



NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every

month

Issue 261

April

2017

The August List

"The idea of disappearing or living in absolute isolation is a rejection of the world and I find that fascinating."

Oxford's first couple of country on hermits and the power of drones.

Also in this issue:

Introducing **LOWWS STORNOWAY** bow out

plus

Oxford music news, reviews, previews, and seven pages of local gigs

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PACKAGING & FULFILMENT

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THE BULLINGDON

APRIL 2017 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Sunday 1st April
Jizzy Pearl / Love / Hate
Bulletproof Rose
Doors: 7pm

Sunday 2nd April
Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
Doors: 7pm

Monday 3rd April
Alejandro Escovedo Band
Doors: 7pm

Friday 7th April
Oxphword:
The Self Love Show
Doors: 7pm

Friday 7th April
Throwing Shapes #001
Doors: 10pm

Saturday 8th April
Freerange Roots
Addis Ababa
Field Frequency Soundsystem
Doors: 10pm

Monday 10th April
Giles Robson
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 18th April
Laetitia Sadier Source Ensemble
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 12th April
Pins
Doors: 7pm

Friday 14th April
The Balkan Wanderers
The Shapes
Genevieve Miles
Doors: 7pm

Friday 14th April
P.Y.T
Doors: 10pm

Saturday 15th April
Old Skool Oxford
2 Bad Mice
Doors: 10pm

Sunday 16th April
DJ Derek Sweet Memory Sounds
Don Letts
Laid Blak (Live)
Doors: 9pm

Tuesday 18th April
Laurence Jones
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 19th April
The Moonlandingz
Coldredlight
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 20th April
The Lounge Kittens
Doors: 7pm

Friday 21st April
Palace
Doors: 7pm

Friday 21st April
Organised Fun
Alexander Nut & Z Lovecraft
Doors: 10pm

Sunday 22nd April
Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
The Reaper
Chaos Theory
K-Lacura
Doors: 7pm

Monday 24th April
Ben Poole
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 27th April
Jaws
Doors: 7pm

Friday 28th April
Lowws EP Launch
Doors: 7pm

Friday 28th April
Tropic Popsicle
Doors: 10pm

Saturday 29th April
Rawdio Presents:
Natty Dub Takeover
Saxxon, T>I, Cabin Fever, Jaxxx
Doors: 10pm

Sunday 30th April
Simple - May Day Party
Call Super
Doors: 11pm

Tuesday 2nd May
The Night Cafe
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 3rd May
Andrew Combs Band
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 4th May
Troy Redfern Band
Doors: 7pm

Sunday 7th May
Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
Bloodshot
Silk Road
1000 Chains
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 11th May
Steve Rodgers
Doors: 7pm

Friday 12th May
Will Joseph Cook
Doors: 7pm

Sunday 14th May
Threepenny Bit
Xogara
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 16th May
The Coathangers
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 18th May
Ryley Walker
Doors: 7pm

Friday 19th May
Smooove & Turrell
Doors: 7pm

Sunday 20th May
Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
Twisted State of Mind
Cherokil
Crimson Tusk
Promethean Reign
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 24th May
Aoifa O'Donovan
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 25th May
The Rifles (Unplugged)
Doors: 7pm

Friday 26th May
ZAIA
Doors: 10pm

Sunday 28th May
Simple
Peggy Gou
Doors: 10pm

Sunday 4th June
Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 7th June
Rhys Lewis
Doors: 7pm

Monday 12th June
The Rainbreakers
Doors: 7pm

Friday 16th June
The Hummingbirds
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 21st June
Oxfordshire Science Festival
Doors: 7pm

Sunday 25th June
Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 28th June
Hitman Blues Band
Doors: 7pm

Friday 7th July
Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 12th July
Billy Walton Band
Doors: 7pm

NEWS

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KT TUNSTALL, JON BODEN and **ELIZA CATHY** head an all-star line-up at this year's Towersey Festival. Oxfordshire's longest-running festival takes place at Thame Sports Ground over the August Bank Holiday weekend (Friday 25-Monday 28th). Other big names confirmed include Newton Faulkner, Show of Hands, The Blockheads, Lindisfarne and Ed Sheeran co-writer Foy Vance. Weekend and day tickets are on sale now, with concessions available, and full line-up details at www.towerseyfestival.com

NANCY KERR & JAMES FAGAN headline the **Oxford Folk Weekend** this month. Now in its sixth year, the event runs over the weekend of the **21st-23rd April** across various venues around the city centre, including the Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre; The Quaker Meeting House; The Wesley Memorial Church; St

Barnabas Church; The Pitt Rivers Museum and St Aldates Tavern. The Folk Weekend line-up also features sets from Leverett; The Melrose Quartet; Ange Hardy; Jim Moray; Jackie Oates & Megan Henwood; John Spiers; Dan Walsh; Dipper Malkin; Jimmy Aldridge & Sid Goldsmith and The Emily Askew Band, while the local folk contingent is represented by Coldharbour; Edward Pope, White Horse Whisperers and Shivelight, among others. As well as concerts there will be the traditional round of ceilidhs, dance displays, Morris dancers and workshops, while Saturday features a Makaton-signed performance of folk songs and a ceilidh for people with special needs.

Weekend tickets for the Oxford Folk Festival are on sale now, priced £67, with day passes starting at £30 and tickets for individual events also available. Full details, including how to volunteer at www.folkweekendoxford.co.uk

THE OTHER DRAMAS and **CHEROKII** have been added to the line-up for the Uncommon stage at this year's **Common People**. The Uncommon stage features 20 local acts across two days on the weekend of the **27th-28th May** in South Park. Additionally, two more local acts, Coldredlight and Lucy Leave, will perform on the main stage, alongside headliners Sean Paul and The Pete Tong Heritage Orchestra.



IDRIS ELBA is the latest star name added to the line-up for **Truck Festival**. The star of *The Wire* and *Luther* will play a DJ set at the festival over the weekend of the **21st-23rd July** at **Hill Farm** in Steventon. The event, headlined by **The Libertines**, **Franz Ferdinand** and **The Vaccines**, is close to selling out in advance with no general weekend camping tickets left.

Other new names added to the bill include Pumarosa; The Moonlandingz; Pulled Apart By Horses; Hinds; Deaf Havana; Jamie Lenman; The Big Moon; Honeyblood; Zak Abel; Arcane Roots; Girl Ray; Kagoule; Palm Honey; Kamikaze Girls and Dream Wife, while Switch will again host late night dace parties, including sets from bass powerhouse TQD; drum&bass act SaSaSaS and grime from Elijah & Skillian, Swindle and Champion & MC Serious. Full line-up details and news on any remaining tickets at www.truckfestival.com

Tickets and full line-up details are at oxford.commonpeople.net.

HALFWAY TO 75 returns in July for its annual celebration of local and international Americana. This year's one-day festival takes place at The Isis Farmhouse on Saturday 29th July. Headlining will be Oxfordshire roots band Little Brother Eli, who are joined by Texan bluegrass singer Rachel Haven; UK country-pop singer Devon Mayson, currently tipped to

join The Shires and Ward Thomas at the leading edge of home-grown Americana, and Clubhouse Records signings The Rosellys. Joining them will be local acts The Knights of Mentis, Jonny Payne & the Thunder and The Deadbeat Apostles. Kids will be entertained by singer Nick Cope and chef Sophie Grigson.

Tickets for the event are on sale now from Wegottickets.com, priced £13.50 for adults and £7 for under-13s, with under-5s free.

THE MAGIC NUMBERS, CC SMUGGLERS AND BRENT COBB headline this year's **WOOD Festival**. The eco-friendly festival takes place at **Braziers Park** in Ipsden over the weekend of the **19th-21st May**. Started in 2008 by Truck Festival founders Robin and Joe Bennett, with the aim of creating a wholly environmentally-friendly festival in the wake of 2007's floods, WOOD has become a leader in eco-conscious festivals, with each year's event themed to highlight a native animal. This year's WOOD will celebrate The Year of The Hedgehog.

Other acts confirmed so far include travelling troubadour Blue Rose Cod; Cornish bluegrass, folk and country outfit Flats & Sharps; indie-folksters Worry Dolls, who have just supported Joan Armatrading on tour, and local stars Jackie Oates & Megan Henwood; Co-Pilgrim; The Epstein, and Nick Cope.

As well as the live music WOOD hosts its usual array of workshops, talks and kids activities. Weekend tickets are on sale now, priced £85, with teen tickets £20 and under-12s free.

Visit www.woodfestival.com for more details.



THE BEST IN LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY

Saturday 18th April - 7pm
Darius Davies, Tom Deacon, Andrew Ryan, Chris McCausland

Sunday 19th April - 7pm
Mark Oliver + Andrew Stanley + TBC

Sunday 22nd April - 7pm
Laura Lexx, Nick Dixon, Tom Wigglesworth, Lost Voice Guy

Sunday 29th April - 7pm
Keith Farnan, Jim Smallman, Paul Thorne, Jenny Collier

The Bullingdon
162 Cowley Road
Oxford, OX4 1UE
01865 244516

www.thebullingdon.co.uk
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facebook.com/bullingdonoxford



SOUL DEVOTION will play their final ever show as part of this year's **The Kids Are Alright**. The classic soul band will bow out with a headline set at the annual fundraising event at the **Said Business School** on **Saturday 1st July**. This will also be the final The Kids Are Alright, which has raised over

£10,000 for children's charities over the past four years. Joining the headliners will be Chasing Daylight; The Shapes; Loud Mountains; Gentleman Jim; The Deadbeat Apostles; The August List; Les Clochards and The MBA Band. The show runs from 3pm through to 11.15pm in the rooftop amphitheatre. Tickets are £10 in

WILD WILLY BARRETT'S FRENCH CONNECTION

SATURDAY APRIL 22. OLD FIRE STATION. OXFORD. DOORS 7pm



Imagine stumbling across a smoky back street bar, late night jam. Django Reinhardt & the Pougues. Robert Johnson accompanies Edith Piaf. Bob Marley's jammin with Stephanie Grappeli. Tom waits to join in. This is French Connection.

TICKETS | 01865263990 | WWW.OLDFIRESTATION.ORG

GRACE JONES, TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB AND BONOBO will headline this year's **Wilderness Festival**.

The annual celebration of food, music, self-consciously eccentric stuff and more food takes place at **Cornbury Park** over the weekend of the **3rd-6th August**.

First Aid Kit, Michael Kiwanuka, Toots & the Maytals, Ray Blk, Hudson Taylor and Aurora are among the acts set to join the headliners at the annual festival aimed specifically at people with more money than sense.

Wilderness, organised by Thee Grande Order of Naked Horseback Mushroom Foragers, offers festival goers the chance to enjoy naked swimming in Cornbury Park's lake; take part in a naked cricket match and indulge in a banquet hosted by The Naked Chef for the price of a family holiday in Spain. Revellers will also be invited to take part in a hunt for the music stage, which last year was discovered hidden between the crystal healing tent and a stall selling ironic retro knitwear.

Tickets, priced £168.50 (plus booking fee), as well as several other pricing tiers, are on sale now, at **www.wildernessfestival.com**. Tickets give festival goers the opportunity to purchase artisan pies for fifty quid and camp next to a crowd of braying London yahoos who can afford to buy bottles of actual champagne from the festival bar. Alternative boutique camping options are available, including a two-person summer lodge for just £3,480, which allows you to sleep among other people who have been declared clinically insane.

advance from Truck Store and Wegottickets.com, or £12 on the door.

ZAIA headline **Om & Bass Festival** this summer. The local reggae favourites, who headline the Uncommon stage at Common People in May, will play the inaugural reggae and yoga festival, which takes place over the weekend of the **23rd-25th June** at **Braziers Park** in Ipsden. They are joined by The Storytellers and 1210Zen, plus a cast of reggae DJs at the event, which mixes music with yoga, dance, martial arts, crafts and a bajillion workshops. Earlybird tickets are £85 until the 1st May and £125 after that. Kids go free with onsite camping included in the ticket price. More details at **www.wildhuman.co.uk**

NICK COPE is among a host of local musicians playing a benefit gig for **Donnington Doorstep** this month. The centre has been forced to cut its family drop-in sessions due to funding cuts. An all-day gig at Donnington Community Centre on Saturday 8th April runs from 2-10pm and features sets from Osprey; The String Project; Country For Old Men; Delnavaz; Beard of Destiny; Mark Atherton; The Jesters; Elena Harris and Franklin's Tower. Entry is free with money raised through donations, raffles and food sales.

THE STRING PROJECT play a show at The Sheldonian Theatre in May. The local Anglo-Indian fusion collective return to the Sheldonian on Thursday 25th May, after a sold-out concert there in November last

year. Mixing traditional Indian folk music with western blues and rock, the band previously featured members of Duotone and Little Brother Eli in their ranks. The show will act as a benefit for the Oxford University Music Faculty. Support comes from Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, nephew of Indian music godfather Nusrat. Tickets, priced £20, are on sale from **Tigmus.com**.

TRUCK STORE hosts its annual **Record Store Day** party on Saturday 22nd April. There will be live music instore, with acts to be announced, plus limited edition releases from the likes of David Bowie; Pink Floyd; Jason Isbell; Maximo Park; The Smiths; The Fall; Elastica; Cabbage; The Flaming Lips; Popol Vuh and Prince. **Maximo Park**, meanwhile, play an acoustic show in the shop on Monday 24th April. **Blaenavon** play an album launch gig instore on Wednesday 12th. Fans are advised to pre-order the album at Truck Store to ensure they can get it. **Blackwell's Music Shop** have surprisingly been left off the list of shops participating in Record Store Day after organisers deemed they were part of a chain. Blackwell's has three shops in the country. A spokesman for the shop said, "Previously Blackwell's has enjoyed successful Record Store Days and has steadily built up a wide selection of music for all tastes – everything from classical and opera to metal and pop, as well as an expanding range of instruments and accessories. We wish Truck records all the very best and shall continue to cater to the needs of musicians and music lovers alike for many

years to come. We shall campaign vigorously to reverse this unfair ruling."



DON LETTS and LAID BLAK are among acts paying tribute to **DJ Derek** at a special party this month. Count Skylarkin hosts the tribute to the legendary Bristolian DJ who died in 2015, having regularly played in Oxford over the years. DJ Derek Sweet Memory Sounds takes place at The Bullingdon on Sunday 16th April from 10pm through to 4am. Tickets are £10 in advance or £12 on the door.

COWLEY ROAD CARNIVAL returns on Sunday 2nd July. The annual celebration of east Oxford life will once again take over the length of the Cowley Road, hosting myriad live music stages and soundsystems as well as its traditional carnival parade. A fundraising gig for the event takes place at The O2 Academy on Thursday 27th April with local Cubanista big band Ran Kan Kan playing. Tickets, priced £9 in advance, are available from the venue box office. Visit **www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk**.

SOUNDWORKS STUDIOS has teamed up with The Music Warehouse to offer Oxford acts the chance to been seen by major labels via video auditions. Music videos and a virtual reality experience are among prizes up for grabs in a series of competitions and auditions. Find out more at **www.soundworks-oxford.co.uk**

OXJAM are looking for volunteers to help co-ordinate the Oxford leg of the national music festival. Over the past 10 years Oxjam has raised over £2.7million for Oxfam, with the annual Oxford Oxjam takeover now an integral part of the local music calendar. Anyone interested in helping run a part of the show, from production to marketing to fundraising, can email **oxjamapplications@oxfam.org.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**.

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

CHRIS ROE-FRENCH (1982-2017)

Nightshift was saddened to hear of the death of Chris Roe-French. Chris, who was the drummer with local band Cat Matador, died unexpectedly in February; he was 34. Cat Matador were big favourites on the Oxford scene from 2008 until their split in 2013, playing The Oxford Punt in 2008 as well as releasing a



number of EPs for Beard Museum Records. The band's singer, Liam Martin, said of his friend, "It's a cliché to go on about how well loved people were but in his case it's absolutely true and I'm sure there will be many people who remember him from the Oxford scene. Anyone who was around the scene during Cat Matador's lifetime might recall his endless and infectious enthusiasm, disarmingly quick wit and ludicrous pink sparkly drum kit. Chris was universally liked and whether he was 'trying out a new drum face', dropping his car keys down a London drain or popping home after a soundcheck to put potatoes in the oven, he was always a pleasure to be around and a great friend. He will be sorely missed." *Nightshift's* deepest sympathies go out to all Chris's friends and family.

APRIL

WHAT'S ON AT THE CELLAR

Sat 1st
FREERANGE
11pm–3am • £5

Mon 3rd
CINEMA UNDER THE STAIRS THEY LIVE
7.30pm for 8.30pm start
£4

Wed 5th
GET LIT
11pm–3am • Free entry

Thurs 6th
KING TERRIBLE PRESENTS THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER
Disco, Rock / 80's / All Time Classics
11pm–3am • Free entry

Fri 7th
BOSSAPHONIK KONGO DIA NTOTILA (LIVE!) + RESIDENT DJ DAN OFER
10pm–3am
£7 adv / £8 otd

Sat 8th
Church Of The Heavy Presents
AUDIO CHEMISTRY + STRIKE ONE + RAISED BY HYPOCRITES
7pm–10.30pm • £7

Sat 8th
TURF
11pm–3am • £5

Tues 11th
INTRUSION
Resident DJs
DOKTOR JOY + BOOKHOUSE + GUESTS
8.30pm–2am • £4 otd

Wed 12th
FUTURE PERFECT THE ORIELLES + GUESTS
7pm–10pm
£7 adv / more otd • 16+

Wed 12th
GET LIT
11pm–3am • Free entry

Thurs 13th
King Terrible Presents
THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER
11pm–3am • Free entry

Fri 14th
FUTURE PERFECT HAPPYNESS + GUESTS
7.30pm–10pm
£9 adv / more otd • 16+

Fri 14th
FRAU DJS GOOD FRIDAY TAKEOVER!
10:30pm–3am
£4 adv / £6 otd

Sat 15th
FUTURE PERFECT TRUDY AND THE ROMANCE + GUESTS
7pm–10pm
£6 adv / more otd • 16+

Sat 15th
FLUID NADINE (MURKY RECORDS), + MASP & FRIENDS
11pm–3am • £6 otd

Sun 16th
DBA X LIVITY SOUND PEV & KOWTON + KAREN GWYER (LIVE) + HODGE + SEMTEK + AMII LITTLE
11pm • £8 adv / £10 otd

Wed 19th
ZAHED SULTAN + GUEST
8pm–10.30pm
£10 adv

Wed 12th
GET LIT
11pm–3am • Free entry

Thurs 20th
FUTURE PERFECT DAN OWEN + GUESTS
7pm–10pm
£8 adv • 16+

Thurs 20th
King Terrible Presents
THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER
11pm–3am • Free entry

Fri 21st
NEW STREET ADVENTURE + SUPPORT
7pm–10pm • £10 adv

Fri 21st
SOUL SESSIONS
11pm–3am • £5

Sat 22nd
TIGMUS RUSTY SHACKLE + SUPPORT
7.30pm–10pm
£8 early / £10 otd

Sat 22nd
PITCH BLACK JAY CLARKE + KATIUSHA
11pm–3am
£5–£6 adv / £7 otd

Tues 25th
FUTURE PERFECT HANNAH LOU CLARK + GUESTS
7.30pm–10pm • £7

Tues 25th
Staircase 11 present:
DISCOGRAPHY KEEP ON + ISKANDER + MONOTREME / REAL VITA
11pm–3am
£4 adv / £5 otd

Wed 26th
FUTURE PERFECT SPECTRES + GUESTS
7pm–10pm
£6 adv / motd • 16+

Wed 26th
ISIS
11pm–3am • £TBC

Thurs 27th
TREMOR RETROGRADE
10.30pm–3am • £5

Fri 28th
DUTTY MOONSHINE + CATJAM + ROB WHY?
10pm–3am
£6 adv / £8 otd

Sat 29th
MOVE
11pm–3am
£6 all night

Sun 30th
CINEMA UNDER THE STAIRS SHALLOW GRAVE
7.30pm for 8.30pm start • £4

Sun 30th
MAY DAY... Calling All Ravers!!! LUV*JAM + ED STEELE + SPECIAL GUEST (SUPER SHARP SUITED)
11pm–5am
£6 adv / motd



The Cellar, Frewin Court, Oxford, OX1 3HZ
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...an independently owned family run venue

The August List

photo: Ian Wallman



“A LOT OF THE SONGS ON this record are concerned with hermits or absenteeism and a lot seem to be sung from the outside looking in,” says Martin Childs, one half of husband and wife duo The August List, explaining to *Nightshift* the main theme of the couple’s second album, ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’, released at the beginning of May. “I have always felt like that to a certain extent and so the idea of disappearing or living in absolute isolation if you actively choose to, is a kind of statement of rejection of the world and I find those that can do it fascinating. I could never do it, no matter how terrible the world gets; there is always hope in connecting with people or art or whatever. The other, more tragic side are hermits who have just ended up alone by circumstance and geography and don’t know how to escape. We tried to look at all sides of this on the record and mix in our feelings. ‘The Ballad Of James Lucas & Betty Dupree’ ends with us basically saying no matter how bad it is, just embrace those you’re with.”

IF THAT LAST BIT READS LIKE a statement of love for his partner in marriage and music, Kerraleigh, then we’ll ride with it. Here are a couple whose musical chemistry has produced what is likely to be the best

album to come out of Oxford this year. Seriously, we don’t throw a claim that out loosely. ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’, the follow-up to The August List’s 2014 debut ‘O Hinterland’, is an absolute feast of musical wonder, one that starts with a backwards vocal chant and ends with ghostly laughter and in between conjures an atmosphere of isolation, sorrow, exploration and hope via the medium of two perfectly aligned voices and an array of often unusual instruments. Even the album title is a joy. “Ramshackle is a favourite word that we’ve never worked into a song and it does sum up our style to a certain extent,” explains Kerraleigh. “Thrown together with Tabernacle, you’ve got two great sounding words that conjure up a wonderful image in your mind, if you try to imagine what a ramshackle tabernacle might be like. Hopefully we’d be the house band.”

A RAMSHACKLE TABERNACLE is exactly the sort of place we imagine The August List living in. In fact the reality isn’t too far off, the couple inhabiting a converted barn on a hill on the eastern outskirts of Oxfordshire, where they moved after relocating here from Dorset in 2012. One of the band’s first acts after moving here was to send a demo to

Nightshift, which earned them Demo of the Month, and after a few fruitless months trying to get themselves gigs in town, they’ve become firm favourites among gig goers, while expanding their sphere of influence beyond the county, including regular shows in London and a tour of the Netherlands with friends The Epstein, two of whom, drummer Tommy Longfellow and bassist Billy Quartermain, now play as part of The August List’s live set-up.

THAT EXPANDED LIVE BAND will launch ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’ with a headline show at The Cellar in May, a suitably cosy and atmospheric setting for a band who capture the warmth of a log cabin porch and the bitter sting of the dustbowl, and, with the new album, the complex darkness of the human spirit. Personable and unassuming, Kerraleigh and Martin Childs exist in a long and proud lineage of husband and wife acts, some of whom – The Handsome Family; Low; Shovels & Rope – they share musical ground with; others, like The wonderful Lovely Eggs, ones they’ve shared a stage with (“That was a fun gig; they were great,” remembers Martin; “their crowd were nice to us and we stole a few fans. I think that musically we’re different, but the attitude was similar,

so it worked.” “It’s always interesting to see how other couples act on stage,” adds Kerraleigh; “The Lovely Eggs are the same as us in that they don’t sing love songs into each other’s eyes. They just rock out, and so do we. In a folk way.”)

KERRALEIGH AND MARTIN’S musical chemistry is most evident in their vocal interaction; Kerraleigh’s striking singing voice, akin to a young Loretta Lynn or Dolly Parton, is the heart and soul of The August List, a variously sprightly, spectral or dolorous foil to Martin’s deeper, more rustic vocal style. Listen to her sublime backing vocals on ‘Old Rip’, which opens the album, to get a sense of just how in tune with each other they are. “I’ve been told I sound like Mary Poppins when I speak, so I’m glad I don’t sing that way!” exclaims Kerraleigh when we ask about the contrast between her singing voice and her considerably more reserved speaking voice. “I guess it’s a mixture of the artists who’ve influenced me and a stylistic fit with the music, which is unconscious. I had to sing show tunes in college, which I hated and didn’t feel confident with at all. It was only when I started listening to stuff like Jenny Lewis that I felt inspired to find my own voice and sing about the things that I wanted to.”

SUCH VOCAL PERFORMANCES are integral to the atmosphere the pair conjure across ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’, one that is haunted and oppressive at times, particularly on ‘Petrified Forest’, one of so many stand-out songs on the record. Martin: “Atmosphere was treated as an instrument for the new songs. We’ve played with the Diamond Family Archive a few times now and the way they create noise or drones for their songs to live in was inspiring and not something we’d thought about much for the last record. In fact we had recorded ‘Petrified Forest’ for the last album, but in the end it just didn’t cut it. It wasn’t until that weird vocal loop was created that it transformed the whole feeling of the song. The atmosphere reinforces the sentiment in quite an intense way. We loved it so much that we used atmosphere loops on a few of the tracks.”

MUCH AS WE LOVED ‘O Hinterland’ – and we *really* loved it – ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’ is a big step up for The August List, produced by renowned local engineer Richard Neuberg, who has also recorded The Epstein’s and Kanadia’s albums, and featuring guest appearances from an array of the local musicians they’ve befriended over the past few years, including a mass vocal contribution from The Great Western Tears.

Kerraleigh: “We knew we wanted more of a band sound on this record and called in Tommy and Billy to play drums and bass. We worked on the tracks before recording to beat them into shape and find a style that mirrored what we had in our heads. We love collaborating and want musicians to come in and bring their own ideas to the table. The same with the production; we wanted Richard Neuberg to throw whatever he liked at it and we’d either love it or perhaps tell him to reign it in.” Martin: “We put the acoustic guitars through amps to give the louder tracks more guts and dirt and used more effects, but that still fitted with our style without us becoming a fully electric rock band. Ben Heaney came in to play violin on two tracks. On ‘Half Light’ he did a beautiful, uplifting folk part, and then on ‘Where Has All The Fire Gone?’ we pushed him to go full Warren Ellis with his electric Fender violin, which sounds amazing. Richard plays the musical saw; it sounds both old timey and like a theremin from space all at the same time.” The use of drones to enhance the atmosphere on tracks like ‘Wilderness’ is one of the keys to the album’s appeal. Kerraleigh: “That’s a layered Harmonium that Richard pitch shifted and then a harmonized vocal loop. It ramps up the progression of the song without overcrowding it with other instruments. The Omnicord is new

for this album. After seeing Sharon Van Etten use one, I went on the hunt and managed to get hold of one in great condition on Gumtree. It’s an electronic harp from the 80s in a wonderful shade of brown. One day we’ll use the inbuilt drum machine that sounds like a Casio keyboard having a bad day...” Another moment of magic comes right at the end of the album and the track ‘The Ballad of James Lucas and Betty Dupree’, a Lee Hazlewood & Nancy Sinatra-style duet which manages to capture a fine balance of desolation and euphoria of the sort you might get at a late night barroom lock in; the laughter of the crowd during and after the song sounds almost ghostly. Martin: “We wanted this song to be a kind of relief at the end of the album, an expel of energy after what proceeds it. We had The Great Western Tears singing and yelling with us and Richard recorded our conversations in and around takes and the laughing

“Ramshackle is a favourite word that we’ve never worked into a song and it does sum up our style to a certain extent,”

was mostly from a story Fern from the band told us, the subject of which cannot be repeated. . .” If The Great Western Tears are an example of local Americana at its most rustic and rootsy, their adventurous use of exotic instrumentation takes The August List well beyond their acoustic origins. The middle bit of ‘Connie Converse’ sounds like the main riff from ‘Enola Gay’ by OMD. Are they just a couple of closet synth pop kids at heart? Kerraleigh: “Ha ha! We were trying to get our Granddaddy vibe on there! It’s actually a Stylophone 2 making that noise. We used the original Stylophone on some of our previous recordings, so we thought we’d up the ante on this one. Turns out that the Stylophone 2 is basically a full analogue synth and not really a toy at all like the original!”

AS MUCH AS THE instrumentation, the voices and the production, the riches in ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’ come from the stories the band tell. The core theme of the album is isolation, inspired by accounts of hermits they read about, both real and fictional, and these cast glorious light and shadow on characters like Connie Converse and Old Rip. Kerraleigh: “Connie Converse was a singer/songwriter from the 1950s, but she was way ahead of her time. When it was all the rage to sing protest folk songs, she was singing about bumble bees, but she was a really great writer. She released one album that was ignored and then she just became disillusioned with everything

and disappeared. Still no one knows what became of her. Then in recent years artists rediscovered her record and all the songs that she wrote but never recorded have been covered on a tribute album.” Martin: “Both with that song and ‘Old Rip’, it’s taking a story, whether it’s fact or fiction, as in the case of Rip Van Winkle, and combining it in with our own existential woes. They’re like a framework that sets the theme of the song that we can then sing about what’s on our minds!” With isolation being a central theme of the album, if the pair had to be exiled to some wilderness, where would they most want to be? Kerraleigh: “I would need to be near the sea. I grew up in Dorset and always get fidgety if I go a while without seeing the ocean. So, maybe an island with a good forest.” Martin: “Yeah, a small island would be good cos it would have the sea, a beach, a forest and maybe a mountain, so it would be varied. Though I’d stay

up the mountain, as I hate the water and Kerraleigh would want to stay by the sea, so we’d have to meet for sing songs and coconuts in the forest, if that’s allowed in this scenario.”

WHEN WE LAST INTERVIEWED The August List, back in 2014, they were still finding their feet in Oxford, getting to know people, having initially struggled to find a home for their music on the local gig circuit; things, though, have long since changed for the better and many local musicians and journalists would point to them as their favourite local act. Do they feel part of the musical furniture here now, and what have been the best things and people they’ve encountered locally? Martin: “Oxford is great; everything seems to be structured so well, whether that’s by design or accident. From Truck Store to *Nightshift*, the venues to the promoters and BBC. Introducing, there is a whole network of support and we do feel really lucky to be a part of that. We were nervous when we first dipped our toe, but it has been seriously rewarding and inspiring.” Kerraleigh: “For us getting started it was *Nightshift*, Carl and Matt at Truck Store, Seb Reynolds at Pindrop and Tamara Parsons Baker who does All Tamara’s Parties who all pushed us to the fore. Now the list includes a lot of local musicians who we’ve met through gigs; Simon Bailey at Future Perfect, who’s starting to put local artists on as support for bigger touring acts, and meeting Richard Neuberg who knew all the obscure alt.country

acts we were going on about.”

ONE OF THE MOST exciting results of those friendships was the tour of the Netherlands the pair went on with The Epstein. Was it comforting to travel in the company of people they knew? Kerraleigh: “It was certainly cosy in the van! It was really cool to go with a band who knew the lay of the land for our first trip. Olly was really gracious it letting us tag along and use half his band for our own nefarious needs! Tommy and Billy are and will always be honorary members of The August List. We love playing with them and they’ll be on board for the launch shows, along with Ben and Richard. The future will depend on circumstances; we’ll continue to do duo shows and full band shows depending on vibes and timetables.” You’ve also broken into the London gig scene with Folkroom Records and Folklore promotions. Martin: “It’s quite daunting when you start looking for gigs in London because there are so many promoters and so many venues and it’s trying to find the ones that suite you and your music. Also it’s about trying to avoid the pay-to-play thing that still exists in places. Folklore and Folkroom have been great; they’re in it for all the right reasons and encompass all the styles we love, from folk and Americana to more alt.rock. They’re also cross-pollinating communities where the promoters and artists all help each other out.”

IF ISOLATION IS THE abiding theme of their new album, it seems that increasingly The August List are making more and more connections with the wider musical world. However far they get, however many records they sell, they more than deserve it. Here is a truly special band, one who have created an almost magical musical world for you to explore, but who still regard themselves as “ramshackle.” One final question about the new record. In ‘Connie Converse’ an old filing cabinet acts as a metaphor for the subject’s past, while previously, on ‘Wooden Trunk Blues’, The August List used a wooden trunk as a vessel for ridding themselves of all the junk of the past; if they could lock up three things in the world and throw them in the ocean, what would they be? “Donald Trump, *Mrs Brown’s Boys* and violent seagulls.” More room in the world for all the good things, then. Like The August List. Make room for them in your life.

‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’ is released on the 5th May. The August List play at The Cellar on Saturday 13th May with Vienna Ditto and Loud Mountains. Hear them at theaugustlist.bandcamp.com

RELEASED

GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS

‘A Murmur, A Charm, A Murder’ (Self released)

To stand out as a truly inventive and impressive post-rock band is a hard task. It’s all very well having a mass of reverb and delay pedals and alternating between quiet and loud every so often, but unless there’s some substance to the songwriting it’s easy to sound as if it’s all being done to a template. While Ghosts In The Photographs do liberally apply all the usual signifiers, they also have a strong sense of narrative to their compositions. More importantly they know when to cut it short and not wander off into indulgent dead ends. Utilising news reports and field recordings they carefully sculpt emotive and impactful songs that resonate long after the final notes of this EP ring out. ‘04201999 South Pierce Street’ is a subtle but effective opening. The music itself is barely there, undulating in the background with a



peculiar mix of calm and menace. Coupling the cries of crows (that’d be the murder of the EP’s title) with news reports from the Columbine School shootings (that’d be more murder) it’s a simple but effective opening, that segues into the much more open and direct thrum of ‘Emergency Friend’. If ‘South Pierce Street’ reflects the cool and deliberate actions of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, ‘Emergency Friend’ encapsulates

NIKKI LOY

‘Pivotal’ (Self released)

Nikki Loy’s Facebook status’s say things like “... dreaming of being a famous singer/songwriter,” but in reality, over the last few years, she’s more than done something about it, and as you read this she is out there tonight, and every night, in her self-made camper van, stealth camping, literally being a target for morons with BB guns or terrifyingly attempting to break in, after playing packed houses as a support to the likes of *X Factor* winner Sam Bailey and Westlife’s Shane Filan. It’s this you have to bear in mind when you listen to ‘Pivotal’, Loy’s third album, produced and recorded by George Shilling; that it’s going to be something she can cart around solo and fly on a rainy midweek night in front of an all-ages crowd in Aberdeen or Dartford or Swansea. Consequently songs here like ‘Under The Lightning’, ‘Closer’, and ‘Do That Again’ are labelled, unthreateningly, as soft rock and deal brilliantly in the feminine core of worded feelings, rather than any sky-punching falsetto hollering egotism, but equally there is an underlying strength to her take on every facet of love that, in the event of an all-in cage fight with contemporaries like Sharleen Spitari, Andrea Corr or Rumer, my money would be on Nikki to be the last one standing. Pivotal is a quality item that gets its point across without frightening the horses, dispatches from the solitary frontline of hard-knock showbiz, and as such will sell shoebox loads to departing crowds from Alhambras, cliff-top pavilions, concert halls, provincial theatres and corn exchanges across the island. Sometimes in life, as on Facebook, being well liked is better than being famous.

Paul Carrera

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something of the chaos of the events. ‘Work Our Bones To Dust’ initially attempts to calm things down with its precise and delicate clean guitar lines; it’s beautifully executed and sets up the explosion of noise that follows perfectly. Although it fits the quiet-loud-quiet norms of the genre, the band always hits the button at exactly the right time for maximum impact.

It’s on ‘WITNESS ME’ where they really hit their stride, however. A real slow burner that never really ignites, it gets its power from simply being allowed to shimmer and morph throughout its seven and a half minute duration. With no release valve deployed the pressure built up is palpable and thrilling. They close with ‘Song For Gene’, which for some reason heads off into jangling indie territory. They pull it back with an interlude in the shape of a spoken word eulogy for Gene, who was “not of this world” and suddenly shift through the gears with a riff that absolutely roars. There’s an array of emotions at play on this short but effective EP. There’s some murder some murmurs, and there’s plenty of charm too. Ghosts In The Photographs might well be a post-rock band, but they’re definitely not just another post-rock band.

Sam Shepherd

HOLLY REDFORD JONES

‘The Future’ (Self released)

In her accompanying email Holly Redford Jones says she agrees wholeheartedly with *Nightshift*’s preview piece for the recent Laura Marling gig, the crux of which was Marling is a far superior singer to the likes of Adele due to her ability and willingness to do understatement so well. Which is a little ironic given Holly’s tendency to go off on one at some point in most of the songs on this debut EP, her band hammering it out as she exercises her tonsils by way of some acrobatic “Woah woos” which are as understated as a heavily armed Graham Norton riding a rainbow coloured unicorn into the middle of a New Year’s Eve firework display.

It’s also unnecessary, since when she downplays her songs they’re so much more appealing. Holly possessed of a smoky, soulful voice that, on ‘Trainspotting’ leans towards Billie Holiday before she decides to take flight. EP title track ‘The Future’ and ‘One of The Things’ take things down a more rockabilly and old-time r’n’b route, revealing a rich voice that could hold its own against Imelda May. The latter is the best cut here since Holly keeps a lid on the histrionics, proving restraint works so much better, while allowing enough grit and dirt into the song to get us thinking of Amy Winehouse.

Alongside Marling, she quote Leonard Cohen among her influences, another master of understatement, and maybe Holly could take a leaf out of both their books when it comes to refusing to, in *X Factor* parlance, smash it.

Dale Kattack

ORDER#227

‘There’s No Rules’ (Rivet Gun)

Order#227 don’t go big on irony, preferring splenetic rage to get their message across, but the title of this new three-song EP’s outright refusal to obey the rules of grammar does raise a chuckle.

Chuckles are otherwise hard to find here, although refusal is writ large. “Gonna kill you because you’re different to me,” bellows singer Rabid (oh yes) on opener ‘Generation Genocide’ with racism firmly in his sights and a loaded barrel of rolling punk guitar noise in his battle-hardened hands. “The internet is a paedo playground,” he rages on ‘Paedo Playground’ as the band pillage Discharge, The Exploited and GBH (whose ‘City Baby Attacked By Rats’ seems to be the musical blueprint here), and, barely pausing for breath, we’re off fist fighting our way through ‘Technolijihad’, subtle political discourse left in the box in favour of hectoring sloganeering and straight-to-the-point hardcore punk belligerence.

Fight fire with fire, though; when we have an American president whose idea of policy rollout is tweeting a pack of ill thought out lies, a UK government whose chief foreign representative is a culturally ignorant oaf and a billionaire-owned media presenting outright prejudice as fact, maybe the best way forward isn’t reasoned debate but a fucking good metaphorical smack in the teeth. In which case, we’re more than happy to hold Order#227’s coat while they administer it.

Ian Chesterton

HALF DECENT

‘Still Getting By’ / ‘By My Side’ (Self released)

Like a rap take on *Child of Our Time*, Half Decent’s new single ‘Still Getting By’ is something of a concept song that was started when he was 21, revisited with a new verse when he hit 25 and finally finished this year when he celebrated his 30th. Hence the “21, 25, 30” chant at its core and the “Life begins at 30, or so they say” contemplation towards the end, which is both a self-affirming clarion call and a moment of self doubt.

The opening salvo is a look back at his birth and early life and the unlikely scenario of him being a rapper, while the middle third finds him making his name on the local scene. Finally he hits the big 3-0, realises here maybe isn’t the place to make it. Having grown up and made his name in Oxfordshire, Half Decent now lives in London, where he obviously feels this kind of music is better accepted.

As ever his rap style is an abrupt machine gun delivery that fits as many words as possible into every line and then adds a few more for good measure. Such a delivery can leave you a bit breathless at times but he never loses his flow and along with the well-orchestrated beats and back-up, it sounds like The Streets if they necked some serious amphetamines. Hopefully Oxfordshire’s loss can be London’s gain and the next verse finds him sat in a gold-plated swimming pool as his mid-thirties loom.

Sue Foreman

METAL HORSES

Darker

(Self released)

An album called ‘Darker’ that contains tracks with names like ‘Harm’, ‘Dirty World’ and ‘Fear’, is unlikely to be a 100%-Non-Stop-Party-Jamz kind of experience.

Such is life for Metal Horses, aka songwriter/vocalist/producer Paul Emery, here with associate Jon Hawes. This twelve-track collection of generally downtempo, largely moody synth-pop brings to mind late-80s Depeche Mode, a smattering of the more sedate side of Nine Inch Nails, a scattering of early Human League or Talk Talk’s refined electronic soundscapery, and a brief sojourn around the cassette-based electronica of early-80s minimal pioneers like Marc Barreca and Steve Roach.

Quite a slick selection of sounds to draw on, and although ‘Darker’ tends more towards the mainstream – Dave Gahan-esque vocal styles and largely traditional song structures – there are also moments of experiment that’ll tweak the diodes of fans of minimal electronica and ambient music. In particular, the closer ‘.’ – yes, just a full stop – is a short, enveloping arrangement of floating tones; ‘Prey’, meanwhile, has a stuttering electronic backdrop that brings to mind Cabaret Voltaire.

‘Darker’ is largely out of step with the contemporary music scene, but that’s not important. Stuck in an earlier time of electronic pop it may be, but it exists there with an uncomfortable approachability and a clear sense of self.

Simon Minter

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G I G G U I D E

SATURDAY 1st
SWITCH feat. CHASE’N’STATUS: O2 Academy – The barons of breakbeat hit town – *see main preview*
JIZZY PEARL’S LOVE/HATE + BULLETPROOF ROSE + HELL’S GAZELLES + BLACK BULLETS: The Bullingdon – OxRox host a rare visit the shire for ill-starred 90s hard rockers Love/Hate, still helmed by sole remaining original member, singer Jizzy Pearl, the band’s almost Spinal Tap-like story including a mock crucifixion of Pearl on the Hollywood sign. At their early-90s peak they toured with Ozzy Osbourne, AC/DC and Skid Row, but a volatile line-up and myriad record company fall-outs stymied any chance of wider commercial success. They’re joined tonight

Saturday 1st
SWITCH feat. CHASE’N’STATUS: O2 Academy
And you shall know them by the trail of collaborators... In the case of Chase & Status, it’s a list long enough to fill this entire feature and spans the spectrum of credibility from Cee Lo, Kano and Rihanna to Alexandra Burke, taking in Tinie Tempah, Plan B, Rita Ora and more recently Tom Grennan, Novelist and, erm, Slaves, with whom they recorded the excellent, hard-edged ‘Control’ last year. Having set out in 2003 with the aim of introducing dubstep influences into nu-skool breakbeats, Saul Milton and Will Kennard have slowly but surely moved into the mainstream, selling rather more than the few hundred records they originally hoped for. 2010’s ‘No More Idols’ went platinum, while 2013 follow-up ‘Brand New Machine’ similarly hit the Top 5, the album something of a tribute to 90s dance, particularly trip hop, UK garage, jungle and commercial house, stopping off for the odd diversion into hip hop, including a turn by Pusha T. The pair still talk up their underground credentials, but they can’t seem to stop making hits, either for themselves or for others, while also providing remixes for a similarly stellar cast of stars. As such it’s quite a coup for long-running local club night Switch to get them in and a sell out is guaranteed.



APRIL

by Cumbria’s classic hard rockers Bulletproof Rose and local melodic metal crew Hell’s Gazelles.
MARCH THE DESERT + CRIMSON TUSK: The Wheatsheaf – Heavy-duty psychedelic stoner-metal in the vein of Sabbath, Clutch, Led Zep and Mastadon from Reading/Brighton crew March the Desert, with support from local stoner/ blues beasts Crimson Tusk.
MAKING A SCENE: The Oxford Centre For The Deaf & Hard Of Hearing – Catweazle’s new monthly live music showcase hosts folk singer Megan Henwood; 60s-styled pop act Art Theefe; alt.country wizard Richard Neuberger; folk-pop singer Rosie Caldecott; traditional Zulu folk song crew Count Drachma and performance poet Alan Buckley.
WINTER MOUNTAIN: The Jericho Tavern – Intimate, reflective folk-pop and Americana from Cornish singer Joe Francis, in his Winter Mountain guise, touring his second album, ‘I Swear I Flew’, following supports to Cara Dillon, Guy Garvey, Richard Thompson and Seth Lakeman, who contributes fiddle to the new album.
FREERANGE: The Cellar – UK garage, grime and bassline club night with an emphasis on new underground tunes.
STICK IN THE WHEEL + JOHN SPIERS: Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington – Punk-charged, politically-spurred traditional folk from the true working class East End from Stick in the Wheel, on a mission to reclaim folk music from the cosy real ale crowd, injecting it with an abrasive cockney attitude. They’re joined by local folk hero Spiers, now back to going it alone in the wake of Bellowhead’s split, and a master of English folk song.
ROGER MCGOUGH & LITTLE MACHINE: The Cornerstone, Didcot – The veteran poet, broadcaster and playwright brings his poetry to musical life in the company of rock band Little Machine, renowned for providing soundtracks to the spoken word, McGough’s witty, surreal and melancholic beat-inspired verses, including his classic ‘Let Me Die a Youngman’s Death’ having seen him dubbed the godfather of modern British poetry.
BÖTLEY CRÜE: Tap Social Movement – New wave, Britpop and indie covers
SYNTRONIX: Fat Lil’s, Witney – 80s synth-pop hits, from Numan and Depeche Mode to Human League, Ultravox and OMD.
THE WIRE BIRDS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – Classic blues covers and original tunes.

SUNDAY 2nd
THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN O2 Academy – Brothers Jim and William Reid continue to douse

pop in petrol and dance to the flames – *see main preview*
BLOODSTOCK – METAL 2 THE MASSES: The Bullingdon – Latest heat of the battle of the bands competition to win a place at this summer’s Bloodstock, tonight with Black Candy; Mamzer; Violence is Golden; The Karybirds and The Guardian.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms – Weekly open session.
STRIPPED DOWN CADILLACS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5-7pm) – Blues covers.

MONDAY 3rd
FEEDER: O2 Academy – Grant Nicholas’ pop-friendly post-grunge rockers return to town on the back of their ninth studio album, ‘All Bright Electric’.
ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO: The Bullingdon – The Tex-Mex troubadour keeps on keeping on – *see main preview*
SPEEDBUGGY USA: The Library – California’s hard-gigging country rockers return to town for a low-key gig after their showing at last summer’s Halfway to 75 Festival, their southern states country inspired by Merle Haggard and Buck Owens, with its roots firmly in the Bakersfield Sound.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim – Weekly open session.

TUESDAY 4th
MALLORY KNOX + LONELY THE BRAVE + FATHERSON: O2 Academy – Big-boned alt. rocking from Cambridge’s Mallory Knox, out on tour to promote third album ‘Wired’. Support from their Cambridge neighbours Lonely the Brave, whose epic, urgent rock recalls Pearl Jam and Glasvegas at times and previous tour support to Lower Than Atlantis, Marmozets and Deaf Havana, plus heartfelt indie rockers Fatherson.
SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern – Weekly open mic session.
OSPREY & FRIENDS: St Aldates Tavern – Local bluesman Osprey hosts a fortnightly song and jam session.

WEDNESDAY 5th
GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS + KID KIN + TIGER MENDOZA + LEE RILEY: The Wheatsheaf – Cinematic instrumental post-rock in the vein of Mogwai, The Workhouse and Explosions in the Sky from Ghosts in the Photographs as they release their debut EP this month. They’re joined by post-rock and electronica wunderkind Kid Kin, dark, ambient industrial electronica and hip hop from Tiger Mendoza and ominous drones from Lee Riley.
GET LIT: The Cellar – Bass-centric dance night from the crew behind Deep Cover, with sets from Mai Gai, Zyklin Sound, Beanhead, Effi Brooks and more.
SOFAR SOUNDS: Venue TBC – The Oxford

branch of the global pop-up gig movement host another night of surprise sounds in a secret location. Join their mailing list to buy tickets and find out what’s in store two days beforehand.
THE TRISH ELPHINSTONE QUINTET with MIKE WILKINS: The White Hart, Wolvercote – Monthly residency from eclectic jazz saxophonist Trish Elphinstone and her band, the alto and soprano sax player’s much-travelled career bringing elements of pop, blues, hip hop and more to her music.

THURSDAY 6th
INDICA BLUES + K-LACURA + CHRONICLE + ROCK SOLID: The Bullingdon – Super-heavyweight stoner blues/metal from Indica Blues at Church of the Heavy, with monstrous thrash metal support from K-Lacura.
DEMOISELLES + NORTHERN SCARECROWS + HOLLY REDFORD

Sunday 2nd
THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN: O2 Academy
The mid-1980s were possibly pop music’s lowest ebb: safe, cynical, over-produced and dominated by a post-Band Aid hegemony. And then The Jesus & Mary Chain happened. In a blizzard of feedback, honeydripping melody and nihilism they helped reinvigorated the UK indie scene, inspired a new generation of kids too young to have lived through punk to pick up instruments and they caused the odd riot along the way. Formed by brothers Jim and William Reid in East Kilbride, and early on featuring Bobby Gillespie on a very basic drum kit, they took Phil Spector’s pop vision and slashed it to ribbons with The Velvet Underground’s drone noise and The Ramones’ all-out guitar blitz. No-one’s bettered them in the battered and bruised pop stakes to this day. They had great tunes too, from ‘Never Understand’ to ‘Some Candy Talking’, ‘April Skies’ and beyond and as they mellowed (slightly), their melodic side came more to the fore. ‘Psychocandy’ remains one of the most important indie records of the post-punk era and while the brothers’ personal relationship was as turbulent as those early singles and gigs, eventually causing the band to split in 1999, they made up and reformed in 2007, subsequently recruiting Ride’s Loz Colbert and fellow Oxford lad Mark Crozer into the band. Mark’s still there and the years have seen the Mary Chain’s legend remain solid. A new album, ‘Damage & Joy’, is a long way off those pop-noise explosions but a first ever chance to see the band in Oxford isn’t something to pass up.



JONES + SEMI URBAN FOX: The Jericho Tavern – It’s All About the Music showcase with soulful, melodic rockers Demoiselles alongside acoustic jazz, rockabilly and blues singer Holly Redford Jones.
KING TERRIBLE PRESENTS: The Cellar – Disco, rock, 80s, everything and anything else from the bag of the turntable terrors.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest running open session continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every week.
SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon – Weekly open mic session.
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure – Weekly acoustic open session.
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford – Open blues jam.

FRIDAY 7th
TIGERTAILZ + TERMINUS + NASTY HIGH: O2 Academy – Cardiff’s veteran glam-rockers return to town in their latest incarnation, singer Jay Pepper now the only original member in the line-up after the death of bassist Pepsi Tate from cancer in 2007 and drummer Ace Finchum’s departure in 2013. Having enjoyed chart success in the late-80s and early 90s, notably with Top 40 album ‘Bezerk’, they split in 1996, reforming in 2005 and subsequently releasing a slew of new albums as well as supporting Kiss’s Ace Frehley on tour.
BOSSAPHONIK with KONGO DIA NTOTILA: The Cellar – Dancefloor Latin, Afrobeat, global grooves, Balkan beats and nu jazz club night, hosted by DJ Dan Ofer and tonight featuring a live set from Kinshasa’s Mulele Matondo, whose group Kongo Dia Ntotila bring the dance sounds of The Democratic Republic of Congo to town, rumba, soukous, zouk and sakade infused by African jazz and some serious beats.
OXPHWARD – THE SELF LOVE SHOW: The Bullingdon – Burlesque and drag night with Morning Star, Carmen Mon Oxide, Crystal Beth and more.
THROWING SHAPES: The Bullingdon – New house and disco club night.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with PAPA NUI + FISHWIVES BROADSIDE + EARINADE + STEEVO NUISSIER: The Wheatsheaf – Klub Kak host their monthly mixed party bag of music. There’s funk-pop from Papa Nui, plus Bedford’s folk-punks Fishwives’ Broadside and caustic punk and guitar pop from Earinade providing the soundtrack for the night.
SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE AND SPOTLIGHT JAM: James Street Tavern – Sparky hosts his monthly bands and jam night, tonight with Glastonbury singer-songwriter Sean Miller, blues and boogie band Mudslide Morris & the Revelators, and The Talc Daemons.
EVERYDAY BANTER: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Rock covers, from AC/DC and Thin Lizzy to Foo Fighters and Green Day.

SATURDAY 8th
DONNINGTON DOORSTEP FUNDRAISER: Donnington Community Centre (2-10pm) – All-day fundraising gig for the Donnington Doorstep family centre, which is having its funding cut. A host of unplugged local acts perform across the day, including an afternoon



Monday 3rd
ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO: The Bullingdon
The world of music is awash with “cult artists”, the majority of whom are unlikely to, or simply undeserving of, selling more than a few hundred records in their time. But then there are the likes of San Antonio’s Alejandro Escovedo, who, you feel, has forever been one big breakthrough single away from becoming a major-league rock star. If nothing, else judge his reputation by those who contributed to a benefit album for him when, in 2003, he nearly died from Hepatitis-C. Steve Earl, Son Volt, Lucinda Williams, John Cale, Ian Hunter and The Jayhawks. Or the fact that Bruce Springsteen was only too keen to join Escovedo onstage for a few numbers at the Austin Music Awards. Like sometime co-writer Chuck Prophet, Escovedo, son of Mexican immigrants, started off playing in punk bands before moving into rootsier folk-rock and alt.country territory, starting with 1992’s solo debut, ‘Gravity’, through to his recent twelfth studio album, ‘Burn Something Beautiful’, co-written with REM’s Peter Dinklage and featuring guest turns from Sleater Kinney’s Corin Tucker and The Decemberists’ John Moen. He was named Artist Of The 90s by alt.country bible *No Depression* and along the way has also worked with everyone from Tony Visconti to Whiskeytown without ever breaking through into the mainstream. It’s unlikely that will ever happen but, now aged 66, Escovedo simply keeps on doing what he does best, rocking every bar that will host him, and living on the enduring love of that select group who recognise his talents.

set from Nick Cope. He’s joined by Osprey; The String Project; Country For Old Men; Delnavaz; Beard of Destiny; Mark Atherton & Friends; The Jesters; Franklin’s Tower and more.
FREERANGE ROOTS with ADDIS ABABA + FIELD FREQUENCE SOUND SYSTEM: The Bullingdon – Roots reggae and dub club night with one of Oxford’s oldest soundsystems, Addis Ababa.
AUDIOCHEMISTRY + STRIKE ONE + RAISED BY HYPOCRITES + FIELD OF GIANTS: The Cellar – Church of the Heavy show with Banbury rockers Audiochemistry alongside Didcot punk crew Strike One and Witney heavyweights Raised By Hypocrites.
AUDACITY LIVE + MANZER + SWITCH OUT + FOUNTAINS: The Wheatsheaf
TURF: The Cellar – House, disco, funk and soul club night.
BARE KNUCKLE PARADE + PEERLESS



Tuesday 11th

LAETITIA SADIER SOURCE ENSEMBLE: The Bullingdon

One of the most consistently exotic voices and constantly inventive personalities on the British music scene over the past 25 or so years, Laetitia Sadier will always be best known as lead singer with Stereolab, with whom she forged some of the most hypnotically beautiful music of the 90s and beyond – fusing Krautrock, French chanson and Velvet Underground drones – but she took her music to other new places in Monade, the band she formed with Pram’s Rosie Cuckston, and since Sterolab’s demise in 2009, four solo albums with various collaborators. Her most recent is ‘Finding Me Finding You’ with Source Ensemble, an album apparently inspired by “a mind’s eye envisaging geometric forms and their possible permutations,” which coming from most musicians would sound like pretentious toss, but from Sadier sounds par for her questing course. Featuring a duet with Hot Chip’s Alexis Taylor, the album’s a stately, restless shifting scenery of electronics, jazz stylings, prog-pop, maths wobbliness and chanson, that finds inspiration in Steve Reich and Penguin Café Orchestra among myriad others and at the heart of which is Laetitia’s warm, rich Gallic voice, a constant presence in everything she does. This is woven into complex choral performances based on arrangements for strings, while the catalogue of instrumentation ranges from cornet and flute to synths and treated guitars. It’s a characteristically sumptuous and immersive record; too wayward to suddenly springboard Sadier into the mainstream, but one that further confirms her place as one of the enduring stars of the musical underground.

PIRATES: The Old Fire Station – Rousing, rootsy drinking songs from Bath’s Bare Knuckle Parade, inspired by Gaslight Anthem and Augustines, plus local grogabilly indie faves Peerless Pirates, mixing Smiths-y guitar pop, rockabilly, spaghetti western soundtracks and romantic lyricism into a potent brew.

GEORGIE FAME: The Cornerstone, Didcot – The jazz and r’n’b legend’s first visit to the Shire since his 2014 showing at Cornbury Festival finds the veteran singer and pianist performing songs from his extensive, fifty-year career, including Number 1 hits ‘Yeh Yeh’, ‘Get Away’ and ‘The Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde’.

HI-ON MAIDEN: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Maiden tribute.

TOM IVEY: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5-7pm) – Blues and rock covers and originals.

SUNDAY 9th
TIGER MENDOZA + KID KIN + BREEZEWAX: The Jericho Tavern – Dark, industrial hip hop and electronic soundscaping from Tiger Mendoza, back in action after the release of their excellent ‘The Shadow’ album last year. Epic, elaborate instrumental post-rock from Kid Kin and electro-heavy hip hop from Breezewax in support.

THE DOMESTICS + GP + SCUMBAG: The Library – Free punk from Smash Disco, with a visit to town for Suffolk’s raging hardcore crew The Domestics, taking brutish inspiration from Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Discharge and Subhumans. Suitably furious d-beat support from GP – the soon to be renamed Girl Power – plus crust and sludge noise from Dore and Too Many Poets offshoot project Scumbag.

OSPREY + MOJO DEMON + MONKFISH + MAEVE BAYTON + PURPLE MAY: The Wheatsheaf (3:30-8:30pm) – Free afternoon of unplugged music in the downstairs bar hosted by Giddyup Music.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms

MONDAY 10th
GILES ROBSON: The Bullingdon – Haven Club return for the UK bluesman, discovered playing back-up to Muddy Waters’ son Mud Morganfield and rated as the best harmonica player on the European circuit, bringing a soulful blend of blues and r’n’b to town.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim ZAPPATIKIA + ACTION ZAPPA: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Double dose of Zappa tribute acts. How much more Zappa? None more Zappa!

TUESDAY 11th
LAETICIA SADIER’S SOURCE ENSEMBLE: The Bullingdon – Former Stereolab chanteuse brings her new band to town – *see main preview*

(HED)P.E.: O2 Academy – California’s G-Punk survivors hit town as part of a tour to promote last year’s ‘Forever’ album, their twelfth, singer Jahred Gomez now the only remaining original member.

INTRUSION: The Cellar – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night with Doktor Joy and Bookhouse keeping it dark on the decks.

SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 12th
PINS: The Bullingdon – Manchester’s Iggy-collaborating girl gang return to town – *see main preview*

THE ORIELLES: The Cellar – Indie like what they used to make from the Halifax sisters – *see main preview*

GET LIT: The Cellar – Bass-heavy club night.

THURSDAY 13th
STOLBY + CHALK + ROSE SEGAL + JUNIPER NIGHTS: The Bullingdon – Airy folk-pop from Stolby at tonight’s It’s All About the Music showcase.

FLIGHTS OF HELIOS: The Cellar – Spaced-out griefcore from the prog-tinged electro

rockers.

TASH LAKE + SUNBRUISE + NICK ORMROD + FASHION PROOF: The Jericho Tavern – Acoustic folk and atmospheric electronics from Falmouth singer-songwriter Tash Lake alongside psych-rock Cornish neighbours Sunbruisse.

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 14th
GREENSLEEVES 40th ANNIVERSARY TOUR with FREDDIE MCGREGOR + KING JAMMY + YELLOWMAN: O2 Academy – The legendary reggae and dancehall label brings a stellar cast of roster stars along for its anniversary tour – *see main preview*

SELF HELP + EASTER ISLAND STATUES + ASH LEWIS + THE SHADES: O2 Academy – It’s All About the Music local bands showcase at the O2 with trashy garage-rock and pop-punk people Self Help, plus 60s-style r’n’b in the vein

Wednesday 12th

THE ORIELLES: The Cellar

Halifax’s Orielles started to make a name for themselves with sets at Dot 2 Dot and Carefully Planned festivals, and a debut release on Oxford’s own Alcopop! label, but the indie underground really went wild for them last year when they released their debut EP ‘Jobin’ as a flexidisc with accompanying colouring book on the excellent Art Is Hard label. It was like the last 20 years of polished corporatism and homogenisation of indie pop had never happened, a playful DIY spirit was back. The record was a hazy, ramshackle tribute to Spector-esque 60s pop, 80s indie and 90s slacker rock, particularly Pavement and Steve Malkmus’s drawly, daydreamy idiosyncrasy, all wrapped up in sugary vocal harmonies, guitar fuzz and surf twang. Those vocal harmonies come courtesy of sisters Esme and Sid Hand-Halford who sound like they were born and raised on the West Coast rather than West Yorkshire and have brought the sunshine to God’s own county via their music, which, as well as The Shangri-La’s and Ronettes, touches base with The Flatmates, The Breeders and The Raveonettes at times. Tonight’s gig is part of their first major UK headline tour, which precedes a summer of festivals, including Green Man, and for everyone sick of how the word indie has been corrupted and rendered meaningless over the years, here’s a sweet, sweet reminder of how it should be done.



of The Yardbirds and early Stones from The Shades.

HAPPYNESS: The Cellar – Daydreamy slacker rock from Bermondsey’s Happyness, a charmingly ramshackle, romantic mix and match of Eels, Pavement, Yo la Tengo and Built to Spill, signed to Moshi Moshi on the back of their debut album, ‘Weird Little Birthday’.

THE BALKAN WANDERERS + THE SHAPES + GENEVIEVE MILES: The Bullingdon – Get yer dancing shoes on and a some gypsy fire in your bloodstream for Oxford’s finest eastern European folk-ska-pop party starters ahead of their headlining set on the Uncommon stage at Common People in May. They’ll be joined there by tonight’s support act, The Shapes, whose feelgood blend of 60s r’n’b, new wave and pop has drawn comparisons to Van Morrison, Tom Petty and The Beautiful South.

P.Y.T.: The Bullingdon – Disco, funk and soul club night.

STORYTELLER + COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN + MAD LARRY: The Wheatsheaf – Funk, rock and reggae fusion from local act Storyteller at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show. Support from bluesy country rockers Country For Old Men and classic r’n’b from Mad Larry.

HERRY & THE GONDOLAS: The Jericho Tavern – Lively folk-rock in the vein of Mumford & Sons, Ben Howard and Bear’s Den from Bristol three-piece Harry & the Gondolas at tonight’s Tigmus show, the band starting to make a name for themselves on the UK folk club and festival circuit.

FRAU DJS: The Cellar – Good Friday club night celebrating female voices in r’n’b, soul and pop from the 90s onwards, playing everything from Aaliyah to Whitney Houston, via Grimes, J-Lo, Lauryn Hill and Sugababes.

HELL’S GAZELLES + THE BLACK BULLETS + TRAUMA UK + MOLOTOV SEXBOMB: Fat Lil’s, Witney – High-octane hard rocking from local stars Hell’s Gazelles, mixing up Judas Priest, Guns’n’Roses and Led Zep into a heady brew at tonight’s OxRox show. They’re joined by Basingstoke’s tattoo-heavy rock’n’roll, punk and biker rock crew Black Bullets, and Witney punks Trauma UK.

SATURDAY 15th
TRUDY & THE ROMANCE: The Cellar – Bluesy 50s pop, swampy r’n’b, surf-rock and rockabilly from Liverpool trio on the rise Trudy & the Romance, recent tour support to The New Moon and championed by Steve Lamacq, who made them his artist of the week.

FLUID: The Cellar – Bassline, garage and grime club night with Murky Records’ Nadine, plus Masp and more.

OLD SKOOL OXFORD with 2 BAD MICE: The Bullingdon – Old skool club night with veteran hardcore/breakbeat crew 2 Bad Mice, instrumental in the genre’s eventual mutation into jungle in the 90s.

LET’S HEAR IT FOR THE GIRLS with THE KUT + JOANOVARC +

IDESTROY + HAXAN: The Wheatsheaf – OxRox host a quartet of all-female rock bands under the banner Let’s Hear It For The Girls. London’s The Kut top the bill with their scuzzy grunge, very much in the vein of Hole, L7 and Deftones; the band recently released new single ‘Bad Man’, having played at Download and Strummercamp festivals. They’re joined by anthemic rockers JoanovArc, fronted by sisters Sam and Sheller Walker, currently touring their debut album ‘Ride of Your Life’, having been championed by Alice Cooper on his Planet Rock show. There’s also grunge-pop from Bristol’s Idestroy, and classic hard rock from Cardiff’s Haxan.

LAST RITES + ECHO4FOUR + CRYSTALLITE + RATS EAT RATS: O2 Academy – Heavyweight local bands showcase from It’s All About the Music, with Sabbath-flavoured metallers Echo4Four, grungy stadium-rockers Crystallite and grunge newcomers Rats Eat Rats.

BIRDEATSBABY + CALLOW SAINTS + BROSEPHINE: The Jericho Tavern – Soulful, orchestral stadium rock from London/Brighton collective Birdeatsbaby, out on tour to promote their fourth album ‘Tanta Furia’.

SUNDAY 16th
DJ DEREK SWEET MEMORY SOUNDS with DON LETTS + LAID BLAK: The Bullingdon – A special tribute night to the late, great DJ Derek, Bristol’s legendary reggae DJ who died in 2015, a regular visitor to Oxford over the years, usually as a guest of Count Skylarkin, who hosts tonight’s show. The equally legendary DJ, musician and film maker Don Letts is on hand to man the decks, the man responsible more than most for bringing reggae to a wider UK audience, originally with his DJ sets at punk gigs in the 1970s and ever since, including his current stint as a 6Music presenter. There’s also a live set from Bristolian reggae, dancehall and hip hop collective Laid Blak. Skylarkin conducts proceedings and it’s a fitting tribute to his old friend.

DON’T BE AFRAID X LIVITY SOUND: The Cellar – Livity Sound’s Pev & Cowtown and Karen Gwyer play experimental techno alongside DBS boss Semtek, plus Hodge and Amii Little.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms

MONDAY 17th
OXFORD CLASSIC JAZZ: The Harcourt Arms

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim

TUESDAY 18th
LAURENCE JONES: The Bullingdon – Stratford’s rising young blues guitarist Laurence Jones returns town at the Haven Club, likened to Peter Green and Joe Bonamassa.

BILLY OCEAN: The New Theatre – Back in town after his sold out show at the O2 last year, the veteran pop and soul hitmaker

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Wednesday 12th

PINS: The Bullingdon

We’d imagine plenty of aspiring young rock things grow up wanting to be Iggy Pop. But while none of us can fill those particular boots, there’s always the possibility you might end up collaborating with the living legend. Which is what’s happened to Pins on their new single ‘Aggrophobe’, which finds the Manchester band’s old school indie noise backing those none-more-lived-in gravelly tones. Pins are as old school indie pop as old school indie pop gets, but when what passes for indie these days tends towards the 3rd rate Oasis boy-gang scheme of things, the old ways increasingly seem like the best way forward. Pins could never be accused of being a boy gang. They’re a girl gang for starters, schooled in the mid-80s ways of Velvet Underground and Phil Spector-inspired fuzz, drone and pop purity. The band’s early songs sounded like a generation-melding blend of Spacemen 3 and Dum Dum Girls, but on second album ‘Wild Nights’ they roped in Queens of the Stone Age producer Dave Catching, who sharpened up the pop side of their sound, the 60s-styled garage rock subsumed to pin-tight melodies, Faith Holgate’s vocals brought more to the fore, rather than sounding like they were coming at you from a mist-shrouded dream. They remain glumly exuberant though, and slightly lost in musical time, relying on simplicity, both musically and lyrically, rather than cutting edge technology or slick genre-blending. No, this is great, classic indie pop, perfect for fans of Best Coast, Allo Darlin’ or Vivian Girls. The best kind of pop, basically. If you don’t believe us, just ask Iggy.

heads out on tour, reliving hits like ‘Caribbean Queen’; ‘Get Out of My Car and Into My Dreams’, and ‘When the Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Going’.

SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

OSPREY & FRIENDS: St Aldates Tavern

WEDNESDAY 19th

THE MOONLANDINGZ: The Bullingdon – Imaginary band from other band’s video become real and eclipse band who imagined them – *see main preview*

VODUN + MASIRO + 1000 CHAINS + CRIMSON TUSK: The Wheatsheaf – Voodoo rocking from the warrior priestesses – *see main preview*

JOSH DOYLE: O2 Academy – Soulful acoustic blues from the Kent-born, Nashville-resident songsmith, out on tour.

ZAHED SULTAN: The Cellar – Atmospheric electronica, hip hop, trip hop and Arabic folk from Kuwaiti multi-media artist Sultan.

THURSDAY 20th

DAN OWEN: The Cellar – Gruff, soulful blues from the young singer on the rise, touring recent EP ‘Open Hands & Enemies’, with its single ‘Moonlight’.

LOUNGE KITTENS: The Bullingdon – Kitschy three-part harmony takes on heavy rock tunes from Southampton’s Lounge Kittens. Imagine The Andrews Sisters covering System of a Down, AC/DC, Marilyn Manson, Toto and Andrew WK? Well, now you don’t have to imagine anymore.

MY DIABLO + QUARTER MELON + FIREGAZERS: The Jericho Tavern – Titanic stoner metal from My Diablo, formed from the ashes of Mother Corona at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show, with support from spangly indie act Quartermelon and rockers Firegazers.

KING TERRIBLE: The Cellar

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 21st

OXFORD FOLK WEEKEND: Various venues – The sixth Oxford Folk Weekend kicks off, with live music, dance displays, ceilidhs, workshops and more around the city centre, including the Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre; The Quaker Meeting House; The Wesley Memorial Church; St Barnabas Church; The Pitt Rivers Museum and St Aldates Tavern. Headliners this year are Nancy Kerr and James Fagan, and they’ll be joined over the three days by Leverett; The Melrose Quartet; Ange Hardy; Jim Moray; Jackie Oates & Megan Henwood; John Spiers; Dan Walsh; Dipper Malkin; Jimmy Aldridge & Sid Goldsmith and The Emily Askew Band, while the local folk contingent is represented by Coldharbour; Edward Pope, White Horse Whisperers and Shivelight, among others. Full details at www.folkweekendoxford.co.uk.

PALACE: The Bullingdon – Brooding, rootsy blues-rock from London’s Palace, out on tour to promote debut album ‘So Long Forever’.

COAST 2 COAST + BETTER THAN NEVER: O2 Academy – Not, sadly, the cheesy early-80s ‘Do the Hucklebuck’ hitmakers, but a Birmingham pop-punk outfit, on tour to promote their new EP ‘The Length of a Smile’. Go along and shout for ‘Hucklebuck’ anyway. Bet they’ll bloody love that.

NEW STREET ADVENTURES: The Cellar – Soulful 80s-style pop from London’s New Street Adventures in a Blow Monkeys and Style Council vein, touring their new album ‘Stubborn Sons’ on Acid Jazz Records.

SOUL SESSIONS: The Cellar – Classic soul, funk and disco club night.

TERMINUS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Rock covers.

STEAMROLLER: The Queen’s Head, Horspath

SATURDAY 22nd

WILD WILLY BARRETT’S FRENCH CONNECTION: The Old Fire Station – Although best known as long-term musical foil to John Otway, Willy Barrett’s career has been

highly varied and characterised by a quality he rarely gets credit for: he’s recorded with Sly & Robbie and Ralph McTell and Bert Jansch; toured with U2, The Police and Madness and once turned down the chance to join The Rolling Stones. With his latest band he explores an exotic world of styles, mixing French chanson; Irish folk; New Orleans Cajun and gypsy dance, taking inspiration from The Pogues; Edith Piaf; Django Reinhardt; Stephane Grappelli and Tom Waits among others, backed by a band that features cellist and wife Mary Holland; uilleann pipe player John Devine, who’s performed for The Queen, and French singer Mary Holland. They’re touring new album ‘A Mange Tout Far’, Barrett’s exuberant humour never too far from the surface.

ELECTRIC SIX + NIGHTMARES FROM THE DISCOTEQUE: O2 Academy – Another year, another Electric Six tour, Dick Valentine’s garage-glam crew still doing the rounds over a decade on from hits ‘Gay Bar’ and ‘Danger! High Voltage’, playing it deliberately dumb with their tongue-in-cheek rock disco bombast.

RUSTY SHACKLE: The Cellar – Lively roots’n’roll from south Wales folk-rockers Rusty Shackle, touring third album ‘Dusk’ and back in Oxfordshire after playing last year’s Towersey Festival.

PITCHBLACK presents JAY CLARKE: The Cellar – Techno club night with Klockworks’ rising techno star Jay Clarke, whose made his name over the last year playing Berghain, Fabric, The Warehouse Project and Doornroosje.

OXFORD FOLK WEEKEND: Various venues – The folk weekend continues across the city, including today a special needs ceilidh.

WOLFBAIT: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Covers.

STEAMROLLER: Bletchingdon Sports & Social Club

SUNDAY 23rd

OXFORD FOLK WEEKEND: Various venues – Third and final day of the folk weekend.

BLOODSTOCK – METAL 2 THE MASSES: The Bullingdon – The battle of the bands competition to win a place at Bloodstock reaches the quarterfinal stage – among those who’ve made it this far are teenage melodic thrash crew The Reaper; malevolent thrash and hardcore beats K-Lacura and Chaos Theory.

SLATE HEARTS + RATS EAT RATS + HOLY MOMENTS + WOLFS: Fat Lils Witney – Goodly four-pack of grunge and punk noise at Fat Lil’s tonight with super shredded riffs and beats from Slate Hearts; grunge rocking from Rats Eat Rats, post-hardcore and pop-punk from Holy Moments and grungy garage rocking from Wolfs.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms

MONDAY 24th

BEN POOLE: The Bullingdon – A return to town for the rising UK blues-rock guitarist, drawing comparisons to Joe Satriani and Joe Bonamassa, winning fans in Bernie Torme and the late Gary Moore along the way.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim

TUESDAY 25th

HANNAH LOU CLARKE: The Cellar – Gorgeously introverted and downbeat garage folk-pop from former FOE frontwoman Hannah

Lou at tonight’s rescheduled show from last November, the singer and multi-instrumentalist layering her pure, plaintive voice over inventive, dissonant electronics and note-bending guitars on new EP, ‘The Heart and All Its Sins’.

STAIRCASE 11 presents DISCOGRAPHY: The Cellar – World disco and Italo house club night with Keep On, Iskander and Monotreme/Real Vita launching the new night.

SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 26th

SPECTRES + THE SHOTGUN SIX + YEAR OF THE KITE: The Cellar – Cathartic dark-psych and noise rock from Devon’s musically scabrous guitar destroyers, taking shoegaze on a dangerous, possibly destructive journey from Beta Band’s spaced-out harmony pop and Ride’s

Friday 14th

GREENSLEEVES 40th ANNIVERSARY TOUR: O2 Academy

Started by friends Chris Cracknell and Chris Sedgewick in an independent record shop in Ealing back in 1975, Greensleeves is arguably the most successful reggae and dancehall label ever. Over its 40 year existence the label has released pioneering records by Barrington Levy; Dennis Brown; Eek-a-Mouse; Gregory Isaacs; Shabba Ranks; Shaggy and Beenie Man, while its 2002 release ‘Diwali’ helped launch a resurgence in dancehall, featuring global hits by Sean Paul and Wayne Wonder. Greensleeves now boasts the largest catalogue of reggae music in the world. How to celebrate it’s big four-O? Host a tour featuring some of Jamaica’s biggest reggae, dancehall and dub stars, including the irrepressible **Yellowman**, one of the first global dancehall stars, making his name in the 80s playing his local soundsystems and becoming one of the first Jamaican stars to crossover into the hip hop crowd, his rhythms used by KRS-1, Tupac and Notorious B.I.G. among others. Becoming more conscious in the 90s, he’s become a philosophical touchstone for the genre, denouncing violence, homophobia and sexism, while remaining a cult hero. He’s joined by **Freddy McGregor**, a singer and producer with over 50 years of music making under his belt, taking in ska, rocksteady and lovers rock as well as dancehall and boasts a monstrous back catalogue, plus **King Jammy**, dub remixer and record producer who was responsible for Black Uhuru’s 1977 debut and more recently records for Sizzla. That’s a serious A-List cast there, and there’s more names to be added. Gonna be the best reggae party Oxford will see this year.



exhilarating shoegaze blizzard through Viet Cong’s white noise scree and into A Place To Bury Strangers’ all-out sonic warfare. Their new single is a called ‘Threshing Machine’ and it’s gonna hurt. Heavy-duty psych-rock from The Shotgun Six in support.

HODAD + HOLY MOMENTS + WOLFS: The Wheatsheaf – Raw, propulsive alt.rock and punk from Cardiff’s Hodad, plus melodic post-hardcore from Holy Moments and grungy garage rock from Wolfs.

OXFORD JAZZ KITCHEN JAM SESSION: The White Hart, Wolvercote

THURSDAY 27th

WHILE SHE SLEEPS + IN HEARTS WAKE + FIZZY BLOOD: O2 Academy – Sheffield’s velocity metalcore crew hit the road again after a joint headline tour with Cancer Bats, touring their third full-length album ‘You Are We’, the band, who won Best Newcomers at the *Kerrang!* Awards in 2012, making up for lost time on the touring front, having undergone an enforced lay-off previously when singer Lawrence Taylor underwent throat surgery.

RAN KAN KAN: O2 Academy – Benefit gig for this year’s Cowley Road Kan Carnival with local Cubanista big band Ran Kan Kan playing Son Montuno and mambo classics.

JAWS: The Bullingdon – Back in the neighbourhood after their showing at Truck last summer, Birmingham’s now slimmed-down Jaws temper their Madchester grooves with considered shoegaze and Foals-y fidget-pop.

ERRATICA: REMNANTS: The Old Fire Station – Complex, harrowing folk/electronica multi-media opera from director Patrick Eakin Young and based on the story The Stone Fields by Courtney Angela Brkic about one woman’s experience of the aftermath of the Srebrenica war crimes, mixing traditional Balkan folk music with electronic music, vocal narratives and documentary footage. Presented by Oxford Contemporary Music.

JORDAN HERBERT: The Jericho Tavern – Hip hop-influenced soul-pop from Northampton singer Jordan Herbert at tonight’s Tigmus gig, out on tour to promote new EP ‘Just Recently’.

RETROGRADE: The Cellar – House, techno, dub and disco club night.

PAUL MCCLURE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Traditional folk and Americana from Rutland troubadour McClure, back in the Shire after shows with Police Dog Hogan and at Wychwood Folk Club.

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 28th

TINARIWEN + ART THEEFE: O2 Academy – Mali’s warrior musicians bring their psychedelic Tuareg trip back to town – *see main preview*

FABIO & GROOVERIDER: O2 Academy – Celebrating 25 years of drum&bass with the veteran Radio 1 DJ team.

DAISY RODGERS MUSIC with LOWWS + KONE + 31HOURS: The Bullingdon – Launch gig for local indie starlets Lowws’ new



Wednesday 19th

VODUN / MASIRO / 1000 CHAINS / CRIMSON TUSK: The Wheatsheaf

If spectacle and theatre in rock music is in short supply these days, no-one told Vodun. Last year’s album ‘Possession’, was a heady mix of psychedelic groove rock, sludge, Afro-futurism and a whole lotta soul. Basing their entire existence on the ancient west African religion of the same name Vodun go the whole concept album hog on ‘Possession’ while sounding something like Aretha Franklin fronting a tribal Royal Blood on a mescaline trip, or maybe Slayer fused with Black Box at that point where 90s rave met thrash metal. Warrior priestess singer Chantal Brown has one hell of a set of pipes on her, and anyone who remembers her fronting expansive soul-rock crew Do Me Bad Things back in the mid-noughties, as well as providing backing vocals for chamber arkestra Chrome Hoof, will remember just how powerful a soul voice she has. Local heavyweight support at tonight’s Buried in Smoke show comes from visceral math-core merchants Masiro, eclectic melodic metallers 1000 Chains, mixing NWOBH, classic thrash, tech-metal and good old fashioned hard rock, plus bluesy stoner rockers Crimson Tusk, very much in the Clutch/Desert Storm mould.

EP, the band’s fidgety electro-pop drawing comparisons with Foals, Everything Everything and Wild Beasts. They’re joined for tonight’s Daisy Rodgers show by stark, understated post-punk people Kone, and atmospheric electro-indie outfit 31Hours.

TROPICAL POPSICLE: The Bullingdon – Tropical house club night.

ELECTRO SWING with DUTTY MOONSHINE: The Cellar – Big band swing, bass and 1930s dance with Bristol/Oxford act Dutty Moonshine, helmed by DJ and producer Michael Rack, mixing classic swing and Vaudeville with garage, grime, funk and drum&bass.

RESTRUCTURE + DAISY + JUNIPER NIGHTS: The Wheatsheaf – Rap, rave and punk mash-up from Restructure, taking golden age hip hop into 90s acid house and street punk in a lo-fi style. Emo-ish pop-punk from Daisy in support.

KADIA + THE WHITE HORSE



Wednesday 19th

THE MOONLANDINGZ: The Bullingdon

When is a band not a band but then becomes a band and the band outgrows the story that saw them come into being? When the band is The Moonlandingz. Who are they? Well, they were, originally, an imagined band being stalked by Maxine Peake in a video by Sheffield electro band The Eccentric Research Council for an album called ‘Johnny Rocket, Narcissist & Music Machine... I’m Your Biggest Fan’, about a smalltown Yorkshire glam rocker, who was played by Lias Saoudi from Fat White Family for the purpose of the video. Keeping up? Turns out the imaginary Moonlandingz’ music (described as “cosmic synth krautabilly meets Joe Meek-style pop”) was actually bloody great and got picked up by various 6Music DJs. And now they’re a real band, who go on real tours and record real albums – their latest, ‘Interplanetary Class Champions’, was produced by Sean Lennon and features contributions from Yoko Ono, Slow Club’s Rebecca Taylor and, erm, the bloke who was the cowboy in Village People. It’s all a bit meta, and proves that not only does real life imitate art, but truth can be stranger than fiction. So, anyway, live they’re as louche and feral as you imagine any band featuring two members of the Fat Whites could be (Bully staff might remember that band’s last visit to the venue while going into a cold sweat), somewhere between The Cramps, Iggy Pop, Suicide, The Velvet Underground and Willie Nelson. The story is great, but you don’t have to understand it; all you need to understand is The Moonlandingz are way, way better than most ‘real’ bands you’ll see this year.

WHISPERERS: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Traditional English folk from the Dorset trio. THE PONDEROSA ACES + AGS CONNOLLY: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Californian honky tonk and outlaw country from The Ponderosa Aces, over for their first ever UK tour and ably supported tonight by recent *Nightshift* cover star Ags Connolly.

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

SATURDAY 29th

RATBOY: O2 Academy – Back in town after last September’s sold out show here, Chelmsford lad Jordan Candy’s rise and rise continues as he document teenage Essex life in a post-Libertines hip hop style. There’s something irresistible about his blokey, bullish, cheeky-scalli pop/punk/rap mash-up and say-it-as-you-see-it stories (typical title: ‘Fake ID’) that career off the stage like a playground bundle involving EMF, Arctic Monkeys and The Beastie Boys, but provoked in the first place by Jamie T. CHASING DAYLIGHT + EARINADE + BEN CHAMPION + CORA PEARL: O2 Academy – Local Britpoppers Chasing Daylight, inspired by The Beatles and Kinks as well as The Blockheads, Dr Feelgood and Oasis, and, so far as we know, the only Oxford band with their own brand of marmalade, play their biggest hometown headline show to date, with support from Earinade – the new band fronted by former ATL? man Mac and joined by assorted members and ex-members of The Candyskins, The Daisies, Les Clochards and more.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with RATS EAT RATS + MANU LOUIS + DEATH OF THE MAIDEN: The Wheatsheaf – Characteristically mixed bag of sounds at this month’s GTI with local grunge newcomers Rats Eat Rats taking Nirvana and Smashing Pumpkins for a breakneck ride through the punk and metal suburbs. Quality contrasting music from prolific Berlin-based composer and performer Manu Louis, whose mix of pop, jazz, electronica and 20th Century classical music makes for an eclectic form of experimental instrumental music. Tamara Parsons-Baker’s self-described gothy burlesque folk band Death of the Maiden open the show in style. THE CORSAIRS + GHOUL + VIOLENT CHIMES + COMPULSORY PRIMAL RESPONSE: The Cellar – Punkolympia show with psychobilly and punk crew The Corsairs, plus death-rockers Ghoul. MOVE: The Cellar – UK bass, grime and garage club night.

RAWDIO NATTY DUB TAKEOVER: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night Rawdio hands over the decks to dubmeister Natty Dub. KID CALICO & THE ASTRAL PONIES + LINN JOHANSSON & FRIENDS + HELEN & CEDRIC: The Harcourt Arms – Roots rocking, blues and honky tonk in the vein of The E Street Band, Dr John, Jonathan Richman and Tom Waits from Wessex’s Kid Calico at tonight’s free show.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Whitehouse – Lively rocking blues from the local veteran. THE STANDARD: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Party covers. STEAMROLLER: Millennium Hall, Horton-cum-Studley

SUNDAY 30th

CHRON GOBLIN + QUEASY: The Wheatsheaf – Southern and desert rock from

Calgary’s Chrongoblin, over in the UK to promote third album ‘Backwater’. MARK ATHERTON & FRIENDS + ADAM & ELVIS + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE + MARK SOLLIS + MIKE HYDER: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm) – Klub Kakofanney host an afternoon of free unplugged live music in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar. SIMPLE MAY MORNING PARTY: The Bullingdon – May Eve house party from the long running club night. MAYDAY RAVE: The Cellar – Disco, house and jungle into May morning with Luv*Jam, Ed Steele and more. MAYDAY FOR THE PEOPLE: The Jam Factory – Count Skylarkin and Tony ‘Naked’ Nanton join forces to ring in May Morning with marathon feast of soul, funk, reggae and disco. HARRY PANE: The Mad Hatter – Northamptonshire folk/blues/soul singer-songwriter Harry Pane tours new EP ‘The Wild Winds’ OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms

Friday 28th

TINARIWEN / ART THEEFE: O2 Academy

Plenty of rock bands might think they’re hard, but they’d fall to the floor weeping like babies if they had to face the hardships Mali’s Tinariwen have gone through to get to their current level of global recognition. They are a collective – not really a band – born out of the nomadic Tuareg people’s battle for independence and come from the deserts that are ruled by rebel warlords. They’re tough old cookies for sure. Their music, by contrast, is a warm, psychedelic mix of ancient desert roots music and western blues and rock, with nods to Hendrix, Fleetwood Mac, Santana and King Tubby. Having attracted attention from the outside world with their appearances at the Mali desert festival, they released their debut album proper, ‘Radio Tisdas Sessions’ in 2001 and played at WOMAD Festival. Over the years the collective’s music has leaned further and further into classic British and American blues, until 2009’s ‘Imidi: Companions’, where they returned to their roots, all spaced-out grooves, drones, chants and ululations that capture the eerie atmosphere of their homeland. Given the nebulous state of the group, what you see on the night dictates what you here, although with founder Ibrahim Ag Alhabib (who made his first guitar out of a tin can, a stick and bicycle brake wire) present, they’ll hopefully be at their psychedelic best. Support comes from local 60s-inspired trio Art Theefe, led by Catweazle Club host Matt Sage.



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LAURA MARLING

O2 Academy

“A shifty, fickle object is woman, always,” reads the translated Virgil quote, from which Laura Marling takes the title of her sixth album. Takes it and twists it, from its original pejorative intent, to the more empowering assertion ‘Semper Femina’: ‘always woman’. And the album appears almost in full tonight, the first five songs presented verbatim – though broader and fuller due to the backing of a four-piece band and backing singers. The sultry bassline of opener ‘Soothing’ blends into a gently lilting guitar refrain in ‘The

Valley’ – a yearning paean to a distant ‘she’. Marling stops here to briefly introduce herself; “Hello, my name is Laura, are you hot?” before launching, solo, into ‘Wild Fire’, its slow acoustic preamble offering something of a glance back to her folk roots, until the lazy ascent of ‘Don’t Pass Me By’ climbs back up to brooding ensemble. There’s a stark contrast when she breaks the run of new tracks to play ‘What He Wrote’, from ‘I Speak Because I Can’; it sounds more tentative, less steady. Unaccompanied, her voice spills

self-consciously into the space her band has vacated. Perhaps in the context of a set of songs about women, this one, written for a man, stands unstable. She continues solo for a while, though on ‘Noel’ – another new one – the guitar sounds more rounded, the vocals more resonant: “You sit so well, a thousand artists’ muse, but you’ll be anything you choose,” she sings to the fictional Noel, and, conceivably, herself. ‘Daisy’ from 2015’s ‘Short Movie’ sees her backing singers return to the stage, layering

incremental harmonies underneath Marling’s driving vocal, and the rest of the band come back for ‘Sophia’, the song’s slight country twang accentuated by the addition of a 12-string guitar and prominent walking bassline. She finishes with a rousing rendition of ‘Rambling Man’, which somehow both fits and doesn’t, the music building to a perfect closing cacophony, but the lyrics so jarringly at odds with her current rhetoric. “It’s hard to accept yourself as someone you don’t desire, as someone you don’t want to be,” she sings, having come across this evening as more composed and resolutely confident in her identity than ever before. *Caroline Corke*

JOSEFIN ÖHRN + THE LIBERATION / CHRIS BARKER

The Bullingdon

Chris Barker is without his keyboard player tonight, which apparently takes much of his music’s intensity away, but he’s ably abetted tonight by well-travelled local drummer Mike Monaghan, plus a certain Willie J Healey on bass. The stripped-back set-up reveals a singer who shares with Healey an easy-going approach to songwriting, an early funk-rock lope making way for a set that leans closer to Elliot Smith and at its best, reminds us of John Grant’s doleful but slightly arch approach to roots rocking. There’s nothing easy, doleful or arch about Josefin Öhrn and her band. This is a serious trip and no-one’s getting off until it’s completed its orbit. Backed by an expansive five-piece band and some seriously trippy visuals, tonight’s show has the feel of an Exploding Plastic Inevitable happening, a wholly immersive audio-visual experience that it’s easy to lose your mind in. Most of the set is a straight run through last year’s superb ‘Mirage’ album, opener ‘The State (I’m In)’ a roiling, droning, pure-phase sonic battle between Stereolab and Spacemen 3, while new single ‘Sister Green

Eyes’ is a sumptuous, motorik lullaby that takes The Velvet Underground’s ‘All Tomorrow’s Parties’ for a wander through a deep, dark narcotic haze. ‘Endless Ocean’ could be a Portishead reimagining of ‘Dark Side of the Moon’, but it’s that point where the tripped-out ‘In Madrid’ morphs into the scouring ‘Rainbow Lollipop’ that provides the night’s highest point, the band, drowned in psychedelic visuals, becoming mere conduits for a sound that’s vast and dense enough to swallow galaxies. Öhrn herself is an intense presence and rarely communicates between songs, but it’s hardly surprising when she’s so intently wrapped up in the music. As the band move away from ‘Mirage’ and into a clutch of tracks from previous album ‘Horse Dance’, the set becomes a battle to keep the intensity up as songs become more urgent, but as ‘Dunes’ pulses ominously towards its close and dissipates into the ether as the swirling, flickering visuals fade to black, you know you’ve just been taken to somewhere very special indeed. *Dale Kattack*

ASHANTI

O2 Academy

The O2 Academy is transformed tonight, from serious, po-faced indie nod-along land to wannabe princess of hip hop heaven, with the queen being Ashanti herself. After a sketchy warm up by a DJ with a MacBook, Ashanti appears, amidst a backdrop of Google images of her long career. After an ill-fated deal with P Diddy, it was at aged just 16 that she signed to Murder Inc. She had been writing songs since she was 13, and was the writer behind hits such as J Lo’s ‘Ain’t It Funny’ as well as many of the songs that we hear tonight. We are treated to a medley mash up from her eponymous 2002 Grammy-winning album, with aesthetically pleasing dancers supporting her every move. Tracks like ‘Happy’, ‘Rock Wit U’ and the smash hit ‘Foolish’ go down a storm amidst the bizarre hen night atmosphere. Number one hits ‘What’s Luv’ and ‘Always on Time’ with Ja Rule cemented her status as the “Princess of Hip-Hop” and despite being a leading songwriter, always played second fiddle to such thug life heavyweights. Regardless, the tracks sound as energetic as ever

tonight and she is clearly a master of stagecraft among a sea of drunk nostalgics. Newer songs, ‘The Way That I Love You’ and ‘The Woman You Love’, highlight her capable vocal acrobatics, which are somewhat detracted from by the flashy stage show and dodgy sound. The title track from 2014’s ‘Braveheart’ is thankfully, not a homage to Mel Gibson, but a power anthem about the survival of a relationship against all odds. The predominantly female audience love it and her presence in undeniable. ‘Count’ could easily be on a current Beyoncé or Nicki Minaj record. Considering Ashanti is the second artist ever to have her first three chart entries in the top ten of the Billboard charts, a feat only accomplished previously by The Beatles, she is an important voice with a talent somewhat overshadowed by the drama surrounding collaborators Ja Rule and Notorious BIG. The ladies of Oxford have certainly enjoyed themselves tonight, and it would be great to see her play a more central role in the current hip hop world. *Karlyn King*

SUPERFOOD / KING NUN

O2 Academy

Youthful Londoners King Nun are wild, spiky and generally a lot of fun. Last November’s ‘Tulip’ single granted them some well-deserved exposure with its two minutes and eighteen seconds of manic teenage guitar-fuelled abandon. Imagine a younger, less disciplined Dinosaur Jr and you’re not far from what to expect. The drummer attacks his cymbals and floor tom with relentless energy while the guitars race up and down scales, low grungy runs meeting screeching high-end motifs that make for an entirely satisfying experience. The singer’s endearing Phil Daniels-style vocal delivery lends just the right amount of big city edge; all they need now are some really killer songs. Three years ago Superfood won over many at Truck with their 60s harmonies and shuffling Super Furry-like songs. This year sees them dropping a new single, ‘Double Dutch’, heavy on analogue-style electronic bass and multi-layered vocals that veers towards psychedelia. Tonight they’re a less subtle affair; that familiar shuffling beat is in evidence but the guitars are angular

and almost discordant, in a nod to 80s indie. ‘Lily For Your Pad To Rest On’ is still daftly likeable, even in stripped-down form without the recorded version’s banjo and treated vocals. New material sounds like the apple hasn’t fallen far from the tree, though further recorded material will reveal the future of the intermittent Jurassic 5-type 90s hip-hop elements. All seems to be going well thirty minutes into the set when they suddenly make for the exit. Catching up with guitarist Ryan Malcolm he tells me it’s their first gig in two years and they’re a bit nervous, plus the new bassist and drummer, only two months in the job, haven’t learned all the songs yet. This explains a few things; the recently low profile and why tonight they come across as a little tentative and less comfortable than at previous shows, as though they’re feeling their way into the new line-up. It does raise the question of why they’re just setting out on a 17-date tour but the modest crowd look happy enough, and maybe that rhythm section are quick learners. *Art Lagun*

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TALL SHIPS / WAYLOR

The Bullingdon

Last time I saw Waylor it was just Dry The River’s Matt Taylor on his own, opening for an acoustic act. In that context I wasn’t quite sold. Tonight, though, is a much changed affair; Taylor is now accompanied by a full band which gives much needed context to the arrangements I struggled with when unaccompanied.

A mixture of Talking Heads, 80s power-pop, and Mac Demarco slacker indie with noisy guitar, slick r’n’b rhythms, and heavily effected vocals pepper most of their songs. This broadness of influence is what I found jarring without a proper rhythm section, and written down it might sound pretty scattershot, but with the energy of a live band it’s surprisingly cohesive and compelling. All the ideas get enough breathing space so as to not detract from the core hooks, but add enough to make Waylor a pretty damn good indie pop act in the making.

Brighton alt.rockersTall Ships seem to have embraced their upbeat, enthusiastic side and put aside the layered mathy influences that punctuated debut album ‘Everything Touching’. Everything

tonight is high tempo, verse-chorus-verse rock, with almost no instrumental sections. Without wishing to sound disparaging I feel caught off guard. A band has seemingly reinvented itself, or at least taken a drastic change in direction without sending me some kind of prior warning; was there not a pamphlet, or a polite notice in *Math Music Monthly*?

‘Ode to Ancestors’ – the heart wrenching centrepiece of their previous album – seems now to be the launching pad for their new material; there are traits of Bon Iver and recent Biffy Clyro shining through; they’re seeking a bigger audience, one that will sing along to a catchy chorus, and if this is their opening salvo they certainly deserve to find that crowd.

Older songs ‘T=0’ and ‘Plate Tectonics’ do come towards the end of their set, but they feel more like appeasement than truly connected parts of a whole set. Tall Ships were a great band and they still are. I don’t know if I shall follow them as closely but I’m sure plenty of others now will.

Matthew Chapman Jones

IDLES / LICE

The Bullingdon

Lice’s singer looks like he should be captaining a *University Challenge* team, while their bassist could be pumping gas on a Kansas freeway or humping gear for Ted Nugent and we wonder how on earth they ever met. We’re glad they did because once the studious frontman casts off his sweater and becomes a sullen, steely-eyed dervish and the bassist casts off his Stetson and strips to the waist, Lice are a juddering, squalling treat, all Bo Diddley riffs, surf twang and tightly-wound chaos, like an early-80s incarnation of The Fall locked in nervous, mortal combat with Gallon Drunk. Exactly the kind of mangled mess we love. There’s nothing as impotent as a bellicose blowhard, which is why the best angry music is either brilliantly clever (like Fucked Up) or comes with a healthy dose of humour. No-one could accuse Idles of being po-faced as they joke with the lively throng in front of the stage, passing a bottle of Buckfast around the crowd and trading barbed insults with each other, while puncturing artistic pretension on the riotous ‘Stendhal Syndrome’ (“Did you see that painting what Rothko did? Looks like it was painted by a two year old kid”), and if heavily-tattooed, potty-mouthed frontman Joe Talbot often looks and sounds like he’s ready and willing to tear some unfortunate to shreds should

his mood turn, it’s obvious he and the rest of the Bristol quintet are having the time of their lives up on stage, fully aware their time has come (last time in town they played to 30 people; tonight the venue is packed and new album ‘Brutalism’ is set to feature in every end of year chart going) and that it might just as quickly go again so best make the most of it. While recent singles ‘Well Done’ and ‘Stendhal Syndrome’ are almost nonsense punk singalongs, much of the time Idles are a far heavier, darker proposition, cancer and depression infecting songs like ‘1049 Gotho’ while set highlight ‘Divide & Conquer’, a stunning, brutish tribal dirge worthy of Killing Joke at their most muscular, is a lyrically minimalist growl of disgust at the dismantling of the NHS.

There’s a genuine frisson about tonight’s gig, as if it could descend into real violence at any moment, but Idles revel in that edge-of-chaos atmosphere, spitting venom at selfies while namechecking Mary Berry as the set tumbles to a tumultuous climax and the band exit the stage amid a mosh of invading bodies, smiles as wide as the river Avon. This is their moment and in the moment is where they’re living. Punk’s not dead; it’s very much alive, drunk and having an absolute riot.

Dale Kattack

DUTCH UNCLES

The Cellar

A ‘Dutch Uncle’ is apparently North American slang for a person giving firm but benevolent advice and the band of that name were clearly visited by such a muse in advance of their advertised concert at the O2, suddenly announcing a switch to the much homelier confines of the Cellar a few days before the gig.

It’s a decision that is fully vindicated as the quintet emerge to a packed house following sets from Her’s and promising local baggie revivalists, 31Hours, singer Duncan Wallis not scared to recreate the slick dance moves of another musical denizen of the English Northwest’s suburbs, Rick Astley and engaging the audience in good natured discussion between songs plucked from across their five album career.

Nor are the late 1980s parallels absent when it comes to the music. The band occasionally funk out in the style of Hall & Oates or Red Box, percussion and lush keyboards central tenets of their musical world view, Wallis’s falsetto and

oblique lyrics overlaying the whole. From the description so far, you’ll probably think they’ll be awful – but that’s emphatically not the case as they race through a set of intelligent, literate pop.

New album ‘Big Balloon’ is naturally prominent and it’s a record that has maintained their high standards. The title track stomps along, while each song is permeated by the irresistible rhythm of their trademark glockenspiel, ‘Overton’ and ‘Streetlight’ standing out especially well on this outing while previous classics, including career high point ‘Fester’, get the audience jiving. ‘Flexxin’ is another cracker, a rich electronic pulse driving the tune as Wallis admits to ripping off David Sylvian having earlier promised that the gig would be “more digestible” from now on after a double album track salvo gets proceedings underway. Not a bit of it – for this is a group that deserve to be far better known and successful.

Rob Langham


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LOWWS

Who are they?

Oxford indie/electro-pop band Lowws – previously known as The Sea The Sea – are Danny Crane-Brewery (*guitar*); Dave Freeman (*guitar*); Matthew Clarkson (*vocals*); Marcus Breese (*bass*); Simon Talbot (*drums*), and Tim Roberts (*keys*). Danny and Dave used to play in Vixens, while Tim has played with Witches and Polysoul. The band has gigged in Oxford, Bristol and London and filmed two music videos. Their debut release ‘Captives’ was put out by Plastic Fish Records in 2014, while new EP ‘Okami’ is available from their Bandcamp page as a “pay what you like” download.

What do they sound like?

Variously twinkling, pensive, atmospheric and danceable electro-indie funk-pop, light on its pins, airy and melodic, machine driven and highly rhythmic but vocally emotive. Lowws sit in suitably fidgety fashion alongside the likes of Everything Everything and The Maccabees, with a shiny gloss pop coat.

What inspires them?

“The music we hear, the people we meet, and the world around us. We’re fortunate to be friends with a number of creative types in Oxford and it’s a really supportive place for people who are attempting to create something new.”

Career highlight so far:

“Oxjam 2016. Playing with so many other great bands and musicians was awesome. We got a great response from the crowd and played to a packed room. Tim couldn’t make the show and no one seemed to notice our stand-in keyboardist drop a large pack of condoms while his laptop rebelled and installed software updates, delaying the start of our set.”

And the lowlight:

“A show in London during the Euros. The England v Wales game was on in the bar. We were amazed at the turnout until we realized they were here to watch the game, and we were playing downstairs in the baking-hot basement. Not only did our crowd not materialize, but we also missed the match.”

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:



“Maiians are on hiatus at the moment, but we’re hoping they return..”

If they could only keep one album it would be:

“‘Two Dancers’ by Wild Beasts.

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

April 28th at the Bullingdon. It’s our EP launch. Hopefully it’ll be an intense and energetic evening. We’re also working on a Lowws goody bag for the first thirty people, but we keep getting distracted with joke inclusions.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“Favourite is the concentration of talented musicians and songwriters for such a small place, which makes the city feel especially vibrant. There’s also a surprising number of scenes if you scratch the surface. Least favourite is there are too many bands who are good at football; they gave us a bit of a beating in the Oxford Bands 6-a-side Football Tournament.

You might love them if you love:

Wild Beasts; Mew; The Maccabees; Everything Everything; Foals.

Hear them here:

www.soundcloud.com/lowwshq / www.lowwshq.bandcamp.com

THE WHEATSHEAF

Saturday 1st April – TWO FACE PROMOTIONS

MARCH THE DESERT

7:45pm

Wednesday 5th April – IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS

TIGER MENDOZA + KID KIN + LEE RILEY 7:30pm

Friday 7th April – KLUB KAKOFANNEY

PAPA NUI

FISHWIFE’S BROADSIDE + EARINADE 7:45pm

Saturday 8th April

AUDACITY LIVE

MAMZER + SWITCH OUT + FOUNTAINS 7:45pm

Friday 14th April – IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

STORYTELLER

COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN + MAD LARRY 7:45pm

Saturday 15th April – OXROX

THE KUT

JOANOVARC + IDESTROY + HAXAN 7:45pm

Wednesday 19th April – BURIED IN SMOKE

VODUN

MASIRO + 1000 CHAINS + CRIMSON TUSK 7:45pm

Wednesday 26th April

HODAD

HOLY MOMENTS + WOLFS 7:45pm

Friday 28th April

RESTRUCTURE

DAISY + JUNIPER NIGHTS 7:45pm

Saturday 29th April – GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES

RATS EAT RATS

MANU LOUIS + DEATH OF THE MAIDEN 7:45pm

Sunday 30th April – BURIED IN SMOKE

CHRON GOBLIN

QUEASY 7:45pm

The Wheatsheaf 129 High Street, Oxford OX1 4DF / www.facebook.com/wheatsheaf.oxford

Dr SHOTOVER: Breakfast of Champs

[Dr Shotover is slumped over his ‘breakfast table’, aka the East Indies Club bar, surrounded by half-empty beer bottles, shot glasses and schooners of sherry... a bowl of Cheerios in full-fat milk sits untouched on the counter, gently congealing... a transistor radio is blaring nearby...]

Transistor radio: ‘This is BBC Vradio Oxford’. **Dr Shotover:** ‘Stop saying “BBC Vradio Oxford”, damn you! It’s not Vradiohead, is it? Just say it properly!’ **Transistor radio:** ‘And the traffic has got really, really bad since Brexit, the NHS is packing up, and all your favourite popstars have just died... but now we’re going to play you a medley of Ed Sheeran hits from 2016... here on BBC Vradio Oxford.’ **Dr Shotover:** ‘NOOOOO!’ *[Enter various of the East Indies Club membership, as Dr S knocks the transistor radio off the bar with a riding crop].* Ah, there you are, chaps. But why are you all dressed as monkeys? Don’t tell me – this is an “internet meme” based on the new *King Kong* film, isn’t it? No sniggering, Tompkinson – I do know what a f***ing internet meme is. I studied Ancient Greek, I’ll have you know, at St Podcast’s Academy for Young Gentlemen... ah, happy days. The head beak used to flog us to within an inch of our young lives if we failed to achieve 100% perfection. This is what makes me such an all-round balanced individual. *[Pausing only to beat the transistor radio into tiny, shiny pieces with his riding crop].* So, is it actually true that you’d agreed to commemorate Mickey Dolenz’s 95th birthday by dressing as The Monkees, but some dyslexic numpty sent the wrong text? I. Am. Looking. At. You. Tompkinson. Tell you what, we’ll draw a veil over the whole unfortunate business if you buy us all a round. What time is it? 9:00 am? Ah, cocktail hour. Make mine a Tranny On The Beach with extra suntan lotion on the side. And turn up the TV. It’s time for *Tee and Mo* on CBeebies. Cheers!

Next month: Breakfast of Chimps



‘This is Ed Sheeran Hour, here on BBC Vradio Oxford...’

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

All institutions start somewhere and in April 1997 local music fans got their first experience of **The Oxford Punt**. Intended as a taster for the forthcoming **BBC Sound City** extravaganza, The Punt featured a modest 13 acts across five venues on one night. **The Dolly; The Point; The Elm Tree; The Fuggle & Firkin** and **Po Na Na** played host to **Dubwiser; Dustball; The Daisies; Tumbleweed; Thurman; Earth Machine; Nought; Bubbleman; Charleystreet; Cab; Dive; Soma** and **Lynda Edwards**. Of the venues, only The Dolly still exists, now known as **The Cellar** while Nought and Dubwiser are the only survivors among the bands, although members of Dustball; The Daisies; Thurman and Bubbleman are still active in local music.

There was a similar musical novelty at **The Oxford Playhouse** this month as 60s pop legend **Marianne Faithfull** played two nights of songs from the Weimer Republic.

While **Supergrass** released their second album, ‘In It For The Money’ this month, **Impossible Music Force**, fronted by Supergrass producer and former Mystics singer **Sam Williams**, released their one and only single, ‘Blah Na Na’, on the **Shifty Disco** singles club.

On the gig front there was a return to town for **Prolapse**, still quite probably the best live band *Nightshift* has ever witnessed, the band playing at The Point with local electro-indie starlets **Cody**. Elsewhere on the local gig calendar were Jon Robb’s **Goldblade**, also at The Point, and **Kenickie, Geneva** and **My Life Story** at **The Zodiac**, while San Fran blues crew **Preacherman** were at The

Fuggle’s Monday Blues club.

Down in the Demo Dumper was a band called **Toshi Station**. A hapless bunch who addressed their letter to the wrong magazine and featured in their ranks a pair of Bicester youngsters called **Tim Bearder** and **Dave Gilyeat**, who would go on to start **BBC Oxford Introducing**. They’ve forgiven us for the review; we’re not sure we’ve forgiven them for mistaking us for **Orbit** magazine.

10 YEARS AGO

The story of Oxford music is often the story of venues in peril. So it was again in April 2007 with the news that **The X** in Cowley would be forced to close if a £3,400 PRS bill wasn’t paid. Landlady Alison argued that the majority of acts performing at the popular pub venue were not PRS registered and played their own material, but the PRS argued rules is rules and the issue finally proved to be the death knell for the venue, which hosted some of the early gigs by **Stornoway** among others.

The music could never die though, and elsewhere this month Oxford hostsd shows by **The Fall; Bring Me the Horizon; Clutch; Midlake; 65daysofstatic; Hatebreed; The Skatalites** and **Acoustic Ladyland**, while **Cradle of Filth** were providing students with an education of a different kind at **Brookes Union** and **Bryan Ferry** was being suave if a bit lazy at **The New Theatre**.

You want local release memories? How about **Trademark; David K Frampton; Andensum; Tonic** and **The Anydays**? How quickly the wheels of fame, fashion and fortune turn. Demos? Who remembers **Piexo; Babelhorn; Mike Finley; Lonely Joe Parker & the Mega Hairy Men**

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

or **Helianthus Eveningstar**? Probably not even themselves.

5 YEARS AGO

Mention of Thurman back then brings us to **The Long Insiders** who, in April 2007, were gracing the cover of *Nightshift*, guitarist Nick Kenny and (at the time) singer Sarah Dodds taking to a guitar with an oxyacetylene torch, while Nick is quoted as saying “It’s really boring when rock bands start saving the planet; it makes me want to pull my eyes out.” The band are still going, without Sarah, Nick (who does his bit to save the world by campaigning against shark fishing among other marine issues) having taken over vocal duties. Back then they were launching their debut album ‘Cat Gut & Engine Oil’ – a quote taken from an early *Nightshift* review.

Looking back at the gig guide from five years ago sees some familiar names, with **Ladyhawke; Lanterns on the Lake; Chuck Prophet** and **Mystery Jets** all having popped back to town in recent months. Over at **The Jericho Tavern**, meanwhile, were a bunch of fresh-faced newcomers called **Bastille**, yet to become world-conquering pop stars and a byword for insipid tedium.

Wander over to the demo pages and there are a few still familiar names: regular local busker **Lewis Newcombe** was top of the pile, while **Swindlestock** were close behind, the band having morphed into **The Great Western Tears** since then. **My Crooked Teeth** also featured, while down in the Dumper were **Scenicliffe**, described rather poetically as “as appetising as fart-flavoured Monster Munch.” They don’t seem to have come back, so the review obviously worked.

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

MORNING EXECUTE VEHICLE

We've said it before and we'll say it again: dark times require dark music, and here's some proper gothic blues noise to bury yourself deep beneath. Appropriately enough it's music made by a guy called Calvin Butcher and as his gravelly voice hovers raptor-like over these songs you can almost picture him wielding a cleaver in a casually brutish manner. Possibly while wearing a full-length trench coat and battered fedora. He might not be Mark Lanegan, or even Andrew Eldritch, but when the other supposedly blues-orientated demo in this month's pile is a soulless heap of macho inconsequentiality, this actually does feel like the Devil's music. The Devil featuring prominently in opening track 'One Ton Monkey' ("It's a one ton monkey riding on your back / He's clawing at your eyes and he's never gonna slack" is probably the most cheery message we get from the lyrics; the rest of it's a bit more pessimistic, although "There's a darkness in your eyes and a demon in your stride" was obviously written with the *Nightshift* demo reviewer in mind), which rumbles and grinds, guitars slashing and drums brooding menacingly in the middle distance. 'Anymore' rides its pale horse out into more Americana territory, but with a bluesy heart that's black as Hell's own sun. It's borderline pastiche but its determination not to go half measures on the gothic imagery is what makes it such a treat, especially as Calvin growls "It's a vampire empire, and they're hunting you" without a hint of irony. Final track 'Lion' is a total mess, an overwrought blues rock workout, but Calvin himself says some of it needs work. Hopefully that work will be carried out at midnight, in the local graveyard, and to hell with the neighbours' sensibilities.

ORCHID

Orchid (Vishkaia, a British-born Iranian singer and producer from Abingdon, now living in London, according to her biog) admits she's a bit scared of sending this in for review since she's spent the last few years laughing at the misfortunes of others who dared to ask our critical opinions and is thus due some karmic comeback. She also says she wrote this track, 'Body', at Glastonbury, so we're hoping it was conceived during a spectacular acid trip in the Rabbit Hole bar or somewhere similarly

Demo of the Month wins a free half day at Soundworks studio in Oxford, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift

exotic. Turns out it must have been during some 5am comedown moment of self reflection as the slinky, smoky r'n'b unfurls over spooked bamboo beats that remind us of Japan's 'Tin Drum' a bit. Lovely voice too – almost playful in its sleepy-eyed soulfulness. It sounds like a lighter take on Tricky's work with Martina Topley Bird, or maybe a downbeat, more tripped-out Foxes. Less a wild Glastonbury party, more a sweet Sunday morning chill-out piece, then. Fear not, young Orchid, karma may yet get you, but for now, we'll protect you from its vengeful talons.

R-KIVE

There's a similarly crepuscular vibe about this demo from local rapper and producer R-Kive, who, like Uncle Monty in *Withnail & I*, we are preparing ourselves to forgive for that moniker. Oxford doesn't really do rap bravado, preferring a more thoughtful approach (see also Rawz and Rhymeskeemz), and R-Kive's opening monologue against fake gangsta wordology is telling. From here he meanders, if not in a dope smoke haze, then maybe a fug of reflective rhyming, stopping off for a more brittle, machine-like instrumental with a doctored, distorted passage of dialogue from *Human Traffic* ("Peter fucking Andre") layered over the top. Woozy, piano passages, dotted with sax skronks and glitchy beats skitter by, and it becomes more and more like a filmscore – one for a movie doubtlessly featuring existential scenes set in deserted urban parks. His vocal delivery is precise and smooth and reminds us, particularly on 'We Were Blessed', of fellow local rhymers ShaoDow. It works well with the slightly dark mood of the five-track mix and if anything we'd like to hear more of his instrumental work in future, as he conjures sparse, atmospheric sounds that belie the encroaching spring outside, especially since the remix of Nas's 'Life's a Bitch' at the end detracts from the mood of what's gone before.

FLATLANDS

There's a very, very fine line between, say, Catfish & the Bottlemen or The View on one hand and The Wanted and Union J on the other. One lot might wield guitars and make claims for authenticity (whatever that means in musical terms), but when you boil them down (and by God, that's a tempting idea) they're all just aiming for primetime hum-along simplicity while trying their hardest not to offend playlist decision makers or anyone who's idea of adventure is to wander beyond daytime Radio 2. This easy middle ground is where we find Flatlands, a band formed from the break-up of local electro-

prog teen sensations The Aureate Act and now heading down a far less convoluted, or interesting, road. Opener 'One Major, One Minor' flies in with fast and feisty intent, but quickly dips into a slightly sorrowful tale of failing a driving test and seeing an ex girlfriend's face in the steering wheel; it continues in sprightly but ultimately characterless fashion until, bish, bash, bosh, it's all done and dusted in a perfect three minutes. 'Truth Be Told' is similarly jaunty but, hey, sensitive too, aiming for what fans of Bastille might consider anthemic, while 'Ghosts' is the compulsory downbeat number, but nothing that's going to trouble Nick Cave's 'Skeleton Tree' for the hearts, minds and turntables of the emotionally wracked masses anytime soon. It's all very polished and professionally executed and quite possibly they'll be able to point and laugh at us in years to come as they drive past in their limousine to another arena show or awards ceremony, but deep down we'll know we were right and deep down, so will they.

BILLY YFANTIS

Then again, sometimes supposedly experimental music isn't as weird, wired or wonderful as it'd like to imagine. Take this short, single track piece entitled 'Dust Not Found', which promises to unleash that previously uncelebrated sub genre of vacuum cleaner-core on the world. "The whole result sounds like a psychedelic trip into Krautrock and John Cage's controversial music," boasts the accompanying blurb. Interest is piqued, excitement levels are hovering just below the red zone, rising very slightly when the stark, almost industrial synth clang heralds the start of the journey into the sonic unknown. Then someone turns on a vacuum cleaner. Then it finishes. 90 seconds of crushing anticlimax. It's like Gary Numan was in the process of recording his new album when the cleaners ambled into the studio and told him time was up. "look at this mess," they scolded, "crisp packets, empty coke cans and dog-eared dystopian sci-fi all over the place. Bloody rock stars." Next month: Jean Michelle Jarre's attempt to hold a spectacular cityscape concert in London's docklands is thwarted when BT Openreach start digging up the pavement in front of his laser theremin.

UNCLE FRANK

A droning vacuum cleaner probably has more nuance and soul than this. Solid, funky blues rock played by a bunch of blokes over a video that features an illegal boxing match; cars; beer; a bull terrier; tattoos; muscles and blood. There's a pretty lady in it too but only briefly and probably only to divert attention from any element of homo-eroticism in the film. Not sure what you can say about this kind of music anymore; it's older than hills, war or

carbolic soap and it's not going to change its ways just because we've had punk, synth-pop or Beyoncé in the interim. "I've been looking for my mojo / I've been looking all night long / I've been looking for my mojo / I think I've found it in this song," growls the big beady bear of a singer. Music always needs more testosterone, right, ladies?

THE DEMO DUMPER

KENAN

KHAZENDAR

Bless Kenan, he's a tryer, we'll give him that. Twice now he's sent us his songs and twice we've left him lying in a puddle of ridicule. But back he comes, with his resolute inability to grasp lyrical metre or write songs that don't make him sound like some kind of stalker. He's almost becoming lovable, like a pet hamster that keeps falling off its wheel. But not, we'll soon discover, for long, as it all gets rather grim this time. 'On A Cloud' is a poetic gem: "Somehow I saw this coming / He spat you out like chewing gum / While I stood there not saying a word / And I couldn't do anything about it / You slowly pushed me out of your life / When the only thing I'd done was be your friend," it begins in a breathless flurry of tuneless, lo-fi, electronic lounge pop. So far, so sweet in an unrequited love kind of way. "Until eventually he left you for a man / I feel nothing but vindication," it goes. So, essentially, "Ha, ha / Told you he was gay!" "Why don't we go out for dinner? / I hope this question doesn't throw you off / Take a shower and rinse your shock away / By no means am I trying to sound flippant / Or take advantage of your broken heart," goes the closing verse. You blummin well are, mate. Poor lass has just been dumped and you're trying to coax her to Nando's so you can rub her nose in the fact you knew her boyfriend was gay, even though you hadn't mentioned it until it happened. Classy. But then things really go down hill on 'Soho', with its opening lines, "Last week she got really mad at me / And threw her mocha latte / At my new Benetton shirt / So I splashed my coffee in her face / And walked out without an iota of shame." So you've just chucked a hot drink in some poor woman's face and walked off without feeling guilty? Nice one, bro. You're some catch. How you going to make it up to her now? Oh, here we go: "Today I'm gonna pay her a visit / Maybe I'll buy her flowers / And a bottle of Bordeaux / But if she does anything stupid again / I'll try not to break the wine over her head." No, sorry, we can't even joke about this anymore. He's going to smash a bottle of wine over her stupid female head if she opens her mouth to him out of turn. We are genuinely speechless. Misogynist lounge-core is a thing now, is it?

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+ Bad Blood Recovery
+ My Diablo
+ Audiochemistry

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J Hus

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