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NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month.
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JOE ALLEN BAND



How Oxford was the making of a Brummie balladeer and a violinist from the valleys - *interview inside.*

Plus: news, reviews and six pages of local gigs and festivals.

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NEWS

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BBC OXFORD'S

INTRODUCING show is offering one local band a chance to play at Truck Festival. The dedicated local music show has nabbed a slot on the festival's bar stage. As well as the performance slot and tickets to Truck, the band will also be recorded by BBC Wales Introducing, so you'll have a professionally-recorded memento of your set to take home.

The winning band will be chosen at a battle of the bands competition at the Jericho Tavern on Wednesday 22nd July. To enter, bands need to register on the BBC Oxford Introducing upload tool, then send an email titled 'Truck Introducing' to oxford@bbc.co.uk with the name of your act and the track you'd like them to listen to. Deadline for entries in Friday 17th July.

RICHARD WALTERS is set to release his debut album in

September. The local favourite, who has recently relocated to Paris, releases 'The Animal' on Kartel Records. The album is preceded by a single, 'True Love Will Find You In the End' on 20th July. 'True Love...', a cover of a Daniel Johnston song, was originally released as the b-side of 'Brittle Bones' last year and was number 5 in Nightshift's end of year Top 20. Richard returns to Oxford for a gig this month. He plays at Baby Simple on Cowley Road on Thursday 16th July.

THIS YEAR'S AUDIOSCOPE

takes place on Saturday 17th October at the Jericho Tavern. The line-up for the annual Shelter fundraiser is still being completed but there will be a warm-up gig for the mini-festival on Wednesday 19th August at the Wheatheaf when Japan's leftfield supergroup Drum Eyes make a rare appearance. Drum Eyes feature

members of The Boredoms as well as former-Can frontman Damo Suzuki and DJ Scotch Egg. To celebrate 10 years of fundraising for Shelter, Audioscope are also planning to release a limited edition compilation album of exclusive tracks from acts that have performed at the event over the years.

Meanwhile, **Oxfordbands.com** are organising a **local bands' five-a-side football tournament** to help raise money for Shelter. The tournament will take place over the weekend of the 22nd / 23rd August. Bands interested in competing should email stuart@oxfordbands.com with the names of their six-person squad (which must include at least three members of Oxfordshire-based bands). Deadline for entries is the 31st July.

Visit www.oxfordbands.com to keep up to date with all Audioscope and tournament news.

MONDO CADA released their debut EP last month, on the same day the band decided to go their separate ways. The band's split was, they say, amicable and down to geographical reasons. Their EP, which was produced by Ben and Ben from Winnebago Deal, is available to buy from international

stoner label Calculon Records at www.calulon.co.uk. Following on from Mondo Cada's demise, Ian and Adam from the band have formed a new band, Ruins, who debuted at Charlbury Riverside Festival in June. Visit www.myspace.com/ruinsonline for more news on the band.

THISREALITY.COM podcast has become the first UK-based podcast to be awarded a Limited Online Exploitation Licence by the Performing Rights Society. The licence means the Oxford-based podcast, presented by Bren and Sophie Jones, can improve and expand its showcasing of unsigned bands as well as established acts. Thisreality.com now regularly attracts over 80,000 listeners world-wide.

Meanwhile, two local musicians, Tim Croston and Angharad Jenkins, are hosting a new weekly podcast featuring bands from Oxford and beyond. The first podcast goes out this month at www.vanitymusicproject.com.

THE O2 ACADEMY are planning to host a special alternative freshers' fair on Wednesday 23rd September. The fair aims to introduce new students to local venues, clubs and businesses which

KATE GARRET 1972-2009

AT THE END OF LAST MONTH Nightshift learned the sad news that Kate Garrett had passed away. Kate had been battling cancer for two years. She was 37 years old.

Born and raised in Dorset, where she formed her first band, a folk duo, with Polly Harvey, Kate became a much loved and admired part of Oxford's music scene, firstly as a member of The Mystics in the 1990s and later as a solo singer and musician and fronting her own Kate Garrett Band.

The Mystics remain one of Oxford's most enduring cult favourites over a decade after they split. Kate's keyboard and guitar playing and unearthly vocals lent the band an exotic edge. With The Mystics Kate signed to Fontana and performed in The States. In recent years Kate's music saw her return to her folk roots, but always with a wonderfully sparse, almost psychedelic, edge, her voice one of stunning purity and emotional depth. Earlier this year Kate, along with her husband, local musician Barney Morse-Brown, formed her own record label, Garret-Brown Music, and released her finest work to date, the brilliant 'King Of The Birds', which earned her a Nightshift front cover. Despite her health problems, Kate continued to write and perform and was hoping to complete a new album at the time of her death.

As well as an extremely talented musician, Kate's most important contribution to Oxford's music scene was her founding and running of



The Young Women's Band Project, where she helped nurture a succession of young female musicians, including local favourites Baby Gravy. The Young Women's Band Project will be re-launched in September to continue the great work she pioneered.

Zahra Tehrani from Baby Gravy worked with Kate on the project and paid her respects to her friend and mentor: "Kate is my biggest inspiration in my music and in the work I do with young people. She nurtured me from the age of 14 as a musician and trained me on the Young Women's Band Project for five years. She was a

bandmate and a dear friend, a bit like a mother to me. I'm sure hundreds of young people could say the same thing about her, hence her nickname: Mama G!"

Renowned local musician Tim Turan also paid tribute to Kate: "Kate was a true, loyal friend with a huge, huge talent which she shared selflessly."

Sam Williams, who played with Kate in The Mystics said of her, "Kate was a beautiful and feisty girl and we used to take the piss out of each other relentlessly. I have very happy memories of her when The Mystics de-camped to LA to record and gig, and I loved watching the quiet, dreamy girl from the Dorset countryside transform herself into a glam rock'n'roll queen, painting her whole body silver and strutting the stage with a big red guitar at the Viper Rooms. She always had the full attention of the guys in the audience. I saw her again just a few weeks before she passed away and we had a lovely time playing each other new songs we had recorded and laughing about The Mystics days. It was such a rollercoaster ride we had together and I feel so lucky to have known and loved this beautiful woman."

Kate was remembered by friends and family at a special service held on Hive Beach in Dorset. Nightshift wishes to extend its deepest sympathies to Barney and all of Kate's family and many friends. Hers is a talent and a legacy that will long be remembered in Oxford and beyond.

have been priced out of or excluded from the traditional University and Brookes fairs in recent years. All local businesses are welcome, including other local music venues, for a flat-rate fee of £100 for a table. The day will also include drinks promotions and entertainment. For more information, call Lauren Riddy on 01865 813505 or email lauren@o2academyoxford.co.uk.

MALMAISON launch a new fortnightly Sunday night singer-songwriter session this month. The hotel, in the Oxford castle complex, is looking for acts to perform. Call the events manager on 01865 268400 or email songwritersunday@malmaison.com.

POOR GIRL NOISE return to local gig promoting this month with a very special show from Tokyo's Nisennenmondai, on Wednesday 22nd July at the Wheatsheaf. The all-girl experimental noise trio are playing their first ever gigs outside of Japan after ten years playing with the likes of Lightning Bolt, Cluster and Mike Patton. Support comes from local leftfield acts Elapse-O and From Light To Sound. Poor Girl Noise also release a compilation album, 'PGN 4', to coincide with the show. The CD features tracks from bands who have played the club in recent times, including That Fucking Tank, Shield Your Eyes, Papier Tigre, Don Vito, Ice Sea Dead People, Pneu and Chickenhawk, plus Oxford acts Hreda and Elapse-O. Visit www.myspace.com/pgnbevies for more details.

HANNEYFEST takes place at the Black Horse in East Hanney, near Wantage, over the weekend of 7th – 9th August. The free festival, (which welcomes donations in aid of Cancer Research UK and Hanney pre-school), is being organised by the same team that organised Wittstock. Acts confirmed so far include Smilex, Lost Transmission, The Halcyons, Mary's Garden, Ady Davey, The Roundheels, BJB, The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, Sunburnt Penguins, Mark Bosley, Maeve Bayton, Out of The Blue, Pint & A Half of Blues, Fiona Elizabeth, Superloose, Laima Bite, John Thomson, E J Norman, Steph Fitchett, Gary Andrews, Rachel Dunnett, Mark Coleman, Mark Wilkin, Mike Davey, Drunkenstein, Dirty Deeds and The Follies. Call Phil Garvey on 07746 061199 for more details.

THE BLACK HORSE in Kidlington hosts a three-day live music festival over the weekend of Friday 31st July – Sunday 2nd August. The event features an indoor and outdoor stage and is in aid of the Children In Touch charity, helping local children with autism. The Scarletts and The Follies kick things off on Friday night. On Saturday Secret Rivals, The Elrics, Night Portraits, Beaver Fuel, Vixens, Riot House and Fajita Eaters play indoors with Andy Fenton, Nikki Loi, Ute and Mollie Hodge on the outdoor stage. On Sunday The Frigging Beatles, Todd, Symbo, The Roundheels, God Of Small Things and Thin Green Candles are amongst those on the indoor stage with Ben Foster, B-Phil and Adam Manning outside. Friday's music starts at 7pm with Saturday and Sunday kicking off at midday. A weekend wristband costs £4, which includes entry to every day of the festival. There a few slots still to be filled – any bands interested should call Charlie on 01865 373 154.

THIS YEAR'S CHALGROVE FESTIVAL takes place over the weekend of the 7th – 9th August. Acts booked for the festival include Stainless, Strange Folk, Plastic Paddles, Spring Offensive, Bon Giovi, The Kommitments, Whoo, The Motowners, Stone Saloon and UXL. Visit www.clmfestival.com for full details.

INLIGHT and recent Miss Uganda UK finalist Haula perform at a benefit gig for the Families Reunited charity at the Bullingdon on Thursday 2nd July. The night also features DJ sets from Natty Dread and DJ Artwell.

A REMINDER that Videosyncratic on Cowley Road currently stocks a wide selection of Oxford artists' CDs and is looking to expand its collection. Drop copies of your CDs off at the shop at 101 Cowley Road.

NIGHTSHIFT still has a three-month backlog of demos for review. If you have sent in a CD or Myspace link and not yet been reviewed, don't fret your pretty wee head about it, we will get round to giving you what you deserve in due course. Unless of course you neglected to put the right postage on your envelope in which case it's still in the sorting office serving as some kind of coaster for the postman's coffee.



CARNIVAL IN THE PARK replaces the annual Cowley Road Carnival this month after the event suffered a shortfall in funding. The new event will offer a slightly downsized version of the usual carnival activities, including live music and the traditional procession.

Carnival In Park takes place in **South Park** on **Sunday 5th July** from midday through to 8pm.

The event kicks off with a local Ark-T young bands session including sets from Uneek, IzzyMK, Devious K-I-D, Silecta and Motion In Colour, plus the Blackbird Leys Choir.

Following the procession, there are sets from The original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band (pictured), The Long Insiders, A Silent Film, Raggasaurus and Mackating. A folk and world music stage features gospel choirs, gypsy dance and local traditional English folk band Telling The Bees, while evarious DJs and sound systems bring a full carnival vibe to the park.

East Oxford Community Centre will be hosting a marquee featuring poetry, spoken word and an open mic session.

For full line-up details and carnival news, visit www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk

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a quiet word with

The Joe Allen Band

JUST AS PLANETS ACHIEVE A mass great enough to develop a gravitational pull on the universe around them, so Oxford's music scene has, in the last decade, pulled more and more talented musicians in as its reputation has grown. Whether, as in the case of Young Knives, it's an already formed band attracted by the fertile, supportive gig scene, or students choosing the local universities because of all they've read about Oxford's musical legacy; the newcomers become absorbed into Oxford's scene and become its own, thus creating an even greater gravitational pull on the next generation.

THUS IT WAS WITH THE JOE Allen Band. Now a four-strong ensemble, until recently, as a duo, they went under their founders' names, Joe Allen and Angharad Jenkins. The pair met while studying music at Brookes in 2006, singer and guitarist Joe originally from Birmingham, violinist Angharad from Swansea, but both drawn to the city by its musical reputation.

ANGHARAD: "The Brookes prospectus had a picture of a very cool-looking couple flicking through some vinyl in a cool-looking record store. I immediately wanted to come to Oxford. Unfortunately, in the time I've been here, all the independent record stores have shut down, which is such a shame, but I soon discovered the thriving live music scene, which is better than anywhere I've ever been. This scene has been the core of my university life, rather than playing pub golf up Cowley Road, or dressing up as a playboy bunny and ending up at Fuzzy Ducks every Wednesday. It's been an opening to getting to know the local Oxford people, and I feel very lucky to be part of it."

Joe: "I knew Oxford had lots of venues, I'd heard you could almost play an open mic every night of the week and that sounded brilliant."

JOE AND ANGHARAD MET SIX months after starting their music courses, introduced by a mutual friend ("at some crappy student union night") and finally got round to practicing together a few months after that. It was an inauspicious start, with Joe clumsily scribbling ideas for Angharad's violin on a scrap of paper before finally humming the parts to her to copy. A classically-trained musician and the daughter of

Angharad and Joe in action



renowned Welsh harpist Delyth Jenkins, Angharad quickly picked up the ideas, comfortably improvising around Joe's melodies.

After a handful of gigs on the local pub circuit, the duo received their first reviews in *Nightshift* and were picked to play 2007's Oxford Punt, quickly earning themselves a dedicated local fanbase.

LAST YEAR JOE AND

Angharad were joined by drummer Chrissie Sheaf, whose stand-up, stripped-down style fully complemented the pair's sparse, emotionally-engaging style of folk-pop, and The Joe Allen Band came into being. More recently, the line-up has expanded to four with bassist Phil Oakley, of Mephisto Grande, and previously of Borderville, joining.

After earning themselves an enviable reputation in local venues, July finds the band playing Truck Festival for the first time, with appearances at Arcane and Under The Oak festivals to come later in the summer. They also release their debut single, 'For You My Love', on July 31st.

Pitched neatly between the worlds of pop and traditional folk, The Joe Allen Band ooze a peculiarly individualistic type of musical class.

Joe's voice is wracked with emotional intensity, soulful and wired without ever falling into that common pitfall of the singer-songwriter – self-pity. Most commonly he's been compared to Thom Yorke and Damien Rice, though there's a bit of The Waterboys' Mike Scott about him too. Angharad's violin playing gives Joe's songs that edge, alternately swooping and soaring or cutting through the nervous tension like a cutlass. A recent live review likened the pair to a cross between Radiohead and Seth Lakeman.

WITH THE BAND'S LINE-UP

seemingly now complete, the single set for release, and with Joe and Angharad now having completed their university degrees, the quartet look set to move up a gear. They have already attracted interest from Rough Trade, who in turn put them in touch with a management company.

JOE: "We met a great guy at Rough Trade about a year ago. He put us in touch with Trust Management and we worked together for the last year, although things may be drawing to a close with them for the time being. They got us a few great support slots in London and sorted out our last recording, but they merged with

SuperVision who have a lot of big artists, like Kaiser Chiefs and Franz Ferdinand, so now they have less time for bands like us. We're still in touch with Rough Trade and SuperVision, and its great having those contacts and the advice on hand.

"I can't wait to get the single done. We've built up a great online following on Myspace and I think we're beginning to get a bit more attention at our gigs, but we've never had anything recorded to a standard that we'd want to release it. It's going to be simple: one single, one b-side, costing a quid or two, but it will come with 1930s-style sheet music for the parts in the song."

WHEN JOE AND ANGHARAD

first started playing together how much common ground was there musically? They're both classically trained and steeped in folk music tradition but the music they make is more in the pop vein.

ANGHARAD: "Our common ground was Damien Rice. We had very different tastes and musical backgrounds, but what Damien Rice was doing attracted me, for his folk influences and interesting instrumentation, but I think for Joe it was probably for the quality of his voice and the lyrics. From there we have developed in our own way."

So what in particular inspires Joe as a songwriter?

JOE: "I like the songs to be personal, and to feel like they are coming from a real place but I try to stay away from literal events, or taking on something that has happened and writing a specific song about it. I never sit down and think, I'm going to write a song about this. I'll be messing around and have started writing something, just a small guitar part or one or two lines to go with it, then I take it in whatever mood I'm in at the time. Some people find it surprising how much angst there is, but for me it's the perfect platform to get all of that out. I like Leonard Cohen's theory on songwriting, that you get a tiny bit of a song – a verse, a guitar riff, or just one line – then you have a hard, arduous slog making sure that the song that comes out lives up to what you loved about the initial part you wrote."

ANGHARAD'S VIOLIN PLAYING

is as central to the band's sound as Joe's voice or guitar playing. Does she feel the violin is a particularly

under-used or misused instrument in pop?

"I think the violin can be misused, just like the glockenspiel or the tambourine are. People tend to play safe with it, saving it for long, sustained notes to highlight passion and romance. This is an effective use of violins, which we admittedly exploit in the band, however, it's very narrow-minded of people to think that it ends there. There is a wealth of effects that can be created simply by exploring and experimenting with the natural timbres of the instrument. I am classically trained and have been bought up playing in orchestras and string groups, but in the past five years I've steered down the folk route, changing from a violinist to a fiddle player. I was first turned on to the violin in a pop/rock setting by Gorky's ZygotiC MynCi and their violinist Megan Childs. It was then I knew I wanted to play in bands rather than orchestras.

"Because I'm approaching the violin/fiddle from a classical and folk background, I don't have the adequate reference points for the use of the instrument in rock or pop settings. I know surprisingly little about the violin outside of traditional and folk music so I'm continuously learning. My favourite fiddle player and inspiration is a Scottish fiddler called Chris Stout; also Aidan O'Rourke from Lau. They're constantly pushing the boundaries of folk music, but at the same time respecting the tradition. As a classically trained violinist-turned-fiddle-player, I've constantly been battling with myself over what I am. Now I just accept that I'm somewhere in between."

HAVING PLAYED AS A DUO FOR a couple of years, what prompted Joe and Angharad to recruit Chrissie as a drummer? How has she changed the band's dynamic?

JOE: "I don't think we were bored as a two-piece, but there were definite songs where we both felt they would really come to life with drums underneath them. Chrissie was the first drummer we tried, she already knew Angharad really well and she fitted straight in. Our management suggested she dropped the bass-drum and stood up playing while we didn't have a bassist."

ANGHARAD: "Before, we were pigeonholed as an acoustic folk outfit, soft on the ear, and immediately placed as the opening act on band nights. People see a violin and a guitar and immediately think it's going to be nice, chilled, easy listening, which always annoyed me, because there was a subtle aggression apparent in the music we were creating, which was often overlooked. We wanted to develop further through expanding our line up. I approached Chrissie having seen her

playing in a jazz quintet whilst at uni and being immediately impressed. What Chrissie has managed to do is give us an extra bite, highlighting the natural rhythms apparent in the music. She's subtle, inventive, resourceful, experimental, and can still rock out in the heavier numbers. She is a very groovesome lady and we couldn't have chosen a better drummer for the style of music we were playing. It's also nice to have a girl to rock out with in what is still a very male-dominated scene."

And now, of course, you've become a four-piece with Phil joining.

JOE: "I'm not sure where Phil came from, but everyone seems to know him so there must have been some link! All I remember is him being at a practice about two months ago. I wasn't even sure we had a bassist coming to practice with us but we all got on well. He's a forward thinker."

NIGHTSHIFT'S MOST RECENT live review of The Joe Allen Band found our admiration for the band tempered slightly by an audience that seemed intent on yacking through their entire set. We suggested a show in the more rarified environs of the Holywell Music Room, a proposition the band jumped at.

JOE: "The Holywell gig is set to be in August. It was inspired by the review, but it's the kind of gig I always want to play. When we did a few sat-down theatre gigs in Birmingham, I knew then that was what we should be doing, it's so different. The audience is with you the whole way and you can completely get into the songs and relax rather than being up there trying to work out how to keep the crowd quiet. It might sound arrogant thinking the crowd should be quiet for our performances but it's just our style of music - it doesn't suit a loud pub audience."

While the Holywell gig should show The Joe Allen Band up in their full glory, hopefully as their reputation continues to grow, every crowd they perform to will shut up and listen.

So, after four years immersed in the Oxford music scene, has it lived up to those early expectations?

JOE: "With complete sincerity I can say the reality has confirmed the perception. There's just so much here: a core of venues, which are constantly putting on local bands. The place is already thriving with musicians, then each year a new batch of fledgling students is also keen to put themselves into the mix. That's what happened with me and Angharad.

'For You My Love' is released on July 31st. The Joe Allen Band play at Truck Festival over the weekend of 25th-26th July. Visit www.myspace.com/joeallenmusic for tunes and gig dates.



July

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31st **MELTING POT** presents **PALAHNUIK / UKI / more**
Includes entry to Backroom Boogie afterwards

Saturdays

4th **SIMPLE** *(electro-house club night)* 10-3am

11th **ALPHABET BACKWARDS / WE AERONAUTS / MINOR COLES**

18th **PHISH** *(90s club sounds).* 10-3am

Sundays

5th **KILL FOR A SEAT COMEDY CLUB** with compere **SILKY.** Door 8pm; £7.50/£6.50

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THE RESPONSE COLLECTIVE

'Dark Is The Light'

(Own Label)

Having hosted their own monthly electro-themed club night this year, The Response Collective are a strange blip on the current local music landscape, melding as they do trip hop atmospherics, hip hop beats and scratching, proggy psychedelia and a jam-band approach to song structures that has rarely been seen round here since The Egg effectively split.

The band's second album, following on from last year's 'Documentary', finds the trio still following their ambient psychedelia path, more often than not allowing the guitar to wander off at playing Pink Floyd, or even Santana, as on album opener 'Let That Be Your Last Battlefield'. Sometimes this exposes Response Collective's chief weakness: too loose a grasp of structure and too liberal an attitude towards reigning themselves in before tracks disappear into the void marked Hippy Jam Indulgence.

Where they work far better is when they keep it tighter and more focussed, as on 'Follow Me

Forever Sea', which also shows how they can best use their sparse vocals, letting bassist Selina Gibsons's more ephemeral voice mingle fully with the instruments and samples. By contrast, Russell Leak's singing on the album's title track sounds too polite, too incongruous in the setting of its bubbling electronics and scratching, perhaps better suited to a simple acoustic folk-pop song, although the band's attempt to aim towards more rounded song structure does help them.

Highlights of an album that would do well to lose a couple of tracks for brevity's sake are the Bill Hicks-hinged closer 'The Vision', where they get the atmospherics just right; the tripped-out deep house of 'Moment Of Profanity' and in particular 'Graham Pushed It', which starts off sounding like The Sundays but flows and grows to a climax featuring a joyous chorus of voices and shows how and where the band can get it just right.



Along the way The Response Collective visit places as unexpected as 80s minor hitmakers Latin Quarter and It's Immaterial, as well as Frankie Goes To Hollywood and even Ozric Tentacles, perhaps accumulating too many retro points for comfort at times but equally displaying a willingness to plough their own individual furrow oblivious to the tight strictures of electro fashion.

Victoria Waterfield

ALPHABET BACKWARDS

'Alphabet Backwards'

(Kittiwake)

Ask a random selection of fans at an Alphabet Backwards gig to describe the band in a single word and chances are it'll be 'happy'. Or failing that, 'fun'. Like Aero, Alphabet Backwards' music comes with bubbles in. That's what puts the bounce in the band.

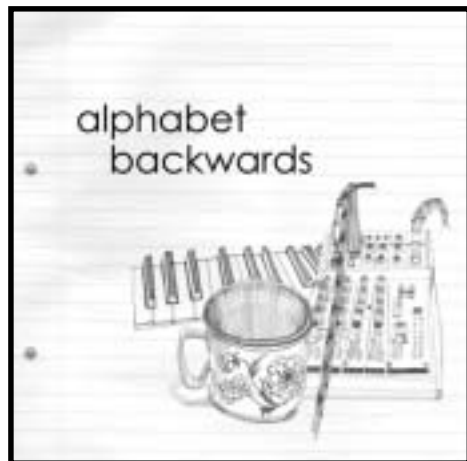
This debut mini-album, on London's Kittiwake Records, features six songs, including the band's two bona-fide perfect pop moments, '80s Pop Video' and 'Polar Bears'. The former is all frothing, wobbling Toytown keyboard and sunshiney boy-girl harmonies, "Nah-nah-nah-nah" choruses and a sense of unbridled

ebullience. The latter is, on the surface, more downbeat, the acoustic guitar dominating the sci-fi keyboard wows and flutters and James Hitchman's almost plaintive reflection of people's tokenistic efforts to stop global warming, but by the time you've hit the chorus, endangered wildlife is the last thing on your mind and sunshine, cider and shagging are the primary orders of the day. And perhaps that's a more potent instrument of education than a thousand speeches or rants: "Can we save the polar bears?" a subtler take on 'Free Nelson Mandela's bray-along pop chorus.

But anyway, back to the sunshine, cider and shagging, and after '80s Pop Video's celebration of fumbling, nervous sex, we get 'Rubix Cube' a genially boisterous Billy Bragg-like jaunt that's all glottal stops and lyrics about girls' knickers, and while 'Ambulance' is a bit too cheesy and forces the kitsch pick'n'mix references, 'Paper' is like a fidgety schoolboy trying to sit still through a telling of so he can go and jump up and down on the bed again.

Alphabet Backwards do fretful angst, but they do it with a smile and a spring in their step, and that's why every gig they play is packed to the rafters. Girls, and boys, just want to have fun.

Sue Foreman



PRDCTV

'It's Never Too Late To Have A Happy Childhood'

(Geometric)

While too much bedroom-based electronic music lacks even a spark of humanity, local producer Alex Lloyd, who records under the name PRDCTV, follows 4-Tet's lead in mixing electronic and acoustic instrumentation to soften the impact and add an organic edge to the music.

This five-track EP on Lloyd's own Geometric label finds him mixing flowing electronic rhythms, soothing ambience and chattering beats with plucked acoustic guitar interjections, strings, occasional vocals, even out-of-kilter handclaps which all add a playful feel to what might in lesser hands become a sterile and soulless exercise in home recording proficiency.

Alex's compositions, made up almost completely of looped and manipulated samples, echo Future Sound Of London's spacey synthetics at times but the name of Keiran Hebden is the one that keeps springing to mind as little Spanish guitar flourishes and icicle-like plucked strings invade the gently undulating cyborg soundscapes. Even so, it's a promising debut release from an inventive newcomer.

Victoria Waterfield

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ENVELOPE

'Envelope EP'

(Geometric)

Released on PRDCTV's Geometric label, Envelope is the work of local producer Tim Matthews, here presenting six tracks of well chilled ambient electronica and glitchy laptop soundscapes, generally dreamy of character, occasionally rising to a busy but tripped-out chatter. Firmly rooted in Warptronica with elements of Coldcut, Boards of Canada and even Thom Yorke's most minimal work, it's pretty and subtly textured but perhaps too laidback for anything other than staring at fractals while coming down from a heavy bong session.

Victoria Waterfield

BORDERVILLE

'Glambulance'

(Free Download)

It's become a cliché bordering on embarrassing to describe Borderville as theatrical but it's still the most appropriate word to use, and one that's never more true than of this latest offering from the band, a hysterical head-on collision of Bowie, The Sweet and Meatloaf trying to cram all the highlights of *The Rock Horror Show* into three minutes while keeping their teeth so firmly gritted you can almost hear the splinters of enamel bouncing off the fretboard as the guitarist goes into overload and the whole thing turns into a ballroom blitz.

Dale Kattack

RICHARD WALTERS

'True Love Will Find You In The End'

(Kartel)

After singing Richard Walters' praises to the heavens for the best part of a decade, only to start believing we were the only people in the universe to recognise his genius, 2009 might finally be the year the man gets his just desserts. Signed to Kartel Records, he's just recorded his solo debut album with producer David Kosten, who has also worked with Bat For Lashes, and the plaudits are starting to come in. In the build up to the album, Richard re-releases his cover of Daniel Johnston's gorgeous heartbreak ballad, which was previously a b-side to his 'Brittle Bones' single in 2008. Not much more to add to what we said of it before: it's beautiful. Richard has an astonishing voice that could melt the hardest heart and the way he makes this song his own is pretty much close to perfect.

Dale Kattack

HEARTS IN PENCIL

'Hannibal Ad Portas'

(Own Label)

"Hannibal ad portas" was a commonly-used declaration of horror from Roman senators at the news of any great disaster, such was the fear of the Carthaginian general at the time. Witney's teenage hopefuls Hearts In Pencil



seem to be full of similar sense of dread on this debut single, the singer deliciously over-emphasising his words over the spidery guitars of what turns out to be a pleasingly virulent pocket-sized gothic opera that ascends from its sulking beginnings, like the rising ocean of the song's lyrics – to a raging storm of angst and ire that belies our early impression of the band as Libertines acolytes. There is a hint of Pete Doherty and co. about Hearts In Pencil, but only if the dough-faced coronary-in-waiting had tried to cover The Human League's 'Circus Of Death' while getting edgy on bad speed down The Batcave club. Preposterous stuff, and great fun.

A complete right-turn in style for b-side 'Bigger Games / Better Days', a far sweeter-natured indie-jangle paean to a broken relationship with some cute boy-girl duetting. Decent stuff but not a patch on the more apocalyptic 'Hannibal'.

Sue Foreman

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GIG GUIDE

JULY

WEDNESDAY 1st

DIVE DIVE + HOLD YOUR HORSE IS + THE ELRICS + THE NIGHT PORTRAITS:

The Bullingdon – The local post-hardcore heroes play their first headline show in yonks – *see main preview*

CAT EMPIRE + PAPRIKA BALKANITUS: O2 Academy – Australia's ever-expanding Latin, funk, ska and jazz collective hit the UK

Wednesday 1st

DIVE DIVE:

The Bullingdon

A very welcome return to bill-topping live action for Dive Dive this month as the band start to fully regain their own identity after spending the past few years performing as Frank Turner's backing band. It doesn't seem like twelve years since Jamie Stuart and Tarrant Anderson took the Oxford music scene by storm in their original incarnation as Dustball, but much water has flowed under the bridge since then. The band became Dive Dive, guitarist Ben Lloyd and former-Unbelievable Truth drummer Nigel Powell have joined and the band have evolved into a post-punk precision machine. Ill-fated record deals have halted Dive Dive's progress along the way, notably with the failed Diablo label who released 'Tilting At Windmills', and the last we heard of the band was 2007's 'Return Of The Mechanical Dog', which perfectly showcased Dive Dive's fervent, effervescent pop-punk. Earlier this year though, the band showcased a set of new songs while supporting Frank Turner on his run of local fanclub gigs and their third album is being finished off this summer. In their time Dive Dive have become one of Oxford's most influential bands, inspiring plenty of Oxford youngsters with their melding of melody and aggression and an indefatigable DIY attitude, chief amongst them Yannis from Foals. With a new fanbase earned on their travels with Turner, maybe Dive Dive will now get the breaks and the justice their music has long since deserved.



for a tour including tonight's already sold-out show, the five-strong core of the band regularly supplemented by a host of guest musicians and dancers.

GOODSOUNDSINYEREAR: Fat Lil's, Witney – Open decks session for local DJs.

THURSDAY 2nd

INLIGHT + HAULA + DJ NATTY DREAD + DJ ARTWELL: The Bullingdon – Benefit gig for Children In Needs' Families Reunited charity, featuring epic stadium pop outfit InLight, plus r'n'b and soul from Ugandan singer Haula.

BIG HAIR: The Cellar – Indie/alternative bands tbc.

AP PROMOTIONS PRESENTS: Fat Lil's, Witney – Rock, metal and indie bands tbc.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

FRIDAY 3rd

MELTING POT with FROWSER + BROMPTONS + APES Vs MEN: The Bullingdon – Grungy metal from Frowser, plus garage blues from The Bromptons at tonight's Melting Pot club.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with NOT TOO SHABBY + FUZZY LOGIC + ECHOBOOMER: The Wheatsheaf – Typically mixed bill of bands at this month's Klub Kak, with raucous blues-rockers Not Too Shabby, along with melodic stadium-indie pop types Echoboomer.

WHITE DENIM: O2 Academy – Texan jazz-core weirdoes hit town – *see main preview*

IRON-ON MAIDEN: Fat Lil's, Witney – Tribute to Iron Maiden.

THE RACE + KING OF SPAIN + MY DEVICE + ANTON BARBEAU: The Winchester, Crown Street – Shifty Disco presents its 'Come Play With Me' package tour, featuring Reading's epic, U2-inspired rockers The Race, London's indie-folksters King Of Spain, spiky post-punkers My Device and psychedelic pop troubadour Anton Barbeau.

NOBLE ROGUES: The Jericho Tavern – Oxford-based Canadian blues-rock duo.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon GET DOWN: The Brickworks

SKYLARKIN: The Cellar – Reggae, ska, soul and rock'n'roll with DJs Mr Benn and MC Souls Liberation, plus live reggae from Zion.

SATURDAY 4th

COLLISIONS & CONSEQUENCES + UTE + BARBARE11A: The Wheatsheaf –

Epic, emotive indie rocking from C&C, plus glitchy, melancholic acoustic pop from Ute.

CHIEF + MOTION IN COLOUR + VIXENS + ASPEN SAILS: The Jericho Tavern – Lachrymose alt.country balladeering from the New York outfit Chief, plus soft-centred indie rocking from Motion In Colour and indie-punk from Vixens.

GORDON GILTRAP: Icknield Community College – Acoustic guitar masterclass from the classical and folk guitar veteran, playing material from his recent 'From The Brush & Stone' album, a collaboration with Rick Wakeman.

TREV WILLIAMS: Crabtree Bar, Faringdon (3pm)

TREV WILLIAMS: The Gate

TOM HEWSON + BARBARE11A +

BEAVER FUEL: The Cellar – Electro-goth rocking from local newcomers Barbare11a.

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – Electro-house club night.

SUNDAY 5th

CARNIVAL IN THE PARK: South Park –

This year's downsized Cowley Road Carnival takes over South Park for an afternoon of live music, dance and more. Acts include Mackating, Raggasaurus, The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band and more.

SMASHING PUMPKINS DAY: Fat Lil's, Witney – Local bands cover classic Pumpkins songs.

MONDAY 6th

3rd DEGREE LEBURN: The Bullingdon – Return to the Famous Monday Blues for the Californian guitarist, with his soulful style of funky blues rock.

SILVERSUN PICKUPS: O2 Academy – LA's spaced-out, histrionic nu-gaze rockers pay due homage to early Smashing Pumpkins and My Bloody Valentine as they plug second album 'Swoon', following on from tour supports to the likes of Kaiser Chiefs and Snow Patrol.

BRYAN ADAMS: The New Theatre – The Canadian singer, songwriter, multiple award-winning star, photographer, philanthropist and all-round good egg heads out on a European tour for his new album, '11', with over 65 million record sales under his belt, tonight performing an acoustic set and mixing up new songs with classic stadium and radio-friendly hits like 'Summer of 69', 'Cuts Like A Knife' and 'Run To You'.

TUESDAY 7th

ACE BUSHY STRIPTEASE + SAINTS INNOCENTS: The Wheatsheaf – Loveably raggedy indie shambling from Birmingham's Ace Bushy Striptease, somehow finding a middle ground between McLusky and The Pastels.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Funky, keyboard-led jazz from The Howard Peacock Quintet at the Bully's free weekly jazz session.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Mason's Arms, Headington Quarry

WEDNESDAY 8th

ME MY HEAD + VIXENS + THE KEYZ: The Bullingdon – Grungy thrash-pop from Me My Head, out on tour, with local support from indie-punk types Vixens and The Keyz.

ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney – Acoustic open-mic night.

THURSDAY 9th

FAILSAFE: O2 Academy – Pop-friendly emo and post-hardcore from Preston's hard-touring rockers, out on tour in support of new album, 'The Truth Is', following supports to the likes of Paramore, Gallows and Flogging Molly, amongst others.

THE BIRTHDAY MASSACRE: O2

Academy – Toronto's goth-horror synth-rockers prepare to release their new album and head out on a European tour, their mix of NIN, Marilyn Manson and Depeche Mode electro-noise topped off by singer Chibi's alternately sweet and guttural vocals.

SECRET RIVALS + CALI COLLECT + PEACH: The Bullingdon – Moshka club night with scuzzy electro indie-punk noisemakers Secret Rivals, plus grungy rockers Cali Collect.

STONE SALOON + TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS + FROM HERE, WE RUN!: Jericho Tavern – Southern-fried rock, Americana and folk from Stone Saloon, with excellent support from rising local starlets Tristan & The Troubadours and sweet-natured math-pop newcomers From Here, We Run!



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LES CLOCHARDS: Baby Simple – Gallic-flavoured pop meets Roy Orbison in Les Clochards' café folk world.

FIXERS + GULLIVERS: The Cellar – Big Hair bands night with stoner garage grunge noise from Fixers, plus ethereal indie-goth jangling from Gullivers

REVOLVER: Fat Lil's, Witney – Alternative club night.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

FRIDAY 10th

QUICKFIX PRESENTS with SMILEX + HEADCOUNT + BEELZEBOZO + DEATH VALLEY RIDERS: The Wheatsheaf – Much heaviosity at tonight's Quickfix session, with increasingly stadium rocking noisenicks Smilex up against proper 'eavy punk-metal titans Headcount, none-more-metal zombie grinders Beelzebozo and instrumental thrash merchants Death Valley Riders.

WHOLE LOTTA DC: Fat Lil's, Witney – AC/DC tribute band.

THE MIGHTY REDOX + THE PETE FRYER BAND + FILM NOIR: The Magdalen – Monthly residency from the local swamp-blues and festival funk faves, plus eccentric rocking from Pete Fryer and Smiths-y indie pop from Film Noir.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon GET DOWN: The Brickworks

BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – Afrobeat, Latin, Balkan, nu-jazz and world beats, with a live set from Bristol's soulful jazz-funk collective Edenheight.

SATURDAY 11th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Cornbury Country Park – Scouting For Girls and The Damned headline the opening day of the festival – *see main preview*

GLASSLIGHTS + DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN: O2 Academy – Nondescript landfill indie from Glasslights, ticking various boxes marked 'anthemic', 'emotive', 'Coldplay reserves' etc. Local spiky punk teens Dial F should have little trouble blowing them off stage, out of town and hopefully under a passing truck.

ALPHABET BACKWARDS + WE

AERONAUTS + MINOR COLES: The Bullingdon – Heart-warmingly bouncy synth-pop from Alphabet Backwards, marking out their claim to be the most fun live show in town. Support from recent Punt stars We Aeronauts, adding an expansive folky flourish to their sweet Elbow-like pop. Acoustic pop types Minor Coles open the show.

SKULL THRASH: Fat Lil's, Witney – Thrash metal.

FARINGDON ARTS FESTIVAL: Market Square, Faringdon – Full day and evening of live music including sets from Zen Pigs, The Follies, Gorgeous Moron, Dirty Deeds, Chalice and more.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: Rose Hill, Community Centre

GOD OF SMALL THINGS + LA VAMPIRETTES: Folly Bridge Inn – Epic,



Friday 3rd

WHITE DENIM:

O2 Academy

If Kings of Leon are the million unit-shifting crown princes of 60s-referencing roots rock, perhaps Austin Texas' White Denim are their slightly insane half-brothers, locked in a tower out of shame for fear they may usurp the throne and herald a new era of strange decrees and possibly a war with the robber barons. The three-piece's debut album, 'Workout Holiday', was recorded piecemeal in an old caravan and somehow manages to build bridges between styles as disparate as prog and garage rock, jazz and hardcore, electro and psychedelia. Or, if you like, a strange, lopsided melting pot of The Minutemen, Randy Newman and Blue Cheer. They're a wild-haired bunch of stoner geeks, with a frontman, James Petralli, who either sings like Anthony Hegarty or simply makes silly noises, while thrashing his guitar, and a drummer with the easy deftness of a master jazz sticksman. Songs take esoteric twists and turns, by turns brilliant and a complete bloody mess, sometimes undertaking bizarre, ambitious journeys, at others simply collapsing in a complete mess. White Denim were widely regarded as the band of the festival at last year's South By South West, and they stand at odds with most overly-polished rock bands; how far they can go really depends on to what extent they can rein in the wacky indulgence and unwind their inspired, experimental side.

piano-led classic rock from God Of Small Things, plus Abingdon newcomers La Vampirettes.

WORDPLAY: The Cellar – Hip hop and dubstep club night.

SUNDAY 12th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Cornbury Country Park – The mighty Sugababes top tonight's festival bill – *see main preview*

K-LACURA + VISIONS FALL: The Wheatsheaf – Metalcore noise from K-Lacura.

THE YOU WEREN'T THERE BAND: The New Inn, Witney – Classic 60s psychedelic faves, from Cream to The Creation.

HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES + BEARD OF DESTINY + THE NEW MOON: The

CORNBURY FESTIVAL

Cornbury Country Park

Saturday 11th - Sunday 12th

DUBBED POSHSTOCK A COUPLE OF years back, Cornbury is probably no more posh than Glastonbury these days but it does offer a level of comfort that is the envy of many larger festivals. For a start, it takes place in what must be the most serene and picturesque surroundings of any UK festival – Cornbury Country Park, a few miles from Charlbury. Here you can go spotting deer or sit by the lake if the music don't take your fancy, while the emphasis on decent catering and beer reflects a clientele that enjoys its home comforts.

Last year's Cornbury, like so many other festivals, suffered from the weather, and this year's Saturday bill seems put together to will the sun to shine.

There's **THE MAGIC NUMBERS** for starters, the Stodarts and Gannons' sunshiney 60s-styled folk-popsters whose bitter-sweet harmony-heavy jangle and chime has been a staple of boutique festivals, including Truck, over the past few years.

Similarly Britpop survivors **DODGY**, who'll enjoy running through 'Staying Out For The Summer' once more if the sun does indeed shine.

BOY LEAST LIKELY TO are equally at home in a summer setting, their twee, sunshiney anorak indie summed up best by *Rolling Stone*, who described the Wendover duo as "if all your childhood stuffed toys got together and formed a band".

Saturday's main stage headliners are, of course, **SCOUTING FOR GIRLS**, a band who seem to have broken some kind of record for critical lambastings since their eponymous debut album sneaked the number 1 slot seemingly out of the blue last year. The Harlow trio's blokey take on Busted and McFly-style boy-rock is perhaps too cheesy and simplistic for many but the hammy choruses and easy-going pop anthems obviously have enough fans to counteract that. Erm, can we stop pretending to be nice about them now, please?

Texas frontwoman **SHARLEEN SPITERI** is Saturday's other main stage star attraction, and she still manages to sneak updated version of old hits like 'I Don't Want Another Lover' into her soul-pop solo set.

Across the field in the second stage, original punk veterans **THE DAMNED** run through classic hits like 'New Rose', 'Neat Neat Neat' and 'Smash It Up', Mssrs Vanian and Sensible still hamming it up and hammering it out and doubtless being the loudest and messiest fun of the entire weekend.

Below them is folk-pop songsmith **TEDDY THOMPSON** – son of English folk legends Richard and Linda Thompson – now making a name for himself in his own right; blues-rock virtuoso **PETER GREEN**, the original Fleetwood Mac man, lauded in his time by everyone from BB King and Eric Clapton to Jimmy Page, seemingly lost for years in a wilderness of psychological illness but now re-establishing himself with his own band; self-styled Victorian funk outfit **THE SHORTWAVE SET**, critically lauded if not yet commercially successful but still able to entice the likes of Danger Mouse, John Cale and Van Dyke Parks to contribute to their last album and adding a sample-laden twist to classic 60s psychedelic pop. Don't miss **KINGSIZE 5** either, an old-fashioned but wonderfully fresh take on classic swing, jive, and blues.

On to Sunday, and if you've survived the Cornbury campsite's late-night bar – which Nightshift almost didn't last year – there can be no better start to a festival day than watching **STORNOWAY** in action. The local favourites open the Oxford Folk Festival Stage, one of myriad festival dates they play this summer and it's not beyond the realms of possibility that sometime soon they'll be headlining those same events. So make sure you catch them now.

PEATBOG FAERIES are this year's OFF stage headliners, the Scottish folk-fusion band mixing rock, jazz and electronica into their traditional celtic folk sound. Irish jazz-folk songstress **MARY COUGHLAN** – a woman who has experience of both alcohol problems and radical politics

Chrissie Hynde



that would shame any hardened rocker – continues her musical rehabilitation, while former-Fairground Attraction singer **EDDI READER** performs her reinterpretations of Robert Burns' songs. Local kora maestro **JALI FILY CISSOKHO** brings his **COUTE DIOMBOULOU** band to the party, with the folk stage line-up completed by Cornwall's eclectic acoustic trio **3 DAFT MONKEYS**, blending Latin, Balkan, gypsy and traditional folk with dub, punk and reggae.

Over on the main stage on Sunday are Nightshift's favourite girl band **SUGABABES**, and not just because they sampled Gary Numan on their Number 1 version of Richard X's 'Freak Like Me'. Nevermind that their internal politics make the Big Brother house look like a Buddhist temple, they've made some of the best hit singles of the past five years, from 'Overload' and 'Round Round' to 'Push The Button' and 'Hole In The Head' and we guarantee that by the time they're a couple of songs into their set even the normally curmudgeonly Nightshift will be shaking its booty. Which might not be a particularly attractive site.

Unlike **THE PRETENDERS**, who are an attractive sight, since we've had a crush on the lovely Chrissie Hynde for longer than we can remember, even when she went and married Jim Kerr, but we forgive Chrissie anything. Because the first Pretenders album is a genuine rock classic, Hynde is one of the all-time great female singers and, oh, goddammit, we just love Chrissie Hynde, okay?

Pop music? Can't beat a bit of **LIGHTNING SEEDS**, can you? Ian Broudie's indie anthem makers have replaced Joe Jackson on the main stage bill, and if the loss of Jackson is a shame, Lightning Seeds do make up for it; if you ignore the fact that everything they've ever released has been used in a car advert somewhere, you can't argue that Broudie writes simple, brilliant pop music. Yes, even 'Three Lions'. Completing the Sunday bill are country-folk songstress **IMELDA MAY**, blues and jazz rockers **LAURA & THE TEARS** and local nu-jazz popster **NATUREBOY**, who won the BBC Radio Oxford nomination to open the day's proceedings.

Tickets and info:

www.cornburyfestival.com.

Ticket hotline: 0871 472 0420

Magdalen – Unplugged session hosted by Klub Kakofanny's Phil and Sue.
FARINGDON ARTS FESTIVAL: Market Square, Faringdon – Live music all afternoon til 6pm with sets from Cooper Black, Sugardirt and more.

MONDAY 13th

FUNKYDORY: The Bullingdon – The rising UK funk, jazz and blues-rockers return to the Famous Monday Blues club.

SPINNERETTE: O2 Academy – Erstwhile Distillers frontwoman, grunge pin-up and Mrs Josh Homme, Brody Dalle returns with her new semi-solo project, joined by former-Distillers bandmate Tony Bevilacqua amongst others. It's a move into poppier territory that tends towards the Pink-fronting-Queens of the Stone Age scheme of things, but with the MTV-friendly tunes of the album replaced with raw garage-rock riffage in the live arena and Brody still a proper Joan Jett-style rock'n'roll hollering machine when she gets going.

TUESDAY 14th

GHOST OF A THOUSAND + THE COMPUTERS + SHARKS: O2 Academy – Riotous Refused-inspired hardcore from Brighton's rising noise heroes, out on a headline tour to promote new album, 'New Hopes, New Demonstrations'. Support from Exeter's Computers.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Jazz singer Sheila Selway is the guest at tonight's live jazz session.

INTRUSION: The Cellar – Goth, industrial, darkwave and 80s club night.

WEDNESDAY 15th

UTE + CAT MATADOR + AIDEN

CANADAY: The Wheatsheaf – More melancholy folk-pop from local newcomers Ute, plus new wave-inspired rockers Cat Matador and sweetly rough-hewn songsmith Aiden Canaday.

ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney

THURSDAY 16th

ATHLETE: O2 Academy – The hitmaking soft rockers head out on tour to plug fourth album 'Black Swan'.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – Adam Glasser is tonight's special guest.

RICHARD WALTERS + PHIL McMINN:

Baby Simple – Angel-voiced troubadour Richard returns to Oxford from Paris for a hometown gig ahead of the release of his debut album, 'The Animal', later this year. Winchell Riots frontman Phil plays a solo acoustic set in support.

MOTION IN COLOUR + NIGHT

PORTRAITS + COLLISIONS &

CONSEQUENCES: Fat Lil's, Witney –

Emotive indie rocking from MIC, with support from punky noise merchants Night Portraits and epic indie rockers C&C.

ARROWS OF LOVE + VIXENS: The

Jericho Tavern – Spiky indie-punk noise from London's Arrows of Love, formed by ex-

members of Hush The Many and Jamie T's band, and recent support to Pete Doherty. Local Joy Div acolytes Vixens support.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

BIG HAIR: The Cellar – Bands tbc.

FRIDAY 17th

TESSERACT + NO MADE SENSE +

TASTE MY EYES + ALFREDO

CONTRACT: The Bullingdon – A night of progressive metal from Burning Legacy promotions. Darkly-emotive prog-core titans Tesseract head out on tour with Reading's atmospheric experimental metallers No Made Sense, plus classic thrash and speed metal riffage from Alfredo Contract.

AND WHAT WILL BE LEFT OF THEM? + THE MOUNTAIN PARADE +

BRONTOSAURUS CHORUS: The

Wheatsheaf – Reliably indie-tastic fare from Swiss Concrete again tonight with Worcester's scuzzy, buzzsaw electro-indie-punk in a similar vein to Bis, Huggy Bear and Fight Like Apes. Support comes from dreamy, cluttered folk-popsters The Mountain Parade plus Los Campesinos-like indie janglers Brontosaurus Chorus.

THE YOU WEREN'T THERE BAND: The Bay Tree, Grove

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon

GET DOWN: The Brickworks

SATURDAY 18th

LES CLOCHARDS: Oxford Botanical

Gardens (2pm) – Sonorous Gallic-flavoured pop amid the flora.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Cricketers Arms

GALLOPS + MINNAARS +

LOAD.CLICK.SHOOT!: The Cellar –

Vacuous Pop present esoteric instrumental electro-rockers Gallops, along with Leicester's spangly Foals-alikes Minnaars and mathsy rockers Load. Click. Shoot.

PHISH: The Bullingdon – 90s retro club night.

SUNDAY 19th

Nuffink.

MONDAY 20th

THE LISA MILLS BAND: The Bullingdon

– Soulful blues-rocking with roots in gospel, country and rock'n'roll from the Mississippi singer and guitarist who's shared stages with the likes of Jeff Beck, Robert Plant and Dr John, as well as fronting Big Brother & The Holding Company.

TUESDAY 21st

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – With special guests The Hugh Turner Band.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Mason's Arms, Headington Quarry

WEDNESDAY 22nd

NISENNENMONDAI + ELAPSE-O +



Wednesday 22nd

NISENNENMONDAI / ELAPSE-O / FROM LIGHT TO SOUND: The Wheatsheaf

Poor Girl Noise return to local promoting, and what a return: Tokyo's astonishing experimental trio Nisennenmondai who are playing outside of their native Japan for the first time in their ten-year history. Like in the olden days of explorers to the orient, touring bands like Battles, Hella and Prefuse 73 have come back from Japanese tours with wondrous tales of the crazy all-girl band who supported them. Bassist Yuri Zaikawa, drummer Sayaka Himeno and guitarist Masako Takada have shared stages with the cream of the world's experimental bands (add to the above Damo Suzuki, Lightning Bolt, Mike Patton and Cluster), while their song titles ('Sonic Youth', 'Pop Group', 'This Heat') offer a glimpse of the exotic influences that steer them through their alternately motorik and pummelling instrumental pieces. They're post-punk, krautrock, free-rock and death disco all rolled into one, and as fun, challenging, uncompromising and captivating as anything you're likely to see this year. A more than welcome return to live action too for local noise merchants Elapse-O, the experimental duo kicking out a ferocious mix of Liars, Swans and Cabaret Voltaire, while atmospheric krautrockers From Light To Sound offer a hypnotic introduction to the night's proceedings.

FROM LIGHT TO SOUND: The

Wheatsheaf – Sublime experimental noise from Tokyo's all-girl cult heroes – *see main preview*

JOSHUA RADIN: O2 Academy – Soulful acoustic roots rocking from the Ohio singer-songwriter who's toured with KT Tunstall and Tori Amos.

ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney

THURSDAY 23rd

D-CONTROL + JUNKIE BRUSH +

BEAVER FUEL: The Bullingdon – Moshka club night with former Government Mule people D-Control, hopefully continuing that



Saturday 25th

CORNERSHOP:

O2 Academy

Proof positive that you can never give a band up for dead. Seven years on from their last album, and twelve from their sole chart hit, Tjinder Singh returns to music making. Cornershop are a radically changed beast from their earliest incarnation – a political-charged indie-noise outfit who released ramshackle singles on curry-coloured vinyl and raged against Morrissey's perceived racism. After that untidy start, the band's line-up changed and moved far deeper into traditional Indian music, resulting in 1995's brilliant, musically radical 'Woman's Gotta Have It', with its epic '6am Jullander Shere' flagship track. Here Eastern temple music met psychedelic drone-rock head on and the band's shows at The Point around the time remain some of the most intense and inspiring we've witnessed here at Nightshift. Thereafter followed Fatboy Slim's remix of 'Brimful Of Asha' and a Number 1 smash hit for Cornershop; an almost unthinkable turnaround in fortunes for the band. Bar a couple of blink-and-you'd-miss-them single releases, it's been quiet since 2002's 'Handcream For A Generation' but now Tjinder – the sole remaining member from that original line-up – returns with 'Judy Sucks A Lemon For Breakfast', suggesting a poppier, funkier take on the band's trademark Anglo-Indian sound, but if even a small amount of the magic of those old shows remains, tonight will be something a bit special.

band's metal terrorism, plus support from increasingly virulent punkers Junkie Brush and potty-mouthed indie-punk fighters Beaver Fuel.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – With jazz guitarist Roger Beaujolais.

BARRY & THE BEACHCOMBERS + FREAKISHLY LONG MIRRORS: Fat Lil's, Witney – Quirky punk noise from the Beachcombers.

RESPONSE COLLECTIVE: The Jericho Tavern – The local trip-hop electro rock trio host their regular Electronic Nights club, featuring the best local electro acts and DJs.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon
HOLD YOUR HORSE IS + RUN! WALK! + PHANTOM THEORY: The Cellar – Big Hair bands night with recent Dive Dive supports Hold Your Horse Is kicking out a frenetic brand of post-hardcore noise, plus riffastic local duo Phantom Theory.

FRIDAY 24th

DEDLOK + DESERT STORM + RUINS: The Wheatsheaf – Grinding thrash metal from the super heavyweight division. Classic thrash from Dedlock, plus stoner metal and psychedelia-tinged 70s grooves from Desert Storm, and malevolent hardcore from Ruins.
THE HAMSTERS: Fat Lil's, Witney – The UK's premier blues-rockers return with their Hendrix and ZZ Top-inspired boogie.
BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon
GET DOWN: The Brickworks
LATE NIGHT LIBRARY: The Cellar – Reggae, jungle, dubstep and funk club night.

SATURDAY 25th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – First day of the local festival, with sets from Ash and Damo Suzuki – *see main preview*
CORNERSHOP: O2 Academy – Tjinder and chums hit the comeback trail – *see main preview*
GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with MEET ME AT MIDNIGHT + JIM HOCKEY & THE SILENT SUN + ASH VERJEE: The Wheatsheaf – Wantonly mixed bill as ever from GTI, tonight mixing and matching Meet Me At Midnight's ogreish metal and hardcore with Cheltenham's Frank Turner-inspired folk troubadour and local ambient Technicolor electro soundscaper Ash Verjee.
THE GREAT PIG IN THE SKY: Fat Lil's, Witney – Tribute to Pink Floyd.
TREV WILLIAMS: Faringdon Glider Club
WAYNE McARTHUR UNIVERSAL PLAYERS: The Cellar – Live roots, rocksteady and reggae, plus dancehall sounds from Don Hayden and Shumba M.

SUNDAY 26th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – It's 'Oxford day' at Truck today with

Supergrass, Candyskins and more – *see main preview*

THE BIG BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3pm) – Open jam session.

MONDAY 27th

LIGHTNIN' WILLIE & THE POORBOYS: The Bullingdon – Return to the famous Monday Blues for the Texas-born, Pasadena-resident electric blues guitarist, a big favourite on the UK blues circuit with his rocking blues, swing and rock'n'roll that mixes up Otis Rush, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eddie Cochran.

TUESDAY 28th

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

WEDNESDAY 29th

ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney

THURSDAY 30th

DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN + MOTHERTRUCKER + VON BRAUN: The Cellar – Great spiky indie-punk and post-hardcore noise from Dial F at tonight's Big Hair night, plus darkly-inclined rock from Von Braun.
MOLOTOV SEXBOMB: Fat Lil's, Witney – Scuzzy glam-punk.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

FRIDAY 31st

MELTING POT with PALAHNIUK + UKI: The Bullingdon – Mixed bag unsigned bands showcase with Aylesbury rockers Palahniuk.
TEMPLETON PECK + NINE-STONE COWBOY + CALI COLLECT: The Wheatsheaf – A- Team-referencing rock from Templeton Peck, plus heroically pessimistic pop from Mark Cope's Nine Stone Cowboy.
THE FOLLYS + THE SCARLETTS: The Black Horse, Kidlington – First night of the Kidlington boozers' three-day live music festival. Rambunctious rockers The Follys and promising ska-punkers The Scarletts play tonight with two full days of music over two stages to follow on Saturday and Sunday (*see news story, page 3*).
GOOD TIME, GOOD TIME + GOOD THINGS HAPPEN IN BAD TOWNS: Fat Lil's, Witney
BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon
GET DOWN: The Brickworks
HQ: The Cellar – Drum&bass club night.

TRUCK FESTIVAL

Hill Farm, Steventon

Saturday 25th - Sunday 26th

TWELVE YEARS IN AND TRUCK FESTIVAL continues to exist in its very individual comfort zone while always offering interesting new angles and challenges for its regulars and newcomers alike.

With around 80 live acts, plus myriad DJs, playing across the weekend, there is, as ever, enough to keep the most restless fan on their toes, and again it's likely to be away from the main headline acts that the most fun will be found.

ASH and **SUPERGRASS** are, of course, this year's main stage headliners, both crowd-pleasing purveyors of indie anthems *par excellence*, (in a Top 40 hit singles contest, Ash narrowly beat The Grass 18-14) but it's typically cheeky of Truck to have legendary improv experimenter **DAMO SUZUKI** performing immediately before Ash on the Saturday night. He'll either clear the field or convert a thousand new acolytes depending on how Truck-goers take to a small, bearded Japanese man chanting bizarre semi-spiritual craziness over mesmerically wayward krautrock grooves. In a perfect world, it'll be the latter.

Other highlights on Saturday's main stage are anthemic Meccano-obsessed power-pop outfit **RED LIGHT COMPANY**; Mali's **VIEUX FARKA TOURE** – son of the legendary Ali and following in his dad's guitar-playing footsteps; Canada's **WINTERSLEEP**, soon to head out on tour in support of Editors; London's plaintive alt-folkers **FANFARLO**, who seem ready to step into Goldrush's musical shoes; Iceland's sweet, winsome classical-pop types **HJALTALIN**; rootsy blues-rockers **DETROIT SOCIAL CLUB** and Belfast's quirky, synth post-hardcore crew **PANAMA KINGS**, coming on in a Modest Mouse vein.

Sunday's main stage line-up is a special Oxford-only affair. Supergrass of course top the bill, hopefully using the opportunity to play a greatest hits set that would be the envy of any band around. Before them are Oxford's quintessential cult favourites **THE CANDYSKINS**, a band who were dogged through their career by astonishing bad luck but who, when it came to writing fantastic pop songs – from 'Wembley' to 'Car Crash' – had nothing short of a magic touch.

Joining them will be rejuvenated post-hardcore heroes **DIVE DIVE**, who have spent much of the last few years performing as Frank Turner's backing band but who are set to return with their third album soon; elegantly cinematic lounge-popster **THE LONG INSIDERS**; festival-friendly country rockers **THE EPSTEIN**, kora maestro **JALI FILY CISSOKHO**, bubbly electro-indie starlets **ALPHABET BACKWARDS** and the very mighty **RELATIONSHIPS**, a band who seem to have existed



Ash

on the local scene as long as the scene itself but continue to write timelessly emotive psychedelic pop gems.

Like any good festival Truck's best treats tend to be hidden away on the smaller stages, and the rule tends to be simply follow your ears or pick an unfamiliar name from the programme and see what fate dishes up.

The Barn stage, as ever, tends towards the heavier side of things. You!

Me! Dancing! host the Saturday where highlights include Cumbria's otherworldly symphonic pop weirdoes **WILD BEASTS**, New York's ear-pummelling Joy Division and Mary Chain-inspired noisenicks **A PLACE TO BURY STRANGERS**, Leeds' mathsy indie rockers **GRAMMATICS**, Glasgow's spiky post-hardcore types **WE WERE PROMISED JETPACKS** and Yorkshire's rising

leftfield pop outfit **WHITE BELT, YELLOW TAG**. Later on the night **FRESH OUT THE BOX** take over for a Cowshed Rave that features Ninja Tunes' **DJ FOOD** as well as **LEE MORTIMER**, **FOAMO** and **TOTALLY ENORMOUS EXTINCT DINOSAUR**.

On Sunday, Rock Sound take over for a day that includes Brighton's riotous Refused-style hardcore brigade **THE GHOST OF A THOUSAND**, Fugazi-influenced post-hardcore people **PULLED APART BY HORSES**, fabulous Breeders-style noise-pop starlets **THE JOY FORMIDABLE**, Leeds' sparkly garage rockers **SKYLARKIN** and punky indie rockers **CALORIES**, while Oregon's grungy, glitchy electro-pop and hip hop chap **YACHT** tops the bill and Supergrass's Gaz and Danny launch their new side project, **HOT RATS**.

One potentially fascinating addition to this year's Truck is the **NON-CLASSICAL**-hosted stage that features a DJ set from **GABRIEL PROKOFIEV**, as well as performances by **THE ELYSIAN QUARTET**, **JOHN MATTHIAS AND NICK RYAN**, **JOBY BURGESS** and **JOHN KAMEEL FARAH**, each offering new, innovative takes on contemporary classical music.

Elsewhere the Market Stage hosts a wide assortment of mellow and acoustic acts, including a headline set from the brilliant **BROKEN RECORDS** and a country-flavoured Sunday bill handpicked by Steventon's own Whispering Bob Harris himself; amongst those playing are Jayhawks' **GARY LOURIS AND MARK OLSON**. The Beathive and Village Pub stages feature a reliably eclectic mix of indie, dance, hip hop and electronic acts and as well as the special Oxford day on the main stage there are a host of Oxford unsigned acts performing across the weekend, including this month's cover stars **THE JOE ALLEN BAND**, **CAT MATADOR**, **DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN**, **THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND** and **THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS**.

As ever, far too much to list here, so take your picks and celebrate what continues to be a leader on the small festival front, and what is undoubtedly the centre-piece of Oxfordshire's music calendar.



Supergrass

In their own words

"The idea for the Oxford day started after we booked Supergrass – one of the bands that got us excited about music in the first place – and we could easily have had two Oxford days. Or three! We like to think of Truck as a summer outing for the Oxford music crowd, so what better than a day of Oxford artists?"

I suppose what makes Truck different is all the local people who are involved, the long walk down the Causeway from the bus stop, the fragrant barn stage... oh, and there are no dressing rooms, so the bands have to muck in!."

Robin Bennett, festival organiser



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BROKEN RECORDS

O2 Academy

My, but what a lot of beards. If beards were hit singles, Edinburgh's Broken Records would be the biggest band in Britain. For now, they'll have to settle for being the brightest hopes of that most credible of labels, 4AD. Their place on that illustrious roster might well be labelled 'fun-sized Arcade Fire', given their string-rich, reach-for-the-stars sweep and the earnest vocal endeavours of singer Jamie Sutherland. They fall short of that perfect spot between epic scope and hysterical melodrama, but for all that, they have a rousing sound to vivify even the lowest spirits.

As with the best bands heavy on personnel, Broken Records realise that it's not about how much noise you make, but how you orchestrate it to best effect. At their best, their music is a mesmerising collage of interacting melodies; brass, violin, cello and guitar swapping the lead as will to conceive an ornate, fascinating tapestry. They're also excellent at choosing the moment to bring all the instruments back into unison to propel their songs skywards.

Having found a sound that works for them, they're also restless enough to push its boundaries – not so much into the avant garde, but far enough that you can see another couple of interesting albums in the offing. An accordion-inflected sea shanty is a triumphant merging of sounds, though they less successfully attempt a flaccid rock-out that's a pretty unconvincing



Photo: RPHimages

divergence.

If they're going to get a kicking over anything, it's that their vacillations between bluster and grandeur masks some unpleasant lyrical mawkishness, which dramatically undercuts their

impact in quieter moments, but let's leave that aside for now. This is a brilliant burst of sunshine to warm hearts at Truck next month, whatever the weather.

Stuart Fowkes

THE RELATIONSHIPS / LES CLOCHARDS / MY FRIEND RACHEL / GRANT

The Cellar

Guitars smashed across faces, blood, bruising, and strangulation by microphone cord, well no, this is a Big Red Sky label night, an evening of tutor-rock, where you're more likely to be wounded by a well placed *bon mot*. It could also be called *Martin Newton's Got Talent* night, as the Kidlington-based producer and multi-instrumentalist who effectively mid-wifed the new label into existence, providing an animal shelter for misunderstood bands and orphan voices.

In this latter mode he is largely the music behind the first two sets tonight. Firstly, playing like Ollie the Octopus, keys, guitar and cut-paste-loop-laptop, along with bassist Pete Marler, over the crooner-rage

of Grant Baldwin, whose gothic phrasing has intense funereal bombast, and some sense of The Editors' Tom Smith singing Kermit's "It's not easy being green". Like all the acts tonight, it's rather splendid in pint-size doses.

With My Friend Rachael, Martin plays guitar for the re-emergence of Oxford's reclusive "Georgia peach" Katherine Hieronymus, along with two of his Witches bandmates, plus Paul Parry the original bassist from Katherine's old band, Hieronymus. They tease us with a four-song set from classy new album 'A Moment's Silence' and all the old Karen Carpenter and Judie Tzuke superlatives can once again be laid at Katherine's feet. A few more gigs and

her ring rust will hopefully be replaced by a confidence that would see her be a force to be reckoned with, if she really wants it.

Les Clochards succeed in the difficult task of warming my curmudgeonly tendencies away. I'm initially resistant to the stereotypical accordion giving such a marked characteristic to the whole thing, with people in the audience queasily developing French accents and saying "tout et bon" or "mayonnaise and chaise longue" in some downtown Parisian-in-Seine way. But Les Clochards are way too clever to fall into that trap, and they meld their love of Frenchness onto a happy Roy Orbison-flying-down-to-Rio, carnival vibe, with the audience

buzzing and dancing for the first time tonight.

The Relationships quickly pick up on all the enchantment that has been created, and replace any temptation they might have to be slippers and cardigan cosy by unleashing some of drummer Tim Turan's Keith Moon skill sets over some Who-like power-chords. I kid you not. Seems the difficult third album has uncorked some ritzy hip shaking amongst Richard Ramage's 60s and 70s name checking. 'Victorian Séance' has a fleeting Stranglers 'Duchess' feel about it, and is that a nod to Genesis' 'Watcher Of The Skies' I hear? So is it Big Red Sky at night, or Big Red Sky in the Morning? Either way the outlook is rosy.

Paul Carrera

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THE SATURDAYS / PIXIE LOTT

The New Theatre

18-year-old Pixie Lott strides onstage wearing very little, with all the nervous excitement of an *X-Factor* contestant. Once she hits the performance button, though, she's awash with brazen confidence, backed by two badly-dressed, oddly-choreographed dancers she runs through a five-song set that completely belies the "New Amy Winehouse" status conferred upon her by her record company's hype machine. She's got a strong, strident soul voice but she's more Kylie crossed with Emma Bunton and with a tendency to warble like every other major label diva these days. Number 1 debut single 'Mama Do' bears a fleeting resemblance to Depeche Mode's 'Personal Jesus' before stomping off down a glam disco alley, but just as we're warming to her, she tries to teach us the "special Pixie handclap", which is just, like, so amazing, we're forced to run to the bar and order everything they've got. Which isn't difficult since we're the only people in the venue old enough to drink.

Despite having marked them down as third-rate Girls Aloud and hated their crucifixion of 'Just Can't Get Enough' to the point of violence, we're looking forward to The Saturdays: it's something different to another night down the Cellar or Wheatsheaf. It takes us four songs to realise why we like going

down the Cellar and Wheatsheaf so much.

Handicapped from the off by having one member, Vanessa, twist her ankle falling over on the first night of the tour, The Saturdays really are vacuous pop made flesh. Without Sugababes' tunes or even Girls Aloud's slender personalities, they're passionless choreographed crap, a parody of a caricature, humping through cod-Motown soul, leaden electro-pop and truly madly deeply awful ballads. Why they don't just come clean and form a tribute band called The Shit Supremes is anyone's guess. They announce a "street version" of 'Beg It', as if it gives them an element of danger, before leaving the stage for a costume change while a supposedly candid video of the band fooling about on the tour bus plays out painfully on the big screen. The teenage girls in the crowd clutch their glossy programmes and scream at every dance move and we feel old and out of touch and remember where we really belong. And so we slope off to the Wheatsheaf where Klub Kakofanny is yet again displaying a greater grasp of untutored, uncaring musical character than The Saturdays and their marketing department could ever imagine. Could we ever love them? Never in a month of Sundays.

Sue Foreman

DEATHRAY TREBUCHAY / STORNOWAY / JALI FILY CISSOKHO

Isis Tavern

"Are you going to the festival?" asks a local to his mate as we cross Iffley Lock. "Are you going to [ironic emphasis] *rock out*?" Doubt it, chum, for this is a record launch from delicate folkpoppers Stornoway, in the The Isis Tavern's bucolic grounds, for well-heeled neo-hippies and fragile indie children. So, in place of warm Fosters we get organic ale; in place of tight black jeans we get flowy floral dresses, and in place of a harried, leather-clad engineer we get – well, some things are constant, perhaps. Kora player Jali Fily Cissokho provides a suitably warm introduction, the sounds from his West African harp growing from tiny wisps of melody to huge clouds of sound as his thumbs writhe around the strings. It's easy enough to drift away to Cissokho's gorgeous set, but he's not pandering to the lentic burger World Music morass; his playing incorporates hard attacks and sudden spasms of notes as well as mellifluous fluidity. This is intricate, intelligent music for active listening, not pallid chillout sessions.

In a near Stalinist act of historical revisionism, Stornoway have announced that 'Zorbing' shall be their debut single; any records you may already own by them are the result of fevered imaginations and possible bourgeois deviation, and mention of them will land you swiftly in a Headington Quarry labour camp. Their songs are so timeless, it feels as though Stornoway have been around forever, though it was only three short years ago that we first saw them,

playing, in all honesty, an uneven set. They've come light years since, but never lost their oddity and awkward affability: after a brief vamping intro their first track tonight is 'On The Rocks', a treble-saturated, reverb-drenched fuzz that is like nothing other Oxford bands would write, and is also illogically beautiful – the cymbals sound like jagged ice, the guitar harmonics flash like winter sunlight, and the glorious vocal arches above everything like a rainbow bridge. The set builds to a restrained climax, and encapsulates everything wonderful about their twitchy bonhomie and nervous charm. They even have a real Zorb terrorising the audience to the front. If you want to break the Oxford pasty, apparently all you need is a giant inflatable Kiwi ball.

Since they look like Dogs D'Amour dressed by Timmy Mallett, and play rag week ska rock, Deathray Trebuchay satisfy those who missed 'The Good Fish Guide' from Stornoway's set. Definitely not us, in other words. But unexpectedly, just by dint of a great bassist, some fluently inventive horn lines, and the fact they're (whisper it) having *fun*, this London act wins us over until we're punching the air to their knockabout jazz punk with the rest of them. Rocking lock man would have approved... unless he was one of the many people phoning in noise complaints, anyway. Childish, of course, but this makes us love the evening even more.

David Murphy

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THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART / FROM LIGHT TO SOUND

The Jericho Tavern

They're astronomically twee and sport fringes of a length normally reserved for Japanese horror movies, but forgive The Pains of Being Pure At Heart the wordcount-guzzling band name and achingly indie credentials. All the way from the US, the college radio hipsters hit The Jericho with impeccable retro shoegaze from one of 2009's top debut albums.

Local noise rockers From Light to Sound - all instrumental but packing a luscious ambient punch - open with heavy sustain, British Sea Power's hooking noise-rock laced with Sonic Youth split distortion. Sample-heavy post-rock - think Explosions in The Sky - fidgets into heavy instrumental post-rock, drifting from 'Storm' into 'Compliance' with Math-rock tech and bursts of white noise.

From punch to pop: a complete change of direction from excellent London based Shrag, who resurrect 70s glam grrl rock, coasting melodic bubbledream pop into punk-dischord keyboard Le Tigre choruses. 'ABC 123' snaps a playground-game chorus over vintage polkadot pop, moving into a Bikini Kill closer, electro-tilting sample heavy creeper, galloping percussion into broken chorus.

Shrieking feedback flips a solid bass-kick into noise pop and Pains are on stage to album opener 'Contender', unaffected vocals camouflaged by the wall of noise, down-tuned guitars and sludgy bass. References to Peter, Bjorn and John and My Bloody Valentine drag through buckets of reverb, shimmering hi-hat twists with vocals in constant opposition, draping and curling over the guitar line. It's uplifting, and without the twinkling shoegaze of Cocteau Twins. 'This Love is Fucking Right' fidgets underneath the warmth of the chorus, compassionate soulful vocals surfing over grouped strumming. A fleetingly cheeky two-second cover of 'Creep' intros into the encore and closer, the magnificent 'Gentle Sons', shamelessly ripping the heartbeat from Jesus and Mary Chain's 'Just Like Honey' before screeching solo, pounding emphasis through feedback and a gigantic wall of sound.

Pains... are an aural catalogue of 80s alt-rock. Their self-titled debut is sheer brilliance: live, originality smashes clean through their musical ancestry. Pure or not, there's a heart of genuine innovation beating behind their reference-heavy nu-gaze.

Liz Dodd

DOUG WIMBISH

The North Wall

In the summer of 1988 three albums changed my life forever. 'Acid Trax 2' hardly needs any explanation, nor does the first Public Enemy LP. But 'Tackhead Tape Time' by Tackhead still sounds like an album with no particular reference to anything made before or since. The guitarist, drummer and bass player (Doug Wimbish) from New York's Sugarhill Records house band had relocated to the UK and joined forces with On-U Sounds supremo Adrian Sherwood to create a earth-shaking collision of funk, dub and metal with liberal use of sampling, then still in its infancy. A collective of like-minded spirits like Mark Stewart, Melle Mel and Gary Clail helped make them prolific and influential figures; I once saw Ron Wood emerge from the wings in a blue fur coat and proceed to accompany them on bass, looking as surprised to be there as we were to see him.

These days Tackhead is on ice, though Wimbish's new album 'CinemaSonics' sees them all present, along with friends like Shara Nelson and Bernie Worrell. Tonight

he's accompanied by drummer Will Calhoun, his partner in duo Head>>Fake and the reformed US black rockers Living Colour. Wimbish uses his bass and effects as a trigger, one minute sounding like a violin, the next a guitar, then back to a bass. Even to fans' ears this music is fairly out there, with elements of free jazz and improvisation, as well as some almost shamanic rhythmical excursions. Though the intimacy of the venue suits the mood perfectly, the twenty-five quid ticket price seems to have put off the casually curious.

If a criticism is needed, it's that Wimbish draws in elements from so many different genres and styles that it's hard to hear his own musical voice. Still, his political passion is undimmed, taking time to rail at length against one G W Bush between songs. Though my dream would be to see Tackhead reunite in its former glory, Wimbish has always preferred to keep looking forward and shows no signs of slowing down or looking over his shoulder.

Art Lagun

2MANYDJS

O2 Academy

The Dewaele brothers are busy people. Part of Belgian pop/rock/electro combo Soulwax for the past 14-odd years, David and Stephen are also the remix/DJ duo 2manydjs, who emerged in the early 00s with some legendary bootleg sets. They used to have a show on Belgian radio, and tonight's gig is part of a tour to celebrate the launch of Radio Soulwax as a web radio show (featuring Soulwax live, DJ sets and special guests, apparently).

This is a live production set - mixing and producing live rather than mixing just pre-prepared stuff, so no outing for 'Bootylicious/Smells Like Teen Spirit'. It's a constantly changing amalgamation. I spot 'NY Lipps' - a mashup of 'Funky Town' and Soulwax's 'NY Excuse' - being mixed into their own remix of Soulwax's 'E Talking' - a live mix of their own remix of their own song!

The highlight is really the animated record covers. Dizzee Rascal's eyes and eyebrows dance to 'Bonkers' (which, predictably, drives the crowd crazy); MGMT bop on the cover of 'Oracular

Spectacular'; the mouth from Fischerspooner's '#1' album has an artistic case of record vomiting; and the assorted members of the (Human) League Unlimited Orchestra are looking lively (for their age) during 'Open Your Heart' ('Love and Dancing' was arguably the first proper remix album, of course). The mainstream (Bodyrox's 'Yeah Yeah') joins the more obscure (is Mr Oizo's 'Cut Dick' obscure?), the older (CLS's 'Can You Feel It'), the currently cool (Tiga's 'Shoes'; Justice's 'Phantom Pt II') and rock (The Clash's 'Rock the Casbah' and AC/DC's 'Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap').

It's much more interesting than a standard DJ set, and there's some very clever technical wizardry going on. I guess they're doing it with CDs, mixers/samplers, a laptop and crafty planning; I can't work out how the synchronised cover art fits in, but I can see them beavering away twiddling knobs to some effect, so I'm satisfied. Mystery AND fun - bargain!

Kirsten Etheridge

GARY NUMAN

O2 Academy

Gary Numan seems convinced he's damned for all eternity. Since his artistic and critical rebirth – finally receiving due recognition as the pioneer of electronica and rediscovering his muse in the world of industrial gothic rock – he's fought a highly personal battle with God in his lyrics, simultaneously dismissing Him, while raging against the neglectful creator. At the same time, newer songs like 'Haunted' and 'In A Dark Place' find Numan striving for splendid isolation from the world as much as 'Cars' did thirty years ago. Really, in the existential angst stakes, Gary makes Thom Yorke look like Timmy Mallett.

Tonight's gig is part of a short tour to promote a new album of remodelled outtakes from his past three albums, but bar a couple of unrecognised newbies, it's more of an exquisite snapshot of a three decade-long career that's scaled incredible heights as well as taken him to some very dark places indeed. But even as he reaches back to songs like 'Films' and 'I Dream Of Wires', Numan's harsh, monolithic industrial metal sound – inspired by Nine Inch Nails and Fear Factory, two bands he in turn inspired first time round – infects them with apocalyptic brutality. In the surprise highlight of tonight's set, he plucks 1982's 'I

Assassin' from nowhere, fillets its electro-funk heart and replaces it with chilled metallic menace.

If 'Absolution' is a disappointingly prodigal inclusion, and a version of 'Are 'Friends' Electric?' sounds too close to a Trent Reznor re-imagining, 'Pure' is stunning, its brooding verse and viciously anthemic chorus typical of Numan's most recent *oeuvre*. But it's a leviathan-heavy version of 'Down In The Park' and a stuttering, sparking encore of 'We Are So Fragile' that steal tonight's plaudits, while closer 'A Prayer For The Unborn' is a howling damnation of a deity who would allow a child to die, all the more poignant since it's written from direct personal experience.

Throughout all this Numan is as uncommunicative and awkward as he's always been on stage, but somehow this lends him a strange showmanship and charisma that's at once alien and natural, and while plenty of his post-punk contemporaries are content to knock out their old hits with casual disinterest in anything other than nostalgia-fuelled lucre, Numan continues to challenge himself, his audience and even God, to listen with fresh ears.

Dale Kattack

JONQUIL / HOUSE OF BROTHERS

O2 Academy

There's nothing more disappointing and anticlimactic than listening to a band live with full expectations of brilliance in your heart only for them to spectacularly fail. This is exactly what happens tonight with House of Brothers, Andrew Jackson's I-am-a-singer-songwriter-guitar-player-with-a-backing-band newish musical enterprise. The former member of Worcester's The Murder of Rosa Luxembourg and Scarecrows, inspired by punk, rock and chaotic landscapes, offers now a performance that is way far from these original roots. Unfortunately, his live singing skills never do justice to the romantic lyricism and suave pop treats in his new recordings. Songs blend one after another into a mash of bland acoustic I've-heard-it-all-before melodies, with drums and basslines reluctant to chip in full-hearted. This isn't to say his playing isn't quality, but if only Andrew's vocals were firmer and more precise and the other members believed rather than pretended, things would be pretty different. There is still a bit of a way to find harmony within this House of Brothers.

But, *coucou!* Here come Jonquil, organically fresh and *absolument* bohemian. After the re-release of their album 'Lions', many months on the road, subsequent

collaborations with Youthmovies and additional recordings, we're presented tonight with an eclectic yet masterly display of songs old and new, arranged in such a well-balanced track flow that it is difficult to spot the novel material. And this is only because there is nothing fake or forced in Jonquil's sound. Their musicianship is such that new songs like 'Fighting Smiles' contain the same sparkle and twinkle as, say, 'Whistle Low', while gently swaying away from fiddle-oriented pastures to more electronic-poppy, guitar-synth auras. They do this with such ease in the songwriting area and on stage that it seems they were born with instruments as an extension of their bodies. Yet it's clear there is nothing easy in their craftsmanship. Bass, drums, percussion, keyboards, accordion, trumpet, keyboard mouth organ, shoo-ba-da tenor voices and guitars are all shared and swapped around like a Parisian carousel to achieve a mature feelgood music that combines the nostalgia and chanting of folk, the beats of daddy long-legged dancy pop and the experimental arrangements of rock as if produced in an oil paint colour palette. The night belongs, without a doubt, to the House that Jonquil built.

Liane Escorça

WOOD FESTIVAL

Braziers Park

WOOD is an eco-friendly celebration of nature, music, solar powered stages, workshops, compost toilets and wood-heated saunas, all put together by the organisers of Truck. It's bigger this year than 2008's debut, three days instead of two and with more high profile acts performing on its tiny wooden stages. Despite still being a new event in the local calendar, and placed precariously early in the summer for an outdoor event, there are over 1,000 people here, some having travelled all the way from the north east to be here. It's a very different crowd to Truck – more older ex-hippy types and couples with toddlers, whose playfulness and curiosity add to the relaxed atmosphere and entertainment.

One of the special charms of Wood is the tiny Bicycle Tent where the amps depend on pedal power from whoever happens by. No cyclists: no show. Some of **Stornoway** help power a set from American trio **Blind Pilot**. They should feel right at home, having already done tours by bike, amazingly taking a double bass with them. Their rustic melancholy Americana and harmony singing make them the best discovery of the Festival.

My highlight is Sunday night and festival headliners **Spiers** and **Boden**, who dazzle on the main solar-powered Wood Stage. The folk heroes make the songs and tunes, which they have played many times, again sound fresh, crisp and minted anew. With no more than Boden's vocals, fiddle and guitar and Spiers' concertinas, plus their wit in

taking on the line of surreal banter coming from the crowd, the duo hold the field's attention throughout their 90-minute set.

Earlier, the rocky echoes of speakeasy jazz, an Appalachian vibe and the warmth and energy of Canada's **Po'Girl** in the Tree Tent take the edge off the chill of Sunday evening with songs played on their home-made guitars. Other Sunday highlights are Scottish folk artist **Karine Polwart's** songs of love and loss, and a rare appearance in these parts by Welsh singer songwriter **Meic Stevens**. With a CV stretching

back to the 60s, and a mellow, psych-folk blues, his set, sung in Welsh as well as English, is just right for those of the crowd who could remember that era. Saturday's highlight is **Stornoway**, who finish past midnight with the main Wood stage surrounded by a pitch-black night and the crowd cheering for more. In 'We are the Battery Human', the band have a real clap-along festival anthem. Earlier there's understated but gripping treatments of traditional folk from multi-

award winner **Jim Moray**. Surprisingly though, his version of 'Two Sisters' is outshone by **Rachael Dadd's** version in her Friday night set.

It wouldn't be a festival without some special unique moments. We have the sun breaking through briefly as Witney-based griot **Jali Fily Cissiko**, to his obvious delight, finds he's totally beguiling a packed Tree tent with his kora playing. There's also an onstage reunion of the **Bennett brothers** and **Mark Gardener**. Best of all are **Dodgy** declaring the festival season open and raising a big cheer with 'Staying Out For The Summer'. Certainly Wood is a great, innovative opener to the season.

Colin May



JULY Dates

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Th 6th **REVOLVER** Identity at Rock Club Night Great DJ's, Great drinks/decks - £3, door 8pm
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Wed 15th Acoustic Lounge Bands/Solo artists, play your songs on the acoustic stage - Free Entry 8pm
Th 16th Motion In Colour + Night Portraits + Collisions & Consequences - £3, door 7.30pm
Sat 18th Lil Fat Comedy Club - Steve Day + More. Fantastic pro-comedy - £3, door 7.30pm
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Fri 24th **THE HAMSTERS** Legends of the blues circuit perform Hendrix & ZZ Top - £12.50, door 8pm
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Th 30th Molotov Sexbomb + Support Great local indie & Metal bands - £4, 8pm
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We Got Tickets

THE BIG BABY GRAVY PARTY

O2 Academy

From the average age of the queue outside, to the screaming girls in front of the stage, there's a distinct youth-club air about tonight's Baby Gravy-hosted proceedings.

We creak our way up the stairs and marvel at the ear-piercing screams that greet **Silecta** as he takes to the stage. An exuberant young MC, he's in his element as he twists his way through some distinctly positive hip-hop. We promise ourselves a quick blast of '3 Feet High and Rising' as soon as we get home and try to forget how long ago the daisy age was.

Motor City Shuffle too are greeted with the kind of adulation that is reserved for genuine icons like The Beatles. Unlike The Beatles, the Shuffle don't have a massive amount of tunes, and those that they do have hark back to the turgid bands that followed in the wake of The Wedding Present. There's no rose tinted way to look back at those memories.

Trading in profane exchanges driven along by the kind of bass that shakes the floor and makes you feel like you've just been violated is how **G Block** roll. It's hip-hop with a frown and at times a little clichéd but you can't help but love a band that has a member who sports a pencil thin moustache and wears a string vest that makes him look like a peculiar mix of John Waters and Gumby.

Returning to the youth club vibe are **The Vibe** who are impossibly young, but still put on a very mature show. Indeed at times they sound

as if they've missed out on the teenage kicks and headed straight for the cruising down the middle of the road. The last few songs seem to be lightly influenced by Foals and are much the better for it. Not great yet, but the potential here is more than considerable.

Mr Shadown is, as always, impeccable. Masterful with the crowd and a true showman, he's on fire tonight. **Baby Gravy** too are on form, Dale's keyboards and Dave's rampant bass lines are to the fore as Iona stalks the stage with the kind of assurance and arrogance

that befits the band's sound.

When Shadown appears mid set for a guest spot it's all too perfect and fizzing with a undeniable energy that is palpable. Collaborations are a tricky thing to pull off, but you suspect that between them Shadown and Baby Gravy could come up with something quite spectacular.

A distinct victory for youth tonight then but dear Lord, it's exhausting. We're off for a nice cup of Horlicks and a sit down.

Sam Shepherd



Baby Gravy and Mr Shadown by Sam Shepherd

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	<p>SAT 11/JUL</p> <h2>alphabet backwards</h2> <p>+ WE ARE AERONAUTS + MINOR COLES</p>
	<p>TWO 10/SEP</p> <h2>THE LOW ANTHEM</h2>
	<p>WED 21/OCT</p> <h2>I LIKE TRAINS</h2>
	<p>SAT 24/OCT</p> <h2>3 DAFT MONKEYS</h2>

NITKOWKSI/THEO

The Cellar

It's nearing the end of eighth week and the Cellar is pretty boisterous, what with all those student-types finishing their work. It's a good thing then that Nitkowski are playing; a perfect band to sum up the anarchic, chaotic mood.

First, though, a ying to Nitkowski's yang, is Theo. From Worcester, Theo likes his loops. They can be dreamy and ambient or more severe; sometimes they are both. He plays mostly guitar, but occasionally other things, and does a good line in lulling audiences into a dreamy state, as his music veers closer to a wall of sound-like effect.

Theo manages to balance the looped-on-stage antics well, and he does a mean line in percussion. He's a serious young man too, and not too keen on cracking a smile. Although over the course of his set it does get a little repetitive, especially as he doesn't really like to break things up with vocals, mostly it's entrancing and admirable stuff.

Nitkowksi may or may not be a serious outfit; it's hard to discern lyrics amongst some of the caterwaul of their Fugazi-style assault, and the screaming vocal delivery. They like repetitive chords like Theo, however their speciality is to drive you into the ground, rather than float from it. It's quite freeform, although the songs are thankfully (due to their head-bleeding volume) fairly brief. It's made more immediate due to the lack of a bass player; there's nothing lulling into the surface; it's an incredibly visceral assault, culminating in heavy crescendos. I'm not sure what the student-heavy audience makes of it,

although there's some tentative moshing from a hard-core group at the front.

Inevitably the DJs take over and pump something more accessible over the speakers, and the night finally blossoms into a classic post-exam piss-up.

James Benefield

JOAN OF ARC / THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS / LOVE OF EVERYTHING / ELEPHANTS

The Cellar

Elephants, newly signed to Vacuous Pop, are a four-piece band from Kent making big music with polyrhythmic twitches. They are overwhelmingly energetic, a red bull drink of riffs, overflowing beats and uncontrollable passion. Their songs cry 'single! single!' though their youth shows their leaks in terms of accuracy and thoroughness. Still, it is refreshing to see a new band full of potential and full of love for music that physically takes your breath away.

Love of Everything are a total disappointment, like love can be. The duo, from Chicago, make an indie-folk sound with drums, guitar and vocals that concentrates on the nakedness rather than the substance. Silence, so important as a medium for songs, is underestimated here and feels dirty and cringeworthy. Beware of

emotional extremes; love of everything or hate of everything.

This Town Needs Guns are up for a storm tonight. The Oxford band have come a long way after numerous tours around Europe and EPs plus their debut album, 'Animals', late last year. Our last live review was not very positive, there wasn't much communication among them, but since then, with a new bassist in tow and a natural and cohesive camaraderie, they offer an intense and colourful set, and an energetic approach to laidback melodic vocals over complicated guitar scale games and syncopated drums. It pays to play and play and play and work hard at it. And it definitely shows.

Following the break up of Capn'Jazz in Chicago in 1995, Joan of Arc was formed with singer Tim Kinsella, who remained as the permanent core of the band. Other members have been in other experimental indie post-rock bands such as American Football, Owls or Make Believe. With so many musical years behind them and about 13 releases under their belts, it is difficult not to assume a top performance. Unfortunately, tonight they deliver what is expected in an air-sealed package: too tight to be fresh, too structured to taste genuine anymore. Tonight, their synthetic noise, offbeat instrumentation and cryptic lyrics with emo tendencies - regardless of Tim Kinsella's personal rejection of the term - feel cold and underwhelming and their incidental percussion spasms, baffled background synths, intricate guitar work sound tinned and over lengthy. Not as heroic as the real Joan, after all.

Liane Escorza

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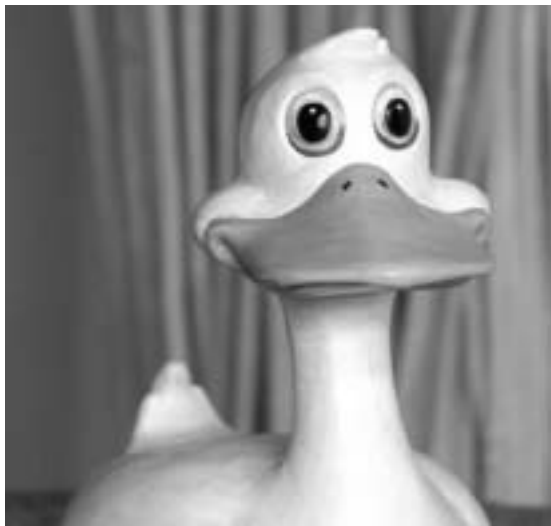
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Last year, Nightshift spent £25,000 on a floating house for the flock of ducks what do our demo reviews, cos we thought we could claim it on expenses and avoid tax or something. Only the bladdy Daily Telegraph are after our bladdy necks and our old classmate Jonathan Djanogly, Tory MP for Huntington (it's true!) reckons we should pay it all back and say it was some kind of misunderstanding, what like he tried to do. Which leaves us a bit short when it comes to paying our printing bills. So, d'you reckon you might consider advertising in the next issue? It'll do wonders for your business's profile and with the added bonus of keeping us in vodka and biscuits until we can raid the Nightshift staff Christmas fund. Ta.

Look, it's 3am, we're trying to get the paper to the printers for when they open in the morning and we've got a bladdy great half page space that needs filling - what are we supposed to fill it with? Reviews?

The Wheatsheaf

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DR SHOTOVER: Out-of-Phasebook

Social networking sites? That used to mean only one thing when I was in the Chelsea Barracks – Hyde Park, the public toilets at King's Cross, anywhere that a naive young subaltern was likely to be approached by dodgy types who had been cashiered from the Guards for gross indecency... Nowadays, I am reliably informed, the phrase refers to "MyFace", "SpaceBook" and "Twister", to which Young People (and Old Saddoes) subscribe in order to, erm, "network". Whatever the bloody hell that is. The pub used to do for us in my day... not to mention the Ricky-Tick, the Scotch of St James's and the UFO Club.... anywhere one could listen to Georgie Fame and The Blue Flames, Zoot Money's Big Roll Band and/or The Pretty Things "freaking out" while one enjoyed the effects of some low-quality Purple Hearts washed down with Watney's Red Barrel and worked out which of the mini-skirted popies would be hosting the best party later in her Notting Hill bedsit... Ahem. Where was I? Ah yes – fly-posting... what's happened to it? Bands these days, they just don't know they're born... There's nothing like the feel of warm wallpaper paste all up one's arm at 11pm on a cold winter's evening... the marvellous vista of those crudely-Letrasetted A4 sheets in serried ranks along the abandoned shop-fronts of the Cowley Rd... the tap on the shoulder from one of Her Majesty's constabulary just as one has applied the final, slightly crooked poster to the final urine-stained hoarding... the gently humorous reminder, "And now you can take that lot DOWN, sonny"... the repeated blows from the kindly bobby's truncheon... Heady days indeed! Nowadays it's all done by "bloggers" on their mobile telephones, I'm told. Where was I again? Ah yes, somewhere up the Zambesi River, circa 1932... Where's my pith helmet?



Next month: Nice helmet!

"Want to go fly-posting with me, Dr S?"

INTRODUCING....

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

The Response Collective

Who are they?

The Response Collective are a three-piece band mixing up electro, hip hop and ambient rock and featuring Russell Leak (guitars, vocals, programming); Selina Gibsons (bass, keyboards, vocals) and the improbably-named FireProof Skratch Duck (turntablism). They formed when Fireproof (Skratch Duck to his mum) called up Russell to asked for guitar lessons only to get bored after two chords. Luckily he'd brought his decks along so the pair started jamming together. They have released two albums, 'The Documentary' in 2008 and 'Dark Is The Night' this month. The band also host their own monthly club night, Electronic Nights, at the Jericho Tavern. Earlier this year they had a track used on the soundtrack to the new *Red Dwarf* story.

What do they sound like?

The Response Collective strive to straddle multiple genres and do it pretty well. They take inspiration from hip hop, trip hop, ambient electronica, rock, indie, prog and anything else that comes their way. The end result is a tripped-out form of classical rock backed by bubbling electronics and scratching, although along the way you might encounter The Sundays, Eric B, The Orb and Pink Floyd. Live the band's projected visuals add to their trippy sound.

What inspires them?

"Anything that is innovative - be it new or old. Things that are different or unusual. Our musical interests are varied, from the Beastie Boys, Pink Floyd, Norman Cook, and Genesis to contemporary indie bands. We take our inspiration from many genres of music, but also movies inspire us as we have always felt much of our music would be perfect on soundtracks."

Career highlight so far:

"Hearing our music pump out at a cinema in London, during the premiere of the new *Red Dwarf: Back To Earth* specials in which our song, 'Tropical State Remix', features."

And the lowlight:

"When we played Edinburgh Festival our promoter went bust and our venue



was cancelled. Not to be disheartened we sat in a coffee shop and phoned around trying to find gigs. We played at a uni bar and it was a great little gig. They asked us back the following night, but there was no audience. They said 'Sorry we haven't taken enough money to pay the barman - gig's off! Oh, and can we have those free beers back that we gave you?'"

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Black Hats and Phantom Theory."

If they could only keep one album it would be:

"The Prodigy: 'Music For The Jilted Generation'."

When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect?

"Thursday 23rd July at the Jericho Tavern: a musical and visual extravaganza."

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"Favourite is that new unusual bands can play in a major city and music is really promoted, and there is such a wide range of music to see. Least favourite: that some people are sitting at home watching TV instead of going out and having a good time."

You might love them if you love:

Pink Floyd; The Orb; Santana.

Hear them here:

www.myspace.com/theresponsecollective

Whatever happened to... those heroes

No Joy In Mudville

WHO?

Apparently named after a piece of baseball terminology, No Joy In Mudville were Jericho Tavern stalwarts in the late-80s and early-90s, originally formed in 1984 under the name Frankie Goes To Wallingford, by singer Grant Baldwin, guitarists Ady Davey and Dave Crossan, bassist Don Crossan and drummer Paul 'Pod' O'Donovan. After scratching about the local scene for a couple of years, mostly playing venues in Didcot, Abingdon and Wantage, occasionally terrifying audiences with a stadium-sized PA in village halls, the band gelled into a tight gigging unit that played regularly in London, Gloucester and beyond, touring in a former fire brigade transit with its blue light replaced by a yellow plastic duck that would be turned on to announce their arrival at each venue.

WHAT?

Initially inspired by punk, post-punk and goth, No Joy In Mudville's sound always tended towards the darker side of rock, but as the band progressed they became more groove based, their Magazine and Joy Division-inspired sound overtaken by influences as diverse as Prince, Pere Ubu and the emerging Madchester sound. Grave Rave they called it, Grant's operatic and portentous vocal lead adding gravity to their uptight funk and spiky new wave.

WHEN?

The band's debut single, 'For God's Sake' was released in 1986 but it wasn't until a couple of years later they really became a force to reckon with, regularly packing

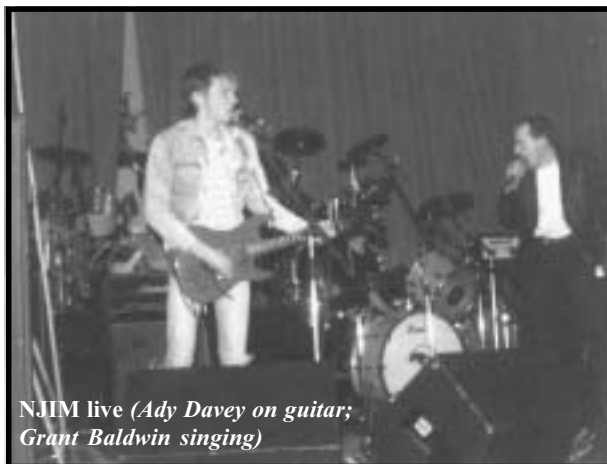
out the Tavern and supporting the likes of Blur (at the old polytechnic union bar "to about ten people," according to Grant. "They were surly, aloof characters who refused to talk to us. We also got our first and only rider. I got food poisoning from a chicken drumstick and became a vegetarian." A 12-inch single, 'Happy Poison' / Looking Down Again' was released in 1989, followed by an album, 'Orbit Round My Soul' in 1992, which gathered together the band's live set pretty neatly. Soon after, however, the band split, simply having run its course, according to Grant.

WHY?

As with so many local cult heroes, No Joy In Mudville had limited success beyond Oxford, but at their peak the band stood out a mile from the dominant jangly indie and metal scenes, offering a more eclectic and musically theatrical option to local gig goers; a mantle that the likes of Borderville have since taken up.

WHERE?

Straight after NJIM split, Ady, Dave and Pod formed the band Pod and for a short time built on the band's cult following, attracting some significant record company interest for a while. Grant has continued to write and record solo material, including a new album, 'Skirr', released on Big Red Sky



NJIM live (Ady Davey on guitar; Grant Baldwin singing)

Records. Dave continues to play guitar, including stints with Grant as well as My Friend Rachel. Ady has maintained a musical career, both solo and with his Easy Tiger band, while Pod retreated from playing to concentrate on collecting rare 1970s reggae records. Don, meanwhile, is apparently missing in action.

HOW?

Copies of 'Happy Poison' should be available from Videosyncratic. 'Orbit Around My Soul' seems to be currently unavailable but hopefully copies may be found to buy. Grant and Easy Tiger albums should be available from Videosyncratic.

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

REIGN UPON US

The kindest thing you could say about this month's batch of demos is that they're a mixed bunch, but let's not detract too much from Reign Upon Us's victory. Bicester's nasty old metal horror bags return with a new demo that's heavier, faster and more accomplished than their last offering, ironing out (with a huge, forged-in-the-heart-of-the-sun iron, we don't doubt) their previous tendency to get on with it all a bit too slowly. Now they growl and roar and scream with admirable haste over a bedrock of blast beats and shredded guitar riffs, a deathly lurch through black-hearted thrash and occasional nods to metalcore melody. And we find ourselves constantly turning the CD player up a notch as we get more and more engrossed in its unapologetic monstrosity. There's great use of a Winston Churchill speech at the start of 'Mike Reed', but the demo highlight is the singer roaring "I'm going to cut your throat out" partway through 'Kill The Jester'. Just a shame they nearly spoil it with such a cheery, matey list of thank yous inside the CD sleeve. All too human after all.

BEELZEBOZO

More metal, this time of a more unreconstructed 80s variety, with Beelzebozo's chugging doom-thrash sounding remarkably similar to the likes of 80s rockers Armoured Saint, or maybe Anthrax's earliest incarnation, all gruff'n'growly vocals and meaty thrash riffage. Demo opener 'Hey You Guys (This Is The One)' kicks in with an almost Dead Kennedys riff and vocals that get us to thinking of Anti-Nowhere League for a few brief moments, but really, this is metal in all its honest nakedness, rumblin' and a grumblin' like a slow-motion panzer division, fingers raised in the devil sign, t-shirt cut off at the sleeves, hair worn conscientiously shaggy. In fact the band cover so many metal clichés, musically and lyrically, in their admirably brief three songs you wonder if tongues aren't firmly wedged in cheeks throughout. Actually, they're more likely stuck out Kiss-like as the band stand, feet on monitors, and machine gun the audience with their guitars. Yep, definitely metal.

CAND ELECTRIC

We have to confess to a certain level of bigotry here, finding it impossible to listen to any kind of funky guitar pop without feeling slightly queasy and being transported back to

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!

hellish days of Level 42 or god knows how many student band competitions where some soulless collective of college musos with a love for Weather Report and late-period Genesis would play an accomplished but sterile set before getting all huffy about losing to someone with a less academic knowledge of diminished fifths but infinitely more imagination and charisma. Or at least a sense of humour. Anyway, not wishing to damn Cand Electric for someone else's sins, the first two tracks here are exactly the kind of cheery, bordering on cheesy kind of keyboard-led funk-up indie jangle you can imagine going down a storm at a college ball or BOTB heat, filling the room with an undemanding party vibe, with nods to The Blues Brothers, Stevie Wonder and something unmentionable from about 1985. Harmless enough, though third and final track, 'Red Tape', is more earnest, even overwrought, all wah-wah guitar and serious lyrics that go to make it sound like the ponderous middle section of a 70s prog rock triptych, possibly about sea nymphs and white ships sailing to western shores, only filtered through Joe Jackson's Jumpin' Jive. We'll leave it up to more open minds to decide if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

MARK BOSLEY

Despite what we say about some acoustic singer-songwriters further down the page, it's impossible not to warm to Mark Bosley, a man who is – as he informs us – celebrating twenty years since his first tentative live performance (which apparently ended in a mini-riot at his school). Actually, celebrate isn't something Mark would do, since he is Oxford's master of musical misery, leading here with a track called 'The Loser's Jukebox', which is all about being, well, yes, a loser. Except that's the irony, he isn't (although decked out in an Oxford United scarf on the CD sleeve suggests he's used to losing). Mark's dry sense of humour and self-deprecating lyrical style actually makes him a bit of a winner – if he can live with that. His plaintively jaunty voice finds his songs rising above their rudimentary acoustic strum and the odd bit of 6th form gothic poetry aside ("As the black sun rises..."), he's got a neat turn of phrase. That said, the best song here is an acoustic track, 'Hailstones and Blossom', a rustic guitar and accordion piece that's as genially good-natured as the man himself.

CHRIS THOMPSON

Initially at least we were up for giving young Chris here a right critical kicking, firstly for listing his influences as "Nature and the universe, history, the present, regrets, loves, memories", and secondly for having what seems to be a slightly wacky and contrived hatred for mushrooms (have you ever tried

the mushroom *en croute* at the Gardener's Arms in Jericho? It's the food of the Gods, we tell you!). But he does then name Iron and Wine as his principle musical inspiration, which displays admirable taste in music if not fungi, and even manages a passable cover of the man's 'Jezebel' here. Two other tracks, 'Someday' and 'For A Friend', are of the strained, pained and rather too earnest school of acoustic singer-songwriter variety, but then he hits us with 'I'll Be With You', which is just gorgeous. A genuinely lovely acoustic lament, hushed and understated with a sweetly melancholic vocal and neatly plucked guitar and nothing else, because nothing else is needed. And then we notice the counter on his Myspace site says it's only received 20 plays. Come on, let's add a few noughts to end of that figure. He deserves it.

VON BRAUN

Despite having been about for a few years now, garnering consistently decent reviews and being lauded by a couple of the best local promoters, Von Braun never seem to have really moved up a level or set the world alight, always the bridesmaid, propping up decent touring bands down the Cellar or wherever. Perhaps this demo offers some answers. And indeed it does. It's a good demo by a band with a tightly-reined grasp of post-punk dynamics, a bit of drama and a dark, serrated edge that never sinks into gothic posturing. But maybe what's missing is that little extra spark that would mark them out from the pack, give them their own identity. Instead, tracks like 'Melanoma Head' and 'Cat/Dog' are too tied to Radiohead's coattails, the former in particular a barely-disguised tribute to 'Karma Police'. Difficult to know where they need to change, since nothing really seems out of place or substandard, and the dual vocals in particular, while occasionally overly-dramatic, are a great focal point for the band to work around. Perhaps they just need that elusive hook-laden hit to land in their laps one night at rehearsal when they least expect it.

EMPTY VESSELS

Empty Vessels tell us they're keen to read our opinion and any constructive criticism we might have for them, clearly unfamiliar with what passes for constructive suggestions on the demo pages when faced with a band that sounds like a constipated Robert Plant wannabe waking up from a coma to discover he's been kidnapped and chained to a disillusioned blues-rock band destined to be stuck forever in an eternal Sunday lunchtime jam session in a quarter-full boozier in one of the more benighted corners of Didcot. They chug, they wail. They chug some more. Empty Vessels do indeed make the most noise. Luckily this means the police won't hear our semi-automatic machine gun as it sends the sorry lot down to that place where the proprietor has, according to legend, all the best tunes. Doubtless he'll be happy to teach them a few, with aid of a super-heated cattle prod.

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

ARCHIPELAGO

We seem to remember being hellishly rude about this lot last year and saying they sounded a bit like something Phil Collins might have left off 'No Jacket Required' for lacking a cutting edge, so surely an improvement is in hand? Well, short of morphing into Level 42 or Simply Red, that much is obvious. Still not sure about it all though, the band quote Yazoo and Human League as inspiration and hopefully describe themselves as Marc Almond meets S Club 7, which conjures up an image of unrestrained camp pop splendour, when the reality is closer to a budget cruise liner cabaret turn attempting to get an early-80s mood going while the drum machine is stuck on bossa nova setting. Actually, the slightly nasal vocals make them sound closer to The Christians or even Fine Young Cannibals at times, all of which are improvements on Phil Collins, but, hell, we're not selling this very well are we? So maybe we'll try and be a bit more positive and say it sounds like a cross between an obscure 80s Belgian electro-disco club hit and something that didn't quite make it as Luxembourg's 1983 Eurovision Song Contest entry. Phew, that should keep them happy.

THE DEMO DUMPER

BEN FOSTER

A concerned local do-gooding liberal type reader emails to ask why Nightshift writes such rotten stuff about acoustic singer-songwriters' demos every month, so we invite him round to listen to Ben Foster's CD, gently explaining beforehand, using nothing more than four letter words, hammers and shouting, that it's because, with a few honourable exceptions, they're all dreary, self-obsessed, self-pitying, talent-free misery magnets who could put out the sun, piss on the Rio Carnival and wipe the smile from a Cheshire Cat with their bleating and sub-Bob Dylan whining. And as if to prove this point, Ben proceeds to strum and mumble through a wet weekend of something or nothing that we can't really be bothered to try and understand, lest it sends us into a spiral of depression that even a lorry load of Ritalin would struggle to unravel. And very soon our previously ebullient guest is muttering darkly about the sound of an abandoned car sinking slowly into a muddy despond and lurching out of the room to neck a bottle of sleeping pills and slash his wrists before being ambulated to A&E to be stitched up and pumped out and put on a three-month course of counselling before popping back round to discover Ben is still moaning away like the whimpering death of the universe itself. And thus the unending cycle of misery continues. We think he understands now. In fact last time we saw him he was thinking of forming his own Cradle Of Filth tribute band



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