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NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month.
Issue 156
July
2008

the epstein

*Going up the country with
Oxford's festival faves*
Interview inside

Plus
News, reviews and
six pages of local gigs

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NEWS

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LOCAL POP LEGENDS THE

CANDYSKINS are set to reform again for a one-off Music For Life gig in aid of Cancer Research at the Academy on Friday 8th August. The band, who last played together at the Zodiac's closing down party last year, will be joined by fellow Britpop stars Dodgy as well as Frank Turner and A Silent Film. The benefit gig is being organised by Dave Holt, who managed Unbelievable Truth and promoted early shows by Radiohead and Supergrass, who has been treated for cancer this year. Tickets for the show are on sale now, priced £15, from wegottickets.com and the Academy box office.

ANDY YORKE releases his debut solo album on 14th July. 'Simple', which features 12 new songs, is released on Aktiv Records. The former-Unbelievable Truth frontman quit the band in 2000 and moved to Russia to work as a translator for Greenpeace, swearing never to play music again. However, five years later Andy found himself with a fresh batch of songs and the desire to carry on. Talking about the new album, Andy says, "The songs were me trying to help and feel better about everything. I was writing in spite of myself. They were therapy and by the end of it things were starting to sort themselves out in my life. I thought it was important to go under my own name; I didn't want to go by a band name. It is different, now it is just 100% me and my songs. I still see there are potential problems going by the name Andy Yorke. But fuck it, it's my name."

TRUCK FESTIVAL has been allowed to increase its capacity by 500 for this year's event. As such a new batch of weekend tickets, priced £60, are now on sale from wegottickets.com as well as Videosyncratic, SS20, Rapture in Witney and other outlets. Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly have now been confirmed as the main stage headliners on the Sunday, with Lemonheads topping the Saturday night bill. Rave legends Altern-8 will play a special Saturday night headline set in the Barn. Visit www.thisistruck.com for more details.

LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER MARC

WEST has an exhibition of his music photos at the Lolapaloza Gallery on Blue Boar Street from Monday 30th June through to Thursday 31st July. Marc, whose exhibition is entitled First 3, No Flash, regularly contributes live photos to Nightshift as well as conducting band interviews for BBC Radio Oxford's Introducing music show. Lolapaloza is open from 10am through to 5.30pm. A special evening viewing, on Friday 4th July, from 5.30-8pm, features a live set from Tristan & The Troubadours.

SUNNYVALE NOISE SUB-ELEMENT

release a limited edition album of live tracks and remixes this month. 'More Than 20%' is available from the band's website and comes in a hand-doodled and numbered mailer box and features remixes by the likes of Boywithatoy, Eduard Soundingblock, Space Heroes of the People and Smilex. The CD costs £4 and only 100 are available. Anyone visiting the band's website at www.sunnyvalenoisesubelement.co.uk and joining the mailing list can download six Sunnyvale tracks for free.

VIDEOSYNCRATIC on Cowley Road are still keen to sell CDs by local bands. The video and comic shop on Cowley Road is the only independent stockist of Oxford music in the city and has now relaxed its rules on CDs having to carry bar codes. Bands should drop their CDs into Jon at the store.

ABINGDON AND WITNEY COLLEGE

launch their new Foundation Degree in Sound and Media Technology this summer, providing an academic introduction into such subjects as sound recording, video technology, business skills, e-media, studio design, film and pop music, listening skills and video production. The course, organised in partnership with Brookes University, is designed to meet the needs of the modern music and media industries. For more information on the new course and the college's other music-related courses, visit www.gotocollege.co.uk or call 01993 208001.

DON'T FORGET TO TUNE INTO

OXFORD INTRODUCING every Saturday evening between 6-7pm on BBC Radio Oxford 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show features the best Oxford releases as well as interviews, gig previews and a demo review. The show is available to listen to all week online at bbc.co.uk/oxford.

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A Quiet Word With the epstein

“WE WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF nowhere surrounded by high mountains and arid grasslands; on a clear day from the right spot you could see over a hundred miles and at night the sky was massive and heavy with stars. The love of making music and playing in a band started there for me.”

EPSTEIN FRONTMAN OLLY

Wills is explaining to Nightshift the rustic, romantic roots of his band, the idea of which came to him whilst he was working on a farm in Wyoming. The wide-open prairies and mountains of the underpopulated American state have had a long-lasting influence on Olly's songwriting.

Listen to the band's debut album, 'Last Of The Charanguistas', with its warm, rich fusion of fiery country swing, chilly romanticism and plaintive, whisky-soaked laments and you're instantly transported to a roadhouse blues shack or a midnight Midwest campfire singalong; anywhere, in fact, other than homely, rural Oxfordshire.

THE EPSTEIN HAVE BEEN A

staple of the local live scene for a few years now, regularly playing at Truck Festival and other Truck-related shows as well as just about every venue in Oxford. But with the release of 'Last Of The Charanguistas', the band finally came out of the shadows and realised all the potential they'd shown as they studiously earned their dues on any and every stage.

The album is alive with ambition and soul, from the stirring mariachi horns-led 'Dance The Night Away', through the deceptively jaunty, infuriatingly catchy 'Leave Your Light On' to the lonesome, haunted 'Just The Wind'. It has already won The Epstein widespread praise, from Rolling Stone to Q, while it was named album of the week on Huw Stephens' Radio 1 show on its release. Last summer, meanwhile, the band won a slot at Glastonbury Festival through the festival's Emerging Talent competition, one of five acts picked from over 3,000 entries and playing three sets at the festival.

The Epstein returned to Glastonbury again this summer as well as playing at Wychwood and Wood Festivals.



This month they will take to the stage at both Cornbury and Truck Festivals, their inclusive, down-home music perfectly suited to the great summer outdoors arena.

ALONGSIDE SINGER AND

guitarist Olly The Epstein features Jon Berry on myriad guitars – from Spanish and slide to lap steel and sitar; Stefan Hamilton on banjo, guitar, mandolin and bazouki; Rowland Prytherch on bass and drummer Ed Hawkesworth. With the band regularly utilising four-part harmonies, everyone does their bit vocally too.

Ed, Jon and Rowland are old schoolmates who played in a succession of bands together before forming an early incarnation of the Epstein with Olly. In addition to The Epstein Jon also performs with The Ralfe Band, while Stefan plays with local ska-punkers The Drug Squad. Rowland, meanwhile, has guested with Goldrush and works as a producer out of Truck's recording studio in Steventon. The Epstein's long-standing friendship with Goldrush also finds Joe Bennett playing trumpet on 'Last Of The Charanguistas'.

With Jon packing for a jaunt to Sardinia, Nightshift spoke to Olly, Stefan and Rowland about the band's journey up to the release of the album, their increasing reputation and the joy of playing festivals.

THE ALBUM REALLY SOUNDS like The Epstein finding their feet.

OLLY: “The making of our album was a real eye opener for all of us. It was, at times, joyous and, at others, really frustrating; we were finding our sound both live and in the studio, which made it a very long process. Some tracks were laid down at Truck and others in the farmhouse where I lived; we shifted gear everywhere, shut ourselves away and saw what we could do. At the outset I had very little idea of what making an album involved, personally, collectively and technically, and from that point of view it is a huge achievement.”

ROWLAND: “When we started making the album we originally set out to represent our live sound as much as possible, so a lot of the work for the album was done in rehearsal rooms while practising for gigs really. We were a four-piece when we started, and when we decided we'd like to hear some banjo and other instruments we were lucky enough to have Stef come and introduce himself, and we were a five-piece by the time it was finished! So in that sense it is very much the sound of us finding our feet, yeah. We hope to do the next record very differently and we might find that the recorded sound and the live sound are not so closely linked for some of the new songs. It will probably sound like the Eagles.”

The reaction to the album has been overwhelmingly positive.

OLLY: “We set out to make a great first album and it has certainly been gratifying that some of the music press feel that we made a good job of

it. When you release an album it takes on a life of its own and you never know where it may end up. The strangest and the best moment for me came when I took a call from our German label saying that the album had been selected as Editor's Choice in Rolling Stone Magazine. You don't get calls like that too often!”

ROWLAND: “One reviewer commended us on the beautiful female harmonies. Jon and I do all the harmonies. We both have beard growth!”

STEFAN: “I liked the reviewer who said my banjo sounded like a sleazy curb crawler. Must have read my diary.”

THERE'S A GREAT MIX OF

intimate romanticism and exotic party spirit about 'Last Of The Charanguistas'; is it difficult to get that blend right? Do you think the album is best listened to alone late at night over a few whiskies or danced to in company?

OLLY: “I think the mix came from our live shows and getting an album track listing down is like writing a set list - except it is one that will never change - and I think it is a good mix of the two. It is not as expansive as our live sound so I think it probably works best late at night when you can let it pull you in.”

STEFAN: “I was surprised when some people commented the album was quite dark, but actually listening back now I tend to agree. There's a lot of heartbreak and separation in the songs. But it's the kind of pain you can sing and dance along to - the good kind.”

ROWLAND: “A bit of company is always better though, isn't it? It's a party album on balance I think, but don't let us stop anyone from drowning their sorrows if they need to. Who doesn't from time to time?”

GIVEN THAT MOST OF THE

band have, or have had other bands going on, what does everyone bring to the Epstein?

ROWLAND: “The mixture of influences is often really exciting and when we're exploring new ideas things often take a turn in unexpected directions. Olly often brings a half-finished song to a rehearsal and takes it away a couple of hours later completely upside

down. We might never play it that way again, but it's all part of the journey that the songs go on before they take shape. We all love Americana and alt.country, but Jon and I were in a sort of post-grunge band for years, then a prog-tinged outfit and finally a seven-piece titan of synth-rock before we found ourselves part of the Epstein, so we've covered a few bases. Stef has a love of punk and surf rock that definitely makes an interesting counterpoint to delicate country melodies. I think Olly's strength is in those melodies, and the rest of us know how to rough up the sound a bit and give an edge to the music where it needs it."

You've gigged pretty much constantly since you started. How has that helped you get to where you are and do you think some bands today don't have time to establish themselves before they're picked up on?

OLLY: "I think that playing live is absolutely central to the band. We try and write great songs and entertain and I feel that you can only entertain when you are comfortable with what you are doing. We are a really tight live unit and this has come from playing hundreds of gigs in all sorts of situations, from big stages to the smallest DIY shows, like those that we started out doing a few years back at The Port Mahon. You have to be ready to deal with any situation playing live. This is what makes it so exciting, so experience counts for an awful lot in my mind. I have to say that our fanbase in Oxford has been a great support for us over the years; the enthusiasm that they bring to shows and their reaction have given us so much confidence to keep pushing onwards and upwards. It is rare that any new act is going to be able to demand an audience's respect without that live experience so yes, I think that some acts are pushed out there too soon."

STEFAN: We love playing live, it's really central to The Epstein, an end in itself. And we're an independent band, so for us gigging is also an essential way of reaching people, making contacts, selling albums. Beyond that gigging is a very important way for us to work up new material. A live audience gives you a very real and immediate sense of when you've got it right, or otherwise."

THIS SUMMER SEES THE Epstein playing a number of festivals, from Glastonbury through to Truck and Cornbury. Of all the festivals they've played, which was the best and why?

ROWLAND: "The first Wood festival this year was a great success with a fantastic atmosphere, and we've been to some beautiful sites

around the country, but being at Glastonbury as a performer for the first time is a hard experience to beat. It was an amazing weekend, mud and all, and feeling a part of something that prestigious was a real thrill. Not to mention the fact that it is incredibly well run and so relaxed behind the scenes all at the same time, and so being a part of it was so easy and such a pleasure. And we've named our van after the cider they served up for us there. The Black Rat is going home this year!"

OLLY: "I look back to the reception that we received at Truck back in 2006. It was Saturday evening, the sky had cleared after afternoon showers and we played to a crazed tent seemingly full of hardcore Epstein fans; the atmosphere was incredible! I wish we could take crowds like that everywhere with us."

Are the Epstein best suited to a big outdoor summer stage or a hot sweaty, intimate venue?

OLLY: "We love doing both. I think it's sometimes harder to pull everyone in when you are working from a big stage but we are getting better and better at it. It is always great fun to be playing outside after months of basement bars and clubs and I hope that comes across. We are pretty effective in the hot sweaty venues... we have done the rounds and earned our stripes in them!"

STEFAN: "We're very mindful of tailoring the set to the environment we are playing in, and who else is playing and so on. Either way our objective is to connect and communicate."

AFTER THEIR STRING OF festival shows The Epstein head off for a tour of Germany where they are signed to Dandyland Records. After that, will it be time for Olly to take his band over the place it all started? What would the good folks of Wyoming feel about a bunch of English kids making such an authentic American-inspired sound?

OLLY: "Americana... alt-country...folk blues... there are so many tags that can be put on a band. We haven't played in the US yet and we all hope to get over there soon, perhaps for SXSW next year. We have to take the band over there for sure and I look forward to it immensely, apart from anything we need to get back to Wyoming and play a few shows up there and let the locals see how my years have been spent!"

'Last Of The Charanguistas' is out now. The Epstein play at the Crown House Club on Friday 4th July, at Cornbury Festival on Saturday 5th July and at Truck Festival on Saturday 19th July. Visit www.myspace.com/theepstein



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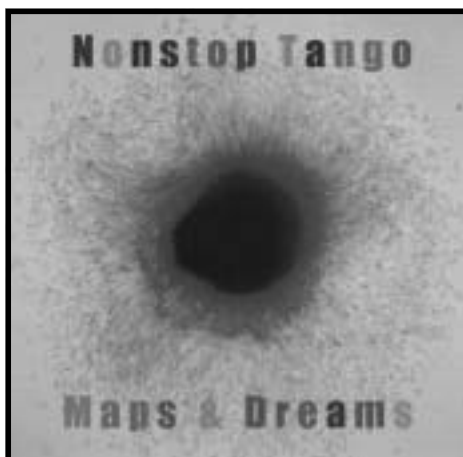
NONSTOP TANGO

'Maps & Dreams'

(Own Label)

It starts with what sounds like Captain Beefheart falling into a de-tuned grand piano and having a violent seizure amid the internal strings and it doesn't get any easier thereafter.

Take five of the most technically talented musicians in Oxford and a music rooted in the ambitions of improvisation and you've got a recipe for either indulgent muso hell or something well beyond the cosy confines of traditional rock music. Nonstop Tango were, undoubtedly, one of the most outstanding acts on this year's Oxford Punt, thrilling and confusing listeners in equal measure, which is pretty much their *raison d'être*. Within their ranks they contain Pat Thomas, a world-renowned keyboard and electronic music experimenter, as well as core Oxford Improvisers luminaries Miles Doubleday, Dominic Lash, Chris Hills and Malcolm Atkins, who also plays with local reggae stalwarts Dubwiser. 'Maps & Dreams', their debut album, sets out to challenge accepted concepts of song construction and as such it's an album you simply have to concentrate on, which will instantly alienate about 99% of the population. The truth is it can be a difficult experience at times, the music simply refusing to sit still and be pinned down, and you can throw a hundred



and one reference points at it and it'll titter to itself and scurry off to play with something completely different. Disquieting electronic ambient passages, seemingly lifted from *Blake's 7* suddenly get eaten by harsh, stabbing jazz intermissions before turning their greedy eyes on synthetic North African mantras or drifting hazily into abstract electro-psychedelic meandering. Often within the space of one number.

Much of the time Nonstop Tango seem content to tinker about like an absent-minded potting shed scientist, just trying to see what works and if it doesn't, then keep it in anyway: if it keeps the listener guessing then it must be right.

Where this doesn't always work convincingly is in the passages of vocal musings that can seem like trying too hard to sound profound, although 'No Stopping', with its completely disconnected list of assorted road signs, takeaway menu listings, train stations and other ephemera, faintly echoes Big Hard Excellent Fish's hypnotic 'Imperfect List' cult classic. Elsewhere the distracted chants and mutant funk recall Damo Suzuki's journeys into improvised musical mysticism even as the inventively off-kilter rhythms – provided by piano as much as drums or bass – bring a little Stockhausen-style awkwardness to the mix. And then in the final number, 'This Guy', the band finally seem to have run out of breath – the wheezing vocals accompanied simply by a lonely piano and violin lament – before it all erupts into a drunken, rabid Tom Waits lurch and closes with a few seconds of maniacal laughter, as if daring you to figure the whole damn thing out, knowing you really can't.

If Nonstop Tango have one real antecedent it would be punk-era weirdos This Heat, another band whose central tenet was to disassemble normal musical arrangements from the inside out. As we said of their Punt set, the world needs bands like Nonstop Tango more than ever, a yang to the yin of mainstream popular music. You might not ever find it in yourself to love them, but at least be thankful they exist.

Victoria Waterfield

DAVID K FRAMPTON

'A Gravitation Towards The Head' /

'Re-Verse'

(Eyeless)

Having won a small army of new fans on the back of his show-stealing Punt set in May one-man electro-noise vandal David K Frampton releases two albums on his own label's monthly CD series, both clocking in at just over 20 minutes and both relentless affairs in their very different ways.

Some people have a talent for certain things and David's talent isn't for singing or writing pop songs. Hence 'Re-Verse' is a trawl through muffled, whiny, ponderous lightweight electro jangle with his painfully flat voice stopped too liberally over tuneless piano and leaden, glitchy beats, only the odd sparkle of synth or clang of heavy industrial machinery to punctuate its remorseless lack of artistic merit.

All of which throws 'A Gravitation Towards The Head' into starker relief. This is closer to where the man's talents really lie – making an arse-quaking noise that just ain't predisposed

towards taking prisoners. More guitar-based than his best albums, 'A Gravitation...' is packed with crunching metallic dissonance, the guitars distorted to seven shades of buggery, recalling bits of Velvet Underground, Throbbing Gristle and Guitar Wolf for fleeting moments as they drill deeper and harder until the music becomes so dense it's hard to discern what's a beat, a guitar, a voice or the washing machine on full spin cycle in the next room. It's a genuinely punishing symphony of clangs and drones.

The two albums are unrelenting and single-minded in wildly contrasting ways, the former seeking to suck your soul out with smirking stealth, the latter happier to simply bludgeon you senseless. If you're going to lose your mind, fast and furious is always the best way.

Dale Kattack

A SILENT FILM

'You Will Leave A Mark'

(Xtra Mile)

These are, without a doubt, the most exciting times for Oxford music since Radiohead and Supergrass first took the world by storm. With Young Knives and Foals currently doing the business, it seems like only a matter of time until they're joined by Little Fish, Winchell Riots and, of course, A Silent Film. This new single is so assured, so naturally elegant, epic and grandiose, it cries out for a Reading or Glastonbury-sized stage to launch itself from. With its sprawling piano lead and Rob Stevenson's guilt-laden vocal performance, 'You Will Leave A Mark' could easily stick around for another five minutes on top of its admirably concise three and a bit. A soaring, opulent but subtly-textured marriage of Snow Patrol and Ultravox, with only a little of the bluster that might suggest, it only makes you more impatient to see A Silent Film outgrow the stages they currently tread and hit the bright lights.

Dale Kattack

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GIG GUIDE

TUESDAY 1st

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Free live jazz with guests The Hugh Turner Band.

WEDNESDAY 2nd

EARPOPPING CANDY: The Port Mahon – New live music club night with bands to be confirmed.

OPERATOR PLEASE + THE VICE + BLACK HATS: The Jericho Tavern – Aussie teen-punk tearaways bring a bit of ping-pong fun to town – *see main preview*

Wednesday 2nd

OPERATOR PLEASE: The Jericho Tavern

Lest Old People be worrying themselves into a Daily Mail-like froth about what Young People might be getting up to when they're not turning schools into all-out knife-wielding warzones, they could content themselves by listening to Brisbane teenies Operator Please, a 21st Century punk-pop update of the Famous Five. Yes, it's fizzy pop all round in every sense of the word as the one-time high school battle of the band winners (they won a box of doughnuts, apparently) celebrate the release of debut album 'Yes Yes Vindictive' with a tour that'll hopefully show folks that there's bit more to them than fizzbomb debut single smash 'Just a Song About Ping Pong'. Musically they're spirited, strident, playful, spiky and artfully primitive, bouncing off the likes of Bow Wow Wow, Be Your Own Pet and The Go Gos, all breakneck drumming and fervent violin lead and with animated singer Amandah Wilkinson coming on like a hybrid of Karen O and Eartha Kitt. Because, you see, they can do slow and sweet as well as fast and mad and really, it's all just very harmless cheesy pop fun. With the emphasis on fun. So, once Old Folks take a short break from vilifying Young People as hoodie-wearing, gun-toting barbarians, they might just enjoy themselves. On second thoughts, let's keep the pretence up and make sure the Daily Mail readers never leave their houses again.

JULY

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Temple

THURSDAY 3rd

THE WHIGS + INTERNATIONAL JETSETTERS + BORDERVILLE + OUTCRY: The Academy – Excellent psychedelic pop, rootsy alt.country and raw garage-pop from Athens, Georgia's fast-rising power-trio, over in the UK to promote new album 'Mission Control', tipping their collective hat towards all things My Morning Jacket, Guided By Voices and Superchunk. Excellent local supporting cast including swirling shoegazing noisemakers International Jetsetters and vaudevillian rockers Borderville.

SWISS CONCRETE with RIGHT TURN LEFT + TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS + CARD ELECTRIC: The Bullingdon – Punky mod-pop from Exeter's Right Turn Left at the ever invigorating Swiss Concrete club. Ace local teen starlets Tristan & The Troubadours support, mixing up sprightly indie jangle with darker Velvets-like scuzz.

DEADBEAT CAVALIER + NEAR THE KNUCKLE + APOLOGIES I HAVE NONE + AUDIO POLLUTION: The Port Mahon – Local punk and metal night with old-fashioned politico-punks Deadbeat Cavalier set to man the barricades.

NITKOWSKI + DR SLAGGLEBERRY + PHANTOM THEORY: The Cellar – Intricate, atmospheric math-rock and post-hardcore from London's Nitkowski at tonight's Big Hair club night, plus the return of malevolent masked math-core merchants Dr Slaggleberry and riff-heavy hardcore rockers Phantom Theory.

CONSCRIPTS + JUNCTION 27 + WORLD VIEW: The Jericho Tavern

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

SMASH DISCO: The Academy

FRIDAY 4th

THE TRANSGRESSIVE HOT SUMMER TOUR: The Academy – Showcase tour for the label that's home to Young Knives and Foals – *see main preview*

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with KANED CITIZEN + THE BLITZ CARTEL + THE SHAKELLERS:

The Wheatsheaf – Typically mixed bag of noises from the Klub Kak Krew. Upbeat indie janglers Kaned Citizen headline, plus lo-fi punk thrashers Blitz Cartel.

THE EPSTEIN: The Crown House Club, Crown Street – Alt.country, whisky-fuelled roadhouse dance and lachrymose roots-pop from this month's Nightshift cover stars – *see main interview feature*

SOUTH CENTRAL HEROES + THE

INTERVALS + SOUND CONNECTION + Ms MONROE: The Jericho Tavern – Four-band bill of punk-pop, emo and post-hardcore.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon – Classic funk, soul and disco.

SHAKE: The Academy – Weekly dose of funk, reggae, soul, rock'n'roll and jazz with Count Skylarkin.

GET DOWN: The Brickworks – Disco, Latin and funk DJ set every week.

BACK POCKET PROPHET + IGNITED + RISING FROM DEATH + IONIX: Bicester Football Club – Four-band bill of Christian heavy rock with local thrash merchants Back Pocket Prophet.

SATURDAY 5th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Cornbury Park – First day of the most civilised festival in Oxfordshire. Paul Simon headlines, with support from The Bangles, Toots & The Maytals, Half Man, Half Biscuit, The Beat and more – *see main preview*

THE COMPUTERS + OUTCRY COLLECTIVE + TARGET 9 + LEAVING DECEMBER: The X, Cowley – Great mixed bag of hardcore noise with Exeter's speedcore terrors out on tour with Surrey's thrash-punk crew Outcry Collective, coming on a like across between Gallows and The Bronx. Gloucester's Target 9 aim for a more melodic brand of indie noise and grunge, while local punk-poppers Leaving December open proceedings.

FARINGDON BIG DAY OUT: Faringdon Junior School (11.15am) – Full day of live music in aid of Helen & Douglas House Hospice, featuring fifteen bands from Faringdon, Oxford, Reading and Swindon, including recent Faringdon Battle Of The Bands winners Forgotten Priority and Disclosure. Amongst the supporting cast are The Dacoits, Wire Jesus, Chalk, B-Phil, The David Reynolds Band, Another Lost Leader, Rhapsodaisical, Script and Not My Day.

M*CK H*CKN*LL: The New Theatre – See: we can't even bring ourselves to type his name properly, lest by doing so we summon some vile child-consuming demon from the netherworld. Along with Phil Collins and Mark King, the Hucknall formed a 1980s axis of musical evil that rivalled anything George W Bush could imagine and laid waste to the charts for years. With the welcome demise of Simply Dreadful, we hoped – prayed – that we'd seen the last of the puffy-faced strawberry-blond shag monster, but now he's back, solo, and on tour paying tribute to soul legend Bobby Bland. Bland being something he should know plenty about.

MELTING POT with THE TALKS + SEMAPHORE + SHIRLEY + TIM MATHEWS: The Jericho Tavern – Mod-punk and reggae from tonight's headliners, having toured with The Beat and Neville Staples last year. Gruff Americana and roots rocking from Semaphore in support, aiming towards the Springsteen and Cash scheme of things. Local good-time 60s rock and pop faves Shirley join an eclectic bill.

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – Funky house club night.



TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM

101: The Academy – Weekly three-clubs-in-one night with classic and contemporary indie at Transformation, 80s and glam pop at Trashy and hardcore, metal and alt.rock at Room 101.

KING EARLE BOOGIE BAND: Fat Lil's, Whitney

SUNDAY 6th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Cornbury Park – Crowded House headline the second day of the festival, with KT Tunstall, 10cc and Bellowhead amongst the supporting cast – *see main preview*

COWLEY ROAD CARNIVAL: Cowley Road – The annual chance to enjoy a car-free Cowley Road – *see main preview*

FIESTA DE LOS MUERTOS: The Academy (12pm-Midnight) – The Academy gets into masked Carnival spirit with a full day and night of ska, reggae and more with sets from Wrontom's Zombie Jamboree, Jewels and The Jacuzzi's, DJs Indecision and Count Skylarkin plus Bristolian DJ legend Derek. The fun takes place outside the Academy until 6pm and then moves indoors through til midnight.

CARNIVAL AFTERSHOW PARTY: The Regal – Local bands, DJs and performers continue the day's carnival fun into the night.

PENTANGLE: The New Theatre – The British acid-folk legends reform – *see main preview*

LOS DE ABAJO: The Academy – Party-friendly Latin-ska from Mexico's eight-strong, Zapatista-supporting collective, mixing elements of reggae, salsa and punk into their energetic dance sound. Signed to David Byrne's Luaka Bop label, they won a BBC Radio 3 World Music Award for 2002's 'Cybertropic Chilango Power' album.

CHRIS CORSANO + TONY BEVAN + DOMINIC LASH: The Wheatsheaf – Wildly inventive avant-rock and free jazz drummer Chris Corsano gets back to his improv work after touring as Bjork's drummer, having previously worked with Sonic Youth and Sunburnt Hand Of The Man, amongst others, here teaming up with local improv luminaries Dominic Lash (bass) and Tony Bevan (sax)

MARRIED TO THE SEA + CITIZENS OF EARTH + I AM THIEVES: Thirst Lodge – Sweet-natured US-style college rocking in the vein of Death Cab For Cutie from Liverpool's Married To The Sea.

OX4: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.

MONDAY 7th

THE JOANNE SHAW-TAYLOR BAND: The Bullingdon – Rising young blues singer out of Birmingham with a sultry, soulful take on rootsy blues and country rocking.

YNGWIE MALMSTEEN: The Academy – Swedish classical-metal guitar virtuoso who had a string of hit albums in the 80s, mixing Paganini with Hendrix and Queen. His most recent outing, 'Unleash The Fury', might just have a hint of overstatement in the title.

ROCK DISCO: Po Na Na

TUESDAY 8th

BOWLING FOR SOUP + KOOPA + STIFF DYLAN: The Academy – Another visit to town for the enduring Texan 'comedy' punkers, with support from Green Day-alike punk-pop crew Stiff Dylans.

GHOSTWOOD: The Academy – Aussie rockers mixing up Oasis-style stadium indie with more dark-hued shoe-gazing noise – re-arranged

from last month.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Club regulars The Howard Peacock Quintet play live, fronted by keyboard player Howard.

SOUTH CENTRAL HEROES: The Port Mahon – Ebullient local pop-punkers.

WEDNESDAY 9th

OXFORD IMPROVISERS: The Port Mahon – Freeform experimentation.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Temple

THURSDAY 10th

BORDERVILLE + THE DRUG SQUAD + BEAVER FUEL: The Bullingdon – Moshka club night with theatrical vaudevillian glam-rockers Borderville, as well as ska-punk vets The Drug Squad, now fronted by the mighty tonsils of Liam Ings-Reeves, plus potty-minded popstrels Beaver Fuel.

DEGUËLLO + BLACK POWDER + PLAYING FAVOURITES + REMEMBER THE CHAOS:

The Port Mahon – Superlative psychedelic post-hardcore noise and experimentation from Deguello, with support from chugging biker-metal types Black Powder, screamo noise from Playing Favourites and screaming thrash-core from openers Remember The Chaos.

COLOUR + SWIM TEAM + THE DEVIL IN: The Cellar

DESMOND CHANCER & THE LONG MEMORIES + CHARLIE KHAN + DAN

AUSTIN: The Jericho Tavern – Great funereal gutter jazz from Mr Chancer and his barfly band.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

SMASH DISCO: The Academy

FRIDAY 11th

MURDER BY DEATH: The Academy – Gothic saloon bar blues, country and punk from Indiana's Murder By Death, walking the line between Johnny Cash and The Bad Seeds.

THE SHAKER HEIGHTS + FREAKISHLY

LONG MIRRORS: The Wheatsheaf – Rootsy melodic rocking from Aylesbury's Shaker Heights. Support from Witney's indie janglers.



Friday 4th

TRANSGRESSIVE HOT SUMMER TOUR: The Academy

Having long since established itself as one of the UK's main indie players, and currently home to both Foals and Young Knives, Transgressive continues to showcase its latest discoveries on the first date of this rolling bill tour that, on other dates includes Liam Finn and Ox.Eagle.Lion.Man. There's no headline band as such but the main attraction is likely to be Anglo-French songsmith **JEREMY WARMSLEY**, set to release his cover of New Order's 'Temptation' shortly. Archly idiosyncratic and wistful by turns, variously recalling Divine Comedy, Magnetic Fields and Patrick Wolf with a playful, busy form of poptronica that's more likely to be cool amongst the London scene's taste-makers than universally popular. Similarly the awkward one-man computer-pop emotional outpourings of **ESSER**. Fun for all is more likely to come from New Zealand's **SO SO MODERN**, previously visitors to Vacuous Pop's club nights, and pitched somewhere between Battles and Klaxons with a restless math-rock-cum-synth-pop party sound for folks what dance like they're plugged into the mains. On a completely different tangent are **ABSENTEE**, rootsy country rockers who marry upbeat pop melodies with seriously morbid lyrics, accentuated by the deep, resonant vocals of frontman Dan Michaelson.

Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd August 2008

INLIGHT CROSS HEADS STORNOWAY
DANNY & THE CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD
THE GOB NAGATHA KRISTI MARIA ILETT DAVE TODD
WITCHES THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND
ANTON BARBEAU OSPREY BEAT IN THE AIR SHIRLEY
SOULJACKER HOLTON'S OPULANT COG BRITON FIFTH
MOTIONINCOLOUR MARK WOOD JIMI ALEXANDER
ALL THESE ARMS THE NEW MOON SMITH & BROWN
BETHANY WEIMARS THE GULLIVERS
ICO THE YOUNGS PLAN CLARE PEACOCK

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Saturday 5th – Sunday 6th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Cornbury Country Park

Last year's Cornbury Festival took place over probably the only sunny weekend of the whole summer, but that's not the only reason why it's by some distance Oxfordshire's most civilised music festival. Set amid the tranquil woods and lake of Cornbury Park, near Charlbury, it's a relaxing and bucolic environment; around the arena you'll find tea and cake stalls (with proper china cups) and even an Audi-sponsored tent where they hand out free chocolate brownies. And then there's the music. Last year's headline sets by Blondie and David Gray, as well as performances by the likes of Midlake, Echo & The Bunnymen and Suzanne Vega set out Cornbury's stall as a festival for an older generation of music fans and families. This year's line-up similarly veers from veteran cool (**PAUL SIMON**, **TOOTS & THE MAYTALS**, **NICK LOWE**) to MOR what-the-fuckness (er, **10CC**). And then, for sheer quirky brilliance, there's **HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT** too.

The living legend that is Paul Simon headlines the Saturday night. Having become a global superstar with partner Art Garfunkel, Simon then cemented his songwriting credentials with the South African-inspired 'Gracelands' album and has continued to create accessible but engaging pop, best encapsulated in his recent 'Essential' Best-Of and his Eno-produced studio album 'Surprise'.

Joining Simon is enduringly popular UK soul, r'n'b and gospel singer **BEVERLEY KNIGHT** (actually Beverley Knight MBE these days) who still manages to knock out some spanking Aretha Franklin and Sam Cooke-inspired soul music amid her ongoing Christian Aid and Terence Higgins Trust charity work.

The Saturday bill is completed by Jamaican legends Toots & The Maytals whose close-harmony ska, soul and reggae flame has been kept alive over the decades by everyone from The Specials to the Clash; 80s hitmakers **THE BANGLES**, whose oddball 'Walk Like An Egyptian' smash and overwrought Number 1 ballad 'Eternal Flame' overshadowed some seriously great songs like 'Going Down To Liverpool'; proto-punk songsmith and producer Nick Lowe; **CARBON/SILICON**, the band formed by ex-Clash guitarist Mick Jones and Generation X / Sigue Sigue Sputnik fella Tony James; bluesman **ERIC BIBB**; peerless Wirral pop wits Half Man Half Biscuit and 80s ska revival stars **THE BEAT**. Opening the whole festival, meanwhile, is local

singer **MARIA ILETT**, who was picked by Radio 2 DJ Richard Allinson from a host of Oxford acts.

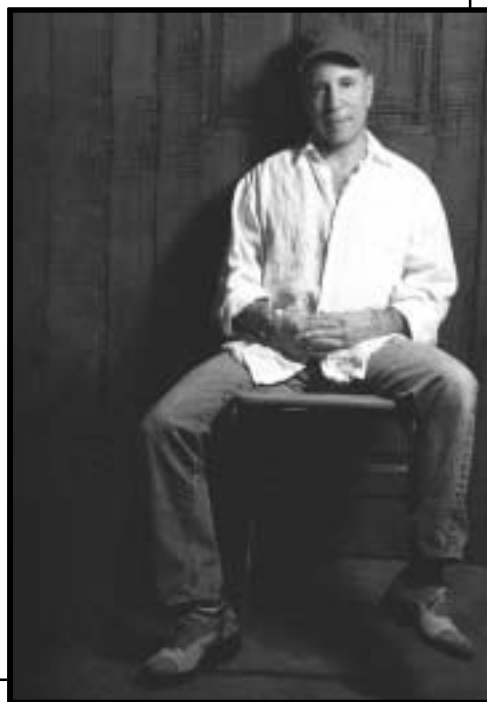
Sunday's line-up is slightly more prosaic although headliners **CROWDED HOUSE** remain steadfastly above the vagaries of fashion and have inspired an entire generation of breezily semi-acoustic pop acts along the way. Having split back in the mid-90s, they regrouped in 2006 with Neil Finn still at the helm and released a new album, 'Time On Earth' last year. So expect all the hits and plenty of new stuff, and if they do, as the song promises, bring the weather with them, let's hope it's bright sunshine.

Scottish folk-pop songstress **KT TUNSTALL** is the main support for the day, and is joined on the main stage by dreary old rock fossils 10cc and acoustic songsmith **TOM BAXTER**, although the real fun of the day should be happening over on the Oxford Folk Festival stage, where Spiers and Boden's big band **BELLOWHEAD** top the bill, going head to head with the impressively exotic hybrid of **SALSA CELTICA**. North Carolina country-rock rising star **TIFT MERRITT** also features on a strong bill.

Beyond the two main stages there is also the Riverside stage, run by the Charlbury Riverside Festival crew and here there is a chance to shine for local acts like this month's Nightshift cover stars **THE EPSTEIN**, as well as sleaze-rockers **SMILEX** (somewhat bringing the entire tone of the event down several notches and good for them) and southern-fried rockers **EASY TIGER**. Jeff Buckley-inspired singer **REBEL JANE**, bluesman **LIGHTNING WILLIE** and blues-folk duo **BACK TO THE BORDER** are other highlights.

And of course, when all the music stops at the end of the day there's always the campsite pub to keep everyone going into the wee small hours. And there was nothing civilised or respectable about the state of Nightshift's review team at closing time last year.

*More info: www.cornburyfestival.com
Tickets: 0871 472 0420*



14 TEN: The Port Mahon – Local female-fronted heavy rockers.

STORNOWAY + THE ZETLAND PLAYERS + HANDSHAKE: The Jericho Tavern – Captivating celtic folk-pop from local faves Stornoway with support from London's swing and folk troupe Zetland Players.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon SHAKE: The Academy

GET DOWN: The Brickworks

42nd STREET: Fat Lil's, Witney

SATURDAY 12th

ZAPFEST: South Park – One-day festival featuring the cream of Oxford bands plus an eclectic selection of DJs from the best local club nights – *see main preview*

LOGAN + VON BRAUN: The Academy – Emotive grunge-pop and soft-metal from Glasgow's Logan, bigger in the States than over here with their blend of Pearl Jam, Reef and Nickleback-styled rocking. Local alt.rockers Von Baun support.

MIDNIGHT DRIVE + LEAVING DECEMBER + COURTESY OF MY THINKING: The Port Mahon – Local hardcore and emo night.

SONIC BOB + MONDO CADA + MR SHAADOW: The Cellar – Decidedly mixed bag of styles tonight at the Cellar with electro-pop and industrial trance chap Sonic Bob going up against hardcore old-school grungers Mondo Cada, plus lyrical lo-fi rap star Mr Shadow.

SILVERACRES + TRANSMISSION + THE COURTESY KILL: The X, Cowley SOUL & REGGAE CLUB NIGHT: The Bullingdon

THE COLLECTOR: Fat Lil's, Witney – Tribute to The Jam.

SUNDAY 13th

WE ARE THE OCEAN + CANTERBURY + ALL FORGOTTEN: The Academy – Another hefty dose of screaming emo noise, this time from clothing line-sponsored Londoners We Are The Ocean, recent tour support to Fightstar and You Me At Six.

ANITA WARDELL: The Regal – Smooth, soulful cocktail jazz from the British singer.
TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: The Academy

MONDAY 14th

THE PRIMO BLUES BAND: The Bullingdon – Return of Sam Kelly's ensemble side project, the five-times British Blues Connection drummer of the year and band playing a mixture of good-time funky blues, reggae, Hendrix-inspired rock and 70s soul.
ROCK DISCO: Po Na Na

TUESDAY 15th

MUGISON: The Academy – Icelandic one-man band going against the grain of his native country's tendency towards glacial neo-classical ambience and general kookiness with a sweaty, soulful brand of blues stomp and rootsy Americana.

ZOOT WOMAN: The Academy – Inexplicable return to live action for Stuart Price's arch 80s-styled electro-pop project, somewhat closer in style to Hall & Oates than their much-referenced Human League and Kraftwerk influences.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – With The Howard Peacock Quintet.

WEDNESDAY 16th

JAIMESON + HPR + MIDNIGHT DRIVE + THE YOUNGS PLAN: The Wheatsheaf –

Assorted shades of heavy rock and punk with south coast emo crew Jaimeson, hardcore merchants HPR, melodic punk-pop from Midnight Drive and twinkling math-rock and indie noise from The Youngs Plan.

GLOBAL ICON NIGHT: The Jericho Tavern

– Unsigned bands chart competition thingie, possibly involving text voting.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Temple

THURSDAY 17th

WE AERONAUTS + SCRIPT + NO DESPAIR: The Jericho Tavern – Morose indie-folk pop from the headliners.

NEW GREY WHISTLE TEST + STRAIGHT JACKET: The Port Mahon

HARRY ANGEL + THE DELTA FREQUENCY: The Cellar –

Blistering, bubbling fuzz-core rocking from Harry Angel, plus the return of electro-glam stompers The Delta Frequency.

Sunday 6th

PENTANGLE: The New Theatre

Various incarnations of Pentangle have appeared and disappeared since the band dissipated into various solo projects in 1973, worn down by disillusionment and tiredness, but this is the first time the original line-up has come back together since those heady days when their pioneering fusion of folk, jazz and blues made them one of the most enduringly popular and influential British bands of all time. In fact it's the increased awareness and recognition of Pentangle's influence by the most recent generation of folk acts that brought the band back together as they were awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2007 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards and subsequently recorded a short concert for the station. Formed back in 1967 by guitarists Bert Jansch and John Renbourn along with singer Jacqui McShee plus bassist Danny Thompson and drummer Terry Cox who had been playing with Alxis Korner's Blues Inc. Pentangle were often wrongly described as a folk-rock band in the vein of Fairport, but with Jansch and Renbourn's inventive guitar playing and Cox's unique time signatures, they were closer to jazz, while remaining close to their melodic roots. Each of the original members has remained active in the UK folk scene since, collaborating with the great and good but this rare chance to revisit their glory years, including songs from landmark albums like 'Basket Of Light' is unmissable for anyone in love with the modern folk revival.



OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

SMASH DISCO: The Academy

FRIDAY 18th

SWISS CONCRETE with COLIN CLARY +

CHALK + YOU & ME: The Wheatsheaf –

Champions of all things sweet and jangly, Swiss Concrete tonight play host to plaintively sunshiney Beach Boys-inspired psychedelic pop chap Colin Clary, alongside lachrymose janglers Chalk and homely acoustic duo You & Me.

TRUCK FESTIVAL WARM-UP: The

Bullington – Bands to be confirmed.

COLLEGE GREEN DISSIDENTS + THE

BRENTFLOOD + CAFÉ RACERS +

TRAWLERS: The Jericho Tavern

DIRTY BAND: The Port Mahon

THE OLI BROWN BAND: Didcot Labour

Club – Live blues at the monthly Red Hot Blues club.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullington

SHAKE: The Academy

GET DOWN: The Brickworks

REDOX: Fat Lil's, Witney

SATURDAY 19th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon –

First day of the seminal local festival, featuring The Lemonheads playing the whole of 'It's A Shame About Ray. Let's hope the sun shines on them this year – *see main preview*

SOCA SLAM: The Bullington – New club night with Caribbean soca, calypso and reggae from DJ J1.

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: The Academy

STIFF JOINTS: Fat Lil's, Witney

SUNDAY 20th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – More trucking action – *see main preview*

MONDAY 21st

THE LARRY MILLER BAND: The Bullington

– Rocking blues from the UK guitarist, inspired by the likes of Stevie Ray Vaughan and Gary Moore.

ROCK DISCO: Po Na Na

TUESDAY 22nd

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullington – Tonight's guest at the free live jazz club is Alvin Roy.

WEDNESDAY 23rd

KD LANG: The New Theatre – Grammy-strewn

Canadian songstress plays songs from her new album – *see main preview*

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Temple

THURSDAY 24th

ECHO BOOMER + DEAD SPIES + UTE: The

Jericho Tavern – Delicately emotive rocking in 'Bends'-era Radiohead style from Echo Boomer.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

SMASH DISCO: The Academy

FRIDAY 25th

LITTLE FISH + THE RELATIONSHIPS + ALLY

CRAIG + DRUNKENSTEIN: The Bullington

– Moshka club night with a to be confirmed



Sunday 6th

CARNIVAL: Cowley Road

Hopefully now with a secure future after a lack of funding two years almost led to its cancellation, Carnival again looks set to turn Cowley Road from traffic-clogged arterial route to colour-spattered party venue for one special afternoon. This year's theme is Masquerade with the expected 20,000 carnival-goers encouraged to wear masks of any kind and as usual there will be a grand procession as well as music, dance, theatre, workshops and lots of food. On the music side of things there are four live music stages in all, featuring local and out of town bands as well as seven different sound systems along the length of Cowley Road from the Plain to Magdalen Road playing everything for dub to traditional African music to hip hop and gospel. Amongst those performing are Arabian-dub troupe Raggasaurus, celtic folk-pop faves Stornoway, garage-rock stars Little Fish, party-funk band Rubber Duck, alt.country rockers Danny & The Champions of the World (*pictured*), electro-punkers Baby Gravy, Matt Sage and Colin Fleter's new world folk band Medicine, Brazilian pop songstress Mariana Magnavita, blues-folk singer Akayzia Parker, indie hopefuls Alphabet Backwards, and funk and hip hop crew Loose Grip. Additionally there will be an open mic stage. Carnival kicks off at midday, live music is from 1pm and it runs through til 6pm. There are also aftershow parties at the Regal and Academy.

headline set from the utterly great Little Fish, plus elegantly fantastic psychedelic pop legends The Relationships, quirky songwriting brilliance from Ally Craig and possibly quite dangerous new rock noise from almost-supergroup Drunkenstein.

SLIDE SUMMER SPECIAL: The Academy – Summer house special with Ministry Of Sound's Lee Mortimer.

LADYBRIDGE + HEARTS IN PENCIL: The Port Mahon

DOGSHOW: The Cellar – Electro skronk rock from Liverpoolian synth'n'drums instrumental duo.

OUTRAZE + FRESH LEGS + PRISONERS OF KATRINA + HOT CITY SYMPHONY: The

Jericho Tavern – Classic rocking in an Oasis vein from Banbury's Outrage, with support from

Portsmouth's twee-pop types Fresh Legs

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullington

SHAKE: The Academy

GET DOWN: The Brickworks

LET'Z ZEP: Fat Lil's, Witney – Led Zep tribute.

SATURDAY 26th

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with DR

SLAGGLEBERRY + SKITANJA + CITY

LIGHTS JUST BURN: The Wheatsheaf –



Saturday 12th

ZAPFEST: South Park

An ambitious addition to this season's summer festival line-up with Zapfest taking over a large segment of South Park for the day and showcasing a sizeable chunk of all that is great about the Oxford music scene. Across three stages there is a host of bands, DJs and comedians, with main stage sets from the cream of the scene, notably Youthmovies (*pictured*), A Silent Film, Little Fish, Jonquil, Witches, Stornoway, The Family Machine, The Rock Of Travolta and This Town Needs Guns.

Over on the Beard Museum Stage, meanwhile, the supporting cast is a decent snapshot of upcoming talent from around Oxfordshire and beyond with Alphabet Backwards, Baby Gravy, Keyboard Choir, Half Rabbits and Joe Allen & Angharad Jenkins joined by Danny & The Champions of the World and Morrison Steam Fayre. Additionally the Cellar's regular Free Beer Comedy Club presents Richard Herring, Nick Page and Tom Greeves.

There's a strong dance contingent on show too, with local clubs Blunted, Hit'n'Run, Dugout, ASM and HQ joining forces to provide a line-up that includes DJ Fu Vs Jungle Drummer, DJ Lee, Robert Luis, Para & Baila, Confidential Collective, Mackating, Indecision and many more.

Amid an increasingly crowded festival calendar it's to be hoped that such a strong line-up will provide the platform for Zapfest to go the distance and become a regular event. The quality speaks for itself.

Tickets on sale from wegottickets.com, SS20 and Ryouki.

Many-angled math-core noise from promising Thame rockers Dr Slaggleberry at tonight's reliably eclectic GTI night. Support from Bournemouth's jazz-rock-synth-core-gabba duo Skitanja, going under the improbable names of Steve Potatoes and Powdered Cow, plus local punk-math-rock crew City Lights Just Burn. **DEDLOK + DESERT STORM + PHOENIX CHILD + RETRIBUTION: The Port Mahon** – Four band bill of local hardcore and metal.

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LIVEWIRE: The Academy – AC/DC tribute band.

FAKE BUSH: The Jericho Tavern – Tribute to Kate Bush, hopefully involving myriad costume changes, frankly bizarre dance routines, guns, hi-wire acrobatics and extremely high-pitched wailing. Anything less will be a crushing disappointment.

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: The Academy
SOUL & REGGAE CLUB NIGHT: The Bullingdon

SUNDAY 27th

ACCIO WROCK: The Academy (2-6pm) – An afternoon of wizard rock (that's wizard rock as in obsessed with Harry Potter, rather than rock bands who sound a bit like Wizzard, or simply rock that's, in slightly arcane language, "absolutely wizard"). A special gig to follow on from the weekend's Harry Potter conference at Magdalen College, featuring the likes of Riddle, Azkaban Escapees, Romilda Vane & The Chocolate Cauldrons, Bella & The Death Eaters, Shrieking Shack Disco Gang and – our favourites – Luna Wants A Longbottom. And if you can't recognise the puns there then you're obviously not nearly as sad as us. In fact, we're off to dig out our pointy hat, dust off our old Wyrd Sisters albums and party on down. And if you dare laugh at us we'll cast a cruciatus curse in your general direction.

LO-FI DJ NIGHT: The Port Mahon
THE HUGH McMANNERS BAND: The Magdalen

MONDAY 28th

JON CLEARY & THE ABSOLUTE MONSTER GENTLEMEN: The Bullingdon – New Orleans singer and pianist mixes up a melting pot of blues, jazz, gospel, and soul, inspired by the likes of Johnny Guitar Watson, Donny Hathaway and Professor Longhair.

ROCK DISCO: Po Na Na

TUESDAY 29th

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – With The Howard Peacock Quintet.

WEDNESDAY 30th

JOHNNY TRUANT + BLACKHOLE + GEHENNA: The Academy – Wholesome night of metal and hardcore with Brighton's metalcore monsters Johnny Truant, whose hobbies include bellowing, shouting and screaming, out on tour to promote new album 'No Tears For The Creatures', having previously been out on tour in support of Killswitch Engage, Alexisonfire and As I Lay Dying. Hertfordshire's extreme metal and southern rock crew Blackhole support along

with local metallers Gehenna. **PHANTOM THEORY + APOLOGIES I HAVE NONE + DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN + SMACK THE PINATA: The Wheatsheaf** – Scuzzy, stripped-down hardcore riffage from Phantom Theory, plus acoustic punk in a Frank Black and Billy Bragg vein from Apologies, I Have None. Grunge rock from Dial F and jerky post-punk and electro-pop from Smack the Pinata.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Temple

THURSDAY 31st

MONDO CADA + 50ft PANDA + COBRA: The Wheatsheaf – Local hardcore grungers Mondo Cada launch their new CD with support from big-riffing duo 50ft Panda and garage-metallers Cobra.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
SMASH DISCO: The Academy

Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion in the gig guide is the 20th of each month - no exceptions. Call 01865 372255 (10am-6pm) or email listings to Nightshift@oxfordmusic.net. All listings are copyright of Nightshift and may not be reproduced without permission

Wednesday 23rd

KD LANG: The New Theatre

First night of the multi-award winning Canadian singer's UK tour, part of a world tour to promote her new album, 'Watershead', lang's first album of original material for eight years. Twenty-plus years into her musical career and it's still not easy to see exactly where kd lang (lower case spelling essential, remember) fits into the great scheme of things. At heart and in her musical roots, a country torch singer, she's moved into jazz, pop and even cabaret regularly and with ease but it's her voice that marks out her star quality: sweet, soft and soulful but equally powerful and pitch perfect. Initially inspired by Patsy Cline (she once formed a tribute band to her heroine), she's collaborated with artists as diverse as Roy Orbison, Tony Bennett, Madeleine Peyroux and Annie Lennox and released a whole slew of covers albums, including the excellent 'Drag', which saw her performing a set of songs about smoking (and also saw her dressed in drag on the sleeve). Her open lesbianism and activism thankfully has never hampered her Nashville-based country career, although her vegetarianism didn't go down to well in cattle ranching country. Still best known in the UK for her solitary big hit, 'Constant Craving', lang has remained an international success for the best part of two decades; that don't happen by accident. Find out exactly why tonight.





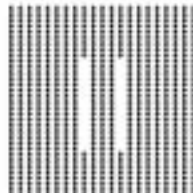
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OXFORDSHIRE MAY BE AWASH WITH

live music festivals this summer, but Truck remains the leader of the pack, an innovator in many ways, as recently recognised in the National Indy Awards where it was awarded Best Festival for its championing of emerging artists, as well as its adherence to corporate-free, environmentally-friendly ethics.

Last summer found Truck quite literally awash after the July floods but it survived and this year will find it back on track. Some 100 acts will be performing over six stages, with big-name guests such as **The Lemonheads** – playing a special ‘It’s A Shame About Ray’ headline set on the Saturday night, mixing with a selection of Oxfordshire acts, from **Winchell Riots** and **Little Fish**, to Truck regulars such as **The Epstein** and **Jonquil**. Because its Truck’s sheer diversity, plus an admirable parochialism rather than a reliance on big names that is its greatest strength. Sunday night’s main stage headliner is **Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly** – an act who has worked his way up the Truck bill over a number of years, from a complete unknown to the point where he is virtually part of the Truck furniture, as well as a cool name to drop in wider musical circles.

With so many acts on show, it’s nigh on impossible to fully preview the weekend, and anyway, past experience has shown us that the star turn will come someone we’ve never heard before in one of the smaller tents. This year’s highlights are likely to come from Truck inviting imaginative local club nights like **Vacuous Pop**, **Abort, Retry, Fail?**, **Sonic Cathedral** and **Fresh Out Of The Box** to run stages on different days. **Vacuous Pop**’s Barn Stage residency will include **These New Puritans**, while **Sonic Cathedral**’s celebration of all things shoegazy includes a set from the mighty **Maps**. The motorik grooves and drone-rock squall of **The Early Years**, **Johnny Foreigner**’s frenetic punk-pop and Texan alt.folkies **Okkervil River** all provide a good snapshot of the leftfield rock that Truck showcases so well.

But there’s so much more than guitar-based noises on offer. Why not investigate renowned kora player **Jali Fily Cissokho**, or dig out an old dust mask from the back of the garage and join rave legends **Altern-8** at **Fresh Out Of The Box**’s dance

party, alongside a selection of guest and resident DJs, or maybe drift off to **Ulrich Schnauss**’s electronic *Musik Cosmiche*.

Back on the main stage, former-Small Faces keyboard player **Ian MacLagan** brings his **Bump Band** along for a 60s nostalgia trip, while there’s artful punk nostalgia courtesy of **Television Personalities**. Rising anti-folk starlet **Emmy The Great** brings a hefty slice of sunshine and sweetness but it’s Scotland’s **Camera Obscura** who promise to be the pure pop highlight of the weekend. Make time too for the likes of **The Nextmen**, **The Coal Porters**, former-Spacemen 3 sound manipulator **Sonic Boom**, New Zealand’s **So So Modern**, **The Post-War Years**, **Noah & The Whale** and **Laura Marling**.

And if all this starts to look like we’re just throwing names at you, we haven’t even touched the surface. Needless to say that if you miss teen math-core monsters **Rolo Tomassi** you are a fool, and it’ll doubtless be impossible to miss **Piney Gir** since she’s likely to be playing at least eleventy-six times over the weekend, more than likely in the company of Goldrush chap and festival co-organiser Joe Bennett who’ll be performing with **Danny & The Champions of the World** amongst many others.

At time of Nightshift going to press exact stage times were unavailable, so you’ll just have to delve into your programme when you arrive and plan your itinerary. Or simply wander round the site and catch something unexpected. You’ll not be disappointed.

New attractions at Truck this year include a **Village Pub Rock** stage and **Lady Genevieve’s Rock’n’Roll Party**, alongside now regular sideshows such as Skylarkin’s excellent **Disco Shed** (it’s a disco. In a shed). And of course Truck wouldn’t be Truck without cross-dressing bar staff, the Rotary Club burger stall, the local vicar selling ice creams and the general feeling that you’ve wandered into the best village fête on the planet, one where a genuine musical treat is only a tent flap away. If the rain keeps off this year’s Truck should be a celebration on many levels.

For line-up details and ticket news, visit www.thisistruck.co.uk



Altern-8



Camera Obscura



Emmy The Great



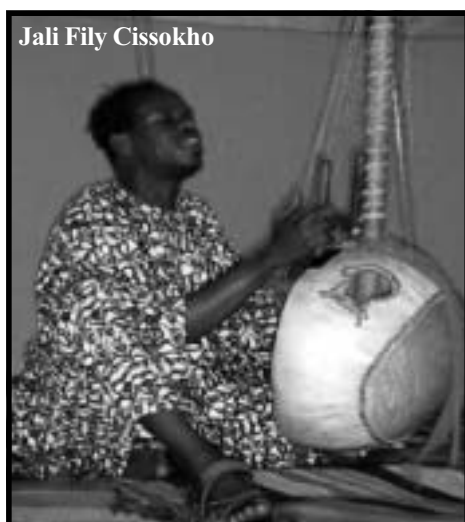
Rolo Tomassi



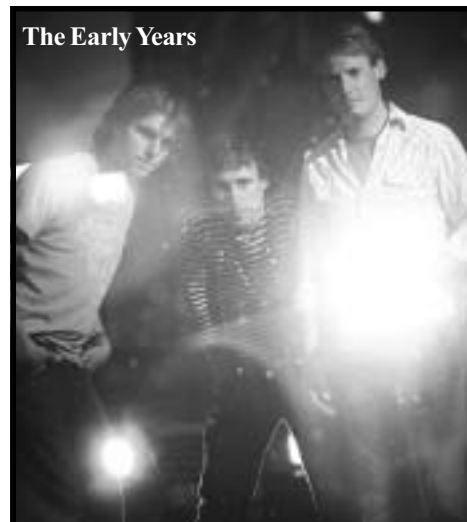
Ian MacLagan & The Bump Band



Sonic Boom



Jali Fily Cissokho



The Early Years

LIVE

BAT FOR LASHES

The Academy

Rarely has a song been more appropriately titled than 'The Wizard', since, without descending *too* far into mawkishness, there has always been something magical about Natasha Khan, aka Bat For Lashes, ever since 'Fur And Gold' materialised as one of the most perfectly-formed debuts of recent years. Her songs are so beautifully textured that 'written' scarcely seems appropriate – 'crafted' feels closer to the mark.

Her live shows, on the other hand, while always impressive, never quite reached the same incredible heights – songs sometimes relied too heavily on programmed beats that skittered around rather than holding them together, and felt a little disjointed. Tonight, however, with Bat For Lashes warming up to support Radiohead on tour, the live show expands on the foundation provided by the album to create something

brehtaking.

The palette of Khan's new backing band, The Blue Dreams, is jaw-droppingly expansive. Flutes, blocks of wood and traditional instruments slot in perfectly alongside the precise crunch of electronic beats. Each song draws not only on Khan's uncanny ear for a melody that sounds like it's been in your head for years already, just waiting to get out, but also on an ostentatious peacock's-tail display of colours provided by everything from clarinets to bowed saws.

It's relieving, too, that the new material is outstanding – it would be awful to think that she had signed some kind of Faustian pact in exchange for only one album's worth of magic. The only previous new song we've heard live before tonight, 'Moon and Moon', feels a little uncertain and misplaced, but 'Pearl's Dream' and others shine just as



photo: rphimages

brightly as anything older, and even allow them to dispense entirely with such gems as 'Sad Eyes'. After each and every song in tonight's set,

Khan bursts into a beatific smile, as though she too can't quite believe what she's now capable of.

Stuart Fowkes

OFF FIELD 5

The Port Mahon

No matter how great they were, every urban bluesman who survived after 1960 turned in some flabby music. However, those who were least guilty were John Lee Hooker and the recently departed Bo Diddley, whose recordings remained energising whilst their counterparts traded graceless solos, because they never strayed far from those simple rhythmic patterns which speak so directly to our primal side. **Frogspawn's** Diddley tribute is deeply aware of the power of that classic beat, and drops into ace Bo shuffles just when you think the guitar and drums duo have lost their way: seriously, this set starts like a bad photocopy of Hella, with all the gradations smudged out, and ends up a clinically rocking delight, with big riffs and beery growling vocals (aside: is singing off-mike to alt rock what vocoders are to house?). Joyous stuff.

Despite admitting they were unhappy with the gig, **Egyptian Death** continue the high standard, slowly coaxing a queasy hum of white noise and vocal ululations whilst crouched around a variety of sound sources (aside: is sitting in a huddle to drone improv what foot-on-monitor is to cock rock?). The rather wonderful effect is like a sonic version of that endless uncomfortable moment when you realise you've forgotten someone's name whilst introducing them. To a cyborg.

Far less subtlety from **Die_funkt**, who is billed as minimal techno, but whose set is busier than Ricardo Villalobos or Basic Channel, even whilst it lacks the complexity of Wartronica or the structural savvy of Detroit. As arid beats go it's fine, if better when keeping to an electro pulse and avoiding IDM stutters, but **Die_funkt** (aside: is the underscore to techno what the umlaut is to

metal?) loses us completely when he starts stuffing tired beats behind Joy Division, Sabbath and The Human League. Yuk.

Thankfully, **Wire Rooms'** set is brilliant...even though they're truthfully quite crap. Imagine some youth club punks jamming with Suicide, but add hilariously lopsided dancing, keyboards that make Les Dawson look like Vladimir Horowitz and the sound of some crash cymbals running the 100m hurdles (no aside: we can't tear attention away from this maelstrom). **Wire Rooms** are deeply likable, which can so often be better than merely being any good.

David Murphy

THOMAS TRUAX/ THINGUMAJIGSAW/ STORNOWAY

The X

If there's one unifying theme to tonight's bill it's that each act playing is a bit mental. Each could easily have Dr Seuss design their album cover, each might be tempted to spell crazy with a K. **Stornoway** – extraordinarily accomplished Oxford folk-pop group *du jour* – have songs about ferrets, fish and haircuts which, when nestling alongside poignant, touching vignettes about, y'know, LIFE and stuff, tend to royally piss off the critics. For tonight's audience, however, this mood-hopping goes down a treat. Whether they're attempting to break your heart or split your sides – and despite the fact that they're clearly better at the former than the latter – one thing holds true: **Stornoway** have such a masterful control of melody, texture and dynamics that

their live show is fantastically, continuously entertaining. At some point an evil record company will tell them to stop messing around; for now, we should cherish a band so willing to vary the emotional tone of their material.

This expansive, sunny, harmony-drenched mood is immediately destroyed by **Thingumajigsaw**. One man stands on a table playing a banjo while a woman sits playing a variety of other instruments. They cover 'I Love The Dead' by Alice Cooper in a whiney falsetto, completely unamplified, their eyes screwed shut in utter conviction. This is undoubtedly infinitely more affecting than any number of soulful schmindie acoustic acts, more terrifying than Metal to the power of Metal, and marginally funnier than 'The Good Fish Guide' by **Stornoway**.

It also sets the tone perfectly for **Thomas Truax**, who is an actual living genius. For the uninitiated, his band is comprised of machines made from odd parts of bicycles, cracker toys, gramophones and a whole treasure trove of clockwork detritus which he, with characteristic unsettling charm, appears to believe are sentient. Veering from the aggressive, mechanical tango of 'Prove It To My Daughter' to the quiet, beautifully structured 'The Butterfly and the Etymologist' (played on guitar with a hand-operated fan), it soon becomes clear that, beyond the schtick of appearing like a psychotropically-disturbed Professor Calculus attempting awkward sexual congress with a Jules Verne-style clockwork chambermaid, Mr Truax is a songwriter of the very highest calibre: poetic and lucid, always unsettling; frequently funny. Audience members who are watching him for the first time are wide-eyed and open-mouthed. Veterans smile quietly to themselves, knowing that this enjoyment deepens with each show they see. The man is truly world-class, and of a whole other world entirely.

Dominic Colquhoun

SAUL WILLIAMS

The Academy

Philosophy graduate, film star, poet, author and MC, Saul Williams is ideally placed as a Renaissance man for the twenty-first century, seeming to excel himself no matter which direction he heads in. The man's even found time to collaborate with Youthmovies, dammit.

This range of expertise speaks volumes for the breadth of his musical palette, which drifts from scattershot *a cappella* poetry (as in a breathtaking run-through the list of heroes and influences from 'Coded Language') to Rage Against The Machine-style aggro rap-rock, only taking a wrong turn during a heartfelt but unfortunately still turgid U2 cover.

The influence of collaborator Trent Reznor hangs heavily over newer tracks like a clanking leather-coated aerostat, with sparsely metallic percussion and buzzing, plangent basslines smeared with NIN's signature sounds, but also enjoying the notable advantage that Williams, unlike Reznor, does not write lyrics

from the perspective of a sulking thirteen-year-old goth boy. The result is a breathless stream of lyrical polemic reliant on machine gun rhythm over and above the rhyming dictionary approach of weaker MCs, backed by sinewy machine rock.

Impressively, he never allows his incredible verbal dexterity to descend into the kind of Yngwie Malmsteen-style lyrical panoply that's occasionally dogged contemporaries like Aesop Rock (whom I love dearly, but rarely have a clue what the hell he's on about). Instead, there's as much purpose behind the lyrics as there is focus in the music through imaginative live manipulation of beats via the hip hop standard MPC centre stage, and taut, controlled bursts of guitar.

This is fantastic stuff, and if the musical ideas ever dry up, there's doubtless a career waiting for him as a celebrity chef, heart surgeon or Premiership footballer, the talented bastard.

Stuart Fowkes

LYKKE LI/

EL PERRO DEL MAR

The Jericho Tavern

Tonight's all Swedish line up kicks off with El Perro Del Mar, standing alone centre stage. She makes a wise set choice, commencing with the more upbeat stuff from her self-titled debut album to get the crowd listening.

'Party' manages to be ethereal and also swing, while Sarah sings with a despairing Kate Bush-style wail. While still great 'Candy' misses the responsive backing vocals, while 'Dog' is wonderfully spirited as it twists and turns. Members of Lykke Li's band join her for the songs from the latest album, 'From The Valley To The Stars'. The first track off that is enhanced by insistent yet not overwhelming piano, which offsets the hypnotic vocals. A stately organ hum pulls 'Do Not Despair' along, while the single, 'Glory To The World', closes a great set with a swaying marching beat.

Lykke Li, another blog favourite, makes her way to the stage replete with cheap gold-effect jewellery and

scraped back hair, looking for all the world like a Swedish Lady Sovereign. For all that, the first two songs put the drummer in the spotlight. On the first he's pelting the snare rim and a cowbell as a kazoo wails and the tune throbs and pulsates. On the second it's more tribal, providing a bed for the electro vocals.

The first problem comes as they slow things down for a love song. It's apparent Lykke Li can't sing very well, the song is simpering and impact free. The vocals are whiny on the next track, the rhythm slowed to a passive thud. That's followed by juddering, dull electro before they pull things around again with great grooves, euphoric choruses and grinding electro beats and a really great version of 'Tonight'. The cover of 'Can I Kick It?' is a bit pointless, but not enough to detract from a scraped victory overall.

Russell Barker



DEAD KENNEDYS

The Academy

How many original members does a band have to lose before they become little more than a tribute band? Bruce Foxton and Rick Buckler could never be The Jam, so it could be as little as one. On the other hand, if you take The Sex Pistols, who are now back to their original line up, you could argue that even with a full compliment of original members you can still end up as little more than a relic of nostalgia. You could argue all day about this subject and still not come up with a satisfactory answer.

When Dead Kennedys parted company with enigmatic frontman Jello Biafra there is little doubt that they lost a large part of what made them great (drummers never being central to their sound). So can Dead Kennedys with "new" vocalist Skip still make an impression beyond pleasing the look-back bores?

Initial signs are not good, as Skip throws himself into the songs aping Jello's demeanour, but as the gig progresses, he grows in confidence and makes the songs his own. This is no mean feat considering the mythic status the likes of 'Police Truck' and 'Too Drunk To Fuck' have attained. There's no denying that these old classics still sound fresh and that East Bay Ray's guitar sound is now the focal point for the band. At odds with the clichéd sound of punk his surf-infused riffs still cut through like a jagged knife. An update to 'MTV Get Off The Air' (now named 'MP3 Get Off The Web') attempts to give the Dead Kennedy's political stance an overhaul for today's world, but whether this is really needed is up for question.

The truth at the heart of 'Holiday In Cambodia' or 'California Uber Alles' is still relevant today regardless of their historical reference points. Besides, substituting Arnold Schwarzenegger for Jerry Brown would make for a sizable challenge when looking for a suitable rhyme.

Ultimately this is more than old fruit for rotting vegetables; the fact is that the DKs' music is good enough to stand on its own. With another original member, Klaus Fluoride, due to leave it's good to know that his band will continue to endure without him.

Sam Shepherd

INSPECTED BY

TEN

The Wheatsheaf

Oxford's got Talent, hasn't it just? I love this crew. Inspected by Ten are a second year music course band from Oxford Cherwell Valley College, and have only been together for six months. More crucially, they are one of those serendipitous, sum of their parts, bands; the epitome of irascible, irreverent youthful exuberance. They'll skank, funk, rock lick, flick, chicory tip, hipnik, give it here and throw it in the mix, and boil it in a bag of rave synth, then mash it up in a wok of punk and party, and never mind if it all fits, it's going in that round hole, square, rare, fair, and whether it wants to or not.

Their Myspace lead track, 'I Hate Boys', comes over like Gwen Stefani fronting Blondie in their disco phase being given a laxative of Paul Oakenfold over some Gilmour guitar and lots of audience participation. Live they have half a dozen more like it, and if you can stand up long enough in the mosh pit, you'll hear joyously shouty singer Anna Hayward sharing the mic with her rabid fanclub, and yelling "I've got five hundred pounds and I want to buy crack!" over slabs of cheesy riffing and sweaty keyboarding before you are trampled underfoot.

Six Months you say? At this rate they'll explode like a beaten Pinata and spew yet more candy on us and we'll die in the sugar rush. Inspected by Ten. Marks out of Ten? TEN!

Paul Carrera

HOT CLUB DE PARIS / THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS

The Academy

I first saw This Town Needs Guns when I arrived in Oxford two years ago. They were so tight they could not get any more emo: those agonising cries, those guitar jumps of electric plucking, and those glockenspiels and keyboards with synchronised claps. Things have changed since then; they are short of original members, and there are not enough instruments left. Even Stuart's voice is broken. It is like they went into surgery for a new heart and they came out with an old pacemaker. Some little switch seems to be missing – the 'emology' has worn out and we get tiredness and bore from dwelling on past sounds. 'And I'll Tell You For Why' seeps through a still air but no clapping and no strained facial expressions can return that lost allure... I so want that glockenspiel back.

Liverpudlian trio Hot Club de Paris

are like a breath of fresh air in the stuffy, humid Bar Academy room. They combine non-stop talking and granny-like chatter about unemployment and rent payments – much more sophisticated topics than those Arctic Monkey fellas - while emitting the freshest and most refined pop-punk sounds of the moment... a moment now where we seem to find many galloping attempts at irony within music. But am I crazy in thinking that I can hear a bagpipe sound-alike melody in 'The Friendship Song'? And am I nuts in thinking I hear afrobeat aerobics? The sprinkling humour, the sudden pauses, the time signatures, and the lack of a proper verse-chorus structure sweeps us into a jumpy surfing wave of harmonies and frantic bouncing: definitely hot hot hot.

Liane Escorza

PUMP AID CONCERT

Port Mahon

Tonight's is one of the strongest unsigned line-ups I've seen assembled in the Port. Record labels are paying to get into the full house, most to check out **Joe Allen and Angharad Jenkins'** unique atomic fusion, each song a slow-build French Apache dance of bated breath and climax, with Joe's intense Jeff Buckley rail writhing like a snake round Angharad's celtic knots of violin work.

It's a stunning start to the evening, and is quickly followed by **Brooks West**, a fast rising, singer-songwriting star born in Fargo, North Dakota, who, with his love of Richard Thompson and other English writers, has been encouraged enough to leave his Nashville band and US touring behind for a week, to play the UK for the first time. His punchy voice, somewhere between Gordon Lightfoot and John Denver, borne from "playing to people's backs" in noisy Pennsylvanian bars, has an added compulsion. Songs like 'Run Away' and 'Snowflake' are chock full of melody and philosophical lines, and delivered in his folksy Americana. He is genuinely overwhelmed by the warmth of the response.

Barely 18 months ago, you could have caught Little Fish frontwoman **JuJu** busking solo and unknown outside the Covered Market. The intervening period's arc of hard work and success means there is a palpable fever of excitement, when, once again solo, she appears with her

acoustic guitar, whose surface is almost worn through to collapse, where she has continually struck it to an inch of its life. The informality of tonight means she can try out barely dry material without titles and galvanises the room to reverence with a rare live outing of 'Error In Your Sunrise'. She is quite simply a Star-Fish.

Eliza Zoot and Ariel Lerner make up **Reverse E**, who self-produced one of the stand-out albums of last year in 'Bio Illogical Weh Who'. Fulsome and decadently heavy with pouting trip-hop beauty, it's as haunting as a night in a deserted fairground. Tonight they revel in the chance to leave the hardware of synths and programming at home, and explore their new chosen path of taking the exquisite songs and giving them a fresh, hands-on feel. The result is revelatory and enchanting. Ariel on guitar with minimum pedals, and Eliza on electric piano, along with some occasional gadgetry, like singing through a telephone, give the special atmosphere of their music a further disembodied sound. They bring to a close an evening that highlights the Port's important place in Oxford's success in continually hot-housing acts to national attention, where artists and songs are stretched naked under an intimate and forensic silence and where only the best performances can get that resulting tsunami of wild applause.

Paul Carrera

DR SHOTOVER: Deaf Jam

Ah, there you are. What's that you say? Time for tiffin? Good idea. What? Time for Gryphon? No, sorry, old boy - always found that particular 70s prog-folk combo a bit too twee, even if I am using one of their obscure mediaeval instruments as a hearing aid... Talking of



Dr Shotover is looking forward to the Cowley Road Carnival

"mediaeval" (not *me*, oaf - I refer of course to Gryphon), the chaps at the East Indies Club and I have set up a new charitable organisation for ageing rock legends. Inspired by seeing The Only Ones/Peter Perrett on the TV the other month, we are going to provide a specialist service - Planned Quiet Nights In For The Stars. Here are a few examples from our tips sheet:

"Mr Perrett, put that crack pipe down, get your slippers on and watch some nice improving telly - University Challenge is on in a minute!"

"Mr Richards, leave that Jack Daniels alone... try reading a good book!"

"Mr Pop, could you come down from there please? That's better... here's your sewing kit (yes, the knees on those jeans are a disgrace), and you can have some Radio 4 later!"

"Mr Yorke... Oh, sorry, you're having a Quiet Night In already". Actually if anyone spoke to me like that I would give them a good hiding with whatever came to hand... yes, a crumhorn or some other mediaeval instrument if necessary. Meanwhile, whose round is it anyway? What? What? Sorry, can't hear you, old stick - must be yours...

Next month: Thursday? So am I - let's have a drink

The Wheatsheaf

Live Music July 04

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BLITZ CARTEL + THE SHAKERS

Mon / 04

THE STICKS

Do 5*

I SEE BLUE + TBC

Mon / 05

THE SHAKER HEIGHTS

Fr 11*

FREAKISHLY LONG MIRRORS + TBC

Mon / 06

JAIMISON

Wed 12*

HPR + MIDNIGHT DRIVE + THE YOUNGS PLAN

Mon / 06

COLIN CLARY

Fr 18*

CHALK + YOU & ME

Mon / 04

DR SLAGGLEBERRY

Sat 20*

SKITANJA + CITY LIGHTS JUST BURN

Mon / 04

PHANTOM THEORY

Wed 27*

APPOLOGIES I HAVE NONE + DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN + SMACK THE PINATA

Mon / 05

MONDO CADA

Thu 27*

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS

Short and really rather sweet is the Tristan & The Troubadours way, here managing to compact myriad cute pop ideas into two-and-a-half-minute bite-size chunks, showing a good few of this month's other contenders how easy it can be. From the opening piano and synth clamour of 'Crows & Doves', with its breathless vocals and fidgety delicacy, they're on a winner – something we could never have predicted when we consigned them to the Demo Dumper a couple of years back (when the poor ickle lambkins were only about 14 years old – and what bastards we feel about that now). They've got a great mix of fluffy jangle-pop naivety and something more virulent and dark-minded from the gloomier side of New York's musical underground, the scraping violin in particular adding a menace to songs like 'Venice Ghosts' and 'K Mono'. Sometimes they sound like they're going to launch into a segment of 'Tubular Bells', at others they're deceptively propulsive, a haphazard but fun mix of throwaway guitar squalls, whispered female backing vocals, untidy funk and jumbled beats, seemingly held together by sellotape and determination. They swirl like a gentle snow blizzard and tell you more about the secrets of pop music with every half-thought-out scurrying left turn than all the earnest singer-songwriters here could muster in an aeon of ball-aching emoting.

THE SPOONS

"Oxford needs metal," announce The Spoons, not incorrectly, "And we The Spoons can bring it" they add, perhaps a little oblivious to the complete and utter incompatibility of their band name to the music they plan to unleash. Come on, The Spoons? You expect a name like that from a bunch of third-rate Arctic Monkeys copyists, not a hairy, scary metal band. Why not Vashta Nerada or Terminal Nightmare Syndrome? Anyway, that aside, this here is indeed metal, mostly of an old school variety: mid-paced thrash with a bit of a power-rock feel in the self-consciously heroic vocals, at least until opening number 'Shadow Plains' descends into nondescript metal-core chugging. And here is The Spoons' other failing – letting their songs go on far too long until they lose their shape and purpose and sound like a band simply

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treading water until the tape runs out. Still, there is some fun to be had, like the singer growling about desert storms or bellowing "Raise your fist in the sky and scream!" and when they do pick their energy levels up they produce a decent enough thrash attack. For now, though, they need to beat some brevity into themselves. And then it's time to go out and beat seven shades of hell into the next passing acoustic singer-songwriter.

PISTOL KIXX

Perhaps The Spoons could take a few lessons from this lot, previous Demo Of The Month winners and a band who know all about the Wham Bam Thank You Mam school of rocking out. These two songs here are almost Cro-Magnon in their old-fashioned approach to punk and metal, something of a meeting point between Motorhead, The Exploited and Backyard Babies, as subtle and simple as a village idiot armed with a machine gun and an old Cockney Rejects album. The singer's whisky'n'gravel croak is wonderfully bluesy and the lo-fi sound can't distract from its determination to get to the bar and drink heavily as quickly as possible, stopping only for a quick guitar solo on the way. There's a great oafish terrace chant feel about 'Fucking, Drinking, Rock'n'Roll', and really, the title alone is all the review you need of Pistol Kixx.

GRANT

Oxford's answer to Scott Walker steps out of his Very Dark Place again to demonstrate just how opulently grim the world can be, this time abetted by Witches' Martin Newton and Eduard Soundingblock's Pete 'Fairy Fingers' Marler. And like Mr Walker himself, Grant Baldwin seems to be moving further into the realms of the twisted and weird, the middle-distance storm-brewing industrial gothic clang of 'Exeat' providing suitable back-up to his portentous vocal delivery, like some operatic lounge crooner. 'Grace' is more playful with its electro-pop backing and intense, florid vocals, while 'Prometheus' is positively airy by comparison, although as dense as cobalt compared to most other stuff on these pages. It's all a bit OTT at times, but that's half the fun of it. Grant might be singing about Icarus and stuff, but he really wouldn't sound right going on about meeting girls in burger bars. Not unless the song ended with him turning said girls into burgers. Hang about, we can feel a rock opera coming on.

BRASSNECK

Ah, nice bit of folk-rock, this should lighten the mood. Brassneck start off sounding a bit

like The Levellers or The Oyster Band and we're prepared to forgive the former as the whole thing carries a bit of punky vim and vigour about it as the fiddle leads the band a merry dance, although we wonder, given the very English nature of the whole affair, why the vocalist has to sing in a horrible Transatlantic accent. Still, by halfway through we're pondering wistfully whatever happened to Tansads and whether barn dances are such evil affairs after all. But then there's an ungainly switch in style and the female singer takes the lead and we suddenly wonder whether this is a Mulligan and O'Hare-style joke, so comically shrill is she. Horrible. And after that we're on our guard to such an extent we notice the whole thing sounds unpleasantly like something that fell off the back of a Beautiful South b-side lorry, the band's earlier verve and vivacity replaced with a lachrymose sopiness that makes us want to wring their bloody brass necks til they snap like old matchsticks.

PETE OLIVE

Pete Olive's business card tells us that he is a "Producer of pop electronica and disco house", although the dandyish photo of him on the CD suggests he's more of a provoker of severe beatings every time he ventures out into the street. Perhaps that's why he doesn't seem to be able to quite muster the lust for life that would make his tunes set dancefloors on fire any time soon. There are squelchy synths, solid beats and vocoder-treated vocals aplenty but it all sounds both dated and stilted, like an obscure Eastern European Eurovision entry. 'City Lights' is Madonna-lite kitchen sink drama, while '90s' is Calvin Harris via a low-rent Pet Shop Boys foray into Euro-trance, and while none of it is offensively bad in any way, you just can't imagine anyone being moved to dance to it, which kind of defeats the whole object, surely.

KANGO BILL & THE LONG COATS

Dear god, you should have seen the state this demo arrived in. Tattered, torn and soaked, it looked like a tramp had slept in it, used it as a toilet and then attempted to eat it. From the urine-soaked remnants of the letter that accompanied the CD we deduce that this is the work of two brothers (unless Niall and Darragh O'Brien just happened to meet at a special club for people called O'Brien and in this Facebook day and age we wouldn't bet against it) from Florence Park. Their bag is close harmony singing with acoustic guitars (the tramp's bag being a brown paper one he uses to hide his cider bottle), which, initially at least, sounds pleasantly airy and bucolic, the pair harmonising wistfully over slight and genteel guitar twinkles. Sadly it never really takes flight from here, gradually becoming leaden and the lack of substance becoming

more apparent, especially when the harmonies stop and it's left to one of the pair to merely yelp and yap in over-egged fashion a bit and strum his guitar too hard to try and convey some sort of emotion by the second song.

ROBERT BATLEY

We know that people say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover but with CDs it's easy. Just take a look at young Robert Batley with his cap worn at a jaunty angle, his month's worth of stubble and his oh-so thoughtful, sensitive artist expression and you know that he's probably auditioned for every series of *The X Factor* as well signed up for a number of modelling agencies. And in between he's found time to churn out an entire album-length demo of stultifyingly moribund acoustic folk-pop that suggests he sees himself as heir to Ian Dury's cockney wordsmith crown but is more like the sound of Paul Weller slipping into a coma halfway through recording one of his more, ahem, introspective numbers. Or maybe Billy Bragg without any semblance of romance, political acumen or indeed talent. A full backing band does give the songs some substance but Robert's voice is so unremittingly grey and his subject matter so prosaic that even on a gloriously sunny summer day, we're gradually sucked into rainswept, kebab-spattered market town pavements in the middle of November. So, if it pisses all over your barbecue this weekend, it's probably all Robert's fault.

THE DEMO DUMPER

PEDRO DE VASCONCELOS

Pedro was born in Portugal but moved to the UK "to pursue a career in music". On this evidence the likelihood of him emulating fellow countryman Ronaldo's impact on the national consciousness is as likely as our cat Pertwee winning the Grand National with Elvis riding on his back. Unless he blows himself up in front of Buckingham Palace or something. Which would at least be more entertaining than this aimless meandering and bleating, a painfully pointless, dismal mush of inconsequentiality whose only notable feature is sounding a bit like the pitiful moans and cries of the aftermath of a mediaeval battlefield. Pedro's MySpace boasts that he "sounds like nothing you ever heard before". Not true, we have heard very similar noises emanating from the emergency room at our local veterinary surgery. And with any luck a kindly doctor will be along soon to put us out of his misery.

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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Mon 30th June - £5 adv

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+ Koopa + Stiff Dylans

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Ghostwood
Rescheduled date - Original tickets valid

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Murder By Death
+ Not My Day + The Family Machine

Sat 12th July - £6.50 adv

Logan + Von Braun

Sun 13th July - £6 adv

We Are The Ocean
+ Canterbury + All Forgotten

Tues 15th July - £6 adv

Mugison

Tues 15th July - £7.50 adv

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Tue 19th Aug - £18.50 adv

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Weds 20th Aug - £14 adv

We Are Scientists

Thurs 28th Aug - £6 adv

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+ The Koolaid Electric Company

Thurs 28th Aug - £16 adv

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Spoken word show

Thurs 28th Aug - £5 adv

DJ Derek
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Fri 5th Sept - £12.50 adv

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Of An Autopsy and The Bezerker

Thurs 11th Sept - £5 adv

Lights Action
+ A Silent Film + Said Mike

Fri 12th Sept - £14.00 adv

Calexico

Sat 13th Sept - £7 adv

The Dodos

Tue 16th Sept - £11 adv

The Academy Is...
+ We Are The Kings
+ The Main

Fri 19th Sept - £15 adv

Y&T

Sun 21st Sept - £15 adv

Mostly Autumn
Show postponed - new date soon

Thurs 25th Sept - £14 adv

Dragonforce

Sat 27th Sept - £12 adv

Nearly Dan
Rescheduled date - Original tickets valid

Sun 28th Sept - £11 adv

The Automatic
Rescheduled date - Original tickets valid

Mon 6th Oct - £7 adv

White Lies

Tues 7th Oct - £16 adv

Enter Shikari

Tues 7th Oct - £9 adv

Cajun Dance Party

Fri 10th Oct - £10 adv

Slide feat. Nic Fanciulli, Lee Mortimer,
Matt Braddock & Rich Smith

Mon 13th Oct - £16 adv

Spiritualized

Thurs 16th Oct - £15 adv

Dirty Pretty Things

Fri 17th Oct - £13.75 adv

Delirious? + Tree63

Tues 21st Oct - £11 adv

Bring Me The Horizon

Tues 21st Oct - £6 adv

Random Hand + Mike TV
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Weds 22nd Oct - £13.50 adv

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& The Fluffers**

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DJ Derek until 2am)

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Weds 5th Nov - £11 adv

Alphabeat

Thurs 6th Nov - £12 adv

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Fri 7th Nov - £10 adv

The Aggrolites
+ Grit + The Talks

Sat 8th Nov - £10 adv

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Stone Roses**

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Sun 16th Nov - £12 adv

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Tues 18th Nov - £12 adv

The Rifles

Sat 22nd Nov - £12 adv

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