



# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month  
Issue 244  
November  
2015

# Esther Joy Lane

"I never wanted  
to be a singer;  
my voice  
offended my  
ears"

The local synth-pop queen talks  
synths and cats, travel and tattoos.

*Also in this issue:*

Introducing **KANCHO!**

Oxjam, Kwabs, Johnny Marr, Metric,  
Sauna Youth and Liu Bei live.

Plus, four pages of local releases, six  
pages of local gigs, two pages of local  
demo and a partridge in a pear tree.

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# THE BULLINGDON

## NOVEMBER 2015

Saturday 31st October  
**Keep Hush Presents:  
Halloween**

Doors: 11pm

Monday 2nd November

**The Brew  
Hell's Gazelles**

Doors: 8pm

Tuesday 3rd November  
**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Groove Alchemy**

Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 5th November

**Clean Cut Kid**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 6th November

**Keston Cobblers Club**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 7th November

**Simple:  
Levon Vincent**

Doors: 11pm

Sunday 8th November

**Titus Adronicus  
Washington Irving**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 9th November

**LUSTS**

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 10th November

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
From Dixieland to Swing  
with the Oxford All Stars**

Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 12th November

**Grant Sharkey**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 13th November

**Mark Pontin Group**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 13th November

**Jungle Playhouse**

Doors: 10.30pm

Saturday 14th November

**Dedication 2015**

Doors: 5.30pm

Saturday 14th November

**Deep Cover Showcase:  
Retrobate**

**Zyldon Sound**

**VLVT**

**Pilgrim**

Doors: 11.30pm

Sunday 15th November

**Brickwork Lizards**

**Simon Davies**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 16th November

**The Coronas**

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 17th November

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Guitar Summit**

Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 19th November

**Vant**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 20th November

**Balkan Wanderers**

**Peerless Pirates**

**Tamara**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 21st November

**Audioscope**

Doors: 1pm

Monday 23rd November

**New Faces**

**Seafret**

**Dan Owen**

**Jack Watts**

**Flyte**

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 24th November

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Extemporize**

Doors: 8.30pm

Wednesday 25th November

**Beans on Toast**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 26th November

**Oxford City Festival Presents:**

**The Mighty Disco Biscuits**

**The Oxford Beatles**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 27th November

**The Men That Will Not  
Be Blamed For Nothing**

Doors: 7pm

Sunday 29th November

**Oxford City Festival Presents:**

**The Aureate Act**

**The Russian Cowboys**

**Drone**

**The Quintins**

**The Haze + Equivalent**

**Ride the Wall**

Doors: 3pm

Monday 30th November

**Chatham County Line**

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 1st December

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**

Doors: 8.30pm

Friday 4th December

**Morpheus Rising**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 5th December

**Simple:**

**Boddika**

Doors: 11pm

Sunday 6th December

**Steamroller**

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 8th December

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
The Bullingdon Hot Club**

Doors: 8.30pm

Friday 11th December

**Ospreys Pirate Soiree  
& Xmas Party**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 12th December

**Chad Valley**

**Oslo Parks**

**Maiians**

**Esther Joy Lane**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 12th December

**Free Range Roots:  
Channel One**

**Roots Guidance**

Doors: 11pm

Tuesday 15th December

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:  
Hugh Turner Quartet**

Doors: 8.30pm

Friday 22nd January

**The Indelicates**

**The Mechanisms**

**We are a Communist**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 23rd January

**Bossaphonik:**

**Lokkhi Terra**

Doors: 11.30pm

Monday 25th January

**Jeremy Loops**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 28th January

**RavenEye**

Doors: 8pm

Saturday 30th January

**Dense & Pikka**

Doors: 11pm

Monday 1st February

**Billy Walton Band**

Doors: 8pm

Saturday 13th February

**Free Range Roots:**

**Abi-Shanti**

**Roots Guidance**

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 20th February

**Altern 8**

Doors: 10pm

Monday 22nd February

**Sam Kelly Band**

**feat. Gregor Hilden**

Doors: 8pm

Friday 11th March

**Will Johns**

**Malaya Blue**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 18th March

**CC Smugglers**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 21st March

**Ben Poole**

**Stevie Nimmo**

Doors: 8pm

Monday 4th April

**J W Jones**

Doors: 7.30pm

Friday 8th April

**Hot Club of Cowtown**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 14th April

**Rob Tognoni**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 23rd April

**Tigertailz**

**Last Great Dreamers**

Doors: 7pm

**The Bullingdon**

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# NEWS

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**GAZ COOMBES AND FOALS** continue to fly the flag for Oxford with both acts recognised for major awards this month. Gaz was nominated for this year's Mercury Prize for his second solo album, 'Matador', while Foals won Best Act In the World at the Q Awards in London.

Huge *Nightshift* congratulations to both of them, and also a reminder that both acts began their careers playing gigs in small local venues as complete unknowns. So go on, pick a few names out of this month's extensive gig guide and maybe go along and witness something very special being born. You're welcome.

**ALL WILL BE WELL RECORDS** release their first album this month – a fifteen-track showcase of acts on their roster. 'Fall' features contributions from eight Oxford acts, including Little Red, Huck, A Reluctant Arrow and The String Project, as well as acts from Reading, Wiltshire and beyond, including surf-rock *Nightshift* faves The Pink Diamond Revue. The local label, set up by Little Red's Ian Mitchell and mainly specialising in folk and roots music, is aiming to help local artists on a not-for-profit basis with showcase gigs, help with pr and access to video makers, animators, illustrators, photographers and producers.

Their first Oxford showcase takes place on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November at The Jericho Tavern, with sets from String Project, Louise Petit, Stuart Clark and Sarah Lambert-Gates, All Is Well, Huck and Ben Gosling. Visit [www.allwillbewellrecords.co.uk](http://www.allwillbewellrecords.co.uk) for more details.

**EARLY BIRD TICKETS FOR TRUCK 2016** are on sale now, and already almost sold out. Next year's Truck will take place over the weekend of the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> July at Hill Farm in Steventon. Tickets at 2015 prices (£79.50, with a £10-a-month

price plan available) can be got at [www.truckfestival.com](http://www.truckfestival.com). This year's sold out event featured headline sets from The Charlatans and Basement Jaxx.

**CORNBURY FESTIVAL 2016**

has been confirmed for the weekend of the 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July at Great Tew Estate. Details of earlybird tickets will be online soon at [www.cornburyfestival.com](http://www.cornburyfestival.com). This year's event was headlined by Tom Jones, Razorlight and Billy Ocean.

**YOU ARE WOLF** headlines

Irregular Folk's Christmas special on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December at St Barnabus Church in Jericho. One of the most inventive alternative folk artists in the UK, You Are Wolf – the stage name of singer, musician and writer Kerry Andrew – mixes new and traditional folk songs and birdsong by way of elaborate loops and classical and electronic instrumentation. She is joined at the show by experimental vocalist Ben See, plus local singer Claire le Master, and poet George Chopping. Tickets, priced £9 in advance, are on sale now from [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com). Visit [www.irregularfolk.co.uk](http://www.irregularfolk.co.uk) for more news.



**CANDY SAYS** have written the soundtrack to a new film released this month. *Burn Burn Burn*, written by Charlie Covell and starring Laura Carmichael, Joe Dempsie, Alison Steadman, Sally Phillips, Nigel Planer and Jane Asher, is a road trip story of two women transporting their friend's ashes across the country in a dilapidated car, and came out at the cinema on October 15<sup>th</sup> featuring ten songs by the local band, as well as incidental music and jingles written alongside Marc Canham from former local favourites Narco. The band – Juju Sophie Heslop and



**OXFORD CITY FESTIVAL** takes over the city's venues again this month. The third annual multi-venue events runs from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> November, featuring almost 100 live acts playing across nine venues, including *The Bullingdon*, *The O2 Academy*, *The Jericho Tavern*, *The Cellar* and *The Wheatsheaf*.

Acts playing range from out of town guests John Otway and Peter & the Test Tube Babies, through veteran local performers like Denny Ilett Snr, *The Mighty Redox* and *The Relationships*, to rising local stars like *Balloon Ascents* (pictured), *The Aureate Act* and *Rawz*.

The festival has been organised by local musician and promoter Mark 'Osprey' O'Brien, who will take to the stage at the O2 on the 27<sup>th</sup> as part of a six-band bill.

For full festival line-up, see the *Oxford City Festival* advert on page 23, the *Nightshift* gig guide or the festival's Facebook page.

Ben Walker (pictured with Covell) – have made an EP of songs from the film available to subscribers to their Bandcamp page, with a full soundtrack album hopefully set for release in 2016.

Describing the writing and recording process, Ben told *Nightshift*, "We used the signature Candy Says sounds of Farfisa organ, harmonium, vocal harmoniser and percussion toys, along with Marc's collection of vintage keyboards and even an ethereal synth sound built from a recording of Juju's voice to create a quirky soundtrack that suits the Withnail-ish feel of the film. The film also called for us to write original music in some more unfamiliar styles: a Gregorian hymn, a club anthem and a jingle for a yoghurt advert.

"Charlie Covell, saw us play our first London gig back in 2012. She'd started working on the script and wanted to use our song 'Dead On Arrival' in the opening scene of the film, but by the time the film was finished in the summer, there were ten Candy Says songs on the soundtrack."

**WATER PAGEANT AND**

**BALKAN WANDERERS** both have new releases coming up this month. Water Pageant – stars of last month's Oxjam – have their debut album 'Outlines' out on Glide Records, while eastern European indie-folksters The Balkan Wanderers, release a new EP, 'So It Goes' out on the 20<sup>th</sup> November. Both releases will be on CD as well as download, and available at Truck Store. Reviews of both next issue.

**TRUCK STORE** host a couple of instore shows this month. The Cowley Road record store hosts Bay Area rap veterans Blackalicious on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November at 6pm, ahead of their show at the O2 Academy the same night, while Kent folkies Keston Cobblers Club play the store

at 6pm on Friday 6<sup>th</sup>, ahead of their show at the Bullingdon that night.

**OXFORD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC** are after musicians and non musicians to join in with a performance by Instant Orchestra this month. Inspired by the open-access success of Scratch Orchestra, OCM are hosting a recital of Handel's 'Messiah' at the Weston Library on Broad Street on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November, as part of the city's Christmas Lights festival. Directed by Radio 3 presenter Max Reinhardt, Instant Orchestra will allow musicians of all abilities – or no ability at all – to perform the piece, without rehearsals. Just turn up before 7pm on the night, with your instrument. To find out more about joining in, email [info@ocmevents.org](mailto:info@ocmevents.org).

**SAFEHOUSE STUDIOS** reopens this month after being closed to booking while Foals wrote and rehearsed for their recent third album 'What Went Down' and tour in recent months. The studio, off St Clement's, and run by Paddox's Kit Monteith, is offering local bands a special £10 per hour rehearsal rate throughout December. Call 07761 357 707 to book your slot.

**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](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

**OXFORD GIGBOT** provides a regular local gig listing update on Twitter (@oxgigbot), bringing you new gigs as soon as they go live. They also provide a free weekly listings email. Just contact [oxgigbot@datasalon.com](mailto:oxgigbot@datasalon.com) to join.

## THE BAR

12pm - Midnight, Sunday - Thursday  
12pm - 3am, Friday & Saturday

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EVERYDAY BETWEEN 4PM - 8.30PM

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# Esther Joy Lane



**“I’VE GOT AROUND TWENTY TATTOOS;** *I’m not sure. I think they all kind of need each other so it’s hard to have favourites; if I had to though, I’d probably say my snake, or the raven, who stole the moon.”*

**THE FIRST THING YOU NOTICE ABOUT** Esther Joy Lane when she steps onstage is the plethora of tattoos that run the length of her arms. That and the proliferation of piercings through ears, nose and bottom lip, plus her untidy tangle of grown-out bleached hair. At *Nightshift* we long ago learned not to judge books by covers but such first impressions really can’t prepare you for the music Esther makes, or her singing voice. Particularly her singing voice. If the punk looks get you expecting a Karen O-style yelp or Courtney Love-like holler, her gorgeous, honeyed soul voice will take you aback before completely hypnotising you – a warm, enveloping mist of a voice that’s already drawn admiring comparisons to Sade, Tracy Thorn and Jessie Ware and wouldn’t sound out of place on a huge r’n’b hit.

Not a bad voice for someone who didn’t even want to be a singer. “My voice offended my ears,” Esther confesses to *Nightshift* as we talk ahead of the relase of her debut EP. “I didn’t do music at GCSE or A Level, and was never in with the

“It was great... apart from the work and stuff. I started the course to learn more about electronic music production but quickly realised that there is a big difference between AUDIO and MIDI; don’t ask an ‘audio person’ about MIDI... just *don’t*. It focused more on live recording of bands, post-production and live sound which, despite it not being what I thought it was, I really enjoyed. I learnt a lot of the science and maths behind things too, which surprisingly made the whole idea of sound that much more magical.”

While the course has helped Esther produce her own music to a tee, it’s still a very male dominated area; how did she find it and are things changing in that respect? “Well, in my class of 24 there were four girls, so a fairly big divide I suppose. I like to think of it as quality not quantity though. *Joke!* In all seriousness though, the girls in my class were incredibly talented and will serve as great examples of ability for any gender in, yes, a fairly male dominated industry. I’d like to think attitudes are changing though; there’s too much goddamn female talent for it not to.”

On a similar subject, increasingly the best new music is being made by women on their own, using electronics: acts like Gazelle Twin, Grimes, Lonelady, I Speak Machine, Gwenno and Mica Levi. Does Esther think the advances in technology and home recording have made it easier for women to create the music they want, away from the band environment?

“It is a really interesting development, I agree, and I do think that more and more people, both male and female, have similar stories to mine where it was their computer, rather than their band, that got them playing or making music. I can wholeheartedly say that I wouldn’t be here without those advancements because I would have never reached the stage of feeling worthy of ‘proper’ studio time. Electronics and home recording allowed me to develop my skills and sound without anyone hearing or judging but me – not even the neighbours. I could mess up and make shit songs as much as I wanted but equally, through that process, could get better and make goodish songs using the abundance of instruments, plug-ins and effects computers give access to. I have a massive respect for analogue synths, ‘real’ instruments and tape recording, and, yes, there is a very different sound to an outboard compressor than a Logic plug-in, but I am so in love with the idea of making music production accessible and people just doing it themselves.”

**WHILE ESTHER HAS QUICKLY** established herself as a rising star and one of the best electronic musicians in Oxford, her early musical experiences were far rootsier. Now 23 and born in Leeds, she grew up in Scotland, immersed in the battle songs of the country’s folk music. “I think I’ll always find Scotland to be a place of magic; the history and culture that I learned throughout primary school sparked my slightly

overactive imagination in so many ways, I’m still sad to have left there. Music played a huge part in celebrating Scottish tradition at my school and many of these traditional songs fuelled my passion for music. The wistful folk melodies and historic tales of camaraderie, bloody battle and war seemed to strike a chord with me and it was actually one of these songs – ‘Ye Jacobites by Name’ – that was the first thing I sang and recorded, using Garageband. It kind of kickstarted this whole music thing I’m now doing. It’s a bloody good song, actually. Other than that my memories are of epic pop anthems we would have on tape in the car, like Tina Turner, The Eurythmics and Air Supply. My parents had a fantastic clash in music tastes; my mum a pop and dance diva but my dad a Black Sabbath, Pink Floyd type of dude. I think my mum tended to win the airwave wars.”

**WHILE SHE AND HER FAMILY MOVED** down to Oxford when she was in her early teens, Esther has always moved around, at one point moving to London, where she began making music more in earnest. “I moved to London at 18, starting a job after meeting some cool people in the street that I kinda hit it off with: every parent’s nightmare. This was where I first discovered that music was what I wanted to do – something I’d really been searching for. I started playing around with Garageband and picked my guitar back up; I even started singing. I was in a really low place at the time when I wrote my first song, to which a good friend of mine listened, looked at me and said ‘this was what you were meant to do.’ Some emotional shit right there, but seriously, it changed my life. “London didn’t work out in the end, some personal stuff was going on and things were difficult. I moved back home to Oxford, then to Sheffield for a year. I then moved to Coventry to start a course but things fell apart again after time so I ended up back home with ma and pa. A bit dysfunctional really but I’ve learnt a lot at each stage, about others and myself. I’m now about to make the move back to London for work but my heart is very much still here in Oxford and the beautiful Cotswolds.”

**FROM FOLK MUSIC AND PLAYING** guitar, Esther’s music now is almost entirely electronic, a perfect balance of machine and soul. Which electronic acts in particular first captured her imagination? “I think The Knife was one of my earlier experiences of electronic music; that pretty much smacked me in the face and introduced me to another, completely amazing, dimension. ‘Silent Shout’ and ‘Deep Cuts’ are great records. I remember when Passion Pit’s ‘Sleepy Head’ came out too and thinking that was great, all the glitchy electronics, sampling and falsetto. I think that led to a new wave in more pop electronic music with MGMT, Miiike Snow and the likes. “In terms of making my own music, everything I did was programmed with MIDI to begin with. It’s an amazing tool, especially when you’re starting out and can’t afford anything too fancy. I made a bunch of tracks using just an AKAI LPK25. I do now have a good old drool over synths. I’ve got a Roland FA-06 and Novation MiniNova, the latter of which I actually use more; sometimes small and simple is better.” Esther has been compared to Grimes a few times, not least by *Nightshift*, and she’s got the t-shirt – proudly worn on her first Soundcloud photo – is

she her primary inspiration? “Grimes is just a straight up goddess. She’s definitely been a massive inspiration to me, I remember seeing her play ‘Genesis’ on *Later... with Jools Holland* in 2012 and being a mixture of terrified and completely infatuated. She was *so* good. It was actually learning more about her personal journey though, that really got me excited and spurred something in me. Grimes is thoroughly DIY. She recorded her album ‘Visions’ on Garageband; her earlier albums were super raw and the live set is just her. She learnt production from friends and teaching herself things, but in all of this, everything she does is so great. This gave me the confidence to think ‘fuck it’ – keep doing this, try harder, get better. I had been messing around on Garageband for a while and completely loved the whole process of making music, but I was incredibly insecure in my musical abilities and production – I still am. Seeing someone like Grimes doing it all herself and growing into an artist that kicked the music industry straight in the teeth, challenging the need for outside producers, engineers and writers - it’s really cool. I think she has a whole lot of talent behind her, strong values and impact. (Esther feigns breaking down) she’s

***“Electronics and home recording allowed me to develop my skills and sound without anyone hearing or judging but me – not even the neighbours.”***

just *bloody great* okay.”

**HAVING MADE HER LIVE DEBUT AT THE** start of this year, things have moved pretty quickly for Esther. Independent Venue Week, where she was picked to play by Stornoway, was only her second gig, and was so impressive she was immediately booked for The Punt in May, with a host of other gig offers to follow. Does she feel like it’s all been a bit of a blur? “I do count myself very lucky to have had things progress in the way they have. The IVW gig was a big deal for me because it gave me the chance to get out there and do something I had been waiting to do for a long time. Since then things have moved fast in parts, but the whole thing is a constant refining process, always moving a step forward then shaving a bit off. I think this can make things feel like they’re moving slower than they really are. Either way, I’m so happy and grateful for where I’m at now. The very fact that there are people out there who like what I’ve made - I could never have imagined that just over a year ago.” How have you found the Oxford scene since you got involved? “It’s funny because I’ve lived here for over twelve years but I never really felt a part of the scene until the last couple of years. I think I always had this perception that people are in their groups and stick with their own, but I have been proved totally wrong. All the bands I’ve supported have been super encouraging and the audiences too. BBC Introducing Oxford has also provided another really good way of getting to know the music scene better: who’s good, what people are up to. That’s how I found out about bands like Balloon Ascents, Maiians and Salvation Bill. Going to gigs now as a punter, I feel more involved and connected to both the music and the people. Oxford also has some great promoters, like Daisy Rodgers and Smash Disco, who put on really cool nights; the sound

guys are all awesome and then there’s *Nightshift*, which I think is the glue that brings everyone together.” The latest reward for Esther’s work came in September when she was picked to play Bestival on the Isle of Wight – how was that? “My manager Vez [Hoper] sent Rob Da Bank my music and he liked what I was doing so offered me a slot. I was pretty damn excited when I found out. The gig itself, in all honesty, was definitely not one of my best. There were a few sound and technical issues but ultimately I didn’t feel I performed well. Playing festivals is a totally different experience to indoor venues, I don’t know why but it totally threw me. Hopefully I’ll get another chance to nail it next year.”

**THE RELEASE OF THE NEW EP WILL** undoubtedly win Esther a host of new fans. It’s barely been off the *Nightshift* stereo since we got an advance copy last month, particularly the song ‘You Know’, an absolutely gorgeous gem of a song where Esther lays her emotions bare over simple, spooked electronics and almost ghostly beats. And her voice – believe us, it’ll absolutely melt you. “Thank you! It’s about the difficulties of love, past and present, I suppose. The verses are the angry, hurt part of me, the one that feels left alone and frustrated. It’s loving someone who always pulls you in then puts you down, knowing you’ll still love them, “*Keep me where I’m wrong, cause you know I’m here*”. The choruses are the part of me where love wins, that moment after the storm, after all the games and

you realise what’s really important. Accepting you’ll get old, people move on, people die but still finding quiet somewhere, with someone. “*Though we fade, remember the days that I told you it’s over. And though we’ve aged, just lie down, I told you to hold me, let’s lie now.*” I don’t know whether it’s my best song, it’s hard to compare as I feel they’re all so different but this song definitely hits me the most emotionally. I find myself getting pretty choked when I do it live.” Really, she’s not the only one. And this from someone who an uninitiated gig goer might expect to be prowling the stage, fronting a confrontational hardcore band. Which takes us back to those tattoos, in particular the animals. We talk about Philip Pulman’s alternative Oxford in *The Northern Lights* where everyone has a daemon animal that reflects their inner soul; given the snake and the raven she wears on her arm, what, we wonder, would Esther’s daemon be? “Hmm, that’s a hard one. I think I’ve always considered myself to be a feline in someway. Cats can be a bit unpredictable, angry and wild but also loving and nice – *ish!* They know what they want – usually food – and won’t wait for someone to get it – unless it’s food. They’re independent, but will still follow you around on your Sunday walks; my cat does anyway. I think I’d like my daemon to be a wild cat though, so it could protect me. I’m going to go specifically for a Caracal because their ears make them look different and weird but it’s this oddity that is actually their strength - they give them enhanced abilities in detecting prey. Basically, sometimes your strengths lie in where you don’t fit in.”

***‘Esther Joy Lane’ is available on CD at gigs or for download at [estherjoylane.bandcamp.com](http://estherjoylane.bandcamp.com). Esther supports Chad Valley at The Bullingdon on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December.***



RELEASED

BALLOON ASCENTS

‘Don’t Look Down’

(Self released)  
While the shadow of Radiohead will loom large over Oxford music for decades to come, there can be few bands any city would rather have to act as a guide or aspiration point for future generations of young musicians to look to, both for their musical ambition and their ongoing anti-music industry stance. No surprise then that two of the most promising new young bands in Oxford, Balloon Ascents and The Aureate Act, carry a distinct Radiohead influence in their sound, or that, like Radiohead, they’re both difficult to pin down genre-wise and happy to head into proggy waters.  
Balloon Ascents perhaps less so on the latter count, but it’d be no insult to mention them in the same breath as Peter Hammill at times, with ‘Don’t Look Down’ possessed of a similarly airy sense of romance and endearingly awkward gait. Radiohead remain the chief inspiration, though: “There’s no way out of here,” croons Thomas Roberts with the air of a man lost in a reverie rather than inside a collapsing mineshaft, the clamouring guitars taking their time to build a sense of tension until it finally starts to feel more like the walls



FALSE ADVERTISING

‘False Advertising’

(Self released)  
Over the last year grunge has made something of a comeback. Plucky twenty-somethings who were barely even walking when ‘Nevermind’ was released have turned up the distortion and started to half shout, half sing overdone, angst-ridden lyrics. More often than not such poor imitation is better off left in the 90s, but that’s where False Advertising differ.  
The trio’s self-titled debut has clearly been influenced by Nirvana et al, yet instead of being a messy homage to the greats, they’ve updated the 90s sound to avoid simply producing a



are closing in. Better still is b-side ‘Someone’; resting on a languid groove, Roberts’ dreamily questing voice floats amid sweet harmonies and woozy electronic wows, as if the whole song is zonked on ketamine and been left to drift among the clouds with a glazed expression and a huge grin on its face. Comparisons to parts of ‘The Bends’ are undeniable, but the optimism of Roberts’ line “it could be you,” contrasts neatly with Thom Yorke’s more pessimistic worldview as well as the more nervy, trapped feel of ‘Don’t Look Down’.  
*Dale Kattack*

shabby copycat. Although it’s full of thundering riffs, the album is abundant with intelligent instrumental lines interweaving the gravelly vocals.  
Vocalists Jen Hingley (from Didcot and a relative of Inspiral Carpets’ Oxfordshire boy Tom Hingley) and Chris Warr alternate duties on guitar and drumming, adding much needed variety, which stops it becoming stagnant. Although the fuzz and growls of grunge reign supreme in the mix, the dynamics are shaken up by killer pop hooks and elegant vocal licks that diffuse the heavier genre and make it more accessible to contemporary listeners.  
Stonking opener ‘Breaker’ sets the tone for the whole of the record: big, brash riffs, combined with more subtle intricacies and crunchy chord progressions. Although at times the album can feel slightly overdone (for example in the jilted ‘Wasted Away’), these moments are few and far between and glimpses of brilliance, like the unrelenting ‘Dozer’, make up for it.  
The mainstream popularity of grunge as a genre once again means it could be easy to disregard False Advertising after a first listen; but that would be careless.  
Far more intelligent than many fellow grunge-inspired counterparts, with anthems that are meant to be filling huge concert halls, this debut stands them alone as a band worth keeping an eye on. The two years it took the band to create this DIY album has been time well spent.  
*Hannah Mylrea Hemmings*



BUG PRENTICE

‘The Way It Crumbles’

(Self released)  
“I wish that we could live in a library,” dream Bug Prentice on the woozy, melancholic ‘Spoons’, summing up an album that likes to sneak up on life from the far side, from a point of thoughtful academia or fanboy geekery. Over 38 minutes, we pick up lyrical references to a drunk Orson Welles, Nicholas Ray’s films, Cole Porter and Kurt Vonnegut. ‘Angular Spirals’ doesn’t seem to be riffing on anything specific, but sounds more like a Vorticist lonely hearts column than your average pop song: the narrator(s) of these songs seem more comfortable away from the action, immersed in scholarly footnotes, DVD extras and bottomless YouTube rabbit holes.  
So it’s astonishing how emotionally direct this record is. Ally Craig might be delivering lyrics consisting of compact, absurd vignettes (‘Ceilidh Dancer’) or just dicking about (hipster grunge parody ‘Moustache’), but his gorgeous, dry, delicate voice, like the smoked-out ghost of Jeff Buckley, makes it seem like he’s whispering soul-drenched secrets.  
The music also gives the songs visceral immediacy: the guitar plays elastic mandelbrot blues that’s somewhere between John Renbourn, Thurston Moore and James Blood Ulmer, whilst the rhythm section hide subtly in the background for long periods, before erupting into hefty Slint-shaped blasts.  
If one song sums the record up, it’s ‘Nebraskan Admiral’, a beautiful brooding lament that teeters on the edge of atonality but which has the comballiest, music-halliest opening couplet you’ll hear all year, sounding like mid-90s Kristin Hersh with lyrics by Ian Dury. If you’ve seen Ally live, you’ll know he can wrench the sentimental core from an Ivor Cutler piece and reveal the unsuspected profundity in a song from *The Muppets*, so this mixture of cabaret schmaltz and surreal sincerity should come as no surprise. This is one of the best Oxford albums in recent times, but be prepared to put some work in, ‘The Way It Crumbles’ is one tough cookie.  
*David Murphy*



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# RELEASED

## ESTHER JOY LANE

### ‘Esther Joy Lane’

(Self released)

It’s easy to be cynical about new musical acts. Some artists precede the genre they’d most comfortably slot into and don’t get the attention they deserve; some merrily ride on the coattails of others, benefitting from the happenstance of all their musical stars aligning; some abandon their soul and change their sound in order to gain traction; and some would really benefit from their audiences not overthinking whether they’re going to be commercial and successful or not and just concentrating on how good the music is. Slotting neatly into this final category is twenty-three-year-old Leeds-born, Edinburgh-raised, Oxford-resident Esther Joy Lane, whose timely nascence is largely a product of her youth coinciding with the advent of Garageband, and whose sound can – incidentally and not detrimentally – be herded into the “chilled but edgy” paddock of The xx and London Grammar.

This, Esther’s debut EP, is so confident and accomplished that it’s astounding that it isn’t yet major label, TV sync stuff; someone needs to send stand-out track ‘You Know’ to *Grey’s Anatomy* immediately. The acoustic-inspired sparse electro soul of the synths and gentle beats perfectly frames Esther’s low, velvety voice, giving it space



without overcrowding it; emotion is conveyed by how little she gives away: the more she controls, the more she implies. The songs do admittedly lie somewhere on a continuum that has Jessie Ware at one end and Grimes, Banks and FKA Twigs at the other, but they’re all favourable comparisons; Esther shares with them a certain hypnotic and beguiling quality, with each play of this EP more rewarding. It has a sort of late night inner-city shimmering-streetlights-reflected-on-a-river vibe; sultry, personal and highly polished, yet claustrophobic, detached and aloof: in short, utterly captivating. *Kirsten Etheridge*



## THE AUREATE ACT

### ‘Madman’s Well’

(Self released)

Few bands are bold enough to proclaim a love for Genesis, King Crimson and Pink Floyd, but for a school-age band it’s damn near unheard of. Which is why The Aureate Act have stood out as one of the most interesting new bands in town over the last couple of years, along with the similarly open-minded Balloon Ascents. Their early demos were convoluted prog explorations, unafraid to take the long road round and touch base with all manner of prog dinosaurs, while gigs were a head-scratching but impressive hotchpotch of anything and everything from Radiohead to Marillion, by way of Van der Graaf Generator. They sounded like a band with the whole world to explore but one who’d deliberately left their map at home.

This debut EP proper was produced by Nick

Moorbath at Evolution Studios, a man who could doubtless tell The Aureate Act a lot about the spaced-out edges of prog given his time in Iron Clowns in the 90s – a band that The Aureate Act might feasibly be heirs to, however unintentional. For starters they have, in Dominic Baum, a singer with an operatic style and delivery who uses his voice as much as an instrument in itself as a way to simply deliver lyrics, the slight quaver in his voice a joyous reminder of the hugely underrated Purescence’s James Mudriczki. If those lyrics can be close to indecipherable at times, they’re worth hearing, with songs like ‘Secant’ musing on the death of religion and how Christianity might be viewed hundreds or thousands of years hence. Behind Baum the band are elaborate and inventive, those early influences replaced by sleeker, more atmospheric ones, with Boards of Canada and even Oxford’s own Wild Swim (who The Aureate supported at their first ever gig) increasingly the dominant influences – electronics coming more to the fore, songs compacted and stripped of (most) fripperies. Everything, though, sounds utterly grand, with the likes of ‘The Night Watch’ possessed of a “gaze upon my majesty and weep, mortals,” imperiousness, albeit it with an unabashed air of Jethro Tull about it, while the instrumental ‘Changing State’ sounds like the grandiose overture to some huge symphony. It’s almost beyond cliché to claim a band sound old beyond their years but The Aureate Act really do – this is music you’d be hard pressed to imagine being made by teenager barely old enough to drink in the venues they’re currently playing in, and with both a technicality and vision that musicians twice, or thrice, their age should be more than slightly envious of. *Dale Kattack*

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## ONE WING LEFT

### ‘The Media Without Voice’

(Self released)

The old maxim “talk quietly but carry a big stick,” doesn’t seem to hold much sway in an age of “smashing it”. Or, in the case of local rockers One Wing Left, belting everything out with bells on, just to make extra sure everyone in a five-mile radius has to pay attention, whether they want to or not.

There’s nothing wrong with a bit of bombast in rock music, but even excess has to be delivered with a bit of guile or else it just becomes an exercise in musical brow beating, like being repeatedly told to eat your riffs by a strident dinner lady dressed in an Evanescence t-shirt. That band’s billowing brand of rock hangs heavily over One Wing Left’s debut album with singer Anastasia Gorbunova’s soaring voice coating every meaty riff with a sense of epic that makes *The Lord of the Rings* look like an episode of *Peepshow*. Album opener ‘Midazolam Daze’ sets the stadium-sized scene, all euro-rock pomp and vocals from the Judie Tzuke and Lita Ford school of Give It Some Welly, and that’s the scene set for the next 50 minutes, everything verging on operatic excess, even the band’s handful of ballads.

It’s all immaculately executed of course, and somewhere, somewhere this kind of rock fills giant arenas and sells albums by the tanker load, but One Wing Left sound too polished and neatly constructed to pack an emotional punch to match their sonic one and end up sounding like a Hollywood director’s idea of what a rock band from sometime around 1985 might have sounded before asking a bunch of seasoned studio session musicians to reproduce that notion on set. Thing is, Gorbunova has a secret weapon in her armory that she rarely uses: her eastern European accent, but when it makes its presence felt it changes the entire feel of her voice and the songs, adding far more character and charm to those songs it sneaks out on than the generic rock siren belting that dominates the majority of the album. Sadly the album reaches a peak of shrill on closing track ‘Ender’, which itself ends on the line “this one’s going to fucking hurt.” Might have been better sticking that warning at the start.

*Dale Kattack*



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# RELEASED

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### ‘Fall – Label Compilation Vol.1’

*(All Will Be Well)*  
Obviously starting up your own record label in this day and age is an act of lunacy on a par with withdrawing all your savings from the bank and tipping them down the nearest drain. In fact it’s damn near the same thing.

Still, cut yourself a niche and do the right things with a bit of imagination and you can make a success of it – just see what Alcopop! have achieved for themselves over the last few years. All Will Be Well is a new label started by Ian Mitchell from local folk/pop trio Little Red, with the aim of helping acts from Oxford and further beyond with releases, PR and more. By concentrating more (but not exclusively) on the rootsier side of things, they’ve an instantly identifiable identity and this fifteen-act compilation generally shines a positive light on the acts they’re working with. Eight of the acts are from Oxford, and without getting all parochially patriotic, they tend to be the best ones. Little Red themselves come out on top with their haunted, deep woods folk,



while Huck’s taut, poetic blues contrasts its buoyant canter with an ill-fated story, and The String Project manage to be both intense and brooding, and almost pantomime silly with their gothic string-based chamber pop, which displays a decent maverick streak. A Reluctant Arrow’s stark, elegant blues-folk stands its ground even if it tends towards strident towards the end, while All Is Worth’s hippyish thrum and jangle sounds pleasingly like something traight out of an old ‘Gather In the Mushrooms’ compilation. It’s not a clean sweep of good

relying on false emotional outpouring which makes ‘Behind Horizons’ such a treat. Songs like ‘The Silence In Between’, ‘These City Lights’ and ‘Favourite Colour Green’ are calculated in every sense of the word; they are yearning, desperate numbers, the disciplined restraint employed by Ryder only accentuating such sentiments. Occasionally he is let down by lyrical cliché, couplets such as “I have no doubt you’re like the others / But my memories are stained with images of you” luckily masked by the authority Ryder can generally dictate over the tone and mood of each song. Such control makes closer ‘Ghosts’ a bit of an outcast, feeling overblown and over-worked in comparison to the rest of the release, making it a shame the album ends on such a note. It would take much more to smear the name of ‘Behind Horizons’, however; a real joy of an album.

*Ben Lynch*

### THE BIG SUN ‘Bruiser’

*(Balloon Twister)*  
‘Bruiser’ is a fabulous cut of pop splendour, thanks largely to it being a stonking house-style mix by Dave Pemberton, he of the legendary Strongroom collaborations with Orbital and Carl Cox. He adds a real four-to-the-floor, deep groove to a gold nugget of a tune and chorus, one that falls between Welsh popstral Jem, and the twinkly fairy lights of Owl City’s ‘Fireflies’. The Big Sun is essentially homegrown teenage talent Berry Brown from Eynsham, who has had a few years of gradual improvement, aided

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things from the Oxford contingent mind, with Nelson and the Columns’ laborious and twee acoustic folk letting the side down. Out of town the hit rate dips alarmingly, particularly with Ben Gosling’s blandly inoffensive busker pop, Reading neighbours The Midnight Rambler’s awful, tuneless landfill indie dirge and Stuart Clark & Sarah Lucas’ worthy, dull and decidedly airy-fairy folk pop. The top-heavy nature of the album becomes apparent as its fades out with the unremarkable, soft-centred Minnie Birch and the frankly fucking dreadful pub-folk shouter Bear, but there’s an aberration of the very best kind in this circle in the form of Reading act The Pink Diamond Revue, who go against the folky grain with their shadowy, shimmering surf-rock. Having seen them live, they’re one of the best, most unusual unsigned bands around and deserve far wider exposure. A mixed bag then, as you’d expect from such an extensive showcase from a brand new local label, but enough to suggest that if they can properly pick and choose the best All Will Be Well can avoid becoming a hopeless money pit and become a small treasure trove of roots music, and more.

*Dale Kattack*

and abetted by members of The Candyskins and Ride. But it’s her evolving move towards more dancey tracks like ‘Ten Ton Truck’ and ‘Time I Bought A Boat’ that’s made the industry sit up and take notice, and it’s this latest single that is going to make them jump out of their seats. The Lyrics are ripe to be mis-heard and endlessly abstract, with the chorus, “*I’m ready / I’m on a jet pack / And Red Arrows fly by*” being hands-above-the-head celebratory, while my urban slang dictionary is no real help with “*I’ve got my bruise back / I’ve got my bruise.*” So it’s clever and multi-layered if you need it (even managing to name-drop a British WW2 air-raid with “*All our protest songs / Drop like Dresden bombs*”); it’s full of wind-blown synth-brass , and it should be on radio rotation, with a video full of candyfloss clouds, and rainbow unicorns circling like Disney bluebirds. Superb.

*Paul Carrera*



### WHITE BEAM ‘Scattergun’

*(Self released)*  
By and large, the late 1990s were a desperate time for mainstream British guitar music – a no man’s land situated between Britpop, which belatedly curled up and died with the release of ‘OK Computer’, and the *NME*-patented New Rock Revolution of the early Noughties spearheaded by The Strokes, The White Stripes and The Libertines. On the evidence of this EP, White Beam have been wandering around lost in that desolate wasteland ever since. From the moment the twin-guitar wail of feedback at the start of opening track ‘Olney Hill’ gives way to the song proper, it’s pretty much all, er, downhill. There are occasional tantalising glimpses of promise: the odd tug of the forelock in the direction of hometown heroes Ride; the subtlest of hints of The Pixies in the first few seconds of ‘Fortune’; Jeremy Leggett’s approximation of Roddy Woomble’s vocal stylings on ‘Clutch’; the utterly unexpected Helmet-esque riff that drags ‘Scythe’ back in the direction of respectability after lyrical guff about winds of change falling from blackened skies. But none of that can excuse a band who proclaim themselves purveyors of “dark rock” having committed to record a song like ‘Watch The Game’, an indie-funk atrocity that finds Leggett attempting to invest the phrases “Relegation dogfight” and “Transfer deadline day” with emotive intensity; it’s even worse than some of the Saturday afternoons I’ve spent at the Kassam. It might encapsulate the regular misery of football fandom, but did it really have to shake my faith in music too?

*Ben Woolhead*

### CAMERON A.G. ‘Lost Direction’

*(Self released)*  
While the solo singer/songwriter star has never been higher, as ever it’s the most easily digestible ones who have reaped the greatest commercial rewards; whether it’s Sam Smith or James Bay, people want smooth operators with no quirks or sharp edges – no real emotional depths beyond some clichéd sense of vague romantic ennui. Hence those artists with serious bruises on their souls, from the wonderful Aldous Harding to our own Richard Walters, remain just a little too grievly for mass consumption.

### CATALANO ‘Patience & Perseverance’

*(One Note Forever)*  
Gabriele Catalano is, despite the surname, an Italian-born musician, now residing in Oxford, and his homeland’s electronic music heritage shines through on this mostly impressive debut album, with Italian house mixing it up with motorik Krautrock and synth soundscaping. The predominant influence, unsurprisingly, is Kraftwerk, from the semi-submerged German voices on ‘Piero Paolo’ to the outright ‘Autobahn’ steal of ‘All of Europe Is Waiting For Me’, but when he gets thing just right, Catalano creates hypnotic and euphoric electronic journeys that blend insistent electronic beats, tropical grooves and almost symphonic sweeps and washes of synth that have you unconsciously nodding along as they shift gears almost imperceptibly and head into the stratosphere. Nowhere more so than on the clamouring ‘Late Night Bloomer’ where what sounds like a trillion tiny nano-bees buzz and swarm amid the electronic cascades, becoming a full-on trance trip at its peak. Less effective is ‘Whenever Something Is Broken, You Just Throw It Away’, which is aimless and feels as overlong as its title. Mostly though, he hits a groove and rides it with skill, like the uplifting ‘Grinding Is Grinding’, all Vangelis circa-‘Cosmos’ sequencers and punchy electronic drums, and the gently skull-boring ‘Witnessing Progress Through Repetition’, which does what it says on the tin, taking you onwards and upwards with its circling synth hook, tribal beat and ever-denser texture, a tune, and an album, to seriously lose your head in.

*Victoria Waterfield*



Cameron Groat falls – sweetly and sadly – into the latter camp; his winsome voice, treated to enhance the quavering loneliness of the song, sounds all at sea on this wonderfully pretty new single, plangent strings and piano the sparsest of rafts on which he’s cast adrift in his own little world of desolation and longing. It’s so simple but so strong you wonder if ‘Lost Direction’ is spun from spiders’ silk, and comes with the sense of hopelessness that a fly trapped in a web must feel. But hey, great British public, don’t let it get to you – we’re sure there’ll be something bland and expensively produced along soon to make sure that great looming void doesn’t impinge on your thoughts too much.

*Sue Foreman*



### BLACKTHORN ‘As She Flies’

*(Self released)*  
Oxfordshire being a heartland of traditional English folk, bands like Blackthorn are a staple of the county (if not city) music circuit. Time has stood still for this kind of music for decades now, and while Blackthorn promise a twist on traditional British songs, there’s little amid this album of arrangements of traditional songs to suggest they’re being taken down new, unexplored roads. From the fair maidens spied in the month of May on ‘Cuckoo’s Nest’, to the young girl running away to be a drummer in the army on ‘British Grenadier’/‘Female Drummer’, these are unchanging stories and songs that have echoed around pub snugs from the Cotswolds to the Chilterns since time immemorial and Blackthorn really aren’t rocking the boat on that score. To be honest we kind of wish they were a bit – songs like this should rock the tavern, be knocked out with abandon amid a flurry of spilled beer, cursing, snogging and ungainly dancing. Too much of ‘As She Flies’ is cosy but polite – album opener ‘Maid of Islington’/‘Hunt the Squirrel’, for example, is the sober cousin to The Pogues’ raucous take on ‘The Gentleman Soldier’. That’s not to say Blackthorn don’t carry some of the songs off with an accomplished hand, and there’s a sizeable contingent of die-hard folkies who’s prefer things not to get too out of hand lest it disturb the sheep at Cropredy, but we’d like to hear them three sheets to the wind and with a bit more dirt beneath their fingernails.

*Dale Kattack*





# G I G G U I D E

## SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**DAPPY: O2 Academy** – Make way for Dappy / Dappy! / Shout a big hooray! / Dappy’s here, make way!  
**MOON LEOPARD + BEARD OF DESTINY + SAM POPE + SOUTH OXFORD BRASS: Donnington Community Centre (6pm)** – Free evening of acoustic music with folkster Moon Leopard, bluesman Beard of Destiny and brass sounds from South Oxford Brass.

## MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**DICK GAUGHAN: The Cellar** – Revolution and romance from the Scottish folk legend – *see main preview*  
**THE BREW + HELL’S GAZELLES: The Bullingdon** – Rock’n’soul from Grimsby’s The Brew at tonight’s Haven Club show, plus glamorous classic heavy rock from local crew Hell’s Gazelles.

## Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>

### DICK GAUGHAN: The Cellar

It’s too easy to describe every other folk music veteran as a legend simply because they’ve stuck around for so long, doing their thing oblivious to the vagaries of fashion, but Dick Gaughan is more than worthy of the title. A man who has been the beating heart of Scottish folk music since the late-60s, he’s equalled only by The Corries and The Boys of the Lough (of which he was a member early on) in that grand tradition. A political firebrand and a great romantic poet, Gaughan is renowned as a great wordsmith but is increasingly recognised as a master acoustic guitarist; he’s always mixed traditional songs with his own compositions and he’s been covered by Billy Bragg, Mary Black and Capercaillie over the years, often seen as Scotland’s own Woody Guthrie for his strong socialist beliefs and protest songs. His uncompromising beliefs have never held him back in the critical acclaim stakes and crossover appeal, and he became the only musician to receive a BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards Lifetime Achievement Award *and* be inducted into the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame. That Neil Finn flew in from New Zealand at his own expense to present the BBC award is testament to the esteem Gaughan is held in, and to see a genuine living legend performing in a venue as intimate as the Cellar is a genuine privilege.



# NOVEMBER

## DAVE PEGG BIRTHDAY CONCERT:

**Nettlebed Folk Club** – The venerable Lord Peggy of Pegg once again celebrates his birthday at Nettlebed Folk Club, the Fairport man joined by Anthony John Clarke, Anna Ryder and Noel Le Long for a singalong show.

## TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**BLACKALICIOUS: O2 Academy** – Literate, eclectic hip hop from the San Fran vets – *see main preview*  
**SIGMA: O2 Academy** – London drum&bass duo Cameron Edwards and Joseph Lenzie come to town, riding high on the back of a slew of big hits, including chart toppers ‘Nobody to Love’ and ‘Changing’, featuring Paloma Faith, as well as remixing Ellie Goulding, Eric Prydz, Groove Armada and Skepta.  
**BLACKALICIOUS: Truck Store (6pm)** – Instore performance from the Bay Area rap duo ahead of their O2 show.  
**GROOVE ALCHEMY: The Bullingdon** – The Bully’s free weekly jazz club hosts groove-led outfit Groove Alchemy.  
**OPEN MIC: The James Street Tavern**

## WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**PAUL HEATON & JACQUI ABBOTT: O2 Academy** – The Beautiful South duo reunite for a tour in the wake of their album together, ‘What Have We Become’, while their old hits, ‘Perfect 10’, ‘Rotterdam’ and ‘Dream a Little Dream of Me’ should get an airing.  
**MEANSTEED: The Wheatsheaf** –Oxford University’s Rocksoc host north London heavyweights Meanstead, tipping their hat to AC/DC, Thin Lizzy and Free, amongst others.  
**MACIEK PYSZ: St John the Evangelist** – Jazz guitar from the Polish composer and musician, fusing tango, flamenco, Latin jazz and classical.  
**BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar** – 80s pop, new wave, disco, glam and synth-pop club night.

## THURSDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**CLEAN CUT KID: The Bullingdon** – Languidly funky electro-pop in a Vampire Weekend style from the Liverpoolian quartet, out on their biggest tour to date to promote their debut album.  
**BERNIE TORME + BLACK DIAMOND + LAST GREAT DREAMERS: The Wheatsheaf** – Some seriously classic rocking at OxRox’s gig tonight with veteran guitarist Bernie Torme coming to town to promote his new album ‘Blackheart’. With a musical history going back to the first wave of punk, Torme is best known for his work with Gillan in the late70s/early 80s before going on to play with Ozzie Osborne, Atomic Rooster and Dee Snider, but since the early 80s he’s fronted a succession of bands, kicking out his trademark heavyweight melodic blues rock, inspired by Hendrix, Gary Moore and Cream. Support tonight comes from Liverpool’s rising young rockers Black

Diamond, out on tour to promote debut single ‘Stranglehold, having supported Royal Blood and We Are The Ocean, plus a return to town for reformed 90s glam-rockers Last Great Dreamers with their suitably sleazy take on Hanoi Rocks and Dogs D’Amour’s power-pop, tonight warming up for a tour support to ex-Runaway Cherie Currie.  
**LION BARK + DAISY JEAN RUSSELL + BURKINI BEACH: The Library** – Gentle-natured indie-folk from Brighton’s Lion Bark at tonight’s Tigmus show, the band joined by soulful singer Daisy Jean Russell, keeping it angelic in the style of Zero7, and Berlin singer Burkini Beach, keeping it melancholic in the style of Elliot Smith, Sun Kil Moon and Sufjan Stevens.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** – Oxford’s long running, and best, open club night continues to showcase local singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every week.  
**OPEN MIC: The Half Moon**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**  
**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

## FRIDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**KESTON COBBLERS CLUB: The Bullingdon** – Kent’s woodland folk creatures emerge for some campfire jollity – *see main preview*  
**KESTON COBBLERS CLUB: Truck Store (6pm)** – Pre-gig instore from the folkie faves.  
**SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM with KIKO BUN + EARL GATESHEAD: The Cellar** – Count Skylarkin’ hosts his monthly ska, reggae and dancehall party, tonight with recent Island Records signing – Italian/Panamanian reggae singer Kiko Bun, fresh from playing Boomtown and Bestival over the summer. Joining the Count on the decks will be Trojan Soundsystem lynchpin Earl Gateshead.  
**BARS & MELODY: O2 Academy** – Barry Bars (seven), and Micky Melody (four and a half) bring their industrial hardcore terror attack back to town to promote new album ‘Post Mortal Ejaculation’.  
**PRIDES + FATHERSON: O2 Academy** – Stadium-sized, daytime radio-friendly electro-soul pop from Glasgow’s Prides, taking a post-Bastille route to big things via a big sound, all pomp and passion, reminiscent of mid-80s bands like Wet Wet Wet, Tears For Fears and Hue & Cry. Support from near-neighbours Fatherson with their heartfelt indie rock that’s earned them supports with Frightened Rabbit, Idlewild and Feeder already.

**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE BALKAN WANDERERS + ROBOT SWANS + FUJI + PURPLE MAY: The Wheatsheaf** – Traditional east European folk dance with a punky indie edge from Balkan Wanders at tonight’s Klub Kak. They’re joined by ramshackle electro-indie pop outfit Robot Swans and funky blues crew Purple May.  
**WHITE BEAM: The Jericho Tavern** – Shoegazy indie, grungy pop and post-punk pop from White Beam, playing their last show for a while as they launch their debut EP.  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar** – Dance club night in conjunction with What You Call It, Garage?

**POLLY & THE BILLETS DOUX: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – Winchester’s twee, smooth-edged country-folk and jazz outfit Polly & co. return.  
**NOTORIOUS 80s: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – 80s pop covers.

## SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**LEVON VINCENT: The Bullingdon** – Austere, minimalist techno from the New Yorker-turned-Berliner and pioneering electro purist, out on tour to promote his eponymous album, stripping linear Kraftwerk-inspired techno down to its barest parts for a strangely sombre and intimate experience.  
**DEFINITELY MIGHTBE: O2 Academy** – Oasis tribute.  
**TWENTY ONE PILOTS: O2 Academy** – Hot-mess pop on a stadium trajectory from the Ohio heroes – *see main preview*  
**SWITCH with BLONDE: O2 Academy** – Deep house and UK garage from Bristol duo Blonde at tonight’s edm club night.  
**HONOLULU COWBOYS: St Giles Church Hall (6pm)** – Traditional Hawaiian tea dance with live band.  
**ROURKE’S DRIFT: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Classic rock covers.

## Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>

### BLACKALICIOUS: O2 Academy

Consistently one of the most versatile, inventive and incisive rap groups, Bay Area duo Blackalicious looked like they’d gone for good after the pair – rapper Gift of Gab and beatmaker Chief Xcel – went their separate ways after 2005’s ‘The Craft’. Even when they did reconvene it looked like it might come to nothing when Gab suffered kidney failure before they could start work on the Pledgemusic-funded comeback ‘Imani Volume 1’. Luckily everything worked out, although the theme of time (or lack of it) and a sense of mortality hangs around the new album, which is due to be part of a trilogy released over the next two years. It’s a strong comeback statement, with little sign of rust, but Blackalicious’ real masterpiece is their seminal 2002 ‘Blazing Arrow’ album, which featured cameos from DJ Shadow, Ben Harper, Jurassic 5, Zack de la Rocha and even the late, great Gil Scot Heron, a major influence on the duo and their intellectual, Afrocentric positivity. While Gab’s rhyming skill is second to none – a real tongue twister of a rapper – musically they go beyond hip hop’s often bare bones musical style, with a full-on funk feel that owes a lot of Sly Stone and George Clinton. With a political message tempered by moments of real wit, they’re also an acclaimed live act, something that time away hopefully hasn’t altered.



## SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**TITUS ANDRONICUS: The Bullingdon** – New Jersey rock’n’rollers perform their punk-prog concept album – *see main preview*  
**LUCY ROSE + FLYTE + C DUNCAN: O2 Academy** – Fragile, winsome 60s-styled folk-pop inspired by Joni Mitchell from the former Bombay Bicycle Cub backing singer and renowned jam maker, back in Oxford after her appearance at Truck in July to promote her new Top 10 album, ‘Work It Out’.  
**RECKLESS SLEEPERS + SCOTT GORDON + SPOON THEORY + LEWIS NEWCOMBE JONES + PURPLE MAY: The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm)** – Free unplugged session hosted by Giddy-up Music in the downstairs bar.

## MONDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**LUSTS: The Bullingdon** – Classic indie with a jangle, a jingle and a sweet, sweet shimmer – *see main preview*  
**THE MARK HARRISON BAND: The Jericho Tavern** – Rootsy acoustic blues from the singer and guitarist at tonight’s Famous Monday Blues.  
**MEGAN HENWOOD & JACKIE OATES: Nettlebed Folk Club** – The local folk luminaries team up once again for a home club show, featuring songs from Megan’s debut album, ‘Head, Heart, Hand’ and more.  
**JAY ELECTRONICA: O2 Academy** – Conscious hip hop from the New Orleans rapper and producer and mate of Jay-Z, with whom he has just released ‘Road to Perdition, having made his name with a fifteen-minute beatless track based on the soundtrack to *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*.

## TUESDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**PATRICK WATSON + THUS OWLS: O2 Academy** – Rarefied classical/pop crossover from Montreal singer/songwriter Patrick Watson, out on tour with his new album ‘Love Songs For Robots’, and finding a delicate meeting point between Pink Floyd, Vangelis, Jeff Buckley and Rufus Wainwright.  
**OXFORD ALL STARS: The Bullingdon** – From Dixieland to swing at tonight’s jazz club.  
**INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night, with Doktor Joy and Bookhouse.  
**OPEN MIC: The James Street Tavern**

## WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**CATALANO + MACHWEO + BRUNO BELISSIMO: The Library** – An evening of electronica courtesy of local label One Note Forever, with their latest signing Catalano launching his debut album ‘Patience & Perseverance’, Italian house mixing it up with motorik Krautrock and synth soundscaping. Glitchy, atmospheric electronica and edm from fellow Italian soundscapist Machweo.  
**OXJAM: The Wheatsheaf** – Oxfam benefit with One Wing Left and more.  
**SUPERMARKET: The Cellar** – Hip hop, grime, UK garage and 90s house.

## THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**GRANT SHARKEY: The Bullingdon** – Acoustic blues, soul and protest pop from the idiosyncratic singer and double bassist.  
**THE FRATELLIS + THE CROOKES: O2 Academy** – The decidedly chipper Glaswegian indie rockers return to the Shire after their set at Cornbury Festival in July, kicking out old hits like



## Friday 6<sup>th</sup>

### KESTON COBBLERS CLUB: The Bullingdon

Previous support to Stornoway, Kent’s Keston Cobblers Club have a similar affinity with nature, from the band press shots set in woody glades, to the Camp Wildlife mini-festival they organised this summer, mixing up live music with adventure camp-style activities. And yes, they’re a folk band, and yes, there’s something a bit twee and rustic about them, and no, there’s nothing wrong with that. There’s little they have in common with Mumford and Sons beyond the odd bit of banjo. Instead the quintet, formed around singing siblings Matt and Julia Lowe, are closer to Of Monsters and Men, early Noah and the Whale and Stornoway themselves, all harmony singing and campfire-warm melodies. Their first album, ‘One, For Words’ was steeped in olde worlde traditions, this year’s follow-up, ‘Wildfire’ expands the sonic palette to take in hints of reggae, jazz, tropical pop and tribal rhythms, adding synth hooks and big old drums to the sound, while remaining true to its rootsy roots. It’s pretty and summery (and sometimes spring-like, just occasionally autumnal) and it’s won them unlikely fans in the shape of Steve Lamacq and Marc Riley as well as the more expected Bob Harris. With such strong crossover appeal, they’re a decent bet for British folk music’s next breakthrough act, so make the most of tonight’s intimate setting.

‘Chelsea Dagger’ as well as songs from new album ‘Eyes Wide, Tongue Tied’.  
**POPE OF CHILLITOWN + LAST EDITION + JOE WYNN: The Cellar** – Brassy, high-octane ska-punk fun from London’s Popes of Chillitown, touring their second album ‘To The Moon’, inspired by classic Two Tone bands like The Specials and The Selecter as well as Rancid and Reel Big Fish. Tonight’s gig is a fundraiser for the Oxford Food Bank. Hold that thought in your head for a moment. Oxford – one of the most beautiful, famous and prosperous cities on the planet – needs a food bank. This is the brave new Tory-led world we live in, dear reader.  
**LAURA JURD + LABTRIO: The North Wall, Summertown** – Oxford Contemporary Music host acclaimed jazz trumpeter and composer Jurd, renowned for her spiky improvisational style, inspired by electric-era Miles Davis and Django Bates. Opens Labtrio fuse jazz improv with hip hop and electronica. Tonight’s concert features sets from both acts followed by a collaborative set.  
**SEVEN O’CLOCK JUNKIES + SILENCES + STRAYS: The Jericho Tavern** – 60s-styled rocking from Seven O’Clock Junkies at tonight’s It’s All About the Music showcase, alongside local rockers Strays.  
**CHRIS RYDER: Café Tarifa** – Free album launch show from the local singer.  
**WILD PONIES: The Cornerstone, Didcot** –





*Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>*

## TWENTY ONE PILOTS: O2 Academy

The term hot mess has gone from being an insult in reviews to a badge of honour in a musical landscape where genre boundaries mean little to bands with the entire history of music a click away. It’s a term regularly applied to Ohio duo Twenty One Pilots, generally because their mix and match approach to pop is as eclectic as mainstream music gets, taking in hip hop, reggae, electro-pop, post-grunge rock and piano pop as well as a decidedly poetic approach to lyricism that reflects their chosen band name – taken from Arthur Miller’s meditation on morality, All My Sons. Singer and multi-instrumentalist Tyler Joseph’s Christian beliefs are intrinsic to his lyrics but they’re neither preachy nor happy clappy, preferring a neat mix of intelligence and fun. And it’s served them well, from a brace of self-released albums to a deal with Fueled By Ramen, a tour support with Fall Out Boy, appearances at Lollapalooza and Bonnaroo, and earlier this year a Billboard Number 1 with fourth album ‘Blurryface’. Little wonder tonight’s show is long since sold out. Next time they hit these shores they’ll be playing arenas if not stadiums, so the relative intimacy of the O2 is a good place to witness a band going stratospheric at their own pace and in their own style.

Emotive, harmony-heavy country and Americana from Nashville duo Doug and Telisha Williams.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**OPEN MIC: The Half Moon**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**  
**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

### FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**LEPER KING + KANCHO!: The Wheatshaeaf** – Stoner-rock riffage of the highest order from Leper King, alongside squalling post-hardcore noise from Kancho! – *see Introducing feature*  
**THE MARK PONTIN GROUP: The Bullingdon** – Loud and dirty blues-rocking from the Swansea-based guitarist and singer, out on tour to promote new album ‘Textures’.  
**Y&T: O2 Academy** – Return of San Francisco’s veteran metallers, still out on the road since forming in 1974 and helping inspire the likes of Metallica and Motley Crue along the way.  
**STRIKING MATCHES: O2 Academy** – Traditional country in the spirit of Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton and Carter-Cash from the Nashville duo, over in the UK to promote debut album ‘Nothing But the Silence’ after their showing at Cornbury Festival in July.  
**BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar** – The long-running monthly celebration of Latin dance, Balkan beats, global grooves, Afrobeat and nu-jazz welcomes travelling multi-national world music heroes The

Turbans to town, mixing up Balkan, klezmer and Middle-Eastern favourites with their own material, drawing on the members’ native music traditions from Turkey, Bulgaria, Iran, Greece, Israel, Italy and the UK.

**TEETH OF THE SEA + LEE RILEY + YOUNG CONSERVATIVE: Modern Art Oxford** – Another night of quality noise courtesy of Burn the Jukebox with a return to town for machine-driven no-wave-inspired psych-progsters Teeth of the Sea with their confrontational blend of Throbbing Gristle, Liars, Boredoms, PiL and Butthole Surfers. Tis a magnificent thing. Suitably anti-commercial support from local dronemeister Lee Riley and Dungeon disco chap Young Conservative.

**THE STRING PROJECT + STUART CLARK & SARAH LAMBET-GATES + LOUISE PETIT + ALL IS WORTH + BEN GOSLING + HUCK: The Jericho Tavern** – All Will Be Well Records launch their new roster compilation album goodly selection of acts, including string quartet The String Project; punky alt.folk singer Ben Gosling; Four-Tet-inspired folktronica crew All Is Worth; acoustic harmony pop duo Clark and Lambert and bluesy Americana from Huck.

**HEART OF A COWARD + IGNITE THE SKY + BEING EUGENE + TWISTED STATE OF MIND + PLAYING THE VILLAIN: The Courtyard Youth Arts Centre, Bicester** – Bicester’s youth arts centre host another cracking all-ages heavyweight bill, picked and booked by the kids at the centre. Headliners this time are metalcore stars Heart of a Coward, taking Meshuggah’s technical approach to riff-based violence and giving it a hardcore melodic edge. They’re joined by local deathcore merchants Ignite the Sky; virulent hardcore crew Being Eugene and classic thrash and NWOBHM teens Twisted State of Mind.

**TELLING THE BEES + DUOTONE: The Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon** – Album launch show from local trad folkies Telling the Bees, plus cello’n’loops maestro Duotone.  
**HEADINGTON HOLLBILLIES: James Street Tavern** – Blues and American folk.  
**HIGH ON MAIDEN: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Iron Maiden tribute.

**JUNGLE PLAYBOOK: The Bullingdon** – Jungle club night.

### SATURDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**SAEDLY DORUS & THE HOOLIE BAND: O2 Academy** – Contemporary, punk-conscious ceilidh fun with the local favourites.  
**HANG THE BASTARD + CONJURER + DRORE: The Wheatshaeaf** – Brain and building-demolishing monster metal from London’s death/sludge titans – *see main preview*  
**DEDICATION 2015: The Bullingdon** – Back for its second annual outing, the Teenage Cancer Trust benefit show brings Limp Bizkit tribute band Stiff Bizkit to town; they’ll be joined by local bands playing tribute to their favourite heavyweight stars – Jabroni Sandwich take on Red Hot Chili Peppers, while Dead A Thousand Times take on Cancer Bats under the name Council Bats. There’s also Wink 91 and Al Is In Staines. Last year’s event raised £3,000 for the charity.  
**DEEP COVER: The Bullingdon** – Showcase club night with Retrobate, Zyldon Sound, VLVT and Pilgrim.  
**ALL TAMARA’S PARTIES: The Roastery, Magdalen Road** – Tamara Parsons-Baker continues to host intimate gigs in unusual venues, tonight rocking up at The Roastery coffee place on Magdalen Road in the company of Cirencester’s Americana and folk duo The Black Feathers,

plus acoustic singer-songwriter Richard Neuberger; baroque folksters Johanna Glaza and your host for the evening, poet and wit George Chopping.  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar** – Club night with Ben UFO, Chris Barrance and Morticse Tenon.

### SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**BRICKWORK LIZARDS: The Bullingdon** – Turkobilly fusion sounds from Brickwork Lizards, mixing up traditional Turkish and middle eastern music with classic rock’n’roll and hip hop.

### MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

**THE CORONAS: The Bullingdon** – Stadium-sized guitar pop from Dublin’s favourite sons, now signed to Island Records and relocated to London for new album ‘The Long Way’, following on from huge critical acclaim and commercial success back in Ireland where they’ve opened for Paul McCartney and Justin Timberlake as well as regularly touring alongside The Script. Back in 2010 their ‘Tony Was An Ex Con’ beat U2 and Snow Patrol to the Meteor Awards Best Album award, and now, it seems, the rest of the world is in their sights.  
**ALBERT HAMMOND Jr: O2 Academy** – With The Strokes apparently back in the studio for a new album, guitarist Hammond Jr is getting a last bit of solo action in before his day job takes hold fully again. Sweeter and more personal on his own than in the band, his new album, ‘Momentary Masters’, touches similar bases to The Strokes – from Television to The Cars – and sounds like his best effort to date.  
**MANDOLIN ORANGE + THE BLACK FEATHERS: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Rootsy Americana from North Carolina duo Mandolin Orange at tonight’s Empty Room show, the pair out on tour to promote second album ‘Such Jubilee’. They’re joined by Gloucestershire’s folk/roots act The Black Feathers.  
**ELIZA CATHY, JACKIE OATES, LUCY FARRELL & KATE YOUNG: Nettlebed Folk Club** – English folk royalty Eliza Carthy teams up with Nettlebed stalwart Jackie Oates and chums for an intimate night of traditional song.

### TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**GUITAR SUMMIT: The Bullingdon** – Jazz guitar action at tonight’s jazz club.  
**HEALTHY JUNKIES + THE VIGIL: The Wheatshaeaf** – OxRox host London’s punk and grunge-inspired heavy rockers Healthy Junkies, alongside Bristol’s QOTSA-meets-Sabbath crew The Vigil, previous support to Everclear, Therapy? and Zico Chain.  
**BEATS WORKING: The Cellar** – Drum&bass and jungle club night.  
**OPEN MIC: The James Street Tavern**

### WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**VERA GRACE + V/VEGAS: The Wheatshaeaf** – Fantastically splenetic hardcore and metalcore nose from Witney’s noisy bastard stars on the rise, drawing effusive praise for their recent ‘Novella’ EP and drawing admiring comparisons to Fucked Up, Devil Sold His Soul and Underoath.  
**BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar**  
**SPARKY’S JAM NIGHT: The James Street Tavern** – Open mic and jam night.

### THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**VANT: The Bullingdon** – Garage-rocking in the vein of The Strokes, Pixies and Vines from

London’s Vant, touring new single ‘Parking Lot’ on Parlophone, recently given Annie Mac’s Hottest Record in the World thumbs up, having previously supported Royal Blood.  
**TOM WILLIAMS + MY CROOKED TEETH + THE AUGUST LIST: The Jericho Tavern** – Solo show from the dark-hearted but soulful Kent singer, who left his band The Boat behind after their third album ‘Easy Fantastic’ to pursue a more stripped-down sound, which can be heard on new mini album ‘New House’. Great local support from acoustic alt.country songsmith My Crooked Teeth, and backwoods porch-folk duo The August List.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**OPEN MIC: The Half Moon**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**  
**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

### FRIDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**THE BALKAN WANDERERS + PEERLESS PIRATES + TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER: The Bullingdon** – Balkan Wanderers launch their new EP, taking a punky indie approach to Balkan folk dance; great support from rollicking rockabilly/indie swashbucklers Peerless Pirates with their mix of Smiths-inspired pop, eastern European folk-punk and spaghetti western soundtracks, plus dark-

*Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>*

## TITUS ANDRONICUS: The Bullingdon

If Fucked Up’s already classic ‘David Comes Alive’ proved that punk bands can do concept albums as well – if not better –than anyone, Titus Andronicus’ latest, ‘The Most Lamentable Tragedy’, might be the genre’s ‘Tommy’ Moment. Following on from their superb ‘The Monitor’ album – itself a concept piece about the American Civil War – the New Jersey quintet have gone the full triple album, 92-tracks spread across over 90 minutes, taking in hymns, a version of ‘Old Lang Syne’, droning synth solos; covers of The Pogues and Daniel Johnston, and silence. Plenty of silence. The album (which comes accompanied by copious sleeve notes in case you have trouble keeping up) is a fictional journey through bipolar illness, based on Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*, and Kay Redfield Jamison’s *Touched By Fire*, which deals with depression and artistic temperament. More than these though it is based on the real life experiences of the band’s frontman Patrick Stickles, a man who could stake a claim for best beard in rock and roll. It’s a labyrinthine lyrical and musical journey, but still centred on what Titus Andronicus do best – energetic, punky rock in the vein of The Clash and The Hold Steady that sticks close to its New Jersey roots with heavy musical nods to Springsteen. Punk rock that knows prog was never really the enemy.



hearted singer/songwriter Tamara.  
**INSTANT ORCHESTRA: Weston Library, Broad Street** – Radio 3 presenter Max Reinhardt directs an open orchestra interpretation of Handel’s Messiah, musicians and non musicians of all kinds invited to take part in the performance – without any rehearsals – inspired by the accessibility spirit of Scratch Orchestra and the Portsmouth Sinfonia. Just bring your instrument along and virtuosos and virgins alike, prepare to play.  
**THE LOST ART + WATER PAGEANT + ALL IS WELL: The Wheatshaeaf** – Daisy Rodgers Music gig night with eclectic folk-pop duo The Lost Art, gorgeously sultry electro-folksters Water Pageant, and 60s-styled hippie-folk people All Is Well.  
**TEMPLE FUNK COLLECTIVE: The Cellar** – Live jazz-funk from Temple Funk Collective, followed by funk, soul, disco and house club night Soul Sessions.  
**SCOUTING FOR GIRLS + MIKE DIGNAM: O2 Academy** – Oi, Scouting For Girls, we’ve talked about this before – get out and stay out.  
**SWITCH with WILKINSON: O2 Academy** – The London producer returns to the O2’s weekly house and electro club night.  
**BLURD: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Tribute to Blur.

### SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**AUDIOSCOPE: The Bullingdon** – The annual leftfield mini-festival in aid of Shelter brings Plaid, Gazelle Twin and more to town – *see main preview*  
**HEAVEN 17: O2 Academy** – Classic synth-pop, funk and soul from Sheffield’s electro pioneers – *see main preview*  
**SEVERANCE + 13BURNING + CONTEK + GLORY CANNON: O2 Academy** – Skeletor rock night with local hard rock and metal act Severance alongside old-school metallers 13Burning and post-hardcore and metalcore crew Contek.  
**ABSOLVA + DEALER + DEATH VALLEY NIGHTS: The Cellar** – A feast of classic heavy rock and metal courtesy of OxRox tonight with former-Fury UK duo Chris Appleton and Martin McNee bringing their band Absolva to town as part of a UK tour to promote third album ‘Never A Good Day To Die’, having previously supported Iced Earth and Michael Schenker as well as forming Blaze Bayley’s touring band. More old school NWOBHM from Cirencester’s Dealer in support, plus Brisbane rockers Death Valley Nights.  
**EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar** – Bassline, UK garage and grime club night with Spooky, Masp and Deep Cover DJs.  
**BREEZE: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Classic rock, 90s indie and chart hits from the versatile covers band.

### SUNDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**CALAN: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – Lively fiddle-led folk reels from the welsh outfit, out on tour with new album ‘Dinas’.  
**LEIGH BEAVERFUEL + MARK BOSLEY + PURPLE MAY: The Wheatshaeaf (3.30pm)** –Free acoustic music in the downstairs bar hosted by Giddy Up Music.

### MONDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**SEAFRET + DAN OWEN + JACK WATTS + FLYTE: The Bullingdon** – New Faces acoustic showcase tour with north-east duo Seafret’s misty folk-pop drawing comparisons to The Lumineers and Staves.  
**THE TROPHY CABINET + PIPELINE + JOHNNY & THE BIRDS: The Jericho Tavern** – Oxford City Festival kicks off with a host of gigs across local venues throughout the week. To start



*Monday 9<sup>th</sup>*

## LUSTS: The Bullingdon

Even if the term indie means bugger all these days and has done since the mid-90s, doesn’t mean there aren’t still bands for whom the golden age of guitar pop remains some kind of musical El Dorado. Leicester brothers Lusts are the latest skinny young things in love with the dark, majestic pop of Joy Division and Echo & the Bunnymen; the psychedelic chime and swirl of The House of Love, the shimmer of shoegaze and the motorik rhythms of Krautrock. In fact, put all that together and the pair could almost be an experiment to create the perfect classic indie band. Maybe they are, but let’s not fret about such fancies right now since Lusts are really very lovely. Unsurprisingly references to French philosophy and arthouse movies litter the handful of features on them so far, while their debut single ‘Temptation’ couldn’t be more knowing if it came packaged in a long black overcoat. So, anyway, shimmering, reverb-drenched indie of a fine old vintage. Gigs so far have been scarce, though they’ve supported Coves on tour, and radio and press are only just cottoning on to their existence, so discovering they’re coming to town is a bit like finding a newly minted £2 coin under your seat on the bus. Did we mention their debut album ‘Illuminations’ has been produced by MJ from Hookworms? The omens couldn’t be better.

it all off here’s some sweet, classic indie pop in the vein of The Go Betweens from Trophy Cabinet, joined by teen rockers Pipeline with nods to The Libertines and Madchester.  
**T-REXY + MOMENTO + KHAMISINA + IDEAL KOALA: The Library** – OCF show with local T-Rex tribute band T-Rexy keeping it glam, plus worldly folk, from English to Balkan and middle eastern from Momento, and epic piano-based torch songs from Khamsina.  
**CALLOW SAINTS + THE SHADES + FIXATION + NELSON & THE COLUMNS: The Cellar** – OCF show with Aylesbury rockers Callow Saints and classic 60s r’n’n from The Shades.  
**CONCEPT: The Cellar** – Garage and bass club night with Reece Thrower, Metcalf and Elliot Bester.

### TUESDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**SAINT RAYMOND: O2 Academy** – Emotive, soulful pop from the Nottingham singer/songwriter who’s toured with Ed Sheeran and HAIM.  
**NOE & THE PASTEL FRONTIER + LEWIS SCOTT + ELOISE REES & THE GIANTS + ANDRE CHAVES: The Wheatshaeaf** – Grungy rocking from Noe & the Pastel Frontier at the OCF show.  
**EXTEMPORIZE: The Bullingdon** – Eclectic experimental jazz and electronica from Stuart





*Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>*

## HANG THE BASTARD / CONJURER / DRORE: The Wheatsheaf

Considering some of the bands it's hosted in recent months – Raging Speedhorn; Conan; Coltsblood – It's a wonder the Wheatsheaf isn't a heap of rubble by now. If its walls are feeling any kind of stress, tonight's gig should finish them off. Who couldn't love a band called Hang The Bastard? Particularly a band called Hang The Bastard who sound like all the tormented rage of every man, woman and child that has ever stood on the gibbet condensed into a fiery ball of utter fury. The west London quartet's second album, 'Sex In The Seventh Circle', saw a change of vocalists, with Tomas Hubbard bringing a nasty, rasping black metal edge to their monstrous sludge/stoner sound that takes Black Sabbath as its starting block and rampages through Boltthrower, Orange Goblin, Red Fang and even Oxford's own Sextodecimo at different points along the way to some terrifyingly apocalyptic finale. Support for tonight's Buried in Smoke soiree are Midlands' bludgeoning death/sludge crew Conjuror and Drore – the new band formed by members of Undersmile and Mutagenocide, simply because they want to hurt you some more. See you down the front, and then afterwards amid the rubble.

Henderson and Jerry Soffe's new band Extemporize at the Bully's weekly jazz club, taking in elements of dub, drum&bass and trip hop.

**ART THEEFE + THE LITTLE UNSAID + SINFICTION + SILVER RAVENS: The Jericho Tavern** – Classic 60s-style pop and surf-rock from Catweazle Club host Matt Sage's reconvened Art Theefe, in the vein of Donovan, The Kinks and The Zombies, plus dark-hearted indie-folk from multi-instrumentalist John Elliot's Little Unsaid, and indie rockers Sinfiction. Part of Oxford City Festival.  
**BIG BLUES NIGHT OUT: The Library** – Oxford City Festival got the blues, with Ady Davey & Shakin' Hips, Texan Ghost Train and Waterfahl.  
**OPEN MIC: The James Street Tavern**

### WEDNESDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**STORNOWAY UNPLUCKED: St John the Evangelist** – The local heroes play a brace of shows at SJE as part of a tour to promote their 'Bonxie Unplucked' EP, featuring stripped-down, acoustic versions of songs from their third album, 'Bonxie'. With the band's love for inventive arrangements and playing unusual hometown shows, it'll yet again be an occasion as much as a gig – another night to say "I was there."  
**BEANS ON TOAST: The Bullingdon** – Hoarse,

ramshackle protest folk and meditations on love, life and drugs from Essex's Jay McAllister, the cult favourite having collaborated with Frank Turner, Mumford and Sons, Billy Bragg, Laura Marling and Emmy the Great along the way to releasing a new album on the 1<sup>st</sup> December every year (his birthday) as well as playing Glastonbury Festival every year since 2007.

**HIDDEN RIVETS + BLOOD RED STARS + CHARMS AGAINST THE EVIL EYE + ECHOIC: The Cellar** – OCF show with Bucks' melodic rockers Hidden Rivets, and grunge rockers Blood Red Stars.

**JOHN OTWAY: The Library** – The Clown Prince of Pop returns to town for an intimate show as part of Oxford City Festival, playing all the hits (both of them), and his litany of cult favourites.

**LUCY LEAVE + FACTORY LIGHTS + ONE WING LEFT + FLUORITE: The Jericho Tavern** – Lo-fi noise-pop from current *Nightshift* faves Lucy Leaves at this OCF show, with support from bluesy rockers One Wing Left and more.  
**CHURCH OF THE HEAVY: The Wheatsheaf** – Oxford City Festival gets its riff on, with sets from Violence Is Golden, Shotgun 6, Wardens and Gag Reflex.  
**SUPERMARKET: The Cellar** – Hip hop, grime, garage and house club night.

### THURSDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**STORNOWAY UNPLUCKED: St John the Evangelist** – Second night of Stornoway's unplucked homecoming.  
**THE WAILERS: O2 Academy** – Another return to town for the legendary Jamaican band, or what's left of the original line-up (only Aston 'Family Man' Barrett remains from Marley's classic band), once again performing 'Legend' in its entirety, so essentially Marley's Greatest Hits. Barrett's joined by former-Upsetter and renowned reggae session man Keith Sterling as well as his son Aston Barrett Jr. Dwayne Anglin continues to take on vocal duties, providing a pretty authentic Marley vocal style to the old classics.

**CALVIN JOHNSON: Ruskin School of Art** – Olympia's legendary underground music man Johnson makes his first visit to Oxford in a decade with an al-ages, early-evening show at Ruskin Art College's new project place on Bullingdon Road. As part of Beat Happening, Dub Narcotic Sound System and Halo Benders, among others, he defined 80s American indie music, inspiring Kurt Cobain along the way, while working with Beck, Heavenly, Jon Spencer and Modest Mouse, while as founder of K-Records he has guided the early careers of many of those artists. Renowned for his deep baritone voice, disregard for the niceties of high-end production, and a determinedly anti-macho approach to rock music, he's a pivotal and enigmatic figure and you should investigate his career immediately.

**MIGHTY DISCO BISCUITS + THE OXFORD BEATLES: The Bullingdon** – Classic disco and funk from the 70s onwards from local seven-piece tribute band The Mighty Disco Biscuits, alongside Balkan-flavoured Beatles classics from The Oxford Beatles.

**SWEET PINK + BAWS + PUPPET MECHANIC + THE ILLUMINATI: The Cellar** – 80s-styled funky rocking from Sweet Pink at the OCF show, plus a return to action for ATL? and Hot Hooves man Mac with his new band Baws.  
**INNER PEACE RECORDS SHOWCASE NIGHT with RAWZ + KING BOYDEN & TIECE + TERA0 + ELLIOT FRESH + TANG THE PILGRIM: The Jericho Tavern** – Hip hop showcase as part of OCF tonight, courtesy of the

local Inner City Peace Collective/label, headed up by rapper-cum-poet Rawz, and Streetsy rapper Elliot Fresh.

**DENNY ILET Sr QUARTET & TONY BATEY: The Library** – Guitar jazz from the local veteran, making a rare live appearance, alongside wide-ranging bassist Tony Batey.  
**RUSHIL + BILLY HERKLOTS: The Bear** – Acoustic session as part of Oxford City Festival.  
**DUOTONE + FAMILY MACHINE + BEAR & THE WOODS: The Old Fire Station** – Gorgeously emotive songwriting meets virtuosoo performance from loops'n'cello star Duotone, with support from intimate indie pop faves Family Machine.

**CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre**

### FRIDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**THE MEN THAT WILL NOT BE BLAMED FOR NOTHING: The Bullingdon** – Roustabout steampunk and songs about gin from London's monocled metalists and pith-helmeted punks.  
**DUOTONE + KUIPER + TOO MANY POETS + EASTER ISLAND STATUES: Jericho Tavern** – Cello'n'loops pop magic from Duotone at tonight's OCF show, alongside post-punk popsters Too Many Poets.

**CHURCH OF THE HEAVY with LAST RITES + 1000 CHAINS + DIRTY VALUABLES + BREEZE + IAGO: The Cellar** – It's All About the Music's rock night with blues'n'metal outfit Last Rites, melodic metallers 1000 Chains, and pop-tinged punk-metal crew Dirty Valuables.

**SKYLARKIN SOUND SYSTEM: The Cellar** – Late-night session from Count Skylarkin, putting on Oxford's best ska, dancehall and reggae party, tonight in the company of Desta Zion Wilson's six-piece reggae crew Mighty Leap, recent support to The Wailers and Susan Cadogan with their blend of deep basslines, soulful melodies, sweet harmonies and lively dancehall, plus renowned DJ Wrongtom.

**STORYTELLER + THE MIGHTY REDOX + DES BARKUS + COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN + THE RELATIONSHIPS + OSPREY: O2 Academy** – Oxford City Festival comes to the O2, with eclectic pop, rock and folk collective Storyteller, funky swamp blues stalwarts The Mighty Redox; rock'n'roller Des Barkus; bluesy Americana types Country For Old Men; tweedy psychedelic heroes The Relationships and OCF host himself, Osprey.

**AUTUMN SAINTS: The Library** – Bluesy rocking at the OCF show.  
**CHASING DAYLIGHT + THE MAD LARRY BAND + CAT SHAKERS: The Marsh Harrier, Temple Cowley** – Classic guitar pop in the vein of The Kinks, Who and Oasis from Chasing Daylight at this OCF show, plus classic 60s-style r'n'b from Mad Larry  
**ATL? + DECOVO + LES CLOCHARDS + MARK COPE: The Wheatsheaf** – Local punk/drunk rockers ATL? play their first public gig in sixteen years as part of OCF, the original trio reunited, fronted by Jericho Tavern and Point legend Mac at the helm, cranking out songs of Oxford life, telescopes, booze and regret in a style partway between Husker Du, Teenage Fanclub and Robert Pollard. They're joined by indie rockers Decovo, French café folk-meets-classic rock'n'rollers Les Clochards and former-Candyskins guitarist Mark Cope.

**AGS CONNOLLY + TREV WILLIAMS: The Bear** – Free session from Ameripolitan roots country singer Ags Connolly and emotive acoustic pop from Trev Williams as part of Oxford City Fest.

**GARAGE NATION: O2 Academy** – UK garage club night tour, with Oxide & Neutrino.  
**WOLFBAIT: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Rock, pop and reggae covers.

### SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with TOO MANY POETS + VUKOVAR + IDEAL KOALA: The Wheatsheaf** – GTI's monthly mixed bag of music takes a wintry turn this time round with local graveyard grungers Too Many Poets exploring the darker edges of indie, with support from Wigan's gothic-flavoured industrial pop and no-wave, and one-woman cello'n'screaming act Ideal Koala.  
**ANTARCTIC MONKEYS: O2 Academy** – Polar opposite Arctic Monkeys tribute.  
**VIENNA DITTO + THE OTHER DRAMAS + CHEROKEE + AMORAL COMPASS + PURPLE MAY: The Library** – 21<sup>st</sup> Century sci-fi blues from synthbilly duo Vienna Ditto at tonight's OCF show, plus garage-pop from The Other Dramas, and dirge-rock from Amoral Compass.  
**PETER & THE TEST TUBE BABIES + THE CORSAIRS + REBEL STATION + STRIKE**

### *Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>*

## HEAVEN 17: O2 Academy

The BBC's brilliant *Synth Britannia* documentary back in 2009 did a lot to give overdue credit to homegrown synth-pop's game-changing mix of resourcefulness and invention, not to mention overwhelmingly working class roots. So much of that genre has been overlooked or misunderstood as music history is written, not least its political edge, which puts any modern musical star to shame. Sheffield's Heaven 17 were one of the leaders in this field. Their now-classic debut 'Penthouse & Pavement' took aim at the early-80s emerging corporate greed and culture of flaunting wealth, even as it was taken into the hearts and clubs of the yuppies the band so despised. Formed from the ashes of the original incarnation of The Human League, Martyn Ware and Ian Craig Marsh continued to evolve that band's mix of dancefloor tunes and futuristic sounds while recruiting singer Glenn Gregory to take them in a more soulful direction. Big hits followed – 'Temptation' and 'Come Live With Me' in particular, but it's the likes of 'We Don't Need This Fascist Groove Thang' that sound more current than ever now. Marsh has long since left but Ware and Gregory continue to stake Heaven 17's case for a place in pop history, and as new generations of synth acts have come through (including La Roux, who they collaborated with on a BBC live concert), their influence has become more apparent than ever.



**ONE + BEAVER FUEL + HEADSTONE HORRORS: The Cellar** – Enduring punk jokers Peter and the Test Tube babies make their first visit to Oxford since a legendarily chaotic and bloody show at the Penny Farthing back in the late-80s as part of this Oxford City Festival Punkolympia show. With such classics as 'The Queen Gives Good Blow Jobs' and 'Elvis Is Dead (He Was 42 and a Fat Cunt)', expect daftness and noise rather than Joy Division-style punk poetry.  
**BEARD OF DESTINY + THE TOM IVEY BAND + COSMOSIS: The Marsh Harrier** – Blues-rocking at the OCF show.  
**BREATHE IN THE SILENCE + AMARYLLIS: The Jericho Tavern** – Pop-punk in the vein of Lower Than Atlantis, Funeral For a Friend and Fightstar from the south Wales crew.  
**LUCY MAIR + HANNAH BRUCE: The Bear** – Acoustic session as part of Oxford City Festival.  
**2 BAD MICE + MUSTARD GUNN + UNCLE BUNGLE: The Cellar** – Hip hop, bassline, jungle and drum&bass club night in memory of Don Saulio, with all proceeds to the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.  
**NINE BELOW ZERO + LITTLE BROTHER ELI: Fat Lil's, Witney** – The near-legendary r'n'b pioneers return to Oxfordshire, founding singer and guitarist Dennis Greaves still leading the band's high-energy blues charge alongside fellow 9BZ veterans Mark Feltham and Brian Bethall. Having hit a creative and commercial peak in the early-80s with albums 'Live At The Marquee' and 'Don't Point Your Finger', it's always been live that the band have made their reputation.

### SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

**MODESTEP: O2 Academy** – Stadium-pleasing, festival-pumping dubstep-cum-electro-rock from the London types, as at home playing Download and Reading Festival as the club circuit.  
**ZEBRAHEAD: O2 Academy** – Orange County's pop-punk veterans return to town for a headline show after supporting Less Than Jake and Reel Big Fish here last time round. This time they're promoting new album 'Walk the Plank'.  
**BALLOON ASCENTS + THE AUREATE ACT + RUSSIAN COWBOYS + DRONE + THE QUENTINS + THE HAZE + RIDE THE WALL: The Bullingdon** – Rounding off Oxford City Festival in style at the Bully with electro/indie/folk/pop starlets Balloon Ascents; inventive electro-prog outfit The Aureate Act, and more.  
**GIRL POWER + THE DOMESTICS + FAWN SPOTS + TOSSERLAD + HATE FILLED KIDS: The Library** – Smash Disco punk and hardcore show with local bruisers Girl Power firing out a virulent mix of classic Amphetamine Reptile-inspired noise, D-Beat and Fugazi-shaped angular post-hardcore. They're joined by East Anglia's Discharge-inspired gonzo-core crew The Domestics; York's SST/Dischord-styled Fawn Spots; Leeds' thrash-punks Tosserland and chaotic Germs-influenced punkers Hate Filled Kids.  
**SUNDAY SESSION with THE EPSTEIN + BALLOON ASCENTS: Florence Park Community Centre (2-5pm)** – Family-friendly gig session with alt.country rockers The Epstein and electro/indie rockers Balloon Ascents.  
**BLUE JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3pm)** – Open jam.

### MONDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

**CHATHAM COUNTY LINE + THE**



*Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>*

## AUDIOSCOPE: The Bullingdon

Back on the Cowley Road after a few years at The Jericho Tavern, the annual Audioscope all-dayer remains one of the best events in Oxford's gig calendar, an always inspired bill of leftfield and underground music that's seen genuine legends like Dieter Moebius, Damo Suzuki, Silver Apples and Stephen Mallinder playing since its inception in 2001, raising over £35,000 for homeless charity Shelter in the process. Last year's line-up – featuring Public Service Broadcasting, Wrangler, Silver Apples and Telescopes – is going to take some beating but looks like they might just do it. Headliners this time round are **Pleid**, back in town for the first time since their collaboration with the London Gamelan Orchestra back in 2010, the Warp-signed duo's subtle electronic soundscaping having seen them also work with Bjork, U.N.K.L.E and Goldfrapp. Among those joining them will be uber-noise hellbastards **Part Chimp**, official Gods of Loud; hypnotic kraut/psyche/math-rock riffmongers **Guapo**; Arbouretum frontman **Dave Heumann**, whose new solo album explores a softer side of his band's psychedelic folk swirl; death-psych duo **Taman Shud**; **Demian Castellanos** from psych-noise band The Oscillation, and local minimalist goth-pop trio **Kone**. Undoubted highlight of the whole event though, will be a first ever visit to Oxford for **Gazelle Twin** (*pictured*), the macabre, unsettling electro project of Brighton's Elizabeth Bernholz, one of the most inspired and innovative acts of the past few years. So, great music, great venue, a great cause and possibly the best gig crowd you'll ever be part of. All in all, a genuinely great day.

**ROSELLYS: The Bullingdon** – Exuberant alt. country and bluegrass from North Carolina's Chatham County Line at tonight's Empty Room promotion, the Raleigh-based quartet over in Europe to tour sixth album 'Tightrope' and renowned for their spontaneity live as they bring American roots music up to date via Bob Dylan and REM. Support from Bristol duo The Rosellys with their mix of bluegrass, Cajun and folk balladry drawing comparisons to Alison Kraus, Gillian Welch and Emmylou Harris.  
**THE LINDISFARNE STORY: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Billy Mitchell and Ray Laidlaw bring their evening of music and storytelling to Nettlebed, the pair recounting the story of the Geordie folk stalwarts from the beginning, interspersed with acoustic versions of classic tracks such as 'Meet Me On the Corner', 'Lady Eleanor' and 'Fog on the Tyne'.

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## BLACKLISTERS / THE CORRECT ARC / KANCHO! Oxford Wheatsheaf

That Kancho!’s cymbals are battered and fraying at the edges gives us helpful advance warning that our eardrums are about to come under attack. And so it proves, with what is a significant change of direction for former Ute and Old Grinding Young man (not to mention Idiot King head honcho) Mike Chilcott. Shellac are a reliably agreeable point of reference, though the duo could perhaps vary the pace a bit for added impact. The Correct Arc instantly transport me back to the turn of the millennium – a time when it seemed

more bands were off-kilter than were on, and when the contents of my bank account were regularly channelled straight into the cash registers of Nottingham music-lover’s mecca Selectadisc in return for a selection of albums from the store’s post-hardcore section. As a result, their set is a trip down memory lane, conjuring up the ghosts of largely forgotten Dischord signings like Bluetip and Faraquet. Times and my tastes have moved on, though, and the rose-tinted reverie doesn’t last. And then there’s Blacklisters.

The Jesus Lizard’s David Yow was never one to be reticent about exposing himself onstage, and I can only assume that at a gig in Leeds some time in the late 1980s he went rather further, judging by the number of love children his band seem to have fathered in the city. From the moment they kick off with ‘Shirts’ – from new album ‘Adults’, produced by Hookworms’ Matt Johnson and released on Smalltown America – it’s clear that we’re in for a treat. And like most treats, the Blacklisters live experience is moreish and

irresistible, but an indulgence that will significantly reduce your life expectancy. Songs slouch along malevolently before exploding into life with violent, in-your-face intensity – a full-on assault of howling vocals, abrasive sandpappy guitar noise, lurching basslines and seasick rhythms that desperately clutches at your throat, hell-bent on throttling every last breath out of you. For a while it’s touch and go, but in the end we make it out alive – and, having lived to tell the tale, we’re duty bound to do so, loudly and regularly to anyone who’ll listen. Consider yourselves told. **Ben Woolhead**

## GENGAHR / CASH & DAVID / PUMAROSA The Bullingdon

Early doors gigs are hardly novel but it’s still frustrating to see an opening band play to no more than a couple of dozen people, particularly when the band is as good as Pumarosa. A five-piece from London, they’re one of those ill-fitting bands who look barely look like they’re all from the same planet as each other, including a Ned Flanders-alike bassist. But musically they’re a dream. A dark, twisted dream populated by ghosts maybe, but a dream nonetheless – singer Isabel Munoz-Newsome an imperiously witchy presence, like a hippy Siouxsie Sioux, performing some kind of snake dance with her hands as the band conjure a slowly uncoiling techno-pop noise that remind us fleetingly of cult 90s Peel faves Bang Bang Machine, culminating in bewitching seven-minute single ‘Priestess’, a gothic-ethereal mantra that is dangerously hypnotic. Maybe it’s fortunate that punters arriving after they finish remain blissfully unaware that the rest of the night’s bill has just been comprehensively blown off stage.

There’s nothing wrong with Cash & David, but equally little that you can take away with you afterwards – a percussion-heavy mix and match of metronomic indie and funky r’n’b that hits a brief peak with a vaguely Sinead O’Connor moment and is fun enough while it lasts but contains little by way of a single memorable song. Gengahr do have a memorable song. It’s memorable because they play it over and over again, for forty minutes, just so you can’t forget it. Somewhere between Ariel Pink’s more recent psychedelia chime and Tame Impala’s sun-frazzled pop, they’ve got a fluid groove but forever seem limited by snake-hipped frontman Felix Bushe’s unbending falsetto, which dominates each and every song to the point it begins to feel at first formulaic and eventually like a blue bottle continually battling to go through a closed window – high pitched and irritating. A shame really, because in one or two song doses, Gengahr sound like they maybe have the hits to make a breakthrough. In the end tonight they feel like a one-trick pony who’ve been comprehensively upstaged by the evening’s real class act – one who fully deserve headline status and packed-out venues. **Dale Kattack**

## SAUNA YOUTH / MUTES / POLEDO / TELEGRAPHER Modern Art Oxford

Telegrapher barely qualify as a band: bassist, drummer and nothing else. Not even a microphone. This is heavy metal with guitar and vocals amputated. They sound like a warzone. They make me feel nauseous and you have to love something this obnoxious. If Poledo lack anything in the originality stakes they more than make up for it in energy; guitar lines burrow in and out of the songs beautifully and they exude confidence as well as cohesion. Song after song drifts effortlessly, from surging power pop to lugubrious, winding ends. Mutes are less arresting but still impressive, like a less menacing, less expansive Swans. If their claim that this is their biggest audience is true, it doesn’t show. Bracingly intelligent, Sauna Youth nevertheless know the virtue of brevity and are very, very loud. Having assumed they’d be good live, more immediate than they sometimes seem on record, I’m still not fully prepared for how good they are. Given the same thirty minutes as every other act tonight, where others had got through maybe six songs each, Sauna Youth race through ten, not that it’s easy to keep count. In the cauldron they make of Modern Art’s basement, it’s hard to recognize songs as ones I’d heard before and there’s no time to care. They stick mainly to songs from last year’s ‘Distractions’ album, with the likes of ‘Abstract Notion’, ‘The Bridge’ and the brutal ‘Transmitters’ worming their way out of the general din. The music is more dynamic than on record, more dynamic than anything I’ve seen in a long while, a disarming fusion of punk mayhem and more sophisticated, post-punk themes of alienation and modernity, and

a sense of discord only heightened by the fact that, in spite of the velocity of their music, they largely stand stock still while playing it. Magnetic, enigmatic singer Jen Calleja stands front and centre, microphone lead draped around her neck as she fiddles with a sampler, guitarist Lindsay Corstorphine and bassist Christopher Murphy near motionless either side, the hacking of Corstorphine’s guitar warring with the muscularity of Murphy’s basslines. But the bottomless energy of their music is best encapsulated in the astonishing performance of drummer/vocalist Richard Phoenix, singing more ferociously than most pure singers, while playing more powerfully than most pure drummers, he is a bundle of formidable energy, his yell a profound counterpart to Calleja’s disarming, slightly aloof monotone, while his drumming is the unstoppable driving force behind the band’s stunning performance. For all the breathtaking racket, the most powerful moment of Sauna Youth’s set comes when the music drops to a low, sickening rumble and Calleja half-speaks the distressing ‘(Taking A) Walk’, reducing the crowd to near silence. Similar to ‘Town Called Distraction’, ‘(Taking A) Walk’ plays like a companion piece to The Mekons’ disorientated, disorientating, post-apocalyptic ‘Psycho Cupid’ and, as the half-remembered story trails off, they segue into a fierce version of ‘Monotony.’ It’s a performance that fulfils, then surpasses, all expectation, the only minor disappointment is that they can’t find ten more minutes in which to unwind ‘Town Called Distraction’. **James Dawson**

## KWABS O2 Academy

Kwabs is a name that has been bounced around more than a tennis ball in a blender recently. Having appeared on a plethora of “ones to watch” lists and racking up support from numerous notable radio personalities, the young singer-songwriter seems to have been just on the cusp of making it for eighteen months, and with his debut album ‘Love + War’ being critically successful and with a song appearing on the coveted FIFA soundtrack, Kwabs’ time might just have come. Strutting onto the small stage at the O2 Academy, he seemed instantly at home. Although backed by a phenomenal six-piece band, it’s the young singer who captivates the audience, blasting his way through the new album. His warm, powerful vocals soar across the venue, reverberating around the room. It’s impressive to see so

many in the audience singing along to every song, with the bulk of the crowd knowing every word to FIFA 15 jam ‘Walk’, and single ‘Wrong Or Right’. Usually fairly sombre, Kwabs proves he can do upbeat just as well as emotive ballads with a cover of Major Lazer’s ‘Lean On’ intermingled amongst his own expertly crafted songs. Impossibly humble, Kwabs seems genuinely grateful to the audience for coming out tonight, thanking them earnestly, as well as his support acts and band. Such personal elegance draws the audience in even further, a welcome contrast to the onstage arrogance of so many acts. Closing his – eagerly demanded – encore with the heart wrenching ‘Perfect Ruin’, we’re left with no doubt that Kwabs is an artist who can only keep going up, and won’t be falling back down again for a long while. **Hannah Mylrea Hemmings**

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## PERSPEX FLESH / GIRL POWER / CPR

### The Library

Smash Disco evenings at The Library are a little like journeying through time and space to Dogtown California or Washington DC circa 1980. The set up is basic, the hardcore is flowing, the audience is right on top of the bands, and

there's a real sense of community and DIY spirit about the entire evening.

CPR (or Compulsory Primal Response, if you prefer) get the things under way in particularly aggressive fashion with a jaunt through a cover

of GG Allin's 'Bite It You Scum'; fortunately their cover only extends as far as tackling the music, and doesn't feature any onstage nudity, defecation or bloodletting, which presumably is something of a relief to those gathered at the front. They later blitz through Nirvana's 'Territorial Pissings' and in typical punk style, forget the words. Their own songs are occasionally aggressive and daft (a song about their mate taking a piss is a particular highlight) and stand up well on their own; perhaps it's time to ditch the covers.

Girl Power's frantic hardcore is like being assaulted by a well-read sociopath. Taking their guide from the rosters of Amphetamine Reptile and Touch And Go it's a set full of aggression and short sharp shocks. It's perhaps apposite that guitarist/vocalist Oli Hewett is wearing a Germs t-shirt, because for every song that ventures into post-hardcore territory, there's another quick stabbing blur that revels in the sheer joy of just being noisy and hostile.

Perspex Flesh ramp up the aggression further still with vocalist Liam screaming into the faces of the audience like pissed-off docker from a Popeye cartoon. A few songs in and the microphone has had enough, wilting under the relentless barrage, which at least gives the audience, who are now starting to mingle with the band, a chance to regain composure. Then they're back into it again with renewed vigour. Pummelling rarely feels this righteous.

*Sam Shepherd*

## JOHNNY MARR / MAN MADE

### O2 Academy

Man Made could be the perfect support band: good but not too good, pleasantly upbeat and tuneful but never running the risk of upstaging their fellow Mancunian waiting his turn backstage. Elements of that city's heritage, like The Stone Roses, peek through, but enough high quality, well played songs emerge to mark them out for a return listen.

Johnny Marr certainly looks like a pop star. Stick thin and immaculately dressed, with a perfect jet black Manc haircut, he shakes his head and strikes guitar poses that are just cool enough to avoid being corny. His band are tight but unexceptional, the songs clearly designed to stand on their own merit, using straightforward arrangements rather than striking out into experimental new territory. Of course it's The Smiths' numbers that excite the crowd most, and we only have to wait 'til the second song, 'Still Ill', for them to start coming. From this point it's hard to keep thinking of New Order's Peter Hook. Both he and Marr are the second most famous members of iconic Manchester bands with origins in the early 80s, whose falling out with their former bandmates led to court cases and the exchange of harsh words. Both are now forging their own careers somewhat in the shadows of their nemeses, who are still filling

stadiums, finding themselves singing the hugely personal words of said nemesis in venues like this.

But unlike Hooky Marr is more forward-looking and always a prolific collaborator; from the Pet Shop Boys to The Cribbs to Electronic, his project with New Order's Bernard Sumner. From that era we have a guitar-heavy version of 'Getting Away With It' that works far better than you might think. New song 'Spiral Cities' is a good example of how he's taken The Smiths' 60s pop sensibility and brought in a denser sound with more serious undertones in the lyrics. But it's The Smiths' songs that keep bringing the biggest cheers, though 'There Is A Light That Never Goes Out' turns into the kind of boozy singalong that would probably horrify Morrissey.

Next comes a moment of lightness when Man Made's guitarist joins Marr's band for a run through of The Primitives' 'Crash' that banishes all historical thoughts for three minutes of pure fun. As the finale 'How Soon Is Now?' fades away it's impossible not to admire Marr's perseverance and dedication to his craft, for he could be sat on a yacht somewhere counting his money and watching the royalties roll on in. That he's here with us instead is surely something to celebrate.

*Art Lagun*

## SEXY BREAKFAST

### The Wheatsheaf

In a musical twist on John Lewis' motto, Sexy Breakfast were never knowingly understated. Each new song reset the rules as to how to reach their climax, like mountaineers discovering new and varied ways of conquering Everest, some convoluted, other straightforward, all of them epic adventures.

The members of Sexy Breakfast were just 17 years old when the band emerged on the local scene in 2002 in a messy, bombastic tumble of glam, prog, dub, funk and stadium rock, and their precocious talent was all too evident. Everyone got a bit giddy about them, or ran cursing from the room in disgust, but it couldn't last and the various members went their separate ways three short years later, going on to form Borderville, Flights of Helios and more. Tonight, though, finally sees all five members back on stage together for the first time in a decade – dubbed The Rude Reawakening – and it's immediately evident that, as ever, the stage doesn't feel big enough for them or their music, which seems intent on squeezing so many facets of rock music's artier side into one giant whole that inevitably it all comes apart at the seams and everything explodes across the venue like a musical supernova. Here Roxy Music do gladiatorial battle with Queen; there Prince gets jiggy with

Bowie at a P-Funk party; meanwhile Radiohead perform an elaborate but sweaty waltz in the centre of the dancefloor with Spinal Tap as gallons of liquid excess pour from the ceiling vents. Every song is a pocket-sized rock opera, singer Joe Swarbrick – his hair now as white as his suit and twice as untidy – clearly enjoying being back on stage playing the part of Thin White Circus Ringmaster.

With every song sounding like the crescendo at the end of the stadium rock show to end all stadium rock shows it's a spectacular comeback, one fully deserving of the capacity crowd packed into the Sheaf tonight, and when Sexy Breakfast do finally come up for breath, inevitably it's to the crackling sampled strains of 'Walking in the Air' that signals their *tour de force*, 'Fade To White', still one of the most ostentatious songs ever to come out of Oxford – and from a city that produced 'Paranoid Android' ain't that saying something – simultaneously genius clever and utterly dumb in its adherence to rock excess.

Coming towards the end of a year that has seen a triumphant comeback for Ride as well as one-off reunions for Sextodecimo and Black Candy, the chance to see Sexy Breakfast even just one more time, feels like all out Christmases come at once.

*Dale Kattack*

## OXJAM

### Various venues, East Oxford

After a couple of less than impressive years, Oxjam 2015 is both back to its east Oxord roots and back to the quality of music and organisation of its first couple of outings, with some forty acts across seven venues.

We'll take the fact that we can't even get to see **BALKAN WANDERERS** at James Street Tavern at half four in the afternoon as a sign that things are going well – an already sizeable crowd wedged into the pub's compact gig space. So we head up to The Library to catch **BALLOON ASCENTS**, who are loading into the venue at the time they're due on. What follows is decidedly odd, the band performing to a packed room without any amplification or microphones and thus all but inaudible to anyone not in the front row.

No chance of not hearing **JESS HALL**, with a crystal-clear voice that could cut through granite not to mention reduce any crowd to rapt silence as she, accompanied by Barney Morse-Brown conjure moments of genuine musical magic, Jess's voice dancing over simple acoustic guitar melodies and cello drones while infusing everything with a sense of autumnal sadness. A rare talent.

Barney then goes solo in his **DUOTONE** guise, similarly holding the audience in the palm of his hand as he busies himself conjuring intricate loops over which his deft cello playing matches the emotiional punch of songs like 'Little White Caravan'.

Back up at The Library the PA is up and working to maximum effect, though after two minutes of **SMALLTOWN HEROES'** prosaic pub rock, we almost wish it weren't.

The unforgiving acoustics of Fusion Arts do **LUCY LEAVES'** somewhat messy noise-pop few favours but even since we last saw them they've come on a fair bit, a few Pixes-like jabs spiking up their mangle and tangle of effects-heavy guitar noise. If they're still slightly chaotic, it's in the most endearing of fashions.

Today's surprise hit are German duo **SEA & AIR**, who've somehow found a way onto this extensive local bill and impress and confound in equal measures by way of some startling piano-led torch-pop, crazed jazz-punk, meandering philosophical chatter, a subtle sense of humour, sparse Radiohead-like electro-pop and a possibly ill-judged Peters & Lee moment at the end. In the middle of all that is a genuinely entertaining band, and one who'll hopefully be back in town again soon.

As with Balkan Wanderers it's impossible to see **LITTLE BROTHER ELI** from inside the James Street Tavern, so we opt for a window seat – watching through a window while listening through the open fire door. Funkier than last time we saw them, their Chili Peppers side is more

to the fore, particularly in Alex Grew's Anthony Kiedis-like voice, and they're a band who elevate themselves above the white boys play the blues tag that might stand against them if they weren't such an unstoppable force for fun.

If today's event has a downside it's The Cape of Good Hope, a venue we haven't stepped foot in since the powers that be closed down the Point back in 2001. The Point hosted White Stripes first ever European gig, The Strokes' UK debut and early gigs for Coldplay, Muse, Snow Patrol and Catatonia as well as a host of genuinely legendary gigs. Owners Six Continents decided they didn't like the sort of people who came to gigs there and turned it into a restaurant. So now there's no stage and half the so-called gig room is a giant open burger grill. It's a fucking abomination and no place for live music. We're hardly Morrissey-level militant but trying to watch **ESTHER JOY LANE** while acrid burnt meat odours assault your senses is not our idea of fun. The person responsible should hang their head in shame. Then hang themselves.

Anyway, back up Cowley Road and briefly into The Cowley Retreat where **CHRIS RYDER** bravely and too briefly battles against a crowd who just want to watch the rugby on the big screen, before we witness the show-stealing performance of the night with **WATER PAGEANT** at Fusion Arts, tonight playing as a duo and creating a pensive, haunting atmosphere with an understated and frankly gorgeous form of folk-pop that occasionally reminds us of The Low Anthem – mainly for Nick Tingay's sweet, almost keening voice – and is deceptively passionate for all its innate stillness.

It's a stark contrast to **MASIRO** at The Library who kick out algorithmic math-core, ferocious funk and unabashed prog that doesn't neglect melody or fluid groove in its quest for technical excellence. They describe themselves as "beard-stroking ego wiggig," but we'll call them noisy bastard kick-ass fun.

Prog of a different sort from **THE AUREATE ACT**, who manage to look and sound simultaneously like a school band competition entry and Reading Festival headliners circa 1975. They're glitchy but orchestral, grandiose but awkward, and really like nothing else around.

We end what's been for the most part a very well organised and musically excellent Oxjam with **DEATH OF HI-FI**, battling against incongruous chandeliers and chip fat residue at The Cape with their alternately sultry and sullen brand of hip hop, depending on who's taking the vocal lead, Lucy Cropper bringing their trippier, more soulful side to the fore and managing the difficult task of covering Lorde's 'Royals' to fine effect.

*Dale Kattack*

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JUSTICE YELDHAM / PHANTOM  
CHIPS / LUST ROLLERS / DJ  
POWER ROOFING

The Jericho Tavern

Take any strand, genre or type of music and it'll have a critical continuum that spans bad to good. 'Experimental' music can partially sidestep this, as with it can come the conundrum of non-figurative art; the fear that "if I say I don't like it, will I be accused of not understanding it?" Tonight's gig, presented by Aylesbury-based promoters Structured Disasters, and startlingly sparsely attended, can be a case study of this phenomenon. Let's posit the evidence.

DJ Power Roofing is a man wearing a Spongebob Squarepants hat, dancing/reacting to pre-recorded mashups of old pop songs, childrens' TV themes, and snippets of speech. It's as if V/Vm, Cardopusher, and Cassetteboy were in a competition to make the most unlistenable nonsense possible.

Lust Rollers, one of whom is Mr Structured Disasters, are a two-piece carrying out proto-Cage/Fluxus abstract sound experiments; a variety of instruments (clarinet, maracas, box containing stuff, cymbal, squeezey birds *à la* that recent Internet meme, etc) are poked, strummed, and otherwise manipulated, seemingly at random. Ferrero Rochers are thrown into

METRIC

O2 Academy

I'm not sure when anthemic indie rock became the enemy but the opprobrium directed towards Coldplay, Snow Patrol and their ilk has always puzzled me. I'll grant you that it's not particularly my cup of tea, but it's a million miles away from the truly manufactured horse shit peddled by Pete Waterman, *X Factor* and *Britain's Got Talent*. Take Metric, a kind of 7 out of 10, under the radar band who have built on their indie roots and launched a six-album career of the kind of music that would have slotted nicely into one of those Shine compilations back in the day – an accomplished combination of bubbling synths and bristly guitar that recalls The Killers and Depeche Mode at their most leather clad. Tonight, at the O2, their set hovers on the edge of preposterousness. Singer Emily Haines emerges against the backcloth of an appallingly pretentious voiceover, decked out in peacock feathers on sticky back plastic before launching into 'Lie Lie Lie', the stand-out cut from their new LP, 'Pagans in Vegas'. Later, she

the crowd. There's a reliance on shock bursts of noise, while some of the quieter passages are perhaps unintentionally pleasing. Phantom Chips forms a sound-based organism with a selection of home-made fabric belts, ropes and strings, like a Cronenberg vision in sound. The one-person core of the work is connected by noises to members of the audience, who've been semi-literally roped in. Half of the set is fascinating and enjoyable, the other half (largely that with audience participation) descends into artless chaos. Maybe that's the point. Justice Yeldham is quite well known in some circles as the man who makes noises by blowing on, screaming through, and manipulating by various mouth contortions a triangular shard of glass that, at the end of the set, is dramatically cracked apart. It's all miked up and potentially run through some post-production effects to result in partially formless blast waves of aggressive noise. Who knows if it's planned, intentional, repeatable or anything more than a visual gimmick. I think I understood what I saw and heard this evening; I'm not sure I liked it. So who knows, perhaps it was good.

Simon Minter

dons a billowing lime green bed sheet as her fellow band members sport luminous spectacles. She struts and pogos, fist pumping the air; a studious audience of freshers and oldies not sure whether to be bemused by the posturing or simply get on down and shimmy. It's a set that is oddly hampered by its choruses. Too often, pleasingly sharp-edged keyboard patterns and spiky guitar bursts are interrupted by a boorish, repetitive refrain. There are too many woo-oohs, as if the business of writing proper lyrics became all too much, while the sheer bombast recalls Muse or the aforementioned Snow Patrol. New material sees the guitars take less of a centre stage and that's a wise move, but the audience seems readier for rockism. As the gig proceeds, it becomes deadening and the impact lessens; the comparative smallness of the venue failing to contain a strategy that would be more suited to the Kassam Stadium, if only Metric had enough fans to fill even a three sided arena.

Rob Langham

LIU BEI / KONE

The Bullingdon

It's odd really that more than a decade after his untimely death, we can still describe a new act as "a John Peel band." It's the great man's enduring legacy that we can still speculate as to what he might currently be lavishing his praise and patronage on. On tonight's showing, it'd very likely be Kone. Barely a handful of gigs old, there's an endearing lack of dynamism about the three-piece that, coupled with their sparse, downbeat sound, places them as close to Salford in 1980 as to Oxford in 2015 and cries out *Peel session ahoy!* quicker than you can say Three album deal with Rough Trade and a tour support with Crispy Ambulance.

With singer and guitarist Alice Ream's tartan print suit making you feel like you're watching a 3D movie without the special glasses, Kone spangle and somnambulate through sullen, almost conversational songs, all loose, meandering grooves and minimalist, staccato guitar chimes, equally sweet and austere, any tension in the songs held in check to enhance the moody atmospherics. The set peaks a little early with debut single 'No Colour World', but it's

THE JAPANESE HOUSE

The Bullingdon

The Japanese House are very much a product of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Created as the moniker for Bristol-based Amber Bain, it is sparing in information shared, making the name one of the only certain things we know about the project. Such allure, however, is impossible to replicate under the sure lights of a live show, where almost all layers are at least partially removed, laying Bain and co. bare. Where some would falter at such an alteration, however, The Japanese House balance a retained air of mysticism with a profound sense of vulnerability and sincerity, a trick not always pulled off quite so effectively. As anyone who has paid any real attention to Bain so far will already know, The Japanese House thrive on a sound comprised of various uneven layers undergoing confusing exchanges, all the while built upon a core which is very human and, at times, very touching. Not a surprise, considering they inhabit a space somewhere between Lapsley and The 1975 (the latter, incidentally, their label mates as well as producers). 'Still' and 'Sister' in particular stand tall as representing the depth to Bain's songwriting capabilities, the latter an ode to familial companionship, accentuated by lyricism beyond Bain's tender years. Such tenderness

early days and when you look back at scribbled notes that namecheck The Passions, Psychedelic Furs and Young Marble Giants, you know you're onto a winner.

Richard Walters has a voice so pure, emotive and strong that unadorned it would steal any show, but with Liu Bei, he's taken the risk of immersing it in full-on rock music for the first time since his days fronting Theremin. But while his band are far more full-on live than they are on their brace of singles so far, it's still that voice that holds your attention, an intimate wall of noise with a nightingale melody at its heart. Richard fair belts it out at times, as on 'Fields', a song about leaving Oxford, while 'Philip Seymour Hoffman' finds him at his plaintive best, crying "who will play me now?" amid starlit guitars, exuding as much intensity as any hardcore band.

Richard leaves his band behind for a solo, acoustic encore, further evidence of his vocal prowess, and the only question hanging over tonight is, why in God's name didn't they give him the James Bond theme?

Dale Kattack

is accentuated by her coy, almost shy, display, largely hidden behind a curtain of blonde hair, engaging with her audience in a quiet, unobtrusive manner.

There's no avoiding the fact that most striking however is the effects Bain employs over her vocals. It is the only remaining component of her cyber-bubble, and she intends on maintaining it. This isn't always pulled off successfully, as early on there is a sense that, rather than embellish the allure, it merely dilutes the very real and obvious heart which lies at the core of her work. It is, however, necessary, and, like The Japanese House as a whole, grows throughout the evening, developing into a tool by which Bain retains her equally curious and genuine persona. If there was to be one song from this evening's show which best reflects The Japanese House, it is 'Teeth'. Comprised of a dislocated front of electronics, vocals, drums, and the odd guitar line, it most accurately represents the layers and trickery which Bain and co. employ. Similarly, however, it boasts a truly human element, an element which shines in tonight's live setting. The Japanese House aren't trying to hide anything; they're just making it a lot more interesting to find.

Ben Lynch

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23rd 7pm... T REXY...SONG & SUPER ROOMS...MOMENTO...KHAMINA...  
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The Bullingdon

26th 7pm... THE MIGHTY DISCO BISCUITS...  
THE OXFORD BEATLES plus support  
29th 7pm... BALLOON ASCENTS...THE AUREATE ACT...  
THE RUSSIAN COWBOYS...DRONE...THE QUENTINS...  
THE HAZE+EQUIVALENT...RIDE THE WALL

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27th 6pm... STORYTELLER...THE MIGHTY REDOX...  
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27th 9pm... AGS CONNOLLY...TREV WILLIAMS  
28th 9pm... LUCY MAIR...HANNA BRUCE

The Marsh Harrier

27th 7.30pm... CHASING DAYLIGHT...MAD LARRY BAND...CAT SHAKERS  
28th 7pm... THE BEARD OF DESTINY...TOM IVEY BAND...COSMOSIS

The Jericho Tavern

23rd 7pm... THE TROPHY CABINET...PIPELINE...  
JOHNNY & THE BIRDS...TRIO COPACABANA  
24th 7pm... ART THEE...THE LITTLE UNSAID...  
SINFICTION...SILVER RAVENS  
25th 7pm... LUCY LEAVE...FACTORY LIGHTS...Q.WILL...  
FLUORITE  
26th 7pm... INNER PEACE RECORDS featuring Rawz,  
King Boyden & Tieco, Terao, Elliot Fresh, Tang the Pilgrim  
27th 7pm... DUOTONE...KUIPER...TOO MANY POETS  
...EASTER ISLAND STATUES

The Wheatsheaf

24th 8pm... PASTEL FRONTIER...LEWIS SCOTT...ELOISE REES  
& THE GIANTS...ANDRE CHAVES  
25th 8pm... Church Of The Heavy, feat... VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN...  
SHOT GUN SIX...WARDENS...GAG REFLEX  
27th 8pm... ATL ?...DECOVO...LES CLOCHARDS...MARK COPE

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**BERNIE TORME** BLACK DIAMOND + LAST GREAT DREAMERS 8pm

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November  
**OXJAM TAKEOVER** 8pm

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November – MOSHKA  
**LEPER KING** KANCHO 8pm/£5

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November – BURIED IN SMOKE  
**HANG THE BASTARD** CONJURER + DRORE

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November - OXROX  
**HEALTHY JUNKIES** THE VIGIL 8pm

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November – BLACK BULLET LIVE  
**VERA GRACE** V/VEGA 8pm

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November – DAISY RODGERS  
**THE LOST ART** WATER PAGEANT + ALL IS WORTH 8pm

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November - OXFORD CITY FESTIVAL  
**VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN**

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Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November - OXFORD CITY FESTIVAL  
**ATL** LES CLOCHARDS + DECOVO + MARK COPE 8pm/£5

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November – GTI & OXFORD CITY FESTIVAL  
**TOO MANY POETS** VUKOVAR + IDEAL KOALA 8pm/£4.50

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DR SHOTOVER: The (un)Sound of Young Scotland

Greetings, sassenachs. Pull up a pew and buy us all a pint of heavy... Much obliged... *[gulp-o, gulp-o, lip-smacking noises]*. Ah, that’s better. Ok, ok, here’s one. The notorious ‘bi-curious’ Laird of North Uist visits a Thai brothel, and says to the Madame, ‘I want to buy the services of a couple of ladyboys’. The Madame says ‘Sorry sir, we’re all outa He-Brides!’ Outa He-Brides... geddit? Oh suit yourselves. As you may have detected, it’s Scottish Theme Week here in the East Indies Club. Yes, Middleton, this is a KILT I’m wearing, not a FROCK. For that unpardonable piece of Celtophobic oafery, you will buy the next round. Mine’s a large Loch Peatie with a muckle great plateful of Arbroath smokies on the side. Slàinte! Meanwhile this week we shall be celebrating the more Caledonian elements of the Oxford Music Scene... there will doubtless be contributions from our esteemed Editor, and hopefully that chap from Hot Hooves and Arthur Turner’s Lovechild?... not to mention Young Angus from yon Relationships, and wee ‘Frenchie’ Nixon from Les Clochards. Any other Scots music people in Oxford? Oh aye, Stumpy, whatever happened to him? Meanwhile expect a constant diet of Jasmine Minks, Orange Juice, Josef K and Altered Images on the East Indies Club bar jukebox. Stornoway? Never heard of ‘em. Cheers! Down the hatch!

Next month: MacFisheries supermarket revival



‘You’re nicked, wee man!’ - another arresting performance by The Scotland Yard Birds

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

Kancho!

Who are they?

Oxford noise-pop duo Kancho! are Michael Chilcott (*bass/vocals*) and Chris Wasyliw (*drums*). Michael was previously in the band Ute, while Chris used to be in I Am Thieves. The pair started playing together in The Old Grinding Young and Salvation Bill. “We’ve both been in bands who got caught up in the tricky idea of ‘making it’, and so we started Kancho! as a release from that... we’re just playing for the fun of it, with no pressure and little expectation,” they say. Formed only a few months back they’ve played regularly around Oxford. Their debut recording won *Nightshift’s* Demo of the Month, and they recently opened for Blacklisters at The Wheatsheaf.

What do they sound like?

Noisy. Really, bloody noisy. In a good way. Kancho’s sound is unselfconsciously ragged around the edges but they get the maximum noise out of meagre resources and a lean line-up, pent-up aggression and shouting adding up to what their review described as “a disjointed heap of angular lo-fi hardcore and all-out vocal intensity.” Did we mention they’re very noisy?

What inspires them?

“A lot of our music comes out of playing together in the rehearsal studio, so the thing that inspires us most is that process of exploring our playing. We’ve also got the imposed limits of the two-piece, bass and drums format so we like the challenge of pushing that as far as possible.”

Career highlight so far:

“Our show with Blacklisters; we hadn’t practised an awful lot before the show and I think that nervous energy served us well. Also it was *loud*. We did a gig in London with Theo Verney and Gang for DIY Magazine. A load of Theo’s fans turned up early and went really nuts, so we ended up playing to a 100-strong mosh pit.”

And the lowlight:

“Having to cancel a show in the summer because Michael got tendonitis.



That sucked hard, and hurt like a bastard.”

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

“Masiro; they are gnarly and complex but still rock like bastards.”

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

“Probably ‘Racecar is Racecar Backwards’ by Reuben. The opening drum fill of that record blows the cobwebs away and it doesn’t really stop. I think we’re always trying to subconsciously copy the energy of that record.”

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

“13<sup>th</sup> November at The Wheatsheaf. Expect more noise than you thought two people who’ve had a pint more than they should have would normally make.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“Favourite is the fact that there is a real alternative undercurrent starting to brew again, especially with cool things like the Smash Disco shows at the Library and Burn the Jukebox. Least favourite is that it’s really tricky to get under-18 shows, so there don’t seem to be many young bands coming through. It always seemed easier when we were growing up.”

You might love them if you love:

Scratch Acid; Shellac; At The Drive-In; Drive Like Jehu; Quicksand.

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ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

Well it finally happened – after some last-minute bureaucratic nonsense, **The Zodiac** opened its doors for the first time. A host of local acts played the opening week with **The Daisies** – just back from a month-long tour of the States – the first band to play the venue. **Supergrass** played a sold-out show, while **Dr Didj** and **The Candyskins** also helped christian what was to become Oxford’s premier venue.

Given the late hassles with the council no out of town bands were booked into The Zodiac initially, though **Loop Guru**, **Gorky’s Zygotic Mynci** and **Sultans of Ping FC** were among the first names to be announced for the upcoming weeks.

Instead local gig highlights continued to be at **The Hobgoblin** – soon to become **The Point** – with **Cornershop**, **Blaggers ITA** and a bunch of unknowns called **Placebo** all at the venue this month. Up the Headington Hill **Jackdaw Music** and **XCNN** were among the bands playing **Brookes’** new union venue, while **Oxford United Social Club** began its brief tenure as a hub of local music, hosting **Daytripper**, **Janey**, **Real Foundation** and reggae faves **Makating**. Biggest gig of the month though, was possibly **Bad Manners’** visit to **Oxford Town Hall**, with Judge Dread as support. How the gatekeepers of that auspicious building must have enjoyed having six hundred skinheads skanking the night away.

In other local music news it was reported that Candyskins manager **Richard Cotton** had had a bag containing all of the band’s DAT masters stolen from outside the (legendary late-night drinking den) **Kari King**. Luckily the thief was spotted,

identified and made an offer he couldn’t refuse. He currently makes up part of the foundations of the M40 near Watlington. Less lucky were **Radiohead** who had all their equipment stolen from their van while on tour with Soul Asylum in the States. Despite the loss of many irreplaceable guitars and equipment, the band went to on to enjoy some modest success in later years.

10 YEARS AGO

Never let it be said that *Nightshift* isn’t a broad church, with room for all manner of strange and wonderful sound makers. In November 2005 we had two of the most bonkers among those gracing the front cover in the form of **Twizz Twangle** and his then partner in music mayhem, **Patsy Decline**. Twizz had previously been near-enough banned from the demo pages after a succession of increasingly “disjointed” offerings (one actually recorded on the toilet), but had come back with a vengeance after teaming up with eccentric singer Patsy. Dan was described as “a genuine treasure, an eternal outsider, a genius and a lunatic.” Among his litany of tales was being attacked by drunks at a gig who’d come expecting a lesbian strip show; being thrown in a river after starting a food fight at a gig in a five-star restaurant, and getting invited up on stage at **Cropredy Festival** to play a bizarre version of ‘Dancing Queen’, with **Edie Reader** on backing vocals, after convincing the promoters he was dying of septicaemia. One of a kind indeed.

One-off’s too on this month’s local gig calendar with **The Cardiacs** at **The Zodiac** and **Motorhead** at **The New Theatre**, while

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

somewhat more mainstream big names in town included **Status Quo**, **Tony Christie** and **Shakin’ Stevens**, all at The New Theatre.

5 YEARS AGO

METAL! Screamed the front cover of *Nightshift* in November 2010 as we dedicated an entire issue to the local heavy scene, featuring a main interview with emergent local stars **Desert Storm**, as well as main players in the scene’s history – notably **Alan Day** and **Dave Hale** from **The Club That Cannot Be Named**, as well as **Dave Smart** from doom heroes **Sevenchurch**. Among a host of emerging local acts to watch out for were **Undersmile**, **Agness Pike**, **Black Skies Burn**, **K-Lacura** and **Prospekt**, while those who wouldn’t go the distance included **Taste My Eyes**, **Beard of Zeuss** and **Beelzebozo**, although the latter did manage to re-emerge for a one-off reunion alongside **Black Candy** last month.

The biggy though was *Nightshift’s* run-down of Oxford’s greatest ever metal bands, with the mighty Sevenchurch pipped to top spot by **Sextodecimo**, another band who reformed earlier this year and have become one of the most influential Oxford bands ever, inspiring the likes of Desert Storm and Undersmile to take noise to its ultimate conclusion. In third spot were **JOR**, whose name shall always be written in bold type and capital letters, followed by **Xmas Lights**, **Suitable Case For Treatment**, **Madamadam**, **Winnebago Deal**, **Coma Kai**, **Mindsurfer**, **Black Candy** and **Faith in Hate**. Say their names with pride, and then take cover.

Photo: Carolina Faruolo





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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### SUGAR DARLING

A debut demo review, a live review and now this mini-album-length demo and still no bugger at *Nightshift* quite knows what to make of Sugar Darling beyond imagining they have a collective case of ADHD and absolutely no comprehension of what a tune is. We rather like that in a band, even if it can make listening to them for prolonged periods a bit of a struggle – like being talked at by a sporadically entertaining but hopelessly stoned nutter with train of thought issues on the nightbus. Here they kick off with a bit of spasticated synth, some off-funk, a whole heap of untidy and several servings of slightly unhinged noise that's wired and brattish and utterly incapable of sitting still for more than five seconds before it's off doing something completely different. Even a standard heavy rock intro only hangs around for brief moments before it's off into tortured no-wave then almost immediately ponderous funk wandering. We imagine the trio have at least a couple of Cardiacs albums lurking in their collection, such is their adherence to musical mischief and mayhem, while one track could be an old nursery rhyme filtered through Butthole Surfers' weird'n'wobbly machine, but perhaps it really is as simple as them genuinely having no fucking idea whatsoever what they want to sound like or how to get there, or by which route, however convoluted. So, they've simply decided to be all of those things, all at the same time, but never for long enough for anyone to realise. And then, having given us seven tracks in barely fourteen minutes, there's a hidden track at the end of the CD, which is pretty much twenty more minutes of (variously) Tuvan throat singing, random guitar squall, sporadic drumbeat, general bass noodling and someone plugging and unplugging a jack plug into an amp a few times. It's neither as experimental or entertaining as they probably hoped it would be, but simply by being a right confusing mess of a band in a sterile old world, we'll give Sugar Darling the thumbs up. Then thumbs down. Then thumbs up. Then shake our left leg ferociously in the air while making our hands into bunny ears. We're sure they'll understand.

### CRYSTALLITE

And by complete contrast, here's a band who have picked up the rock rule book that Sugar Darling just chucked out of the studio

*Demo of the Month wins a free half day at Soundworks studio in Oxford, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit [www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift](http://www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift)*

window and read it cover to cover to make sure they're adhering to every standard regulation going. Fronted by powerhouse singer Agnes Bozai, Crystallite are a melodic mid-to-soft rocking trip back to sometime in the 1980s when everything had to be BIG. And EPIC. And HEROIC. And WING DING DONG DANGLE DOO. Because otherwise it was – pauses to snort vast line of cocaine off the mixing desk –for LOSERS. Who probably only got signed to indie labels and probably used public transport instead of stretch limos. So, 'In Broken Dreams' reminds us rather more than we'd ever care to remember, of Bonnie Tyler – everything shiny and over the top perfect, as if *X-Factor* had been chosen to host the Bloodstock Music For The Masses band competition. And we're just scrambling through our cassette collection for an old Pere Ubu bootleg to redress the balance of nature when we realise that the final track here, 'Wild Bill', is actually rather good, with its hammering piano and big old synths and unabashed sky-searching guitars and big-haired rock siren vocals and.... Oh Christ, they've got us. Get out while you can! We'll hold them off for as long as we can, just run. Run and tell Behemoth, Hang the Bastard and Pig Destroyer that the 1980s rockers are back and they need to form a resistance army immediately.

### HELL'S GAZELLE'S

Talking of *a)* old-fashioned rock music and *b)* Bloodstock, Music For The Masses, here's the band who won the local heat of that competition and joined the likes of Rob Zombie and Trivium at the summer feast of heaviosity. Perhaps, on this evidence and that of Crystallite, the old ways are back with a vengeance, hairy riff aficionados suddenly weary of giant sludgy musical monoliths and metalcore belligerence and hungry for Rob Halford screams, Quireboys strut and something a bit funky. Depending on your point of view it's classic and timeless (Judas Priest via Chili Peppers with a slight detour round to Hanoi Rocks' place for a few beers), or a clichéd reminder of what Metallica and Slayer came to save us from back in the 1980s. If only for singer Cole Bryant's falsetto squeal at the end of 'Shivers' we'll go for the former for now. That must have been one hell of a needle someone just stuck in his bollocks, so credit for staying in tune.

### A NIGHTMARE

### UPON US

Those good times down The Viper Club can't last, and so here's A Nightmare Upon

Us to bring some grim tidings ahead of any Christmas cheer you might be starting to feel in your toes. If Crystalline have an element of operatic excess about them, ANUU are the full Ring Cycle, or at least the parts where everything burns and everyone dies and the earth is laid waste (we don't know if that actually happens in The Ring Cycle so don't bother writing in to correct us, we just like the idea of apocalyptic opera and that's the only one we can think of at the moment). A Nightmare Upon Us have played Skeletor's metal night at the O2 recently but this is more full-on goth really, a song, 'Father Sin', about a pervert rapist priest in the middle ages who would burn women as witches if they raised their voices against him (oh, how times have changed). Misery upon misery upon misery, then, and the music reflects it perfectly, a hollowed-out guitar spider crawl and spooked vocals exploring the dark recesses of the batcave, occasionally billowing up into symphonic metal of admirable preposterousness. It's like Dragonforce covering Bauhaus' 'Hollow Hills'; it's all a bit silly but it's great fun. No, not fun. Misery. Endless misery. Oh come on, you know what we're like by now – we revel in misery. We're dancing around the room to this right now. But, like, very slowly. And we're weeping too. Weeping at the crushing futility of it all. Still, did someone mention Christmas? We'll have Boney M back on the stereo before you know it.

### TOO MANY POETS

If Hell's Gazelles and Crystallite are happy to revel in a 1980s rock haze, Too Many Poets are reclining in their own favourite musical bath – early-noughties indie rock, in particular the epic but slightly dark sounds of Killers, Editors and The National. The band's one-song demo 'The Worst Intention' careers into the room in a hysterical bundle of screams and grungy guitar but quickly settles down on the sofa for some contemplative, bordering on sullen, thrumming and crooning that on a local level makes them sound like Peerless Pirates' studios, teetotal kid brothers, or maybe Zurich's less elegant and sophisticated cousins. It's effortlessly wordy and nimbly constructed but doesn't have that enigmatic edge you want from black-clad stadium pop, and when they up their game and threaten to lose their rag, it sounds more like someone expressing mild irritation that their girlfriend stayed out later than expected with her mates than someone completely at the end of their tether or on the verge of a two-day tequila bender.

### RAAYKO

It's easy to imagine that bedroom-bound electronic producers have it easy compared to "proper bands" and stuff – just push a couple of buttons and bummer off downstairs to make a cup of tea. But we know it's

more complicated than that – you have to press the stop button too. Only kidding. It's a completely different art form, but sometimes you wonder if composing in front of a laptop screen doesn't suck a little of the life out of a piece of music. Raayko here produces slick, lightweight house and r'n'b, at its gnarliest all Vocodered voices and cascading pianos like something nabbed from the last Daft Punk album; at its fluffiest some less than banging four-four beats, sampled female pop vocals and a bit of synthscaping that wouldn't have been out of place on an old Jean Michel Jarre album. Chuck in some grungy guitar samples occasionally and it almost gets off its backside, as on best track here, 'Karma', but too often you can't help feel it's all a bit sterile and lifeless in the wrong sort of way – the irritatingly "cute" robot off the Confused.com advert rather than the merciless rampaging cyborg from *Terminator*.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### DANIEL SIMON

We fully appreciate that Royal Mail have always been incompetent mooncalves who can barely distinguish a postbox from an elephant's anus, and since they've been privatised they've become money-grabbing incompetent mooncalves who can barely distinguish a postbox from an elephant's anus, but if you're sending a demo CD in for review, it does help to stick enough stamps on the envelope that it doesn't incur a fine for the poor sod who's meant to be reviewing it. It's bad enough you bastards out there make us sit around all day trying to extract tiny teardrops of positivity from your oafish outpourings, but making us pay for the privilege is beyond the pale. You owe us £1.11. Further, there's a small but important paragraph at the bottom of this page that's been there ever since the very beginning of time that mentions you need to include a contact phone number with your demo. If only so we can call you up in the middle of the night to laugh mockingly at your pathetic attempts to rhyme moon, June and ignorant baboon. It's not difficult really, is it? Apparently it is. So, Mr Simon, if you've done anything right and proper with this demo you've at least dug your own grave, which saves us a couple of hours, which we can now spend drinking cheap rum out of a plastic beaker. We also saved another twenty minutes by only giving your demo the most cursory listen possible. Sounded exactly like we expected – mildly incompetent. Recompense us and we'll listen to it properly next time, though on this slender evidence, that might just be digging your grave even deeper.

*Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to [editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk](mailto:editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk), 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. And don't fucking whine about your review on Twitter either; else we'll print a screenshot and make you look like a prize tit.*



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# Beans on Toast

**WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER**  
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# THE MEN THAT WILL NOT BE BLAMED FOR NOTHING

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# thebluetones

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