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NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month.
Issue 202
May
2012

To infinity - *and beyond!*

FIXERS

Prepare for lift-off - *exclusive interview inside*

Also in this issue:

OXFORD PUNT 2012 -
four-page pull-out guide

plus

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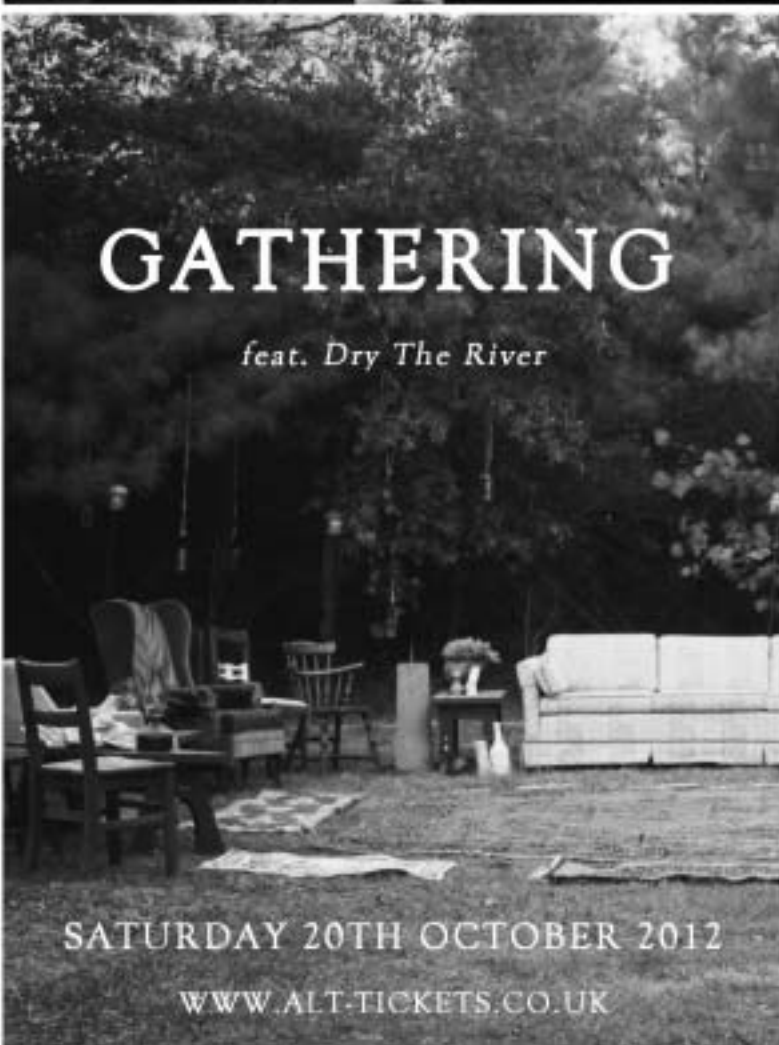
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NEWS

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WITTSTOCK FESTIVAL returns this month. The annual three-day free festival takes place at the **Railway Inn in Culham** over the weekend of **4th / 6th May**.

Ian Staples headlines the opening evening, joined by Domes of Silence, Junkie Brush, Class Dismissed, Skelfie and Mark Allen Barnes. Saturday and Sunday feature a full day and night of music. Reservoir Cats top the Saturday bill, alongside Steamroller, Lost Dogs, Big Society, Zen Pigs, Stem, Superloose, The Scott Gordon Band, Blin' Jonnie, Laima Bite, Thin Green Candles, Trevor Williams and more, while The Graceful Slicks round off Sunday, alongside Space Heroes Of The People, Phil Garvey, The New Moon, Billy Pure, Mark Bosley, Beaver Fuel, Rag Doll, The Shapes, True Rumour and loads more. A raffle, merchandise and donations will all go towards raising money for local mental health charities Oxfordshire MIND and Headway Oxfordshire.

You can follow Wittstock news on Facebook.

RICHARD WALTERS is selling off myriad exclusive items of music and personal possessions on Pledge Music in order to raise money to pay for his forthcoming album, 'Regret Less'. Along with signed CDs and homemade artwork, Richard is offering his favourite guitar for sale and has already sold his spectacles. 'Regret Less' has

been recorded with A Silent Film's Rob Stevenson. Visit www.pledgemusic.com/projects/richardwalters to buy his stuff and help the album come to fruition.

FIXERS, TROPHY WIFE AND SECRET RIVALS all play at this year's **Liverpool Sound City**. The three-day music festival takes place from Thursday 17th May to Saturday 19th. Professor Green, Yuck and White Denim are among the big name acts also set to play.

PINDROP PERFORMANCES gear up for a busy couple of months by announcing a new team-up with Club Fandango at the Buffalo Bar in Islington where they will be hosting a monthly showcase of Oxford music. The opening night takes place on Tuesday 29th May and features The Family Machine, Stornoway offshoot Count Drachma, and The Cooling Pearls.

May is also a busy month for Pindrop in Oxford with a May Morning show at Truck Store on Cowley Road. Flights Of Helios, The Old Grinding Young and Cat Matador will be playing the new month in from 6.30am. Following this on Friday 4th is the already sold-out show from alt.country legend Bonnie Prince Billy and Brit-folksters Trembling Bells at the Bully; Sunday 13th sees Canadian dream-pop collective Slow Down, Molasses at the Wheatsheaf, with support from



FRANK TURNER returns to Oxford in November as part of an 18-date UK tour. Following on from his sold-out show at Wembley Arena last month, the honorary Oxfordian folk-punk troubadour, who counts Dive Dive members Tarrant Anderson, Ben Lloyd and Nigel Powell in his backing band, plays the **O2 Academy on Monday 26th November**. Tickets, priced £18, went on sale late April and are likely to sell out fast. Following the chart success of 2011 album 'England Keep My Bones', Frank released a limited edition double a-side 7" single for National Record Store Day, featuring the songs 'I Still Believe' and 'Somebody To Love'. Turner also won best live act and hardest working band at the 2011 AIM Awards.

The Cooling Pearls, We Aeronauts and My Crooked Teeth; on Saturday 26th experimental freak-folkster Alexander Tucker headlines Modern Art alongside Yaldabaoh and Flights Of Helios, while Sunday 27th finds orchestral Danish-Icelandic folk-pop ensemble Dad Rock heading a bill that also features Robots With Soul, Count Drachma and Rainbow Shark. Finally, moving into June, Saturday 9th is a punky-reggae party with Dead Jerichos and Dubwiser at Modern Art.

Additionally, Pindrop continue to host their own Oxford-centric radio show on Fake DIY every Wednesday at 8pm. You can hear it at www.thisisfakediy.co.uk.

TRUCK STORE hosts a brace of in-store Q&A sessions with

directors as part of OxDox documentary festival this month. On Tuesday 15th May there will be a Q&A with Jon Spira to tie in with a screening of Oxford music scene film *Anyone Can Play Guitar* at the UPP, plus some instore live music. On Sunday 20th, a screening of National Record Store Day documentary *Vinylmania* at the UPP will be followed by a Q&A with the director at Truck Store.

Other instore Truck Store events this month include a May Morning show at 6.30am on the 1st with Flights of Helios, The Old Grinding Young and Cat Matador; Canadian folk troubadour Dan Mangan on the 4th; Polly & The Billets Doux on the 5th and Bristol's Doughty & The Wolf Chorus on the 12th. As ever, visit www.rapture-online.co.uk for times.



TIM MINCHIN is a surprise addition to this year's **Truck Festival**. The comedian and musician, most recently responsible for helping bring Roald Dahl's *Matilda* to the West End, will perform on the main stage.

Other new acts announced include **Frightened Rabbit**, **Future Of The Left** and **Turbowolf**, while the local contingent will feature **Black Hats**, **Dubwiser**, **Spring Offensive**, **Dead Jerichos**, **Flights of Helios**, **Dreaming Spires** and **Poledo**.

They join the likes of **Temper Trap**, **Mystery Jets**, **Villagers**, **British Sea Power**, **The Low Anthem**, **65Daysofstatic**, **Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly!** and **Guillemots** over the **20th / 21st July** at Hill Farm in Steventon. With Truck having been taken over by Derbyshire's award-winning Y Not Festival, who are promising to take the event back to its roots, tickets are a modest £69 and on sale from www.truckfestival.com as well as Truck Store on Cowley Road and assorted other local outlets.



SMILEX, ALPHABET BACKWARDS, BLACK HATS AND THE EPSTEIN head the line-up for this summer's **Charlbury Riverside Festival**. The free festival takes place over the weekend of the **16th / 17th June**. Other acts announced for the main stage over the weekend include The DB Band, Tamara & The Martyrs, The Mighty Redox, The Inflatables, Deer Chicago, Blin' Jonnie and Brickwork Lizards. The Riverside second stage features sets from Undersmile, Hot Hooves, Von Braun, The Hawkhurst, Beard Of Destiny, Listing Ships, Matt Midgley, Colour Change For Camouflage, Superloose, Mogmatic, Flights Of Helios, Lost Dogs, James Foley Band and King Terrible, with more to be confirmed. Visit www.riversidefestival.charlbury.com for full line-up details and news.

THE RIVERSIDE STAGE AT CORNBURY FESTIVAL, meanwhile, features a host of local acts. Cornbury takes place over the weekend of **June 29th / July 1st** at **Great Tew Country Park**. Acts confirmed for the Riverside stage include Charly Coombes, The Epstein, Steamroller, Deer Chicago, The Jesters, Dead Like Harry, Fused, The Family Machine, Brickwork Lizards, The Inflatables and Kris Dolimore. They join headliners **James Morrison, Elvis Costello & The Imposters** and **Jools Holland's R&B Orchestra** with Marc Almond and Ruby Turner.

Other acts already announced for Cornbury include The Waterboys, Alison Moyet, Pixie Lott, Seasick Steve, Newton Faulkner, Hugh Laurie and Nerina Pallot. Cornbury tickets, priced £150 for adult weekend passes, are on sale now on 0844 338 0000. Visit www.cornburyfestival.com for full line-up.

RODDY WOOMBLE is among a host of new names added to this summer's **Wilderness Festival**. Wilderness takes place at **Cornbury Country Park** over the weekend of **10th / 12th August**. **Wilco, Rodrigo Y Gabriela, Spiritualized** and **Sharon Jones & The Dap Band** have already been announced as headliners.

Woomble takes his place alongside local acts like Deer Chicago and Duotone as part of the Folk Guild stage. Other acts announced include 1000 Mile Highway, 3Cane Whale, Ahab, Bella Hardy, Cut A Shine, Franky & The Jacks, Larkin Poe, Mat Midgley, The Miserable Rich, The Monster Ceilidh Band, Ruby & The Ribcage, The Stamp Collective, Toyhearts and Under The Driftwood Tree.

Jointly organised by **Secret Garden Party** and **Lovebox**, Wilderness will feature its own Secret Garden Party party within the festival after its parent festival sold out.

Tickets for Wilderness are on sale now, through the festival website wildernessfestival.com.

Weekend tickets are priced from £119, with under-18s priced £54 and under-10s going free.

AUDIOSCOPE hosts an evening of "quiet music" at the **Old Boot Factory** on **Saturday 19th May** in aid of homeless charity Shelter. Scholars, Richard Walters, Rome Pays Off and Phil McMinin will all perform alongside Sarah Mayhew's art installation 'The Natural Course Of Things', which is "an immersive installation exploring the psychology of space through subconscious language and landmarks," whatever the damn hell that means in proper English. Anyway, great music and a great cause. Go along.

THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND headline a special Diamond Jubilee weekend party at the Jericho Tavern, organised jointly by Oxfringe, Back & To The Left, Coo Promotions and Pindrop. **The Jubilee Jam** runs over the Jubilee weekend of **2nd / 3rd June**. Other acts already confirmed include We Aeronauts, The Yarns, Matt Winkworth, The Old Grinding Young, Deer Chicago, Black Hats, Dead Jerichos, Jess & Ness and Flights of Helios. Tickets, priced £8 per day or £14 for the weekend, are on sale now from Wegotickets.com.

PHANTOM THEORY have called a halt to proceedings. While they insist they're not splitting up, merely going on indefinite hiatus, the duo are planning to bow out with a final show at some point in the next few weeks. Guitarist Aaron is set to concentrate on Kill Murray with drummer Steve will continue with

his drone-rock solo project Robots With Soul.

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

Regularly updated local music news is available online at www.musicinoxford.co.uk. The site also features interactive reviews, interviews, podcasts, a photo gallery and occasional live sessions.

Nightshift's online forum also features breaking local music news as well as the chance to chat to other Oxford musicians and gig-goers, advertise for bandmates or simply have a bloody good row about something and nothing – visit nightshift.oxfordmusic.net.

Oxfordshire Music Scene Magazine provides a quarterly overview of the local music scene, while its sister publication, **The Sampler**, provides more comprehensive coverage of Oxford's clubbing and electronica scene. Pick up copies of the latest issues from local outlets or download current and archive issues at www.oxfordmusicscene.co.uk.

A REMINDER PLEASE, that the deadline for gig listings is the 20th of each and every month. Always has been and always will be. And yes that does apply to you.



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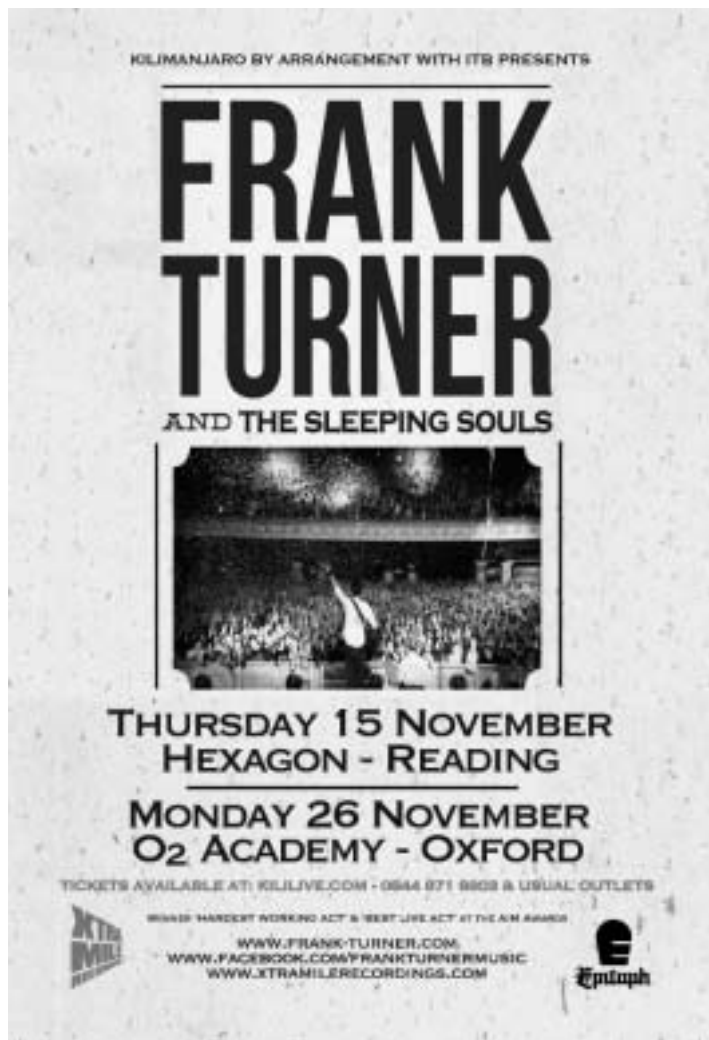
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WWW.TRUCKFESTIVAL.COM



GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES celebrates its tenth anniversary this month. The monthly live music club, renowned for its eclectic mix and match line-ups of local and out-of-town acts, runs every last Saturday of the month at the Wheatsheaf, having previously found a home at the Jericho Tavern and the Zodiac. Gappy Tooth also runs the annual pre-Christmas Winter Warmer mini-festival.

The celebration show takes place on the 26th May with a gig featuring local Smiths-inspired rockers Peerless Pirates, Leeds' electro-funk outfit Galaxies and laptop pop act Gert Lassitude.

Gappy Tooth host Richard Catherall explained the ideology behind the club: "Anyone whose big promoting idea is to put on the three bands they quite liked seeing at a gig last week, because the other guy seemed to get away with it, is of no interest to us. We started GTI because nobody was putting on eclectic, relaxed nights with a mix of artistic styles in Oxford back in 2002. So we made our own. The gigging environment is far healthier nowadays, but I still think that nobody does what we do, possibly for valid reasons.

"I think part of the strength of GTI is that we always try to put on fresh line-ups without repeating acts, and we treat everyone equally, on or off stage, even though this isn't always the best approach in financial terms."

WIN CORNBURY FESTIVAL TICKETS!

After successfully relocating to the picturesque **GREAT TEW ESTATE** last year, **CORNBURY FESTIVAL** returns this year, now firmly established as one of the centrepieces of the Oxfordshire music calendar.

This year's event takes place over the weekend of **29th JUNE-1st JULY**.

Sometimes dubbed Poshstock (David Cameron is a long-time attendee), Cornbury appeals to a family audience, with a line-up of music that mixes big-name stars, cult heroes and up and coming pop acts.

In the former category this year are headliners **Elvis Costello**, with his band **The Imposters**, and **Jools Holland**, appearing with his **Rhythm & Blues Orchestra**, and for a special Cornbury treat, joined by singers **Marc Almond** and **Ruby Turner**. Cornbury regulars **The Waterboys** continue to be one of the European festival circuit's most enduring favourites, while **Alison Moyet** remains a singular vocal talent.

Of the younger pop fraternity, **James Morrison** continues his rise and rise with a Friday night headline set, while **Newton Faulkner** has regularly proven himself a personable and engaging performer. We have a definite soft spot for **Pixie Lott**, simply because she keeps coming up with great pop hits.

Further along the bill **Hugh Laurie**, along with



his **Copperbottom Band**, has defied critics with an impressive album of classic blues; r'n'b siren **Macy Gray** remains star quality and *Guardian* columnist Tim Dowling makes sure things don't get too serious with his band **Police Dog Hogan**. The potential star turn of the whole weekend,

though, should be **Seasick Steve**, whose back-to-basics hobo bluesman performance is an antidote to everything glitzy and manufactured about modern pop music.

With three stages of live music, including a host of locally-sourced acts on the Riverside Stage, Cornbury's line-up is eclectic but accessible, while away from the music, there are a host of activities, including bhangra and Bollywood dance classes, circus skills, poetry, comedy and children's entertainment.

Tickets for Cornbury are on sale now, priced £150 for an adult weekend camping pass, with concessions for under-18s, and under-16s admitted free. Visit the festival website at **WWW.CORNBURYFESTIVAL.COM** for full line-up or call the credit card hotline on **0844 338 0000** for tickets.

Nightshift has a **pair of weekend camping tickets to give away**. To win, simply tell us

WHAT IS THE NAME OF JOOLS HOLLAND'S BBC MUSIC SHOW?

Answers on a postcard (no email entries please) to: Cornbury Competition, Nightshift Magazine, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU.

Please include address and a daytime phone number. Deadline for entries is the 20th May.

SATURDAY 19TH MAY · O₂ ACADEMY OXFORD

UPSTAIRS

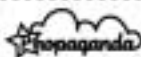
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SATURDAY 16TH JUNE · O₂ ACADEMY OXFORD

UPSTAIRS

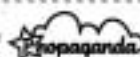
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Richard Walters
The Family Machine
Listing Ships
The Gullivers



Doors 7pm - Carfree 11.30pm. Tickets include free entry to Propaganda - £3 adv
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May 5th **POLLY & THE BILLETS DOUX**

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May 12th **HEG DOUGHTY & THE WOLF CHORUS**

*Dramatic piano based songs emboldened
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OXDOX EVENTS

May 15th **'ANYONE CAN PLAY GUITAR'**
After screening QE&A plus in-store

May 20th **'VINYL MANIA'**
After screening QE&A

a quiet word with

FIXERS



"I AM LITERALLY SAT IN OUR

apartment in Brooklyn, doing this interview now. Tonight we play at the Mercury Lounge in New York City.

So far, we have seen Thurston Moore and Jim Jarmusch walking around, which is pretty cool. This city is incredible, I want to live here so bad. I've been looking at art and eating food, I've been fucked by food to be honest, it's the bane of my life."

JACK GOLDSTEIN IS, AS YOU

doubtless just surmised, chatting to Nightshift from New York, where his band, Fixers, are playing a series of dates ahead of their debut Stateside release.

TRYING TO TIE JACK DOWN TO SOME

interview time amid this latest hectic bout of promotional activity has been no easy task and it shows just how far Fixers have come since we last featured them on the cover of Nightshift, just over a year ago. It's even crazier to remember that it was a mere two years since Fixers played at the Oxford Punt, the band only a few months old, not yet the great, grandiose psychedelic pop party force of nature they are now, but already awash with an ambition and potential few bands ever achieve, however long they stick it out.

FROM THE VERY START FIXERS HAVE

seemed somewhat unearthly – obsessed by UFO cults and Scientology and seemingly intent on creating music that could break free of Earth's gravity.

With the release this month of their debut album, 'We'll Be The Moon', such grand plans sound like they're coming closer to fruition. From the album's ecstatic opening track, 'Majesties Ranch', to its uncharacteristically reflective coda, 'Good Night', Fixers manage to find that fine balance between epic production and orchestration, and glorious melody. 'We'll Be The Moon' sounds like an album perfectly timed for the oncoming summer months – it radiates warmth and a sense of celebration, at least until its final, almost autumnal twist at the end.

IT BEING A BUSY OLD YEAR SINCE WE

last interviewed Fixers at length, Jack brings us up to date, firstly, on what the past twelve months have involved for him and the rest of Fixers (Roo Bhasin; Michael Thompson; Christopher Dawson and Jason Warner). Back then the quintet had just inked a deal with Vertigo and were set to release 'Iron Deer Dream' as a single.

JACK: "We've been recording an album, travelling around the world with our show. It's

been pretty nuts; you can go sixty miles up the road and no one will come to your show but you play in Amsterdam and it's rammed full of people going totally nuts, singing along. It's got to the point where we don't have any preconceptions of shows; it's become more visceral, like a half hour long mission statement. We try to bombard people a little more." You've supported both Kaiser Chiefs and Summer Camp lately; how were those? How different were they as experiences and which, if either, band did you feel the most affinity with? JACK: "Summer Camp are great guys, touring with them was super fun. It's a little tougher with a band like Kaiser Chiefs; they were great guys but it's this breadth of performance that is just so uninteresting and alien to us. You see a million bands slugging away at being the band that their audience feel most comfortable with them being, goose-stepping in a catatonic stupor of harmonic ignorance and disillusioned union. Fuck that."

HAVING SIGNED WITH VERTIGO,

Fixers recorded 'We'll Be The Moon' at the equally illustrious RAK Studios; Jack reported that it gave the band the space to be creative; how so?

JACK: "It's a great space; we were totally immersed in the process. We mastered the

record at Abbey Road and that studio is great but I'd find it very hard to relax in a place like that. Lots of hustle, massive canteens. Very strange."

Are you now completely happy with the finished article? Is it your 'Pet Sounds' or is that yet to come?

JACK: "Nah, it's not our 'Pet Sounds'.

Four of the songs on the album have been released as singles previously; how much re-recording of those songs was there and what new things do you think you've brought to them from their early incarnations?

JACK: "They are all complete re-recordings. It's one of the hardest things to do though, if a song becomes cherished in an initial form, how do you better it in definite form? You can run the risk of creating this absence; after all you are working from a template now. The only other option is to re-master the initial recording, but then you run the risk of dissatisfying the listeners expectations. From personal experience, I've always disliked it when a band just remasters their tracks for their albums - it's exciting to hear new versions, they don't necessarily have to be definite. Who's saying we couldn't re-record them for the second album too?"

Which of the new songs are your favourites and why?

JACK: "I like 'World Of Beauty'; it has this Twin Sister/Cuba Gooding feel to it, very dreamy but steeped in the Seventies Delfonics-esque mysticism. I also really love 'Good Night', the final track. I think it's the most Beach Boys-esque track on the record, we recorded it late one night in our bedroom at the studio on an old eight track cassette tape recorder. I was pretty drunk to be honest."

The album ends on an uncharacteristically come-down note with 'Good Night', when you're more renowned for conjuring a sense of euphoria. Is that a deliberate wrong-footing of the listener?

JACK: "I don't know if it's meant as a come-down as such, more of a realisation. It's preceded by a track called 'Really Great World' which I would say is more of a come-down track, it's fantastical in its naivety, bordering on intentional ignorance. Kind of like Randy Newman but not as good."

'WE'LL BE THE MOON' IS FIXERS AT

their most poppy for the most part, but the band have always striven to be experimental and confound expectations with the extra tracks on their singles and b-sides; will that continue and what can we expect by way of that side of things in future?

JACK: "I think things are going to get a little weirder. It feels important to say that, that statement shouldn't sound like an investment, it should be exigent. Saying that means it now has to happen. Watch this space."

Is there a lyrical theme running through the album? You've been fond of concept releases previously?

JACK: "The concept is a little more conceited than previous efforts; we wanted to bask in the musical ideology of locking yourself away for a month in a studio. It doesn't seem like something we would want to readily repeat in such an obvious way. I didn't want to make a massive concept record; that is yet to come. The

next album will be a concept record of sorts though, I can confirm that now."

I notice you've been reading David Wallace Foster's novel, 'The Broom Of The System'. Does that existential kind of thought appeal to you or influence your writing?

JACK: "I'd love the next album to be conceptual, apocryphal in its longing and desperation. I used to write so many songs about sex when I was a kid, each one was based on some kind of inclusive musical preconception, I was almost writing about other people's experiences as opposed to my own. With that, I'd also love the next album to be a meta-album of sorts. It will come with a series of musical footnotes analogous with David Foster Wallace. It will be a journey but it's important that the listener is always aware that they are in their bedroom, listening to an album."

You've always been fanatical consumers of music; have you discovered anything in particular since we last interviewed you and has it affected the way you write and record at all?

JACK: "I can't stop listening to the Youth Lagoon album, it is easily the best album I've heard in years. I've been wrapped up in a bunch of classical stuff at the moment; the new Nicki Minaj album is great too."

WHILE THE RELEASE OF 'WE'LL BE

The Moon' marks a new career high point for Fixers, it is their astonishing live shows that more than anything show off the expansive vision and ambition within the band. Last year's Truck set was widely regarded as one of the classic performances at the festival; so much so it was included in Nightshift's top twenty greatest

shows by Oxford bands in our 200 issue lifetime. Everyone who witnessed that show will rave about it, but how was it for the band themselves? Jack's giant fake beard and Hawaiian gear and his madcap between-song pronouncements drew some attention but it was the unbridled sense of euphoria that made it so special; did you get that feeling too?

JACK: "The audience made it what it was, that kind of reaction just relaxes you and makes you giddy. I did feel like I was on Jupiter because in many ways I was; I'd assiduously lost control and it felt great. What's more, we had just watched Sealings and we were on a high because of that."

You've got your hometown headline show on May 17th; got anything special lined-up?

JACK: "I want this to be an erupting volcano, the eruption will be at the beginning of the set and the duration of the set will be the aftermath. Everyone coming together amongst the rubble, the smoke rising from the cooling lava and the texture of hardened rock under foot. I want people to tear down the O2 Academy. Let's bring the building to its knees, leave it to cower in the crevasse of Cowley Road amidst a humdrum clusterfuck of multilateral shame."

Sounds fair enough. Given Jack's regular pronouncements about partying in outer space, if Fixers could play a gig on any planet, which would it be and why?

JACK: "Earth. We gotta try it sooner or later."

'We'll Be The Moon' is released on 14th May. Fixers play the O2 Academy on May 17th. Visit fixerstheband.com for news and tour dates.

Jack sports the Cosmic Captain Birdseye look at Truck Festival last summer



photo: Sam Shepherd

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FIXERS

‘We’ll Be The Moon’

(Vertigo/Mercury)

Fixers have created something great, but it took a while to realise it. They’ve been busy little bees over the past eighteen months or so, whirling through a career trajectory that’s seen them grow from the slightly awkward early performance at the Wheatsheaf as part of 2010’s *Nightshift* Punt to a stellar showing at last year’s Truck Festival during a seemingly endless set of international gig dates. ‘We’ll Be The Moon’ marks a development from their early days, where the ‘Beach Boys meets Animal Collective’ tag was routinely applied. It’s a huge, layered, throw-everything-in production of an album that develops the Fixers sound into something more tinged by the anthemic pop of 1980s acts like Tears For Fears, yet still pulling off the trick of sounding intimate and independently spirited.

Normally I’d gouge the eyes of people using terms like ‘chillwave’ or ‘hypnagogic pop’, but they seem fitting here, in music that blurs and echoes voices and instrumentation into a shiny gloop, albeit a gloop with structure and definition. Sure, the Beach Boys and Animal Collective references can still be spotted - Animal Collective’s relentless weird positivity is all over ‘We’ll Be The Moon’, and the vocal sounds and harmonies on tracks like ‘Alexandra’ and especially ‘Good Night’ are often *so* Beach Boys. But there’s so much more going on here: at points in the past, Fixers may have been mere imitators, but now they’re drawing on and combining so many influences and strands of musical history



with such an artful and populist touch, that it’s hard not to love the results, or indeed to find melodies lingering long after listening has ended. In the same way that Flaming Lips reinvented psychedelia as a new and modern form, Fixers show glimpses of a magic touch – the weirdsville end section on ‘World Of Beauty’, for example, or the rolling positivity of ‘Pink Light’ – to signify their position as the latest Big Oxford Band.

The one small downside to all this may depend on the mood of the listener. In darker times, an album with tracks called both ‘World Of Beauty’ and ‘Really Great World’ may seem cloying, and it’s not amazingly difficult to find more (especially American) bands that seem to be playing with the same set of influences. But forget that. Listen to this with a positive mood and it makes a lot of sense. A spectacular album.

Simon Minter

GREY CHILDREN

‘Doctor Doctor’

(Free download)

The credits on ‘Doctor Doctor’ read like an Oxford supergroup; with guest vocals from Little Fish’s Juju, Tamara Parsons-Barker and instrumentals from members of Witches, it seems set to be a solid offering, even before the first play, and it’s fair to say the album, by Grey Children (the creation of former-Witches front man David Griffith), lives up to the expectation, albeit in a more obsessive, dark manner than expected.

Opener ‘Sinister A’ sets the scene, overlapping vocals creating an instant sense of confusion for the listener, the synth weaving in and out of the percussion, adding to the effect. Title track ‘Doctor Doctor’, meanwhile, becomes a more poignant rendition, fuelled by the softer introduction and duel vocals. Nevertheless, it’s ‘Falling Up A Tree’ which stands out on first listen, the elements of a driving rock song combining with Chris Fulton’s sympathetic violin accompaniments to produce a song which brings back memories of The Wonder Stuff.

Even without contextual knowledge, the album has many hints of something ominous lurking

just out of view, a vehemence which runs throughout.

Still, it’s the obsessive instrumentation which falls beneath Juju’s vocals in ‘It Really Doesn’t Matter’ which begins to bring about a musical sense of Pure O, a form of OCD which is limited to thoughts alone, and which this album intends to highlight, which marks the backbone of the project.

There is a sense at times that the album is too intense to survive; it’s a complex offering which relentlessly demand attention but as it meanders through sounds its longevity becomes more apparent. ‘Best Believer’ begins like a jazz version of The Killers ‘Somebody Told Me’ before slowing down for a more melodic sound before switching to a more rocky, almost discordant sound and it’s this level of creativity which keeps the album afloat. Nevertheless, it’s closing number ‘Surrender Me’ which ultimately marks the power of the album, Tamara’s vocals carrying a weight of sadness and lingering long after the song draws to a close.

Lisa Ward

MUTAGENOCIDE

‘Mutagenocide’

(Own label)

“Technical metal”. It’s where it’s all at these days. Which basically means the prog rockers finally won the war, sneaking in under the radar while the punk upstarts were busy necking a few too many pints of celebratory cider. Though how something this LOUD could sneak anywhere without being noticed is beyond anyone’s comprehension.

But we digress. What we’re trying to say is, perhaps King Crimson and co. weren’t so bad after all, they just dressed it up all wrong – all fancy clothes and ostentatious guitar solos. Hell, no-one minds someone else having a few quid in their pocket; they just don’t want to see them cruising down the road in an open-top Porsche while sticking two fingers up at the poor people in the bus queue.

So bands like Mutagenocide are clever but they don’t rub it in your face. They dress down even while they’re planning their next space mission. ‘Warhead’ for instance, is Pantera or Meshuggah cheerily wrecking the furniture whilst occasionally sneaking upstairs for a sneaky spliff with Pink Floyd: it’s dirty and violent but sophisticated too. Like going out rioting armed with a diamond-tipped industrial drill.

‘Fists Of Steel’ has the title and feel of classic early-80s new wave metal and first generation thrash, but once it’s got its head of steam up, it’s free-ranging across what appears to be several plains of rock noise, always tightly-reined enough to return to their central directive before exhausting each diversion.

‘Hammer To The Head’ too has a decidedly old-school feel too it, both in the twin-guitar attack and in Fred Savoury’s almost Rob Halford-like vocals. Again it veers off-course at will into 70s prog indulgence but keeps a hand firmly clasped on the handle marked “Armageddon Autodestruct Overkill”, or something similarly hardcore.

Funny isn’t it, while so much of the mainstream press – musical or otherwise – continue to believe heavy metal is dumbass noise, increasingly, it’s the cleverest racket in town.

Dale Kattack



GAZ COOMBES

'Presents: Here Come The Bombs'

(Hot Fruit)

If someone invented a formula for guaranteed post-pop group solo success, they'd make a mint. Unlike a multitude of former frontmen who've waded into those treacherous waters. For every Paul Weller there's a Nick Heyward; for every Beyoncé there's a... well, pick any Spice Girl you like. Not that Gaz Coombes should ever need to worry about sinking that low, but after two decades fronting Supergrass – a band who, let's not forget, sold millions of records worldwide, outlived pretty much all their Britpop era contemporaries and were a major influence on a subsequent generation of indie bands, notably Arctic Monkeys – going it alone will bring with it mixed blessings.

"There's nothing lonelier than living with someone you don't want to," goes the old maxim, and towards the end Supergrass wasn't a happy house by all accounts, so this new-found freedom is bound to inject new life and new ideas into Gaz's music. Almost equally, there must be the nagging doubt – will anyone care any more?

Gaz's debut solo shows at the Rotunda in Iffley last year revealed a musician seemingly reborn – gone was Supergrass's heady rock exuberance



and sense of stoned mischief, replaced by an almost boffin-ish approach, lo-fi electronics mixing with simple acoustic stylings to produce a surprisingly different sound from anything we'd been expecting.

Gaz's debut album is a far more fulsome affair than those shows, but that apparent desire to spread his creative wings remains. That he's teamed up with Sam Williams, the one-time Mystics frontman who helmed Supergrass's 'I Should Coco' debut, seems to reflect a newly rediscovered sense of purpose and vigour. In fact there are echoes of The Mystics dotted across 'Here Come The Bombs', notably on the shock

and awe pop blast of 'Simulator', one of four tracks co-written with Sam, while die-hard Supergrass fans will find succour with the cartwheeling 'Whore' and the lysergic swirl of 'White Noise', which harks back to the likes of 'Lenny' or 'St Petersburg'. The move towards a more dominant electronic sound is what discerns this album from anything that's come before it. Rumours that Supergrass's (subsequently unreleased) final album was heavily influenced by krautrock seem borne out here as the likes of 'Hot Fruit' pulse and purr with motorik intent, Neu! and Faust in particular leading Gaz up stranger avenues, while 'Fanfare' and 'Bombs' shimmer with starry-eyed wonder, swashes of almost Eno-esque noise guiding the songs spacewards. It's 'Break The Silence', though, that stands out even amid all these riches. Here's where Gaz goes kraut-disco, a euphoric Moroder shimmy with a wonderful lightness of touch that's eventually punctured by shards of serrated guitar.

The album drifts towards a calming, idyllic conclusion with the reflective, piano-led 'Sleeping Giant' and it feels like a sigh of satisfaction at finding inner peace. However Gaz fares commercially out on his own seems like a cheap question on this evidence; 'Here Come the Bombs' sounds genuinely like a record made for its creator's own pleasure, and for that reason most of all, damn right you should still care.

Dale Kattack



SECRET RIVALS

'Make Do & Mend (Part 2) EP'

(It's All Happening)

"I'll decide when you've had enough / There's more than enough here for either of us": a simple statement shot through with undertones of menace. So goes the chorus of 'Once More With Heart', the lead track from the new EP by Secret Rivals, and from the first note a musical breath of fresh air. Urgent and breathless, yet perfectly catchy, singers Clouds and Jamie complement each other perfectly; his voice twisted with emotion, hers calm even as she delivers the above warning. 'The Part That Kills' continues the theme, guitar and bass competing to fit in as many notes as humanly possible, as drummer Reece's cymbals crash incessantly in accord. 'I Hope She Knows' slows down the pace, a bitter tale of disappointed friendship, well-crafted but lacking the power of the opening salvo. 'I Know Something' begins with a drum machine and old school synth line but soon builds to a frenzied guitar-led climax, with Clouds

sounding for all the world like a modern day Poly Styrene. Just as it seems that variety might be going the way of petrol after a David Cameron speech, the title track closes proceedings with class. An acoustic guitar line leads into a haunting keyboard line and a two-minute tale of regret that ends all too soon.

All in all this is an uplifting package; energetic, open-hearted and pleasingly free of pretension. 2011 was a good year for the band with their album picking up airplay from Rob Da Bank and Tom Robinson, and now 'Once More With Heart' has been heard on Sky Sports' 'Soccer AM'. At this rate they won't stay secret for much longer.

Art Lagun

TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER

'Lover'

(Big Red Sky)

"I will survive!" sang Gloria Gaynor, subsequently sound-tracking every girl's defiant post-split gin session. While generations of women are thus declaring their fortitude, Tamara Parsons-Baker is slumped across her tearstained bed racked with naked despair. Her heart will not go on; instead she's breathlessly intoning "No, I can't get him out," while the object of her soul-deep sorrow sits elsewhere "Crying into his pills at night, stabbing a titted figurine in the groin with a pin," contemplating all the wrongs she's done him.

Yeah, it's carefree party anthems from start to finish on this solo offering from Tamara, whose musical activity alternates between her more full-blooded blues and rockabilly outfit Tamara & The Martyrs, and this far more intimate solo work.

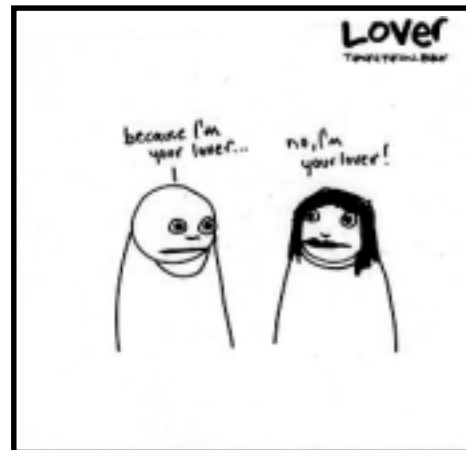
'Lover' is a highly personal journey into the heart of darkness, recalling the starkest, most turbulent moments of Sinead O'Connor and Marc Almond (in

particular his heroin-ravaged Marc & The Mambas songs). 'Hang My Picture' – a stripped-back version of the song on The Martyrs EP from last year – sounds like the troubled offspring of 'Nothing Compares To You' and 'Hallelujah', without a chink of redemptive light in sight. It's a perfect showcase for Tamara's raw, emotionally wracked voice, which wastes not a single note, nor ever sinks into mawkish sentimentality.

Elsewhere 'Crying Wolf' finds her admitting "We've got to live apart, before it tears us apart," with bitter objectivity, before 'I Stuck It Out' exposes a soul full of despair, a sombre, but discreet cello adding to the all-encompassing mood of claustrophobic longing.

While the mood remains determinedly – almost pathologically – despairing throughout the EP, you never feel alienated or, worse, that you're imposing on private grief; Tamara has a rare knack of plumbing the utter depths of romantic sorrow without coming on like some bunny boiling harridan or self-pitying mimsy. Instead she's just acutely – sometimes painfully – honest, and armed with a voice that would make angels and demons weep, she's created a record that draws something utterly beautiful out of unrefined misery.

Dale Kattack



MOTHER CORONA

'Out Of The Dust'

(Button Mushroom)

It begins with a riff as big and unforgiving as a mountain range. Eight songs and almost an hour later that riff is still towering over all else like a black thundercloud that shrouds the mountaintops.

In the world of Didcot groove metallers The Riff is everything. It is a glowering giant on every horizon and the dirt under your fingernails. It rolls and rages and casually crushes anything that gets in its way. It is always there and it probably knows where you live.

What has always marked Mother Corona out from most of the rest of the local metal pack is singer Daveo's voice – not a rasp or a growl or an Uruk-Hai bellow, but an oddly adenoidal sneer that's more Billy Corgan than Robert Plant or Ozzy Osbourne, whose names we pluck from the firmament of rock vocal titans since Mother Corona owe a not inconsiderable debt to Led Zep and Black Sabbath, as well as psych-metallers Electric Wizard and proto-metal blues rockers Blue Cheer. But equally there's a raw, gritty underbelly to their often sprawling psychedelic jams, a little Stooges to queer the pitch and make sure this particular acid trip isn't some carefree skyride.

From amid the relentless grooves epic, skyscraping solos emerge. Seemingly just for the hell of it. How'd you like them apples? By the ton, perhaps. If there's any criticism to be made of 'Out Of The Dust' it's maybe that it's so singularly paced, the occasional drop down into something – relatively – mellower, like '15 Minutes', little more than a

subtle shift down the gears. But then that's a bit like moaning that a Panzer division isn't a Formula 1 race. That's not what it's there for. What it is there for is to riff, and riff some more. Something Mother Corona do quite magnificently.

Dale Kattack

AS IF ft DANNI JAMES & C.O.A.H.

'Sygns'

(Big Windmill)

As If is the long-time band project of Phillip Goss from Appletree Studios, now the county's longest-running recording studio. 'Sygns' is As If's seventh album, and although we reviewed their first offering, we've not heard anything in the interim, so it's difficult to gauge what progress, if any, they've made in some 20 years.

That 'Sygns' comes credited to As If featuring Danni James and C.O.A.H. suggests it's a departure from their normal format, the singer and rapper dominating vocal duties, Danni generally taking the lead with C.O.A.H. adding interjections.

With the contrasting styles pitched together, 'Sygns' reminds us of those early-90s acts who first tried to weld rap onto rock, bands like Senser and Curve, though As If rarely delve into anything as heavy musically as those two. At their best, as on 'Re-Psampled', they can be raunchy and soulful, Danni possessed of a warm, soulful voice capable of belting it out or resting in a sweet croon without ever feeling the need to warble, while Phil's guitar switches to stadium rock excess mode, kicking life



into the song. Elsewhere 'Wondering Blind' is almost rustic electronic pop, C.O.A.H.'s authoritative lead giving the chopped-up r'n'b added muscle, while 'Better Than' reminds us of Garbage, bullish but perhaps lacking that killer punch.

By contrast 'This Love' feels like an attempt to get down and get sultry but just sounds overproduced and sterile and a couple of the tracks towards the end of the album could easily have been junked to give 'Sygns' a more compact and cohesive feel.

Given the quality of the two chief vocal talents on show, it's perhaps surprising that the strongest track here is 'Don't Erase Me', with Phil on lead, a more contemplative piece with its meditation on faith. He's by no means the most striking singer around but keeps within his own range, gets the best out of himself by doing so and so adds a more understated soulfulness to his music.

Ian Chesterton

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9pm Gunning For Tamar

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The Cellar

7.30 Secret Rivals

8.15 The Cellar Family

9pm Von Braun

10pm Tiger Mendoza

The Wheatsheaf

8.15 Jess Hall

9pm Caravan Of Whores

9.45 Kill Murray

10.30 Leftouterjoin

The Duke's Cut

8.15 ToLiesel

9pm Deer Chicago

9.45 The Old Grinding Young

10.30 Dallas Don't

The Junction

9pm Band Of Hope

10pm The Long Insiders

11pm Half Decent

12 midnight

Manacles Of Acid

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OXFORD PUNT 2012 -

Tamara Parsons-Baker



THE PURPLE TURTLE

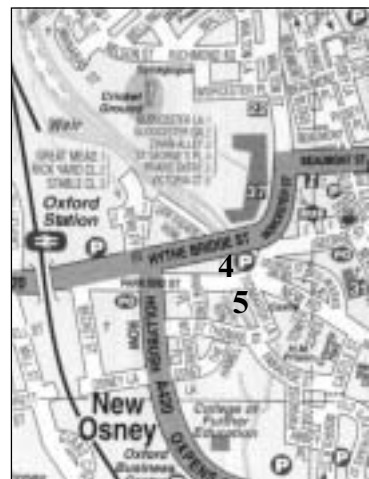
As is now traditional, The Purple Turtle is where the Punt kicks off, the venue's coolly labyrinthine layout, situated beneath the Oxford Union, making it a great rock and roll environment. First up this evening is the startlingly talented **TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER**, whose voice is an astonishing instrument in its own right, one so wracked with drama she could make a simple request for a cup of tea sound like the tragic denouement to some grand opera, her dark acoustic blues and tumultuous pop variously recalling Jacques Brel, Imelda May and Sinead O'Connor. Darker still are the wondrously tectonic **UNDERSMILE**, a stoner-sludge metal band of such extremity their songs have developed their own gravitational field, sucking all light from the room. Think Swans, Melvins or Flipper fronted by the ghostly twin daughters of Linda Blair in *The Exorcist*: equally awesome and terrifying. Fleeter of foot are **GUNNING FOR TAMAR**, a band whose melodic take on math-pop is so precise they even released their last EP as a wristwatch; they have riffs as elegant and impressive as Big Ben though, and it's little wonder they're being tipped by just about everyone as one of Oxford's most promising young bands. Rounding proceedings off at the Turtle are brutally technical heavyweights **MUTAGENOCIDE**, a band whose songs are apparently wrought from molten girders laced with a radioactive substance distilled from Slayer, Mastodon, Iron Maiden and Meshuggah. We did say they were heavy. **TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER 7pm; UNDERSMILE 8pm; GUNNING FOR TAMAR 9pm; MUTAGENOCIDE 10pm**

THE CELLAR

A venue possibly older even than the rocks that the city of Oxford rests upon and almost certainly more... ahem... rock, The Cellar is where Old Nick himself would host a party if he decided to celebrate his birthday in our fair city. No surprise then that Oxford's finest pop imps **SECRET RIVALS** open their Punt account here, the quartet having mischievously stolen our hearts with their indefatigably exuberant electro-indie, which has seen them drawing admiring comparisons to The Cure, Bis, Belle & Sebastian and Huggy Bear. You will dance, you will laugh and you will sing along. It is the law. The law eventually caught up with Joseph Fritzl, who imprisoned his family in a cellar, and after whom **THE CELLAR FAMILY** were named. Appropriately so given the band's ability to distil the very essence of misanthropic disgust and turn it into a venomous brand of punk rock, one that has captured the imaginations of local audiences ever since the trio made their gigging debut in Oxford two years ago. Think McLusky; think Fugazi; think At The Drive-In; think time to hide behind the sofa. They'll get you wherever you hide. **VON BRAUN**'s grasp of musical tension might sound more refined, but it's no less sharp: the band's recent 'Folk Devil' EP sounded like a band raging against the dying of the light while capturing a perfect blend of nervousness, tension and drama and finally fulfilling all the potential they've exuded over the past few years. **TIGER MENDOZA** bring a pensive, trippy heaviness to the world of dance-rock crossover, hip hop rhythms, scattershot drum&bass, punked-up electroclash and subterranean blues ridden through with serrated industrial guitar noise, where Portishead meets DJ Shadow and Nine Inch Nails.

SECRET RIVALS 7.30; THE CELLAR FAMILY 8.15; VONA BRAUN 9pm; TIGER MENDOZA 10pm

Deer Chicago



- 1 - The Purple Turtle
- 2 - The Cellar
- 3 - The Wheatsheaf

THE WHEATSHEAF

Ah yes, home from home; how we love The Wheatsheaf, perhaps Oxford's quintessential gig venue, for years the natural nesting place for local rising stars and musical misfits. Hopefully tonight's bill reflects the pub's eclectic nature, not so much kicking off as blossoming into life with the sweet, sweet acoustic folk-pop sound of **JESS HALL**, a young lady not averse to performing on stage alongside a Christmas tree and a candelabra. Her off-kilter kookiness and heart-on-sleeve emotiveness has seen her compared to Kate Bush, which is all the recommendation anyone could want, but Jess's gorgeously pure voice and heart-on-sleeve melancholy is very much her own. And then you will bow down and cower before **CARAVAN OF WHORES**, whose name suggests they might be Satan's own troupe of dancing girls but are, in fact, sprawling, doom-laden stoner-rock beasts *par excellence* and who party like every day is a Black Sabbath. With epic songs stretching into the darkness, a long, hot night in Hell rarely felt so much fun. You'd imagine with a combined pedigree that included Dial F For Frankenstein, 50ft Panda and Phantom Theory – Oxford Punt alumni all – **KILL MURRAY** would be a rib-threatening thunderball of grungy noise, but instead their guitar and occasionally electro-based brand of pop is more delicate and elaborately structured than you might imagine, apart from those moments when they turn into a rib-threatening thunderball of grungy noise. Considered by many in the know to be Oxford's hottest young property, savour the chance to catch them in such intimate surroundings. And then simply cast aside thoughts of any kind and prepare to rave til you're fit for the grave in the company of one-man acid techno party **LEFTOUTERJOIN**, whose live drumming display and squelchastic electro grooving is augmented by the sort of visuals you'd expect at a full-on rave rather than a pub venue. **JESS HALL 8.15; CARAVAN OF WHORES 9pm; KILL MURRAY 9.45; LEFTOUTERJOIN 10.30**

Where, when and what

Jess Hall



THE DUKE'S CUT

One of the joys of organising the Oxford Punt each year is getting new venues involved. We have two this year, including the excellent Duke's Cut, a proper traditional family-run pub in the centre of town that's no stranger to live music. There's something wonderfully traditional about **TOLIESEL** too: their harmony-heavy, beachcombing folk-pop has its roots in timeless English folk music but, like neighbours Stornoway, ToLiesel bring a youthful sense of exuberance to the music, occasionally leaning towards the likes of King Creosote as well as backwoods Americana and some serious rock swells. You could apply oceanic metaphors to **DEER CHICAGO** too, a band whose stadium-sized shoegazing riffs come thundering down on you like Atlantic rollers. Debut single 'Lantern Collapse' was grandiose and turbulent, an all-consuming snowball of guitar splendour that reminded us of Ride and even My Morning Jacket. Damn right we were impressed. When Ute split last year we feared Oxford had lost a band of rare talent and delicacy, but Ollie Thomas is back now with his new band **THE OLD GRINDING YOUNG**, his fragile, taut voice still seeming to walk that precarious tightrope between devastating emotional intensity and complete collapse as his poetic pop rides the stormy pop seas in search of some kind of redemption. Too few bands are named punningly after whisky distilleries but **DALLAS DON'T** are redressing the balance, a twist on Dallas Dhu, the Speyside distillery near to where singer Niall grew up. Now resident in Oxford he and his band sometimes come on like a Caledonian Pixies; at other times fellow Scots such as The Twilight Sad or Idlewild spring to mind. The band have a song called 'This Town Needs Us', and from what we've heard so far, they're damn right it does.

TOLIESEL 8.15; DEER CHICAGO 9pm; THE OLD GRINDING YOUNG 9.45; DALLAS DON'T 10.30



- 4 - The Duke's Cut
- 5 - The Junction

Gunning For Tamar



Undersmile



THE JUNCTION

The second of this year's new venues and the place where the Punt party reaches its climax. To ease you seductively into the mood, **BAND OF HOPE** will sing you sweet, sweet lullabies, tinged with rustic country-folk sadness and a dreamy, romantic sense of regret. Don't go getting all maudlin, mind – this is beautiful, immersive music that will embolden your heart for the party ahead. **THE LONG INSIDERS** are certainly a band who not only know how to party but how to dress for the occasion. Slick of hair and natty of thread, they hark back to a time when rock'n'roll in its purest form shook the world. Classic 50s rockabilly gets a surf-rock shakedown, The Cramps get down and dirty with Suicide, Johnny Cash and June Carter jam it out on their porch and a new age of youthful rebellion kicks off big time. Rhythms and rhymes of a very different kind from **HALF DECENT**, one of Oxford's most promising rappers and producers, who has already shared a stage with Example, Chipmunk and MF DOOM, winning plaudits for his swift-footed MC-ing as well as his inventive beatmaking. And then, it's time to hold on to your pints and your sanity as **MANACLES OF ACID** pile drive everyone into the wee small hours with their vintage analogue acid house noise, invoking an 808 state and firing off confetti cannons as you get your groove on big time. Don't say we don't know how to show you a good time, folks.

BAND OF HOPE 9pm; THE LONG INSIDERS 10pm; HALF DECENT 11pm; MANACLES OF ACID 12 midnight

Oxford Punt 2012 Guide

Welcome to this year's Oxford Punt.

If you already know what the Punt is all about don't let us keep you; you're probably giddy with excitement and can almost taste that first, cool, calming pint of the evening, ahead of the best night of new local music of the year. So off you poddle; we'll have two large gins and two pints of cider, ice in the cider, since you're asking.

Right, for those of you less familiar with the concept, The Oxford Punt started off in 1997 as a way of showcasing the best up and coming unsigned acts in Oxfordshire in one night. Because we know it's hard sometimes to keep up with everything. Just look at this month's gig guide – so much to see, so little time, it's enough to make you faint with choice. So we have the Punt, so you don't have to turn up at half seven every time you go to a gig in the hope of catching the next big thing in town. They're all here in one handy one-night, five-venue package. Mmm, drink in that raw, untamed talent.

In the past the Punt has played host to early gigs by the likes of Young Knives, Stornoway, Fixers, Little Fish, Richard Walters, Elizabeth (who went on to become Foals), The Modern (whose Hugo Manuel subsequently formed Jonquil and Chad Valley) and so many more. Some of the acts you'll see on the Punt sound like they're destined for greatness, others are simply a bloody great barrel of fun. There are 20 acts crammed into tonight's event so there's bound to be something in there for everyone. Unless you're a brass band purist. In which case sorry, we'll try harder next year. And find a bigger venue to accommodate one.

Ah yes, venues. Some on the Punt circuit are old favourites (step forward The Wheatsheaf, The Cellar and The Purple Turtle), others are new to Punting (a very warm welcome to The Duke's Cut and The Junction), but each brings something unique to proceedings and each hosts an eclectic mix of live music

over the evening.

Things get going at The Purple Turtle at 7pm with Tamara Parsons-Baker and finish sometime well past midnight at The Junction with Manacles of Acid and we always find it advisable to take the following morning off work.

The best way to get the most out of the Punt is to get yourself an **all-venue Punt pass**. There are only 100 of these available and they're a mere £8 (plus a quid booking fee) which is beyond a bargain when you consider just how many acts you could potentially see (a word of warning: please do not attempt to see all 20 acts; it is impossible in the same way that it's impossible for Santa to deliver presents to every house in one night, and we don't want to be sweeping innards off the pavement after you've combusted trying to get two places at once. Anyway, Punt passes. You can buy one from **Truck Store** on Cowley Road or online from **Oxfordmusic.net**. Support local independent businesses while you're about it.

If you don't get a pass, you can pay on the door at any of the venues. It's only a fiver at each, while The Duke's Cut is free. This here handy pull-out guide can be your friend and companion for the evening, guiding you through the myriad styles on offer. Best not try getting a pint down it, mind; it really cannot hold its drink.

Right, think that covers just about everything. Best get moving – that other lot who have been here before are already ahead of you at the bar and there's a big long evening of drinking and gigging to get through. We've staggered the bands' set times to make sure you get to see as much as possible (see below for ultra-handy spreadsheet thingie guide). How much you're staggering by the end of it is your choice, so don't blame us tomorrow, we'll have our own aches and pains to contend with. Have a great Punt.

	7pm		8pm		9pm		10pm		11pm		12 midnight	
Purple Turtle	Tamara Parson-Baker		Undersmile		Gunning For Tamar		Muta-genocide					
Cellar		Secret Rivals		The Cellar Family	Von Braun		Tiger Mendoza					
Wheatsheaf				Jess Hall	Caravan Of Whores		Kill Murray		Leftouter join			
Duke's Cut				ToLiesel	Deer Chicago		The Old Grinding Young		Dallas Don't			
Junction					Band Of Hope		The Long Insiders		Half Decent		Manacles Of Acid	



THE ORIGINAL CORNBURY FESTIVAL

29TH JUNE TO 1ST JULY 2012 THE GREAT TEW PARK OXFORDSHIRE

FRIDAY 29TH JUNE

SATURDAY 30TH JUNE

SUNDAY 1ST JULY

JAMES MORRISON

THE WATERBOYS

ALISON MOYET

ELI PAPERBOY REED

& THE TRUE LOVES

GRETCHEN PETERS

JUAN ZELADA

ELVIS COSTELLO AND THE IMPOSTERS

MACY ALOE GRAY BLACC

NEWTON FAULKNER

HUGH LAURIE WITH THE COPPERBOTTOM BAND

TOM STOOSHE

BAXTER THE DUNWELLS

DANNY & THE CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD RAINY BOY SLEEP INTERNATIONAL UKULELE CLUB OF SONNING COMMON

JOOLS HOLLAND & HIS RHYTHM & BLUES ORCHESTRA
FEATURING MARC ALMOND & RUBY TURNER

WILL YOUNG

SEASICK STEVE

KATZENHAMMER

LOS LONELY BOYS NERINA PALLOT

STAXS

9 Below Zero

POLICE DOG HOGAN

ABSOLUTE RADIO EMPORIUM ~ RIVERSIDE STAGE ~ KASHMIR CLUB ~ THERAPIXIE TENT
AND FOR THE KIDS

CIRCUS SKILLS | AFRICAN DANCE WORKSHOPS | STORYTELLING | KIDS YOGA | PARACHUTE GAMES | VENTRILOQUIST SHOW
THE ORANGE HAT PUPPET SHOW | DRUM CIRCLE | MAGIC WORKSHOPS | PUNCH & JUDY | CLAY MODELLING | WILLOW TUNNELS
ACE OF DIAMONDS MAGIC SHOW | FACE PAINTING | ARTS & CRAFTS | SAND ART | MASK MAKING | CRAZY COMIC CLUB
cornburyfestival.com



GIG GUIDE

TUESDAY 1st

THE RAPTURE: O2 Academy – The return of New York's dance-rock partystarters – *see main preview*

FLIGHTS OF HELIOS + THE OLD

GRINDING YOUNG + CAT MATADOR:

Truck Store (6.30am) – Free-ranging electronic psych-pop from Flights Of Helios in store at Truck Store to welcome in May morning at some unholy hour. They're joined by intimate, emotionally turbulent acoustic folk-popsters The Old Grinding Young and dark-hearted, violin-led alt.rockers Cat Matador.

OSPREY & NTHE OX4 ALLSTARS: The Bear (7am) – Veteran local songsmith Osprey

Tuesday 1st

THE RAPTURE:

O2 Academy

The Rapture's success was all about timing. Back in 2004 they rode the crest of the wave of New York bands hitting the UK in the wake of The Strokes and, helped by having an irresistibly exhilarating live presence, looked like being one of those rare bands who can mix rock and dance without tripping over their shoelaces in the process. 'House Of Jealous Lovers' was a crossover hit single and their debut album 'Echoes' looked to confirm the band's place as heirs to The Cure's throne. Fast forward to 2006 and The Rapture's jerky, robotic post-punk and house beats cocktail and association with Danger Mouse found them hailed as forerunners of nu-rave for its short-lived lifetime. Here was a band that could even make cowbells sound cool. But now, six years after that last triumph, what's left for the Rapture? They released their new album, 'In The Grace Of Your Love', to little fanfare and there's the very real danger they'll arrive back in the UK for this tour feeling every bit last year's party turn, time finally having overtaken them. Hopefully it'll work out better for them than that since they are a band whose gigs genuinely feel like a party, one where the band are having as good a time as anyone in the audience.



MAY

greet May morning in the company of fellow east Oxford musical chums.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Free live jazz every Tuesday at the Bully, tonight featuring singer Alison Bentley.

NOSTROMO + OXFORD IMPROVISERS

ORCHESTRA: Old Fire Station – Free jazz improv from Nostromo, comprised of keyboard player Alexander Hawkins, saxophonist Pete McPhail, bassist Dominic Lash and drummer Roger Telford.

SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 2nd

RED BULL MUSIC ACADEMY & SIMPLE

PRESENT: The Bullingdon – House and techno club night.

WEDNESDAY BLUES: James Street Tavern

THURSDAY 3rd

MATTHEW P + NEIL HALSTEAD + THE

YARNS + DAN RAWLE: The Jericho Tavern

– Beard Museum host Suffolk songsmith Matthew P, touring his debut album. Former-Slowdive and Mojave frontman Neil Halstead joins him, set to release his new solo album, 'Palindrome Hunches', plus local support from gentle indie souls The Yarns.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre – Oxford's longest running and best open-mic club continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and more every week.

PETE BAILEY + PAUL TAYLOR + THE METHOD + MATTHEW CARTER & ELLIE

HANGAR: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury –

Jambox acoustic session.

COUNTERHOLD + THIRD COMPANY + CLIPPER: The Bell, Bicester – Jambox rock and metal night.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston

FRIDAY 4th

BONNIE PRINCE BILLY & TREMBLING

BELLS: The Bullingdon – Kentucky's master of mirth teams up with Glasgow's psych-folksters – *see main preview*

DAN MANGAN: Truck Store – Instore show from the Canadian singer ahead of his Jericho Tavern show.

DAN MANGAN: The Jericho Tavern – Sweet'n'prickly indie-folk from the Canadian songsmith – *see main preview*

THE MAD PROFESSOR DUB SHOW + ARIWA PLAYERS + COUNT SKYLARKIN

+ DESTA ZION & THE ELEMENTS: The Cellar – Jamaican dub legend Mad Professor plays an early show for Skylarkin Soundsystem, recreating his Ariwa Studio on stage, replete with mixing boards, tape machines and live instrumentation, a succession of guest singers helping him remix his extensive back catalogue, including his groundbreaking collaboration with Lee 'Scratch' Perry. After the show it's Skylarkin's regular club night with a great mix of ska, reggae, dub, soul and funk, the Count joined by dubwise Roots Manuva collaborator Wrongtom and bright young British reggae singer Desta Zion.

GUNS 2 ROSES: O2 Academy –

Guns'n'Roses classic performed in the style of Boys 2 Men. Possibly.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with MUNDANE SANDS + MARY BENDYTOY + NOT TOO

SHABBY: The Wheatsheaf – Sultry folk-rocking, taking in influences as diverse as The Oyster Band and Dire Straits, from Mundane Sands at tonight's characteristically eclectic Klub Kak. They're joined by dark-hearted industrial-gothsters Mary Bendytoy, who have just released their debut album, 'Push', and bluesy rockers Not Too Shabby.

WITTSTOCK: The Railway, Culham – The annual free festival kicks off with a headline set from Red Square's master of confrontational experimental jazz, Ian Staples. Joining him on tonight's bill are grungy stoner-rockers Domes Of Silence, agit-punkers Junkie Brush and more.

SWINDLESTOCK + THE DEPUTES + RAGDOLL + MOOGIEMAN: The Port Mahon – Great backwoods barroom country blues and boogie from local faves Swindlestock.

COUNTERHOLD + THIRD COMPANY +

CLIPPER: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury –

Jambox rock and metal night.

CHURCHFITTERS: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot – Lively folk-roots with a rock edge.

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

WHO DO YOU LOVE?: The Duke, St.

Clement's – Alt.rock, 60s garage, soul, new wave, punk, surf and electro-pop DJ session with Jens, Jim and Grizilla.

DISCO MUTANTE: The Library – Classic disco, cosmic funk, electro boogie and house in a New York stylee.

SATURDAY 5th

MOTHER CORONA + CARAVAN OF

WHORES + ANNERO + AGNESS PIKE +

GOAT LEAF: The Wheatsheaf – Top drawer bill of local metal from Buried In Smoke.

Psychedelic groove metallers Mother Corona launch their debut album, rolling out riffs as big as the ocean in the style of Black Sabbath,

Electric Wizard and Kyuss. They're joined by bluesy stoner-metallers Caravan of Whores; brutal death thrash from Annero and quirky gothic horror thrash from Agness Pike.

WITTSTOCK: The Railway, Culham (midday) – A full day and night of free live music (donations to charity, if you please) with full-on electric blues-rockers Reservoir Cats headlining. They're joined by Lost Dogs, Steamroller, Big Society, Zen Pigs, Stem, Superloose, The Scott Gordon Band, Blin' Jonnie, Laima Bite, Thin Green Candles, Trevor Williams, The Mighty Redox, Beard of Destiny and plenty more.

PHOENIX & PHAEDRA HOLDING

PATTERNS: The Basement, Modern Art Oxford – Oxford Contemporary Music take over Modern Art with two separate events in one night.

JANEK SCHAEFER'S LOCAL RADIO

ORCHESTRA: The Yard, Modern Art Oxford – Experimental composer and Shruti box player Schaefer constructs an interactive

piece on the traditional Indian instrument, utilising portable radios in the audience to retune and deconstruct the piece in various frequencies, the shape of the music shifting depending on the audience's chosen frequencies. Come on, can you imagine Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds attempting anything like that?

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy – Classic and contemporary indie at Propaganda, plus kitsch pop and 80s sounds at Trashy and alt.rock, metal and hardcore at Room 101 every week.

THE BIG NORTHERN SOUL NIGHT OUT: The Bullingdon – Classic soul all night.

HOT MAGENTA: The Port Mahon – Rock, blues and soul in a 70s style from Coventry's Hot Magenta.

PETE FRYER BAND: The Dolphin, Wallingford – Eccentric blues-rocking from the local stalwart.

ADINA & JOHNSON: Magic Cafe (1pm) – Lunchtime show in the style of Bessie Smith from the duo.



Friday 4th

BONNIE 'PRINCE' BILLIE & TREMBLING BELLS: The Bullingdon

Pindrop Performances have a tendency to pick magical shows out of the air and tonight's collaborative effort could be one of their best to date. Under his myriad guises Will Oldham is something of the cult musician's cult musician, creating gently gothic alt.country of a highly individual nature for over two decades now, boasting a back catalogue as long as your arm, covered by Johnny Cash and Mark Lanegan and namechecked in song by Jeffrey Lewis and Biffy Clyro. He's no stranger to collaborations but this latest, with Glasgow's indie folksters Trembling Bells, is one of his most unexpected. The band, formed by Alex Neilson, have some way to go to match Oldham's expansive canon but their three albums to date have drawn widespread praise, an indie-friendly take on classic 60s British folk music, sort of The Incredible String Band filtered through Belle & Sebastian. Together with Oldham in his Bonnie 'Prince' Billie guise, they've just released an album, 'The Marble Downs', which pitches Oldham's fragile quaver against Lavinia Blackwell's far more authoritative warble, the pair duetting over Neilson's psychedelic baroque folk. It's songs from this album that they'll be playing tonight, but since 'The Marble Downs' includes a take on Oldham's 'Riding', loyalists are unlikely to be disappointed.

Bethany Weimers, Steven John Hopkins and more, plus DJ Theoretical will be spinning dance tunes between sets.

TUESDAY 8th

ERRORS: The Jericho Tavern – Glasgow's excellent post-rock-cum-electro crew return to town to plug new album 'Have Some Faith In Magic' on Mogwai's Rock Action label, coming in somewhere between Battles, LCD Soundsystem and Autechre.

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

INTRUSION: The Cellar – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night.

Friday 4th

DAN MANGAN: The Jericho Tavern

Having made his reputation in his native Canada the old fashioned way – playing anywhere and everywhere; making friends with likeminded musicians who would become his backing band, and begging and borrowing equipment and studio time – Dan Mangan has been reaping the rich rewards in recent times, being shortlisted for the Polaris Prize (Canada's equivalent of the Mercury) and nominated for a number of Juno Awards, becoming much more than a cult concern back home. 2010's 'Nice, Nice, Very Nice' was the album that made his name, revealing Mangan as a master of rough-hewn vulnerability as well as being possessed of a quirky, witty observational lyrical style (check out his song 'Robots' with its tale of a factory worker falling in love with a series of rejected electrical items), able to mix the personal and political easily and remaining true to his rootsy folk-pop sound while willing and able to explore grander soundscapes to keep everything fresh and alive. In this he's ably abetted by a band drawn mainly from Vancouver's jazz scene, their playing as lithe and fleet-footed as Mangan's words. With a new album, 'Oh Fortune', now out on City Slang, he's on tour around the UK and hopefully set to become much more than merely a critics' favourite.



SUNDAY 6th

WITTSTOCK: The Railway, Culham (midday) – Second full day and night of free live music at the excellent annual Wittstock festival. Today's headliners are psychedelic garage rockers The Graceful Slicks and electro-popsters Space Heroes Of The People, alongside Phil Garvey's Light & Shade, The New Moon, Billy Pure, Mark Bosley, Beaver Fuel, Rag Doll, True Rumour and many, many more.

ULTIMATE EAGLES: O2 Academy – Not just Eagles, but Ultimate Eagles. Forget three-inch talons and razor-sharp beaks, these critters carry AK47s and Sidewinder missiles. Don't mess.

STRANGE VINTAGE + MOON LEOPARD + SQUEEZY PETE & CELESTE + DES & JEREMY: Donnington Community Centre (6pm) – Free acoustic session.

HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: Wagon & Horses, Culham – Country folk and Americana.

MONDAY 7th

ERJA LYYTINEN: The Bullingdon – Return to the Famous Monday Blues for Finnish guitarist Erja who has earned herself an enviable reputation as a rising blues star in her native country, as well as working with British blues star like Ian Parker and Aynsley Lister.

TANUKI SUIT + GOVERNMENT MAN + CAMENA + MIDNIGHT BLINK: The Port Mahon – Local indie rockers Tanuki Suit play their debut gig.

QUICKFIX PRESENTS: The Plough, Witney (midday) – Local label and promoters Quickfix present a full day of live music as part of Witney Music Week. From midday onwards there are sets from Arkham Asylum, Molotov Sexbomb, Charm Assault, Strength of the Bear, Brothel Sounds, Who Put Bella In The Witch Elm, Billy Ray Cypher, Beard of Destiny and Abi Sloan, ahead of a headline set from rising local rapper and producer Half Decent. There's also an acoustic stage, with Samuel Zasada,



Wednesday 9th

ZULU WINTER:

The Jericho Tavern

London's Zulu Winter seem to find themselves hailed as "The New Vaccines" by some parts of the music press at the moment, though any resemblance is fleeting at best. It's probably more to do with the fact they share management with The Vaccines (and Kaiser Chiefs). Musically they follow more in the lineage of Foals, Maccabees, Friendly Fires and Wild Beasts. Theirs is a seductively chilly form of tropical pop, airy rather than wired and with the sort of rarefied falsetto vocals that mark out their closest contemporaries. These come courtesy of singer Will Daunt, whose name would be more suited to a swashbuckling sci-fi comic hero than a pale, skinny indie singer with a liking for long overcoats and foppish haircuts. Having released their debut single 'Never Leave' on Double Denim, they've now signed to Play It Again Sam for whom they release their debut album 'Language' this month. They've just come off the back of a tour support with Keane, which will have broadened their fanbase from the London indie cognoscenti, though only time will tell if they can outdo the modest commercial success of those who have come so recently before them.

SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 9th

DJ FRESH: O2 Academy – Daniel Stein has gone from genre-defining drum&bass pioneer to dubstep chart star in a career that spans a decade and a half, from his early groundbreaking work with Bad Company, through production and remix work for the likes of DJ Shadow, Pet Shop Boys and Pendulum to more recent chart-toppers like 'Louder' and 'Hot Right Now'. With a follow-up to breakthrough album 'Kryptonite' due out this summer, he's out on tour again, following a successful full-band excursion last year.

ZULU WINTER: The Jericho Tavern - Foals-y pop starlets on the rise - *See main preview*
CASHIER NUMBER 9: The Bullingdon – Sweeping, 60s-inspired West Coast pop and Americana from Belfast's rising indie stars, mixing it up somewhere between The Byrds, Flaming Lips and Pavement on their David Holmes-produced debut album.

THURSDAY 10th

POLLY & THE BILLETS DOUX: The Jericho Tavern – Winchester's twee, smooth-edged country-folk and jazz outfit.

NEWTON FAULKNER: O2 Academy – He may have butchered Massive Attack's 'Teardrop', for which we were prepared never to forgive him, but Newton turns out to be a personable showman live, one possessed of a decent voice and a charming sense of humour. After the platinum-selling success of debut album 'Hand Built By Robots', and its post-surgery follow-up, 'Rebuilt By Humans', he releases a new EP, 'Sketches', this month ahead of his third album in the summer. And come on, who could dislike anyone whose middle name is Battenberg?

THE EPSTEIN + HANNAH ALDRIDGE + CO-PILGRIM: The Cellar – Alt.country on the grandest of scales from local heroes The Epstein, alongside Nashville's folkstress Hannah Aldridge (daughter of Walt Aldridge, who wrote and produced for Lou Reed and Conway Twitty), over in the UK to promote her debut album, 'The Wanderer. Co-Pilgrim – aka Mike Gale and friends – opens the show, fresh from recording his debut album alongside Mark Gardener.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

NUDYBRONQUE + THE KAOS +

KIELAND RIDGE: The Bell, Bicester – Jambox rock and metal night.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston

FRIDAY 11th

BROKENCYDE + PSYKODALEK: O2 Academy – There is, quite possibly, an element of irony at work in BrokenCYDE's music, but regardless of that, shit is shit and it don't matter how many fancy pink ribbons you tie round it, it still stinks.

BOSSAPHONIK with THE DESTROYERS: The Cellar – Latin jazz, Balkan beats, world breaks and nu-jazz club night, tonight featuring a live set from Birmingham's fifteen-piece Balkan gypsy dance collective.

CRYSIS + SONIC RISING + DE PROFUNDIS: The Wheatsheaf – Moshka club night with young local thrash metal merchants Crysis alongside narcotic drone-rockers Sonic Rising.

HAWKHURST: The Bullingdon - Local folksters

SOUTHERN BLUES FIASCO: The Port Mahon

BAYOU SECO: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot – Traditional Bayou blues and folk from the Keppeler-McLerie family band.

THE MIGHTY REDOX: James Street Tavern – Swampy blues and psychedelic rocking from the enduring local faves.

DOGSTATE + KIELAND RIDGE + LEST

WE FORGET: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox rock night.

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon

SATURDAY 12th

LISTING SHIPS + NOUGHT + GRUDLE BAY: The Cellar – Back & To The Left host a clash of instrumental titans with local electro-

heavy post-rockers Listing Ships touching bases with Einstellung, Tortoise and Rodan with all the force of a full-on naval bombardment. Joining them are Nought, making a welcome return to their spiritual home city, James Sedwards having pioneered scouring, jazz-inflected post-rock and hardcore guitar experimentation back in the mid-90s before moving to London. Expect to be aurally cleansed. Electro-funk rocking from Grudle Bay in support.

BOOTLED ZEPPELIN: O2 Academy – Led Zep tribute.

HEG DOUGHTY & THE WOLF CHORUS: Truck Store – Instore set from Bristol's strings and piano-led ensemble.

VEILS + BATTLE FOR PARIS + THE

LONG HAUL: The Wheatsheaf

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy

HODGE PODGE FUNDRAISER PtII: The Bullingdon – Dub night.

JAY BENNET: The Port Mahon

BLUE BIRD: Magic Cafe (1pm) – Lunchtime show from the female Americana duo.

HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: Upper Heyford Village Hall (midday)

SUNDAY 13th

SLOW DOWN, MOLASSES + WE AERONAUTS + THE COOLING PEARLS + MY CROOKED TEETH: The Wheatsheaf – Expansive, almost orchestral folk, alt.country and post-rock dream pop from Canada's Slow Down, Molasses, at tonight's Pindrop show, the collective over in the UK to promote second album 'Walk Into The Sea'. Euphoric folk-pop support from We Aeronauts and haunted, ethereal folk from Aiden Canada's Cooling Pearls in support.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY ACOUSTIC SESSION: The Wheatsheaf (2pm) – An afternoon of free acoustic music courtesy of Klub Kak, with sets from Mark Atherton, Pete Madams, Beaver Fuel and Pete Fryer.

MUSIC IN THE PARK: Elms Park, Thame – Full day of live music, with a headline set from New Orleans-style hot jazz faves The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band. They're joined by local reggae and dub heroes Dubwiser, Led Zep tribute Hats Off To Led Zep, party band Muttz Nuttz, Elton John tribute Ultimate John, pop-punkers The Drakes, prog-rockers The Michael Lee Band, electro-rockers As If, 50s revivalists Roadhouse Cruisers and more.

THE EMILY SMITH TRIO: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot – Traditional Scottish folk music from the singer recently described as a Caledonian Joni Mitchell and nominated for Best Singer at this year's BBC Folk Awards.

OXFORD UKULELES: The Port Mahon – Workshop and live session.

MONDAY 14th

HAMILTON LOOMIS: The Bullingdon – Soulful, Texan-flavoured blues from the singer, guitarist and blues harpist at tonight's Famous Monday Blues.

IVYRISE: O2 Academy – Clean-cut, gently-polished, neatly tucked-in rocking from recent McFly tour support Ivyrise, whose previous

steps on the rise to fame and fortune include supporting Bon Jovi. We had to turn the new Killing Joke album off in order to listen to some of their songs. Have you any idea how traumatic an experience that turned out to be?

THE LOVELY EGGS: The Port Mahon – Altogether now, “Fook it, oh yeah / Fook it, oh yeah – *see main preview*

TUESDAY 15th

DEATH IN VEGAS: O2 Academy – Gothic electro dance from Richard Fearless – *see main preview*

CONCRETE KNIVES: The Cellar – Effusive indie pop in the vein of Los Campesinos! and Help, She Can’t Swim.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Live jazz from Alvin Roy & Reeds Unlimited.

SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern

Monday 14th

THE LOVELY EGGS: The Port Mahon

Despite describing themselves simply as “a punk rock band from northern England,” it’s fair to say there isn’t another band around anything like The Lovely Eggs. Formed by married couple Holly Ross and David Blackwell, the pair, from Lancaster, plough a singularly idiosyncratic furrow, bashing out gorgeously exuberant indie-thrash gems like ‘Allergies’ and ‘Minibus’ one minute, potty-mouthed grunge rants like ‘Don’t Look At Me (I Don’t Like It)’ and ‘People Are Twats’ the next, everything smothered in a quintessentially northern gravy of daft humour, oddball lyricism and Holly’s unrefined Lancastrian accent. On the one hand they’re so determinedly anti-commercial they released a single called ‘Fuck It’ on a bank holiday Monday so that DJs couldn’t play it and no-one could actually buy it, but on the other, pretty much everything they do comes tinged with pop magic. Which is why they can get someone like Casey Raymond to direct a crazed psychedelic video for them and Gruff Rhys to star in it (as the Grim Reaper, in case you’re wondering). Describing what they sound like is altogether more difficult, though if you can imagine a cutely insane collision of British post-punk, early Sub Pop grunge, C86 pop, a malevolent kids TV band, Moldy Peaches, Daniel Johnston and Half Man Half Biscuit, you might just about get the picture. Just be assured they’re brilliant, mad, daft and fantastically fun. You *will* love them.



OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 16th

THE OXFORD PUNT – The year’s best showcase of new local music, featuring twenty acts playing across five venues in the city centre over the course of the evening – *see main Punt pullout*

TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER + UNDERSMILE + GUNNING FOR TAMAR + MUTAGENOCIDE: The Purple Turtle

SECRET RIVALS + THE CELLAR FAMILY + VON BRAUN + TIGER MENDOZA: The Cellar

JESS HALL + CARAVAN OF WHORES + KILL MURRAY + LEFT OUTER JOIN: The Wheatsheaf

TOLIESEL + DEER CHICAGO + THE OLD GRINDING YOUNG + DALLAS DON’T:

The Duke’s Cut

BAND OF HOPE + THE LONG INSIDERS + HALF DECENT + MANACLES OF ACID: The Junction

WEDNESDAY BLUES: James Street Tavern

THURSDAY 17th

FIXERS + PET MOON + BETA BLOCKER & THE BODY CLOCK: O2 Academy –

Homecoming show for the psych-pop heroes – *see main preview*

IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC ACOUSTIC SESSION: The Bullingdon – It’s All About The Music host Osprey is joined for an evening of local unplugged music by Ags Connolly, Rory Evans and Mark Noble.

HEIDI TALBOT: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot – Postponed from last autumn after she lost her voice, Talbot returns, with fiddle player John McCusker in her band, drawing favourable comparisons to vocalists as diverse as Bjork, Kirsty MacColl and Nora Jones.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

CONFLICT AGAINST + GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS: The Bell, Bicester – Jambox rock and metal night.

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

FRIDAY 18th

THE BIG TEN INCH with PUNK’S NOT DAD + NATTY BO: The Cellar – Count

Skylarkin’s monthly vintage tear-up features live sets from dad-friendly anarchists Punk’s Not Dad, tackling such weighty social issues as garden sheds and Ikea furniture. Natty Bo is on the decks with his crate of vintage 78s, plus the usual mix of jump blues, swing and rockabilly.

DICK VALENTINE + LEWIS WATSON: O2 Academy – Solo outing for the Electric Six frontman, with support from local Youtube sensation Lewis with his soulful acoustic pop.
KILL CITY SAINTS + RECTIFIER: The Bullingdon

CRISIS, WHAT CRISIS? + MARVELLOUS MEDICINE: The Wheatsheaf – Funk, rock and blues from the headliners, plus funk and reggae from the support.

MARTIN CREED & HIS BAND: Modern Art Oxford – Modern Art has hosted Turner



Tuesday 15th

DEATH IN VEGAS: O2 Academy

It seems a long, long time since Death In Vegas were soundtracking ads for Sony and Levi’s as well as cropping up on every film and TV score going, but then there’s usually a pretty extended passage of time between Death In Vegas albums. Since the slightly misfiring ‘Satan’s Circus’ back in 2004, main man Richard Fearless relocated to New York and formed a psychedelic rock band called Black Acid, while his long-time DIV partner Tim Holmes has departed the band altogether. The long wait for last year’s ‘Trans Love Energies’ was worth it though, with Fearless, armed with an array of acid house-era electronics, and joined for a couple of tracks by Austra’s Katie Stelmanis, weaving a typically bleak mix of deep techno, krautrock and lysergic rock. Back in the late-90s and early-noughties, DIV could call upon A-list guests like Liam Gallagher, Iggy Pop, Paul Weller, Bobbie Gillespie and Hope Sandoval for vocal contributions, regularly bringing the best out in all of them on glowering electro-goth anthems like ‘Aisha’ and ‘Scorpio Rising’, while ‘Dirge’, featuring voice-for-hire Dot Allison, became a ubiquitous electro-rock anthem. These days Fearless handles most of the vocal duties himself but the band’s power, on record or live, is undiminished.

Prize winners before but probably not for their music. Creed, who won the Turner in 2001 for his ‘The Lights Go On & Off’ (which amounted to an empty room where the lights went on and... erm, off), pursues a highly literal approach to titling his works (check out early masterwork ‘Work No. 79: some Blu-tack kneaded, rolled into a ball and depressed against a wall’), which he brings to his punk-inspired music – ‘1-2-3-4’ is simply those numbers repeated as lyrics. It’s art, right?

AVE HENRIKSON & TRIO MEDIAEVAL: Holywell Music Room – Norwegian trumpeter Henrikson returns to Oxford after his last sold-out show for OCM. The versatile, innovative player takes inspiration from Mongolian and Javanese folk music as well as contemporary classical and electronic music and tonight he pitches his sounds against the mediaeval vocal trio.

CONFLICT AGAINST + FLEISCH + TOM CASWELL: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury
THE JUKES: The Port Mahon – Local rockers.

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon



Thursday 17th

FIXERS: O2 Academy

After a two-year rise and rise from local hopefuls to national music press and radio darlings, via a generous sprinkling of ambitious singles and EPs, Fixers prepare to release their debut album for Vertigo. The band, never ones to opt for understatement, musically or otherwise, have previously declared intentions to create their own 'Pet Sounds' and 'We'll Be The Moon' certainly doesn't suffer from under-production or a lack of big tunes. While Brian Wilson's vision of pure pop grandiosity is one Fixers touchstone, and Animal Collective's warped psychedelia is another, the band are so much more than the sum of their myriad cool influences, unafraid to step out of any comfort zone, however expansive. So for every shimmering, harmony-heavy psych-pop anthem like 'Crystals' or 'Iron Deer Dream', there's a megalomaniac cheese-pop anthem like 'Swimmhaus Johannesburg', or an excursion into middle eastern-inspired electro-dub. And live it's simply the greatest LSD-infused beach party you can hope for – Jack Goldstein playing the galaxy-tripping pop preacher-visionary part to perfection. Fixers are simply a band who recognise brilliant pop music when they hear it and know how to entertain. Jack's exonerated to party like you're on Saturn might look, on paper, like the rantings of a loon, but go and see Fixers and you'll realise the ambition and ability to transport you somewhere crazier is very real.

SATURDAY 19th

UPSTAIRS featuring ADMIRAL FALLOW + ADAM BARNES + THE OLD GRINDING YOUNG + THE YARNS + MARIANA MAGNAVITA: O2 Academy – This month's Upstairs showcase welcomes Scotland's orchestral indie-folksters Admiral Fallow to town, following on from their excellent set at last summer's Truck Festival, their uplifting sound counterpointed by oceans of lyrical pathos, sounding not unlike a rustic collision between Stornoway, The Waterboys and Broken Records. They've got a new album, 'Tree Bursts In Snow' out and they're joined tonight by a local supporting cast that features soulful acoustic pop troubadour Adam Barnes; pensive indie-folksters TOGY; jangly popstrels The Yarns and Brazilian songstress Mariana Magnavita.

AS GODS: The Wheatsheaf – Melodic, atmospheric metallers.

FISHWIFE'S BROADSIDE: Chester Arms – Protest folk, shanties and punk cabaret.

SCHOLARS + RICHARD WALTERS + ROME PAYS OFF + PHIL McMINN: The Old Boot Factory – Audioscope fundraiser for Shelter, featuring hook-laden electro-rockers Scholars, plus emotive, angel-voiced troubadour Rich Walters, atmospheric post-rock and drone-rock combo Rome Pays Off and heartfelt songsmith Phil McMinn.

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy

SELECTA: The Bullingdon

TREVOR WILLIAMS: Magic Cafe (1pm) – Soulful balladry and protest songs from Faringdon troubadour Trev.

PETE FRYER BAND: Shepherd's Hut, Ewelme

SUNDAY 20th

MONDAY 21st

GIRLS WITH GUITARS: The Bullingdon – The Famous Monday Blues hosts Ruf Records second Blues Caravan Girls With Guitars tour, featuring young Kansas guitarist and singer Samantha Fish alongside Brighton's Dani Wilde and Victoria Smith, their combined roots bringing elements of blues, boogie, soul, country and punk to the mix.

TUESDAY 22nd

NIGHTWALKERS + HARBOUR: The Wheatsheaf

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – The New Jazz Collective play live.

SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 23rd

GET CAPE, WEAR CAPE, FLY! O2 Academy – Sam Duckworth returns to town, touring his fourth album, 'The Mannequin', his slick electro-folk mix of the personal and political having boasted an eclectic set of collaborators in the past – Nitin Sawhney; Baaba Maal; Shy FX; Kate Nash – that's never quite transported his music beyond a pleasant, polished Coldplay-gone-electropop.

TENNIS: The Jericho Tavern – Married couple Patrick Riley and Alaina Moore return with their lush, lo-fi blend of classic 60s girl groups and shimmering preppy indie pop.

100 HAND SLAP PRESENTS GLANVILLE SESSIONS + TROLL 23 + GRUNDE: The Cellar – Hip hop, reggae, funk and soul club night.

WEDNESDAY BLUES: James Street Tavern

THURSDAY 24th

THE CELLAR FAMILY + COCAINE COWBOYS + SHATTERED DREAMS + NEW CLEAR SKYLINE: The Bullingdon – Punk action from It's All About The Music promotions, with The Cellar Family kicking out their virulent brand of post-hardcore, fuelled by a deliciously misanthropic disgust. Grungy pop-punkers Shattered Dreams return to action. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**
BURGUNDY: The Bell, Bicester.

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

FRIDAY 25th

THE HANDSOME FAMILY: The

Bullingdon – Ghostly gothic alt.country from Mr and Mrs Sparks – *see main preview*

JONQUIL: O2 Academy – Hometown return for the local faves, their eclectic, ever-shifting blend of tropical pop, dreamy atmospherics, psych-folk and more having taken them around the globe over the past year.

Friday 25th

THE HANDSOME FAMILY:

The Bullingdon

While the term alt.country has been rendered all but meaningless by unreconstructed traditionalists trying to keep a fingerhold on a younger audience, The Handsome Family are the real alternative deal. The husband and wife duo of Brett and Rennie Sparks have been creating beautiful, grotesque music together for close to 20 years and nine albums now. The couple's mix of darkly minimalist music with lyrics that blur the lines between the mundane and the fantastical is as potent as it is unassuming. These are songs of weirdness and wonder set in mysterious places, whether deep in the forests or in dusty back roads motels and deal with anything from the discovery of electricity or meditations on death and the desire to properly live, to a story of a man who discovers a hole in his backyard which never fills up however much rubbish he tips into it, until he uses it to journey to the darkest places on earth. The lyrical pictures Rennie paints are often magical and bizarre – not surprising coming from someone who claims she sees ghosts – while Brett's time spent in a mental hospital finds its way into some of the duo's stories. Musically they drift through old-time bluegrass and classic country to honky tonk and rustic rock but always with a feeling of something unearthly about them. It's been well over a decade since The Handsome Family last graced an Oxfordshire stage, but we've never forgotten just how great they were then and we expect nothing less than greatness again this time.



HQ: The Cellar – Drum&bass club night with a DJ set from Mark System.

MIXTAPE: The Wheatsheaf

BURGUNDY + THE REAPER + JUST LIKE LITTLE PEOPLE + AMONG HONOUR:

The Wheatsheaf, Banbury – Jambox metal night.

PETE FRYER BAND: The King & Queen, Wheatley

FUNKY FRIDAY: The Bullingdon

SATURDAY 26th

SKATALITES: O2 Academy – The Jamaican ska legends return for more party mania – *see main preview*

MUTAGENOCIDE + INTENSIVE SQUARE + REIGN UPON US + FRAGMENT + SIX BULLET CHAMBER: O2 Academy – Skeletor presents another cracking night of heaviosity in conjunction with Room 101. Tonight's bill is topped by local technical metallers Mutagenocide, who'll hopefully have earned themselves a few new fans at the Punt earlier in the month. They're joined by Cardiff's Intensive Square, inspired by Meshuggah, Pantera and Mr Bungle; Reign Upon Us, whose debut album 'Her Majesty's Infection' is out now; Fragment, whose death and black metal leans towards Mayhem's groundbreaking style, and thrash'n'groove outfit 6 Bullet Chamber, leaning towards the Clutch and Metallica scheme of things.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with PEERLESS PIRATES + GALAXIES + GERT LASSITUDE: The Wheatsheaf – Gappy Tooth celebrates its tenth anniversary doing what it does best – mixing and matching on-the-rise and little-known acts and hoping folks are open minded enough to come along and listen. Great headline set tonight from local pirate-obsessed indie rockers Peerless Pirates, kicking out a rambunctious rockabilly-tinged racket that recalls classic Smiths and Franz Ferdinand. Support comes from Leeds' electro-funk act Galaxies, recalling everything from house labels like Salsound and Sleeping Bag, through artists such as Herbie Hancock and Patrice Rushen, to producers like Walter Gibbons and Giorgio Moroder. Elegant laptop-based melodies from Gert Lassitude, featuring former members of Doolittle and Mr G & Rich.

ALEXANDER TUCKER + YALDABAOH + FLIGHTS OF HELIOS: Modern Art Oxford – Experimental blues, drone-rock and freak-folk from Kent's Alexander Tucker, the hardcore singer-turned-folk experimentalist, utilising tape loops, field recordings, guitar fx and detuned instruments to create a spooked modern folk sound that earned him releases on ATP and Thrill Jockey.

HALF DECENT + AIKZ: Stocks Bar, Crown & Thistle, Abingdon – The Skittle Alley presents rising local rappers Half Decent, fresh from his Oxford Punt set, and Abingdon's own Aikz.

PROPAGANDA + TRASHY + ROOM 101: O2 Academy

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Chester Arms
LOVERS ROCK & SOUL NIGHT: The Bullingdon

VON BRAUN + COLOUR CHANGE
FOR CAMOUFLAGE + MOIETY +

OLIVER COATES: Cafe Tarifa (5pm) – Chilled-out acoustic session from Quickfix, featuring local indie rockers Von Braun and more.

ANTON BARBEAU: Magic Cafe (1pm) – Acoustic lunchtime show for the psychedelic pop minstrel.

SUNDAY 27th

DAD ROCKS + ROBOTS WITH SOUL + COUNT DRACHMA + RAINBOW

SHARKS: The Cellar – Pan-Scandinavian orchestral folk-pop from Njall Albertson's Dad Rocks collective, whose elaborate, seductively melodic 'Mount Modern' album has reaped critical plaudits across the board lately. Drone-rock and electro noise from Robots With Souls in support, plus a local outing for Count Drachma, the band formed by Stornoway's Oli and Rob Steadman, exploring their South African roots with journeys into Zulu language songs.

PIANOROCKETSHIP: Friends Meeting House, St. Giles – Exotic, surreal storytelling from the singer and pianist.

GLEND A HUI SH + PENNY & PHIL + BEARD OF DESTINY + DAVE & JEREMY: Donnington Community Centre (6pm) – Free acoustic session with bluesy punk-folk siren Glenda Huish and more.

MONDAY 28th

24 PESOS: The Bullingdon – Funky blues and soul from the London outfit at tonight's Famous Monday Blues.

OXFORD UKULELES: The Port Mahon

TUESDAY 29th

NEAL CASAL + DANNY GEORGE

WILSON: O2 Academy – Sometime bandmate of Ryan Adams in The Cardinals, New Jersey's Neal Casal tours his latest opus, 'Sweeter The Distance', with support from Danny & The Champs frontman Danny George Wilson.

GENERAL FIASCO: The Jericho Tavern – Punky indie rocking from Northern Ireland's General Fiasco, tour support over the years to Pigeon Detectives, The Enemy, Wombats and Fighting With Wire.

JAZZ CLUB: The Bullingdon – Free live jazz with The Hugh Turner Band.

SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 30th

WEDNESDAY BLUES: James Street Tavern

THURSDAY 31st

HALF MAN, HALF BISCUIT: O2 Academy – Nigel Blackwell and Neil Crossley return to town with the mighty Half Man Half Biscuit. Since their seminal 80s debut 'Back In The DHSS', Blackwell's none-more-sardonic



Saturday 26th

SKATALITES:

O2 Academy

Skatalites' performance at the Zodiac back in 2007 has down in local music folklore as one of the great party nights in town and there's nothing to suggest this latest return trip will be anything less. Formed in the early-60s the band were in large part responsible for the popularisation of ska with hits such as 'Guns Of Navarone' and trombonist Don Drummond's 'Man In The Street', as well as the genre's transformation into reggae. In their prime, between 1964 and 1965, the band recorded and played with the best Jamaican musicians and producers, including Prince Buster, Desmond Dekker and Lee Perry, recording their first two albums, 'Ska Authentic' volumes 1 and 2, at Studio 1. The beginning of the end came with the jailing of Drummond for murder and the band split in 1967. A reformed Skatalites returned in 1983, minus Drummond, who had died in prison, and have since relocated to the States and made their first forays into Europe and around the world. These days the core of the original band consists of Lloyd Knibb, Doreen Shaffer and Lester Sterling, with Tommy McCook and Jackie Mittoo amongst the casualties over the years. They remain, however a potent live band and one of the most important acts ever to come out of Jamaica, so get them there dancing shoes on and show us what you're made of, people.

outlook, inventive punnery and Fall-esque post-punk racket has documented smalltown English life, football and crap telly in peerless fashion, a rare example of laugh-out-loud humour mixing seamlessly with great music. A national treasure, as the late, great John Peel once rightly declared.

NEON TEEPEE + THE NEW MOON: The Bullingdon – It's All About The Music local bands night.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

EYES OF EVE + AETHARA: The Bell, Bicester – Jambox rock and metal night with epic thrash crew Eyes Of Eve and hardcore ubermetallers Aethara.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: The Jack Russell, Marston

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LIVE



MYSTERY JETS / PEACE

The Bullingdon

Tonight's gig is buzzing, and justifiably so. Given the four singles they have had in the charts so far, it could well be argued that headliners Mystery Jets are a little too big to be playing such intimate venues as The Bully, but of course no-one is going to be complaining about that any time soon.

First, though, support in the form of moody indie-rockers, Peace. Initial signs are promising: the opening riff on their first song is upbeat and energetic, reminiscent of Foals' earlier math-rock based work, and by the sounds of it the songwriter of the outfit has an ear for one hell of a chorus. Where the side is let down, though, is the enthusiasm – or rather lack of – of the band members themselves. It unfortunately appears that the lead vocalist is simply too cool to announce the names of his songs with any sort of pride, and the guitarist too focused on maintaining appearances to curl even one side of his mouth and give the crowd the slightest hint of a smile they are so craving. But alas, no such luck.

The headliners, by contrast, are smiles all round, and this rubs off enormously onto the crowd; within no time at all it is full steam ahead for

old and new material alike, and soon enough we are accordingly bopping up and down to 'Serotonin' and 'Two Doors Down'. As to where they got their inspiration for soon-to-be-released LP, 'Radlands', the band's attire leaves no-one in the dark; lead vocalist Blaine Harrison is donning a cowboy-style leather jacket, whilst lead guitarist William Rees prefers a shirt entirely comprised of the red, white and blue of the national flag of the U.S.A (stars and all). The pace of the evening momentarily drops upon the band performing another off said album, but is all the better for it – female vocalist Sophie-Rose joins the band on stage to help out on 'Take Me Where The Roses Grow', a sweet little number that revolves around a duet between Rees and herself. The warmth and affection that is so evident between the pair really epitomises the band tonight – despite some "serious shit" (their words) going wrong with their technology towards the closing stages of their set, they nonetheless battle on through (and doing so quite happily), finishing with 'Flash A Hungry Smile'.

Nick Beaver

CAT MATADOR / DALLAS DON'T / PUMP SHARK / ROBOTS WITH SOULS

Port Mahon

Sometimes it doesn't take much to be new. Live looping stopped being surprising some time ago, and bass and drums duos litter hipster house parties like half smoked Camels, yet we've never seen anyone put them together. Robots With Souls' Steve Wilson balances a two string bass on a sparse drum kit, and samples up some big, dense rhythms over which he delivers fragmented lyrics with melodic intensity. Somewhere in this marriage of indie crooning and dumbass mall sludge, a truly excellent new act has been created. It's a fantastic show, that in the sweaty crucible of the Port Mahon feels more a shared ritual than a gig. Wycombe's Pump Shark offer a twitchier take on

rock intensity, jerky rhythms continually pulling the rug beneath soul-baring vocal howls. There's a little of the sensitive brutality of Fugazi in their mixture of choppy guitars and lopsided sincerity, but somehow the set never quite gets off the leash. If Pump Shark could get over a certain studied restraint they could be powerful, but as it is the initial buzz dwindles before their half hour is up.

There's something we adore about Dallas Don't, but let's be frank, it ain't their playing. The rhythms are sloppy and they're rarely entirely in tune, but it doesn't matter because their music tells stories, and each slurred vocal line conjures up images that massed ranks of well-drilled musos

could never achieve. The sound is a fascinating battle between erudite, melancholic indie and scruffy US rock – The Delgados morphing into Mudhoney, perhaps – and you get the feeling that if one side ever won the fight, the magic would dissipate, but for now this tuneful whirlwind of rage and romanticism is one of the best things in Oxford music.

A Cat Matador is a funny idea. Wave a cape at your average moggy and you'll get bemused disdain, not an enraged stampede. And we feel roughly the same: Cat Matador play well, doing all the right things with violin-flecked indie, putting intricate snare patterns behind introspective Tindersticks laments, and there are some mournful fiddle lines and clattering bursts of energy to snag our ears, but generally the feeling is that whilst Cat Matador and Pump Shark are decent enough bands, real character will always win out.

David Murphy

JOHN BRAMWELL / THE LAKE POETS / JESS HALL / THE SONIC RISING

02 Academy

The manager of a fairly notorious comedian once told me about what he called the 'nutter tax'. Simply put, it's a ticket price that is sufficiently high to ensure that only people who really want to be there will come to shows. After all, scabrous as that particular comic may be, the walk-outs and complaints of the offended are still a pain in the arse and knacker the gigs. Perhaps BBC Introducing should contemplate something similar, or open another room to house the oblivious punters who have merely come for a natter.

Sonic Rising really don't need to compete with the punters; on a largely acoustic bill they seem an odd choice due to the sheer volume they produce, three guitars, drums, bass and organ sufficient to pin us back with noise. Early doors they reminded me a little of early-90s Creation outfit Adorable or, more contemporaneously, Kasabian. The best bits are when they break out of the droning chug and give it some good garage welly. What they do have is a great rhythm section which, to use a technical term, gives it some right humpty. What they don't just yet is material that really stands out. When my ears are better I might well check them out again.

I doubt if Jess Hall enjoys her evening overmuch. Memorable largely for bringing an aspidochelone along with her onstage, she deserves credit for playing through the roar of gobshites. She has a sweet voice but her songs seem too timid and softly focussed to really cut through, though to be fair, if Joni Mitchell had been up there, the chatterers would still probably have chatted. A lose-lose scenario.

The Lake Poets is Sunderland singer-songwriter, Martin Longstaff, who plays the first half of his set solo before bringing his band on with him. He has a silvery, almost falsetto voice and comes across as something of a pub trouper. Musically, it's pretty anodyne, very competent but resolutely unedgy, perhaps in the same ballpark as Seth Lakeman or similar.

Purely subjectively, I rate I Am Kloot's John Bramwell as one of my favourite songwriter/performers around. A Mercury nomination last year was fully deserved, and his short, sharp, highly melodic songs are incisive and cut through with a salty desperation. He's been around far too long (his first album, under the name Johnny Dangerously, came out in 1987) to berate the non-participants round the bar but makes enough acerbic comments to make it clear where he stands. To compensate he plays harder, which gives the gig a slightly ragged, but forceful, energy. He takes requests from the Kloot back catalogue and, if you can hear him, it's a joy.

It's not so much that an artist's status should automatically demand attention, but that something of this quality should go absolutely unnoticed by a large chunk of people who have chosen to spend their evening in a live music venue, is baffling. The roar of the crowd is all very well, but when it's an inane, self-reflexive roar that all but obliterates the focus of the event, then that roar, and the meat puppets that produce it, really should go fuck themselves.

Jan Webster

NICK MALCOLM QUARTET

The Ashmolean

It's great to see the Oxford Jazz Festival defying what are worrying times for festivals and kicking off the local festival season with its traditional April date. Much of this year's programme is straight-ahead mainstream jazz, but upstairs in Copa trumpeter **Nick Malcolm's Quartet** are into what, to the casual listener, is weirder jazz territory: abstract free improv spliced with experiments with unusual time signatures, sudden changes in pace and having passages of music so different from each other in the same number that it seems to be a strange accident that they happen to be in the same tune.

Everyone in the quartet is a strong player. Malcolm's own trumpet style is often quite sparse. He seems to be playing the spaces between the notes as well as individual notes themselves and out of that tension creates a sound that's angular and yet sometimes beautifully lyrical in the same moment. As well as composing most of the music, a major contribution as leader is that he gives lots of scope to Oxford's fast rising piano star Alexander Hawkins, a man with astounding technique. In contrast to Malcolm, Hawkins often produces a flood of unbelievably fast-paced notes, his fingers

becoming a blur, though perhaps he does this just a little too often. The refined double bass of Oli Brice and the sophisticated drums of Mark Whitlam are both creative and anchor the music.

The quartet play with feeling and grab your attention from the start. I'm surprised by how tight a band they turn out to be, and this, along with always putting the music back together again whenever they've pulled it apart, means that they never get too weird and lose their audience.

An equally good, but different, listen over the course of the festival are the two gigs the festival hosts in the unusual venue of the Ashmolean's atrium, which both draw appreciative crowds. Engaging young vocalist and keyboard player **Theo Jackson**, with a fine double bass man, Jason Reyes, performs standards, the highlight being their version of the Duke Ellington classic, 'Caravan'. The day before the hugely talented violinist **Ben Holder** and guitarist Stuart Clark-Smith bring the Ashmolean alive, playing mainly Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli tunes, and have the large crowd, and maybe even the listening statues, calling for more.

Colin May

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LOS CAMPEsinOS! / TALL SHIPS

O2 Academy

"You deserve toilet doors!" Gareth Campesinos shouts at the packed O2 Academy, "don't let anybody tell you otherwise!" The crowd seem rather less incensed by the O2's lax attitude towards the state of their bathrooms than the band do, but they cheer anyway. Unmitigated approval looks to be the theme of the evening – indeed, the kid in front of us carries on cheering and dancing even when the band stop to tune up between songs.

Earlier, the audience are warmed up by Brighton based math rockers Tall Ships, whose huge bass lines carry drawn-out intros through layers of soaring, reverb-laden vocals. The whole set is entirely based around rhythm; lyrics and actual melody appear a mere afterthought. Nonetheless, it proves an effective formula, as by set closer 'Hit The Floor', a good part of the crowd is singing along.

Los Campesinos! take to the stage to 'By Your Hand', the anthemic first track of 2011's 'Hello Sadness', before launching into the distinct glockenspiel intro of early single 'Death to Los Campesinos!'

Unexpectedly, both new and old material elicits similar levels of

adulation from the audience – these are fans that have stuck by the band since the beginning. But then why wouldn't they stay; despite a slight movement towards more a more "mature sound" musically, Los Campesinos! have stayed true to their roots: big vocal harmonies, pop choruses, a lyrical earnestness, and a tongue in cheek self awareness of the genre they inhabit. "I think we need more post-coital and less post-rock," Gareth sings in 'Straight in at 101', after the melodic 'Knee Deep at ATP'.

You can still recognise the massive hits, though: when the prolonged intro of 'You! Me! Dancing!' breaks into the verse, the crowd sing along to the actual guitar riff. An encore of synth based 'In Media Res' swells into the rousing 'Sweet Dreams Sweet Cheeks', during which Gareth jumps into the audience, before all eight band members gather round three microphones, unaccompanied, and shout the refrain. This is the sort of music that somehow makes you feel invincible, that you could do anything, that actually, you know what, you DO deserve toilet doors!

Caroline Corke

SIMONE FELICE

Jericho Tavern

There are very few artists who you could watch singing Dylan's 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door' as an encore, where you'd end up nodding with respect and say, "yup, you've actually done the knocking."

While Simone Felice's name is phonetically Simon, it probably didn't help having his grandmother add an *italianate* 'e' to his birth certificate, thereby ensuring school was a bumpier ride than it needed to be. Things got worse. He went onto to survive a serious brain aneurysm as a boy, and then two years ago he was back on the touch and go table with a major operation to fix a potentially fatal heart arrhythmia. In the hands of a neighbourhood, top-trumping, pub bore, this would normally clear the room, but as a member of Catskill NY troubadour family The Felice Brothers, and with the charismatic shom looks of a young Kris Kristofferson, these are all the wake-up call credentials you need to finally publish a couple of novels, then write an eponymous album and take it on the road, with a stripped-back band of brilliant musicians who are also your best friends.

The room is packed to the rafters with devotees, and his 'Mud Slide Slim'-era James Taylor

wordsmithery, crossed with his Cat Stevens-like voice, soon has them swathed in the poetic, messianic, folk-rock they crowded in for.

Simone's most metropolitan and popular song, 'New York Times', a scathing look at today's tabloid media, is confidently used up first, and after that we are left in no doubt that in his mind, the rocking chair, porch philosophies of his hometown, like "You got to give to get", are more than an intellectual match to what he affectionately dubbed "Oxford's 'community college' book learnin'." He's at his best, though, when he's looking under the stones of his backwoods upbringing and revealing the creepy dark side. In 'Bobby Ray' the haunting rape and subsequent murder of a local young American Indian girl, is brought horrifically to life, while equally poignant memories are shared of his first love and her Ouija board, in 'Stormy Eyed Sarah' After you've been at death's door, and in Simone's case had a daughter born two months after they'd sewn him back up, everything you do must seem like a beatifying high. I just hope that having the angels on his side never dulls his sword.

Paul Carrera

DELILAH / JOSH KUMRA

O2 Academy

Having played a part in Wretch 32's number 1 hit 'Don't Go' last year, Swindon's Josh Kumra is being talked about as the New Ed Sheeran. Such comparisons seem fair enough after tonight's opening couple of numbers, with Josh's cracked, bluesy voice and hip hop-conscious mix of acoustic guitar and drumming tailor-made for crossover appeal. Too quickly, though, it all sinks into generic acoustic soul balladeering, with lyrical clichés like "Nothing feels real without you / Not even the ground beneath my feet," abounding. By the time he gets to recent single 'Helicopters & Planes' we're haunted by images of Simply Red somehow filtered through Chris Rea's gnarly tonsils. We even weigh up the advantages of spending the rest of his set standing in the toilets, and when he closes with an abominable cover of MGMT's 'Kids' we suspect a paddle in the urinals might have been the more palatable option.

"Talent borrows, genius steals," goes the old saying, which would make Delilah's 'Go' single a piece of pop Einstein. Blatantly lifting whole sections of Chaka Khan's 'Ain't Nobody', it's an irresistible slice of modern soul, racking up

over two million Youtube hits already. Perhaps predictably Delilah saves it til last tonight, confident enough in her own talent and versatility to make us wait. Her opening number starts inconsequentially, a breathless soul-pop shuffle, but by the time she's finished with it, her voice is soaring to a higher plain and it's finished too soon. Despite comparisons to Adele, the best bits of Delilah's set tonight find her closer to Sinead O'Connor's emotionally-intense tones. 'I Can Feel You' is dubwise trip-hop with a superb wandering bass, while a brace of more intimate songs about her family reveal her more intimate side.

It's Delilah's heavier, dubstep-friendly side that we prefer, though. A pensive cover of Minnie Riperton's 'Inside My Love' makes way for the excellent 'Shades Of Grey' before we get that anthem at the close. With a vocal talent that's beyond any doubt – she never once resorts to hackneyed melisma – Delilah's up against stiff competition in an already overcrowded market. We'd like to think she'd benefit from avoiding the easy, crowd-pleasing route and explore riskier, but more rewarding, territories.

Dale Kattack

EYES OF EVE / ZAOS / DE-MASK

THYSELF

The Wheatsheaf

Tonight's Moshka gig features a trio of new local metal acts, in De-Mask Thymself's case, so new they're playing their debut show. As such it's decent to cut them a little slack for being occasionally, well, slack. Which isn't too often, truth be told. There is an understandable lack of fluency about their death-thrash racket at times but when they do hit the spot they can sound like rolling thunder.

Zaos, while far from being an established act, are already making their reputation on the local metal scene. They've certainly got the moves, all synchronised hair swirling and foot-stomping, like an uber-metal boy band, except that boy bands rarely sound like Satan throwing a hissy fit about the quality of jam at the breakfast table and engulfing everyone else at the table in eternal flame. Well, maybe One Direction. But you get the idea. So anyway, Zaos sound like a squalling, ogre-ish blend of Venom and Mayhem and maybe even a bit of Bolt Thrower for extra nasty measure and it's quickly apparent

why they're being hailed as one of Oxford's most impressive young metal talents. Onward they plough, through tracks like 'Metamorphic Disarray', as obviously powerfully and unstoppable as an HGV with a broken handbrake on a steep incline, except the only way they're heading is up.

Eyes Of Eve are far more melodic than tonight's support. They're pretty anthemic too, particularly the vocalist who cuts through the twin guitar attack on their opening number like an OTT tribute to Eddie Vedder. With his almost body-length dreads and sometimes operatic singing style, he casts an impressive figure, but as he becomes more guttural through the set, so the band's music darkens, heading into more classic thrash for the final furlong. Whether this shift reflects the way their music is heading in the future we can only guess, but we'd prefer it if Eyes Of Eve could hang on to those elements that mark out their individuality rather than following the heavyweight herd.

Dale Kattack

LANTERNS ON THE LAKE / DEER CHICAGO

O2 Academy

There's little doubting that Deer Chicago have long been on an upward curve since they first popped up a couple of years ago. They've been tweaking and refining their emotionally-charged, delay-drenched heart-over-head ballads until they sob uncontrollably in a corner, which is probably just the kind of effect they were after. Tonight's highlights just how professional they've become and they sound polished and direct. Where things fall down slightly is an apparent adherence to a songwriting template which insists on a contemplative tinkling intro, some unobtrusive drums (usually a little light cymbal work and a thumping floor tom), into a slow build and from there into a redemptive, explosive thrash. Naturally, it's an effective blueprint, but over the duration of an entire set there's little in the way of a dynamic spectrum to sustain interest. A little more tweaking, and perhaps the addition of a violin/cello (no more xylophones please, there are limits) and Deer Chicago could be onto something with huge potential.

Lanterns On The Lake are already well versed in the effectiveness of

dynamic range but then there are six of them, and they all appear to be multi-instrumentalists. Pitched somewhere between the post-rock of Sigur Ros and the ambient folk of The Album Leaf, they have the ability to tug at the heart from any angle they choose. Early in the set 'A Kingdom' stands out with its pop inflections and builds to a raucous ending, but it's the likes of the utterly gorgeous hymnal balladry of 'Ships In The Rain' that make Lanterns On The Lake such a fantastic prospect. Hazel Wilde's delicate vocals provide a wonderful centre point for the band to swell and yield against; when she's joined by Adam Sykes for 'If I've Been Unkind' it's a perfect mix. With Paul Gregory's otherworldly guitars and the searing violin of Sarah Kemp LOTL are capable of creating ethereal soundscapes as well as rustic ballads. Closing the set with 'Not Going Back To The Harbour', it's the latter they leave us with. Hopeful and sad in equal measure, it's the perfect encapsulation of the emotional range and a fitting end to a wonderful set.

Sam Shepherd

KYLA LA GRANGE / WE WERE EVERGREEN / OZONNA

The Jericho Tavern

The night gets off to a bright start. Given that opening act Ozonna's good-natured swagger is seemingly fuelled by nothing other than optimism and self-belief, it is hard to think otherwise. Upon the African-born electro-popper singing about how he doesn't care about the imperfections he might or might not have on his latest single, 'I Love Me', what the Londoner is all about becomes plain for all to see; it is not 'I Love Me' in the arrogant sense, it is 'I Love Me' in the 'everybody's different' sense.

When We Were Evergreen take the stage, things don't go from bright to brighter just in the figurative sense; in no time at all it's apparent that the lead singer being clad head to toe in different shades of pink is a good reflection of the kind of music he and his band produce. What isn't expected, though, is the sheer amount of playful, yet sophisticated noise the three make. Folk-tinged indie-pop 'Parisians' begins their set with the help of pre-recorded spoken word and a loop pedal, and it quickly hits

home that the trio are not your everyday wonky pop outfit. The fact that the band continue as if nothing happened when the technology they are much dependent upon fails before they can start the last song of the set sums them up perfectly; it's as if they are on a mission to show how happy they are just to be here.

Headliner Kyla La Grange, then, was always going to struggle to maintain this "never say never" attitude the supports seem to embody. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; if anything Kyla uses it to her advantage, creating a moody, atmospheric ambience with angst-driven opener 'Been Better'. Although it's impressive such a booming voice can come from someone so timid, both in size and personality, unfortunately it does also mean the complete silence in between songs that is soon the elephant in the room, is that much easier to hear, strangling the atmosphere the songs try so hard to create.

Nick Beaver



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DR SHOTOVER Reality TV

REALITY TV? It should be wrapped in barbed wire and rolled smartly down the nearest Alp. All those horrible Young People alternately gurning and shrieking as they show off their abs/fake bosoms/hi-tech gadgets/lo-tech brains, then pretending to blub as they thank their mums/gym instructors/stylists... even my days in the jungles of Burma have not caused me to wake up screaming as I did after inadvertently watching ten seconds of *Strictly Go Rancid*... However, now that I am a proud member of SNOTT (Society for Nurturing Oxford Televisual Talent), it has been necessary to bite the bullet regarding what we fashionable types are calling 'Really TV'. [*Dr S adjusts his Moschino spectacles modestly*]... Get the drinks in and I will explain the whys and wherefores... Well, as reported last month, our opening salvo was Mr Coombes's *Now You're Cooking With Gaz*, which is already proving very popular with the 'hot knives' daytime TV crowd. This will be followed next month by *Britain's Got Tarrant*, featuring, yes, you guessed, the bass player of Oxford's own Wembley headliners Bachman-Turner OverDrive; *The Ex Factor*, as local scenesters reminisce about music at the late, great Exeter Hall; and of course Yours Truly in *My Big Fat Topsy Weed-In* – can't for the life of me imagine what THAT will entail... but next time we warm up some cutlery in the East Indies Club kitchen, I'm sure I'll think of something. Meanwhile I am strongly rooting for a solo vehicle for former Oxford student and *Countdown* lovely, I mean presenter, Rachel Riley. No Fanshawe, it WON'T be called *Life of Riley*; neither will it feature... Ah, bottoms up! What? WHAT?? I was referring to the drinks. Obviously.

Next month: Riley TV



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INTRODUCING....

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

Kill Murray

Who are they?

Kill Murray are Gus Rogers (*guitar/vocals*); Aaron Delgado (*guitar/synth*); Scott McGregor (*bass*) and Chris Hutchinson (*drums*). The quartet's individual roots lie in the bands Dial F For Frankenstein, 50ft Panda and Phantom Theory come together as fans of each others previous bands after Gus placed an ad on the Nightshift forum last year after Dial F split up. After debuting with an impressive showing at Ley Lines Festival in October, they continued to gig locally and released their debut EP last month, with another due in the summer. Having been tipped as one of the the local bands to watch by myriad local promoters and writers, Kill Murray play at this month's Oxford Punt.

What do they sound like?

Given their collective history you might expect Kill Murray to be all big, meaty grunge riffs and thundering beats, and sometimes they are, but equally they're far poppier than you might imagine, with three-part harmonies and even some synth disco bits scattered through their dynamic leftfield rocking.

Who or what inspires them?

"Arthur C. Clarke and Prince."

Career highlight so far:

"Our first gig was pretty special. We'd been writing and rehearsing for only a few months, literally no one other than us had heard our music yet. We were lucky enough to be given a good slot at Ley Lines at the O2 Academy and the crowd were fantastic. Getting such a positive initial reaction really helped to validate that we were onto something worth doing."

And the lowlight

"Being stuck in a shady area of London after the band wagon engine exploded on us at 2am after a show and finding out that there are actually two different colours to radiator fluid, red and blue. We didn't know which was the correct one, so we used the third option: purple."

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Poledo. Great lo-fi indie noise jams and fine songwriting. He's new on the



scene, he just won Nightshift Demo Of The Month and has now got himself a full band, so is definitely one to get psyched about."

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

"The English Riviera' by Metronomy. Every song is an absolute smash and, production wise, it's perfect, which is why we feel incredibly lucky to be working with the engineer for that album on our next EP."

When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect?

"The Nightshift Punt on Wednesday 16th May, at the Wheatsheaf at 9.45pm. We've all played the Punt before with our previous bands and it's always such a packed night. It's easily one of the best Oxford music night of the year."

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"Favourite: how supportive the Oxford scene is. It's the keen music fans and the relentless churn of new talent that keeps Oxford an important place for fresh music. Least favourite: considering the size of Oxford as a city, the scene is understandably saturated."

You might love them if you love:

Talking Heads, Pavement, Tom Vek, Dinosaur Jr, Cake, Metronomy, Yuck.

Hear them here:

Killmurray.bandcamp.com

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

20 YEARS AGO

"I fucking hate Bob Dylan; he sings out of his arse." "I hate fishing. And people who go fishing." "And golf. It's stupid and has a devastating effect on your dress sense." Just a few of the more coherent nuggets from Curfew's interview with **Arthur Turner's Lovechild?** in May 1992's issue. ATL? were the band formed by then Jericho Tavern promoter Mac, a man not exactly renowned for holding back when it came to opinions. He revealed he only formed the band "after seeing how shit most of the bands who played here were," and revealed all his songs were "about Northampton."

ATL? played at the Jericho Tavern themselves this month, supported by local grunge-rockers **Squid**, who were also that month's top demo review. Also appearing at the Tavern were a then barely-known Sheffield band called **Pulp**, whose show on Friday 29th pulled in approximately 50 punters. Just one of many big-name acts to come through the Jericho on their way to the top over the years.

Elsewhere this month the issue of flyposting was still high on the local agenda, **Radiohead** released their 'Drill' EP on EMI, with Curfew declaring it a more than promising debut and hoping their label would give them time to develop into something really special. Prescience being a particular skill of ours over the years. Ver 'Head also headlined the Oxford Venue (now the O2), while **The Jennifers**, **Swervedriver**, **The Daisies** and **Death By Crimpers** also playing the venue. The month's letters page found assorted malcontents moaning about the coverage given to such "rubbish, marginal

indie bands" as The Jennifers and On A Friday ahead of more promising local talents like **The Elmores**. Well, quite.

10 YEARS AGO

Goldrush gazed out from the cover of the May 2002 Nightshift, the band hosting and performing at that summer's Truck Festival. The newly-announced line-up included **The Rock Of Travolta**, **Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia**, **The Young Knives**, **Dustball** and **The Four Storeys**, while the out-of-town contingent featured **Caretaker**, **Lapsus Linguae** and **Jetplane Landing**.

The Samurai Seven were the featured interview band, launching their debut album, 'Le Sport', on Rotator Records. The local favourites had fought their way back to action after singer Simon Williams was shot by an airgun three years previously, almost losing an eye. Championed by the late, great John Peel, the Sammys recorded half a dozen sessions for Peel in their time before later morphing into **The Dirty Royals**.

In local music news, an online poll revealed **Ride** were voted the local band most people wanted to see reform, beating **Black Candy**, **Beaker** and **The Candyskins** to the title. JOR released their debut album 'Blunt', while **Smilex**'s 'Beg For It', **Soma**'s 'Black Rock City Star' and **Cody**'s 'Uplift' were also released. The month's gigging highlight was the Oxford Punt, featuring **The Young Knives**, **Sharron Kraus**, **Mindsurfer**, **Winnebago Deal** and **Sexy Breakfast**, as well as such destined-for-glory names as **Mr Duck**, **Varjak** and **Malkovitch**.

5 YEARS AGO

It being May, the Oxford Punt dominated the month's issue of Nightshift, **Smilex** variously glowering and grinning from the front cover. They were this year's closing act and were joined by the likes of **Mephisto Grande**, **Space Heroes Of The People**, **Borderville**, **Mr Shaadow**, **Foxes!** and a bunch of young striplings called **Stornoway** across six city centre venues that included The Market Tavern and The QI Club.

It was announced that **The Candyskins**, **The Nubiles**, **Dustball** and **Unbelievable Truth** were all set to reform to play a final night party at the Zodiac, which had been sold to the Academy Music Group. The night in question was to go down in local history and provide the impetus for Jon Spira's excellent *Anyone Can Play Guitar* documentary. In other local news, Truck Festival had sold out in a matter of hours without a single act having been as yet announced.

A glance at the month's gig guide revealed The Waterboys, A Silver Mt Zion, Simian Mobile Disco and Biffy Clyro as the chief highlights, while over in the demo pages, Kidlington's one-man electro warrior **The Nichole Steal** topped the pile with his "morass of guitars that churn like an android's stomach on a rough ferry crossing", while **Phil Honey**, chief protagonist behind such Nightshift faves as **The Rock Of Travolta**, **Boywithatoy** and **The Delta Frequency**, was dumped for his solo acoustic demo, which was a "Barely coherent somnambulant dirge."

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

ASHER DUST & OFFKEY

Keeping up with Asher Dust's myriad long-term, occasional and one-off collaborations would be a job in itself but a worthwhile one, since they're each touched by the man's highly individual, off-kilter talent. This team-up with Offkey is no exception, with 'Voices' a nagging, up-for-it slab of squelching dubstep with Asher's harsh, soulful refrain, "I hear voices in my head," that earworms itself into a part of your brain you can never reach in and remove it from, and thus we're hearing his voice in our heads long after we've reached the bottom of this month's demo pile. 'Mud Blut' works in a similar fashion, though it's possibly even better, again a dirty dubstep thump and a nagging refrain, akin to early Cabaret Voltaire, burrowing and badgering its way into your mind and bloodstream. After which 'Save Me' is both come-down and soothing balm after the cranial thrashing just dished out. It's a no-fi electro hum and flutter that sounds like a decidedly scuffed up Seal mixing it with Frankie Knuckles. We'd say "come back soon," but in Asher Dust's case, there's little doubt that he will.

THE MAN WITH THE STEREO HANDS

Lack of brevity is the undoing of many not-too-bad bands and musicians and with songs regularly clocking in around the six minute mark, Faringdon's Neil Dwerryhouse, who seems to be The Man With The Stereo Hands, too often outstays his welcome when with a bit of self-editing we might think more kindly of him. Then again, rhyming couplets like "Dr Paranoia / They'll find a reason to destroy ya" really don't help his cause. There's a strangely frustrating mish-mash of sounds going on here. One moment we're enthused by his chiming, Ride-like pop thrum, the next we're contemplating calling The Samaritans as he plunges into yet another bombastic soft-rock guitar solo, desperately convincing himself it make the music in some way epic, rather than overblown and turgid. 'Heed The Funnymen' rather overdoes the aquatic metaphors on lost love and heartache ("I'm never gonna swim to shore / It's hard to keep floating when you know you're losing the war"), Neil's heavy heart too often

reflected in the music which sounds weighed down under the baggage of self-pity and romantic longing and by the time he hits 'Tighten Up', you're shouting "lighten up!" at the CD player til you're fit to burst like a balloon full of guts. And then, just as you've all but given up hope, he comes back with 'So High', which sounds like a title even Liam Gallagher would dismiss as hackneyed, but spangles along like an old La's number, full of summery abandon and even something approaching a singalong chorus.

COLOUR CHANGE FOR CAMOUFLAGE

Boasting that they're "the strangest combination of artists since Eminem did that track with Elton John," Colour Change For Camouflage obviously wear their eclectic nature as a badge of honour, perhaps unaware that mix'n'match can so easily slip into mix'n'don't match. The band's biggest asset is singer Emily Wharton, a girl with a strident, acrobatic voice that verges on operatic at times and seems capable of wringing every last ounce of emotion out of each line. But too often what's going on behind her is little more than generic indie-funk fluttering and trilling, so songs like 'Harrie' end up sounding like something we imagine might be called Florence & The Foals. Emily warbles gustily on 'Disgrace' but the song goes nowhere and does little, while 'Emerald Exotics' seems similarly designed to showcase the impressive power and versatility of her tonsils, but is little more than lightweight guitar pop floundering, and the rap interlude sounds tagged on to give the whole procession a bit of flavour. 'Patterns In Nature' sounds like everyone in involved simply got bored and a bit drunk before they'd finished writing the tune and it stumbles and lurches in ungainly fashion through pub funk territory and we're just about to completely give up on them until, like The Man With The Stereo Hands before them, they save themselves at the death with 'Smokey's Song', the vocals and music at last in something approaching harmony, even the rapping sounding sweet and an acoustic jazz amble suggesting there may be a happy unified future for all concerned after all.

JOE TRUBY

More thumping techno from Joe Truby, who furnishes us with a second single-track demo after his promising debut outing last summer. 'Rock'n'roll' here is incessant to the point of hypnotic acid-tinged techno, dirty enough to pass itself off as some vintage analogue experiment but sleek enough to sneak into

broader-minded modern house club nights. It's a bit like you'd imagine Daft Punk might sound if they wanted to get ugly, all grimy awkwardness amid the solid pulsing core, but more than that it reminds us early-Noughties electro duo Morbious who released a similarly-minded single also called 'Rock'n'roll'. Heck, it's almost like we're becoming capable of putting two and two together and not ending up sitting in a puddle of our own making.

JESSICA LAW

Of course they didn't have things like synthesizers or house music in the 1940s, which is where Jessica Law's demo seems to have parachuted in from. Parachute silk being something that crops up in a list of items you can buy from the black marketer subject of her first song, 'The Spiv'. It's a light-footed waltz though old-time folk music with arcane language to match – when was the last time you heard “counterfeit britches” mentioned in song? Not that Jessica is completely stuck in the past musically – across six songs here she utilizes instruments as diverse as mandolin, squeezebox, harmonica and heavily distorted electric guitar, the latter adding some contemporary dirt to songs like 'The Innocent' and 'The Narcissist'. The former is belted out with a cheesy grin and you can almost imagine Jessica dressed as a wartime washwoman as she sings under a West End spotlight. The song titles too – to the above you can add 'The Sellout' and 'The Outlaw' – suggest set piece numbers from some character musical and she has the wonderfully clipped tones of a trained stage singer. For all its showy nature there's some heart and soul to the songs; it's not all glitz and footlights self-awareness. Occasionally Jessica reminds us of Kathryn Williams, at others Sally Timms, while demo highlight 'The Sellout' could be an old wartime popular hit filtered through a trippy fog and crackle of passing decades. And now, if you'll excuse us, we're off to have powdered egg for tea.

JONNY DREAD & THE STUPID THINGS I SAID

Another single-song demo here and one that seems to be over before we've even finished reading out the protagonist's name. It's a slender southern gospel-tinged country lament entitled 'Thank You Head', pitched somewhere between Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash, a sparsely-plucked acoustic guitar all that accompanies the gently rough-hewn voice. Pleasant enough, might even be a cover version. Certainly easier to get through than a plate of powdered egg.

THE TIED

What the world needs right now, more than a cure for cancer or a solution to the Middle East conflict, is... hell, yes... a band who sound

exactly like Arctic Monkeys. Despite the fact that even Arctic Monkeys are doing their damndest not to sound like Arctic Monkeys any more. Well done The Tied. Nice one. Ride that wave of pop zeitgeist. But, hey, wait, hang right on there buddy. Cos second song in they don't sound like Arctic Monkeys any more. No sir. Come 'Come Tell Me Girl' they've started sounding like The Libertines. Sing Hosanna and hang out the bunting! No more *faux* geezerish indie rocking with fake Yorkshire accents; now we've got *faux* geezerish indie rock with fake cockney accents. Don't knock it, these guys have a won a Battle Of The Bands competition. They told us so. Oops, we've upset them now. They've even ditched the *faux* geezerish indie rock and turned into The Strokes. No geezerishness here. Fake New York accents aplenty, mind. By gad this is a crazy old rollercoaster to keep tabs on, for sure. No wonder they've won prizes. And now, having come in and thrilled us so, we're hoping The Tied, like the tide, will now go back out. Before we go and have too much fun, like.

THE DEMO DUMPER

NATURAL OCCURRENCES

Just because something occurs naturally, doesn't make it a good thing. Takes floods. Or famines. Or farts. Not things you'd want to be stuck in the middle of. And to that exulted list you can add this lot, a band about whom we know next to nothing except that they're (a) from Carterton and (b) a load of shite. Oh yeah, and (c) they can't spell. Which is why their first song is called 'Vicerol' (*sic*). It does, however, seem to reflect the band's attitude to music making in that they don't seem overtly bothered how it all comes out, an elongated, heavily-flanged guitar solo eventually allowing some moaning, groaning vocal chant in on the action, like a dying crone's cancerous cry for help from the grave. We think it might all be supposed to be spaced-out and psychedelic with the disconcertingly incongruous synth arpeggios woven into the messy musical slurry, and maybe if you were utterly bonged out of your gourd you might find it disorientating enough to make you dribble out of the corner of your mouth and think about chocolate, but really, it's just a tuneless holler. 'Appletree' (well done, you managed to spell that one correctly; give yourself a biscuit), meanwhile comes with choice lyrics that include "Appletree, appletree / You grow so merrily" and "I sleep like a log / But don't throw me in the fire," though by this point it's highly tempting. Thing is, all this could be fun if they didn't sound like they were taking it all so bloody seriously. We bet they even think Hawkwind got better after they kicked Lemmy out.

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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