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NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month.
Issue 172
November
2009

Welcome to

BORDERVILLE

YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE...

*Glamour, theatricality and joy through work
with Oxford's Vaudervillian rockers*



photo: Terri Amos

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

The WheatSheaf

The week in November

Sat 1st Christmas Tree-Foundation Presents...

CASTANETS+LAZARUS+SEABUCKTHORN 8pm/10

Sat 8th The Opto Presents...

JIM HEARTS GEMINI 8pm/10 (ES NUS)

Fri 12th Klub Kakekum Presents...

QUADROPHOBIC+KNIGHTS OF MENTIS+RED SQUARE 8pm/10

Sat 15th

VON BRAUN+NOTORIOUS III-FI KILLERS

SAMUEL ZASADA 8pm/10

Sat 12th The Opto Presents...

PAUL BOOTH 8pm/10 (ES NUS)

Fri 12th MEX Presents...

VULTURES+BARBARELLA+CHAMBERS OF THE HEART 8pm/10

Sat 14th MEX Presents...

THE BLACK HATS+MOTOR CITY SHUFFLE+TBC 8pm/10

Sat 15th During Legacy Presents...

TESSERAFT+NO CONSEQUENCE 8pm/10

Sat 15th The Opto Presents...

LUIS D'AGOSTINO 8pm/10 (ES NUS)

Fri 20th During Legacy Presents...

PHANTOM THEORY+BABY GRAVY+TBC 8pm/10

Sat 21st MEX Presents...

SEXTODECIMO+RUNS+TBC 8pm/10

Sat 22nd Three Head Music Presents...

SPRING OFFENSIVE+JOE ALLEN+MUSIC FOR PLEASURE

NIGHT PORTRAITS 8pm/10

Sat 23rd The Opto Presents...

STEVE WILLIAMSON & PAT THOMAS 8pm/10 (ES NUS)

Sat 23rd Guppy South Industries Presents...

PRDCTV+FIFTEEN MINUTES+MOIETY 8pm/10

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NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU
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THE PORT MAHON relaunches itself as a live music venue on Friday 30th October when Smilex provide suitably rock and roll entertainment. They are joined by recent Nightshift Demo of the Month winners Adrenochrome and Dial F For Frankenstein, as well as punk rockers Black Powder. Music starts at 8pm and it's £5 on the door. The Port Mahon, on St Clement's, closed down at the end of 2008 but was recently taken over by Joe Hill, who runs the Fir Tree on Iffley Road and previously fronted local rock favourites Black Candy. The venue has been given a complete refit, with a new stage as well as a new PA and lighting rig. The re-vamped venue will also have a new bar included. Joe is still looking for reliable promoters to run regular nights at the Port, which is available seven nights a week. Interested promoters should contact him at portmahon@hotmail.co.uk.

ANYONE CAN PLAY GUITAR is set for a cinema release in March 2010. The film, produced and directed by Videosyncratic's Jon Spira, traces the story of Oxford's music scene from the late-1970s through to the closure of the Zodiac in 2007 and features interviews and rare footage of bands like Talulah Gosh, Ride, Swervedriver, Radiohead, Supergrass, Foals, The Candyskins, Dustball and Unbelievable Truth. Anyone interested can follow news of the upcoming film release at [@acpghthemovie](http://acpghthemovie) on Twitter or join the *Anyone Can Play Guitar* Facebook group.

MEANWHILE, BBC Radio Oxford presenter Trevor Hayward launches his book, *Rocking In Oxford – A Personal History Of The 60s and 70s Music Scene*, this month. The 80-page book looks back at the live music scene in Oxford, from gigs by The Beatles, Pink Floyd and David Bowie, to some of the local heroes and venues of the era. The book is available from Waterstones in Commarket and Videosyncratic on Cowley Road.

HEADCOUNT play at a party to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Malicious Damage Records this month. The local punk-metal stalwarts have released two albums on the legendary indie label, 2004's 'Die, Monkey, Die' and 2007's 'To

The Point'. Tickets for the show are £6 available from www.maliciousdamage.biz, with the first 50 punters getting a free copy of a limited edition Headcount remix album, including a remix by labelmates The Orb. Headcount frontman Robert Moss said, "It's wonderful to see a truly independent record company celebrating 30 years, especially with all the economic misery around us. Mind you, if they expect any money in their birthday card, they can fuck off." Headcount are currently recording their next album, due in 2010.

OXFORD GUITAR GALLERY, in South Parade, Summertown, hosts a special jazz evening on Wednesday 18th November when Luis D'agostino will be appearing in the store. Tickets for the event are available by calling the shop on 01865 553777. On Saturday 12th December Dudley Ross will be in the shop demonstrating the new range of Vigier guitars, while Saturday 21st November is the Guitar Gallery's annual autumn shindig day, featuring discounts and give-aways. Anyone who takes a copy of the store's Nightshift advert along on the day will be entered into a draw to win a £250 guitar and amp.

THE WEEKLY ELECTRIC BLUES JAM at the Bricklayer's Arms in Marston has switched venues to the Jack Russell in Old Marston with immediate effect.

THE MONTHLY RECORD, CD AND DVD FAIR at Oxford Town Hall has a change of date this month. It will take place on Saturday 14th November, instead of the usual first Saturday of the month.

ASAP celebrates three years on the air this month. The weekly radio shows, presented by local gig promoter PC Rae, goes out every Tuesday evening at 10pm on FM 107.9, playing the best in cutting edge electronica and brand new indie.

AS EVER, don't forget to tune into BBC Oxford Introducing every Saturday night between 6-7pm at 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show features the best new Oxford releases, interviews, demos and gig guide. The show is available to listen to online all week at bbc.co.uk/oxford.



LITTLE FISH release their debut single on Custard Records, via iTunes this month. The local duo have spent much of 2009 in America, recording their debut album with producer Linda Perry, as well as playing showcase gigs in New York and LA. The single is 'Darling Dear', which topped last year's Nightshift Top 20. The song is backed with 'Whiplash', plus a radically reworked version of long-time favourite 'Sweat And Shiver'. It was originally available only on the US iTunes but has now been made available in the UK.

Speaking to Nightshift before heading back out to New York, Little Fish singer Julia Heslop said, "We're really excited that things have just started to come together for us. Since being signed last year, it has taken a while for the band to get through the big cog that is the music industry. Off the back of our supports for Placebo, The Dave Matthews Band and Spinnerette, we have now been asked to perform shows at the infamous CMJ Festival in New York this week and on return will be heading out on tour with The Eagles Of Death Metal and Juliette Lewis. With all this happening and not having our album due out until 2010 we thought that we would release a digital mini-EP to make some of our music available."

Visit www.myspace.com/littlefishmusic for more news and gig dates.

DR SHOTOVER: The Future Is Bright

Ah, there you are... pull up a gin and orange... yes, that's very kind of you, I'll have another of the same... and another... [etc, for some minutes]. Ahhh, that's better. Well, it's certainly been an exciting month for me... First there was a secret, members-only viewing at the East Indies Club of Lord Spyrograph's film about the Oxford Music Scene, circa 1878 – 93... oh, the top hats and canary-yellow waistcoats we wore, so stylish! What a dash we used to cut, sweeping the ladies around the Empire Ballroom under the tinkling chandeliers! How exciting it was when Porky Porton invented the first steam-driven guitar amplifier! [Removes monocle to wipe a tear of pure gin from the eye]... Where was I? Oh yes, 2009. Then The Anyways reformed... no, NOT The Anydays... No, NOT The Funky Scottish Anyways... the OTHER lot, who used to delight our hearts with their winsome tunes in the late 80s and early 90s, not to mention their top hats and canary-yellow waistcoats... or am I mixing them up with Count Whirligig and His Gypsy Minstrels? (Very sought-after at the Empire Ballroom in their day). No matter. The point I am trying to make, o buffoonish friend of mine, is that **THINGS WERE SIMPLER THEN**. There are too many bands these days, that's for sure. This may or may not come as a surprise to you, but I am proposing a cull. Of Oxford bands, yes. So far my list includes Tristan and The Troubadours (too young), Young Knives (too old), Alphabet Backwards (too twee), The Candyskins (too cool), The Relationships (too prog), Foals (too popular), Stornoway (too brainy), Les Clochards (too French), Twizz Twangle (too German)... By my reckoning, when the cull is complete that will leave Radiohead and The Mighty Redox. Oh, and, as usual, the Bonn Square buskers with the ponchos (and the backing tapes). New dawn for Oxford! Lucky you. More gin, NOW! [Falls off stool, is revived, continues to drink gin through a funnel until ambulance arrives].

Next month: Dr Shotover prepares for a storm of hate mail.



The Oxford Music Scene after the Great Cull

a quiet word with BORDERVILLE



“WE TRY TO PUT ON A GREAT SHOW.

But there's a line, you know; we played with a band in London called Scrotum Clamp who dressed in wigs and bondage gear and ran around the room hitting people with comedy props. That's just crass and awful.”

NIGHTSHIFT IS TALKING TO JOE

Swarbrick, singer and guitarist with Borderville, a band renowned for their theatrical approach to gigs.

“We do things that normal audiences find quite challenging: pulling the rug out from underneath them. Many people only seem to ‘get’ what we do the second or third time, because we can’t be constrained by a genre. It’s not easy for people to say, ‘Oh, okay, they’re a heavy rock band’ or ‘they’re glam’ or ‘indie’ or ‘a bit like Meatloaf’, because actually none of these things are completely true. We’re a nightmare for promoters because, although they might like us, they have no other bands to put us with. I hope we’re fun for reviewers, though.”

THAT LAST BIT COULDN’T BE MORE TRUE.

Since they formed three years ago, Borderville have never failed to captivate us. Joe is a man with a vision of what a great rock and roll band should look, sound and perform like, inspired by great showmen like David Bowie. A man who despairs of the grey, easily-pigeonholed homogeneity of contemporary ‘alternative’ music and seeks the return of glamour and flamboyance to live music.

Even the band’s name conjures up a picture of

sleazy decadence and unabashed showiness, of preening rock dandies and brash dilettantes. Musically their canvas is awash with the bold colours of Ziggy-era Bowie, the camp theatricality of goth, the funky stomp of Prince, Hendrix’s guitar licks and the broad ambition of prog mavericks like Van Der Graaf Generator. All of which is played out over a backdrop of between-the-wars German cabaret, which gives Borderville the feel of a band ripped from a past so detached from contemporary guitar pop they might be visitors from the far future.

No surprise then that this month Borderville release their debut album, and it’s a full-on concept album.

THE LAST TIME WE FEATURED

Borderville on the front cover was January 2008, when they released their first EP, ‘Waltziche’. Three days after the interview went to print the band lost bassist and core founding member Phil Oakley and came close to finishing completely. Now, though, Borderville, still led by Joe along with long-standing keyboard player Tom ‘Woody’ Woodhouse, drummer James Irvine and new bass player Matt Halliday, are stronger, and just as fascinating and entertaining as ever.

JOE IS RUMINATING OVER PHIL’S

departure, having played with the bassist since his teens, when the pair formed the band Sexy Breakfast together.

“It was extremely complicated but not really unforeseen; I think we knew each other so well that we knew how to push each others’ buttons

and get all riled up very easily. It was the end of a beautiful working relationship, but one that really had to end for the sake of our friendship.”

Phil has since joined The Joe Allen Band. All made up now?

“Yep. He’s such an awesome musician... clearly an asset to any band he plays in. And he’s a great human being.”

Matt’s made a great job of filling Phil’s shoes.

“We drafted Matt in on bass about a month after Phil left. Around the same time we brought in a second guitarist, who wasn’t quite right... I found myself having to tell him exactly what to play, so he wasn’t really a collaborator, which is what we needed. We really needed pepping up; we’d just finished an ambitious little EP and had plans for an album but all of a sudden everything felt up in the air. I think this partly prompted Arthur (House – guitarist) to jump ship and move to Berlin. After that, well, it was clear that it had to be all-change. We got rid of the guitarist and learned how to play like a proper band. Loud, fast and dirty, most of the time.

“Matt’s played in bands for Richard Walters and Chantelle Pike. He also moonlights in Stornoway when their bassist is feeling too academic to play gigs. But then you hear what he’s listening to on his stereo and it’s all The Birthday Party and The Grifters and scuzzy, nasty fighting blues...so, you know, as wonderful as he is at playing sensitively on a lovelorn ballad, he’s really more concerned with creating a venue-destroying bass sound. Even more importantly than all this, though, is the way he intuitively understood from day one what we were trying to do. Better than any of us did, even. He totally gets the aesthetics: the costumes, the way we try and connect with an audience, the importance of The Show. He is an artist in the truest sense and he has become utterly irreplaceable.”

Losing both Phil and Arthur has slowed the band’s progress. Has it been difficult over the years to find musicians who share your musical vision?

“It’s not the craziest thing in the world. You can watch films together, listen to some records and see some plays and know where each other are coming from, so in that sense it’s more about sharing your cultural life with other people and growing and developing as artists alongside them. We’re obviously incredibly lucky to have Woody on piano – he shapes our sound by being such a talented virtuoso. We’re very lucky to have James on drums too: this is a man who’s drummed in *West Side Story*, for crying out loud, which is no mean feat at all – and he brings so much to the table compositionally. It’s rare to find a compositional drummer, actually, let alone one who is himself so composed. So oddly enough, it hasn’t really been hard at all.”

THIS MONTH SEES BORDERVILLE

finally release their debut album, a grand, thirteen-track pocket opera entitled ‘Joy

Through Work'. With the line-up changes it's a work that's taken a long time to complete.

"We scrapped 90% of our material as soon as we lost Arthur. We set out to make a wholly new record from scratch. I wrote the bulk of it in about three weeks on acoustic guitar with Woody and we set about road-testing the material as a two-piece while rehearsing as a full band.

"We recorded it all quite separately, layering parts up in Woody's shed. Some recording was done in a beautiful residential studio called Vale Studios up near Pershore, where we got to record live on a load of vintage gear: three tracks from that session ended up on the record – 'Flights', 'Glambulance' and 'Blood on the Kitchen Floor'. That was a wonderful experience – on top of our game as a live band, bashing it out in a stately home. So yes, in the end, 'Glambulance' and 'Lover, I'm Finally Through', both old songs from the Phil and Arthur days, have been reworked. They fit perfectly. All in all it's been just under two years and a hell of a lot of work. We set out to make a classic record and we didn't stop until it was there."

'Joy Through Work' has a lyrical theme running through it.

"Right. We're firmly in the realms of the concept album here. I think the basic premise is a discussion of people's attitudes to work, obsession and control. And love. The narrative over the course of the record follows the arc of a relationship, but what that relationship is with could be a number of things. A lot of it deals with the resentment I felt over Arthur and Phil leaving too, particularly 'Lights' and 'Flights'."

The title sounds like an old Third Reich slogan.

"Yep, it was used by Volkswagen under the Nazis to encourage people to work for the war effort. The German people were all promised cars but very few of them actually got one. Today, most people hate their jobs. I hated mine until I went into teaching. I hated it. Offices up and down the country are packed with listless, miserable people slaving away so they can die in comfort – slaving away to get their elusive Volkswagen. And we're told we should be grateful, and we should be really, because the alternative is starvation, homelessness, not being able to support your family. So we make ourselves love it, or pretend to, or we bitch about it in the pub, or we seek refuge in some hedonistic Dionysian weekend cult. But whatever we do, we allow ourselves to continue working in what is kind of an abusive relationship. In doing so we can end up complicit in some terrible business. We allow ourselves to be deceived for money. There's a word for people who do that for a living."

There's a distinct element of Weimar-era pop running through your sound. Few contemporary pop artists even seem to be aware of the music from that era, let alone take inspiration from it. Has it been a big influence on you?

"Yeah...I mean I've seen *Threepenny Opera* and loved it, and I went to see *Cabaret*, but I'm not a Weimar nut, you know? I'm probably getting a lot of it second hand, through 'Aladdin Sane' maybe, and contemporary cabaret stuff like Camille O'Sullivan. But I've read Brecht and Brook

and studied it and put the stuff into practice, so I know about the theatre of the oppressed, the way theatre can work in this rough, intellectual way. Alienating an audience is quite easy to do sonically... then you pull them back in with something emotional, then get them to consider that against what you do next. The key to this is in the structure of it, and not allowing our songs to be a string of easy, happy indie love songs to get drunk to. They're meant to make you think within the context of each other. That's exactly what the Weimar cabaret did."

A BORDERVILLE SHOW CAN BE AN escape in itself. Do you ever despair of other bands' lack of attention to putting on a show? Last time round you lamented the state of the 'indie' scene and legacy of punk. Do you feel that still holds sway?

"To be honest, I feel I've turned my back on it all. It says nothing to me and I intend to say nothing to it, in the hope it will go away. The main difference is that we're demanding quite a lot from an audience. We want them to watch and listen and, in doing so, kind of participate or become complicit in the illusion. It's actually quite fun you know, and we've got an awesome following who dress up and dance and really help create the atmosphere we need for this to work."

Which artists, if any, offer a brighter future for music?

"Well, it's like this really: loads of stuff is going on all the time. Just because electro female artists are big doesn't mean that venues are awash with them. You'll always get your careerists but then there's plenty to enjoy that is good on its own terms. I think what we need are platforms for it. Places to play where it's okay not to be a dull indie band, where you can be with your own kind and play in front of a receptive audience. But this is, outside of Oxford, very difficult to find."

If you got to the stage where money was no object, what would a Borderville gig consist of?

"Hmmm. This stuff would have to be properly planned...I guess we'd love to collaborate with a theatre company, someone like Kneehigh or Punchdrunk... something really visual and physical. Kneehigh's adaptation of *Don Juan* for the RCS last year was awesome, the way they used music was really cool. So I guess it wouldn't be a gig at all really, but something like a spectacular, visceral musical... perhaps an adaptation of something by Kafka. We've started playing around with some ideas already and we've been talking to some theatre people."

YOU'VE GOT A SETTLED LINE UP

now; where do you see Borderville going from here with the album?

"I want to sell a load of copies of it and go touring. I want to take it to Edinburgh and perform it as a theatre piece and see how that works. I mean, we're never going to headline Glastonbury are we? But we could headline a Spiegeltent. That would be awesome."

'Joy Through Work' is out now.

Visit www.myspace.com/borderville to hear songs from the album.

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BORDERVILLE

‘Joy Through Work’

(Own label)

Obviously Borderville couldn't just release any old debut album. It had to be a full-on concept album, with a narrative arc that deals with humanity's relationship with work, obsession and control; it's an album about relationships, but it's never obvious who or what the singer's relationship is with.

The singer, of course, is Joe Swarbrick, a man who is, even by the intellectual and literate standards of the best Oxford music, is particularly literate, a musician who has never lost sight of rock music's primary purpose to entertain on multiple levels, which is why Borderville gigs are such a joy to watch, and a reviewer's wet dream.

Without the visuals of their stage show, Borderville have incredible strength in depth, notably from virtuoso keyboard player Tom ‘Woody’ Woodhouse, but there's a freedom and creativity to every instrument on ‘Joy Through Work’ that gives the music a lively flamboyance that's so rare in contemporary guitar music. In fact Borderville have more in common with musical theatre than rock music – witness the careering moods of ‘Flights’, just one of myriad highlights on the album, with its amphetamine



piano runs and a span that connects Queen on the one shore to *West Side Story* on the other. The album's title track, meanwhile, sounds like *Les Misérables* if it had been written by David Bowie in his ‘Aladdin Sane’ period, awash with gothic camp and you can picture a massed chorus line twirling and hanging off the set as it carousels through its tale of workplace drudgery. Further along ‘Glambulance’ is pure The Sweet-do-Rocky Horror with its glam-rock terrace stomp and hysterical silliness.

What is so fascinating about Borderville's songs is the sheer number of ideas they cram into four or five-minute songs; nothing stays still long

enough to get comfortable: one moment Joe is all operatic annunciation, the next he's locked his lyrics tightly into the beat, while Woody is always on hand to rip a tune to shreds and take it on the next fairground ride.

If this makes Borderville sound like ADHD prog-rockers, that's only half the story – they can do delicate, pretty pop too, like the sweet, folksy ‘The Protesters’, the introverted piano ballad ‘Stage Fright’ or the angsty ‘Blood On The Kitchen Floor’, although the latter is perhaps the album's sole weak point: one of the few songs here you could imagine any other band coming up with.

Like any great show, Borderville leave the biggest and best tunes to the end: ‘Lover, I'm Finally Through’ is a drunken musical hall waltz, part Brecht & Weill, part Leiber & Stoller: you can just picture the decadent subterranean cabaret bar with its cast of lost, frustrated caricatures, desperate for escape, while ‘Lights II’ is an heroic, possibly redemptive reprise of the earlier version.

‘Joy Through Work’ sits in an uneasy lineage of theatrical rock albums that runs through ‘Aladdin Sane’ and Marc & The Mambas’ ‘Torment & Toreros’, but it feels unique held up against not just the rest of Oxford's recent musical output, but almost any mainstream rock album. A triumph, then.

Dale Kattack

TELLING THE BEES

‘An English Arcanum’

(Black Thrustle)

Last time Telling the Bees sent us an album to review, they were thoughtful enough to enclose a false beard for us to wear while listening, worried that they might be too bearded for us. Not that they should have been overly concerned. We've long been enthralled by Oxfordshire's rich folk music scene, particularly those acts, like Telling The Bees and Sharron Kraus, who come steeped in the earthy pagan traditions of English folk with its gothic storytelling and darkly psychedelic edge.

Telling The Bees are made up of four local folk scene stalwarts: singer and multi-instrumentalist Andy Letcher, bassist and guitarist Colin Fletcher and string players Jane Griffiths and Josie Webber. They take their band name from the ancient custom of telling the family beehive of any notable goings-on lest they get upset and fly away and, as you'd expect, they're in that solid tradition of native folk that has passed from minstrels into the modern age via Fairport Convention and more recently singers such as Seth Lakeman and Kris Drever. In fact one of ‘An English Arcanum's highlights, the rousing ‘Otmoor Forever’, echoes Drever's

interpretation of Boo Herwerdine's ‘Harvest Gypsies’, with its tale of displaced working men. Equally, there is a tendency to romanticise a transient lifestyle, as on the sorrowful love ballad that is ‘Playing At Gypsies’, but while some might balk at the rustic storytelling style, Letcher's warm, rich voice is as welcoming and captivating as a roaring hearth in a country inn. Here he's superbly backed up by Griffiths' and Webber's sumptuous string arrangements which, while playing safer than they did on the band's debut, ‘Untie The Wind’, add texture and atmosphere to the songs. Never more so than on this album's high point, the closing ‘Apple’, where they circle ominously round an haunting lament that would sit well on the best of Fairport's catalogue.

Amid the songs there are a handful of instrumental tracks here to fill out the album, played on border pipes or fiddle and guitar and given weight by Webber's harsh cello thrum, and it's an album that rewards repeated visits, much like a favoured country inn. Sup long and heartily, good friends.

Dale Kattack

NINE-STONE COWBOY

‘Jesus Christ’

(Download only)

“Jesus H Christ, I fucked up my life / But at least I'm not as bad as others out there.”

It's worth hearing each new Nine-Stone Cowboy single for the lyrics alone. Mark Cope writes, and sings, with the air of a hungover and considerably less wealthy Paul McCartney, his songs full of life's losers and world-weary, through-a-glass-darkly observations. ‘Jesus Christ's cast of characters includes Bloody Mary and Norman Abnormal (who stirs TCP into his cup of tea) and, in characteristic NSC style, circles pensively, all solitary piano stabs and squelchy lo-fi electronics, before gathering its Dutch courage for a rousing finale that takes in heroic brass and full gospel backing chorus. It's pop as a metaphor for the defiant faded glamour of a neglected seafront café; it's ‘Eleanor Rigby’ by way of The Candyskins’ ‘Mrs Hoover’; it's loser rock in the noble lineage of Arthur Turner's Lovechild? The closing verse is a pearl: “Jessica's speeding home, clutching her mobile phone / Camera and MP3 / She loves technology / Look here comes a tree.” Toddler-simple but delivered with lachrymose glee and the sort of pop *nous* that money can't buy.

Dale Kattack

ROCKING IN OXFORD

A Personal History of the 60s and 70s Music Scene

By Trevor Hayward

(Chris Andrews Publications)

With Jon Spira's Oxford music scene documentary set for cinema release next spring, this brief spin through an earlier local scene makes an interesting precursor. While the film takes the late-70s as a starting point, BBC Radio Oxford broadcaster and former musician Trevor Hayward looks back to the decades previously, taking as his starting point the Beatles' now legendary gig at the Carfax Assembly Rooms in February 1963 (tickets: 30p).

From here Hayward looks back at other bands who graced local stages before they hit the big time (The Stones in 1964; Pink Floyd in 67; Bowie in 72), as well as Oxford venues of the time. Many of these are long since demolished or closed down (the Assembly Rooms is now an HSBC bank lobby, while Botley's Elms Court and George Street's Stage Club are long consigned to history), while other still exist today – notably the Cornolly; now known as the Cellar but a haven for rock fans for four decades. From here Hayward moves on to local heroes of the time: Fallen Leaves in the 60s who signed to Parlophone years before Radiohead and Supergrass were even born; State Affair who were apparently cheated out of an *Opportunity Knocks* victory; the recently reformed Steamroller, and of course Oxford's original chartbusters Mr Big.

At only 80 pages in length and packed with pictures of period concert posters and grainy band shots, 'Rocking In Oxford' never delves too deep into the stories, which feel more like parish

newsletter vignettes. The tales are, as the book's subtitle says, personal, filled out with recollections from fans and musicians who were there. Often such tales are too dry, lacking in colour or detail (such as the news that Cream formed on a car journey home after a gig at Oxford Town Hall), while Hayward's writing style has the feel of a local newspaper opinion columnist, never more so than when patronisingly passing over the city's nascent punk and new wave scene at the Oranges and Lemons ("You couldn't make it up!" he concludes as he chuckles at those funny-looking bands with their funny-sounding names).

There are some great exceptions: the chapter on the Cornolly paints a far more colourful picture, and we learn more about Mr Big's story, like how their sole Top 10 hit was almost banned by Mary Whitehouse for its supposedly salacious lyrics. The story of Adrian Hopkins – local boy turned ticketing, management and merchandising entrepreneur – is interesting, as are the pictures of him as a young man – the dead spit of his son Tim, who now runs the Cellar. We also learn that Hopkins organised the original Woodstock Festival, two years before the American version. PP Arnold and Manfred Mann headlined the event at Blenheim Palace in front of 3,000 fans.

What the book does do is show how much Oxford has changed, and how much has stayed the same. Local bands back then could aspire to be local support acts or tour British Legions or air bases but



not much more, but then, as now, Oxford played host to the biggest bands on the way up. It's telling that the book's cover features pictures of The Beatles and Bowie, while a list of big-name non-Oxford acts dominates the sleeve. There are obvious omissions in the chapter on local heroes (no mention of The No or Dee D Jackson) and the back page blurb disingenuously suggests no-one thinks about popular music when they think of Oxford, even today.

For fans of local music history, though, this book does offer a snapshot of Oxford's distant past – a time before the scene became so much more complex, expansive and successful.

Dale Kattack

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GIG GUIDE

SUNDAY 1st

CASTANETS + LAZARUS +

SEABUCKTHORN: The Wheatsheaf –

Crack open your finest bottle of bourbon and settle down to a night of haunting country, folk and psychedelia with San Diego's Castanets, signed to Sufjan Steven's label and recent support to Frank Turner, with his dark, acoustic psych-country; San Francisco's gothic bluesman Lazarus, and local electro-acoustic soundscapist Seabuckthorn, coming on somewhere between Bert Jansch and Boards of Canada with his mix of understated ambience and acoustic guitar contemplation.

Monday 9th

FRIGHTENED

RABBIT: O2 Academy

What's that, another great band out of Glasgow? They know how to keep 'em coming. Frightened Rabbit, the band formed by and centred around singer-songwriter Scott Hutchinson have, oddly, been dubbed Celtic-emo, probably due to the convergence of the singer's broad Scottish accent and often painfully emotive lyrics, but don't let that put you off. The band's mix of melancholic folk, bluegrass, indie and even, occasionally, grunge, is wholly engaging, rough hewn, jagged and raw but wrapped around soft acoustic melodies that can be simultaneously scathing, rousing and tender. At various times the foursome recall early REM and The Arcade Fire, as well as cult Scottish band The Reindeer Section, but Hutchinson's lyrical outpourings are always highly personal. The band toured as support to Death Cab For Cutie last year and follow this headline show by supporting Modest Mouse around the UK, after which they should release the follow-up to 2008's critically-acclaimed album, 'The Midnight Organ Fight'.

NOVEMBER

CHTHONIC: O2 Academy – A first ever visit to Oxford for Taiwan's black metallers, led for over a decade now, by lava-tonsiled frontman Freddy Lim, who also goes under the name Left Face Of Maradou. Because this is death metal we're talking about, not yer poxy indie pop with guitar players called Brian or whatever. Chthonic deal with the ancient history of their homeland in a similar way to the Nordic black metallers, sing in classical Chinese and make use of a traditional Taiwanese hena, a two-string violin-like instrument. They've previously toured as part of Ozzfest and are over in the UK to plug new album, 'Mirror Of Retribution'. Best of all, their bass player is called Doris. Although she'd prefer it if you addressed her as Thunder Tears.

OVERRATED + FIREFLIES + HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES + COTTINGHAM & AUSTIN: Donnington Community Centre – Free live music session.

MONDAY 2nd

THE ROB TOGNONI BAND: The

Bullingdon – The Tasmanian blues devil returns to the Famous Monday Blues for the first time in nearly three years, showing of his powerful and versatile electric blues-rock style that's served him well in his 30 plus years on the road, his style owing much to Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

TUESDAY 3rd

Y&T: O2 Academy – Return of San Francisco's veteran metallers, still out on the road since forming in 1974 and helping inspire the likes of Metallica and Motley Crue along the way.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Free weekly live jazz club, tonight featuring singer Alison Bentley.

CREATIVE TUESDAY: Café Tarifa – Acoustic night.

WEDNESDAY 4th

NINE BLACKALPS: O2 Academy – Manchester's Nirvana acolytes follow up last year's 'Love/Hate' album with new opus 'Locked Out From The Inside', sneaking a bit of Teenage Fanclub and Lemonheads-flavoured pop into their grungy racket.

THURSDAY 5th

SPIN JAZZ CLUB with JIM HART'S

GEMINI: The Wheatsheaf – Cornish multi-instrumentalist Hart brings his new band, featuring other members of the Loop Collective, to The Spin, leading the band on vibes and exploring contemporary freestyle and swing.

MOTION IN COLOUR + FRANCESQUA:

Fat Lil's, Witney – Soulful emotive indie rocking from Motion In Colour.

THUMPERMONKEY + COMRADE

ROCKET: The Cellar – Big Hair club night.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Club – Oxford's premier weekly open mic club featuring a varied selection of singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: Bricklayers Arms, Old Marston

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: Eurobar – Klub

Kakofanney's Phil and Sue host a new weekly acoustic session.

FRIDAY 6th

ELLIOT MINOR + ME Vs HERO +

FRANKO: O2 Academy – Utterly wretched, soulless Satanic bum dribble that exists solely to make money from gullible toddlers who believe the press release when it says Elliott Minor are a punk-pop band when really they sound like Boyzone with a distortion pedal. They've got a new album out, apparently. It's called 'Solaris'. Solaris is also the title of a great sci-fi film, which we recommend every one of you to see. The album, however, is depressingly risible old tud of the lowest order. Get there early and you get a double dose of depression courtesy of Blackpool's hopelessly generic pop-punk outfit Me Vs Hero.

WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS: O2 Academy –

Club night featuring a set from Scottish electro hip hop crew Drums Of Death, plus electro-house from Ste-V-Something and electro, bassline and dubstep from Shark Bait.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with

QUADROPHOBIE + KNIGHTS OF

MENTIS + RED SQUARE: The Wheatsheaf

– The usual mixed bag of sounds at Klub Kak, tonight featuring sprightly ska and jazz-pop types Quadrophobe, plus confrontational experimental jazz-rockers Red Square.

PORT MAYHEM with FALL OF AN

EMPIRE: The Port Mahon – Live electro from Fall Of An Empire, plus acoustic supports.

BIG NIGHT OUT: Freud's – Free live music, DJs and hoop dancing in aid of Children In Need.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon – Classic, soul, funk and r'n'b every week.

GET DOWN: The Brickworks

OVERRATED: The Chester Arms

SATURDAY 7th

ABSENT ELK + HOLD FIRE: O2 Academy

– Exuberant indie rocking in the vein of The Hoosiers from Anglo-Norwegian outfit Absent Elk, out on tour to promote new album, 'Caught In The Headlights. Brighton's epic guitar popsters Hold Fire support.



WINCHELL RIOTS + FROM LIGHT TO SOUND + HUNTED: The Cellar – Winchell Riots play the second of their monthly residency gigs, with an epic, glacial blast of oceanic indie rock. Electro-post-rock from FLTS.

HOPE & GLORY: Fat Lil's, Witney – Tribute to Madness, plus ska classics.

UPROOTED + THE INFLATABLES:

Romanway, Cowley – Rock, blues and soul covers from Uprooted, plus classic ska, soul and reggae covers from The Inflatables.

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy – Weekly three-clubs-in-one session with indie and electro at Transformation, trashy pop, glam and 80s at Trashy and hardcore, punk, metal and alt.rock at Room 101.

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – Electro-house with Jack Beats and residents.

SKITTLE ALLEY ACOUSTIC NIGHT: The Ox, Oxford Road, Abingdon – Live sets from Glenda Huish, Mark Solis and more.

REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern

TECHNICOLOUR TIME MACHINE: Baby Simple – Prog and psychedelia club night.

THE DRIFTWOOD STAGE: The Marsh Harrier, Temple Cowley

SUNDAY 8th

LES CLOCHARDS + ADAM BARNES + ANTON BARBEAU: Malmaison (5pm) – Semi-acoustic session at the prison hotel, with French café pop, country and folk from Les Clochards, plus a solo set from Motion In Colour's Adam Barnes and Californian psychedelia from Mr Barbeau.

JOOLS HOLLAND & HIS RHYTHM & BLUES ORCHESTRA: The New Theatre – The ebullient host of *Later...* gets back to his primary love in life, tinkling the ivories, tonight with his expansive r'n'b band.

MONDAY 9th

ALABAMA 3: O2 Academy – Larry Love and the Very Reverend Dr D Wayne Love return with another dose of acid house blues and country medicine, riding the rough highway between Happy Mondays and Hank Williams, spreading a little bit of worldly wit and chemically-enhanced joy as they go.

FRIGHTENED RABBIT: O2 Academy – Celtic emo from the Glaswegian folk-rockers – see main preview

THE LARRY MILLER BAND: The Bullingdon – Rocking blues from the UK guitarist, inspired by the likes of Gary Moore and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

TUESDAY 10th

GOOD SHOES + LA SHARK + MOTION IN COLOUR: The Jericho Tavern – Morden's tightly rhythmic indie-punk scrappers Good Shoes return to action after a brief hiatus, finding strange glamour in the mundane surroundings of the south London suburbs; they're joined by New Cross's oddly-shaped indie types LA Shark and soulful local rockers Motion In Colour.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Funky, keyboard-led jazz grooves from The Howard

Peacock Quintet, playing at the Bully's free weekly live jazz night.

WEDNESDAY 11th

BLUE ROSES: The Bullingdon – Bradford-based, XL-signed singer-songwriter Laura Groves mixes up quirky, ethereal influences from Joni Mitchell, Bjork and Kate Bush.

ANGELO KELLY: The Jericho Tavern – Spanish-born, German-resident, but actually Irish folk, blues and soul singer and percussionist Kelly heads out solo after a life on the road with his father's travelling band.

VON BRAUN + NOTORIOUS HI-FI KILLERS + SAMUEL ZASADA: The Wheatsheaf – Cure-meets-Radiohead style alt.rocking from Von Braun, plus great esoteric pop from Samuel Zasada.

ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney – Open mic session.

THURSDAY 12th

WE WERE PROMISED JETPACKS + THE GULLIVERS + CAT MATADOR: The Jericho Tavern – Sinewy post-punk in the vein of Franz Ferdinand and The Wedding

Present from Scotland's We Were Promised Jetpacks, plus playfully ethereal gothic pop from local favourites The Gullivers and dark-minded new wave noise from Cat Matador.

WAYNE McARTHUR & THE UNIVERSAL PLAYERS + DUBWISER + DJ NICO: The Bullingdon – Luton's roots reggae minor legend McArthur returns to live action, currently undergoing a renaissance with major soundsystems like Jah Shaka and Abashanti playing his 'Victory Dance' single. He'll doubtless be joined onstage by Jonas and Spider from local reggae heroes Dubwiser, who also provide the main support for tonight's gig.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB with PAUL BOOTH: The Wheatsheaf – Versatile saxophonist Booth guests at the weekly jazz club, having previously worked with Steve Winwood and Eric Clapton, among others.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Club

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

BIG NIGHT OUT: Café Tarifa – Live music and DJs, including emotive local singer-songwriter Trev Williams.

ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: Bricklayers Arms, Old Marston

THE MIGHTY REDOX + GLENDA HUISH: The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Swampy funk and blues and psychedelia from The Mighty Redox, plus Bicester singer-songwriter Glenda.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: Eurobar

FRIDAY 13th

SLIDE & SIMPLE present AEROPLANE: O2 Academy – Electro, pop, Balearic beats, disco and house from Belgian duo Aeroplane at tonight's collaborative club night from Slide and Simple.

MR SCRUFF: O2 Academy – A characteristically epic five-hour set from Stockport's tea-sipping, fish-obsessed Scruff, mixing hip hop, soul, funk, pop, ska, dubstep



Wednesday 18th

AUTOKRATZ: O2 Academy

Amid the lightweight approximations of 80s electro-pop, it's always good to hear a heavier update of the genre. London duo AutoKratz – a duo made up of David Cox and Russell Crank – are currently at that "impossibly cool" stage of their pop career, signed to Parisian record-cum-fashion label Kitsumé (alongside Digitalism) and beloved of both indie kids and clubbers, with recent single, 'Stay The Same' perching atop the DJ Magazine Hype Chart. With their second album, 'Animal', out in the summer, tonight's gig is part of their most extensive tour to date, a chance to see whether their undoubted dancefloor appeal transfers to the live stage. They're hard and substantial enough to make it work – all choppy electro rhythms and heavy beats, emotionally detached vocals and lashings of sleek, silicon synth lines, at their lighter, poppier edge, harking back to New Order's mid-80s peak or Giorgio Moroder, but equally capable of clanging, industrial disco noise that owes more to electro pioneers like The Normal or Depeche Mode's fetishistic thunder.



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Friday 20th

STAFF BENDA BILILI: O2 Academy

Forget all those tales of rock band hardship – sleeping in the back of vans, eating Ginster's pasties every day; Congo's Staff Benda Bilili really do come from the university of hard knocks. Formed by a collection of paraplegic buskers and street children living rough around Kinshasa's city zoo, playing on instruments made from scrap, they've worked themselves up from the very bottom to the point they're now fêted around the world and tonight round off a UK tour as part of Oxford Contemporary Music's autumn season. Despite the band's background Staff Benda Bilili's music is incredibly uplifting, a mix of rumba rhythms, township dance, reggae, funk and baile, acoustic grooves underpinning multi-part vocals and featuring the virtuoso playing of 17-year-old Roger Landu, who fashioned his one-string lute from an old tin can and piece of discarded wood. The name means "look beyond appearances" and even without the genuine hardship that the players have endured, they'd be more than worthy of wider attention. Already Damon Albarn and Massive Attack's Robert de Naja have been singing their praises and with African music of all kinds currently enjoying an artistic and commercial resurgence, the group will hopefully reap the rewards of a struggle most of us can barely imagine.

and whatever else is in his large box of records into an eclectic and highly eccentric session.
LUKA LIGETI + BRAINDEAD COLLECTIVE: The Holywell Music Room – Oxford Contemporary Music and Pindrop Performance team up to present the Hungarian-born, New York-resident composer and percussionist Ligeti, taking influences from contemporary classical and jazz, as well as African music and experimental electronica. Braindead Collective, meanwhile bring elements of Ninja Tunes, Mr Scruff and The Cinematic Orchestra into their improvised set.
VICARS OF TWIDDLY + THE ROUNDHEELS + THE MARMADUKES:

The Jericho Tavern – Classic 50s and 60s-style surf rock from the Vicars, plus trad acoustic folk from The Roundheels.
VULTURES + BARBARELLA + CHAMBERS OF THE HEART: The Wheatsheaf
JOE BROWN: The New Theatre – Chirpy Cockney rock'n'roller Brown celebrates 50 years and counting on the gig circuit, having recently been awarded a Lifetime Achievement gong from Mojo magazine.
COHESION FESTIVAL: Jacqueline du Pre Building – Oxford Improvisers present a two-day mini-festival, tonight featuring a performance of Trish Elphinstone's 'Romany Road' by the Oxford Improvisers Orchestra, taking in everything from Romany folk music to flamenco, north African and Indian music.
THE EPSTEIN + GOOD THINGS, BAD THINGS: Fat Lil's, Witney – Expansive country rocking with an exotic Tex-Mex twist from local favourites The Epstein.
FOUR MORE FACES: The Chester Arms – Beatles, Who, Kinks and new wave covers.
ALIGHT + CALI COLLECT + IONIX + MILK FUNCTION + BLUE JUNK: The Pavilion, Chinnor – Metal, punk, hardcore and alt.rock from a selection of local bands at the Pavilion's regular rock night.
BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon
GET DOWN: The Brickworks

SATURDAY 14th

THE AIRBORNE TOXIC EVENT: O2 Academy – LA widescreen rockers on the rise, somehow rising above their very obvious debts to The Killers, Arcade Fire and The Strokes, with a knack for a stadium-friendly pop anthem.
BOOT-LED ZEPPELIN: O2 Academy – Tribute to the 70s rock behemoths.
THE BLACK HATS + MOTOR CITY SHUFFLE: The Wheatsheaf – Swaggering mod and new-wave inspired rocking from the local faves, pitched partway between the Who, The Jam and Young Knives.
WILLIAM FITZSIMMONS: The Jericho Tavern – Wonderfully autumnal Americana and acoustic folk from Pittsburgh's Fitzsimmons, born the youngest child of a blind couple and raised to communicate through music; his early adult life was spent working with mentally ill people and now he is a qualified music therapist. Initially inspired by classic American folk acts like Dylan and Joni Mitchell, his style has been likened to Elliot Smith, Sufjan Stevens and Iron & Wine.
THE SCARLETTS + NIGHT PORTRAITS

+ DEAD JERICHO + KING OF CATS:
The Port Mahon – Excellent bill of young local bands including ska-punkers The Scarletts, frenetic hardcore noise pop from The Night Portraits and uptight modish mathcore from Dead Jerichos.
DRESSED TO KILL: Fat Lil's, Witney – Tribute To Kiss.
COHESION FESTIVAL: Jacqueline du Pre Building – Phil Minton leads The Feral Choir at Oxford Improvisers' mini-festival, while local improv virtuosos Pat Thomas (keyboards), Alex Ward (clarinet and sax) and John Bissett (guitar and electronics) come together for a masterclass headline set.
4 OR 5 MAGICIANS + MUSCLE CLUB:
The Cellar – Vacuum Pop night with Brighton's grungy indie pop types 4 Or 5 Magicians.
TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy
HOUSE NIGHT: The Bullingdon
REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern
OVERRATED: Six Bells, Kidlington
THE CLIMAX CEILIDH BAND: Kennington Village Hall

SUNDAY 15th

THE FALL: O2 Academy – The inimitable Mr Mark E. Smith returns once again, dispensing his very individual brand of punk-infused rockabilly clatter, one that's seen him reinvent himself and his band countless times over the past four decades, while forever remaining the same. Irascible to the point of parody, he's also a national pop treasure, the author of some of the greatest music of the past 30 plus years, as well as a band dictator who has dispensed with the services of over 30 musicians along the way. What you get on the night – an explosive display of wit and creative genius, or a shambling wreck of a set, depends entirely on the man's mood and alcohol consumption. And we wouldn't have it any other way.
TESSERACT + NO CONSEQUENCE + APPARITIONS OF THE END + REIGN UPON US: The Wheatsheaf – A night of unrelenting metal noise, with progressive thrash from Tesseract, death and speed metal from No Consequence, Septultura-like noise from Banbury's Apparitions of the End and Bicester's recent Nightshift Demo Of The Month super-heavyweights Reign Upon Us.

MONDAY 16th

THE MISSION DISTRICT + SNAKES HATE FIRE + THE NEW CITIES: O2 Academy – Montreal's 80s-inspired emo band make it town after September's postponed show. Disney-style grunge-lite from Snakes Hate Fire in support.
THE TOM PRINCIPATO BAND: The Bullingdon – Roots blues rock in the New Orleans tradition from Washington DC guitarist Principato, inspired by the likes of T Bone Walker and JJ Cale.
BEETROOT JAM: The Port Mahon – Indie rockers The Elrics and Matt Sage's wistful bluesy rockers The Medicine play at the new live music club night.

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TUESDAY 17th

THE NEW BEAUTIFUL SOUTH + SANDI THOM: O2 Academy – The kitchen sink pop dramatists relive their greatest hits collection, from 'Old Red Eyes Is Back' and 'Rotterdam', to 'Perfect 10' and chart topper 'A Little Time'. Paul Heaton has departed but founder member Dave Hemingway takes over on vocals alongside Alison Wheeler, while most of the rest of the original line-up reconvene to run through a Best Of set. Annoying folk-pop warbler Sandi Thom opens the show, meanwhile, still firm in her belief that punk rock girls wear flowers in their hair.

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

CREATIVE TUESDAY: Café Tarifa – Acoustic night.

WEDNESDAY 18th

WAVVES + FROM LIGHT TO SOUND:

The Jericho Tavern – Dizzying, deafening lo-fi blissed-out guitar noise in the lineage of The Velvet Underground and My Bloody Valentine from San Diego's druggy, drummer-baiting, goth obsessive Nathan Williams and co. at tonight's You! Me! Dancing! show, with support from local electro post-rock instrumentalists From Light To Sound.

N-DUBZ: O2 Academy – Back in town for a Christmas party gig after their sold-out show here in April, and having won Best UK Act and best Album awards at the recent MOBOs, the slick young hip hop trio carry on onwards and upwards.

AUTOKRATZ + ALEX METRIC: O2

Academy – Electro-rocking from the icy-cool sound synthesists – *see main preview*

THURSDAY 19th

SONS OF ALBION: The Bullingdon – Robert Plant's son Logan brings his new hard rocking band to town, having supported the likes of The Who, Velvet Revolver and Lenny Kravitz. It's classic heavy rock as you might expect, with nods to Soundgarden in the mix, but it'll be interesting to see how long Logan's run as a rock star is. Did you see what we did there? Did you? Did you see?

MINOR COLES + THE GREAT ESKIMO HOAX + TOLIESEL: The Jericho Tavern – Intricate indie pop in the vein of Death Cab For Cutie from Minor Coles, plus mathsy rocking from GEH and indie rock from Nominees side project Toliesel.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB with LUIS

D'AGASTINO: The Wheatsheaf – The local jazz guitarist is guest at the weekly jazz club.

FIRST SIGNS OF FROST + PROCEED: Fat Lil's, Witney – Prog-tinged metalcore from the headliners.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Club

OVERRATED: Clementines, St. Clement's ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: Bricklayers Arms, Old Marston

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

THE RACKET 88 CLUB: Baby Simple – Jump blues, r'n'b and rockabilly from the 30s to the 50s.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: Eurobar

FRIDAY 20th

STAFF BENDA BILILI: O2 Academy – Congolese street musicians bring the dance – *see main preview*

MIXMAG TOUR: O2 Academy – DJ sets from Zane Lowe, DJ Marky, MC Cole, Jaymo & Andy George, Hatcha, DJ Fu and Jungle Drummer and more.

GAY FOR JOHNNY DEPP + BLAKFISH + OUTCRY: The Bullingdon – Batten down the hatches, there may be songs about willies – *see main preview*

BRICKWORK LIZARDS + THE

MEDICINE: The Jericho Tavern – Exotic melange of 1940s jazz, world music, hip hop and north African folk from Brickwork Lizards, with wistful blues rock from The Medicine in support.

PHANTOM THEORY + BABY GRAVY + EXIT INTERNATIONAL + DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN: The Wheatsheaf – Local hardcore-cum-classic heavy rock duo Phantom Theory launch their debut single (*see Introducing piece*), making with the big beats and even bigger riffs, a great, high-octane cross between Led Zep and Minor Threat. Support from electro-punk-hip hop noisemakers Baby Gravy, monster-heavy racketeers Exit International, and frenetic post-hardcore urchins Dial F For Frankenstein.

OASIZ + CHALK: Fat Lil's, Witney – Oasis tribute.

LES CLOCHARDS: The Chester Arms – Roy Orbison does French café pop in Les Clochards' sweetly exotic world.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon GET DOWN: The Brickworks

SATURDAY 21st

MAGIC NUMBERS: The Jericho Tavern – A low key local date for the sunshine 60s psychedelic pop siblings, veering between Fleetwood Mac's sugared pop and more acid-dazed folk-rock.

SEXTODECIMO: The Wheatsheaf – Oxford's noise-rock tyrants return to action – *see main preview*

HUGH CORNWELL: O2 Academy – The former-Stranglers frontman returns to town,



Friday 20th

GAY FOR JOHNNY DEPP /BLAKFISH/OUTCRY COLLECTIVE:

The Bullingdon

Excellent triple bill of underground hardcore noise tonight at the Bully as the Triple Threat package tour hits town. New York queercore maniacs Gay For Johnny Depp will probably be the main pull as their potty-mouthed spazz-punk continues to tickle more fancies, if only for the ludicrous song titles and obscene lyrics. 'Fuck You Gladys, I'm On Vacation'? That's our current favourite. Musically they're in the vein of Blood Brothers and The Locust – hysterical vocals and frantic, unrelenting speed-core guitar noise with songs regularly clocking in at the 20 second mark. They never equal Pansy Division for wit but they're crazy, fucked-up fun nonetheless. Birmingham's Blakfish are no less chaotic, sharp-elbowed hardcore that collapses into the room partway between Minor Threat and early Biffy Clyro, a double vocal attack and song titles like 'Your Hair is Straight, But Your Boyfriend Ain't'. Intelligent socio-political debate isn't on tonight's agenda. Surrey's Outcry Collective are, though and their melodic hardcore recalls Fucked Up and The Bronx and already finds them being heralded as the new Gallows. If you happen to pass any fundamentalist Christians on your way to the gig tonight, invite them along for the ride. They are duty bound to forgive you.

playing songs from the classic Stranglers 1977 debut 'Rattus Norvegicus', including 'Hanging Around', 'Peaches' and 'Get a Grip On Yourself', plus tracks from his most recent solo album, 'Hoover Dam'.

WITCHES + THE MARK BOSLEY BAND: Stocks Bar, Crown & Thistle, Abingdon –

Darkly exotic orchestral noise pop from Witches at tonight's Skittle Alley session, plus lachrymose local troubadour Mark Bosley.

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy

SOUL & REGGAE NIGHT: The Bullingdon

REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern

ELECTEC: The Cricketers Arms – Underground dance, Berlin techno and minimalist electronica.

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Saturday 21st

SEXTODECIMO:

The Wheatsheaf

Saturday 28th

WINNEBAGO DEAL:

The Cellar

Fantastic to see both these local bands back in action, bookending the week having both undergone something of a hiatus in recent times. First up are Sextodecimo, the most extreme band Oxford has produced in many a year, regularly managing to clear venues with their unrelenting, scouring sludge-core party tunes. We once described them as the sound you'd hear if the radioactive fallout from Chernobyl formed a band. Somewhere between Eyehategod, Iron Monkey, Swans and the opening salvos of World War III, they're an absolute joy, if you like a bit of pain with your music.

Winnebago Deal, meanwhile, are a local institution we can never tire of visiting, a lesson in no-frills, all-action hard rock, Ben Perrier and Ben Thomas thrashing out speed-crazed garage-metal that barely pauses for breath as it races through tales of whisky bars, knife fights, dusty highways and more whisky. And more fights. The duo have spent time playing as part of Nick Oliveri's Mondo Generator as well as teaming up with Jack Goldstein as The Dresdens, but it's as Winnebago Deal that they really drive all before them. Hopefully they'll release their new album, the follow-up to the Jack Endino-produced 'Flight Of The Raven', soon.

SUNDAY 22nd

MARIACHI EL BRONX: O2 Academy – LA's frenzied hardcore punk stalwarts The Bronx take an unexpected sidestep into mariachi as they head off on a European tour in support of new album 'Mariachi el Bronx'.

THE NORTHWESTERN: The Jericho Tavern – Sam Herilhy and Simon Jones from Chichester post-rockers Hope Of The States return with their new band, taking a more melodic approach, touching on Teenage Fanclub-style summer fuzz along the way.
BIG NIGHT OUT: Malmaison – Free live music and DJs in aid of Children in Need, with a live set from local indie rockers InLight.

MONDAY 23rd

THE WAILERS + BRINSLEY FORDE + DUBWISER: O2 Academy – Return of the legendary reggae group after April's epic three-hour sold-out show. As Bob Marley's backing band they have been touring for over 40 years and have some 250 million album sales under their belts. The current line-up features a good smattering of those who played with Marley, including original member Aston 'Family Man' Barrett, plus Keith Sterling, Chico Chin and Nambo Robinson. Current lead vocal duties are taken by Elan Atticus. That last show showed they're still very much on top of their game and able to start a party and keep it going all night. Expect all the classics from 'Exodus' and much, much more. Former-Aswad frontman Brinsley Forde and local roots favourites Dubwiser provide top drawer support.

THE AYNSELY LISTER BAND: The Bullingdon – Heavy-duty blues-rock from the acclaimed young British guitarist, equally at home playing it raw and acoustic or pumping it up Hendrix style on the electric.

FOY VANCE: The Jericho Tavern – The Irish troubadour returns after his last sold-out show at the same venue, mixing traditional Irish folk with the soul, jazz and blues sounds of the American south, where he spent his formative years, coming in somewhere between Otis Redding and Van Morrison.

TUESDAY 24th

ALISON MOYET: The New Theatre – The veteran UK blues and soul torch singer tours her Greatest Hits album.

GOLDHAWKS: The Jericho Tavern – Bunnymen-inspired new wavers.

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

WEDNESDAY 25th

SPRING OFFENSIVE + JOE ALLEN + MUSIC FOR PLEASURE + THE NIGHT PORTRAITS – Slick, indie rocking in the vein of Foals and Winchell Riots from Spring Offensive, plus taut folk-rock from Joe Allen, melodic indie pop from Music For Pleasure and hardcore pop noise from The Night Portraits.
ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney

THURSDAY 26th

SWERVEDRIVER: O2 Academy – The former local rock legends return from the grave – *see main preview*

SPIN JAZZ CLUB with STEVE

WILLIAMSON & PAT THOMAS: The Wheatsheaf – Renowned saxophonist Williamson – who started his musical career playing with reggae legends Misty In Roots – teams up with local keyboard wizard Thomas for a special set at the weekly jazz club.

TIM FRIERS: The Jericho Tavern – Folk-rock from the local singer and guitarist.
SECRET RIVALS + MIDIMIDIS: The Port Mahon – Trashy indie noise from Secret Rivals.

HARRY ANGEL + PHANTOM THEORY + MOLOTOV SEX BOMB: Fat Lil's, Witney – Chameleons and Sonic Youth-inspired alt.rocking from Harry Angel, with support

from riffastic heavy rock duo Phantom Theory and punk rock types Molotov Sex Bomb.

BIG NIGHT OUT: The Bullingdon – Live music and DJs, including local singer-songwriter Nikki Loy.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Club

ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: Bricklayers Arms, Old Marston

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

DRAUGHT FOR DROUGHT FESTIVAL:

The New Inn, Witney – Live bands and real ales in aid of the African Children's Fund.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: Eurobar

FRIDAY 27th

QUEEN OF CLUBS: Holywell Music Room

– The music and cabaret club celebrates its first birthday in style in Europe's oldest concert venue. Local folksters Telling The Bees launch their new album, bringing a modern twist to traditional English folk music, while Mondesir provides haunting acoustic support along with

Thursday 26th

SWERVEDRIVER:

O2 Academy

Despite having relocated to London early in their career, Swervedriver are very much part of Oxford music history. From their origins as local Stooges and MC5-inspired garage rockers Shake Appeal (and before that, Splatter Babies), the band were, and remain local heroes. Guitarists Adam Franklin and Jimmy Hartridge, along with bassist Adi Vines formed Swervedriver in the late-80s and were signed to Creation after Ride's Mark Gardener presented Alan McGee with a demo tape of 'Son Of Mustang Ford', a collision of Sonic Youth and Dinosaur Jr with nascent shoe-gazing noise. The band went on to tour the States with the likes of Smashing Pumpkins, Monster Magnet and Soundgarden and released three albums for Creation before being dumped when the label decided to focus its energies on Oasis. A doomed alliance with Geffen preceded an eventual split in 1999 but last year Adam and Jimmy, along with drummer Jez Hindmarsh, announced their reformation to coincide with the re-release of their back catalogue and tonight sees Swervedriver playing their spiritual hometown for the first time in well over a decade. And with no new recordings on the horizon, it should be cult favourites from start to finish. The noise they made back then sounds undiminished even now, and a heroes' reception awaits them.



classic soul and blues singer and guitarist Roscoe, plus cabaret style singer Susannah Starling.

STATUS QUO: The New Theatre – First night of the mighty Quo's seemingly traditional two-night annual stint at the New Theatre, knocking out all the classics as well as songs from their more recent albums, and showing no sign of stopping rocking all over the world any time soon.

DETACHMENTS + MARVEL: The Jericho Tavern – Jerky, robotic 80s-styled new wave inspired by Joy Division and The Motors from Detachments, last seen round these parts playing at Truck Festival.

FUSE ft. FAKE BLOOD: O2 Academy – Electro-house club night with Fake Blood, as well as a live set from London's Kraftwerk-inspired synth-pop act Filthy Dukes – hosts of Fabric's Kill Em All night. Lee Mortimer also DJs.

BON GIOVI: Fat Lil's, Witney – Tribute to Bon Jovi.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Chester Arms

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon

GET DOWN: The Brickworks

OVERRATED: The Flowing Well, Sunningwell

DRAUGHT FOR DROUGHT FESTIVAL: The New Inn, Witney

PHIL KING + YUSUF B'LAYACHI: Duke Of Monthmouth, Abingdon Road – Acoustic jazz and folk.

SATURDAY 28th

GONG: O2 Academy – Refuel your teapot and crank up the bong as the Space Rock International Brigade reform – in part at least – and channel broadcasts from Radio Gnome Invisible. Daevid Allen, Gilli Smith, Steve Hillage and co. revisit the ultimate hippie band's psychedelic catalogue.

A + THIS CITY: O2 Academy – The Leeds pop-punk outfit reform after a three-year hiatus, in which time frontman Jason Perry has been writing for and producing McFly. Previously Kerrang's Best British Band winners and Top 10 hitmakers for their 'Hi-Fi Sessions' album, they set off on a headline tour after support slots to The Wildhearts.

WINNEBAGO DEAL + DESERT STORM: The Cellar – Whisky business from the local garage-metal urchins, back in action – *see main preview*

STATUS QUO: The New Theatre – Second night in town for the rock legends.

MOIETY + FIFTEEN MINUTES + PRDCTV: The Wheatsheaf – GTI provide their reliably eclectic mix of sounds with delicate trippy pop from Moiety, McLusky-meets-Sugar alt.rocking from Dublin's 15 Minutes and Four-Tet-inspired electro-organic soundscapes from PRDCTV.

THE FAMILY MACHINE + A GENUINE

FREAKSHOW: The Jericho Tavern – Lachrymose country-tinged indie rocking from The Family Machine, plus Reading's emotive rock types A Genuine Freakshow, leaning towards the Radiohead and Jeff Buckley scheme of things.

FREEFALL + WITCHES + NINE-STONE COWBOY: Fat Lil's, Witney – Classic rock and blues covers from Freefall, plus freewheeling indie noise from Witches and epic melancholic pop from Nine-Stone Cowboy.

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy

DUB STEPS: The Bullingdon

REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern

DRAUGHT FOR DROUGHT FESTIVAL: The New Inn, Witney

SUNDAY 29th

FIVE-FINGER DEATH PUNCH + SHADOWS FALL: O2 Academy – Double dose of thrash metal as LA's Five Finger Death Punch and Massachusetts' Shadows fall team up for a joint headline tour, the former currently following up their acclaimed debut album, 'The Way Of The Fist' with new opus 'War Is The Answer', while the latter plug their new 'Retribution' album.

HAR MAR SUPERSTAR: O2 Academy – Sean Matthew Tillman strips down to his knickers once again as he, like a perverted Mr Benn, adopts his Har Mar Superstar alter ego and goes porn-obsessed r'n'b crazy.

MALCOLM MIDDLETON: The Jericho Tavern – The former-Arab Strap chap returns with more of his joyous gloom. Having previously described himself as "A fat child throwing a Casio keyboard down a flight of stairs and hitting an old man at the bottom who's playing Verve songs badly on an over-priced guitar," it's fair to say he doesn't take himself too seriously, even as he explores the dark nights of his soul, and he's a master of underplayed observational pop, nearly nabbing the 2007 Christmas Number 1 spot with his wry 'We're All Going To Die' ditty. He's out on an acoustic tour to promote new album, 'Waxing Gibbious', which he's said may be his last.

STEELEYE SPAN: The New Theatre – The English folk-rock veterans head out on tour once more.

BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney – Open jam session.

MONDAY 30th

RINGO DEATH STARR + SEALINGS: The Jericho Tavern – Eardrum-bothering nu-gaze noise – *see main preview*

EARL THOMAS WITH PADDY MILNER & THE BIG SOUNDS: The Bullingdon – Tennessee soul singer Thomas teams up with Scottish pianist and songwriter Milner for a collaboration that draws on their collective blues, r'n'b, honky tonk and gospel influences at tonight's Famous Monday Blues session.

Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion in the gig guide is the 20th 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



Monday 30th

RINGO DEATHSTARR / SEALINGS: The Jericho Tavern

It's not easy finding information on Austin, Texas quartet Ringo Deathstarr, but doubtless soon their name will be all over t'internet as the world succumbs to their glorious shoegazey racket. Having made sizeable ripples at South By Southwest, as well as supporting Dandy Warhols, in the last couple of years and released one self-titled EP, the band make it over the Atlantic to coincide with a new single, 'In Love', bringing the coals to Newcastle, so to speak with their cranked-up, rewired take on The Jesus & Mary Chain, My Bloody Valentine and Lush. Ethereal, honey-dipped melodies and sweet boy-girl vocals get drenched in distortion and feedback and live kicked out at satisfyingly extreme volume, making the band contemporaries of Asobi Seksu and the equally loud A Place To Bury Strangers. They're the sort of band best experienced in these dark, intimate surroundings where their oppressive musical assault fills the room. Support band Sealings earn extra cool points from the off by dint of being named after a Yeah Yeah Yeahs song and their crunchy, chaotic garage psych-rock more than lives up to that potential, stripped down and highly abrasive, they should have scoured the audience into submission before the headliners even hit the stage.

VENUE PHONE NUMBERS

O2Academy: 0844 477 2000 (ticketweb)
The Bullingdon: 01865 244516
The Wheatsheaf: 01865 790380
The Cellar: 01865 244761
The New Theatre: 0844 847 1585
The Jericho Tavern: 01865 311775
Fat Lil's: 01993 703385
The Purple Turtle: 01865 247086
East Oxford Community Centre: 01865 792168
Isis Tavern: 01865 243854
Malmaison: 01865 268400

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OX4

Various Venues, Cowley Road

Like Japanese technology, Truck seem to specialise in making things small and efficient. If Truck Festival is a village fête Glastonbury, today's OX4 event is the *Blue Peter* version of In The City. It's a showcase of local talent, with a smattering of bigger names chucked in to pull the crowds, but it's a mini music

convention too. Instead of industry bigwigs discussing marketing strategies and declining CD sales, we get forums on 'Keeping It Local' and youth in music, as well as workshops on making music videos and fanzines, gig photography and sleeve design. If these daytime activities are less populous than the later gigs,

they're a great, novel idea and hopefully something the organisers can build on in future years.

Today's mini-festival is billed as "A celebration of artistic talents in OX4" and although the volunteers handing out wristbands at East Oxford Community Centre seem

unable or unwilling to recommend any acts other than the headliners, the event does succeed, drawing in the likes of Oxford Folk Festival, Catweazle's open-mic club and the Hammer and Tongue slam-poetry crew. Down at Café Tarifa, where OFF are in afternoon residency, **THE REVERANZA**'s caffeinated singsong and **THE SELENITES**' attentive and surprisingly Victorian-sounding parlour string arrangements are a gentle introduction to a long day of music.

The Community Centre is the place to catch an early glimpse of some extremely promising young local acts. Recent Nightshift Demo Of The Month winners **THE SCHOLARS** might out-Editors The Editors on occasion but their shimmering post-punk goth-pop, all chiming guitars, squelch synths and detached, yearning vocals is still highly impressive, not to say fantastically powerful from a band who are still starting out.

DEAD JERICHOs match them blow for blow. They spice their Fred Perriered lad garage with the bits they like from Foals (disco hi-hat; rubbery bass) whilst completely ignoring the bits they don't (preening; reading books). They touch base with early Cure, sing songs about squaddie's step-daughters, revel in Oxford United's 5-0 victory that afternoon and end up sounding like Paul Weller might have if he'd grown up listening to maths-rock and disco. A superb prospect.

An older hand is on the helm at the Bullingdon in the form of **RICHARD WALTERS**, who today is joined by A Silent Film's Robert Stevenson on piano, and we'd only be repeating ourselves if we eulogised his vocal and songwriting greatness here, but it's a magnificent spectacle to hear his sparse, darkly emotive music rise above the incessant chatter of the dozen or so utter fucking imbeciles at the back who seem to think everyone here has paid to listen to their inane crap. Fuck off into the front bar and rip your own throat out, why don't you?

No such problems for **UTE** at the Academy. Anyone who is tempted

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to chat is too busy keeping up with the band. On the face of it Ute are a semi-acoustic folk-rock three-piece, but they're virtually impossible to second-guess as they swap slightly wayward, muscled-up campfire pop for crunching, hysterical grunge and then moody Radiohead-style contemplation. They indulge in the most incongruous bout of hand clapping we can remember and end up sounding like a brilliant, bizarre fusion of Stornoway and Queens Of The Stone-Age.

In his former band Tumbleweed **CHARLIE COOMBES** received some unfairly over-critical treatment from Nightshift in the 90s, but these days he seems to have grown into his blend of raucous bluesy rock and chirpy 70s pop, which, apart from one Stilton John piano ballad, is enormous fun.

MR FOGG, too, have improved a lot since we saw them, a subtle display that balances trombone, harp and electronics to sound like 'Hunter'-era Björk as played by Peter Gabriel and Radiohead – a long way from the stadium bombast we saw last month.

DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN, thankfully, haven't developed too many subtleties since we last saw them burning up Thirst Lodge at the Oxford Punt in May. The singer's slacker drawl is pure Cobain, but the band are spikier and punkier, closer to Mudhoney, but with Dive Dive's precision aggression holding it all together in a raucous, cohesive ball. Plenty of young bands kick out a similar post-hardcore racket, but few hit it so squarely on the nail.

According to a friend, Bletchley's **ACTION BEAT** stopped and asked for directions to the Bullingdon earlier in the day and the amount of herbal smoke that emanated from their van convinced him they'd never make it, let alone play such a stunning set. Four drummers and four guitarists. It's like a tribal dance party held inside a jet engine. Start. Chug. Crash. Stop. Joyous.

We're so enthralled we only make it up to the Academy to catch the final number of **DUSTY & THE DREAMING SPIRES** set, which is a shame since Robin and Jo Bennett organised today's happening. They're rocking out anyway, in a country style.

The Academy is rammed by the time **THE BIG PINK** come on stage amid a blizzard of white noise and strobes and continue to grind imperiously away like a Gregorian Jesus & Mary Chain, or maybe A Place To Bury Strangers after an all-day Glaswegian pub crawl. Dark, shadowy melodies drip like honey from the scalding

heat of the feedback and machine-like beats, through the sublime 'Velvet' to an inevitable, searing finale of ubiquitous recent single 'Dominoes' that prompts the day's first mass sing-along.

After which New Jersey hip hop duo **DÄLEK**, at the Bullingdon, risk being a complete let-down. And for much of their set they are – rumbling and hollering aimless and muffled as if they're playing in another room, but finally hitting a churning, hypnotic plateau that sounds like Einstürzende Neubaten covering Ice Cube's 'Colours'. A shame they can't sustain such quality for the whole set. We head off to catch **BABY GRAVY**'s mess of strip-lit mall pop and new wave fuzz, which is far more enticing, especially when guest star Mr ShaOdoow promises to give one Nightshift scribe a good hiding, from the stage.

The second mass singalong of the night is upstairs at a crazily packed Baby Simple, which is hosting a solo set from **ALPHABET BACKWARDS** frontman James Hitchman. We arrive just in time to catch 'Polar Bears' from halfway up the stairs and every bugger in the room is braying along to its insanely catchy chorus.

Downstairs at the same venue **MR SHAADOW** has dispensed with the crew of collaborators that made his summer Truck set such a lively affair and gets back to showing what an exemplary performer he has become, now awash with self-confidence and a machine-gun flow that rarely trips up. He's equally genial and polemical, coating sharp social commentary with a wicked sense of humour and a warm personality, and his heroic attempts to get the crowd chanting along to 'Grime' and 'R U Stoopid?' are amply rewarded. Highlight of the set, though, is his a cappella finale of 'Look Out, There's a Black Man Coming'. Best rap song of the last couple of years, period.

And finally, as at the Punt back in May, it's up to **THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND** to warp up the show, turn baby Simple into a 1930s speakeasy and get people dancing to jazz who would normally run a mile at the very mention of the word (us, then). After which it's out onto a Cowley Road that suddenly feels like a war zone. Teams of neon-jacketed police with sniffer dogs have been raiding the local bars and breaking up fights between lairy, pissed-up lads. We catch the bus and another fight breaks out. This is the ugly face of Cowley Road; it's the other side we're celebrated today, and long may that survive.

Dale Kattack / David Murphy

the **JERICHO**

FRI 30 OCT
YOUVES + SHAPES

TUES 10 NOV
GOOD SHOES
+LA SHARK +MOTION IN COLOUR

WED 11 NOV
ANGELO KELLY

THURS 12 NOV
WE WERE PROMISED JETPACKS
+THE GULLIVERS +CAT MATADOR

FRI 13 NOV
VICARS OF TWIDDLEY
+ROUNDHEELS +MARMADUKES

SAT 14 NOV
WILLIAM FITZSIMMONS
+GUESTS

WED 18 NOV
WAVVES
+GUESTS +FROM LIGHT TO SOUND

THURS 19 NOV
MINOR COLES
+TOLIESEL

FRI 20 NOV
BRICKWORK LIZARDS
+BORDERVILLE

SAT 21 NOV
THE MAGIC NUMBERS

SUN 22 NOV
THE NORTHWESTERN

MON 23 NOV
FOY VANCE

TUES 24 NOV
GOLDHAWKS

THURS 26 NOV
TIM FRIERS

FRI 27 NOV
DETACHMENTS
+MARVEL

SAT 28 NOV
THE FAMILY MACHINE
+A GENUINE FREAKSHOW

SUN 29 NOV
MALCOM MIDDLETON

MON 30 NOV
RINGO DEATH STARR
+SEALINGS

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ZU / DR SLAGGLEBERRY / DRUNKENSTEIN

The Wheatsheaf

Tonight should have been billed as a horror show, such is the threatening nature of the bands on display.

Drunkenstein is a band built from the component members (drunken or otherwise) of a multitude of other Oxford bands. Like the monster at the heart of Mary Shelley's masterpiece, Drunkenstein is a flawed beast. Heading off into prog-rock territory

is a risky move at the best of times, and the band frequently veers between the ridiculous and the sublime. They're at their best during the long drawn out instrumental sections but occasionally they get lost, stumbling around an arrangement, and failing to break through before giving up and going home. There are a fair few rough edges that need to be smoothed over, but on this showing

the beast that is Drunkenstein seem to be sobering up and getting better.

Dr Slaggleberry continue to terrify audiences with their hockey mask/doctors' whites chic. Then there are the insanely technical instrumentals that bridge the gap between math rock, hardcore, and the noodling of hair metal Van Halen types. As usual, they are brutal and incredibly precise, like a psychopathic cannibal slowly dissecting their afternoon tea. Even '8 4 5' – a song which on their latest record 'The Slagg Factory' served as a light reprieve from sonic violence – is much more aggressive and unsettling than expected. The whole set is chillingly executed, as those masks would lead you to expect.

Zu promise us a death bassoon, but the stark reality is that it's merely a baritone saxophone played through a heap of effects. That the death bassoon apparently holds no place in reality is the only disappointment of Zu's set. A cavalcade of ideas erupts from the band in a wall of noise that is thoroughly oppressive. A fault on their backing track means that their sound tonight is not as confused as their recorded output but the sheer volume means that such concerns are merely fleeting. Middle Eastern influences mate with the blues, and hypnotic rhythms provide threatening scree that is both startling and fascinating. Essentially it's not unlike Ornette Coleman, re-imagined by Napalm Death, and played by Morphine. They close their set in appropriate fashion with a thunderous stomping rhythm pattern and a basic "melody" line slowly provoking a similar kind of response as the piano motif from *Jaws* – a heightened sense of danger. It's the ideal, if disconcerting, end to the evening.

Sam Shepherd

NOAH & THE WHALE

O2 Academy

Last night Noah & The Whale played in Manchester. After the gig they had all their equipment nicked from the venue car park. The fact they're even playing tonight is incredible. Unfortunately, too often tonight they seem to be trying too hard to be heroic.

Having captured the essence of young summer love on debut album, 'Peaceful, The World Lays Me Down', their new album, the ironically-titled 'First Days Of Spring', comes wrapped in the chilly, regretful romanticism of autumn. Tonight's set is split evenly between the two sets of song but those earlier tracks lose out tonight from an unquenchable desire to rock out, as well as the absence of Laura Marling, whose dreamily chirpy backing vocals gilded Charlie Fink's bountiful tunes. 'Five Years Time' in particular suffers, and is delivered bereft of mandolin. It feels like it's being thrown away like an old love letter, which essentially it is: Marling didn't just leave the band, she split with Fink, thus providing the entire narrative thread that runs through 'First Days Of Spring', a narrative that starts with the disbelief of loss and runs a gently melancholic rollercoaster of emotions until it closes with resignation and some fresh hope. It's these songs that work best tonight, particularly Fink's most stripped-down and personal numbers, like 'Stranger', giving the songs space to breath and his voice room to show its depth and fragile strength. Fiddle player Tom Hobden regularly encourages some rousing moments from the overwhelmingly downbeat material, but too often the full band arrangements weigh the songs down: what is engaging and deft on CD becomes a dirge on stage tonight. Earnestness sits ill with Noah & The Whale.

The best stuff is still great, though: an understated 'Blue Skies' and 'The First Day Of Spring' itself are gorgeous. But as the band climax with an extended wig-out, you wonder if they're maybe airing the anger and frustration of last night. Let's hope whoever catches the thieving little bastards responsible deals out a correspondingly abrasive beating.

Sue Foreman

JOHNNY FOREIGNER / TELLISON

The Jericho Tavern

Stephen H. Davidson is at pains to point out that his band are called Tellison, and not Television. Not that there's much chance of confusing this bunch of modest Get Up Kids devotees from the south of England with the louche New York art-punks behind 'Marquee Moon'. Studios and conscientious observers of the punk pop rule book, Tellison know that the way to be taken seriously (not to mention the way to a girl's heart) is through bookish lyrics – and you can't get much more bookish than a song called 'Edith Wharton'. In a set heavy on new material, there are the odd diversions from the established template, when multi-instrumentalist Matt Roberts is called into providing electronic beats, additional percussion or even sax (such as on 'Thebes'). But they're actually at their best when not trying too hard and instead sticking to what they know, the Jimmy Eat World-echoing 'Henry Went To Paris' being a case in point.

I'm not sure what the burly brute of a guy to my left made of Tellison, but by the disbelieving shake of his head can well imagine how he feels about having been dragged by his girlfriend to see the headliners: "Johnny Foreigner? Coming over here [all the way from Birmingham]? In a van? Seducing our women? Subjecting our English eardrums to assault by all manner of foul foreign noise? Well, I tell you – we won't stand for it..." And the truth is that for the first three songs – an unbelievably sloppy stew, an unrelenting blizzard of sound – I can kind of see his point.

But then the fourth song starts (perhaps it's no coincidence that it's a new one) and suddenly, as if cured by a fast-working hypnotherapist, they're no longer tune-phobic or afraid to give the music time to breathe. And by the time we're into 'Eyes Wide Terrified', arguably the most dynamic single on debut album 'Waited Up Til It Was Light', they appear to have made the evolutionary leap it took Idlewild the best part of a year to manage (from 'Captain' to 'Hope Is Important') in the space of just five minutes.

Now don't get me wrong – there's nothing much enlightened or revolutionary about sounding like Los Campesinos! with your fingers jammed in live sockets and firecrackers rammed up your arse, but still the electrified racket and yelping boy-girl duetting of new single 'Criminals' can't fail to stir me to paroxysms of excitement. And you have to doff your hat to an outfit who choose to recognise Spinderella's lamentably oft-ignored contribution to Salt 'N' Pepa's musical output by immortalising her in a song title.

Ben Woolhead

MUMFORD & SONS / SONS OF NOEL

& ADRIAN

The Bullingdon

There must be something in the food certain people eat or in the air they breathe, not only to want to call themselves 'Sons of Something and Something' or 'Something & The Sons' or 'The Sons', for that matter, and use ampersands like we're still reading and speaking Dickens English and dwelling in the 1850s... but also to make us totally believe for 30 minutes that we *do* live back in that era of modest shoemakers, old-fashioned barbers, smoky pubs and sleek waistcoats, and, why not, beautifully crafted mandolins, violins, double basses or banjos.

Sons of Noel & Adrian hail from Brighton. Though, if it wasn't for them mentioning it, we would've thought they come from a hippy community family of the Catskills around Woodstock (the American one) with their carefree attitude, long beards, and old-fashioned folk instrumentation. Their sweet vocal harmonies contrast greatly with the vibrating dark voice of leader Jacob Richardson; their music is rich ('The Wreck Is Not A Boat'), layered, intricate ('Indigo') and soulful in the folk sense of things. It is about atmosphere as much as story telling. It is about travel, love, art and painting, all combined in sonar movements. They are incredibly advanced musically, playfully touching Celtic traditions or basic Spanish flamenco guitar strumming, as on

'Damien'. This is progressive folk that has not lost its character; progressive folk that you want to replay over and over again.

Mumford & Sons are a London four-piece who incorporate more of a fiery approach to their folk music. They have just released their first album, 'Sigh No More', to great acclaim; their tracks have got sing-along pop tunes and sad love lyrics and lots of build ups that end in explosive cries of despair and/or ecstasy, with a final drop of quiet whispers and lonely vocals as closure. Yet this basic formula is so successfully achieved it is impossible not to succumb. They are skillful musicians, trained through years of touring and schooling; these are the sort of musicians who can read scores and play classical symphonies as easily as drunken pub tunes. Marcus Mumford's voice is also a delight in this setting, unique and passionate like few others. Its smoky treble blends distinctively with the acoustic guitar, banjo and piano but his overall work is pretty remarkable considering he plays percussion, accordion, and anything his hands lay upon simultaneously. Mumford & Sons are a band who not only speak the same language musically as each other but they are also in tune in presence, displaying modesty, intelligence and a fresh, witty sense of humour – an astonishing pack that will make you sigh even as they ask you not to.

Liane Escorça

SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE / NIGHT TERRORS / FUZZY LOGIC

The Wheatsheaf

One of the many things that gives Klub Kakofanny such an enduring atmosphere once a month, is Ainan Addison's unique light show, that bathes the stage and backdrop with ever changing psychedelic patterns projected through revolving faceted crystals. All the bands benefit greatly from this kaleidoscope dreamscape, and none more so than Space Heroes Of The People, whose Warp-minded, Sparky-voiced loop fest seems even more alive in this rainbow-hemia. It's a shame it's the last gig for the band's drummer Liz Shirley, as she glamorously lends a focus and glue to Tim Day's slick sampling and Jo Edge's thrumming cut-away electric cello, especially during one of their best numbers, 'Barbie Is A Robot'. An old-school marriage S-Express and Conny Plank it may be, but never done better.

The light show, too, extracts the max from Melbourne's Night Terrors. If you are a fan of 'The Brazilian' by late-era Genesis, or have Roger Dean posters on your walls then this is for you: cosmic proggy of a supreme quality. All six foot five of Miles Brown goes into alternatively crunching hardcore bass and wafting harmonic sweetness out of a ring

theremin, while Marika Bardin, in full Wakeman overdrive, along with Ianto Kelly on drums, creates an epic synth mind-trip of planet colliding proportions; we're talking Emerson, Lake and Palmer here, but even they were never this dense, dark and all consuming as typical track 'Saturnalia' reveals itself.

If you want a masterclass in gig running orders, look no further than Klub Kakofanny promoters Phil and Sue. They somehow link partying, intellectual thoughtfulness and then more partying, into one seamless happening. Fuzzy Logic bring on their own world party of what I can only coin as Afri-Ska. A rootsy, hip hop big beat, with all the levity and flavour of that vast continent reflected in our own cross cultural mirror. Nigerian frontman Darwood is the most open-hearted and vibrantly coherent rapper you could care to hear, giving us such telling songs as 'Television Is The New Religion' and 'A Drunk Man's Speech Is A Sober Man's Secret', while entreating us to take our shirts off like he has. Face it Darwood, if we all had ripped bodies like yours, we wouldn't need asking.

Paul Carrera

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AUDIOSCOPE

The Jericho Tavern

Audioscope's reputation as an austere day of difficult music is smashed in seconds by **BITCHES**, who may have had a liquid lunch. Their music has rock riffs and punk noise, but exhibits an eerie lack of propulsion, feeling excellently like a drunken Fluxus take on an early Sebadoh rehearsal. **CATS & CATS** charmingly announce that they hope to get their single into "the indie charts", which makes us feel ten years younger. They play a pleasant set of contempo-folk introspection, which is rather spoilt by unsuccessful leaps into grandiloquent climaxes, turning them into Arcade Embers. **TALONS** turn

out to be much better at the Godspeed crescendos and have two excellent violinists, but could do with some of Cats' songs to retain interest. Call it a draw.

Worcester's **THEO** loops tricky Don Caballero guitar licks and accompanies himself fluently on drums, and this Billy Nomates Mahonie turns out to be our set of the day. He has some trouble with guitar leads and drum pedals, but we cynically wonder whether he fiddles with them deliberately to hide the fact he hasn't quite worked out how to end his songs.

UTE have come leagues since we saw them in January, mixing rousing folk

songs that wouldn't be out of place during the miner's strike with tremulous indie delicacy, before unexpectedly flipping out and going all Shellac unplugged. Occasional Thom Yorke vocal moments are less satisfying, but the set is a winner. Audioscope favourites **BILGE PUMP** proffer the closest thing to sonic extremity on this year's bill, with their well-honed take on post-McClusky artcore, and it's fine but **BRONNT INDUSTRIES CAPITAL** is far more exciting. He opens with what may as well have been an excerpt from *Blade Runner*, synching faultlessly with the video projections, that are like being

overtaken on the autobahn by Petronus charms. He keeps up the Vangelis-like approach for some excellently sleek mid-80s synth romps, headbutting the keyboard to inject some John Foxx drama. The Ferris Bueller shades are a step too far, however.

We get a brief palate cleanser before the headliners, as Glasgow's **REMEMBER REMEMBER** fold looped glockenspiel and melodica motifs in on themselves like Fuck Buttons lost in Toytown, which sets us up nicely for the disappointment of **THE LONGCUT**. There's nothing hugely wrong with mixing New Order with Doves and throwing a bit of NY funk over the top, but it seems that every third band in 2009 sounds exactly like this. They still don't upset us too much until something sounding like Editors playing 'I Feel Love' drives us to the bar.

We ask the organisers why they don't have anyone famous on this year's bill, like Kid 606, Clinic or a krautrock legend, to be told that Mercury nominees **MAPS** are better known in the real world than those other acts put together. It comes as no surprise that we lost our grip on the public's taste years ago, but it is eyebrow raising that they've gone for something that sounds so much like The Beloved. That is, when they don't sound like Crystal Castles played by Candy Flip. Nothing revolutionary here, then, but Maps play a warm and unhurried set of comedown electropop that makes us wish we were watching at 4am in a room made entirely from pillows and Gummi Bears, until we're absolute converts. We were all set to bemoan the lack of a Shit & Shine, Parts & Labour or Datapanik epiphany, until we realised that the least adventurous Audioscope lineup has perhaps become the most consistent, and good music's what matters ultimately, not its obscurity. That and the £1,700 raised for Shelter, and an excuse to subsist on beer and Pepper's burgers for a day.

David Murphy

THE PROCLAIMERS / MILES HUNT

O2 Academy

Miles Hunt may have had the wonder stuff at one stage, but tonight his soulful vocals, coupled with Erica Nockalls' rousing fiddling, create a sound lacking in ability to transfix an audience. Erica's sound juxtaposes Miles' melodies, rather than merging into them and the crowd inevitably become more interested in discussing a football game, against Belarus, whose result is irrelevant. It takes something 'The Size Of a Cow' to reel them in, but its misplaced slot at the end of the set means most miss Miles' lyrical humour of 'The Cake' and Erica's arresting accompaniment to 'Fill Her Up And Foot Down'.

The Proclaimers however, successfully pull the

focus away from England and within seconds of arriving on stage, the crowd becomes filled with Scottish flags and Hibernian scarves. Though there are a few youthful faces dotted amongst them, it is clear that The Proclaimers' first gig in Oxford, despite their 22 year history, has pulled faithful fans out of the woodwork and they do not disappoint. A band who in their heyday built their success on songs which allowed guys to be emotional, without being slushy, with the likes of 'I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)', prove that even 20 years on, their songs are still anthems. Tonight they continue to wow their audience, with anecdotal numbers about their

daughters in 'Sweet Little Girls' and the haunting, yet breathtaking 'Shadows Fall', taken from their latest album, 'Notes & Rhythms'. Mixed in with those are legendary songs such as 'Letter From America', which combine to verify that The Proclaimers still have what it takes.

Whilst visually there is evidence that twins Charlie and Craig have been around for a while, musically their intertwined vocal prowess is timeless. The addition of Erica for 'Sunshine On Leith' is all it takes to push their set from being outstanding, to truly epic. 20 years after professing to be 'On My Way', The Proclaimers reached the top and if tonight is anything to go by, they won't be moved from their mountain of success any time soon.

Lisa Ward

THE MEDICINE / THE VICARS OF TWIDDLY / THE ROUNDHEELS

The Wheatsheaf

The Roundheels are a three-piece acoustic band with a fondness for bluegrass and American folk. On closer inspection they also turn out to be an unlikely reincarnation of Wantage's finest, Cargo Cult. Gone are the long, spaced-out epics; in come short, catchy tunes that sound vaguely familiar, though most are self-penned. Sharyn Salwowski still has a voice of rare purity, nicely set off by the banjo and acoustic guitar, weaving wistful, slightly dark tales.

The Vicars of Twiddly emerge in full ecclesiastical attire, though they seem to have upgraded themselves from vicars to popes. Musically, they're a bouncy surf band, with a nice line in 60s-sounding keyboards and twangy guitars. They come across a lot heavier than their Myspace recordings, and sound all the better for it. In the 80s there was a huge scene of similar-sounding bands, mainly in London and often dressed in sharp suits, like The Mysterons and Out On Blue Six, who seemed to fade away with the dance revolution. To be honest this music is best enjoyed in a live environment

and tonight's enthusiastic crowd seem to agree.

There's no doubt that Oxford owes a large musical debt to Matt Sage. His sadly defunct Roots.net venue had a refreshingly forward-looking musical policy, until he turned up one day to find that the club literally didn't exist anymore. More recently his Big Village project champions some fine world music, odious though the term may be. Yet his own music has been often characterised by self-indulgence and ponderousness. Always working with talented musicians, The Medicine is his latest attempt at getting the formula right, and features the highly respected Jerry Soffe on bass. Wistful pop with a hint of blues, it would fit well into a Radio 2 schedule. While the musicianship is typically flawless, you can't help thinking they're playing more for their own pleasure than ours. But, in contrast to the previous band, it all makes more sense at home where the subtlety and craftsmanship is easier to appreciate.

Art Lagun

FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND / SAVE YOUR BREATH

O2 Academy

I need to contain myself. Not out of excitement, but despair. I need to contain all the words that would come out of my mouth if I didn't hold it tight. Why do bands choose names that make it so easy to rip them apart? Especially if they're hideous. I'm not the only one in on this. Everybody here tonight O2 Academy seems to want to slaughter Save Your Breath as much as I do. Typical British politeness though saves them, as we put up with a band of dismembered monkeys, jumping about like they live with Cheetah in the jungle, playing some sort of noise that is nothing more or less than dysfunctional clatter, and pretending that we're all having "such a great time" that we deserve to participate in a jumping competition to win – get this – an amazing Save Your Breath hoodie. "How about that? We have now hoodies in merch; you'll be a lucky, lucky winner!"

I can't remember a tune, melody or lyric, just barbaric burps of crap with a tremendously lame drummer and gorilla-like pacing to and fro that make me want, (ta da!), to save my breath for a cultured civilization and get the heck out of there.

Yet here we go again with Funeral For A Friend. They're from Wales but their attitude and work has always been very much American-oriented. It's so tiring to see fake copies of similar bands; you would think people catch on these things but no, rather alarmingly, some join happily along, just like scoundrels buy Louis Vuittons in Chinatown. So we're gifted this bunch of Linkin Park-meets-Slipknot impersonators, playing metal wrapped in pink cellophane and singing and shouting and crying or whatever you want to call that while sitting in a bathtub surrounded by bubbles, rubber duckies and shaving their copious amounts of hair, or so I imagine. Each song has a predictable hook and during every song, singer Matthew Davies-Kreye strikes poses, leaning on the amp, both hands clutching the microphone with such passion (or pain, I can't see the difference) as if his underwear was pulling his balls right up. If you want to know about screamo stereotypes, just watch Funeral for a Friend, or join them in their pass-over celebrations, since they are so experienced in 'losing' band members.

Liane Escorça



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BAT FOR LASHES / YEASAYER

O2 Academy

You've heard of I'm From Barcelona, right? (In case you were wondering, they're not – the lying buggers are Swedish.) Well, Yeasayer might as well be called I'm From Brooklyn, so brazenly do they wear their origins on their collective sleeve. Okay, so some distance removed from Brooklyn's current crop of C86 obsessives Yeasayer may be, but they've regularly been bracketed with the likes of Vampire Weekend as Afrobeat aficionados at the cutting edge of cool.

On this evidence at least, those who hailed Yeasayer's debut album 'All Hour Cymbals' as a musical milestone should know better than to endorse the kind of future where an MGMT *sans* hooks are king. If a postmodern, artily mangled mess of Fleetwood Mac and Hall & Oates and a vomit-splattered boilersuit with the sleeves rolled up and set off with a power balladeer's mullet are where's it at, then I for one would rather not be there.

Bat For Lashes should by rights be equally preposterous. Natasha Khan's first album, 2006's Mercury-nominated 'Fur And Gold', suggested someone for whom recording music was a rude interruption from wheeling around in crop circles barefoot, flower-garlanded and dressed in chiffon like a medieval waif or sylvan sprite, partaking in the odd pagan ritual to reaffirm her oneness with her Earth Mother. But guffaws were stifled by the sheer power of the music: rich, emotive, captivating. Otherworldly, yes, but inclusive and enveloping too. Tonight, everything from that period resonates with a dark sensuousness: 'Horse And I', 'Tahiti', 'The Wizard', 'Prescilla' and especially the single 'Trophy', its sinister edge sharpened by Charlotte Hatherley's guitar.

So, how does Fur And Gold's no less extraordinary successor, 'Two Suns', compare? Well, it's a meditation on dualism and cosmology and Khan still sounds as though she spends too much money on healing crystals and too much time prostrating herself beneath the moon. But the difference, in the words of the Ting Tings, is largely the drums, the drums, the drums: the inventive percussion of 'Glass' and the tribal pounding of 'Two Planets' in particular, courtesy of New Young Pony Club's Sarah Jones. Though that's not to mention the encroaching presence of synths and electronics, most notably on chart-bothering single 'Daniel'.

In these respects, the fact that much of the



photo: Harry Wade

album owes its conception and genesis to a period during which Khan spent living in Brooklyn is evident. It's as much a surprise that her collaborators in Yeasayer don't join her onstage at any point, as it isn't that the infamously reclusive Scott Walker fails to show up for 'The Big Sleep', the duet-of-sorts that closes Two

Suns, Hatherley instead providing his vocals. One of the most affecting and intoxicating new tracks is called 'Siren Song', but in truth they could all be given that name. Khan is an enchantress and, quite simply, one of the few truly original stars in the pop firmament.

Ben Woolhead

WINCHELL RIOTS

The Cellar

Combining power with subtlety is an art in itself, and one that Winchell Riots have always excelled at. Tonight, as they play the first of their monthly residency nights at the Cellar, they strike such a fine balance between the epic and the intimate, you wonder if they pushing to soundtrack whatever new *Life On Earth* series David Attenborough is planning.

Take 'The Man Who Mapped The Oceans', a starfish dreaming of being a blue whale, finely textured and ablaze with tiny detail and colour but capable of driving all before it as frontman Phil McMinn matches the power of the guitar glissando with a skyscraping howl. Or 'Histories', The Beatles' 'Helter Skelter' ski-jumping hysterically off the top of a Norwegian fjord. That one's just got to have dolphins in the video. And lasers. Gotta be lasers, no question.

What's really great about Winchell Riots is how they also mix an admirable

sense of brevity into these big, musical landscapes: songs soar, shimmer or squall with seasonal energy but dissipate before they become overblown. And when they do wig out at the end, it's with an introverted severity that dives into the deep blue rather than throw itself to the wind. Somehow they've managed to find a point where they can tap into both Muse and Sigur Ros without losing themselves too much in either.

Winchell Riots are looking increasingly hirsute these days, to a man sporting full, bushy beards. It kind of fits in with what we're hearing tonight, though: the sound of north Atlantic storms, tidal waves and the odd moment of glacial majesty. Give them another six months and they'll be sporting Viking helmets and ransacking Northumberland coastal villages. And from there – Wembley, surely.

Victoria Waterfield

INTRODUCING....

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

Phantom Theory

Who are they?

Phantom Theory are a heavy rock duo made up of Aaron Delgado (guitar, bass, vocals) and Steve Wilson (drums, vocals), who met while living in student halls at Brookes University. The band was initially a side project to their respective other groups but after a few jam sessions the band took shape. The pair's first demo was recorded for a meagre £22.50 in a bedroom and received a positive review in Nightshift. Since then they've been kicking up a right old racket around the local venue circuit, supporting the likes of Hundred Reasons and Johnny Foreigner as well as appearing at this year's Oxford Punt. They've been played on Radio 1 and Xfm, had their front door kicked in by an angry neighbour during a rehearsal session, and this month they release their debut single with a gig at the Wheatheaf.

What do they sound like?

Furious beats, furious riffs and urgent vocal delivery make up a paired-down, high-octane heavy rock that straddles the divide between classic 70s rock and 80s American hardcore. But beneath the often monstrous exterior breathes a subtlety and musical ambition that finds the duo exploring darker, more spacious, almost proggy areas. A recent Nightshift live review said of them, "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. In their own words they are, "Meaty riffastic, explosive alternative grungy rock."



What inspires them?

"Any sort of convincing live music really. Going to gigs can really make you up your game, although it kind of makes you frustrated that you're not up there playing sometimes."

Career highlight so far:

"Supporting Hundred Reasons and Johnny Foreigner at the O2 Academy was pretty awesome along with getting played on Radio 1 and being picked to play the Punt. Oh, and getting Phantom Theory stickers."

And the lowlight:

"Never having enough band money. As a two piece everything costs loads, although we do totally reap the beer tokens."

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Target Nine – we love those guys; they're not really Oxfordshire even though they claim to be!"

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

"Deftones: 'White Pony'. We both bought it when we were 14 and it never gets boring."

When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect?

"Our single launch at the Wheatheaf on November 20th, with Exit International, and Baby Gravy. We'll be selling some limited-edition CDs, brand new merch and giving away free stuff."

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"Oxford has an incredible music scene. It's so supportive and the calibre of bands here is phenomenal. The people are really nice too. Least favourite: too many students not venturing out into seeing live music, preferring to drunkenly dance to the *Baywatch* theme tune at Fuzzy Ducks every week."

You might love them if you love:

Death From Above 1979; Led Zeppelin; Biffy

Clyro; Blood Red Shoes; Minor Threat.

Hear them here:

www.myspace.com/phantomtheory

Whatever happened to... those heroes

Shake Appeal

WHO?

Cult local heroes in the mid-to-late-1980s, Shake Appeal were a rare band that united the disparate tribes of Oxford gig-goers, appealing across the board to metal, punk, indie and goth fans. The band consisted of Adam Franklin and Jimmy Hartridge on guitars, Adi Vines on bass, Paddy Pulzer on drums and Adam's brother Graham on vocals. Adam and Paddy previously played in Splatter Babies with future Talulah Gosh singer Amelia Fletcher, while Jimmy and Graham played together in The Roadrunners. The quartet were united by their shared love of all things Stooges and MC5 and decided to form a band in tribute to those twin giants of the Detroit scene, even naming the band after a Stooges song. Adam was originally the bassist but switched to guitar when Paul Wilson, then Richard Mason then eventually Adi joined. Their riotous and packed gigs attracted the attention of *Sounds* writer Roger Holland who released the band's only single, 'Gimme Fever', on his NoTown label.

WHAT?

"Stoner rock played by speed-freaks," is how Adam describes the band. Shake Appeal played raw, abrasive garage rock directly inspired by The MC5 and The Stooges. The band's gigs reflected their primal sound, with shows at venues like the Wheatheaf finding the band playing in the crowd or atop the PA system, or performing chaotic, mis-tuned sets alongside My Bloody Valentine in London squats.

WHEN?

In the late-80s Shake Appeal dominated Oxford's live scene even more than Talulah Gosh. They could pack out the Co-Op Hall (now the O2 Academy's upstairs venue), which was unusual for a local band. As well as 'Gimme Fever', they appeared on the 1988 scene-defining

compilation 'The Jericho Collection', contributing the track 'Rollercoaster' (produced by Tim Turan). Their penultimate gig was at Oxford Polytechnic where they stole a huge lump of cheese from the dressing room fridge, only to have their equipment held hostage until they returned it the next day.

WHY?

Shake Appeal will be known as the band that spawned Swervedriver. Adam, Jimmy and Adi formed Swervedriver together and signed to Creation Records after Ride's Mark Gardener passed a demo on to Alan McGee. Adam also recalls meeting Ed O'Brien in New York a few years ago and the Radiohead guitarist telling him that in the early days they couldn't get a gig in Oxford because they didn't sound like Shake Appeal. "The fact that they went on to become the biggest band in the world from not sounding like Shake Appeal pretty much sums up our influence on the scene!"

WHERE?

Post-split, Graham moved to Poole where he formed an electronic trance outfit called Dimension 5 who reformed last year for some shows in Holland. Paddy lives in London and has played drums with bands such as Jack and Rosita and currently plays in the Garden City Project. Adi Vines left Swervedriver to form Skyscraper before returning to guitar teching, and was Steve Jones' tech for the Sex Pistols recent show in London. Paul Wilson lives on a barge in Oxford and still plays in bands. Jimmy and Adam reformed Swervedriver last year and play the Academy on Thursday 26th November. Adam has also recently recorded his third solo album and will be touring with his band Bolts of Melody again in the New Year.

HOW?

As with so many bands of the pre-digital age, there is nothing available to buy by Shake Appeal, however a number of Shake Appeal live recordings will shortly be making their way into the British Library via The Gerzon Contemporary Music Archive, which is a project to digitise and preserve the remarkable collection of live music recordings made by the late Michael Gerzon. Details online soon at sounds.bl.uk



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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

BALLS DEEP

It's a month of stark contrasts in this demo pile, with a right old bunfight for the coveted Demo Of The Month slot on one hand and full-on dogfight amongst the rest to avoid the ignominy of the Demo Dumper. With a fair few demo page regulars popping up to enhance or puncture their reputation, the top review – by the shortest of lengths – goes to this weirdo bunch, a bass, vocals and drum duo formed from the ashes of previous local leftfield bands Twat Trot Tra La and Prefontaine. Theirs is an ugly, rumbling, constipated form of psychedelic blues, an untidy mess of fantastically dirty bass rattle and hum, tumultuous drum riot and creep-in-the-cellar vocals that might just squeeze its pug-ugly butt onto the sofa in between PiL, Liars, Can and Sex Gang Children. It's so devoid of beauty or passion or anything of those other things we tend to think constitute the vital statistics of pop music it, like a mutant bullfrog, is a wonder of nature all by itself. 'She's Working That Meat Draw' is the musical equivalent of being drooled over by Jabba The Hut but hypnotically fascinating, while the relatively more restrained 'No Arms, No Qualms' is an imp pit of disorientated circle dancing, bass squelches and lost tribal drum jam-outs. As unlike a potential *X-Factor* winner as it's probably possible to get. Wonderful.

DEAR CITY

In any other month and all that... Dear City sees the return of prolific local musician and producer Phill Honey, here providing all the musical back-up to singer Camille Baziadoly and a follow-up to their last, mildly intoxicating recordings, which also only just missed out on the DOTM title. This is chilled, woozy electro-folk music that's halfway up the moonlit hill between a haunted Victorian romance novel and atmospheric long-lost 80s pop types AC Marias. Phill's uneasy Radiohead-styled electro ambience circles neatly, occasionally imperiously, around Camille's hushed, breathless croon on 'Rip', like the soundtrack to a gothic vampire flick, while on 'Among Three' he provides genially robotic chitter-chatter back-up to Camille's very obviously enchanting voice. There are times when it all threatens to sink into lazy reverie, and the acoustic 'Stranger Guest' sounds pretty but shallow on first listen, but

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the pair have a subtle way of building up the intensity, whether it's a rising, circling waltz or a moon-gazing sleepwalk, and while you wonder if they could retain your attention over a full album, over four songs here, it's an enveloping trip.

BOYWITHATOY

Ah, Phill Honey, back again already? It hardly seems five minutes since we were last praising your musical efforts. Under his Boywithatoy guise – along with Smilex's Lee Christian – Phill has twice won Demo Of The Month, but, while this new demo isn't quite as good as previous recordings, it's as much to do with the quality of the competition (including his own) as any great failings here that mark him down. For anyone unacquainted with Boywithatoy, the combination of one-time Rock Of Travolta guitarist and current member of electro-goth rockers Delta Frequency Phill with frontman of sleaze-rockers Smilex Lee might lead along many potential musical paths, but Prince's 'Alphabet Street' wouldn't be the obvious one. But, so it turns out to be as the pair rediscover 80s funk and disco, complete with the sort of sax warbles that make you think Dick Morrissey must have sneaked in the room after ruining yet another Gary Numan album. At their best, Boywithatoy pump it out convincingly, mincing predatorily along dressed in a glittery catsuit and sporting a neatly trimmed 'tache and goatee combo, somewhere between Funkadelic and Studio 54, but with a crackly lo-fi edginess to it. They lose it a bit in the drug haze sludge of 'There Is No Love Heavier Than The One You Inflict Upon Yourself', but even this mildly hysterical goth disco hissy fit possesses more real soul than an entire MTV weekend special of Leona Lewis hits.

HUCK

Talking of unexpected musical outcomes, Huck isn't the sort of thing we'd expect from Sextodecimo bassist Humphrey Astley. But then, like many other musicians who have pushed the boundaries at one extreme, the temptation is to throw yourself to the far end of the room, the prime example being Swans' Michael Gira – arch noisemonger-turned-gothic folk crooner. And so Humph takes a break from creating sludge-metal black holes to explore the world of acoustic folk-blues. Live he is joined by fellow Sexto chap Tony Longfellow as well as Borderville's flamboyant frontman Joe Swarbrick, but here at least it's mostly just him and an acoustic guitar. His chief weapon, though, is his voice, a rich, broken-hearted drawl that falls between Will Oldham and

Johnny Cash, ruminating on the soul-destroying qualities of MDMA, resurrecting the lost art of whistling or coming on all strung out and sparse on demo highlight 'The Fall'. Humphrey revisits the legend of Stagger Lee Shelton on 'Stagorlee', sung from his girlfriend's point of view, while 'Passion Man' is a rollicking blues stomp with a full band back-up. Raw, rootsy and authentic, it's fantastic to hear someone so talented and effective in such diverse musical directions.

VAPOUR TRAIL

Previous recipients of both critical kickings and damning faint praise in these pages, Vapour Trail do at least seem to have a sense of humour and perspective on their plight, likening their relationship with Nightshift to an eager-to-please housewife who cooks up a delicious dinner every night, only to be rewarded with a slap to the face. Which makes us feel like right old meanies, but the good news for the poor, put-upon popstrels is that they're really getting a lot better and we're more inclined to wrap a comforting arm around them this time than wallop them with the buckle end of our belt. They open with 'Olympic', a doodly electro-pop number that marries sprightly tinkling synths to a blokey Blur-like jangle. Thereafter they make a play for 'End Of The Century'-style reflectiveness but now seem prepared to canter into the setting sun instead of moping about on the sofa, hoping a passing girl might take pity on them. 'Pearls' is all big grand indie rock gestures with epic horns and strings and bold balladeering, while 'Gods With Guitars' lumbers into the full rock'n'soul showboating arena. The demo does start to outstay its welcome by the sixth number, a Small Faces-style bounce, but a cheeky acoustic take on Ride's 'Vapour Trail' is both sweet and respectful and makes us think next time we pop round we'll remember to take flowers and chocolates.

TWIZZ TWANGLE

And thus to the dregs. Like Phill Honey, Twizz Twangle is a demo page regular and, like Phill, is one of that select bunch who have ended up at the bottom and top of the heap in the past. Here, with his first offering in a long while, Twizz almost becomes the first person ever to get Demo Dumped either side of a Demo Of The Month. Truly this is a wretched excuse for anything resembling music. It's a one-track, two-minute demo that consists of nothing more or less than some randomly twanged guitar and some breathless, faux-Gregorian moaning that sounds a bit like the death throes of a cartoon sperm whale. With acute indigestion. It's absolutely beyond rubbish. But it's kind of what we expect from Twizz. And because his random journeys into sound can occasionally produce something approaching lunatic genius, we forgive him almost anything. Plus, there are, unbelievably, worse things out there this month.

THE RYMANS

The Rymans' Myspace address has them called The Fucking Rymans, and that's what we'll refer to them from hereon in, since they're so fucking rubbish. Rubbish to the point we assumed it was a joke – not a particularly funny joke, mind, but a joke nonetheless, concocted after far too many cheeky Vimtos of a Sunday afternoon – but they've got a proper Myspace site with friends and everything, so we have to conclude, with heavy hearts, that they honestly thought this was worth using up precious hours of their lives on. It sounds like a half-awake jangle-pop pastiche of George Formby, entered in a student talent competition with backing vocals from the college rugby club. Diddy Dick and Dom have done more sophisticated sketches than this. Onward it stumbles, an incoherent, aimless thrash that only serves to confirm that everyone concerned, including the hapless listener, is wasting their time. Still, naming your band after a chain of stationery stores was never going to conjure up images of rock and roll glamour was it, and The Fucking Rymans certainly aren't David fucking Bowie.

THE DEMO DUMPER

CHIMA ANYA

And thus, local rapper Chima, one half of occasionally fun duo GTA, becomes, to our knowledge, the first person to move from Demo Dumper to Demo Of The Month and back again; a feat that's all the remarkable since he's up against Twizz Twangle. In Chima's case it's not so much his lack of ability that's the problem, but his lyrical diarrhoea, which spurts out like a burst cyst of rap cliché over an incoherent 25-track, 70-minute duration, taking in everything from homophobia to rampant, self-aggrandising sexism along the way. "I get the babes jumping / You get the gays jumping / Up and down on your dick", he offers early on, before referring to women as "fucking bitches" on 'Laid Them All'. We also learn that he's got a big willy (which, obviously, the ladies are unable to resist), and doubtless plenty more besides, but by two-thirds of the way through we'd utterly given up trying to decipher or understand what he's chatting about. And the big shame about all this is that amongst the dross, Chima again proves he's a slick rapper when he wants to be, freestyling easily with a neat flow and enough decent ideas in the production to have made up a pretty good four-song demo. 'King Of The Swingers', in particular, wades in with a jaunty thump, and anyone who can drop lines about Renaissance oil paintings surely shouldn't need to lower themselves to cheap gangsta posturing or the sort of Neanderthal bullshit that seeps noxiously from every pore of this demo.

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

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



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