

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month.
Issue 154
May
2008

PUNT 2008

King Furnace fire up for the year's best
showcase of Oxford music talent.

Four-page pull-out guide inside

King Furnace photo by Katharine Bird

Plus
All the latest Festival news

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NEWS

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THIS MONTH'S OXFORD PUNT will give local music fans a fantastic opportunity to see some of the best new and unsigned bands in the area. The Punt, now in its eleventh year, takes place on **Wednesday 14th May** and features **18 bands across five venues** in Oxford City Centre. The mini-festival kicks off at Borders at 6.15pm with acoustic folk-pop singer Faceometer and runs through the evening at Thirst Lodge, the Purple Turtle and the Wheatsheaf, finishing at midnight at the Cellar with one-man digital hardcore riot Clanky Robo Gobjobs. In between you'll hear funk, ska, metal, electro-pop, experimental noise, blues, rock, indie and more.

The full line-up for the Punt, which includes this month's Nightshift cover stars King Furnace, can be found in a special handy pull-out guide in the middle of this issue, including a brief introduction to every venue and act involved. With so many of Oxford's recent musical successes having played at the Punt early on – including Young Knives, Goldrush, Winnebago Deal, Fell City Girl and early incarnations of Foals and Jonquil – it really is a great way to discover new local talent.

As ever admission to each individual gig on the Punt is a bargain £4 and there are a limited number (100 only) **all-venue Punt passes** available, priced £7, from **Videosyncratic** on Cowley Road, or online from **Oxfordmusic.net**.

BLACK KIDS, Pete Tong, Mystery Jets, Elliot Minor and You Me At Six are the latest acts to be announced to perform at **Wakestock Festival**. Wakestock takes place in the grounds of Blenheim Palace in Woodstock over the weekend of the **27th-29th June**.

The new acts confirmed join already announced bands like Groove Armada, The Streets, Mark Ronson, Funeral For A Friend, Supergrass, Futureheads, Calvin Harris, Young Knives and Pendulum. More names are expected to be announced shortly, including a number of Oxford bands.

As it stands Groove Armada will headline the Friday night main stage, along with Audio Bullys. Pendulum head the main tent bill on the Friday and are joined by Hadouken, Friendly Fires and Royworld.

Saturday night's bill is topped by Mark Ronson, Funeral For A Friend

and Jazzie B, who are joined by Mystery Jets, Calvin Harris, Operator Please, Elliot Minor, Norman Jay and Brandon Block, amongst others.

The Sunday sees The Streets, Supergrass and Pete Tong headlining the three stages, along with Black Kids, Dykeemins, Futureheads, Young Knives, Lightspeed Champion and Metronomy.

In addition to the bands there will be displays of wakeboarding, the cult watersport which mixes water-skiing and surfboarding.

For more line-up information and festival news visit **www.wakestock.co.uk**.

Tickets for the weekend are on sale online from the festival site, from the credit card ticket line on **01758 710 000**, as well as from SS20 on Cowley Road and Rapture in Witney.



THE LEMONHEADS have been confirmed as the main headline act for this year's **Truck Festival**. Evan Dando's legendary grunge-pop band will perform the whole of their classic 'It's A Shame About Ray' album in its entirety as they perform on the main stage on Saturday 19th July at Hill Farm in Steventon.

As Nightshift went to press Truck was almost completely sold out, although a handful of tickets, priced £60 for the weekend, including camping, might still be available from outlets around the county. Visit www.thisistruck.co.uk for details of outlets, as well as line-up details.

Other acts already announced for Truck include Camera Obscura, Small Faces keyboard player Ian McLagan and the Bump Band, The Television Personalities, Noah & The Whale and Maps. Vacuous Pop, Abort, Retry, Fail?, Sonic Cathedral and Fresh Out Of The Box are amongst local club nights who will be running stages over the weekend.

Meanwhile there are still tickets available for Truck's new **WOOD FESTIVAL**, which takes place at Braziers Park, near Wallingford, across the weekend of 16th-18th May. The environmentally-conscious festival features sets from Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly, Ashley Hutchings and Lightspeed Champion, amongst others.

OUT TO GRAZE is the latest festival to grace Oxfordshire's summer schedule. The two-day event takes place across the weekend of 13th-14th June at Rookery Farm in Shabbington, on the Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire border. The festival, in aid of the Oxford Wheels Project, features three stages and an acoustic café. Bands confirmed to play include Baby Gravy, International Jetsetters, Raggasaurus, Scanners, Dogshow, Borderville, Von Braun, Jaberwock, One Dollar Peepshow and Loose Grip, while DJs from Simple, Slide, Skylarkin and Bassmentality will also be playing funk, soul, ska, reggae, hip hop, house, breaks and techno. Tickets for the event, priced £30, are on sale now through wegottickets.com. Visit www.outtograze.com for more details.

COWLEY ROAD CARNIVAL takes place on Sunday 6th July, featuring four live music stages along with various sound systems, a carnival parade, theatre, dance, magic, circus acts and food, running across the afternoon from midday til 6pm. Any bands or solo artists wanting to play should email music@inevents.org for an application form.

BAT FOR LASHES (pictured) plays a special warm-up show at the Academy on Tuesday 3rd June before supporting Radiohead on their UK tour. Bat For Lashes - the band created by Brighton singer and songwriter Natasha Khan - is set to release her, as yet untitled, second album later this year, the follow-up to her 2006 Mercury-nominated debut 'Fur & Gold', Nightshift's album of the year. Her last Oxford show, at the Zodiac in February last year, was one of the most incredible gigs of 2007.

Tickets for the gig are on sale now, priced £9 from wegottickets.com or from the Academy box office.



VIDEOSYNCRATIC is set to become the only independent stockist of local music from this month. The video and comic shop on Cowley Road currently sells tickets for local gigs and festivals, including Truck and the Punt, but any bands wanting to sell good quality CDs through the shop should pop in and talk to Jon Spira.

Meanwhile, Videosyncratic will be holding a special comic and toy give-away day on Saturday 3rd May, with a 2000AD signing session with the comic's editor Matt Smith (what, no Tharg?) and artist Simon Davies. In the evening there will be a special Superheroes gig at the Port Mahon featuring Smilex and The Palace of Righteous Justice in full costume.

OXFORD CYCLE

WORKSHOP celebrates a major re-launch with an afternoon of free live music this month. Inflatable Buddha, Dr Butler's Hatstand Medicine Band, Chris Faroe and Simon Davis will be performing at the OCW shop at 39 Magdalen Road in East Oxford from 1pm on Saturday 10th May. A cycle treasure hunt is also planned in the morning in aid of Shelter. For more details on the gig or OCW call 01865 204799 or visit www.myspace.com/theoxfordcycleworkshop.

LAST YEAR'S AUDIOSCOPE

festival raised £1,200 for homeless charity Shelter. The event, headlined by krautrock legends Michael Rother and Dieter Möbius, and featuring sets from Einstellung and Shit & Shine amongst others was, in Nightshift's view, the best gig of 2007 and we await the line-up for this year's event like eager kittens eyeing up a newly-acquired pet hamster. Audioscope's organisers are also giving away a limited number of 2002 Audioscope CDs

for free. The CDs feature Nought, Dustball, Cat On Form, Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia, and more. Go to www.audioscope.co.uk for more details.

Witches, who also performed at the last Audioscope, play a special Shelter benefit gig at the Wheatsheaf on Saturday 17th May with Ivy's Itch. The band recently released a download-only video EP in aid of Shelter.

SERJ TANKIAN'S gig at the Academy on Saturday 5th April has been rescheduled for the Tuesday 19th August after the singer taken ill. All tickets for original date remain valid or refunds are available from point of purchase.

AS EVER, don't forget to tune into the Download every Saturday evening between 6-7pm on BBC Radio Oxford 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best Oxford releases and demos and features interviews with local and touring acts as well as a gig and clubbing guide. The show is available to listen to online all week at bbc.co.uk/oxford

PLEASE CAN ALL BANDS

sending in CDs for review make sure they affix the correct postage. Recently we've had a few notes from Royal Mail saying full postage has not been paid on an item and it'll cost us £1.06 to have the package delivered and we're bugged if we're forking out for the privilege of enduring your miserable attempt to.... Er, sorry, we can't quite afford to fork out for the delightful opportunity to hear your work of genius. Yeah, yeah, it's all down to Royal Mail's frankly ridiculous new pricing policy, but maybe get your envelope weighed before sending it off. Else it'll exist in sorting office purgatory for all eternity, probably to be used as an ersatz coaster.



PAUL SIMON has been confirmed as the main headline act for the Saturday night of this year's **CORNBURY FESTIVAL**. The legendary New Jersey singer-songwriter tops the bill on Saturday 5th July at Cornbury Park, near Charlbury. He is joined on the main stage by Beverley Knight, Toots & The Maytals and The Bangles amongst others, while Mick Jones and Tony James' Carbon Silicon project join Nick Lowe, Eric Bibb, Half Man, Half Biscuit and The Beat on the second stage. As already announced, Crowded House headline the festival on Sunday 6th July and are joined by the likes of KT Tunstall, 10cc and Imelda May, while the Oxford Folk Festival stage plays host to Bellowhead, Salsa Celtica and Tift Merritt.

Paul Simon's headline set is sure to include plenty of old classics, following, as it does, the release of his 'Essential' best of album last year, as well as songs from his Eno-produced 'Surprise' album.

Tickets for Cornbury are on sale now (weekend tickets start at £90 for adults and £55 for under-16s with under-5s free), either online from www.cornburyfestival.com or from the credit card booking line on 0871 472 0420.

WIN CORNBURY FESTIVAL TICKETS!

Cornbury Festival organisers have kindly given us two pairs of weekend camping tickets to give away free! To win yourself a pair, simply **tell us the name of one of last year's Cornbury Festival headline acts**.

Answers on a postcard (no email entries) to: Cornbury Festival Competition, Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU. Please include your name, address and phone number. The deadline for entries is the 20th of May. The editor's decision is to walk like an Egyptian.

DR SHOTOVER Does Dallas

... or was it Dalston? Or Darjeeling? Anyway, it certainly wasn't Portishead. Ohmigod, Portishead. The syllables strike gloom into my very soul. Por-tis-head. "Moan, moan... everything's so miserable... moan, moan". They're as bad as Radiohead. Mind you, wouldn't want to live there, either - too much static. Now, where was I? Oh yes, instructing you to buy a bottle of the finest Mexican champagne... get on with it, you gringo cheapskate... it's time to celebrate! What, exactly? Why, FOALS and YOUNG KNIVES, two of this column's favourite Oxford bands, are getting married! (Yes, to each other, obviously... Moron). The bands' banns have just been read in church... we think Yannis will look so nice in white. (But please, no garter-showing for the cameras - we've seen QUITE enough of his legs in the videos... a bit too "athletic" for us). From now on they will be known as Mr and Mrs YOUNG FOALS-KNIVES. Just imagine the scene at breakfast round at their North Oxford home. Mr Henry (wearing old suit jacket and half-mast tie): "I say, darling, how is our son doing at school?" Mrs Yannis (sporting tracksuit bottoms with twinset and pearls): "Cassius, it's over! Cassius, away!" Mr Henry: "Yes, darling, I KNOW he's away, we talked about this... it'll do him the world of good, mind. Personally I loved boarding-school..." Mrs Yannis (yelping): "Cassius, Cassius! At best, it's all that we could do, it's all that we could do!" Mr Henry (comfortingly patting his wife's hand): "That's right, dear. It's for the best... Ah, there's the phone. Hello? Hello, my boy, how nice to hear from you...! You've rung with your exam results?" [Passes phone to wife]. Mrs Yannis (still yelping): "Cassius, it's over! You're second best! Second best! Second best! Second best!" [repeat ad infinitum]...

Next month: The RAMONES marry The NEW YORK DOLLS



Joey: "Ok, NEW YORK DOLLS, I'll marry ya! But only if my cat Gabba can be a bridesmaid..."

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STORNOWAY

'On The Rocks'

(Hatpop)

Stornoway are a weird one. Last year they provided us with two of the best songs we'd heard from a local band, 'End Of The Movie' and 'Zorbing', both delicate, dreamy wisps of celtic folk-tinged jangle pop that suggested a band of sensitive young romantics with a fondness for Belle & Sebastian and JD Salingers. Live though, they were raucous and daft, sporting trilbies and horses heads and exuding the air of bad student band competitions. Chief musical culprit in all this was crowd favourite 'The Good Fish Guide', a cheesy roll-out-the-barrel jingle that listed which fish were environmentally okay to eat, and which to avoid. Admirable sentiments but it always made me want to smash their teeth in.

'The Good Fish Guide' is included here, along with some blurb from the Marine Conservation



Society, and you've got to admire any lyricist who can slip sturgeon and rabbit fish and roundnose grenadier into a song, especially when they're trying to educate people into maybe, just maybe, doing a bit to save this benighted planet, but it still makes me think

I've died and woken up in purgatory with only Chas'n'Dave for company. And anyway, not having eaten fish for over 20 years, bar an accident with a curried prawn some time back, I don't think this is meant for me anyway.

So, having drifted, like a Japanese trawler net, too far from the point of this review, better to concentrate on what Stornoway do better, their eccentric but engaging folky take on rustic rock, skewing muted guitar thrashes with buzzing keyboards or subtly-placed trumpet and cello. Of course what really lifts the band above the ordinary is singer Brian Brigg's huge, heroic vocal performance, an equal to The Waterboys' Mike Scott at its best. Like a beloved uncle prone to telling embarrassing jokes at inopportune moments, I guess eel just have to try and skate over Stornoway's more haddock-inducing moments, because there is a place for silliness in pop music and whatever their foibles, they can still carry a decent tuna.

Dale Katfish

ECHO BOOMER

'Echo Boomer'

(Own Label)

Jonny Race is a name that's cropped up in the Nightshift demo pages a couple of times and Echo Boomer is the solo acoustic chap's full-on band project. It nearly didn't happen, though, since Jonny managed to trash his laptop with all the band's recordings on it when he crashed his car and then had to wait for the insurance pay out to be able to retrieve the songs. Worth the effort? In parts, yes, though whether Echo Boomer are up to a full album yet is debatable.

The band's moniker is a misnomer: bar a few bullish guitar solos there's little that booms here. Opening track 'Where Are You Now' is steely and linear with chiming guitars and a downbeat feel that never sinks into self-absorbed whimsy. The piano-led 'Survive' is a chilly, questing paean to the power of love in the face of global catastrophe which is about twenty times better than that might sound. Together with the elegantly understated 'Seeds', the song shows off the band's strengths, in particular Jonny's voice – delicately powerful, calmly emotive – although both sound like they've sneaked out the back of 'The Bends'.

Over nine songs, however, Echo Boomer do lapse into a generic rut that any amount of fuzzy fretplay can't disguise and towards the end they fall back on that staple of any desperate band – funk. Choppy, trebly guitars and a lyrically vacuous vocal lead do them a disservice.

A shame then, but taking the three or four best songs here would make for an appealing EP, and for a debut outing it's not the wreck its origins could have led it to be.

Sue Foreman

A SILENT FILM

'Sleeping Pills'

(Xtra Mile)

The first single in a lead-up campaign to their debut album in the autumn, 'Sleeping Pills' is a song lifted from A Silent Film's 'Projectionist' EP from last year, a flushed skitter through pop music that owes its life to the 1980s' freedom fields where bands like Talk Talk were able to explore new territories within the realms of mainstream major label rock without some twat of an accountant or marketing drone knocking on the door and asking what the hell they were doing with the company's precious money. So, essentially, 'Sleeping Pills' is an unfettered three-minute guitar pop song that'd be as at home on Radio 2 as it will be on Xfm, but equally it's a multi-layered prog mini-epic that touches bases with Ultravox and Marillion as well as Joe Jackson and Radiohead without falling into any of the traps you might expect from any of that. And given free reign, as you'd hope and expect a label like Xtra Mile to do, A Silent Film's musical ambition and ability could take them any place they like.

Dale Kattack

RUSALNAIA

'Rusalnaia'

(Camera Obscura)

Oxford folk siren and recent Nightshift cover star Sharron Kraus continues her globetrotting collaborative journey with this new album with Philadelphia's Gillian Chadwick, a singer who is better known for her work with glam-rock band Ex Reverie and the Black Sabbath-inspired Woodrose. Rusalnaia is supposedly a meeting point between their musical worlds but the haunting, pagan folk is far closer to Sharron's home territory, with its sparse acoustic instrumentation and other-worldly ambience.

Steeped in the very earliest forms of English, Scottish and Appalachian folk music there is processional menace, hypnotic reverie and a constant overbearing darkness that goes against the idea of the playful mischief of the water nymphs from whom the band and album take their name; you're unlikely to be tickled to death by songs that are desolately bewitching and possessed of deathly wonder. The instrumentation is simple and precise, from acoustic guitar and banjo to dulcimer and goat's nail shakers, but it's Sharron and Gillian's intertwining vocals that threaten to steal your breath away. This is music so far removed from contemporary pop cynicism that it might as well come from another planet, never mind century. And Sharron Kraus remains Oxford's most under-appreciated musical talent.

Dale Kattack

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| 3 rd Quickfix presents Smilex, Palace of Righteous Justice plus more - free entry for comic characters | 17 th Charity Ceilidh Dance |
| 4 th Dirty Boys presents ... | 18 th The Deputees |
| 5 th Phantom Theory + 50ft Panda | 21 st Sneaky Pete presents |
| 8 th New Grey Whistle Test | 22 nd Gunnbunny + Vultures |
| 9 th The Convention | 23 rd Sugar Dirt |
| 10 th Love Hate Logic + Shirley + The Swamis | 24 th Lady Fest |
| 11 th Red Vein | 25 th Open Mic Night ... |
| 13 th Black and White Music presents White Sunday | 28 th Permanent Vacation presents Sad Shields + Vile Vile Creatures + You're Smiling Now But We'll All Turn Into Demons |
| 14 th Oxford Improvisers | 30 th D-Blockers |
| 15 th Amnesty International benefit with Keeling Curve + Agents of Jane | 31 st TMW presents |

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The Wheatsheaf

Live Music May 08

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| Friday 9 th | BORDERVILLE
INTERNATIONAL TRUST + VULTURES | 8pm / £5 |
| Saturday 10 th | RAGGASAUROS | 8pm / £5 |
| Wednesday 14 th | RUMBERDUCK, ALPHABET BACKWARDS
NON STOP TANGO
TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS | 8pm / £4 |
| Friday 16 th | DUBWISER DUBHEART | 8pm / £5 |
| Saturday 17 th | witches IVY'S ITCH | 8pm / £5 |
| Friday 23 rd | JUNE THE STICKS | 8pm / £5 |
| Saturday 24 th | SHAKER HEIGHTS GOG + VIXENS | 8pm / £5 |
| Sunday 25 th | VISION FALL + BEELZEBOTO
PHANTOM THEORY + SATURN + TBC | 8pm / £5 |
| Friday 30 th | SUNNYVALE NOISE SUB-ELEMENT | 8pm / £5 |
| Saturday 31 st | THE OOLITES
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Thursdays

1st **SWISS CONCRETE** presents **RIVAL CONSOLES / WORRIEDABOUTSATAN / EUHEDRAL**

8th **MOSHKA** presents **THE NEW MOON + BLITZ**

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Saturdays

3rd **BEAVER'S BIRTHDAY BASH** - live bands featuring

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10th **SIMPLE** - Funky House with **CROOKERS** + residents 9-3am.

17th **OX4** - Drum'n'Bass. 9pm-3am

24th **FUNKFEST** - All-day festival of live funk + DJs.

11.30am-4am

31st **COWLEY ROAD CARNIVAL FUNDRAISER** - Funky house DJs + live bands

Sunday 4th

BULLINGDON COMEDY CLUB with **ADDY VAN DER**

BORGH, NATALIE HAYNES and compere **SILKY**. £7/6

Upcoming shows

Thursday 12th June - **MAD ABOUT THE 80s SKA TOUR**

Wednesday 18th June - **COO COO CLUB** presents

WINCHELL RIOTS + HOUSE OF BROTHERS

GIG GUIDE

THURSDAY 1st

RIVAL CONSOLES +

WORRIEDABOUTSATAN + EUHEDRAL: The

Bullingdon – Leicester's acclaimed techno boffin Ryan L West casts off his Aparathec moniker in favour of new project, Rival Consoles, for tonight's Swiss Concrete club, creating darkly atmospheric electro-glitch soundscapes in a similar vein to Aphex Twin. Leeds'

Worriedaboutsatan manage the difficult task of mixing up intelligent electro ambience and breakbeats with post-rock noise, while local abstract electro experimenters Euhedral make soundtracks to nursery nightmares.

THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS + 4 OR 5

MAGICIANS + MIMAS + MINNAARS: The Cellar – Elaborate, emotive indie rocking from local favourites TTNG at tonight's Vacuous Pop gig. Joining them are Brighton's This Is Fake

Saturday 3rd

SKATALITES:

The Academy

Skylarkin' welcomes back Jamaica's legendary Skatalites after their last sold-out show at the Zodiac a year ago. Formed in the early-60s the band were in large part responsible for the popularisation of ska with hits such as 'Guns Of Navarone' and trombonist Don Drummond's 'Man In The Street', as well as the genre's transformation into reggae. In their prime, between 1964 and 1965, the band recorded and played with the best Jamaican musicians and producers, including Prince Buster, Desmond Dekker and Lee Perry, recording their first two albums, 'Ska Authentic' volumes 1 and 2, at Studio 1. The beginning of the end came with the jailing of Drummond for murder and the band split in 1967. A reformed Skatalites returned in 1983, minus Drummond, who had died in prison, and have since relocated to the States and made their first forays into Europe and around the world. These days the core of the original band consists of Lloyd Knibb, Doreen Shaffer and Lester Sterling, with Tommy McCook and Jackie Mittoo amongst the casualties over the years. They remain, however a potent live band and one of the most important acts ever to come out of Jamaica. As ever with Skylarkin' nights, the emphasis is on undiluted fun and with Skatalites in the house, a good time would appear to be compulsory.

MAY

DIY-signed 4 Or 5 Magicians, in thrall to the great and good of US alt.rock; Denmark's sultry soundscapists Mimas and lo-fi Foals-styled scrappers Minnaars.

THE BALANESCU QUARTET: North Wall, Summertown – Oxford Contemporary Music present violinist Alexander Balanescu's world-renowned multi-media quartet, performing two pieces of contemporary classical music, 'Second Breath', reflecting the life of sculptor and holocaust survivor Maurice Blik, plus 'Play', a soundtrack to recently-discovered film footage of the Ballet Russe.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – Keyboard player Dave Gordon joins the in-house jazz band.

DEDLOK: The Port Mahon – Grinding metalcore.

INSPECTED BY TEN + ULYSSES + THE BLACK HATS + KING OF SPAIN: The Jericho Tavern – Good-time pop, dance and reggae from Oxpens College band Inspected By Ten, with support from Bristol's psychedelic poppers Ulysses, local 60s-styled rockers Black Hats and quirky folksters King Of Spain.

ELECTRIC JAM SESSION: The Jack Russell, Marston – Fortnightly open jam session for singers and players, with the in-house band, Rough Mix.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

SMASH DISCO: The Academy – Electro, indie and garage rock club night every Thursday with live bands and DJs.

FRIDAY 2nd

PAUL WELLER: The Academy – First of two already sold-out gigs by the enduring songsmith, who's gone from punk firebrand to narky dad-rock messiah over the space of three decades, retaining a musical cannon of quality and substance, as displayed by his recent 3-CD career-spanning Best Of. These two shows are part of a UK tour to promote new album '22 Dreams', and as his recent Sting-baiting outbursts prove, the man isn't in danger of mellowing any time soon

CRYSTAL CASTLES + FRIENDLY FIRES + TEAM WATERPOLO + WHITE LIES: The Academy – NME-sponsored New Noise tour with a decent mixed bill that takes in Toronto's excellent electro underground darlings Crystal Castles, coming on somewhere between Kraftwerk and Atari Teenage Riot, via a pile of vintage Gameboy soundtracks; post-punk dance-rockers Friendly Fires; sample-laden jangle-popsters and recent Moshi Moshi signings Team Waterpolo, plus darkly-inclined indie rockers White Lies.

ECLECTRIC: The Academy – Electro and house club night with a live set from Alter Ego plus Jesse Rose.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE DRUG SQUAD + THE RELATIONSHIPS + LES CLOCHARDS + QUADROPHOBIE: The Wheatsheaf – Ska-punk stalwarts The Drug Squad return with new singer Liam Ings-Reeves up front for extra bluesy growl strength. Joining them on tonight's reliably eclectic Klub Kak bill are dreamy psychedelic pop heroes The Relationships and Gallic folk-popsters Les Clochards.

THE HELLCATS: Fat Lil's, Witney BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon – Classic funk, soul and disco every week.

SHAKE: The Academy – Funk, soul, reggae, rock'n'roll, disco and ghetto-jazz from the Skylarkin' crew.

LOS + IKOMO + CAR CRASH

TELEVISION: The X, Cowley SHAKER HEIGHTS + CONTACT + WOOKIES + THE WILMOTS: The Jericho Tavern – Rootsy indie rocking from Shaker Heights.

GET DOWN: The Brickworks – Disco, Latin and funk DJ session.

SATURDAY 3rd

PAUL WELLER: The Academy – Second night of the Modfather's sold-out residency.

SKATALITES: The Academy – Ska legends return to Skylarkin's club night – *see main preview*

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: The Academy – Three clubs in one with classic and contemporary indie hits at Transformation, 80s pop and kitsch noise at Trashy, plus alternative rock and metal at Room 101.

HARRY ANGEL + TOUPE + BEAVER FUEL + JAMES BELL: The Bullingdon SMILEX + THE PALACE OF RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE: The Port Mahon – Special superheroes theme gig to celebrate Videosyncratic's special comic giveaway and 2000AD signing session in the afternoon. High-octane sleaze-punk from Smilex, plus infantile electro-rocking from PORJ.

MELTING POT with RAY + THE SWAMIS + THE WHYBIRDS + CABARET RAT: The Jericho Tavern – Elegant and dramatic power pop from London's rising starlets Ray, coming on somewhere between The Bunnymen, Ride and Go-Betweens, plus Cambridge blues-rockers The Wybirds and industrial goth-pop chap Cabaret Rat.

RIG UP EXPLOSIVE + LOST DEPARTMENT + MONROE + SKYCADIA: The X, Cowley – Poppy emo rocking in the vein of Incubus from Cheshire's Rig Up Explosive, plus metalcore fret-manglers Lost Department and Leamington's emotronica types Skycadia.

OXJAM: The Cellar – Oxfam benefit gig with live sets from Lesser Panda, Architeq and Numbrnine, plus DJ sets from members of Sunnysvale Noise Sub-Element, Youthmovies and The Evenings.

THE MILL: Fat Lil's, Witney SKITTLE ALLEY ACOUSTIC SESSION: The Fitzharris Arms, Abingdon – Rami, Dan



Austin, Simon Davies, Running With Scissors and True Rumour are among the local acts unplugging for the monthly acoustic session.

SONGS OF PRAISE: Baby Simple – Soulful gospel house Christian club night with a special guest launch from the Bishop of Oxford. Whether he'll be spinning any tunes is yet to be confirmed.

SUNDAY 4th

ROYWORLD: The Academy – Alternately wonderful and infuriating rising rockers, recalling early Roxy Music's electro-glam pop on the one hand and Keane's stadium-sized power balladeering on the other, and well worth a gander for cracking singles like 'Elasticity' and the Sparks-tinged 'Man In The Machine'. Truly, the Supertramp revival is just around the corner.

ANTI-KID + DISSOLVEDIN + BETWEEN THE SCREAMS + SOUTH PARADE: The Port Mahon – A night of emo, punk-pop and metalcore with melodic punkers Anti Kid, Reading's All American Rejects-inspired rockers Dissolvedin and ambient metalcore from Southend in the shape of Between The Screams.

Friday 9th

LES SAVY FAV:

The Academy

"Why do they never play Les Savy Fav on the radio?" sang Jetplane Landing once upon a time. Perhaps it's because the station controllers were worried that the band's frontman, Tim Harrington, might well climb out of the radio while the song was on and trash whichever house he ended up in. It's not beyond the realms of possibility given that Harrington, a big, bald, bearded bear of a man, is one of the most entertaining, and crazed, singers currently on the planet, one who spends more time hanging from rafters (no mean feat given his size) or riding over the crowd as he does actually on stage. Not that this should detract too much from his band, since the Brooklyn-based quartet are genuine underground cult stars with a history going back to 1995. Musically leaning towards the Fugazi / Pixies / Girls Vs Boys scheme of things, Les Savy Fav are arty, abrasive and angular but equally highly melodic, colourful and inventive, notably guitarist Seth Jabour, and new album 'Let's Stay Friends', recorded after an extended hiatus, is their best yet, coming close to capturing the band's theatrical live shows. In fact, it might finally be the breakthrough they've long deserved.



BASSMENTALITY: The Cellar – A night of funk, soul, ska, hip hop and reggae with live sets from ten-piece ska-hip hop crew Imperial Leisure and dubbed-out trip hoppers Horizontal Life, plus DJ sets from Drunken Uncle Bungle, Saine, Random Character and Dan Fraser.

MONDAY 5th

MEMO GONZALEZ & THE BLUESTCASTERS: The Bullingdon – 300lb of Tex-Mex dynamite is how Memo Gonzalez describes himself, and with over 1,000 gigs under his (ample) belt, his reputation isn't in any doubt. The Dallas-based singer covers classic Texan roadhouse blues as well as swing and r'n'b and a lively show is always guaranteed.

WE ARE THE PHYSICS: The Academy – Ebulliently jerky sci-fi robo-rock in the vein of Devo, Polysics and The Skids from Glasgow's rising nerds.

PHANTOM THEORY + 50ft PANDA: The Port Mahon – High-velocity, low-rent scuzz rock, surf and punk from Phantom Theory, with local two-piece riffmeisters 50ft Panda in support.

TUESDAY 6th

WOMBATS: The Academy – Long since sold-out gig from the amiably jocular Liverpoolian indie rockers, riding high on the back of radio-friendly hits 'Move To New York' and 'Let's Dance To Joy Division'. Easy to forget that only a few months ago they were playing to a few dozen punters at Swiss Concrete's club night at the Port Mahon. A lesson here for everyone: go and see more small gigs; that's where the stars of tomorrow are born. You will thank us for this advice in the future.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – With live set from singer Alison Bentley.

WEDNESDAY 7th

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Beehive, Carterton – More eccentric blues rocking from the local character.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Temple

THURSDAY 8th

MR SCRUFF: The Academy – Another quirky, eclectic and doubtless marathon DJ set from Manchester's tea-guzzling, marine life-obsessed Andy Carthy, with a sometimes surreal selection of tunes.

JESSE MALIN: The Academy – Grimy, downbeat tales from New York from Jesse Malin, former glam-punk, Ryan Adams collaborator and mate of Bruce Springsteen, currently out on tour with his new album of cover versions, 'On Your Sleeve', adding his own colour to songs by the likes of The Clash, Ramones, Hold Steady and The Kills.

THE NEW MOON + BLITZ CARTEL + B-PHIL: The Bullingdon – Moshka club night with acoustic pop from The New Moon and B-Phil plus punk thrash from Blitz Cartel.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – With saxophonist John Burgess.

SLOUNGE: Vaults Café, Radcliffe Square – OCM's great multi-media sessions return, tonight featuring electro act Inchtme, infusing his synthetic soundscapes with elements of world, folk and jazz music, while international slam poetry champion Steve Larkin provides the spoken word element and there are visual art installations from OVADA.



Sunday 11th

GRAVENHURST: The Jericho Tavern

If sad music makes you want to party, get your dancing shoes on, because Bristol's master of melancholy Nick Talbot is back, and he's still not happy. Now on his fourth album, 'The Western Lands', already an outside contender for album of the year, Gravenhurst remain Warp Records' least funky proposition, ripe as it is with intricate, shimmering guitars, an ethereal air of desolation and Talbot's airy, tender voice. After his earlier works that leaned towards the neo-folk sounds of Low and Red House Painters, 'The Western Lands' is more expansive, harmonies and effects heavy, closer to My Bloody Valentine, 80s gothic art-pop or early Pink Floyd's more lachrymose moments, a gorgeous, melancholy English form of psychedelia, understated rather than lo-fi, laden with a lyrical gloom that can't ever subsume the genuine beauty of the music. There's sometimes a risk with music this delicately woven that it can't be properly conveyed live, and Gravenhurst's previous showing in Oxford, at the Wheatsheaf, was beset by technical problems, but given decent sound, it's music to get completely lost in.

DEAD SPIES + SPIRO SPERO + 50ft PANDA:

The Jericho Tavern – Spiky indie rocking from London's Dead Spies, plus post-rockers Spiro Spero and riffastic rocking duo 50ft Panda.

OCEANOGRAPHERS: The X, Cowley
NEW GREY WHISTLE TEST: The Port Mahon
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Jack Russell, Marston

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

SMASH DISCO: The Academy

ECLECTRICITY: The Cellar – Electro and house tunes with Lee Mortimer and Edge.

FRIDAY 9th

LES SAVY FAV: The Academy – Melodic hardcore from the US cult stars – *see main preview*

BORDERVILLE + INTERNATIONAL TRUST + VULTURES: The Wheatsheaf – Vaudevillian gothic blues rocking from the mighty Borderville.



Friday 16th – Sunday 18th

WOOD FESTIVAL:

Braziers Park

Truck continues to pioneer boutique festivals with this new micro festival set in the picturesque setting of Braziers Park, an environmental educational establishment near Wallingford. The idea behind the event is to create a festival that pays more than lip service to being carbon neutral and with an emphasis on being family-friendly and big on audience participation. So, aside from the live music, there'll be everything from singing workshops to hay bale construction. The main stage is made of wood (following on from Truck's back-of-a-truck stage) and solar powered, while organic food is cooked on wood stoves, and there are even composting toilets. Most of the music over the two stages is acoustic and there are some big names on the line-up, including laptop pop warrior and Truck favourite Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly, as well as a solo set from Lightspeed Champion (*pictured*). Folk stalwart Ashley Hutchings brings his Rainbow Chasers project along, while there are sets from The Coal Porters, Jali Fily Cissokho, King Creosote ad Danny & The Champions of the World alongside local acts such as Stornoway, The Epstein and KTB. A gentle and novel way to break into the summer's festival season, and with the larger festivals becoming ever more corporate and expensive, a timely reminder that live music in the great outdoors should be fun and not an endurance test.

MENTALISTS + BABY GRAVY: *Modern Art, Oxford* – Special gig for the Young Women's Band Project, featuring London's post-punk skank popsters The Mentalists, giving it some in a Slits vein, plus local electro-punk starlets Baby Gravy.

THE MIGHTY REDOX + THE PETE FRYER BAND + FILM NOIR + JEREMY & KEV: *The Magdalen* – Swampy festival funk and witchy psychedelia from the ever-gigging Mighty Redox at their monthly love-in with regular guests Pete Fryer, indie rockers Film Noir and acoustic folkies Jeremy and Kev.

THE CONVENTION: *The Port Mahon*
SOULJACKER + BOY DID GOOD: *The X, Cowley* – Classic 70s-styled rock and funk from Souljacker.

MATT WEEDON + THE COLD BLOODS + DISSOLVED IN + MONKEY PUZZLE: *The Jericho Tavern* – Jeff Buckley-influenced acoustic blues-pop from Devon singer-songwriter Matt Weedon.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: *The Bullingdon*
SHAKE: *The Academy*

BOSSAPHONIK: *The Cellar* – Live, brass-heavy funk, ska, jazz and dub from Smerin's Anti-Social Club.

WAM: *Fat Lil's, Witney* – Live ska.

GET DOWN: *The Brickworks*

SATURDAY 10th

INFLATABLE BUDDHA + DR BUTLER'S HATSTAND MEDICINE BAND + CHRIS FAROE + SIMON DAVIES: *Oxford Cycle Workshop, Magdalen Road (1pm)* – The local cycle co-operative relaunch their workshop with an afternoon of free live music, featuring slam-poetry-cum-skiffle-funk-punk-cabaret collective Inflatable Buddha, goodtime blues and jazz band Dr Butler, plus local acoustic songsmiths Chris Faroe and Simon Davies.

BOOT-LED ZEPPELIN: *The Academy* – Tribute to Led Zep.

MAGNUM: *The Academy* – Treat for fans of 70s and 80s heavy rock as the Brummie veterans continue their reformation tour, still featuring original vocalist Bob Catkey and guitarist Tony Clarkin and best known for their 80s hit albums 'Chase The Dragon' and 'A Storytellers Night'.

SIMPLE: *The Bullingdon* – Funky house with guest Crookers, plus resident DJs.

LOVE HATE LOGIC + SHIRLEY + THE

SWAMIS: *The Port Mahon* – 70s-styled rock from Leamington's LHL, in the style of Reef and the Chili Peppers, plus feelgood rock'n'roll party band Shirley.

THE CRUSADERS + PHOENIX CHILD + THE

JULIA THOMAS BAND: *The X, Cowley*

KEYBOARD CHOIR + THEO + WHITE

NOISE BAND: *The Cellar* – Esoteric synth ambient and noise from Keyboard Choir at tonight's Big Hair club, plus loops'n'drones post-rocking from Theo.

JEFF DENTON: *Fat Lil's, Witney*

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM

101: *The Academy*

SUNDAY 11th

GRAVENHURST: *The Jericho Tavern* – Dreamy lachrymose rocking from the Bristolian neo-folkies – *see main preview*

RED VEIN: *The Port Mahon* – Bristol

alt.rockers tipping a nod to Editors et al.

MONDAY 12th

THE CHARLATANS: *The Academy* – The long-standing Brummie indie stalwarts head out on tour again, back with a vengeance after supporting The Who and The Stones last year and the renewed interest in the band on the back of their free download album, 'You Cross My Path', adding folk, soul and even reggae influences to their 60s-styled psychedelic pop.

BLACK LIPS: *The Academy* – Rough'n'raw r'n'b out of Atlanta, Georgia, with The Black Lips back in the UK after their last show at the Cellar, mixing up early punk and garage rock with hook-laden Beatles pop, plugging last year's 'Good Bad, Not Evil' album.

SHERMAN ROBERTSON + BLUESMOVE:

The Bullingdon – Goodtime upbeat blues from Texan guitarist Robertson, playing rhythmic, funky electric blues and rock with dynamic solos and a soulful voice.

THE WHIP + SOUTH CENTRAL LIVE: *The*

Jericho Tavern – Manchester's New Order-inspired, Jesus Jones-sounding synth-rockers The Whip headline with support from Brighton's great synth-funk goth-rockers South Central Live.

TUESDAY 13th

JOE LEAN + THE JING JANG JONG: *The Academy* – Shit name, shit band, will probably sell out. Some people are just fucking daft.

PHOEBE KILLDEER + THE SHORT

STRAWES: *The X, Cowley* – Thrown out of Nouvelle Vague, apparently for bad behaviour, Australian singer Phoebe Killdeer has recruited a new band and headed down darker musical paths while retaining much of Nouvelle Vague's sultry, smoky glamour. Gothic blues rubs up against jazz and raw rockabilly, taking in elements of PJ Harvey, Nick Cave and Siouxsie Sioux. And if that don't sound like a welcome alternative to Joe Lean, you are a soulless automaton.

JONAH MATRANGA + ATTENTION + THE

FIVE-O's: *The Jericho Tavern* – Intricately epic and passionate singalong pop from the former-Far and Gratitude frontman, now going under his own name after a string of releases as Onelindrawing.

WHITE SUNDAY: *The Port Mahon* – Reading's Oasis-influenced Britrockers on tour.

JAZZ CLUB: *The Bullingdon* – With keyboard-led jazz band The Howard Peacock Quintet.

JOSH KNIGHT + MAEVE BAYTON + BAND + RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND: *East Oxford Community Centre* – Acoustic local songwriters night.

INTRUSION: *The Cellar* – Goth, industrial and darkwave club night.

WEDNESDAY 14th

THE OXFORD PUNT – *See main pull-out guide*

FACEOMETER + DESMOND CHANCER &

THE LONG MEMORIES: *Borders (6.15pm)*

INTERNATIONAL JETSETTERS + CAT

MATADOR + ELAPSE-O: *The Purple Turtle*

TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS + NON-

STOP TANGO + ALPHABET BACKWARDS +

RUBBER DUCK: *The Wheatsheaf*

BLACK SKIES BURN + LITTLE FISH +

SIKORSKY + KING FURNACE: *Thirst Lodge*

EDUARD SOUNDING BLOCK + DAVID K

FRAMPTON + 50ft PANDA + CLANKY

ROBO GOBJOBS: *The Cellar*

OXFORD IMPROVISERS: *The Port Mahon*

OPEN MIC SESSION: *The Temple*

THURSDAY 15th

EX-MODELS + ELAPSE-O +

LOAD.CLICK.SHOOT!+ ICE, SEA, DEAD

PEOPLE: *The Cellar* – Another musically

confrontational treat courtesy of Vacuous Pop, tonight presenting Brooklyn's no-wave-inspired Ex-Models to town as part of a short UK tour, cranking out alternately incessant and haphazard hardcore mayhem, topped off with plenty of frantic screaming for full audience alienation fun. Recent Oxford Punt stars Elapse-O ignite their own electro-noise inferno in support.

SPIERS & BODEN: *The Bullingdon* – Return visit to the Bully for the award-winning folk favourites, with accordionist Spiers and singer and fiddler Boden adding a little bit of gypsy panache to traditional English tunes.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: *The Wheatsheaf* – With guests Trevor Warren's Disassembler.

SCARLET'S WELL + THE LODGER + DIAL F

FOR FRANKENSTEIN: *The X, Cowley* –

Superlative indie goings on at tonight's Swiss Concrete club, with former-Monochrome Set frontman Bid bringing his wordy, theatrical pop troupe Scarlet's Well to town, joined along the



Thursday 22nd

BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE: The Academy

With some band's you know exactly what you're going to get – which songs and in what order. With Toronto's Broken Social Scene, you're never sure until they hit the stage who's even in the band. Although formed by core members Kevin Drew and Brendan Canning at the turn of the decade, Broken Social Scene have expanded and contracted with such regularity it's often a case of who is in town on a particular night as to what the actual line-up entails. At their peak they've boasted 19 musicians on stage, most of whom are drawn from other Canadian indie bands, with guests drawn from the likes of The Dears, Metric, Do Make Say Think, Stars, A Silver Mt. Zion and singer Feist. It all began because Drew and Canning needed a band to make their instrumental debut album sound interesting when they played it live, but they've since become a grandly orchestral pop concern, taking on elements of grunge, garage, classical, punk and prog and utilising the full orchestral range of instruments. And yes, it can be a bit of a mess, but that's half of the appeal – the fresh, gleeful freedom of their pop. Award-winning stars in their native Canada, BSS are still something of a cult concern in the UK but you can bet tonight's gig – one of only a handful UK dates on their current European tour – will be packed to the rafters with people who take their pop music very seriously indeed. Arcade Fire may have the unit-shifting capacity, but BSS get all the lo-fi love.

way by erstwhile Talulah Gosh and Heavenly guitarist Pete Momtchiloff. Leeds' The Lodger support with a jangly 80s style of indie that recalls Orange Juice and The Wedding Present while local newcomers Dial F For Frankenstein give it some grunge-pop welly.

KEELING CURVE + AGENTS OF JANE: The Port Mahon

ELECTRIC JAM SESSION: The Jack Russell, Marston

THE KING'S SHILLING + TELEGRAMME +

THE SHANKS: The Jericho Tavern

LITTLE MAN TATE: The Academy – Post-Arctic Monkeys indie-punk from the Sheffield rockers.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

SMASH DISCO: The Academy

FRIDAY 16th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park – First day of Truck's innovative new eco-conscious mini-festival – *see main preview*

THE SMITHS INDEED: The Academy – Tribute to Morrissey & Co.

THE COUNT & SINDEN: The Academy – Slide, Simple and Eclectic join forces again for a night of house music, featuring a live set from The Count & Sinden, out on their debut live tour after the success of ubiquitous club hit 'Beeper'.

DUBWISER + DUBHEART: The Wheatsheaf – Double dose of reggae with local legends Dubwiser and Bournemouth's aptly-named Dubheart.

BEV BEVAN'S MOVE: Fat Lil's, Witney – Drummer Bevan keeps the Move flag flying, playing all the band's classic 60s and 70s rock hits.

SELF-INFLICTED CONFUSION + THE CRUSADERS: The X, Cowley
NOT MY DAY + EVERYTHING EVERYTHING + THE SHAKELLERS + DAVID FRIDHOLM: The Jericho Tavern – Bluesy guitar pop from headliners Not My Day.

FRESH OUT OF THE BOX: The Cellar – Techno, house and breaks with a live set from Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaur.

DESMOND CHANCER & THE LONG MEMORIES + CHARLIE KHAN: The Port Mahon – Morbid blues reveries from Mr Chancer and his merry gang.

RICHARD BROTHERTON: Jack Russell, Marston – Live electric blues and rock.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon SHAKE: The Academy

GET DOWN: The Brickworks

JAY TAMKIN & THE CRACKERS: Didcot Labour Club – Live blues at the monthly Red Hot Blues Club.

SATURDAY 17th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park – *See main preview*

THE METROS: The Academy – Jaunty, punky mod-rocking from the Peckham newcomers, coming on like a modern day Merton Parkas or Secret Affair.

WITCHES + IVY'S ITCH: The Wheatsheaf – Benefit gig in aid of homeless charity Shelter with ace local eclectic rockers Witches plus malevolent goth-grungers Ivy's Itch.

EARTH MACHINE MUSIC: Park Farm, North Aston – Now here's something that'd cause yer average Metros fan to weep tears of blood – Oxford Contemporary Music present Finnish accordion player Kimmo Pohjonen, a leading exponent of anything-goes musical innovation which, tonight, leads him to a farm where he'll be utilising the available machinery – from tractors to milking and threshing machines – to create truly agricultural music. And, as an added bonus, gig-goers will get a tour of the organic farm including a special tasting session.

OX4: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.

THE EAVESDROPPERS: The X, Cowley

THE MIGHTY REDOX: Fat Lil's, Witney
ABORT, RETRY, FAIL?: The Cellar – Electro and post-punk with live ands and DJs.

GREEN ONIONS: The Jericho Tavern – Blues Brothers tribute.

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: The Academy

SUNDAY 18th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park – *See main preview*

AMY McDONALD: The Academy – Jaunty acoustic folk-pop from the Glaswegian singer-songwriter, out on tour to promote her debut album, 'This Is The Life'.

VINCENT VINCENT & THE VILLAINS: The Jericho Tavern – Authentic, timeless 50s-styled rock'n'roll from Richard Hawley's recent tour support, kicking out stripped-down, Latin-tinged rock, harking back to Eddie Cochran and Richie Valens.

THE DEPUTIES: The Port Mahon

MONDAY 19th

NEVER THE BRIDE: The Bullingdon –

Another visit to town for the blues-rock favourites, fronted by asbestos-lunged frontwoman Nicki Lambourn, likened to Tina Turner and Janis Joplin and rated as the UK's premier female blues singer; power-rocking back-up in the style of Heart from her band.

NOAH & THE WHALE: The Academy – Jaunty, whimsical London folk-popsters on the up and up

THE TING TINGS: The Academy – Salford's hotly-tipped girl-boy electro-dance pop duo, riding high on the back of sprightly hip-pop single 'That's Not My Name'.

FIGHTING WITH WIRE + DIVE DIVE + HREDA: The Jericho Tavern – Derry's Foo Fighters-styled grunge-pop hopefuls, formed by ex-Jetplane Landing guitarist Cahir O'Doherty head out on a headline tour after supports to Reuben and Biffy Clyro. Local pop-punk heroes Dive Dive come back to gigging life after playing

Saturday 24th

FUNKFEST:

The Bullingdon

Oxford gets its first all-day festival of funk, and when we say all day, we mean all day. It kicks off at 11.30am and runs through till 4am, featuring ten live acts plus assorted DJs, and if you can keep on getting up and getting on down for the duration you'll probably get a medal or something. The event is hosted by local hip hop duo GTA and features a headline set from Bristol's festival regulars Bad Science, preferring a semi-improvised approach to reggae, hip hop and folk-tinged funk, with some poetry thrown in for good measure. Joining them on stage are Oxford's meandering, jazz-styled funk outfit QT & The Reservoir Cats; Brighton's Mean Poppa Lean, with their upbeat and soulful vibe; London's electro-funkers Kojo, who have supported Sugababes and draw on Prince and Stevie Wonder for inspiration, as well as Brighton's Bad Sandwich, with a rockier, Living Colour and Chili Peppers feel. Other bands playing include Swervin Merv, Funky Justice, Tonic and Sub-Func, while on the decks Breakin' Bread's Rob Life is the main attraction while Skylarkin's Aidan Larkin and Indecision will be keeping the vibe alive into the wee small hours.





Monday 26th

SAUL WILLIAMS: The Academy

"And you ain't rich, dawg, you just got money," opines New Yorker Saul Williams on his classic eponymous 2005 album, incisively cutting to the very core of what went wrong with hip hop. Williams is a rapper, but more than that he's a poet, one who probably fits in better with the slam scene than most contemporary hip hop superstars (in fact after winning various slam poetry awards he found his break into a more mainstream audience with his appearance in the award-winning 1998 film *Slam*). A master rhymers with a machine gun delivery, he's also a potent political critic, whether documenting the appalling treatment of poor black ex-servicemen in the country that sent them to war, to the hypocrisy and stereotyping that exists within the black community. As such Williams takes hip hop back to its real roots, to its place as "The Black CNN", evoking the spirits of Chuck D and Michael Franti, while musically, keeping his sounds raw and eclectic, drawing on punk, dancehall and drum&bass; there are echoes of Run DMC and Scott la Rock. Trent Reznor produced Williams' most recent album, 'The Inevitable Rise & Liberation Of Niggy Tardust!' and he has supported both Nine Inch Nails and The Mars Volta. Add to that four volumes of published poetry, assorted film and TV appearances and a lecture tour of the US and you start to get an appreciation of the importance and wide appeal of the man. Shame he's not in the running to be the next president of the US.



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as Frank Turner's backing band in support, while math-rocking newcomers Hreda open the show.

TUESDAY 20th

MEG & DIA + MAYDAY PARADE + FOUR YEAR STRONG + THE COLOUR FRED: The Academy – Give It A Name Festival package tour with Utah's polished Disney-rock sister duo Meg & Dia, Florida's polished grunge-pop act Mayday Parade, Massachusetts' polished emo-metal outfit Four Year Strong and Philadelphia's polished grungy folk-pop crew Color Fred, featuring Fred Mascherino, formerly of polished emo favourites Taking Back Sunday. It's a dirty business, rock music, and no mistake.
IDA MARIA + COGWHEEL DOGS: The Jericho Tavern – Norwegian singer Ida scuffs up her confessional garage pop with elements of Cat Power and The Strokes, with support from twisted folk-pop duo Cogwheel Dogs.
JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – With The Howard Peacock Quintet live on stage.

WEDNESDAY 21st

WEDNESDAY THE THIRTEENTH: The Academy – Ghoulish gothic rock cabaret from the former-Murder Dolls frontman and fiendish friends, out on tour promoting new album, 'Skeletons'. Great family entertainment, if your family name is Addams.
SLOUNGE: Vaults Café, Radcliffe Square – Tonight's multi-arts session features eclectic folk music from Hamilton Yarns.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Temple
HIT & RUN: The Cellar

THURSDAY 22nd

BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE: The Academy – Expansive Canadian pop darlings – *see main preview*
ALL TIME LOW + COBRA STARSHIP + BROADWAY CALLS: The Academy – Double headline bill of new US punk with Maryland's punk-poppers All Time Low and New York's electro-emo act Cobra Starship.
SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – With The Julian Joseph Trio.
THE DIRTY ROYALS + FATALLY YOURS: The Jericho Tavern – Breezy summery guitar-pop with a fuzzy melodic punk edge from long-standing local hopefuls The Dirty Royals, back in live action after reuniting with their American drummer and recording their new EP in the States.
THE RALFE BAND + THE DENNIS HOPPER CHOPPERS: The X, Cowley – Wayward, rambling folk, blues and Gallic pop with a hefty nod towards Will Oldham from London's Ralfe Band. Former-Menlo Park bassist Ben Nicholls brings his new one-man-band to town in support kicking out a raw rockabilly twang in the style of Dick Dale.
GUNNBUNNY + VULTURES: The Port Mahon – Raw and rocking primeval grunge noise from Gunnbunny.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Jack Russell, Marston
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon
SMASH DISCO: The Academy

FRIDAY 23rd

ZOLOF THE ROCK AND ROLL DESTROYER: The Academy – The name alone

would suggest some crazed, leather-clad spawn of GG Allin and Lydia Lunch, but the reality is rather fluffier – a grungy power-pop boy-girl duo out of Philadelphia, as much Avril Lavigne as they are Nirvana.

JUNE + THE STICKS: The Wheatsheaf
THE FOLLYS + ALICE DOYNE + HANNAH HARRIS + NAOMI BULLOCK + DJ TOXIC JUNGLE: The X, Cowley – Benefit gig for Oxford Mind with sunshiny jangle-popsters The Follys plus Alice Doayne's slice-of-life acoustic pop and Hannah Harris' breezy, reflective acoustic jazz and blues.
NORDGARDEN + SEMAPHORE + LITTLE THINGS + JUSTIN SALTMERIS: The Jericho Tavern – Melancholic acoustic blues and folk in a Ryan Adams and Elliot Smith vein from Oslo's Nordgarden, plus London's rootsy, downbeat blues rockers Semaphore.
GRIN CITY: Fat Lil's, Witney
BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon
SUGAR DIRT: The Port Mahon
SHAKE: The Academy
GET DOWN: The Brickworks

SATURDAY 24th

BIG HAIR SPECIAL: The Cellar – Extended session of leftfield noises from the reliably ace Big Hair club people, tonight featuring freaky Parisian noise terrorists Spleen Vs Ideal, mixing up Melvins-style heaviosity, Mr Bungle oddness, some rockabilly psychosis and plenty of electro madness; Action Beat return to town with their semi-improvised collage of post-hardcore, Xmas Lights set their controls to total sonic annihilation, while 50ft Panda crank out the metal and hardcore riffs big time, all this and much, much more. Marvellous stuff.
STORNOWAY + RADIO LUXEMBOURG + THE FAMILY MACHINE: The Academy – Divine celtic-tinged pop and daft roustabout songs about fishing from Stornoway at tonight's EP launch gig. Welsh sunshine popsters Radio Luxembourg join them fresh from playing as Euros Child's backing band, while enduring local country-pop faves The Family Machine open the show.
ROB TOGNONI: Fat Lil's, Witney – Driving rock and blues from the Tasmanian guitarist and his band on one of only four UK dates on this current European tour.
TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: The Academy
SHAKER HEIGHTS + GOG + VIXENS: The Wheatsheaf
LADYFEST: The Port Mahon – Intimate mini-festival celebrating women in music and art.
THE MIGHTY REDOX + THE ROUNDHEELS + MONKEYPUZZLE: The Stock Bar, Crown & Thistle, Abingdon – Skittle Alley bands night with festival funksters The Mighty Redox and support.
ELECTRICITY IN OUR HOMES + ELLEN: The X, Cowley – Discordant, clattering, lo-fi thrash-pop with nods to Beefheart and Zappa.
1877 + DIRTY DAYS + GLOCKENSPIEL: The Jericho Tavern – Grungy new-wave and hardcore noise from Aylesbury's 1877.

SUNDAY 25th

VISION FALL + BEELZEBOZO + PHANTOM THEORY + 14TEN: The Wheatsheaf – Four-band bill of heavy rock.
MELTING POT ALL-DAYER: The Jericho Tavern – Full day of bands from the Melting Pot club, including headliners King Furnace, with their

NIGHTSHIFT presents the

OXFORD PUNT

Wednesday 14th May

1 Night, 5 Venues, 18 Acts

Quite simply the best showcase of unsigned local music of the year

Borders

6.15 Faceometer
7.00 Desmond Chancer &
The Long Memories

Purple Turtle

7.45 International Jetsetters
8.30 Cat Matador
9.15 Elapse-O
10.00 Raggasaurus

Wheatsheaf

8.15 Tristan & The Troubadours
9.00 Non-Stop Tango
9.45 Alphabet Backwards
10.30 Rubber Duck

Thirst Lodge

8.30 Black Skies Burn
9.30 Little Fish
10.30 Sikorsky
11.30 King Furnace

Cellar

9.00 Eduard Sounding Block
10.00 David K Frampton
11.00 50ft Panda
12.00 Clanky Robo Gobjobs

*Every act plays for 30 minutes.
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£4, except Borders, which is free!*

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or online from oxfordmusic.net

THE OXFORD PUNT 2008:



BORDERS

As is traditional, we kick off this year's Oxford Punt in the charming surroundings of Borders. Here, as well as starting your musical journey of discovery, you can learn sumfink while you're about it. Depending on where they put the performers, you can immerse yourself in foreign language dictionaries, medical encyclopaedias or religious tomes, although we don't recommend reading the medical stuff too much – one year we spent the entire Punt convinced we were suffering from acute liver failure and gout. Several hours in various local venues later, we were informed by a proper doctor that this was exactly what we had. But anyway, this year's opening act, **FACEOMETER**, will cheer you up whatever your ailments. A travelling troubadour of the old school, Faceometer has lived and busked in Exeter, Birmingham, Wales and London before moving to Oxford where we've quickly fallen for his jaunty, wordy form of folk-pop, reminding us not a little of the great Jeffrey Lewis – replete with banjo plucking and washboard shuffling, not to mention a cheesy, cheery grin. Mind you, you'll not be smiling after **DESMOND CHANCER & THE LONG MEMORIES** have finished with you. Misery is their game and misery is what you'll get, albeit a splendidly stylish form of misery with its roots in Tom Waits and the darkest of jazz bar crooners. Still, you do get the occasional Rasputin-style fake beard to spirit things along and we think they're quite exceptional talents. And after that, you'll be wanting a drink or six...

www.myspace.com/faceometer

www.myspace.com/desmondchancerandthelongmemories

THE PURPLE TURTLE

With its post-industrial arched gig room and austere brickwork, set at the end of long, winding corridors, the Purple Turtle is increasingly one of our favourite local venues and thus the perfect setting for **INTERNATIONALJETSETTERS**, increasingly one of our favourite local bands. Formed by Oxford pop veteran Mark Crozer and former-Ride drummer Loz Colbert, the pair of them now also part of The Jesus & Mary Chain, they're an amalgamation of everything that was great about indie rock, when that term actually meant something. From the narcotic fuzz of Spacemen 3 to the insistent jangle and drone of The Wedding Present, and lifted spaceward by singer Fi McFall's ethereal vocals, they're dark and dreamy but they rock like bastards. Newcomers **CAT MATADOR** also tend towards the darker side of guitar pop, abetted in this course by some suitably shadowy violin. In their lighter moments there are echoes of The Police but their best moments find them lurking in 70s New York's musical underground. **ELAPSE-O** are without doubt the most extreme act on this year's Punt, quoting the likes of Swans, Liars and Big Black as inspiration and welding brutal rhythms to experimental guitar noise for an exhilarating, stomach-churning ride through no-wave and the outer reaches of electronica. **RAGGASAURUS** will take you to far out places too, although of a more exotic and danceable variety as they lay down huge dub grooves over which frontman Tunsu sings his soaring north African folk anthems. It's a sublime meeting of musical worlds.

www.myspace.com/internationaljetsetters

www.myspace.com/catmatador

www.myspace.com/elapseo

www.myspace.com/theraggasaurus



1 - Borders

2 - The Purple Turtle

3 - The Cellar

THIRST LODGE

This is the first year Thirst Lodge has hosted the Oxford Punt, but then this is the first year Thirst Lodge has existed. Situated in St Ebbes, behind the Westgate Centre, on the site of the old Pennyfarthing pub, the building itself has a proud history of live music and tonight might well see a little bit more historical significance added to that as **LITTLE FISH** get their chance to show everyone exactly what we've been raving about over the last year. Without doubt the most exciting new band to emerge on the Oxford scene since Foals, the two-piece, consisting of singer/guitarist Joolz and drummer Nez, have already graced the front cover of Nightshift and played support to Supergrass and Young Knives and are now being flown to places like LA to talk to record labels. With the punky verve of Patti Smith, the raw, blues-rock soul of Janis Joplin and the ballsy glam stomp of Suzi Quatro, they're the embodiment of great rock and roll and this may well be your last chance to catch them in such intimate surroundings. Raw power is a phrase you could definitely use to describe **BLACK SKIES BURN**, metallers of the extreme variety who deliver an uncompromising mix of modern thrash and metalcore, blending moments of heavy groove, furious thrash riffing and driving blastbeats. And if you argue with them, they'll eat you. Banbury duo **SIKORSKI** prefer the electronic route to sonic terrorism: black clad, dark of mind and surprisingly dancefloor friendly with their industrial-heavy techno throb, they're like an unlikely meeting point between Aphex Twin, Depeche Mode and The KLF. And chances are they'll be inviting former-Miss UK Ellie Glynn on stage for a spot of PVC-clad death disco fun. Anyway, you want rock music? You got rock music. **KING FURNACE** rock. They rock in a spiky, impassioned, hook-laden and highly-charged fashion, tearing up blues, metal, funk, pop and prog into a hairy old hellraising party, and if you can't swing your pants to that, you dead, bro'.

www.myspace.com/blackskiesburn

www.myspace.com/littlefishmusic

www.myspace.com/sikorskielectro

www.myspace.com/kingfurnace

WHO, WHAT AND WHERE

ELAPSE-O



THE WHEATSHEAF

Reliably unkempt home to every decent band to come out of Oxford in the past decade, every town should have its own version of the Wheatshaf. Tonight it is host to a peerless mix of youth and experience. The youth comes in the form of teenage popstrels **TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS**, not long since recipients of a damning Demo Dumper review in these very pages but more recently transformed into a highly-promising seven-strong collective, still raw around the edges but possessed of a sparkle many bands will never know. Boy-girl vocals, violin, guitars and buzzing keyboards all add up to a sound that can recall the best bits of Belle & Sebastian, Libertines or even The Velvet Underground at various points. **ALPHABET BACKWARDS** too have been earning enthusiastic praise for their fusion of sultry guitar pop and giddy electronics, including a deal with the mighty Vacuous Pop label. From Toytown glam rock to wistful folktronica, they're an unfettered pop joy. Experience arrives in the form of **NON-STOP TANGO**, a band formed by the very cream of Oxford Improvisers, including the world-renowned keyboard player Pat Thomas. Since they're essentially an improvisational collective we can't tell you exactly what they'll sound like on the night, although you'll find elements of jazz, funk, rock, electronica and experimental psychedelia in the mix, all executed with a style and virtuosity that the rest of us can only stand and gawp at in humbled silence. After which you can dance yourself into a frothy mess with the Punt's funkier band, **RUBBERDUCK**. From soul and reggae to folk and pure pop, they blend myriad influences and kick it out with pure party spirit and it's little wonder they're becoming one of the biggest crowd-pullers on the local scene.

www.myspace.com/tristanandthetroubadours

www.myspace.com/nonstoptango

www.myspace.com/alphabetbackwards

www.myspace.com/rubberduckband



4 - The Wheatshaf

turtle

5 - Thirst Lodge

LITTLE FISH



CLANKY ROBO GOBJOBS



THE CELLAR

And here is where the Punt party comes to its climax, because we're not going to let you down gently. Not when we've got **EDUARD SOUNDING BLOCK** to rock your knickers into bloody blazes. Or maybe just get them in some sort of a twist trying to keep up with their frenetic, many-angled spazzcore noise blast where the opposing forces of prog rock and hardcore rub up against each other like a head-to-head between Dillinger Escape Plan and King Crimson and where chaos is always just about kept at bay. Inventive brutality is also the forte of **DAVID K FRAMPTON**, one of those bedroom mavericks that Oxford breeds so well, leaving his home studio occasionally to punish the general public with a genuinely unholy form of electronic musical violence that always sounds like it should be soundtracking the sort of movies where malevolent androids stalk and dismember terrified and inexplicably scantily-clad space pirates. Sorry, we're back to talking about knickers again, aren't we? Riffage and rhythm, that's what **50FT PANDA** deal in. There's only two of them but they make enough noise for ten. The drummer hits stuff hard and sometimes very fast; the guitarist cuts giant rock riffs out of granite and we bow before their unreconstructed rock majesty. And then, finally, we present to you **CLANKY ROBO GOBJOBS**, better known to his mum as Matti Brown, although if she knew exactly what his live act involved she might wonder where it all went wrong. Because Mighty Matti is a one-man digital hardcore freak circus, dressed in a horrible dinosaur-style tracksuit and coming on like Harry Enfield's Kevin the teenager and Atari Teenage Riot. And some folks we know absolutely hate it, but they're wrong because it's the absolute spirit of musical mayhem and it'll be ringing in your ears for the whole of tomorrow. And if you don't dig that, knickers to the lot of ya!

www.myspace.com/eduardsoundingblock

www.myspace.com/davidkframpton

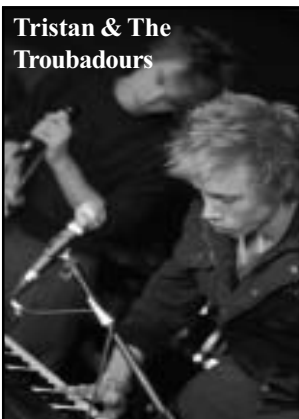
www.myspace.com/50ftpanda

www.myspace.com/clankyrobo

Plan Your Punt

The Oxford Punt 2008

Timings	6.15 - 6.45	7.00 - 7.30	7.45 - 8.15	8.15 - 8.45	8.30 - 9.00	9.00 - 9.30	9.15 - 9.45	9.30 - 10.00	9.45 - 10.15	10.00 - 10.30	10.30 - 11.00	11.00 - 11.30	11.30 - 12.00	12.00 - 12.30
Borders Magdalen Street	Faceometer	Desmond Chancer & The Long Memories												
Purple Turtle Frewin Court, Cornmarket St			International Jetsetters		Cat Matador		Elapse -O			Raggasaurus				
Wheatsheaf Wheatsheaf Yard High St				Tristan & The Troubadours		Non-Stop Tango			Alphabet Backwards		Rubber Duck			
Thirst Lodge Pennyfarthing Place, St Ebbes					Black Skies Burn			Little Fish			Sikorsky		King Furnace	
The Cellar Frewin Court, Cornmarket St						Eduard Sounding Block				David K Frampton		50ft Panda		Clanky Robo Gobjobs



Tristan & The Troubadours

Make the most of your Punt night with an all-venue **Punt Pass** and this here handy timetable table thingie what the lovely Julia done for us. Plan your route and catch the very best new bands in Oxfordshire.

All-venue Punt Passes are on sale now, priced **£7**, from **Videosyncratic** on Cowley Road, or online from **Wegottickets.com**. But hurry - there are only 100 of them.



Sikorski

full-on brand of heavy rock action, plus
Olympian Fall, The Skies, James Forde and more.

MONDAY 26th

SAUL WILLIAMS: The Academy – Rap poet and social commentator makes his Oxford debut – *see main preview*

THE MATT SCHOFIELD TRIO: The

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

EASTERN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS: The Jericho Tavern – First trip to the UK for Philadelphia's country and blues-infused rock'n'rollers, promoting new album 'Ameritown', coming on like a latter-day Violent Femmes at times and having supported Black Francis and Black Rebel Motorcycle Club in the States.

JAZZ JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston
LORD MAYOR'S PICNIC: Hinksey Park – Live music from local bands to celebrate the end of the Lord Mayor's parade.

TUESDAY 27th

KIDS IN GLASS HOUSES: The Academy – Punky power-pop from the South Wales crew recently voted Best Unsigned Band in Kerrang! Out on a national headline tour in support of new single, 'Easy Tiger', after supporting the Manics, Lostprophets and Funeral For A Friend.

IVYRISE + ALISTAIR GRIFFIN: The Jericho Tavern – Emotive stadium pop in a Keane vein from London's Ivyrise – don't get too excited, now.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon

WEDNESDAY 28th

DUKE SPECIAL: The Academy – Intimately orchestral pop balladeering from Belfast's dreadlocked romantic, Pete Wilson, out on a short solo tour.

SAD SHIELDS + VILE VILE CREATURES + YOU'RE SMILING NOW BUT WE'LL ALL TURN INTO DEMONS: The Port Mahon – Superlative night of noise from Permanent vacation, with hardcore surf rock and electro noise from Sad Shields, trashy DIY garage punk in the vein of Erase Errata and The Slits from Manchester's Vile Vile Creatures, plus the mighty YSNBWATID with their wacked-out brand of rockabilly, metal, garage noise and drone rock. In some perfect parallel universe these three bands are forever top of the charts while Kooks and Scouting For Girls suck cocks for small change in Hell.

THOMAS WHITE: The Jericho Tavern – Erstwhile Electric Soft Parade and Brakes chap brings his new band to Coo Coo Club's party.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Temple

THURSDAY 29th

DEAD KENNEDYS: The Academy – East Bay punk legends continue life after Jello – *see main preview*

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – With The Nicholas Meier Group.

WINTERMUTE + THESE MONSTERS + HREDA: The Cellar – Post-punk and post-rock noise night at Big Hair.

SMASH DISCO: The Academy – featuring a live set from the utterly brilliant Little Fish.

ELECTRIC JAM SESSION: The Jack Russell, Marston

D-BLOCKERS + JULIA EK THOMAS + SARAH WARNE + KANGO BILL: The Jericho Tavern

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

FRIDAY 30th

LIMEHOUSE LIZZY: The Academy – Superior tribute to the legendary Irish rockers.

SUNNYVALE NOISE SUB-ELEMENT: The Wheatsheaf – Abrasive post-rock and electro-noise from Sunnyvale, launching their new '20%' CD.

BABY GRAVY + RESPONSE COLLECTIVE + GENTLEMAN RHYMER: The Jericho Tavern – Punky riot grl electro-pop from Baby Gravy, plus pleasingly chilled-out funk, jazz, hip hop and psychedelic rocking from The Response Collective.

D-BLOCKERS: The Port Mahon – Grunge rock.

SUPER FUNK FOUR: Fat Lil's, Witney
THE MIGHTY REDOX + THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Bystander, Wootton
BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon
SHAKE: The Academy
GET DOWN: The Brickworks

SATURDAY 31st

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with OOLITES + HAPPY PENGUIN, HUNGRY BEAR + HYBRD4M: The Wheatsheaf – Exuberant college rock from north Oxford newcomers Oolites at tonight's GTI, with melodic post-rockers Happy Penguin and lo-fi r'n'b outfit Hybrd4m

FONDA 500 + FOXES! + BORDERVILLE: The Jericho Tavern – Return of Hull's indie kings Fonda 500 at tonight's Coo club, plus jangly vulpine pop from Foxes! and theatrical rocking from Borderville.
COWLEY ROAD CARNIVAL FUNDRAISER: The Bullingdon – Live bands and funky house DJs.
TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: The Academy
ALL IDOLS FALL + EXP + MIDNIGHT DRIVE + ARC ANGEL: The Mill, Banbury – High-energy punk and hardcore from the headliners, plus metal and hardcore support.

MARKET SQUARE ACOUSTIC: Market Square, Abingdon (1pm) – Afternoon of acoustic music in Abingdon's market square, organised by the Skittle Alley team.



Thursday 29th

DEAD KENNEDYS: The Academy

The Sex Pistols without Lydon? The Clash without Strummer? Unthinkable, but Dead Kennedys without Jello Biafra? Seems the jury is still out on that one, and tonight gives Oxford its first chance to find out if the reformed San Francisco punk legends still cut through the crap like they did in their 80s heyday. Musically always ahead of the punk game – inspired as much by Beefheart, psychedelia and jazz as by punk – Dead Kennedys were railing against the establishment, in particular America's religious right, long before it became fashionable, and the classic 1980 debut 'Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables' is amongst the greatest punk albums of all time. From those speedball beginnings they moved into more experimental territory, culminating with 'Frankenchrist', whose accompanying Penis Landscape poster led to their charges for obscenity and the band's subsequent bitter split. Only East Bay Ray and Klaus Flouride remain from the band's peak incarnation, a series of replacement singers, including former child actor Brandon Cruz, culminating in recent recruit Dave Scheff. Still, a chance to relive some of punk's greatest moments, from 'Holiday In Cambodia' and 'Kill The Poor' to 'Too Drunk To Fuck'.

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LIVE

THE WINCHELL RIOTS / HER NAME IS CALLA

The Wheatsheaf

Sometimes big *is* better, and you feel, watching Leicester's Her Name Is Calla that, like a crocodile, you could put them in any setting and they'd grow to fill it. Never overblown they are intensely epic, all portentous piano, oceanic guitar, flailing limbs and barely decipherable vocals; they're a stadium band in waiting, much like their recent tourmates iLiketains. There's a strange nocturnal grandeur about the band in the way they carve out gothic chamber music – replete with brilliantly utilised trombone – and you feel they'd have been right at home on 4AD back in the mid-1980s, sharing stages with Modern English or even The Virgin Prunes, but as their set climaxes in a huge, abrasive, progastic crescendo, they ride closer to Spiritualised. "We're not from anywhere interesting," they declaim. Maybe not, but where they're heading could be somewhere very special indeed.

Bands come and go but the demise of Fell City Girl left an indelible mark on the local scene last year. Not only were they one of a very few local acts who could sell out

the Zodiac, but they came painfully close to making that huge break into bigger and better things before music industry politics did for them as it has for so many before them. Fell City Girl's shadow will doubtless loom large over The Winchell Riots for a while at least, as frontman Phil McMinn and drummer James Pamphlion, along with new recruits Phil Jones and Rich Leicester, start to climb back up that daunting hill towards rock stardom.

Winchell Riots' sound is slightly more jagged than FCG but that sense of epic insularity remains, Phil virtually spitting out his words and attacking his guitar as if all the frustration of his experiences are being exorcised on stage. Simultaneously urgent and adrift, they're part Bunnymen, part Sigur Ros, songs like 'Kandahar Road' armed with a passion that melts their glacial heart.

We wouldn't normally encourage bands to act more like rock stars but perhaps Winchell Riots could appear a little less self-conscious. You can forgive them breaking the spell as they tune up between



Photo: pphimages

songs when they're enticing you back in with a song as gorgeous as 'Hymn 24', but more swagger and less shrugging might benefit the show. It's telling though that something unrelated to the music is the only real criticism you can make. The gig finishes with Phil performing a solo version of the old

Fell City Girl favourite 'February Snow', proving they're not precious enough to break all links with their past, and it's a timely reminder that Phil has written some of the greatest songs by an Oxford band in the past few years. You can't keep that sort of talent down. **Dale Kattack**

NINE STONE COWBOY/BLACK POWDER/WITCHES

The Wheatsheaf

It's always a nice surprise to discover a band on a gig that you weren't expecting. Tonight we discover Witches propping up the bill with their first tentative steps since Dan and Tim left the band. What is interesting is that despite this being Witches' first live gig since the personnel changes they are simply stunning, and new guitarist Martin Newton seems to have

fitted in seamlessly. In the past Witches have managed to leave me cold and lost to explain quite why so many are insisting they are one of the most exciting bands to emerge from Oxford of late. Tonight, their twisted, moody compositions make perfect sense. Filling the venue with tendrils of menace and despair, the dynamics that fill their 'Heart of Stone' album have never sounded more perfectly replicated. Add my name to the list of those predicting great things.

Black Powder hit the stage sporting at least one Mohican and launch into a set that lacks any of the subtlety we'd been spoiled with during Witches' set. This is punk in the Discharge vein: loud, to the point and not entirely original. "This is another song about rape," states vocalist Tom Graham, who then indicates that this is only the second of the three we can expect on the subject. We can't hear the lyrics, but seeing as the band rolls along with all the refinement of a pissed-up biker in a barrel steaming down a steep hill, we can only assume that it's being dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Nine Stone Cowboy might be great on any other night but tonight something is very wrong indeed. Mark Cope's vocals are so abrasive they seem intent on shredding your inner ear. When coupled with Ady Davey's backing vocals things become almost unbearable. Quite why they're singing in different keys is uncertain, but they seem to be scuppering the perfect pop harmonies of the likes of 'Son Of Elvis'. Only bassist Maria Illet manages to retain a sense of effortless cool as things start to unravel and become something of a mess. "This one's 'Jesus Doesn't Like Me'" says Copey, rupturing our ear drums in the process and making us wonder if Jesus might not have a point.

Sam Shepherd



photo by Sam Shepherd

DAN LE SAC Vs SCROOBIU PIP / PRODUCERS WITH COMPUTERS

The Academy

"Thou shalt not create thy own Zwinky"

It's easy to create new lyrics for Dan Le Sac and Scroobius Pip's 'net hit 'Thou Shalt Always Kill', because, like all great satire, it simultaneously feels like self evident truth and a highly original creation. "What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed," as Alexander Pope put it. Naturally it receives a riotous reception tonight, but the cabaret laptop rap recital we witness reveals Dan and Scroob to be more than a one click pony.

"Thou shalt not vote for us on The Road To V"

Whilst Scroob chats and flogs home made 7"s at the merchandise table, label types hand out fliers offering free ringtones: like many satirists who attack the modes of dissemination, from the aforementioned Pope, to Wyndham Lewis to Chris Morris, the Pip show has suddenly had to find a way of working with the very industry they're lampooning. One way of doing this is just be really bloody good, and Dan's laptop

work is crunchy and incisive, whilst Pip's delivery shows a keen knowledge of hip hop beneath his geeky persona. Witness the power of the bravely dissonant second number, addressing self harm in a blizzard of harsh electronic tones and impassioned intonation, or the subtle 'Angles', exploring the minefield around binary ethics.

The downside of youth culture success is having to share a bill with Producers With Computers, two fatuous gabbling striplings who risibly mix Kid'n'Play with Grange Hill (although Riz MC is ace, and Gideon Conn is a likably messy cross between G Love and Twizz Twangle).

"Thou shalt not drink crap lager from a plastic cup at £3.15 a pop."

And yet, no matter how slick and regulated our cultural life may become, great artists always shine through. So long as Le Sac and Pip – and their audience – carry on with this fantastic and intelligent approach, there's hope for our culture yet.

David Murphy

EFTERKLANG / PHIL MCMINN

The Bullingdon

What hooks us about songwriters and their vocal skills is their ability to display – and explain – in raw format the emotions, pain and thoughts we identify with. Phil McMinn is no exception. Former leader of Fell City Girl, now fronting the similarly melodic Winchell Riots, he balances on the fine line between mastery and agony, bouncing his voice like a rollercoaster and making us hold our breath when we all, him and us together, reach the top, wondering if we will derail. But we do not. He has much more lyrical stamina and energy than fellow troubadour Richard Walters, yet lacks of the aura of mystery and perfection of Andy Yorke. Tonight he is partly improvising due to an unexpected cancellation of the scheduled support, Peter Broderick. And despite this initial disappointment, Phil leaves us curious enough to keep an eye on his new band.

It is hard to describe feelings when heart and soul are being hugged by golden sparkles and rippling waves of happiness and glacial serenity at once. Efterklang, a Danish eight-piece experimental collective, deliver

an intense and splendid repertoire, to which the audience responds with a hypnotised silence, too adamant to let go of the bliss. Efterklang have been compared to Sigur Rós and Röyksopp but Casper Clausen's team is not content with mere credentials. The multi-layered vocals, the tidal crescendos and the spiral wind blows, combined with precise magical percussion and synth arrangements, create a twinkling musical design comparable to the vast cosmos. The complex shifts of the trumpets, glockenspiels and piano seem accurate and mathematical, yet there is an element of freedom and ordered chaos that is too difficult to ignore. Clausen holds notes in an undisturbed stillness, chants, claps, and grins in a jolly, naïve manner to an entranced audience, transported by the essence and beauty of ethereal Scandinavian landscapes. Efterklang seem to own the key to a door of interstellar journeys – they offer supernovas in blank canvases and bursting Big Bangs in an infinite universe.

Liane Escorza

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ELBOW / TWO GALLANTS

The Academy

I can't be alone in thinking that the fashion for bass-less duos has run its course. There's nothing really wrong with San Francisco's Two Gallants, but there's nothing particularly right about them either. The drummer's pleasantly inventive and the songs have a nice, rolling country feel, but the whiney vocals and thin sound get in the way of a truly satisfying experience.

It has to be said that Elbow aren't the easiest band to like. Lyrically dark and melancholic, the music is complex and intense and somehow seems designed to elicit feelings of discomfort. And yet there's something about them that gets under your skin and stubbornly refuses to leave. Once you get over the fact that singer Guy Garvey looks and sounds like Johnny Vegas after a few weeks in a health farm (and I haven't), you realise he has a truly extraordinary voice with unusual harmonics that on its own sounds like a chorus. He takes great pains to engage with the crowd, who hang dutifully on every word. Fans discuss his lyrics endlessly, but they're often as unfathomable as everything else. Take the great new single 'Grounds For Divorce': 'I've been working on a cocktail called Grounds For Divorce / Polishing a compass that I hold in my sleep'. As a band they seem to lack any particular influences or reference points; the songs often have no discernible verse or chorus and, combined with the complex wordplay, they end up in an odd way owing more to hip-hop than pop or rock music. Augmented by a small string section, they do their best to recreate the carefully constructed layers of their recordings, and mostly succeed. Mark Potter comes up with some great and very Mancunian guitar work (even if they are from Bury) but these are brief diversions from the sweeping, somewhat mournful strings and keyboards. Often a song builds up towards a swelling climax, but then ends without achieving it, leaving a vague sense of dissatisfaction. Ultimately they're a frustrating beast and this may explain their uneasy relationships with record companies. But old favourites like 'Newborn', one of their few cheerful songs, lifts everyone's spirits and 'Some Riot' looks set to become their new singalong anthem.

On the way out I spot a possible clue in the engraving on the hip flask on sale at their merchandising stall: deep warm drunk. It makes as much sense as anything else.

Art Lagun

OXFORD FOLK FESTIVAL

Town Hall and Various Venues

Morris dance teams usually do nothing for me but *en masse* they created a rare carnival atmosphere in the city centre, courtesy of the fifth annual Oxford Folk Festival Weekend.

Armaleggan are my favourite looking team: great with blackened faces for the men and black lines on white faces for the women and feathered top hats and multi coloured tatters for all. As well as the best name, their stick striking is so fearsome it has us thinking "Oh Lord, protect thy knuckles".

There are music sessions in pubs throughout the weekend and then there is a Sunday lunchtime French and Breton session at Far From The Maddening Crowd, which is becoming an urban folk myth. This year there are thirty assorted hurdy gurdies, French bagpipes, whistles, and among the fiddlers, one well-known BBC radio presenter who has come from London just to take part in this.

Inside the Town Hall, on Friday night the youthful **Three Daft Monkeys** create a high energy vibe with Gypsy, Balkan, Arabic and Spanish music and their native Cornish tradition. They are definitely on the up as a festival band and would be even better to see in a field on a sunny summer's day.

The most mayhem, though, is at festival headliners **Bellowhead's** Saturday gig. Coming on with silly hats and party poppers, they are determined to celebrate that it had all started for them at the first festival four years ago. If there

is such a thing as folk moshing, they ignite it immediately by deliberately starting with their devoted fans' favourite, 'Prickle Eye Bush'. Though the music suffers a little, it's worth it for that high. It might almost be a Gogol Bordello or Ska Cubano gig and the MC has to allow a second encore or risk actual bodily harm.

It is a set with no link to the British folk tradition that's my festival highlight. Flamenco guitar maestro **Rafael** and singer and dancer **Lola** are riveting, and this at Saturday lunchtime. This is hairs on the back of the neck and butterflies in the stomach time, and not only when Lola is singing and dancing pain and passion but also with Rafael's beautiful solo playing of different flamenco styles. Only **Martin Simpson** doing 'Never Any Good', his award winning song for and about his father, has the same emotional impact.

Northumbrian piper and fiddler **Kathryn Tickell** and her band are my other top highlight. Their renditions of traditional tunes and their own compositions, and the rapport they strike up with the crowd makes for a thoroughly enjoyable finale.

The other monkey at the festival, **Brass Monkey**, have been going for over twenty years, led by major folk names Martin Cathy and John Kirkpatrick. Their sound is driven by bass trombone rather than bass guitar and they give a mature and relaxed concert.

Mawkin, a young instrumental band from

Essex, have gained from being joined now by singer **Jim Causley**. They play the main stage but it is on the second stage that they perform a gem of a set. More delights come from **Chris Newman's** guitar playing with **Máire Ní Chathasaigh**, who takes the Irish harp into 1930s swing and jazz territory.

The festival continues to benefit from inviting musicians from outside the folk mainstream. What festival goers could have enjoyed includes 'Islands, a suite composed by **Luke Daniels** and **Donald Grant**, which straddles chamber and folk music, **Jali Fily Cissiko's** West African Band, **Coute Diomboulou**, local brass big band **Horns of Plenty**, playing Township jazz and Balkan tunes, and **AMV** doing their combination of early French and Indian music meets Captain Beefheart.

Of the local musicians **Telling The Bees** have taken a big step forward. They play a seriously tight set which goes down a storm, propelled by Colin Fletcher, now playing more electric than acoustic bass and the confidence of time spent together recording their first CD.

The Oxford Folk Festival is now well established and one of the few occasions when there is a carnival as well as a corporate consumer atmosphere in Oxford city centre. By cannily attracting enough of a younger audience, by putting on Bellowhead and Brass Monkey, it is contributing to the optimism surrounding folk music currently. It provides a valuable platform for a wide variety of music and local musicians, both folk and non-folk, to win new friends. Long may it thrive.

Colin May

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CAT MATADOR / TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS

The Purple Turtle

Confidence is at a premium tonight, but with little justification, from two new local bands with enough talent on display to warrant at least some degree of arrogance.

Witney's Tristan & The Troubadours are two men down, their drummer and violinist, which explains some of their nervousness tonight, singer Joe repeatedly apologising for having to

play everything acoustic (not, strictly, true, since they've got an electric guitar and keyboard present and correct). In fact he spends much of their set apologising for just about everything, which is quite endearing since there's little to apologise for, other than the obtrusive bongos that tend to smother some of the songs. Singing with a breathless urgency and occasionally

slipping into a panicked yelp, Joe counterpoints his vocal partner, Trixie, well, her style more a demure, deadpan narrative when she's not puffing down that staple of indie cuties everywhere, a melodeon. They're a hard band to pin down, which is particularly impressive given they're all still in their mid-teens, at one point coming on like a weird meeting point between Belle & Sebastian and The Twang, while the set's highlight, their penultimate number, shivers like The Velvet Underground's 'Heroin'. They're still a bit of a clutter at times, although given they apparently only rehearsed these stripped-down arrangements the night before, that's not surprising and their promise is apparent enough for anyone to see.

Cat Matador have got their violinist with them tonight, but even so frontman Liam looks like he'd happily shrink into the back wall rather than engage any of the crowd in conversation. This shrinking violet display does tend to creep into his performance as his words become a mumble beneath the band's swimming, dappled guitar pop that at its best hits a more metronomic groove, like something lost from New York's 1970s musical underground, Sian's violin adding depth, colour and a little menace to each song. Sometimes they try and go for that self-consciously difficult prog-pop thing, à la Youthmovies, but then they up the tempo and strip away everything bar the groove and melody and come on more like The Police. Perhaps once they realise they've got plenty to be confident about Cat Matador can perform with the panache their name promises.

Dale Kattack

BE YOUR OWN PET

The Academy

Much has been made of Be Your Own Pet as heirs apparent to the throne vacated by Bikini Kill, but in truth they're more like the bright 'n' shiny reflection of riot grrl. Where Kathleen Hanna was taken with daubing 'slut' over her exposed torso, singer Jemima Pearl, with a degree of anagrammatic appropriateness, sports a T-shirt screaming 'lust! lust! Lust!' – a microcosmic representation that BYOP are perhaps best described as Bratmobile if they'd grown up obsessed with frat boys and keg parties. It's an apolitical, good-time ball of energetic garage punk, taking the hardcore template and using it to kick off the kinds of fights that are usually prefixed with 'water' or 'pillow' – and right on cue, a song called 'Food Fight' whizzes past. Jemima is undoubtedly the star of the show – a dizzying, restless dervish for whom the word 'ebullient' was waiting for its definition, throwing shapes as if her life depended on it.

Where so many bands tackling this kind of good-time party punk fall

down is that they sound like they'd rather be popping down to the laundrette or doing the dishes. During cracking tunes like 'The Kelly Affair', though, BYOP exude the kind of jubilation that suggests the speed at which they can whip through their set has some kind of direct correlation to their chance of winning the lottery.

It's fantastic in small doses – the kind of music you'd be delighted to hear pop up on a random iPod playlist – but over the course of an hour, it's rather like eating too many Smarties and getting a headache. What's more, their occasional forays into more 'mature' (viz. mid-paced) material don't translate too well live, sounding much too close to the kind of faceless backing bands that pop up in *Dawson's Creek* prom night scenes, which leaves us worrying about where they might be able to head next. That might be a question for another day – for now, we're happy to cram our faces with sweets and damn the consequences.

Stuart Fowkes

THE LONG BLONDES

The Academy

Kate Jackson is all things to all people. Long Blondes' raven-haired singer is looking elegantly dishevelled in stripy t-shirt, mini-shorts and black stocking, part cabaret diva, part consummate indie kid. The girls all want to be her, the boys all want to be with her. Here she's the world-weary lover, done with men, there she's the sultry seductress. On the anthemic 'Separated By Motorways' she could be the female Morrissey, documenting imperfect lives of desperate young girls, on 'Giddy Stratospheres' she's the defiant, declaiming ex, while on 'Once And Never Again' she's the coolest big sister on the planet. Kate Jackson is, in short, a pop star in every sense.

Why The Long Blondes aren't on the front cover of every music magazine in the racks is anyone's guess but on tonight's evidence there are few bands around who can match them for unfettered fun, and simple pop inventiveness. While their debut album, 'Someone To Drive You Home',

was a bubblegum riot of Blondie-inspired bitter-sweet pop-punk, its follow-up, 'Couples', finds The Long Blondes stretching into electro-pop, as on the clanging, doomy 'Century', and old-fashioned burlesque rock, like new single 'Guilt'. The highlight amongst highlights of tonight's set, though, is the slithering, snake-like 'Round The Hairpin', a song that fidgets and weaves with all the eerie edginess of a midnight open-top drive round mountain lanes at the centre of a David Lynch movie.

By turns caustic, defiant and vulnerable, Kate Jackson has the poise and pop sophistication of Alison Goldfrapp but equally possesses an emotional depth and engagement rarely heard since The Shop Assistants' Alex Taylor. And she and her band make writing great pop songs seem dangerously easy. The world might not realise it quite yet but The Long Blondes are possibly the best pop band around at the moment.

Sue Foreman

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CIBELLE

The Academy

I have to say that for someone who has never really got to grips with much music from Latin America, the singer, composer and artist Cibelle has been something a revelation. Her eponymous debut album set new standards in cult Brazilian cool, melding bossanova and winsome beauty with the most captivating and sophisticated electronica. Her most recent album, 'The Shine of Dried Electric Leaves', significantly deepened the appeal and expanded the horizons. It is more considered and imaginative, with more space and subtlety and influences which engage as much with European jazz, rock and folk traditions as her native Sao Paulo scene.

Seen live tonight, the heavier rock element often comes surprisingly to the fore. Cibelle's band is just a guitarist and a drummer plus herself on vocals, guitar and electronic treatments. On CD her vocal style has sometimes gravitated towards the winsome delicacy of Madeleine Peyroux but live it seems to have a clearer and more penetrating beauty. Live, in fact, she is a revelation. Simply put you won't hear a more purely astonishing voice or see a more engaging and naturally talented

performer. While the glitter/glam chic of her visual and dramatic appeal evoke both Goldfrapp, carnival, cabaret and Bowie at his best, her emotional involvement in the Portuguese songs and rhythms is irresistible.

Self-confessedly unrehearsed, some of the show is a little hit and miss - the crowd get to rattle keys and provide vocal accompaniment in the quirky but inconsequential song 'Elaine', and the guitar histrionics don't always step onto the right side of kitsch, but then the triumphs are extraordinary. 'City People' is remade into a song of power and grandeur that brings to mind vintage Scott Walker, while her cover of Tom Waits' 'Green Grass' is deeply moving. Unreleased track 'White Hair' is also a lovely lyrical exercise. An hour or so of Cibelle onstage seems a matter of minutes. The range and sincerity of her communication is something special. You feel that she could move in so many different musical directions and try so many different things, and with a talent so engaging and curious, all of her choices will be worthy of attention.

Steve Thompson

BLOOD RED SHOES

The Academy

As a wise man once opined, anger is an energy. That same wise man may have gone on to appear on *I'm A Celebrity ... Get Me Out Of Here!*, but his point remains valid - and that's why the Academy's smaller room is positively crackling with energy tonight.

There's no denying the fact that Blood Red Shoes are mightily miffed. Halfway through the set, Laura-Mary Carter furiously flings her guitar to the floor and storms off stage right, her partner Steven Ansell following sharply after. This is no inexcusably arrogant diva-ish strop or childish temper tantrum, though. With long-awaited and unfortunately delayed debut LP 'Box Of Secrets' finally about to hit the shelves, the duo have been bedevilled by malevolent technical gremlins from the off, becoming increasingly frustrated in their attempts to showcase a set of songs in which they passionately believe.

When they reappear, apologetically, the anger hasn't dissipated and, further riled by The Man's joyless suppression of the stage invasion encouraged by Ansell, they set about those same songs with a ferocity that the recording process just can't capture, mainlining their furious art-

punk assault straight into our earholes. An explosive live act at the best of times, tonight their abrasive re-imagining of Nirvana if they'd been on Kill Rock Stars rather than Sub Pop is in a different league altogether.

In truth, 'Box Of Secrets' is ingeniously titled, a whole clutch of the songs - 'It's Getting Boring By The Sea', 'I Wish I Was Someone Better', 'You Bring Me Down' and most recently 'Say Something, Say Anything' - having already seen the light of day as singles and on the band's numerous jaunts the length and breadth of the country. But there's the rub. It's fitting that such serious contenders for the title of the hardest gigging band in Britain should take their name from a story about Ginger Rogers having to rehearse a dancing sequence so many times her white shoes turned red. After all, it's precisely that kind of dogged tunnel-vision determination and dedication, even at risk of exhaustion and personal injury, that defines them.

Safe to say that if Brighton can keep on producing bands like Blood Red Shoes, then it's unlikely to get boring by the sea any time soon.

Ben Woolhead



IAMX

The Academy

IAMX, DJ Chris Corner's post-Sneaker Pimp outfit, was always going to be one for those with trance in their pants.

Upbeat, repetitive and extremely danceable, this schlock blend of dramatic synth-rock, bondage-infused pop and deftly-constructed indie dance capitalises on the now vast tap-root of panstick theatrics and grubby 'nightlife' electronica of the previous decades. The references lean back to 1930s Berlin and the decadent Joel Grey MC in the film *Cabaret*, on through the 70s and the Giorgio Moroder trickle beats that fuelled Donna Summer's hits, and into the 80s panoply of stars like Depeche Mode and John Foxx, each layer illuminated in the time tunnel tonight by the arc-welding strobe of the lime and blue and purple lights on the darkened stage. The camp, catwalk, BDSM whole is then roundly completed by an industrial four-to-the-floor beat that literally pounds your chest like the heart-starters you see waved in ER

rooms in hospital films.

Musical retro-ness aside, the sexual lyrical content has an openness and swagger not seen in the darkwave of the past, with songs like; 'Kiss and Swallow', 'Spit It Out' and 'You Stick It In Me' pretty much covering all the oral sex and violence bases they lobby from. But when the Factor Max that proves the fact is melted down. This is a finely controlled performance from a band who sometimes have The Mighty Boosh, Sue Denim from Robots in Disguise and James Cook from Nemo in their rolling line-up, and who regularly headline stadiums throughout a Europe that go bananas for this archness.

It's an event rather than a set and Corner's Batman Joker-cum-leather-clad bellboy persona raises it from being a Frankie Goes To Hollywood for the Marilyn Manson-ites, to a resurrected Blitz Club where a new generation can go and scenester and Vogue.

Paul Carrera

FUTURE OF THE LEFT / DEGÜELLO / BITCHES

The Jericho Tavern

You simply can't go wrong with a band with a dustbin player in their ranks. Bitches – formed from the detritus of The Walk Off – also feature a distorted-to-buggery old keyboard, a drummer and a screaming bass player and come close to capturing some of Big Black's proto-industrial metal-into-flesh musical barbarism. They're almost politely brutal, tempering the urge to explode in all-out sonic violence with a neat grasp on churning atmospherics and by the time they batter their way to the end of their short set we're making admiring comparisons to Alien Sex Fiend.

Degüello are one of Oxford's hidden musical treasures: always fascinating and inventive even as they kick out a seriously malevolent form of hardcore noise. Since we last saw them they've taken a sideways step into darkly atmospheric no-wave, guitar and bass carving out shifting textures of unforgiving menace, spiced up with odd moments of almost grungy melody. Guitarist The Earwig? (seriously) sings strange Lydia Lunch-style incantations while the experimental psychedelia of the seamlessly-segued set captures the essence of Sonic Youth when they really

were exploring uncharted territory.

The world is full of love songs but Cardiff's Future Of The Left provide an antidote to all that. Formed by erstwhile McLusky guitarist Andrew Falkous and drummer Jack Egglestone, along with former-Jarcrew bassist Kelson Mathias, they continue those bands' journeys through spasticated Chicago-style hardcore, all sheet metal guitars and dispassionate vocal snarls, injecting a bastardised form of rockabilly, that wouldn't feel amiss on one of The Fall's more spiteful excursions, into the mix. But it's the lyrics that really make Future Of The Left – caustic, bordering on all-out misanthropy, but infused with genuine wit. That humour carries on into the between-song banter, Falkous and Mathias displaying obvious chemistry as they take the piss out of local restaurants, before launching into another two-minute staccato punk lurch. Doubtless Future Of The Left will continue to kick against the pricks from music's margins without ever getting the acclaim they deserve, but even so far from the bright lights, they bring welcome bile-fuelled balance to the world.

Dale Kattack

DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN / VON BRAUN / OWEN TROMANS / MUMFORD AND SONS

The Jericho Tavern

So many bands, so little time, so apologies for skipping the pleasantries and jumping straight in. Mumford and Sons: as I endeavour to get over the fact that the singer, Marcus Mumford, is the spitting image of a young Stephen Fry, they move effortlessly through their folksy, bluegrass set, sprinkled with r'n'b hues. Melodic tunes layered with effortless harmonies are background to Marcus's whisky-sodden voice that leans far into Damien Rice territory, but thankfully hints of Scott Matthews, Ray LaMontagne and even, dare I say, Joe Cocker, keep it and the whole thing on edge. A band I'm sure we'll see more of.

Owen Tromans' lackadaisical style of delivery and performance seems often out of kilter with the music which punches with attitude and catchiness. His voice is pleasant enough but perhaps would be better suited to simpler, quieter stuff. The Cars, Interpol and even a bit of The Jam can be heard as influences here. His knack for a catchy tune reminds me of Brendan Benson, but his listless voice lets the side down.

A real highlight tonight is Von Braun. Two

guitarists and a drummer but no bass, which is occasionally missed. Obvious comparisons here would be Pixies and Radiohead, but Von Braun really are unique. Confident with experimentation, they take the listener on a ride. With so few instruments the sound is amazingly awash with light and shade; Dave and Adam share the singing and their contrasting and out-of-sync harmonies add to a general sense of melodious foreboding. Considering they're so young I can't help but think they're well on their way to something big.

And finally, Dial F For Frankenstein: an 'alternative indie rock band with pop overtones'. Or so that is how they describe themselves; certainly they seem to tick all the right boxes. Clever riffs, angst-driven, loud, attitude, lots of jumping round, it's oh-so-shit-to-be-17 etc etc. By the third song in we've got some interesting chord changes and unusual rhythm patterns, but it does seem that for the most part DFFF are indeed just ticking the boxes. Given their youth, some fine tuning and perhaps some standout songs I reckon there's potential here yet.

Katy Jerome

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

TIES YOUR SHOES TO YOUR KNEES AND PRETEND YOU'RE SMALL LIKE US

And thus, with half the word count used up on the band name alone, we endeavour to unravel a genuine enigma of a demo. This here is yer proper journey into sound, from the opening babbling clamour of a repeatedly overlapped German accented voice chanting the band's name over and over again, through eerie electronic atmospherics, an ad hoc mess of found sounds, disembodied voices, flutes, ukuleles (or possibly bouzoukis), typewriters, elastic bands and even the odd interjection of an acoustic guitar for some incongruous normality on the CD's stand-out track, coming on like an out-take from the *Wicker Man* soundtrack. On the surface, all of this is a random, reviewer-taunting piss-take. But, keep listening (and believe us, you will keep listening) and it all sort of comes together, albeit in a maddeningly haphazard fashion. From wobbling, churning industrial grind to Balkan wedding music, pretty much everything is here if you listen out for it, but rather than a thrown-together lesson in smart-arsedness, it's a complex, delicately-textured gem that'll have you simultaneously infuriated, thrilled, amused, bored and beguiled.

DAN SANDMAN

Inspired to play his guitar and sing by Bert Jansch and Nick Drake, Dan Sandman has vague echoes of both on these two songs, both in Drake's melancholic lyricism (he even puts his hand up to personal angst in his accompanying letter, so we'll not crucify him completely for it) and the inventive fretplay apparent on 'Acoustic (I Love It)'. Problem is, one bloke and his acoustic guitar always has to work that much harder than, say, a bunch of blokes with a room full of hellbaster effects pedals and the world's craziest drummer to sound effective and Dan does tend to drone on a bit when he's coming on all reflective, as on the laboured if genial 'She Swam, She Swan & She Swam', while the self-consciously

clever 'Acoustic' is simply annoying in the extreme – a kind of history of the guitar tale, from Chuck Berry through Hendrix that comes with the refrain, "But I want acoustic / I must be getting on". If Jeffrey Lewis can write a cool, witty song about the history of Chinese communism, surely it can't be difficult to inject a little more humour here. Ah well, we've always preferred the sound of guitars with a flange pedal whacked up full, or shredded to smithereens, so what do we know?

FRANCIS PEW & THE WHISKY SINGERS

Now this is what it should all be about. Francis Pew & The Whisky Singers were formed, ten months ago, with the single purpose of singing about and drinking whisky. Which should be a compulsory module at the Brits School. Anyway, they list amongst their influences, Laphroaig, Talisker and Bruichladdish (what, no Tullibardine or Mannochmore? Amateurs!) and have the sort of lachrymose feel about them that you'd expect from men who've spent too many hours in malt-soaked self contemplation, plus the slightly slurred and ramshackle approach to music that late-night barfly musicians should be proud of and which seems to add to the whole project. Exuding a downbeat campfire country-blues haze, employing pedal steel and harmonica alongside acoustic guitars, and no less than four vocalists, it's a warm, inclusive collection of songs with titles like 'Blood Pete, The Ballad Of A Whisky Drinking Fighting Cock'. In fact we can see the appeal of a monthly theme night at a suitably snug local bar, maybe the Half Moon, with Francis Pew in residency and only single malts on tap. Yes, we can picture that a little too vividly at the moment. Mmmm... whisky....

KELLY FRENCH

And at the opposite end of the blues scale here's a young woman who's been tutored at the Brits School. Which is obviously where they send talented youngsters to make sure any rough edges are polished down and made into easily-digested 'product' for consumers who don't want to have to go through the effort of being challenged in any way, shape or form by the music they're listening to. Kelly here is obviously possessed of a great soulful blues voice, somewhere between Beverley Knight and Corinne Bailey-Rae, but there's something

horribly sterile about the finished product, four tracks that touch on old-fashioned swing and discreet funk but mostly sink into sappy balladry full of vacuous, clichéd emoting and Kelly practising her scales over slick, inoffensive piano back-up. If anyone can tell us the difference between this and several thousand other generic so-called soul CDs from the past decade or so we'll give them a shiny gold coin and a bottle of that whisky we were talking about. Meanwhile, we'll do our very best to avoid writing a dissertation about the inherent evils of the Brits School and its creeping omnipresence in the UK music scene.

ASHER DUST

It wouldn't be too much of an exaggeration to say that Asher Dust (aka AJ) has more musical ideas running around in his head than the rest of the acts reviewed here put together, but maybe what he is lacking is a cohesive framework for his invention. Here he is back again after a double dose of demo fun a couple of months ago and it's such a mixed bag of noise that it's hard to know where to start. Opening track, 'Starts With An S', is a jaunty skank with a great chorus hookline, "It begins with an s and rhymes with hit / And believe me mate, you're full of it", all carried aloft by a jolly trumpet lead. 'Tik Tok Shock' is a complete left turn, churning guitar noise and squelching synths contributing to an almost dubby grunge mess that manages to rise above its random arrangement. From there into pulsing, clattering electro with 'FU&YRBF2', which darts off in myriad different directions, AJ's vocal lead neither rap nor song, nor even narrative, rather a blunt, bullish, stream-of-thought commentary. It's a demo that requires repeated listening, and rewards you for it, and one day we reckon AJ will create a proper masterpiece. For now, we'll keep trying to figure out how all this fits together.

LEE CHRISTIAN

And here's another inventive local maverick perhaps in need of some focus. Theatrically aggressive as frontman of gutter-rockers Smilex and sleazily camp as the voice of electro-funk duo Boywithatoy, here Lee takes time out to make a (presumably) home-recorded solo demo and the result is uneven, boasting a few decent ideas but too muddled and muffled in its execution to leave any great impression. The clattering rhythms and splashes of electronic noise and guitar fuzz on 'Adaptation' are a propulsive vehicle for Lee's sneery vocals but all a bit of a mush and it starts sounding a bit like a lo-fi attempt at the darker side of emo. More effective is the restless electro ambience of 'Vampire Song', which seems to lean heavily towards Radiohead's most recent excursions, or alternatively, Nine Inch Nails go to Toytown, while 'T.W.A.T' has

an almost Numan-esque feeling of mumbling claustrophobia about it.

CRACKY D

We're guessing Cracky D is the moniker of the person behind this, such is the chaotic scrawl that passes for writing on the CD. Someone called D Smith might also be involved, or perhaps it's by a bloke called Cet Me Flow ect. Cue alarmed tabloid headline about Britain's failing schools. It's all the fault of rap music anyway, as any Daily Mail reader knows, and, as chance would have it, this here is rap music. Well, nominally at least. Actually it sounds more like a very, very drunk person attempting to explain to an indulgent police officer who's just discovered him slumped on a park bench, where he may or may not have lived and what he used to do for a job years before all powers of cohesive speech were robbed from him by the demon drink. When you can tell what is meant to be going on it's more like someone explaining in a dreary monotone what they did with their girlfriend at the weekend, in between toking on a large spliff and threatening to fall asleep at any moment as the flotation tank musak that passes for a backing track drifts randomly in the middle distance. By the third and final track Cracky has woken up enough to actually sound like he's rapping, but by then the idea that hip hop is destroying kids' minds nation-wide is starting to have credence.

THE DEMO DUMPER

GLITTERSKIN

Rock music so predictable that scientists are planning on using it to set specialist nuclear clocks. Initially Glitterskin are epic in a nominally Muse-like way, a painfully intense singer with an apparent inability to use any consonants shrieks and whinnies over chugging, formulaic stadium prog-pop bluster, that makes way, with crushing inevitability, for a heroic guitar solo which holds all the style and elan of a fat truck driver wanking in front of a mirror. Soon afterwards he falls flat on his face in a puddle of stinking emo leftovers, abandoned even by Victory Records' talent-spotting department for lacking something in the originality stakes. And from there it's only a short stumble into spandex-clad 1980s soft-metal and death at the fingertips of a thousand pointing and laughing skate kids. Honestly, this CD should have come in a vacuum-sealed sachet with a cautionary list of ingredients: Cliché (min 75%); stodge; cheese; gristle; xanthum gum. Guaranteed 100% fun free! Eat up!

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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