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NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month.
Issue 175
February
2010

Dead Jerichos

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Drayton's teen sensations



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NEWS

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BANDS WANTING TO PLAY at this year's **Oxford Punt** have until the 10th March to submit demos. The Punt will take place on Wednesday 12th May across five venues in the city centre. The Punt will kick off at Malmaison in the castle complex. Other venues are Thirst Lodge, the Purple Turtle, the Wheatsheaf and the Cellar. The annual Oxford Punt, which was launched in 1997, showcases the best unsigned acts in Oxfordshire. Past events have featured Young Knives, Little Fish, Stornoway and Elizabeth – the band that went on to become Foals.

Acts wanting to take part in the Punt can send demos in to Nightshift at PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU or email nightshift@oxfordmusic.net. Please clearly mark all submissions Punt and include a contact number and some band or artist details. All acts

should be based in Oxfordshire and have some gigging experience. A limited number of all-venue Punt Passes are on sale from the beginning of February from Videosyncratic on Cowley Road and online at oxfordmusic.net, priced £8, plus booking fee.

THE JERICHO TAVERN'S correct website address is www.thejericho.co.uk. This site lists correct, up-to-date gig dates for the pub. A Google search for the venue tends to direct people to the old address, which is still run by the Tavern former promoter and includes some serious factual inaccuracies.

A SILVER MOUNT ZION play at the Regal on Friday 26th March as part of the new Offshoot Fringe Festival, which runs in conjunction with the annual Oxford Folk Festival and aims to explore the



INNOVATIVE FOLKTRONICA COLLECTIVE TUNNG and veteran folk guitarist **Martin Simpson** are among the first acts to be announced for this year's **Wood Festival**.

Wood, billed as the UK's greenest live music festival, takes place over the weekend of the 21st - 23rd May at Braziers Park, near Wallingford. The festival, organised by Truck, also features Danny & The Champions of the World, Frontier Ruckus and Ora Corgan, with over 30 live acts due to play over two stages. Other attractions include a cycle-powered disco and cinema, music and singing workshops, a poetry slam and craft and children's activities. Music stages are powered by cycle and solar power.

Tickets for Wood are on sale now, priced £70 for the weekend, including camping. Tickets for 13-17 year olds are £50 with kids going free. You can buy tickets at Videosyncratic in Summertown or on Cowley Road and The Scribbler in Oxford City centre as well as various outlets around Oxfordshire and online. Check out the festival advert in this issue of Nightshift for a full list of outlets.

A limited number of Supertrucker tickets, which allow entry to both Wood and Truck Festival in July, are also on sale now, priced £120.

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concept of folk music with a month of live music events, ranging from gigs to workshops and choral, contemporary classical, spoken word and poetry shows. Other acts performing include Trembling Bells, Thomas Truax, Jali Fily Cissokho, Tarik Beshir, Bleeding Heart Narrative, Pindrop Chamber Ensemble and many more. The event kicks off on the 5th March with a spoken word performance. For more information and ticket details visit www.myspace.com/theoffshoot.

THE OXFORD JAZZ FESTIVAL returns for its second year over the Easter weekend. The four-day festival runs from Thursday 1st – Sunday 4th April and features over forty acts playing at venues like the Ashmolean, the Bodleian Library, St. Michael at the North Gate and Malmaison. Acts confirmed include Liane Carroll, Mornington Lockett, Flight of Hand, Kairos Quartet and The Kate Williams Quartet, while there will be a number of special gypsy jazz events to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Django Reinhardt. Elsewhere there will be a youth jazz competition, while the Cellar will host nightly jazz jams. Visit www.oxfordjazzfestival.com for full details.



BELLOWHEAD HEADLINE THIS YEAR'S OXFORD FOLK FESTIVAL. The annual three-day celebration of folk and world music returns over the weekend of the 16th – 18th April. Other acts already confirmed include Cara Dillon, The Warsaw Village Band, Chris Wood and The Demon Barbers Roadshow. As ever the main part of the festival takes place at Oxford Town Hall, with more events at the Holywell Music Room, Oxford Castle complex and beyond. As well as concerts there are workshops, buskers, Morris dancers and ceilidhs. Weekend tickets are on sale now, priced £61. Visit www.oxfordfolkfestival.com for more details.

CREATIVE TUESDAYS, the acoustic music and spoken word club at Café Tarifa on Cowley

Road, goes weekly from this month. The night showcases acoustic acts as well as local bands wanting to play acoustic sets of their normal material. On Thursday 18th March the club hosts a special solo performance from The Hold Steady's Franz Nicolas, with a limited number of tickets available from wegottickets.com.

Creative Tuesday are also launching a new weekly cult film night and any local bands or musicians wanting to showcase their videos or documentaries before the main feature can contact Beth at wales_b@hotmail.com.

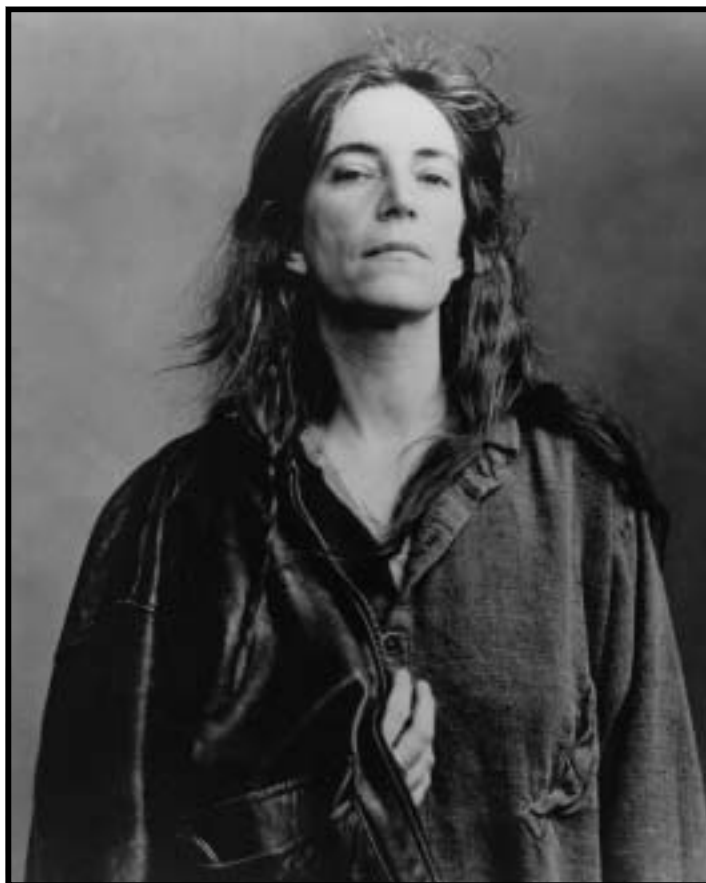
OXFORD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC are inviting applications for their annual OCM Open Session, which takes place at the North Wall Arts Centre in Summertown and launches their spring season. Innovative and original acts of any genre can submit Myspace links to info@ocmevents.org, or visit www.ocmevents.org for more details. Deadline for submissions is the 5th March.

BABY GRAVY launch their new single, 'Not Waiting', this month with a gig supporting former-Slits guitarist Viv Albertine at the Cellar on Saturday 6th February.

THIS MONTH'S OXFORD TOWN HALL RECORD FAIR takes place on Saturday 20th February, from 11am – 4pm.

AS EVER, DON'T FORGET TO tune into BBC Radio Oxford Introducing every Saturday evening on 95.2fm. The weekly local music show celebrates its fifth anniversary in March with a specially commissioned tribute to Radiohead's 'The Bends', featuring various Oxford bands, all in aid of Children In Need. BBC Radio Introducing features a regular mix of new local releases, demos and interviews. The show is available to listen to as a podcast all week at bbc.co.uk/oxford.

DUE TO LAST MONTH'S BAD weather, a few outlets didn't get their January issue of Nightshift, featuring an exclusive interview with Ride, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the debut EP release. The issue is available to read online in PDF format at nightshift.oxfordmusic.net, along with a comprehensive archive of past issues. If you would like a copy of the January issue, just send a large SAE to Nightshift at PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU.



PATTI SMITH performs an evening of "words and music" at the Holywell Music Room on Monday 22nd March. The legendary singer returns to Oxford for the first time since her astonishing show at the Academy in 2007 where she played an extended set of songs from her classic 'Horses' and 'Easter' albums.

The concert is being promoted by Pindrop Performance and tickets, priced £20, are on sale now from www.artistticket.com.

Another music legend coming town is **LOU REED** who brings his Metal Machine Trio to the O2 Academy on Sunday 18th April.

Reed formed MM3 in 2008 with saxophonist Ulrich Krieger and electronics experimenter Sarth Cahoun, and inspired by Reed's notorious 'Metal Machine Music' album, they play improvised sets of free rock and jazz, minimalism, noise and electronica. The group is billed as "Lou Reed without vocals or songs", which might well come as a blessing to anyone who's heard his last few albums. Tickets are on sale now from the Academy box office or online at www.ticketweb.co.uk

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a quiet word with

Dead Jerichos



SMALL TOWN LIFE, WITH ALL its innate boredom, parochialism and low-level violence has always been perfect fodder for rock music. The romantic squalor of the big city and its vices and possibilities, however unpalatable, can feel like an escapist's paradise compared to the restrictive horizons of your average provincial Nowhereville.

A place like Drayton, for example. A village that looks to Abingdon for its bright lights. Not a bad place to live of course. If you're 50 years old. For a typical teenager though, Drayton might feel a bit... well, shit. A place where the principle form of weekend fun is blagging bottles of cheap cider, gathering on the nearest convenient street corner with your mates and having the occasional scrap. This is the world that Dead Jerichos live in and sing about.

DEAD JERICHOES ARE ALL 17 years old and grew up in Drayton. The village lives and breathes in their songs, from 'Under The Street Lights', a song about hanging out on street corners because there's nowhere else to go, to 'Red Dance

Floor', where a party descends into violence as beer and coke take hold and petty local factionalism comes to the fore.

These songs are delivered with a tightly-wound mix of hooligan swagger and spangling, spidery art-pop subtlety. They fizz with steely intent and a tell-it-like-it-is simplicity but they're danceable and fantastically catchy. Dead Jerichos rock with the bruising elan of The Jam or Arctic Monkeys but skip and skitter with the wiry, uptight funk of Foals.

DEAD JERICHOES ARE CRAIG Evans (*vocals, guitar*); Sahm Amirsedghi (*bass*) and Leo Raynor (*drums*). Craig and Leo first played in a band together when they were eight years old, including a set at their local Cub Scout meeting. The pair then began jamming together aged eleven, recruiting a friend, Dave, as singer and aged 13 submitting their first demo for review in Nightshift under the name Ivy. Nightshift was polite if hardly enthusiastic about the offering, which wore its angst firmly on its sleeve.

By his mid-teens Craig was starting

to experience the sort of things in life that kids his age weren't meant to and, raised on a diet of old punk bands like The Buzzcocks and Stiff Little Fingers, he started to document it all in lyrics.

Dead Jerichos came together almost by accident when Craig was asked if he still had a band by Baby Gravy drummer Zahra Tehrani in her job at the Ark-T young people's music project. He lied that he did and quickly called Leo and Dave up. Leo recommended Sahm, who he knew from primary school. They practised twice and played a four-song set that included current favourite 'Red Dance Floor'.

The current three-piece line-up finally coalesced in February last year with everyone having finished school and Craig blagging a support slot from a workmate for his covers band. Dead Jerichos' first proper gig was at the Fitzharris Arms in Abingdon in front of a crowd of bikers. The band were terrified. The bikers loved it.

Nightshift scribe Paul Carrera chanced upon Dead Jerichos last summer and raved about a young band with so much to say. Shortly after they won our Demo Of The Month, while 'Red Dance Floor' sneaked into our Top 20 Oxford songs of the year.

This month Dead Jerichos release their first proper EP, four new songs that show just how rapidly the group are progressing. Constant gigging – playing any pub or club that will have them – has honed them into a propulsive, fleet-footed power trio, at times recalling The Cure's early post-punk sound, but equally informed by Bloc Party and beyond. Lyrically Craig deals with domestic violence ('What She Said'), the conflict between wanting to fit in but keep your identity ('Spaces and Sounds') and getting drunk and saying stuff you regret in the morning ('Too Late').

IN THE FLESH DEAD JERICHOES are affably laddish and unpretentious, a can or pint of lager rarely far from their grasp: three lads with a smart, moddish appearance and a love for Oxford United. So much so that later this year they're organising a gig in aid of United's Twelfth Man fund to buy new players.

We wonder, first, how growing up in a village like Drayton but already in love with music and the idea of being in a band from such an early age affected them.

CRAIG: 'I've always been brought up with decent music on the stereo,

with the likes of the old punk bands and lots of Britpop stuff like Stone Roses and Oasis. I always really enjoyed growing up in Drayton. It has played a big part in my song writing. At about 14 years old it became *the* place to be with all the local youngsters with their bottles of Strongbow, or if you didn't have enough money for that a 3-litre bottle of Frosty Jacks for about £1.20. Nasty stuff. From that age is where I got to write many of my first songs about the mayhem we did and saw.'

LEO: 'I got into music when I was very young as my dad played drums in a local band called Loopy and I thought it was cool. The music I grew up on was mainly new wave, punky stuff, like The Smiths and Joy Division. As I grew older I got into more electronic music like dubstep, garage and drum & bass. I feel this has helped with the tightness of the band.'

SAHM: 'I remember buying my first Nirvana CD and playing the shit out of it. This is what inspired me to learn the guitar and it's only recently that I picked up a bass.'

Was there a feeling of connection or detachment to the Oxford scene at the time? Was it something you aspired to get involved in?

SAHM: 'I've always loved the Oxford scene. I feel it's inspired us and made us take music more seriously.'

CRAIG: 'I've always aspired to get involved in the Oxford scene. I started reading Nightshift at a very young age. I still remember the first issue I got had Dive Dive on the front and always thought about what it would be like to be on the cover or Demo of the Month. My first Oxford experience was playing at the Ark-T and that helped me greatly with contacts to the local bands.'

LEO: 'When we started the band we thought we would just be playing shitty old pubs in villages but Oxford seems to like what we are trying to do. I just remember supporting Nine Black Alps and thinking, fucking hell I was listening to them on MTV2 not so long ago.'

Having started to gig regularly in Oxford now, has your opinion of the local scene changed?

LEO: 'It's changed lot. Before being in this band I assumed, having only listened to bands like Foals and Young Knives, that the scene was full of posh upper-class acts. Although they're good in their own right I felt

we were out of place. As we started to get more gigs around the city centre and meet other young bands I realised Oxford is a spot on scene to be in, with some great bands like The Scarletts, Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band and Dial F For Frankenstein."

CRAIG: "It's just as great and exciting as I thought but what cracked me up are the Uni bands and some older bands that think the sun shines outta their arses! They talk down to us if we are playing higher on the bill than them and sometimes kick off because we're younger, and then shut up after they see us play. But it all adds to the excitement."

DEAD JERICHO ARRIVE AT A time when Oxford is enjoying a rash of great new teenage bands, from Tristan & The Troubadours and Hearts In Pencil to Desert Storm and Dial F For Frankenstein. One of the things that helps such young acts when they're starting out is a good support network of people able to offer advice, tuition or rehearsal space. Ark-T is one such youth music project and it, particularly Zahra Tehrani, who herself was aided by the project in her band Baby Gravy, has helped Dead Jerichos to get going. How and why are organisations like Ark-T so important?

CRAIG: "Places like Ark-T are great for young people. I first got involved six years ago when me and Leo played there with Ivy. A couple of years later Zahra got in contact with me to do a couple of solo gigs. Unfortunately I embarrassed myself a bit; I thought as I was nervous it was a good idea to drink a bottle of White Lightning before playing. A year after that she rang again and forwarded me on to a band called Among the Giants. I was with them for about five months and started to use the lyrics I wrote while being out in Drayton, including my first song, which was called 'Boy Better Run', about me and a mate who got caught up with some boys we didn't get along with and ended up getting chased half way around Drayton. And the song 'Under The Street Lights' – I don't really like the song but the lyrics sum up my teenagers years to a tee. Ark-T is a great place for young bands because it gives them chance to record without paying a mint."

DESPITE DEAD JERICHO'S ages, the subject matter of the songs suggests a life lived beyond their years; how much is from personal experience?

CRAIG: "Every song I write is from experience. There's nothing that pisses me off more than people that go over the top with their stories and always think they're God's gift. I think some people don't believe my songs though as I remember one review saying that we're just trying to be punks. We are doing nothing of

the sort! I think my writing is maturing though, just as I am as a person, going from the scraps and my young teen drinking years to more serious things that have affected me in the last couple of years and writing about feelings rather than events.

"I wrote 'Red Dancefloor' at around 15 years old. It is about a party at a local hall in Abingdon with the lads, the typical type of party we'd go to at the time, with around four local rival places all under one roof who would have a bit of drink, some had drugs, and when you add girls to that it's bound to kick off."

THE RECEPTION DEAD

Jerichos have had so far has been extremely positive.

LEO: "The reception we've received has affected us quite a lot. Nearly all the reviews we receive have boosted us more and more. We've had one or two bad ones but everyone does. We've had people that haven't warmed to the vocals so we got another singer for a while but that made us lose everything we are about as a band."

SAHM: "We always try and take feedback constructively and used it to improve the band. You shouldn't focus too much on certain comments and reviews. Being bundled by a brilliant review can make you arrogant and dwelling on a bad review can hold you back from achieving. But it's brilliant to get a great review!"

CRAIG: "I think it's been fucking banging! There's nothing more we could have hoped for and we're just having a great time and working our socks off too! There's nothing better than getting off the stage and with three pints already on the table and a load of hand shaking and great comments. The part that means the most to me is when we get people we've never seen before turning up at gigs specially to see us. We can't have wished for a better year. I mean, we only started in February 2009 and every month it's just got better and better!"

WITH THE NEW EP THE YEAR

is set to get better still for Dead Jerichos. Barely a year old the buzz they're causing continues to grow and the new fans they're winning with every gig are making every outing more of an event. The village life they're singing about might be small but their voice is big and getting bolder. Better get ready for the teenage rampage.

Dead Jerichos play live at the Chester Arms on Friday 5th February; the Folly Bridge Inn on Saturday 13th; the Port Mahon on Thursday 18th; the Red Lion in Drayton on Saturday 20th and the Seacourt Arms in Botley on Friday 26th. Visit www.myspace.com/deadjerichos for more dates and tunes.



February

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13th **DRUM'N'BASS NIGHT**

20th **SOUL & REGGAE NIGHT** 11-3am

27th **DUB POLITICS** – *Dubstep*

Early Saturday show

20th **DERRIN NAUENDORF.** 7.30pm; £9

Sundays

14th **QUEEN OF CLUBS CABARET**

28th TCT presents **JOHNNY FLYNN & THE SUSSEX WIT**

FLIES ARE SPIES FROM HELL

‘Red Eyes Unravelling’

(Own label)

Originally formed in Leeds, later based, at least partly, in Oxford, now scattered around the southern counties of England, Flies Are Spies From Hell were always one of those local bands who seemed to get on with doing their own, brilliantly individual thing without really blowing their own trumpet too loudly. To be honest, until this debut album turned up, we’d pretty much forgotten they ever existed, despite coming within a whisker of the Demo Of The Month a couple of years back.

This is an incredibly accomplished debut, seven instrumental tracks spanning forty minutes, a running duel between Chris and Will’s guitars and Fred’s piano, bolshy but ebullient nu-prog mixed with what was once called classical rock but now tends to get lumped in with that nebulous term post-rock. From the more spaced-out, considered ‘Glass Light Shatters’ to the stomping rumble that is ‘Mountain Language, which rises to a suitably cacophonous climax, guitars and drums battling to the top of the mountain before kicking each other screaming off its peak, they mostly manage the difficult task of keeping energy



levels high throughout and keeping things fresh when the central conceit might wear thin. Much of the credit for this is the astonishingly energetic drumming of Watty, a powerhouse sticksman whose versatility matches his onslaught approach.

There are nods to The Rock Of Travolta and even Lapsus Linguae along the way, but if you can imagine a high octane punch-up between Explosions In The Sky and Frederic Chopin, you’ll get the gist of what Flies Are Spies are about: another great example of a band who don’t need a voice to make their point powerfully and succinctly.

Dale Kattack

SECRET RIVALS

‘Break Song’

(Own label)

A debut download release for the Oxford-Reading quartet who seem to be single-handedly trying to resurrect the spirit of 90s boy-girl indie revolutionaries Huggy Bear. We’ve made the comparison a couple of times before but it’s hard to avoid, with Secret Rivals going for a similar indie-punk scree, topped off with lashing of slightly shrill shouting. ‘Break Song’ fizzles and fuzzes enough until it breaks down and struggles to regain its initial momentum, ultimately coming on like a less focussed or fun Help, She Can’t Swim. Further in they try and up the pop stakes with the spindly ‘Afraid Of The Dark’, which has a slightly firmer grip on song structure and ‘We’re Not Leaving’, which sounds like something Talulah Gosh might have left behind at an early rehearsal session.

Like Huggy Bear before them, Secret Rivals’ music has a tendency to sound like it’s deliberately trying to underachieve, which isn’t such a bad thing as that sounds, although after the initial burst of fun you start to crave some kind of ambition. Unlike Huggy Bear it’s not

clear what, if anything, Secret Rivals have to say. Maybe some bolder statements of intent, musically and lyrically, will make themselves heard in future.

Dale Kattack

MARK CROZER

‘Just Another Day’

(Download only)

Mark Crozer is, without question, a great guitarist and songwriter, playing with The Jesus & Mary Chain as well as local nu-gaze rockers International Jetsetters. His previous solo stuff can be captivating too, mining a downbeat countrified psychedelia. Which makes this download single, a taster for his new album in April, all the more disappointing. Rather than psychedelic it just feels out of focus, a chugging, approximation of Badly Drawn Boy’s ‘Something To Talk About’ that’s knocked out with half-arsed casualness. In fact, the more we listen to it, the more it threatens to turn into ‘Hi Ho Silver Lining’. Which we strongly suspect wasn’t the intention.

Dale Kattack

OSIRIS THE REBIRTH

‘Remnants of Life’

(Rare Steak)

Dave Adams, the Bicester-based bassist with Hawkwind tribute band Assassins of Silence, here resurrects his old band Osiris, along the way attracting contributions from former-Hawkwind members Nik Turner and Bridget Wishhart, as well as space-rock violinist Cyndee Lee Rule.

With that band name, the musical history of the personnel involved and some Roger Dean-style sleeve artwork, it’s no surprise that ‘Remnants of Life’ is a full-on prog-rock epic, clocking in at an endurance-testing 74 minutes, its expansive set pieces punctuated by some interstellar flight announcements, lest you forget that this is not just an album, it’s a trip.

While Osiris deny this is a concept album the way each track segues into the next and the space-flight motif recurs throughout, it feels every inch like an old 1970s or 80s prog indulgence. In fact, this might well have arrived by TARDIS direct from Roger Water’s garden shed. There are obvious echoes of Pink Floyd’s grandiose, almost classical, guitar journeys here, although the album’s high points, such as the star-bound space-prog ‘Siren’ and the OTT ‘Technology’ are closer to Hawkwind’s cosmic rock journeys.

While there are whole passages that feel laborious and unnecessary – such as the Ozric Tentacles-inspired ‘Bliss’ – and sometimes it takes itself way too seriously (notably the ‘spooky’ narrative that introduces ‘Karmic Vortex’), Adams manages to keep the whole thing moving, rarely getting too bogged down in indulgent fretplay, and while the album can feel like a rock period drama, a bit of unselfconscious excess and stories of interplanetary space flight and mythical beats is a nice change from tales of being drunk at bus stops or getting dumped by your girlfriend outside the kebab shop.

Ian Chesterton



EMPIRE SAFARI

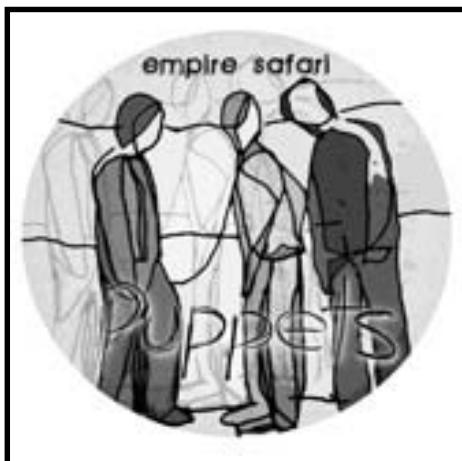
'Puppets'

(Own label)

Empire Safari are a local three-piece, all 18-years-old who formed just over a year ago and here present us with their debut album, a sixteen-track effort clocking in at over an hour. Call us mean-spirited cynical bastards (plenty do) but that information alone should set alarm bells ringing. Because unless one of the band is an irrepressibly prolific songwriting genius, that seems a hell of a premature and over-ambitious opening statement. And so, sadly, it turns out to be.

Recorded at home and at Ark-T, 'Puppets' offers glimpses of a young band with some musical prowess, but mostly it's a rambling affair, grasping at any outside influence that comes to mind without ever stamping its own identity on the songs. While this month's Nightshift cover stars Dead Jerichos – slightly younger than Empire Safari but together for a similar period of time and who have also recorded with and benefited from the resources of Ark-T – have honed their skills with constant low-level gigging, developed their own instantly recognisable character and hit us with a couple of short incisive EPs, Empire Safari sound like they want to be in a band but don't really know what sort of band and here stretch the few ideas they've come up with so thinly as to make them almost invisible.

Album opener 'Amsterdam' is funk-up heavy rock, delivered with hamfisted vigour, the



singer shouting about trying to buy dope in the big city, while 'The Broker' is a lighter, jauntier but still half-heartedly funky form of rock that lacks any conviction, while vocally it's flat and nasal. And so it trundles on. And on. And on. And we have to keep pinching ourselves to pay attention as Empire Safari knock on more and more doors in search of inspiration. 'Empty Stage' offers more confident, bolshier possibilities, but 'Dialtone', which immediately follows, is risible indie funk and jangle that staples a horrible wah-wah heavy guitar solo on as a coda. There's also the least convincing use of the f-word we can remember.

There will be those who decry our damning of a relatively young band so early in their career, but really Empire Safari have wreaked the damage themselves. Perhaps a more modest debut would have emphasised their strengths, such as

they are; instead they've left the chaff in with the little wheat they've harvested and it makes for a flat, unpalatable pan loaf of an album.

Dale Kattack

DOMES OF SILENCE

'Temple Of The Wasp'

(Own Label)

Banbury's Domes Of Silence have spent the last decade making a virtue of embracing rock cliché so unreservedly that they don't so much side-step criticism as bulldoze it out of the way and grind its cynical bones into the snow with tank track-heavy riffs. Now featuring former-Narco helmsman and producer Rich Aitken on guitar, they're even sludgier and grizzled than before, while retaining the dispassionately sullen approach to industrial sleaze rock they introduced on their 2001 Shifty Disco debut, 'Tarnished Evidence'. On 'Temple Of The Wasp' they rumble, grumble, rumble and grumble some more and generally sound like they're cranking the song out in the studio one-handed, while grinding a broken Jack Daniels bottle into the face of a passing media tastemaker who dared suggest that coating Primal Scream's 'Rocks' with an extra coat of Nine Inch Nails grime might be less than this week's hot new thing. You might do well to bear that image in mind before you even think about resisting this juggernaut of a band.

Dale Kattack

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GIG GUIDE

MONDAY 1st

PETE BOSS & THE BLUEHEARTS: The Bullingdon – Clapton-inspired electric blues from the local guitar stalwart.

TUESDAY 2nd

OCEAN COLOUR SCENE: O2 Academy – Return of the moddish Britpop survivors, touring their new album, 'Saturday', plus all the hits from 'Mosley Shoals' and more.

STORY OF THE YEAR: O2 Academy – Missouri's post-hardcore screamers tour around Europe in support of new album 'The Constant', including dates supporting Enter Shikari.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Free weekly live jazz night. Tonight's guests are funky

Wednesday 3rd

THE MACCABEES:

The Regal

2009 was a hell of a year for The Maccabees. Previously dismissed as just another jerky post-punk-inspired indie band in the wake of Editors et al, and mocked by Lily Allen on 'LDN', last year saw them critically and commercially revived, due to both their new album, 'Wall Of Arms', and a series of plaudit-winning festival appearances. They finished 2009 by selling out the 4,000-capacity Brixton Academy. 'Wall Of Arms' was produced by Markus Dravs, who previously worked with Arcade Fire and Björk and the former's influence on the new Maccabees sound is undeniable, along with more unexpected influences like James. They've still got that jerky, uptight new wave feel to them but now their sound is expansive, confident and excitable, augmented by exuberant brass, and the whole thing sounds so much less parochial. To further their credentials, they've even gone and recorded their latest single with Roots Manuva. Tonight's gig is a warm-up for the forthcoming *NME* Awards tour and the elegant surroundings of the Regal should suit a band who have quietly gone about becoming huge.



FEBRUARY

keyboard-led collective The Howard Peacock Quintet.

MIS-SHAPES: The Cellar – IMSOC indie club night with live bands.

CREATIVE TUESDAY: Café Tarifa – Weekly acoustic night, tonight featuring emotive local singer-songwriter Trevor Williams.

WEDNESDAY 3rd

MACCABEES: The Regal – Orchestral post-punk indie rocking from the critically and commercially reborn Brighton rockers – *see main preview*

RICHARD WALTERS: The James Street Tavern – Gorgeously melancholic acoustic pop from the local troubadour.

FREE RANGE: The Cellar – Drum&bass and dubstep club night.

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

THURSDAY 4th

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – Saxophonist Snake Davis is tonight's special guest, with a session musician CV that includes Kylie, Eurythmics, George Michael, Lisa Stansfield and M People.

CHAMBERS OF THE HEART + GUNNING FOR TAMAR: The Bullingdon – Improvised drone-rock, noise and psychedelia from Chambers of the Heart, plus atmospheric post-rock newcomers Gunning For Tamar.

AGE OF MISRULE: Port Mahon – Young local bluesy heavy rockers.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: James Street Tavern – New weekly acoustic live music session. Joyous local indie popstrels Alphabet Backwards and Jonquil's Jody Prewett play.

MEXICO FALLZ + 123 & IN + STATIC ACTION: Fat Lil's, Witney – Frenetic punk-pop and post-hardcore from Mexico Fallz on tour.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: Café Coco, Royal Oxford Hotel – Weekly acoustic session with Scott Gordon and guests.

WE ARE ECLECTRICITY: The Cellar – A night of diverse house with Southern Fried's Audiofun.

FRIDAY 5th

KIDS IN GLASS HOUSES: O2 Academy – Lightweight punk-pop from the Cardiff rockers, currently on tour with Lostprophets.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with PHYAL + DRUNKENSTEIN + THE NEW MOON + JIM & LOUPE'S CIRCUS: The Wheatsheaf

– Bicester's punky heavy rockers Phyal reform for Klub Kakofanney, along with proggy funk rockers Drunkenstein and acoustic pop types The New Moon.

DEAD JERICHOES + THE BLACK HATS + NIGHT PORTRAITS + THE SCARLETTS: The Chester Arms – Debut CD launch gig from this month's Nightshift cover stars Dead Jerichos, melding militant mod-rock with mathsy indie pop. New wave rocking from Black Hats in support, plus fizzbomb indie rocking from Night Portraits and ska-punk from Scarletts.

PHANTOM THEORY + SECRET RIVALS + IF SHE FLOATS: The Port Mahon – Stripped-down, amped-up riffage where 80s hardcore and classic rock meets post-punk invention from Phantom Theory.

PURPLE PROJECT: Fat Lil's, Witney – Deep Purple tribute band.

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

SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM: The Cellar – Ska, reggae, soul and more from Count Skylarkin and tonight featuring rapper and singer Jimmy Screech, part of Roots Manuva's Banana Klan, as well as former Hard-Fi tour DJ Wrongtom, now on Ninja Tunes imprint Big Dada.

TELL ALL YOUR FRIENDS: James Street Tavern – Punk, rock and indie tunes every week with Room 101's Thomas Instone and Leigh Slater and Mutiny's Cara Louise.

GET DOWN: The Brickworks – Weekly session of Latin, funk and Afrobeat.

TECHNICOLOR TIME MACHINE: Baby Simple – Prog-rock and psychedelia club night.

SATURDAY 6th

PROSPEKT + TASTE MY EYES + UNKNOWN FLOW + RIOT HOUSE: The Wheatsheaf – Atmospheric progressive metal from Prospekt, plus progressive tech-core from Taste My Eyes, featuring JOR frontman Ben Hollyer; Rush-inspired heavy rocking from Unknown Flow and classic Brit-metal from Riot House.

VIV ALBERTINE + BABY GRAVY: The Cellar – Rare chance to catch the Slits guitarist on one of her solo dates. Back in the heyday of punk she was bandmates with Sid Vicious and girlfriend of Mick Jones, before joining the legendary Slits. She gave up on music on idealistic grounds in the 80s and spent the next two decades making films before being tempted back into music last year, and now she's out playing live again to plug her new EP on Thurston Moore's Ecstatic Peace label, leaving her punk roots mostly behind in favour of a spaced-out, dubbed-up form of folk-pop. Time, though, seems to have mellowed her barely a jot. Support comes from local electro-punk pop tigers Baby Gravy, launching their new single, 'Not Waiting'.

KINS OF LEON + THE STRIPE WHITES:

O2 Academy – Puntastic tribute night.

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

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – House, dubstep and techno with Mumdance, aka Jack Adams, playing his trademark mix and match of grime, dancehall, electro and garage, plus residents.

FRESH OUT THE BOX: The Cellar – House, breaks, two-step and techno club night.

THE AUSTRALIAN NIRVANA: Fat Lil's, Witney – Like Nirvana, but Australian.

THE MARK + UNDERSMILE: The Port Mahon

CABARET CLANDESTINE: East Oxford Community Centre – Live music, poetry and more with hip hop poet Spliff Richard; gypsy folk from Scarlett & the Wilderness; wordy folk-pop in a Jeffrey Lewis style from Faceometer, plus an open jam session.

SKITTLE ALLEY ACOUSTIC SESSION: The Ox, Abingdon – Acoustic sets from Matt Sewell, Phil Garvey, Mark Bosley and Sefton.

SUNDAY 7th

BRANCH IMMERSION + E 4 ECHO:

Malmaison – Malmaison's fortnightly live music session tonight features local acoustic blues and folk outfit Branch Immersion, plus indie-folksters E 4 Echo.

SUNDAY ROAST: The Cellar – Chilled out rock'n'roll and soul club night with live bands.

OVERRATED + PETE FRYER + MOON LEOPARD + PENNY & PHIL: Donnington Community Centre – Free live music session.

MONDAY 8th

THE KYLA BROX BAND: The Bullingdon – Daughter of British blues legend Victor Brox, Kyla has shared a stage with her father many times, matching his powerful vocals easily and on course to be one of the UK's leading female blues singers, mixing up classic r'n'b, funk and soul.

TUESDAY 9th

LOS BASTARDOS FINLANDESES: O2 Academy – Hairy, leather-clad Finnish metal and

southern rock vikings give it some serious Motorhead-style noise.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Live jazz from Alison Bentley.

CREATIVE TUESDAY: Café Tarifa – Weekly acoustic night, tonight featuring Kat Gadsden, Nigel Brown and Tiger Mendoza.

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

WEDNESDAY 10th

DIRTY LITTLE RABBITS: O2 Academy – The band formed by Slipknot Clown Shaun Crahan, but a long way removed from his day job, the full-on metal assault replaced by a wired, kooky form of alt.pop, led by singer Stella Soliel. Tonight's show is a one-off headline gig after the band finish supporting Lacuna Coil around the UK.

PHAT SESSIONS: The Cellar – Fortnightly open jam session with house band Four Phat Fingers, plus DJ Geenee playing a mix of funk, hip hop, reggae, dubstep and more.

THURSDAY 11th

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – Contemplative, soulful acoustic jazz from Kairos Quartet, featuring soprano saxophonist Adam Waldmann.

LAFARO + UTE + HOLD YOUR HORSE IS + VON BRAUN: The Cellar – More quality underground noise at tonight's Big Hair promotion with Belfast's Smalltown America-signed hardcore battlers cranking it up in McLusky style. Support from eclectic folk-pop-cum-leftfield-rock trio Ute; sheet-metal alt.rock pitched somewhere between Yourcodenameis:milo and Jawbox from Hold Your Horse Is and Cure-inspired new wavers Von Braun.

SMILEX: Fat Lil's, Witney – Serious rocking action from the characteristically chaotic music monster that is Smilex.

WINCHELL RIOTS: Baby Simple – Acoustic show from the local indie rock favourites.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: James Street Tavern

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: Café Coco, Royal Oxford Hotel

STEVE CARROLL: The Boat Inn, Thrupp – Rock, folk and pop from the local multi-instrumentalist.

FRIDAY 12th

THE SCHOLARS + DIAL F FOR FRANKENSTEIN + NAKED YOUTH + THE NOMINEES: The Jericho Tavern – Rising local starlets The Scholars launch their new single, kicking out Editors and Interpol-inspired indie rock, plus post-hardcore types Dial F For Frankenstein.

ROY YOUNG + STEAMROLLER: Fat Lil's, Witney – Veteran pianist celebrates 50 years on the ivories – *see main preview*

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – Latin, Balkan, world beats and nu-jazz club night with DJs Dan Ofer and Gil Karpas, plus a live set from Baraka, playing reggae, calypso, hi-life and soca.

TELL ALL YOUR FRIENDS: James Street Tavern



Friday 12th

ROY YOUNG:

Fat Lil's, Witney

Although he never had a hit anywhere in the world in all his 50 years playing music, singer and pianist Roy Young's musical CV is nothing short of astonishing. Born in London he took up playing boogie-woogie piano in the 50s and was dubbed The English Little Richard, although his style owed as much to Ray Charles and Joe Cocker. Through the years he toured with Russ Conway and supported both Cliff Richard and the Shadows and The Beatles on tour as well as playing as part of Hamburg's Star Club house band with a certain Ringo Starr (contractual obligations meant he had to turn down Brian Epstein's invitation to join The Beatles early on). In the 70s he played on Bowie's seminal 'Low', while the 80s found him touring his adopted Canada with Ian Hunter and Mick Ronson. More recently he's played with KC & The Sunshine Band amongst a host of others and now, having returned to live in the UK, he's just released a retrospective double album spanning his half-decade career. Hardly a household name, to those that know their music history, Young is quite the legend. Tonight he's joined by recently reformed local blues-rock heroes Steamroller, reprising their 1970s local fame.

GET DOWN: The Brickworks

LOST IN MUSIC: The Port Mahon – Beats and breaks.

HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES + THE 4 FOURS + RIP THE JOINT: The Chester Arms – Americana and folk from Headington Hillbillies.

SATURDAY 13th

EBSEN & THE WITCH: The Jericho Tavern – Free gig from Brighton's ethereal goth-pop trio – *see main preview*

THE UK GUNS'N'ROSES: O2 Academy – Like Guns'n'Roses, but, like, from the UK.

EMPTY VESSELS + THE HALCYONS: The Wheatsheaf – Solid blues rocking from Empty Vessels, plus electro squelch and torch songs from Halcyons in support.



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Saturday 13th

EBSEN & THE WITCH:

The Jericho Tavern

You! Me! Dancing! have quickly established themselves among the best promoters in Oxford lately and tonight's gig is further evidence of just why. So enamoured are they of Brighton's Ebsen & The Witch, they're offering a chance to see them for free tonight. A chance to bring a little chill to your heart on a winter's night. Formed in the ghostly mould of acts like Dead Can Dance, Bat For Lashes and This Mortal Coil, the trio exist in a twilit world of shimmering, spidery guitars, ethereal vocals, Victorian horror, doomed romance and lashings of forbidding atmospherics. Discovering any useful information about Ebsen & The Witch isn't easy, although their Myspace quotes them as being inspired by "glaciers, caverns and waning moons," but once you hear singer Rachel in full flight, there's nothing more you need to know: a voice of passion and portent and, surrounded by the band's gently glowering collage of sampled dialogue, chattering electronics and Batcave guitar fuzz, she's utterly captivating. So much so that next time they visit town, you'll not be able to get your wallet out quick enough.

DEAD JERICHO'S + SIMON & THE FAULKNERS: The Folly Bridge Inn –

Another chance to catch this month's Nightshift front cover stars.

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy – Special St Valentine's Day Massacre-themed party at Trashy tonight with a speakeasy theme, silent films, jazz etc and 1930s gangster fancy dress.

DRUM&BASS CLUB NIGHT: The Bullingdon

JESSIE QUINN & THE METS +

ISAIDYES: The Port Mahon – Mellow acoustic pop from the sometime bassist of Keane.

1000 MILE HIGHWAY: Fat Lil's, Witney – Blues-rocking and Americana from the Charlbury outfit.

SUNDAY 14th

HEART & SOUL: The Cellar – Soul, funk and indie club night, featuring live sets from 15-piece

funk band Dot's Funk Odyssey and indie outfit Crisis, What Crisis.

QUEEN OF CLUBS: The Bullingdon – Live music, performance art, poetry, comedy and more.

BEETROOT JAM: The Port Mahon – Live jam session.

MONDAY 15th

SNOWY WHITE'S BLUES PROJECT: The Bullingdon – A rare local showing for the renowned rock guitarist who's played with Thin Lizzy, Pink Floyd, Peter Green and Roger Waters in his time, and now out on tour with his trusty Gibson Les Paul Goldtop to promote his new Blues Project album, 'In Our Time Of Living'.
PINDROP CHAMBER ENSEMBLE + BRAINDEAD COLLECTIVE + WE AERONAUTS: The Holywell Music Room – A special showcase and awards ceremony night from Pindrop, in aid of young people's performing arts charity the Exuberant Trust. The Pindrop Chamber Ensemble perform Shostakovich, while Braindead Collective play selected ambient piano pieces. Expansive folk-rockers We Aeronauts also perform as well as an award winners' showcase including Vanessa Wilde, Catriona Scott, Dom Lash and Erica Montenegro.

TUESDAY 16th

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Funky keyboard-led jazz from The Howard peacock Quintet.

CREATIVE TUESDAY: Café Tarifa – Weekly acoustic night, tonight featuring Tamara Parsons-Baker and Huck, Anton Barbeau, Mark and Peter, and Jack Harris.

BEAT KITCHEN: The Cellar – Old school hip hop.

WEDNESDAY 17th

NICHOLAS MEIER: The North Wall, Summertown – Flamenco, Latin and Middle Eastern-influenced jazz from the classically-trained Swiss guitarist, tonight backed by local jazz trio 3BPM.

FREE RANGE: The Cellar

ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney

THURSDAY 18th

IMOGEN HEAP: O2 Academy – Quirky electronic pop from the cult singer – *see main preview*

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – With guest Kelvin Christiane.

THE ELRICS + PHARAOHS + ECHO BOOMER: The Jericho Tavern – Spiky, melodic indie rock partway between Oasis and Placebo from The Elrics, Foals-y math-pop from London's Pharaohs and epic indie rocking from Echo Boomer at tonight's Daisy Rogers Music night.

DEAD JERICHO'S: The Port Mahon

IN GRATITUDE: Fat Lil's, Witney

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: James Street Tavern

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

ACOUSTIC NIGHT: Café Coco, Royal Oxford Hotel

WE ARE ECLECTRICITY: The Cellar

FRIDAY 19th

OWL CITY + LIGHTS: O2 Academy – Double bill of synth-pop from across the Atlantic with Minnesota's Postal Service-like Owl City hoping to bring some of their Stateside chart success across the pond. Canada's Lights, the musical incarnation of Valerie Anne Poxleitner, mixes up a silicon brew of Bjork, Abba and The Knife in support.

ANIMAL KINGDOM: The Jericho Tavern – Epic, soft-centred and occasionally ethereal rocking in the vein of Flaming Lips or Coldplay from Animal Kingdom, over in the UK to plug debut album 'Signs and Wonders'.

BORDERVILLE: The Cellar – Flamboyant, literary glam-rocking from the local favourites, mixing up everything from Bowie and Queen to Brecht and Weill in their admirably opulent musical odyssey.

Thursday 18th

IMOGEN HEAP:

O2 Academy

From her early musical career alongside uber-producer Guy Sigsworth in Frou Frou, Imogen Heap has carved out her own singular niche in modern pop, earning herself a devoted cult following along the way, but a cult following that regularly packs out venues this size and buys her self-produced and released albums in sufficient quantities to dent the charts as with 2009's 'Ellipse', her third solo album. Live Heap is a mix of ditzy kookiness – chatting away to herself, giving the impression that the mass of technology that surrounds her is getting the better of her, and enjoying a nice cup of tea – and supremely accomplished and inventive musician. She may give the impression of being a mad-woman-with-ten-cats-at-the-end-of-the-street type but she doesn't fill a venue this size by accident. Her lysergic caterwaul comes backed with squelchy analogue electronics or piano, sometimes a bit MOR, at others as experimental as Laurie Anderson. At her best Imogen recalls Tori Amos or a grander, more assertive Cat Power, but her self-consciously wayward personality which shines from each song always puts her beyond easy categorisation.



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Tuesday 23rd

THE DRUMS: O2 Academy

Looking set to be *the* buzz band of 2010, Brooklyn's Drums do at least write absolutely cracking pop songs. Pop songs that sound as timeless and carefree and simple as pop music probably felt back in the 50s and early-60s. But equally pop songs that feel like they've been doused in heavy Mancunian rain. In The Drums' world, dolefulness sits comfortably next to dreaminess and The Beach Boys walk hand in hand through the surf with The Cure and Joy Division. The way The Drums space out their instrumentation is resonant of Martin Hannett's production and the band are keen to admit they are in thrall to Factory Records acts like The Wake and Stockholm Monsters as well as Manchester's pop gods The Smiths. It's the way they manage to so effortlessly combine these sounds with classic doo wop, 60s girl groups and surf pop that makes them so great. Having released their joyous debut single, 'Let's Go Surfing' (including the best whistling on a pop song in ages) on none-cooler label Moshi Moshi, and been hailed by the BBC's influential Sound of 2010 survey, The Drums set out on their first extensive UK headline tour, and this time next year success on the scale of The Strokes or Kings Of Leon isn't out of the question.

tour to plug his second album, 'Shadow Of An Empire', the follow-up to 2006's Mercury-shortlisted 'The End Of History'. Inspired by Bob Dylan and Neil Young, Regan is very much

at the darker end of the folk-pop spectrum, mixing dewy-eyed nostalgia with a fair amount of menace. Great support too from Truck faves Danny & The Champions of the World, heart-warming, exuberant 60s-styled pop from the top drawer.

THE MELTING POT with THE KEYZ + SO MANY DYNAMOS + VEDA PARK: The Bullingdon – Another mixed bill from The Melting Pot with Banbury's cheesy 70s-styled piano-led pop outfit, alongside Missouri's alt.pop crew So Many Dynamos touring their new 'The Loud Wars' album and local folky rockers Veda Park.

DEAD JERICHO: Seacourt Arms, Botley
THE MIGHTY REDOX + DES BARKUS:

The Chester Arms – Funky swamp blues rocking from The Mighty Redox.

PHANTOM THEORY + GUNNING FOR TAMAR + ATLASES: The Port Mahon – New wave and hardcore rock riffage from Phantom Theory, plus post-rockers Gunning For Tamar.
WALHALLAH: The Cellar – Deep house, tech-house and techno club night.

BACKROOM BOOGIE: The Bullingdon
TELL ALL YOUR FRIENDS: James Street Tavern

GET DOWN: The Brickworks

SATURDAY 27th

SKA CUBANO + THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND: O2 Academy –

Always welcome return to town for the Cuban ska and mambo party-makers. Led by Top Cats' irrepressible frontman Natty Bo, Ska Cubano mix traditional Cuban dance with Jamaican rocksteady and ska, a fair whack of Calypso and the spirit of classic rock'n'roll and it'll be party time til the early hours. Great warm-up fun from Nightshift faves The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, taking jazz back to its dirty, whisky-sodden roots, in cheap suits.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with SPRING OFFENSIVE + BEFORE I EXPLODE + MR FOGG: The Wheatsheaf – Heady, highly promising mix of maths disco, epic guitar pop and multi-voiced folk anthems from rising local faves Spring Offensive at tonight's characteristically eclectic GTI session. Soft, chirrupy, song-based electronica with dreamy female vocals from Plymouth duo Before I Explode in support, as well as glitchy, cerebral pop in the vein of Mum and Sigur Ros from Mr Fogg.

DD/MM/YYYY + MICE: The Jericho Tavern – Pathologically restless spazz-core indie-jazz electro-pop math-rock from Toronto's difficult-to-pronounce DD/MM/YYYY, utilising unusual instrumentation and even more unusual time signatures to conjure an elaborate mess of sound that switches from Fugazi to Steely Dan, via Youthmovies. Snow Patrol they ain't.
DUB POLITICS: The Bullingdon – Dubstep club night.

DEPUTEEES + PETE THE TEMP: The Port Mahon

SEROTONIN + LOS CALAVERAS: The Stocks, Crown & Thistle, Abingdon – Skittle Alley club night with grunge rockers Serotonin.

OX4 ALLSTARS + NINE-STONE COWBOY + MIKE DAVEY: The Winchester, Crown Street

AGE OF MISRULE: The Centurion, Bicester
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Jolly Postboys – Eccentric blues-rock.

TRANSFORMATION / TRASHY / ROOM 101: O2 Academy

HQ: The Cellar – Drum&bass club night.

SUNDAY 28th

JOHNNY FLYNN & THE SUSSEX WIT:

The Bullingdon – Wry, literate and jaunty folk-pop in the vein of Bright Eyes from London actor-cum-singer Johnny Flynn and his merry men.

MONTHLY BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney – Open session for local musicians.

Friday 26th

THE CLUB THAT CANNOT BE NAMED: The Wheatsheaf

Not all of Oxford's musical success stories have been bands. Ten years ago this month two friends decided to start putting on gigs at the now defunct Elm Tree, under the name The Club That Cannot Be Named, to showcase the up and coming metal and hardcore bands they felt weren't getting enough local exposure. From putting on local acts like JOR and Black Candy, as well as new out of town bands like Hundred Reasons and Lostprophets, Alan Day and Dave Hale gradually built up their reputation and remit to the point that TCT Music, as it was shortened, became Oxford's leading gig promoters, hosting the best emerging talent on the touring circuit as well as some seriously big name bands. These days Alan and Dave work with Kilimanjaro, promoting the likes of Slayer and Alice In Chains as well as helping organise Sonisphere. Along the way TCT pioneered local all-ages gigs and gave Kings of Leon their first European show. To mark the tenth anniversary of their first ever show, they're returning to their roots with a celebratory night featuring some of those bands that helped them start out. Hardcore heroes **JOR** are reforming, along with **Shouting Myke**, who went on to become A Silent Film. Raging metalcore titans **Faith In Hate** bring the pain, while the mighty **Sextodecimo** will give no quarter. Improv collective **The E Band** bring a little bit of returned madness to proceedings, while **The Walk Off** kick off some digital hardcore mayhem. Alan will be manning the decks too, playing his favourite tunes and as well as a chance to reflect on just how far things have come in the past decade, it'll be a hell of a heavyweight party.



QUEEN OF CLUBS CABARET
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HUCK & THE HANDSOME FEE / BARBARE11A / LORD MAGPIE & THE PRINCE OF CATS

The Cellar

The implausibly named Lord Magpie & The Prince Of Cats offer guttersnipe rockabilly that can hardly be called tidy, but has the clumsy alluring grace of a newborn foal. They have tiny amps that probably came from a Kinder Surprise, atrocious backing vocals, a strange ungainly vocalist who campily croons like a

cross between Andy Warhol and Waylon Jennings, and enough energy to outweigh any amateurism. Some of the greatest rock and roll is primal, and whilst Lord Magpie isn't angry, or sweaty, or sexy, the music does seem to come from the very core of the performers. They're also fascinating: how did this weird lot

meet? How do they rehearse? Hang on, have they ever rehearsed? If there's one thing missing in rock music today, it's mystery; Lord Magpie is a mystery wrapped in an enigma wrapped in a butterfingers "Hi-Heeled Sneakers" cover. Seek them out.

Barbare11a grab the attention too, looking like a horrific mixup in the costume departments of *Mad Max* and *Two Gentlemen Of Verona*: ruffs, leathers and leggings. They play greasy glam rock, and though the vocalist talks like a strange Swedish Eddie Izzard, he has a strong Bowie-inflected singing voice. They're like a version of Borderville from out of a Christmas cracker, and as such are great fun, if a touch unconvincing. Then again, they're playing with a man down, and they do give us a wonderful lilting waltz, and a superbly slurred Booze Brothers cover of 'Minnie The Moocher', so it's a victory in the end.

Huck & The Handsome Fee could probably give seminars on how to build a set (though, with their grubby white vests they'd best not set up as stylists). Their gig is a compact, well-constructed suite of songs that builds from a quiet bluesy narrative to a punked-up Sun Records crackle without a wasted second. Humphrey Astley has a voice that milks the maximum drama from his dark songs, intoning 'The Fall' like a mixture of Roy Orbison and Nick Cave and his backing is rock solid. Perhaps the dour country blues balladry feels thin after the flamboyant character of the support acts, but this is a decent band for a quiet evening of listening and solid, melancholy liquor drinking.

David Murphy

VIVIAN GIRLS / VERONICA FALLS / SEALINGS

The Jericho Tavern

Sealings are rapidly becoming one of our favourite local bands. The two-piece are irrepressibly dour, heroically noisy and stripped to the bare bones – a hissing drum machine and two jagged, flesh-scouring guitars over which the singer mumbles his indecipherable monotone. It's like early Jesus & Mary Chain meets *very* early Sisters of Mercy, but really like nothing else around at the moment and they're all done and dusted in fifteen uncompromising minutes.

There's a time warp feel about the Tavern tonight, like we've landed back in the same venue in 1987. A feeling accentuated when former-Razorcuts frontman Greg Webster wanders past during Veronica Falls' set. The London-based boy-girl quartet are pure 80s indie: Phil Spector's sugar-coated wall-of-sound pop caked in reverb, surf twang and exuberant guitar jangle and out to party like The Flatmates and Talulah Gosh are still the coolest kids on the block. Heck, someone's even gone to the trouble of baking some customised indie gingerbread men and left them around for punters to pick the Smarties off.

Underlining the idea that American indie circa-2010 is basically UK indie circa-the late 80s, Brooklyn's Vivian Girls are a picture of frenetically

sweet-natured, slightly ramshackle pop thrash. They seem to have two types of song in their repertoire: the fast ones, where The Ramones butcher The Shangri-La's, and more considered ones where The Ramones butcher The Shangri-La's slightly more slowly. Every song is precisely two and a bit minutes long, comes with triple helpings of sing-song harmonies and sounds joyously unmoulded. Here's a nod to We've Got A Fuzzbox; there's a steal from Paint Teens; here's some more of the same with an extra scoop of giddy fun.

It's patently clear after 25 minutes that the trio have run out of ideas but they continue to play for a full hour, which kind of spoils the effect. 40 minutes and we'd have loved it, but like gorging on fondant-filled chocolates past the point of sensible, a full hour tests the patience of even a die-hard girl-pop fan like me.

Still, they do manage to finish on a high and having flown in from the States for this tour, you can hardly expect them to wrap it all up too quickly. Like kittens and Christmas crackers, Vivian Girls may seem to have no discernible purpose, but they're lovely nonetheless.

Dale Kattack

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DELPHIC

O2 Academy

Having already made their presence felt on the festival circuit last year, Manchester's Delphic have been nicely bubbling under for the last few months. Even so the sudden explosion of interest in the band is staggering. Being placed third on BBC's Sound of 2010 has done the band's profile no harm at all, with the O2 sold out and an expectant crowd fizzing with anticipation. With Delphic being touted as this year's leading lights, and perhaps unfairly, charged with leading guitar music into a new dawn in some quarters, anything less than a revolution will surely be a disappointment.

Their organic take on dance music has distinct links to New Order, so much so that at times it's hard not to imagine that you're actually at the Hacienda and not on Cowley Road. It takes time for the band to find their feet and although every song is welcomed with an unquestioning roar of approval, the truth is that, initially at least, Delphic struggle to meet expectations. Singer/bass player James Cook appears apprehensive on 'Red Lights' and stumbles over his vocals occasionally. At times the band seems at odds with their own songs despite guitarist Matt Cocksedge's best efforts.

A more clearly defined bottom end, some sterling drumming and Cocksedge's heavily



photo: Sam Shepherd

processed guitar gives the band a more heavyweight sound than their debut album 'Acolyte' suggests they might be capable of and as they settle down they start showing why they're being considered as something special. When they mix full-on rock chops with craftily-nuanced dance breaks on the eminently danceable 'Counterpoint' and the undeniably

catchy 'Halcyon' they tap into the wild-eyed abandon of Underworld's 'Born Slippy'. Moments like this are scattered throughout the set but are infrequent. Delphic could be pretty incredible and hopefully they will be given time to develop, as too much expectation and hype could be their undoing.

Sam Shepherd

CAT MATADOR / NAPOLEON IN RAGS / MINOR COLES

The Wheatsheaf

On a night when the deserted centre of Oxford looks like the set of *The March of the Penguins*, it's good to huddle with a sizeable crowd in the Wheatsheaf and forget about being a frostbitten global-warming denier.

Minor Coles are an enjoyable to behold work in progress. Evolving and shaping, you can sense with each gig they are getting better. The dual guitar and vocal attack of Mark Stephenson and Ruben Everett in songs like 'Small Room' are from the feistier end of Proclaimers-style bloke-folk and the knottier side of Eels. At other moments the chiming guitars in 'Caroline' suggest The Edge if he was in Goldrush. Beautifully balanced.

Napoleon in Rags (Bob Dylan's description of Andy Warhol) put a few cancelling Oxford bands to shame by braving the treacherous road from Swindon, and they are rewarded by creating a buzz of approval in the room. Fresh from supporting Babyshambles on tour, they crank out a shuddering set, ranging from the high-buttoned class of Franz Ferdinand to Haircut One Hundred if they were fronted by Tom Robinson. Indeed frontman

Ben Altieri has all the snap, crackle and pop of Alex Kapranos and you feel with a fistful of slick tunes like 'Don't Let It Out' and 'Wound Too Tight' that Napoleon In Rags could get the radio play you can sense they are hungry for.

That said, their Myspace doesn't do them full justice and I've noticed how with the rise of online availability, a gulf has opened between web and live performances. Cat Matador's site promises a focused and delineated batch of songs, full of strong emotion. Maybe it's because NIR were so honed or whether the now extinct Joe Allen Band have already taken me to the heights of folk-rock, but tonight's Cat Matador set sounds woolly, overly autumnal, with lyrics and vocals tacked on and mumbled into beards, rather than broadcast and set free. I just don't glimpse anyone's soul.

The high spot is the insistent, bird call guitar riff from 'Down', which if they had any sense they would get online as a pay to buy ringtone and make a million. But somehow dealing with The Man doesn't seem to be what they are about.

Paul Carrera

the JERICHO

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DR SHOTOVER

The Anticks of Doctor Shotte-overre

Hey, yeah, it's certainly GROOVY to be here, back with all you lovely people. *I do not think*. I wore beads once or twice as a young man (yes, you can wipe that smirk off your face RIGHT NOW, Hendred-Thompson). I even went to the occasional LOVE-IN. And there was that time we dropped a lighted bong down the Hyde Park toilets, thinking that a passing park keeper was a member of Her Majesty's Constabulary... or The Fuzz, as we used to say back then. On another occasion I wore flares so big that a bus drove over them as I was sloping down the King's Road... it caused a sensation at the Roundhouse later. ("Wow, a tyre-track design on your strides... that's so STEPPENWOLF!") But I digress. I've come here today to drink myself under the table... no, NO, of course not. The very idea. What I mean is... what do I mean? What does *any* of us mean? Ahem. Oh yes... I'm here to announce the latest East Indies Club promotion – the Fourteenth Art Rock Trend Festival, or FART-Fest for short. Sadly Damo Suzuki and CAN'T are unable to perform this year... yes, yes, I know, CAN'T are *always* unable to perform, very funny... so-o-o, we are opening the doors to a wide variety of (piss-)artists and japesters and merrie knaves.... No, NOT *that* sort of merrie knave, Tulkithorn – no need to give us your Jethro Tull impersonation. What's more, I thought we'd banned the wearing of man-tights and cod-pieces in the Club bar. Anyway, prizes will be awarded for the most, erm, FREAKY act... winner gets a week at Shotover Towers re-painting the gazebo, if you must know. Runner-up? Two weeks, obviously. What was that, Tulkithorn? Oh, you weren't impersonating Jethro Tull... that was your *Stornoway* impression? Yikes! Fill my flagon with meady substances, varlet! Flute solo – NOW!

Next month: Down in Je-ri-choohhh.



Tulkithorn follows through at FART-Fest

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INTRODUCING....

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

UTE

Who are they?

Ute are an Oxford-based folk-rock trio comprised of Ollie (*guitar and vocals*), Mike (*bass and vocals*) and Joe (*drums and percussion*), although in their case, folk-rock doesn't really do them full justice, since they're plenty more things besides, being one of the more eclectic new bands we've encountered around town in the last year or so, ranging from slightly wayward, muscled-up campfire pop to crunching, hysterical grunge and then on to some moody Radiohead-style contemplation. The trio have known each other most of their lives, having been to school together, always secretly wanting to form a band together but always afraid to actually get it together. Luckily for us they did and have supported the likes of Pulled Apart by Horses, The Xcerts, Maps, The Big Pink, and Stornoway. They have also played Truck (opening last year's main stage), The Secret Garden Party, OX4 and Audioscope and have had a session on BBC Oxford as well as being played by Steve Lamacq on Radio 1. Recently they've recorded a couple of self-released singles and have tracks set to contribute to BBC Radio Oxford Introducing's 'Round the Bends' album and the Big Scary Monsters '10' collection. They have just finished a tour with Cats and Cats and Cats too which was, in their words, "completely ace".

What do they sound like?

Bit of a mix, really. Our review of their demo in September last year found them wallowing pleasingly in almost funereal acoustic pop and folk music, though even here there were sudden left turns into zydeco and more buoyant pop. Live though, they structure and build a set that's difficult to second-guess and always intriguing, three-way vocal harmonies often much to the fore and some seriously great use of handclaps.

What inspires them?

"Demo Dumper reviews, bad plumbing and north Oxford mums in yellow ponchos."

Career highlight so far:

"Opening the main stage at Truck was an amazing experience. We've been



going to the festival for years and so to be able to play was something else. It was definitely the biggest stage we've ever played, and although we were a little bit jazzed from the night before the gig went well.

And the lowlight:

"We played a gig at the Regal with Maps&Atlases and Colour in October 2008. We were so excited to play on such an amazing bill and that excitement lasted until the first note when it turned into one of those gigs when nothing goes right and you just want to rip your balls off. Shocker, but we learned a lot from it, and bought nice t-shirts. Also we got a rider and a dressing room, which for us was both amazing and undeserved."

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"It's got to be Jonquil. Because they're so goddamn fresh!"

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

"Probably 'Visitor' by The Dodos, because it's probably the one album that's had the most influence on us as a band."

When is their next gig and what can we expect?

"At the Cellar on February 11th with Hold Your Horse Is and LaFaro... we have been working on their new trapeze routine and are excited for its world premiere. Also we'll play some songs."

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"Our favourite thing is that there's loads of it and it's all really diverse and interesting and there's always exciting new bands coming through which is really cool for such a small city. Our least favourite thing is that not enough people come out to see all the great stuff that's going on."

You might love them if you love:

Radiohead, Stornoway, Dodos, Ryan Adams, Queens of the Stone-Age.

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Whatever happened to... those heroes

JOR

WHO?

Formed from the ashes of various other local bands, including Paramesium and Pang, associated with Chicken Records, the label started by Dave Hale, who went on to start The Club That Cannot Be Named with Alan Day, JOR were, arguably, Oxford's first metalcore band. Ben Hollyer (*vocals*), Ansley Prothero (*guitars*), Dan Summerfield (*guitars*), Lawrence McClelland (*bass*) and Roland Carter (*drums*) came together over a mutual love of smoking dope and getting drunk. Ansley consumed an entire bottle of Jack Daniels before their first gig, threw up and had to be carried on stage. Over the course of the late-90s and early-Noughties, JOR established themselves as the most intense live band in Oxford, paving the way for subsequent generations of heavy bands in town. They toured extensively, racking up 200 gigs a year at their peak, playing with the likes of Dead Kennedys, Avenged Sevenfold, Spineshank, Biffy Clyro, Hundred Reasons, Lost Prophets and Earthtone9 amongst others. They were featured on Lockjaw Records and Organ zine's compilation albums as well as Rocksound and Metal Hammer cover-mounted CDs. They signed to Plastic Head's Loudspeaker imprint and released their sole album proper, 'Blunt', in 2002.

WHAT?

A molten fusion of hardcore and metal: Slayer and Pantera on the one hand, Black Flag and Jesus Lizard on the other. The noise they made was simply incredible and gigs were mayhem, particularly their regular headline shows at the Elm Tree, usually packed beyond capacity and featuring hoards of metal kids stage-diving off the bar. 'Blunt' managed to capture much of JOR's frenzied musical violence, but it was live where they really cut it.



WHEN?

Forming in the late-90s, JOR spent five years gigging almost non-stop, their reputation spreading nation-wide as they packed into the back of a van and played anywhere that would have them, usually sharing stages with the best up and coming hardcore and metal bands on the scene. In Oxford they sold out bigger and bigger venues and headlined Truck Festival's Barn stage in 2000, along with Raging Speedhorn. The band fell apart in 2003 with a second album written but unable to be released, no label backing, up to their necks in debt and exhausted from such a hectic touring schedule.

WHY?

Before JOR – alongside Black Candy and Mindsurfer – came along, Oxford's metal scene was a very poor relation to the dominant indie scene, but Oxford took to them from the off; gigs were packed, reviews were ecstatic. Inspired by JOR, bands like Coma Kai, Shouting Myke (who became A Silent Film) and Miazma picked up the hardcore baton and the metal scene expanded to a point where it is still a large and significant part of Oxford's increasingly diverse musical story. The band's dedication to touring and DIY ethic was also an inspiration to any aspiring local band of any genre.

WHERE?

Post-split Ben formed October File who still tour and release albums and he also fronts local metallers Taste My Eyes. Ansley subsequently formed the much-loved Sow before moving to Leeds where he currently plays with OSA. All the band are now happily married with kids, apparently.

HOW?

Since the band existed before widespread Myspace usage, there's very little available out there, although one fan of the band set up www.myspace.com/jor666 with a few tunes on. Copies of 'Blunt' are available at Amazon or ebay. But the best news is JOR are reforming for a one-off gig at the Wheatsheaf on February 26th to help celebrate the 10th anniversary of TCT Music, who gave them their early gig breaks. Witness the storm.

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

THE NICHOLE STEAL

Nichole Steal demos don't come round very often but they're always worth the wait. Paul Hamblin's last offering won him Demo Of The Month and he reprises that success with this latest offering, trading in some of his previous sultry trip hop atmospherics for a harder, beat-led hip hop, notably on opener 'Dime', all electronic wow and flutter and snatches of upbeat soul vocals. It just gets better from there, The sweet, simple and effective 'Colourful', with its sleeker electronic lines and cutesy android vocals, has a distinct Ladytron feel about it, which is about as good as it gets in our book, while 'I Am Pain' opens with what could be a clichéd sample of Hal from 2001: *A Space Odyssey* but crashes and burns like an Aphex Twin remodelling of late-70s Cabaret Voltaire. '75', meanwhile, is all buzzsaw guitars and brutal beats, a churning evil twin to Moby's 'Natural Blues'. Paul manages to switch moods easily with each new track and has an admirable grasp of brevity. In fact if there's a fault with this demo it's that he could maybe expand on some of the ideas he explores. For now, though he goes for the short, sharp shock, and in a month when some demos seem to last for days, we'll drink to that.

ABANDON

"In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan". That's not actually a lyric from Abandon but it feels wholly appropriate. As we sit down to listen through this month's demo pile, the UK is gripped by its coldest winter for 30 years and we're blocked in by a foot of snow. Perfect conditions for Abandon to wreak their bleak musical carnage. In fact Abandon is another solo project from demo page regular Umair Chaudhry who seems to be making good use of the downtime at the studio he works in, and should perhaps be called Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here. Because this is no laugh-a-minute party mix. In fact we wonder if Umair actually has an icicle instead of a soul, such is the unrelenting misery of his prolific output. This demo features a mere four tracks but runs to 52 minutes, and while you have to admire its majestic misery, after a while it can feel like you're

Demo of the Month wins a free half day's recording at Keynote. Call 01189 599944 to claim your prize and get special deals for local bands!

trapped in a blizzard-bound log cabin for a week. Across a shifting landscape of spangling guitars, discreet fuzz and a mournful vocal groan, he touches bases with Flying Saucer Attack, Dead Can Dance and Swans, especially on the final track, a desolate gothic dirge. It's all very Siberian in feel and if you're wanting to soundtrack a country gripped by Arctic weather this is as good a choice as any. Thing is, all this was apparently four years in the making and has sat in the demo pile for a good couple of months, so perhaps it's fate it gets reviewed right now. Thank God it didn't turn up in June: it could have completely bugged the entire weather system.

VIENNA DITTO

This lot seem to come from Oxford, Reading and London, depending on what you believe, but local or not it's worth bigging up because it's bloody great – a one-song demo called 'Long Way Down' that sounds like a cross between Edith Piaf and Portishead's Beth Gibbons fronting an old rockabilly band helmed by Dick Dale, possibly scoring a soundtrack to an old Tarantino movie. The singer has a simply great voice, smoky and sultry but also intense, yearning and richly soulful, while the rockabilly rumble comes complete with pleasing electronic squelches and remains airy and exuberant throughout. Great stuff: ambitious and fun and we look forward to hearing plenty more from them wherever they're coming from or going to.

ADAM GILLESPIE

Talking, as we were, about demos that go on far too long, here's a new one from Abingdon-based rapper Adam Gillespie, who we reviewed a couple of years back. His rhyming, flow and confidence have come on some since that last demo but this new one suffers, like so many rap demos, from just going on and bleedin' on, when a bit of attention to quality over quantity would do it so many favours. On the plus side, his best tracks have a bit of punch about them, and the slightly clunky 'Skills Make A Person Think' is a fun run through pretty much every computer game Adam's ever played, complete with some great old-school scratching. This kind of stuff suits him far better than tales of running from the police, which just sound a bit forced from a grown man from Abingdon. Unless Adam's a vicious career criminal, in which case, we think this whole demo is bloody fantastic and is actually Demo of the Month and please don't let that bull terrier off its leash. Sir. Elsewhere there's signs of neat ideas, like

the cartoonish sampling of 'Bohemian Rhapsody', but 'Kurt And Courtney' shows just how hard it is to do a hip hop break-up song with any originality in these post-Streets times. Ultimately over ten tracks the CD becomes too one-paced and a bit of chopping and changing and cutting away the dead wood to leave the best ideas to breathe better might benefit both him and us, the poor snow-bound reviewer. Who, incidentally, spends the last half of the demo tidying up the kitchen cupboards. We found no less than 15 bottles of kids' bubble mix. Result.

ELDENOIR

"We are just two people recording music. I refuse to call us a two-piece band," announces one half of Eldenoir in a sublime moment of self-denial. They also inform us that the CD's cover art is an original drawing by a five-year-old, which may or may not be true, but a passing cynic might suggest the music too could be said child's handiwork. There's definitely a certain naivety about it. But that's a cheap jibe because it's actually quite good fun if you don't stare too hard at it. From its opening lopsided lo-fi Beefheartian skronk, it wanders and wobbles awkwardly along, searching for its old Stump and Bogshed singles, pumped-up unfunk bass, hissing cymbals, spasming guitars and muttering middle-distance vocals all woven untidily together and hoping the stitching doesn't come apart in the post. It's the kind of thing John Peel might have indulged back in the early-80s in the absence of anything new from This Heat, a bit warped and weird but in this day and age sounding just too random and aimless to really grab you: it feels like a couple of fun ideas looking for a few mates to complete the picture.

BURN THE EMBASSY

Given that another big bit of news other than snow, snow and more bloody snow this week is the bomb threats to western embassies in the middle east, this lot are appropriately named and will doubtless be receiving a visit from Ros Myers and her mates any day soon. Unless she really did die at the end of the last season of *Spooks* (but come on, they can't kill her *and* Jo in the same series, surely?). They needn't worry though: MI5 will soon realise Burn The Embassy are more likely to bore the ambassadors into submission than blow them up. Musically this is okay, if unambitious: it aims for a kind of Wedding Present-meets-The Velvet Underground wall of guitars sound and pretty much succeeds, but vocally it's horrendous: a growly gothic sulk of a voice mumbles sullenly for the entire duration of three songs without a

single hint of variety, emotion or humanity. It's so ponderous and glum it's like listening to Marvin the Paranoid Android trying to re-enact The Jesus & Mary Chain's 'Darklands'. This is the duo's first demo so all's not lost: get yourselves a new singer (possibly a ranting Islamic extremist cleric), ramp the guitars up a bit and then maybe you'll set the place alight.

NO BUTTONS TO PUSH

We wish we could offer similarly encouraging criticism to this lot but when you state your primary influence as Counting Crows we fear you're well beyond help or hope. No Buttons To Push trade in attitude-free soft rock of the sort you tend to find stuck in the corner of awful market town pubs on a Friday night, serving to get undiscerning feet tapping after seven too many pints of strong lager, or perhaps reaching the quarter-finals of yet another Battle of the Bands competition. Hey, people, when you're documenting life's tedium and disappointment, there's no need to sing and play like you've given up the will to live too. By turns over-earnest, over-enunciated, over-egged, under-funked and sounding by the end like a genuinely vile cross between hoary old rockers and a particularly asinine r'n'b boy band, they definitely don't push any of our buttons, except that big red one on our forehead marked 'Homicide Mode'.

THE DEMO DUMPER

JASON SEAGER

And so we sit here, snowed in, surrounded by stir-crazy kids, diminishing supplies of red wine and biscuits, recovering from a bout of bone-aching flu and the CDs punctuated by the sounds of Super Mariokart and sibling rivalry. But despite all that we reflect that we are far happier than Mr Seager here, with his dreadful dirge of a demo and its endless Snowy White-style guitar solo backing up his mournful, painful wailing. Has someone died? No, seriously, something must have died, else what is that sickly stench of putrefaction we can smell? It couldn't be the music could it? Christ almighty, this makes a Gregorian mass sound like a riotous Saturday night at the Playboy Mansion. Strum and moan, strum and moan. Yes, we've been here before in the Demo Dumper of course, but this time with a foot of snow blocking us in so we can't even get in the car and drive over a cliff to put us out of his misery. Here, truly, is the musical equivalent of dying slowly in a frozen ditch as the emergency services look the other way.

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

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



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