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# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month.  
Issue 181  
August  
2010

# Dial F F Or Frankenstein

photo: Harry Wade



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**BLACK CIRCLES**  
THE FABULOUS LAGGARD

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**DEAD JERICHO**  
WINTER OLYMPICS

Sat 17<sup>th</sup> Meckla Presents...8pm/15

**JUNKIE BRUSH**  
AGNESS PIKE + THE NO-ONES + A PHYRRIC VICTORY

Sat 18<sup>th</sup> MBL Presents...8pm/15

**SCHOLARS**  
VON BRAUN + SAMUEL ZASADA

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**AGE OF MISRULE**  
MORT DELAMER

Fri 13<sup>th</sup> Three Blind Mice Presents...8pm/13

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# NEWS

**Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU**  
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**AGNESS PIKE's** debut gig this month sees the return of some Oxford music legends to the stage. The band, who play at the Wheatsheaf on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August, features former Madamadam members Martin Spear and brothers Chris and Mick Brown, plus erstwhile Underbelly and Suitable Case For Treatment bassist Pete Marler. Madamadam were one of Oxford's most popular bands in the late-80s and early-90s for their riotous blend of punk and metal. Singer Martin subsequently fronted Sevenchurch whose 'Bleak Insight' was voted the third greatest doom metal album of all time by Terrorizer Magazine.

Joining Agness Pike on the bill are Junkie Brush and Pyrrhic Victory.

**A NEW OXFORD SCHOOL OF ROCK** launches from September aiming to help budding musicians aged from 8-13 with all aspects of playing music and being in a band. Run by International Jetsetters and Jesus & Mary Chain guitarist Mark Crozer, the school will take place on Saturday mornings from September 11<sup>th</sup> at Rotator Studios on Magdalen Road, with sessions

focussed on songwriting, performance skills and instrument tuition. There will be help and guidance from experienced local musicians as well as guest performances from local acts and the opportunity to learn about making demos and videos, getting gigs, playing at festivals and more.

The studio is equipped with drum kit, amps and PA and each session is limited to 15 children. Sessions cost £15. To learn more about the school or enrol, visit [www.markcrozer.com](http://www.markcrozer.com).

**THE O2 ACADEMY** hosts its annual alternative freshers fair on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September. With Brookes University continuing to freeze out all non-Union-based clubs and businesses, the Academy fair aims to help introduce local businesses to the new influx of students. Any venues, clubs, bars or businesses wanting a stall should contact Paul Williams at [Paul@o2academyoxford.co.uk](mailto:Paul@o2academyoxford.co.uk) or on 01865 813506.

**ROCKROOM STUDIOS** is set to close at the end of July. The studio on Cave Street in East Oxford has been forced to close due to the City Council not renewing its lease at Standingford House and it being financially unviable to start up again at a new venue. Joe Deller, who has run Rockrooms over the past few years, told Nightshift, "Over the last five years I've been very fortunate to have worked with many fantastic people – with a few



photo: Johnny Moto

**SMILEX** have been voted **Best Live Band** in the UK in Playmusic magazine's **Unsigned Awards**. The magazine, distributed through music shops, picked up on the band's "hydrogen bomb explosions of energy" and frontman Lee Christian's "no-holds barred antics and powerful, versatile voice".

Talking to Nightshift about the award, Lee said, "We're incredibly pleased about the award; it was a nice surprise as when you have been going as long as we have, you forget anyone is paying attention so it's cool after all these years of blood, sweat and other bodily fluids to get a bit of recognition, especially as a live band and by a magazine that deals with the nitty gritty of being in a band, not a fashion mag dictated to by major labels! I think we probably stood out a mile to be honest, being quite a different proposition to most bands' live shows. I only hope more bands step up their act a bit - people deserve a good show for their hard-earned cash."

Smilex have recently been on temporary live hiatus while bassist Jen Acton goes on work sabbatical to New York but have been rehearsing with drummer Pat Holmberg's girlfriend Liv (from Charm Assault) standing in. The band also release an EP of live songs recorded at last year's Cornbury Festival later this month. Smilex hope to be back in live action by the end of the summer.

notable exceptions – and produced some work of which I'm really proud; some has made Nightshift Demo Of The Month, with none managing the Demo Dumper."

**A REMINDER THAT SS20** on Cowley Road now stock local CDs and vinyl. All Oxfordshire acts are encouraged to get in contact with either Mon or Lee at SS20 at 176 Cowley Road or on 01865 791851.

**AS EVER**, don't forget to tune into BBC Oxford Introducing every Saturday evening between 6-7pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best new local releases and demos as well as featuring interviews with local and touring acts. Local bands can upload tracks to be played on the show via the Uploader tool on the BBC website. Visit [bbc.co.uk/oxford](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford) for more details.

Another quick round-up of local festival news...

**THIS YEAR'S HANNEYFEST** takes place across three venues in East and West Hanney over the weekend of **6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> August**. Inspiral Carpets frontman Tom Hingley tops a bill that also includes Smilex, Quadrophobe, Drunkenstein, Mark Bosley, Cooper Black, 14Ten, Daved & Confused, Out Of The Blue, Welcome To Peepworld, Twizz Twangle, True Rumour, Stuart Boon, First Among Equals, Jon Thompson, Phil Bird, Laima Bite, Moon Leopard, Supafunk and loads more. Gigs take place at the Black Horse and Royal British Legion in East Hanney and The Plough in West Hanney. Visit [www.theblackhorseineasthanney.co.uk](http://www.theblackhorseineasthanney.co.uk) for more details.

**CHARLIESTOCK** takes place over the same weekend (**6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> August**) at The Black Horse in

Kidlington. The second annual mini-festival features a strong local bill that includes sets from Beelzebozo, Space Heroes Of the People, Age Of Misrule, Empire Safari and Trevor Williams on the Friday; We Are Ugly But We Have The Music, Dead Jerichos, King Of Beggars, Riothouse and The Graceful Slicks on Saturday and Samuel Zasada, Tommy Guns, Shilling Shakers and Nikki Loy on the Sunday. All profits from the weekend go towards MacMillan Cancer Support.

**PRISON RULES** is a day of live music set in the Oxford Castle courtyard on **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August**. Music runs from 4pm through to 10pm over two stages. Bands confirmed include The Long Insiders, The Scholars, Spring Offensive, Ute, Charly Coombes & The New Breed, Les Clochards, Message To Bears, Joe Allen, Samuel Zasada, Aiden Canaday, Adam Barnes and

Rebecca Neale. Tickets, priced £7, are available from [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com)

**THIS YEAR'S ELDER STUBBS FESTIVAL** takes place on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August** at the Elder Stubbs Allotments on Rymers Lane in east Oxford. No line-up details available at time of press but hopefully more details online nearer the event at [www.elderstubbs.org.uk](http://www.elderstubbs.org.uk).

**BUNKFEST** returns over the weekend of **3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> September**. The free blues, folk and rock festival, held over various venues in Wallingford, this year features the likes of Soothsayers, Artisan, Mabon, Pressgang, Seize The Day, Cloudstreet and Isambard. As well as concerts Bunkfest features celidhs, dance displays, workshops and a beer festival. Visit [www.bunkfest.co.uk](http://www.bunkfest.co.uk) for full details.



# Dial F For Frankenstein



**THE OLD SCHOOL TIE IS** something you'd normally associate with politics or big business, not rock and roll, but maybe, just maybe, which school you went to can have a bearing on how great your band is.

If it does, then Dial F For Frankenstein are a shoe-in for success.

Their educational pedigree is second-to-none amongst Oxford's sea of rock hopefuls. Singer and guitarist Gus Rogers attended Abingdon School, which has produced all of Radiohead as well as members of Foals and Dive Dive, while the band's bassist Scott McGregor's alma mater is Wheatley Park, the school that spawned Supergrass. How can they possibly fail?

**THEY CAN'T, OF COURSE.** But it'll be nothing to do with those educational connections when success comes knocking. We're not talking Brit School-style manufacturing plants here. Dial F For Frankenstein's star is in the ascendancy due to talent that is all their own.

We first encountered Dial F supporting punk veterans Strung Out at the Academy back in 2008 and were taken by their inspired revitalisation of 80s American college rock and melodic hardcore. Since then the quartet have become one of Oxford's best loved young bands, playing at Truck Festival, the Oxford Punt and OX4, as well as winning Nightshift's Demo Of The Month and having a song used in the soundtrack to *Skins*.

They've come on some in that time too. Now they're a pin-tight riot of grunged-up anthemic rock, sharp-elbowed post-hardcore and fiery pop freshness, Gus's laconic slacker drawl underpinned by a noise that can be a right old row but comes with a sharpness and attention to detail, and keeps a whole load of tricks up its sleeve to keep the listener on their toes.

**DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN** were formed by Gus and Scott as part of a college practical assignment. Later they recruited drummer Michael Thompson (who also plays with Fixers) and guitarist Chris Berger.

This month they release their debut single, 'USA', a sprightly slice of noise-pop that joins

various dots between Husker Du, Dinosaur Jr, Nirvana, Dive Dive and even The Beach Boys.

The band's name comes from a prescient short story by sci-fi writer Arthur C Clarke, which predicted both Artificial Intelligence and the internet.

Nightshift chatted to Gus ahead of Dial F's Truck Festival warm-up gig at the Bullingdon and asked him first how much influence it had on him and Scott going to the same schools as such big local stars.

GUS: "Like most people round Oxford we have always been aware of these great local bands. Going to their old schools meant we were more obviously aware of and influenced by Radiohead and Supergrass from an early age. It also showed us that you didn't have to be from Manchester or LA to be in a great band – you could just be from Wheatley or Rose Hill."

How do you think your sound has changed since those first few gigs? Back then the band seemed more in an old school hardcore style, while now the band has a far stronger melodic edge.

GUS: "When we write songs it's never very premeditated. It's more instinctive, like it gets beamed to us. We started off by just kicking out the jams for 20 minutes and then jumping off stage. But our set now has evolved into a variety of different stuff; it shifts and slides around like a python, like an eel. There's something for everyone now – we're a band for the whole family. I've no idea how you would define us or where we fit in; we've been compared to everything from Husker Du to Jeff Buckley. The new single is a good representation of every aspect of our sound, and definitely the most dynamic song in our set. It sits nicely between pretentious and pop."

**DIAL F PRETTY QUICKLY** made their mark in Oxford, with promoters and reviewers keen to give the teenage four-piece exposure to a wider audience. How hard or easy have they found it to stand out from so many other young local bands all vying for attention?

GUS: "A lot of bands in Oxford lean one way or the other and stick to their creative guns, but we have tried to tread between genres and

create our own sound which is why we're so hard to pigeonhole.

Buuuuuuuu I think it's also made us the sore thumb of Oxford, which is a gift in some ways but in others a slight curse as people are never sure how to fit us on a bill. We've played with everyone from Desert Storm to King of Cats. Someone once told us we've got enough indie savvy for the Jericho Tavern and enough riffs for the Wheatsheaf."

How supportive and in what ways have you found the local scene to be towards the band?

GUS: "I think we've come along at a really good time for Oxford.

Stomoway and Foals have brought fresh attention to the city's music scene and some great new bands like Fixers and Dead Jerichos are starting to emerge, meaning there's a real sense of happening right now. It is not so big that it loses a sense of community, yet manages to avoid being cliquey. When we started we were all so young, all under 18, we initially felt we were a bit marginalised as a 'kids' band' but positive reviews – including Nightshift Demo Of The Month – and support from BBC Oxford soon got us respected as a serious band.

**HAVING BUILT THEMSELVES** a solid reputation on the local live circuit, Dial F's biggest break to date came late last year when a song of theirs, 'Wes Vega', was used in an episode of *Skins*. They subsequently played a sold-out *Skins* house party in Bristol, following in the footsteps of Foals whose career was similarly aided by exposure on the show.

GUS: "We uploaded the track via the *Skins* website and heard back almost immediately that they were interested in using it. Despite the fact it was for all of about ten seconds, it was funny to hear it used on telly and see our name on the credits and the (very small) payment meant we could do a couple of days recording which we'd been putting off for lack of funds."

Subsequently 'Wes Vega' has made it onto Tom Robinson's 6Music show. Has this exposure led on to any other opportunities or won you new fans?

GUS: "Yes; initially there was a huge surge of interest on Myspace and Facebook and we sold a fair few copies of the song on iTunes – particularly in France, as it turns out that French kids are crazy for *Skins*. It's being repeated in the UK at the moment and someone told us recently they just saw it in New Zealand, so hopefully that will convert to more overseas fans."

The song itself is a lot poppier than

the rest of your set; is this the shape of things to come? Do you find the crowd reacting differently to it than the rest of the set?

GUS: "We never set out to create a poppier track. Some of the new material we've been working on lately has leaned towards the pop side of things and we've definitely developed our radio muscles, but half of our new stuff is also some of the darkest and heaviest shit we've ever played. We try to produce a wide range of moods and styles while hopefully keeping our identity. And if the kids like the pop tunes, then sweet apples."

**NAMING THEMSELVES AFTER** such a prophetic story, we wonder what sorts of things, musically and otherwise, inspire Dial F For Frankenstein. Are they, maybe, a bunch of sci-fi geeks, or raging monsters come to wreck civilisation as we know it?

GUS: "Dial F are first and foremost a gang. Gang mentality is key to our sound. Gang inspirations include *The Warriors*, *Clockwork Orange*, *The Dirty Dozen*, *Boyz n the Hood*, *Stand By Me* and *The Real Ghostbusters*. The short story 'Dial F for Frankenstein' is about technology taking over the world. When we initially picked the name we hadn't read it and didn't know much about it, we just thought it was a clever name. However the subject of technology, robots and the internet seem to have cropped up frequently in our lyrics without us realising it until later on and looking back. Now the name seems to make sense in this download age that has dawned on us in recent years. Plus it's hard to come up with an original name these days and it Googles well. It could be worse, we could be called The Scholars."

So, if you had to make one startling prediction for the future of music, what would it be?

GUS: "More Cowbell."

God forbid. Suddenly global warming and religious terrorism don't seem so bad.

Faced with such a terrifying vision of the future, maybe we should just get on with going out in a blaze of rock and roll glory. In which case, ladies and gentlemen, here's the band to play us out to the end of all things: Dial F For Frankenstein. Monstrously good stuff.

*Dial F For Frankenstein play at the Cellar on Saturday 14th August. New single 'USA' is available on iTunes the following week. Visit [www.myspace.com/dialfforfrankenstein](http://www.myspace.com/dialfforfrankenstein) for more tunes and gig dates.*



# August

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7<sup>th</sup> **REGGAE**

14<sup>th</sup> **LIQUID** – *drum'n'bass*

28<sup>th</sup> **SELECTA** – *drum'n'bass*

Sunday

15<sup>th</sup> **PINDROP PERFORMANCE** presents  
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## LITTLE FISH

### 'Baffled & Beat'

(Custard)

Love can drive you crazy. That seems the lesson to be learned from Little Fish's hotly-anticipated debut on Linda Perry's own Custard label. Listen to singer Juju's hysterical scream at the climax of 'Darling Dear', or the bug-eyed mania of recent single 'Am I Crazy?' and you can almost reach out and touch the turmoil in her lovesick soul.

Long-term fans of the duo were worried a few months back when a polished, popped-up version of 'Sweat & Shiver' turned up on the b-side of 'Darling Dear', while a succession of intrusive Hammond players meddled with Juju and Nez's onstage chemistry, but no amount of studio trickery or uber-producer pop *nous* can smoothen the frenzied emotional fragility or blood-red soul from Little Fish's songs.

Opener 'Bang Bang' exudes a sense of puzzlement and obsession bordering on panic as the song all but trips over itself to make sense of its surroundings. It's just scene-setting for 'Darling Dear' though. The song previously topped *Nightshift's* end of year Top 20 and it still wreaks havoc – a smouldering reworking of The Velvet Underground's 'Heroin' that finds



Juju losing the plot big-time, eventually putting a gun to her head as the Hammond swells and swirls around her and her guitar squeals for mercy. 'Am I Crazy?' exists in a similar state of love-struck mania, detailing a derailed ill-judged passion for love object unknown as Juju and Nez hammer home their crunching garage-rock unencumbered by frills or fripperies.

There a couple of minor blips: 'Sweat N Shiver' still sounds over-produced, like a tiger that's been neutered, while 'Luck's Run Out' is lightweight, as if it's trying to please Radio 2

playlist makers. Conversely though, forthcoming single 'Whiplash' is breakneck fun and album closer 'Sorry State' is a suitably come-down coda after the craziness at the beginning.

The album's heartstring-shredding centrepiece, though, is 'Heroin Dance', a tumbling ballad, Juju's voice and emotions laid bare, her voice silken, gently strident and defiant rather than rusted and raw. In fact if 'Baffled & Beat' proves anything it's that Juju's voice is just getting better and better. Always gutsy, raw and emotionally taught, the power she shows here is awesome: those comparisons to Patti Smith, Sinead O'Connor and Chrissie Hynde are fully justified; the album's title track in particular carries echoes of Patti's 'Redondo Beach', while 'You, Me & The TV' is flecked with traces of 'People Have The Power'. We're comfortable comparing Little Fish with the very best because there's so much here to suggest they deserve it and can live with it. When even *The New York Times* proclaims that your band makes Hole look and sound lacklustre, you know you've something special going on.

2010 is turning into a vintage year for Oxford albums. First Foals, then Stornoway; now you can add Little Fish to that list: a band you can love. Truly, madly, deeply.

Dale Kattack

## ECHOBOOMER

### 'You Are'

(Own label)

Previously purveyors of a rather promising demo CD, Echo Boomer here release their debut EP, again with interesting, if mixed results. Lead track 'The Circle' is strung-out indie rock, full of epic introspection, balanced neatly on a snowbound funk rhythm that recalls Kraftwerk's 'Trans-Europe Express'. This formula works best on 'Learning To Lie', an oddly robotic slab of electro-rock that gets you to thinking about Ultravox at times and led by Jonny Race's powerful, queesting voice, which occasionally sounds like he's trying too hard but equally lifts the whole song to a higher level. A shame they spoil it at the end with 'You Are (The One)', a complete mess of conflicting ideas that basically seems to crunch a cheesy old 80s funk rhythm up with what sounds like the chugging riff to 'Eye Of The Tiger', but sadly all bogged down by its innate sense of seriousness. On balance though, this is good stuff: Echoboomer might occasionally seem unsure as to whether they want to be stadium pop or ambient electronica, but when they manage to combine both desires, they sound like a band preparing themselves for bigger things.

Dale Kattack

## THE LONG INSIDERS

### 'Midnight Man'

(Own label)

Previously The Long Insiders have come across as a latterday lounge-surf band, a cruise ship cabaret for Nick Cave fans, and very good at it they were too.

With this single though we're in deeper, darker waters altogether. 'Midnight Man' is a full-on rock'n'roll rumble, all trashy surf-rock guitars and freight train drumming, while Nick Kenny and Sarah Dodd holler at each other like Johnny Thunders and Tammy Wynette after a heavy session down the local whisky bar. It's dirty and lo-fi, like something wrenched from the dusty archives of an abandoned Mid-West record store attic and smells less like Teen Spirit than cat gut and engine oil. It finishes with drummer Dan Goddard dropping his sticks on the ground, a neat finale to its authentically untutored atmosphere.

B-side 'Nervous' is Sarah's show, an old-fashioned man-done-me-wrong tale in the classic style of Lee Hazelwood and Nancy Sinatra, all steel guitar twang and drums that sound like an old shoebox being kicked to buggery. Cracking stuff. Pass the bourbon.

Ian Chesterton

## SAMUEL ZASADA

### 'Neisen EP'

(Own label)

Samuel Zasada's demo last year was one of the strongest and most ambitious we've received. Recent shows have displayed some incredible vocal talent and we're both excited about this new EP and slightly trepidations that it won't match that last recording. Frontman David Ashbourne's voice is equally haunting and earthy, lead track 'Omit' an almost hymnal lament, Luci Flynn's wispy close harmonies adding an otherworldliness to David's beaten-down lament, the simple, circling finger-plucked acoustic guitar allowing their voices to take centre stage while taking on a hypnotic air. The rootsier side of David's voice comes to the fore on 'Request', while 'Lost & Founds', with its almost flamenco flavour shows the ease with which the band have adapted to a fuller electric sound. But it's EP closer 'Pursuit' that best demonstrates Samuel Zasada's easy way of making something basic sound grand and ambitious, again simple acoustic guitar giving the interweaving voices room to breathe. These five songs take a few listenings to fully appreciate but after that they simply confirm what we suspected: that Samuel Zasada are something special.

Dale Kattack



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# INTRODUCING....

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

## SAMUEL ZASADA

### Who are they?

Samuel Zasada was originally David Ashbourne as a solo act. His first Nightshift demo review in March 2009 was less than complimentary but its follow-up earned him a Demo Of The Month award and a review suggesting that at that rate of improvement he would probably have "turned into Leonard Cohen, invented a cure for cancer and scored an Ashes-winning double-century before the summer was out". After recording and finding more potential with layers of other instruments and vocal harmonies David decided to get a band together. Samuel Zasada is now Luci, David's partner, on acoustic guitar and vocals, good friend Tom on bass and vocals and brother Mark on drums. The band release a new EP on 7<sup>th</sup> August. They played at this year's Oxford Punt as well as Cowley Road Carnival in July.

### What do they sound like?

Nominally acoustic acts rarely come as captivating as Samuel Zasada. The vocal interaction between David, Luci and Tom is astonishing, as is David's expert microphone technique, all of which provide some of the most incredible vocal performances you'll hear from a new local band. The songs are subtle and ethereal but imaginatively crafted, often grandiose in an understated way. They're simultaneously gothic and earthy, lyrically poignant and capable of utterly bewitching everyone in the room.

### What inspires them?

"I find inspiration from being able to pick and choose music I like from the past and present. There's so much diverse music out there and getting hold of it these days is so easy."

### Career highlight so far:

"Playing a gig and getting paid with trees."

### And the lowlight:

"Halfway through a set playing to no-one but the sound man and the bar staff. Funnily enough I think that was one of our best performances."



### Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Message To Bears. We played a gig with them a couple of months ago and they were captivating to say the very least."

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

"A bit of a toughie, but I'd say Iron and Wine's first album 'The Creek Drank the Cradle'. So under-produced and beautifully gritty. The one album that I think will always be with me."

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

"7<sup>th</sup> August in Rapture, Witney. They're great guys and have let us play in there when the shop closes as an EP launch. Expect a nice chilled intimate atmosphere and some songs that will compliment the mood."

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

"Funnily enough our least and most favourite part of the Oxford music scene are in the same vein. The variety and quality of musicians in Oxford is incredible, however the eclectic nature of the music scene can make it difficult for any band to be heard by the people who may really enjoy it."

### You might love them if you love:

Bon Iver, Will Oldham, Iron & Wine, This Mortal Coil, Leonard Cohen.

### Hear them here:

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

*Whatever happened to... those heroes*

## PASSION PLAY

### WHO?

Passion Play were a band you could call goth and not get your head bitten off for your troubles. Although you probably would thinking about it because they were full-on proper goth and so probably had fangs and stuff, and one of their best songs was called 'Your Talons', so you might also get disembowelled into the bargain. The band formed in 1994 when guitarist Linda Lloyd and bassist Mark Bosley started rehearsing together in the wake of their previous bands' demises (Lin was in Death By Crimpers, Mark in his own band). Singer and guitarist and Oxford's tallest man, Justin Stephens, soon joined them and a new dark age dawned.

### WHAT?

Gothic rock in all its black-clad glory. Justin's dark, hollowed-out vocals combined with pounding drum machine beats, Mark's industrial bass rumble and alternately spidery or chorus pedal-effected guitars to create a sound inspired by The Sisters Of Mercy, Danse Society and Xmal Deutschland as well as more contemporary goth bands like Rosetta Stone, preferring a serrated, aggressive sound over the panstick gloom of too many other goth bands around at the time.

### WHEN?

After a series of local gigs and a handful of demos Mark left the band in 1997 to be replaced by Mike Watkins, conveniently enough Lin's husband. This line-up of the band began to play out of town far more, including the LA2, gaining

far greater acceptance and success outside of Oxford. In 1999 they toured across Germany, including the huge Wave Gotik Treffen festival in Leipzig, before supporting the reformed Chameleons at their first German shows. The trio released two albums, 'Stress Fractures' in 1999 and 'Dreaming Spikes' in 2001, the latter receiving rave reviews and leading to further German tours. By 2002, though, Lin and Mike were parents and had little time for the band. Justin continued to play live with a succession of other musicians, including his brother Doug who had previously played with doom-metal legends Sevenchurch. Passion Play's final gig was at the Convergence Festival in Chicago in 2004 and although they never officially split, Justin's relocation to Chicago and then Berlin signalled the end of the band as an active unit.

### WHY?

While few in Oxford will recall Passion Play as a big local name they were far, far more successful and critically acclaimed beyond, especially in the European and American underground press and their appearance on major festival bills confirms the standing in which they were held. Oxford has a strong lineage of goth-inclined bands, like Play Dead, Chatshow and Wonderland, most of whom did better elsewhere and Passion Play were very much in this category. Of the band's significance locally, Justin modestly claims they "Probably had none whatsoever. We were always on the fringes of the local scene, but loved being a part of it."

### WHERE?

Justin still lives in Berlin and is working on new material while also playing guitar with Frank The Baptist. Mark continues to perform locally, solo, with Twizz Twangle and more recently as a member of Moiety, while Lin and Mike continue to live in (where else?) darkest Oxfordshire.

### HOW?

There is a Passion Play site at [www.myspace.com/passionplaymusic](http://www.myspace.com/passionplaymusic).



# GIG GUIDE

## SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**ARCANE: City Farm, Eynsham** – No definite line-up news for the second day of Arcane, but check out [www.arcane-festival.com](http://www.arcane-festival.com) for more details.

**PRISON RULES: Oxford Castle Courtyard (4-10pm)** – An afternoon of live local music in

*Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>*

## JAH WOBBLE'S NIPPON DUB ORCHESTRA: O2 Academy

We can't help but wish Mr Wobble was playing this same venue a couple of weeks previously with his old band PiL; instead here he is with his latest musical project, The Nippon Dub Orchestra, having turned down the chance to reunite with childhood friend John Lydon in the band with which he first made his reputation. Wobble (born John Wardle, allegedly nicknamed Jah Wobble by a drunken Sid Vicious) has led an eventful life, almost replacing Glenn Matlock in the Pistols before forming PiL and then going seriously off the rails in the early-80s which led to him quitting music for years before sobering up and going on to collaborate with a vast array of musicians from around the world, his reputation and influence growing with each new project and passing year. In particular his exploration of myriad styles of music from around the world, right back to his Invaders Of The Heart band in the 1980s, preceded many of his peers' interest in world music. Having played with The Chinese Dub Orchestra in 2009, he now heads towards Japanese traditional music with his latest outfit, adding his trademark unconventional bass stylings and, as ever, staying, if not ahead of the pack, well out of its reach.

## AUGUST

the picturesque castle grounds. Hey, bring a picnic, why not? The strong line-up features plenty of local faves over two stages – The Long Insiders, Spring Offensive, Ute, Charly Coombes and the New Breed, Les Clochards, Message To Bears, Joe Allen, Samuel Zasada, Aiden Canaday, Adam Barnes, The Scholars and Rebecca Neale. If the weather's decent there can be few better places to enjoy a gig in the city.

**PROSPEKT + K LACURA + UNDERSMILE: The Port Mahon** – Heavyweight night at the Port with atmospheric prog-metallers Prospekt alongside melodic metalcore merchants K-Lacura and stoner-grind hellraisers Undersmile.

**TREVOR WILLIAMS: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot** – Emotive acoustic pop from the Faringdon singer-songwriter.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Hobgoblin, Bicester**

## MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**LIBERTY KINGS: The Bullingdon** – Epic rocking from the Dublin band out on their first major European headline tour, mixing up Aerosmith's stadium rocking with an almost proggy sweep of electro-rock and a dash of Oasis-like indie swagger.

## TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Free weekly live jazz club night, tonight featuring funky keyboard-led ensemble The Howard Peacock Quintet.

**LISA FITZGIBBON + DUOTONE: The Warneford Chapel** – Gutsy blues and folk from the Aussie songstress, plus Barney Morse-Browne's experimental cello and loops-based project Duotone.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon**

## WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**JAH WOBBLE & THE NIPPON DUB**

**ENSEMBLE: O2 Academy** – The former-PiL bass man returns with his latest dub-inspired outfit – *see main preview*

**HOUSE OF ROOTS: The Cellar** – Reggae club night with Grifta and Linguistics, plus a live set from soul, ska and tropical outfit The King Louis Collective.

## THURSDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**UNDERSMILE + DEATH OF THE ELEPHANT: The Wheatshaf** – Doomy sludgecore from Undersmile, plus punky riot grl noise from Essex's Death of The Elephant.

**NOVEMBER & THE CRIMINAL + THEO: The Cellar** – Various ambient, angular and anthemic indie rocking from November & The Criminal, plus loops'n'beats experimentalists Theo.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford**

**Community Centre** – Oxford's longest-running and best open mic club continues to showcase local singers, musicians, poets, performance artists and more every Thursday.

**ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: Bricklayers Arms, Marston**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

**BATTLE OF THE BANDS: The Hobgoblin, Bicester**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

## FRIDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**CHARLIESTOCK: The Black Horse, Kidlington (5.30pm)** – First night of the annual charity mini-festival in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support, with a headline set from metal monsters Beelzebobo – *see main preview*

**HANNEYFEST: The Black Horse, East Hanney** – First night of the annual village festival, running across three venues in Hanney. Tonight's bill features ska and funk pop act Quadrophobe, proggy funk rockers Drunkenstein, lachrymose acoustic troubadour Mark Bosley and Dirty Deeds.

**VISION FALL + 13 GAUGE + THE FIERCE: The Port Mahon** – The second monthly Port In A Storm metal and hardcore night features recent nightshift Demo Of The Month winners The Fierce mixing in some Blood Brothers and Girls Vs Boys-style hardcore into their fearsome metal riffage, while Vision Fall match them with their Killswitch Engage-inspired metalcore. Hardcore, punk and metal fighters 13 Gauge complete an impressive local bill.

**ICHI + THE HAND: Modern Art** – Part of the gallery's Gigs In The yard season; experimental sounds involving steel drums, tape loops and ping pong balls from Ichi, plus world folk from The Hand.

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

**SKYLARKIN PRESENTS DUB POLITICS: The Cellar** – Great clash of club nights tonight as Count Skylarkin brings his mix of ska, reggae and soul up against Dub Politics' dubstep, also featuring Poland's Radical Guru, Saine from Urban Nerds, Oxford's own Document One and the Raggasaurus Soundsystem, reuniting the members of Arabic dub collective Raggasaurus who split last year.

**FOUNDATION REGGAE: East Oxford Community Centre** – Roots, dancehall and dub every Friday.

**WHO DO YOU LOVE?: The Duke, St Clement's** – DJs play a mix of alt.rock, punk, 60s garage rock, pop and electro.

**TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER + UTE + MINOR COLES + ALPHABET**

**BACKWARDS: The Isis Tavern, Iffley Lock** – Acoustic night with local indie faves Alphabet Backwards, Minor Coles and Ute, plus pop siren Tamara.

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: Chester Arms** – Blues classics and more from the eccentric local rocker.





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

**CHARLIESTOCK: The Black Horse, Kidlington (4pm)** – We Are Ugly But We Have The Music top today's bill at the second annual Charliesstock mini-festival – *see main preview*

**CHILL IN THE GARDEN: Kidlington Green Social Club (4pm)** – Mini-festival in aid of Helen & Douglas House Hospice and the Alzheimer's Society. Classic rock covers from headliners Evolution, plus a selection of blues and blues-rock from The John Berry Band, Classic Cadillacs, Fraud Squad and teenage guitarist Aaron Keylock, plus Elvis classics from Elvis Off The Cuff and classic rock from Ollie Farley.

**RISEN IN BLACK: The Wheatshaf** – Moshka club night with local hardcore metal crew Risen In Black.

**HANNEYFEST: The Black Horse, East Hanney (2pm)** – Rootsy blues and folk-rockers Cooper Black headline, plus Smilex, 14Ten, Snipe, Daved & Confused, Steve Morris, Khamsina, Fiona Cox and more.

**HANNEYFEST: British Legion Hall, East Hanney (2pm)** – Out Of The Blue, Welcome To Peepworld, Twizz Twangle, Bloody Murder, True Rumour and Back To Black perform.

**HANNEYFEST: The Plough, West Hanney (3pm)** – With Stuart Boon, First Among Equals, Pete Spencer and Matt Willis.

**YOOF: The Cellar** – Up and coming indie and electro bands, plus Yoof DJs til 3am.

*Friday 6<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>*

## **CHARLIESTOCK: The Black Horse, Kidlington**

Kidlington (not just the largest but also the coolest village in the UK) gets a festival to call its own as Charliesstock returns for the second year: three days of live music in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support. Heavy metal monsters Beelzebozo bring their blood-spattered rock action along as headline for the Friday night. They're joined by excellent synth-pop duo Space Heroes of the People, grunge rockers Empire Safari and Age Of Misrule and emotive acoustic troubadour Trev Williams. Saturday features acid-house chap We Are Ugly But We Have The Music bringing a bit of old school rave fun to the party and he's ably supported by rising local heroes Dead Jerichos, uptight lo-fi noisemakers King Of Beggars (*pictured*), classic metallers Riothouse, 60s psychedelic rockers The Graceful Slicks and more, while Sunday has a more laid-back vibe with ethereal, downbeat alt.folkers Samuel Zasada opening proceedings, followed by Above Us The Wave, The Tommy Guns, Shilling Shakers and Nikki Loy, amongst others.



**TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy** –80s, glam and kitsch pop at Trashy and punk, metal and alt.rock at Room 101.

**REGGAE NIGHT: The Bullingdon**

**WAX ON WAX OFF: James Street Tavern** – Weekly funk, soul, disco, breaks and hip hop session.

**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Bricklayers Arms, Marston** – Swamp blues and festival funk from the enduring local faves.

**CIRCUIT CHASE + WHITESPACE + JACK LITTLE: The Port Mahon** – Bicester's fuzzy indie rockers Circuit Chase headline.

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

**CHARLIESTOCK: The Black Horse, Kidlington (2pm)** – Samuel Zasada and Above Us The Waves are amongst those on the third and final day's bill – *see main preview*

**BEELZEBOZO + KOMRAD + SIX BULLET CHAMBER + UNDERSMILE: The Wheatshaf** – Buried In Smoke metal night at the Sheaf with blood-spattered heavyweights Beelzebozo, prog-core maniacs Komrad and grungy sludge-core from Undersmile.

**HANNEYFEST: The Black Horse, East Hanney (2pm)** – Third day of the village festival with Inspiral Carpets frontman Tom Hingley playing a headline set. He's joined by Jon Thompson, Phil Bird, Moon Leopard and Laima Bite.

**HANNEYFEST: British Legion Hall, East Hanney (2pm)** – Live sets from Incendiary Pigs, Supa Funk 4 and the Folk Academy Band, plus more.

**HANNEYFEST: The Plough, West Hanney (3pm)** – With Simon Williams, Half Price and more acts to be announced.

**MATT KILFORD + TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER: Malmaison** – Wistful, melancholic acoustic folk-pop from the really rather wonderful Mr Kilford at tonight's show in the Mal's cocktail lounge. Powerful acoustic pop from Tamara in support.

**NIKKI LOY: Head Of The River (5.30pm)** – First of a series of local gigs this month for the soulful acoustic singer-songwriter, who has drawn comparisons to Alicia Keys and Joss Stone.

**FEED ME: The Port Mahon**

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

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

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Live jazz from The Howard Peacock Quintet.

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

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon**

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

**QUADROPHOBIE: The Wheatshaf** – Goodtime ska and funk pop.

**WORDPLAY: The Cellar** – Hip hop and dubstep club night. It's a homegrown special tonight featuring local rappers Benz & Pieman, Rhymeskeemz and Elliot Cornell, plus Wordplay DJs.

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

**CROPREDY FESTIVAL: Cropredy** – First night of Fairport's annual folk and rock festival with a headline set from Status Quo, plus Selecter's Pauline Black, Thea Gilmore and Leatherat.



*Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>*

## **CROPREDY**

## **FESTIVAL: Cropredy**

Fairport Convention's annual gathering of the tribes once again turns a very quiet corner of north Oxfordshire into a giant folk and rock party. The event is now well into its fourth decade and continues to feel – quite pleasingly, it must be said – like The Festival That Time Forgot. Fairport themselves, the great granddaddies of English folk-rock, whose legacy seems to loom larger these days than in any time since the 1970s, play their traditional three-hour headlining set on Saturday night, joined as ever by an extensive cast of friends and collaborators, and the inevitable celebratory rendition of 'Meet On The Ledge', while Thursday night finds **Status Quo** topping the bill, doubtless bringing a crowd-pleasing set of hits from their vast catalogue to the party. Friday's headline act is **Little Feat**, 70s cult heroes, beloved of everyone from Bob Dylan and The Stones to Led Zeppelin. Guitar legend frontman Lowell George died in 1979 but the band have kept on rocking in his memory. Other highlights over the weekend include **Steve Winwood's English Rock Ensemble**, The Selecter's **Pauline Black** and **Martyn Joseph**, while **Thea Gilmore**, **Bellowhead** and **Three Daft Monkeys** are amongst those representing a more modern generation of folk heroes. Cropredy is as much about a celebration of rural England as the bands themselves though and its enduring success rests on its refusal to compromise to fashion.

**BLACK CIRCLES + THE FABULOUS**

**LAGGARD: The Wheatshaf**

**BROKEN MILE + DEAR CHICAGO + HALF NAKED: The Cellar** – 60s-inspired blues, indie and rock from Broken Mile.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

**ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: Bricklayers Arms, Marston**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**  
**BATTLE OF THE BANDS: The Hobgoblin, Bicester**

**NIKKI LOY & MIKEY GLAZIER: Joe's Bar, Summertown**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

## **FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup>**

**CROPREDY FESTIVAL: Cropredy** – Little Feat headline the second day of Fairport's festival, with support from Bellowhead, 3 Daft Monkeys, Mabon, Little Johnny England and Ahab.

**CHINA CRISIS: O2 Academy** – The Liverpoolian synth-pop outfit hit the comeback



*Friday 13<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>*

## LIVESTOCK: Hall Farm, Stratton Audley

Another weekend and another boutique festival in the heart of rural Oxfordshire. Livestock, though, is a pretty unique event, concentrating its musical gaze on world, country and folk music, with acts confirmed to play including the likes of Peruvian chicha outfit Los Chinchas (*pictured*), whose style takes in elements of south American folk, dance, surf-rock, psychedelia and electronica. Their appearance this weekend follows on from festival appearances at Bestival, Secret Garden Party and Lovebox. Elsewhere over an eclectic weekend you'll find a selection of music that stretches from Senegal to Sudan, Finland to Madagascar and Armenia to Oxfordshire. Other acts include Lorraine Lucas and a Couple Of Cowboys, Jacquelyn Hynes & Allison Sleater, Bowell & The Movements, Knights of Mentis, The Holloway Jug Band, Jali Fily Cissokho, Modeste, Amara Kheir, Bigg Taj, Tigran Aleksanyan & Andrew Cronshaw, The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, plus plenty more. Additionally Livestock also features a mini festival-within-a-festival, Scribifest, which showcases poets and writers using music in their work, plus a food fair. All proceeds are split between Maggie's Centre in Oxford and the Anthony Nolan Trust. Visit [www.livestockfestival.co.uk](http://www.livestockfestival.co.uk) for more details and tickets.

trail, reviving their surprisingly extensive catalogue of 80s hits, including 'Christian', 'Black Man Ray' and 'King In A Catholic Style'.

### DEAD JERICHO + WINTER OLYMPICS:

**The Wheatsheaf** – More militantly uptight post-punk from the local rising stars, mixing Gang Of Four's strident funk with the edgy melodicism of early-Cure.

**LIVESTOCK: Hall Farm, Stratton Audley** – First day of the eclectic world, folk and roots festival – *see main preview*

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**  
**BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar** – Latin, Balkan beats, world breaks and nu-jazz club night, including a live set from Flamenco, Latin and north African-flavoured outfit Fernando's Kitchen.

**FOUNDATION REGGAE: East Oxford Community Centre**

**YELLOW CRAYON: The Port Mahon**

## SATURDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN + ULYSSES STORM: The Cellar** – Launch gig for the band's new 'USA' single – *see main interview feature*

**CROPREDY FESTIVAL: Cropredy** – Fairport Convention play their customary headline set,

with all the old classics and myriad guest appearances. Rick Wakeman and the English Rock Ensemble, Martyn Joseph, The Martin Taylor Quartet, Breabad and Richard Digance support.

**LIVESTOCK: Hall Farm, Stratton Audley**  
**BACK POCKET PROPHET + AGE OF MISRULE + RISEN IN BLACK: The**

**Wheatsheaf** – Metal night at the Sheaf with thrash and classic metal types Back Pocket Prophet, bluesy grunge rockers Age Of Misrule and virulent thrash and death metal faves Risen In Black.

**THE MOUNTAIN PARADE: Modern Art** – Great ramshackle folk-pop from the lo-fi Arcade Fire-styled outfit.

**TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy**  
**LIQUID: The Bullingdon** – Drum&bass club night.

**WAX ON WAX OFF: James Street Tavern**

## SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**LIVESTOCK: Hall Farm, Stratton Audley**  
**UGLY DUCKLING + RATFACE + PIEMAN: The Bullingdon** – Wordy, humorous underground hip hop from the Californian trio – *see main preview*

**NIKKI LOY & JOHN DOOLE: The Fishes, North Hinksey (3pm)**

## MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

**ADAM BOMB + RESERVOIR CATS: The Bullingdon** – The Famous Monday Blues' only show this month sees the return of LA's big-haired glam-metal axe hero, who, as well as supporting Chuck Berry and Johnny Thunders during his career, has also auditioned for Kiss, shared an apartment with Izzy Stradlin and jammed with Eddie Van Halen. His is an old-school form of heavy rocking, with nods to Hanoi Rocks and The Sweet along the way. Local heavyweight blues-rockers Reservoir Cats support, doubtless seeing whether they can crank their amps up even louder than Mr Bomb's.

**BEETROOT JAM: The Port Mahon** – Live bands and open jam session.

## TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**ENTER SHIKARI: O2 Academy** – St Alban's hardcore-cum-rave warriors carry on kicking up a party storm. Mixing up screamo guitars, rave synths, vocal chants and screams and euphoric hooks into a frenzied storm of fun.

**JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Alvin Roy & Reeds Unlimited are tonight's guest band.

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon**

## WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**HOUSE OF ROOTS: The Cellar**

## THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**TERRATHORN + VENTFLOW + FAITH IN HATE + VISION FALL: The Bullingdon** – Skeletor Promotions metal night with velocity thrash metal from the south coast's Terrathorn; brutish grind in the vein of Pantera and Lamb Of God from Swindon's Ventflow and bruising metalcore from Vision Fall. Tonight's real treat though are utterly ferocious death-cum-thrash monsters Faith In Hate, back in action after reforming for The Club That Cannot Be Named's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary show earlier in the year.

**DESERT STORM + KOMRAD + MOTHER CORONA + UNDERSMILE: The Cellar** –

Local stoner-metal titans Desert Storm launch their second album, mixing elements of psychedelia, blues and hardcore into their colourfully sludgy palette. Support comes from proggy hardcore types Komrad and Melvins-meets-Babes In Toyland grinders Undersmile.

**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford**

**Community Centre**

**ELECTRIC BLUES JAM: Bricklayers Arms, Marston**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

**BATTLE OF THE BANDS: The Hobgoblin, Bicester**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon**

## FRIDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon**  
**FRESH OUT THE BOX: The Cellar** – House, breaks, garage and electro club night with resident DJs.

**FOUNDATION REGGAE: East Oxford Community Centre**

**NIKKI LOY & MIKEY GLOZIER: The Old Post Office, Wallingford**

## SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**JUNKIE BRUSH + AGNESS PIKE + PYRRHIC VICTORY: The Wheatsheaf** – A night for local legends to reawaken. The core of late80s/early-90s punk-metal heroes Madamadam reconvene – brothers Chris and Mike Brown (guitarist and drummer respectively) and singer Martin Spear (who went on to front doom-metal legends Sevenchurch) – with bassist Pete Marler,

*Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>*

## UGLY DUCKLING: The Bullingdon

With decent hip hop gigs a rare treat in Oxford, it's great to be able to welcome Long Beach, California trio Ugly Duckling to town. DJ Young Einstein and MCs Dizzy Dustin and Andy Cooper grew up surrounded by gangsta rap but their brand of hip hop is far removed from that genre, heavily referencing classic old school acts like The Beastie Boys, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul and Eric B & Rakim, preferring the old school way of sampled rather than self-created beats and frequently lampooning contemporary mainstream hip hop's excesses. Live the emphasis is on interactive fun and their relentlessly upbeat outlook, frequent biblical references and lyrically sharp rapping has made them cult stars, releasing four albums since they formed in 1993, including last year's 'Audacity', and playing festivals across the globe, including Coachella, Reading and Australia's Pyramid Rock. Support for the evening comes from former-Dead Letters frontman Ratface, plus local beatboxer and rapper Pieman.



whose enviable CV includes Underbelly and Suitable Case For Treatment, under the guise Agness Pike. We've yet to hear the fruits of this unholy union but with a pedigree like that, it's fair to assume it's gonna rock. Like the Devil's own bastard offspring. Ferocious local punk and new wave rockers Junkie Brush headline.

**ELDER STUBBS FESTIVAL:** Elder Stubbs Allotments, Rymers Lane – The annual Restore charity festival returns with a mix of live music, art and craft, family activities and more.

**A JOURNEY BACK:** Folly Bridge Inn – 50s and 60s night with various tributes to The Shadows, Neil Diamond, The Monkees, Elvis and Chuck Berry.

**TRASHY / ROOM 101:** O2 Academy  
**FREE RANGE:** The Cellar – Drum&bass and dubstep club night.

**WAX ON WAX OFF:** James Street Tavern

**ELECTEC:** Cricketers Arms – House, Berlin techno and minimalism from DJs Art Lagun and guests.

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

**MATT WINKWORTH + MOUNTAIN PARADE:** Malmaison – Wry, literary cabaret pop from singer and pianist Matt, playing the Mal's fortnightly semi-acoustic night, along with grandly-proportioned lo-fi folk-rockers Mountain Parade.

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

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

**JAZZ CLUB:** The Bullingdon – Live jazz from The Howard Peacock Quintet.

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** The Port Mahon

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

**SCHOLARS + VON BRAUN + SAMUEL ZASADA:** The Wheatsheaf – Darkly-crafted epic indie pop in the vein of Editors and Interpol from Scholars, plus Radiohead and Cure-inspired alt.rocking from Von Braun and ethereal folk and country from Samuel Zasada.

**WORDPLAY:** The Cellar – Hip hop club night, featuring local rap star Mr ShaoDow.

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

**AGE OF MISRULE + MORTDELAMER:** The Wheatsheaf – Grungy blues-pop from AOM.

**THE PETE FRYER BAND:** The Prince Of Wales, Iffley

**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** East Oxford Community Centre

**ELECTRIC BLUES JAM:** Bricklayers Arms, Marston

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** James Street Tavern

**BATTLE OF THE BANDS:** The Hobgoblin, Bicester

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** The Half Moon

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

**D GWALIA + THE YARNS + AIDEN CANADAY:** The Wheatsheaf – Haunting gothic pop from songsmith D Gwalia, whose recent debut album, 'In Puget Sound', remains one of our favourite local releases of the year, recalling This Mortal Coil in its hushed, almost Gregorian melancholy. Fluffy indie jangle from The Yarns in support and wistful acoustic pop from Aiden Canaday.

**MELTING POT:** The Bullingdon – Mixed bag of unsigned bands, tbc.

**MASK OF JUDAS + THE FICTION + VISION FALL + THROUGH HER EYES:** The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox rock, metal and hardcore night.

**THE BIG 10 INCH:** The Cellar – Count Skylarkin hosts his monthly celebration of rock'n'roll, ska, r'n'b, swing, skiffle and jive, tonight featuring a live set from London's six-strong r'n'b collective The Divetones, recently championed by Andy Weatherall.

**THE MIGHTY REDOX:** The Chester Arms

**BACKROOM BOOGIE:** The Bullingdon

**FOUNDATION REGGAE:** East Oxford Community Centre

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

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with PICTUREHOUSE + AMY'S GHOST + WEARE UGLY BUT WE HAVE THE MUSIC:** The Wheatsheaf – Quality mixed bill as ever at Gappy Tooth Industries, tonight featuring local electro-pop, hip hop and alt.rock outfit Picturehouse, who are joined by Reading's ethereal alt.folk, trip hop and ambient pop types Amy's Ghost and one-man retro rave party We Are Ugly.

**MATT WINKWORTH + RADIO BIRD:** Modern Art – Wry cabaret pop from singer and pianist Matt Winkworth in the gallery's yard.

**HQ:** The Cellar – Metalheadz special with DJ Storm and B-III.

**THE PETE FRYER BAND:** The Marsh Harrier, Cowley

**TRASHY / ROOM 101:** O2 Academy  
**SELECTA:** The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.

**WAX ON WAX OFF:** James Street Tavern

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

**NIKKI LOY:** The Head of the River (4.30pm)

**GUNS'N'AMMO RECORDS NIGHT:**

The Cellar – Label relaunch night with Benny Page and Dope'n'Ammo DJs spinning drum&bass and jungle.

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

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

**JAZZ CLUB:** The Bullingdon – Live set from The Hugh Turner Band.

**OPEN MIC SESSION:** The Port Mahon

**FLASH HARRY ENTERPRISES**  
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## CORNBURY FESTIVAL

### Cornbury Park

#### SATURDAY

Affectionately dubbed Poshstock by its regulars, Cornbury seems to be trying to outdo its reputation as the music festival for those who appreciate the finer things in life. There's a farmers' market in the camp site and a Waitrose cocktail lounge inside the main arena, while Jamie Oliver even has an Italian food stall here. But such gourmet passion goes beyond these fripperies. The first band we encounter today only features Lloyd Grossman on guitar. That's right. Lloyd Grossman. In a punk band. It gets to the point where we spend all day Sunday scanning the folk stage to see whether anyone with a beard is Anthony Worrall-Thompson and wondering whether Dervla Kirwan might turn up as compere ("This isn't any blues rock; this is *M&S* blues rock").

Anyway, back to Lloyd and his punk rock. The oddly-accented one has recently revived his late-70s troupe **THE NEW FORBIDDEN**. They're not really punk at all, more the sort of energised r'n'b that preceded punk. It's not exactly gourmet fare; you could probably do as well in any boozier on a Saturday night. Maybe they could do with arch-swearist Gordon Ramsay on guest vocals for a quick run through The Anti-Nowhere League's 'So What?', although if you want a chef with some serious punk attitude, the late, great Keith Floyd would be your man. What we'd give to see him knocking out a few old Stranglers classics.

This year's Cornbury bill does veer more than ever towards the middle of the road: lots of musical veterans, only a very few of whom deserve their 'legend' tag, and most of the real treats are tucked away at the back of the field on the Riverside Stage today. While most people only shift from their little wagon circle in front of the main stage for toilet visits or emergency rosé replenishment there are fewer people evident at the start of an excellent set by **LES**

**CLOCHARDS** than there were last time they played The Wheatsheaf. It doesn't faze them any, and they deliver their trademark brand of lush Gallic cafe indie with the same stately grace as usual, a gorgeous 'Démodé' being the highlight. Light airy music, but their background in vintage punk and indie bands gives the music a classically French stubborn defiance (in the sense of getting whipped on absinthe and inventing new art forms, not overpricing croques madames to tourists and bombing Greenpeace). Sad that their subtler moments lose out in a sound war with the nearby fun fair rides; "*Criez si vous voulez aller plus vite!*"

**DEAD JERICOS** are notably incongruous in such perfectly pastoral surroundings, with their uptight post-punk scrawl and tales of domestic violence and coke'n'lager-fuelled punch-ups in provincial nightclubs, but this simply makes them even more irresistible. They play every single gig as if it's the last Friday night before the Pandora opens. It's rock energy so improbably infectious that it isn't even punctured when a snare drum breaks and there's a brief gap whilst another is located. Each short invigorating shot of espresso pop is a joy to witness.

Back to the main event in time to hear **JOSHUA RADIN** sucking all vestige of life and soul out of Yazoo's 'Only You', like a slowly expiring consumption victim, as a tiny black cloud of misery threatens the sundrenched field of happy people. He continues in this vein for several aeons, at one point sounding like a poor-man's Procul Harem, until we're forced to retire to the Waitrose cocktail lounge where giant pictures of Heston Blumenthal and Delia Smith gaze down on us like genial versions of Bond villains Blofeld and Rosa Kleb.

Thus refreshed we're in exactly the right mood for **BUDDY GUY** and

#### Candi Staton



Candi Staton, Feeling and Buddy Guy by Will Banks

his alligator blues: it hasn't evolved since forever, but it has a deadly bite. The band is good and play a solid big stage blues set, but when Buddy steps up the others just fade into the background, which is impressive as he's about 800 years old. His guitar sound is amazing, each acid-etched note drawing a line back to BB King, sideways to Albert Collins and forward to Jimi Hendrix. He plays 'Hoochie Coochie Man' with such a perfect mix of soul-baring emotion and carny roustabout repartee that we feel as if we'd never heard the song before, and if that ain't a definition of raw innate talent, we don't know what is.

We were hoping to get the same experience from **DR JOHN**, and at first it was promising: he has a battered organ and a baby grand, each topped with a human skull; he ambles onstage with the confident air of a mafia don who knows he owns us all; he wears a superbly sharp voodoo suit and looks like a child's drawing of Orson Welles disguised as Bryan Ferry; he can sit at a keyboard

better than most people can play it; he draws raps drenched in the cartoon skullduggery that was so influential on Tom Waits. But for the first half of the set the music doesn't really gel, and simply sounds like a competent bar band, an effect possibly not helped by the fact that an insufficiently audible trombone takes the place of a stomping horn section. Things are just getting going when the band slips into a dirty funk chug and it's suddenly all over. The conclusion is that whilst Buddy is happy with the elder statesman's showcase on a festival stage, Dr John probably still only gets on top of his awesome game with a few hours in a dark sweaty room, not sixty polite minutes in the Cotswold sun.

**SQUEEZE**, on the other hand, are so happy to trot their greatest hits out to the punters they probably have wristband blisters. Before the first track is even out they're pointing the mike at the audience for a singalong, and, in fairness, a large percentage of the crowd are

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Buddy Guy



eager to take them up on the offer. All around us tipsy parents are reliving their 5<sup>th</sup> form disco whilst their kids cause havoc with bubble machines, and Squeeze get a grand reception, which is fully deserved. As with Crowded House, also on the heritage trail, it's amazing that Glenn Tillbrook's voice hasn't aged at all, and still has the tuneful chumminess of their old hits. And what hits they are. Squeeze have got so many top notch pop songs in their arsenal you forget how great they are until you hear them again.

**CANDI STATON** knows her audience too, and you can't blame her for giving them what they want. Impressively, her rich voice is just as strong as it was when we saw her a decade ago, and her set is a super-slick ball of fun, with a cantering romp through 'Suspicious Minds' standing out, but most of the audience don't get to their feet until 'Young Hearts Run Free', so she cleverly makes it last about fifteen minutes. With her sparkling dress and ballsy soul delivery Staton is a bit like an alternate universe Tina Turner who hadn't erased all her character in post-production somewhere in the early 80s.

After Staton has put a spring in our step, Cornbury regular **IMELDA MAY** knocks us off our feet. Her

band play a turbo-rockabilly, all slapped double bass, Duane Eddy guitar, scorching trumpet and battered tambourine, over which May's feisty Dublin voice wails with a sassy, gospel passion. The songs are relatively generic, but played with fiery conviction, and even "I'm a creepy, sneaky freak" can sound like Byron if you sing it as viscerally as Imelda May does.

After this run, all Cornbury has to do is keep the party going. And they give us **DAVID GRAY**. That's like having ten minutes to score a hat trick, and bringing on Heskey. His set is just as tedious as you'd expect, and he doesn't even interest us by being particularly awful. He does that 'Babylon' one. He does that one that sounds like that other one. He does some we know and some we wish we didn't. Then he does several million more. We strive to imagine that somehow his set is one elongated psychedelic mantra, hypnotic rather than catatonic, but who are we kidding? Just when we think it can't get any worse he insults the crowd and loses even those daft enough to have stayed to sing along to songs so anonymous they could be used to infiltrate the Taliban. We visit the loo. Turns out that taking an echoey piss in an empty trailer

housing 22 well-used urinals is just like watching a David Gray gig.

## SUNDAY

Aaagh! My eyes! Such is the joy of waking in a tent in glorious sunshine after approximately three-hours dream-filled sleep into which filtered a bizarre mix of *Heart FM* dance anthems and the worst campfire harmony singing this side of the Tone-Deaf Cub Scout Jamboree. We need tea and cake and someone to vent some spleen on. The former two are well catered for by the reliably homely Charlbury School tea and cake stall. Proper china mugs and glorious chocolate sponge topped with fresh cream. Jamie and Heston would approve.

David Cameron is in the house, so here's our opportunity to satisfy that third need. Bet he didn't sleep on several lumps of sandstone next to a tent full of flatulent Welshmen last night. Sadly he's nowhere to be seen. Probably busy informing the kids' entertainers their supply of modelling clay is set to be cut by 20% and he's upping VAT on Bollywood dance lessons. The cad.

Caffeinated and caked-up, it's over to **SONNY LISTON**, who won the BBC Oxford *Introducing*

Gray by name...



David Gray by Miles Walkden

competition to open the Second Stage on Sunday, and worthy winners they were. Their songs are uber-perky folk-indie strums, with lots of vibrant trumpet and literate lyrics about Charles de Gaulle, generally sounding a bit like Belle & Sebastian rewrites of 'Summer Holiday', which is a lovely way to start the day, and with two great vocalists who can deliver even wordy lyrics convincingly, whilst keeping the summery pop melodies afloat.

**JON ALLEN** maintains our relaxed buoyant mood. He may come from Devon, but his songs all have a laidback pseudo-country singer songwriter waft that we like. To be frank, his songs all sound like Bob Dylan circa-'Desire', and his set is so mellow we start to ponder just how Sunn0))) would go down with the Cornbury crowd, but it'll do for now.

**THE BLOCKHEADS** were always an odd proposition, pub rock passion mixed with punk sneers and funk chops, topped off by a tone deaf romantic/cynical poet obsessed by sex, ethics and Essex. Dury has of course sadly passed on now, but we're glad the band have chosen to keep the unique vision alive, and if the set is a bit of a chicken-in-a-basket cabaret turn, you can bet that if Ian is looking down on us, he'd hate his

memory to be enshrined too formally. His current replacement hams it up, overdoing some of Dury's vocal tics. On the plus side every musician on stage is simply *astounding* and, what's more, is still clearly having the time of their life. The band delivers a hits selection, but don't shy away from original arrangements to keep things fresh, the sax solo on 'Clever Trevor' being the greatest musical moment of the festival. Plus, they have a vault of cracking tunes so deep, they make Squeeze look like Milli Vanilli.

**EASY TIGER** might not have the hits but their set feels instantly familiar. Ady Davey, resplendent in lurid pink shirt ("Primark, four quid," apparently), cowboy hat and shades, looks like Neil Young but sings more like Roger Daltrey, while the band's high-octane bar-room blues reminds us of Jason & The Scorchers. It's rollicking fun, topped off when Ady introduces Texan steel guitar player Lightnin' Willie to the stage to help celebrate American Independence Day. Cornbury is right back in party mode.

But the sky is darkening, an omen perhaps of **REEF**'s approaching set. If anyone can truthfully tell us what the world needs with this band, we'll treat them to a slap-up feast at Jamie's pasta stall next year. How they can take such titanic influences (Led Zep, AC/DC) and get something so simple so hopelessly **WRONG** beggars belief. The singer sounds genuinely constipated, they

do that one about putting their hand inside your hole or whatever and with that vision burned into our minds, we head for the South African wine stall which the lovely Cornbury press people have given us free vouchers for. We use them all up in one bucket-sized go.

Thank God, then, for **FISHERMAN'S FRIEND**. They are late middle aged men from Port Isaac who sing *a capella* shanties. They have some intelligent harmonies, but they aren't precious about the performance, honking out the songs like nine Cornish vuvuzelas filled with navy rum. This is folk music with big balls and simple melodies (Middle eight? Never heard of one, chum) that cut straight to the heart and force even the most reticent tongues to shout along like 18<sup>th</sup> century street vendors. All this, plus oodles of camp innuendo between songs. What a simply brilliant band. They get a *huge* response from the crowd, which does the soul good to witness. And after which we can barely face the idea of **NEWTON FAULKNER** on the main stage. But, he turns out to be a surprisingly decent showman, personable, occasionally funny and possessed of a pretty good voice which we'd overlooked in our haste to hate his cover of 'Teardrop'. He quickly builds up a conversational rapport with the crowd, which is no mean feat on a big stage after a day and half of music, so even if his own songs aren't much to write home

about, his set flashes by, closing with an unfortunate acoustic take on 'Bohemian Rhapsody'.

It's drizzling now and the wind has picked up. Last year the advent of rain rapidly dampened the festival mood but India's **RAGHU DIXIT** are on hand to make sure that can't happen again. Barely known and tucked away on the Riverside stage, they are the absolute highlight of the weekend. Raghu has a simply sensational voice, keening and powerful, while the funky fusion rhythms make you want to get up and dance as though David Gray was a distant memory. The band is fantastic, notably the violinist whose vigour if not virtuosity equals Seth Lakeman, and while they're mixing traditional Indian sounds with funk and rock, they can sound more like an African hi-life band at times, or even a Bollywood Los Lobos. Not just a great singer, Raghu is a superb entertainer and genuinely funny, managing to coax the entire crowd, including his manager, to dance down the front. Normally when we describe an act as "a good festival band" it's a back-handed compliment; for Raghu Dixit it's a golden commendation. Simply joyous. Stick them on the main stage next year, please.

**JACKSON BROWNE** is today's headline act and should really be reviewed last but he's such a comedown at the end of the day, a feeling of resignation after the

triumphalism of The Blockheads, Raghu Dixit and Seth Lakeman, that we're loathe to finish on a sigh rather than a cheer, so instead the final words are for **SETH LAKEMAN**, a man who's so familiar to local venues and festivals we should have tired of him months ago but who never fails to set a theatre or field alight. His is folk music *about* the people, *for* the people. He is keen to ground each song in real events in his introductions, celebrating people otherwise off history's radar, whether ancient tales like 'Kitty Jay' or more contemporary stories, such as 'Solomon Brown'. Forthcoming album title track 'Hearts And Minds' is a crowd rousing song, but in the sense of "Let's all believe the same thing", rather than "Let's get some cudgels and duff up the ruling classes". It's a performance of egalitarian, humanitarian music, spiced with his fluid fiddle playing and outstanding double bass.

And that's that for another year. Cornbury is never going to be a ground-breaking music event; that's simply not its remit, but again it proves itself to be ever capable of pulling enough surprises to keep even us happy for a weekend and it remains one of the most fun festivals around. And yes, we leave feeling unusually well fed for two days spent camped out in the middle of the country.

*Dale Kattack, David Murphy.*

Raghu Dixit



photo: Paul Knowles / Guarav Vaz

Seth Lakeman



photo: Samantha Rice

# OZZY OSBOURNE

## O2 Academy

“I WANNA HEAR YOU FUCKIN’ SCREAM!” The High Priest of Rock; The Pope of Dope, speaks in capital letters, and the Academy event of the year is finally underway. It’s been two hours since the coiling black snake of a queue poured into the humid Academy; half instantly swamping the merch stand, buying up the £20 black t-shirts, showing our hero atop a hillside brandishing a large black flag in an uncharacteristically decisive pose; the other half happy with their free cardboard Ozzy face masks, which when viewed *en mass*, worn on the back of their heads is, nightmarishly, like seeing life through a multifaceted fly’s eye.

“GO FUCKING CRAZY!” quoths the Prince. After an hour and a half of a none-more-metal DJ playing back to back Greatest Rock Anthems, like black mass hymns to the congregated faithful, the five hundred strong mosh explodes like a shaken can of beer, jolted lager rains skywards as ‘Bark at the Moon’ releases the energy of anticipation. “Vengeance is boiling / He’d returned to kill the light,” sings the eerie live voice we’ve all waited to hear. “It’s Ozzy Fucking Osbourne!” yells an overexcited girl, a quarter of his age, into her Dad’s ear. Indeed it is. The Cherie Blair letterbox grin: check; the glittering, truly manic, black kohl rimmed eyes: check. There is only one Ozzy Osbourne, his lean frame hooked like a question mark over the clasped mike, and the crowd is singing back the answer.

There is no old man here, no John Culshaw doddering stupidity. Ozzy is in his true element, a fish placed back



photo: Spike Holfield

in the river, and after the weary off-key Youtube vids of Blizzcon 2009 this semi-secret, sold-out-in-five-minutes prelude to a massive three month world tour for his new album ‘Scream’ shows him to be in the shape of his life.

The rabble is roused. ‘Mr Crowley’ brings the first of six full buckets of water throughout the show, to be slaked firstly over himself then across the crowd. We are soaked through; he is soaked through. ‘Road to Nowhere’ swims into ‘Suicide Solution’. WTF, tell me why we aren’t all being electrocuted? This is the guy who was shocked Chico auditioned with a live

mic in his LA garden water feature. My notes are drenched and the ink runs into equal incomprehension.

Rick Wakeman’s son, Adam, fires up a WWII air raid siren on his keyboards for ‘War Pigs’ and the poppier ‘Shot in the Dark’ resembles ‘You Give Love A Bad Name’ more than it should, but I’ve stopped reviewing after the third bucket. Classic rock song follows classic rock song as only the back catalogue of someone who has been at the top for 40 years can, and with the easiest name in the world to chant, still ringing off the lighting, he comes out one last time and brings the house

down with the full stop of ‘Paranoid’.

Speaking as someone who has often been quoted as saying, tongue in cheek, that rockers over thirty-five shouldn’t be allowed on stage or in recording studios, I have to say living legends like John Michael Osbourne are a breed apart, and can be exempt. *Ozzy really should* have his genome mapped, and any usable results be available on the NHS, for this man, for all his frail looks, has the constitution of an ox and is not possessed by the Devil. In fact I’d wager the Devil is possessed by *him*.

**Paul Carrera**

## CARNIVAL Cowley Road

From graffiti walls to blues ensembles; samba masterclasses, school dance teams and glam rock to chicken tikkas and green curries to go; Chinese dragons and zorb globes to drumming workshops for children ... nothing beats the Cowley Road Carnival in Oxford. What started off years ago in east Oxford as an incentive to build community ties and boost business exchange has now become an annual must-go for any resident of the city.

Its tentacles have spread even further when it comes to options in entertainment and venues, recently adding South Park as another platform for cultural expression. The same thing has happened in terms of music. The involvement of local bands from different backgrounds and styles reflects the variety and richness of different Oxford communities and it’s a delight to be able to enjoy a day out completely for free, while learning, experimenting and discovering something new.

On Cowley Road the selection of sound systems is as eclectic as it is loud. Heaving from each corner of the street are reggae, funk, jazz and

party tunes, but also the constant sing-alongs, shrieks of delight, oeh-oeh-oehs and stomping of locals. Particularly popular are the offers by **SKYLARKIN’ SOUNDSYSTEM**, offering both DJ and live sets, with **ZION & THE WHITE BOYS** leading the masses to a collective new jazz/funk euphoria. The eatery *Carne* offers a Portuguese-infused display of salsa, including ad-hoc workshops by natives of the country: far from the type of music performed around the corner in South Park.

There two music stages are up, one specifically for acoustic troubadours, where local bands perform in half-hour slots, short and sweet so as to enhance the diversity of rhythms and become acquainted with the talents living next door. **PHOUSA** and **BETHANY WEIMERS** are two singer-songwriters with plenty of stories to tell and hearts to move. One tender and nostalgic, the other feisty and direct, they perform in front of a small crowd, involving them all in the intimacy of their sharing. **UTE**, on the main stage, an indie fold pop act,

present songs sometimes reminiscent of the early aura of Radiohead, while adding folk and pop diversions; the band has become the latest potential success of the city. **ADAM BARNES** brings a straightforward approach to American folk with guitar in hand and sight locked to the horizons, while **WINCHELL RIOTS** bring back the indie pop of non-conformists, experimenting with melody, light airy guitars and grand finales. **BORDERVILLE** follow: cocky, extravagant and chaotic at times while **HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES** travel back in time to offer ‘60s country atmospheres.

Things get serious when **CHARLY COOMBES & THE NEW BREED** take the stage. A massive jump in professional performing techniques ensues and the extremely tight blues and jazz-based **ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPAM BAND** finish off the day with a superb goodbye set, topped up by the most beautiful rainbow ever seen over South Park – a trophy to the good health of Oxford’s multiculturalism and community fusion.

**Liane Escorza**



## PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED

### O2 Academy

Punk was rock and roll's great full stop. What came immediately after was more than a new chapter; it was a renaissance, an enlightenment. Freed by punk, musicians – and non-musicians – looked to dub, to funk, to krautrock and prog, to electronic music and to the mad inventiveness of Zappa and Beefheart.

At the forefront of this was John Lydon, a man whose curmudgeonly comic quotability sheltered a musical vision second to none. Public Image Limited were post-rock before the term was even invented. More, they

were anti-rock, a whole new musical ball game. Their influence is everywhere today but not always recognised. The very idea of PiL doing a reunion tour feels absurd, but tonight makes you grateful it's happened.

Not that it's a proper reunion – only Lydon remains from the original line-up, now augmented by former-Pop Group drummer Bruce Smith amongst others – an inspired choice in a frankly incredible band. Lydon is still happy to play the taunting court jester, strolling on

stage with a cheery "Hello poor people", before launching into a metallic 'This Is Not A Love Song', a loose arrangement that sets the scene for tonight's determinedly uncommercial set. PiL's very nature means they're never going to knock out a lazy greatest hits set. Instead we get two and a half hours of weird, wired slabs of dubbed-out, reverbed-to-buggery mantras topped off by the most recognisable whine in music. And it's all spectacularly, incontestably, fantastic.

'Poptones' merges into 'Tie Me To

The End Of That' and then into an epic 'Albatross', a sprawling, hypnotic dirge that's monstrous in its execution, weaselling and nagging its way into your brain while the bass reaches into your very soul. 'FlowersOfRomance' is rendered even more oblique and perverse than its original incarnation, while 'Warrior', like so much tonight, is twisted and elongated into an almost shamanic exorcism, its message as keen and vitriolic as it ever was. If Lydon enjoys winding people up and playing the clownish iconoclast, his ire has never dampened since those Pistols days and if the language sounds inflammatory, maybe that's because no other fucker has the guts to say what he does these days. Before the set is finished he's accused the Pope of being an alcoholic, a Nazi and a paedophile. "Lock up your children / The priests are coming," he chants.

That said, while he spends the set spitting Jack Daniels onto the stage, wiping his nose on his sleeve and berating security, he now seems to have genuine appreciation and affection for his fans and that moment of warmth reveals a side to his nature barely recognised by the media.

After a set that spans PiL's most *outré* moments, they finish with a trio of genuine sing-along hits that still feel freakish as hell compared to anything you'd hear in the charts nowadays – 'Public Image', 'Rise' and Lydon's collaboration with Leftfield, 'Open Up'.

After the flabby appearance on I'm A Celebrity and the embarrassment of those butter adverts, watching a lithe, viciously camp John Lydon on stage tonight, back doing what he does best – taking rock music to uncharted places – restores your faith in a man who often appears hell-bent on destroying his own legacy. Tonight's gig is nothing less than awesome.

**Dale Kattack**

## SUZANNE VEGA

### O2 Academy

The cynic might ponder Suzanne Vega's motives. Back, with a collection of old songs re-recorded, on paper it sounds like little more than a money making stunt. Suzanne herself even suggests after tonight's opener, 'Marlene On The Wall', that "journalists might like to argue with me and say it's not a love song, it's an angst song," which makes its addition to 'Close Up Volume 1, Love Songs' suspect to say the least. Like its latest album version, 'Marlene' comes with a stripped-back sound tonight, but the distinction from the original is subtle, a shift which only discerning fans would notice.

Suzanne however seems wise to this and there's a deliberate push to make the non-album songs in tonight's set beefier, 'When Heroes Go Down' given looming guitar riffs, and 'Blood Makes

Noise' having its already sinister feel pushed to the max. This creates a chameleon effect, one minute strumming out acoustic ballads, the next clutching her microphone and prowling the stage, rapper style. There's high expectation when she drops a guitarist, attempting 'Left Of Centre' with just a bass for backing. Whilst Suzanne's vocals are punchier, this minimalistic approach seems to fall flat. The intricate harmonies which drive the original are too crucial to be dispensed with and the resulting sound becomes almost cumbersome.

Nevertheless, it does quiet the scepticism regarding arrangements of the latest album. It seems clear that the likes of 'Some Journey' and 'Gypsy' cannot tolerate a heavy-handed approach to rearrangement and Suzanne's subtle yet distinctive alterations allows them to breathe, her mellowing

vocals shining through, without the loss of their musical charm. Equally her addition of Dangemouse & Sparklehorse's 'The Man Who Played God', which Suzanne penned, proves that the latest album is not a consequence of her songwriting running out of steam, but it equally begs me to ask why Suzanne didn't simply opt to release a new album.

Those who haven't embraced Suzanne's every offering are well rewarded: 'Luka', 'Solitude Standing' and 'Tom's Dinner' complete with the DNA remix style interludes, all being well received. But those who have lavished after Suzanne over the course of her 25-year career might be less reciprocal. Whilst her addition of early album tracks 'Small Blue Thing' and 'Neighbourhood Girls' highlight Vega's ongoing power as a singer songwriter, like 'Caramel' the end result is a desire for something that which cannot be obtained.

**Lisa Ward**



## GASLIGHT ANTHEM / TWIN ATLANTIC / SHARKS

### O2 Academy.

As far as greeting your audience goes, “Good evening Oxford, we’re Sharks from Leamington Spa” is hardly up there with such rock’n’roll classics such as “Hello Cleveland”. The rest of their set is however awash in cliché and knocked-off ideas. From their quiffs to their punk posturing there’s not an original thought to be found. Someone should tell them that desperately wanting to be The Clash won’t make it so.

Twin Atlantic might be a good band; it’s frankly impossible to tell seeing as the mix renders them a concept band whose sole purpose is to make the audience prolapse with a singular nondescript bass note. There might be a hint of Biffy Clyro, even early Placebo, lurking beneath the surface somewhere, but we’re too busy holding our sinuses in with a couple of biros to notice.

And so to The Gaslight Anthem, a band who have released a couple of pretty damn fine rock records over the last few years in the shape of ‘The ‘59 Sound’ and ‘American Slang’. A storming performance supporting Bruce Springsteen at Hyde Park last year has clearly won a few fans as t-shirts featuring The Boss are

in abundance. Springsteen’s patronage has helped, but he can’t hold their hands every step of the way and the band is keen to prove their credentials tonight. Vocalist Brian Fallon is the focus of attention, a constant hive of energy and passion as he belts out these stadium-sized songs. Each one is crammed with a kind of working man’s creed, hokey pathos or sepia-tinted nostalgia – the kind of sentimentality designed to hit right in the heart. Naturally the place erupts, but something just doesn’t sit right. Songs normally shot through with the spirit of Springsteen and The Clash on record somehow conspire to come across as limp and tired tonight. What worked in front of several thousand people at Hyde Park last year seems to be falling hideously flat tonight. Not that anyone’s noticing of course, because it’s easy to get drawn in by Fallon’s gravely voice of apparent authenticity and these admittedly finely-crafted songs; but this is not the finished product yet. Springsteen’s shoes have yet to be filled, and tonight suggests that The Gaslight Anthem are not yet the band to do it. *Sam Shepherd*

## TENDER TRAP / LES CLOCHARDS / SHRAG

### The Wheatsheaf

Musical trends and fashions come and go, but the indie pop sound has been constant, since at least the mid-1980s. Tonight, three bands that represent different aspects of that sound and its legacy combine to remind me that not *all* music is cynical, aggressive and wilfully confrontational.

Shrag, despite what I’ve just said, can notch up the noise levels from time to time, but they do so in the context of charming, deceptively well-written songs that speak of (what else?) relationships, happiness, unhappiness. Augmenting a traditional guitars’n’vox jangle sound with some neo-old-school synth blurts, they’re an effortlessly enjoyable band to watch. Totally relaxed, and completely enjoying what they’re doing, they mix up the best parts of Heavenly, Bis and old American female-tinged indie-pop like Rocketship, Tiger Trap or Velocity Girl. They eschew the awkward embarrassment that so unfortunately prevails in this kind of music, and almost have a swagger to them – albeit a cute, friendly swagger.

Les Clochards, I have previously snarked about in these pages, but perhaps I’m in a better mood this

time. Featuring guitarist Peter Momtchiloff (late of Talulah Gosh and Marine Research), they’re the grown-up, reflective side of Shrag’s cheeky hair-pulling antics. Finely-crafted, acoustic guitar-led songs sound something like a drunkard’s laments, reeking of regret and red wine.

Tender Trap feature further Talulah Gosh/Heavenly/Marine Research alumni in Amelia Fletcher and Rob Pursey. With new album ‘Dansette Dansette’, they haven’t reinvented themselves or branched out into dangerous new musical territories. Instead, they continue along a well-trodden yet warmly familiar and welcoming path of buzzing, energetic guitar lines, and sly, knowing vocals, skipping over simple rhythms. Fletcher’s voice is now so recognisable as to somewhat define whatever it’s featured on, and much of Tender Trap’s set could easily be interchanged with that of a Marine Research or even Heavenly show, but that doesn’t particularly mean anything. As people used to say, way back when, ‘indie pop don’t stop,’ and it’s a pleasure to hear bands that still hold aloft this all-too-easily ignored torch.

*Simon Minter*

## THE WORLD IS NOT FLAT! / BAND OF HOPE / MATT WINKWORTH / FACEOMETER

### The Bullingdon

There is a theory that soon the professional musician will largely become extinct, along with the idea of owning recorded music. The days of groups signing on the dole for years until a lucky break lands a fat recording deal seem part of a bygone era. Gigs like tonight are a part of the resistance movement; a few punters, a few quid changing hands and everyone going home happy.

Faceometer, from Birmingham, tonight playing as an acoustic duo, fit an album’s worth of words into the average song; nervy, hyperactive and very English. Fun though this is, keeping up is hard work and the slower numbers provide welcome relief and more satisfaction, before it’s back to more quickfire tales of space, pirates and stuffed animals.

Matt Winkworth is an example of another great English institution: the camp piano player. In another era he’d be a music hall star, but there’s more to him than that. Claiming to be ‘anti-indie’, his music recalls an earlier era of gentleness and sophistication, in the best senses, though he could find himself destined

to be the eternal ‘quirky’ support act.

Wallingford’s Band of Hope come across as mature and assured, claiming to be excited to be playing in a city. Tom Crook left his career as a session guitarist to gather a highly talented group of players to make poignant, stirring songs based in Celtic and other folk traditions. In a live environment their songs take on a life of their own and are simply captivating. They just need to replicate it on record.

The World Is Not Flat! take their name from the fact the duo live in Oxford and New York respectively, difficult to believe as they’re almost telepathically in time with each other. Roxy Brennan from local outfit The Mountain Parade has produced two albums with New York’s Chris Faroe, who implausibly claims they practice over the phone. Continuing the poignant, folky vein of the evening, the songs are rich and a little dark, steeped in history and recurring themes of distance and separation, if a little short on light relief.

*Art Lagun*

## DR SHOTOVER: Jaz Club

“Once is happenstance, twice is coincidence, three times is enemy action” – as some overblown super-villain once said to my old mate JAZ BOND out on the golf course... After our Esteemed Ed’s horrible experience a couple of years ago at Cornbury (see last month’s column, dunderheads), the dreaded David “Hammer-On” Cameron turned up AGAIN, albeit this time tailed by plain-clothes coppers with revolvers spoiling the line of their cheap suits. Truly this event has earned its name of POSH-BASTARD-FEST. If he appears next year, we will know that the festival is officially dead in the water (...of the Cornbury Estate PRIVATE FISHERIES LAKE). Meanwhile rumour has it that Ham’s faithful caddy, Clegg, was being allowed a day off, and for once, I found myself envying the lot of a Liberal Democrat, since God knows I could do with a day off myself... Now, it may seem to *you* that I just spend all my time propping up the bar at the East Indies Club cadging drinks off unsuspecting new members (ah, thanks, very decent of you, old boy) and regaling all and sundry with tales of the Raj and/or how much better the Oxford Music Scene used to be. But how wrong, nay how CRETINOUS would that make you? Do you not recognize the Hardest-Working Man in Showbusiness when you see him? In fact I am thinking of changing my name by deed-poll to JAZ BROWN. Take me to the bridge! (Of the ahem, FISHERIES LAKE). Please, please, please, PUH-LEEEZE! [Dr S falls to his knees, has a cape put on him, is escorted to the side of the stage, does a little dance back over to the mic-stand of the East Indies Club karaoke machine... this process is repeated several times until someone buys him a drink, and then he settles down again]. But enough of all that Jaz... let’s get some KILLING JOKE on!

**Next month:**  
**EIGHTIES! I’m living in the Eighties! (Worse luck).**



*Killing Joke’s JAZ COLEMAN takes over the East Indies Club karaoke night*

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# DEMOS

## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### THE NO-ONES

It is with something of a heavy heart we crown The No-Ones Demo Of The Month, partly because they're not even from Oxfordshire, but across the border in Bucks, but mainly because in any other month they'd be occupying one of the best-of-the-rest slots, not sitting proudly atop the pile. But that's the luck of the draw for you, rules is rules and rules says we have to have a winner. So here we go – the best of a pretty sorry bunch by a country mile. The main thing in The No-Ones' favour is opening track 'Crystalline', which is the single memorable tune in the entire pile, a rollicking, billowing slab of power-pop that sounds like a cross between Husker Du and Green Day giving Teenage Fanclub's 'Sparky's Dream' a good going over but with the rough edges neatly sanded down for ease of consumption. Close your eyes, cast off your cynicism and you can well imagine it being pumped out from the main stage at Reading Festival later this month. The rest of the demo continues in this post-grunge power-pop vein, equally bullish and sunshiny, all rolling chords and vocal harmonies, infused with a sense of positivity, epic in both length and execution, nods to Foo Fighters and The Gin Blossoms at various points but bordering on 80s hair metal at times and by the time they reach the fourth and final track, the bilious, histrionic 'Does It Have To End?' some of that early charm is wearing thin and we have to conclude that, yes, it does: quit while you're ahead.

### SEAN STEWART

We reviewed Sean's one-song demo a couple of months back when he was joined by local gutter-heart crooner Desmond Chancer whose earthy tones provided a bit of out-there edge to Sean's slightly innocuous acoustic pop. Left to his own devices over four songs, Sean struggles to keep your attention and you're quickly craving some of that previous darkness to return. These are slender, not unpleasant songs, prone to navel gazing and lacking the passion or poetry this sort of music demands if it's got any chance of connecting with the listener ("Do you look at photographs / To raise a few laughs?" is typical of the pedestrian rhyming throughout the demo). 'Tell Me' makes more of a stand than the rest of Sean's songs but even here it's in a half-hearted

Belle & Sebastian fashion, while by the time he gets to 'She Went & Made Up Her Mind On Her Own' he's getting seriously maudlin, rambling and droning along devoid of purpose or melody. And really, going back to the beginning of this review, since when should "not unpleasant" ever be taken as a compliment? It's all about as invigorating as a lukewarm shower of piss.

### YELLOW FEVER

Could this be Oxford's first post-Dead Jerichos band? Yellow Fever look like they're all in their mid-teens and quote Youthmovies, Jonquil and Foals as primary influences, but the singer's snappy Alex Turner-like twang and the band's uptight post-punk indie-funk reminds us far more of Drayton's finest. There's a very definite leaning towards all things Arctic Monkeys from the vocalist as he recounts tales from the seedy underbelly of life in leafy Oxfordshire, particularly on 'Mode', which sounds like 'When The Sun Goes Down' filtered through Dead Jerichos' 'She Says The Word'. In their favour Yellow Fever keep their energy levels set to buoyant throughout and if they never really carry enough punch to sound wholly convincing, perhaps a bit of life experience will knock that into them. We heartily recommend a large dose of drinking and fighting, not to mention a damn good listen to Wire's 'Pink Flag' for starters.

### CURFEW

Good grief, what's this? Another bunch of local teens who sound like Arctic Monkeys? Since when did Oxford kids decide singing like swaggering south Yorkshire lads was where it's at? Still, we guess it's preferable to pretending to talk like you're a Baltimore corner kid. Anyway, Curfew, all being 14 and 15, are too young to know that Nightshift was once called Curfew, so at least their name shows good taste, but while Yellow Fever make up in effervescence what they lack in musical and melodic prowess, Curfew seem stuck in apathy mode, trundling along dolefully instead of scampering with something approaching reckless abandon.

### FOREST FICTION

Forest Fiction present an impressive list of influences on their Myspace, a who's who of the great and good of leftfield indie noise, but for now they themselves lack the coherence to fully bring all those diverse strands to life. 'Another Game' is all kick and rush, muddled together rocking, the drumming a too clumsy to carry the song along, the vocals too shouty and overbearing, everything trying, and ultimately failing, to hang together by a

thread. 'Breaking Hearts' is more single-minded and coherent, almost epic even with its big guitar tidal surges and with singer Rob Stringer finally showing what he might be capable of in an almost Morrissey kind of way, and it promises better things to come from the band. But for the most part here Forest Fiction sound like they're going for the kitchen sink approach – chucking anything and everything into the mix to make it sound big and bold and hoping no-one notices the lack of a decent tunes underneath it all.

## MAKE MONDAY MAY DAY

Witney's 'Make Monday May Day' kick off with a song called 'I'll Never Woo As Well As Darryl Palumbo', which is easily song title of the month and we settle down for a spot of Glassjaw-inspired skull-cracking noise. It starts promisingly enough with a sludgy intro but that quickly makes way for some shrill boy-girl call-and-response shouting over a bed of greasily fuzzed-up grunge-pop. We were expecting Rise Against; we get Los Campesinos!'s ungainly cousins. And whereas Los Campesinos! sound like a teenage pop party about to explode like a shaken bottle of fizz, Make Monday.. sound more like the drunken stumble home in the dark afterwards, falling into a couple of hedges en route. So no, you can't make Monday May Day. We'll expect you in class at 9am sharp. First lesson: how to rock. Like a bastard.

## LOVE ZEALOTS

Love Zealots' stated ambition is to "capture the explosive energy of Pixies' 'Surfa Rosa, Nirvana's 'Nevermind' and AC/DC's 'Highway To Hell', which is a more than admirable aim, especially since the ambition of most of the other bands on this page this month seems to extend as far as getting to the loo before they shit themselves, but, as is ever the case, reality fails to match the vision. 'Fallen Hero' shows signs of promise with its raggedy garage-grunge guitar screele which is closer to Tad than Nirvana, while, 'Dark Night Of The Soul' rides a mini storm cloud of portent and thunder before dissipating into mid-paced soft-metal, all mouth and no trousers. Elsewhere the band don't really seem up to the challenge of matching those greats they mention, preferring to hang onto coattails and please the crowd rather than kick against the pricks and plough their own furrow. In the end it's all just too inconsequential and safe. Failure: it's when your best just isn't good enough.

## THE CAPER

With a band name like The Caper, they've just got to be jolly, sunshiny japesters with

a love of old Ealing comedies, surely? Exactly what we need on a warm, blustery summer's day. Sadly, like fellow Banburyites The Keyz, The Caper are less life and soul of the party, more self-consciously zany office "character". 'Bad Barbara' is overwrought honky-tonk pub boogie, like the worst Supergrass song ever written and punchably jovial in the way those *Later... with Jools Holland* end of show jams are. It's the sort of stuff that people who aren't quite as far up the evolutionary ladder as us would describe as "toe-tapping fun" or "good-time" as they flood us with punctuation-free email complaints. But all we can envisage as we sit listening with our heads in our hands and tears of pure loathing dripping on the desk is the guitarists exchanging knowing winks as they hit the middle-eight. At least until they hit the considerably more earnest 'Don't Jump Georgy', a great barrel of deep, meaningful nothingness that sounds like The Beautiful South gutted and remodelled by jaded session musicians for a Sunday afternoon pub jam session, complete with a guitar solo nicked from Thin Lizzy stuck in the middle for no reason whatsoever. Go on Georgy – jump! Jump you fucker and do us all a favour!

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### S.U.N.

S.U.N. describe themselves as indie funk rock, which, sure as eggs is eggs, fills our hearts with joy unbounded. And our worst fears are confirmed when the first song, 'Step Up', marks them out as horrible, risible Red Hot Chili Peppers copyists, sounding like a stoned vagrant trying to remember the words to 'Under the Bridge'. 'Hey Presto' goes for the funk but lacks even the vaguest semblance of fluidity while the singer over-enunciates every vowel while sounding precisely 150 years older than he probably is. So "You've got your goggles on" comes out as "You've got your gargle zone", like some wanky mouthwash advert, and we have absolutely no fucking idea what "I'm a ten foot toffee apple boy" is meant to mean. The incomprehensible, consonant-free gibberish continues as the band get ever more ponderous and it suddenly hits us: this isn't wretched sub-Chili Peppers rubbish, this is wretched sub-Spin Doctors rubbish. And suddenly, in the middle of the warmest, sunniest summer in years, we are filled with a bleakness and emptiness the like of which the lovechild of Ian Curtis, Leonard Cohen and Michael Gira could barely begin to comprehend. S.U.N.? More like S.H.I.T.

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

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



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