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# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month.  
Issue 131  
June  
2006

**Truck Line-up  
Announced!**

**High Priests in  
the Sonic Temple**

# The Workhouse

*Interview inside*

photo: Miles Walkden

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# NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU  
Phone: 01865 372255 email: [nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto:nightshift@oxfordmusic.net)



**THE FUTUREHEADS AND MYSTERY JETS** have been confirmed as the headline acts for this year's Truck Festival. Although the

**ROBERT PLANT AND TEXAS** are the confirmed headliners for this year's Cornbury Music Festival, which takes place at Cornbury Park, near Charlbury, over the weekend of Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> / Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July. Other acts joining them on the festival's main stage include The Waterboys, Deacon Blue, The Pretenders and Robyn Hitchcock. Truck Records will also be running a stage, with acts including Goldrush, Piney Gir and Fell City Girl, while the Oxford Folk Festival stage features Kate Rusby, Spiers and Boden and the very wonderful Circulus. Tickets for the weekend are on sale now, priced £70 (or £120 for VIP tickets), from 0780 118 1636.

**LAB 4** release their fourth studio album this month. The hardcore techno duo, based in Abingdon, have spent most of the last year touring around the world. 'None Of Us Are Saints' will be the band's tenth album in total



Truck organisers have been tight-lipped about The Futureheads (*pictured*), due to contractual reasons, the band themselves let slip that they would be headlining the Saturday night. Mystery Jets will close the festival on the Sunday night.

Other acts announced include: 65daysofstatic, Hundred Reasons, Battles, Regina Spektor, Chicks on Speed, The Neutrons, Skindred, Forward Russia, My Awesome Compilation, Seth Lakeman, Jetplane Landing, Electric Soft Parade, Morrison Steam Fayre and The Organ. Amongst the 40 or so local bands booked to play are The Young Knives, Fell City Girl, Goldrush, Youth Movie Soundtrack Strategies and Winnebago Deal, all Truck regulars, plus a host of other Oxfordshire acts, some of whom were picked on the strength of their recent Oxford Punt performances, including Xmas Lights, Rebecca Mosley and Degüello.

Truck Festival, which runs over the weekend of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July at Hill Farm in Steventon, is completely sold out. Full line-up details as well as regularly updated festival news is available online at [www.truckfestival.org](http://www.truckfestival.org).

*A full Truck Festival preview will run in next month's Nightshift.*

and features remixes from Nightbreed and Slipknot's DJ Starscream. The album has already been released in Japan and Australia, with imports reaching the UK, but its domestic release has been delayed due to a change of record labels. It will now be released by Resist in the UK. The first single to be taken from the new album is a techno reworking of Nine Inch Nails' 'The Perfect Drug' on a limited edition 12" picture disc.

**RICHARD WALTERS** is due to release a new EP in July. Richard has been working with Bernard Butler in the studio and the fruits of that labour are expected soon. As well as playing his biggest live dates yet, at Manchester and Birmingham Academies with Dave Matthews, Mr Walters has also been enjoying some success in the States where he has topped the US dance chart and had his track 'All At Sea' played on the soundtrack to CSI: Miami, prompting over 14,000 hits on his MySpace site.

**SEVENCHURCH** are featured in the latest issue of metal bible Terrorizer. The legendary Oxford doom metallers, who split up ten years ago, are also included in the magazine's all-time Top 10 doom-metal albums, alongside Black Sabbath and Cathedral, with their classic debut 'Bleak Insight'.

**AS SUSPECTED SOME TIME AGO** this year's Charlbury Riverside Festival will not now take place this year. The annual free festival, which has taken place every June for



**JAMES BLUNT** (*pictured*) leads a cast of big-name stars appearing at Blenheim Palace this summer for a series of open air concerts. Blunt, whose 'Back To Bedlam' debut was the biggest selling album of the past twelve months, plays at the Palace on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July. Tickets for the gig, priced £40, are available from the credit card hotline on 01870 400 0688. The night before (Friday 31<sup>st</sup> June) Westlife will be drowning the audience in a lake of inspid, treacly pop, while on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July Jools Holland brings his big band to the Palace. Tickets for both these nights are £37.50.

the past few years, has been cancelled after it was refused a licence following trouble in the campsite last year. A small minority of idiots have therefore managed to ruin what is always one of the best weekends of music in the Oxfordshire calendar. Organisers are hoping the festival can return next year. In the meantime, July's Cornbury Festival, near Witney, has offered Riverside their own stage to host local acts.

**THE OXFORD GUITAR GALLERY** on South Parade in Summertown are hosting an evening with Lakewood Guitars on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm. As well as demonstrations and a chance to play the guitars there will be a prize draw with the chance to win a Lakewood guitar. Call Dave on 01865 553777 for more details.

**FOPP** have opened a new store on the site of the recently closed Massive Records in Gloucester Green. The new store, part of a small national chain, is promising to stock as many local releases as it can. Local acts should visit the store and speak to Euan or Simon.

**THE NEWLY OPENED** Dawson's Music Shop in Abingdon High Street, meanwhile, have announced that they will continue to stock CDs as well as musical instruments, recording equipment and sheet music.

**AS EVER**, don't forget to listen to the Download on BBC Radio Oxford 95.2fm every Saturday night between 6 and 7pm. The show features the best new local releases and gigs as well as interviews with touring acts coming to town, a gig and club guide and a demo vote. 'The Download Sessions' album, featuring live acoustic tracks recorded exclusively for the show is out now, priced £5, with all proceeds to BBC Children In Need.

# The Workhouse

**“MOST OF THE BANDS THAT** inspired The Workhouse were discovered and championed by John Peel, so he influenced us through music. He was also had integrity, a sense of humour and liked a pint: factors which are common in The Workhouse.”

**MARK BAKER, GUITARIST**

with The Workhouse, is talking to *Nightshift* about his band's claim to fame that they were the last band ever to be chosen by the late, great Radio 1 DJ John Peel to record one of his legendary live sessions. It is an honour that brings no joy to Mark.

“It feels pretty sad as we would rather he still be around doing his shows late at night playing terrible Mongolian Trance on a scratchy 12”. His death was a big shock to the band. He supported us at Radio 1 and gave us our first radio play in 2000. When we recorded the Peel session it was initially like being at a funeral...you could feel the soul of John Peel everywhere we turned. We eventually enjoyed doing the session, so it was an emotional moment hearing it being broadcast in 2005.”

**THE RECORDING AND**

broadcast of that Peel session was just one of so many small but important triumphs that The Workhouse have had along a long and sometimes rocky road from their tentative early recordings to the release of their second album, ‘Flyover’, this month on the small but highly-respected indie label Bearos.

The Workhouse's history goes back well over a decade. In that time they've released eight EPs and a debut album (2003's ‘End Of The Pier’) on half a dozen different record labels, including Fierce Panda, Devil In The Woods and Awkward Silence. The band have also featured on compilations put together by ATP and Rocket Girl, amongst others.

As such, the band have become something of a cult concern, gaining a fanbase across the UK and in the States. This despite, on more than one occasion, being hailed as ‘Oxford's best kept secret’ in these very pages: a reaction to local audiences' indifference the band's often glorious, delicately-



*The Workhouse (l-r): Chris Taylor, Mark Baker, Peter Lazell, Andy Dakeyne*

crafted guitar soundscapes. Too often The Workhouse have found themselves playing to only a few dozen people but every one of those watching falls for the band hook, line and sinker.

**THE CURRENT LINE-UP OF**

The Workhouse has been together since 2001 and consists of Mark Baker (*guitars*), Andy Dakeyne (*guitars*), Pete Lazell (*drums*) and Chris Taylor (*bass and vocals*). They describe themselves as “four ageing indie kids belting four tons of shite out of electric guitars”, but are responsible for some of the most sublime music to come out of Oxford in the past decade. Taking their inspiration from post-punk miserablists like Joy Division and Magazine, oceanic shoegazers such as Ride and Kitchens of Distinction and more recent ethereal rockers like Mogwai and Six By Seven, The Workhouse create dense, atmospheric pieces of noise, alternately sombre and playful, dark and uplifting. Chris' vocals carry a similar sense of loneliness to Ian Curtis, while musically the band lean towards the intricately-crafted sounds of Cocteau Twins and The Chameleons, coupled with the majestic power of The God Machine.

Newcomers to The Workhouse

draw comparisons with sky-gazing guitarscapists Explosions In The Sky, but The Workhouse got there long before their Texan counterparts arrived on the scene.

**NIGHTSHIFT MET UP WITH**

Mark on the eve of the release of ‘Flyover’. Its predecessor was basically a collection of tracks from earlier EPs but garnered the band some rave reviews. Hopefully this more coherent album will see The Workhouse achieving the level of success they've long since deserved. It's an album with an overriding mood of loss and despair, not just lyrically but within the tremulous, aching guitars. But it's also music of ornate beauty and a far from depressing experience.

MARK: “Originally Flyover was an album we *had* to make as we had an agreement with a US label to release it within a certain time scale. I think there was more pressure on us to get it finished. As a result it sounds less like a compilation of songs recorded at different times with different equipment and more of an album, if that makes sense. There is more fluidity through the tracks and they have been mixed and mastered to a higher consistent standard. The new album is bigger sounding where it wants to be, but also has a stronger melodic base

than the debut album. We also used more instruments, which gives a more textured feel to the songs. The overall mood remains melancholic but there is at least one happy song – recently a journo suggested we make Interpol sound like Girls Aloud.”

How would you say your sound has changed since your inception?

MARK: “When we started the band we thought there was a certain way to write, arrange and put together a song and the sound would reflect this process. With time we have thrown out the rulebook and attempted to play what comes to us, even if its sounds deconstructed or plain noise. It's basically taken us two albums to know how to get the recorded sound that we want. Some people say we have developed “the Workhouse sound”, which probably means it's time to throw out the rulebook once again.”

**THE WORKHOUSE HAVE**

been making music in this nature for ten years or so now but at long last it's a style that's come into fashion, albeit on an underground level. Is it frustrating to think you were one of the first and now bands like Explosions In The Sky are reaping all the acclaim? Have you ever felt like a band out of time?

MARK: “When the last album came out and we started to be compared to more ‘successful’ bands, we felt like we had reached a good starting point to what we were trying to do. When other bands started getting acclaim for doing similar stuff it is, of course frustrating as we want our music to be heard by as many people as possible. At the same time as we develop we don't really track what other bands are doing and follow our own merry trajectory, wherever that may lead us. The positive aspect of doing stuff at our rate is that we can do stuff on our terms when we want to.”

‘Oxford's best kept secret’: is that a fair description? Do you feel you've been overlooked at all in your home town? How are the band perceived in other cities?

MARK: “Yeah I think this is probably a fair description for Oxford. We played for several years in Oxford to a handful of punters or no-one at all, even when we starting getting good local press. After the

last album there was a flurry of interest and increasing punter levels. Hopefully this trend will continue and more people will come and see us play, but I think we will always remain a bit understated. I don't think we have been overlooked; overlooked by whom? Most of the population of Oxford is not interested in four ageing indie kids belting four tons of shite out of electric guitars. Other cities – well we have never played further north than Birmingham where about seven people came along – didn't ask them what they thought either. Live we have always gone down well in London, Brighton and the Home Counties and there are pockets of people in cities all over the world that rave about The Workhouse. I suppose the perception elsewhere is similar to that in Oxford: a bit of a mystery but good to have around."

You've consistently received rave reviews in Nightshift and other local webzines and publications and gained a small, devoted following but a more widespread acceptance of The Workhouse has never really materialised. What are your feelings about Oxford's music scene and how it's treated you and the way it's changed over the time you've been together?

MARK: "The music scene in Oxford should never be taken for granted. At the same time it shouldn't take itself too seriously; life is too short. There are more people putting interesting music on than ever before, and there seems to be live music around every corner. When The Workhouse started there were a few established venues, and more uncertainty to the longevity of these places. Now, you feel that if one music venue stops live music, there will quickly be another new promoter trying to get something started somewhere else. That's good. The music scene in this city has been generally supportive of what The Workhouse are trying to do. If people think we are rubbish, then that's their opinion and we don't care."

**OVER THE YEARS YOU'VE** released singles and EPs on over half a dozen labels; how has that come about? Have you found it frustrating not to be able to settle on a label or is Bearos a more solid home for The Workhouse now?

MARK: "Then honest answer is we have struggled over the years to get labels to stick their neck out and release material for us, so it feels like a miracle that we have released so many singles. All of these releases are one-offs and that's how it works in indie reality. 'Flyover' was meant to be released by US label Devil in the Woods but the label has

imploded. We were also meant to release our debut album in 2001 on another US label, but this also hit the buffers. With the US labels we have dealt with there is usually a lot of bullshit and little action. While it can be frustrating, having no long-term label means we control what we do on our terms. However, Alan Farmer from Bearos Records is one in a million. We don't know if we will release anything else on Bearos after 'Flyover' but it is our home for the new album. That's all we know."

Do you think the internet has had a positive or negative affect on small independent labels?

MARK: "It must have a positive effect. We would not have found some of our labels that released our singles without the internet. It creates a massive underground scene which itself snowballs into live gigs and other events. While the internet might mean that the overall quality is lower, there will always be a new cracking little indie label just a few clicks away."

**THE WORKHOUSE HAVE** always been busy, perhaps, due to the haphazard nature of the past releases and gigging, without always seeming that active. 'Flyover' has the potential to tip the band over into something more than a purely cult concern, even by underground rock standards. Where do the band go from here, both sound and career-wise?

MARK: "We want to record a third album over the next 12 months – or as long as it takes. We have a new batch of songs which we need to work on and this will form the core of the next album. We want to play to more people and be heard, watched and read about by more people. We have grown slowly over the last few years and it would be good if this growth continues. As long as we feel that people are enjoying our music then there will be more music by The Workhouse coming up. The next album must improve on 'Flyover'. We want to experiment more with sound and use more actual instrumentation. The band is not so much a career, more like a gang of ageing indie kids having fun. That's it for now."

The Workhouse aren't salesmen. But their music does all the talking for them. So do yourselves a favour and start to sit up and take notice of Oxford's best kept secret.

**'Flyover' is available online from Bearos Records ([www.bearos.co.uk](http://www.bearos.co.uk)) and in shops from mid-July. The Check out [www.the-workhouse.net](http://www.the-workhouse.net) for news and gig dates.**



## June

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Wed 7<sup>th</sup> **LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY**

Sat 10<sup>th</sup> **ENGLAND Vs PARAGUAY** (k.o. 2pm) / **HIP HOP & BREAKBEATS CLUB NIGHT** (9-2am)

Wed 14<sup>th</sup> **LIVE BANDS** (tbc)

Thu 15<sup>th</sup> **ENGLAND Vs TRINADAD & TOBAGO** (k.o. 5pm) followed by Bullseye at 9pm

Sat 17<sup>th</sup> **FUTURE FUNK FOUNDATION**

Tue 20<sup>th</sup> **ENGLAND Vs SWEDEN** (k.o. 8pm) followed by jazz club.

Wed 21<sup>st</sup> **KARDOMAH** plus support

Thu 22<sup>nd</sup> **TEMPLE** plus support – followed by Bullseye

Sat 24<sup>th</sup> **ROADRUNNER** with **THE BEAT** (tickets £12.50 on sale from The Bully)

*Upcoming*

Sat 29<sup>th</sup> July **JOHN COGHLAN BAND** – the former Status Quo drummer playing early Quo and hits. Tickets £11 from The Bully

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# RELEASED

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## THE YOUNG KNIVES

### 'She's Attracted To'

*(Transgressive)*

Anyone who's ever seen Meet The Parents will have cringed at hapless Ben Stiller's disastrous attempts to win over father-in-law-to-be Robert De Niro. But on the evidence of 'She's Attracted To', he had an easy ride of it compared to The Young Knives. A song that recounts a first encounter with the future in-laws starting with an opening yelp of "Who are these people? They are too stupid to be your real parents" and rants its way to a conclusion with "You were screaming at your mum and I was punching your dad", is a long way off yer standard angsty love song and once again demonstrates Henry Dartnell and House Of Lords' obtuse genius with surreally observational songwriting.

Nicking a bass line from The Stranglers, a hysterically hectoring vocal style from Pere Ubu's David Thomas and frothing up the whole three-minute scrap on the front lawn with a dash of Jilted John, 'She's Attracted To' is less a pop song, more an impulse smack in the teeth. There's simply no point trying to reason with great pop music when in it's in this mood.

**Dale Kattack**

## GTA

### 'Love Is Here'

*(Blunted)*

Following on from their promising demo a few months back comes the debut EP from Kidlington-based rap duo GTA, who have shared stages with everyone from Ugly Duckling to Sway, released on Blunted Records, the people behind the regular Cellar-based hip hop nights. Keeping in the spirit of the Blunted nights, GTA see rap as party music rather than a soundtrack to getting mortally stoned or a medium for telling the world how big your dick is. Assisted by upcoming DJ Fu on stand-out track 'Known To Spit' and singer Bobby on the EP's title track, Chima Anya and Ineffable mix up soul and big beats with their neatly dovetailed duel rap passages. The looped vocal samples on 'Love Is Here', coupled with Bobby's uplifting chorus, make for an uplifting dancefloor smooch, while the meaty, brassy backing keeps the glass charged. There's some chest-beating going on on tracks like 'And So It Is', but mostly there's little macho bullshit to sour the party and GTA aim for and mostly reach for the freshness and enthusiasm of old skool block party rap.

**Sue Foreman**



## LOOPY

### 'Come On, Come On (We're Not Coming Home)'

*(Loopy)*

The build up to the World Cup has brought an unprecedented number of unofficial footie songs, some inspired, most insipid. Oxford's contribution to the melee comes courtesy of bubbly pop stalwarts Loopy. And... it's bloody awful. As half-hearted as most of Oxford United's performances last season, it wipes its feet on every imaginable cliché (samples of key England commentaries; lame attempt at terrace chant chorus; it's-gonna-be-our-year sentiments). In the end the whole wretched mess sounds like The Fimbles getting pissed and thinking they're Chumbawamba.

For your information, the best football song ever was Barby Army's magnificent 'Sharp As A Needle' (even if was about Liverpool). As for the rest of the crap swilling around at the moment, it makes us hunger for a time when Mick Channon led the England line and respectable folk had absolutely no interest in the game at all.

**Dale Kattack**

## JONAS

### 'Do You Know Who I Am?'

*(Own Label)*

Do you know who I am? asks Jonas Torrance, a question he answers himself on this album's title track: "I am the rasta man". Few people who have been involved on the Oxford music scene over the past 15 years can not know who Jonas is. As well as vocalist and percussionist with local reggae stalwarts Dubwiser, he's long been a champion of young Oxford musicians with his work at Blackbird Leys Community Centre and

other youth music projects. People like Jonas are the unsung heroes of local music scenes across the country. He also has the most recognisable dreadlocks in town.

But it's as a singer and musician in his own right that he's most at home. This is Jonas' debut solo project, though the credits show that the rest of Dubwiser are heavily involved too. In Dubwiser, Jonas provided the sweet, soulful foil to Spider's more throaty rapping. Here his delicate falsetto – owing plenty to Horace Andy – is out on its own, while the dancefloor-friendly vibe of that band is replaced by a more languorous ambience, the loping funk grooves slowing to walking pace

on songs like the album's title track.

Preaching goodwill to all men, with a keen awareness of Rastafarian consciousness, Jonas exudes good feelings but these can sometimes seem twee in a tree-hugging kind of way, as on the anti-racist 'My Only Experience', with its references to rainbow colours. Similarly 'Ride Your Life (Like a Bicycle)' conjures a trite metaphor. Beyond that, though, is a gentle freshness and a carefree rootsiness in songs like 'Don't Make Me Suffer' and 'She Looks Like You' that it seems churlish to be too cynical about.

**Dale Kattack**

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# the port mahon

## Live Music in June

Thu 1<sup>st</sup> **Port Mayhem**

Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> **Oxford Folk Club**

Sun 4<sup>th</sup> **Melodic Oxford**

Mon 5<sup>th</sup> **Swing Mechanism**

Wed 7<sup>th</sup> **Ariel Pink + Belong + The Warm + Divine Coils**

Fri 9<sup>th</sup> **Oxford Folk Club**

Sun 11<sup>th</sup> **Emmy the Great + Foxes! + Keyboard Choir**

Tue 13<sup>th</sup> **Mary's Garden + Hangman's Joe + Sue Jordan +**

**The Mark Bosley Band**

Wed 14<sup>th</sup> **Eddie Stanton**

Thu 15<sup>th</sup> **True Rumour**

Fri 16<sup>th</sup> **Oxford Folk Club**

Mon 19<sup>th</sup> **Shirley**

Tue 20<sup>th</sup> **Blue Junk**

Wed 21<sup>st</sup> **The Great Eskimo Hoax + I R Tiger**

Thu 22<sup>nd</sup> **Kohoutek**

Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> **Oxford Folk Club**

Sat 24<sup>th</sup> **Lanterns + Divine Coils + Hana Sumai**

Sun 25<sup>th</sup> **The Pindrop Performance - Borderville (5pm to 8pm), then Improv Club.**

Tue 27<sup>th</sup> **Nedella + Jonquil**

Wed 28<sup>th</sup> **They Came From The Stars, I Saw Them + Sunnyvale**

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# GIG GUIDE

## THURSDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**MATT SAGE & THE ORCHESTRAS OF LOVE: The Zodiac** – Emotive, dynamic folk-pop from the local singer and Catweazle Club compere.

**KALED BAHOU + DAN AUSTIN: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Acoustic showcase with the Tuni frontman.

**ZELEGA + WAITING FOR CONISTON + THEO: The Cellar** – Melodic indie fuzz and post-rock action.

**JAZZ NIGHT: The City Tavern**

### *Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>*

## ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN: The Zodiac

There couldn't be a better time for singer Ian McCulloch and guitarist Will Sergeant to return with a new album. With the rise and rise of bands like Editors, The Rakes and Battle, all heavily indebted to Echo & The Bunnymen's darkly-inclined psychedelic pop, the release of new Bunnymen album 'Siberia' is a cause for celebration and a chance to reflect on a band who typified everything that was great about post-punk music first time around. 'Siberia' is produced by Hugh Jones, who also oversaw the band's masterpiece, 'Heaven Up Here' and it's easily their best outing since 1984's 'Ocean Rain'. The Bunnymen oozed class from the off: McCulloch's soft baritone, not far off Scott Walker at its best, combined with Sergeant's spangled guitar work, inspired by The Doors, The Velvet Underground and the sweet, sweeping 60s pop of Phil Spector, and while they suffered tragedy in the form of the death of drummer Peter de Freitas in a car crash and later split and then partly reformed, this is their most complete-sounding incarnation in years. Simply one of the great bands of the last 30 years and one whose legacy, thankfully, seems to have been saved for a new generation.



## JUNE

**PORT MAYHEM: The Port Mahon**  
**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks** – Weekly dose of ska, reggae, funk, latin and Afrobeat from Aidan Larkin and guests.  
**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac** – Weekly rock, punk and alternative club night.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** – Weekly all-comers live music club night.

### FRIDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**SOL SAMBA: The Zodiac (upstairs)** – More live samba and Brazilian percussion from the local crew.  
**THE EPSTEIN + OX + THE DUSTY SOUND SYSTEM: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – Country rock night at the Zodiac with a Flying Burrito Brothers flavour from The Epstein, plus melancholic alt.country from Ox and rootsy folk-country from Robin Goldrush's Dusty Sound System.  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with BORDERVILLE + RISING SEA DRAGON + THE IDEA: The Wheatsheaf**  
**UNDER THE IGLOO + A GENUINE FREAKSHOW + WORLDVIEW: The Corner Room** – Spacey Radiohead-inspired ambient electro rock from UTI.  
**THE LEGENDARY BOOGIEMEN + PETE BEARDER: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho**  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**  
**BEAT ROOT: East Oxford Community Centre** – Hip hop and drum&bass session.

### SATURDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN: The Zodiac (upstairs)** – New wave pop legends return with new album, 'Siberia' – *see main preview*  
**BIC RUNGA + THE DEVASTATIONS: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – Kiwi songstress makes her break for global fame – *see main preview*  
**INFLATABLES: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Long-standing local ska, reggae and soul faves.  
**SIMPLE: The Bullingdon** – Funky house club night.  
**NATIONAL SCHOOL + THE TURBULENCE + THE MORES: The City Tavern** – Eccentric end of the pier organ-led minimalist pop from National School.  
**RAGGASAURUS: The Cellar** – Live Arabian-tinged dub reggae in aid of Amnesty International.  
**COBRA: Bricklayers Arms, Marston** – Heavy rock and metal covers.

### SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**THE FEELING: The Zodiac (upstairs)** – The MOR revival stars here, apparently. Apparently The Feeling aren't embarrassed to admit they love 10cc and Supertramp. They damn well should be.

**THE SEMIFINALISTS: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – Lovely psychedelic whimsy and electro-pop from London-based American-Indonesian three-piece The Semifinalists, promoting their eponymous debut album. Dreamy and epic in equal proportions and calling to mind Mercury Rev, Flaming Lips and The Cardigans at various times.  
**MELODIC OXFORD: The Port Mahon**  
**ACOUSTIC SONG SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley (3-7pm)**  
**SALSANEROS: The Cellar** – Live Latin jazz residency.  
**SEV: Magic Café (1-2pm)**

### MONDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**THE LIGHTNING SEEDS: The Zodiac** – *see main preview*  
**LARRIKIN LOVE: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – Trendy new things out of south London, following in the musical and sartorial footsteps of The Libertines with Dickensian street urchin attire and punky indie noise that takes in ska, reggae and country hoe-down along the way. Currently plugging new single 'Edwoud' and fresh from supporting The Zutons on tour.  
**THE DAVID RAPHAEL BAND: The Bullingdon** – Rocking blues and r'n'b from the singer and harpist.  
**SWING MECHANISM: The Port Mahon**  
**MARTIN SIMPSON & MARTIN CATHY: Nettlebed Folk Club**

### TUESDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**ROBIN GUTHRIE: The Phoenix Picture House** – Former Cocteau Twins guitarist soundtracks his new animated feature – *see main preview*  
**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC ECLECTIC JAM SESSION: The City Tavern**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ, BLUES & FOLK NIGHT: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With funky pop duo Silvia Sola and Nicholas.  
**RUSTIC NATION: The Cellar**

### WEDNESDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**ARIEL PINK + BELONG + THE WARM + DIVINE COILS: The Port Mahon** – Trippy, lo-fi psych-pop from LA's Ariel Pink, plus synth-pop from Tokyo three-piece The Warm and dissonant ambience from Divine Coils.  
**FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**PHONIK SESSIONS: The Cellar** – Funk jam.  
**ARAWAK: East Oxford Community Centre** – Long-running reggae session.

### THURSDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**WHEATLEY PARK SOUL BAND: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**FLIPRON + THE EPSTEIN: The Cellar** – Quaintly old-fashioned acoustic country blues from Flipron, plus earthy country rocking from The Epstein.  
**JAZZ NIGHT: The City Tavern**  
**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**





*Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>*

## BIC RUNGA:

### The Zodiac

A multi-platinum-selling, award-winning star in her native New Zealand before she was out of her teens, Bic Runga's reputation outside of her country of birth has been built entirely on word of mouth until now. A world tour with Crowded House's Tim Finn showed her off to a wider audience, and now, following the release of her third album, 'Birds', Sony look set to get the hype machine into gear and establish Bic as a global asset, or whatever it is that major label marketing departments refer to musicians as these days. Sony's initial moves seem to suggest they're selling her as "The New Nora Jones", which is perhaps unfair on Bic, a singer with a sweet, delicate slightly childlike voice, and songwriter who dips into the more exotic worlds of Cocteau Twins, Nina Simone and Paul Simon as well as the more wistful campfire environs of Bob Dylan. 'Birds' is deeper and darker than the bedroom ruminations of its predecessors, and while there are moments of coffee table-friendly blandness to be had, there's also a wilder streak and sense of adventure that her paymasters are missing out on in their headlong pursuit of profit chasing.

**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**FRIDAY 9<sup>th</sup>**

**SHIRLEY + THE KEYBOARD CHOIR: The Zodiac** – Party-friendly pop sounds from recent Punt stars Shirley, plus esoteric



synthetic ambience and glitchiness from The Keyboard Choir.

**HELP! SHE CAN'T SWIM + T.I.T.S + TIGER FORCE + DISCO DIVE: The Wheatsheaf** – Sprightly Sonic Youth-influenced noise pop from HSCS, plus Sabbath-inspired no-wave from San Francisco's T.I.T.S and post-riot grl rocking from Tiger Force at tonight's Vacuous Pop gig.

**ASSASSINS OF SILENCE + GLENDA**

**HUIH: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Hawkwind tribute from AOS, plus an acoustic turn from Phyl frontwoman Glenda.

**THE RACE + THE PLUGS: The Corner Room** – Epic indie rocking from Reading's The Race.

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

**SATURDAY 10<sup>th</sup>**

**ASEP SUNANDER SUNRAYA & TROUPE: Wesley Memorial Chapel, New Inn Hall Street** – Javanese Gamelan and elaborate puppet show from the ten-strong troupe.

**THE DIRTY DANCE + THE UPSTREAM PROVIDERS + SIMON DAVIES: The City Tavern** – Local bands showcase.

**HIP HOP & BREAKBEATS CLUB NIGHT: The Bullingdon**

**REDOX + OPAQUE: Flowing Well, Sunningwell**

**DARWIN'S WISH: Bricklayers Arms, Marston**

**WIRED: East Oxford Community Centre JUDE MANN: Magic Café (1-2pm)**

**SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup>**

**EMMY THE GREAT + FOXES! + THE KEYBOARD CHOIR: The Port Mahon** – Anti-folk songstress Emmy headlines with support from local indie rockers Foxes! and multi-synth orchestra The Keyboard Choir. **ACOUSTIC SONG SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley (3-7pm)**

**ELECTRIC JAM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Jam along with the in-house rhythm section. All musicians welcome.

**MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup>**

**THE EDDIE MARTIN BAND: The Bullingdon** – British blues guitarist, twice nominated for best UK blues guitarist and adept at acoustic, electric and slide, drawing on all manner of American blues traditions, from Delta and Texan style to Chicago and New Orleans. **ROSIE DOONAN & BEN MURRAY: Nettlebed Folk Club**

**TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup>**

**JAMIE T: The Zodiac** – Fresh, eclectic new pop talent from West London, Jamie T looks certain to be one of this year's big breakthrough successes on the back of his excellent 'Betty & Her Selfish Sons' EP. Mixing up a low-rent 70s punk attitude, early Bob Dylan-style folk and Streets-y hip hop and electronica, Jamie's simultaneously boisterous and sensitive, danceable and introverted, with a touch of the Arctic Monkeys about his observational punk poetry.

**MARY'S GARDEN + HANGMAN'S JOE + SUE JORDAN + THE MARK BOSLEY BAND: The Port Mahon** – Gothic Eurorocking from Mary's Garden, plus local supports.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon DELICIOUS MUSIC ECLECTIC JAM SESSION: The City Tavern DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ, BLUES & FOLK NIGHT: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With singer-songwriter Simon Davies. **INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Goth and industrial club night.

**WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup>**

**FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

**EDDIE STANTON: The Port Mahon**

**HIT & RUN: The Cellar** – Drum&bass club night.

**ROOTS LOUNGE: East Oxford Community Centre**

**THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup>**

**TRUE RUMOUR: The Port Mahon** – Soulful 80s-styled pop.

**HARRY ANGEL + PHOTO + ALUMINIUM BABE: The Cellar** – High-wired gothic-tinged melodic hardcore pop from Harry Angel, with support from Strokes-inspired Photo and cute indie popstrels Aluminium Babe.

**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**

**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

*Monday 5<sup>th</sup>*

## THE LIGHTNING

### SEEDS: The Zodiac

Could there be a more appropriate time for The Lightning Seeds to reform? What with the World Cup and it being ten years since the release of 'Three Lions', Ian Broudie has picked his time well. In fact it's all systems go for The Lightning Seeds this summer, with a host of festival appearances lined up as well as a re-release for that footie anthem and a 'Best Of' compilation out this month. Broudie himself could easily have retired on the royalties from 'Three Lions', as well as the money from all the adverts that have used his songs over the years. Those ads might have cheapened the feel of the band but listen back to hits like 'Pure', 'Life Of Riley' and 'Sugar-Coated Iceberg' now and it's impossible to argue with the pure, undiluted pop thrill of them. Broudie is a seriously talented pop practitioner, whether its as a songwriter or a producer (he's worked with some of the best bands in British music over the last 25 years, most recently The Zutons and The Coral). Tonight's gig is one of a handful of low-key comeback shows before the festival season really kicks in, but one thing you can be sure of is that Broudie's is a face you'll be seeing a lot of in the coming weeks.





*Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup>*

## ROBIN GUTHRIE:

### Phoenix Picture House

A rare chance to catch one of the greatest and most influential guitarists of the modern age in an unusual setting, this. Robin Guthrie's work with Cocteau Twins and This Mortal Coil back in the 80s provided the blueprint for much of what goes under the name post-rock these days, as well as inspiring everyone from My Bloody Valentine and Ride to Sigur Ros and Mogwai. Guthrie's ephemeral, spangled style was a perfect foil to Elizabeth Frazer's otherworldly vocals, and since that band's demise his solo work has continued to drift along a singularly ethereal path. Robin has just released his second solo instrumental album, 'Continental', a delicately grandiose affair that takes a trip through the cosmos at a leisurely pace, while tonight he'll be performing music from his recent animated movie, *Lumière*. The performance will be followed by a question and answer session, which should be great entertainment in itself given Guthrie's often hilarious press interviews in the past that are completely at odds with the music he makes.

### FRIDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

**BEATNIK FILMSTARS: The Wheatsheaf** – Indie veterans of some 16 years standing, with tour supports to Flaming Lips and Superchunk under their belts as well as more Peel sessions than you could shake a Pastels-shaped stick at. **RESERVOIR CATS + SO LONG ANGEL:** The Exeter Hall, Cowley – Hard-rocking blues party music from Tony Jezzard's boys.

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**FRIDAY STREET: St Aldates Tavern**  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho**  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**  
**ROOTS LOUNGE: East Oxford**  
**Community Centre**

### SATURDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**DELPHI + JOE SATRIANI TRIBUTE + BOBBY MOORE'S SHORTS: The City Tavern** – Delicious Music local bands showcase.  
**FUTURE FUNK FOUNDATION: The Bullingdon**  
**WILSON + MARY'S GARDEN + LOST CHIHUAHUA + NICK BREAKSPEAR + JEREMY HUGHES: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Wittstock Festival fundraiser.  
**FRESH OUT OF THE BOX: The Cellar** – With Meat Katie  
**EMMARELLA: Bricklayers Arms, Marston**  
**CORNERSTONE MUSIK: East Oxford Community Centre** – Reggae session.  
**PHIL GARVEY: Magic Café (1-2pm)**

### SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**ACOUSTIC SONG SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley (3-7pm)**  
**SLIDEWINDER: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Live blues.

### MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**RICHIE MILTON & THE LOWDOWN: The Bullingdon** – UK bluesman taking in southern states blues as well as rock, soul and be-bop, with a Blues Brothers-like onstage theatricality.  
**SHIRLEY: The Port Mahon** – Feelgood beat pop from the recent Punt stars, mixing up early Beatles melody with Housemartins bounce and a little Los Lobos Latin panache.  
**DAVE SWARBRICK'S LAZARUS: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Former Fairport man introduces his new band.

### TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**BLUE JUNK: The Port Mahon** – Jazz-funk.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC ECLECTIC JAM SESSION: The City Tavern**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ, BLUES & FOLK NIGHT: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With electric jazz guitarist Pawel Kuterba.

### WEDNESDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**ZEBRAHEAD: The Zodiac** – Orange County underground punk heroes continue to follow the DIY path having supported RATM, Fugazi and Green Day around the world.  
**KARDOMAH: The Bullingdon**  
**THE GREAT ESKIMO HOAX + I R TIGER: The Port Mahon** – Angular rocking with an oddball reggae edge from Birmingham's Great Eskimo Hoax.

**FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

### THURSDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**TEMPLE: The Bullingdon** – Live bands night.  
**SOPHIE POLHILL + PHIL THURMAN + TIM PONT + SEFTON: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Acoustic showcase night.  
**KOHOUTEK: The Port Mahon**  
**MR G & RICH + AMBERSTATE + NUMBENINE: The Cellar** – Local indie rock bands night.  
**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**  
**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

### FRIDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**EASY TIGER + WELCOME TO BODERVILLE + LAGRIMA + REBECCA MOSLEY: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Grinning Spider Promotions presents bluesy southern states-style rocking from Easy Tiger, plus supports.

**NOT MY DAY + DREW ATKINS + NATIONAL SCHOOL + THE BBCs: The Corner Room** – Delicious Music local bands night.

**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho**  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**  
**MACKATING: The Cellar** – Local reggae faves.

### SATURDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**ELTON JOHN: Oxford United Stadium** – Global superstar makes his first visit to Oxford in an age at Oxford United's stadium. After

*Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>*

## THE BEAT:

### The Bullingdon

Following on from the appearance of former Specials frontman Neville Staples late last year, Roadrunner present another staple of the early-80s ska revival, The Beat. Formed by guitarist Dave Wakeling in Birmingham in the late 70s, they only really came to life after the arrival of rapper Rankin Roger and veteran ska saxophonist Saxa, who injected a bit of fun and soul into proceedings and got them signed to 2Tone at a time when that label was really taking off. After enjoying a hit with a cover of Smokey Robinson's 'Tears Of A Clown' they moved to Arista and enjoyed a string of hit singles including 'Hands Off... She's Mine', 'Mirror In The Bathroom' and 'Too Nice To Talk To', as well as a hit-strewn debut album, 'I Just Can't Stop It'. It was The Beat's politics that won them their live following though, militantly anti-racist and champions of CND and trade union causes, their finest moment was surely 'Stand Down Margaret'. After losing the initial energy and falling apart (Wakeling and Rankin formed General Public, Andy Cox and David Steele formed Fine Young Cannibals) some of the band came together again in 2003 and, now without Wakeling but fronted by Rankin Roger and his son, it's time to relive those classic hits and a period when seriously militant music was not only fun but also incredibly successful.



what he managed with Watford, maybe he could finance a revival for another team in yellow.

**THE BEAT: The Bullingdon** – 80s ska hitmakers return – *see main preview*  
**LANTERNS + DIVINE COILS + HANA SUMAI: The Port Mahon** – Experimental noise and dissonance.  
**TRANSMISSION + LES CLOCHARDS + PRIMITIVE TIME MACHINE: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Last ever gig for local indie rock favourites, plus Gallic jazz-flavoured pop from Les Clochards.  
**THE DREW ATKINS BAND + THE BBCs + THE MARS PROJECT: The City Tavern** – 60s-styled rocking in a Bob Dylan and Neil Young vein from Drew Atkins.  
**BREEZE: Bricklayers Arms, Marston OX:UN + CREECHA SOUNDS: East Oxford Community Centre** – Drum&bass double bill.  
**MAEVE BAYTON: Magic Café (1-2pm)**

### SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**BEARD MUSEUM with CHAMPION KICKBOXER: The Purple Turtle** – Sweetly lysergic folk-pop in a Super Furry Animals vein from Sheffield's Champion Kickboxer at tonight's Beard Museum club night.  
**PINDROP PERFORMANCE with BORDERVILLE: The Port Mahon (5-8pm)** – Low-key glam-tinged electro rocking from former Sexy Breakfast frontman Joe Swarbrick's new band.  
**ACOUSTIC SONG SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley (3-7pm)**  
**ELECTRIC JAM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

### MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**SHERMAN ROBERTSON & BLUES MOVE: The Bullingdon** – Good-time, upbeat blues from guitarist Robertson, playing a rhythmic, funky electric style with dynamic solos and a soulful voice.  
**ELIZA CARTHY & SAUL ROSE: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Crown Princess of English folk takes her feisty fiddling to the stage at Nettlebed.

### TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**NEDELLE + JONQUIL: The Port Mahon** – San Franciscan singer with a surreal, autobiographical bent.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC ECLECTIC JAM SESSION: The City Tavern**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ, BLUES & FOLK NIGHT: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With Jazz Emporium.

### WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**THEY CAME FROM THE STARS, I SAW THEM + SUNNYVALE NOISE**

**SUB-ELEMENT + SCULPTURE + NATIONAL SCHOOL: The Port Mahon** – Genuinely off-kilter bizarreness from They Came From The Stars, mixing up space jazz, ranting krautrock, new wave dub and some other stuff that even we haven't got nice little pigeonholes for yet. Imagine a lo-fi mix up of Faust, Sun Ra, Pram and Kissing the Pink and you're most of the way there, but they'll make sure you're abducted by aliens before you get home. Esoteric post-rock experimentalists Sunnyvale support.  
**BLOODROSES + ALLYOUMISS + BOMBSHOE + MITCH: The Wheatsheaf** – Post-hardcore rocking from Bloodroses, plus grungey pop from Allyoumiss and insane metal noise from Bombshoe at tonight's Grinning Spider club night.  
**LIVE BANDS NIGHT: The Bullingdon ATTILA THE STOCKBROKER + DAVID ROVICS + THE RUB: East Oxford Community Centre** – Benefit gig for Peace Not War with Brighton's veteran punk poet.  
**FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

### THURSDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

**TOP CATS + NINE TON PEANUT SMUGGLERS: The Zodiac** – Vaudevillian ska, r'n'b, jazz and swing from Natty Bo's band, the man behind Ska Cubano. Support from ace local ska warriors NTPS, plus DJ sets from Natty Bo, DJ Derek and Aidan Larkin.  
**THE END GAME + FROM ASHES TO ANGELS: The Port Mahon**  
**THE MONROE TRANSFER + DIRTY SCI-FI + MOYLE: The Cellar** – Post-rock experimentation from The Monroe Transfer, plus gothic grove rocking from Dirty Sci-Fi.  
**JAZZ NIGHT: The Market Street Tavern**  
**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**  
**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

### FRIDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

**WESTLIFE: Blenheim Palace** – Doom-laden industrial hardcore and onstage self-immolation from Trent Reznor, Steve Albini and Genesis P Orridge's new supergroup. No, really.  
**WITTSTOCK: The Plough, Long Wittenham** – Start of a weekend of live music with blues, rock and folk acts on show.  
**SAM KELLY'S BLUES BAND: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho**  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

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Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> Legendary Boogiemen / Pete Bearder 8.30pm £3  
Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Inflatables 8.30pm £3  
Thu 8<sup>th</sup> Wheatley Park Soul Band 8.30pm FREE  
Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Assassins of Silence / Glenda Huish 8.30pm £3  
Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Kaned Citizen / Hangman's Joe 8.30pm £3  
Sun 11<sup>th</sup> Electric Jam  
Fri 16<sup>th</sup> Reservoir Cats / So Long Angel 8.30pm £3  
Sat 17<sup>th</sup> Wilson / Mary's Garden / Lost Chihuahua / Nick Breakspear / Jeremy Hughes 7pm £4  
Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Slidewinder / Kitt 8.30pm £3  
Thu 22<sup>nd</sup> Sophie Polhill / Phil Thurman / Tim Pont / Sefton 8.30pm FREE  
Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> Grinning Spider / Lagrima / Welcome To Boderville 8.30pm £3  
Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Transmission / Les Clochards / Primitive Time Machine 8.30pm FREE  
Sun 25<sup>th</sup> Electric Jam  
Fri 30<sup>th</sup> Sam Kelly's Blues Band Tickets on sale now at the X & The Music Box £5 Advance £6 on the door. 8.30pm

*Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion in the gig guide is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month - 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



ALLY CRAIG

photo: Jill Faure



ASHER DUST

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JOFF WINKS BAND

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REBECCA MOSLEY

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photo: Sam Shepherd

## OXFORD PUNT 2006

Without wishing to make too pretentious a point of it, the annual Oxford Punt is a voyage of discovery. With 19 of the best local unsigned acts on show in one night around town it's a chance to unearth acts you might not normally cross town for. As such it's appropriate that it always kicks off at Borders where the audience, perched amid the bookshelves, can learn something new even as they listen to the first two acts. Last year we were flipping through medical dictionaries; this afternoon we choose to learn Finnish (well, from A to D at least). But Punt opener **ALLY CRAIG** is too captivating to be distracted from. Playing his acoustic guitar on his knees, like a lap steel, he's a long way from the singer-songwriter stereotype, his rhythmic, often discordant style closer to Sonic Youth (whom he name-checks). Possessed of a dry wit, Ally can be caustic or warm and uplifting lyrically, notably on 'A Train, Then A Train, Then A Train', and while an enthralled crowd that stretches back halfway across the store looks on, one of Oxford most unlikely new pop heroes is born.

Ally stays with us as guitarist for **REBECCA MOSLEY**. Perhaps a more traditional songstress, with a deep, dark melancholic folk streak running through her songs, Ally's guitar as well as the gothic cello add a vague air of threat to her otherwise sweetly-natured songs. From the frantic, clamouring, 'Papered Up', to the absolutely gorgeous, haunting 'Queues', Rebecca brings a little West Coast acid-folk to more traditional and sedate English folk, and while she never tries to kick down any doors, the room she's chosen to inhabit is simply and sometimes magically decorated.

And so we leave the wordy learning stuff behind (too many funny accents over all the letters in

Finnish we decide; we much prefer trying to learn Elvish, or Klingon, both of which will probably come in more useful in every day life anyway. If we ever do go to Finland we'll just speak loudly and slowly in that traditional English manner and hope they put us on the right train and don't wee in our beer). It's down to Jongleurs Comedy Club where the mix and match of bands on show isn't giving heroic sound engineer Tony Jezzard many laughs tonight. **WITCHES** begin with a flourish of trumpet and bow-played guitar but it's their more tender pieces that catch you off guard: oddly placid, contorted musical storms with the trumpet leading the charge and making them sound like a cross between Calexico and Spiritualized. It's a mark of good songwriting that their tunes are deceptively simple and eminently catchy, despite being so densely structured and rich.

Time for an early ear clean out before the serious venue hopping begins and **XMAS LIGHTS** are here to do the honours with the aid of some lacerated-throat screaming and relentless, pummelling guitar noise, the gaps during and between songs filled with piercing feedback that in this context work in the same way as the horn sections Public Enemy utilised back in the day. From the speed riffing of Slayer to the bleeps and clicks of Aphex Twin and the pure insanity of The Locust, they're intense and determined but canny enough to give the listener something to hang on to: it's no barrage of overdrive and frenzy, but an ordered sequence of...er... overdrive and frenzy.

**KEYBOARD CHOIR**'s multi-synth ambience might on paper seem to be a complete contrast to this, but both bands share a feel for and command of atmosphere and sound textures. With an impressive array of electronic wizardry and some entrancing visuals they seem to have introduced more control and logic into their layered mix of sounds than in previous live outings. Tunes are

born from a mess of drones and bleeps to develop into rhythmic, hypnotic waves. Equal parts Underworld, Pink Floyd, Eno and The BBC Radiophonic Workshop, The Choir are an odd blend of improvisation, techno and ambient music, but it's their oddness that sets them apart and introduces some character.

Tonight's Purple Turtle goings on are hosted by Beard Museum and so an air of gentle, lopsided rootsiness reigns. **MARK CROZER** admits that his songs aren't happy or clappy and few local singer-songwriters do heartache and unrequited love as well as Mark. Yet by allying spiky electric guitar to his soft, ghostly harmonic voice on songs like 'Breaking The Waves' (and that's about the last time tonight we can remember any song titles), there's an underlying feel of there being a comfort zone for him even in this melancholy.

**DUSTY SOUND SYSTEM**'s is one of the more understated sets of this year's Punt. Starting off with three members and finishing with six – various members having been spotted hurtling along Cornmarket to get there almost in time – they're a rockier take on Robin Bennett's other musical concern, Goldrush, while retaining some of the lackadaisical attitude that Goldrush maybe left behind when they left the campfire party.

**WHERE I'M CALLING FROM** are already being touted (in these very pages) as one of the most promising young bands in town, and although they have a habit of wandering seemingly aimlessly through passages of not-quite-funk instrumentals, when they actually deign to play some proper songs, that promise seems more likely. Somewhere between The Only Ones' starry-eyed romanticism and Belle and Sebastian's, um, starry-eyed romanticism, they can be abrasive but at heart they're true pop dreamers.





100 BULLETS BACK

photo: Jill Faure



SOW

photo: Sam Shepherd

Up at the Wheatsheaf **HARLETTE** win the prize for the youngest band at this year's Punt. And the prize for best war paint. They look like a cross between The Slits and a gang of Boudicca's warriors, one of them's sporting a Queen Adreana Suck t-shirt and the singer's belting it out with the shrill zest of X-Ray Spex' Poly Styrene. Add in some spidery gothic guitar, reminiscent of the Banshees at their most rudimentary and some playful bile-letting and you've got the true spirit of punk. Harlette are the sound of a bottle of small-town ennui shaken up 'til the cork pops.

**AND NO STAR** can't be much older. And if any older members of the audience were wondering where prog rock had been hiding, it's safely in the hands of a new generation of teenagers. Are the kids really demanding King Crimson and Captain Beefheart? Well, the Wheatsheaf is bursting at the seams and the crowd is hanging on every (instrumental) note. Even in tonight's company they're one of the big hits of the Punt.

**ASHER DUST** – aka AJ – is a considerably more experienced performer and one who, even alone on stage with his box of tricks, can make you feel there's a whole band up there. His voice is sweet but it's the music that kicks it. Forget cloning US hip hop and r'n'b, this sounds more like Cabaret Voltaire remixing Tackhead. The production may be raw but that only adds to the effect. AJ's performance is brilliant, delivering socially aware and funny rap monologues and cutting quite a dash, holding the crowd in the palm of his hand.

A band that even Holiday Stabbings have described as "loud and a bit abstract",

**DEGÜELLO** hit the stage in a flurry of flailing hardcore that's reminiscent of Winnebago Deal's set on this very stage a few Punt's ago. This is heavy stuff and yet it's a million miles away from the primal roar of Sow or the sharp elbows of Xmas Lights. They're the sort of band who

## XMASLIGHTS



photo: Sam Shepherd

## JABERWOK



photo: Jill Faure

inhabit your skull when you've woken up after way too much whisky; grimy riffs pour from the stage as the band somehow manage to up the ante through their set as the taste of stale bourbon rises in your throat.

The City Tavern provides tonight's special Punt moment. Walking downstairs after Joff Winks' set, the pub's huge TV screen is filled with The Young Knives taking over MTV. Four years ago they were cutting their teeth at this very event and we wonder who of tonight's cast will be up there in lights in years to come.

**THE JOFF WINKS BAND** would appear to be prime contenders. Basically Joff and his elaborate backing band, he writes songs for the big stage. The ambition is occasionally ahead of the finished product, although to be fair to him, even now his songs benefit from a larger stage and PA which can separate the many, many parts that make up his torch songs. At its best though it's music to lift the soul, much as the likes of Snow Patrol do, but here the terrain is closer to that meeting ground of Steely Dan and Flaming Lips. Place your bets now for a Top 10 hit in the next five years.

Odds are that **SOW** won't be troubling the charts any time soon, but their unadulterated ferocity might just terrify every other act out of the way and leave them in top spot. Tonight they're bludgeoning anyone who walks through the venue door, their ferocious noise spilling out into the almost deserted street below and doubtless adding to the emotional trauma of any passing Middlesborough fans whose team have just been royally dismembered in the Uefa Cup final. Incredibly loud and musically confrontational, they're awesome: giant squalls of guitar clattering around a filthy metal core. The intensity is getting on for that of Swans or Sonic Youth

circa-1982, a no-wave collision of noise roughly shaped into what we can only imagine are songs.

But the Punt, like the Yellow Pages, isn't only here for the nasty things in life. **SHIRLEY** are by some light years the most cheery band on the bill. Watching their set is like stepping back in time 40 years, to a more innocent and happier place for music. Displaying a similar exuberance and feel for harmony-heavy beat pop to The Samurai Seven, you half expect them to kick into a version of 'Twist and Shout' at any moment, while when they get all Latin on us, it's like The Housemartins trapped inside the bodies of Los Lobos. With hindsight maybe they should have closed the whole event and sent everyone, even the most cold-hearted frump, home with a smile on their face.

But it's down to the Cellar for the finale of the Punt. Aspiring young local rapper **ZUBY** gives us a hint of how live hip hop can be made to work well by simply getting back to the basics and not overloading the performance: some head-nodding loops and a tight MC in the spotlight. A disappointingly sparse crowd actually works in his favour musically as you can hear every word, and in Zuby Oxford may even have found its most accomplished rapper, a man with the swagger and braggadocio of an American hip hop star and with the flow to match, shooting off quickfire rhymes with barely a pause.

Synth-pop is something else you don't get a lot of in any quality in Oxford, but **100 BULLETS BACK** make some amends, although even they can't avoid layering on some stuttering new wave guitar noise to fill the sound out. But with the sometimes pumping electronics and shouty vocals, there's a similar feel of up-and-at-em about 100BB as there was with Zuby, and at this time of the evening, when the glorified pub crawl that is the Punt starts to really come into its own, their energetic brand of pop is impossible not to warm to.

And so bring on the dancefloor heavyweights. **JABERWOK** seem to have lost their vocalist to a personality crisis and he's flown home to the States, so it's a very different band to the one we've been so impressed with on demo thus far that presents itself on stage tonight. And possibly, potentially, a better one. Out go the stilted Chili Peppers-flavoured raps and acid-jazz fun and in comes a far heavy fug of cosmic funk and dubby psychedelia. Someone, whose brain is less clouded by the late night and alcohol suggests they're sound a bit like The Egg, but we're thinking more along the lines of Hawkwind in their more jazzed-up incarnations. And that'll do us just fine at any time of night.

Time to clear the dancefloor though, and ironically it's a technohead who's on hand to do it. **NAILBOMB CULTS** is one man (Will Ross) and his dirty Mac. Actually it's cleanly-produced digital hardcore drum&bass, the sort of thing Alec Empire pioneered and set the very highest benchmark for, and Will only really starts to excel when he stops trying to scare the Bejeezus out of the wobbly barflies and hits on some happy hardcore – that most underrated of genres – but his mash up of samples and snippets and nasty glitches and bleeps does mean we end up heading for home after a very long night taking in new music with an old classic ringing in our ears. 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight' indeed. And he's gonna have one hell of a hangover in the morning.

*Words: Dale Kattack, Simon Minter, Sam Shepherd, Art Lagun, Kirsten Etheridge, Colin May, Paul Carrera, David Murphy.*



## KILLING JOKE

### The Zodiac

"I've seen Hell. You think I'm joking, but I've seen it and it's coming. You're all in fucking Butlin's now". Jaz Coleman's off again with his visions of the apocalypse and for all that, dressed in an oversized boiler

suit and caked in greasepaint, he looks like the Kwikfit Fitter from Hades, there's a dark corner of your soul that takes him ever so seriously.

Killing Joke may be older, guitarist Geordie may have less hair and Jaz has filled out plenty since they provoked a riot at the polytechnic on their last visit to Oxford twenty-one years ago, but tonight is bone-crunching proof that they have not and will not mellow. Coleman's mind is a turbulent place and here he acts out his fire and brimstone vagrant preacher role to a soundtrack of biblical splendour and menace.

There's a Wagnerian stomp and operatic majesty to tracks from new album 'Hosannas From The Basements Of Hell', notably 'Gratitude', with Geordie's guitar churning like the whole world being sucked down into the sewer, Coleman's robotic rasp an unholy entity, delivered, almost worryingly, with such little effort. Killing Joke are relentless, like an unending night-time storm, conjuring the feel of worlds ending like no other band has ever come close to matching. 'Wardance', with its pounding tribal beat and evil synth snarl, is an early explosion of gothic industrial punk carnage, quickly followed by a similarly classic 'Requiem', with its brutal radioactive pulse, while newer songs like 'Total Invasion' are more fiery and abrasive.

Jaz Coleman's appearance and between-song rants and rambles do carry a darkly comic edge, but knowing his reputation for violence and the real darkness within the soul of this former choirboy, you quickly wipe the smile from your face.

And as tonight's set almost imperceptibly builds to its climax, the pressure intensifying, finally to be released in the cataclysmic 'Complications', the end of days suddenly doesn't seem so fantastical. A quarter of a century on from their debut album, Killing Joke are still walking with gods.

**Dale Kattack**

## KULA SHAKER

### The Zodiac

Yes, that Kula Shaker. Hey, wait, come back! The ever-dapper and evergreen Crispian Mills and co. have long divided opinion since 'Grateful When You're Dead' ten years ago, but haven't troubled anyone's consciousness much since their split three years later. Now they're back with a tour, an iTunes- and vinyl-only EP and plans for an album.

So, how much has changed? Is the bass player still called Alonza? Yes, but he's balder; only Jay Darlington, now part of the Oasis touring band, is missing, replaced by Henry Broadbent on the requisite Hammond organ. Are they still into Indian mysticism and spirituality? It seems so, along with a myriad of other 60s psychedelic influences. Of the new stuff, 'Diktator of the Free World' has a political edge (and the chorus "I'm a dik, I'm a dik, I'm a diktator..."), and 'Revenge of the King' has Crispian's distinct talking vocals and the same type of abstract lyrics and sitar-like guitar sound as the stuff on their John Leckie-produced debut album, 'K'.

Have all their fans deserted them? The sold-out Zodiac crowd would say no; they can still sing along with the Sanskrit vocals of 'Tattva' and 'Govinda'. Their music remains stuck anytime between the 60s and now, so Arctic Monkeys need not worry about their fans deserting them for Kula Shaker's new, fresh 2006 sound. The genial Crispian seems delighted with the turnout, chatting between songs and repeatedly thanking the crowd for coming. Really, though, if you liked 'K' but were a bit disappointed by 'Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts' you'll welcome the return to form, and if you didn't care in the first place you won't care now. Kula Shaker still have the same interests and philosophy and convey them in the same way; they still have a distinct style and something to say.

**Kirsten Etheridge**

## SLEEPS IN OYSTERS / THE SILKROOM / AMBERSTATE

### The Port Mahon

Melody in music works like plot in fiction: it's not essential, but it can be a useful entrance point, and if done well, is a joy in its own right. Melodic Oxford is cleverly arranging events that explore how wide a variety of musicians have a melodic sensibility at work. With supper jazz drums, sub-aquatic bass, languorous vocals and keys that alternate between ridiculous Rick Wakeman-style arpeggios and sonar blips (mostly produced by slapping a vocoder mike) Amberstate serve up smouldering tunes like a lo-fi Smoke City. If you like the thought of the second Lamb album made in a garden shed, give them a whirl and go home happy.

Oddly, The Silkroom seem to run on melodic empty. They sound like Franz Ferdinand with three-quarters of the songs removed, so to make up for this dearth they play ridiculously loud and put the vocals through some effects. Sadly, all the pedals in PMT couldn't disguise the singer's two-note youth club blurt, and the set feels lax and flabby. They could have a future making Billy Mahonie-style stop-start music, but tonight, boys, we infinitely preferred the stop.

Sleeps In Oysters refresh our waning Sunday spirits with an intriguing set. They have enough fuzzy loops and glitches to make Sunnyvale blush, yet they embellish them with gorgeous tuneful figures on toy glockenspiels and such, like a Fisher Price Sigur Ros. The glacial female vocal lines are a treat too, though the male counterpart is a little nasal. Their racks of equipment test the Port's sticky tape sound system, but they shouldn't let it get to them so obviously, as their music is joyous.

**David Murphy**

## THE DELTA FREQUENCY

### The Cellar

Any band that features founding member of The Rock Of Travolta, Phill Honey as well as Smilex guitarist Tom Sharpe was never going to be big on subtlety, but even so, The Delta Frequency layer on the bombast with aplomb tonight.

Playing their second gig, The Delta Frequency aren't pulling any punches, opening with 'Eyes Wide', a blizzard of feedback and overdriven guitars and doom-laden electric piano, all topped by an overwrought gothic vocal. Further in, 'Maybe, But I'm Always Right' sounds like Rammstein lifting the weight from their shoulders and finding happiness. The problem is, the impact of the first few numbers is such that it's hard for them to keep pulling surprises out of the hat. To their credit the level of intensity rarely falters across a 25-minutes set, the headrush dynamics never far from Phill's past incarnation with The Rock.

What is slightly disappointing is that the electronic side of The Delta Frequency is given little space to breathe, drowned out by the storm of guitars and bass, although the odd moments of Trans-Am-like squelch, as on 'Introducing My Demagogues', let some light in.

It's inevitable really that a band like The Delta Frequency will get compared to their members' previous bands, especially as in Phill's case it was a band that had such an impact on the local scene, but if the myriad distractions of the line-up (as well as Tom's work with Smilex and drummer Cameron playing with The Quarterfinals, Phill also has his Boywithatoy project) don't scupper their progress, The Delta Frequency are already proving they've got enough fight in them to make their own space.

**Ian Chesterton**



## UGLY DUCKLING

### The Zodiac

A zoology-themed line up tonight for the Zodiac, but kicked off firstly by Blunted's own, non-animal related GTA, a blend of medical student Chima Anya and Ineffable, Oxford's best dressed freestyler and tonight complimented by the ubiquitous DJ Fu.

They set the crowd up for California's Giant Panda, who have a similar-get-up-and-get-involved attitude and style as Jurassic 5 and tonight's headliners, Ugly Duckling. An extremely animated performance, if a little too long, perfectly inspires the crowd to be ready for America's favourite 'Meatshake'-drinking, gold chain-wearing hip hoppers.

In these modern hip hop years where production is king, Ugly Duckling's approach is refreshing: stripped back beats with a catchy hook, either from a sample or a call & response, reminiscent of the good old days. Although this can sound a little tired at times, it's not long before something else drops in to keep you interested. Yes this is funky hip hop, without the need for guns and bitches; in fact making a mockery of that with their hilarious 'Mr. Tough Guy': a poke at all the beef within hip hop and all the people taking themselves far too seriously. Two MCs and a DJ is all Ugly Duckling need, the MCs keeping the majority of the crowd engaged and DJ Young Einstein's party piece, 'Einstein's On Stage,' keeping the DJs happy. An unforgiving touring schedule could explain tonight's slightly lacklustre performance, however, this is not taking anything away from them. They still tear it up, giving every inch of energy they can. If you want a fun night of full on funky hip hop flavours with one great DJ and two excellent MCs then check them live next time they're back; you will not be disappointed.

**DJ Indecision**

## MYSTERY JETS / THE SPINTO BAND

### The Zodiac

Visually the six-piece Spinto Band fall somewhere between those American wobble-head toys, the effervescent early Beatles and those mechanical nodding donkeys you get in the desert. Combining the obvious enthusiasm of the band and the hook-laden songs and glorious harmonies, you're smitten within minutes. Most of tonight's set is made up of their debut album, 'Nice & Nicely Done'. The seasickness-inducing 'Mountains' sways around after an intro that features some psychotic staring that Ron Mael would be proud of. 'Direct To Helmet' is woozy and 'Oh Mandy' introduces a lighter air through the melody, courtesy of Nick Krill's fine windmilling of a mandolin. Latterly the band even find fine use for kazoo on 'Brown Boxes'. A victory for off-kilter melody.

Mystery Jets waste no time settling in, crashing into the set with their two most recent singles, 'The Boy Who Ran Away' and 'You Can't Fool Me, Dennis', the latter currently getting the obligatory re-issue. The initial songs are really catchy and driven by powerful bass lines. The band also have an excellent trick they employ frequently of using their voices more like instruments, harmonising well, elongating ends of lines so that the tunes burst like rays of sunshine through a morning window.

A momentous and industrial sounding 'Little Bag Of Hair', the band bathed in pink light, is the start of a more testing part of the set. In truth, this middle section drags a bit, as the band hit a more experimental stride. Luckily 'Alas, Agnes', the set highlight, picks things up and pushes them through the roof, before signature song 'Zoo Time' closes the set.

**Russell Barker**

## BREAKS CO-OP

### The Zodiac

Radio 1 Evening Session DJ Zane Lowe's band, Breaks Co-op, formed back in his native New Zealand years before he moved to the UK, combine a number of elements which, when they get it right, really work well. Imagine Marvin Gaye, Barry Gibb, Maroon 5, Sade's bass player, Crosby, Stills and Nash with a bit of Eric Clapton - all polished off with a trip hop sheen, and you get the drift. They love getting into a groove.

But they love it so much they sometimes get stuck there with few chord changes and a lack of arrangements, and no matter how clear and beautiful local boy turned honorary Kiwi Andy Lovegrove's singing is, it can't always compensate for a lack of songs. Where they get it right are with numbers like 'The Other Side'. It's a complete change to the previous few songs and is the highlight for me. The three part harmonies are spot on, Andy sounds more like a chocolatey Neil Young than Barry Gibb here and with such an anthemic chorus even the DJ's talking samples seem to fit snugly. Ah yes. The DJ. Morrissey had it right when he sang "Hang the DJ".

Andy Lovegrove was brought in much later in Break Co-op's existence. But I would like to think that it's his amazing vocal talent and help in the songwriting department that has helped the band's increased popularity and not Zane Lowe's mate in the back with the headphones on, spinning and scratching LPs, and who any minute I think is going to ask the bride and groom to take their first dance. Don't get me wrong, the subtle samples and laid-back electronica elements create an important atmosphere and certainly add to the blander songs. And I'm sure he's a lovely guy. But don't let him near a mic. Especially when he starts rapping. It's all far too... too... white, really.

**Katy Jerome**

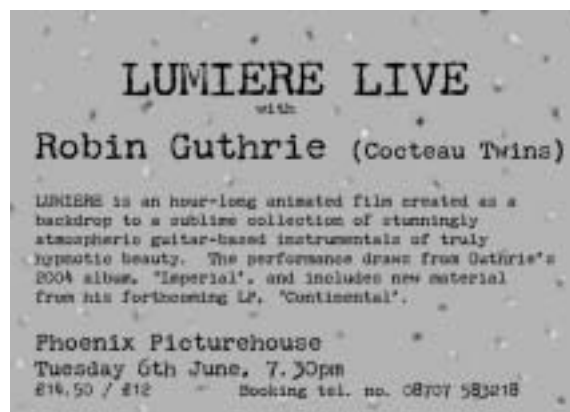
## DR SHOTOVER: Scum Dancing

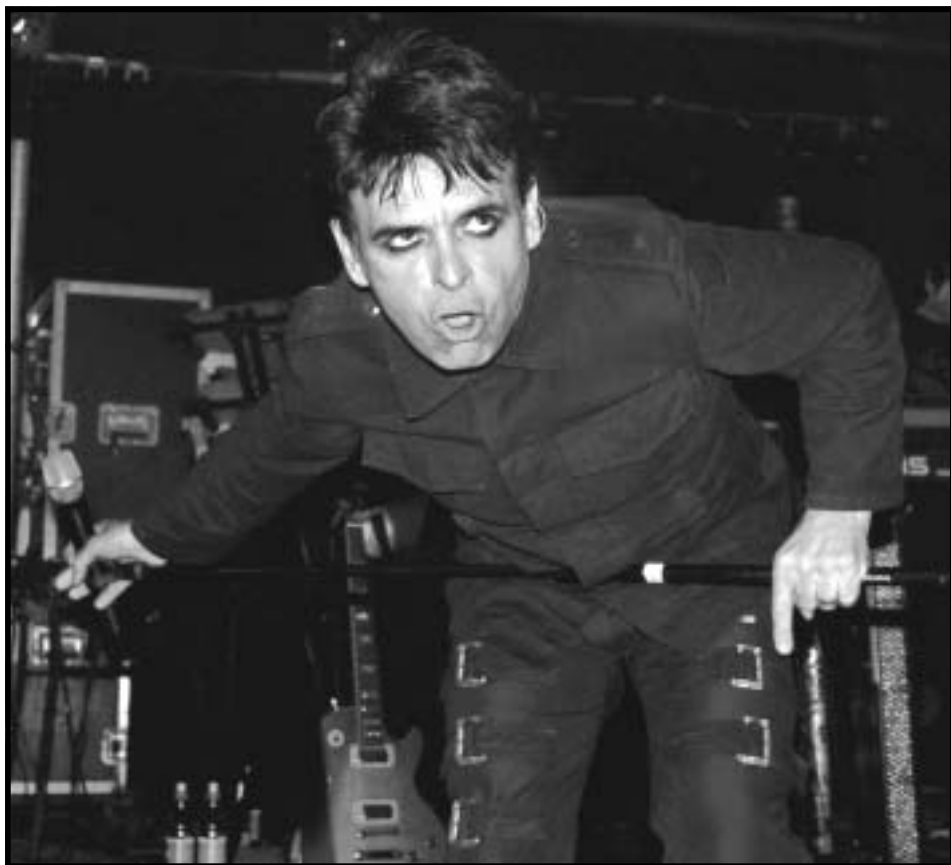
Valerie Solanas? Of course, I remember her well, and her Society for Cutting Up Men. Spirited filly, what? Not sure I should have lent her my old service revolver that day in New York, though... Anyway, Lefty Beaumont and I are thinking of reviving S.C.U.M., though obviously this time the initial letters will stand for something else... What? Oh well, yes, I suppose \*that\* is a possibility, but we were thinking more along the lines of the Society for Cutting Up Managers. Lefty's ancestral pile adjoins a deer-park, through which the be-suited prey will run, pursued by Yours Truly and associates on horseback (or, in my case, on a souped-up Vespa). The Greater Fakenham hounds will be brought out of retirement for the event, and no doubt the Beaumont family Purdeys will be deployed, too. You know that bit in every Western where one cowboy chappie makes another "dance" by firing bullets at the ground around his feet? We'll be doing that to a soundtrack of "Liars Beware" by Richard Hell and The Voidoids. I can hardly wait... Now, what shall I have in my hip flask for the Big Day...? Brandy? Or cheap brandy?

**Next month: The Stooges move in next door.**



*Valerie Solanas: "I'm waiting for my manager"*





## GARY NUMAN

### Brookes University

A week after Easter and here's a resurrection of similarly fantastical proportions. Once the subject of music press vitriol on an unprecedented level and later an object of ridicule until he finally seemed to drop from the radar altogether, bankrupt and creatively spent, Gary Numan was sustained by a small and

ever-dwindling fanbase that must rank as the most fanatical in music. With the release of new album, 'Jagged', the overdue follow-up to 'Pure', which saw him creatively and critically reborn, Numan finds himself as one of the most influential figures in rock. Talents as diverse as Nine Inch Nails, Beck, Afrikka Bambaataa and

Blur cite him as a major influence and the metal press in particular have hailed his pioneering genius.

Tonight's gig might be a revelation to newcomers to the cult of Numan. Having embraced the monolithic industrial rock of those he first inspired, songs from 'Jagged', like set-opener 'Pressure', or 'Haunted', have more in common with the likes of Fear Factory than any of the old 80s synth-pop brigade. Even older tracks, like 'Me, I Disconnect From You', have evolved over time to fit the new mould. The trademark bass synth howl remains, though, tonight pushed to the fore where it dwarfs the churning guitar, sounding like sirens from a distant, futuristic war, while the metallic bass rumbles like tank tracks over human skulls. Numan's lyrics, dark, introspective and deeply distrustful, switch between the personal and the more misanthropically paranoid. The former is most touching on set closer 'A Prayer For The Unborn', Numan crying out his anger at the loss of a child. 'Metal' epitomises the sci-fi obsessed dystopia of his imagination, a song that predated Thom Yorke's bleak visions by two decades.

An arch showman, and one who looks nothing like his 48 years, Numan contorts and emotes, drinking in the adulation of the crowd, remaining aloof and looking like the best villain Dr Who never came up against. It's almost unbelievable, listing to 'Noise Noise' in this setting, that it was originally recorded with cute boy/girl duo Dollar back in 1982.

Magnificently desolate, tonight's sermon at the church of Numan is that God is dead. We're alone and we're damned. On the strength of tonight's show though, Gary Numan is very much alive and the road to hell is going to be a glorious ride.

**Dale Kattack**

## THE BROTHERS / THE QUARTER-FINALS

### The Zodiac

The Quarter-Finals are a promising new local three-piece outfit, one previously known around town as Warhen. They've got a great guitar sound, an energetic approach and best of all a really, really good drummer sporting the longest sticks I've ever seen. A comparison with The Jam is a bit too flattering and musically somewhat wide of the mark: the songs are short and to the point, they just need some killer hooks and tunes to turn them into serious contenders.

The crowd isn't the largest of the year but they all dutifully troop down to the front for Oxford's The Brothers. Their opening song is catchy and energetic, but let down by an indifferent arrangement. Coming across as energetic showmen, they look a bit like a late 70s new wave (as opposed to punk) band, right down to the t-shirts with arms rolled up into the shoulders.

Their sound is broadly dance-orientated, with two keyboards, some interesting, funky percussion and often features a trademark jungle beat. Only occasionally troubling his guitar, the singer stands out more for his theatrical selection of facial expressions that initially hold our attention, but frankly start to grate after a while. There's at least one great song played tonight, but others seem half-formed, the problem being they can't seem to decide whether they want to be Funkadelic and play spaced-out cosmic jams, or take a more modern pop approach with tightly constructed songs.

The latter path seems to be winning as the set only just clears forty minutes, only confirming the impression that they need to put some time and thought into fleshing the whole thing out. They don't appear to be copying anyone, in fact I've been driven mad trying to work out who they remind me of: there's a bit of XTC, The Tubes, maybe The Knack. You certainly couldn't accuse them of jumping on any vogueish bandwagon. Clearly there's enough talent here to (eventually) make something of what is currently a very rough diamond.

**Art Lagun**

## HOT CHIP / GROSVENOR

### The Zodiac

It's. All. About. The. Rhythm. With Hot Chip, there are simplistic underlying techno beats to everything; a relentless and pounding core that propels songs along in the same way as works so well for Daft Punk. Overlaid onto this are varying degrees of eighties-tinged synthetic sounds, choppy guitar lines and confusingly MOR-sounding vocals.

Surprisingly, on the whole, this mix works just fine, and Hot Chip are simultaneously out there and up there: running the gamut from not-so-arresting ballads to absolutely captivating hyper-rhythmic high-speed chants. I wouldn't have thought that this was my 'thing,' and opening act Grosvenor sums up why with his spectacularly smug take on the Hot Chip sound, which seems so wrapped up in its Nathan Barley / *Dazed & Confused*-drenched perceptions of cool irony that any point has been lost. Hot Chip, however, seem so genuinely excited and *into* their music that it's hard not to be swept along – and when they introduce elements of Kraftwerk's motorik repetition and Pigbag's ramshackle funk into the mix, the energy flying from the stage is hard to ignore. The Zodiac's response is about as enthusiastic and cheery as I have ever seen, and we all skip home happy with The Rhythm flying around in our minds for hours to follow.

**Simon Minter**

## BABY GRAVY

### The Zodiac

Here tonight to promote their new EP, 'Well Done Mary Ellen, You're a Dance Teacher Now', Baby Gravy are, as the playground/porno slang of their moniker suggests, a provocative coupling of the disarmingly childlike and the downright filthy. They're the kind of band who offers the audience lollipops with one hand whilst threatening to use the other to relieve some unfortunate of their eyeballs. This unsettling sweet-savage combination is crystallized in frontwoman Iona, whose ability to morph from demure starlet, possessed of all the wide-eyed coyness of Betty Boop, to murderous harpy imbues her with terrific presence.

With their lead vocalist moonlighting from Harlette, Baby Gravy's teenage sextet also features Fred of The Keyboard Choir. This unlikely convergence gives rise to a breed of glitter-bitch punk that latches its canines into doom-mongering electro idiosyncrasies and haywire rocking. Iona's powerful, bolshy voice bears its blood and guts, snagging on dark gutturals before spiralling into a bile-soaked bawl. Synthetic beats collide with live drums, whilst saxophone – played by Cecilia, who also teams up with Iona to deliver ranty duets – lends a jaunty, jazzy strangeness to proceedings.

There's a distinctly ramshackle vibe to the

whole package, the disparate parts hastily cobbled together to form a teetering, unstable edifice permanently poised on the brink of collapse. And indeed the band does come unstuck at points, whereupon the entire thing concertinas into a mash of botched notes and missed beats. However, the state of shambolic derangement that is their shortcoming is also what gives them their energy; is the very stuff and substance of their songs, which tend to follow much the same formula. Propelled by the repetitive lurch of keyboard and saxophone, they pitch about in their own fevered night sweats, gradually whipping themselves up to the sick speed of an out-of-control waltzer before collapsing in a great giddy heap. This careering-off-the-track aesthetic is best evinced on 'She's On The Floor'. The band profess an aversion to playing it for this very reason, but it's the most immediate song of their set – a frenetic ball of mad, panicked energy booted along by urgent synths that fall somewhere between early nineties rave and the claustrophobic weirdness of Pulp's mid-eighties excursions. They need to impose clarity on their chaos, but Baby Gravy offer odd, anarchic fun. Quite possibly of the kind that stains your sheets.

*Emily Gray*

## JENIFEREVER / ILL EASE / SCARECROWS

### The Wheatsheaf

After headliners The Paper Chase had to pull out for medical reasons, Scarecrows go a long way to help us forget we're missing a band tonight. Essentially a post-rock band, they do things a little differently. We're used to seeing such bands head to a stage bowing under the weight of effects processors, and way too many guitarists: Scarecrows create their unique noise with the aid of a violin and a trumpet. There's a rhythm section that lays down a tight, taut disco sound that almost ventures off in a jazz funk direction at times, before stopping at the sign that says 'last chance to turn off before musical disaster'. The image of a lounge band playing Godspeed You! Black Emperor springs to mind, but in reality it sounds so much better than that.

Ill Ease's (New Yorker Elizabeth Sharp's one-woman band) set is an inspired adventure in simple riffs and frantic drumming. Sampling her basic punk riffs and looping them, Sharp then accompanies herself on drums and vocals. It's a fuzzy amalgam of noise that takes in the likes of Peaches, Moldy Peaches and John Bonham. Although at times it's insanely chaotic, Sharp's natural charm and wit make her performance endlessly loveable. She rounds things off with a lengthy version of 'Fuck Everyone', but she's got a twinkle in the eye and a grin plastered on her face, so she can't possibly mean it. Finding themselves accidental headliners, Sweden's Jeniferever head straight for the heartstrings, and within the blink of an eye we fall in love with them. It's post-rock alright, but rather than adhere to the usual quite-loud thing we've all become accustomed to, they specialize in hushed, intertwining compositions. Loud doesn't really get a look in. Understated atmospherics pour from the stage as the audience rocks back on their feet in a unified dreamy stupor. There hasn't been an adjective invented that describes how enchanting and spellbinding Jeniferever are, but they could make Henry Rollins quit his life as a tattooed muscle head and take up flower arranging instead.

*Sam Shepherd*



photo by Sam Shepherd

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# DEMOS

*It's World Cup month and we're so excited, we decided to have our own tournament with the demos. A glamorous opening ceremony involving at least two bottles of Chilean Merlot saw the demos drawn out of a hat and put into two groups of five with the winners of each to face each other in a grand final. Cue several rather forced footballing metaphors and the odd musical own goal.*

## GROUP A

If not quite a titanic clash of talents on the scale of Brazil taking on Argentina, this group of demos is strong and the competition is tight. Hapless outsiders **THE BLUEPRINTS** are quickly swept aside in a blitz that sees them conceding 37 goals before giving up and going home after a mere two songs. The musical equivalent of American Samoa, The Blueprints kick off with some lightweight funky guitar, which is a bit like signing a concussed goalkeeper and Sunderland's back four the day before you go out to play Barcelona. They're ripe and deserving of their drubbing, plodding and jangling along, led by a vocalist who sounds like he's just crept out of a bag of stale biscuits and has as much chance of rousing his team-mates to victory as Firoz Kassam has of being elected mayor of Oxford. Playing with a midfield made up of Lumpen, Insipid, Apologetic and new Bulgarian signing UtterIdevoidofanyoriginalideas, they're soon on the plane back home, to be banged up for life by their country's less than benevolent dictator.

Elsewhere it's a close-run thing. **KITTY HAWK DRIVE**, playing a strange formation that includes players called Odeevil Jazz, Nutrient Agar and Ellie Mental, and utilising a less than standard system of violin and clarinet, as well as guitars and electronics, quickly achieve a dreamlike state of gothic ambience that might open them up to attack but simply confuses the opposition, who can barely see them in the drifting fog they inhabit. Difficult to judge any distance here too, as the whole shebang sounds like it was recorded half a mile away on a cool, still night, where the singer's voice could hover alongside the spooky scraped strings. Their slight downfall is a tendency to come across as a bit pedestrian when they aren't layering on the atmosphere, but otherwise they're surprise package with no little promise.

Similarly deceptive are **MAGNUS HITCH**, whose line-up features an ornithologist, a Russian translator and a South African undergraduate. Their sweet, sugary folk-pop melodies, featuring minimal, semi-acoustic backing along with a very strong tenor lead vocal wouldn't sound out of place either at a trad folk club or warming up the crowd at a Belle & Sebastian gig. At their most basic they're a

kind of sub-Glenn Tilbrook sort of jangly English pop band and you wonder if such a fey bunch wouldn't be better off playing a nice games of boules rather than indulging in the rough and tumble of football, but 'Beachcomber's Windowsill' is deceptively lively, dinking along the touchline like a lanky winger before being booted off the pitch by a thug of a centre-half. Perhaps they lack the strength in depth to win the group, but, like Kitty Hawk Drive, they put in enough of a showing to earn some points.

Head to head for top spot then between **TV BABY** and **THE GULLIVERS**. TV Baby have the experience and the pedigree, made up as they are of three former members of local pop legends The Bigger The God. They fly out of the traps so fast and so furiously, cranking up the trashy post-punk noise, that they're two goals up in the first minute. Belying their age, they continue to play an all-out attacking formation that features Wire, Buzzcocks and The Dead Kennedys, and they take few prisoners with song titles like 'Shit (You're Full Of)', which is worth another goal in itself. They're playing at such a frenetic pace and with such a simple formation that they might open themselves to conceding easy goals on the break, but before there's any time to run out of steam they bring on their substitute, 'Mind', a Rezillos-style flurry of poppy new wave that's sees them finish strongly. They'll take some beating on this form.

Spirited youngsters The Gullivers, from the burgeoning youth academy of Bicester, push them all the way. Initially at least sounding a bit too much like Jamie T fronting The Arctic Monkeys, and coming so soon after we had them down as Libertines acolytes, The Gullivers sound like they're forever playing catch up for most of the match, leaking a soft goal in the opening five minutes. But this demo boasts four short, sharp indie punk stabs, infused with a slightly forced sensitive yobbishness (and since when did kids from Bicester sing with south London accents?), and if the skanking 'Morning After (The Night Before)' is a bit too much like a spell of lumping long balls up to the big centre forward, final number 'Hierarchy', a more strident new wave mantra, is a deftly-taken shot into the top corner from 25 yards out. Victory at the final whistle, but it looks like TV Baby have won the group on goal difference.



## GROUP B

Luck of the draw, we guess, but Group B is going to take a bit less effort to win. This is mainly down to demos like the one from **OPERATION MONDAY**. Like a self-made used car millionaire taking over a decrepit Northern League team with aspirations of getting them into the Champions League, Operation Monday talk a good fight, declaring that a "bit of a break and some airplay will lift them up onto the first rung on the ladder of a tough business". "We feel out music will be very big," they announce with an air of unabashed hubris. Fans flock to the first game expecting something special only to find that they've simply signed a couple of youngsters on loan from Matlock Town FC, plus an ageing pro who spent a couple of seasons at Chesterfield and Bury. Their effort isn't open to question, but there's precious little raw talent and absolutely no tactics and they crumble, playing a straight, overly-earnest pub rock style that only very simple people from isolated hamlets that have had no contact with the outside world since 1975 might be impressed by. The brief moments of inspiration, like the breakdown on 'Opposed Again' simply aren't enough to save them from a tonking.

**MARTIN SELWOOD** makes a bid for victory with a one-song demo that was, apparently, produced by the grandly-titled Guild Of Songwriters, which is the musical equivalent of getting a board of selectors to pick the team. And given the FA panel's incompetence in selecting the new England manager, it doesn't bode well. 'Tell Me, Tell Me' is a self-confessed sensitive ballad that has aspirations to feature in a Broadway musical. And indeed it is the sort of synthetically orchestral heap of tripe that might have been edited out of an Andrew Lloyd Webber shitefest, featuring a female vocal dragged straight from the chorus line of *Cats*. It's as predictable and depressing as England going out of the World Cup on penalties again, a rolling ball of mud and processed cheese that threatens to grow to vast proportions and swallow all that is good in the world. Never mind a penalty shoot out, just stick these bastards in front of a real firing squad and be done with it.

With the bottom two places in the group decided, it's a battle for top spot. **ALL TALK, NO ACTION** promise to steal it early on, an improvisational instrumental band who recorded their lengthy demo live and unrehearsed. Maybe playing without a singer is a bit like going out onto the pitch without a recognised striker in the team but perhaps it's simply a case of total football and when they're on the attack, changing formation regularly to keep the opposition

on their toes it pays dividends. Their problem, notably on stand-out track 'Measurement Of Loss', is that everyone seems too intent on making fancy passes on the edge of the penalty area rather than actually having a shot on target. But, just as they pick up speed and threaten to sweep all before them, they run out of steam and spend the rest of the demo, which feels like its running into extra time and penalties, hanging around ponderously, like they want to be Fleetwood Mac, sounding like they're missing a key player and eventually sinking into the increasingly muddy pitch.

**RETRIBUTION** were early favourites to win the group on the strength of their last demo, but the addition of vocals to their decidedly old school heavy metal gallop – all Thin Lizzy and Iron Maiden riffs – doesn't benefit the sound and maybe takes away some of its character. Plenty of vim and vigour on songs like 'Agony Of War' and 'Crash and Burn' but the singing is bland and lacks the youthful thrust of the guitars. It's a bit like sending a bunch of enthusiastic youth teamers out with an ageing donkey of a centre forward up front and wondering why all that sweet approach play isn't producing results.

And so **NOT TOO SHABBY** steal top spot, despite having a name that makes them sound like a bunch of Sunday League Working Men's Club cloggers. And they are a hoary old bunch too. But they can belt it out, notably on 'Lazy Butt', a great paean to underachievement that rumbles and crunches along with the singer giving it some serious welly, and sounds like Pearl Jam powering through some rudimentary 60s garage rock noise. They're old fashioned, a bit untidy but against pretty mediocre opposition, Not Too Shabby cruise to victory, even able to enjoy a bit of guitar solo showboating as the final whistle approaches.

## THE FINAL

**TV BABY**'s raucous new wave splatter against **NOT TOO SHABBY**'s similarly rumbustious rock is a more equal contest than you might expect. NTS maybe even have the edge in the melody department, notably on the big, epic grungy numbers like 'World That I Desire', but they tend to drag it out on the slower tracks, like 'Give It Up'. Both bands hark back to times past in their tactics, perhaps proving that clever, clever post-rock techno-glitch craziness can never quite beat a bit of blood and thunder rock and roll, and inevitably TV Baby's punk-pop riot inches them to the coveted trophy, Ellis James' Steve Diggle vocal impersonation a joy to behold as he nets the winner and proves that however old the legs, class will always out.

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**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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