, like Beck did about ten years ago. Sometimes it works okay, the loops and grooves and occasional vocal samples weaving together into a passable tapestry of sound, but Rob's own vocals can't hold up in such company, moping innocuously around the Moby-ish backdrops. Essentially it's pretty basic 60s folk-pop with a bit of a synthetic overhaul, and while even here it can work alright – as on the Byrds-y 'Chemicals', the whole project is bogged down by its pedestrian pace which never looks likely to drag itself out of its self-made rut.

CASSETTE FOR CASSETTE

Just think, there will very soon be an entire generation of music fans who will have no idea what a cassette is. Mind you, there is already an entire generation who have no idea whatsoever who Young Marble Giants were. But they should, because they were great, and Cassette For Cassette sound a tiny bit like them at times, which is always to be encouraged. Here is tinpot, minimalist indie noise that sounds like it's held together by willpower and sticky tape alone. Vocalist Emma sounds fabulously bored and angsty, the almost desolate sense of melancholy and spindly arrangements recalling Cat Power at her most maudlin. 'Quiet, Too Quiet' has a children's music box simplicity and if you pinched its pale, skinny arm it'd doubtless squeal like a rabbit, but it's bolstered by some edgy, almost toy town keyboards and the whole ramshackle affair smells pleasantly of the true spirit of indie music past.

REDOX

Individually and together Redox have been around the local scene seemingly forever, including in their ranks, as they do, Klub Kakofanney stalwarts Phil Freizinger and Sue Smith. As such, we're unlikely to find them chasing the latest musical trend, and nor would we want to. Not when there are odd guilty pleasures to be had like 'Bullaburra', a barn-dance hoe-down topped off with Gong-like space-shrieking vocals, a touch of skiffle and a barely-suppressed silly side. It's like an ungodly mix up of 70s drug-addled Glastonbury

indulgence, a children's TV advertising nightmare and Lonnie Donegan. 'Blood' is a more saddle-weary cowboy jaunt with a tendency to go off on a jazz-rock wander halfway through but it's 'Free' that ultimately scares us away: a dubbier, mystical skank with lyrics about dancing on beaches, being free and getting tender and squeezy under a solstice moon. A bit too much like Ozric Tentacles doing a crusty, tie-dyed remake of 'Je T'aime'. You'll excuse us if we pass on that idea.

PHYAL

Phyal seem to have been around forever, such is the regular flow of demos from them and their insatiable local gigging appetite, but they only formed in 2002. In that time they've gone from being a rudimentary but fun punk band with slight metal undertones to a full-blooded metal beast with a slightly punky edge. Big rolling punk chords thunder along apace, gutsy and bombastic without being fancy, allowing singer Glenda Huish to exercise her not inconsiderable lung capacity. Brassy and bluesy she plays the metal queen part well, although we always seem to end up describing her as strident. But then she is, in an almost operatic kind of way, which is probably what gives Phyal their 1980s feel, the way they seem to so unashamedly over the top. Anyway, where once they sounded very much like Vice Squad, now Girlschool and even L7 seem like more appropriate reference points, but for all their lack of subtlety, there's something heroically rumbustious about Phyal.

GESO

Sometimes you wonder whether band are really just having a laugh at your expense, or if not, what possessed them to do what they do. That feeling goes, initially at least, for Gesso, who sound like a kind of joke version of The Divine Comedy: a rudimentary piano-led pop stomp topped off with some incongruous, faux-operatic vocals. The only person we've ever heard sing like this who can get away with it is Nick Cave on 'Release The Bats'. Here it sounds ridiculous, but then you start feeling a strange sense of admiration for the band for maybe trying to do something a bit OTT. And they use a harpsichord on one song, and anything with a harpsichord on is alright in our book. Still, really rather silly all things considered.

DON SMOOTH

Nothing silly about Don Smooth of course. Well, apart from the name, which sounds like a character from Miami Vice. Oh, and the atrocious attempt at rapping from the lead singer on second track here, 'Decadent Honey'. But, apart from all that, this is

serious stuff: aggressive post-hardcore rocking with a metallic sharpness, not unlike Dive Dive at times. That ill-advised rap (which really amounts to little more than talking in an awkward manner) detracts from an otherwise effective stab at the harder edge of emo, and while the whole thing feels like it may have arrived just a little too late to catch the emo bandwagon, it's confident and slickly-constructed stuff and hopefully has enough character of its own to push on from here.

LOOPY

Another band of local circuit stalwarts who've always managed to produce something likeable without ever quite setting the local scene on fire, Loopy return with more cheery summer-sounding pop, part-way between The Monkees and The Beautiful South. 'This Sound' is jolly power pop with a distinct 60s feel, while best track on the demo, 'Too Late', is frothy in an early-Beatles kind of way and full of bah, bah, bah backing vocals. Bit of a shame then about the strained, almost pained acoustic lament, 'Living The Adventure', although 'Blue Cortina', with its chirpy keyboard bounce and bubblegum harmonies, just about manages to rise above its grumbling indie dirge roots and shows a keenness to expand on simple ideas.

THE DEMO DUMPER

TREV WILLIAMS

Trev made his demo debut here a few months back with an expansive, inconsistent but sometimes inventive offering. This time he's compressed it all into four tracks and attained some kind of consistency of sound, although perhaps not of the kind we'd have liked. The lounge jazz-funk of 'Seaside', with its softly chugging FM rock guitars is a bad enough start but it's all downhill from there. The monstrously cheesy 'I Love You' is a lifeless piano ballad that somehow manages to fuse Savage Garden, Toploader and the very worst bits of Elton John into a grim four minutes, while 'Don't Let Me Go' is Crowded House's 'Always Take The Weather With You' rendered as lame as a pig in a minefield. And so we reach the grand finale, 'Slow Down', which aside from ironically urging us to slow down even though it seems to have taken us several years to get here, goes on to reassure us that everything will work out fine. Except it hasn't, has it Trev? You're in the Demo Dumper and things are going to get a whole lot worse for you just as soon as we detonate the lethal plague spore bomb we hid behind your radiator earlier.

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. Aw heck, you're not taking the slightest bit of notice of this are you?

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July

Club Nights

15 Fri 01 July The Point Presents
THE WALKOFF + THE SCHA LA LA'S
+ THE KEYBOARD CHOIR

Sat 02 July Led Zeppelin Tribute
WHOLE LOTTA LED

Wed 05 July + ROB REYNOLDS
LOVE WITH ARTHUR LEE

10 Fri 06 July The Point presents
PLACE ABOVE + HARLETTE + 20 20 VISION
+ ACCIDENTALLY INNOCENT

14 Thu 14 July www.theclubthat.com presents
ANTHRAX
JOEY BELLADONNA, FRANK BELLO, CHARLIE BENANTE, SCOTT IAN + DANNY SPITZ

14 Thu 14 July Shifty Disco Night - www.theclubthat.com presents
THE DOMES OF SILENCE + THE UNISEX
+ MORE

14 Sat 16 July www.theclubthat.com presents
DOGS

14 Sun 17 July www.theclubthat.com presents
JOSH ROUSE + TRUMAN FALLS

14 Mon 18 July www.theclubthat.com presents
IN ME + FONY + SAVE OURSELVES

15 Fri 20 July Gassy Teeth Presents
THE DRUGSQUAD + THE NAILBOMB CULTS
+ MICHAEL BARK

AUGUST

14 Sat 6 Aug www.theclubthat.com presents
EVERY TIME I DIE + TWELVE TRIBES
+ A LIFE ONCE LOST

14 Sat 13 Aug www.theclubthat.com presents
MY AWESOME COMPILATION

14 Thu 18 Aug
ARCTIC MONKEYS

14 Wed 24 Aug www.theclubthat.com presents
THE COOPER TEMPLE CLAUSE

September

Thu 8 Sep www.theclubthat.com presents
THE MISSION

14 Sat 24 Sep www.theclubthat.com presents
DRAGONFORCE

October

14 Thu 13 Oct www.theclubthat.com presents
TOM BAXTER

14 Mon 17 Oct www.theclubthat.com presents
THE PADDINGTONS

14 Fri 21 Oct www.theclubthat.com presents
HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

14 Fri 28 Oct www.theclubthat.com presents
ALEXISONFIRE

14 Sat 29 Oct www.theclubthat.com presents an evening with
LACUNA COIL

Tue 5 July

Hammer & Tongue

Poetry Slam night plus Hip Hop DJs

Thursdays

SABOTAGE: Alt rock, metal & punk weekly

DJ DEREK: Thu 28 July

Legendary Granddaddy of Ska, Reggae & Dancehall

Fridays

SLIDE: Fri 8 July - LOTTIE

Quality House monthly

SOURCE: Fri 15 July- JIBBA & ROGUE/ HUSSLA

DUBPLATE/ SMOKEY - Drum'n'Bass monthly

BOOGIE BASEMENT:

Soul, Funk & Disco every week

Saturdays

TRANSFORMATION:

Indie, Rock & Alt Dance upstairs

TRASHY Goes Weekly!

Trash pop, 80s, Indie & Glam Rock downstairs



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with DJs
Tommy Kneecaps & The LadyFlysox

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These details are subject to change, call to check.