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# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month.  
Issue 135  
October  
2006

Photo: Ben Freeman

# ivy's itch

*Interview inside*

**Also in this issue:**

**County's venues in crisis!**

**plus:**

**Six pages of local gigs**

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# NEWS

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**THE EXETER HALL** re-opened its doors to live music after a major refurbishment at the end of September. The opening night featured sets from The Drug Squad and The Epstein amongst others. The Ex now features a brand new stage, PA system and lighting rig. Having established itself as one of the best live music venues in Oxford since landlady Al took over, it can now provide an even better quality of gigs. Klub Kakofanny has moved its monthly club night from the Wheatsheaf to the Ex as of November. The last Klub Kak at the Wheatsheaf takes place on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October with a headline set from recent Nightshift Demo Of The Monthers Mary Bendy Toy. Klub Kakofanny host an Oxfam benefit gig at the Ex on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October, part of a month of Oxjam events around the country aiming to raise money for the charity. The event kicks off at 6pm with Ed McGregor and also features Raggasaurus, Redox, Les Clochards and Twizz Twangle amongst others. The Ex also hosts two special John Peel Day gigs on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October. Shirley and Ally Craig are the respective headline acts for the gigs. Local



**IMOGEN HEAP** plays at the New Theatre on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October as part of a tour to promote her 'Speak For Yourself' album, and she is offering one local band the chance to support her. Bands should visit Imogen's MySpace site – [www.myspace.com/imogenheap](http://www.myspace.com/imogenheap) – for full instructions and the best band to link to her site will be playing to 1,700 fans at Oxford's largest live music venue.

bands wanting to play at the new-look Ex should send a demo to Al, c/o The Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Cowley.

**THE WHEATSHEAF** looks set to continue hosting live music until Christmas at least after a proposed buy-out of the pub was put on hold last month. The Wheatsheaf's owners, Greene King, had expected the sale to go through by now, with rumours suggesting that the current owners of Freud's were to be the new proprietors and that the upstairs venue was to be turned into a wine bar or restaurant. While the future of the Wheatsheaf is still uncertain and the current management are unsure of plans for the place other than that its sale is on hold, for now at least one of the most important small venues in town can carry on.

**FELL CITY GIRL** play an in-store show at the Virgin Megastore on Cornmarket Street on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October (5pm) to launch their new EP, 'February Snow'. The CD, released on Lavolta Records features four songs, 'February Snow', 'These Are The Heart Attacks', 'Helplines' and 'The Helicopters Overhead'. 'Helplines' has never been played live before and is described by singer Phil McMinn as "the most personal thing I've ever done". On the opposite end of the scale, 'Helicopters...' is a six-minute epic in three parts that Phil describes as "Us trying to be as over the top as we could. I think we succeeded".

As well as the in-store show, Fell City Girl play a headline gig at the Zodiac on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October as part of a national tour to promote the new EP. Support for the night are local instrumental rock heroes The Rock Of Travolta and experimental electro stars The Keyboard Choir. Tickets are on sale now from the Zodiac box office – 01865 420042.

**SOUNDWORKS RECORDING STUDIOS** in Blackbird Leys are holding open days on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> of October, following a refurbishment and a substantial investment in new equipment. Anyone is welcome to come and view the studio, and as an enticement there is a 25% saving if you book on the day. See the Soundworks website for more details:  
[www.soundworks-oxford.co.uk](http://www.soundworks-oxford.co.uk).

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES** celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> gig this month. The monthly live music club night, which started life at the Jericho Tavern before moving to the Zodiac on the last Friday of every month, prides itself on its eclectic music bills and well as putting on art and photography displays in the venue to compliment the music. The 50<sup>th</sup> gig features local rapper Zubu, plus AmberState, Life With Bears and Delta. In addition, GTI are starting a new monthly live music night under the guise of Gammy Leg Productions (what next, Sclerosis



**LAB4** have decided to split. The local hardcore trance duo, based in Abingdon, issued a statement on their website confirming that they are calling it a day after twelve years together. "At the beginning of this year we discussed our intentions of taking 2007 off to be able to recuperate physically and mentally, as well as to take stock of the past 15 years of our lives. We also felt that if we were to continue onwards with our music, that we need to be able to focus for longer without every studio session being disrupted by our gig schedule. "2006 has been a really hard year for us, what with the endless delays with the 'None Of Us Are Saints' album, followed by being threatened with legal action over a certain cover version, the Live Extreme productions in Japan and at Brixton Academy and all the extra planning, rehearsing and production work needed to pull off such big shows. After lots of soul searching and reflecting we have decided that it is time to call it a day with Lab4. We have had an amazing trip over the last 12 years, that has been a constant roller coaster ride of unbelievable highs and lows (mostly highs) that has taken us all round the world and put us in front of crowds of upwards of 15,000 in a single room, but we both know that the time has come to step off and let Lab4 be, and to move on to whatever may be ahead for us both.

"We will be playing live up until NYE which is being discussed with possible promoters at the moment and from thereon anyone who is on our mailing list will be informed of what we will be up to into 2007. Thanks to everyone who has supported us over the years at gigs and via email, it has made all the difference."

Lab4 will play one final Oxford show on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November at the Zodiac. Tickets are on sale now, priced £10, from the Zodiac box office (01865 420042). As well as a live set from Adam and Lez there will be sets from Proteus, Sterling Moss and Grady D. Check out the Lab4 website for more news: [www.lab4.com](http://www.lab4.com)

of the Liver Promotions?). The new night kicks off on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November at the newly-refurbished Exeter Hall pub and features Script, The Smallteasers and Dan Morgan. Check out [www.myspace.com/gammylegproductions](http://www.myspace.com/gammylegproductions) for more details or if your band want to play.

**THIS YEAR'S WITTSTOCK FESTIVAL** raised £947 for Motor Neurone Disease research. The free festival, run over three days at the Romany Inn in Bampton in August, was forced into a last-minute change of venue after its planned venue, the General Elliot in Hinksey, proved unsafe.

# Market Town Soul-less

*Live music in Oxfordshire's market towns is in danger of extinction, due to public apathy, police interference and poperty development.*

**WITH THE WHEATSHEAF GRANTED A** temporary stay of execution this month, Oxford gig-goers can breath a sigh of relief, for now at least, and maybe content themselves with the knowledge that even if we do lose one of our best and most established live music venues, we have plenty more to choose from. Not so gig-goers in the rest of the county.

**AT THE END OF AUGUST THE PIT IN** Witney closed forever as a music venue. The Hollybush pub in Corn Street, which hosted the tiny but excellent Pit venue – which at its peak was hosting three gigs a week, featuring the cream of Oxford talent as well as up and coming Witney bands – has changed hands and is to be turned into a restaurant. With the neighbouring Red Lion pub currently undergoing major refurbishment and set to concentrate on covers and tribute bands when it does return to action, there is absolutely nowhere for aspiring Witney bands to play.

In Abingdon, meanwhile, the past couple of years have seen the town's two regular live music venues, The Red Lion and The Horse and Jockey, demolished to make way for housing. Currently the only way for fans of local bands to see them without travelling to Oxford is the King's Head and Bell's monthly bands night, which is limited to acoustic acts due to noise restrictions. Not so long ago the Skittle Alley (a collective of Abingdon musicians and music fans) were promoting two nights of gigs every weekend, while the Net youth centre was providing regular under-18s gigs featuring local and touring bands.

Even Banbury, Oxfordshire's largest town outside of Oxford itself, is almost completely bereft of live music beyond the standard covers acts. The heroic exception is the monthly I Am Giant night at the town's Mill Arts Centre. But even here the promoter is considering his future in the face of audience apathy. The picture is a little better in Bicester where the Hobgoblin hosts one band night and one open mic session a month, while the Courtyard Youth Arts Centre provides a once-a-month outlet for local teenage musicians. As for other Oxfordshire towns like Thame, Didcot, Henley and Wantage – forget it. You're as likely to stumble across Lord Lucan

playing poker with Elvis and Osama Bin Laden than a regular local bands night.

## SO HOW AND WHY HAVE THINGS

gotten so bad? All those towns mentioned have previously enjoyed regular, sometimes thriving, local live music scenes and provided the county with many of its best young bands and musicians. As ever the reasons are many and the solutions rarely simple.

Local audience apathy is obviously a factor as Si Giant from I Am Giant points out:

"I'm on the verge of giving up. It's not a monetary thing, more of an attitude problem. The trouble with trying to do a night focused on Oxfordshire bands is that whilst nationally Oxford might be recognised as a great place for up and coming bands, county-wise the sphere of influence certainly doesn't really extend out too far.

"If you look at the line ups I've had here you would have to agree I've had some of the best bands that Oxford has to offer playing, yet I've struggled to fill a 100-capacity venue in a town where folk music and tribute bands rule. And it's not for the want of trying. The young kids seem to be fixated on bands like Funeral For A Friend et al, so the fact that Fell City Girl or Harry Angel or The Half Rabbits are playing doesn't seem to make much difference.

"I can't fault the Mill; I get it for a bargain price and they are tolerant of some of the behaviour that takes place. It was the only logical place because Banbury isn't geared up for live music. I can't think of a single pub which could accommodate live music in a separate room and I don't think that the crowds here would justify endangering that Saturday night pub crawl crowd."

## OBVIOUSLY IN ANY SMALL TOWN,

live music will only appeal to a limited number of people but the way things are now, those fans and bands will be forced more and more to travel to gigs or remain isolated.

Promoters face the daunting obstacle of finding a venue or pub that is prepared to take a financial risk on hosting live music. On a weekend night landlords understandably need to maximise custom. A jukebox or DJ playing well-known music tends to keep the majority of drinkers happier than a young rock band, especially when, since last year's public entertainment law revamp, they'd have to stump up a few thousand pound for a licence in the first place. For most pub owners and managers it's simply not worth the effort or expense and so finding anywhere to even put bands on, never mind get anyone to come and see them, is a huge battle.

The Hobgoblin in Bicester is one pub where they are prepared to give live music a go, on a weekday at least. Promoter Russ, who also plays in Bicester punk band Phyal, is grateful that he is being given a chance:



*Sow, whose reputation has been built on gigging around the county and who are now involved in plans to save Witney's live music scene*

"The Bleeding Ears night is largely about getting some decent quality, varied, original music acts on, once a month, in a venue that doesn't charge. Luckily the pub supports this, while also often putting on live bands other than my night, often two or three times a month. My main concern is just the usual worry of getting people through the door, so it's worthwhile for the pub, which we seem to be doing okay on at the moment."

Bicester is lucky too to have a youth centre like the Courtyard, who can give younger bands an outlet, even just once a month, as centre co-ordinator Louise Wiggins explains:

"The music scene at The Courtyard is very lively. Many of the bands that rehearse here perform at our monthly gigs, which regularly attract a large crowd. The gigs are organised by a group of young musicians who are responsible for choosing the line up and listening to demos. Recent headline bands include Sow. The centre has recently refurbished its sound production studio which will give bands the opportunity to record their music."

## BUT NOT EVERY TOWN FARES AS WELL

as Bicester. It doesn't help when pubs are sold off to property developers to be turned into housing, as happened in Abingdon. Where once the town had a busy local live scene that provided a fertile breeding ground for bands, with two venues putting on regular gigs, now Abingdon has to do with a single acoustic gig a month, courtesy of the Skittle Alley collective. Jamie Cotmore and Martin Kelley from the Skittle Alley are justifiably angry with the way they have been treated over the years:

"The Skittle Alley started life about five years ago and after much searching stumbled across a little back street boozer called The Horse & Jockey, who had a landlord who was as keen as us to bring live music to the town. It was not without its problems, both from the local council, neighbours and the police – one over zealous officer once visited the pub personally to issue a 'We are going to close you down' threat



*A block of flats, yesterday.*



to the landlord. It battled on and introduced to Abingdon a scene that had previously never existed. Another local pub, The Red Lion, already ran regular live nights but their focus was more on cover and tribute bands - which nevertheless saw packed crowds most weekends. Pretty healthy, you might think. But then the breweries sold them off for housing developments! And unfortunately, this scenario is endemic in many places across the country, as the corporate money machine that is the modern brewery doesn't give a stuff about the impact such closures have on the community - just maximising profits from every property on its estate. And the sad fact is, it's the smaller pubs that are often seen as disposable; they are the ones more likely to entertain the idea of live music as an option to increase trade. While odd pubs in Abingdon are still prepared to have the occasional band night, the truth is that if you regularly watch bands live your only real option is a trip to Oxford.

"Without the Skittle Alley, there would not have been one single venue promoting local music in Abingdon. And yet we now find ourselves with the means and desire to continue promoting but with the seemingly impossible task of persuading the local council that there is a real demand for the type of live music night that people in Oxford take for granted. You only have to glance at venues like the Exeter Hall to see that even a medium sized pub can create an atmosphere conducive to live music.

"Abingdon's biggest problem, however, seems to lie with the 'powers that be'. Entertainment

licenses are expensive and hard to come by, with not only the council seemingly reluctant to support live bands, but also a generally negative attitude from the local police. Apparently it can take just one complaint from a neighbour about noise levels for the local Environmental Health Department to get actively involved. The result: no more bands. No 'let's get together and find a solution. No 'I'm sure it's not an obstacle that cannot be overcome'. Just a big, fat *no more bands!* In a society where you can now get an ASBO for organising a rave, it quite naturally makes many a licensee a touch nervous.

"The Skittle Alley will continue breaking its balls to bring the Abingdon public as much live music as it can. And The Kings Head & Bell are keen to promote this, but up until now, the council just will not allow live, amplified music."

**THE GREAT FRUSTRATION OF EACH OF** these cases is that in every town there is always someone willing to try and bring live music to a local audience, and with plenty of hard work they *can* attract an audience, maybe even one that is prepared to come back on a regular basis and create a local music community.

For many years the Pit in Witney was run by Dan Goddard - previously drummer with local bands The Nubiles and The Four Storeys - but when he, due to work and family commitments, was no longer able to carry on, the music nights lacked a cohesive force. And now, thanks to the take-over they're gone for good.

There may be a chink of light for Witney though with a group of musicians now actively looking

for a new venue, but faced with a long, hard slog. Sow bassist Tom is one of the people involved:

"With the scene in Witney bursting at the seams, the closing of the Pit couldn't have happened at a worse time. Possibly the smallest venue in the UK, it was a haven to local talent like Greenacre, Skull Thrash and many more. But the demise of the Hollybush pub leaves the once acclaimed Pit a mere storage room and nowhere for the younger bands to play.

"We're on the case to sort some form of Pit Mark 2. There are venues about here: the Barn at The Red Lion for example, but with their age restrictions and emphasis on covers bands, kids have nowhere to go. The Palace is the next venue to crack. It has a bad rep as a Phoenix Nights-style club at the moment, but it's got potential to accommodate gig goers outside of Oxford."

**FOR OXFORDSHIRE'S TOWNS, THIS IS** the worst it's been for live music in years. And without the hard work of this small band of promoters and handful of supportive landlords, it could get even worse. Local councils, brewery chains and the police need to adopt a more supportive attitude towards people who are doing something positive for their communities instead of blocking them or threatening them at every turn. Most importantly, gig goers need to support local venues and bands. Local bands nights can be as much fun, and are much cheaper, than going to see a big name band. These are, potentially, the stars of tomorrow. But only if they're given the chance to show what they can do. Will you give them that chance?

## NEWS

**PARTS & LABOR** (pictured) are the last band to be added to the bill for this year's Audioscope mini-festival, which takes place upstairs at the Zodiac on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October, running from 2pm through to 11pm. The New York-based math-rockers have toured with Melt Banana and Lightning Bolt as well as releasing a split CD with Battles' Tyondai Braxton. They join headliners Clinic as well as Sonic Boom and Magnetophone, I'm Being Good, Magic Piano, Kids In Tracksuits, Trencher, The Rock Of Travolta and Sunnyvale Noise Sub-Element at what has become one of the best leftfield and underground music events in the country, and all in aid of Shelter. Audioscope organiser Stuart Fowkes told Nightshift how excited he was about this year's festival:

"Musically, we think it's the best and most varied yet. Last year's event was a whole weekend to celebrate reaching our fifth birthday, and this year we're back to one day but moving the event upstairs. And since Audioscope's been growing every year since it began, moving upstairs seemed like the natural thing to do. The obvious delights of Clinic aside, I'm really looking forward to Piano Magic, who don't play live often and who are a truly fantastic band, and Parts & Labor, who are going to take the roof off. And of course we're contractually obliged to inform you that all of the bands are going to be awesome, so



just come for the entire day."

Tickets for Audioscope are on sale now, priced £10 from the Zodiac box office.

**THE ROCK OF TRAVOLTA** and Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia are included on a new double-CD compilation celebrating fifteen years of Rough trade Publishing. 'Sweet Fifteen', which features 32 tracks, also includes contributions from Violent Femmes, Tindersticks, Rocket From The Crypt, Trans Am, Tortoise, Godspeed You Black Emperor! Futureheads and Smog.

### OXFORD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

launches its Autumn Season this month as well as a new guide to buying, playing and listening to music in Oxford, which acts as a directory of music groups, venues, shops and plenty more in the city. The guide is available to download, in PDF format, at [www.ocmevents.org](http://www.ocmevents.org) as well as [oxfordbands.com](http://oxfordbands.com). OCM's new season of concerts includes a celebration of Steve Reich's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with a performance from Three Strange Angels at the Jacqueline Du Pre Building on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October as well as a multimedia show involving Pram, Blissbody and Project Dark at the Zodiac on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November plus Kitchen Motors, a night of experimental Icelandic music, again at the Zodiac on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November. Info and tickets for all shows is available at the OCM website.

**HARLETTE** have split. The local all-girl punk band who were one of the highlights of this year's Punt, bowed out with a gig at the Wheatsheaf. University commitments are cited as the main reason.

**THE CATWEAZLE CLUB** is looking for volunteer bar staff to help at its Thursday night open mic sessions at East Oxford Community Centre. The Community Centre bar is owned by its members and bar takings are essential for the continuation of the Catweazle Club, which this month celebrates its 12<sup>th</sup> birthday (5<sup>th</sup> October). Anyone willing to lend an hour behind the bar should contact Matt at [info@catweazleclub.org](mailto:info@catweazleclub.org) in return for free club entry.

# The Ex is Back!



## Exeter Hall Pub

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01865 776431

### EVERY TUESDAY

Sush Open Mic 8.30pm Come Sing / Play / Listen **FREE ENTRY**

### EVERY WEDNESDAY

Folk Session 8.30pm – All Welcome – Come Play / Sing / Listen **FREE ENTRY**

## LIVE MUSIC IN OCTOBER

### Sun 1<sup>st</sup> **Synaesthesia Art & Music**

– Acoustic songs alongside an exhibition of artworks, all inspired by and inspiration for one another. Art inspired by music; music inspired by art. 8pm; £3

### Fri 6<sup>th</sup> **\*XPosure At The X\***

presents **Narcissism** (wired grungy/ punk from Banbury) / **Vestibule** (poppy post-rock from Witney) / support TBC. 8pm £4

**Sat 7<sup>th</sup> The Cheese graters** (eclectic mix of funk, soul, rock 'n' roll, Latin and country) 8.30pm £4

### Sun 8<sup>th</sup> **Electric Jam** - All Welcome

- Come Jam with **The X Men** 8.00pm **FREE ENTRY**

### Thu 12<sup>th</sup> 1st of Two Day **John Peel**

**Nights - Shirley** plus More TBC 8.30pm **FREE ENTRY**

**Fri 13<sup>th</sup> 2nd John Peel Night - Ally Craig / Kaned Citizen / The Mighty Roars / The Ruins**

8pm **FREE ENTRY**

**Sat 14<sup>th</sup> TBC** Check the website for missing dates [www.theX.co.uk](http://www.theX.co.uk)

### Sun 15<sup>th</sup> **TBC**

### Fri 20<sup>th</sup> **Grinning Spider** presents

**Reservoir Cats / Leather Rat / Soular** (from Albuquerque, New Mexico) 8.30pm; £4

**Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> Electric Jam** - All Welcome - Jam with **The X Men** 8pm **FREE ENTRY**

## LIVE MUSIC IN SEPTEMBER

**Thu 28<sup>th</sup> Sush Night** – An Evening of Acoustic Performance - **Sam Pope / James Sergeant / Jesse Gamage**

**Fri 29<sup>th</sup>** Grinning Spider presents, from London, **Blue Stone Suns** plus support

**Sat 30<sup>th</sup> Assassins Of Silence** (Hawkwind tribute) / **Breathe** (performing Pink Floyd's 'Dark Side Of The Moon')

**Fri 27<sup>th</sup> The Inflatables** - Best Ska/ Reggae/ Soul Band in Oxford

**Sat 28<sup>th</sup> Halloween Party** with **Bombshoe / Junkie Brush / Fork / Sow / The Walk Off / The Taste** (from Germany) 8pm £4

### Sun 30<sup>th</sup> **TBC**

### EVERY THURSDAY IN OCTOBER

will be a fund raising night for **Oxjam** (except for Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> which is BBC John Peel Day). Klub Kakofanny are also presenting an Oxjam Night on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>. Oxjam is Oxfam's biggest, most ambitious, music event ever. They are asking musicians and promoters (*in fact everyone!*) to put on all kinds of music events during October to raise money for

Oxfam. Classical, club night, mambo and metal, it'll add up to one huge, UK-wide, Oxjam festival – raising thousands of pounds to fight poverty. More info available [www.myspace.com/oxjam\\_oxford](http://www.myspace.com/oxjam_oxford) or [www.oxjamoxford.co.uk](http://www.oxjamoxford.co.uk).

*We have several act TBC for various Thursdays, but there is room for a little more. If you want a slot email [innkeeper@exeterhall.co.uk](mailto:innkeeper@exeterhall.co.uk)*

**Sat 21<sup>st</sup> Klub Kakofanny** Presents **OXJAM** in Aid of **OXFAM**  
11pm **RAGGASAUROS**  
10pm **REDOX**  
9.15 **LES CLOCHARDS**  
8.30 **SU JORDAN AND FRIENDS**  
8pm **NEW MOON**  
7.30 **TWIZZ TWANGLE**  
7pm **STRANGE VINTAGE**  
6.30 **MAEVE BAYTON**  
6pm **ED MC GREGOR**  
Door 5.30pm £4.00

# FRESH OUT OF YOUR BOX

## A Quick Freshers' Guide To Oxford Music

### NEW HERE, YOU SAY?

Like a good gig but feeling a bit lost? Well come in, make yourself welcome.

It's a easy to forget, as we merrily hobnob with the inner sanctum of the Oxford Music Scene Clique that this time of year brings a huge influx of new faces to the city, and we'd hate to think any of them might end up trapped in some Mitchell's & Butlers-owned hell hole, when they could be watching Sextodecimo tear a new hole in the fabric of the universe in some darkened pub backroom, or be bouncing for joy on their sofa to the sounds of Fell City Girl.

So, to help the newcomers on their way, here's a (very) brief and possibly flawed introduction to getting the best out of Oxford's vibrant live music scene. Obviously, simply by picking up this copy of **Nightshift** you're halfway there already. Nightshift comes out every month and features interviews, reviews and news about local bands and events as well as the most comprehensive local gig guide anywhere. It's free from every music and record shop, venue or decent pub in the area, but if you can't find a copy, it's online in PDF format too at [nightshift.oxfordmusic.net](http://nightshift.oxfordmusic.net). There's also a lively discussion forum where you can find bandmates, plug your gigs, have furious arguments about which member of Headcount is the sexiest (it's Stef, by the way; Rob's a fat old hippy). There's also an extensive list of links to local bands' **MySpace** sites so you can listen to them before spending your hard-earned cash watching them in their full ear-bothering live glory. Other websites worth checking out include **Oxfordbands.com** which carries up-to-date news and reviews, a discussion board, an extensive local bands guide, a photo gallery and a handy introduction to being in a band in Oxford. These guys also organise the excellent annual Audioscope festival in aid of Shelter as well as monthly gigs featuring local and touring bands. The [bbc.co.uk/oxford](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford) site has a good music page and links to Oxford's only local music radio show, **The Download**, which is broadcast every Saturday night from 6-7pm on 95.2fm as well as being streamed throughout the week online. The show, presented by Tim Bearder and Dave Gillyeat, plays local releases and interviews local and touring bands as well as featuring a gig and clubbing guide and a local demo vote. Tune in and keep it on the air!

### OXFORD IS FANTASTICALLY

served by some of the best venues in the country. Depending what you're into there's something for everyone. Bigger name touring bands tend to play at the **New Theatre** in the city centre (upcoming names include Kate Rusby, Motorhead and Imogen Heap), **Brookes University Union** on Headington Hill (coming up: Divine Comedy, Plan B, The Automatic, Guillemots) or the **Zodiac** on Cowley Road. Probably Oxford's best known, and best live venue, the Zodiac has two gig rooms and features live music virtually every night, from the best up and coming indie, metal and hardcore bands to folk, world music and reggae. The biggest local acts can also be seen here (this month alone you'll catch The Young Knives, Fell City Girl, Suitable Case For Treatment and Winnebago Deal) A major refit is planned next year.

For **local bands** and newer touring bands try the **Wheatshaf** off the High Street (whose long-term future is currently in doubt due to a potential buy-out), the tiny but brilliant **Port Mahon** on St Clements, the **Cellar**, underneath Cornmarket, the **Music Market** on Market Street and the newly-refurbished **Exeter Hall** at the far end of Cowley Road.

The best place for **blues** is the **Bullingdon** on Cowley Road whose Monday nights attract the cream of American and European acts, while the Exeter Hall features regular local and international blues acts. The Bullingdon also hosts Oxford's most popular live **jazz** night, a free session every Tuesday featuring resident band The Tom Grey Quintet as well as regular guests. Thursday nights at the Wheatshaf hosts the **Spin Jazz Club** with renowned performers playing with the club's in-house band, while **Pizza Express** in Golden Cross (off Cornmarket Street) has a Tuesday night jazz session.

For **hip hop**, **breakbeat** and **drum&bass** the Cellar is probably the first port of call with weekly club nights and occasional live acts, while the monthly **Source** at the Zodiac is the biggest drum&bass night around. The monthly **Slide** night at the Zodiac and **Simple** at the Bullingdon cater for House, while **Skylarkin** hosts a monthly ska and reggae night at the Zodiac with regular guest DJ Derek as well as big name ska and reggae acts.

For more esoteric sounds, **Vacuous Pop** and **MyAnalog** promote regular post-rock, electronica and

experimental nights at the Wheatshaf and Port Mahon, while it's worth checking out **Oxford Contemporary Music's** website ([www.ocmevents.org](http://www.ocmevents.org)). Their seasonal programmes feature a wide variety of contemporary classical, jazz, improvisational and experimental artists.

Oxford also hosts a wide range of **open mic sessions**, most of them weekly. The best are the Exeter Hall's Tuesday night sessions, Delicious Music's Sunday nights at the Market Tavern and the Marlborough House's Wednesday session with a £50 prize.

### FOR MUSICIANS FORMING

bands there's a wealth of local music shops to choose from: **PMT** on Cowley Road is the biggest and with the widest range of stock, although it's worth a short trip to Abingdon to check out **Dawsons**. The **Music Box** at the bottom of Cowley Road manages to squeeze a phenomenal amount of second hand gear into a tiny space, while for guitarists, head straight to the **Guitar Gallery** on South Parade in Summertown.

**Delicious Music Emporium** on St Aldates sells instruments and has a huge range of **sheet music**.

There are dozens of decent **recording** and **rehearsal studios**

around Oxford, with prices to suit most budgets – most studios advertise in Nightshift so ring round to find the best for you.

### IF YOU'RE AFTER BUYING CDS

by bands you've seen live, **HMV** and **Virgin** dominate the city centre, both with a decent selection of specialist stuff, while the newly-opened **Fopp** in Gloucester Green can beat most places for price. Just off Gloucester Green is **Avid Records**, a second-hand record lovers' paradise, though sadly due to close within the next few months. Across from the Zodiac on Cowley Road is **Polar Bear** which as well as plenty of specialist releases also stocks the widest range of local releases, while **Vinyl Frontier** on Rectory Street also sells second hand records with a good dance selection.

### THERE'S PROBABLY MORE –

and we couldn't even start to go into which local bands are best worth checking out – that's something for you to discover for yourself. Suffice to say, if there's nothing for you out there, you probably are best off stuck in some Mitchell's and Butler-owned hellhole. Well away from decent folk like us. Welcome to Oxford.

## DR SHOTOVER IS 100

You know what someone said to me the other day? "Oh, Dr S, now you're 100 years old, perhaps you'll start to like hip-hop...". Yes, it's true. No, not about liking hip-hop, dunderhead - the other thing. Well of COURSE I look well-preserved for my age; who wouldn't after all that neat alcohol...? Trouble is, one loses track due to one's misspent youth lasting so long. In my time I've been (in some order or other): a mod, a teddy boy, a Crombie, a zoot-suiter, a Carnaby St dandy, a Goth, a commissioned officer, and a member of Hawkwind. Mmm, the electric spoons on 'Psychedelic Warlords (Disappear in Smoke)', that was me... funny thing, I'd just come out of the Burmese jungle at the time, was still dressed as a Chindit... the chaps didn't notice anything out of the ordinary. Interesting place, Ladbroke Grove in those days... Where was I? Ah yes, about to receive a belated birthday brandy off you at the Old Youth Club bar. Splendid idea. Splendid. Cheers!



Next month: **Ash Ra Tempel** Unplugged - **Dr S** explores the concept of **Krautfolk**

*"Take that, enemies of a free and drug-addled democracy!"*

A Quiet Word With

# ivy's itch

## IN ANY NORMAL

circumstances it would be bad form to suggest that a young lady had a voice that sounded like Hell vomiting up its breakfast. But then this is Ivy's Itch frontwoman Eliza Gregory we're talking about; her voice is anything but normal.

Eliza has one of, if not *the* most remarkable voice on the local music scene: a savage roar, a lupine howl, a ghostly whisper, a primal scream and a childlike coo, all often within the same song. Listening to Ivy's Itch's new single, 'Roses', a newcomer would believe the band had at least two singers. Both of them unhinged in their own sweet ways.

## ELIZA ORIGINALLY FORMED

Ivy's Itch in 1998 after moving to Oxford from Yorkshire. Backed by drummer Pete Ward and bassist Kat Bond this original incarnation of the band quickly made an impression on the local scene with their harsh, stripped-down punk sound. An early *NME* review raved about Eliza's ferocious vocal style, drawing comparisons to Kat Bjelland of Babes In Toyland, and preceded a planned EP release, but the band split acrimoniously before it saw the light of day and it wasn't until 2001 that the band really started to come together as a force to reckon with.

Eliza was introduced to bass player Jo Reid, who had played with local all-girl punk-metal legends Death By Crimbers in the 90s. A mutual desire to create heavy music encouraged them both to shake off disillusionment with playing in bands and Eliza even managed to bury the hatchet with Pete who returned on drums.

Ivy's Itch were further bolstered by the addition of guitarist Jimmy Hetherington, also of Suitable Case For Treatment and now Jo's husband. Gigs around the country – although precious few in Oxford where their reception beyond a hardcore following, and Nightshift's pages, has been muted – quickly drew attention from the burgeoning goth and hardcore fanzine scene and *Metal Hammer* featured them in their Ones To Watch section.

With things very much on the up the band released 'Roses', their



Ivy's Itch (l-r): Jo, Pawel, Jimmy, Eliza

third EP, but, in true Spinal Tap fashion, they again lost drummer Pete (for the third and seemingly final time), who has been replaced by Polish-born Pawel Kuterba, a talented multi-instrumentalist best known in Oxford for his interpretations of Joe Satriani songs.

## SO, EVERYTHING FINALLY

settled and comfortable? Oh come off it: this is Ivy's Itch – comfort is the enemy! Listen to 'Roses' (go on – listen to it on their MySpace site) and you'll see that emotional turbulence and musical demolition are the order of the day (or dead of night to be more accurate). Behind Eliza's excoriating voice are sullenly bullish basslines, pummelling, tom-heavy drums and alternately creepy and molten guitar lines. Somewhere between hardcore, early grunge and (whisper it) gothic rock, Ivy's Itch have been compared to the equally musically and vocally disturbed Queen Adreena, whom they have supported on occasions, but really there are few bands around at the moment who sound anything like them. With the band set to embark on a national tour to promote 'Roses', Nightshift asked Ivy's Itch which particularly darkened corner of hell they're coming from, and in particular that schizophrenic voice.

Eliza: "I'm not sure if that's the right word for it. I'd agree on the word *vulnerable*, as a person's voice is a piece of them and being asked to sing is like stripping away all your defences whilst everybody is watching. One of the reasons I

started to front a band was as an exercise to cure myself of being shy. It doesn't feel like it's me up there most of the time. I have a lot of out-of-body experiences on stage and then have no recollection of our performances.

"People are wary of us but that's alright, I quite like it that way. I think the boys get more people coming up to talk to them than me and Jo, as they appear more approachable. People will make of it all what they will but that doesn't mean they know us just because they've watched Ivy's Itch. Do people think I walk round the house singing like that the whole time? I can think of many examples of people who sing ballads and MOR stuff that scare the shit out of me."

How much strain do you put your voice under – could it stand up to a month-long tour?

Eliza: "I dunno, but we're about to find out. Come ask me that in the New Year. I think my voice is a pretty strong thing. At least I hope it is or I / we are up the proverbial creek!"

Who are the singers and performers you most admire?

Eliza: "I have respect for loads of performers. I was brought up listening to a real hotchpotch of music as I have an older sister who was into the glam/punk thing: Adam and the Ants, Siouxsie, The Cure, Kiss etc. and the rest of the family record collection was loads of jazz, big band swing, the Supremes and soundtracks to musicals like *Porgy and Bess*. That's had more of a

lasting impact on me than anything I've heard since."

The music, the words and the performances obviously don't come from a contented individual – what drives Ivy's Itch?

Eliza: "Two words: Northern. Grit."

## 'ROSES' HAS BEEN OUT FOR

a couple of months now. What's the reaction been like, particularly from outside of Oxford, where the band have been far more conspicuous?

Eliza: "As far as I can gather it's been great. Really well received, we've had so much press from it! Especially through the underground fanzine scene. I felt that making this record was a real turning point – it was kind of make or break. A test of 'if this doesn't turn out like I want it to, then maybe I can't do this anymore'. I wasn't very happy with our last recording and I thought that 'Roses' meant that we're totally on the right track, as we should sound and it feels like a right of passage to say that we've finally arrived."

There's a real darkness, occasionally even a spookiness, about your songs. You're uncomfortable with the term gothic but would you agree there is that edge to your music?

Eliza: "*Gothic* has a lot of pre-conceived notions about it and people so often get the wrong end of the stick. It automatically makes people think of those terrible classical/metal crossovers that have come into fashion over the past few years, therefore it's misleading. Certainly there's an aspect of the macabre included in what we do but it also comes down to a common sense of humour that the four of us share. A bit dark, a bit sick.... I find people who are chirpy *all* the time unsettling and are probably heavily medicated."

Jimmy: "And there's a difference between being a goth and a miserable bastard!"

## AS WELL AS BEING OUT ON

their own musically, Ivy's Itch are a rare thing in Oxford – a female-led band, and not just vocally. At a time when there are fewer female musicians in bands than for many years (and with Harlette, Oxford's sole all-female band of any note



having just split up), Ivy's Itch offer a more emotionally complex flipside to so much macho hardcore and teen-boy angst.

Eliza: "I think it may be a generational thing as when we were teenagers, we had quite a lot of female role models in the alternative genre who broke the mould and flew the flag for musical equilibrium, like Patty Smith, Diamanda Galas, Kim Deal, Kim Gordon, Kristen Hersh, Polly Harvey, Chrissie Hynde, Siouxsie Sioux, Billie Holliday, Janis Joplin... Not to mention Courtney Love and Kat Bjelland. Now with the new wave of bands a lot of girls seem to want to be an accessory as opposed to forming groups themselves, which is really sad. The worst thing is that some of the bad attitudes that Jo and I have experienced as musicians doesn't just come from boys.

"There are a lot of girls in indie bands but not enough for it to stop being a novelty. What really distresses me and has me turn into a ranting lunatic are all-girl 'kitsch' acts, which is infuriating because you can see that they play well and could do something great but instead they choose the cabaret band route. It looks like a defence tactic, so if people didn't like it, they could say, 'It wasn't a serious project anyway', which speaks volumes in lacking self-confidence. Locally, as far as I'm aware, there are quite a few girls who play in mixed bands, which I think is fantastic. Harlette have split and that's a shame, but those girls will probably go into doing other things musically - I hope they do anyway."

Jo: "There do seem to be less female musicians now but perhaps it's deceptive, because there are fewer all-female bands and more mixed bands. I think that's a good thing because men and women in my opinion approach music in different ways, both are equally valid and the two compliment each other well.

"I think that it's tough to survive as a woman in a predominantly male industry, especially when you don't fit into the stereotype so a lot of women lose heart and give up. Maybe it has something to do with lack of confidence as well, as you are often judged a lot more on your technical ability than originality and on your looks from the start rather than the final product of the music. That's hard when you are a young woman and are still finding your own identity. I was lucky as I started playing bass when Riot Girl was at its height and as Eliza has said there were a lot of strong female role models to aspire to, which made me determined to discover my own style and to try and shrug off any criticism."

**AFTER ELIZA'S FIRST ATTEMPT TO** get Ivy's Itch off the ground, and getting so close to succeeding, only to find the band falling apart around her, meeting a like-minded soul like Jo must have been some kind of Godsend.

Eliza: "Jo rescued the band from the wreckage. We both weren't sure when we met that we wanted to get into it all again. I was told that she'd need heavy persuasion to pick up her bass and play as she'd been out of the band scene for quite a while. We decided to use the same name as it was

known but the music was *so* much better than before. She taught me not to be afraid: of my voice or of people's reactions to us. We agreed we wanted to do something heavy, as that came natural to us both. She has an amazing ear for what sounds right and we share the same philosophy of simplicity being the way forward. It was weird when we did meet, as she had come to see a gig we played at The Point in '99, when I didn't know her and she had commented to somebody 'I never want to be in a band again, but if I had to it would be one like that'. Weird eh?"

Death By Crimpers, Jo's former band, remain one of the most fondly-remembered groups to come out of Oxford, despite having split up over a decade ago. An all-girl five-piece fronted by a singer, Karen Nolan, with a ferocious lava-gargling voice to match Eliza's, they toured relentlessly, built up a fanatical fanbase and were signed to a German record label before being torn apart by music industry machinations. How does Jo remember that time now and how does it compare to playing with Ivy's Itch?

Jo: "I can't remember half of it as I'd drunk too much cider most of the time and was stuck in the back of a van! I don't think much has changed now... But seriously, the Crimpers was a very steep learning curve as we were all very young and it certainly opened my eyes to the music industry. There were a lot of highs and a lot of lows but I wouldn't have changed anything. It's different in some ways in Ivy's Itch as Eliza and I have a strong musical partnership. It's really brilliant to work with the boys and to have their musical perspective as well. In other ways it's quite similar. We gigged endlessly in the Crimpers and had a lot of people from around the country that followed the band to every gig. I think things are different now, especially with the internet. Ivy's Itch seems a bit harder to categorise in the current music scene, as it has become more mainstream and we fit in everywhere and nowhere. The underground fanzine culture seems to be having a revival too recently, which is great for bands that are a bit different."

**COME ON THEN, BEFORE WE GO** - what's it like having a married couple in the band? Do Jo and Jimmy bicker endlessly?

Pawel: "It's fun, because they are very cute when they do!"

Eliza: "I don't know what he's talking about! We are a tantrum free band. Ahem..."

Jimmy: "We don't really bicker about music, more about moving the gear about! It's pretty cool me and Jo being in the band together as it's something else we work well at as a couple."

Jo: "Is this an interview for Nightshift or Hello magazine?"

**'Roses' is out now: buy it online at** [www.lineoutrecords.com](http://www.lineoutrecords.com). Ivy's Itch headline the Zodiac on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October. Check out [www.myspace.com/ivys-itch](http://www.myspace.com/ivys-itch) for news and tracks.

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# RELEASED

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## FELL CITY GIRL

### **'February Snow'**

*(Lavolta)*

After the genuinely superlative 'Swim' earlier this year, Fell City Girl return with another limited-edition four-song EP. Where its predecessor was extravagant and glacial, 'February Snow' is more introverted, infused with bewildered romanticism and lyrical imagery similar to Snow Patrol. It's still typical Fell City Girl widescreen pop though, eventually rising to a crescendo of shimmering guitars before making way for the spikier 'These Are The Heart Attacks'. 'Helplines' is, according to frontman Phil McMinn, the most personal song he has written; recorded in his bedroom in the middle of the night its gentle synth hums and tip-toeing guitar allow Phil's voice contemplative centre stage. 'The Helicopters Overhead' is the closest the EP comes to epic proportions, a three-part song with a six-minute wingspan that takes on an almost



mantra-like feel before dissolving into ambient chaos; it still feels reigned in, lending it subtle tension. The elegance and emotional complexity that we've come to associate with Fell City Girl remain throughout as well as their luxuriant command of melody. There's no getting away from it - Fell City Girl are something special.

**Sue Foreman**

## WITCHES

### **'Taking Myself Home Again'**

*(Within The Woods)*

Pleasingly understated glitch-pop charm from Witches on this their second release, a two-song CD that demonstrates the band's ability to marry a studious folky ambience with more abrasive rock and electronica. Dave Griffiths sounds alternately like a campfire choirboy and a pensive mouse on vocals and sometimes you wish he'd grasp the song by its thorns and lend

it some propulsion. 'Taking Myself Home Again' touches on Sparklehorse's lonesome wildwoods folktronica, with its countrified guitar shimmer and sweet glockenspiel, but 'Dead As A Ghost' is a more gregarious beast, horns flailing around like a scrap at a Mexican wedding. Witches are perhaps a bit too mannered at times and need to let go emotionally on both ends of their musical scale - the trumpet storm finale shows what they can do - but this is Cotswold-flavoured country rock with a side order of Welsh valleys we're talking about here so maybe a bit of British reserve is well in order.

**Sue Foreman**

## MY FATHER THE BEAT

### **'El Diego'**

*(Vinyl Interstate)*

Like New Romantic and cowpunk, baggy is something that really doesn't cry out for a revival. There's always someone chancing their arm though, most recently Kasabian with their hopelessly contrived Stone Roses rip-offs. Perhaps with an eye on joining such hallowed ranks, My Father The Beat, a band made up of former members of Mr Duck and Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia, here attempt to to resurrect the spirit of Happy Mondays. Such is the stilted nature of these five tracks, you'd be

as well sticking a CD of Tony Blair's Commons speeches on at a rave if you wanted anyone to dance. Former MBICR man Tim Croston tries his hardest with some skewed electronic backing and machine beats but the feeble guitar grooves, the painfully wracked intensity of the vocals and ambling pace mark this whole project out as doomed as Sean Ryder attempting to string together a coherent sentence. My Father The Beat are simply too fey and too uptight to be funky. Even 'Whiskey', an attempt at electro-funk dissonance, ends up sounding like Shakatak on a morphine drip. If My Father The Beat ever invite you to a party just stay in with a warm cup of Horlicks. You'll have bags more fun.

**Victoria Waterfield**

## THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS

### **'Hippy Jam Fest (The Likes Of Which Has Never Been Seen Before)'**

*(Big Scary Monsters)*

For so long destined to dwell in the shadows of Fell City Girl, whom they emerged alongside a while back, This Town Needs Guns now find themselves dubbed The Most Improved Band In Oxford after a series of battling live shows across the city. Musically there are comparisons to be drawn with Fell City Girl, notably the stadium pop intent and the mixture of plaintive, almost lullaby-like melody and epic noise. This debut single, though, finds them closer to another great Oxford rock export, Dive Dive. Stuart Smith's voice has the same keening, cracked feel as Jamie Stuart's, while the jagged shards of guitar that combust out of delicate piano-led hymns are born of the same mould.

The single's lead track never lives up to its grand title, promising a firework finale that fizzles out before it's even taken flight. 'Denial Adams' carries a greater sense of drama, while repeating 'Hippy Jam Fest's' string coda and it's only with 'Like Romeo and Juliet' that they hit harder ground (or sky, depending on which way you look at it). They sound assured and their grasp of texture is sharp, with strings and piano woven deftly into the guitar lines; what This Town Needs Guns need now is an emotional depth to match.

**Dale Kattack**



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# GIG GUIDE

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## SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**EMBRACE: Brookes University Union** –

After the ignominy of writing probably the most turgid World Cup anthem of all time, the brothers MacNamara return to what they do best – soulful, symphonic indie rocking of a slightly dirge-like nature. Them kids love it, so they do.

**PATRICK WOLF: The Zodiac** – Lycanthropic songsmith gears up for the release of his third album – *see main preview*

### *Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>*

## PATRICK WOLF: The Zodiac

Folktronica doesn't quite cut it as an adequate description of London-based songsmith Patrick Wolf. Sure he writes pastoral hymns cut through with analogue sounds and electronic beats but the often sweeping elegance of the songs, particularly those from last album 'Wind In the Wires', as well as his yearning, doomed lyrics and wonderfully limpid voice draw him closer to Nick Cave or John Cale. At the moment he's one of the country's greatest pop secrets, although he should be no stranger to local audiences after appearances at Truck Festival. A talented multi-instrumentalist, Wolf tends to lead with violin, viola or piano, but utilises more exotic instruments, such as a Finnish kantele, but it's his voice and lyrics that really grab you, searching for eternal childhood, feeling lost in the city or discovering the beauty of isolation while recording in a Cornish shack. Now signed to Loog Records, he's set to release his third album, 'Magic Position', featuring collaborations with Marianne Faithfull and Larrikin Love and mainstream success finally looks like his for the taking.



## OCTOBER

**SYNAESTHESIA ART & MOVEMNT: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Acoustic music-art interface performance.

**ELECTRIC OPEN JAM: The Music Market**  
**MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**PRIMO BLUES BAND: The Bullingdon** – Funky blues, Hendrix-style rock, reggae and 70s soul from the offshoot project of Station House, the band built around award-winning blues drummer Sam Kelly, here giving his band's backing singers a lead role.

**BELLOWHEAD: The Zodiac** – Spiers and Boden's brass and fiddle-driven eleven-piece folk party band, recent winners of the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards Best Live Act prize  
**JOHN KIRKPATRICK & ROY BAILEY: Nettlebed Folk Club**

### TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**THE RIFLES + THE QUARTER-FINALS: The Zodiac** – Jam-like indie rocking from Walthamstow.

**JAZZ CLUB with KATYA GORRIE & DENNY ILETT Jr: The Bullingdon** – Guest appearance at the Bully's weekly free live jazz night from singer Katya and renowned jazz guitarist Denny.

**STEFAN GROSSMAN & DAVY GRAHAM: Holywell Music Room** – Acoustic blues and folk guitarist renowned for his finger-picking style.

**SUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – The Ex's weekly open mic session returns with all musicians welcome.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ NIGHT: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With jazz instrumentalist Eddie Thompson.

**ACOUSTIC OPEN MIC SESSION: The Hobgoblin, Bicester**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: Mangoes, Cowley Road**

### WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**THOMAS TRUAX + MUNCH MUNCH: The Port Mahon** – Hillbilly electronica from Truck Festival favourite Thomas Truax, plus off-kilter indie noise in a Deerhoof vein from Munch Munch at tonight's MyAnalog night.

**FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House**

### THURSDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**CERYS MATTHEWS: The Zodiac (upstairs)** – Former Catatonia singer tours in support of her second solo album – *see main preview*

**MENDEED + KINGSIZE BLUES + SANCTORUM: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – Classic Maiden-style metal with thrash artillery

back-up from Mendeed, now signed to Nuclear Blast Records.

**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac** – Weekly club night playing the latest metal, hardcore and alternative sounds.

**RANDOMNUMBER: Modern Art, Oxford** – Electronic experimentation and soundscaping from Matthew Robson, mixing up glitchy, disorientating noise with atmospheric drones and drifting.

**OXJAM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – First of a month of Oxfam benefit gigs, featuring a wide range of local acts – check out [www.oxjamoxford.co.uk](http://www.oxjamoxford.co.uk) for line-up details.

**BIG JOAN + SUNNYVALE NOISE SUB-ELEMENT: The Cellar** – Bass-heavy post-punk heavyweights out of Bristol, making an abrasive old racket somewhere between PiL, Venetian Snares and Swans.

**DOMES OF SILENCE + GOOD COP, BAD COP + BEARD OF ZEUSS: The Hobgoblin, Bicester** – Return to action for local darkwave rockers, mixing up Doors and Primal Scream, plus support from stoner metallers Beard Of Zeuss

**PHOTO: Po Na Na** – Darkly-inclined indie-punk rocking from Photo.

**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks** – Dub, ska, Latin, funk and Afrobeat sounds every week from DJ Aidan Larkin and guests.

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB with ROGER BEAUJOLAIS: The Wheatsheaf**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford community Centre**

### FRIDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**PARAMORE + CUTE IS WHAT WE AIM**

**FOR: The Zodiac** – The emo wagon just carries on rolling, tonight featuring Tennessee teens Paramore, coming on like a marginally more raucous version of Avril Lavigne. Fuelled By Ramen labelmates Cute Is What We Aim For are currently one of the States' indie sensations, providing their label with its fastest selling release to date.

**KATE RUSBY: The New Theatre** – Leading lady of new folk goes for the big theatre show – *see main preview*

**NARCISSISM + VESTIBULE: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Banbury heavy rockers in a Tool vein.

**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with MARY BENDYTOY + THE BRICKWORK**

**LIZARDS + MARK BOSLEY & SUE**

**JORDAN + MOEITY: The Wheatsheaf** – Crazy industrial pop-punk from Mary Bendy Toy, plus eclectic world soul from Brickwork Lizards at tonight's Klub Kak.

**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria**



**fopp oxford**

unit 8, 95 gloucester green, oxford, ox1 2bu





*Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>*

## CERY'S MATTHEWS: The Zodiac

Ah, Cerys. Lovely Cerys. Cherryade-voiced chanteuse with the majestic Catatonia, possibly the best pop act ever to come out of Wales, and one that could have the most Saxon-blooded of Englishmen braying "Every day when I wake up / I thank the Lord I'm Welsh". Purveyors of often divine indie rock that could leap from cutely doe-eyed ('Lost Cat') to fabulously bombastic ('I Am The Mob'), they rose from humble beginning (including many fondly-remembered visits to The Point and Oxford United Social Club) to sell about fifty billion records before they split up amid tales of alcoholic over-indulgence and mental instability. Seemingly forgotten as quickly as they became huge, but now Cerys Matthews is back with a new album, 'Never Said Goodbye' – her second solo outing – and a proper UK tour. The new songs are less extravagant than Catatonia's, tending towards folkier singer-songwriter stuff, and she won't be playing any of the old hits tonight, but it'll be worth it just to hear that voice again – truly a force of nature, one that can melt a man's heart at fifty paces.

**LES CLOCHARDS:** *Chester Arms* – Gallic-flavoured jazz-pop.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE:** *The Bullingdon* – Weekly dose of classic soul, funk and disco.

**THE DUGOUT:** *The Cellar* – Soul and funk grooves from DJs Aidan Larkin, Fabulous Hand, Jon Kemp, Cuban John and Green-T.

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB:** *The Port Mahon SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup>*

**FELL CITY GIRL + THE ROCK OF**

**TRAVOLTA:** *The Zodiac* – Local rising rock starlets return to the Zodiac to promote new single, 'February Snow' – *see main preview*

**ANTI NOWHERE LEAGUE + GUNS ON THE ROOF + HEADCOUNT:** *The Zodiac* – Veteran early-80s punk monsters, best known for their cover of 'Streets Of London' (and even more so for its infamous b-side 'So What?', possibly the most misanthropic song ever to grace the Top 40). Re-animated after Metallica took to covering 'So What?' live, frontman Animal even joining Hetfield and co. onstage, prompting him to reform the band. Bloody-minded, foul-mouthed punk like what it used to be made. Local punk-metal beefcakes Headcount bring their collision of Killing Joke and Therapy? along in support. And hey, Discharge are in town next month. We're getting excited already.

**TELESCOPES + SENNEN + TELEWISE:**

**The Wheatsheaf** – Warm-up gig for

Audioscope on the 28<sup>th</sup>. One-time shoegazing cult stars Telescopes are a very different musical beast these days, now stripped down to a two-piece, featuring founder members Stephen Lawrie and Jo Doran and carving out atmospheric guitar drone soundtracks. Shoegazers Sennen evoke memories of My Bloody Valentine, while Slowdive's Simon Scott returns with his new band Telewise.

**IMOGEN HEAP:** *The New Theatre* – The Essex singer-songwriter prepares to finally hit the big-time with her biggest UK tour to date after a summer that saw her playing both Coachella and V Festivals. Though probably more successful in the States, Japan and Australia, she's hit the charts here in the past, notably with the band Frou Frou, a collaboration with Guy Gigsworth. With the re-release of last year's 'Speak For Yourself' album, part Madonna-ish dancefloor-friendly pop, part Laurie Anderson-influenced electronic strangeness, a full break into the mainstream beckons.

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

**THE CHEEGRATERS:** *The Exeter Hall, Cowley* – Funk, soul, Latin pop, country and rock'n'roll mix.

**SHIRLEY COLLINS + DAVY GRAHAM:** *Holywell Music Room* – Rare chance to see 60s folk revivalist Shirley Collins live, accompanied by Davy Graham with whom she recorded her seminal 'Folk Roots, New Routes' album. That along with 'Anthems In Eden' made her one of the most innovative and subsequently influential trad folk singers of the period, inspiring acts as diverse as Billy Bragg, Current 93 and The Decemberists.

**WINGBACK + THE SUNRAYS + CRANEFLY:** *The Port Mahon ACOUSTIC NIGHT with LAGRIMA + OPAQUE + EVERY OTHER SUNDAY:* *The King's Head & Bell, Abingdon* – The Skittle Alley presents their monthly unplugged local bands night.

**SAPPHIRES:** *Wolvercote British Legion* – Blues rock.

**PETE FRYER BAND:** *Prince of Wales, Didcot*

## SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**FIELDS + GOODBOOKS + KID**

**HARPOON:** *The Zodiac* – Acid folk-inspired pastoral pop from London's Fields, fresh from supporting Mystery Jets on tour and drawing inspiration from the likes of My Bloody Valentine and Magic Numbers into their psychedelic folk world. Support comes from ace Transgressive signings Goodbooks, mixing up haunting, pretty acoustic folk with jangly guitar pop and synths.

**LIBRARY TAPES + IMPURE THEATRE + SLEEPS IN OYSTERS:** *The Port Mahon* – More leftfield rock action from MyAnalog, tonight with Swedish post-rockers Library Tapes giving it some in a Godspeed style, plus tense prose, scruffy beats and atmospheric electronics from ex-Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia chaps Tim and Emily's new band Impure Theatre and electronic experimentation from Sleeps In Oysters.

**ELECTRIC OPEN JAM:** *The Music Market MONDAY 9<sup>th</sup>*

**THE JIMMY GRISWOLD BAND:** *The Bullingdon* – Energetic blues rock from the Tampa Bay guitarist, playing in the style of T-

Bone Walker, BB King and Jeff Beck.

**THE ANSWER + ROADSTAR + AIRBOURNE:** *The Zodiac* – Wild and hairy old-fashioned cock-rock that sounds a lot like Thunder from Ireland's The Answer, currently promoting debut album 'Rise', basking in the glory of being nominated as Best British Newcomers at the Kerrang! Awards and being handpicked to support veteran rocker Paul Rodgers at the Albert Hall this month.

**LAST NIGHT'S FUN:** *Nettlebed Folk Club TUESDAY 10<sup>th</sup>*

**THE LEMONHEADS:** *Brookes University Union* – Evan Dando returns to full band action after an eight-year hiatus – *see main preview*

*Friday 6<sup>th</sup>*

## KATE RUSBY: The New Theatre

The leading lady of the English folk revival plays her biggest Oxford show to date, proving that, six solo albums in, her popularity just carries on growing. With new album, 'The Girl Who Couldn't Fly', Kate Rusby continues her trick of breathing freshness and vitality into traditional folk ballads as well as penning an increasing percentage of songs herself. As well as long-time collaborator and producer (as well as husband) John McCusker (formerly of The Battlefield Band who in the 80s gave similarly new life to traditional Scottish music), the new album finds Kate teaming up with Idlewild's Roddy Woomble (who duets with her on three tracks) and Graham Coxon (who designed the album's sleeve artwork). As ever it's a charming, disarmingly simple affair, Kate's pure, dreamy voice the main focus with the songs either simple acoustic guitar ballads or more elaborate and lively fiddle and accordion-led jigs. After a succession of folk awards as well as a Mercury Prize nomination, Kate is now a fully-fledged chart star after her collaboration with Ronan Keating, 'All Over Again', went Top 10 earlier this summer. At 31 she's still a youngster in trad folk circles but already Kate Rusby feels like an old hand. One that keeps on getting better.





*Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>*

## FELL CITY GIRL/THE ROCK OF TRAVOLTA

*Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> / Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup>*

## THE YOUNG KNIVES

*Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup>*

## SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT:

### The Zodiac

Quite a month for Oxford's musical elite as three of the biggest and best bands in town headline the Zodiac (plus you could add in Winnebago Deal's support to The Bronx on the 14<sup>th</sup>), though with rather different levels of celebration. Fell City Girl prepare to release a new single, 'February Snow', later this month, their upward trajectory looking in no doubt. They're just getting better and better as songwriters and performers and a break into the commercial mainstream in 2007 looks inevitable; support band The Rock Of Travolta are now seemingly back on creative track after a series of typically impressive gigs including a show-stealing performance at Truck this summer. The Young Knives' breakthrough came this year with the release of 'Voices Of Animals And Men', one of the most critically-acclaimed albums of the year, while the band have found themselves cast as standard bearers for a new line in sartorial elegance. They bookend their latest national tour with two Zodiac gigs, no doubt anticipating the number of folks who'll want to see them in all their hometown glory. Maverick pop genius at its best. But sadly it's goodbye to Suitable Case For Treatment, one of the most original and awe-inspiring bands Oxford has produced. They're splitting up after tonight's Halloween gig, an appropriately ghoulish date for their monstrous spazz-jazz-prog-death-metal-gospel-blues racket, leaving us with plenty of great musical memories, not least the bizarre spectacle of them performing with Jon Snow on the Richard & Judy Show. A month that proves just how far local music has come on in the last couple of years.

**PAOLO NUTINI: The Zodiac** (*upstairs*) – Long-since sold-out gig from Paisley's chart-busting teenage singer-songwriter, mixing up string-drenched ballads, Stones-y swagger and 70s soul-pop.  
**GOJIRA + HATESPHERE: The Zodiac** (*downstairs*) – Double bill of extreme metal

from mainland Europe with France's Gojira making an evil old racket in a Morbid Angel / Messhugga vein having impressed everyone at Download this year, while Denmark's Hatesphere give it some in the brutality stakes.  
**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon**  
**JON FLETCHER + A PINT & A HALF OF BLUES + DAVE NOBLE & JALIFILY CISSOKHU: The Port Mahon** – Folk and jazz from finger-picking guitarist and singer Jon Fletcher, plus guitar'n'harp blues duo A Pint & A Half and Senegalese folk-blues fusion from Dave and Jalifily.  
**SUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ NIGHT: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With guests Desfinado.  
**INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Goth and industrial club night.

### WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**OXFORD IMPROVISORS: The Port Mahon** – Renowned drummer Steve Noble, who has played with Derek Bailey and Rip, Rig and Panic amongst others, teams up with guitarist Otto Fischer and keyboard player Alexander Hawkins for a night of improvised music.  
**FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**CLARK WISEMAN: The Wheatshaf**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House**  
**THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup>**

**JOHN PEEL NIGHT with SHIRLEY: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – First of two nights of gigs celebrating the life of the legendary Peel; tonight 60s-styled pop fellas Shirley give it some party-friendly action in an early Beatles-meets-The Housemartins style.

**THE YOUNG KNIVES: The Zodiac** – First of two headline dates at the Zodiac for the local heroes – *see main preview*

**SEKOU KEITA: The Zodiac** – Afro-Mandinka music, blending sounds from Senegal, Italy, Egypt and Gambia into a melodic, dancey whole.

**JOHN OTWAY BIG BAND: The Port Mahon** – More musical madness from the clown prince of pop.

**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**  
**OXFORD UNIVERSITY JAZZ SOCIETY NIGHT: The Music Market**  
**SPIN JAZZ CLUB with THE DIERDRIE**  
**CARTWRIGHT GROUP: The Wheatshaf**  
**INACUN + MEAN POPPA LEAN + GIRLS ARE LOUDER: The Three Horseshoes, Towersey** – Hoodwink Promotions attempt to kick some rock and roll life into Towersey with a monthly local bands night.

**KING FURNACE + BLACK ALLEY SCREENS + DIATRIBE + CHANTELLE PIKE: The Cellar** – Chili Peppers-influenced hairy rocking from King Furnace, plus Jam-like new wave noise from Ireland's Black Alley Screens.

**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

### FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**JOHN PEEL NIGHT with ALLY CRAIG + KANED CITIZEN + THE MIGHTY ROARS + THE RUINS: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Second Peel night, tonight seeing ace local

songsmith Ally Craig displaying his unique lyrical and musical style, mixing up influences as diverse as Jeff Buckley and Sonic Youth.  
**SEXTODECIMO + SOW + BEARD OF ZEUSS + COBRA: The Music Market** – Top-notch night of local hardcore and metal with ultra-grindcore stoner-rock behemoths Sextodecimo heading once more into the darkest of musical black holes, while Sow crank up the Meshugga-inspired riffs, Beard Of Zeuss hit a stoner-rock groove and Cobra fire out prime grunge.

**CHRIS DIFFORD: The Zodiac** – Former-Squeeze frontman and lyricist, these days a byword in cool after musical homages from The Libertines et al. Since the demise of Squeeze he's worked with Elton John, Lamont Dozier and most recently Marty Pellow as well as winning an Ivor Novello award for his soundtrack to *Still Crazy*.

**SLIDE: The Zodiac** – House club night.  
**SMILEX + BILLY ENGLAND + MISSING LEG COMPARTMENT: The Wheatshaf** – All-action sleaze-rocking from Smilex, due to release their debut album soon, plus angular

*Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>*

## THE LEMONHEADS: Brookes Union

Now here's something we never thought we'd ever see: The Lemonheads back and gigging. And coming to Oxford! To be honest you could have been forgiven for thinking Evan Dando was long since lost to the world after his steady spiral into crack-induced unpredictability in the late-90s; the intervening solo comeback shows even accentuating the feeling that he would never recapture that past magic when The Lemonheads – preceding the grunge explosion – were indie rock's bitter-sweet heroes and Dando was a genuine sex symbol. The reformed Lemonheads features former-Descendants Bill Stevenson and Karl Alvarez, while the likes of Chris Brokaw and Julianna Hatfield have supplemented the line-up since last year's relaunch. Now signed to Vagrant Records there's a new album out this month, featuring another grunge survivor, J Mascis, and tonight's gig will feature plenty of old favourites from the 'Shame About Ray' and 'Come On Feel The Lemonheads' period, when the band were at their commercial peak. So sing along to 'Big Gay Heart' and be thankful that while Dando's old buddy Kurt Cobain didn't make it, this story at least has a happy ending.



punk noise from Billy England and bluesy metal from Missing Leg.

**BOSSAPHONIC: The Cellar** – Live jazz dance.

**BOBO STEPHENSON TRIO: Holywell Music Room** – Swedish jazz pianist Stephenson, plus drummer Anders Jormin and bass player Jon Falt, displays the intense, minimalist virtuosity that has seen him collaborate with Sonny Rollins and Stan Getz in the past.

**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria**

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

### **SATURDAY 14<sup>th</sup>**

**SETH LAKEMAN: The Zodiac** (*upstairs*) – Champion of the British folk new wave – *see main preview*

**THE BRONX + WINNEBAGO DEAL + LADY FINGER: The Zodiac** (*downstairs*) – LA punkers in a Husker Du-meets-Black Flag vein hit town after supports to Converge and Mastodon. Local speed-crazed hard rockers Winnebago Deal, rising high on the critical acclaim accorded new album 'Flight Of The Raven' provide support.

**MESAPLEX + DARK PHASE: The Wheatsheaf** – Atmospheric electronics and gothic ambience from Mesaplex, plus tripped-out electro-pop from Dark Phase.

**FUNK ELECTRIC MASH-UP: The Bullingdon DIVINITY SCHOOL + NOT MY DAY + THE IDEA: The Music Market** – Local rock bands night.

**COTTON BLONDE: The Port Mahon** – Melodic indie punk from local rockers Cotton Blonde.

**BASSMENTALITY: The Cellar** – Ten-piece ska and hip hop collective.

**MIKE NELSON: Wolvercote British Legion** – Favourites from the 50s and 60s.

### **SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup>**

**I, LUDICROUS + THE WOMBATS + HUMDRUM EXPRESS: The Port Mahon** – A band we thought had long since died and gone to obscure 80s indie pop heaven, now resurrected and coming to town courtesy of the monthly Swiss Concrete club. A London duo formed by John Procter and Dave Rippingale, they first gained John Peel-endorsed notoriety with their debut flexi disc (yes, it was *that* long ago) 'Preposterous Tales' before going onto document all manner of humdrum trivia in a style somewhere between The Fall and Half Man, Half Biscuit. Dry, hangdog lo-fi pop at its best. Support from pop-punkers The Wombats and 'insensitive singer-songwriter' Humdrum Express.

**GET CAPE, WEAR CAPE, FLY: The Zodiac** (*upstairs*) – Tender, melodic acoustic guitar and laptop action from Sam Duckworth, currently reaping the rewards of years of slogging around the toilet circuit with the press and radio latching onto his funny, clever brand of folk-pop, picking up on the details of humdrum everyday life as well as wider political commentaries.

**THE LONG BLONDES: The Zodiac** (*downstairs*) – Delightfully summery pop from Sheffield's stylish Long Blondes, last seen in town on the NME Tour at Brookes. Out on tour to promote debut album, 'Someone To Drive You Home' following a string of critically-lauded singles and mixing up the zest of early Blondie with the joyful fun of 60s girl group pop and 80s indie jangle.

### **ELECTRIC OPEN JAM: The Music Market MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup>**

**THE KYLA BROX BAND: The Bullingdon** – Powerful blues vocalist out of Manchester, daughter of renowned bluesman Victor Brox, whose band she first started her career singing with. Out on her own she reprises classic r'n'b as well as original blues material.

**KLAXONS + SHIT DISCO + DATAROCK: The Zodiac** – Glowsticks aloft, kids as NME presents the so-called New Wave Of New Rave  
**JAZZ GROOVE: The Port Mahon**  
**MADDY PRIOR: Nettlebed Folk Club**

### **TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup>**

**ROOSTER: The Zodiac** – Sony-signed pop-friendly rockers tout their new album, 'Circles And Satellites, with its trademark manufactured raucousness that sounds like a cross between Pearl Jam and Blue. You lucky, lucky people.

**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY**

**QUINTET: The Bullingdon**

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

**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ NIGHT: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With regular duo The Jazz Emporium.

**SIKORSKI: The Port Mahon**

**VERTIGO: The Cellar** – Indie club night with live music from The Victorian English Gentlemen's Club, Untitled Musical Project and Figment.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: Mangoes**

### **WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup>**

**PHOEBE KREUTZ + AARON STOUT: The Port Mahon** – Double bill of New York acoustic anti-folk singers.

**KEITH JAMES & RICH FOOT: Phoenix Picture House** – The songs of Nick Drake.

**FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House**

### **THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup>**

**NICK KELLY: The Port Mahon** – Dreamy, melodic pop from the award-winning Irish singer and former Fat Lady Sings frontman.

**BILLY COBHAM & ASERE: The Zodiac** – Spanish guitars meet African rhythms as world-renowned drummer Billy Cobham - who's worked with Miles Davis as well as the Mahavishnu Orchestra, teams up with Cuban Son band Asere, part of Oxford Contemporary Music's new Autumn season.

**OXJAM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Bands to be confirmed.

**WHERE I'M CALLING FROM: QI Club** – Belle & Sebastian and Only Ones-inspired indie pop from promising local starlets WICF.

**OXFORD UNIVERSITY JAZZ SOCIETY NIGHT: The Music Market**

**NICK KELLY: The Port Mahon**

**ZELEGA + MIMAS + WITCHES: The Cellar** – Post-rock from Zelega plus

Sparklehorse-meets-Calexico-style rocking from Witches.

**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**

**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

### **FRIDAY 20<sup>th</sup>**

**JAMES DEAN BRADFIELD: The Zodiac** – The Manic Street Preacher frontman plugs his first solo album, 'The Great Western', with his trademark mix of personal and political lyricism. Long since sold out.



*Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>*

## **SETH LAKEMAN: The Zodiac**

Ghost stories from Dartmoor, tales of Civil War battles and handsome soldiers courting young maidens? Surely this sort of stuff went out with the folk music ark? Well, if it did no-one told Seth Lakeman, and thank the lord for that. The Cornish singer-songwriter returns to Oxford after his excellent showing at Truck Festival in July and doubtless his following will have grown yet again. Seth is very definitely an artist on the up. Following on from last year's Mercury Prize-nominated 'Kitty Jay', new album 'Freedom Fields' continues his storytelling journey through West Country legend and romantic historical tales. Despite the very traditional subject matter, the music can be as urgent and energetic as any punk band, highly rhythmical in style, led by dynamic fiddle playing and Lakeman's powerful voice. Given that Cornwall historically has more in common with Scotland and Wales than the rest of England, the deep Celtic roots in his music aren't surprising and now the man who once backed up Kate Rusby and Cara Dillon is about to become a fully-fledged star in his own right.

**INLIGHT + THE SIRENS CALL + THE RUINS: The Zodiac** – Local bands night.  
**MUGSTAR + MEET ME IN ST LOUIS + AND NO STAR: The Wheatsheaf** – Fantastic hypno-jazz-core soundscaping from Liverpool's Mugstar, ripping into Hawkwind, Sun Ra, Sonic Youth and Can with moody gusto. Surrey's Meet Me In St. Louis provide complex, schizophrenic punk rock support.  
**RESERVOIR CATS + LEATHER RAT + SOULAR + ALLY CRAIG: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Grinning Spider Promotions night with hard rocking local bluesmen Reservoir Cats, plus New Mexico's Soular and local singer Ally Craig.

**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria**  
**FRESH OUT OF THE BOX: The Cellar** – With DJ Ramirez, on the up after this summer's hit remix of Bodyrox's 'Yeah Yeah'.  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**



*Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>*

## PLAN B:

### Brookes Union

If Ben Drew – aka Plan B – spoke like he raps he'd doubtless have an Asbo to his name by now. Foul-mouthed in the extreme, Drew just happens to be the most brutally honest and verbally dextrous documenter of East London ghetto life you're likely to hear. From knife fights, teenage pregnancy, crack addiction, mugging and, er, catching genital warts from a corpse, he doesn't spare any imagery and it's unlikely he'll be up for a Mercury Prize any time soon, but he's almost certainly the equal of Dizzee Rascal, although his brand of hip hop comes from another direction altogether – more often than not based on acoustic guitar melodies and acoustic beats rather than samples. The songs from his debut album, 'Who Needs Actions When You've Got Words', are both bleak and visceral; while you're never entirely sure whether Drew is condemning the subjects of his stories or revelling in their gory activities, his braggadocio is equalled by his horror at all that surrounds him. Now signed to 679 Records – alongside The Streets – he's all set to enter UK hip hop's uppermost echelons, and if that seems like faint praise, it shouldn't. Want a slice of life? You got it, just don't be surprised if you're terrorised by what you get.

**REDOX + STRANGE VINTAGE: The Magdalen Arms**

### SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**OXJAM FUNDRAISER with RAGGASAUROS + REDOX + LES CLOCHARDS + SUE JORDAN + THE NEW MOON + TWIZZ TWANGLE + STRANGE VINTAGE + MAEVE BAYTON + ED MCGREGOR: The Exeter Hall, Cowley (6pm)** – Part of a nationwide series of gigs in aid of Oxfam, tonight featuring a selection of Klub Kakofanney faves, including dub-rockers Raggasaurus, acid-pop crazies Redox, and Gallic pop act Les Clochards.

**KILLA KELA: The Zodiac (upstairs)** – Return of the human beatboxer after his sold-out gig at the Cellar a couple of months ago, tonight accompanied by Trip Rookwood, DJ Skeletrik and Spider J.

**IVY'S ITCH + PHYAL + DEGUELLO: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – This month's Nightshift cover stars peel the paint from the walls with their haunted gothic grunge exorcism.

**PLAN B: Brookes University Union** – Brutal slice-of East London life from upstart UK rapper – *see main preview*

**THE RELATIONSHIPS + LOZ COLBERT: The Port Mahon** – Sweetly melancholic psychedelic jangle pop from local veterans The Relationships, plus acoustic pop from former-Ride drummer Loz.

**PRETTY DEAD THINGS + MOOCHER + SECTION 3: The Music Market** – Local bands showcase.

**THE DRUG SQUAD + ALEXANDRA: The Wheatsheaf** – Ska-punk from The Drug Squad at tonight's Grinning Spider club night.

**REGGAE MIX NIGHT: The Bullingdon BLACK JACK TABAC: The Duke, St.Clements** – Blues, funk, soul, 70s rock and punk.

### SUNDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**INME: The Zodiac (upstairs)** – Bleedin' 'eck, first Rooster, now InMe. What a month for glossy corporate rock pigswill. Angst-toting teen rockers out of Essex still clinging gamely onto the coattails of Funeral For A Friend and Lostprophets while sounding suspiciously, and rather unpleasantly, like Silverchair. Save your ticket money and treat yourself to a potato peeler to gouge your ears out with instead.

**HOWLING BELLS: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – Dreamy countrified indie rocking coated in gothic gloom from Australia's Howling Bells whose picturesque melancholy recalls Mazzy Star and Cowboy Junkies as well as Dolly Parton's more downbeat moments. And we thought it was year-round summer barbies and garage rocking down under.

**EMMY THE GREAT: The Port Mahon** – New York anti-folk singer-songwriter.

**ELECTRIC OPEN JAM: The Music Market HITCHMO: The Bullingdon**

**ELECTRIC JAM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Electric open play session with in-house band The X men.

### MONDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**MEMO GONZALEZ & THE**

**BLUESCASTERS: The Bullingdon** – 300lb of Tex-Mex dynamite is how Memo describes himself and with over 1,000 gigs under his belt his reputation isn't in doubt. The Dallas-based singer covers classic Texan roadhouse blues as well as swing and r'n'b; tonight's gig is part of a tour to promote new album, 'Live In The UK'.

**THE RYE COALITION: The Zodiac (upstairs)** – Swaggering New Jersey metallers hit the UK to promote their Dave Grohl-produced 'Chariots Of Fire' EP.

**AIR TRAFFIC + THE RACE: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – Lively piano-led indie rocking from Bournemouth band who've just released the much-praised 'Just Abuse Me' on Fierce Panda's new download singles club, Fandango.

**THE CARNIVAL BAND Nettlebed Folk Club**

### TUESDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**THE PADDINGTONS: The Zodiac** – Inexplicably popular indie punk raggamuffins out of Hull or some such benighted northern hellhole.

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

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

**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ NIGHT: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With guests The Franz Frauke Duo.

### WEDNESDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**THREE STRANGE ANGELS: Jacqueline du Pre Music Building** – Celebrating composer Steve Reich's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, the pioneering percussion ensemble reinterpret Reich's 'Sextet' piece.

**FOLK SESSION: The Exeter Hall, Cowley OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House THURSDAY 26<sup>th</sup>**

**HUNDRED REASONS: The Zodiac** – Swift return to town for Surrey emo heroes Hundred Reasons after their show here in April. This tour sees them without guitarist Paul Townsend who left after the band's Japanese tour in support of third album 'Kill Your Own'. A band who never seem to be off the road, they spent the summer playing every festival going, including Truck, and big, sweaty post-grunge anthems are their stock in trade. Once more into the moshpit then, dear

*Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>*

## AUDIOSCOPE

### The Zodiac

For the first time Audioscope, the annual mini-festival in aid of homeless charity Shelter, moves upstairs at the Zodiac, after previously packing out the downstairs venue with an ever-reliable selection of some of music's more esoteric marvels. Previous highlights have seen Can legend Damo Suzuki headline, while last year Luke Vibert was sensational. This year's headliners are Clinic, a band out of time and magnificently so. Like something dark and deranged dragged out of the New York musical underground sometime in 1976, they mangle robotic synth-rock with an arty psychedelic pop sensibility and dress like the surgical team from hell. And they'll make you dance like a bastard. Also on today's superb bill is a collaboration between Birmingham krautrockers Magnetophone and Spacemen 3 legend Sonic Boom; angular art-rock from Brighton's I'm Being Good; ambient electronica and post-rock from Piano Magic, making a rare live appearance; skewed, sample-heavy electro-dance from Nottingham's Kids In Tracksuits, and some Casio grindcore from Trencher. Add in local stars The Rock Of Travolta and Sunnyvale Noise Sub-Element and that's a full day of leftfield music that should thrill and confuse in equal measures. And all for charity, you say? Get in there!





friends. Bring your lighter with you, they even do slow songs these days.

**THE AUTOMATIC + ALTERKICKS:**

**Brookes University Union** – Third visit to town in six months for the NME darlings, armed with at least one cracking pop hit – ‘Monster’ – and a man with a voice like a strangled Chihuahua on vocals. Such are the things that pop stardom is made of these days.

**SABOTAGE: The Zodiac**

**DELICIOUS MUSIC CHARITY BALL:**

**Oxford Town Hall** – Live jazz and DJs plus various luxury ball attractions courtesy of the Delicious Music crew.

**OXJAM: The Exeter Hall, Cowley**

**REBECCA MOSLEY: QI Club** – Sweet and sultry acoustic folk-pop from the local songstress.

**OXFORD UNIVERSITY JAZZ SOCIETY**

**NIGHT: The Music Market**

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB with ROB TOWNSEND:**

**The Wheatsheaf**

**THE DELTA FREQUENCY +**

**TWENTYSIXFEET + IMMUNE: The Cellar**

– Gothic electro-rocking from The Delta Frequency, plus moody indie rock from Twentysixfeet

**SKYLARKIN: The Brickworks**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**FRIDAY 27<sup>th</sup>**

**THE INFLATABLES: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** – Classic ska, reggae and soul.

**SALMONELLA DUB: The Zodiac** – Return of the New Zealand reggae collective, mixing up roots and dub with drum&bass and trancey grooves.

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES presents**

**ZUBY + AMBERSTATE + LIFE WITH**

**BEARS + DELTA: The Zodiac** – GTI

celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> gig with another typically mixed bill. Headlining is local hip hop talent Zuby with a fine line in slick, free-flowing rap in the style of Nas and Jay-Z. Ambient jazz-pop act AmberState support along with synth-pop cabaret band Life With Bears and acoustic

duo Delta who have supported The Coral and Fairport Convention.

**PINK MARINES: The Music Market**

**THE DOMES OF SILENCE: The**

**Wheatsheaf** – Doors and Primal Scream-influenced dark rockers.

**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Victoria**

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

**SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup>**

**AUDIOSCOPE 2006: The Zodiac (2pm)** –

Annual all-day festival, featuring the best in leftfield and underground music in aid of Shelter – see main preview

**BOMBSHOE + JUNKIE BRUSH + THE**

**WALK OFF + FORK + SOW + THE**

**TASTE: The Exeter Hall, Cowley** –

Heavyweight pre-Halloween party at the Ex featuring local metal titans Sow and Bombshoe, plus punk rocking action from Junkie Brush, punishing digital hardcore from The Walk Off and prog noise from Fork.

**HOLIDAY IN VIETNAM + CAPTAIN**

**PYRTAES + THE BIG TURNOUT: The**

**Music Market** – Local bands showcase night.

**MOVE IT: Wolvercote British Legion**

**SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup>**

**JAMIE T: The Zodiac** – Fresh’n’easy folk-rap from West London troubadour Jamie T, poised to make the big time with his Beck-meets-Streets style of electro-folk storytelling. Post-punk hip hop as it is should be, with little regard for convention or self-imposed musical limits.

**ELECTRIC OPEN JAM: The Music Market**

**BEARD MUSEUM with EARNEST COX +**

**OCTOBERMAN + MATT WINKWORTH +**

**THE MIGHTY TANGERINE MONK + NAN**

**MUGGER: The Purple Turtle** – Cheltenham’s eclectic new wave-cum-synth-pop sweeties Earnest Cox headline tonight’s Beard Museum gathering.

**OXJAM: The Bullingdon** – Oxfam fundraiser.

**MONDAY 30<sup>th</sup>**

**ENTER SHIKARI: The Zodiac** – St Albans hardcore crew mixing in a good dose of 90s trance in with their guitar and screaming storms, earning a Kerrang! Best Newcomer nomination and a slot at this year’s Download along the way.

**THE MATT SCHOFIELD TRIO: The**

**Bullingdon** – Young British blues guitarist who started off playing with Lee Sankey and Dana Gillespie as well as the Lester Butler Tribute Band, now going out with his own band, playing blues and funky jazz inspired by BB King, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Albert Collins.

**ALTAN: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Sublime Irish folk music with a strong Scottish feel, fronted by the divine vocal talents of Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh, mixing up haunting traditional songs with lively jigs and reels.

**TUESDAY 31<sup>st</sup>**

**THE YOUNG KNIVES: The Zodiac (upstairs)**

– Second date at the Zodiac this month for the local chart heroes – see main preview

**SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT: The**

**Zodiac (downstairs)** – And it’s goodbye from them. Very loudly – see live preview

**LEVEL 42: The New Theatre** – When people tell you the 80s were rubbish for music they’re probably thinking of this lot. Level 42’s enduring popularity strongly suggests that some people shouldn’t be allowed to go out on



**Monday 30<sup>th</sup>**

**THE DIVINE**

**COMEDY:**

**Brookes Union**

Is it possible, we wonder, to write about The Divine Comedy without resorting to the description “arch”? Still that’s what you get if you’re a clever fellow with a dry sense of humour and a predilection for F Scott Fitzgerald and William Wordsworth as well as Scott Walker, Bert Bacharach and Nik Kershaw. Since his breakthrough album, ‘Liberation’, in 1993, Neil Hannon has managed to write brilliantly catchy pop with wit, intelligence and an array of unusual instruments that in his hands belie their arcane origins. After some serious chart action in the 90s, with the likes of ‘Something For The Weekend’ and ‘Becoming More Like Alfie’, Hannon split the band up, only to re-emerge with his own label and now a purely solo project. 2004’s ‘Absent Friends’ found him back on commercial and creative track, especially with the album’s title track and the superb ‘Come Home Billy Bird’, and now there’s no looking back with new album, ‘Victory For The Comic Muse’ and its associated hit single, ‘To Die A Virgin’, rarely off the radio. Still remembered best as something of a pop dandy, or a rock’n’roll Noel Coward, Hannon will probably continue to come in and out of fashion for years to come but his status as a deft pop protagonist is always assured.

their own, never mind vote or breed.

**VERTIGO with PHOTO: The Cellar** – The indie rock club night celebrates Halloween with gothabilly rockers Photo.

**JAZZ CLUB with PADDY MILNER: The Bullingdon**

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

**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ NIGHT: Bar**

**Milano, Pizza Express** – With Pawel Kuterba.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC HALLOWEEN PARTY:**

**The Music Market** – Live bands and DJs.

*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.*

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# LIVE

## SUPERGRASS

### The Zodiac

In the thirteen years since the band's inception, Supergrass have developed from cheeky young Britpop-baiting, Chopper-riding scamps into more complex personalities and songwriters – and for me, seeing the band tonight for the first time since 1995, they seem obviously a different proposition to that which they once were. On the basis of the bursting-at-the-seams Zodiac this evening, however – albeit bursting mainly with overweight, shaven-headed forty-year old men, for some reason – they're still a popular proposition.

Ostensibly showcasing a batch of new songs tonight, Supergrass still sprinkle their forty-five-minutes-or-so appearance with a few of the old familiar ones, and prove that songs like 'Caught By The Fuzz' and 'Strange Ones' retain an infectious, bubbling charm that it's hard not to like.

However, where they were once jittery and excitable songs, they now seem a touch like grown-up readings of obviously old songs: somehow slightly tired, and lacking a certain vitality and shiny-eyed enthusiasm. Whilst not utterly charmless by any means, they perhaps suggest that the band prefer to move on. Songs like 'Lemmy' and, from later albums, 'Sun Hits The Sky' and 'Moving' bolster the Jam/Buzzcocks fun with more T-Rex/Faces-influenced structure and dynamics. More recently-written songs move the band's sound in familiar, but strange, directions – at certain times the newer acoustic-guitar-and-lapsteel-over-keyboard-wash sounds recall Pink Floyd, and at others the giant riffs recall The Who at their stadium-busting rockiest.

So it seems that Supergrass are a band intent on compiling music from throughout the seventies into a selection of songs that still manages to sound all their own. In part this is probably due to the unique, recognisable voice of Gaz Coombes, and in part it might be due to the comfortable feeling of a local-band-done-good mixing with a variety of well-loved reference points. Whatever Supergrass do, they seem to win over the crowd, and it's good – although strange – that they don't seem to treat a 'homecoming' gig as anything more than another date on a tour. There are no "It's good to be back, Oxford's" – and not even a blast through 'Alright' for good crowd-pleasing measure. I'm hoping that this is a sign of a band



photo: Richard Hounslow

still exploring their live sound rather than a lazy complacency: at times tonight it's hard to tell, but as a whole I'm at least left with a grin on my face and a few melodies in my head.

*Simon Minter*

## BARRY 'THE FISH'

### MELTON

### The Bullingdon

Pioneers of late 60s psychedelia, the musical experimentalism and political polemicising of



Country Joe and the Fish has made them the stuff of myth for the Woodstock generation. Boasting an appearance by co-founder and lead guitarist Barry 'The Fish' Melton, tonight's Famous Monday Blues evening is an intriguing chance to see what becomes of a former revolutionary over the space of four decades.

The answer seems to be that he wallows in his own legacy. Drawn out to a ridiculously long three hours, the set is self-indulgent in the extreme. Melton shares the stage with long-time associates The Green Ray whose numbers are spliced with his own, bassist Kevin Whaley's rather characterless vocal performances alternating with his much meatier beltings.

However, the whole thing is essentially a showcase for the Melton's technical virtuosity. Inscribing noodly guitar squiggles over every spare centimetre of the band's chugging brand of proggy psychedelia, it is his playing that dominates the sound. The skill is undeniable, but the overall effect is swamped and overcrowded, with the rest of the band allowed no breathing space. It is not until a cover version of Dylan's 'Not Dark Yet' that Melton steps back from the spotlight, making

way for the guest vocalist. Here his playing weaves into the music as opposed to blanketing it and the whole thing sounds much better for it.

Also featuring are versions of old Country Joe and the Fish standards. Almost inevitably, the music which had a fresh, eccentric edge at the time of its inception has since ossified into stolid worthiness and lost its cultural relevance.

This is particularly highlighted in an updating of 'Superbird'. Originally about Lyndon Johnson, the lyrics have been reworked – via an audience call-and-response – to refer to George W Bush. Whilst the parallel itself may be pertinent, a reliance on earlier materials to make it suggests not only political enervation but also imaginative stagnation.

There is something rather sad about all this, like watching an aged starlet squeezing her sagging body into the gladrags of her glory days.

A guy behind me remarks that they just don't make music like this anymore. An observation as tired as the music itself, it is perhaps the most encouraging thing that can be taken from tonight's show.

*Emily Gray*

## FOALS / THE SWARM / DEGÜELLO

### **The Wheatsheaf**

Intensity is tonight's watchword. Three bands, all very different, each united in a struggle to hit that absolute zenith of rock fervour.

West Oxfordshire three-piece Degüello appear to be fronted by Thing from The Addams Family, a young man with no face, just hair, going under the moniker Rusty Needles, who barks ferociously as the girl calling herself The Earwig batters rack-mounted guitars in a bleakly angular fashion. At times they could give Swans a run for their money in the sheer bloody brutality stakes and we always come away from watching Degüello content that the future of Oxford music is in such safe young hands.

The Swarm are, incredibly, even more brutal. Dressed in almost fascistic black uniform and armbands, they embrace melody up to a point, but turn it into a repeated sonic hammer blow until it becomes a relentless clanging cacophony, backed by, and perfectly reflecting, the video screens playing footage of torrential storms, floods, WWI tank battles and innards. As loud and uncompromising as the previous loudest band we've seen at the Wheatsheaf, Geisha, they manage to drive almost the entire audience out of the room. Given that tonight is promoted by Oxfordbands.com, famous for their championing of extreme music, that's quite a feat. Absolutely brilliant stuff.

Foals may not have volume on their side, but their armoury contains more stealth weaponry. Two guitarists, bassist and keyboard player all face each other, like a counselling group for musicians unable to find anyone able to keep up with them, they lock horns and hit the funk button, freewheeling through many-angled spazz-jazz math-rock, a form of tumultuous, tightly-orchestrated chaos that recalls post-punk mavericks like The Pop Group and Shriekback. Former Edmund Fitzgerald members Yannis and Jack seem to have taken a complete sideways step away from their previous incarnation and maybe decided that dancing can be fun after all. You'll be needing some serious amphetamines to get on down to this soundtrack, but Foals have very definitely got the funk.

**Dale Kattack**

## TILLY AND THE WALL / KID HARPOON / JONQUIL

### **The Zodiac**

We start the night regretting arriving late for the brilliant Jonquil, yet immediately manage to lose ourselves in the floral accordion and heavy violin repetitions. Their set reverberates with slide guitar and uncomplicated melodies, endlessly repeated to hypnotic effect. Jonquil play pleasant, trouble-free but intelligent music, and are Oxford's best answer to the upcoming end-of-summer blues and rainy afternoons.

Kid Harpoon is, however, the polar opposite: a bedraggled acoustic guitar pouring out the most generic jagged rock/acoustic music possible. A faked gravelly voice sings pitifully weak lyrics, like that of 'Colours': "Red is the colour of blood when I cut myself / The colour of stickered-up items you can purchase from most major stores". Pathetic.

"Sunshiny 60s indie-pop". You may have heard that description many a time concerning disposable acts like Aberfeldy or The Magic Numbers, yet have you ever heard of sunshiny 60s indie-pop plus tap-dancing? Well, Terence, now you have. Clip-clopping all the way from Omaha, Nebraska, Tilly And The Wall greet the Zodiac audience so affectionately it's as if they've just made everyone a cup of warm tea. The boy/girl five-piece initially survive dodgy monitors and poor hem-work on dresses and perform with wonderfully genuine pop zeal, resonating feel-good vibes from corner to corner of the Zodiac. High handclaps and maracas fill the tango-tinged 'Bad Education', while high school anthem 'Night Of The Living Dead' finishes the encore, the lyrics, "We're bored to death, we've got a bottle of wine, a fresh pack of smokes", encapsulating adolescent ennui perfectly. Tilly rise above current indie-pop niches and the potential novelty act status and charm the socks off everyone.

If only every hyper Britney fan or moody Arcade Fire kid would listen to Tilly And The Wall. How the world would mend.

**Pascal Ansell**

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# LOVE IS ALL / JAKOBINARINA

## The Zodiac

Jackobinarina are a six-piece band from Iceland who look barely old enough to have been allowed out of the country without accompaniment of a responsible adult, someone to carry the heavy luggage and show them how to unwrap their in-flight meals. It's become easy to stereotype Icelandic bands of late but Jackobinarina go against their native grain, straight-up synth-driven punk-pop relatively free of musical idiosyncrasies or glaciers. It is, however, wonderfully infectious, especially the ebullient synth that leads the carefree canter that's equal parts punk enthusiasm, synth-pop freshness and grunge fuzzstorm, while the singer's hectoring vocal style makes the whole thing sound like a teenage Fall tribute at times. As well as reminding us how ashamed we always feel in the face of foreign bands' excellent grasp of English, we love Jackobinarina's song titles, like 'His Lyrics Are A Disaster', and in particular, 'Nice Guys Don't Play Good Music'. In which case, these guys must be a right bunch of bastards.

And by the same token, Sweden's Love Is All must be a bunch of Hitler-worshipping kitten killers, so artfully, lopsidedly, exuberantly brilliant is their recent debut album, 'Nine Times The Same Song'. Mind you, sax player Fredrik might well fit the Hitler-worshipping kitten killer mould tonight. A scrawny geek in a hooped shirt and specs and sporting a pudding bowl haircut, he's got some serious anger issues, convinced his instrument doesn't work (it sounds fine to everyone else in the room) he starts attacking the equipment before taking a fire door off its hinges (no mean feat) and finally being ordered to leave the stage by the rest of the band and thrown out of the venue by security.

It somewhat spoils what could have been a brilliant gig, removing a crucial edge from a band whose innate mania is subsequently subdued. Still, it's not all lost. The first half of the set is fantastic, like The Slits lost and ready to party inside Roxy Music's first album, diminutive and croaky singer Josephine, armed with a cowbell and unruly mop of hair, yelping and shrieking amid the clamour of guitars and sax on tracks like 'Ageing Had Never Been His Friend', where wobbly, leftfield jazz suddenly careers into pure sunshine pop and back again without pausing for breath. Even at the end, a man down, they can melt your heart with the devilishly pretty 'Turn The Radio Off'. While so many bands plunder



Photo: Richard Hounslow

from such a narrow part of post-punk, Love Is All capture more of the free-for-all individuality of the period, closer to the synth-funk party sounds of Rip, Rig and Panic, Kissing The Pink or even Altered Images.

Tonight's gig comes at the end of a long tour, with all the strains that can entail. Maybe when Fredrik's calmed down a bit – he's later spotted skulking in a doorway down Cowley Road muttering sheepishly into his mobile – they can come back and really tear the roof off the place.

**Dale Kattack**

## AMP FIDDLER

### The Zodiac

Two years ago, nine hours late and on the wrong stage, Amp Fiddler strode out into the Glastonbury rain and delivered possibly the best live funk performance I've ever seen. Even the legions of baffled-looking hoodies waiting for Aphex Twin seemed to agree! In the country to promote his first solo long-player, 'Waltz Of A Ghetto Fly', the loose-limbed, understated neo-soul work-outs seemed to take flight in the live arena, not least because of Amp's hypnotic stage presence and surprisingly strong voice.

Fast-forward to The Zodiac in September 2006. Amp's got a new record out - Afro Strut - which trades the minimalism of his debut for a broader sound - still deeply-rooted in 70s ghetto funk but taking in dancehall reggae, house, and (courtesy of Fela Kuti sideman Tony Allen) afrobeat. It's a big precedent for his sparse band (comprising keys, guitar, bass, drums and Amp's own vintage clavinet) to live up to, and they

seem to struggle amid murky sound on the clunky opener 'Afro Strut'. Things quickly improve though, and with the fly frontman demanding your attention with every languid movement as he switches between keyboard and vocal duties it's not long before a rapt crowd are grooving to the liquid bassline of newie 'Faith' and chanting every word of 'Soul Vibration'.

It's still Amp's older material that stands out, emphasised by a stunning encore of 'If You Can't Get Me Off Your Mind'. Alone at his piano, the 'fro'd father of funk, looking deceptively youthful and disarmingly handsome for a man who in his late forties has spent a good portion of his life touring the world as a George Clinton All-Star, is at his crooning, swooning best as his throaty Sly Stone-whisper lifts to become a bruised Bobby Womack-wail. The jury may be still out on some of the new tunes, but the Fiddler is still a class act.

**Aidan Larkin**

www.audioscope.co.uk

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# MY MEGA-MELODIC ALL-DAYER

## Port Mahon

Promoting gigs is often more a matter of blind hope than financial certainty, but hosting over nine hours of lo-fi performance on Bank Holiday Saturday is simply commercial suicide.

Still, we pop along for the first half of MyAnalog and Melodic Oxford's marathon, and discovered some gems, even though we're pretty sure we were the only non-performing audience members for at least half the time.

Dave Griffiths in acoustic mode raises eyebrows from the off, revealing emotional subtleties in his voice rarely evident in Witches' sonic maelstrom. Arresting, but we still live for sonic maelstroms round here.

Proffering rustic guitar strums augmented with frail melodica and glockenspiel, Blanket are never likely to satiate this particular need, but their featherweight pastoralia is lovely. Rather gorgeous on the ear it may be, but trying to actually focus on the music and criticise it proves as tricky as climbing a rice paper staircase. Things fare better on their evocative (and reasonably priced) album.

When Robh Hokum takes to the stage with his acoustic he seems even more awkward than Blanket's singer, who had the air of a five-year-old forced to play an angel in the infants' nativity. Quick stage school tip: "I'm *this* close to vomiting" isn't an ideal greeting. However, once he

starts singing his Americana-brushed songs, any concerns are forgotten. His tiny nylon strung guitar and high reedy voice are so thin and delicate it sounds like someone's spinning a Depression-era 78 onstage, to surprisingly engrossing effect.

Twee will rock you! Synth-poppers Life With Bears have grabbed the guitars to become Socks & Shoes for some inept three chord proto-punk with childlike lyrics, something like The Shaggs meets Rod, Jane & Freddy. It's bloody great fun, but probably not much else.

HIV apologise for their offensive name, but they needn't worry, their tedious improv rock is offensive enough on its own, a dire mirror image of The Evenings' brilliance, which is tragic as the members are in wonderful bands too numerous to mention. Some light-hearted unpretentious banter softens the blow, but HIV could have internet moles feverishly typing "Clique". Caps lock on, naturally.

Warbly crooner Wolf Tracks is so ear-manglingly awful we're ecstatic that we catch a few minutes of Onions For Eyes before departure, and leaving during their carny roustabout 2 Unlimited cover makes us want to stay awhile. Which, after over five hours in The Port, is really the biggest compliment we can give this intriguing, if uneven festival.

**David Murphy**

## SPLEEN Vs IDEAL / MAIMAYO MAI

### The Cellar

They probably call it math-rock, we call it jazz. What has happened to the world that so many young men are growing beards, trying to look twice their age, playing their guitars up by their chests like dodgy 80s funk bands used to and making music that has more in common with complex logarithms than anything resembling a tune and seems intended solely to impress similarly-minded studious young men whose idea of a wild Saturday night is dissecting the intricacies of Miles Davis' rhythm section while reading a biochemistry encyclopaedia? It's enough to make you neck a bucket-load of pills and beg S Club 7 to reform. Almost.

Mai Mayo Mai's brand of jazz-rock is urgent, technical, staccato, treble-heavy and occasionally disorientating. But while it can all be frustratingly highbrow for a Ramones-loving monkey like me, there are plenty of visceral thrills to enjoy, notably the last number which careers along in a blur of speed-addled funk and discordant saxophone before drifting off

into the night with an Eno-ish coda.

Anglo-French duo Spleen Vs Ideal are a more straightforward proposition, a drummer and a bassist, both seated and wearing ski masks and white boilersuits that make them look like a nightmarish cross between the skinny kid brothers of the Michelin Man and extras from Blake's 7. Musically they're no less disturbing, pummelling chamber music to a hardcore pulp, the bassist chanting and mumbling through is mask like a mad Mullah, or, as on 'Wunderbar', sounding like 'Hey Jude' after a dose of radiation sickness. 'Atreopitheque' weirs its way into north African folk music by way of much industrial clanging and clatter.

Spleen Vs Ideal make challenging, unusual music without any kind of self-conscious cleverness. Along their personal path to the rock and roll vivisection lab they've never forgotten that music is for entertainment and not a reminder that you haven't done your maths homework.

**John Leeson**

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*Delicious Music & Up n Coming present / £4*

19th: OXFORD UNI JAZZ SOCIETY Free Entry

20th: BREAK BEAT feat. RESIDENT DJ SHAKER

*Delicious Music presents / £4 Entry*

21st: PRETTY DEAD THINGS + MOOCHER + SECTION 3

*DMR & UNC present / £4*

26th: OXFORD UNI JAZZ SOCIETY Free Entry

27th: PINK MARINES + SUPPORT £4 Entry

28th: HOLIDAY IN VIETNAM + CAPTAIN PYRATES + THE BIG TURNOUT £4 Entry

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## NIZLOPI

### The Zodiac

Thankfully the Nizlopi live experience isn't just a rehashing of the Westlife Christmas single-thrashing 'JCB Song' all night. Leamington Spa's Luke Concannon (main vocals, guitar and occasionally a bodhran hand drum) and John Parker (double bass, rather loud beatbox and occasional guitar and vocals) make far more of a noise than you'd think.

Their multi-personnel-recorded sound is rather impressively rendered on stage by just the two of them as an enthusiastic, meandering funk/soul/folk/skiffle amalgamation.

Maybe I should laud Nizlopi for their originality, passion, musicality, rapport and interaction with the audience, social awareness etc. But I just can't.

I've never been so irritated and band so accomplished and so loved by their crowd. I just can't help feeling that they're more suited to a pitch at Tottenham Court Road tube station. Both their lyrics and musical style come across as an awkward combination of earnestness and lightheartedness, and it doesn't really work for me. The anti-Blair/Brown/Bush/BNP politics of the chirpy 'Part of You Is Gay' sound like a naïve mixture of the brave and contrived. There's no doubt that they mean well – they use recycled card and organic cotton for their CDs and t-shirts, and champion their home-town independent label FDM Records – but, combined with their cod hip hop and embarrassing rapping



Photo: Richard Hounslow

(like on 'ExtraOrdinary'), it all smacks of trying too hard to bend genres and be different.

It's a shame, as those are also the main things they have going for them.

Luke's soulful and versatile voice has been compared to Tracy Chapman's; however, his refusal to stick to one note for more than

a microsecond reminds me more of Craig David, albeit sitting far less comfortably with the accompaniment than Craig's voice. I do want to like them; everyone else here tonight certainly loves them. In time, perhaps, they'll settle into a groove and iron out the awkwardness.

**Kirsten Etheridge**

## GREAT ESKIMO HOAX

### / PHOTO / TOY #1

#### The Port Mahon

It's a Sunday, so I suppose it would be the right thing to do to forgive everyone for staying in and watching *Songs of Praise*, or having their once-a-week pre-work bath. It is a bit of a shame for the bands here tonight though because as Toy #1 take to the stage they are playing to an audience of chairs. That said, they don't let it dampen their performance one iota. They make an entirely pleasurable noise that calls upon the grimmest of Melvins riffs, and occasionally steals from 'Bleach'-era Nirvana. If the proverbial man and his dog were here, no doubt the little mutt would cock his leg by way of a salute.

Photo take to the stage draped in Cramps t-shirts and a lovely shade of black. Black being the ideal colour for a band that trade in first-class rock and roll with a sizeable dollop of horror mixed in for good measure. We can't help but think of the likes of Misfits and Rocket From The Crypt, which is a good thing, obviously. Drummer TJ finally pounds the kit into submission before sending it flying across the stage, and then they're gone into the dark night to party with the undead. But only if the undead have the fashion sense of The Stokes and bring their own beer, obviously.

Great Eskimo Hoax are more angular than an hexagonal box full of set-squares that come with instructions from Pythagoras. There's a bit of post-rock here, a smattering of math-rock there, and a keyboard played with the pointy toe right there at the edge of the stage.

Elements of The Paper Chase's panic-stricken jazz workouts are in evidence, but these songs fluctuate between total paranoia and the kind of peace you might be experiencing if you farted in a Jacuzzi full of strangers. If there's a formula to writing their songs, you can be sure it's got more x's in it than a hardcore xylophone movie. A great night all round then; I hope *Songs of Praise* was worth staying in for.

**Sam Shepherd**

## ANTON BARBEAU &

### SU JORDAN / THE

#### BUENA VISTA

#### SOCIALISTS

#### The Music Market

It's all go tonight at the newly re-branded Music Market, which has the nostalgic feel of a rat pack speakeasy: groups of people, musicians and assorted riff-raff surround tables, chatting convivially and imbibing to excess. And if the mood is one of casual abandon, the entertainment is certainly apt.

The first act, Buena Vista Socialists, grab us by our ideologies and don't let go. They even whack out some rousing covers ('Baker Street', 'Easy') that keep the small crowd on a retro tip. Original numbers warrant a greater degree of attention and range from the sublime proletariat anthem 'Temporary Worker' through to the ridiculous 'Bush Fire', which could be guilty of indulging in a spot of Anton baiting (if he even gave a shit).

A short interlude of numbers from the Socialists' front man Pete, followed by a startling-at-first appearance by a Jesus-like figure named Dave, who plays an impromptu Vietnamese mouth organ ditty, heralds the dynamic duo of Mr Barbeau and Su Jordan. Those unfamiliar with the Sacramento local may be surprised to learn that he is a singer/songwriter of considerable output (twelve albums at last count). His back catalogue is matched only by his exuberant, 'stick it to the man' attitude and all the songs presented are highly melodic, structurally simple and with messages that are fantastically direct.

Mixing a large dollop of Simon and Garfunkel earnestness with a dash of Tenacious D mania is never going to be boring and tonight's rollercoaster set is performed at a by and large breakneck pace. Su chimes in superbly without ever overcooking the mix, to the point where you can't help but feel that this is the complete anathema to a phoned-in set: personal, enthusiastic but above all engaging.

**Matt Bayliss**

## ABERFELDY

### The Zodiac

This Edinburgh five piece are an unassuming but quirky bunch. One of those square pegs in a round but large cushioned hole. They, for the most part, keep to their folk sensibilities but throw in more than a few conversation killers and head-turning moments.

True it would be easy to say Aberfeldy, with their almost inhumanly luscious three-part harmonies (courtesy of bandmates Sarah McFadyen and keyboardist Ruth Barrie), West Coast sentiments combined with occasional 60s-style doo-wop bubblegum pop, are just hitchin' a ride on the MOR highway. (Er, can you have a 'middle of the road' highway? hmmm...).

But Aberfeldy aren't going to make it that easy for you to pigeon hole them. Yes they have Belle and Sebastian overtones, yes they are like Scissor Sisters' much tamer (and straighter) cousins. Yes The Magic Numbers would probably like to have them round for tea, but their pleasant, chirpiness, as seen in 'You Dress As If It Were The 1970s', is tinged with something a tiny bit sinister and an edge that Bono would envy. Think Stereolab or The B52s on Prozac.

It also doesn't hurt that Riley Briggs, frontman and songwriter, is an entertainer as well as a talented singer. He empathetically keeps the crowd laughing in between songs; okay, so it's mostly at James Blunt's expense. But it really is the twee folk and pop combined with what is obviously an obsession with late 70s bands – mainly Devo – that make the band stand out. 'Whatever Turns You On' and their cover of Devo's 'Beautiful World' are highlights, not to leave out the bass-pumping 'Poetry' which has a distinct Chic feel to it.

Aberfeldy won't be selling out Wembley too soon. But you get the impression that they are content, as are their fans, to do things their way thank you very much.

**Katy Jerome**

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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### MARY'S GARDEN

Boasting a fine pedigree (singer Laima Bite and guitarist Moty Dimant were in narcotic goth-rock starlets The Factory; keyboard player Colin McKinnon fronted promising folksters Bridge) Mary's Garden here tread a fine line between misty gothic pop and overblown Euro-rock. At any one time they're only a couple of degrees off being Bonnie Tyler or Belinda Carlisle, but even a short distance can make a big difference and particularly on CD opener 'Gasoline' – which recalls the heavily-loaded atmosphere of The Factory's sublime 'Servant's Hand' – they're coolly powerful and delicate by turns. Colin's stern synth leads the line, buzzing over tom-heavy drums and billowing guitars while Laima's striking voice holds sway, pitched neatly between Grace Slick and Sinead O'Connor. 'Live In Your Head' comes with a heavy dose of campy melodrama, not to mention a sly steal from Ultravox's 'Vienna', while closer 'Mary's Garden' builds from gothic lullaby to moody barnstormer over an epic seven minutes. Perhaps they're a bit stuck in the 80s stylistically, but with the right mix of pomp, portent and sweet melody, Mary's Garden deliver on all the potential their line-up promised.

### LIND OPTICAL

Might have scraped Demo Of The Month if they had continued the promise of their first track across the whole demo but Lind Optical appear to have put all their eggs in a single musical basket with 'The Devil Rides Out', with its carouselling organ (*a la* Supergrass 'Going Out') and veritable flood of synthesized orchestration. Conjuring up a sweeping, cinematic wall of sound, they belie their humble four-man band line-up, getting Pink Floyd, The Verve and Flaming Lips to lock horns. Thereafter they start pissing about a bit with a couple of truncated instrumental tracks that go precisely nowhere after much huffing and puffing, although 'The Red Room' does sound like it could be the theme tune to some long-lost 1970s BBC espionage serial. Lind Optical (who apparently take their name from 19<sup>th</sup> Century Swedish singer Jenny Lind as well as Isaac Newton's dissertation, 'Opticks') also offer up a dozen journalistic self descriptions, including 'Tori Amos recreating the final half hour of Kubrick's 2001', and 'the childhood dreams and nightmares of Isaac Newton'. Very good, lads, but maybe less time on self-analysis and more time writing proper pop songs in future, eh?

### PHOTO

Something of a disappointment this, given Photo's showing at the recent University Battle Of The Bands final (which they won). That night the identically-dressed and groomed trio looked like refugees from a Strokes convention and sounded like a more mannered New York Dolls. But while their MySpace site boasts an impressive array of pre- and post-punk influences, few of them appear to leave a mark on the finished product. Initially from Birmingham, they seem to have ambitions towards Los Angeles with the trans-Atlantic vocals recalling any number of pumped-up 80s American college rock bands, while tune-wise they sound like The Cars (or The Knack if we're being less kind). Further in and it all becomes a bit of a melange of hairy American rock (Aerosmith) and 70s British pub rock (Eddie & The Hotrods), gruff and accomplished but never really inspiring. A somewhat incongruous Mexican-style flourish during the last song lifts the mood but it never lives up to our expectations.

### AMBERSTATE

While it's customary to the point of cliché to suggest a singer can have dogs howling in pain for miles around, in AmberState's case it really is true. Emma De Lacey's voice is shrill and sharp and she wails lavishly over an aimless pond of wobbly electro doodling and squelching that seems to bare little resemblance to music and more to random noise generation. Her chorus line-style over-acting would dominate any band but with the music invariably little more than innocuous ambient synthetics or acoustic strum, there's nothing at all to latch onto. 'Doesn't Matter' comes closest to a song, a soul-lite wander that might harbour vague ambitions of being Swing Out Sister in another life, but soon enough it's back to the whooping and warbling, like a breathless refugee from a local amateur dramatic production of *Cats*.

### FORUM

Bands shouldn't list their influences when they submit demos. If the list is full of cool stuff it's odds on the band won't live up to your hopes. Less inspiring influences will have you turning off before the CD even starts. Come on, are we really meant to be jumping around the room in anticipation of Hundred Reasons, Biffy Clyro, Million Dead and Incubus? Still, apparently this lot got to the final of a bands competition that was judged by Chris Martin and Mark and Lard amongst others (though whether those luminaries judged the heats that got Forum to the final which they apparently didn't win is another matter). And so, after noodling about for a few minutes in *faux*-ominous fashion (ostensibly to build up an atmosphere) they

rumble and clatter through three lumps of standard post-grunge soft rock with some bloke wailing about how shit the world is or something, while no-one in particular cares. He's probably moaning about townies and not being understood or something. One day soon we're going to build a time machine and go back and make damn sure Pearl Jam never exist and thus save civilisation from a decade of adolescent torment.

## SHED SOUND

From the wilds of Thame and boasting a love of all things grunge, the appallingly-named Shed Sound grasp the opposing worlds of grunge and space rock and make them cuddle each other like playful bunnies. Well that's the idea anyway and sometimes it actually works. You get the shouty fuzz storm of Mudhoney and Nirvana stopping and starting and taking elongated lunch-breaks in the land of Pink Floyd on 'Follow The Leader', while 'Wishful Thinking' spends a greater amount of time floating in space with the magic mushroom tea and post-rock CD collection. Their aims and ideas are often better than their execution, need some editing at times. A bit of brevity and they might sound less like a stoner jam session and more like a band going places. Saturn, perhaps.

## THE SIRENS CALL

Previous recipients of a particularly ferocious Demo Dumper mauling (which prompted them to call up and ask if we were serious about having them shot by a paramilitary death squad), credit is due to The Sirens Call for re-entering the musical firing line. And credit to for a sizeable leap in quality from that previous offering. Lurching in with forty seconds of heavily-flanged guitar, they promise to go all Spacemen 3 on us but as the vocals wade in it's more like an Oasis-style grunge storm, the Liam-alike vocals just about managing to hold their own, though it'd be good to hear the guitars swamp them as they're not really strong enough to hold the lead role. Second track, 'Out Of Luck', leans back a bit more, content to coast on an old Bo Diddley riff, while the more melodic vocals aim for anthem stature but can't quite achieve full lift off. A lesson here for any band of the sharp end of a critical lambasting: don't moan or cry about it, just get back in the saddle and try and get better. And no, we don't really have bands shot, though sometimes it's tempting.

## ARMSTRONG

Another previous denizen of the Demo Dumper, although maybe that was just another band called Armstrong since this lot claim to have formed after that review was written. Maybe we should keep better records. Maybe Armstrong should make better records (did you see what we did there. Did you? Did you see?). Anyway, if it is the same Armstrong then they, like The Sirens Call, have got a bit better in the interim, but again it's all relative. This is typical emo-cum-boyband

stuff, Blue-meets-Foo Fighters, which may or may not be an improvement on the Gillan b-side-style rock gruel they previously did or didn't proffer. It's a lot more professional and now only sounds a decade less past its sell by date. Essentially McFly with a couple of knocked-off old Iron Maiden riffs and fewer tunes. And they've nicked the band A's logo. The blimmin' cheek of it.

## HANGMAN'S JOE

Can't help but think of Hangman's Joke from *The Crow* every time we hear this band's name; maybe they're just trying to avoid litigation with this slight perversion of the original moniker. Citing all manner of classic heavy rock and post-grunge names as influences Hangman's Joe thrash out a steady if unremarkable brand of melodic rock, best of the lot here being the almost poppy 'Dead Stars Everywhere'. Bigger on solid rocking power than creative enterprise they're entertaining enough when they're keeping it simple, or flying off on Hendrix-style solos, but their attempt at a ballad, 'Someday', is just WRONG, with its wounded dog vocals and echoes of rancid old crap like Poison or Ugly Kid Joe.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### TRISHA AND THE TROUBADOURS

Ah the wonders of modern education. Trisha and the Troubadours have obviously spent too much time dreaming of pop stardom and being mates with Pete Doherty and not enough time concentrating on learning basic English and understanding simple instructions. Apart from their accompanying letter being written in the untidy scrawl of a caffeine-addled chimp and therefore mostly illegible, they say (and we quote): "You said you wanted contact addresses... not sure what you meant!" Come on! What part of we need a contact address is so difficult to comprehend? Perhaps they should include it as a future GCSE exam question since it's caused so much confusion. Anyway, they then neglect to provide a contact address, thus rendering their demo ineligible for review. Except we've decided to make an example of them now. Suffice to say it's absolute pig swill, proving they haven't paid enough attention in music lessons either, particularly the bits about writing melodies, being able to sing or not sounding like Pete fucking Doherty. There's some weak attempts to get a bit skanky which tend to make Larrikin Love sound like The Specials but it's all so rudimentary we expect next month's demo pile to include a heavily-bearded man wearing a dirty old mammoth skin banging a couple of rocks together while shouting guttural nonsense at the moon. It'll almost be like progress.

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

**IMPORTANT:** no review without a contact address and phone number (no email or mobile-only). No more than four tracks on a demo. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. Aw heck, you're not taking the slightest bit of notice of this are you?

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