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NIGHTSHIFT

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Free every
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The Cellar Family

Songs from under the floorboard



photo: Johnny Moto

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NEWS

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JONQUIL return to town for a special Blessing Force-themed show at the O2 Academy on Saturday 17th December. They are joined for the night by Pet Moon, Sisterland and Motherhood as well as art contributions from Tinhead, Valeska Hykel, Amy Honour and Charlotte Freeston. Tickets are £6 in advance from the Academy box office.

Jonquil, who played at South By Southwest and CMJ earlier this year, have recently signed to Co-op Records and will release a new album, 'Point Of Go', in February in conjunction with Blessing Force Records.

Jonquil frontman Hugo Manuel, meanwhile, has signed a record deal with Loose Lips in his **Chad Valley** guise. After a Far East tour, Hugo headed off on a UK tour in support of Friendly Fires throughout November. Visit www.myspace.com/hugomanuel for more details.

THE REGAL is set to become a church from this month. Rumours had been circulating around the local music scene for a couple of months before it was confirmed at the beginning of November that the Christian Life Centre would take over the lease of the 1,700-capacity venue, which has recently hosted shows by Stornoway, Imelda May and Bellowhead.

The Regal's owner, Niaz Ali, had

taken control of the building three years ago after Solarview, the company that refurbished it after years of neglect, went into liquidation.

Trouble at a couple of club nights in the past had earned The Regal a bad reputation in certain sections of the press, but more recently the building looked like it was set to fulfil its potential as the biggest dedicated live music venue in Oxford.

SECRET RIVALS release a new single next month. 'Once More With Heart' b/w 'I Know Something' is released on It's All Happening Records on January 16th. Visit www.secretivals.com for more news on the band.

THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND play a fundraising show for Kingham Primary School's music course this month. The course has previously been funded by the annual Commotion Festival in the school grounds but this year the event was incorporated into the far larger Harvest Festival, run by Big Wheel on Alex James' farm. Having put together one of the worst line-ups in festival history, including The Feeling, The Kooks and DJ Sara Cox, and attracting such delightful clientele as David Cameron and Jeremy Clarkson, Big Wheel went into administration, leaving Commotion, and many others, unpaid.

The ORFSB will play at Chipping Norton Town Hall on Friday 9th December alongside folk singer Krissy Matthews. Visit www.commotionfestival.co.uk for tickets and more details.

THE GRACEFUL SLICKS have their song 'Bul Bul Tarang' included on Custom Made Music's autumn sampler album in the States this month. The local psychedelic garage rockers feature alongside Bauhaus' David J and Peter Holmstrom from The Dandy Warhols. The same song will also



M83 have added a date at the O2 Academy on Tuesday 24th January to their UK tour. The band, centred around French musician and producer Anthony Gonzalez, recently followed up their acclaimed 2008 album 'Saturdays = Youth' with new album, 'Hurry Up, We're Dreaming'. Tickets, priced £12.50, are on sale now from the venue box office.

THE HORRORS, meanwhile, have re-arranged their Academy show for Thursday 19th January after their original date in October was postponed when singer Faris Badwan lost his voice. Tickets for the original date remain valid.

feature on a cover-mounted CD with China's SoRock! magazine next month, along with an interview with the band. Visit www.myspace.com/thegracefulsicks to hear the song.

FOLK IN OXFORD is a new website dedicated to the local folk scene, covering everything from folk concerts to morris dancing, celidhs, community choirs and more. The site has been set up by local folk singer Cat Kelly. Visit www.folkinoxford.co.uk.

DON'T FORGET to tune into BBC Oxford Introducing every Sunday evening between 9-10pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best Oxford releases and demos as well as featuring interviews and live

sessions with local acts, gig reviews, news and a weekly gig guide. The show is available to download as a podcast all week at bbc.co.uk/oxford.

More local music news, as well as interactive local gig and music reviews, photo galleries, podcasts and interviews are also available online at www.musicinoxford.co.uk.

FINALLY, a big Nightshift goodbye and good luck to Vicky Walters, who is leaving her position as box office manager at the O2 Academy. Vicky was responsible for starting and running the Academy's excellent Upstairs local bands showcases earlier this year. We're certain Vicky will miss those idyllic Wednesday nights working at Fuzzy Ducks.

THE OXFORD GUITAR GALLERY in Summertown has closed down. The guitar shop, jointly run by former-Sevenchurch axeman Dave Smart, shut its doors for the last time at the start of last month after eleven years trading, the shop, like so many other independent retailers, suffering from declining sales.



This issue of Nightshift is dedicated to the memory of Craig Allnutt

a quiet word with

THE CELLAR FAMILY

photo: Johnny Moto



"STYLE OF MUSIC DOESN'T come into it; it's bands that are shamelessly mimicking what they assume will get their dicks sucked and make them millionaires instantly that we hate. The only thing that matters is integrity and genuine heartfelt energy in live shows. We don't want to mention any bands that we particularly dislike because it's irrelevant."

ANGER. LOATHING. DISGUST. These are the things that drive The Cellar Family. Drive them to ever-greater highs of musical virulence. Drive them to react in the most visceral fashion to the posers and pretenders who would try and use music simply as a tool to climb an imagined career ladder.

PLENTY OF BANDS CALL themselves punk. A few of them even sound like they might have a passing acquaintance with the idea of punk. A rare few look and sound and really feel like the spirit of punk, whether they even recognise the term as applying to them or not.

The Cellar Family are one of that rare breed. Here is a band who, on their night, feel so taut, so uptight you wonder how they don't simply turn themselves inside out. A band whose shows we've been lucky enough to witness over the past twelve months carry a palpable sense of catharsis about them, that make you come away from the venue cleansed and invigorated, while simultaneously feeling like you've got

all the dirt in the world under your fingernails.

BECAUSE, LET'S BE HONEST, The Cellar Family's songs aren't songs you could take home to meet your parents.

Instead here are tales of serial killers, sociopaths, cult leaders and voyeurs. Tales yelped, screamed, snarled and eerily gurgled through the twisted skeletons and shrapnel of acutely angular hardcore noise, all sheet-metal guitars and pulverising artillery beats. There's no juvenile revelling in shock tactics here; instead songs like 'Fritz!', 'Secret Admirer' and 'Father Michael' immerse themselves in a level of humanity most of us are lucky enough not to have ever encountered.

The band's latest EP, 'Flab', features seven tightly-wound splenetic salvos of blissful punk noise that fuse, weld or simply crunch together elements of The Pixies, Fugazi, Big Black, McLusky, At The Drive-In and Pere Ubu. It makes our heart beat faster, makes our feet want to dance dervish-like and makes us want to throw items of furniture through the window. It's music that makes you feel *alive*.

THE CELLAR FAMILY HAVE been playing around the Oxford scene for just over a year now, but the band have been together for three and a half years. Singer and guitarist Jamie Harris, bassist Sam Good and drummer Nick Reading met and formed the band together at art college in Winchester ("There wasn't anyone

else there who played instruments seriously so we didn't really have a choice"), before moving to Oxford last year. Nick and Sam actually live in the cellar of their house in east Oxford.

"There isn't really a home-grown scene in Winchester," they explain, "but lots of bands pass through, playing almost solely at The Railway where we were lucky enough to play with The Vibrators and The UK Subs, which were pretty important gigs for us and we received an enthusiastic response from the ageing crusty punk crowd and also from Charlie Parker. Still, due to the lack of a scene we ended up playing mostly in London."

The Cellar Family aren't the first band to move to Oxford because of its vibrant, supportive music scene, but we wonder how the trio found their way here.

"Sam is originally from Oxford. We knew we wanted to make a go of it and the options were really London, Oxford, Brighton or Bristol. The latter two were never really options though. We realised Oxford has a really good scene with a strong community ethic. It's really good for young bands of any kind of music. We figured that our style and methods would be more appreciated here where other towns may reject them."

You've been here over a year now; how have you found it? Have you been surprised by people's reactions to the band?

"It wasn't that easy to get gigs in the beginning. We weren't expecting it to be easy, though. Gradually with the

help of a couple of good live reviews and Demo Of The Month in *Nightshift* last year and the kind support of local people like Paul Carrera and Johnny Moto and Osprey and Penny at the Bullingdon spreading the word, we got a bit of attention and quickly realised that moving here was a good decision."

Even if you haven't seen or heard The Cellar Family yet, chances are you'll have heard local promoters and other musicians name-checking them – always a good sign. Wherever they play they leave a lasting impression. Another indication of how much Oxford has taken to The Cellar Family came when they were picked to play the Blessing Force tent at Truck back in July.

"Andrew [Mears] from Blessing Force emailed us out the blue. It's was very cool of them, we weren't expecting to be asked to play. To be honest, we don't think our sound makes a lot of sense to the Blessing Force thing. I guess either someone recommended us and we were a last resort or they just figured we were edgy enough. Either way, musical pleasings aside, it's totally impressive what the collective have done in Oxford and there should be more young people trying to do the same."

HAVING HEARD THE CELLAR Family's first demo last October and given it Demo Of The Month, *Nightshift* was keen to see the trio live and ended up catching two shows in a week, at the Bullingdon and the Wheatsheaf. They were everything we'd hoped for and more. There was a genuine feeling of tension about their performance, as if none of them felt comfortable in their own skin, as well as a cathartic zeal about the songs they were feverishly kicking out.

NICK: "On the best nights that's definitely the case but then on bad nights I can sometimes feel like something hasn't been completed. Playing live is just a good release of various tensions built up through the week really."

JAMIE: "I agree; after a few songs I don't really know what I'm doing anymore. It's a huge release; our style of music's good for that."

SAM: "I've been waiting to play music like this all my life. I don't even think it's cathartic enough yet but it will be. Every time we start a gig I feel quite normal, usually grumpy and then it all takes over and just escalates. I'm usually quite snappy and bad tempered when we come off stage, something weird happens."

A lot of Jamie's lyrics deal with serial killers or sociopaths

or weirdos – from Fred West to Joseph Fritzl to the anonymous voyeuristic protagonist of ‘Secret Admirer’. Is there a genuine interest in those sort of characters?

“There is a genuine interest but the interest is more about the darkness in the subject matter; obviously no one is trying to be some kind of voice for serial killers and paedos. Whether or not it’s going to be a recurring theme in the lyrics is quite unpredictable, as from song to song the subject matter can come from anywhere. I never really make a conscious effort to include serial killers or whoever in the song, it’s just an organic process.”

To what extent are songs like ‘Secret Admirer’ just storytelling and to what extent do you identify with the characters you’re often singing from the point of view of? “I suppose I like the idea of a hopeless weirdo singing one of those classic 50s-style stories that’s about an unattainable woman, gazing at her from afar. The way we play it is in an obviously brash and psychotic format that puts our own twist on it, but I can’t really say I can relate to that character in any way. I have a girlfriend of two years and to be honest I can’t remember the last time I obsessed over an unattainable woman.”

‘Father Michael’ in particular has grabbed people’s imagination.

“That song is based on a documentary we saw on Channel 4 about a cult leader who told his followers that he knew when the world was gonna end and used his status as cult leader to sleep with most of the female members, including his son’s wife. We just thought it was pretty fucked up and pretty cool to write a song about. It seems to stand out for a lot of people, although the way we see it we’ve been playing it for two years and compared to the direction we have been going in the time since then in songwriting or structural terms it’s pretty straightforward.”

One review suggested there was a strong sense of disgust running through your songs. “Yes. Obviously we don’t sing about these things because we think it’s cute.”

IN NIGHTSHIFT’S INTRODUCING feature on The Cellar Family earlier in the year, they stated that that part of their driving force was a reaction against image-obsessed indie bands, but which particular bands are a positive influence on them?

“In terms of positive influences, we all have a stupidly diverse taste. Sometimes we listen to the same stuff, sometimes we totally disagree. Right now, between us we’re listening to Cerebral Ballzy, Jay Reatard, Charles Bradley, Neil Young and dark, future drum&bass.”

The Cellar Family’s earliest songs, which we heard on that first demo, were more straightforward punk, while the material most Oxford fans will know them for is far more angular and strung-out; do they feel there’s been a gradual evolution of your sound or was there some epiphany?

“Definitely a gradual evolution; it just organically and naturally developed over three and a half years of playing and living together until it just sounded like the Cellar Family. It’s not like a narwhal-riding Moses appeared to us in a collective dream declaring that the future of music is angular, not curved.”

Great idea for a video though.

One of the most striking things about The Cellar Family’s sound is how Jamie’s voice can switch in style and pitch mid-song, most notably on ‘Father Michael’; it’s quite unnerving when you first hear it, like an intensely creepy child. Did he grow up doing strange voices or is it something that’s developed while in the band?

“I watched programmes such as *Reeves & Mortimer* and *The League Of Gentlemen* from an early age, and absorbed that particular style of humour. The way it has found its way into our music has always been inevitable.”

ANYONE WHO HAS WITNESSED THE musical storm that is The Cellar Family live will have heard the band playing the occasional cover of cult 80s rockers The Screaming Blue Messiahs, another band with a taut, primal approach to their music. Such affection for the Messiahs started early for Jamie, since his dad Kenny was drummer in the band. We wonder what it was like growing up with a dad in a pretty successful band and how much he influenced Jamie’s music making?

“Well, I didn’t really fathom how good the Messiahs were until I was a teenager, even though I knew he was in a band from a young age. In fact, only in the last three or four years have they become a major influence, but my dad and, for that matter mum, have always been a massive influence on what I listen to. Put it this way, they were the first to show me The Prodigy when I was about six years old, and I’ve been a fan since.”

Is your dad a fan of your SBM covers?

“We’ve done two now and he has always been impressed by the fact that we try to make them our own. Since the beginning he’s always been majorly supportive.”

THINGS, THEN, ARE LOOKING VERY good for The Cellar Family right now. When they first started gigging in Oxford they had to wheel their equipment to gigs in a knackered old shopping trolley they christened Old Mary. No longer, it seems...

“No. Mary is probably still rotting in the garden of our former smelly house. She has been replaced by a slick and sturdy sack truck called Slick Ernest. He’s orange. Mary will always be with us in our hearts and our memories, though. She features on the cover of ‘Flab’, wearing her favourite shoes.”

Something that has been nagging away at us since we first interviewed the band for their *Introducing* piece though is an answer they gave to their career low so far. A gig in Southampton apparently, which featured a topless student perpetually rowing on a rowing machine, and a first ever band interview in which they were asked which type of sandwich they would be. So.... Cellar Family, if you *were* a sandwich, what sort of sandwich would you be?

“Fuck Off.”

Excellent. That is the correct punk rock answer.

‘The Cellar Family play at the Wheatsheaf on Friday 16th December as part of the Winter Warmer, and at the Bullingdon on Thursday 22nd with The Relationships.



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TRACKS OF OUR YEAR

2011 was the year that Jon Spira's film *Anyone Can Play Guitar* immortalised Oxford's music scene and showed how it formed and grew and helped nurture some of the best bands on the planet. It's also been a year that proves how well that scene continues to flourish and throw up so much fantastic music. Compiling *Nightshift's* end-of-year Top 25 has always been fun, but lately it's become increasingly difficult to fit everything we love in, even as we limit each act to a single song. A dozen or so acts could feel justifiably aggrieved not to feature here, but we gotta draw a line somewhere and 25 felt like a suitably arbitrary number. **RADIOHEAD's** sublime 'Lotus Flower' is their fourth table-topping achievement since we started doing this almost twenty years ago and confirms their standing as the greatest band Oxford has ever produced, while the fact they pipped **FIXERS** by a mere couple of votes from the *Nightshift* scribes shows just how exciting their future is. Anyway, enough waffling. Here it is, *Nightshift's* essential guide to the best of the best in 2011. Makes you proud to be part of something so special, don't it?



1. RADIOHEAD: 'Lotus Flower'

Recent Radiohead albums – 'Hail To The Thief' and 'In Rainbows' in particular – have been fantastically cohesive pieces of work from which it was difficult to pick out stand-out tracks, else they lost their context. Ironically it was arguably the band's most uneven album to date, 'King Of Limbs', that produced one of their greatest single tracks. Forget the decidedly unnerving video of a bowler-hatted Thom Yorke attempting to dance like a loon, 'Lotus Flower' is as intricate, delicate and near-perfect as its title would suggest. Thom's voice hovers over the shifting guitar and synth textures with the grace of Muhammad Ali reincarnated as a hummingbird. You feel if you could reach out and touch the song it would crumble to dust in your fingers, but sit back and let it wash through you and it's power is simply staggering.

2. FIXERS: 'Swimmhaus Johannesburg'

'Iron Deer Dream'; 'Crystals'; 'Majesties Ranch': Fixers littered 2011 with exuberant psychedelic pop gems, each of which was good enough to top most Best Of Lists, but it was 'Swimmhaus Johannesburg' that so many people went for. Partly because it demonstrated just how brilliantly unpredictable Fixers could be, as they momentarily ditched the lysergic partying and cooked up a magnificent J-pop anthem, and partly because it managed to be both cheesy to an almost criminal degree and so HUGE as a song, it near

enough developed its own gravity. A Latin-American-flavoured electro bastardisation of 'The Final Countdown' shouldn't sound so magnificent. But it bloody well did.

3. YOUNG KNIVES: 'Glasshouse'

"She's my daughter, she's the apple of my eye / Hear her laughter, fills me up like shepherd's pie." Just one reason to love this closing number from Young Knives' 'Ornaments From The Silver Arcade' album unreservedly. Others might include its insanely catchy "Ba ba ba ba" chorus, a lyrical shout out to hornbills and a gleefully bullish sense of purpose that makes them sound like

The Beach Boys reincarnated as a post-punk electro-pop band. Better known for their characteristically caustic lyricism and artfully angular musical approach, with 'Ornaments...' and 'Glasshouse' in particular, Young Knives proved that pure, unadulterated pop suits them just fine. Joyous.

4. THE CELLAR FAMILY:

'Father Michael'

The Cellar Family spent the year proving they weren't just here for the nasty things in life. Oh hang on, yes they were. Whether it was serial killers or creepy voyeurs they knew how to get to the heart of the beast with angular severity. This, though, was the monstrous, bulldozing highlight of the band's cathartic shows, a tightly-wound, splenetic exploration of a doomsday cult leader with a thing for shagging his disciples. From the malevolent lead riff to Jamie Harris' creepy kid vocals halfway through, it was a fantastically serrated reminder of how invigorating punk rock can be when it's done with real attitude.

5. CHAD VALLEY:

'Now That I'm Real'

By stark contrast to Cellar Family's excoriating musical surgery, Chad Valley was blissed out in some Ibiza beach café at sunrise, residual pot confusion informing Hugo Manuel's soft-focus, gently euphoric blending of 80s pop and chilled 90s house. 'Now That I'm Real' opened July's 'Equatorial Ultravox' EP, although it was Kraftwerk and Ryuichi Sakamoto more than Ultravox that informed this shimmy through 'Trans-Europe Express'-style grooving, middle-eastern motifs mottling the sleek lines, leaving everyone in the vicinity with a smile on their face and a sudden craving for pizza and chocolate biscuits.

6. DIVE DIVE:

'Ape Like Me'

Given that three quarters of the band seem to spend more time on tour as Frank Turner's band, it's easy to forget just how bloody great Dive Dive are.

Their last album, 'Potential', released on Xtra Mile, the same label as Mr Turner, was a timely reminder. Traditionally at their best when kicking it out fast and furious, 'Ape Like Me' proved that Dive Dive can do slower and more sensitive just as well, Jamie Stuart's cracked, plaintive voice wrenching more emotion out of three and a half minutes than you'll hear in an entire series of *X-Factor*.

7. SPRING OFFENSIVE:

'A Stutter & A Start'

While *Youthmovies'* influence continues to cast a long shadow over Oxford music (and beyond), Spring Offensive are the band who have done most to take that influence and move it into somewhere new. After the thirteen-minute conceptual single that was 'The First Of Many Dreams About Monsters', 'A Stutter & A Start' found them back in poppier territory (even supporting *The Go! Team*), dinking like a diminutive winger through a static back four before nonchalantly placing the ball in the top corner while appearing to make no real effort at all. Lucas Whitworth's voice similarly conveys fraught emotions while forever sounding like he doesn't care two hoots. Making great music sound effortless is a rare talent indeed.

8. LITTLE FISH:

'Wonderful'

A year of no little upheaval for our fishy friends as they were cast adrift from their record label, seemed to settle into their permanent three-piece formation before drummer Nez left the band. Somehow in between that they managed to record a new album with Gaz Coombes – set for release next year – write a book about their experiences in the music industry (pledge online, folks) and release this new single, accompanied by one of the cutest videos we've seen in a long old while. Nothing, it seems, can stop Juju writing awesome pop songs, while her voice is now so powerful there's an entire government department investigating if it can be used as a source of renewable energy.

9. THE ROCK OF TRAVOLTA: ‘Last March of the Acolytes’

Over a decade on from their inception, The Rock Of Travolta’s elegant brutality remains a thing of wonder. ‘Fine Lines’, their first album since 2003’s ‘Uluru’, found their searing fusion of powering electronica, classical structures and pure rock bombast unbowed, this stand-out piece suggesting someone in Hollywood’s missing a trick not getting them to soundtrack billion-dollar budget sci-fi battle scenes.

10. UTE: ‘The Innocent Tailor’

A band who started the year staking a claim to the throne of Oxford’s brightest new pop hope but ended it splitting up. Ute’s ‘Gambler’ EP back in January featured this drunken, almost vaudevillian waltz full of murderous intent, staggering from one whisky bar to the next, its arms round Radiohead and Grinderman’s shoulders at it lived out its wracked revenge fantasies like an old blues lament stuck in Purgatory’s waiting room.

11. TROPHY WIFE: ‘Wolf’

On their ‘Bruxism’ EP, Trophy Wife sounded less like they were lying awake at night grinding their teeth, more like they were somnambulating through some hazy dreamspace between sleep and waking. ‘Wolf’ in particular from the EP – produced by Yannis Philippakis – came with a sense of foreboding that lurked at the edges of its blissed-out reverie, like fleeting glimpses of ghosts. Fragile and slightly eerie, just as we like it.

12. JONQUIL: ‘Fighting Smiles’

Always difficult to pin down, with their last mini-album, ‘One Hundred Suns’, Jonquil nutmegged everyone’s expectations once again, going proper tropical and hi-life, bleached-out psychedelia and sea shanties cast aside in favour of high-end township guitars, sunbeam synths and Hugo Manuel’s reverb-drenched, blissed-out falsetto. ‘Fighting Smiles’ sounded like a beach party hosted by Animal Collective but gatecrashed by Vampire Weekend, everyone present too merrily intoxicated on acid and coconut-based cocktails to care what time it is.

13. DUBWISER: ‘Power Up’

Twenty years after they formed, the local reggae godfathers got round to releasing their debut album. Given that fact it was amazing just how fresh ‘A

Crack In Paradise’ sounded, incorporating ska, pop, even acid house, into its central reggae stylings, running a whole gamut of emotions, from joyous positivity to politically-charged anger to contemplation and resignation. This militant highlight of the album fused hip hop and 70s soul into the dominant dub, raging against government austerity somewhere between Culture and Stevie Wonder.

14. DEAD JERICHO: ‘Please Yourself’

Going into the studio with former-Test Icicles man Rory Atwell proved as fruitful as you’d hope for Dead Jerichos who built on last year’s ‘Mountains’ debut with this wiry, laddish updating on early Cure, all twinkling, reverb-heavy guitars and Craig Evans’ set-jaw proclamations. Atwell swept away the clutter and punk raucousness of the band’s live sound to reveal the surprisingly fleet-footed pop band beneath.

15. THE WINCHELL RIOTS: ‘Undertows’

Like Ute, The Winchell Riots left us before they could fulfil their seemingly limitless potential. Here was a band seemingly intent on writing the biggest songs in the world, albeit big songs with an almost angelic sense of grace. On this highlight from their ‘Figure 8s EP’ Phil McMinn’s limpid falsetto is as clear and fragile as glass, twinkling guitars eventually exploding into a torrent of crystalline noise at the song’s climax. They may be gone but they’ve left us with some damn near perfect musical memories to keep.

16. BORDERVILLE: ‘The Human Way’

Having dealt with life, work and death in 2009’s ‘Joy Through Work’, Borderville created another epic concept album, based on Kafka’s ‘Metamorphosis’, following the novella’s unfortunate protagonist Gregor Samsa from his awakening as a giant insect to an inevitably low and unclean death. ‘The Human Way’ was the album’s darkest hour: pensive, churning riffs and a brilliantly understated central hook giving the bleak, squalling centre-point of the album a bizarrely uplifting feel.

17. UNDERSMILE: ‘Crab People’

Moving things along at almost tectonic pace, Undersmile were, from a certain angle, brutality incarnate. Relentless galley slave beats, riffs so coated in tar they could pollute entire oceans, and fronted by duel vocalists Hel Sterne and Taz Corona who

between them chanted bleak, haunted mantras like some demonic twin sister of Linda Blair from *The Exorcist*, Undersmile’s slo-mo metallic hardcore harked back to classic Swans or Melvins and sounded simply unstoppable.

18. THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND: ‘Grandpa’s Shed’

If it’s a good time you want, a few drinks, a bloody good dance and, hey, why not, a few more drinks, then The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band are your men. Trilbies, cheap suits, big horn flourishes and a Fats Domino-led fiesta, all add up to a serious period-piece party vibe that, as debut album ‘Year Of The Rabbit’ showed, they could do just as well on record as on stage. Because, seriously, you can drink and dance as easily at home as you can down at your local speakeasy.

19. COLOURED: ‘Tom Hanks’

A spasming old-school rave tune with an extreme case of ADHD. Played by Cybermen. Inside the darkest corner of Donna Summer’s brain. In the future. Probably. How else to describe Coloured’s singularly distracted approach to dance music? With ‘Tom Hanks’ Matt Mooney and Nick Brewer went fully head on with their love for classic disco, performing some form of strange surgery on its hapless body before kicking it twitching and short-circuiting onto the dancefloor. The resulting spectacle was as unsettling as it was thrilling.

20. THE HALF RABBITS: ‘Poor Me/Poor You’

The Half Rabbits titled their latest EP ‘The Optimist’ with an obvious eye on irony. Unless of course you find optimism in songs that document various apocalyptic scenarios, ‘Poor Me/Poor You’ examining the fall-out from war over a Killing Joke-style industrial stomp, Michael Weatherburn’s theatrical vocal delivery suggesting he could recite his shopping list and make it sound like The Book Of Revelations. The Half Rabbits don’t do understatement, but then, given their subject matter, how could they?

21. PROSPEKT: ‘Shroud’

While Oxford’s metal scene continued to flourish this year, few local bands managed to release anything. Prospekt were ahead of the pack both in putting out an epic debut EP, and in having a

skill set that most others could merely standby and gawp at. Lee Luland is fast earning a reputation as a fretmaster *par excellence*, while singer Matt Winchester’s heroic, soaring voice could fill stadiums all on its own. This eight-minute pocket opera of a song blended convoluted prog with full-on brutal riffage, blending Dream Theatre, Opeth, Meshuggah and Rush into a titanic whole.

22. GUNNING FOR TAMAR: ‘Bonfires’

Relentless gigging has honed G4T into a tightly-wound fighting unit with a surprisingly melodic core, best exemplified by this track from their early summer ‘Deaf Cow Motel’ EP, an almost folky, Idlewild-like feel invading their spangly math-rock motifs, displaying a lighter side to their riff-heavy Biffy-inspired post-grunge rocking. A precision balancing act between power and prettiness that they pull off with a deft touch.

23. UNEEK feat. SILECTA: ‘Soul Destroyer’

The late, great Kate Garrett’s lasting legacy in Oxford is The Young Women’s Music Project, from where teenage rapper Uneek emerged to nab the Nightshift Demo Of The Month title back in February, displaying an easy flow in her giddy, skittish delivery, backed with squelchy electro back-up. Trading rhymes with the likes of Asher Dust and, as on this demo highlight, Silecta, she carried some serious bite, not to say some serious hooks.

24. RICHARD WALTERS: ‘Mattress Fire’

Richard’s ‘Pacing’ album may have been over-egged in parts but when he stripped the production back on tracks like ‘Mattress Fire’, he revealed the tundra-cold magic he’s always been capable of, a characteristically desolate ode to lost love metaphorically recounted as a house fire. Crack open the whisky and chuck another log on the fire, eh?

25. THE GOGGENHEIM: ‘Ah Sabina’

Referencing acts as strange and diverse as The Residents, Renaldo & The Loaf, The Slits and This Heat, The Goggenheim were a joyously deranged breath of fresh air, utterly unlike anything else in town or some distance beyond. A shiny, plastic space-cake disco in Siouxsie Sioux’s wildest dreams, ‘Ah Sabina’ was, in a word, mental.

RELEASED

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FIXERS

'Imperial Goddess Of Mercy'

(Vertigo)

And then, when you think Fixers can't surprise you any more or improve on what they just did, they bloody well go and do it anyway.

The band's show at Truck Festival back in July was a phenomenal spectacle, a euphoric celebration of musical invention, madness and pure pop pleasure. 'Majesties Ranch', the lead track on this five-track EP, feels like an encapsulation of all of that, a vast slab of party pop, a planet-sized anthem constructed from euphoric, chanted vocals, alternately twinkling and searing synths, monster beats, tambourine and, well, just about everything else the band could get their hands on. Throw it in the blender, make it dance and see what happens. If you're not leaping about the room drunk on life and planning a trip to Saturn by the end of it, you're not coming round our place for Christmas and that's final.

Of course Fixers are contrary on an epic scale, so they follow such a pop treasure with 'Selinah', a glowering, disorientating clutter of disembodied voices, gloomy, staccato beats and clanging electronics, and then 'Evil Carbs', a monstrous electro dream-pop stomp that sounds like Ryuichi Sakamoto dropping a couple of E's and forcing



the Japanese national orchestra to compose theme tunes for imaginary kids cartoon shows, before spiralling in on themselves with the loop-crazy 'Divorce', only returning to their more standard Beach Boys-go-raving 'Trans Love' at the very end.

If you're in any doubt whatsoever that Fixers are the most exciting band to emerge from Oxford, and far beyond, in the past couple of years, 'Imperial Goddess Of Mercy' is just another irrefutable piece of evidence against your musical taste and your sanity. Stick it at the top of your Christmas list today and enjoy it with copious Christmas crackers and champagne. You deserve it. **Dale Kattack**

LISTING SHIPS

'The 100 Gun Ship'

(ASC)

Although they describe themselves as post-rock, Listing Ships frequently share more in common with The Rock Of Travolta's decidedly rockist tendencies. No bad thing really when the power they generate across this debut album is so tangible.

Opener 'The 100 Gun Ship' is a scowling electro-heavy dirge, riding on an undulating metallic bass line, textured guitars and discreetly menacing synths working together towards an explosive crescendo that cries out for the biggest rock stage to make its presence best felt. Similarly the elegantly beastly 'Equus Ager', a guitar storm with pockets of quiet contemplation to catch your breath.

Perhaps the one thing we'd hope for from Listing Ships is to occasionally ditch the pretty or more pensive moments and simply ride one of their great all-consuming grooves for a solid ten minutes until brain matter starts to seep out of our ears. 'Melusine Romance' is a case in point, sounding too ponderous despite its obvious muscle. By contrast 'Skipper's Daughter' is glorious when it hits full steam, an unstoppable outpouring of sonic weaponry worthy of the battleships which lend this EP its title.

To be honest the term post-rock does Listing Ships no justice since, these days, it suggests indulgent showboating, whereas this album, at its best, is too busy trying to start a war to bother with pretty pattern making.

Victoria Waterfield

DEER CHICAGO

'Lantern Collapse' / 'Rolling Of The Ocean'

(Own label)

With the demise of The Winchell Riots Oxford lost a band of heroically epic scope, one who adhered to the "cathedrals of sound" ethos and seemingly wanted to make music that was bigger than any venue that could house them. Anyone missing The Winchell Riots though, should immediately check out Deer Chicago, a band that's been lurking around the opening slot section of the local live circuit for a year or so now but whose debut single should by rights launch them to a higher standing.

'Lantern Collapse' is self-consciously grandiose, reaching escape velocity at that point where Ride and Slowdive meet My Morning Jacket, all shimmering guitars that snowball – or fireball if you'd prefer – into a turbulent plateau of sky-touching/shoegazing noise, waiting til you think it can't get any more epic before becoming, well, more epic. It could easily be bombastic and overwrought but instead it's elegant and majestic.

B-side 'Rolling Of The Ocean' would, in normal circumstances, be an impressive slice of oceanic indie rocking but, despite clocking in a good minute longer than 'Lantern Collapse', it can't match it for all-consuming splendour, good, rather than great. But never mind that, this is one hell of a debut single.

Dale Kattack

CROZER BROTHERS

'Christmas Time Again'

(Own label)

Mark Crozer is best known as guitarist in The Jesus & Mary Chain as well as, alongside brother Paul, part of the now defunct International Jetsetters. Here the brothers try to resurrect an imagined halcyon day for Christmas records, possibly forgetting that Christmas records have always been mostly bilge of the lowest order. This, however, is really quite lovely, like My Bloody Valentine waking up on Christmas morning to discover Santa's brought them a shiny deluxe Beach Boys boxset and a set of sleighbells and setting out to prove they have a sweet, sugar-coated side. It's a wonderfully pure piece of snow-pure guitar pop that's wide-eyed and completely irony free. And, like snow, it's melted away to nothing too soon. Sledge-gazing, anyone?

Dale Kattack

ALPHABET BACKWARDS

'British Explorer EP'

(Highline)

It's increasingly difficult to listen to an Alphabet Backwards song without wanting to give singer James Hitchman a big hug and tell him everything's going to be okay. Not that he ever seems like things are getting him down, however often he sings his sweet, plaintive pop songs about heartbreak and that old staple of seeing an ex-girlfriend out and about with a new partner. No, he's like a bush baby, wide-eyed with wonder at even the most mundane minutiae of the world, never quite letting it get him so down he can't lope along the street surrounded by warm, bubbling synths. Right up to the point he mentions erections and you cough nervously and suggest he takes up internet dating. Lead track 'Big Top' here is an old-fashioned honey-dipped summer love song seemingly infused with an almost pathological naivety, like Noah & the Whale's glorious 'Five Years Time'. You could stick it on the top of your Christmas tree maybe and fill the whole house with love, love love. Alphabet Backwards make fools of cynics the world over.

Dale Kattack



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GIG GUIDE

THURSDAY 1st

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre – Having celebrated its seventeenth anniversary last month, Catweazle remains Oxford's finest open mic club, showcasing singers, musicians, poets and storytellers every week.

WORDPLAY: The Cellar – Hip hop and dubstep club night with residents Geenee and Kid Fury and tonight featuring a live set from Ohio's Stalley, signed to Rock Ross's MMG label and over in the UK for a short tour in support of his new album 'Lincoln Way Nights'.

PARASITIC EARTH+HAUNTED

TRANQUILITY: The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Jambox metal night.

SHATTERED DREAMS+THOM MUDDLE + RYAN MITCHELL & JOEY COHEN + KARL & SAM: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox acoustic night with punk-popsters Shattered Dreams playing an unplugged set.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

Friday 2nd

FIONN REGAN:

St. Barnabas Church

The grand, ornate setting of St Barnabas Church is made for a singer like Fionn Regan. The folk-pop troubadour from County Wicklow's songs are too tender to get swallowed up by the chatter and beer-sodden stickiness of your typical gig venue. Here's where his literate folk tales of dangerous women, forests and horses can best blossom, though what the parishioners might make of his allusions to al fresco sex on new album '100 Acres Of Sycamore' is anybody's guess. Having emerged six years back with stark, Mercury-shortlisted debut album 'The End Of History', Regan's lost boy dusky romanticism has made him, if hardly a household name, then at least a cult favourite: critical favour has come from the States as well as the UK and Ireland and his list of celebrity fans includes Ellie Goulding and actor Rhys Ifans. Having moved into more electric territory for second album 'Shadow Of An Empire', Regan's latest opus finds him back in more comfortable acoustic terrain, mining a rich seam of dewy-eyed nostalgia, tinged with enough menace to keep him very much at the darker end of the folk-pop spectrum.



DECEMBER

FRIDAY 2nd

WIRE + TALK NORMAL: O2 Academy – The punk-era innovators return to town – *see main preview*

FIONN REGAN: St. Barnabas Church – Dark-hearted folk-pop from the Irish troubadour – *see main preview*

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE FAMILY MACHINE + BLACK HATS + PANTHEIST: The Wheatsheaf – Great mixed bill at this month's Klub Kak, with local faves The Family Machine adding their wry, lachrymose indie-pop to Black Hats' Who and Jam-inspired power-pop and Finland's dissonant, mournful funeral-metallars Panthiest.

JUNE + THE GRACEFUL SLICKS + SHATTERED DREAMS + MILLION FACES:

The Bullingdon – It's All About The Music local bands night with indie rockers June; psychedelic garage rockers The Graceful Slicks and feisty punk and grunge types Shattered Dreams.

PHIL KLINE'S UNSILENT NIGHT: Radcliffe Square et al – Oxford Contemporary Music reprise last year's revelatory musical tour of Oxford landmarks to the accompaniment of Phil Kline's 'Unsilent Night' piece. Anyone can join the tour for free, but you'll need to bring your own music player along – ghetto blaster, laptop or whatever you prefer. Call 01865 488369 to find out how to join in.

SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM: The Cellar – Count Skylarkin's monthly celebration of all things reggae, dancehall and hip hop, tonight featuring a live set from Leeds' East Park Reggae Collective, co-founded by Gentlemen's Dub Club and Submotion Orchestra chap Tommy Evans, plugging their newly-released debut album, 'Three Stripe Science'. They're joined by reggae remix institution and Outlook Festival mainstay DJ Jstar as well as The Count himself.

CARETAKER + KOMRAD + ECONO: The Port Mahon – Seriously 'eavy noise with Hampshire's abrasive alt.rockers coming on like The God Machine at times. Progressive hardcore somewhere twixt Dillinger Escape Plan and King Crimson from the mighty Komrad.

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon – Classic funk, soul and r'n'b every Friday.

WHO DO YOU LOVE?: The Duke, St. Clement's – Alt.rock, 60s garage, soul, new wave, punk, surf and eletro-pop DJ session with Jim, Jen and Grizilla.

GENERALS & MAJORS + MONTANA GOLD + YELLOW FEVER: The Swan, Wantage – Local rock bands showcase night.

SATURDAY 3rd

THIS TOWN NEEDS GUNS: The Jericho Tavern – The local melodic math-rock faves play their first hometown show in some time, fresh from a tour of Australia and having said goodbye to founding member and singer Stuart Smith, whose place in the band has been taken by Henry

Tremain. The band have been in the studio recording the follow-up to 2008's 'Animals' album.

NICK HARPER + SIMON BATTEN: O2 Academy – The acoustic guitar virtuoso and political folk singer returns to action after a brief hiatus, touring his latest album, 'The Last Guitar', having made his name first as a member of his dad, Roy's band, before collaborating with Glenn Tilbrook and The Levellers, among others.

SHARRON KRAUS + FURSAXA: China Shop Gallery, St Mary's Road – Oxford cult folk heroine Sharron Kraus returns home for her first local show in a long while, playing songs from her most recent album, 'Woody Nightshade', fusing ancient English and Appalachian folk styles into a wonderfully gothic whole. She's joined by ATP signing Fursaxa – aka Tara Burke – from Pennsylvania, whose haunting, atmospheric alt.folk has seen her collaborating with members of Espers.

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – After pulling a coup with Claude Vonstroke last month, house and electro club night Simple welcomes Bristol's bass-driven producer Julio Bashmore, who himself released his debut EP on Vonstroke's pioneering Dirtybird label.

DENNIS ROLLINS' VELOCITY TRIO: Old Fire Station – Exuberant, funky and visceral jazz from trombonist Rollins, who has played with Courtney Pine, Blur and funk master Maceo Parker, alongside Hammond player Ross Stanley and drummer Pedro Segundo at tonight's Oxford Contemporary Music concert at the newly-reopened Old Fire Station.

ALAMAKOTA: The Wheatsheaf – Local funk-rockers.

OXFORD IMPROVISERS' NEW MOVES, NEW SOUNDS: The Pegasus Theatre – Oxford Improvisers celebrate their tenth anniversary Cohesion Festival with a series of workshops and an open session for regulars and prospective imps, followed by a special concert from African Musicians Tunde Jegede, Hafeez Al-Karrar and Ahmed Abdul Rahman, alongside OI regulars.

PHIL McMINN + THE HALF RABBITS + GERT LASSITUDE: Phoenix Picturehouse – Free show in the Phoenix's upstairs bar, featuring Winchell Riots frontman Phil playing his first solo set since his band bowed out last month. He's joined by goth-tinged indie rockers The Half Rabbits.

GLAMNATION: Fat Lil's, Witney – 70s glam-rock hits.

THE MIGHTY REDOX + FILM NOIR: The Chester Arms – Swampy blues rocking and funk from The Mighty Redox, plus old school indie rocking from Film Noir.

THE OLD GRINDING YOUNG + TOLIESEL + THE COWLEY DRUMMING GROUP: Fusion Arts Centre – Cooling Pearls' Aiden Canaday curates an evening of live music and arts, with sets from shoegazy indie types ToLiesel and the old Grinding Young, who we tried to find out some more about but came up against some particularly, not-suitable-for-work websites.

NICO'S ALCHEMY: The Swan, Wantage – Blues and psychedelic rock from the Italian guitarist and band.

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy – Weekly three-clubs-in-one extravaganza, with classic and new indie at Propaganda; kitsch pop and guilty pleasures at Trashy and metal, hardcore and alt.rock at Room 101.

EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar – Weekly mix of house, breaks and beats.

A TRUST UNCLEAN + KAIDAEKA +

HAUNTED TRANQUILITY: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox rock and metal night.

SUNDAY 4th

ADAM BARNES + FLIGHT BRIGADE + CHRIS AYER + LELIA BROUSSAND + MATT SIMONS: The Jericho Tavern – Good mixed bag of folk-leaning artists tonight with soulful local troubadour Adam Barnes leading the line with his emotive balladeering, not far from Ed Sheeran at times. Joining him is Hampshire's Fleetwood Mac

Friday 2nd

WIRE: O2 Academy

After last year's astonishing showing at the Jericho Tavern as part of Audioscope Festival's tenth anniversary celebrations, Wire return to town, and to a venue big enough to house all those who missed out last time round. Wire emerged from punk's revolution pool but were always beyond the nihilistic rage of the Pistols et al, and continued to mutate and innovate at every turn. The quartet's opening gambit, 'Pink Flag', had all the energy of punk but was more ambitious and eclectic than its contemporaries and over the next couple of albums, 'Chairs Missing' and '154', Wire became increasingly eclectic while keeping that raw, stripped-down edge. Disbanding in 1980 they reformed in the late-80s with a poppier sound for 'A Bell Is A Cup (Until It Is Struck)' but have become increasingly experimental over the years, while original guitarist Bruce Gilbert has now apparently departed for good. Frontman Colin Newman, bassist Graham Lewis and drummer Robert Gotobed still remain from the original line-up though and if you can judge a band on those they inspired, Wire have few equals: REM, The Cure and The Manic Street Preachers are huge fans, while more recently Bloc Party, Franz Ferdinand and Futureheads have quoted them as a chief influence. Across the Atlantic Big Black and Minor Threat took up arms after hearing Wire. As ever, exactly how tonight's show will pan out is anyone's guess; Wire are notoriously anti-nostalgia, though last year's show found them revisiting 'Pink Flag', 'Drill', 'Kidney Binges' and 'The 15th' alongside tracks from their new album, 'Red Barked Tree'. Whatever they play, here is a rare thing: a band that completely defied categorisation and still sound cutting edge even well into their fourth decade together.



and Fairport-inspired folk-rock outfit Flight Brigade; Brooklyn's Chris Ayer, who previously won the folk award at the John Lennon Songwriting Awards, inspired by Paul Simon and James Taylor among others, plus LA's playfully cosy folk-pop songstress Lelia Broussand.

WOLSBANE + NEVER A HERO: O2 Academy – Now fully reunited after Blaze Bayley's stint as Iron Maiden frontman, the 80s metallers head off on tour in support of forthcoming album, 'Wolsbane Save The World'.

PETE BAILEY + CALIS LANDING + OPIE DEINO + RYAN MITCHELL + JOEY COHEN: The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Jambox acoustic session.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Old Bookbinders

MONDAY 5th

THE MARCUS BONFANTI BAND: The Bullingdon – Return to town for the rising star of the UK blues scene, the singer and guitarist having recently been nominated for two gongs at the British Blues Awards, winning fans for his rich, earthy voice and versatile guitar playing that ranges from Jimmy Page-inspired electric riffage to more considered acoustic folk and country picking.

TUESDAY 6th

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Free live jazz every Tuesday, tonight featuring guests Alvin Roy & Reeds Unlimited.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern – Weekly open mic club with Sparky, Hugh McManners and guests.

WEDNESDAY 7th

SHATTERED DREAMS + ROBOTS WITH SOULS + TRAPS + BALLS: The Wheatsheaf – Moshka club night with pop-punkers Shattered Dreams kicking it out in the vein of Penetration and L7; support from Robots with Souls, the new side-project from Steve from Phantom Theory, and local punk newcomers Traps and Balls.

YOUNG KNIVES + THE FAMILY MACHINE + CAT MATADOR: The Rotunda, Iffley – First of Beard Museum's shows in the former-Dollhouse museum - *see main preview*

PHAT SESSIONS: The Cellar – Full band open jam session with The Phat Session Collective, plus Kid Fury spinning a mix of funk, soul, hip hop and house.

ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney

WEDNESDAY BLUES: James Street Tavern

THURSDAY 8th

DJ SHADOW: O2 Academy – The genre-splicing instrumental hip hop maestro plugs new album, 'The Less You Know, The Better' – *see main preview*

DOGS D'AMOUR + LUCKY STRIKES: O2 Academy – The formerly hirsute glam-rockers keep on keeping on, frontman Tyla the only remaining original, having employed a revolving door attitude to bandmates over the years, the band having reformed three times now and now set to release a re-recorded version of 1988's 'In The Dynamite Jet Saloon'.

MALCOLM MIDDLETON: The Jericho Tavern – The former-Arab Strap chap returns with more of his joyous gloom. Having previously described himself as "a fat child throwing a Casio keyboard down a flight of stairs and hitting an old man at the bottom who's playing Verve songs badly on an overpriced guitar," it's fair to say he



Wednesday 7th – Friday 9th

ROTUNDA SESSIONS: The Rotunda, Iffley Village

Having previously hosted pop-up restaurant feasts and teamed up with club night Yoof! as well as opening a permanent café on Magdalen Road, Oxford this month continue their love of unusual venues by putting on three nights of shows in a former dolls house museum in Iffley Village in conjunction with the mighty fine Beard Museum people. The cast of players over the three nights is mostly local but it's a pretty peerless cast nonetheless. On the Wednesday **Young Knives** make a rare foray into local gigging with a slightly stripped-down set; their first Oxford show since Truck. The trio's 'Ornaments From The Silver Arcade' earlier this year proved they've not lost their way with a magic, twisted pop gem, while a supporting cast of **The Family Machine** and **Cat Matador** provides a fine mixture of darkly-inclined melody and wry humour. On the Thursday night **Richard Walters** proves yet again he is possessed of one of the finest, most stunningly fragile voices ever to come out of Oxford as well as a skill with a tragic, romantic ballad that has few equals. Ambient chamber-pop ensemble **Message To Bears** and singer-songwriter **Ed Laurie** provide support. On the Friday it's a first chance for local fans to see **Gaz Coombes** in his post-Supergrass solo incarnation. He's currently recording his debut album with 'I Should Coco' producer Sam Williams, due out next spring, and you'd hope for a handful of 'Grass faves along the way. As an added bonus **Spring Offensive** are the support, having staked their claim to be one of Oxford's most promising young bands of the year.

doesn't take himself too seriously, even as he explores the dark nights of his soul. He's also a master of underplayed observational pop, almost nabbing the Christmas number 1 spot back in 2007 with his wry, 'We're All Going To Die' ditty. Having threatened that 2009's 'Waxing Gibbious' might be his last offering, he's back out on tour and just in time to spread a little festive cheer. **RICHARD WALTERS + MESSAGE TO BEARS + ED LAURIE: The Rotunda, Iffley** - *see main preview*
BLACK POWDER + NUCLEAR SKYLINE + COCAINE COWBOYS + THE BIG SOCIETY: The Bullingdon – Hardcore thrash-punk action from local behemoths Black Powder at tonight's It's All About The Music show.



Thursday 8th

DJ SHADOW:

O2 Academy

Following up one of the most epoch-making albums of the past two decades was never going to be easy, but 15 years on from 'Endtroducing', DJ Shadow remains a musical perfectionist, and if not the scene leader he once was, still a talent others aspire to emulate. 'Endtroducing' was the first wholly sampled album, a restless fusion of hip hop, funk, soul, ambient electronica, jazz and rock and probably created a dozen subsequent genres all by itself. Having spent the intervening years collaborating with U.N.K.L.E., Cut Chemist and Dan The Automator, as well as creating his own solo work, the man born Josh Davis returned with his fourth album, 'The Less You Know, The Better' last month, a similarly genre-splicing effort that showed greater adherence to conventional song structures as well as longer samples. From old skool hip hop to full-on metal, via dub, and featuring vocal contributions from Tom Vek and Little Dragon's Yukimi Nagano, it has the feel of a mixtape, but it's with his recent live shows that he's most impressed, using intricate light shows and special effects to create a genuine spectacle that goes well beyond what you'd expect from a DJ set. The man has still very much got it.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre

WORDPLAY: The Cellar – Hip hop and dubstep.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

FRIDAY 9th

WARM DIGITS + THE WORKHOUSE +

LISTING SHIPS: The Wheatsheaf –

Krautrock-tastic journeys from Newcastle's Warm Digits – *see main preview*

THE SAW DOCTORS: O2 Academy – Return of the cult Irish folk-rockers after their headline set at this summer's Cornbury Festival.

GAZ COOMBES + SPRING OFFENSIVE:

The Rotunda, Iffley - Gaz plays his first solo show in the intimate and unusual Rotunda setting – *see main preview*

BOOTLED ZEPPELIN: O2 Academy – Led Zep tribute.

DRESSED TO KILL: Fat Lil's, Witney – Kiss tribute band.

X-UFO: The Bullingdon – Laurence Archer, Danny Peyronel and Clive Edwards from UFO, alongside UFO offshoot band MSG's Rocky Newton kick out a selection of old UFO faves.

THE PINDROP CHOIR + THE EPSTEIN + MAT GIBSON: St. Michael's at the

Northgate – Pindrop hosts its Christmas party, getting more into the true spirit of the event than most with a performance from the excellent Pindrop Choir, fronted by James Cuning from the Christchurch Singers, performing a set of mediaeval carols and modern songs. They're joined by local alt.country rock faves The Epstein and singer-songwriter Mat Gibson who has released his debut album, 'Forest Fire', on Clubhouse Records earlier this year.

BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – Balkan beats, dancefloor Latin, world breaks and nu-jazz club night with a live set from Balkan brass band The Balkanatics.

GRUDLE BAY + CAMENA + ARTHUR

SAWBRIDGE: The Port Mahon – Daisy Rodgers Music night with ambient electro and chillwave from Grudle Bay, plus acoustic alt.pop from Camena and local songsmith Arthur Sawbridge utilising violin and loops to create his intricate form of pop.

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon

LORD 'AV MERCY: The Library – Roots, dub, dancehall and bashment session.

CRY EXCESS + THE KAOS: The

Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox rock night.

C.U. TUESDAY: The Swan, Wantage

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Crown & Thistle, Abingdon

SATURDAY 10th

BURIED IN SMOKE'S CHRISTMAS ALL-

DAYER: The Wheatsheaf (2pm) – Ten solid hours of molten metal to grind your festive spirit to dust – *see main preview*

ELECTRIC SIX + BLACK HATS: O2

Academy – Back again for Christmas, just like Santa, Dick Valentine's garage-glam crew continue to knock out 'Danger! High Voltage' and 'Gay Bar' alongside a surprisingly extensive catalogue of songs, playing it deliberately dumb with their tongue-in-cheek garage-rock disco bombast.

URIAH HEEP: O2 Academy – The seminal 70s heavy rockers plug 23rd album 'Into The Wild', only Guitarist Mick Box remaining from their classic incarnation whose often operatic fusion of prog, classical and proto-metal helped them sell over 30 million albums.

LIZ GREEN + BRICKWORK LIZARDS + THE

HOUND REELS: The Jericho Tavern – Raw, haunting 1930s-style jazz, blues and folk from singer Liz Green at tonight's Coo Promotions show, the former Glastonbury Emerging Talent competition winner sounding more like a pre-war singer from the Deep South than a northern English lass, her voice regularly compared to Judy Garland, Karen Dalton and Jolie Holland, her new album, 'O Devotion', a lesson in elegant spookiness. Great eclectic support from Brickwork Lizards, combining elements of 1930s jazz, hip hop and Arabic folk music, plus lo-fi alt.folk from former-Roundheels and Cargo Cult chap Nick Ruck in his new Hound Reels incarnation.

THE GUNS + FIVE MILES NORTH + THIEVES:

The Cellar – Welsh rockers The Guns head out on tour to plug new album 'Fuck The Demons Outta Me'. Followed by beats, breaks and house club night Extracurricular.

Friday 9th

WARM DIGITS / LISTING SHIPS / THE WORKHOUSE: The Wheatsheaf

A simply stunning triple bill of (mostly) instrumental soundscaping at the Sheaf tonight for what is ostensibly Listing Ships' EP launch gig, although the star turn is bound to be Newcastle's Warm Digits. Duo Andrew Hodson and Steve Jefferis' recent debut album, 'Keep Warm... With the Warm Digits' is a revelation, fusing the classic electronic krautrock of Neu! and Kraftwerk with Giorgio Moroder's gleaming disco and My Bloody Valentine's snowstorm guitar assaults. Add in some Silver Apples-style wild drumming and a little of Holy Fuck's wild-eyed motorik electronica and you've got a simply astonishing band. Listing Ships should be able to hold their own in such elite company mind, their electro-heavy take on post-rock filled with nautical references and capable of kicking out some Dreadnought-heavy firepower, partway between Billy Mahonie, Rodan and Holy Fuck. The Workhouse, meanwhile, now settled in London after leading the field in elegantly incendiary post-rock locally, remain a band by whom all others must be judged.



REPLICA: Fat Lil's, Witney – Rock and pop party tunes.
PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy
VIBED: The Bullingdon – R'n'b, garage, house and pop with DJs Dee and Varchez.
THE JUKES + YELLOW FEVER + THE PLAYMAKERS + VAGUEWORLD: The Duke's Cut – Local bands showcase led by Britpop newcomers the Jukes, taking their cue from The Jam, Kinks and Oasis, plus indie popstrels Yellow Fever.
OXEDELIA: The Port Mahon – New club night playing psychedelia, krautrock, freakbeat, mod, indie and rock'n'roll, plus a live set from Yanmolby.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Hollybush, Osney
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Chester Arms
QUADROPHOBIE: The Swan, Wantage – Funk and ska-tinged pop.

SUNDAY 11th

EMILY SPIERS + FLUER + MUNDANE SANDS: The Bullingdon – It's All About The Music presents a folky selection of local acts, including singer-songwriter Emily Spiers and pastoral folk-rockers Mundane Sands.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Old Bookbinders

MONDAY 12th

THE ROCK SOUND RIOT TOUR: O2 Academy – Quadruple dose of hardcore spleen-venting courtesy of rock mag Rocksound. New York State's Every Time I Die headline the bill, bringing some technical angularity to the hardcore blueprint, while Sacramento's Trash Talk's raw, often dissonant hardcore thrash has seen them working with Steve Albini and Black Flag's Keith Morris. Boston's Defeater up the political activism quota on their raging punk squall while Watford's Spycatcher fly the flag for British post-hardcore, having supported Get Up Kids.
THE HAMSTERS: The Bullingdon – Final tour for the British blues-rock veterans, well into their third decade having served the blues circuit well in that time with their Hendrix and ZZ Top tributes.

TUESDAY 13th

FRANZ NICOLAY: The Wheatsheaf – The former-Hold Steady multi-instrumentalist returns to town after his show at Café Tarifa last year, his versatile skills put to good use as he incorporates elements of gypsy folk, jazz, punk and world sounds, vocally akin to Nick Cave and Tom Waits and a flamboyant entertainer in the Vaudeville tradition.
SAXON: O2 Academy – Easily the pick of this month's plethora of classic heavy rock bands coming to town. Leaders of the New Wave Of British Heavy metal in the late-70s and early-80s, Saxon have sold something in the region of 13 million albums around the world, including genre classics like 'Wheels Of Steel' and 'Denim & Leather'. Incredibly, they've never split up, Biff Byford and Paul Quinn keeping the roadshow rocking around the world over the decades and, like many of their generation, they've lately found favour with a new audience, playing both Sonisphere and Download recently. Mighty stuff.
THE FLOATING WORLD ENSEMBLE: The Warneford Chapel – Ethereal traditional Japanese music from Koto player Melissa Holding and shakuhachi flautist Clive Bell at tonight's OCM outreach educational show.
JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Free live jazz from The New Jazz Collective.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon
SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern
INTRUSION: The Cellar – Goth, industrial, darkwave and EBM club night.

WEDNESDAY 14th

THE CELLAR FAMILY + GO ROMANO + BEAVER FUEL: The Wheatsheaf – Skreeling angular hardcore brilliance from this month's cover stars at tonight's Moshka club night.
FREE RANGE: The Cellar – Old skool jungle special with Niki Blackmarket and North Base.
WEDNESDAY BLUES: James Street Tavern

THURSDAY 15th

VINTAGE TROUBLE: O2 Academy – Vintage by name, vintage by nature as the Hollywood-formed quartet recall the tough, soulful r'n'b of the 60s, with frontman Ty Taylor drawing comparisons to James Brown. They're considerably better live than on their debut album, 'The Bomb Shelter Session', a raucous old-style revue that's won them an army of fans at various festivals as well as supporting Brian May and Bon Jovi.
ELLA + WHO'S FELIX: The Bullingdon – It's All About The Music gig night.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon
AVENGE VULTURE ATTACK + GRINDHOUSE + KINKY BOOTS BEASTS + YUNGSTAR: The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Jambox rock night.

FRIDAY 16th

CHIPMUNK: The Regal – Tottenham's pop-friendly rapper comes to town after the postponement of October's show here, a slew of radio-friendly hits under his belt after early grime singles like 'Oopsy Daisy'.
THE WINTER WARMER: The Wheatsheaf – First night of Gappy Tooth Industries' annual pre-Christmas shindig, tonight featuring Hot Hooves, Secret Rivals and this month's Nightshift cover stars, The Cellar Family – *see main preview*
THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND'S CHRISTMAS KNEES-UP: O2 Academy – Never mind warmed-up classic rock, which seems to be the theme of this month's gig guide, here's the real way to get into the Christmas spirit, with a proper jazz riot. The Rabbits, as we'll call them for brevity's sake, have been the local go-to act for serious party vibes for the past couple of years now and with damn good reason, kicking out a raucous update of 30s and 40s New Orleans speakeasy jazz with some serious punk attitude. Great rock'n'roll support from The Long Insiders, dancing a fine line between meaty rockabilly and smooth lounge-surf, plus top swing and jump blues party tunes from Count Skylarkin on the decks.
DUOTONE + JESS HALL + MATT CHANARIN: The Bullingdon – Cellist and musical experimenter Barney Morse-Brown plays a solo set under his Duotone guise, joined for the night by Devonian folk singer Jess Hall, whose wistful style recalls Laura Viers and Eva Cassidy. Tonight she's launching her 'Red Jumpers' EP.
WE ARE ELEMENTS: The Cellar – Garage, funky and dubstep club night, with special guest Mosca, recently nominated for breakthrough act by DJ Mag.
THE STONES: Fat Lil's, Witney – Rolling Stones tribute.



Saturday 10th

BURIED IN SMOKE CHRISTMAS ALL-DAYER: The Wheatsheaf

Since Nightshift's metal special last yea, the Oxford scene has continued to cement its foundations even further with Skeletor and Buried In Smoke's regular shows giving the best local heavyweights a decent airing, while also attracting some excellent emerging out-of-town bands to the Academy and the Wheatsheaf. So it's great to see Buried In Smoke celebrating Christmas in the most unseasonal manner possible. Today's all-dayer features a dozen bands many of whom tend towards the sludgy, stoner end of the spectrum. Hosts and headliners **Desert Storm** are ferociously psychedelic in their metalling, with an almost Deep South Baptist preacher edge to their groove-heavy sound, and with two albums already under their belt they continue to lead the local scene. We would say that **Undersmile** are catching up fast, but so tectonically slow is their form of uber-sludge doomcore, that wouldn't be appropriate. Taking a cue from Melvins, Swans and Flipper and adding some seriously spooky vocal incantations to the mix, they're this year's star local metal turn. There's more sludgy, stoner riffing from the likes of **Caravan Of Whores**, **Beard Of Zeus**, **Mother Corona** and St Albans' **Trippy Wicked**, while *Komrad's* technically esoteric math-core and *Mutagenocide's* progressive thrash offer a different angle. A pretty unrelenting way to spend the build up to Christmas, but if you rate Satan above Santa in the fun stakes, the Sheaf can be your very own grotto of pleasure.

<p>Fri 2 Dec, 8pm Radcliffe Square Phil Kline's Unsilent Night Join a spine-tingling street promenade FREE Full info at ocmevents.org</p>	<p>Sat 3 Dec, 8pm Old Fire Station Dennis Rollins' Velocity Trio New jazz sounds with heady, driving energy £13 (£10 concessions) 01865 305305 ocmevents.org</p>
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Friday 16th – Sunday 18th

THE WINTER WARMER: The Wheatsheaf

Last year's Winter Warmer coincided with the heaviest snowfall in Oxford in over 30 years and saw Nightshift walking home to Kidlington from Cowley Road, with only a bottle of brandy for company. An unavoidably disastrous ending to one of the best mini-festivals on the local calendar, a high-quality, decidedly uncommercial escape from the pre-Christmas riot of consumerism. Jointly organised by the monthly Gappy Tooth Industries club and indie promoters Swiss Concrete, The Winter Warmer takes different forms each year; this time round it's three nights at the Wheatsheaf and features one of its strongest line-ups so far. Friday night is topped by **Hot Hooves**, the band formed by former Talulah Gosh and Heavenly guitarist Peter Momtchiloff and legendary Jericho Tavern and Point promoter Mac, together kicking out a splendid fuzzstorm in the vein of Husker Du and Teenage Fanclub. Joining them are double-cafeinated electro-indie starlets **Secret Rivals** (pictured) and this month's Nightshift cover stars **The Cellar Family**, along with **Adam Beckley** and **Arthur Sawbridge**. Saturday finds consummate party band **The Vicars Of Twiddly** donning their ecumenical garb for some serious shimmering. They're joined by alternately jangly and raucous indie newcomers **Dallas Don't** and elaborate ambient soundscapist **Seabuckthorn**, among others. Sunday rounds the weekend off neatly with recent Nightshift demo of the monthers **Vienna Ditto**, whose seedily exotic dream-pop sounds like Portishead soundtracking a Tarantino movie. The wonderful **Family Machine** join them, mixing wry, romantic lyricism with darkly pastoral indie and country-tinged rock. Atmospheric alt.folk songsmith **D Gwalia** and **Hollox** complete an exceptional bill.

LO-AUDIO + YUNGSTAR + ADOTT ASH: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox hip hop night.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Cricketers, Iffley Road
HYPERMUSED: The Swan, Wantage – Muse tribute band.

SATURDAY 17th

THE WINTER WARMER: The Wheatsheaf – Surf-rockers The Vicars Of Twiddly headline tonight's second instalment of the Warmer, plus Dallas Don't and Seabuckthorn – *see main preview*
UPSTAIRS: O2 Academy – The final Upstairs local bands showcase of the year is a Blessing Force special, with Jonquil returning to Oxford after a

globetrotting year (frontman Hugo Manuel also enjoying some serious success in his solo Chad Valley guise). Their effervescent tropical pop is effortlessly uplifting and should be complemented by Andrew Mears' Pet Moon, taking a more electro and r'n'b direction after his time with pioneering local rockers Youthmovies. Sisterland and Motherhood complete the musical bill, plus there is art from Tinhead, Valenka Hykel, Amy Honour and Charlotte Freeston.

DAPPY: O2 Academy – 'Im with the 'at out of N'Dubz and not, apparently, a cartoon duck, although you'd be forgiven for failing to see or hear the difference.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC CHRISTMAS

PARTY: The Bullingdon – The Bully's local music promotions crew celebrate the festive season with some of their fave bands. Nine-Stone Cowboy, The OX4 Allstars, I Silecta, Mogmatic, Player2 and Yellow Fever all play.

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – House and electro club night, with local electro-pop starlets Wild Swim, plus their more electro-house alter-egos Cubiq performing alongside the Simple residents.

WITNEY WINTER FESTIVAL: Fat Lil's, Witney (3pm) – Witney gets it own pre-Christmas winter warmer. Dead Jerichos headline and are joined by an excellent cast of local acts that includes hardcore rock duo Phantom Theory; electro-indie fuzzsters Secret Rivals; moddish power-pop trio The Black Hats; epic shoegazers Deer Chicago; ballsy heavy rockers Empty Vessels; bluesy indie types Very Nice Harry; an acoustic set from Alphabet Backwards and hip hop-tinged rockers Colour Change For Camouflage.

ALASDAIR ROBERTS + DAVID A JAYCOCK:

Modern Art Oxford – Adventures Close To Home round off a great year of promoting underground and leftfield folk acts in unusual local venues with a particularly special show, featuring ex-Appendix Out chap Alasdair Roberts, whose solo career has found him leaving experimental indie sounds behind to explore spectral ancient Scottish folk song. In the process he's collaborated with Will Oldham, Isobel Campbell and Jason Molina as well as more recently gracing the cover of *Wire* magazine. His new album, 'Too Long In This Tradition', is out now.

THE DIRTY EARTH BAND: Fat Lil's, Witney – Classic rock covers.

THE NEW MOON + SOLACE: The Hollybush, Osney – Fundraiser for next year's Wittstock Festival with local acoustic pop outfit The New Moon.

SHATTERED DREAMS + THE COLOURS + TAI CHI SWAYZE: The Port Mahon – Pop-punk from Shattered Dreams.

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon DJ DEREK'S 70th BIRTHDAY BASH: The Hi-Lo Jamaican Eating House – The legendary Bristolian ska and reggae DJ joins Count Skylarkin to celebrate his 70th birthday, playing classic tunes from over the years.

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy

EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar
THE ALAN KEYLOCK BLUES BAND: The Swan, Wantage – Blues covers.

SUNDAY 18th

THE WINTER WARMER: The Wheatsheaf – Vienna Ditto, The Family Machine and D Gwalia help round off the Warmer for another year – *see main preview*

MOON LEOPARD + BEARD OF DESTINY + HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES + SUE & PHIL: The Wheatsheaf (2pm) – Acoustic session

downstairs in the Sheaf from Klub Kakofanny's Phil & Sue and friends ahead of the final Winter Warmer session upstairs in the evening.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Old Bookbinders

MONDAY 19th

THE FAMOUS MONDAY BLUES

CHRISTMAS PARTY: The Bullingdon – Roadhouse, Debbie Bond, Alamo Leal and Cherry Lee Mewis all put in a turn at the blues club's traditional festive knees-up – *see main preview*

TUESDAY 20th

GO WEST: O2 Academy – The 80s pop duo return with a new album, '3D', doubtless set to give old hits like 'We Close Our Eyes' and 'King Of Wishful Thinking' another airing.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Live jazz from New Jazz Collective.

CHRISTMAS CASUAL CLASSICS: The Cellar – Live music from grungy popstrels Kill Murray; punky indie noise from Beta Blocker & The Body Clock and lo-fi trash-pop from recent Demo Of The Month winners Poledo, plus classic tunes from the 80s onwards.

Monday 19th

THE FAMOUS MONDAY BLUES CHRISTMAS PARTY:

The Bullingdon

After 25 years bringing the blues to Oxford, The Famous Monday Blues club's annual pre-Christmas knees-up remains a highlight of its calendar and tonight's shindig is a characteristic mix of old and new. In the former camp are UK electric blues-rockers **Roadhouse** who, since their 1991 inception, have played over 2,000 shows and released 11 albums, while performing at every festival going. Gary Boner's crew kick it out in the style of Creedence Clearwater Revival and Lynyrd Skynyrd, while sticking close to their blues roots. Joining them is Alabama's **Debbie Bond**, whose soulful southern backwoods blues is inspired by Bonnie Raitt and Janis Joplin, taking in elements of jazz and country along the way. Rio de Janeiro's **Alamo Leal** has been a regular visitor to the FMB over the years and provides a laidback Delta and New Orleans-style counterpoint to Roadhouse's high-octane approach. Potential highlight of the night, though, is Wales' **Cherry Lee Mewis**, who debuted here back in the summer, rising fast through the ranks with her powerful old-time blues voice and fresh, soulful takes on the likes of Blind Willie McTell, Koko Taylor and Memphis Minnie alongside her own songs.



WEDNESDAY 21st

FREERANGE: The Cellar – Dubstep, drum&bass, UK garage and grime Christmas party.
WEDNESDAY BLUES: The James Street Tavern

THURSDAY 22nd

THE RELATIONSHIPS+THE CELLAR FAMILY: The Bullingdon – Local pop godfathers The Relationships burnish their psychedelic sweet suburbia, alongside this month's Nightshift cover stars.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
IZZIE STONE + WHERE'S BILLY + THE LIGHT DIVIDED + CJ QUINN: The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Jambox rock night.
WORDPLAY: The Cellar

FRIDAY 23rd

BORDERVILLE + MARY'S GARDEN + DEER CHICAGO: The Wheatsheaf – The Wheatsheaf eases itself into Christmas in considerable style with vaudevillian concept rockers Borderville taking a Ziggy Stardust-shaped axe to Kafka's Metamorphosis, while Mary's Garden return to action in suitably winterish fashion. Epic shoegazing indie rocking from Deer Chicago in support.
GLAM ROCK CHRISTMAS PARTY: The Bullingdon – Double bill of glam-rock from It's All About The Music, with Wigwam and Martini Rockers.
SHEPHERD'S PIE: Fat Lil's, Witney – Rock covers.
BERSICKER + CIRCUIT CHASE + DIGGING FOR PEDRO + BRANDON KING: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox metal and rock night.
FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon

SATURDAY 24th

SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM'S REGGAE CHRISTMAS: O2 Academy – Count Skylarkin continues the tradition of welcoming in Christmas with some serious reggae action, tonight featuring a live set from fast-rising dancehall starlets Laid Blak, whose recent singles 'Red' and 'Bristol Love' are already considered modern day classics of the genre, plus a soundclash between Desta*Nation and House Of Roots.
YOUR SONG: The Bullingdon – Classic covers and moments of inspired genius from Hot Hooves, The Mazarati, Black Powder, Komrad and more local acts to be announced.

SUNDAY 25th

Having discovered that Sainsbury's stock chocolate-flavoured wine, Nightshift is planning to see exactly how much of the stuff we can consume before we vomit our chocolate-infused livers all over the

Christmas tree. Merry Christmas to all our readers. We'll have a large brandy, some Twiglets and Amy Pond off of *Doctor Who* please, since you're asking.

MONDAY 26th

Ooh... football.

TUESDAY 27th

SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 28th

FREERANGE: The Cellar
WEDNESDAY BLUES: The James Street Tavern

THURSDAY 29th

THE BLACKOUT+ATTACK ATTACK+REVOKER+SAVE YOUR BREATH: O2 Academy – Merthyr Tydfil's post-hardcore heroes celebrate their most successful year yet as they continue to tour new album 'Hope'. They began 2011 as support to My Chemical Romance before going on to play the main stage at Reading and Leeds Festivals as well as supporting Funeral For A Friend. Keeping it welsh, they're joined by Caerphilly's Attack Attack.
BLUNTED: The Cellar – A return to the Cellar for the vintage hip hop, funk and soul club night, with DJs Fabulous Hand, Fu, Grande, Unia et al.
REIGN UPON US + A TRUST UNCLEAN + CIRCUIT CHASE: The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Jambox metal night with thrashcore monsters Reign Upon Us.

FRIDAY 30th

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon FOUNDATION REGGAE: East Oxford Community Centre – Reggae and roots soundsystem.

SATURDAY 31st

THE BIG BANG: The Cellar – Disco, soul, boogie, hip hop, house, garage and funky tunes into the new year with The Cellar crew.
PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy – The Academy celebrates a space and aliens-themed NYE party, with classic and new indie at Propaganda; kitsch pop, 80s and guilty pleasures at Trashy and alt.rock, metal and hardcore at Room 101.
NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY: Fat Lil's, Witney
THE PETE FRYER BAND + SIMON WALTERS + JEREMY HUGHES: The Chester Arms

Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion in the gig guide is the 20th of each month - no exceptions. Call 01865 372255 (10am-6pm) or email listings to Nightshift@oxfordmusic.net.



DECEMBER

Every Monday

THE FAMOUS MONDAY NIGHT BLUES

The best in UK, European and US blues. 8-12.

5th **THE MARCUS BONFANTI BAND (UK)**

12th **THE HAMSTERS** – 25th anniversary farewell tour (UK)

19th **THE FAMOUS MONDAY BLUES XMAS PARTY** with **ROADHOUSE (UK) / DEBBIE BOND (USA) / ALAMO LEAL (Brazil) / CHERRY LEE MEWIS (UK)**

Every Tuesday

THE OXFORD JAZZ CLUB

Free live jazz plus DJs playing r'n'b, funk and soul until 2am

6th **ALVIN ROY & REEDS UNLIMITED**

13th / 20th **THE NEW JAZZ COLLECTIVE**

Thursdays

8th **BLACK POWDER / NUCLEAR SKYLINE / COCAINE COWBOYS / THE BIG SOCIETY**

15th **ELLA / WHO'S FELIX**

22nd **THE RELATIONSHIPS / THE CELLAR FAMILY**

Every Friday

FUNKY FRIDAY

Funk, soul, boogie and R&B. 11pm-2.30am; £3.

Early Friday shows

2nd **JUNE / THE GRACEFUL SLICKS / SHATTERED DREAMS / MILLION FACES**

16th **DUOTONE / JESS HALL / MATT CHANARIN**

23rd **XMAS GLAM-ROCK PARTY** with **WIGMAN / THE MARTINI ROCKERS**

Saturday Early Show

17th **IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC CHRISTMAS PARTY**

with **NINE-STONE COWBOY / THE OX4 ALLSTARS / I**

SILECTA / MOGMATIC / PLAYER2 / YELLOW FEVER

24th **YOUR SONG** with **HOT HOOVES / THE MAZARATI / BLACK POWDER / KOMRAD** & more!

Saturdays

3rd **SIMPLE** – House & techno with **JULIAN BASHMORE. 10-4am; £10adv**

10th **VIBED** – R&B, house, garage and pop. **DJs DEE & VACHEZ. £3 B4 11pm / £5 after**

17th **SIMPLE** – House & techno with **WILD SWIM / CUBIQ**

Sundays

11th **EMILY SPIERS / FLUER / MUNDANE SANDS**

Join us on Facebook: Backroom @ The Bully

LIVE



photo: Sam Shepherd

TOTALLY ENORMOUS EXTINCT DINOSAURS / FIXERS

The Ashmolean Museum

It seems fitting that this pairing of acts should find themselves playing in the auspicious surroundings of a museum. Is there a better place to find a dinosaur, let alone a totally enormous one (we'll take extinct as read)? As for Fixers, the class that permeates their music exudes the kind of sophistication that justifies the bar staff carrying the empties out on silver trays.

DJ Mim of the BlackCab sessions kicks the night off and keeps things ticking over nicely with an array of finely chosen hip hop tunes. It's primarily of late-80s early-90s

vintage and inspires the kind of dancing that could provide the basis for an entire comedy routine from Chris Rock. Switching smoothly between A Tribe Called Quest, Ice Cube, and Gangstarr, he has the crowd in the palm of his hand all night. It's only when he crashes a Pharcyde track to introduce T.E.E.D. that he drops a slight clanger.

Fixers' set is nothing short of a marvel. Despite the venue not providing the best of acoustics, they still sound utterly divine. Their amalgam of electro, rock and close harmony is as close to an updated

Beach Boys as is possible to get and their ear for a melody is phenomenal. It's plain to hear in the likes of 'Another Lost Apache' or 'Swimmhaus Johannesburg' just why they're being discussed as being the next big thing to come out of Oxford. Fixers, when they're on this kind of form are incredible. Forget the comedy disguises and random bellowed statements that defined their set at Truck this year, concentrate on their wealth of tunes, and it's perfectly clear that Fixers are destined for truly great things.

Totally Enormous Extinct

Dinosaurs' budget rave has a lot to follow after such a tight set, yet he copes perfectly. Resplendent in a bright blue dinosaur costume, producer Orlando Higginbottom (for he is T.E.E.D.) excavates the fossils of early 90s rave and European house to get the room writhing in a seething mass of sweaty bodies. There's as much knowing camp in his performance (the first few songs aren't a million miles away from The Pet Shop Boys) as there is a keen understanding in how to get a crowd dancing and once he gets them going, they never look like they're going to stop. It seems that the dinosaurs really do come alive at night in the Ashmolean.

Sam Shepherd

PROFESSOR GREEN

O2 Academy

Hackney rapper Professor Green is at his career zenith today, with the current number one, a second album just out and a reality TV show now available on 4OD. There's certainly a lot to latch onto - the singsong delivery, the humour, the cheekiness... charm discernible to people who don't usually stray into his territory.

The Professor's earliest chart successes - 'Just Be Good to Green' and 'I Need You Tonight' - skip along at a jolly pace, with Green bounding around and furiously polishing the air; and it's all about him, his backing band efficiently rendering his chart-friendly guest stars unnecessary. But the

material from his new album is mostly an anticlimax. I shouldn't feel as relieved as I do when he follows the hostile 'D.P.M.O.' with the much more fun first album track 'Kids That Love To Dance'.

His development as an artist probably needed this step into contemplative introspection: the Eminem-like rant on his number one, 'Read All About It', about his Dad's suicide and criticism of his talking about it, seems excusably cathartic, and it's probably a deft step to avoid sliding into parody, but the night is defined by this dichotomy. The new material is more like his earlier 'Jungle':

more aggressive than playful; more lugubrious than energetic. Self-deprecation has slipped into self-indulgence; stuff like 'Astronaut' - about a rape victim turned drug addict - would have felt too serious on his first album. But the overall loss of the sparkle of songs like 'Monster' is a shame.

Luckily, the wit hasn't totally been abandoned: the new album's title track, 'At Your Inconvenience', a critique of the music industry, has some bite, despite the lolling backing. Green even makes that Travie McCoy/Bruno Mars shipwreck of smugness 'Billionaire' listenable. But while the new album might end up defining his legacy, it's the old stuff that currently gives him the most credit.

Kirsten Etheridge

THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND / MATT WINKWORTH & THE WINKWORTHERS ORIGINALS

The Jericho Tavern

Matt Winkworth's mini orchestra are a sight to behold. Matt himself is a picture of camp uncool, like the lovechild of Marc Almond and Gok Wan, while behind him is a motley collection of thick-rimmed spectacles, ill-advised haircuts and, oh yes, a purple trombone.

It fits perfectly with the band's consistently entertaining blend of cabaret and pop: Weimer-era music hall filtered through The Magic Band and Marc & The Mambas, a grand operetta full of geeky drama, frantic polkas and almost stately waltzes, wordy and often emotionally taught for all the campiness around its edges.

Describing The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band simply as a jazz band is like calling The Pogues a folk band. It's sort of correct but doesn't even touch on the fiery soul of the music. Like The Pogues, The ORFSB are detested by genre purists, who flee aghast from their uncouth treatment of the past, chucking a molotov cocktail under the tanker of tradition and dancing round the flames. Pints are sunk rather than chins stroked. But such precious harrumphing forgets that jazz, in its youth, was all about gin palaces, brothels and riots, not endless solos or self-reverential

virtuosity. Time was, jazz was viewed as wholly immoral, a genuine threat to the wellbeing of decent society, not the background musak for upmarket restaurants.

The ORFSB are rough-hewn and raucous, simply an old-time dance band with punk rock attitude, Cab Calloway-style gravel-throated vocals sharing space with big horn flourishes, occasionally the mood dropping into what sounds like old-time Italian street music. But what's most surprising – and invigorating – about a Rabbit Foot show, is the age and style of the crowd – a far younger bunch than you'd imagine, many of them discovering jazz for the first time, doubtless, like this reviewer, put off the idea of it because of what it's become. And that's a triumph on so many levels.

Tonight is bonfire night, a centuries-old tradition kept alive, mostly through the fun of explosions, bright lights and simple visceral thrills. Almost a hundred years on from the heyday of ragtime and swing in downtown Old Orleans, The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm band are applying similar principles to keep that tradition alive in a corner of Oxford.

Dale Kattack

TERJE ISUNGSET'S ICE MUSIC

The Northwall

We don't normally care about a musician's equipment - start talking like that and before you know it you think Stevie Vai is better than John Lee Hooker – but we watched Terje Isungset's Ice Music desperate to know what gear they had backstage. What sort of refrigeration rig is required to bring instruments carved from Norwegian glaciers to the UK?

The instruments not only look gorgeous in subdued theatre lighting, but they sound phenomenal: an ice marimba is somewhere between a balafon and a tabla, and a pair of glistening ice horns sound like Jan Garbarek mournfully morphing into an elephant seal. But, once you've marvelled at the logistics and the concept and the beauty of ice instruments, you're unfortunately left with something aimlessly pretty. Take Lena Nymark's breathy vocals: she may be adept enough with her effects pedals to build a wash of Cocteau Twins ambience, but her voice is rather thin when what the show needs is a steely soprano or a gutsy folk chorus to raise it from the

morass of politeness.

To be honest, we far prefer the first half of the concert. 'Tribute To Nature' is a piece for drumkit augmented by elemental wood and granite percussion, but the rough-hewn instruments offer more than earthy novelty. The click of stone on stone is a Neanderthal telex, and a Jew's harp passage sounds like a Tuvan version of Aphex Twin's 'Didgeridoo'; at times the windswept stillness is Biosphere unplugged, at others the frenetic crackling rhythms are bebop played by a huge insect. A Max Roach, maybe? No, no, you're right, we're sorry.

'Tribute To Nature' may be too long, and the shamanistic groove is too Howard Moon ("Coming at you like a jazz narwhal!"), but the piece is hypnotic and evocative, and Isungset is modest enough to break the sonic spell and make people giggle by creaking his drum stool: ice is nice, but sometimes a musician finds their best material in jokes and accidents.

David Murphy

THE LIGHTHOUSE TRIO

Lincoln College

This is one of those rare gigs when you get lucky and happen to be there when whatever the mysterious creative thing that composer-musicians do is very much there and in the room. A generous bequest brought The Lighthouse Trio to Lincoln just at the point when they had spent two months working up a set of new compositions, and just two weeks before taking them into the studio. So on offer tonight are new recipes freshly cooked and served piping hot with the cooks still playing around with the flavouring.

The band are playing acoustic, not a microphone in sight and this, along with being in touching distance and the band's readiness to tell the story behind their tunes, makes for a particularly intimate gig tonight.

The Lighthouse Trio are Tim Garland on saxes and bass clarinet, Gwilym Simcock on piano and Asif Sirkis, who plays a special drum set of Turkish frame drums, udu, and Swiss hang. This means Sirkis can hit the drums as hard as he loves to but make only half the noise of a standard drum kit and avoids drowning out the unamplified piano and sax. It also makes Middle Eastern rhythms one of the big influences on the music along with the easy virtuosity of pianist Simcock. Often described as

reminiscent of Keith Jarrett, his playing is characterised by frequent shifts of time signature, sudden storms of notes and a strong left hand, so that the absence of a bass is never missed. However, like the entire band, what seems most important ultimately is the melody. The prolific Simcock seems to compose in different styles as easily as he plays, including being inspired by Ibiza house music and by the sound of the Hang, like a resonant steel drum but with fewer notes. I particularly like his 'Beelzebub', a tribute Earthworks, the band drummer Bill Bruford ran after he left Yes, which suggests even the Devil has meditative moments.

However, it's two of Garland's tunes, combined with his rhapsodic lyrical playing, which are most moving. 'One Morning' – inspired by his acquisition of a 1949 sax – feels like the best sort of warm Sunday morning, with sunlight streaming through the window and good coffee brewing. 'Passion Flower', a heartfelt tribute to the lyrical playing of John Coltrane is all the more poignant and joyful for being played on that 1949 sax.

When live music gives you moments like this, you suddenly remember why you love it so.

Colin May

DANANANANAYKROYD / NAIROBI

The Bullingdon

Nairobi take their lead from the African pop music that seems to have been bizarrely adopted by indie bands like Vampire Weekend, and from the precision and pseudo-polyrhythmic approach of Foals and their ilk. What this means is very clean, unaffected and uneffected guitar melodies, and catchy, memorable songs. Without realising it, after seeing Nairobi a couple of months previously, I'd absorbed a couple of their tunes, which tonight seem pleasantly familiar. They are sparse in arrangement, with that clean guitar sound spidering around white-boy-funk bass and skittering drum patterns, but they're taken a step beyond mundanity with a couple of twists and turns of rhythm and construction. On top of of this, vocals are delivered in a bizarre Robert Smith-style yawn, which whilst somewhat out of tune, is confident enough to charm. I like Nairobi; they're an odd combination of recognisable influences and strange quirks.

Liking them sets me up perfectly for Dananananaykroyd, who I *really* like, but who are unfortunately about to split up. They remind me of how

many indie bands used to have *fun* with their music and performances, and not try to either bewilder or belittle their audience. That's not to say that they're simplistic or soft; they're actually pretty flippin' noisy and fierce, delivering buzzing, gruff pop music that joins the dots between Bis, Huggy Bear, Cat On Form and Johnny Foreigner. They've got outstanding levels of energy and joyousness, with in-your-face dual vocals that express cheeky, drunken fun rather than ire. It's difficult to not have a stupid wide grin on your face when presented with this combination of expert, succinct, clever pop music, self-effacing humour and an overall feeling of warmth and friendliness. This is typified in their take on the normally violent moshpit Wall Of Death - reinvented as the Wall Of Cuddles. Any band that can get pretty much everybody in the room hugging strangers have to be doing something right, right? Noisy, enjoyable stuff. Sometimes it's great to leave one's brain at the door and just immerse yourself in the atmosphere.

Simon Minter



AUDIOSCOPE

The Jericho Tavern

Audioscope begins almost as it ends today with local stoner-metal titans **Desert Storm** making damn sure no fucker gets eased gently into proceedings. Brutal they may be, a sympathetic sound in the Tavern ensures the many subtleties in their sound, from psychedelia to something almost gospel, aren't buried in sheer riffage.

At the end of today's mini-festival in aid of Shelter, West Virginia's grizzled rockers **Karma To Burn** reprise the no-frills, no-prisoners form of stoner-metal they helped pioneer in the 90s in front of a bank of Marshall stacks and bring the day full circle.

In between these monolithic musical bookends is a bill that's almost universally excellent, each act uncompromising in their own unique way, from **Listing Ships'** gracefully malevolently electro-rock that sounds ten times as vital in these

compact surroundings as it did in front a dozen punters in the cavernous Academy venue at Ley Lines last month, 'The 100 Gun Ship' swarming into every corner of the room to wreak its damage, to **The Cellar Family** who similarly benefit from playing to a decent crowd in an intimate setting, where their angular, sheet-metal hardcore oozes a particularly venomous sense of disgust.

Action Beat come armed with a mere two drummers today but three guitarists and a bassist, lined up eye-to-eye with the crowd, create a metal-to-the-floor wall of noise, a searing sonic conflagration that suffers only slightly from being kicked out in such short, sharp bursts when really they just need to hammer the point home mercilessly for an unstinting 40 minutes and let the cleaners sweep up what gory mess remains of the

audience.

They're positively lightweight compared to **Necro Deathmort**, mind. The clue is in the name, dear readers. Here is doom, more doom and an extra side portion of doom with chocolate sprinkles on top. Dark chocolate, obviously. Like an unholy (what else?) collision of Sunn0)))'s funereal black mass metal and Salem's vicious electro-cum-drum&bass attack, Necro Deathmort are like experiencing an aural enema and are positively the bleakest thirty minutes of live music we've witnessed in years. They make Wolf Eyes sound like happy hour at a school disco.

After which **Spring Offensive** feel like sunshine after the storm, particularly when they take to the middle of the floor for an acoustic four-way harmony workout that's one step removed from The Housemartins' 'Caravan Of Love'. Elsewhere they can be abrasive, as on closing number 'Every Coin', but maintain a simmering emotional edge to everything they do, while it's easy to forget amid some of their tightly-angled moments just what a fantastic voice frontman Lucas Whitworth has.

Alexander Tucker is a bit of a disappointment, all pensive Steve Reich-style drones that don't really go anywhere. Given that it's gone dinnertime we wander up to Peppers Burgers; we ask if it got any better when we return. We're told it got a bit louder. Not the same thing, is it.

Fujiya & Miyagi (who are neither a duo nor Japanese) threaten to be similarly dull for the first half of their set, sounding worryingly like Chris Rea trying to cover Talking Heads' 'Psycho Killer' at one point and a lounge jazz remodelling of The Prodigy's 'Breathe' at another. Something clicks halfway through though with a superb 'Electro Karaoke' that's pure Neu!-like grooving.

Against such high quality opposition though, it's **The Victorian English Gentlemen's Club** who perhaps steal the show. Other than a couple of songs where we try to pin them down bizarrely between the Breeders and Alien Sex Fiend, they're virtually unclassifiable, a spasming, grating, atonal but deceptively melodic set of songs that all sound like they've been twisted out of shape by some evil toymaker.

In fact they kind of sum up Audioscope as much as any band ever could – a world away from the mainstream with no hope of ever being invited to join in. It's a genuine pleasure to encounter such wilfulness and, as ever, Audioscope brings such pleasures right to our doorstep, while, at the same time, raising money for those who don't have their own doorstep.

Dale Kattack

DOOM

O2 Academy

The inexhaustible longevity of hip hop owes much to its ability to mutate and evolve, even if that often seems to bring it around in some kind of circle. Diehards claim it to be the only truly new musical form since rock'n'roll but Chuck D may be more on target when he described it as the black CNN; 24-hour rolling news rather than carefully considered documentary. This view is supported by the current trend for distributing new music via mixtapes, MP3 collections of often exclusive material, freely available from websites like Datpiff and often superior to officially released product, Drake's 'So Far Gone' a prime example.

Which brings us to DOOM, aka MF Doom, in the game since 1988 and as famed for his

musical and production skills as his rapping, earning fans that include Thom Yorke and Jonny Greenwood, who collaborated with him on recent track 'Retarded Fren'.

Wordplay DJs Geenee and Kid Fury warm us up nicely with a set that includes Jay Electronica's 'Exhibit C', the finest song of recent years in any genre.

Then DOOM emerges to a rapturous reception from the crowd, including many fans from out of town who clearly know every rhyme backwards, and, interestingly, are 98% white. He sports his trademark scary mask, a nod to the Doctor Doom character from Marvel Comics that runs through all his album artwork. But that's about as scary as things get; he's sporting a significant

belly and the kind of green anorak often worn by people working in garden centres: this is clearly a man more concerned with the impression left by his music than his appearance.

As expected the backing tracks are simply produced, heavy on beats and samples from old soul records rather than wowing us with hi-tech digital trickery. The lyrics seem to be more a stream of consciousness than a series of conventional songs and, though the PA doesn't quite allow us to catch every word, he includes his take on 'I Get A Kick Out Of You' and a reference to the Teletubbies. Aside from a video screen with a simple looped sequence of his masked features there's nothing to distract us from a hugely enjoyable set. How great is all this? Who could put it better than Lil Wayne; "I'm so high I could vomit on a comet".

Art Lagun

ADAM ANT

O2 Academy

Listening to the radio on the way down tonight, the BBC are crowing about their Children In Need Rocks concert, boasting about a line-up that features Coldplay, Kelly Rowland and Michael Bublé. And we ponder, sadly, how they don't seem to make pop stars like Adam Ant any more. Only Lady Gaga on that bill has anything approaching the sense of theatre that the man born Stuart Goddard brought to the charts in the early-1980s, dressed variously as a pirate, a highwayman and a fairytale prince.

Serious mental illness as much as the tides of fashion finished Ant's career but lately he's recovered some of that old form and tonight's show, while not without its pitfalls, is a reminder of the genuine star quality he once possessed, as well as being a seriously great songwriter.

We couldn't have hoped for a better set-list. While he could easily have hacked out the big hits and a load of new material, tonight's near-two-hour set is packed with songs from Adam & The Ants' superb 'Dirk Wears White Sox' debut. Most of it still sounds incredible – 'Car Trouble and Cleopatra' in particular; the latter dedicated to Elizabeth Taylor. 'Dog Eat Dog', early in the set, suggests Ant's voice is shot; it sounds awful, but it's easy to forget how much of the big hits were down to Merrick's production and thirty years on Adam is never going to hit those high notes. There's something of the ageing

children's entertainer about the way he swaggers about the stage, trying to emulate the old moves, moustachioed and bespectacled beneath his pirate hat, but backed by a muscular, occasionally heavy-handed band and a pair of glamorous backing singers, 'Stand & Deliver' and an inevitable encore of 'Prince Charming' still carry some of the old shine.

Aside from the earliest material – closer in spirit to early PiL as to the punk scene they emerged from – highlights tonight come unexpected quarters, notably 'Puss In Boots', dedicated to Phil Collins, who played drums on the original ('I like Phil Collins. Fuck it, I don't care,' spits Adam with Lydon-esque glee). The monstrous Burundi beat of 'Kings Of The Wild Frontier' has lost little of its impact, particularly played with two drummers tonight, and we'll even brush over the fact that solo hit 'Vive le Rock' sounds like Status Quo covering Robert Palmer's 'Addicted To Love'.

Ageing pop stars hitting the comeback trail can be sad, tawdry affairs, and given his recent history, Adam Ant's shows could be a car crash waiting to happen, but it's apparent how much of that old desire to perform, to entertain, still burns in his heart. And by God, if the alternative is Coldplay and Michael Bublé, we might need him back more than we ever knew.

Dale Kattack

WILD BEASTS / BRAIDS

O2 Academy

Braids, from Montreal, look like your typical indie rock band – keyboards, guitars, bass, drums, all contributing to vocals – but beyond that, they never conform to formula. Instead, they have an exploratory, dream-like, warping, rising and plummeting nature. Like Dirty Projectors, they push the boundaries of the concept of indie music and make their stuff, well... *authentically* indie. Their sound effects, cathartic spells, puzzling beats, highs and drops encompass a performance that pretty much conveys a sense of deconstruction, pulling all elements apart rather than building a whole. It is this conceptual quality that separates them from others. It is this harmonious baring of it all, with utter precision but loving delicacy that makes their music intriguing, engaging and beautiful.

Words that could similarly be applied to Wild Beasts' music. Promoting their Mercury Prize-nominated album 'Smother', the band from Kendal are nothing else but gentlemen playing hypnotic tunes. The reasons for their

supreme delivery can't be anything other than an absolute love for their music, a serious and modest approach, and joy of playing together. Together they form a close-knit bunch, one in which they constantly challenge their own perceptions, trust their instincts and act according to rules that only they themselves understand; they're gloriously intimate.

This intimacy transcends. They make pop a challenge; they make baroque style a calming drug, and they make music cavalieresque for cavaliers and damsels. With two vocalists alternating between a serious falsetto and a husky powerful baritone, chills run down spines while drumbeats echo and bounce off the walls. They are intense, intricate, sensual, but never totally suffocating. Wild Beasts are the equivalent of exquisitely draped and adorned, red and golden rooms over bare brickwork surfaces in medieval palaces – finely and gently handcrafted, finely and gently smothering.

Liane Escorça

CHARLIE BAXTER / SPACE

HEROES OF THE PEOPLE /

LEFT OUTER JOIN

The Wheatsheaf

Right off the bat, tonight's Moshka club night's attendees tonight have a feast for the ears. Left Outer Join, all hard techno poise, keeps his live glowstick drumming set-up and Roland machine locked over a swelling backdrop of progressive Goa-style synth-lines. His music fails to threaten but there's particularly solid genesis with his mightily energetic performance. At points we're in a proper proto-drum&bass vibe circa-90s T Power, scattered snares chipping away at your ears but always avoiding a screeching flow.

Space Heroes Of The People follow suit with a tumult of decayed synthetic fizz, then step up the trashy percussion and 4/4 rumble. Echoing melodic innocence from 80s post-punkers Propaganda, showing a varied palette that takes in nu-rave and filters it through a Ferris wheel of proportionate vocoder tidbits and pounding bass, rather like an autochanger from dull to cool. Tim Day's vocal effecting makes the natural timbre of voice seem second-rate by comparison, squelchy bleeps adorning the mid section of the set alongside Jo Edge's distant double bass. The show droops

and stirs like a malfunctioning juggernaut, their set ending with a simple "thank you", affirming technology doesn't get in the way of heart when it's needed most.

"Oh my god, it's Techno music" on his t-shirt: a gimmicky endorsement to indie's fervour with dance in recent times? Charlie Baxter pulls it off with a mullet to spare. Kicking out a Ramones-y surf-punk guitar shuffle, the jungle tempo yields high octane rhythm sections, powered with "gimme adrenaline" lyrical phrases. He approaches a more giddy version of Pendulum with those neon synths and maximalist figures, but it all sounds coherent and lacking in cheese. These are purposeful tracks filled with vim, especially his white boy cover of 'Play That Funky Music'. Baxter then gets to asking the audience what they had for dinner. "Maybe I should write a song about pizza," he muses. If it's as engaging as his new single, 'Charlie Baxter's In My House', featuring a cameo of Europe's 'The Final Countdown', he'll be one to cook for in future. A stellar night all round.

Mick Buckingham

TWIN SISTER / HOLIDAY SHORES

Jericho Tavern

Two bands from the top and bottom of the USA, on a late-autumn European tour. One band better, stripped back live, than their over-egged studio work, and one band whose cushioned indie songs are more suited to a bedroom stereo, than the intrusive braying rowdiness that is the upstairs Tavern on a weekend.

First up, from Tallahassee, Florida, Holiday Shores (formerly Continental Divide) really get a handle on the Friday night vibe, with vocalist / keyboard player Nathan Pemberton duelling with jazz-style guitarist Josh Martin, and together with their Spin Doctors-tight rhythm section they have me thinking of Jenniferever and Tears For Fears getting it on with Brian Wilson in his beach house.

With most of the tracks tonight coming from their latest album, 'New Masses for Squaw Peak', segued with even more exciting unnamed instrumental experiments, they are an evolving band as sharp and natively fresh as Christopher Cross hosting a West African dance party.

Twin Sister, a coolly cult Brooklyn quintet, probably expected that if people paid ten pounds to get into a

dedicated music venue, then they'd have come to see them and soak up the chillwave sounds, instead of partying like its 1999 by the main door. With her wide-brimmed black hat pulled way down, singer Andrea Estella comes off as a shy and shadowy mix of Yoko Ono and Stevie Nicks, an image she reinforces by asking for most of the stage lights to be turned off.

Their Cranes-meets-black, black dream pop, like a small child singing lullabies at the bottom of a well, starts shipping water from the start, with slower songs like 'Ginger' and 'Nectarine' swamped by the raised voices, until bewildered Estella is forced to remark, "You having a good time out there?" as the core of their fans glower over their shoulders disapprovingly and shuffle forward as one to the stage, to hear better.

The band finally pull it round with the ramped-up electro-funk jam outs of 'Milk & Honey' and 'Bad Street', sparking Estella to become more like Andrea True Connection, a sequinned boot they should have put down firmly at the very start.

Paul Carrera

ANYONE CAN NUKE GUITAR!

Blockbusting Hollywood director Roland Emmerich is set to remake *Anyone Can Play Guitar*.

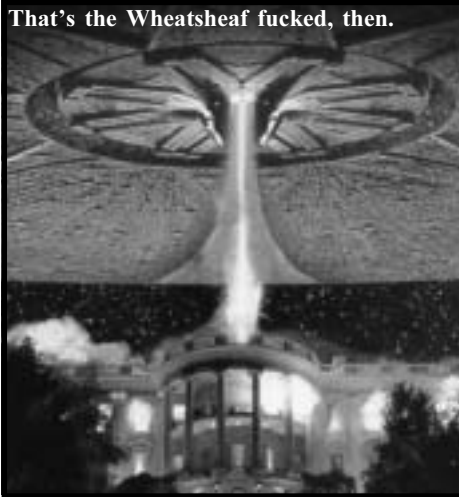
Emmerich, whose previous hit movies include *Independence Day*, 2012 and *Fuck Me, Look At The Size Of That*, described Jon Spira's documentary about the Oxford music scene as, "a bunch of middle-aged men trying to remember what they did last week," and "completely lacking in laser guns, global catastrophe or extra terrestrials. Well, except for Richard Cotton, obviously."

Filming is due to start this month with the late Marlon Brando set to reprise his role of Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now* as Jericho Tavern promoter Mac. Terry Thomas plays Zodiac promoter Nick Moorbatch, while prime minister David Cameron is set play Nightshift editor Ronan Munro after going on a curry and doughnut diet for six months.

In a spectacular opening sequence, The Jericho Tavern is destroyed by a supervolcano that has lain dormant under Port Meadow for thousands of years. The destruction is shown to have been predicted in an ancient piece of graffiti on wall of the gents' loos in the Oranges & Lemons, previously mistranslated simply as "Oxfud mental mob was ear".

As the local music scene attempts to come to terms with this disaster, The Zodiac is invaded by a race of sinister aliens who plan to turn the club into a giant factory churning out second-rate

That's the Wheatsheaf fucked, then.



tribute acts and ageing rock bands whose souls have been replaced by an unstoppable desire to meet their final mortgage payments.

In typical Emmerich fashion, the fate of the local scene is left in the hands of a ragtag bunch of maverick misfits led by Thom Yorke (*played by Peter Lorre*), a previously popular local celebrity dancer whose career has hit the rocks after a traumatic encounter with Coldplay left him incapable of writing a proper tune for over ten years.

Yorke's battle to overcome the aliens are hampered by a vast snowstorm caused by global warming that means the Number 5 bus service is suspended, and conflict with his trusty lieutenant

Nick Cope (*Steve Buscemi*) who has been rendered the unluckiest bloke on the planet by a disturbance in his neutrinos, possibly caused by a solar flare, or lack of dietary fibre or some other laws-of-physics-defying shit that even a five-year-old could see right through.

After numerous setbacks – their spaceship goes into liquidation; an attempt to create a world-saving weapon utilising lightning bolts, a gong and a giant condom by eccentric scientist Tim Turan (*Tim Roth*) goes messily awry; our gallant heroes unearth a long-buried copy of Radiohead's 'Pop Is Dead' single and waste a good hour laughing themselves sick – the local musicians are victorious; the final, spectacular battle scene sees two-thousand-year-old indie-pop deity Lord Richard Ramage (*Christopher Biggins*) emerging from his library to make everyone a nice cup of tea, while Dustball, The Nubiles and The Candyskins try to work out why none of the monitors are working.

The final scene features Supergrass singing 'Alright' as the gang slap each other manfully on the back, oblivious to a swarm of microscopic math-rockers pouring through holes in the Zodiac's quite frankly dangerous roof.

"I thought it was great," said Jon Spira, "far more convincing than some old hippy claptrap about community and musical talent. Though, to be honest, it'll be even better once they've let George Lucas twat about with it a few times and turn Thom Yorke into a CGI-rendered Hayden Christensen."

THE WHEATSHEAF

Live Music December 2011

Fri 2nd Klub Kokofonney...

THE PANTHEIST + BLACK HATS + FAMILY MACHINE 8PM/10.5

Sat 3rd

ALAMAKOTA 8PM/10.5

Wed 7th Moshko Presents...

SHATTERED DREAMS + ROBOTS WITH SOULS + TRAPS + BALLS 8PM/10.5

Fri 9th Music In Oxford Presents...

WARM DIGITS + LISTING SHIPS + THE WORKHOUSE 8PM/10.5

Sat 10th Buried In Smoke Presents...

DESERT STORM + BEARD OF ZEUS + TRIPPY WICKED & THE COSMIC CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT + DEAD EXISTENCE + KOMRAD + WHIT + MOTHER CORONA + STEAK + CARAVAN OF WHORES + MUTAGENOCIDE + GURT UNDERSMILE 8PM/10.5 ALL DAY

Tue 13th

FRANZ NICOLAY (THE HOLD STEADY) 8PM/10.5

Wed 14th Moshko Presents...

THE CELLAR FAMILY + GO ROMANO + BEAVER FUEL 8PM/10.5

Fri 16th GTI Presents The Winter Warmer...

SECRET RIVALS + HOT HOOVES + ADAM BECKLEY

ARTHUR SAWCROSS 8PM/10.5

Sat 17th GTI Presents The Winter Warmer...

THE VICARS OF TWIDDLE + DALLAS DON'T + CHERRY BUT NO CAKE + SEABUCKTHORN + DAVID LEACH 8PM/10.5

Sun 18th GTI Presents The Winter Warmer...

VIENNA DITTO + FAMILY MACHINE + HOLLOX + D GWALIA 8PM/10.5

Fri 23rd Sheaf Amos Party...

BORDERVILLE + MARY'S GARDEN + DEER CHICAGO 8PM/10.5

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mbiproductions@gmail.com or www.myspace.com/wheatsheaf_music

DOCTOR SHOTOVER

Render Unto Caesar

Well, dear boy, it's all about TRIBUTES this month. More specifically, TRIBUTE BANDS... though I *will* take a Bulmers and tomato juice off you, if you are offering to render unto Shotover some form of "liquid tribute" from the bar... Ah, that's better [*gulp-o*]... Meanwhile, older readers of this column may recall, and resonate with, my long-held theory that the more tribute bands there are, the better - since they help keep the newer and more self-indulgent (aka moan-y) Young People's bands off our stages. Even if it does mean that we have to put up with all those amusingly misspelt names appearing weekly at the O2 Laughing Academy – The Smyths, The Jamm, "Sandi Thom" Yorke. (Laugh? I thought I'd never start etc). We here at the East Indies Club are generally more partial to the ones which include a nationality and/or location in the name, e.g. The Australian Doors... The Danish Blue Oyster Cult... The Isle of Wight Stripes. Still with me, Junior? Now, what about another liquid tribute? Well, since you're asking... I wouldn't say NIET to a large vodka and Cherry Blossom. Try and keep up at the back – it's from my days in a Russian Gulag, when, in the absence of other stimulants, we used to melt shoe polish on the radiators and spread it on our bread. Bedingfield our trusty bar-steward knows the drill... Why, thank YOU, comrade [*gulp-ovitch*]. That's put a new shine on things! While we're on such lofty cultural topics, here's a couple more tribute bands for you – the Russian RUSH... the Canadian CAN... not to mention "Harold" Buddy Holly and The Italians... what's that? You'd rather go and see This Town Needs Guns? Oh suit yourself. Just get another liquid tribute in, and then you can f*** off.

Next month: Caesar Sisters



Bohemian Crapsody – The Queensland QUEEN

INTRODUCING....

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

Deer Chicago

Who are they?

Deer Chicago are Jonny Payne (*vocals / guitar*), Dan Newton (*bass*) and Tris Griffiths (*drums*). They formed late in 2009 to play a gig at Fat Lil's in Witney and were immediately offered the chance to play at Charlbury Riverside Festival the following year, so thought it would be a good idea to stay together. The trio have continued to gig locally since, including a stint of gigs around Scotland last winter where they apparently did more snow shovelling than gig playing due to the weather. They've recently been recording with Ben Lloyd from Dive Dive and have their debut single 'Lantern Collapse' / 'Rolling of the Ocean' to show for it this month

What do they sound like?

In a word, epic. Maybe even majestic if 'Lantern Collapse' is anything to go on, all shimmering guitars that that snowball into a turbulent plateau of sky-touching/shoegazing noise, waiting til you think it can't get any more epic before becoming, well, more epic. There are elements of post-rock in there, but tempered by more structured melodies and an adherence to the contrast between light and soft bits and more grandiose bursts of noise.

What inspires them?

"Music that has the ability to pull you in certain ways. There are particular live gigs we've all been to where the band/artist manages to create an atmosphere or mood in the room, and completely captivate the audience."

Career highlight so far:

"The Upstairs with BBC Introducing show at the O2. We grew up going to see very influential gigs at the Zodiac, and although it's very different now it was still the first time we'd played in that building."

And the lowlight:

"Playing the Box in Glasgow where we got heckled a huge amount for things as small as dropping a spectrum. The banter began when we said we were from Oxford. Mistake."



Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Von Braun."

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

"Biffy Clyro's 'Vertigo of Bliss'. Every song is written really well and we've been influenced by the way the songs flow, whether it involves long instrumental sections, big verses or build ups, every part has its place."

When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect?

"Fat Lil's Winter Warmer on the 18th December. It's an all-dayer packed with local bands and festive treats. Hopefully stollen and glühwein."

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"Favourite – There's a large amount of support for local music with Rapture/Truck store as well as a variety of local magazines and websites. The range of venues is also pretty impressive. Least favourite: although we wouldn't say it's a negative point, but there are a lot of good gigs that clash at the moment. In one night there was Upstairs Oxford with some amazing bands, plus Winchell Riots' last show and Komrad and Rock of Travolta at the Cellar. All gigs we wanted to attend."

You might love them if you love:

Ride; Winchell Riots; Slowdive; My Morning Jacket.

Hear them here:

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Ye Olde Days

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

20 YEARS AGO

In a landmark moment for Oxford music, a young band called **On A Friday** graced the cover of local music mag *Curfew*, the band's first ever interview. The feature found Thom Yorke admitting, tongue-in-cheek, that he was "sick and aggressive" as he explained how 'Nothing Touches Me' was about an artist imprisoned for abusing children, while Oxford itself was the inspiration for songs like 'Everybody Lies Through Their Teeth', before admitting that he maybe "takes things too seriously" but "it's the only way to get anywhere" and his band "is ambitious." Who could have guessed back then just how far that ambition would carry them.

Elsewhere **Ride** announced they were to play their biggest hometown show, at the Apollo (now the New Theatre) the following February, while *Curfew*'s demo of the month was a sprightly bunch of young pups called **The Jennifers**, featuring a teenage Gaz Coombes and Danny Goffey. The review likened them to "The Beatles meeting Syd Barrett on the Moon."

Gig highlights of the month included a brace of shows from **On A Friday** (supporting **Freak!** at The Oxford Venue – now the Academy); grindcore pioneers **Carcass** supported by local doom-metallers **Sevendust** at the Jericho Tavern and a host of local acts including **The Haze**, **Dead But Dreaming**, **The Daisies**, **Purple Rhinos**, **Five Alarm Panic** and **Saturn 5**.

A quick glance at the studio ads in that issue shows how long-lasting many of them are – Appletree, The Coldroom and Courtyard all feature.

10 YEARS AGO

Nightshift was celebrating "A hell of a year" in December 2001. The front cover featured photos from **Radiohead**'s phenomenal South Park show; **Ride**, who had reformed for a one-off performance on Channel 4; the Point venue that had been controversially closed down the previous month, going out with a riotous final show, and pictures from Truck Festival and the Punt.

The Rock Of Travolta, **Eeeblee**, **Meanwhile**, **Back In Communist Russia** and **Six Ray Sun** had played a special Nightshift-organised show at the Zodiac to celebrate the emergence of a new wave of great local bands, while Radiohead topped Nightshift's end of year Top 20 with 'Pyramid Song' from their 'Amnesiac' album. The Rock Of Travolta's 'Lukewarm Skywater' was runner up.

Big Speakers, **Dupe**, **Moonkat** and **Cargo Cult** were among acts now lost in time in the Top 20.

Former-No Joy In Mudville singer **Grant** was demo of the month, while poor old **Asher Dust** was stuck in the demo dumper, the enduring singer, rapper and producer having since finished top of that particular pile. A new band in town, **Ponycub**, were also reviewed, later to change their name to **Young Knives**.

Gig highlights of the month were, at the time, newcomers **Hundred Reasons** at the Zodiac, while post-punk cult heroes **The Chameleons** were on the comeback trail. Christmas Day's listing saw The Velvet Underground, Magazine, Gary Numan, Blondie and Radiohead set to play at the editor's house. Like bollocks they were.

5 YEARS AGO

It was announced this month that The Academy Music Group was set to buy The Zodiac venue, Nick Moorbath and Adrian Hicks relinquishing ownership of the venue they had opened six years previously with investment from Radiohead, Ride and Supergrass. AMG spokeswoman Louise Kovacs told Nightshift that the company would "be looking to improve standards of service, décor and facilities for fans and artists".

Fell City Girl, who later morphed into Winchell Riots, graced the Nightshift front cover as well as topping our end of year Top 20 for the second year in a row – the first band ever to achieve the feat. **Young Knives** 'She's Attracted To' was runner-up in a list that also included **Thom Yorke**, **Xmas Lights**, **Foals** and **Rebecca Mosley**, while Young Knives bassist House Of Lords was celebrating being included in NME's Cool List for the year. Joining Young Knives on Transgressive Records were Foals, who were due to set off on tour with Mystery Jets and Larrikin Love.

Local acts releasing new material this month were **October File**, **Sharron Kraus** and **Junkie Brush**. **Hammer Vs The Snake** were demo of the month, while at the other end of the scale, **Impinge** apparently sounded "depressingly like Christopher Cross's 'Arthur's Theme' with any semblance of thrill factor removed (and ain't that saying something?)"

Gig highlights of the month were **The Human League** at the New Theatre and a rare show from lost folk legend **Vashti Bunyan** at the Zodiac.

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

DAMN VANDALS

With the singer's stentorian voice and a bit of a gothic stomp about it, Damn Vandal's 'Can't Go Dancing When You're Gone' initially promises to be right old Batcave hoe-down, or disco time down at the Hammer Horror studios, but ultimately it pulls too many punches and never manages to work itself free of its central refrain and ends up sounding like The Divine Comedy trying too hard to sound mean and moody. Thankfully, 'Hey Little Bunny' is a far darker beast of a song. With its opening lines, "Hey little bunny, I've seen you jumping around / With your tail in the air and your feet off the ground," we wonder, at first, if it's meant to be a piss-take, but no, it's all about the destruction of poor wee bunny's countryside home by developers – woodland burrows concreted over and nature poisoned by humanity's headlong pursuit of consumerism. The singer talks dolefully to bunny as a squalling storm of guitar builds behind him, the whole thing brought to life rather wonderfully by a video of a floppy toy rabbit enduring ever more depressing scenarios – falling off a seafront wall, breaking his paw and becoming homeless. It's great and reminds us of Robert Foster's fantastic 'Is This What You Call Change?' remade by be-suited 80s rockers The Godfathers.

VERA GRACE

Witney's Vera Grace pile into proceedings with no little bombast, all thundering drums and anthemic guitar volleys, before the singer screams, belches and rasps his way into the ceremony and it's all set for the thrilling spectacle of Iron Maiden battling it out with Gallows and we're hanging on to their coattails for the duration of the party. And then. And then they go and do what every other bloody metalcore band seem to do – bring in the melodic counterpoint vocals to try and prettify everything. Like nasty, brutish hardcore mayhem ever needed prettifying. Not only is it a cliché, it's like the barman at a Viking feast suggesting everyone stop for a sweet sherry because all that high-octane mead and axe-throwing is getting a bit beastly and might upset that nice lady sat in the corner. Not realising that the nice lady is actually Boudicca and she's the biggest party animal in the room and wants bloody axe-related mayhem as much

as anyone, not piffing pretty backing vocals. Anyway, composure regained, it just pains us to hear an opportunity lost. Momentum goes by the wayside and we feel we've got to sit pensively at the bottom of the stairs contemplating the beauty of metaphysical poetry when really we want to be outside firing lasers at passing asteroids. Vera Grace to their credit try once more to rouse themselves towards the end but even then they can't resist doing the fluffy stuff again. The silly sausages.

HALF NAKED

While rather less ferocious than Vera Grace on first inspection, Half Naked sound more convincing overall for not upsetting their particular punk apple cart with anything unnecessarily nice. Seemingly coming from the post-Blink 182 school of pop-punk, they're all fizz and bluster, the singer chewing up his words and spitting them out with a decent amount of attitude, the guitars all staccato stabs of fuzzed-up belligerence. 'An Offer You Can't Refuse' finds them at their spikiest, all stop-start dynamics, while 'Broken Arrows' is far poppier, managing to find a good balance of melody and fiery intent, careering through an entire skipful of Stateside punk at a determined canter. Just as you've got them pegged down as slightly two-dimensional noisemakers, they close with the seven-minute 'Our Future, slower and more densely textured. It's probably less fun than what's come before but demonstrates an admirable willingness to change things around a bit and while they're hardly an original band, they kick it all out with some serious vim and vigour and are in no immediate danger of being mistaken for poetry-reading softies.

GRUDLE BAY RIOTS

Following on from their so-so one-track demo a couple of months back, Grudle Bay Riots return with another single-song offering, still painting pretty pastoral pictures with their decidedly chilled form of dream-pop. 'Oneandone', like 'Hon' before it, feels like a come-down answer to Chad Valley's more euphoric form of Balearic-inspired electro-pop. Guitars twinkle, electronic beats chatter and breathless vocals swoon overhead, while an understated dubby bassline gives it a less ephemeral feel. Of course, it's the musical equivalent of staring out across the Mediterranean at sundown/sunrise (deleted according to sleeping/waking habits) after a good session on the bong. Which, as the cold, damp nights draw inexorably in, feels like a bloody good place to be right now.

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MATT FINUCANE

Matt, now resident in Brighton, reminds us of local bands he's been in in the past, including mid-90s Nightshift faves Thin Blue Wrists, as well as more recent local rock heroes Empty Vessels. His solo stuff here is nothing like those acts, a far more understated affair with a warm, lo-fi fuzziness to it that underpins Matt's almost Bowie-ish vocals, particularly on '180 Degree Reaction' (although he does momentarily turn into some kind of cockney borrow boy when he announces "I'll fuckin' knock you aaart" at one point. Best of the two songs here is 'Hands Up', which is sort of list of random, mostly bad stuff ("Hands up if you believe in trophy shags; hands up for an office crèche; hands up for rotten teeth and rickets... etc), delivered in an oddly jaunty fashion for its mostly downbeat subject matter. We particularly like the "Ba ba ba" bit near the end, which fleetingly reminds us of Iggy's 'The Passenger'. Anyone who reminds us of Iggy, however fleetingly, is alright in our book.

MAMMOTH & THE DRUM

Mammoth & The Drum sent us a full album of their stuff some months ago, which showed that they have at least one cracking pop song in their repertoire – the maddeningly catchy 'Who Says You Shouldn't Surf In Jimmy Choo Shoes?' We're not sure if this demo counts as progress, the songs, for the most part, sounding like they're made of old lolly sticks held loosely together with sellotape but, again, they have their moments. Or moment, to be precise. 'Why Buy Balloons Just To Let Them Go?' is annoying, partly since its lyrics are little more than wacky non-sequiters that sound like Mammoth & The Drum are trying too hard to be zany and psychedelic, but also because the singer's voice so squeaky and adenoidal the chorus line sounds like he's singing, "Wah babbaloo jussa lemago". It's like an old Twizz Twangle demo with all the mad silliness removed. 'Now That Summer Is Here' is better, a lo-fi surf-tinged jaunt that's awkward enough to make you think of a beefed-up Incredible String band, but 'Such A Glorious Day', replete with laughing children and a cheeky snatch of that old 'Jimmy Choo Shoes' ditty wedged into its coda, is their best effort by far, folkier, more solid and again proving they can pen a simple, cheery tune when they put their minds to it.

FIVETHIRTYONE

We're not sure if this band's name is meant to be taken like that classic Spinal Tap "one louder" moment and the band are like Tara Milton's old outfit 5.30 except, y'know, louder. Or faster. Or just a bit later in the day. Then again, given they're all sixteen years old and come from Henley, we doubt they're particularly aware of a cult early-90s mod-punk band. Neither are we sure they're

particularly aware of what the spirit of rock and roll entails, sounding like the sort of teenagers who might tell their parents to turn that bloody racket down. This is power pop of the politest sort, the sort of stuff that clogs up MTV's schedules in case they broadcast something that offends a Presbyterian minister's wife in Ayreshire. This lot make McFly sound like Fucked Up in the crazed punk rock stakes, lead track 'Soul For Sale' sounding suitably soulless, while 'Free Fresh Air' and 'Fake Weekend' are like some warped Human Centipede-style fusing of The Feeling and Shed Seven. Come on lads, you're sixteen years old ferchrissakes, not sixty. Sound like you're having fun, not trying to impress some gimlet-eyed major label A&R shark who's been told to sign someone who'll look pretty on the front of glossy mags but satisfy the Radio 2 playlist panel. Still, if it's any consolation Fivethirtyone are this month's band most likely to get a million downloads on iTunes or a billion Likes on Googleplus, or whatever it is young people do instead of buying records and CDs these days. See, we're completely out of touch with youth culture. Then again, if this is indicative of youth culture, we're bloody glad to be so.

THE DEMO DUMPER

CLEPSYDRA

From young people trying to sound like old people, to old people trying to sound like dead people. Some time ago we got chatting at a gig about great artists who had unintentionally inspired a disproportionate number of really rubbish acts. The Beatles obviously, and Stevie Wonder (not just for Jamiroquai) came up. And of course Jimi Hendrix. Arguably the world's greatest ever guitarist: an innovator, a showman, a true original. So how the bloody hell come so many of the tedious old tosswallies who worship at his musical altar can't manage to be innovative, showy or original in the bloody hell slightest? This sorry bunch are a typical case in point. They even have a song called 'Jimi Plays My Guitar'. They've also got a band name that sounds like a particularly unpleasant type of STD. On and on they churn, like it's still 1969. In fact, so long do they churn on and bloody on, they might well have started playing in 1969 and simply forgot to ever stop. It's all very what earnest old dullards would call authentic and earthy and blah blah bloody blah boring as fuck. With big jangly bells on. Here's a windswept guitar solo; there's a constipated blues dirge. Here's a full to the brim bucket of cattle dung. Eat up. Back in the day Jimi Hendrix set fire to his guitar on stage. The only way you'd get anything like a similar level of entertainment out of Clepsydra would be to pour a can of petrol over them mid-set and torch the fuckers. Guess we might even dance to that.

Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1ZU. Or email song links 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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