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# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month.  
Issue 171  
October  
2009

# tristan & the troubadours

Oxford's own Magnificent Seven  
ride out - *Interview inside*

*plus*

News, reviews and seven pages of local gigs

photo: Marc West

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

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# NEWS

**Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU**  
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**THIS MONTH'S OX4 FESTIVAL** will feature a special Music Unconvention alongside its other attractions. The mini-convention, featuring a panel of local music people, will discuss, amongst other musical topics, the idea of keeping things local. OX4 takes place on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October at venues the length of Cowley Road, including the O2 Academy, the Bullingdon, East Oxford Community Centre, Baby Simple, Trees Lounge, Café Tarifa, Café Milano, the Brickworks and the Restore Garden Café. The all-day event has been organised by Truck and local gig promoters You! Me! Dancing! Bands already confirmed include hotly-tipped electro-pop outfit The Big Pink, improvisational hardcore collective Action Beat and experimental hip hop outfit Dälek, plus a host of local acts. Catweazle Club and the Oxford Folk Festival will also be hosting acoustic music sessions.

As well as live music, OX4 will feature slam poetry with Hammer & Tongue, while there will be opportunities throughout the afternoon to make a music video, design a record sleeve for The Magic Numbers, record a single in a mobile recording studio, write a film script and make fanzines.

Tickets for the festival are on sale now, priced £15, from the Academy, Videosyncratic and Oxfam on Cowley Road as well as online at [www.thisistruck.com](http://www.thisistruck.com). 14-18 year olds can buy tickets at a discount £12.

**THE PORT MAHON** is set to reopen for gigs at the end of October. The pub, on St Clement's, closed down at the end of 2008 but has recently been taken over by Joe Hill, who runs the Fir Tree on Iffley Road and previously fronted local rock favourites Black Candy. The venue is being given a complete refit, with a new stage as well as a new PA and lighting rig. The revamped venue will also have a new bar included. Joe is looking for reliable promoters to run regular nights at the Port, which is available seven nights a week. Talking to Nightshift about the reopening, Joe said, "From a personal point of view, having had the opportunity to have played in Black Candy at a time when there was a great deal of local support and more importantly, small venues in which to try to build a name for yourself, I understand the importance of what The Port Mahon could stand for. Oxford needs this venue and we will endeavour to support all music that graces it. Its potential is amazing and I'm really excited about it."

Interested promoters should contact Joe at [portmahon@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:portmahon@hotmail.co.uk) or call 01865 245290.

**THOM AND ANDY YORKE** have collaborated for the first time on a song to raise money for singer-songwriter Mark Mulcahy. The brothers have recorded a version of Mulcahy's 'All The Best' for a compilation album commemorating the former-Miracle Legion frontman's late wife, Melissa, who died of cancer. Thom sings lead vocals on the song, with Andy adding backing vocals. Other acts who have

contributed to the album, 'Ciao My Shining Star - The Songs Of Mark Mulcahy', include Michael Stipe, Frank Black and Mercury Rev.

**OXFORD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC** launches its autumn season this month, with an eclectic programme of world, folk and experimental music across Oxfordshire venues. Rising Scottish folk stars Lau (*pictured*), featuring Kris Drever, perform at Chipping Norton Theatre on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October, while Norwegian jazz composer Tord Gustavsen appears at the Jacqueline du Pre Building on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>. African soul diva Simphiwe Dana plays the O2 Academy on Friday 30<sup>th</sup>, while October also sees a series of concerts at Modern Art Oxford, including renowned drums and theremin duo Seb Roachford and Pamela Kurstin on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>, and local electronic experimenter PRDCTV on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup>. OCM's November programme includes virtuoso percussionist Lukas Ligeti at the Holywell Music Room on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> as well as a rare UK show by Congolese street musician collective Staff Benda Bilili at the O2 Academy on Friday 20<sup>th</sup>. Details of the full OCM autumn season are online now at [www.ocmevents.org](http://www.ocmevents.org)



**SWERVEDRIVER** play their first Oxford gig in over a decade next month. The one-time Oxford favourites, who relocated to London in the early-90s, play at the O2 Academy on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November. The band, who signed to Creation Records shortly after Ride in 1990, split in 1999 but reformed in 2008, still fronted by Adam Franklin and Jimmy Hartridge, who kickstarted their musical careers in local heroes Shake Appeal. Adam and Jimmy are set to feature in the upcoming Oxford music scene documentary *Anyone Can Play Guitar*. Tickets for the Academy show are on sale now, priced £14, from [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com) or the Academy box office.

**STORNOWAY** are set to become the first rock band ever to play at the Sheldonian Theatre this month. The local favourites play at the renowned Christopher Wren-designed theatre on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October when they'll be joined by the Oxford Millennium Orchestra for a special concert as part of Stornoway's first UK tour. The band release a new single, 'Unfaithful', on 28<sup>th</sup> September and the 800-capacity Sheldonian show will be their biggest headline gig to date. 2009 has already seen the band play four different stages at Glastonbury Festival, perform at the Radio 1 Big Weekend and record a session at the BBC's Maida Vale studios. Stornoway will release their debut album in April next year. Visit [www.myspace.com/stornoway](http://www.myspace.com/stornoway) for full tour dates.

**THIS YEAR'S WINTER WARMER** takes place at the Jericho Tavern over the weekend of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December. The annual Warmer is a mini-festival run jointly by local promoters Gappy Tooth Industries and Swiss Concrete and features two full days of live music at a bargain price. A total of 22 acts will be playing over the two days, including, Space Heroes Of The People, The Joe Allen Band, Project Adorno, Drunkenstein, Motion In Colour, Comrade Rocket, Trev Williams, Superman Revenge Squad, Vileswarm (a collaboration between David K Frampton and Euhedral), The Fox & The Bramble, Motor City Shuffle, Mr Shadow, Baby Gravy and Fuzzy Logic, with more to be confirmed. Entry to each day is £5, or £4 in advance or before 3pm. A limited number of weekend tickets will be available for £7 nearer the time. Visit [www.gappytooth.com](http://www.gappytooth.com) for more details.

**BRAINLOVE RECORDS** release a compilation album of their favourite new unsigned acts of the year. 'Fear of A Wack Planet' features a number of Oxford acts, including A Scholar & A Physician, We Aeronauts, Trademark and Keyboard Choir. The eclectic 27-track album is released on October 18<sup>th</sup> and is available for £5 via Cargo Distribution. Visit [www.brainloverecords.com](http://www.brainloverecords.com) for full details and tracklisting.

**THE ANYWAYS** reform for a special one-off gig this month. The Oxford music legends reconvene to play at the Wheatsheaf on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October, at a party to celebrate local singer-songwriter Mark Bosley's birthday. The Anyways – featured in this issue's 'Whatever Happened To Those Heroes' section, were active in the late-80s and early-90s and helped to shape the local music scene as we know it. The gig also features sets from The Mighty Redox, Twizz Twangle and Mark Bosley himself.

**PETER HOOK** will be signing copies of his new book, 'The Hacienda: How Not To Run A Club', at Borders on Magdalen Street on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October from 6pm. The Joy Division and New Order bassist recounts the story of Manchester's iconic venue and the Manchester music scene of the times.

**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](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

a quiet word with

photo: Marc West

# tristan & the troubadours

**THERE IS, IN OXFORDSHIRE,** A select group of acts that have experienced both the ignominy of the Nightshift Demo Dumper, and the glory of the Demo Of The Month award. Prolific musical mavericks like Twizz Twangle, Asher Dust and Phill Honey are three people who can be brilliant and baffling in varying measures.

No band, though, have made the move from the dumper to the top of the heap so spectacularly as Witney's Tristan & The Troubadours.

Back in late 2006 the band, then all in their early teens, submitted a demo that was so rough and rudimentary we posited that a heavily bearded caveman banging a couple of rocks together while howling at the moon would be comparative musical progress.

**FAST FORWARD TO JULY 2008** and we're marvelling at the radically improved Troubadours' new offering, with its breathless vocals, fidgety delicacy and masterful mix of fluffy jangle-pop naivety and more virulent, dark-minded underground rock. They still sound like organised chaos, but now it's thrilling, exciting, rather than desperate.

A few months later and they are Demo Of The Month for a second time, now squeezing more fun pop ideas into three-minute mini-epics than many bands manage in an lifetime, and positively oozing potential. In between they have played the Oxford Punt, exposing them to a wider local audience. They also got played on Radio 1; Huw Stephens selected them to play at Underage Festival; Blur's Alex James picked them as winners of a battle of the bands competition, while Young Knives chose the band to support them at their Academy show.

This month Tristan & The Troubadours, still in their teens, some of them still not old enough to perform in many local venues, are preparing to release their debut EP on Vacuous Pop, produced by former-Ride frontman Mark Gardener and all set to fully build on that potential.

**TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS** were formed in 2005 by schoolmates Ben Conway and Richard Smith, using toy instruments to make "an experimental punk" noise. Subsequently the pair recruited guitarists Bryony Cunningham and Sam Conway, plus drummer Rowan Brackston and keyboard player Joe Weller. This line-up played a few shows at local youth clubs but found



gigs hard to come by due to their age, all being 14 or 15.

Soon after that first, scathing review violinist Bernard Goyer joined the band's ranks and the Troubadours secured slots at Truck and Riverside Festivals. With a new found sense of musical direction Josh McAffer replaced Bryony on guitar and the seven-strong line-up was complete.

**WHAT IS STARTLING ABOUT** Tristan & The Troubadours, particularly given their age, is how difficult they are to categorise. With an expansive line-up and no obvious band leader, their disparate influences are allowed to mix like paints on a palette; their sound is dense and diverse, piano and violin equal partners to the guitars. Their songs are short, sweet and packed with a giddy, youthful exuberance, best exemplified by their gorgeous, sunshiney vocal harmonies. You might spot fleeting references to The Cure or The Velvet Underground, Clinic or Larrikin Love, even OMD, but nothing sticks for long; they sound fresh and playful one minute, brooding and pensive the next. Let's simply call it great pop music. Because that's what Tristan & The Troubadours make.

**NIGHTSHIFT TALKED TO THE** band's two founding members, Rich and Ben, and asked them first how that early panning had affected them.

BEN: "We were seriously gutted. Looking back it was an awful, awful demo. It really was poor. But when you're younger any recording is a gold disc. It definitely changed the band in some shape or form."

RICHARD: "For me it was a reality check, because it knocked all the arrogance out of us as musicians. Looking back on it, we thought we were good, definitely better than to get demo dumped, and yet we were on the back end of a damning review." Your next two demos were both Demo of the Month. How did that feel after the earlier review?

BEN: "For us, at that time it was undoubtedly the greatest compliment we could have had, because we had to work so hard creatively to achieve such a vast turnaround in fortunes."

RICHARD: "It was a dramatic change in fortune for us, because it felt like we had a foundation, a sound and perhaps that little spark we lacked previously. Especially being compared with bands like The Velvet Underground and Joy Division, it undoubtedly left a mark because these bands have such a legacy which

remains so strong and integral to us."

Were you nervous of Nightshift's response to that demo or did you feel you'd improved enough in the interim to be confident of a decent review?

BEN: "Without sounding arrogant, I was mildly confident, yet with the magazine in front of you and the previous press, nerves were an emotion which was unavoidable. The songs on that demo had a lot of ourselves in them, so the shock and surprise of critical recognition really felt amazing."

RICHARD: "I think (Smilex frontman) Lee Christian, who produced that demo, filled us with a lot of confidence about the potential of those recordings. Something we have been very lucky to have is people who do believe in us wholeheartedly. That period was so crucial to us."

**WHETHER OR NOT THAT FIRST** demo review, like a critical boot camp, helped kick Tristan & The Troubadours into shape, what is certain is the band are now one of Oxford's most promising young prospects, a joy to watch, difficult to second guess and beyond their years in terms of songwriting ambition.

Do they think having seven members with varying tastes plays a big part of that?

RICHARD: "Most definitely, because each individual person brings a new perspective on the same idea."

BEN: "Also, it gives an almost never ending source of ideas to create new music with, making it very hard to write formulaic songs."

RICHARD: "'Three Studies' was the first real song which really showed us what we could possibly do with our sound. As a song it goes through a massive journey from start to finish, both emotionally and musically and it's the varying tastes which we can use as a body for us and the audience."

The sound you make is expansive; how difficult is it to pull all that together, particularly live?

RICHARD: "There isn't an issue about us pulling it together in a live environment because we write it as a song regardless of context. At times conflict might come when actually writing the song or the arrangements of sections, whether to be restrained or not yet this just makes the songs better. Like our own little quality control test! To be honest, the real test is knowing when to stop. We have a real problem with restraining a song. It sounds clichéd but sometimes

less is more. It just gets a bit boring not playing on stage!"

#### WHEN THE TROUBADOURS

were picked to play the Oxford Punt in 2008 they were forced to change venues at the last minute when the landlord of their planned venue realised they were too young to be in his pub. Most of them were only 14 or 15 when they started gigging; what obstacles did they come up against getting shows?

RICHARD: "The same as any other young band really, it's always been a bit of a problem for us, age. Even now, we still have members in the band who are under 18 so it's something which never properly goes away for us at the moment. It just makes it difficult to really reach our full potential, because part of being in a band is reaching out to audiences and at times it feels like we really can't do that because of something so trivial as an age restriction."

BEN: "In a weird way, I think it's better the obstacles were there. When we first started we weren't ready. If we'd been able to play wherever we wanted we wouldn't still be together today. In the early days the only place we could play was the Port Mahon; they were incredibly facilitating. But having gigs occasionally made them more eventful. Obviously it's been annoying in recent years because Sam and Josh are still 15 and 16 respectively, so there are still barriers. But in those early days our age was a boon, people took note of us who would never have looked twice at an older band playing our songs."

Being so young and coming from Witney, did you ever feel excluded from the Oxford music scene?

RICHARD: "It's definitely something which worries me, not because I feel like there is anything malicious in the scene but just because of our age, and the fact it is hard to integrate within the scene when you can't be a permanent feature of it. It's just something which is hard as a young band, it's why there is something really refreshing with the likes of From Here, We Run! and Hearts In Pencil on the scene, because they are people who are roughly our age, sharing the same musical influences."

The reception you've had in the last 18 months, both in Oxford and beyond, has been extremely positive. What have been the key moments?

RICHARD: "Nearly all of the reception we have received has been brilliant; we've been lucky to only really have the one bad review so far, which was the Demo Dumper. The key moments, which have really made the last 18 months, are more actual gigs. Just because with a gig the audience feeds off you, off the venue and it's the same for us. If the audience is massively receptive, then

you put more into making it special for them."

BEN: "I think easily the Saturday show we did at Truck Festival a couple of years ago: the tent was rammed, the sun was out, we couldn't all fit on stage and as a band it was the first time we struck that balance of a tight show and a live show, something which is always crucial."

RICHARD: "To be tight and entertaining is such a hard thing to do for us. Truck proved we could do it."

"Without trying to have a massive list, the time we got played on Radio 1 for the first time on Hew Stephens' show was just incredible. We were in the final four of a competition to play Underage Festival and got played on the live show because The Mystery Jets picked us themselves."

#### THIS MONTH THE BAND'S

debut EP is released, featuring live favourite 'This Is To Be', which was originally included on the band's second Demo Of The Month. The EP has been produced by Mark Gardener. What was it like for the band to work with him?

RICHARD: "Obviously we had heard of Ride, and the impact and influence they had, but what struck us when meeting Mark for the first time was him as a person and his whole ethos of creating music. When talking through how he wanted to record the EP, the energy he wanted to convey and the sense of being a band and not individuals, really made us believe in his ethos of music comes first, technicalities later. It made music for me seem more real."

BEN: "The recording process, because of the facilities we were exposed to, really brought out a sound and energy we didn't know we had. The whole process was organic, yet controlled by a common purpose."

What advice would you yourselves now give to a new young band starting out?

BEN: "We could still do with some fucking advice!"

RICHARD: "Yeah, it's hard to know exactly, because we are still very much starting out but honesty in the music and passion, a self-awareness and imagination. One thing we have learned is that musical talent isn't everything."

#### THE CONCEPT OF MUSICAL

talent isn't an exact science; simply being able to create great pop music is a talent in itself, which puts Tristan & The Troubadours in the top stream already. And if the "advice" we offered in that first demo review helped put them up there, they're flying on their own steam now.

*'This Is, To Be' is released this month on Vacuous Pop. The band play the Jericho Tavern on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Visit [www.myspace.com/tristanandthetroubadours](http://www.myspace.com/tristanandthetroubadours).*



## October

Every Monday

### THE FAMOUS MONDAY NIGHT BLUES

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5<sup>th</sup> **GEOFF AICHISON & THE SOULDIGGERS** (Australia)

12<sup>th</sup> **PAUL LAMB & THE KINGSNAKES** (UK)

19<sup>th</sup> **THE OLI BROWN BAND** (UK)

26<sup>th</sup> **THE JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR BAND** (UK)

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13<sup>th</sup> **THE HUGH TURNER BAND**

20<sup>th</sup> / 27<sup>th</sup> **THE HOWARD PEACOCK QUINTET**

Wednesdays

21<sup>st</sup> **I LIKE TRAINS / SPIRAL 25 / SWIMMING**

Thursdays

1<sup>st</sup> **TWIN ATLANTIC / FAILSAFE / TARGET 9**

8<sup>th</sup> **ECLECTIC - TOTALLY ENORMOUS EXTINCT**

**DINOSAURS** / Get Yer Geek DJ. 10pm; £5

15<sup>th</sup> **BIG NIGHT OUT.** *Children In Need benefit with*

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29<sup>th</sup> **STATE OF UNDRRESS**

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### BACKROOM BOOGIE

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

Friday Early Shows

2<sup>nd</sup> **TWISTED WHEEL / 12 DIRTY BULLETS**

16<sup>th</sup> **AGENTS OF JANE / THE ELRICS /**

**QUADROPHOBIA.** *Friends of the Earth benefit. £5 adv.*

30<sup>th</sup> **MELTING POT** presents **BANDS TBC**

*Includes entry to Backroom Boogie afterwards*

Saturdays

3<sup>rd</sup> **SIMPLE** (electro-house club night) with **MOWGLI** / 10-3am

10<sup>th</sup> **OX4** featuring **DALEK** / more

17<sup>th</sup> **SOUL & REGGAE NIGHT**

24<sup>th</sup> **3 DAFT MONKEYS / INFLATABLE BUDDHA /**

**SCARLET IN THE WILDERNESS**

31<sup>st</sup> **THE CHAPMAN FAMILY / VIXENS / THE GULLIVERS**

Sundays

4<sup>th</sup> **COMEDY CLUB** with **ROB DEERING / TANYA LEE**

**DAVIS** plus compere **SILKY.** 8-11pm; £7.50 / £6.50

11<sup>th</sup> **BIG COLOURS JAZZ BAND**



## DR SLAGGLEBERRY

### 'The Slagg Factory'

(Crash)

The conundrum of how conjoined twins decide between them which way to walk, run or whatever was brought into grotesque focus by The League Of Gentlemen's brilliant *Psychoville* series earlier this year, and it's something this mini-album by Chinnor-based math-metal trio Dr Slaggleberry reminded us of. Part prog, part metal, a tiny weeny bit jazz, partway between the worlds of King Crimson and Meshugga, they are a band that sounds like a car being driven with three people's hands on the wheel and three feet hovering over the brake pedal. Who's steering who, and who decides when to stop, speed up or veer to the left?

Dr Slaggleberry are a band formed by three drummers, two of whom switched to guitar and their focus on rhythmic precision is what defines them. As it is their syncopation is never in any doubt as they career through a tumultuous cacophony of finely shredded guitars and offbeats, all riffs and rhythm and, despite the



angles and tangents, a singular sense of purpose that many far more straightforward rock bands never achieve. In the end, who is following whom never comes into it since the trio sound like one huge multidextrous beast. They also manage to make virtuosity sound accessible, instead of an indulgent puddle of self-satisfied boffin piss. And, most of important, they rock. Like bastards.

**Dale Kattack**

## FACEOMETER

### 'To Infinitives Split'

(Own label)

As his album title suggests, Faceometer, aka Will Tattersdill, is a wordy type of songsmith. Sometimes this makes for clever, funny entertainment; sometimes it just makes him sound like an annoying smart Alec. Sometimes Will just comes across as a pretty decent singer and songwriter, free of frills or fripperies. There's evidence of all of these here. Most of the best stuff – album opener 'Everybody's Alright', 'A Strange Visitor', 'Stuffed Animals' – finds him keeping it simple. 'Everybody's Alright' is uncharacteristically downbeat, harmonica and accordion backing up his contemplative shanty. 'A Strange Visitor' finds him telling a tale of a building-sized duck that comes to town in the middle of the night, complete with the sound of pouring rain in the background. Such whimsical lyrical detours are commonplace.

Where Will falls into the annoying bastard-son-of-Richard-Stilgoe trap is on songs like 'Shaking Sabres', that additionally stumbles by being a horribly clunky 70s rock chug, when, as on 'Song For The Summer' he shows he can tread far more lightly, into Eastern European polka or Parisian café pop, as well as simple acoustic folk-pop.

Where Will is both clever and entertaining is the expansive 'The Irritating Maze', featuring a cast of guests that includes MC Lars and tells a tale of a mythical underground maze that defeats all but a geeky IT guy. It's like a provincial amateur

dramatics production composed after the village hall tea urn was spiked with magic mushrooms.

It's impossible to shake off Will's likeness to Jeffrey Lewis; it would be easy for the uninitiated listener to think they had stumbled across some obscure lost Lewis number much of the time. That aside, when he isn't cramming too many ideas into too short a space of time, as if he's having trouble keeping up with his own train of thought, Will is a compelling campfire storyteller, with a pleasingly oblique outlook.

**Dale Kattack**

## STORNOWAY

### 'Unfaithful'

(Own Label)

A re-recorded version of the lead song from Stornoway's 2008 'Good Fish Guide' EP, 'Unfaithful' finds the band produced by Craig Silvey, who has worked with Portishead, The Horrors and the Coral, and he brings out the powerhouse anthem in the song. As ever Brian Briggs' voice dominates, unfurling like a Pacific sunrise as violin and guitar squall and squabble in uneasy union beneath (the instrumental version of the song included here allows you to appreciate the subtle tension beneath what appears to be a languorous folk-rock carousel best). It's as romantic and grand as we've come to expect from Stornoway, a band who seem to conjure epic, timeless pop songs from the earth with enviable ease.

**Dale Kattack**

## COGWHEEL DOGS

### 'Greenhorn'

(Own Label download only)

In Alan Moore's cult classic story, *The Ballad Of Halo Jones*, the eponymous heroine is asked why she has chopped her hair into an untidy mess. "Because I wanted to make myself look ugly," she retorts. You might ask the same of Cogwheel Dogs and their treatment of their songs on this debut EP. Cogwheel Dogs are the band formed by singer-guitarist Rebecca Mosley and cellist Tom Parnell and seem to be a vehicle for demolishing Rebecca's previous reputation as a sweet-natured folky singer. Across these four songs her voice ranges from a husky growl, through a child-like whisper to a frantic witchy yelp, while Tom's cello slashes through the melodies like a chainsaw, salvos of drums intermittently shattering any promised calm along the way.

'Kitchen' feels less like a song, more a final, dazed report from the haunted galley of a capsizing ship, while 'Spit' is spiteful and glowering, the brutish sound of a song clambering awkwardly but with resolute determination up a collapsing scaffold tower, Rebecca howling like Tanya Donnelly at her most maniacal. The effect across the EP is powerful and dramatic, like the wide-eyed, blood-drenched figure of Carrie at that film's school prom climax. Cogwheels go all out to make themselves sound ugly, but in doing so, they only serve to expose the mad, eccentric beauty within.

**Victoria Waterfield**

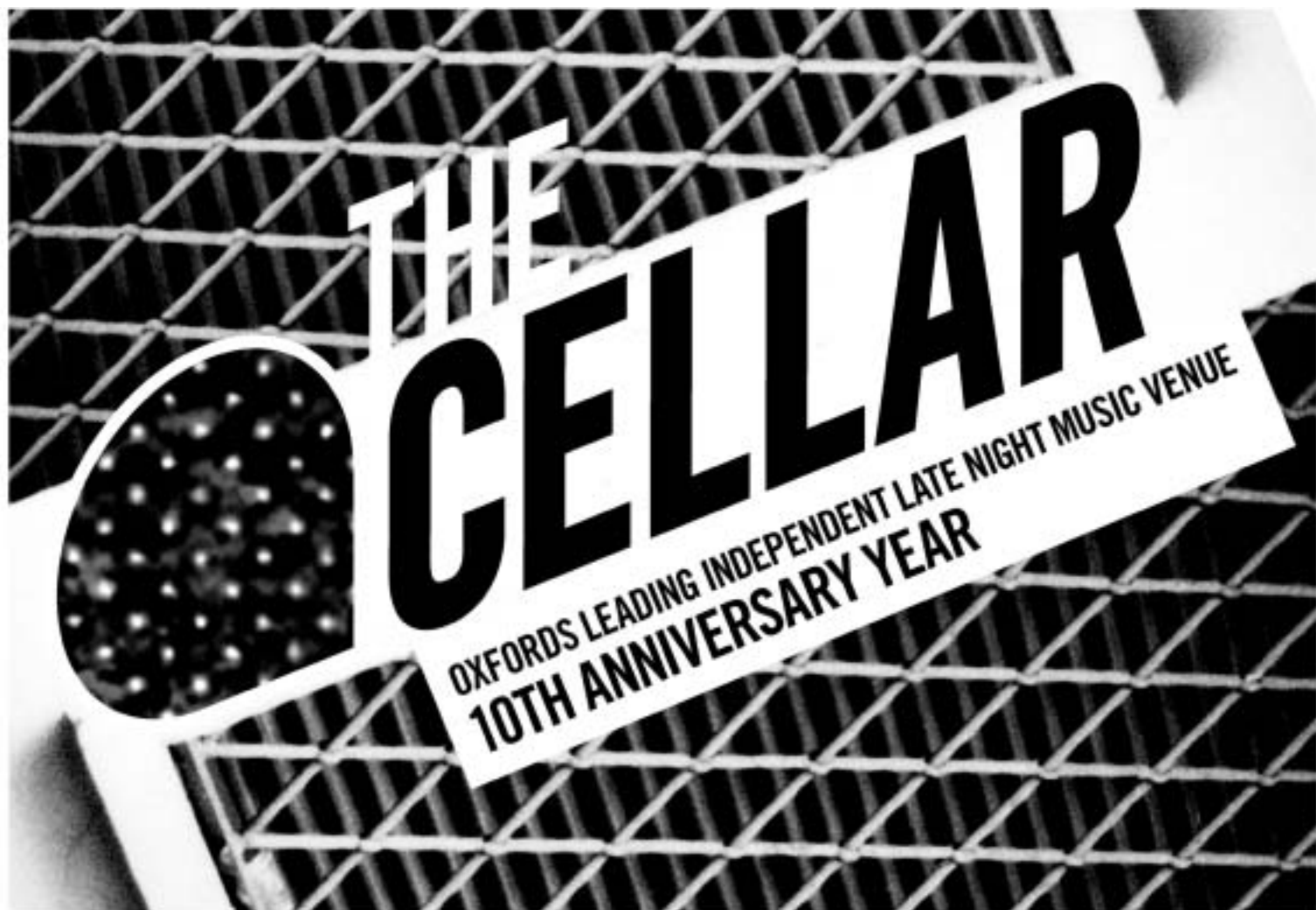
## AGENTS OF JANE

### 'Nova Scotia'

(Free Download)

Following on from last year's well-received debut album, 'Karoake Boy', local folksters Agents Of Jane offer this new free download single, a more strained-sounding effort than the languid, reflective nature of that album's high points. Here they aim for the heroic power-folk of early Waterboys, although 'Nova Scotia' might well find itself as at home with the likes of Deacon Blue or, oh yes, David Gray. The pastoral poetry is replaced by a driven style that you can see turning more heads in a crowded pub venue but maybe lacks the personality of songs like 'Harbour' or 'Elspeth' and needs the strings and female backing vocals that added such character to their strongest material. Pleasant, passable stuff then, but we feel they've got better songs in them than this.

**Dale Kattack**



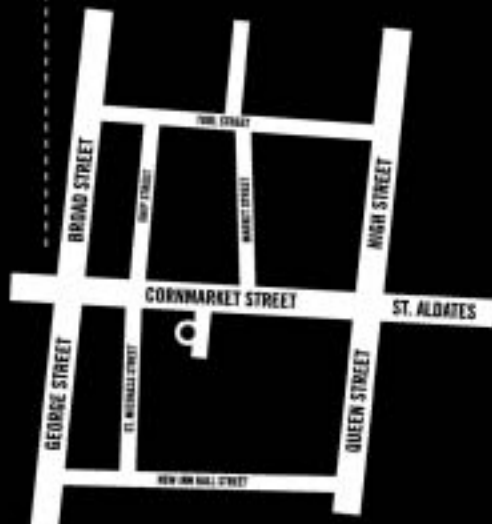
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### **Sundays**

**SUNDAY ROAST** – Tea, cake and rock  
'n' roll (bands & djs)

### **Mondays**

**THE FREE BEER SHOW**  
Stand Up Comedy Club

### **Tuesdays**

**INTRUSION** – Goth, Industrial &  
Darkwave (dress code) DJs

**MIS-SHAPES** – new bands followed by  
indie/alt DJs (bands & DJs)

### **Wednesdays**

**FREE RANGE**  
Drum & Bass & Dubstep DJs

**PHAT SESSIONS** – Open Jam Session  
+ house band – Bring your Tools (bands)

### **Thursdays**

**BIG HAIR** – Indie, Rock, 80's,  
Pop & Stuff (bands & DJs)

**ECLECTRICITY** – Electro, Techno,  
Party Bangers and other treats (DJs)

### **Fridays**

#### **SKYLARKIN' SOUNDSYSTEM**

Reggae, Soul, Rhythm & Bouncehall  
(bands & DJs)

#### **BOSSAPHONIK**

World breaks & Dancefloor Jazz  
(bands & DJs)

#### **BASSMENTALITY**

Bassline house, Hip Hop, Old Skool  
& Reggae (bands & DJs)

#### **HQ**

Cutting Edge Drum & Bass (DJs)

### **Saturdays**

#### **VACUOUS POP**

hot live bands and DJs

#### **BIG HAIR**

Indie, Rock, 80's, Pop & Stuff  
(bands & DJs)

#### **FRESH OUT THE BOX**

House, Breaks & Beats (DJs)

# GIG GUIDE

## THURSDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**BEN TAYLOR: O2 Academy** – Anodyne soul and funk-flavoured folk from the son of Carly Simon and James Taylor.

**NOAH & THE WHALE: O2 Academy** – The pastoral popsters discover the art of sad – *see main preview*

**TWIN ATLANTIC: The Bullingdon** – Melodic post-hardcore and grungy powerpop from Glasgow's Twin Atlantic, out on tour to promote their debut album, 'Vivarium', after supporting Biffy Clyro, Smashing Pumpkins and most recently, Taking Back Sunday.

**PULLED APART BY HORSES + THAT**

**FUCKING TANK: The Jericho Tavern** – Bargain £1 gig from You! Me! Dancing! with recent Truck Festival stars Pulled Apart By Horses showing off their frantic, chaotic showmanship in the vein of Nation Of Ulysses, plus strung-out angular prog noise from That Fucking Tank.

### Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>

## NOAH & THE WHALE: O2 Academy

That Noah & The Whale release their second album, entitled 'The First Days Of Spring', preceded by a single called 'Blue Skies', just as autumn kicks in suggests mischief at work. But there's more. The joyous, harmony-heavy summery pop of their debut is gone; in its place is a darker, starker style of pop awash with the perfume of loss and regret. It's quite a change of tack. The reason for all that is that since the band's gold-selling debut, 'Peaceful, The World Lays Me Down', singer and songwriter Charlie Fink has split up with long-time girlfriend and previously Noah & The Whale's backing vocalist Laura Marling. So he's sad. And so a narrative thread runs through the new album from the initial break-up to Fink's resigned acceptance of the situation towards the end. But his loss is our gain as the music is more complex and orchestral than before, taking in massed choirs, church bells and pedal steel, alongside his doleful, Will Oldham-like vocals. There's no chirpy female backing vocals to be heard (as well as Marling, Emmy the Great has chirruped merrily for Noah & The Whale previously), but whether that means there'll be no 'Five Years Time' tonight is anyone's guess. What we will get, for certain, is a live rendition of a great modern-day break-up album.

## OCTOBER

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – With guests The Juliet Kelly Band.

**MIMI SOYA: Fat Lil's, Witney**

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford**

**Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

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

## FRIDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**TWISTED WHEEL: The Bullingdon** – Highly-touted Mancunian youngsters who recently supported Oasis at their hometown Heaton Park shows, as well as Paul Weller. Named after Manchester's legendary northern soul club, their sinewy indie-punk mixes up various parts

**Libertines, Arctic Monkeys and The Clash.**

**THE XX + EBSN & THE WITCH: The Jericho Tavern** – After their showing at Truck, London's XX return to Oxford; in between they've supported Florence & The Machine on tour. Their downbeat electro-tinged soul pop takes inspiration from 90s r'n'b as well as early-80s indie, its sparse minimalism offset by the highly-charged boy-girl vocals and a Foals-y math-pop edge.

**HEY MONDAY + EVERY AVENUE + OUT OF SIGHT + STEREO SKYLINE: O2 Academy** – Florida's punky power-pop crew come to the UK after supports to The Academy Is and Fallout Boy.

**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE NIGHT TERRORS + SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE + FUZZY LOGIC: The Wheatsheaf** – Bit of an extra special Klub Kak tonight, with the visit of Australia's spaced-out theremin-led electro instrumentalists The Night Terrors, stewing up a heavyweight storm of psychedelic synth noise. Local fidgety electro-rock faves Space Heroes provide suitably robotic support.

**THE ZZ TOPS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Tribute to the Texan boogie masters.

**UK VOMIT + NEAR THE KNUCKLE + ALMOST PRESIDENTS + BLAME JACK + WE'RE NOT MEXICANS: The Pavilion, Chinnor** – Anarchy comes to Chinnor with thrash-punkers UK Vomit and ska and dub-punkers Near The Knuckle.

**SKYLARKIN': The Cellar** – Ska, soul, rock'n'roll and more with Count Skylarkin and Bristol's legendary ska DJ Derek, plus a live set from local jump-up jazz monsters The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band.

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

**BIG NIGHT OUT: Freud** – Children In Need benefit with world music from Garvin Dan.

**GET DOWN: The Brickworks**

## SATURDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**GO AUDIO: O2 Academy** – Return trip to the Academy for the electro-tinged emo-lite crew who make Fightstar sound like Pantera.

**THE NOMINEES + SIERRA ALPHA: The Wheatsheaf**

**TREMBLING BELLS: The Jericho Tavern** – Eccentric folk-cum-electro-pop from the Scottish oddballs.

**YOU ANIMALS + THESE WAVES + VIXENS: The Cellar** – Vacuous Pop presents a double dose of Derby rock, with former-Komakino types You Animals providing a sprightly, breezy and highly infectious dose of pop-punk, while These Waves squeeze in between emo and math-rock.

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

**SLIDE: The Bullingdon** – Electro house with Mowgli.

**EYECON: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Mod covers.

**REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern** – Roots, dub and rocksteady every week.

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Black Bull, Kidlington**

## SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**ZU + DR SLAGGLEBERRY + DRUNKENSTEIN: The Wheatsheaf** – Mayhem math-metal spazzcore Italian style – *see main preview*

**DANIEL MERRIWEATHER: O2 Academy** – Timberlake-style r'n'b from the Aussie singer best known for his work with Mark Ronson, out on tour to plug recent Number 2 album 'Love & War'.

**JOAN BAEZ: The New Theatre** – Without doubt a musical – and political – legend. Baez's 50-year musical career has seen her release some 30 albums, moving from the early-60s folk revolution scene (along with then-boyfriend Bob Dylan), through a career that's taken in gospel, blues, rock and country. Her collaborations reads like an A-Z of rock's great and good through the years, from Paul Simon to Bruce Springsteen, while her tireless campaigning for civil rights, anti-war and environmental causes would be enough on its own to secure a place in the history books.

**THE FIREFLIES + BEARD OF DESTINY + MOON LEOPARD + THE NEW MOON: Donnington Community Centre**

## MONDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**GEOFF ACHISON & THE SOULDIGGERS:**

**The Bullingdon** – Melbourne's blues-rock singer and guitarist returns to the Famous Monday Blues, accompanied by his UK touring band, adding a funky edge to acoustic and electric blues in the style of all the Kings – BB, Freddie and Albert.

**FANFARLO + FIRST AID KIT: The Jericho Tavern** – The orchestral Anglo-Swedish troupe return to Oxford after their epic showing at Truck, leaning towards Arcade Fire's elegant form of expansive pop. Stockholm's First Aid Kit claim to sound like Gary Numan if he made folk music, and we're not going to disagree. The wee sweeties.

## TUESDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO: O2 Academy** – Having seemingly produced any band of significance





in recent times (from Arctic Monkeys to Peaches and Klaxons), James Ford and Jas Shaw find time to record their own, second, album, 'Temporary Pleasure', packed to the rafters with heavy electro grooves as well as guest spots by Gruff Rhys and Beth Ditto, and calling all stations marked krautrock, soul, rave and hip hop.

**BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB: O2 Academy** – Having only just finished school, north London's Bombay Bicycle Club set about living up to the initial hype surrounding them. Debut album, 'I Had The Blues But I Shook Them Loose', is full of their trademark slacker fuzz, heavy rock thrash and melodic fragility that earns them a secure perch between the Strokes, My Bloody Valentine and Pavement, and if higher education don't get 'em first, then bicycles will be riding high pretty soon.

**JOHNNY FOREIGNER + TELLISON + JAPANESE VOYEURS: The Jericho Tavern** – Turbo-charged electro-core from Birmingham's Johnny Foreigner, back in town for more party-friendly mayhem, coming on like a cross between Pixies and Los Campesinos with their frenetic but catchy pop and squabbling boy-girl vocals. Fast-rising London rockers Tellison support, mixing up Fall Out Boy and Get Up Kids-style post-hardcore.

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Free weekly live jazz, with tonight's guests Alvin Roy and Reeds Unlimited.

**THE SINGING BONES: The North Wall** – Atmospheric music and storytelling with The Devil's Violin Company and Daniel Morden, kicking off the new Oxford Contemporary Music autumn season.

**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: Café Tarifa**  
**OPEN MIC SESSION: Mason's Arms, Headington Quarry**

## WEDNESDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**WILD BEASTS + BLUE ROSES: O2 Academy** – Otherworldly symphonic pop from the Cumbrian outfit, last seen playing at Truck Festival. Counter-tenor vocalist Hayden Thorpe is already being compared to Anthony Hegarty, while their weirdly romantic style of pop recalls the likes of Sparks and The Associates, which has to be a very good thing indeed.

**CLUB DUB: The Cellar** – Dubstep club night.

## THURSDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**THE KING BLUES + POS: O2 Academy** – Proper old-fashioned agit-pop, punk, rap and folk from London's The King Blues, finally starting to get some press attention after years touring around in an old ambulance, playing gigs at abandoned warehouses or outside weapons factories. Initially inspired by Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine, they follow a similar path of London-centric storytelling with political polemic. They're an eclectic bunch though, sounding like a mad old mix of The Streets, The Pogues, Green Day and Jamie T.

**BAT FOR LASHES: O2 Academy** - Natasha Khan returns - *see main preview*

**WINCHELL RIOTS + CARETAKER + PHANTOM THEORY: The Cellar** – The local indie faves start their monthly residency at the Cellar, coming in between Snow Patrol's epic pop grandeur and Sigur Ros' glacial intricacy. Hampshire's serrated hardcore noisemongers Caretaker and local hard rocking riff monsters Phantom Theory support.

**HEARTS IN PENCIL + SPRING OFFENSIVE + PICTUREHOUSE: The Jericho Tavern** – Promising indie-punk from Hearts In Pencil, plus anthemic guitar pop from Spring Offensive.

**HOMELIFE: Modern Art Oxford** – OCM's new season of early evening gallery gigs starts off with experimental ambient duo Paddy Steer and Tony Bumside.

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – With guests Tommaso Starace Quintet.

**ECLECTRICITY: The Bullingdon** – Electro and house club night with a live set from Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs, plus DJs.

**BIG NIGHT OUT: Café Tarifa** – Children In Need benefit with Nikki Loy, plus DJ Garvin Dan.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford**

**Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

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

## FRIDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**EASTPAK ANTIDOTE TOUR with ALEXISONFIRE + ANTIFLAG + GHOST OF A THOUSAND: O2 Academy** – Punk package tour featuring the return of Canadian screamo heroes Alexisonfire with their new album, 'Old Crows/ Young Cardinals', after rumours of an imminent split. There's political punk from Pittsburgh's radical veterans Anti-Flag, releasing their seventh album, 'The People Or The Gun', and back in live action after frontman Justin Sane's broken collarbone. Brighton's Epitaph-signed hardcore outfit Ghost Of A Thousand open the show.

**SLIDE with STYLE OF EYE: O2 Academy** – Electro-house and techno from Stockholm's award-winning Style Of Eye at Oxford's leading house club night.

**THE CRUSHING + VISIONS FALL: The Wheatsheaf** – Skull-threatening metal from The Crushing.

**HOPE & GLORY: The Pavilion, Chinnor** – Madness tribute band.

**THE MIGHTY REDOX: New Inn, Crawley**  
**BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar** – Jazz dance club night with live sounds from the London Afrobeat Collective, plus Latin, Balkan, nu-jazz, afrobeat and more from resident and guest DJs.

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

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

## SATURDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**OX4: Various venues, Cowley Road** – Over fifty acts, plus workshops, dance, poetry, open mic sessions and more across ten venues around Cowley Road – *See main preview*

**THE BIG PINK: O2 Academy** – The Scottish electro-rockers play as part of OX4 – *see main preview*

**DÄLEK: The Bullingdon** – Hopefully, at last, a chance to catch the New Jersey experimental industrial hip hop duo in Oxford, as part of OX4 – *see main preview*

**RZA + ACHOZEN + FRUCKWAN + MR BANG ON: O2 Academy** – The Wu Tang's main man plugs his new book with a special support set from his team-up with System Of A Down's Shavo Odadjian – *see main preview*

**KILL IT KID + SPARROW & THE WORKSHOP: The Jericho Tavern** – Authentic-sounding American blues roots from Bath's Kill It Kid, led by Chris Turpin's raw, passionate voice and epic fiddle playing. Recent Broken Records tour support Sparrow & The Workshop return to town.

**LAU: Chipping Norton Theatre** – Livewire acoustic Scottish folk from the virtuoso trio formed by singer-songwriter Kris Drever,



*Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>*

## ZU: The Wheatsheaf

Although they're rarely seen in the UK beyond appearances at All Tomorrow's Parties, Rome's Zu here play a very intimate show at the Sheaf, offering a chance to get up close and personal with one of Europe's most innovative and genre-defying bands. The Italian trio, for the most part instrumental, take in elements of free jazz, metal, punk, math-rock, electronica, improv and whatever else you can find down the back of the sofa. It's all crushed up, condensed, rolled back out and left for the listener to decipher. Whatever you call it, it's astonishing stuff: super-heavy but loose-limbed and prone to veer off at odd tangents, often depending on who they're collaborating with. Because the core trio of Zu, utilising bassoon, sax, bass, drums and electronics, love to collaborate. Last year they toured with Mike Patton as a semi-permanent member, while previously they've teamed up with The Melvins' Buzz Osbourne, Japanese house producer Nobukazu Takemura and, perhaps not surprisingly, Domo Suzuki. They've also recorded with Steve Albini and Bob Weston on the way to recording some 14 albums (no-one seems quite sure if that's the actual tally). They've also played over 1,000 shows worldwide, driven by Black Flag's DIY punk ethic. Come on, who couldn't love band who play what they themselves call a "death bassoon"? Support comes from Thame's math-core prodigies Dr Slaggleberry, firing out a determinedly wayward noise.



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*Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>*

## BAT FOR LASHES:

### O2 Academy

One of the most startling musical talents to have emerged in the past decade, it's always exciting to have Bat For Lashes back in town again. Bat For Lashes is essentially Pakistan-born, Brighton-resident singer-songwriter Natasha Khan, whose 2006 debut, 'Fur & Gold' was Nightshift's favourite album of that year and was robbed of a deserved Mercury Prize. It was a stunning debut: a twisted, haunting and completely magical journey through smouldering sensuality and raw emotion, coming from that dark corner of folk where love and death walk hand in hand in beautiful union: musically inventive, dreamlike and often arcane, full of portentous piano, viola and harpsichord dominating the treated guitars and marching drums. Everything, though centres on Natasha's exquisite vocals; she's been compared, not unfairly, with Björk, Kate Bush and Sinead O'Connor, but, gender aside, she's as close to the likes of Nick Cave and Marc Almond. This year's highly-anticipated follow up, 'Two Suns', disappointed some, who decried it as more of the same, but perhaps the truth is that it simply lacked the shock of the new that her debut possessed. And, anyway, more of the same genius is still very much a good thing, right?

accordion player Martin Green and fiddle player Aidan O'Rourke and whose tight interplay and reworked traditional sound has already earned them a Best Band title at the BBC Folk Awards. **A SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION: The Wheatsheaf** – A Night of 80s and 90s cover versions metal style with Death Valley Riders, Beelzebozo, Phantom Theory and Dedlok. **MIX & BLEND: The Cellar** – Reggae, soul, dub, funk, hip hop, drum&bass and electronica with DJs Daywalker, Sumba Youth, Garvin Dan and more. **E 4 ECHO + QUADROPHOBE + REBECCA NEALE: Folly Bridge Inn** **SHEPHERD'S PIE: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Hard rock covers. **TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy** **REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern**

## SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**EASY STAR ALL-STARS + JOHN BROWN'S BODY: O2 Academy** – Roots and dub from the New York reggae collective, now paying tribute to The Beatles after releasing 'Dub Side Of The Moon' and a dub version of 'OK Computer'. **ENTERSHIKARI + THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA: O2 Academy** – St Alban's hardcore-cum-rave warriors return, surviving last year's critical backlash and showing that sometimes rock and roll is really just about having a bit of mindless fun, in their case diving into the pit and flailing around to their heady mix of screamo guitars, rave synths, vocal chants and euphoric hooks. **BIG COLOURS BAND: The Bullingdon** – Big band jazz.

## MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**SKINDRED + DEAD BY APRIL + KARNIVOOL: O2 Academy** – Rousing hardcore'n'dub party time with Benji and the boys – *see main preview* **PAUL LAMB & THE KINGSNAKES: The Bullingdon** – One of the leading lights of the UK blues scene over the last 30 years, inducted into the British Blues Hall Of Fame and an award-winning harmonica player with few equals in modern blues. Along with Spanish guitarist Paul de Pedro Marinero he adds elements of swing and jazz to classic, laid-back electric blues.

## TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**SONIC BOOM SIX: O2 Academy** – Manchester's hard-gigging punk-hip-hop-ska battlers hit town again, tempering their Bad Brains and Specials-inspired ire with plenty of sweet Fugees-style soul-pop on recent, third, album, 'City Of Thieves'. **THE UNTHANKS: The North Wall** – Tyneside sisters Rachel and Becky Unthank return to town with their quirky and innovative form of north-eastern English traditional folk music, plugging new album, 'Here's The Tender Coming', a melancholic follow-up to the bleak, Mercury-nominated 'The Bairsns'. **JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – The Hugh Turner Band play live. **OX + THE EPSTEIN + TREETOP FLYERS: The Wheatsheaf** – Raw, soulful alt.country from Canada's Ox, plus expansive country rocking from local favourites The Epstein. **THE FANCY TOYS: The Oxford Union** – Jaunty jazz, French café pop, swing and acoustic cabaret from the idiosyncratic duo. **INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Goth, industrial, darkwave and 80s.

## WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**THE PROCLAIMERS: O2 Academy** – Always bound to be remembered for their 80s chart hits 'I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)' and 'Letter From America', Fife's identical twin brothers Charlie and Craig Reid returned to the national consciousness with the Comic Relief appropriation of their biggest hit but in the interim they've continued to tour and release increasingly accomplished albums that mix up their traditional Scottish folk ancestry with a punky attitude that complements their unwavering political campaigning, and as their showing at Cornbury Festival a couple of summers back, showed they're pretty much unbeatable for a spot of singalong folk anthem fun. The duo's latest album, 'Notes & Rhymes' has just been released. **LIGHT: The Jericho Tavern** **PHAT SESSIONS: The Cellar** – Open jam

session with in-house band Four Phat Fingers, plus DJs playing funk, soul, hip hop, dub and more.

## THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**SAVING AIMEE: O2 Academy** – St Albans' 80s-referencing rockers alternate this month headlining around the UK and supporting Fightstar on tour. They also manage the previously unthought of job of sounding like a cross between Buggles and Van Halen. **SEB ROACHFORD & PAMELIA KURSTIN: Modern Art Oxford** – Early evening gallery gig with in-demand drummer Seb Roachford, who has played with Brian Eno, Acoustic Ladyland and Polar Bear, teaming up with the UK's premier theremin player Pamela Kurstin. **BIG NIGHT OUT: The Bullingdon** – Children In Need benefit, with indie rockers InLight, plus DJs Natty Mark and Garvin Dan. **APPLE PIRATE PRESENTS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Rock, metal and indie bands night. **WE ARE ELECTRICITY: The Cellar** – New club night playing a mix of electro and techno, with DJs L-Vis, Nikniknik and Eldoko. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

*Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>*

## RZA / ACHOZEN /

### O2 Academy

There are some people you really don't expect to see performing in Oxford and RZA is definitely on that list, and the idea of seeing the de facto leader of Wu Tang Clan up on the Academy stage is something to savour. As the pivotal figure in the mercurial rap collective that was The Wu, Robert Fitzgerald Diggs, RZA as he became, plus half a dozen other aliases along the way, was responsible for the epoch-making 'Enter The Wu (36 Chambers)', which redefined hip hop, continues to cast a huge shadow across the genre and helped spawn successful solo rap careers for most of its members, from Method Man to Ghostface Killah to Raekwon. A shame then that RZA's attempts to reconvene the group for last year's '8 Diagrams' album and tour resulted in so much in-fighting and bitterness. RZA is too much of a musical maverick for his erstwhile bandmates and his move into movie soundtracks and acting in recent years shows he's happy to leave such things behind. This date is part of a tour to plug his new book, *The Tao Of Wu*, which continues to explore RZA's spiritual beliefs, taking in Buddhism, Christianity and Islam as well as philosophies gleaned from a lifetime addicted to martial arts films. Always one of hip hop's smartest and most complex characters, his place in music history is assured. As an extra bonus tonight, RZA's new project, Achozen, are supporting, featuring System Of A Down's Shavo Odadjian, while Gravediggaz' Fruckwan also puts in an appearance. Unmissable stuff.



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

## **FRIDAY 16<sup>th</sup>**

### **FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND: O2 Academy –**

Bizarre as it may seem, Bridgend's emo heroes are on tour to plug a greatest hits album, 'Your History Is Mine 2002-09', collecting together the highlights of their four albums. Expect big powerchords, pop-friendly harmonies and epic choruses from start to finish.

**HOT RATS: O2 Academy** – After their somewhat chaotic showing at Truck Festival, Gaz Coombes and Danny Goffey bring their covers band sideshow to the Academy, hopefully this time round being joined by Nigel Godrich. From The Sex Pistols and The Doors to Gang Of Four and The Cure, they kick out some of their favourite songs for fun, although we stand by our opinion that their take on 'Fight For Your Right To Party' is among the worst cover versions ever.

### **AGENTS OF JANE + THE ELRICS +**

**QUADROPHOBIA: The Bullingdon** – Benefit gig for Oxford Friends Of The Earth. Local folk-pop types Agents Of Jane release their new CD this month, plying a melancholic style of acoustic pop in the vein of Nick Drake, all poetic reflectiveness and pastoral loneliness, leavened by a breezy 60s-style Californian pop. There's lively if wacky ska-pop from Quadrophobia and promising indie rocking in the vein of Placebo from The Elrics.

### **COMPANY L + DRUNKENSTEIN + ALLEY RATS: The Wheatsheaf**

– Triple bill of punk rock noise.

**STAGECOACH + END OF LEVEL BADDIE + MY FIRST TOOTH: The Cellar** – Surrey's Alcopop-signed indie janglers Stagecoach add a touch of alt.country to their pop, taking in Lemonheads and Wilco along the way, while Brighton's End Of Level Baddie are a weirder proposition altogether, their warped, almost rockabilly style veering into Cardiacs or Very Things territory at times as well as more pop-friendly Supergrass-style moments.

**ONLOOKERS + NIGHT PORTRAITS + LIDDINGTON + THE SHAKER HEIGHTS: The Jericho Tavern** – Anthemic electro-rock from Onlookers, plus belligerent trash-pop from Night Portraits, contemplative indie pop from Liddington and rootsy Americana-tinged indie from Shaker Heights.

**NEVILLE STAPLES + THE INFLATABLES: The Palace, Witney** – The former-Specials and Fun Boy Three frontman plays all the old Two Tone favourites as well as ska and reggae classics, while local ska, reggae and soul covers band The Inflatables support.

**THE UNCHOSEN + MOTION IN COLOUR + 14TEN + TERROFRET + DESOLATE EARTH: The Pavilion, Chinnor** – Rock night at the Pavilion, with Thame's occasionally funky metallers; emotive acoustic rocking from Motion In Colour; bluesy rock from 14Ten and pop-punk from Terrorfret.

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

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

**AUDIOSCOPE: The Jericho Tavern** – Maps, The Longcut, Remember Remember and more play the annual Shelter benefit festival – *see main preview*

**CALVIN HARRIS: O2 Academy** – After his LCD Soundsystem-pillaging 2007 debut, 'I Created Disco', with all its inherent 80s references, Harris

brings himself a little bit more up to date with his new album, 'Ready For The Weekend', now pillaging the 90s, in particular that forgotten but not much missed micro-genre, handbag house, diva-ish vocals, piano riffs and all. It's cheesy old rubbish of course, but it hasn't stopped tonight selling out long ago. Today, as then, there's no accounting for taste.

**THE ANYWAYS + TWIZZ TWANGLE + THE MIGHTY REDOX + MARK BOSLEY: The Wheatsheaf** – Celebrating his birthday, local master of misery Mark Bosley gathers a goodly selection of his musical chums together for a party. And so, as well as his own dryly humorous goth-folk set, we get swamp-blues funksters The Mighty Redox and Oxford music's lunatic in residence Twizz Twangle. The real treat, though, is a rare reunion of local pop godfathers The Anyways, a timeless, pure-pop gem of a band inspired by Love, The Go-Betweens and The Byrds amongst others and a band responsible for at least a dozen of the best songs ever to come out of Oxford. See them.

**MEAN POPPA LEAN: The Cellar** – Chili Peppers and Funkadelic-flavoured funk rock from the Brighton band.

**GARY MOORE: The New Theatre** – The blues-rock hero and one-time Thin Lizzy guitarist heads out on tour in support of his recent 'Bad For You Baby' album, playing a selection of old Lizzy and solo faves along the way.

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

**SOUL & REGGAE NIGHT: The Bullingdon**  
**REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern**

**ELECTEC: Cricketers Arms** – Underground dance, Berlin techno and minimalist electronica with Aleekat and Art Lagun.

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

**IDLEWILD + XCERTS: O2 Academy** – The epic Scots rockers return – *see main preview*

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

**THE OLI BROWN BAND: The Bullingdon** – Norfolk's rising blues singer and guitarist, signed to Ruf Records and paying due respect at the altars of Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

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

**FRANK TURNER + FAKE PROBLEMS + BEANS ON TOAST: O2 Academy** – The Surrey folk-punk troubadour turned honorary Oxonian returns to Oxford after his four-night residency at the Wheatsheaf and Cellar earlier in the year, where he played a series of fanclub-only shows, showcasing new material. More recently he made a semi-secret appearance at Truck. Now the man is back on tour in earnest, armed – heavily armed it must be said – with his trademark mix of righteous political polemic and more personal songs of love and loss, all delivered with those big ol' pop hooks he does so well.

**ELECTRIC EEL SHOCK: O2 Academy** – Japan's heavy metal clown princes strip down to their socks and sideburns once again for an unabashed trip through AC/DC and Motörhead metal heaven.

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

**MINOR COLES + ATLUM SCHEMA + WISE**

**CHILDREN: The Wheatsheaf**

**ACOUSTIC NIGHT: Café Tarifa**

**BEAT KITCHEN: The Cellar** – Old school hip hop.

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



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

## **OX4: Various venues, Cowley Road**

By way of celebrating Oxford's eastern music quarter, Truck and You! Me! Dancing! are taking over ten venues along the Cowley Road for the day for a series of gigs, workshops, open mic sessions and more. The emphasis is on local bands but there are a few star turns from out of town too, notably Scotland's rising electro-pop stars **The Big Pink**, whose anthemic 'Dominoes' single seems to be everywhere at the moment, and justifiably so, since their mix of Glasvegas-style anthemic pop and MGMT-like electro-rock is simply great. They're at the Academy, while a few yards down the road at the Bullingdon, New Jersey experimental hip hop team **Dälek** bring their heavyweight beats and samples for a first ever Oxford show. Elsewhere Bletchley's improv hardcore collective **Action Beat** provide Sonic Youth and Glenn Branca-inspired noise, and the Oxford contingent features the likes of **This Town Needs Guns**, **Jali Fily Cissokho**, **Baby Gravy**, **Witches**, **Dusty & The Dreaming Spires**, **Mr ShaOdow**, **Richard Walters**, **The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band** and plenty more. Gigs aside there are workshops through the day where punters can design a record sleeve for Magic Numbers, make a pop video, create a fanzine, write a film script or record a single in a mobile studio. All-day passes for the event are £15 from various outlets, while full details of the line-up are online at [www.thisistruck.com](http://www.thisistruck.com) or [www.ymdpresents.co.uk](http://www.ymdpresents.co.uk).

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**OxfordBands.com**



*Monday 12<sup>th</sup>*

## SKINDRED:

### O2 Academy

A decade into their career and Newport's Skindred are still evading crossover success. World-wide they've sold half a million copies of their first two albums, 'Babylon' and 'Roots Rock Riot', and toured with Korn, Gogol Bordello, Disturbed and Papa Roach, but remain the preserve of a fanatical cult following, one that rightly wonders why the band aren't proper huge yet. Once you've witnessed Skindred in the flesh, you'll probably ask the same question. Live they are explosive and command a crowd like few other bands around. Much of this is due to enigmatic frontman Benji Webbe, an alternately genial and ferocious party host who can toast, joke or simply roar over his band's monstrous fusion of metal, punk, dub and hip hop. Skindred describe themselves as 'ragga-metal' and they've found themselves charting in both the rock and reggae charts simultaneously. Obvious comparisons have thus been drawn to Bad Brains but Skindred really exist in that genre-jumping world of acts like Living Colour, Soulfly and even System Of A Down, taking roots music into the realms of the heavy. Having recently been nominated for a Metal Hammer award for best live band they head out on a headline tour in support of new album, 'Shark Bites & Dog Fights', and if it doesn't bring them any closer to that long overdue world domination, perhaps the world simply doesn't deserve them.

## WEDNESDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

### ILIKETRAINS + SPIRAL 25: The Bullingdon

iLiketains remain one of the UK scene's most consistently underrated bands, forever living in the shadows of Editors and British Sea Power, but equal to both in the brooding pop stakes. Unafraid to write sprawling ten-minute epics documenting everything from the assassination of British Prime Minister Spencer Perceval, to the Beeching Report or even chess champion Bobby Fischer, they take the funereal moodiness of Dead Can Dance and Joy Division, marry them to shoegazing atmospherics and a heavy hint of goth and create some of the most unabashedly melodramatic music around. Local narcotic groove rockers Spiral 25 provide suitably dark-minded support, looking to Loop and The Doors for inspiration and kicking out a thunderous acid-drenched psychedelic haze.

**DOES IT OFFEND YOU, YEAH?: O2 Academy**

– Dumb, vapid but oddly entertaining electro-rock from a band who, ironically, probably aren't going to offend anyone.

**COUGAR + ELAPSE-O: The Jericho Tavern** – Extravagant, atmospheric instrumental rock from Wisconsin's Cougar, over in the UK to support the release of new album, 'Patriot', using intricate arrangements and slowly-evolving dynamics to create music that takes in post-rock, classical, prog and film soundtracks, somewhere between Explosions In The Sky, Four Tet and Penguin Café Orchestra. Doomladen electro-experimenters Elapse-O provide excellent local support.

**FREE RANGE: The Cellar** – Drum&bass and dubstep with DJs Fu and B-ILL.

## THURSDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**NOISETTES: O2 Academy** – Having started out as a typical noisy indie rock act and flatlined commercially, Noisettes were reignited by a Mazda ad and that accompanying smash hit single, 'Don't Upset The Rhythm (you know it; you can't shake from your brain; it's stuck in there forever)', and look set for some Ting Tings-style mega success with ebullient new album, 'Wild Young Hearts', frontwoman Shingai Shoniwa channelling Dionne Warwick and Diana Ross' soul through indefatigably cheery disco party pop, funky jazz and playful rockabilly. It's happy music, and sometimes even we just have to fall for its sweet, simple charms.

**PURESENCE: O2 Academy** – One of the best, and definitely amongst the most underrated, bands of the 90s, Manchester's Puresence continue to prosper on their own label, their soaring, epic indie rock, partway between The Manics and Radiohead at times, topped off by James Mudriczki's astonishingly powerful and emotive voice. While they've been largely forgotten since their late-90s peak, they're still a major cult concern in their home city as well as major chart stars in Greece, where they've recently supported Depeche Mode. This tour is set to promote new album, 'Sharpen Up The Knives', a semi-best of affair, while Mudriczki's talents have found him picked by Judy Collins to contribute to her 'Born to The Breed' album, alongside Leonard Cohen, Chrissie Hynde, Dolly Parton and Joan Baez.

**THE TORD GUSTAVSEN ENSEMBLE: The Jacqueline du Pre Building** – The Nordic jazz composer returns for Oxford Contemporary Music's autumn season with a new ensemble, taking inspiration from Scandinavian folk, Caribbean music, early blues, gospel and traditional hymns.

**LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO: The New Theatre** – Joseph Shabalala and sons (and assorted others) continue to take their traditional Zulu harmony singing and dance routines to the world, almost 25 years after their contribution to Paul Simon's 'Graceland' album made them international stars – and a good 40 years since their formation.

**MOSHKA with KING SKIN + THE CRUSHING: The Bullingdon** – Grunge-funk from Dover's King Skin, plus big ol' metal noise from The Crushing.

**CANADIAN COLLECTION: The Wheatsheaf ELECTRIC ELECTRIC: The Cellar** – Big Hair club night with Strasbourg's Electric Electric.

**BEELZEBOZO: Fat Lil's, Witney** – None more metal local horror-core rockers.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

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

## FRIDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**DREADZONE: O2 Academy** – The non-stop gigging machine that is Dreadzone steers a course back to Oxford, still going strong five years after the premature death of founder and guitarist Steve Roberts. Theirs is a peculiarly English form of reggae, fusing roots sounds and dub with a folky feel, trance and breakbeats. Consummate live performers and veterans of seemingly every festival ever (including this year's Cropredy), they maintain a canny knack of transforming any venue or field into a reggae party

**FIGHTSTAR: O2 Academy** – Swift return to the Academy after April's show, Charlie Simpson's lightweight, melodic post-grunge rockers follow up their self-released 'Be Human' with a new tour.

**STANTON WARRIORS: O2 Academy** – Nu-skool breaks from Dominic Butler and Mark Yardley, mixing in electro and two-step along the way.

**THE HALF RABBITS + TRISTAN & THE TROUBADOURS + DOOLITTLE + PHANTOM**

*Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>*

## AUDIOSCOPE:

### The Jericho Tavern

Since its inception in 2001, Audioscope's annual mini-festival has raised nearly £20,000 for homeless charity Shelter. Important, on a different level, is its continuing showcasing of the best underground, leftfield and downright maniacal music talents around, from Damo Suzuki and Four-Tet to Rother & Möbius and Clinic. This year's line-up is typically diverse and perverse in equal measures. Headlining is Northampton's **Maps**, the band formed around multi-instrumentalist James Chapman, who has translated his love of all things Spiritualized and My Bloody Valentine into a dreamy, celestial form of electro space-rock. Joining him on the bill are Manchester's groove'n'drone alt.rockers **The Longcut**, pitching in somewhere between Joy Division and Happy Mondays; **Remember Remember**, the musical vehicle of sometime Mogwai live guitarist Graeme Reynolds, signed to Mogwai's Rock Action label and creating hypnotic, minimalist classical music in the vein of Steve Reich; Bristol's horrrortronica act **Bronnt Industries Kapital**, a sort of steampunk-cum-krautrock experiment in cosmic electronica; Hereford's spazzcore scrappers Talons, plus skittish math-pop types **Cats & Cats & Cats**. The day's local contingent is this year taken up by downbeat acoustic troupe **Ute** and sheet-metal hardcore duo **Bitches**. Charity gigs are ten-a-penny of course, but few if any offer such musical challenges and rewards as Audioscope



**THEORY: The Jericho Tavern** – Excellent local bill, with new wave gothsters The Half Rabbits launching their debut album, with support from this month's Nightshift cover stars, Tristan & The Troubadours and hardcore rockers Phantom Theory. Former Eat frontman Ange Doolittle returns to town to join the bill.

**INTRODUCING PLAY INTRODUCING: The Cellar** – Skylarkin' brings Introducing's reworking of DJ Shadow's classic 'Introducing' back to town, with a full nine-piece live band. Plus Laroca and the Skylarkin' Soundsystem.

**THE MIGHTY REDOX + FILM NOIR: Chester Arms** – Bluesy psychedelia and funk from Mighty Redox, plus Smithsy indie pop from Film Noir.

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

## SATURDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**BLACKSTONE CHERRY + DUFF**

**McKAGAN'S LOADED: O2 Academy** – Southern fried rocking in the tradition of Lynyrd Skynyrd and Black Crowes from Kentucky's Black Stone Cherry, plus bourbon-soaked rocking from former Guns'n'Roses fella Duff and chums.

**TOMMY REILLY: O2 Academy** – Orange Unsigned winner Tommy heads out on tour again after his debut Top 20 hit 'Gimme a Call', the teenage Glaswegian one-man band offering an occasionally spiky take on traditional Bob Dylan and Kings of Leon-inspired roots rock.

**3 DAFT MONKEYS + INFLATABLE BUDDHA + SCARLET IN THE WILDERNESS: The Bullingdon** – Eclectic blend of traditional English folk, Latin, Balkan and gypsy dance with dub, punk and reggae from Cornwall's rising trio 3 Daft Monkeys, who were one of the star turns at this year's Cornbury Festival. Local slam poetry-cum-world music-cum-punk outfit Inflatible Buddha support.

**KABEEDIES: The Jericho Tavern** – Cutesy shouty indie punk in the vein of Los Campesinos! and Huggy Bear from Norwich's Kabeedies.

**VULTURES + FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH: The Wheatsheaf**

**MINOTAUR MADNESS FESTIVAL: Botley Road Park** – All-day live music mini-festival with a headline set from Siskin, fronted by Kevin Ayres' daughter, plus punk from Room 94, rap from local duo GTA and many more.

**VICARS OF TWIDDLY + EVOLVERS + STRANGE VINTAGE: Folly Bridge Inn** – Surf rocking from the Vicars, plus mellow rocking from Wales' Evolvers and rock covers from Strange Vintage.

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

**REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern**

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Chequers**

## SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**DANANANAYKROYD + DINOSAUR PILE-UP: O2 Academy** – Every computer spellchecker's least favourite band hit the Academy after March's Bullingdon headline show, their notoriously riotous live reputation showing no sign of diminishing as they continue to forcibly rearrange the furniture at venues across the land, while kicking out a hook-laden post-hardcore brand of angular screaming noise that marries Blood Brothers, Fugazi and Futureheads, and which they cheerily describe as fight pop.

**BRRRAP PACK TOUR with CHIPMUNK & IRONIK: O2 Academy** – Having previously showcased Tinchy Stryder, the Brrrap pack tour

hits the road again, giving exposure to rising young British rappers, including, tonight, teenage grime star Chipmunk, winner of the 2008 MOBO Best British Newcomer Award, as well as the runner-up in that category, Ironik, who hit the charts earlier this year with the Elton John-sampling 'Tiny Dancer'.

**THE BROKEN FAMILY BAND + CHRIS TT + THE JOE ALLEN BAND: The Jericho Tavern** – Cambridge's much-loved alt.country types finally decide not to keep on choogling as they bow out with a farewell tour after eight years and seven albums, having won a fanatical following along the way for their mix of wry observational songwriting, intricate folk melodies and shoegazey-style levels of epic guitar noise. Brighton's personable singer-songwriter Chris TT returns to town in support, having gone out on tour with everyone from Ben Folds and The National to Divine Comedy and Frank Turner over the years. Local folk-rock faves The Joe Allen Band open.

**BORDERVILLE + HOUSE OF STRANGE + DESMOND CHANCER & THE LONG MEMORIES: The Cellar** – Vaudevillian glam-goth-electro rockers Borderville launch their debut album, 'Joy Through Work'.

**MAGIC – A KIND OF QUEEN: The New Theatre** – Theatrical, hit-laden tribute.

**MARIANA MAGNAVITA: Jacqueline du Pre Building** – Debut album launch gig for the locally-based Brazilian songstress, with a gently exotic take on pastoral acoustic pop.

**JEREMY WARMSLEY + STARS OF SUNDAY LEAGUE + DEAR LANDLORD: The Wheatsheaf**

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

**BIG NIGHT OUT: Malmaison (5pm)** – Children in Need Benefit with acoustic singer-songwriter Jessie Grace, plus world music from D Garvin Dan.

## MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**PASSION PIT: O2 Academy** – Michael Angelakos' cheesy AOR synth-rockers return to town after their last showing in February, alongside Hockey. Dubbed the MOR MGMT, they're an unlikely fusion of Flaming Lips, Go! Team, Randy Newman and Stevie Wonder, but since that gig at the Bully at the start of the year, they've moved onwards and upwards

**JOANNE SHAW-TAYLOR BAND: The Bullingdon** – British blues' bright young starlet – *see main preview*

## TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**EAGLES OF DEATH METAL + SWEETHEAD + TELEGRAPHS: O2 Academy** – Josh Homme and Jesse Hughes bring their scuzzy garage-rock side project back to town. Named after a drunken argument in a bar about the band Poison, the duo have, at various times, been joined by Brody Dalle, Dave Grohl and Nick Oliveri, as well as playing alongside The Strokes and Guns'n'Roses (before being kicked off the tour by a less than amused Axl Rose, a man hardly renowned for his sense of humour). There's always an air of side-project slackness about the band, but they are fun, loud and raucous and they're currently off on tour in support of new album, 'Heart On'.

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

## WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**EMILY BARKER & THE RED CLAY HALO + VIRGINIA MacNAUGHTON: Baby Simple** –



*Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>*

## IDLEWILD: O2 Academy

Bands like Idlewild, like fine wines, are a rare and special thing; they just get better with time. 2007's 'Make Another World', the Edinburgh band's sixth, was amongst their best, an equal to their superb 2002 magnum opus, 'The Remote Part'. Roddy Woomble's men have moved on from their early, late-90s spiky indie-punk origins (which once found them described in a review as the sound of a flight of stairs falling down a flight of stairs), to a more sweeping and melodic incarnation, exemplified by that last album's title track, so hopes are high for this month's newbie, 'Post-Electric Blues'. In the interim, Woomble has been indulging his love of traditional Scottish folk music, touring and recording with Kris Drever and John McCusker, which highlighted both his incredibly powerful voice and his ear for a great song. Songs are what count in Idlewild's world, and they have them in abundance, their heroic pathos obviously inspired by the likes of REM, Nirvana and Sebadoh, but having long since learned to soar in their own right. Always managing to bridge the gap between commercial success and cult status, Idlewild are more than just survivors in rock's fickle waters, they are simply one of the finest bands these isles have produced in recent years.

Haunting, old-fashioned gothic campfire folk from the Australian songstress and her new band.

**PHAT SESSIONS: The Cellar**

## THURSDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

**PRDCTV: Modern Art Oxford** – Playfully organic electro ambience from Alex Long's PRDCTV project, akin to Four-Tet and Future Sounds Of London.

**LOS CAMPESINOS! + COPY HAO + SPARKY DEATHCAP: O2 Academy** – Cardiff's old school indie pop squad return with a new album ahead of supporting The Cribs on tour. Equally spiky, twee, bitter and celebratory, with the emphasis more on short and simple trash-pop anthems than clever arrangements, they're in the spirit of riot grrl and 80s jangle-pop, part Swell Maps, part Bikini Kill, part Bis, all fun. Support comes from Glasgow's Wedding Present-styled indie types Copy Haho and Manchester's lo-fi popsters Spiky Deathcap.





*Monday 26<sup>th</sup>*

## JOANNE SHAW-TAYLOR: The Bullingdon

Just as Duffy did for soul, Birmingham's young guitar sensation Joane Shaw-Taylor seems to be doing for the blues, showing that a young, white British girl can match the American old-timers. Coming on like a cross between Stevie Ray Vaughan, Bonnie Raitt and Dusty Springfield, with a great sultry vocal delivery that matches her much-admired guitar playing, Joanne started playing at the age of 14 around her native Black Country clubs and was performing at Ronnie Scott's by the time she was 16. Discovered by Eurythmics' Dave Stewart, she spent the summer on tour with him, Candy Dulfer from Prince's band, Jimmy Cliff and Parliament's Mudbone Cooper in the supergroup D.U.P and has also played alongside Bill Wyman and BB King. And now looks set to join the ranks of the UK's blues elite, teaming up with Grammy-winning songwriter Kevin Bowe and set to take on the American market. With barely a hint of hype, just a string of enthusiastic reviews across the blues press, she's started to build a big UK following, mostly a much younger, more female-orientated crowd than blues attracts in this country. But so laid-back and assured is she, you'd think she'd been doing this for decades.

**STATE OF UNDRRESS: The Bullingdon** – Roots, fiddle-led folk-rock from the Dorset troupe.

**SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – With guest Art Themen.

**WE ARE ELECTRICITY: The Cellar**

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

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

**IN THE POCKET PRESENTS: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Live bands night.

## FRIDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

**STORNOWAY + OXFORD MILLENNIUM ORCHESTRA: The Sheldonian Theatre** – Stornoway continue to explore Oxford's more unusual gig venues, tonight becoming the first rock band to perform at the Sheldonian, where they'll be joined by the Oxford Millennium Orchestra, bringing out the best in their expansive folk-rock sound. Stornoway's journey to becoming the best loved band in town continues with new single 'Unfaithful' this month, with that long-awaited debut album to come next spring.

**TINARIWEN: O2 Academy** – Mali's nomadic narcotic blues-roots warriors pitch up in town – *see main preview*

**SIMPHIWE DANA: O2 Academy** – Modern African soul from the South African singer, mixing traditional Xhosa, reggae and jive into her powerful soul style that's seen her compared to Lauryn Hill and Miriam Makeba.

**THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE HALLOWEEN with THE NEXTMEN + DELEGATORS + FRESH OUT THE BOX ALLSTARS: O2 Academy** – Fresh Out The Box and Skylarkin' team up for a night of reggae, soul, ska, hip hop, house and breaks. Prolific remix duo The Nextmen bring their four-deck mash-up along, plus London's rocksteady and soul crew The Delegates.

**YOUVES + SHAPES: The Jericho Tavern** – Frenetic, angular post-punk from former Mirror Mirror noiseniks Youves.

**MELTING POT with BRIDGEFIRE + GRACE SOLERO + ALIGHT: The Bullingdon** – Old-fashioned heavy rock from London's Bridgefire, plus Skunk Anansie-inspired rocking from Grace Solero.

**METALLICA UK: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Tribute to the metal titans.

**DEVILFORK + DEVIL BESIDE HER + HELL'S GAZELLES + KABEZA: The Pavilion, Chinnor** – Devilish heavy rock goes on ahead of Halloween over in Chinnor, with thrash-metallers Devilfork, plus Wycombe's classic metallers Devil Beside Her.

**HQ: The Cellar** – Drum&bass with Doc Scott, Lynx and Spectrasound.

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

## SATURDAY 31<sup>st</sup>

**THERAPY? + OCTOBER FILE: O2 Academy** – Andy Cairns and co. keep on rocking, celebrating twenty years making a sizeable racket and retaining a sizeable cult following for their maniacal but melodic brand of punk-metal long after their early-90s commercial peak which saw them regularly hitting the charts with singles like 'Teethgrinder', as well as being shortlisted for the Mercury Prize with 'Troublegum'. New album 'Crooked Timbre' is out this month. Killing Joke-inspired hardcore noise from October File in support.

**THE CHAPMAN FAMILY + VIXENS + THE GULLIVERS: The Bullingdon** – After opening for La Roux on the NME Radar tour back in May, Teesside's Chapman Family head out on their own headline tour, their cataclysmic thrash-pop sounding like Sonic Youth eating Kaiser Chiefs, which is considerably more appetising and fun than that might sound. Local new wavers Vixens and ethereal goth-pop types The Gullivers support.

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with THE HALCYONS + PAGAN WANDERER LU + JONATHAN SEET: The Wheatsheaf** – Electro-rock and squelchy dance-pop from The Halcyons at tonight's eclectic GTI session, plus one man Welsh pop orchestra Pagan Wanderer Lu's Casio-cooustic pop and local singer-songwriter Jonathan Seet.

**THE TRAVELLING BAND + THE WOE BETIDES: The Jericho Tavern** – Return of Manchester's rootsy psychedelic folk-pop collective, in the vein of Crosby, Stills and Nash.

**WITCHES + LES CLOCHARDS: The Cellar** – Witches play their traditional Halloween night show, channelling ghostly spirits through their dark-hued noise-pop. French café pop and country rocking from Les Clochards in support.

**FUSED: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Indie and rock covers.

**QUEEN OF CLUBS: Isis Tavern, Iffley Lock** – Live music, cabaret and more, with old-time swing and jump up jazz from The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, plus bluegrass murder ballads from The Henry Brothers.

**TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy**  
**REGGAE REGGAE SATURDAY: James Street Tavern**

*Friday 30<sup>th</sup>*

## TINARIWEN: O2 Academy

Plenty of rock bands might think they're hard, but they'd fall to the floor weeping like babies if they had to face the hardships Mali's Tinariwen have gone through to get to their current level of global recognition. They are a collective – not really a band – born out of the nomadic Tuareg people's battle for independence and come from the deserts that are ruled by rebel warlords. They're tough old cookies for sure. Their music, by contrast, is a warm, psychedelic mix of ancient desert roots music and western blues and rock, with nods to Hendrix, Fleetwood Mac and King Tubby. Having attracted attention from the outside world with their appearances at the Mali desert festival, they released their debut album proper, 'Radio Tisdas Sessions', in 2001 and played at WOMAD Festival. Their last two albums have been slight disappointments, leaning too far into classic British and American blues, but with 'Imidi: Companions', they've returned to their roots, all spaced-out grooves, drones, chants and ululations that capture the eerie atmosphere of their homeland. Given the nebulous state of the group, what you see on the night dictates what you hear, although with founder Ibrahim Ag Alhabib (who made his first guitar out of a tin can, a stick and bicycle brake wire) present, they'll be at their psychedelic best.



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



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UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE

Fri 2 Oct -	<b>The ZZ Tops</b>
Fri 30 Oct -	<b>Metalica UK</b>
Sat 14 Nov -	<b>KISS</b> tribute DRESSED TO KILL
Fri 20 Nov -	<b>OASIZ</b>
Fri 27 Nov -	<b>Bon Giovi</b>
Fri 11 Dec -	<b>Thin Lizzy Experience</b>
Fri 18 Dec -	<b>The BackBeat Beatles</b>
Thu 31 Dec -	<b>New Year Party</b>

Door times and prices vary but a week normally looks something like:

Tue - Viva Salsa dance classes from 7pm,  
Wed - Original bands Open Mic Sessions & Comedy Club. 8pm - 12  
Thu - Original Indie/Rock/Metal bands, Rock Club Nights. 8pm - 1am  
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## THE LOW ANTHEM / GOLDHEART ASSEMBLY

### The Bullingdon

Goldheart Assembly are like some MOJO writer's wet dream. By the end of the London sextet's set (beard ratio: four to two), our notepad looks like a list of 60s and 70s movers and shakers, from Pink Floyd and The Beach Boys to Cat Stevens and Matthew's Southern Comfort. Besides the beards

and untidy mops, there are crushed velvet jackets and an air of slightly stoned contemplation that complete the authentic period picture. Their three-way vocal harmonies are straight out of sunny 60s California, while the sudden bursts of noise and subsequent reveries are pure Floyd. But just when they're starting to get a little ponderous they hit us with a closing couple of numbers that ride on a rising organ hum and pull out their finest frat house harmonies and end on a genuine high. And besides, you have to love a band who all neck wine straight from the bottle on stage with such nonchalance.

A packed Bullingdon is reduced to hushed reverence for headliners The Low Anthem. This feels more like a church service than a pub gig, but it's soon clear why such silence is necessary. In the rock and roll vocal stakes, Low Anthem singer Ben Knox Miller makes Art Garfunkel sound like Lemmy. His voice, at its most striking best, is so ghostly, so reedy and paper thin you worry a sudden breeze might blow it clean out of the venue, but as it shimmers, ethereally over the title track of the Rhode Island trio's new album, 'Oh My God, Charlie Darwin', it feels like music from another time or universe altogether.

At other times Miller adopts a fuller vocal persona, with obvious nods to Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen, leading the band's sparse arrangements – conjured from double bass, clarinet and a set of crotales that Jocie Adams strikes with a cello bow – through tales of wild, wild whisky and wild, wild women. Such rootsy material can feel like a rude awakening after the more incandescent songs that are the set's highlights, but it would be nigh on impossible for The Low Anthem to maintain such a precious atmosphere for a full hour and when they encore with 'To Ohio' and 'Don't Tremble', it feels like there's some kind of magic in the air. The eruption of applause at the finale is like catharsis for an audience that has been kept under a powerful spell, and it's everything The Low Anthem deserve.

**Dale Kattack**

## EMILIANA TORRINI

### O2 Academy

Let me be clear; I'd turn up to see Emiliana Torrini sing the phonebook. But it doesn't mean that I think everything she sings is perfect. I loved the dreamy electronica of 1999's 'Love In The Time of Science', but found 2005's 'Fisherman's Woman' achingly beautiful, yet sad and difficult to listen to (fitting for a work borne out of several personal tragedies). And last year's 'Me And Armini' was a little on the odd side. For example, according to Emiliana tonight, that album's title track is about a stalker whose spirit has entered her via whisky...

However, her performance tonight wins me over and makes me reappraise those two most recent albums. The focus is her voice, and her versatile five-piece backing band visit everything from table steel guitar to harmonium, glockenspiel and bowed cymbals to recreate her records' varied instrumentation around it. Her songs are unashamedly personal; she means them, rather than acts them, and takes her time to explain them to us. It's almost as if you have to see her singing to really appreciate it. Her voice can be both strong and vulnerable, melancholy and uplifting. Quirky like her fellow Icelander Bjork and at times reminiscent of the Sugarcubes (her drummer Siggi was a founding member), she's not bothered about sticking to genres; 'Me and Armini'

visits reggae and 'Heard It All Before' jazz and ska, yet she mostly sticks to the acoustic folk of songs like 'Heartstopper' and 'Fireheads', occasionally veering towards the strangely prog in 'Gun' and into the lush synths of 'To Be Free'.

'Unemployed In Summertime' was originally trip hoppy, but tonight it's more like jazz and country – yet doesn't lose any of its charm, and big European hit 'Jungle Drum' is far less twee live. Lovely is the best word for it, and I leave feeling all warm and fuzzy.

**Kirsten Etheridge**

## JOSH RITTER

### O2 Academy

The Academy's atmosphere tonight is as thick as the snow that tops the mountains of the headlining act's home state; Josh Ritter, everyone's favourite fluffy-haired, Idaho-born singer-songwriter, is back in the UK for the first time in eighteen months. He's mainly here to support Ray LaMontagne, but Oxford is one of the few places Josh is headlining a gig of his own. The smiley troubadour comes accompanied by an equally grinning, yet sinisterly moustachioed, double bass player and a back-catalogue spilling over with Americana-tinged, poppy roots music. One of the biggest draws of tonight is the new

material the singer is showcasing, from his recently-recorded new album, due out next year. He plays only a sprinkling of stuff, but it's a lot more mellow and low-key than his last effort, the at times day-glo effort of 'The Historical Conquests'. For the most part tonight he performs stuff from this record, and career highlight 'Hello Starling'. The bittersweet blast of 'Conquest's' most sing-along friendly track, 'Right Moves', coming maybe a little too early in the set, is a definitive highlight. It's like a modern Elton John by way of Wendy's, but in a good way.

Ritter can be heard with a band on most of his records, and the stripped-down nature of tonight's set occasionally shines the cruel light of day onto some of the songs' lyrics. Although he's pretty lyrically inventive, this stripping away invites a scrutiny which yields mixed results. His song about the Cold War seems twenty years too late, and stretches its love and war metaphor to teeth-grinding tenuousness. However, anyone who begins a song with the line "If all the other girls here are stars / You are the northern lights" should deservedly get all the sex they could ever want.

Between complaining about the price of coffee, smiling a lot and letting his bass player sing a song about facial hair, one thing becomes clear: move over Curtis Stiger, and erm, Sarah Palin, Idaho now has another living legend.

**James Benefield**

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# THE SCHOLARS / FIXERS / HUCK / INVENTIONS OF JERRY DARGE

## The Cellar

The Inventions of Jerry Darge (no, we don't know who Jerry Darge is either) are a stripped-down acoustic team, part membered by Ryan from local experimental rockers Degüello, on lap guitar. Initially the songs appear ultra-sparse, often just two or three chords looping, like a psychotic patient humming and rocking themselves back and forth in some primal trance. The funereal stomp of 'Waking Hours' is a typically deceptive example of how they build intoxicating patterns, like a muzzy take on Blur's 'Tender'; its subtle drone should really come with a warning of possible hypnosis.

Huck (And The Handsome Fee) is essentially the solo project of Humphrey Astley, bassist in hardcore noiseniks Sextodecimo. This is a good first outing with the Fee part, featuring Matt Halliday on bass, fellow Sextodecimo member Tom Longfellow on drums and, crucially, Borderville's Joe Swarbrick on lead guitar. It's the latter's Prince-ly ingredient to the mix that gives us a kind of baroque Tex-Mex, with Huck's rich vocals sounding like Bobby Golsboro having a lost and unshaven weekend in a Rio Grande saloon. My, how Jack Goldstein has changed. Once a

Tad-like, fuzzbox botherer *par excellence* in Gunbunny, the weight and hair has been shed to leave him the height of cool. The extraordinary quick mind and talent remain though, and has moved on, to explore the more artful of the past's fringe music, with new band Fixers. With long-time pal Cameron Grote on drums it always promises to be choppy and crisp stuff, and so we get an aural vision of The Modern Lovers and XTC holed up in Brian Wilson's rehearsal room. It cranks up enough originality, tension and left field edge, though, to end by kicking the mic stand into the audience.

You feel Banbury's The Scholars ("yes, we do look about 12 years old") should be famous already and all over your radio. It's more obviously Now than anything unsigned in this city usually is, but, boy, it's brilliantly played and written. Christian Gillet's understated but all enveloping guitar playing is splashed wonderfully around his brother Adrian's tenor, and the whole gallop of it frequently out-Editors The Editors, while 'Blood Runs Blue' and majestic new single 'Turbulence' have all the futuristic pomp and potential success of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Ultravox.

**Paul Carrera**

# OKKERVIL RIVER / DAWN LANDES / WE AERONAUTS

## O2 Academy

We Aeronauts' lo-fi take on the pomp of Arcade Fire is usually a definite crowd pleaser. Tonight, the early birds in the audience are not easily convinced, entrenched as they are at the very back of the venue. Taking matters into their own hands the band take it from the stage and to the audience, forcing the crowd to take part and listen. You've got to admire a band that can face down a crowd armed only with acoustic instruments and some chanted choruses. We Aeronauts are fast becoming our favourite local band.

Dawn Landes wanders on dressed like a cowgirl. White cowboy boots worn over her jeans and plaid shirt are in place, all that she lacks is the 10 gallon hat. Just beneath her shirt, however, is a shining silver-sequined top that suggests that Landes is not your archetypal country rock act, and that there's something a bit more fun at work

here. Indeed her songs are shot through with good humour, despite the occasionally dark subject matter. Her voice is pitch perfect and her quirky take on country means that you're drawn in rather than thinking about the bar.

Like Landes, Okkervil River have a habit of covering the darkest of subjects with anthemic, intelligently written songs. Chief songwriter Will Sheff's obsession with the side effects of minor celebrity means that murder, suicide and existential dread is never far away. By the time the band closes the set with 'Westfall' (Sheff's take on the grisly Yoghurt Shop Murders) the stage is full of metaphorical corpses.

Death and misery may be everywhere lyrically, but musically the tempo is usually high and there's always a knowing grin behind it all. It's not too often the suicide of a poet inspires a sing-a-long, but Okkervil River's consummate showmanship and canny way with a melody make that possible. The mix of great tunes and an increasingly professional stage presence means that the band can inspire an outbreak of audience participation and stun them into silence with a poignant solo spot. Tonight they move through the emotional range with surprising fluidity. 'Unless It Kicks' is a ramshackle, out-of-tune riot that gets hands in the air, while Sheff's solo spot on 'Red' is heartbreaking and inspires an awed hush. Only a churl could fail to be moved by something in tonight's show.

**Sam Shepherd**



photo: Sam Shepherd

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## DINOSAUR JR

### O2 Academy

While the scientific debate over how the dinosaurs died out rages on, what caused the extinction of the original Dinosaur Jr line-up is well known and well documented: a sharp cooling-off of relations between bassist Lou Barlow and dictatorial songwriting genius J Mascis. So the announcement in 2005, sixteen long years later after Barlow got the boot, that the ice age was over and that the pair and drummer Murph were back from the dead was met with surprise and cries of “Jurassic Park!”.

Four years on, and they’ve chosen Oxford to open their European tour in support of second comeback album ‘Farm’ – a decision they might be forgiven for regretting early on. It seems rather churlish to complain about Dinosaur Jr sounding sludgy – it’s like complaining about a bear having a dump in the woods – but the Academy’s set-up is doing them no favours whatsoever. The crowd – overwhelmingly male, wider of waist and thinner of hair than in the band’s heyday, filling the

sweltering venue with a thick fug of stale sweat – shuffles uncomfortably.

A few songs in, though, and things improve. It all starts to come together with ‘I Want You To Know’ from the new record. The bespectacled Lou – shirt sleeves rolled up and a little hesitant, like a nervy supply teacher – begins to relax, while Murph appears as untroubled by the perpetual loss of drumsticks as he is by the loss of his hair. Meanwhile J – who a couple of hours earlier wandered into Cycloanalysts to enquire about fold-up bikes in that voice that never seems to be able to bear dragging itself out of bed – stands to the left of the stage flanked by an imposing trio of Marshall stacks resembling no-necked bouncers, a plump wizard widdling his way through the Herculean solo of ‘I Don’t Wanna Go There’, as his long straight grey hair is buffeted by a fan.

No snoozy proggy noodling here, though – not for a band who are perfectly equal parts Black Sabbath, Neil Young and hardcore punk. That the tensions of the past are behind them seems clear from the fact that, to our delight, they not only mix classic early singles ‘Freak Scene’ and encore-closing Cure cover ‘Just Like Heaven’ in with recent highlights like the snarling rifferama of ‘It’s Me’ from 2007’s ‘Beyond’, but also a clutch of fantastic tracks from the non-Lou period including ‘The Wagon’, ‘Out There’ and (best of all) ‘Feel The Pain’.

Sure they aren’t winning many new fans – I’d bet those rushing to the merch stall at the end are mostly buying the iconic cow T-shirt to replace one that’s been through the wash so many times it looks leprous, like mine – and sure ‘Farm’ suggests that evolution is beyond them. But bollocks to that; having come back from extinction is enough.

**Ben Woolhead**

## DR SHOTOVER: Free Festival Fringe

What’s *\*what\** smell? Oh, THAT. Breathe deep, enjoy. That’s Tubby Tartlington burning Kasabian albums by the barrowload in the back garden of the East Indies Club. What a lovely scent. Last week it was Snow Patrol. Next week it will doubtless be The Kooks. This is part of a Festival we’re having – it’s called The Indie-Burn Fringe. Nowwww... I will, I think, take a small libation off you, as we are by coincidence standing at the bar. Yes, one of those, please... no, not a single measure, you cretin... THE WHOLE BOTTLE. Thank’ee – that’s better. Ah, Creme de Menthe – that will make up nicely for forgetting to clean the ancestral gnashers this morning. Life is good, is it not? We have the joyful aroma of burning Indie Rock, the sweet taste of fine comedy booze... all we need is some “good sounds, man” as we used to say when I was in The Moody Blues (but in a more Brummie accent). What’s this you are telling me? **Spotify?** It sounds like a vile acne preparation, like that stuff in the green plastic bottles I used to drink, I mean apply, in my teenage years... PhisoHex, that’s the fella... Anyway, tell me more about this modern means of listening to music, o rat-featured friend of mine. What? WHAT?? You mean that I can go to the computer in the Club office and “dig” free Hawkwind albums without all the unnecessary palaver of taking them out of the sleeves and placing the stylus on the rotating black vinyl? Why the flaming f\*\*k would I want to do that, stupe?? Do you not realise that I might *\*like\** the black vinyl (and its scratches)? That I might *\*need\** the record sleeve, to try and decipher the track-titles in the strange space-computer typeface and look at pictures of opulent dancer Stacia with no clothes on? Let alone the whole business of rolling up a tasty “jay” of Red Leb while I listen to the “sounds”? Try and keep up at the back! Spotify, I ASK you... **Next month: Greasy Truckers Party On.**



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## THE FAMILY MACHINE / INLIGHT / ALPHABET BACKWARDS

### The Jericho Tavern

In keeping with the spirit of Daisy Rodgers Promotions, which boasts being able to buy Panda Pops as part of its appeal, tonight’s line up walks us away from the land of bands in dingy bars, welcoming us instead into school disco heaven.

Minus his band, James Hitchman steps away from the electronic pop for which Alphabet Backwards are best known, and meanders into the world of acoustic. Whilst as a group, the urge to dance is unrelenting, solo, we get to revel in the true humour of James’ lyrics. Pondering the thoughts of gay forecasters in ‘In Love With The Weatherman’ and examining the perils of being a slave to fashion in ‘Primark (All Towns Look The Same)’, controversy is everything and James transforms the audience into a room of sniggering adolescents, who seem unsure if it’s okay to laugh.

InLight welcome us to the dance floor. Their Pink Floyd-meets-The Beatles sound is something of a sherbet fountain, with a bittersweet effect that leaves the audience hanging on every beat. Though ‘Bridges’ is without a doubt their

strongest offering, their cover of The Beatles’ ‘Day In The Life’ is equally resounding. Sadly, at times, frontman Charlie Cooke seems to try just a little too hard, which tips his vocals into being somewhat shrill but nevertheless, InLight command attention and leave us rooted to the spot, begging for more.

The Family Machine have resurfaced, after a long hiatus and round off the evening with a set filled with more flavour than a slab of Hubba Bubba. Opening with favourites ‘Did You Leave’ and ‘Flowers By The Roadside’, it takes the same amount of time as it would to neck a double vodka behind the bike shed, for the crowd to start singing along, the only reprieve coming when the band reveal the new songs they’ve been writing during their time away.

An evening filled with laughter, dancing and singing, all three bands ensure childlike pleasures are embraced to the max. In fact, it’s only next morning when we realise there’s no option to sleep away the hangover in double maths that the notion of being an adult reappears.

**Lisa Ward**



## MR FOGG / BRAINDEAD COLLECTIVE /

### TARIK BESHIR

#### Ultimate Picture Palace

When internet promotion for a gig describes it as a “cosmic event” and an “amazing astral vibez show” featuring “projections from the ether” expectations are low – surely we’re either going to be dumped amongst a teeming mass of well-medicated hippies attempting to marry us off to Princess Leyline in a giant naked healing ceremony, or in a hideously knowing Shoreditch preenfest. As it is, despite one preposterous neo-Oakey fringe flapping gratuitously, this turns out to be a friendly evening of approachable music.

The ethos is best encapsulated by Brickwork Lizard Tarik Beshir, who plays songs on his oud accompanied by fiddle and qanun, a large plucked dulcimer. Beshir doesn’t boast the ghostly keening tone of great North African singers, but his quiet voice adds to the conversational feel of the set. Where the ambience is uncomplicated, the music is anything but, fragments of melody mutating like fractals, and fiddle lines arcing away gloriously.

Once, when musicians wanted a busman’s holiday, playing outside their normal bands, they’d start covers acts. Now they all choose free improv. Fears that Braindead Collective – featuring members of Guillemots, Keyboard Choir, The Joe Allen Band, etc – would be a smug bundle of poorly-placed skronks are

dashed by their opening salvo, a Godspeed-plays-the-spectralists cluster of wafts and pulses. The set may be improvised, but it’s built on small packets of horn melody and bolstered by groovy basslines and tap-tempo laptop effects, until it ends up resembling the jazzier end of the Ninja Tunes catalogue: The Cinematic Orchestra without the rustle of Rizlas, perhaps, or Mr Scruff through a refracting lens. Surprisingly coherent.

Mr Fogg’s post-Radiohead glitch-pop is the most conventional fare on tonight’s bill, but he makes up for it by squeezing at least three sets’ worth of rock cliché into his performance. Musically it’s all rather good, some well written laptop pop songs performed with the broad strokes of the contemporary “mainstream alternative” (think Four Tet versioned by Muse), and there are some great arrangements, especially the gorgeous trombone interjections, but the effect is scuppered by thirty minutes of desperate rockist posing and manic “Good evening, Wembley” gurning. We’re the sort of people to find all stadium postures pretty ridiculous, but what looks dumb in Budokan is almost unbearable in a slowly emptying provincial cinema. Go see Mr Fogg, but take a blindfold to enjoy the experience.

*David Murphy*

## FUCK BUTTONS / ZUN ZUN EGUI / THEO

### The Cellar

It’s a good place, The Cellar, when it’s busy and vibrant. Tonight it is both of those things, presumably due to a headliner who’ve received a whole heap of acclaim over the past year or so and who are somewhat renowned for really, er, ‘having it’ as a live act. But first, to Theo, a one-man looping machine who switches effortlessly from drumkit to guitar, utilising every ounce of power that a digital delay pedal or two can offer, to create an impressively complex mesh of sound. The fear for this kind of performance would be that it would fall back on a bedroom-style ‘delay pedal playtime’, and sidestep texture and composition. Theo somehow manages to avoid this and weaves actual songs out of nothing more than layered guitar lines and flitting drum patterns. There is a *slight* tendency to fall back on noise to mask the transition from one rhythm or time signature into another, but I’m not sure how that could be avoided.

No such problems for the oddly-named Zun Zun Egui, who take the stage in a flurry of Mandela shirts and boisterous positivity, and quickly manoeuvre themselves just outside of my sphere of enjoyment by being too damned perky and ebullient than can ever be healthy. They’re all pseudo-Afrobeat rhythm and clattering *favela* sounds, which ticks a certain number of world music/right on/ Afrobeat-is-it-right-now boxes, but it all fails to ring true for me. I don’t get a genuine sense that the enjoyment and energy on stage is being created by the music; it feels like the sound is a sideshow to the players themselves. I want blood and sweat with my fun.

Maybe Fuck Buttons can provide. Daft name aside – what’s wrong with simple, straightforward, non-offensive band names, eh? – I’m primed for enjoying this set, having not previously heard the band but having been aware of several megawatts of hype. As is so often the case, I should have

been more cynical, and approached more gingerly. This just isn’t clicking. I’m not normally a pigeonholing kind of guy, but I think Fuck Buttons suffer from not knowing what they are. They’re something of a techno outfit, they’re a bit of a noise band, they’re even a bit post-rock at times. But the sum total is not what it might be – it’s visceral and diverting perhaps, but that thrill wears off quickly, and what remains isn’t much more than not a whole lot of nothing. What am I missing?

*Simon Minter*



photo: Harry Wade



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# INTRODUCING....

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

## Cogwheel Dogs

### Who are they?

Cogwheel Dogs are an experimental "punk-folk" duo made up of singer and guitarist Rebecca Mosley and cellist Tom Parnell. Rebecca, originally from the Peak District, moved to Oxford to study art; Tom spent three years of his English degree carefully avoiding libraries, then ended up working in one, and dying inside. Rebecca advertised for a cellist; Tom cast aside his barcode scanner and dusted off his bow. Since getting together they have self-released a couple of EPs, becoming increasingly unconventional in their sound. The duo's latest EP, 'Greenhorn', is released as a download only this month at [www.cogwheeldogs.com](http://www.cogwheeldogs.com).

### What do they sound like?

Although mostly acoustic, Cogwheel Dogs bare little resemblance to the normal folk-pop scheme of things. With Rebecca's bewitching voice – switching from sweet-natured croon to devilish screech at will – battling with Tom's harsh, distorted cello, the tension and wayward awkwardness of their songs makes them one of the most unique and unpredictable new acts around. Or, in their own words, "A radio stuck halfway between folk and grunge stations, flitting vertigo-inducingly between the two. Experimental Bluegrunge, perhaps?"

### What inspires them?

"Working out how to make music do things. We both like combining the outlandish with the domestic. We want to find a way to make a cello imitate the sound of a reversing dustbin lorry, or sound like a kitchen blender. We're both excited by strange juxtapositions, unusual textures and big contrasts. And melody. Melody is massively important. Rebecca comes up with pearls of melody, which then spark off ideas for the cello arrangements."

### Career highlight so far:

"Career? Ha ha ha! Er, Tom having to book in his cello as a passenger on a flight for a gig in Belfast, and sitting next to it on a plane."



### And the lowlight?

"The Tascam FW 10-82 mixing desk's strange inexplicable low-frequency buzz whenever in presence of guitars, preventing recording for several weeks, and causing much passive aggression in band."

### Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Bug Prentice."

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

"How do you compromise between Benjamin Britten's 'War Requiem' and 'In Utero'? We'll compromise with 'Mary Anne & The Gravediggers'"

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

"Nothing booked. We will announce it on our website. It is unlikely to be in a conventional location."

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

"The fact that the main music shop is called 'PMT'. Brilliant. We sometimes go in there and buy stuff just to get the bag. Least favourite thing: inaccessibility to venues."

### You might love them if you love:

PJ Harvey; Tanya Donnelly; Rose Kemp; Laura Moody.

### Hear them here:

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

## Whatever happened to... those heroes *the anyways*

### WHO?

Alongside The Candyskins The Anyways were possibly the quintessential Oxford pop band. The band existed from 1986 through to 1994, undergoing several line-up changes along the way, but the core of the band was Richard Ramage (*vocals, guitar*); Alan Buckley (*bass*) and Pete Lock (*drums, vocals*). The earliest incarnation of the band also featured Trudy Aspinwall (*vocals, tambourine, guitar*) and Jennie Crisp (*keyboards*), while Ali Day (*keyboards*), Hamish Ferguson (*guitar*), Karen Cleave (*keyboards*) and Mark Price (*guitar*) also served. The Anyways were formed from the ashes of mid-80s proto-janglers Here Comes Everybody, dubbed The Godfathers of Oxford music and the band who inspired Ride's Andy Bell to first pick up a guitar. The initial aim was to sound like The Velvet Underground but they "got it slightly wrong", according to Richard. In the early days they played alongside The TV Personalities, Talulah Gosh, The Mission and Ride; released a single, 'Confession', on Notown Records; featured on the 1988 scene-defining 'Jericho Collection' and got played on Peel and reviewed in *Sounds*. Later on they released the 'Sunshine Down EP' on Marineville, while an album, 'Love Lies', was recorded but never released. The band bowed out in 1994 with a gig at the Jericho Tavern. A 20-track retrospective compilation, 'Younger Than Yesterday' was released by Marineville.

### WHAT?

In an age where the term meant something, The Anyways were a proper indie band, flush with the DIY spirit of the mid-80s, and along with the likes of Talulah Gosh and The Razorcuts they carved out their own niche on

the local scene, creating pretty, literate, understated guitar pop music that mixed elements of The Byrds, the Beatles, Love, The Go-Betweens and The Velvet Underground.

### WHEN?

The Anyways' arrival neatly coincided with the aftermath of *NME*'s inspirational C86 compilation and their strong songwriting quickly got them noticed both in Oxford and beyond. Both their releases were well received in the national press, and although they didn't play outside of Oxford regularly they retained a cult following among the UK's fanzine-reading indie massive.

### WHY?

Because few Oxford bands have ever written such great pop songs. Seriously, The Anyways' canon is something to be treasured, from the early jangle pop of 'Confession' and 'Sweet Marie' to later, darker takes like 'Black Crow' and 'Some Kind Of Beautiful Nothing'. The Anyways also set the scene for later, more successful local bands like Ride, Radiohead and Supergrass, by raising Oxford's profile beyond the city walls.

### WHERE?

Post-split, Richard and Pete formed The Relationships with erstwhile Here Comes Everybody and Razorcuts chap Angus, while Pete, Mark and Alan formed Blue Kite. Pete later left The Relationships and, after Blue Kite's

demise, carried on playing with Mark under the guise Moiety. The Relationships continue to this day, recently releasing their third album, 'Space' on Big Red Sky Records. Alan is now a published poet, while Karen plays with francophile popsters Les Clochards. Sadly Hamish passed away last year.

### HOW?

Although none of their releases is still available, The Anyways now have a Myspace site ([www.myspace.com/theanyways](http://www.myspace.com/theanyways)) and later this month many of the band will reconvene for a special one-off gig at the Wheat sheaf to celebrate local singer-songwriter Mark Bosley's birthday – a rare chance to witness genuine local legends in action.



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# DEMOS

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indulgences, tics or tricks and with a bit of refinement, a full set of strong material and the right break, who knows how far they might go.

## THE SCHOLARS

Back in July The Scholars beat off stiff competition, including the mighty Borderville, at a BBC Introducing band competition to earn themselves a slot at Truck Festival, and their performance there justified the judges' decision, displaying a band with a sense of theatre in their music. This demo maybe lacks a little of their live power but still displays plenty of potential, even if it wears its influences rather too proudly on its sleeve at times. Primary among those are Editors, to the extent Scholars rip off the guitar hook from 'An End Has A Start' wholesale on 'This Heart's Built To Break', but it's the vocalist who takes centre stage with a rounded performance that never deigns to soar or stretch itself too much, retaining instead a coolly detached sense of comfortable superiority that is rare in new bands. 'Turbulence' is more strident and you can almost picture the band dressed in tight black shirts and neatly creased grey trousers as they run through post-punk's more literary-minded catalogue. There's more Editors rifling on demo closer 'Blood Runs Blue', a spangled guitar thrash over which the singer reaches almost imperious levels of dramatic delivery and we wonder whether The Scholars can fulfil their very obvious potential and develop more of their own character.

## SPRING OFFENSIVE

As with The Scholars, Spring Offensive's potential is abundantly clear, in fact they probably have even more commercial appeal. 'Between One And One-Nine-Four' they have an indie disco floor-filler in waiting, guitars twitching and twinkling beneath a vocal that spits out its opening line and carries a sneer with it throughout, only the bass proving a solid, rumbling foundation. If we can be completely Oxford-centric for a moment, Spring Offensive are pitched equidistant between Foals' mathsy disco, Winchell Riots' epic guitar pop and even Stornoway's multi-voiced folk anthems. A such they might sound like another Oxford composite band, but there's a strength to their songs and a restlessness about them rhythmically that keeps you on your toes and if 'Let Down' takes a bit too long to reach its thunderous closing crescendo, they keep a tight rein on any

## APPLICANTS

Sometimes the job of reviewing a demo mostly involves picking the salvageable items out of a car crash of hastily put together noises. Such it is with Applicants, who feature at least one ex member of previous Demo Of The Month winners Dark Phase. We can see what they're trying to do, mixing up Atari Teenage Riot's digital hardcore with more melodic rock and electro-pop elements and some of the time it works just right, as on 'Children In Japan', where the flat news report narrative gets grinded up by a furious but sweet electro-rock noise, like an imagined band from some obscure teen sci-fi mini-series. Further in 'Crash Mat' is a right old mess in a vaguely Art Brut kind of way but makes you think they're trying too hard to be clever and anarchic at times, while 'Pig Bag' is a daft, fun romp involving a sped-up record, but comes to a sudden halt after little more than 30 seconds. Elsewhere there's a decent balance of melody and chaos but some of the fun has leaked out as they become increasingly frantic in search of silly ideas – the Devo-ish robo-rock of 'He's A Man' is hysterical enough but 'Two Of The Beatles Are Dead' is simply silly.

## DALTON, SMITH AND BROWN

Singer and guitarist Ade Brown apologises for his handwriting because his printer is broken and he's pissed, but we'd expect nothing less of such a man since he's in a folk band and all folk bands are, by law, utter pissheads. We once partied with Fairport Convention backstage after their Cropredy appearance. Those men shouldn't even be alive, the amount they drank. Anyway, Ade is joined by fiddler Ben Smith and double bassist Dalton (no other name provided) and they rollick and roll through a handful of jaunty reels and shanties, keeping it raw and rootsy, probably not unlike several thousand other pub folk bands (they describe themselves as a pub band in their letter, which, given they're pissed, we took for granted), but we like bands who like a drink and this is warming stuff on a blustery September afternoon as we watch the remains of Hurricane Cuthbert or whatever blowing everyone's carefully-sorted recycling down our street. Ah yes, dirty old town and all that. Grand stuff. Another large one? Don't mind if we do.

## SECRET RIVALS

Ebulliently trashy indie-thrash from Secret Rivals on this two-song demo. 'Break Song' thunders and fizzles in pretty much a straight line, quite forgetting to take a tune along with it, sounding like Huggy Bear yelping over the top of what sounds like an attempt to recreate Sonic Youth's 'Teenage Riot' as heard for 30 seconds over a bad phone line and with the clever bits left out. 'Get Famous', meanwhile, like Applicants' 'Pig Bag' previously, sounds like a 33rpm record speeded up to 45 back in the days when people still bought vinyl and you had to do that sort of thing to have fun with music because samplers hadn't been invented. The squeaky female vocal threatens to get buried under the onward rushing fizzstorm and it all sounds like a musical interpretation of a punch up in a school playground. Anyway, it's available as a download from their Myspace site so go and decide for yourself - it's free and worth every penny.

## KNV8

No idea how you're supposed to pronounce that name but it's the solo, semi-acoustic project of the former-singer and guitarist of local rockers Twat Trot Tra La and it's a right old mixed bag of a demo, starting off with some mad electro-dub-folk soup of wobbly, squelchy madness that quickly settles into a country'n'western jink of the sort you'd expect to hear coming out of New York's anti-folk scene. Such mischief soon leaves the room, the lopsided electro wibbles and thumps of 'No Flaw Bore' not quite enough to take it into the same land of odd, although, as with each track here, there seems to be a willingness to try and make something a bit different out of base materials, which always gets our vote. As purely acoustic folk-pop songs, these wouldn't stand up to close scrutiny and the electro interjections or occasional bit of accordion keep things lively, although their novelty also makes you think how plain it might all sound like without them

## STYLUS BOY

Stylus Boy is the work of singer-songwriter Steve Jones. Why he calls himself Stylus Boy we can only guess. Maybe it's because he's a diamond geezer. Or maybe he has a very pointy head. With fluff on the end. Not 'arf! His picture on Myspace suggests he may be a long-lost missing member of Young Knives, but whatever, Steve claims he writes songs that warm the heart and are about the beautiful things in life, although we're buggered if we can hear any mention of kittens, Winona Ryder, Thai red curry or Matt Phillips' 25-yard screamer of a goal for Wycombe against Bristol Rovers. No, instead it's all strumming and moaning,

strumming and moaning. On and on. And bleedin' on. What he's moaning about is uncertain. Not, from the tone of his voice, a recently severed limb, or a violently butchered relative. More likely mundane stuff like his girlfriend leaving him and taking all his Damien Rice CDs with her. Did we mention Steve quotes Damien Rice as his primary influence? Along with Badly Drawn Boy. This just gets better and better, doesn't it? Once in a while the mood is leavened by some sweet-natured female backing vocals and sounds like a Noah & the Whale cast-off. The fact he's got a full band behind him suggests Steve could do much more with his slender songs but the arrangements are sparse and pedestrian and he doesn't have the strength of voice, like Richard Walters for example, to stand alone. Instead he just ends up, like so many before him and doubtless more to come, a bit sorry for himself. Strum and moan, strum and moan. Isn't it bad enough that summer is gone without ever getting started without this sorry shadow being cast over us?

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### GOD OF SMALL THINGS

Talking of all things autumnal, this lot are an entire month of wet weekends rolled into one. Their band photo should have warned us: why do so many groups have their picture taken by a brick wall? It only makes us think of writers' block, which they seem to be collectively suffering from as they blithely trudge like condemned cattle through what feels like several hours of horrifically lumpen soft rock of the sort we hoped and prayed had become extinct in the mid-80s, once in a while threatening to rouse themselves from the solemn piano-led pomposity of it all with a grungy guitar flourish of the sort that Levi's ad-hyped rock no-marks Stiltskin once tortured the charts with. Oh yes, God, that piano! The piano is potentially the most beautiful and emotive instrument on the planet, yet here God Of Small Things reduce it to awkward, perfunctory subservience to overbearing rock guff whose self reverence beggars belief, most notably a singer who over-emotes every line, elongates every vowel and stretches each syllable to a preposterous degree. You imagine these are the sort of musicians who pore over copies of *Classic Rock* magazine each month and tut at bands like Ting Tings or Baby Gravy for their lack of technique. If music had a smell, Baby Gravy would probably smell of cut grass and alcopops; God Of Small Things, by contrast, would whiff of old scotch eggs and the bass player from Foreigner's farts.

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

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Sun 15th Nov • £20 adv  
**The Fall**

Mon 16th Nov • £5.50 adv  
**The Mission District**  
Rescheduled from 22nd Sept  
+ original tickets valid

Tues 17th Nov • £20 adv  
**New Beautiful South**  
+ Sam & Thorn

Weds 18th Nov • £20 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**N-Dubz Christmas Party**

Weds 18th Nov • £8 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**Autokratz**

Fri 20th Nov • £10 adv  
7pm - 10pm  
**Staff Benda Bilili**

Sat 21st Nov • £15 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**Hugh Cornwell**

Sun 22nd Nov • £10 adv  
**Mariachi El Bronx**

Thurs 26th Nov • £14 adv  
**Swervedriver**

Sat 28th Nov • £18.50 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**Gong**

Sat 28th Nov • £12.50 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**A + This City**

Sun 29th Nov • £12.50 adv  
**Five Finger Death Punch + Shadows Fall**

Fri 4th Dec • £10 adv  
7pm - 10pm  
**The Horrors**

Sat 5th Dec • £10 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**Frankmusik**

Sat 5th Dec • £15 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**The Answer**  
+ Mammal + Black Spider

Tues 8th Dec • £20 adv  
**From The Jam**

Tues 8th Dec • £10 adv  
**Set Your Goals**  
+ Broadway Calls + Fireworks

Fri 11th Dec • £15 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**Terrorvision**  
15th Anniversary of 'How To Make Friends & Influence People'

Fri 11th Dec • £12 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**Gunfire 76**  
+ Bullies + Octane

Sat 12th Dec • SOLD OUT  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**Echo and The Bunnymen**

Tues 15th Dec • £20 adv  
**Saw Doctors**

Weds 16th Dec • £18.50 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**Shed Seven**

Thurs 17th Dec • £11.50 adv  
**Goldie Lookin' Chain**

Fri 18th Dec • £10 adv  
**The Complete Stone Roses**  
+ The Hazes

Fri 18th Dec • £13.50 adv  
7pm - 10pm  
**Thea Gilmore**

Sat 19th Dec • £10 adv  
8.30pm - 10pm  
**Electric Six**

Sun 19th Jan • £10 adv  
**The Doors Alive**