

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 264
July
2017**



RIDE

*"It was easy
to slip back into
the chemistry of old
and how we worked
best together in
the early years."*

**Mark Gardener talks reunions,
communication and returning
to The New Theatre.**

Also in this issue:

Introducing **THE OTHER DRAMAS**

TRUCK & CORNBURY previewed

**COMMON PEOPLE, KRAFTWERK
& SLOWDIVE** reviewed

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

THE BULLINGDON

JULY 2017 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Sunday 2nd July
Simple
Cowley Rd Carnival After Party
Doors: 4.30pm

Wednesday 5th July
Joyce Manor
Martha
Fancy Dress Party
Drama Kids
Doors: 7pm

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

Friday 7th July
Metal to the Masses
After Party
Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 12th July
Billy Walton Band
Doors: 7pm

Friday 14th July
Nathassia
SAAL London
Original Primate
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 15th July
Musical Medicine
Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 19th July
Deap Vally
Demob Happy
Doors: 7pm

Friday 21st July
Bossaphonik
Lakuta
Doors: 11pm

Tuesday 25th July
Sam Outlaw Band
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 26th July
Hamilton Loomis
Doors: 7pm

Friday 28th July
The Bluetones
Doors: 7pm

Friday 28th July
King of the Jungle
Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 16th August
Billy Branch
With Giles Robson Band
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 19th August
Electronic Sound Session
Bart Rose
Tom Ranx
Slaw Farb
Doors: 11pm

Friday 25th August
P.Y.T
Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 30th August
Neil Hilborn live Poetry
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 31st August
Daniel Romano
Doors: 7pm

Friday 1st September
Throwing Shapes #3
Doors: 11pm

Sunday 3rd September
We Are Your Friends #2
Feat. Chad Valley
Doors: 3pm

Tuesday 5th September
Rob Tognoni
Hell's Gazelles
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 6th September
Alvvays
Doors: 7pm

Friday 8th September
Poizon
Singer of Tigertailz - Rob Wyld
Doors: 19pm

Saturday 9th September
Old Skool Oxford
Easy Groove
Doors: 10pm

Monday 11th September
Blues Caravan
Doors: 7pm

Friday 15th September
Bossaphonik
The Destroyers
Doors: 10pm

Friday 22nd September
Danny & The Champions
of the World
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 27th September
King No-One
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 28th September
Micah P. Hinson
and The Holy Strangers
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 12th October
The Dead Beat Apostles
The Shapes
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 14th October
Simple
Joy Orbison
Jon Rust
Doors: 10pm

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: 10pm

Monday 23rd 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

Sunday 29th October
Jane Weaver
Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd November
Too Many T's
Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd November
Simple
Levon Vincent
Doors: 10pm

NEWS

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LOUD MOUNTAINS were picked by *Nightshift* to play this month's Truck Festival. The country-rock outfit were one of half a dozen Oxford acts selected from Truck's band app, which allows unsigned bands from around the country to apply for a slot. BBC Introducing in Oxford selected four local acts: Slate Hearts; Catgod; 31Hours and The Autumn Saints, while Uprising picked Little Brother Eli. They all join fellow Oxford artists Willie J Healey, The Dreaming Spires and Leader among others at the sold-out event at Hill Farm in Steventon over the weekend of the 21st-23rd July. Full line-up details at www.truckfestival.com.

WILLIE J HEALEY releases his debut album next month. 'People & Their Dogs' is out on the 18th

August on National Anthem, part of Columbia and features thirteen songs.

ALL TAMARA'S PARTIES hosts a bank holiday all-day mini-festival on Sunday 27th August. Catgod; Lucy Leave; Salvation Bill, and Anna McCrae from the Young Women's Music Project are all confirmed for the event at The Tap Social in Botley, with more acts to be announced. 25 early bird tickets, priced £10, are on sale from alltamarasperties.bandcamp.com.

CHAD VALLEY and **Jack Goldstein** play at the second **We Are Your Friends** mini festival later this year. The annual all-day event takes place on **Sunday 3rd September** at **The Bullingdon**, aiming to raise money for the Michael Barry Fund for the Brain Tumour Charity. Michael Barry, who died in March 2016 aged 35, was one of the organisers of Abort. Retry. Fail?, the club that hosted some of the earliest gigs by Foals, Youthmovies and Friendly Fires, as well as playing in local electro-pop act 100 Bullets Back.

The show will be Chad Valley's first hometown gig since December 2015 and their first since they lost all of the equipment in a van break-in during a tour of the US last year. Fixers frontman Jack Goldstein, will be playing songs from his new album 'Sandwiches'. Follow We Are Your Friends on Twitter at [@thembfund](https://twitter.com/thembfund).



CARNIVAL brings a huge splash of colour to **Cowley Road** again on **Sunday 2nd July**, with the annual celebration of east Oxford life again set to feature myriad live music stages, sound systems, dance displays, food and the main procession, stretching for over a mile and featuring over 660 people from 30 community groups and schools, taking over the road, from The Plain to Magdalen Road as well as pubs, car parks and side streets around the area.

Over 40,000 people attended last year's Carnival, making it by far the largest music gathering in Oxfordshire.

Live music stages will be situated at The Cape of Good Hope; 420 Skates; Jeune Street; East Oxford Community Centre; The Black Swan; The Bullingdon; The Library; Manzil Way; Restore; the Asian Cultural Centre, and The City Arms, with live music from the likes of The Young Women's Music Project; reggae stars Zaia; Cubanista big band Ran Kan; swamp-blues crew The Mighty Redox; dark-pop stars Death of the Maiden; hip hop collective Inner Peace Records, and classic r'n'b band The Shapes mixing with DJs; samba bands and dance displays; Irish dancing; drum troupes; steel bands; Bollywood dance; burlesque and more.

As well as the live music Carnival boasts its traditional cornucopia of world food stalls; a science zone; skateboarding and kids activities.

Carnival runs from 11am til 5pm, with various gigs and club nights afterwards, including Simple's traditional house and techno party at The Bullingdon.

On Saturday 1st July, South Park hosts Colossus Awakes, a pyrotechnic extravaganza in South Park. The event starts at 9pm; entry is free.

Full Carnival details at www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk

HEAVY POP have taken over bookings for **The Jericho Tavern**. The promotions company have been putting on gigs in Oxford since 2008, including shows from The Wave Pictures, Ezra Furman, Spring King and Royal Blood, while they are also the team behind Reading's annual Are You

Listening festival, which regularly features Oxford bands.

Among the first shows booked into the Tavern is **Tom Williams** on **Saturday 16th September**. Find out more about Heavy Pop at www.heavypop.co.uk or follow them at twitter.com/HeavyPopPromo.

WOLF EYES are among the latest set of acts to be announced for **Supernormal Festival**. The seminal Detroit noise band make a rare foray into Oxfordshire when they play at the experimental music and arts festival at **Braziers Park** in Ipsden over the weekend of the 4th-6th August.

Other names released include Self Help; The Wargs; VÄLVÉ; Sacred Paws; Rat Salad; Not Sorry; R. Elizabeth; Matana Roberts; Lush Worker; Aggressive Perfecter; Beards; Clout Then Grappling; Ed Askew; Death Pedals; Evil Ussets, and Cattle. They join a host of acts announced last month, including Sharron Kraus, Dead Rat Orchestra and Left Hand Cuts off the Right.

Now in its eighth year, Supernormal has earned a reputation as as the most esoteric, eclectic and adventurous festival in Oxfordshire, winning national awards for its challenging, artist-curated line-ups and diversion from traditional festival tropes.

Tickets, priced £85, including camping, are on sale now at www.supernormalfestival.co.uk.



THE BEST IN LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY

Saturday 1st July - 7pm
Tom Toal, Roger Monkhous, Mike Newall, Michael Fabbri

Saturday 8th July - 7pm
Tobias Persson, Jarred Christmas, Phil Nichol, Gordon Southern

Saturday 15th July - 7pm
Andy Askins, Carey Marx, Daniel Townes, Josh Pugh

Saturday 22nd July - 7pm
Paul McCaffrey, Gavin Webster, Jimmy McGhie, Jay Handley

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NEWS



THE RUSTY BICYCLE hosts a day of free live music alongside its annual beer and cider festival on Saturday 29th July. Ziaia (pictured); Little Brother Eli; Little Mammoth; Ran Kan Kan; Jauquin & the Smoke Machine, and Sian Lloyd Jones will all be playing live at the pub on the corner of Magdalen Road and Hurst Street from midday til late. Wear your drinking suits and your dancing shoes.

GLASSHOUSE STUDIOS hosts its second birthday party this month. The studio, on Denman's Lane in Cumnor, run by The Family Machine's Jamie Hyatt, celebrates its second anniversary with a family-friendly barbecue and picnic with live music, from 1-7pm on Saturday 15th July. Cooling Pearls, Quarter Melon and Wolfs are among the acts providing the music for the day. Admission is free. Check out the studio at glasshousestudios.org.

K-LACURA AND CRIMSON TUSK have earned themselves places at the final of the **Bloodstock: Metal to the Masses** battle of the bands this month. The pair will face off with the winners of the second semi-final, which takes place on the 25th June. The final takes place on Friday

7th July at The Bullingdon, with the winner earning a place on the year's Bloodstock bill alongside headliners Megadeth, Ghost and Amon Amarth in August.

THE BLACK SWAN on Crown Street hosts a new fortnightly open mic night starting the month. Slung What You Brung kicks off on Thursdays 13th July and will run every other week from there, from 8-11pm. Anyone wanting to perform can simply turn up on the night, or contact Spike Holifield via Facebook. Performers' sets will be 20 minutes, with a free drink for every act.

POLAROID pictures of local acts performing at **Common People** are on display at Truck Store this month. Local photographer Cristina Camilla Corazza's exhibition features shots of Death of Hi-Fi; Kanadia; Catgod; The Balkan Wanderers; Slate Hearts; Cherokii; The Epstein; Vienna Ditto and Moogieman & the Masochists and runs until the end of July, or see her work at facebook.com/cristinacamillapx.

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

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



CORNBURY FESTIVAL organiser **Hugh Phillimore** has been talking to *Nightshift* ahead of the event's Fabulous Finale this month. Cornbury is bowing out after fourteen years, in its time bringing stars like Robert Plant, Amy Winehouse, Elvis Costello, Simple Minds and Tom Jones to Oxfordshire, earning itself the affectionate nickname Poshstock along the way for its regular cast of well-heeled guests, including Orlando Bloom, Kiera Knightley and David Cameron. Bryan Adams, Kaiser Chiefs and The Pretenders will headline the final festival, which runs over the weekend of the 7th-9th July at **Great Tew Country Park**.

"I've got very mixed feelings about the festival coming to an end," explained Hugh on his decision to pull the plug. "I love great live music and it's a privilege to work with such great bands, but there are so many festivals, competition is fierce and in all honesty I've lost too much money.

"When I started out in 2004 I'd aimed to do 21 years on the basis of 'will you still love me when I'm 64' but as a small independent promoter it's a very scary ride. I'm proud of what we've created; it really is a village fete with some big bands. I've had some great highs but some very low lows."

With so many years to pick from, Hugh's favourite Cornbury moment was an intensely emotional one. "It has to be Elvis Costello in 2005; it was a few days after the 7/7 London bombings and in the middle of a blistering hits show he dedicated 'Shipbuilding' to a fan who'd died in the tube bomb; we all wept."

While declaring the one act he most wished he could have booked for Cornbury is the late, great Leonard Cohen, Hugh says he has mixed feelings about getting his summers back.

"I'll be spending more time working on my events business providing Lionel Richie for Russian oligarchs' birthday parties and hopefully enjoying a bit more time with my daughter, although she's so furious that 'daddy's big party' is ending she may not be speaking to me anymore."

For full line-up details and tickets, visit cornburymusicfestival.com

DEATH OF HI-FI release their second album next month. The Whitney hip hop outfit, who were among the stars of May's Common People Festival in South Park, release 'Follow' on Friday 11th August; the album is the follow-up to 2013's 'Anthropocene', which was hailed by *Nightshift* as the best hip hop album to come out of Oxford.

Andy Hill from the band said, "It's 13 tracks and is an intensely personal story based around the last five years of my life, almost perfectly coinciding with the release of 'Anthropocene', hence the reason it's taken so long to follow up the first album.

"It's still a kitchen sink mixture of our influences but is a bit more focussed featuring only Lucy (Cropper) on vocals, Rhymeskeemz on one track and Tiger Mendoza on another. We wanted to have something we could play live without having to corral lots of different people."

Death of Hi-Fi are planning a revamped website to coincide with the album release but find out more at facebook.com/deathofhihi.



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JULY

THE CARPENTERS STORY SAT 8

RIDE MON 10

THE ILLEGAL EAGLES FRI 21

AUGUST

JOE MCELDERRY SAT 5

SEPTEMBER

PEACE TRAIN:
THE CAT STEVENS STORY TUE 12

TEXAS WED 13

THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN FRI 15

NIGHTS ON BROADWAY -
THE BEE GEES STORY SAT 16

ONE NIGHT OF ELVIS:
LEE 'MEMPHIS' KING FRI 29

ONE NIGHT OF QUEEN SAT 30

OCTOBER

SUZANNE VEGA MON 2

TOTALLY TINA SAT 7

MARC ALMOND SUN 15

MIDGE URE, THE CHRISTIANS,
ALTERED IMAGES TUE 17

THE PRETENDERS WED 18

THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD SHOW THU 19

NOVEMBER

JOOLS HOLLAND AND HIS
RHYTHM & BLUES ORCHESTRA SUN 5

COLLABRO MON 6

ALISON MOYET TUE 7

JOHN MAYALL IN CONCERT WED 8

WHITNEY - QUEEN OF THE NIGHT THU 9

DR HOOK FEATURING
DENNIS LOCORRIERE FRI 10

DECEMBER

BANANARAMA MON 4

THE SENSATIONAL 60'S EXPERIENCE FRI 8

CHRIS REA SAT 9



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RIDE



“WE COULD HAVE communicated better, within the band and the team around us. The reunion and better lifestyle choices have changed all of that for the better,” says Mark Gardener thoughtfully when asked what single thing he would have changed about Ride first time round and whether the band’s reunion has allowed them to rectify that.

THE SENTIMENT ECHOES A line from ‘Lannoy Point’, the opening song on Ride’s new album, ‘Weather Diaries’, the quartet’s fifth and their first in over 20 years: “We’ll be wiser when we fall / Like the dinosaurs before.” Perhaps not the finest piece of pop poetry but a concise and heartfelt realisation, perhaps, that things could have been done better.

BACK THEN, OF COURSE, WAS 1996, the year Ride released their break-up album ‘Tarantula’ amid much rancour between Mark and co-singer and songwriter Andy Bell. The fall-out had brewed for a couple of years as Ride lived in each other’s pockets both on tour and in the studio while moving away from each other musically. Hostilities didn’t last long after the quartet split, but it was that split that allowed friendships to be resumed, even if it robbed Oxford of its most pioneering musical heroes – the first real stars to emerge from the local scene.

IN THE TWO DECADES THAT

followed Ride’s split the band’s reputation grew and grew; they became a sonic inspiration to new generations of bands, in Europe, America, even Japan, while fans’ enduring hopes fuelled regular rumours of a reunion.

In 2010 a *Nightshift* cover feature marked the 20th anniversary of the ‘Ride EP’, the band’s debut and hailed it as the most important record ever to come out of Oxford, as much for the way it opened the door for a whole host of fellow local acts to break out into the mainstream – including Radiohead and Supergrass – as for the glorious, timeless music it contained. Back then the band – Mark and Andy, plus bass player Steve Queralt and drummer Loz Colbert – expressed an enthusiasm for once again joining forces, while explaining that circumstances and timing were against them. “I’d like to play with them again sometime, but I can’t put a date on it,” said Andy at the time.

That time, though, did come in 2014 as circumstances changed. With Liam Gallagher’s Beady Eye breaking up, Andy, who’d played with him since joining Oasis in 1999, was free to pursue a new musical path – or rejoin one he’d stepped off years before.

IN APRIL 2015 RIDE PLAYED their first live show in two decades in the entirely appropriate setting of the O2 Academy’s upstairs venue – the room where they’d first become local stars. It was a highly emotional show,

for band and fans alike. It was also a triumph. If the band had aged, the music hadn’t; those 20 years were wiped away in 90 blitzkrieg minutes. World tours and festival appearances followed and at the end of June ‘Weather Diaries’ was released, the album recapturing much of that early magic, the four members once again reading from the same page while bringing their individual experiences and influences to bear. More than ‘Carnival of Light’, it feels like the natural follow-up to ‘Going Blank Again’ as huge washes of guitar noise mingle with questing harmonies and prominent electronic components.

ON THE 10th JULY RIDE WILL play a homecoming show at The New Theatre, Oxford’s biggest concert venue and the location of the band’s triumphant show in 1992 that saw them crowned musical kings of the city. Ahead of that landmark show, *Nightshift* chatted to Mark Gardener about the long-awaited reunion, the new album and where it all goes from here. One of the most striking things about Ride’s 1996 split was how quickly Mark and Andy made up again – the long-time friends aware that circumstances more than personality differences were at the root of their fractious working relationship. All four members have stayed in regular contact, Mark and Loz still resident in Oxford, Andy and Steve regular visitors to their home town.

“It certainly doesn’t feel like we had so much time away from the band,” says Mark; “it’s so strangely familiar in so many ways. Thankfully it was easy to slip back into the chemistry of old and with the benefit of hindsight on how we worked best together in the early years, so that we could apply the better working methods now.”

That first gig back in 2015 at what was The Zodiac and before that The Co-Op Hall where you played some of your earliest Oxford show; what were your feelings before you went on stage? Did it feel like the natural place to restart the story?

“It did feel like a natural place to restart the story. It was a night of extreme emotion for me. I welled up a good few times during the show. There’s so much release that comes up after that time and all we went through together and apart. It was a kind of exorcism in a way and in another way a total celebration of the fact that we could feel *that* unique feeling again. We went away but the music and songs never went away in our absence. It was great to reconnect with the songs, the guys and audience again like this in a room and venue that I have enjoyed so many great nights in.”

And now, two years on, you’ve got your New Theatre show coming up. It’ll be 25 years since your last gig there; what are your memories of that night and how do you feel going into the new show – just another gig or something special?

“My memories are a bit hazy but it was my childhood ambition to one day play with a band in the New Theatre after going to my first gigs in Oxford as a teenager in this amazing theatre. It’s always a night of high emotion for me as the theatre is so special to me. This is so ‘not just another gig’, it’s always a special night there. Those shows in the New Theatre back in the day were off the scale!”

BACK WHEN RIDE STARTED the quartet were united in their love of certain acts – the likes of Sonic Youth, My Bloody Valentine, Stone Roses, Spacemen 3 – while by the time of ‘Tarantula’ the influences were stretched. Writing together again for ‘Weather Diaries’, did Mark, Andy, Steve and Loz still find common ground and which acts in the interim have most affected the way they want to write and record music?

“We listen to so much music. We still think those original influences were great and timeless. I think it’s about being passionate for music, which has not changed at all for any of us. In a way the harder life gets outside of music the more you cling on to that musical thing as an even more needed remedy and therapy to help you through when the going gets tough. In some ways we find common ground and in other ways we don’t and that makes for interesting input from everybody. Then you add Erol Alkan into the mix in the studio and he’s DJing at the weekends and also has a totally eclectic record collection... as we all do. Hopefully the new record has many colours which reflect the music range.”

AH YES, EROL ALKAN. THE DJ and producer, known for his remix and mash-up work as well as his psychedelic project Beyond the Wizard’s Sleeve, was not, maybe, the most obvious choice to helm the recording sessions for ‘Weather Diaries’, but it’s a gamble that’s paid off handsomely, particularly on the more electronic-based tracks like All I Want’ and ‘Rocket Silver Symphony’, which count among the album’s high points.

“We don’t always do obvious and that’s part of the experiment. Andy and our management had links to Erol and I really liked his Beyond The Wizard’s Sleeve album. “Erol was great at being the fifth member inside the control room for us so we could be liberated and just play. I’ve done lots of mixing and production work and with Ride I just wanted to feel like the guy back in the band, so personally as soon as Erol got involved that really helped me to feel like that again. We had a good time with him in the studio. He had a great perspective. He helped with track selection and loads of ways.” There’s a strong electronic edge to

much of ‘Weather Diaries’; do you feel like that’s a step on from what you were doing previously? “We’ve always loved lots of electronic music so it feels natural to bring in some electronic elements and see how they work with the guitars. I’m a big fan of Bonobo and Boards Of Canada and lots of other more contemporary electronica acts as well as certain old and new electronic instruments, so if it helps the mood of the song, adds colour and keeps all interesting then all good. Who knows if it’s a step on from where we were or not!” Given the length of time between this album and the last, and knowing Mark’s taste for new, particularly dance-orientated music, was there any inclination to make, say, a hip hop-influenced album or something else completely different to what people might consider the Ride sound?

“There’s definitely a lot of younger curious faces along with older more nostalgic fans in the crowds. That’s great to see.”

“There are elements of Ride that will always continue and thread all together. I see all of our records as very honest sonic diaries as to what was happening to us along with the music and the madness of our world and the world outside at that time and how we were reacting to that. We’ve changed and grown and the music reflects that. Those threads that were always there remain but we’ve never felt restricted to sound a certain way. We’d quickly get bored if we did. So yes the next album will be grime or death-metal, no doubt!”

BACK IN 2010’S NIGHTSHIFT feature to mark the 20th anniversary of the ‘Ride EP’ we called it the most important Oxford release ever for the way it opened the door to so many other bands. Would Mark agree with its importance in that respect and how does he feel about it as a record now? “I think it was a door opener for other great local bands. It was important in that way but we obviously had no idea at the time. It was all about timing and stuff that we have no control over. It was a massively important record for us as our lives were never the same since that point. It opened the doors for us into a lifetime in music. We totally respect it and still play ‘Drive Blind’ and ‘Chelsea Girl’, often to end the set or as an encore. It’s hard for me to imagine what my life could have been had we not made that EP.” Back then there hadn’t been a major breakout band from Oxford but these days people actually move to Oxford to try and make it musically; how much of an eye do you keep on the local scene and which Oxford acts, if

any, have you taken to over the years? “I always keep an eye out. I always read *Nightshift*! I’ve become a little reclusive with the amount of studio work I’ve been doing; I don’t get out to gigs as much as I’d like to but I always enjoy when I do. It’s my roots. Going out to see Shake Appeal, The Wild Poppies and many other great local bands like that back in the day was also a big inspiration and motivator to me when I was a teenager to want to be in a band. Presently I’ve just finished mixing the Temper Cartel debut album. I think they have a great chance and the talent to be the next big band to emerge from Oxford. I’ve seen them a few times in Oxford and some of the other bands that have been playing with them on the bill were also very good. It makes me realise that Oxford is the town that keeps on giving when it comes to great and interesting new

talent and bands. That also keeps me on my toes, in a good way.” How much do you think the Oxford scene has changed since 1990? “I think the whole industry has changed massively in many good and bad ways. Maybe Oxford reflects that in a micro kind of way. It’s much harder for new bands to break through as there are so many of them. The talent is still there as it’s always been. I feel like we were more naive in many ways than some of the guys from local bands I meet now, who seem more together and on it than we were... or I was anyway! Obviously when we started out Oxford didn’t really have a musical heritage or history whereas it does now. Hopefully that does help new local bands to keep on believing and Oxford is now taken very seriously as a city that great bands emerge from. Whichever way you have to play, play and play. I don’t think that’s changed since the 90s.

“There’s always some luck but always loads of hard work involved and lots of coming back stronger from the many disappointments bands can experience and go through.” Is there anything about that old Oxford scene you particularly miss: people or places or something less tangible? “I miss the wide-eyed naivety I had going to gigs back then but I still feel like that when I play music. Everything changes so I try not to get too nostalgic about those days and that’s why I love hearing and seeing great new bands when I can, back in venues like the Jericho, which is still great and was where it all started for Ride. There’s magic in those walls!”

RIDE’S LEGACY HAS ONLY grown since 1996, how has that affected the sort of crowds the band have been playing to, particularly in America where there’s been generations of new bands come through quoting Ride as an influence. Is it all old fans at the shows now, or are the younger generations coming along too? “From what we can see from stage our audience does span the generations these days. There’s definitely a lot of younger curious faces along with older, more nostalgic fans. That’s great to see.” The name Ride, of course, is intrinsically linked with the term shoe-gaze, an offhand description once used to describe a wave of early-90s bands linked by their dedication to expansive guitar noise, ethereal atmospherics and heavy-duty FX pedal abuse. Ride’s old tourmates and fellow shoegazers Slowdive have also reformed recently and released their first new album in 20 years, their reputation as pioneers similarly having grown in the intervening years; has Mark heard it, and could he foresee playing with them again at any point? “I’ve heard most of it. I’ve always been a fan of Slowdive and continue to be and all of the new tracks I’ve heard I think are great. I think we are playing with them at a French festival soon. I could see us playing with them again at some point in the future as we’re both releasing new quality material. I speak with Rachel from time to time. I’m very happy for them and all that’s happening for them.”

FINALLY, HAVING LED OXFORD music’s charge out of the city walls all those years ago; having tasted global pop success, seen it all fall apart and then come back as big as ever, what one piece of advice would Mark give to a new young Oxford band wanting to make it now? “Don’t think too much about ‘making it’. Love and enjoy the music you play and make together and that could work out and you could end up making some kind of living from that, but if it doesn’t you will still have enjoyed the music you’ve made and that experience you’ve had in the room with your friends. Like most endeavours in life the more you are prepared to work it and come back stronger from adversity – which is plentiful in the early days of being in a band – then you will increase your chances of your music making you a living and becoming a lifestyle, if that’s what you want. Being in a band can be very all consuming and the more you are prepared to put in then the more you will potentially get out of it. It’s so not an exact science and that’s what keeps it all interesting.”

Ride play The New Theatre on Monday 10th July.

RELEASED

MOOGIEMAN

‘Girls and Film’

(Self released)
Moogiemán might yet end up enjoying the accolade of being the last ever artist to kick off the Oxford Punt and his 2016 opening set at the Purple Turtle remains a favourite memory of that May evening. The bulk of the intervening year has seen him tinker with the finishing touches to this album. The record is a concept album about analogue photography which, like cassette tapes, arctic roll and board games is firmly back in fashion – just ask the hipsters at Cowley Road’s Bear and the Bean café where a dazzling array of said equipment is for sale and on display. That indicates an album to which much thought has been devoted and even the odd flowchart. Thankfully, it’s a release that wears its charm, its tunes and its inventiveness on its sleeve, a double dozen of songs that recall Blur, The Kinks and even early Pink Floyd in its particularly English whimsy. Just as Damon Albarn would pepper his albums with a litany of fictional characters, Moogiemán does the same. So instead of Tracy Jacks and Ernold Same (whatever happened to Red Ken?), we have Octavia and Holga Jen, the former a seeming refugee from the tableau of personalities that starred with Phil Daniels in the ‘Parklife’ video; the latter the title character of the album’s stand out track, a putative, insistent indie anthem in the style of Martha and the Muffins. It’s an LP with many highlights – ‘Parallel Lines’



GOLDEN CITIES

‘EP 1’

(Self released)
Tim Day was previously one half of local electro-pop duo Space Heroes of the People and is the only other person I know who sports a Cats on Synthesizers in Space t-shirt. Prior to receiving this new solo EP I’d bumped into him in the queue for Kraftwerk’s gig at The New Theatre. Fair to say that Tim likes his synthesizers. When it comes to synth-pop Tim is very much old school, Golden Cities is all clean, silicon lines, and austere electronic beats, vocals kept to a minimum, like the heavily-treated mantra of “Attack, sustain, release” of ‘Monitors’, and



is another that has real drive to it – while the instrumentation is often brilliant. A bold sax solo from Clare Heaviside of the Balkan Wanderers lights up ‘Ektachrome’ and Andy Diagram-style trumpet from Kate Bryer on ‘Summer of 09’ really elevates that particular track. Nor is the piece lacking lyrically. The tall tales include Moogiemán leaving his camera on a roof in 1972, thinking of ‘getting into processing’, urging people not to take their disposal cameras back, and meeting a drunken debutante with a voice like Joan Greenwood. The one quibble is the length, and while it’s necessary to make use of studio time, there are almost two albums of good music here.

Rob Langham

these three tracks would fit neatly onto one of the Minimal Wave compilations that have surfaced in recent times, collecting lost electronic recordings from across the continent, and sound like they should be soundtracking lo-budget dystopian sci-fi movies. There’s a primitiveness about it all that gives it an edge that too much modern commercial electro-pop lacks and if you’re left contemplating space stations, concrete underpasses and the works of JG Ballard, that’s almost certainly the idea. Welcome to the retro future.

Dale Kattack

MY CROOKED TEETH

‘Better Off’

(Self released)
As frontman for the much missed Toliesel, Jack Olchawski explored an epic form of Americana-informed indie rock that made way for a more intimate, self-deprecating acoustic pop once he set out alone as My Crooked Teeth. For his new single he’s got a band behind him again and returns to those wide open spaces, his yearning, earnest delivery bringing a quiet sense of epic romance to ‘Better Off’, which wouldn’t have sounded out of place on one of The Epstein’s earlier albums. His deft lyrical skill always kept him afloat in his solo shows but a bigger sound suits him far better and Jack sounds like he’s restarting where Toliesel left off, which can only be good news.

Ian Chesterton

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SALVATION BILL

‘Fat Fate’s Formal Handshake’

(Self released)
Ollie Thomas has long been one of Oxford’s more idiosyncratic characters operating in the nominally acoustic singer-songwriter sphere. From his early days helming Ute, through the short-lived Old Grinding Young, to his long-term Salvation Bill incarnation, his voice, a sometimes keening mix of plaintive purity and cracks and splinters can instantly divide a room. A sometimes macabre sense of humour only adds to the appeal for those who he counts as fans. ‘Fat Fate’s Formal Handshake’ is Ollie’s first full-length album and is released at a time when he’s forsaken Oxford for Bristol and most recently London. Opening track ‘Grim Reaper’ is almost the perfect encapsulation of what he does best: taking what in lesser hands would be solid, simple songs and making merry with the arrangements, in this case mixing almost ghostly spaghetti western incidental music with Tom Waits’ gutter blues and Nick Cave’s mix of the gothic and the mundane, the scrape of fingers across guitar strings contrasting with the squirming and squelching of a synthesizer. Further in he’ll puncture a languid acoustic lullaby with an incongruous kazoo solo and scatter rhythmic rainfall on windows over a farewell lament by way of rhythm.

Ten tracks does maybe show up the limitations on Ollie’s voice and ability to change tack: too much of it is similarly paced, the plaintive blues of ‘Me & My Big Mouth’ and ‘Captain Flash & Bitch Cassidy’ fuel to the fire of criticism that he’s too in thrall to Thom Yorke while unable to capture Yorke’s poetry or invention. But then he’ll pull something like ‘This Is Actually Happening’ out of the bag, it’s multi-way vocal parts overlapping, pulling the song in different directions while retaining the gentle reverie at its core until it dissipates into the fog by way of a splintering crash. Given the songs here range in age from ten years to six months maybe some quality variation is understandable. When he’s at his best though, Salvation Bill is somehow wrong in all the right ways.

Sue Foreman



THE SHAPES

‘Long Way Home’

(Self released)
Easily the feel-good act of Common People last month, The Shapes are best seen live for the infectious *bon homie* they bring to the party. Old enough and big enough not to care much about what constitutes cool, they mix and match musical styles within a broad template that joins dots between 60s r’n’b, soul, chart pop, new wave and folk. Age plays a big part in a couple of the songs here: ‘It’s Bringing Me Down’ – inspired by a chance meeting with former footballer Paul Merson – is a reflection on coming to terms with life, the demons it can throw up and the dreams it can bring crashing down, that takes the form of a suitably wistful swirl of Gallic-flavoured folk-pop, while ‘Crossroads’, with backing



singer Alix Champ on lead, is a lament for dead friends. It’s a surprisingly upbeat number if perhaps not as elegant as it might want to be, but the EP’s highlights come with the bold, rootsy ‘Til They Put Me In The Ground’, mixing hoe-down Americana with Pogues-y folk, Alix and bandleader Ant Kelly doing a very decent approximation of the old Shane McGowan / Kirsty MacColl act and the closest The Shapes get to their exuberant live selves.

Dale Kattack

FOCI’S LEFT

‘May Everyone Be Safe From Harm’

(Self released)
The latest album from Foci’s Left, the work of Mick Buckingham, follows a similar pattern to his previous offerings: minimalist electronic ambience, drones and pianism that starts off well enough but ends up going on too long and losing any sense of direction until it’s little more than a jumble of randomly-ordered noises. Opener ‘Store the Memories’ is solemn, random pianism but ‘Stalk the Fool’ condenses his best ideas into a subtle weave and drift of drones, although the incongruous, cheap-sounding beats towards the end are an unwelcome distraction. ‘Statist Supremo Suicidal Shitpiece’ is not only a great title, which Ed Sheeran should borrow immediately, but also takes the music to the next level via electronic squiggles and discordant intermissions, although the strange knocking sounds throughout suggest he’s recorded the piece on a keyboard perched on an unsteady

table, which tends to puncture the atmosphere. From here we start to get lost. ‘Oblique World’ starts off in Eno-ish ambient territory but by the end he’s simply going through the scales on his piano, the weird knocking sound speeding up as he becomes more intense and agitated. By the time we reach ‘Overrated is the Title of a Woe Is Me Philanthropist’, we’re into freeform piano plonking, any sense of cohesion sent to its room well before the eleven minutes is up, and ‘Boring’ finds him simply hammering the same notes repeatedly with no pretence at taking things further. Flickers of hope return on ‘Neuroharp’, with its insistent industrial rhythm, but again the lead is incoherent and insubstantial. Everything comes to a close with the icy, atmospheric drone of a remix of Steve Roach’s ‘The Green Place’, a pointer perhaps for where Foci’s Left might be better focussing his future efforts. With the emphasis on that word focus.

Dale Kattack



GUIDE

Saturday 1st IRREGULAR FOLKS SUMMER SESSION: Victoria Arms, Old Marston

First up, for the uninitiated, forget any ideas of folk music. Irregular Folks began some years ago attempting to present music inspired by or loosely connected to traditional musical forms but has moved well beyond even that baseline. The annual Summer Session is a genuine highlight of the local music calendar, an invitation to a world of strange musical invention and adventure set in a Bedouin tent. Last year’s highlights included the striking, bizarre Waitress For the Bees and the otherworldly Jessica Sligter as well as the surrealist lunacy of compere **PAUL FOOT**, who is back on genially insane host duties again this time round and is worth the admission alone. Musically the day kicks off with probably the biggest names on the bill, **YORKSTON, THORNE AND KHAN** melding traditional Scottish folk, contemporary jazz, electronica and classical Indian sarangi music. Along the way you’ll also encounter spooky, glitchy American computer game-inspired popstrels **GO DARK** (*pictured*); the striking, mood-shifting vocal talents of multi-instrumentalist **LAURA J MARTIN**, veering from burlesque to Kate Bush-like pop experimentation; **OLY RALFE**’s mellow, stripped-down piano soundtrack to Joanna Kavenna’s ‘A Field Guide to Reality; cinematic drone-folk conceptualists **DEAD RAT ORCHESTRA**; playful indie folk with its toes in Sun Ra and Stereolab from This is the Kit’s **ROZIE PLAIN**, and local singer-songwriter **HANNAH BRUCE**’s Cat Power and PJ Harvey-inspired acoustic folk-pop. Beyond the Bedouin idyll, there’s the **ODDITORIUM**, hosted by David Bramwell, the man behind Singa-along-a-Wicker-Man, and featuring unusual talks, presentations, stories and more, plus a short film cinema tent, where you’ll also find the drunken drawing gang. The best day out of the summer? It’s got to be up there.



JULY

SATURDAY 1st
IRREGULAR FOLKS SUMMER SESSION:
Victoria Arms, Old Marston (*midday-11pm*) – Oxford’s best mini-fest? You’d heard it here – *see main preview*

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT: Said Business School Rooftop Ampitheatre (*3-11.15pm*) – The fifth – and final – KAAR fundraiser in aid of local children’s charities sees a host of local bands take to the Said Business School’s rooftop amphitheatre for a full day of live music. Playing for the cause this year are classic soul ensemble Soul Devotion; Britpop/r’n’b crazies Chasing Daylight; recent Common People stars The Shapes; darkwoods alt.country duo The August List; harmony-driven Americana crew Loud Mountains; expansive, country-flavoured soul crew Deadbeat Apostles, and Novak & Good. This year’s worthy beneficiaries are Children’s Ambulatory Care, the John Radcliffe Children’s Hospital and All As One.

THE COOLING PEARLS + BIRDS OF HELL + PROTECTION SPELLS: Fusion Arts – Cooling Pearls play their first show in two years ahead of the release of new album ‘The Red Laugh’, their gothic dream pop mixing delicate, pretty melodies with a sense of haunted desolation. Norwich’s Birds of Hell bring atmospheric electro-pop and shoegaze in support alongside dream-folk three-piece Protection Spells.

FREERANGE: The Cellar – UK garage, grime and bassline club night, playing the best new underground sounds.

SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE AND SPOTLIGHT JAM: The White House – Sparky hosts his monthly bands, jam and open show at its new home at The White House on Abingdon Road, tonight with sets from Ras Brother John, Richard Brotherton, and The Talc Daemons.

FINSTOCK MUSIC FESTIVAL: Finstock Playing Field – Second day of the live music festival, with Leicester’s blues rockers headlining, the band having previously played with Dr Feelgood, Nine Below Zero and Canned Heat. Support from Alex Chapman and Wood Green Big Band.

JUKESTERS: Tap Social, Botley – Jive, swing blues and rock.

HAIRFORCE 1: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Hair metal covers.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: Six Bells, Headington – Classic blues, r’n’b, rock and more from the veteran local singer and guitarist.

SUNDAY 2nd
CARNIVAL: Cowley Road – The Annual celebration of east Oxford life returns, with the

length of Cowley Road and its tributaries taken over by live music stages, sound systems, dance displays, food stalls and much, much more. With 40,000 revellers expected it is, as ever, the biggest and best free party of the year – *see news feature for line-up details*

SIMPLE – CARNIVAL AFTER PARTY: The Bullingdon – House and techno party for Carnival goers.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open mic session.

MONDAY 3rd
JIM CAUSLEY & JACKIE OATES: Nettlebed Folk Club – Folk songs and stories from the West Country from five-times BBC Folk Award nominee Jim Causley alongside Nettlebed regular Jackie Oates.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim – Weekly open mic session.

TUESDAY 4th
FVNERALS + WREN + INDICA BLUES: The Wheatsheaf – To hell with summer, the dark is rising – *see main preview*

AIRWAYS: The Cellar – Bolshy indie-rock from the Peterborough quartet, out on a headline tour to promote new EP ‘Starting To Spin’ after tour supports to The Hunna, Nothing But Thieves and Sunset Sons.

SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern – Weekly open mic session.

WEDNESDAY 5th
JOYCE MANOR + MARTHA + FANCY DRESS PARTY + DRAMA KLUB: The Bullingdon – Spiky, melodic emo/pop-punk outta Torrance, California from Joyce Manor, making their Oxford debut tonight, the band out on tour to promote fourth album ‘Cody’, and taking an increasingly pop-friendly road, having previously been signed to local indie label Big Scary Monsters. Back in town as support after their packed headline show at East Oxford Community Centre last year are Durham’s indie/punkers Martha, kicking it out in the vein of Ash, Pains of Being Pure at Heart and Spook School, while local newcomers Fancy Dress – sulk-core in the vein of Sunnyday Real Estate from members of Slate Hearts and Too Many Poets – and ex-Hatemail crew Drama Kids open the show.

JAM & OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – New monthly open mic and jam session.

THURSDAY 6th
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf – Swamp blues, funk, psychedelia and ska from the madcap local stalwarts, in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest running open club night continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance



Friday 7th – Sunday 9th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Country Park

All good thing must come to an end, which makes us worry the world’s wine supply is about to dry up. Before that catastrophic happening, we must bid a very fond farewell to Cornbury Festival, which will take place for the fourteenth and final time this month. Starting life at its original home of Cornbury Park in 2004, the festival has hosted a slew of world-renowned acts over the years, from Blondie, Amy Winehouse, The Pretenders and Elvis Costello, to Robert Plant, Simple Minds, Bryan Ferry and Tom Jones, as well as myriad cult heroes from a cross the musical spectrum, from Half Man Half Biscuit and Seth Lakeman to Dr John and Osibisa. All of this has been driven by festival founder Hugh Phillimore’s imperishable love of live music and ability to make stuff happen. That it’s now coming to an end says far more about the difficulty in running musical festivals in the current climate and overcrowded market than it does about the quality of Cornbury itself. But anyway, off it pops, into the sunset, determined to go out on a high.

This last Cornbury has been dubbed The Fabulous Finale, with many of the acts performing returning after previous appearances.

Chief among those are Sunday’s headliners **THE PRETENDERS**, who will send the festival off into the long night in style. Joining Chrissie Hynde and co. will be the unofficial Queen of Cornbury, **IMELDA MAY**, who has probably racked up more appearances here than any other artist, her elegant update on r’n’b-flavoured rockabilly and skiffle remaining timeless. **JOOLS HOLLAND** must run May close in the regular return stakes, **HIS RHYTHM & BLUES ORCHESTRA** a mainstay of the main stage, with a host of special guests that’s previously included Marc Almond and Ruby Turner, cranking out soul and blues classics. Others coming back for more are gravel-voiced soul man **JACK SAVORETTI**;

While Adams tops Saturday’s bill, Friday’s headliners are first timers too, indie rock hitmakers **KAISER CHIEFS** sure to get the entire field singing along to ‘I Predict A Riot’, even if Poshstock is the last festival where that’s going to happen. Maybe if the Pimm’s bus runs out or something.

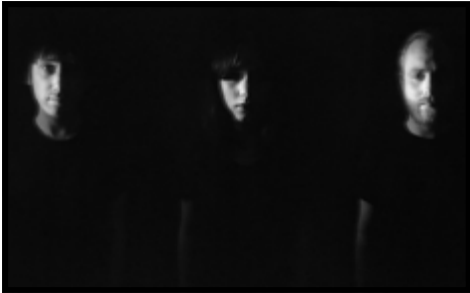
Talking about revolutions, we know for a fact that **BLACK DYLAN** is not a black tribute to Bob and **TEX PISTOLS** are not a southern rock tribute to Johnny Rotten and gang, but we’ll be checking them out anyway, cos you never really know what surprises are instore at a festival that’s earned a reputation for mainstream appeal but always manages to throw a few curveballs into the mix.

We’re betting one of the big hits of the weekend will be surprise 80s pop sensations **RIGHT SAID FRED**, as well as Ultravox frontman **MIDGE URE**, who’ll reprise a selection his band’s greatest hits, hopefully chuck in the odd Visage song and avoid his somewhat suspect take on ‘No Regrets’, while **ROSE ELINOR DOUGALL, LAURA OAKES** and **KESTON COBBLEERS CLUB** are all acts capable of winning new fans across the weekend.

As is traditional, The Riverside stage brings a local slant to the event, this year seeing crowd-pleasing return sets from **THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND; 2 TONE ALL SKAS** (One of *the* big hits of last year’s Cornbury); **ZURICH; THE EPSTEIN; BRICKWORK LIZARDS; GREAT WESTERN TEARS** and **ALPHABET BACKWARDS**, while the comedy tent hosts **NISH KUMAR, TIM KEY** and **AUSTENTATIOS** among others.

So, yes, sad to see it go; Cornbury’s been part of *Nightshift*’s summer calendar for so long now we can’t remember a time when it wasn’t around (though in all honesty, given the amount of wine we tend to consume we often struggle to recall anything before the last lunchtime). Bowing out in style though, doubtless with an A-List celeb guest list and a very British approach to partying. Enjoy your summers off from now on, Mr Phillimore; you’ve damned well earned them.





Tuesday 4th

FVNERALS / WREN / INDICA BLUES: The Wheatsheaf

Yes, it’s summer and yes we’re all supposed to be outside listening to sweet tropical pop while enjoying things like the sun, the sky and the green, green grass, but *Nightshift’s* darkened soul craves bleakness and things of a heavy nature. Some kind of stark reminder that winter – and, hey, death – are never too far away. And so we open our hearts to Glasgow’s glorious doom-core trio Fvnerals at tonight’s Buried in Smoke show. The band’s mix of crushing post-metal riffage and black hole ambience is equally dark, heavy and beautiful, like a meeting point of Earth, Undersmile and Mazzy Star. Having formed in Brighton, the band, led by ethereal singer/bassist Tiffany (really, not *that* Tiffany, although it’d be brilliant if it was) obviously decided the seaside wasn’t their thing and relocated to the generally more cloudy and wet far north, there to make records that sound like thunderstorms, haunted houses and your darkest thoughts. Their new album, ‘Wounds’, sounds like its title suggests. So frankly, you can stick your cheery festival vibes and chilled cider by the river, we’re off to stare into the void. Support comes from London’s oppressive sludge-rock outfit Wren and local stoner-blues behemoths Indica Blues. Perfect summer tunes all round.

artists every Thursday.

THE LORDS OF DISCO WONDER: The Cellar – Rock, disco and 80s hits with King Terrible.
IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC SHOWCASE: The Jericho Tavern – Local bands night.
SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon – Weekly open mic session.
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure – Weekly unplugged open night.
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford – Open blues jam.

FRIDAY 7th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Country Park – First night of the Last Hurrah and a fond farewell to Poshstock, today with a headline set from Kaiser Chiefs – *see main preview*
BLOODSTOCK – METAL 2 THE MASSES: The Bullingdon – The final of the rock and metal battle of the bands to win a place at this year’s Bloodstock Festival. Metalcore merchants K-Lacura and stoner-blues beasts Crimson Tusk go up against the winners of the second semi final, which took place at the end of June.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with SELF HELP + MONKFISH + THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + BROWN GLOVE: The Wheatsheaf – This month’s anything-goes mixed bag at Klub Kak featured punk-popsters Self Help; gothic blues from Monkfish, launching a new EP; acid-fried surf-rock from The Pink Diamond Revue and dark, Brechtian blues from Brown Glove.
BOSSAPHONIK with TASHKEZA: The Cellar – Wild and atmospheric retellings of songs from the Middle East, The Balkans and beyond from seven-piece band Tashkeza at tonight’s Bossaphonik, the band mixing Arabic melodies, Turkish and Greek rhythms, Balkan horns, vocal harmonies and floor-shaking basslines.
CASH: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute to The Man in Black.

SATURDAY 8th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Country Park – Bryan Adams tops the bill at today’s farewell fun – *see main preview*
DUB FOR THE ELDERS: O2 Academy – A night of celebration of seven of roots reggae’s pivotal figures born in July, with Jamatone; Tom Dred; Shumba Youth; Lee Valentine and Unity Sistren giving it up for Desmond Dekker; John Holt; Gregory Isaacs; Flabber Holt; Junior Byles; Tapper Zukie and Black Uhuru’s Michael Rose.
THE OTHER DRAMAS + RICHARD BRABIN: The Library – Melodic garage pop from recent Uncommon stage stars The Other Dramas, tonight launching their new single with a pay-what-you-like show – *see Introducing feature*
FREEMANTLE + TARPIT + FUJI: The Wheatsheaf – It’s All About the Music local bands showcase.
KING BOLETE: The Cellar – Doom’n’blues from the local heavyweights.
TURF: The Cellar – House club night.
THE CARPENTERS STORY: The New Theatre – Big stage telling of the brother/sister hitmakers story. Spoiler alert: great music but it doesn’t end well.
PEATBOG FAERIES: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Traditional Scottish folk music gets abducted and taken raving by Skye’s Peatbog Faeries, heading off on a tour of indoor venues alongside a festival-filled summer, including Glastonbury, fiddles, bagpipes and beats mixing up an infectious party cocktail of traditional Scottish sounds, reggae, funk, African rhythms and techno.
SHEPHERD’S PIE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Rock covers.
THE BANKERS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – Classic rock covers.
THE PETE FRYER BAND: Cricketers Arms, Cowley
STEAMROLLER: Chilton Festival

SUNDAY 9th

CORNBURY FESTIVAL: Great Tew Country Park – Last day of the last Cornbury – bowing out in style with The Pretenders – *see main preview*
THE GORIES + RON GALLO + TABLE SCRAPS: O2 Academy – Detroit’s cult garage rock legends keep it raw – *see main preview*
DAISY + ASH LEWIS + DUDLEY + THE DEMOISELLES + THE KITES + DUO CANIC: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm) – Free afternoon of live music in the downstairs bar from Klub Kakofanney.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms WATERFAHL: Tap Social, Botley (2.30pm) – Acoustic blues and pop from the local duo.

MONDAY 10th

RIDE + SPECTRES: The New Theatre – Homecoming show for the reformed local heroes as they tour their comeback album, ‘Weather Diaries’ – *see main interview feature*
JOSIENNE CLARKE & BEN WALKER: Nettlebed Folk Club – Delicate, autumnal folk balladry from a star turn of the English Folk scene – winners of the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards for Best Duo – coming to Nettlebed to play songs from their acclaimed album ‘Overnight’ on Rough Trade Records, Clarke’s pure voice drawing comparisons to Sandy Denny, Gillian Welch and Laura Marling.
OXFORD CLASSIC JAZZ: Harcourt Arms
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim

TUESDAY 11th

INTRUSION: The Cellar – Goth, industrial, ebm, dark wave and more at the Cellar’s long-running club night, with Doktor Joy and

Sunday 9th

THE GORIES / RON GALLO / TABLE SCRAPS: O2 Academy

Even in the often murky world of garage rock The Gories aren’t exactly a household name. But they should be. Half a decade before Jon Spencer cut blues, punk and soul up with a whole heap of amphetamine sulphate, the Detroit trio were taking the influence of Hound Dog Taylor, Captain Beefheart, The Sonics, Velvet Underground, Link Wray, Them and The Gun Club and going hell for leather for the finish line. Fronted by the rich gravel-blues voice of former mod Mick Collins and driven by Peggy O’Neill’s primitive sexbeat, The Gories were raw, stripped-down and ferocious, a 60s garage band transported into the 80s via the punk revolution. Their 1989 debut ‘House Rockin’ is a classic of its genre and so obviously it was all but ignored at the time and after two more albums The Gories split. The enduring love and endorsement of Jack White among others led to a reunion in 2009, the original trio back together as their cult status continued to cement. If you have any love for the dirt and grime and raw thrill of rock’n’roll and blues, do not miss this gig. Great support from Nashville’s psychedelic blues master Ron Gallo, touring his new album ‘Heavy Meta’, and Birmingham’s heavy-duty scuzz-psych rockers Table Scraps, featuring former members of The Scholars.



Bookhouse keeping it dark on the decks.
SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 12th

THE BILLY WALTON BAND: The Bullingdon – Blues-rock in the vein of Hendrix, Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan from the New Jersey guitarist, who has played around his local scene since his early teens, jamming with Springsteen, Gary US Bonds and Double Trouble along the way.

THURSDAY 13th

LORDS OF DISCO WONDER: The Cellar
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC SHOWCASE: The Jericho Tavern
SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon
SLUNG WHAT YOU BRUNG: The Black Swan – New fortnightly open mic night hosted by local musician Spike Holifield. Free drink for all performers.
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford

FRIDAY 14th

NATHASSIA + SAAL LONDON + ORIGINAL PRIMATE: The Bullingdon – East-meets-west EDM from Dutch-Indian singer Nathassia, out on her Future Now tour to promote second album ‘Light of the World’, mixing Pussycat Dolls-style-pop and house with Bollywood dance soundtracks.
BLOODSHOT + OCEANS OF APATHY + FORCE OF MORTALITY: The Wheatsheaf – Local rock and metal night with Witney’s groove metallers Bloodshot alongside metalcore crew Oceans of Apathy and classic metallers Force of Mortality.
STEVIE PARKER: Modern Art Oxford – The latest in a series of free shows from Future Perfect at Modern Art brings Bristolian singer-songwriter Stevie Parker to town as she promotes her new break-up album ‘The Cure’, heartache and reflection meeting vengeful thoughts as the smoky, tripped-out atmosphere of Massive Attack blooms around her often idiosyncratic vocals.
WHITESNAKE UK: Fat Lil’s, Witney – UK tribute to renowned Mongolian metallers Whitesnake.

SATURDAY 15th

GLASSHOUSE STUDIOS BIRTHDAY PARTY: Glasshouse, Denman’s Lane, Botley (1-7pm) – Second anniversary barbecue and picnic at the local recording and rehearsal studio, with live music from The Cooling Pearls, Wolfs and Quarter Melon.
MASSIVE + BLACK CAT BONES + HELL’S GAZELLES + TEQUILA MOCKINBYRD: The Wheatsheaf – Melbourne’s Earache-signed road

dogs return to the UK for their Yellin’ Degenerates tour to promote debut album ‘Full Throttle’, a suitably-titled opus for a band whose anthemic hard rock recalls AC/DC, Guns’n’Roses and Motley Crue. Support at tonight’s OxRox show comes from Liverpool hard rockers Black Cat Bones; local melodic metallers in a Judas Priest and Guns’n’Roses style, Hell’s Gazelles, and Melbourne garage rock and pop-punk trio Tequila Mockingbyrd, back over in the UK to plug their album, ‘Fight & Flight’.
MUSICAL MEDICINE: The Bullingdon – Funk, soul, disco and house club night.
FLUID: The Cellar – Bassline, drum&bass and grime club night with host Masp joined by Hamdi, VLV, Burt Cope and Wissla for a night of underground sounds.
SKITTLE ALLEY CHARITY ALL-DAYER: King’s Head & Bell – Charity fundraiser in aid of Yeah Baby, with live music from Franklin’s Tower; Superloose; Beard of Destiny; Boon, Mew and Wooster, and Mark Bosley.
THE NIGHT WRECKERS: The Tap Social, Botley – Rock’n’roll, r’n’b and 60s pop covers.
FOS BROTHERS + THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Black Swan
STEAMROLLER: Sandford Village Festival

SUNDAY 16th

FLAMENCO MADRID: The Cellar – Authentic Spanish flamenco with dancer Laura Gonzalez, singer Ana Brenes and guitarist Jer0 Ferec.
THE MIGHTY CADILLACS + MOJO DEMON + PURPLE MAY + GLENDALE TRAIN: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-8.30pm) – Free live music in the downstairs bar from Giddyup Music.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms

MONDAY 17th

MEGAN HENWOOD: Nettlebed Folk Club – Resident songstress Megan plays a hometown show at the legendary Nettlebed club.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim

TUESDAY 18th

DAN OWEN: The Cellar – Gruff, soulful blues in the vein of Tenterhooks and Lake Komo from the young singer on the rise, back in town touring recent EP ‘Open Hands & Enemies’, with its single ‘Moonlight’.
SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 19th

DEAP VALLY + DEMOB HAPPY: The Bullingdon – Double dose of pure rock’n’roll – *see main preview*

THURSDAY 20th

Q + STATE FUNERAL + GUILT POLICE + COWLEY CHAINSAWS: The Library – More beautiful squalid

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Wednesday 19th

DEEP VALLY / DEMOB HAPPY: The Bullingdon

For a band who met at needlework class, LA’s Deep Vally are a right noisy bunch. Drummer Julie Edwards runs a shop back home called The Little Knittery, but sit her behind her kit and she’ll thrash seven shades of hell out of it. Singer-guitarist Julie Edwards, meanwhile, compacts all the raw blues and soul venom of Janis Joplin, Karen O and Alison Mosshart into a strident howl that sings of female empowerment (‘Gonna Make My Own Money’) or fires broadsides at creepy blokes (‘Creeplife’). Together the pair fire out strident, bluntly feminist bluesy hard rock that pays as much homage to Joan Jett as it does to Led Zeppelin and distils rock and roll back to its base elements by way of some biblically distorted stoner riffage. Such a grunged-up, primal approach to stripped-down blues rocking has, of course, been done plenty of times before, from Zep and Sabbath, through to Royal Trux and The White Stripes, but if you’re going to let that spoil your fun, more fool you. Deep Vally knit. They crochet. Most of all though, they bloody well rock. Who can match them in the rock’n’roll ring? How about Brighton’s Demob Happy, unkempt grunge/garage rockers who are unapologetically brash in their dedication to sludgy, sleazy garage rock which tends to hurtle along at quite a pace, stopping off to pay due respect to The Stooges, Queens of the Stone-Age and even Beck in his more slacker moments. It’s gonna be loud and heavy and it’s gonna be hot and sweaty. That’s yer actual rock’n’roll for you.

noise from the lovely Smash Disco people, tonight’s high-octane lo-fi fun comes from Missouri’s violent, degenerate hardcore and D-beat wreckers of civilisation Q, over in the UK to tour their new record ‘Relaxed Mike’. They’re joined by Brighton’s hardcore crew State Funeral, raging against “rainy shit-hole, austerity-scorched, nothing-left-to-lose, Thatcher mk2 Britain”;; local angular sheet-metal filth Guilt Police, mixing up Discharge-inspired noise with Amphetamine Reptile-influenced grit. Whisky and super strength lager-fuelled punk mess from openers Cowley Chainsaws.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatshaeaf – Free show in the downstairs bar.

OCEANS: The Jericho Tavern

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

STONETRIGGER + SYKKO DOLLS + TERMINUS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Glam, sleaze and hard rock from Dublin’s Stone Trigger, out on their Sleaze In the City tour after supporting LA Guns in March.

FRIDAY 21st

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – Bigger, brighter, better – Truck’s girth continues to expand – *see main preview*

FREDDIE MCGREGOR & ALLSTARS OF REGGAE & LOVERS ROCK: O2 Academy – 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 with LAKUTA: The Bullingdon – Upbeat, jazzy tropical soul from Brighton’s Lakuta at tonight’s Bossaphonik club night, the nine-piece band taking time out from a summer of festivals and promoting new album ‘Brothers & Sisters’ to play tonight’s more intimate club show, a guaranteed dancefloor filling act with elements of funk, hip hop and afropop fronted by the big, soulful voice of Siggie Mwasote. Bossaphonik host Dan Ofer mans the decks to play a globe-spanning mix of jazz dance, Latin, Afro, Balkan and more.

THUNDER ON THE LEFT + REBEL STATION + ORDER#227 + RESOLVE: The Wheatshaeaf – Nimble, angular and melodic indie-core from London’s Thunder on the Left, coming in somewhere between Fugazi, Veruca Salt and The Breeders on new EP ‘The Age of Letting Go’. Support from Oxford/Swindon/Gloucester crew Rebel Station, mixing old-school punk and hard rock, plus virulent hardcore beasts Order#227 and prog-core and djent newcomers Resolve.

ILLEGAL EAGLES: The New Theatre – Big stage tribute to The Eagles. Not actually illegal, though we hope they’re making all the necessary PRS payments.

MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS: Tap Social, Botley – Idiosyncratic lo-fi electro-pop and classic eccentric English pop in the vein of Syd Barrett and The Kinks from Moogiemann, playing songs from his new camera-themed concept album, ‘Girls & Film’.

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

BON GIOVI: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Bon Jovi tribute.

BEER & MUSIC FEST: The Tree, Iffley – Live music from The Pete Fryer Band and more.

SATURDAY 22nd

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – The Libertines headline the second day of the sold-out festival – *see main preview*

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with LOWWS + ED GEATER + WEBS & MARIONETTES: The Wheatshaeaf – Another goodly mixed bag of acts at this month’s GTI, with groove-led electro-indie in the vein of Mew,

Wild Beasts and Maccabees from Lowws, joined by Birmingham’s Ed Geater, taking influences from Bonobo, Boards of Canada and Four-Tet in his mix of loops, electronic beats and acoustic guitar, plus alternatively tender and funky guitar popsters Webs & Marionettes.

RESTRUCTURE + BEAVER FUEL + DJ FRED UGLY: The Jericho Tavern – Great lo-fi hip hop, terrace punk, electro-pop and acid house mash-up from Restructure, somehow sounding like Sleaford Mods, Crass and The Shamen trapped in a 1980s rave together. Caustic indie punk from Beaver Fuel in support, while Restructure’s Fred Ugly mans the decks.

THE SATELLITE VINES + FINISTERRE + LINCOLN & LOGAN: The Harcourt Arms – Folk rock from the Brighton outfit.

JOHNNY’S SEXUAL KITCHEN: The Bell, Bicester – Classic rock and blues covers.

BEER & MUSIC FEST: The Tree, Iffley – Live music from The Mighty Redox and more.

STEAMROLLER: The White Horse, Bicester

WATERFAHL: Horse & Harrow, West Hagbourne (3-5pm)

SUNDAY 23rd

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon – The Vaccines and Maximo Park round off the weekend – *see main preview*

OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms

WATERFAHL: The Plough, Wolvercote

MONDAY 24th

FOLK ON THE ROCKS: Nettlebed Folk Club – Folk meets rock with Pete Lincoln and members of Feast of Fiddles teaming up for runs through ‘Maggie May’, ‘Baker Street’ and more.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim

TUESDAY 25th

THE SAM OUTLAW BAND: The Bullingdon – Southern Californian country music and honky tonk from LA singer-songwriter Sam Outlaw, over in the UK to promote his new album ‘Tenderheart’, the follow-up to his Ry Cooder-produced debut, ‘Angeleno’, Outlaw having quite his job in advertising aged 30 to become a singer. He’s doing pretty well so far – sharing a stage with Bonnie Raitt, Brandi Carlile and Jack Ingram at the 2016 tribute concert to Glenn Frey, and the Stagecoach Country Music Festival in Indio, California.

WOVEN SKULL + GIFT OF BLINDNESS + OLD ERNIE: The Wheatshaeaf – A jolly summer evening of dark atmospheres and oppressive ambience with Ireland’s Woven Skull’s repetitive minimalism breaching the barriers between post-metal, wyrd-folk and eastern classical music to make for a hypnotic soundtrack to a journey into the mind’s eye. Monolithic gothic industrial noise from Umair Chaudhry’s Gift of Blindness, inspired by Godflesh and Swans’ *sturm und drang*, plus David Kahl’s decidedly strange and often wonderful Old Ernie, taking a convoluted path through lo-fi, doomy musical landscapes.

OSPREY & FRIENDS: St. Aldates – Local bluesman Osprey and friends kick out the jams.

SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 26th

HAMILTON LOOMIS: The Bullingdon – Soulful, Texan-flavoured blues from the singer,



Friday 21st – Sunday 23rd

TRUCK FESTIVAL: Hill Farm, Steventon

Bigger, brighter, better. Truck’s rise and rise in fortunes since its takeover by Count of Ten in the wake of 2011’s financial woes is evidenced in the fact that not only has the three-day format proven to be a success, but this year’s festival is the biggest ever – capacity close to 13,000 – and also sold out four months in advance. In a crowded festival market such success deserves a hearty round of applause, slap on the back and a raised glass or five.

As such, you don’t need this preview to persuade you whether to buy a ticket; you’re either going or you’re not. If it’s the former, we’ll see you there; if it’s the latter, don’t expect us to be thinking of you, we’ll be way too busy wondering where to head to next as Truck continues to be the local festival that most challenges you to explore and discover new acts with some nine different stages to pick from and well over 100 acts to enjoy.

This year’s main stage headliners speak for themselves: big name indie stars in the form of **FRANZ FERDINAND**; **THE LIBERTINES** and **THE VACCINES** can pull in the crowds, allowing newer and more esoteric acts to stake their claim for your ears elsewhere. In fact even below the top line the likes of **SLAVES**, **MAXIMO PARK** and **LOYLE CARNER** are all capable of headline billing. Carner perhaps should be on the main stage but truth be told his intimate, emotive, poetic style of hip hop will probably benefit from the more compact setting of the market stage.

Similarly **JAGWA MA**, **PUMAROSA** and **HONEYBLOOD**, who all play the unofficial second stage and will pack the place out. Pumarosa have been one of *Nightshift*’s favourite new bands since we caught them opening for Gengahr at the Bullingdon back in 2015, their serpentine goth-pop opus ‘Priestess’ rarely far from our heavily shadowed turntable.

Back to the main stage for a minute though and beyond a wealth of name indie and rock acts – **BRITISH SEA POWER**; **DEAF HAVANA**; **WOMBATS**; **NOTHING BUT THIEVES**;

fine vein of musical despair.

All this and so far we’ve barely scratched the surface. Of the local contingent on the main stage **WILLIE J HEALEY** will undoubtedly pull the biggest crowd of the weekend, his genially grungy slacker rock as loveable as the young man who makes it, while **LEADER**, who packed out the Uncommon tent at Common People in May, are perfect festival fare – huge tunes and a massive stage presence suggest headline status isn’t beyond them. The Truck band app has given several up and coming local acts a chance at festival glory, with **SLATE HEARTS**; **LITTLE BROTHER ELI**; **CATGOD**; **31HOURS**, **AUTUMN SAINTS** and *Nightshift*’s own pick **LOUD MOUNTAINS** winning through. And it wouldn’t be Truck without the Bennett brothers, Robin and Joe, on stage, the festival’s founders playing on the main with their **DREAMING SPIRES** band.

Another regular connection comes in the form of Alcopop! and BSM Records’ traditional takeover on Sunday, where they welcome former-Reuben frontman **JAMIE LENMAN** alongside the likes of Nashville’s hypnotic heavyweights **ALL THEM WITCHES** and Liverpool’s smash-rock trio **ALPHA MALE TEA PARTY**.

And now we’re starting to run out of space and we haven’t even mentioned the late night parties in the market stage, Friday night hosted by **BUTTERZ** and featuring **TAD** (No, not *that* Tad), **ELIJAH & SKILLIAM** and **SWINDLE**; Saturday featuring **MISTAJAM**, **SASASAS** and **SWITCH** DJs, and Sunday rounded off by **JAGUAR SKILLS**.

Or all the stuff on the saloon stage, the Veterans & Virgins stage, or the Rockin’ Chair with **BLUE RINSE**. And we haven’t even mentioned some of our favourite bands who’ll be playing, notably **THE ORIELLES**, **DREAM WIFE** and **HONEYBLOOD**, three bands that keep a tight hold of the true spirit of indie: great pop music played with punk spirit by women who are helping to dismantle rock’s blokey stronghold. We love them all, and we love Truck Festival. It’s survived everything from floods to financial meltdown over the past 20 years and it’s come back stronger than ever. It’s still the most Oxford of all the county’s festivals and we shouldn’t ever forget to celebrate its continued presence.



THURSDAY 27th
CHORUSGIRL + EASTER ISLAND
STATUES + SCHANDE: The Wheatsheaf –
 Classic indie fuzz and jangle, surf, 60s girl group and
 bubblegum pop from London's Fortuna Pop!-
 signed Chorusgirl at tonight's Swiss Concrete

RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL: Mill, Field, Charlbury

Over 40 acts across three stages means there's plenty of variety to be had. Saturday's main stage bill is topped by dark, shiny electro-indie stars **ZURICH** and they're joined by party rock covers band **THE STANDARD**; wonderfully atmospheric alt.country couple **THE AUGUST LIST**; spaced-out electro-pop travellers **FLIGHTS OF HELIOS**; party-hearty ska tribute act **TWO TONE ALL-SKAS**; pop-friendly afro-indie crew **BRIGHT WORKS**; emotionally fraught emo chaps **DAISY** and grungy punk-pop types **SELF HELP**. Sunday is another mixed bill, ranging from **PROHIBITION SMOKERS CLUB**'s sleazy, glammed-up P-funk, Prince-flecked soul revue, to **KNIGHTS OF MENTIS**'s Americana; **BLACK HATS**' roustabout anthemic indie rock and **DEATH OF HI-FI**'s electro-heavy hip hop and trip hop, to **WATER PAGEANT**'S warm, ambient electro-folk pop and **THE MIGHTY REDOX**'s goodtime mix of ska, funk, blues, pop and psychedelia.

Plenty more besides, including the acoustic Fringe stage and really, there are few better places to be on a sunny summer day in Oxfordshire.

FRIDAY 28th

SATURDAY 29th

SUNDAY 30th

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Saturday 29th

HALFWAY TO 75: Isis Farm House, Iffley

MONDAY 31st

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim





SATURDAY

Being handpicked by festival organiser Rob de Bank to open the main stage at the second Common People must have seemed an exciting proposition for **CANDY SAYS**, but the reality of playing to a handful of earlybirds and security staff at 11am maybe took the shine off the occasion; their short set is elegant and even in the bright bank holiday sunshine sweetly autumnal and deserves a far bigger audience.

As the crowd does begin to swell **THE GOSPEL HOUSE CHOIR** capture the early afternoon vibe with some early house tunes sung with gusto and soul – not the last time we’ll encounter this particular musical blend. A full-throated version of ‘Ain’t Nobody’, accompanied by live percussion and a DJ, facilitates the first shoots of a long weekend of dancing.

THE BEAT sound fresher and livelier than might be expected, playing all the hits we’re hoping for – though disappointingly no ‘Stand Down Theresa’ – plus themes from *James Bond* and *The Avengers*.

Considering they formed as a ska revival band in 1978 they are surely the definition of ageless and a ferocious version of ‘Mirror in the Bathroom’ displays their punk and rock credentials. However they’re technically The New English Beat featuring Ranking Roger, as previous singer Dave Wakeling fronts The English Beat, mainly operating in the US.

Straight afterwards **THE SELECTER** achieve something similar but never had quite the magic songwriting touch of The Beat; they’re still a whole lot of fun, hits like ‘Three Minute Hero’ bringing back happy memories to many.

A wander around the busy South Park site finds a packed Pig’s Big Record Club, where **VOTE PEDRO** are playing Mariachi versions of ‘Teenage Kicks’ and ‘Seven Nation Army’, reminding us why the little stages and tents at festivals should never be passed by without investigation. Pure, unadulterated fun and a cue for even more dancing.

Quite what Foals fans were expecting from their DJ set is open to speculation but there’s a fair chance it wasn’t ‘Big Love’ by Fleetwood Mac or The Tom Tom Club’s ‘Genius of Love’. Underground itchy electronica this isn’t.

SAINT ETIENNE are another veteran festival stalwart, and often seen in these parts now that they’re a majority Oxford affair, with Sarah Cracknell introducing an “Oxford mafia” that

includes Bennett brother Robin and Joe, plus drummer about town Mike Monaghan. Pete Wiggs and Bob Stanley stick to low-key keyboard duties, while Cracknell still cuts the glamorous figure she emerged as in 1990. ‘Who Do You Think You Are’ is all the better for having long-time backing vocalist, and former Dolly Mixture singer Debsey Wykes, onboard. After providing a healthy dose of hits things get a bit more experimental, even a touch industrial, proof that the band are still keen to confound expectations.

It’s sometimes easy to imagine **AMY McDONALD** and KT Tunstall are the same person: Scottish singer-songwriter-guitarists both, but Amy has a sort of folk lilt in her voice that, when laid over acoustic guitar strumming, lands her even more firmly in Radio 2 territory than KT. There’s nothing inherently bad about her stuff, even if the instrumentation is tired and old-fashioned, the tunes not either the most memorable or inventive, but wistful and solid four-chord repeated patterns get a bit boring after a while. The evidence suggests she’s getting less and less interesting and inventive with her tunes; a shame really, as she’s got a great voice.

On the Uncontained Stage 90s junglist soldier **GOLDIE** does everything he can to *not* be Goldie. There’s barely a breakbeat in sight and those hoping for some Metalheadz are to be disappointed. However, this is billed as a ‘reggae DJ set and that

it is, albeit a bang up to date one: plenty of Chronnix and only one Marley.

While Goldie is skanking out, **DJ WRONGTOM** and long term pal **COUNT SKYLARKIN** are cheerily tinkering around in the Disco Shed, bumping into each other as they swap gardening tips and dub plates, entertaining an increasingly animated crowd. It’s well attested that at any festival, the late afternoon/early evening punters tend to be the liveliest, before the sun, cider and assorted supplements do their work. The Shed provides an eclectic – lots of 80s hits, to the delight of many a hipster – yet groove-filled pulse for the afternoon.

GROOVE ARMADA’s DJ set makes absolutely no concession to the nostalgic, retro theme running through the day, playing a set of accessible techno stompers that would have probably been better suited as a closing act. It emerges the reason you don’t see many pictures of the duo may well be that one is nearly twice as tall as the other.

Headliner **SEAN PAUL** clearly has a thing for the “sexy ladies”. He mentions them between every song. “Sexy ladies, put your hands up!” But what are the criteria? Should we all assume we’re sexy by dint of being ladies? Or only if we *think* we’re sexy? It’s too confusing. Maybe Paul’s regular audience have more of an idea of the etiquette involved with this sort of thing. Apart from that puzzling dilemma, Sean seems to have the Oxford crowd completely on board. He rushes through 23 songs in an hour and we worry he’s shot his load by doing ‘Get Busy’ so early on, but he then proceeds to bang out a host of songs he guests on, including some we had no idea he had anything to do with, and some, like Ed Sheeran’s ‘Shape Of You’ we’re pretty sure he doesn’t. Some people on the internet noticed the similarity between this and Sia and Sean’s ‘Cheap Thrills and made a mashup of them; why then should Sean not exploit the link.

So anyway, we get 2016’s number one ‘Rockabye’, originally with Clean Bandit and Anne-Marie; Beyonce’s ‘Baby Boy’ and Enrique Iglesias’s ‘Bailando’ collaborations as well as ‘Cheap Thrills’, but not his 2003 number one with Blu Cantrell, ‘Breathe’, or his 2012 number one with the Saturdays, ‘What About Us’, but we do get his year’s ‘No Lie’, which, for once, is his track, and features another artist *du jour*, Dua Lipa.

The collaboration section is followed by his first international hit, 2002’s ‘Gimme the Light’, and then by what we can only assume is more of his solo stuff, more dancehall- and reggae-focused, though the energy, pace, arm pumping and love of the “sexy ladies” is no less prominent. 2011’s ‘She Doesn’t Mind’ is still a great song, despite the dubious lyrics.

SUNDAY

By now it’s clear that this year’s event has exceeded 2016 in numbers, as well as the choice of food. Thankfully, the weather is almost identical; dry, bright and warm but not too scorching, which undoubtedly helps boost the crowd.

An early highlight on the main stage, **TOM WILLIAMS** sounds uncannily like Lloyd Cole, and his brand of anti-folk and country-rock is not far removed from his early albums

either. The Tunbridge Wells band have crowdfunded their last two albums, with echoes of a more accessible Nick Cave, and provide a rousing soundtrack to the early afternoon sunshine.

There must be a point to **ELVANA**, though it’s not easy to fathom what it is. Fronting a Nirvana tribute band with an Elvis Presley impersonator is not the worst idea in musical history, but the band aren’t that great and Elvis looks and sounds nothing like the real thing, the full beard being a particular stumbling block. Yet they’ve obviously tapped into something that’s brought them this far, as their enthusiastic reception demonstrates.

THE DUTTY MOONSHINE BIG BAND prove to be a fourteen-piece big band incorporating the Temple Funk Collective, mixing a healthy dose of horns with some nice low end digital bass and decent scratching. The rapping may add little to the enjoyment factor but at their best the music is infectiously danceable and perfectly in keeping with the weekend’s musical direction.

A wander over to the Uncontained Stage finds **FELIX DICKINSON** mixing up some fine, techy grooves in the late afternoon sun. Now a relative veteran in DJ terms, he manages to keep matters deep and light, not an easy task in dance music’s constantly shifting universe. Then a wander past the tiny Kiwi Camp tent produces one the weekend’s highlights. Their **GOSPELOKE** session turns out to be a chance to sing some karaoke in front of a small gospel choir with a mighty sound. From their own take on ‘Lovely Day’ to a volunteer throwing herself into ‘Like a Prayer’, it provides a perfect diversion to the main action.

Back on the main stage **BECKY HILL** proves drum&bass with live vocals is still alive and kicking. ‘Afterglow’ is one of those perfectly crafted festival songs, and proves their really is life after *The Voice*.

The generally accepted view of **PETE TONG** as a great radio DJ but a crap live one is challenged in tonight’s closing performance. Raised with his decks above a full orchestra, conducted by Jules Buckley, he takes us through a selection of dance classics, from Frankie Knuckles, Faithless and Candi Stanton, to Fat Boy Slim and Daft Punk, introducing some A-list guest vocalists along the way. It all works much better than you might expect, mainly down to the well-chosen set list. House legend Jamie Principle emerges for ‘Your Love’, better known as the basis for The Source’s version of ‘You Got the Love’. Ella Eyre fronts a decent take on ‘Good Life’, though the highlight comes with ‘Strings of Life’, a tune that transcends time and genre as a true musical milestone.

Another hugely successful Common People should hopefully see this as a permanent fixture on the Oxford calendar. Maybe more of a look to the future than the past could make it even better but there’s no sign of complaints as the crowd heads for the exits.

Words: Art Lagun; Kirsten Etheridge; Leo Bowder

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UNCOMMON STAGE

Saturday

It’s an early start for **THE OTHER DRAMAS**, first act on Common People’s dedicated local music stage, but it’s heartening to see they’re both holding a can of beer. Dedication to the cause, that’s what we like. As far as fresh starts go, they’re spot on, Maria Ilett and Richie Wildsmith’s neat, not-too-sweet harmonies helping build up bubblegum garage-pop melodies like ‘Radio’ that they’re then happy to puncture with raw riffage and beats; they’re straight to the point in a similar way to Fiery Furnaces and where once they seemed to fall between the pop and noise stools, now they have the legs to straddle both with ease. While early afternoon South Park bathes in sunny intervals, **THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE** bring some subterranean darkness, metronomic beats underpinning Tim Lane’s acid-surf guitar squalls and disquieting disembodied narratives about death row final meal requests and incantations about not being a rock and roll band. Lane’s casually menacing demeanour and lack of communication beyond a thumbs up at the end of each track, as well as a set-long battle with the armless torso on stage alongside him makes the duo the most strangely brilliant band of the weekend, a feeling confirmed by the stage manager’s enthusiastic praise after the show.

Darkness of a different kind from **LITTLE RED**, whose pretty harmonies and folk-pop reveries should provide dappled relief after TPDR, and for much of the time they do as Hayley Bell and Ben Gosling play off each other on tracks like ‘Chapters’. Yet forest-dwelling spectres haunt their songs, while ‘Siren Song’ takes their dreamy-eyed folk into more psychedelic territory, a hypnotic mantra. Big stages demand big music and **THE EPSTEIN** are built for occasions such as this: multi-part harmonies, soaring choruses and an expansive lead vocal performance from Olly Wills make everything they do sound epic, heroic even. The more nuanced ‘Hudson’ displays an intimate side, but ‘Finally Forgive’ is as big as anything The Waterboys ever did and closer ‘I Held You Once’ is a glorious finale, an overactive smoke machine on stage combined with the stiff breeze lending a suitably windswept vibe to the whole show.

With the tent now packed it’s time for **THE SHAPES** to bring the party, and they more than rise to the occasion. If we’ve ever harboured reservations about their tendency towards The Beautiful South side of things, today they launch in with the punchy r’n’b of ‘Not the Hurting Kind’ before slipping into something more sultry and soulful, flying off into a Gallic flourish, touching bases with Tom Petty and Van Morrison before really tearing it up with the Pogues-y ‘Til They Put Me In the Ground’. Feelgood band of the summer, no contest. Which might have made **JESS HALL & DUOTONE**’s joint set something of a comedown, but if they cast a shadow with songs like the lovely Boo Hewerdine-flavoured ‘Our Lands’ it’s welcome shelter. Jess’s a capella ‘I Gave My Love An Apple’ is a stark reminder of just what a beautiful voice she has, at times reminiscent of ABBA’s Agnetha

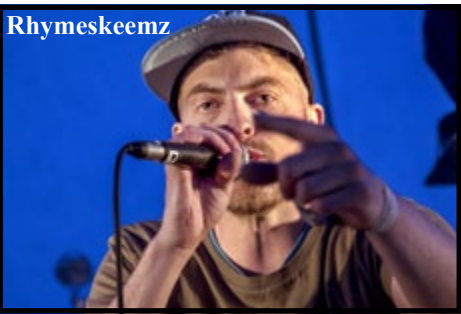
Fältskog, while Barney Morse Brown might be best known for his cello skills but matches her vocally in his understated manner. Sometimes almost hymnal in their delicate solemnity, they’re as entrancing as The Shapes are infectious.

LEADER pull the biggest Uncommon crowd of the entire weekend and it’s all too easy to picture them headlining the entire event one day as they match The Epstein for epic proportion, the surging stadium pop of ‘Chasing You’ made to be sung back at them by 50,000 devotees. They can get a bit funky at times but at their best they pitch Editors’ broad-canvas indie with Mansun’s taut, anthemic rock, add a hefty dash of Ultravox’s pop pomp and could pump up each and any crowd they’re faced with. Crowds that can only get bigger and bigger.

Anyone who questioned why **ZAIA**, **THE BALKAN WANDERERS** and **VIENNA DITTO** all got a second booking after playing here last year would only have to have watched and learned to understand why. Vienna Ditto are what punk would have looked and sounded like if it had been invented by rockabillies from the future, learned its trade playing jazz standards on ancient analogue synths and discovered that Alison Goldfrapp was its long lost birth mother. Just brilliant. If Vienna Ditto transport to you a disco in outer space, The Balkan Wanderers sweep you up and dump you drunk and dazed in the middle of a gypsy wedding. In fact singer Antica Culina is missing such a wedding in her native Croatia to be here today so she’s behaving accordingly and asking the crowd to help her forget; she’s joined onstage by an exotic eastern European dancer as the band rip up polkas and ska skanks, sailors’ songs and lovers’ laments with a playful sensuality that even the most leaden viewers at the back of the tent find hard to resist. Zaia are similarly exotic, albeit a more Arcadian sense of exotic as Amy McKown conjures the feeling of summer afternoons with her voice and the eight-strong band bring a steep folk lilt to their loping reggae grooves. It’s a laidback, feel-good finale to the first day, one that is set to continue into Sunday.

Sunday

What Oxford needs on a Sunday morning is a rude rock and roll awakening, and who better to bring that than **CHEROKII**. Riffs. Beats. Yelping. Screams. Swear words. All stripped down, cranked up and kicked out like Led Zep’s delinquent kid brother. It’ll only fuel the fire of those determined to moan about Common People on the *Oxford Mail*’s website (seriously, have some people no sense of fun?), but bollocks to them, they can have a lie-in tomorrow. Good morning St. Clement’s – it’s time to party! Again! And just in case any bleary-eyed denizens of Morrell Avenue had hoped to doze off again once that musical thrashing has finished get a second rude awaking. Dungarees. Hair. Throat-ripping roars. More riffs. It must be **SLATE HEARTS**, who refuse to give anyone within a five mile radius any respite as they play the set of their lives today, flying full pelt through 30 minutes of



snarling, sneering, grunge racket that scrunches Mudhoney and Smashing Pumpkins up into a tightly-wound ball of excess energy and histrionics. Utterly fucking fantastic stuff fellas, we salute you. AC/DC salute you. The Devil’s at the door with a record contract in his hand, by the way.

Respite does come in the form of **CATGOD**, their easy funk-ed-up electro-pop with a bubbly jazz edge initially taking on an xx-like vibe, before out comes a flute, deeper goes the groove and we’re off on a laidback Ozric Tentacles trip, wandering off on a jazz amble and finally heading out on a full-on jazz-rock excursion with a bass and drum duel that sounds like Weather Report caught up in a carnival samba party.

One of the most satisfying things about having a dedicated Oxford stage is that it allows the likes of **THE YOUNG WOMEN’S MUSIC PROJECT** to bring their invaluable work to a wider audience. To give girls and young women a chance to build up their confidence in this way is a small but important step along the road to redressing the gender balance that still infects music. Hard to judge the performances on the same scale as the more established acts on show here but highlights include an eight-strong marching drum ensemble, and a smoky ballad from singer **ANNA MCCRAE** and guitarist **MOLLY TAYLOR** that draws a



pleasingly wavy line between Mazzy Star and Sade.

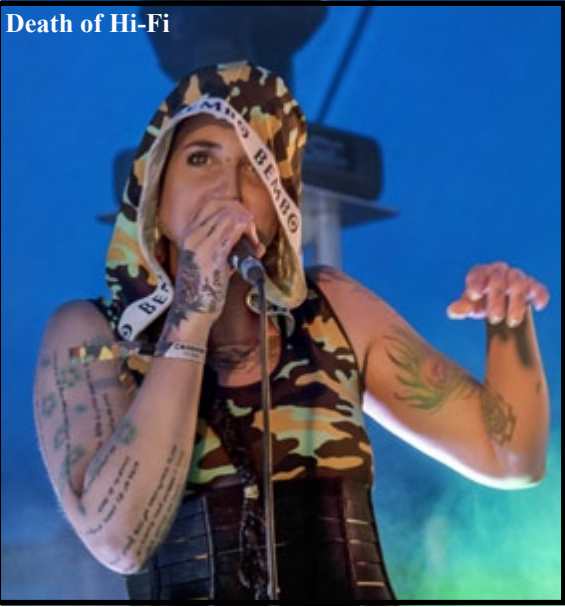
If those girls are just finding their feet, **LOW ISLANDS** play like they’re already stars today. The band is barely ten gigs old but they have pedigree and some serious class. They’re far denser and heavier live than on record, a clamouring blizzard of synths and almost ravey beats, everything powered along by live drums to the point anyone missing the mighty Maiians might want to stop missing them immediately and head straight for the next Low Islands show. Propulsive bass and gnarly synth lines cut through the airy, often trippy melodies and delicate vocals, breaking down the gig/club wall on tracks like new single ‘That Kind of Love’ and people leave the tent convinced they just witnessed Oxford’s next break-out band.

Late afternoon and the sky begins to bruise. Storm clouds threaten to build – a deluge is forecast – but when it does break it’s in rock and roll fashion in the form of **DESERT STORM** who, just for the occasion, are playing the heaviest set their now extensive catalogue allows. They sound like a titan made of pure granite, wielding a flint axe riding a dragon into battle on wings of heavy metal glory. They sound exactly like their name. Former *X-Factor* finalist Becky Hill over on the main stage doesn’t stand a chance.



While Oxford’s hip hop contingent begin their late Sunday take-over, **KANADIA** follow in the footsteps of The Epstein and Leader in providing big music for the big occasion, ploughing through Six By Seven’s brooding darkness and back out into Coldplay’s pop sunshine via some elaborate but ear-wormy Police-styled funk-pop like they were only ever meant to play stages this size. **RHYMESKEEMZ**, meanwhile, is putting on a big stage performance, today joined alongside regular DJ sidekick Uncle Bungle and producer Astrosnare by fellow MC Booka T and singer Tiece, the latter lending a rich soul and ballsy r’n’b feel to much of the set while funky beats and some playful vocal sparring hark back to Wu Tang’s early blossoming before they bring the dancehall vibe to what’s a spectacular show, several steps up from the Punt show a couple of years ago.

Picking a personal highlight from two days when every one of the twenty local acts plays a blinder – no exaggeration – is almost impossible, but maybe it’s **DEATH OF HI-FI** by a whisker. The band has changed almost beyond recognition since they started out, but in Lucy Cropper they have a singer with genuine star quality, adding a soulful human voice to the band’s often dystopian sci-fi goth-hop and electronica, occasionally reminiscent of Death Grips. ‘Roses & Guns’ is a minor masterpiece, a song for desolate times, but stand-out number

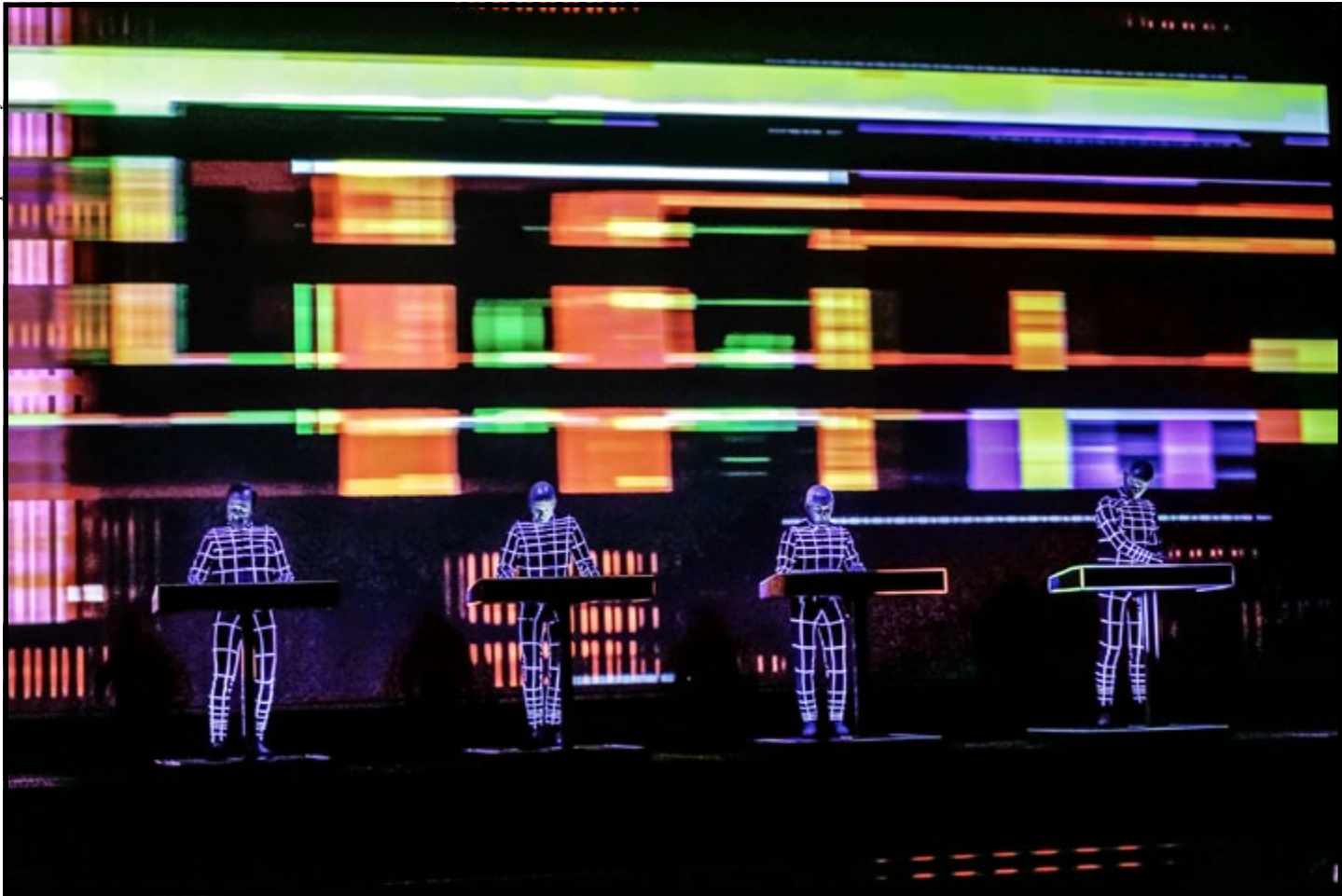


is new song ‘Ghosts’ with its lush Chvrches-like synths. Andy Hill brings some old-skool rap and the trio are joined by Rhymeskeemz for one number and it all suggests that their debut album – still the best hip hop album to come out of Oxford – is set to be eclipsed by their imminent second.

So how to round off such a weekend? How about by getting one of the most mild mannered, sweetest natured men to emerge from the local scene onto the stage to tear the roof off the place. After an extended heavyweight build up from DJ Fresh, **SHAODOW** hits the stage like a whirling dervish, immediately whipping the crowd down the front into a frenzy, climbing over the barriers to get in their faces with a set seemingly designed for his old hometown crowd - ‘Look Out, There’s A Black Man Coming’ and ‘R U Stoopid?’ in particular – his machine-gun delivery a genuine force of nature. He’s a consummate showman, and it’s hard to believe it’s the same guy we first saw playing rap open mic sessions at the old Market Tavern all those years ago. He may have flown the nest but ShaoDow is every inch an Oxford hero and the perfect send off to what’s been a triumphant weekend for Oxford music, a celebration of the quality and variety of music in the city, of which we should each and every one of us be proud.

Dale Kattack

All photos: Guy Henstock



KRAFTWERK

The New Theatre

For some of us Kraftwerk are more important than The Beatles. While the Fab Four took rock’n’roll and ran with it, Ralf Hütter and chums had to build their own launch pad from scratch. 47 years on from their debut album, Kraftwerk’s influence on music around the world extends from hip hop and techno to electro-pop, industrial music and contemporary classical; they are one of music’s elite game changers and to witness them tonight in Oxford – their first visit here since 1981 – isn’t far off a religious experience for many, including those near us who have travelled from Lancashire and Scotland to see the show. And it’s no ordinary show either; it’s a 3D spectacular with immersive visuals that take you from the

autobahn to outer space; one minute you’re riding through the Alps as part of the Tour de France, the next you feel you’re trapped in the movie *Tron*. Perhaps Hütter – now the sole original member of the band – and co. realised four slightly severe looking old blokes stood behind computer workstations was never going to be great musical theatre but in the end it’s one of the most incredible shows we’ve witnessed; a trip in every sense. From the opening ‘Numbers’, with an undulating landscape of digits expanding out of the giant screen, like entering the Matrix, through to the closing ‘Music Non Stop’, Kraftwerk work their clean, clinical lines with absolute precision: from the austere ‘Man Machine’, all Nietzschean

imagery and cold war paranoia, through ‘Autobahn’'s languorous, linear trip, to the playful ‘Computer Love’, this is music that shines like a far flung future. Kraftwerk’s music set myriad new templates but even in their admittedly limited lyrics they were ahead of the game, anticipating big data, mass surveillance and internet dating. They’re not without a sense of humanity either, ‘Neon Lights’ is positively wistful in its hazy ambient drift, while ‘The Model’ tempers its cold, cynical eye with feelings of affection. There are even very occasional human hiccoughs in the music to remind us it’s all being played live, despite its decidedly robotic nature. Talking of robots, the first encore

sees the four humans replaced by their cyborg doubles for the song of the same name. It’s one of almost too many highlights tonight, although the warm, airy, euphoric ‘Space Lab’ perhaps take peak place as much for its stunning visual accompaniment,

which climaxes with a flying saucer hovering over Oxford before landing outside The New Theatre, to huge cheers. The oppressive ‘Radioactivity’ too: a mesmerising, golden glow of a song whose deep, synthetic bass line rattles the venue’s fragile fixtures and fittings. At the end each member exits stage left individually, a curt bow to the crowd before departing; last to go of course is Hütter, a very human “danke schön,” and, yes, a smile. Greeted by an ecstatic standing ovation: a fitting salute to a very modest musical game changer. **Dale Kattack**

by the presence of a film crew capturing every moment of the set. They’re carefree rather than threatening, almost polite in their poppiness, well drilled and seemingly set for the edgy rock slot on *Friday Download*. But there’s no denying they can be fun: singer Luke Riley in particular is an energetic master of ceremonies, perpetual motion personified as he cooks the crowd to fever point, performing as much in the front few rows as on stage and managing to cram almost the entire audience onto the Cellar’s intimate stage with him for the final number. Few songs linger long in the memory, though early single ‘Ay Ay’ has a chorus hook big enough to land a great white. The best moment of the night comes as the band hit a purple patch of rollicking bluesy garage rock that promises to turn into a raw take on ‘Gloria’, but sadly they decide that’s the moment to finish the song. And that perhaps sums up Otherkin on tonight’s evidence: there’s promise of something special here, but for now they sound like they’re worried about making too much mess. **Dale Kattack**

THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART / THE NIGHT FLOWERS

The Cellar

Along with Belle and Sebastian, I’ve always harboured a small but significant feeling of resentment towards The Pains of Being Pure at Heart. Just as the Scottish combo took the template laid down by a host of indie bands of the 1980s and ran with it – jangly guitars, wan vocals, chunky shoes, artful fuzz and the occasional beret, the Pennsylvanian five piece did the same a decade or so later. Hence, a pathway to success has been forged that was denied to the likes of The Flatmates, The June Brides, The Weather Prophets and One Thousand Violins. And while Stuart Murdoch and Kip Berman would be the first to afford a fulsome nod to their predecessors, I’ve always felt that time and place was much kinder to the latter acts.

But first tonight, we’re treated to an enjoyable set from Night Flowers. True, the mood is again likely to primarily please visitors to online independent music compendium Twee.Net and waif-like front woman Sophia Pettit does little to defray that impression, but to her left, be-hatted Humbsider Greg Ulyart is looking for inspiration from Keith Richards and Nicky Wire for his moves,

strutting his stuff as a set that starts off limpid becomes more and more ballsy. Indie reticence is restored when the Pains take the stage, frontman Berman, the key creative force behind the headliners, eulogising charmingly about Oxford at the culmination of one of those endless, magical summer days. That they are in town did come as a surprise given the lack of recent material they have provided but Berman promises a fourth album and it’s as a showcase for this forthcoming effort that the set is primarily designed. That’s not to say that old classics from their first trio of records are ignored: ‘Heart in Your Heartbreak’ and the appropriately named ‘Come Saturday’ are as barnstorming as you would expect, recalling the Raveonettes in their sheer race-along vim while it’s a perhaps more muscular set than one might imagine from a band that once provided the last word in fey. Of that new material, there is in inevitable feeling that it doesn’t hit the spot in the way the oldies do – but given it’s a first hearing for most of the audience, it would perhaps be unfair to judge. **Rob Langham**

MINUS THE BEAR / JOAN OF ARC

Bright math twiddling. Thick bubbling synths that could be slowly achieving consciousness in Herbert West’s laboratory. Insectile loops and insistent drum tattoos. Periods of drone stasis and sonic wave therapy. Some floppy old second-tier Britpop glam. Oh, and it was all going so well. Joan Of Arc set up some wonderfully eclectic and enticing music – think Parts & Labor with a smidgen of Bardo Pond and a dash of Tomaga’s dub-inflected churn, for starters – and then, intermittently, some clumsy sub-Molko vocals parachute in and ruin it all. There’s even some frankly worrying vicar-in-a-youth-club gyrating. It’s as if the band felt they needed some vocals to make the music acceptable, no matter how unsuitable. If so, the singing adds legitimacy while being actively unpleasant. A bit like the DUP, perhaps. Still, there’s more than enough great stuff to enjoy here, and Joan Of Arc repay attention with a varied sound that could be four different bands battling for supremacy over 30 minutes; let’s hope the three good ones attain ultimate victory. Minus The Bear might come

from Seattle, but they could have been bred in a petri dish to please Oxford musicians. They have a post-rock veneer with some jerky guitars, staccato keyboards and vast punnetfuls of pedals, but beneath it they make big, old-fashioned yearning rock music, all impassioned choruses and reverby star-seeking solos. There are times when their slick wide-angle rock resembles the articulate, post-Radiohead bounce of Maximo Park, and there are times when their brief tics and stutters fail to hide unashamed stadium bombast, like ‘Zooropa’-era U2. At the final whistle, what looked to be a close fight at first becomes a walkover, glitchtronica references floored by guitar solos on the crash barrier, enveloping textures thrown aside negligently by tastefully epic vocal angst. Like our own Kanadia magnified, Minus The Bear are very good, but we wish they’d just give up the half-arsed post-rock pretence, buy some proper smoke machines and a big fuck-off fan and kick Brian May off the roof to become the unfettered, billowy-bloused rockers they are deep inside. **David Murphy**

THE SKIDS

O2 Academy

“If you keep shouting for it, we won’t play it,” scolds Richard Jobson early into tonight’s gig. He’s talking about ‘Into the Valley’ of course, The Skids’ biggest hit and doubtless the reason a fair few folks are here. It’s the eternal curse of any band who’ve been around the block a few times but remain associated with one or two well-known songs. Thankfully most of this impressively large crowd know the band’s armoury is stocked with plenty more songs just as good, some maybe better. The Skids’ anthemic yobbery married to huge chiming guitars, courtesy of chief songwriter Stuart Adamson, made them chart regulars in the late 70s, a peculiarly Scottish take on punk with the influence of their native folk music running through songs like ‘Hurry On Boys’ and ‘Of One Skin’ like thick, rich treacle. Tragically Adamson took his own life back in 2001 and his place is taken in the current Skids line-up by fellow Big Country guitarist Bruce Watson, who slots seamlessly into proceedings in which Jobson is very much the ringmaster, an erudite, caustically funny frontman. Strong melodies were always The Skids’ stock-in-trade, songs like ‘The

Olympian’ so bold you felt they could lead men into battle, even as ‘Dulce et Decorum Est (Pro Patria Mori)’ decries warmongering politicians. ‘Working For the Yankee Dollar’ flies out of the traps and points to the place where the band’s late guitarist began moving towards his trademark Big Country guitar sound, while lo-fi fuzz-pop debut single ‘Charles’ could have been written yesterday, never mind 40 years ago.

Less successful are the heavy-handed ‘Thanatos’ and a strangely formless ‘A Woman in Winter’, but once the opening bars of ‘Masquerade’ chime out, such cares are forgotten. ‘The Saints Are Coming’ is an early wow moment, but when the band close the main set with ‘Into the Valley’ the throng down the front go bonkers. An encore of ‘Charade’ and daft shout-along ‘TV Stars’ seems a fitting way to bow out, so it feels strange and incongruous when Jobson tries – only partly successfully – to get the audience involved in some choir practice, followed by an unknown new track, which leaves us befuddled rather than elated. But, hell, we got to hear ‘Into the Valley’, and we didn’t even have to shout for it.

Ian Chesterton

ANTHONY JOSEPH

The Cellar

There is no easing into the set from Trinidadian-born, long-time British resident poet and lecturer Anthony Joseph and his band at tonight’s Bossaphonik. They are on it from the start with a driving groove underpinned by Andrew John’s heavy bass guitar, plus a call to attention from the wonderful Jason Yarde on sax. Joseph exudes energy and presence as he strides about the tiny stage, conducting the band or giving a blast on a whistle in between reciting, chanting and sometimes almost singing his words. Most of tonight’s set is drawn from Joseph’s sixth album ‘Caribbean Roots’, which has the mellow tones of the Trinidadian steel pan running through it, but tonight there is no mellow steel pan, which could be why much of the performance is more raw than the album, though a plaintive call and response between Joseph and Jason Yarde’s sax shows there is subtlety too. Much of Joseph’s poetry advocates Caribbean peoples reclaiming their roots and their history by connecting their past, including their ancestors, with their present. This is at most explicit when Joseph launches into the album’s title track with its message that the splendours of European cities are built from

colonialism and slavery and how “Our history is not slavery, our history is our struggle against slavery,” but the message is also there more obliquely in song-stories of individuals like ‘Jimmy Upon the Bridge’. The enthusiastic Bossaphonik crowd love the variety of Caribbean and west African rhythms and styles as the band mix a potent brew of calypso, salsa, reggae, Afrobeats, jazz-funk and more. If there are moments when they threaten to take us back to the 70s with guitar and drum solos we can forgive them as Richard Baker on African percussion and David Bitan on kit drums are virtuosic, while renowned sax player Jason Yarde is compelling, whether playing lyrically or unleashing a burst of free improv. This is not music as decoration to poetry; verse and vibe are equals even if the vibe at times overwhelms, making it difficult to make out Joseph’s lines. Apart from this disappointment, this is very much the charismatic Joseph’s night. His impressively authoritative performance shows that while the comparisons with the late Gil Scott Heron are justified, he is his own man, one whose time might just have come. **Colin May**

photo: Marc West



LIVE

SLOWDIVE / ULRIKA SPACEK

O2 Academy

Ulrika Spacek’s first song coalesces out of synth drones and careful staccato guitar into a melancholic beat-driven crescendo and once over the crest of that wave it gives in to a fuzzy krautrock jam. This sets the tone for the entire set. Every song is a mini set in itself; there are extended instrumental sections, more traditional pop sections and abstract screeches of feedback and noise. They’re often much sweeter and more accessible than similar bands who just offer up a wall of fuzz for 30 minutes and the times when the guitars make way for Rhys Edwards’ calm and ethereal vocals are inviting and an excellent counterpoint to the hypnotic riffs.

From the first note Slowdive are exactly what Slowdive should be: a huge, enveloping wash of slowly shifting chords borne along on the minimal rhythm arrangements. Rachel Goswell and Neil Halstead’s vocals are almost lost in the texture but that’s no bad thing; they are part of the whole. Is that lilting melody Rachel singing or a guitar? Frankly who cares when it sounds this good.

From beginning to end Slowdive are simply fantastic; the setlist includes four tracks from the eponymous new album and several from the band’s early EPs, including their eponymous song, all of which sit well against each other. Without knowing in advance you would never guess that there’s a 20 year gap between the writing of ‘Allison’ and recent single ‘Sugar For The Pill’.

For every epic peak of reverb-drenched intensity there is another just around the corner, and just as you get complacent the next song will use that same thing to blow you away; the stand-out drumming on ‘She Calls’ and the post-rock grandeur of the two-part ‘Avalyn’ in particular show that despite very much having a signature sound Slowdive can do a hell of a lot within it.

There’s a word I’ve tried to avoid using in this review, but I think the genre name that is easily thrown at bands like Slowdive and their ilk does tonight make sense, not just as a joke at the effect-pedal-focused guitarists’ expense, but also it implies that your sight is not the sense needed for this genre. This is music you get lost in, mesmerised and absorbed by and while that happens, why not check out your footwear?

Matt Chapman-Jones

THE COMET IS COMING / FLAMINGODS / WANDERING WIRES

O2 Academy

Wandering Wires, tonight’s local opener, commence proceedings with light keyboards, joined by an electronic sax and some vocal snippets from a backing track. Before long the four-piece venture into Herbie Hancock-style prog jazz that’s best described as hit-and-miss, though switching to a real sax makes for a more meaty and palatable experience. You can see what they’re aiming for, and they’ve set themselves a mighty high bar, but at this stage it’s all a bit aimless and bombastic.

Flamingods’ own description of ‘exotic psychedelia’ pretty much says it all: we’re greeted by two drum kits, a five-string bass and a guitar that looks like a lute, only with a weird twisty neck. Formed in Bahrain, then partly moving to the UK, they’ve become festival favourites as much for their long, spacy songs, collection of curious international instruments as their esoteric clothes. New single ‘Mixed Blessings’ continues their mix of north African, middle eastern and western pop traditions, only now with a more dancefloor-orientated vibe. Unfortunately the sparse crowd upstairs at the O2 makes for a rather echoey mix, so some of the subtlety is lost, though things get more interesting when they start swapping instruments. Fun though the records are

they make more sense as a live experience, a treat for the eyes as much as the ears.

After all this relative looseness The Comet Is Coming are a tight and focused contrast to their support acts. The London three piece combine drums, sax and electronics into a hypnotic mix of free jazz, cacophonous percussion and dubstep-inspired keyboards. Saxophonist King Shabaka, the last member to join, in 2013, is the pivotal figure; his urgent, brilliantly clear licks ensuring the unit never dissolve into self-indulgence. They claim Sun Ra as a key influence, and Shabaka is an occasional member of the tireless Arkestra, though that seems to be mainly a stepping-off point. The wobbly keyboard noises are very London, while Betamax Killer’s drums neatly straddle jazz and experimental rock, even prog, traditions. More wild tonight than on the recent ‘Death To The Planet’ EP, they’re one of those rare bands that you simply want to have play all night. Three supremely talented musicians who understand each other completely and know how to make timeless music for the modern age.

Art Lagun

FUTURE PERFECT

AIRWAYS

THE CELLAR

04.07.17 | £7

SUPERGLU

THE CELLAR

14.09.17 | £7

YAK

THE BULLINGDON

09.10.17 | £10

SLØTFACE

THE CELLAR

26.10.17 | £7

THE OTHER DRAMAS

THE LIBRARY

08.07.17 | FREE ENTRY

JAMES YUILL

THE CELLAR

15.09.17 | £10

INHEAVEN

THE BULLINGDON

15.10.17 | £8

ULRICH SCHNAUSS

MODERN ART

28.10.17 | £12

STEVIE PARKER

MODERN ART

14.07.17 | FREE ENTRY

KIRAN LEONARD

ST BARNABAS CHURCH

21.09.17 | £12.50

CLEAN CUT KID

THE BULLINGDON

17.10.17 | £10

SLOWCOACHES

THE CELLAR

31.10.17 | £7

DAN OWEN

THE CELLAR

18.07.17 | £8

ANDREW O’NEILL

THE CELLAR

23.09.17 | £10

THE BIG MOON

THE BULLINGDON

18.10.17 | £10

GHOSTPOET

O₂ ACADEMY

03.11.17 | £15

DEAP VALLY

THE BULLINGDON

19.07.17 | £10

BARNS COURTNEY

THE CELLAR

26.09.17 | £8.50

RITUAL UNION FESTIVAL

COWLEY ROAD

21.10.17 | £25

BRIX & THE EXTRICATED

THE CELLAR

04.11.17 | £15

THE BLUETONES

THE BULLINGDON

28.07.17 | £15

MICAH P. HINSON

THE BULLINGDON

28.09.17 | £15

LOW ISLAND & FRIENDS

THE BULLINGDON

21.10.17 | £5

CC SMUGGLERS

THE BULLINGDON

06.11.17 | £10

NADIA REID

THE CELLAR

02.09.17 | £9

VAN ZELLER

THE LIBRARY

28.09.17 | FREE ENTRY

FRANCOBOLLO

THE CELLAR

22.10.17 | £7

GOAT GIRL

MODERN ART

10.11.17 | SOLD OUT

ALWAYS

THE BULLINGDON

06.09.17 | £12

A TRIBUTE TO DEVO

THE CELLAR

30.09.17 | £8

HOWIE PAYNE

THE BULLINGDON

23.10.17 | £10

TOSELAND

THE BULLINGDON

12.11.17 | £10

BANFI

THE CELLAR

08.09.17 | £6

THE SKINTS

THE BULLINGDON

04.10.17 | £16

MILES HUNT & ERICA NOCKALLS

THE BULLINGDON

26.10.17 | £15

MARIKA HACKMAN

THE BULLINGDON

14.11.17 | £10

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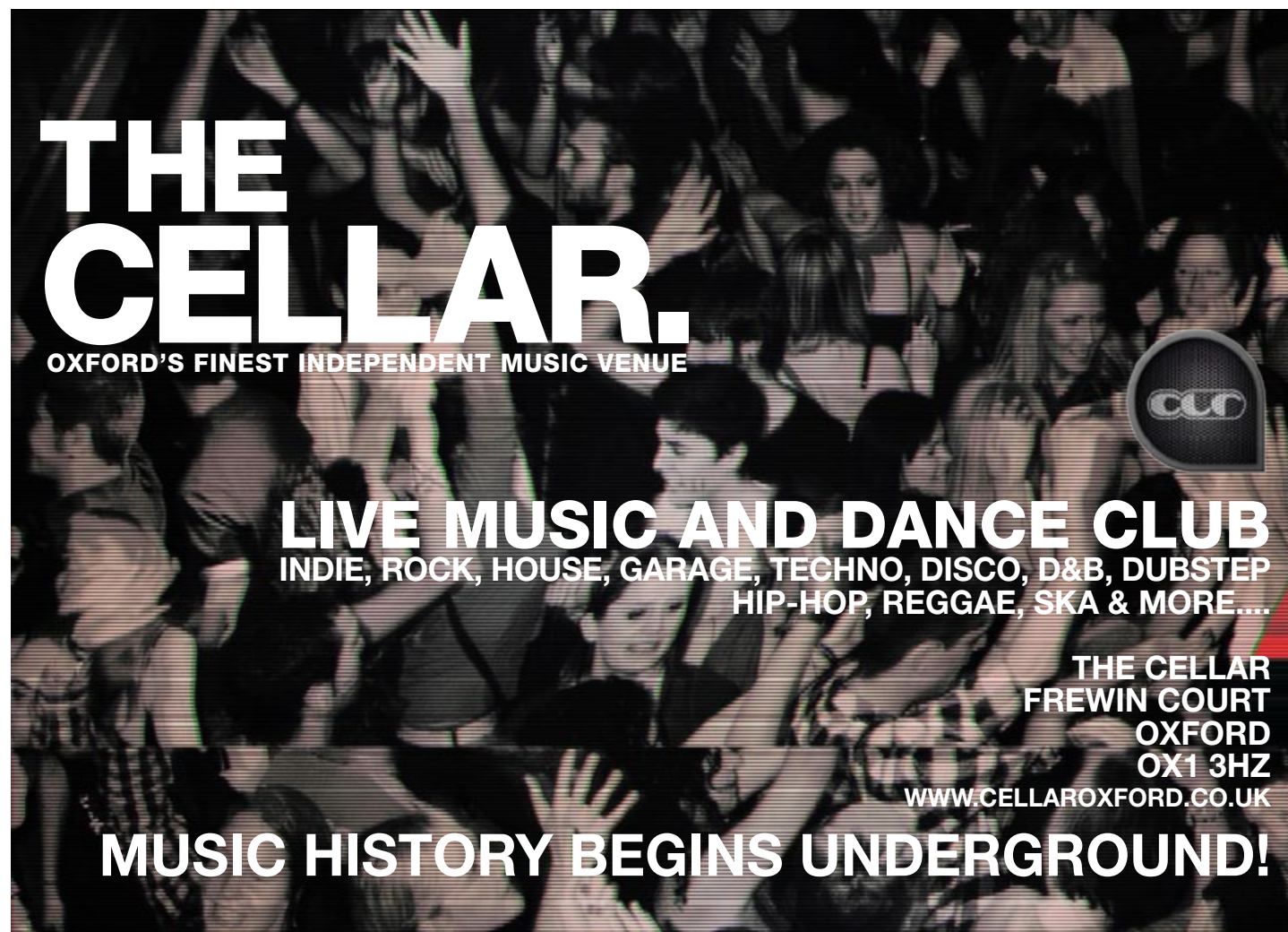
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CHORUSGIRL THE EASTER ISLAND STATUES + SCHANDE 7:45pm

Friday 28th July - *JAM CITY*

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Dr SHOTOVER Visits the Horror Channel

[Voice-over: ‘The following column may contain scenes which some viewers may find disturbing’]... Ah, there you are. Welcome to the East Indies Club bar. How kind - mine’s a Very Bloody Mary. No, don’t ask. Bedingfield our cadaverous black-clad steward abhors questions about his cocktail ingredients. Meanwhile, that is indeed his glamorous nocturnal friend Nurse Feratu helping out behind the bar. As you say, what a lovely – if pointy – smile she has. Mm, quiet in here tonight, isn’t it? Various of the newbies haven’t been heard of since they went to Romania last month. Apparently the young fools thought it would be a good idea to make a film in an abandoned asylum which had been built on the site of a mediaeval cemetery. Some ‘found footage’ was posted anonymously to the club last week, in rusting film canisters decorated with strange cabalistic symbols. Difficult to make much out due to poor lighting and grainy filtering, but prospects aren’t rosy for Timpkins, Sketchy, Harmondsworth and the bevy of American lingerie models who accompanied them. Ah well, boys will be boys, I suppose. And, er, American lingerie models will be American lingerie models. RIP Robyn, Shawn and Sydney. (No, that’s the lingerie models). Reminds me of that time when I was a young buck in Swinging London and a few of us decided to hold a séance in a deconsecrated East End church. What groovy fun it seemed, as we drove from Chelsea to Stepney in our Mini-Mokes, the wind blowing through our sideburns and Sgt Pepper’s ‘taches, not to mention the Silvikrin-ed locks and Union Jack mini-dresses of the girls. Yes, everything was mini in those days, apart from the massive reefers we were smoking as we set up the Ouija board on the ruined altar at midnight... The music was, I recall, White Noise’s *Black Mass: An Electric Storm in Hell*, on Bumbo Farquhar’s reel-to-reel tape-recorder. At this point a masked Wendy Padbury appeared with a goat’s skull full of LSD-impregnated sugar cubes. What could possibly go wrong? [To be continued, after the ads]

Next month: ‘L-L-Looks like we’re in the Land of the Giants!’

Zoe: ‘Is this the way to the Karnstein estate?’
Chloe: ‘I’m SURE Dr S said to pass the port clockwise...’

INTRODUCING....

The Other Dramas

Who are they?
The Other Dramas are a two-piece garage pop band from Cowley formed by Maria Ilett (*vocals / guitar*) and Richie Wildsmith (*drums / vocals*). Maria started as a solo performer and was spotted playing at an acoustic night at The Bullingdon by London producer Jim Eliot; they went on to form the band Eliot releasing an album ‘The Small Hours’ and playing at Glastonbury Festival as well as featuring on an Original Source Mint and Tea Tree shower gel advert. Richie, originally from Plymouth, moved to Oxford to join the band Shuffle in the late-90s. The pair met when they both joined ex-Candyskin Mark Cope’s band Ninestone Cowboy. Maria wanted to try out some of her new songs with drums, intending to form a new band but, “the rehearsal went so well we decided to stay as a two piece.” Regular gigging locally and in Brighton led to a slot on the Uncommon stage at Common People. They launch new single ‘Radio’ at The Library on the 8th July.

What do they sound like?
Scuzzy garage-pop, with a neat balance between bubblegum pop melodies and sweet harmonies and fiery beats and riffage. The stripped-down nature of the line-up keeps songs simple and straightforward, allowing the hooks to get under your skin, while Maria can stamp on the FX pedals to bring the noise.

What inspires them?
“Being in a two piece band inspires us. The limitations of the set up actually increase creativity; it really makes us think about our song writing. The ground constantly shifts and we are always learning.”

Career highlight so far:
“Playing on the Uncommon Stage at this year’s Common People. The support from *Nightshift* and *BBC Introducing Oxford* and encouragement from the other bands, friends and family was the best feeling in the world.”

And the lowlight:
“Maria accidently booking a room on the top floor of a hotel that had no lift; it nearly finished us off.”



Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:
“There are a lot of bands we really love but one artist that has stood out lately is Willie J Healey: we love his song writing and energy in his live shows and can’t wait for his new album.”

If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:
“‘Thirteen Tales from Urban Bohemia’ by The Dandy Warhols; it’s like Ride meets The Rolling Stones.”

When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?
“A launch party for our new single on 8th July at The Library, hosted by Future Perfect. It will be hot and loud but full of cold beer. Free tickets are available in advance from seetickets.com and ‘pay what you like’ on the door.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:
“We like: The friends we make through music; PMT moving closer to our house; quality live venues of all sizes. We do not like: trying to get to a soundcheck on time during rush hour when there’s nowhere to load or park.”

You might love them if you love:
Elastica; The Gossip; Black Honey; Courtney Barnett; Wolf Alice.

Hear them here:
theotherdramas.bandcamp.com

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

While **Radiohead** celebrated their first number 1 album with ‘OK Computer’, Oxford music increasingly came under the wider spotlight in July 1997 with a dedicated **Radio 1** feature as part of that station’s build up to Sound City in October. ITV’s **Central News**, meanwhile, launched its new regular Central Sounds feature, starting off with a live performance from **Dustball**, as well as a nice big plug for “the essential” *Nightshift* from presenter **Clare Taylor**. We still love you, Clare. In more day-to-day events, **Beaker** released their debut single, ‘Backgarden’, on **Shifty Disco**’s singles club, the record still considered a classic local release; subscribers’ copies came with a free bag of sunflower seeds to plant. In their back garden. DYSWTD? Also out this month was ‘Seasons’, the third album from local flautist and Klub Kakofanney mainstay **Frei Zinger**, his ambient mood piece taking us from spring through to winter ina floaty style. Local hardcore beasts **Callous**, meanwhile, were featured on an album of underground punk sounds around on Lockjaw Records, titled ‘Helping You Back to Work’. A characteristically quiet July was enlivened by the visits to town of ska-punk firebrands **King Prawn**; **Ultrasound**; **The Pastels**; **Comet Gain** and new Creation Records signings **Arnold**, all at **The Point**. The latter’s show provoked the timeless put down from reviewer **Chris Fish**: “Readers with long, unclouded memories will remember that Arnold was the name of Tony Blackburn’s dog. After this woeful showing, many would suggest it’s also the name of Alan McGee’s.”

10 YEARS AGO

As we prepare to enjoy the biggest and most successful ever **Truck Festival** this month, it’s easy to forget just how close to going under it was ten years ago. Going under literally as the heaviest rainfall in decades led to county-wide floods that deluged the Truck site, almost putting paid to Truck for good. In true blitz spirit the organisers (whose family house was also flooded) relocated as many of the main acts as possible, including **The Brian Jonestown Massacre**, **Garth & Maud Hudson** and **Goldrush**, to **Brookes University Union** for two nights of undercover fun, with collection buckets passed round to try and ease the financial pain, while **Frank Turner** played an impromptu benefit show at **The Port Mahon**. One local band who had expected to join in the celebrations at Hill Farm this month were **A Silent Film**, who were caught mid-leap on the cover of July 2007’s *Nightshift*. Here was a band that took books on stage with them. They’d also just played Glastonbury, handpicked by Emily Eavis and Radio 1’s Steve Lamacq, and were set to perform at Truck Festival a year on from their set there being curtailed by a biblical downpour that blew all the electrics onstage; A Silent Film, Truck Festival and rain were obviously a cursed combination. Cornbury Festival fared rather better with **Blondie**, **David Gray**, **Suzanne Vega**, **Echo & The Bunnymen** and **Seth Lakeman** all performing. *Nightshift*’s reporter on site was slightly perturbed to find himself standing next to an as-yet not prime minister David Cameron for the Bunnymen’s set and noted that he was actually dancing, albeit badly.

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

5 YEARS AGO

“I feel ashamed. Our set was dreadful; we sucked. I would have hated me too if I’d been watching.” Thus said **Fixers** frontman Jack Goldstein by way of apology for his band’s, ahem, “ramshackle” set at **Truck Festival** in July 2012. Having been the star turn at the previous year’s Truck, the local heroes performed in a state of extreme inebriation, to equal amounts amusement and horror. If it’s any consolation, it’s a set that no-one who saw it has ever forgotten. This was the first Truck Festival under the new stewardship of Y Not Festival, after 2011’s financial woes. **Mystery Jets**; **The Temper Trap**; **Guillemots**; **British Sea Power**; **The Low Anthem**; **Tim Minchen**; **Villagers** and **65Daysofstatic** among the headline names on show, while the local cast included **Dead Jerichos**; **Yellow Fever**; **Robots With Souls**; **Kill Murray**; **The Old Grinding Young**; **Poledo** and **Alphabet Backwards**. Back indoors, **Soulfly** stopped off in town to wreak rock havoc at the **O2 Academy**, as did **We Are Augustines**, although the place to be this month was **The Jericho Tavern** as **Savages** made their first visit to Oxford, supported by **Palma Violets**, while perhaps most unexpected treat of the month was **Charlotte Church**’s show at the Tavern, the former child star, who’d sold over 10million albums and performed for the Queen, the Pope and Bill Clinton revealed her new rock and roll persona to 150 intrigued fans. And yes, she was a great and yes, she was lovely and yes, we did want to marry her. Still do.

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

CHRIS BARKER

Last time we saw Chris Barker he was opening for Josefín Öhrn and had Willie J Healey playing bass in his band. No surprise then that he has a similarly laidback, stoner vibe to Willie about his own songs, which come filled up with lots of dinky stuff that makes them sound like a lot of thought's gone into their making while remaining relatively simple. Initially we're worried 'Genie' might be more post-Sheeran acoustic cod soul, but it gradually reveals its roots rocking heart with a Mac Demarco slacker edge, before moving into Aerial Pink territory with the dreamy acoustic grunge swirl of 'Mac' that meanders off into bluesy psychedelic side roads along its easy ramble. The woozy 'Soulmate' continues the spaced-out journey, moments of stuttering electro-funk providing an unobtrusive counterpoint to the general air of Syd Barrett-inspired pop whimsy with its easy soul-rock lining. Further into this month's pile we'll hear music that sounds like it's barely got the ability to get to the end of a song without soiling itself. Chris here sounds like he doesn't actually need to make any effort to get where he's going. The guy's probably got a magic carpet, or at least, in his sweet herbal haze, imagines he has.

J LIND

So bloody awesome is Oxford's music scene and so far does its reputation extend we even have American musicians moving here to make their names. J Lind here is all the way from Arizona, now resident in our fair city. And bizarrely he's actually called David, so we'll have to guess what the J stands for; hopefully not Jamiroquai or Jam-master, although given the nature of this music the latter would be preposterously inappropriate. No, this one-song offering, 'I Don't Know', is solemn, almost stately folk music with an epic pop edge that could be the result of listening to a lot of Snow Patrol while growing up. It starts off as a delicate strum and some hushed, introspective vocals, all romantic imagery and a fair bit of Jeff Buckley-style reflection before things gradually build to almost hymnal levels of intensity. "Just because we may be losers doesn't mean we can't be winners," sings J/David with perhaps a touch too much earnestness, but on this occasion he's right. Well, second on the podium anyway, after Chris Barker.

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

FUJI

A very good friend of *Nightshift's*, who also happens to be something of a local music legend and has excellent musical taste told us he'd seen Fuji a few weeks back and they were pretty decent, like a cross between A Certain Ratio and The Kane Gang (please skip over that last bit if you're under the age of 40 or don't have a near encyclopaedic knowledge of 80s pop). So, we're keen to hear this demo (and it's rare we're ever keen to hear any demo). Let's just say we'll wait to see them live to pass full judgement, cos this is as close to ACR as Theresa May is to a strong and stable leader. 'Night Lover' is clumsy, unfunky funk-rock that lacks even an iota of fluidity and sounds like Little Brother Eli without the energy, musical ability or songs, while 'Where Are You Going?' manages to be both ponderous and overwrought, wobbling awkwardly around the place like a socially inept guest at the wrong wedding reception. 'We Fly' promises something better, with a nice gnarly guitar churn running through much of it, but ultimately it's still a bit clunky and even at only four minutes, feels too long. We'll go and see them live and hope for better, but if we find any of them wearing a trilby at a jaunty angle we're going on a vodka and machete rampage.

IRON ISLANDS

Oh joy, more funk-rock. More lightweight funk-rock. With a fucking piano. Why go and call yourselves Iron Islands if you're not at the very least playing hardcore black metal while dressed as a Viking. You could at least have an actual wolf on lead guitar or something. But no, this a right old longboat full of *meh*, sounding like an amateur Peter Gabriel impersonator fronting a featherweight Chili Peppers tribute band who secretly want to be a pub-level Elton John tribute. What would Yara Greyjoy think? Waste of a good band name.

SEMI URBAN FOX

Another good band name – sounds like one of those self-effacing, deliberately prosaic monikers that a lot of 80s indie bands went for as a statement of wilful underachievement, conjuring an image of a once wild animal renouncing night time raids on bins and savaging the local rabbit population and now settled down to a life of TV dinners in front of gentle BBC sitcoms. The band's one song here, 'Doomed From the Start', is a breathless fuzzy jangle topped off with Pete Doherty-like vocals, sprightly almost to a fault and untidy in mostly the right kind of way and feels like they can't wait to get to the end so they can get down the pub, which accentuates its likeable but forgettable bloquiness. We thought there was a second song here, an

elegantly crafted slice of gleaming stadium-pop with a more determined feel to it but this being Soundcloud it was just the algorithm-selected follow-on song – Kanadia's new single 'Ocean Blue'. Always good to be reminded how good Kanadia are.

A.C. JONES

"Tell me where you want to go / Cos I can't drive you anywhere," offers A.C. Jones helpfully to the love of his life. Might as well offer her an empty biscuit tin and tell her to pick her favourite. Maybe Jonesy here could simply bash said empty biscuit tin with a mallet repeatedly instead of trawling sluggishly through colour-by-numbers acoustic soul-pop like 'Club City' or strumming frantically through cretin-simple busker thrash like 'Happy Song'. Despite what decades of demo reviews might suggest, *Nightshift* isn't inherently prejudiced against emotionally wracked solo singer-songwriters, but we do object to things like terrible rhyming and monotony of which there is much to pick from here ("Standing room only / Never be lonely" an early offender in the former camp, while the interminable wail and drone of 'Lennon' is as far from the former Beatle's pop invention as it's possible to get without simply being a large fly buzzing against a window for all eternity). 'Wait For Me By the Weir' does at least up the ante slightly with some sparse plucked strings, a more convincing vocal performance and less awkward lyrics but it's too little and too late to rescue this temple to musical tedium. Maybe go down that bashing a biscuit tin route next time, old chap, got to be an improvement.

I SAID YES

Talking of Lennon, John famously fell for Yoko Ono at one of her exhibitions in which the word "Yes" was written in tiny letters on an otherwise blank canvas. Lennon loved the positivity inherent in the piece. So we're expecting any band called I Said Yes to exude *joy de vivre* and provide us with the soundtrack to summer now that it's finally arrived. We didn't expect the national anthem of Glumland: a song that starts off with a slowly ticking clock before unfurling like a blackened forget-me-not into a piano piece that makes Tindersticks sound like Vengaboys. But, hey, we're suckers for a bit of sombre soul-searching and a sense of funereal boreboding. The song here, 'Run This Town', maybe lacks the elegance needed to really work but it's got a gothic insistency about it and the overlapping vocals bring a sort of late Sunday evening in November life to it all. And if we squint our ears enough you might imagine it's Tindersticks bringing every party in every town to a desolate conclusion. Good work, but come on people, what's with all the misery; it's summer! It's not as if we're preparing to spend the next five years living under a government propped up by a handful of killjoy religious lunatics whose idea of wild

times is sitting sour-faced on the sofa, sipping a mug of boiled water and listening to old Ian Paisley speeches on a wax cylinder, are we. Oh yeah, as you were. Misery. Woo!

LEST WE FORGET

We were beginning to wonder if everyone had forgotten how to rock out for a while there, but here are this month's almost obligatory heavyweights to bring the riffs and demonic forces, the singer belching and growling like one of Abaddon's foot soldiers in the best bits of this five-minute metalcore workout. This being pretty standard metalcore of course, we also get some clean vocals, as if there's some quota that has to be adhered to – "sorry madam, the limit is a maximum 50% nasty, dirty stuff; don't want anyone having too much fun." So we get half Mr Hellspawn and half Mr Goody Two-Shoes Spoilsport and have to make do. Along it sprints, beats and riffs pitched partway between the worlds of evil and average. But, as Beavis and Butthead once said of Radiohead's 'Creep', "If they didn't have a part of the song that sucked, the other part wouldn't sound as cool."

THE DEMO DUMPER

WILL CARPENTER

Times are tough, we recognise that, the world can be a frightening and uncertain place but, dear God, some people could do to pull themselves together. For most of this demo we're not sure if Will is going to cry or die. He sounds on the verge of both. He's possessed of a croaky, expiring kind of voice that makes Leonard Cohen sound like Katy Perry. On 'Addicted' ("I'm addicted to you / I just hope you won't be offended when I say I've become dependent") he sounds like an overly emotional drunkard leaving his ex a voicemail after several hours down the pub over a wandering, almost jazzy acoustic blues amble that barely has the energy to cross the finish line when it finally gets to the end of the song, which we swear is at least two weeks long. 'I'll Be In Love With You Tomorrow' is even more lethargic, sinking into a slough of despond while sounding like Lou Reed's 'Coney Island Baby' performed by a rusty door hinge with severe depression. Elsewhere there's some standard twelve-bar blues and a song called 'Travelling Home' that makes Chris Rea's 'Driving Home For Christmas' sound like The London Gospel Choir performing 'Joy to the World' after dropping an entire bucket of MDMA. Taken as a whole we imagine it's the soundtrack to Theresa May's internal thought processes as she saw her election gamble stumble pathetically to the floor with all the élan of a sickly heifer collapsing into a pile of broken deck chairs. Which cheers us up no end. As for Will here, sadly it seems he's beyond hope or help.

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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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 Morissettes
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



Thurs 21st Dec • £23 adv
Slade

Fri 22nd Dec • £17.50 adv • 6pm
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