

# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every  
month  
Issue 252  
July  
2016**



"There are piratical references but most of it is about bawdy capers and suspect antics. We're the Carry On team in tricorns."

## PEERLESS PIRATES

**High seas high jinks with  
Oxford's pirate pop  
adventurers.**

*Also in this issue:*

**COMMON PEOPLE** reviewed  
Introducing **KANADIA**

*Plus* - all your Oxford music news, reviews,  
previews, and eight pages of local gigs.

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# THE BULLINGDON

## JULY 2016 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

## COCKTAIL BAR

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Friday 1st July  
**Paves**  
**Ballin Jacks**  
**Whyte Lytes**

Doors: 7.30pm

Saturday 2nd July  
**Dead Belgian**  
**Les Clochards**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 2nd July  
**Botts and Burns Festival**  
**Zed Bias (2HR Set)**  
**Real Connoisseur**  
**Spectre**

Doors: 8pm

Monday 4th July  
**Easy Star All-Stars**  
**Celebrating 10 Years of Radioread**  
**Shanty**  
**Count Skylarkin**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 8th July  
**Kanadia**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 9th July  
**Evarose**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 10th July  
**Simple's Cowley Road Carnival**  
**After Party**

Doors: 5pm

Monday 11th July  
**Albany Down**

Doors: 8pm

Friday 15th July  
**The Hip Drop Live...**  
**The Tropics ft. Holly Lawson**

Doors: 8pm

Saturday 16th July  
**Black Nevada**  
**Reveller**  
**Raised by Hypocrites**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 16th July  
**De:Formed Presents**  
**Dibz & Aliman, Ironlung, Audio Sonic**  
**Sinista B2B Dubz, Mblaze + MCs**

Doors: 8pm

Friday 22nd July  
**Bossaphonik**  
**Mankala**

Doors: 8pm

Monday 25th July  
**The Black Circles**

Doors: 8pm

Thursday 28th July  
**The Rev Peyton's**  
**Big Damn Band**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 29th July  
**Honkey**  
*(FT. Members of Down, Melvins, Buttahole Surfers)*  
**Desert Storm**  
**The Grand Mal**

Doors: 7.30pm

Saturday 30th July  
**Hope Burden**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 11th August  
**Matt Edwards Band**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 18th August  
**Speaking in Shadows**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 25th August  
**Whitney**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 27th August  
**P.Y.T (Pretty Young Things)**  
**Disco for the Next Generation**

Doors: 8pm

Wednesday 31st August  
**The Garden**

Doors: 7.30pm

Friday 2nd September  
**Seratonos**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 2nd September  
**NeverInd**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 10th September  
**Hell's Gazelles (Album Launch)**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 15th September  
**Saiichi Sugiyama**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 19th September  
**Giles Robson**

Doors: 8pm

Sunday 25th September  
**Ulrika Spacek**

Doors: 7.30pm

Monday 26th September  
**Stevie Nimmo**

Doors: 8pm

Wednesday 28th September  
**Loyle Carner**

Doors: 7pm

Monday 3rd October  
**Red Butler**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 16th October  
**Ward Thomas**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 17th October  
**The Arkyard Sessions**  
**Feat. Rivers & Robots**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 19th October  
**Meilyr Jones**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 14th & Saturday 15th October  
**What Became of us Festival**  
**Gengahr**

Doors: 7pm

**Willie J Healey**  
**Hudson Scott**  
**Cabbage**  
**Van Zeller**

Doors: 8pm & 2pm

Sunday 16th October  
**All Tvbins**

Doors: 7.30pm

Thursday 20th October  
**Pat McManus**

Doors: 8pm

Friday 21st October  
**The Stray Birds**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 22nd October  
**The Long Insiders**  
**The Shapes**  
**Peerless Pirates**

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 26th October  
**The Sunshine Underground**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 28th October  
**Ferocious Dog**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 5th November  
**Rob Tognoni**  
**Hell's Gazelles**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 10th November  
**The Mentulls**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 11th November  
**Sara Watkins Trio**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 17th November  
**Steve Rodgers Band**

Doors: 8pm

Thursday 24th November  
**Federal Charm**

Doors: 8pm

Friday 2nd December  
**Dreadzone**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 9th December  
**Catfish**

Doors: 8pm

**JAZZ**  
**AT THE BULLINGDON**  
FREE EVERY TUESDAY 8.30PM

28th June  
**Bullingdon Hot Club**  
5th July  
**Groove Alchemy**  
12th July  
**Blake's 7 Funk**  
19th July  
**Oxford Jazz Quintet**

26th July  
**Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**  
9th August  
**Ewan Baird Quartet**  
16th August  
**Martin Pickett Organisation**  
23rd August  
**Hugh Turner Band**

30th August  
**Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**  
6th September  
**Rod Kelly Quartet**  
13th September  
**Hugh Turner Band**  
20th September  
**Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**

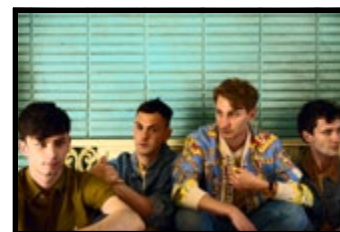
# NEWS

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Online: [nightshiftmag.co.uk](http://nightshiftmag.co.uk)



**GLASS ANIMALS** have announced their biggest Oxford show to date in October. The band play the **O2 Academy on Friday 21st October** as part of a national tour to promote second album 'How To Be A Human Being', including a show at The Roundhouse in London on the 25th October. The quartet, who have sold over 500,000 copies of debut album 'Zaba', and enjoyed 200 million Spotify streams worldwide, played a secret hometown show at The Bullingdon on the 3rd June ahead of the release of come-back single 'Life Itself', which was Annie Mac's Hottest Record in the World. Tickets for the O2 show are on sale now, priced £15, from the venue box office, or through Ticketweb.



**CASELS** release a new EP in August. The Chipping Norton duo, who starred on the Uncommon stage at Common People in May, will release 'You, Us & They' on Big Scary Monsters at the end of August. The brothers will launch the EP with a headline show at the Wheatseaf on Thursday 25th August. Tracklisting for the EP is: 'Cool Box'; 'You,

Us & They'; 'Well Fed Worms in a Graveyard', and 'Ignoring All the Tunnels & Lights'.

**OXJAM** returns to Oxford on Saturday 15th October. The annual nationwide network of gigs in aid of Oxfam runs all day at various venues on or near Cowley Road, including East Oxford Community Centre; Fusion Arts; The Library; James Street Tavern, and Joe Perks, with more venues to be added. Organisers are now looking for local acts who want to play the event. Anyone interested should email [oxjamoxfordproduction@gmail.com](mailto:oxjamoxfordproduction@gmail.com) or send a message via the Oxjam Oxford Takeover Facebook page. Last year's event featured sets from The Balkan Wanderers; Death of Hi-Fi; Duotone and Little Brother Eli, among others. Additionally Oxjam are running a six-a-side football tournament in conjunction with The Gatehouse as a fundraiser for both charities. The tournament will take place on Sunday 7th August at the Oxford City ground in Marston with bands paying a small fee to enter. Any bands, or coalitions of bands wanting to take part should email Aiden Canaday at [aidencanaday@gmail.com](mailto:aidencanaday@gmail.com) for more information.

**GENGHAR, Hudson Scott** and **Yuck** are among acts confirmed for **What Became Of Us Festival** in October. The two-day event, organised by promoters Future Perfect, takes place at **The Bullingdon** from **Friday 14th – Saturday 15th October**. Also confirmed are **Willie J Healey, Cabbage** and **Van Zeller**. Earlybird tickets, priced £10 for both days, are on sale now. Visit the What Became of Us Facebook page for details.

**CHRISTY MOORE** plays an Oxford show in October. The Irish folk legend, a founding member of Planxty and Moving Hearts, comes to The New Theatre on Wednesday 12th October with Declan Sinnott and Jim Higgins as part of a tour to promote new album 'Lily', his 27th solo studio album. Tickets, priced £36.15 (plus booking) are on sale now on 0844 871 3020, or via [Ticketweb.co.uk](http://Ticketweb.co.uk).



**MAIIANS HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THE RELEASE OF** their debut album next month and the future of the band as two members head off for jobs abroad.

The local electro-rock favourites launch their eponymous album at **The Cellar** on **Thursday 21st July**, as well as playing at Truck Festival on Friday 15th, following on from their show at Common People in May. The band will also play a show at London's Seabright Arms on July 23rd. Following the release of the album keyboard player Sam King is moving to Japan, while drummer Callum Peaston is heading for The States.

The band insist the departures are not the end of Maiians though, with new recordings planned online and future live shows as and when all the five members are in the UK together.

"We've been aware that the end of this summer would be a natural stopping point for a while now," keyboard player James Cunning told *Nightshift* in the wake of Maiians' triumphant performance on the Uncommon stage at Common People, "so the best thing to do in our eyes was to collect everything we've done before, record what we had left, and see if we could fit it onto two sides of vinyl. We had 'Lemon' and 'One of Each' remastered as we were never that happy with the originals. Writing takes time with this band; there are no songs *per se*, but ideas that are jammed to within an inch of their lives, then cut up and reassembled. The aim was always to replicate the sound live. I'm really happy with the way it sounds, because it does capture the energy of the band, and the tracks sit very well next to each other."

Formed in 2013, Maiians quickly became big favourites on the Oxford scene with their powerful and atmospheric instrumental electro sound, powered by two live drummers, which blended elements of techno and trance with post-rock and Krautrock and saw them compared to the likes of Kraftwerk, Fuck Buttons and trance pioneer Banco de Gaia. 'Lemon', the lead track from their debut EP 'Tokyo', was voted *Nightshift's* second favourite track of the year in 2014, beaten only by Glass Animals' global hit single 'Goosey'. The band were handpicked by Rob de Bank to help launch Common People at The Cellar at the start of 2016.

Talking of their rapid rise to the status of local favourites and one of the most popular live bands in Oxford, James said, "the first time I remember thinking we'd really connected with an audience was at the Punt last year, and from that we had an amazing run of shows: headlining the Friday night in the small tent at Truck was fantastic; Independent Venue Week at the Cellar, and Common People. All of our shows have been really fun, this band is really fun. Seeing crowd reactions is the absolute best."

"Some of the shows we've played will live in our memories for a lifetime," added Matt Goolding, one of the band's two drummers, "and that's tons more than we expected at the beginning. We've genuinely just had fun with what we write and it's amazing for that to be positively received. Oxford's been unbelievable for us; the support of our mates, *BBC Introducing*, and *Nightshift* has really helped to fill those venues. Oxford has always been very supportive of anything slightly differing from the norm and we are very grateful for that"

"It's the end for a little while but certainly not forever," promises James, talking of the quintet's future plans. "We're just having a break and we don't know how long for. We lost a member to Japan before, just after 'Tokyo' came out, and we carried on. People will be back and taking it online might make it even easier to write; we are all capable of sequencing drums and recording stuff so when the stars align and everyone's back in the country shows will happen. We just can't say when yet! The album should be available late July; we're releasing it digitally and on a limited 12". We'll have copies at the launch shows and you'll probably be able to pick up a copy from Truck store or our Bandcamp after that."



# NEWS

## CARNIVAL RETURNS TO COWLEY ROAD ON SUNDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JULY.

The annual celebration of east Oxford's multicultural life takes place along the length of Cowley Road, from The Plain to the top of Magdalen Road, from midday through til 5pm, with a series of post-Carnival parties and gigs planned at the venues and pubs in the area.

As ever music plays a huge part in Carnival, with myriad live stages and sound systems along the road. The Bullingdon, The City Arms; The Black Swan; The Library and The Cape of Good Hope are among pubs hosting stages, while there'll also be live stages at The Music Box, 420 Skates and Restore on Manzil Way, plus The Kate Garrett stage.

Among the live acts performing across the event are Zaia; Maiians; Chad Valley; Death of the Maiden; The Young Women's Music Project; Rhymeskeemz; Inner Peace Records; Two Tone All-Skas; Mad Larry; Headington Hillbillies; Heavy Dexters; Flights of Helios and Ran Kan Kan.

As well as the live music, sound systems and DJs, including the Free Range Roots system, Carnival boasts its traditional cornucopia of world dance, theatre, food, poetry and spoken word, kids activities and more, including the main Carnival procession. Last year's event attracted over 40,000 people to Cowley Road, making it the biggest event of its kind in the county.

Post-Carnival the party continues at the O2 Academy with an official after party featuring rap legend KRS-One, plus Statik Selektah; White Magic Sound; Dr Erbs; Sir Sambo; Rhymeskeemz and Flotecs. At The Bullingdon house club Simple host their own party, while The Black Swan has sts from Dizzy Lizzy; DJ Tony Nanton; The Corsairs; The Mighty Redox and more.

*All the latest Carnival news, and details of how to get involved and volunteer at the event, are at [www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk](http://www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk)*



**VANGOFFEY** play a show at **The Jericho Tavern** on **Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October**. The gig, hosted by Daisy Rodgers Music, will mark frontman Danny Goffey's return to the venue that launched his career with The Jennifers and later Supergrass in the early 90s. Now fronting his own band Danny tours his debut album 'Take Your Jacket Off & Get Into It'. Tickets, priced £10 adv, are on sale from [Wegotickets.com](http://Wegotickets.com).

**BLACKWELL'S MUSIC** in Broad Street have announced that they are now stocking a wide range of Tanglewood acoustic and electro acoustic guitars to add to their expanding range of musical instruments and accessories. For all enquiries, phone 01865 333581 or email [music.ox@blackwell.co.uk](mailto:music.ox@blackwell.co.uk)

AS EVER, don't forget to tune into **BBC Oxford Introducing** every Saturday night between 8-9pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local music show plays the best Oxford releases and demos as well as featuring interviews and sessions with local acts. The show is available to stream or download as a podcast at [bbc.co.uk/oxford](http://bbc.co.uk/oxford).

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



*And just because we couldn't not print this picture of Paul Chuckle with Public Enemy, taken at Common People in South Park. A culture clash in excelsis. Read our full festival review in this issue.*



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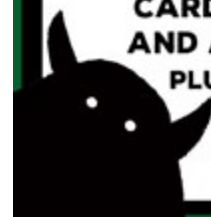
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## A Quiet Word With



**“THERE WAS NO INTENTION to be a pirate band or write about pirates,” says Peerless Pirates frontman Cliff Adams, a man regularly seen onstage dressed in elegant buccaneer garb singing songs about high seas adventure and derring do. “My late father played in a midnight league ten-pin bowling team in Birmingham in the 1960s called Peerless Pirates, basically consisting of staff from a company called Peerless Stampings Ltd. I still have his black silk shirt with ‘Peerless Pirates’ on the back. When I was between bands I just thought that would be a good name for my next venture.”**

### INTENTIONAL OR NOT

Peerless Pirates have carved out a singular niche for themselves locally since they formed in 2013 as purveyors of a swashbuckling form of pop that pressgangs 80s indie, rockabilly, eastern European folk dance, spaghetti western soundtracks, surf rock and sea shanties and makes them dance a merry hornpipe that they describe as Pirate Pop. They don’t go overboard on the costumes but there’s a strong pirate image on show, one that’s been increasingly taken up by the band’s devoted following.

### AT THE END OF MAY THE

band took their rollicking rock and roll show to the stage at Common People where they predictably went down a storm. A week later the quartet launched their debut album with a headline show at the O2 Academy. This month they head out on further festival adventures, playing at Cornbury Festival and Charlbury Riverside and The Kids Are Alright charity show in the rooftop amphitheatre of the Said Business School. For those who prefer their musical grog in more intimate surroundings The Pirates also perform at Klub Kakofanny at The Wheatsheaf on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. A busy month, then, for a band who have earned themselves a reputation as one of the most out and out fun acts in town. Along the way songs like ‘High Seas love Affair’; ‘Your Grace’ and ‘The Ghost of Captain Kidd’ have become singalong favourites

**THE NAME PEERLESS** Pirates has been around for a while now – an early incarnation of the band, fronted by Cliff, existed in 2008 but soon fell apart, and the band we know now came together three years ago as Cliff was joined by guitarist Kyle Mundy, bassist Stuart Green and drummer Barry Short. While comparisons have been made (and made again, to the obvious

weary disquiet of the band) to The Smiths, particularly Cliff’s bold, rich voice that touches on Morrissey at times, and Kyle’s lively guitar work which owes a little something to Johnny Marr, Peerless Pirates are so much more than this, owing as much to bands like The Monochrome Set, Adam & the Ants and The Ukrainians, as well as composer Ennio Morricone, whose influence is pebbledashed all over the band’s single ‘El Gringo’. “It would be churlish of me to deny that The Smiths were a big influence on me,” says Cliff as *Nightshift* chats to Peerless Pirates ahead of their hectic month of gigs. “However, I am always at pains to point out that my music collection is completely eclectic. I’m never dented by comparisons to Morrissey, though. I don’t mind it, but I don’t think I’m quite as miserable.” “Let’s be honest here,” adds Barry, “being compared to The Smiths from the very early days has actually been a blessing. We did moan about it initially but at the end of the day, if you are being compared to one of the most influential bands of the 80s, you must be doing something right.”

**THE RELEASE OF THE ALBUM** ‘Peerless Pirates’ is the culmination of that something right, a logical extension of the succession of well-

received singles and demos the band have put out over the last few years. Do the band feel they’ve been appreciated fully along the way or has the pirate shtick hindered as much as helped them along the way? CLIFF: “Our reviews have generally followed the same pattern: ‘You sound like The Smiths. You never change. You think you’re real pirates but we like you.’ This is a constant source of confusion for me, but I like the fact that people eventually cotton on to the fact that our piratical bent is delivered with swathes of black humour. As with all these things they take time and I think people’s initial reservations have made it more difficult for us but we have continued to have fun regardless of what has been happening around us. It’s maybe foolhardy, but I think it has taken us longer than normal to become established locally because of it. Hopefully, it’s a hare and the tortoise thing. Seems like we got somewhere in the end.” Full fruition is upon us now with the album. Is it everything you wanted it to be? CLIFF: “It’s rather overdue. We actually have enough material now for a double album. We began recording back in October 2015 and Kyle and myself have spent the last three months mixing and mastering it. We

maybe broke some rules along the way but it has definitely come out sounding like us, which is the very least we wanted.” BARRY: “For me it feels like we’ve been working on it since 2010. This is like the end of the first chapter. We wanted to make sure when we brought an album out that it would be considered and received well. Now that people are starting to buy into us perhaps they can see through the pirate veil and just enjoy the music.” KYLE: “I’d say this album has achieved what we set out to do though; it’s us at this point, on a CD, exactly how it should sound. We may sound like a totally different band in a year, but I wouldn’t change a thing about the album.”

**ONE SURPRISING OMISSION** from the album is ‘El Gringo’, the 2014 single that more than any song displayed Peerless Pirates’ wider musical horizons, with its strong Tex-Mex flavour, accompanied by a knockabout video set in a Mexican restaurant. Did the band feel it didn’t fit the narrative of the rest of the album and is that more spaghetti western sound something they’d like to explore further? CLIFF: “Yes, for sure. All of our material, up until the release of ‘El Gringo’, was painted on a nautical canvas and I felt that the debut album should reflect that. ‘El Gringo’ was perhaps a hint of a future direction where we will be exploring more of the Tex-Mex bandit sound and more surf and eastern European dynamics. That’s not to say I’m done with the seafaring lark but a band needs room to manoeuvre and this is ours.” KYLE: “Anyone who’s spoken to me for more than five minutes knows I’m a huge rock’n’roll and surf nut, so I’m always up for revisiting that! I am also looking forward to exploring some other styles in the not too distant future. We decided fairly early on not to include ‘El Gringo’. The album has a strong nautical feel – a narrative is a really good way to put it – and it was something of a square peg in a round hole in that respect.”

**ULTIMATELY PEERLESS** Pirates, as anyone who has ever seen one of their superb live shows would testify, seems to be about having fun; do they feel enough bands make an effort to have fun and encourage their audience to do likewise? CLIFF: “I’ve never been into trying to gee an audience along. They will either have fun of their own accord or they won’t. Getting them to clap along is going to get right up their noses. I just get up and play and if it has a positive effect then I’m humbled. I know I perform a little like I’m a mincing dandy caught up in my own inflated tales, but the audience seem to do the same so we’re all at it. This is what gigging is all about.”

STU: “We certainly like to put on a show: we dress up, we prance about and we have a good time. And because we love it, the audience know they can join in. The worst thing is a good band taking themselves too seriously as it detracts from the quality of the music. All musicians play because it’s fun, so if it’s not fun, why the hell are you doing it?”

**ONE THING THAT STANDS OUT** in many of Peerless Pirates’ songs is an almost heroic sense of romance, something that lends far greater depth to the band than any superficial impression of daft rum-soaked fun. (“I must confess I am a romantic at heart,” confirms Cliff, “but I’m also a deviant and I believe that also comes across in the lyrics. I have to watch myself pre-watershed”). Given this oft overlooked side of the band, what do they think is the most popular misconception about pirates – and the

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**“At the end of the day, if you’re being compared to one of the most influential bands of the 80s, you must be doing something right.”**

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most popular misconception about Peerless Pirates themselves? CLIFF: “That they were all bad. True, most were but some were also misguided. However, back in the day, no leniency was shown to someone who probably just needed a comforting arm around the shoulder or a massage. Let’s face it, executions were a family day out. Captain Kidd was a decent bloke led astray, like a lot of decent blokes.” KYLE: “That they look like Johnny Depp when most of them looked like a blind cobbler’s thumb.” STU: “That they were a disorganised rabble; they were in fact an extremely democratic and fair society. As long as you weren’t the ones being boarded.” CLIFF: “The most popular misconception about us is that we believe we are pirates and sing solely about pirates. There are one or two salient piratical references but most of it is about other bawdy capers and suspect antics. We’re the Carry On team in tricorns.” Have you played any of the pirate festivals around the country? CLIFF: “We’ve played at Hastings Pirate Festival a couple of times but we don’t do too many generally. We mostly play our own stuff so pirate festivals have to stretch their roster a little to accommodate us. We do bring a little light relief to the endless covers of Friggin’ In The Rigg’in’.” BARRY: “Pirate festivals are amazing. Hastings Pirate Day was amazing fun. I think it was about 15,000 fully dressed up pirates during the record attempt back in 2012, which was pretty cool.” Is there ever a worry that having such

a strong image and so many songs about pirates and the sea the band could paint itself into a corner? CLIFF: “I’m sure that may have gone against us from time to time but I really don’t care about it to be honest and, as I’ve said, we really haven’t got that many songs that are actually about pirates. Even the songs that might mention pirates are just delivering passing references and using it as an analogy for a tale about love or debauchery or exploring or whatever. We could get up there in jeans and t-shirts and sing songs about high school rejection... would that make us more palatable? Probably not, but it would make us easier to pigeon hole. I’d rather get up and sing about high school rejection in 1742 and have the protagonist slay his/her paramour on the deck of a ship. That’s much more interesting.” BARRY: “It is a fine line and one which I feel we navigate very well.

It’s nice to have an edge that sparks creativity when writing but once you listen to our music you do tend to see the bigger picture. Our songs are full of romance, cheekiness and a little bit of organised chaos. I suppose we are who we are, minus any delusions of grandeur and as long as people keep coming to the gigs and enjoying our sound we’ll carry on.” KYLE: “It’s always been more of a flourish than a peg leg and parrots kind of affair. If people can’t see past the pirate thing then they aren’t listening. I love being a pirate, and the most pirate thing after all, is not caring what others think. That and theft. And rum.” STU: “I wouldn’t say we’d ever be a novelty. We play music that falls into a mixture of genres including indie, alternative, folk, surf, rock. But quite prominent and pretty uniquely, is a strong dose of shanty. It influences the rhythms and the meandering melodies, and it’s infectious and addictive. We can’t deny that it is key part of our music, so we embrace that in our image. And anyway, who doesn’t love a pirate.” If the four of you were real pirates, who’d be captain; who’d be the cabin boy; who’d drink all the rum and who’d end up keelhauled? CLIFF: “Without going into details, I guess I’d remain as Captain and the rest could squabble over the dregs of rum I’d left for them.” BARRY: “Yeah, I’d be keel hauled most probably. Ha ha. There can only be one captain and that’s Cliff. Stu would be the cabin boy, and Kyle would definitely drink all the rum.” KYLE: “I would absolutely drink all

the rum.” You’ve got a decent hardcore of fans who dress up for shows; is that something that you encourage and how much does it help make gigs into more special occasions? CLIFF: “No, we never encouraged it. People just started rocking up to the shows in that stuff. Just like anyone likes to wear a band t shirt to see a band they like, it’s probably their way of showing us that they like what we are doing. It also shows that secretly everyone likes to dress up and what’s wrong with that? We’re just acting as a catalyst.” Barry: “Personally I love it! On another note, we didn’t introduce a conga to our song ‘Bring Out Your Dead’ either, that is something that has developed of its own accord and always makes us smile!”

**LOOKING AHEAD TO THE** summer now, and there’s a swathe of festivals on the horizon for Peerless Pirates, including a headline slot on the Riverside at Cornbury Festival. Do they think their live show – lively, inclusive, geared for a good time – is particularly suited to a festival crowd? CLIFF: “I wouldn’t say we’re suited to festivals in particular but I do think we’re adaptable. I personally prefer smaller intimate gigs where the sweat collects on the ceiling. Festivals have an altogether different vibe. In terms of festivals we have coming up I’d say Cornbury and Charlbury Riverside are the two giving me the butterflies.” BARRY: “Festivals are my favourite gigs. We get to perform to massive audiences who have probably never heard of us, so the challenge is greater to get them dancing. It’s fun to watch them gradually loosen up and end up fully jumping about.” KYLE: “We’ve had some dumpster fire festival gigs, and some gigs at your local Slug and Lettuce that have felt like Wembley. I really do think it’s the crowd that makes it. I think Cornbury is going to be a banger! I can’t wait for that!”

**PEERLESS PIRATES’ ALBUM** closes, as do their live shows, with a roustabout version of the classic ‘What Shall We Do With the Drunken Sailor’. What would the band do with an actual drunken sailor? CLIFF: “Kick him in the shins and steal his boat.” KYLE: “Steal his rum!” STU: “Actually, we usually just give him the lead guitar.”

**‘Peerless Pirates’ is out now. Peerless Pirates play Klub Kakofanny at The Wheatsheaf on Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> July; The Kids Are Alright 4 at Said Business School on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>; The Riverside Festival at Cornbury Festival on Friday the 8<sup>th</sup>, and Charlbury Riverside on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>. Hear them at [www.peerlesspirates.com](http://www.peerlesspirates.com)**



# RELEASED

## PEERLESS PIRATES

### ‘Peerless Pirates’

*(Pirate Music)*  
Peerless Pirates are doubtless one of the county’s foremost good time bands, and many a staid local scenester has been seen throwing some unattractive shapes to their high-octane indie shanty bounce, sacrificing dignity in the cause of buccaneering bacchanalia. Listening to this album, though, brings out the subtler side of their work. Just a scan of the titles throws up some words that you wouldn’t find in the mouths of your average party combo: gallantry; palaver; gauntlet; moratorium. This excellent debut album is stuffed with light, eloquent pop pop that puts these pirates closer to Guybrush Threepwood than Bluebeard. Much has been made of the band’s Smiths influence, but aside from a bit of Morrissey phrasing, such as the ‘Hand In Glove’-shaped outro to ‘The Greatest Explorer On Earth’, Salford’s passive-aggressive princeling is best reflected in the fact that this record seems improbably arch and theatrical while it still exhibits an everyman earthiness which tugs at the hindbrain. A lot of care has been taken to ensure the songs do not run together into a generic chug, and there are some nicely varied textures and rhythms, especially from Kyle Mundy’s guitar, which throws out Duane Eddy tremolo and Dick



## SLATE HEARTS

### ‘Blood Fluff EP’

*(Self released)*  
If the Oxford Punt is a reliable bellwether of current local music then the noisier end of rock is what’s rising right now, with the likes of Too Many Poets, Cherokee, The Beckoning Fair One, Kancho! and myriad others mining the darker vaults of grunge, hardcore and classic hard rock for inspiration. Slate Hearts too, whose recent Demo of the Month in these pages signalled a love for grunge’s first flowering, for when it was an unholy mess of punk and Black Sabbath riffage, before it was airbrushed to fit marketing campaigns for



Dale depth charges on ‘Your Grace’, Runrig stadium clarions on ‘High Seas Love Affair’ and – yep – Johnny Marr shimmers on ‘The Ghost of Captain Kidd’. Fans may miss the chipotle tang of recent single ‘El Gringo’ from the tracklist, but the searing live favourite ‘Bring Out Your Dead’ is there to sweeten the absence, before the record ends with a proper traditional shanty knees up. What shall we do with the sober sailor? Play him this album, and he’ll be hanging from the tavern light fittings, swigging back the rotgut and making good-natured romantic lunges at potboys and bar wenches alike before track 4 is out.  
**David Murphy**

overpriced sportswear. ‘Blood Fluff’ might owe its life to Nirvana but it’s the thrilling lo-fi mess of ‘Bleach’ rather than the anthemic choruses of ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit’ that hold the tiller as the band head for the rockiest path through turbulent waters. Their formula is simple but highly effective: sturdy beats and monolithic superfuzzed guitars straight out of the Tony Iommi School of Granite Riffage anchoring songs that veer between a strangely plaintive form of sullenness and all-out hysteria, depending on whether singer Ellis Currell is feeling murderous or suicidal. ‘Dreamboat’ is both at once, while even the more monolithic ‘Monotomy’ (*sic*) drops down from its beefy Sabbath worship at the end to explore the edges of Thom Yorke’s self doubt. If the moody, almost acoustic ‘Summer’ shows the band’s ability to change tack with ease, it’s the dense guitar blizzard of ‘Sandra’ that proves the EP’s high point, 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. Oddly they leave what is undoubtedly their most instant, and melodically strongest track, ‘Take Me To The Green’, til last, possibly an act of deliberate truculence that sits perfectly at ease with Slate Hearts’ spiky, spiteful re-appropriation of grunge as a musical weapon rather than an advertising jingle.  
**Ian Chesterton**

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## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### ‘Bear on a Bicycle

### Volume 4’

*(Bear on a Bicycle)*  
While the continued survival of bedroom record labels remains a cause for celebration, the record label compilation album can be a minefield: few artists want to give their best material away cheap, and unless a label has a tightly controlled aesthetic, the mix and match of acts can be more mixed than matched. Thus it is with this fourth compendium from Bear on a Bicycle’, who have given us great album releases from Paddox and Jordan O’Shea in the past. Both of those figure here, though Paddox’s microtonal, Eno-esque somnambulating ‘Aphrodisiaque 006’ is an old track from their debut album, while Jordan’s song comes under his new Friday Night Film Club guise and is harsher than we’ve come to expect of him. Still, they provide two of the compilation’s best moments, alongside My Crooked Teeth, who injects some plaintive passion into proceedings; Waltz In the Shallow End’s gently carouselling twee-pop, with its French café folk vibe, and in particular Be Good’s woozy and wobbly but surprisingly successful cover of Roy Orbison’s ‘Crying’.

After the Thought’s spacious, ambient instrumental of electronic pulses and bleeps verges on the hypnotic but maybe lacks context amid much of the company here, while Penny Lane’s acoustic strum is sweet and sleepy-eyed enough to appeal but struggles to live long in the memory. There’s little to actually dislike, although North Beach’s stumbling r’n’b lacks any discernible character and Sier Pin Sky’s simultaneously strangled and lackadaisical funky electro-pop makes them sound like a poor man’s Thomas Dolby. Instead it’s a lack of some kind of core to the album that lets it down – while understated electronics and acoustic pop seems to be dominant, there’s little to tie one track to the next, and none of the best acts here are at their best. Better to check out the artists in their own right, while wishing continued power to BOAB’s elbow along the way.  
**Dale Kattack**



## LUCY LEAVE

### ‘Fighter Pilot EP’

*(Self released)*  
There’s a consensus among the hardcore gig-going regulars of our fair city that Lucy Leave are one of the very best new live bands around, sharing an acclaim similarly afforded to the likes of Cherokee, Kanadia and Slate Hearts. Their appeal lies in a very fine balance between all-out sonic warfare and oddly tender melodies, coupled with a feeling that everything is going to fall apart completely in the next few bars. Stripped of the volume



## THE SHAPES

### ‘The Passing of the Years’

*(Self released)*  
Youth, as the saying goes, is wasted on the young. It’s a philosophy that’s served songwriters well over the decades, and this latest

## EN-TRANCE vs DEATH OF HI-FI

### ‘Lazarus’ (Harder Remix)

*(Substance)*

Since coalescing fully into a three-piece with Lucy Cropper on lead vocals, Death of Hi-Fi have headed more and more into tripped-out electro, personified by last year’s swoonesome ‘Swim Away’ single and their awesome contribution to the ‘We Do Not Have a Dinosaur’ compilation, ‘Roses & Guns’. Here they hand ‘Lazarus’ to fellow local producer en-Trance who turns the sparse, atmospheric original – not a million miles

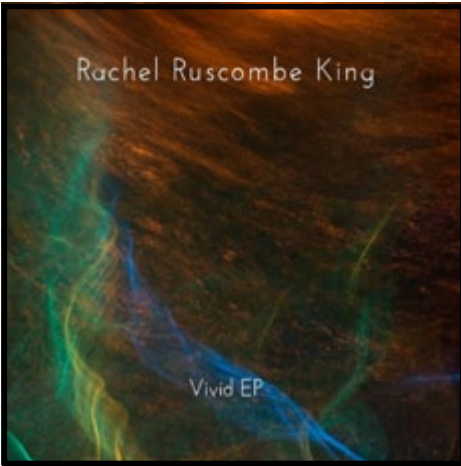
and general pub gig distortion that adds to the overall spectacle live, Lucy Leave’s new four-song EP throws both their strengths and weaknesses into starker light. Title track ‘Fighter Pilot’ is an odd lead-in since it’s the band at their most scrappy, seemingly out of tune with each, coming on like some long lost (for good reason) mid-80s jangle band whose ambition probably extended no further than playing first on to Talulah Gosh. They rectify things with ‘Friends’, now at their sweetest, singer Mike Smith’s fragile voice reminding us of Robert Wyatt, while the band explore their more abstract, jazz-rock side. ‘Carry’ is spikier by far, scurrying into Pixies territory, but it’s the seven minutes-plus closer ‘40 Years’ that really steals the show, the trio doing what so many great bands over the years – Modern Lovers, Wedding Present, Perfect Disaster – have done so well: nabbing an old Bo Diddley riff and running with it until they’re over the horizon. So, while this EP maybe lacks some of Lucy Leave’s raw live power, it succeeds in revealing what a great, genuinely quirky act they are. One that, like Bug Prentice in the local scheme of things, aren’t going to sit around letting you second guess them. An oddly shaped wee gem of a band.  
**Dale Kattack**

Shapes single carries on in the grand tradition, singers Ant Kelly and Alix Cornhill reflecting on just how quickly life passes, while turning the track into something of a love song to the Oxford of their younger selves (“the sound of the streets that make me feel so tall”). It’s a characteristically bittersweet lament that rises from downbeat country-blues to rousing boogie while remaining steadfastly misty-eyed. Like The Relationships’ Richard Ramage, at his best Kelly has a knack for melancholic reflection, and a softness of touch that wouldn’t shame Ray Davies, although more than anything ‘The Passing of the Years’ reminds us of great lost 80s pop romantics Dream Academy. Elsewhere here ‘April Showers’ is a slightly cheesy jazz-flavoured pop swing that refuses not to be compared to The Beautiful South, and ‘Late Night at the Bully’, another ode to a local fixture, one that nicks its tune almost wholesale from The Kinks’ ‘Come Dancing’. The Shapes won’t ever be the coolest company in town but if you’re going to stay up all night drinking and dancing, you’ll struggle to find easier company.  
**Dale Kattack**

## RACHEL LUSCOMBE KING

### ‘Vivid EP’

*(Self released)*  
Claire Heaviside from Balkan Wanderers would surely be a shoo-in to play the clarinet were an Oxford super group ever to be assembled and its customary warmth is the best thing about Rachel Luscombe King’s low key EP, ‘Vivid’, a release that comes with aurora borealis artwork across swirling aquamarine. Too often, however, the wind instrument is forced to share house room with the title artist’s cooing vocals and it would not be unreasonable to wish for a little more in the way of proper lyrics. When the former singer of Ragdoll does deliver some recognisable words, few could have objections to the way they are delivered but the whole is pretty unexciting in the mode of incidental music from a 1970s kids’ TV show with protagonists all crossed legs on mats and telling tales of damsels in distress, nasty wolves and forests that are black as pitch. It’s earnest and heartfelt but songs such as ‘Tread Lightly’ and ‘Solar Eclipse’ fail to really catch fire, unlike the artist’s eyes which she claims came a cropper staring for too long at just such a celestial event. So, that clarinet and some of the arrangements aside, the first four tracks are pastoral and undemanding but the quality rises sharply with the EP’s closer. The release’s second track, ‘Beacon’, reappears, remixed by Omeron City Lights and the introduction of muffled beats and subtle changes of pace signify something a whole lot more interesting, recalling Serafina Steer, who attracted critical plaudits a couple of years back with her ‘The Moths are Real’ album. Much of that is presumably also down to James Schumann’s cajón, a Peruvian percussion instrument that resembles an over-sized bird seed dispenser. Its quirkiness is a real antidote to the pleasant but less than gripping nature of the rest of the EP but Luscombe-King deserves credit for opening the studio to something different.  
**Rob Langham**





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# Irregular Folks Summer Session

Hogacre Eco Park

**SATURDAY 2ND JULY 2016**

1:00pm - 11:30pm

**Bastardgeist**  
**Stealing Sheep**  
**Waitress For  
The Bees**

Jessica Slighter  
**Whiskey Moonface**

Jess Hall  
**Water Pageant**  
Haus Khas  
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# Irregular

## Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> IRREGULAR FOLKS SUMMER SESSION: Hogacre Park

Irregular Folks organiser Vez Hoper has earned a reputation over the last few years of making every gig an event, with the sort of attention to detail – from handmade tickets, to stages covered in frosted branches – normally the preserve of boutique festivals. Which will make this year’s Summer Session something special. As the name suggests, this isn’t a regular folk session, with the nebulous genre’s more eclectic and esoteric innovators stretching the boundaries in often spectacular fashion. Having seen C Duncan play at last year’s event before going off to be shortlisted for the Mercury Prize, this year’s highlights are Liverpool’s **STEALING SHEEP** (*pictured*), their olde worlde wyrd folk all close harmonies, eerie atmospherics, and dark, droney psychedelia, with hints of The Velvet Underground at times. Folktronica doesn’t really describe the trio’s music, although there is folk and they do use electronics. Deep within the mix you’ll hear Indian temple music instrumentation as well as Toytown synth plonks. Returning after last year’s star showing is Chicago’s **BASTARDGEIST**, whose real name, Joel Midden, (un)neatly reflects his brilliantly messed-up approach to songwriting – more like uneasy tapestries of sound. There’s also Dutch singer **JESSICA SLIGTER**, whose wide-ranging voice and luxurious electronic soundscapes recently saw her support Jenny Hval on tour; one-woman dinosaur obsessive and viola maestro **WAITRESS FOR THE BEES**; local Bon Iver and Low Anthem-influenced folk-pop duo **WATER PAGEANT**; sultry accordion-led blues and shanties trio **WHISKEY MOONFACE**, and sea song chanteuse **JESS HALL**. The emphasis is on invention as well as a great songwriting, and today’s is one of the most ambitious line-ups of any event this summer. As an added bonus there’s a very special compère for the day, but we’ll put our foot in it if we give their name away and that would be appalling.



# JULY

**FRIDAY 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with PEERLESS PIRATES + ART THEEFE + KANADIA + DAN McKEEN:** **The Wheatsheaf** – Klub Kak’s genial bag of musical magic opens once again with this month’s *Nightshift* cover stars, Peerless Pirates, playing alongside this month’s Introducing featured band, Kanadia. There’s also 60s-styled pop from Art Theefe.  
**PAVES + BALLIN’ JACK’S WHYTE LYTES:** **The Bullingdon** – Blues-flavoured roots rocking from London’s Paves, out on tour to promote recent single ‘Take Me While I’m Here’.  
**WAY TOO GULLY:** **The Cellar** – Drum&bass club night with Rich Raw, Greencode B2B Bolo, Mark B and Beatsurfer.  
**MOGMATIC + GELATO + THE VINDICTA + PICTURE PALACE + LUKE MITCHELL:** **The Jericho Tavern** – Blues rocking from local veterans Mogmatic at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show, plus a swift return to town for Los Angeles psychedelic power rockers The Vim Dicta, the young trio earning themselves an enviable reputation in the States for their raw, riff-heavy blend of Led Zep, Janis Joplin, The Doors and Jefferson Airplane.  
**SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE & SPOTLIGHT JAM:** **James Street Tavern** – Genial open mic club veteran Sparky hosts his monthly bands’n’jams night, with guest turns from Savannah, Tony & Sal, and Cosmosis.  
**FEROCIOUS DOG:** **The Wheatsheaf, Banbury** – Nottingham’s folk-punk road warriors hit the Shire ahead of a tour support to The Levellers later this year. Having become the first unsigned band to sell out their hometown’s 2,000-capacity Rock City venue, they recently played on the Leftfield stage at Glastonbury and are earning a reputation as one of the most hard working and entertaining live bands in the country. Drawing on the punk spirit of The Clash and Celtic folk traditions, they’re in the traditions of bands like The Men They Couldn’t Hang, Tansads and Flogging Molly- angry and uplifting in equal measures.

**SATURDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**IRREGULAR FOLKS SUMMER SESSION:** **Hogacre Common** – Inventive folk and not so folk fun. In the sun. With Stealing Sheep, Bastardgeist and more – *see main preview*  
**DEAD BELGIAN + LES CLOCHARDS:** **The Bullingdon** – The Belgian bard brought back to life in gritty style. There will be wine – *see main preview*  
**THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT 4:** **Said Business**

**School (6pm)** – The fourth annual outing for The Kids Are Alright once again sets up an excellent selection of local bands on the rooftop amphitheatre of the Said Business School in aid of children’s charities. Topping the bill are rockabilly faves The Long Insiders, Gretch-wielding singer Nick Kenny and band mixing up classic 50s rock’n’roll and surf sounds in the vein of Jerry Lee Lewis, The Cramps and Sun-era Elvis. They’re joined by this month’s *Nightshift* cover stars Peerless Pirates; soulful new wave pop and Americana crew The Shapes; folk outfit La Phooka, mixing good time tunes and ballads; authentic western barroom tales from Great Western Tears, and western pop-Indian classical fusion sounds from The Fusion Project. Money raised goes to All As One UK, Belle House Drayton Ward and Paediatric Diabetes.  
**POLEDO + RADICAL BOY + LONG LIMBS:** **The Wheatsheaf** – Poledo make a welcome return to their home town at tonight’s Idiot King show, the duo’s majestically messed-up melodic noise-pop recalling Dinosaur Jr, Built to Spill and Yo la Tengo. They’re joined on tour by Sheffield’s lo-fi garage-pop and noise rock duo Radical Boy and Glasgow’s sweet-natured grunge-pop perpetrators Long Limbs.  
**INFURIOS + 1000 CHAINS + WAYS ACROSS + MINDFUL EYE + REPERCUSSIONS OF YESTERDAY:** **The Cellar** – Classic thrash in the vein of Slayer, Metallic and Lamb of God from local boys Infurious at tonight’s Church of the Heavy, with support from melodic metallers 1000 Chains, and Cheltenham’s Paramore-styled alt.rockers Ways Across.  
**FREERANGE present WHAT YOU CALL IT, GARAGE?:** **The Cellar** – UK garage, grime and bassline club night with residents playing the best underground sounds.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX:** **The Red Lion, Eynsham** – Blues rock, ska, psychedelia, funk and oddly-shaped pop from the ever-gigging local vets.  
**STEAMROLLER:** **Annie’s Tea Room, Thrupp** – The local blues-rock vets rattle the china at Annie’s with their blend of Hendrix and Cream.  
**CHILTONFEST:** **Chilton School** – Blues rockers Steamroller play the charity mini-fest.

**SUNDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**TOO MANY POETS + SLATE HEARTS + SPQR + DUKE MERCURY:** **The Library** – Too Many Poets launch their new EP with a free gig for Smash Disco, the molten gothic rockers’ all-action live performance perfectly suited to the none-more-intimate Library. Similarly ferocious noises from grunge newcomers Slate Hearts as they launch their own new EP, taking grunge back to its belligerent roots. Liverpool’s

lo-fi art-rockers SPQR and Manchester’s uptight post-hardcore duo Duke Mercury support.  
**SUPERLOOSE + BEARD OF DESTINY + PURPLE MAY + SPOON THEORY + SAMMY POPE:** **The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm)** – Free unplugged live music session hosted by Giddyup Music in the downstairs bar.  
**MARK ATHERTON & FRIENDS + MATT SEWELL + MOON LEOPARD + EMI & JULES:** **Donnington Community Centre (6pm)** – Live acoustic folk, blues and psychedelia at the monthly Donning session, hosted by Moon Leopard’s Jeremy Hughes.

**MONDAY 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**OMMADON + LEGION OF ANDROMEDA + DRORE:** **The Wheatsheaf** – Death to summer. Death to nice things. Death – *see main preview*

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**ALL TAMARA’S PARTIES SUMMER FESTIVAL:**  
**The Perch, Binsey**  
Having made its reputation with a succession of intimate shows in often unusual venues – from college chapels to health food shops – All Tamara’s Parties presents its first summer all-dayer, taking the place at the picturesque perch pub in Binsey of Irregular Folks, whose summer all-dayer takes place on the same day over at Hogacre Common.

Hosted by local singer Tamara Parsons-Baker, today’s almost exclusively locally-sourced bill includes a headline set from punk and indie-infused eastern European folksters **THE BALKAN WANDERERS**, fresh from headlining the Uncommon stage at Common People. They’re joined by alt.country rockers **THE EPSTEIN** (*pictured*), playing songs from their new ‘Burn the Branches’ album; rousing funky blues’n’soul stars **LITTLE BROTHER ELI**; decidedly chipper riot grl pop-punk act **RAINBOW RESERVOIR**; gorgeously downbeat dustbowl gothic alt.folksters **THE AUGUST LIST**; Ameripolitan country troubadour **AGS CONNOLLY**; Tamara’s own new band, the baroque pop **DEATH OF THE MAIDEN**, and Yorkshire-born poet and playwright **CAROLINE BIRD**. Given the setting, the emphasis will be on a laidback vibe as well as quality music; your ever-enjoyable and genial host for the day is poet and storyteller **GEORGE CHOPPING**.



**EASY STAR ALLSTARS:** **The Bullingdon** – Back on a European tour to celebrate the tenth anniversary of their ‘Radiodread’ reworking of ‘OK Computer’, playing tracks from the album as well as live favourites from their dub and reggae remodelling of The Beatles and Pink Floyd.

**TUESDAY 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**DMA’s: O2 Academy** – Having been banished to the colonies 20 years ago, Britpop’s prison ship has docked in Botany Bay and Oasis, The Verve and Cast have alighted to bring the message of mid-paced indie rock trudge to Australia’s youth. DMA’s’ debut album ‘Hill’s End’ suggests they’ve lapped it up.  
**GROOVE ALCHEMY:** **The Bullingdon** – The Bully’s free weekly jazz club hosts groove-led outfit Groove Alchemy.  
**SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON:** **James Street Tavern** – Weekly open mic night, hosted by Sparky.  
**TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE:** **The Half Moon** – Modern jazz and grooves from the Hammond/sax/guitar/drums outfit, playing their monthly residency.

**WEDNESDAY 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**VIDAR NORHEIM:** **The Library** – Glitchy, understated electro-pop from Norwegian singer, beatmaker and vibraphone player Vidar Norheim, recalling a tripped-out Pet Shop Boys at times on his debut EP.

**THURSDAY 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**SNAKE DAVIS & ROSS STANLEY:** **The Wheatsheaf** – Spin jazz club with funky soul and jazz saxophonist Snake Davis.  
**FORCE OF MORALITY + HOLY MOMENTS + YOUNG AT SEA + DIN TWINS + RICHARD MOOR:** **The Jericho Tavern** – It’s All About the Music local bands showcase.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB:** **East Oxford Community Centre** – Oxford’s longest running open night showcases singers, musicians, storytellers, poets and much more every Thursday.  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS:** **The Half Moon** – Open mic night.  
**ACOUSTIC THURSDAY:** **Jude the Obscure** – Unplugged open mic night.  
**BLUES JAM:** **The Catherine Wheel, Sandford** – Open blues jam.

**FRIDAY 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**CORNBURY FESTIVAL:** **Great Tew Park** – Jamie Cullum, Wilko Johnson and The Beat head up the first day of the annual festival – *see main preview*  
**KANADIA:** **The Bullingdon** – Stadium-sized indie rocking from Abingdon’s new stars on the scene, exploring rock’s wide-open spaces in the company of Radiohead, Muse and U2 – *see Introducing feature*  
**BOSSAPHONIK featuring DAPHNA SADEH & THE VOYAGERS:** **The Cellar** – World jazz and global fusion club night  
Bossaphonik hosts Israeli-born composer and double bass player Daphna Sadeh and her band The Voyagers – featuring new Indian singer Jyotna Srikanth, fusing the worlds of Jewish



**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**DEAD BELGIAN / LES CLOCHARDS:**  
**The Bullingdon**  
Even if you haven’t heard Jacques Brel, you’ll have heard his songs, often translated into English. The Belgian singer and songwriter is possibly the greatest exponent of modern chanson, and since his death, aged just 49, in 1978, his legend and influence has only grown stronger. David Bowie, Scott Walker, Nina Simone, Frank Sinatra, Bellowhead and Marc Almond are just a small handful of the artists who have kept his songs alive over the decades, in some cases recording entire albums of his songs. Lyrically and musically Brel saw the darkness in life and love and classics like ‘Amsterdam’, ‘My Death’, ‘Jacky’, ‘Next’ and ‘The Dove’ carry the mark of a genius. Liverpool quartet Dead Belgian have sought to take Brel’s songs out of the realms of cabaret and back to the streets and bars where they were first performed, while bringing the influences of various European folk traditions and modern rock to bear on them. The result is inventive reinterpretations of the songs you know and some you maybe on’t. Where better to hear Brel’s music than in a dark backroom bar, possibly with a fair few glasses of wine inside you. Suitably smoky support from Les Clochards, whose Brel influence is clear to hear as they take languorous pop for a few drinks in a Parisian dive bar.

kletzmer, Arabic and Mediterranean folk, Indian classical and dancefloor jazz. She’s touring to promote her most recent album, ‘Born in Parallel’, orchestrated with David Murphy, whose previous work has involved premiering music by Ravi Shankar. Bossaphonik host Dan Ofer, meanwhile, spins world jazz dance tunes.  
**MASIRO + SOCIAL DISCHARGE + LEE RILEY:** **The Wheatsheaf** – Math rockers Masiro launch their new EP, mixing Pink Floyd-like atmospherics with angular Mars Volta-inspired prog noise for a simultaneously cerebral and visceral rock attack. Punk/grunge support from Social Discharge, and atmospheric drones from Lee Riley.  
**FIREGAZER + TONY BATEY + BLIN’ JOHNNY:** **James Street Tavern** – Dark, inventive folk led by singer and accordion player Alan Foulkes from Firegazer.





*Monday 4<sup>th</sup>*

## OMMADON / LEGION OF ANDROMEDA / DRORE:

### The Wheatsheaf

Summer? Fuck off – bring on the thunderstorms. Bring on the lightning. Bring on Ragnarok. This is how every summer should be soundtracked – with darkness and brutality and the feeling, halfway through the gig, that maybe there is actually no escape and you’re demon fodder now, for all eternity. Glasgow’s Ommadon are drone-doom behemoths of the sort that normal behemoths cower from like terrified kittens. Their new album is a single-track 45-minute monolith, self-titled because, in the words of the band themselves, “we aren’t entertainment and we aren’t easy listening.” No they aren’t. They’re an unrelenting rumble of doom from the netherworld. But, oh, they’re a cheeky chappie, high-fiving bundle of merriment compared to Tokyo’s Legion of Andromeda, a band who sound like someone recorded a Balrog’s worst nightmare and set it to some serious galley slave beats. They quote Big Black, Eyehategod and Godflesh as primary influences. We love them unconditionally, however much they set out to hurt us. Can any Oxford band stand up to such company? In the brutish, downtuned form of Droe, indeed, yes. D-beat and crust given a doom makeover with ferocious results. If this is what the end of the world sounds like, roll the credits.

### SATURDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Park** – Brain Fury tops the bill today, with sets from All Saints, Booker T and Lucinda Williams – *see main preview*  
**EVAROSE: The Bullingdon** – Alt.rock and post-hardcore pop from Banbury’s starlets, back in live action.  
**31HOURS + FASHIONPROOF + SILVER RAVENS + JINJACOOZE + LUKE ALLMOND: The Cellar** – Woozily atmospheric indie-electro from 31Hours, plus dark electro-rocking from Fashionproof at tonight’s It’s All About the Music showcase.  
**TERMINUS: The Wheatsheaf** – Hard rock from Terminus at tonight’s Rocksoc show.  
**MUDSLIDE MORRIS & THE REVELATORS: The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow** – Slide and harp-led blues and boogie inspired by Seasick Steve and White Stripes.  
**STEAMROLLER: The Eight Bells, Eaton**

### SUNDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Park** – Third and final day of the festival, with Seal, James Morrison, Newton Faulkner and The Zombies – *see main preview*  
**CARNIVAL: Cowley Road (12-5pm)** – Oxfordshire’s biggest free party returns for its annual take-over of Cowley Road, the afternoon dedicated to a world of live music and sound systems, plus a similar palate of dance, food and costumes. Separate stages below:  
**GEORGE HUXTABLE + THE WIND AND RAIN + PAUL DAVIS + MARK & CARLEY: Cape of Good Hope**  
**HI-LO SOUND SYSTEM: Hi Lo**  
**THREE FACES OF DEATH + RHYMESKEEMZ + INN ER PEACE RECORDS + MORE: 420 Skates**  
**THE MAD LARRY BAND + TWO TONE ALL-SKAS + THE NIGHT WRECKERS: Music Box**  
**CHAD VALLEY + DOCUMENT ONE + MAIIANS + ZAHIA + GEORGE’S MUSICAL MEDICINE: The Bullingdon**  
**HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES + UKEY DUKES + MORE: The Black Swan**  
**FUNK, SOUL, ELECTRO & HIP HOP DJs: The Library**  
**CIRCLES DINER + JACK LITTLE + LEWIS SCOTT + LAURA JONES + MANNY MCGURN: Restore**  
**LANI SINGERS + RAN KAN KAN + DELNAVAZ: World Stage**  
**DEATH OF THE MAIDEN + JADE TARQUIN + YWMP + MRY JAMES + MOONRAE + BURT COPE: Kate Garrett Stage**  
**NAT & THE NOISE BRIGADE + HEAVY DEXTERS + FLIGHTS OF HELIOS + DECADENT DAYZE + BUFFALO CARTEL + THE STRING PROJECT: City Arms**  
**KRS-1: O2 Academy** – Rap legend, activist and Temple of Hip Hop founder brings the rhymes post Carnival – *see main preview*  
**SIMPLE: The Bullingdon** – Carnival after party.

### MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**ALBANY DOWN: The Bullingdon** – Heavyweight blues, melodic metal and AOR from London’s Albany Down out on tour.

### TUESDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**BLAKE’S SEVEN: The Bullingdon** – Funky jazz from the crew of the Liberator at the Bully’s weekly jazz club night.  
**INTRUSION: The Cellar** – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night, with Doktor Joy, Bookhouse and more.  
**FELIX M-B + SYLVA KAY + LORKIN O’REILLY: The Library** – Heartfelt acoustic folk-pop from Derby singer Felix M-B at tonight’s Tigmus show, with support from sweetly soulful acoustic singer-songwriter Sylva Kay.  
**SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern**  
**OSPREY & FRIENDS: St Aldates Tavern** – Veteran bluesman and promoter Osprey kicks out the jams with chums.

### WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**FLAMENCO LIVE!: The Cellar** – Live flamenco music and dance from Barcelona and Madrid, with guitarist Jero Ferec, dancer Madalena Mannion, and singer Nieves Molina.  
**WAY UP: The Cellar** – UK garage, funky, house and summer dance anthems with DJ Platinum.

### THURSDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**PIERCE BROTHERS: O2 Academy** – Following on from their showing at Cornbury over the weekend, Melbourne’s twin brothers, who began their musical lives busking on the streets of their hometown, head out on a full UK tour, their energetic, feelgood folk-pop inspired by the likes of Ben Harper, who they’re back home to support on his upcoming Australian tour.  
**CLUB SODA + THE ILLUMINATI: The Jericho Tavern** – 80s-flavoured pop from Club Soda at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show, with post-Britpop rocking from The Illuminati.  
**NICK SMART: The Wheatsheaf** – Spin jazz club night with trumpeter and head of jazz at the Royal Academy of Music, Nick Smart.  
**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 15<sup>th</sup>

**TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon** – Catfish & the Bottlemen top the bill on the first day of the newly expanded Truck – *see main preview*  
**PAK-MAN: O2 Academy** – Legendary Night presents an evening of emerging London hip hop talent, including rappers Pak-Man, making his Oxford debut, Shaker the Baker, Big Tobz and Goldie 1.  
**THE CORSAIRS + TRAUMA UK + JUNKIE BRUSH + STRIKE ONE: The Wheatsheaf** – Church of the Heavy night with classic rockabilly, ska and rock’n’roll from local veterans The Corsairs, plus metallers Trauma UK and agit-punk warriors Junkie Brush.  
**THE HIP DROP LIVE: The Bullingdon** – 60s and 70s soul, funk and jazz tunes with a live set from The Tropics, featuring Holly Lawson.  
**SOUL SESSIONS: The Cellar** – 60s and 70s soul, funk and disco classics.

**MUDSLIDE MORRIS & THE REVELATORS: James Street Tavern**  
**LES CLOCHARDS + PAUL GALLEY: The Mad Hatter’s** – Loungey classic rock’n’roll with a French café folk twist from Les Clochards.

### SATURDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

**TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon** – Anthemic rocking from The Manic Street Preachers on the second day of the festival – *see main preview*  
**BLACK NEVADA + REVELLER + RAISED BY HYPOCRITES: The Bullingdon** – Riff-

*Friday 8<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>*

## CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Country Park

It might live under the shadow of its nickname Poshstock, and a regular guestlist that includes much of the Chipping Norton set as well as everyone from Orlando Bloom and Sienna Miller to our ham-faced lord and master David Cameron only adds to the label, but the reality of Cornbury is that it’s probably less posh and poncy than either Wilderness or Big Feastival, and unlike those two it’s very much about the music rather than gurning celebrity chefs, outdoor banquets and ironic silliness. Cornbury founder and main man Hugh Phillimore lives for his music and has built the festival in his own image – a deceptively eclectic line-up of acts that range from major league superstars, through cult heroes; enduring hitmakers and pop idols, to the odd novelty surprise thrown in for good measure (**BJORN AGAIN!** Yes!).

Of those on this year’s bill who could justifiably count themselves in the global superstar category, **BRYAN FERRY**, who headlines Saturday’s main stage, remains one of the most suave men in music, musically, vocally and sartorially. From his pioneering glam days helming Roxy Music to becoming arguably the UK’s finest crooner and interpreter of classic songbooks, he’s a near perfect headliner for Cornbury – bags of hits and even bigger bags of style.

The weekend’s other headliners might not have Ferry’s near-50-year back catalogue but both count their album sales in the multi millions. **SEAL**, who tops Sunday’s bill, was the surprise guest turn during last year’s show-stealing set by The Trevor Horn Band, so he’s back in his own right, performing 80s hits like ‘Crazy’ and ‘Kiss From a Rose’, as well as songs from his most recent Horn-produced album ‘7’, and he’s a serious showman. Friday’s headliner is **JAMIE CULLUM**, who is apparently a singer and multi-instrumentalist in the jazz-pop scheme of things and is apparently very popular if the triple platinum awards for his ‘Twentysomething’ album are to be believed.

Moving swiftly on.... Particularly onto much happier things and they don’t come much happier than the story of **WILKO**



**JOHNSON**, who plays on Friday. The last time Wilko performed at Cornbury, back in 2013, was as part of his farewell tour. The pioneering guitarist, whose work with Dr Feelgood not only revitalised British r’n’b but also laid the groundwork for punk, had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and instead of retiring to undergo treatment, he decided to go out like the trouper he is – playing live until he no longer could. Hugh Phillimore introduced him to his friend, the esteemed cancer specialist Charlie Chan, who persuaded Wilko to seek a second diagnosis. Three years on, Wilko is fully recovered and still playing, still one of the most livewire performers on the circuit, and a guitarist with few equals. It’s gonna be emotional.

If Wilko should provide Cornbury’s finest hour, other high points will come from enduring ska hitmakers **THE BEAT**, back to relive classics like ‘Mirror in the Bathroom; ‘Hands Off She’s Mine’ and ‘Too Nice To Talk To’; veteran country star **LUCINDA WILLIAMS**, whose work has become hugely influential on subsequent generations of alt.country musicians, and reformed 90s girl band **ALL SAINTS**, who at one point seemed better known for their various showbiz relationships than their hits, though a listen back to the likes of ‘Pure Shores’ and ‘Never Ever’ is a reminder of why they were serious contenders to The Spice Girls’ throne back in the day. Frequent visitor to Oxfordshire **NEWTON FAULKNER** reprises his showing here a few years back, a highly likeable singer whose rather too-pleasant albums don’t reflect his quirky, oddly charismatic live persona.

60s stars **THE ZOMBIES** will undoubtedly be another big draw, Colin Blunstone and Rod Argent still helming the band who went global with timeless classics ‘She’s Not There’; ‘Time of the Season’, and ‘Tell Her No’. Pianist and organist **BOOKER T** is another 60s star whose legacy remains undiminished, his work with The MGs at Stax Records providing the sound of southern soul on hits for Otis Redding; Sam & Dave and Wilson Pickett among others, as well as his own monster instrumental hit ‘Green Onions’. More big names in the



form of Yorkshire soul singer **CORINNE BAILEY RAE**, a return visit for **BEVERLEY KNIGHT**, playing with Cornbury’s classic soul residents **STAXS**, and singing supermarket **JAMES MORRISON**, while among the newer faces on show will be authentic Nashville-style country duo **THE SHIRES** out of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, duo Ben Earle and Crissie Rhodes becoming the first British country act to sign to a major Nashville record label, releasing their debut album, ‘Brave’ last year; sombre, sensitive and soulful acoustic folk-pop from the Teesside outfit **CATTLE & CANE**, named after The Go-Betweens’ classic single, and folk-pop singer **GABRIELLE APLIN**, best known for her John Lewis advert soundtracking cover of ‘The Power of Love in 2012.

As is traditional at Cornbury the festival’s third stage is run by the folks behind Charlbury Riverside Festival, so a strong local contingent includes **PEERLESS PIRATES**; **SAEDLY DORUS & THE HOOLIE BAND**; **THE INFLATABLES**; **MAYHEM**; **ZURICH**; **ALPHABET BACKWARDS**; **GREAT WESTERN TEARS**; **LOUD MOUNTAINS**; **THE BALKAN WANDERERS**; **THE MIGHTY REDOX**; **TWO-TONE ALL-SKAS** and **HATTIE BRIGGS**, while *Nightshift*’s evening generally ends somewhere near **THE DISCO SHED**.

A by-word for civility in the festival world, Cornbury is as laidback as standing in a field alongside 15,000 other people is likely to get, and apparently punching Jeremy Clarkson in the face if you see him is against festival rules, but at its heart it’s the sort of celebration of music for music’s sake that the likes of Wilderness will never be in their wildest dreams.



heavy melodic hard rocking from Bishop Auckland’s Black Nevada, kicking it out in the vein of I Divide, Deaf Havana and You Me At Six, out on tour after supports to the likes of Funeral For A Friends, Hactivist and The Blackout. Support from local metalcore crew Reveller and Witney metallers Raised By Hypocrites.  
**DE:FORMED PRESENTS: The Bullingdon THE SOUTHMARTINS: O2 Academy** – Tribute to The Housemartins and Beautiful South.  
**CHRONIXX: O2 Academy** – A return to the Academy for rising young Jamaican reggae star Chronixx (Jamar McNaughtn Jr – son of singer Chronicle), mentored from a young age by Danny Browne and going on to sing with Lutan Fyar amongst others before striking out as a singer in his own right. Heavily inspired by Marley, musically and stylistically, he’s back over in the UK with his band Zincfence Redemption on the back of a string of singles and EPs, including mega US hit ‘Dread & Terrible’.

*Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>*  
**KRS-ONE: O2 Academy**

Hip hop has produced more than its fair share of philosophers, visionaries, pioneers and activists, but KRS-One is up there with the best. The rapper born Lawrence Parker in The Bronx has long seen hip hop not as a commodity, or even just a style of music, but as a widespread political movement bordering on a religion and a force for positivity and self-awareness. As part of this view he started the Temple of Hip Hop, and perhaps more importantly the Stop the Violence Movement. The latter came in the wake of the murder of his Boogie Down Productions partner Scott La Rock, as well as a young fan murdered at an early gig. La Roc was Parker’s youth counsellor when he was an aspiring teenage MC living on the streets and starting to discover the spiritualism of the Hare Krishna movement. In the wake of La Rock’s murder he carried on alone, his freestyling approach to rap, drawing on Jamaican influences, leading the way for subsequent generations of MCs, and while he didn’t enjoy the big hits of many of his 80s contemporaries, tracks like ‘Sound of da Police’ and ‘MCs Act Like They Don’t Know’ have remained classic rap anthems. For a man whose live battle cry remains “I want you to leave here inspired,” KRS-One has always walked it like he talked it. Inspiring indeed.



**SYMBOL OF ORION + CRIMSON TUSK + OF GIANTZ + R.O.Y: The Wheatsheaf** – Prog-metal and djent mixed with traditional Nepalese music from London’s Symbol of Orion. Support from local doom/groove metallers Crimson Tusk.  
**RACHEL RUSCOMBE KING + TREVOR WILLIAMS: Art Jericho** – Genteel, rustic acoustic folk from local singer Rachel Ruscombe King, launching her new EP ‘Vivid’ tonight, with support from soulful acoustic pop balladeer Trevor Williams.  
**FLUID: The Cellar** – Bass, garage, grime and techno club night in aid of Restore, with Vern & Milla, Masp and Zyklon Sound.  
**SWANFEST: The Swan, Ascott-under-Wychwood (1pm)** – Wychwood Folk Club host their annual all-day festival, this year topped by veteran welsh singer Martyn Joseph, whose extensive career takes in 30 years and 32 albums, along the way seeing him compared to Springsteen, John Mayer and Bruce Cockburn, but an influential roots star in his own right. He’s supported across the day by Acousticana, Under the Wychwood, Redwing, Noah’s Cape, James Bell & Friends, Mad Larry’s Band, and The Ponderosa.  
**JOHNNY’S SEXUAL KITCHEN: Three Horseshoes, Long Hanborough** – Classic rock covers.

**SUNDAY 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon** – Kodaline close the final day of Truck; ah well, you can’t have everything – *see main preview*  
**DONALD CAMPBELL + TONY BATEY & SAL + PETE LOCK & MARK BOSLEY + PUPPET MECHANIC + FEEMANTLE: The Wheatsheaf (2.30pm)** – Klub Kakofanny host their monthly free session in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar.

**MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**TUESDAY 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**THE OXFORD JAZZ QUINTET: The Bullingdon** – Free live jazz at the Bully’s weekly club.  
**SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern**  
**OSPREY & FRIENDS: St Aldates Tavern**

**WEDNESDAY 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**WILLIE J HEALEY: The Cellar** – Rising local rock’n’stroller Willie plays an intimate hometown show ahead of the release of his new EP later this summer.

**THURSDAY 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**MAIANS + SALVATION BILL + SHH! THE DEAF HAVE AIDS: The Cellar** – Following on from their triumphant set at Common People in May, Maiians launch their debut album, their double drummer, double synth, all-action ambient electro/trance/Krautrock instrumental journeys proving to be one of the most exciting sounds in town over the last couple of years. Make the most of this launch gig though as the band are going their separate ways for the foreseeable future. Support from alternately dark and barbed, and



*Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>*  
**RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: Mill Field, Charlbury**

Second only to Carnival as Oxfordshire’s biggest free live music event, Riverside is well into its third decade now, firmly established as a local festival for local people, played almost exclusively by local bands. And it says a lot about the quality of the line-up each year that even in such a packed summer of festivals, thousands flock to Charlbury for Riverside, its location next to the river and a five minute walk from the train station an added attraction for city-dwelling fans.  
There are some 40 acts across three stages over the two days. Headlining Saturday’s main stage line-up are eclectic electro-indie faves NEVERLND (*pictured*), and they’re joined by alt.country heroes THE EPSTEIN; stadium-sized rockers LEADER; bluegrass and country ensemble KNIGHTS OF MENTIS; Afro-pop-flavoured math-rockers BRIGHT WORKS; goodtime heavyweights CRYSTALLITE and atmospheric progsters THE AUREATE ACT. Sunday’s bill comes topped by punk-disco ceilidh band SAEDLY DORUS & THE HOOLIE BAND, with support from the likes of southern states country rockers SPEEDBUGGY USA, from California; swashbuckling indie-rockabilly stars PEERLESS PIRATES; funtime blues, ska, folk and funk stalwarts THE MIGHTY REDOX, and country rockers HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES.  
The second stage is again hosted by Truck Store and Rapture, with sets from CHEROKEE; LUCY LEAVE; RUSSELL MORGAN; MUDDY JOHNSON; THE BLACK HATS, and SYLVA KAY on Saturday, plus THE LOTTERY WINNERS; THE HUMMINGBIRDS; THE BECKONING FAIR ONES; PAPRIKA BLUES BAND; CHARLIE LEAVY, and A RELUCTANT ARROW. Plenty more besides, including an acoustic tent, and if the sun shines, there are few better places to be on a summer afternoon.

wryly humorous songsmith Salvation Bill.  
**IDIOT KING PRESENTS: Modern Art Oxford** – Bands tbc.  
**JAMES ALLSOPP: The Wheatsheaf** – Spin jazz club with multi award winning saxophonist, clarinetist, band leader and composer James Allsopp.  
**CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon**

*Friday 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>*  
**TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon**

Can it really be Truck Number 19? That means there will be a sizeable percentage of fans, not to say bands, here this year who weren’t even born when Robin and Joe Bennett handpicked a handful of their favourite local acts to play on a flatbed truck in a field for Robin’s birthday party back in 1998. While here at *Nightshift* we’ve been coming back every year since that inaugural shindig, and we’ve seen it grow and change over the years, witnessed every triumph and tragedy along the way. Far more of the former, thankfully.  
This year sees a very major change to that core weekend of the Oxfordshire music calendar that is Truck, with the festival upping in size significantly, while expanding to three days. That happened once before of course, with less than successful results, but under the stewardship of Count of Ten, who also run Derbyshire’s Y Not Festival, Truck has regained its strength and sold out every year recently, so it’s not quite the risk it once was.

With a bigger capacity, of course, you get bigger names, and MANIC STREET PREACHERS are among the biggest names Truck has boasted in its history, the welsh rock giants still capable of filling arenas far larger than this, with a catalogue of hits going back a quarter of a century that’s perfect for a festival headline set, from ‘You Love Us’ and ‘Motorcycle Emptiness’, to ‘If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next’ and ‘A Design For Life’. An added kick comes with this being the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the band’s classic ‘Everything Must Go’, their fourth, and the first to be released after the disappearance of Richey Edwards. While they’re a band who understandably split opinions, they’re also a band tailor-made for a gig like this.

The Manics top the main stage bill on the Saturday. On the Friday night it’s the turn of fellow welsh heroes CATFISH & THE BOTTLEMEN, the Llandudno quartet’s



seeming overnight success nine years in the making. If they’re a long way off having the same catalogue of songs as their neighbours to call on, the Number 1 success of second album ‘The Ride’ in May should ensure enough singalong moments for an inevitably packed field.

We’re struggling to summon too much enthusiasm for Sunday’s headliners, KODALINE, having seen them playing The Jericho Tavern not so long ago and failed to fall for their polished indie-boy-band crossover brand of pop.

Instead we’ll move swiftly on to more appealing matters, including, on the main stage, LA hip hop giants JURASSIC 5; Manchester’s eclectic indie crew EVERYTHING EVERYTHING, whose fluid fusion of indie, r’n’b, electronica, prog and more has earned them a Mercury nomination as well as Foals tour support last year, and, possibly the band we’re most looking forward to seeing all weekend – PUMAROSA, whose witchy, serpentine mix of gothic pop, and something decidedly sexy and pagan, made them one of the best new bands we’ve seen over the past year.  
These stars will be joined on the big stage over the weekend by the likes of COASTS; CIRCA WAVES; RAT BOY; SUNDARA KARMA; JACK SAVORETTI; BLOSSOMS and BEACH BABY.

With so many acts playing across six stages, plus late night parties hosted by SWITCH, and featuring sets from WILKINSON, PREDITAH, BIG NARSTIE and NORMAN JAY, previewing everything at Truck is impossible and experience has taught us to simply wander between stages and discover unexpected treats as and when we find them.  
Truck’s key appeal for us at least, remains its ability to thrill and surprise on its fringes. Last year’s most enjoyable moments came on the new Palm City stage, particularly a host of welsh acts, and it’s back again this year, with sets from the likes



of TIBET; CUT RIBBONS; HVNTER; CASEY; MELLT; WE’RE NO HEROES; ROUGHION; REUEL ELIJAH and a band called AFROCLUSTER, who we just checked out in case they were some bizarrely brilliant Afo-pop/Krautrock fusion and turn out to be a pretty superb hip hop/acid jazz/funk-soul fusion outfit. See – it’s all about discovering something new.

What else? The Market Stage features SOAK; DMA’S; SWIM DEEP; MYSTERY JETS and DANNY & THE CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD, as well as two more of the weekend’s most promising treats – Edinburgh’s Scottish, Liberian and Nigerian rock-hip-hop-electronica-tribal pop fusion collective YOUNG FATHERS, and Brighton’s brilliant BLACK HONEY, mixing alternately epic and ethereal indie, surf-rock, Ennio Morricone soundtracks and grunge, with charismatic singer Izzy Fraser channelling Lana Del Ray, Nancy Sinatra and Ronnie Spector in a voice that veers dramatically from dulcet croon to startling scream on a sixpence.

As ever the local contingent are well represented across the various stages, from PIXEL FIX and HUDSON SCOTT on the main stage; ESTHER JOY LANE, WILLIE J HEALEY and DREAMING SPIRES on the Market stage; CASSELS in The Nest, and a whole host of them on the Veterans and Virgins stage, including MAIANS; NEVERLND; LEADER; LUCY LEAVE; BE GOOD; KANCHO!; FAMILY MACHINE; INNER PEACE RECORDS; TOO MANY POETS and, returning to the place where he made his name as Oxford’s finest rock and roll nutter with Smilex, LEE CHRISTIAN.

All this and far more besides. Anything we’ve not had room to mention here can just be part of your own personal Truck journey of discovery. Whether you’re a Truck veteran or virgin yourself, you’ll either already know why it remains one of the UK’s best small festivals, or you’ll quickly find out. As ever, happy trucking. Seriously – can it really be number 19? It’s no longer the wee baby we once knew, but we’ll always love it.





*Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>*

## REVEREND PEYTON’S BIG DAMN BAND: The Bullingdon

Named in a roundabout way after a stuffed bear Reverend Peyton won at the fair while on a first date with the woman who was to become his wife and bandmate The Big Damn Band have unusual origins and unexpectedly wide appeal. The Rev met Breezy when she was nursing him back to health after an operation on his hand. He introduced her to Charley Patton; she played him Jimbo Mathus. A decade and a half later they average 250 gigs a year, including a tour support to Clutch, gigs with Flogging Molly and a full Vans Warped tour. Not bad for a bluegrass band. They’re also frequent visitors to blues and country bars across The States and Canada and went down a storm at Cornbury Festival a couple of years ago. They’re fiercely proud of their rootsy authenticity – The Rev’s dad was an occasional fur trapper and he learned to play guitar on his family’s front porch before acquiring his own handmade cigar box guitar to go alongside his 1930s steel bodied National. What gives the band their broad appeal is their raw, punky approach to their traditional music – Breezy’s washboards often ended up a splintered wreck after gigs and fragments of them can be bought from the merch desk, while Rev’s voice is gutsy and full-blooded. Perfect for singing songs called things like ‘Let’s Raise Some Hell’. They preach authenticity and it’s a sermon well worth hearing.

ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure  
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford

**FRIDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
RAGING SPEEDHORN + STONEGHOST + BY ANY MEANS + BLACK SKIES  
BURN: The Wheatsheaf – Back at the Sheaf after their triumphant reformation show here last year, Corby’s finest sons continue to soar on wings of pure fury, their sludgy, downtuned attack dog hardcore, a melting pot of Iron Monkey riffage and Black Flag fury, in no hurry to get from a to b, but getting there causing the maximum amount of damage. Fronted by dual singers Frank Regan and John Loughlin, they’re unpredictable and inspiring musical violence incarnate. The pit awaits you. Great

supporting cast, including London’s metalcore crew Stoneghost; Belfast hardcore merchants By Any Means and our own grindcore heroes Black Skies Burn.

LET THE LADY SING with CALLOW SAINTS + DEADBEAT APOSTLES + THE OTHER DRAMAS + OUT OF THE VILLAGE + ROSE SEGAL + SARAH DE WARREN + MEREDITH BAKER: O2 Academy – It’s All About the Music presents its monthly showcase of female singers and female-fronted bands, tonight with Aylesbury’s melodic rockers Callow Saints and bluesy country hoedown crew Deadbeat Apostles.

BOSSAPONIK with MANKALA: The Bullingdon – Dancefloor Latin, Afrobeat, Balkan beats, global grooves and nu-jazz club night, tonight with a live set from Bristol’s multicultural eight-piece band Mankala, back at Bossaphonik after their show here last year, and whose sound spans the grooves of central African soukous, South African township dance, Afrobeat and the juju and tribal polyrhythms of west Africa. Bossaphonik host Dan Ofer is on the decks playing world jazz dance faves.

TERRAFORMS: The Cellar – Drum&bass star Commix comes to town ahead of his second album for Metalheadz, following the success of his influential 2007 debut ‘Call To Mind’. Sets too from Bolo, Greencode, Vyper, MC KB and MC Sandman.

TANNERS POOL + THE SHADES: The Jericho Tavern – Light, bubbly, funky rock from local newcomers Tanners Pool, launching their new EP, plus moddish rocking from The Shades at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show.

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Mad Hatter

**SATURDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: Mill Field, Charlbury – Neverlnd, The Epstein and Leader head up the first day of the annual free festival – *see main preview*

EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar – House, techno and bass club night.

STEAMROLLER: The Queen’s Arms, Horspath

BLACKTHORN: Finstock Village Hall – Traditional English folk from the local group.

TEXAS GHOST TRAIN: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – Blues rock covers.

**SUNDAY 24<sup>th</sup>**  
RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: Mill Field, Charlbury – Saedly Dorus & the Hoolie Band top the bill on the second day of the free music fest – *see main preview*

**MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup>**  
THE BLACK CIRCLES: The Bullingdon – After supporting Laurence Jones here in May, Warrington’s electric blues warriors return to the Haven Club, the pair’s alternately mellow and energetic 60s-styled blues inspired by Hendrix and The Bluesbreakers.

DEBBIE BOND + THE TED WHITE BAND: The Jericho Tavern – Powerful, soulful blues from the veteran Alabama singer-guitarist, inspired by Bonnie Raitt and Maria Muldaur, at tonight’s Famous Monday Blues.

**TUESDAY 26<sup>th</sup>**  
ALVIN ROY & REEDS UNLIMITED: The Bullingdon – Trad jazz, swing and bop from veteran clarinetist Roy and his reeds band at the Bully’s free weekly jazz club.

SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

OSPREY & FRIENDS: St Aldates Tavern

**WEDNESDAY 27<sup>th</sup>**  
LEADFOOT TEA: The Wheatsheaf – One-man surf-rock and classic rock’n’roll action.

WAY UP: The Cellar – UK garage, funky, house and summer dance anthems with DJ Platinum.

*Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>*

## HALFWAY TO 75: The Isis Farmhouse

One of those tiny mini-festivals that Oxford does so well, Halfway To 75 hasn’t taken long to establish itself on the calendar, with each event sold out. The premise is simple and sweet: get the best local roots and Americana acts and put them on with some of the best touring roots and Americana acts on one day in the frankly lovely surroundings of the Isis Farmhouse, on the river near Iffley Lock. This year’s star guests are California’s hard-gigging SPEEDBUGGY, whose southern states country is inspired by Merle Haggard and Buck Owens, with its roots firmly in the Bakerfield Sound. They’re joined today by HANNAH JOHNSON & THE BROKEN HEARTS, who evolved out of The Toy Hearts, playing honky tonk, classic country, western swing and blues, mixing original material with authentic standards. Hampshire’s DOEL BROTHERS, meanwhile, bring a little 1950s Mississippi hillbilly rockabilly to the party, and an excellent local cast includes alt.country and folk-rock heroes THE EPSTEIN, playing songs from their new ‘Burn the Branches’ album; Connecticut brothers Kevin and Sean Duggan’s harmony-heavy country crew LOUD MOUNTAINS; whisky blues from FRANCIS PUGH & THE WHISKY SINGERS; gorgeous dustbowl Americana from THE AUGUST LIST; feelgood 60s-style r’n’b, soul-pop and new wave from THE SHAPES; acoustic storyteller JONNY PAYNE, and ex-Candyskin-turned-children’s songmeister NICK COPE. All these and a Sophie Grigson cookery school onsite for the day.



**THURSDAY 28<sup>th</sup>**  
THE REVEREND PEYTON’S BIG DAMN BAND: The Bullingdon – Authentic banks-of-the-Mississippi blues with punk attitude from The Rev and Breezy – *see main preview*

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 29<sup>th</sup>**  
KANADIA + COLDREDLIGHT + THIRD LUNG: The Jericho Tavern - Epic, reverb-laden stadium pop inspired by Radiohead, Muse and Jeff Buckley from the fast-rising Abingdon stars, tonight playing alongside fellow recent Punt stars Coldredlight, whose lost highway blues sounds like a haunted liason between Mazzy Star and Ry Cooder at times.

SKYLARKIN’ SOUNDSYSTEM with THE ED ROME BAND: The Cellar – The classic sounds of late 60s/early 70s Jamaica with a uniquely British voice, from Ed Rome and his band, back at Skylarkin’s monthly party after his show here last year; expect a thrilling ride through vintage ska, reggae, soul and rocksteady.

HONKY + DESERT STORM + THE GRAND MAL: The Bullingdon – Hard-rocking blues and boogie from Austin, Texas’ Honky, featuring Butthole Surfers’ DJ Pinkus, back over in the UK after playing Stateside with the likes of Down, Fu Manchu, Karma To Burn and Nashville Pussy. Support at tonight’s Buried In Smoke show comes from local stoner/blues heavyweights Desert Storm and groove-rock supergroup The Grand Mal, featuring members of Desert Storm and Mother Corona.

MOLOTOV SEXBOMB + BROSEPHINE + THE SHOTGUN SIX: The Wheatsheaf – Indie rocking from Molotov Sexbomb, plus psych-drone rocking from The Shotgun Six.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Baytree, Grove – Eccentric blues rocking from the local veteran.

**SATURDAY 30<sup>th</sup>**  
HALFWAY TO 75: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock (midday) – The annual celebration of

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Americana, folk and country returns – *see main preview*

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with ART THEEFE + SHRINKING VIOLETS + CHARLIE LEAVY: The Wheatsheaf – GTI’s bountiful mixed bag throws up another trio of acts, with Catweazle Club host Matt Sage’s Art Theefe – also featuring Little Brother Eli’s Josh Rigal – brewing up a blend of 60s pop, blues, soul and country, taking in Fleetwood Mac, Steely Dan, Bob Dylan, Donovan, Van Morrison and The Rolling Stones at various points. They’re joined by Redditch’s synth-tinged popstrels Shrinking Violets and recent Punt star Charlie Leavy, whose bitter-sweet acoustic soul touches on Tracy Chapman and the Indigo Girls at times.

HOPE BURDEN + STOLBY + LE PUB + MARK COPE: The Bullingdon – Rock and blues show case.

EXTRA CURRICULAR – MOVE: The Cellar – Bassline, garage and grime club night with Pavv, Barely Royal, Bunnie, Oli C and more.

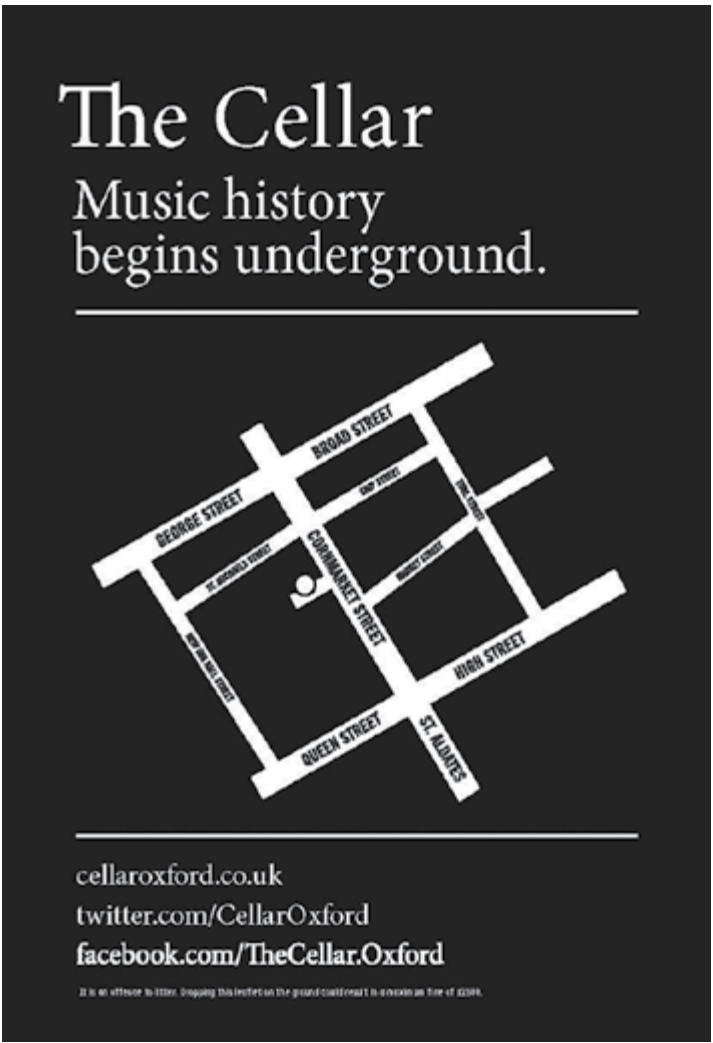
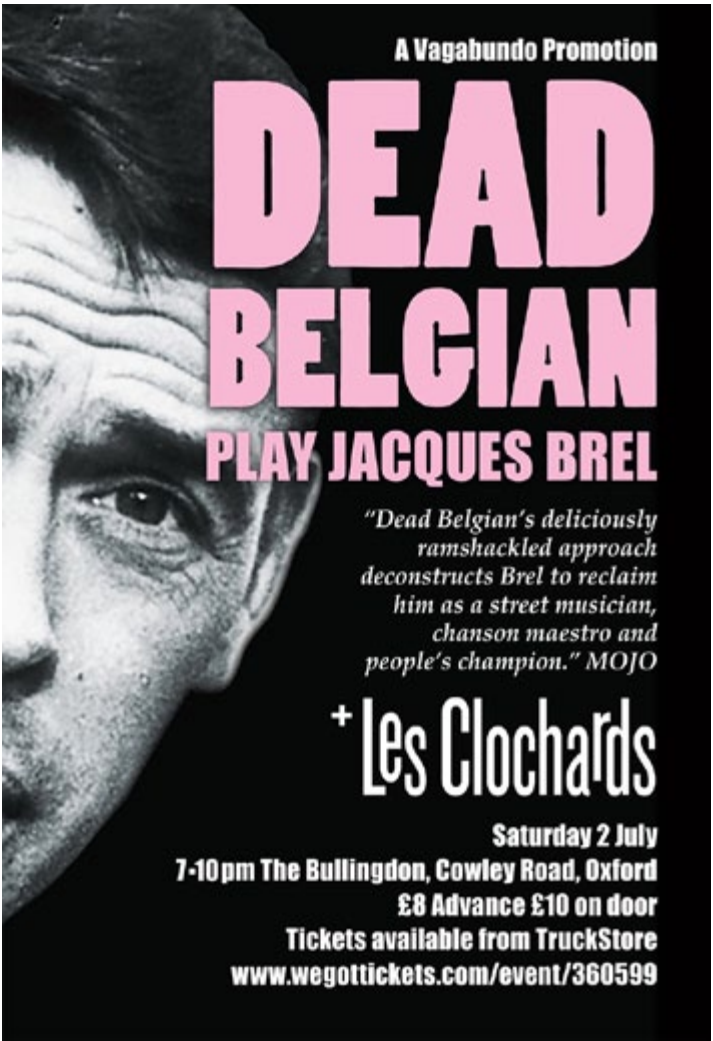
GIRL POWER + SCRAP BRAIN + BASIC DICKS: The Library – Punk rock for free at tonight’s Smash Disco show. Local hardcore crew Girl Power return to action ahead of a new EP, mixing all-out d-beat violence with angular Shellac-inspired industrial clang. They’re joined by old skool punkers Scrap Brain and Basic Dicks, the latter, featuring members of Girl Power, Drove and Too Man Poets, harking back to early-80s anarcho punk acts like Crass, Omega Tribe and Flux of Pink Indians – there will be revolution! And tofu!

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Black Swan

STEAMROLLER: The Turnpike, Yarnton (3pm)

STEAMROLLER: Three Horseshoes, Long Hanborough

**SUNDAY 31<sup>st</sup>**  
JOHNNY’S SEXUAL KITCHEN + SAL & TONY BATEY + OSPREY + PURPLE MAY + SONG & SUPPER ROOMS + FREE MENTLE: The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm) – Free unplugged live music session hosted by Giddyup Music in the downstairs bar.





South Park

SATURDAY

It’s been a decade and a half since Radiohead’s glorious South Park show, but finally the festival spirit has returned to the centre of Oxford. It’s fair to say that the line-up is quite a grab bag of acts, and on first impressions, it’s hard to imagine a large crowd heading out to see Chas & Dave, Mr Motivator, The Chuckle Brothers and Craig David, *even if* Duran Duran and Primal Scream are headlining. Evidently, the Commoners of Oxford are more than content to mix it up a little, and with the weather gods on their side, it’s fantastic to see just how busy South Park is, from the very start on Saturday.

Having legged it up and down the inclines of South Park, we’re feeling far less motivated than perhaps we should by the time we finally get into the festival. It’s fortunate then that **MR MOTIVATOR** is the first thing to come bounding onto the stage. It’s hard to believe he’s 63 years old such is the sheer energy he projects and although he fails to get us dancing on the spot, by the end of workout, he’s got most of the field moving and doing some weird crab dance. It’s like watching a cult, where the uniform is an orange leotard and motivational speeches like “work it!” are barked out at regular intervals.

Filled with pep, and raring to go, it’s over to **THE PEERLESS PIRATES** to keep things going. Unsurprisingly, there’s something of a nautical theme to their show, and as luck would have it there’s a massive tree trunk that looks like a mast, plonked right in the middle of the stage acting as a support for the tent. And so, as if they’re banging out punked up sea shanties on the deck of Queen Anne’s Revenge they run through a set of songs that gets people up and dancing like they’ve been tapping the admiral all morning. Their run through of ‘Swords Of A Thousand Men’ sums them up perfectly: they’re a bit daft, but have great bit grin inducing tunes.

There are acts that go through the motions because they could do them in their sleep, and acts that do it because they love it; **CHAS & DAVE** give every impression of the latter. They zip through fourteen songs with the experience, confidence and even humility of people who know they’re an era-transcending national institution. All the hits are present – ‘Gertcha’; ‘Snooker Loopy’; ‘Rabbit’; ‘Ain’t No Pleasing You’ – along with lesser-known (or

less-remembered) stuff like ‘That Old Piano’, ‘The Diddlum Song (Diddle Ummaday)’, which sounds exactly as you think it would, and the frenetic ‘The Sideboard Song (Got My Beer in the Sideboard Here)’. They also rattle through their wartime medley from last year’s VE Day ‘Party to Remember’ 70th anniversary concert and “new single” ‘Two Worlds Collide’, which, you’ll be pleased to hear, doesn’t deviate from the rockney knees-up formula one bit. Despite every song having a different bassline, speed, vocal arrangement and, well, lyrics, they all manage to end up sounding the same - which is surprisingly comforting.

Our only prior exposure to **THE CUBAN BROTHERS** was Let’s Dance For Comic Relief, which went only a fraction of the way to prepare us for their performance today. We genuinely had no idea acts like this still existed outside of *Britain’s Got Talent*. Part breakdancers; part DJs; part singers; part inappropriate jokes that are presumably okay because “it’s a character”; part rappers; all cabaret, and 100% not Cuban, they seem to be based around soul, funk and hip hop b-boy action – some original, some of which they play today (their track with Mica Paris – ‘So Sweet’ – is actually quite good). Lead Brother, Miguel, gets far more naked than anyone was expecting for mid-afternoon, and the whole thing culminates in some rather child-unfriendly near-naked running around the crowd. We’re not actually sure whether we’re laughing at them or with them or what, but the whole thing is undeniably entertaining, exhilarating and hilarious.

Although certainly royalty, in regards to his reputation with dub/roots/reggae production techniques and output, **PRINCE FATTY** (real name Mike Pelanconi) is certainly not fat. But then neither was the late King Tubby from whom he has clearly derived his name. Like Tubby, Fatty’s neo-classicist analogue style, whereby he uses modern recording methods to get a very gritty, authentic sound is instantly recognisable and public performances are rare, so it is a refreshing treat to see him spinning the vinyl alongside long term dready vocalist Horseman (who is neither very horselike, it seems) on playful MC duties on the Uncontained stage today. Having worked with talent as diverse as Mad Professor, Gregory Isaacs and Hollie Cook (daughter of Pistol’s drummer Paul Cook), today



he plays largely re-imagined hip hop classics (Cypress Hill’s ‘Insane in the Brain’, Ol’ Dirty Bastard’s ‘Shimmy Shimmy Ya’, and Snoop Dogg’s ‘Gin N Juice’) as well as some reggae staples (Max Romeo’s ‘Wet Dream’ and ‘Chase the Devil’ as well as the obligatory Marley). Both upbeat and not too bass heavy, it provides a sunny interlude before the grinding dub step of the rest of the afternoon descends.

Every so often a voice comes along that simply demands your attention by virtue of its damaged, delicate quality. In the past we’ve had the likes of Richard Waters and Andy Yorke, and now we’ve got **CAMERON AG** whose vocals are impossible not to fall in love with. It’s hard to imagine that he was stuck behind the drumkit in his old band Warhen when such talent deserved to be out front. Today, those delicate tones hang in the air like the seeds of dandelion cast out into the wind. It’s an elegant and charming set and it surely wins a fair few over today. Although the weather has been rather warm and sunny, **UNDERSMILE** have a reputation of angering the weather gods every time they play outside. Today, thankfully, things stay perfect and sunny throughout the duration of their set. Even their normally crushing doom seems to find new layers of nuance and beauty today. That is not to say that their

songs don’t possess these qualities already, but here in the open air, they’re allowed to breathe and to reveal new depths. The contrasts between light and dark, heavy and delicate are highlighted perfectly and the anticipated audience exodus never happens; in fact, they win quite a few over today. They might have made one child cry, but there are plenty of other kids actually dancing. Next year, they’ll be sharing the stage with The Chuckle Brothers.

Back in the Uncontained tent, **SIR DAVID RODIGAN** is no stranger to the OX4 area, as the story of his early/pre-Capital/Kiss FM/BBC radio days hawking records in a Blackbird Leys car park is well known by now, and his various shout outs (“can I get some signal from the Cowley Road massive!”) are well received by the locals in a rambunctious and well-oiled crowd. A Rodigan gig is less a straight up DJ set (he doesn’t really mix, and in fact spends as little time as possible behind the CD decks, preferring to jump up and down in front of the barrier) than a mini lecture (“this one, recorded in Kingston, Jamaica 1972...”) set to music. Also, whilst a more traditional DJ would aim to get into a particular groove and play a few tunes, back to back from roughly the same genre, Rodders is all over the shop, some Shaggy one minute, Damian Marley the next, then



a bit of old school jungle, followed by some dancehall then maybe some Toots and the Maytals. These are all fired off while pogoing like a hyperactive teenager; his enthusiasm for his beloved music and sheer energy levels are clearly infectious.

**SOUL II SOUL** have been going for nearly thirty years, Jazzie B reminds us, and they’re very grateful to everyone for their support. For their part, the exquisitely voiced Caron Wheeler has rejoined the touring band, and so expertly tight versions of ‘Keep On Movin’, ‘Love Enuuff, ‘Back to Life’ and some other stuff that sounds very plausibly more than twenty-five years old delights the ears of this more-than-twenty-five-years-old listener. Universal love still seems to be a policy for them: a musical theme that was as relevant in the late 80s as the Soul II Soul sound was, and is as welcome now as their sound is.

Last time we saw r’n’b/dance/deep house/everything-in-between singer **KATY B** in Oxford, after the release of her second album ‘Little Red’, she had a full band; this time, it’s just her and DJ Emerald – and four extremely energetic dancers. Her third and most recent collection, ‘Honey’, is an album of collaborations, but despite her coterie on stage today, Katy is more than capable of carrying a festival crowd. Her chat is friendly;



she dedicates new album track ‘I Wanna Be’ to “all the loves to be,” gets the audience jumping around with our arms in the air to ‘Broken Record’ and singing parts of the chorus of ‘Crying For No Reason’, chucks in her number one KDA collaboration ‘Turn the Music Louder (Rumble)’, and generally embodies the perfect spring afternoon main stage crowd-pleasing accessible-to-all booking that festival organisers must count their blessings to secure.

Having already charmed the festival on the main stage, **ESTHER JOY LANE** pops up again on the Uncommon Stage and people can’t get enough. The bass she pumps out is ridiculous, creating tremors through the ground and knocking the air out of the lungs of anyone too close to the PA. Evidently nobody’s tired of dancing yet (it’s clearly the Mr Motivator factor) because they’re packing out the tent and dancing like there’s no tomorrow.

It’s rare to find a new band that looks like the finished product, but **NEVERLND** certainly look as if they could be on the main stage. Lead vocalist Thomas Roberts leads the line like a soulful Morrissey, his implausible quiff, apparently undaunted by the soaring temperatures, simply refuses to wilt. Not only do they look the part, but



they’ve got the songs too. At times it seems a little too smooth, but before long the irresistible pop-hooks make themselves known and dig in deep. There’s a real glut of quality bands bubbling under in Oxford at the moment, and Neverlnd seem to be shimmying their way to the top. Only a fool would bet against them making it to the next level soon.

When the sun is shining, and the weather is sweet, you need a bit of reggae to move those dancing feet. To the rescue comes **ZAIA**, a nine-piece band that simply drips with professionalism. Amy MacKown is positively resplendent in a costume that is part way between Egyptian queen and a giant butterfly, and she never stops grinning as she takes the audience and band through laid back tune after laid back tune. They’re a little one paced at times and in need of a few more lively tunes to perk things up around the mid-point but frankly, slow, languid dancing is perfectly fine when you’re filled to the gills with cider and macaroni cheese.

Speaking of acts that could play in their sleep, tying things up on the main stage come **DURAN DURAN**. Thankfully though, they, like Chas’n’Dave, still seem to be enjoying it; so much so that they’re still recording and trying to be a still-current 80s band.



In many ways they are perfect headliners, especially for a family-friendly festival; they have enough recognisable old stuff (and rest assured that all the hits are present here today) even for youngsters to appreciate, and are able to introduce enough newer stuff to keep the inebriated middle-aged Durannies who are struggling to stand up straight in front of us happy, introduce a bit of variety for everyone else, and maybe even hook in people who are familiar with their 80s ubiquity but haven’t given any thought to listening to anything of theirs released since then. They slip in tracks from their latest album, ‘Paper Gods’, so skilfully that a great exodus bar-wards is avoided, give sufficient spectacle with films on the big screens behind them, confetti cannons and giant beachballs to distract any waning focus, and present non-trite tributes to David Bowie and Prince. At the start of the second encore, impossibly evergreen singer Simon Le Bon points out they’ve just played an hour and a half of politics-free music, which is a relief all round at the moment, frankly. Whatever your feeling towards Duran Duran, tonight’s performance underlines the impossibility of denying their strength as a great singles, and live, band.

**Words: Kirsten Etheridge, Sam Shepherd and Leo Bowder.**



## SUNDAY

Make no mistake, Common People is a PROPER FESTIVAL, and it feels like an event that unites the city’s music lovers like no other since, well, that other event that keeps cropping up in conversation all day – with persistent (and untrue) rumours that Radiohead and/or Thom Yorke might pop up in a random tent at some stage.

Truth be told, special guest performances like this – however incredibly welcome they would have been – aren’t necessary when you’ve got names like Primal Scream and Public Enemy coming to town, and all the other trappings that make this exactly what Oxford’s been crying out for, after other abortive attempts for a large-scale city-based festival in the past.

In fact it’s not until about midway through Public Enemy’s set that it really hits us – Public Enemy are playing in South Park, Oxford. *PUBLIC ENEMY!* The erstwhile most dangerous group in America, purveyors of ‘Fight The Power’ and ‘Don’t Believe The Hypo’, performing in a space that, with one notable exception, is more used to hosting ice cream vans and pretentious Cotswold food festivals.

Such dangers aside, kudos too to the organisers for doing their best to give Common People a proper family feel rather than stopping at tokenism: there’s a well-stocked and well-thought through family area and, continuing in the Bestival style, it’s very much a ‘kids welcome’ festival. In this vein **THE CHUCKLE BROTHERS** short set is a lot more fun than it deserves to be, despite the risqué lyrics, even stirring a spot of audience participation. They even out themselves as competent musicians, to the surprise of many. When a selfie of Paul Chuckle emerges, taken with Public Enemy backstage, it quickly goes viral and seems to sum up the wildly eclectic nature of this inaugural Common People and how it all unexpectedly seems to fit together. We await the release of ‘It Takes A Nation of Millions To You, To Me’, imminently.

**LADY LESHURR** makes the trip from Birmingham to treat us to her ‘Queen’s Speech Episode 4’, probably the best rap about not brushing your teeth in the hip hop canon. Not everyone knows the responses expected, as she’s probably more of a Youtube star than anything else, but with some slick dance moves she pulls off a highly watchable set.

Over on the *Nightshift*-curated stage highlighting the best of the current Oxford scene, one of the hits of the day are **LITTLE BROTHER ELI**, whose stage presence and tightness elevates them instantly above the level of ‘local band’ and sees them well suited to a festival stage. Vocalist Alex Grew sways between earthy blues rock and some flamboyant idiosyncrasies that bring Mike Patton to mind, and he’s a basket of energy, working the crowd and throwing poses for photographers like a pro. They’re at their best when the energy levels are high and the pace is relentless; the first few songs of the set are particularly impressive, making us wonder whether they might be the next Oxfordshire band to step up to the next level.

**THE AUGUST LIST**, meanwhile, make fine use of an ancient electric harp, combining with acoustic guitar and huge vocals to create a powerful, steely sound conjuring up images of a north American wilderness, with their tales of grizzly bears and travelling into the darkness. The duo create a bigger sound than many bands three or four times their size, with more atmosphere too.

Over at the main stage the crowd has expanded substantially. The prospect of **THE SUGARHILL GANG** brings hope of seeing Keith Le Blanc, Doug Wimbish and Skip MacDonald, the rhythm section that provided the backing to so many of the New York label’s groundbreaking early hip-hop releases, before transforming into the all-conquering Tackhead. No luck there as this an all rapping and turntables affair, but their credibility is assured by the royal presence of Melle Mel and Scorpio from The Furious Five. Unashamedly old skool, they achieve powerful takes on ‘The Message’ and ‘White Lines’, tunes attempted by but never in as safe hands as the original creators. Back at the Uncommon stage the **INNER PEACE RECORDS** collective are an even bigger hip-hop treat, if only through the intimacy of the tent and its excellent PA. Six rappers joyously bounce rhymes off each other, with no-one’s ego hogging the limelight. The beats are tight and the basslines as infectious as the mile-wide grins and positive vibes emanating from the stage. This could be the moment Oxford hip-hop truly came of age.

In keeping with his records **GAZ COOMBES**’ set is frustratingly close to being triumphant, yet



marred by spells of aimlessness. The songs display a maturity that Supergrass never really achieved, but are often lack the substance to grab you the way that great pop music should. It’s only when he starts to rock out that we see some sparks of the true genius we all know he’s capable of. In a nice twist he’s barely yards from the spot where his first band The Jennifers played at Fun In The Parks in 1992.

“Ah, **CRAIG DAVID**, that’ll be a laugh”, we said, expecting him to be appearing mid-afternoon in front of a sparse collection of people dimly remembering something about “seven days” from about 15 years ago. Instead, we come across perhaps the biggest crowd of the entire day and rapturous enthusiasm of the sort normally reserved for global superstars. To be precise, the act is

billed as Craig David’s TS5, which leads us to expect a live band, but what we get instead is Craig jiggling around behind a laptop holding a microphone, looking for all the world like he’s doing a session of Craig David karaoke in his bedroom and we’re all invited. He’s actually doing some pretty good stuff up there, live-mixing between his own tracks and other garage/miscellaneous classics and belting out the familiar honeyed R&B stylings. The set descends into school disco mega-mix towards the middle, but by the time ‘Seven Days’ comes around the crowd are eating out of his hands. Craig David, 2016 megastar. Who knew? By contrast, **GHOSTPOET** is much more up our street, but manages to drive away half the crowd and – briefly – the sunshine with his urban anxiety. As his multiple Mercury nominations testify, he’s been



mopping up the critical acclaim left, right and centre with his tight blend of elements from the likes of Roots Manuva, Massive Attack, Moderat and late-night pirate radio, and he’s assembled a live band that expands and enhances where his songs can go in a live context. Thoroughly satisfying stuff.

Once more to the Uncommon stage where **VIENNA DITTO** are creating a tangled storm of digital mayhem, and the most enthusiastic crowd response of the night. The two live stages emerge as perfect counterpoints to each other, the local bands’ raw energy a nice contrast to the big acts’ slick professionalism. **CASELS** are an increasingly powerful beast, having developed some serious songwriting skills since their early, more tentative gigs. Just as the vocals, guitar, drums and duo



has finally edged out of fashion the Chipping Norton boys have cleverly stuck to their guns, honing their craft with proper songs interlaced with staccato breaks that add to the tension.

**PUBLIC ENEMY** over on the main stage absolutely bring it. There’s initial disappointment that Flavor Flav doesn’t make it along (something about problems with his passport, though it sounds like there’s a story there) – but this is tempered by relief given that he’s apparently spent much of recent performances trying to sell copies of his book. Otherwise, there’s a full complement, from the military shapes thrown by the S1Ws (universally declared afterwards to be looking weirdly bored with the whole affair, as if they’re on a minimum-wage world tour) to a

full live band and a backup team of rappers. The magnetic centrepiece is of course Chuck D, as full of fire and anger as ever, and just as passionate in his delivery of old classics like ‘Bring The Noise’ as he is with newer cuts.

It’s a shame for the fabulously-named **BALKAN WANDERERS** that they have to clash with Primal Scream (hey, it’s a tough job, but someone has to), but they play to a more than respectable crowd on the second stage, and manage to whip up a frantic dancefloor with their gypsy-ska Balkan stylings. This level of energy and fun is exactly what’s needed to bring a triumphant two days on the Uncommon stage to a close, and a fitting demonstration of the depth and quality of the Oxford scene in 2016. Big Sam would probably even try to sign them.

Never known for disappointing a crowd **PRIMAL SCREAM** plough through selections from their new album with a few old chestnuts thrown in. In fact we’re lucky to see them at all as Bobby Gillespie injured his back falling off stage a few days later and is out of action for eight weeks. While some songs still veer into sub-Stones territory they always hit their sweet spot quickly, and ‘Swastika Eyes’ still has the power to thrill. With fifteen thousand happy punters and perfect weather the weekend exceeds all expectations, bringing what feels like the whole city together in music for the first time since, well, that OTHER South Park gig. We can only hope next year brings even greater things.

*Words: Art Lagun and Stuart Fowkes.*





## THE NIGHTINGALES

### The Cellar

As anyone who has been watching *Springwatch* will know, nightingales are renowned for their beautiful singing voices and songs. As it turns out, they can also be fairly vicious and aggressive when protecting their

young from a hungry adder.

Robert Lloyd, who has helmed the band The Nightingales since their inception in 1979 could never really be described as having a beautiful voice, but the songs his

ever changing band creates are

fuzzy, mixed-up wonders, often shot through with occasional glimpses of elegance and massive helpings of barely-contained anger and malevolence.

Much like The Fall, The Nightingales are a band in constant transition, with the line-up changing around Lloyd’s focal point. On tonight’s evidence, his current band might just be the finest incarnation yet. Whilst The Nightingales most definitely play songs, tonight’s show is a non-stop singular piece of performance with no gaps and no pauses for breath. Each individual composition segues seamlessly into the next, and with every passing moment, the tension seems to build, as the band up the ante constantly throughout their hour-long set. It’s impossible to pin them down as the set progresses. At times they’re twitchy and angular post-punk; then they drift into skewed Beefheartian blues. They find time to mess around with nursery rhymes and when the mood takes them they head into drawn-out, hypnotic improvised jams.

Leading it all is Lloyd, and he switches roles constantly tonight. He’s a poet (he looks like John Shuttleworth’s angry older brother), a crooner, a barroom brawler and a maniacal preacher. As important as he is to the band’s aesthetic, it’s impossible not to be impressed with his band. They’re tight and well-rehearsed, and in drummer Fliss Kitson they’ve got a versatile rhythmic powerhouse to rival any legendary tub-thumper you might care to mention.

Tonight’s show is absolutely magical, and any fledgling band would do well to study The Nightingales as they are at the moment. They’re an idiosyncratic wonder that makes a mockery of the notion of heritage bands. They’re still relevant and pushing at the boundaries. This is how it’s done. *Sam Shepherd*

## KATHRYN JOSEPH / JESS HALL / COLDREDLIGHT

### Modern Art Oxford

On a night when Oxford’s brief heatwave succumbs to thunder and lightning and a torrential downpour, Coldredlight are the sound of a distant storm brewing. Gaby-Elise Monaghan’s sleepy-eyed voice carries a weariness that defies her tender years while alongside her Casper Miles conjures a lost highway kind of blues on his guitar. Together they create a wonderfully pensive atmosphere on tracks like ‘Bloom’ that suggest something lurking just beyond the horizon. In her more strident moments Gaby could be a young Joni Mitchell but the softly snarling ‘Little Scorpion’ suggests a midnight liaison between Ry Cooder and Mazzy Star and

tomorrow *Nightshift* is off to buy a hat, so we can eat if Coldredlight don’t become the stars they so obviously deserve to.

By contrast Jess Hall’s set feels like the fleeting sunny interval before the storm really hits. If not exactly bright eyed and bushy tailed, her romantic stories carry an air of optimism about them, a sense of naïve wonder about the world around her, particularly the gorgeous ‘Sea Song’ from 2014’s ‘Bookshelves’ album. Much of her set tonight is lent added gravitas by regular collaborator Barney Morse-Brown whose virtuoso cello playing never imposes on Jess’s pure, limpid voice that sounds like it would be as suited to singing

arias as folk songs. If a *capella* number ‘The Table’ is too shrill and prosaic, ‘Dearest Heart’ is bright as a summer morning.

But here comes the real darkness, in the form of Aberdeen’s Kathryn Joseph, whose bleakly titled debut ‘The Bones You Have Thrown Me & Blood I Have Spilled’, released shortly after her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, won the 2015 Scottish Album of the Year Award. Fixing the audience with severe stare throughout, her songs virtually bleed hurt, stark piano coupling with Marcus Mackay’s superbly understated drumming to create turbulent maelstroms that suck in the crowd’s rapt attention. From the clamouring ‘The Mouth’ to the softer, almost florid ‘The

## BIG DEAL

### The Bullingdon

Big Deal have become a big deal in their own right, supporting Depeche Mode on tour and becoming Radio 1 favourites. The hype is justified by their performance tonight at the Bully, despite rumours of Alice Costelloe’s laptop being stolen, making her appear more frosty than shy on stage.

They open with ‘In Your Car’, reminiscent of The Lemonheads’ 90s college pop, followed by new tracks from latest album ‘Say Yes’, sounding like a younger, brattier Pixies. ‘Avalanche’ is a reverb-soaked dream, with Alice’s vocals echoing more of Karen O than her usual Mazzy Star-style fragility. The new album’s title track is a longing teen anthem with a ‘Siamese Dream’-era Smashing Pumpkins vibe, while ‘Saccharine’ could easily have been a Lemonheads cover, with the addition of a more powerful vocal than ‘June Gloom’ or ‘In Your Car’ by Alice. ‘VITRIOL’ sounds like ‘Heads Will Roll’ by Yeah Yeah Yeahs, showing a band exploring their soundscape with the new four-piece line up.

Full band versions of tracks like ‘Talk’ add a new leverage to well written duo pieces, revealing the potential of the band. Lyrics like “All I wanna do is talk / But seeing you fucks me up” make them easily accessible and of course, make for a good singalong.

Kacey and Alice’s duo encore of ‘Homework’ makes for a haunting end to the gig, followed by new track ‘Lux’, with its echoes of tour buddies Depeche Mode, a song which appears to be about mental health, ironic considering that Alice is apparently a descendant of Sigmund Freud. Frosty or not, the onstage chemistry tonight is subdued, with Kacey cracking the jokes, but all in all, letting the songs speak for themselves. A promising set from a growing group.

*Karlyn King*

## BRAIDS / ESTHER JOY LANE

### O2 Academy

With Glastonbury and Truck festival appearances ahead of her and a double showing at Common People in the bag, this is proving to be Esther Joy Lane’s *annus mirabilis* and it’s another spectacularly accomplished set that we are treated to. Pummelling synths and hallways of sound that might make for a fitting soundtrack to a procession scene in some dystopian sci-fi drama are the solo artist’s stock in trade and there are inevitable comparisons to Zola Jesus and, in particular, Grimes. There are changes in mood too, with slower numbers recalling the salad days of dubstep while the artist’s command of a keyboard is absolute. Shy by her own admittance, confidence is growing by the gig.

It’s a fitting appetiser for Braids, a band that skilfully combine traditional instruments and electronic innovation. Quite simply, it’s

## TEMPER TRAP

### O2 Academy

In 2009 The Temper Trap burst onto the scene with the release of indie-rock belter ‘Sweet Disposition’. It quickly became an indie anthem, and was what catapulted the band into the headphones of teenage fans all over the world. Now, seven years on, the band have just released their third album, ‘Thick as Thieves’, and have begun a busy summer of festivals and touring; but do they still live up to the name they built for themselves have a decade ago?

Yes and no. There are moments of brilliance tonight: the instrumental breakdowns that begin quietly before growing into vivacious apexes lift the short set; the shiny syncopation and anthemic vocals in these moments show where the band truly shine, but more often than not these peaks are pulled back by lifeless material.

New single ‘Fall Together’ fails to encapsulate what made the band shine all those years ago. Whereas their earlier music was bright and engaging, this feels lacklustre, with sludgy reverb and a limp chorus. ‘Burn’ appears to mimic what first made the band popular, yet lacks the certain *je ne sais quoi* that once made their music so interesting.

The encore couldn’t be anything other than ‘Sweet Disposition’, and from the shimmering opening you’re reminded what a great band The Temper Trap can be. The energy that had drooped at points in the set finally returns in full force, with the audience drinking in every second.

The Temper Trap are clearly a talented band, but their new material has been marred by the overbearing success of ‘Sweet Disposition’. Though there is no doubt they Trap can perform live, the energy and shine that makes their encore soars sadly isn’t present throughout the majority of the show.

*Hannah Mylrea Hemmings*

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photo by Sam Shepherd



## MALCOLM MIDDLETON

### The Bullingdon

“Look mate, you can’t just...I mean thanks, but...” Malcolm Middleton is addressing a member of the audience that’s just given him a pint mid-song. It’s just one of a number of things that go

astray tonight. Before Middleton’s even played a note, there’s a technical difficulty that means he’s scrabbling around with his laptop and leads trying to get everything to work.

“It’s performance art” he deadpans “without the performance.” “Or the art,” counters a wit in the audience. “That’s just your opinion...” mutters Middleton before returning

to his leads. When things finally get going, the whole set seems to teeter on the brink of falling apart. Yet despite the dour reputation Middleton possesses, he deals with all of these bizarre and befuddling moments with a grin and some well-timed humour. Only he could pen a song entitled ‘We Are All Going To Die’ and somehow imbue it with positivity. By turns beautiful, sad, and downright weird, tonight’s show feels as if it’s been plucked from the same world that his album with David Shrigley documents. Tracks from his latest album find him opening his sound out considerably; by utilising support act Pictish Trail as his backing band and presumably laptop wizardry, songs like ‘John Lennon Says’ and ‘Big Black Hole’ sound massive. ‘Summer of ’13’ takes the form of a quirky club hit, just about offsetting the crushing opening line of “I want to curl up into a ball and die” with its offbeat nature. His entire set tonight stares deep into the jaws of defeat, but Middleton’s way of dealing with misfortune and heartbreak is to face it head on and write beautiful, heartbreaking, and occasionally very funny songs about the situation. When he rocks out, as on ‘Red Travellin’ Socks’, he’s facing adversity with aggression, and when he strips things back to acoustic guitar, he embraces it. Morrison’s might not need a singer-cum-songwriter-cum-record producer-cum-indie schmie indie guitarist-cum-moaning bastard miserabilist, as he suggests on ‘By-Proxy Song’, but almost everyone else could do with some Malcolm Middleton in their lives.

*Sam Shepherd*

## SONA JOBARTEH

### The North Wall

The stunningly beautiful Sona Jobarteh is billed as the first significant professional female player of the West African kora, the ancient 21-string harp-like instrument with a 700-year history, and which Senegalese maestro and Witney resident Jali Fily Cissokho has introduced to the local Oxford scene. It’s not the kora though, but Sona’s voice that first draws you into tonight’s gig. Gentle and strong, flowing and definitive, never harsh or stretched, it’s suffused with a warmth that’s irresistible. Indeed, for much of the first set Sona’s kora is understated, just one instrument in the band. However, when the first substantial solo comes along it’s like shards of soft light shining through finely woven cloth. Born in London of Gambian heritage into one of the families with an hereditary right to play the kora, Sona started learning it age three. She tells us she’s is aiming to innovate at the same time as sustaining that heritage, even setting up a music school in Gambia to that end. Her versions of the West African classics ‘Kanu-Jarabi’ and the instrumental ‘Kaira’ are very much in that spirit, taken at a faster rhythm than usual, yet still deeply traditional. It’s evolution not revolution,

so while her band has a bass guitarist and kit drummer, merging this traditional music with another genre – say jazz or hip hop – is clearly not for her. She takes a lot of care introducing numbers, and her own songs in praise of women, in praise of the elders and in praise of Gambia are clearly close to her heart. When announcing ‘Mamamusa’ in praise of her late grandmother, the emotion is clearly very near the surface and Sona appears close to tears. Along with her mainly London-based musicians, she conjures catchy rhythms that get some of the polite north Oxford crowd dancing. Senegal-based Momodu Sarr on African percussion, whose huge smile is as dazzling as his polyrhythmic virtuosity, is particularly impressive, alongside Andi McLean’s less-is-more bass playing. With the band’s energy complimenting Sona’s grace, warmth, commitment and passion, there’s more than enough evidence on stage tonight to suggest that in her hands this music will continue to evolve for generations to come.

*Colin May*

## THE JOY FORMIDABLE

### O2 Academy

Amid mixed reviews for new album ‘Hitch’, The Joy Formidable have the kind of confidence that can only come from sharing stages with heavyweights such as Muse and the Foo Fighters, the latter dubbing them songwriters of the year for chorus-laden aural assault, ‘Whirring’”. With fashionably late support from Demob Happy, a packed venue warms up with a ramshackle riff fest, one for fans of the Queens of the Stone Age or Fugazi. Solid two-stringed bass lines and muted vocals leave us suitably nostalgic for the Sub Pop glory days. The Joy Formidable open a blistering set with 2011’s ‘Cradle’, a soaring pop song laced with Ritzy’s signature guitar fuzz, with vibes of punk pioneers The Wipers. This continues with ‘I Don’t Want to See You Like This’ and ‘Austere’ but at times, Ritzy’s vocals are somewhat overwhelmed by the massive guitar lines and cymbal swell. This is, thankfully, interspersed with more fragile moments like ‘Liana’ and ‘Silent Treatment’, revealing how well she can actually sing.

## THE CULT OF DOM KELLER / MASIRO

### The Bullingdon

Masiro might have a reputation as a band that other musicians love and admire, but for all the complexity and cerebral nature of their instrumental post/math-rock, they’re both accessible and visceral. Extremely visceral at times as they hit their mood switch at will, transforming passages of almost ambient Pink Floyd-inspired wandering into sandblasted Mars Volta-like angular prog noise with barely a pause for thought. Their set is one of peaks and troughs of noise, and if they can sink into ponderous noodling very occasionally, you’re only ever a turn-on-a-sixpence moment away from some more of that lovely bloody-minded noise. Nottingham’s Cult of Dom Keller seemingly have no truck with mood changes or complex musical diversions. Their world is dark and their groove goes from a, right through b, c and d and crashes gloriously through the back end of z, flattening everything in its way. No frills, no nonsense psychedelic



photo by Karlyn King

New tracks from ‘Hitch’ are definitely of a heavier, more driving persuasion, cementing Ritzy’s status as a guitar force to be reckoned with, channelling unique atmospherics in contrast to her guitar-lite contemporaries. An encore featuring Ritzy and Rhyddian repositioned from centre stage to the middle of the

## RY X

### St John The Evangelist

Ry X, takes to the centre of the stage amid a droning organ chord and a beautiful evolving texture that spills over from Nils Frahm territory to the borders of post-rock grandeur, and despite this being a pop band they manage to keep that sense of emotive scale through their entire set. Australian singer Ry Cumming’s unique blend of falsetto and contemporary folk style lets his voice float through as if James Blake has started hanging out with Keaton Henson. The deep synth bass plays perfectly with the live percussion, which acts as much more than holding the band together and adds complex rhythmic treats throughout, while the layer upon layer of organ, keys, guitar and vocals evoke much more avant garde music, and just as you think a more casual listener might be getting a little uncomfortable, a catchy reverb-drenched chorus floats to the top, or some Bon Iver-style harmonies relax the mood. What strikes me about this expansive approach is something you don’t see often these days

where they disappear into a fog of My Bloody Valentine crossed with My Vitriol circa 2001. Their presence is both full on and fragile all at once, leaving critics in a sea of feedback, safe in the knowledge that they are both a unique and progressive band with or without the hype.

*Karlyn King*

from ‘pop’ musicians: allowing powerful section of a performance to run along like a great rock jam of yesteryear, that feeling of the music sounding so good you don’t need to stick to the four minutes the song was on the album; if the band is swept away, the audience will surely follow, and they are tonight, repeatedly. Whether it’s pre-orchestrated or not, it’s an increasingly rare treat, as if bands don’t believe our attention spans will last longer than the studio arrangement. At his core Ry is a musician, but one who embraces the wide scope that pop music can possess. This kind of music has been out there for a while and has been done well but perhaps a sweet-voiced, radio-friendly and charismatic Australian might just be able to bring a mainstream audience with him, to somewhere where walls of beautiful noise can last for eight minutes, and choruses are less important than your emotional response; he certainly does tonight.

*Matthew Chapman Jones*



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Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July

**OMMADON** LEGION OF ANDROMEDA + DRORE 8pm

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July – *THE SPIN JAZZ CLUB*

**SNAKE DAVIS & ROSS STANLEY**

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July - *IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC*

**MASIRO** SOCIAL DISCHARGE + LEE RILEY 7:45pm

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July – *OKROX*

**TERMINUS** 8pm

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July – *THE SPIN JAZZ CLUB*

**NICK SMART** 8pm

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July – *CHURCH OF THE HEAVY*

**THE CORSAIRS** TRAUMA UK + JUNKIE BRUSH + STRIKE ONE 7:45pm

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Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July – *THE SPIN JAZZ CLUB*

**JAMES ALLSOP** 8pm

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**RAGING SPEEDHORN** STONEGHOST + BLACK SKIES BURN 7:45pm

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July – *IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC*

**LEADFOOT TEA** 7:45pm

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> July

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## Dr SHOTOVER: Seeks stable relationship

[In a whisper] Ah, there you are. [Louder] I said, AH, THERE YOU ARE. My voice - not quite as hearty as usual? Yes, well-noticed, Dewdrop-Innes. Your prize for being really *really* observant is to get a round in. Mine's a Lemsip and ginger wine... very civil of you...*glugg, glugg*... ah, that's better. What happened, you say? Well, I was singing along to FOALS and I got a little hoarse. A. LITTLE. HOARSE. Geddit? Oh suit yourselves. No, in fact my uncharacteristic quietude of tone is the direct and inevitable result of shouting at Young People. Justifiably? It's always justifiably. I was cycling over Magdalen Bridge yesterday, when a pair of mouth-breathing adolescent numpties had the temerity to walk out in front of the ancestral velocipede. Not only that – they were *texting* and *wearing trainers* at the time. What else could I do? Half-an-hour had passed before I finished my tirade, as follows: 'AND ANOTHER THING, pond life - you've made me LATE for an IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT!' With this, I cuffed the gruesome twosome round the backs of their spotty heads and pedalled on. Long story short, I arrived at my regimental reunion with only seconds to spare, and, what was worse, I had quite lost my voice. This didn't stop me enjoying several bottles of claret and a generous portion of Spotted-Dick Wellington with lashings of brandy custard, but did make the sing-song at the end a bit of a disappointment, especially when it came to my Jon Anderson-style harmonies on *Eskimo Nell Does Didcot*. Still, the whole thing degenerated (as is traditional) into a monumental food fight, for which the Shotover vocal cords were not needed - so all was well. What's that, Sidcup? I've still got some Stilton tucked under my velveteen collar? That's for later, dunderhead. Now then, what's this about some more equestrian local band names? RIDE, obviously, good. HOT HOOVES, like it, like it. PONYCLUB – nice, nice. (Yes, Totterdown, that's what YOUNG KNIVES were originally called, not many people know that). THE EPSOM? Hmm, maybe. RODEOHEAD! [Fanfare of trumpets, lights flash, chorus girls enter carrying a large cake, all cheer]. Ambassador, you spoil us! Crack open another vat of Lemsip and Crabbie's – cheers! **Next month: Everybody Needs Good Neigh-Bours**



'Guten Tag, Dr S – we're the National Velvet Underground. Fancy a canter?'

## INTRODUCING....

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

# KANADIA

### Who are they?

Abingdon-based alt.rockers Kanadia are James Bettis (*guitar/vocals*); Tim Lucas (*drums*); Melissa Marshall (*keyboards*) and Jack Ashworth (*bass*). James and Melissa were in a previous band in Devon but relocated after hearing about the thriving music scene in Oxford, where they met Jack and Tim. Despite only gigging locally over the past few months, the quartet have already won plenty of fans, notably at their recent Punt show, with more than one renowned local promoter proclaiming them the best new live band in town. Their self-released, eponymous debut EP was released in April and they've already started work on their debut album with Richard Neuberg, who produced The Epstein's 'Burn the Branches' album.

### What do they sound like?

"Big" is the word most often used to describe Kanadia, both live and on record. Young, new and fresh-faced they're already aiming for a stadium-sized sound inspired by Radiohead, Muse and even some of U2's wide-screen rock, but invested with a sweet melodic golden thread that recalls Jeff Buckley's airy sense of longing and heartache. There is reverb and their choruses touch the sky. One *Nightshift* scribe described their "billowing musical confection" as sounding like the musical equivalent of candy floss flavoured e-cigarette vapour.

### What inspires them?

"New and interesting music; concerts; songwriting; reverb."

### Career highlight so far:

"Recording the album, playing the Oxford Punt and winning the Witney battle of the bands."

### And the lowlight:

"Playing a certain anonymous venue in Reading, or possibly being suddenly cornered and challenged to an MC battle in the streets of Leicester



by a guy who demanded we use more electronics."

### Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Coldredlight; we only recently discovered Gaby-Elise's music but we were absolutely blown away by her song 'Little Scorpion'."

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

"In Rainbows" by Radiohead.

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

"8<sup>th</sup> July at the Bullingdon and 29<sup>th</sup> July at Jericho Tavern. You can expect some new unheard tracks, not yet released, as well as some of the more well known tracks from our upcoming album. Plus there will be free EPs on the door and some great support acts."

### Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"Our favourite thing is the supportive local music community who want to hear live original artists; least favourite is the guy who follows us around stealing our plectrums and drum sticks!"

### You might love them if you love:

Radiohead; U2; Jeff Buckley; Muse; Foals; TV On The Radio.

### Hear them here:

[www.kanadia.band](http://www.kanadia.band)

## ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

### 20 YEARS AGO

There are gigs that have attained legendary status in Oxford music history and July 1996 saw possibly the daddy of all of them: **Radiohead's** two-night stint at **The Zodiac** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> (the latter an under-18s show), which was their first Oxford gig since attaining global superstar status on the back of 'The Bends'. Fans queued down Cowley Road to buy tickets when the gigs were announced via some les than subtle hints in *Nightshift*, every one snapped up in under an hour. In perishing heat the band played for over two hours, including a ten-song encore, the set featuring at the time new songs like 'Paranoid Android' and 'I Promise', as well as 'Subterranean Homesick Alien'; 'Planet Telex'; Banana Co.'; Thinking About You'; 'Lucky' and 'Fake Plastic Trees', but, surprising for the time, no 'Creep'. *Nightshift's* review of the show reported that Thom spent much of the gig joking with fans, claiming "I'm not very good at being nice to people," and drinking beers, while Jonny Greenwood played with a brace on him arm. It concluded with the bold but not unreasonable claim that "Radiohead are simply and indisputably the best live band in the world."

Elsewhere this month **The Egg** released their debut album, 'Albumen' (named after a pun in an early *Curfew* review) on China Records, while **The Mystics** announced they had parted company with their label Fontana. "It was a marriage that promised great sex but turned out to be frigid," said singer Sam Williams to *Nightshift*. The band's debut album would later be released on **Rotator**.

In an otherwise quiet month for gigs locally names

now forgotten in time included **Ampersand**;

**Funbug**; **Stretch Princess**; **Lynus**; **Souled Out**;

**Fat Freddy's Fingertips**; **Elvis Virus** and **Baby**

**Grain**, though encouraging to note that **The Dirty**

**Earth Band** and **The Inflatables** are still going

strong two decades on.

### 10 YEARS AGO

It being July, the main event of the month was **Truck Festival**. After a heatwave caused the tarmac on the A34 to melt and cars to overheat, those who made to Stevenon on time were greeted by a sudden biblical downpour that threatened to wash the festival into the sea for a few hours as the likes of **Xmas Lights**, **Harry Angel**, **Kill Casino**, **Co-Pilgrim** and **Get Cape, Wear Cape, Fly** played on. When things brightened up again the weekend's highlights included **Battles**; **A Suitable Case For Treatment**; **Skindred**; **The Futureheads** and **Forward Russia!** on the Saturday, and **65Daysofstatic**; **Youthmovie** **Soundtrack Strategies**; **The Rock of Travolta**; **Regina Spektor** and **Seth Lakemen** on the Sunday.

Over at **Cornbury**, meanwhile, **The Pretenders**; **Robert Plant**; **The Waterboys**; **Texas** and **Robyn Hitchcock** graced the main stage with **Spiers and Boden** and **Kate Rusby** on the **Oxford Folk Festival** stage.

Away from festivals, **Winnebago Deal** released their album 'The Raven' on Fierce Panda, while Youthmovie Soundtrack Staregics were off on tour with **Forward Russia!** ahead of the recording of their third album.

## THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

**Elton John** played a show at **The Kassam Stadium** this month and apparently many of those in attendance that day never returned to the ground until Oxford Utd played Swansea City's reserves in the FA Cup last season.

### 5 YEARS AGO

Talking of Spiers and Boden, who was that on the cover of *Nightshift* in July 2011? Why, **Bellowhead**, the ensemble declared the Official Best Live Band in the World following a slew of major awards for their shows and set to headline this month's Truck Festival, having stolen the show the year before. Spiers and Boden talked to us about their roots in the Oxford folk scene.

This was to prove a pivotal year for Truck, expanding to three days and a bigger capacity but, sadly, being forced into liquidation after ticket sales failed to cover costs.

A shame since there were some serious star turns over the weekend, not least from an acid-crazed **Fixers** whose set has gone down as one of the greatest in Truck's history. **The Cellar Family**, **Wild Swim**, **Trophy Wife** and **Sealings** led the local charge on **Blessing Force's** specially hosted stage, while **Phil Selway**, **Young Knives**, **Spring Offensive** and **The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band** also flew the Oxford flag with pride on a bill that featured **John Grant**, **Galaxie 500**, **Nathaniel Rateliffe** and **Graham Coxon**. Thankfully the story had a happy ending with Truck's takeover by the people behind **Y Not Festival**. This year they're expanding to three days and upping the capacity. Fingers crossed, eh?



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# DEMOS

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## DEMO OF THE MONTH

### BLACK CAT TANGO

Aim for the stars and you might reach the Moon goes the old cliché and Black Cat Tango are at least aiming high. Or maybe not; mostly they sound like they're aiming for the bottom of the rankest gutter in town, but, like, in a good way, if you get our drift. Their Facebook boasts motivational quotes from Frank Zappa and Tom Waits, while their Bandcamp self description promises "In a moonlit alley on the wrong side of the tracks, somewhere between comic-book blues, jazz-noir and thumping 50s rock lays Black Cat Tango." All of which point in roughly the direction the band are coming from, though you could add Nick Cave's murder ballads, Stray Cats' rumble and The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band's gin-soaked hot jazz and r'n'b to all that. And they make a reasonable fist of it, a bit of swing and some down and dirty blues and rockabilly to soundtrack late nights in dive bars counting the nickels and dimes for that next shot of sourmash. Right now, though, they're still not entirely convincing; singer SJ Salem (if that's his real name we'll scoff our battered trilby with a side order of custard) yet to achieve the weary, lived-in crack in his voice that can make all the difference. They're a new band in town though, so there's ample room for a fuller descent into those sought-after gutters, with demo highlight 'Bad Things' the darkest shot on show and hopefully an indication of the way things might from here (downwards, if you get what we mean). In the meantime get a couple of pints of Mark Lanegan down you chaps and come back sounding like you crawled out of a drain.

### AMANDA AALTO

Listening to music all day every day can do strange things to your brain, particularly making you hear things that aren't there. And going to loads of gigs without wearing earplugs apparently gives you tinnitus. Thus it is we spend the duration of this four-song demo wandering around the house to see if we've left the fridge door open (it has a tendency to shout at us in fridge language if it's left open for more than 30 seconds, which is a right bugger if you're stuck deciding between a can of Scrumpy Jack or that bottle of salted caramel vodka the birthday fairy just delivered) or one of the cats is torturing a rat downstairs in the kitchen (no UB40 jokes please, we're

*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)*

allergic). Why? Because throughout the entire duration of the demo there's a high-pitched whining noise somewhere in the middle distance. It becomes so incessant we end up calling the doctors surgery and booking an ear test appointment. Too many nights in the company of Killing Joke, Coltsblood and Hang the Bastard have finally done for us, obviously. But as soon as we turn the music off to use the phone the whining stops. Turns out Amanda Aalto here has decided the best way to lift her demo out of the floaty, fluffy acoustic-guitar-and-a-voice ghetto is to stick a constant synth whine behind every song. Every bloody song. Thanks. Beyond that incessant whining Amanda tends to flit between slightly shrill emoting, stepping over the line into full-on wailing on 'Without Your Love', a slightly tipsy song which sounds like it necked a couple of cheeky glasses of Prosecco before committing itself to tape, and airy coo-ing, which makes her sound like she's singing love songs to a toddler. There are occasional flamenco flourishes, the odd nod to something Cajun, and some obligatory melisma and if it's not exactly offensive it does tend to feel like you're trapped inside an advert for herbal teabags. While stood next to a fridge door that's been left open too long.

### SOLAFIDE

Solafide is the work of a guy called Chris and this demo is a one-song affair called 'Hyannis'. The Soundcloud page comes with this choice quote about the song: "Hyannis is located on the east coast of the United States. It is the home of the Kennedys and steeped in the history of America's discovery by European civilization. The song is an attempt at evoking the spirit of promise and tragedy that seems audible in the sound of the waves and the roar of the planes ferrying tourists and workers out to Martha's Vineyard. It is a romance between peoples centuries apart and divided by cultures which are, on the one hand, intent on survival, and on the other, domination." We've printed it for you to read because we had to, and why should we suffer alone? It's here so you can start to understand what we are up against sometimes. It's not actually too bad really – bit overwrought and recorded so that everything keeps distorting the more racked with emotion Chris gets as he contemplates all that promise and tragedy and survival and domination. Sort of like a strangely over-intense meeting point between Jack Savoretti and The Blue Nile. We've probably overlooked something deep and important here but for some reason we keep thinking about salted caramel vodka, which prevents us from concentrating properly.

### THE KARLOS KOLLECTIVE

Something else that's in the *Nightshift* fridge is a big block of cheese, since great pop music and cheese have long been good bed fellows. The Karlos Kollektive here have an entire cheese board to slather over their odd little songs. Take opener 'Atmosphere', which sadly, despite their letter promising a mix of original songs and covers, isn't either the Joy Division classic or Russ Abbott party banger. Instead it's a happy clappy folk-pop number that might have been half inched from a 1980s Christian pop festival, with a set of rhymes to make Liam Gallagher blush. That's nothing compared to 'Livid Leon', which might be a lo-fi take on T-Rex's glam boogie with cheap electro-pop bells and trinkets attached, or 'Take the Taxi Dear', which starts off as a synth-string-laden electro-soul torch song before someone drops the world's largest slab of cheddar on top of it and it sails off into cheesy yellow sunset power ballad. Or maybe 'Lucky Life', which begins life as a 60s-style folk-rock lament before Karlos decides to whip out the world's most incongruous guitar solo and take everything to hero level, his voice cracking under the strain of trying to keep up with such epic endeavors. On the one hand it's verging on pop nightmare material, but on the other, hey, why not – who wants to be sweet and sensible when there's the chance of a party breaking out and terrible dancing to be done. Awful and brilliant in almost equal measures.

### BETAJAXX

It's been a good couple of years since we reviewed anything from local singer Clea De Sebrock, mostly one-song demos on an upbeat trance tip. So what's new? She has a new band name for starters – Betajaxx being a collaboration with Brazilian producer Pablo Henrique. Otherwise what we have here is a one-song demo on an upbeat trance tip. And really, when you consider the alternatives (see certain other demos this month and every other month), what's wrong with that? As before there's something a bit timeless about Clea's club-friendly electro. 'Say You Will' here is far less jarring than the Daft Punk-ish 'Time' we heard on her previous demo, her voice softer, more Madonna, less Goldfrapp, but the Guetta-like production turns it into an everyman house banger that might have come from any time over the past 20 years. Well-orchestrated summer anthem stuff but maybe lacking an edge to lift it above and beyond the background buzz of a million similar pieces.

### MAX SCHNUPP

The old fashioned idea of the one man band – some mad old goat standing on a street corner with a guitar in hand, harmonica scaffolded to his mouth, bass

drum strapped on his back and a pair of mini cymbals between his knees as he negotiates a ramshackle version of 'Streets of London' for bemused commuters – long ago became obsolete with the advent of home recording technology, but it's good to know that some people still adhere to that play-everything-at-once-all-by-yourself ideal. Max Schnupp here sounds like he's contorting himself into all manner of odd shapes in his bedroom while trying to recreate the sound of a full free jazz band, like a game of muso Twister. Abstract beats, funky guitar, random keyboard hums and squeaks and some decidedly doleful vocals don't suggest someone clinically in control of the recording process. "I can't change my mind," mumbles Max as he charges round the room hitting, plucking, tweaking or generally trying to understand each and every instrument he encounters along the way. It's a mess but it sounds pleasingly organic compared to most of the bedroom-bound efforts we get sent. No need to change, Max. Maybe move to a smaller bedroom though – much easier to reach everything without falling over on top of the cymbals all the time.

## THE DEMO DUMPER

### THE ILLUMINATI

That high pitched whine/warning signal from the fridge we seem slightly obsessed with? Reckon it has more nuance and melodic appeal than this demo. *Nightshift's* enduring love for workaday blokey rock bands is well documented (mostly in the Demo Dumper, it must be said), and yet still they come. This, as is ever the case, is well prepared and produced, much like a supermarket own brand meat pie, but as adventurous and deviant as that particular pastry-cased delight. Give us crazy culinary messes laced with ghost chillies or weird cauliflower, chocolate and gin combos – something to challenge our palates. That The Illuminati list Oasis, The Libertines and Ocean Colour Scene as primary influences says everything. Here is sullen, plodding, earnest soft rock with absolutely no comprehension of what real excitement is, just a safe, stodgy gloop of tried and tested, polished and pruned musical and lyrical clichés. The idea that Britpop's second tier also-rans still exert such an influence on modern music is something that would make us weep if that didn't constitute an emotional reaction to something that doesn't deserve it. In fact we're off downstairs now to repeatedly slam our heads in the fridge door for an hour until the pain of that idea overcomes the pain of listening to this. Then we're going to drink the entire bottle of salted caramel vodka so we can't remember a single thing about it.

*Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to [editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk](mailto:editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk), clearly marked Demos. IMPORTANT: no review without a contact address and phone number; no more than four tracks on a demo please. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. And don't fucking whine about your review on Twitter either, else we'll print a screenshot and make you look like a prize tit.*

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