

# NIGHTSHIFT

**Oxford's Music Magazine**

Free every  
month.  
Issue 167  
June  
2009

## international jetsetters

Oxford's sonic architects talk indie purity, baptisms of  
fire and landscape gardening - *inside*



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# NEWS

**Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU**  
**Phone: 01865 372255 email: [nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto:nightshift@oxfordmusic.net)**  
**Online: [nightshift.oxfordmusic.net](http://nightshift.oxfordmusic.net)**

**TRUCK FESTIVAL** continues to add more attractions to this year's event.

London's Nonclassical club night will be hosting their own session bringing artists from the avant garde of contemporary music, including **the Elysian Quartet, John Matthias and Nick Ryan, Joby Burgess and John Kameel Farah.**

Also added to the weekend is **Vieux Farka Touré**, son of Mali music legend Ali; Vieux comes to Truck as the festival pledges another three years' support to the Mali Development Group, an AIDS prevention programme they have helped for the past five years.

Meanwhile former-Ride frontman **Mark Gardener** and post-hardcore heroes **Dive Dive** join Sunday's Oxford bill, alongside headliners **Supergrass** and **The Candyskins**, while house and breaks club Fresh Out The Box host their own session. In a box.

This year's Truck Festival takes place over the weekend of **25-26<sup>th</sup> July** at **Hill Farm in Steventon**. As previously announced, **Ash** headline Saturday night on the main stage, along with krautrock legend **Damo Suzuki**.

Remaining weekend tickets are on sale, priced £70, from [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com) as well as other outlets around Oxfordshire. Visit [www.thisistruck.com](http://www.thisistruck.com) for more details.

## TWO MORE MINI-FESTIVALS

to add to your summer calendar this month. **Otra Vida** takes place in **South Park on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June**, from midday through to 7pm and features three stages of live music, all in aid of Peruvian orphanage charity Aldea Yanapay, as well as Helen & Douglas House Hospice. Acts performing include Foreign Beggars, The Molotovs, Raggasaurus, Raphael Y Lola and Count Skylarkin' plus many more. The event also includes storytelling, poetry, art and a kids area. Tickets for the event are on sale now, priced £10 (£5 concessions) or £15 including a special after-show party, from [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com). Visit

[www.otravidaoxford.co.uk](http://www.otravidaoxford.co.uk) for full details.

On the same day, **COMMOTION 09** takes place in the West Oxfordshire village of **Kingham**. Headlining are Abba tribute band Abba Mania, plus Beverly Craven. Other acts performing include Little Fish, The Epstein, Inlight, David Gibb, Shaker Heights, Jay Alice and The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band. The event is in aid of children's cancer charity CLIC Sargent; tickets, priced £15 for adults and £8 for students, are on sale now. Visit [www.commotionfestival.co.uk](http://www.commotionfestival.co.uk) for full details.

**SEXTODECIMO**, who returned to live action last month at the Wheatsheaf after an extended hiatus, release a limited edition live mini-album this month. The stoner-rock band, widely accepted to be the most extreme act in recent local history, release 'Quadra-Spazed On A Life-Glug' as a limited run of 100. The album was recorded live at the Zodiac in February 2004. Visit [www.myspace.com/sextodecimo](http://www.myspace.com/sextodecimo) for more details.

**UTE** are set to play at this month's Glastonbury Festival. The local nu-folk trio join fellow local stars Stornoway over the weekend of 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> June.

**SOL SAMBA** celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday this month with a special night of Brazilian and world samba music and dance. The event takes place at the O2 Academy on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June. Tickets, priced from £6 to £10, are on sale now from the Academy box office.

**OXFORD IMPROVISERS** have relocated to the Folly Bridge Inn on Abingdon Road following the closure of the Port Mahon last December. The collective host a night on the second Tuesday of each month, starting on June 9<sup>th</sup> with performances by Chris Brown (guitar) and Jill Elliot (violin), plus Bruno Guastala (cello) and Chris Stubbs (percussion), as well as an electric quartet of regulars Miles Doubleday, Pat Thomas, Malcolm Atkins and Pete McPhail.



**DIVE DIVE** play at the Bullingdon on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July - the band's first headline show for two years. The local post-hardcore favourites have spent most of the past two years touring and recording as part of Frank Turner's band. They are currently in the studio with the folk-punk troubadour in Norfolk before they finish work on their own third album, due for release later this year or early in 2010. Tickets for the Bullingdon show are on sale now from [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com).

**ABINGDON & WITNEY COLLEGE** is inviting applications for this year's BTEC and A-level courses in media and music technology, which cover all aspects of working with music and in the music industry. For details call the college on 01993 208001, or email [inquiry@abingdon-witney.ac.uk](mailto:inquiry@abingdon-witney.ac.uk), or visit [www.gotocollege.co.uk](http://www.gotocollege.co.uk).

**OXFORD'S MUSIC IN MIND** release a 'virtual gig' compilation CD this month, featuring recordings by Little Fish, Alphabet Backwards, Bethany Weimers, The Dacoits, Alice Doyné, Failing To Focus, James Dey, Vanessa Lewis, The Follies and Trev Williams. The album costs £5 (cheques payable to Zoe Williams) direct from PO Box 2894, Faringdon, SN7 8WT, with all proceeds going to local mental health charity MIND.

**DON'T FORGET, AS EVER, TO TUNE INTO BBC OXFORD INTRODUCING** every Saturday night between 6-7pm on BBC Radio Oxford 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best local releases as well as featuring interviews with local and touring bands, demo reviews, a local gig guide and other special features. The show is available to listen to all week online at [bbc.co.uk/oxford](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

The Introducing Upload tool now allows local bands to directly upload their songs onto the programme's website.

**PLEASE NOTE:** the Nightshift office will be closed from Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May through to Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Please email all gig listings or news to [nightshift@oxfordmusic.net](mailto:nightshift@oxfordmusic.net).



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Sun 7 <sup>th</sup>	FRAGILE Special tribute to legendary producers YES - £8, door 7pm
Wed 10 <sup>th</sup>	Acoustic Lounge Bands/Solo artists, play your songs on the acoustic stage. Free, door 8pm
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Fri 12 <sup>th</sup>	FAUX FIGHTERS Screeningly good tribute band of the FOO FIGHTERS - £5, door 8pm
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup>	Evolution Fantasy 80's/90's Stadium Rock coverband - £3, door 8pm
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Thu 18 <sup>th</sup>	Mimi Soya + Harlequin + More. AP presents IndiePopPunk bands - £3, door 7.30pm
Fri 19 <sup>th</sup>	The Black Hats + Friends, our favourites, on stage + special guests - £3, door 8pm
Wed 24 <sup>th</sup>	Acoustic Lounge Bands/Solo artists, play your songs on the acoustic stage. Free, door 8pm
Thu 25 <sup>th</sup>	Harry Angel + Desert Storm + Secret Rivals 3 great indie bands - £4, door 8pm
Fri 26 <sup>th</sup>	The Stone Saloon Great young southern rock band. Originals & Covers - £3, door 8pm
Sat 27 <sup>th</sup>	THE PURPLE PROJECT Incredibly high standard tribute to DEEP PURPLE - £8 door 8pm
Sun 28 <sup>th</sup>	Big Blues Jam Join the house band for a jam or just relax and enjoy. Free Entry, door 3 to 7

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We Got Tickets

a quiet word with

# international jetsetters

## AS THE RECENT OXFORD PUNT

proved, fresh faces can make the freshest sounds. But equally, as International Jetsetters prove, the experienced hands of master craftsmen can fashion music that is both magnificent and timeless.

## ALTHOUGH CONCEIVED AS A

band just two years ago, the individual members of International Jetsetters have histories in local music going back 20 years – singer and guitarist Mark Crozer and bassist Bert Audubert having played in various bands together over the years, while drummer Loz Colbert was part of Oxford legends Ride – the band that really put Oxford on the musical map.

More recently Mark and Loz played together in Jesus and Mary Chain singer Jim Reid's band before the Mary Chain themselves reformed and the pair were taken on as part of their live band. Working together like this was the spur for Mark and Loz, along with Bert, to get International Jetsetters together, initially as a three-piece, before Mark's brother Paul joined them.

## THE FINAL PIECE OF THE

jigsaw was recruiting singer Fi McFall. Fi was a friend of the band, but when Mark overheard her singing one day he recommended her to The Jesus and Mary Chain, who needed a female vocalist to perform 'Just Like Honey' live. Despite the days of Mary Chain gigs routinely descending into riots being long gone, to perform to such a large crowd on her debut was still a baptism of fire. Fi passed with flying colours and her subsequent recruitment into the Jetsetters provides the band with its exotic, unearthly magic ingredient. Since then they've gone on to play with Glasvegas, Inspiral Carpets and Sons and Daughters, amongst others.

## INTERNATIONAL JETSETTERS'

sound was summed up early in the band's life by Nightshift, declaring them, "an amalgamation of everything that was great about indie music when that term actually meant something. From the narcotic fuzz of Spacemen 3 to the insistent jangle and drone of The Wedding Present, and lifted spaceward by Fi McFall's ethereal vocals, they're dark and dreamy but they rock like bastards." And we're not in the habit of getting these things wrong.



Fi McFall by Bonamy Norman

## LAST YEAR THE BAND

released their debut mini-album, 'Heart Is Black', on the American record label Planting Seeds. The six-song CD captures the band's bullish majesty well – from Loz's trademark drum attack to the hypnotic chiming guitar blizzard to Mark and Fi's dual vocals. It's music steeped in the classic 60s rock of The Beatles and Stones, but with its heart full the honey-dipped noise of bands as diverse but uniquely positioned as My Bloody Valentine, The Chameleons, Pale Saints, Magoo, Purescence and even Cowboy Junkies. And at a time when so many great American underground bands are looking to those same influences, International Jetsetters sound like they're on the cusp of something new.

## THIS MONTH THE BAND

release a download-only single, 'California', a typically elegant, sky-searching mix of shimmering, chiming guitars and Fi's powerfully dreamy vocals, ahead of a full CD release later in the year. When Nightshift meets the band plans of any kind are somewhat at the back of Mark's mind. He's just become a dad for the first time, although he's somehow managed to find time to pencil in a string of Jetsetters gigs, including one at the Jericho Tavern at the end of June, as well as working at a local recording studio and playing dates with The Mary Chain.

We talk first about everyone's histories in local music and how the band came together.

MARK: "I've been around playing in

bands since the late 80s. My first proper Oxford band was Dead But Dreaming. We played at The Jericho in the good old days. I left the UK to live in Canada in 1993 and spent ten years out there where I released two solo albums. I remember sending in a demo of three solo songs to Nightshift back in about 1999 and you slated one song for being 'solid busker rock', which I've never forgotten! Ha ha. So I'm glad I finally won you over."

PAUL: "Mark and I first played together in a band called Jubilee back in 1977; I was four, he was six. We split up after a few years due to musical differences – he got into The Smiths, I got into Shakin' Stevens. I think we all know who made the right choice: The Smiths didn't get to play Glastonbury last year did they?"

MARK: "I guess International Jetsetters was a coming together of kindred spirits. Bert and I met doing telephone fundraising back in 2003. It was a very boozy summer that year and there was one night a bunch of us went for a midnight drink by the river in Osney. Someone brought along a guitar and some bongos and it turned into a hippy jam, which would normally send me running, but there was a girl involved that both Bert and I fancied.

"At some point after that Bert invited me over to his house for a cup of tea and I decided I had to live there too one day. The house is absolutely incredible. It's an 18<sup>th</sup> century Palladian-style mansion house built by the Dashwood family and actually has a garden landscaped by Capability

Brown. It's a very creative place to live. I guess you could quite happily call us the Morecambe and Wise of rock. I often wake in the early afternoon to find Bert making tea in the kitchen dressed in an old dressing gown and sock suspenders."

## UP UNTIL THE JETSETTERS

formed Mark had been working solo for some years. What prompted him to form a new band?

MARK: "International Jetsetters came about out of necessity when I was offered a gig at The Zodiac, but only if I had a band. So I said I did, which was when I asked Bert. Having been playing with Loz in Jim Reid's band, he was the natural choice for drummer. I really didn't have any vision at all. It was initially just a one-off gig. Bert and I had already been writing and recording for a while and had never really thought about actually doing anything live until then."

It must have been strange for Mark and Loz to end up playing with The Jesus And Mary Chain, who were musical heroes to them in their teens.

LOZ: "Absolutely. It is strange, but strangely natural to spend time and play music with them. I think Mark and I mainly got the gig from being the band for Jim's solo stuff."

MARK: "For me it's still something I can't quite believe. I was very aware of them in the 80s and liked 'Darklands' a lot. I find it all quite weird. To be honest I was actually more excited about being in a band with Loz than anything else, as I'd been a massive Ride fan since the early days. It's all still very odd to me. From the time I was a teenager through to my early thirties, all I ever wanted was to be a pop star and then, when it didn't happen, I sort of gave up on it and just decided to pursue music for pure fun. So to have been suddenly launched into that world in the last few years is very odd. It's great! The strangest thing about it is the total clash between my everyday life and the life we have on tour. One day I'm being whizzed about in a chauffeur-driven van with Scarlett Johansson sitting on the seat in front of me and the next I'm back to emptying the bins at Rotator Studios. I quite like that, though."

## HAVING TASTED FAME AND

success early on with Ride, how does Loz take to being in International Jetsetters?

LOZ: "Post Ride, I wanted to keep

drumming and was lucky enough to do session work and to work with loads of local bands and it's great fun getting to play new stuff with different people. Tours happened with The Animalhouse (*the band Loz and Mark Gardener formed together post-Ride along with Mystics frontman Sam Williams*) and, bizarrely, I played in Supergrass for a European tour, standing in for Danny, whose missus was having a baby. After that it was playing with Jim Reid and now here we are: it's different from being in Ride because I can see through my fringe now."

Fi, by contrast, is a complete newcomer to this rock and roll lifestyle thing. But she certainly started in style with that performance on stage with the Mary Chain.

FI: "I think Mark overheard me singing along to something in Bert's room and when the Mary Chain needed a singer for 'Just Like Honey' he suggested me. It was very short notice. Bert and I were going to the Brixton gig anyway and on the morning of the gig I got a call asking me if I would like to do it, and I was like, '...um... yes... obviously!'. I think I felt a bit faint after that! When we arrived that night, I got a glimpse of how many people were in the audience...I think the colour must have drained from my face because I remember Mark started to say reassuring things like, 'oh, don't worry you won't see the audience when you're on stage!' Bert and I watched the first part of the gig from the front. It was packed and they sounded amazing... we went back stage a few songs before and waited in the wings – it was a bit mad. Then Jim Reid introduced me and I went up to a mic right next to him... and saw every single face in the audience. Standing next to the lead singer of The Jesus And Mary Chain in front of a 4,000 strong audience was a pretty surreal experience to say the least... but I loved it!"

**FI'S ARRIVAL ADDED A NEW** dimension to the Jetsetters' sound. How do the band think the band has evolved since her arrival, and how do they see things changing from here? MARK: "I think we've got a lot more scope now. Fi can actually sing, so our songs have more room for ambitious melodies. I've always just written for my voice, which is quite limited in its range. Now we can be anything we want."

The band's influences seem to come mainly from a certain time and place in music, notably the 80s indie scene. Do you feel there was an idealism or purity about some of those bands that is missing in music now?

MARK: "I don't think that music has really changed that much since then. There are still some great, off-the-wall bands around that do their own thing – Bat For Lashes springs to

mind instantly. I think what's changed is the way that new music is disseminated. In the 80s you had *Top Of The Pops*, *The Tube*, those kind of shows that everybody would watch, so if some great new band came along they'd get exposure to a huge audience very quickly. It's all become much more niche oriented and that of course affects the way a band's career develops. I think, though, that in a way this means that there's even more great music around than ever before because bands have to try harder and harder to get heard and build a following."

BERT: "We all bring different influences to the band, but yeah, there is a strong indie element. Not a huge amount of discussion goes on, so maybe in that sense there's a purity about what we do. Is it missing in music today? Maybe in the mainstream, but not from what I've seen locally at least."

LOZ: "I think the track off our first EP, 'Inside Out', is as good as anything from that era, if not better; but some other tracks on it, like 'Inside Yourself', and 'Get the Call' off the new EP, have a groove that was never apparent at that time, and I'm glad to be making something of that now."

**WHILE MOST OXFORD – AND** UK – bands would release their debut on their own label or a homegrown indie, 'Heart Is Black' came out on Stateside label Planting Seeds; how did that connection come about and what are they like to work with?

MARK: "I first connected with Neil at Planting Seeds when I was booking tours for Canadian bands back in 2005. Then later, he saw that I was working with Jim Reid. We got talking about music more generally and found we had similar tastes and then when International Jetsetters were thinking about releasing something Planting Seeds was the natural choice. It's really a very nice label to work with. They've put a lot of time, effort and money into releasing and promoting our EP in the US and it's paid off. We got a load of very positive press out of it and charted on over 40 stations across the country. I think we might have even sold a few copies too. All pretty amazing for a band that nobody has heard of before. We have a very laid-back kind of arrangement with the label. It's all very old-school. No contracts have been signed. It's all done on a gentleman's agreement, which is good enough them and for us."

**'California' is released on June 25<sup>th</sup> on iTunes. International Jetsetters play at the Jericho Tavern on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June. Visit [www.myspace.com/internationaljetsetters](http://www.myspace.com/internationaljetsetters) for tunes and gig dates.**



## June

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**Saturdays**

6<sup>th</sup> **SIMPLE** – Out To Graze Festival warm-up. Electro / tech-house club night. 10-3am

13<sup>th</sup> **TBC.** 20<sup>th</sup> **TBC**

27<sup>th</sup> **R'N'B / FUNKY HOUSE. 10.30-3am**

**Sundays**

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# RELEASED

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## THE RELATIONSHIPS

### 'Space'

(*Big Red Sky*)

Can there be a more quintessentially English band than The Relationships? The opening track of the band's third album finds them chanting, "We were singing Rule Britannia, as we conquered space", while conjuring an image of the Post Office Tower (and doesn't that date them?) as a rocket prepared for take-off. It's as if The Relationships exist in a hermetically-sealed bubble, forever lost in a certain place in a certain period of history. Further in, on 'Living In A House With Brian Jones', frontman Richard Ramage sings, "We got bombed in the war / We cried when Mr Churchill died", before dropping in a line about "warming up the TV".

But for we long-standing fans of the band, this is their particular charm. Hip hop, mobile phones, Twitter – they're still alien concepts, and even the space race references are filled with the wonder of those pioneering 1960s missions to the moon. Fifteen years in, it's fair to say you know what



you're getting from a Relationships album ('Space' is their third release in all that time, proving that in every sense they live in a slower-paced world). Richard's voice is as calm, airy, warm and literate as ever; Angus Stevenson's lovingly-teased twelve-string guitar chimes with a sound like musical sunshine and the whole band play with an almost

effortless confidence that only a band with nothing to prove can muster.

'Soft Rock Canyon' finds them referencing 10cc and Status Quo, while inhabiting a world closer to Pleasant Valley. At least if Pleasant Valley were situated somewhere close to Burford, while 'Grace' jangles and spangles somewhere between The Byrds and The Go-Betweens. There's a gentle surf-pop shimmer to 'Victorian Séance', while album closer, 'The Eternal Colonel' finds The Relationships at their most wistful, playing to their greatest strength – the feeling of middle-aged ennui and subtle but soul-deep regret. Occasionally they seem to hit Relationships default mode, like the lackadaisical 'Her Constituency', but 'Living In A House...' is them at their very best.

'Space' concludes with NASA-infatuated drummer Tim Turan counting down an ignition sequence before announcing the lift-off of HMS Britannia on a voyage "to the moon and beyond". Fair to say after all this time, The Relationships aren't going to go stellar, but in their own secluded and timeless pop world they remain kings.

**Dale Kattack**

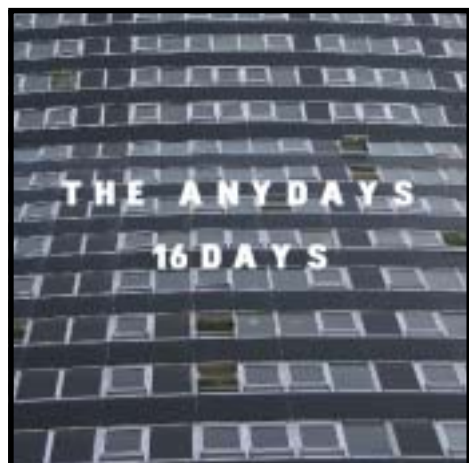
## THE ANYDAYS

### '16 Days'

(*Supertone*)

The secret to making great retro pop or rock music is as elusive as fairy dust but some bands have it, others miss the boat entirely. Just as fellow locals Desert Storm make classic 70s heavy rock sound fresh and invigorating, so The Anydays, pillage 60s rock'n'roll, rhythm'n'blues and garage-rock and create something full of life and vigour that's a long, long way from the tired covers circuit.

'16 Days' is a harder take on their 60s schtick than their 2007 'Sound' album, the song fizzing with the spirit and simplicity of The Ramones, while 'Time To Get Up' rides on classic Bo Diddley riffs and comes up for air somewhere between The Rolling Stones and The Modern Lovers. The title of 'Turn You Radio On' itself



reeks of unfettered pop nostalgia and takes a brief detour round Jan and Dean's 'Dead Man's Curve' before burning up the highway with Status Quo pumping on the stereo. Only 'Psycho Baby' fails to kick into life fully, even with its brasher Kinks-style thrust.

The Anydays' hearts might lie in the past, but they live very much in the present.

**Sue Foreman**

## MY FRIEND RACHEL

### 'A Moment's Silence'

(*Big Red Sky*)

With her previous band Hieronymus, singer Katherine Hieronymus produced a wistful, contemplative folk-pop that found a middle ground between The Carpenters' syrupy balladry and All About Eve's cloud-gazing dreaminess. My Friend Rachel is her collaboration with Martin Newton – also musical back-up to singer Grant Baldwin as well as guitarist with Witches – and two years in fermentation, 'A Moment's Silence' the first chance we've had to hear the band, since they haven't yet gigged together. That fact isn't surprising once you hear the elaborate orchestration on the album: it'd take some ensemble and something beyond the local venue circuit to do justice to their delicate arrangements and Katherine's ethereal vocal reveries.

The album glides in with 'Give Me Love', a neat collage of acoustic guitar and strings, lush without sounding overcooked, radiating bucolic sweetness, tinged with the merest hint of melancholy. And so the mood is firmly set for

the next 40 minutes. Cello and harp lend an oddly arcane feel to songs like 'Me On The Inside', while softly blossoming electronics give a more contemporary sheen to 'Mermaid Smile'.

Throughout, Katherine's voice remains placidly, perfectly detached. At its best – such as the intimate 'A Good Day', it's gently enveloping. But sometimes it can feel suffocating – pretty but passionless. The album's polished nature can make it sound like it lacks soul, and while many of the songs reward repeated listening, some shift in mood feels overdue after half a dozen songs. On cue, 'Soured His Mood' is a jaunty accordion-led swing, a sugary cousin to Kendra Smith's kooky 'Maggots', and while My Friend Rachel quickly revert to type, they do leave the best to almost last with 'Weak', the innate sweetness working as it's underpinned by underplayed regret and a gorgeously understated melody.

**Dale Kattack**



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A THOUSAND**

FRI  
11/9



**OKKERVIL RIVER**

SUN  
27/9



**HOCKEY**

**THE BULLINGDON**  
182 COWLEY RD, OXFORD

SAT  
30/6

**HOWARD ELLIOT  
PAYNE**

+ CHARLENE SORIA  
+ MATT KILFORD  
+ SCARLETT IN THE WILDERNESS

WED  
1/7

*Dive Dive*  
+ HOLD YOUR HORSE IS

SAT  
11/7

**alphabet backwards**  
+ WE ARE ASTRONAUTS + MINOR COLES

THU  
10/9

**THE LOW ANTHEM**

WED  
21/10

**I LIKE TRAINS**

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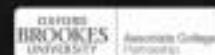
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# The Wheatsheaf

Live Music in June

- Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> **JOE ALLEN BAND + CAND ELECTRIC + AIDEN CANADAY** 8pm/£4  
Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> **The Spin... ROB TOWNSEND** 8pm/£3/£7(NUS)  
Fri 5<sup>th</sup> **HARRY ANGEL + KNIGHTS OF MENTIS + SWITCH 60**  
**TWIZZ TWANGLE** 8pm/£5  
Sat 6<sup>th</sup> **DESERT STORM + PROSPEKT + TMC** 8pm/£5  
Thurs 7<sup>th</sup> **The Spin... MARTIN SHAW** 8pm/£5/£7(NUS)  
Sat 13<sup>th</sup> **IN THE FLESH + TMC** 8pm/£5  
Wed 17<sup>th</sup> **THIN GREEN CANDLES + LIDDINGTON + CALI COLLECT** 8pm/£4  
Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> **The Spin... CENTRELINE** 8pm/£3/£7(NUS)  
Fri 19<sup>th</sup> **HARVEY WILLIAMS & JULIAN HENRY + THE NOMINEES**  
**CRISSEY FUEL** 8pm/£4  
Sat 20<sup>th</sup> **THE SHAKER HEIGHTS + DYING ANIMALS + TMC** 8pm/£5  
Tue 23<sup>rd</sup> **FIXERS + HEARTS IN PENCIL + SECRET RIVALS** 8pm/£5  
Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> **The Spin... ANDREA VICARI** 8pm/£3/£7(NUS)  
Fri 26<sup>th</sup> **RUINS + DOMES OF SILENCE + TMC** 8pm/£5  
Sat 27<sup>th</sup> **FROM HERE WE RUN + CLING + THE SIDEWINDERS** 8pm/£4

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# GIG GUIDE

## MONDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**JON CLEARY: The Bullingdon** – The Famous Monday Blues hosts the British-born, New Orleans-resident pianist and singer (and member of Bonnie Raitt's band), receiving plenty of acclaim for his take on traditional Mississippi funk, jazz and soul, covering standards by the likes of Curtis Mayfield, Professor Longhair and Fats Domino amongst others.

**KID BRITISH: O2 Academy** – Sprightly 60s-styled summer pop-meets-hip hop fun from Manchester's sparky new hopefuls, fresh from tour supports to The Enemy and the reformed Specials.

## TUESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**GAY BLADES + DAVE HOUSE: O2 Academy** – Arch glam-rocking and garage pop noise from New Jersey duo Gay Blades, giving the Electric Six style treatment to Mott the Hoople and Queen.

### Friday 5<sup>th</sup>

## 2 MANY DJs:

### O2 Academy

Few people would have believed, back in 1996 when Belgian brothers David and Stephen Dewaele released their debut album, that over a decade later they'd be among the most consistently innovative clubland figureheads in the world. 'Leave The Story Untold', released under their Soulwax moniker, was an eclectic mix of electro and rock but only hinted at the no-holds-barred mash-up fun that was to later unfold. It was really with 'As Heard On Radio Soulwax Pt.2' that the 2 Many DJs project really made itself felt, splicing together everything from Dolly Parton and 10cc to Iggy Pop and Salt'n'Pepa. The pair have continued along this route since with a succession of broadcasts, collected into volumes of the Radio Soulwax brand, culminating earlier this year with a Radio 1 broadcast that fitted some 420 song intros into a 60-minute collage. Along the way they've also remixed The Gossip, MGMT, Gorillaz and LCD Soundsystem, amongst others, and tonight they bring their sometimes dizzying mix'n'match DJ show to the Academy, for what will be as much a chance for some pop trainspotting as simply enjoying some innovative dance music.

## JUNE

Support from Surrey's acoustic folk-punk chap Dave House, in the vein of Billy Bragg and Frank Turner.

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Funky contemporary jazz from keyboard player Hugh Turner and his band at tonight's free weekly live jazz club.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: Mason's Arms, Headington Quarry**

**MIS-SHAPES: The Cellar** – Indie club night with live bands.

## WEDNESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**TOMMY REILLY + BETHANY WEIMERS: O2 Academy** – Orange Unsigned winner Tommy heads out on tour after his debut Top 20 hit, 'Gimme A Call', the teenage Glaswegian one-man-band offering an occasionally spiky take on traditional Bob Dylan and Kings of Leon-inspired roots rock. Local acoustic folk-pop songstress Bethany Weimers supports.

**THE JOE ALLEN BAND + CANDE ELECTRIC + AIDEN CANADAY: The Wheatsheaf** – Highly-promising emotive pop from Joe Allen, coming on somewhere between Radiohead and Seth Lakeman, plus funky indie rock from Cand Electric and sweetly shambolic folk-pop from Aiden Canaday.

**THE BLACK HATS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Spiky indie and new wave rocking from the rising local faves.

**BORDERVILLE + ELMOR + THE GULLIVERS: The Jericho Tavern** – Reliably theatrical vaudevillian glam-goth rocking from Borderville, plus recent Vodaphone Live Music Award finalists Elmor out on tour with their airy, melodic indie rock. Spangly alt.pop from The Gullivers in support.

**PHAT SESSIONS: The Cellar** – Open jam session with in-house band Four Phat Fingers, with guest musicians able to jam along in any style from hip hop, Latin and funk to ska, drum&bass and reggae. Plus a full house band set and resident DJs.

## THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**THE RELATIONSHIPS + LES CLOCHARDS + GRANT + MY FRIEND RACHEL: The Cellar** – Big Red Sky Records label launch night. Formed by the four bands playing tonight, each performing songs from their new albums, with whimsical psychedelic pop from The Relationships, Gallic café pop and country rocking from Les Clochards, portentous industrial pop from Grant and sweet, flowery acoustic pop from Friends Of Rachel.

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – Saxophonist Rob Townsend is tonight's guest.

**VIENNA DITTO + NIKKI LOY + NATTY MARK + DJ ARTWELL: The Bullingdon** – Oxjam present a night of speed-dating and live

music, with Vienna Ditto providing a great mix of electro, surf and soul, sort of where Portishead meets Dick Dale. There's also acoustic soul-pop from Nikki Loy and rastafarian performance poetry from Natty Mark.

**SON OF KRAKATOA + SKULLTHRASH: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Live metal and hardcore.

**VICARS OF TWIDDLY + THE FIND + KANGO BILL: The Jericho Tavern** – Classic surf, swamp and garage rocking from the Vicars, inspired by Dick Dale, Link Wray and The Safaris.

**THE DYING HOUR + DR SLAGGLEBERRY + DEEP DEEP BALLS + ELEMENTS OF REFUSAL + REIGN UPON US: The Pavilion, Chinnor** – A night of heavyweight noise at the Pavilion, with Wycombe's metalcore merchants The Dying Hour, Chinnor's math-metal masters Dr Slaggleberry and more.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** – Oxford's longest-running and best open mic club, with an eclectic weekly selection of singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists.

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

**SKITTLE ALLEY OPEN MIC SESSION: Stocks Bar, Crown & Thistle, Abingdon**

## FRIDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**2MANYDJs: O2 Academy** – Mash-up mayhem from the Soulwax brothers – *see main preview*  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with HARRY ANGEL + KNIGHTS OF MENTIS + SWITCH 60 + MARK BOSLEY: The Wheatsheaf** – Mixed bag of noise from the Klub Kak Krew, with Harry Angel stretching from Sonic Youth-style firebrand noise to Chameleons-inspired alt.rock, while Switch 60 bring their rudimentary indie thrash and Mark Bosley continues to stake his claim to the title of Oxford's premier acoustic doom-meister.  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon** – Classic funk, soul and r'n'b every week.  
**GET DOWN: The Brickworks** – Funk, Latin, Afrobeat and more DJ session.

**THE SATURDAYS + PIXIE LOTT: The New Theatre** – Laboratory-bred, stage school-reared, Comic Relief-endorsed, Depeche Mode-mugging girl band set free to hunt down and outsell Girls Aloud, armed with two former members of S Club Juniors. Pop long ago ate itself. Now it's chowing down on its own vomit. Meanwhile, 18-year-old Pixie Lott is the latest bright young thing being set up to be The New Amy Winehouse, with a powerfully, old-fashioned soul voice. She's currently working with Lily Allen collaborator Greg Kurstin and set for some serious chart action with single 'Mama Do'.

**EL TANBURA: Wesley Memorial Chapel** – Big Village make a welcome return to local gig promoting with Egyptian Sufi collective El Tanbura, utilising the ancient simsimiyya lyre to conjure exotic, rhythmic Arabic folk and soul music.





**INLIGHT + SHABU + JESSIE GRACE + LUKE KEEGAN:** *The Jericho Tavern* – Epic stadium pop from InLight.  
**SKYLARKIN' SOUNDSYSTEM:** *The Cellar* – Reggae, soul, ska and rock'n'roll with Count Skylarkin and Indecision.

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

**LIGHTS! ACTION! + TELEGRAPHS: O2 Academy** – Return of the epic, anthemic stadium popsters, plus Brighton's rugged but melodic grunge-tinged rockers Telegraphs.

**DESERT STORM + PROSPEKT: The Wheatsheaf** – Seriously heavyweight stoner-metal and psychedelic rock monsters, fresh from their all-slaying Punt performance.

**FONDA 500 + ALPHABET BACKWARDS + MOMERATHS + THE WHITE SAIL BAND: The Cellar** – Coo Co Club night with Hull's enduring chaotic electro-noise-pop troupe Fonda 500, along with bouncetastic local electro-tinged pop heroes Alphabet Backwards, charmingly chirpy skiffle-pop outfit Mome Rathes and Stornoway side project White Sail.

**10CC: The New Theatre** – Graham Gouldman takes the current version of the 70s soft-rock hitmakers out on tour for a run-through the old favourites and songs from his own solo career.

**OTRA VIDA FESTIVAL: South Park (12noon-7pm)** – Charity all-day mini-festival with three stages playing host to the likes of Foreign Beggars, Count Skylarkin, Rafael Y Lola and Raggasaurus, plus more, all in aid of Peruvian orphanage fund and the Helen & Douglas House Hospice.

**COMMOTION FESTIVAL: Kingham** – All-day charity live music festival, featuring a headline set from Abba Mania and 90s chart balladeer Beverly Craven. Plus sets from Little Fish, The Epstein, David Gibb, Jay Alice, The Scholars, InLight, Shaker Heights, The Truths and Reluctant Heroes.

**TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM**

**101: The Academy** – Weekly three-clubs-in-one extravaganza with indie and electro at Transformation, 80s, trashy pop and glam at Trashy, plus alt.rock, metal and punk at Room 101.

**FREEFALL + EASY TIGER + MR WILSON:**

**Fat Lil's, Witney** – Classic 70s and 80s rock and modern indie covers from Freefall, plus Neil Young and Lynyrd Skynyrd-inspired rocking from Easy Tiger.

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Royal Standard, Headington**

**SIMPLE: The Bullingdon** – Electro and tech-house at tonight's Out To Graze warm-up night.

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

**DOUG WIBISH & WILL CALHOUN: The North Wall** - *See main preview*

**FRAGILE: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Tribute to prog rockers Yes.

**MARK BOSLEY & JULIAN MOSS: Donnington Community Centre** – Downbeat gothic-folk pop from Mr Bosley.

**BURLESQUE CABARET: Café CoCo, Park End Street** – Burlesque performances plus live music from local cinematic pop types The Long Insiders.

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

**THE IAN PARKER BAND: The Bullingdon** – Return to the Famous Monday Blues for the Brummie roots-rock singer and guitarist, owing as much to The Edge and Mark Knopfler as he does to the classic American blues tradition.

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

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Singer Alison Bentley is the guest at tonight's live jazz club.

**OXFORD IMPROVISERS: Folly Bridge Inn** – After the closure of the Port Mahon, Oxford Improvisers reconvene every month at the Folly Bridge Inn. Tonight's session features Chris Brown (guitar), Jill Elliot (violin), Bruno Guastala (cello) and Chris Stubbs (percussion), plus an electric quartet of regulars Miles Doubleday, Pat Thomas, Malcolm Atkins and Pete McPhail.

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

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

**THE DAMNED + THE ALARM: O2 Academy** – Double dose of punk nostalgia for your dollar as original rock nihilists The Damned smash it up to the sounds of 'New Rose', 'Neat Neat Neat' and more, while 80s Welsh Clash acolytes The Alarm resurrect old hits like '68 Guns'.

**ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney**  
**MICHAEL WESTON KING: The Jericho Tavern** – Former member of UK alt.country pioneers Good Sons continues his illustrious solo career, promoting his latest live album, 'Crawling Across The USA', drawing favourable comparisons with Townes Van Zandt and Gram Parsons and having played with the likes of Nick Cave, Steve Earle and Ron Sexsmith.

**FREE RANGE: The Cellar** – Dubstep and drum&bass club night.

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

**GARY NUMAN: O2 Academy** – Return of the synth-rock legend – *see main preview*

**THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART + FROM LIGHT TO SOUND: The Jericho Tavern** – New Wave of Twee champs hit town – *see main preview*

**DYING ANIMALS + DEDLOK + COMRADE ROCKET: The Bullingdon** – Moshka club night with rumbling grunge-rockers Dying Animals, full-on thrash-metal merchants Dedlok and frenetic prog-core mayhem where Dillinger Escape Plan meets The Berzerker, from Comrade Rocket, the new incarnation of Eduard Soundingblock.

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – Trumpeter Martin Shaw guests.



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

## **DOUG WIMBISH & WILL CALHOUN: The North Wall Arts Centre**

Legend is an overused word, especially in music, and the idea of applying it to a bass player might initially seem ludicrous, but if any living bassist deserves the title, it's Doug Wibish. He, along with Skip McDonald and Keith LeBlanc, formed Sugarhill Records in-house rhythm section, so Wibish performed on the likes of Grandmaster Flash's 'The Message' as well as 'White Lines', helping to pioneer a particular style of hip hop bass playing. Arguably his most creative period was in London with LeBlanc and McDonald when they, along with Adrian Sherwood, formed Tackhead, before he joined funk-metal pioneers Living Colour. Here Wibish teamed up with multi-award-winning drummer Will Calhoun, who has become his regular collaborator. When Living Colour split, the pair formed drum&bass act Head>>Fake. Between them they have CVs that include everyone from The Rolling Stones, BB King and Jeff Beck to Madonna, Depeche Mode and Public Enemy, but while they're among the most renowned studio musicians for hire in the world, they're also performers and innovators in their own right and tonight's show, presented by the Oxford Guitar Gallery, should be a showcase of just what the very best musicians are capable of getting out of their instruments.

**ABBA MANIA: The New Theatre** – Sing along to the timeless pop classics.

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

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

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

**AMOROUS JAZZ: The Indian Room** – Bossa nova, swing and jazz ballads.

**ECLECTRICITY: The Cellar** – Electro, bassline, fidget house and more with Jokers of the Scene and Urchins.



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*Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>*

## GARY NUMAN: O2 Academy

After last year's sold-out show here performing his epoch-making 'Replicas' album in full, Gary Numan returns to town as part of a short UK tour to promote sort-of-new album 'Dead Son Rising', reworkings of assorted demos from the past few years, with a new album proper, 'Splinter', due in 2010. The musical contrast between that 'Replicas' show and tonight's gig will show how far Numan has moved in the past 30 years, but also how much has stayed the same. The dystopian sci-fi paranoia and robotic pop has been replaced by an iconoclastic lyrical theme and a move into dark, industrial gothic rock territory. What's unchanged and undiminished, though, is the power Numan manages to summon from electronic music, as well as remaining a peerless rock entertainer with a keen sense of theatre. Despite being critically reviled early on, and being creatively and commercially bankrupt by the late-80s, Numan's star has been in the ascendancy since generations of bands, from Blur, Beck and Afrika Bambaataa to Nirvana, Nine Inch Nails and Dr Dre, quoted him as a major inspiration, and with even Sugababes scoring their best chart hit with a reworked 'Are Friends Electric?'. The hardcore Numanoid following has never deserted him, but Numan's fanbase is growing again and tonight's a good chance for newcomers to discover probably the most important star in electronic music of the past 30 years.

### FRIDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**OUT TO GRAZE: Marsh Farm, Shabbington** – First night of the dance festival, hosted by Slide, Simple and Bassmentality. Slide and Simple's tent sees a headline set from award-winning DJ Krafty Kuts, plus sets from Lee Mortimer, Emily Williams and James Weston among others. The main Out To Graze stage sees live sets from local reggae faves Mackating, techno from Dogshow, dubstep from Number Nine, hip hop from Fridge and Bungle and reggae, soul and rocksteady from Jewels and Jacuzzis. There's acid house from Microclimate, jungle and dubstep from Snatch Productions and sets from Filed Under K, Shakka, Bushman, Humb and Absnif, plus many more. For full line-up, visit [www.outtograze.co.uk](http://www.outtograze.co.uk).  
**JONQUIL + HOUSE OF BROTHERS: O2 Academy** – Cinematic psychedelia, sweeping, experimental folk-pop and hardy, singalong sea shanties from local stars Jonquil, plus lovely heavy-hearted orchestral folk-pop from Nottingham's House Of Brothers.

**DEATHRAY TREBUCHAY + STORNOWAY + JALI FILY CISSOKHO: The Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock** – A great mixed bill of world sounds tonight down at Iffley Lock with East London's gypsy punk collective Deathray Trebuchay kicking up a polka party vibe, plus ace local folk-pop heroes Stornoway and renowned kora player Jali Fily Cissokho.

**FAUX FIGHTERS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Tribute to Foo Fighters.

**LES CLOCHARDS: The Chester Arms**  
**SONS OF THE DESERT + MINOR COLES + OUTLAWS OF TOMBSTONE + JETKING: The Jericho Tavern** – Libertine-style indie-punk from Birmingham's Sons of the Desert.

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

**GET DOWN: The Brickworks**

**THE MIGHTY REDOX + THE PETE FRYER BAND + FILM NOIR + DES BARKUS: The Magdalen**

**BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar** – Jazz dance, Latin, afrobeat, Balkan and nu-jazz.

### SATURDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**OUT TO GRAZE: Marsh Farm, Shabbington** – Full day of dance, from reggae and dubstep to acid house and techno – *see Friday preview*.

**BABY GRAVY + THE VIBE + MC SHUFFLE + G-BLOCK + MR SHAADOW + SILECTA: O2 Academy**

– Raucous riot grrl-fuelled electro-punk rocking from Baby Gravy, tonight hosting their own showcase party for local funk and hip hop talents, including young soul review ensemble The Vibe, the mighty Mr Shadow and more.

**IN THE FLESH: The Wheatsheaf**

**WEAERONAUTS + TREETOP FLYERS + SAM BEER + JAMES HANCOX: The Jericho Tavern** – Expansive indie folk-pop from the recent Punt stars We Aeronauts, coming in somewhere between Arcade Fire and Elbow, with support from Dylan-esque folk-country act Treetop Flyers and heartfelt and soulful acoustic folk chap Sam Beer.

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

**EVOLUTION: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Live tribute to 80s and 90s stadium rock excess.

**LES CLOCHARDS: Jericho Street Fair**

### SUNDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**DREVER, McCUSKER & WOOMBLE: O2 Academy** – The three kings of Scottish folk-pop head off on tour together – *see main preview*

### MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**ABSENT ELK + INLIGHT + KING'S**

**SHILLING: O2 Academy** – Alternately exuberant and sweeping indie pop of the Coldplay-meets-Hoosiers variety from Sony signings Absent Elk, plus local support from epic stadium pop types Inlight and folkies King's Shilling.

**THE MATT SCHOFIELD TRIO: The**

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

### TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

**DEVILDRIVER + GOD FORBID +**

**MALEFICE: O2 Academy** – Former-Coalchamber frontman Dez Fafara brings his

Californian outfit to the UK in support of new album, 'Pray For Villains', proffering a groove-led brand of thrash and death metal. New Jersey's anthemic metalcore crew God Forbid support, along with Reading thrash-core types Malefice, recent tour support to SikTh.

**BROKEN RECORDS + SPARROW & THE WORKSHOP: O2 Academy** – Magnificently brooding folk-laced alt.rock from Edinburgh's seven-strong Broken Records, recently signed to 4AD after a record company scramble for their signatures. Utilising cello, violin and trumpet amid a veritable orchestra of instruments to create great, expansive music that finds a meeting point between Arcade Fire, The Waterboys and Calexico. Languorous, exotic pop from Glasgow's Sparrow & The Workshop in support.

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

*Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>*

## THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART: The Jericho Tavern

Funny how all the best classic British indie pop is being made by Americans these days. New Yorkers The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart (don't worry, they're not emo) come from the same anglophile scene as Vivian Girls and Crystal Stilts and it's fair to presume they worship at the altars of Sarah Records and The Pastels. True, they're twee as fuck, but there's noise aplenty here too, their cutesy jangle interrupted by fuzztone and feedback. The lispy, wan vocals of frontman Kip Berman are pure Stephen Pastel, but the band are closer in sound and spirit to the My Bloody Valentine of 'Strawberry Wine' – before they reinvented music with 'Isn't Anything'. They were last seen in the UK supporting The Wedding Present on tour, including a date in their spiritual home city of Bristol where assorted ex-members of The Flatmates ventured out to see the legacy they had spawned. Hopefully they left happy, because TPOBPAH's exuberant simplicity makes for seriously joyous pop music and is a reminder of what the term indie meant before it became a catch-all for any bunch of gonks with guitars. Tour support comes from Brighton's girl-boy jangle-punk shamblers Shrag, resurrecting the spirit of Huggy Bear, plus local krautrock-cum-post-rock newcomers From Light To Sound.



**OPEN MIC SESSION: Mason's Arms, Headington Quarry**

### **WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup>**

**PAPA ROACH + BUCKCHERRY: O2 Academy** – How the mighty have fallen! Once world-conquering poster boys of nu-metal, it's been a long while since Papa Roach released multi-platinum selling albums of the calibre of 'Infest', but, having long-since ditched the rapping and concentrated on the angst and powerchords, they're back with a new album, 'Metamorphosis'. They're out on tour over here with recent Cruefest tourmates and fellow Californians Buckcherry, a band for whom it never stopped being the mid-80s. Their new album, 'Black Butterfly', still finds them singing about booze'n'birds and nicking riffs from Aerosmith, and if you like your metal sleazy and with big hair, they're still your band.

**VIAROSA + THE EPSTEIN + THE ROUNDHEELS: The Bullingdon** – Death and sorrow-obsessed country-noir from Viarosa, drawing on the unholy trinity of Johnny Cash, Nick Cave and Leonard Cohen for inspiration, plus exotic country rocking from The Epstein and traditional English folk sounds from The Roundheels.  
**THIN GREEN CANDLES + LIDDINGTON + CALI COLLECT: The Wheatsheaf** – Experimental mix of trip hop, electronica, and rock from TGC, plus heavyweight indie noise from Cali Collect.  
**PHAT SESSIONS: The Cellar**

### **THURSDAY 18<sup>th</sup>**

**ROPETRICK + GOD OF SMALL THINGS + SWITCH 60: The Bullingdon** – Return to live action for funky soul-rock troupe Ropetrack at tonight's Moshka club, plus piano-led bluesy rock ballads from God Of Small Things who sound alarmingly like a drug-addled Bonnie Tyler.  
**SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – Up and coming London jazz ensemble Centreline are tonight's special guests.  
**NITKOWSKI + THEO: The Cellar** – Intricate, bass-free math-rock and Steve Reich-influenced rhythmic pop from London's Nitkowski, plus inventive loops and drones ensemble Theo.  
**MIMI SOYA + HARLEQUINN: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Spiky, bouncy punk-pop from Brighton's Mimi Soya out on tour.  
**MICHAEL LEE + LAURA WILLIAMS + MEET MEAT MIDNIGHT + HELL'S GAZZELS: The Pavilion, Chinnor** – Proggy soft rock from Michael Lee, plus bluesy rock'n'soul from Laura Williams at tonight's Rock The Pavilion set.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**  
**ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston**

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

**HARVEY WILLIAMS & JULIAN HENRY + THE NOMINEES + CHRISSY FUEL: The Wheatsheaf** – Swiss Concrete continue their journey to the heart of Twee

with tonight's joint gig by Harvey Williams and Julian Henry – the former once of Another Sunny Day, the latter chief songwriter of the semi-legendary Hit Parade, indie janglers of intermittent activity but a history going back 25 years. Both bands were signed to Sarah Records in the 80s and tonight the duo will be pillaging their back catalogue to perform seminal cuts like 'Anorak City' and 'I'm In Love With A Girl Who Doesn't Know I Exist' – how indie? None more indie! Support from local rockers The Nominees and Brighton's cute-pop starlet Chrissy Fuel.

**ABSOLUTE BOWIE: O2 Academy** – Bowie tribute.

**THE BLACK HATS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Local spiky new wave power-poppers.

**EMPIRE SAFARI + THE STANLEY BLACKS + STRATEGY + SEVEN DAYS OF SLEEP: The Jericho Tavern**  
**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**

**GET DOWN: The Brickworks**  
**FRESH OUT THE BOX: The Cellar** – House, breaks and techno club night.

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

**ELECTRONIC NIGHTS: The Jericho Tavern** – Recent Punt stars Response Collective host their monthly electronic music club night, performing their own cinematic electro hip hop-rock fusion, plus guest bands and DJs.

**RIVERSIDE FREE FESTIVAL: Charlbury** – First day of the free music festival – *see main preview*  
**SHAKER HEIGHTS + DYING ANIMALS: The Wheatsheaf** – Melodic Americana-tinged indie rocking from Shaker Heights, plus punky noise from Dying Animals  
**TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: The Academy**

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

**RIVERSIDE FREE FESTIVAL: Charlbury** – More free musical fun by the river – *see main preview*  
**BIG COLOURS BIG BAND: The Bullingdon** – Traditional and contemporary big band jazz.

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

**SHARRIE WILIAMS & THE WISEGUYS: The Bullingdon** – Rocking gospel blues from the powerful Michigan-based singer at tonight's Famous Monday Blues.

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

**FIXERS + HEARTS IN PENCIL + SECRET RIVALS: The Wheatsheaf** – Taught, energetic Dr Feelgood-style rocking from Fixers, with spiky indie-punk from recent Punt stars Hearts In Pencil in support.  
**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – The Howard Peacock Quintet play live at the free weekly jazz club.

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

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

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## THURSDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**BLAZE BAYLEY: The Bullingdon** – Return of the former-Wolsbane and Iron Maiden frontman, now working with his own band and treading a darker metal path.

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – Jazz pianist and composer Andrea Vicari guests.

**INTERNATIONAL JETSETTERS + DESMOND CHANCER & THE LONG MEMORIES: The Jericho Tavern** – Star-gazing indie rock from this month's Nightshift cover stars – *see main interview feature*

**HARRY ANGEL + DESERT STORM + SECRET RIVALS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Gothic fuzzpunk and atmospheric post-punk noise from the mighty Harry Angel, plus monolithic metal

### *Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>*

## DREVER, McCUSKER & WOOMBLE: O2 Academy

The coming together of three of Scotland's most accomplished contemporary musicians was always going to make people sit up and pay attention, but then supergroups of any kind can be crashing disappointments – little more than indulgent backslapping exercises. What Kris Drever, John McCusker and Roddy Woomble produced with their album, 'Before The Ruin', fully filled expectations though, an alternately anthemic and intimate take on traditional Scottish folk music and modern acoustic pop. Orcadian singer-songwriter Drever, folk producer and multi-instrumentalist McCusker and Idlewild frontman Woomble share plenty of common ground musically, while each bringing some of their individual style to the party. Woomble's 2006 solo outing 'My Secret Is My Silence' hinted that there's a world for him beyond sweeping indie rock and he works well with the delicate, pastoral Drever, who has now won two BBC Folk Awards, as best newcomer and for best band for his Lau project, while McCusker's CV includes 12 years working with Kate Rusby as well as time with Eliza Carthy and a recent tour support to Mark Knopfler. He's also producing Radiohead drummer Phil Selway's solo album and Phil plays on 'Before The Ruin', as does Teenage Fanclub's Norman Blake. Traditional stuff it may be, but it's as fresh and modern as all the best folk music.



riffery and all-round stoner-rock brilliance from Desert Storm and scuzzy, fuzzy electro-indie-punk from Secret Rivals.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford**

**Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

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

## FRIDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**SOL SAMBA: O2 Academy** – The local samba collective celebrate their 10<sup>th</sup> birthday with an evening of carnival rhythms and samba styles from around the world.

**DOMES OF SILENCE + RUINS: The Wheatsheaf** – Industrial-strength sludge-rocking at the point where Primal Scream meet Motorhead from Domes of Silence, plus hardcore grunge noise from former-Mondo Cada chaps Ruins.

**DEVIANT UK: The Bullingdon** – Dark industrial gothic rock from Deviant UK, paying due homage to Gary Numan's more recent electro-doom material.

**THE STONE SALOON: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Southern-fried classic rock.

**WHISKY BLITZ + CHALK + PALAHNUIK + BLUE JUNK: The Jericho Tavern** – Classic heavy rocking from Whisky Blitz.

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

**HQ: The Cellar** – Drum&bass.

## SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**THE ANYDAYS: The Bullingdon** – Spirited garage-rock, classic 60s r'n'b and guitar pop from The Anydays, launching their new single, '16 Days'.

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with FROM HERE, WE RUN! + CLING + SIDEWINDERS:**

**The Wheatsheaf** – Gappy Tooth offers up its usual mixed bag, with recent Punt starlets FH,WR! coming in with a sweet, pop-friendly take on math-rock, plus London trip-hoppers Cling and Banbury's extravagant classic rockers Sidewinder paying sue homage to Led Zep and AC/DC.

**CODES IN THE CLOUDS: The Jericho Tavern** – Atmospheric, dynamic rocking in the vein of Mogwai and Explosions In The Sky.

**THE PURPLE PROJECT: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Tribute to Deep Purple.

**SILVANITO + SMILEX: Stocks Bar, Crown & Thistle, Abingdon** – Skittle Alley blends night with Silvanito kicking out an exotic band of Shadows-style surf pop, Spaghetti Western shimmer and Latin swing. Smilex set their sights on straight-down-the line rock'n'roll mayhem in support.

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

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: Rose Hill Community Centre**

**R'N'B & FUNKY HOUSE CLUB NIGHT: The Bullingdon**

## SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**THE BIG BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3-7pm)** – Afternoon all-comers blues jam.



### *Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>*

## RIVERSIDE

## FESTIVAL: Charlbury

Charlbury's annual Riverside Festival continues to provide the county with an excellent free weekend of live music, for the most part showcasing local talent. Saturday's main stage is headed by Witney's rising teenage starlets Tristan & The Troubadours, creating a lively, expansive pop noise that harks back to The Velvet Underground and, more contemporaneously, the likes of Jamie T. Joining them are global rock heroes in waiting Little Fish, looking set to move Stateside soon as they prepare for the release of their debut album on Linda Perry's Custard Records. Saturday also features inimitably effusive rockers Smilex, stadium pop from InLight, eclectic indie from Hearts In Pencil and dark electro noise from Thin Green Candles. Gentle-natured rockers Liddington head Sunday's main stage bill, where they're joined by country rock faves, and seasoned festival veterans The Epstein (*pictured*), rootsy Americana act Two Fingers Of Firewater, epic guitar pop from A Silent Film and Gallic folk-cum-country rock from Les Clochards, amongst others. There's also a smaller second stage that variously features excellent metal and punk noise from Desert Storm, Sextodecimo and Winnebago Deal, plus all manner of rock, pop, folk and more from various local acts. Something for everyone then, and a weekend that's equal to many festivals that charge for the privilege.

**ACOUSTIC OPEN MIC SESSION: The Red Lion, Kidlington**

## MONDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

**THE DANI WILDE BAND: The Bullingdon** – Rocking blues and soul and the occasional piano-led power ballad from the Brighton singer at tonight's Famous Monday Blues.

## TUESDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

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

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





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## GALLOWS / EVERYTIME I DIE

### **O2 Academy**

'Gallows: in association with Relentless'. A branded tour bus is idling outside the Academy, and its awkward presence isn't doing much to calm fears that the once vicious hardcore act have been de-clawed by the media merry-go-round. Support band, the New York noise-merchants Every Time I Die, have upped the stakes, accumulating a headliner-worthy crowd. Deservedly so - their punk arpeggios hearken back to the best of 90s embryonic emo. Heavy dischord rips gut-punch into a chorus, with dynamics that allow the odd harmonic rise to breath air into tight chords. It's a thrash-heavy, energising set to top.

Mock-goth organ - the intro to Gallows' new album - floats out from behind a stark Tudor Rose backdrop. The band's trademark sarcastic nationalism - Albion burning - skirts close to self-parody until, on obliterating opener 'The Vulture', tattooed livewire Frank Carter pogoes onstage into an instant transfer of energy. The new material is furious, all metal arpeggios and Oi! shouted vocals: Frank's guttural performance feeds the circle pit that opens as (adapted) new track, 'Oxford Is The Reason', risks Spinal Tap-style gimmickry to ascend, sweating sincerity. There is a moment's rest as Frank regails us with the symptoms of the alleged swine flu that's forcing his vomit-inducing dives offstage, before a punishing minute-long assault of tense hardcore opens up a pit - incredibly - that surrounds the sound desk.

The end approaches: while it's not the first time



Photo: RPHimages

Frank has closed an Oxford gig atop the bar - in this case for hit 'Belly of a Shark' - it's a shreddingly tense moment when, with a casual "fuck it", he leaps onto the crowd and surfs, intact, back to the stage.

It's been an exhausting gig for a lead singer who

delivers a lung-shredding, adrenaline slashed set. Punk rock or parody - with the enigma intact, Gallows motor off in their unashamedly colossal tour bus, to hurl, spit and swear at another of the home counties.

**Liz Dodd**

## DOG SHOW / THE KEYBOARD CHOIR / PAGAN WANDERE LU

### **The Cellar**

Pagan Wanderer Lu's songs are tiny crystallised nuggets of excellence, hand turned clusters of bleepy melody and literate lyrics so exquisite they should be sold from some impossibly cool boutique. Every tidy tune is catchy but creakily skewed, as if Stephen Merritt had been bashing fragments of song together after some violent pop holocaust. Pity that the live show isn't too captivating, really. The vocals are a tad lifeless, and the guitar sounds clumsy and nasal amongst the quaint electronic backing, so we have to pay close attention to get the most out of the compositions. They are well worth it, though, especially the last number, a wonky Mario World bounce featuring the award winning line, "Christians like you are why God made lions". Why aren't there more lyricists like this around?

After the Oxford Radcliffe Hopsitals Trust, The Keyboard Choir must be this city's primary employer. There are loads of them, and we're not sure they're all the same ones as last time, but they come together to buzz, fuzz, flutter and chuckle with a panoply of synths. We heartily applaud the undertaking involved in getting this huge band onstage to make keyboard noises that everyone probably assumes are all on tape anyway. The music takes in everything that's great about electronic sound, from Messiaen's 'Ondes Martenot' to microhouse, via Delia Derbyshire and Tangerine Dream, and the only part we take issue with are the rather shop-worn, clichéd spoken samples. They end with what sounds like something from The Orb's forgotten 'Pomme Fritz' LP versioned by Klaus

Schulze and Sven Vath. What an endearingly illogical band!

What with their live drums, endlessly arpeggiating keyboards and slightly crappy flashing sculpture, Dog Show are pretty much what a band from "The Future" would look like on some low budget British sci-fi show from the mid 70s (they wanted Roger Moore but ended up with Simon MacCorkindale; Nigel Havers puts in a good cameo, but Michael Elphick is woefully miscast). The set varies between pumping electro euphoria and a slightly annoying fairground jauntiness, until we don't know whether to stick on an Altern8 facemask or join the candy floss queue. In many ways this is like music for excitable children, on a constant sugary high and with a relentless, if somewhat gauche, melodic logic that just keeps going and going and bloody well going. Watching Dogshow is like endlessly riding the Waltzer; refreshing and liberating, but you know that sooner or later you're going to start feeling sick.

**David Murphy**

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## **BARBARE11A / THE SCARAMANGA SIX / FIXERS / MINOR COLES**

### **The Wheatsheaf**

Quickfix nights always provide plenty of treats, and tonight is no exception. Minor Coles are a laidback band with a somewhat Guided By Voices-style US alt-rock feel. Featuring Mark Stephenson from We Aeronauts, they have a distinctive sound and solid song-writing, if tending towards epicness rather more than necessary. If they could inject a bit more diversity, and less restrained drumming, results could ensue.

Fixers are a lively bunch. Formed late last year by Jack Goldstein of Gunnbunny, they also feature members of The Delta Frequency and Vultures. Two people spontaneously mention Elvis Costello to me (maybe it's the suit), but I'm thinking more of classic pub rock like Dr Feelgood. As if to agree, Jack occasionally gives us a fantastic little guitar solo, but they're tantalisingly short and infrequent. Despite this, it's a taut, energetic performance and the crowd seem to love them.

The Scaramanga Six were supposed to be headlining tonight, maybe because they've come all the way from Huddersfield. Now a decade old, they're touting new album 'Songs of Prey', their

sixth, continuing a tradition of dense, punchy rock with dark theatrical touches of prog and glam, but still packed with solid, catchy tunes. A longstanding relationship with Tim Smith of The Cardiacs gives a clue as to their motivation though, rather ironically, he's currently recovering from a heart attack. Stripped of the album's complex production and multiple vocal tracks that would do Queen proud, the band have to rely on the quality of the songs, and there's no denying they can get under your skin.

New local outfit Barbare11a (note the two '11's rather than 'LL's) have a distinctive Dickensian goth look with a nod to *A Clockwork Orange*. Musically they're still half-formed: vocals more spoken than sung, rumbling analogue synths, minimalist drumming, a vague feeling of impending doom. If Nine Inch Nails had started in 1980 they might have sounded just like this. As of today they're a band to admire inquisitively rather than fall in love with, at a stage where musical direction could follow a number of interesting paths.

**Art Lagun**

## **MOTION TRIO**

### **Wesley Memorial Church**

Given the substantial influx of Polish character and identity into the (multi)culture of the UK in recent years it's surprising not to see a larger turnout for a group so lauded and acclaimed in their native country. Formed in Krakow in 1996, the Motion Trio are a group dedicated to pushing the boundaries and exploring the full potential of music composed for and played on accordions. With both a solid grounding in street performance and the technique of classical training under their belts, their credentials certainly seem persuasive.

The set does open with a non-starter – a piece by English composer Michael Nyman with whom they've collaborated, but this is rather mundane and forgettable. However they soon hit their stride with the rhythmically intense 'UFO' from recent album 'Play-Station'. While overtly eschewing folk music, it's clear that the spirit and flavour of these mid-European traditions still inform much of their sound, and not just in pieces like 'Balkan Dance'. In fact most of their set is composed by the trio's leader, Janusz Wojtarowicz. He shines as the stand-out performer though the fully integrated playing of the three musicians is what makes them a genuinely successful chamber group. Numerous are the pieces which showcase the dazzling virtuosity and strange sonorities they conjure from their custom-made instruments. 'Kura' is a heady steeplechase of a track; imagine Scott Bradley's cartoon tunes played by a demented organist. 'Sounds of War' on the other hand is an atmospheric lament for victims of the Chechnya conflict, including a

parody of martial music, and sound effects with machine guns and helicopters (all evoked acoustically by the accordions). If anything the programme is almost too eclectic and varied. But they do excel in almost every genre, every style, they adopt. Most entertaining of all is the simulation of club music in 'You Dance' and – with infectious humour – the exhaustive reproduction of video game sounds throughout the encore, 'Game Over'. The audience, though small in size, seem suitably stunned and appreciative.

**Steve Thompson**

## **FERTILIZER**

### **02 Academy**

"Underground sounds that fertilize the mainstream" is the neat tagline for the phenomenon of Fertilizer – basically an initiative that, since 2002, has sought out challenging new music from across Europe and showcased it in gigs in London. Now they've gone a bit further and, as part of Polska Year, are taking a selection of Polish artists on a UK tour.

Tonight's gig at the Academy actually isn't quite as wide-ranging as the publicity would suggest, as two of the groups share more than half their line-up. In the middle of the program, however, is a set by composer and sound manipulator Michal Janaszek. Effectively a run-through of his recent album 'Treny', the live playing of a cellist and violinist are merged with vocal and electronic textures and treatments. Unfortunately the venue does this music few favours as much of the atmosphere is killed by ambient chatter. Essentially soundtrack material, it is at its best when most insubstantial and diffuse yet there's also a rhythmic monotony and lack of variation that the quality of the live performers can't quite rescue.

The two groups performing are billed as key players in Poland's vibrant experimental jazz-rock scene. While there are obvious similarities in their styles, the differences are also intriguing. Sing Sing Penelope clearly draw much inspiration from the late-60s and early-70s fusion movement with Miles Davis' seminal 'Bitch's Brew' a particularly strong influence on their sound – dark and complex textures, deep grooves with wah-wah trumpet and the inimitable Fender-Rhodes keyboard. Still they've the full measure of this style and enough energy to make it exciting and compulsive listening.

My biggest thumbs-up of the evening, however, goes to the Contemporary Noise Sextet. More wide-ranging in sound than Sing Sing Penelope, they survive the odd disconcerting lapse into muscular funk to deliver a set with much fresh and hard-edged improvisation. You have to agree that when the shackles are off and the cacophony let loose, a healthy dose of the Velvets and punk adrenalin can do wonders for the jazz constitution.

**Steve Thompson**

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## THE JOY FORMIDABLE

### The Jericho Tavern

Tonight has it all: stage invasions, crowd surfing and sorely tempted guitar destruction, most of it by singer Ritzy Bryan herself. With her bell-cut blonde hair spiking with every jolting chord and her convent girl clothes inflaming her adoring fans into a sea of raised arms, she finally trusts her new status as indie goddess enough to launch herself onto the bed of hands during the extended whiteout of last song, 'Whirring'.

Not that they've had to make it rise to that climax, as from the very first song, the slow boiling 'The Greatest Light Is The Greatest Shade', the room is in uproar. If The Cocteau Twins had joined forces with My Bloody Valentine, or Kim Deal with a 'Blow Out'-era Radiohead, plus the commercial melodic *nous* of Snow Patrol, you would start to sense why you're standing there with your mouth agape like everyone else in the venue.

Rhyddian Dafydd's temple veins throb as much as his bass strings and Matt Thomas slams six shades out of his kit, as the whoop-along 'Cradle' has Ritzy lashing the front rows with her hair while she stabs at her vast tray of guitar pedals. By the time



photo: Andy Wright

they reach the masturbatory mindwarps of 'Austere' and 'Anemone' the two Buster Bloodvessel lookalikes who had been balletically smearing the mosh against the walls, scarily clamber up on stage and dance around while Ritzy

wrangles the feedback to within inch of its life.

It's the kind of sweat-bathed theatre that would be lost on a big stage behind a security moat. This isn't so much a gig, more a full blown coronation.

**Paul Carrera**

## COLLISIONS & CONSEQUENCES

### The Wheatsheaf

When a band is described as epic, there's always a sense of fear that their set list will contain songs longer than Joyce's *Ulysses*, filled with similarly confusing lyrical tangents and unnecessary musical diversions. This will inevitably leave some audiences members rejoicing at the uniqueness, whilst leaving equal measures to stand scratching their heads ape-like, not sure what it is all about.

To start with Collisions and Consequences seem to be erring towards the latter, providing songs which could lose a minute or so. Whilst there's no doubt the songs are packed full of emotive vibes, by the fifth song the audience is begging for a change of direction. In fact, it's one of the bass players and his pneumatic drill-type approach to playing guitar that captures most attention, as well as carrying the entirety of the band's energy.

Thankfully, just as their set begins slip away from ambitious and heroic, dragging itself down with the sheer length of each song, the lead singer jumps up and announces a batch of new songs. There's a brief moment to ponder if new means different or more of the same, just penned more recently, but with that announcement Collisions and Consequences seem to awaken. While 'Paths' contains a solid dose of melodic keyboarding to accentuate the passion of the lyrics, the rest of the music allows for a meander into a slightly shorter but altogether more powerful musical tangent that allows them to verge off the beaten track just long enough to reveal its untamed nature, without becoming overburdened by the wilderness.

Its antidote is 'Ignite', where they seem to drift away from epic into lighter indie territory, the end result sounding not to dissimilar to The Wombats. With that in mind, it seems the new direction captures all of the emotion of the old, colliding it with new sounds, creating rawer, punchier numbers, which consequentially leaves little to fault.

**Lisa Ward**

## ...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD

### O2 Academy

To us, ...Trail of Dead at the Zodiac will always be about their triumphant show far too many years ago, in which they took the roof off the venue, and The Rock of Travolta announced their arrival in Oxford with a stunning support set. Years later, they're back playing the same songs in the same venue, albeit with a lick of paint, a new sponsor and fewer people there to see them – the faintly-depressing spectacle of a once-hyped band apparently on the way back down.

Even leaving heroin and band departures aside, time hasn't treated them enormously kindly. If we're being a little uncharitable, rarely has a band's music tallied so accurately with their physical appearance. Back around the time of 'Madonna', Trail of Dead were taut, wiry, aggressive and more than a little threatening, both in person and musically. These days, there's as much in their latest material as there is in their bodies that's corpulent and creaky, stumbling along as if they have some vague muscle memory of once playing vital, irresistible music, but instead feel compelled to stretch each new song out beyond its natural limits into some kind of horrible art rock prog.

Yet they do find their rhythm as they go along: the more they leave behind bloated ambition and strip down the instrumentation, the more vital they sound. There's little else in their canon to touch the euphoric reach of 'Relative Ways' and, with their heads down and three guitars in unison, 'Totally Natural' is the same energising, Unwound-via-Sonic Youth analeptic as ever.

But that's all it is: by the enormously high standards set through years of health-endangering, stage-smashing live brilliance, the 2009 model is a pallid recapturing of the band they once were.

**Stuart Fowkes**

## NORTHERN PORTRAIT

### The Wheatsheaf

If I'd have shown up at this Swiss Concrete night and someone had told me the headline act was a Danish band, setting out to take on America and the UK after playing this, only their third ever live gig, and more, that when you saw them play, you'd instantly lose a grip on reality and literally believe you'd gone back in time and were witnessing a history that now said David Gavurin, the guitarist from The Sundays, knocked on Morrissey's door, instead of Johnny Marr, and invited him to front his band instead of Harriet Wheeler, I'd have groaned. Instead the flyer just said, "sophisticated guitar pop".

But wait, it's all true...Stefan Larsen is a modest, less arch, less braying, sweeter Mozza, and the band jangle heartbreakingly like out-takes from The Sundays' lost classic 'Reading, Writing, & Arithmetic'.

It's a real Susan Boyle moment, because first of all you stand there shaking your head saying, this is ridiculous, then gradually you get sucked into how utterly charming and brilliant it all is, and you want to buy every album they are surely going to make, seeing as every song you hear contains lyrics and titles that the sage of Salford would crawl over glass to borrow. 'Sporting a Scar' captures all the sadness of faded black and white England in lines like "You're the best thing that never happened to me", and "Hari kiri with a teaspoon", while songs like 'The Operation Worked But The Patient Died' and, my favourite, 'I'll Give You Two Seconds To Entertain Me' sweep and chime through you like the Millennium never happened.

Do I sound like I'm in love? Yup, me and the rump of people still left cheering them on to an encore of 'A Quiet Night In Copenhagen' while the bar switches off all its lights behind us and chairs are stacked on tables, before we all stream away to our homes, to add several hundred more hits on their Myspace site.

**Paul Carrera**



## METRIC

### O2 Academy

Metric connect with me differently on three levels. Without meaning to damn them with faint praise, their professionalism is second to none: every note is absolutely perfect, Emily Haines a fizzing dynamo of enthusiasm from start to finish, with a much-practised skill at working a room with a series of waves, claps and nods. She's the perfect embodiment of Metric's music, a blur of wholesome cheerleaderish pep and zeal, zipping around in a whirl of motion and colour.

Creatively, though, it's pretty mediocre stuff. There are a couple of classic tunes in their canon: predictably, we're made to wait until the encore for 'Monster Hospital', but it's a coruscating showcase of how to write a chorus when it comes.

Elsewhere, the pace varies from bouncy and diverting to (increasingly) pedestrian and wearing. The band's perfect professionalism even works against them in some areas: the bass playing is

technically spot on, but sports the kind of slightly-showy fills that only serve to highlight that it's just another stock stadium pop/rock band doing what hundreds have done before, and will again.

Alas, in terms of lasting impact, it's gossamer-thin. Not to say that we should expect an emotional firestorm of Leonard Cohen proportions from every gig, but any chance they might have of leaving a mark is shot down by their obeisance to the golden rule of stadium rock, viz. that it's better to slightly affect most of the people than it is to matter deeply to a few of the people.

The lyrical themes are ones of such vague disaffection that they could have been passed with a PG rating by a musical branch of the BBFC. The net effect is akin to a musical equivalent of the presumptive glossy sheen from Pantene conditioner: soft and manageable.

*Stuart Fowkes*

## FLIPRON / BORDERVILLE / HEARTS IN PENCIL / MATT WINKWORTH

### The Jericho Tavern

Listening to Matt Winkworth tonight is like listening to Stephen Fry tinkling the ivories and doing his best Noel Coward impression. Whether he's singing about cardigans, or simply promoting his Myspace page there's a wonderful playful humour to his lyrics and stage presence (as much as someone can have a stage presence sat behind a keyboard). The addition of a cello to his tunes adds a slightly mournful edge to proceedings, but the intelligence and wit of his writing provides adequate counter-balance.

Scribbling hearts in pencil on your exercise book at school was always a necessity. Firstly you could rub it out so that no one could take the piss out of your declaration of desire. Secondly, you could change the

name with ease as soon as you'd found a new crush – usually after about twenty minutes. Such are the vagaries of young love. Hearts In Pencil are nowhere near as twee as their name might suggest though. Taking folk and stamping it through a new wave filter, their songs are poppy and surprisingly angular. A particularly invigorated display from their bass player finds us thinking back to Peter Hook as well as Echo and The Bunnymen as he propels the songs with stark pulsing rhythms. Definitely a band to keep an eye on.

Borderville are never a disappointment live. Advocates and practitioners of the theatrical performance, they again turn in another gem of a set. Songs that are as much steeped in the traditions of English dancehall as they are prog rock and pop don't really need much presentation to convince you that the band are something special. Throw in some stupendously shiny shoes and an enigmatic frontman in Joe Swarbrick and you can't fail, but you all knew that already, didn't you.

Somerset's Flipron are very much in the same mould as Borderville: quirky, fun and determined to put on a good show. They've got great tunes in the likes of 'Gravity Calling', which reminds us hugely of The Sensational Alex Harvey Band (as does much of tonight's set) and a sense of humour which is deployed well enough to ensure that they don't become tagged with the label of "comedy band".

You can have too much of a good thing though, and as their set hits the midpoint they begin to meander and lose the audience somewhat. If only they'd kept it short and sweet, we'd probably be raving about them.

*Sam Shepherd*



Flipron by Sam Shepherd

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The Purple Turtle: 01865 247086

East Oxford Community Centre:  
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## THE OXFORD PUNT Oxford City Centre

This has got to be the best start to a Punt ever.

As is traditional, we're in Borders for the launch of the event, but instead of the usual dictionaries and medical encyclopaedias, we're surrounded by Peppa Pig merchandise. And giant fluorescent crayons. How much more fun is that than rock and roll? Especially since it means we get to menace Nightshift's website designer with a stuffed pig toy for the duration of **MATT KILFORD**'s set.

If anything, Matt is more amiable and funnier even than Peppa Pig, as he fights a private battle with Borders' in-store announcer. Such interruptions, however, are a source of comedy for Matt, whose wry humour is as much a highlight of his set as his sweet, mellifluous voice. He might look rather unprepossessingly like Badly Drawn Boy crossed with Mike Gattling, but his voice is not only gorgeous but has the tiniest jazz and blues traces around the edge, and his guitar technique displays some incredibly subtle embellishments way beyond your average strummer. In fact we prefer his woozy slower numbers to his upbeat tunes and it isn't often we think that about an acoustic balladeer.

The short break finds our Peppa Pig-themed reenactment of the battle of Agincourt end in a foam stuffing blood bath, but luckily we've got **BETHANY WEIMERS** to heal the wounds.

By contrast to Matt's set, Bethany's is a riot – her excited guitar bursting with flamenco fireworks, and her dynamic singing full of theatre that easily fills even Borders' expansive store. Coming on like a cross between Edie Brickell and Bonnie Langford at times, she's at her best when keeping things folky, especially in a sea shanty-flavoured ditty about her great, great grandparents, with a winning

melody oddly reminiscent of 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen'.

Onward then to the Purple Turtle and the opportunity to start drinking in earnest. Which is entirely appropriate since **PISTOL KIXX** are the first band on. They're all dressed in black and three of them are wearing bandannas. And they worship Guns'n'Roses and Hanoi Rocks and all those other bands like Dogs D'Amour that once seemed to personify rock'n'roll cliché but now, in a world of landfill indie, seem so much more exotic. We get into an argument as to whether they're being ironic or not (we damn well hope not), but the truth is, they rock. And they're hugely entertaining. They've got the spirit of early punk about them and they're a joyous reminder of a more innocent era.

Innocent and impossible not to love too are **FROM HERE, WE RUN!** If Young Marble Giants or Orange Juice came from Oxford and were brought up on Don Caballero rather than The Velvet Underground they couldn't have sounded any better than this. Singer Pietek's mature voice and unconventional phrasing keeps the math element in check and hints at a band of greatness emerging.

More treats at the Wheatsheaf, where **PHANTOM THEORY** are showing us exactly why sometimes less is more. Plenty of duos like this lack depth but not them. A drummer who looks like he's involved in a no-holds-barred bar brawl with an octopus drives the band along with fearsome momentum while the frontman switches between guitar and bass to provide a cacophony of violence. They squeeze the maximum dosage of rock hedonism from the simplest of means and the effect is enormous but minimal, like a juggernaut pulling a wheelie, and they have enough ideas, and songs, to keep a fantastic set fresh as it powers along.

Our last encounter with **WE AERONAUTS** found them shambolic and a little pretentious, but tonight's set is a genuine Punt highlight, another band who take folk music as a building block but end up fashioning something altogether different, like the wonderful Danny & The Champions of the World, or the Waterboys. The crowd quickly get caught up in the buoyant, feel-good mood they radiate, particularly when they weave their way into the audience to orchestrate a singalong.

Across town and to Thirst Lodge and it's here we make our first live encounter with Witney's **HEARTS IN PENCIL**, initially at least an awkward (in the best sense of the word) angular, gangly mix and match of assorted bits of The Adverts and Gang Of Four, before they settle into a more recognisable Libertines-inspired indie-punk that's too effervescent to sound derivative, instead possessing some of fellow Witney-ites Tristan & The Troubadours uncategorisable, evasive pop magic that means they're still holding our attention half an hour later.

Proving that the Punt really does take its pick of talent from the breadth of the county, here too are math-metal magnates **DR SLAGGLEBERRY**, from Chinnor. Many bands over the years have employed the simple gimmick of wearing masks on stage but it never fails to feel unnerving. Any fear that the band's math-core extravaganza would end up sounding like three accomplished musicians in search of a tune are unfounded as time-changes and mood shifts are augmented by pulverising rhythms, neat finger-tapping trickery and deft slight-of-hand drumming. They're not as full-on as The Locust (probably a blessed relief in a room this size, and so early in the evening) but they're righteously impressive and even manage to instigate some of the most unfettered dancing this side of The Original Rabbits Foot Spasm Band later on.

**Desert Storm**

Johnny Moto

**Mary's Garden**

Johnny Moto

**Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band**

Johnny Moto

**Black Hats**

Terri Bonham

**Dial F For Frankenstein**

Johnny Moto

**From Light To Sound**

Sam Shepherd

If we're handing out awards, the prize for most elegantly-presented performer of the night goes to Laima Bite, hands down. The **MARY'S GARDEN** frontwoman looks every inch like a glamorous 1940s film-noir femme fatale, and that gothic feel creeps into some of the songs too, although they sound lighter, even poppier, than we remember them from before and instead of Laima's voice fighting to be heard amid the billowing guitar noise, tonight she's leading the line.

**RESPONSE COLLECTIVE** are too busy getting their heads down and their beats in order to worry about looking glamorous, and instead hide themselves beneath film projections. Musically they mix up trip hop ambience, scratching and spaced-out guitars into a proggy, stoner hip hop vibe that, at its best, sounds like a late-night Glastonbury jam session between The Orb and Carlos Santana.

**BEAVER FUEL**, too, could never be accused of being glamorous. Purveyors of ramshackle punk they might be, but their edge can be found with singer-guitarist Leigh Alexander. Delve beneath the simplistic fuzzy riffs and you'll find a songwriter who has more in common with Nigel Blackwell from Half Man Half Biscuit than you might expect. Mr Fuel may have throwaway songs like 'I Want to Live In Your Buttock', but there are also gems of and wisdom in the likes of 'Eurovision Political Favour Contest'. What's clear is they've been working hard over the past few months as this is the tightest we've ever seen them.

By the time **WINCHELL RIOTS** take the stage, it's impossible to get anywhere near the place and even when you do squeeze your slender frame into a gap at the back, you can't see anything of the band since there's no stage to speak of and Phil McMinn is hardly the tallest of men. Luckily his songs rise above the throng for him, epic in

stature, intricate in their construction, and it feel like someone's almost playing a joke on the band squeezing them into such a small venue when their music is so much more suited to the big stage and the ornate surroundings of grander halls.

Hopefully heading in a similar direction are **THE BLACK HATS**, such a well oiled machine now after cutting teeth for a couple of years both locally and beyond but they don't ever let it feel too polished or stale, delivering potential hit after hit with songs like 'Shout Out' and 'Won't Say'. They seem poised to do great things over the next year or so, and it couldn't happen to a more deserving band.

As Winchell Riots' packed audience starts to dissipate, so does the mid-evening intensity of the Punt, with a chance to saunter rather than rush between venues and catch more of each set.

And so we catch the whole of **DESERT STORM**. And by Christ they're something to behold. "We play solid metal for fans of solid metal," proclaims the trench-coat wearing frontman, before they live up to at least half of their name and simply bulldoze the venue with a genuinely magnificent display of uber-riffage that sounds considerably older and more grizzled than their tender teenage years. They trawl metal's archives and hammer them into your head with enough force to leave physical scars the following morning, whether it's Alice Cooper or Hendrix or Metallica or a sludgy stoner combination of them all, and in 'Hofman' they have an awesome song that tonight sounds ten times better even than its recorded version.

**DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN** are similarly young and similarly call to mind so many great bands without actually sounding like them: principally Dinosaur Jr, Weezer, Smashing Pumpkins and Dive Dive, but they seem to have no end of nifty little tricks to keep everyone

interest and dynamic rock tunes aplenty that keep the crowd on their toes for the whole set and even earn themselves an encore.

From **LIGHT TO SOUND** might have an Oxford track record between them that rivals Roger Banister's, but that's no guarantee of greatness. Except tonight it is. The Cellar's engineer has given them a huge sound and their music simply soars across a packed venue, all Explosions In The Sky grandeur, Billy Mahonie twistiness and Stereolab intelligence. And they have some proper bleepy noises – when they keyboards aren't coming on like ELP filtered through Battles, that is. Despite a few mistakes and technical glitches their set flashes by in an instant and the euphoric effect of it stays with us all night.

After which it's hard not to get swept up in **SPIRAL 25's** intense drone. Continually repeated drum patterns and guitars that are so steeped in delay they fold in on themselves create a kind of sonic supernova, but beautifully reigned-in and moving at its own geological pace.

**THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND** may not be the greatest band ever to play the Punt but they are the best closing act, whipping up a frenzy with their self-styled "chav-jazz" covers of 1930s classics. It's a wonderful mixture of drunken showmanship and muso chops, of rousing singalong choruses and quicksilver brass solos, that has some people dancing on the stage like goons and others nodding appreciatively in the corner. Then, in a flurry of whinnying trumpet and discarded plastic pint skiffs, we're suddenly at the end of the Punt, out on the street and wondering why we can't do this every night. The next morning, of course, the answer is painfully obvious.

*Words: David Murphy, Sam Shepherd, Art Lagun, Dale Kattack, Lee Christian*

# WIN CORNBURY FESTIVAL TICKETS!

**CORNBURY FESTIVAL** has become one of the cornerstones of Oxfordshire's summer festival season. The annual two-day live music festival in the picturesque grounds of Cornbury Country Park, near Charlbury boasts a laid-back atmosphere and levels of comfort unknown at most larger events.

Cornbury 2009 takes place over the weekend of **SATURDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> / SUNDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY**.

Past events have seen the likes of Paul Simon, Blondie, Amy Winehouse, David Gray and The Waterboys performing; this year's line-up sees multi-platinum hit-makers **SUGABABES** topping the bill, alongside **SCOUTING FOR GIRLS**. Joining these two headline acts over the weekend will be



Scouting For Girls

former-Texas singer **SHARLEEN SPITERI**, post-punk pop legends **THE PRETENDERS**, summer pop heroes **MAGIC NUMBERS**, and original punk maniacs **THE DAMNED**, among many others. Some 25 acts will be performing over the festival's two main stages, plus an array of local and unsigned acts appearing on the Charlbury Riverside Festival stage.



Tickets for Cornbury Festival are on sale now, priced £90 for adults and £45 for children (under-5s and over-70s go free). Day tickets and special VIP tickets are also available. Visit the festival website at **WWW.CORNBURYFESTIVAL.COM** for full details, or call the credit card hotline on **0871 472 0420**.

Nightshift has two pairs of adult weekend tickets to give away free.

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## DR SHOTOVER Sees sense

No really, I am SO sorry. All those years.... I never realised how much offence I was causing.... not to mention the harm I was doing mySELF. No, no, you're right – it wasn't big. Or clever. The drinking. The nasty 70s drugs. The groupies in the billiard room. The incident with the inflatable elephant dressed as Robbie Williams floating over the Eau Too Perrier-Heineken Enormodome... I agree, dreadful... DREADFUL. The Sports Goth slogans on the wall in the East Indies Club Gents... similarly, MOST unfunny. Ahem. [cough]... now, where was I? Oh yes, doing a role play for our new Club Counsellor/Commitment Officer. Yes, yes, all very "now", I'm sure you'll agree. As well as signing an affidavit that we will not use Club expense accounts for nefarious purposes and/or own second homes (chance would be a fine thing – I wonder if that mobile crack den in Barton counts...?), we have all agreed under the new EU Guidelines to have a one-hour session every month with aforesaid C/CO, who is called Kerry (he doesn't have a surname, apparently) and is prone to murmuring, "Yes, yes, I SEEEE" in an understanding tone while discussing "goals", "anger management courses" and the "calming effects of Coldplay". I have been quite successful in curbing my darker side over the last couple of weeks, but I fear it is only a matter of time before I crack and.... aieeeee, here he comes! Quail before his wrath! Avoid his mighty cudgel! Bow before the majesty of ... The Dwarf, GARG!

**Next month: Dr Shotover and Mr GARG.**



Rozzer: "All right, all right... which one of yew gennelmen is The Dwarf, GARG?"



# INTRODUCING....

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

## FROM LIGHT TO SOUND

### Who are they?

From Light To Sound are a bit of a local supergroup, made up of members of The Workhouse, Sunnyvale Noise Sub-Element, The Evenings, Thumb Quintet and Intentions of An Asteroid. Or, Mark Baker (guitar, bass); Stuart Fowkes (keyboards, electronics); Simon Jablonski (guitar); Andrew Thompson (guitar) and Mark Wilden (drums). The quintet came together through a mutual love of all things krautrock and a desire to do something different together from their other bands, "the Harmonia to our other bands' Neu!". Since their first gig, at a friend's party, they've had their demo played on 6Music and recorded a demo with Tim Waterfield from Field Records. In May the band were chosen to play at this year's Oxford Punt.

### What do they sound like?

The band's intention to meld krautrock and post-rock has been pretty successful, layering spangled, spaced-out guitar textures and swirling synthetics over solid, clattering motorik grooves, with closer attention to texture and atmosphere than to melody, and finding a fine balance between flowery whimsy and gilded aggression. Or in their own words, "Melodic, majestic, elemental, controlled, uplifting instrumental music, tempered with an edge of aggression; the tension of an argument and the bliss of reconciliation."

### What inspires them?

"The relative success of bands like Animal Collective, Battles and Holy Fuck, proving that there's a big world out there for music that pushes boundaries and moves things forward."

### Career highlight so far:

"Getting played on Tom Robinson's 6Music show was really good and quite unexpected. And we've been played on radio stations in Spain and Norway."

### And the lowlight:

"The difficulty in getting all five of us in a room together: one of us lives



in London, we all have busy jobs and other bands to think about, so we've had to turn down more gigs than we've actually played."

### Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Hreda – a stunningly good band."

### If they could only keep one album it would be:

"Neu's first record, for showing that all you need is two blokes with a simple idea no-one's thought of yet to change the face of modern music."

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

"June 11<sup>th</sup> at the Jericho Tavern supporting The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart. Expect heart-stopping, gloomy krauty post-rock with tunes you can hum and that..."

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

"The diversity of music in what is essentially a fairly small provincial city, and the fact that there are a bunch of enthusiastic promoters who keep putting gigs on. The worst is that it can be very navel-gazing and inward-looking, and the internet can bring out the worst in some people."

### You might love them if you love:

Neu! Explosions In The Sky, Mogwai, Polvo.

### Hear them here:

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

*Whatever happened to... those heroes*

## Purple Rhinos

### WHO?

Purple Rhinos had a silly name and were in love with the idea of having fun. Formed in 1986 at Abingdon School when guitarist Jim Crosskey and bassist Jason Moulster started playing Cure covers at parties, they soon recruited singer Anita Wilson and then drummer Nigel Powell by the turn of the decade when they became a proper gigging band. In the early-90s they were one of the biggest draws on the Oxford scene, regularly packing out the Jericho Tavern and standing out as an unabashed pop band amid a sea of cool indie kids. Hard working in the extreme, they gigged around the country and were renowned for playing gigs any time, any place at the drop of a hat.

### WHAT?

Punk-tinged pop makes Purple Rhinos sound a lot more punk than they ever were. Pure guitar-based pop with the energy of punk is closer to the truth. You could spot bits of Buzzcocks, Altered Images and The Tourists in their sound, though The Primitives were perhaps the closest comparison. Their music was relentlessly upbeat, accentuated by Anita's party-in-her-head effusiveness, although the whole band were unstoppably bouncy. So much so that Jim once pogoed so hard he went through the boards of the Tavern's stage.

### WHEN?

Having built a large and loyal local following on the back of their party-vibe local gigs, Purple Rhinos went off on tour in the early-90s with bands like, Dr & The

Medics, The Sandkings (who later morphed into Babylon Zoo) and Reading's Resque. The band featured on the cover of Curfew Magazine in September 1991. A self-released EP was due to be distributed by Pinnacle, who pulled out of the deal at the last minute, prompting a disastrous gig at the Old Fire Station where Jim got blind drunk and played all his guitar parts backwards; a disgusted Anita stormed off stage and the end of the band beckoned. They bowed out with a sold-out and emotional final show at the Jericho.

### WHY?

While Purple Rhinos may not have left much of a mark on the local scene per se, it's for what came after that they're most important. But no-one should underestimate the band's popularity, both locally and around the country where they so often played those last-minute gigs. Nigel recounts how, when arriving at JFK airport with Radiohead, the group were approached by an excited fan who completely ignored the rising global megastars to ask, "Are you the drummer from Purple Rhinos?"

### WHERE?

Immediately post-split Nigel went on tour as Radiohead's lighting engineer before reconvening with Jason to form Unbelievable Truth with Andy Yorke and score a number of chart hits. Jim played guitar live with the band and all three of them played on Andy's comeback album, 'Simple', last year.

Subsequent to Unbelievable Truth's split, Jim and Jason joined ex-Candyskins chap Mark Cope's Nine-Stone Cowboy before forming the short-lived Toulouse. Nigel, for his part, has since joined Dive Dive as drummer and with them also forms Frank Turner's backing band. Anita, meanwhile, was briefly a member of Dr & The Medics.

### HOW?

Purple Rhinos are long-since invisible to modern day music fans. There's not even a MySpace site in their honour. Hopefully arch-archivist Nigel will one day compile the band's old recordings onto CD.



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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### SAMUEL ZASADA

Having hinted at something decent with his last demo earlier this year, Samuel Zasada (the evil, world-domination-seeking acoustic singer-songwriter alter-ego of Witney's David Ashbourne) returns with four tracks that show a huge step-up in quality and ambition. It takes something pretty special for these types of demo to stand out, and David looks like he's found that something special. A rough-hewn bluesy voice that's capable of easing into something softer and more emotive; a sense of poetry that offers a glimpse into his soul without going overboard on the emotional hand-wringing, and an ear for interesting arrangements of what are simple songs. 'Grow Up To Be' comes in like a fusion of Bruce Springsteen and Billy Bragg, delicate but raw, laced with steel guitar and a great lyric packed with melancholy and understated bitterness. 'Buried' is a slow-burning acoustic gothic folk rumble that makes a big sound from modest components and with David's voice dropping into more gentle territory, not far from This Mortal Coil's Dominic Appleton. 'Place Your Words In Time' is darkly atmospheric, not unlike nu-folkies Candidate, while the closing 'The Blade That You Hold' is dreamier and more spacious, his voice back to its rougher, bluesier edge. There's a creeping hypnotic feel about the whole demo that slowly sucks you in, and by the time you've listened through a few times you're completely entranced. At the rate of improvement Mr Zasada is showing, he'll have turned into Leonard Cohen, invented a cure for cancer and scored an Ashes-winning double century before the summer is out.

### VIGILANCE BLACK SPECIAL

Now here's a name we haven't heard for a while. Back in the late-90s these Abingdon-based doomsters released the sublime 'We're Wolves' on Shifty Disco before producing an intermittent stream of excellent demos but never really making the promised leap onto a higher level. Still, time doesn't seem to have withered their talents, nor improved their collective mood much judging from this three-song CD. Frontman Adam Clayton is possessed of one of those wonderfully epic voices that could break a heart at fifty paces and 'Perfect Servant' finds him riding on a playfully grandiose mix of trombone, guitar

*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!*

and piano that sounds like My Life Story might have done had they lost their sense of irony, succumbed to their inner goth and written a few better tunes. 'Stop The Birds', meanwhile, finds Adam in full Nick Cave growl mode, horns adding a little pomp to a billowing piano and organ-led lament. 'Question Time' feels positively jolly by comparison as the trombone parps and Adam croons like a lounge lothario about brushing his teeth, but soon he's "falling apart at the seams" and the whole thing sweeps with ragged majesty to its finale. Good to have them back, with summer approaching, we need all the rampant misery we can get.

### FRED BONES & THE POPULAR GLORY

Another batch of recordings from local veteran AJ (aka Asher Dust), yet again displaying an admirably eclectic approach to music, which does tend to make him a bit of a jack of all trades rather than a master of one, but keeps us very much on our toes. The one constant in AJ's music is his voice, which remains one of the best soul voices in town, getting rougher and richer with the passing years and working to great effect on opening track here, 'I'm Sorry Miss Thompson', a bluegrass skank oddity that somehow sounds like Hayseed Dixie covering OutKast. Elsewhere 'People Will Fall' is rootsy but smooth soul in the vein of The Christians, while 'Quiet Noise' is wee small hours acoustic miserablism. Best of the lot is the gospel lament of 'Rocking And Crying', with its slow marching snare and sense of dread, a lonesome harmonica lending it a spaghetti western vibe. Like buses, you wait ages for one of AJ's demos to turn up and three arrive at once. Here's another already. Well have to hold the third over til next issue.

### ASHER DUST

What were we just saying about AJ/Asher being eclectic? Here he presents four recent collaborations, again with his voice the only constant factor. 'Drama' is a team-up with French electro-rap act GMR, based around a sample of the old *Superman* film theme tune, the chiming electronics adding life to a solid four-four beat, AJ indulging in call-and-response lyrical trades with his Gallic counterparts – even he admits he has no idea what they're rapping about, but he reckons it sounds sweet enough. 'I Refuse To Be Friends With Your New Boyfriend' is a collaboration with Russian breakcore and hardhouse producer Oligarch, which is urgent and nominally upbeat but actually full of the ire and misanthropy we come to expect from AJ. It's oddly jolly but a bit too two-dimensional,

although the line, "Your new boyfriend is a fuckwit" stamps the song's message down nice and neatly. AJ's soulful voice sounds unconvincing on 'Bulletproof', which sees him working with former-Big Speakers guitarist Marsk – the electro-grunge back-up needs a vocal with more rocking conviction, but on 'Foolish People, I Hate You', he gets back to doing what he does best, in particular teaming up with local dubmaster Meef Chaloin for a darker and more twisted narrative journey and a whole heap more misanthropy. We're also particularly taken by the pearl of wisdom that concludes AJ's accompanying letter: "Dry pants catch no fish." Keep that with you always.

## COLOURED

Two tracks in three and half minutes? Makes our job easier, and all the more enjoyable that such brevity is the work of former-Xmas Lights and Mounted Insanity Cannon chaps Nick and Simon Brewer and Matt Mooney. And with titles like 'Danger Wank' and 'First Date Rim Job', subtlety is never going to be the order of the day. As it is we get disorientating squiggles, rumbles, flutters and growls, all stuck forcibly through a robo-rock mincer and spewed out the other end in random aggressive fashion until they simply collapse untidily in a heap without even a final fanfare, a bit like a closing time punch-up on George Street involving a pissed-up Cyberman, then.

## 1877

This lot aren't actually from Oxfordshire, but sod that, Aylesbury's close enough and we do rather like them. Last time round they sounded like Sonic Youth trying to eviscerate Joy Division, and they've moved on to even darker things since on this evidence. 'I Am An Antagonist' sounds like it should be a Stephen Fry pastiche of The Sex Pistols, but is more like the sombre electro clatter of early New Order, all machine beats and moodiness, with a sparkle of Explosions In The Sky-like guitar to leaven proceedings. No light at the end of the tunnel on 'Narcolepsy', however, with all the sober atmospherics of early-80s 4AD bands like Dead Can Dance and Clan Of Xymox. It's relentlessly morose of course, but since that appears to be the whole point, we're going to sit here in the dark and damn well enjoy it.

## SOUTH PARADE

We like South Parade – one of Oxford's best streets, with its Guitar Gallery and three of the best restaurants in town and that slightly mad wine café where kids can go bonkers in the play area while their mums get completely mullered on Chardonnay at 11 in the morning. If this South Parade were a street it'd probably have a McDonald's, a sewage treatment plant and several large rusty skips for tramps to piss in. They describe themselves as "The Red Hot

Chili Peppers meets the Arctic Monkeys", which is true enough, but not in the thrill-filled way you might imagine. More like the dreary 'sensitive' stuff the Chili Peppers shit out in between cracking rock numbers, only sung by a man who thinks he's Alex Turner but possesses none of the lyrical bite, wit or vocal playfulness of the original. The band also add that the above comes "with the freedom of Hendrix", although that's patently bollocks. The only free thing about South Parade is they're not in prison, and if we had our way, even that liberty would be curtailed. Anyway, 'Stunning', the band's signature tune, is naggingly insistent in the same way as a cheap lager hangover, while 'Another Word To Say' is another of those Kinks/Squeeze/Libertines knock-offs we keep finding lying about like the postman's discarded red rubber bands and is so prosaic it's almost heroic. 'Home' attempts to capture some of Arctic Monkeys' kitchen sink drama but all the whining tales of having no money or food is as mundane as a month of Sundays spent staring out the window of a council flat at a pile of piss-stained mattresses and abandoned car tyres.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### MARK SABINO CALLAGHAN

Unbelievably this is even worse, although it's the only demo this month to nearly make us cough up an internal organ through laughing so much. Mark Sabino Callaghan is an acoustic singer-songwriter from Woodstock. And in the world of acoustic singer-songwriters, if Leonard Cohen is an elegant Rolls Royce and Nick Drake is a sleek Ferrari, Mark here is a discarded donor kebab. We'll pass over his guitar playing since it's so rudimentary and mundane it is beyond rational criticism, and concentrate on Mark's lyrics. "I didn't feel very well, so I had a nap / Then I woke up and I had some food / But it had bones in it / Yeah Yeah." Do you see, it's almost like poetry! Or how about, "Not all cold meat is bad for you / Sometimes I eat tuna and ham." This is lyrical gold dust. Sam, did you just make this stuff up as you went along, possibly whilst undergoing open brain surgery? Or was it an off-the-cuff attempt to amuse a passing toddler? There is a song here – following on from an ode to eating "chow pain noodles" (sic) – entitled 'I Wrote A Song With Satan's Pen', which we like to imagine even Marvin the Paranoid Android could instil with some passion, but Mark's voice is so insipid and devoid of human character, he could recite thrilling Norse myths about the coming of Ragnarok and make it sound like a listless teenager reading the back of a cereal packet. Well done Mark, you have finally killed off our love for music.

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

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



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