

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 265
August
2017**

photo: Ian Wallman



"This album could easily be about love but for me it's about recovering from loss and finding redemption."

DEATH OF HI-FI

From post-apocalyptic worlds to post-traumatic stress with Oxford's electric dreamers.

Also in this issue:

Introducing **MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS**
RIDE, CORNBURY FESTIVAL & IRREGULAR FOLKS reviewed

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews and gigs for August

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NIGHTSHIFT: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU. Phone: 01865 372255

THE BULLINGDON

AUGUST 2017 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Wednesday 16th August
Billy Branch
With Giles Robson Band

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 19th August
Electronic Sound Session
Bart Rose
Tom Ranx
Slaw Farb

Doors: 8pm

Friday 25th August
P.Y.T

Doors: 8pm

Saturday 26th August
Volume #5
Taxman & MC Trigga

Doors: 8pm

Wednesday 30th August
Neil Hilborn Live Poetry

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 31st August
Daniel Romano

Doors: 7pm

Friday 1st September
Oxphward: B-Movies

Doors: 7pm

Friday 1st September
Throwing Shapes #003

Doors: 8pm

Saturday 2nd September
Groove

Doors: 8pm

Sunday 3rd September
We Are Your Friends #2
Chad Valley
Charlie Cunningham
Jack Goldstein
Egrets

Doors: 8pm

Thursday 5th September
Rob Tognoni
Hell's Gazelles

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 16th September
Alvvays

Doors: 7pm

Friday 18th September
Poizon
Singer of Tigertailz - Rob Wyld

Doors: 8pm

Saturday 9th September
Old Skool Oxford
Easy Groove

Doors: 8pm

Monday 11th September
Blues Caravan

Doors: 7pm

Friday 15th September
Bossaphonik
The Destroyers

Doors: 8pm

Saturday 16th September
Musical Medicine

Doors: 8pm

Thursday 21st September
Earinade Album Launch

Doors: 7pm

Friday 22nd September
Danny & The Champions
of the World

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 23rd September
David Rodigan

Doors: 8pm

Wednesday 27th September
King No-One

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 28th September
Micah P. Hinson
and The Holy Strangers

Doors: 7pm

Sunday 1st October
Coasts This Life Tour

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 3rd October
Krautwerk
Harald Grosskopf & Eberhard Kranemann

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 4th October
The Skints
Nice Time Tour: Part 2

Doors: 7pm

Friday 6th October
Police Dog Hogan

Doors: 7pm

Monday 9th October
Yak

Doors: 7pm

Friday 13th October
The Dead Beat Apostles
The Shapes

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 14th October
Simple
Joy Orbison

Doors: 8pm

Sunday 15th October
Inheaven

Doors: 7pm

Monday 16th October
Dream Wife

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 17th October
Clean Cut Kid

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 18th October
The Big Moon

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 21st October
Ritual Union Festival

Doors: 12pm

Saturday 21st October
Low Islands & Friends

Doors: 11pm

Monday 2nd October
Howie Payne

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 24th October
Skinny Molly

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 25th October
Miles Hunt & Erica Nockalls
(The Wonder Stuff)

Doors: 7pm

Friday 27th October
Gentlemen's Dub Club

Doors: 9pm

Saturday 28th October
Jane Weaver

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 1st November
Matthew E. White

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 2nd November
Eddie Martin Band

Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd November
Too Many T's

Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd November
Simple
Levon Vincent

Doors: 8pm

Monday 6th October
CC Smugglers

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 7th November
Emily Barker Band

Doors: 7pm

Sunday 12th November
Toseland

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 14th November
Marika Hackman

Doors: 7pm

NEWS

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GALLOPS have been confirmed as headliners for **If Not Now When?** in September. They join Spook School; Oh Peas; Grace Lightman; Death Pedals; Weddings; Self Help and Protection Spells, who have also been added to the bill.

If Not Now When? is a new festival for east Oxford, organised jointly by Divine Schism and Idiot King. The one-day event takes place on Saturday 2nd September at East Oxford Community Centre and Fusion Arts. 30 acts will play across three rooms, from 2pm through to 3am, with other acts confirmed including: Tigercats; Johanna Glaza; Fever Dream; Garden Centre; Flemmings; Slate Hearts; Kid Kin; Green Hands; Kone; WOLFS; Porridge Radio; Repo Man; Alpha Male Tea Party; Tellison (solo); Birds of Hell; Rough Music; Be Good; Flights of Helios; and Small Hours. Tickets, priced £18 are available from Wegotickets.com. More info on the If Not Now, When? Facebook page.

DESERT STORM will celebrate their tenth anniversary with a headline show at The Cellar on Saturday 25th November. The local rock titans, who have spent much of the past two years touring the UK and Europe in support of their third album 'Omniscient', are joined for the show by Sons of Thunder and Bad Blood Recovery. Tickets, priced £7, are on sale from Wegotickets.com.

CURIOSITY CARNIVAL is a city-wide celebration of academic research with a strong musical theme that takes place on Friday 29th September across Oxford's museums, libraries and gardens, as well as locations in the city centre. The event aims to explore how researchers ask questions and discover answers, with an eclectic array of music, including school projects based on sleep research, ancient Greek music, 18th Century songs and grime exploring various themes. More info at www.curiositycarnival.org

RABBIT HOLE FESTIVAL returns next month. Now in its fourth year, the festival boasts 14 acts across two stages on Saturday 9th September at The Victoria Arms in Old Marston. Organised by local music lover Ed Reckitt, Rabbit Hole features sets from Zaia; Paves; Faith I Branko; Lucy Mair; Zhang & Jane; A Little

Bit Country; Elephantasy; The Abingdon Community Choir and more. Tickets, £5 in advance or £7.50 on the door, with kids free, plus full line-up details can be found at www.rabbitholemusicevents.co.uk.

31HOURS, Sleepers Dome and Flatland's Jamie Corish are among the acts playing at **Intermix Jungle** this month. The event, which runs on the 4th and 5th August at MIND's Mill centre on Cowley Road, is a multi-media exhibition and performance, featuring live music, poetry art, design, photography and performance, with an emphasis on improvisation. Find them on Facebook and Instagram.

OXROX are looking for bands to play a short set of cover versions at their event Versions on Friday 29th December at The Bullingdon. Acts of any genre who are interested should contact Sam at sammietomlin@yahoo.co.uk.

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT 5 all-dayer raised £3,650 for Children's Ambulatory Care, the John Radcliffe Children's Hospital and All As One. The event, on the 1st July at Said Business School rooftop amphitheatre featured Soul Devotion, Chasing Daylight, The Shapes and more and brings the total amount raised for local children's charities over the last five years to £13,000.

TERRORSAURS headline this year's **Musicians Against Homelessness** show in aid of Crisis. The Birmingham rockers join Reading punk act Who Killed Nancy Johnson and Gloucester rockers Rebel Station at The Cellar on Saturday 29th September as part of a nationwide series of gigs co-ordinated by MAH patron Alan McGee. Tickets, priced £5 in advance, are on sale now from Wegotickets.com.

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.



photo: Ian Wallman

COLDREDLIGHT played their last gig in their current incarnation at Truck Festival at the end of July. The band, formed by singer/guitarist Gaby-Elise Monaghan and multi-instrumentalist Casper Miles, are planning to re-emerge with a new name and a new line-up in October.

Talking to *Nightshift* about the change Gaby said, "I think we just knew from the beginning that we wanted the sound to be bigger than two people could allow so it just made sense for us to start anew with a fresh perspective and other band members. Coldredlight has been a stepping stone for us into the next stage, our influences are constantly shifting but the music itself will still be us, only bigger and better. We'll just be starting again with a fresh perspective and some new permanent band members, will be keeping some of the same songs and writing a whole load of new ones." She added, "I wanted to say a massive thank you to all the support *Nightshift* has given us over the past year and a half."

Gaby made her local solo debut at The Punt in 2016, with Coldredlight quickly building a local following for their dark, emotive style of blues and grunge; their song 'Little Scorpion' was voted *Nightshift*'s Number 2 song of last year – beating Radiohead's 'Burn the Witch' – and the band were picked by Rob da Bank to play the main stage at Common People in May.

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WHEN?

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A Quiet Word With

DEATH OF HI-FI



DEATH OF HI-FI’S SECOND album, ‘Follow’ opens with a portentous sample of Gustav Holst’s ‘Mars’ – the bringer of war. What follows, though, is not a return trip to the planet-scale dystopia of the band’s debut, ‘Anthropocene’, but a trip into the darker reaches of the human mind, specifically that of Andy Hill, Death Of Hi-Fi’s co-founder, beatmaker, electronics maestro and sometime rapper.

DEATH OF HI-FI RELEASED ‘Anthropocene’ at the end of 2012. Back then the band was a duo made up of Andy and partner Daniel Clear alongside an expansive cast of guest rappers, including local stars like Half Decent, Asher Dust and N-Zyme, plus friends from further afield, including Ugly Duckling’s Dizzy Dustin. A concept album about aliens creating a musical interpretation of Earth, made up from hearing snatches of radio signals from a dying world, ‘Anthropocene’ was ambitious, varied and expansive and *Nightshift* hailed it as the best hip hop album to come out of Oxford.

FAST FORWARD FIVE YEARS and Death Of Hi-Fi release its eagerly-awaited follow-up, ‘Follow’. The band are now a trio, having permanently recruited

singer Lucy Cropper, with guest appearances limited to local rap star Rhymeskeemz. While less of a straight-up hip hop album than its predecessor, it’s possibly an even better record than ‘Anthropocene’, a turn towards darker, more soulful pop, industrial soundscapes, old school techno and trip hop, with Lucy’s voice a more settled focal point for the band’s sound. Live too her arrival has had a big impact. Previously a Death Of Hi-Fi show would see Andy and Dan masked and studiously anonymous, utilising samples of their various vocal contributors, while now they look like a band: Andy hunched over his banks of synths or stepping up to the mic to add husky, downbeat raps; Dan playing the cyborg guitar god, and Lucy an exotic, flamboyant frontwoman. The trio’s set at Common People back in May was a show-stealing performance as they flew the flag for Oxford hip hop alongside rappers ShaoDow and Rhymeskeemz, whose own sets were similarly triumphant.

“COMMON PEOPLE WAS amazing this year! We loved it!” exclaims Andy when *Nightshift* talks to him ahead of the release of ‘Follow’ this month; “I think there’s so much local hip hop out there but

it remains steadfastly underground. There’s a ton of people I respect on the scene, too many to name check without missing people out. I think the scene is healthy, especially when you look at the big names that now play shows here; De La Soul, Mobb Deep, Method Man and Redman, etc. Who would have thought a few years ago they’d have visited? For me the key is to support each other and push each other through rather than trample on each other.” “There’s a number of people who don’t quite fit into the classic hip hop mould and are willing to incorporate different things into their music,” he continues, warming to the theme of Oxford hip hop’s continued emergence into the light; “I remember back in the days when I started out as a rapper I would play shows with indie bands as a bit of a rent-a-rapper – this was the days of Senser, Credit to the Nation and Rage Against The Machine – but we opened up a lot of doors by playing to non-traditional hip hop crowds. I’d like to see more people step out of their comfort zone and see where it leads.” A high point of that Common People set, and of the new album, was Marc Clifton (aka Rhymeskeemz)’s rap on ‘Some Escape’, an abrasive, urgent rail against the day-to-day struggle to earn a living, raise a family and

breathe above a rising tide of poverty and mundanity, all harsh electronics, stalking beats and churning guitar. It’s possibly the hardest, darkest moment on ‘Follow’. “I’ve long been friends with Rhymeskeemz,” says Andy, “and we’ve always wanted to work on something together but never really managed to work it out. I had written the track with a rapper in mind but not him particularly. We were chatting at the Bully one night and we both said we should do something together and it suddenly made sense to have him on that. A light bulb moment as his writing fits perfectly the feel of what I was trying to achieve with that track. It was always destined to be the kick-off track for the album and needed to be punchy and make a statement; Marc perfectly captured the feel of it.”

ELSEWHERE ON ‘FOLLOW’ we get the cool, languorous trip hop of previous single ‘Swim Away’; the almost playful hardcore techno of ‘Serenity’; the robot-pop-cum-rap of ‘Ghosts’; the almost Madonna-ish techno-pop of ‘Stolen Hearts’, and the strident industrial sci-fi goth-hop of ‘You Don’t Know’, all with Lucy on vocals. Her arrival in Death Of Hi-Fi marked a huge turning point in the band’s fortunes and musical direction. “We met when I was DJing at

Witney Music Festival back in 2013, says Andy. We were introduced by some mutual friends. Neither Dan nor I had ever really wanted to be stood at the front; we hid behind masks and laptops like the lab assistants we are. Lucy seemed to get what we were trying to do and became the front person for our next project.” Her arrival led to a move away from the more straight-up rap of the first album as well as opening the door for more regular gigging for Death Of Hi-Fi, always a logistical issue previously.

“It wasn’t conscious but born out of the need to be able to perform the album live in as much of its entirety as possible. The first album became almost impossible to play as it featured so many different collaborators from different countries; we could never get them all in the same place. We had toyed with the idea of filming them and beaming them in but that proved problematic and if not done properly would have failed miserably.” Do you feel the line-up now makes it easier for the band to push forward, particularly with live shows? “Absolutely, but I’m never finished; I think there’s always more we can do. We’ve been talking about bringing back the visuals for a while now, so we might explore that as a complement to Lucy rather than a distraction from our lumpen visages.”

Has reining in the number of guests on ‘Follow’ compared to ‘Anthropocene’ affected the way you went about writing? “It means more focus, fewer headaches and we can pick and choose what songs we want to play live rather than being forced into playing whatever ones we have collaborators available for.”

SOMETHING ELSE THAT HAS gone along with the rotating cast of guests are the masks that Andy and Dan previous wore onstage, as much as a defence mechanism for two guys uncomfortable to play centre stage as a complement to their music’s often steely, alien nature. These days we see their faces, a reflection now perhaps of the new more soulful and human sound that Lucy’s voice brings to the music. Andy agrees. “I think the masks gradually became less a feature and more of a hindrance, plus they smelled terribly after a while. We once did a gig straight after spraying them gold and the combination of sweat and paint fumes meant I couldn’t see my equipment properly by the end. Luckily I ramble on the microphone anyway so no one could tell the difference.”

TURNING THE CONVERSATION back to ‘Follow’, the new album has taken a fair while write and record – five years on from ‘Anthropocene’.

Those five years, though, are intrinsic to the story of the new album: a turbulent time for Andy. “It’s been an interesting few years since ‘Anthropocene’. It was such a high to release that album and people got what we were trying to do with it. It was fun and nerve wracking in equal measure putting it together and shaping it as I heard it in my head. It was received really well and I’d wanted to follow it up quickly. I must have made at least ten different albums in the last five years and threw most of them away, becoming frustrated at being unable to articulate what I wanted to say next. “For ten years I lived through a misunderstood struggle until I was finally diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. It can often be an awkward topic but one I’ve come to terms with and feel

“We all want to know we’re understood in our struggle and find a way to make room for hope. I think everyone can relate to that.”

is important to not leave behind as taboo just because it’s difficult. Many artists thrive on hardship but for a while creativity went out of the window for me. The more I tried to write the more blocked I became; it was a self-defeating cycle, a bit of a rollercoaster. The album could easily be about love but for me it’s about recovering from loss and finding redemption. “I reached that point where you can only crawl upwards again and the more I reached up the more I realised I knew what I wanted to say. The album became catharsis and I suppose I had a moment of clarity as each element began to flow, almost uncontrollably. It became a bit of a motivation and obsession to get this album out of me. “The album really at the core is about love, loss and the struggle back to redemption. In a nutshell, it’s about learning how to be a human being again, which is ironic considering the first album was a very dispassionate observation of human life on earth.”

A TRIUMPH OF ‘FOLLOW’ IS that such a great record has come out of such a dark time in Andy’s life. Tracks like ‘Swim Away’ are simply gorgeous, the calm on the surface of the water that hides the desperate struggle going on beneath. How much does he think the themes on the album are universal as well as personal? “When talking about universal topics, the details don’t matter – feelings are what get us all. We all want to know we’re understood in our struggle and find a way to make room for hope. I think everyone can

relate to that.” Does Andy think Death Of Hi-Fi are an optimistic or pessimistic band? ‘Lazarus’ (“I’m reborn / I will rise up”) at the end of ‘Follow’ seems to offer hope after some of the more downbeat narrative of the album. “I think that despite everything that’s happened, I still believe in redemption. I still believe in the human spirit and the will to survive. The story of the album mirrors the various stages of my life and ‘Lazarus’ informs my rise out of the ashes and a sort of rebirth. It’s ultimately a story of hope, so I suppose that makes me an optimist.

LOOKING BACK NOW AT ‘Anthropocene’ and its core theme of the idea of aliens creating a musical interpretation of Earth, that sci-fi and industrial vibe carries over onto ‘Follow’, even on a more personal

level, particularly on tracks like ‘You Don’t Know’ and ‘Ghosts’. “It’s always there,” agrees Andy; “it’s always been a huge part of my life and will always be. I just wanted to tell a more human sci-fi story in the vein of *Blade Runner*. It was a little like using an Esper machine at times. Who knows where the next one will go: maybe a combination of both observer and observed. At the core of all good science fiction should be a human element; even something as pioneeringly bleak as *The Purple Cloud* explores what it means to be the last human on earth and the destructive frustration that causes Jeffson to burn cities of the world.” Similarly, there’s a strong lyrical parallel between ‘Some Escape’ and ‘Anthropocene’ highlight ‘Until I Stop Breathing’ – a strive to survive motif with the music’s almost claustrophobic urgency capturing the feeling of drowning in the humdrum of life. “Totally; the lyrics might be different and come from a different place but the theme is the same. We often do what we do to get by, to make it through the day and it’s an acknowledgment of that. It’s also the opening chapter in the story of the album and sets the scene.”

ONE SONG THAT HASN’T made it onto ‘Follow’ is ‘Roses & Guns’. One of the first songs written with Lucy in the band, it’s been a live highlight for a couple of years now and its inclusion on the excellent ‘We Do Not Have a Dinosaur’ compilation last year, which showcased the best in Oxford electronic music, earned it a placing near the very top of *Nightshift*’s end of year Top 25.

Inspired by the heartbreaking chapter in Alan Moore’s masterpiece *V For Vendetta* where an imprisoned Evie reads the letter Valerie wrote while similarly incarcerated and tortured, it’s a glorious celebration of love and integrity in the face of hatred and intolerance. Death Of Hi-Fi have turned it into one of the most moving songs we’ve heard in recent times, its message as potent now as it was when Moore wrote the original story in the 1980s. “‘Roses’ started out as something we weren’t too sure about. We finished it and left it in the metaphorical drawer for a while. It kept popping back into my brain before I realised how much I loved it. We were so happy to be able to include it on the ‘We Do Not Have a Dinosaur’ charity compilation and for people to single it out for praise was mind blowing considering the exalted company it was in. We truly are blessed with some fantastic talent in Oxford and I’m always happy to be included in their number. I think that *V for Vendetta*, like so much of Alan Moore’s work, has had such an influence on me. He packs so much into each frame and absolutely nails his subject matter – and most other people’s in the process. At the heart of his dystopian view of the UK is a pulsing love story and this is reflected in the Valerie/Prisoner V subplot. I wanted to use that imagery of the eternal battle between love and hate, peace and war. There’s something that moves me in the letter she writes and always affects me deeply. “For three years I had roses and apologised to no one.” There is something noble about that defiance in the face of death that speaks to me: there’s nothing to regret for her and I love that; it says to me that hate will never win.”

THAT RESOLUTE SENTIMENT sums up so much about the world, but also the personal struggles that have led up to the release of ‘Follow’; Valerie’s refusal to stop loving or give up her last inch of integrity in the face of bigotry and brutality is heroism in its purest form. Andy Hill too has come out triumphant. ‘Follow’ is a superb album: dark, troubled and turbulent at times, but ultimately a wonderful piece of art. And personally he’s come out of the five years with a renewed sense of optimism and creativity that bodes for even greater music to come. “At the moment, I am writing music for TV and films, splitting my time between here and Los Angeles. Creatively I’ve never been in a better place; I’ve got a side project that I’m launching in early 2018 which will be exploring other elements and the softer side of my influences. A bit of calm after the storm, perhaps.”

‘Follow’ is released on The 11th August. Visit www.deathofhifi.com to hear tracks from the album.

RELEASED

WILLIE J HEALEY

‘People & Their Dogs’

(*National Anthem/Columbia*)

“I felt like I was in a dream / I wish someone would help me / Won’t someone pinch my skin / Reality,” pleads Willie J Healey on recent single ‘Lazy Shade of Pink’, one of the high points of his debut album. It kind of sums him up; much if not most of ‘People & Their Dogs’ feels like Willie’s looking at life with his head cocked to one side, slightly befuddled after one too many spliffs and not enough sleep.

Album opener ‘Subterraneans’, with its languid surf slide and twang is the album stretching itself awake and in no hurry to go anywhere fast. From here we get the heavy-lidded, wandering sax of ‘Somewhere In Between’; ‘All These Things’, which sounds like it should be sung from the depths of a hammock on a balmy summer evening, and the wobbly psychedelia of the album’s title track. Closer ‘We Should Hang’ is dreamy and downbeat, as if Healey still hasn’t quite shaken off that woozy, snoozy feeling.

It makes for an easy, likeable vibe, but it’s not the whole story. The mood might be predominantly mellow but even a slacker troubadour can get a cob on, and on ‘Love Her’ in particular he kicks out the jams with some real beef and venom – a searing, overdriven beast of a song possessed of Dinosaur Jr’s grungy crunch that stops abruptly as if someone reminded Willie he wasn’t himself when he was hungry and maybe needed a Snickers. Similarly the almost yobbish punk of ‘Greys’ with its scouring crescendos that dissipate just as they’re about to reach critical mass.



MONKFISH

‘Dark Matter’

(*Self released*)

Monkfish aren’t a band in a hurry. Having taken ten years off, they reformed in 2015 and returned with a *Nightshift* Demo of the Month. This fully fledged EP comes two years on from that and is similarly happy to take its time.

We say happy but there’s precious little joy to be had here as Kevin Riddy’s husky stentorian growl



‘Would You Be’, like ‘Lazy Shade...’ and the Bolan boogie-tinged ‘Pipedreams’ demonstrates what Healey does best: tempering his noisy grunge whims with lysergic melody, pretty harmonies and a sense of trippy euphoria. Brevity is also one of his virtues; nothing clocks in much above three minutes, so even when he occasionally dips, as on the throwaway, formulaic ‘Sleep All Day’, or the lyrically bland ‘Marie’s Balcony’, it’s over and done with quickly and we’re back to what he does best. ‘People & Their Dogs’ is a deceptively dynamic album (from the determined bass of its opener to the marching snare of the closer), but also enticingly dreamy. “It felt just like a dream,” sings Willie on ‘Lazy Shade of Pink’, but given the way things have been going for him lately, it’s a dream that Willie J Healey might not want to fully wake from any time soon.

Dale Kattack

leads the sky-searching guitar across desolate wastelands, possibly in search of redemption, maybe simply looking for monsters to frighten. The opening track here is called ‘Monsters’ and sounds a lot like 1980s Leeds-based gothsters Rose of Avalanche, all portent and epic churning. Riddy’s voice does threaten to tip into parody, such is his almost comic intensity, but by the time the band have reached ‘Sinkhole’ everyone’s lightened up a few shades for a spaghetti western rockabilly canter, which could actually do with a slightly higher growly portent quota. Best of the four songs here is the tight, urgent ‘Turn Out the Light’, the goth switch cranked back up again but Riddy’s gruff Lee Hazelwood delivery sounding less like he’s got one eye on panto season.

The EP’s title track is almost a gothic country lullaby with the guitars stretched to their most epic but the vocals once again toned down a notch or two, revealing something that could almost be mistaken for a softer side.

It’s all good dark-hearted fun, and such is Monkfish’s OTT approach to rock you can’t argue too hard with their regular excesses, although with three of the four songs here clocking in around the six-minute mark, some concession to brevity might not be out of order to prevent epic becoming excessive.

Ian Chesterton

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CO-PILGRIM

‘Moon Lagoon’

(*Farm Music*)

Former Black Nielson frontman Mike Gale is a prolific chap. ‘Moon Lagoon’ is his fourth album in as many years: two solo works and two with a full band that features Oxford stalwarts Joe and Claire Bennett and Mike Monaghan (who is surely doing the work of at least half a dozen drummers these days). These three make Co-Pilgrim a three-quarters Oxford act, even if its chief singer and songwriter is from Winchester. We’ll take them for our own though on the strength of most of ‘Moon Lagoon’. First track ‘Turn It Around’ is all fuzzgun rumble and shimmering synths, a bold opener and a departure from the rootsy introversion we’re used to from Gale. It sounds like it might fit neatly on the new Ride album with its wide-eyed sense of pop hope and its close harmonies. The excellently-titled ‘You’ll Look Pretty As A Picture When The Acid Rain Hits Ya’ is better still: Gale’s serene lead vocal nicely counterpointed by Claire Bennett’s bubblegum cheerleader backing, while ‘Cylindrical Fire Escapes’ is ethereal, lushly orchestrated, a meeting point between Teenage Fanclub and Brian Wilson.

The album’s title track continues with this sense of optimism, again Bennett’s playful backing vocals taking the song to a higher place, but things drop off in the second half of the album as the languid but bland ‘I’m Not A Wallflower, I’m the Wall’ lives up to its title, and even the rich orchestration and atmosphere of ‘Digging Holes in the Whites of Your Eyes’ can’t detract completely from the fact it might be an old Dire Straits number. ‘Thank My Stars’ tips its hat knowingly to Leonard Cohen’s ‘Suzanne’ and the album closes with a flourish on the horn-led ‘Wouldn’t You Like to Dance’, but that initial vigour and playfulness never fully returns. Debilitating agoraphobia and the loss of one of his parents during the writing of ‘Moon Lagoon’ perhaps explains the dip into reflection and melancholy, but perhaps a more optimistic musical outlook is the best therapy, and on this evidence, it’s where Co-Pilgrim’s strength really lies.

Dale Kattack



THE OTHER DRAMAS

‘Radio’

(*Self released*)

Boys might still outnumber girls to a stupid degree when it comes to rock music, but you only need to stand in the way of Maria Ilett’s guitar on new Other Dramas single ‘Radio’ for a few seconds to realise it’s quality not quantity that counts. It’s gnarly and covered in dirt and splinters of broken things, the sort of sound intended to get you right in the middle of your ribcage. Layer on her pop-friendly vocals – sort of Lily Allen with an edge of Tanya Donnelly – and a dash of harmonies with drummer Richie Wildsmith, and you’ve got a song that keeps just enough of the grungy grubbiness intact while showing the polished surface beneath, the sort of song you’ll hear twice and struggle to shift

from your internal jukebox. After a fair few years stuck on the fringes of the local scene – promising but never quite the finished article – The Other Dramas are better than they’ve ever been, and dead set for centre stage.

Sue Foreman

LEWIS NEWCOMBE-JONES

‘Passing By’

(*Self released*)

It’s five years now since Lewis Newcombe-Jones won the *Nightshift* Demo of the Month, and four since he graced top spot again as part of Ragdoll, and bar a couple of brief encounters with him busking on Cornmarket we’ve not seen or heard much from the man since, so a fully realised album is as surprising as it is welcome.

Let’s not beat around the bush on this one: Lewis is a bit of a hippy, but despite lyrics like “Why does the sun never fall? / Why are we here at all?”, and “Why do the flowers grow? / Some things are hard to know,” he’s more loveable than laughable, in thrall to 1960s folk, particularly Nick Drake and Pentangle, at his best capable of rich orchestration and setting a pastoral mood.

In this he’s ably abetted at times by Steph West, whose sweet backing vocals on ‘Shadows’ and spring raindrop harp playing on album opener ‘Wondering’ sprinkle a little fairy dust on the feather-soft melodies and Lewis’ own wistful vocal performances.

Having set a reflective, misty-eyed mood from the off on songs like ‘Don’t Wake Me’, we

wonder if he can maintain the spell for a full fifty minutes, and for the most part he does. Guitar instrumentals like ‘Lily’s Dance’, and the more considered ‘A Kind Sir’, break up the balladry and pay due tribute to Jansch and Renbourn and when things do fall flat, like the cumbersome ‘Hold On’, which sounds like something you’d be forced to endure at any number of open mic sessions, he’s able to follow it with the more elegant, psych-tinged title track, which could have been cribbed from the seminal ‘Bringing in the Mushrooms’ compilation.

The album’s a bit too long – although rather than cutting out whole tracks, Lewis might do well to lop the odd minute or so off a few of them to prevent them drifting too far off into the ether. That said, the overriding mood of ‘Passing By’ is that Lewis Newcombe-Jones has all the time in the world and ain’t nobody going to hurry him along.

Dale Kattack



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G U I D E

TUESDAY 1st
SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern – Weekly open mic night.

WEDNESDAY 2nd
DC HIP HOP SESSIONS: The Cellar – Deep Cover hosts a weekly Wednesday free party, with

Friday 4th – Sunday 6th
SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden
Featuring the highest concentration of *Nightshift* scribes of any local event, Supernormal is the event that took a stand against an overly-commercial, corporatized and overpriced festival scene and come up a winner each and every year. It’s small and strange and utterly brilliant, the artist-curated line-up fully focussed on the weird, wonderful, experimental and square peg in round hole scheme of things. The biggest name on this year’s line-up are Michigan’s seminal noise trio **WOLF EYES** (*pictured*) whose malignant sonic journeys are equally oppressive and alien. Elsewhere on a characteristically esoteric and abstruse bill are acts like electronic sound and visuals artists **ZAIMPH**; gothic wyrd-folk singer **SHARRON KRAUS**; Newcastle’s ambient/industrial drone veterans **:ZOVJET*FRANCE:**; vitriolic speed metal/hardcore crew **AGGRESSIVE PERFECTOR**; Amphetamine Reptile-inspired noise agitator **BRUXA MARIA**; post-punk funkners **BEARDS**; wayward jazz-punks **CHOP CHOP**; chaotic, rhythmic psych-skronkers **CATTLE**; Tortoise-inspired post-rock jazzateers **EVIL USSES**; experimental folk troubadour **ERIC CHENAUX**; abstract minimalist **KELLY JAYNE JONES**; Ghana’s rhythmic Afro-poppers **KING AYISOBA**; Japanese psych duo **PIKACYU & MAKOTO**; eldritch poetry and ambience from **PLAGUE DOGS**; Sabbath-esque blues-doom, and poppy post-punk joy from **SACRED PAWS**. That’s just scratching the surface of a very deep, mysterious lake of sound, and if that all sounds far too mainstream for you, how about some Ouija board-driven sound art from **AUTOMATIC WRITING CIRCLE**; maybe a festival of feminist cinema, or perhaps some no-wave tennis. Supernormal is like no other festival; it’s an absolute gem of an event on the very edge of Oxfordshire and the very edge of musical normality. Time to make the trip. And it is a trip.



AUGUST

hip hop, grime, r’n’b, trap and dancehall tunes from the resident DJs.
JAM & OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon

THURSDAY 3rd
ANTON BARBEAU + THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + CHARMS AGAINST THE EVIL EYE: The Jericho Tavern – Timeless psych-pop from Sacramento-born, Berlin-based troubadour Anton Barbeau, a regular visitor to town over the years with his Bowie and Barrett-inspired sounds, this time round playing songs from his new ‘Heaven Is In Your Mind’ EP, where he tackles tracks by Bowie, Traffic and Big Star alongside his own songs. He’s joined tonight by long-time local collaborators Charms Against the Evil Eye, with their 80s indie and Paisley Underground-inspired sound, plus acid-friend surf-rave noisemakers The Pink Diamond Revue.
KING TERRIBLE presents THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER: The Cellar – Rock, disco and 80s tunes every Thursday.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest-running and most eclectic open night 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 unplugged open mic night.
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford – Open jam session.

FRIDAY 4th
SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden – First day of the annual leftfield music and arts festival, with American noise-rock titans Wolf Eyes among the highlights of a seriously esoteric cast – *see main preview*
LIONIZE + KANADIA + A WAY WITH WORDS + MATCHBOY: O2 Academy – Arena-sized funk and soul-rock from Washington DC’s Lionize, bringing together influences from Led Zep and Clutch to Parliament, Funkadelic and Bob Marley on their new album ‘Nuclear Soul’. In the big music stakes they’ll be matched blow for blow by local stars on the rise Kanadia, pitching up somewhere between U2, Radiohead and Coldplay, plus Swindon’s grungy rockers A Way With Words.
FREDDIE MCGREGOR & ALLSTARS OF REGGAE & LOVERS ROCK: O2 Academy – Re-arranged from last month and following on from his showing at the Greensleeves Records 40th anniversary tour show here in April, Freddy McGregor returns to town; 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, he boasts a monstrous back catalogue. He’s joined by a host of reggae and dancehall stars,

including Peter Hunnigale, Sandra Cross, Ossie Gad, Adele Harley and Yashema McLeod.
BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – Dancefloor Latin, Afrobeat, global grooves, Balkan beats and nu-jazz club night, with a live set of gypsy dance, klezmer, vaudeville and rock’n’roll from Chancery Blame & the Gadjo Club, plus host Dan Ofer on the decks.
RATS EAT RATS + RESTRUCTURE: The Wheatsheaf – Melodic grunge from Rats Eat Rats, inspired by Nirvana and Smashing Pumpkins, with support from terrace-punk-rave duo Restructure.
OXROX ALIVE: The Northcourt, Abingdon Utd FC – Opening night of the two-day rock and metal festival – *see main preview*
METAL GODS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – 80s metal and rock covers.

SATURDAY 5th
SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden – Oxford’s most adventurous music festival continues – *see main preview*
HELL’S GAZELLES + BLACK BULLETS + TRAUMA UK: The Wheatsheaf – Old school rock and metal action from Hell’s Gazelles at tonight’s OxRox show, mixing up Judas Priest NWOBHM riffage with AC/DC theatrics and Guns’n’Roses’ sense of rock melody. Support from Basingstoke’s sleazy, tat-heavy biker rock brigade Black Bullets, plus Witney punk crew Trauma UK.
JOE McELDERRY: The New Theatre – Long before Brexit, the British population learned how to break things by voting for the wrong people with TV talent shows, which is how Joe McElderry has ended up with an eight-year pop and acting career after winning *X Factor*. Credit to the fella though, he’s overcome the odds on a hard exit from the limelight by shifting over two million albums as well as going on to win even more TV shows, *Pop Star To Opera Star* and *The Jump*, as well as starring in *The Who’s Tommy* and *Joseph & His Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Hurrays and hurrahs all round.
OXROX ALIVE: The Northcourt, Abingdon Utd FC – Brit metal legend Blaze Bayley headlines the second day of the festival – *see main preview*
DESMOND CHANCER & THE LONG MEMORIES + ADRIAN FORD: St. Giles Parish Hall – Gutter blues and whisky songs inspired by Tom Waits et al from the very excellent Desmond Chancer and chums.
FREERANGE: The Cellar – UK garage, grime and bassline club night, playing the best new underground tunes.
SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE & SPOTLIGHT JAM: The Whitehouse – Open mic, jam and bands night, hosted by Sparky, tonight with sets from Nash & Triller, Glendale Train and Firegazers.
THE MIGHTY DISCO BISCUITS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Funk, soul and disco covers.
STEAMROLLER: Red Lion, Old Marston (4pm)
STEAMROLLER & SUNFLY: Kidlington FC – MacMillan Cancer Trust benefit show with heavyweight blues rockers Steamroller teaming up with Sunfly for some classic riff action.

SUNDAY 6th
SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden – Day three and you’re almost certainly down the rabbit hole by now – *see main preview*
CONFRONT THE CARNAGE + KING BOLETE + GHOUL: The Wheatsheaf – Deathcore and grind from Confront the Carnage alongside doom’n’blues outfit King Bolete and masked horror-punkers Ghoul.
S.P.Q.R + SLATE HEARTS + EGRETS: The Library – Liverpool’s lo-fi art-rockers SPQR return to Smash Disco for a night of free punk noise. Support from raging grunge/garage rockers Slate Hearts and 90s-inspired alt.rockers/shoegazers Egrets.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms

Friday 4th – Saturday 5th
OXROX ALIVE: Abingdon United FC
Something that’s been sadly lacking from pretty much every local festival line-up in recent years is some serious rock music, though as anyone who witnessed Desert Storm’s monstrous set at Common People would attest, plenty of people want to hear something heavy, even on a sunny summer afternoon. So here are OxRox to rectify matters. They’ve been putting on old school rock and metal bands on in town for the last few years and this weekender condenses all that riff celebration into two solid days of noise, complete with camping. Friday’s line-up is topped by Guns’n’Roses tribute band **GUNS2ROSES** who are, let’s be honest, probably better than the real thing these days. They’re joined by local rock stars **HELL’S GAZELLES**, whose own debt to G’n’R comes with added slabs of Judas Priest and AD/DC. There’s also a double dose of Nottingham rock from **FAHRAN** and **NASTY HIGH**, while Liverpool’s **BLACK CAT BONES** make a return to the shire. Witney punks **TRAUMA UK** open proceedings.
Saturday is a full day, with the star turn being headliner **BLAZE BAYLEY** (*pictured*), the former Wolfsbane and Iron Maiden frontman keeping his own rock dream very much alive. Joining him will be stoner-blues heroes **DESERT STORM**; Berkshire’s 80s thrash and NWOBHM-inspired metallers **PRIMITAI**; Edinburgh thrash and metalcore crew **DOG TIRED**; Worcestershire’s “fantasycore” merchants **FURY**; northern powerhouse rockers **A JOKER’S RAGE**; Harrow’s Thin Lizzy and AD/DC-influenced heavyweights **MEANSTEED**; Bristol’s grunge-popsters **IDESTROY**; Basingstoke’s sleazy, tat-heavy biker rock brigade **BLACK BULLETS** and local garage-rock duo **CHEROKII**.



MONDAY 7th
OSIAH + A TRUST UNCLEAN + BLOODSHOT: The Wheatsheaf – Brutal deathcore from that there pit of hell – *see main preview*
STRUM WHAT YA BRUNG: The Black Swan – Fortnightly open mic session.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim

TUESDAY 8th
INTRUSION: The Cellar – Goth, industrial, AND ebm club night with residents Doktor Joy and Bookhouse keeping it dark on the decks.
SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 9th
DC HIP HOP SESSIONS: The Cellar

THURSDAY 10th
FAIRPORT’S CROPREDY CONVENTION: Cropredy – Fairport Convention’s already sold out annual gathering of the folk tribes opens with a headline set from literate 90s hitmaker The Divine Comedy. He’s joined by legendary producer Trevor Horn and his band for a run-through of hits; trad folk stalwarts Show of Hands; Feast of Fiddles and an acoustic set from Fairport themselves.
PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf – Free gig in the downstairs bar from the veteran local blues and rock man and his band.
KING TERRIBLE presents THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER: 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
THE MOTIVE & FRIENDS: Fat Lil’s, Witney

FRIDAY 11th
FAIRPORT’S CROPREDY CONVENTION: Cropredy – ‘Downtown’ hitmaker Petula Clarke tops the bill on the second day of Fairport’s festival. She’s joined on the bill by English folk guitar legend Richard Thompson, plus Pierce Brothers, CC Smugglers and The Gigspanner Big Band among others.
THE HISTORY OF JUNGLE: The Cellar – Jungle anthems and rare classics.
GROWLER: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Rock and punk covers.
REVEREND BLACK: Tap Social, Botley – Classic blues and rock.

SATURDAY 12th
FAIRPORT’S CROPREDY CONVENTION: Cropredy – Fairport Convention play their traditional epic closing set at Cropredy, joined by a cast of guests and former members as they run through their illustrious five-decade folk-rock back catalogue. They’re joined on today’s bill by Dougie MacLean, Marillion and Cats in Space.
HOUSE PARTY: The Cellar – Hip hop, pop, r’n’b and garage with Headchef, Katiusha and Muzzletough.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms
PETE FRYER BAND: The White House
PANDEMONIUM: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Classic rock, metal and blues.
WIREBIRDS: Tap Social, Botley – Classic blues and rock.



Monday 7th
OSIAH / A TRUST UNCLEAN / BLOODSHOT: The Wheatsheaf
Osiah were described as the heaviest band in the world in a review of their debut album ‘Terror Firma’, which is some claim, but you don’t have to listen for long to start believing it’s more than mere hype. How heavy are they? Think Bolt Thrower or Behemoth levels of heavy. This is brutal death metal mixed up with hellish grindcore and atmospheric black metal, speed-crazed beats mixed with titanic riffs and Ricky Lee Roper’s gore-spattered Uruk-hai vocal rasp. It’s utterly savage and uncompromising but it’s also a tight precision kind of sonic weaponry, the band’s technical edge prominent in the mix but never allowed to temper the onslaught. Hailing from Sunderland – a place hardly renowned as a haven of beauty – Osiah have done that rare thing: make an album that fits neatly into the extreme metal genre but sound fresh and vital. With its murky bass, blitzkrieg kick drum blasts and churning guitar, it’s a devastating debut, and we can only imagine – while salivating slightly at the prospect – how it will sound cranked up live and loud on the Wheatsheaf’s PA. Great local death/grind support from A Trust Unclean, making a rare local live appearance, and groove-led grind newcomers Bloodshot. We’ll be down the front. We might never come back. We will have died happy.

SUNDAY 13th
YAM TAN TETHERA #1: Tap Social, Botley (1-11pm) – TIGMUS host a full day of live music at Oxford’s coolest new bar, featuring sets from Afro-tinged indie-dance crew Bright Works; jaunty indie types Flatlands; punk newcomers Self Help; grunge beasts Slate Hearts, and garage rockers WOLFS, plus Echoic; Rosie Caldercott; Hazey Jane and Holly Redford-Jones.
ADAM & ELVIS + MARK ATHERTON & FRIENDS + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE + MARK SOLLIS + ASTEROX: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm) – Free afternoon of unplugged live music in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar hosted by Klub Kakofanny.

MONDAY 14th
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim
OXFORD CLASSIC JAZZ: Harcourt Arms

TUESDAY 15th
TOO MANY ZOOZ + THABO: O2 Academy – Following on from their New York neighbours



Wednesday 16th

BILLY BRANCH & THE GILES ROBSON BAND:

The Bullingdon

A genuine blues legend at The Haven Club tonight in the form of Chicago singer and harmonica player Billy Branch. Three times a Grammy nominee as well as an Emmy winner and recipient of more dedicated blues awards than his mantelpiece can probably handle, Branch started his musical life in the early 1970s playing with the great Willie Dixon's Chicago Blues Allstars, eventually taking over harp duties from Carey Bell who went of to form his own band. Later Branch formed his own Sons of Blues band, featuring Dixon's son Freddie and has become an ambassador for the blues with his Blues In School project, as well as an ambassador for the city itself. Along his long and varied career he's played with Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker and BB King and his lengthy, labyrinthine discography features collaborations with everyone from Johnny Winters, Lou Rawls and Eddy Clearwater to Koko Taylor and Taj Mahal. Back in 2007 the Chicago Blues Festival honoured his 30-plus years of music making with a three-hour live performance but he's clearly not resting on any laurels, still touring his music which is both dextrous and aware of all of blues history – from its acoustic southern roots to the electric Chicago sound he helped make a global hallmark, Tonight he's playing with Giles Robson's band in what should be an essential night out for all blues fans.

Moon Hooch's visit to town late last year, fellow subway busking skronkers Too Many Zooz bring their "brass house" to the O2 as part of a tour to promote recent album 'Subways Gawdz', the trio high-energy mix of trumpet, sax and beats putting them alongside the likes of UK contemporaries Melt Yourself Down and The Comet is Coming as a band taking live jazz into a funkier 21st Century and beyond.
SPARK'S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 16th

BILLY BRANCH & THE GILES ROBSON BAND: **The Bullingdon** – Classic Chicago blues from the legendary singer and harmonica player – *see main preview*
DC HIP HOP SESSIONS: The Cellar

THURSDAY 17th

SOFAR SOUNDS: **Venue TBC** – The Oxford branch of the global pop-up gig movement hosts its

monthly show in an intimate venue and featuring acts to be announced to ticket holders the day before.
KING TERRIBLE presents THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER: **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**
SHATTERED COMPASS + CONTEK + THE REAPER + EDEN FALLS: **Fat Lil's, Witney** – Local metalcore crew Shattered Compass launch their new EP, 'Matters of Mind', with support from ambient post-hardcore crew Contek and teen riffmongers The Reaper.

FRIDAY 18th

LEST WE FORGET + SWITCHBLADE CITY + DELLACOMA: **The Wheatsheaf** – Heavy duty fun from OxRox tonight with local metalcore crew Lest We Forget alongside Northamptonshire's Switch Blade City and Melbourne's classic rockers Dellacoma, kicking it out in the style of Velvet Revolver, Guns'n'Roses and Stone Temple Pilots.
SOUL SESSIONS: **The Cellar** – Classic disco, funk and soul tunes from the 60s onwards.
LOS PEPES: **The Library** – Winnebago Deal's Ben Perrier brings his new garage rock/power pop band to Smash Disco's free gig night.
WOODSTOCK ACOUSTIC CLUB: **Woodstock Social Club** – Unplugged music club with LA singer-songwriter Anny Celsi alongside Brian Wilson percussionist Nelson Bragg and Ireland's Duncan Maitland, plus Under the Wychwood and Clark Wiseman.
THE A-WATTS: **The White House** – Classic jive.

SATURDAY 19th

HAZE + BIRTHDAY CARD + FATHER DEMO + MILK: **O2 Academy** – Following support slots with Ratboy, Palm Honey and Cabbage among others, local post-punk starlets Haze play their biggest headline show to date, the band's unruly noise pop taking cues from Wire, The Fall, Parquet Courts and Shame. Support includes melancholic Aylesbury indie crew Birthday Card.
ELECTRONIC SOUND SESSION: **The Bullingdon** – Trance, techno and electro station Electronic Sound brings its playlist to life with selector Slaw Farb alongside Bart Rose and Tom Ranx.
FRACTURE + STORYTELLER + KHAMSINA + FUJI: **The Wheatsheaf** – It's All About the Music local bands showcase.
FLUID: **The Cellar** – Bass, grime and drum&bass from Fluid DJs in aid of Oxford Homeless Pathways.
THE BRITPOP BOYS: **Fat Lil's, Witney** – All your favourite Elastica, Echobelly and Sleeper tunes... oh, hang on...
THE MIGHTY CADILLACS: **The Brewery Tap, Abingdon** – Blues, r'n'b and rock'n'roll.

SUNDAY 20th

OPEN MIC SESSION: **The Harcourt Arms**

MONDAY 21st

STRUM WHAT YA BRUNG: **The Black Swan**
OPEN MIC SESSION: **The Royal Blenheim**

TUESDAY 22nd

SPARK'S SIDE OF THE MOON: **James Street**

Tavern

WEDNESDAY 23rd

DC HIP HOP SESSIONS: **The Cellar**

THURSDAY 24th

KING TERRIBLE presents THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER: **The Cellar**
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: **The Half Moon**
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: **Jude the Obscure**

Friday 25th – Monday 28th

TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: Thame Showground

53 years young, Towersey Festival really is the genial, gentle-natured godparent of the Oxforshire festival scene, its family-friendly traditions evident in the mix of roots music, arts, crafts, cinema, folk dances and workshops. Sprawled over a heroic four days on Thame Showground, it continues to attract some of the biggest names in acoustic, folk, blues and Americana, with highlights of this year's event including Scottish indie-folk songstress and BRIT and Ivor Novello-winning star **KT TUNSTALL** (*pictured*); dreadlocked troubadour, raconteur, hitmaker and all-round good egg **NEWTON FAULKNER**; Steve Knightley and Phil Beer's veteran acoustic folk band **SHOW OF HANDS**; local folk hero, singer, fiddle player and record holding BBC Folk Award winner **JON BODEN** (eleven and counting); Ian Dury's former backing band **THE BLOCKHEADS**, with their quintessentially English take on r'n'b, punk and funk; **FOY VANCE** with his mix and match of Irish folk and southern states jazz, blues and soul; Singer and fiddle player and English folk royalty **ELIZA CARTHY** with her Wayward Band; Newcastle's enduring folk rockers **LINDISFARNE**; folk traditionalists **FLOOK**; Yorkshire/ Derbyshire folk trio **COOPE, BOYES & SIMPSON** with their close harmony singing and social commentary; husband and wife pair – and BBC Folk Award winners for best duo – **KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN**, and superb Irish folk, klezmer, Balkan folk and punk ensemble **THE ESKIES**. Loads more obviously with full weekend tickets available alongside day passes and rustic good vibes guaranteed.



BLUES JAM: **Catherine Wheel, Sandford**
FRIDAY 25th

TERMINUS + SILENT JACK + FYRESKY: **The Wheatsheaf** – Classic hard rock and blues covers from local rockers Terminus at tonight's OxRox show.
TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: **Thame Showground** – Opening day of Oxfordshire's oldest music festival, with sets across the weekend from KT Tunstall; The Blockheads; Show of Hands; Newton Faulkner; Eliza Carthy, and a host of other folk, blues, Americana and acoustic pop stars – *see main preview*
THE BIG FEASTIVAL: **Alex James's Farm, Kingham** – The world's biggest ever parade of artisan cheese marches on a big-stage Kenwood Chef demonstration to a soundtrack of Ibiza hits played in an orchestral style.

CHRIS GOLDFINGER: **O2 Academy** – Roots and dancehall club night with former-Radio 1 and 1Xtra DJ Chris Goldfinger and his soundsystem.
PYT: **The Bullingdon** – Disco, funk and soul club night.
TERMINUS + FYRESKY: **The Wheatsheaf** – Blues and classic rock covers from recent Tigertailz support Terminus at tonight's OxRox show, with support from Southend's gothy hard rockers Fyresky.
PITCHBLACK SUMMER TECHNO PARTY: **The Cellar** – Pitch Black host their annual summer party with techno from John Swede and Jack Ganna-Powell.
EYE-CON: **Fat Lil's, Witney** – Mod classics and Britpop hits.

SATURDAY 26th

TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: **Thame Showground**
GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with BRIGHTWORKS + PFAFF + SEMI URBAN FOX: **The Wheatsheaf** – Afropop, mathrock and funky electro-pop from London/Oxford crew Bright Works at tonight's GTI, the band having just released their new EP 'Cox Works'. They're joined by Manchester's fidgety, angular instrumental outfit Pfaff, who have tracks with titles like 'Social Media Crowdsourcing Doesn't Really Work For Naming Songs (This Song Is Called Gary)'. Indie fuzz and jangle from Semi Urban Fox to open the show.
EASTER ISLAND STATUES + FLATLANDS + TARPIT: **The Cellar** – Folk-tinged indie rocking from Easter Island Statues.
SKYLARKIN SOUND SYSTEM: **The Cellar** – Count Skylarkin' hosts his monthly reggae, dancehall, ska and soul party.
VOLUME with TAXMAN & MC TRIGGA: **The Bullingdon** – Drum&bass club night.
THE HEX COLLECTIVE + TAMAL(ES): **Harcourt Arms** – Antique stroies and poems set to modern folk tunes.
THE BIG FEASTIVAL: **Alex James's Farm, Kingham** – Posh chips and Olly Murs: yours for just a hundred quid.
THE CARTHORSES: **The Brewery Tap,**

Abingdon – Power ballads from the 60s through to the 90s.

SUNDAY 27th

TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: **Thame Showground**
THE BIG FEASTIVAL: **Alex James's Farm, Kingham** – Oxfordshire's largest farmers market and fast food convention comes to a close with Madness and more.
SUPERLOOSE + PURPLE MAY + ASH LEWIS + FREDDY LECRAGG: **The Wheatsheaf** (3:30-8:30pm) – Free afternoon of music from Giddyup Music in the downstairs bar.
OPEN MIC SESSION: **The Harcourt Arms**
BLUES JAM: **Fat Lil's, Witney** (3-7pm) – Open blues jam.

MONDAY 28th

ALL TAMARA'S PARTIES FESTIVAL: **Tap Social** (1-11pm) – All-day festival from All Tamara's Parties, with sets from electro-blues synthabilly duo Vienna Ditto; funk and jazz pop starlets Catgod; wonderfully wonky songsmith Salvation Bill; even more wonderful and wonky post-punk jazz-rock pop perverters Lucy Leave; folk/Americana duo The Black Feathers; grandiose post-rock-meets-folk folks The Diamond Family Archive, and Oxford/London acoustic singer-songwriter Anna McCrae. Poet and wit George Chopping is your comper for the day, while DJs from Young Women's Music Project will be keeping the music going between songs.
TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: **Thame Showground**
SARCASM + OWNER: **The Library** – Smash Disco host a double dose of post-punk noise with London's Sarcasm channelling Gang of Four and Crisis, while Owner worship at Wipers' noise altar.
OPEN MIC SESSION: **The Royal Blenheim**

TUESDAY 29th

SPARK'S SIDE OF THE MOON: **James Street Tavern**

WEDNESDAY 30th

DC HIP HOP SESSIONS: **The Cellar**

THURSDAY 31st

DANIEL ROMANO: **The Bullingdon** – Countrypolitan mix of honky tonk, country blues and balladry from the Ontario singer-songwriter, keeping the spirit of George Jones alive in his sad-eyed storytelling.
KING TERRIBLE presents THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER: **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**

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LIVE

CORNBURY FESTIVAL

Great Tew

We were somewhere around Woodstock on the edge of Great Tew when the Pimm’s began to take hold. I remember saying something like “the cucumber in this is weird. Pass the lager”. Suddenly there were 4x4s all around us. Then camping chairs. And leather sofas. And fully furnished tents. And fridges. And for some reason wood burners. After all, it really wasn’t hot enough. The sky was full of flags, and a huge angry sun. Our editor had taken his shoes off and was pouring beer into his face to facilitate the tanning process. “What the hell are you yelling about?” he muttered, staring up at the sun so he wouldn’t have to set eyes on Scouting For Girls; “pitch your tent and drink this. We’ve got a few hours before Kaiser Chiefs are on.”

So here we are, the last Cornbury – the Fabulous Farewell as it’s been billed. A civilised journey to the heart of the Oxfordshire music dream, if you’ll allow us to further bastardise Hunter S Thompson. Perhaps the festival that became dubbed Poshstock might, for this last hurrah, ditch its genteel veneer and allow some proper bad behaviour to seep out. Or maybe not, if the apology issued after Black Dylan’s set on Saturday afternoon is anything to go by. Standards must be maintained; this isn’t the last night in Gomorrah, after all. Rebellion at Cornbury generally involves ignoring the chair ban in the main arena, which makes it one of the few seated outdoor festivals in existence. But for all our mocking of festival going Cotswold style, this most straight laced of events remains one of the highlights of the local festival calendar. The music this year might be more middle of the road than a line-painter on a dual carriageway, but there’s always something to keep even the most cynical amused.

Keeping things genial on the Riverside Stage are **THE AUGUST LIST**, who have realised that dropping a series of F-bombs during ‘The Ballad Of James Lucas and Betty Dupree’ is perhaps inadvisable at a festival with a strong family ethic. They replace the offending word accordingly, it’s not quite as punchy, but getting messed up with The August List is still an excellent way to spend the afternoon. They finish with ‘Wilderness’, one of the finest songs to come from an Oxford band in recent times. It can reduce even the

hardest to tears; it’s either that or the effects of the sunscreen melting into our eyes.

STONE FOUNDATION have been knocking around for a good while now but with the recent patronage of Paul Weller, they’ve started to make a real name for themselves. We hear them drifting over the fields before we see them and for a short while wonder if perhaps The Style Council have reunited for a secret gig. Their attention to detail and commitment to laid back soul grooves is admirable and they’re warmly received by the crowd.

Finishing the Friday off are **KAISER CHIEFS** and on this evidence, they might have been better as a closing act for the whole weekend. Ricky Wilson is an energetic and entirely personable frontman, impossible to dislike. He might well predict a riot but on this occasion, he’s way off the mark, everything will be just fine unless there’s a shortage of free muesli and real ale or more than a hint of profanity. ‘Ruby’ is, as always, an absolute earworm, and by the song’s conclusion we go off with a tune in our heads and a need for a curry in our stomachs.

Saturday begins with a brief detour via the local tavern, The Falkland Arms, where weary writers can imbibe the best ales, eat a frankly pathetic portion of mushroom lasagne, and until recently, partake in as much snuff as they can Hoover up. It’s here we find a tweed-wrapped toff dressed as a frog helping himself to a pint from behind the bar, pouring it into a tankard sellotaped to his green fist. His friends appear to be sporting sporrans fashioned from entire dead animals, their glazy eyes peering out from the crotches of their sartorially offensive owners. This sunscreen is really messing with our eyes.

If you’re need of perking up, there’s no better band the **ALPHABET BACKWARDS**, who always seem to be filled with the joys of life. Their new song ‘Springsteen’ is a perky little pop number more in line with ‘Glory Days’ than ‘Atlantic City’. Just as we’d expect. From Springsteen to Dylan. **BLACK DYLAN** to be exact. Clearly not blessed with the self-censorship awareness of The August List he’s a potty-mouthed (not our words, the words of a nearby punter) ball of



energy and a self-proclaimed “Black Viking Motherfucker!”. His set, a whirling mix of funk, soul, rock, hip hop and expletives is the highlight of the weekend. Telling his bassist to “sit in your fucking chair” before moving on to the guitarist and telling him, “you hired your fucking guitar, didn’t you?” he’s unpredictable and essential viewing. It also helps that he’s got a huge pile of decent tunes to match the attitude. Of course, people complain and the organisers are compelled to issue an apology over the PA. Shortly afterwards David Cameron is spotted stalking across the fields, unmolested. Weird isn’t it that people will complain about someone saying “motherfucker” yet remain unmoved by the presence of a man who fucked the entire country.

Onto something less contentious, in the form of **ROSE ELINOR DOUGAL**, once of the perfect pop parish of The Pipettes. She’s still got the sensibilities of her former band, but now she’s a little more grown up in her approach. For a moment, she sounds a little like Sonya Madan of Echobelly, but as the set continues, she channels the softer side of Blondie. We’re worried that **POLICE DOG HOGAN** have gone over to the soft side for much of the first half of their set. For all the tales of “shitty white wine” (no apologies offered) there’s an absence of fun early on, but once they hit ‘Galway Girl’, a Dubliners-like roustabout, they pick

up significantly. Sometimes a band can get a bit too tight though and we hope they haven’t lost that early knockabout spirit.

Back at The Riverside stage we catch **TEN MILLENIA**’s soundcheck, which promises some Hammond-driven gospel, like we’re about to be delivered a day early to the best church in town. When they finally take the stage all the promise of a ballsy soul band disappears in an instant and it all goes a bit bland. It’s a real shame because there’s something here, we’re sure of it. As Ten Millenia work through their set a river runs through the Cornbury site. We check the skies. The sun is still set higher than a pensioner’s central heating. Behind us a never ending flow of people are snaking across the site towards the Songbird Stage. We check the programme. We check again. **SCOUTING FOR GIRLS?** Are there really that many people wanting to see Scouting For Girls? Evidently there are. In fact there are more people wanting to see them than can fit into the field, and disappointed punters are starting to turn back and head towards the main arena. The thought of battling through the throng in order to hear ‘She’s So Lovely’ is too much to bear. So it’s off to try and find a good spot Bryan Adams.

While he’ll never hit the heights of Springsteen, **BRYAN ADAMS** is certainly capable of putting on



Photos: Ben Phillips

a stadium sized show. It’s easy to forget just how many of his songs have drilled their way into our cerebral cortex over the years. When he brings his act to town he might not bring it heavy, but he does go straight for the jugular, despite being the nicest man in rock (committed vegan, champion of whales and dolphins, all-round good egg). They’re all here tonight: ‘Run To You’, ‘Summer Of 69’ and ‘18 Till I Die’. He runs through ‘(Everything I Do) I Do It For You’ (fists are pumped skyward by people of our acquaintance who should know better), and ‘Go Down Rocking’, which by Bryan’s own admission sums up his entire career in heroically bluesy fashion. He ends on a brace of Eddie Cochran and Elvis covers and it’s a near enough perfect finale to the most packed day Cornbury has ever known. Perhaps if they’d all come along before, this wouldn’t be the last one.

Sunday morning, of course, means tea. And cake, if you can stomach the world’s largest slab of all-butter Victoria Sponge in the Tea For Tew tent, the location of which, next to the Riverside stage, gives us one of the surprise highlights of the weekend in the form of **THE CHIPPING NORTON SCHOOL JAZZ BAND**. School bands can be a horrific experience, but as they run through a series of hits, it’s clear they’ve got a couple of incredibly talented vocalist on board and a rhythm section that’s got more funk than plenty of the acts

here three or four times their age.

We love a bit of Ultravox, and if they were never the same after **MIDGE URE** replaced John Foxx, they had a sense of pomp about them that carried their litany of epic synth-rock hits aloft. Today Ure is playing an acoustic set, accompanied by a violinist. He starts promisingly enough with a take of ‘The Voice’ and he’s a funny, self-deprecating presence, but the set soon slumps into subdued melancholy which becomes laborious. We contemplate leaving, but then he pulls all his aces out and we get ‘Vienna’, ‘Hymn’, ‘Fade To Grey’ and a closing ‘Dancing With Tears In My Eyes’, which are reminders that deep down he’s a sometimes phenomenal singer and songwriter, and also that an awful lot of early 80s pop hits were about nuclear annihilation.

NINE BELOW ZERO might not have the charismatic personnel of Dr Feelgood or The Blockheads, but their turbo charged pub rock is a force to be reckoned with. The drum solos might be a little self-indulgent, but they can just about be forgiven simply because the energy they pump out is infectious.

The uncrowned Queen of Cornbury, of course, is **IMELDA MAY**. She’s been here so often she’s probably entitled to a residency. This year she seems a little more subdued than the colourful 50s explosion that we’re used to. Dressed in black

and peppering her set with low key introspective tunes, it’s as if her goth alter-ego has taken over for the day. Her speech about love and togetherness in the face of terrorism is entirely well meaning but it drifts into mawkishness and pulls the power from her set. In the face of such worthiness what is needed is a bit of fun, and **RIGHT SAID FRED** are nothing if not fun. They’re essentially a Eurovision band that’s never done Eurovision; they trot out their usual hits and throw in a little Bloodhound Gang tune for good measure. Inevitably it’s hard for them to sustain the momentum for an entire set however, so it’s off to catch a little bit of **HOPE & GLORY** whose ska covers have the biggest crowd for the Riverside all weekend going absolutely nuts.

THE PRETENDERS’ set is pretty much everything you could wish for. Chrissie Hynde is quick to assess the situation, stating that and delivers on the promise to give the audience the “cheesy stuff” they want. ‘Brass In Pocket’; ‘Don’t Get Me Wrong’; ‘Chain Gang’... they’re all here and belted out as hard as the Cornbury PA will allow. They close on ‘Middle Of The Road’, a song that sums up the weekend perfectly.

Such a hits heavy set would be the perfect finale for a festival in its final year, but there’s still time for a few old familiar faces. **STAXS** run

through their spotless renditions of a host of old classics. Their version of ‘Norwegian Wood’ set to ‘Come Together’ is a particular highlight and with **MICA PARIS** joining them (and putting in a fine performance for ‘I Put A Spell On You’) it’s pretty much all you could ask for. **JOOLS HOLLAND**, with his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra is maybe not something we’d ask for, but as an old friend of the Cornbury family, it’s perhaps appropriate that he closes the festival. The highlights come when he’s joined by Chris Difford for a run through of Squeeze’s ‘Take Me I’m Yours’ and ‘Cool For Cats’, but Ruby Turner’s appearance pushes them close.

After which we get fireworks – Cornbury literally going out with a bang at the very end, although perhaps the most surreal moment of the entire weekend comes in the campsite bar in the early hours. The corner of Cornbury Festival most inclined to real hedonism break out in a chorus of “Oh, Jeremy Corbyn” when we thought Clarkson was more the thing here. As the song carries across the valley we smile at the idea that even at this most middle England of festivals a little rebellious spirit proudly lingers. And we live in hope that, like the Labour leader, Cornbury might yet defy all the odds to rise again. It’s too much fun to lose forever.

Words: Sam Shepherd, Dale Kattack



RIDE / SPECTRES

The New Theatre

Having cancelled their June show in Oxford at very short notice, Spectres might have been expected to arrive in sackcloth and ashes uttering repeated apologies as they sneak on stage at The New Theatre before a sparse audience. That they win everyone over with a visceral set punctuated by slabs of noise from their four guitarists, World Domination Enterprises and Einstürzende Neubauten recalled, is therefore a credit to them. It’s with their more driving, drummer-propelled tracks that they click the best rather than the noise-storm slower numbers, the vocals definitely playing second fiddle despite hints of Nick Cave and even Elvis about them. That this kind of full frontal aural assault would in days of yore been accompanied by malevolent behaviour involving razor blades and bodily fluids (The Birthday Party, Throbbing Gristle) might make you wistful,

although the clean-up job in time for pantomime season wouldn’t be pretty. Ride emerge to a crowd of balding men with jazzy shirts, this reviewer not excluded. From the off, the most remarkable thing about the whole performance are Mark Gardener’s vocals. There’s none of the croakiness you might expect a quarter of a century on from the band’s heyday; the front man is mellifluous in his delivery and a stellar back catalogue of songs, plus some fine ones from the band’s new album, ‘Weather Diaries’, provide for an evening of insane catchiness accompanied by swirling laser beams. The sonic cathedrals are there of course, immersing the theatre and reinstated in full after the experiment of low-church trestle tables and plain pulpits of the ‘Tarantula’ era. The music is positively baroque, providing curlicues and

floating buttresses of sound. Nor does the shoegaze label seem appropriate: Gardener probably can’t recall what footwear he was wearing and he has an engaging presence as the band glide with confidence. There’s an admission that this is a big night for nostalgic reasons; he recalls seeing Siouxsie, The Smiths and...er... Big Country in this very building back in the day and as audience members roundly ignore the limits of the all-seater venue, each successive song seems to be greeted with an ever more rapturous reaction. Highlights include a stunning rendition of ‘Drive Blind’, its middle eight transformed into a psychedelic wig-out, while a predictable but nonetheless welcome encore of ‘Leave Them All Behind’ is a memorable capstone to the evening. The new stuff impresses too, in particular ‘Charm Assault’ and the distinctive, new wavy ‘All I Want’. When are homecomings ever not triumphant? Ride don’t let us down in that respect. **Rob Langham**

FVNERALS / WREN / INDICA BLUES

The Wheatsheaf

Indica Blues’ set might, at its heart, be a symphonic 30-minute, sludged-up homage to Black Sabbath’s ‘Iron Man’, but that doesn’t make it any less captivating. It’s like watching a slow-moving lava flow advancing towards you with a soundtrack of God sculpting a nearby mountain into a stature of the Devil with an angle grinder made of jet engines. And if that don’t sound like your idea of fun, you’re not invited to our next party, you big softy. You know you’re onto a winner when a band has a guitarist whose sole job seems to be to lay down a bed of ambient feedback for the rest of the group to dish out punishing industrial grooves over. Tonight’s set from London quartet Wren is a pulverising *tour de force* – weaponised future factory noise that’s all-consuming and unrelenting. There are moments mid set when they pitch into more contemplative post-metal soundscaping and even some more abstract diversions, but ultimately they return to the oppressive molten core of crushing galley slave beats, middle-distance barks and howls, and

scouring guitar noise, which lingers in the darkest reaches of your brain long after the last strands of feedback have dissipated. If Indica Blues are the oncoming storm and Wren the conflagration, Fvnerals are the ghostly aftermath of the battle, stripped-down and as funereal as you’d expect from their name; their music hangs wraith-like in the air rather than trying to batter your senses. They’re unstintingly doomy and monolithically heavy, but fronted by singer Tiffany’s spectral, sometimes hymnal vocals, they sound like a midnight meet-up between Undersmile and Mazzy Star, or perhaps what Cranes might have sounded like if they’d ditched their Dead Can Dance albums in favour of Earth. Such bleakness is incongruous to the warm summer evening outside, but also accentuates its hypnotising chill, and frankly, if this is what our funeral sounds like, we’ll go to our graves happy. **Dale Kattack**

NATHASSIA

The Bullingdon

The Bully is bedecked with mystical-symbol-and-fluorescent-fractal wall hangings in a quantity last seen at the closing-down sale of an incense shop in 1999; the promise is to take us “from our ancient past to the future”; “from Paganism to Transhumanism, Egypt to Nanotech and Third Eye to AI”. Dutch-born Nathassia – tonight promoting her debut album, ‘Light of the World’ – is a self-made package, unsurprisingly given the ambition of her premise. It all sounds how you’d expect it to sound, given the periods referenced: glitchy, drum&bass electronica and atmospherics that meander over and under Middle-Eastern strings and wibbly quarter-tones. The trick is not just to pick the best bits of both traditions, but the bits that work the best together, and unfortunately, based on tonight, Nathassia hasn’t quite got it yet. Experimenting is one thing, but a traditional song structure needs a memorable hook. Nathassia herself has a beautiful voice, but her vocal quirks – over-rolling her ‘r’s, ending lines with

what sounds like bird calls – are unnecessary affectations. The journey taken in the eight songs is too short to make a convincing concept album (a genre notably very forgiving of bizarre narratives). The leap from ‘Egypt’s Queen’, about the ancient bust of Queen Nefertiti that the Germans won’t give back to Egypt, to the future when AI will merge with consciousness and we’ll all communicate with each other in our heads (‘Telepathically’) is too quick. ‘Turning Headz’, about a future when we’ll all see each others’ points of view, is the best-formed song tonight, a Pendulum-esque romp that’s desperate for a Pendulum-esque tune. This is all accompanied by two costume changes, taking us from peacock feathers to LED-covered wings: an interesting development but too grand for the context. You have to admire Nathassia’s aspirations, and apparent budgetary restraints. She just needs to make everything – the songs, the look, the narrative – cohere better. **Kirsten Etheridge**

STEVIE PARKER / CANDY SAYS

Modern Art Oxford

With an early start at a free gig you’d forgive people for lingering at the back of the room for the support act but tonight everyone’s thronged as close to what passes for a stage as they can for Candy Says. Here’s a band you have to get up close and personal to: they’re hushed, almost hymnal, the emotional cracks in songs like ‘For What It’s Worth’ so fine they demand your full attention. Julia Walker’s voice is put through a harmoniser for the entire set, giving it an oddly alien feel, but you can still feel the passion in ‘Whatever Comes’, a spectral cousin of Annie Lennox’s ‘Into The West’, while the trippier ‘Ghosts’ shifts the duo closer to Grimes territory. It’s intensely intimate music, which makes you wonder how it might transfer to the bigger stages and crowds it so obviously deserves, but for now it’s a treat to get so close to something so genuinely special. Bristolian singer Stevie Parker is possessed of a similarly pure voice to Julia, and it’s her voice



THE CELLAR

WHAT’S ON IN AUGUST

Wed 2nd DC HIP-HOP SESSIONS Hip-Hop / Rnb / Trap / Grime £3 DOUBLE GIN & JUICE • 11pm – 3am Free Entry!	Fri 11th THE HISTORY OF JUNGLE MUSIC 11pm – 3am £6 all night	Thurs 24th King Terrible Presents...THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER Rock / Disco / 80s 11pm – 3am Free Entry
Thurs 3rd King Terrible Presents...THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER Rock / Disco / 80s 11pm – 3am Free Entry	Sat 12th HOUSE PARTY Hip-Hop / Pop / RnB / Garage 11pm – 3am • £5	Fri 25th PITCH BLACK SUMMER TECHNO PARTY Techno / Techno / Techno 11pm – 3am • £5
Fri 4th BOSSAPHONIK Dancefloor Latin / Afrobeat / Global Grooves / Balkan Beats CHANCERY BLAME & THE GADJO CLUB (LIVE!) 10pm – 3am, band on at 11pm • £7 adv £8 otd	Wed 16th DC HIP-HOP SESSIONS Hip-Hop / Rnb / Trap / Grime £3 DOUBLE GIN & JUICE • 11pm – 3am Free Entry!	Sat 26th Din Twins Presents EASTER ISLAND STATUES + TARPIT + JUNIPER NIGHTS Reggae / Dancehall / Etc 7:30pm – 10pm £5 adv
Sat 5th FREERANGE UKG / Grime / Bassline 11pm – 3am £5 all night	Thurs 17th King Terrible Presents...THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER Rock / Disco / 80s 11pm – 3am Free Entry	Sat 26th SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM All / Kinda / Styles COUNT SKYLARKIN (4HR SET) 11pm – 3am £3 B4 11:30pm • £5
Tues 8th INTRUSION DJS DOKTOR JOY + BOOKHOUSE Goth / EBM / Industrial Dress Code: Cyber / Dark Alternative 8:30pm – 2am • £4 otd	Fri 18th SOUL SESSIONS Disco / Soul / Funk 11pm – 3am £5 all night	Wed 30th DC HIP-HOP SESSIONS Hip-Hop / Rnb / Trap / Grime £3 DOUBLE GIN & JUICE • 11pm – 3am Free Entry!
Wed 9th DC HIP-HOP SESSIONS Hip-Hop / Rnb / Trap / Grime £3 DOUBLE GIN & JUICE • 11pm – 3am Free Entry!	Mon 21st CINEMA UNDER THE STAIRS Oxford’s / Underground / Cinema JAWS 7:30pm for 8:30pm start • £4	Thurs 31st King Terrible Presents...THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER Rock / Disco / 80s 11pm – 3am Free Entry
Thurs 10th King Terrible Presents...THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER Rock / Disco / 80s 11pm – 3am Free Entry	Wed 23rd DC HIP-HOP SESSIONS Hip-Hop / Rnb / Trap / Grime £3 DOUBLE GIN & JUICE • 11pm – 3am Free Entry!	

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IRREGULAR FOLKS SUMMER SESSION

Victoria Arms, Old Marston

Irregular Folks say they don’t do headliners, and when the very first act on the bill is the outstanding **YORKSTON, THORNE & KHAN**, we’re apt to believe them. As we’re alternately buoyed up by Moving Shadow-influenced double bass swells and snarled in dense brambles of sarangi we watch a special gazebo being set up to stop anyone mooring up a punt and getting in for free, which has to be the most Oxford piece of security ever; we feel bad about sneaking in drugs inside our *Brideshead* teddy bear, now.

If we wanted accompaniment to such well-heeled crime capers **JACK CHESHIRE**’s artful, bucolic English prog is the perfect choice, a gyroscopic blur of prog-pop that spins jazzily somewhere between Wilco and Fridge. Occasionally a tiny bit prissy, but overall entrancing, and enhanced by some Stornobass. A bugbear of ours is journalists who only ever compare female musicians to other women performers, but there are no male equivalents for the tastefully breathy kookstimme of someone like Joanna Newsom, let’s not beat around the bush. **LAURA J MARTIN**’s tastefully looped pop tapestries are actually at their best when she swaps the wide-eyed vocals for some percussively cheeky Herbie Mann flute workouts, anyway.

OLY RALFE’s meandering piano fripperies are the only mis-step in today’s musical schedule, but he does allow us to recline on the satiny cushions of the bordello-kino on Mini-Movie Island, a home for short films whose highpoints are leftfield comedies, reminding us that Buxton and Serafinowicz are as responsible for bringing as much quirkily literate originality to British popular culture of the past quarter century as Welsh or Cocker. Not that the Brits have cornered the market, as proved by a talk in the consistently excellent Odditorium lecture-yurt about cartoonist B Kliban, forgotten influence on the syndicated surrealism of Gary Larson or Rupert Fawcett. And of course there is the genius of **PAUL FOOT**, who MCs the whole day with the spiralling manic desperation of a teaching assistant failing their workplace assessment.

With her sparse programmed backing **HANNAH BRUCE** at first reminds us of fellow Oxonian Esther Joy Lane but soon has us thinking of mid-80s Carly Simon and the airbrushed windswept vistas of vintage Chris Isaak, and so keeps us fascinated even when we’re not entirely convinced. There’s more stately, minimal pop from **ROZI PLAIN**, which would probably sound harmlessly pleasant if you were enjoying the sun and the

Vicky Arms’ ales, but which is spellbinding when you give yourself up to it: we’ve heard of acts rewarding close attention, but Rozi Plain pays out like a banjaxed one-arm bandit, their dinner party kraut subtlety drawing us in more with every track, until they sound like The Sundays played by To Rococo Rot. Doing a Sun Ra cover makes you awesome; doing one so it sounds like The Cardigans languorously evaporating in a greenhouse made of spun sugar makes you the best act of the day.

GO DARK is the new act featuring Doseone, alt hip hop yarnspinner and abstract geek hyper-poet whose style is ADHD meets AD&D. Musically the duo, with fellow button puncher and mike wrangler Crash, is brasher than much of Doseone’s older work, stuttering glitch treatments of shiny sass-pop that sounds like a Flying Lotus remix of Gwen Stefani’s greatest hits or a version of Basement Jaxx’s ‘Kish Kash’ made on a cubist SNES, and the presentation is brasher by a factor of about one squillion – the camp stagewear with rainbow arm insignia is as much Bucks Fizz as it is Buck Rogers. No wonder the event programme writes the band’s name ALL IN CAPITALS; you can’t miss this Dayglo sonic explosion, and you shouldn’t miss next year’s Irregular Folks session, either: how many gigs feature great acts *and* a fireworks display and a TED talk on werewolf erotica, eh? Book your getaway punt now, and join us in 2018.

David Murphy

THE BLUETONES THE BULLINGDON 28.07.17 £15	BARNS COURTNEY THE CELLAR 26.09.17 £8.50	CLEAN CUT KID THE BULLINGDON 17.10.17 £10	SLOWCOACHES THE CELLAR 31.10.17 £7
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KIRAN LEONARD ST BARNABAS CHURCH 21.09.17 £12.50	THE SKINTS THE BULLINGDON 04.10.17 £16	MILES HUNT & ERICA NOCKALLS THE BULLINGDON 26.10.17 £5	GOAT GIRL MODERN ART 10.11.17 SOLD OUT
JOY ROOM THE CELLAR 21.09.17 £6	YAK THE BULLINGDON 09.10.17 £10	SLØTFACE THE CELLAR 26.10.17 £7	TOSELAND THE BULLINGDON 12.11.17 £10
ANDREW O’NEILL THE CELLAR 23.09.17 £10	INHEAVEN THE BULLINGDON 15.10.17 £8	ULRICH SCHNAUSS MODERN ART 28.10.17 £12	MARIKA HACKMAN THE BULLINGDON 14.11.17 £10

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FAITH AND BRANKO

Albion Beatnik Bookstore

It’s a modern fairy tale: girl goes to the Balkans to find a gypsy violinist to play in Gifford’s Circus Band and is taken to a house in a village where an introduction is made. Five years later here are Faith and Branko, married and with their friend Victor on bass guitar, playing in a venue which in the age of internet book stores is itself a kind of romantic fairy tale.

Balkan tropes now are a familiar part of the local live scene thanks to the city’s own Balkan Wanderers, and Bossaphonik regularly bringing Balkan-influenced bands to town. The combination of the venue – the nearest thing to a gig in someone’s house without actually being in someone’s house – and the virtuosity of Branko’s electric violin brings a freshness to the long, swooping lines, staccato rhythms, frenzied arpeggios and mix of near suicidal melancholia and upbeat village tunes that make up most of the band’s almost totally instrumental set.

Faith on button accordion and Victor’s bass, (“I am not really a bass guitarist, but I think I am bluffing quite successfully”) are a solid platform for Branko’s spectacular playing, despite at times

appearing less than certain as to what the maestro will do next. It’s when they each more or less play an equal part, as in the sombre third number, that their music is at its best. Certainly all three are very much on it in a frenzied white knuckle ride of a tune in the second half of the set, and they exchange smiles at the end, possibly of relief at not having fallen off the edge.

Also in the second half they add more variety. They open it with a standard from the Great American Songbook, and include a hornpipe; at the end they come up with a weird closer (“we like weird”), a techno gypsy number which it is said Branko wrote aged just eight. They play another couple of originals that are evocative of moments in Faith and Branko’s story, but it’s when playing those Serbian and Romanian tunes that they’re at their most impressive and some of the crowd respond by doing the seemingly impossible: rising from their tightly packed seats and dancing where there appears to be no space. If this is the effect they can have as a trio, watch out Oxford when they return with their full band.

Colin May

DEAP VALLY / PINS

The Bullingdon

Imagine a strip club in downtown Hollywood run by the sassiest women ever. Deap Vally would be the perfect house band. Why? Because they are sexy, sleazy and raucous as hell. And they can hustle. Testament to this is the packed Bullingdon tonight. Men, women, girls and boys who all want a bit of California meets Vegas show-woman ship.

As much anything it takes serious guts and even greater talent to follow Pins on stage tonight after the Manchester quintet put in a stunning performance, the high point of which is ‘If I Was’ where Go-Go’s harmonies drag a propulsive Can-like mantra to ecstatic heights.

If Cherie Currie had got a Fender Mustang for Christmas and sacked Kim Fowley, the result would be Lindsey Troy. The classically trained badass emits the swagger of all great rock and roll heroes and is unapologetic in her 60s groupie style.

Her vocal knocks seven bells out of most contemporaries in a dream mash up of the Bangles meets Led Zeppelin via Joplin and Love-Cobain. This is most notable on dynamic tracks such as ‘Teenage

Queen’ and ‘Julian’ from new album, ‘Femijism’. We can only hope that such a genius term makes it into the Oxford Dictionary. Self released after parting ways with Island Records, they enlisted Nick Zinner of the Yeah Yeah Yeah’s and the Karen O comparisons abound, especially on ‘Royal Jelly’ with howls of “If you wanna be queen bee” and a video featuring Georgia May Jagger.

But it’s the tracks from first album ‘Sistrionix’ that the crowd really want. ‘Baby I Call Hell’ is an earworm chant, casting an inadequate lover into the fire for lack of being “a bigger man than you”. First single ‘Gonna Make My Own Money’ is a DIY femme anthem, like a 1970s version of Hole’s ‘Gutless’. ‘Bad For My Body’ is the ultimate guide to not following the guidebook and making your own rules. No wonder the youngsters love it.

Lazy comparisons to the White Stripes are unfounded, as Deap Vally carving out a vital energy for themselves. More diverse sounds and song structures would propel them into the next league. Watch this space.

Karlyn King

EASTER ISLAND STATUES / THE OTHER ONES / BREEZEWAX

The Wheatsheaf

The evening heatwave has followed us into the venue, but a dope session of laidback chill-hop is on hand from Breezewax, aka Ashley Thorpe, a local electronic producer /composer who takes us off to play in the cool surf of multi genre influences. After a decade of working up his slick skills at home, producing a dazzling array of EPs and a fine album, ‘Native Sun’, he’s braving the live stage, and it’s a real treat to slip into the drowsy mental beachwear of the likes of ‘Blue States’ and PM Dawn with the best cuts and mixes from his new album ‘Press To Play’. The choicest of this ace collection, which calls to mind the sweet vibes of lamalex, Deeb and Guggez, is ‘We’ll See The World’, coyly sampling the orchestration from ‘Me & Mrs Jones’ to such a tropic effect that I’m almost tempted to go and order a Malibu cocktail.

The Other Ones, from London, would like to kill fascists with love, as they shake up their considerable can of power-punk before opening it over us. Where the gutsy politics of Sleater Keaney meets the playfulness of the Ramones, their clever lyricism

brings to mind The Buzzcocks. With air-gulping eclectic pop songs like ‘Wasted Youth’ and ‘Forever Young’ their drummer, Yameen, seriously looks like he is going to self combust in the soaring temperatures, until they time out and let him steam while they extol the virtues of the new Marylebone to Oxford railway connection and the ease with which London bands can now roll into our gothic pile and enjoy new audiences who don’t talk all over their sets.

Easter Island Statues have gone one stage further and actually *moved* to Oxford, from Leeds, to take advantage of the vibrant scene in town. Singer Donald Campbell has body-built a Lemonheads / Neutral Milk Hotel feel, pumping it up with country rock and southern boogie into a blustering, sweaty behemoth. Songs like; ‘Stunt Flyer’, ‘Bow & Arrow’ and ‘The Rain’ show their potential songwriting chops, and as Gappy Tooth Industry host Richard Catherall wittily observes at the end, Easter Island Statues could soon stand head and shoulders above everyone else.

Paul Carrera

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

Moogieman

Who are they?
Moogieman is Shan Sriharan, plus his Masochists: Claire LeMaster (*keys*); Vincent Lynch (*bass*), and Stefano Maio (*drums/guitar*), plus part-time member Clare Heaviside (*saxophone*). It began as a solo acoustic project for Shan before he recruited Vincent on electronic drums at an improv night. Claire was recruited at Catweazle Club in 2014 at which point The Masochists were born. After a string of demos the band opened the Oxford Punt in 2016 and last month released their debut, 'Girls & Film', a concept album about analogue photography on All Will Be Well Records.

What do they sound like?
They describe themselves as “psychedelic geek pop with synthesizers and drum machines,” which sums it up neatly. Shan’s idiosyncratic but heartfelt vocals bring to mind Syd Barrett at times; there’s a stripped-down, wayward post-punk spirit about the sound, while his obscurist’s eye for lyrical subject matter can take the songs into the realms of *QI* via *Photography Monthly* and Mark E Smith’s strangest acid flashbacks.

What inspires them?
“People who do totally off-the-wall things: from a guy I knew at an open mic who made it a rule to go on with absolutely no idea of what he was going to do, to Ernst Toller, a poet and playwright who commanded the militia of the Bavarian Socialist Republic in 1919 against an attacking force of proto-fascist government-backed shock troops because he was the only one around willing to do it, winning a resounding victory.”

Career highlight so far:
“The reception of our first album 'Girls and Film', released in June. *Nightshift* and *BBC Introducing* have been very supportive. Most of all, musicians who I really respect have said some lovely, insightful things about it.”

And the lowlight:
“Playing a solo gig at a strip club in Reading. The punters seemed pretty impatient and strangely unimpressed with my witty lyrical musings.”



Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:
“Cradle. Like being in a film joint directed by John Hughes and David Lynch: comforting, glamorous and deeply unsettling at the same time.”

If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:
“‘Chips From The Chocolate Fireball’ by The Dukes Of Stratosphear: a reminder of all the different sub-genres of the late 60s.”

When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?
“There’s ones in the pipeline for September but the next confirmed gig is Klub Kakoffaney on the 3rd November at the Wheatshaf. By then I’m not even sure what to expect: more synths and more shouting, perhaps.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:
“Favourite thing is Smash Disco, the hardcore/punk/new-wave gig night at the Library. In a fairly unpropitious venue the promoters have created a high-energy, inclusive atmosphere where pretty much anything goes. Least favourite: there’s so much exciting, innovative, diverse stuff going on you’re always having to tell your friends you can’t make their shows because there’s three other things on you have to see.”

You might love them if you love:
Magnetic Fields; Momus; early Pink Floyd; The Human League; Olivia Tremor Control; Television Personalities

Hear them here:
moogieman.bandcamp.com

THE WHEATSHEAF

Friday 4th August – *IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC*

RATS EAT RATS

RESTRUCTURE

Saturday 5th August – *OXROX*

HELL'S GAZELLES

BLACK BULLETS + TRAUMA UK

Sunday 6th August

CONFRONT THE CARNAGE

KING BOLETE + GHOUL

Monday 7th August – *TWO FACE PROMOTIONS*

OSIAH

A TRUST UNCLEAN + BLOODSHOT

Friday 18th August - *OXROX*

LEST WE FORGET

SWITCHBLADE CITY + DELLACOMA

Saturday 19th August – *IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC*

FRACTURE

STORYTELLER + KHAMISINA + FUJI

Friday 25th August - *OXROX*

TERMINUS

Saturday 26th August – *GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES*

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Dr SHOTOVER: Class `A' Festival Guide

Ah, there you are, Lady Yuppington. Have a spiffing time at the posh Oxon festies, did you? Heyyyy, why not buy us an organic micro-brewery strawberry-flavoured cider and tell us all about it? No really, DO. [Suspiciously sincere look in eyes]. Was it truly, truly the final ever Cornbury? [Pushes out lower lip in fake sympathy]. Oh dearrrrr. Echo and the Bunnymen have, after all these years, found their way home from Great Tew to Liddypool, have they? Accompanying old Bryan Ferry 'cross the Mersey? Not to mention Bryan, or was it Ryan, Adams? So, do tell all – how was GLAMPING amidst the forest-glade cashpoints and the reiki stalls? Macrobiotic full English, quick head-massage, then a Swing Out Sister dance workshop with David Cameron, mmm? Followed by some lovely artisan cheese chat with Alex James, eh? And then a set by Jools Holland featuring those loveable Mockney millionaires Chas ‘n’ Dave? [At this point Bedingfield the East Indies Club steward leans across and wordlessly points at a notice over the bar: NO SARCASM OR SPITTING]. No sarcasm? No spitting? Would you take away the final pleasures left to me? You'll be telling me next there's a smoking ban! What's that...? It's been going for TEN YEARS? You are f***ing kidding! [Lights Balkan Sobranie in jade cigarette-holder, three Clint Eastwood-style cigarillos, and a small Meerschaum pipe loaded with strange-looking herbal tobacco]. I'd better... puf-puf... make up for...puf-puf... lost time, then! [Bedingfield clicks his fingers and East Indies Club 'Health & Safety Officer' Figgy Sturgess glides out of the snug bar with seven ninjas in Rainbow Warrior t-shirts; they surround Dr S]. To quote that bearded little stoner from the Isle of Wight Festival in 1970... this is a psychedelic concentration camp, man! Unhand me, you eco-fascists! [Drinks spill, glass breaks, general unpleasantness results].
Next month:
BANANARAMA
backwards =
AMARANANAB.
Just sayin'.



Lady Yuppington: 'Now this is what I CALL glamping, Dr S!'

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

In the days before we could take the very excellent BBC Introducing in Oxford for granted, we had to rely on the inconsistent largesse of commercial radio to get any kind of local music fix on the radio. Back in August 1997 **Oxygen FM**, a student-run station, decided to axe its local show **Edible**, reneging on a promise to properly support the local scene. The show was replaced by a chart rundown. The station's head of programming, Nick Moulder, is probably a senior advisor to Jeremy Hunt these days. An unexpected turn of events of a far more welcome variety came with the one and (so far) only visit to Oxford by **Belle & Sebastian**, who played **The Zodiac**. The band had released their second album, 'If You're Feeling Sinister', and such was their expansive line-up they had to play with half the band on stage and the rest on a platform in the middle of the venue; a one-off show in so many ways. In the build up to **Radio 1 Sound City** Oxford City Council hosted a public meeting on the event with representatives from Radio 1, the Musicians Union and the BPI in attendance. Talking of looking to the future August 1997 saw *Nightshift* finally launch itself online. www.oxlink.co.uk/nightshift was the rather unwieldy domain. Don't bother trying to find it now; it is but dust in the virtual ether.

fallout from **Truck Festival**'s cancellation after the biblical downpours of late July saw the site flooded, while **Fopp Records** in town closed after the chain went into administration; fast forward a decade and Truck has just celebrated its most successful festival, while Fopp is back in town, celebrating its first anniversary back in Gloucester Green. In happier news **The Young Knives** were shortlisted for The Mercury Prize for their 'Voices Of Animals & Men' album and it was announced that **Supergrass** would become the first Oxford band to headline the new **Academy** venue when it opened in September. **Witches** were the month's featured cover band, singer Dave Griffiths telling us about the hypnagogic hallucinations (waking dreams) and recurring nightmares that informed his band's darkly oppressive pop. Elsewhere **A Silent Film** and **Sharron Kraus** had new releases out, while over in the demo pages **Ally Craig** topped the pile for his "tendency towards the deliberately obtuse and the feeling that he neither knows nor cares where songs are going or at what pace." At the other end of the pile **Khameleon** were "constipated pub-bound rock that took itself so seriously, you want to spend the duration of their interminably laboured demo lighting your own farts or sitting on a whoopee cushion just to try and restore some kind of natural balance to the world."

10 YEARS AGO

Good and bad in the news section of August 2007's *Nightshift*. The main piece centred on the

5 YEARS AGO

"I've suffered from nightmares, night terrors and sleep paralysis since I was five years old, so lots

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

of ideas for lyrics and musical feel come directly from that," said Hel Sterne, co-singer/guitarist with uberdoom rock wraiths **Undersmile** in the band's first front cover feature for *Nightshift* back in August 2012. The band, who had just released their debut album 'Narwhal' on Future Noise and talked about touring with Billy Anderson, being able to clear a venue before their first number was finished, and how their kids would slam the door on their rehearsal sessions and tell them to shut up. No less desolate was the new release from **Vienna Ditto** this month, the duo's take on Blind Willie Johnson's 'I Know His Blood Will Make Me Whole' a reverb-heavy voodoo blues hammerblow that ranks among the finest cover versions to come out of Oxford. Other local releases included **Glass Animals**' 'Leaflings' EP and **Peerless Pirates**' 'Thieves and Miscreants'. This being the height of summer, festivals dominated the local gig calendar, with the second **Wilderness** boasting a line-up that included **Wilco**, **Spiritualized**, **Rodrigo y Gabriela**, **Grant Lee Buffalo** and **Field Music**, while at the other end of the county, the reliably eclectic and esoteric **Supernormal** played host to Warp Records heroes **Seefeel**, alongside such household names as **Hey! Colossus**, **Bilge Pump**, **DJ Scotch Bonnet**, **Joeyfat** and **Raagnarok**. Oh, and Undersmile, just to give the whole thing a bit of a summery pop vibe. At the northern tip of the Shire, meanwhile, **Cropredy** saw sets from **Bellowhead**, **Joan Armatrading**, **The Saw Doctors** and **Squeeze**, while **Fairport Convention** put in a wholly unexpected appearance on the Saturday night. Who saw that coming, eh?

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

SID VISCOUS

We're in the privileged position here sometimes of getting sent stuff for free long before mere plebs like you get a sniff of it. So a few days before we sit down to wade through this month's pile of demos, some lovely PR person sent us a download of the new Gary Numan album, a full two months before its release date and we've been bothering the neighbours' senses and window fittings with it ever since. The punningly named Sid Viscous – aka Ollie Harris – here obviously knows the way to our hearts as the opening track here is called 'More Human Than Numan', which turns out to be a genius mash-up of samples from *Bladerunner* with samples of 'Cars', plus a glowing silicon sweep of synths that stretches as far along the autobahn as you can see, and some great squelchy acid house bleeps just for good measure. The title's a play on the Tyrell Corporation's More Human Than Human motto; the track itself is absolutely fucking wonderful. We just played it six times in a row, slightly louder each time. There are three more mostly instrumental tracks here too, featuring more Numanesque snaffling on the decidedly ebm-flavoured 'Lovers Acid', but then taking a sharp left turn into seriously mangled old school metal with 'Supernaut' that sounds like it's taken an old Saxon track round to Nurse With Wound's workshop to be dealt with. Harshly. Back to the heavy-duty synthetics with final track 'Getting the Vapour' which sounds like a doomy acid house remake of the *Terminator* theme tune. So there you go: synthesizers, Numan samples, heavy metal and sci-fi. That's pretty much all our favourite things in one. Stick a picture of a kitten on the cover and pour us a glass of wine and this is as close to perfection as life gets. Frankly no other bugger this month stands a chance.

SLOW LEARNER

A decade or so ago there was a great compilation released called 'Gather In The Mushrooms', which collected some of the best acid-fried folk music from the 60s and 70s, from Comus to Magnet. It's fair to say Pete Lock, the man behind Slow Learner, has heard the record, but truth is, he's probably also rolled it into a giant

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

reefer and smoked it on the strength of demo opener 'Hidden Track', a flight of psilocybin-infused fancy that could be the soft-spoken offspring of a chance meeting of Pentangle and 60s psych weirdoes HP Lovecraft (not to be mistaken with the eldritch novelist of the same name, although it's fair to say that's where they got their chief inspiration from). Anyway, yeah, pixies and an understatedly gothic side of the hippy folk dream. From here things get less spooked; 'The Misfits' is a melancholic hippy-folk comedown, and the feeling that faeries, goblins or a naked body double of Britt Eckland are about to appear in the middle of the woodland glade goes out the window. By the time we get to final track 'Packet of Dreams' things have wandered off into a nearby meadow with a hangdog expression – the hippy dream is over. Still, this month's demo most likely to wear flowers in its hair, eat strange fungi and be found sat against an old oak tree reading 'The Mountains of Madness', which is something we should all aspire to.

THE EULOGIES

Like Slow Learner The Eulogies is a one-man band home recording affair, but while Pete Lock sounds like he's off on a mushroom forage, The Eulogies' Simon Veaney's poison would appear to be morphine, or at least a large glass of whisky. This is tenderly downbeat rock, which doesn't quite fall into goth, country or folk but mixes a little of each into its palette to make a darker shade of grey. At his best, as on 'Ghost Waltz', his lovely, soft-edged croon makes him sound like he's off in his own daydream, albeit one where he's dancing with ghosts, which might make it a day nightmare, and everything's neatly understated to the point of subdued. Tindersticks and The National are the most obvious touchstones and Simon's own quote that this is a set of "cinematic songs of regret, bemusement and wonder that capture something of the glowing evening light, shadows and ghosts of Oxford's backstreets" comes close to summing up what he's about, rather being the self-aggrandising bollocks most press blurb offers up. It's not all charm and wonder of course: 'That Little Sting' is clumsy and, by his standards, overwrought, which ruins the whole point, while 'Summer Rain' betrays the demo's home recording nature with the mix all over the place. Still, given its modest origins, it's mainly a decently soul soothing offering that suggests better to come.

PALE SCALES

Forgive the ridiculous national stereotyping but we never really imagine Italy having a sizeable goth contingent; it's a bit warm and sunny down that way, surely? Tight black clothing isn't good Mediterranean get-up. Maybe that's why Pietro Sgambati has moved to Oxford. We're assuming Pietro's a bit of a goth given the gloomy shroud that hangs around this four-song demo like a thick English pea soup. The Cocteau Twins spangle of 'Cherry Tribute', with its old school drum machine thump captures him at his darkest and most intense, while 'Purple Sunset' is proper solemn, somehow managing to touch bases with both Slowdive and Pink Floyd. Good stuff, but elsewhere it can sound clumsy: 'Inside the Nest's airy dreampop sounds like it almost can't be bothered to get from start to finish, while the folkier 'Still' is fine other than the feeling that Pietro's desperately in need of a wee and trying to hold it in until he gets to the end of the song. Anyway, welcome to Oxford, young fella; hopefully this sunny spell won't last too long and we can get back to the regular downpours and gloomy grey skies that brought you here.

EASTER ISLAND STATUES

Maybe Pietro could do some kind of cultural exchange with Easter Island Statues, who sing "I've never seen so much rain / I hope to see the sunshine again," on opening song, 'The Rain', a roustabout rock shanty that manages to come in just about the right side of Mumford & Sons with its mandolin twang and the singer's rich, salty tones, which remind us a little of Little Brother Eli's Alex Grew in the way he strains his tonsils to keep it epic. 'Stunt Flyer' aims for a more straightforward, noisier indie rock sound in the vein of The Maccabees or Kaiser Chiefs, still up and at 'em but maybe lacking 'The Rain's character. Season 7 of *Game of Thrones* kicked off last night but all thoughts of winter being here are out the window, at least until the seemingly doomed Soundcloud deems fit to follow Easter Island Statues with someone called Voor Hans and the absolute worst cover version of The Velvet Underground's 'Sunday Morning' you can imagine, like a cold, steady drizzle right into our very souls. Seriously, we'd rather have the Night King stick a frozen blade in our heart than have to listen to that shit again.

THE DEMOISELLES

Musical differences are usually cited when a band's been together for a few years and

everyone's broadened their influences to the point they're no longer compatible. The Demoiselles look like they're keen to skip the bit where they're all reading from the same page and sound like they're all playing in different bands from the off. It's the only thing they do sound like they're in a hurry to do, mind, given the way 'Anything Goes' grinds sluggishly along. Anything goes in this case meaning "do what the hell you like, regardless of what the rest of the band are up to." So in his mind the guitarist is playing in a rudimentary two-chord grunge band, the drummer is playing an extended solo from some epic Rush number and the singer thinks she's Lita Ford cast in the lead role of an Andrew Lloyd Webber musical. (No-one ever cares what the bassist thinks). It's a laborious chug and a right bloody mess all at the same time. 'Midnight Somewhere' would appear to be their "sensitive" number, which means energy levels dip even further from that less than promising starting point, again the drummer smacking stuff elaborately all over the shop, while the singer over emotes to the point she gets so shrill we thing either our eardrums, her tonsils or this here wine glass will go pop, and the guitarist finally rouses himself from his single-minded chug to try and match the drummer with a Snowy White-style solo. We're trying to think of positives about where the band might take all these thrilling ingredients and how they might one day come together in a vaguely bearable fashion. But like finding yourself on some TV cookery contest where you're given a loaf of bread, some margarine and a bowl of excrement, you know the only outcome is going to be a shit sandwich.

THE DEMO DUMPER

SWEETMATES

With a name that sounds like a brand of flavoured condoms and a song called 'Papa Chico's Semi Freddo', which sounds like a disgusting euphemism for something we're not prepared to discuss in a family magazine, we're hoping Sweetmates will be a pervy bunch of weirdoes who have grown up on a diet of Har Mar Superstar, Prince and Throbbing Gristle. But no, they're a cheesy, slightly geezerish disco/funk rock band who sound like a gruesome meeting point between Toploader and Everything Everything. Or maybe what Red Hot Chili Peppers would have sounded like if they'd grown up in Lewisham listening to Level 42. A right old load of horse cock, basically.

*Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk, clearly marked Demos. **IMPORTANT:** no review without a contact phone number. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. We make no pretence to being fair, objective or open-minded and reserve the right to use juvenile insults while almost completely ignoring your music should we feel like it. Your Facebook friends are welcome to get all huffy on your behalf, but we'll laugh at them too.*

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Lionize

+ Kanadia + A Way With Words
+ Nightjar

Fri 4th Aug • £25 adv • 10pm

All Stars of Reggae & Lovers Rock - Live In Concert Freddie McGregor

Tues 15th Aug • £17 adv

Too Many Zooz

+ Thabo. + Red Crow

Sat 19th Aug • £8 adv

Haze

+ Birthday Card + Father Demo
+ Milk

Fri 25th Aug • £10 adv • 11pm

Chris Goldfinger

Fri 1st Sept • £12 adv

Floralyn George "When Light Falls Asleep"

Sat 2nd Sept • £8 adv • 7pm

The Wholls

+ Little Brother Eli + Garden

Sun 3rd Sep • £7 adv

Dance a la Plage

+ Victors + Who's Alice?
+ Sam Martin

Fri 8th Sept • £15 adv • 6.30pm

Roddy Woomble

Sun 10th Sept • £27.50 adv • 7pm

The Psychedelic Furs - The Singles Tour

Fri 15th Sept • £8 adv • 6.30pm

Chapter and Verse / Wars

Thu 21st Sep • £22.50 adv

New Found Glory

+ Roam

Fri 22nd Sep • £8 adv • 7pm

Uprising - BBC Introducing

+ ZAIA + Lowws + Laura Theis
+ Catgod + Wandering Wires
+ ZAIA Aftershow (DJ Set)

Sat 23rd Sep • £10 adv • 6.30pm

Elvana - Elvis

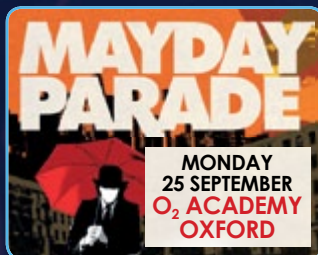
Fronted Nirvana

+ Field Of Giants + Freemantle

Mon 25th Sep • £18 adv

Mayday Parade - A Lesson in Romantics 10th Anniversary Tour

+ With Confidence
+ All Get Out



Tue 26th Sep • £16 adv

Lowkey

Wed 27th Sep • £5 adv

Fishies

Thurs 28th Sep • £25 adv

DJ Shadow

Fri 29th Sep • £13 adv • 6.30pm

The Velvet: Celebrating 50 Years of The Velvet Underground

Sat 30th Sep • £18 adv • 6.30pm

Genesis Invisible Touch Tour 30th Anniversary performed by: The Carpet Crawlers

Sat 30th Sep • £8 adv • 6.30pm

Allusondrugs

Thu 5th Oct • £15 adv • 6.30pm

The Dears

Fri 6th Oct • £15 adv • 6.30pm

The Wall Of Floyd (Pink Floyd Tribute)

Fri 6th Oct • £29.50 adv • 6.30pm

Gary Numan

Sat 7th Oct • £13 adv • 6.30pm

The Smyths: Strangeways Here We Come Tour

Sat 7th Oct • £14 adv • 6.30pm

Amber Run

Sun 8th Oct • £32 adv • 6pm

Perfect

Tue 10th Oct • £18.50 adv

Tom McRae

Thu 12th Oct • £12.50 adv

The Hoosiers: The Trick To Life (10th Anniversary Tour)

Fri 13th Oct • £12 adv • 6.30pm

Wille & The Bandits

+ Claude Hay

Fri 13th Oct • £7 adv • 11pm

The Oxford Soul Train

Thu 19th Oct • £18.50 adv

Lethal Bizzle

Fri 20th Oct • £22.50 adv • 6.30pm

The Alarm + Dave Sharp

Sat 21st Oct • 6pm

Ritual Union Festival

Fri 27th Oct • £12 adv • 6.30pm

Guns 2 Roses

+ Metallica Reloaded
+ Cosmisis + Empyre

Sat 28th Oct • £20 adv • 6pm

Roots Manuva

+ Chali 2na (Jurassic 5)
+ Krafty Kuts
+ Oscar Worldpeace



Sat 28th Oct • £16.50 adv • 6pm

Katchafire

Fri 3rd Nov • £23 adv • 6.30pm

From The Jam "The Gift" 35th Anniversary

Fri 3rd Nov • £15 adv • 6pm

Ghostpoet

Sun 5th Nov • £12.50 adv

Intervals

Tue 7th Nov • £18.50 adv

Cradle of Filth

Fri 10th Nov • £14 adv • 6pm

Pearl Jam UK-Tribute

Fri 10th Nov • £22 adv • 6.30pm

Billy Bragg

Tue 14th Nov • £27.50 adv

Nelly

Fri 17th Nov • £12 adv • 6.30pm

Antarctic Monkeys

Sat 18th Nov • £12 adv • 6.30pm

Definitely Mightbe

Sun 19th Nov • £21 adv

Airbourne

Fri 24th Nov • £15 adv • 6.30pm

Glasville

Fri 24th Nov • £22.50 adv • 6.30pm

Dr John Cooper Clarke

Sat 25th Nov • £10 adv • 6.30pm

Saedly Dorus and the Hoolie Band

Thurs 30th Nov • £22.50 adv

Scouting For Girls

Fri 1st Dec • £14 adv • 6.30pm

Jagged Little Pill A Tribute to Alanis Morissette's Classic Album

Sat 2nd Dec • £12.50 adv • 6.30pm

The Prince Experience

Fri 8th Dec • £15 adv • 6.30pm

Absolute Bowie

Fri 8th Dec • £21.25 adv

The Twang



Sat 9th Dec • £22.50 adv • 6.30pm

Mark Lanegan Band

+ Tenebrous Liar
+ Joe Cardamone

Thurs 21st Dec • £23 adv

Slade

Fri 22nd Dec • £17.50 adv • 6pm

Dreadzone

Sat 2nd Mar • £20 adv • 6pm

The Blockheads

+ Chasing Daylight

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