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NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month.
Issue 116
March
2005



Dive Dive

Back from the dead and rocking
harder than ever - interview inside.

Plus

Live reviews, local releases, demos and the
biggest and best Oxfordshire gig guide.

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NEWS

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THE DEADLINE for demos for bands wishing to play at the **Oxford Punt** is the 15th of March. This year's Oxford Punt, which will showcase 21 acts across seven venues in Oxford city centre, takes place on **Wednesday 11th May**. The event runs from 6pm through to 1am, starting off at Borders bookstore and carrying on through the evening at Jongleurs, The Wheatsheaf, The City Tavern, The Purple Turtle (in conjunction with Beard Museum), Far From The Madding Crowd (in conjunction with Delicious Music) and finishing off at the Cellar. The Punt is the premier showcase for unsigned Oxford talent. Acts wishing to play need to submit a demo, clearly marked Punt on the envelope, along with a short bio, to Nightshift Magazine, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU. The only rules for consideration are that acts must be from Oxfordshire and be unsigned.

As ever there are **100 all-venue Punt passes available**, priced £7. These are on sale now from Polar Bear on Cowley Road, The Oxford Music Shop on St Aldates or online from oxfordmusic.net. Almost half the passes have been sold already, so be quick! Admission to each separate venue will be either £3 or £4, with either three or four acts playing at each. The gigs at Borders and Far From The Madding Crowd are free entry.

The full line-up for the Punt will be announced in the April issue of Nightshift, with a four-page Punt guide pull-out in the May edition. Contact Nightshift on 01865 372255 for more details.

THE DOWNLOAD, BBC Radio Oxford's new local music show starts this month, on Friday 4th March. Supergrass will help launch the new show, which airs every Friday evening from 7-8pm. Presenter Tim Bearder will be interviewing Gaz, Mickey and Danny, who have been recording their new album in France. The Download aims to showcase local music of all persuasions and will include club and gig reports as well as a local demo section in conjunction with Nightshift. Bands wanting their stuff played on the show should send CDs to Tim c/o BBC Oxford, 269 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DW. Remember: the only way to keep local music on the radio is to support the show, so tune in, or visit the website at bbc.co.uk/oxford.

NARCO return from extended hibernation this month with a new single, 'Evil Brother', on Surface To Air Records. It will be the band's first release since 2000's

'Blackmailer' EP. 'Teen Suicide Explosion' from that EP topped Nightshift's end of year Top 20. 'Evil Brother' is out now and will be followed by another single, 'Worth It', at the end of March with their debut album, 'Control Of The Stereo', due for release on the 18th April. Narco return to live performance with a gig at the Zodiac on Thursday 24th March.

THE WORKHOUSE's second Peel session will be broadcast on Thursday 17th March on Rob Da Bank's Radio 1 show. The Workhouse were the last ever band to be invited to record a session for John Peel. The band are currently recording their second album. They play live at the Wheatsheaf on Saturday 16th April.

THE EDMUND FITZGERALD have announced that they are to split. The band, reckoned to be one of the most promising young bands in Oxford over the last couple of years, will play their final show

DR SHOTOVER

They made me do it!

Hmm. The Brit Awards. Now, it was like this... Stuffy Stimpson's pure Bat Guano Mezcal was to blame... He smuggled a bottle back from Mexico inside a hollowed-out Toltec head, y'see... Two days later I woke up on the ottoman, quite unable to move. Some stupid bastard had left the the TV on... so I had to watch the whole of 'The Brits'. Ghastly, absolutely ghastly. From 'Sensitive Chav' Mike Skinner to Schmoozy Sioux practically sticking her tongue down Ms Scissor Sisters' throat (actually, come to think of it, that was the best part)... From Snoop Dogbreath's poncing about to Robbie Williams' 'kid with attention deficit disorder' hyper-thyroidism... All I could think about was how much I missed The KLF and Extreme Noise Terror machine-gunning the audience in 1992, or the reformed Faces doing 'Stay With Me' in 1993. Actually, I even felt quite nostalgic about the time my older brother tried to do a trepanning operation on me using a Black & Decker Work-Pal in the garden shed – less painful by far than 2 ½ hours of that insipid self-congratulatory slop...

Next month:
Pete Doherty –
"I thought
heroin would
stop me having
such a fat face."



Dr S discusses the decline of Western Civilisation with Robbie Williams

this month (Saturday 5th March) at the Zodiac supporting Youth Movie Soundtrack Strategies.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY will be running their traditional May Bank Holiday weekend live music festival again this year. The two-day event takes place at the Exeter Hall in Cowley on Saturday 30th April and Sunday 1st May, with some 30 acts appearing over the two days, and all for the bargain price of £4 a day. More line-up details as we get them.

A REMINDER that tickets for this year's Truck Festival are on sale now, priced £27.50, from wegottickets.com. The festival takes place over the weekend of the 23rd and 24th July at Hill Farm in Steventon. Last year's festival sold out in advance so buy early. Check out www.truckfestival.org for all

the news and info you need.

THE VICTORIA pub on Walton Street in Jericho has a new acoustic open mic session starting this month. The music nights will take place on the first and third Sundays of each month with all singers and musicians welcome to join in. Entry is free. Call 01865 554047 for more details.

KAISER CHIEFS' gig at the Zodiac on Sunday 24th April has been upgraded to Brookes University Union after selling out in under two days. All tickets for the Zodiac remain valid, while remaining tickets are on sale now, priced £9, from the Zodiac box office (01865 420042) or online from wegottickets.com. Support comes from hotly-tipped newcomers Nine Black Alps and Dual.

THE OXFORD PUNT

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a quiet word with

Dive Dive

STICK AROUND LONG

enough and fashion will come back to embrace you eventually. It's a maxim that's served many a band well over the years. And it might help explain why, ten years after they first hit the local scene running as Dustball, Dive Dive are once again the most popular band in Oxford.

Back in 1996 Dustball were the brightest young things in town. Pale, skinny and wired they kicked out a simple but highly effective three-chord punk-pop noise that coated the classic sound of The Undertones and Buzzcocks with a sprinkling of brattish American punk thunder. We loved it. The kids loved it. The record companies loved it. Dustball were gonna be the big new thing.

But it never works out like that, does it? Big-money contracts were waved around and vanished into the ether just as quickly. The kids discovered nu-metal. Dustball looked like they might just disappear. And for a short while they almost did. The original three-piece (Jamie Stuart - vocals and guitar; Tarrant Anderson - bass; James Russell - drums) packed it in to get proper jobs. But soon they were back. They changed their name (initially to Mote, then the Fighting Ghandis and, finally, to Dive Dive), they recruited long-time friend and roadie Ben Lloyd on guitar and replaced James with former Unbelievable Truth sticksman Nigel Powell. And then they got to work making things happen on their own terms.

SINCE THE BAND

reconvened in 2001 with the new name and line-up, Dive Dive have racked up half a dozen single releases on assorted indie labels, played hundreds of gigs across the UK and finally landed themselves a deal with London-based label Diablo. The first fruit of this new liaison was the re-release of 'Good Show' late last year. Last month they released another single, '5-5-5 For Film Stars', and their album, 'Musica Fabrica', is due out in May. Most of the band's old fanbase has grown up or moved on but in their place is a whole new



Dive Dive (l-r): Tarrant, Jamie, Ben, Nigel.

wave of teenage fans, enthused by Dive Dive's trademark blend of sublime melody and punk rock delivery. A strong fanzine support and an active street team have bolstered their reputation, while the video for the single has just been playlisted by MTV. In short, they're back and they're stronger than ever.

THE DIVE DIVE 2005 MODEL is still recognisable from its original incarnation but now it's stronger, sleeker and with bigger, spikier bits attached. '5-5-5 For Film Stars' boasts a harder-edged guitar sound than their rollercoasting sound of old. US hardcore bands like The Jesus Lizard and Minutemen now seem to be a significant influence, while slower songs have a skyscraping quality that seems to owe something to Unbelievable Truth's epic yearning.

Nightshift caught up with Jamie, Tarrant, Nigel and Ben as they prepared to play a headline show at the Zodiac, part of yet another national tour.

The band seems to have found fresh impetus both with the arrival of Nigel and the settled new name.

Jamie: "Yeah.... the settled new name, that's what we wanted you to think! Nigel rocks! I'd never imagined he was that kind of drummer, having listened to the less-than-lively Unbelievable

Truth. What he's also helped to instigate is a level of professionalism, or at least tried to. We tend to be a much more efficient band these days, approaching gigs with almost military precision instead of using them as excuses to get completely wrecked.

"The dictators of the band, Nigel and Tarrant, 'helped' me give up smoking. My voice has gotten better but I've lost some good friends. I suppose Nigel has been a factor, but it's more that we realised we want to do this for a living. We used to be accused by some of the major labels of not having the desire to succeed, but really, we were 18 and not convinced of anything much. Now, having gigged a lot, you see other bands out there making a go of it, releasing records, managing themselves, and earning a living with or without the 'big' record deal. We just came around to the idea that we can make this happen ourselves."

The pop rush is still there but there's an increasing hard edge to a lot of your songs recently, especially '555 For Film Stars'; how have your influences and tastes changed?

Jamie: "When we first started Dustball I wasn't listening to much music at all, I couldn't avoid some bands like Nirvana and Sonic Youth, but they weren't really

affecting my writing because I didn't really know many chords and I only had fairly chirpy melodies bouncing around in my head. I guess now I just find it easier to vocalise the shit things that happen to me rather than the good things, though still in quite happy melodies. The band has always been high energy and it feels great to get these things off your chest as loudly as possible whilst throwing yourself around a stage. Lately I haven't really been listening to anything weird, just bands we bump into like This Ain't Vegas, Jetplane Landing and Berkley and other shouty stuff like the Futureheads and Yourcodenameis:milo. Having said all that my favourite song at the moment is Sam Cooke's 'Change Is Gonna Come'. It's one of the most beautiful songs I've ever heard."

IN OXFORD AT LEAST DIVE

Dive's fan base now is mostly different people to that which followed them as Dustball in the late-90s; do they think now they were ahead of their time back then or have they changed or has fashion merely come full circle just at the right time?

Jamie: "Hell Knows. In the last four years music seems to have sped through the 70s and into the mid-80s with lots of bands that sound like bands that no-one really listened to until now because some bands sound like them, according to a journalist. We have changed the way we sound; sadly we learnt how to play somewhere along the line so two-minute, three-chord punk songs can no longer take up the whole set. Whilst we're influenced by all the bands we play with I would like to think that we're evolving without a mind to current trends. In all the time I've been playing in a band people will come up to me and say, 'You sound like XTC,' or 'you must be a big fan of the Buzzcocks,' and sometimes, 'the guy at the door won't give me my money back, so cough up or I'll smash you through that wall' and nine times out of ten I'll have to go down to Avid the next day, buy some old vinyl and find out what the fuck they're talking about."

Nationally you're now regarded as a completely new band in its own right but do you think in Oxford you are still thought of as the band that used to be Dustball?

Jamie: "Yes absolutely, and that's fine, they were good times and I don't think we disappoint anyone who comes to see us for whatever reason. If there are people that avoid our gigs because they hated Dustball, that's fine too. Losers."

For Nigel it must be a huge change playing with a band like Dive Dive after Unbelievable Truth.

Nigel: "Faster. Much faster. Unlike UT, the writing process with Dive Dive can be very fraught and tense. Not always, but with UT it was as easy as breathing. But on the other side, with UT playing live could be like pulling teeth using a flight of stairs, a toaster and a piece of string, whereas with Dive Dive it's the most natural place to be. Personally I've always liked to push myself in other directions, so I love it all."

BACK IN 1998 DUSTBALL

were being courted by a number of major label suitors, but, typically it came to nothing and the band released their debut album, 'Quality But Hers' (named after a faulty sign above a Cowley Road butcher's shop) on local indie label Shifty Disco. The album came packaged in a novel but annoyingly mobile silver ball casing. Even now Dive Dive find themselves more at home on a small but upwardly mobile indie label and that long-overdue second album is on its way. Nightshift listened to a rough mix of the new CD and it displays a tight grasp of punky, post-hardcore dynamics, a bullish production that complements their live sound and half a dozen classic pop melodies that will stick with you for months to come. What are the band's feelings about the new album and with the new label?

Tarrant: "Diablo are an independent label based just south of London. We were put in touch with them through a girl at MTV who really liked the 'Good Show' single the first time it was released back in the summer of 2003. The album has been a while in the making and its going to be great to get it out there with some proper backing."

Are they feeding you well?

Jamie: "Yes they are. Being an indie, they're more into their gastro pubs over the trendy, urban polished pine and chrome bistros favoured by majors. They've even gone as far as giving us tour support so we've graduated from living off Gingsters and motorway sandwiches – although the addiction remains – to Pizza

Express (margherita and a jug of tap water). We've also been able to make a couple of videos to accompany the singles, one which I didn't like – it was like miming an episode of Hollyoaks – and one which I did, which seems to be getting played a lot. The last month has been really picking up speed and I'm getting really excited about this release and the gigs that go with it."

WHILE DIVE DIVE ARE BUSY

exploring the farthest reaches of the UK's live music scene, they are still firmly rooted in the Oxford scene that spawned and nurtured them. Veterans of the scene now, how do they view Oxford and the way it's changed since they were starting out?

Jamie: "Oxford is blessed and cursed with a very close music scene. It's great for people that want to get on with it; there are plenty of gigs, studios, small labels, publishers and even distributors. For those who are competitive or selfish in any way it can be too close for comfort. There are some great bands around at the moment. For me, Youth Movie Soundtrack Strategies are great; The Edmund Fitzgerald, great, great; Fell City Girl great, The Young Knives and Smilex, great, great. I miss the Point, always: I saw the Strokes and the White Stripes on their first UK tours there. These large companies that run roughshod over local interest on the word of an ill-educated area manager have their heads up their arses. I really want to go to a board meeting and do the Matt Damon thing in 'Dogma'. As I've grown up around the scene my perspective has changed. It would be tempting for me to say that it has weakened, but that would be unfair. When we first got involved there was a lot for us to aspire to and thanks to a healthy network I gained experience guitar teching for larger bands, Tarrant gained experience as an engineer helping us learn our trade in the times we weren't playing. I'm sure that network is still there with some different faces. Having seen how disparate the music scenes are in other places of similar activity and population around the country. Yeah... Oxford is blessed and almost everyone who reads this magazine helps in some way."

'5-5-5 For Film Stars' is out now on Diablo. 'Musica Fabrica' is released in May (date to be confirmed). Dive Dive play instore at HMV on Cornmarket on Saturday 26th February. Check out www.divedive.co.uk for gig dates and news.



March

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Saturday 12th – **DEPTH CHARGE** – Drum'n'Bass 9-2am

Wednesday 16th – **BROOKES ROCK SOCIETY BANDS SHOWCASE** 8-12

Saturday 19th – **STICK IT ON** – Open Decks DJ Session. 9-2am

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VARIOUS ARTISTS

'Under 18'

(Quickfix)

You know how grown ups are always worrying what the youngsters of today are doing? Well here's a chance for them to find out, from the comfort of their own homes. And what the youngsters of today are up to, if this compilation of local teenage bands is anything to go on, is shouting.

Quickfix is now the most prolific Oxford record label and this CD adds a fresh twist to the idea of local compilation albums, limiting inclusion to bands under 18 years old, giving them two tracks each to show what they're capable of.

Unsurprisingly the band who come out best are The Walk Off, who have already made quite a splash on the live scene with their mayhem industrial techno assault. Stripped of their chaotic onstage show and dancing bear, their music is made to stand up and fight in its own right and makes a good fist of it, the Ministry-meets-Aphex Twin-meets-Suede crunch of 'Taste Of Animals' throbbing unpleasantly amid the general din of guitars and sequencers.



'Office Girl' is less effective, the electronic chatter and squalling guitars unable to keep up with the ranting vocals.

Winnebago Deal acolytes Mondo Cada acquit themselves well too, although their buzzsaw, full-pelt garage metal doesn't stray too far from their mentors' blueprint, all straight-ahead ramming speed beats and overdriven guitar stabs. Elsewhere Back By Six make angry shouty noises over thrashed-up Iron Maiden riffs on 'Haydn vs Bach' and Funeral For A

Friend on 'Comparatives'. Similarly metal-minded, 20/20 Vision are marginally harder if not faster, equally in thrall to 80s thrash, topping it off with dual shouty rap vocals. Just to prove that Oxfordshire's youth clubs are not just a sea of testosterone-fuelled aggression, all-girl grungers Harlette get their quota of shouting in too. The excellently-titled 'Sometimes She Pisses Me Off' coats Cure-inspired bass lines with guitar fuzz, lightweight ranting and We've Got a Fuzzbox-style vocal harmonies. The even better-named 'Didcot Is For Lovers' rises above its untidy arrangement with a haunted dreaminess.

It doesn't go as read that young bands equal unfinished article: from Supergrass through Crackout to Sexy Breakfast and plenty of others, Oxford has always produced teenage bands who punch well above their weight, but equally, given how young all the bands here are, it's not surprising that the quality is uneven. Still, plenty of time to smooth over those cracks and fine-tune those nascent ideas. By which time there'll be a whole new crop of teenage bands coming through the ranks. Some of whom might even keep a civil tongue in their heads.

Dale Kattack

NARCO

'Evil Brother'

(Surface To Air)

Well Hell, was it really back in 2000 that Narco's glorious 'Teen Suicide Explosion' topped the Nightshift end of year chart and the band looked set to be the next big thing out of Oxford? And then... nothing. After being kicked about by record labels Narco-in-chief Rich Aitken concentrated on his more lucrative job writing music for computer games and producing a succession of other acts.

There were a few brief live outings last year but now it looks like Narco are back in contention full time with this single set to be followed by the band's debut album in April. So crank out those hissing Suicide synth riffs and those evil metallic bass lines, growl like you're a down-home Noo Yawk smackhead with a 40-a-day habit and life dedicated to the cliché of the rock and roll dream. 'Evil Brother' knows in its gut it was born to grace the stage of CBGB's and probably die in the process. It's a precision produced slice of New Wave synth rock, yet sounds like it was mashed together from spit, sawdust and beer dregs. It's half-dead with the spirits of Martin Rev and Jim Morrison, it needs a decent meal inside of it and it's great.

Dale Kattack

BLUE KITE

'Resolution'

(Own Label)

By Oxford standards Blue Kite have a hell of a pedigree. Formed by three former members of indie legends The Anyways, Alan Buckley, Mark Price and Pete Lock, their current line-up also includes one-time Mystics siren Kate Garrett on vocals, drummer Tim Turan who must by now have played in every band in Oxford, plus guest appearances by Soma's Rich Haines and Goldrush's Joe Bennett.

Blue Kite made their debut on 1996's seminal local band compilation 'OXCD' and have released two previous albums but the nature of the band has meant they've played less than a handful of gigs in all those years. Things have changed somewhat since the arrival of Kate into their ranks but this elusive band are still something of a secret even in their home city. Which they shouldn't be, because this third album is very much the sum of all that talent.

Discreet pop is probably as apt a description as you can find for Blue Kite but that insinuates something bland or dinner partyish, when really they're more exotic than that. Kate's voice is inscrutable and other-worldly and this as much as anything lends a lost in time feel to everything. The darker edge of the 60s hippy

dream mingles with a very English folk edge and the accomplished maturity of a jobbing jazz-rock band. So while Blue Kite can occasionally feel like a victory for professionalism over adventurism, more often they can be as seductive as an autumn evening and as comforting as red wine in front of a log fire. 'Wired' and 'Tears For a Blues Kite' are smoky, slow burning gems, Pete and Kate's voices softly twisting themselves around each other, while at the other end of the scale, 'You Are My Dreamer' rides on squalling U2-style guitars. Kate comes into her own on the solemn 'Run To Me', all mournful cello and plaintive vocals, reminiscent of Propaganda siren Claudia Brücken. Only on tracks like the pedestrian 'Our Great Expectations' and a seriously risible reinterpretation of 'Daydream Believer' do they unmake the spell.

Given that most of Blue Kite have been writing and playing for 20 years or more, the depth and breadth of talent on show here isn't unexpected. What might be more of a surprise is just how fresh most of this album sounds, Much more so than many bands less than half their age.

Sue Foreman

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Fridays: Upstairs events till late

REPUBLICA: Fri Mar 4 - Anne Savage - Hard House

SLIDE: Fri 11 Mar - Yousef - Quality House

RUMPSHAKER: Fri Mar 18 - Old Skool Special

SOURCE: Fri 25 Mar - Drum'n'Bass

BOOGIE BASEMENT: Soul, funk & disco every week

Saturdays: Now open till late

TRANSFORMATION: indie, rock & alt dance upstairs

TRASHY: trash pop 80s indie & glam rock March 12 & 26

PEEPSHOW: Treats & Beats alt Sats ds March 5 & 19

These details are subject to change, call to check.

GIG GUIDE

TUESDAY 1st

FIGHTSTAR + CRY FOR SILENCE + HOLLYWOOD ENDINGS: **The Zodiac** –

Former-Busted singer Charlie Simpson's new proper indie punk rock band comes to town, the former pre-teen heartthrob apparently following his heart and jacking in the popstar life for some back-of-a-van action around the nation's more intimate venues. Of course it's already long-since sold out. Support comes from London hardcore crew Cry For Silence.

JAZZ CLUB with **THE TOM GREY QUINTET**:

The Bullingdon – The Bully's weekly live jazz club keeps swinging the joint with club resident band The Tom Grey Quintet keeping it lively. Quality jazz and dance and all for free.

ANTON BARBEAU + THE NEW MOON +

GARY CURRAN: **The Port Mahon** –

Psychedelic pop in a Robyn Hitchcock vein from

MARCH

American singer Anton Barbeau, plus support from Tim Buckley-inspired duo The New Moon and 50s-style jazz, rock'n'roll and country from Mr Curran.

DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION:

Old School House, Gloucester Green –

Weekly all-comers live music club.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Exeter Hall, Cowley

THE EVENINGS + THIS TOWN NEEDS

GUNS: The Cellar – Vertigo, the University's indie music society hosts its new club night with live music from dynamic electro pounders

The Evenings, plus emo-tinged rockers

TTNG.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: **The Hobgoblin**, Cowley Road

WEDNESDAY 2nd

THE DHARMA: **The Port Mahon**

COROFIN & FRIENDS: Exeter Hall, Cowley

– Weekly trad Irish folk residency.

BOSSAPHONIC with NATUREBOY

featuring ALICE RUSSELL: **The Cellar**

CATWEAZLE CLUB: **Northgate Hall** –

Weekly all-comers session for musicians, singers, poets, storytellers and performance artists.

BARCODE: The Hollybush, Osney – Weekly energy jazz residency with resident drums, double bass and piano trio.

THURSDAY 3rd

THE SOUNDTRACK OF OUR LIVES: **The**

Zodiac – Sweden's megalithic classic rockers, making out like it's still 1968 with hefty doses of folkly psychedelia and Rolling Stones steals. Oh, and a big beardy frontman who we can only presume is the lovechild of Vangelis and Rasputin. Takes all sorts.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB with JOHN ETHERIDGE:

The Wheatsheaf – World-famous guitarist and former member of Soft Machine, Etheridge has played with Stephan Grapelli, Dizzy Gillespie and Nigel Kennedy during his illustrious career, drawing plaudits from the likes of Pat Metheny and Sting along the way.

RAMI & THE EYE-LAND MONKEYS: **The**

Exeter Hall, Cowley – Funk, soul and blues from the local troubadour.

BEARD MUSEUM with ADVENTURES OF EMILY ROSE + BEN ULPH + ANONYMEN: **The Cellar**

BLACK RIVER PROJECT + STONE FROM DELPHI + DR SID + THE APPLETHIEVES + SOULBURN: Brookes University Union – Showcase night for the Brookes Rock Society with Leicester hardcore crew Black River Project; melodic hard rock in a Muse-meets-Lostprophets vein from Stone From Delphi; stoner rock from Reading's Dr Sid, plus two of Brookes' own current faves, Soulburn, firing out some Pantera-inspired metal and funky riffs and grunge noise from The Applethieves.

DELICIOUS MUSIC BLUES AND JAZZ

BANDS NIGHT: **Far From The Madding**

Crowd – The mobile live music club presents a weekly session of jazz and blues bands.

MY INITIALS CLUB with GINGER BROWN + SALVO: **The Port Mahon**

SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks – Weekly dose of ska, dub, funk, reggae and Latin beats, with DJ Aidan Larkin and guests.

SABOTAGE: The Zodiac – Weekly rock club night with Club That Cannot Be Named DJs spinning a selection of metal, punk, hardcore and indie sounds.

FRIDAY 4th

THE RAVEONETTES + DOGS + THE BOXER

REBELLION: The Zodiac – First chance to see the heavenly Danish fuzz-pop duo – *see main preview.*

DIATRIBE + THE GREEN + THE LONG

WEEKEND + THE SEVENTH LEVEL: **The**

Zodiac – Four-band local bill featuring glammy rockers Diatribe, Suede-inspired gothsters The Green, plus four-times Nightshift Demo Of The Month winners The Long Weekend with a dynamic, melodic blend of 60s garage rock and 80s indie.

REPUBLICA: The Zodiac – With special guest Anne Savage.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with JUNKIE BRUSH

+ SACRED DISORDER + REVEREND

MOONSHINE: **The Wheatsheaf** – Yer actual

proper old school punk rock from Junkie Brush.

CJ ROCK PRESENTS: **The Exeter Hall,**

Cowley – A night of unsigned local rock bands.

SKETCHY: The Cellar – Hip hop, ragga, funk and drum&bass sounds from DJs Toby Kidd and Mr Brogan.

SLIGHTLY MAD: **The Barn, Red Lion,**

Witney – Queen tribute.

OXFORD FOLK CLUB with BEN PALEY &

TAB HUNTER: **The Port Mahon** – Fiddle and

guitar duo playing klezmer and bluegrass.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: **The Bullingdon** –

Classic funk, soul and disco.

SATURDAY 5th

THE HAUNTED + DEAD TO FALL + MARTYR

AD: **The Zodiac (upstairs)** – Swedish thrash

metal titans return to the Zodiac to plug their 'reEVOLVER' album, following last year's tour support to Funeral For A Friend and now reunited with original vocalist Peter Dolving. Support from Victory Records-signed metalcore hopefuls Dead To Fall and Martyr AD.

YOUTH MOVIE SOUNDTRACK

STRATEGIES + THE EDMUND FITZGERALD +

THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS + NARCISSISM:

The Zodiac (downstairs) – Youth Movies

continue on their convoluted guitar journey with this headline gig. Elaborate guitar textures and dynamic rhythms make for a thrilling but intelligent journey into leftfield rock noise. Promising post-rock youngsters The Edmund Fitzgerald sadly call it a day with this gig. Their spiky instrumental guitar noise having lived up the local live scene for the past couple of years, hopefully it won't be long before Yannis and co. return with a new band. Melodic emo rockers TTNG and proggy Banbury youngsters Narcissism make up a strong local band bill.

P.Y.E + WARHEN: The Wheatsheaf – More post-rock action down the road with P.Y.E adding a jazzy slant to their instrumental noise. Spiky punk teens Warhen support.

BOYWITHATOY PRESENTS: **The Port**

Mahon – Leftfield and indie bands.

THE PETE FRYER BAND & GUESTS: **The**

Exeter Hall, Cowley

Friday 4th

THE RAVEONETTES / DOGS / THE BOXER REBELLION:

The Zodiac

Well, it's about bleedin' time The Raveonettes played in Oxford. Some of us have been waiting an age and we just know it's gonna be worth it. How will you be able to not fall madly in love with a two-piece boy/girl band from Denmark who sound like a stripped-down crystallisation of The Jesus and Mary Chain, Shop Assistants, Buddy Holly and just about every Phil Spector-produced girl band of the 1960s? And that's not even counting the fact that bassist / singer Sharin Foo coos like a less angelic Julee Cruise and looks like Nico (we feel faint all of a sudden). Or that guitarist / singer Sune Rose Wagner sounds exactly like Lou Reed when he was in the Velvet and was actually any good. Drones, feedback and honey-dripping bubblegum punk melodies? They got 'em. Support on this Jim Beam-sponsored tour comes from north London's scruffy rock and roll newcomers Dogs, and Aussie-American ex-pats The Boxer Rebellion, mixing up the Verve's sweeping grandiosity with Geneva's delicate sense of epic.





Tuesday 8th

THIRTEEN SENSES: The Zodiac

It's barely a year since Thirteen Senses were being tipped as "The New Coldplay" by the marketing department of some vast record label that weren't on the ball enough to sign the old Coldplay first time round. Now of course, three Top 40 singles, a CD:UK appearance and tours with Embrace, Keane and The Charlatans later, they're an established part of the musical furniture. As comfortable as an Ikea sofa and as discreet as a flat-packed coffee table. Like Keane, and Coldplay before them, Thirteen Senses deal in delicate, emotional pop. With pianos. Singer and keyboard man Will South writes gentle, semi-acoustic anthems that swoop and sweep in all the right places and sings them with a suitably plaintive falsetto. Like their home county, Cornwall, Thirteen Senses may be a bit wet at times but, again like Cornwall, the scenery is pretty and come the summertime, they're going to be very popular.

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – Old school funky house with Nicky Blackmarket.

MARK BOSLEY + NUGGET + CHANTELLE PIKE + STEM + BLUNT INSTRUMENTS + NEW MOON: King's Head & Bell – Skittle Alley acoustic session, featuring gothic troubadour Mark Bosley and a host of local unplugged types.

AFTER HOURS: The Barn, Red Lion, Witney

MAEVE & GRAEME: Magic Café (1pm)

SUNDAY 6th

RODRIGO Y GABRIELA: The Zodiac – Swift return to the Zodiac for the Dublin-based Mexican guitar duo, mixing up Latin rhythms, Celtic lyricism, Flamenco, jazz and the odd Metallica riff into an oddly effective world fusion experience.

CHURCH OF THE HEAVY: The Bullingdon – Local live bands showcase.

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

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Victoria, Jericho

BURN: The Black Horse, Kidlington

THE USSR: The Port Mahon

MONDAY 7th

STRAYLIGHT RUN + THE SPILL CANVAS + JUNIOR VARSITY: The Zodiac – Long Island melodic rockers formed by John Nolan and Shaun Cooper, who left Taking Back Sunday in 2003 just as that band hit the big time. Their apparent career suicide is now paying dividends, although their piano and sample-heavy new sound is some way removed from their heavy rock roots.

THE GREGG WRIGHT BAND: The Bullingdon – Energetic and soulful blues rocking

from California's guitar virtuoso Gregg Wright, one of the most renowned blues guitarists and session men in the world, including a stint in Michael Jackson's touring band.

SALSANEROS: The Cellar – Live Latin dance.

THE PHIL BEER BAND: Nettlebed Folk Club TUESDAY 8th

BARNABAS + SIMON DAVIES + SEAN TAYLOR: The Port Mahon – Prolific local cellist, guitarist and singer Barney Morse-Brown performs his own songs solo; classically trained guitarist Simon Davies provides songs of thwarted romance, American imperialism and melancholia, while London-based Sean Taylor does folky pop in a John Martyn style.

THIRTEEN SENSES: The Zodiac (upstairs) – Sweet piano-led pop dreaminess from Cornish starlets – see main preview

SONDRE LERCHE: The Zodiac (downstairs) – Easy listening with a distinctly dark tinge from Norwegian songwriter Sondre Lerche, mining a similar vein of quirky, ambitious pop to Rufus Wainwright and Ed Harcourt.

JAZZ CLUB with THE HOWARD PEACOCK 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 9th

THE EPSTEIN BAND + REDOX + FORK + THE NEW MOON: The Bullingdon – Oxfam benefit gig with four local acts giving it up for the developing world. Melodic country rockers The Epstein Band headline, swampy party vibes from Redox, proggy punk noise from Fork and gentle acoustic pop from The New Moon.

COROFIN & FRIENDS: Exeter Hall, Cowley
MIXOLOGISTS + DIGITAL ERA: The Cellar – Drum&bass DJ set.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall

BARCODE: The Hollybush, Osney

THURSDAY 10th

WHITMORE + CHIEF LIBIDO + FLOATING FACE DOWN: The Zodiac – UK ska-core heroes.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB with STEVE LODDER: The Wheatsheaf – Jazz piano from the former sidekick to Andy Sheppard and Paul McCartney.

DELICIOUS MUSIC BLUES AND JAZZ BANDS NIGHT: Far From The Madding Crowd

GWYN ASHTON: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Acoustic rock and blues.

DELIVERENCE with SUMMER OF MARS: The Elm Tree – Country and western themed club night with live bands and free grub.

SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks

SABOTAGE: The Zodiac

FRIDAY 11th

ONE LOUDER with THE ROCK OF TRAVOLTA + SIREN + THE WALK OFF: The Wheatsheaf – The final One Louder club night features the first ever live show from the new-look Rock Of Travolta. Phill Honey's long-standing leftfield rock club is the perfect setting for his old band's comeback, hoping to retain their majestic grasp of dynamic rock and orchestral noise. Support comes from former Ultrasound frontman Tiny Woods' epic new outfit Siren, plus rampaging techno noisenicks The Walk Off. Amps turned up to 11 all night and bowing out in style.

SLIDE: The Zodiac – Funky house club night.

TALL FACES: The Barn, Red Lion, Witney
OXFORD FOLK CLUB OPEN NIGHT: The Port Mahon

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon
HQ: The Cellar – Drum&bass from Q Project.

SATURDAY 12th

THE SAMURAI SEVEN + RED STAR CYCLE + FILM NOIR: The Wheatsheaf – Buzzsaw punk-pop with classic 60s harmonies from local stalwarts The Samurai Seven. Bullish synth'n'fiddle-led rock from RSC, plus indie pop from Film Noir.

WIGOUT! with UNCHAYNED + SIR BALD DIDDLEY & HIS WIGOUTS: The Port Mahon – Raucous garage punk from Unchained at tonight's Wigout Club. Host Sir Bald Diddlely carries the torch for authentic 50s and 60s rock'n'roll, surf and garage rock, plus rock'n'roll and soul DJs.

EIGHT-FOOT UNDER: The Barn, Red Lion, Witney

SEXTODECIMO + CHINESE FINGERTRAP: The Zodiac – Local stoner heavyweights pile on the pressure with grungy punkers in support.

DEPTH CHARGE: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.

THE CHEESEGRATERS: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Live funk and soul.

DEVIL'S GUN: The Cellar – Live electro punk noise.

LATIF BOLTA + JENNIFER FERRARO: Friends Meeting House, St Giles – An evening of Turkish sufi music in aid of Tsunami relief.

DAVE NOBLE & SHARON SUBBARAO: Magic Café (1pm)

Monday 14th

HATEBREED: The Zodiac

Hatebreed are one of the few bands around who can get away with calling their album 'The Rise Of Brutality'. Because that, in essence, is their story. The band who were recently nominated for a Grammy for best metal performance have worked their way to the top with a decade of seriously vicious metallic hardcore, selling nearly a quarter of a million albums before they'd even been signed to a major label. Now that they're firmly ensconced in the mainstream – signed to Universal in the States and with singer Jamey Jasta presenting MTV's *Headbanger's Ball* – they're giving it a royal kicking. Theirs is a sweaty, cathartic and extremely punishing update of Slayer and Sick Of It All's stripped-down metal, fuelled by extreme amounts of testosterone and anger. They've most recently been seen in the UK supporting Slayer and Slipknot, while their musical incitements to riot have seen them barred entry to Canada, lest they corrupt the nation's youth. So, parents, are you sure you want your kids going out tonight?





Thursday 17th

SECRET MACHINES: The Zodiac

Nightshift's favourite album of last year, by some distance, was Secret Machines' full-length debut, 'Now Here Is Nowhere', a magical, dynamic journey into sound that stands in stark relief to the ugly, messy lumps of noise that pass for mainstream 'alternative' rock these days. Brothers Brandon and Benjamin Curtis (singer and keyboard player, and guitarist respectively), along with drummer Josh Garza started out based in Dallas, Texas before relocating to New York and it shows: they have the expansive sounds of traditional southern rock, coupled with the artier edge of their new home. They've been called prog and krautrock, but while they encompass elements of both, it's their melodic majesty that makes them so special. You can hear echoes of Neu!, Pink Floyd and Tangerine Dream in their sound, but equally Crazy Horse and The Band. Even more than this though, Secret Machines sound like a band who should be headlining every festival this summer, ploughing their epic motorik groove under lazer-lit skies. A band who claim to want to "connect to the cosmos and connect to the gods". Which isn't something you could say about too many other bands.

SUNDAY 13th

THE RELATIONSHIPS: The Bullingdon – Gentle psychedelic rocking from the 60-inspired stalwarts.
DUBWISER + SEXY BREAKFAST: The Zodiac – Local reggae veterans team up with epic glam-prog faves.
IN/OUT: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Rock covers.
BIG EYED FISH: The Black Horse, Kidlington
COMPOUND: The Cellar
ANOTHER LOSS LEADER: The Port Mahon

MONDAY 14th

HATEBREED + CROWBAR + CALIBAN: The Zodiac – Ten-ton heavy metalcore carnage from the US rising stars – *see main preview*
THE COLIN JOHN BAND: The Bullingdon – Classic blues and rock from the Ohio-based guitarist and singer.
NOEL MURPHY: Nettlebed Folk Club

TUESDAY 15th

LAGRIMA + JEREMY HIGHERS + STEM: The Port Mahon – Subtle, soulful pop from Lagrima at tonight's acoustic night. Instrumental guitar support from local cult figure Jeremy Hughes, plus former Neustar people, Stem.

JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon
DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC SESSION: Old School House, Gloucester Green
HEDROOM + SOW: The Cellar – Funky hard rock and ska-punk from Thame's Hedroom, plus hardcore heaviosity from Sow.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Exeter Hall, Cowley
ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Hobgoblin, Cowley Road

WEDNESDAY 16th

OBSU ROCK SOCIETY LIVE MUSIC SHOWCASE: The Bullingdon – A taste of the Brookes rock scene.
IN THE FLESH + BLUEWAX: The Wheatsheaf – Grungy epic pop with Foo Fighters and U2 influences from In The Flesh.
COROFIN & FRIENDS: Exeter Hall, Cowley
BOSSAPHONIC with THE SPIRALIST: The Cellar
CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall
BARCODE: The Hollybush, Osney

THURSDAY 17th

SECRET MACHINES: The Zodiac – Must-see Oxford debut for New York's magnificent prog-pop stars – *see main preview*
SCRIPT + CHANTELE PIKE: The Port Mahon – Lightweight indie drifting from Script, with folky pop from Chantelle and band.
SPIN JAZZ CLUB with CHRIS GARRICK: The Wheatsheaf – Electric violinist whose style switches from contemporary jazz to Hot Club to gipsy swing.
DELICIOUS MUSIC BLUES AND JAZZ BANDS NIGHT: Far From The Madding Crowd
RAMI & THE EYE-LAND MONKEYS: The Exeter Hall, Cowley
THE KICKS + KONTIKI: The Cellar – Local indie rockers.
SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks
SABOTAGE: The Zodiac

FRIDAY 18th

DETWIJJE + WAITING FOR CONISTON + THE EXPLOITS OF ELAINE: The Wheatsheaf – Cinematic guitar soundscaping from Detwijje at tonight's Vacuum Pop club night. Support from former-Modern post-rockers WFC and Exploits of Elaine who mix up Sonic Youth, My Bloody Valentine and Godspeed.
QUENCH + LENO + SCARLET SOHO: The Zodiac (*downstairs*) – Newly-signed melodic rockers in a vaguely Foo Fighters style out on tour for the first time.
RUMPSHAKER: The Zodiac (*upstairs*) – Old school acid house and techno club night.
THE DIRTY EARTH BAND: The Barn, Red Lion, Witney
OXFORD FOLK CLUB St PATRICK'S DAY SPECIAL: The Port Mahon
LISA FITZGIBBON & JANE GRIFFITHS + KATE GARRETT + MAEVE BAYTON + JACKIE SINGER & JOSIE WEBBER: Holywell Music Room – A night of local female singer-songwriters as part of the International Women's Festival. Power-folk singer Lisa Fitzgibbon headlines.
FUNK WAR: The Exeter Hall, Cowley
SOLUTION: The Cellar – Live UK hip hop plus club DJs.
BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon

SATURDAY 19th

QUEEN ADREENA + THREE CHILDREN OF FORTUNE + IVY'S ITCH: The Zodiac – Down'n'dirty gothic sludge rocking from the gutter – *see main preview*
KOHOUTEK: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – The band formerly known as Tsunami return with a new name and some more epic soft rock.

THE EPSTEIN: The Port Mahon – Country rock.

RIM: The Barn, Red Lion, Witney
ROLLERCOASTER Vs CHICKS WITH DECKS: The Cellar – Indie, electro, 80s pop and punk sounds.
STICK IT ON: The Bullingdon – Open decks night for aspiring local DJs.

JOHN PAUL DAVIES: Magic Café (1pm)

SUNDAY 20th

THE GA*GA*s: The Zodiac – Old school heavy rock revivalists in the vein of Guns'n'Roses and Backyard Babies. Signed to Sanctuary Records having toured with The Wildhearts and – gulp – Whitesnake.

CHURCH OF THE HEAVY: The Bullingdon – Local live bands showcase.

ELECTRIC JAM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Victoria, Jericho
THE WORRIED MEN: The Black Horse, Kidlington

MONDAY 21st

GOD FORBID + EXTOL + TED MAUL: The Zodiac – New Jersey thrashcore metallers last seen at the Zodiac opening for Chimaira and Killswitch Engage. They've since toured with Machine Head in the UK, drawing on early 80s British metal and mid-80s American thrash for inspiration.

FAMILY STYLE BAND: The Bullingdon – Genuine proper family band, from Milano in

Saturday 19th

QUEEN ADREENA / IVY'S ITCH: The Zodiac

If you think Pete Doherty is a wildly unpredictable performer, you probably haven't witness Katie Jane Garside yet. While one previous Queen Adreena gig was cut short midway through after Katie collapsed on stage, their best shows have been an encapsulation of everything that is exciting about rock and roll. Like Linda Blair in The Exorcist, there's a little girl with demonic possession quality about Katie Jane's performance, while musically Queen Adreena spark and crackle with unrestrained power and energy. Imagine a gutter-level Björk raised by rats fronting a head-on collision between Motorhead and The Banshees. Or Kate Bush trapped in a gothic underworld of freaky metal-obsessed cave trolls. Now, you're about halfway there. Just don't stand too close to the front: you might get hurt. Support comes from Oxford's own banshee rockers Ivy's Itch, boiling up cauldron of gothic grunge noise and spooky kid whispers and caterwauling.



Italy, rated as Italy's premier blues band playing tonight's gig as one of only a handful of UK dates on their current European tour, mixing up Chicago and New Orleans blues with a cool jazz edge.

JOHN TAMS & BARRY COOPE: Nettlebed Folk Club

TUESDAY 22nd

TWIZZ TWANGLE + RICHARD

BROTHERTON + BROKEN RECORD + LEE

GABEL: The Port Mahon – Legendary local pop loon (and this month's Nightshift Demo of the Monther) Twizz gives music another lopsided kick in the pants. Support from blues guitarist Richard Brotherton, Lee Smilex's new project Broken Record, plus trad folkster Lee Gabel.

JAZZ CLUB with THE HOWARD PEACOCK QUINTET: The Bullingdon

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

OPEN MIC SESSION: Exeter Hall, Cowley

DIATRIBE: The Cellar

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Hobgoblin, Cowley Road

WEDNESDAY 23rd

COROFIN & FRIENDS: Exeter Hall, Cowley

SYNTHESIS: The Cellar – Reggae and hip hop club night.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: Northgate Hall

BARCODE: The Hollybush, Osney

THURSDAY 24th

EIGHTEEN VISIONS + EMANUELLE +

MISERY SIGNALS: The Zodiac (*upstairs*) – Southern Californian metallers return to The Club That Cannot Be Named to promote their new album, 'Obsession'; their first UK headline tour following supports to 36 Crazyfists and Lostprophets.

NARCO + KIOSK: The Zodiac (*downstairs*) – Long-overdue return for the electro rocking Narco brigade. The Doors meet Suicide in their sleazy synth-infested world. Debut album due in April.

DISQUES VOGUE: The Zodiac (*upstairs*) – Special one-off return for the seminal local easy listening club, with original DJs Giles and Dick spinning cheesy pop and Moog classics.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB with ZUBOP: The Wheatsheaf – Lively blend of contemporary jazz, Latin and African dance and funk.

DELICIOUS MUSIC BLUES AND JAZZ BANDS NIGHT: Far From The Madding Crowd

HARRY ANGEL + THE THUMB + RED STAR CYCLE + SHIRLEY: The Exeter Hall,

Cowley – Local bands night with belligerent indie gothsters Harry Angel headlining. Synth'n'fiddle-led rocking from RSC in a vaguely New Model Army kinda way, plus punky pop from Shirley.

DELIVERENCE: The Elm Tree

NEUTRINOS + SEVENTH LEVEL + LIQUID REMEDY: The Cellar

SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks

SABOTAGE: The Zodiac

FRIDAY 25th

STINKING LIZAVETA + SEXTODECIMO + HEY COLOSSUS: The Wheatsheaf – Fancy your brain scrambled for dinner? Here are your chefs for the evening – *see main preview*

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with CHANTELLE PIKE + MOVE ALPHA

PRODUCTIONS: The Zodiac – Folky pop fun from the vocally dextrous local singer at tonight's GTI club night.

SOURCE: The Zodiac – Longstanding monthly drum&bass club night.

PHYAL + FORK: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Double bill of local punk-inclined noisemakers, Bicester's Phyal go for the metal side of the coin, while Fork keep it poppy and proggy.

THE HIDEAWAYS: The Barn, Red Lion,

Witney – 60s soul and r'n'b covers.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon

SKETCHY: The Cellar

SATURDAY 26th

BLUE KITE + STUEY MUCH: The Zodiac – Insular, atmospheric jazz-pop from the reclusive collective who seem to suddenly have found their front door after managing about three gigs in eight years.

GOLDRUSH + THE EPSTEIN: The Zodiac

SHIRLEY + THE KICKS + AIRPORT TIGERS:

The Wheatsheaf – Local progressive punkers headline with melodic indie rockers in support.

WHALEBONE POLLY + MARK BOSLEY: The Port Mahon

THE DRUG SQUAD: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Ska-punk and spaghetti western party noise.

BARNES COURT REUNION: The Bullingdon – Classic soul.

FREE AT LAST: The Barn, Red Lion, Witney

CONFIDENTIAL COLLECTIVE: The Cellar – Live funk and hip hop.

SUNDAY 27th

LAIMA BITE + SARAH WILSON: The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Excellent local gothic folk chanteuse.

CHURCH OF THE HEAVY: The Bullingdon – Local live bands showcase.

JABERWOK: The Cellar

SCOOBY DON'T: The Black Horse, Kidlington

MONDAY 28th

BLUES BURGLARS: The Bullingdon –

Chicago-style blues from Newcastle quintet, formed around guitarist John Whitehill, who spent years playing with Paul Lamb and the Kingsnakes, plus singer Billy Sharp, belting it out in a Howlin' Wolf style.

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

OPEN MIC SESSION: Exeter Hall, Cowley

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Hobgoblin, Cowley Road

TUESDAY 29th

JAZZ CLUB with THE ALVIN ROY BAND: The Bullingdon

THE CLIFFHANGERS + SIMON

SCARDELLO + PHIL GARVEY: The Port Mahon – Local chanteuse Chantelle Pike and Inflatable Buddha's Su Jordan present their new bands, The Cliffhangers. 60s pop classics from local veteran Phil Garvey.

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

OPEN MIC SESSION: Exeter Hall, Cowley

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Hobgoblin, Cowley Road

WEDNESDAY 30th

FORK + PHYAL + JUNKIE BRUSH + FECK: The Bullingdon – Punk and metal local bands

bill at the Bully tonight with old school slash'n'burn punkers Junkie Brush the pick of the bunch.

THIS AIN'T VEGAS: The Wheatsheaf – Hard, fast, angular and angry post-punk rocking from Sunderland's brightest sons, exuding righteous fury in the style of Husker Du, Fugazi and Gang of Four.

CHERRY FALLS + UNDERCUT + FELL CITY GIRL: The Zodiac

COROFIN & FRIENDS: Exeter Hall, Cowley



Friday 25th

STINKING LIZAVETA / SEXTODECIMO / HEY COLOSSUS:

The Wheatsheaf

Okay, seeing as it's Good Friday why not put on a night of music that even the Devil himself would run scared of. Philadelphia's Stinking Lizaveta (named after a character in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, fact fans) have been blowing amps for ten years now, previously championed and produced by Steve Albini and having just released their fourth album, 'Caught Between Worlds'. They're brutal for sure – all oppressive bass, pile-driving polyrhythms and cluttered guitar scrawl, like a cross between Slint and Black Sabbath, but with space for icier space rock and prog tendencies, plus a willingness and ability to improvise live. Doom jazz? It's real and it's happening tonight. Local sludge-core deviants Sextodecimo provide suitably monstrous support. Mind you, you'll be deaf by the time they come on stage, after south London's Hey Colossus have laid waste to your eardrums and most buildings within a five-mile radius. Hypnotic drones, white noise and screaming are the order of the day, and that order comes with a side portion of boiled synapses. Enjoy!

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

LIVE

MINNIE DRIVER

The Zodiac

Hands stuffed in jean pockets, dressed in a modest t-shirt, tight curls down to her shoulders and exuding an unassuming chumminess, the woman onstage could be any club singer on any night in any town. Surrounded by a tight group of jobbing musos, she's got a husky, soulful voice, somewhere between Patsy Cline and Bonnie Raitt. But this isn't just any anonymous club singer, this is Minnie Driver, genuine A-list Hollywood actress and now, she hopes, pop star. Which is why the Zodiac is packed and a slightly older than usual audience are hanging on her every word, laughing at every aside and occasionally wolf whistling.

Of course Minnie was a singer before she fell into acting – something she's keen to remind us about tonight, lest we mistake her for another misguided thespian passing time between blockbusters. Early reports have pointed towards a Dido style of soppy pop, but Minnie's more into her roots than that. Her five-piece band is dominated by a pedal steel player and there's a distinct, if discreet country twang to the majority of the set. And that's the main problem: she's a great singer, and a decent enough songwriter, but everything about her music sounds compromised. The best songs tonight, the bluegrass anthem, 'Invisible Girl', plus a couple of smoky, jazzier numbers prove she's got soul when she uses it, but mostly it's all over-polished Nashville sheen and no dirt under its nails. Minnie even apologises for the mellowness of the set, but



Photo: Richard Hounslow (07761 682297)

its lack of any great divergence makes for soporific listening.

Essentially what Minnie is doing musically is exactly the same as she's done with her acting career – taking her genteel, very English manner and aimed it straight for the heart of middle America. There she might find commercial success on the back of her name but you feel there's more to her than this.

Sue Foreman

AT RISK / ZELEGA / PLACE ABOVE

The Port Mahon

Last-minute stand-ins for Intermezzo, Place Above are notable for most of their set more for their pained expressions than for any great tunesmithery. They make plenty of noise, but it's their spirited cover of Smilex's 'Mystique' that creates the biggest splash, the singer wading into the crowd and eyeballing various punters before coming face to face with the venue's doorman. Who just happens to be Lee Christian, lead singer with Smilex.

Zelega win this month's competition for bands wearing the coolest t-shirts onstage (Big Black; Yo La Tengo), but can their music match? They give it a fair crack: guitars are fed through pedals to make them sound like entire string sections and they interweave dark and dense layers of sound with a solid dynamic and know not to spoil it all by trying to be flash. There are washes of guitar sound and crescendos everywhere; doubtless Mogwai and Godspeed albums lurk within their CD collections, but while they rarely stray far from the post-rock template, they make a satisfying job of it.

At Risk are one of a growing number of bands flying the flag for goth in Oxford these days. Singer Cat has the looks of a 1930s Hollywood starlet and one of those wonderfully bored-sounding, almost flat vocals that can rest undisturbed amid the most turbulent of sonic storms. The band can veer towards the untidy side of things but at their best their clatter and scramble of gothic indie pop sounds like a primitive take on early Siouxsie and the Banshees or even 80s German girl goth cult stars X-Mal Deutschland.

John Leeson

THE FACTORY

The Bullington

Great music should take you places. One song into their third ever gig and The Factory are simultaneously taking us up into the stratosphere and deep, deep down into the dark cavernous earth. Squalls of heavily-flanged guitars sweep everything from their path, swirling like a cyclone while the bass cuts a groove through anything that stands in its path. This is the five-minute intro to opening track, 'Servant's Hand'. Soon the musical storm, part raw Stooges menace, part hypnotic Spacemen 3 psycho blast is engulfing singer Laima Bite's mantric, Grace Slick-like vocals. It's overwhelming and a revelation from such a new band. Laima of course is gaining quite a reputation locally for her gothic confessional folk songs, but with this new band, including three guitarists and what sounds like a jet engine for back up, she's proving her talent extends in even more directions. After that opening salvo The Factory have to work hard to keep up the momentum. They aren't letting up though. Black-clad, with fringes covering their faces, the band are a picture of studious malevolence, surrounding their diminutive, kohl-eyed singer. The Stooges-like blasts of raw power makes way for pockets of calm, dark, Doors-y atmospherics or krautrock grooving.

While it can be easy to get swept along by the giddy headrush of a new band, it's obvious that The Factory have arrived on the local live scene more fully formed than most. If they can continue to build on this impressive start, while never losing grasp of that raw intensity, plenty more people are going to find themselves in awe of industry.

Victoria Waterfield

THE FAMILY MACHINE / BONE MACHINE / AIRPORT TIGERS

The Zodiac

Airport Tigers kick off proceedings at tonight's Gappy Tooth Industries club and by the second song they've quickly reached their peak. It's one of these wired, angular, stop-start numbers, which they've pulled apart to such an extent there's barely a melody left. Yet strangely it works. Unlike the rest of their set, which rapidly descends into a sub-Zeppelin blues swamp and never recovers. They have a song called 'Bumstick Brown', which is a fair description of the majority of their set.

Portsmouth's Bonemachine are industrial, yet strangely poppy. The band crank out rhythms reminiscent of the long forgotten Delicatessen, surges of keyboards enveloping the sound and force feeding you their tunes. The strange twist in their music is the effortless abandon with which they purvey their dark, almost gothic tunes and also their unexpected humour.

Local favourites The Family Machine play sweet pop with a slight country slant. I'm reminded of the band South, who have good tunes but are a bit on the toothless side. Not many of their songs reach out and grab you tonight, but they're at their best when the do more upbeat numbers, as that's when the songs finally start to effervesce. 'Chicken Feet' stands out from the rest as it has before and they leave us in sublime fashion with a sweet little number played over a birdsong backing track.

So while you'd struggle to find anyone on the bill tonight that'll set the world alight, it's been a pleasant mix of the dark and light sides.

Russell Barker

The Zodiac

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WILLY MASON

The Zodiac

There is something special about Willy Mason. This 19-year-old from one of the most affluent communities in Massachusetts packed it in to travel across America. Living it rough and sometimes on the streets had a profound affect on the youngster. Perhaps that is what this completely packed audience finds so appealing: his sincerity. His technical ability on the guitar isn't something to write home about, but he has a winsome charm and honesty about him that most his age wouldn't know if it came bottled and smeared with an alcopop label. His songs are wrapped up with emotion of the heart and of politics delivered with a careless, lackadaisical attitude. His backing band, who have their own claim to fame, The 22-20s, reflect this can't-be-arsed attitude - looking at times positively bored. The music is rough around every edge. It's hard to tell if they mean for it to be this way or if they just didn't get many chances to practice.

About three songs into the set we start to wonder if Willy's been listening to too much Johnny Cash. Lazy and bending singing set over rockabilly and country throwbacks; Ryan Adams meets a whisky-drinking, tab-smoking Jackson Browne over Kenny Roger tunes. But Willy quickly treats us to what's got most of us out tonight. Songs like Radio 1 hit 'Oxygen' and political-minded 'Hard Hand To Hold' get the audience into a frenzy. It's hard not to get swept away with it all really. But we're holding back. Yes Willy could be this generation's Bob Dylan. Yes it's amazing some of the insights and lyrical delights he brings. But the simple fact of putting him on this pedestal so soon may indeed take away the things that make him so ... real. The verdict is still out and only time will tell.

Katy Jerome



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PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS

The Zodiac

One problem with hardcore gigs is maintaining attention span. Sure you can shock with pounding riffs and impassioned screams for the first couple of songs, but what when four bands share a bill? Alas this seemed the case for the opening two bands on tonight's bill. While both sets were distinct from each other, the palm-mute power of the first and the two-piece thrash of the second, both get lost mid-set. Golf Records' October File bring a bold stage presence, meaning while the performance is lively and listenable there is little in the songs diverging from the usual hardcore-by-numbers fare. Following this hit and miss hardcore, Planes Mistaken For Stars take the stage in front of an audience seemingly a touch restless. Launching into 'A Six Inch Valley' from latest album, 'Up Them In Guts', displaying the rawer side of hardcore, moments of calm serving as the exception to the brutal but impassioned onslaught that is, unfortunately, muddled

in the mix. With the exception of the token would-be circle pitter pinballing round the front rows, parts of the crowd seem sceptical, as band requests to move forward are greeted with grudging shuffles. However being the last night of their UK tour, it seems Planes are determined to keep up the intensity audience interest or no. They give the impression they'd be playing this hard faced with an empty room, all four sweat-drenched members having to catch their breath between songs. As the set goes on this stubborn passion and sheer force of will finally brings the audience round. With old favourite 'Copper and Stars' they impress enough to be kept for an encore and 'Thunder in the Night' sees frontman Gared O'Donnell embracing the front row as they join him in belting out the song's climactic screams, truly serving as the last hurrah and leaving the cynics starting to believe, and the die-hards fully sated.

Patrick Casey

THE KILLS

The Zodiac

The best ideas are usually the simple ones - I think we can agree on that. It's certainly a philosophy beloved of The Kills, who take the two-piece aesthetic of The White Stripes, apply a dash of *reductio ad absurdum* by whipping away the drumkit, leaving them with a scant armoury of drum machine, guitar and themselves. That's to say, a couple of pseudonyms, a slender American girl with a velvety voice and a tight T-shirt, and a haggard, scowling English bloke who moves like Leatherface, if only he'd taken up guitar instead of elementary dismemberment. They look good, they pull all the right moves: so far, so glossy style mag. In fact, the Kills have the potential to be the absolute epitome of

style over substance. Erm, if only they weren't so damn good.

Ostensibly a blues-inflected punk band, The Kills simultaneously keep it simple while mining a rich vein of influences. There's a little prime Chrissie Hynde about VV's peremptory sneer, and more than enough welcome nods in the direction of the Velvet Underground. But while outclassing their influences might be beyond them, their performance is little short of compelling. Hotel twitches and spasms, eyes wild and speaking in tongues, while VV coils herself around him and her microphone stand in equal measure, elegantly wasted. Both are mesmeric, and having nothing else to focus on makes a positive virtue out of their not

having a drummer. When they're singing about fucking and fighting in 'Black Rooster', it's impossible to tell if they're going to vanish off stage to do one or the other.

Ultimately, it's a gloriously sleazy statement of punk rock in dishabille, and one which, thankfully, more than lives up to the mythology they've created for themselves.

Stuart Fowkes





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HOOD/YOUTHMOVIE SOUNDTRACK STRATEGIES

The Wheatsheaf

Youthmovie Soundtrack Strategies have rapidly become one of the most popular live bands in Oxford, and the reasons are obvious tonight. Their songs are created from an amalgamation of styles, making it difficult to pin them down into any one genre. Their forthcoming release 'Ores', for example, has everything you ever wished for in a single: the rolling bass line and disco interlude are surprising yet perfect compliments to the heart wrenching guitars and anguished vocals. And with 'The Pitch and Yaw of Satellites', the band breathe new life into the term epic, as the song builds into a glorious fury of guitars and writhing bass.

It is difficult to discern when exactly Hood start playing; indeed, their entire set retains a bizarre, almost dreamlike atmosphere. Their sound, surprisingly, is a lot clearer tonight than it has ever been on record.

Tracks such as 'They Removed All Traces That Anything Had Ever Happened Here' and 'You Show No Emotion At All', both taken from their earlier album 'Cold House', here sound noticeably more polished.

Where once Hood dabbled cautiously in electronica, they seem now to have fully embraced the genre with their most recent material, and thus have grown into themselves as a band. The newer tracks that they play tonight are arguably the best of the set. Recent single 'The Lost You' sounds remarkably more accomplished than their earlier material. Similarly, forthcoming release 'The Negatives' is framed with rousing, electronic harmonies, and is accompanied by a beautiful organ sound that causes the track to resemble an old Irish reel.

However, the main problem that Hood face tonight is the audience's lack of concentration. While the band is technically excellent, it is nonetheless noticeable that many people find it difficult to focus their attention stagewards for any more than five minutes at a time. It is perhaps possible that, due to the type of music they perform, Hood are not quite as immediately accessible live as the guitar bands with whom they choose to play.

Emma Short

DEATH FROM ABOVE 1979 / THE FEVER / CONTROLLER CONTROLLER

The Zodiac

Funny how you can have a notion about an entire nation so quickly dispelled. Like how Canadians are all so personable and polite. But, just as the equally chilled Norwegians gave us death metal, Canada tonight showcases two bands who burn with unexpected intensity.

Ontario's Controller Controller are a revelation: broody and long of fringe, they kick out a wired punk-funk racket that is various parts Banshees, Wire and Slits, infectiously danceable but with a dark heart. Diminutive singer Nirmala Basnayake bounces and shimmies, while cooing menacingly about 49th Parallels. As sweet as maple syrup and as ferocious as a grizzly bear.

Sitting uncomfortably between the two Canadian band are New York's The Fever, who prove that not everything from the Big Apple is as impressive as we may be led to believe. They boil down the constituent parts of Talking Heads, The Velvet, and Television, and manage to totally overcook the final product. What's left is a mush of ideas murdered by over-indulgence and appalling sound.

Ever since Death From Above 1979's debut single sold out in a matter of minutes, and their remixes found their way on to the more sordid of dance floors around the UK, it's been obvious that this was a band capable of notoriety. Stripping back the basics of normal band dynamics, Sebastien Grainger and Jesse Keeler take to the stage armed with a drum kit and a bass guitar, laden with effects. But if you think that such a set up would be full of more holes than a cartoon piece of cheese, Death From Above take such notions and stomp them into dust before your eyes. They specialize in brutal reappraisals of Led Zeppelin and Motorhead, but without the need for screaming guitar solos. With songs as powerful as 'Romantic Rights', and a stage presence someway between our own Winnebago Deal and Fugazi (one white light bulb; all-out intensity), you should be watching the skies for Death From Above.

Allin Pratt

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THE PADDINGTONS / **KILL CITY**

The Zodiac

Lisa Moorish, lead singer with oh-so trendy Londoners Kill City has already mothered children by Liam Gallagher and Pete Docherty, so she knows her way round a dirty rock beast. And Kill City are kinda dirty and beastly themselves. Lisa looks, dresses and even sings like Pauline Black of The Selecter, but musically it's hardly party time. Her strident, sloganeering vocals dominate a low-rent, monochrome form of indie noise, driven sluggishly along by a drum machine with only one speed setting. They've got a clutch of almost annoyingly catchy songs, notably the football chant 'Hooligans On E', but it's only with their final glitterstomping number that they really kick it up. The bassist swaggers like a drunkard and tells the crowd to "Fuck off you cunts", while Lisa sieg heils, but their wanky attitude simply detracts from what is a strangely intriguing sound. Back in 1982 a GLC-sponsored benefit gig is missing a band.

Hull's Paddingtons are neither as cute as their teddy bear namesake, nor as hard as one of his legendary hard stares. Mates with the Libertines and The Others, they share a similar bedsit revolutionary attitude, while nicking what few musical ideas they have from Sham 69. While we don't doubt their hearts belong to punk rock, it sounds like it's been learned through NME retrospectives, watered-down to fit a comfortable middle class audience. Really, The Paddingtons are so lame, so wretchedly lacking in any character you fantasise about them being forced on stage in front of a Killing Joke audience just to see them beaten to a bloody pulp. I think we'll keep the original Paddington Bear, thanks. This lot can fuck off back to darkest Peru.

Sue Foreman

XAVIER FLOYD **FIREBIRD /** **TRANSMISSION**

The Cellar

With his plethora of vocal guises and band names, it'd be easy to label Transmission singer Mark Cobb as an unlucky chancer. Unlucky because he is also in a band called Tsunami, who I presume are now all washed up, and chancer because in tonight's guise, he'd like us to believe that Matt Bellamy doesn't exist. If he didn't, I'd be telling you about a fantastic new frontman who can give you epic balladeering by the shed load, like you'd never heard before. Unfortunately Muse have all but cornered this particularly histrionic section of the market, leaving everyone else a voucher for a stars-in-your-eyes audition. 'Amber Light' stands out as the best of the 'Musings', while on a positive note 'Kings' adds an Arabian twist to the guitar sound, which is worth expanding on.

Xavier Floyd Firebird, from Southampton, have worked their name to the other extreme, or maybe it's a famous NASCAR driver I'm ignorant of. Their music certainly seems exactly what you'd need playing during a track race. XFF are on a month-long, what I call a Seagull Tour: i.e. they fly in, make a lot of noise, crap on everything in a wonderfully punk sort of way and fly off, making us local sparrows in the audience dream of an irresponsible bright light life on the wing. They look and sound like a stripped down Cooper Temple Clause in 'Panzer Attack' mode, with every song played at full pelt. The single 'Boss Man, You Scare Me' does impress, and final song 'Kick It In' is joyous for its reminders of Generation X. Bedheaded and feral, they hand out button badges that say Long Live Rock and Roll, which is pretty much all you need to know.

Paul Carrera

THE LONGCUT **Northgate Hall**

An unassuming lot, The Longcut. Thin, gawky, and awkward-looking young men, looking as if they've just wandered out of the audience and decided to have a bash at a few tunes.

They're not much for stage presence either, mumbling their thanks and shuffling about without so much as a hint of Mancunian swagger. But then there's a lot to be said for letting your music do the talking, right?

For a band apparently grabbing enthusiastically from influences like a hyperactive kid with free rein over Pick 'N' Mix, The Longcut's set can essentially be divided into two categories. The band's singing drummer isn't of the Phil Collins mould (as in drum-and-sing-at-the-same-time), so rhythmic duties on vocal-led tracks are picked up by a keen but tinny drum machine. Songs flash past that are inventive and hook-laden, like a stripped-down version of the Boo Radleys on 'Giant Steps', but a combination of cavernous acoustics in the venue and the ineffectual spit of their programmed rhythms lend them a anaemic feel.

The instrumental tracks are where things really pick up, though. Heads-down, locking into a groove, and taking inspiration as much from the gloriously hypnotic repetition of Loop and the sense of joy of prime Stereolab as from the twisting arpeggios characterising much of Sonic Youth's recent material. Where so many instrumentals can spiral off into unfocused noise to make amends for spreading one idea too thin, 'Late Night Bus' is almost the Stone Roses-gone-Neu!, poised and deliberate but with a groove that knowingly skirts around the fringes of Krautrock. The Longcut are that rare commodity – a hotly-tipped band who take a bit of invention and élan to their influences. Substance over style, then. Hurrah!

Stuart Fowkes

NATUREBOY

The Port Mahon

Dave 'Natureboy' Noble is a furry little fella that we all know. A quiet, humble, furry little fella – not prone to bigging himself up too much. Thing is, if he was a bit more mouthy about his talent, a lot more people would have heard about him and his band. As it is, Dave has brought together a few friends (including Quantic Soul Orchestra vocalist Alice Russell) to play a chilled Sunday evening set in a pub resembling my gran's sitting room (you know, the one with the plastic flowers that only gets used at Christmas), for a few more friends ahead of higher profile shows at the Camden Jazz Café and Bossaphonik here in Oxford. And as chilled Sunday evenings go, it's the best I've had in some time.

Opening with 'Sweet Is The Air', an airy piece that sounds like a collaboration between John Martyn and Sergio Mendes - with an exquisite vocal performance from Russell - the group (featuring drums, bass, keys, violin plus Dave on guitar and vocal duties) glide through an hour that takes in folk, jazz and bossanova at a suitably unhurried pace. As a singer, Noble is restrained, his vocal rarely rising above a honey-coated whisper; as a frontman he has real understated charm, between-song banter is funny and self-deprecating. He has the kind of presence that it's hard not to warm to; by the time he has implored us to get up and dance for some later, more uptempo tunes ('Life' is pure Astrud Gilberto; 'Bum Funk' has an authentic Blaxploitation feel), it's impossible to refuse the guy. Alice Russell's trademark soul holler is reintroduced for an all-too-brief encore, and our perfect Sunday night is at an end. Still, Dave's got two albums worth of new material awaiting release, so next time shouldn't be far off.

Aidan Larkin

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

TWIZZ TWANGLE

Eight months on from being stuck in the demo dumper in an attempt to stop him sending us his increasingly inept and unhinged musings, Twizz Twangle – aka Dan Eisenhandler – returns with some of his finest music to date, equal to his original lunatic outpourings under the guise of Oh Susannah Joanna some twelve years ago. For this mini epic of a demo Dan is joined by regular co-conspirator Patsy Decline as well as gothic balladeer Mark Bosley and Vigilance Black Special's Adam Clayton. Their vocal contributions make all the difference since Dan's breathless, deathless monotone can drive you to distraction in prolonged sessions. From the anti-folk carnage of 'Dark Outside', through the mad scramble of 'Jehovah's Witness', Twizz is back to being unnervingly strange and proper daft. That's not to say he's just a crazed novelty act. 'Motorway', with Patsy on vocals, is a full-on atonal punk rant that echoes both The Slits and even Throbbing Gristle, while 'Guiding Light', with its swirling synths and tinny beats, topped off by Patsy's otherworldly disco diva vocals and absolutely captivating. Finally, 'Future Paradise', finds Adam Clayton's full, rich baritone wrapped in a solemn Spanish folk strum, ugly synth stabs occasionally puncturing the atmosphere. Unlike so much this month, nothing here sounds even remotely like Radiohead, and never would want to. Welcome back Twizz; the break has done you a world of good.

SOW

"I love my baby and my baby loves me / We're as happy as squirrels in a tree," opines the lead singer of Sow on opening track, 'Little Johnny'. Well, he might do, but it's impossible to hear anything he's singing because he has the devil himself lodged in his throat and everything he shouts, bellows or grunts is utterly unintelligible. And so it should be for the band formed from the ashes of Slave Unit. The band has found a new lease of life since guitarist Aynz's other band, Jor, split recently. Along with Days of Grace bassist Chris, he's going for it full tilt now, old

Slave Unit crooner Pains concentrating on Near Life Experience, replaced by 19-year-old screamer Tom Higgs. Sow rumble and grind and occasionally career along, like a train with a drunken driver. There are rampaging drums and discordant, uptight guitar solos; they don't pull their punches, they have no time for subtleties and make no concession to tunefulness. Proper 'eavy metal, then.

KAZOR

And here's some more while you're about it. The work of Abingdon's Daniel Clarke, this is the gruff flipside to his more ambient Reactor Mind project. It's an innocuous opening, 'Why Do You Do This Everyday?' a straightforward run through of sloganeering vocals and staccato riffs, obstinate enough but nowhere near the bulldozing might of Skinny Puppy that it purports to take inspiration from. Things get better with each track though, the electronics taking a more prominent role, counter-pointing the often pantomime vocal growls. 'Unconscious' batters with real conviction and a deathly techno throb, while 'Junkie Idol' is a steaming industrial metal assault, taking a blunt swipe at junkie celebrity worship. Daniel Clarke doesn't sound like a very happy man. All the better for us.

THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS

Leading the charge of the Radiohead-afflicted young men this month are This Town Needs Guns, a university band who've made a name for themselves on the local gig circuit in the last year. They lean towards the emo scheme of things on 'They Spoke With Strange Accents', mixing quiet, almost pastoral verses with regular bursts of splenetic noise, trying their hardest to hide the obvious Nirvana influences bubbling up from beneath. With 'Eleven' they move firmly into the post-Radiohead land of emotive stadium pop, plenty of bravado, bombast and stomp carrying them through, although there's not too much to take away with you afterwards. 'Vaguer Transmission' shows that they're capable of better things, though. With its hazy swells of epic guitar noise and awkward dreaminess about it, they come into their own. The shadow of Muse lurks over the overwrought 'This Is Wrong', but you feel with a better sense of direction, This Town Needs Guns could be shooting up the right street soon enough.

MARK CROZER

The first demo in a good while from the talented Mr Crozer; in fact, we think it's his first offering since he temporarily upped sticks to Canada 18 months ago. We always liked his lachrymose take on the singer-songwriter thing, and this new demo builds well on those old recordings, introducing new levels of sound and a heavier edge. Mark's lost little of his old morose self, but songs like 'They Said It Would End In Tears' coat the world-weary tales in layers of lysergic guitar fuzz, much like Mercury Rev or Flaming Lips of old. 'A Million Miles Away' similarly gets a kick in the pants by swells of distortion, its pastoral fuzziness similar to Flying Saucer Attack, although the agitated vocals distract from what could be a hypnotic performance. Mark's still best when he strips it down to basics though, and 'Sink Or Swim', with its Thom Yorke-style howl, retains its decency, Mark's voice stretching well and never taking leave of its senses. Definitely a local solo artist to keep an eye on.

HARRY ANGEL

Another act with at least one or two Radiohead albums in their collection, Harry Angel also retain their dignity on songs like 'Striptease', which, if you're being really cynical, could have been stolen from the demo sessions for 'The Bends', but manages to plough an admirably melodic but cacophonous furrow, with its alternately sweeping and angular guitar noise. But it's 'Death Valley Of The Dolls' that impresses more. With echoes of Bauhaus' 'In The Flat Field' in its gothic heaviness, offset by bassist Hayley Phillips' Kim Gordon-style backing vocals, it careers towards an imagined precipice with lead singer Chris Beard hollering, "The doors are closing in", and you can start to feel the creeping claustrophobia.

YUKURI

With a name that implies a spot of fantastic throwaway Japanese punk-pop and a declared affection for Japan itself (the country, not the band), this should be good. They're actually from east Oxford and sound a bit more like the Wedding Present, but it's not so bad, at least initially. First track, 'Can't Delay' is slightly fey, with the feel of a malfunctioning clockwork toy amid its insistent guitar grooves. The singer is a bit Bob Dylan-ish and sounds a bit forced at times but the band have got a decent grasp on dynamic power pop and a few hooks to hang your coat on. Similarly

'Bring Me Here', with its repeated guitar grooves, jangly pop with muscles and some neat New Wave influences. By the end they're treading water, though. 'Satellite' repeats the formula to diminishing effect and, at eight minutes, outstays its welcome by about seven minutes.

TREV WILLIAMS

Trev is a solo artists recently relocated to Oxford from Manchester. This demo sprawls over nine tracks (cheers, Trev), and as tends to be the case with these sort of efforts, it can be frustrating listening as he tries to cover all bases on limited resources and you wish he'd stick to what he does best. What he does best is keeping it simple and raw, like the opening 'My Girl', which initially promises to imitate Manchester's favourite son, Mark E Smith, but makes do with a full-blooded, if old-fashioned bluesy rock'n'roll stomp in the vein of early Beatles. Or best of the lot, 'Clothes Peg', which is fuzzy Guided By Voices-style psych-pop. Elsewhere, though, Trev is either self-consciously quirky, as on 'Firestone', or over the top and operatic, like 'Crying In Silence', which just goes to make his limited resources all the more starkly obvious. Eclectic is not always a great thing.

THE DEMO DUMPER

CLONE RADIO

And talking of such things, one muse recently pointed out that eclectic is the new dull. But equally, epic is the new musak, and no-one demonstrates that more than Witney's Clone Radio, who, for all their bombast, sink lumpenly into the background with every sky-touching burst of guitar noise. They've got all their old Radiohead riffs, they've got fake American accents and they've got stadium-sized gigs in their sights, but for all that, they're unconvincing. Even when they're trying their hardest, like on 'All Because Of You', and you feel that in a live setting, with the volume turned up to the max, they might pick you up and carry you away for a few brief minutes, you come away with nothing, not even an unpleasant aftertaste. Things do pick up significantly at the death, with 'The Art Of Falling Apart' ditching the Radioheadisms and displaying some frenetic punky soul, but it's almost too late.

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.

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