

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month.
Issue 142
May
2007

PUNT 2007

Smilex head this year's showcase of
Oxford's best new musical talent

Full Punt
preview inside

Smilex photo by Sam Shepherd

Candyskins bid farewell to the Zodiac!



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THE MAGIC NUMBERS

+ *The Rumble Strips*

21 JUNE - AYLESBURY CIVIC CENTRE



BIFFY CLYRO

21 MAY - OXFORD BROOKES UNI SU



the twang

+ DOGS

25 MAY - OXFORD BROOKES UNI SU

While the Zodiac gets it's summer makeover, check out our shows at Reading Fez Club

65daysofstatic

+ Josh T Pearson
+ Mirimar Disaster

18 MAY
READING FEZ CLUB

The WOMBATS

+ Assembly Now
23 MAY - READING FEZ CLUB



KATE NASH

20 MAY - READING FEZ CLUB

built to spill

19 MAY - READING FEZ CLUB

SAOSIN

24 MAY - READING FEZ CLUB



CONVERGE

+ Rise And Fall + ANIMOSITY

+ Omerta

8 JULY - READING FEZ CLUB

Tom McRae

6 JUNE - READING FEZ CLUB

THE ALIENS

8 JUNE - READING FEZ CLUB

The Crimea

30 MAY - READING FEZ CLUB



14 JUNE - READING FEZ CLUB

NEWS

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



THE CANDYSKINS, THE NUBILES, DUSTBALL AND THE DAISIES are all set to reform to bid farewell to the Zodiac this month. The Zodiac closes its doors for the last time on Thursday 17th May before undergoing a £2,000,000 refurbishment, which will see it re-open at the end of September as the Oxford Academy. The Daisies were the first band ever to headline the Zodiac when it opened in November 2005, while The Candyskins also headlined the venue in its opening week. The Zodiac's last night party will feature local bands across both floors as well as DJs from Transformation, Trashy and Smash Disco. Other acts confirmed to play include Smilex, Winnebago Deal, The Epstein and The Relationships – one of the few Oxford acts who can claim to have outlasted the Zodiac!

Tickets for the last night party, priced £12.50, go on sale at 1pm on Saturday 28th April from the Zodiac box office and will be available to personal callers only – there will be no internet tickets available

As reported by Nightshift back in March, the **Academy Music Group** plans to turn the downstairs room into a 900-capacity venue with a 436-capacity live music room upstairs, which will retain the name the Zodiac. In addition a 280-capacity bar venue will be included in the downstairs plans. The overall capacity of the venue will be increased from its current 750 to 1,150, with plans to increase this in the future. The new-look Oxford Academy will also have the flexibility to host seated gigs up to 600 capacity downstairs and 250 upstairs. AMG bought the Zodiac from owners Nick Moorbatch and Adrian Hicks late last year with the venue in desperate need of rebuilding work.

In the absence of the Zodiac, promoters **TCT Music** are continuing their gigs over the summer at venues in Reading and Aylesbury as well as booking acts for the re-opened Academy in the Autumn. Check out their ads in Nightshift or their website at www.tctmusic.co.uk

TICKETS FOR THIS YEAR'S TRUCK FESTIVAL sold out in a matter of hours when they went on sale locally on April 9th. Half the festival's tickets were made available to local fans that day with the remainder being snapped up online two days later. As yet no acts have been confirmed for the tenth Truck Festival, but organisers are looking for Oxfordshire bands and

singers to submit application forms to perform. Artists must complete an online form at www.thisistruck.com, providing a MySpace link where possible – they will not be accepting demos. All acts must be from Oxfordshire and the Truck committee is particularly keen to hear from younger bands. Truck 10 takes place at Hill Farm, Stevenon, over the weekend of the 21st and 22nd July.

TICKETS FOR CORNBURY FESTIVAL are selling faster than in previous years and the event again looks like selling out. Headline acts for the festival, which takes place at Cornbury Park near Charlbury, are David Gray and Blondie who are joined by The Waterboys, The Feeling and The Proclaimers, who returned to the top of the singles charts last month. Tickets are available by phone on 0871 472 0420. Comprehensive festival information is available online at www.cornburyfestival.com. The line-up for the Charlbury Riverside stage, featuring local acts, is due to be announced soon.

THIS YEAR'S COWLEY ROAD CARNIVAL takes place on Sunday 1st July, from 12-6pm. As well as seeing the return of the carnival's traditional procession, the event, which attracts up to 20,000 visitors each year, features live music and sound systems, plus an array of theatre, dance, workshops, food and family activities. Organisers are looking for bands and solo artists to play one of the many stages across the carnival. Acts should email their details, website and MySpace links and say why they would like to perform at the carnival to carnival@eastoxford.com. Anyone wanting to contribute ideas to how the carnival should take shape can post ideas at cowleyroadcarnival.blogspot.com, while news about the event will be online at www.cowleyroadcarnival.org,

SWISS CONCRETE host two whole days of live music at the Port Mahon over the weekend of 30th June / 1st July. The mini-festival celebrates the club's first anniversary and features some of the best acts to have played over the past year. Ape Has Killed Ape!, Our Own Devices, Zuby, Balor Knights, Godwits, Little Eiffel, Mr Shadown, Last Days Of Lorca, Foxes! and Sailplanes are among the acts playing in the evenings, while each day sees an afternoon of acoustic music and poetry in the pub's back garden, including sets from Ally Craig, Richard Catalogue, Beaver Fuel, Simon Davies and Glenda Huish. Tickets for the event are £8, or £5 for each day, with all profits going to The Red Cross. Check out www.myspace.com/swissconcrete for more details.

THE EPSTEIN won a slot on the acoustic stage at this year's Glastonbury Festival after



OMD play at the New Theatre on Saturday 23rd June as part of a national Greatest Hits tour. The original line-up of the band, Paul Humphreys, Andy McLusky, Malcolm Holmes and Martin Cooper, reformed last year and recently played a series of dates celebrating 1981's monumental 'Architecture and Morality' album. Tickets for the synth-pop pioneers' Oxford show are on sale now, priced £27.50, from the credit card hotline on 0870 606 3500.

Meanwhile, singer-songwriter **Damien Rice** comes to the New Theatre on Thursday 21st June. Tickets are on sale now, priced £23.50.

winning the festival's Emerging Talent competition last month. The band were among 24 acts to be shortlisted from over 2,000 entries to perform at the festival which runs over the weekend of 22nd-24th June. Glastonbury is already sold out but you can see The Epstein live in Oxford this month when they play at the Cellar (Thursday 10th) and the final night at the Zodiac (Thursday 17th).

THE FAMOUS MONDAY NIGHT BLUES club now has a website. Go to www.famousmondayblues.co.uk for news on upcoming blues nights at the Bullingdon as well as a history of the long-running dedicated blues club.

FORMER NUBILES AND FIVE-THIRTY frontman Tara Milton makes a rare live appearance at this month's Beard Museum club night at the Purple Turtle on Sunday 27th May. With the Nubiles reforming to play the last night at the Zodiac on the 17th, this is a chance to catch Tara's solo show. Baby Gravy are amongst the other acts playing on the night, which features free entry to anyone sporting a full beard. Check out www.beardmuseum.com for more news and dates.

AS EVER, DON'T FORGET TO TUNE INTO THE DOWNLOAD every Saturday evening between 6-7pm on BBC Radio 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best new Oxfordshire releases as well as featuring interviews with local and touring acts, an Oxford gig and club guide and a local demo vote. The show is available to listen to all week online at bbc.co.uk/oxford

RELEASED

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VARIOUS

'Blunted Presents LMFLH Vol 2'

(Blunted)

For the past four years Blunted have almost single handedly flown the flag for Oxford-based hip hop, steadfast in their belief that this most unlikely of cities can harbour some serious rap talent. The emergence of acts like Zuby seems to bear that belief out and this second compendium of local hip hop suggests Oxford is probably unfairly dismissed by anyone who thinks rap can only work if it crawls out of a sink estate.

Saying that, 'LMFLH Vol 2' (Local Music For Local Heads) does overrun by some distance, its admirable endeavour to give room to as many local rappers as possible weighing the whole thing down as the latter half of the album in particular struggles to find any diversity of



pace or rapping style.

Strike a line through the excess baggage however and there's more than enough to justify your time and the five quid this compilation will set you back. Zuby's 'Start All Over', the highlight of last year's 'Commercial

Underground' album, again stands out in any company, his lively, accomplished rhyming up there with the best UK underground rap. Pneumatic & Sloth's metallic bass-led 'The Morning Star' is a stark, oddly coherent jumble of scratches and samples, while Ill Technicians' gruff outpourings add a degree of hardcore that most of the rest of this cast lacks. Other highlights include Riskie Business'

'Introducing...' echoing Black Dog's propulsive style; Chima, Astro Snare & Kid Fury's soulful lament, 'Yeah', and Fluke's ambient drum&bass skit, 'Quiet Night'. There's also a surprise bonus addition of Highscores Lo-Fi remix of Youthmovies' 'The Naughtiest Girl Is A Monitor'

Of the rest, most suffer really just through being lost in the crowd and losing a few fillers would make 'LMFLH...' the pleasure it deserves to be. And let's face it, unlike Pinikal, En-Reek & Kryptic, you're unlikely to hear Jay-Z namecheck Graham Norton any time soon.

Victoria Waterfield

SHIRLEY

'Vintage'

(Own Label)

Never mind the 80s, the local 60s revival continues apace, a sure sign it is now officially summer. Last month we had The Anydays' debut album, celebrating that part of the 60s before The Beatles discovered hallucinogenics, and now here are perennial local cheery types Shirley, bringing a little bit of pop sunshine into our dour, goth-loving lives.

Anyone who's ever seen Shirley live will attest to their unstinting pursuit of the fun side of rock, from the Beatles harmonies to the lightweight rockabilly clatter and those odd



slivers of latin surf pop. To be honest this new album doesn't really hit those highs. By Shirley's standards it's almost downbeat, moments of introspection and lovelorn longing creeping in, even as the sun cuts a dash through our office window.

Album opener, 'Beautiful Sober', is everything we expect from the band, full-pelt jangle pop, three-part harmonies and nothing by way of clutter to restrict the view; it's like The Samurai Seven ditching their Buzzcocks leanings and throwing themselves fully into Gerry & The Pacemakers territory. Thereon in the guitars tend to get heavier, more distorted, the drummer less flighty; 'Dancing Shoes' is a sleazy shuffle, while 'Like a Man' is a weary 70s blues-rock trudge. Even those more typical 60s-styled odes to love have heavy hearts, quite literally in the case of 'Heavy Love', for all its handclaps and passing resemblance to 'I Want Candy'.

Relief comes with 'Hungover Again', wherein The Housemartins discover skiffle by way of Adam & The Ants; this is the kind of carefree rock that better suits Shirley. Similarly the Mexican-flavoured 'Bandido d' Amor', a great slice of cheesy surf pop that sounds like it's aching to be played at double speed.

While there is fun to be had with 'Vintage', its main disappointment is that Shirley don't sound like they're playing to their greatest strength: the ability to turn a room full of arms-folded misery guts into a pogoing pack of party animals.

Dale Kattack

JULIANA MEYER

'Holding Up The Sky'

(Own Label)

"Hello trees, hello clouds," chirps sunny songbird Juliana Meyer at the start of her debut album.

Okay so she doesn't but she might as well, such is its drippy hippy feel. What she does sing is "I disagree with your criterion", which doesn't really stand up alongside GG Allin's "I'm a rock and roll gypsy muthafucker", but hey, it's summer so maybe we should cut the lass some slack, especially since she looks like she's having quite a ball on the sleeve, kicking along a beach at sunset, skimpy lace dress pulled up over her head.

Juliana's achieved much in her time – appearing on TV at the age of five and playing to audiences of 10,000 as well as the Queen and the president of Estonia – although it's impossible to find any more details; we'll have to take her word for it. At the moment, though, she's a bit too busy warbling over some car advert piano to tell us more.

Inertia descends as the album rapidly wafts off into innocuous folk-pop dreaming, with echoes of Beverly Craven. If Juliana's due for any more TV appearances like the ones she mentions in her letter, perhaps a TV talent show where the winner is voted for by middle-aged people who haven't listened to Radio 2 since they accidentally made 'Golden Brown' single of the week in 1982, would set her up for a multi-million selling career.

Victoria Waterfield

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Friday 11th May - Quickfix Presents

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Doors 8pm / £4.50

Saturday 12th - Vacuum Pop Presents...

THE PAPER CHASE + CUTTING PINK

KNIVES + MEET ME IN ST LOUIS + HREDA

Doors 8pm / £5

Friday 18th May - Men behind Logic Presents...

GUNNBUNNY + THE DRESDENS + COBRA

Doors 8pm / £4

Wednesday 23rd May - Swiss Concrete & Awesomeness Industries...

SOUNDS LIKE VIOLENCE + SMILEX

HARRY ANGEL Doors 8pm / £5

Friday 25th May - OxfordBands Presents...

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For more info on all gigs visit

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May

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7th **SHERMAN ROBERTSON** (USA)

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BACKROOM BOOGIE

Funk, soul and R&B. 9-2am

Free B4 10pm; £4 after.

(last Friday of the month with guest DJ Aidan Larkin)

Saturdays

5th **SOUL NIGHT FOR LOVERS** with Tony Nanton and Lawrence. 9pm-2am

12th **SIMPLE** Funky House. With Radio 1's Annie Mac. 9.30pm-4am

19th **SKA NIGHT** 9pm-2am

26th **OX4** Drum'n'bass club night. 9pm-3am

DELICIOUS MUSIC

Live In May

The Music Market upstairs at The Market Tavern, off Cornmarket Street

Tue 1st Tuesday Night Blues & Funk Jam - £3

Thu 3rd Oxford Jazz Society - Live jazz - 8pm, £3

Sat 5th The Keys + CONTRACT + CAMINUS - 8pm, £4

Sun 6th ELECTRIC JAM & Open Mic Night - Free Entry

Tue 8th Tuesday Night Blues & Funk Jam with FUNKED UP + BLUE MAMA - £3

Fri 11th Deadbeat Sounds presents - LIVE MUSIC 8pm

Sat 12th SHE CRIES + SLEEPLESS + THE TURBULENCE - 8pm, £4

Sun 13th ELECTRIC JAM & Open Mic Night - Free Entry

Tue 15th Tuesday Night Blues & Funk Jam with GREEN ONIONS - £3

Thu 17th Oxford Jazz Society - Live jazz - 8pm, £3

Sat 19th Hip Hop / Urban Night featuring INSPEKT'A'RHIME + MR SHAADOW + CHRIS MARTIN + DEVLISH + NONSENSE - 8pm, £3

Sun 20th ELECTRIC JAM & Open Mic Night - Free Entry

Tue 22nd Tuesday Night Blues & Funk Jam, £3

Sat 26th THE TREAT + THE UPSTREAM PROVIDERS + COLINS OF PARADISE - 8pm, £4

Sun 27th ELECTRIC JAM & Open Mic Night - Free Entry

Tue 29th Blues Jam Blowout - Venue Closing - 6pm til late!

With BLUE MAMA + FUNKED UP + MOOCHER

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GIG GUIDE

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TUESDAY 1st

JOHN OTWAY: The Port Mahon (6am) – The clown prince of pop does his traditional May Morning turn, kicking out the non hits and general mayhem.

THE WATERBOYS: The New Theatre – Return of the raggle taggle roving rockers – *see main preview*

THE WOMBATS + ASSEMBLY NOW + THE EVENINGS: The Zodiac – Sprightly, harmony-heavy indie pop types out of Liverpool, telling tales of goats with drug habits in the style of Kaiser

Tuesday 1st

THE WATERBOYS: The New Theatre

The return of Mike Scott's often mercurial rockers The Waterboys and a chance to relive some of the most defiantly unfashionable pop to come out of the 1980s. Going against the grain of most post-punk, The Waterboys infused their gutsy, exuberant brand of rock with a traditional piano and brass-led rootsy edge and a stadium-style grandeur that for a time threatened to take them into the same stratospheric level of commercial success as Simple Minds and U2. Instead a trio of classic mid-80s albums, 'A Pagan Place', 'This Is The Sea' and 'Fisherman's Blues', steered clear of that sort of pomposity and the band remained more of a cult concern. Mass acceptance did finally come in 1991 with the re-release of epic single 'The Whole Of The Moon', but by then Scott had already moved on, ditching the raggle taggle Celtic rock in favour of darker, more experimental waters. With the rest of the core of the original line-up (keyboard player Karl Wallinger and saxophonist Anthony Thistlewaite) long-since departed, Scott now helms the band, backed by guest musicians, the Waterboys' traditional sound now restored for new album 'Book Of Lightning' and an indomitable songwriting talent intact.



MAY

Chiefs and Kooks.

MUSIC AT BROOKES BIG NIGHT OUT: The Zodiac – Showcase of Brookes bands.

JAZZ CLUB with KATYA GORRIE & DENNY ILETT Jr: The Bullingdon – Free weekly live jazz night with renowned jazz guitarist Denny and singer Katya and r'n'b DJs til late.

SHUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The X, Cowley
BLUES & FUNK JAM: The Music Market
VERTIGO: The Cellar – ImSoc club night with live sets from home-made instrument maverick Thomas Truax, plus electro soundscapists The Keyboard Choir.

LOVE BURNS: The Jericho Tavern – Live bands and indie DJs.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Mangos

WEDNESDAY 2nd

JASON DONOVAN: The New Theatre – Reborn actor-turned-singer-turned-actor-turned-singer Jason, now resident in Oxford and set for local canonisation after donating a sizeable chunk of cash to the new JR children's hospital, breaks out the hits old and new.

FROM THE JAM: The Zodiac – Or perhaps more accurately named, The Two Unimportant Ones From The Jam. Bruce Foxy and Rik Waller, or whatever they're called, finally give up waiting for Paul to phone and get some other bloke in to sing. Hopeful fans snap up tickets in record time and Weller sits back smugly and waits for the PRS cheque to turn up in the post.

ACTION + ACTION + THEO + ENIGMA DESIGN + DEAD SOUL CAVALIER: The Port Mahon – Post-rock and leftfield indie noise.

SAM KELLY & FRIENDS: The X, Cowley – First of many fundraising gigs this month at the X to pay their PRS bill. Award-winning jazz drummer Sam Kelly brings a selection of friends along for the evening.

ROY METTE: The Vaults Café – Acoustic blues singer-songwriter.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House

OPEN MIC SESSION: Temple Bar

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

THURSDAY 3rd

WHEATUS + MC LARS + ARMY OF

FRESHMEN: The Zodiac – New York's teenage dirtbag geek rockers return as part of the Good To Go tour with support from languid electro-hip hop rapper MC Lars and Californian teen punk-pop types Army of Freshmen.

A SILVER Mt ZION + JONQUIL +

SUNNYVALE NOISE SUB-ELEMENT: The Zodiac – Godspeed sister act bring the classical post-rock noise – *see main preview*

SMASH DISCO: The Zodiac – Probably the best new club night in town, mixing up electro, indie, post-punk and grime with a fair mix of new and old hits. Tonight you even get a live set from local digital hardcore devils The Walk Off for your money. Double bonus.

OCEAN COLOUR SCENE: Brookes

University Union – Rescheduled from last month apparently, possibly due to potential punters nodding off out of sheer blinding tedium.

GRINNING SPIDER with TOUPE + GWYN ASHTON + MR G & RICH + BEAVER FUEL: The X, Cowley – Mixed bill of sounds from the GS people, featuring Southampton's Toupe, plus and acoustic set from Australian bluesman Gwyn Ashton, electro-tinged indie rock from Mr G & Rich and low-rent noise and insinuation from Beaver Fuel.

PORT MAYHEM with TALC DEMONS + THE NEW MOON + TREV WILLIAMS: The Port Mahon – Acoustic live music club night with Rami's Dylanesque Talc Demons, plus psychedelic pop from The New Moon and lovelorn ballads from Trev Williams.

MEMORY BAND: Modern Art, Café Bar – Nebulous London-based folk supergroup, updating traditional acoustic sounds.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD + VESTIBULE + COLOUR: The Cellar – Dark indie rocking inspired by The Cure and Radiohead from Underground Railroad.

OXFORD JAZZ SOCIETY: The Music Market

BEELZEBOZO + ANDENSUM + MY OWN CONSPIRACY: The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Doomy grinding metal from the mighty musical behemoth that is Beelzebozo, plus proggy metal and emo noise from Andensum.

CROSTOWN TRAFFIC with BLACK HATS + JUNE + BETHANY WEIMERS: The Jericho Tavern – Local bands night.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

DOUBLE VISION: The Bullingdon

FRIDAY 4th

RISE AGAINST + THE BRONX + CANCER

BATS: The Zodiac – Long-since sold-out return for Chicago's political hardcore giants, making out in the vein of Bad Religion and Minor Threat and fresh from supporting My Chemical Romance on tour. LA punks The Bronx support, mixing up Black Flag and Husker Du-style noise, while Cancer Bats kick it out in a furious fashion that should appeal to fans of Winnebago Deal.

JUSTIN NOZUKA: The Zodiac – Lovelorn acoustic soul and blues in the vein of Stevie Wonder and Ben Harper from Toronto teenager Nozuka, on the rise with his eponymous debut album and recent Radio 2 Album Of The Week.

SLIDE & ECLECTRIC: The Zodiac – Club soundclash with monthly house club Slide teaming



fopp oxford

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

up with DJs from electro, breaks and techno night Eclectic.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with SHIRLEY + SHAKER HEIGHTS + NON-STOP TANGO + SUPERLOOSE: The Wheatsheaf – Sunshiney 60s pop and rock'n'roll with a surf edge from party rockers Shirley headlining tonight's Klub Kak, plus melodic indie rockers Shaker Heights amongst the supporting cast.

OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon DUGOUT: The Cellar – Soul, rare groove and funk club night.

SATURDAY 5th

A HAWK & A HACKSAW with THE HUN HANGAR ENSEMBLE: The Zodiac – Baltic folk, gypsy dance and acid-folk trance from the New Mexico duo – *see main preview*
TRASHY: The Zodiac – Weekly club night playing trashy pop, 80s, indie and glam-rock.

Thursday 3rd

A SILVER Mt ZION + JONQUIL + SUNNYVALE NOISE SUB-ELEMENT: The Zodiac

Originally formed as a one-off side project of Godspeed You Black Emperor! by trio Efri Menuck, Sophie Trudeau and Thierry Amur to record a tribute to Efri's deceased dog, Montreal's A Silver Mt Zion have grown since their 1999 inception to a seven piece now regarded as a completely separate entity. Sharing a similarly desolate miserablism to Godspeed, A Silver Mt Zion lean more heavily towards classical music, adopting its stately presence into their eloquent take on post-rock (in its truest form). Another major difference between the bands is that ASMZ use vocals, despite Efri's apparent discomfort with both singing and being the centre of attention. Still, his poetic, political lyrical style helps define the band. Having undergone numerous elaborate name changes to match their perversely wordy album titles (try 'He Has Left Us Alone But Shafts Of Light Sometimes Grace The Corners Of Our Room' on for size), they're possibly not even called A Silver Mt Zion any longer but we'll stick with it for simplicity's sake. Also on tonight's musically fascinating bill are local cinematic experimentalists Jonquil, plus eviscerating electro-rock noisemongers Sunnyvale.



HARRY ANGEL + VON BRAUN + LUKE & MARCUS: The X, Cowley – eXposure club night with headliners Harry Angel stirring up their effervescent goth-core once again to giddy effect. Support from dreamy lo-fi popstrels Von Braun and Damien Rice-influenced acoustic duo Luke and Marcus.

PROHIBITION SMOKERS CLUB JAM

SESSION: The Port Mahon – Open mic session, plus jam along with local indie supergroup collective PSC.

RAMI'S ROCK'N'ROLL CIRCUS with TANDARA MANDARA + HEADSHRINKERS:

The X, Cowley

MELTING POT with BLIND PILOTS + SKETCHBEAT + THE FOLLYS: The Jericho Tavern – Old-fashioned hairy rock inspired by Led Zep and Black Crowes from Blind Pilots, plus funky jazz rock from Sketchbeat and trashy 60s-styled pop from Trev Williams' Follys.

ALL-DAYER: The Plough Inn, Witney (12-11.30pm) – A day of punk and metal noise in aid of The National Association of Bikers with Disabilities with sets from EXP, Jack Viper, Bomb LA, Kill Cartel, Skullthrash, Trip Dash, Jackson Caged, Blue Bear and Dead Souls Eve, plus metal karaoke and acoustic music.

SOUL NIGHT: The Bullingdon – With DJs Tony Nanton and Lawrence.

THE KEYS + CONTRACT + CAMINUS: The Music Market – Delicious Music new bands night.

BASSMENTALITY: The Cellar

THE ROOSTER BAND: Skittle Alley, King's Head & Bell, Abingdon

THE RONI CHAD BAND: Temple Bar

SUNDAY 6th

ALL-DAY PRS FUNDRAISER: The X, Cowley (12pm) – Full day of live music in aid of the X's PRS bill, featuring grunge-goth screamers Ivy's Itch, ska-punk from The Drug Squad, theatrical space rock from Borderville, post-punk noise from Diatribe, plus Botox Cowboys, The Minutes, Mitch Salisbury and many more.

GHOSTS + TINY DANCERS: The Zodiac – The soft rock revival continues apace with this joint headline tour. Ghosts' jaunty, folky pop steers a course close to Fleetwood Mac, while Sheffield's Tiny Dancers – named after an Elton John song – do fluffy-edged 60s pop that isn't a million miles away from The Feeling. Should we start worrying?
DELICIOUS MUSIC ELECTRIC OPEN JAM: The Music Market

CODE RED! DADDY LONGLEGS: The Cellar – New club night with live bands and DJs, featuring sets from leftfield rockers Von Braun, indie pop noise from Smokers Prohibition Smokers Club plus video game electro from Clanky Robo Gobjobs, plus DJs.

MONDAY 7th

SHERMAN ROBERTSON: The Bullingdon – Good-time, upbeat blues from Texan guitarist Robertson, playing rhythmic, funky electric blues and rock with dynamic solos and a soulful voice.
THE HAUNTED + MUNICIPAL WASTE: The Zodiac – Melodic but heavyweight thrash metal from Swedish titans the Haunted, following up their acclaimed 'rEVOLVer' album with new opus 'Deadeye', which sees them moving into more complex territory. Pop-friendly thrash from Anthrax acolytes Municipal Waste in support.
THE ZICO CHAIN + ARMSTRONG: The Zodiac – Scuzzy grunge and punk noise from London newcomers Zico Chain, trying to find a middle ground between Nirvana and Motley Crue with their new Joe Baresi-produced debut album, following on from supports to the likes of Alkaline Trio, Cave In and Disturbed.



Saturday 5th

A HAWK AND A HACKSAW with HUN HANGÅR ENSEMBLE: The Zodiac

With a name like that you tend to expect pile-driving hardcore and maybe the odd power drill solo, but New Mexico's A Hawk And A Hacksaw are woven of more exotic materials. Formed by former-Neutral Milk Hotel chap Jeremy Barnes and violinist Heather Trost, the duo's journeys into sound take in everything from Jewish klezmer, through Mexican mariachi, gypsy waltzes and, with new album, 'The Way The Wind Blows, a strong eastern European folk theme. The album was recorded with Balkan folk group Fanfare Ciocarlia, and tonight, the first date on an extensive European tour, Barnes and Trost are joined by Hungarian quartet The Hun Hangår Ensemble. To the traditional Balkan sounds, A Hawk And A Hacksaw bring their own brand of bucolic balladry as well a heavy dose of acid folk to create a sound that's both bleak and eerie but also otherworldly and escapist. Tonight's promotion is a team-up between Oxford Contemporary Music and Vacuum Pop: another case of two worlds colliding.

GREEN ONIONS + THE G's: The X, Cowley – Live blues in aid of the X's PRS bill.

TUESDAY 8th

WILLY MASON: The Zodiac – Lacrymose, weather-beaten country and acoustic pop from the deceptively young Willy Mason, documenting the world through a glass darkly in the style of Ryan Adams and mentor Conor Oberst, with new album, 'If The Ocean Gets Rough' out now.

LOW Vs DIAMOND: The Zodiac – Arena-sized new wave and glam-pop, inspired by Roxy and Bowie from the same stable as Killers.

JAZZ CLUB with THE HOWARD PEACOCK QUINTET: The Bullingdon

BLUES & FUNK JAM: The Music Market – With Funked Up and Blue Mama.

SHUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The X, Cowley INTRUSION: The Cellar – Goth and industrial club night.

LOVE BURNS: The Jericho Tavern

WEDNESDAY 9th

THE OXFORD PUNT: Showcase of the best emerging talent in Oxford across six venues in one night - *see main preview*.

JESSICA GOYDER + MR SHAADOW:

Borders (6.15pm)

BORDERVILLE + BRICKWORK LIZARDS + MARY BENDY TOY + STORNOWAY: The Music Market (7.30pm)



Thursday 10th

SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO: The Zodiac

Even undiscovered tribes in the Amazon rainforest will have Justice's remix of Simian's 'Never Be Alone' rammed in their internal jukeboxes, so omnipresent has it been both in clubs and on the radio. Come on, you know the one – "We. Are. Your. Friends"; that's it, you're nodding and grinning like a loon already. Smashing stuff. Then came last year's dancefloor smash 'Hustler' and now new single 'It's The Beat', irresistible techno-pop that combines the best of late-80s New York house with European electro dance. Formed out of the band Simian, James Ford and Jas Shaw began DJing after gigs to sate their love of electronic dance and when the band ceased to be Simian Mobile Disco simply carried on and started to achieve the success its former incarnation never came close to. Having now produced the likes of Arctic Monkeys, Klaxons and Mystery Jets and played everywhere from the NME Awards tour to Fabric, SMD signed to Witchita (home also to Bloc Party) and are set to release their first album proper in June, featuring contributions from Go! Team's Ninja and Clor's Barry Dobbins. And if anything is certain about tonight's gig, it's that you will dance, whether you want to or not.

LES CLOCHARDS + APE HAS KILLED APE! + JOE ALLEN & ANGHARAD JENKINS: QI Club
MEPHISTO GRANDE + COLINS OF PARADISE + FOXES!: Purple Turtle
MILE HIGH YOUNG TEAM + THIRTY TWO + THE GULLIVERS + MONDO CADA: The Wheatsheaf
SMILEX + SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE + BABY GRAVY + THE DELTA FREQUENCY: The Cellar
THE LUIS D'AGOSTINO BAND: The X, Cowley – The local jazz guitarist and full band.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House
OPEN MIC SESSION: Temple Bar

THURSDAY 10th

SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO: The Zodiac – They are your friends, you know – *see main preview*
JOR + SEXTODECIMO: The Zodiac (downstairs) – Final reunion and farewell to the local hardcore stars as guitarist Aynz heads off for pastures new. Intense, melodic ultra-metal in the vein of Snot and Helmet. And of course, the only

band capable of holding their own in such company are the mighty, magnificently malevolent Sextodecimo, a vision of where heavy rock can go when it disappears down a black hole of intensity and comes out the other side: where Throbbing Gristle do battle with the gods of metal and audience members weep with fear and excitement. See them. Worship them. Do it.

SMASH DISCO: The Zodiac

JOBY BURGESS & THE ELYSIAN QUARTET:

Jacquelin Du Pre Building – A multi-media experience taking in rhythm, electronics, visuals and contemporary classical music from percussionist Joby Burgess (from The New Noise Duo and Ensemble Bash), and the eclectic Elysian Quartet (recently seen playing with Damo Suzuki in London) reinterpreting classic Kraftwerk numbers as well as classical compositions from the likes of Steve Reich, Gabriel Prokofiev and Javier Alvarez.

KANED CITIZEN + AGENTS OF JANE: The X, Cowley

THE EPSTEIN + VIAROSA: The Cellar – Country rocking from local favourites The Epstein in the vein of The Flying Burrito Brothers.

OXFORD JAZZ SOCIETY: The Music Market

CROSSTOWN TRAFFIC with RED SOUL

BRIGADE: The Jericho Tavern

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

DOUBLE VISION: The Bullingdon

FRIDAY 11th

SONIC BOOM SIX+ THE JB CONSPIRACY + DEADBEAT CAVALIER + CANNON

FODDER: The Zodiac – Riotous punk-ska-funk-jungle mash-up from Manchester's politicised street punk fighters, blending firebrand punk and dancefloor catchiness.

SOL SAMBA: The Zodiac – The local samba orchestra enjoy a Cuban carnival party with guests Puno de Dios.

GAMMY LEG PRODUCTIONS with

NUMBERNINE + HELLSET ORCHESTRA +

LAGRIMA: The X, Cowley – Cure-influenced rhythmic new wave pop from Numbernine at tonight's Gammy Leg club night. A welcome return for Nottingham's Hellset, a sublime blend of Meatloaf, Mogwai, Sabbath, Victorian theatre and Hammer horror, plus local duo Lagrima managing to blend flamenco, metal and folk-pop.

QUICKFIX presents COGWHEEL DOGS + LITTLE FISH + ELECTROLYTE: The

Wheatsheaf – Rebecca Mosley unveils her new band, Cogwheel Dogs, at tonight's Quickfix gig, with bluesy rock support from Little Fish and scuzzy indie rock from Electrolyte.

OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon

REDOX + THE PETE FRYER BAND + FILM

NOIR + HUGH MC MANNERS: The

Magdalen – Funk, ska and swamp rock from Redox.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon

SATURDAY 12th

THE PAPERCHASE + CUTTING PINK WITH KNIVES + MEET ME IN ST LOUIS + HREDA:

The Wheatsheaf – Dark-minded post-hardcore noise out of Texas – *see main preview*.

EUROVISION OPEN MIC PARTY: The X,

Cowley – Open invite to local bands and singers to pick a country at random and represent it at a Eurovision special in aid of the X's PRS bill.

National costumes essential and classic Eurovision and Abba covers the order of the day. Already confirmed are Fork, Leigh Alexander and Al DeBoss; all contributors welcome to participate or simply come along and laugh mercilessly.

FRANK TURNER + CAPTAIN BLACK + JAY JAY PISTOLET: The Zodiac – The former-Million Dead frontman continues his new solo career, swapping the rage of his old outfit for a more considered political pop approach, closer in style to Billy Bragg.

BOOTLED ZEPPELIN: The Zodiac – Tribute to the 70s rock legends.

TRASHY: The Zodiac

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – Funky house club night with guest DJ Annie Mac from Radio 1.

SHE CRIES + SLEEPLESS + THE

TURBULENCE: The Music Market – Heavy rocking at tonight's Delicious Music bands night.

ABORT, RETRY, FAIL? The Cellar – Electro, indie, techno and grime club night.

WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT + DANNY:

Temple Bar

SUNDAY 13th

FEED THE ADDICTION + TEMPLETON PEK + KING FURNACE: The Zodiac – Oxford Wheels

Project gig featuring Newbury punks Feed the Addiction, emo rockers Templeton Pek and funk-metal types King Furnace.

Saturday 12th

THE PAPER CHASE + CUTTING PINK WITH KNIVES + MEET ME IN ST LOUIS + HREDA: The Wheatsheaf

Return of Texas' brilliant Paper Chase, the band formed by producer John Congleton as a way of channelling his frequent panic attacks. As such Congleton makes for a fascinating frontman, wired and intense, dealing in raw emotions, cynicism and paranoia, while musically the band take Big Black's angled hardcore blueprint to another level, dealing in alternately stark and orchestral arrangements, Congleton's guitar work seemingly improvised much of the time and his vocals strained and emotionally tense. Lyrically The Paper Chase come from a desperately dark place, struck through with paranoia, anxiety and stress. Little wonder their last scheduled Oxford show was cancelled due Congleton's incarceration. Back with a new album, 'Now You Are One Of Us', he's exploring the idea of fear as social control, and so the picnic continues. Support at tonight's Vacuous Pop promotion comes from superfast hardcore scrappers Cutting Pink With Knives, Guildford's angular, energetic jazzcore favourites Meet Me In St Louis and local ambient rockers Hreda.



HUGH MASEKELA: Oxford Playhouse – South Africa's township jazz legend brings his colourful, vibrant blend of jive and jazz to town, taking in a whole world of influences, reflected by his multi-national band, from the sounds of his native South Africa, through Israel and France, mixing dance rhythms with political lyrics and storytelling.

ALL-DAYER: The Hobgoblin, Bicester (2pm)

– Rock and roll through the afternoon and evening with headliners Headcount, plus Phyal, The Berts, Reservoir Cats, The Plaudits, Fork, Domes of Silence and Mephisto Grande.

DELICIOUS MUSIC ELECTRIC OPEN JAM: The Music Market

MONDAY 14th

THE GWYN ASHTON BAND: The

Bullington – Lively blues rock and boogie from the Welsh-born Australian guitarist and singer.

XMAS LIGHTS + SOW + BLACK SKIES

BURN + SKULLTHRASH + RANDALL

FLAGG: The Zodiac – Metal and hardcore blowout with a top-notch local bill that includes virulent electro-hardcore screamers Xmas Lights, stoner metallers Sow, thrashcore heavyweights Skullthrash and speed-fuelled noisemongers Randall Flagg.

SHIRLEY + SILVERSIGHT + KEVIN

MOLLOY + MITCH SALISBURY + MART

GEIBER: The X, Cowley – Sunshiney 60s pop from Shirley, plus supports.

PHIL BEER, MIRANDA SYKES + JACKIE

OATES: Nettlebed Folk Club – Renowned singer, guitarist and fiddle player Beer, sometime half of Show Of Hands and formerly of The Albion Band, teams up once again with double bassist Miranda Sykes.

LEO RICKARD: The Jericho Tavern –

Traditional Irish folk night.

TUESDAY 15th

YOUR SONG: The Zodiac – Possibly the last ever Your Song? Certainly the final cover version gore-fest before the Zodiac closes for its refurb. As ever Mac is your curator as local stars become heroes and villains with their interpretations of classic and not so classic pop gems.

JAZZ CLUB with THE HOWARD PEACOCK QUINTET: The Bullington

BLUES & FUNK JAM: The Music Market –

With Blues Brothers tribute act Green Onions.

SHUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The X, Cowley

DIRTYBEAUTIFUL: The Cellar – Techno and electro club night.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Mangos

WEDNESDAY 16th

6 AFRAID OF 7 + BEELZEBOZO + POLAR

REMOTE: The Port Mahon – Swiss Concrete club night with Warwickshire's militant hardcore and prog-metal noisemongers 6 Afraid Of Seven mixing up Deftones, Tool and Incubus. Suitably heavyweight support from metal doom-mongers Beelzebozo. Polar Remote get the evening off to a relatively lightweight start with their shimmering shoegazy brand of rock.

THE MARK BOSLEY EXPERIENCE + MAIN STREET ELECTRIC PARADE + JULIANNA

MEYER: The X, Cowley – Darkly humorous songwriting from Mr Bosley and madcap band at tonight's PRS fundraiser.

DANNY GEORGE WILSON: QI Club –

Intimate solo gig from the Grand Drive chap, playing soulful, Americana and acoustic folk-pop.

HIT & RUN: The Cellar

OPEN MIC SESSION: Marlborough House

OPEN MIC SESSION: Temple Bar

THURSDAY 17th

THE CANDYSKINS + THE NUBILES + THE DAISIES + DUSTBALL + THE EPSTEIN + WINNEBAGO DEAL + THE RELATIONSHIPS

+ SMILEX + MORE: The Zodiac – The Zodiac signs out (did you see what we did there? Did you? Did you see? Zodiac, signs? No? Oh never mind.

Anyway, bid farewell to a sizeable chunk of Oxford's musical history as the Zodiac closes for a major refurbishment, to re-emerge in the Autumn as the Oxford Academy. To mark the occasion various local rock legends reform to pay their respects - *see main preview*

SLOUNGE: The Jam Factory – Multi-art installation brought together by the reliably adventurous Oxford Contemporary Music team. Music tonight comes from Cathode's glitchy, rhythmic electronica, while there's poetry from Mark Gwynne Jones and sculpture from Brian Catling.

POPULAR WORKSHOP + FIGMENT + THE SIRENS CALL: The Cellar – Jagged, spasmodic post-punk from London's Popular Workshop at tonight's Big Hair bands night.

JJ APPLETON + SMALLTEASERS: The X, Cowley – Hook-laden rock from New York's JJ Appleton, drawing on Elvis Costello, Tom Petty and Fountains of Wayne for inspiration.

OXFORD JAZZ SOCIETY: The Music Market

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

CROSSTOWN TRAFFIC: The Jericho Tavern

DOUBLE VISION: The Bullington

FRIDAY 18th

GUNNBUNNY + THE DRESDENS + COBRA:

The Wheatsheaf – Mighty Jack Goldstein celebrates his coming of age with a gig-cum-party featuring his various musical projects, to wit, blood-curdling grunge'n'blues dynamite duo Gunnbunny and pummelling garage-metal titans The Dresdens, wherein he teams up with the two Bens from Winnebago Deal for a spot of Action Swingers-meets-AC/DC fusion. The results are little short of astonishing. A very merry birthday to you, good sir. No getting old and sensible now you're 18, y'hear?

DHAFAER YOUSSEF & VOX CLAMANTIS:

The Sheldonian – First ever collaborative performance from two stalwarts of world vocal traditions. Tunisian sufi singer and oud player Youssef comes together with Estonian polyphonic choir Vox Clamantis for a concert of sacred music in the atmospheric and historic setting of the Sheldonian.

GRINNING SPIDER: The X, Cowley – Local bands showcase.

BASSMENTALITY: The Cellar – With live set from nine-piece jazz and hip hop collective Captive State.

OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullington

SATURDAY 19th

UNIVERSAL PLAYERS: The X, Cowley – Local ska and reggae newcomers.

INSPEKT'A'RHIME + MR SHAADOW + CHRIS MARTIN + DEVLISH + NONSENSE:

The Music Market – Hip hop and urban music night with local rappers and MCs.

MELTING POT with FUTUREKINGS + SLASHED SEAT AFFAIR + MATT GREENHAM:

The Jericho Tavern

JAZZ NIGHT: The Bullington

DESTA*NATION: The Cellar – Roots, reggae and jungle club night.

REDOX + TWIZZ TWANGLE + MARK

BOSLEY: Skittle Alley, King's Head & Bell, Abingdon



Thursday 17th

LAST NIGHT PARTY: The Zodiac

And so we bid farewell to the old girl and look forward to the bigger, brighter Oxford Academy to come in September. Fittingly tonight's closing party features the return of some of the Oxford music legends who made their names playing at the Zodiac when it first opened in 1995. The Candyskins remain a benchmark for great guitar pop. In their day they were local musical royalty, from their early gigs playing the Jericho Tavern to their later chart-bothering heights. This is the first time the band has played together since New Year's Eve 2001, itself a reformation after their 1998 split. Love them unconditionally. Also back from the grave are The Nubiles (*pictured*) whose oddly-shaped funk-rock was a precursor to the current indie predilection for angular post-punk. A band ahead of their time. There will be many fond memories of The Daisies too, who later found success as Medal, and Dustball who have gone on to continued success as Dive Dive. Joining the oldies will be The Epstein, Winnebago Deal and Smilex, with a special mention to the wonderful Relationships, a band who have outlived even the Zodiac. A night for nostalgia then, but also to look forward to an even better venue for Oxford come the end of the year.

LEE DAVIES + RICHARD FULLER: Temple Bar

SUNDAY 20th

DELICIOUS MUSIC ELECTRIC OPEN JAM: The Music Market

ELECTRIC JAM: The X, Cowley

MONDAY 21st

BIFFY CLYRO: Brookes University Union – Post-grunge beardies make the trip south of the border again – *see main preview*

NEVER THE BRIDE: The Bullington – Return of the blues-rock favourites, fronted by asbestos-lunged frontwoman Nikki Lambourn, likened to Tina Turner and Janis Joplin, and rated as the UK's premier female blues singer; power-rocking back-up in the style of Heart from the band.

STEVE KNIGHTLEY & JENNA WITTS: Nettlebed Folk Club

TUESDAY 22nd

JAZZ CLUB with ALVIN ROY: The Bullington

MADRIGALS + WINSTON ECHO + BLUE PROPHET: The Port Mahon – MyAnalog celebrate their first birthday with London's quirky folk-pop outfit Madrigals, plus acoustic anti-folk

turn Winston Echo and Foxes! frontman Adam Bell's solo project Blue Prophet.

SHUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The X, Cowley

BLUES & FUNK JAM: The Music Market

WEDNESDAY 23rd

PAUL JEFFRIES JAZZ BAND & GUESTS: The X, Cowley – Live jazz with Paul Jeffries and the X's house band.

SOUNDS LIKE VIOLENCE + SMILEX + HARRY ANGEL: The Wheatsheaf – Swiss Concrete presents Swedish melodic hardcore starlets Sounds Like Violence, unsurprisingly inspired by Refused and hailing from the town of Bastad, which just has to be the coolest place on earth for a rock band to live. Support from local glam-punkers Smilex and speed-crazed goth-punks Harry Angel.

PHONIK SESSIONS: The Cellar

SEFTON: The Jericho Tavern

THURSDAY 24th

EMILY BURRIDGE & BJ COLE: Modern Art, Café Bar – Cellist and composer Burridge teams up with pedal steel guitarist Cole (who has played with the likes of John Cale, Marc Bolan and Luke Vibert along the way), reinterpreting the likes of Purcell, Satie and Copeland as well as their own compositions.

HANGMAN'S JOE + DYING ANIMALS + K-LACURA + KIMCHI: The X, Cowley – New bands showcase from Decibel Studios.

KING FURNACE + FOURTH CHAMBER + TOY + BLINDPILOT: The Cellar – Big Hair bands night with headliners King Furnace doing their heavyweight funk-rock thing.

AMBERSTATE: QI Club – Ambient jazz pop.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

DOUBLE VISION: The Bullingdon

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

FRIDAY 25th

THE TWANG: Brookes University Union – Currently the UK's fastest-rising rockers, returning quickly after their sold-out show at the Zodiac for a show at Brookes. Mixing up the swagger of Oasis with the grooves of baggy bands like Flowered Up and quintessentially English rap of the Streets, the laddish tendencies tempered somewhat by guitar

melodies nabbed from U2 and Chameleons. Probably not as great as the hype paints them but nowhere near as bad as you've possibly read elsewhere.

TRENCHER: The Wheatsheaf –

Oxfordbands.com makes a welcome return to live promoting, bringing an esoteric selection of leftfield and underground bands to town, kicking off with Casio grindcore devils Trencher, uncompromising stars of last year's Audioscope.

BARRY & THE BEACHCOMBERS +

WORLDVIEW + ALPHABET BACKWARDS:

The X, Cowley – Wittstock fundraiser with weirdo punk rockers Barry & the Beachcombers.

OXFORD FOLK CLUB: The Port Mahon

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon

HQ: The Cellar – Drum&bass club night.

REDOX: Fat Lil's, Witney

SATURDAY 26th

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with WITCHES

+ SILVER FACTORY SUPERSTARS + THE

SMALLTEASERS: The Wheatsheaf – Another fine mixed bill at this month's GTI, now firmly bedded down in its new home. Local eclectic rockers Witches headline, merging country, leftfield pop, electronics and full-on noise. Support from eloquent synth-pop act Silver Factory Superstars and bouncy popsters Smallteasers.

OX4: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.

THE TREAT + THE UPSTREAM PROVIDERS + COLINS OF PARADISE: The Music Market – Delicious Music bands night with 60s-styled rockers The Treat, plus space-jazz and electronic beats from Colins of Paradise.

CHICKS WITH DECKS: The Cellar

THE RUINS + TUNNELS: Temple Bar

SUNDAY 27th

THE CHEESEGRATERS + SPOKANE +

HEADSHRINKERS + THE X MEN + RICHARD

CATALOGUE: The X, Cowley – 10th

anniversary party for the local dodgy rockers.

POLMO POLPO + MANTLA: The Port

Mahon – Subterranean atmospherics and dark ambient techno from Toronto's Sandro Perri, aka Polmo Polpo, at tonight's Vacuous Pop evening.

BEARD MUSEUM with BABY GRAVY + TARA

MILTON + BOB KENNIS + BLACK HATS +

DAVE CORRIGAN: The Purple Turtle –

Another, always welcome chance to see the great Baby Gravy, also stars of this month's Oxford Punt, doing their mix'n'match electro-dub-punk oddness, but the real highlight of tonight's Beard Museum must be the return to Oxford of Tara Milton, one-time frontman with The Nubiles and 5.30, both acts helping to put Oxford on the national music map in the 90s. Whether or not we're likely to hear any old Nubiles classics remains to be seen but as a great songwriter and an imposing frontman, Tara will be well worth watching whatever.

DELICIOUS MUSIC ELECTRIC OPEN JAM: The Music Market

STORM WARNING: Country Club, Old Chapel, Bicester

MONDAY 28th

DINO BAPTISTE: The Bullingdon – Blues, funk and boogie-woogie from Birmingham keyboard wizard Baptiste, drawing inspiration from the likes of Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis and Ray Charles.

TUESDAY 29th

JAZZ CLUB with THE HUGH TURNER BAND: The Bullingdon

SHUSH OPEN MIC SESSION: The X, Cowley

BLUES & FUNK JAM: The Music Market – Final Tuesday night blues club blow-out before the venue closes. Live sets tonight from Blue Mama, Funked Up and Moocher.

WEDNESDAY 30th

THE EVENINGS + GRAIN + ELKS: The Port

Mahon – Return of the local electro-rock favourites after some months off to regroup and write new material. Taking inspiration from as diverse sources as Neu! Queen and Ultravox, The Evenings are one of the most genuinely exciting bands in town. Support comes from Nottingham's wobbly, warped blues and hillbilly funk collective Grain and Idlewild-inspired indie rockers Elks.

JESSICA GOYDER + DAN AUSTIN: The X, Cowley – Acoustic night with Punt star Jessica and melancholic balladeer Dan.

CARUS + THE FAMILY MACHINE: The Jericho Tavern

THURSDAY 31st

RICHARD WALTERS + PAUL MARSHALL +

JONNY RACE: The Cellar – Sublime acoustic pop from local songsmith Richard Walters, exploring the lonely, melancholic side of life, inspired by the likes of Jeff Buckley and Thom Yorke.

OXFORD JAZZ SOCIETY: The Music Market

Monday 21st

BIFFY CLYRO: Brookes University

Just like their beards, Biffy Clyro's music hides as much as it displays. The Kilmarnock trio have slowly and steadily moved up rock's stardom ladder since the turn of the decade to the point where they're playing their biggest headline tour to date, in support of new album, 'Puzzle', and yet their true musical colours aren't always as obvious as you'd expect. 2003's breakthrough album, 'Vertigo Of Bliss', (recorded in a single day) was either the sound of a perfectly accessible adult-friendly stadium rock band doing their damndest to fuck their own tunes up, or conversely, a band desperately trying to find some kind of order out of brute chaos. Despite that album's chart success and a handful of Top 40 singles, where Biffy Clyro work best and make most sense is live. Here the power of their grunge-inspired heavy rock hits home and where the pop sensitivity breathes most easily. Somewhere between Foo Fighters, Tool, Soundgarden and Mogwai, Biffy Clyro are a blunt rock instrument of destruction but also a band infused with subtlety, invention and inventiveness. And of course, they got great beards.



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NIGHTSHIFT presents the

OXFORD PUNT

Wednesday 9th May

One night, six venues, twenty acts

The best showcase of new Oxford music of the year

Borders

6.15pm JESSICA GOYDER

7pm MR SHAADOW

QI Club

**8.30pm JOE ALLEN &
ANGHARAD JENKINS**

9.30pm APE HAS KILLED APE!

10.30pm LES CLOCHARDS

The Wheatsheaf

8.15 MONDO CADA

9pm THE GULLIVERS

9.45pm STORNOWAY

**10.30pm MILE HIGH YOUNG
TEAM**

The Purple Turtle

8pm FOXES!

8.45pm COLINS OF PARADISE

9.30pm MEPHISTO GRANDE

The City Tavern

7.30pm THIRTY TWO

8.30pm MARY BENDY TOY

9.30pm BRICKWORK LIZARDS

10.30pm BORDERVILLE

The Cellar

9pm THE DELTA FREQUENCY

10pm BABY GRAVY

11pm SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE

12am SMILEX

Every act plays for 30 minutes.

Admission to each venue is a bargain £4, except the Purple Turtle (£3.50) and Borders, which is free!

WANT TO SEE EVERYTHING?

Get an all-venue Punt Pass.

Only 100 available. £7 each (plus booking fee) from Videosyncratic on Cowley Road, QI
Bookshop on Turl Street or online from oxfordmusic.net

THE OXFORD PUNT 2007:

Mr Shaodow



BORDERS

As is now traditional we kick off the Oxford Punt in the charming surrounds of Borders. Here, as well as discovering some great new music, you can also learn summink while you're about it. At last year's Punt we found ourselves perched next to a shelf of Scandinavian dictionaries and were soon fluent in Finnish. Previously we'd been immersed in a medical encyclopaedia and spent the entire Punt convinced we were suffering from gout and Legionnaire's disease. Something you will most definitely learn tonight is that **JESSICA GOYDER** is an extremely talented singer and songwriter with a whole world of inspiration and experience behind her. Having grown up in Ethiopia, India and Oxford, she's a classically-trained pianist and has performed as far and wide as Australia, South America, Cuba, Glastonbury and Edinburgh Festival, while time spent living in Barcelona saw her discovering bossa nova from a troupe of Brazilian musicians and playing in an eight-piece all-girl country band. But is she fluent in Finnish? Fluent is something rapper **MR SHAADOW** definitely is. Hailing from London the man known to his mum and mates as Elliot Haslam is studying law at Brookes Uni while organising hip hop nights around Oxford. The name Shaodow comes from his love of Shaolin kung fu, something he went to China to learn, while his electrifying rap delivery brings with it a very English take on the genre: witty, rapid-fire observations on life, from racism to drugs and dead-end jobs. An absolute star in the making.

Jessica Goyder – 6.15pm; Mr Shaodow – 7pm



1. Borders
2. QI Club
3. The Music Market

THE MUSIC MARKET

Sad to report that the Music Market is soon to be no more. Situated upstairs from the Market Tavern behind the Covered Market, it's become a seriously neat little city centre venue over the past couple of years, home to Delicious Music's gig nights amongst others, but by the end of the summer it'll be a Japanese restaurant. So make the most of it while it's here. And maybe it won't be by the time **THIRTY TWO** have finished battering the walls into submission with their fearsome breakneck barking thrashcore that pays little heed to fripperies like melody or commercialism, preferring to tumble down several mountains in its relentless eagerness to shout in your ear very loudly indeed.

And don't think **MARY BENDY TOY** are going to offer any respite after that. These people have got an bloody air raid siren ferchrissakes! And when they're not using that to scare passers-by, they exhume Lena Lovitch and make her recite warped *Carry On* scripts in front of the Devil's own industrial goth rock house band. At least that's what it sounds like from behind this here sofa. And if any scaredy cats are thinking about trying to run as far away from that as possible, who better to help them on their way than **BRICKWORK LIZARDS**, who can transport to you to Egypt or 1940, or perhaps both, in a single song. They write "new old music", drawing inspiration from The Inkspots, Tom Waits, Method Man and Dean Martin, and we bet you won't find another band around at the moment who can boast the same. Finally, wonder to the sheer OTT rock and roll splendour that is **BORDERVILLE**. Recent winners of the University Battle of the Bands, they are a lesson in rock theatricality, one where Cole Porter gets eaten by Sex Gang Children on the set of *Chicago* and where The Doors urge Marc Almond and David Bowie onto ever greater drunken excess. Coldplay they ain't.

Thirty Two – 7.30; Mary Bendy Toy – 8.30; Brickwork Lizards – 9.30; Borderville – 10.30



Mary Bendy Toy

QI CLUB

The QI Club is a virgin venue as far as the Punt building that also features a bookshop, restaurant and music here tonight, not least **LES CLOCHARI**. Nixon does a pretty neat impersonation of a Galt music, grizzled country and Elvis. Bizarrely and **APE!** have got a mandolin. And a glockenspiel. Eastern European arthouse film. Okay, so they're and terse, poetic prose to go with the menagerie. 2% of DNA doubtless helps with the prose and immediately makes them great, even before you see Mike Scott. Newcomers to the Oxford live scene

Joe Allen & Angharad Jenkins – 8.30; Ape H

THE WHEATSHEAF

As we write this the Sheaf has just undergone or is about to undergo a bit of a refurb with a new improved PA, stage and lighting, and it's a welcome bit of news for one of the best little venues in the country and one whose future had been in some doubt until recently. So come along and thrill to the sonic carnage of opening band **MONDO CADA**.

Emerging from that scary West Oxfordshire noise scene that has spawned the likes of Winnebago Deal, Sextodecimo and Deguello (stars of previous Punts, all of them), Mondo Cada pack a mighty rock punch, reminding us of when grunge was a genuine force of nature and not a vehicle for mummy's boys to get a load of angst off their puny chests. Mudhoney! Dinosaur Jr! Tad! Go get 'em, boys! Bicester's **Gullivers**, meanwhile, have nifty weaponry of their own. They approach the punk beast from a different direction altogether, utilising sharp pop hooks and lively ska rhythms in their stropy, scrappy attack, their chief allies in their personal pop war being Maccabees and Larrikin Love. Tongues have been wagging and pens scribbling ever more feverishly of late about **STORNOWAY**, the only Oxford band ever to have an entire BBC Radio Oxford breakfast show dedicated to them (one that got the DJ in question suspended, but hey...). Instilling a gentle celtic ambience into their robust guitar pop, they could well be this year's Punt dark horse. **MILE HIGH YOUNG TEAM** have obviously got their mind on higher things already with that name and, like so many of the bands on this year's Punt, they're a hard act to pin down, a polished, expansive pop outfit with a goodly mix of roughneck folk and perfect English manners. And they got a cello. We love cellos.

Mondo Cada – 8.15; The Gullivers – 9pm; Stornoway – 9.45; Mile High Young Team – 10.30



WHO, WHAT AND WHERE



4. The Wheatsheaf
5. The Purple Turtle
6. The Cellar

THE PURPLE TURTLE

As ever our friends at the ace Beard Museum club host Punt goings-on at the Purple Turtle and this mixed bill is very much in keeping with their eclectic spirit. Recent Nightshift Demo Of The Month winners **FOXES!** fully deserve their exclamation mark, signalling as it does their giddy enthusiasm for uncluttered pop fun. Fronted by husband and wife team Adam and Kayla Bell, Foxes! are reminiscent of all those cute 80s bands like Talulah Gosh as well as much overlooked pop geniuses Ooberman. Foxes! twinkle and jangle with childlike glee, even when they're singing about graveyards and the Jacobite rebellion. Believe us, you'll want to take them home and make them into pets. Only crazy people would allow **MEPHISTO GRANDE** into their homes. Formed from the fire and brimstone remains of Suitable Case For Treatment, Mephisto Grande are some unholy melting pot of Southern Baptist preaching, train-wreck blues, virulent hardcore and vaudeville. And they rock. As do **COLINS OF PARADISE**. But in a completely different kind of way. Because they're more of a jazz band. Only a space-age jazz band. With drum&bass. Yes, that's it, a they're a space-jazz-drum&bass-funk-rock-fusion-upside-down-cake. And if you invited them into your home they'd probably turn your kitchen into a debauched jazz rave up.

Foxes! – 8pm; Colins of Paradise – 8.45; Mephisto Grande – 9.30



Foxes!

It goes but it's a very warm welcome to one of the unlikeliest new venues in town, nestling within the QI and members' club. And it's part-owned by Stephen Fry so understandably we've got some suitably cultural **DS**, who are so cultural they even sing in French. Sometimes. And they've got an accordion and singer Ian Mallic Johnny Cash at times. They're sort of a cultural exchange project between 80s indie pop, Parisian folk and pleasingly they all get along like a house on fire. They might not have an accordion but **APE HAS KILLED** has a cornet. And an exclamation mark at the end of their name which they take from a very highbrow got it from *Planet Of The Apes*, but don't tell Mr Fry. They've also got some cool, scruffy electronic beats of percussion instruments that you apparently don't need opposable thumbs to play, although their extra poetry. **JOE ALLEN AND ANGHARAD JENKINS**, meanwhile have a violin. An electric one at that, which you get to Joe's restless, emotive songs and a voice that has seen him compared favourably to Damien Rice and as they're already making sizeable waves.

Has Killed Ape – 9.30; Les Clochards – 10.30

Ape Has Killed Ape!



Mile High Young Team



THE CELLAR

The Cellar is where the Punt goes on late into the night and the tempo switch is cranked up to number 11. 11 being one louder. One Louder being a great, pioneering local club night started up by Rock Of Travolta chap Phill Honey. Who just happens, at is happens, has a great new band called **THE DELTA FREQUENCY**, a band who know all about turning it all up a notch and layering on the bombast. Last month the band were issued with one of the worst reviews ever in Nightshift pages, and that's saying something, but us what are in charge reckon different and The Delta Frequency's gothic robo-rock is actually bleedin' ace and we're hoping the occasion of the Punt might inspire them to wear pneumatic stilts and crack open some pyrotechnics. Pyrotechnics of a different kind from **SMILEX**, who close the show tonight. Long-established as the most riotously fun rock band on the local scene, it's only taken Smilex this long to get on the Punt because their last scheduled appearance was thwarted by a burst appendix. Similarl bodily disasters are rarely far from the fore when frontman Lee Christian gets going and the band's frenetic garage glam-punk mayhem is a spectacle all of its own. In between these colossuses of rock we've got Oxford's best teenage band **BABY GRAVY**, one of the most inspired, lopsided, esoteric and generally mad collections of girls and boys around, somehow finding a middle ground between Human League, X-Ray Spex, Lee Perry and Hawkwind (it's true!), so if you've been searching all this time for some cheerleader punk-dub-electro-pop-prog, your search is over. And after that, you can dance in a strange and awkward fashion to **SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE**, what make totally ace glitchy krautrock techno pop and even have a song about which are the best dinosaurs. Tell us that ain't what pop music should be all about.

The Delta Frequency – 9pm; Baby Gravy – 10pm; Space Heroes of the People – 11pm; Smilex – 12am



The Delta Frequency



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SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER '07!

LIVE

CAMERA OBSCURA

The Zodiac

Anyone can say they're heartbroken, but only a rare few can sound like they really mean it. Camera Obscura's 'Hey Lloyd, I'm Ready To Be Heartbroken', a direct response to Lloyd Cole's 1984 hit, is probably the band's most cheerful number, but amid its elegant, muscular chime and rousing organ swirl, Tracyanne Campbell's daydreaming voice sounds like the loneliest songbird on the planet.

Seriously, Tracyanne could sing you her shopping list (two pints of heartache and a loaf of world weary melancholy) and sound like the last great romantic on earth. All the more remarkable then that in between songs tonight the demure, slightly boyish singer is possessed of a wonderfully dry sense of humour, trading self-deprecating insults with sizeable guitarist Nigel Baillie, who in turn rises to the challenge of a technical hitch by shuffling through a few bars of 'Mull Of Kintyre'.

It's taken Glasgow's Camera Obscura ten years to become an overnight success, with last year's most beautiful song, 'Country Mile', from their breakthrough third album, 'Let's Get Out Of This Country', now co-opted by Tesco for its latest clothing advert. Such prostitution can do nothing to tarnish the song's desolate sense of aching wonder. Not since The Shop Assistants' Alex Taylor has a female singer captured the pure essence of melancholy so succinctly.

That comparison is no accident: Camera Obscura are steeped in 80s Caledonian pop, from Lloyd Cole and Altered Images to Belle & Sebastian. They delve into country at times, even a spot of Calypso and a cute waltz for 'The False Contender', and just occasionally Tracyanne could be a less coquettish Nancy Sinatra, but that spirit of Scotland past stays with them always. Hell, they even finish tonight's set with an old single, '80s Fan'.

Through almost all of their songs, from 'Suspended From Class', through 'Let's Get Out Of This Country' to 'Tears For Affairs', Camera Obscura are seeking escape: escape from everyday drudgery and disappointment,



photo: Richard Hounslow

to a more magical place. A magical place they conjure so joyously with their music. So, are we ready to be heartbroken? Most definitely, and it's a wonderful feeling.

Dale Kattack

DR SHOTOVER: Dalek, I Love You

Eeny meeny miny mo... Ah, there you are... I'm just trying to decide which of the separated-at-birth fat-faced boy wonders should die first - Cullum, J. or Doherty, P. - it's a poser, isn't it? Some would have it that Doherty is Cullum's evil twin, but in my view the bouncy jazz-lite prancings of the latter may put him equally in the frame for sudden death. The chaps in the club bar and I have formulated a mighty plan... we are going to launch a new publication called "Goodbye Magazine", in which the lifestyles of the Rich and Famous (and Sickening) will be put under the microscope... after which you, the public, will be able to vote for the early demise of the most loathsome. Can't say too much about it at the moment, but Tuffy Cecil reckons he has some contacts in Mossad who might be able to help... An "Ice The Spice Girls" Campaign is already being set up for those of you who have never forgiven Ginger, Posh, Baby etc for their crimes against culture... Meanwhile, on a lighter note, isn't it great to have Dr Who back on our screens? How well I remember the first episode! I acted the bobby in it who gets into the Tardis by mistake and is then clubbed to death by cavemen... oh yes, I remember, they decide not to use that bit. Only had two lines, mind you... "You there! I have reason to believe that's a stolen bicycle!" and "You there, with the beard! Put that young lady down! Aaarrggghh!" Now, THAT story was worth a drink, wasn't it? Mine's a pint of gin and jelly-babies - cheers!



Dr Who: "Dr Shotover, you say? Never heard of him".

Next month: Holiday in Disneyland

THE SOUNDS

The Zodiac

Imagine for a moment, if you will, that you are the impossibly pert pop punk pixie Maja Ivarsson, lead singer of Helsingborg's The Sounds. Surrounded by your four not-bad-looking-either male bandmates, you're actually quite happy to be crammed up next to your devoted audience downstairs at the Zodiac; your jaunty synth rock is designed to get under your listeners' skin, and you're also quite partial to getting closer to your audience by way of the odd crowd surf. (You're tiny so nobody's likely to drop you.)

Oxford may be a world away from the New York scenes among which your recent, second album 'Dying To Tell This To You' fits perfectly, but your appeal is pretty international. Your music mostly has just the right blend of commercial and cool to have attracted celebrity fans like Dave Grohl and Bam Margera (whose wedding reception you recently played at); 'Tony the Beat' is probably the best so far - addictive, catchy and more

sophisticated than the rawness of most of your first album, 'Living In America'. The more anthemic 'Song with a Mission', 'Painted by Numbers' and 'Queen of Apology' come close behind though. Despite demanding the audience's attention, you're kind enough to leave guitarist Felix and keyboardist Jesper to do some sweaty electric drumming at the end of 'Ego'.

Comparisons to Blondie are inevitable but flattering, and you might concede that your band is not the most original there has ever been, but who cares? Your magnetic yet dangerous demeanour is such that nobody's likely to argue with you. Your voice is at times as vulnerable and delicate as that of The Cardigans' Nina Persson, but you're leather to Nina's wool. You're having fun belting out some great tunes, and the Zodiac is transfixed. On the evidence of tonight, I think you'd be quite chuffed to be Maja Ivarsson.

Kirsten Etheridge

BRYAN FERRY

The New Theatre

You could say that Bryan Ferry owes Oxford. All the more surprising then, that after the aborted outdoor gig in a grim corner of Cutteslowe Park a couple of years ago, the New Theatre is pretty much sold out with tickets at nearly £50. But the sometime singer with Roxy Music is on a bit of a roll at the moment.

With a successful Roxy reunion tour behind him, and a much-anticipated album by the group in the pipeline, it's apparently a choice time to head out on another solo tour.

On the surface the new album featuring heavily in tonight's set – a collection of Bob Dylan covers called 'Dylan-esque' – doesn't sound like the most inspiring career move, but Dylan songs have often drawn out the best in Ferry, and if tonight's gig is anything to go by, the effect is still revitalising. 'A Simple Twist of Fate' charges from the blocks sounding uncannily like Roxy's classic 'Pyjamarama', while 'Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues' swings with real attitude and edgy style. The attempts at 'Knocking on Heaven's Door' and 'All Along the Watchtower' manage to be respectable rather than embarrassing and even the schmaltz of 'To Make You Feel My Love' is digestible. 'Positively 4th Street' is actually superb and shows just how

emotive and affecting Ferry's voice can still be. Similarly 'Gates of Eden', one of those imperishable Dylan songs that you feel should be left untouched is here given a powerful and ethereal reading that really works. Much of the credit must go the calibre of musicians Ferry has with him these days, including veteran drummer Andy Newmark and Chris Spedding as one of three fine guitarists.

For someone who has not seen a (complete) Ferry concert before, it is a bit disappointing not to have any of the old Roxy classics but the choices from the solo albums, ranging across the full 30+ years of his career, is impressive. There is mercifully little of the over-produced and sometimes vapidly atmospheric stuff from the 80s and 90s. Instead there are some great surprise inclusions from under-rated 70s albums like 'The Bride Stripped Bare' and particularly 'In Your Mind'. At the end of the evening the last two tracks, 'A Hard Rain's a Gonna Fall' and 'Let's Stick Together', predictably bring the audience to their feet. No real encores, mind, which is a bit unsatisfying, though I guess that's part of the tantalising Ferry experience. Still, a remarkable voice and a still remarkable pedigree as a performer.

Steve Thompson

THE FALL

The Zodiac

For over thirty years now The Fall have existed as a belligerently independent fiefdom jostling between the perennially warring kingdoms of Prog and Punk, with Mark E Smith as its twisted jester-prince. A new year brings a new tour and, not uncommonly, a new band, so it's no shock to discover that Smith's third wife, keyboard twitcher Elini, is the only person onstage surviving since The Fall's last Oxford visit, less than 18 months ago. Perhaps more surprising is that the new lads are primarily American alt musos and not the sort of "unlearned" musicians from which Smith has traditionally built his army: guitarist Tim Presley at times indulges in the sort of fiery, Sonic Youth rocking that would have earned earlier band members a severe dressing down. Probably between verses.

Odd frills excepted, however, this is still clearly The Fall as we know them, sludgily pummelling garage guitars, krautische Korg synth buzzes and relentless glam rockabilly drum patterns topped off by an impenetrable, yet oddly mesmerising drawl. Smith's voice, a long way from his youthful yelp, is a worn piece of shoe leather, cracked and ugly, yet far more malleable than many fresher alternatives. A track like 'My Door', far more satisfying live than

on the recent 'Reformation Post T.L.C.' album, reveals just how subtly expressive Smith's voice can be, once you've tuned into the cosmically unmelodic frequency on which he works. Mark may have sadly lost the psychedelic narrative impulse of yore, but it's been replaced by a quiet vocal intensity.

The Fall are a notoriously uneven band, and one worries that Smith can no longer tell a good gig or a decent album from a bad one, so well drilled are the members into the group's sound (despite Smith's allegations that he only recruits non-Fall fans, recent line-ups have clearly done their homework). Ignoring twin basses and some American accents this gig still sounds exactly like The Fall, and the worry lingers that there's nothing new left to do with the format. Then again "sounds exactly like The Fall" is one of the greatest superlatives in our dog-eared critical lexicon. And when the band come on for an unsuspected second encore, with house lights up and half the audience already out the door, fuzzily reinterpreting recent favourite 'Blindness', doubts about the continued relevance of The Fall evaporate. And, hey, didn't Mark audibly thank the audience at one point? Some things do change, after all.

David Murphy

MOLLOY/LITTLE COSMONAUT/ MINUTES

The Port Mahon

Sometimes minutes can seem like hours, and Minutes manage to make tonight last for eternity. At best what they do could be described as lightweight acoustic indie, which has its place certainly, but still has to be delivered with some panache. "This song has a story behind it – but it's not very interesting," states the mild mannered bass player. Rather unsurprisingly what follows doesn't exactly command the attention either. With the exception of 'Sunset Attack 8', their set is a tedious slog through whiny angst-ridden tunage. Minutes have taken half an hour of my life, and I want it back.

Little Cosmonaut take to the stage with some very cheap-looking Casio keyboards, a couple of children's xylophones (or is it glockenspiels – I can never remember) and a cymbal. To say that they are twee would be an understatement. They probably got beaten by the twee kids at school, left bruised and emotional in pools of blood and glitter. Not that this matters, because they create the kind of music that takes you back in time to *Bagpuss* and *The Clangers* (neatly reversing the aging effects of Minutes). It's so simple and otherworldly you can imagine floating through space with their gently chiming tunes echoing around your space suit.

After Little Cosmonaut, Molloy are something of a shock to the system with their cutely crafted electrofied new wave songs. Part Elastica, Part B-52s, almost everything they do tonight is a gleaming nugget of genius, and it's played with such enthusiasm it's practically impossible not to love them. Everything from the squelch of the Moog, to the hand claps, and choruses that beg to be chanted works perfectly. That singer Caz spends at least one song bellowing down a telephone is a merely an aesthetic bonus. Molloy are certainly a band that should move on to bigger things.

Sam Shepherd



Molloy photo: Sam Shepherd



CLUTCH

The Zodiac

Like the Arctic Monkeys, Clutch are a band that confounds expectation. They are birthed from a rare breed of musicians that must have given their previous record labels the kind of quizzical looks usually reserved for people trying to cross the road in busy traffic.

Heavy but not quite metal, frenetic but not at all punky, their failure to capture a particular zeitgeist has, however, in no way impeded their popularity. Indeed they maintain a firm grip on a particular firebrand of bluesy rock which is never really in fashion, and never really out. Admittedly there are small tinges of “going through the motions” in tonight’s set, but they are only of a minor hue and after twelve years on the front lines it is, if not expected, then hardly surprising. Anyway, it matters none, as the Zodiac is rammed to the gunnels and intensely gleeful at the straight-up, balls-to-the-wall assault. The band draw widely from new release ‘From Beale St To Oblivion’ but it’s the numbers from ‘Pure Rock Fury’ which really excite (if ever there was an album that did exactly what it says on the tin....).

Structurally too, their songs are all over the shit show, with several numbers accorded mid-song impromptu jam sessions, albeit without all that proggy crap. Neil Fallon’s lyrical delivery is part rap, part southern fried and all non-sequitur, leading to obtuse choruses like “Bang bang bang, vamanos vamanos” (a précis for their country’s situation in a certain Gulf State perhaps).

However if I hear one more lazy hack drone on about Neil having the element of the preacher about him then I swear I’ll explode. Jesus. The only reason he has that massive beard is because he looks about 17 without it. Idiocy aside, every track has people doing the good time dance, which is great, considering the typically goldfish-like Oxford audiences.

Matt Bayliss

CHERRY GHOST / THE FAMILY MACHINE / STORNOWAY

The Zodiac

Sometimes, when eminently quotable lyrics marry up with hummable tunes all you can do is stand back and marvel at the privilege of being a witness. To have all three of tonight’s bands do this in sequence is really rather special.

Stornoway, whose massive fanbase has considerably swollen the audience, sally forth and pitch us song after exquisite song of intelligent *Kinder-folk* beauty. ‘End Of The Movie’ is as bed-sit savvy as the Flying Pickets doing Adrian Gurvitz’s ‘Classic’, while the impossibly infectious ‘Zorbing’ is an instant hit that just will not leave your head, like a groovy ‘Walking in the Air’.

The Family Machine, too, have a masterful knack of relaxing the crowd with troubadour *bonhomie* as if fresh out of a festival VW camper van. Singer Jamie Hyatt, who increasingly looks like Johnny Borrell’s big brother, sugar coats dark Costello-style wryness with toe-tapping Thrills-like jauntiness and even some whistling. ‘You’ve Got It Made’ is a breezy lament, shot through with lonely *film noir* guitar, and ‘Flowers By The

Roadside’ is almost a skit in its narrative clarity, but it too is punctuated by calculated mortality. After falling head over heels in love with the stop-what-you’re doing, radio beauty of single ‘Mathematics’, everyone is keen to find out what songwriter Simon Aldred, of Cherry Ghost, looks like. Pale limp aesthete? Drink grizzled cowboy? As it turned out he couldn’t have been more naturally blokey, looking like an affable cross between Gordon Ramsey and Nick Knowles. The fact he has a magnetic voice, somewhere between Willie Nelson and Richard Hawley, plus an absolute mountain of wonderfully mysterious literate lyrics he can shape at will into melodic songs of different styles, is everything.

Swathes of lovelorn or loveless nocturnal urban imagery hypnotise in ‘My God Betrays’ and ‘Mary’s Lament’, while the countrified spangle of ‘Four AM’ shows he’s not just about howling at the moon. Out in July, this will be one of the finest albums of the year. Life really doesn’t get any better than this.

Paul Carrera

THE TWANG

The Zodiac

I was looking forward to this, my trusty pen filled with the most barbed invective, ready to dismiss this bunch of upstarts as yet another over-hyped product of a desperate, bloated industry bereft of real talent. Yet disappointment reigned, because The Twang are simply fantastic, a life-affirming revelation, a great band playing a blinding gig. From the first chord there is genuine excitement in the air and a tangible feeling that we’re witness to something special.

Dismissed by many as baggy revivalists, they’ve built up their own local following in Birmingham, to the point of being banned from every venue for causing near-riots. Yet tonight’s vibe is edgy and powerful with no hint of aggression. Madchester jibes aside, there lie undeniable parallels with the Happy Mondays: two front men (though both singers), one appearing completely bollocks, and a general street gang attitude. More importantly, behind the laddish front the music is highly developed and complex, and held mainly in the guitar and bass (you can tell they’re not a manufactured band because the drummer really isn’t that great). Stu Hartland’s

guitar style is curiously mathematical, owing more to Flamenco than indie, with clear references to The Edge, while Jon Watkin’s fluid basslines are songs in themselves. It’s no surprise to learn that for months they rehearsed five nights a week while holding down factory day jobs, or that they’re all old friends in their first band.

On the downside there’s the rapping that just doesn’t fit, plus the aforementioned drummer, though the Mondays only made it big when they let people like Paul Oakenfold mix in some dance beats. Of course this isn’t 1990 and rock and dance are now moving apart not converging, but great bands have always defied categorization.

The band express surprise that tonight’s gig is sold out, and with one single just out and not even a website that wouldn’t normally be expected. They bring back memories of early Oasis gigs, when they were still heart-stoppingly great and full of naïve optimism. As soon as The Twang finish I just want them to start all over again, and it’s at least two years since I’ve had that feeling.

Art Lagun

THE QUARTER FINALS / THE BLACK HATS / SCARAMANGA SIX / PROHIBITION SMOKERS' CLUB

The Wheatsheaf

Considering there are seven of them on stage, Prohibition Smokers' Club make a surprisingly simple sound. Far from the noisy mayhem of Smilex and Verbal Kink, members of whom make up part of the PSC line-up, their songs are almost indie-pop-like in their naivety and bouncy hopefulness. With a lead vocal style that reminds you of the quirky strangeness of Deerhoof, and refreshingly non-angular music augmented by flute, saxophone and washes of post-rock reverb'n'delay noise, PSC look like they're genuinely enjoying themselves and giving it their all. Keeping clear of the blandness that can sometimes come from indie-pop, they're honest, enjoyable and melodic, with just enough oddness to hold the interest.

No such subtlety from Scaramanga Six, who bludgeon the crowd repeatedly with meaty riffs in the style of Queens Of The Stone Age: stylishly brutal yet oddly vacuous. Seemingly harbouring a chip on their shoulders about Oxford's typical reticent gig crowd (there are a few barbed quips on this subject throughout the set), they valiantly give it their all, ending with an aggressive twenty seconds of silent staring into the audience. They're fun to watch, and have just enough heavily hummable tuneful sparks to lift them above the morass of overdriven heaviness they seem to be edging around.

Nick Breakspear's previous band Chamfer

were heavily influenced by late-60s psychedelic pop, and his new outfit The Black Hats continue in a similar vein, albeit in a rather more stripped-down form that is more Paul Weller than The Flowerpot Men. If you like. This is solid indie rock with several tips of the pork-pie hat to The Stone Roses, The Jam and The La's: melody is all, and simple song constructions are effortlessly and competently rolled out one after the other. There's a slight lack of direction – perhaps there just aren't enough hooks to delineate songs from one another – but at any moment of their set it's hard to say that The Black Hats aren't good at delivering straightforward, easy-to-listen-to guitar music.

Much the same could be said about The Quarter Finals. They're certainly not setting the world on fire with originality and dynamism, but if you're after a band that can fire off round after round of chunky grunge-tinged Supergrass-meets-Ramones heavy pop, they're your men. Once again, it's hard to tell one song from another at times, but there are a few singalong vocal refrains that suggest a crowd-pleasing sensibility that can hopefully develop into a more singular, unique sound for the band. If they can crack it, The Quarter Finals could really come into their own.

Simon Minter

MIDLAKE / ROBERT GOMEZ / STEPHANIE DOSEN

The Zodiac

Tonight's gig goes further to highlight the quality of former-Cocteau Twins guitarist Simon Raymonde's Bella Union roster, one of the best-kept secrets in music today. As well as all tonight's acts they also have Explosions In The Sky, The Dears, Howling Bells and lots more besides. Judging by the sold out crowd, this won't be a secret much longer.

Stephanie Dosen is up first, naturally kooky and suitably elfin. She enchants us with her beautiful melodies and bemuses us with her inter-song banter of death metal bands and gig snipers. Robert Gomez, playing with three of Midlake tonight, shows that great players do not necessarily make for a great show. The songs are drab and directionless and Gomez appears uninterested.

Those same musicians, when part of Midlake, are transformed. Midlake have the tunes in abundance, and despite them being on the whole soft rock, there's enough edge and hooks to reel you in. The

harmonies are wonderful too, the whole band contributing to the vocal bliss. Tonight's set is made up primarily of songs from last year's 'The Trials of Van Occupanther' album, save for the odd old number including the weirdly druggy beauty of 'Balloon Maker'. They've gathered an obsessive fanbase, who greet even album tracks with loud cheers. The band switch instruments on a regular basis, seeing the live arena as a place that necessitates them to tease out further layers from the rustic vibe that is the songs in recorded form. 'Roscoe', 'Head Home' and 'Young Bride' are all wonderful tonight, but it's 'Van Occupanther' that steals the glory, building and building to a chorus that's almost anti-climatic, yet just perfect. Midlake are a band who've picked up the baton of storytelling, countryside-dwelling rock recently left by the track's side with the demise of Grandaddy and taken it to the next level.

Russell Barker

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BIG BAD CITY

The Port Mahon

It must be a bit of a mixed blessing, being in a band whose most noteworthy feature is being fronted by the current Miss England, Ellie Glynn. No matter what you may feel about a contest which celebrates the incomparable feminine virtues of being wholesome, non-threatening and nice to look at, it gives Big Bad City a promotional power to which they couldn't otherwise aspire. I, for one, wouldn't have been there tonight were it not for the sneaking, double-edged desire to see what someone who has the compromised honour of being crowned England's most beautiful might do musically. On the other hand, a curiosity based upon the vocalist's beauty queen status is by its nature short-lived and, sadly, there's little in the music itself to sustain any further interest.

Big Bad City come across like a band put together for a Gap advert: some marketing executive's idea of what vibrant, youthful fun looks like. Though the sound at the Port tonight is in a woeful mess, it's clear that they're pretty skilled instrumentalists. Playing summery

fun rock in a Chilli Peppers vein, their songs are underpinned by tight drumming and interspersed with guitar solos so polished Mr Sheen couldn't have done a better job. Ellie's surprisingly deep vocals stand no chance against the dismal sound and seem to lack range, but might feasibly come across as gutsy under more favourable conditions. And all of this is all very well and good, but it stands for nought in the absence of any kind of creative vision or originality. So derivative that they sound like they're performing covers even when they're not grinding the life out of 'Come Together', their sound is tediously predictable. Chugging verse gives way to chugging chorus; song mulches into forgettable, samey song. Fair enough, they're not trying to revolutionize the face of music, but this isn't even fun. Not even the Chilli Peppers would produce such anodyne, banal pap. They may boast a singer of prize-winning prettiness, but it doesn't look like they'll be achieving comparable status with their music any time soon.

Emily Gray

WITCHES / NINE STONE COWBOY

The Zodiac

There's some kind of stubborn genius at work here that Witches frontman Dave Griffiths can take a vibe so coolly British, redolent of The Good, The Bad and the Queen, and persist in dicing in the latin-flavoured trumpet that alternately blusters and croons through a majority of the songs. It's a motif you'd think it wise to use sparingly, yet somehow it works, like nothing else would work.

Tonight's set is also a statement of intent. The band's debut album is recorded and on its way, and it's clear by how tight and fervently the whole band plays that there is a collective will to succeed. They open with one of their best songs, 'Multiple Personality Detective', which showcases their unique sound: heavily-interlaced guitar work deeply veined with the Mariachi brass. 'Sleep Like The Witch That You Are' has a sweetly sung, almost soulful Al Green feel, and 'Putting You Back In The Ground' contains the picturesque line, "Standing by the entrance to your womb". Ooer, missus. The whole is a creative and satisfying beast that jostles to ask you

searching questions and be noticed. It's more than I can say for Mark Cope's rebuilt Nine Stone Cowboy, here playing only its second gig. It's a palpable disappointment after last years exciting line-up. This time they feature Ady Davey manfully cranking out spiky guitar, while the glamorous Maria Ilett thumbs out some rudimentary basslines.

The songs, too, are no more than functional, even clichéd, Americana. The first song seems to just repeat the one line, "She just keeps ringing", banded out for five minutes like Crazy Horse on a tape loop. I did get the joke. The second song, I think, is called 'I've Had Enough'; either that or the review was writing itself, while 'Lemonade' chronicles domestic abuse and is only remarkable for the sudden appearance of several bars of notes straight from the chorus of Neil Diamond's 'I Am (I Said)'. They finish with 'Jesus Doesn't Like Me'; I can only presume that the man from Nazareth must have seen their first gig.

Paul Carrera

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May

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the port mahon

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OXFORD FOLK FESTIVAL

Town Hall and Other Venues

The fourth Oxford Folk Festival shows just how established the event is now. The question of if this year might be a let down after 2006's success is soon answered by enthusiastic, relaxed crowds, sold out gigs, with fun, music and dance again going on across the city, and headline acts deserving their standing ovations.

Part of the fun of the festival is not to be precious about folk tradition. **The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain** are brilliant on Friday night. Formally attired, they launched into covers of classic pop and rock songs with style, verve, and deadpan humour. Their version of 'Psycho Killer' is creepy and sinister, and a highlight of the three days, as is their version of 'Miss Dynamite'. Typically 'Anarchy In The UK' is introduced as a folk song and they dedicate Isaac Hayes' 'Shaft' to revered folk song collector Cecil Sharp, changing it to 'Sharp'. The jokes can't disguise their terrific musicianship and arranging powers, especially in the finale of six different songs sung simultaneously.

Also leftfield and in their way equally interesting but much more cerebral, are the classical sounds of **Luke Daniels' Lost Music of the Gaels**. With piano and viola in their line up, they captivate their afternoon audience.

Salsa Celtica's cocktail of Celtic and Latin rhythms is much better than when last heard at the Zodiac. This time they have only a single sax. Their Saturday night set is the hottest of the weekend; from the start half the audience are up dancing, with Eliza Cathy joining the band on backing vocals and getting completely into the vibe. Pillars of the folk scene shine brightly too.

John Kirkpatrick is in fine form on squeezebox; **Robin Williamson** and **John Renbourn** entrance their afternoon audience. Williamson plays 'Milwaukee Blues' on his Celtic harp, giving a fresh take on blues harp. Guitar maestro Renbourn hosts a workshop and delights everyone with Charlie Mingus' 'Goodbye Pork Pie Hat'.

One outstanding feature of the weekend is all the wonderful female singers. As well as Julie Murphy of **Fernhill** and Mara Carlyle of the **Ukulele Orchestra**, there are many newcomers. **Lisa Knapp**, who is already getting attention nationally; **Anne Sofie Valdal** and the new band **Fribo** who soon will, and **Anna Tabbush** who plays with a different band each of the three days, and who deserves far more attention. Two individual singer-songwriters, **Jack Harris** and **James Chadwick**, show they could be names for the future, especially as both are fine guitarists.

Of the local acts I catch, **Telling the Bees** have moved up a league now they are a four piece; **Kismet** do a good set and 16 year old **Wilbur** shows why he is talked of as a folk blues guitar protégé.

Oxford's own folk heroes **Jon Boden** and **John Spiers** get a tumultuous ovation not once but twice on the main stage. The first is as a duo when they encore with their signature version of 'Prickle-Eye Bush', the second is with **Eliza Cathy** in her band, **The Ratcatchers**, who close the main Town Hall event with 'The Man Who Puffs The Big Cigar' and 'Worcester City', and leave a real buzz hanging in the air. Here's to next year.

Colin May

HEADCOUNT

The X

One of the many joys associated with putting your back out is that your immediate priority upon entering a venue is to secure the most comfy seat in the house. Not very punk rock, I can assure you. Never mind, there is a more than welcome diversion in the extreme form of local punkers **Headcount**, who offer us by way of distraction, a generous helping of fist-pumping punkadelica. Plus the added bonus of a direct current style fuckfest which constitutes their lyrical content.

The sheer pace of their songs alone is cause for concern; the fact that they are delivered with tack-like precision just adds to the euphoria. Musically the tunes shudder not so subtly from proto-punk to monolithic metal, covering 'Ace of Spades'-era **Motorhead** and pretty much every other punk/metal reference point you'd care to mention along the way. Blistering tunes like 'Die! Monkey! Die!' are thrashed out with healthy doses of subtle humour and good-natured

self-deprecation ("We ain't got nuttin' against monkeys or nuttin'. Honest"). The more metal-influenced numbers feel like standing simultaneously in the middle of a buffalo stampede whilst being ritually disembowelled. In a good way, that is. Don't get me wrong, there are vague semblances of melody in there but it's as if Rob, Rob and Stef are a tad worried that it may get a little too listenable at any given point, and automatically head down the sheer blistering power road instead. In fact drummer Stef looks dangerously like he is running down hill very, very fast, most of the time and I dread to think what he'd be like after a few **Red Bulls**, or maybe some crack.

The meagre but appreciative crowd laps it all up and it's interesting to see 75% of them, instead of heading straight for the door, stagger round the walls peeling off their recently removed facial skin. Powerful stuff, them **Headcount** boys.

Matt Bayliss

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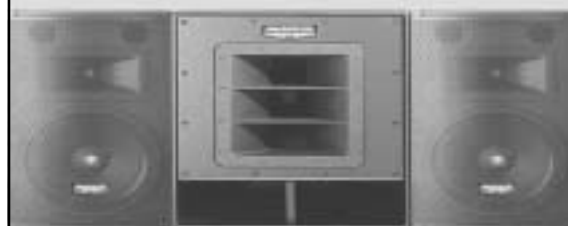
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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

THE NICHOLE STEAL

It's a good couple of years since Kidlington's Paul Hamblin last proffered us a Nichole Steal demo. Back then he was tripping out in a bleakly gothic fashion and thankfully the interim hasn't seen his mood brighten any. 'My Premonition Was Your Ammunition' slips into things with a treated sample of Neo's closing monologue from *The Matrix* before descending into a morass of guitars that churn like an android's stomach on a rough ferry crossing, sci-fi synth blasts and eerily soulful vocals, the whole thing a softly but incessantly pulsing electro-goth mantra obviously inspired by but not wholly in thrall to Tricky and Massive Attack. Further along 'Let Me Sleep' sounds like the musical equivalent of those old chaos computer programmes, a constantly shifting backdrop of noise over which a disembodied voice coos sweet nothings. 'Daylight & Danger' is a more serene trip, surrounded by a soft white mist of ambient electronic and orchestral noise, like Angelo Badalamenti's incidental score for *Twin Peaks*. Taking all of that as a whole it makes it sound like Nichole Steal are still stuck somewhere in the early-90s but such a firm grasp of atmosphere, eerie dynamics and a spectral feel for soul music, it's a fresh breeze of dark winter air.

MATTHEW COLLINS

Look out, there's a sensitive white man coming, to paraphrase our current favourite Mr Shadow song. But it's okay, it's Matthew Collins, he's been round these parts before and we know him to be a good soul with the ability to construct waif-like ballads with some skill, his delicately plucked guitar lines and even more delicate vocals recalling Nick Drake and Eliot Smith on barely-there acoustic whimsy like 'Outside The Wall'. He gets away with being a bit of a sentimental softy by dint of being able to actually sing, write a decent tune and not have lyrics that are embarrassing beyond the realms of human comprehension. Saying that, for some odd reason 'Unfaithful' here reminds us of The Kooks' 'She Moves In Her Own Way', even though it's stylistically so different and it's a feeling we find hard to shrug off and bothers us unduly for the rest of the CD. Matthew saves the day with some neat, intelligently used violin and the dreamy, shoegazey feel of closing track, 'Waiting To Crash'. Definitely this month's demo least likely to pick a fight with a stranger at a bus stop.

THIRTYTWO

Unlike this bunch of tigerish urchins, all pent up and ready to start using their fists or near-to-hand planks of wood should anyone – even their own mother – suggest calming down a bit. Produced by Xmas Lights' doom overlord Umair Chaudhry, Thirty Two pay homage to bushcraft and survival expert Ray Mears on 'Ray Mears saved My Life', wherein they recreate the calamitous sound of buildings and people collapsing in fear and pain with a side order of open warfare and a fire in a chip shop staffed entirely by certified lunatics, while frontman Sober Dave (and, yes, that probably is the name on his birth certificate) barks, shouts, screams and possibly kicks and bites his way through the whole evil business. For second track, 'Pieces Of You Stitched To My Heart', they create a darkly atmospheric plateau of tom heavy beats and searing guitar, occasionally taking odd pauses for breath before launching back into the fight. Great stuff.

PHYTE

And hey, neat little link here with all that fighting talk. Phyte is the latest project from Abingdon's one-man thunder storm Dan Clarke, last heard round these parts in industrial manglers Kazor. With Phyte Dan goes chugga chugga Grrrrrrrrrr! Quite a lot, truth be told, meaty thrash metal riffs underpinned by incessant electronic beats and a voice that sounds like it's emerging from a heavily-bearded cave-dwelling troglodyte. Seriously, he even uses words like Bleugh! as lyrics. More singers should do that. Ambient proggy wandering becomes skin-removing industrial thresher rock on 'Pure Light', a gruff, brutal grind that calls to mind Killing Joke and Godflesh and the end of the world moves inexorably closer.

ELECTROLYTE

Not, apparently, to be confused with local band Electrolytes, this lot have just moved to Oxford from Southampton, lured here by their admiration for such local luminaries as Youthmovies, which isn't so surprising once you get into their restless, itchy fretplay. A closer local comparison, however, would be The Workhouse, notably on 'The Pale Rider' wherein they jangle and shimmer in a vaguely 80s fashion, while on 'Jet Lag' the vocalist apparently sings something about "Whatever happens when the camel breaks his bed?" (although it could be "bakes his bread" since it's so shrouded in guitar-laden mystery). Elsewhere there are hints of Tindersticks until the singer moves up several octaves and turns into Lloyd Cole, and if the band don't yet quite have the gentle touch necessary to really hit the target, they do come close on occasions to

evoking the spirit of early-80s underground guitar pop.

DIATRIBE

And they're not the only ones lurking in the darker regions of that decade's indie music. Live Diatribe can be a right old fuzzstorm, but here they show off their more considered side, cutting a dash with a spirited sprint through early Echo & The Bunnymen, whipped up a bit by some rough pub rock bravado, then bringing in Robert Smith and some fuzzy gothic effects pedals, probably called Sounds Like The Chameleons, which is no bad thing *at all*. Despite some rough edges, they can soar when the spirit takes them, notably on 'Hobo Rocksy' which manages the difficult task of finishing a good couple of minutes before you want it to. Begging, stealing and borrowing from the early-80s is so common these days Diatribe will have their work cut out making their presence felt, but they have a natural effusiveness about them that'll at least help them part of the way.

TITUS

Titus boast some pedigree, featuring as they do former members of Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia, Diego Garcia and the English Symphony Orchestra, as well as up'n'coming noisemakers Theo. Whether all that adds up to anything special is debatable, since Titus seem to in thrall to their influences (notably Billy Mahonie and Don Caballero, plus a hefty dose of The Rock Of Travolta) to retain much of a unique identity. Not that they're in any way bad, more like musak for the post-rock generation, each elongated track sounds too much like an interlude than anything with a sense of direction. There's much jazzy bass meandering, tip-toeing beats and furtively frenetic fretplay (Leonard Sachs, eat yer heart out) amid the general ambience of proggy noodling and the whole thing feels a bit like a clever semi-improvised jam session.

NAGATHA KRUSTI

This lot are much more straight-to-the-point, shouting and skanking their way through an album-length demo that takes a bumpy ride back into punk's past, mixing it up with hefty doses of reggae, ska and funk, plus the odd bit of rapping and generally sounding like the sort of band who would have ended up on a Crass or Mortarhate compilation album of street punk sounds. They're at their best when they stick to the old-fashioned big rolling punk guitar chords and spitting angry invective (well, as angry and invective as any Brookes University law and human biology graduates can be), the attempts at rap just a little bit too forced and, well, posh sounding, to work. Nagatha Krusti's lo-fi feel and wholesale plundering of ska and reggae suit their crusty feel and if they haven't quite got King Prawn's way

with a killer tune, you imagine them stirring a decent crowd in some distant corner of a field at Glastonbury.

SEV

The work of one Sev Groulie, who sounds like some kind of Tolkien-inspired hobbit or maybe a friend of Fungus the Bogeyman. Well his name does anyway; his singing, meanwhile, sounds like Fred Schneider from The B52s, complete with that overbearing sense of jauntiness that always made you want to smack that band in the teeth even as they were writing cracking surf-pop hits. Sev's moon-in-June style of rhyming doesn't help much either, like on his ode to Jackie Onassis: "Jackie, Jackie O / Where did you go? / Jackie Jackie O / I miss you so", which is a shame as the song's sentiments are rather more dignified. Elsewhere Sev points to The Pogues as inspiration for 'Brand New Chevrolet', while all the while sounding rather more like They Might Be Giants or Hootie and the Blowfish, an occasional shouty blues number with slide guitar only serving to accentuate his American accent. Still, we shouldn't be too harsh on poor Sev; like the most benign drunkard he has a tendency to be a bit annoying but his unstinting jollity and resolute lack of self-pity is rather endearing for a short time. God forbid we ever find ourselves trapped in a lift with the bugger, though.

THE DEMO DUMPER

THE FILTHY HONEY

As a founder member of The Rock Of Travolta as well as his more recent projects, Boywithatoy (twice Demo Of The Month winners) and The Delta Frequency (also DOTM recently) Phill Honey has proved time and again that he's a talented musician and writer. He is, however, an absolutely rubbish singer. Here he attempts to show his sensitive side by way of some mournful piano and several bucketfuls of navel-gazing mumbling. And so this staggeringly overlong demo trudges haplessly along like a sullen teenager kicking a coke can while reciting all the smart things he wishes he'd said to the girl what just dumped him. It lacks all the verve, energy, imagination and bombast of his best stuff, only the odd synth twinkle reminding us that this musical corpse is alive. A sudden crunch of guitars six minutes into 'My Body The Map' is, by this stage, simply an incongruous kick in the shins for the slumbering demo reviewers, while the stolen snatches of 'Happiness Is Warm Gun' fail to ignite the lazy sprawl of sub-Nine Inch Nails scratching and by the end the whole thing has slumped back into a barely coherent somnambulant dirge. Oh Philly, you silly billy.

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

IMPORTANT: no review without a contact address and phone number (no email or mobile-only). No more than four tracks on a demo. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. Nightshift accepts no responsibility for deflated egos.

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