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# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month.  
Issue 169  
August  
2009

Love Music, Hate Stupidity

# MR SHAODOWN

The kung-fu rapper talks grime, idiocy and the DIY work ethic - *inside*

photo: Louis Taylor

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# NEWS

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**THE NIGHTSHIFT ONLINE FORUM** now features an interactive local music directory. The directory features contact details for local bands, studios, promoters, web designers, van hire, magazines, record labels and more. Anyone interested can register their

details for free. Visit [nightshift.oxfordmusic.net](http://nightshift.oxfordmusic.net).

**THE UNSIGNED GUIDE** launches its new website this month, offering a guide to unsigned bands, blogs and discount vouchers for various musical services. Visit

[www.theunsignedguide.com](http://www.theunsignedguide.com)

**FAT LIL'S** in Witney hosts an all-day free mini-festival on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August. Lil-Lapolooza will feature an assortment of local indie and metal bands from 1pm onwards. Visit [www.fatlils.co.uk](http://www.fatlils.co.uk) for line-up details.

**TRUCK** will follow up July's festival with a special one-day celebration of the local music scene on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October. OX4 will feature gigs and music workshops at various venues along Cowley Road, as well as film, poetry, art and theatre events. More details in

next month's issue.

**AS EVER**, don't forget to tune into BBC Oxford Introducing every Saturday evening between 6-7pm. The dedicated local music show features the best new local releases, interviews, demos and gig guide. The show is available to listen to online all week at [bbc.co.uk/oxford](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

**A REMINDER** to all venues, clubs etc. about the Academy's alternative freshers fair which takes place on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Anyone interested in taking part should contact Lauren at the venue at [lauren@o2academy.co.uk](mailto:lauren@o2academy.co.uk)

## RICHARD HAINES 1963-2009

**LOCAL MUSICIANS** have been paying tribute to **RICHARD HAINES**, who passed away on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July, after battling with cancer. He was 45.

Rich ran Dungeon Recording Studios for almost 30 years, in that time producing pretty much every band worth its salt in Oxfordshire, including early sessions by Radiohead and Supergrass.

Rich started his own studio at the age of 17 and made producing music his life's work. Over the nearly three decades that he ran Dungeon Studios, for the most part from a barn studio near Ascott in north Oxfordshire, and later at the Coldrooms in Cumnor, he produced and engineered a series of bands that reads like an A-Z of Oxford music from the 1980s onwards, and earned a reputation for getting the best from every act, whatever their ability. Rich was also renowned for his rich, dry sense of humour which he regularly used to coax the best out of musicians.

Rich was himself a highly talented musician. In the 1980s he played guitar in Freezing In Cannes who appeared on the 1988 scene-defining 'Jericho Collection', as well as touring across Europe. A decade later he formed Nightshift favourites Soma with singer Laura Kramer. Most recently Rich formed a new band, Martha's Ghost, with friends Bob Prowse, Richard Willoughby and Emily Holt.

It is for his work at Dungeon Studios that Rich will always be remembered. Richard Ramage, singer with The Relationships, recorded at Dungeon regularly over the past 20 years, and remembered the man with particular fondness: "Recording with Rich was a creative rollercoaster ride, while he remained at all times a man of infinite patience, great good humour, talent and imagination. The Relationships' third album was recorded with Rich at Cumnor. We called it 'Space', which seems appropriate because Rich always gave you lots – both in terms of that lovely 3-D quality to his mixes, and in the way he coaxed



the best performance out of you when your fingers had turned to sausages on the fretboard with studio nerves. 'Which song are you playing again?' would come dryly in the headphones from the control room, and after a burst of tension-busting laughter, you'd find you'd nailed the take after all. Rich's studio always felt like home, in the best possible way... but also like a musical adventure, funfair and comedy theatre, all at the same time. I'll miss the crosswords, the creativity, the enthusiasm, the laughs, the friendship. I feel privileged to have known him, and have such great recordings to remember him by."

Les Clochards, whose members also worked with Rich many times over the years added their tribute: "While Rich was a hugely talented and diligent recording engineer, he was so much more too. He was a gifted guitarist and musician who cared passionately about the music produced in his studio, coaxing, teasing and sometimes even bullying a great performance into being – his musician's sensibility gave him insight into what was possible and drove him to get the best out of every take. He was also possessed of a wicked sense of humour: a master of the gently withering putdown when a take wasn't up to scratch (and Lord knows he must have had some practice!), he was visibly thrilled when an artist produced the goods. When we heard 'that's the puppy!' we knew we'd nailed it – there could be no better feeling."

Mark Crozer from International Jetsetters summed up many people's feelings for Rich when he said, "Rich was a true gentleman. One of the loveliest blokes I've ever worked with. No, I'll even say he was *the* loveliest bloke I've ever worked with."

Former Jericho Tavern and Point promoter and ATL? frontman Mac added, "Richie was a lovely guy and a top engineer. I worked with him many times and have nothing but fantastic memories of every session. His easy style and acerbic wit never failed to get the best out of the musicians, and

he'll leave a gaping hole that'll be tricky to fill."

Witches guitarist Martin Newton also recorded with Rich many times over the years in different bands and said of the man, "I honestly believe with all the bands Rich recorded during his time who went on to bigger and better things that the Oxford Music scene would be a very different place if he had not been involved - and will be a very different place without him."

Rich's best friend of 20 years and manager of Freezing In Cannes, Jonny Bell, added, "Richie was an inspiration, musically, to many, even to a non-musician like me. We would talk for hours at Dungeon about the benefits of analogue recording – which we championed – over digital. His 'ear' was his best attribute, but people didn't realise what a fine guitarist he was and his dry wit was legendary. We would have each other in tears, especially with musician gags, which being one meant he could laugh at himself too. A very self-deprecating and humble man. I miss him terribly and always will."

Rich would have been too modest to admit it, in fact he would doubtless have laughed at the very idea, but he was a genuine Oxford music legend and he will be sorely missed by everyone who knew or worked with him. Nightshift's thoughts go out to Rich's wife, Sue and all his many friends.

a quiet word with

# MR SHAO DOW

*"YEP, I GOT A 2:1 LAW DEGREE, but I'd rather be a poor musician. Fantastic!"*

## LOCAL RAPSTAR MR

ShaoDow is mapping out his future. And despite the seemingly difficult choice before him, he's apparently set on the more difficult, but ultimately more spiritually rewarding path. Elliot Haslam QC? Or Mr ShaoDow MC?

Still, we'd expect nothing else from a man who as a 16 year old, saved every penny from his job in a call centre to travel to the middle of nowhere in China and learn kung fu from Buddhist monks, earning himself a good beating if he was ever late for breakfast.

## TWO YEARS AGO WE

featured Mr ShaoDow on the cover of *Nightshift*. Then he was 20 years old, still studying law at Oxford University and had made an instant impact on the local scene with his brilliant, witty 'Look Out, There's A Black Man Coming', a sly sideswipe at casual racism (so sly in fact that hip hop channel Channel U banned it for being racist!).

Since then ShaoDow – Elliott to his mum and hopefully his lecturers – has earned himself a decent reputation as a rapper well beyond Oxford by busking and selling his CDs on the streets of London, Birmingham and wherever else the train takes him, while collaborating with local bands like Smilex and Baby Gravy, as well as managing to finish his degree. Oh, and designing a range of clothing to tie in with his music.

## LAST YEAR SHAODOW

released a single, 'Grime', that satirised say-nothing grime MCs with the same elan he'd swatted racists before. And this month he puts out a new mix tape of his rapping, plus a new single, 'R U Stoopid!?!', a genially abrasive commentary on, well, stupidity.

"It's a song about stoopid people for stoopid people by stoopid people. It's mainly about people who don't think before they act. I have seen some intelligent people who really should know better doing some incredibly dumb things and that is when I was forced to ask, 'R U Stoopid!?!'" 'Grime' saw ShaoDow collaborating with local producer Offkey, who took

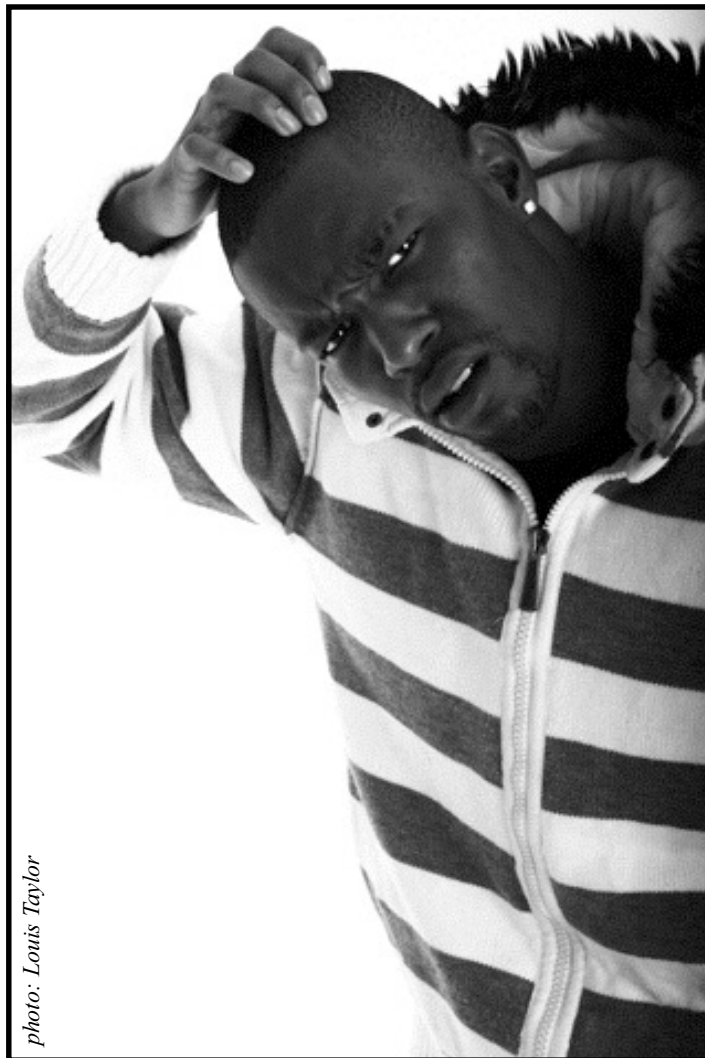


photo: Louis Taylor

the beats and backing to a new level, away from the minimalist rhythms of ShaoDow's earliest performances, adding a harder-hitting instrumental side to his lyrically-sharp, machine-gun delivery.

As with 'Look Out, There's A Black Man Coming' and 'Grime' before it, 'R U Stoopid!?!' retains a playful edge and an easy pop hook. ShaoDow raps with the crisp clarity of classic homegrown rappers, but augmented by the more modern trappings of grime and electro.

## 'GRIME', DWELLED ON

ShaoDow's frustrations with the genre, although the influence of the style is there in his music. What were the issues he was trying to deal with; where can grime go from here?

"Satire and irony are two of my closest friends when it comes to my lyrics; unfortunately some people tend to miss that. With 'Grime' I was

trying to highlight the negative aspects of a genre that I think has a lot of potential.

"I listened to a lot of bad grime and then made my own representation in the hope that it would inspire people to put more effort into their music. A lot of people understood what I was doing; unfortunately some people missed the point and assumed I had just made a bad grime song. I should note those are the same people who ask me why my rap name is MC Wasteman..."

The character MC Wasteman is, in ShaoDow's lyrical universe, 'the worst grime MC in the world'.

"Wasteman will be making a reappearance during the 'R U Stoopid!?!' campaign. A lot of people enjoy his antics so I've been trying to arrange a meeting with him to talk about starting his own mini series. Unfortunately he's such a wasteman he keeps forgetting to turn up."

## SHAODOW'S MUSIC HAS

changed a lot since 'Look Out, There's A Black Man Coming'; the beats in particular have become more accomplished. How did he team up with Offkey and how do the pair work together?

"It was always a natural progression that I had planned for my music. I aim to make commercial sounding music that can compete with the majors but with more intelligent lyrics. I love some of mainstream stuff that's coming out but the lyrics and concepts make me want to rip the little hair I have out of my head.

"I met Offkey randomly at university. A friend had mentioned him to me before but we didn't end up meeting until a year later. When we met I was working on the second verse for 'The British Are Coming'. Offkey spent the evening building a beat which six months later became the instrumental for the song.

"For me Offkey does with production what I am trying to do with my lyrics: the versatility he brings with each different song allows me to work on different genres and test my skills while forcing me to constantly improve myself. We don't work with each other exclusively; we're both independent artists in our own right. I see it as a Timberlake/Timberland relationship. Although if anybody asks, I'm Timberland!"

You've just released 'That's Mr ShaoDow To You' as a mix tape.

"The truth is I was bored of 'The ShaoDow Saga'. Don't get me wrong, it's a good CD, but I felt that it no longer represented my ability. So I worked on a new mixtape. I'm reluctant to call it an album as I have big plans for my first album. But that'll also require big money.

"Right now I travel around the country and sell my CDs to open-minded people; it's going really well so far. I'm meeting a lot of interesting people and it's doing a lot to raise my profile. I'm very proud of the mixtape; I've tried a few new things on it and the new versions have a few extra secrets if you insert it into your computer."

## WHEN WE LAST SPOKE TO

ShaoDow, he had just had the video to 'Look Out...' banned from the Channel U hip hop station, who, ironically, deemed it racially offensive. Since that difficult start,



he's started to earn himself airplay, including an interview on Tim Westwood's Radio 1 show, while Channel U have also come round to his music. What's it like for an unsigned rapper to get noticed?

"It's not easy at all but God made me relentless; if you can help me get further and I manage to get hold of your name and your number, you are in trouble! Seriously though, when I think of what I've managed to achieve in two years I'm very happy, but then I think about what else needs to be done for the week and I start crying.

"As an unsigned unmanaged artist getting onto Tim Westwood's show was a dream come true but afterwards I was slightly lost. I'm the type of person that needs a direction and purpose, otherwise I'm just raw, unconfined energy. Getting on Westwood was such a big thing for me that after I had done it I was like, 'what next?'"

Back then there was also a feeling that it was difficult for UK rappers to celebrate their own culture, that you had to be American. Does that situation still exist, or have things improved?

"I've got to say I'm so proud to see some UK 'urban' – I hate that term – artists achieving number one records. It's very encouraging, I think that the situation still exists: luckily, otherwise 'The British Are Coming', wouldn't be relevant anymore.

"I think now there has been a culture shift; there's a lot more people enjoying UK music. The only trouble is that artists are still following trends and copying whatever is popular at the moment. It does get annoying but I'm just keeping my head down and churning out quality until everybody knows who I am."

Last time we interviewed ShaoDow he talked about collaborating with other artists from different genres. Since then he's worked with Smilex, on a rock remix single of 'Look Out...' and with Baby Gravy on their furious electro-rap skank live favourite, 'Don't Touch Me'. How has that been?

"Fantastic on both accounts; the bands have very different styles, characters and ways of working but they are both incredibly talented and it has been an honour being valued enough that they would want to work with me. I'm always up for collaborating with anybody who is serious with their music, I have worked a lot with Asher Dust as well, who is incredibly talented. I prefer to work with bands and singers over rappers. One thing I would like a bit more is to work with some more female singers. I'm just looking to make bigger and better music."

**SHADOW FIRST MET SMILEX** due to his involvement in the local

Love Music, Hate Racism campaign, in which he has become active; what have been his experiences of the campaign and how important does he feel the organisation is, particularly with respect to the current social and political situation?

"Well, I love music and I hate racism so already they're speaking my language! They are fantastic. I rarely have a lot of money to donate to causes but I'm always up for donating what little talent I have been blessed with.

"The Oxford branch of LMHR have been incredibly supportive. We made a music video for the Mr ShaoDow/Smilex collaboration. That's up on YouTube at the moment; I'm also looking to get it on some TV channels. I'm hoping it'll help raise awareness for the release on iTunes, as we donate a percentage of the profits to LMHR."

**BORN AND RAISED IN LONDON,** ShaoDow has lived in Oxford for three years now as a student. How does he feel the city has taken to him and his music since he's been here? Does he think he'll stick around here or is still a London boy at heart?

"Oxford is officially the birth place of my music and my style so that's the place I represent, regardless of where I am. With so many rappers from London I always have a silent chuckle when I tell people I'm a rapper from Oxford; it raises some eyebrows. People in Oxford seem to be very open-minded. I always enjoy selling CDs here plus it's a bit of a thrill when people recognise my black face.

"So yeah, all in all I'm very happy I came here. I'm a nomad at heart, from when I picked up and moved to China for a bit, I know I can settle most places quite comfortably.

Oxford has some incredibly talented people though, not just artists, it's a great place to build a name."

Is there a place where Elliott Haslam ends and Mr ShaoDow begins?

"Erm, these days I have no clue. I work on my music so much these days my idea of relaxing is when I'm printing up new CDs. I try to keep the two entities separate, just have some non-music time as Elliott, but what with everything to do I find myself up at all hours working on projects, making plans and most importantly enjoying it.

"So right now I'd say I'm more ShaoDow than Elliott but that's understandable, I have a world to conquer!"

**'R U Stoopid!?!' and 'That's Mr ShaoDow' are both out now. Visit [www.myspace.com/mrshadow](http://www.myspace.com/mrshadow) to hear tracks and download an instrumental version of 'R U Stoopid!?!' for your own MC or remix.**



## August

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29<sup>th</sup> **SELECTA** – Drum'n'bass with **ORIGINAL SIN / CABBIE. 9-3am. £6 before 11pm**

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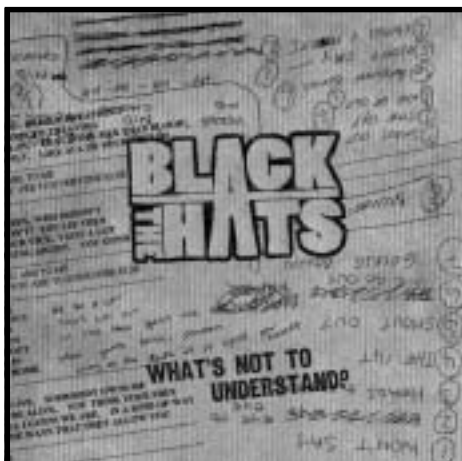
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## THE BLACK HATS

### 'What's Not To Understand?'

*(In The Pocket)*

When Morrissey penned 'Sweet And Tender Hooligan' he wasn't thinking about The Black Hats but it's a term that feels wholly appropriate to the band listening to this debut album. A classic power trio who have been earning themselves a decent reputation on the local gig scene over the past couple of years, The Black Hats, like The Who, The Faces and The Jam before them, come across as slightly yobbish artisans, one moment swaggering with bullish confidence and gruffly describing city streets at night time, the next indulging in sweet-natured vocal harmonies. Those three bands similarly provide three corners of The Black Hats' musical inspiration, the final quarter



filled by our own Young Knives, whose spiked post-punk attack adds an edge to Black Hats' strongest songs.

'We Go Out' is all muscle and prickly attitude, while 'Broken Bones' is brash and aggressive, in

the spirit of The Jam's 'In The City'; on the flipside, 'Callow Man' sees the band's sweeter, more playful side taking over, even as it comes armed with that serrated Young Knives edge and a blatant Sex Pistols steal in the middle-eight.

What can let 'What's Not To Understand?' down is that, for all its high energy levels and admirable brevity, there's precious little variety, token slowie 'Shout Out' an overwrought sub-Manics trawl that only proves the band do loud and fast so much better. And while the band are uncomplicated, unpretentious fun on stage, such lack of artifice on CD means much of the album blurs into noisy bluster.

Saying that, in songs like 'Made Of Paper', The Black Hats show an ability to craft genuine anthem material where their yobbish tendencies meld best with their undying pop sensibilities. Get the album by all means, but use it to learn the words so you can belt them out in time with the band in their natural, live, environment.

**Dale Kattack**

## THE EVENINGS

### 'Open Letters'

*(iTunes)*

Bands come and go, often signing off with little fanfare, so it's gratifying to know that one of Nightshift's perennial favourites are still very much alive after something of a hiatus. In the interim they've stripped down to a three-piece centred around drummer and singer Mark Wilden.

As The Evenings morph and mature, so their sound shifts, and it's good to have a band around who don't always deliver what's expected of them. Previously their stock-in-trade has been quirky, experimental electronica or groove-heavy krautrock. This new EP shifts the sands again, firstly into almost folk territory and then glammed-up synth-pop.

'Music That Doesn't Remind Me Of Her' is what great lost English folk-punks Blyth Power might have sounded like had they survived long enough to discover glitchy laptop electro-pop, Mark offering an unexpectedly melancholy vocal lead about wishing he could listen to music without it reminding him of his ex. Hardly world-changingly original sentiments – distinct echoes of Womack and Womack – but here done with an unsentimental sweetness over a gentle shanty.

'Maybe It's Too Late' is what The Human League might have sounded like if they'd tried to go gospel, all chitter chatter synths and oddly restrained soulful vocals. Hell, scrap that. Remember Queen always used to put "No synthesisers were used on this album" on their record sleeves? Well this is what they might have sounded like if they'd done a ballads

album using only synthesisers. Sort of. An impression confirmed by the sprawling, epically ambient EP closer 'I Take Myself Too Seriously'.

Funny old band, The Evenings; we'll listen back to this in a week's time and come up with completely different impressions. And that's a rare thing. Glad they're back in action.

**Dale Kattack**

## JONATHAN SEET

### 'Thanks To Science We've Got Love'

*(Mazurka)*

In last month's feature on the Joe Allen Band we marvelled at how Oxford was gradually attracting more musicians from other towns, hoping to make their reputations here. And here's Jonathan Seet, who's moved here from Toronto. Already established in his homeland with a string of releases under his belt, 'Thanks To Science...' is his third album, one that betrays not an ounce of his Canadian roots, steeped as it is in a thoroughly English form of pop, possessed of a genteel nature that finds its roots in Paul McCartney's post-Beatles *oeuvre*.

For an album whose lyrics reference lesbianism, hardcore porn, Rohypnol and drunkenness, there's nothing wild or depraved to be heard. Instead Jonathan croons, mostly soulfully, over well-orchestrated but ultimately overly-smooth Radio 2-friendly pop that too often sounds purposely designed to sneak into the more emotional scenes of some family drama or other.

Album opener 'A Million Hungry Eyes' is plaintively epic and not a million miles away from Elbow, while 'Just Try' floats along genially, high-quality production substituting for genuine character, while 'Killing All My Friends' showcases Seet's rich, mellow voice but falls into soft'n'sensitive pop slop territory all too easily, even as it strives for a heroic finish.

All is not lost though, as the more rhythmic 'Fashion Tips For The Homeless' demonstrates – a far neater take on his observational style, with imaginative layering of guitars beneath the dominant drums. Similarly, closing track 'The End Of The Tape' finds the polished sheen blistering as Jonathan adopts a more ghostly vocal presence while machine beats combine with angry, storm-brewing guitars for a song that, almost an hour into the album, makes you sit up and wonder what he's really capable of.

Elsewhere the spirit of Macca looms large, at its most mawkish on 'My Wasted Youth' and oddly coupled with Radiohead's electronic ambience on 'Watching You Sleep'. All of which is forgivable enough but for the album's overlong presence. Ever since CDs became the dominant format, artists seem intent on filling every minute of their capacity in a misguided attempt to provide value for money, when most of the greatest albums of all time benefited from their vinyl-restricted brevity. No wonder people increasingly prefer to download individual tracks.

Anyway, 'Thanks To Science...' is an album mostly content to cruise along the middle of the road, but Seet has both musical and vocal talent in abundance, and given his obvious ability to stray into more adventurous terrain, it'll be interesting to hear how his relocation to Oxford shifts his horizons.

**Dale Kattack**

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# The Wheatsheaf

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- Fri 7<sup>th</sup> **INVISIBLE VEGAS + THE ELERICS** 8pm/£5
- Sat 8<sup>th</sup> **HEARTS IN PENCIL + SECRET RIVALS** 8pm/£5
- Tue 11<sup>th</sup> **TALONS + ON HISTORIES OF ROSENBERG** 8pm/£5
- Fri 14<sup>th</sup> **GEORGE HARRISON TRIBUTE**  
Featuring 'Piggies' (Members of Nought/Smilex/Bethany Weimers) 8pm/£5
- Sat 15<sup>th</sup> **MONSTER KILLED BY LASER + THAT FUCKING TANK**  
**CELEBRITY LOVE CRISIS + BALLS DEEP** 8pm/£5
- Wed 19<sup>th</sup> **DRUMEYES + KEYBOARD CHOIR + HREDA** 8pm/£5
- Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> **ALPHABET BACKWARDS + NINE STONE COWBOY**  
**MINOR COLES + JOE ALLEN BAND** 8pm/£5
- Wed 25<sup>th</sup> **WISE CHILDREN + ANNA LOG**  
**THE BUMBLEBEES** 8pm/£3
- Sat 29<sup>th</sup> **THIN GREEN CANDLES + FLASH BANG BAND**  
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# GIG GUIDE

## SATURDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**CHARLIESTOCK: The Black Horse, Kidlington (Midday)** – A whole day of live music across two stages at the Black Horse, all in aid of

*Monday 10<sup>th</sup>*

## **STEAMROLLER: The Bullingdon**

It seems there isn't a band on the planet that hasn't reformed for at least a few gigs over the past few years, with even the death of the main players seemingly not a barrier, if The Doors were anything to go by. Perhaps we'll still get that long-awaited Jimi Hendrix Experience reunion some day soon. It's even happening in Oxford, where local 70s rock heroes Steamroller have reconvened after a thirty-year hiatus. Hendrix was their chief inspiration way back in 1970, along with Cream, with guitarist Robert Wakeley renowned for his fiery blues-rock style of play. Along with bassist Roger Warner and drummer Larry Reddington, the trio got together in the now legendary confines of the Oranges and Lemons pub in St Clement's and became big favourites on the local pub and college circuit before heading off on UK tours. They split in 1978 and in the intervening years have collectively survived a stroke, prostate cancer and chronic alcoholism, but decided to do it all again after meeting at the Jack Russell's weekly blues jam nights. Tonight the Famous Monday Blues club hosts their reawakened talents. With musical histories going back to the late-50s and time spent touring with the likes of Dusty Springfield (Roger) and being produced by Joe Meek (Robert), Steamroller are a little bit of Oxford history come back to life.



## AUGUST

the Children In Touch charity. After last night's opening session, the mini-festival continues today with sets from The Elrics, Night Portraits, Beaver Fuel, Vixens, Riot House, Fajita Eaters, Ute, Mollie Hodge and more.

**ARCANE FESTIVAL: Horsenden Meadow, Tetworth** – The West Oxfordshire mini-festival returns for its third year, featuring live music from A Silent Film, Guggenheim, The Joe Allen Band, Tristan & The Troubadours, Reload The Radio, Borderville, Anton Barbeau, Ivy's Itch, The New Moon, Horns of Plenty and more across two stages, plus hardhouse in the Square One dance tent, dubstep, breaks and drum&bass from Pure Alchemy and trance from Lucid.

**FUSED: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Covers of Radiohead, Kings of Leon etc.

**TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy** – Weekly three-clubs-in-one night with indie and electronica at Transformation; glam, trash and 80s sounds at Trashy, plus hardcore, metal and alt.rock at Room 101.

**REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern** – Reggae, dub, dancehall and ska every Saturday with DJs Zappa and Selectah Spanners.

## SUNDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**CHARLIESTOCK: The Black Horse, Kidlington (Midday)** – Another full day of music with two stages featuring sets from The Frigging Beatles, Todd, The Roundheels, God Of Small Things, Thin Green Candles and more.

## MONDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**THE ADAM BOMB BAND + RESERVOIR CATS: The Bullingdon** – Swift return to the Famous Monday Blues for Adam Bomb, the big-haired LA glam-metal guitarist, still out on a mammoth European tour, and whose past experiences include auditioning for Kiss when he was 18, sharing an apartment with Izzy Stradlin, jamming with Eddie Van Halen and, along the way, supporting the likes of Chuck Berry and Johnny Thunders. Stylistically he's a heavy rock guitar hero of the old school, with nods to Hanoi Rocks and Sweet along the way. Local heavyweight blues-rockers Reservoir Dogs support, doubtless seeing whether they can crank their amps up even louder than Mr Bomb.

## TUESDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Smooth, sultry jazz with Canadian singer and composer Katya Gorrie at the Bully's free weekly live jazz club.  
**TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER + HUMPHREY + AIDEN CANADAY: Café Tarifa** – Free acoustic session with local songstress Tamara and more.

## WEDNESDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS + ALPHABET BACKWARDS + THE GULLIVERS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Great triple bill of local bands with expansive indie pop from Tristan & The Troubadours, party-friendly electro-folk pop from Alphabet Backwards and ethereal gothic rocking from The Gullivers.

## THURSDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**NATALIE IMBRUGLIA: O2 Academy** – Low-key show for the multi-million-selling former Neighbours star, best known for her international hit 'Torn'. The Aussie songstress gears up to release her fourth album, 'Come To Life', which features songs written for her by Chris Martin, the follow-up to her last CD, the number 1 hit 'Counting Down the Days'.

**MOTOR CITY SHUFFLE + VULTURES + DIRTY MONEY: The Cellar** – Local indie rock triple bill at Big Hair.

**KENAI + THE ELIJAH + IMMERCIA + VISIONS FALL: Fat Lil's, Witney** – A night of metal with Essex' post-hardcore and electro-metallers Kenai, epic rockers The Elijah and local heavyweights Visions Fall.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**  
**ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston**

## FRIDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**GLINT + THE SHAKELLERS: O2 Academy** – Lush, orchestral New York City electro-rockers Glint attempt to find a middle ground between Muse and Kraftwerk.

**INVISIBLE VEGAS + THE ELRICS: The Wheatsheaf** – Rough'n'ready bluesy rocking in the vein of Free from Invisible Vegas, plus promising Smiths-y indie rocking from Elrics.

**HANNEYSTOCK: The Black Horse, East Hanney** – First evening of the free south Oxfordshire music festival, featuring sets from Drunkenstein, The Follys and Dirty Deeds. Continues through Saturday and Sunday. Proceeds from voluntary donations, merchandise sales etc will go to Cancer Research UK and Hanney pre-school. There's camping available – enquire at the pub.

**CHARLGROVE FESTIVAL: Chalgrove** – First night of the music festival with a headline set from soul tribute act The Motowners.

**THE BACKBEAT BEATLES: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Beatles tribute.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**  
**GET DOWN: The Brickworks**

## SATURDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**HANNEYSTOCK: The Black Horse, East Hanney (2pm)** – Full day of live music, with sets from Smilex, Mary's Garden, Slink, Lost Transmission, Mark Bosley, Lauren Dunnett, The Halcyons, The Roundheels, Twizz Twangle, BJB, Pint and a Half Of Blues, Laima Bite and more.



**CHARLGROVE FESTIVAL:** Chalgrove – Bon Jovi tribute band Bon Giovi headline.

**HEARTS IN PENCIL + SECRET RIVALS:** The Wheatsheaf – Spiky post-punk and Libertines-style rocking from Hearts In Pencil, plus electro-punk noise from Secret Rivals.

**GENERAL BOVINE & THE JUSTICE FORCE 5 + BEAT THE RED LIGHT + DR**

**SLAGGLEBERRY:** The Cellar – Glam-stomping blues-rock from the superhero-obsessed Brighton rockers General Bovine, plus local math-core instrumentalists Dr Slaggleberry.

*Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>*

## CROPREDY FESTIVAL: Cropredy

Fairport Convention's annual, erm, convention, once again turns a (very) quiet corner of north Oxfordshire into a giant folk and rock party. The event is now well into its fourth decade and while it still feels – quite pleasingly, it must be said – like The Festival That Time Forgot, there are, as ever, hints that the wider, more modern world does touch upon it. Fairport themselves play their traditional three-hour headlining set on Saturday night, joined by an extensive cast of friends and collaborators, the whole shebang ending with a celebratory sing-along of 'Meet On The Ledge'. Almost equally traditional is Richard Thompson's headline set on the Friday, the former-Fairport guitarist running through his extensive repertoire, hopefully this year including material from his recent 'Thousand Years Of Popular Music' tour. Thursday's opening night headline slot is taken by Steve Winwood who, with The Spencer Davis Group, Traffic and Blind Faith, has a musical history equal to anyone else on the festival bill. Just below Winwood on the bill is the weekend's surprise inclusion, The Buzzcocks, who should bring a little bit of punk rock shock and awe to proceedings. On Saturday Seth Lakeman offers a glimpse of English folk's young generation, while on the opposite end of the scale Ralph McTell brings his traditional folk tales to Sunday's line-up. Among the other acts playing are Nick Kershaw and Dreadzone as well as Cropredy stalwart Richard Digance and BBC Young Folk Award winners Megan and Joe Henwood. Meanwhile, Ade Edmondson comes close to resurrecting his Vivian character from The Young Ones with a folk take on classic punk tunes. The perfect English summer weekend.



**RIOT HOUSE + THE SILENCE + RUN WALK:** The Folly Bridge Inn – Classic heavy rocking from Riot House, inspired by Led Zep, AC/DC et al, plus grunge-pop from local newcomers The Silence and thrash-core from Winchester duo Run Walk.

**TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101:** O2 Academy

**PHISH:** The Bullingdon – 90s retro club night.  
**REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY:** James Street Tavern

### SUNDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**HANNEYSTOCK:** The Black Horse, East Hanney (2pm) – Final day of the charity festival, with a headline set from recent Punt stars The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, along with the Vics Of Twiddly, Out Of The Blue, What The Folk, Superloose, Ady Davey and more.

**CHARLGROVE FESTIVAL:** Chalgrove – Classic soul tribute from Kommitments rounding off the three-day music festival.

**THE JOE ALLEN BAND + AIRTIST:**

**Jacqueline du Pre Building** – Last month's Nightshift cover stars finally get to air their gorgeously emotive folk-pop in a suitably grand venue, mixing up taut Thom Yorke-style angst with a lively modern folk flourish. Support from fusion collective Airtist, utilising Jew's harp, didgeridoo and human beatbox.

### MONDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**STEAMROLLER:** The Bullingdon – Oxford's 1970s blues-rock heroes come out of retirement – *see main preview*

### TUESDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**TALONS + ON HISTORIES OF**

**ROSENBERG:** The Wheatsheaf – Vacuum Pop club night with Hereford's post-rock, math-rock and hardcore instrumentalists Talons, plus Brighton's indie noisemakers On Histories Of Rosenberg.

**JAZZ CLUB:** The Bullingdon – Tonight's guests are swing and mainstream jazz quintet Alvin Roy and Reeds Unlimited.

### WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**ACOUSTIC LOUNGE:** Fat Lil's, Witney – Open mic session; all welcome.

### THURSDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**JESSIE GRACE + SIKORSKI:** The

**Bullingdon** – Big Night Out presents another benefit gig for Children In Need, tonight featuring folksy rocker Jessie Grace, coming in somewhere between PJ Harvey, Judy Tzuke and KT Tunstall, plus heavyweight industrial electro noise from Banbury's excellent cyber-rockers Sikorski.

**WITCHES + MIMAS + SHAPES + UTE:** The Cellar – Gloriously chaotic, opulent gothic party pop from Witches, adding a fun mariachi twist to their abrasive and intense noise rock. Denmark's Mimas bring their epically morose rock along in support.

**REVOLVER:** Fat Lil's, Witney – Alt.rock club night.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** East Oxford Community Centre

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** The Half Moon

**ELECTRIC BLUES JAM:** The Jack Russell, Marston



*Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>*

## DINOSAUR Jr: O2 Academy

When J Mascis and Lou Barlow reunited in 2002 after years of antipathy, it was a genuine cause for celebration. And when the pair reconvened with drummer Murph to record 2005's 'Beyond' album, one of alternative rock's most iconic bands were well and truly back. Back in the late-1980s Dinosaur – later adding the Jr for legal reasons – helped formulate what was to become grunge, taking inspiration from hardcore bands like Black Flag and classic metal, particularly Black Sabbath. Along the way they were mentored by Sonic Youth and became a huge influence on Nirvana. They released the seminal 'You're Living All Over Me' and 'Bug' albums as well as the sublime 'Freak Scene' single before Mascis' control freakery split the band and he effectively ran Dinosaur Jr as a solo project throughout the 90s. Since the reformation the trio have curated All Tomorrow's Parties and now release a new album, 'Farm'. And despite the fact their sound is mellower than the distortion and feedback-drenched noise of their early recordings, they've started playing all the old classics again. Despite the noise, they were always a band very much in love with melody and Mascis' reedy, detached drawl lends itself to a more melodic form of rock, and to hear those old classics again played by the original trio, will be something very special indeed.



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*Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>*

## DRUM EYES / KEYBOARD CHOIR / HREDA:

### The Wheatsheaf

The build-up to this autumn's Audioscope starts here in characteristically uncompromising style. Drum Eyes is the band formed by and around DJ Scotch Egg, the now Brighton-based Japanese gabba producer and DJ, whose uncompromising musical war on the senses has won him praise from the likes of Lightning Bolt. Drum Eyes is a different beast, but no less confrontational – a sort of nebulous supergroup that takes in members of Trencher, I'm Being Good and Comanechi, as well as former members of Japanese noise-rock legends The Boredoms. Damo Suzuki has also joined, bringing his singular vision of *outré* rock to proceedings. Most recently the band have performed at Supersonic, where by many accounts, they stole the show, mixing up punk, psychedelia, electronica, post-rock and prog into a hypnotic tribal storm of noise. It's exactly the sort of act Audioscope are so good at bringing to town and in the suitably intimate confines of the Sheaf should be one of the gigs of the year. Local support comes from experimental ambient synth orchestra Keyboard Choir as well as intricately-textured math-rockers Hreda.

### FRIDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE HARRISON: The Wheatsheaf** – Quickfix presents a special tribute to the former-Beatle, with a band made up of members of Smilex, Nought, Black Hats and Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia performing a set of songs Harrison wrote for The Beatles.  
**THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND + EARTH CALLING ALICE + JONATHAN SEET + SAM SALLON: The Jericho Tavern** – Superb 40s jazz with a punk rock bite from the recent Oxford Punt stars. Supporting cast includes Elbow and Paul

McCartney-inspired Canadian songsmith Jonathan Seet.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon GET DOWN: The Brickworks**

### SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**MONSTER KILLED BY LASER + THAT FUCKING TANK + IVY'S ITCH + BALLS**

**DEEP: The Wheatsheaf** – Poor Girl Noise night of leftfield rocking, with a Leeds double bill of Monster Killed By Laser, kicking out monster riffs over almost jazz-style rhythms, having supported the likes of Melvins, Oxes and USAmonster, and That Fucking Tank, now moving away from their early math-core sound to a strung-out, angular prog direction. Ferociously raw hardcore monsters Ivy's Itch support.

**STORNOWAY: Oxford Botanical Gardens** – A chance to witness Oxford's current favourite band in the serene setting of the Botanical Gardens, where their dreamily rustic folk-pop should charm the birds from the trees and maybe even magic Lyra from her parallel Oxford.

**WE AERONAUTS + GOOD THINGS HAPPEN IN BAD TOWNS + TRISTAN & THE**

**TROUBADOURS + KING OF CATS: The**

**Cellar** – Expansive folk-rocking from We Aeronauts, plus alt.country and folk-pop from GTHIBT, dark, groove-heavy indie from T&TT and Eynsham's ukulele chap King Of Cats.

**LIGHTNIN' WILLIE & THE POORBOYS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – The Pasadena blues-rock guitarist returns to Oxfordshire with his mix of Otish Rush, Eddie Cochran and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

**TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101:**

**O2 Academy**

**REGGAE & SOUL CLUB NIGHT: The Bullingdon**

**LIVE APE: James Street Tavern** – Live music and comedy all day in the James Street Tavern back garden in aid of the Sumatran Orangutan Society, with sets from Bill Bailey, Ute, Pete The Temp, Martha Rose, The Orange and Reggae Reggae Soundsystem.

**TECHNICOLOR TIME MACHINE: Folly Bridge Inn** – A night of psychedelia and prog-rock, complete with lightshow and oil lamps, celebrating the groovy sounds of 1968.

### SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

### MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**THE DINO BAPTISTE BAND: The Bullingdon** – Theatrical blues, rock'n'roll and boogie woogie from the Brummie keyboard player in the vein of Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis.

### TUESDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Lively keyboard-led contemporary jazz from The Howard Peacock Quintet at tonight's jazz club.

**BETHANY WEIMERS + MOTION IN COLOUR + JAMES FOLEY: Café Tarifa** –

Acoustic night with Punt star Bethany showing off her powerful folk-pop style. Solo acoustic set from Motion In Colour in support.

### WEDNESDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**DINOSAUR Jr: O2 Academy** – The grunge legends reunited – *see main preview*

**DRUM EYES: The Wheatsheaf** – Stunning semi-improvised electro-core mayhem from DJ Scotch Egg and chums – *see main preview*

**GOLDEN ANIMALS + SPIRAL 25: The**

**Jericho Tavern** – Bluesy psychedelia and groove-led garage rocking in the vein of The Doors and Mott The Hoople from LA's Golden Animals, plus local narcotic groove rockers Spiral 25.

**NATUREBOY + WILL PHIPPS + THEO**

**ATIERI: Baby Simple** – Pastoral acoustic pop, Beatles-inspired melodies and nu-jazz from Natureboy.

### THURSDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**FIXERS + HUCK: The Cellar** – Roots Americana and 60s garage rocking from Jack Goldstein's new band Fixers. They're joined by a bizarre supergroup formed by members of Borderville and Sextodecimo. Which hopefully adds up to a flamboyant glam-goth stoner metal black hole of noise.

**MIDNIGHT DRIVE: Fat Lil's, Witney** – EP release gig for the local grunge rockers.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford**

**Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

**ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston**

### FRIDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**MELTING POT: The Bullingdon** – Mixed bag of bands at the monthly live music club.

**MINERS CLUB + BILLY PURE + BETHANY**

**WEIMERS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Lachrymose folk rocking from Miners Club.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon GET DOWN: The Brickworks**

### SATURDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**ELDER STUBBS FESTIVAL: Elder Stubbs**

**Allotments, Cowley Road** – Annual live music festival in aid of Restore, with sets from Hawkwind's Huw Lloyd Langton, local swamp-funk faves The Mighty Redox and Hawkwind tribute act Assassins of Silence.

**REWIND FESTIVAL: Temple Meadows,**

**Remenham** – First day of the 80s nostalgia festival near Henley, with Kim Wilde, Bananarama, Belinda Carlisle and more – *see main preview*

**ALPHABET BACKWARDS + NINE STONE**

**COWBOY + THE JOE ALLEN BAND: The**

**Wheatsheaf** – Joyous electro-folk-pop from rising local starlets Alphabet Backwards, plus drama-heavy observational pop from Nine Stone Cowboy and emotionally-wired folk-pop from Joe Allen.

**TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101:**

**O2 Academy**

**REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern**

### SUNDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**REWIND FESTIVAL: Temple Meadows,**

**Remenham** – Gloria Gaynor, Sister Sledge and ABC join the 80s nostalgia fest – *see main preview*  
**BIG BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3pm)** – All-comers blues jam.

**SILVANITO NIGHTS: The Jericho Tavern** –

Self-styled spag-rockers Silvanito host their own monthly club night, drawing inspiration from Ennio Morricone and The Shadows, plus support from UC3 and Adam Matthews.

### MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**ALVIN YOUNGBLOOD HART: The Bullingdon** – Country blues and 60s and 70s rock, somewhere between Led Zeppelin and

Leadbelly from the Grammy-winning Californian guitarist at tonight's Famous Monday Blues club.

## TUESDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Guitarist Hugh Turner and his band are tonight's special guests.

## WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**WISE CHILDREN + ANNA LOG + THE BUMBLEBEES: The Wheatsheaf** – Dark and tender folk-pop from Wise Children, plus sparse acoustic pop from Anna Log.

**ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney**

## THURSDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**EINSTELLUNG + FROM HERE, WE RUN!: The Cellar** – Krautrocking brutality from

*Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>*

## REWIND FESTIVAL:

### Remenham

Pure unadulterated 80s nostalgia is the name of the aptly-named Rewind Festival, enjoying its first outing on Oxfordshire's southernmost border. Gathered for the weekend are some two dozen of that decade's hitmakers, some more fondly remembered than others, but put together, they read like the track-listing to one of the first Now! albums. Saturday's line-up is headed by Kim Wilde, who'll be running through hits from 'Kids In America' to 'Cambodia', along with cheesy popmaker Rick Astley, enjoying some huge kitsch internet revivalism; Bananarama, Billy Ocean, Belinda Carlisle, Kid Creole, Heaven 17, Dr & The Medics, Cutting Crew, Toyah and China Crisis. Sunday takes a more soulful look at the 80s with headliners Gloria Gaynor and Sister Sledge doubtless provoking outbreaks of dancing round handbags, and they're joined by ABC, Paul Young, The Christians and Go West, plus synth-pop fellas Midge Ure, Howard Jones and Nik Kershaw. There's also T-Pau, The Blockheads and Chas'n'Dave who might, for once, find themselves the most credible act on the bill. It'll be plenty of people's idea of musical hell on earth, and does lend credibility to those who declaim the 80s as the worst decade ever for music. But for sheer cheesy retro wallowing, there'll be no better event this summer.

Birmingham's motorik noisemakers – *see main preview*

**THE FAMILY MACHINE + MOTOR CITY SHUFFLE + JP: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Genially bucolic country-laced indie rocking with a gallows humour from the mighty Family Machine.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford**

**Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

**ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston**

**HYBRID4M: Cafe Tarifa**

## FRIDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**AVIPAUL + QUADROPHOBIE: Fat Lil's, Witney** – New live music club night Glovebox brings West London's Anglo-Asian funk and r'n'b newcomers to Witney, drawing inspiration from Funkadelic, Kool and the Gang and Lenny Kravitz, plus funk-rockers Quadrophobe n support.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

**GET DOWN: The Brickworks**

## SATURDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with THIN GREEN CANDLES + FLASH BANG BAND + SLEEPING PASSENGERS: The Wheatsheaf** – Eclectic mix of sounds at the monthly GTI club,

tonight with dark-edged electro troupe Thin Green Candles, quirky Brighton rockers The Flash Bang Band, who are promising a raffle in which the winner gets a new song written about them, while openers Sleeping Passengers sees the return of one-time local hopefuls Where I'm Calling From in a hazy and hushed acoustic country-pop guise.

**SHEPHERDS PIE: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Classic hard rock covers.

**TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: 02 Academy**

**SELECTA: The Bullingdon** – Drum&bass club night with Original Sin and Cabbie.

**REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern**

## SUNDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

**LOVE/HATE: 02 Academy** – The perennially unpopular LA hair metal underachievers hit the road again, still clinging on to the vain hope that their brand of trashy glam-metal will hit a chord



*Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>*

## EINSTELLUNG / FROM HERE, WE RUN!: The Cellar

Anyone who's missed out on Einstellung's previous visits to town and has a love for all things noisy and hypnotic should make room for tonight in their diaries forthwith, the Brummie quartet, featuring assorted ex-members of Godflesh and Katastrophy Wife, having utterly captivated us at 2007's Audioscope, followed by a show of serious strength at the Wheatsheaf last year. Like Kraftwerk's 'Autobahn' re-imagined by Smashing Pumpkins in their early grunge-pop prime, Einstellung are a tightly-orchestrated thunderstorm, equally oppressive and delicate, from the twinkling Neu! subtleties to the all-out pressure cooker panzer rock crescendos. Theirs is a monolithic, slow-building storm of the sort that finds you enveloped and consumed by the end so you end up nodding involuntarily along as the ante is gradually raised. Support comes from rising local starlets From Here, We Run! adding a sweet-natured almost gothic pop sheen to pretty math-rock.

with someone. Anyone.

**LIL-LAPOLOOZA: Fat Lil's, Witney**

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

AUG/Sept Dates	FAT LIL'S Live Music and Comedy Club
Sat 1 <sup>st</sup>	Fused One of the most popular cover bands in town. Hits by Radiohead, KOL - £3 door 8pm
Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	Rapture present Tristan & The Troubadours + Alphabet Backwards + The Gullivers - £3, 8pm
Thu 6 <sup>th</sup>	Kenail + The Eljah + Immortals + Vicious Fall - Top metal bands - £3, door 7.30pm
Fri 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>THE BACKBEAT BEATLES</b> One of the finest tribute bands in the land - £10 door 8pm
Wed 12 <sup>th</sup>	Acoustic Lounge Bands/Solo artists, play your songs on the acoustic stage - Free 8pm
Thu 13 <sup>th</sup>	REVOLVER Monthly alt/Rock Club Night. Great DJ's, Great drinks deals - £3, door 8pm
Sat 15 <sup>th</sup>	Lightnin' Willie & The Poor Boys. Authentic US blues man and band - £10, door 8pm
Wed 19 <sup>th</sup>	Lil Fat Comedy Club. Special fundraising event for breast cancer - Door 7.30pm
Thu 20 <sup>th</sup>	AP presents Midnight Drive EP release + Support - £3 entry, door 7.30pm
Fri 21 <sup>st</sup>	Miner's Club + Billy Pure + Bethany Weimers + Support & DJ's - Charity Gig, door 8pm
Sun 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Monthly Blues Jam Join Dave Smith and the band on stage or just relax - Free Entry 3pm
Wed 26 <sup>th</sup>	Acoustic Lounge Bands/Solo artists, play your songs on the acoustic stage - Free Entry, 8pm
Thu 27 <sup>th</sup>	The Family Machine + Motor City Shuffle + JP. Fantastic indie bands - £4, door 8pm
Fri 28 <sup>th</sup>	Every Hippie's Dream psychedelic 80's covers and theme night - £3, Door 8pm
Sat 29 <sup>th</sup>	Shepherd's Pie Top Oxfordshire Hard Rock Cover Band - £3, door 8pm
Sun 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>LIL-LAPOLOOZA</b> All day free music festival featuring indie and metal bands - Free, door 1pm
September	
Sat 4 <sup>th</sup>	The Dirty Earth Band One of the counties most popular party cover bands - £4, 8pm
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## SPINNERETTE / LITTLE FISH **O2 Academy**

She's swigging neat vodka from the bottle, perched post-gig on the side of the Cowley Road; Brody Dalle makes Courtney Love look like Margaret Thatcher. The punkette left Australia in her teens to elope with Rancid frontman Tim Armstrong, wound up in LA fronting The Distillers, divorced Armstrong to marry Josh 'Queens Of The Stone Age' Homme and started Spinnerette, one woman's take on nu-rave-dance-punk.

Distillers may be pre-historic, but tonight's ratio of mohawks to glo-sticks betrays what's been behind ticket sales. We're amply sated first by Little Fish, who shred liberation on a bigger stage: ferocious rock screeches split punchier rock'n'roll than recent festival sets have pushed them to air.

Spinnerette emerge through the feedback, an amalgamation of Brody's cigarette-scraped vocals infused with – it's impossible to avoid the comparison – the blunt striding of her husband's pseudo-stoner band. Somewhat anchorless, songs like - 'Geeking' - lean heavily on QOTSA lines, but lack the arrogance to execute. With a set admittedly devoid of her previous band's energy, Oxford isn't - optimistic shrieks from Distillers' fans aside - feeling Spinnerette's mash-up. "Where's the bar in this place?" Brody snaps. "You all need to get another drink". The grungier 'Baptized By Fire' settles into a more curvaceous groove, dropping into 'All Babes Are Wolves', all dashes of choppy dance-rock ripped out of family friends' Eagles of Death Metal's riff encyclopaedia. Pitching from 'Sex Bomb' – a sinking-diving melee that relies on Brody's ability to carry a melody – into grrl-rock 'Ghetto Love', the set closes – *sans* encore – with the slugger 'Walking Dead'.

It's unlikely Brody's choice of after-show refreshments reflect any performance anxiety. One uninspired show isn't going to derail someone with more connections than Stephen Fry's Twitter - but for the sake of the next generation's riot grrls, let's hope Spinnerette grow roots that keep them more whole, than Hole.

**Liz Dodd**

## FROM HERE, WE RUN! / SIDEWINDERS / MINOR COLES

### **The Wheatsheaf**

We arrive at The Wheatsheaf positively dripping from the torrential rain outside, only to find that since our last visit, the venue has been re-developed as an oven.

Braving the heat admirably are Minor Coles, who have just secured a spot on the Truck line up, so we're expecting good things. Although touted as being an acoustic act we're pleased to find this is something of an untruth. Their compositions have the simplicity favoured by many a singer-songwriter, but with the muscle of a full band; they have more in common with the likes of The La's than any thing else. Their set is peppered with songs that are full of glorious hooks and perfect vocal harmonies. For a band to

be so proficient within months of their inception is scary. Given a few more months Minor Coles could just be the most talked about band in Oxford.

If there's one thing tonight's promoters Gappy Tooth Industries can never be accused of, it's putting together generic line ups. So it is we slip from the college pop of Minor Coles to the full on rock'n'roll of The Sidewinders. You can imagine each and every one of them sleeps under an Iron Maiden duvet at night (though probably not the same one) because they play nothing but straight-up classic rock. Duelling solos are dutifully in place, as is rampant drumming, thunderous riffing and the obligatory Maiden T-

shirt. The supreme gurning of one of the guitarist is merely a bonus, as we watch and wonder whether it is possible to eat your own head. Quite why their vocalist appears to model himself on Simon Le Bon is something we'll ponder on the way home.

From Here, We Run! appear to be having a bad night. They're clearly talented but for some reason their collision of math-rock and cutesy indie fare (largely represented by the fey vocals of Pietke) doesn't quite come off tonight. Riffs and patterns are stumbled over. Songs start. Stop. Rewind. And start again. There are glimmers of hope when things lock in nicely later on, but the band seems visibly rattled. From Here, We Run! are overflowing with good ideas and tricky time signatures, but tonight, in the pressure cooker of The Wheatsheaf they seem to have lost their cool.

**Sam Shepherd**

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## CAT MATADOR / UTE / AIDEN CANADAY

### The Wheatsheaf

A pleasantly busy Wheatsheaf tonight, for a Wednesday. It's normally the day that promoters fear. Perhaps it's due to the free pick'n'mix that's being handed out on the door? If nothing else, that gimmick provides me with the awful necessity of stating that tonight's bill was 'something of a pick'n'mix of music' (read that out in your best 1980s Radio 1 DJ voice); the general high standards perhaps helping to explain the bustle. Aiden Canaday opens the show with a somewhat lightweight, but reasonably heartfelt set of morose indie-folk. One voice, one keyboard, one jauntily-placed hat. Nice. The voice is good and echoey: perhaps that is more due to the PA than the singing, but it gives it a warm edge, which is welcome.

Ute, I'll happily admit, are my surprise highlight of the evening. It's their *differentness* that attracts me; they're a musically-adept combination of the familiar and the odd. There are touches of what can now be a very tired post-whatever kind of band, but they're presented

with a strange twist by the combination of lead melody on an acoustic guitar, with a penchant for the exploration of structure and dynamics with a very sparse rhythm section that often recalls Radiohead's 'In Rainbows'. There are moments of nervousness, but to continue the DJ clichés they're definitely 'one to watch'.

Cat Matador are a great headliner, and tick a lot of boxes with a set of solid, slightly angular indie rock: acute indie rock, if you like. There comes a time in one's evening when straightforward is best, and that's what this band does. They're not going to win awards for devastating originality or ferocious invention, but I believe they're not trying to do that – and that's refreshing in itself. They get on stage and they get on with business, and they're loud and effective. It takes skill to pull off music that's compelling without it seeming challenging – and it's a trick that this band has learnt pretty well. 'Keep on rockin', lads' – or whatever Kid Jensen would say.

*Simon Minter*

## WHITE DENIM / CALI COLLECT

### O2 Academy

You know it's going to be a long night when two songs into a support set, you can feel the blood drain from your face and time stand still, as if thrown into some hideous never-ending purgatory of watching thousands of opening bands at the Bull and Gate all at once.

Cali Collect might play risibly poor alt. rock, but they do unwittingly provide the highlight of the night when the guitarist treads on his guitar cable mid-solo, pulling

it out, then has to scamper back to his amp to plug it in while attempting to preserve the last shreds of his dignity. Ah, *schadenfreude*, how we love you.

Where Cali Collect scarcely have two ideas to rub together, White Denim are practically a lesson in musical intemperance. They start off brilliantly, a looped, lucent guitar line on top of some tense percussion, ripping into a stoner-tinged, loping riff that promises great things. Sadly, things go downhill from here.

If a preternatural mastery of the wah wah pedal was the mark of a great band, White Denim would be bigger than U2 by now, but much of the next hour is spent watching the band flit from a watered-down interpretation of psychedelia to some periodically interesting but stubbornly anaemic seventies rock grooves. Except they neither pause between songs or shift the tempo, instead churning out an hour-long morass of chunky, mid-paced riffs interspersed with prosaic soloing.

If you're going to transform music by making the most of a single idea, you'd better make that idea a *really* good one, as opposed to making us feel like we've been mugged by a particularly tenacious Kyuss covers band, as we do by the time they introduce the final lump of their interminable wig-out with "we've got one more jam left". Saints preserve us.

*Stuart Fowkes*



Photo: RPHimages

## THE ANYDAYS / DEAD JERICHO

### The Bullingdon

Something special this way comes. Dead Jerichos, a very young and exciting three piece out of Drayton, marry the subcutaneous intelligence of The Jam with a commanding talent way beyond their years. It'll be so easy for instant critics to skewer their on-the-sleeve mod influences, but already the intricate guitar flourishes within choppy songs like 'Red Dance Floor' see them struggling out of that nurturing cocoon into experimental air. Leo Rayner on drums is astonishingly good alongside Sahm Amirsedghi's nonsense bass, and if the charming, bullish confidence of singer-guitarist Craig Evans can wash off the Alex Turner glottal stops and find his own voice, we might have that most rare of beasts; a local band with something to say.

Recently Richard Thompson embarked on a tour in which he covered a thousand years of music. The Anydays could equally do an educational tour demonstrating how to put together a modern song out of the jigsaw of bands from the last

forty-odd years. They say the best songs have a simple familiarity about them, but The Anydays test this theorem to the ultimate destruction of their main amplifier, which causes a stir by catching fire and filling the room with a pall of acrid smoke.

After the hapless electronics are despatched to the car park to die, they carry on through the PA, arc welding together huge slabs of The Troggs and The Stooges ('Psycho Baby') Oasis and Primal Scream ('Sixteen Days') and 'Saturday Night's Alright For Fightin'' via The Blockheads ('Time To Get Up') in a manner that, if I were beered up, and not reviewing I'd thoroughly enjoy. Instead, as I'm the reverse, I end up trainspotting every song rip-off till my note pad is almost comically full. I can't be sure whether they know all this or whether they simply don't care. Maybe I've simply been around too long.

*Paul Carrera*

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# CORNBURY FESTIVAL

## Cornbury Park

### SATURDAY

It's the little things that make a festival. The first act we encounter at Cornbury are The **SPLOTT BROTHERS**, two old geezers in fez hats and tuxedos, armed with an old-fashioned organ playing silent film music while cajoling passers-by to sit at a table, be served with cocktails and generally become part of the act. It's like something from an old penny dreadful sideshow, on many levels catastrophically awful, but utterly compulsive.

It's a very English kind of act, and Cornbury is a very English kind of festival. With a very English type of festival weather. It's glorious sunshine now but half the crowd have already donned wellies in anticipation of the forthcoming deluge.

As if willing the rain to keep at bay, **BOY LEAST LIKELY TO** are unrelentingly cheery, a little cheesy – even more so than the BBC Radio Oxford duo who introduce them – and of course they've got a banjo. Theirs is a skiffle-inflected pop hoedown intended to buoy the slowly swelling audience and set a scene of good cheer for the weekend. They mostly succeed, even given a cover version of George Michael's 'Faith' and the impression that they're the musical equivalent of that irritatingly enthusiastic relative who insists on making everyone play charades at Christmas.

**DODGY** too seem laboratory-built to squeeze the last ounce of sunshine out of a summer's afternoon, their good-natured laddishness seemingly reflected in the worryingly large number of blokes we spot sporting rubber biker helmets with spikes on. Obviously this year's jesters' hats, god help us. There's a telling moment when a swear word slips out and half the crowd start boo-ing. Not much chance of Motorhead playing next year, then. Still, all seems to be forgiven when Dodgy play 'Staying Out For The Summer' and everyone suddenly has an extra spring in their step.

Not least **KINGSIZE 5**, a simple, fun blend of old-fashioned swing and jive who sound like they probably headlined Cornbury Festival in 1940, if it existed back then.

Given Cornbury's overriding MOR musical stance, the including of **THE SHORTWAVE SET** is unusual – the critics' choice rather than crowd-pleasing party-makers – but theirs is possibly the set of the weekend, bringing a little downbeat artiness ahead of the rain. There's a bit of anthemic pop sweetness about their songs but also an underlying motorik groove that leans toward Stereolab, and their sleek cover of 'Slave To The Rhythm' is an unexpected but delightful peach of a moment.

A wander further up the festival field to the Riverside stage to watch **WITCHES** provides us with a the prefect excuse to avoid **PETER GREEN** who has attracted approximately one hundred times as many onlookers and is precisely one hundred times less fun. He plays 'Albatross, which might have kept any casual fans happy but such a tediously reverential run-through old blues-rock guff threatens to eclipse even Scouting For Girls in the blinding tedium stakes.

A rather more fun return trip to the 60s comes

### Lightning Seeds



### Magic Numbers



from **MAGIC NUMBERS** who can, on previous experience, be either a shower of pure summer sunshine, or an indulgent retro racket. They're more of the former today, occasionally sounding more like the 80s incarnation of Fleetwood Mac, but then tripping out in more psychedelic acid-folk style, hitting us with pure pop classic, 'Love Me Like You', before ending on a stadium-sized campfire singalong.

Then it starts to rain. Just a light drizzle for starters but one that gets heavier by increments until you realise you're soaked through your coat and boots and the entire mood of the festival has taken a downward turn. People start drinking more earnestly as if to keep the encroaching chill at bay and memories of last year's soaking come flooding back.

We wander over to see if **TEDDY THOMSON** is as excruciating as his renowned father, who we once stood and watched for two hours in a torrential downpour at Cropredy because people assured us he was a legend. He isn't. Quite.

Meanwhile, **SMILEX** are chucking strawberries into the crowd as if to hammer home the point they're the fruitiest band on the bill, at least in the profanity stakes.

**SHARLEEN SPITERI** doesn't need to swear to be noticed; her nose does the work for her. She's far better than we expected to be honest, armed with a bit of showbiz pizzazz and some serious

soul credentials. She belts out 'Black Eyed Boy' and several others that sound just like it before hitting 'River Deep, Mountain High'. Someone close by suddenly experiences an epiphany, exclaiming, "Oh, she's from the band Texas, not Texas in America!" It only took him an hour to work that one out.

But what we really need right now is some stupid, fun, mad-eyed punk rock action to take us out of this drizzly depression. And **THE DAMNED** just about do the trick. The hits sound bloody great, from a rampaging 'New Rose' to the orchestral sweep of 'Eloise', as Mssrs Sensible and Vanian ham it up like panto dames, only spoiling it a bit with too many guitar solos and paying tribute to Peter Green, without whom etc. etc. when really punk was all about kicking dinosaurs like that into the back of beyond.

And now, dear friends, it's positively lashing it down. And what could be more soul-enhancing than watching **SCOUTING FOR GIRLS** in the pouring rain? Stabbing your own eyes out with a biro, perhaps? We seriously contemplate it for a moment before heading for the campsite bar, to drink even more heavily and laugh at possibly the most heroically rubbish rapper in Christendom before attempting to get some sleep with rain drumming ever more heavily on the tent roof.

Imelda May



Pretenders



Sharleen Spiteri



Sugababes



## SUNDAY

Of course, if there's one thing worse than trying to get to sleep in a tent to the sound of rain, it's waking up with glorious sunshine boring through the canvas and slowly baking you alive in your sleeping bag. Yeah, cheers Mother Nature.

There's a stall in the campsite doing Portobello mushroom and halloumi burgers with rocket and garlic olive oil. Which isn't something you have for breakfast every day, and as clothes dry in the sun, we watch some flash git doing aerobatics above the festival site, knowing he's got a captive audience. Then it rains again, just long enough to get our clothes wet again.

The sun is back out again in time for **NATUREBOY**'s opening set of the day, and if most people still aren't awake enough yet to show much enthusiasm, his bucolic jazzy pop does serve as a gentle introduction to the day.

In fact, it's pretty much gentle musical strolling for most of Sunday, from **STORNOWAY**'s enthralling set on the Folk stage that deserves a far larger audience, through **LAURA AND THE TEARS**' decidedly underwhelming display of soft-centred r'n'b on the main stage that's so smooth and soulless, they make **IMELDA MAY** sound like Napalm Death by comparison.

That's maybe unfair on Imelda actually, who does have a right whopper of a voice, not to

mention a cracking 1950s hair-do. Mixing up primitive rockabilly with 40s swing, she's like a classier, punkier Amy Winehouse and she seems to wake the entire festival site up finally.

Just in time for **EDDI READER** to almost send the whole place catatonic again with a display of library-friendly folk-pop that's refined and seamless instead of raw and rootsy; if Reader really is the keeper of Scottish music's flame, as she seems to believe, she's in desperate need of some extra paraffin to keep it alight. In fact, a bloody great big bonfire is what we could do with right now to get a proper party started.

Instead we get **LIGHTNING SEEDS**, who normally we'd love but who seem to approach live performance like some strange alien entity to be treated with utmost caution, which is a cardinal sin when you're playing on a festival stage. And so, despite being armed with possibly the best arsenal of great pop songs of any band on the main stage this weekend – from 'Life Of Riley' to 'Lucky You', they sound like a dirge. Ian Brody may be touched by genius in the studio, but perhaps that's where he should stay in future.

Luckily **THE PRETENDERS** are proper rock'n'roll warhorses of the old school – veterans of festival stages across the globe and able to put on a show that comes close to topping even The Damned for performance of

the weekend. Chrissie Hynde is, what, 58? 59? but she's cooler by far than most women half her age. She struts, she shimmies, she... well, she just rocks, okay? It's a crowd-pleasing hits set, as you'd hope for, from 'Brass In Pocket' to 'Talk Of The Town' and, yeah, The Pretenders have still got it.

It's always been Cornbury's strategic strength that they try and end Sunday night on a high, and so, after the hellish inconsequentiality of Scouting For Shite last night, we get a full-on folk hoedown with **PEATBOG FAERIES** on the second stage, complete with bagpipes, which always sound bloody fantastic coming from a festival stage, followed by tonight's headliners, **SUGABABES**, a band you might not expect to take to these surroundings as well as the rockier and folkier acts, but whose well-drilled Greatest Hits set goes beyond ticking boxes marked familiarity and inclusiveness and features more songs we know all the words to than we care to admit.

And of course it helps that we haven't had a drop of rain since breakfast. It may be those little things that make each festival different, but a bit of sunshine is the one thing guaranteed to makes each one that much more enjoyable.

*Words: Ian Chesterton  
Photos: Danny Cox*



## **SMILEX / HEADCOUNT / BEELZEBOZO / DEATH VALLEY RIDERS**

### **The Wheatsheaf**

Repetition, like excessive volume, is a musical trick that's childishly easy to achieve, yet incredibly difficult to pull off convincingly. Death Valley Riders play huge, near-static rock instrumentals, with a distant basis in metal, and the merest hint of goth in the bass effects, and come off like *Einstellung* divided by Nephilim. The ever-chugging longform tracks are doubtless supposed to be monumental, and in a way they are, but that isn't always impressive: imagine the monolith in *2001* made of, not mysteriously

sleek adamantine, but warm guacamole. Ultra-minimal music can be hypnotic, but it can also just be, you know, sort of...long.

Beelzebozo are the residue after a clinical hard rock titration – there's nothing to their music but thumping drums, ceaseless riffs and silly outfits, leaving us wondering why so many other rockers try to dilute their sound with clumsy extraneous ornaments (rap breaks, hasty electronics, embarrassing politics). The band's Satan-raped conference delegate look, all blood-splattered

shirts and battered nametags, is amusing, but doesn't detract from some high quality rock taken at a stately pace. Glance at their website, and you'll find it boasts more ideas than most bands get through in a lifetime: their music is harmless levity, but they take it very seriously, which is why we love them.

Three chunky lads playing swears punk should be tedious, so the fact that Headcount are not only listenable, but also one of this county's best acts, is frankly astounding. We call it *The Tommy Cooper Ratio*. So, of course we get lumpy clogged-artery punk frolics, but we get subtlety too, in Stef Hale's surprisingly delicate drum embellishments (shades of Therapy?, perhaps) and Rob Moss' increasingly melodic vocals. As befits a band that has been working hard for a decade, it's admirably mature stuff, and even better, as Moss gives his arse an airing onstage, it's played by admirably immature people.

The temptation before this gig was to cut up all our old Smilex reviews and stick the words back together in a random order. A problem with being vastly professional and reliable entertainers (and you should see Tom Sharp flying into the set, even though he's sick as a dog), is that people can get immured to your charms. Intriguingly, this turns out to be a set of new and less familiar material, which allows us to focus once again on what a storming rock band Smilex are.

We discover afresh how intense the rhythm section is, and how good Lee Christian can be at performing a song (even whilst he's flailing about with his top off, like the grotesque child of Iggy Pop and Neil Hannon). A wonderful set by a band we shouldn't take for granted. But don't spit on us like that, Lee; Rob's already brought one arse to the stage, no need to be another.

*David Murphy*

## **DIVE DIVE / THE ELRICS / NIGHT PORTRAITS**

### **The Bullingdon**

Outside it's murderously muggy and the Cowley Road tarmac is beginning to melt. Inside an air-con-cooled Bully, Night Portraits are boiling up their own summer storm. They're all fizz, froth and thunder: cascading drums, high-wired guitars and shouting. Songs sound like they're fighting tooth and nail while being sucked down a giant plug hole. 'Otter Of Beirut' is a gothic Electric Six that finds the singer barking non-sequiturs as the bassist accidentally wrecks his guitar. But unlike the last time we saw them, when pretty much the same thing happened, tonight they just get on with it, powering through the flange-heavy 'Fellows' and the strident post-punk noise of 'Southern Electric'. Superb, simple stuff and they're still young enough to be getting a lift home with their mum afterwards.

By contrast, Elrics singer Marc doesn't look like the sort of person you'd trust in a car with your mum. Like a young Robbie Williams dressed as a Levi's 501 model, he's got Morrissey's quiff, eyebrows and mannerisms and certainly seems born to the stage. When he sings, though, he's more Brian Molko than Mozzer and there's a distinct mix of the muscular and camp about the band, as if John Barrowman had left West End musicals for Indieville. Stone-y r'n'b rubs up against a more ethereal Mew-style of pop, and casting aside the cheesy 'She Doesn't Exist', somewhere in here there's a pop hit and a pin-up waiting to happen.

Waiting to happen might one day be etched on Dive Dive's gravestone. Not because the band have sat around in expectation – they've worked their collective arse off over the past decade – but because a higher level of success has always eluded them, bad luck rearing its ugly head at inopportune moments. But perhaps salvation is at hand. Having worked as Frank Turner's backing band for a couple of years, a new generation of fans could be theirs. They've not been idle in the songwriting stakes either, having apparently penned and discarded three albums-worth of material in lead up to recording their third CD. Tonight is the band's first local headline gig in an age, and if the crowd doesn't do the band's reputation justice, their performance does easily. They're taut and bullish, kicking out melodic but high-wired post-hardcore pop with the well-drilled professionalism you'd expect a band to command after so long on the road, but coupled with a freshness that comes from playing their own songs for a change. New songs like the sparse, eager 'Mr Ten Percent' mingle with old favourites like 'Name And Number', a fluid avalanche of guitar pop that's equal to the best of Idlewild. They still can't do ballads, as the cloying 'Let's Swap Places' amply demonstrates, but when they get their skates on Dive Dive, are still leaders of punk's brat pack.

*Dale Kattack*

## **SILVERSUN PICKUPS**

### **O2 Academy**

Animal Kingdom are a UK four-piece band playing indie, alternative post-rock music. There is nothing special, edgy or surprising about them. There's nothing 'animal' either. In fact, you can't help but feel suspicious when you check out their Myspace page, filled with absolute statements of grandeur (like in film reviews) of the quality of their music by The Guardian and NME. They have a rockier approach to Coldplay and a more emo attachment to Sigur Ros in Richard Sauberlich's vocals, possessed of a natural but irritating falsetto, and songs blur in an unrecognizable mash of sloppy soapiness and monotonous drumming.

If you fancy a doped-up version of Smashing Pumpkins, Pixies or Breeders, Silversun Pickups will be right up your street. The Californian outfit have cultivated a large fan base for to their fussy, grunting and droning guitar roar and Brian Aubert's rusty, husky vocals. The overpowering bass lines are an attack to the senses too but the band's best psychedelic convulsions come from the drummer Christopher Guanlao. All this sounds powerful in writing but even though they are on the right track to set the mood and momentum of controlled violence, they've not yet mastered the skill to break it. There's nothing more alluring and engaging than using the importance of anticipation, and so teasing the crowd's senses to challenge it. Silversun Pickups, unfortunately, are still a bit far from becoming grown-ups in that area.

*Liane Escorza*



## THE BIRTHDAY MASSACRE / RAGGEDY ANGRY

### **O2 Academy**

Spotting people queuing for this gig at 2pm, and seeing town was awash with purple and black, it's rather a surprise to find an Academy less than half full tonight. The modest but loyal following are out for two sides of the acceptable face of goth in the form of two bands from Ontario, Canada on this first date of a European tour.

Raggedy Angry claim to be voted the most controversial band in Ontario, but tonight they're actually a lot of fun, their name telling you pretty much all you need to know. Hardcore metal with an electro twist, even a taste of happy hardcore, they pretty much give up on trying to frighten us as soon as they start. Despite a diverting cover of 'Gangster's Paradise', an extensive merchandise range suggests they realise the music alone isn't likely to make them stars, controversial or otherwise.

The Birthday Massacre continue the black, white and lots of make-up theme. Singer Chibi, in vampire schoolgirl chic, does her best to whip up the crowd while Marilyn Manson-lookalike guitarist Rainbow spends most of the gig gobbing on the floor. More visual kei than goth, like

Japanese heartthrobs Dir En Grey they're much more a treat for the eyes than the ears. The songs are mainly lumpen metal-by-numbers, lurching from chord to chord like a drunk staggering home, and only Chibi's clear, engaging voice keeps the set alive. As an experiment I close my eyes and, as expected, I hear uninspiring, predictable metal-pop. The cover of 'I Think We're Alone Now' is more telling than maybe they realise, in that they owe more to Tiffani than say, Coil, the genuinely unsettling industrial pioneers. By now the crowd has thinned out enough to gob back at Rainbow, but no-one bothers.

It's an interesting example of how the internet has changed music; once people would turn out for a gig because it was the only way to find out what they were like. Now you can watch hours of live footage and learn every last detail about a band before you leave your bed. The result seems to be an increasingly fractured scene of niches and sub-genres, with the innocent excitement of discovery the victim.

*Art Lagum*

## BOSSAPHONIK PRESENTS EDENHEIGHT

### **The Cellar**

In the midst of everyday life, where something normally vibrant within the psyche can be starched flat, given a drubbing, or distorted beyond recognition, there are heaven-sent bands like Edenheight to readdress the balance. Basking in the glow of an illustrious influences list, browsing their MySpace page for the first occasion offers up a titbit of what's to come at this month's afrobeat, latin jazz and funk extravaganza Bossaphonik. Having seen Mankala tear it up two months prior with a meld of Santana-like rhythms and lyrical interplay, fellow Bristolians Edenheight present a repertoire of dub-inflected meanderings and a healthy smattering of jazz-funk attitude.

With the DJs ushering in funky but reserved tunes to please those seated and standing, starting as a four piece, jamming out an arousing take on British funk, two saxophonists enter by the third number, while watching the drummer and keyboard player is a visual treat, and like a portable microwave, they know how to bring the heat. Abundant in atmosphere but never sickly like cake icing, seldom

have I ventured to The Cellar when the vibes have been this spectacularly intense.

Edenheight are at their best when the instruments are left to ornament and careen wildly - the saxophone sections in particular - and distilled to the most vital levels of conditioning. A cauldron of good eggs as a nine-piece congregation, the interval is a nice touch, giving minutes to compose oneself before giving in to another hour of rockin' jazz-funk. Shortly after, the arrival of Madlox applies an underlying pulse to the evening. The partying audience lap this up, dancing with red shoes on. Working in unison, the sax men vary their inhalation technique to great effect, the group alternating numbers throughout but always making more than just a pretty sound. Madlox rides with the lyric "You know I wanna do anything you wanna do", attracting bodies closer by a word to "Get down", whereby the crowd show an affinity and respect by doing as he says. Ultimately, what's at stake with gigs like this? Edenheight have a simple answer: pleasure.

*Mick Buckingham*

## **INTRODUCING....**

*Nightshift's new monthly guide to the best local bands bubbling under*

## **HREDA**

### **Who are they?**

HREDA are a spellcheck-bothering three-piece instrumental band formed in 2006 by Russ Wainwright (drums) and Jamie Cooper (guitar). After a couple of months practising they decided they needed another guitar and recruited Alex, even though he fell asleep during the first rehearsal session together. The trio played their first show in March 2007 at an Abort, Retry, Fail? club night at the Cellar. Since then they've garnered rave reviews in Nightshift and on DrownedinSound. In November that year they released a DIY promo 'EP One', and this September they will be out touring across the UK to promote double A-side single 'Minnows'/'Dead Horses' on Bristol's Inque Records.

### **What do they sound like?**

HREDA are all distorted peaks, complex battling guitars and subtle changes of pace. One of Nightshift's earliest live reviews of the band pointed to their rare ability in their world of post-rock to be both pensive and cathartic: "Their guitars have obviously had a good massage from Steve Albini and they know how to work the hypnotic angle to a tee. The slower sections of their set give the odd feeling of being underwater, while the more textured blasts are akin to being brought upwards to glide low over the ocean. No, scratch that, Hreda ARE the ocean; a large, exquisite, glistening expanse that is all too easy to get carried away with."

### **What inspires them?**

"HREDA is a group effort and we all contribute equally. It's the overall honesty: I think we all get a buzz out of that. Practise for us now is always just trying to put ideas together. It's never a constant production line but we are finding bits we like, are all happy playing and ultimately the continuous practise makes us better at what we do."

### **Career highlight so far:**

"Playing the last Trailerpark Tent at Truck Festival was a highlight; we had never played on a stage as big as that before."



### **And the lowlight:**

"After the tour we did in April 08, it took us an age to get back to normal service. We just weren't productive in that time and it got to us a bit."

### **Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:**

"SeaBuckThorn. 'Twilight Synopses' is a beautiful piece of work, similar to Grails' 'Black Tar Prophecies...'"

### **If they could only keep one album in the world, what would it be?**

"Phya - 'The Haunted House', simply because it's the only album that I can remember we've all agreed we like."

### **When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect?**

The next Oxford gig is for Audioscope on 19<sup>th</sup> August at the Wheatsheaf, with DrumEyes. For three people we make a big sound. We should also be playing new tracks too."

### **Playing favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:**

"Favourite: some of the best buskers. Least favourite: some of the worst buskers."

### **You might love them if you love:**

Godspeed You! Black Emperor; Explosions In The Sky; Mogwai; Don Caballero.

### **Hear them here:**

[www.myspace.com/hreda](http://www.myspace.com/hreda)

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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### IRON WOLF

As we type this, southern England is still basking in the sort of heatwave that makes you think maybe global warming ain't such a bad thing and perhaps we can grow olives in our back garden and drink Pimms every afternoon. Which means it'll piss it down tomorrow and we've lost our last chance to get a tan by sitting in a stuffy office listening to a large batch of demos. Let no-one tell you this is a glamorous job. What's more, the first CD in the pile seems to make a virtue of its utter, unrelenting misery. Iron Wolf describe themselves as "The vanguard of a hallowed army torn to shreds at the teeth of a dreaded behemoth." They are, "The crushing peril of brave knights facing their doom". Or perhaps a bunch of goths stuck in a blacked-out bedroom with an old Sevenchurch album on the stereo and a well-thumbed copy of Lord Of The Rings on the bookshelf. Which isn't to say this isn't a bit bloody good. With the emphasis on the word bloody. Iron Wolf's is a well-orchestrated mix of ambient industrial doom, sludgy, riff-heavy doom and guttural bellowing. With a side order of boiled doom. They switch from clattering black metal ferocity to passages of dense industrial fog and heavy electro blooping with admirable gravity and not a hint of irony and as the Met Office predicts torrential downpours and flash floods in the West Country, we know just who to blame. Ragnarok? Bring it on!

### THE BLITZ CARTEL

Having previously furnished us with a succession of pissed-up punk demos that erred on the chaotic side of ramshackle, it's an odd experience hearing Blitz Cartel switching into something altogether more poppy, albeit from the drawer marked 'warped pop'. 'Oh Girl' sounds like they've swapped the glue and speed for mescaline and discovered Liars, although the end result sounds more like a misfired attempt at sounding like Brian Eno's mid-70s pop excursions. Not sure it entirely suits them, but respect for trying something different. Elsewhere they go back to their roots with the tinny, trashy 'Seven Car Pile Up', all clattering pots'n'pans drums, Stooges guitars and shouting, before tipping back into quirky new wave for the delightfully-titled, if seemingly half-formed 'I Love Alex So I Wrote This Song About Him And His Ex (That Bitch)' and ending with some typically

*Demo of the Month wins a free half day's recording at Keynote. Call 01189 599944 to claim your prize and get special deals for local bands!*

strung-out and strangled yelping on 'It's My Frustration'. Heaven only knows where they'll go from here, but it's comforting to know that they can do different styles with just as much haphazard incompetence as they did their old punk stuff.

### NIGHT PORTRAITS

Perhaps they could learn a thing or two from Night Portraits, a band we were mighty impressed with when we saw them playing at the Bullingdon earlier in the month and are still young enough to be picked up by their mum afterwards. They cross the divide between early-80s positive punk (we're studiously trying to avoid using the phrase goth here) and Fugazi-style post-hardcore. Theirs is a tender tumult, battering otherwise sweet-natured melodies about with a ragged nonchalance, cocksure and full of suppressed rage. There are two songs here, each pounded out in simple, aggressive fashion and kept on a tight leash. Bish bash bosh. Job done.

### VOLUNTEER

Volunteer is the work of Martin Andrews, who also plays guitar in synth-rockers Camp Actor, now based in Oxford and here ploughing his singular electro-pop furrow, initially sounding like Joy Division filtered through a tinny machine-pop filter to unexpectedly enjoyable effect, before clunking into a sparse Suicide side alley, all harsh metallic beats, heavily-reverbed vocals and shards of silicon flying about. He's less effective trying to be human, with all the frailties that implies, on 'Yellow Paper Walls', which is too vague and tries too hard to emulate Bowie's late-70s electro period, but hats off to the fella for his cover of Spacemen 3's 'Revolution', a difficult track to tackle given the original's sheer enormous power. In a neat twist of history, he turns the song into a Suicide-like grind, that band influencing Spacemen 3 so heavily in the first place. Interesting stuff all-round; hopefully Martin will be about town for a while longer.

### WE ARE UGLY BUT WE HAVE THE MUSIC

A one-man bedroom project formed by Thin Green Candles' Fred who got fed up with all his friends and family finding TGC's music too difficult. So he turned his laptop and memory back in the direction of early-90s rave and bleep, bloop, squiggle, here's a low-rent but occasionally fun mix and match of The Grid, Underworld and KLF, all swirling synths and solid electro beats. Best cuts here

are the heavier, nagging 'Snich & Snach' and 'Iddyoc', which could be a previously unimagined hybrid of Yazoo and A Guy Called Gerald. But really, if your family think your music is too difficult to understand, get a new family.

## STYLE SYNCRETISTS

Another demo from the strange and sometimes inspired world of AJ / Asher Dust, here finding him collaborating with French producer Monsieur Greg, although the pair have never met, just communicated through email. AJ admits from the off that the collaboration is a bit conservative for his palette and probably not Nightshift's kind of thing, but hints that if we compare his voice to Jay Kay out of Jamiroquai there will be gangster-related reprisals. It never crossed our mind. Much. Actually, with its lightweight electric-piano-led funk and slightly nasal vocal delivery, demo opener 'Special Thing' sounds more like a cross between 80s hitmakers Shakatak and UB40. Which we guess is pretty insulting to a man who values his funk and reggae. Rather better is 'Set Your Spirit Free', with its jammed-out 70s Blaxploitation soundtrack feel and echoes of Stevie Wonder's 'Higher Ground', while 'Kissing My Dub' properly hits a lazy, loping reggae groove before wandering off a bit too much towards the end. The man is right then – a far more conservative offering than his best stuff where he tends to veer well off the beaten path, hit on some weird old blues, soul or reggae thing and let his imagination go to town, but enough of his talent shines through to keep your attention.

## ULYSSE DuPASQUIER

In the big tough manly music stakes, Ulysse here makes Belle & Sebastian sound like Boltthrower, but don't let that make you think for one second he sounds even remotely like Belle & Sebastian. Rather he sings like a 90-year-old man on the point of shuffling off his mortal coil, each barely-decipherable line fading into an ever-weakening groan on songs like 'You Are Within Me (Oh Vile Consumptive Disorder)'. Sorry, we made up that bit in brackets. But, by god, this from a (presumably) healthy 19-year-old? We blame the industrialisation of the food industry and the abandonment of National Service. Still, this is meaty stuff compared to 'Paperwall' wherein Ulysse simply whinges and whines like a sickly child over a solemn, slender acoustic guitar dirge. "Nyer nyer, I want a DS for Christmas / Nyer nyer, why can't I go on Club Penguin? / Nyer nyer, not fair, want sweets". Seriously, the lad cannot sing. Not at all. It's embarrassing. It's horrible. Make it stop. Funny thing is, once in a while the music is quite sweet and maybe cries out for a flowery

female crooner to breath some life into it. Until then, never mind Belle & Sebastian and Boltthrower, a simple bolt gun is all that's required to put us all out of Ulysse's misery.

## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Naming yourself after a rather secretive Catholic lads club might be seen as a mistake, leading your demo with a live recording of a song where the audience's handclaps are louder (and, it must be said, more in time) than the song, is asking for trouble. A couple of listens through and we're still trying to work out what, if any, point there is to Knights Of Columbus. 'Sonifex' is a widdly, fiddly math-rock instrumental with none of the inventiveness of the best of that genre but all the pointless frippery of its worst protagonists and with an apparent single aim in life to see just how trebly they can get the guitar to sound before bugging off without even attempting to construct a tune. They do slightly better with 'So You Want To?', although its ragged indie jangle and thrash is entirely bereft of character, and it's ironic it finds them singing, "So you want to be different", when they quite patently don't.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### PARACHUTES

This is so all over the place we wonder whether it even qualifies as music and thus any kind of music criticism. Parachutes are apparently a five-piece band, though they sound more like some sausage-fingered bedroom hermit collapsing on the random play buttons of every instrument in his room and deluding himself that it's something akin to *avant garde* genius. There's a bit of trancey electro minimalism with some posh-trying-to-sound-geezers shouting utter fucking bollocks over the top that is doubtless meant to pass as rapping, and further in a whole jumble of electronic beats, aimlessly strummed acoustic guitar and some bloke with clipped accent going on about loving Mozart or something before it all morphs untidily and inappropriately into a rambling post-punk noise. It's like there's no pre-planning gone into this at all, but not in a crazed Japanese hardcore improv band sort of way, just a bloody great big mess created by people without the necessary skill to carry it off. Listening through its appalling twenty minutes is like watching a hastily cobbled together Sunday league team trying to emulate Holland's sublime total football, only to witness the keeper score an untidy own goal off his arse while the rest of the team collapse like overweight Labradors on wet lino. Out of the window it goes. Without a parachute.

Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1ZU. Or email MySpace link to [nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto:nightshift@oxfordmusic.net), clearly marked Demo for review.

**IMPORTANT:** no review without a contact address and phone number. No more than four tracks on a demo. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo.



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