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# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month.  
Issue 173  
December  
2009

**On a mission to save  
jazz - from itself!**

# The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band

photo: Richard Lawrence Wade

**NIGHTSHIFT: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU. Phone: 01865 372255**

# The Wheatsheaf

Live music in December

The 2<sup>nd</sup> The Spin Presents...

**BENCUMMINGS** Sat/ES (ES HUG)

Fri 14<sup>th</sup> Kilo Kilo Presents...

**BILLY PURE + THE MIGHTY REDOX + MATT WINKWIRTH** Sat/ES

Sat 5<sup>th</sup> Stone Free Presents...

**DESERT STORM + WITCHES + FROM LIGHT TO SOUND**

**FRANCIS PUGH & THE WHISKY SINGERS** Sat/ES

The 12<sup>th</sup> The Spin Presents...

**GILAD ATZMON** Sat/ES (ES HUG)

Fri 17<sup>th</sup> MEX Presents...

**JOE ALLEN BAND** Sat/ES

Sat 12<sup>th</sup> MEX Presents...

**ALPHABET BACKWARDS + MINOR COLES + ARCHIE** Sat/ES

The 17<sup>th</sup> The Spin Presents...

**BIG COLORS BIG BAND** Sat/ES (ES HUG)

Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Darling Legacy Presents...

**THE SAFETY FIRE + VISION FALL + MY SHIKOME + SCION** Sat/ES

Sat 19<sup>th</sup> MEX Presents...

**BEELZEBOZO + DESERT STORM + UNKNOWN FLOW**

**RISEN IN BLACK + RIOT HOUSE** Sat/ES

Mon 21<sup>st</sup> MEX Presents...

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# NEWS

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**STORNOWAY** complete their incredible 2009 by topping Nightshift's end of year Top 20 with 'Cold Harbour Road'. This year saw the band play five sets at Glastonbury, as well as perform at Radio 1's Big Weekend, appear on *Later... with Jools Holland* and headline a sold-out show at the Sheldonian Theatre.

Speaking to Nightshift, Stornoway singer Brian Briggs and keyboard player Jonathan Ouin, said, "Glastonbury was the real highlight of the year, because in itself it included so many different highlights! Right from the competition stage back in March when we hired a bus and drove down to Pilton and met Michael and Emily Eavis, the whole thing was unforgettable. The actual festival was a bit of a whirlwind: we crammed in about five gigs on different stages and winnebago roofs. I think our set on the Acoustic Stage on the Sunday was the one we all enjoyed the most.

"Musically speaking, our gig at the Sheldonian is still etched on our minds though; it was a true privilege to be able to play in a beautiful, historic Oxford building like that, and to so many people. Incredible. With the help of the Oxford Millennium Orchestra, we were able to re-imagine some of the familiar songs in a grander setting and add a layer of intensity, which even we didn't expect.

"The plan is to finish off an album over the next couple of weeks. Some of this will be re-recording, remixing or adding extra carot chops or saucepan or throwing broken crockery around - whatever is required. The majority will be self-produced. Hopefully it will be done before the year is out, but we are sticklers for details..."

Stornoway headline the next Uni-Truck event at Bucks University in High Wycombe on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Joining them on the bill are Pulled Apart By Horses, Talons, Ute and Dusty & the Dreaming Spires. Admission is free for Bucks University students or £5 for everyone else. Visit [www.thisistruck.com](http://www.thisistruck.com) for more details.

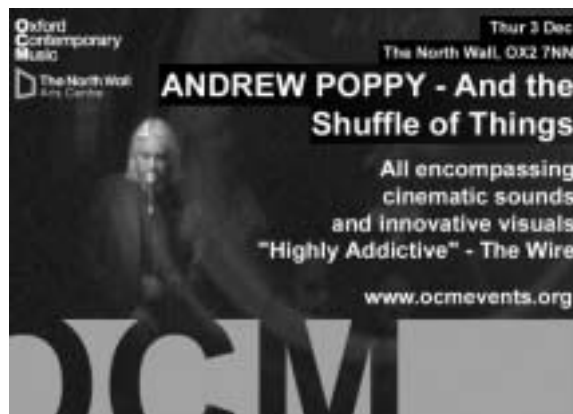
**BORDERVILLE** celebrate the digital download release of their debut album, 'Joy Through Work', with a two-night stint at The Port Mahon on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of December. The shows will involve various comedy and cabaret support acts as well as Borderville's characteristically flamboyant live show. Advance tickets are on sale now from [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com).

**NICK COPE** releases an album of songs specially written for children this month. The Candyskins frontman has been running special kids music sessions at the Fusion Arts Centre on Princes Street, behind East Oxford Community Centre. Nick explained the motivation behind the album: "I work at several schools and nurseries in and around Oxford and the CD was inspired by the lack of original kids' songs. My kids are a little older now but the endless car journeys with 'The Wheels On The Bus' ringing in our ears got the idea started. It got me back into writing and performing, which has been a revelation, and now with the audience jumping around at the front dribbling, screaming and crying, nothing's really changed much from Candyskins days!" You can order Nick's CD, 'What Colour Is Your T-shirt?', from [www.nickcope.co.uk](http://www.nickcope.co.uk).

**BANBURY-BASED STRING PLAYER** Richard Heacock has started up an online string arrangement service for local bands. Visit [www.myspace.com/fatcatstrings](http://www.myspace.com/fatcatstrings) for more information.

**AS EVER**, don't forget to tune into BBC Oxford Introducing every Saturday evening between 6-7pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays a selection of new local releases, demos and interviews. The Boxing Day show will feature a complete run through of Nightshift's end of year Top 20. The show is available to listen to online all week at [bbc.co.uk/oxford](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

**AND FINALLY**, this month we bid a very fond farewell to long-time Nightshift contributor Katherine Hieronymus, who is leaving Oxford to return to her native America. Katherine has been writing reviews for Nightshift since 2002 under the pen name Katy Jerome, as well as fronting her own band My Friend Rachel. We wish her all the best back in the States.



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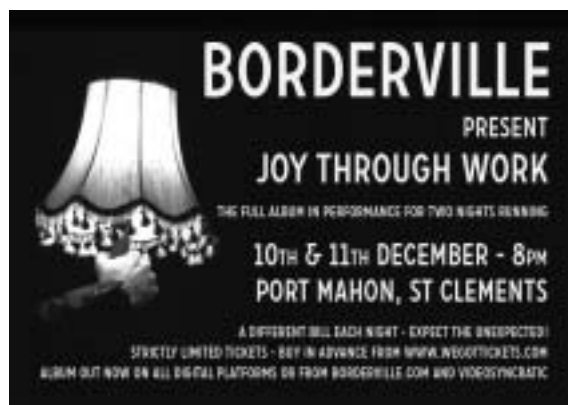
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**Merry Christmas to all our readers.**

**The next Nightshift will be out on December 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**Copy deadline is November 20<sup>th</sup>.**



a quiet word with

photo: Richard Lawrence Wade

# *The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band*



**YEARS AGO NIGHTSHIFT** shared a house with a jazz fan who woke us every Sunday morning playing Miles Davis way too loud. Eventually, in a moment of surreal heroism, our cat jumped off the bed, onto the table on the landing and pushed our housemate's entire box of Davis and Coltrane tapes down the stairs. Victory was ours and a lesson was learned.

**'BARON' STUART MACBETH**, singer, pianist and banjo player with The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band is on a similar mission to banish the forces of evil that make listening to jazz music an endurance test rather than a riot of revelry and drunken fun.

STUART: "I spent a lot of time walking around in the jazz section of HMV hiding the Miles Davis albums so no-one could find them and get put off jazz for life. If you walked into HMV and wanted to find out about jazz, nine times out of ten you'd walk out with a Miles Davis record. A lot of people think that *is* jazz music. But if you've grown up listening to The Clash, what do you wanna listen to Miles Davis for? I wouldn't play most of that shit in a lift. But if you ended up with, say, Jabbo Smith or Louis Armstrong's Hot Five playing 'Hotter Than That', then that's a revelation. If it doesn't improve your life it will at least ensure

you've got something worth listening to if we come around your house."

**THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT Spasm Band** are Oxford's most unexpected musical success story of 2009.

Nightshift first encountered the band bringing down the house at Klub Kakofanney's monthly night at the Wheatsheaf back in February, kicking out a raucous, riotous, rasping 1930s-style speakeasy jazz, drenched in sweat and gin, dressed in louche suits and singing about sex and narcotics. The sort of authentic New Orleans jazz we thought had long since been emasculated by the lounge musak and tedious virtuoso brigade.

We immediately invited them to headline this year's Oxford Punt festival and were rewarded by one of the greatest Punt sets ever witnessed: a packed venue of drunken hipsters dancing like lunatics, invading the stage and taking to the mic to join in. Decades of conditioning was broken: jazz was *fun*.

**THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT Spasm Band** was formed in 2006 by Stuart, who had a musical epiphany at the age of 12 when he heard Louis Armstrong's 'St Louis Blues' on a Walkman. At first they

were a raggle, taggle outfit with Stuart playing kazoo and a banjo made out of an old biscuit tin, and his friend Tom playing a borrowed ukulele and harmonica.

STUART: "I couldn't blow the kazoo while I was singing so I sellotaped it to a coat hanger and strapped it around my neck. That was the band. We couldn't play our instruments properly so we developed an outlandish stage act and hoped no-one noticed."

Over time members came and went and the band gradually took shape, playing tunes from the 1890s through to the 1940s, plus an increasing amount of original material, mostly improvised.

The current seven-piece features Stuart alongside 'The Reverend' Tom Costelloe (*guitar and banjo*); Victor 'Buzz' Booker (*upright bass*); Paul 'Bunny' Eros (*trumpet and vocals*); John 'Muggsy' West (*sax and vocals*); 'King' Martin Horsfall (*trumpet and trombone*) and John 'Hurricane' Gannon (*drums*).

STUART: "We based our sound on a group called the Barnstormers Spasm Band, a skiffle band active in the late 1950s. When we started it had to be skiffle because we couldn't get anyone who played an instrument to join the band. Even people who knew a little about jazz didn't understand where we were at."

And so, avoiding established jazz clubs who wouldn't touch the band with a barge pole, The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band took their music to the unwashed masses, along the way gaining the tag 'Chav Jazz'.

MUGGSY: "The label came about when Stuart started out, playing some real dives: they even used to get requests for 'God Save The Queen', which is pretty hard to play on a kazoo when you've drunk half a litre of gin. The name has stuck with us. I guess the local modern jazz clique would probably describe us as 'a bunch of chavs in Primark suits defiling good music', so yeah, 'Chav Jazz' it is."

## **WHEN NIGHTSHIFT MEETS**

The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, we first want to know where they think modern jazz stopped being the fun, escapist party music it originally was, and what they can bring back to the genre.

STUART: "Hot jazz lost its reputation for provoking disorder. Jazz is supposed to be music of anguish and suffering. While the early enthusiasts in Britain understood that, by the 60s people were turning it into pop music. They retained the instrumentation of jazz but they butchered its spirit. Real jazz for us is beat music and it's speed-fuelled. We play jazz music that speaks of subjects like drink and sex and domestic violence. We make the music up as we go along - it's exciting and switches people on. We're not purists about it."

BUNNY: "Things went wrong with Stan Kenton and 'progressive jazz'; a steady move towards abstraction, an abandonment of traditional chord changes for the ever more abstruse. Eddie Condon said about the difference between modern and old jazz musicians: 'They flatten their fifths, we drink ours'. Attempts to fuse it with other musical forms in order to keep it relevant; questions of 'authenticity' and 'appropriation', that got in the way of the music. But then all this isn't necessarily jazz's fault - shunted from the mainstream by the emergence of rock'n'roll and other children's records, what was it meant to do? I like to think we're paring it down, taking it back to what first made it swing out."

MUGGSY: "Obviously there are some greats from the modern era

but they're never going to get you bouncing off the walls. We want to bring back the sheer madness of it all, complete with the *risqué* lyrics, hard hitting riffs, raucous horn section and a furious pace."

A major source of frustration to each of the band is lack of availability in shops of the old jazz sounds.

BUNNY: "The lack of any pre-1960 jazz in record shops when I was a kid was awful; I once bought a Benny Goodman CD and they gave me a free CD entitled 'Modern Jazz' with a ghastly version of Glenn Miller's 'Moonlight Serenade' on it that sounded like a soft porn soundtrack by Weather Report. This led to me talking to my Grandpa Jim about music a lot and buying 78s in box-loads from the age of 13, because they were junk to most people, dirt cheap as a result, and you sure as hell weren't going to find that stuff anywhere else."

**OXFORD GIG GOERS HAVE TAKEN** to The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band with extraordinary enthusiasm, pulling in fans who would never otherwise contemplate dancing to a jazz band. Most importantly they've left behind the purist scene and ghetto mentality of many jazz acts and taken their music into venues like the Cellar and the Wheatsheaf, playing alongside bands of all genres. This month they will share a stage with electro-punks Baby Gravy and math-mod rockers Dead Jerichos at what promises to be one of the best, and certainly most diverse, gigs of the festive period.

Do they see any other bands with a similar attitude and feel for jazz as themselves?

BUZZ: "Sure, there are bands with similar line-ups, but if they were similarly minded we'd be seeing them in the venues we play. We don't see anything like that."

STUART: "The jazz we play is a living, hard-hitting music. There are some superb DJs around but we don't know any other bands who approach New Orleans jazz as modern music. Traditional jazz purism repulses us. It's like the music's gone into a coma. There's also a retro scene, which is more of a tea-drinking crowd and we definitely don't fit in with that lot; they'd run a mile!"

It's not just in their home town that they've won a new legion of fans. Beyond Oxford they fare even better.

STUART: "Our big break was being booked for the first Camp Festival in July 2008. That's when the band really started jumping. Gaz Mayall, who deals in old jazz 78s, heard us and booked us to play at his club. We couldn't go back to doing pub gigs after that."

MUGGSY: "Apart from what felt like a festival a week over the summer, we've been playing a lot around Bristol, Reading, Northampton and in London clubs like Gaz's Rockin' Blues and the Big Chill House. We've been on the X90 most weekends. Stuart has even been known to put on a bit of a show at motorway service stations on the way home. Apart from the service stations, the reception

has been pretty good."

Among regular Oxford gig-goers, though, it will be The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band's Punt set at the Cellar in May that sticks best in the memory; how was that night for them?

MUGGSY: "I was nervous. It was either going to be a disaster or insanely good, and there wasn't going to be any middle ground. Walking in, it felt a bit like we'd walked into the wrong club, and the audience looked like they thought we might have too, but once we got started it was cool. The crowd was fantastic."

BUNNY: "It was like the 60s: 'If you remember it, you weren't there'. So I drank until I couldn't, because I was. The stage invasion was awesome, though; who'd have thought, in 2009, a Nat Gonella song would have (Oxford Mail clubbing guide scribe) Marc West hanging off a microphone and bellowing the back-up vocals with us, or that wildly dancing people would have to be removed from the stage?"

MARTIN: "That was a terrific night. We have always insisted that our music is for everybody and that crowd gave us a great reception."

**NOW FIRMLY ESTABLISHED AS** one of Oxford's most consistently entertaining live acts, with a set made up of original material and classic covers and a sound based on free-spirited improvisation, there are plans for an album next year.

STUART: "We have an LP in the can which is a mixture of our own songs and our arrangements of old tunes. It was recorded very quickly, and we've left all the mistakes in. It's good primitive music, just the seven of us wailing around the piano."

What do the band think about the Oxford music scene, both its jazz scene and the scene as a whole?

BUNNY: "It feels like there's a Jesuitical stranglehold on jazz, with a small clergy of musicians and a very narrow liturgy; if you don't play the right songs, always with an eye to modernity, with the right musicians in the right style, you're out in the cold."

"It's sad because there's excellent trad jazz to be heard at the Gladiators by the East Side Rhythm Kings, for example, and at least four proper hard-working swing bands in and around Oxford that don't get the audience they should. The back room of the Bullingdon is a great place for jazz bands of all flavours – David Shier's Big Colours band is always worth catching – but that's a notable exception. I wish there was more of it, and more variety."

STUART: "There are lots of bands in Oxford that are really exciting to watch but it's not a great town for jazz. The people of this city never got their jazz riot. They had to wait for The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band to come and shake it up for them."

*The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band play at the Cellar on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December with Baby Gravy and Dead Jerichos. Visit [www.myspace.com/theoriginalrabbitfootspasmband](http://www.myspace.com/theoriginalrabbitfootspasmband)*

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# Tracks of our Year

*Ah yes, the end of another great year for Oxford music, and so it falls upon us once again to compile the essential Top 20 of locally-made tunes. 2009 was a year that saw the emergence or development of some fantastic local talent. In some respects it's been an odd year for Oxford music with most of the local big guns holed up in the studio or touring far afield, which explains the absence of Radiohead, Supergrass, Foals, Young Knives, A Silent Film and Little Fish from the list. What it does highlight, though, is the incredible strength in depth we have in Oxford's music scene.*

*Whichever way you look at it, it's been Stornoway's year: from playing Glastonbury and Radio 1's Big Weekend, to appearing on Later with... Jools Holland and that astonishing show at the Sheldonian, they have beguiled and bewitched us at every turn and seem to be everyone's favourite band in town. Anyway, here's the Top 20. It's a corker.*

photo: JJ Bullock



## 1. STORNOWAY: 'Cold Harbour Road'

What a year it was for Stornoway. They triumphed at every turn, creating challenges for themselves and cruising to victory, with no agenda or attitude, just the quiet, confident knowledge that they, not the Devil, had all the best tunes. Their two official releases this year, 'Zorbing' and 'Unfaithful', were reworkings of older songs, but even barring those, we were spoilt for choice: it could have been 'We Are The Battery Human', or 'Fuel Up', but this beautiful, bleak ballad is the killer. Brian Briggs' stunning voice soars like the seabird of the lyrics, bringing to life the ocean and wilderness that surround the town from which they take their name. 'Cold Harbour Road' is the sound of longing and loneliness and love and a thousand other flowering emotions all condensed into four and half minutes of musical magic.

## 2. BORDERVILLE: 'Flights'

A band who forever stand firm against the drudgery of grey indie rock, Borderville's long-awaited debut album was everything we'd hoped for and more – a full-on concept album that explored humanity's relationship with work, obsession and control, played out like an elaborate rock musical by virtuoso musicians whose imaginations simply won't sit still and fancy themselves as Bowie's Aladdin Sane reborn. 'Flights' is the singular high point of an album of highs, all amphetamine piano runs and a span that connects Queen on one shore to *West Side Story* on the other.

## 3. KATE GARRETT: 'King Of The Birds'

The death of Kate Garrett from cancer in the summer, at the age of 37, was a tragedy. As the founder of the Oxford Young Women's Band Project she was an inspiration to scores of girls, but it's for her stunning vocal talent that we'll remember her, and her final release was her greatest: 'King Of The Birds' is an otherworldly folk-pop flight of fancy that could melt the heart of anyone who heard it. Accordion and violin set the chill, rustic scene but Kate's voice, hovering and swooping around the pretty, seductive melody lifted it up somewhere magical. A fitting legacy to a life well lived.

## 4. RICHARD WALTERS: 'The Animal'

Many years we've waited for Richard to release his debut album and Oxford's finest vocal talent delivered in typically emotive style, his tender, powerful voice adrift among the sparse acoustic arrangements, delivering unexpected lyrical hammer blows like this stark, brutal tale of domestic violence that is the album's title track. The shocking subject matter is so much more potent for its delicate grace

## 5. MEPHISTO GRANDE: 'Sea Life Part 2'

Any band featuring a man dressed in gold lamé playing a saxophone and clarinet simultaneously while all around him freewheels chaotically to Hell's own blues bar gets our vote. Mephisto Grande are that band and made this year's most wayward rock'n'roll gospel-punk jazz-core noise, coming on like a particularly belligerent Tom Waits fronting The Magic Band in The Birthday Party's subterranean hideout. 'Sea Life Part 2' was the clamouring, cathartic highlight of their startling 'Seahorse Vs The Shrew' album.

## 6. WINCHELL RIOTS: 'Glasgow Space Flight'

"Oceanic"; "glacial": Winchell Riots seem to attract epic adjectives, and we often find ourselves watching them, imagining their intricately epic music soundtracking *Life On Earth* or *somesuch*, as they tap into both Sigur Ros and Muse, taking the best of both worlds without losing their own identity along the way, as this gloriously spacious pop spangle so ably demonstrates, a studied reverie that blossoms and takes flight before dissipating into the ether.

## 7. ALPHABET BACKWARDS: '80s Pop Video'

Oxford's singalong stars of the year, no contest. Between this and 'Polar Bears', James Hitchman showed an unerring ability to get the most out of a cheesy, cheery pop tune, all frothing, wobbly Toytown keyboard and sunshiny boy-girl harmonies, a sense of unbridled fun and an irresistible "Nah nah nah nah" chorus that had every packed venue they played in joining in en masse. All this and a lyric about awkward first-date shagging. What's not to love?

## 8. TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS: 'This Is, To Be'

Incredible to think that we've been raving about this lot for a couple of years now and half the band still aren't old enough to be allowed to play most of the venues in Oxford. Tristan & The Troubadours' musical ambition-to-age ratio is off the scale, regularly cramming more fun pop ideas into a three-minute song than many bands manage in an entire career. Breathless, scurrying synth-led pop that finds space for guitars and violins and still doesn't sound overburdened as it masterfully keeps its teasing tension on a tight leash until the very last minute, all the while sounding like OMD high on tartrazine and teenage ebullience.

## 9. MR SHAADOW: 'R U Stoopid?'

Mr ShaOdo is a man on a mission. Whether it's puncturing the ridiculousness of casual racism, or the idiocy of say-nothing grime wannabes, he's in the face of stupidity everywhere, and never more so than on his most recent single, wherein he asks both friend and foe, "R U Stoopid?". Now established as Oxford's finest ever rapper, and surrounded by a regular onstage crew, plus producer Offkey, he's more confident and fun than ever and he's been taking his words and music around the streets of cities across the UK. Hopefully it won't be long before a wider audience is following his rabble-rousing call-and-response anthems.

## 10. DESERT STORM: 'Shadow Of An Eagle'

When we first heard Desert Storm's debut album, we were shocked – here was a band who made that girizzled old monster called heavy rock sound fresh and mean and dirty once again. When we saw them live we were stunned. Instead of hoary old blokes with heavy beards they were fresh-faced teens. Here are riffs to crush your puny skull into something resembling peanut butter, fronted by the voice of Lemmy grafted onto an Orc by way of Killdozer. They call it stoner metal. We call it rock and fucking roll.

## 11. THE SCHOLARS: 'Turbulence'

They pinned their influences proudly on their chests like a badge of honour, but Banbury's Scholars had more than enough chops of their own to win our hearts and critical bouquets. The power and confidence of the band shone through, winning a slot at Truck Festival, and on this debut single mixing sleek electronics and chiming new wave guitars with singer Chris Gillett's theatrical baritone to make for a strident indie anthem that wipes the floor with most of Editors' recent album.

## 12. BABY GRAVY: 'Did It Again'

Gobby, bratty synth-punk of the old school top drawer from the stripped-down, amped-up Baby Gravy on this single, released back in February, bouncing off the walls like Penetration's Pauline Murray fronting a primitive early incarnation of The Human League in a garage rock basement, guitar rendered redundant as Dale's synth buzzes like an angry hornet. The still-ragged-round-the-edges feel merely accentuates their charm and they forever feel like a party about to kick off.



## 13. THE JOE ALLEN BAND:

### 'For You, My Love'

Once they were two; now they are four, and they even have a band name and everything. Meanwhile singer / guitarist Joe Allen and violinist Angharad Jenkins create yet finer music, in this case a rollicking electric fiddle-led shanty that brings a fresh buoyancy and abrasiveness to Joe's trademark taut, Mike Scott-like folk-rock.

## 14. FROM LIGHT TO SOUND:

### 'Hearts & Electricity'

With a pedigree that included members from The Workhouse, Sunnyvale Noise Sub-Element, The Evenings and Thumb Quintet, From Light To Sound were always going to be great, and this majestic set opener was all that, a sleek, shiny star cruiser of a tune that sounds like Gary Numan's electro ballad 'Complex' rewired for the post-rock generation

## 15. HEARTS IN PENCIL:

### 'Hannibal Ad Portas'

Like Tristan & The Troubadours, Hearts In Pencil are a bunch of teenagers out of Witney quickly breaking out of the shackles of their influences (in HIP's case, The Libertines) and creating fun new sounds. 'Hannibal Ad Portas' was a pleasingly virulent pocket-size gothic opera that ascends from sulky beginnings to a raging storm of angst and ire that's as deliciously over-egged as great preposterous pop should be.

## 16. THE BLACK HATS: 'Broken Bones'

Yobbish artisans in the lineage of The Who, The Faces and The Jam, spiced up with a few shards of Young Knives, The Black Hats were dab hands at kicking out genuine indie anthem material that melded up-for-a-scrap meatiness with undiminished pop sensibilities as this brash, aggressive nugget from their album, 'What's Not To Understand?' ably demonstrates, and if you disagree, they'll simply boot you where it hurts.

## 17. DEAD JERICHO: 'Red Dancefloor'

If Paul Weller had grown up listening to math-rock, he might have founded Dead Jerichos, a trio who even by the high standards of this year's crop of local teenage

bands, punched well above their age band weight. In fact, we wonder how, with their tender years, they can write songs like this – a tale of blood on the dancefloor (literally) as coke'n'lager-fuelled fights break out in Abingdon nightclubs. With their militant modish intensity and punk-disco elasticity, you can easily picture them filling those same dancefloors in the not too distant future.

## 18. HREDA: 'Minnows'

While Oxford (okay, the entire world) is awash with instrumental bands playing difficult music, the best ones continue to stand out even more. Drums'n'guitars trio Hreda possess the rare ability in the world of post-rock to be both pensive and cathartic – hypnotic and angular, all busy fretplay and dinky subtlety that makes way for a more confrontational stance, where staccato riffs and resolute beats take over. Little wonder they seemed to be so many local musicians' favourite band in town.

## 19. SPIRAL 25: 'Today's Future (Tomorrow's Past)'

We still haven't thought of a better description for Spiral 25 than 'slow-motion narcotic groove rock', because that sums them up perfectly, a band who hit a groove and mine it deeper and darker until you come up coated in soot and dirt and your mind spinning from the pretty psychedelic fractal patterns burned into your retina. On this track from their debut EP they exhume the blues via The Doors' 'The End' and grind relentlessly into the black.

## 20. DR SLAGGLEBERRY: 'Feed Me A Stray Cat'

Restless, rhythmic rocking is the order of the day for Chinnor's Dr Slaggleberry, a band formed by three drummers, two of whom switched to guitar and who play behind spooky white masks, lest a glimpse of the humanity behind them detract from the glowering tumult they create. Part prog, part metal, a tiny, weeny bit jazz, partway between King Crimson and Meshugga, they are a band that sounds like a car being driven with three people's hands on the wheel and three feet hovering over the accelerator, but held together with pin-tight syncopation.

Mr ShaOdo



photo: Louis Taylor

Borderville



photo: Terri Amos

Tristan & The  
Troubadours



photo: Marc West

From Light To  
Sound



Mephisto Grande



photo: Johnny Moro



# RELEASED

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## THE DACOITS

### 'The Dacoits'

(Own label)

It's well over a year since we reviewed The Dacoits' last demo; since then the Faringdon-based band have been pretty quiet, holed up in the studio recording this debut album. Musically, though, they're swimming in the same murky waters as before, an ominous rumble heralding opener 'Black Dog', while 'Home By Twelve' is a moonlit dip in the same lake that PJ Harvey's blacker moods drag her towards. In fact Polly Jean is a regular reference point throughout the album, singer Carrie Rossiter possessed of a similarly gravelly, searching vocal style and lyrical disposition on the best songs here.

Where The Dacoits are strongest is in these darker moods, when Carrie's full of a starchy, witchy angst and the band are grinding out a gothic form of garage-pop. Along with 'Home By Twelve', the album's strongest moment is 'Turn You On', the grungier side of PJ Harvey



married to Radiohead's 'Just'.

Where The Dacoits flounder is trying to slow things down and tone down their more rockist tendencies, as on the floaty 'Raze It To The Ground', all "wooh-wooh" backing vocals and forced intensity, like some mid-90s major label indie band after they've been told they'll be dropped unless they can write a couple of Belinda

Carlisle-style power ballads. Ditto the cloying MOR soul-rock of 'Other People', which just reminds us of the sort of sterile, over-earnest, middle-aged soft rock you used to get as the musical interlude in old 1980s Saturday evening variety shows: offensively inoffensive rock music for people who don't like rock music but think they ought to show willing. In fact there's an odd too-grown-up-for-their-own-good feel to The Dacoits throughout the album, a bit too much studio polish, when you feel the songs need a bit more dirt under their nails. Even when Carrie's hollering "I'd love you to turn me on" there's a feeling she's faking it for the camera; compare this to Little Fish's emotionally raw, loose-limbed thrash: the feeling that there is a band for whom every performance is catharsis.

All of which can read as a little too damning of a band who can rip the best out of a mood piece when they stop trying so hard to please an imagined army of A&R execs and just get down to business. As Morpheus says to Neo in *The Matrix*: "Stop trying to hit me and hit me".

**Dale Kattack**

## SEROTONIN

### 'Siempre y para Siempre'

(Crash)

The title gives the game away; in English it means "always and forever". In Serotonin's case it means keeping the flame of Nirvana burning always and forever, the Bicester trio ploughing headlong, without a single sideways glance, through gruff, growly grunge balladry of the sort that could pass as one of Kurt's more Mogadon-inspired downers. Pretty generic stuff, but then, if Buffy Clyro can keep a career alive doing pretty much exactly the same thing, then no reason to knock Serotonin, especially when there's a thousand market towns out there populated with kids whose iPods are hardwired to 'Bleach' and 'Nevermind'. Did we mention that Serotonin's singer is called Jay Cobain?

**Dale Kattack**



## ALPHABET

### BACKWARDS

#### 'Primark'

(Kittywake)

The notable absence from Alphabet Backwards' debut album earlier in the year, 'Primark' gets a download single release. From its opening gambit of "Let's all go to Primark / Where all the girls look the same," it casts a casually disdainful look at modern life's lack of character, and while it's not in the same league as the band's brilliant, anthemic 'Polar Bears' or '80s Pop Video', the bubbling synths and blokey observational narrative pitch it at a likeable point between Silicon Teens and Jamie T.

**Sue Foreman**

pop, Hammond organ buzzing and, along with the trumpet, filling the gaps where a tune might otherwise go. From its musical box beginnings to its billowing climax, it feels like Witches on autopilot, an album filler rather than a showcase single. Which is all the more surprising given the strength of the new material on the free sampler CD they gave away a few months back.

**Dale Kattack**

## RISE EAST STRIKE WEST

### 'To The Lions'

(Own label)

With such an apocalyptic band name, it's a shame Rise East Strike West's music often sounds so ponderous and laboured. We want tidal waves of overdriven guitars, hellbastard screaming and the sound of several drum kits being kicked off a mountain top. Instead this east Oxford collective twinkle and drift down that well-trodden post-grunge path, sometimes, after a substantial wait, billowing up into a decent storm of noise, only to sink back down into moody contemplation. Following in the footsteps of This Town Needs Guns, Rise East... try to keep things fresh to an almost pathological degree, rarely letting an idea settle before they take a detour, when perhaps a more straightforward approach would benefit them. 'Guns For Show', for example, builds to a sizeable crescendo, but such displays of power come too infrequently and, paradoxically, the whole EP becomes a bit of a restless dirge.

**Dale Kattack**

## WITCHES

### 'Expansion'

(Own label)

Witches are one of Oxford's finest unsigned bands – a group that know how to put on a show and find that fine balance between delicate tenderness of melody and all-out searing, serrated rock noise. So why does this new single – a taster for their second album, due next year – leave us so underwhelmed? Maybe it's Dave Griffith's voice, here sounding timid when his reedy, emotive singing style can conjure something truly magical like 'Sleep Like the Witch That You Are'. Maybe it's just the song itself, such as it is – a slender affair, pretty but unengaging, a bit country rock, a bit 60s psych-



## DR SHOTOVER: Happy Critical Mass

So there I was, listening to "Mekanik Destruktiw Kommandoh" by MAGMA, idly remembering hairstyles gone by... when some chirpy little elf popped his head round the East Indies Club music room door and asked if I'd like to help organise a seasonal charity concert called "We Wish You a Metal Christmas". My reply was brief and to the point and contained the following letters (NB the right ones, but *not necessarily* in the right order): F-U-C-O-F-F-K... I think there was an exclamation mark in there too, but what do you care, you inbred illiterate? However, after an appeasement campaign which involved the promise of a Fortnum & Mason's hamper delivered to Shotover Towers on Xmas Eve, I consented to devise a Seasonal Quiz, and here, without further ado, it is:

- Which of these acts are you most likely to find in your Xmas stocking?  
a) *Little Boots* b) *Little Feat* c) *Little Fish* d) *Little and Large*
- Which of these acts most sums up your festive season?  
a) *Xmas Lights* b) *Carole King* c) *Psychic TV* d) *Drunkenstein*
- Who, if anyone, would care if Coldplay ceased to exist?  
a) *Gwyneth Paltrow* b) *Snow Patrol* c) *Charles Manson* d) *That was a rhetorical question, stoopid*
- Spot the Oxford band!

- Stormoway in a manger* b) *Hark the Headcount angels sing* c) *I saw three*

*Relationships come sailing in*  
d) *Good King Winchell Riots looked out*

- Do they know it's Xmastime at a-a-all?

- No* b) *Yes* c) *Umm...* d) *Not sure*

**Next month:  
Meet The New  
Toss, Same  
As The Old  
Toss**



"Hello, we're the carol-singers" –  
MAGMA await their sherry and mince pies

# the JERICHO

TUESDAY 01 DEC  
**COMMA CLUB  
MUSIC NIGHT**

WEDNESDAY 02 DEC  
**DEAD CONFEDERATE**  
+ SPIRAL 25

TUESDAY 08 DEC  
**HORSE FEATHERS**  
+ MESSAGE TO BEARS

FRIDAY 11 DEC  
**WE AERONAUTS**  
+ THE GULLIVERS + SMALL ENGINE REPAIR  
+ BEAR IN THE AIR

SATURDAY 12 DEC  
**JOHN BRAMWELL**

FRIDAY 18 DEC  
**PINEY GIR**

19/20 DEC  
**GAPPY TOOTH  
WEEKENDER**

MONDAY 21 DEC  
**CASIOTONE FOR  
THE PAINFULLY ALONE**

JUST CONFIRMED:  
ERRORS, FIRST AIR KIT, CHRIS TT, DDMYYYY.

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56 WALTON ST. OXFORD  
JERICHOBOOKINGENQUIRIES@LIVE.CO.UK

162 Cowley Road Oxford

01865 244516

## December

Every Monday

### THE FAMOUS MONDAY NIGHT BLUES

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

7<sup>th</sup> **24 PESOS (UK)**

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

21<sup>st</sup> **CHRISTMAS PARTY** with  
**ROBERT HOKUM'S ALLSTAR BAND** plus guests

Every Tuesday

### THE OXFORD JAZZ CLUB

3<sup>rd</sup> **THE HUGH TURNER BAND**

8<sup>th</sup> / 15<sup>th</sup> / 22<sup>nd</sup> **THE HOWARD PEACOCK QUINTET**

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

Wednesdays

9<sup>th</sup> **LITTLE COMETS**

Thursdays

3<sup>rd</sup> **MOSHKA** presents **VIXENS** / **CITY FATHERS** / more

Every Friday

### BACKROOM BOOGIE

*Funk, soul and R&B. 10.30pm-2.30am; £4.*

Friday Early Shows

18<sup>th</sup> **ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC XMAS PARTY** with  
**OSPREY & THE OX4 ALLSTARS** / **CHANTELLE PIKE** /  
**BABY GRAVY** / **JUSTIN GIBSON** / **MARTINI ROCKERS**  
/ **MAD ANDY LYONS. 7pm**

*Includes entry to Backroom Boogie afterwards*

Saturdays

5<sup>th</sup> **SIMPLE.** Electro house with **ERROL ALKAN.**

*10-4am. Tickets from wegottickets.com*

12<sup>th</sup> **SELECTA** with **BASSLINE SMITH & CABBIE.**

*9pm. £8 B4 11pm*

19<sup>th</sup> **OUT TO GRAZE** reunion with **ALTERN-8. 9-3am**

Sundays

6<sup>th</sup> **COMEDY CLUB** with compere **SILKY.**

*7.45-11pm; £7.50 / £6.50 concessions*

13<sup>th</sup> **CINEMATICS** / **THE SCHOLARS** / **VON BRAUN**

### New Year's Eve Party Thursday 31<sup>st</sup>

Reggae, soul, funk & dance with **JOHN H (Studio 45)**  
and **Addis Ababab Soundsystem.**

*10-30 - 4am. Tickets £8 from the Bullingdon*

# GIG GUIDE

## TUESDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

### KEVIN DEVINE + SHOES & SOCKS OFF: O2

**Academy** – Big Scary Monsters Records' Holiday Tour brings Brooklyn acoustic alt.rock singer-songwriter Kevin Devine to the UK, having made his name supporting Brand New across the States.

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Free weekly live jazz club night with guests The Hugh Turner Band.

**THE JON FLETCHER GROUP + MATT SAGE + SIMON DAVIES + SUE STARLING: The Vaults** – Acoustic live music in aid of Amnesty International, featuring local folk stalwart Jon Fletcher, plus Catweazle's Matt Sage.

**THE JOKER & THE THIEF + NIKKI LOY + MOLLY HODGE + THREE YEAR ZERO**

*Friday 4<sup>th</sup>*

## THE HORRORS:

### O2 Academy

In these days of short attention spans from both record companies and fans alike, it's rare for a band to be granted a second chance, never mind snatch it so vigorously as The Horrors have. Although their first album, 'Strange House', pricked the charts and saw them grace the cover of *NME*, they looked like typical This Week's Big New Thing fodder, a bunch of garage-goth chancers who were all image and little substance. But with this year's 'Primary Colours', Southend's black-clad skinny urchins have made possibly the best album of 2009. Having signed to XL and recorded with Portishead's Geoff Barrow, 'Primary Colours' is classic updated indie noise – hefty debts paid to The Chameleons and Psychedelic Furs, plus nods to Can, PiL, The Sisters of Mercy, My Bloody Valentine and Joy Division. Their influences are worn so obviously on their (black) sleeves, they might sound like some horrible tribute band, but the reverse is true. 'Sea Within A Sea', the bizarre seven-minute-long choice for a first single from the album, is a powerhouse of gothic krautrock, while throughout the album, the swarming keyboards, heavily-effected guitars and sonorous vocals make for a stunning update on post-punk's blueprint. They were shortlisted for this year's Mercury Prize, and probably should have won it, and against the odds, The Horrors are one of the most exciting bands around at the moment.



## DECEMBER

**WRITERS: Café Tarifa** – Free acoustic session with London's blues and soul types Joker & The Thief, plus local singers Nikki Loy and Molly Hodge.

## WEDNESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**SONIC SYNDICATE: O2 Academy** – Lightweight Swedish death metallers out on tour.

**DEAD CONFEDERATE + SPIRAL 25: The Bullingdon** – Alt.country and psychedelic grunge pop in the vein of My Morning Jacket from the Athens, Georgia crew. Support from local lysergic groove rockers Spiral 25.

**BLUE ROOM JAZZ SESSION: Baby Simple**

## THURSDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

### THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND + BABY GRAVY + DEAD JERICHO:

**The Cellar** – Unmissable local triple bill, featuring three of 2009's local stars. There's taut, punked-up math-mod rocking from Dead Jerichos and livewire electro-punk pop from Baby Gravy, while this month's cover stars The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band kick up a hell of a jazz party and show why they're Oxford's most unlikely new musical heroes.

**ANDREW POPPY: The North Wall, Summertown** – The minimalist composer and Lucius Malfroy lookalike performs his latest electronic composition, 'And The Shuffle Of Things', at tonight's OCM-presented event, which also features visual artist Julia Bardsley. Having arranged for acts as diverse as House Of Love, Erasure, Nitzer Ebb and The The in the past, Poppy's new album finds him leaving some of his considered minimalism behind in favour of a fuller sound, full of romantic piano patterns, dark ambient grooves and stark electronica.

**WILL YOUNG: The New Theatre** – Hmm, yeah, you know, him off that telly programme: curly hair, bit boring, did that rubbish version of 'Light My Fire'. Old ladies love him.

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – Trumpeter and Derren Brown lookalike Ben Cummins is tonight's guest, playing in the style of Clark Terry and Bob Brookmeyer, having performed with The New York Jazz Orchestra and Humphrey Lyttleton, amongst others.

**MOSHKA with VIXENS + CITY FATHERS: The Bullingdon** – Post-punk from Vixens at tonight's Moshka club night.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

## FRIDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**THE HORRORS: O2 Academy** – The Mercury-nominated goth-rockers unleash a coffinful of early-80s pop joy – *see main preview*

**KLUB KAKOFANNEY: The Wheatsheaf** – Klub Kak's very own Mighty Redox headline tonight's pre-Christmas party, with their unabashed blend of swampy blues-rock and magic mushroom funk.

They're joined by Billy Pure, Glenda Huish and singer-pianist Matt Winkworth.

### UPROOTED + PLAYER 2 + THIN GREEN

**CANDLES + SEROTONIN: Exeter Hall, Kidlington** – Benefit gig for the Make a Wish Foundation and Sobell House Hospice, with classic rock and pop covers duo Uprooted, new young local rockers Player 2, experimental electro-dance outfit Thin Green Candles and grunge rockers Serotonin.

**DO THE SKA: The Palace, Witney**

**EYE-CON: Isis, Witney** – Mod covers from the Jam, The Who and beyond.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

**GET DOWN: The Brickworks**

**TECHNICOLOR TIME MACHINE: Baby Simple** – Prog and psychedelia circa 1967 at the monthly club night.

## SATURDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

### WITCHES + DESERT STORM + FROM LIGHT TO SOUND + FRANCIS PUGH & THE

**WHISKY SINGERS: The Wheatsheaf** –

Excellent mixed bill of local bands tonight. Ebulliently cacophonous rocking from Witches, launching their new single, with support from monstrous stoner-metal heroes Desert Storm, electro post-rock instrumentalists From Light To Sound and malt-flavoured maudlin songsmithery from Francis Pugh.

**WINCHELL RIOTS + THE HALF RABBITS + SANGUINE HUM: The Cellar** – Glacial indie-rocking and stadium-bound pop from Winchell Riots at the third of their monthly residency shows.

**THE ANSWER + BLACK SPIDERS: O2 Academy** – Classic heavy rock from Northern Ireland's Answer, who have spent much of 2009 as tour support to AC/DC. Beyond this they've opened for Aerosmith and The Rolling Stones and been feted by Jimmy Page and Joe Elliot and now head out on a headline tour to plug new album, 'Everyday Demons', the follow-up to their lauded 'Rise'.

**FRANKMUSIC + KILLA KELA: O2 Academy** – Croydon's Frankmusik might feasibly be considered the arch-enemy of classic rock, so it's ironic he's playing the Academy the same night as The Answer, although in his own way he's just as cheesy and steeped in the past, recalling the electro-funk and disco of certain 80s acts, and coming in somewhere between Erasure and Chicago, although he's often mentioned alongside La Roux. Award-winning human beatboxer Killa Kela supports, putting his myriad vocal beats, scratching and MC skills to good use on new album, 'Built Like An Amplifier'.

**TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101:**

**O2 Academy** – Weekly three clubs in one night with indie and electronica at Transformation; 80s, glam and trash at Trashy, plus alt.rock, metal and punk at Room 101.

**BLAKES III + TELLING THE BEES: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock** – Blues and Americana from Blakes III, plus dark, occasionally psychedelic-tinged traditional English folk from Telling The Bees.

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

**THE JOHN BERRY BAND: Eynsham Sports & Social Club**

**SIMPLE: The Bullingdon** – Electro-house club night with Errol Alkan and residents.

**SKITTLE ALLEY ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Ox, Abingdon**

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

**THE FAMILY MACHINE + DUSTY & THE DREAMING SPIRES + GOLDMINES:**

**Malmaison** – Semi-acoustic session with local country-tinged indie faves The Family Machine and Robin and Joe Bennett's alt.country rockers Dusty.

**DENNY ILETT Jr & COMPANY: The Port Mahon** – The local guitarist and chums pay tribute to Led Zeppelin.

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

**24 PESOS: The Bullingdon** – Funky blues and soul from the London outfit at tonight's Famous Monday Blues show.

## **TUESDAY 8<sup>th</sup>**

**SETH LAKEMAN + 6 DAY RIOT: Oxford Town Hall** – The West Country troubadour returns – *see main preview*

**FROM THE JAM: O2 Academy** –

Bruce'n'Rick'n'the other one continue to relive The Jam's glory years, while Paul continues to receive the PRS royalty cheques.

**SET YOUR GOALS + BROADWAY CALLS + FIREWORKS: O2 Academy** – Triple bill of American punk-pop with San Francisco-based headliners Set Your Goals kicking out a decent propulsive post-hardcore racket, while Oregon's Broadway Calls bring their chest-beating style of punk-pop along in support.

**HORSE FEATHERS + MESSAGE TO BEARS: The Jericho Tavern** – Portland, Oregon's folkies return to town after their Academy gig in March, playing it sparse and warmly desolate, like Neil Young gone bluesgrass.

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Funky keyboard-led jazz from The Howard Peacock Quintet.

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

**LITTLE COMETS: The Bullingdon** – Newcastle's ebullient, Afro-pop-flavoured indie rockers head out to promote their debut single,

'Adultery', after tours with Hockey, Noisettes and The Twang and having made their name with a series of cheeky guerrilla gigs in university lecture halls and call centres, before being regularly manhandled from the venues.

**RAPTURE CHRISTMAS PARTY: Fat Lil's, Witney** – The local independent record shop presents a night of live bands, DJs and more.

## **THURSDAY 10<sup>th</sup>**

**BORDERVILLE: The Port Mahon** – First of a two-night stint at the Port for Borderville, celebrating the digital release of their superb debut album, 'Joy Through Work'. Expect plenty of beyond-the-call-of-duty rock theatrics, flamboyant performance and ambitious songwriting coming in somewhere near the point where Aladdin Sane-era Bowie writes a Weimer Republic remake of *West Side Story*. In the cosy confines of the Port, it should be even more intense.

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – Anglo-Israeli saxophonist and political author Gilad Atzman is the star turn at tonight's Spin session, having previously won best album at the BBC Jazz Awards for this 2003 'Exile' outing.

**THE ELRICS + BLACK HATS + LOST FROM ATLAS: The Cellar** – Sprightly stadium-sized indie pop from The Elrics at tonight's Big Hair club, plus moddish new wave rocking from The Black Hats.

**REVOLVER: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Heavy rock, punk, metal and more.

**TELLING THE BEES + MARIANA**

**MAGNAVITA: Baby Simple** – Acoustic night with local trad folkies Telling the Bees and Anglo-Brazilian folk-pop from Mariana Magnavita.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

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

## **FRIDAY 11<sup>th</sup>**

**THE EPSTEIN + WINCHELL RIOTS + RICHARD WALTERS: The Holywell Music Room** – Great triple bill of local talent from Coo Promotions, with Tex-Mex-infused country rockers The Epstein, glacial stadium indie types Winchell Riots and gorgeous, emotive balladeering from Rich Walters.

**THE JOE ALLEN BAND: The Wheatsheaf** – Taut, emotive folk-rocking from Joe and Angharad and crew.

**GUNFIRE 76 + BULLETS & OCTANE: O2 Academy** – Murderdolls frontman Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> returns to town with his new band, Gunfire 76, ditching the horrorcore theme in favour of a trashy, sleazy hard rock closer to The New York Dolls, Deadboys and Kiss. South Carolina's heavy rockers Bullets & Octane support.

**TERRORVISION: O2 Academy** – The 90s hitmakers continue along the reunion circuit, having reconvened in 2007. Best known for their Number 2 hit, a Mint Royale remix of 'Tequila', they're far rockier than that single suggests, closer to the upbeat party rocking of Reef.

**WE AERONAUTS + THE GULLIVERS + SMALL ENGINE REPAIR + BEAR IN THE AIR: The Jericho Tavern** – Sweet, lo-fi orchestral folk-pop from We Aeronauts, plus playfully ethereal goth-pop from The Gullivers and wistful acoustic Americana from Hereford's Small Engine Repair.

**BORDERVILLE: The Port Mahon** – Second night of the band's digital album release.



*Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>*

## **SETH LAKEMEN: Oxford Town Hall**

Seth Lakeman is a regular visitor to Oxfordshire, but each one is worthy of mention, as he continues to establish his credentials as a leading light of English folk revival. This time round Lakeman is plugging his new DVD, recorded live at Cornwall's Minach theatre – an outdoor amphitheatre set into the cliff face, a suitably romantic setting for his West Country stories, be they of love, death or disaster, ranging from tales of the English Civil War and Dartmoor ghosts to the Penlee lifeboat disaster. From his 2006 Mercury-nominated debut, 'Kitty Jay', through 'Freedom Fields' to last year's 'Poor Man's heaven', Lakeman has injected his very traditional style of folk with a freshness and attitude that brings it firmly into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He is a powerful singer and guitarist, but it's when he picks up his fiddle that he really dazzles and his tales of young maidens, handsome soldiers and tragic lovers really come to life. Seth spent this last summer as he normally does these days, touring the festival circuit, from Glastonbury's Avalon stage to the Cambridge Folk Festival to a headline set at Fairport's Cropredy Festival, and with each appearance he comes closer to the major commercial success his talents so richly deserve.

**QUEEN OF CLUBS: Bartlemas Chapel** –

The music and cabaret club comes to Cowley Road with live sets from burlesque gypsy ska outfit Scarlett In The Wilderness, singer-songwriter Kimwei and traditional Egyptian and Arabic ensemble Magan, led by Brickwork Lizards' Tarik Beshir.

**ABSOLUTE BOWIE: Kidlington Football Club** – Tribute to the Thin White Duke.

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

## **SATURDAY 12<sup>th</sup>**

**ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN: O2 Academy** – Sold out show for the Liverpoolian new wave legends – *see main preview*

**JOHN BRAMWELL: The Jericho Tavern** – I Am Kloot frontman Bramwell takes time out from recording his band's new album for a solo gig, showcasing his bleakly humorous, poetic lyricism that's seen him compared to Morrissey and Stuart Murdoch in the past.

**ALPHABET BACKWARDS + MINOR COLES + ARCHIE: The Wheatsheaf** – Celebratory, acerbic electro-pop from joyous local faves Alphabet Backwards, plus promising indie newcomers Minor Coles.

**PINDROP CHRISTMAS PARTY: The Half Moon** – The esoteric Pindrop brigade get into



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*Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>*

## ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN: O2 Academy

To many people of a certain generation, The Beatles were not the best group to come out of Liverpool. Instead that honour goes to Echo & The Bunnymen, who rank alongside the greatest acts to emerge in the wake of punk. Singer Ian McCulloch, guitarist Will Sargeant and bassist Les Pattinson (plus the late Pete de Freitas on drums) together recorded four albums between 1980 and 1984 that stand as classics of alternative pop music. Of these, 'Heaven Up Here' and 'Ocean Rain' are near-peerless examples of sweeping, timeless songwriting, displaying a musical ambition and depth that has stood the test of time and now finds them garlanded for their inspiration (without the Bunnymen, there'd be no Editors, Interpol, White Lies et al). The Bunnymen split in 1988 but the surviving trio (de Freitas dying in a motorbike accident in '89) reconvened in the mid-90s and have carried on where they left off, hitting a more recent creative peak with 2005's 'Siberia', and their set at Cornbury Festival in 2007 showed they're still one of the coolest looking and sounding bands on the planet. Pattinson left the band a few years back and this September long-time keyboard player Jake Brockman died, like de Freitas, in a motorbike crash, but this already sold-out show finds McCulloch and Sargeant as relevant today as they were nearly 30 years ago.

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**BANDS NIGHT: Fat Lil's, Witney**

**SELECTA: The Bullingdon** – Dubstep and bassline club night.

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

**EYE-CON: The Chequers, Headington Quarry**

### SUNDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**THE CINEMATICS + THE SCHOLARS: The Bullingdon** – Restless, angular new wave rocking from Glasgow's Cinematics, with support from promising local indie newcomers The Scholars.

### MONDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**THE LEE RYDER BAND: The Bullingdon** – London-based guitarist Ryder plays The Famous Monday Blues club, playing 70s-style electric blues in the style of Eric Clapton and Mark Knopfler.

**WAYNE HUSSEY: O2 Academy** – The Mission frontman and Dennis Norden lookalike goes solo.

### TUESDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**BETHANY WEIMERS + TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER + DOH, RAY, ME, EGON + ADAM BARNES + KAT GADSDEN: Café Tarifa** – Creative Tuesdays acoustic night, with wispy folk-pop from Bethany Weimers, plus emotionally taut pop from Tamara Parsons-Baker. Motion In Colour's Adam Barnes also takes a solo turn.

**TRAGEDY + SILVANITO + THE SHITE STRIPES: O2 Academy** – "Hilarious" heavy metal tribute to The Bee Gees, with "hilarious" support from White Stripes tribute types The Shite Stripes. Did you see what they did there? Did you? Did you see? Oh our aching sides.

**SAW DOCTORS: O2 Academy** – Return of the cult Irish folk-rockers, this time round with a greatest hits tour, including 'I Useta Lover', the biggest selling single in Ireland. Amid the timeless hometown vignettes and emotive, rootsy reminiscences, expect covers of Radiohead and Sugababes, and plenty of excuses to drink wildly and sing along.

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

**OPEN MIC SESSION: Baby Simple**

### WEDNESDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

**SHED 7: O2 Academy** – Bread and butter Britpop also-rans join the comeback bandwagon, unearthing all their old classics like... erm... er... ah yes, got it... no, sorry, that was by The Bluetones. 'Going For Gold'? That's the fella! Yeah, all the old classics. You lucky, lucky people.

**LUCIA & THE LEMONS: Baby Simple**

### THURSDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**GOLDIE LOOKIN' CHAIN: O2 Academy** – "Hilarious" comedy hip hop from the Newport crew responsible for 'Your Missus Is A Nutter', 'Guns Don't Kill People, Rappers Do', 'Your Mother's Got A Penis' and other rap classics.

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB with THE BIG COLOURS BAND: The Wheatsheaf** – Big band jazz with contemporary arrangements of everything from Duke Ellington and Chick Corea to Steely Dan and Frank Zappa.

**FIXERS + DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN + THE SCARLETTS: The Cellar** – Harmony-heavy Beach Boys-style psychedelic pop from Jack Goldstein's Fixers at tonight's Big Hair club, with

support from post-hardcore noisemongers Dial F and ska-punk from Scarletts.

**APPLE PIRATE CHRISTMAS PARTY: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Live punk, post-hardcore and metal bands.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

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

### FRIDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**THE COMPLETE STONE ROSES: O2**

**Academy** – Tribute to... oh go on, take a guess.

**THEA GILMORE: O2 Academy** – Poetry, pain and politics from the folk-pop queen – *see main preview*

**SAFETY FIRE + VISION FALL + MY**

**SHIKOME + SCION: The Wheatsheaf** – Four band bill of metal, hardcore and alt.rocking noise.

*Friday 18<sup>th</sup>*

## THEA GILMORE: O2 Academy

Twelve years and nine albums into her career, Oxfordshire-born singer-songwriter Thea Gilmore is only just 30 and remains one of UK folk music's best kept secrets, critically acclaimed at every turn but rarely troubling the charts like some of her contemporaries. But since she started out she's been happy to be an outsider, preferring to stay independent even when major labels were courting her.

Along the way she's won fans in Bruce Springsteen and Joan Baez (whom she duetted with on her 'Liejacker' album and supported on tour in 2004) and collaborated with the likes of Martha Wainwright, Zutons' David McCabe and members of The Waterboys. Her high standing is entirely due to her musical ambition and lyrical prowess, possessed of a poetic writing style that marries highly personal subject matter with a typical outsider political stance. Vocally Gilmore leans towards Chrissie Hynde and Lucinda Williams, updating traditional folk and blues sounds with a modern acoustic pop feel. After the comparative success of 'Liejacker' Gilmore this month releases 'Strange Communion', an album of Christmas songs, mostly self-penned but also featuring covers of Yoko Ono's 'Listen, the Snow Is Falling' and Elvis Costello's 'St. Steven's Day Murders', while live you can expect to hear quirky takes on Dead Or Alive and more.



**PINEY GIR: The Jericho Tavern** – Country'n'western pop fun from the Kansas singer and multi-instrumentalist at tonight's Coo Coo Club.

**GEORGE PRINGLE: The Cellar** – Vacuous Pop present the confessional electro-pop songstress.

**QE II + KRIS LUNDY: Wallingford Sports Park** – Tribute to Queen from QEII, plus a Meatloaf tribute from Kris Lundy.

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

**ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC CHRISTMAS PARTY: The Bullingdon** – Live music from Osprey and the OX4 Allstars, Chantelle Pike, Baby Gravy, Justin Gibson, Martini Rockers and Mad Andy Lyons.

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

## **SATURDAY 19<sup>th</sup>**

**WINTER WARMER: The Jericho Tavern** – First day of the annual weekend mini-festival – *see main preview*

**ELECTRIC SIX + EUREKA MACHINES: O2 Academy** – Return to town for Dick Valentine's garage-glam crew, now onto their sixth album, following on from their biggest UK hits, 'Danger! High Voltage' and 'Gay Bar', still kicking out their trademark clever/dumb tongue-in-cheek garage-rock-disco bombast, and sounding increasingly like Queen with every new record.

**ENGINE EARZ: O2 Academy** – Asian beats, dubstep and rock collision.

**BEELEBOZO + DESERT STORM + UNKNOWN FLOW + RISEN IN BLACK + RIOT HOUSE: The Wheatheaf** – Big metal noise-making at the Sheaf with horror-core riffmongers Beelzebozo, classic rock with a stoner twist from the mighty Desert Storm, plus prog-rock from Unknown Flow and thrash and death metal from Risen In Black.

**MISTY'S BIG ADVENTURE: The Port Mahon** – Fun, kitsch dance-pop from Grandmaster Gareth and that fella in the big dress made of rubber gloves.

**EVOLUTION: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Hard rock covers.

**OUT TO GRAZE: The Bullingdon** – The local summer dance festival reconvenes in the more intimate setting of the Bully for a night of old school acid house from Altern-8 and more.

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

**PETE FRYER BAND: The Red Lion, Marston SUPERLOOSE + THE ROUNDHEELS + OVERRATE: The Ox, Abingdon** – Skittle Alley Christmas party session.

**THE JOHN BERRY BAND: Stonesfield Sports & Social Club**

## **SUNDAY 20<sup>th</sup>**

**WINTER WARMER: The Jericho Tavern** – Second day of the mini-festival – *see main preview*

**THE DEPUTEES + CHRIS THOMPSON + PEACH: Malmaison** – Gentle-natured, harmony-

laden indie pop from Deputees, plus acoustic folk-pop from Chris Thompson and bluesy country rocking from Peach.

**KNIGHTS OF MENTIS + FILM NOIR: Eurobar** – Klub Kakofanny's Sue Smith and Phil Freizinger host their new monthly acoustic session.

## **MONDAY 21<sup>st</sup>**

**CASIOTONE FOR THE PAINFULLY ALONE: The Jericho Tavern** – Lachrymose lo-fi

electronica from Chicago's Owen Ashworth and his tribe of cheap'n'cheerful digital toys.

**ROBERT HOKUM'S ALL STAR BAND & GUESTS: The Bullingdon** – The Famous Monday Blues hosts its traditional Christmas party with various guests taking their turn on stage. Main attraction is The Guvnors' Robert Hokum, keeping alive the Delta and Chicago blues traditions.

**EMPIRE SAFARI + RIGHT BACK + ROB & GUS: The Wheatheaf**

**BEETROOT JAM: The Port Mahon** – Indie rock from Boog and punk rock from Jet Pack, plus an open rock jam.

## **TUESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**WARHEN + KOMRAD + FROM HERE, WE RUN! + LESLIE HAMMOND & HIS AMAZING ORGAN: The Cellar** – New wave rockers Warhen reform for a one-off gig, joined by experimental prog-core types Komrad, gothic math-pop lovelies From Here, We Run! and between-sets entertainment from Leslie and his (fnarr, fnarr) organ.

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – With The Howard peacock Quintet.

## **WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**MICHAEL SCHENKER: O2 Academy** – Solo show from the UFO and Scorpions metal guitarist.

**WHEATSHEAF CHRISTMAS PARTY with THE VICARS OF TWIDDLY + UTE + HARRY ANGEL: The Wheatheaf** – 60s-style surf rocking from the ever-entertaining Vicars of Twiddly at the Sheaf's Christmas bash. Support comes from promising alt.folkers Ute and dark-minded new wave rockers Harry Angel.

**ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Acoustic open mic evening.

## **THURSDAY 24<sup>th</sup>**

**A VERY REGGAE CHRISTMAS: O2 Academy** – The Academy's traditional Christmas Eve reggae party, as ever hosted by local favourites Mackating, plus reggae, ska and soul tunes from Count Skylarkin, and Trashy club DJs.

## **FRIDAY 25<sup>th</sup>**

Ah yes, Christmas Day. Leona Lewis roasting on an open fire. Children singing Christian Death rhymes. And the Nightshift editor forcefully shoving the Christmas tree up Simon Cowell's backside, the smug fucking goblin. Another glass of port, Dr Shotover? Then we'll see exactly how much we can rearrange John and Edward Grimes' faces before they no longer look identical.

## **SATURDAY 26<sup>th</sup>**

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Seacourt Arms**

## **SUNDAY 27<sup>th</sup>**

**BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3-11pm)** – All-day open blues jam.

## **MONDAY 28<sup>th</sup>**

## **TUESDAY 29<sup>th</sup>**

## **WEDNESDAY 30<sup>th</sup>**

*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*



*Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> / Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>*

## **WINTER WARMER:**

### **The Jericho Tavern**

This annual two-day mini-festival, jointly organised by local promoters Gappy Tooth Industries and Swiss Concrete is now in its fifth year and becoming a very welcome festive institution. You'll find no big names here, just a couple of dozen acts of varying shapes and sizes mixed up together for a seriously eclectic weekend of live music. Amongst the local favourites fraternity will be spiky electro-punk pop types **Baby Gravy** (pictured), who will doubtless be joined by rapper **Mr Shadown**; proggy funk-rock craziness from Sunday headliners **Drunkenstein**; taut, emotive folk-rockers **The Joe Allen Band**; the newly-downsized **Space Heroes Of The People**; **Komrad**, the prog-core outfit that's risen from the ashes of Eduard Soundingblock; soulful guitar pop outfit **Motion In Colour**; twee folk duo **The Fox & The Bramble**, plus promising indie rockers **The Spring Offensive**. From out of town there are idiosyncratic indie types **MJ Hibbert & The Validators**, featuring the former drummer from Prolapse and sounding like a cross between the Wedding Present and Half Man Half Biscuit; skewed and wiry grime-rock outfit **Fuzzy Logic** and Cheltenham's one-man electro-hip-hop-pop chap **Charlie Baxter**. Along the way you'll discover **Vileswarm**, a drones'n'chants'n'drifting joint project from Euhedral's Lee Riley and Eyeless Records chap David K Frampton; **Matt Winkworth's** Noel Coward-inspired songsmithery and quirky pop types **Project Adorno**. There's plenty more besides, including DJ sets from The Evenings each day, and at only £5 per day, or £7 in advance for a weekend ticket it's a great budget way of not only discovering some interesting new sounds, but a great way to escape the pre-Christmas consumer madness.

## **THURSDAY 31<sup>st</sup>**

**BACK TO THE FUTURE NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY: O2 Academy** – BTTF-themed party with all three films being screened plus a NYE Your Song special. Club nights Transformation, Trashy and Room 101 provide the tunes into 2010.  
**REGGAE, SOUL, FUNK AND DANCE PARTY: The Bullingdon** – Jason H and the Addis Ababa Soundsystem welcome in the New Year.  
**NEW YEAR'S PARTY: Fat Lil's, Witney**  
**GREEN ONIONS: Folly Bridge Inn** – Blues Brothers tribute party.



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## GOOD SHOES / LA SHARK

### The Jericho Tavern

La Shark, as teasing or scary as it may sound, provide just that in terms of music and theatre. The band, from New Cross in London, are incredible actors, not only when it comes to multiple musical personalities, but also in onstage presence. Their disarranged performance and look, knitted tightly to hook-laden danceable pop is totally brilliant. It's like licking the leftover sweetness of a melted Calippo. They embody a French version of Munch Munch with a Joy Division attitude and a sophisticated and fresh punk of spoken slogans... as if Robert Smith from The Cure had turned rockabilly. Their quirkiness, love for dressing up, gayness, and rococo interpretation of Edith Piaf's pains of the heart is fun, grabbing and still more fun. I *so* want to swim and dance with La Shark again.

But what an abyss I encounter when Good Shoes come on stage. Seriously, it must be really embarrassing to turn up onstage, after such a supporting performance, and tear everyone's expectations apart. I refuse to believe those fans at the Jericho Tavern are genuinely enjoying this show. Good Shoes are mediocre in skills, simple in effort and skint in energy. No matter how 'interesting' their lyrics can be (more qualified for Twitter than for songwriting, really), their music is same-ish and controlled, so much so that when they manage to release some sort of ferocity, the flame is already incandescent blue. There is nothing that distinguishes them from any other band, playing mildly catchy indie and swaying their lower limbs while



photo: Harry Wade

scratching their guitar strings like they flick their hair. If all I am getting is spiky guitars, Art Brut-esque nervous hiccups of vocals and washed-out *nouveau* punk, then, please, Good Shoes, Think Before You Play.

**Liane Escorza**

## LOS CAMPESINOS! / COPY HAHO

### O2 Academy

Copy Haho take to the stage safe in the knowledge that they already have fans in Oxford, local label Big Scary Monsters having released their debut EP, 'Bred For Skills & Magic'. Hook-heavy guitar pop with an abrasive underbelly is their *modus operandi* – comparing them to The Rakes wouldn't be much of an endorsement, so let's go for the neatly-turned-out offspring of The Wedding Present and Arctic Monkeys instead. Time will tell if the quartet have quite the skills and magic to become as famous as their home town Stonehaven's other significant export, the deep-fried Mars Bar, but there's no doubt which of them is the most nutritious. I'll be honest – I've known Los Campesinos! since they were knee-high to a genuflecting grasshopper, so tonight is almost as surreal an experience for me as it is for them: some way from their birthplace of Cardiff, being pawed at by hordes of lust-eyed teenagers, playing the first birthday party for a promoter named after their signature song.

The fact that said song, 'You! Me! Dancing!', is sarcastically introduced as 'Creep' suggests it's become a millstone hanging heavy around their collective necks, something everyone

wants to hear but they're increasingly reluctant to play. Nevertheless, party poopers they are most certainly not (even despite being officially diagnosed with swine flu, new vocalist/keyboard player Kim equipped with a bucket in case of mid-set Technicolor yawn), so play it they do and it's met with the anticipated delirium.

Los Campesinos! are no one-hit wonders, though – far from it. Debut album 'Hold On Now, Youngster' is well represented in the set and tracks like 'Ways To Make It Through The Wall' drawn from its darker, spikier successor, 'We Are Beautiful, We Are Doomed', are really beginning to come into their own. At the expense of some older gems ('The International Tweecore Underground' is a particularly lamented omission), there's also space to showcase material from forthcoming LP 'Romance Is Boring', due out in the new year, which hints at a more contemplative, considered, grown-up future. But – for the present, and especially given the circumstances – it's the scatty, bratty, livewire Los Campesinos! we want, and that, largely, is what we're delighted to get. **Ben Woolhead**

## STORNOWAY

### The Sheldonian Theatre

Even by Stornoway's ambitious standards, this is an *event*. Having performed at the Jacqueline du Pre Building and Oxford Botanical Gardens, tonight they become the first rock band ever to perform at the 340-year-old, Christopher Wren-designed University theatre. As such we get a brief lecture about the building's history and what not to do (no food, no drinks, no chewing gum, you filthy pop-loving peasants), as well as a support set from the Oxford Millennium Orchestra, which features both Stornoway bassist Ollie Steadman and violinist Rahul Satija.

It feels strange watching a gig in such a rarefied environment, but amid such splendour Stornoway sound more magical than we've ever heard them before. Lit only by sparse footlights, set opener 'Cold Harbour Road' soars into the Sheldonian's high ceiling like a cormorant above a bleak Hebridean beach: rich, powerful and tender, Brian Briggs' delicate but majestic voice filling every inch of space in the expansive hall. New song 'Fuel Up' is a wide-eyed car journey through sepia-tinted memories and longing and tinged with a gorgeous sadness, Jon Ouin swapping his keyboard for an Indian harmonium as Stornoway bring

a campfire intimacy to a setting more used to hosting full orchestras.

At every fresh turn Stornoway reveal greater songwriting riches, from Brian's mesmerising rustic and romantic solo turn, 'November Song', to the anthemic, banjo-led 'We Are the Battery Human'. Only 'Long Distance Lullaby' trips along the way, cluttered and clumsy, perhaps as much due to the unusual acoustics of the venue as the fact one of the brass players only joined the previous day.

And at the end Stornoway are joined by the massed strings of the Millennium Orchestra for an "experimental" (Brian's description) run through 'On The Rocks', and 'Unfaithful', with violins conjuring the sound of raindrops on the former, and a heroic sweep of sound on the latter, while 'Zorbing' is bold, hearty and faintly weird.

An audience that has sat in rapt silence throughout rises as one at the finale and Brian, a wholly reluctant star, returns to demand a massed Halloween scream from the 800-strong throng; a cathartic end to a unique evening. Gigs at the Sheldonian are rare occurrences. Bands like Stornoway are even more precious.

**Dale Kattack**

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## LUKAS LIGETI/ MARTYN HARRY/

### **Holywell Music Room**

One of the risks of performing experimental music is that sometimes the concept behind what's going on promises far more than the music itself delivers. For every piece as groundbreaking as John Cage's 4'33" or as heartstoppingly lovely as Stuart Dempster's experiments with trombones and reverb (no, really), there are a hundred examples of mediocre music produced through a 'higher' concept. So it is with Martyn Harry's 'Restraint For Handcuffed Pianist', which sees his wrists bound, allowing him a maximum range of an octave and a sixth on the piano. Fascinating concept, executed badly, since the bulk of his performance involves him hammering only on keys an octave and a sixth apart with little interest in really exploring melodic possibilities of his self-imposed limitations.

The less said about the execution of Braindead Collective's opening piece the better: a mumbled nine-minute monologue from *Catch 22* is its centrepiece, surrounded by an amorphous miscellany of swirls and drones, like a particularly uninspired Orb knock-off.

Lukas Ligeti delivers a bit more, firing off fizzing samples taking in everything from traditional African music to contemporary electronica with boundless enthusiasm. Mélange of influences notwithstanding, the main attraction is his instrumentation, a feat of science called the marimba lumina: an electronic marimba that uses each key to fire off MIDI samples when hit with the appropriate beater. Alas, by the middle of his set, it's the flashy bit of kit that's firmly centre stage, with Ligeti's in-depth explanations and dextrous manipulations of his pride and joy sidelining the music itself. What we end up with, sadly, is an inchoate and cluttered sprawl of ideas that, in trying to weave in too much and having apparently little sense of how to achieve this with coherence and harmony, never really gets going.

*Stuart Fowkes*

## LITTLE FISH O2 Academy

We feel a certain amount of trepidation about tonight's gig. Our favourite local band have been holed up in a recording studio in the States with uber-producer Linda Perry most of this year, doubtless being groomed for global rock domination and this morning we heard the first results of all that work: a puzzlingly polished pop remake of 'Sweat & Shiver', the song seemingly stripped of its emotionally wired mania.

And our doubts are doubled when Jules and Nez take to the stage tonight, supporting Eagles Of Death Metal, accompanied by a keyboard player. Suddenly their perfect symmetry is skewed. Too often tonight he dominates the songs, organ flourishes detracting from Jules' garage-sharp guitar hooks, when some simple bass fills would suffice. Tellingly tonight's highlight is the sparse, more considered 'Perfect Stranger', just Jules and Nez and an acre of extra space for the song to breathe. It's still a fantastic set, though. From opener 'Your Dress', with its solid drum tattoo – Nez playing with characteristically nonchalant brutality, like a giant plucking the limbs from hapless peasants – to the boiling, bluesy psych-rock of 'Die Young', which sounds like Grace Slick if she'd grown up in 70s New York, Little Fish remain an undiminished force of nature. Jules has become a stunning performer, a rock goddess with feline poise and sudden moments of snarling aggression and, on set closer 'Am I Crazy', a genuinely maniacal glint in her eye, staring daggers at an imagined foe. Her voice still sounds magnificent: a howl the like of which only Patti Smith can equal, and we wonder, if we'd never set eyes on them before, if we'd even notice the new guy sat stage left filling the sound out.

For the most part, then, early fears are assuaged; Little Fish may be under the guidance of the woman who gave the world Pink and Christine Aguilera, but live at least they're still the band we loved before: red and raw in tooth and claw.

*Dale Kattack*

## ALABAMA 3 O2 Academy

On the face of it, to call Alabama 3 Dad Rock would be unfair. Primarily because their music can hardly be described as rock. Instead, it's a hybrid of acid house and bluesy country. However, it's probably designed for your dad (if your dad had a mid-life crisis about fifteen years ago, and is still yet to recover), not least because the group seem to be getting too old for the music they play. And the term 'Dad Rock' implies a degree of pomposity very much present in the band's music.

They enter the stage (in complete darkness) to the sounds of dialogue samples and gunshots. Things don't get any subtler, unfortunately. Their beats are dark and heavy and rumble as deeply as loose coffin lids. This would all be fine, but it becomes objectionable when slide guitars and the affected vocals of lead singer 'Larry Love' and his Mickey Rourke-alike accomplice The Very Reverend Dr. D. Wayne Love are slapped over things.

In terms of tone, they seem to occupy the same terrain as Meatloaf and Sparks. It manages the paradox of being completely rooted in its time (here, the arrangements and jumping off point are acid house), and yet completely alien to anything its contemporaries came up with. And like these two bands, Alabama 3's music is kind of funny. Unlike these examples, though, I'm not sure it's supposed to be amusing. To be fair, not every song falls victim to this excess. Opener 'Shoot Me Up' is a dark, nasty piece of work, and all the better for it. 'Mansion' is a bouncier version of their biggest hit (and theme tune to *The Sopranos*) 'Woke Up', which finds itself buried half way through the set. And as for their aforementioned most famous song, it is extended into some grandiose statement of intent.

The problem with Alabama 3 is that they don't know how fundamentally silly their music can be. And for a band who are ageing, it's just looking embarrassing.

*James Benefield*

## WAVVES

### **The Jericho Tavern**


Everyone was hoping the current European tour by San Diego's Wavves would go better than this summer's disaster. Their set at Primavera in Barcelona ended in an onstage fight and the band getting bottled off, with subsequent dates cancelled after singer Nathan Williams admitted to an addiction to alcohol. A swift reshuffle saw Zac Hill brought in on drums but a day before this twenty-nine-date tour kicked off, to finish in Barcelona, Hill broke his wrist. However, soldiering bravely on with a somewhat tentative stand-in drummer their lo-fi, high energy take on the noise experience retains much of its power and charm.

Tunes are simple and to the point, the common factor being a fondness for unbridled whooping in a fashion almost akin to doo-wop.

Vocals are heavily treated with echo, though no-one came expecting to make out any words. Often the guitar is held back for much of the song, to be unleashed for maximum impact, a technique often used by The Gang of Four. On record they employ a technique that sounds like deliberate distortion, also used by The Flaming Lips on their new 'Embryonic' LP; whether they're fans is open to question. 'So Bored' encapsulates their attitude perfectly, and manages to be simultaneously nihilistic and joyous.

My one visit to San Diego created an impression of a clean, airy, well-heeled city and I can imagine a Wavves gig as a perfect counterpoint to a day on a spotless beach. They (or it could be he, opinion is divided on whether it's a band or just Williams) have taken a lot of stick for their rapid emergence as lo-fi superstars, such as from Psychedelic Horseshit, darlings of the Shitgazing scene (I swear I'm not making all this up). But scenes and sub-scenes aside, Wavves are a great deal of fun and that's what really counts.

*Art Lagun*



**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

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East Oxford Community Centre: 01865 792168  
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## CASTANETS / LAZARUS / SEABUCKTHORN

### The Wheatsheaf

It's such a quiet Sunday night down The Wheatsheaf tonight, it makes us wonder whether people are at home watching old clips of *Songs of Praise* on Youtube.

Despite the light smattering of punters, there's plenty of atmosphere coursing through the room, courtesy of Andy Cartwright, in his musical guise of Seabuckthorn. A man armed with an acoustic guitar is seldom cause for celebration but there are exceptions, and Seabuckthorn fits nicely into that category. His album 'Ether Trail' is an enthralling mix of folk and electronica, but tonight there seems to be more of a darker edge. Nightmarish folk drones mix with Spanish influences and elements of Americana calling to mind the last outing from Earth, as well as the desolate soundscapes explored by Ben Ulph. It's wonderfully haunted stuff.

Lazarus (aka Trevor Montgomery) is equally adept at creating a sombre atmosphere, although his blues-inspired dirges are also curiously uplifting. Despite the disappointing turnout tonight Montgomery is totally immersed in his songs, investing them with so

much emotion that they practically burst. Possessing an electric guitar and a voice that encapsulates warmth and hurt in equal measure, he has a presence that many full bands struggle to produce. We can't help but think of 'Nebraska'-era Springsteen and for some reason Mark Knopfler. We try and ignore such thoughts and enjoy the rest of the set.

Castanets feature Montgomery on bass, and although they fail to utilise his vocal talents, still manage to impress with their decidedly downbeat country rock. They switch from stark, sparse traditional country arrangements to full-on blitzkrieg assaults with ease. The more aggressive moments are made all the more feral as the band's equipment is electrocuting them throughout the set and they appear to be seeking revenge on their instruments. The frequent walls of noise elevate the songs beyond mere trad tunes into something much more ephemeral and experimental. By turns exhilarating and oppressive, Castanets ensure that while it may be a quiet night, it's by no means forgettable.

*Sam Shepherd*

## BLUE ROSES / PAUL THOMAS SAUNDERS

### The Bullingdon

Given the nature of their music, it's entirely fitting that this wonderful pairing are playing on such a dark and stormy night. Blown in from the Bronte heartlands of West Yorkshire, they embody everything that is pleasing about buttoning up a warm coat, pulling down a beanie hat and joining the swirl of leaves and Tesco bags on the Cowley Road amongst the boisterously tactile elements.

My music collection has grown considerably this year but nothing has yet outreached the sheer enchantment and, dare I say, perfection, of Paul Thomas Saunders' recent 'Four Songs in Twilight' EP. Tonight, fronting light percussion and female backing vocals/harmonium, he enhances his already haunting vocals, which lie midway between Fleet Foxes' Robin Pecknold and a 'Kathy's Song'-era Paul Simon, by using two mics in tandem, one a vintage harmonica mic taped into a tin can, giving an otherworldly vibe that would take weeks to create in a studio.

Perched on a bar stool and doubled over his acoustic guitar, pedals high up on a milk crate, while peering through the kind of long fringe that only teenagers his age can carry off, he wafts through 'Fruit of the

Poisonous Tree' and 'Starless State of the Moonless Barrow' which carries such lines as "When you threw replica paintings at your father's sweetheart". By the time he reaches the big finish in 'Waking & Evening Prayers for Rosemary-May', I'm as big a puddle as those outside.

Blue Roses, which is basically Laura Groves leading a similar line-up, is a conundrum. Recorded she has an arch theatrical breeziness, which feels a little at odds with her shy, mousy onstage appearance. She plays piano and guitar with an almost classical reserve, but her voice really does pirouette around the room as it does on her eponymously-titled debut album. Caught between Joni Mitchell and the coy ambience of Bell Horses, at times she follows the alpine hopping scales of Kate Bush so closely that you expect a chorus of 'Child In His Eyes' to follow on. In 'I'm Leaving' she sums up the nomadic life of the troubadour, beautifully, when she reflects "...when I decided to live the rest of my life from a list of towns, cities and populations".

If the term quintessentially English could be applied to anything it would be Blue Roses. File under Wuthering.

*Paul Carrera*

## WORLD IMPROVISING TRIO / PHIL MINTON'S FERAL CHOIR

### The Jacqueline Du Pre Building

Whilst free improvisation has grown in stature and acceptability over the past few years, we're a long way from an intersection between improv and Saturday night TV. No chance of *Lower Case Idol*, *Strictly Onkyo* or *Company Week Bootcamp* happening any time soon. And yet, in a way, Phil Minton is edging towards the concept, by co-opting for his Feral Choir amateur singers from the area, including some Blackbird Leys vocalists who might be familiar from Channel Five's *The Singing Estate*. If they found three months with Handel's 'Messiah' challenging, an afternoon with Minton's glossolalia must have been beyond culture shock.

But the music is incredible no matter where the musicians came from, conductor Minton playing the sixteen vocalists as if they were one huge instrument, opening with a queasily yawing, slowly rising tone, before dropping down into waves of hisses, clicks, and jabbers. It's alternately exuberant and unsettling, feeling like a cut price UFO cult invocation in an Anglican church hall. Our only criticism is that the show becomes a catalogue of effects, and we'd rather the sonic palette be limited a little, but this doesn't detract from a joyful performance, highlighting Minton's

good humoured inventiveness, and the impressive responsiveness and control of these amateur singers.

The World Improvising Trio is John Bissett and Alex Ward on guitars, and Pat Thomas on keyboards. The first half of the set is lopsided, the guitar amps and effects pedals swamping the keyboards: clearly guitarists always play too bloody loud in any genre. Thomas evidently realises this, and turns from the Cylon indigestion synth sounds to the piano, reining things in with some surprisingly lush and simple chords. From hereon the players seem to find their natural balance, playfully brushing past musical structures, including one clipped lead line from Ward that sounds oddly like derailed AM country. To finish, Thomas dampens his piano strings to make harpsichord tones whilst the guitarists emulate low flying light aircraft, reaching a surprisingly stately conclusion. Next time people think they'll see a Moyles-touted band at the Academy because they "sound alright", they should take a punt on an Oxford Improvisors gig instead: they might find whole new vistas opening up, or be shocked into stunned, enraged silence. Both exciting options, no?

*David Murphy*

# INTRODUCING....

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

## The Scholars

### Who are they?

The Scholars are a five-piece indie band from the Banbury area, formed around the musical partnership of brothers Adrian and Chris Gillett (*vocals and bass and lead guitar respectively*). Tim Mobbs (*rhythm guitar*), Josh Herring (*keyboards*) and Adam Clarke (*drums*) complete the line-up. The band formed in 2007 but really came to people's attention when they won BBC Radio Oxford Introducing's battle of the bands competition to clinch a slot at this summer's Truck Festival, where they more than justified their place. They followed this with a Nightshift Demo Of The Month in October and a place on the bill at the OX4 festival the same month. Last month they released their debut single, 'Turbulence', with a second single, 'This Heart's Built To Break', due in February 2010.

### What do they sound like?

Big, bold new wave pop awash with shimmering synths and chiming guitars, plus a theatrical edge to Chris's baritone vocals that raises them well above the standard of most new young bands. Comparisons to Editors are unavoidable, but so confident do they sound and so strong are their hook-laden songs, you quickly get over such trivialities. Nightshift's demo review marvelled at The Scholars' "coolly detached sense of superiority", while our earlier live review described them as having "all the futuristic pomp and potential of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Ultravox".

### What inspires them?

"Bands that put effort and attention into putting on a good live show."

### Career highlight so far:

"Truck Festival was a massive turning point for us as a band. And our London debut with The Cinematics, which was a fantastic 'meet your heroes' moment, along with our BBC 6 interview on the same day."

### And the lowlight:

"Being a weekend band whilst we are all studying and slaving away at various universities, colleges and sixth forms."



### Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"We really look up to A Silent Film in terms of where we want to be. 'You Will Leave A Mark' is an absolutely unstoppable song."

### If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:

"'Kid A' by Radiohead."

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

"Supporting Cinematics at the Bullingdon on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December. Expect full-on walls of sound, full scale rocking out and amidst all the alternative rock, post punk, new wave madness and songs that will stick with you."

### Their favourite and least favourite thing about Oxford music are:

"When you go somewhere else you realise just how unique a music community Oxford has where everyone knows everybody else. It's something that has made us feel immensely welcome in the city over such a short space of time but it can be a double edged sword in that opportunities are highly fought over, and the massively high standard of the music scene only make things more difficult if you're trying to emerge from the pack."

### You might love them if you love:

Editors; Interpol; Stellarstarr\*; White Lies.

### Hear them here:

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

## Whatever happened to... those heroes

## ARTHUR TURNER'S LOVECHILD?

### WHO?

The band formed by and centred around legendary local promoter Mac, Arthur Turner's Lovechild? (named after Oxford United's manager when the club entered the Football League, and usually shortened simply to ATL?) formed in 1992, undergoing myriad line-up changes along the way, boasting anything from three to six members at any given time. Apart from Mac (vocals, guitar, keyboards), those who served included Hamish 'Cheeky' Chalmers; Billy Two Jackets; 'Mad' Norman Gardener; Hamish Tesco; Hamish 'Hooch' Ferguson; Ian Nixon; John Halliday; Brett Gordon and Loretta the Dancer. Along the way, ATL? played several shows supporting Radiohead, who were massive fans of the band, performed at the very first Truck Festival, released a single, 'Son Of The Human Cannonball', on Shifty Disco and an album, 'David's Soul', on Rotator, after signing their record contract on the pitch at Oxford United's Manor Ground, for the grand sum of a pound and a small bag of drugs.

### WHAT?

"Drunk rock" is what Mac called it, but despite the somewhat carefree attitude to anything important, ATL? were a fantastic band, lyrically and musically. Early songs like 'Lucy House' painted witty, caustic pictures of Oxford life; 'Put Your Hands Up If Your First Word's Fuck In The Morning' were daft, alcohol-infused singalongs, while 'Telescope' and 'Black Heart = Blue Morning' (featuring Beaker's Kim Parsons on backing vocals) were superb, pathos-ridden ballads. Musically ATL?'s sound fell somewhere between Husker Du, Teenage Fanclub and Guided By Voices, although Mac describes it as "Like a piss poor



Neil Young tribute act accidentally sounding vaguely like Husker Du, whilst all along trying to compose like Neil Diamond".

### WHEN?

A veteran of various local acts over the years, Mac got the band together following a handful of improvised gigs at the Jericho, filling in when support bands failed to turn up and, given his position as the Jericho Tavern's promoter, was able to call on some of the best musician on the scene over the years. The band flirted with success at various points, but Mac would usually get biblically drunk when an opportunity to impress reared its head. 'David's Soul' was released in 1999 and 'Black Heart = Blue Morning' from the album topped that year's Nightshift Top 20.

### WHY?

As the promoter of the Jericho Tavern and the Point for some 15 years, Mac remains one of the most – if not *the* most – important figure in Oxford music's rise and rise, giving early shows to everyone from Radiohead and Supergrass to Dustball, Young Knives and Yannis from Foals' first band

Elizabeth. On-stage self-destruction aside, he was also a phenomenal songwriter. Mac claims ATL? invented the mash-up with their fusion of Superchunk's 'Garlic' and Bodycount's 'Freedom Of Speech', a live favourite. Echoes of Mac's through-a-glass-darkly lyricism can be heard in Nine-Stone Cowboy's songs. Mac claims the band had no significance then or now, but were "A band when bands were bands and not the caeerist, snivelling public school ninnyies they are today".

### WHERE?

ATL? never officially split up, although Mac has been musically dormant for a few years now, working as sound engineer on tour with bands like The Waterboys and Oui 3. Of the rest of the band, most are still around Oxford, with Ian Nixon playing with Les Clochards. Sadly Hamish Ferguson died last year from cancer.

### HOW?

'David's Soul' is available from Videosyncratic on Cowley Road.



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# DEMOS

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**KEYNOTE STUDIOS**

## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### DEAD JERICHO

Still too young to vote or get boozed up in the bars they sing about, and only a handful of gigs into their life, Dead Jerichos are already big favourites of ours here at Nightshift. There's been a real glut of great teenage bands emerging in Oxford this year – from Desert Storm and Dial F For Frankenstein to Tristan & The Troubadours and The Scholars – and you can add this lot to that list. They're sweet enough to apologies for sounding a bit like Arctic Monkeys on this debut recording, but they sound like nothing of the sort, instead coming on more like a teenage Paul Weller might have if he'd formed Foals in 1977, or The Cure's earliest incarnation somehow taking inspiration from The Exploited. It's determinedly yobbish but pin-sharp on the melodies and lyrical bite. 'Red Dance Floor' is the killer – a bruising tale of coke-and-lager-fuelled punch-ups in provincial nightclubs, though how the wee tykes managed to witness these we don't know. And don't care; we're too busy cracking our heads on the ceiling as we pogo round the office to the math-mod jerk-pop cranked up to about 27 on the stereo. Go and see this lot live as soon as you can (they're supporting this month's cover stars The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band at the Cellar on the 3<sup>rd</sup>). Then go and buy yourselves a new Fred Perry shirt. Then go and burn something to the ground. Do it.

### WALTER PICO

There's always a feeling of trepidation when we get a local rap demo to review; for every Mr Shadow there are plenty of deluded misogynist fucknuts with a microphone and a copy of the Ladybird Book Of Rude Rhymes. So it's refreshing to get a demo like this, from Marston-based rapper / producer Pico, a man who errs rather more on the daisy age rather than wannabe gangsta side of things. Best track here is 'Hipkirk and Hopkirk (Deceased)', which is unsurprisingly based around the theme tune to *Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)*, a busy, bustling scramble and babble of overlapping vocals and fidgety scratching, all of which reminds us a bit of De La Soul. Further in, 'What Were You Thinking' sees Walter reaching into more spacious tripped-out wandering, all disembodied vocal samples and the feeling he's been at the bong again.

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!

'The New Breed' is more upbeat but lacking the first track's mischievousness, but 'What Do You Know' has more about it, sounding like The Avalanches on morphine. The whole thing has a real home-made DIY feel about it, but plenty of neat ideas kicking about to make you think Walter's someone worth keeping an eye on.

### TOLIESEL

If we had to name one band in this month's demo pile most likely to sell twelvety trillion albums over the course of the next decade, it'd be ToLiesel by a mile. On the face of it they're a slightly over-earnest bunch of post-Coldplay stadium indie labourers, but dig a little deeper and they've got potential in spades. 'Ashes To Stain' follows that Snow Patrol path of intimate yet bold melancholy, backed with chiming, soft-focus arena pop and billowing, politely distorted guitars that blossom halfway through when they press the button marked 'Epic', but it's a well-orchestrated song that reminds us of Tom Petty's 'Freefalling', although the piano-led coda is pure Snow Patrol. 'Dear Jane', meanwhile, tiptoes along the line between sensitive and mawkish with admirable poise, lyrically following an exchange of love letters that might end up reeking of some vile mid-80s American balladeer like Christopher Cross (and there are odd moments when it sounds exactly like James Blunt's 'Wisemen', but we'll skirt over that). In the end it's what The Housemartins' 'Caravan Of Love' might have sounded like if Chris Martin had got his hands on it. We've just read all that back and decided it must be a right old bunch of Radio 2-bothering guff, but believe us when we tell you it really isn't. It's actually pretty bloody good.

### RELOAD THE RADIO

Before CDs were properly launched on the general public, *Tomorrow's World* featured the future-of-music format, boasting that the little silver discs were so tough you could fry an egg on them or stub out a fag and they'd still play perfectly. Absolute bollocks. Reload The Radio's demo arrives looking like it's been used to sandpaper floorboards and duly fucks up one minute and four seconds into the third song, clicking back 12 seconds on endless repeat, like a Squarepusher practical joke. Bigger won't even fast forward onto track four, although it's fair to say we know what we might have got by then. Bicester's Reload The Radio play punk-pop in the lineage of Blink 182, Good Charlotte, All American Rejects and a thousand and six other identical bands,

feisty enough and, in the right environment, probably a whole heap of fun if you're 15 and have just necked three cans of Strongbow. There's a enough of a fragment of Englishness about them to stop them sounding too whiney and bratty and they kick it all out convincingly enough, but we're bugged if we can tell them apart from just about any other band on Victory or Fueled By Ramen Records.

## SEABUCKTHORN

Half a very good demo here from Andy Cartwright, the man who is Seabuckthorn. This starts off great, like some industrial world-folk soundtrack, all rhythmic crashes and circling acoustic guitar, augmented by some sort of wailing north African instrument we should know the name of but can't quite place. Gradually it shifts and expands before dissipating into gentle classical guitar contemplation. This segues seamlessly into a passage of ambient electronica and sparse pulsing bass, shifting further along into clamouring guitar and scraped violin bustle and we're thinking it'd make a great film soundtrack. But then he lets the atmosphere evaporate, ending the demo with two tracks of pretty aimless drones and guitar noodling that might be the offcuts from an old Pink Floyd album. By the time it's finished it's drifted off track completely and we've drifted into a mid-afternoon slumber, only to be roused by the postman dropping about twenty pizza delivery menus through the letterbox.

## MOTION IN COLOUR

We're not in the habit of watching *The X-Factor*, mainly because it is television made by morons, featuring morons and designed for morons, but if we did, we think Motion In Colour might be in with a chance of making the semi-finals. They sound like what *X-Factor* viewers probably think indie rock sounds like. Which is basically The Kooks watered down with some Boyzone in case they were deemed too dangerous or spiky. 'Close Your Eyes' in particular is the sort of semi-acoustic power ballad Radio 2 programmers might sneak into the playlist to appear edgy. Singer-guitarist Adam Barnes shows he can write decent songs with 'Mountains Are Like Spices', where the addition of a bit of violin spices things up enough to sound like the Levellers gone emo, but elsewhere his slightly nasal twang suffers from being left exposed by the slender arrangements and weak melodies.

## THE ORENDOS

Most bands, however inept, at least sound like they tried to construct something resembling a song somewhere along the way. This lot don't even bother. It starts off quite promisingly with 'Mission Accomplished', a barrage of heavily-flanged bass and some

random sub-Hendrix guitar doodling going on in the background, but three minutes later that's all there is and it slumps to an innocuous finish. Mission Aborted. And from there it just gets worse, eight tracks of wretched, random noise, squalling crap, and what could well be a tramp muttering to himself in the style of John Cooper Clark in the middle distance. So, a joke demo then. But a joke with no wit, no punchline, nothing. At least we fucking hope it's a joke, because if this is really the best they can do they have problems only a B52 bomber can resolve. Down in the bottom corner of their accompanying letter (just below where they describe a former bandmate as an arsehole) they've written 'Demo Dumper' and underlined it, like they're trying to emulate Derren Brown's subliminal suggestion. But it's so obvious that's where they want to end up, so they can revel in the crazy japerly of it all. Well tough titty. We're not giving you the satisfaction. You can sit here in this demo review no-man's land and wallow in your own dung.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

## WICKHAM

You know what we were saying about how most bands, however inept, at least sound like they tried to construct something resembling a song? Well perhaps we were too hasty if this offering from an American PhD student living in Witney is anything to go by. We wonder what his PhD is in. Singing like a constipated wino, perhaps? Or maybe simply wasting everyone's fucking time. He starts off great: "One, two, three, four!" he bellows, but quickly followed by clump, stumble, fizzle, crunk. Nothing. Fuck all in a bag. With a side order of boiled onions. Christ, this sounds like more of a joke than the last lot, but we think he's being serious. "I wish the government was in control!" yells Wickham, in direct defiance of punk's original spirit. Any genuinely authoritarian government would have him tied up in an orange boiler suit and handcuffs for this sort of musical terrorism. "We need someone to take control!" he continues, sounding more like one of those asinine political comments you get from Sun Page 3 girls. It gets worse. He takes to the piano for the second track (we hesitate to call it a song), the result is as ungainly and difficult to behold as one of those deformed one-footed pigeons you occasionally see in Gloucester Green. This is fucking pathetic – beyond torturous. This is presumably an intelligent man; one whose PhD research may hold the answer to any one of the world's pressing problems. Then again, maybe his thesis is simply titled, 'What the fuck was I thinking?'.

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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## The Horrors

Sat 5th Dec • SOLD OUT

6.30pm - 10pm

## Frankmusik

+ Killa Kela

Sat 5th Dec • £13 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## The Answer

+ General Flaco  
+ Black Spider

Tues 8th Dec • £20 adv

## From The Jam

Tues 8th Dec • £10 adv

## Set Your Goals

+ Broadway Calls  
+ Fireworks

Fri 11th Dec • £15 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## Terrorvision

15th Anniversary of  
'How To Make Friends  
& Influence People'

Fri 11th Dec • £12 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## Gunfire 76

+ Bullets & Octane

Sun 12th Dec • SOLD OUT

## Echo & The Bunnymen

Mon 14th Dec • £15 adv

## Wayne Hussey

Tues 15th Dec • £20 adv

## Saw Doctors

Tues 15th Dec • £6 adv

## Tragedy

All Metal Tribute To  
The Bee Gees  
+ Silvanito + The S\*\*\* Whips  
(White Striped Tributes)

Weds 16th Dec • £16.50 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## Shed Seven

Thurs 17th Dec • £11.50 adv

## Goldie Lookin' Chain

+ ATB

Fri 18th Dec • £10 adv

## The Complete Stone Roses

+ The Hazze

Fri 18th Dec • £13.50 adv

7pm - 10pm

## Thea Gilmore

+ Rod Clements

Sat 19th Dec • £10 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## Electric Six

+ Borderville

Sat 19th Dec • £8 adv

11pm - 4am • over 18s only

## Dub Politics

### Presents:

Engine Earz (live) featuring  
Shahid Abbas Khan / Benny  
Page (Dubstep Set) / Koan  
Sound / Coochie Moresta /  
Document One b2b Griffta

Weds 23rd Dec • £19.50 adv

## Michael Schenker

Thurs 24th Dec • £5 earlybird

adv until December 11th /  
£8 after  
9pm - 2am • over 18s Only

## A Reggae Christmas

ft. Mackating  
+ The Trashy Christmas Grotto

Fri 31st Dec • £8 earlybird adv  
until December 11th / £10 after

9pm - 4am • over 18s Only  
Transformation / Trashy /  
Room 101 Presents:

## New Years Eve: Back To The Future

Three Films, Three Rooms,  
Party like its 1985!

Fri 15th Jan • £7 adv

## Delphic

Sun 17th Jan • £10 adv

## The Doors Alive

+ The Empty Vessels

Weds 20th Jan • £14.50 adv

## Reel Big Fish

+ Big D & The Kids Table  
+ Sonic Boom Six

Fri 22nd Jan • £12 adv

7pm - 10pm

## Laura Viers

+ Cataldo + Old Believers

Sat 23rd Jan • £11 adv

7pm - 10pm • Band on stage at 130pm

## Whole Lotta Led

Thurs 28th Jan • £5.50 adv

## Twenty Twenty

Fri 29th Jan • £8 adv

7pm - 10pm

## Mike Snow

Sun 31st Jan • £8 adv

## Iglu and Hartly

+ Politics

Tue 2nd Feb • £22.50 adv

## Ocean Colour Scene

Mon 8th Feb • £7 adv

## Saving Aimee

Sat 13th Feb • £10 adv

7pm - 10pm

## UK Guns N'Roses

Thurs 18th Feb • £17.50 adv

## Imogen Heap

Fri 19th Feb • £10 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## Owl City

Sat 20th Feb • £11 adv

6pm - 10pm

## Bizarre presents Chipmunk

+ Master Shortie  
+ Tinnie Tempah  
Rescheduled show  
• original tickets valid

Mon 22nd Feb • £17 adv

## Europe

+ Diamond Head

Thurs 25th Feb • £7.50 adv

## Reamonn

Sat 27th Feb • £15 adv

## Ska Cubano

+ Original Rabbit Foot Spasm  
Band + Action Stations DJs

Tues 2nd Mar • SOLD OUT

## Peter Andre

Fri 5th Mar • £14 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## Tom McRae

Rescheduled show  
• original tickets valid

Mon 8th Mar • £9 adv

## The Automatic

Thurs 11th Mar • £12.50 adv

## It Bites & Aynsley Lister Band

Fri 12th Mar • £12.50 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## Fun Lovin Criminals

Weds 17th Mar • £23 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## The Stranglers

Sat 20th Mar • £16.50 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## Trivium

Sun 21st Mar • £7 adv

## The Joy Formidable

Sat 27th Mar • £10 adv

7pm - 10pm

## The Smiths

Indeed  
'Meat is Murder'  
25th Anniversary Tour

Sun 28th Mar • £12.50 adv

## Dan Le Sac Vs Scroobius Pip

Sun 28th Mar • £12.50 adv

## Paloma Faith

Weds 31st Mar • £6.50 adv

6.30pm - 10pm

## Glamour of The Kill

Fri 23rd Apr • £15 adv

## The Beat