

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 228
July
2014**

JORDAN O'SHEA

SADNESS IS A BLESSING
with Oxford's new master of melancholy

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plus

TRUCK and CORNBURY
festivals previewed

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NEWS

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HMV OXFORD in Cornmarket closed its doors for the final time on the 18th June. The store, which has been a mainstay of Oxford music retail since the late-1980s, and the only CD store in the city centre since Zavvi and Fopp closed down five years ago, had a stay of execution earlier in the year as management looked to find a new site for the store. The shop's Twitter feed declared on the 14th June that a new store would be opening in the autumn but as yet no details of the location have been released. The closure of HMV leaves **Truck Store** on Cowley Road as Oxford's sole remaining dedicated music store, and the only store selling a wide selection of local releases as well as tickets for local gigs and festivals. On Friday 11th July Truck hosts an album launch show from local singer-songwriter Adam Barnes. He's on stage at 6pm. Keep supporting local independent businesses. Once they're gone they're gone. Visit truckmusicstore.co.uk for more news and stuff from the shop.

THE PORT MAHON has ceased running as a live music venue. The pub on St Clement's, which has hosted gigs in its intimate upstairs room for many years, is turning the venue into a dance studio.

CINDYTALK AND BRONNT INDUSTRIES KAPITAL are among a slew of new acts added to this year's **Supernormal Festival**. Mob Rules, The Wharves, Howie Reeve, Anta, Rex Nemo, The Cosmic Dead and Taman Shud also join a line-up that features Esben & the Witch, GNOD, Joanna Gruesome, Death Shanties, Sly & the Family Drone, Teeth of the Sea and Thought Forms. The decidedly leftfield Supernormal takes place over the weekend of the 8th-10th August at Braziers Park, near Wallingford. The artist-curated event also features contemporary art installations alongside three stages of music. Visit www.supernormalfestival.co.uk for more details and tickets.

RED STAR CYCLE reform for their first show in ten years this month. The electro-heavy prog-rockers, fronted by local music scene mainstay Jeremy Leggett, will play a one-off gig at the Wheatshaf on Saturday 26th July, where they're joined by Vienna Ditto and Chantelle Pike. Tickets for the show are on sale from Wegottickets.com, priced £4 in advance. The band have recently made a video for their song 'Pressman and the Tiredness', which you can see on Youtube.



DE LA SOUL have been added to the line-up of this year's **Big Feastival**. The festival, hosted by Jamie Oliver and Blur's Alex James, runs over the weekend of the 29th-31st August at James's farm near Kingham in west Oxfordshire. **Laura Mvula** is another addition to a bill that features Fatboy Slim; Jamie Cullum; Stornoway; Kelis; Norman J; Jack Savoretti; The Cuban Brothers and tribute acts Fleetwood Bac and Bjorn Again. More line-up news and ticket details for the music and food festival at www.jamieoliver.com/thebigfeastival.



GAZ COOMBES is set to headline **OxfordOxford**, a three-day music, film and community festival taking place in **South Park** over the weekend of the 26th-28th September. The festival is being billed as "a celebration of the city," with the Saturday (27th) dedicated to live music. Joining Gaz will be Tunng, Pixel Fix and Dance a la Plage, with more acts expected to be announced shortly. Friday will be dedicated to film screenings, while Sunday is set aside for local community groups. Tickets for the music day are on sale now, priced £32.50, from www.oxfordoxford.co.uk, alongside more information on the event.

SWINDLESTOCK AND FRANCIS PUGH & THE WHISKY SINGERS team up for a travelling gig around the pubs and venues of east Oxford this month. Oxford Roots Ramble takes place on Friday 11th July, with the two bands leading fans around various venues for impromptu live music and drinking. Fans should meet at The Port Mahon at 8pm before being led astray for the night. Visit either act's Facebook page for updated details nearer the time.

FLIGHTS OF HELIOS, Cooling Pearls, Listing Ships, Family Machine, Desert Storm and local music blog One Note Forever are among a host of teams taking part in the **Oxford Music World Cup** 5-a-side tournament this month. The tournament takes place at Court Farm Place, next to Oxford City's ground in Marston, on Saturday 5th July, raising money for homeless charity Shelter. Go along and support your favourite band, laugh at their skinny wee legs and join them for drinks and stuff during and after. It all kicks off at midday with the champions crowned sometime around 4pm.

AMONG small host of errors in last month's *Nightshift* (hey, we

were rushing to get it done early so we could go on holiday), our review of Pierce Artists' 'Raking Dead Leaves' album suggested Flooded Hallways' Nemrot was involved in the hip hop collective. It was of course Deeq from that band. The reviewer in question has been made to sit in the corner and listen to the new Kasabian album until his brain falls out of his nose.

AS EVER, don't forget to tune into **BBC Oxford Introducing** every Saturday night between 8-9pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best Oxford releases and demos as well as featuring interviews and sessions with local acts. The show is available to stream or 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, a photo gallery and gig guide. Nightshift's online form is open to all local music fans and musicians at nightshift.oxfordmusic.net

OXFORD BANDS looking for members or musicians looking for bands can advertise for free in *Nightshift*. Simply email your needs in up to 30 words, to nightshift@oxfordmusic.net.

A quiet word with

JORDAN O'SHEA

TO QUOTE MORRISSEY, HOW can someone so young sing words so sad?
“Well you see, I was happy in the haze of a drunken hour, but Heaven knows I’m miserable now...”

NIGHTSHIFT IS TALKING TO Jordan O’Shea, at a tender 22 years old already staking a claim for the title of Oxford’s Master of Melancholy. The fella’s got some stiff competition obviously. Oxford excels at many things musically but sad-eyed young men with a satchel full of regret and longing is a particular *forte*. From Thom Yorke through Richard Walters and Phil McMinn to the young crop that includes Adams Barnes and Jordan here, we’re blessed by singers who rise above the humdrum bleatings of the terminally unloved. Increasingly Jordan O’Shea is leading the pack on the back of a debut EP, ‘Her Name is-French Cinema’, and an album, ‘Desperation, My Dear’, both on Bear On A Bicycle, the label-cum-collective he started with a group of friends three years ago.

Jordan’s songs are awash with poetic reflections on the less bright side of life (“I reached out my hand for others / But no-one would reach out for mine,” from ‘The Hopeless St Jude’ sets out the mood of the aptly-named ‘Desperation, My Dear’), while offering enough slivers of defiance and hope to keep the blackness at bay. His voice, meanwhile, is sweet and heroically plaintive, occasional flamenco flourishes and lush horns bringing warmth to stark songs of loss and longing.

JORDAN WAS ONE OF THE star turns at May’s Oxford Punt and in the next few months is set to step his work up another couple of notches, starting to play live with a full band for the first time, and writing both a new album and a score for a short film he’s making.

JORDAN O’SHEA WAS BORN and raised in west London, living in Ireland and Australia before moving to Oxford at the age of twelve. He claims he started playing music at 14 when he realized he was never going to play for QPR. Learning to play the bass his first forays into music were far from the introverted disenchantment we’ve come to love from him.

“I grew up with bands such as Tonight Is Goodbye and Hedroom dominating the part of the Oxford music scene I was involved with, so it was a completely different time to now. My first band, Let Go Control,

was based around Berkshire. I went to school in Maidenhead for a bit, right in the prime of teenage angst, so naturally I stuck on Funeral For a Friend and Alexisonfire and started a post-hardcore band. Seriously, I was all black hair, long fringe, eyeliner. We recorded two EPs which went down pretty well, landing us slots in Camden Underworld and a few festivals, but in the end I just found myself completely drifting from that scene, and unfortunately from the band-members.”

When Let Go Control came to an end, Jordan formed Camena with a group of Oxford friends. They were short-lived but earned a *Nightshift*

“I blame QPR for everything. My dad took me nearly every Saturday to see them, so I suppose I was destined to understand what disappointment, failure and sadness were.”

Demo of the Month just before they split. It was quite a sea change from the post-hardcore of his first band. “I fell in love with Portugal. The Man and a lot of Portland, Oregon bands, and just chilled out a bit! I was bored of the repetitive structures that became a staple part of writing a post-hardcore song, and I was beginning to discover I could actually sing, not just scream my lungs out. I still have a massive soft spot for that music, as to be honest my music is probably more emo now than it was back then! Starting afresh as a solo act, were you becoming more aware of artists around you in Oxford?

“Since getting older my friends introduced me to bands like Trophy Wife and Jonquil who I thought were great, but it was only on joining the scene when I fully appreciated the acts around me. I seriously had to up my game if I was going to make any sort of impression; every band just always seemed so professional. It was like walking into this waxwork museum of musical talent, and I was just standing there next to the sculptures pretending to be part of the exhibition.”

OXFORD EXCELS AT producing sensitive young men playing sad songs. Was Jordan particularly influenced by anyone else locally when he started? “I wasn’t at all actually. It was simply the circumstance of Camena breaking up that left me solo. It was only once I met Phil McMinn and worked with him a bit that I started looking out at other acts. He introduced me to

Richard Walters and once I saw them both play at Truck Store I realised how both of them made the most beautiful music. Now their music is always played at my house, and again, they made me want to be better. I love what they’ve created, but I by no means want to re-create it. It would be an insult to their talent.”

What makes you distinct from any other singer-songwriter? “Man, I really don’t know. I think maybe the fact I have no clue how to play a major chord.”

What do you think about contemporaries like Adam Barnes and Lewis Watson?

“The Adam Barnes album that’s just been released is beautiful. I think he has more pop elements than I have in my music, which is by no means a bad thing; it’s a brilliant trait to have hooks alongside melancholic elements. I have serious beard envy for that man too. I would love it if Adam Barnes knew who I was to be honest! Maybe we could go on tour together!”

THERE WAS A SUGGESTION IN an early live review that Jordan sounded like he was haunted by his own songs. Is there a compulsion for him to get feelings out through music? “I like to write stories. I would love to be an author but I don’t have the patience to write a whole book, so it seems to come out in my lyrics. But yes, although I hate to admit it most times as it sounds like I’m a moaning attention-seeker, I do use my music as an outlet for my feelings. I can be a joker. Not in an office though. I hate offices.”

The sense of loss across the EP and album suggests a long life of disappointment and regret, and yet much of it was written in your teens. “I don’t think age really comes into being sad. It’s more a state that you happen to be in. When I’m happy I’m too busy actually being happy to write a song.

How much of you would your friends recognise from your lyrics? “I’m not sure. I hope I’m not like my musical persona at the pub otherwise I would hate to hang out with me.” How much of the melancholy in your

music is QPR’s fault? “I blame QPR for everything. I grew up in London and my dad took me nearly every Saturday to see them, so I suppose from about four upwards I was destined to understand what disappointment, failure, and sadness were. Although I did just go to Wembley to see QPR get promoted, so hopefully you’ll hear a glimmer of hope in my next release.”

AS WELL AS HIS OWN MUSIC, Jordan set up Bear on a Bicycle three years ago to act as both a record label for his and others’ releases and as a community for musical and artistic friends. It came around the time that Blessing Force was getting some serious press; was there an influence from them at all?

“No, I really didn’t know who they were to be honest. It was only after starting BOAB and someone telling me that Blessing Force were doing a similar thing did I realise. Bear on a Bicycle started as a collective of friends with exceptional talent and the same goal, there was no aim to compete with Blessing Force, and still isn’t, we were just a different group of artists and musicians with a very different style too. We were more inspired by Andy Warhol’s Factory.”

What was the main aim of starting Bear On A Bicycle? Do you think collectives/labels like this can take the place of the old style of record labels? “We wanted world domination! No not really, it was to give each other a platform and help each other in any way we could to showcase our work. It just made so much sense, Bear On A Bicycle artists doing album artwork for Bear On A Bicycle bands; Bear On A Bicycle bands playing gigs at the exhibitions of Bear On A Bicycle artists. If you collaborate, one of us is likely to make it, and we can bring each other up with us. There are lots of people involved, especially now we’ve just released our culture magazine ‘Urban Trees’. Most notably though are Heather Lawson, Rob Burr, Adam Watson, Matt Chapman-Jones, Jack Olchawski, David Gilchrist, Trent Smith, Sophie Carwardine, Anna Osborne, Kaye Dougall, Kat Buchanan, Josh Woodman and Rhys Baker.

“I think collectives are the way forward in some ways, but it depends what you want. We can’t compete with Sony or Universal, but the indie labels are always going win in the end. They see music before money. I can’t speak for every collective out there, but the pride I get when I see fellow bears succeeding is incredible. There’s no jealousy because you all

did it together.”

AS WELL AS A BUSY summer of gigging and festival appearances, Jordan is recording his second full album, ‘Ezralake’, a concept album, apparently. The concept isn’t unexpected given his songwriting tack record, but where does it take him musically compared to ‘Desperation, My Dear’?

“‘Ezralake’ is the story of a broken-hearted man, who is writing letters to his love as a form of self discovery and as an attempt to lure her back to a place where they were together and at their happiest. The letters reveal dark stories of his childhood, his philosophies, and the reason for his silence during their relationship. “Musically, it’s more advanced and obviously more dramatic than ‘Desperation, My Dear’. I have a backing band, The Commonwealth, performing on this album with me which adds a lot of elements both to the production and now to my live show too. I’d say ‘Ezralake’ isn’t too different, but it definitely shows that I’ve matured musically and lyrically.” And you’re making a film.

“I don’t like being bored so I do a million things at once. I have written and I am directing my first short film *The Beautiful Minimal* in association with The Ultimate Picture Palace and Bear on a Bicycle chaps Trenton Smith and Heather Lawson. I can’t reveal too much right now but it will see an August release so keep your eyes peeled! And no I am not starring in it, you will be thankful to know!” You are writing the score, though; how different is that compared to writing an album?

“Not too different now I have finished ‘Ezralake’ to be honest. It’s fun because I am writing songs that fit the mood and story of the film, not that fit what I’m feeling or how I feel my music career should be going. It’s a very different genre to what I’m used to so I’m having a lot of fun with it, and I think I’ll end up releasing the soundtrack under a different name to fully separate the different styles. It’s so liberating though.

WITH SO MUCH GOING ON, we wonder, given what he said earlier, where Jordan O’Shea finds the time to be sad enough to get the inspiration for new songs. And we wonder, finally, whether, as such a sensitive soul, does he bruise easily? “Is that a threat? Does someone in Oxford have it in for me? Don’t upset me. I’ll only go and write a song about it.”

Jordan O’Shea plays Cowley Road Carnival on Sunday 6th July and at the O2 Academy on Wednesday 9th as support to Fatherson. Visit jordanoshea.bandcamp.com to hear ‘Her Name Was_French Cinema’ and ‘Desperation, My Dear’.



RELEASED

RAWZ ‘The Difference’

(Self-released)
Rakim was, of course, the master of saying what needed to be said without appearing to need to make any effort to do so. Local rapper Rawz seems to have mastered the art of getting through an entire album while sounding like he’s not even awake enough to get out of bed. The fact he’s already on his third album suggests he’s no slouch, and as well as his own music he works mentoring young musicians at the Ark-T project, so such a laidback delivery is doubtless cover for a highly active mind. ‘The Difference’ suggests Rawz thinks long and deep about what he wants to say, so that when he does put it down, it’s deliberate and precise. Nowhere is that more obvious than on ‘Son Rise’, an acoustic number at the end of the album, one he played alongside Hannah Bruce at the Punt recently, a love letter to his young son that could be mawkish but tips the right side of the sentimentality coin. Such philosophical musing permeates so much of Rawz’ lyrics, whether it’s the fatalism and cynicism of early album highlight ‘Mary Lamb’, or the “what would Jesus do if he came back today” questions of ‘Jesus’. There’s also straight-out social commentary on the likes of ‘The Uprising’ (“I’m proud of my country but not its mind / Too quick with persuasion to the right”), but he steers well clear of preaching or polemic, seeming to prefer the approach of “these are my thought, make of them what you will.”



GIRL POWER ‘Girl Power’

(Self-released)
Self-titled releases are often seen as a kind of mission statement for a band who has established a good idea of who they are, but applying this concept to Girl Power’s first release leaves us more than a little worried for their sanity. The band are almost an Oxford supergroup, featuring former members of local legends Bersericker, Sextodecimo and Suitable Case For



It’s little surprise that his back-up is understated as his words, often no more than simple electronic rumbles or hazy horn parps and warbles, which benefits the message no end. Only the brasher ‘The Truth’, with the elegantly soulful Jada Pearl, opts for the more extrovert approach, and while it’s the most immediate track here it perhaps suits Rawz’ style the least. He’s best when he allows an almost woozy sense of come-what-may to dominate, allowing his words to breathe properly and the listener to wander through a train of intelligent but rarely convoluted thought, referencing John Lennon and The Proclaimers as much as Ghostpoet and Gil Scott-Heron, neatly balancing the personal and political into a coherent album that’s as accessible as sleep itself.
Dale Kattack

Treatment, and they’ve thoroughly impressed many at a handful of shows in the past few months, including a powerful set at this year’s Punt. These two tracks accurately capture their abounding raw live energy. Like all the best punk, its short and sweet - two tracks, just under seven minutes in total, of some of the most misanthropic, angry hardcore the Oxford scene has ever heard. Taking cues from US greats like Black Flag, Girl Power tear chaotically through riffs that, whilst volatile and predictable, are undeniably solid headbangers, revealing hints of a sludgier undertone that belie an undeniably metallic influence, especially on second track ‘Consumers’. Both tracks showcase a fantastic sense of controlled chaos, with dissonant, fuzzy guitars constantly teetering on the edge of feedback, whilst rapid drum patterns drive the band forward at a relentless pace. Girl Power alternate between hoarse, aggressive yells and expansive gang vocals, screaming “I can sell you rock’n’roll” in ‘Consumers’ as they assail the ears of their listeners with a hammering of powerful, well chosen chords. This is certainly not music for the faint of heart, but for those who enjoy the darker, heavier, louder things in life, Girl Power are without a doubt one of the most exciting bands in Oxford at the moment.
Tal Fineman



AMY SIMPSON ‘Fairy Tales, Stories & Myths’

(Self-released)
At primary school, one of my classmates won a Christmas card competition. When her artwork was printed, we were horrified to realise they’d “childified” it. As we then discovered, it’s often easier for the young to be accepted if they play up to the older generation’s expectations of them, to the expense of their actual capabilities. Amy Simpson, a seventeen-year-old A-level student from North Newington, near Banbury, seemingly hasn’t been tempted by this route; being more Radio 2 than 1Xtra, with a folky, delicate and unostentatious voice, she wouldn’t have gone far on *The X-Factor* anyway. She was discovered during a recording session her parents bought for her fifteenth birthday, and her lushly produced debut EP is entitled ‘Fairy Tales, Stories & Myths’, which sets the scene before we hear a note. So, wistful, flourish-bedecked piano-led stuff it is – and opener ‘Homemade Rocket’ is, despite the presence of “set sail in a homemade rocket” and other cheesy celestial metaphors, really rather lovely. BBC Radio Scotland and Tom Robinson also think so, and ITV would no doubt love it for a drama trailer montage. But it doesn’t scream, “Look at me! I’m seventeen – aren’t I clever!” – which is refreshing. ‘All I Wanna Do’ sounds like an Echobelly b-side (praise indeed), and ‘Only You’, a country-esque ballad with some great chord progressions, is reminiscent of the Kylie Minogue 1989 album track ‘Heaven and Earth’, allowing me to indulge in personal nostalgia for a moment. ‘Glow’, a jauntier number, reminds me of the sort of thing we used to enter into Eurovision despite no contemporary chart music sounding like it. And actually, Malta might do well if they entered ‘Everything’.

In short, nothing groundbreaking, but lots of pleasantness, especially the rich orchestration. It risks teetering into the abyss of cliché to say so, but Amy is promising and would do well to nurture her talent.
Kirsten Etheridge



LEAP ‘Fighting Monsters’

(Self-released)
The late, great John Peel declared that all bands should release one great song then split up. It’s a shame Leap here didn’t take him on his word and quit after the opening track on this debut album. ‘Fighting Monsters’ starts with ‘(You Can’t) Turn Back Time’, a warmly rustic folk-tinged song full of defiant melancholy and close harmonies, in the mould of King Creosote. It makes no great play for drama but is possessed of a gentle power. From here the album doesn’t so much slide into the mire as hurl itself off a cliff into the void. The album’s title track finds the first signs of something annoying lurking in the shadows with its silly half-whispered backing vocals and the overall air of an over-earnest radio jingle, and by the time they get to ‘City People’ we’re into full jauntily smug honky tonk territory. And this is what really grates – the overbearing jauntiness of it all, like a self-consciously wry local newspaper column about not understanding modern technology (we even get as much in ‘I’m Throwing The Gadgets Away’), which brings back horrific childhood memories of Richard Stilgoe (for younger readers, an odd, bearded man with a piano who’d pen teeth-grindingly “witty” skits and play them at the end of lighthearted current affairs programmes for the amusement of simpletons back in the 1980s). On the flipside of Leap’s compositional compost heap are the mawkishly sentimental piano ballads that might have grown like mould on the walls of depressing late night wine bars where sozzled patrons mistake them for

Michael Bublé numbers. ‘Give Me A Tune’ is ironically-titled in the extreme, a busker-ish dirge bereft of anything resembling melody, and the whole thing culminates in the well-intentioned but fantastically clumsy ‘Take No Shit From Anyone’ that could be the deformed weakling twin of Nizlopi’s ‘JCB Song’. Doubtless Leap will live up to their own lyrics and refuse to take any shit from *Nightshift*, but maybe they could take a leaf out of Mr Peel’s book, and, like the dinosaurs that grace their album sleeve, make themselves extinct with immediate effect.
Dale Kattack

POSITIVE VIBES CREW ‘Around the World’

(Self-released)
Curmudgeonly bastards that we are at *Nightshift*, if anyone calling themselves Positive Vibes Crew moved in next door we’d arm ourselves with assault rifles immediately. There’s little chance of such a thing happening, since despite forming in Oxford and returning here to play their EP launch party, they seem to spend most of their time trying to bring sunshine and love to Berlin clubs and festivals. Festivals being their natural home with a mellow cocktail of reggae, dancehall and hip hop of the sort that’s become the sound of summer on these shores in its evolving shapes and forms since the 1950s. The vibe of the early sound systems is to the fore in the singing and toasting, while the sparser, more electronic production of tracks like ‘Those Were The

Days’ bring a more dancehall feel, but the overall vibe you get from ‘Help Me’ and ‘Bump in the Night’ is rootsy one-world goodwill to all brothers and sisters, reminiscent of British reggae’s early-80s heyday. They’re aptly named then and, given the weather, well timed too.
Ian Chesterton

FLIGHTS OF HELIOS ‘Succubus’

(Self-released)
While Flights of Helios have a well-stuffed satchel of cracking tunes to their name – last year’s ‘Star’ and their recent ‘Factory’ single for instance – they’re not a band that benefits from listening to in brief snippets. Instead it’s better to catch one of their live shows to experience the shifting patterns and dense textures of their variously ethereal and lacerating techno-prog. Which is why this latest release, ahead of an album that’s planned for the end of the year, feels rather flat in isolation. It carries the slow-build, sudden-release dynamic a lot of FOH’s songs but doesn’t seem to possess much character beneath those surface dynamics. Singer Chris Beard performs neatly-restrained acrobatics, sounding like he’s on the edge of a taut leash but the marching snare and spangled guitars and keys are an innocuous muddle beneath and by the time it all erupts into a fiery crescendo of squalls and squeals it’s too little too late; you feel it’s merely the intro to something bigger and better. Stood alone, it’s instantly forgettable.
Dale Kattack



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G I G G U I D E

TUESDAY 1st

JAZZ CLUB: Art Bar – Free live jazz every Tuesday, tonight with club regular Hugh Turner.

BARREL TRIO: The Old Fire Station – Oxford Improvisers host a collaboration between violinists Alison Blunt and Ivor Kallin, and cellist Hannah Marshall.

OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 2nd

PETE DOHERTY: O2 Academy – As he prepares to reunite with Carl Barat once again for a Libertines show in Hyde Park in a few days time, Doherty returns to the O2 in his solo guise for an intimate warm-up show.

THURSDAY 3rd

BALLOON ASCENTS + THE SEA THE SEA + FRAEDA: The Cellar – Divine Schism hosts rising local indie starlets Balloon Ascents, alongside dark-tinted indie rockers The Sea The Sea.

CHRIS ALLARD: The Wheatsheaf – Jazz guitarist Allard comes to the Spin Club off the back of playing in Russell Watson’s band on tour.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest-running and best open mic club continues its build-up to its 20th anniversary in November with an eclectic mix of singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists, every Thursday.

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf – Free unplugged show in the downstairs bar from the local swamp-blues faves.

MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS + GEORGE CHOPPING + LAURA THIES + STUART NEAL + BOB SYKES: Albion Beatnik Bookstore – Dolefully humorous pop vignettes from Moogiemán, tonight launching

Wednesday 2nd

PETE DOHERTY: O2 Academy

Pete. Pete! You’re on in five minutes. PETE! WAKE UP! Your audience is waiting. Oh Pete, wake up, you’ve soiled yourself.



JULY

his debut EP, alongside poet/comedian George Chopping and Robot Swans singer Laura Thies.

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

FRIDAY 4th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate – Jools Holland heads up the opening day of the festival – *see main preview*

SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM: The Cellar – Count Skylarkin’s monthly reggae, dancehall and bass party, tonight featuring a live set from local roots act Zaia, formed from the ashes of long-time faves Raggasaurus, heavy on the horns and dubby basslines. On the decks Sensible Dancehall’s Robin plays Carnival classics, while Melbourne’s Tom Showtime spins reggae, rocksteady and hip hop party tunes.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with PEERLESS PIRATES + MARY BENDYTOY + TORN LIKE COLOURS: The Wheatsheaf – Klub Kak’s monthly shindig brings together swashbuckling rockers Peerless Pirates, kicking out a Bluebeard-friendly mix of classic rockabilly and The Smiths; goth/steampunk crew Mary Bendytoy and grungy blues-rockers Torn Like Colours.

BATTLE OF THE BULLY: Art Bar – Independence Day party.

STEAMROLLER: Prince of Wales, Shippon – First of a host of gigs and festival shows from the veteran local blues-rock heavyweights, keeping the spirit of Cream and Hendrix alive.

DISCO MUTANTE: The Library – Disco, boogie and house club night.

SATURDAY 5th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate – Simple Minds provide suitably epic stadium pop headline tunage for the second day of Oxford’s most genteel festival – *see main preview*

WONK UNIT + GIRL POWER + THE DOWN AND OUTS: The Cellar – The Oxford Wheels Project host a BMX Jam after show party with London skate-punks Wonk Unit, fronted by former-Flying Medallions frontman Alex Johnson, alongside ferocious local hardcore crew Girl Power, slamming it out somewhere between Discharge and Nashville Pussy, and melodic Liverpoolian punks Down & Outs. Followed by Fresh Out the Box DJ session.

PROPAGANDA: O2 Academy – Classic and

contemporary indie anthems and more every week.

SKITTLE ALLEY ALL-DAYER: King’s Head & Bell, Abingdon (midday) – Abingdon’s long-running live music club hosts eleven hours of music in aid of the Yeah Baby charity, with sets from Rosee Summers; Mew, Wooster and Boon; Ze Ze Ba Ba; Superloose; Beard of Destiny; Purple May; Dale Easthope; Luke Allmond; Mark Bosley; Les Clochards, and Mark Sollis.

WYCHWOOD FOLK CLUB FESTIVAL: The Swan, Ascott-under-Wychwood (3pm)

Sunday 6th

CARNIVAL: Cowley Road

Despite its troubles over the years, Carnival seems to be back where it belongs – on the Cowley Road, an annual celebration of east Oxford life that sees myriad stages and venues hosting music and dance stretched from The Plain to Magdalen Road. From the Cape of Good Hope, via Truck Store, Art Bar, the O2 Academy, East Oxford Community Centre, Manzil Gardens and Tesco car park, to The City Arms, bands, solo artists and sound systems bring a little of the whole world to one street for the afternoon. Among the bands playing are the reliably party-starting **ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND**; young reggae crew **THE DUBLINGS**; funksters **TEMPLE FUNK COLLECTIVE** (*pictured*); Zulu folk collective **COUNT DRACHMA**; rising indie starlets **BALLOON ASCENTS** and folk singer **MEGAN HENWOOD**. **COUNT SKYLARKIN** heads a cast of local DJs playing everything from roots and dancehall to funk, soul, hip hop and drum&bass, while the Kate Garrett stage hosts a day of young acts from the Ark-T project, including rappers **CHUKIE** and **JACK BUSHROD**. Elsewhere there’s traditional Irish folk, samba, street dance, ballet, theatre and Indian and Indonesian music and dance, and that really is just the tip of a highly eclectic iceberg. Add in all the street food and it really is the world condensed into a single mile of summery joy.



– Music and beer festival hosted by the local folk club, featuring sets from Darwin’s Wish; Mark Pidgeon; David Menda & Braham Levy; Josh Chandler; Skeptics; Linda Watkins; Toots & Fraser; Scarecrow and Colin Greenaway.

EYE-CON: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Current and classic mod covers.
THE ERIN BARDWELL COLLECTIVE: The Swan, Wantage – Live reggae.
STEAMROLLER: The Plough, East Hendred

SUNDAY 6th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate – Latin rumba and gypsy dance from The Gipsy Kings rounding off Cornbury for another year – *see main preview*
CARNIVAL: Cowley Road (12-6pm) – East Oxford’s annual celebration of a world of music, dance, food and more returns to Cowley Road – edited highlights from various stages below – *see main preview*

COUNT SKYLARKIN + THE DUBLINGS + ZAIA + TEMPLE FUNK COLLECTIVE + DJ FU + DUTTY MOONSHINE: Scrapyard Stage
THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND + SOL SAMBA: Manzil Gardens
NIKKI LOY + GAZ 7 PADZ + GEORGE HUXTABLE + DARWIN WISH + IN ZANADU + THE APRIL MAZE: Cape of Good Hope
FRANZ FRENETIX + SPANSIH MUSIC: Kazbar

DATSOUND: Meli Deli
LARRY REDDINGTON & AARON KEYLOCK: The Music Box
THE MAGIC MANGO BAND + SMUDGE + KYPPTIK + HANNAH & THE LADS + XCS + LIES OF ELIZABETH + EBONY KEISHA: East Oxford Community Centre
MEGAN HENWOOD + ONE WING LEFT + EDD DONOVAN & THE WANDERING MOLES + FRANKIE THE GAMBLER + HOWLING TAILDRAGGERS + JON FLETCHER + SARAH FELL: James Street Tavern

COUNT DRACHMA + OXFORD UKULELES: Truck Store
SAMITA ATKINS: First Floor
RAN KAN KAN + TESS OF THE CIRCLE + A RELUCTANT ARROW + PALAHNUIK + THE MIGHTY REDOX + MADCAPS + MOOGIEMAN + ERROR 54: Art Bar
HOUSEWURKS: Art Bar
ZAMIR WHEELER + BEAT THIS + PAIGE MATHIS + SHOTTZ + NADINE FISHER + VODOO COLLECTIVE + MIZZ LYRIKAL + CHUCKIE + MARY JAMES + JACK BUSHROD: O2 Academy
SIMPLE: Art Bar – Post-Carnival party with the long-running house and techno club night.
BEARD OF DESTINY + MOON LEOPARD + DANNY KAYE + MATT SEWELL + JOELY: Donnington Community Club (6pm) – Free evening of acoustic music with one-man blues army BOD and Jeremy Hughes’ Moon Leopard.

MONDAY 7th

BOB HALL & LIL JIMMY REED BAND:

Friday 4th – Sunday 6th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Estate

To read certain sections of the press – national and local – you’d imagine Cornbury Festival was little more than an elite annual gathering of the Chipping Norton Set with papped pics of everyone from David Cameron to Noel Edmonds and Jeremy Clarkson taking precedence over any mention of the music on offer, but the truth of the matter is that, Poshstock tag and well-heeled celeb guests aside, Cornbury, now in its eleventh year, is becoming something of a rarity in the festival stakes: a weekend dedicated entirely to live music (and a sizeable dose of comedy) rather than some kind of lifestyle event, family fun day or glorified farmers market.

In this it’s very much a reflection of its founder and organiser Hugh Phillimore whose combination of enthusiasm, ambition and geniality comes across on a line-up that mixes big-name acts with cult legends and rising pop acts. What it lacks in cutting edge credibility is made up for in an eclectic taste that in previous years has seen the likes of Sugababes; Half Man, Half Biscuit; Dr John; Osibisa; Bellowhead; The Damned, and Katzenjammer mixing it up for a genteel crowd in the picturesque surroundings of the Great Tew estate.

Of this year’s three headline acts **SIMPLE MINDS** are undoubtedly the pick. Their recent reunion gigs show that while there’s still a place for their epic mid-80s stadium pop anthems, they’ve remembered what made them such an astonishing band in their early days, producing six albums of sublime synth-glam pop that produced such classics as ‘I Travel’ and ‘The American’, while you can already picture the Cornbury clientele singing along to ‘Alive & Kicking’ and ‘Don’t You (Forget About Me)’. They’re built for shows this size. **JOOLS HOLLAND** knows how to please a crowd too, having topped the bill here just two years ago. The ivory-bothering boogie-woogie man and all-round diamond geezer was joined by Marc Almond back then and the Soft Cell fella’s back again this year, along with former-Spice Girl Melanie C, for a set that’ll mix r’n’b standards, jazz and pop in equal measures.

If hopes were high that Tom Jones would be Sunday’s ‘very special guest’, **THE GIPSY KINGS** will probably provide better all-round entertainment, less reliant on a handful of well-worn hits, and finely-honed for this kind of event over four decades of constant touring. The French/Spanish ensemble are renowned for their popularising of traditional Romani folk and flamenco, and if the sun can bring itself to shine over the weekend, they’ll be an ideal closing act, with the festival organisers promising a mass rumba dance class ahead of their set so everyone knows the right moves.

Further down the bill is where the real treats



and horrors lurk, of course. In the latter camp we find – and avoid stepping in – **SCOUTING FOR GIRLS**, whose enduring popularity, if nothing else, proves that some people shouldn’t be allowed to vote or breed, while **THE FEELING**’s music possesses slightly less personality than an incidental character in *Frozen*. Still, that’s why festivals have bars, where you can drink to forget.

Thankfully there are more treats than horrors and a potential Cornbury highlight will be **SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY & THE ASHBURY JUKES**, now featuring **GARY US BONDS**, born of the same Jersey shore scene that spawned Springsteen and who have worked closely with The Boss since the 1970s, possessing a similar adherence to showmanship, blue-collar storytelling and sheer live energy.

R’n’b and legend **GEORGIE FAME** – just 70 years young – will be another must-see act, especially since he’ll be backed by Guy Barker’s 15-piece big band, while 80s hitmakers **KID CREOLE & THE COCONUTS** should provide a health dose of kitsch tropical pop entertainment. 70s soft-rockers **10CC** will roll out the old hits, while **SUZANNE VEGA** remains a class act as her last Cornbury showing proved.

Cornbury can even do hip hop, as the booking of **ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT** shows, while you’ll also get Irish folk (**HUDSON TAYLOR**); American country music (**KACEY MUSGRAVES**); eastern European folk (a radically reinvented **SOPHIE ELLIS BEXTOR**); soulful pop (*X-Factor* bellower **SAM BAILEY**); authentic Delta blues (**REVEREND PEYTON’S BIG DAMN BAND**); Electro-folk fusion (**PEATBOG FAERIES**) and plenty of folk, blues and country sounds from the likes of **NINA NESBITT**, **LISSIE** and **HUNTER & THE BEAR**.

Plenty more besides, of course, including the festival’s Riverside stage, which features a host of local acts, including **THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND**; **DUBWISER**; **BLACK HATS** and **BRICKWORK LIZARDS**, as well as some big-name comedy from the likes of **JEREMY HARDY**, **MILES JUPP** and **AL MURRAY**. All in all a damn sight more civilised than Metallica at Glastonbury, which suits us just fine since we won’t have to be within 50 miles of walking sewage outlet James Hetfield; instead it’s as relaxing a weekend as festivals come, and long may that continue.



Wednesday 9th

THE DANDY WARHOLS: O2 Academy

The best Christmas song ever isn't 'Fairytale of New York', or even 'Christmas Rapping' by The Waitresses. It's actually The Dandy Warhols' version of 'Little Drummer Boy'. Check it out on Youtube if you don't believe us. Just don't actually watch the video; it's a bit odd, and not in a good way. Christmas is still a long way off, but The Dandy Warhols have songs for any season, some of them unlikely hits, like 'Not If You Were the last Junkie On Earth', and 'Bohemian Like You'. Unlikely since the band, despite singer Courtney Taylor-Taylor's pin-up looks and seemingly effortless cool, exist in a strange druggy drone-pop netherworld upon which the sunshine of public gaze so rarely settles. Which is why so many of their songs seem to be about drugs. But in a fantastically poppy kind of way. And anyway, compared to former chums and Portland neighbours The Brian Jonestown Massacre, they're as clean-cut and stable as any Simon Cowell-mentored group. Which isn't saying much given what a monumental lunatic BJM's Anton Newcombe was and possibly still is. That's all documented in the fantastic film *Dig!* Which charts the two bands' relative rises and falls. The Dandy Warhols rose, while BJM fell. And while they're not so hit heavy these days, the Warhols continue to create fine, fine music, with new live album 'Thirteen Tales From Urban Bohemia'.

The Jericho Tavern – The Famous Monday blues plays host to semi-legendary blues veteran Lil Jimmy Reed, whose 50-plus year career has seen him playing with Ike Turner and Bobby Blue Bland among a host of others. Tonight he teams up with the grand old man of British blues piano playing, Bob Hall, for an intimate night of blues and boogie-woogie. **HOME SERVICE: Nettlebed Folk Club** – John Tams fronts his eight-strong band formed from the nucleus of The Albion Band line-up that produced 'Rise Up Like The Sun'.

TUESDAY 8th

JAZZ CLUB: Art Bar – Groove-led funky jazz from The New Jazz Collective. **INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night with Doktor Joy and Bookhouse. **OXFORD ACOUSTIC CLUB: The Jericho Tavern** **OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern**

WEDNESDAY 9th

THE DANDY WARHOLS: O2 Academy – They're bohemian like you, you know – *see main preview* **FATHERSON + JORDAN O'SHEA: O2 Academy** – Epic indie rocking in the vein of Broken Records et al from Kilmarnock's Fatherson, out on tour to promote debut album, 'I Am An Island', after supporting the likes of Idlewild, Frightened Rabbit and Feeder. This month's *Nightshift* cover star Jordan O'Shea supports.

THURSDAY 10th

JAMES: O2 Academy – altogether now... "Oh sit dow..." okay, maybe not – *see main preview* **ANATOLI VYCAHESLAVOV & STUART HENDERSON: The Wheatsheaf** – A double dose of horns at tonight's Spin Jazz Club with tenor saxophonist Vycaheslavov alongside trumpeter Henderson, 'Tolly' having played alongside Don Weller, Peter King and Mornington Lockett as well as recording with Yusuf Islam and Nick Heyward over the years. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** **THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf** – Free gig in the downstairs bar from the veteran local blues-rocker. **OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon** **OPEN BLUES JAM: Jack Russell, Marston**

FRIDAY 11th

ADAM BARNES: Truck Store (6pm) – Soulful, lovelorn acoustic pop in the vein of Damien Rice and Bon Iver from the rising local songsmith, launching his debut album – *see Introducing feature* **YARDFEST: The Courtyard, Bicester** – Bicester's excellent Courtyard youth arts centre hosts its second Yardfest, a one-day mini-festival organised and curated by the kids who attend the centre each week. A main stage features a selection of national alt.rock bands, while a second stage is for mostly local hip hop and acoustic acts. Headlining the former are Cheshire's Blitz Kids, anthemic punk-pop merchants in the vein of Taking Back Sunday, You Me At Six and 30 Seconds to Mars. They're joined by Chelmsford's sugary, melodic Hype Theory, who've played Sonisphere and Download as well as the Warped UK tour; poppy post-hardcore crew Scholars; Reading's Attention Thieves, recent tour support for Enter Shikari and Canterbury, plus The Loud and Lazy and Fault lines. Local rapper made good Shaodow brings his energetic hip hop to the party, joined on the second stage by Flynn Davies; Jack Little; Makeout Kids; Young Spide and Morrell. **STRUMMERFEST: Castle House, Banbury** – Opening two days of free live music in aid of the Katharine House hospice, with 60s-styled psychedelic pop from headliners Reckless Sleepers, plus Kastaphor, Small Time Heroes and more to be announced. **ROOTS RAMBLE with SWINDLESTOCK + FRANCIS PUGH & THE WHISKY SINGERS: Various venues** – Two of Oxford's finest blues and country crews team

up for a moveable feast of a gig, stopping off at assorted east Oxford pubs and venues for impromptu giggage. Meet at the Port Mahon at 8 and follow the caravan of sound. **LIES OF ELIZABETH + WARDENS + JACK & THE GIANTS: Art Bar** – It's All About the Music gig night with jazz and blues-tinged popsters Lies of Elizabeth; indie rockers Wardens and acoustic-pop uni band Jack and the giants. **KINGS OF LYON: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Kings of Leon tribute. **HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: James Street Tavern** – Americana, country-folk and bluegrass from the local regulars. **THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Bay Tree, Grove**

SATURDAY 12th

IRREGULAR FOLK'S SUMMER ALL-DAYER: The Perch, Binsey – Not yer typical folk all-dayer. And all the better for that – *see main preview* **A TRUST UNCLEAN + EMPIRE DIVIDED + CROW'S REIGN + A KILLER**

Thursday 10th

JAMES: O2 Academy

If your primary experience of James is having to endure gangs of drunken students / workmates / imbeciles braying 'Sit Down' at some ungodly hour, you have our sympathy. We've been there too. Luckily we've also experienced the good bits of James, which is a lot of the stuff that isn't 'Sit Down'. Like the relentless, joyous 'Sometimes'. Or the rude but great 'Laid'. Or loads of the excellent stuff like 'What In The World' they did back in the 80s when they were Manchester's best kept secret and supported The Smiths on tour, while self-financing early records that placed them atop the Indie charts on a regular basis. Come the 90s and the band, led by the enigmatic, philosophical (or downright nutty, depending on your viewpoint) Tim Booth, were fully-fledged big time stars, going on to sell 25million records across the world, including 'Come Home' and, yes, 'Sit Down'. Booth quit in 2001 to do his own thing, but rejoined in 2007 and the band release their fourteenth album, 'La Petite Mort', this month. They'll be playing songs off it at tonight's long-since sold-out show. As well as 'Sit Down', no doubt. All together now....



AMONGST US: The Wheatsheaf – A night of superheavyweight nastiness from Murder of Crows promotions, featuring excellent local death-grind crew a Trust Unclean, plus deathmongers Empire Divided; metalcore and thrash merchants Crow's Reign, plus metalcore from Banbury's A Killer Amongst Us. **ORANGE VISION + PUPPET MECHANIC + IONEYE + RAE ZOE: The Cellar** – Scuzzy rocking in an Arctic Monkeys vein from Orange Vision at tonight's It's All About the Music show, plus acoustic country blues from Puppet Mechanic and acoustic pop from Ioneye. **THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT: The Amphitheatre, Saïd Business School** – Back for its second annual outing the extended gig in the business school's amphitheatre this time round aims to raise money for charities SSNAP and All As One. Headlining are local country-rock heroes The Epstein, who are joined by alt. country crew Empty White Circles; 60s-styled r'n'b outfit The Shapes; country-blues people Swindlestock; ceilidh-disco merchants Saedly Dorus & the Hoolie Crew and folk-rockers The Dreaming Spires. **STRUMMERFEST: Castle House, Banbury (midday)** – Full day of free live music across two stages in aid of the local care hospice. Among a host of acts playing are 2Twenty2; Aural Candy; Punch Drunk Monkey Club; Spinner Fall; Beaver Fuel and Missing Persians, while the acoustic stage plays host to Cardboard Castle; Charlie Leavy; Rob Lanyon; Jack Little and more. **PROPAGANDA: O2 Academy** **WHAT YOU CALL IT, GARAGE?: The Cellar** – Garage, house and grime with DJs Charris & B-ILL, Naughty Nath, Ramsay and Elements. **WOLFBAIT: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Rock covers. **THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Dolphin, Wallingford** **STEAMROLLER: The Red Lion, Eynsham**

SUNDAY 13th

JULES PENZO + LAIMA BITE + EMMA HUNTER + PETE MOORE & CORRINE CLARKE + BEARD OF DESTINY: The Wheatsheaf (2.30-7pm) – A free afternoon of unplugged music in the downstairs bar hosted by Klub Kakofanney.

MONDAY 14th

PIG: Nettlebed Folk Club – Feast of Fiddles spin-off featuring Hugh Crabtree on vocals and melodeon, alongside saxophonist Alan Whetton; guitarist Martin Vincent; bass player Dave Harding, and whoever they can get on drums for the night. Explosions and bizarre gardening accidents no doubt allowing.

TUESDAY 15th

OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern **JAZZ CLUB: Art Bar** – Live jazz with Alvin Roy.

WEDNESDAY 16th

SPARKY'S JAM NIGHT: James Street Tavern – Open mic and jam night.

THURSDAY 17th

BENET McLEAN QUARTET: The Wheatsheaf – Post-bop jazz from rising pianist McLean at tonight's Spin club. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** **OPEN MIC CLUB: The Half Moon** **OPEN BLUES JAM: Jack Russell, Marston**

FRIDAY 18th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – Opening day of Oxfordshire's flagship music festival – *see main preview* **MIKE DIGNAM: O2 Academy** – Polished acoustic pop from the Preston singer-songwriter who's previously provided tour support for Gabrielle Aplin, Elliot Minor, Roachford and most recently Lewis Watson. **SHEDONISM: The Cellar** – The Disco Shed comes to the Cellar in the middle of festival season with an eclectic mix of house, breaks, disco, dancehall, hip hop and funk floor fillers. **THAMESFEST: The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow** – First day of the three-day free blues and beer festival, moving canal side at Enslow from last year's Eynsham setting. Today's line-up is topped by local blues-rock veterans Steamroller, keeping the spirit of Hendrix and Cream alive. They're joined by Aussie bluesman Ian 'The Pump' MacIntosh, The Matt Edwards Band; Hippy Haze; Caddyfins and Slippers & Beer.

SATURDAY 19th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – Second day of the festival – *see main preview* **WITTSTOCK: The Plough, Long Wittenham** – First day of the weekend free festival, with Peerless Pirates and more – *see main preview* **ANNERO + TAKE TODAY: The Wheatsheaf** – Old-school metal, thrash, grindcore and hardcore punk from Annero. **HOW DO YOU CALL BURLESQUE - THE RETURN: The Jericho Tavern** – Live burlesque show from Mercury Flame. **THAMESFEST: The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow** – The second day of the free blues fest features Debbie Bond & the Trudats; The Lost Art Duo; Missing Persians; Telephone Bill & the Smooth Operators; Voodoo Stripe and Punch Drunk Monkey Club. **PROPAGANDA: O2 Academy** **WHAT YOU CALL IT, GARAGE?: The Cellar** **MAETLOAF: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Tribute act. **THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Three Horseshoes, Garsington** **VALERIE VALE AND HER AYLESBURY AYLEVATORS: The Swan, Ascott under Wychwood** – Wychwood Folk Club hosts old-time bluegrass, country, hillbilly and rockabilly fiddler Vale and her band.

SUNDAY 20th

WITTSTOCK: The Plough, Long Wittenham – Second day of the free festival – *see main preview* **THAMESFEST: The Rock of Gibraltar,**



Saturday 12th

IRREGULAR FOLK'S SUMMER ALL-DAYER:

The Perch, Binsey

One of our absolute favourite things about 2013 was the emergence of Irregular Folk's club nights, showcasing an eclectic selection of acts around various venues that could in the very loosest sense be described as folk music. But, like, not really. Sadly the club has been quiet this year but today's one-off all-dayer is a perfect opportunity to remind yourself what they do so well. And in a perfect setting too – the idyllic and historic Perch. Club curator Vez Hoper claims they don't do headliners, but star turn are likely to be theatrical torch song ensemble **THE IRREPRESSIBLES**, centred around the angelic, operatic vocal talents of Jamie McDermott. Their recent show at The Cellar was something very special. They're joined by gothic blues troubadour **SALVATION BILL**; sombre, atmospheric folk-popsters **THE MAY BIRDS**; cello'n'loops maestro **DUOTONE**; gorgeous sea songs and love ballads from **JESS HALL**; musical comedian **BEN CHAMPION** and the utterly divine loop-crazy chanteuse **YOU ARE WOLF (pictured)**, possibly our favourite artist to appear at Irregular Folk last year, and that's really saying something. Plenty more besides, and as idyllic a day by the river as you could hope for. Folking great, in fact.

Enslow – Third and final session of the free blues fest, with The Backbone Blues Band; Crayfish; Beard of Destiny and Adina and Johnson, while Twizz Twangle should give everyone an insight into a very different take on the blues.

MONDAY 21st

THE JOHN NEMETH BAND & PADDY MILNER: The Jericho Tavern – Idaho's blues-soul harpist and singer Nemeth teams up with Scottish blues pianist Paddy Milner at tonight's Famous Monday Blues, the American bluesman having previously played with Robert Cray and Junior Watson. **PETER KNIGHT'S GIGSPANNER: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Feast of Fiddle and Fairport fiddler Knight teams up with guitarist Roger Flack and percussionist Vincent Salzfaas for a night of intimate and innovative folk music.

TUESDAY 22nd

TOO MANY POETS + PUNCH DRUNK MONKEY CLUB: **The Jericho Tavern** – It’s All About the Music gig night with Witney indie crew Too Many Poets and Banbury rockers Punch Drunk Monkey Club.
JAZZ CLUB: **Art Bar** – With The New Jazz Collective.
OPEN MIC SESSION: **James Street Tavern**

WEDNESDAY 23rd

BE LIKE PABLO + DALLAS DON’T: **The Wheatsheaf** – Local noisenicks Dallas Don’t make a welcome emerging from hibernation as they bring their chums from Forres in Scotland, Be Like Pablo, to town, plying a skewed fuzz-heavy power-pop that owes much to Weezer and Teenage Fanclub alongside The Beach Boys and Granddaddy.

Saturday 19th – Sunday 20th

WITTSTOCK: The Plough Inn, Long Wittenham

Having led a somewhat nomadic life in recent times, the annual Wittstock returns to its spiritual home this year, once again offering a varied selection of local acts all for free, while raising money for local charities. This year’s recipients of cash from on the door donations and raffles, will be The Young Women’s Music Project and My Life, My Choice.

Musically the two-day bill leans towards local bands and solo artists who tend to exist beyond or below the radar of most gig-goers. One dead cert for a highlight will be **PEERLESS PIRATES**, whose rambunctious mash-up of classic rockabilly; eastern European folk; The Smiths and swashbuckling hornpipes is pure rock and roll entertainment. They’re joined on the Saturday by country-blues crew **SUPERLOOSE**; hazy 60s-styled psych-popsters **RECKLESS SLEEPERS**; grungy rockers **FRACTURE**; gothic rock poet **MARK BOSLEY**; punk bands **DIE IN VAIN** and **THE FIRE ANTZ**, plus bluesman **MATT EDWARDS**, who headlines the day.

Sunday’s afternoon session features Chipping Norton rockers **MAN MAKE FIRE**; swamp-blues and psych-funk veterans **THE MIGHTY REDOX** and the beautifully downbeat poetic pop of **BETHANY WEIMERS**. Free music for two worthy causes? You should be on your way already.



THURSDAY 24th

PEERLESS PIRATES + THE MATT EDWARDS BAND + LUCKY CLUB + TOO MANY POETS: **The Cellar** – Swashbuckling indie and rockabilly from the pirate-obsessed Peerless Pirates, plus electric blues from singer-guitarist Matt Edwards and band, plus more at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show.
HATEMAIL: **The Library** – Smash Disco’s free monthly celebration of noise continues with punk and hardcore crew Hatemail, plus support.
NIGEL PRICE: **The Wheatsheaf** – Breezy swing and blues-tinged jazz from the hard-working guitarist at tonight’s Spin.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: **East Oxford Community Centre**
OPEN MIC CLUB: **The Half Moon**
OPEN BLUES JAM: **Jack Russell, Marston**

FRIDAY 25th

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with WARDENS + THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + ELOIS REES: **The Wheatsheaf** – Another musical lucky dip with a prize every time from Gappy Tooth Industries. This month they’re joined by local indie types Wardens, plus Reading/London synth-rockers The Pink Diamond Revue, mixing classic 50s rockabilly reverb and psychedelic swirls into their synthy soundscapes, and sweet, soulful acoustic folk-pop songstress Elois Rees.
ABSOLVA + GOSBANE: **The Cellar** – Classic metal in the vein of Iron Maiden from Manchester’s Absolva, touring their new album, ‘Anthems to the Dead’ at tonight’s OXRox show. Local Nordic-infused rockers Godsbane support. Followed by indie disco Ultra Plaid Shirt.
THE MIGHTY REDOX + PETE MOORE & CORINNE CLARK: **James Street Tavern**
THE STONES: **Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Tribute act.
HEADINGTON HILLBILLES: **The Chequers, Headington Quarry**
STEAMROLLER: **The Nag’s Heads Abingdon**

SATURDAY 26th

RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: **Mill Field, Charlbury** – Opening day of Oxford’s biggest and best free festival with a headline set from The Epstein – *see main preview*
HALFWAY TO 75: **The Isis, Iffley Lock** – A one-day mini festival leaning towards the roots side of things, taking in blues, rockabilly, country and more along the way. Star turn is Nashville act Ward Thomas, twin sisters who have been recording their debut album with country mainstay Vince Gill. They’re joined by local nine-piece folk, country and Americana ensemble The Knights of Mentis, plus Radio 3’s jazz presenter Alyn Shipton and his band; ‘Ameripolitan’ singer-songwriter Ags Connolly; former Candyskins frontman-turned kids songsmith Nick Cope; folk-rockers Empty White Circles, and more.
D-FEST: **The Red Lion, Drayton** – Mick Quinn’s DB Band headline this year’s Drayton-based mini-festival. Joining them at



Saturday 26th – Sunday 27th

RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL:

Mill Field, Charlbury

It’s easy to forget just how spoilt we are in Oxfordshire for festivals. Especially free stuff. In a busy summer of musical weekends large and small, Riverside still stands out for both its quality of bands and quantity of punters making the journey out to west Oxfordshire (the festival site is right next to the railway station so leave the car at home). There are some 40 acts across three stages over the two days. Saturday’s main stage line-up features alt.country faves **THE EPSTEIN**; exotic popstrels **CANDY SAYS**; post-punk rockers **THE SCHOLARS**; doleful indie sweeties **THE FAMILY MACHINE**; reggae party crew **DUBWISER**; indie-country stars **TOLIESEL** and more, while a more blues and roots-orientated Sunday features 60s-styled r’n’b band **THE SHAPES**; Americana ensemble **KNIGHTS OF MENTIS**; swamp-blues veterans **THE MIGHTY REDOX**; folk singer **JESS GOYDER**, and indie-funk types **GRUDLE BAY** among others. Truck and Rapture host the second stage, with synth-blues duo **VIENNA DITTO**; gothic rockers **DAMN VANDALS**; ambient electro chap **AFTER THE THOUGHT**; rising indie stars **BALLOON ASCENTS** and funky blues crew **LITTLE BROTHER ELI** among a host of acts. There’s also a Riverside Fringe stage as well as the usual array of family-friendly stuff going on, this year involving interesting and fun stuff to do with sticks. Watching free live music in a field in the middle of summer being one of the top things that is far better than a poke in the eye with a sharp one.

the Red Lion will be rockers Orange Vision; bluesy heavyweights Empty Vessels; rising young indie-pop crew Balloon Ascents and Wiltshire’s arch indie rockers Nudy Bronque, while an acoustic stage hosts Bronwyn Leonard; Nikki Loy and Beard of Destiny among others.
RED STAR CYCLE + EYES FOR GERTRUDE + VIENNA DITTO: **The Wheatsheaf** – Back together for one last job... After a ten year break local electro-prog rockers Red Star Cycle reunite for a one-off show, joined by groovetastic electro-blues faves Vienna Ditto.
SCARLETT VIXENS: **The Cellar** – Burlesque night with the Reading-based outfit.

PROPAGANDA: **O2 Academy**
EXTRA-CURRICULAR: **The Cellar** – Techno, bass and house club night.
WHITE MAGIC PRESENTS A NIGHT OF MUSIC pt.3: **Art Bar**
DIRTY EARTH BAND: **Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Rock covers.
STEAMROLLER: **The Eight Bells, Eaton**

SUNDAY 27th

RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: **Mill Field, Charlbury** – The Shapes, Knights of Mentis and The Mighty Redox head up the bill on the second day of the free festival – *see main preview*
BLUES JAM: **Fat Lil’s, Witney (3pm)** – Open jam session.

MONDAY 28th

DEBBIE BOND: **The Jericho Tavern** – Soulful country-blues from Alabama’s veteran guitarist Bond, who’s previously backed Eddie Kirkland, Jerry McCain and Willie King before fronting her own band. 30 years playing the blues have led to her founding the Alabama Blues Project, to help preserve the traditional music of her state, that’s inspired her own music.

TUESDAY 29th

JAZZ CLUB: **Art Bar** – Free live jazz from Hugh Turner.
OPEN MIC SESSION: **James Street Tavern**

WEDNESDAY 30th

THURSDAY 31st

SARAH JAROSZ: **St John the Evangelist** – Bluegrass, country and Americana from Texas’s Grammy-nominated singer and multi-instrumentalist Jarosz, over in the UK to promote her third album, ‘Build Me Up From Bones’, released on Sugar Hill Records.

Friday 18th – Saturday 19th

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon

Festivals and come and festivals go. There are plenty bigger but Truck remains the heart of the Oxfordshire music calendar with its origins and story so tightly bound with the local music scene and its bands. Founders Robin and Joe Bennett may have relinquished the reins since the financial troubles of 2011 but their presence can still be felt and the brothers’ latest band, **THE DREAMING SPIRES**, one of a host of Oxfordshire acts who continue to lend what is now an established national event its enduring local feel.

Among the other Oxford-based talent on show over Truck’s two days in the sun (we keep fingers and toes firmly crossed) are the reliably entertaining **ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND**; the reliably bonkers and unclassifiable **GOGGENHEIM**; the reliably noisy and serrated **POLEDO**; the reliably shiny and popstastic **ALPHABET BACKWARDS**; the reliably spaced-out **FLIGHTS OF HELIOS**; the reliably legendary and tweedy **RELATIONSHIPS**; the reliably romantic and rustic **RALF BAND**; the reliably doleful and dreamy **FAMILY MACHINE**, and the reliably woolly and spectral **PIXEL FIX**. There are others dotted about the bill and they’re all splendid. You can rely on that.

Beyond the local names is a bill that loosely tends towards the indie scheme of things but mixes and matches styles with ease and never underestimates the audience’s ability to enjoy something new and different.

So this year’s twin headliners are **WHITE LIES**, whose darkly euphoric synth-laden pop sits alongside Editors and Interpol with its lush reinterpretation of Joy Division and Echo & the Bunnymen’s post-punk blueprint, and **THE CRIBS**, who played here at Truck exactly a decade ago, albeit rather lower down the bill. The brothers Jarman, from West Yorkshire, have survived 14 years and six albums, for a while augmented by Johnny Marr, whose temporary membership doubtless boosted their popularity. Feisty and spiky and heroically singular of purpose, they’re almost the definition of a proper cult band, but with enough familiar tunage to keep a festival crowd happy.

Another band who are no strangers to Truck, and who boast Oxford heritage, are **STORNOWAY**, who should need no introduction in these pages. But since we’ll never tire of expounding their musical virtues, we’ll just say, they are an awesome band, and one who possess that rare gift of making music that’s intimate and highly emotive but perfectly suits the big outdoor setting and a good rousing mass singalong.

Further into the bill you’ll find plenty of other acts making return visits to Truck, whether



it’s Cardiff’s roustabout indie bouncers **LOS CAMPESINOS!** Or Brighton’s garage rocking duo **BLOOD RED SHOES**, while Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly’s **SAM DUCKWORTH** is such a regular fixture we’re starting to suspect he’s simply never found the way out.

Among almost guaranteed high points of this year’s festival will be two acts who can justifiably lay claim to be truly seminal in their art. **GANG OF FOUR** laid down the template for so much of modern alt.rocking with their skewed, uptight, highly-politicised punk-funk which has informed everyone from The Red Hot Chili Peppers to Supergrass to Foals, while **ROOTS MANUVA** now stands as something of a godfather of modern British hip hop with a bleak, existential lyrical outlook that stands at odds with so many preconceptions of rap, while, oddly managing to produce party-friendly hits alongside a dizzying array of collaborators and producers. There can’t be many more quintessentially English rappers out there and now, in his 20th year as a musician, he’s approaching national treasure status.

What else, what else? Well how about a solo set from one-man rock riot **ANDREW WK** as part of Alcopop! and Big Scary Monster’s Barn takeover? Or **GNARWOLVES**’ spindly hardcore punk, which has seen blood, sweat and beers splattered liberally across the Wheatsheaf’s walls recently. On a different kind of dance tip house producer **JULIO BASHMORE** will be topping of the late-night revelry in the barn, while there’s nimble mixing skills, quick cuts and knowing samples from the drum&bass party starter **JAGUAR SKILLS**.

All of which leaves us very little room to mention Cardiff’s punk power-pop crew **KIDS IN GLASS HOUSES**; spangly, funky indie darlings **PEACE**; Brooklyn’s riotous lo-fi punksters **CEREBRAL BALLZY**, or Sheffield’s sweet folk-pop duo **SLOW CLUB**. In fact it leaves us so little room, you’ll just have to do what *Nightshift* does every year at Truck and rush around the half a dozen or so stages dotted around the Truck site and try and see as many different acts as is humanly possible, while attempting make room for the Rotary Club’s burger tent and the organic ale bar. We know you can do it; we’re just not taking responsibility for your physical state come Sunday morning.



DRENGE / THE BOHICAS O2 Academy

The Bohicas are pretty rock’n’roll as an outfit, bouncing around like a collective bundle of energy wrapped in leather jackets. ‘Rampage’ starts a circle of death from those members of the crowd whose parents have dutifully made themselves invisible around the bar after their necessary appearance at the box office. The fast song pairs heavy guitars effectively with 60s-boyband-style backing vocals. The four-piece wind up their set with latest single ‘xxx’, a ska-tinged number, whose insistent guitar riff and urgent bass line lend its lyrics a sinister feel. The overall sound is slightly dated, but it’s hard not to enjoy the solid set and impeccable colour-coordination. Having last seen Drenge supporting Peace at the Academy in December, it’s good to see they’ve

grown into the headliner role by changing nothing, save for drummer Rory Loveless’ now increasingly luxuriant mane. The duo, brothers from a self-declared shitville up north, have a certain air of confidence about them, bolstered tonight by a large and rowdy crowd. Drenge are at their most anthemic with ‘Fuckabout’, which sparks revellers into a confident sing-along, circle of death perpetrators now swaying their arms from side to side. The rest of the set is compiled from tracks to which swaying is not an appropriate reaction. The songs occasionally approach sentimentality, singer/guitarist Eoin taking to any relationship-themed topic with a tired tone of voice, but they brush off all the gross emotions and stuff with

extremely audible vigour, such as on ‘Let’s Pretend’. The song has quite a moving build-up, crawling along with dark intention until growing into a breakdown that gradually picks up pace until its almost hilariously frenetic finale. During the extended outro-intros between tracks it is obvious that the brothers are extremely skilled at what they do. Amidst one complicated fill Rory repeatedly straightens his mic before inadvertently knocking it away with his sticks. He manages to complete this process – without missing a beat – in time for his backing vocals, which end up practically lost in the noise anyway. They finish with their debut single ‘Bloodsports’, reminding us that it’s actually only been quite recently that Drenge have stepped up to supply us with our daily allowance of self-awareness and general loathing of humanity. **Celina Macdonald**

EAST INDIA YOUTH / JUPITER C O2 Academy

Despite a reasonably priced ticket deal, the Academy is far from busy tonight – puzzlingly so given East India Youth’s emergence as one of 2014’s more innovative and talked about new artists; William Doyle’s artful electronica having secured him omnipresence on this summer’s festival circuit and provided him with a good outside chance of a Mercury Prize nomination for ‘Total Strife Forever’. First though, Jupiter C treat us to a set of buzz enshrouded beats, Ashiya Eastwood’s Cocteau-style vocals soaring over the low din. That one man and his dog are there to see them is no reflection on the quality of their offerings and although you can see them struggle for confidence in front of such a small audience, they still sparkle. Ditto the headline act who gets things underway with a chiming

rendition of album opener ‘Glitter Recession’, a gorgeous sequence that recalls Dead Can Dance at their most ornamental. Doyle, despite a reputation for modesty and self-effacing charm, isn’t one to cower facelessly behind a set of keyboards – his vocals on ‘Heaven, How Long’ and ‘Looking for Someone’ are powerfully delivered while the more upbeat numbers are accompanied by visions of the Bournemouth producer’s bobbing mop top. It’s an eclectic set that closely mirrors the album and the bonus CD that accompanied the printed recording, at times every bit the equal of the parent composition, is not afforded an airing. That East India Youth have already treated us to almost two hours of ground breaking material is confirmation of Doyle’s talent and his ability to convert this to the live experience is richly confirmed here. It’s just a pity that more people in Oxford weren’t there to see him. **Robert Langham**

THE HOT 8 BRASS BAND / TEMPLE FUNK COLLECTIVE O2 Academy

With two brass band ensembles taking over the upper room, tonight the O2 is a guitar-free zone. First up Temple Funk Collective, unsurprisingly a funk collective from Temple Cowley. In about eight or nine medleys they cover as many as forty numbers from different eras and genres including ‘Satisfaction’, ‘Superstition’, the theme from *Star Wars* and ‘Slam’ by Pendulum, which is a bit of a marvel both of arranging and playing. It also can be dizzying to listen to when in a single medley they give the brass funk treatment to seven or eight tunes in as many minutes and if it’s tempting to suggest this is too many, this might be missing the point. Better surely just to enjoy the entertaining, indefatigable upbeat ensemble playing despite the occasional slip, Steve Heywood’s excellent trumpet solos, the band enjoying themselves and the sizeable crowd enjoying themselves even more. They certainly appear to do a great job warming up the audience, for when the headliners from New Orleans come on and straightaway order us to “rock your body” most of the packed room has no hesitancy in immediately doing so. All

rather un-English and un-Oxford don’t you know, and the prelude to a sweaty hour in which the band and crowd create a party and hardly pause for breath. Hot 8 combine New Orleans brass band marching tradition with rap and beats, and with three trombones in their line-up have plenty of dirty bottom-end oomph in addition to the thumping beats of their tuba’s bass lines. Fundamentally an instrumental band with Big Al’s trumpet featuring strongly, they overlay their impressive playing with short bursts of hip hop style chants and songs, which tonight are mainly about having a good time. Their highly polished – possibly over polished – and exuberant performance makes it difficult to pick up the extent to which there are elements of their more sombre side in the mix, but on tonight’s showing any such strands would be transformed into something uplifting in defiance of the many tragedies the band has experienced. Tragedies that haven’t tempered the ensemble’s ability to get a serious party started. **Colin May**

JEFFREY LEWIS AND THE JRAMS / THE COOLING PEARLS

The Cellar

Who wants to spend their summer Sunday evening in a *cellar*? A lot of people, it would seem, as the place is nicely bustling this evening, despite the twin alternative draws of (1) The World Cup and (2) a quiet night in. The Cooling Pearls get things started with a mellow, Belle And Sebastian-on-a-downer set. Despite the knockabout fun the band seem to be having on stage, and their relaxed and jolly group persona – typified by frontman Aiden Canaday’s jokes about football and introduction to a stuffed teddy bear acquired in Germany – they’re musically a solemn bunch. With more than a hint of Nick Drake/Vashti Bunyan’s hope-for-the-best folk style, they create a mellifluous sound that’s enriched by accordion and violin. What they may lack in clearly-defined songs, they make up for with pleasingly naive vocals and a charming sense of dour beauty. Tied in with the New York 1990s ‘antifolk’ scene that begat The Moldy Peaches, Jeffrey Lewis And The Jrams is a singer, songwriter and comic book artist, a Renaissance man that wends a strand of humour and curiosity through his songs. Tonight, those songs – based around Lewis with guitar and dominant

vocals, backed up by a sparse, effective drum and bass rhythm section – fall into three broad categories: first, ‘funny songs’ with relentless, rich lyrical content that riffs on what seem to be many aspects of Lewis’ own personal life; second, straighter songs that are vocally and musically influenced by Lou Reed – indeed, the set tonight includes a trilogy of Reed’s own songs, played respectfully and diligently; finally, part of an ongoing didactic series of pieces that build out a type of musical history lecture, augmented by comic book illustrations held aloft, this evening focussing on ‘A History Of Communism Part 7: Vietnam’. The latter, especially, is fascinating and hugely entertaining, but after a 75+ minute set (which may speak of long afternoons playing to empty coffee shops in ’90s New York, more than short’n’sweet UK gig sets), the novelty begins to become slightly wearing. This is a very talented man; the skill of moderation does not seem to be in his talent list. So, who knew that cellar-dwelling would be a relaxing, educational and fun way to spend a Sunday evening? Consider me informed. **Simon Minter**



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LIVE

TAME IMPALA / KIRIN J CALLINAN

O2 Academy

There's only so far that a bad shirt and what might be euphemistically described as an idiosyncratic haircut can get you. Unfortunately for us, in the case of Kirin J Callinan it's the other side of the world, on tour with fellow Aussies Tame Impala. In truth, he deserves some kind of trophy for managing, via the medium of pretentious electro-rock, to locate an improbable midpoint between MGMT and Rammstein – though that trophy should then be used to bludgeon him to death for crimes against ears.

If Tame Impala have brought Callinan along just to make themselves look better, they needn't have bothered. Apocalypse dreams are what I was having during Callinan's slot, but the song of that name, just two tracks into the headliners' set, is stunning, setting the bar for what proves to be a stupendously good show. If the Flaming Lips hadn't recently covered 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds', Tame

Impala – essentially Kevin Parker and four others who help to take what was originally his bedroom project out into the wider world – would be the missing link between the Beatles and Wayne Coyne's crew. With the latter (who happen to be former collaborators and tourmates) gradually shuffling further and further off into the leftfield gloom, the more central ground previously occupied by 'The Soft Bulletin' is fair game, and Tame Impala have the psychedelic visuals, the bobbing basslines and, most importantly, the songs to capture it.

Or to put it another way, they're a glimpse into a parallel universe in which Altamont never happened and, as the 1960s gave way to the 1970s, the musician's drug of choice never changed from LSD to coke. Everything they do seems steeped in the hippy ideals of freeing your mind and opening yourself up to new experiences. "I tried Fosters for the first time

today", announces one band member. "You know they don't even sell it in Australia."

It turns out that pseudo-Aussie cooking lager isn't the only thing Tame Impala try for the first time today, the live debut of 'Lonerism' bonus track 'Beverly Laurel' receiving a warm response from a capacity crowd much more rabidly excited than you'd imagine given the enveloping fog of weed smoke. They're at their most animated for thumping footstomper 'Elephant', whose riff and solo are collectively bellowed out with such gusto that, like 'Seven Nation Army', you sense it could be destined to be immortalised in terrace chants.

If I was to be critical, it would be that they perhaps peak a bit too early – but then every high has to have some kind of comedown. At the beginning of the evening, Parker admits to having a heavy cold and fearing "the danger of a croakfest", but by the end he's beaming: "Tonight's gone a million times better than I could have hoped". Our friend Mr Callinan aside, I'm not disagreeing.

Ben Woolhead



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NUDYBRONQUE / CHARMS
AGAINST THE EVIL EYE / TORN
LIKE COLOURS / MARK SOLLIS

The Wheatsheaf

Mark Sollis’ voice sits somewhere between a supper club crooner and a wounded bear. He has a song about sheep, replete with melodic bleating, and a song about local musical miserablist and walking Gallifrey Base discussion board, Mark Bosley. Put it like this: he has character, and character goes a long way. But, sadly, not always far enough.

Torn Like Colours, on the other hand, have apparently had all their character removed, possibly by the sort of high-spec vacuum packing device used to seal an astronaut’s risotto. Their music is a hideous melange of suburban rocking, something like Lita Ford without the leather, and relentlessly joyless chirpy pop, something like drive time on Satan AM. They try to inject some interest by knocking out a tired mash-up and nicking an intro from ‘Eye Of The Tiger’, but none of it saves a moribund set. Charms Against The Evil Eye also sound like they’re stuck in about 1988, where their lives were filled with erudite indie, poetry and occasional caches of scratchy Oxfam psychedelia. The lyrics could mostly have been culled from Science & Nature questions

from Trivial Pursuit, which is a refreshing change from the norm, and the songs are neat, built on unexpectedly muso-ish fretless bass and precise drums, and topped off with guitar that jumps between Peter Buck chiming and blurred Gedge hyper-strums. Highly enjoyable, if lacking spark at some junctures. Our beer-soaked gig notebook simply reads “floppy Suede dweebs” under the heading Nudybronque. Not really fair, as their music has the melodic sensibility and feeling of restless invention that typified pre-fame Pulp, as evidenced by their recent demo which reached the final of *Nightshift*’s Demo World Cup last month, but in a way they’re more a bundle of proto-Britpop signifiers than a band; probably great to start a cultural studies discussion with, but not great to listen to. We suspect this set, in a hot empty room, after the band missed soundcheck when stuck in traffic on a blocked A34, is not the one on which to judge them, and our notebook’s dismissive damnation is probably a long way from describing a promising band. *David Murphy*

WOOD FESTIVAL
Braziers Park

With the organic-everything infrastructure in place, and with nature in Braziers Park doing its thing in abundance, the sixth WOOD is as green as ever. And the sun shines. Given the weather, along with the workshops and so much else besides, the music could seem like a sideshow, but it remains the heart and soul of WOOD. Arguably the weekend’s highlight is Stornoway front man **BRIAN BRIGGS**’ solo debut in a setting which could hardly have been more intimate, since as the Kindling tent only holds about twenty lucky punters. He is in confident form vocally, and the stripped-down renditions of Stornoway’s songs work well in this environment, particularly ‘I Saw You Blink’. Between numbers he entertains with duck trivia; *Nightshift* now knows that half the world’s duck population is in Vietnam, and his set includes a duck song as well as the new ‘Love Song of the Beta Male,’ a Stornoway number in the making. His whole set is a delight. The choice of a solo set from **SWEET BABOO** to headline the main stage on Saturday night seems as quirky as the man himself but his idiosyncratic style turns out to be both absorbing and entertaining.

Accompanying himself just on acoustic guitar, his is an extremely self-assured performance despite apparently missing his band at times; “you have to imagine the bass player doing a solo here,” he announces at one point. Such is the nimbleness and wit not only of his lyrics but of his banter with the crowd, that *Nightshift* can forgive that the set falls a bit short on variety. Most of the rest of the weekend’s bill tends towards, as *Nightshift*’s preview had it, “the folkier and organic side of things,” including WOOD regular and kora maestro **JALI FILY CISSOKO** who gets one of the biggest cheers of the weekend. Several of the folk performances have moments of captivating beauty entirely suited to the ethos and setting of the festival, **JACKIE OATES**, **O’HOOLEY AND TIDOW**, and **RACHEL DADD** to name three, but folk dirge overload does start to set in and the alt.psych electric guitar and synth pulses of **MY SAD CAPTAINS** comes as timely relief; the longer we listen the more absorbing becomes their understated sound and appealing melodies. It seems they might have some flair with lyrics too, but it’s hard to decipher much on that score. Over at the Tree Tent second stage we discover

HUCK & THE XANDER BAND

The Old Fire Station

The moment tonight’s premiere performance of ‘Alexander the Great: A Folk Operetta’ starts I know I am stuck in a quandary. Not as to whether I like what I’m seeing, or even as to the quality - there’s no debate there - The issue is *what* I am seeing. Now before you think I have arrived to review a show in the middle of some kind of hallucinogenic episode, I’m talking about categorising the show; is it a gig, a musical, a film with a live soundtrack? I think the answer is probably of all of the above. We are in a theatre space; the audience is seated, though some definitely so in the ‘standing’ area; there is one large traditional projector screen and two photographer’s reflectors for further imagery. The band are on the floor in front of us, and give an eclectic and mesmerising show. ‘Alexander The Great’ is obviously a narrative piece, and adding that constraint has let Huck and his team go wider with the music than any one band would. We get folk, Americana, blues, rock’n’roll and in the darkest moments we stray as far as the prog of early Pink Floyd. On paper this sounds like a terrible mess, but being in aid of (tragic) story and not the ego of a songwriter, it works. The story evolves like left-field

cinema, but it’s told through the lyrics of this twelve-song suite, so both elements are one and the same. The visuals put together by Matt Halliday and Billy Quarterman are a series of visual contexts and cues for the story that root the show in narrative more than music performance. The music is clearly rooted in the deep south, and the projections add the dust of the highways and the brash city lights of New Orleans; the grounding and purpose of truly well-constructed art. The two round screens show symbols from the surrounding artwork that almost act as a codex for the events, were you to have got lost in the guitars/keys/drums or bass and missed some story. Like many others here tonight I come along not knowing quite what to expect and leave thankful I took the plunge. It’s not often you come out of a gig having seen something genuinely new but I this time we did. How often do you see beautiful animation, poetry, a tragic coming-of-age story, and a performance by a band so tight and well arranged that it feels they’ve been doing the circuit for decades. That may have been a rhetorical question but the answer should me much more often. *Matt Chapman Jones*

that roots singer **JACK DAY**, dressed all in black in defiance of the sunshine, has become a duo with **BRYONY AFFERSON**, who’s dressed in white, and together they had become **SUGAR MAGNOLIA**. Very confusing as there’s nothing sugary about Jack’s rough, almost haggard whisper of a voice even when it blends appealingly with Bryony’s purer tone. As Jack knows his way round a lyric they could have a future but they need to ditch that saccharine name. It’s also on the second stage that we hear two entertaining Birmingham bands, the Neil Young influenced **GOODNIGHT LENIN** who have added more substance since last sighted at WOOD 2011, and **BOAT TO ROW**, an alt. folk band with similarities to our own Cooling Pearls, and a harmonium and a drummer who lay down subtle minimalist grooves. No minimalist grooves on Sunday night though, when the festival has a big party courtesy of the reliably boisterous **ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND**. Their uninhibited brass riffs and uptempo vintage sounding jazz numbers follow hotly one after the other and get the entire festival site, even *Nightshift*, shaking a leg. It’s an invigorating if undignified way to end what’s been another enjoyable WOOD festival. *Colin May*



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DR SHOTOVER: SPACK FM

Good morning, pop-pickers. You may approach the presence. The usual tribute of beers and cheap brandies will be exacted, so form an orderly queue at the East Indies Club bar. Lord Torville and I were just devising our soon-come radio show, SPACK fm – listen and marvel, newbies. There will be a plethora of amusing chat, eg anecdotes about Torville’s cheesy 80s metal band Leerdammer, and news’n’views on everything Oxon, from William-Morris-dancing to Smilex’s favourite deadly sinkholes. At no point will Oxfordshire be pronounced ‘Oxford-SHEER’. The playlist, meanwhile, will emanate from the ancestral Shotover jukebox... which means plenty of scratched Hawkwind, Crimson and Sabbaff, and absolutely *no* Young People’s Music. Requests? Of course... if accompanied by a sports bag full of used tenners. Though Kasabian will never be played. *Never.* (Kasabian think they are ‘it’... and in fact they are. ‘It’ with a capital SHH). Yes, Baylock, there will be adverts... but not that one for a nursery which is ‘second to Mum’ with a man pretending to be a friendly bear. As we all know, the average friendly bear would rip the children’s arms off if they had the misfortune to encounter him, whether or not he is called ‘Mr Mellow’ and enjoys the ability to talk. And believe me, I have met a few talking animals in my time... pass me that curiously legal yet extremely potent e-pipe, Torville... PFFWWTT, PFFWWTT... Ahhh, there you are. It’s Mr Grumblecute the chatty badger, isn’t it? How ARE things on the riverbank this week? Marvellous, marvellous. [Strobes flicker; Dr S falls off his barstool in slow motion and sinks into some large beanbags; clamping headphones over his ears, he listens to the ‘bustle in your hedgerow’ section of Stairway to Heaven on repeat play until he falls asleep].

Next month: Illuminati? No thanks, just put one out...

‘Hello, SPACK traffic news? I’d like to report a tailback on the A40... and so would my talking horse’.

INTRODUCING....

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

Adam Barnes

Who is he?

Adam Barnes is a singer/songwriter from Oxford. He started performing three and a half years ago, releasing a debut EP, ‘Blisters’. Subsequently he has toured the UK, the US and Europe, including shows at SXSW, a three-week tour of Germany and Switzerland with Richard Walters at the start of last year and a four-week tour of Holland, Germany and Italy with American songwriters Chris Ayer and Matt Simons in November 2013. This month sees the release of his full debut album, ‘The Land, The Sea & Everything Lost Beneath’. The album was crowd funded via Kickstarter.

What does he sound like?

Adam’s own description of himself, “melancholic yet uplifting contemporary folk music, inspired by the likes of Damien Rice and Ray LaMontagne that every now and then flirts with folk rock before retreating to a lyrically melodic sombreness,” is pretty spot on. His album is a distillation of the plaintive soulfulness that has always permeated his reflective acoustic songs with their dedication to sorrow and longing.

What inspires him?

“Other songwriters mostly. Richard Walters was a big influence when I was 16: it was amazing to see a local act achieve what he has done. More recently, I’ve been listening to a lot of Aidan Knight and Noah Gundersen, whose new albums make me want to step up my game.”

Career highlight so far:

“I’d have to say my first ever show in Germany. It was a headline show in Berlin, a sold out evening in a small basement venue in the sweltering heat, but despite the temperature and the lack of air conditioning/windows, it was the most incredible atmosphere.”

And lowlight:

“Playing a set at 11pm in Munster midway through a club because the promoter thought it would have died down by then, which it hadn’t. I got about 4 songs in before they realised it was best to cancel and move it to a better place where people could listen, which ended up being a coffee shop at

10am the next morning before we had to head to the next city.”

His favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

“Richard Walters for the aforementioned reasons. He was kind enough to take me out on tour with him and include me in his band, which was great experience. He’s an amazing songwriter and person.”

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

“Ray LaMontagne: ‘Til The Sun Turns Black’. It’s a record I have on vinyl and it never ceases to amaze me. It’s just one of those complete albums that you can listen to from beginning to end with no hesitation. Well, except to flip the vinyl over every 5 tracks.”

When is his next local gig and what can newcomers expect?

“I’m hoping to be playing a big full band show this autumn. It’s quite a different show to my usual acoustic gigs and it’s nice to showcase a different side to my music.”

His favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“So many awesome small venues in the city, as well as the ability for nearly every space to be turned into some kind of venue. On the other hand, not enough small capacity all-ages venues. I think we’re missing a trick there.”

You might love him if you love:

Damien Rice; Bon Iver; Frightened Rabbit; Elliot Smith; Gregory Alan Isakov

Hear him here:

adambarnes.bandcamp.com

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

“Friends cross the road to avoid me since they read those reviews. Everyone thinks I’m some kind of terrifying nutcase.”

So said James Green, singer with **Underbelly**. His band were gracing the cover of *Curfew* magazine back in July 1994 and we might have mentioned the band were a little on the scary side, what with their piercings and tattoos and Very Loud Music. Of course, as is ever the case, the band are never as monstrous as the music would suggest. “We’re the puniest band in Oxford,” claimed bass player Pete Marler during a conversation revolving around sticking James in a boxing ring with Henry Rollins. Underbelly were, back then, Oxford’s nastiest, noisiest grunge-metal warriors. And age hasn’t mellowed any of them one iota. James now fronts the carnage-wreaking **Komrad**, while Pete still summons hell in musical form with **Agness Pike** (alongside fellow Underbelly brothers Mike and Chris Brown) and lately **Girl Power**.

Talking of 20 years ago, can it really be so long ago that ‘Strange Ones’ by **Supergrass** was released? Well there it was, in all its glory, *Curfew*’s reviewer declaring the band “re-affirm my total belief in local music with their blistering two-and-a-half-minute collision-pop gemstones.” Soon a substantial proportion of the planet’s population would agree. A typically quiet summer month found **Fatima Mansions** and **Tansads** as highlights of the gigging month in Oxford, both at the **Jericho Tavern**, while local names treading the boards included **The Fatbelly Blues Band**, **Ned Kelly Blues Band** and **Richie Rich and the Rich Boys Blues Band**.

Glorious days. Never mind, head over to **The Pit** in Witney on the 23rd and you could see **Lesbian Biker Sluts In Wheelbarrows**.

10 YEARS AGO

A moment of poignancy looking at the front cover of July 2004’s *Nightshift*, featuring as it did local electro-pop trio **Trademark**, whose album ‘Want More’ was released that month. Back then *Nightshift* was enthusing about the band’s techno-savvy update of the classic synth sounds of Human league, Depeche Mode and Pet Shop Boys and chatting with lifelong friends Oli Horton and Stuart Meads as they prepared to perform at **Truck Festival** at the end of the month. Tragically Stuart died, alongside partner Gavin, in November last year.

Joining Trademark at Truck this month were headliners **The Eighties Matchbox B-Line Disaster** and **Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodriguez**, along with perennial Truckers **The Electric Soft Parade**, and **Goldrush**; **Million Dead**; **Electric Eel Shock**; **Dive Dive** and **The Cribs**, who have moved up the bill somewhat for this year’s event.

5 YEARS AGO

Talking of things coming back round at conveniently placed points in time, only last month *Nightshift* was waxing lyrical about **Montmartre** at **The Wheatsheaf**. The band is fronted by Joe Allen who – ta da! – was on the cover of *Nightshift* back in July 2009 with his band, **The Joe Allen Band**. Must have thought long and hard about that one.

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

The Brummie balladeer had made his name locally while at Brookes University, teaming up with welsh violinist Angharad Jenkins, making a dark, emotional kind of electric folk-pop that was melting hearts among local sceneseters. Good to know he’s still going for it.

Sadly the big news this month was the death of **Kate Garrett** at the tender age of just 37. Kate, who’d made her reputation first in **The Mystics**, and then under her own name, had succumbed to cancer, but not before leaving behind both some awesome music (seriously, track down a copy of her wonderful ‘King of the Birds’), and **The Oxford Young Women’s Music Project**, which carries on to this day, providing support and tuition to girls hoping to make their mark in music. Mystics frontman **Sam Williams** and **Baby Gravy** drummer **Zahra Tehrani**, who would take over the reins of the project, were among those paying tribute to an inspiring woman.

In happier news, **Sugababes** were headlining this month’s **Cornbury Festival**, where they were joined by **The Pretenders**; **Magic Numbers**; **Peter Green**; **The Lightning Seeds** and, **Scouting For Girls**, who are back again this year. Like a dose of herpes.

There was a strong Oxford flavour about the Sunday of **Truck Festival** with **Supergrass** topping a bill that also featured a reformed **Candyskins**; **Dive Dive**; **The Long Insiders**; **The Epstein**; **Jali Fily Cissokho** and **The Relationships**. It was a proud day to be an Oxford music fan, not to say a rather emotional hour or so while The Candyskins reminded everyone just how bloody brilliant they were.

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

MR WOLFE

As we sit down to wade through this month's demo pile it's so sunny and summery that even England's wretched World Cup showing can't dampen *Nightshift's* mood. So, cheery smiles and sunshiny dispositions all round, right? Bring on those demos. In particular bring on Mr Wolfe, the pick of the pile and a band who we guess have only the most fleeting familiarity with the concept of sunbathing or uplifting piano house. They're from Banbury, which possibly explains their downbeat demeanour and boast The Doors, Cold War Kids, The National and, inevitably, Johnny Cash, as influences. Which would go some way to explaining their hangdog bourbon-steeped country-blues, which emanates from that corner of an old roadhouse where the ghost of old Seth doubtless still lingers, haunting strangers to the bar with rumbling tales of lost harvests and murdered spouses. Singer Matt Davy has an easy baritone, authentically American in its accent with hints of Chris Isaak and particularly Matt Berringer about him, while the music is pitched between driving electric blues ('Never Call') to ruminating, rootsy country-rock ('Bet With The Devil'), the band rarely straying far from a set of musical rules and moods that's remained unchanged since Custer made his last stand. We'll not hold such things against them any, since this is fine wintry drinking music and knocks several spots off pretty much everything else laid before us this month. We stick it on repeat play and we swear a few leaves fall forlornly from a nearby tree.

CLEVEDON

Clevedon, the collaborative affair between now disbanded Demo of the Month winners Jeff Wode, and folk-popsters Sweet William, return with a second demo, continuing to sound as unsummery as it's possible to be without actually being Greg Lake's 'I Believe In Father Christmas'. Like a depressed Low fan spiked with crystal meth and let loose on a steel guitar, they hack away at country-folk's sense of restraint and come up with lacerated thumbs and an overwhelming sense of inescapable melancholy. As before they

Demo of the Month wins a free half day at Silver Street Studios in Reading, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry.
Visit www.silverstreetstudios.co.uk/nightshift-demo-of-the-month/

do tend to stumble and mumble a fair bit but now they seem to have a semblance of purpose about where it's all going. Possibly to an early grave. Possibly to the next whisky bar. 'Yellow Moon' in particular has a maudlin frosting of melody atop its grungy blues shell, though the overall impression you're left with is of a band mere seconds away from collapsing into their twelfth pint of the night. A state we're fully able to empathise with.

JOE TRUBY

Joe here has been popping in with occasional one-track demos for a while now, the last one as recently as March, and we must be doing something to encourage him since he's back again, this time with another floor-shaker called 'Horizon', which sounds like the name of some giant warehouse club near Ayia Napa, where this squelchy slab of electronic epic would fit in like a hefty dash of vodka in a can of Redline energy drink. If, as the old cliché goes, writing about music is like dancing about architecture, perhaps we'd be better doing a dance about this track instead of attempting to put its shimmering tranciness into words. Can you see us out there in Readerland? That's us wiggling and cavorting with something akin to wild abandon. It's not pretty, we'll give you that, but it's the best we can do given our overbearing social awkwardness and lack of any sense of rhythm, but it'll have to do. In essence, we like this and would, given the requisite amount of drugs and caffeine supplements, dance to it most of the night.

SIMON ROWE

Simon, like Joe before him, usually makes dance music. But, being a guitarist originally, he's decided to stray from the path of soundtracking hedonistic mating rituals to indulge in some navel-gazing fretnoodlery. Bad move Simon, old chap. Of the two instrumental tracks here 'M Theory' is just about the more bearable, an extended soft-rock guitar solo over a nominally funky bassline and heavy-handed drum machine. We guess such musical indulgences have their place – stadium gigs in the mid 1970s perhaps, or communal wheelie bins, but it don't half go on a bit. 'Molasses', meanwhile, sounds like a collaboration between Mark Knopfler and Carlos Santana, but with neither of them particularly on top of their game and with the unnerving feeling that at any moment Sting is going to stumble in and start singing about turtles. We

listened further into Simon's Soundcloud and his dance stuff is much more fun and interesting. Simon, if any of this change in musical tack is due to you stopping taking party pills in order to save yourself early-onset liver damage, have a rethink, please. Surely an ignoble death in a high-dependency hospital ward is preferable to people thinking you sound like Sting.

FRACTURE

Desperation rarely looks or sounds appealing and Fracture do sound remarkably desperate for much of this three-song offering. Singer Mark Brandish at least, whose strangulated, pleading voice dominates an easy, vaguely bluesy rock that's otherwise going to struggle to stamp its identity on your memory. Which isn't to say they're a hopeless case. Opener 'Stand in Line' is unimposing but Mark's voice aims for an almost epic sense of anguish and we're given to thinking about Augustines' tales of familial desolation for a few pleasing minutes. Nothing as grandiose or emotionally shredded as that band but decent enough; they could do to ramp up the pressure a couple of notches towards the end for full stadium-sized catharsis. From here, though, Fracture sound like they're trying to force the despair out through cracks that aren't there, the gentle twinkle of 'So Cold's' introduction making way for thumping post-grunge bombast and 80s hair-metal pleading but all sounding like something formulated for an advertising campaign for soft rock fans' grooming products. Mark's quavering voice actually works best on 'Tonight' where it sounds less forced, but the anonymous backing and melody (or lack of) fails to do it justice. We're not sure whether to tell them to stop trying so hard, or to try twice as hard.

BLOOD RED STARS

In contrast to Fracture, Blood Red Stars don't sound like they're particularly trying at all, from the singer's lazy rock drawl to the band's passable if somewhat by-rote grunge chug. 'You Beg' us all fuzz and bluster and dismissive nonchalance, kind of like if the Gallagher brothers had grown up listening to Dinosaur Jr rather than The Stone Roses, its momentum seemingly governed by the simple laws of gravity rather than too much effort on anyone's part. No bad thing in itself, since much great music sounds effortless. The Abingdon three-piece continue to churn a singularly grungy furrow on 'Cadence', here at least straining enough to include a guitar solo amid the dreamy squall that could have been torn (but not too

violently) from the Pavement songbook, while 'Looking Down' is doleful to the point of gothic, the whole thing sounding like it's being sung from the bottom of an abandoned well. The band doubtless unwilling to expend the necessary effort to climb out.

THE DEMO DUMPER

THE VENETIAN BAND

A band fronted by a trained opera singer dressed as a Harlequin cavorting around in videos featuring band members in masks and cowls, simulated sex and strange old synthesizers. This has just got to be the best, most rock and roll thing ever, right? Oh reader. Dear reader. This is fucking dreadful. And so wretchedly dull to boot. On 'The Black Cat', poncy-meant-to-be-sinister clown opera man reclines on a sofa while barely-clad young ladies clamber over and around him, but all we can focus on is the stultifying soft rock that seems to have crawled, or seeped out of an abandoned LA recording studio sometime around 1986. It's so lame there are value brands of cat food that would turn it down as unfit for slaughter and rendering. On 'Dancing Angel' poncy-meant-to-be-sinister clown opera man stands enigmatically behind his microphone with a guitar, the footage intercut with him getting shagged something mental by a barely-clad young lady, but all we can focus on is the directionless clutter of soft rock clichés that mingle and curdle like a warm pint of condensed milk and bin juice. And then there's the whining. The incessant whining. We think that's the opera bit, but it sounds like someone's stuck gaffa tape over Ronnie James Dio's mouth and is torturing him with a scrotum clamp. On 'Sometimes', poncy-meant-to-be-sinister clown opera man serenades a thankfully fully clothed young lady on a (different) sofa with some vaguely funky soft rock, but all we can focus on is the full-length window and balcony behind them, over which he is getting thrown very soon if he doesn't shut the fucking fuck up. But, hey, what's this? Young lady is cutting out a line of drugs on the coffee table. Whoo, crazy rock and roll behaviour. That or she's so fucking sick of his incessant whining she'll do anything to numb her senses to buggery. And here come some more masked men in cowls, circling the apartment. They're doubtless symbolic of something. A huge steaming pile of shit, perhaps.

*Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to nightshift@oxfordmusic.net, clearly marked Demos. **IMPORTANT:** no review without a contact address and phone number; no more than four tracks on a demo please. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo.*

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Little Dragon

Sat 6th Dec • £10 adv
6.30pm - 10pm • on stage 8pm

UK Foo Fighters

Fri 12th Dec • £26 adv
6pm - 10pm

Saxon

35th Anniversary Tour
+ Hell

Sun 14th Dec • £18.50 adv

Taking Back Sunday

Fri 19th Dec • £7.50 adv
8pm - midnight

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Rabbit Foot Spasm

Band Knees Up 2014

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