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# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month.  
Issue 139  
February  
2007

photo by Squib

# Richard Walters

Oxford's master of melancholy on his incredible ten-year musical journey - *interview inside.*

*Plus* - News, reviews and six pages of local gigs

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# NEWS

**Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU**  
**Phone: 01865 372255 email: nightshift@oxfordmusic.net**

**BANDS AND SINGERS** wanting to play this year's **Oxford Punt** on May 9<sup>th</sup> have until the 15<sup>th</sup> March to send CDs in. The Punt, now in its tenth year, will feature nineteen acts across six venues in the city centre over the course of one night. The Punt is widely recognised as the premier showcase of new local talent, having, in the past, provided early gigs for The Young Knives, Fell City Girl and Goldrush amongst others. Venues taking part this year are Borders, QI Club, the Wheatsheaf, the Music Market, the Purple Turtle and the Cellar. The event runs from 6pm in Borders through to 1am down at the Cellar. Bands, duos or solo acts should send demos, with a short bio, to The Punt, c/o Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU. The only rules for inclusion are that bands must be unsigned, resident in Oxfordshire and have some gigging experience. Bands that played last year's Punt cannot play this year. As ever a limited number (100) of all-venue Punt passes will be on sale from mid-February, priced £7, from Videosyncratic on Cowley Road, QI Club on Turl Street and online from oxfordmusic.net.



**JOHN CALE's** gig at the Zodiac on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January has now been re-arranged for Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March. The former-Velvet Underground man pulled the Oxford show due to "unforeseen circumstances". All tickets remain valid for the new date. Similarly Thirteen Senses have re-arranged their February Zodiac show for Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March due to recording commitments.

**SHIFTY DISCO** celebrates ten years of musical independence this month with the release of a three-CD box set featuring some of the label's

most significant releases as well as the best of its current roster. The label began as a monthly singles club back in 1997 with Dustball's 'Senor Nachos', and was responsible for The Young Knives' debut single and mini-album as well as debut releases by Unbelievable Truth and Nought. The box set features tracks by Unbelievable Truth, Nought, Beaker and The Evenings as well as non-Oxford acts such as Beulah, Elf Power and new signings My Device.

**YOUTHMOVIES** team up with former-Can legend Damo Suzuki for a one-off gig at the Cellar on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April. Damo has played a number of improvised gigs in Oxford with various local musicians, including members of Nought, Dive Dive, Ride and Fell City Girl. Tickets for the show are on sale now, priced £6, from wegotickets.com. Support comes from Fuck Buttons, Swordwind and Traktors.

**THE WALK OFF** release their debut single, 'Vader Fader', on February 26<sup>th</sup> on Norwich-based indie label Hungry Audio, home also to Telescopes. The new single is released on 7" vinyl as well as a download. The band launch the single with a gig at the Zodiac on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February, with support from last month's Nightshift cover stars Baby Gravy, plus ex-Suitable Case people Mephisto Grande. Go to [www.thewalkoff.com](http://www.thewalkoff.com) for further tour details.

**OXFORD GUITAR GALLERY** hosts another jazz masterclass with renowned guitarist Sid Jacobs on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March. The class starts at 6.30pm with tickets, priced £10, strictly limited. Contact 01865 553777 for details or visit [www.oxfordguitargallery.com](http://www.oxfordguitargallery.com)

**THE FAMILY MACHINE AND FOXES!** contribute to a new compilation mini-album on Big Scary Monsters' Alcopop singles club this month. The six-track, 3 CD is available to singles club subscribers from late January or by mail-order from [www.ilovealcopop.co.uk](http://www.ilovealcopop.co.uk) from 26<sup>th</sup> February. The other acts included on the CD are Ooberman, Midget, Beauty School Dropout and Popular Workshop. Family

**SCOTT MATTHEWS** plays at Brookes University Union on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April following two sold-out shows at the Zodiac by the Midlands-based singer-songwriter last year. Tickets, priced £10.50, are on sale now from [wegotickets.com](http://wegotickets.com) or from the Brookes Union box office, on 01865 484750.



photo: Matt Sage

**REM** were surprise guests of Robyn Hitchcock at the Zodiac last month. Michael Stipe and Mike Mills joined bandmate Pete Buck - part of Hitchcock's regular touring band, The Venus 3 - onstage for the encores, including a brace of REM songs, 'Electrolyte', plus a new, as yet untitled song, plus Hitchcock's classic 'Listening To The Higsons' and a cover of 'Eight Miles High'. With Thom Yorke also in the audience, it made for a star-studded night - see full gig review, page 14.

Machine and Foxes! play a launch gig for the album at the Cellar on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February.

**QI CLUB** in Turl Street are looking for more acts to play their fortnightly gig nights. Bands and solo acts can email Stewart at [chuckykeys@hotmail.com](mailto:chuckykeys@hotmail.com) or call on 07939592732.

**DON'T FORGET TO TUNE IN** to the Download every Saturday evening between 6-7pm on BBC Radio Oxford 95.2fm. The local music show features the best new Oxford releases, plus interviews, a club and gig guide and a regular demo vote. The show is available to listen to online all week at [bbc.co.uk/oxford](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

## THE MUSIC MARKET

Upstairs @ The Market Tavern 8 Market St, off Cornmarket St  
Tel: 01865 248388 Email: [citytavern@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:citytavern@yahoo.co.uk)

### February

#### DMR + UP'N'COMING ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

Every Saturday 8.30pm, £4. Local live bands night.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Caminus / One Dollar Peepshow / The Wildflowers Tour  
10<sup>th</sup> Hip Hop Night with Mr Shadown / Nonsense / Chris Martin / Sly / more  
17<sup>th</sup> Shaker Appeal / Juxtsar / The Castrates / The Iliterates  
24<sup>th</sup> Off Kilter / The Underside

#### DELICIOUS MUSIC OPEN MIC NIGHT

Every Sunday 8pm, FREE ENTRY

#### OXFORD UNIVERSITY JAZZ SOCIETY

Every Thursday 8pm. FREE ENTRY

#### FRIDAY FOOD

Every Friday 12-3pm. £2 (includes a bowl of fresh home-made soup)  
2<sup>nd</sup> BORDERVILLE 9<sup>th</sup> BROTHER BEN & JAMES BELL  
16<sup>th</sup> AMBERSTATE 23<sup>rd</sup> MONDO CADA

#### DEADBEAT SOUNDS - Live bands

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> / 16<sup>th</sup>. 8pm, £4

#### DMR TUESDAY NIGHT BLUES CLUB 8pm, £3

13<sup>th</sup> GREEN ONIONS (unpeeled) 27<sup>th</sup> BLUE MAMA

A Quiet Word With

# Richard Walters

## **"I USED TO GET THE JEFF**

*Buckley comparison a lot, that and Thom Yorke. They're two of the best vocalists of the last 20 years, so it's always been a taken by me as a compliment. They were two of the main reasons I started singing. But really, deep down, I wish I was Scott Walker."*

**RICHARD WALTERS IS ONE OF** the most talented singers Oxford has produced and, almost secretly, one of the most successful. Still only 24 years-old, Richard has been playing on the local scene for ten years now, originally in the band Polysoul (alongside future members of Witches and Jaberwok) and later Theremin, who released a single on Shifty Disco in 2001. But it's as a solo performer that Richard is best known and has enjoyed his greatest successes. In the past five years he has signed a publishing deal with Warner Chappell Music and been taken under the wing of Courtyard Management, who look after Radiohead and Supergrass. He has played gigs as far and wide as the States, Hong Kong and Sweden and worked with Suede's Bernard Butler, Noel Hogan of The Cranberries (in his Monoband project) and Guy Sigsworth, producer to Björk and Britney Spears.

Along the way Richard has experienced both incredible highs and equal lows. When his song 'All At Sea' was used on an episode of *CSI: Miami* last year, it prompted an unprecedented response in the States and the track on his MySpace site received over 30,000 plays. This came shortly after Richard believed his chance had slipped after a trip to the States to meet interested record companies was cut short when he suffered a seizure and was later diagnosed with epilepsy.

**WITH PLENTY OF MUSICAL** irons in the fire, 2007 looks like being Richard's most successful year yet. This month he releases a new EP, 'Pilotlights', on renowned indie label Big Scary Monsters, five songs that showcase everything that is great about his voice and his songwriting. Often – and quite accurately – compared to Jeff Buckley and Thom Yorke, Richard's voice possesses a choirboy-like clarity: cracked and keening, run through with vulnerability and a real sadness that can puncture the hardest heart. Songs like 'We Have Your Head' and 'Elephant In The Room' are wonderfully stripped-down and



Photo: Squib

simple, the latter a solemn, funereal lament that recalls the heart-breaking purity of Robert Wyatt at his very best. Elsewhere, 'Ice Skaters' rides over a bizarre rhythm like the sound of feet trudging through deep snow, accentuating the gorgeous longing and loneliness inherent in it.

A long-time favourite of ours here at Nightshift, rave reviews of Richard Walters' gigs and low-key CD releases have become a staple of these pages, while in his various guises he has appeared at more Oxford Punt events than any other artist. As such, it's easy to forget just how much the quietly unassuming singer has achieved. For his still tender years he has seen and done far more than most musicians will ever accomplish in their careers, and it's all still just beginning.

We met up with Richard as he prepared to launch his new EP. Befitting of an artist who imparts such emotional depth into his music and who has been out there and done so much already, he has a lot to say; in fact it is possibly the most expansive interview we have conducted for this magazine and it's just a shame we can't fit it all in. That said, one listen to 'Pilotlights' is all you need to fall in love with Richard's songs.

## **YOU WERE SIGNED TO**

Courtyard Management; how did that help your career?

"Theremin signed to Courtyard/Warner Chappell publishing first in

2001 - Courtyard saw us supporting Meda1, who they were managing at the time. I left the band in 2002, pretty much intent on leaving music alone for a few years. But I started writing again and playing a few gigs on my own, and that's when Courtyard approached me regarding management. It was a huge compliment - having been a Radiohead and Supergrass fan for years. I'm managed by their sister company ATC now but it's all interlinked. I still do the bulk of my recording at the studio over in Sutton Courtenay. I re-signed a solo publishing deal, just with Warner Chappell, in 2005."

You've worked with some formidable people in the music industry.

"Working with Guy Sigsworth has been awe inspiring; he's a genius. It was initially a strange idea for me, working with an electronic and mainly pop-based producer; he'd just finished work with Britney Spears when I met him. At the time I really felt like I'd fallen out of love with guitar music, I wanted to move away from that shitty singer/songwriter scene and try a different direction. The idea of making electronic music had always been appealing, but I'd never had the know-how technically to do it alone. I'd listened to Björk or Portishead records and thought how the fuck? Cos there are certain sounds you just can't pin down, and not being able to understand how it's done is half the appeal. Guy was suggested to me; I was aware of what he'd done

with Björk, especially on 'Vespertine', and his involvement with Madonna but that was it. I did some research and fell in love with the Frou Frou album he did with Imogen Heap, that's an incredible record, totally underrated. It's been a fantastic experience. I've also written and recorded with Bernard Butler over the last year. I met him at a festival in Ireland in 2005, and pestered him until he agreed to do some tracks. I think Bernard's still untouchable as a guitarist, he's totally unique."

## **YOU'VE JUST SIGNED TO BIG**

Scary Monsters. How did that come about, do you see it as a long-term arrangement and how does it feel to be involved with a small label compared to Warner Chappell?

"I heard about BSM because they released a wonderful EP by the Swedish band Jeniferever, whom I became a little obsessed with. Kev who runs the label was a friend of a friend, and I got her to speak to him about the possibility of doing a single. I thought he'd instantly dismiss the idea - the label's quite rock based and I was looking to release what is, essentially, a pop EP. It's impossible to compare BSM and my publishers. Kevin's running a fantastic, proven label almost entirely by himself, simply because he loves music. Signing publishing with a major was good for the advance, but that's about it... unless I suddenly start shifting millions of albums, I'll never be a priority at a company as big as that."

## **YOU'VE SEEN A FAIR BIT OF**

the world in recent times.

"I feel so lucky to have had the chance to see somewhere like Hong Kong, to play there. It's not somewhere I can imagine I would have visited otherwise. It did make me realise how lucky we are in Oxford and the UK in general when it comes to live music. They're crying out for live acts over there, this massive city and yet, if you're a music fan, it's very limited. Playing in the States was fun - it's a bit of a teenage dream realised. When we played at SXSW in Austin, I just assumed, Texas - redneck hell, but it was great. The festival was staggering: an entire city devoted to music for one week, it was just fucking mayhem, in a good way. And Austin was a beautiful, cultural city. I got a taxi from the airport, and before the driver had even asked where to, he told me that not all Texans are small minded, gun-toting Bush supporters;

he just wanted to make that clear. I thought that was interesting."

**HOW DID IT FEEL TO HAVE 'ALL At Sea' played on CSI: Miami,** especially with the reaction it provoked?

"It's like having a free music video, albeit starring David Caruso. And you've got a guaranteed audience of millions; it's amazing exposure. When it was originally shown in May, I couldn't believe the reaction. CBS said they'd never had a response like that to a piece of music on the show, which was very flattering. I had an email from a couple in San Diego who used the song for their first dance at their wedding. And a dance company in Portland have used the song. Those kind of things are odd to think about, but it's the reason I wanted to write music. I find it comforting to think that a song I wrote in my living room means something to other people in other places."

**THERE'S A CONSISTENT** feeling of sadness and loss in your songs; do your songs reflect you as a person?

"They are sad songs but I don't think of myself as a particularly sad person. I have ups and downs like everyone else. It's just that I write more music when I'm on a low. They're not always written from a personal point of view though; sometimes they're stories. I'd like to move away from that one day and try a different approach, but at the moment writing happy songs for the sake of it just wouldn't be true. 'Elephant In The Room' is obviously about the end of a relationship but I think, despite the lyrics, it's uplifting, hopeful even. Someone shouted 'Why don't you set yourself on fire?' right in the middle of 'I'm Sorry' at one gig last summer and I thought, shit, this really must be unbearable to watch, but that happens sometimes. On the good nights it comes out as just, I don't know... an aching, the right side of sadness. I think a lot of the time people can find something they relate to in that. I'd feel ridiculous if I suddenly started writing political protest songs, it'd be totally contrived. It's not that I don't care about big world issues, it's just... there aren't that many words that rhyme with Bush."

**YOU WERE DIAGNOSED WITH** epilepsy in 2004 just as things were looking to take off; how did this affect you and what was going on at the time and has it had an effect on your songwriting?

"When it first happened it was a bit of a shock. In spring 2004 I'd been invited over to Los Angeles to meet some labels. It was bizarre, labels in the states hear a CD and if they like it, rather than coming along to a gig, they'll ask to see you play in their office. When I was invited over to LA, I remember thinking, this is a

huge opportunity, if I can't get signed from doing this, I never will. I put an incredible amount of pressure on myself, the idea of coming back empty handed terrified me. On my second morning in LA, I had a fit - the first time anything like that had happened to me. I woke up in an ambulance and had no idea what was going on. The hospital did all the necessary tests and came to no obvious conclusions. So I was given some valium and discharged. I was in LA for another week or so, but my heart wasn't really in it. I got back to Oxford and just felt totally deflated, the whole experience really knocked my confidence. I really felt that I'd fucked up my one big chance. I saw my doctor and was told it was a one-off seizure, probably brought on by tiredness and stress. I wasn't actually diagnosed with epilepsy until the following January, when I started having fits again. I found it quite hard to cope with at the time, and it just distracted me from music for a bit but things went back to normal after a month or so."

**YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING IN** bands and solo since you were 15; what have been the most important things that have happened to you in that time, and what has been the most important lesson you've learned?

"I'm 24 now, so it's scary to think it's almost 10 years since Polysoul. I suppose, on a personal level at least, not much has changed. I still love singing, I write in the same way and yeah, music's still the biggest part of me. The only difference really is it can be harder, without that safety net you have when you're younger, to find the time and drive to push yourself to the next level when you're working 35 hours a week, in a job that you have little or no interest in, but that's how I know it still matters to me. My opinion of the music industry has changed massively in that time though; I'm probably getting more and more cynical every year. I signed my first publishing deal when I was 19, and at that time, in my mind at least, the idea of achieving anything notable without the backing of a major was out of the question. But I found out pretty quickly that majors aren't necessarily what you need to start a career, certainly to sustain one. That's what's amazing about the current musical climate, this whole DIY, home-made ethos that's growing - the idea that you can gain a global following, potentially without even leaving your house, is just incredible. Music still feels fresh to me. It still feels brand new."

**'Pilotlights' is released on 26th February on Big Scary Monsters. Richard plays the Zodiac on Saturday 23rd February. Visit [www.myspace.com/richardwalters](http://www.myspace.com/richardwalters) for news and downloads.**


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**LISTINGS**  
**FEBRUARY:07**

**01st THURSDAY**  
**Big Hair**  
 Indie night with live acts  
 BUCKY punky rock duo + LITTLE FISH  
 rock + TWAT TROT TRA LA alt rock +  
 MEFISTO GRANDE ex-SCAT  
 8pm-3am - £4

**02nd FRIDAY**  
**RAG Battle of the Bands**  
 In Light, Lonely Echoes, L-Shape  
 Room, Sub-Funk (plus two more acts  
 to be confirmed) 8pm-3am (First act at  
 8:30pm) £4 before 8:30pm £5 after

**03rd SATURDAY**  
**The Dugout**  
 The very finest in heard and unheard  
 super fly soul, rare grooves and  
 bad assed funk  
 SIR BEANS OBE + SPECIFIK & DUGOUT  
 Residents  
 8-3am - £5

**04th SUNDAY**  
**Sunday Roast**  
 Chilled club night  
 8:30pm-Late - £3

**05th MONDAY**  
**The Free Beer Show**  
 Stand up comedy club  
 Earl Olin + Support/MC: Rob Alderson  
 Doors 8pm / Show 9pm  
 Bar & Music til 1am £6/£5 members  
 free beer with every ticket

**06th TUESDAY**  
**Vertigo**  
 Indie night with live acts  
 Acts TBC 8pm-2am  
 £4/£3 IMSOC membership

**07th WEDNESDAY**  
**Hit & Run**  
 Hip-hop and Drum n Bass  
 Nicky Blackmarket  
 8pm-3am - £5

**08th THURSDAY**  
**Big Hair**  
 Indie night and rock with live acts  
 THE FAMILY MACHINE alt country/  
 indie + FOXES powerpop/indie MATHY  
 FERGUSON indie/rock  
 8pm-3am - £4

**09th FRIDAY**  
**Bassaphenik**  
 Live Jazz dance night  
 SMERINS ANTI-SOCIAL CLUB  
 Brass-heavy ska, funk, jazz, dub  
 8pm til 3am - £5

**10th SATURDAY**  
**Bassmentality**  
 PLANET MAN & THE  
 INTERNATIONALZ (8 piece Reggae,  
 Ska, Funk) + DJ Darcy, Heartless P,  
 Random C, Drunken Uncle Blumple  
 8pm til 3am - £4 B4 11 £5 after

**11th SUNDAY**  
**Salva Sundays**  
 Live Latin Rhythms  
 SALSANEROS 10 piece salsa band  
 8:30pm-Late (band on from 9pm) - £4

**12th MONDAY**  
**The Free Beer Show**  
 Stand up comedy club  
 Oxford All-Stars: John Gethin, James  
 Laurence, Tom Greaves, Charlie  
 Partridge + MC Rob Alderson  
 Doors 8pm / Show 9pm  
 Bar & Music til 1am  
 £6/£5 members  
 free beer with every ticket

**13th TUESDAY**  
**Intrusion**  
 Goth Club night  
 8:30pm-2am - £3

**14th WEDNESDAY**  
**Phonik Sessions**  
 Oxford groove jam session is back!  
 Jazz-funk-soul-latin-afrobeat. Bring  
 your instruments for a night of  
 improvised music.  
 8pm-2am - £2/£3

**15th THURSDAY**  
**Big Hair**  
 Indie, Rock, 80s Disco  
 THE ROCK OF TRAVOLTA rock!!!  
 + WATCHES indie/alt  
 SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE  
 electro/experimental  
 8pm - 3am - £4

**16th FRIDAY**  
**Turl Street Arts Festival**  
 Kid A Dance Party  
 Mixtape Society + Radioheads Kid A  
 & Indie DJs  
 8pm - 3am - £4

**17th SATURDAY**  
 Turntableism, Party Hip-hop & Breaks  
 8pm-3am - £5

**18th SUNDAY**  
**Sunday Roast**  
 Chilled Club night  
 8:30pm-Late - £3

**19th MONDAY**  
**The Free Beer Show**  
 Stand up comedy club  
 Russell Howard - Wandering tour  
 + support  
 Doors 8pm / Show 9pm  
 Bar & Music til 1am - £6/£5 members  
 free beer with every ticket

**20th TUESDAY**  
**Fundraiser**  
 in aid of local charities fighting poverty  
 Acts TBA  
 8pm-2am - £4

**21st WEDNESDAY**  
**Hit & Run**  
 Hip-hop and Drum n Bass  
 8pm-2am - £3 B4 10 £4 after

**22nd THURSDAY**  
**Big Hair**  
 Indie, rock, 80s disco  
 THE LIES AND HOW WE TOLD THEM  
 indie / experimental / progressive +  
 ZELEGA experimental post rock +  
 APERATEC electro  
 8pm-3am - £4

**23rd FRIDAY**  
**NO**  
 Drum n Bass Sessions  
 DJ Lee (Metalheadz), Survival  
 (forthcoming tunes on Play:Music),  
 Creative Source, Exit Records)  
 Jazz Thieves (Pushin Wad)  
 8pm-3am - £3 B4 10 £5 after

**24th SATURDAY**  
**Chix with Decks**  
 Indie, Punk, Rock & Roll  
 style Club Night  
 8pm-3am - £3 B4 10 £5 after

**25th SUNDAY**  
**Salva Sundays**  
 Live Latin Rhythms  
 SALSANEROS 10 piece salsa band  
 8:30pm-Late (band on from 9pm) - £4

**26th MONDAY**  
**The Free Beer Show**  
 Stand up comedy club  
 Freedom of Speech Season - acts tbc  
 Doors 8pm / Show 9pm  
 Bar & Music til 1am - £4

**27th TUESDAY**  
**Dirty beautiful**  
 Hazy Minimal, Jacking Techno, Dirty  
 electro, Hooper by Remedy  
 9pm-2am - £3

**28th WEDNESDAY**  
**Phonik Sessions**  
 Oxford groove jam session is back!  
 Jazz-funk-soul-latin-afrobeat.  
 Bring your instruments for a night of  
 improvised music.  
 8:30pm-2am - £2/£3


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# RELEASED

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## **GOLDRUSH**

### **'The Heart Is The Place'**

*(Truck)*

In which our protagonists journey far from the Shire to take on the American beast, lose two of their band of brothers, come within an inch of splitting up and finally return home full of spirituality and with a new-found love of psychedelic prog-rock.

Not that Goldrush's third album escapes its prairie roots entirely, from its grandly symphonic intro, of which Spiritualized would be proud, to its layers of swirling, shimmering

guitars and songs that seem to be trying to soar skywards even when they're treading timorously behind Robin Bennett's reedy, just-got-out-of-bed-after-several-bottles-of-whisky voice. His is the faltering vulnerability amid the new, bold acid-pop tendencies.

Having acted as Mark Gardener's backing band for much of the last three years, it's not surprising that there are hints of Ride in tracks like 'Every One Of Us', where those country roots are a distant dust cloud on the horizon, while 'The Story of the City' recalls Mercury Rev's finest moments, with its gorgeous, childlike, swooning melody. Having threatened to stagnate completely for a while, it's great to hear how fresh Goldrush can sound on 'The Heart Is The Place', the pastoral psychedelic trip of 'Can't Give Up The Ghost' and the kooky 'Heaven's My Destination' with its scraped strings and backwards guitars and Robin sounding like Robert Wyatt just two of its understated highlights. Only when they slump back into ballad mode, as on 'Yours And Mine' do they sound lethargic, Robin singing like the death-rattle of a 40-a-day smoker.

As Goldrush lurch off the road in a squall of horn stabs and flailing heavy rock guitars on 'Sun In Your Eyes', you can feel that far from sapping the life out of them, their global trawls have set them on another journey altogether.

**Sue Foreman**

## **THE WALK OFF**

### **'Vader Fader'**

*(Hungry Audio)*

Hissing factory beats, synth squelches with edges as rough as shattered glass and a voice like Marilyn Mason coughing up a lungful of cigarette tar; it's fair to say The Walk Off won't be invading the consciousness or wallet of yer average fan of The Feeling any time soon. But they should. They should be inside their heads screaming and pummelling and making them cry for it all to stop because it hurts. Hurts like ten tons of hammers and rusty razor blades landing on you when you're tucked up snugly in bed. Hurts even though at heart it's a snappy little disco number with a chorus that sounds like N.E.R.D's 'Lapdance' after a *contretemps* with an industrial chicken meat processor.

If Michael Jackson was indeed the Devil, and Aphex Twin and Atari Teenage Riot had produced 'Bad', this is what it might have sounded like.

**Dale Kattack**

## **CHANTELLE PIKE**

### **'Ain't It Just A Cigarette EP'**

*(Own Label)*

Oxford is currently awash with talented young female singer-songwriters, amongst them Chantelle Pike, who eschews bedroom introspection in favour of a more showy, jazz style. That said, the strongest track on this Mark Gardener-produced EP is 'Isabella' with its swooning cello and deep-set melancholy. But otherwise Chantelle seems more at home belting out tear-stained torch songs in a basement jazz club, her strong, velvety voice often at odds with her humdrum subject matter.

You do get the feeling though that she's not making the very best of her vocal strength with slight material that lingers only briefly in the memory. The more playful 'Dropping Stitches' is sweet enough but lightweight and only when Chantelle darkens the mood does she begin to shine in her best light.

**Dale Kattack**

## **LAIMA BITE**

### **'Spiderweb'**

*(Own Label)*

A couple of years ago the then completely unknown Laima Bite absolutely slayed us with one of the most beautiful, heart-wrenching demos we've ever received, including the peerless 'Did You Used To Love'. Since then her solo work has taken a backseat to vocal duties with The Factory and latterly Mary's Garden. With a voice that can convey both portent and sadness with consummate ease Laima has taken each band to a higher level but it's still her stripped-down solo material that shows her talents off best.

This eight-song mini-album features backing from Junkie Brush's Tim Lovegrove, plus Mary's Garden bandmates Moty Dimante and Colin MacKinnon, but they never impose on Laima's warm, soulful folk songs, a lyrical world of love and loss. Sometimes the words have a clumsiness that trips up the emotional outpouring, as on 'The Milkman', but at others, such as 'Hear You Breathing' she can cut to the very quick of what love is all about, and that's a rare gift.

Despite the romantic nature of these songs, it's slush-free; Laima's take on it all is resolutely pessimistic, but then happy music is for stupid people and you could lose your head and heart in songs like 'Twisted Angel' or the gorgeous 'Wait For Me', gently bucolic flute and acoustic guitar creating a shroud of private melancholy.

Too often singer-songwriters have either a great voice or great songs. Laima has both. A rare talent. One that demands wider exposure.

**Dale Kattack**



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## DR SHOTOVER:

### Missing, Presumed Deaf

Yes, yes, I heard you the first time, no need to rub it in, you smug bugger. I know, I missed THE gig of the year the other week, when REM showed up at the Zodiac to jam with Robyn Hitchcock. Now, young Hitchcock's a sound cove – I was at school with his father – and I usually pop along to pay my respects, but sadly I was unavoidably detained, so had to forego the pleasure. What's that? Where WAS I? In the cells, you nosy blighter. For cheeking a police dog, actually...

Anyway, last night the chaps at the club bar and I found ourselves discussing great events which we have missed due to circumstances beyond our control... Binky Harmondsworth was on the guest list, but drank so much egg-nog he failed to make it to the Strokes at the Zodiac, the one where Kate Moss joined them on backing vocals (I was there and I don't remember that, but who's to point the finger of doubt when

a good story is involved...?)...

Algy Fortnum had tickets for the 1966 World Cup, but was hospitalised due to falling off a Spacehopper the day before... and Soupy Sales had to miss his own wedding after being mauled by a lion at Longleat. That was HIS excuse, anyway, though he looked fine to me when I saw him the following week with that Brazilian popsy at the Isle of Wight Festival... Now, where was I? Ah yes, most amusing, in the cells... your turn to buy the next hogshead of claret, you ghastly little oik...

Next month: Gigs we WISH we'd missed, part 1: The Vines



Michael Stipe about to make a surprise guest appearance at the Nettlebed Folk Club.

## DELICIOUS MUSIC

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13 Tamara Parsons & Adam Dutton + Pawel Kuterba

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27 Blue Mama

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13 Green Onions (unpeeled)

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## February

Every Monday

### THE FAMOUS MONDAY NIGHT BLUES

The best in UK, European and US blues. 8-12. £6

5<sup>th</sup> **ROB TOGNONI** (Australia)

12<sup>th</sup> **FUNKYDORY** (UK)

19<sup>th</sup> **THE LEE RYDER BAND** (UK)

26<sup>th</sup> **HONEYBOY HICKLING & THE DTs** (UK)

Every Tuesday

### THE OXFORD JAZZ CLUB

Free live jazz plus DJs playing r'n'b, funk and soul until 2am

6<sup>th</sup> **KATYA GORRIE** featuring **DENNY ILETT Jr**

13<sup>th</sup> **THE TOM GREY QUINTET**

20<sup>th</sup> **THE TOM GREY QUINTET**

27<sup>th</sup> **THE NUMBERS RACKET**

Every Thursday

### GET FUNKED

Electromash, bastard pop, broken bass. 9.30-2am. £3

Every Friday

### BACKROOM BOOGIE

Funk, soul and R&B. 9-2am Free B4 10pm; £4 after.

(23<sup>rd</sup> – with guest AIDAN LARKIN)

Saturdays

3<sup>rd</sup> **SIMPLE** – Funky House. 9-3am

10<sup>th</sup> **OX4** – Drum'n'bass. 9-3am

17<sup>th</sup> TBC

24<sup>th</sup> **SKAVILLE + THE ELEMENTS**. £8

Sundays

4<sup>th</sup> **LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY**. 8pm. £7/6

11<sup>th</sup> **THE DIVINITY SCHOOL + LOKEI +**

**HANGMAN'S JOE**. 7.30-11pm. £4

18<sup>th</sup> **HI FLYER** + support. 8pm. £3

25<sup>th</sup> **THE DOUGHNUT KINGS**

# GIG GUIDE

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

**HELLOGOODBYE + PLAIN WHITE T + HOUSTON CALLS:** **The Zodiac** – Electro-pop and sunny Orange County pop-punk collide in unlikely but quite fun union in HelloGoodbye's world. Tonight's show by the Drive Thru-signed types is already sold out.  
**GRINNING SPIDER with TRUE RUMOUR + COLINS OF PARADISE + JOE &**

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

## JAMIE T: Brookes University Union

MySpace may have launched him on the road to fame and fortune but it's a path that's been well beaten by endless tours and one that shows no sign of ending any time soon. In fact, with his debut album, 'Panic Prevention', due at the end of January, Jamie T is looking more and more like one of 2007's biggest stars. The champion if the disenfranchised has so far furnished us with a handful of limited edition EPs, each packed to the gunnels with blurry, boozy suburban narratives. Like a south London Arctic Monkeys he's got an eye for detail and a way with a rhyme that would shame most rappers. Jamie blurs the line between rap and folk, not to mention punk and reggae, as much indebted to Billy Bragg and Desmond Decker as he is to The Streets and The Clash. His music often seems as gangly and awkward as its creator but really it's pin-sharp and always utterly charming, imbuing everyman tales of booze and pills and love and chippies with great romanticism. He may come backed with Apple technology but Jamie T is a real troubadour of the old school. Get used to loving him.

## FEBRUARY

**ANGHARAD + PETE CHADWICK:** **The X, Cowley** – Delicate, doleful acoustic pop in the vein of Jeff Buckley and Red House Painters from True Rumour, plus support from trippy cocktail jazzers Colins of Paradise.  
**JOHN ADREW FREDERICK + THE NEW MOON:** **QI Club** – LA singer-songwriter and Black Watch frontman Frederick comes to town as part of a short UK tour to promote his 11<sup>th</sup> album, 'Tatterdemalium', plying eloquent, psychedelia-tinged pop and backed by Pat 'Jazz Butcher' Fish. Local acoustic duo The New Moon support.

**PORT MAYHEM:** **The Port Mahon** – Acoustic night.

**BUCKY + LITTLE FISH + TWAT TROT TRA LA + MEPHISTO GRANDE:** **The Cellar** – Leftfield rock from the Big Hair crew, including post-rockers Twat Trot Tra La and rabid blues mayhem from former-Suitable Case chaps Mephisto Grande.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** **East Oxford Community Centre** – Oxford's long-running open-mic club keeps going strong with a varied selection of singers, poets and performance artists every week.

**DIRTY SCI-FI + MONDO CADA + FATALLY YOURS:** **The Hobgoblin, Bicester** – Bicester gets its monthly dose of the heavy stuff, this time courtesy of doomy rockers Dirty Sci-Fi, full-on grunge thrashers Mondo Cada and Smiths-inspired rockers Fatally Yours.

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** **The Half Moon**  
**GET FUNKED:** **The Bullingdon**

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

**BEN LEE TYLER + ALEX VARGAS + THE IDEA:** **The X, Cowley** – Classic 60s-influenced power rock from Cheltenham's Ben Lee Tyler, with support from bluesy acoustic pop singer Alex Vargas.

**ROSY BENEFIT:** **Emperor Ballroom, Romanway, Cowley** – Benefit gig for Respite Nursing for Oxfordshire's Sick Youngsters, featuring a night of hip hop, r'n'b and jazz music, including soul starlet Jada Pearl, rapper Zuby, G Buck, Teresa Edwards, Alvin Roy, plus a special Def Jam guest.

**DAN SARTAIN:** **The Zodiac** – Colourful, dramatic story-telling singer out of Alabama with an authentic 1950s Tex-Mex sound that mixes rockabilly with mariachi and a country twang. Stylishly stripped-down stuff from another age, performed with genuine flair.

**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with IVY'S ITCH +**

**PETE FRANKLIN + IAN STAPLES:** **The Wheatsheaf** – Goth-grunge banshees Ivy's Itch tear up Klub Kak's monthly session.

**BANDS & SINGERS NIGHT:** **The Victoria, Jericho**

**INLIGHT + LONELY ECHOES + L-SHAPED ROOM + SUB FUNC:** **The Cellar** – RAG battle of the bands.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE:** **The Bullingdon** – Weekly club night featuring classic soul, funk and disco.

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB:** **The Port Mahon**  
**TONY BOWEN + SLASHED SEAT AFFAIR + SOMAHIGH + THE BANDINIS:** **Jericho Tavern** – Rock and acoustic night.

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

**GYM CLASS HEROES + MADINA LAKE + HANGAR 18:** **The Zodiac** – New York hip hoppers, signed to Fueled By Ramen, mixing crudely witty lyrics with laid-back beats, somewhere between Outkast and Bloodhound Gang.

**THE DeBRETTS + HAMMER Vs THE SNAKE + GEORGE PRINGLE:** **The X, Cowley** – eX-Posure club night with frothy cabaret punkers The DeBretts headlining, plus jerky post-punk synth rockers Hammer Vs The Snake and current MySpace star George Pringle, sprinkling stream-of-consciousness monologues over minimalist electro-pop.

**THE GREEN:** **The Port Mahon** – Darkly-inclined indie rockers.

**ONE DOLLAR PEEPSHOW + CAMINUS + THE WILDFLOWERS TOUR:** **The Music Market** – Sweet Cardigans-styled pop from Reading's One Dollar Peepshow at tonight's Delicious Music new bands night.

**THE DUGOUT:** **The Cellar** – Soul, rare groove and funk with eight-piece band The Specifik, Sir Beans OBE and Dugout.

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

**SKITTLE ALLEY ACOUSTIC NIGHT:** **King's Head & Bell, Abingdon** – Unplugged night with Mark Bosley and Morrison & Wheat.

**MELTING POT with KING FURNACE + PARKER + GRIM LAKE FACILITY:** **Jericho Tavern** – Chili Peppers-style funk rocking from King Furnace.

**SKYNY NYRDS:** **Killingworth Castle, Wotton**

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

**METRIC:** **The Zodiac** – Toronto-based quartet fronted by Broken Social Scene collaborator Emily Haines whose effervescent vocals and keyboard playing breathe life into the band.



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Album 'Live It Out' was nominated for Canadian album of the year in 2006, while single, 'Monster Hospital', is a great anti-war anthem. Alternately sweet and noisy, they've got some of the fizz and fun of early Breeders about them.

#### **DELICIOUS MUSIC ELECTRIC JAM**

**SESSION: The Music Market**

**ELECTRIC JAM: The X, Cowley** – Jam along with the in-house band, The X-Men.

**DEAD SPIES: The Port Mahon**

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

**ROB TOGNONI: The Bullingdon** – Driving blues-rock from the Tasmanian guitarist and his power trio band.

**GRACE + CLOCKS: The Zodiac** – Package tour of two up'n'coming indie acts. West London's Grace, unsurprisingly, owe a debt to Jeff Buckley, while Surrey's Clocks, recently signed to Island Records and managed by former-Menswear guitarist Chris Gentry, have a melodic, jangly 60s edge akin to The La's and Shack.

**SUGAR'N'SPICE + THEO + DJ**

**HOMELESS: The Port Mahon**

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

**JAMIE T: Brookes University Union** – The Bard of Wimbledon continues his unstoppable rise – *see main preview*

**PATRICK WOLF: The Zodiac** – Return of London-based folktronica songsmith after his excellent show at the Zodiac back in October as

well as his appearance at last summer's Truck Festival. Pastoral hymns cut through with analogue sounds and electronic beats with a sweeping elegance coupled with as his yearning, doomed lyrics and wonderfully limpid voice mark him out as a successor to Nick Cave or John Cale. A talented multi-instrumentalist, Wolf tends to lead with violin, viola or piano, but utilises more exotic instruments, such as a Finnish kantele. Now signed to Loog Records, he released his third album, 'Magic Position', late last year featuring collaborations with Marianne Faithfull and Larrikin Love and mainstream success finally looks like his for the taking.

**JAZZ CLUB with KATYA GORRIE &**

**DENNY ILETT Jr: The Bullingdon** – Free weekly jazz club with resident and guest bands, plus r'n'b DJs til late.

**SHUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The X, Cowley**

**COTTON BLONDE + YOUR FAVOURITE WEAPON + THE IDEA: The Port Mahon**  
**VERTIGO: The Cellar** – Indie and electro club night with live bands.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ SESSION: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With jazz guitarist Luis D'Agostino.

**OPEN MIC NIGHT: Mangos**

**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Hobgoblin, Bicester**

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

**FOLK SESSION: The X, Cowley**

**HIT & RUN: The Cellar** – Hip hop and drum&bass club night.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House**  
**THURSDAY 8<sup>th</sup>**

**BEN WATERS & CHRIS JAGGER: The X, Cowley** – Renowned blues and zydeco duo play an intimate show at the X – *see main preview*

**AEROGRAMME: The Zodiac** – Symphonic, oceanic and sometimes bruising prog-grunge excellence from Glasgow's mighty Aerogramme, a band who ought to be selling several million more albums than they currently do, despite being beloved of everyone from Flaming Lips and Pavement to Charlie from Busted. Inspired by the likes of Talk Talk and The God Machine, they're ambitious, extravagant and complex but packing a great melodic punch. C'mon, make them famous!

**BRITPOP NIGHT: The Zodiac** – New club night with Loz Colbert spinning classic indie and rock anthems.

**ZELEGA: The Port Mahon**

**LOUISE SETARA: The Living Room, Oxford Castle** – Rising teenage jazz singer, recently signed to Blue Note offshoot label Manhattan, promoting debut album, 'Still Waters'.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

**GET FUNKED: The Bullingdon**

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

**CAPDOWN: The Zodiac** – Once more into the breach for Milton Keynes' politicised ska-punk battlers.

**BRIAN JAMES GANG: The Zodiac** – Original Damned guitarist Brian James keeps on



*Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>*

## **REGINA SPEKTOR: Oxford Town Hall**

An unusual venue for a gig, Oxford Town Hall's high ceiling and miniature grandiosity is well suited to Regina Spektor. The wild-haired Muscovite-turned-Bronx resident is well in the ascendancy now after years spent cultivating a cult following amongst the anti-folk and art-rock crowd in her adopted New York, mixing up gypsy folk, jazz and grungy pop. Her big break came in 2003 when she supported The Strokes on tour and she hasn't looked back. Last year she sold out the Zodiac and headlined the barn stage at Truck and this time around should have little trouble selling out such a venue as this. As with another of this month's star turns, Bat For Lashes, Regina's appeal lies both in her quite stunning voice and her twisted take on songwriting. Vocally she veers from little girl lost to ominous majesty, all the while rivalling Tori Amos for the title of Queen of Whimsy; she's prone to beating her piano stool with a cane and singing about Hans Christian Anderson "Having his way with me". After 2005's breakthrough album, 'Soviet Kitsch', her reputation is enhanced with fourth album 'Begin The Hope' and it's not beyond reason that next time she'll have outgrown even this venue.

rocking with his own band, keeping the punk and garage rock flag flying. And they still play 'New Rose', in case you were wondering.

**SLIDE: The Zodiac** – House club night with special guest DJ set from the renowned producer and remixer Paul Woolford.

**BLUNTED Vs BOOGIE BASEMENT: The Zodiac** – Breaks, funk and reggae on the decks as the two club favourites go head to head for the night.

**GAMMY LEG PRODUCTIONS with RAGGASAUROS + WILSON + LES**

**CLOCHARDS: The X, Cowley** – Gappy Tooth Industries' side project presents a jolly party mix with lively reggae / Arabic groovers Raggasaurus, deceptively brilliant Northampton baggy revivalists Wilson and local Gallic

*Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>*

## **CHRIS JAGGER & BEN WATERS: The X**

Jagger: a big name for a small venue but the perfect environment to appreciate Mick's younger brother's earthy brand of swamp blues, zydeco and cajun. The Somerset-based singer and harpist has been recording and performing since the 70s, including two cult albums for David Geffen in the 70s. As well as this he contributed lyrics to two Stones albums, 'Dirty Work' and 'Steel Wheels'. Most recently he's been exploring world and roots music and 1994's 'Atcha' album saw the fulfilment of this in collaboration with long-term musical partner Ben Waters, a world-renowned pianist whose CV is a who's who of blues and rock. A boogie-woogie pianist inspired by Dr John and Ray Charles as well as the showmanship of Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard, he's also possessed of a strong, raunchy blues voice. The duo's new album 'Act Of Faith' is recently released and tonight's gig should get the X well and truly rocking.





*Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>*

## NME AWARDS TOUR: Brookes University

One of two NME Awards-branded tours currently doing the rounds, this one is dubbed 'The New Rave', a lazy and inaccurate label for a collection of bands playing dancefloor-friendly rock. South London's Klaxons probably come closest to fitting the label, taking gonzo acid house riffs and playing them with guitars instead of synths. There are obvious nods to Guru Josh and Baby D, while they also cover novelty rave hit 'The Bouncer', but their drunken, hyperactive pop is as close to Kasabian at times. Leeds' Sunshine Underground Band keep the frantically funky post-punk noise count high, where Killers meet Radio 4, while New Young Pony Club, fresh from supporting Lily Allen, style themselves closer to Tom Tom Club with an alluring blend of electro-pop and 80s funk. Best of the lot, though, are Sao Paulo sextet CSS (*pictured*). While it's not surprising to see the media get into a froth about an (almost) all-girl Brazilian band, their dirty, sexy robo-disco-punk is irresistibly infectious, nowhere more so than on recent single, 'Alala', where Hot Chip meets Go! Team. Just can't get them out of our head....

songsters Les Clochards coming on like a cross between Serge Gainsbourg, Elvis and The Pastels.

**BANDS & SINGERS NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho**

**QUICKFIX presents VESTIBULE + BROTHER FRANCISCO + GANGER DRAFT + BLUE RIDERS: The Wheatsheaf** – Post-rocking from headliners Vestibule, plus heavy-duty drone rock action from former-Black Neilson types Brother Francisco. Newcomers Ganger Draft feature members of Verbal Kink and At Risk, while Didcot's Blues Riders opt for some classic heavy rocking. **BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar** – Brass-heavy ska, funk and jazz with Smerin's Anti-Social

Club, plus DJs.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**  
**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**  
**TREV WILLIAMS + THE KING'S**  
**SHILLINGS + OFF THE RADAR + THE**  
**BROCKS: Jericho Tavern** – Acoustic pop and indie rock night.

### SATURDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**FORK + HEADCOUNT + 32 + ALLY**  
**CRAIG: The X, Cowley** – Wittstock fundraiser with prog-punkers Fork teaming up with punk-metal titans headcount, plus Sonic Youth-via-Jeff Buckley style pop from Ally Craig.  
**MIDAS: The Port Mahon**  
**MR SHAADOW + NONSENSE + CHRIS MARTIN + SLY: The Music Market** – Hip hop night from Delicious Music and Half Decent Entz.  
**BASSMENTALITY: The Cellar** – Ska, reggae and funk with guests Planet Man and Internationalz, plus DJs.  
**OX4: The Bullingdon** – Drum&bass club night.  
**BARAKA: Coven II** – Psy-trance club night with DJs Aeon, Petran and LSDan.  
**BLACK JACK TABAC: The Duke, St Clements** – Blues, funk, soul, jazz, reggae, and punk from DJs Van Mule and Aidan Larkin.

### SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**FLIES ARE SPIES FROM HELL + MESAPLEX + LAST DAYS OF LORCA: The Port Mahon** – Swiss Concrete night with alternately urgent and ambient synth'n'guitar instrumentalists Flies Are Spies, plus Depeche Mode-inspired electronics from Mesaplex and epic, angular rocking from Chichester's Last days of Lorca.  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC ELECTRIC JAM SESSION: The Music Market**  
**THE DIVINITY SCHOOL + LOKEI + HANGMAN'S JOE: The Bullingdon** – Local rock bands night.  
**SALSANEROS: The Cellar** – Salsa club night with live band.

### MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**FUNKYDORY: The Bullingdon** – Rough and raw blues-rock with a soul edge from the UK rising stars, drawing on Led Zep, Frank Zappa and Tina Turner for inspiration.  
**THE HOLLOWAYS: The Zodiac** – North London rockers named after the road they live on, plying more sprightly post-Libertines indie punk with a slice-of-city-life lyrical bent.  
**MAIRE NI CHATHASAIGH & CHRIS NEWMAN: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Ireland's premier Celtic harpist teams up with the influential acoustic guitarist for a night of 17<sup>th</sup> Century jigs and reels as well as contemporary originals.

### TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**REGINA SPEKTOR: Oxford Town Hall** – Kooky New York-based Russian singer returns to town – *see main preview*  
**KLAXONS + CSS + NEW YOUNG PONY CLUB + THE SUNSHINE UNDERGROUND BAND: Brookes University Union** – NME's 'New Rave' Awards tour comes to town – *see main preview*  
**JUST JACK: The Zodiac** – Urban folk narratives from the North London singer-cum-

rapper in a vaguely Streets-like vein.

**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY QUINTET: The Bullingdon**  
**ANTON BARBEAU + THE NEW MOON: The Port Mahon** – Psychedelic-tinged 60s-styled pop from Mr Barbeau.  
**SHUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The X, Cowley**  
**INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Goth and industrial club night.  
**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ SESSION: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With guests Tamara Parsons, Adam Dutton and Pawel Kuterba.  
**BLUES NIGHT with GREEN ONIONS UNPEELED: The Music Market** – Unplugged set from the Blues Brothers tribute act.

### WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**MARCIO MATTOS: The Port Mahon** – Brazilian cellist, a renowned figure on the London and European improvisation circuit, teams up with members of the Oxford Improv Collective.  
**VALENTINE'S MASSACRE with BLACK SKIES BURN + THIRTY TWO: The Music Market** – Extreme metal night in celebration of St Valentine's Day, featuring former-Faith In Hate people Black Skies Burn.  
**FOLK SESSION: The X, Cowley**  
**PHONIK SESSIONS: The Cellar** – Funk open jam session.  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House**

### THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**THE ROCK OF TRAVOLTA + WITCHES + SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE: The Cellar** – The resurgent Rock are re-stating their case as the best live band in Oxford with their incendiary blend of rock theatrics, orchestral pomp and electronic edginess, pitching them somewhere between Stravinsky, Shellac and Trans Am, in a galaxy far, far away. Witches provide more genteel leftfield pop fun, while newcomers Space Heroes could be one of this year's star turns, mixing up glitchy electronics with metronomic drumming and sci-fi samples.  
**ROLO TOMASSI: The Port Mahon** – Shouty, shouty, yelp, yelp 236MPH wobbly Beefheart-gone-gabba extreme gibbering synthcore mayhem from the Sheffield nutters wot sound like The Locust getting cooked in a spin dryer by Melt Banana. Bring yer mum.



**FRANK TURNER + DIVE DIVE + BEANS ON TOAST:** *The Zodiac* – Former Million Dead frontman Frank heads off on tour in support of his new solo album, *Sleep Is For The Week*, now plying a more rootsy style with a political edge. Local punk-pop heroes Dive Dive are acting as his backing band for the duration and also playing a support set, having released their second album, 'Revenge of the Mechanical Dog' this month. Beans on Toast should provide suitably wholesome support as well as valuable roughage.

**JESSICA GOYDER:** *The X, Cowley* – Sweetly exotic singer-songwriter based in Oxford and Barcelona, mixing Joni Mitchell, Sade and Emmylou Harris with bossa nova.

**SABOTAGE:** *The Zodiac* – Now fortnightly rock club night playing new metal, hardcore and alternative releases.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** East Oxford

**Community Centre**

**ROGER TARRY:** *QI Club* – Tender, melancholy folk-pop in a Nick Drake style from Mr Tarry, with support from The Epstein's Olly Wills.

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** *The Half Moon*

**GET FUNKED:** *The Bullingdon*

**FRIDAY 16<sup>th</sup>**

**GRINNING SPIDER with**

**SMALLTEASERS + PHYAL +**

**BACKPOCKET PROHET + AGENTS OF JANE + TREV WILLIAMS + SCELFIE:** *The X, Cowley* – Benefit gig for mental health charity MIND, featuring MOR popsters Smallteasers, punk-metallers Phyal, plus balladeer Trev Williams.

**MANATEES + YOU JUDAS:** *The*

**Wheatsheaf** – Awesome black-hearted prog rock, doom-metal and drone-core from Carlisle's Manatees at tonight's Vacuous Pop night. Ambitious and incredibly heavy, leaning towards Swans and Neurosis but with King Crimson's adventurous squall. They'll take your bleedin' head off, so they will. Derby's You Judas will give them a good run for their money with their vitriolic brand of proggy hardcore, where Radiohead collide head on with Black Sabbath.

**DARTZ:** *The Zodiac* – Spiky, angular post-punk funk in a Q And Not U-meets-Dismemberment Plan vein from the Teeside newcomers.

**BANDS & SINGERS NIGHT:** *The Victoria, Jericho*

**BACKROOM BOOGIE:** *The Bullingdon*

**TURL STREET FESTIVAL:** *The Cellar*

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

**JESSICA GOYDER + ROLAND**

**CHADWICK + WIDDOS:** *Jericho Tavern*

**AMOROUS:** *The Magdalen* – Live jazz.

**SKYNY NYRDS:** *The Chester Arms*

**SATURDAY 17<sup>th</sup>**

**THE EGG:** *The Zodiac (upstairs)* – After their last, curiously muted, showing at the Zodiac, the one-time local trance-funk favourites return to Oxford, still riding high on the back of their collaboration with David Guetto, 'Love Don't Let Me Go', used on the ice-skating Citroen advert. These days stripped down to twins Ned and Maff Scott, they still manage to inject a live rock vitality into dance music.

**LOST ALONE + ARMSTRONG:** *The Zodiac (downstairs)* – Return of former-Intentions of An Asteroid frontman Steven Battelle with his new band Lost Alone, aiming high with a stadium-sized brand of punky metal, where Aerosmith and Muse meet Green Day.

**WHISKEYCATS:** *The X, Cowley* – Funky good-time rock and roll from Manchester's cult stars.

**UP C DOWN C + EDWARD SOUNDING BLOCK + TWAT TROT TRA LA +**

**NEVEREST SONGS:** *The Port Mahon* – Myanalog night with good bill of leftfield rockers, including former-Suitable Case types Edward Sounding Block, plus math-rockers Twat Trot Tra La.

**SHAKER APPEAL + JUXTAR + THE ILITERATES:** *The Music Market* – Delicious Music new local bands night, including the ironically-named Iliterates.

**ABDULLAH CHADEH:** *Chipping Norton Theatre* – Big Village presents the Syrian Qanun maestro.

**TURNTABLEISM:** *The Cellar* – Hip hop and drum&bass club night.

**MELTING POT with BEAR IN THE AIR + BRANDAN STEEP:** *Jericho Tavern*

**SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup>**

**AIR TRAFFIC + GHOSTS + SNOWFIGHT IN THE CITY CENTRE:** *The Zodiac* – Piano-led punk from Bournemouth's Air Traffic, newly signed to EMI after casing a stir with their debut single, 'Just Abuse Me' on Fierce Panda's Fandango singles club last year, and more recently seen on Jools Holland and on tour with Snow Patrol.

**HI FLYER:** *The Bullingdon*

**DELICIOUS MUSIC ELECTRIC JAM**

**SESSION:** *The Music Market*

**ELECTRIC JAM:** *The X, Cowley*

**MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup>**

**AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD:** *The Zodiac (upstairs)* – Texan sonic destroyers return – *see main preview*  
**BLOOD RED SHOES:** *The Zodiac (downstairs)* – Raw-edged bubblegum grunge-pop from Brighton duo who've released singles on Drowned In Sound and Youthmovies' Try Harder label.

**THE LEE RYDER BAND:** *The Bullingdon* – 60s-style biker blues from the London-based guitarist and former leader of 60s cult act The Hush who played with Led Zep and Fleetwood Mac amongst others. After a 20-year break from music, Ryder returned in the early-90s to establish himself on the UK blues scene, drawing favourable comparisons with Peter Green.

**THE BATTLEFIELD BAND:** *Nettlebed Folk Club* – Scotland's premier folksters return for another intimate gig.

**TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup>**

**HELL IS FOR HEROES:** *The Zodiac* – Spiky punk rocking in a Dischord vein from the DIY crew, set to release their third self-released album this month.

**JAZZ CLUB with THE TOM GREY**

**QUINTET:** *The Bullingdon*

**SHUSH OPEN MIC SESSION:** *The X, Cowley*

**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ SESSION:** *Bar Milano, Pizza Express* – Tonight's guests are Neil Mason's Masonic Groove.

**OPEN MIC NIGHT:** *Mangos*

**WEDNESDAY 21<sup>st</sup>**

**DISCO DRIVE + AN EMERGENCY:** *The Wheatsheaf* – Melodic punk-pop, where The Clash meet Fugazi from Turin's Disco Drive; Exeter's post-hardcore guitar manglers bring their Q And Not U-influenced punk along in support.

**FOLK SESSION:** *The X, Cowley*

**HIT & RUN:** *The Cellar*

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** *Marlborough House*

**THURSDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**ALTON ELLIS + INTENSIFIED:** *The Zodiac (upstairs)* – Rocksteady legend makes his first ever visit to town – *see main preview*

**DUKE SPECIAL:** *The Zodiac (downstairs)* – Dreadlocked Belfast-based musical hobo Peter Wilson explores the romantic underbelly of pop, mixing Morrissey's downbeat humour with a lush, piano-led Keane-styled sound. Recently he's toured in support of The Divine Comedy and Beautiful South.

*Monday 19<sup>th</sup>*

## AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD: The Zodiac

It seems half a lifetime since we were dodging flying cymbals and well-aimed Sonic Youth riffs down at the old Point when the Austin, Texas band whose name will always be truncated to Trail Of Dead first hit town. Despite much critical praise and plenty of those frantic life shows, the band never really took off (eventually earning themselves the music industry tag And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Debt) and you could be forgiven for thinking they'd simply died and gone to indie rock heaven. But here they are back again, with new (fifth) album, 'So Divided', something of a return to form after 2005's self-destructive 'Worlds Apart'. Nerdy gothic cowboys they might be, with a penchant for Dungeons and Dragons, but they still kick out a fair old racket, powerchords and guitar vandalism being the order of the day, an almost orchestral amalgam of so much that's good about classic American alt.rock. Swaggering raunch-rock played loud and things getting broken: would you *really* rather go and see Thirteen Senses?





*Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>*

## ALTON ELLIS / INTENSIFIED:

### The Zodiac

Courtesy of Skylarkin, comes a rare chance to catch a glimpse of a genuine reggae legend, Alton Ellis, the Jamaican singer widely credited with inventing rocksteady back in the 60s. According to legend, while recording the song 'Get Ready - Rock Steady' stand-in bassist Jackie Mitoo couldn't keep up with the ska rhythm so it was slowed down and a new genre was born. With a career stretching over 40 years, including some legendary sessions at Studio 1 and classics like 'Duke Of Earl', Neil Sedaka's 'Breaking Up Is Hard To Do' and hit single 'Girl, I've Got A Date' to his credit, Ellis, possessed of a smooth, passionate soul voice, is rightly considered one of the figureheads of traditional reggae; in 2006 he was inducted into the Reggae & World Music Awards Hall Of Fame. Tonight's support, Intensified, could headline in their own right, with fifteen years of live performance behind them, earning a reputation as the UK's leading trad ska band and favourably compared to The Skatalites. Tonight's gig is followed by Skylarkin's regular ska, reggae and soul session with legendary Britolian DJ Derek.

**SAVING BLUE + MIMI NOIR: The Port Mahon** – Double bill of touring Swedish bands.

**THE LIES & HOW WE TOLD THEM +**

**ZELEGA + APERATEC: The Cellar** – Leftfield and experimental rocking.

**SELECTASOUND with FOXES! + IZIT-U + THE SIREN'S CALL: The X, Cowley** - Sweet jangly electro-pop from Foxes! plus indie rocking from Banbury's Sirens Call.

**MARK BOSLEY: QI Club** – Local gothic pop troubadour.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

**GET FUNKED: The Bullingdon**

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

**100 BULLETS BACK + MARY BENDY TOY + ANTON BARBEAU: The X, Cowley** – Synth-rocking action in an Underworld-meets-Sheep On Drugs vein from rising stars 100 Bullets Back, with support from industrial pop weirdos Mary Bendy Toy and 60s psychedelic folk-pop from Anton Barbeau.

**MACCABEES + GOOD BOOKS: The**

**Zodiac** – Brighton's indie funksters hoping to live up to their NME-infected "Best New Band In Britain" tag, and looking ever more likely to make it big with a live wire live show that leans towards Bloc Party and XTC.

**RICHARD WALTERS + THE FAMILY**

**MACHINE + WITCHES: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – This month's Nightshift cover star Richard Walters launches his new EP, with support from lachrymose country-popsters The Family Machine and esoteric rockers Witches – see main interview feature

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with STORNOWAY + KANUTE + THE**

**GULLIVERS: Moody's Pool Bar** – Change of venue for GTI tonight due to a double booking at the Zodiac, so it's off round the back for the eclectic live music club night, tonight featuring celtic-tinged rockers Stornoway, atmospheric trip-hoppers Kanute, plus skanking indie-punks The Gullivers.

**FRESH OUT OF THE BOX with PLUMP**

**DJs: The Zodiac** – Special FOTB tonight as multi-award-winning DJ team Plump DJs, from Fabric's Eargasm club, spin the best in nu-skool breaks. Plus sets from First Contact and Soundz. You are requested to wear a hat. Or a wig.

**BANDS & SINGERS NIGHT: The Victoria, Jericho**

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

**OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon**

**HQ: The Cellar**

**REDOX + PETE FRYER BAND: The Magdalen** – Swamp funk from Redox, plus eccentric blues-rocking from Mr Fryer and chums.

**NIGEL BROWN + COTTON BLONDE + CUSTOM GUITAR REBELS + THE LONG WEIGHTS: Jericho Tavern**

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

**EL TANBURA: The Zodiac (upstairs)** – Traditional Egyptian music from the collection of fishermen, musicians, storytellers and poets.

**THE WALK OFF + MEPHISTO GRANDE + BABY GRAVY + PALACE OF RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – Launch gig for The Walk Off's new single. Punishing digital hardcore mayhem, death disco brutality and dancing bears all round. Mephisto Grande sees the return of former-Suitable Case For Treatment frontman Liam Ings-Reeves and drummer Pete Ward with a stripped-down brand of grotesque blues-core, while Baby Gravy add further lopsided lunatic genius to the party with their dubby synth-punk racket.

**SKAVILLE + THE ELEMENTS: The Bullingdon** - Top-flight ska, reggae and punk from former-Bad Manners chaps Nick Welsh, Louis Alphonso and Martin Stewart, who, as well as penning the band's 80s hits, have also played with and produced Lee Perry, Prince Buster and The Selecter. Dust off your monkey boots and get ready for some serious moonstomping.

**SHAKER HEIGHTS + SAM ISAAC + SIMPLY LUKE + LEIGHFIELD: The X, Cowley** – Infectiously melodic country-tinged rock and shimmering indie pop from Aylesbury's Shaker Heights.

**ZUBY + FUGAZIRUM + SCROOBIUS PIP + MY SHAADOW: The Port Mahon** – Swiss Concrete presents a night of hip hop with ace local rapper Zuby's slick, accomplished delivery recalling Nas and Jay-Z. Support comes from six-piece blues-hip hop band Fugazirum, laidback jazz poet and humourist Scroobius Pip and possibly best of all, newcomer Mr Shadown, armed with a dark, raw style, excellent use of samples and, with 'Look Out There's A Black Man Coming', a brilliant, funny, uncomfortable piece of social commentary – a new local star in the making?

**THE EPSTEIN + DANNY GEORGE WILSON + MORRISON STEAM FAYRE: Holywell Music Room** – Country rocking of the old school from local favourites The Epstein at tonight's special Holywell concert.

**OFF KILTER + THE UDNEERSIDE: The Music Market**

**CHICKS WITH DECKS: The Cellar** – Indie, new wave, riot grrl and 80s club night.

*Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>*

## ¡FORWARD, RUSSIA!: The Zodiac

Having been the saving grace of last year's NME tour at Brookes, followed by one of the star turns at Truck Festival, Leeds' ¡Forward, Russia! (and, God, don't we hate having to keep inserting them upside-down exclamation marks) return for a headline show in their own right. Here is a band for whom the word frenetic was possibly invented. With little room for subtlety or slowing down they take At The Drive-In for a breakneck ride through late-70s / early-80s new wave, calling at stations marked The Pop Group, The Associates, Joy Division and even Dexy's; it's a frantic, slightly crazed form of disco all scuzzed up by white noise and spiky hardcore before being shovelled into a washing machine for a full spin cycle. Combative to the point of awkwardness, ¡Forward, Russia! offer lyrical political conjecture and songs about Einstein but smother them in so much guitar mess you'll have your work cut out picking the nuggets of wisdom out, and they've a tendency to simply number their songs rather than give them names. They're not especially new tricks, but they are immense fun. And faced with a rock show like this, fun is what it's all about.





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

**FOALS: The Zodiac** – Having signed to record label-of-the-moment Transgressive and relocated to Brighton, Foals return to their former hometown for their biggest headline gig to date. The former-Nightshift cover stars look set for a very bright 2007 with an album due out later this year and their highly-rhythmic blend of new wave funk, post-rock and disco-fied pop set to light up the musical skies. They may have fled to the seaside, but we'll keep them for our own for now, spiritually at least.

**PINDROP PERFORMANCE with THE KEYBOARD CHOIR + JUNK PLANET + LITTLE COSMONAUT: The Port Mahon** – Electronic ambience, digital experimentation and analogue brilliance from the synth orchestra at tonight's Pindrop. Little Cosmonaut bring a healthy dose of twee to the table in support, along with John Brainlove's electro mash-up ensemble Junkplanet.

**THE DOUGHNUT KINGS: The Bullingdon** – Big band jazz from the university collective.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC ELECTRIC JAM SESSION: The Music Market**

**BEARD MUSEUM: The Purple Turtle** – Psychedelic blues and folk from Morrison Steam Fayre at tonight's Beard Museum, plus downbeat local rockers The Moneyshots and The Robot Heart.

**SALSANEROS: The Cellar**

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

**HONEYBOY HICKLING & THE DTs: The Bullingdon** – Renowned UK blues harpist and singer who's worked with Steve Marriot and Bo Diddley along the way. In his own right mixing up covers of classics by Chuck Berry, Charlie Musselwhite and Canned Heat amongst others.

**COURTNEY PINE: The Zodiac** – Another visit to town for the UK's leading jazz saxophonist and bandleader, mixing

experimental and easy jazz with drum&bass, funk, and world sounds.

**MORNING RUNNER: The Zodiac** – Lighters aloft, kids, Reading's epic soft rockers return, armed with a cache of ballads and stadium anthems and an eye on Coldplay's throne and looking likely to make a fair attempt at capturing it after support tours with them as well as Snow Patrol and Bloc Party.

**BILLY MITCHELL & BOB FOX: Nettlebed Folk Club**

**LOGH + VESSELS: The Port Mahon**

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

**FORWARD, RUSSIA! + CURSIVE + SOMETREE: The Zodiac (upstairs)** – Uptight, up'n'at'em rock and roll from the rising post-hardcore heroes – see main preview

**BAT FOR LASHES: The Zodiac (downstairs)** – A trip into folk's heart of darkness with songstress Natasha Khan.

**JAZZ CLUB with THE NUMBERS**

**RACKET: The Bullingdon**

**VEDA PARK + RICHARD BROTHERTON: The Port Mahon** – Gentle rocking from Veda park with a hint or two of Steely Dan in the mix.

**SHUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The X, Cowley**

**THE BLACK HATS + NUMBENINE + THE QUARTERFINALS: The Wheatsheaf** – Benefit gig for Amnesty International.

**DELICIOUS MUSIC JAZZ SESSION: Bar Milano, Pizza Express** – With Blue Mama.

**DIRTY BEAUTIFUL: The Cellar** – Techno club night.

**JACK HAINES + ANAIS MITCHELL: Jericho Tavern** – Double bill of American singer-songwriters.

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

**PIGEON DETECTIVES: The Zodiac** – Possibly the band most likely to get everyone saying 'Arctic who?' in 2007. Leeds' laddish, rabble-rousing rockers are already experiencing gig mayhem on the back of MySpace-inspired cultdom, kicking out buzzsaw indie-punk in the vein of The Clash and Buzzcocks.

**A SILENT FILM: The Wheatsheaf** – Oxford's band-most-likely-to gear up for a busy few months, attracting plenty of record label interest for their epic, inventive stadium-sized pop, mixing epic, introverted piano ballads with sky-touching guitar workouts, somewhere between Queen, Elton John and Muse. Get 'em while they're hot.

**FOLK SESSION: The X, Cowley**

**DIVINE COILS: The Port Mahon** – Drones, dissonance and ambient spookiness from the experimental collective.

**PHONIK SESSIONS: The Cellar**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House**

**THE BANSHEE + MEENIES: The Jericho Tavern**

*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. All listings are copyright of Nightshift and may not be reproduced without permission*



*Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>*

## BAT FOR LASHES: The Zodiac

Nightshift's favourite album of 2006 came from that dark, dark corner of folk music where love and death go hand in hand in beautiful union. Singer-songwriter Natasha Khan is Bat For Lashes and 'Fur and Gold' is one of the most stunning debuts of recent times, a twisted, haunting and completely magical journey through smouldering sensuality and raw emotion. Natasha herself was born in Pakistan and now lives in Brighton but really, this is music that comes from a far corner of a distant galaxy. Everything centres on Khan's exquisite vocals, which are wrapped in inventive, often arcane, musical arrangements, creating a dreamlike feel with portentous piano, viola and harpsichord dominating the treated guitars and marching drums. Thus far she's been compared – not unfairly – to Bjork, Kate Bush and Sinead O'Connor, but gender aside, she's as close to Nick Cave or Marc Almond at times. The truth is, though, that she's a unique talent in her own right and after such an auspicious debut, this is one fairytale that has us well and truly gripped.

## VENUE PHONE NUMBERS

The Zodiac: 01865 420042  
The Bullingdon: 01865 244516  
The Wheatsheaf: 01865 721156  
The X: 01865 776431  
The Cellar: 01865 244761  
The New Theatre: 0870 606 3500  
Black Horse: 01865 373154  
The Port Mahon: 01865 202067  
Delicious Music: 07876 184623  
Point Promotions: 07711 628021  
The Victoria: 01865 311723  
Brookes: 01865 484750  
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# LIVE

## ROBYN HITCHCOCK AND THE VENUS 3

### Oxford Zodiac

Well, you know what happened next, but we didn't then. It was never going to be just another Robyn Hitchcock gig – he's played in Oxford quite a lot recently, but this time he is backed by the Venus 3, who are REM guitarist Peter Buck along with bass player Scott McCaughey and drummer Bill Rieflin, who are also in REM these days. Sadly the advertising hadn't made this terribly clear, and the Zodiac was no more than half full.

Apart from a few old Hitchcock favourites like 'Madonna of the Wasps' and 'Kingdom of Love', much of the material tonight is from the new 'Olé! Tarantula' album, and leans towards the jangly, dreamy side of Hitchcock, rather than the grinding stuff that mentions 'thorax' a lot. Buck is happy to strum modestly in the background on a vintage twelve-string and look on indulgently during Hitchcock's surreal song introductions, which, as a friend remarks, are becoming very reminiscent of a less nasty Peter Cook.

This would have been a great gig if it had ended there, but when the band come back for an encore, who appears but Mike Mills and bloody Michael Stipe! Cue much girly shrieking, and not just from me. Stipe is wearing a Norman Wisdom suit, with a cap and what can only be described as a handbag, and, in the way of celebrities, he's very small. The affable-looking Mills picks up a spare guitar and Stipe makes his way to the side of the stage, all eyes following him. The ensemble start with REM's 'Electrolite', with Stipe and Hitchcock singing the chorus, 'You are the star tonight', to each other, then 'Listening to the Higgs' (Michael Stipe + a song that mentions Norwich = surreal!) and an unreleased REM song called, I think, 'DJ At the End of the World'. Stipe leaves and everyone starts swapping instruments, finishing with a fabulous 'Eight Miles High', where Buck finally lets rip with the



photo: Scott Harrison

freeform twelve-string lead. They all look like they are having the best time together, and I suspect the residents of the Randolph or Old Bank are disturbed that night by long renditions of *Fast Show* sketches and requests for toast at 3am. Quite extraordinary.

*Angus Stevenson*

## SAM COOKE GROUP Feat. ADAM WALDMANN / ALEX HUTTON TRIO

### Spin Jazz Club, The Wheatsheaf

They say the problem with jazz today is that there's plenty of young blood coming in but only old people watching. Oxford's finest (and most credible) jazz club, The Spin, disproves this view: they manage to get young bands and pull in plenty of students, providing warm jazz on a cold and fatally windy night.

And warm jazz it is indeed. London's renowned Alex Hutton Trio opens with 'Yellow-Blue Waltz', double bass acting as the focal point of the song, plucking tender melodies whilst Hutton's embellished piano chords provide a background. As far as oxymorons go, there's a certain melancholy-upbeat mood – 'Another Good Reason' expounds this odd ambivalence better than the English language could. Hutton ends with a quiet contrapuntal piano line, a finale held silent a moment too long – adding tension; the last chord bringing a resolute end with chuckles all round.

The even younger Sam Cooke

Quartet, featuring soprano saxophonist Adam Waldmann, start their introductory theme; Waldmann's head-bobbing followed by a jilting yet soulful bass groove. Herbie Hancock-esque chimes reverberate from Sam Cook's keyboard and a tidy little drum line fills it in. A fuller and more rounded sound is achieved, perhaps because of Cooke's deep honky tonk setting offset by Waldmann. Yet this doesn't mean more variety: the quartet's only letdown is that the material is rather same-y. Still, the band holds great unity, the virtuosity of each member is undoubtable, and the subdued groove they bring is a refreshing change.

Endless nostalgia trips and revisitations could be the downfall of jazz. Perhaps the most important factor for keeping modern jazz alive is the importance of new, original material, and this is why Hutton's Trio prove to be the highlight of the night.

*Pascal Ansell*

## MARY'S GARDEN / DIATRIBE / SCRIPT

### The Zodiac

It is problematic when a band reminds you of your shady musical past. Take Script, whose gentle songs are full of hushed melody. They constantly threaten to break your heart before soaring off skyward, bursting open like the greatest fireworks you've ever seen; and then without warning they remind you fondly of The Beautiful South. Remembering you actually like The Beautiful South could be a traumatic experience if Script weren't there to usher you through the whole affair with well observed lyrics and perfectly written tunes.

Diatribе take you back a few years too. An instrumental introduces their vocalist as eventually he swaggers to the stage and leans awkwardly on the mic stand, a pint of water sitting unconvincingly in his hand. Diatribе soon prove themselves to be an amalgam of both sides of the Britpop war. The vocalist tries very hard to assimilate the likes of Ian Brown (plenty of bravado and barely able to hold a note) while the band seem to have taken their lead from the

likes of Blur. Their take on 'indie' is far more spiky and interesting than you'd expect: they cover Pixies' 'Gouge Away', so I guess the band is winning this particular war.

Mary's Garden have had to live in the shadow of The Factory for some time, but on tonight's evidence it won't be long before we're grateful they split when they did. These songs are dark and dense and in lesser hands could seem cumbersome and heavy. However, the band are so tight that they make these songs roar. Centre stage is Laima Bite who looks as if she's dressed for a wedding and a funeral at the same time. Such get up unsurprisingly suits the band who are capable of creating an unforgiving dirge whilst Laima's voice takes their songs to a passionate high. They finish their set with the eponymous 'Mary's Garden', a seven-minute epic that epitomises the band. It's awash with dynamics and opulent ideas and it sounds gigantic; hopefully grand things await this enchanting band.

*Sam Shepherd*

## IMOGEN HEAP

### The New Theatre

Imogen Heap loves to play the ditty bimbo. There she is on stage, nattering away into her microphone, more to herself than anyone in the crowd, making out like all her technology is getting the better of her, oh and here's a nice cup of tea, courtesy of a helpful roadie. In reality, she's a smart operator and highly inventive musician. Self-consciously kookie in a mad-woman-with-ten-cats-at-the-end-of-the-street way she may be but she hasn't filled a venue this size by accident.

Leading into her set with an impromptu appearance in the front row, she wrenches dirty, squelchy analogue sounds out of her hand-held synth on 'I'm In Love With You', layering on her trademark lysergic caterwaul, voice, effects and rhythms all looped to buggery as she flounces around the stage in her best ball gown. Next she's behind her decorative grand piano (or at least an electric disguised as), exhorting breathlessly as she pounds the keys with almost operatic portent, the MOR tendencies subtly raked through with

electronic experimentation of the kind Laurie Anderson pioneered in the early-80s. Indeed there's an overwhelming feel of 80s nostalgia about much of tonight's set, the image of Cyndi Lauper more than once peeking out from Imogen's geekily flamboyant performance.

The straight piano-led numbers hint at Tori Amos, or a grander, more assertive Cat Power, but when she's joined by support band Nemo things lean towards harsher electronic sounds, while the best of her solo songs tonight have a skipping African township rhythm and are playfully bizarre.

The synth-heavy 'Hide & Seek' that closes the set is simply brilliant; similarly the exuberant 'Daylight Robbery'. Imogen Heap finds herself in a strange place: too arty and weird for the Alanis-buying multitudes but too sweet and soulful for the avant-garde crowd. Given that she's playing to a packed and completely rapt house tonight, it seems like a place worth inhabiting.

**Dale Kattack**

## THE VOYAGERS / MATT SAGE'S ORCHESTRA OF LOVE

### The Zodiac

Tonight there are two Matt Sages. The promoter of excellent Big Village gigs and the performer who two years ago wanted strings, keyboards and backing singers to set off his heartfelt singer-songwriting. Now his is a late 60s-early 70s sound: Brit folk, art rock, Al Stewart with inflections of Dylan, Cohen and even Paul Simon.

How much does the Orchestra enhance Matt's performance? Mainly they echo the emotion of Matt's lyrics, singing and guitar with lush, soaring, swooping harmonies, professionally arranged and played. But the best is when they and Matt set up a contrast, especially when he starts songs almost unaccompanied. This seems true for Matt too, as he sings 'Lilia' in this style with much more confidence after a low-key start to the set.

The Voyagers is the first of four Big Village gigs of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern music. The Voyagers are purely instrumental and led by London-based

Israeli Daphna Sadeh on double bass. Her band are all virtuosos but play their mix of Sephardic, Middle Eastern, Klezmer and a touch of jazz as a genuine ensemble. What we get is very earthy and ranges from joy to reflective melancholy. Never one dimensional, there is a touch of Jewish irony not only in some of the music but also the ritualistic way Daphna asks the traditional question, "Are you having a good time?"

An early number is like a moody film *noir* slowly unfolding. Then there's Nim Schwartz's wonderful long-awaited oud solo intro; I'd have loved more of this. The clarinet is the instrument of the soul in Klezmer, and Stuart Curtis ensures that the soul is dancing, but it is Daphnia's ballsy double bass that is centre stage. She plucks fiercely and with great musicality, and bravely challenges the audience with bursts of bowing that seem more festival of abstract high brow music than Middle Eastern.

The last run of numbers have a dance edge; they are a touch samey and suffer from the Zodiac acoustics mashing the sound of the individual instruments. But it is a big finish with a vibrant atmosphere and mutual high between crowd and band.

**Colin May**



photo: Scott Harrison

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## ROSE KEMP / UNDERGROUND RAILROAD / REBECCA MOSLEY

### The Cellar

Rebecca Mosley captures an extraordinary amount of punk rock spirit with her taut, at times aggressive, take on the acoustic singer-songwriter style. Not that her songs are crude, messy or particularly loud; far from it, she has a beautifully clear and untainted voice and delivers lyrics with breathy confidence. There's real power to what she's doing, though. It may be the arrangement of the music, going beyond the realms of standard strum/fingerpick into more esoteric areas. It may be the quirky style of her cello player, who hacks and paws at the strings to add undercurrents of dissonance and atonality to the sound. Whatever it is, Mosley seems absolutely free of pretence and posturing whilst delivering rich, captivating songs that have the crowd in the palm of her hand.

Underground Railroad ratchet up the noise frenzy quotient with an absolutely outstanding set. This is a band that sounds like the entire discography of Sonic Youth being minced into pieces: feedback-infused barrages of unidentifiable guitar noise showering over relentless basslines and some of the tightest and most inventive drumming I've seen for some time. It's an incredible show, and works

brilliantly as a visual spectacle – the three band members are unerringly cool and detached, with each taking on vocal duties during, and even between songs. The obvious influences at work here could have easily replaced any sense of originality or magic about the band, but they're better than that – they're carving the past into their own sound and they're very, very good.

Following that high, it's difficult for me to fully appreciate Rose Kemp's set of comparatively middle-of-the-road heavy indie-rock numbers. I've previously seen her performing as an intense, passionate solo artist (tonight she appears with band in tow) and in her wonderful improv/drone side project, Jeremy Smoking Jacket, and so it's a slight disappointment how *ordinary* her music sounds. Don't get me wrong, it's perfectly listenable guitar-based noise, bringing to mind a relaxed Courtney Love fronting The Breeders, but tonight it lacks a spark that I'm sure Kemp is capable of. There are, however, occasional glimpses of something special at work, with forays into repetitive riffing and distorted tone. Maybe tonight was just not the night for it to really happen.

**Simon Minter**

## A SILENT FILM

### The Cellar

A Silent Film must come under the marvellous new zeitgeist banner of a big, fat guilty pleasure. Some nights you just want to go out and see A Show, in the safe hands of a band whose frontman is an out and out trooper. And anybody who has witnessed Rob Stevenson's grandstanding at Your Songs over the years, especially the stellar set of Elton John covers that saw in this New Year at the Zodiac, will know that the fame train has long been overdue.

Most bands find themselves in the gutter, and some indeed are looking up at the stars, but after a first stab at it as Shouting Myke, ASF weren't just going to lie there. They pawned everything they had and have built themselves a giant booster rocket out of the history of pop and rock and they are as sure as hell going up there. They may well be a music hack's spot-the-influences wet dream, but to their credit they are like some fantasmagorical recycling machine, one where everything comes out shiny new and original. So 'Lover's Ride', a curious simile on relationships via a rusting car, fairly gushes like the Manics' 'Design For Life'; 'Rascal Of Love' is pure A-Ha by way of John Barry, replete with Jonny Greenwood-style guitar, and 'Aurora' is as much Scott Walker balladeering as Keane, where only Rob could sing "I am your patient / you are my shrink" and make it sound like heartbreaking songsmithery.

But if maturity has finally fluttered down on the shoulders of Oxford's boyish answer to Robbie Ross and Chris Martin, you can rest assured that his heart, like Mika, still belongs to Freddie and his production values, fully displayed when the band all take to drums for the piano stomping finale, 'Chromatic Eyes', with its echoes of 'It's A Kind Of Magic' and 'We Will Rock You'. Tonight they deserve every stadium they want to lay their hands on. This isn't just music, it's Baroque and Roll!

**Paul Carrera**

## JONQUIL / THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS / STORNOWAY / LITTLE COSMONAUT

### The Cellar

New Year is always a good time to discover new bands. And to show off Christmas presents. We know what Stornoway got for Christmas, since they keep mentioning it: the book, *Does Anything Eat Wasps?* Oh, and a Stylophone, just one of many unusual instruments used across tonight's gig.

So anyway, apparently spiders eat wasps, as does Stornoway's singer's goldfish, he informs us. Such whimsy is in keeping with the band's occasional wackiness, as on 'The Good Fish Guide', but they're far better when they beef things up, as on a song about catching the sun, like a heavier, rootsier Belle & Sebastian, while their opening track finds them switching between urgent funk-rock and scrawny ska skanking like a bug-eyed speed-freak. The restlessness that sticks with them throughout their set stands them in good stead.

Tonight's openers Little Cosmonaut are twee beyond belief, a Korg synth resting precariously on a lap their only concession to 'proper' instruments amid a melodica, xylophone and various toys. At their best they evoke the spirit of Stereolab playing the incidental music for *Bagpuss* but it

doesn't help that half their songs collapse amid nervous giggles.

This Town Needs Guns are tonight's most traditional act, instrument-wise, one sax-led track the only break from their twin guitar attack. Made of sterner stuff than their recent EP, live TTNG manage to convey enough power, emotion and an occasional elaborate grasp of melody to suggest they could go on to better things, but you do sometimes wish they had a bit more simplicity and punch about them.

Conversely, Jonquil work better on CD; too much of their subtlety and wonky atmospherics get lost amid the clutter of a live band. Their faces painted like cats and armed with piano accordion, trumpet and upright bass, they're hardly your common-or-garden indie rock band, and the ideas they have are obvious for all to hear: a mess of sea shanties, nursery rhymes and acid folk drones. But tonight they sound like snapshots rather than songs, rarely given time to breathe before being put to sleep. A more ambient setting would suit them, but for now Jonquil's 'Sunny Casinos' album is the best place to fully appreciate their genuine charms.

**Dale Kattack**



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## February

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*Thu 15<sup>th</sup>* Jessica Goyder / guests 8.30pm  
*Fri 16<sup>th</sup>* Grinning Spider presents a fundraiser For MIND with The Mighty Roars / Santa Dog / Fork / Dirty Sci Fi 8:30pm £4  
*Sat 17<sup>th</sup>* Whiskeycats / guests 8.30pm £4  
*Sun 18<sup>th</sup>* Electric Jam 8pm FREE  
*Thu 22<sup>nd</sup>* SelectaSound presents TBA 8:30pm £4  
*Fri 23<sup>rd</sup>* Live At The X presents 100 Bullets Back / Mary BendyToy / Anton Barbeau 8:30pm £4  
*Sat 24<sup>th</sup>* Live At The X presents Shaker Heights / Sam Isaac / Simply Luke / Leighfield 8:30pm £4  
*Sun 25<sup>th</sup>* TBC

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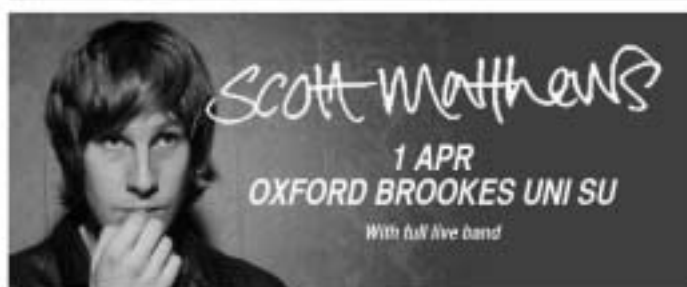
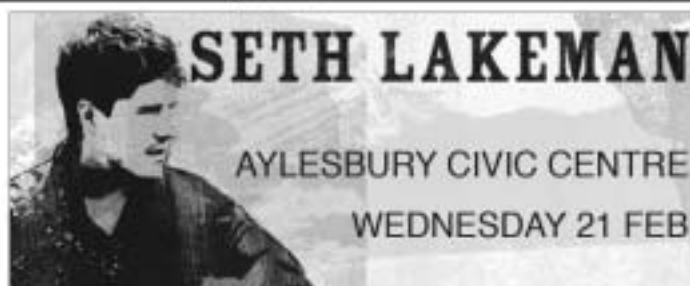
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| 2 - Oxford Folk Club     | Rolo Tomassi + Infants   |
| 3 - The Green            | 16 - Oxford Folk Club    |
| 4 - Dead Spies           | 17 - Myanalog present    |
| 5 - Sugar'n'Spice + Theo | Up C Down C + Edward     |
| + DJ Homeless + guest    | Sounding Block + Twat    |
| 6 - Dirty Boys present   | Trot Tra La + Neverest   |
| Cotton Blonde + Your     | Songs                    |
| Favourite Weapon +       | 22 - Saving Blue + Mimi  |
| The Idea                 | Noir                     |
| 7 - Myanalog presents    | 23 - Oxford Folk Club    |
| 8 - Zelega               | 24 - Swiss Concrete      |
| 9 - Oxford Folk Club     | present Zubu +           |
| 10 - Midas               | Fugazirum + Scroobius    |
| 11 - Swiss Concrete      | Pip + Mr Shadown         |
| present Flies Are Spies  | 25 - Pindrop             |
| From Hell + Mesaplex +   | Performance              |
| Last Days of Lorca       | 26 - Myanalog present    |
| 13 - Anton Barbeau +     | Logh + Vessels           |
| The New Moon + more      | 27 - Veda Park + more    |
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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### MONDAY MORNING SUN

And so we embark on another epic journey into electronic unpleasantness with Xmas Lights lynchpin Umair Chaudhry, a man who either has an awful lot of spare time on his hands or else has an awful lot of bile to unload. This latest opus weighs in at a full hour and could easily have been stripped of a couple of its more ponderous tracks, Gregorian industrial dirges wherein any hope for mankind's salvation is hoovered up by some vile robotic battle tank, but at its best this is pretty awesome stuff, lead track 'Bad Bones' in particular, with its galley slave beats and eviscerating synthetics that, over ten minutes, billow up into a cavernous cacophony that's almost operatic in its reach and grandeur, a disembodied robot voice your only friend for the trip. Umair is a master of unrelenting music, doubtless gleaned from his love of Swans, a band who took the idea of desolation to a whole new level. He's closest to their grim magnificence on 'The Quest', the musical equivalent of something nasty stalking darkened corridors. He might be in need of some serious editing at times, but really, give this man a full orchestra and let him loose composing the incidental music for the next series of *Dr Who*.

### SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE

A very, very close second this month, perhaps only because this demo doesn't quite capture the band's impressive live sound. Formed by one-time Eeeblee bandmates Jo Edge and Tim Day, Space Heroes take that band's glitchy electronic edge, add some seriously metronomic drumming and sprinkle on the film samples and antiquated computer game bleeps and bleeps. Jo's strident double bass playing, sometimes warping into a lead instrument, full of classical portent, holds the ship steady while synths and samples have a free rein. Easily the best of the lot here is last track 'Groovy Dancer', a pounding krautrocking groove underpinning a primitive but poppy sci-fi synth lead, where Neu! catch up in time and space with Daft Punk.

### SERPICO

Anthemic, chest-beating punky metal that, seemingly by force of will alone, makes you cast aside any heard-it-all-before cynicism and punch the air in testosterone-fuelled triumph. Serpico are so steeped in heavy rock cliché it's almost heroic. From 70s metal, through 80s thrash to the more macho side of grunge, stopping briefly to nab some rabble-rousing slogans from New Model Army, they kick it out with vigour and no little genuine passion. We'll brush the pleading, semi-ballad 'Glasseye' under the carpet for now since otherwise this is full-throttle, balls-out hard rock as it were meant to be. And, in the spirit of AC/DC, we salute them for it.

### THE COLINS OF PARADISE

Ambience of a very different nature to Monday Morning Sun from former B So Global chappie Jon Seagroatt and chums. Colins of Paradise instead transport us to the cocktail lounge of a cruise ship circa-1972 with crooner Bobbie Watson playing it sweet and cheerful over an easy jazz backing that's just spaced out enough to avoid becoming elevator musak. It's a smooth ride with the best track here the more elegant 'Be Still', a torch song that could have been a great Bond theme with a bit more bombast, Bobbie's pure, limpid voice holding sway before the band buoy themselves up for a final track that's closer to The Cardigans. It's the sort of stuff you could play to your parents, or even your grandparents. In fact they're more likely to play it to you.

### STRAFE

We vaguely seem to remember Strafe's last demo a year or so ago being one of those "are they being entirely serious?" efforts but giving it the benefit of the doubt and history repeats itself with this new offering, wherein a pretty decent tune, shimmering with early-80s indie-goth sweetness gets dragged into another place by the singer, a chap who sounds like a repressed bank clerk, a timid little chap filled with fury and a need to express his torment to all around him and so gets drunk at the office Christmas party and does an Echo & The Bunnymen impersonation on the boss's desk. Odd, but oddly likeable, especially since the guitars chime and spangle like The Banshees or early-Altered Images. They lose it a bit when they attempt to rock out, trying too hard to be pained and earnest. Not sure what the line-up of the band is (and we're too bone idle to look on

MySpace) but perhaps a new singer might be in order. What's that you say? It's Dave Gilyeat from The Download? Oops. Brilliant stuff. Absolutely blinding.

## PROHIBITION SMOKERS CLUB

A supergroup of sorts, formed by various members of Smilex (isn't every local band these days?), Baby Gravy, Suspicion Of Affray, Verbal Kink and Courtesy Kill, they centre around Lee Smilex's songwriting, veering, often with little regard for coherence between stripped-down acoustic numbers to more inventive arthouse jazz tracks. 'Witch' is the best of these, a hazy free-for-all nominally held together by a lazy marching beat that prevents all the different voices and sax scrawls from disappearing in five different directions. It's like some post-punk anarcho collective discovering John Coltrane. From there we get meandering countrified murder ballads, and a ghostly, flute-led clamour of lo-fi alt.pop noise before they seem to run out of co-ordination completely and sound like a blues-rock take on Scissor Sisters. Not entirely sure if that's to be encouraged or not but take the best two or three tracks here and the dissonant melting pot of ideas is pretty appealing.

## THOMAS POORE

Simple, straightforward stuff this from singer-guitarist Thomas, backed by erstwhile-Factory and now Dirty Sci-Fi drummer Andy Proper. From its initial Can-like pulse, this one-song demo breaks into a more punked-up 60s rock chug with faint echoes of Spacemen 3 and Joy Division, but a more overriding feel of Steppenwolf. Despite their stripped-down line-up this is full-blooded, raunchy stuff in a heads-down, garage drone way and sounds like it could punch a decent-sized hole in a studio wall. It's even got a guitar solo that manages to retain a sense of purpose, grounded by the throbbing biker bass rhythm. We're always a bit suspicious of one-track demos but Thomas promises it's a taster for a full album, currently being recorded and it's enough to get us wanting to hear more. If that album features a jolly medley of Joy Div's 'Dead Souls' and Steppenwolf's 'Born To be Wild' we'll send him a shiny pound coin. It's where his head's at.

## THE COUNTERFEITS

Another band who rise above their everyman rock standard by dint of actually managing to write three decent tunes (which, on a three-song demo is going some). They can do raucous indie punk ('No Alternative'), as well as dark-hearted rockaboogie and even slip in a stripped-

down acoustic ballad that not only doesn't suck like a Dyson full of leeches, but carries some emotional weight. They can be a tad clumsy at times, with the odd unnecessary guitar solo and occasionally you feel they could switch up a gear, if only to make the most of what are essentially strong melodies, but otherwise, a sterling effort.

## VEDA PARK

Time for a break from the hectic world of modern music, so here are soft-centred 70s-styled rockers Veda Park, singing about the joy of new babies ('Welcome To The World') and questioning why they, us or anyone goes to work everyday with the possible homage to that piece of M40 graffiti, Why Do You Do This Every Day? Respect must go out for the whistling on the first track, although the generally pedestrian pace and lack of passion about the whole demo does make you ache slightly for a bit of va-vah-voom. Still, Veda Park have never been about breaking bones, preferring a more languid approach, all wandering sax codas and gently strummed acoustic guitars. Somewhere between the easier end of Steely Dand and Van Morrison's less abrasive moments. It's like proper grown up music!

## THE DEMO DUMPER

## WASTED POTENTIAL

In another strong month for local demos (what's going on? Have we scared all the really rubbish bands away or are people finally getting the message and tidying up their acts?) we were fretting slightly (but not unduly) about which poor sods were going to end up undeservedly dumped. So hats off to Wasted Potential for stepping in at the death with this risible effort, wherein someone who cannot sing teams up with some people who can barely play and scrape, slither and generally drag their sorry carcasses through a mire of inconsequential guitar pop that sound so sorry for itself we can only guess it's been wandering around town with a wasp in its shoe, searching for the tenner it lost while being hit by a bus and laughed at by a group of school children. All this after being dumped its girlfriend. Who we shall call Laura. Because there's a song here called 'Laura Fuck You', which seems to have nicked its premise from The Scissor Sisters and promptly sucked any vestige of camp disco energy out of it. That said, it's better by far than 'Just Friends', the musical incarnation of tepid cabbage water that whines and sobs like a chastised lurcher and makes The Pastels sound like Metallica. Wasted Potential? What fucking potential?

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

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FEBRUARY CLUB NIGHTS LAST ENTRY FOR CLUBS 2AM AT WEEKENDS! SEE WEBSITE FOR MORE CLUB INFO

THURSDAYS: 15th Feb - SABOTAGE Rock, Metal, Punk & Alternative/ 8th BRITPOP NIGHT Britpop & influences // Thu 22 Feb new Club launch night

29th: DJ DEREK feat WRONGTOM ((Trojan Records / Hard Fi) Feelgood Reggae Dancehall and Ska with the Skylarkin' Crew

FRIDAYS - BOOGIE BASEMENT 2nd Feb//Boogie Basement Disco Shed Soundsystem// 9th Feb: Blunted Presents Boogie Basement

2nd - HIT & RUN 6th BIRTHDAY Foreign Beggars, Total science, Jungle drummer Vs, DJ FU, GTA, Heartless B, Charris b2b FLawless

9th - SLIDE Paul Woolford & residents @ Quality House clubnight monthly

16th - REPUBLICA Drum'n'Bass special Mampi Swift, Randall, Chase and Status, Clipz, TC, Reaction, Mikee Hussla, Mc's Sniper (Flavaunit) Algar (Kinetic

23rd - FRESH OUT THE BOX 2nd Birthday Presents Plump DJs / First Contact / Soundz

SATURDAYS - TRANSFORMATION Current & classic indie rock + TRASHY Indie punk glam rock & 80s