

NIGHTSHIFT

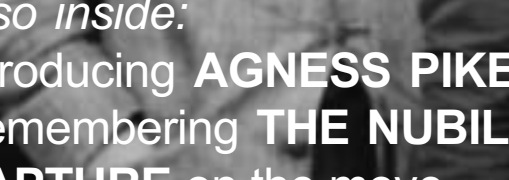
Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month.
Issue 195
October
2011**

BORDERVILLE

“As soon as you put a giant insect on stage
it all gets a bit Stonehenge”

Oxford's baroque pop heroes bring Kafka's 'Metamorphosis' to life



Also inside:
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plus

All your Oxford music news and reviews and six pages of local gigs



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FRIDAY 2ND DECEMBER
ST. BARNABAS CHURCH, JERICHO

EMMY THE GREAT
28 SEPT - THE JERICHO

CLOUD CONTROL
29 SEPT - THE JERICHO

YOUNG LEGIONNAIRE
01 OCT - THE JERICHO

DAVID'S LYRE
06 OCT - THE JERICHO

MAZES
11 OCT - THE JERICHO

EMILY BARKER & THE RED CLAY HALO
16 OCT - THE JERICHO

SPECTRALS
19 OCT - THE JERICHO

VISIONS OF TREES
20 OCT - THE JERICHO

UGLY DUCKLING
20 NOV - THE BULLINGDON ARMS

MECHANICAL BRIDE
21 OCT - THE JERICHO

BEN HOWARD
22 OCT - THE JERICHO

SAM DUCKWORTH
25 OCT - THE JERICHO

FOREIGN OFFICE
26 OCT - THE JERICHO

TWIN SISTER
04 NOV - THE JERICHO

DANANANANAYKROYD
10 NOV - THE BULLINGDON ARMS

3 DAFT MONKEYS
10 NOV - THE JERICHO

SUMMER CAMP
15 NOV - THE JERICHO

ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE
& THE MELTING PARADISE U.F.O.
16 NOV - THE JERICHO

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NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU
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TRUCK STORE on Cowley Road is set to close this month and will be relocating to Gloucester Green as a **Rapture** store. The shop, which opened back in February as a partnership between Rapture in Witney and the Truck organisation, will open in the corner unit at Gloucester Green previously occupied by Massive Records and Fopp.

Rapture are promising the new store will operate with the same spirit as the Truck store, featuring new releases alongside an extensive vinyl selection and a wide range of local releases.

Manager Carl Smithson explained the move, saying, "Our time on the Cowley Road has been an incredible experience and we will take away some great memories. We've been involved in some fantastic in-store gigs, some epic all-day shows and met some great characters. Most importantly though it has shown us that Oxford is still a town deeply in love with music and as such we're really keen to set up shop in what we feel is in the best possible location. The idea of the Truck Store is so intrinsically linked to the OX4 community that we feel going out under our own name makes sense in the city centre. We are keen to make the store just as welcoming to out-of towners arriving on the bus as it is to those in the know about how vibrant the local music community is.

We will be just as actively involved in the local music scene as we are on Cowley Road. We will continue to sell local band CDs and merchandise and we are also keen to increase the amount of tickets for local events we sell. Again the extra accessibility of the city centre should make us the key location for the local music scene. We will also continue to support the Truck organisers with whatever future events they are involved in."

Truck Store is set to bow out with a weekend of live music on the 1st and 2nd October. Check with the shop for details.

THE SUMMER FAYRE FREE FESTIVAL due to be held in South Park at the beginning of September was cancelled two days beforehand after the organisers were faced with a severe weather warning for the weekend. Although the bad weather didn't materialise, Gecko Events, based in Milton Keynes, took the decision to cancel the festival rather than face potentially crippling losses. With the festival a free event the promoters were relying on bar and food revenue to cover their costs and a poor turn-out due to bad weather would have led to huge losses.

Explaining the decision to cancel what was a highly-anticipated event, featuring a strong bill of local acts alongside ABBA and Jimi Hendrix tribute acts, Gecko Events' Tony Delahaye told Nightshift: "We had an extreme weather warning on the Wednesday for rain and strong winds for the weekend but that didn't happen. We had to make a decision and felt it was safer to be careful so we could pay our bills instead of going bust. We had heavy rain the previous weekend at our Bedford event and couldn't risk it happening again; it was a very hard decision but we have five events lined up for next year already and couldn't afford to put those at risk. We pitched Oxford as our biggest event but it depends on how things pan out whether we try it again next year."

THE KEYBOARD CHOIR have split up. The local synth orchestra announced their disbanding ahead of a final show at the O2 Academy at the end of September.

Seb Reynolds told Nightshift, "Essentially, we've been together for eight years and we've had some great times: three Truck Festivals; The Big Chill; Brian Eno's 60th birthday bash at his house; a host of remixes; an EP and an album. But we haven't released anything in a number of years and new material was just not coming as naturally as it should. On top of that we lost a member, Alex, recently and we've



KARMA TO BURN will headline this year's **Audioscope** mini-festival. The West Virginian instrumental stoner-metal act round off the event at the **Jericho Tavern** on **Saturday 12th November**.

Since 2001 Audioscope has raised over £22,000 for homeless charity Shelter. Over the years it has hosted leftfield and underground stars such as Damo Suzuki, Wire, Four Tet, Deerhoof and Luke Vibert.

Other highlights of this year's event include: Brighton's krautrock-influenced dance-pop outfit **Fujiya & Miyagi**; ATP Recordings star **Alexander Tucker**; Cardiff-based art-rockers **The Victorian English Gentlemen's Club**; doom electronica specialists **Necro Deathmort** and Bletchley's Glenn Branca-inspired noise band **Action Beat**, who can feature up to six guitarists and two drummers. The local contingent is made up of **Spring Offensive**, **The Cellar Family** and **Listing Ships**.

Audioscope organiser Stuart Fowkes said of the event, "It's hard to believe that Audioscope has been going for eleven years now, but we're enormously proud of what we've achieved, and grateful to everyone who's given their time to come and support what we do.

"At the same time as bringing some of what we consider to be the finest music in the world to Oxford, we've raised £22,000 to support Shelter's vital work. This is one of the most exciting and varied line-ups we've ever put together, and we're sure it's going to be the best possible way to celebrate more than a decade of using music to tackle homelessness."

A further Audioscope fundraising show takes place at the **Wheatsheaf** on **Friday 18th November**, featuring **The ODC Drumline Vs Coloureds**, **Dead Jerichos**, **Gunning For Tamar** and **D Gwalia**.

Visit www.audioscope.co.uk for more details.



used all the available keyboard players in Oxford, so there was no one to replace him.

"We'll continue with remixes in some capacity and our members continue to play in Flight of Helios, The Epstein and We Aeronauts. There may well be another project at some point but that's up for debate."

LITTLE FISH are set to publish a book in conjunction with writer Miranda Ward. *The New Original Little Fish Paper Club Handbook* will be "a series of essays on a rock'n'roll band" and is set to be printed in hardback on new

NEWS

publishing label Unbound. The band are looking to get 400 fans to pledge to buy the book in advance. In return fans will have their names printed in the back of the book as well as receiving a series of random gifts from the band. Visit <http://unbound.co.uk/books/12> for more details. Little Fish are set to fly out for a series of gigs in Singapore next month, followed by a tour of China in February next year.

NICK COPE releases his second album of songs for children this month. 'My Socks' is the former-Candyskins singer's follow up to last year's 'What Colour Is Your T-Shirt', which has been a sing-along favourite in the Nightshift family car over the past year. The CD is on sale now from www.nickcope.co.uk. A full review in next month's Nightshift, by which time we'll have the likes of 'Pour In The Bubbles' and 'The Very Long Shopping List' firmly wedged in our brains, never to be removed.

OXFORD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC launch their new autumn season this month with a concert by jazz guitar duo Pete Oxley and Nicolas Meier. The Eclectica! duo perform at the Warneford Chapel

on Tuesday 11th October. Further highlights of the new season include a bonfire night concert of ice instruments at the Northwall Arts Centre in Summertown (Sat 5th Nov) with ice instrument pioneer Terge Isunget and Norwegian singer Lena Nymark; an evening of central American music with singer-songwriter Aurelio Martinez at the Northwall, in conjunction with Big Village (Sat 12th Nov); Matthew Sharp's 'Death's Cabaret' at the Northwall (Fri 18th Nov) and the return to town of ambient keyboard composer Harold Budd, alongside cult Australian trio The Necks for an evening of music entitled Time Being at the Holywell Music Room (Tue 22nd Oct). For a full list of OCM shows, plus ticket details, visit www.ocmevents.org.

TROJAN HORSE RECORDINGS and Silver Street Studios in Reading have teamed up with Nightshift to offer our Demo Of The Month winners a free half-day session in the studio with producer and engineer Umair Chaudhry, himself a regular recipient of the award over the years, both as a member of electro-metallers Xmas Lights and with his myriad solo projects. Trojan Horse



FIXERS are this year's **BBC Oxford Introducing Band Of The Year**, following in the footsteps of Stornoway, Little Fish and A Silent Film. Dave Gilyeat, who presents the dedicated local music show, explained the decision to pick Fixers: "This year was an incredibly tough choice but we were of the opinion 2011 belonged to Fixers: they got signed to Vertigo; played an astonishing set at Truck; had Radio 1 playlists, wrote one of our favourite tracks in 'Swimmhaus Johannesburg' and headlined the BBC Introducing stage at Reading. Huw Stephens heartily agreed with our choice too.

"By a strange quirk of fate the Band of the Year show was almost two years to the day that we first played Fixers on the programme. They're a band that can surprise you with each new release, entertain you without fail at each new show and they just happen to be splendid and humble chaps all round too. It's been great watching everyone else come round to our way of thinking!"

KLUB KAKOFANNEY organisers Phil Freizinger and Sue Smith have been talking to Nightshift about the longstanding live music club's **20th anniversary celebrations** this month.

Phil and Sue, who also play together in their band The Mighty Redox, started Klub Kakofanney back in 1991 with the aim of "recreating the free festival spirit in an Oxford venue", an ideal that hasn't changed over the two decades Klub Kakofanney has been running.

Over the weekend of **7th-9th October** Klub Kak will be celebrating its anniversary at **The Wheatsheaf** with a host of acts who have graced its stage in that time. Among those performing are The Vicars Of Twiddly, Fuzzy Logic, The Relationships, Mary's Garden, Space Heroes Of The People, Red Square, Knights Of Mentis, Superloose and of course long-term Klub Kak favourite Twizz Twangle, who we were proud to have introduced to Klub Kak back at the very beginning. Sunday's session additionally features a stage downstairs at the Sheaf hosted by Abingdon's likeminded Skittle Alley crew.

Phil and Sue explained the Klub Kakofanney ethos. "We wanted to hear music no one else at the time would put on, or if they would, the venues didn't exist to put newcomers on. We



wanted an eclectic 'anything goes' showcase gig where you could mix genres of original music and make it into a party. Also, [pioneering sound recordist] Michael Gerzon nagged us when we were in our old band Tin Tin Tin to set up a monthly club to promote wackier stuff in Oxford: music that more suited our own off the wall style as a festival band.

"Our old band played many free outdoor festies and played lots of gigs with Hawkwind, Here and Now and Gong, but apart from The Cricketers, The Jericho Tavern and the Bullingdon, there weren't the venues available there are now.

"Klub Kakofanney is non-profit making; we want to promote music of all types, from avant garde to straightish rock and everything in between. For us there are only two types of music: good and not so good; genres are

irrelevant for us. Our other principle is to pay the acts, which we have always done for the last 20 years. We have no desire to make money out of promoting; we are musicians who promote other musicians and we understand what it means to do a gig.

"Amazingly Klub Kak gigs have always retained a special intimate and friendly atmosphere, more like a festival vibe. We have worked with Wheatsheaf promoter Joal and our lighting man Ainan for over 15 years, so every gig feels a bit like a reunion, and this extends to the bands - new and old. The Atmosphere of the monthly gig feels to us very much the same as when we first started in October 1991!"

With Klub Kakofanney renowned for its anything goes policy, Nightshift wondered what the weirdest performance Phil and Sue had witnessed over the years.

"Miles Doubleday in a gas mask with a screaming banshee called Sybil Madrigal and their band hurtling out thirty minutes of 'Fuck Off Batman'!"

*Klub Kakofanney's 20th anniversary party kicks off at the Wheatsheaf on the evening of Friday 7th, followed by two full days of live music on Saturday and Sunday. Entry is £5 for each day. **For full line-up, see gig guide.***

are also offering special deals for Oxford bands. Call Umair on 0845 519 5723 or visit www.trojanhorserecordings.co.uk for more details.

RADIOHEAD WERE HERE is a short film made by Ling Low and featuring interviews with Oxford musicians about the influence of Radiohead on their bands. The six-minute short features Spring Offensive, The Scholars, Inlight, Ben Philips and Empire Safari. You can see it here: <http://vimeo.com/sweetandlowfilms/radiohead-were-here>

HANNEYFEST celebrates the presentation of its charity cheque with a one-day mini-festival at the Black Horse in East Hanney on Saturday 1st October. The original three-day event raised over £2,000 for local causes. Acts so far confirmed for the 1st are AAA, Lost Dogs, Laima Bite, The Scott Gordon Band and Amy Ireson. Entry is free with any voluntary donations going towards staging next year's Hanneyfest.

THE REGAL is set to host more regular live music shows with the arrival of Coo Promotion's Autumn Neagle as music co-ordinator at the

venue. The 1,500-capacity converted cinema in east Oxford recently hosted Stornoway's sold-out Concert4Conservation, as well as shows from Mogwai, The Unthanks and Frank Turner. Imelda May and Bellowhead are already lined-up for November. Promoters interested in hiring the venue should contact Autumn at autumn@the-regal.com.

THE BULLINGDON has just spent £6,000 on upgrading its Backroom venue, including a new stage, lighting and effects and a stage backdrop. The venue has also installed a stage camera to enable gigs to be screened on new plasma screens in the front bar and will soon be able to offer bands a DVD of their show. Bands or promoters wanting to put on shows at the Bully should call Arron on 01865 244516.

AS EVER, don't forget to tune into **BBC Oxford Introducing** every Sunday night from 9pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show features the best new Oxford releases and demos, live studio sessions and interviews with local acts. The show is available to download as a podcast at bbc.co.uk/podcasts.

UTE HAVE SPLIT. *The local favourites, who featured on the front cover of Nightshift as recently in August and were voted BBC Oxford's Band Of The Year in 2010 announced their split at the start of September, following the release of their latest single, 'Brother' on Alcopop! Records. Bassist Michael Chilcott told Nightshift, "It's very sad, but it just one of those things really; we always maintained that if being in the band wasn't fun then we'd end it. There were no on-stage – or off-stage, for that matter – histrionics, just a simple parting of ways for a cluster of different reasons." As well as their Nightshift cover and BBC Oxford Band Of The Year award Ute played at Radio 1's Big Weekend and Sound City events as well as Truck Festival and 2009's Oxford Punt.*



photo: Johnny Moto

REGULARLY UPDATED LOCAL MUSIC NEWS is available online at musicinxford.net. The site also features interactive local gig reviews, new releases and demos, interviews, live sessions, a photo gallery, gig guide and forum. You can also discuss local music issues on the Nightshift forum at

nightshift.oxfordmusic.net.

NIGHTSHIFT CURRENTLY HAS A BACKLOG OF CDs and demos for review. If you have sent anything in and it hasn't been reviewed yet, we will get round to it. At least once we've finished this rather fine bottle of Claret.

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a quiet word with

BORDERVILLE



photo: Johnny Moto

“THE IDEA FOR THE OPENING song ‘Uneasy Dreams’, which takes place within Gregor’s dreams and the terrifying moment when he wakes, came to me when I was in bed for a week with swine flu. I’d accidentally taken these painkillers that had caffeine in them and I couldn’t sleep at all but had an horrific temperature, with just the opening line of the novel going round and round in my head: ‘ONE MORNING GREGOR SAMSA AWOKE FROM UNEASY DREAMS TO FIND THAT HIS BODY HAD BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A MONSTROUS INSECT’. Over and over, for hours and hours. I realised how completely unnerving it is to feel ill and mad and immediately felt affinity with Gregor. Though I think anyone can find empathy with him; anyone who has been left behind, who feels useless or alone, who has no place. He’s a great protagonist for a rock song. He’s Thom Yorke with mandibles.”

BORDERVILLE FRONTMAN

Joe Swarbrick is recalling the not entirely pleasant source of his band’s decision to turn Franz Kafka’s seminal novella ‘Metamorphosis’ into an album.

For fans of Borderville, such a

waywardly ambitious idea will come as no surprise. The band have always stood well apart from the local rock pack, musically, in the subject matter they tackle and the way they make records.

Borderville’s previous album, ‘Joy Through Work’, released back in 2009, was a concept album on the theme of how work traps humanity. Rather than some lumpen nouveau-prog indulgence, ‘Joy Through Work’ was a startling success – a rich, complex, musically diverse song cycle that touched bases with everyone from Queen and Meatloaf at one extreme and Van der Graaf Generator and David Bowie at the other, all by way of Jacques Brel and Kurt Weill.

‘Metamorphosis’, its follow-up, released this month, continues the quartet’s enterprising if perhaps perilous quest to take rock music into new places, swatting away potential cries of pretentiousness with an armoury of stunning songs that run the full gamut of moods, from the gloriously triumphant ‘I Am The Winter’ to the dark, dense gothic horror of ‘The Human Way’.

BORDERVILLE’S MUSICAL triumphs come from the band’s

disparate make up: Joe, a drama teacher by day, has the literary vision and is a natural performer. Tom ‘Woody’ Woodhouse is a virtuoso keyboard player who can makes the most complicated pieces sound effortless. Drummer James Irvine has played in musicals like *West Side Story*, while bassist Matt Halliday, a fan of The Birthday Party who has moonlighted for Stornoway in the past, brings a scuzzy, bluesy underbelly to the songs. Together the four of them make music they’re loathe to be labelled theatrical but which comes with a flourish most bands would struggle to emulate if the entire Royal Shakespeare Company landed on stage with them mid-set.

BORDERVILLE WILL LAUNCH

‘Metamorphosis’ with a show at the O2 Academy on 7th October and Nightshift is talking to Joe ahead of the launch and we wonder first why he chose this book in particular and how he imagined putting such a story into the concept of an album. “It was while we were working on ‘Joy Through Work’; we were looking for our next project and knew we wanted to adapt an existing narrative, and I think we found a resonance with the story and our

previous album. The novella itself is a perfect example of a short story examining a theme metaphorically – a salesman called Gregor is unable to provide for his family having woken up one morning as a giant insect. Through this Kafka examines how fervent capitalism dehumanises the worker and, when the worker can no longer work – perhaps through sickness or some other incapacity caused by the work itself – they become trash, vermin. Though it’s often translated as ‘insect’, the German word ‘Ungeziefer’ from the untranslated text is actually more vague – vermin might be closer. That’s what Gregor becomes – unclean, unwanted. It makes for a desperately sad narrative which has timeless meaning: the way our current government is systematically deconstructing the way it supports those in need makes it more relevant than ever. So the two strands – the political and the emotional – pointed to a structure and a theme that we felt we could explore in an album, which can function just like a short story in terms of being so tightly conceptual.”

What parts of Kafka’s story did you most closely adhere to and which parts, if any, have you changed or taken liberties with?

"It's pretty much as it was written... a couple of things disappeared, most notably the lodgers that the Samsa family get in to help them make ends meet when Gregor can obviously no longer work. One major change we made was to nominally set it in the 1960s, which gave us a musical palette with which to work. So you have the flashback scenes that play with chord progressions and textures of 1960s pop and an altogether darker, heavier sound that we use to explore Gregor's current predicament."

THUS FAR NIGHTSHIFT HAS only heard half of the album; Borderville finish its final stages the week we meet Joe, but the most striking initial impression is how much darker and musically heavier it is than 'Joy Through Work'. "The way we set about recording it was completely different. This album was pretty much set down live at Vale Studios in Pershore, where we did a couple of tracks off the last album. There's a lot less layering and tinkering, making it a lot more of a heavy rock record. That said, it's not without its tender moments. There are quiet, reflective songs as well. What all the tracks have in common is a real sense of space and energy. Hopefully it sounds a lot more like how we sound live."

Saying that, there are common threads running through both albums – the idea of people being trapped by the need to work, to earn money and provide for those around them however much they hate the work. Is that true?

"Well in a way it's the flipside to the last record. Gregor wants to work – however badly he's been treated by his bosses, he throws himself into it. It's only when he's unable to do his job that he realises how much of a commodity he's become. Thematically, 'Joy Through Work' feels like a bit of an adolescent hissy fit at times – the student who won't get out of bed, who won't accept the fact that he has to get out and earn a living. This is much more about responsibilities within families and how they can contribute to how someone defines themselves. If Gregor had no awareness of his responsibilities you wouldn't feel much sympathy for him – as it is, he's desperate to be useful but finds everyone turns against him."

Some people might think you'd have been better off writing a full-on musical rather than an album. What would you say to that?

"We did originally want to do that but felt that as soon as you put a giant insect on stage it all gets a bit Stonehenge. Also, by leaving the music to speak for itself as much as possible and trying to avoid getting too specific lyrically, we hope we've avoided re-writing and reducing the

original text. I hope it provides an interesting interpretation, or something that can be experienced alongside Kafka's novel. We thought about releasing our own edition of the novella along with the CD but all existing translations are in copyright and none of us can speak German."

BORDERVILLE LIKE TO tackle big, complex subjects on their albums; once upon a time that would have had them labelled a prog band. In fact there's something of the Van der Graaf Generator about songs like 'Human Way'. Is that something Joe is aware of when creating such a connected series of songs?

"Prog is such a dirty word. You may as well label a band "numbly boring" in the eyes of your average punter. But we don't do twenty-minute guitar solos. We always try to perform like pure bandits. We want our live shows to be visceral as well as to take listeners to unexpected places. I guess there just isn't a label

"Prog is such a dirty word. You may as well label a band 'numbly boring'. But we don't do twenty-minute guitar solos. We always try to perform like pure bandits."

for us. We're not quite difficult enough to be in the post-rock camp but we're definitely not an indie-pop act. Self-description has always eluded us. Theatrical rock sounds even worse than prog. Cabaret rock sounds like it's a drag show, which it usually isn't. Care to help? You could coin a genre and start a movement."

Any thoughts on what you might tackle next?

"We have two plans: the first is going to be a musical. There's a director attached called Sam Yates, which we felt was vital – we need someone to shape the thing and bounce our ideas off, making sure we're not too indulgent. The aim is to start workshopping songs and scenes from the show at some point over the next six months. At the moment, we're looking at it being about conspiracy theorists and secret societies – heavily influenced by Jon Ronson's book *Them – Adventures with Extremists* which is a fascinating piece of gonzo journalism where he travels round the world spending time with complete nutcases. We think we've found a narrative in there that could really work as a musical. The second idea is to make a gay disco record aimed at heterosexual men. The working title is ManDate."

HAVING ENJOYED – OR MORE accurately endured – a slightly unsettled line-up early on, losing almost half the band at the start of 2009 before 'Joy Through Work'

was recorded, Borderville are now a stable unit. On a purely musical level though, how does Joe feel they have changed since the first album?

"I think this feels like a progression from those musical ideas. The album is a lot less silly and a lot more comfortable with getting darker and darker and darker – the record doesn't really let you up for air for the last two thirds, it just gets more and more intense. Playing it live feels like throwing ourselves into an abyss – the string of songs from when Gregor gets injured to when he eventually dies is pretty full-on. We're not going to chuck in a 'Glambulance' to lighten the tone." How much and in what ways does being a drama teacher affect the way you make music and perform it?

"Well I try not to swear too much. And in actual fact, I feel like making music is what influences being a teacher. Good theatre is made in the same way as good music – keeping an open mind, trying new things out

practically and reflecting on what works and what doesn't. Having respect for your audience and their opinions. Not being afraid to alienate people one moment and draw them in the next. It's all part of the same game, and that's how I try to teach the subject – using as much music as possible, looking at developing an aesthetic appreciation of art in all its forms. Reading a lot about theatre and the ways in which theatre is taught and developed makes me more and more aware of how rigidly I have stuck to comfortable ways of working musically. I'm trying to free up more, lose the clichés."

WHILE BORDERVILLE ADHERE to the standard rock band line-up – guitars, keyboards, drums, a singer; live, as on record, they strive to escape such strictures. There is always, with them, a desire to put on a show, without resorting to pantomime or cheap gimmicks. Launching 'Metamorphosis' on a big stage at the Academy, what can people expect from the show?

"As we've done before, we'll perform the whole album in its entirety. We're hoping to have some big, visual elements to the performance too. It's all still in development! We're not entirely sure how the piece will come across live in its entirety – we hope people come open to the experience and willing to engage with it on its own terms, however it comes out on the night!"

You've got The Cellar Family and The Goggenheim supporting; two of the most exciting new acts in Oxfordshire.

"When Woody was a child he was best friends with The Cellar Family's bassist. They never stopped holding hands apparently. Aged six, they would stay awake for hours discussing the infinite universe. This may have had a great effect on their musical abilities, because The Cellar Family, much like us, have a healthy disdain for doing what's expected of them in a song. In fact, the Cellar Family are very appropriately named because they sound as if they've never encountered such bourgeois concepts as verse and chorus, as if they've been sheltered from pop structures in some sort of underground penitentiary, like The Shaggs with frightening effects pedals. We are honoured by their presence."

Each time we've interviewed you you've despaired of the state of dull, grey indie rock; has anything changed since last time we featured you two years ago – for better or worse? Any acts around at the moment who you can feel an affinity with or who are pushing the boat out more than others?

"Well I definitely feel completely differently about modern music, though I'm not sure why. There are two possible reasons: a) I've stopped being such a grumpy gobshite, trying to give what we make value by setting it in complete opposition to all forms of contemporary music or b) music has fractured into a quite gloriously anarchic spectrum of anti-genres each with a charming lack of respect for sounding like Coldplay. There are loads of bands that I've really liked recently – Pulled Apart by Horses, Sleigh Bells, Japandroids. Of course there was loads of stuff like this around a few years ago but it's very heartening to see interesting rock music taking off. Locally, Fixers are obviously superb and we really rate the Cellar Family."

You talked last time of wanting to take the Borderville show to Edinburgh; is that still a plan, or at least a dream?

"Apart from the more famous stand-up side, the Edinburgh Fringe is a frightening pit largely populated by children, animals and madmen. We think we would go down brilliantly if we can juggle the potential insanity and the ludicrous cost of the thing. So it's not yet a plan, and as dreams go we're aware that it's an uneasy dream. I'd like to perform 'Metamorphosis' there if we can develop the visual side a bit more. I'd also just like to go up and play a load of shows...let's see..."

'Metamorphosis' is launched at the O2 Academy on Friday 7th October. Visit www.facebook.com/borderville for more news on the band.

RELEASED

Sponsored by



THE WORKHOUSE

'The Coldroom Sessions'

(Hungry Audio)

Could sound ever be 3D out of stereo speakers? We only ask since there are moments on this, the third album by The Workhouse, notably in the introspective 'And We Watched The Waves', where the music seems to physically unseat you by yawing on its axis, revealing a hidden side to its sonic plane.

The Workhouse's second album, 'Flyover', was a genuinely unstoppable masterpiece, but 'The Coldroom Sessions' cements the notion that it wasn't just a lucky strike, as it picks up where its predecessor left off, despite the gargantuan creative loss of their companion producer, Rich Haines (to whom this album is dedicated). 'The Coldroom Sessions' is the sound of a band drilling down through magma caverns to explore the very core of their existence, after 'Flyover's cinematic, neo-orchestral orbits of their blue earth.

'Stalker' (Workhouse fans know the song titles are not a conceptual guide to the music, and that the band are wry enough to have simply named this track after the ex-chief constable of the Manchester Police Force) is a classic example of their technique of planting their feet squarely down with Peter Lazell's halting drum tattoo, overlaying it with a TV theme-style tune that's just a few crotchets short of being 'Telstar' by The Tornados and deep frying this confection like a Mars Bar in a rush of guitar pedal power. Bassist Chris Taylor's inspired vocals continue



to enthrall and compliment the atmospherics on 'The Last Time I Saw The Stars' and 'Seen Sometimes'; part Joy Division, part House Of Love. In 'The Whistler', you're left to wonder, is that a voice from beyond the grave when Chris sings "The clocks don't work here / Time stands still."

The highlight of 'The Coldroom Sessions', though, is 'Drag Queen', a pentimento of the track 'Peacock' from their first album, a slow-building trip out beyond our galaxy, supplemented by a gorgeous chiming riff that weaves throughout the immensities at play.

The Workhouse are something way more than soundbed clip-art for videomakers; this is the music that will be playing when you walk through the door of your potential and reach the complete understanding of enlightenment.

Paul Carrera



LAIMA

'Breathe'

(Rivet Gun)

Having been a huge favourite of ours here at Nightshift for the past few years, both as an acoustic solo act as well as fronting The Factory and Mary's Garden, Laima Bite has been conspicuously quiet in recent times, the odd low-key solo show the only clue that she hasn't vanished completely from the scene. So

we were very excited to see she's back with this new single, a download-only affair on Junkie Brush's Rivet Gun label.

Although it's heralded as a solo release, 'Breathe' is closer to Laima's most recent band, Mary's Garden, the billowing Euro-rock similarly ostentatious, all swirling keyboards, soaring guitars and epic drumming, Laima's vocals multi-tracked, self harmonising and overlapping to create that vast cathedral of sound you'd expect from some late-80s German pop festival headline act.

The song amply demonstrates what a powerful singer Laima is, one with few equals locally, but there's a slight sterility about the whole affair that undermines her innate emotional bite: listen back to her breathtaking 'Did You Used To Love?' and you'll understand the fantastically epic fragility she's capable of, or Mary's Garden's 'Gasoline' to hear the imperious grace she can conjure amid the most cacophonous of musical storms.

Hopefully 'Breathe' is simply a taster for more bountiful fare to come. We hope so; Laima's talent is far too great to disappear from view again any time soon.

Dale Kattack

TROPHY WIFE

'Bruxism'

(Blessing Force)

There's a sense of irony about Trophy Wife's new EP being titled 'Bruxism': the gnashing or grinding of teeth, predominantly during sleep. Such a title suggests tension and anxiety, whereas the music here sounds singularly at ease with itself, songs somnambulating in that space between sleep and waking, a theme Trophy Wife return to throughout the five songs here.

Having previously released two self-produced singles for Moshi Moshi, 'Bruxism' finds Trophy Wife signed to the newly-minted Blessing Force label, something that makes the whole BF thing a more tangible proposition, while cementing the bands more closely to the label and its ideals. The band have also expanded their horizons by teaming up with different producers for each song, including Yannis Philippakis, Plaid, Ewan Pearson and James Yuill. That overriding sense of lysergic fragility about Trophy Wife's music remains, though, EP highlight 'Wolf' in particular drifting hazily through some half-seen dreamscape, blissed out reverie shadowed by a sense of eerie foreboding, fleeting glimpses of ghosts dancing at its edges.

While Trophy Wife possess a far more propulsive edge when they play live, those beats – harking back to Balaeric house and early-80s disco – impede far less here, only 'Sleepwalking', ironically, stamping its more earthly presence on proceedings. The instrumental diversions 'Bruxism' takes feel less like conscious detours as the involuntary scene shifting of dreams, pretty pastoral pictures of dandelion seeds carried on a summer breeze fading into darker, shadowy scenes.

It's precious, tender stuff – music that'd get its arse royally kicked by Therapy?'s – on the surface, similarly-themed – 'Teethgrinder', but more like Sonic Boom's Spectrum, this isn't music for fighting, or even dancing to, but slipping between planes of consciousness where imagination plays subtler tricks.

Victoria Waterfield



AGNESS PIKE

'Minum Vitae'

(Rivet Gun)

Agness Pike's musical pedigree is impeccable. Bassist Pete Marler previously served time in Underbelly and Suitable Case For Treatment, while the rest of the quartet - singer Martin Spear, drummer Mick Brown and guitarist Chris Brown - last shared bandspace together in seminal local punk-metallers Madamadam. Additionally Martin fronted doom-metal legends Sevenchurch, retrospectively hailed as pioneers of the genre by *Terrorizer* magazine.

So of course the formation of Agness Pike last year was a cause for much excited anticipation. How close the new band comes to emulating its members' previous work remains open to debate but this debut mini-album does demonstrate a band that, in its own peculiar way, could take on most-comers in a battle of local metal bands, while surreptitiously giving the finger to the genre's macho posturing and self-seriousness.

Musically Agness Pike owe their biggest debt to early Metallica: Chris's serrated riffs and relentless chug are instantly recognisable, notably



'Ruthless', with its non-too-subtle nod to 'Fight Fire With Fire', but it's the almost incongruous presence of Martin's vocals that give the band its unique character. Pitched partway between the Lydon-esque sneer of his Madamadam styling and the Gregorian intonations of his time with Sevenchurch, he's a campy gothic presence here, particularly if you can picture him in your mind's eye in his live show get-up of military uniform and handbag, like a devilish reincarnation

of Dale Winton.

The abrasive relationship between band and ringmaster is most apparent on 'Now Is The Time', the slow-burn intensity of the riffs twisted askew by the Hammer Horror *faux*-gravitas of the vocals. On 'Taking Control', meanwhile, Martin sounds like Christopher Lee fronting Machine Head on what proves to be Agness Pike's strongest melodic showing.

Of course, what is the band's defining characteristic also proves to be their most limiting, as they threaten to slip into formulaic thrash panto towards the end of the EP and maybe four tracks here instead of six would have left you wanting more. But that's not to say Agness Pike are either one-trick ponies, or merely an extended joke at metal's expense. Their individual talents and experience meld well enough to elevate them immediately to the upper echelons of Oxford metal, while live they're mercurial enough to provide relief from the standard chest-beating of the metalcore massive. And perhaps Agness Pike remember what too many bands forget, that without a sense of its own ridiculousness, metal loses a little of its original soul.

Dale Kattack



DB BAND

'Stranger In The Alps'

(Own label)

With Gaz Coombes still recording his debut album with 'I Should Coco' producer Sam Williams, and working on Little Fish's next album, it's Mick Quinn who becomes the first of the original Supergrass trio to release his own record. While Mick can also be seen pumping out some serious r'n'b alongside Sir Bald Diddley in Beat Seeking Missiles, DB Band is very much his own thing, Mick taking over vocal and guitar duties as well as his usual bass skills. It's the latter which hold 'Stranger In The Alps's' head above water, a slightly awkward, strung-out 'Hunky Dory'-era Bowie stomp that maybe just needs to stamp its authority a bit harder.

Of the rest of this four-song EP, 'Five A Day' and 'Bus Stop Shuffle' are yobbish punk grinds, the former sounding like a less aggrieved Stranglers, the latter like something Dr Feelgood

might have brewed up ahead of punk's main assault. Which leaves the real highlight as 'Dreams', DB Band showing their softer, more carefree side, closest in feel to Supergrass, laidback, slightly sunny day 60s psychedelia, just a touch bluesy, a distant cousin to 'Lenny' perhaps. Something we'd prefer to hear more of from them in future.

Ian Chesterton

DUOTONE

'Ropes'

(ECC)

There's a sense of retreating into safety about Duotone. Not only are the band named after an old printing technique, but their promotional material is steeped in sepia Edwardiana, and despite copious use of loop pedals their music nods towards well-behaved salon folk. Add a few lyrics about the hermetic safety of an old-fashioned middle class childhood, all bedtime stories and warm nurseries, and you'd be forgiven for thinking that Duotone are a soppy panacea for delicate wallflowers who think the world is moving too fast and who wish they were back at prep school.

But you'd be wrong. Comforting and hushed the music might be, all deep in the womb of Barney Morse-Brown's impeccable cello, but this is far more than insipid ambience. Not only are there moments of chilling eeriness throughout the album, but the music is restlessly inventive. When it might have been easy for Duotone to stick with some whispered melodies and a few pretty James Garrett guitar parts, they slip some eclectic elements into the album: 'Walking To The Shore' starts with a

stately promenade that owes something to British minimalism, before introducing a spikily elegant vocal line that reminds us of The High Llamas. Later, 'Alphabet' leaps halfway through from bucolic lullaby to something that isn't far from a *Knight Rider* chase theme.

'Broken Earth' is a high point, a Hansel & Gretel referencing chunk of goth folk that reminds us of an urbane take on 60s experimental folk, a clean-shaven Comus if you will.

There are a couple of mis-steps on 'Ropes', from the fluffy Disney refrain of 'Till It's Over' to the directionless doodle of 'Powder House', wordless female vocals flitting politely about like 'The Great Gig In The Sky' repackaged for Habitat, but these are minor blemishes. 'Ropes' is a gorgeous record that is immaculately performed and recorded, but which still retains an enticing air of melancholic mystery: for all their abilities, this is the important element most Sunday supplement boutique folk acts seem to be missing.

David Murphy



NEXT MONTH: - Borderville - The Scholars - Nick Cope
- Hot Hooves - Listing Ships - Beat Seeking Missiles and more

GIG GUIDE

SATURDAY 1st

YOUNG LEGIONNAIRE: The Jericho

Tavern – Angular, grungy post-hardcore from the band formed by ex-Yourcodenameis:milo and Automatic guitarist Paul Mullen and Bloc Party bassist Gordon Moakes, veering pleasingly towards Mullen's old band more than anything on debut album 'Crisis Works' and out on a headline tour following a support to Les Savvy Fav.

SAVE MATES & DATES BENEFIT: O2

Academy – Charity gig for the Save Mates & Dates friendship and dating service for adults with learning difficulties, featuring This Elegant Chaos, The Black Tears and more.

Saturday 1st

YOOF! with TEETH / MY GREY HORSE:

The Cellar

Yoof! the club night run by *Oxford Mail* clubbing reporter Marc West, returns after its summer hiatus, offering a good mix of emerging indie and electro talent with local and guest DJs similarly mixing up indie, electro and dubstep. Tonight's live sets comes from Moshi Moshi-signed electro trio Teeth, laptop-wielding Ximon Tayki, singer and synthist Veronica So and drummer Simon Wybray combining to soundclash heavy-duty electro house with lo-fi punk attitude, kind of like Crystal Castles in rave mode. Recent single 'Care Bear' reminds us a bit of very early Metronomy, although there are also similarities to Test Icicles, Adult and even Fuck Buttons when they're at their heaviest and most discordant. Already lumped in with the possibly imagined illwave scene, their raucous, skronky electro-punked dance is a most pleasing mess with the right balance of attitude and sense of fun and guaranteed to upset readers of *Classic Rock* magazine, so double bonus points all round. Considerably more restrained, if not completely bucolic pop support from Stratford-on-Avon's My Grey Horse, plus DJ sets from Blue Flowers and OxfordMusicBlog's Jack Olchawski.

OCTOBER

THE PETER BRUNTNELL BAND + BRIAN

HOUSTON: The Bullingdon – Country-rock stomp and wry acoustic whimsy from Kingston-on-Thames' songsmith Peter Bruntnell at tonight's Empty Room Promotion, the singer being one of very few British country-inspired acts to make a connection with American audiences, something he's being doing since his 1995 debut, 'Cannibal', aided and abetted by his association with Son Volt. New album 'Black Mountain UFO' is out now and finds him traversing his trademark Crazy Horse-meets-Chris Isaac territory in style.

YOOF! with TEETH + MY GREY HORSE:

The Cellar – Trashy electro-punk from Teeth at tonight's Yoof – *see main preview*

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101:

O2 Academy – Weekly three-clubs-in-one extravaganza, with indie and electro faves at Propaganda; kitsch pop, glam and guilty pleasures at Trashy and metal, alt.rock and punk at Room 101.

HANNEYFEST: The Black Horse, East

Hanney (4pm) – Mini free festival to celebrate the handing over of the main Hanneyfest's charity cheque, tonight featuring AAA, Lost Dogs, Laima Bite, Scott Gordon Band and Amy Ireson, plus more to be announced.

JESS & NESS + WATER PAGEANT + CAT

MATADOR: Fusion Arts Centre – First of a series of bi-monthly pop-up gigs and art installations from local troubadour Aiden Canaday and friends.

THE BIG SOCIETY + FAGIN'S GANG: The

Folly Bridge Inn – Ska-punk and reggae from ex-Drugsquad people Big Society, with support from American folk-blues outfit Fagin's Gang.

N_EV/ERL"AND: Fat Lil's, Witney

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – House and techno club night with MJ Cole.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: Highfield Social Club, Bicester

CARMENTA + WHEN WORDS FAIL + A COLD HARBOUR + PARADIGM SHIFT:

The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox rock and metal night.

GROWLER: The Swan, Wantage – Rock covers.

SUNDAY 2nd

ED SHEERAN: O2 Academy – Soulful, lightweight acoustic pop and r'n'b from the Suffolk songsmith, whose Van Morrison-inspired sound has found him championed by Rio Ferdinand and Elton John, as well as playing with Example, Wiley and Ghetts along the way and most recently hitting the Top 5 with 'The A-Team'. Unsurprisingly given his high profile, tonight's show is long-since sold out.

THE RIVERSIDE VOICES + DES &

JEREMY + BEARD OF DESTINY + SUE & PHIL: Donnington Community Centre – Free acoustic session.

TREVOR WILLIAMS: The Swan, Wantage – Emotive acoustic pop from the local troubadour.

ACOUSTIC & OPEN MIC NIGHT with ADAM MATTHEWS + DARREN LESTER: The Hobgoblin, Bicester

MONDAY 3rd

VIRGIL & THE ACCELERATORS: The

Bullingdon – Hard-rocking, riff-heavy blues-rock and classic rock'n'roll from the fast-rising teenage band, discovered by Otis Grand when Virgil was only 12-years-old and since then mentored by Joe Bonamassa as well as touring with Joanne Shaw-Taylor. Inspired by the likes of Led Zep, ZZ Top and Alvin Lee, theirs is a frenetic but cleverly textured take on classic sounds.

MATT KILFORD + HEY SHOLAY + MY

OTHER LIFE: The Port Mahon – Delicate, romantic acoustic pop in the vein of James Taylor, Rufus Wainwright and Van Morrison from the talented Mr Kilford.

TUESDAY 4th

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Free weekly live jazz, tonight with regulars Alvin Roy & Reeds Unlimited.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 5th

AGNESS PIKE + ANNERO + BERSICKER + BEAT THE RED LIGHT: The Wheatsheaf – A

trio of local metal bands, including theatrical thrash merchants Agness Pike launching their debut mini-album – *see Introducing piece*

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

THURSDAY 6th

ENTER SHIKARI + YOUR DEMISE: O2

Academy – St Alban's hardcore-cum-rave crew return for more anthemic rock-dance fun, all big guitar hooks, synths, vocal chants and occasional dance beats, with a third album on the way this autumn following on from a Vans Warped tour of the States and sets at Reading and Leeds Festivals.

MISSING ANDY: O2 Academy – Rap-tinged Britpop-inspired mediocrity from the Sky 1 *Must Be The Music* runners up.

DAVID'S LYRE: The Jericho Tavern – Return to the Tavern for Manchester's Paul Dixon under his David's Lyre moniker, best known so far for his Ellie Goulding cover and remixes for Marina and the Diamonds and Everything Everything, but starting to make his own name more and more with an exotic blend of folky pop and dubstep that's drawn comparisons to Jack Penate and Wild Beasts.



VERA GRACE + PALM READER + SLEEPWALKERS + IN DECADENCE: Fat Lil's, Witney – EP launch gig for local metalcore outfit Vera Grace, plus a heavyweight supporting cast.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford's oldest and best open mic club continues to showcase local singers, musicians, poets and storytellers every Thursday.

WELCOME TO PEEPWORLD + STEM + ONE GEAR GO: The Bullingdon – Intimate acoustic folk-pop from WTP at tonight's It's All About The Music promotion..

FRANCIS PUGH & THE WHISKY SINGERS + THE A TRAIN + KNIGHTS OF MENTIS: The Port Mahon – Whisky-soaked folk from Francis Pugh, tonight launching their debut album, 'Here In The Night', plus London's alt.folksters The A Train and country and Americana outfit Knights of Mentis.

PETE BAILEY + CJ QUINN + JAY COBAIN + THOM MUDDLE: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox acoustic and open mic session.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: Jack Russell, Marston

FRIDAY 7th

BORDERVILLE + THE CELLAR FAMILY + THE GOGGENHEIM: O2 Academy – This month's Nightshift cover stars launch their new Kafka-inspired album alongside local hardcore heroes The Cellar Family and whacked-out post-punk psych-rock crazies The Goggenheim – *see main interview feature*

JAGUAR SKILLS + ZINC + MC SKIBADEE + DJ@WAR: O2 Academy – The ninja-obsessed hip hop DJ brings his eclectic mixing skills back to town. Altogether now: "HoooOOO!"

KLUB KAKOFANNEY 20th ANNIVERSARY WEEKENDER: The Wheatsheaf – two decades young and Klub Kak shows no signs of mellowing, celebrating their anniversary with three days of live music at its long-time home, the Sheaf, with favourite bands old and new. Tonight's opening session features clergy-core surf-rockers Vicars Of Twiddly, gothic electro rockers Mary's Garden, bluesy rockers Not Too Shabby and an acoustic set from indie-rockers Deer Chicago.

DENIS JONES + MATTHEW P + TIM GILL: The Jericho Tavern – Soulful, scuzzy Mancunian blues from singer Denis Jones at tonight's Coo Promotion, utilising loops, samples and electronic beats alongside organic instruments to create a sound that veers from emotive acoustic folk to heavy-duty electro. Support from summery Suffolk folkster Matthew P and improvisational violinist and viola player Tim Gill, previously seen playing with Message To Bears.

SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM: The Cellar – Live reggae from bright new hopes Desta Zion & The Elements at tonight's Skylarkin Soundsystem, playing a lively selection of roots, dub, ska, soul, hip hop and more. Croatia's DJ Shepardog mans the decks alongside Count Skylarkin, while Mancstafarian mic master MC Kwasi hosts the party.

DEAD ALPHABET + WHITE BONE RATTLE: The Bullingdon – Double dose of 60s-styled psychedelic blues, with Dead Alphabet mixing up The Doors and Hendrix, while Kent's White Bone Rattle ply a groove-led form of heavy psychedelia.

THE BASEMENT MIXTAPE SESSIONS: Modern Art – Experimental music night with east London's Ian Dury-inspired types Jukebox Collective mixing up lo-fi punk and electro grooves, alongside local glitchy electro ensemble Wild Swim and Death In Vegas chap Tim Fairplay playing retro electro on the decks, alongside Neural Ohmlette DJs.

WHOLE LOTTA DC: Fat Lil's, Witney – AC/DC tribute.

JACKIL: The Port Mahon – Live & Loud session.

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

DISCO MUTANTE: Baby Simple – Monthly cosmic funk, Afro-disco and acid-dance club night, tonight featuring a live set from old school acid house duo Manacles Of Acid.

BAD SIGN + CHERRY & THE SCREAM: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox rock night.

MOLOTOV SEXBOMB + STEM + THE PLANES: The Swan, Wantage – Indie punk noise from Witney's Molotov Sexbomb.

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

SATURDAY 8th

KLUB KAKOFANNEY 20th ANNIVERSARY WEEKENDER: The Wheatsheaf (2pm) – The party gets into full swing with a full day of live music, including sets from Fuzzy Logic, The Mighty Redox, Billy Pure, Country For Old Men, The Relationships, Moiety, Space Heroes Of The People, Beaver Fuel, Big Society, The New Moon and Film Noir, covering all bases from electro-pop, indie rock, ska-punk and swamp-blues to Americana, folk, funk and comedy rock.

THE BIG TEN INCH DIRTY WATERS RECORDS SPECIAL: The Cellar – Count Skylarkin's monthly celebration of vintage jump blues, rock'n'roll, rockabilly, r'n'b, doo-wop and garage tonight welcomes Dirty Waters Records, who present Beat Seeking Missiles, the band formed by Sir Bald Diddley and former-Supergrass chap Mick Quinn, with support from Bury St. Edmund's raw teenage garage rockers Thee Vicars and Sir Bald Diddley's vintage garage outfit The Arousers.

DESERT STORM + BETRAEUS + FRAGMENT + MOTHER CORONA + SLEEPWALKERS: O2 Academy – Skeletor and Room 101's monthly metal extravaganza this time round brings Manchester's fast-rising progressive death-metallers Betraeus to town, coming in somewhere between Death, Opeth and Bloodbath and having shone at last year's Bloodstock as well as this summer's Download. Local stoner-metal titans Desert Storm top the bill and are joined by grindcore and death-metal types Fragment; psych-metallers Mother Corona and hardcore crew Sleepwalkers.



Friday 14th

TENDER TRAP: The Wheatsheaf

As singer with Talulah Gosh, Heavenly, Marine Research and, in recent years Tender Trap, Amelia Fletcher is undoubtedly the Godmother of Oxford music, possibly even The Queen Of Indie. With Talulah Gosh she pioneered a twee-pop movement that flourishes even today, and inspired the original riot grrl movement. That band were the first local stars to really break out of Oxford and make a national and international reputation for themselves that still endures today. Heavenly were a slight mutation of that early incarnation but over the years and each new band Amelia, alongside long-time partner Rob Pursey, has stayed true to her indie roots, inspired by The Shangri La's and Ronettes on one hand, The Pastels and Mary Chain on the other. Tender Trap's 2010 album, 'Dansette Dansette', found them ditching their more electronic side in favour of classic 60s girl-pop harmonies and the classic lo-fi sounds of The Shop Assistants et al. while a new set of songs is promised for this return to her spiritual roots (an early Talulah Gosh show at this very venue saw Amelia supporting My Bloody Valentine in their pre-'Isn't Anything' days). Fantastic stuff, and from a woman who, as a Doctor of Economics, is also just about the brainiest pop person to come out of Oxford, and ain't that saying something when you consider the competition?

BATTLE OF THE BANDS: O2 Academy – Bands competition in aid of Against Breast Cancer, featuring Black Hats, Ways Across, Young Lust, Colour Change For Camouflage, Molotov Sexbomb and The Reaper.

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

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy

CELIDH: Kennington Village Hall – Traditional folk dance with Panjandrum, plus a Morris dancing workshop from 2pm.

CRUDE MEASURE: The Swan, Wantage – Rock covers.

TREVOR WILLIAMS: The Magic Café (1pm)

SUNDAY 9th

KLUB KAKOFANNEY 20th ANNIVERSARY WEEKENDER: The Wheatsheaf (2pm) – The third and final day of Klub Kak's well-earned anniversary party, today featuring two stages, upstairs and own. Upstairs, Knights Of Mentis, Superloose, Barry & The Beachcombers,



Saturday 15th

LEYLINES: O2

Academy / Bullingdon / Old Boot Factory

Although it's not officially a replacement for OX4 Festival, Leylines inhabits similar terrain, both musically and geographically, taking over various venues along and around Cowley Road for a full day and evening of live music and clubbing, featuring over 25 acts, as well as featuring workshops, music classes, talks, exhibitions and stalls. The O2 Academy, The Bullingdon and the Old Boot Factory are among the venues confirmed for the 15-hour event. **Jamie Woon** and **Futures** top the list of bands performing, sultry electro-soul and dubstep singer and producer Woon being the man behind hit single 'Night Air', while Buckinghamshire's Futures offer their take on epic stadium indie. The addition of Sheffield DJ and producer **Toddla T** (pictured) to the bill ups the ante somewhat, with his second album 'Watch Me Dance' offering a more soulful, poppier update on his bass-heavy dancehall-influenced sound, and having produced Roots Manuva and Tinchy Stryder, remixed Hot Chip and Gorillaz and label managed Sticky and Roska, there are few more high profile credible DJs around. Potential star turn of the day, though, might come from Newcastle's gorgeous **Let's Buy Happiness**, with their swooning, shimmering update on Sundays and Sugarcubes-style pop. Elsewhere Nottingham's **Dog Is Dead** return after their showing at last year's OX4, playing a playfully jazzed-up form of euphoric indie; there's electro-heavy grime from Merseyside's **Melé** and synth-funk pop from **Theme Park**. Amid a strong local cast are riff-heavy math-rockers **Gunning For Tamar**; electro-tinged fightpop outfit **Secret Rivals**; gothic rockers **Vixens**; kraut-groove experimenters **Listing Ships** and **Kill Murray**, the new band formed by assorted members and ex-members of Dial F For Frankenstein, 50ft Panda and Phantom Theory.

MONDAY 10th

LES WILSON & THE MIGHTY HOUSE ROCKERS: The Bullingdon – Gutsy slide guitar veteran of some 30 years on the UK blues scene, Wilson returns to the Famous Monday Blues with a style learned from the likes of Buddy Guy, Hound Dog Taylor and Albert King. **JAWLESS & FRIENDS: The Cellar** – Jungle, drum&bass, dubstep, garage, house, funk and soul.

TUESDAY 11th

BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB: O2 Academy – Long-since sold-out show from the jangly indie teens, out on tour to plug their third album 'A Different Kind Of Fix', produced by Ben Allen, who has also produced Animal Collective; he seems to have introduced more loops and layers to the band's jangly sound but that trademark mixture of bouncy sensitivity and earnest determination remains intact.

SUBMOTION ORCHESTRA: O2 Academy – Formed by a collective of Leeds music scene luminaries after the Arts Council commissioned a live dubstep piece to be performed at York Minster, Submotion Orchestra are actually less dubstep, more a woody fusion of dub, funk, jazz and drum&bass, a bit like Sade fronting Massive Attack and, unsurprisingly, beloved of Gilles Peterson.

MAZES: The Jericho Tavern – Exuberant indie fizz and jangle from the Fatcat-signed froth-pop outfit whose recent debut album, 'A Thousand Heys', traces a nicely fizzed-up line between Pavement, Buzzcocks, The Kinks and Weezer. This UK headline tour is followed by A US tour supporting Sebadoh.

PETE OXLEY & NICOLAS MEIER: Warneford Chapel – Oxford Contemporary Music open their autumn season with a concert from Eclectica! duo Oxley and Meier performing Pat Metheny and Turkish-inspired jazz on a wide range of guitars.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Live jazz from trumpeter Stuart Henderson's jazz quintet.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon
INTRUSION: The Cellar – Goth, industrial, darkwave, ebm and 80s club night.

WEDNESDAY 12th

PHAT SESSIONS: The Cellar – Open jam session with in-house band The Phat Sessions Collective playing funk, soul, jazz and hip hop, plus UK beatboxer Layth.

ACOUSTIC LOUNGE: Fat Lil's, Witney – Unplugged session, tonight featuring Phousa, Welcome To Peepworld, Black Hats' Nick Breakspear and teen metallers The Reaper.

OSPREY, ADY DAVEY & MARIA ILETT: The Fir Tree, Ifley Road

THURSDAY 13th

ROACHFORD + SCARLETTE FEVER: O2 Academy – Over twenty years on from his big hit, 'Cuddly Toy', the soft-centred British soul-pop singer continues to enjoy cult status, remaining a big selling star around Europe even as his commercial star has waned in the UK. **COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN + RICHARD BROTHERTON: The Bullingdon** – Old-time country folk from C4OM.

COLOUR CHANGE FOR CAMOUFLAGE + ASHTON CURTIS + KNAVES + CRACKERDUMMY: Fat Lil's, Witney – Hip hop-tinged bluesy pop from Colour Change at tonight's local bands showcase.

EMILY SCOTT + ARTHUR SAWBRIDGE + DRONEY MITCHELL: The Albion Beatnik Store – Bittersweet ukulele folk-pop, plus string trio from Emily Scott, fresh from a sold-out Edinburgh festival showing. Violin and loops-led pop from Arthur Sawbridge in support, inspired by Arthur Russell and Owen Pallett.

CAT MATADOR + MILLION FACES: The Port Mahon – Darkly-inclined, violin-led pop from Cat Matador.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

FRROWSER + RIOTHOUSE: : The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Jambox rock night.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: Jack Russell, Marston

WORDPLAY: The Cellar – Hip hop, dubstep, reggae and drum&bass.

FRIDAY 14th

WOLF GANG + S.C.U.M + DZ

DEATH RAYS: O2 Academy – The latest NME-branded package tours brings ambitiously anthemic and shiny stadium popsters Wolf Gang back to town after their showing here back in June. Max McElligott's epic, piano-heavy tunes draw on influences as diverse as David Bowie, David Byrne, The Beach Boys and La Roux and have previously seen him supporting the likes of Editors, Florence & The Machine and The Naked & Famous. Darker and decidedly scuzzier are S.C.U.M, also recent visitors to the O2, as support to The Kills, mining a dark seam of inspiration that features The Velvet Underground, The Jesus & Mary Chain and Spacemen 3. Überfuzzed Aussie hardcore types DZ Deathrays open the show.

BEDLAM IN OXFORD: O2 Academy – DJ Fresh leads an extensive cast at tonight's Bedlam, his new album 'Louder' seeing him make a move into dubstep after a decade committed to drum&bass and collaborating with Kosheen's Sian Evans. Elsewhere on the bill are sets from Joker, Friction, Wilkinson, Koan Sound, Document One, Zomboy and Linguistics.

TENDER TRAP + THE MELTING ICE CAPS + THE COOLING PEARLS: The

Wheatsheaf – Talulah Gosh and Heavenly legend Amelia Fletcher returns to her home town with her current indie outfit – *see main preview* **THE TRAVELLING BAND + TWO FINGERS OF FIREWATER + YARNS + CRAYON: The Jericho Tavern** – Cosmic country pop, psychedelia, rock'n'roll and classic Americana from The Travelling Band, touring their new 'Screaming Is Something' album. Support from Guildford's roots-rock outfit Two Fingers Of Firewater and local indie-folk janglers The Yarns.

DROPOUT + THE ROGUE MOTEL +

GEORGE CHOPPING: The Bullingdon DIRE STREETS: Fat Lil's, Witney – Dire Straits tribute.

THE HOLLIES: The New Theatre – The 60s and 70s hitmakers keep on keeping on, running through classic hits like 'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother', 'The Air That I Breathe' and 'I Can't Let Go'.

Mundane Sands, Twizz Twangle, Red Square, True Rumour and Blin' Jonnie do their respective eclectic thing, while downstairs Skittle Alley host Headington Hillbillies, Zim Grady, Beard Of Destiny, Mark Sollis, Les Petits Clochards, Moon Leopard, Mark Atherton, Mark Bosley, Phil Garvey and Maeve Bayton.

OXJAM: The Bullingdon – Red Valve play at the Oxfam fundraiser.

THE NEON VIOLETS + THE CELLAR FAMILY + NUDYBRONQUE: The Swan, Wantage – Heavy duty drone-rock, acid blues and garagey psychedelia from The Neon Violets, alongside Cellar Family's fantastically angular rage-fuelled post-hardcore.

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon

FROWSER: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury

BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – Dancefloor Latin, Balkan beats, world breaks and nu-jazz club night with a live set from Lokkhi Terra.

SATURDAY 15th

LEYLINES – O2 Academy / The Bullingdon / The Old Boot Factory – Fifteen hours of live music, workshops, talks and more along various venues around Cowley Road – *see main preview*
DUOTONE: The North Wall, Summertown – Barney Morse-Brown and James Garrett launch their second album, 'Ropes', in suitably

Monday 17th

CHAPEL CLUB: O2 Academy

As with The Horrors, who play the same venue this week, Chapel Club are a band who create moody music inspired by the greats of 1980s alternative rock. Chapel Club are signed to James Oldham's Loog Records, with whom The Horrors also started out, but there the two bands diverge. Whereas The Horrors spike their cocktails of doom-laden post-punk with krautrock and gothic garage noise, Chapel Club's pensive but swooning pop sails closer to Echo & The Bunnymen's orchestral splendour. And if Chapel Club's debut album, 'Palace', was hardly on a par with 'Ocean Rain' or 'Heaven Up Here', it showed the band have plenty of promise. Their chief weapon of course is singer Lewis Bowman, a man possessed of a similarly rich, doleful voice and onstage charm to Ian McCulloch or Morrissey and a crooner to match Matt Monroe. It's his dark, honeyed voice that made early singles like 'Surfacing' and 'All The Eastern Girls' such perfect playlist fodder, although the similarities of 'Surfacing' to classic standard 'Dream A Little Dream' prevented the single becoming the hits it deserved to be. Tonight's show will feature a main headline set from the band, plus a separate support set where they'll be airing a whole slew of new material. With 'Palace' receiving only lukewarm reviews on its release, Chapel Club will have to prove they're capable of consistently writing songs to match those singles but whatever happens, you feel Bowman at least has a bright, if darkly-lit, future ahead of him.



intimate but auspicious surroundings, joined for the evening by Colin Fletcher and Jane Griffiths and poet Alan Buckley.

EXTRACURRICULAR: The Cellar – Launch night for the Cellar's new club night playing a mix of garage, house, drum&bass, hip hop, beats and breaks.

CAT MATADOR + THE COOLING PEARLS + TOLIESEL: The Port Mahon – Oxjam show with dark-hearted indie types Cat Matador; wistfully gothic acoustic trio The Cooling Pearls and epic indie rockers Toliesel.

FUSED: Fat Lil's, Witney – 90s and noughties pop and rock party band.

VIKING MOSES + ROB St JOHN +

PETRELS: Modern Art – Emotionally taut alt.folk, blues and electronica from erstwhile Devendra Banhart bassist Brendan Massei and his band.

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy

VINYL VANDALS: The Swan, Wantage – 80s covers.

SUNDAY 16th

BLESSTHEFALL + PIERCE THE VEIL: O2 Academy – Arizona's post-hardcore crew return with their third album, 'Awakening'.

EMILY BARKER & THE RED CLAY HALO: The Jericho Tavern – Haunting desert songs with an occasional gypsy folk flourish from the Norfolk-based Aussie songstress, best known for her theme tunes to *Wallander* and *The Shadow Line*, sometimes compared favourably to Laura Cantrell and Gillian Welch and out on tour with her regular chamber folk trio The Red Clay Halo in support of new album 'Almanac'.

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

OPEN JAM SESSION: The Swan, Wantage
SUNDAY ROAST: The Cellar

MONDAY 17th

CHAPEL CLUB: O2 Academy – Lustrous Bunnymen-inspired rocking from the rising indie starlets – *see main preview*

GEOFF ACHISON & THE SOUL DIGGERS: The Bullingdon – The Melbourne-based blues-rockers and previous winner of the prestigious Albert King Award for most promising young blues guitarist returns to the Famous Monday Blues club, excelling at both electric and acoustic blues styles, adding jazz and funk improvisations to his traditional repertoire.

TUESDAY 18th

BENJAMIN FRANCIS LEFTWICH: O2 Academy – Wistful acoustic melancholia from the York singer-songwriter in the mould of Elliott Smith and Jose Gonzales, out on his biggest headline tour to date, in support of debut album, 'Last Smoke Before The Snowstorm'.

POP WILLEATITSELF: O2 Academy – Graham Crabb reforms his old grebo-industrial act, without co-frontman Clint Mansell, but now in league with Gay Byker's Mary Byker, for a run through old hits like 'Def Con One', 'Ich Bin Ein Auslander' and 'Can U Dig It?'.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Live jazz from The Stuart Henderson Quintet.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon



Thursday 20th

UGLY DUCKLING: The Bullingdon

Just over a year on from their last visit to Oxford, it's great to be able to welcome Long Beach, California trio Ugly Duckling back to town. DJ Young Einstein and MCs Dizzy Dustin and Andy Cooper grew up surrounded by gangsta rap but their brand of hip hop is far removed from that genre, heavily referencing classic old school acts like The Beastie Boys, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul and Eric B & Rakim, preferring the old school way of sampled rather than self-created beats and frequently lampooning contemporary mainstream hip hop's excesses, while paying homage to its golden era acts – their track 'Do You Know What I'm Saying', for example, is made up entirely of lines from classic hip hop tunes. Live the emphasis is on interactive fun and their relentlessly upbeat outlook, frequent biblical references and lyrical sharp rapping has made them cult stars, releasing six albums since they formed in 1993, including their latest, 'Moving At Breakneck Speed', and playing festivals across the globe, including Coachella, Reading and Australia's Pyramid Rock, while over in the UK a cult following was earned from the frequent use of their music on *Ideal*.

WEDNESDAY 19th

SPECTRALS: The Jericho Tavern – Leeds-based songsmith Louis Oliver resurrects classic doo-wop and 60s girl group with their two-piece band Spectrals, coming across like a Yorkshire Best Coast at times, drawing inspiration from Dion, The Shangri-La's and the mellower side of The Jesus & Mary Chain on their debut album, out this month on Wichita.

THE PIERCES: O2 Academy – Slick, nominally folksy pop from sisters Catherine and Allison Pierce, recent back up to Lissie on tour and now going out in their own right in support of new album 'You & I'.

FREE RANGE: The Cellar

THURSDAY 20th

UGLY DUCKLING: The Bullingdon – Return to town for the Californian rap trio in awe of hip hop's golden age – *see main preview*
VISIONS OF TREES: The Jericho Tavern – Ethereal electro-heavy dream-pop from the London duo – *see main preview*



Thursday 20th

VISIONS OF TREES: The Jericho Tavern

Visions of Trees claim to be from “nowhere” and describe their music as “nothing”, proclaiming only that they want to “create our own wilderness”, all of which makes it quite hard to discover anything much that’s useful about them, but it’s well worth persevering since the duo’s debut single, ‘Sometimes It Kills’, on Moshi Moshi, is gorgeous, in a slightly unsettling kind of way, pitching distorted electronic beats and abstract electronic soundscapes underneath fantastically crystalline female vocals. So it turns out Visions Of Trees are Joni Juden and Sara Atalar and they’re from London. He makes the beats and synthy bits, she’s the one with the heavenly voice. Doubtless someone somewhere has already lumped them under the heading Chillwave, and there are moments where they share airspace with the likes of Washed Out, but more than that the pair are like a fully-updated-for-the-21st-Century Cocteau Twins or AC Marias – music that sometimes feels almost too fragile to exist in the physical world. It’s gothic and ethereal but occasionally club friendly in an ambient r’n’b fashion, the clamour of beats and synths providing a discreet canvas for Sara’s dreamy vocals. Tonight’s show is part of a headline tour to promote new release ‘Sirens’ and follows their appearance at the Ashmolean back in the summer, a venue perfectly suited to their lush but intricate music.

HAWKLORDS: O2 Academy – Harvey Bainbridge, Steve Swindells, Nik Turner and assorted other Hawkwind associates reform their space-rock offshoot for more spirit of the age fun and psychedelic sound exploration.

APPLE PIRATE PRESENTS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Indie, punk and rock bands.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

SIX BULLET CHAMBER + DOGSTATE: The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Jambox rock and metal night.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: Jack Russell, Marston

FRIDAY 21st

THE HORRORS: O2 Academy – Skinny, black-clad gothic garage-rock joy unbounded – *see main preview*

ANNIE MAC PRESENTS: O2 Academy – Radio 1 DJ Annie spins a mix of electro,

dubstep, drum&bass and hip hop alongside 2Bears and Ray Foxx.

MECHANICAL BRIDE: The Jericho Tavern – Quirky melancholy and eerie acoustic pop reveries from Lauren Doss, somewhere between Lykke Li, Laura Marling and Florence & The Machine.

NINE-STONE COWBOY + PANDAS & PEOPLE + ALAMAKOTA: The Wheatsheaf – Daisy Rodgers club night with lachrymose pop from Mark Cope’s NSC; quirky electro-tinged alt.pop from Redditch’s Pandas & People and funk, dub and jazz fusion from Alamakota.

LEFT OUTERJOIN + HALF DECENT + ASTRO SNAKE: The Bullingdon – Big, bold squelchy acid trance from Left Outer Join, plus electro-heavy rap from Half Decent.

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon
SIX BULLET CHAMBER + WHERE’S BILLY + DOGSTATE: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox rock night.

WE ARE ELEMENTS: The Cellar

SATURDAY 22nd

DAVE GILES: O2 Academy – Quirky folk-pop in a similar vein to Frank Turner from Dave Giles, out on tour to promote new album ‘Tales Of A Social Misfit’.

BOWLING FOR SOUP + SUBURBAN LEGEND + ORANGE: O2 Academy – Texas’ most puerile addition to the punk-pop firmament return to full band action after Jaret and Erik’s recent acoustic tours, back with a new album, ‘Fishin For Woos’, but doubtless plenty of old jokes.

BEN HOWARD: The Jericho Tavern – With an almost religiously devoted following behind him already, Devon’s delicate folk-pop troubadour’s gigs already have an air of prayer meetings about them, but it’s a following he’s rightly earned through word of mouth rather than any social network site buzz. Howard’s cosy form of acoustic pop, at home on Ben Mumford’s label, is spiced up by jazzy intricacy, mixing up influences like Tim Buckley, John Martyn and Nick Drake.

THE NORTHSEA RADIO ORCHESTRA + WATER PAGEANT + LEWIS WATSON: St. Michael’s at the Northgate – A contemporary mix of classic romantic and chamber music with contemporary classical, folk and art-rock from The Northsea Radio Orchestra, recently seen backing Stornoway at their Regal show. Pretty pastoral pop support from Water Pageant.

BLIN’ JOHNNIE + SCATTERED FEW + JON BOYD: The Folly Bridge Inn – Glenda Huish’s new band Blin’ Johnnie headline, plus ambient psych-rockers Scattered Few and mordant Americana singer Jon Boyd.

DUBWISER + HOOKS + EVO SYLVIAN: The Port Mahon – A proper old school punky reggae party as last month’s Nightshift cover stars Dubwiser pitch their dub, roots and soul up against young local punk pups Hooks, plus Craig from Dead Jerichos’ electro solo project Evo Sylvian.

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy

SELECTA: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.

MAD MODS & ENGLISHMEN: The Swan, Wantage – Mod covers.

SUNDAY 23rd

THE CORRESPONDENTS: The Cellar – The hard-gigging band plug their ‘What’s Happened To Soho?’ EP, mixing up jazz, hip hop and funk into their oddball but dancefloor-friendly electro-pop.

MONDAY 24th

WRETCH 32 + LOICK ESSIEN + TEEZY + DUCHESS: O2 Academy – Pop-friendly hip hop from the chart-bothering Tottenham rapper – *see main preview*

ERJA LYYTINEN BAND: The Bullingdon – Return to the Famous Monday Blues for the young Finnish guitarist who has earned an enviable reputation as a rising blues star in her homeland and has previously worked with UK blues faves Ian Parker and Aynsley Lister.

Friday 21st

THE HORRORS: O2 Academy

Funny how things turned out for The Horrors. Originally seeming to be little more than *NME*-hyped clothes horses kicking out a frenzied brand of garage-rock, their second album, ‘Primary Colours’, saw them artistically and critically reborn. Updating classic 70s and 80s alt.rock in style and produced by Portishead’s Geoff Barrow, the album fused the likes of Joy Division, The Chameleons, Psychedelic Furs and Sisters Of Mercy with Can’s krautrock and PiL’s post-punk, coated it all in pitch black clothing, drenched it in reverb and, hey presto, instant classic – one that was predictably robbed of a deserved Mercury Prize. Two years on and The Horrors’ third opus, ‘Skying’, is greeted by critics and fans alike with almost religious anticipation. A difficult task to fulfil such expectation but while the new album is more restrained than its predecessor, it’s an album that repays repeated listening, switching its gaze towards Simple Minds’ early electro-heavy pop as well as early-90s shoegaze. Live they’re as self-consciously enigmatic as you’d hope for, Faris Badwan’s wonderfully glowering baritone cutting through the storm of heavily treated guitars and scouring synths, a perfect blend of period cool performed with enthusiastic panache. Fantastic stuff.



JAWLESS & FRIENDS: The Cellar

TUESDAY 25th

SAM DUCKWORTH: The Jericho Tavern – Stripping off his Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly! moniker, Mr Duckworth plays an intimate acoustic show.

MAVERICK SABRE: O2 Academy – R'n'b, trip-hop, Motown soul and jazz-infused hip hop from the Hackney rapper, a vocal contributor to Professor Green's 'Jungle' single and a Top 20 hitmaker in his own right with his 'Let Me Go' single earlier in the summer.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Live jazz from guest Robert Vienna.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 26th

FOREIGN OFFICE: The Jericho Tavern – Squelchy electro-funk from the recent Erasure support act.

BG RECORDS SHOWCASE: O2 Academy – Polemical female rap and grime star No-Lay headlines BG Records' showcase night, joined by reunited electro-punk crew Baby Gravy, Foals-y indie tykes The Vibe and a supporting cast that includes SUD, Exonic, Volume, Domino T and Blueprint.

CHARLIE BAXTER + SPACE HEROES OF THE PEOPLE + LEFT OUTER JOIN: The Wheatsheaf – A night of electro-pop courtesy of Moshka tonight, with SHOTP mixing up vintage Kraftwerk, Numan and The Normal with acid house and techno.

NERVANA: Fat Lil's, Witney – Nirvana tribute band.

PHAT SESSIONS: The Cellar

THURSDAY 27th

AS GODS + RED SEAS FIRE + CRYISIS + ANNERO: The Bullingdon – Skeletor metal night with a double dose of prog-core from Guildford's As Gods and Bristol's Red Seas Fire, plus local thrash support from Crysis and Annero.

JOHNNY GET THE GUN: O2 Academy – Chugging, anthemic soft rocking from London's JGTG.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

KILL CITY SAINTS + MOONMOTH +

BLACK SUNRISE: Fat Lil's, Witney – Local rock bands night.

WHEN WORDS FAIL + PARADIGM SHIFT + THE COLD HARBOUR: The Hobgoblin, Bicester – Jambox metal and rock night.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: Jack Russell, Marston

WORDPLAY: The Cellar

FRIDAY 28th

BRITISH SEA POWER: O2 Academy – Always welcome return to town for Brighton's elegantly bookish indie rockers, following their support to The Manics with this headline tour to promote 'Valhalla Dancehall', still ahead of the game in the epic grandeur stakes, the new album adding a sweeter melodic edge to their sound but live, as ever, they're a superbly visceral experience.

THE KIXX: O2 Academy – Cheesy blues-meets-All American Rejects shitemongery from Reading's "boy band with a difference", who have supported Ollie Murs and boast they were once offered advice by Robbie Williams. Whether that advice was along the lines of sticking their godawful songs up their arses and fucking off while they were about it is something we may never know. Our lives are so much emptier for it.

KILL MURRAY + BETABLOCKER + THE BODY CLOCK: The Bullingdon – Kill

Murray, the band formed by members of 50ft Panda, Phantom Theory and Dial F For Frankenstein play their first headline show.

TOO REX: Fat Lil's, Witney – T-Rex tribute.

THE GRACEFUL SLICKS + FEUD +

CYNOTIA: The Swan, Wantage – Velvets and Sonics-inspired 60s psychedelia and garage rock from Graceful Slicks.

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon

FOUNDATION REGGAE: East Oxford

Community Centre – Roots and dub club session.

HQ: The Cellar

SATURDAY 29th

UPSTAIRS: O2 Academy – The Academy's monthly team up with BBC Oxford Introducing to showcase the best local acts this month features Charly Coombes' soulful rockers The New Breed, alongside blues and rockabilly siren Tamara & The Martyrs, haunted gothic folksters Samuel Zasada, epic indie types Toliesel and A Genuine Freakshow.

WINCHELL RIOTS + MAGIC LANTERN + DOUG TIELLI: The Jacqueline du Pre Building – A suitably grandiose setting for Winchell Riots' elaborate indie rock, fusing Sigur Ros's intricate glacial soundscapes with Snow Patrol's epic intent. Support from folk, jazz and contemporary chamber pop group Magic Lantern and Toronto folk singer Doug Tielli.

THE CELLAR FAMILY + DALLAS DON'T + MEAN RIGHT HOOK: The Port Mahon – Ferocious, angular post-hardcore from Cellar Family, with support from local indie newcomers Dallas Don't, leaning towards the mellow side of Idlewild.

MY BIG UK: The Folly Bridge Inn – Oxford's 1970s hitmakers prepare to release their new album, 'Bitter Street'.

W.A.M: Fat Lil's, Witney – Ska and punk covers.

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy

JAMBOX ROCK ALL-DAYER: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury (1pm) – Benefit gig in aid of the Musicians' Benevolent Fund, with former-Sikh chap Mikee Goodman's new band The Painted Smiles, plus thrash merchants Reign Upon Us and sets from Izzi Stone, Nine Lights, Molly Makes Mistakes, Grindhouse, Lo-Audio, Haunted Tranquillity, plus acoustic sets from Riohouse, Serotonin and CJ Quinn.

ROOTS & REGGAE NIGHT: The Bullingdon

GREEN ONIONS: The Swan, Wantage – Blues Brothers tribute.

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Monday 24th

WRETCH 32:

O2 Academy

In the absence of an obvious soundtrack to this summer's riots, Tottenham rapper Wretch 32's second album, 'Black & White' seems to be a popular choice for some. The man born Jermaine Scott is the son of a local reggae DJ who took part in the 1985 Broadwater Farm riots and was a friend of Mark Duggan, whose shooting indirectly triggered the riots. Despite his roots in grime, though, 'Black & White' sounds too pop-friendly to properly backdrop footage of burning buildings: big hits like the singalong 'Traktor' and the Stone Roses-sampling 'Unorthodox' lack that grit and bile. While he's hardly a good-time MC like Dizzee Rascal, he's hardly Roots Manuva either, his conscious rapping eclipsed by his big choruses and a swaggering sense of showmanship. The new album is also a pretty soulful affair wherein Wretch unveils his more sensitive, loving side; it feels, more than anything, like a grown up record. Which isn't to put the man down: he's a great rapper of the old school and live in particular has more presence than most, even if he does have a predilection for covering The Script. He's an adept freestyler too, putting his skills to Jay-Z's '99 Problems' and with a healthy handful of MOBO nominations to his name this year, his rise to the upper echelons of British urban music is undeniable.

SUNDAY 30th

BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3pm) – Open jam session with Dave Smith and his band.

MONDAY 31st

PATRICK WOLF: O2 Academy – More lupine musical loveliness from the London folktronica troubadour, cutting his pastoral hymns with analogue sounds, violin and electronic beats to underpin his elegantly doomed lyrics, marking him out as a latter-day Nick Cave or John Cale at times. He's out on tour again in support of new album 'Lupercalia', his fifth.

GREGG WRIGHT & LEFT HOOK: The Bullingdon – Classic blues and rock anthems from the Californian guitarist, a veteran session man who has worked with Michael Jackson and Spencer Davies in an illustrious career, renowned for his left-handed playing of an upturned right-handed guitar.

LIVE



photo: Johnny Moto

STORNOWAY / THE EPSTEIN / DREAMING SPIRES

The Regal

There's something about The Regal's weathered glamour that makes any gig here An Event, but tonight's show, as with anything involving Stornoway in recent times, does feel like a special occasion.

It is, of course, a Concert 4 Conservation, raising money for various environmental charities, including Sumatran orang-utans and the RSBP, volunteers from whom shuffle about the venue in furry or feathered fancy dress all evening shaking collection buckets, no doubt suffering more than anyone from the venue's rising internal temperature. When the bar subsequently runs out of everything apart from cider and WKD before Stornoway have even taken to the stage, we're inclined to organise a Concert 4 Intoxication.

Dreaming Spires' bucolic 60s-styled Americana neatly reflects the pictures of fauns and orchids and wholesome children enjoying wood-related activities that play out on the giant screens each side

of the stage, an opening number that promises to turn into 'Venus In Furs' drifting into the sort of wistful nostalgia we've long since come to expect from brothers Robin and Joe Bennett. Their set, though, gradually feels uplifting, powered along by drummer Loz Colbert, Robin's voice initially tremulous and fragile but becoming optimistic by turns until, by the final, slightly cheesy, song, he's in full Christian rock cheerleader mode.

The Epstein are simultaneously more earthy and more rarefied, the trio now bolstered by the addition of Humphrey Astley and Tommy Longfellow, from Tamara & The Martyrs. There's always been a widescreen feel about The Epstein but lately Ollie Wills' songs and voice have moved from the campfire and the porch to encompass the entire horizon, typified by closing number, and recent single, 'I Held You Once'. This is, as The Waterboys might once have described, The Big

Music. And as long as The Epstein's tunes can keep up with the expansion in sound, they'll soon develop their own gravity fields.

Tonight's show might have been described as a homecoming for Stornoway – it is, after all, their first Oxford gig in a year – but it's more like a well-wishing party for conquering heroes about to set off on a new epic quest. Tonight is, of course, a first chance to hear some of the songs that will appear on the band's next album. They're keen that their hometown fans get first listen, and for the most part we're amply rewarded. 'When You Touch Down' is about aliens landing in South Park, a quirkily romantic piece that might have come from the pen of Paul McCartney, while 'The Bigger Picture', played out alone and acoustic by Brian Briggs, and a close-harmony song aired during the encore, show off Stornoway's extraordinary range and increasing confidence. Slightly less satisfying is a folk shanty featuring Brian on autoharp that could be a bold Orcadian roustabout but ends up sounding too much like 'What Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor'.

Of course the best moments, the

times when a 1,500-strong crowd are most roused, come with old favourites: 'We Are The Battery Human' provoking a mass singalong only two songs into the set; the gorgeously nostalgic 'Fuel Up', with its metaphorical car ride through a lifetime of memories; the child-like simplicity of 'I Saw You Blink' with its indefatigable glee tinged with exquisite melancholy and, best of all, the sublime 'Coldharbour Road', awash with nature-related metaphors for the storm of a love affair.

Brian remains an unassuming frontman, recounting stories of cross-eyed possums and a German cow that escaped the abattoir to go and live in a forest, before announcing 'The End Of The Mooovie' with wry understatement, the band tonight joined for the second half of their set by the North Sea Radio Orchestra, who add discreet strings to the likes of 'Here Comes the Blackout'.

A final encore of 'Zorbing' is as welcome as it is predictable, giant inflatable balls let loose from their moorings to surf over the crowd as Stornoway, as ever, close the show with a sense of triumph.

Dale Kattack

THE GOGGENHEIM / MacGILLIVRAY /

D GWALIA

Modern Art

We've been on a mission to catch Dylan Gwalia ever since the Welshman-turned-Oxfordian's debut album, 'In Puget Sound' completely blew us away last year. On paper the rarefied confines of Modern Art should provide the perfect setting for his sombre, sonorous music, but in reality the high wooden ceiling tends to swallow the subtleties of his sound, and when his bass guitar packs up early on, we worry we'd have been better of sticking with the CD. He's not to be defeated though and two tracks in particular from the album, the gorgeously sinister 'Orson Welles' and set closer 'The Cruel Ships Captain', show what a rare talent he is, the rich welsh burr of his voice drawing obvious but deserved comparisons to John Cale, while he shares an ability with This Mortal Coil's Dominic Appleton to mine a deep, rich seam of melancholy with almost nonchalant ease.

Our first impression of MacGillivray is of a strangled cat randomly pounding a piano. Not great, then. Quickly though she drops down to a more comfortable vocal register and reveals, like her sometime collaborator D Gwalia, a singer of exquisite depth and range, from breathless operatic swoon, lonely as the ocean, to tortured tragic heroine via some wonderful Gaelic incantations. Her music, played entirely on piano tonight, swoops from barely-there minimalism to an oddly restrained form of catharsis, everything reaches a peak as she loops her vocals and allows them to swarm around the room. There are brief moments

when you're reminded of Cat Power or Bat For Lashes, but MacGillivray is a singular talent.

After such ethereal fare, The Goggenheim are a stunning wake-up call. Singer Grace Exley is dressed up like some kind of ancient Egyptian burlesque performer, possessed of the most stunning vibrato voice you'll hear outside of Italian opera, and backed by a five-strong band that plays with the fluid tightness of a jazz ensemble but with the taut, nervous energy and spikiness of post-punk's first flowering. Early set highlight 'Ah Samina' is a wired, dissonant freakout that recalls the best extremes of Renaldo & The Loaf and The Residents, only mashed through The Slits' witchy punk-funk.

Further in they're no less fevered or esoteric and our battered notebook ends up littered with references to everything from Throbbing Gristle to This Heat, via The Grateful Dead and some kind of crazed krautrock. Just occasionally they lose their focus, playing it hazier and looser, but by the time they finish with 'Plastic Space Disco', a title that might well sum them up as well as anything we can muster, they're a brilliantly squalling bundle of musical nonsense, a genuine one-off act in a world of conformity. They are also, having managed to personally piss of Rupert Murdoch, impossible to Google. Embrace their insanity.

Dale Kattack

XERATH / PROSPEKT / AETHARA / IN DECADENCE / ZAOS

O2 Academy

A year on from Nightshift's metal special, the local scene has gone from strength to strength, evidenced by promoters Skeletor making the move to the Academy for a monthly team-up with Room 101.

While the tone of the night is one of brutality, the five-band showcase displays enough variety to prevent metal fatigue setting in, openers Zaos adding an often elaborate progressive twist on death metal, frontman Mikey Goodson a grimacing, growling gargoyle leading his band's Meshuggah-styled blast-core.

In Decadence lack Zaos's pure slam value but once they're up to full steam their classic thrash-cum-metalcore finds them scoring highly on the sweat factor.

Aethara's pummelling beatdown reaches epic proportions, the somewhat standardised death-growl-blast-beats-and-shredded-riffs set-up laced with almost operatic backing vocals and a sheer, unrelenting sense of purpose that lashes any reservations to the rack and mercilessly

beats the living shit out of them. Fantastic.

Prospekt are easily the most inventively nuanced act on show tonight, Lee Luland eschewing sheer brutality for an almost acrobatic fretboard performance that goes a long way to justifying the comparisons to Eddie Van Halen that have been directed his way.

You can hear immediately how headliners Xerath originally formed to create film scores; their orchestral approach to symphonic metal is cinematic in scope, but as claustrophobic as any torture porn flick. Like Aethara before them they're, at face value, a standard package of modern progressive metal components but taken to a higher level by their pin-sharp execution, the stately, almost serene, chime of keyboards stacked at odds with the battling blastbeats and Richard Thompson's death-growl vocals. They're a suitably climactic finale to what we can only hope is the first of many Skeletor extravaganzas to come.

Ed Burnham

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SUPERNORMAL FESTIVAL

Braziers Park

Asking myself how I feel about Supernormal is a strange experience. On the one hand, I absolutely love the *idea* of it: Braziers Park taken over by musical and artistic curators, loads of obscure bands and everything from a singalong *Wicker Man* and a programme of experimental films to Bowie karaoke and a 36-hour improv performance clanking away with a nine-year-old on drums next to the hot dog stand. At times, it's so pretentious it somehow manages to come full circle and become utterly straightforward.

In practice, the musical highlights are disappointingly few and far between: far more common are sets of haphazard nonsense shouting from people dressed as clowns or vampires (take a bow, **Lonesome Cowboys** and **Mr Solo**) or look-at-me bouts of improv which could easily come under the heading of 'couldn't be bothered to practice'.

Thankfully it's not all dressing up and random shouting. **Skullflower** drill a hole in the head with their psychedelic drone noise; **SJ Esau** wobbles around a set of unpredictable hip hop, folk and electronica; **Gum Takes Tooth** are a squadron of brutal kosmische Panzers; the mighty **Bong** stretch two chords out into a monolithic set of Sunn0)))-mimicry. The discovery of the weekend, **Fuzzy Lights**, stitch together Dirty Three, Papa M and Broken Records into something rather lovely of their own.

But concerns about the consistency of music over the



Lonesome Cowboy photo by Giulia Biasibetti

course of its three long days mean that this is *nearly* an amazing festival. The fact that it exists, run by the time and enthusiasm of artists and bands giving their time

for free to create something appreciably different, is in itself to be applauded. A higher quality of music across the weekend, and a few more people knowing

about this supernormal enclave tucked away in the woods and we could have a genuine treasure of a festival on our doorstep.

Stuart Fowkes

THE LOOSE SALUTE / CAT MATADOR / BAND OF HOPE / LEWIS WATSON / NICK RUCK

The Bullingdon

Opening tonight's Back & To The Left show, the cruelly underrated Nick Ruck, ex- of The Roundheels and Cargo Cult, plays a short but enthralling set of his own material with a gentle country blues theme. Tirelessly original, he could be Oxford's answer to Jim O'Rourke, his continual inventiveness always a joy to watch.

Lewis Watson, another acoustic singer/songwriter, is young, polite and nervous, and his music follows suit. Gentle and diverting for a while, he seems a little too in debt to acknowledged heroes like Ed Sheeran to maintain our interest for too long.

Next up come more countryphiles in the shape of Band of Hope from Wallingford. Inoffensive if a little downbeat, their mid-bill status is pitched about right. The tasteful violin and poignant air

can't make up for a shortage of great songs, though 'Summer Cold' comes close.

There's nothing so positive to say about Cat Matador, sadly. Ponderous and overblown, they're best described as a poor man's Winchell Riots (even down to the great drummer), though that really should read a poor man whose hardship payments have just been stopped by the Job Centre. If they could pull things together and focus the introspection in a less moany manner they could possibly be on to something.

London's The Loose Salute are the brainchild of Ian McCutcheon, once drummer of influential 90s shoegazers Slowdive and then Mojave 3, though now promoted to singer and guitarist. The band seem to have arrived straight

from 1967, both musically and visually, all Dennis Wilson t-shirts and huge sideburns. Signed to Heavenly and oozing talent and professionalism, they're almost too clinically flawless to be simply enjoyable. Maybe we've just had enough of indie country by this point, 'This Is Love' sounding a bit too much like the soundtrack to a T-Mobile ad. Things perk up when the two female singers take over vocal duties, complementing each other perfectly, and anyone who can create a warm vibe on an autumnal Wednesday night deserves a medal. But ultimately there's too much Beautiful South polish and too little Mamas and Papas innocence.

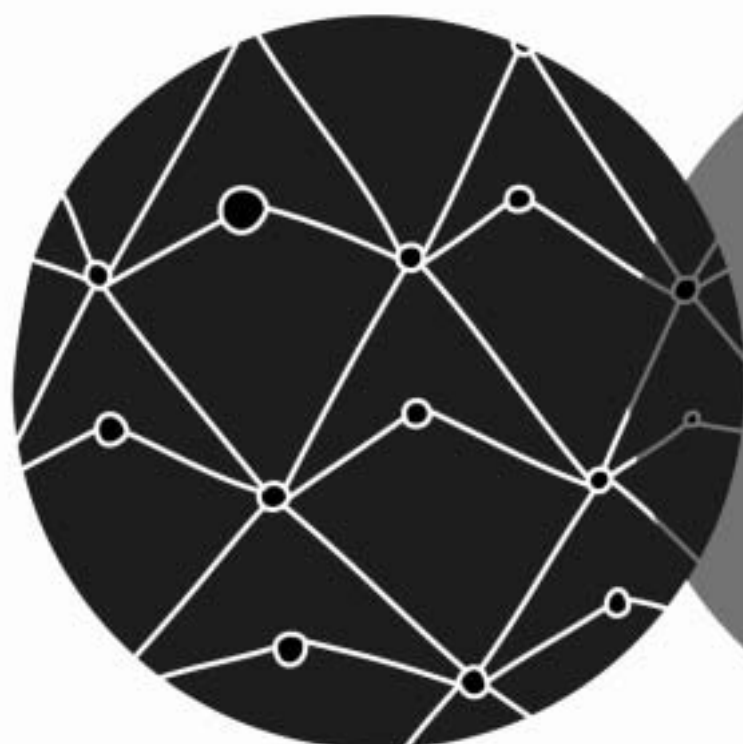
A film of this whole evening would make a great section of a documentary about the state of UK music in 2011, everyone capturing a piece of the zeitgeist in their own way. But the endless remoulding of folk and country has to stop somewhere. Please.

Art Lagun

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DAVID FORD

O2 Academy

David Ford was cynical long before the recession hit, but tonight there seems to be something timely about his brazen lack of romantic ideology. He opens with 'Song For The Republican Convention' mixed with 'Cheer Up (You Miserable Fuck)', fusing whistle blues with his ability to spit lyrics out as if some kind of poison. Later in the night 'State Of The Union' follows a similar vein, loops being layered far beyond what Katie Tunstall might opt for, until it becomes a crashing wall of dissent, only complete by the foot stomps on the piano.

Yet whilst David's political messages often tumble out in the form of heavier songs, 'Guantanamo Bay' being giving an edge by the loop, it's the piano-led 'Stephen' which hits the hardest nerve. Despite all the media that surrounds Irish politics there is nothing more moving than a single song told from the perspective of widow Mrs Carroll and no greater reminder of the reality of conflict than a story riddled with pain.

Religion gets an equal smattering of disdain, the more autobiographical 'St Peter' being built on his tour of the southern American States. Meanwhile, 'Panic' combines frustration with speed until David is practically chanting his abhorrence for religion in some kind of trance-like mantra. It's the juxtaposition of these protests against the likes of 'To Hell With The World' and 'Song For The Road' which make these latter piano driven numbers even more heartfelt.

He may be back with new recordings, but it is the older songs which capture the crowd. Whilst 'Pour A Little Poison' is a solid, though more country sounding number, it's 'I Don't Care What You Call Me' and 'Requiem' which truly surmise what David is about. As I leave, I overhear a couple moaning about the level of noise and degree of reverb, but I for one, welcomed the chance to have my disgruntlement for 21st Century living matched by David's dissident sound.

Lisa Ward

RICHMOND FONTAINE

The Bullingdon

Empty Room Promotions have served up a real treat tonight, bringing Portland, Oregon's Richmond Fontaine to the back room of the Bully. They are here principally to promote their tenth studio album, 'The High Country', an album that on first listen seemed disappointing, but on repeated plays turns out to sneak up on you and be their best ever.

This is some achievement for a band on their tenth album, more so when you realise it is more than a concept piece, rather a short story cut up and set to music. The album is set amongst the logging community in small town Oregon, and tells the tale of a secret love between the counter girl of an auto parts store and a mechanic. The weirdos of the community terrorise the young couple and

their innocent ways. That this type of album should work so well will be no surprise to anyone familiar with Richmond Fontaine's back catalogue, or indeed singer Willy Vlautin's three novels.

Willy announces at the beginning of the show that they are going to play the album in full, followed by a brief selection of their back catalogue. It helps that there is an audience of *Uncut* readers present to allow them to do such things. Deborah Kelley of The Damnations is here to reprise her vocals from the album, and to provide extra instrumentation. She seizes the initiative immediately, with her affecting spoken word opening piece, 'Inventory'. The band run with this on the haunting instrumental 'The Girl

On The Logging Road', before launching into the gently ferocious 'The Chainsaw Sea'. 'Angus King Tries To Leave The House' swirls and kicks like a toy boat in high winds, disorientating wildly. They even pull off 'Driving Back To The Chainsaw Sea', the sound of a radio being re-tuned between awful country stations.

After a short break for beer, the band returns for a run through past favourites. In some aspects this merely accentuates the giant leap the band have made with 'The High Country', but it also shows they can be a great rollicking alt.country bar band too, like a slightly defter Hold Steady. When they play 'Lonnie' from the album 'We Used To Think The Highway Sounded Like A River', you remember what great things they have done previous to that astonishing current album.

Russell Barker

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TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS / NINE TON PEANUT SMUGGLERS

O2 Academy

It must be tough opening for a living legend but it doesn't seem to faze Oxford's Nine Ton Peanut Smugglers. They manage to grab the attention of the growing crowd and warm them and the atmosphere up nicely with an entertaining set of mainly self-penned ska and rhythm'n'blues. The crowd even respond to leader Sir Bald Diddley's call, 'Everybody Ska' with some gentle swaying. Their set could be even better though, if more of the numbers were spiced up with the blistering jazz solos which feature in the band's last number, 'Bald Head'.

The by now jam-packed crowd raise their game several notches for Toots and the Maytals. When asked "Are you ready for the pressure to drop?" it's astonishing how many belt out the 'Pressure Drop' chorus at top volume even before Fredrick 'Toots' Hibbert saunters on stage. Dressed in sleeveless leather jerkin, leather trousers, black bandana and shades, Toots' gangsta look is slightly dodgy and contradicts the goodwill and warmth he exudes but there

is nothing dodgy about the 65-year-old's singing voice, his energy levels and his stagecraft in the manner he invites the crowd to get ever more involved.

What we get tonight is a revival meeting celebrating Toots' catalogue of hits stretching back to the mid 60s. Ska and reggae is tinged with gospel and Toots is the preacher man. Early on 'Reggae Got Soul' sets the tone with Toots at the front of the stage, arm outstretched and pointing over the crowd as he declaims, "Everybody's got soul; he got soul; you got soul!" Behind him his five-piece band is tight and shifts effortlessly between ska rhythms and reggae skank. Quite why the veteran rhythm guitarist plays the whole night with a towel draped over his baseball cap remains a mystery.

We get all the classic hits, of course. 'Time Tough' and 'Sweet and Dandy' are followed by a mento-influenced 'Louie Louie', which Toots covered successfully in the 1980s. After that it's further back with Toots picking up an acoustic



photo: Colin May

guitar for my favourite moment of the night, a wonderfully liquid, languid version of 'Bam Bam', which won him the first Jamaican song contest in the 60s. Then, via 'Funky Kingston', the main set builds to its finale, a loud rendition of 'Monkey Man' with the congregation bellowing the refrain before giving out a tumultuous, ear-splitting call for an encore.

Back comes Toots for another half hour, featuring, appropriately, 'I Never Grow Old,' and a half gospel, half rap version of '54-64 Was My Number', with much spirited call and response between Toots and a now very boisterous audience who are almost as much the stars of the night as the man himself.

Colin May

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HEALTH / LISTING SHIPS / THE MANACLES OF ACID

The Jericho Tavern

Knob-twiddling: a term that conjures up images of a greasy recidivist in a long mac lurking in the bushes of your local park and indulging in a game of pocket billiards at the merest glimpse of teenage skin. But thankfully tonight's display of knob-twiddling from the Manacles Of Acid is a great deal more agreeable than that, if not entirely wholesome. Beats and squelching synths mesh neatly, and the symbiosis between man and machines is impressive, if not exactly a feast for the eyes. Given a late-night slot in a darkened Cellar, these Manacles might really grip.

Comprised of veterans of the local scene, Listing Ships haven't taken long to make a big splash. Not for them wearing their influences metaphorically upon their sleeves: no, they prefer to wear them literally on their t-shirts. Bassist Stuart Fowkes' Can T-shirt signposts what's coming, though the quartet perhaps wisely avoid dropping anchor for too long in any particular port. 'All Aboard The Andrea Doria', for instance, calls in on Mogwai, Rodan and (most pleasingly) the bristling, aggressive instrumental funk of Billy Mahonie before setting sail anew. Fowkes introduces one track by saying: "It's about a shipwreck, like all of our

songs". We eagerly await their take on Celine Dion's 'My Heart Will Go On'.

"You will love each other", reads the slogan on the HEALTH T-shirts at the merch desk. A sunny prediction? A sinister command? Who knows. Equally unsettling is the Californians' music, the sound of Wolf Eyes and Animal Collective taking a power drill to each other's craniums and wallowing around in what issues forth. It's a kaleidoscopic collage of thrash, noise, electronics, tribal drumming, shouting, flailing hair and primary colours. And, by and large, it's thrilling.

And yet, two songs from the end of the main set, they abruptly and somewhat improbably morph into MGMT circa 'Time To Pretend'. The kids love it, sure, but the band suddenly look faintly depressed, as though contractually obliged to play the hits. That they suddenly appear to be caught in the headlights of the mainstream and desperate to escape away back into the shadows is underlined by the single-song encore, a minute of throat-shredding and skin-bashing. "This is the real us", they seem to be saying. Next time, they might hopefully spare us the identity crisis.

Ben Woolhead

EAST 17 O2 Academy

As is customary these days, "edgy" 90s boyband East 17 have (yet again) reformed, though this time the gaffe-prone proto-Dappy, Brian Harvey, has been replaced by the requisitely tattooed and baseball-capped Blair Dreelan. Songwriter and rapper Tony Mortimer is back, sometimes brandishing a guitar (sadly hard to hear in the mix). The other two, John Hendy and Terry Coldwell – who don't seem to have aged – look delighted to still be there.

The poppier stuff like 'House of Love', 'It's Alright', and the slightly risqué (if you were in your early teens at the time) 'Deep' and 'Steam' are still fun, but John and Terry – who do the occasional harmony and now stand in line with the others rather than dance behind them – still seem underused. On the slower, more r'n'b numbers like 'Hold My Body Tight', 'Someone To Love' and 'Around the World' (which I'm sure didn't use to sound so Lighthouse Family),

Tony's rapping seems lacklustre, but that could be due less to lack of effort and more because what worked in 1994 doesn't work now.

Oddly, given the marketing opportunity, they only do one song from their imminent new album; if the rest of it is anything like the sub-Olly Murs 'Secret Of My Life', it's probably just as well.

Tony's songwriting is still impressive – 'Stay Another Day' has outlived the output of most mid-90s boybands and remains one of the most memorable ballads of that decade – and he could surely still do a Gary Barlow and churn them out for *X-Factor* finalists. But for all the nostalgic excitement of the audience, it feels a little flat. Brian was the band's Robbie and Mark in one, but Blair's voice and banter seem to work so satisfactorily that it makes me wonder how necessary Brian was in the first place. Yet it still seems a bit pointless without him.

Kirsten Etheridge

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DOCTOR SHOTOVER

Look Into My Eyes

Very excited, VERY. Just found my old vinyl copy of mid-70s industrial obscurity *Follow-Up Fart Committee*, by squidgy synth miserabilists **Amoebic Dysentery**. A vinyl gem it may be, but you want to avoid the *run-off groove* on that one, you really do... [wheezy laughter follows for several minutes]... now, where were we? Ah yes, you were about to buy me a drink. And then – ta very much, old boy, *down the hatch* – we were going to discuss the **Anyone Can Play Guitar** Oxford Premiere. Frankly speaking, I imbibed SO bloody much on that occasion that I will need a hypnotherapist to help me regress through all the buried memories associated with the evening. But I am

reliably informed that I behaved myself IMPECCABLY during the film showing, and that the cries of "Kidney Scans!" half-way through the feature were from the row *behind* where I was sitting. As for the after-show party, there are rumours of repeated stage invasions by a dishevelled figure sporting an outsized pair of Y-fronts with "I HEART COTTON" inscribed on the gusset... well, I will let you know what Dr Darke my hypnotherapist has to say when he has listened back to the tapes. (It will probably go something like this: "Childhood trauma... blah blah blah... over-reliance on Nanny... blah blah blah... too much time in Burma during the monsoon season... blah blah blah... oh hang on, what's this on Side B of this old cassette...? **AMOEBIC DYSENTERY** – far OUT!). That's enough of THAT rubbish. Harrumph! My glass – hel-LO-OH? It seems to be EMP-TY?

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SYNTHOTHERAPY - "You are getting bleepier"

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INTRODUCING....

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

Agness Pike

Who are they?

Agness Pike's pedigree is second to none in the local metal stakes, formed last year by singer Martin Spear (formerly of Madamadam and Sevenchurch); bassist Pete Marler (Underbelly, Suriki, Suitable Case For Treatment), guitarist Chris Brown and drummer Mick Brown (both ex- of Madamadam and Underbelly). They are possessed of all the heaviosity you'd expect from their composite members, replete with Martin's highly idiosyncratic theatricality. Their debut mini-album, 'Minum Vitae', is out this month on Rivet Gun Records.

What do they sound like?

An often bizarre fusion of straight-ahead classic thrash from the golden days of Metallica and Anthrax and Martin's high individualistic vocals that veer from Lydon-esque squawk to stentorian narrative. Or, in their own words, "Heavy, urgent and thrusting, concocted from a seething cauldron of influences that include Killing Joke; Obituary; Hawkwind; Dead Kennedys; Black Sabbath; Rush; Sex Pistols; Judas Priest; Joy Division; Anthrax; Obituary; Monty Python; John Cooper-Clarke and Claire Petulengro."

What inspires them?

"We are currently taking spiritual guidance from the writings of the esteemed solar stargazer Shelley von Strunckel (The Sunday Times), always consulting her forecasts before making any important creative decisions."

Career highlight so far:

"When Hot Hooves' frontman left a sock behind at a recent Wheatsheaf performance. This sacred sock has now been framed and forms the centrepiece of a shrine."

And the lowlight:

"A handbag buying trip around Botley's charity boutiques. Agness found a perfect specimen but decided to sleep on it – went back the next day and there was a sickening void where the bag once sat."



Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"The UndersmileCellarFamilyDesertStormKomradJunkieBrush Experience. Oh what a magnificent noise."

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

"'Among The Living' by Anthrax – the album that brought us all to the same place in, eh-hem, 1987."

When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect?

"Wednesday 5th October with Annero and Bersicker at the Wheatsheaf. Newcomers can expect to be royally entertained."

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"The abundance of acts that hail from the heavier/noise side of the tracks that are treading the boards in Oxford at the moment. Least favourite: the lack of back-stage area at local venues – a man needs space to adjust his tifter and apply his fake moustache and the back stairs at the Wheatsheaf just will not do."

You may love them if you love:

Anthrax; Metallica; PiL; Machine Head; Christopher Lee.

Hear them here:

'Minum Vitae' is available to download from www.rivetgunrecords.co.uk

Whatever happened to... those heroes

The Nubiles

WHO?

Formed by Tara Milton in 1992 after the demise of his "schoolboy band" 5.30 and inspired by Oxford's then emerging local scene, The Nubiles featured Tara on bass and vocals; Chris Nettleton (aka "pre-op Welsh transvestite" Penny Schueller) and Italian Giorgio Curcetti on guitars and Dan Goddard on drums. Describing himself as "just a regular mulatto raised in a lunatic asylum outside Burford," Tara's vision was to form a band that "went past the picturesque stereotypes of what I thought a band should be, visually and sonically." The vibrancy of Oxford's music scene at the time allowed such a bizarre project to flourish, at least until Giorgio was "frog-marched back to London by his ferocious fiancée" after being caught in a compromising situation and the band relocated to King's Cross, living in the flat below Elastica. They released a slew of well-received singles before splitting on the eve of the release of their debut album, 'Mindblender', a slimmed-down version of the band continuing for a short while after.

WHAT?

A band that never quite fitted into any pigeonhole, at least any that existed at the time, The Nubiles' sound was sharp, warped, urgent, elastic, emotionally taught, ferocious, or, in Tara's own words, "an interesting racket." Had they arrived a decade or more later they might have been lumped in with the more freewheeling post-punk types, with a hefty dose of Zappa and Primus jabbed into its heart for good measure; words like "mayhem", "paranoia" and "lunacy" cropped up regularly in their reviews.



WHEN?

The Nubiles existed for a few brief years in the early-90s but made a lasting impression on the scene, signing to Lime Street Records and releasing singles like 'Layabout'; 'Tatjana (All Over Me)' and 'I Wanna Be Your Kunte Kinte' ahead of the album, but it was their frenetic live shows that left the most lasting impression: they blew Oasis off stage when they supported them in Bedford, just one stop off on a seemingly endless UK tour. While the band's demise is sometimes attributed to a fondness for narcotics, Tara is quick to refute such a claim, tongue firmly in cheek: "we never experienced any problems at all, getting hold of quality narcotics." Tara convened a version of the band for the last night of The Zodiac in 2007.

WHY?

As Jon Spira's film *Anyone Can Play Guitar* demonstrates, a new generation of Oxford musicians grew up inspired by The Nubiles' incendiary live shows, chief amongst them Supergrass, The Rock Of Travolta and Smilex. Tara himself is more circumspect, paraphrasing The Jam: "'If we communicate for two minutes only, it will be a START!' I think we communicated to an audience that was often moved."

WHERE?

Chris now lives in London (now happily post-op, according to Tara, who also claims that Giorgio "runs a lucrative brothel back in Rome"); Dan, for a long time promoter at the Pit venue in Witney, currently plays drums in The Long Insiders, while Tara has a new musical project, Tara Milton With The Boy & Moon, with whom he hopes to release something soon.

HOW?

Most Nubiles releases are extremely hard to find these days, although there is some stuff up on Youtube. The band, of course, feature in *Anyone Can Play Guitar*, out later this year.

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

TOMASHTON

There seems to be an air of weary melancholy hanging over a lot of this month's demos. Maybe it's because autumn's creeping in and all that summer hope has been dashed by weeks of rain and dull, cloudy nothingness. Still, some folks do misery better than others and Tom here manages to take that old sad-man-and-his-lonely-guitar schtick and beef it up just the right amount, still not fully formed but heading very much in the right direction. Demo opener 'You Will Never Leave' starts out as a maudlin, piano-led piece, Tom himself coming across as a potential heir to Andy Yorke or Richard Walter's throne, playing to his vocal strengths, never stretching his voice beyond what it's capable of, never over-egging his lines with warbling or over-emoting and sounding all the better for it. He creates a sense of chilly longing while his guitar paints pretty patterns behind him and rather than ending up like a good old moan round the campfire, the song sounds satisfyingly robust. 'He Was Innocent' is better still, minimalist but driven, Tom's voice fragile – echoes of Wild Beasts at times – yet tinged with venom, while 'Flames To Burnt Matches' is more buoyant and busy, adding another slight twist to the prevailing mood. Whether this is a purely solo effort we're not sure and maybe some sympathetically discreet bandmates might expand these songs further, but for now, this is promising stuff.

MATT WINKWORTH & THE WINKWORTHERS ORIGINALS

Fronting what he calls an eight-piece "anti-indie cabaret band," and presenting a three-song offering entitled 'And Now For Something Completely Brillig', which features his own musical interpretation of Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem, 'Jabberwocky', Matt Winkworth could be insufferably smug, but it's to his credit he, and his band, who incorporate condensed string and horn sections into their ranks, actually create something both clever and inclusive. The take on 'Jabberwocky' is pretty straightforward all things considered, the poem recited over a Weimer-era cabaret roustabout, sounding a bit like Borderville's precocious kid brother, but 'Elixir Of Life'

sees Matt telling his own story of being denied his own death by doctors who have discovered its cure; his enthusiasm for such a cure similar to the morbid realisation of what immortality really means experienced in the current run of *Torchwood*. There are obvious echoes here of Jacques Brel as well as Brecht and Weill, though you feel the band could let rip a bit more and add a Bacchanalian sense of mayhem to the song. There's similar influences at work with '4am', though here you're reminded more of Marc Almond's take on such things, Matt's vocal range exposed slightly after three songs. Truth is, Matt and his band probably aren't best appreciated either on a demo or in a normal pub venue and need a full theatre production or the corner of a particularly debauched period-themed bar to really get the most out of their songs. And gin. You'll most definitely need gin.

SHATTERED DREAMS

Previously winners of the Demo Of The Month award, Shattered Dreams have since parted company with their excellent vocalist Steph Branch and recruited Marnie Wood into their ranks. Their formula remains unchanged though: simple, bolshy but pop-friendly chunks of grungy noise that don't try anything too clever or risky but are light on their feet and happy to bounce around on your soul for a couple of minutes before chugging off to find something sweet and alcoholic to guzzle. 'Get Outta My Way' is like a frothier, airier version of L7's 'Shove', Marnie doing well to fill Steph's boots. She leads the line well on 'Honesty' too, initially sounding too much like any number of pub blues-rock warblers until she hits her stride, drops the stridency and kicks off her heels with the staccato guitars flailing with some abandon alongside her. 'Live & Learn', meanwhile, features Steph on vocals, a surging beast of a power ballad that could be Bonnie Tyler reborn into a lo-fi grunge band. As so often is the case, the simple things in life are the best.

BETTER FLY HONEY BEE

There is a fine line between being a beautiful doomed romantic and being a miserable, self-pitying misery guts who needs to man the fuck up. Over seven tracks here James Wright, the man behind the prettily-titled Better Fly Honey Bee, slips over both sides of the divide, offering glimpses of a sweet-hearted singer and songwriter as well as warning us not to stand too close to him at parties. For the first couple of numbers he's like the earnest, maudlin bloke who'll spoil your fun by mithering about not having a girlfriend, vocally following that school of thought that believes you should never use a single syllable

when four can easily be squeezed into the end of every line and so lost in his own existential angst that he's quite forgotten to write a chorus. Just as we're resigned to losing half an hour of our lives to someone else's aimless moaning and strumming, James picks up speed, breaks into a gentle trot no less, his voice becomes richer, augmented by some lovely female backing vocals and lets a simpler delivery reveal stronger songwriting credentials. It's like he's necked a couple of glasses of strong cider and decided life's not so bad after all. In fact he might have a go on the karaoke later (as long as they've got some Mumford and Sons or Willie Mason on there). Sadly by the very end he's slumped back into that original rut, soft-centred bordering on mawkish, but, hey, for a while back there he sounded like a man we wouldn't mind sharing bar space with.

THE SHAPES

The Shapes proclaim themselves inspired by the local likes of Stornoway, The Epstein and The Dreaming Spires, which shows good musical taste if nothing else, but this elongated demo only goes a little way to demonstrating they can live in such exulted company. Opener 'Parochial Pete' is languorous to the point of laborious, a countrified lope, replete with harmonica lead that suffers badly from the singer's rough-hewn, leaden delivery. You can imagine Robin Bennett's airy, plaintive tones lifting it to another level instead of wallowing in the mire with a dozen or more like-minded bands. 'Hey Little Girl' feels similarly not-quite halfway there, although the discreet female backing vocals do leaven it slightly. They have a decent enough ear for a tune, 'Falling Apart Again' being sweetly reflective even as it ramps up the volume with electric guitar and full-on drumming, but 'The Sound Of Your Strumming' is just painful and by the time they reach 'My Friend' they're treading disturbingly close to David Gray territory. Just when we fear all is lost 'The Last Time' injects some jollity – and some banjo – into proceedings, a country roustabout complete with fake American accents, and with 'Live In The Moment' they come closest to fulfilling the potential their earlier songs had only offered the briefest glimpses of.

SIMON FELTON

Despite a tediously overlong biography, Mr Felton's CD isn't too bad; certainly he could apply some of his musical tidiness and brevity to his press pack. Simon's got two types of song: ones full of pastoral psychedelic whimsy that sound like they've wafted down from the sky where they've been floating idly since 1969, and ones that sound like something fell out of the Radio 2 playlist panel's "Don't call us..." pile. In the latter category are tracks like 'Slowing Down' and 'Compatible', which are so bereft of character or memorable features they could get jobs working as deep cover agents for the CIA, evading terrorist cell detection for years on end. Really, the

word inoffensive should never be the nicest thing you say about any music. Thankfully the former category includes the likes of 'Lying Down', with its authentic 60s-styled psych-folk feel and lazy, lysergic feel, like Pink Floyd drifting off into a cloud-gazing reverie, and 'Peepshow' where Simon's politely clipped pronunciation and oh-so-English accent remind us of Syd Barrett's more self-consciously whimsical moments. Best of the lot is the decidedly tongue-in-cheek 'Psychodelia Smith', which wouldn't sound out of place on an old Dandelion Records compilation. More mushroom tea and hash cakes for Mr Felton, please.

GRUDLE BAY RIOTS

Similarly there's a fine line between chilled-out splendour and wallpaper musak. Grudle Bay Riots – who recently contributed to the local 'We Do Not Have A Dinosaur' electro compilation – here present a one-track demo, entitled 'Hon', which seems content to drift airily from start to finish without presuming to disturb your afternoon nap. On the face of it 'Hon' occupies a similarly rarefied place on the planet to Chad Valley or Trophy Wife, all lazily brushed snare drum, abstract minimalism and gossamer falsetto, but without any progression or sense of euphoria those acts evoke. It's nice enough but then so is a glass of milk and given the choice we'd rather have six pints of lager and a couple of Jaegerbombs.

THE DEMO DUMPER

THE ED MILLIBAND

Seriously we should stick this lot in the Demo Dumper for that band name alone, a non-joke that had its time about half an hour after the plastic-faced one was elected leader of the Labour Party. As it is, it's about the best thing about this instrumental outfit who have only been together for about two months, something which might excuse the fact they sound like they're still tuning up. They claim they're looking for a drummer, after which they're planning on moving towards a shoegaze / dream-pop sound. Spare drummers being a difficult thing to unearth in Oxford, The Ed Milliband might be more productively employed searching for something even vaguely resembling a coherent idea, never mind a tune, instead of rambling aimlessly and, it has to be said, tediously through four pieces of non-music that sound as half-arsed and barely-thought-out as their drone-bot namesake's supposed alternatives to the Cameron-Clegg purge of everything good in British society. If this is supposed to make us imagine the potential of the band it doesn't work – it's like cracking an egg into a bowl and asking someone to imagine how delicious it might be if it formed part of a chocolate and banana cake. Rather than a shit sandwich.

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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