



# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every  
month  
Issue 257  
December  
2016**

photo by Marc West

*"Sadly I had  
to sell the  
limousine;  
it was so bad  
for fuel."*

# Willie J Healey

**Oxford's rock'n'stroll troubadour  
talks work ethic & unpredictability**

*Also in this issue:*

**Introducing ZURICH**

**The Oxford songs of the year**

**Farewell STORNOWAY**

**plus - nine pages of local gig reviews,  
and your gig guide for the month ahead.**

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# THE BULLINGDON

## DECEMBER 2016 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Thursday 1st December  
**Pastel Frontier**  
InAir  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 2nd December  
**Dreadzone**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 2nd December  
**The Egg**  
Doors: 8pm

Saturday 3rd December  
**Better Than Never**  
Coast to Coast  
Last to Leave  
One State Drive  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 3rd December  
**Simple Presents**  
*Livvy Sound Showcase*  
**Hodge Perverlist**  
**Kowton**  
Doors: 8pm

Sunday 4th December  
**Nick Harper**  
**and The Wilderness Kids**  
Doors: 7pm

Monday 5th December  
**The Night Cafe**  
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 8th December  
**Lost in the Zoo**  
Feat. Holy Goof  
Doors: 8pm

Friday 9th December  
**Catfish**  
Doors: 8pm

Friday 9th December  
**James Haskell (DJ set)**  
Doors: 8pm

Saturday 10th December  
*The Saucy Pear Cabaret presents*  
**Oxphward**  
**Feel my Presents**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 10th December  
**P30 Memorial**  
**Kenny Ken**  
DJ SS  
Ragga Twins  
David Boomah  
Doors: 8pm

Sunday 11th December  
**Goan Dogs**  
**Ben Dey**  
**Joe Osborne & The Winter Moon**  
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 14th December  
**Film Oxford**  
**Festive Special**  
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 14th December  
**Willie J Healey**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 15th December  
**Uncle Acid & the Deadbeats**  
**Vodun**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 16th December  
**PYT**  
Doors: 8pm

Saturday 17th December  
**Cate Le Bon**  
Doors: 7.30pm

Saturday 17th December  
**Future Perfect Xmas Party**  
Doors: 10pm

Monday 19th December  
**The Shades**  
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 21st December  
*Halfway to Seventy-Five*  
**Christmas Jamboree**  
**CC Smugglers**  
**The Savoy Jazz Swingtet**  
**Hannah Johnson & The Broken Hearts**  
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 22nd December  
**Haze Xmas Party**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 24th December  
**Reggae Christmas**  
**Macka B**  
**& The Roots Reggae Band**  
Count Skylarkin  
DestaNation DJs  
Dasher & Wazzy  
Doors: 7pm

Monday 26th December  
*Deep Cover*  
**Boxing Day Party**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 31st December  
*Cowley Road NYE Festival*  
**Ratpack**  
**Simple**  
**ZAIA**  
Skylarkin Soundsystem  
Dub Politics  
Doors: 7pm

Sunday 1st January  
**Bloodstock**  
**Metal to the Masses**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 2nd January  
**Beth Rowley**  
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 18th January  
**The Cactus Blossoms**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 28th January  
**Margo Price**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 28th January  
**Disco Ma Non Troppo**  
Doors: 8pm

Saturday 28th January  
**Bossaphonik**  
**K.O.G and the Zongo Brigade**  
Doors: 8pm

Sunday 22nd January  
**Bloodstock**  
**Metal to the Masses**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 24th January  
**Black Peaks**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 28th January  
**Chatham County Line**  
Doors: 8pm

Friday 27th January  
**Mr Scruff - All Night Long**  
Doors: 8pm

Sunday 29th January  
**C Duncan**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 4th February  
**Simple**  
**Midland**  
Doors: 8pm

Sunday 5th February  
**Bloodstock**  
**Metal to the Masses**  
Doors: 7pm

Monday 6th February  
**Menace Beach**  
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 9th February  
**The Brew**  
Doors: 7pm

Friday 10th February  
**Kanadia**  
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 18th February  
**Fred Abbot**  
Doors: 7pm

Monday 13th February  
**Ben Watt**  
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 14th February  
**Chuck Prophet & Mission Express**  
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 15th February  
**Cabbage**  
**The Shimmer Band**  
**April**  
Doors: 7pm

# NEWS

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**RADIOHEAD AND SUPERGRASS** are among a host of local and national bands featured in a gallery of pictures on photographer Dean Ryan's website. The rare shots were all taken at The Jericho Tavern in the early 1990s and feature never before seen live photos of pre-fame Pulp, The Verve, The Cranberries and Ocean Colour Scene, as well as Oxford stars like Sevenchurch, Death By Crimpers, Human Torches, The Daisies. Madamadam, Arthur Turner's Lovechild? and Gaz and Danny's pre-Supergrass band The Jennifers. Dean is planning to keep adding to the gallery with shots of The Candyskins and Ride, along with pics of The Bigger The God, Th'Faith Healers and Gallon Drunk among those due to be added soon. Visit [deanryan.co.uk](http://deanryan.co.uk) to view the gallery.

**THE YOUNG WOMEN'S MUSIC PROJECT** has been named as Oxford Act of the Year by BBC Introducing in Oxford. Having raised £5,000 back in April just to keep going the charity project, founded in the 1990s by the late Kate Garrett and now run by musician Zahra Tehrani, aims to "liberate and empower young people across Oxfordshire by providing an inclusive and supportive space for them to make music together, learn new skills, express themselves, and grow in confidence." The award caps the projects most successful year so far, which included live sets at Common People and Oxjam as well as a number of gigs and exhibitions of their own. Previous winners of the award include Stornoway, Glass Animals, Esther Joy Lane and this month's *Nightshift* cover star Willie J Healey. Talking about the award, BBC Introducing in Oxford producer Liz Green said, "The Young Women's Music Project give many amazingly talented young women the opportunity to write, record and perform music, some for the first time. They are a welcome refreshing voice on the Oxfordshire music

scene, providing an encouraging and empowering environment for young women to express themselves. They've had a fantastic year, putting on gigs and workshops regularly and appearing at Common People Festival in South Park, Oxjam, and becoming the Artists in residence at Fusion Arts Centre. It is fantastic to see an Oxford Institution go from strength to strength and we are looking forward to seeing what they've got in store for us next year."

**BLAZE BAYLEY AND GUNS2ROSES** headline OxRox Live next year. The two-day festival runs over the weekend of the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> August at Abingdon United Football Club and features over 20 rock and metal acts over the two days. Organised by local rock club OxRox, the weekend will feature sets from the likes of Hell's Gazelles; Desert Storm; Colour of Noise; Dog Tired; Fähran; Nasty High; Black Cat Bones; Trauma UK; Fury; Joker's Rage; Twisted State of Mind and more. Weekend tickets are on sale now, priced £27.99, with day tickets on sale at £17.99. Camping tickets are also available. Visit [www.oxroxalive.co.uk](http://www.oxroxalive.co.uk) for full details.

**THE ULTIMATE PICTURE PALACE** hosts two live music and film screening events this month. On Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December the independent cinema on Jeune Street in east Oxford will be showing new British comedy drama *Burn, Burn, Burn*, featuring a soundtrack by local stars Candy Says. The band will be playing a set before the screening. Doors are at 8.30pm. Then on the 8<sup>th</sup> UPP teams up with The Young Women's Music Project for a screening of the documentary *Sonita*, which follows Afghan refugee Sonita Alizadeh as she takes on personal hardship and widespread misogyny in Iran through her politically charged hip hop. 16-year-old folk singer Susie Corfield and soul/hip hop artist Ithar MK will perform live before the film. Doors at 6pm. Visit [www.uppcinema.com](http://www.uppcinema.com) for more details and tickets.

**NICK COPE** launches his new album, 'A Round of Applause For The Dinosaurs', with two shows at The Holywell Music Room this month. The former Candyskins frontman releases his fifth album of songs for children (and adults) on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>



**STORNOWAY WILL BOW OUT WITH A FAREWELL SHOW** AT The New Theatre next year.

The Oxford stars announced their plans to split at the end of October, and will head off on a final UK tour in March, culminating in their biggest ever hometown gig on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March. The show is already sold out. Announcing the split, the band, formed by friends Brian Briggs, Jon Ouin and brothers Oli and Rob Steadman in 2006, stated, "After ten years of wonderful adventures together, Stornoway will become Stornomore. Our friendship remains as strong as ever but the winds of change have blown us all in different directions.

"For Brian the call of the wild has lured him back into the world of wildlife conservation, and he now works as a nature reserve warden in south Wales. Rob has followed his heart across the Atlantic to New York. Having gone straight from school onto the road with Stornoway he is now finding time for a mixture of university study and music over there. Oli has been drawn into the bustle of London, where he is running a successful start-up for gig-lovers and playing Zulu music from his home country. Jon has settled in Oxford, the band's home and birthplace and is realising his dream of writing and recording music for radio, film and theatre.

"We have achieved far more as a band than we ever dared to dream back as students and school kids in a drafty east Oxford garage."

Emerging in 2006, Stornoway quickly became huge favourites on the Oxford scene for their mix of romantic folk-pop and quirky, clever songs and went on to become one of the most successful Oxford bands ever, playing shows and festivals across the globe, renowned for performing at unusual venues. They released three albums in their ten-year career, including 2010 debut 'Beachcomber's Windowsill', which was classified Silver in the UK, and last year's Top 20 third album, 'Bonxie'. Along the way the band featured on the cover of *Nightshift* three times and topped our end of year Top 25 in 2009 with 'The Coldharbour Road'. BBC Oxford DJ Tim Bearder, an early champion of the band, was once suspended by the station for locking himself in a studio and broadcasting a solid hour of Stornoway songs. Perhaps the quartet's crowning glory, though, was their show at The Sheldonian Theatre in 2009, the first non-classical act ever to play at the Christopher Wren-designed venue. It remains one of the greatest gigs *Nightshift* has ever witnessed.

So, thanks for all the great music boys, and here's to that last blowout in March. It's going to be emotional.

December. The album was produced by Robin and Joe Bennett of The Dreaming Spires and featuring Ride's Andy Bell on guitars. Ticket details at [www.nickcope.co.uk](http://www.nickcope.co.uk).

**INDEPENDENT VENUE WEEK** returns in January. The nationwide celebration of grassroots live music runs over the week of the Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>-Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January.

**CATGOD** release their debut album this month. The band, formerly known as Roberto y Amigos, and helmed by Neverlnd guitarist Robin Christensen-Marriot, launch the album, 'Home In Your Heart', with a gig at The Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre in St Ebbe's on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December.

**PORT IN A STORM** play their first gig in 30 years this month. The local band were regulars on the Oxford scene in the late 1980s and early 90s and originally featured a pre-Ride Steve Queralt in their ranks. They will regroup for a show on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December at The Masons Arms in Headington.

**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).



### THE BEST IN LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY

Saturday 14th January - 7pm  
**Tom Allen, Marlon Davis, Ellie Taylor**

Saturday 20th January - 7pm  
**Jamali Maddix, Steve Harris, Ivo Graham, Paul Tonkinson**

Saturday 28th January - 7pm  
**Mike Gunn, Steve Williams, Rhys James, Damian Clark**

Saturday 4th February - 7pm  
**Suzi Ruffell, Michael Fabbri, Phil Nichol, Stephen Grant**

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# Willie J Healey

“**SADLY I HAD TO SELL THE limousine; it was so bad for fuel. I buy all of my cars from a family friend over at Oddball Motors; I asked him for a van within my budget but he only had a limo, so I kinda had no other option. It was very stylish but kinda dark, being a funeral limo. I now have my own van which is way more practical but not as cool; it’s an old Leyland DAF: you know, the type your school netball team would travel to other schools in.**”

**WILLIE J HEALEY USED TO** drive to gigs in style. These days, travel comes in more prosaic fashion, but the gigs are more frequent, the venues and crowds bigger. In fact Carterton-born Willie has spent quite a lot of 2016 on the road, including tours with Beach Baby and Summer Camp. Along the way he’s released a clutch of singles and EPs, with each new set of songs, his popularity has grown and with a record deal with Columbia/National Anthem, 2017 looks like it’s going to be the ride of his life. “We’ve had a really fun year of gigs,” Willie tells *Nightshift* as he prepares to play his biggest hometown headline show so far, at The Bullingdon on the 15<sup>th</sup> December. “The tour we did with Beach Baby would be my highlight; they’re really nice peeps and a wicked band. We haven’t really had any mishaps yet, but there’s always time. Every gig seems like an adventure to me; my van’s so old and slow that we all hi-five on arrival.”

**2016 REALLY HAS BEEN** Willie J Healey’s year. His summer single ‘Pipedreams’ proved to be something of a breakthrough release, picking up plenty of radio plays and racking up thousands of Youtube plays, while revealing the 22 year old as a serious songwriting talent in the post-grunge slacker mould of artists like Kurt Vile, Ariel Pink and Mac Demarco. Willie grew up in his west Oxfordshire home town, getting into music via his dad’s love of 1970s rock, inspired to play himself by watching family members performing Oasis songs at Christmas parties (“That’s when I thought ‘hey, I’d love to play ‘Definitely Maybe’ too”). “Once I had secured my first acoustic guitar I was off,” he recalls of that first musical opportunity. “It was a great feeling to finally



photo by Mare West

join the family singalong each year. Lunchtimes were no longer about football and now became 45-minute windows to learn The Pigeon Detectives’ new smash hit with my friend Matt the cat. I’m not sure when I made the transition from

Kooks tribute band to writing my own material; I guess I was around the age 13 or 14.”

**AS IS A TRADITIONAL RITE** of passage for all aspiring rock stars, Willie’s first public appearances were

nervous, low-key affairs, learning from his mistakes. “My first gigs were so exciting but probably really terrible. I started out attending every open mic I possibly could, then worked my way into playing more organised gigs around

Witney and Oxford.” Willie originally wrote and performed under the band name Sweet William, but dropped that moniker in favour of his own name after a handful of shows. “It was brought to my attention that I was competing with the Sweet William bra company, Sweet William Chocolate and a bunch of other more useful sites; my Bandcamp was really struggling, ha ha! No, the main reason was the change in my songs. I started releasing songs that didn’t match the Sweet William vibe so I switched to Willie J Healey.”

**THE CHANGE IN MUSICAL** style found Willie playing what he described himself as rock’n’stroll – a laidback, pop-friendly mix of bluesy slacker rock, airy acoustic pop and woozy surf rock with its roots in the music of Neil Young, Jonathan Richman and Beck. His debut EP in 2015, ‘HD Malibu’, which immortalised his second-hand limo before he even bought it (“I wish I had a car that was too big to drive”) imagined a glamorous pop star future that increasingly looks less like a fantasy. The EP was produced by Pelham Groom from then local heroes Spring Offensive, and he was briefly taken under the managerial wing of Stornoway’s Oli Steadman. The EP earned Willie a *Nightshift* Introducing feature and support slots with those local acts he’d befriended.

**A STEADY SUCCESSION OF** singles has grown his reputation, earning him that record deal, culminating in the acclaim and airplay afforded ‘Pipedreams’, and this month he put out a new song, ‘Would You Be’, a raw, slab of confessional grunge pop that opens with the line “I’m alive but I’m barely living”. Is that something Willie particularly feels relates to him right now? “I guess we all have moments where we feel we could or should be doing more with our time, instead of going through the motions. I know I’ve had that feeling!” Having started out writing more observational songs, Willie has begun to reveal more of himself in his lyrics. “The first bunch of songs were definitely more observational. I’d watch some cult films then create fun song ideas around them, like *X-Files* and other stuff. Now I tend to write about more real world things: things I see, do and feel. I don’t think one style of writing is better than the other but I do feel more attached to a song when it’s not about Agent Scully. I can’t say I avoid things intentionally but I naturally write about things I’m interested in: love; my bedroom; neighbours; love... you get the picture, right? I wouldn’t do a song about politics because I know

nothing about politics; why would I embarrass myself like that! You have to keep things honest, I think.” **GROWING UP ON THE EDGE** of Oxfordshire and then immersing himself in Oxford’s music scene, we wonder how much local bands played a part in Willie’s formative musical experiences. “I’m not sure how to put my love for Spring Offensive and Salvation Bill into words. I remember watching them a lot when I was younger, a teenage fanboy. I’m still waiting for the Spring Offensive reunion. Oxford has some really nice musicians in and around it; the list of people that have inspired and helped me would go on forever so I won’t name names, but it’s a great feeling to be around such a nice bunch.” How about beyond Oxford, now that you’ve been out there on tour a few times? “We’ve been to some cool spots lately but we always have a great time in Bristol; The Breakfast Records gigs are always wicked! That’s my final answer: Brizzle.” **AS WELL AS THE HELP AND** support of fellow local musicians, another thing that’s stood Willie in good stead was the diploma in popular music he took at college, teaching him the skills he needed to self-produce his earliest songs. “I had a wicked two years. I’d say the thing that helps me the most is the recording techniques I learnt. They taught us the basics in recording, I didn’t really see the point at the time because I just wanted to play music as much as possible but now I’m really grateful for the recording tips.” Another big influence on Willie is Neil Young, not just his music but his work ethic and unpredictability. Is that old ethic of continual gigging still one that works best in today’s music scene? “Yes, I love the amount of music he’s released over the years. I like the idea of trying different things and not getting caught up in making things perfect. Gigging is my favourite part of music; it’s important to keep plugging away to new people and places if you can.” What would be the most unpredictable thing you could write, release or do now? “Well, I guess a heavy metal album would shock my family and friends. I’m releasing a long EP in December which consists of seven really raw bedroom recordings. I’m not sure if

peeps will dig it but I really like it; it’s pretty different to the other stuff I’ve been releasing of late.” **THAT WORK ETHIC HAS BEEN** apparent this year with constant gigging being the order of the day, and with a hint or two of Jack Kerouac about his songs and image – the travelling artist thing. “I named a song after his book *The Subterraneans*; I haven’t finished reading it yet, though. Other than that no so much, maybe someday Jack and me will click.” Could you imagine leaving the modern world behind and becoming an itinerant troubadour? “Hmmm I’m not sure...” Saying all that, Willie is prolific in keeping fans up to date on social media. How important has that been in building and maintaining a following? “I think it’s important to make the

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**“It was brought to my attention that I was competing with the Sweet William bra company and Sweet William chocolate”**

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most of social media. It is a great way to keep people updated on things in a fun way! I don’t think things should be taken too seriously.” Had any stalkers yet? “Sadly not...” **JOINING WILLIE ON TOUR** and onstage are his bandmates, Mike Monaghan, Chris Barker and Harry Deacon, but by going out under his own name, Willie J Healey has become part of the current dominant force of solo artists leaving the traditional rock band set up behind while moving beyond the solo singer-songwriter cliché of the guy with the acoustic guitar and sad voice, willing and able to cross genre boundaries, helped by more readily available technology. Does he feel a part of that movement and is the traditional band format is dated or in danger? “I’ve never really thought of it as a movement but I guess it’s a common thing at the moment for solo artists to play in full band set-ups, Like Neil Young or Bruce Springsteen or Tom Petty. I personally feel like music goes through phases: sometimes there are more solo names than band names, but for me it’s all the same. Collaboration is present in both. You’re always going to have big pop stars dominating popular music but that shouldn’t scare anyone, it should inspire bands to push harder! I’m not sure how well I’ve answered that...” **IF THE TRADITIONAL BAND** format isn’t an endangered species quite yet, something that is pretty damn rare in this day and age is a

record deal, which makes Willie’s tie-up with Columbia/National Anthem all the more special. How did that come about, and in today’s straitened music industry, what benefits does having a deal hold for him? “A friend of mine from Witney had a friend in London who put me in touch with the right people. Thanks friends! So far so good, they have been really supportive of my ideas and we all seem to be on the same page. The main benefit for me would be the amount of time I now have to write, record and gig. Hopefully more people hear my music too.” They are indeed, with some of the most influential DJs picking up on ‘Pipedreams’ – Annie Mac, Huw Stephens, Lauren Laverne and Steve Lamacq among others played the song and came back for more. Has Willie been surprised by the way people have taken to him? “It’s nice to know that people are hearing the stuff I’m releasing. I find it exciting, to be able to record a song in my garage for it then to be played on a major radio show. I can’t say I’ve noticed any notable fans yet!” You’ve released a string of singles so far, including ‘Would You Be’ this month; when can we expect a full Willie J Healey album? “We don’t have a solid date in the diary for an album release but I’ve been told that summer next year is a possible. I’ve got it all written and mostly recorded, bar a few songs. I’m keen to use as much new material as possible; it seems anti creative to put too many oldies on there, so expect a bunch of new stuff; we play some of it live already, so it’ll be nice to finally release it.” **WE GET THE FEELING THAT** next year is going to be even more special for the unassuming young man from Carterton who once watched enviously as his family sang Oasis songs after Christmas dinner but who looks increasingly like he’s going to make it under his own creative steam. Two years ago he was working as a plasterer, a job that helped give him extra motivation to make it in music, as well as a practical skill to fall back on should he ever need it. “I worked with my dad so it was fun to hang out with him every day. It’s not something I plan on doing again, though.” **NO, FOR NOW THIS TRIP IS** only going one way: up. And who knows, one day soon Willie might be once again arriving at gigs in a limousine. This time in the back seat

***Willie J Healey plays The Bullingdon on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December. ‘Would You Be’ is out now. Hear it at [soundcloud.com/willie-j-healey](https://www.soundcloud.com/willie-j-healey)***



# RELEASED

## THE BALKAN WANDERERS

### ‘Citizens of Nowhere’ (Self released)

That The Balkan Wanderers’ EP releases don’t compare to the band’s live shows is far more a reflection of just how great they are on stage than any criticism of their recorded work. Live they’re one of those rare acts it’s nigh on impossible to resist as they suck even the most cynical sod (and by crikey, there’s some cynical sods here at *Nightshift*) into their exotic party world.

Named after Theresa May’s little Englander conference speech in the summer, ‘Citizen of Nowhere’ enhances The Balkan Wanderers’ standing as one of Oxford’s most international, and outward looking, bands. An inclusive act too – the ska, punk and indie elements they bring to traditional eastern and southern European folk dance make them a good gateway band for anyone daunted about discovering a new world of music.

This five-song EP tempers the Anglo/Croatian/German quintet’s merriment with moments of melancholy, the high-energy ska rhythms and Claire Heaviside’s playful clarinet and tenor



saxophone bringing the party while Antica Culina’s heavily accented voice provides the romantic heart and soul. So, while ‘Tropical Moonlight’ bounces along at full pelt, and the energetic duet between Antica and Stu Wigby on ‘Summer’ is halfway between indie disco and gypsy wedding party, ‘I’ll Write You A Song’ is a stately piece and a great vehicle for showing off Antica’s bi-lingual singing.

Mostly what you get from the EP is a feeling of warmth. But to really feel the heat, catch them live.

**Sue Foreman**

educational, silly and funny songs that might still have more in common with Mr Tumble than Throbbing Gristle, but are some way beyond nursery rhymes: songs adults can sing and laugh along to.

They’re serious earworms for sure: it took us a good two days to extricate ‘Lily Oh Lily’ (about a girl who falls down a hole and can’t get out until she’s saved by an elephant 40 years later) from our internal jukebox, while the tongue-twisting ‘I’m A Little Lizard’ will come back to haunt us every time we watch *Life On Earth* now, but the fact they’re so instantly captivating makes them perfect for kids. And there’s some lovely stuff here: ‘Joni The Lonely Wolf’ is sort of ‘Puff the Magic Dragon’ with a happy ending and a nice bit of inter-species love, while ‘Don’t Stamp On An Ant’ is a love letter to all creatures great and small (mostly small).

Rhymes that are so simple and daft they’re borderline genius (“museum / Go see ‘em”, and “Along came a mosquito / Who said I’m pleased to meet you” being prime examples) dance over sweet, fresh arrangements – with Ride’s Andy Bell and The Dreaming Spires’ Robin and Joe Bennett contributing to the simple mix of guitar, piano, ukulele and children’s choir.

Nick was always a supremely gifted songwriter (go listen to The Candyskins’ ‘Monday Morning’ or ‘Wembley’ if you’re not familiar), and we’ll bet there won’t be another local album released this year that’s so completely all killer and no filler than this. Kids don’t care about cool; they care about great tunes. Kids know best.

**Victoria Waterfield**

Sponsored by



## SHAODOW

### ‘The Way Of Shao’ (DiY Gang)

Once you get past the prickly and slightly mawkish introduction, ShaoDow’s third full-length album features some of his best songs yet. At his best the east London rapper, who made his name on the Oxford scene while studying law at university before going off to sell over 10,000 CDs busking around the UK, sounds not just more confident, but bigger – like he’s physically grown, to become a larger than ever presence on his songs, bolstered by an impressive raft of collaborators and a powerful, inventive production that could often go head to head with that of far bigger American names (notably Nas, whose epic, almost orchestral arrangements are a regular touchstone).

ShaoDow’s opening rant about people being unable to pronounce his name might be semi-tongue in cheek but it’s unnecessary – and feels like a cheap opening shot. The rest of the album is a mixed bag but self-confident enough to stand up for itself; the opening title track in particular is a proper anthem, singer Kelly Woods adding big, soulful accompaniment to ShaoDow’s steely delivery.

His flow is faultless throughout, and the variety of guest turns – from Zeph Ellis’ autotuned r’n’b buzz on ‘Sharingen’ to the easy delivery of long-term friend and co-conspirator Zuby on ‘Price of Success’ – keeps things fresh.

There are awkward moments – nuggets of cod philosophy, occasional self justification – and like its predecessor ‘Kung Fu Hustle’, it could do with some trimming: maybe the clumsy if heartfelt ‘The Rise’, the cheesy, ponderous rock-lite ‘Right Now’, or pointless skit ‘The ShaoDow In Your Ear’, but the best here is strong, with ShaoDow’s machine gun rap attack on his solo piece ‘Katana Flow’, the beauty and the beast duet with Jo Simms on ‘Inferno’, and the bubbling, multi-lingual ‘Vibe Up’, with guests Duff, Entek, Wuzet and Smack providing three of the album’s highlights, and it’s gratifying to see ShaoDow continue to grow as an artist – one who’s always had his eyes on the prize, but never strayed from his DIY ethic.

**Dale Kattack**



## GARDEN CENTRE ‘Monster Energy’

(Self released)

Those of you who ever caught King of Cats live will struggle to forget Max Levy’s hyperactive performances that always seemed intended to get under your skin rather than in your face.

In a month that sees the return of Dean Ween to musical action, it’s appropriate that Levy is back with a new mini-album under the moniker of Garden Centre.

Max’s schtick is, like Ween, a cartoonishly creepy kiddie voice that invests his songs with a slightly queasy, macabre element, making them simultaneously silly and sinister, like nursery toys that’d stab your eye out as soon as they finish reciting some inane nursery rhyme. ‘York Hotel’ typifies his way with a niggly, hard-to-dislodge tune that sounds like it should be soundtracking some lysergic eastern European animation, or emanating from a haunted musical box. Musically everything’s a messy, tumbledown homebrew of bedroom instrumentation that Levy turns into hysterical lo-fi punk (‘Comfort of My Room’) or an oddly sombre country lament (‘Sorry Feeling Heart’). His voice remains a constant itch-beneath-the-skin worm that takes immense satisfaction in irritating twenty times as many people as it’ll ever charm, but it’s what gives this strange toddler-monster project its character.

Whether that’s a character you’d want anywhere near your house – probably hiding under your bed giggling at you demonically while you try to sleep – is another matter entirely.

**Ian Chesterton**

## LEE RILEY

### ‘Growth Trails’ (Self released)

The cover imagery for ‘Growth Trails’ is apt. It shows a monochrome aerial photograph of a broad, flat landscape, patterned by geographical elements and criss-crossed with regularly-spaced wind turbines. The influence of engineering and regularity on an otherwise free and chaotic form is reflected in the six pieces that make up ‘Growth Trails’ 50 minutes.

In earlier works, sound artist Lee Riley has used heavily treated, abstract guitar sounds to create unending swathes of echo/delay; bottomless chasms of drone that slowly shift

## LOUD MOUNTAINS

### ‘Love One Another’ (Clubhouse)

Of all Oxford’s Americana acts, Loud Mountains are best placed to keep the flame of American roots music burning, since brothers Sean and Kevin Duggan, who helm the band, hail from Connecticut.

The pair have lived in east Oxford since 2011 though, and with Loud Mountains have slowly but surely earned themselves a place at the Oxford-Americana Society’s top table alongside the likes of The Dreaming Spires, The August List and The Epstein.

While those bands bring an often genteel Englishness to play on their sound, Loud Mountains remain far closer to their roots, ‘Love One Another’ lead track ‘Walking On A Ton’ a full-on roadhouse country-blues blast, all Nowheresville goodtime vibes, big harmonies and harmonica. Similarly ‘She’s A Fire’, with its strong Whiskeytown vibe, and ‘Lethal Remedy’, with its Dylan-goes-Nashville stylings.

The stand-out moment comes on ‘Eloise’, where the band take a break from the big, driving numbers and take a more considered route, its aching, down-home weariness reminiscent of Conor Oberst, but also the more downbeat musings of 90s bands like The Gin Blossoms or even Marcy Playground. It’s a direction I’d prefer to hear them move more into, but maybe that’s the Brit in me; Loud Mountains, more than any other band locally, are entitled to play it the full-on American. There’s no denying they do it well.

**Dale Kattack**



## MOOGIEMANE & THE MASOCHISTS

### ‘Action Sampler’ (Self released)

Like local musical cousins Beaver Fuel, the trick with Moogiemane & the Masochists is to look – or listen – beyond the often clunky, clumsy low-rent music and grasp the humour and intelligence at play, however childish it might seem. This sampler for a forthcoming full album “about girls and film” features three songs about cameras and models as well as a bonus track about neither. ‘Disposable’ flies in the face of pretty much everything we’ve come to expect of Moogiemane’s Shan Sriharan (a man prone to writing songs about fantastically obscure historical figures and Wolf-Rayet stars), being a flurry and rant about the instructions on a disposable camera box, over a hysterical organ buzz that might have done as runner from an old Cardiacs recording session. He’s back on more familiar ground with the contemplative ‘Hoga Jen’ and ‘I Left My Camera on the Moon’, the latter based on a true story and one of the great regret songs of all time (you can’t just pop back and pick up that little box with all its unique photos inside, can you?), musically mixing a Chris Isaak-style surf-pop strum with lo-fi early-80s electro-pop.

It’s all so crudely wrought, musically, you know the band will never make it as big time pop stars but seriously, if *Mock The Week* or *QI* ever need an in-house band for some thoughtful but slightly silly musical interludes, Shan’s the man to call.

**Dale Kattack**

## NICK COPE

### ‘A Round of Applause For the Dinosaurs’ (Self released)

Nick Cope’s fifth album is subtitled “a collection of new songs for all the family”. Not “songs for children” – the whole family. And that sums up why Nick – for anyone who isn’t familiar, former singer with local pop legends The Candyskins – has made such a success of his chosen solo career. Anyone who is or has been the parent of a young child or toddler will know just how brain-melting the music aimed at them can be; we’ll go to our graves happy if we never ever hear ‘There’s A Worm At the Bottom of the Garden’. What Nick does is write clever,

Flower’ and ‘Rise Now Night Wonderer’ delves into incredibly abstract and sparse non-music. However, tapping into rhythm provides a series of humanistic hooks that help to guide the listener, rather than leaving them at the mercy of what can be intimidating and dense textures of sound. In this, ‘Growth Trails’ hints at a wide variety of potential influences or, at least, kindred spirits: shamanistic or ritualistic folk music; the lighter parts of Aphex Twin’s ‘Selected Ambient Works Volume II’; the churning metallic soundtrack to *Eraserhead*; the very outer limits of mid-1980s Sonic Youth; even an organic mirror held up to the crisp digital output of the Raster-Noton label.

**Simon Minter**



# TRACKS OF OUR YEAR

*In a rotten old year for politics and deaths, we still had plenty of great music to cheer us along. Oxford's fastest-rising stars, **GLASS ANIMALS**, surpassed themselves with their second album, and are rightly closing in on A-List rock star status. Already there are **RADIOHEAD**, whose 'Moon Shaped Pool' emerged with characteristic stealth and didn't disappoint, while we were thrilled to be taken completely by surprise by some brand new stars in waiting in town. So, as is traditional, here is Nighthshift's Top 25 Oxford songs of the year. Quality from start to finish - some absolute belters just missed out. Head over to the Nighthshift Facebook page to let us know who your favourites were.*



## 1 GLASS ANIMALS 'Life Itself'

If their debut album 'ZABA' found Glass Animals wandering in a lysergic haze – all peanut butter vibes – follow-up album 'How To Be A Human Being' let them loose at the party and they got down and got funky. This lead single was a ten-league boot-sized leap forward in style and energy for the band, a deliciously exuberant afterhours get up and get down mix of African rhythms, silken psychedelia, electro-pop and r'n'b that might have been a tea, weed and goodtimes-fuelled jam session with Radiohead, The Weeknd, Tame Impala and Mbongwana Star. Ultimately it was impossible to hear 'Life Itself' and not feel life was just great, and in 2016 of all years, that's a feeling we need more than ever.

## 2 COLDREDLIGHT

### 'Little Scorpion'

Before May this year Coldredlight were complete unknowns locally. This debut demo came out of nowhere and knocked us sideways. Gaby Elise Monaghan's solo set at the Punt knocked everyone else sideways and fast forward six months they're the name on everyone's lips. 'Little Scorpion' is a gloriously black-hearted kind of blues: sultry, seductive and highly venomous, Gaby and multi-talented co-conspirator Caspar Miles building the song up like an approaching thunderstorm beyond the horizon. Imagine Mazzy Star meeting Ry Cooder at the crossroads at midnight; then think darker and sweeter and poised to kill. The pair are still in their teens. Somewhere the Devil must have their souls kept in a bottle.

## 3 RADIOHEAD

### 'Burn The Witch'

Having sat up all night with a massive bong watching *Trumpton* and *The Wicker Man* Radiohead decided to write a pop tune to give toddlers and their parents nightmares. And they succeeded with flying colours – brighter than the ones in 'Burn the Witch's' old-school animated video, darkening

further evidence, if any was needed, of what an absolute gem of a band Vienna Ditto are, Hattie Taylor's seductive, serpentine croon – like a futuristic alien Billie Holiday – positively gliding over Nigel Firth's synthetic plucked and marching strings, Latin rhythms and synth squelches. Once you'd have needed a full orchestra and chorus line to create something this elegant; that two pop crazies with a shopping trolley of junk instruments can conjure it, just shows how completely fucking special Vienna Ditto are.

### 6 CASSELS 'Flock Analogy'

“A fish rots / From the head down” stutters Jim Beck at the start of Cassels single for the Too Pure singles club: a characteristically venomous line from a band who, despite showing their more tender, thoughtful side on 'Ignoring All the Lights and Tunnels' – a song about living too long – were at their best when snarling, cranking things up, kicking it all out with spindly, wiry rage and disgust and fucking off out of their when two minutes is up and you're picking your teeth up off the pavement and wondering why all teenage rock bands can't pack this kind of punch.

### 7 CAMERON AG 'Heroes'

If Cassels provide the short, sharp shock and smack to the jaw, Cameron Groat is the soothing balm and shoulder to cry on after. Possessed of a voice that could melt hearts of pure granite, he always sounds lost in some static mist as he makes himself sound small and vulnerable while simultaneously epic and heroic. This tumbling, twinkling lullaby is tender yet tough, riddled with uncertainty but bold as a tiger. A star still very much on the rise.

## 8 ESTHER JOY LANE

### 'Quest For Her'

And here's another rising star, albeit one who probably doesn't quite realise just how great she is. After the sad, soulful beauty of last year's debut EP, Esther's new songs find her meshing ever closely with her machinery, which chatters and whirrs, flutters and breathes around her – comforting but other-worldly. She's six foot tall and recently shaved her head and she has the tremulous voice of an angel, so she's basically Ripley from *Aliens* and The Little Matchstick Girl both at the same time. How cool is that?

### 9 LUCY LEAVE '40 Years'

Lucy Leave brought a most peculiar form of noise to the party this year, quickly becoming the band that all the other bands loved and name-checked. We remember when they started and were a right mess, but they've honed that wayward approach to pop, noise and jazz-rock to become something vital and unique – The Cardiacs in a musical tussle with Soft Machine, and here, on this seven-minute sprawl from their 'Fighter Pilot' EP, heading off down the highway with Bo Diddley and The Velvet Underground, a rolling stone gathering ill-fitting clumps of moss about them and making them all fit strangely together. Where they go from here even they might not know, but it's gonna be a cool ride.

## 10 KANADIA

### 'Into The Flames'

Born in Dorset, built in Abingdon, designed for

stadiums, Kanadia want to sound big and play the biggest stages. And why shouldn't they when they have songs like 'Into The Flames' in their armoury: a gorgeously understated silver thread of a song that takes Jeff Buckley's airy sense of longing and heartache and sets it loose in a musical landscape as wide as U2 ever dreamt of. Throughout its softly tumbling, chiming duration it threatens to break free and soar skywards, but never really does; the denied gratification makes it ten times the song it might be in less skilled hands.

## 11 TIGER MENDOZA & DAVE GRIFFITH

### 'The Shadow'

The collaboration between electro wizard Ian De Quadros and former Witches singer turned poet Dave Griffiths produced an exceptional album of menacing electronica in 'The Shadow'. Its title track, all glowering bass synth, parseltongue vocals and synthetic vox humana, was music made to soundtrack horror movies where the baddy – that unsleeping denizen of the void – is never seen, just felt as a malignant presence. There's nods to Nine Inch Nails, Gary Numan's most recent industrial/ electro music and something from the cellar into which you must never *ever* look. The Shadow's coming to get you. Tonight. While you sleep. We'd try and save you but we're cowering in the wardrobe.

### 12 KID KIN 'Masterclash'

18 months in the making, featuring some 50 instruments and clocking in just shy of nine minutes, 'Masterclash' was Kid Kin's most ambitious statement of intent so far. His intent seemingly to wrap the world in a vast blanket of sound – a thrilling crescendo of swirling, soaring guitars and intricate keyboard circuitry over several movements that shared a glacier with Sigur Ros and a cathedral atop a cloud with Ride and should really be providing the symphonic ambient soundtrack to the new series of *Life On Earth*.

### 13 DRORE 'Fukbags'

See that? Drore have a song called 'Fukbags'. They have others too, with titles like 'Hippy Crack' and 'Skinjob', and they sound like the High Priestess of Doom trapped in a jet plane that's hurtling to earth at a 100mph and is kicking and screaming to get off. Or Kat Bjelland leading the demon Abaddon's unholy forces into battle with the Norse gods. 'Fukbags' lurches from hollowed-out gothic lament into a blizzard of shrapnel and hate, concluding with a hiss and whine and sizzle that could be all their amps melting, and a reverbed “Thank you very much”. Yeah, your soul tasted just great.

## 14 RICHARD WALTERS

### 'Adeline'

More heartaching loveliness, this time from the king of Oxford ghost pop, whose fan-funded fourth album 'A.M.' did little to defrost the chilled magic he's so good at, instead simply cementing Richard as perhaps the finest singer we've produced and a man whose heart is right there on his sleeve and all yours if you treat him nice. “I'll go anywhere you want me to / The mountains, lakes and seas,” he croons on the too-short 'Adeline'. Who could resist such an offer from such a supreme talent?

## 15 BUG PRENTICE

### 'Don't Be That Dude'

Oddly-shaped, abstract and understated pop shapes from Ally Craig and crew on the highlight of their

new EP, taking a well-aimed pot shot at sex pests in a style that conjures images of absurdist Scottish poet Ivor Cutler cast as the hero of *Deathwish*, with a soundtrack orchestrated by Shellac and Young Marble Giants. Whimsical in its true sense, Ally has never knowingly taken the pop path most travelled, even here, at his most accessible,

## 16 THE BALKAN WANDERERS 'I'll Write You A Song'

Oh, it's all so sensible and serious round here, yeah? Let's have a party. And who better to bring it than Oxford's league of nations champions of Balkan folk, ska, gypsy dance and indie-punk. Saying that, 'I'll Write You A Song', from their recent 'Citizens of Nowhere' EP (yeah, up yours, Theresa May!), is the band at their most understated and romantic, but it does emphasise Antica Culina's gorgeously seductive Croatian voice, and Clare Heavyside's wandering tenor sax as the song swirls elegantly around the campfire at midnight, casting spells that no sane person wouldn't want to fall under.

## 17 THE EPSTEIN

### 'Finally Forgive'

With new album 'Burn the Branches', The Epstein continued their epic musical quest, increasingly leaving the Americana of their earlier albums for a sound closer to The Waterboys. 'Finally Forgive' rides into town on a rollicking skiffle rhythm but it's as big-hearted and romantic as we've come to expect of The Epstein, managing to turn something approaching heartache into something big and bold and heroic. Essentially it's Gloria Gaynor's 'I Will Survive' in a plaid shirt, heading into the forest to dance with the wolves.

## 18 WILLIE J HEALEY

### 'Pipedreams'

Young slacker dude Willie's self-styled “rock'n'stroll” was often so laidback it night as well have been lying on a sun lounger sipping White Russians with Jeff Bridges, but even then it could rouse itself to stomp down hard on that shred pedal and send a song to grunge heaven, as on this single from back in the summer, an almost lysergic approximation of Marc Bolan fronting Nirvana as they jammed out Bowie's 'Moon-Age Daydream', with Willie sounding like a choirboy who's drunk all the communion wine and slept in a skip: sweet and pure and rough as hell.

### 19 MAIIANS 'Parasaur'

One of a host of great bands we said farewell to in 2016, Maiians at least left us with their superb debut (and likely final) album, six coruscating instrumental journeys that stretched from Kraftwerk's autobahn to the languid coastal roads of Ibiza. Six hazily hypnotic journeys through math-rock rhythms, propulsive electro-pop and jazz fluidity. 'Lemon' almost topped this end of year list in 2014 and 'Sionara' featured in last year's Top 10, but 'Parasaur's' Fuck Buttons-charged sparkle and shimmer meant Maiians left us with a sliver of sunshine in our hearts.

### 20 LEADER 'Chasing You'

Big of beard and heavy of tattoo, Leader might have passed as another gang of Americana aficionados, but their stock in trade was anthemic stadium pop with a heart as big as Wembley and a windswept ambition that stretched to the

horizon. This chest-beating high point of their self-titled EP came armed with heroic chiming guitars and expansive vocals that reminded us a bit of Ultravox's Midge Ure standing on top of a mountain with U2 and Big Country, surveying their domain. To paraphrase Professor Peach in *The Italian Job*: we like 'em big.

## 21 THE LONG INSIDERS

### 'Bad'

Steeped in the murky diesel fumes of classic rockabilly, The Long Insiders have their lighter side, all Carl Perkins stomp and shake, but this single was a ghostly gothabilly creep, all spaghetti western harmonica and tremolo-heavy Gretch that sounded like Jody Reynolds getting it on with The Cramps on the set of some lost David Lynch movie. Probably sometime around midnight.

### 22 RAWZ 'School Is A Cage'

Stand-out track from Rawz's philosophical life journey on his 'The Path' album, the rapper with the heart of a poet railing against the constraints of the education system with a scathing flow that suggest he's learned plenty along the way. The man has a way of sounding totally chilled even when he's pissed off – maybe a little bit of Rakim in there – and though 'The Path' avoids bitterness for the most part, there's a righteousness about this cut.

## 23 PEERLESS PIRATES

### 'The Greatest Explorer on

### Earth'

2016 was the year Peerless Pirates came of age, with the release of their debut album and a star turn at Common People as well as more gigs than you could shake a cutlass at, and while much of their eponymous debut was already familiar from previous EPs and demos, 'The Greatest Explorer on Earth' was a reminder of why we need the Pirates – it's brazen fun, with its surf rock twang, rockabilly rhythm and Cliff Adams' heroic baritone leading the charge from atop the rigging. He may have had enough of the Morrissey comparisons, but to be compared to one of the finest singers and lyricists of the past 30 years and come out covered in glory is something to drink to in our book. Rum! Lots of it!

## 24 SLATE HEARTS

### 'Sandra'

Long hair, dungarees and grunge riffs might not get late Hearts into any hipster bars but they charmed their way into our hearts, and drilled into our craniums with the dense guitar blizzard of 'Sandra', the heaviest cut from their 'Blood Fluff' EP, a blistering show of sonic strength that, at just over two and half minutes, is way too brief and could carry on grinding for another half an hour before we even started to check our watches.

### 25 CHEROKII 'Shit Brown'

Let's finish on something of a guilty pleasure – guilty because this isn't a very nice song at all – it's crude and cruel, a vengeful put-down of some ex who's no longer in their good books. Then again it's so daft it's hard to take entirely seriously. Garage-noise duo Cherokii, who started the year named Cherokee, are a brazen riffs'n'beats force of nature whose path you'd best not get in the way of, and this potty-mouthed, supercharged singalong is their battle cry.



# GIG GUIDE

## THURSDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**KULA SHAKER: O2 Academy** – Back on tour to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of their multi-platinum selling debut album ‘K’, Crispian Mills and co. continue to indulge a love for Indian mysticism, spirituality and instrumentation, fusing them with their 60s psychedelia-inspired rock, so expect all the hits – ‘Tattva’, ‘Govinda’, Hey Dude’ – and more, while reliving Britpop’s mid-90s heyday.  
**PASTEL FRONTIER + INAIR: The Bullingdon** – Epic grungy rock from local crew The Pastel Frontier, plus grunge-pop and emo from InAir.  
**DOÑA OXFORD + OSPREY: The Cellar** – Funky old-school soul and boogie from the American singer and pianist, in the vein of Gladys

## Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>

### PRIMAL SCREAM: O2 Academy

It might have been The Loft’s lyric, “My magpie eyes are hungry for the prize,” that gave David Cavanagh the title for his book about Creation Records, but it was another of the legendary label’s signings, Primal Scream, who most characterised the phrase. Bobby Gillespie has spent over 30 years now grab bagging classic and cult influences – Love; The Byrds; The Rolling Stones; Suicide; Neu!; D.A.F. – to keep his often nebulous band fresh. Sometimes it’s worked; others, not so. The high point critically and commercially was of course the epoch-making ‘Screamadelica’ in 1991, though 97’s ‘Vanishing Point’ and 2000’s ‘XTMNTR’ are arguably better records. This year’s ‘Chaosmosis’, though, sounded like a band throwing too much at the wall in the hope it would stick – notably recent single ‘100% Or Nothing’, which sounds like something Depeche Mode left off ‘Speak & Spell’ for being too dull. Still, live Primal Scream can still be a potent force. Their secret show at The Zodiac in 2000, when their line-up boasted Kevin Shields and Mani, was a classic gig, and back in May they headlined Common People in South Park, which proved that however much Gillespie is always on the lookout for the next move forward, he’s not averse to throwing a bunch of old favourites into the set. Odd to think of the alternately militant and hedonistic singer as an elder statesman of rock these days but he’s got here by, at his best, turning derivation into something pioneering.



photo by Giulia Biasibetti

## DECEMBER

Knight, over in the UK as part of a European tour to promote her new album ‘Live & Loud’. Local funky bluesman Osprey supports.  
**PATCH WORK with MR TIES: The Cellar** – Eclectic mix of techno, house, funk, soul and more from underground legend Mr Ties, host of hedonistic Berlin night Homopatik, and tonight playing a five-hour set.  
**THE AUGUST LIST + LITTLE RED + ED LOFTSTEDT: The Library** – Excellent double bill of local roots stars, with dustbowl country blues from The August List, alongside deep, dark forest folk-pop from Little Red.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf** – Kicking off another busy gigging month, the veteran local swamp-blues, ska, pop and psychedelia stalwarts play a free show in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** – Oxford’s longest running open club night continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and more every week.  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon** – Weekly open mic club.  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure** – Weekly unplugged open session.  
**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford** – Open blues jam.

## FRIDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**UPRISING with 31HOURS + KANADIA + DOLLY MAVIES + WEDNESDAY’S WOLVES + A WAY WITH WORDS: O2 Academy** – The O2’s team-up with BBC Introducing Oxford to showcase new local artists tonight features a live set from rising starlets 31Hours, with their hazy, languid electro-pop and r’n’b. They’re joined by epic indie rockers Kanadia; blues-tinged acoustic folk-pop singer Dolly Mavies; female folk duo Wednesday’s Wolves, currently drawing comparisons to Joan Baez and Natalie Merchant, plus Swindon rockers A Way With Words.  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with FLIGHTS OF HELIOS + A RELUCTANT ARROW + TANNERS POOL: The Wheatsheaf** – Klub Kak host their final show of 2016, the year when they celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Tonight’s pre-Christmas party features space-rock electro explorers Flights of Helios, plus dark blues and folk-pop from a Reluctant Arrow, and funky rock from Tanners Pool.  
**DREADZONE: The Bullingdon** – Dreadzone return to town with their peculiarly British form of reggae, fusing roots sounds and dub with a folky feel, trance and breakbeats. 23 years old this year, veterans of ten albums (plus a Best of), six Peel sessions and countless tours and festival appearances, their enduring appeal rests in their ability to transform any room, or field, into a reggae party. The trippy, spacious, almost rustic feel of their sound might feel almost archaic compared to what’s come since but it’s following their own path that’s ultimately kept them on top of their game for so long.

**THE EGG: The Bullingdon** – Club night gig from former Oxford psychedelic dance crew The Egg, remaining members Maff and Ned Scott keeping the vibe alive with a new line-up, bringing space-cake Pink Floyd-meets-Funkadelic journeys to bear on extended funk and trance jams.  
**TEQUILA MOCKINGBYRD + BLACK BULLETS + CIRCUS 66: The Wheatsheaf** – OxRox hosts Melbourne’s garage rock and pop-punk trio Tequila Mockingbyrd, currently over in the UK to tour their debut album, ‘Fight & Flight’. Support from Basingstoke’s tattoo-heavy rock’n’roll, sleaze-punk and biker rock crew Black Bullets.  
**CANDY SAYS: Ultimate Picture Palace** – Candy Says make a long overdue return to local live action as they play a set of songs from their soundtrack to the comedy drama *Burn, Burn, Burn*, ahead of its Oxford premiere.  
**SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE + SPOTLIGHT JAM: James Street Tavern** – Sparky hosts his monthly bands and jam night, tonight with Savannah, Charms Against the Evil Eye and Reverend Black.  
**STEAMROLLER + HIPPY HAZE: Kidlington FC** – Classic 60s-style blues rocking in the vein of Hendrix and Cream from local veterans Steamroller.

## SATURDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**MOTORHEADACHE: O2 Academy** – Hard to believe it’s almost a year since Lord Lemmy of Kilmister departed this earthly plane to join Satan’s own house band, so here’s a tribute to the great man and his thunderous rock legacy.  
**BETTER THAN NEVER: The Bullingdon** – Pop-punk in a Blink 182 / Good Charlotte vein from the local rockers.  
**SIMPLE: The Bullingdon** – House and techno club night.  
**MAD DOG McREA + PEERLESS PIRATES: The Cellar** – Folk-rock, bluegrass and gypsy jazz from Plymouth’s Mad Dog McRea, championed by Mike Harding and chums with Seth Lakeman. Rollicking, roustabout rockabilly and high seas indie from Peerless Pirates.  
**SHOTGUN SIX + GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS + FIGMENT: The Wheatsheaf** – EP launch gig for local psych-rockers Shotgun Six, with glowering, towering instrumental post-rock in the vein of Godspeed and Sigur Ros from GITP.  
**BE GOOD + GREEN HANDS + JOHANNA GLAZA: Fusion Arts** – Stark, piano-led songs from London singer-songwriter Johanna Glaza at tonight’s Divine Schism show, alongside local indie rockers Be Good and Green Hands.  
**BRICKWORK LIZARDS: St. Giles Church** – Turkbilly, gypsy-hip hop, 30s jazz and Arab folk fusion from the enduring local faves, playing as part of the Jazz at St Giles autumn season.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Black Swan**  
**LINDISFARNE: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Newcastle’s enduring folk-rockers, still led by singer Ray Jackson, return to the intimate surroundings of Nettlebed’s weekly folk club.  
**HATFUL OF RAIN + THOM MORECROFT: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood** –

Wychwood Folk Club host Brighton’s bluegrass and old-time American-influenced British folk-roots, beloved of Mike Harding and Bob Harris. Shrewsbury’s rising folk-pop singer Thom Morecroft opens.  
**FUSED: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Indie, rock and grunge covers.  
**STEAMROLLER: Seacourt Arms, Botley**

## SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**ASTEROX + PETE LOCK & MARK BOSLEY + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE + MARK ATHERTON & FRIENDS + ADAM & ELVIS: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm)** – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of unplugged live music in the downstairs bar.  
**OXFORD YULEKULELES + MOON LEOPARD + MARK BOSLEY + MATT SEWELL + RIVERSIDE VOICES + SUPERLOOSE: Donnington Community Centre (5-9pm)** – Free unplugged live folk, blues, roots, and choral music at the monthly Donnington sessions, tonight with a festive set from the Oxford Ukulele Orchestra.  
**CHAS’N’DAVE: O2 Academy** – Back in town after their showing at Common People back in May, the critical reappraisal of norf Laarndan duo Charles Hodges and David Peacock continues apace with suggestions in respectable quarters that if Blur had written the likes of ‘Ain’t No Pleasing You’, it’d be considered a pop masterpiece. Whatever, you can bet pretty much anyone you meet over the age of about 20 can sing most of one of their hits, from ‘Gertcha’ to ‘Margate’ to ‘Rabbit’, their mix of cheery, beery pub singalong, boogie woogie and music hall – dubbed rockney – has proved remarkably timeless and if they pledged back in 2011 that they were off on their farewell tour, that seems to have no end date either.  
**NICK HARPER & THE WILDERNESS KIDS + AUTUMN SAINTS + OSPREY: The Bullingdon** – The acoustic guitar virtuoso, highly eclectic songwriter and political folk singer returns to town, with his new band The Wilderness Kids, having first made his name as a member of his dad Roy’s band, before collaborating with Glenn Tilbrook and The Levellers, among others.

## MONDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**THE NIGHT CAFE: The Bullingdon** – Exuberantly funky indie jangle from Liverpool’s fast-rising youngsters, out on a headline tour after recent supports to The Hunna and Sundara Karma.

## TUESDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**THE FRATELLIS: O2 Academy** – The decidedly chipper Glaswegian indie rockers return to the O2 after their show here at the end of last year, this time celebrating the tenth anniversary of their ‘Costello Music’ album, which featured monster hit ‘Chelsea Dagger’.  
**SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern** – Weekly open mic club night.

## WEDNESDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**ALTERNATIVITY with BROWN GLOVE + VOLKENFUNK + DEATHSEX BLOODBATH: The Wheatsheaf** – A decidedly untraditional, not-suitable-for-church celebration of the nativity tonight with theatrical gothic Weimar cabaret from Brown Glove, helmed by singer and keyboard player Gemma Moss who, a couple of years ago, took the birth of Christ thing a tad too far onstage. Volkenfunk take a historical trip through electro-pop, from Kraftwerk and

Moroder, through Daft Punk to Pet Shop Boys, with a bit of room for The Fall along the way, while Coventry’s pop degenerates Deathsex Bloodbath promise music inspired by “Meaningless sexual encounters; self loathing; murderous intentions and asphyxiwanking”. Those of you of a more traditional persuasion might prefer to stick to the Chrisdingle service at your local church.

## THURSDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**PRIMAL SCREAM: O2 Academy** – Rockin’ Bobby keeps bobbin’ along – *see main preview*  
**THE WEDDING PRESENT: O2 Academy** – David Gedge and his veteran indie warriors return to town, this time touring new album ‘Going Going’, their ninth studio album. Defiantly old school indie in sound and attitude, expect a whole heap of classic oldies from the band’s 30+ years career besides.  
**PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf** – Free show in the downstairs bar from the veteran local blues-rock eccentric.  
**SEVEN O’CLOCK JUNKIES + WET LACE: The Jericho Tavern** – It’s All About the Music showcase night with REM-inspired indie rockers Seven O’clock Junkies.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon**  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure**  
**BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

## FRIDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**BOSSAPHONIK with MARIANA**  
**MAGNAVITA: The Cellar** – A return to live action for one-time Oxford resident Mariana and her band, playing the samba, bossa nova and jazz of her native Brazil, her seven-strong band featuring members of Jamiroquai and Lily Allen’s band.  
**CATFISH: The Bullingdon** – Rising new stars of the British blues scene, not to be confused with The Bottlemen. Having hit number 1 in the IBBA Blues chart with their debut album ‘So Many Roads’, the Sussex-based quartet repeated the feat with their tribute to BB King, ‘When BB Sings the Blues’, and a slew of nominations at the British Blues Awards, in town tonight as guests of Haven Club.  
**ABSOLUTE BOWIE: O2 Academy** – Tribute to the late, great Thin White Duke.  
**TREVOR NELSON’S CLUB CLASSICS: O2 Academy** – The pioneering DJ and champion of urban music brings his roadshow to town, playing old school soul classics, modern r’n’b hits and cult club classics from the 1970s onwards.  
**THE CORSAIRS + NEON TEEPEE + SILVER RAVENS: The Wheatsheaf** – Rockabilly and psychobilly from Corsairs at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show.  
**MUDSLIDE MORRIS & THE REVELATORS: James Street Tavern** – Lively blues and boogie, with cigar box guitars and one-string Diddley bows.  
**CHRIS BECK & STEVE SIMPSON: Quaker Meeting House, St. Giles** – Folk, country, rock’n’roll and blues originals and covers with sing Chris Beck alongside Slim Chance’s Steve Simpson, in the intimate setting of the Quaker Meeting House.  
**ZZ TOPS: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – ZZ Top plus plus.

## SATURDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**THE SAUCY PEAR CABARET: The Bullingdon** – Burlesque cabaret from Jupiter Jove and the charmingly named Ginger Tart.  
**THE P30 MEMORIAL: The Bullingdon** – Jungle and drum&bass club night in memory of Paddy Juste, with all proceeds going to his children’s trust



## Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>

### MINOR VICTORIES / ULRIKA SPACEK:

#### O2 Academy

What do you get if you combine members of Mogwai, Editors and Slowdive? You get Minor Victories. You also get a supergroup that’s far removed from the ego trips or let’s-get-back-to-barroom-basics clichés of so many such get-togethers. Wanting to indulge some of the ideas that didn’t fit with his day job, Editors guitarist Justin Lockey phoned Slowdive singer Rachel Goswell, who knew Mogwai’s Stuart Braithwaite. Add in Justin’s film maker brother James and Minor Victories was born. Without Rachel, Justin or Stuart ever having met in the flesh, songwriting and recording was often done remotely but the resulting album is everything you’d hope for from its contributors: grandiose, fluid, sometimes moodily atmospheric, sometimes pedal-blasted, dramatic, euphoric and pensive. Rachel’s crystalline vocals combine well with the dark indie rock, shoegaze noise and surging post-rock of her bandmates, and The Twilight Sad’s James Graham and Mark Kozelek are on hand to make things even more super. The chance to witness such disparate talents together onstage and see what chemistry takes place is not an opportunity to pass up. And get there early for Ulrika Spacek, a Berlin-formed, London-based melting pot of classic indie, alt.rock and psychedelic influences that ranges from My Bloody Valentine fuzz and spangle and Spacemen 3-like drone/dirge, to Sonic Youth’s discordant, abrasive noise, through Krautrock motoring and onward to Deerhunter’s solemn spangle. They collect old television with the apparent intention of creating wormholes to another dimension, so as you might imagine, the music’s pretty out there. Man.

fund. Kenny Ken, DJ SS, DJ Guv, Ragga Twins, David Boomah and more play across two rooms.  
**MASSIVE + NASTY HIGH + BREAKING WAVES + THE SMOKIN’ PROPHETS: The Wheatsheaf** – OxRox celebrate Christmas in suitably rocking style with a double headline bill of hairy and heavy classic rock acts – Nottingham’s Nasty High, and Melbourne’s hard-gigging Massive, on tour in the UK to promote new album ‘Full Throttle’, a self-descriptive title if ever there was one. There will be riffs and there will be Jack Daniel’s.  
**ECHO4FOUR + GLUEMAN + MASIRO: The Jericho Tavern** – It’s All About the Music showcase night with Black Sabbath-influenced heavy rockers Echo4Four and King Crimson-meets-Shellac mathcore demons Masiro.  
**BEN HOLDER QUARTET: St. Giles Church** – Jazz at St. Giles round off their autumn season with



a Christmas party featuring violinist Ben Holder and his band.  
**PORT IN A STORM: Masons Arms, Headington** – First gig in 30 years from the local pop crew, whose original line-up featured a pre-Ride Steve Queralt, the band back to recapture their old magic and hope their fanbase hasn’t died off in the interim.  
**CALLOW SAINTS + AURALCANDY + THE OTHER DRAMAS: The Wheatsheaf, Banbury** – Final Strummerroom gig of the year up in Banbury, with Aylesbury’s melodic rockers Callow Saints, plus buoyant folk-op from Auralcandy and fuzzggun garage-pop from The Other Dramas.  
**THE MIGHTY CADILLACS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon** – Classic blues and rock’n’roll.  
**PETE FRYER BAND: The White House STEAMROLLER: Old Anchor, Abingdon DISCO BISCUITS: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Disco and funk covers.

**SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**BLOSSOMS: O2 Academy** – Last time round in Oxford Stockport’s indie rockers were playing at the Bully and snuggled near the top of pretty

*Friday 16<sup>th</sup>*  
**UNCLE ACID & THE DEADBEATS / VODUN: The Bullingdon**  
Sod pre-Christmas good cheer to all men, it’s time to rock. It’s always time to rock and has been since the end of the 1960s and the acid-fuelled first flowing of heavy metal, a time that Cambridge’s Uncle Acid & the Deadbeats worship like a SecondComing. Right up to the point of using period instruments and recording techniques to fully capture a sound that billowed over the horizon like a vast storm cloud, ridden by Black Sabbath, Alice Cooper and Deep Purple. Led by Kevin Starrs, the band’s huge riffs and deep, rolling grooves make room for doom and southern rock but remain loudly and proudly in that late-60s/early-70s epoch and, on the evidence of new album ‘The Night Creeper’, are unlikely to be moved, even with the use of heavy machinery or tactical nuclear weapons. Great support tonight from Vodun, back in town after supporting Limb earlier in the year, their sound a heady mix of psychedelic groove rock, sludge, Afro-futurism and a whole lotta soul. Basing their entire existence on the ancient west African religion Vodun go the whole concept album hog on recent album ‘Possession’ while sounding something like Aretha Franklin fronting Royal Blood on a mescaline trip. Singer Oya has one hell of a set of pipes on her, and anyone who remembers her fronting expansive soul-rock crew Do Me Bad Things back in the mid-noughties will remember just how powerful a soul voice she has.



much every ones-to-watch list for 2016. Nine months, several tours, a Number 1 album (for their eponymous debut), Reading and Leeds Festivals and a Truck Festival appearance later, they’re playing the O2’s downstairs room, having fulfilled most of those hopes and expectations. With actual bands still a bit out of fashion even in indie circles, they tick plenty of the right boxes, being both chart-ready and suitably gobby in classic Manchester indie style.  
**YOUTH CLUB: O2 Academy** – Southend’s electro-tinged funk-pop quartet head off on tour to promote new single ‘Sorry’. We’ve heard it and they should be.  
**CLAY: The Cellar** – Leeds’ anodyne electro-tinged funk-pop quartet take time out from playing under the name Youth Club at The O2 tonight to play at The Cellar. Choices, choices.  
**GOAN DOGS + BEN DEY + JOE OSBOURNE: The Bullingdon** – An exotic blend of Tex-Mex, desert rock, rockabilly and surf from Bristol’s Goan Dogs, drawing comparisons to Beirut, Caexico and Ry Cooder.  
**NO HORSES + FIREGAZERS + PURPLE MAY + SONG & SUPPER ROOMS + LEWIS NEWCOMBE-JONES: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-8.30pm)** – Giddyup Music host a free afternoon of acoustic folk, roots and blues in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar.

**MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**St. AGNES FOUNTAIN: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Festive folk songs from Chris While, Julie Mathews, Chris Leslie and David Hughes.

**TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**MINOR VICTORIES + ULRICA SPACEK: O2 Academy** – A supergroup that’s actually musically super, as members of Editors, Slowdive and Mogwai come together – *see main preview*  
**SOFAR SOUNDS: Venue TBA** – The Oxford branch of the global pop-up gig network host their last show of the year, with acts to be announced alongside the city centre venue the day before the gig – sign up to their mailing list to get in on the action.  
**INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm, dark wave and death rock club night, with residents Doktor Joy and Bookhouse.  
**SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern**  
**OSPREY & FRIENDS: St. Aldates Tavern** – Blues jam with the veteran local singer and guitarist and chums.

**WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**WILLIE J HEALEY: The Bullingdon** – *Nightshift* cover star Willie plays a hometown show – *see main interview feature*  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

**FRIDAY 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**PEERLESS PIRATES + JAMES BELL & THE HALF MOON ALL-STARS + ART THEEFE + THE OUTSIDE: O2 Academy** – Rounding off their most successful year so far – a year when they released their debut album, appeared on the front cover of *Nightshift* and led the line on the Uncommon stage at Common People Festival –

Peerless Pirates host a rum-fuelled grog-abilly party with tales of high seas derring do, bodice-ripping romance and general mischief and skulduggery.  
**THE CRAIG CHARLES FUNK & SOUL ROADSHOW: O2 Academy** – BBC Radio’s most infectiously enthusiastic DJ brings his party-starting collection of soul, funk and rare grooves back to town for a traditional Christmas party set.  
**UNCLE ACID & THE DEADBEATS + VODUN: The Bullingdon** – Riffage from the dawn of time. Or at least the dawn of the 1970s – *see main preview*  
**UTE + ELEPHANTS + LUCY LEAVE + SLATE HEARTS: The Cellar** – Reforming five years almost to the month since they split up, the former *Nightshift* cover stars host their own Christmas party in aid of the Michael Barry Fund, the trio’s dark, inventive pop switching between almost Vaudevillian cabaret, through latter-day Radiohead electronica and onto Grinderman-inspired gothic blues. Top drawer support from two of this year’s best new acts – off-kilter jazz-rock/noise crew Lucy Leave, mixing up The Cardiacs with Soft Machine, and nu-grungers Slate Hearts, whose raw but melodic noise draws on Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins and Placebo. Grunge pop act Elephants complete the live bill, while Progressively Less Elephant DJs play indie party tunes in between and after.  
**PYT: The Bullingdon** – Disco, funk and soul club night.  
**EARINAID + STOLBY + TEMPLE CARTEL: The Wheatsheaf** – It’s All About the Music showcase with caustic rockers Earinaid ina Husker Du/Teenage Fanclub style.  
**OXROX CHRISTMAS PARTY: Fat Lil’s, Witney**  
**THE MIGHTY CADILLACS: Red Hot Blues, Didcot**  
**STEAMROLLER: Kidlington FC** – NSPCC benefit.

**SATURDAY 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**CATE LE BON: The Bullingdon** – Carmarthenshire’s finest pop talent brings *Nightshift* the only Christmas present we could wish for – a evening of pop genius – *see main preview*  
**FUTURE PERFECT CHRISTMAS PARTY: The Bullingdon** – Post-Cate le Bon party with this year’s hottest new local promoter, featuring guest DJs and booze.  
**LEATHERAT: O2 Academy** – Banbury’s high-octane folk-rockers bring their party to Oxford, having made their name playing pubs and clubs around the Shire over the past 12 years as well as Cropredy Festival. Fairport’s Ric Sanders and Chris Leslie have appeared on Leatherat’s albums, while the band have shared stages with Status Quo, The Levellers and Jethro Tull along the way.  
**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with KANADIA + THE BALKAN WANDERERS + THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + CHARLIE LEAVY: The Wheatsheaf** – The monthly live music club hosts its traditional Christmas showcase of its favourite bands of the year, this year’s quality bill featuring stadium-sized indie rockers Kanadia, inspired by Radiohead, Muse and Coldplay; recent *Nightshift* cover stars and eastern European folk, ska and indie fusion party starters The Balkan Wanderers; Reading’s superb surf/trance/electro/punk duo The Pink Diamond Revue, and soulful acoustic singer-songwriter Charlie Leavy.  
**CATGOD: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre** – Album launch gig for the band formerly known as Roberto y Amigos, and helmed by Neverlnd guitarist Robin Christensen-Marriot, lending a Latin edge to strung-out electro-fuelled

pop.  
**FLUID: The Cellar** – Grime, bass and drum&bass at Fluid’s Christmas bash, with Black Butter Records’ Woz on the decks alongside resident DJs.  
**STRIKE ONE + QUINTENS: The Jericho Tavern** – It’s All About the Music showcase night, with Newbury’s punk newcomers Strike One.  
**CHRISTMAS SINGALONG: James Street Tavern (5pm)** – Oxford Beard Festival host a festive singalong session, with local acts Beard of Destiny, Cherokii, STEM; come and join them in yuletide merriment and song.  
**EWAN McLENNAY + SHIVE LIGHT: The Swan Inn, Ascott-under-Wychwood** – Wychwood Folk Club welcomes balladeer and storyteller Ewan McLennay, with his passionate, pathos-infused songs of social justice.  
**SHEPHERD’S PIE: Fat Lil’s, Witney**

**SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**LAIMA BITE + GLENDALE TRAIN + ECLECTICA + THE JESTERS: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm)** – Klub Kakofanny host a free afternoon of unplugged live music in the downstairs bar.  
**GALACTIC EMPIRE + NICK JOHNSTON: O2 Academy** – Heavy metal from the Dark Side (isn’t it all?) with *Star Wars*-costumed riffmongers.  
**DAISY + 31HOURS + HOLY MOMENTS + FLATLANDS: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre, St. Ebbe’s** – Tigmus gig night, with local singer-songwriter Luke Allmond going out under his new name Daisy, alongside spacy electro-pop crew 31 Hours and more.  
**TOM IVEY: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon** – Funky electric and acoustic blues.

**MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**BELSHAZZAR’S FEAST: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Best known as fiddle and oboe player with Bellowhead, Paul Sartin has been a staple on the English folk circuit for nigh on twenty years and together with accordion player Paul Hutchison makes up Belshazzar’s Feast, bringing humour and virtuosity to old English dance tunes, ballads, war poems and folk standards.

**TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**HALFWAY TO 75 CHRISTMAS JAMBOREE: The Bullingdon** – Roots and Americana festival Halfway To 75 follow their sold-out summer shindig with a festive jamboree, with live sets from rough’n’ready blues ramblers CC Smugglers, the Bedfordshire’s busking ensemble inspired by old-time Texan folk and swing and bluegrass; honky tonk, classic country, western swing and blues outfit Hannah Johnson & the Broken Hearts, who headlined back in July, plus the Savoy Jazz Swingtet and more.  
**ZURICH: The Jericho Tavern** – Dark and shiny new wave synth-pop in the vein of Interpol and The National from the local starlets, launching their new Christmas single – *see Introducing feature*.  
**CAROLS & CAPERS with MADDY PRIOR & THE CARNIVAL BAND: St. John the Evangelist** – The Brit-folk legend hosts a festive evening of traditional song.  
**LET THE LADY SING with OUT OF THE VILLAGE + CORA PEARL + LAZ CUNLIFFE: The Wheatsheaf** – It’s All About the Music’s monthly showcase of female singers.

**THURSDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
**HAZE: The Bullingdon** – One of the local bands looking set to become firm favourites in 2017, recent Demo of the Monthers Haze sign off on 2016 with a headline gig, their understated post-punk rock recalling Wire, Bogshed and early Adam & the Ants at times.  
**EASTER ISLAND STATUES: The Jericho Tavern** – It’s All About the Music showcase.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

**FRIDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC CHRISTMAS BALL: O2 Academy** – It’s All About the Music host a Christmas extravaganza, with sets from reformed local metal titans Black Candy, plus Deadbeat Apostles; Osprey & the OX4 Allstars; Crystallite; Beard of Destiny; Country For Old Men; Temper Cartel; Daisy; The Other Dramas; Kuiper; Flatlands and more, plus DJ sets from Prism veterans Remould, Marty P and Northern Mark.  
**HELL’S GAZELLES + DEATHWISH: The Wheatsheaf** – OxRox host their Christmas party in rocking style with local heavy rock heroes Hell’s Gazelles whose melodic, riff-heavy blend of 70s and 80s rock beasts like Judas Priest, Van Halen, Iron Maiden and Guns’n’Roses has made them one of the best new bands to emerge on the local rock scene this year. They’re joined by Manchester’s hard rock/metal crossover crew Deathwish.  
**DIRTY EARTH BAND: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Party favourites from the local rockers.

**SATURDAY 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**A REGGAE CHRISTMAS: The Bullingdon** – An Oxford institution now after 20 odd years, A Reggae Christmas welcomes in Santa and the baby Jesus with some serious riddim. This year’s star atop the tree is lyrical Rasta chief Macka B, back in town as guest of Count Skylarkin and co. having made his reputation over 30 years as one of the UK’s finest ever dancehall toasters. Inspired by U-Roy, I-Rot and Prince Far I, he’s toured the world with The Wailers, Burning Spear and Lee Perry among others. He’ll be joined tonight by Desta\*Nation DJs; Count Skylarkin; Constant Jammin, and Dasher & Wazzy.

**SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup>**  
Merry Christmas to all our lovely readers. This year we’d quite like a caracal kitten, please.

**MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**PETE FRYER BAND: Seacourt Arms, Botley** – The local blues veteran plays his traditional Boxing Day show.  
**DEEP COVER: The Bullingdon**

**TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**A VERY MERRY NANGMAS: The Cellar** – Nang Tunes club night, with Shed, JNK, Goe

*Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion is the 20th of each month - no exceptions. Email listings to editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk. All listings are copyright Nightshift Magazine.*



*Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>*  
**CATE LE BON: The Bullingdon**  
In a world that slumps on its collective sofa celebrating sterile, overly-trained vocal mediocrity on prime time telly, real stars like Cate le Bon remain the cherished property of the luck few. Hailing from a tiny village in Carmarthenshire, but now residing in the rather less tiny Los Angeles, Le Bon is one of the most singular vocal talents of recent years with a haunting voice and dark lyrical edge, fixated on death for much of the time, that immediately recalls Nico, but wrapped in a warm, rich Welsh accent that makes her unique. While her earliest songs were sung in Welsh, she performs entirely in English now, which is a shame since old songs like ‘O am Gariad’ are as bleakly beautiful as music gets. After supporting Gruff Rhys on tour and playing in Neon Neon with him, Cate released her debut album, ‘Me Oh My’, *Nightshift*’s favourite album of the last few years, maintaining an air of imperious grace as it messed with all manner of lo-fi sounds and eclectic pop ideas, pitched somewhere between Bobbie Gentry and The Velvet Underground. Since then she’s gone on to play at Glastonbury and tour support The Manics, releasing a succession of quirky, beautiful albums, always too off kilter with mainstream pop audiences to make the break into the big time. Their loss, our gain, as we get to see her in such intimate surroundings. Really people, you need to try harder when looking for your pop heroes and heroines.

Shadles and A Dogg playing funk, disco, house and techno.

**THURSDAY 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

**FRIDAY 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE BIG TEN INCH: The Cellar** – Count Skylarkin’ hosts a post-Christmas special of his 50s and 60s rock’n’roll and surf-rock club night.  
**MASSIVE + TEQUILA MOCKINGBYRD + PILGRIM + TRAUMA UK: The Wheatsheaf** – OxRox’s final show of the year with heavy, hairy rockers Massive; Australian garage rock and pop-punk crew Tequila Mockingbyrd and more.

**SATURDAY 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**COWLEY ROAD NEW YEAR’S EVE FESTIVAL: The Bullingdon**  
**FLUID: The Cellar** – Bass amd grime into 2017





## THREE TRAPPED TIGERS / THE PHYSICS HOUSE BAND / KID KIN

### O2 Academy

Received opinion states that prog and math rock are introspective, self-justifying genres, with no relevance beyond their complex musical conventions. Maybe so, but on a day in which the US electorate has made a decision with vast international

ramifications, the inward gaze is a tempting option. Kid Kin provides a warm, amniotic space for reflection, with stately keys and meditative fuzzy guitar. Sometimes it's feels a bit too pretty, but then he brings in a bass synth that sounds like the

Matterhorn clearing its throat, and we are swept up again. He's adept at live looping too: make a mistake with that and you have to live with it for a fair while: a bit like voting in a president.

Received opinion states that

contemporary prog is a rollercoaster music that can only retain interest through continually switching direction. Whilst The Physics House Band's set might have so many time signatures that it could be some sort of muso version of bingo calling, they are also fantastic at setting the controls for full steam ahead. They've got the intricate synths and the twiddly guitar phrases, but they aren't afraid of chugging out a chunky groove that could almost be Rainbow. Despite their nerdy name, it's great to see that tricksiness can be wonderfully augmented by sweat, passion and *Whistle Test* hair. They sell t-shirts after the gig; given the comprehensive demo workout we'd just witnessed, they might have done better selling drumkits.

Received opinion states that prog is a backward-facing genre, but Three Trapped Tigers show us what can be done when math rock is influenced by the sounds and structures of electronica. They are a little like prog jesters Focus signed to Warp, and their music is very silly, although in a world containing the phrase President Trump, "silly" may need recalibrating. Regardless, their maximalist monkey seizure music is fiery, fun and surprisingly funky. Received opinion says that technical performers like this can't be joyous and exciting, but then again, received opinion had fifty quid on Clinton to win.

*David Murphy*

## GLASS ANIMALS O2 Academy

The day before this homecoming show Radiohead were announced as next year's Glastonbury headliners. Glass Animals' turn at the top spot surely can't be so far off.

The Oxford quartet's rise and rise has been nothing short of staggering since the release of debut album 'ZABA' in 2014 and it's a genuine thrill to see them play this gig, which sold out weeks in advance.

There's no standing on ceremony though, the brief intro of 'Premade Sandwiches' kicking straight into 'Life Itself' and a huge wave of euphoria washes from the stage. David Bayley has come on some as a performer, endless world tours instilling something of the showman in him. This is his party and he's dancing like no-one's watching, flapping his arms like a bird or getting jiggy with a tambourine. 'Youth' comes and goes in a breathless scurry, while 'Season 2, Episode 3' trickles and creeps like a haunted old Amiga games console, slight and nervy but hitting the dancefloor rather than brooding in the corner.

Glass Animals are a band who like their vibe trippy and woozy but upbeat and inclusive. Their funk is natural and comes well chilled and

they genuinely look like they're having fun up there. "In case you didn't know, we're from Oxford," announces Bayley to a huge cheer. "This is where we grew up seeing some of our favourite bands, so it's amazing to be on this stage," he continues, obviously savouring every second of this ongoing triumph.

That vibe doesn't so much dip as wander off in a slightly stoned haze on occasions but the band never let it stray too far, 'Gooley' bringing it all back, as the packed throng shout 'Peanut butter vibes' as one. And then they're leading a mass clap-along on the funk-ed-up hip hop stomp of 'Pork Soda' that closes the show.

It's all too easy to take this kind of Oxford success story for granted now, but as Glass Animals sign off yet another sold-out show and head out on another global trip, we think back to those early gigs at The Jericho Tavern and East Oxford Community Centre when the audiences numbered in the dozens rather than the thousands and wonder whether there really is something in the water in Oxford. Next stop Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage? Only a fool would bet against it.

*Dale Kattack*

## THE LOVELY EGGS / TENDER PREY / LUCY LEAVE

### The Cellar

Awkward. Lopsided. Wonky. Three words that spring to mind when trying to describe Lucy Leave's music. All intended as compliments as the band's variously angular, unkempt and fluid post-punk funk, odd jazzy rhythms, almost dubby interludes and oblique sense of melody keep you guessing and always entertained. Little wonder the trio have become firm favourites with so many other local musicians. There are moments when they capture some of The Pop Group's wayward dub-funk-punk, while the frenetic jazzcore of 'Chant/Fresh Crepes' rides closer to The Cardiacs. By contrast set closer 'Friends' is tremulous, oddly tender, but sums up the band's leftfield approach to a pop tune. So much about the band shouldn't work, shouldn't fit together, but it all does, wonderfully. Make these wonky, lopsided awkward pop weirdoes your new favourite Oxford band too.

Cardiff's Tender Prey are no more straightforward. They're dressed like Shaolin paramedics for starters and seem to be similarly inspired by that flush of post-punk's maverick invention, singer Laura Bryon yelping and cooing lines like "I am a pioneer of absolutely nothing in particular" over her band's moody, grungy pop that hits its stride with the gothic slow-building 'Tequila Worm', and keeps getting higher with some dark, driving psychedelia led by an off-the-leash organ. Like a noisier, more pensive

Altered Images, they sweet and dangerous.

The Lovely Eggs know all about making the sweetest pop songs sound like a threat to take you outside and teach you a painful lesson. Lancastrian couple Holly Ross and David Blackwell have a musical chemistry with few equals and a shared sense of sharp but daft northern humour that infects even their most philosophical songs, like 'Fuck It' ("an official anthem for Lancashire," says Holly), which isn't the splenetic outpouring of rage you might expect, but an oddly affecting lullaby. 'I Shouldn't Have Said That' really is all punky brattishness and sounds like a lost X-Ray Spex song, but 'Magic Onion' is a weirdly gorgeous psychedelic mantra and shows Blackwell up as a seriously versatile drummer in the mould of Can's Jaki Liebezeit. Never knowingly over-serious, the pair pay touching but humorous tribute to the old after-hours house party scene of their home town, killed off by extended licensing hours and finish their with surreal singalong anthem 'Don't Look At Me (I Don't Like It)' with its dog dirt eyes, washing line smiles and, yes, sausage roll thumbs.

Possibly the most quintessentially eccentric English band of the modern age, we sometimes daydream we could live next door to the daftest, maddest, funniest, noisiest, most astute couple in the street. The Lovely Eggs are pop music fried to perfection.

*Dale Kattack*

## PENNY RIMBAUD, EVE LIBERTINE & LOUISE ELLIOT / THE STRING PROJECT

### East Oxford Community Centre

The bar at EOCC couldn't be a better venue for tonight's event, with its history of hosting oddball and leftfield happenings. First up is Pieman (or is he a mathematician called Pi Man?), a human beatbox, plus a sampler and effects unit for good measure. With flawless timing he comes across as a one-mouth Tackhead, a dizzying clash of beats and swirling otherworldly noises, throwing in a snatch of Massive Attack's 'Angel' to keep us on our toes.

The String Project are a hugely enjoyable collective of violins, double bass, drums and vocals, with contributions from Pieman and Bossaphonik's Dan Ofer guesting on piano. Taking in ska, folk and straightforward pop they sound best when all three violins are working together, one player getting extremely animated, jumping around like something off *The Muppet Show*. The fact that the timing is a little loose and one or more violins may be slightly out of tune only adds to their appeal. This is music made with love and for fun rather than aiming for total perfection, and let us hope they stay just as they are.

Crass were a band of contradictions; a punk band with a firm anarchist manifesto, yet clearly so well-rehearsed that they played with almost militaristic tightness. Fervent political activists from the outset they produced a series of hoaxes, one of which, a fake taped

conversation between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, made headlines and was discussed around Thatcher's cabinet table and prompted questions in Parliament. They also faced a number of prosecutions for obscenity, contributing to their disbanding in 1984. Former members Penny Rimbaud and Eve Libertine here perform a series of poems backed by the improvised saxophone of Louise Elliot, far from their punk roots but still challenging in its own way. Rimbaud explains that this is a kind of skeleton of Crass, that their approach was right for the time but now they need to be more 'sinewy'. The highly personal content is a world away from the uncompromising, confrontational lyrics of Crass: "Then truly love is all, or love is not at all, for as long as we are deluded by the conceits of meaning we cannot truly love, there is no question to ask. Love is not a word, for love is that which is beyond love, before beginning without end". All this is delivered with theatrical force and conviction, Libertine's voice still retaining the power that once turned its force towards attacking militarism and sexism. It's difficult to know what to make of the performance; it could as easily be profound revelation as pretentious hippy twaddle. But the passion and uncynical self-belief is beyond question, and food for thought at the very least.

*Art Lagun*

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STRAY BIRDS

The Bullingdon

As my highlight of Cambridge Folk Festival last year, the announcement of a debut Oxford date for Pennsylvania’s Stray Birds created a great deal of anticipation. Had I remembered them too fondly through the haze of summer sunshine and festival ale, or had they really been that extraordinary? I’ve been caught out before, but with a clear head and a year of separation I’m pleased to say that

for once I’m not disappointed. All that I remember loving about the Stray Birds performance is still here tonight: close harmonies that occasionally break for Maya de Vitry’s vocals, reminiscent in tone to Gillian Welch, to soar away; urgent bluegrass, which turns at times throughout the set to honky tonk and even sometimes gospel, all with the same quality. Tonight the band are joined by

drums, which add weight to some of the older tracks, their debut full length having been somewhat more acoustic than their latest release, ‘Magic Fire’. The result is a formidable sound that breathes new life into the likes of ‘Best Medicine’ and, in particular, ‘The Bells’, which is driven forward with gusto. These provoke the biggest audience reactions of the night: although the new album

has not long been released, they are met by a room full of people mouthing the words. Throughout the night Stray Birds also weave in almost all of the tracks from their ‘Echo Sessions’ EP, a live recording of five covers, ranging from Townes Van Zandt’s ‘Loretta’ to Jimmie Rodgers classic ‘Blue Yodel #7’. The only omission is Nanci Griffith’s ‘I Wish It Would Rain’, a solitary disappointment from a set which is a masterclass in the genre. *Jo Cox*

AMBER ARCADES / ELLA

The Cellar

Being forced to endure a top-deck shuttle bus journey from Bristol Airport to Bath would be more likely to inspire most people to misanthropic and perhaps even homicidal rage than to write a song, but not Ella van der Woude. The penultimate track on her new EP was conjured up in just such circumstances, and is remarkably measured to boot. Elsewhere in a set of material that would probably endear itself to fans of Waxahatchee and Courtney Barnett is a cover of “a French goth song from the 80s”, mere mention of which no doubt has the ears of *Nightshift*’s esteemed editor immediately pricking up. Apparently, Ella learned it at the request of a friend for her wedding – which, on this evidence, must have been an eventful bash. Certainly more eventful than the headliners’ day. Not that Annelotte de Graaf, aka Amber Arcades, is disappointed by that. On the contrary, given that

recent tour tribulations have included the classic van breakdown, it’s positively welcome. This isn’t de Graaf’s first time in Oxford; she’s previously visited as a law student (as a former legal aide on UN war crimes tribunals, she’s presumably used to hearing even more routinely horrifying and upsetting things than you would on a Bastille record) and indeed could have ended up doing a semester in the midst of the dreaming spires. She opted to go to the US instead, though, which is where she started playing music. “I don’t regret it.” Neither, she can be assured, do we. Backed by her support band, plus a bassist and a drummer who looks like Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall if he’d stuck his fingers in a socket while on holiday in Hawaii and who appears to be drying tea towels on his drum skins, de Graaf crafts instantly charming jangly indie pop smeared with pretty 60s psych. It’s unafraid of melody and clean lines; it’s Deerhunter, Camera Obscura, Angel

Olsen, perhaps (with the deliciously chiming guitars of ‘Come With Me’) even Sonic Youth at their most placid. Any fears Amber Arcades may have shot their bolt by playing ‘Right Now’ – arguably the best track on debut LP ‘Fading Lines’ – just two songs into the set are swiftly dispelled by the haze of sensitive, daydreamy loveliness that follows, in which ‘Constant’s Dream’ is particularly spellbinding. An interpretation of Nick Drake’s ‘Which Will’, that de Graaf confesses is “very free,” wins even more friends, but most appreciation is reserved for another of the singles from ‘Fading Lines’, ‘Turning Light’, which sees Amber Arcades morph into Stereolab and banish the summery wistfulness with a bracing autumnal squall that shakes us into the realisation that we’ve just witnessed something very special indeed. *Ben Woolhead*

THE LOW ANTHEM

O2 Academy

When Good Bands Go Bad: it could be the title of a new Channel 5 show. If they need a group to kick it all off, they should head straight for The Low Anthem. Let’s get this straight: last time we saw the Rhode Island outfit, we were mesmerised. *Nightshift*’s companions tonight are all similarly enamoured of a band who could seemingly capture the breeze and spin it into song. Long before tonight’s gig is over two have walked out – a first for both of them – while another has been reduced to an almost hysterical fit of giggles by the self-indulgent abomination served up on stage, one made worse by their own engineer turning the sound – which was perfectly fine for stand-in support act Jack Little – into a sonic mudbath. It starts badly: ‘In Eyeland’, from their recent concept album of the same name, is an elongated ambient collage of sounds, from birdsongs – which here sound more like polystyrene rubbed against glass – and train whistles, to a gong, a typewriter and some pompous poetry reading. Pretentiousness levels are high from the off. Three songs in it’s evident the band have either joined a religious cult since we last saw them

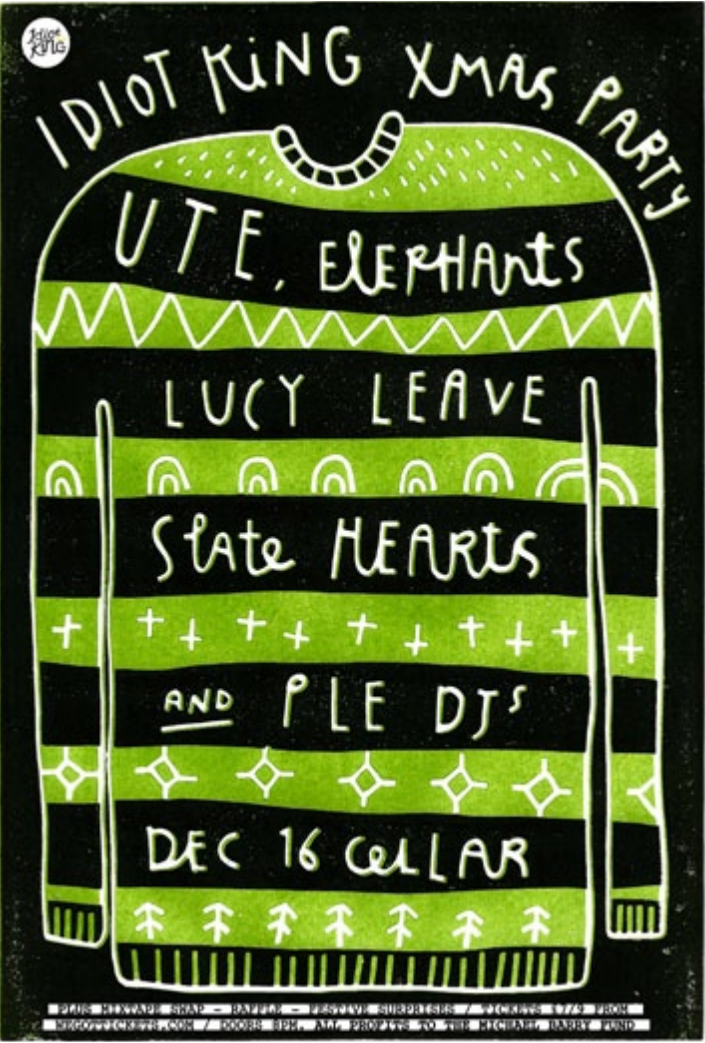
or dropped some serious amounts of acid. They make Pink Floyd sound like Slaves in the ponderous prog-rock stakes, even the sudden bursts of wired guitar noise failing to add any brightness to the muffled dirge, a resolute lack of any kind of communication with the audience – or even an acknowledgement there’s anyone else in the venue – merely exacerbating the feeling The Low Anthem have disappeared, not into the parallel universe that their song ‘The Air Hockey Fire’ suggests, but up their own backsides. Christ, they even manage to render the magnificent ‘This Goddamn House’ a muggy, emotionless shrug. We stick around, hoping things will get better, but when they set out on a tortuous, torturous cod-operatic prog workout that sees half the remaining audience stood with their fingers in their ears to protect against the oppressive shrillness of the keyboards and Florence Wallis’ wailing, we know the love affair is over. Not that the song is; we finally head for the door as it enters what feels like its third week, and for all we know they’re still up there onstage, lost in a horrendous heap of self-indulgent horseshit of their own making. *Dale Kattack*

THE WAVE PICTURES

The Cellar

A dozen years and a similar number of albums into their enduringly low-key career and The Wave Pictures aren’t giving up any time soon. A resolute lack of anything resembling breakthrough success hasn’t dampened either their enthusiasm or their creative fire, the band sustained by a modest but devout following. If anything, on tonight’s evidence, they’re getting better. New album ‘Bamboo Diner In The Rain’ – described by singer and guitarist Dave Tattersall as “a bluesy, boozy love letter to the guitar,” – was inspired by a childhood scarred by watching the *Terminator* films and worrying that the machines will take over. Perhaps that’s why The Wave Pictures’ sound is so firmly rooted in an idyllic past: one where Jonathan Richman, Tom Verlaine and Lou Reed are still the gods of the guitar and the fallout from punk hasn’t quite happened yet. In fact an hour in the company of the second best band to come out of Leicester (Prolapse being the undisputed east Midlands champs in case you were wondering), unfolds as an I-Spy of influences that stretch from folk-rock pioneer Richard Thompson, through spiky Buzzcocks-style cheekiness and on through edgy

new wave melody in the vein of Elvis Costello and The Cars, with the odd detour into Dick Dale surf-rock and Bo Diddley r’n’b. It’s like The Wave Pictures have soaked up fifty years of guitar music like a giant sponge and squeezed it out to form pretty patterns on their own pop canvas. Utilising hypnotic repetition as a key foundation, they then head off on elongated diversions, like Tattersall’s wandering solo in the middle of ‘Now I Want To Hoover My Brain Clean’, while the gloriously motorik ‘I Am the Running Man’ – pure ‘Marquee Moon’ – is cut out with a nervy, nicotine-stained tension. Succinct grasp of melody though, remains at the heart of their best songs, like the gorgeous, almost lullaby-like ‘Hot Little Hand’ (“I will hold on tight to your hot little hand,” promises the singer over a warm organ vibrato and delicate guitar curlicues). Given their extensive back catalogue it’s maybe disappointing that we only get an hour tonight: no-one among the packed throng would have complained if they’d gone on three times as long, but there’s a club night on afterwards, and the band have another tour to complete; this is one wave that will just keep on rolling. *Dale Kattack*





Zaia photo by: Leo Bowder



LIVE

AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM

O2 Academy

The Afro Celt Sound System are back. Or at least a version of them is, for a bitter split now sees two groups claiming the name and heading for the courts. This does make us a bit uneasy: might the gig somehow be a tactic in that clash? Anyway, this is the group led by Simon Emmerson, who had the original idea of bringing together west African and Celtic music with dance beats over 20 years back, and he’s joined on stage by ten others. The line-up still includes dynamic Dhol Foundation leader Johnny Kalsi, and Guinean kora and balafon player and singer N’Faly Kouyate, and it is Kouyate who provides an early highlight with an ancient west African praise song, his soaring voice and virtuosity on the kora spellbinding in what turns out to be the only solo number of the night. Among the newcomers to the line-up are Scottish and uilleann pipes player and Gaelic rapper and

singer Grigoir Labhruidh, who in a splendidly weird moment worthy of Supernormal Festival, gives us a burst of jazz bagpipes, and fine flautist and singer Rioghanch Connelly, whose warm voice and the beautiful way it blends with that of backing singer Val Etienne, is pure pleasure. Her sassy soulful singing on ‘Honey Bee’ is an earworm of a vocal that lingers long after the gig. While remaining true to the aim of interweaving global styles and dance beats, this group have made a change and tone down the electronica in favour of a more organic approach. They open with the slow elegiac ‘Beware Soul Sister’ with ethereal female vocals, keys and plaintive pipes, but in the second set they’re still able to turn the room into global dance club central, and they end the night with the headlong ‘Whirl-y-reel 2’. With four drummers playing Irish bohrán as well as West African,

GENTLEMAN’S DUB CLUB / ZAIA

O2 Academy

Ubiquitous Oxford pop-reggae merchants Zaia go from strength to natty strength. They are constantly active, ever since being played by BBC Radio’s Sir David Rodigan and subsequent to this we catch them performing at a key moment during the South Park firework display. Tonight, however, we get a very stripped-down set-up with the radiant Amy McKeon singing and bassman/arranger extraordinaire Paul Williams on DJ backing duties. Despite the fact that there’s only two Zaians, it still manages to sound full, warm and bouncy. Also no strangers to the bounce are tonight’s main draw, Gentleman’s Dub Club, who pack themselves on to the stage, one by one, after Zaia eventually float off in a musical cloud of good vibes. Largely from Leeds they’ve been at it since the mid noughties. Like last month’s visitors to town Laid Blak, GDC straddle the related genres of dub, ska, reggae and dubstep, with a smattering of rock guitar and EDM stylings (particularly with the constant build ups and breaks that characterise their danciest numbers). We get tracks from latest album ‘The Big Smoke’, including the outrageously catchy ‘Music is the Girl I Love’, as well as some nostalgic blasts from the past (the biggest blast, being, of course their stoner anthem ‘High Grade’, which they have recently been playing with an extended dubby section in the middle and a gigantic bassline that vibrates anything not screwed down tightly...). Also ‘Emergency’, which highlights their ska influences, and ‘Gentleman’s Sleng’, which makes good use of the classic ‘Sleng Teng’ riff (you know the one, it goes: duhduhduhduh, duhduhduhduh, duhduhduhduh, dum-dum) reimagined with Gabrielle’s ‘Rise’. Occasionally they overdo the constant exhortations to “make some noise!”, “lift those legs!” and the perennial favourite “somebody SCREEEAM!” but a high-energy approach to live work is their hallmark. There are nine of them on the stage, all with *Pulp Fiction*-style black jackets and ties, the guitarist with shorts, cap and tie like some reggae Angus Young, big bass, horns that cut through the mix, and main vocalist Jonathan Scratchley, a grin permanently etched on his boat race. As he sings, “When I’m grey and old will I still be getting involved? I hope so’,” it’s hard not to believe him.

Leo Bowder

Punjabi and kit drums, they have no problem generating a powerful pulse, especially after Johnny Kalsi emerges from behind a bank of tablas to pound his Dhol drum. The band, though, is at its best when not dominated by percussion, and when not going full pelt. Most of tonight’s gig is not a mash up, rather a rich kaleidoscope of sound with, despite the disappointment of the balafon being drowned out too often, most numbers bravely and impressively arranged. The female voices and the superb fiddle playing of Eòghann MacEanruig create multi-layered textures; ‘Magnificent Seven’ sets dhol against Irish flute; ‘Colossus’ has a kora and uilleann pipe duet and the complex ‘Cascade’ intercuts bagpipes and Gaelic rap and Irish fiddle with African choral chant and the distinctive vocal rhythms of the Baka people. With their more organic approach and new blood in the ranks, this set of Afro Celts still have something to say even after two decades; lawyers permitting of course.

Colin May

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## AUDIOSCOPE

### The Bullingdon

For a while, there was a real danger that this year’s Audioscope might not happen, but it’s not every day you’re offered a chance to put on avant-noise legends Nought. The result is a slightly cropped event (annual Shelter fundraiser Audioscope usually being an all-day affair) but one that packs just as much quality in as we’ve come to expect.

First up is **THE OXFORD GUITAR ORCHESTRA**, which not only features members of Suitable Case For Treatment, eeebleee, Kid Kin and The Young Knives on guitar, but also

Audioscope co-organiser Stuart Fowkes on bass and Loz Colbert from Ride on drums. Performing Rhys Chatham’s No-Wave classic ‘Guitar Trio’, the ensemble ruminate on a single E chord, establishing a hypnotic groove. Whilst the idea of ruminating on a single chord for 30 minutes might sound simple, the effect is incredibly dynamic as the players join and leave the composition. The addition of Colbert on drums is a boon, one of the most dynamic and exciting drummers to come from Oxford; his contribution here cannot be underestimated as he leads the

troupe through their explorations. It’s an invigorating and hypnotic experience from start to finish. Just as spell-binding , but somewhat quieter, is **BENJAMIN D. DUVALL**’s set. Performing a piece entitled ‘Prepared Guitars & AM Radios’, he’s hunched over two guitars and a set of radios. Minimal would be one way of putting it and for a moment it seems as if we’re listening to the air conditioning. Then, small bursts of music begin to creep through the static and white noise. With the audience surrounding him, the performance takes of the feel of a

séance as he conjures voices and musical passages from the ether. The Guitar Orchestra might have Loz, but in Valentina Magaletti, **TOMAGA** possess a percussionist who is capable of seemingly impossible feats. They fade in slowly, but soon they’re exploring elements of jazz, krautrock and afrobeat. They establish formidable grooves, then change direction effortlessly; it’s so impressive that the gasps from the crowd almost become part of the performance. Another act capable of drawing giggles of incredulity is **NOUGHT**. Guitarist James Sedwards is one of the most accomplished and gifted musicians of his generation, but those gifts would be for nothing were it not for the band around him. Tight doesn’t cover it; there are moments tonight when they simply must be operating on a psychic level. The twists, turns, stops and starts that pepper the two pieces they play (‘The Metamorphosist’ and ‘Return Of The Climax’) are executed perfectly. They start off in playful, funky mode, channelling exploitation soundtracks and twisting them into sharp metallic points but before long the discordant, angular jazz takes hold and buffets up against raging hardcore influences. They might only play two pieces tonight, but each contains multiple movements and passages, becoming more intense and breathless as they progress. When they hit a sequence of arpeggios, the seemingly endless repetition builds such a sense of hysteria that the only appropriate response is to giggle like a maniac. That the evening should end on such a feverish and joyful note is only fitting for an evening geared to try and make the world a better, more joyful place.

*Sam Shepherd*

## FREE RANGE ROOTS with PRINCE JAMO

### The Bullingdon

Free Range Roots have made the second Saturday of each month at the Bullingdon their own, dedicated reggae sound systems, MCs, vocalists and selectors making the journey to Oxford for a night of roots and culture. Tonight it is the turn of the well-established Real Roots sound system, their selectors Sattaman and Paulo and Birmingham based vocalist Prince Jamo.

We arrive at the venue early to see the mighty Desert Storm bringing to a juddering crescendo a heavy metal all dayer, and as their punishing, metronomic riffs pound down, we’re transferred back, Marcel Proust like, to our days as a student, before our addiction to bass culture

took over. As the band are wheeling their amps out, and I’m helping to move in the sound system’s speaker boxes, there is a metaphysical meeting with our former self. The moment passes however, after we wire up the Real Roots sound, driven up from London. It’s a colossal system with huge subwoofer bass bins, a hand-built four-way preamplifier and all the trimmings. Some serious wattage.

A Real Roots set is typified by drawing from a wide range of musical varieties that fall within the root’ category (by this we mean any reggae style music that celebrates the spiritual side of life, particularly of Jah Rastafari, the late Ethiopian emperor, seen as divine by many

Rastas, as opposed to, say, dancehall or lovers rock). Tonight they play both one drop (where the beat is on the 3) and steppers (4/4 time, the same beat as much dance music) through their towering speaker stack, to a modestly sized but well animated crowd. They’re helped with this by their occasional MC I-Mandala and then by Prince Jamo, who is blessed with a sparkling chanting style voice and his energetic co-pilot Digga Ranks, with some more down to earth ragga-rapping.). It’s this variety that keeps things lively; just when one form of the genre has begun to run its course, another is introduced. We take up our usual spot, facing the speaker stack, with the sonic control tower to our left, and skank out, blissfully until 3am; standard operating procedure, nice and easy...

*Leo Bowlder*

## JACK GOLDSTEIN / THE POTENTIALS / ROBERT RIDLEY SHACKLETON / THE GOLDEN WILDERNESS

### The Library

Smash Disco’s Halloween party is as lo-fi, unpredictable and inventive as you’d hope from the DIY promoters who have turned The Library’s intimate basement into Oxford’s best few square feet over the past couple of years.

Dublin’s The Golden Wilderness are somehow playing their debut gig in Oxford tonight and are apparently very nervous, but when they kick off with an extremely understated cover of ‘Enola Gay’ that sounds like it’s being performed by a trio of novice nuns with a synth-pop fetish, we’re onside straightaway. They look like a 1970s Greek prog-rock band on a trick or treat expedition and their Casio and bass guitar set-up is on the basic side of rudimentary, but their solemn, somnambulant meander through no-fi gothic pop develops an ethereal quality about it and a cover of ‘Monster Mash’, which is way creepier than the original, is genuinely inspired.

What to make of Carterton-based performance artists Robert Ridley Shackleton? Our frenziedly scribbled notes feature phrases like “Paul Foot fronting Suicide” and “a Dadaist deconstruction of Prince and Mariah Carey.” The man’s either a genius or a blundering lunatic. Possibly both at once. It’s all hissing electronic backing tracks, non-sequiturs, an ongoing existential war against the grip on his mic stand and ruminations on mundane subjects like folding the laundry and immersion heaters, interspersed by bizarre snatches of

‘I Wanna Be Your Lover’ and ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’. It’s like cruising through a thousand radio stations in random order while on acid. It’s ridiculous. It’s brilliant. After which what we definitely need is a riot grrl band inspired by *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, which is what The Potentials are. It’s so packed in the tiny venue now it’s impossible to actually see the band, but what we hear sounds like a J-Pop reimagining of Crass’s ‘Penis Envy’, littered with Buffy references. If that doesn’t appeal you probably need to extract that witch’s broom from up your backside.

Jack Goldstein can always be relied on for something appropriately inspired and he doesn’t disappoint. Dressed as a blood-spattered Hammer Horror princess and joined on a tiny synth set up by Tom McDowell, who’s painted blue, he pays mutant tribute to the horror movie music genius of John Carpenter, twisting themes from *Halloween*, *Escape From New York* and *The Fog* into weird new shapes, vast bass drones and icicle drip synth chimes variously bringing industrial noise menace and a haunted sea mist chill to the room, and when the pair close on some wild electro-western hoedown freakout from *Dark Star* it feel entirely normal. With a new Fixers album apparently due for release next year, Jack will hopefully become a more regular fixture on the live scene; we need his kind of maverick brilliance more than ever.

*Dale Kattack*

## ANAÏS MITCHELL

### St John the Evangelist

Anais Mitchell returns to Oxford as part of a small tour with no particular agenda, having no new material to tout, and so formalities are dispensed with at SJE tonight. Rather than playing to a rigid setlist the Vermont singer and guitarist meanders through her back catalogue, encouraging requests for a large section of the night and connecting one on one with the loyal fans who provide something of a cult following for her music in the UK. Even she seems to be genuinely amused by the depths people are able to plug and the number of calls for tracks from her folk-opera ‘Hadestown’, which premiered earlier this year in New York. She plays solo for the majority of the night, accompanied only by her own guitar. I’ve previously seen it commented that her voice sometimes fails to match the weight of the material she’s delivering, but I couldn’t agree with that this evening. If anything the stripped back delivery illuminates the strength of her songwriting.

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## LEADER / CLUB DRIVE

### O2 Academy

Leader do like to celebrate the big occasions. Last time they played a hometown show it was the day Oxford United won promotion to League 1. Tonight’s show follows South Park’s firework spectacular. Twice now the band have risen fully to the occasion. Support band Club Drive, from Hertfordshire, are initially a strange mix of bombastic funk rock and something nicked from the Michael Jackson book of shiny 80s pop, but pretty soon they settle for being something approaching a Maroon

5 tribute band: they’re enthusiastic enough and well orchestrated, but ultimately too considered to move us. Constant touring has honed Leader into festival headliners in waiting, even since that last show back in May they seem to have moved up a couple of notches, cutting out any superfluous fat. Just like last time the venue is packed – an impressive feat given how few local acts can pull a substantial crowd – and the band exude a confidence that comes with experience. They come on

stage to a retro 80s-style remix of one of their own songs by Alex Lanyon, which is appropriate given the (possibly unconscious) debt they owe to the likes of Simple Minds, Ultravox and in particular early U2. There’s a distinct Edge-like chime to the guitars on ‘Honest Man’, while singer Ben Edgington’s voice – epic, tense and questing – recalls Midge Ure’s most dramatic performances as he squeezes every last drop of stadium-pleasing passion out of songs like ‘Chasing You’ – the anthemic highlight of their recent

eponymous EP and one of a handful of tunes tonight you can easily picture carrying a Reading Festival crowd before them in the future. ‘The Way You Do’ is a rare moment when they lapse into cheesy acoustic arena pop, though even then they get away with it by dint of its singalong properties, and ‘Left Outside’ and ‘Live Like Kings’ pump the end of the set up to something approaching heroic proportions, bringing Leader back to that early U2 vibe – all sky-touching Big Music triumphalism – and if there aren’t any actual fireworks here, the band are on explosive form. **Dale Kattack**

## FROM THE BOGS OF AUGHISKA / KHOST / TERRA / SHRYKULL

### The Wheatsheaf

Amid all the mawkish excitement surrounding the new John Lewis Christmas ad, it’s easy to forget that winter is a dark, cold, bleak place. Tonight’s gig is a timely reminder. Two-man death/sludge dirge machine Shrykull are a ferocious assault with a singular purpose. If they don’t deviate far from given templates, they fulfil their remit to obliterate the senses of anyone within a fifty metre radius, all downtuned guitar noise, death rasps and metronomic beats. As their set progresses the lava flow becomes a torrent. A relentless, uncaring torrent. From a torrent to a blizzard with Terra’s more expansive take on black metal, taking them close to Wolves in the Throne Room’s almost symphonic wall of sound at times. With vocals

reduced to nothing more than howls of rage, they’re one step away from being a pastiche, but mostly they’re bloody great, though next time we’d like to see the drummer, who spends the entire set gurning with murderous intent while wearing an oversized pair of red ear protectors, sporting fluffy bunny ears. And after the blizzard comes the eternal nuclear winter: a frozen, lifeless tundra stretching to the horizon and beyond. At midnight, obviously. Khost envelope The Wheatsheaf like a shroud, all stage lights dimmed as they strip down Godflesh’s malevolent industrial metal to create a merciless death march, like a funeral disco in Hell’s own basement bar. Yeah, no trampolining badgers here, sunshine.

And then comes the night, the endless night at the end of the universe. Ireland’s From the Bogs of Aughiska have haunted The Wheatsheaf a couple of times before but they’re not going to indulge in cheery familiarity anytime soon. The three balaclava-clad figures on stage conjure oppressive electronic drones, feedback and low, rasping vocals over stark, monochrome footage of black, unforgiving sea cliffs and ancient ruins, reflecting the unrelenting pounding of waves against desolate shores. Sadly they’ve dropped long-time set highlight ‘Aos Si’, but we still get our dose of Irish folklore horror in the form of ‘An Seanchai’, from their recent ‘Roots Of This Earth In My Blood’ album. Not that you’re going to find any singalong salvation in this unremittingly ruined musical wasteland. You need From The Bogs Of Aughiska in your life, though. And rest assured, they will find you and follow you, to the grave, and beyond. Merry Christmas, everybody. **Dale Kattack**

## URANIUM CLUB / LUCY LEAVE / GRUB / BASIC DICKS

### The Library

If The Library’s compact space and low ceiling provokes thoughts of punk-era squat gigs, Basic Dicks’ tumbledown anarcho-squall only reinforces the image. The name’s a pun on vintage agit-punks Rudimentary Peni, and the harsh, trebly guitar tone is a jolt back to the time when bands like Omega Tribe ruled the musical underground, while the duel vocals of Taz Corona Brown and sister Loz recalls the brilliant but long forgotten Hagar the Womb, one of the best of the Crass-inspired anarcho bands of the early 80s. You’d need to go back even further to pinpoint the origins of Grub, a band whose big, fat mess of superfuzzed riffage reflects their name. Their wah-wah-heavy garage-grunge is raw and untamed, like a churning storm of Stooges and MC5 noise sporadically bundled out of its heads-down stoner haze by some Mudhoney-like rage. It’s simple and straight-down-the-line but seriously bloody great. Lucy Leave sound oddly disjointed compared to their show-stealing performance with The Lovely Eggs at The Cellar the previous week, their set more of an extended jam

infected by all manner of post-punk abstraction and even pockets of proggy wandering, than the pin-point mortar attack of our last encounter, but closing track ‘Friends’ is an oddly comforting lullaby for weirdoes and even on an off night, Lucy Leave carry more intrigue than most bands will ever muster. Over from Minneapolis for the Static Shock festival, Uranium Club are perfect for these surroundings, a hysterical, spindly punk attack that’s initially Dead Kennedys’ camp spitefulness given an angular, jerky makeover by Devo, urgent and uptight, regimented but played hard and loose by a well seasoned band. As their short, sharp set sprints to its close they get closer to Wire’s agitated take on punk, and as we pass the table where gig goers are asked for a small donation towards the band’s travel costs and where vinyl and cassettes are being traded, the whole show feels like the true spirit of punk rock still lives on in tiny basement bars and an over-used and abused word really means something again. **Ian Chesterton**

## PETER ROCH / LADY NADE / STOLBY

### The Wheatsheaf

Having read excerpts of Johnny Marr’s new autobiography an hour before tonight’s characteristically eclectic Gappy Tooth Industries gig hand, I’m mentally bobbing in a jangly, mid-80s, guitar frame of mind. So it’s a real treat to have that glittering sky rocket of feeling reignited by Jonathan Willis, Stolby’s guitarist. Singer Kseniya Kotyuskeva, a Russian emigre hailing from Krasnoyarsk, that sits alongside the glorious Stolby national nature reserve in Siberia, dances her Harriet Wheeler voice over ‘Sing Fly Sing’ and ‘Small Steps’ deftly plucked refrains, pirouetting away into the more mollified Amy Winehouse of ‘Mirror Mirror’ and the seductive Norah Jones of ‘40 Below’. It’s a wonderfully textured performance from a tight, relatively new band who promises great things locally. Speaking of seductive, Lady Nade (as in lemon-nade) has the native Bristolian burr of the Cadbury’s bunny to bring all the boys to the yard between songs, and a caramel smooth singing voice that is less the expected strident Nina Simone, and

more the arched enunciation of a soulful Cleo Laine. Overflowing with dark corkscrew hair and twinkling personality, she is out touring her aptly named debut album ‘Hard To Forget’, full of tentative late-night blues and dawn laments full of heartache, and with the earworm of her new single ‘Mind Made Up’, she is surely a shoe-in for a future *Later* appearance. Singer-guitarist Pete Roch immediately gets you thinking of a young Chris Evans rescued from several haircut-less years on a desert island. The eager-to-please, first-gig-in-Oxford enthusiasm also extends into his band’s rhythm section, with awesome drummer Jason Davidson wildly auditioning for something far jazzier than their predominantly Springsteen / Kings of Leon style of rock psychedelia that lurches here and there, occasionally bumping into Jonathan Richman, and then focusing for a moment to become The Jam covering The Beatles’ ‘Drive My Car’. It’s much like the spin round with a broomstick and blindfold party game: great fun but ultimately, very disorientating. **Paul Carrera**

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Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December – GET IN THE BOX  
**BROWN GLOVE** VOLKENFUNK + DEATHSEX BLOODBATH 7:45pm  
Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December – IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC  
**THE CORSAIRS** NEON TEEPEE + SILVER RAVENS 7:45pm  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December – OXROX  
**NASTY HIGH** MASSIVE + BREAKING WAVES  
THE SMOKIN' PROPHETS 7:45pm  
Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December – IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC  
**EARINADE** STOLBY + TEMPER CARTEL 7:45pm  
Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December – GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES  
**KANADIA** THE BALKAN WANDERERS + PINK DIAMOND REVUE  
CHARLIE LEVY 8pm  
Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December – IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC  
**OUT OF THE VILLAGE** LAZ CUNLIFFE + CORA PEARL 7:45pm  
Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December – OXROX XMAS PARTY  
**HELL'S GAZELLS** DEATHWISH 7:45pm  
Friday 30<sup>th</sup> December – OXROX  
**TEQUILA MOCKINGBYRD** PILGRIM + TRAUMA UK 7:45pm  
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Dr SHOTOVER: The O.C.

Whoaaaa, dudes and dudettes – surf on in and park your butts, why don’tcha? Ahem, excuse the unpleasant Americanisms. Catching, aren’t they? Actually I had to horse-whip some Republicans earlier, for wearing ‘These Colors Don’t Run’ t-shirts and Donald C\*\*t lapel pins. Cuh, colonials, eh? Who would have thought that they could be SO stupid that they would elect the Orange Clown from the McFondles Deathburger chain to be their Overlord? That’s not how you spell COLOURS, by the way, and they DID run, as I chased them out of the East Indies Club bar dressed as a psychotic Mexican. Yes, Thorpe-Parkes, hence the big hat. Drink? Good man. Mine’s a Margarita – oh, just give me the whole jug. [Glugg, glugg, glugg]. Ahhh, muy, MUY refreshing, seenyor. [Wipes moustachios]. Now, where were we? Oh yes, creating a list of showbiz people we’d like to see in charge of the US of A, based on the sort of criteria which voters must have used when they put their big shaky X-es next to Donald McFondle’s name. Sooo, we’d got as far as Pee-wee Herman - as POTUS, obviously – plus our old buddy Ted ‘Nuke’em’ Nugent as Vice Prez. Lady Gaga can be Secretary of State, and Ron ‘Pigpen’ McKernan from the Grateful Dead would make a fine Secretary of Health and Human Services. (Him being dead should be no obstacle). Mariah Carey can be Attorney-General, and/or Secretary of Kittens, or, well, [misty-eyed look] anything really. Secretary of the Treasury? Khloe, Kourtney, Kim or their sister Khazi – whatever. Whew, this government is practically forming *itself*. Get another round in, Denton, and we can start discussing who to build a wall round. Probably *The Apprentice USA* studio, for starters... Cheers! Down the pan!  
Next month: **You’re fired, you Orange C\*\*.**



‘Vote for me or I’ll puke on your car’: Ron ‘Pigpen’ McKernan on the campaign trail

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

ZURICH

Who are they?  
Electro-indie rockers Zurich formed in 2014 from the ashes of their previous band, The Scholars. That band’s five-piece line-up became a trio of Adrian Banks (*bass / vocals*); Christian Gillett (*guitar / vocals*), and Leigh Taylor (*drums*), prompting a move in a new direction and a whole new set of songs. They set up their own label and released their debut EP ‘Small Wars’ last year. Two national tours and some 6Music airplay followed and this month they launch a new Christmas single with a headline show at The Jericho Tavern.  
What do they sound like?  
Shiny and dark. Gloomy but anthemic. Elegant and melancholy. Inspired by new wave and the bleaker side of 80s indie and electro-pop, as well as more recent makers of dark indie like Editors and Interpol, Zurich have a bit of the gothic about them but equally sound as bright and shiny as any festival headline act. They certainly sound like they were born to play big stages.  
What inspires them?  
“We love films, from the cinematography to the soundtracks. Politics also influences our songs at various points. Outside of that, we try and find inspiration in our everyday mundanities or anything we want to get out.”  
Career highlight so far:  
“Playing second from top on the Riverside Stage at Cornbury in July felt big. We played the same stage last year but much earlier in the day, so this felt like we’d earned our slot, and the crowd seemed to really enjoy our set too.”  
And the lowlight:  
“Losing two members in a week in our old guise was tough. It made us step back and re-group to make sure the remaining three of us were on the same page, and that we wanted to continue making music together. Though it was an unstable time, we came out of it stronger and closer as a result.”  
Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:  
“The August List; we played with them last year and completely fell in love with their sound and aesthetic.”



If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:  
“Coldplay: ‘A Rush Of Blood To The Head’. We all love such a wide range of music but this we all unanimously agree is Coldplay at their peak. The songs are great, the production is faultless, and this record helps keep the peace the longest.”  
When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?  
“Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December at The Jericho Tavern. It’s our big Christmas party, essentially, in our favourite venue. We’ll be playing new songs for the first time, launching our Christmas single, and trying out visual projections too, so this will be us at our most ambitious yet within a live setting.”  
Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:  
“Favourite is definitely the variety of venues. Each has its own history and atmosphere, regardless of its size or location within the city. Least favourite is probably how quickly the scene changes and bands can suddenly be considered part of the ‘old scene’. Luckily for us, we’ve never felt part of any particular wave of acts within the area, so we haven’t really been pigeonholed into a particular time period.”  
You might love them if you love:  
The National; Interpol; Editors; The Killers; Depeche Mode; New Order.  
Hear them here:  
zurichofficial.bandcamp.com

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO  
If it seems a lifetime away that the internet didn’t exist as a widely available medium for bands to distribute their music, it’s because it actually is for the current generation of musicians. Back in December 1996 you still needed a record label and a distributor. And with such things in short supply a new Oxford label was born: **Shifty Disco**. Initially a monthly singles club with a remit to debut new local talent, the label was launched with an appeal for subscribers with the announcement that **Dustball**’s ‘Senor Nachos’ would be the label’s first release in January. With 1,000 copies of each single made, an initial six-month subscription was £15 and the reward was an actual physical CD delivered in the post. Possibly by horse-drawn carriage. For this month, though, local releases amounted to a single by the band **Daytripper** (“A solid debut, sporadically reminiscent of The Undertones’ ‘Wednesday Week’” according to the review), and an album by **Nero’s Acolytes** called ‘Albatrocity’ (“Over-indulgent tedium; even the most drug-addled loon couldn’t survive the trawl through its 18 songs”). The review of the latter prompted a letter of complaint from the band, promising us a one-way trip to Hades. We’re still here; they aren’t. As was traditional in December, *Nightshift* compiled its end of year Top 20 of local songs. Joint top of the pile were Dustball’s soon-to-be-released ‘Senor Nachos’ and **Beaker**’s ‘Back Garden’, with top placings for **The Candyskins** (‘Car Crash’); **Heavenly** (‘Mark Angel’); **Supergrass** (‘Going Out’); **Ride** (‘Black Nite Crash’); **The Bigger the God** (‘Mum Steals Boyfriend’) and **Soma** (‘Letting the Ghost Out’).

10 YEARS AGO  
Mahoosive local music news in December 2006 with the revelation that **The Academy Music Group** had bought **The Zodiac**. At the time AGM was still run by its founder and ex-Oxford boy **John Northcote**, who was quoted as saying, “Having grown up in Oxford, it’s a very special city for me and where I started out in the music industry, and we plan to continue to build upon the Zodiac’s reputation.” **Carl Bathgate** was appointed venue manager and plans were in place for the venue to close for full-scale rebuilding. In other local music news **The Young Knives**’ debut album ‘Voices of Animals and Men’ charted at number 21 and the band were included in myriad music press lists of acts to see in 2007. The future of **The Wheatsheaf**, meanwhile, was secured after a buy-out fell through and promoter **Joal Shearing** was given the go-ahead to start booking shows again. Long may it continue. Former-**Unbelievable Truth** frontman **Andy Yorke** played his first solo hometown gig, while **Foals** confirmed they had signed to **Transgressive Records**, joining neighbours The Young Knives and **Mystery Jets**. 2006’s end of year Top 20 was topped by **Fell City Girl**’s ‘Send In The Angels’, making the band the first to top the *Nightshift* poll two years running. Runner-up was The Young Knives’ ‘She’s Attracted to’, followed by **Xmas Lights**’ ‘Threat Level is Orange’; **Thom Yorke**’s ‘Black Swan’; **Rebecca Mosley**’s ‘Queues’; **The Workhouse**’s ‘Chancers’; **Foals**’ ‘Try This on Your Piano’ and **Belarus**’ ‘Standing in the Right Place’. Gig of the month in town was a rare chance to see **The Melvins**, who were at The Zodiac, as were

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

Vashti Bunyan and Joan As Policewoman, while **The Human League** were at **The New Theatre**.

5 YEARS AGO  
Fell City Girl might be the only band to hit the top spot two years running but, perhaps unsurprisingly, **Radiohead** hold the record for the most Number 1s in *Nightshift*’s end of year chart, with four. Their last one came in December 2011 with ‘Lotus Flower’ topping the pile. “You feel if you could reach out and touch the song it would crumble dust in your fingers, but sit back and let it wash through you, its power is simply staggering,” ran our eulogy. It pipped **Fixers**’ exuberant psych-pop anthem ‘Swimmbaus Johannesburg’, while **Young Knives** (‘Glasshouse’); **The Cellar Family** (‘Father Michael’); **Chad Valley** (Now That I’m Real’); **Dive Dive** (‘Ape Like Me’); **Spring Offensive** (‘A Stutter & A Start’); **Little Fish** (‘Wonderful’); **The Rock of Travolta** (‘Last March of the Acolytes’) and **Ute** (‘The Innocent Tailor’) made up the top 10. Dark-minded punk trio The Cellar Family also graced the front cover of this month’s issue, talking about serial killers, catharsis through music and what type of sandwich the band would be (“fuck off” being the correct answer). On the local gig front punk legends **Wire** and sample genius **DJ Shadow** played at the O2 Academy, while **Fionn Regan** was at **St Barnabas**, and a series of gigs at the **Rotunda** in Iffley featured Young Knives, **Richard Walters**, **The Family Machine**, Spring Offensive and a debut solo show from **Gaz Coombes**, playing songs from his ‘Here Come The Bombs’ for the first time.



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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### LOW ISLAND

Okay, disclaimer: *Nightshift* sat down to review this month's batch of demos on the day the US elected a racist, misogynist, narcissistic maniac as president, because they considered those attributes preferable to someone who was possibly a bit creepy. But not obviously a maniac. Hey ho, we've always said the success of acts like Bastille and James Bay is evidence that some people shouldn't be allowed to vote. So anyway, we wanted to do something to cheer us up, or at least remind us that some things never change and are therefore safe and comforting, and the demos never change, other than the format they arrive in. Comforting is something Low Island certainly are. Formed by former members of former *Nightshift* favourites Wild Swim, their swooning electro-pop, all pretty starlit twinkle and clickety click rhythms, like a midnight train across an icy tundra, immediately takes us to a better place. "At the bottom of the ocean, that's where I'll be," goes the opening line, but it sounds more like something from up among the stars – somewhere that seems ever more appealing as a place to live, and certainly more affordable than anywhere in Oxfordshire. It's possessed of a similarly woozy atmosphere to Glass Animals' more rarefied outings, but before anyone cries foul, remember Wild Swim emerged at the same time as them, so they've hardly been cribbing. No, this is all rather lovely. Make the most of it, though: it'll probably be a radioactive cinder in six months' time, like everything else on the planet as soon as Trump has a Twitter spat with Putin.

### CRIMSON TUSK

If there is a huge war to end all things, we hope it at least sounds a bit like this lot. Like The Kraken arising and laying waste to everything around it. Having seen Crimson Tusk live recently we can confirm they have not only the best beards but the best hair in Oxford – fucking loads of both, like proper Vikings, or at least Vikings if they gave a toss about male grooming. The band's a bit of a behemoth: rolling stoner riffs and rasping, gravelly vocals that sound like the sing-song tones of a man who drinks his breakfast from a giant ivory horn and has to prepare lunch with a double-headed axe. Truth is, there are moments when they could be a Desert Storm tribute band, but songs like 'Nowhere To Run' (a feeling people might be all too aware of post-Brexit vote and Trump victory), which

*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)*

takes Canned Heat's 'On the Road Again' up the mountain to make a man of it with some serious riff therapy, and the slo-mo Orange Goblin-styled avalanche of 'Stray Dog' are simply irresistible: unreconstructed warrior music for the end times, even if the lyrics do suggest there's someone or something out there even more badass than they are. Yetis maybe. Or White Walkers. This is a bloody great beast of a demo; who needs Armageddon when you've got Ragnarok.

### PRISON OF BLUES

If Crimson Tusk are a mediaeval battle with swords, steeds and heavy armour, Prison of Blues are a knife fight in a darkened back alley, just after closing time. They describe themselves as psychobilly but the singer's bolshy, rasping vocals are closer to death metal and the surging, spindly guitar attack is more punk than rockabilly, the cantering rhythm the chief indicator they might have the odd Coffin Nails album in their collection. Even then they somehow manage to dip into something approaching a ballad on 'Who Killed Your Friends' that sounds like a severely wasted James Hetfield having a teary, drunken singalong with Tom Waits and Captain Sensible – which makes it sound a lot more fun and raucous than it actually is. Luckily 'Tobacco City Psychobilly' gets things moving again, all bare-chested, rabble-rousing thrash punk, but it's been and gone within a minute when we were all up for some table trashing and chicken dancing. Ad then it's back to leaning drunkenly against the jukebox and shouting into an empty pint glass. The intention was there but seems like brewers droop put paid to the party.

### THE WORKING MAN

Well, this is all getting a bit macho – which given who's in charge now is probably appropriate. The Working Man sound exactly like you'd imagine a band called The Working Man to sound: tough, bullish, no-nonsense and a bit sweaty. There's even a bit in their first song, 'The Pig' (yes! Proper song title!), where they sound like someone beating the living crap out of some hapless wimp in the middle of the roughest pub in Blackburn. It's gnarly and rough hewn, all grimy garage rock riffs and low-slung metal noise. Yeah, men's music. Which makes 'Skiing With the Boys' all the more of a shock, all foppish flamenco and mention of croissants (and, yes, Donald Trump for some reason, alongside Taylor Swift), before it turns into something of a bipolar punch-up between The Divine Comedy and a biker metal band. And we're not entirely sure which side the band are on, or who's having the piss ripped out of them

(along with their kidneys in all likelihood). The last song is called 'Tony Concrete'. Reckon he must be the hardest bastard on the estate. The song sounds like someone punching their own face in in the chippie afterhours while their mate lends a helping hand by smashing a cheap synthesizer round the back of their head. Against any sense of decency we think we rather like it, we just don't fancy meeting it in an alleyway on the way home is all.

### VIOLENT CHIMES

And still the rock music comes, all beefy and manly, with riffs and beats and a vaguely surly outlook on life. The oddly titled 'X/∞' is a fizzing, fuzzing prog-rock workout that doesn't quite enter post-metal territory but hovers noisily around its margins, like a sort of meeting point between Opeth and Pete Gabriel – deeply distorted guitar burn coupled with an epic, almost pained vocal performance. It's a bit muffled to be honest and would probably sound better cranked up to dangerous volume, possibly in Donald Trump's next nightmare. By contrast 'Cross To Bear' sounds awkward, hesitant and a bit floaty woaty. It wouldn't last five minutes in The Working Man's pub, unsure whether to order a white wine spritzer or a Babysham, although it's mostly the vocals that struggle to cut it, the guitars spangling like some shoegaze band before relenting and returning to riffsville, then changing its mind again and going a bit twinkly. If they're unsure, the singer really can't make his mind up and sounds like he either needs a sit down and a comforting cuppa, else he might just cry, or a bloody good thrashing. See, you've got us all indecisive now; it's infectious. If only a few more Americans had been similarly unsure and stayed at home on polling day. Then again, idiots are always absolutely certain in their beliefs, and therein lies one of the chief problems with the world.

### EOIN GLACKIN

Eoin is, according to accompanying email, pronounced Owen, while Glackin seems self explanatory, but for this review we'll pronounce his name Travelling Wilburys. He's definitely got a bit of the Tony Pettys about him – no bad thing, and this jolly, bluesy, countrified campfire rock'n'roll seems designed to make absolutely everyone within a ten mile radius feel good about themselves and the world, even a world now ruled by a bigoted buffoon and two legislative houses controlled by slimy, self-interested evangelicals. No, Eoin is saying sod all that, we're gonna have a good time and if you don't want to join in, the door's over there. Frankly, we're going nowhere. Oh, and we love the fact his list of influences includes "Len Cohen". See, Eoin can even make the late, great musical master of misery sound like some cheery bloke he knows from down the boozer. Play it again, Eoin.

*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 phone number. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. We make no pretence to being fair, objective or open-minded and reserve the right to use juvenile insults while almost completely ignoring your music should we feel like it. Your Facebook friends are welcome to get all huffy on your behalf, but we'll laugh at them too.*

### A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY

If you want your music reviewed it probably helps a little bit if you include a link to it in your email, or at least some vague kind of suggestion as to where you might be hiding your songs. Alternatively you could waffle on about your new release and hope the reviewer is excited enough to search it out all by themselves. Which is what Aylesbury duo A Little Bit Country do here. So we find their Facebook page, which has a link to their website, which has no music on it. Apparently we can buy their new song on iTunes, which we don't have. Going well so far; maybe this is the post-truth world we've been reading about. Oh, hang about, there's a video of the song – 'Shot At Loving You' – on their Facebook feed. Ah, except it's just a thirty second snippet. And what does it sound like? Erm, a little bit country if we're honest. Guess the clue was in the name and we didn't even need the music. Let's vote on it without knowing what we're even voting about. Doesn't seem to bother anyone else. 'Shot At Loving You'? Shit at sending out demos, more like.

### THE DEMO DUMPER

### INKFIELDS

Inkfields' photo makes him look like a young Donald Trump if he'd joined Nickleback, so we're onside from the off. His email self describes him as "The Arctic Monkeys meeting Radiohead in Coldplay's basement" – a meeting during which we'd hope some nasty-minded bastard would nail the fucking basement door shut and leave the mutant offspring of that union to die and putrefy. Inevitably the actual music sounds nothing like that description. It's far worse: aimless, pleading acoustic soul-pop of no discernible merit that sounds like a casual shrug, a pint of indifference and a silent fart enjoying tea and biscuits in that basement we just mentioned. Nothing fancy, mind, just Asda own-brand custard creams and those teabags you get in Travelodge rooms that have no flavour however hard you squeeze them with the spoon. It's music you've forgotten while you're actually listening to it, a bizarre combination of desperation and lethargy made by someone who apparently left all forms of employment at the end of last year to become an artist and is supported by the National Lottery, which merely confirms that the lottery is a tax on hopeless stupidity. How bad is this? Bad enough to be worse than a country and western duo whose music we couldn't even listen to. It's music for a world ruled by Donald Trump. Lap it up, idiots.

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+ Junkie Brush + Die in Vain

Thu 24th Nov • £22.50 adv • 7pm

## Brian Fallon & The Crowes

+ Chris Farren + Dead Swords

Fri 25th Nov • £20 adv • 6.30pm

## Alabama 3

Celebrating their 20 years Anniversary

Fri 25th Nov • £12 adv • 6.30pm

## Pearl Jam U.K.

+ Mike Wall from "Nine Black Ravens"

Sat 26th Nov • £11 adv • 6.30pm

## Antarctic Monkeys

+ Dear Hero + Ash Adams

Sat 26th Nov • £21 adv • 6.30pm

## Turin Brakes

+ Toy Tin Soldier

Sat 26th Nov • £10 adv • 11pm

## Chris Lorenzo LIVE

Sun 27th Nov • £13.50 adv • 7pm

## Walking On Cars

Sun 27th Nov • £10 adv • 7.30pm

## Avatar - "Feathers & Flesh"

Wed 30th Nov • £18 adv • 6.30pm

## Steve-O (Jackass)

Wed 30th Nov • £5 adv • 9.30pm

## Fishies Sports Night

Thu 1st Dec • £22.50 adv • 7pm

## Kula Shaker - K Tour, 20th Anniversary

Fri 2nd Dec • £8 adv • 7pm

## Uprising - BBC Introducing

+ 31 Hours

+ Kanadia

+ Dolly Mavies

+ Wednesday's Wolves

+ A Way With Words

Sat 3rd Dec • £11 adv • 6.30pm

## Motorheadache (A Tribute to Lemmy)

Sun 4th Dec • £22 adv • 7pm

## Chas & Dave

+ Chasing Daylight

Tue 6th Dec • **SOLD OUT** • 7pm

## The Fratellis - Costello Music 10th Anniversary Tour

Wed 7th Dec • £5 adv • 9.30pm

## Fishies Sports Night

Thu 8th Dec • £26.50 adv • 7pm

## Primal Scream

Thu 8th Dec • £16.50 adv • 7pm

## The Wedding Present

Fri 9th Dec • £14 adv • 6.30pm

## Absolute Bowie (Tribute) -

Celebrating the life of David Bowie

Fri 9th Dec • £15 adv • 10.30pm

## Trevor Nelson Club Classics UK Tour

Sun 11th Dec • £6 adv • 7pm

## Youth Club

Sun 11th Dec • **SOLD OUT** • 7pm

## Blossoms

Tue 13th Dec • £15 adv • 7pm

## Minor Victories

+ Ulrika Spacek

Wed 14th Dec • £5 adv • 9.30pm

## Fishies Sports Night

Fri 16th Dec • £8 adv • 6.30pm

## Peerless Pirates

+ James Bell & The Half Moon All Stars

Fri 16th Dec • £17 adv • 10pm

## Craig Charles Funk & Soul Club

+ Count Skylarkin'

+ Tony Nanton

+ The Tropics (Live Band)

Sat 17th Dec • £12 adv • 7pm

## Leatherat Christmas Party

Sat 31st Dec • £14 adv • 9.30pm

## Switch NYE 2016/17

+ SASASAS + Flava D

+ Mollie Collins

Wed 25th Jan • **SOLD OUT** • 7pm

## The Hunna

Sat 28h Jan • £12 adv • 11pm

## Switch feat. Sigma and Nadia Rose

Tue 7th Feb • £15 adv • 7pm

## Loyle Carner

Thu 9th Feb • £14 adv • 7pm

## Little Comets

Sat 11th Feb • £11 adv • 7pm

## Cash (A Tribute to the Man in Black)

+ Hannah Clapham

Monday 13th Feb • £14 adv • 7pm

## Kate Nash

Thu 14th Feb • £14 adv • 7pm

## Ladyhawke

Wed 15th Feb • £10 adv • 6pm

## Galactic Empire

Thu 16th Feb • £20 adv • 7.30pm

## Union J

Fri 17th Feb • £10 adv • 6.30pm

## Nearly Noel Gallagher's High Flyin' Birdz

Fri 24th Feb • £12.50 adv • 6.30pm

## The Clone Roses

Sat 25th Feb • £8 adv • 6pm

## Infurious and Violence Is Golden

Sat 25th Feb • £20 adv • 6.30pm

## White Lies

Sat 25th Feb • £15 adv • 11pm

## Dusky Live

Fri 3rd Mar • £12 adv • 6.30pm

## The Amy Winehouse Experience...A.K.A Lioness

Wed 8th Mar • £10 adv • 6.30pm

## Dutch Uncles

Sun 12th Mar • £8 adv • 7pm

## SALES

Tue 14th Mar • £12 adv • 7pm

## Bonafide

+ Chase The Ace

+ Killer Bee

Wed 15th Mar • £14.50 adv • 7pm

## Lucy Spraggan

Sat 18th Mar • £20 adv • 6.30pm

## Half Man Half Biscuit

Tue 21st Mar • £8.50 adv • 7pm

## Declan McKenna

Tue 21st Mar • £8 adv • 7pm

## The Wailers

Thu 23rd Mar • £16.50 adv • 7pm

## Bear's Den

Mon 27th Mar • £12 adv • 7pm

## Pulled Apart By Horses

Mon 27th Mar • £20 adv • 7pm

## Blackberry Smoke

Tue 28th Mar • £19.50 adv • 7pm

## Warpaint

Tue 4th Apr • £16 adv • 7pm

## Mallory Knox

+ Lonely The Brave

+ Fatherson

Sat 22nd Mar • £15 adv • 7pm

## Electric Six

Sat 6th May • £16 adv • 6.30pm

## Ward Thomas

Fri 9th June • £25 adv • 7pm

## The Skids - 40th Anniversary Show

Sat 24th June • £18 adv • 7pm

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+ King Hammond

+ The Rude Boy Mafia

+ Madan Scorchier

+ Darren Bennet



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